

וַיֵּרְאוּ אֹתוֹ מֵרָחֹק וּבְטֶרֶם יִקְרַב אֲלֵיהֶם וַיִּתְנַכְּלוּ אֹתוֹ לְהַמִּיתוֹ: (בראשית לז, יח)

THEY SAW HIM FROM AFAR AND BEFORE HE CAME NEAR THEM THEY CONSPIRED AGAINST HIM TO KILL HIM.

(Bereishit 37:18)

רש"י: וַיִּתְנַכְּלוּ. נִתְמַלְאוּ נְכָלִים וְעֲרֻמוּמִיּוֹת: אֹתוֹ. כְּמוֹ אֹתוֹ עֲמוּ כְּלוֹמַר אֵלָיו:

Rashi: THEY CONSPIRED. They were filled with plots and crafts. **HIM (אֹתוֹ)** is [spelled] like “with him” (אֵלָיו) — “with him” (עֲמוּ) meaning “against him” (אֵלָיו).

Ohev Yisrael

In the name of R. Yechiel Michel of Zlatchov.

THEY CONSPIRED AGAINST HIM TO KILL HIM. Rashi explained: HIM is like “with him” — “with him” meaning “against him.” My predecessors have cried out to understand Rashi’s holy words on this. I will try to explain.

Rashi hinted at an ancient secret—it is known that the twelve tribes were rooted in the secret of the twelve diagonal boundaries (Sefer Yetzira 5:2), as we explained above, and as it says in the holy writings of the Arizal,

Reuven’s aspect was the sense of sight, Shimon’s the sense of hearing, and so on for the rest of the tribes—each according to its measure.

And Joseph the *tzaddik*’s aspect was the completion and conclusion of all the measures, connecting them all to bring every measure from potential to reality, from hidden to revealed.

Here, when they wanted to reify some measure, they could not possibly accomplish this action without the measure of Yoseph the *tzaddik*,

And here, when Yoseph came near his brothers and they then conspired in their thoughts to kill him, they could not complete the thing in reality, *mamash*, Heaven forbid, without Yoseph’s measure.

They were unable to come near him to take him to kill him, to bring their thoughts from potential to reality.

This is the meaning of THEY CONSPIRED AGAINST HIM.

אוהב ישראל

בשם ר' יחיאל מעכיל מזאלאטשות

וַיִּתְנַכְּלוּ אֹתוֹ לְהַמִּיתוֹ. וּפִירֵשׁ יי"ל אוֹתוֹ כְּמוֹ אֹתוֹ עֲמוּ כְּלוֹמַר אֵלָיו. וּכְבָר צֹחַו בְּזָה קִמְאֵי דְקִמְאֵי לְהַבִּין דְּבָרֵי קִדְשׁוֹ שֶׁל רִשׁ"י יי"ל בְּזָה. וְלִי נ' לְפָרֵשׁ.

דְּהִנֵּה רִשׁ"י יי"ל רְמוֹז כָּאֵן סוּד עֲתִיק. וְהוּא דִּידוּעַ שְׁהִי"ב שְׁבִטֵי יי"ה הִיָּה שְׁרֵשׁ בְּחִי נִשְׁמַתָּם בְּסוּד יי"ב גְּבוּלֵי אֶלְכֶסוֹן וְכַמְבֹאֵר לְעֵיל וְכַדְאֵי בְכַה"ק הָאֲרִיז"ל

שְׁרֵאוּבֵן הִיָּה בְּחִי חוּשׁ הָרְאָיָה. וְשִׁמְעוֹן בְּחִי חוּשׁ הַשְּׁמִיעָה. וְכֵן שְׁאָר שְׁבִטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כ"א לְפִי בְּחִי וּמִדָּתוֹ.

וְיוֹסֵף הַצַּדִּיק הִיָּה בְּחִי גְמֵר וְסוּף כָּל הַמִּדּוֹת וְאֶתְקַשְׁרוּתָא דְכוּלָּא לְהוֹצִיא כָּל מִדָּה וּמִדָּה מִהַפְּתָח אֶל הַפְּעֹל. וּמִהַפְּעֹל אֶל הַגְּלוּי.

וְהִנֵּה כְּשֶׁרוֹצִים לְפַעַל שׁוּם אֵינָה מִדָּה וְאֵינָה דְבָר עֲשֵׂיָה אֵינּוּ בְּאִפְשָׁרֵי לְהַעֲשׂוֹת בְּלִתֵּי מִדָּת יוֹסֵף הַצַּדִּיק.

וְהִנֵּה כְּשֶׁקָּרַב יוֹסֵף אֶל אָחִיו וַיִּנְכְּלוּ אֹתוֹ בְּמַחְשַׁבְתּוֹ לְהַמִּיתוֹ. לֹא הִיָּה אֶפְשָׁר לָהֶם לְגַמֵּר הַדְּבָר בְּפַעַל מִמֶּשׁ ח"ו. בְּלִתֵּי מִדָּת יוֹסֵף הַצַּדִּיק

וְלֹא הִיָּה לָהֶם יְכֹלֶת לְקָרַב אֵלָיו וּלְלַקְחוֹ לְהַמִּיתוֹ. וְלְהוֹצִיא מִחֲשַׁבְתָּם מִהַפְּתָח אֶל הַפְּעֹל.

וְזֶהוּ וַיִּתְנַכְּלוּ אֹתוֹ.

VAYESHEV

On its face, the word AGAINST HIM is superfluous—it should simply have said, THEY CONSPIRED TO KILL HIM.

However, it means that they united with his measure to lift their hands, so they could bring their thoughts from potential to reality.

This is Rashi's hint to us with his sweet language.

HIM is like “with him.”

But the word “with him” is sometimes interpreted as “him.” Therefore, Rashi elaborated: “with him” (עמו), meaning with his aspect.

But why didn't scripture explicitly say, “with him?”

This is the reason for Rash's explanation: meaning, “against him”—that is, they were not, *mamash*, actually with him, but they united then with his aspect: “against him” or “to him”—to come near to him.

The words of the wise are graceful,

[Meaning of Hebrew uncertain!]

The enlightened will understand because it is profound.

וַיֵּשֶׁב

וְלִכְאוּרָה תִּבְּת אֹתוֹ מֵיִתֵּר וְהִילֵּל
וַיִּתְנַקְּלוּ לְהַמִּיתוֹ.

אָכֵן ר"ל שְׁנִיתִיחֲדוּ בְּבַחֵי מִדָּתוֹ כְּדִי
שְׁיַעֲלֶה בְּיָדָם וַיִּוְכְּלוּ לְהוֹצִיא מִחֻשְׁבָּתָם זֶה
מִכַּח אֶל הַפְּעֵל.

וְזוֹ שְׁרָמְזוּ לָנוּ רַש"י ז"ל בְּמַתְק לְשׁוֹנוֹ.

אוֹתוֹ כְּמוֹ אֵתוֹ.

אֵךְ תִּבְּת אֹתוֹ יִתְפָּרֵשׁ ג"כ לְפַעְמִים כְּמוֹ
תִּבְּת אֹתוֹ. לָכֵן פִּירַשׁ"י עִמּוֹ הֵינּוּ עִם
בְּחִינָתוֹ.

אֵךְ לָמָּה לֹא כָּתוּב בְּפִירוּשׁ בְּהַתּוֹרָה עִמּוֹ.

לָכֵן פִּירַשׁ"י כְּלוֹמַר אֵלָיו. ר"ל שְׁלֹא הָיוּ
עִמּוֹ מִפְּשׁ בְּפַעֲלֵי רַק שְׁנִיתִיחֲדוּ אִזּוֹ עִם
בְּחִינָתוֹ אֵלָיו כְּדִי לְקָרֵב אֵלָיו.

וּדְפַח"ח (וּדְבָרֵי פִיהֶם חֲכָמִים חֵן)

וּשְׂמִיד"ג (וּשְׁפָתַיִם יוֹשֵׁק מְשִׁיב דְּבָרִים
נִכְחִים)

וְהַמְשַׁכֵּיל יִבִּין כִּי עֲמָק הוּא:

Or HaChayyim

How do we parse AND BEFORE? Does it apply to what preceded it: They saw him from afar before he came near them? Or does it belong with what follows: And before he came near them, they conspired against him? Both interpretations are problematic. If it applies to what preceded, it should have said “before he came near,” not “*and* before he came near.” But if it belongs to what follows, it should have said, “and before...they conspired (וְהִתְנַקְּלוּ)” not “*and* they conspired (וַיִּתְנַקְּלוּ).” Perhaps the additional *vav* was meant to increase distance, meaning that AFAR does not mean he had not yet come near, but that they saw him at an exaggerated distance (בְּרַחֲוִיק מְפֹלֵג). We also could say that AND THEY SAW HIM FROM AFAR refers to the distance of their hearts (הַלְבָבוֹת מְרַחֲוִיק): they did not see him as brothers see brothers, but like someone far from them. AND BEFORE HE CAME NEAR means that this seeing was also BEFORE... Had it not said AND BEFORE with a *vav* it would have implied that they saw Joseph at a great physical distance. Therefore, the *vav* was added to show that it was another thing entirely. One could offer a different explanation of the text, but it appears that this is the best reading.