Limmud 2019

BINYAMIN ISAWEREWOLF

Study pack





FANTASTIC BEASTS AND WHERE TO FIND THEM WEREWOLVES FOR BEGINNERS

וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמוֹ, בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אֹתוֹ (בראשית א' כ״ז). צלם באלב״ם זאב, לכך אותם בני אדם שמשתנין לזאב, נבראו מששת ימי בראשית, ואין חוזרין לקדמותן עד שאוכלין דם אדם או אשה.

"And God created humankind in the God's own image: in the image of God it was created." צלם, image, in the אלב" system, is אלב, wolf. This refers to those people who are turned into wolves. They were created [as such] during the six days of Creation, and they cannot return to their original form until they have consumed the blood of a man or woman.

Rabbeinu Ephraim on Genesis 2:28

SPOTTING A WEREWOLF

פסוק זה מתחיל ב' בנימין ומסיים בל' שלל, לכך יש לישראל ל"ב שינים, ולפי שהשניים לשון שינוי, לכך הן נופלות לכל אדם וחוזרות וגדלות פעם שנייה, וכמו שנהפך האדם לזאב אפילו שהוא משתנה לאדם בכל שעה יש לו זנב.

This verse begins with a ב and ends with a ל, because Israelites have 32 teeth. And because שניים, teeth, recalls שינוי, change, they fall out of every person and return and grow back a second time. Likewise, a man who becomes a wolf, he has a tail at all times, even when he is in the form of a man.

Rabbeinu Ephraim on Genesis 49:27

THE MOMENT OF TRANSFORMATION

יש שקורין לוף גארו והוא בן אדם ומשתנה לזאב, ובשעה שמשתנה לזאב רגליו יוצאין מבין כתיפיו.

There is a thing called a 'loup-garou'. This is a human who turns into a wolf. At the moment of transformation to a wolf, [the wolf's] feet emerge from between [the man's] shoulders {see also Deuteronomy 33:12}.

Rabbeinu Ephraim on Genesis 49:27

BENJAMIN'S STORY

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO RACHEL?

לכך נולד בשינים, לומר כמו שזה משונה כך יהיה משונה משאר בני אדם, וכן בנימין אכל את אמו שמתה ממנו דכתיב: נַיְהִי בְּצֵאת נַפְּשָׁהּ, כִּי מֵתָה, וַתִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ, בֶּךְאוֹנִי (בראשית לה' י״ח).

A werewolf is born with teeth. This alteration is as if to say that [the werewolf] will change the remainder of humanity [into werewolves]. Thus, [having teeth], Binyamin ate his mother, and she died from this, as it is written: "And her spirit left her, and she died, and she called [her son's] name Ben-Oni, son-of-my-affliction."

Rabbeinu Ephraim on Genesis 49:27

IMPACT ON HIS DAILY LIFE

בנימין היה זאב יטרוף וטורף בני אדם לעתים, וכשבא לו העת שנהפך לזאב שנאמר: בַּנְיָמִין זְאֵב יִטְרָף (בראשית מט׳ ז״ט). ובעוד שהיה אצל אביו נשען על הרופא ובאותו זכות לא היה נהפך לזאב, שכך אמר וְעָזַב אֶת־אֶבִיו, וָמֵת (בראשית מד׳ כ״ב), כלומר כשיפרד מאביו יהפך לזאב לעוברי דרכים והיה כל מוצאו יהרגהו.

Binyamin was a wolf that tears-to-pieces, sometimes preying upon humans, and when the time came for him to turn into a wolf, thus was written: "Benjamin is a wolf that tears-to-pieces." So long as he was with his father, he could rely on a doctor, and on account of [the doctor] he would not change into a wolf. This is why it says, "Should he leave his father, he would die." In other words, on being separated from his father, he would turn into a wolf [immediately upon encountering] travellers, and all who should find him [in such a condition] would kill him.

Rabbeinu Ephraim on Genesis 44:29

FURTHER EVIDENCE?

THE VERY FIRST TEARING

ַנְיְשַׁלְחוּ אֶת־בְּתֹנֶת הַפַּפִּים, וַיָּבִיאוּ אֶל־אֲבִיהֶם, וַיֹּאמְרוּ, זֹאת מָצָאנוּ: הַכֶּר־נָא, הַבְּתֹנֶת בִּנְךְּ הִוּא אִם־לֹא. וַיַּבִּירָה וַיֹּאמֶר בְּתֹנֶת בְּנִי, חַיָּה רָעָה אֲכָלָתְהוּ; טָרף טֹרַף, יוֹסֵף.

And they sent the coat of many colours and took it to their father, and they said, "We found this. Examine it; is it the coat of your son or isn't it?" And he examined it and said, "It is the coat of my son – an evil beast must have devoured him. Joseph has been torn by a beast!"

Genesis 37:32-33

SILVER BULLETS?

ַנְיְצֵו אֶת-אֲשֶׁר עַל-בֵּיתוֹ, לֵאמֹר ... אֶת־גְּבִיעִי גְּבִיעַ הַכֶּסֶף, תַּשִּׂים בְּפִי אַמְתַּחַת הַקָּטֹן ... וַיְלַקֵּט יוֹסֵף אֶת־ בָּל־הַכֵּסֵף הַנָּמָצַא בָאֵרֵץ־מָצְרֵים וּבָאָרֵץ כִּנַעַן.

And [Joseph] instructed the steward of his house, saying: take my goblet, the silver goblet, and place it in the opening of the sack of the youngest one.

And Joseph gathered up all the silver that was to be found in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan.

Genesis 44:1a, 2a, 47:14a



Student Rabbi Gabriel Kanter-Webber gabriel@gabrielquotes.org.uk