

Zera Shimshon

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Chapter I: Bereisheet (Gen. 1:1-6:8)

Essay 3. G-d proclaims three things Himself: famine, plenty, and a good leader.

גמרא פָּרַק ג' דְּחוּלִין דְּרִשׁ ר' חֲנִינָא בַּר פָּפָא יְהִי כְבוֹד ה' לְעוֹלָם יִשְׁמַח ה' בְּמַעֲשָׁיו. פְּסוּק זֶה, שֶׁר הָעוֹלָם אָמְרוּ. בְּשִׁעָה שָׁאֵמַר הַקָּב"ה לְמִינְהוּ בְּאֵילָנוֹת נִשְׂאוּ דְשֵׁאִין קַל וְחֹמֶר בְּעֶצְמָן וְכו'.

The Gemara, in the third chapter of Chullin, reads:

Rabbi Chanina bar Pappa taught: “May the glory of the L-rd endure forever; the L-rd will rejoice in His works” (Ps. 104:31). This verse was stated by the minister of the world, i.e., the angel charged with overseeing the world. When the Holy One, Blessed be He, said: “After its kind” (Gen. 1:11) with regard to trees bearing fruit from the same species, and not intermingling with a different species, the grasses drew an *a fortiori* inference with regard to themselves.

They reasoned: If the Holy One, Blessed be He, wishes the mixing of species, why did he say: “After its kind,” with regard to the trees? And furthermore, let us draw an *a fortiori* inference: If with regard to trees, which do not naturally grow mixed (as they are large and distinct from one another), the Holy One, Blessed be He, said: “After its kind,” all the more so with regard to us (since grass naturally grows mixed).

Immediately, every kind of grass emerged after its kind, as it is stated: “And the earth brought forth grass, herb yielding seed after its kind” (Gen. 1:12). The minister of the world began to speak and said: “May the glory of the L-rd endure forever; let the L-rd rejoice in His works,” who do His will even when not explicitly instructed.

- Chullin 60a

קִשְׁיָה מֵה טִיבוֹ שֶׁל שֶׁר הָעוֹלָם בְּכָאֵן דְּנִקְא וּבְפְסוּק זֶה שֶׁל יְהִי כְבוֹד וְכו'.

A question is what is the exact nature of this “minister of the world” here and in this verse of, “May the glory of the L-rd endure forever”?

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וַיִּשׁ לֹאמַר דְּאִמְרִינָן בְּבִרְכוֹת פְּרָק ט', אָמַר ר' יוֹחָנָן נְשִׁלְשָׁה אֱלֹהִים דְּנִקְרָא אֱלֹהִים בְּעֵצְמוֹ, רָעַב וְשָׂבַע וּפְרָגְס, דְּקָתִיב וְכוּ'.
וְאָמַר ר' יִצְחָק אֵין מְעַמְדִין פְּרָגְס עַל הַצָּבוּר אֱלָא אִם כֹּן נִמְלְכִין בְּצָבוּר, שְׁנַאֲמַר "רְאוּ קָרָא ה' בְּשֵׁם בְּצִלְאֵל" וְכוּ' ע"כ.

It's worth noting that it says in the ninth section of Berachot:

Rabbi Yochanan said: "Three matters are proclaimed by the Holy One, Blessed be He, Himself: famine, plenty, and a good leader. Famine, as it is written: 'For the L-rd has called for a famine; and it shall also come upon the land seven years' (II Kings 8:1). Plenty, as it is written: 'And I will call for the grain, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you' (Ezek. 36:29). And a good leader, as it is written: 'And the L-rd spoke unto Moses, saying: See, I have called by name Bezalel, son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah' (Ex. 31:1–2)."

With regard to Bezalel's appointment, **Rabbi Yitzchak said: "One may appoint a leader over a community only if he consults with the community and they agree to the appointment, as it is stated: 'And Moses said unto the children of Israel: See, the L-rd has called by name Bezalel, son of Uri, son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah' (Ex. 35:30)."** The L-rd said to Moses: "Moses, is Bezalel a suitable appointment in your eyes?" Moses said to Him: "Master of the universe, if he is a suitable to You, then all the more so." The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to him: "Nevertheless, go and tell Israel and ask their opinion." Moses went and said to Israel: "Is Bezalel suitable to you?" They said to him: "If he is suitable to the Holy One, Blessed be He, and to you, then all the more so he is suitable to us."

- Berachot 55a

וְצָרִיךְ טַעַם מַה צּוֹרֵךְ שְׁלִשְׁלִשָּׁה אֱלֹהִים דְּנִקְרָא אֱלֹהִים בְּעֵצְמוֹ, וּמַה צּוֹרֵךְ לְהַמְלִיךְ עִם הַצָּבוּר בְּהַעֲמַדַת פְּרָגְס אוֹ מְלָךְ. וַיִּשׁ לֹאמַר מִשּׁוּם שְׁהַמְלִיךְ מוֹתֵר בְּכָל הָאֲמוּר בְּפִרְשַׁת מְלָךְ, וּכְלָל גְּדוּל בְּיַדְיָנוּ, אֵין חֲבִין לְאָדָם שְׁלֵא מְדַעְתּוֹ, וְאֵין הַפְּרָגְס הוֹאִיל שְׁיֵשׁ לוֹ רְשׁוּת עַלְיֵהֶם וְהֵם כְּעִבְדִים לוֹ, נִקְרָא חוֹב וְאֵין חֲבִין לְאָדָם שְׁלֵא בְּפִנּוּ וְשְׁלֵא מְדַעְתּוֹ.

A sense is required what need there was to state that these three specifically are proclaimed by the Holy One, Blessed be He, by Himself, and what was needed in appointing a ruler over a community, in establishing a leader or a king. It's worth noting that the king is permitted to do all that is said in the section of kingship,¹ but we have a great rule in our hands: "One may not act against a person's interests without his knowledge."² Even with a

¹ The Mishna in Sanhedrin 20b states: "The king brings out people for conscription in an optional war, i.e., a war that is not mandated by the Torah and is not a war of defense, on the basis of a court of seventy-one, and breaches fences of anyone in his way to create a pathway for himself for his various needs, and no one can protest his power. The pathway of the king has no measure, neither lengthwise nor widthwise, and one cannot protest that this pathway is wider than necessary. And all the people take spoils in war and give them to him, and he takes the first portion of the spoils."

² Cf. Ketubot 11a: "One may act in a person's interests in his absence, but *one may not act against a person's interests in his absence.*"

leader—where he has authority over [the people] and they are like servants to him—this is called a moral obligation, and he cannot act against a person’s interests in his absence and without his knowledge.

אלא דאי הכי קשיא מאי דאמרינן התם שהשיבו ישראל למשה אם לפניך ולפני הקב"ה הגון, לפנינו לא כל שכן. דמה קל נהמר הוא זה? שהואיל שחוב הוא להם, הנה להם להשיב, הואיל שלפני הקב"ה הגון, אף לפנינו הגון. פלומר שהם מתרצים בו אפילו בעל פה, הואיל שפיר נתרצה בו הקב"ה. ומהו זה הכל שכן?

Rather, if so, that such a great rule is even binding upon a king, to protect his subjects’ interests from his abuse, it is difficult why it says there in Berachot 55a, “Israel answered Moses, ‘if to you and to the Holy One, Blessed be He, [Bezalel] is suitable, then all the more so he is suitable to us.’” What is the *a fortiori* doing here, i.e., why did they add “all the more so”? Also, why did they need to cite that Bezalel was suitable to Moses? Since [Moses] was morally obligated to them, to protect their interests from his abuse, they should have simply answered him, “Since [Bezalel] is suitable to the Holy One, Blessed be He, he is also suitable to us.” It is as if they were compliant even though it was against their will, since [Bezalel] has already been preferred by the Holy One, Blessed be He. And again, what is this *a fortiori* doing here, that they said, “all the more so”?

וגיש לומר דבפרק ט' דברכות אמרינן, הוואה מלכי ישראל צרידי לבריה, ברוי . . . שחלק מקבדו ליראיו. שאף הקב"ה נותן למלך דבר משלו, ומחלקו נותן לו הכבוד. ואף הנביא שממנה או מושט אותו, נותן לו מחלקו, כמו שמצינו ביהושע שסמך משה את ידיו עליו כבודע. וכן פינתס, הקב"ה רצה שמשה יתן לו משלו, כדאיתא בזוהר על פסוק, הנני נתן לו את בריתי שלום.

It can be noted that in the ninth chapter of Berachot (58a), it says, “One who sees kings of Israel recites: ‘Blessed [are You, our L-rd, King of the universe,] Who has shared of His glory with those who revere Him.’” Even the Holy One, Blessed be He, gives something to a king from Himself, and from His portion gives him honor. Even through the prophet whom He has appointed or anointed, He gives from His portion, as we find with Joshua, for Moses rested his hand upon him, as is known.³ Similarly with Pinchas, the Holy One, Blessed be He, wanted Moses to give him a part from himself, as is brought in the Zohar (III:220a) on the verse, “I grant him My covenant of peace” (Num. 25:12), that G-d had instilled the Shechinah within Moses, giving him the Divine Inspiration through which he achieved prophetic knowledge, and G-d commanded Moses to share that gift with Pinchas.

³ Num. 27:23: “He laid his hands upon him and commissioned him—as the L-rd had spoken through Moses.”

והשתא אתי שפיר הקל וחומר, אם לפניך שגם אתה תחלוק לו ברצון טוב מברוך, ולפני הקב"ה הגון שגם הוא תחלוק לו מברוך, לפנינו לא כל שכן אף על פי שמחוייבים אנו ליתן לו ממון שלנו, שלפי האמת אינו שלנו, אלא של הקב"ה? דכתיב לי הכסף וכו'.

Now the *a fortiori* is fine. The people meant, “If you will give a portion of good will from your honor, and if the Holy One, Blessed be He, sees fit to also give a portion to him from His honor, then is it not all the more so that we are obligated to give him our money, which truly is not ours, but rather belongs to the Holy One, Blessed be He? As it is written, “Silver is Mine and gold is Mine—says the L-rd of Hosts” (Haggai 2:8)?

ונזהו הטעם שצריך שהקב"ה יכריז עליו בעצמו. לפי שבהכרח זהו, הקב"ה מחלק לו מברוך, דומיא דסמיכת ידיו דמשה על יהושע, כשחלק לו קצת מרוח הקודש שלו, כמו שאמרו I"ל, כמדליק גר מגר.

In this sense, the Holy One, Blessed be He, imposed upon Himself to make a proclamation. According to this proclamation, the Holy One, Blessed be He, separates for [the good leader] a portion of His honor, similar to the laying of hands of Moses upon Joshua, that he apportioned for him a bit of his Divine Inspiration that G-d had apportioned for Moses, as the rabbi of blessed memory said, “like lighting a candle from a candle.”⁴

והטעם שאף ברעב ובשבע מכריז עליהם הקב"ה בעצמו, לפי שאין הגשמים יורדים אלא אם כן נמחלו עונותיהם של ישראל, שנאמר רצית ה' ארצה וכו' נשאת עון עמך וכו'. ואמר ר' תנחום בריה דר' חניא איש כפר עכו, אין הגשמים נעצרים אלא אם כן נתחייבו שונאיהם של ישראל כליה, שנאמר ציה גס-החום יגזלו מימי-שילג, שאול חטאו וכו'. ועצר את-השמים, ולא-יהיה מטר . . . ואבדתם מהרה ע"כ.

The sense is that even regarding the famine and plenty, the Holy One, Blessed be He, proclaims them Himself, as per the following:

Rain falls only if the Jewish people’s transgressions have been forgiven, as it is stated: “L-rd, You have been favorable to Your land; You have turned the captivity of Jacob; You have forgiven the iniquity of Your people; You have pardoned all their sin. Selah” (Ps. 85:2–3). . . . Rabbi Tanchum, son of Rabbi Chiyya of the village of Akko, said: The rains are withheld only if the enemies of the Jewish people (a euphemism for the Jewish people) have been sentenced to destruction for their sins, as it is stated: “Drought and heat will steal the snow waters; to the grave [go] those who have sinned” (Job 24:19). . . . “And the anger of the L-rd will be kindled against you, and He will close up the heavens, and there will be no rain, and the earth will not give its fruit, and you will perish quickly” (Deut. 11:17).

- Taanit 7b

⁴ Midrash Tanchuma, Pinchas 11: “ ‘Take Joshua, son of Nun’ (Num. 11:25). . . . And he rested his hand upon him, like lighting a candle from a candle.”

ואם כן מוכרח הוא שיכריז עליהם בעצמו, לפי שהשליח אין בידו למחול העונות ולא ליתן עונש. ועוד כי זה הוא דבר הנוגע לגדול שבדינים, כדתנו בסנהדרין, הגדול שבהם אומר, איש פלוני אתה זכאי, איש פלוני אתה חייב.

If so, He must proclaim [the famine and plenty] Himself. The proclamation couldn't be done with a messenger, because the messenger doesn't have it in his hands to erase the sins of the Jewish people **without giving punishment. Furthermore, this [idea] that G-d Himself is proclaiming famine or plenty is something relevant to the greatest of judges, as is taught in a Mishnah in Sanhedrin (29a):** "After the judges finish reviewing the matter and reach a decision, they bring in the litigants. **The greatest of the judges says: So-and-so, you are exempt from paying; or: So-and-so, you are liable to pay.**"

ועוד יש לומר שהקב"ה, שברא את העולם, רוצה בקיומו לכן בשלשה דברים אלו, שהם שלשה דברים הצריכין לקיום העולם. מכריז עליהם הקב"ה בעצמו. שהשבע הוא האוכל הצריך לארץ. והרעב אף על פי שחסר האוכל, הוא מכריז בגי אדם לאומנות, כדאמרינו בפרק ג' דסנהדרין, שב שני הנה פכא ואכבא דאומנא לא חליף. ופרנס הוא המלך הצריך להנהגת בגי אדם.

It can also be said that the Holy One, Blessed be He, Who created the world, desired these three things in its establishment, that they are the three things needed to establish the world. The Holy One, Blessed be He, proclaimed them Himself. First, that the plenty is the food needed for the land. Second, the famine—although this is negative in that the food is lacking, it is positive in that it compels mankind to a trade, as it says in the third chapter of Sanhedrin (29b): "Seven years there was a famine, but over the craftsman's door it did not pass." I.e., if the harvest is poor, a farmer will have a reduction in revenue, but a craftsman's revenue won't be affected. Third, a good leader: he is the king who is needed to lead mankind.

ומעתה כשאמר הקב"ה למינהו באילנות, ובזה יש פאן האוכל, דהיינו העשבים והאילנות. והמלך המנהיג אותם הוא רצונו של הקב"ה, שרצה שלא יהיו בערבוביא. והאומנות שהדשאים עשו נגד טבעם כדי שלא לצאת בערבוביא. לכן כשראה שר העולם שלשה דברים אלו, נתן הודיה ושבח להקב"ה מעין שלשה דברים אלו, שבהם יתקיים העולם.

From now, when the Holy One, Blessed be He, said, "after its kind" (Gen. 1:11) with regard to trees, and in this here we have the food needed for the land, that is the grasses and the trees represent the plenty that G-d proclaims. The king who leads them is the will of the Holy One, Blessed be He, who doesn't want there to be intermingling. The cultivation of the grasses is against their nature, such that they didn't come out intermingled. Therefore, when the minister of the world saw these three things (the rapid growth of the grasses representing plenty; the cultivation to prevent intermingling leading to reduced yield and thus famine; and the grasses following the commands of the King), he gave his acknowledgement and praise to the Holy One, Blessed be He, for these three things, through which the world exists.

וּפְתַח וְאָמַר יְהִי כְבוֹד ה' לְעוֹלָם, דְּהֵיִנוּ הַמְּלִיךְ דְּהָא מַלְכוּתָא דְאַרְעָא כְּעֵין מַלְכוּתָא דְרַקִיעָא. וְעוֹד כְּמוֹ שְׁאָמְרוּ ו"ל, יִשְׁתַּדַּל אָדָם לְצֵאת אֶפְיָלוֹ לְקִרְאֵת מַלְכֵי אוּמּוֹת הָעוֹלָם, שְׂאָם יִזְכֶּה יְבַחֵין וְכוּ'. וְעוֹד אָנוּ מְבַרְכִין עַל הַמְּלִיךְ, שְׁחֵלֵק מְכַבּוּדוֹ לִירְאֵיו. וְעוֹד יִשְׁמַח ה' שְׁכַשְׁיֵישׁ הַשׁוֹבֵעַ יֵישׁ הָאוֹכֵל וְיֵישׁ שְׁפַע שְׁבַע רְצוֹן וְשִׂמְחָה לְפָנָיו, כִּי דָרָךְ הַטּוֹב לְהִיטִיב. וְלִהְפֹּךְ חָס וְשָׁלוֹם כְּשֵׁישׁ הָרָעֵב שְׁיֵישׁ צַעַר בְּעוֹלָם כְּבִיכּוֹל הַשְׂכִּינָה מְצַטְעֶרֶת קַלְנֵי מְרֵאשֵׁי וְכוּ'. אֲבָל כְּשֵׁיִהֵה הָאוּמָנוּת, אַז אֵין עוֹד צַעַר, לֹא לַמְטָה וְלֹא לַמְעָלָה, וְזֶהוּ יִשְׁמַח ה' וְכוּ'. כְּשֵׁיִהוּ הָאוֹכְלִים שֶׁהַכֵּל הוּא מְעַשֶׂה יְדֵי הַקַּב"ה, תִּהְיֶה שִׂמְחָה לְפָנָיו, וְעוֹד בְּמַעֲשָׂיו דְּהֵיִנוּ הַמְּלָאכָה וְהָאוּמָנוּת.

[The minister of the world] first said, “May the glory of the L-rd endure forever” (Ps. 104:31), that this is the King [who is the good leader], that the “royalty on earth is like royalty in the heavens” (Berachot 58a). Furthermore, as [Rabbi Yochanan] of blessed memory said: “One should always strive to go out toward kings of Israel to greet them. And not only should he run toward kings of Israel alone, but even toward kings of the nations of the world, so that if he will merit it, he will distinguish between the kings of Israel and the kings of the nations of the world” (Berachot 58a).⁵ Also, we bless the King, who apportions from His honor to those who fear Him. Further, G-d will be happy that when there is the plenty, there is the food, and there is abundance, “overflowing with favor,”⁶ and joy before Him, because the good path is to do good. And the opposite, G-d forbid, when there is the famine, that there is suffering in the world, it is as if to say that the Shechinah suffers, “Woe is me from my head.”⁷ But when there will be a trade, then there will be no more sorrow, not from below and not from above, and this is why “the L-rd will rejoice in His works” (Ps. 104:31). When there will be the types of food, which is all the work of the hands of the Holy One, Blessed be He, there will be joy before Him, and furthermore there will be joy in His actions, which is the labor and the craftsmanship.

וְעוֹד יֵישׁ לוֹמַר שְׂמִתְחַלֶּה הִיָּה מִתְפַּחַד שֶׁר הָעוֹלָם שְׂמָא לֹא תְבוֹא בְּרִיאַת הָאָדָם, וְיִחְזוֹר הָעוֹלָם לְתֵהוּ וְבֵהוּ, לְפִי שְׁהָאָדָם בְּטַבְעוֹ נוֹטָה לְחוּמְרֵיִת, וְכְמוֹ שְׁאָמְרָה תוֹרָה לְפָנֵי הַקַּב"ה, כְּשֶׁבָא לְהַמְּלִיךְ בָּהּ עַל בְּרִיאַתוֹ, הָאָדָם הִנֵּה עֲתִיד לְאַרְגֹּזָא קַמָּךְ וְכוּ'. וְכֵן הַפְתּוֹת שֶׁל מַלְאָכִים הָיוּ מְקַטְרְגִים, דְּכוּלִּיָּה קַטְטָא וְכוּלִּיָּה שְׁקָרִים וְכוּ'. אֲמַנְם כְּשֶׁרָאָה שְׁהָאָרְץ שִׁינְתָה הַטָּבֵעַ שְׁלָהּ כְּשֶׁהוֹצִיאָה הַדְּשָׁאִים כְּדִי לְכוּיִן רְצוֹנוֹ שֶׁל הַקַּב"ה, שְׂמַח בְּלָבוֹ. שְׁבִנְדָאֵי יֵישׁ לָנוּ לוֹמַר שְׂגַם הָאָדָם יַעֲשֶׂה כָּךְ, שְׂאָרַף עַל פִּי שְׁבִטְבַּע שְׁלוֹ הוּא עֲלוֹל לִיפּוֹל בַּחטָּא, מְכַל מְקוֹם אָנוּ מְקוּמֵם שְׁיִכְבוֹשׁ אֶת יְצָרוֹ וְיִתֵּן כְּבוֹד וְשִׂמְחָה לְבוֹרְאוֹ. וְלָכֵן אָמַר בְּלִשׁוֹן עֲתִיד יְהִי כְבוֹד ה' לְעוֹלָם יִשְׁמַח ה' וְכוּ'.

Furthermore, one can say that initially, the minister of the world was afraid that the creation of the man wouldn't come, and the world would return to being “unformed and void” (Gen. 1:2), because the man by his nature is prone to materialism, and the Torah said before the Holy One, Blessed be He, when He came to consult with the Torah on His creation,

⁵ Following the text of the Guadalajara, Spain printing c. 1488.

⁶ Deut. 33:23.

⁷ Mishnah Sanhedrin 6:5 (Sanhedrin 46a): “Rabbi Meir said: When a person *suffers* (for example, by receiving lashes or the death penalty at the hands of the court), how does the *Shechinah* express itself? ‘*Woe is Me from My head, woe is Me from My arm*’ (because G-d empathizes with the sufferer). If the Holy One, Blessed be He, suffers to such an extent over the blood of the wicked, how much more so does He suffer over the blood of the righteous that is spilled.” Also appears at Chagigah 15b, and Yerushalmi Sanhedrin 29b.

“this man, his future is to sin and to irritate you.”⁸ Similarly, among the denominations of angels were prosecutors [saying that man] is always brawling and is full of falsehoods.⁹ In truth, when He saw that the Land changed its nature when she sprouted the grasses in order to adjust to the will of the Holy One, Blessed be He, He was happy in his heart. He was happy that we can certainly say that the man will also do thus, that despite the fact that his nature is liable to fall into sin, nevertheless we hope that he will conquer his will and give honor and joy to his Creator. Therefore it says in the future tense, “May the glory of the L-rd endure forever; the L-rd will rejoice in His works” (Ps. 104:31).

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⁸ This is derived from Zohar I:205a; III:35b; III:70a.

⁹ Gen. Rabbah 8:5: “Rabbi Simon said: At the hour that the Holy One, Blessed be He, came to create the first man, the ministering angels formed *denominations* and groups, among them were those who said, ‘don’t create,’ and among them were those who said, ‘create,’ as it’s written, ‘Kindness and truth meet; justice and peace kiss’ (Ps. 85:11). [The angel of] kindness said, ‘create,’ because [man] pursues kindness. *Truth said, ‘don’t create,’ because [man] is full of falsehoods.* Justice said, ‘create,’ because [man] does acts of justice. *Peace said, ‘don’t create,’ because [man] is always brawling.*”