

# Zera Shimshon

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## Chapter XVI: Beshalach (Ex. 13:17–17:16)

### Essay 17. Not responding to insult

**שַׁבָּת** פָּרָק ט' תְּנוּ רַבָּנָן: הַנִּצְעָלִים וְאֵינָם עוֹלָבִים וְכוּ', קִשָּׁה דְהַנִּצְעָלִים וְאֵינָם עוֹלָבִים הֵינּוּ דוּמְיָא דְשׁוּמְעִין חֲרַפְתָּם וְאֵינָם מְשִׁיבִין, וְעוֹד עוֹשִׂים וְכוּ' מָה עֲנִינוּ פָּאן.

Tractate **Shabbat**, chapter 9 (88b): “The Sages taught in a Baraita: About those who are insulted and do not insult, who hear their shame and do not respond, who act out of love and are joyful in suffering, the verse says: ‘And those who love Him are as the sun going forth in its might.’”<sup>1</sup>

Question 1: A difficulty is that “those who are insulted and do not insult” is similar to “those who hear their shame and do not respond.”

Question 2: Also, regarding “who act out of love and are joyful in suffering,” what relevant is this here to “those who are insulted and do not insult”?

וְיֵשׁ לומר שְׁאֵמְרוּ ז"ל אֵין אָדָם נִחְשָׁד בְּדָבָר אֲלָא אִם כֵּן עֲשָׂאוּ, וְאִם לֹא עֲשָׂאוּ כִּלּוּ עֲשָׂאוּ מִקְצָתוֹ, וְאִם לֹא עֲשָׂאוּ מִקְצָתוֹ רָאָה אַחֲרֵיהֶם שֶׁעֲשָׂאוּהוּ וְשָׂמַח. וְכַנֶּגֶד אֵלּוּ הַשְּׁלוּשָׁה דְבָרִים הֵם הַנִּצְעָלִים, וְשׁוּמְעִים, וְעוֹשִׂים, מְשׁוּנִים זֶה מִזֶּה, שֶׁהַנִּצְעָלִים הֵם נִצְעָלִים וְנִחְשָׁדִים מִשׁוּם שֶׁשָּׂמַחוּ בְּרֵאוּתָם אַחֲרֵיהֶם לַעֲשׂוֹת, וְאִם עַל פִּי שִׂישׁ בָּהֶם פָּגַם זֶה, מִכָּל מְקוֹם אֵינָם עוֹלָבִים אַחֲרֵיהֶם שֶׁחָטְאוּ מִמֶּשֶׁ, וּמִשׁוּם הֵכִי נִתְפַּר עוֹנָם, וְנִקְרָאוּ אוֹהֲבֵיו. שׁוּמְעִים חֲרַפְתָּם וְאֵינָם מְשִׁיבִים, עֲשׂוּ מִקְצָת דְבָר וְאִחֵר כִּדְגִתְרָטוֹ וְלֹא גִמְרוּהוּ, וּפְרִישְׁתָּם מִהֶאֱסוּר הֵינּוּ תְּשׁוּבָתָם. וְיָדוּעַ שֶׁמִּצְנֵת הַתּוֹכְחָה הִיא שְׁלֵא לְבַיֵּשׁ אֶת חֲבִירוֹ, כִּדְאִיתָא "הוֹכַח תּוֹכִיחַ" וְכוּ' "וְלֹא-תִשָּׂא עָלָיו חֲטָא". וְאֵלּוּ שְׁמֵלְבִינִים פְּנִיָּהם בְּנֹדָא שְׁאֵינָם צְדִיקִים, וְהֵיוּ יְכוּלִים לְהַשִּׁיב לָהֶם עַל דְּרָף טוֹל קוֹרָה מִבֵּין עֵינָיו, וְאִפְלוּ הֵכִי אֵינָם מְשִׁיבִים, מִשׁוּם הֵכִי נִקְרָאוּ אוֹהֲבֵיו.

**It can be said that [the rabbis] of blessed memory said:**

**A man is suspected of [having done] something [sinful] only if he has [indeed] done so. And if he did not do it wholly, [then probably] he did it partly. And if he did not do it [even] partly . . . [then certainly] he saw others doing it and was happy.**

- Moed Katan 18b

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<sup>1</sup> Judges 5:31.

**Corresponding to these three things are those who are insulted, who hear their shame, and who act out of love. Each are different from the other.**

The answer to question 1, the difference between the first two items, is **that those who are insulted are insulted and suspected because they were happy to see others doing [something], and even though they have this defect, in any case they do not insult others who have really sinned.** I.e., they may have a guilty conscience knowing that they take delight in seeing others commit a sin, and they may be tempted to insult those who have actually sinned. But they successfully fight that impulse, and **that is why their sin is forgiven, and they are called “those who love Him.”**

In contrast, **those who hear their shame and do not respond, they do [some sin] partly, and afterward they regret and do not finish [their action], and their withdrawal from the prohibition was their repentance. It’s known that the commandment of rebuke is not to embarrass one’s fellow, as it is brought: “You shall surely reprove your people, but incur no guilt on their account.”<sup>2</sup> Those who rebuke someone but go too far and actually embarrass<sup>3</sup> are certainly not righteous.** I.e., “those who hear their shame and do not respond” means that they partially committed a sin, but then they repented. Someone rebukes them for the partial sin in a way that embarrasses them. **“Those who hear their shame”] would be able to answer [the rebukers] in the way of, “Remove the beam from between your eyes,”<sup>4</sup> meaning “you are worse than me, because you have embarrassed me with your rebuke,” but even so, they instead hold their tongues and do not answer those who embarrassed them. Because of this, they are called “those who love Him.”**

עושים מאהבה, רצה לומר ואותם אשר באמת עשאוהו כלו, השתא שעושים תשובה מאהבה ושמים בייסורין ובבזיונם לכפרת עונם, עליהם הפתוב אומר "ואהביו כצאת השמש בגברתו".

**“Who act out of love” wants to say, those who in truth do everything of which they were suspected, now that they have repented out of love of G-d and are happy with their suffering and their shame as penance for their sins. About them, Scripture says, “And those who love Him are as the sun going forth in its might.”**

והענין אשר השנה אותם לשמש, ענין לעיל בסדר הקודם על פסוק "דלותי נלי יהושיע".

The answer to question 2: **The connection** of those who act out of love to the first two types of people is that “those who act out of love and who are joyful in suffering” bear their suffering without complaining against G-d, and in that way they are analogous to those who are insulted but do not insult, and to those who hear their shame but do not respond.

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<sup>2</sup> Lev. 19:17.

<sup>3</sup> Literally, “whiten the faces” [of others].

<sup>4</sup> Bava Batra 15b: One person tells another, “remove the splinter from between your teeth,” i.e., pointing out a relatively small flaw, and the second person responds, “remove the beam from between your eyes,” i.e., suggesting that the first person has an even greater flaw.

**It equates them [all] to the sun. See above in the previous section, i.e., parashat Bo, essay 15, on the verse, “I was brought low and He saved me.”**<sup>5</sup> This brings the incident in Avodah Zarah 54b when Roman philosophers asked the rabbis, “If G-d doesn’t want idolatry, why doesn’t He destroy the idols?” The rabbis responded that some people worship the sun, but for G-d to destroy the sun would mean destroying the world. The sun is innocent; it is the idolators who are guilty, and G-d will eventually punish them. So too, the three parties discussed here, even though they have sinned fully, or sinned partially, or who have been happy to see others sin, have all repented, and have then remained silent upon being insulted by others. Thus, they are now once-again innocent, and those who insult or shame them will eventually be punished, just as those who abuse the sun by making it their object of worship will eventually be punished.

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<sup>5</sup> Ps. 116:6.