

Zera Shimshon

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

Essay 8. Belief in Moses

מדְרָשׁ ילקוט "ניאמינו בה' ובמשה עבדו" אם במשה האמינו קל וחומר בה', ומה תלמוד לומר "במשה"? ללמדך שכל המאמין ברוצי ישראל כאילו האמין במי שאמר והיה העולם עכ"ל. מקשים העולם דהיה לו לומר מה תלמוד לומר בה', ולא מה תלמוד לומר במשה שהרי האמונה בה' אתיא מקל וחומר דמשה, ובמשה איצטריך לגופיה. ותירצו לפי דרכם.

Midrash Yalkot Shimoni, Beshalach Remez 240: “ ‘And when Israel saw the mighty Hand which the L-rd had wielded against Egypt, the people feared the L-rd, **and they believed in the L-rd and in His servant, Moses.**’¹ If they believed in Moses, then *a fortiori* they would have believed in the L-rd. What is Scripture teaching us by [mentioning] Moses? To teach you that **all who believe in the shepherds, i.e., leaders, of Israel are as those who believe in ‘the One Who spoke and the world came into being.’**”²

Everyone asks that [the author of the Midrash] could have said, “What is Scripture teaching us by [mentioning] the L-rd,” and not “What is Scripture teaching us by [mentioning] Moses,” for the belief in the L-rd *a fortiori* comes from the reference to Moses, and we need Moses for itself. I.e., if Scripture had only said, “and they believed in Moses,” through logic we would have understood that they also believed in the immortal, all-powerful G-d. But if Scripture had only said, “and they believed in G-d,” we would not have necessarily understood that the people also believed in Moses. **They solve this in their own ways.**

ולדין נראה שהמדְרָשׁ הרגיש קושיא אחרת, דלא שייך כלל לומר שהאמינו במשה, שהרי משה עשה כל האותות והמופתיים מפי הקב"ה, וכל מה שהיה עושה היה מנפיר שם הקב"ה. ולא מקרי כלל שהם האמינו במשה אלא בהקב"ה, וכן פתיב קרא "ויאמן העם וישמעו כִּי־פָקַד ה' וכו' ויִקְדוּ וישתחוו", וכאן על הים אמר משה "התיצבו וראו את־ישועת ה' אשר־עָשָׂה לָכֶם הַיּוֹם". ואף אם בא לומר שהאמינו בהקב"ה שיעשה האותות ואף האמינו במשה שהיה ראוי להעשות הנסים על ידו, עדיין קשה מה תלמוד לומר "במשה", דבשלמא מה שהאמינו בהקב"ה שייך שפיר הכא, שהרי בנכות האמונה נגאלו ממצרים כמו שאמרו רז"ל אכל מה שהאמינו למשה לא שייך כלל הכא לגאולתם של ישראל.

For us, it seems that the Midrash felt a different difficulty, that it was not relevant at all to say that they believed in Moses, as Moses performed all the signs and wonders per the

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¹ Ex. 14:31.

² A well-known saying occurring in Tractate Gerim 1:2 and in over a dozen places in the Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds.

instructions³ of the Holy One, Blessed be He, and everything that he did was invoking the Name of the Holy One, Blessed be He.

It's not at all said that they believed in Moses, rather in the Holy One, Blessed be He. Thus, Scripture writes: “and the people believed; when they heard that the L-rd took note of the Israelites and that He had seen their plight, they bowed low in homage.”⁴ Also, here in our parasha, as they stood by the sea, Moses said, “Have no fear! Stand by, and witness the deliverance which the L-rd will perform for you today.”⁵

Even if [Scripture] is coming to say that they believed in the Holy One, Blessed be He, who performed the signs and they even believed in Moses who was worthy of having the miracles performed by his hand, it is still difficult to understand why Scripture is saying “in Moses.” Granted, the relevance of believing in the Holy One, Blessed be He, is fine here, for it was in the merit of their belief in G-d that they were redeemed from Egypt, as the rabbis of blessed memory said.⁶

But the fact that they believed in Moses was not relevant at all here to the redemption of Israel.

ותירץ שְׂבָא לְלַמְדָנוּ לְדוֹרוֹת, שְׂכַל מִי שֶׁמֵאֱמִין בְּרוּעֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אִף מֵה שְׂאוּמְרִים בְּשֵׁמֶם וְלֹא בְשֵׁם הַקֹּב"ה, מְקַרֵי כְּאִילוּ הָאֱמִינוּ בְּהַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא. וּמִכֻּל הֵן אֵתָהּ שׁוֹמֵעַ לֹא, שְׁמִי שְׂאִינוּ מֵאֱמִין בְּרוּעֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כְּאִילוּ אִינוּ מֵאֱמִין בְּהַקֹּב"ה, שְׂאִף כָּאֵן שְׁלִי יִשְׂרָאֵל נַעֲשֶׂה לָהֶם הַגִּס בְּזִכּוֹת הָאֱמוּנָה, אִם לֹא הִיָּה בְּלִבָּם לְהֵאֱמִין לְמֹשֶׁה אִף בְּדַבְרֵים שְׁלֹא הִיָּה אֹמֵר מִפִּי הַקֹּב"ה, לֹא הִיָּה נַעֲשֶׂה לָהֶם הַגִּס, וּמִשׁוּם הַכִּי הוּצַרְךָ לֹא מֵר "וַיֵּאֱמִינוּ בֵּה" וּבְמֹשֶׁה עֲבָדוּ."

The solution of the Yalkut Shimoni is that [Scripture] came to teach us for the future generations, that all those who believe in the shepherds of Israel, even those who speak in their own names and not in the name of the Holy One, Blessed be He, are considered as if they believe in the Holy One, Blessed be He.

From the positive statement you may derive the negative, that one who does not believe in the shepherds of Israel is as one who does not believe in the Holy One, Blessed be He. Even here in our parasha, where a miracle was performed for Israel in the merit of their belief, if it was not in their hearts to believe in Moses—even for the things that he didn't say quoting the Holy One, Blessed be He—the miracle would not have been performed for them. Because of this, it was necessary for Scripture to say, “And they believed in the L-rd and in His servant, Moses.”

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³ Literally, “from the mouth of.”

⁴ Ex. 4:31.

⁵ Ex. 14:13.

⁶ Yalkot Shimoni, Beshalach Remez 240.