

Zera Shimshon

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Chapter XX: Tetzaveh (Ex. 27:20–30:10)

Essay 1. Three laws that perplexed Moses

דְּרָשִׁינוּ שְׁפִיר סְמִיכוֹת הַפְּרָשִׁיּוֹת, שְׂרָאֲשֵׁי תִיבוֹת נְחֹשֶׁת גֵּר חֵדֶשׁ שְׁקָלִים תְּרָאָה וְאִתָּה תְּצַוָּה, וְהֵם הַשְּׁלֵשָׁה דְבָרִים שֶׁנִּתְקַשְׁוּ מִשֶּׁהָ בָהֶם לְפִי מָה שֶׁפָּתַב רַשִׁ"י בְּפִירוּשׁ הַחוּמָּשׁ, וְעַיִן בְּרֵא"ם וּבְחִידוּשֵׁי אֲגָדוֹת פֶּרֶק הַקּוּמָץ. וְלְפִי שֶׁבְּפִרְשָׁה זֹ לֹא נִזְכָּר בָּהָ שֶׁמֶ מִשֶּׁהָ נִרְאָה לֹא מֵר שֶׁהַשְּׁלֵשָׁה דְבָרִים שֶׁנִּתְקַשְׁוּ מִשֶּׁהָ בָהֶם לֹא הִיָּה הַקּוּשִׁי מִצַּד עֲצָמָם, דְּכַמָּה דְבָרִים יוֹתֵר חֲמוּרִים מֵאֵלּוּ הַבֵּינִן מִדְּ, אֲלָא הַקּוּשִׁי הִיָּה מְפָנִי שֶׁהִיּוֹ נִוְתָנִים לוֹ רִמְזוֹ עַל מִיתָתוֹ חוּצָה לְאֶרֶץ.

We expound well the juxtaposition of these *parshayot*, Terumah and Tetzaveh, for the last word of parshat Terumah, נְחֹשֶׁת [*nechoshet*], is an acronym for גֵּר חֵדֶשׁ שְׁקָלִים תְּרָאָה, which is followed by the first two words of parshat Tetzaveh, וְאִתָּה תְּצַוָּה. The six words can be read as: “A lamp,” “a [new] moon,” [and] “shekels,” “you will see,” “and you will command.” The intent is that G-d would literally show Moses: (1) how a menorah should be made for the Tabernacle;¹ (2) how the new moon should be observed;² and (3) how a half-shekel coin should appear, for such a coin should be offered by each adult male as an atonement for the sin of worshipping the Golden Calf.³ Having received visual instruction, Moses would then instruct the Jewish nation how to observe these commandments.

These are the three things that had perplexed Moses, according to what Rashi wrote in the commentary on the Pentateuch,⁴ and see also the Re'em⁵ and the Chidushei Agadot [on] the chapter “*hakometz*.”⁶

Since in this parsha, Moses' name is not mentioned, it seems to say that the three things that perplexed Moses were not difficult on their own, for there were several things more serious than these that come to mind immediately, rather the difficulty was because they gave him a hint of his death outside of the Land of Israel.

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¹ Ex. 25:31–40. Rashi on Num. 8:4, “ ‘And this is the work of the menorah’—‘This’—we may gather that the Holy One, Blessed be He, showed it to him with His finger, because he was puzzled by it [i.e., how to construct it].”

² Ex. 12:1–2. Rashi on Ex. 12:2, “Moses was perplexed regarding the exact moment when the new moon begins, i.e., how much of it must be visible before it is proper to consecrate it as new moon. [G-d] therefore pointed it out to him in the sky with the finger and said to him, ‘Behold it like this, and consecrate it’ (i. e., when you see the moon in a stage of renewal similar to this, you may proclaim that a new month has begun).”

³ Ex. 30:11–16. Rashi on Ex. 30:13, “[G-d] showed [Moses] a kind of fiery coin, the weight of which was a half shekel and said to him, ‘Like this shall they give.’”

⁴ See the previous notes re: Rashi on Ex. 12:2, Ex. 30:13, and Num. 8:4.

⁵ Rabbi Elijah Mizrahi (c. 1455–1525 or 1526), Talmudist and mathematician.

⁶ Rabbi Mordechai Ha’Cohen of Safed (1523–98), *Siftei Cohen on Torah* (Venice 1605).

וְנִיתָן לוֹ רִמּוֹז זֶה שְׁלִשָּׁה פְּעָמִים, לְפִי שְׁגָם הוּא בְּשִׁלְשָׁה דְבָרִים מְנַע מִמֶּנּוּ כְּנִיסַת הָאָרֶץ כְּדֵאִתָּא בְּמִפְרָשִׁים וּבְמִדְרָשִׁים וְעַיִן בְּזוֹהַר (פְּרִשְׁת בְּרֵאשִׁית דָּף כ"ח), הָרֵאשׁוֹן הוּא כְּשֶׁאָמַר "שְׁלַח-נָא בְּיַד-תְּשַׁלַּח", הַשֵּׁנִי "לָמָּה הִרְעַתָּה", וְהַשְּׁלִישִׁי כְּשֶׁקִּבַּל הָעָרֶב רַב וְגָרְמוּ לְיִשְׂרָאֵל לַעֲשׂוֹת הָעֶגְל וּמִתּוֹ בְּמִדְבָּר בְּשִׁבִיל שְׁחֹזר יֵצֵר הָרַע לְמִקּוֹמוֹ כְּנֹדַע, אֲבָל הַחֲטָא שֶׁל מִי מְרִיבָה הוּא עֲנִין אַחַר שְׁמִחַמַת זֶה נִשְׁבַּע הַקַּב"ה, שְׁנֶאֱמַר "לָכֵן לֹא תֵבִיאֻוּ", וְאִין לָכֵן אֵלָּא שְׁבוּעָה וְשׁוּב לֹא הָיָה לוֹ תִּקְנָה לְהַרְבּוֹת בַּתְּפִלָּה וּלְכַטֵּל הַגְּזֵרָה.

He was given this hint three times, according to which he also by three things prevented himself from entering the Land of Israel, as was brought by the commentators and in the Midrash,⁷ and see in the Zohar, volume 1, parshat Bereisheet page 28a. The first, as it is said, “send whomever You will send,”⁸ when Moses suggested he was not qualified to approach Pharaoh. The second is, “why have You dealt ill with the people,”⁹ when Pharaoh increased the burden on the Israelites after first being approached by Moses and Aaron. The third, is when he accepted the mixed multitude and they caused Israel to make the Golden Calf and caused them to die in the wilderness, because it returned the evil inclination to its place, as is known.¹⁰

But the sin of the waters of Meribah, where Moses struck the rock instead of simply ordering it to produce water as G-d had instructed him,¹¹ is a different matter, for because of this, the Holy One, Blessed be He, vowed, as it is said: “therefore you shall not lead this congregation into the land that I have given them,”¹² and the word “therefore” [lachen] [לָכֵן] is nothing other than a vow,¹³ and again he had no remedy to increase his prayers and to cancel the decree that he would die in the wilderness.

וּמִתְחִלָּה מִנְשֵׁה נִתְקַשָּׁה בְּמוֹלֵד הַלְּבָנָה, שֶׁהִיא רִמּוֹז לְמַלְכוּתוֹן שֶׁל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְהוּא נִגְד "שְׁלַח-נָא בְּיַד-תְּשַׁלַּח" שֶׁלֹּא יִהְיֶה הוּא הַמְּבִיא וְהַמְּלִךְ, עוֹד נִתְקַשָּׁה בְּמִנּוּרָה וְהוּא נִגְד "לָמָּה הִרְעַתָּה", וְעוֹד בְּשִׁקְלִים נִגְד הָעָרֶב רַב, וְזֶהוּ בִּיאוּרָם.

From the start, Moses was perplexed regarding the appearance of the new moon, which is a hint at the Kingdom of Israel,¹⁴ and the halacha of observing the new moon is in response to his saying, “send whomever You will send,” i.e., that he is not the leader and the king. He was further perplexed by the menorah, and this is in response to his saying, “why have You dealt ill.” Also, with regard to the *shekalim*, this is in response to the mixed multitude, and [the following] is their explanation.

⁷ Ex. Rabbah 5:23; Yalkut Shimoni, Va'etchanan remez 821.

⁸ Ex. 4:13.

⁹ Ex. 5:22.

¹⁰ Avodah Zarah 5a: With the acceptance of Torah, the Israelites became like godlike beings, and would have lived eternally and would not have had offspring. But with the sin of the Golden Calf, they reverted to a human state and were again susceptible to death, and they again begot offspring. *See also* Gen. Rabbah 48:11.

¹¹ Num. 20:12.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Deut. Rabbah 11:10.

¹⁴ Zohar Chadash 40a says that the moon symbolizes the *sefirah* of *malchut*, kingship.

דָּבָר בְּרוּר הוּא שֶׁהַלְבָנָה מִתְמַלֵּאת וּמִתְחַסְרֶת, וְהִיא דוֹגְמַת אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁמְשׁוּלָה לְצַבִּי שָׂאִין עוֹרוֹ מִתְזַיֵּק אֶת בְּשָׂרוֹ, בְּזִמְנֵן שִׁיּוֹשְׁבֵיהָ עָלֶיהָ רִוְחָא אִין יוֹשְׁבֵיהָ עָלֶיהָ גְּמָדָא, וּכְנֻגָד ט"ו יָמִים הָרֵאשׁוֹנִים שֶׁל הַלְבָנָה הָיוּ ט"ו דוֹרוֹת מֵאַבְרָהָם עַד שְׁלֹמֹה, שָׂאֵז מִיָּמָא סִיחָרָא בְּאַשְׁלֻמוֹתָא פְּדֵאִיתָא בְּזוֹהַר, וּכְנֻגָד ט"ו יָמִים הָאַחֲרֹנִים שֶׁהִיא פְּגוּמָה, הָיוּ ט"ו דוֹרוֹת מִרְחֻבָּעַם עַד צְדָקָהוּ שִׁסִּימָא נְבוּכַדְנֶצַּר אֶת עֵינָיו, דוֹגְמַת הַלְבָנָה שֶׁמִּתְחַסְרֶת, וְכֵהִיא דְאַמְרִינֵן בְּגִלְקוּט דְבְּרֵי הַיָּמִים (דָּף קס"א ע"ד) אִם זְכִיתֶם אִתֶּם מוֹנִים לְמִילּוּאָה שֶׁל לְבָנָה דְכְּתִיב "הַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה לָכֶם", אַבְרָהָם, יִצְחָק, יַעֲקֹב, יְהוּדָה, פָּרְץ, וְכוּ', וְאִם לֹא אִתֶּם מוֹנִים לְפִגְימָתָהּ, רְחֻבָּעַם, אֲבִיָּה, אֶסָא, וְכוּ' נְעִי"ש".

The new moon. **What is clear is that the moon waxes and wanes, and is a model of the Land of Israel, which is compared to a deer, for the skin of a deer cannot hold its flesh [for after the animal is skinned, its hide shrinks], so too [with regard to the Land of Israel], when it is settled, it expands, but when it is not settled, it contracts.¹⁵ In parallel to the first 15 days of the moon, when it is waxing, were the 15 generations of the nation growing to its greatest level, from Abraham to Solomon, for then the moon exists in her fullness, as is brought in the Zohar.¹⁶ In parallel to the 15 final days that it is defective, i.e., waning, there were the 15 generations of the nation sinking to new lows, from Rehoboam to Zedekiah, whose eyes Nebuchadnezzar blinded, like the darkening moon. This is what is said in the Yalkut Shimoni, Chronicles (page 161d) (remez 1082), “If you merit, you will be counted with the fullness of the moon, as it is written, ‘this month shall be for you,’¹⁷ Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, Peretz, Hezron, Ram, Amminadab, Nachshon, Salmon, Boaz, Obed, Jesse, David, Solomon, and if not, you will be counted with its deficiency, i.e., a waning moon, Rehoboam, his son Abijah, his son Asa, etc.¹⁸**

וְאִם הָיָה מִשָּׁה מְכַנְיָסָם לְאֶרֶץ לְעוֹלָם הָיוּ יוֹשְׁבִים עָלֶיהָ תָּמִיד, שֶׁהִיא נוֹטָעָם שָׁם פְּנוּדָע, וְתָמִיד הָיְתָה הִמְשָׁמְשָׁה בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל וְלֹא הָיָה נִחְרַב הַבַּיִת וְהָיְתָה הַלְבָנָה בְּמִילּוּאָהּ. וְלָכֵן פְּשָׁאֵמֵר לוֹ הַקַּב"ה "הַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה לָכֶם" דְּמִשְׁמַע לְשׁוֹן חִידוּשׁ שֶׁהַלְבָנָה מִתְחַסְרֶת, נִתְקַשָּׁה לְמִשָּׁה, וְאֵז הָרָאָה לוֹ הַקַּב"ה שִׁיּוֹשְׁרָאֵל יִגְלוּ מֵעַל אֲדָמָתָם וְהוּא לֹא יְכַנְיָסָם לְאֶרֶץ, דְּהֵינּוּ שְׂלֵא יִהְיֶה הַמְּבִיא וְהַמּוֹלֵךְ.

If Moses had brought them into the Land of Israel, they would have always occupied it, for they would have been planted there, as is known, and the reign would have always been with Israel, and the Temple would not have been destroyed, and the moon would have been in its fullness. Therefore, when the Holy One, Blessed be He, said to him, “this month shall be for you,” that has the meaning of renewal, that the moon renews itself, it perplexed Moses, and thus the Holy One, Blessed be He, showed him that Israel would be exiled from their Land, and that he would not bring them into the Land, that is, he would not be the one leading and ruling.

¹⁵ Gittin 57a.

¹⁶ Zohar II:85a.

¹⁷ Ex. 12:2.

¹⁸ I Chron. 3:10 ff. There were more than 15 kings of the descent, but some had very short reigns.

עוד בציווי המנורה כתיב "תיעשה" ביו"ד דלית דכונתא באורייתא, ואמרו במדרש שהוא רמז לעשר מנורות שעשה שלמה. והש"ף נתן טעם למה שלמה עשה עשר מנורות ובמשכן לא עשו אלא אחת, לפי שבימי שלמה היו כל האומות כפופים תחתיו, ושאלמה מלך על העליונים ועל התחתונים, ומשום הכי עשה עשר מנורות כולם משבעה גרות שהם שבעים גרות, כדי להחליש פח שבעים אומות, אבל במדבר לא היו צריכים להכניע אלא משבעה עממים שהיו בארץ ישראל, ומשום הכי לא עשו אלא מנורה אחת משבעה גרות עכ"ל.

The menorah. Also, in the commandment of the menorah, “You shall make a menorah of pure gold; the menorah shall be made of hammered work,”¹⁹ the word “shall be made” [תיעשה] [tei’aseh] is written with a yod, enhancing the purity of the Torah, and it says in the Midrash that this is a hint of the ten menorot that Solomon made,²⁰ the letter yod having the value of ten. The Shach²¹ gave a reason why Solomon made ten lamps, while in the Tabernacle they made only one: i.e., it was because in the days of Solomon, all the nations of the world were subject to him, for Solomon reigned over the inhabitants of the heavenly worlds, i.e., demons and spirits, as well as the human inhabitants of the earthly worlds.²² Because of this, he made ten menorot, each with seven lamps, which are seventy in total, in order to weaken the power of the seventy nations of the world. But in the wilderness, they had to subdue only the seven nations that were in the Land of Israel, and because of this, they only made one menorah with seven lamps.

וכשראה משה שהקב"ה אינו מצוה לו לעשות רק מנורה אחת, לא הנה מבין הטעם, שהנה סובר שצריך עשר מנורות כדי להכניע כל השבעים אומות בשבעים גרות. והראה לו הקב"ה צורת המנורה, פלומר אין צורך רק למנורה אחת, מפני שאתה עתיד למות, ומתחלה צריך להחליש פח שבע אומות. ואחר כך יבא יהושע וינמית הל"א מלכים כמנין א"ל, לשון קשה כדכתיב "ואת אילי הארץ הוליד", ואחר כך יבא שלמה ויחליש השבעים אומות. ואם לא הנה משה אומר "למה הרעמה" הנה רואה מלחמת ל"א מלכים ותכף הנה מכניע כל השבעים אומות ואז הנה יכול לעשות במדבר עשר מנורות, לפי שכל התיקון הנה בא כאתד בשביל זכותו שהנה איש אתד.

When Moses saw that the Holy One, Blessed be He, only commanded him to make one menorah, he did not understand the reason, for he had thought he needed ten menorot to subdue all seventy nations through seventy lamps. The Holy One, Blessed be He, showed him the shape of the menorah, as if to say only one is needed, because your future is to die,

¹⁹ Ex. 25:31.

²⁰ Yalkut Shimoni on Torah 369:4; see also Menachot 29a: “As Rav Yehuda says that Rav said: Solomon made ten menorot.”

²¹ Rabbi Shabtai ben Meir HaCohen (1523–98), European posek (decisor) and commentator on the Talmud, called “the Shach” after his work, Sifte Cohen (שפתי כהן), a famous commentary on the Yoreh De’ah section of the Shulchan Aruch.

²² Megillah 11b: “Solomon . . . ruled over [the inhabitants of] the heavenly worlds [i.e., demons and spirits], as well as [the human inhabitants of] the earthly worlds, as it is stated: ‘Then Solomon sat upon the throne of the L-rd as king’ (I Chron. 29:23).”

but first it's necessary to weaken the power of the seven nations presently in the Land of Israel. Afterward, Joshua will come and will kill the 31 kings,²³ the number of kings corresponding to the Gematria number of ל"א [EL] [G-d], difficult language, as it is written, "and he carried away the gods of the Land,"²⁴ and afterward Solomon will come and will weaken the 70 nations of the world. If Moses had not said, "why have You dealt ill with the people," he would have seen a war against the 31 kings instead of Joshua and he would have soon subdued all 70 nations instead of Solomon, and then he could have made ten menorot in the wilderness, according to which all the repair of the world would have come at once because of his merit, for he was one man who could have accomplished all this.

ואף כששמע משה שהקב"ה צנה עליו על מחצית השקל, דמשמע שאין עולם מלא ואין השם מלא, הוקשה לו והלא אם הוא יבניסם לארץ יהיה עולם מלא. והראה לו הקב"ה מטבע של אש ומשקלה מחצית השקל, לומר שהוא לא יבניסם לארץ, שכתב הש"ד ששקל בא"ת ב"ש גימטריא כ"ו, פדאמר ר' [ירמיה בר ר'] אלעזר מיום שחרב בית המקדש דין לעולם שישתמש בשתי אותיות, דמאחר שאין עולם מלא אין ראוי שיקרא ה' אלא על עולם מלא, כמו שאמרו ז"ל "ה' אלהים", שם מלא על עולם מלא, שלא היה עדיין עבודה זרה בעולם שהיא שקר ושם הוי"ה מורה אמיתות והנה. ומנה הטעם אין נקרא השם פכתבו אלא בכנויו, ולפי שעשו העגל לזה אמר שיתנו מחצית השקל עכ"ל. וזהו נגד הערב רב שעשו העגל והביאו עבודה זרה בישראל, פדאיתא שם בפרק ד' דעבודה זרה (דף נ"ג) מדפלוהו ישראל לעגל גלו אדעתיהו דניחא להו בעבודה זרה.

The half shekel. Even when Moses heard that the Holy One, Blessed be He, had commanded him regarding the collection of the half shekel,²⁵ with the meaning that the world is not whole and that G-d's name was not whole, it was difficult for him to accept, for if he would bring them into the Land of Israel, he would repair the world, and then the world would be whole.

The Holy One, Blessed be He, showed him a "fiery coin, the weight of which was a half shekel,"²⁶ to say that he would not be bringing [the Israelites] into the Land of Israel, for which the Shach wrote that the word shekel [שקל] in the AtBash cipher²⁷ is בד"ך, which has a gematria equal to 26, which is the gematria of the Tetragrammaton. That is, the people were commanded to financially support the Tabernacle in the wilderness and the Temple in the Land of

²³ Josh. 12:9–24.

²⁴ II Kings 24:15 refers to Nebuchadnezzar who "deported Jehoiachin to Babylon; and the king's mother and wives and officers and he carried away the notables of the Land as exiles from Jerusalem to Babylon," but here it appears to be quoted to mean, "and [Joshua] carried away [i.e., destroyed] the gods of the Land," i.e., when Joshua conquered the Land of Israel, that included removing the idols from the Land.

²⁵ Ex. 30:11–16.

²⁶ Ex. 30:13, "This they shall give," to which Rashi, based on Midrash Tanchuma, Ki Tisa, 9, commented, "[G-d] showed [Moses] a kind of fiery coin, the weight of which was a half shekel and said to him, 'Like this shall they give.'"

²⁷ In the AtBash cipher, the first letter of the alphabet is replaced by the last letter of the alphabet, the second letter of the alphabet is replaced by the second-to-last letter of the alphabet, etc.

Israel, as an atonement for their sin with the Golden Calf. The Shechina would dwell among the people, in the Tabernacle and the Temple, to assist the Jewish nation in the repair of the world, so that it would be whole again.

“As Rabbi Yirmeya bar Elazar said: From the day that the Temple was destroyed, it is enough for the world to use [only] two letters [for referring to G-d, the *yod* and *heh*, instead of the Tetragrammaton], as it is stated: ‘Let everything that breathes praise the L-rd [*Yah*]; Hallelujah’ (Ps. 150:6).”²⁸ For after the Temple’s destruction when the world was not whole, it was not proper to call G-d by His full name unless the world were whole.”²⁹

As [the rabbis] of blessed memory said, “ ‘For the L-rd G-d had not caused it to rain upon the earth’ (Gen. 2:5): The whole Name [of G-d] is [employed] in connection with a whole world; it is similarly employed in connection with the fall of rain.”³⁰ For there was not yet idol worship in the world, for this is falsehood, while the “Name of Existence” [i.e., the Tetragrammaton],³¹ teaches about truthfulness and existence. For this reason, the destruction of the Temple, the Name [of G-d] is not read as written, but only with a substitute name, and since they made the Golden Calf, for this reason, He said they should give a half shekel.

This was in response to the mixed multitude, who had created the Golden Calf, i.e., Aaron created it, but it was through their instigation, and they brought idolatry to Israel, as is brought there in the fourth chapter of tractate Avodah Zarah (page 53b), “since [the Children of] Israel worshipped the [Golden] Calf, they revealed their intentions [and indicated] that they were amenable to idol worship.”

וְנָהוּ גֵר ח' דָּשׁ שְׁשֵׁלִים תְּרָאָה וְאֵתָה תְּצַנֶּה, כְּלוּמַר דְּלֹא הוּזְכַר שֵׁם מִשָּׁה בְּפִרְשָׁהּ זֹו לְהוֹרוֹת לָנוּ שְׁמֵאֱלוֹי שְׁלֵשָׁה דְּכָרִים יָדַע מִשָּׁה שְׁיִצִּיאַת נַשְׁמָתוֹ תְּהִיָּה בְּחוּץ לְאֶרֶץ וְיִהְיֶה נֶעְלָם מֵעֵין כָּל חַי.

This is the meaning of “a lamp,” “a [new] moon,” [and] “shekels,” “you will see,” “and you will command,” as if to say that Moses’ name was not mentioned there in this parsha to teach us that from these three things, Moses knew that the departure of his soul would be outside of the Land of Israel, and “he would no longer be among the living.”³²

²⁸ Eruvin 18b.

²⁹ According to the Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Service on the Day of Atonement 2:6, and Prayer and the Priestly Blessing 14:10, when the Temple stood, the High Priest would pronounce the Tetragrammaton on Yom Kippur.

³⁰ Gen. Rabbah 13:3.

³¹ The author writes many of the names of G-d in this work, but he does not write out the Tetragrammaton. Instead, the anagram הו"י"ה, the “Name of Existence,” is used to represent the Tetragrammaton.

³² Literally, “he would be disappeared from every kind of living thing,” a quotation that is found as early as *Keli Yekar* (Lublin 1602), by Rabbi Shlomo Ephraim ben Aaron Luntschitz (1550–1619), Num. 19:2.

וְזֶה שֶׁאָמַר "אִתָּה יִדְעָתָ אֶת־הָעָם פִּי בְרָע הוּא", דְקָשָׁה מֵהוּ מִלֵּת "בְּרָע", וְעוֹד כִּי צִד הָיָה נוֹדָע שֶׁהָעָם הוּא רַע אִם אֶדְרָבָא אֶתְמוּל הַשְּׂמִיעִים הַקֵּב"ה אֶת קוּלוֹ וְנָכוּ לְרֵאוֹתוֹ "פְּנִים בְּפְנִים". וְיֵשׁ לוֹמַר דְאָמְרוּ בְּזוֹהַר (הַבִּיאוּ יְדֵי מִשָּׁה פְּרִשְׁת יִתְרוֹ)³³ שֶׁהָמֶן לֹא הָיָה יוֹרֵד לְעַרְב רַב, רַק לְיִשְׂרָאֵל, וְהֵם הָיוּ גִיזוּנִים מִהַשָּׂאָר, וּבְשִׁבִיל זֶה נִתְקַנְאוּ בָהֶם וְהִתְטִיאוּם בְּעֶגְל עַכ"ל. וְלָכוֹן אָמַר לוֹ אֱהָרֹן "אִתָּה יִדְעָתָ אֶת־הָעָם", דְהִינּוּ הָעַרְב רַב, "כִּי בְרָע הוּא", דְאוֹתִיּוֹת בְּרָע הֵם אוֹתוֹת עַר"ב, וְהֵם אוֹתִיּוֹת רַע"ב כִּי רַעֲב הוּא לְמֶן. וְכֵן קָמַת הַש"ד בְּפְרִשְׁת בְּשִׁלַּח שֶׁהָעַרְב רַב לֹא הָיוּ טוֹעֲמִים אֶת הָמֶן כְּמוֹ שֶׁהָיָה יוֹרֵד, אֲלֵא כִּפִּי עוֹבֵי חוֹמְרֵם הָיָה מִתְעַבָּה וְלָזָה הָיוּ טוֹחֲנִים אוֹתוֹ וְכו', וְכֵן קָתְבוּ גוּרֵי הָאֶר"י זְכָרוֹנוֹ לַחֲזִי הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא בְּסוּד הַפְּסוּק "שְׁטוּ הָעָם וְלִקְטוּ" וְכו'.

The jealousy of the mixed multitude. This is what [Scripture] said: “Aaron said [to Moses], ‘Let not my lord be enraged; **you know that this people is bent on evil.**”³⁴ **This is difficult to understand, for what is the word “בְּרָע”** [ve’rah] [“on evil”], **and further, how would it be known that the people are evil, for to the contrary, yesterday the Holy One, Blessed be He, made His voice heard to them, and they merited to see Him “face to face.”**³⁵

It can be said that it’s said in the Zohar³⁶ that the *manna* did not fall for the mixed multitude, only for Israel, and [the mixed multitude] were sustained by the remnants of *manna* left over by the Israelites, and because of this, [the mixed multitude] became jealous of them and caused them to sin with the Golden Calf.

Therefore, Aaron said to him, “You know that this people,” that is, the mixed multitude, “is bent on evil,” for the letters of “בְּרָע” [ve’rah] [“on evil”] are the letters of עַר"ב [erav] [“mixed”], and they are the letters of רַע"ב [ra’ev] [“hungry”], because the [mixed multitude] was hungry for the *manna*.

Similarly, the Shach wrote in parshat Beshalach that the mixed multitude didn’t taste the *manna* as it went down, rather the thickness of the material would thicken on them, and they would grind it with their teeth. The disciples of the Ari,³⁷ may he be remembered for life in the World-to-Come, wrote similarly regarding the esoteric secret of the verse, “The people went about and gathered it, ground it between millstones or pounded it in a mortar, boiled it in a pot, and made it into cakes; it tasted like rich cream” (Num. 11:8).

³³ The citation to parshat Yitro may be an error, as the source appears to be Zohar II:191b, on Ki Tisa.

³⁴ Ex. 32:22.

³⁵ Deut. 5:4, “Face to face the L-rd spoke to you on the mountain out of the fire.”

³⁶ Zohar II:191b.

³⁷ Lit., “the cubs of the Lion.”

ואף לפי דעת רז"ל בפרק ג' דמנחות שהשלושה דברים שנתקשה משה הם מנורה ראש חדש ושקצים, יש לומר שהשקצים נמי הם נגד הערב רב שקבל משה, שעשו העגל והתזירו הניצור הרע למקומו לאחר שקבר קבלו התורה חירות ממלאך המות מיצר הרע ומשעבוד מלכות, כמו שקתב הש"ך. "וזה לכם הטמא" הוא סמ"אל והשמונה שקצים הם ח' פחותיו, והוא סוד מה שאמרו ז"ל מלאך המות בשמונה. וכן איתא במדרש "זאת החיה" וכו' שקל אלו נגד האומות ונגד הגלויות שקלו ישראל, "את-הגמל" זו בבל וכו'. ואתי נמי שפיר הראשי תיבות של גחש"ת ג'ר ח'דש ש'קצים ת'ראה ואתה תצנה. ועיין לקמן בפרשת וילך על פסוק "הנה שכב" וכו'.

Even according to the opinion of the rabbis, of blessed memory, in the third chapter of tractate Menachot (29a), that the three things that perplexed Moses, and for which G-d showed him an image, were the menorah, the new moon, and creeping animals³⁸ (instead of the half shekel), it can also be said that the creeping animals were also a counter to the mixed multitude that Moses had received. For they made the Golden Calf and restored the evil inclination to its place after they had already received the Torah, which meant freedom from the Angel of Death, from the evil inclination, and from the servitude to the nations, as the Shach has written. "And this shall be unclean from among the things that swarm on the earth,"³⁹ this refers to the Angel of Death, Samael, and the eight listed creeping animals are his eight powers, and this is an esoteric secret that was said by [the rabbis] of blessed memory, that the Angel of Death [requires] eight [flights] to arrive at his destination.⁴⁰

Similarly, [see what] is brought in the Midrash,⁴¹ on the verses beginning, "These are the animals that you may eat,"⁴² discussing first animals that are kosher and then those that are not kosher. The rabbis taught there in the Midrash that each of the non-kosher animals corresponds to the nations and corresponds to the exiles in which Israel was exiled. For example, "the camel"⁴³ is corresponding to Babylon, etc.

Note that even according to the rabbis who say that the three things that perplexed Moses were the menorah, the new moon, and creeping animals, the acronym of *nechoshet* would be fine, standing for **ג'ר ח'דש ש'קצים ת'ראה**, i.e., "a lamp," "a [new] moon," [and] "creeping animals", "you will see," then followed by, "and you will command" from the beginning of this parsha. That is, the *shin* of *nechoshet* could stand for either *shekalim*, as proposed at the beginning of this essay, or for *sherezim* ["creeping animals"]. **Also see below Chapter 52, parshat Vayeilech, essay 2, on the verse, "The L-rd spoke to Moses: 'You are soon to lie with your ancestors.'**⁴⁴

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³⁸ Lev. 11:29–38.

³⁹ Lev. 11:29.

⁴⁰ Berachot 4b.

⁴¹ Lev. Rabbah 13:4–5.

⁴² Lev. 11:1.

⁴³ Lev. 11:4.

⁴⁴ Deut. 31:16.