

# Zera Shimshon

by Rabbi Shimshon Chaim Nachmani zt"l

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

### Essay 3. Moses' refusal to serve

**מדרש רבה** "ואתה הקרב אליך", הדא הוא דכתיב "לולי תורתך שעשעתי אז אבדתי בעניי", כשאמר הקב"ה למשה "ואתה הקרב אליך", הרע לו, אמר לו תורה היתה לי ונתתיה לך שאלולי היא אבדתי עולמי עכ"ל. צריך עיון מה ענינו של פסוק "לולי תורתך" לכן, ועוד קשה איך אפשר שמשה דכתיב ביה "והאיש משה ענו מאד" יהיה מיצר בגדולת אחיו, ומצינו באהרן הפך מזה כדכתיב "וראך ושמח בלבבו".

There is a **Midrash Rabbah**:

**“You shall bring near to yourself your brother Aaron, with his sons, from among the Israelites, to serve Me as priests: Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, the sons of Aaron.”<sup>1</sup> This is understood by what is written, “If Your Torah was not my delight, I would have perished in my affliction.”<sup>2</sup> [I.e.,] when the Holy One, Blessed be He, said to Moses: “You shall bring near to yourself,” [Moses] was upset. [G-d] said to him: “I had a Torah, and I gave it to you. Were it not for it, I would have eliminated My world.”**

- Ex. Rabbah 37:4

This requires investigation what relationship the verse “If Your Torah was not my delight” has to here.

It is also difficult how it is possible that Moses, regarding whom it is written, “Now Moses himself was very humble, more so than any other human being on earth,”<sup>3</sup> would be distressed by the greatness of his brother. This is especially difficult, when we find for Aaron the opposite of this, as it is written regarding him, “upon seeing you, he will rejoice in his heart.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ex. 28:1.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. 119:92.

<sup>3</sup> Num. 12:3.

<sup>4</sup> Ex. 4:14.

ועוד מה תירוץ הוא זה תורה היתה לי ונתתינה לך, ולמה הוצרך לומר שאלוהי היא אבדתי עולמי. ונודע שבשביל שאמר משה "שלחנא בידתשלח" ניטלה ממנו הנהוניה, כדאמרין בפרק י"ב דזבחים אמר הקב"ה אני אמרתי שתהיה אתה כהן ואהרן לוי, עכשיו יהיה הדבר להפך. ואיך עונש זה הוא מדה כנגד מדה, יובן במאי דאיבעיא לן בפרק ד' דנדרים אי כהני שילוחי דרמנא או שילוחי דידן, מאי נפקא מינה, למודר הנאה. ואף על גב דהתם לא איפשיטא, אסיקנא בפרק קמא דקידושין דכהני שילוחי דרמנא גינהו, וכן פסק הרמב"ם ו"ל. ומעתה הדבר פשוט שהוא מדה כנגד מדה, שלפי שמושה מאן ללקת בשליחותו של הקב"ה, משום הכי לא רצה עוד שיהיה שילוחו בעבודת כהונה.

**Also, what explanation is it that, "I had a Torah, and I gave it to you." Also, why was it necessary to say, "Were it not for it, I would have eliminated My world."**

**It is known that because Moses said, "Oh L-rd, please send by the hand of him whom You will send,"<sup>5</sup> that the priesthood was taken from him. This is as it is said in the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter of tractate Zevachim (102a): The Holy One, Blessed be He, said, "I said that you should be the priest and Aaron the Levite, [but] now the matter will be the opposite." How this is measure-for-measure punishment will be understood by the dilemma raised in the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter of tractate Nedarim:**

**Are these priests the agents of the Merciful One, or our agents?" What is the practical difference? [It is with regard to] one prohibited by vow from deriving benefit [from another.] If you say that they are our agents, don't they [provide] benefit [for the one for whom benefit is forbidden by vow], and [therefore, sacrificing that person's offering is] prohibited? But if you say that they are agents of Heaven, [it is] permitted.**

- Nedarim 35b

**Even though there it in Nedarim it wasn't resolved, in the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter of tractate Kiddushin (23b), it was concluded that the priests are the agents of the Merciful One, and thus also ruled the Rambam of blessed memory.<sup>6</sup> Now the matter is simple, that it was measure-for-measure punishment, that because Moses refused to go on an assignment of the Holy One, Blessed be He, because of this, He no longer wanted [Moses] to be his agent in the service of the priesthood.**

אלא דקשה הואיל שמושה אינו ראוי עוד להיות שילוחו של הקב"ה, למה אמר הכתוב "הוא יהיה לך לכהן ואתה תהיה לו לאלהים", ועוד כתיב "ראה נתתיך אלהים לפרעה", דבשלמא אם משה היה שילוחו של מקום אתי שפיר ששילוחו של אדם כמותו, אבל עכשיו שמושה אינו ראוי להיות עוד שליח איך אפשר שיהיה כאלהים.

**But it is difficult to understand this, for since Moses was no longer worthy to be the agent of the Holy One, Blessed be He, why did Scripture say, "he will be your spokesman,**

<sup>5</sup> Ex. 4:13.

<sup>6</sup> Mishneh Torah, Laws of Vows, chapter 6, halacha 5.

and you will be to him in G-d's place."<sup>7</sup> Also, it is also written, "see, I have made you like a god over Pharaoh."<sup>8</sup> Granted, if Moses was the agent of the Omnipresent, it would be fine, for the legal status of a person's agent is like that of himself.<sup>9</sup> But now that Moses is not fit anymore to be an agent of G-d, how is it possible that he would be godlike in his interactions with Aaron and Pharaoh?

ומצאנו בפרקי דרבי אליעזר (פרק מ'), אמר לו "לכה ואשליחך אל-פרעה", אמר לפניו רבון העולמים "שלח-נא ביד-תשלח", ביד אותו האיש שאתה עתיד לשלוח. אמר לו לא אמרתי לך "לכה ואשליחך אל-ישראל" אלא "לכה ואשליחך אל-פרעה". ולאותו האיש שאתה אומר אני שולח לעתיד לבוא אל ישראל, שנאמר "הנה אנכי שלח לכם את אליה הנביא" וכו' עכ"ל. ומפשט המדרש הנה נראה שמשה לא מאן אלא ללכת בשליחותו של מקום אל ישראל, אמנם לפרעה לא מאן, ולכן שפיר אמר קרא "ראה נמתיד אלהים לפרעה", דשילוחו של אדם פמותו, וכנגד מה שמאן להיות שליח לישראל, ניטלה ממנו הכהונה, שהם שילוחים מהמקום לישראל להקריב קרבנותיהם.

#### We found in Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer (chapter 40):

[G-d] said to [Moses], "Now, come, I will send you to Pharaoh, and you shall free My people, the Israelites, from Egypt."<sup>10</sup>

[Moses] said before Him, "Master of the Universe, 'please send by the hand of him whom You will send,' by the hand of the man whom You say, 'I am destined to send.'

[G-d] said to him, "I didn't say to you, 'Come, I will send you to Israel,' rather, 'Come, I will send you to Pharaoh.' As for that man of whom you are saying that I am destined to send him to Israel in the future, it is said, 'Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the L-rd come. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers.'<sup>11</sup>"

- Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer 40:7

From the plain meaning of this Midrash, it appears that Moses only refused to go as an agent of the Omnipresent to Israel, but he didn't refuse to go as an agent to Pharaoh. Therefore, it is fine that Scripture said, "see, I have made you like a god over Pharaoh," according to the rule that the legal status of a person's agent is like that of himself.

It was because of his refusal to be an agent to Israel that the priesthood was taken from him, as [the priests] are the agents of the Omnipresent to Israel to bring their sacrifices.

<sup>7</sup> Ex. 4:16.

<sup>8</sup> Ex. 7:1.

<sup>9</sup> Kiddushin 41b.

<sup>10</sup> Ex. 3:10.

<sup>11</sup> Mal. 3:23.

אָמַנְם עֲדִיין צָרִיךְ טַעַם מֶה הִיָּתָה פְּנִינְתוֹ שֶׁל מֹשֶׁה לְמַאֵן לְהִיּוֹת שְׂלִיחַ לְיִשְׂרָאֵל בְּנֻקָּא, וּמֵה הִיָּתָה תְּשׁוּבָתוֹ שֶׁל הַקַּב"ה וּלְאוֹתוֹ הָאִישׁ שְׂאֵתָה אוֹמֵר אֲנִי שׁוֹלֵם לְעֵתִיד לְבוֹא אֶל יִשְׂרָאֵל. וְנִשׁ לֹאמַר דְּנֻדָּאֵי מֹשֶׁה רַבִּינוּ ע"ה דְּכַתִּיב בֵּיה "בְּכָל־בֵּיתִי נֶאֱמָן הוּא", לֹא חָטָא וְלֹא מָאן, רַק הַכֵּל הָיָה מְבַקֵּשׁ לְטוֹבָתָן שֶׁל יִשְׂרָאֵל, דְּאִמְרִינוּ בְּמִדְרָשׁ עַל פְּסוּק "מִי אֲנֹכִי כִּי אֵלֶּךְ אֶל־פְּרַעֲוֹה", אָמַר מֹשֶׁה לְפָנָי הַקַּב"ה, רַבּוֹנוּ שֶׁל עוֹלָם כְּשִׁירָד נִעְקַב לְמִצְרַיִם לֹא כִּף אִמְרָתָ לֹ" אֲנֹכִי אֲרֻד עִמָּךְ מִצְרַיִמָּה וְאֲנֹכִי אֵעֲלֶךְ גַּם־עֲלֶיךָ, וְעַכְשָׁיו אֵתָה אוֹמֵר לִי "לֵכָה וְאֲשַׁלְּחֶךָ אֶל־פְּרַעֲוֹה", לֹא אֲנֹכִי הוּא שְׂאֵמְרָתָ לֹ" אֲנֹכִי אֵעֲלֶךְ גַּם־עֲלֶיךָ" עכ"ל.

**Indeed, we still need a reason what Moses' intent was in refusing to be an agent specifically to Israel.**

**Also, what was the meaning of the answer of the Holy One, Blessed be He, "As for that man of whom you are saying that I am destined to send him to Israel in the future"?**

**It can be said that certainly our teacher, Moses, may he rest in peace, about whom it is written, "he is trusted throughout My household,"<sup>12</sup> did not sin and did not refuse. Rather, he was only made a request for the sake of Israel, as it is said in the Midrash on the verse, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh"<sup>13</sup>:**

**Moses said before the Holy One, Blessed be He: "Master of the Universe, when Jacob went down to Egypt, didn't You say to him, 'I Myself will go down with you to Egypt, and I Myself will also bring you up,'<sup>14</sup> but now you are saying to me, 'Come, I will send you to Pharaoh.' This is not the "I Myself" about whom you said, 'I Myself will also bring you up.'" [I.e., why was G-d appointing an agent when He'd previously said he would personally redeem Israel?]**

- Ex. Rabbah 3:4

וְכֹךְ הִיָּתָה פְּנִינְתוֹ שֶׁל מֹשֶׁה רַבִּינוּ ע"ה אֵתָה אוֹמֵר לִי "וְהוֹצֵא אֶת־עַמִּי בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם" דְּמִשְׁמַע שְׂאֲנִי אוֹצִיאֵם, זֶה הַדְּבָר אֵינּוּ נוֹגַע לִי אֶלָּא לְךָ בְּנֻקָּא. וְאֲנִי אֵינִי יְכוֹל לְהִיּוֹת אֶלָּא מְבַשֵּׂר טוֹב לְיִשְׂרָאֵל כְּמוֹ שְׂיִהְיֶה אֵלֶיךָ. וְאִם שְׂלִיחוֹת הַבְּשׂוּרָה מִיּוֹסֵד לֹ" בְּנֻקָּא, גַּם עִתָּה יֵשׁ לְךָ לְשִׁלוֹם עַל יְדוֹ וְתִהְיֶה אֵתָה הַגּוֹאֵל.

**Thus, the intent of our teacher Moses, may he rest in peace, was: "You are saying to me, 'and you shall free My people, the Israelites, from Egypt,' which means that I should free them. This matter is not relevant to me, rather, it is relevant precisely to You. I am only able to be a source of good tidings to Israel, as Elijah will be. If the mission of the good tidings is specifically [Elijah's], then now You should send him, and You will be the redeemer."**

<sup>12</sup> Num. 12:7.

<sup>13</sup> Ex. 3:11.

<sup>14</sup> Gen. 46:4.

ונמצא שמשה לטובתן של ישראל הנה רוצה שגלויה יהיו על ידי בשר ודם, לכן הנה אחריהם שעבוד, אמנם הגאולה האחרונה תהיה בידי הקב"ה לכן אין אחריה שעבוד, וזהו שהקב"ה אמר לו לך אמור להם אהי"ה אשר אהי"ה, אני הייתי עמם בשעבוד זה אני אהיה עמם בשעבוד מלכות אחרים. אמר לו משה דנה לצרה בשעתה וכו', שהקב"ה לא רצה לגאלם בעצמו, שאם יגאלם הוא אי אפשר עוד לשעבדם, והגלות נתקן עליהם לפפרת עונותיהם, וכמו שהתנה עם אברהם שאברהם בירר לו המלכות, ואם לא יהיה הגלות היו ישראל חייבים פליה, שגלוי וידוע לפניו שעתידין לחטא.

**It's found that Moses, for the sake of Israel, had desired that the Holy One, Blessed be He, should go by Himself. This is because it is said in a number of Midrashim,<sup>15</sup> that since the first redemptions had been accomplished by men of flesh and blood, therefore there had been more servitude after [the first redemptions]. Indeed, the final redemption will be by the hand of the Holy One, Blessed be He; therefore, after it there will be no servitude.**

**This is the meaning of what the Holy One, Blessed be He, said to him: "Go and say to them, 'I will Be what I will Be.'<sup>16</sup> G-d meant: I was with them in this servitude, and I will be with them in the servitude of other kingdoms." Moses said to Him:**

**"It is enough! [Let] the [future] suffering [be endured] at its [proper] time. [I.e., don't discuss it now.]"** The Holy One, Blessed be He, agreed and said to him: **"Go and tell the children of Israel only that, 'I will Be has sent me to you.'**"<sup>17</sup>

- Berachot 9b

**That is, the Holy One, Blessed be He, did not want to redeem them by Himself, for if He were to redeem them, it would be impossible to subject them to additional servitude, and the servitude serves as a correction for them to atone for their sins. This is as it was agreed with Abraham, for Abraham chose the servitude to the kingdoms over punishment in Gehenna.<sup>18</sup> If not for the servitude, Israel would have been subject to annihilation, for it is revealed and known before Him that [Israel] is destined to sin.**

ומשה הנה סובר שלאחר שיקבלו התורה דכתיב בה "חרות" חירות ממלאך המות עוד לא "ישבו לכסלה", ומה שהסכים הקב"ה עמו שנגמר "פה תאמר לבני ישראל אהיה שלחני אליכם", לא הנה אלא להראותם שעדיין יש הבחירה לפנייהם לבחור בטוב ולמאוס ברע ואין ידיעתו מרחת.

**Moses was of the opinion that after they would receive the Torah, that they would not "turn to folly,"<sup>19</sup> as is written in it, "charut" [חרות], which the rabbis interpreted as "Freedom"— freedom from the Angel of Death. That is, in describing the Tablets of the Ten**

<sup>15</sup> E.g., Yalkut Shimoni, Zechariah, remez 577.

<sup>16</sup> Ex. 3:14.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Gen. Rabbah 44:21: "He said to him: 'Through which do you wish your descendants to be punished, through Gehenna or through the Kingdoms?' Rabbi Chanina bar Pappa said: Abraham chose the Kingdoms. Rabbi Yudan, Rabbi Idi, and Rabbi Chama bar Chanina said: Abraham chose Gehenna, but the Holy One, Blessed be He, [refused and] chose the Kingdoms on his behalf."

<sup>19</sup> Ps. 85:9.

Commandments, the Torah states that “the writing was the writing of G-d, engraved [חרות] [*charut*] upon the Tablets.”<sup>20</sup> The Gemara quotes Rav Acha bar Yaakov: “[Had the tablets not been broken,] no nation or tongue would ever have ruled over them, as it is stated: ‘Engraved [upon the stones]’; do not read it *charut* [חרות] [engraved] but rather *cheirut* [חירות] [freedom].”<sup>21</sup> The Gemara also understands Reish Lakish as saying that after receiving the Torah, the Jewish people would have become immortal had they not sinned with the Golden Calf.<sup>22</sup>

**The Holy One, Blessed be He, agreed with [Moses] not to mention future exiles, as it is said, “Thus shall you say to the Israelites, ‘I will Be has sent me to you.’”<sup>23</sup> This was only to show them that there was still a choice before them, to choose good and to despise evil, and that His knowledge would not compel them to act a certain way. I.e., man has free will, independent of the fact that G-d knows what will happen.**

נאם תאמר היאך קנים הקב"ה מה שהבטיח ליעקב "אנכי אעלה גם-עלה", או לא הנה לו להבטיח כן מתחלה, יש לומר ש'להכי כתיב "אעלה גם-עלה" לרמוז לגאולות רבות ואנכי תקיים בגאולה האחרונה. ונהו שתיירץ לו הקב"ה למשה ואותו האיש וכו' אני שולח לעתיד לבוא וכו'. ואף על פי שפננת משה היתה טובה, הקב"ה מדקדק עם חסידיו כחוט השערה, שלא הנה לו לסרוב כל כך אחר דבריו של הקב"ה, וגיטלה ממנו הפהונה.

**You may say: How did the Holy One, Blessed be He, fulfill what He promised Jacob, “I Myself will also bring you up”? Maybe He shouldn’t have promised this initially? It can be said that thus it is written, “I will also bring you up,” with a doubling of the Hebrew root עלה, to hint at a plurality of redemptions, and I Myself will fulfill the final redemption. This is the answer of the Holy One, Blessed be He, to Moses, “that man whom You say, ‘I am destined to send,’” I will send him in the future. Even though the intent of Moses was good, the Holy One, Blessed be He, is strict with his pious ones to a hair’s breadth,<sup>24</sup> for he should not have begged so much after the words of the Holy One, Blessed be He, and the priesthood was thus taken from him.**

ובנה יובן פננת יתרו שאמר יתרו למשה "איעצה ויהי אלהים עמך" בעצה, כפרש רשי הנה אתה לעם וכו' שלים ומליץ בינותם למקום וכו', וצריך עיון אם עצת יתרו היתה עצה נכונה ומוכרסת, כמו שאמר לו "לא טוב הדבר" וכו' "נבל תבל" וכו', מהו זה שנתירא פן לא יספים אלהים בעצה זו. אלא לפי שאמר לו "הנה אתה לעם" וכו' שלים בינותם למקום, נתירא פן הקב"ה לא ירצה בנה לפי שמאן בשליחותו.

**By this will be understood the intent of Jethro, when Jethro said to Moses, “I will give you counsel, and G-d be with you,”<sup>25</sup> as Rashi explained, “For the people, you should be**

<sup>20</sup> Ex. 32:16.

<sup>21</sup> Eruvin 54a.

<sup>22</sup> Avodah Zarah 5a.

<sup>23</sup> Ex. 3:15.

<sup>24</sup> Yevamot 121b.

<sup>25</sup> Ex. 18:19.

facing G-d, an agent and intermediary between them and the Omnipresent, and be the one who enquires of Him regarding the judgments.”<sup>26</sup> **It requires investigation if the advice of Jethro was the proper and obligatory advice, “The thing you are doing is not right; you will surely wear yourself out, and these people as well. For the task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone.”**<sup>27</sup> **Why is it that [Jethro] was afraid that G-d would not agree with this advice, as indicated by his words, “and G-d be with you”?** **Rather, because [Jethro] said to him, “you represent the people before G-d,”**<sup>28</sup> i.e., **an agent between them and the Omnipresent, [Jethro] feared lest the Holy One, Blessed be He, would not want this, because [Moses] had refused to be His agent.**

ומעתה נבא לביאור המדרש הנ"ל, כשאמר לו הקב"ה למשה "ואתה הקרב אליך" וכו'. לא שחרע לו מפני שאחיו נכנס בכהונה חס ושלום, אלא הרע לו לפי שקמפרע מאן ללקת בשליחותו של מקום אצל ישראל, שאם לא הנה ממאן אפשר שזכותו הנה מגין עליהם, הואיל שהנה הוא השליח ביניהם למקום. אמר לו הקב"ה תורה היתה לי ונתתיה לה, כלומר עתה אתה מצטער ומרגיש שחטאת, והלא קודם לזה הנה לה להרגיש, כשנתתיה לה את התורה, דלמה נתתיה לה התורה דקתיב "זכרו תורת משה עבדי" וכו', "תורה צוה לנו משה" וכו', אלא נדאי הטעם הוא לפי שעתידין לחטוא.

**Now we come to an explanation of the Midrash mentioned above. When the Holy One, Blessed be He, said to Moses, “You shall bring near to yourself your brother Aaron,” the Midrash explains: “[Moses] was upset. [G-d] said to him: “I had a Torah, and I gave it to you. Were it not for it, I would have eliminated My world.” He was not upset because his brother was entering into the priesthood, G-d forbid. Rather he was upset with himself because previously, he had refused to go before Israel as the agent of the Omnipresent. If he had not refused, it’s possible that his merit would have shielded them from sin, since he would have been the agent between them and the Omnipresent.**

**The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to him, “I had a Torah, and I gave it to you,” as if to say, “Now you are sorry and feel that you sinned, but shouldn’t you have sensed this previously, when I gave you the Torah? Why did I give you the Torah personally, as it is written, “Be mindful of the Teaching of My servant Moses,”**<sup>29</sup> **“Moses commanded us the Torah”**<sup>30</sup>? **Rather, certainly the reason that G-d gave the Torah to Moses was because G-d knew that [the Israelites] were destined to sin.**

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<sup>26</sup> Rashi on Ex. 18:19.

<sup>27</sup> Ex. 18:17–18.

<sup>28</sup> Ex. 18:19.

<sup>29</sup> Malachi 3:22.

<sup>30</sup> Deut. 33:4.

ואמרין במדרש שיר השירים על פסוק "ישקני מנשיקות" שאמלא ישראל היו שומעים כל העשרת הדברות מפי הקב"ה לא הנה שולט בהם לא מיתה ולא נצר הרע ולא שכחה וכו', כיון שבאו אצל משה ואמרו לו "דבר-אתה עמנו" וכו' הור נצר הרע למקומו. ולמה באו אצל משה לומר לו "דבר-אתה עמנו" וכו', לפי שלא היו יכולים לסבול פחו של הקב"ה.

**It is said in Midrash Song of Songs Rabbah on the verse, “Oh, give me of the kisses of your mouth,”<sup>31</sup> that if Israel had listened to all of the Ten Commandments from the mouth of the Holy One, Blessed be He, that neither death, nor the evil inclination, nor forgetfulness would have ruled over them. But since they came to Moses and said to him, “You speak to us, and we will obey; but let not G-d speak to us, lest we die,”<sup>32</sup> that the evil inclination returned to its place, i.e., being able to rule over them. Why did they come to Moses, to say to him, “You speak to us”? It is because they were not able to withstand the might of the Holy One, Blessed be He.<sup>33</sup>**

וקשה והלא אמרין במדרש רבה פרשת יתרו "קוליה' בכח", "בכחו" לא נאמר אלא "בכח", בכח של כל אחד ואחד, הבחורים לפי פחם, הזקנים לפי פחם, וכו'. ולמה לא היו יכולים לסבול, אלא צריך לומר ששהקב"ה בא אליהם בכח שיהיו יכולים לסבול אם ירצו, והם היו סבורים שאינם יכולים לסבול, ובאמת שהיה יכול לבוא עליהם בכח שאינו כל כך גדול, כדי שידעו בנדאי שיכולים לסבול, אלא שרצה לתת להם הבחירה. וכיון שבאו אצל משה הור נצר הרע למקומו, לפי שקבלו התורה מיד בשר ודם, וכשם שבשר ודם עובר, כך תלמודם משתפח, אבל לעתיד לבוא כתיב "נתתי את-תורתי בקרבם ועל-לבם אכתבנה".

**This is difficult to understand, for isn't it written in Midrash Rabbah, parashat Yitro, on the verse, “The voice of the L-rd [comes] with might [בכח]”<sup>34</sup>:**

**It is not written: “The voice of the L-rd [comes] with His might [בכחו].” Rather, it is written: “with might,” i.e., the might of each and every [person]: the young men according to their might, the elders according to their might, and children according to their might. Had it been written: “The voice of the Lord [comes] with His might,” the world would have been unable to survive.**

- Ex. Rabbah 29:1

**Thus, why were they not able to withstand the speech of G-d? It is certainly necessary to say that the Holy One, Blessed be He, came to them with might geared toward each individual, such that they be able to withstand if they so desired. But they were of the opinion that they were not able to withstand it. In truth, He was able to come to them with power that was not so great, in order that they should know certainly that they would be able to withstand it. But He wanted to give them the choice as to whether to overcome their fear or to instead ask Moses to be an intermediary. Since they came to Moses, the evil inclination returned to its place, since they received the Torah from a man, of flesh and blood. Just as flesh and blood**

<sup>31</sup> Song of Songs 1:2.

<sup>32</sup> Ex. 20:16.

<sup>33</sup> Song of Songs Rabbah 1:15.

<sup>34</sup> Ps. 29:4.



pass away, so too their Torah learning is forgotten. However, regarding the Future-to-Come, it is written, “I will put My Torah within them, and write it upon their hearts.”<sup>35</sup>

וְכָל זֶה הָיָה בְּשִׁבְלֵי שְׁגָלוֹי לְפָנָיו שְׁעֵתִידִין לְחֻטְאוֹ, וְאִם לֹא הָיָה לָהֶם יֵצֵר הָרַע לֹא הָיָה לָהֶם תְּקוּמָה, וּבְשִׁבְלֵי זֶה סִיבַב הַקַּב"ה הַדְּבָר שִׁיְהִי לָהֶם יֵצֵר הָרַע וּבְזֶה נִקְרָאוּ אֲנוּסִים מִיֵּצֵרם הָרַע וְאֵינָם חַיִּיבִים כְּלָיָה. וְזֶהוּ שְׁסִיִּים הַמְדַרְשׁ שְׁאֵלֻלִי הֵיחָא אֲבָדְתִי עוֹלָמִי, כְּלוֹמַר שְׁאֵלֻלִי לֹא נִמְתָּי אוֹתָהּ לֶךְ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל הָיוּ חוֹטְאִים, הֵייתִי צָרִיף לְאַבְדַּ עוֹלָמִי, כִּי לֹא הִיְתָה לָהֶם תְּקוּמָה חֵס וְשְׁלוֹם.

**All this was because it was revealed before Him that they were destined to sin. If they would not have had the evil inclination, they would not have had standing to excuse their sins. Because of this, the Holy One, Blessed be He, brought about the fact that they had an evil inclination, and because of this they were considered slaves of their evil inclinations and they were not deserving of annihilation. This is why the Midrash concludes, “Were it not for [the Torah], I would have eliminated My world,” as if to say, that if I had not given it to you and Israel had sinned, I would have needed to destroy my world, because they would not have had merited standing to excuse their sins, G-d forbid.**

וְעוֹד דְּאִיתָא בְּיַלְקוּט הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַחוֹטְאָת וְכו' שְׁאֵלוּ לְחֻקָּהּ חוֹטָא מָה עֲנָשׁוּ, "חֻטְאִים תְּרַדְּף רָעָה". לְנִבְיָאָה, הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַחוֹטְאָת וְכו'. לְתוֹרָה, אִמְרָה יְבִיא קִרְבָּן וְיִתְפַּכֵּר. נִמְצָא שֶׁהַתּוֹרָה הִיא מְקַנְיֶמֶת הָעוֹלָם, שְׁהָרִי הָעֲבוּדָה הִיא מְקַנְיֶמֶת הָעוֹלָם כְּדַתְנָן עַל הַתּוֹרָה וְעַל הָעֲבוּדָה הָעוֹלָם עוֹמֵד, וְשִׁפִּיר קָאֵמַר שְׁאֵלֻלִי הִיא כְּבָר אֲבָדְתִי אֶת עוֹלָמִי, שְׁאֵלֻלִי הִיא כְּבָר הָיָה נִאֲבָד בְּתִירוּץ הַחֻקָּה וְהַנִּבְיָאָה.

**Also, it is brought in Yalkut Shimoni on the verse, “The person who sins shall die”<sup>36</sup>:**

**They asked Wisdom:** [regarding] **one who sins, what is his punishment?** [Wisdom] said: **“Misfortune pursues sinners.”**<sup>37</sup> **They asked Prophecy:** Regarding one who sins, what is his punishment? [Prophecy] said: **“The person who sins shall die.”** **They asked Torah:** Regarding one who sins, what is his punishment? [Torah] said: **“He will bring an offering and be forgiven.”** **They asked the Holy One, Blessed be He:** Regarding one who sins, what is his punishment? He said: **“Let him repent and confess and he will obtain atonement.”**

- Yalkut Shimoni, Ezek., remez 358

**It's found that the Torah sustains the world, as this Midrash indicates that the Temple Service sustains the world. This is as it is taught: “The world stands on Torah and on the Temple Service.”<sup>38</sup> It is fine that the Midrash says” “Were it not for [the Torah], I would have eliminated My world,” for if not for [the Torah], [the world] would have already been destroyed by the answers of Wisdom and Prophecy.**

<sup>35</sup> Jer. 31:33.

<sup>36</sup> Ezek. 18:4.

<sup>37</sup> Prov. 13:21.

<sup>38</sup> Pirkei Avot 1:2.

ואף שהקב"ה אמר יַעֲשֶׂה תְּשׁוּבָה, זֶה לֹא הָיָה אֱלֹא כְּדֵי שְׂיִהְיֶה לָהֶם קִצְתַּת תְּקִנָּה אֲף לְאַסֵּר הַחֲרָבָן שְׂאֵי אֶפְשֵׁר לְהִבְיֵא קֶרְבָּן, דָּאֵי לֹא תִימָא הִכִּי לְמָה כְּתִב בְּתוֹרָה מִצְוֹת הַקֶּרְבָּנוֹת, הֲלֹא בְּתִשׁוּבָה לְחֻדְתָּה סְגִי, אֱלֹא וְדָאֵי שְׂאֵי עַל פִּי שְׂמִתְכַפֵּר בְּתִשׁוּבָה, מְפַל מְקוֹם אֵין זֶה תְּכִלִּית הַכַּפָּרָה, אֱלֹא שְׂנִידוֹן כְּאֲנוּס לְעִנְיֵן הַקֶּרְבָּן מִפְּנֵי שְׂעֲכָשְׂיו אֵין בֵּית וְאֵין מִזְבֵּחַ, שְׂהָרִי מִי שְׂמִתְחַיִּיב קֶרְבָּן אֲף עַל פִּי שְׂעֲשֶׂה תְּשׁוּבָה מְחֻיִּיב לְהִבְיֵא לְכִשְׂיבְנָה בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ, כְּדֹאשְׁכֶּסֶן בְּפָרֵק קִמָּא דְשַׁבַּת דָּר' ?שְׂמַעְאֵל כּוֹן אֱלִישַׁע קָרָא וְהִטָּה וְכָתֵב עַל פִּנְקָסוֹ, אֲנִי וְכוּ' אָבִיא חֲטָאת שְׂמִינָה.

**Even though the Holy One, Blessed be He, said “Let him repent,” this was only so that that there would be some correction for them even after the destruction of the Temple, when it was impossible to bring a sacrifice. For if you wouldn’t say thus, then why is the commandment of the sacrifices written in the Torah, wouldn’t repentance alone be enough? Rather, certainly, even though one is forgiven by repentance, regardless, this is not the ideal atonement, rather, he is considered as someone prevented regarding the bringing of the sacrifice, because now there is no Temple and no altar. For if one is obliged to bring a sacrifice, even though he has repented, he is required to bring it when the Temple will be rebuilt. This is as we find in the first chapter of tractate Shabbat, that Rabbi Yishmael ben Elisha “read and adjusted [a candle wick on the Sabbath], and he wrote [after the Sabbath] in his notebook: I, Yishmael ben Elisha, read and adjusted a lamp on Shabbat. When the Temple will be rebuilt, I will bring a fat sin-offering [as atonement for this sin].”<sup>39</sup>**

וְזֶה שְׂאָמַר הַכְּתוּב "וְתַתְּנֶנּוּ-לִי מִגֹּן יִשְׁעָה וַיִּמְיָנָה תְּסַעְדֵנִי וְעִנְיֹתָה תִרְבֵּנִי", אַתָּה הַקָּב"ה נִתְּנָה לִי יִשׁוּעָה וּמִגֹּן עַל כָּל חֲטָאתִי, וְכִיצַד נִתְּנָה לִי הַיִּשׁוּעָה וּמִי הָיָה הַגֹּרֵם שֶׁל יִשׁוּעָה זֶה, עַל זֶה אָמַר "וַיִּמְיָנָה תְּסַעְדֵנִי". וְכַמְדַּרְשׁ רַבֵּה עַל פְּסוּק "וַיִּתֵּן אֶל-מִנְשָׁה כְּכֹלְתוֹ" וְכוּ', מִצִּינֵי "וַיִּמְיָנָה תְּסַעְדֵנִי" זֶה תוֹרָה דְּכִתִּיב "מִיִּמִּינֵנוּ אֵשׁ דָּת לְמוֹ" עַכ"ל. וְאִם הַחֲכָמָה וְהַנְּבוּאָה אָמְרוּ חֲטָאִים וְכוּ' וְהַתוֹרָה אָמְרָה יָבִיא אֲשֶׁם וַיִּתְכַּפֵּר, זֶה הִיא הַיִּשׁוּעָה שְׂנִתְּנָה, אֲמַנְם הַקָּב"ה אָמַר יַעֲשֶׂה תְּשׁוּבָה, וְזֶהוּ "וְעִנְיֹתָה תִרְבֵּנִי" שְׂהָרְבִית לִי הַיִּשׁוּעָה אֲף כְּשִׂאֵין קֶרְבָּן.

Regarding what the Scripture said: **“You have given me the shield of Your protection; Your right hand has sustained me, Your care has made me great,”<sup>40</sup> You, the Holy One, Blessed be He, have given me salvation and protection from all my sins. How have You given me salvation, and what is the cause of this salvation? About this it is said, “Your right hand has sustained me.”** We can look in the Midrash Ex. Rabbah 41:3 on the verse, **“And He gave unto Moses, when He had finished speaking with him upon mount Sinai, two tablets of testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of G-d.”<sup>41</sup> We find the following commentary on the words “Your right hand has sustained me”—This is Torah, as it is written, “Lightning flashing at them from [God’s] right hand.”<sup>42</sup> If the Wisdom and the Prophecy said what they did**

<sup>39</sup> Shabbat 12b.

<sup>40</sup> Ps. 18:36.

<sup>41</sup> Ex. 31:18.

<sup>42</sup> Deut. 33:2.

regarding sinners, and the Torah said “[the sinner] will bring an offering and be forgiven,” **this is the salvation that was given. Indeed, the Holy One, Blessed be He, said, “Let him repent.” This is the meaning of “Your care has made me great”: the salvation has made me great, even though there was no sacrifice given.**

ובדברך זה יובן נמי מאי דאיתא בזוהר (ח"ג דף רמ"ו) שבישביל שאמר משה "ואם-אין מחני נא" לא נזכר שמו בפירוש זה של "ואתה תצונה", וקשה למה דוקא בפירוש זה. ויש לומר שלפי שבפירוש זה נבחר אהרן לכהונה. ולמה היה אהרן כהן? לפי שמשה מאן ללכת בשליחותו של מקום. ולמה משה מאן? לפי שהיה רוצה שילך הקב"ה בעצמו. ולמה כך? לפי שהיה רוצה שלא יהיה לישראל עוד שעבוד. ולמה לא רצה הקב"ה? לפי שגלוי לפניו שיעתידין לחטוא. וכשתטאו ישראל אמר משה "ואם-אין מחני נא". ומשום הכי כשנבחר אהרן לכהונה, לא נזכר שמו של משה, לפי שמשה אמר "ואם-אין" וכו', לפי שתטאו ישראל. ומעתה שתטאו ישראל לא יפה עשה משה כשמאן ללכת וכו', אלא אדרבא יפה עשה הקב"ה שלא ללכת הוא עצמו לגאם.

**In this way, it will also be understood what is brought in the Zohar (part III, page 246a), that because Moses said, “Now, if You will forgive their sin [well and good]; but if not, erase me from the record which You have written,”<sup>43</sup> his name was not mentioned in this parasha of Tetzaveh. It is difficult to understand why specifically in this parasha, as opposed to some other parsha, such as Ki Tisa, where we find the verse “erase me.”**

**It can be said that it's because in this parasha, Aaron was chosen for the priesthood. Why was Aaron the priest? Because Moses refused to go on the agency of the Omnipresent. Why did Moses refuse? Because he had wanted the Holy One, Blessed be He, to go by Himself. Why so? Because he wanted that Israel would not have any further servitude. Why didn't the Holy One, Blessed be He, want this? Because it was revealed before Him that they were destined to sin.**

**When Israel sinned with the Golden Calf, Moses said, “if You will forgive their sin [well and good]; but if not, erase me.” Because of this, when Aaron was chosen for the priesthood, the name of Moses was not mentioned, because Moses said, “but if not, erase me,” because Israel sinned. I.e., while Moses didn't say “erase me” until next week's parasha, Ki Tisa, his name was erased from this week's parashah, Tetzaveh, because that's when Moses was punished by G-d depriving him of the priesthood and instead giving it to Aaron. Now that Israel sinned, it wasn't right that Moses refused to go as G-d's agent. Rather, to the contrary, the Holy One, Blessed be He, did the right thing by not going by Himself to redeem them.**

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<sup>43</sup> Ex. 32:32.