

Zera Shimshon

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Chapter XXIV: Vayikra (Lev. 1:1–5:26)

Essay 8. The Jews alone are commanded to bring offerings

מִדְרָשׁ על פסוק "אֲדָם כִּי־יִקְרִיב", מִשָּׁל לְמִלָּךְ שֶׁהֵיךְ לוֹ פָּרָקְסִין אָמַר לוֹ לַעֲבֹדוֹ קִפְלוּ וְנִעְרוּ וְכוּ', כִּךְ אָמַר מִשָּׁה לַפָּנִי הַקֵּב"ה רַבּוֹנוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם מְכַל שְׂבָעִים אוֹמוֹת שִׁישׁ לָךְ בְּעוֹלָמְךָ אֵי אֶתָּה מְצוּנִי אֵלָּא, "צוֹ אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל", "דִּבֶּר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל", "אָמַר אֶל־בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל", אָמַר לוֹ שֶׁהֵם דְּבוּקִים לִי הֵדָּא הוּא דְּכֵתִיב "כִּי כֹאשֶׁר יִדְבֹק הָאָזוּר אֶל־מִתְנֵי־אִישׁ" וְכוּ'. אָמַר ר' אֱלֵעָזָר מִשָּׁל לְמִלָּךְ שֶׁהֵיךְ לוֹ פוֹרְפוּרִין וְהֵיךְ מְצוּנָה עַל עֲבֹדוֹ וְכוּ', אָמַר לוֹ שֶׁהֵם הַמְּלִיכִינִי תַחֲלָה עַל הַיָּם וְאַחֲרָיו "ה' יִמְלֹךְ לְעֹלָם וָעֶד". אָמַר ר' בְּרַכְיָה מִשָּׁל לְזֶקֶן וְכוּ' שֶׁקִּבְּלוּ מַלְכוּתִי וְאַחֲרָיו בְּסִינִי נִעְשָׂה וְנִשְׁמַע עַכ"ל.

There is a Midrash on the verse “When a man brings an offering”:¹

There is a parable of a king who had an undergarment. He said to his servant: “Fold it, shake it out, and pay close attention to it.” His servant said to him: “My lord the king, of all the inner garments that you have, you command me only regarding this one.” He said to him: “It is because I wear it directly on my body.” **So too, Moses said to the Holy One, Blessed be He: Master of the universe, of the seventy imperial nations that You have in Your world, You command me regarding: “Command [צו] [tzav] the children of Israel [and say to them: Be punctilious in presenting to Me at stated times the offerings of food due Me],”² “speak [דַּבֵּר] [daber] to the children of Israel [and say {וְאָמַרְתָּ} {va’amarta} to them: When one of you presents an offering of cattle],”³ “say [אָמַר] [emor] to the children of Israel”⁴** He said to him: “It is because they are attached to Me.” That is what is written: “For just as the belt cleaves to the waist of a man, [so I have attached to Me the entire house of Israel and the entire house of Judah].”⁵

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¹ Lev. 1:2.

² Num. 28:2.

³ Lev. 1:2.

⁴ Ex. 33:5 is the only location for this language, but it does not relate to sacrifices, so it doesn’t make sense that the Midrash intends to quote it. There are other forms of the root verb “אמר” [amar] [“say”], such as “וְאָמַרְתָּ” [va’amarta] [“and say”] which is part of the previous citation, Lev. 1:2, though that reads “say to them.” While there isn’t a verse relating to sacrifices with the specific language “say to the children of Israel,” the point seems to be that there are three different verbs, “command,” “speak,” and “say,” used in expressing the mitzvot regarding sacrifices.

⁵ Jer. 13:11.

Rabbi Elazar⁶ said: There is a parable of a king who had a royal garment. He would command his servant: “Pay close attention to it, fold it, and shake it out.” His servant said to him: “My lord the king, of all the royal garments that you have, you command me only regarding this one.” He said to him: “It is the one that I wore on the day of my coronation.” So too, Moses said before the Holy One, Blessed be He: “Master of the universe, of the seventy governing nations that You have in Your world, You command me regarding only Israel: ‘Command the children of Israel,’ ‘say to the children of Israel.’ ” He said to him: “They initially crowned Me at the sea and said: ‘The L-rd will reign for ever and ever.’ ”⁷

Rabbi Berechya said: There is a parable of an elder who had a handkerchief. He would command his disciple, saying to him: “Fold it, and shake it out.” His [disciple] said to him: “My lord the king, of all the handkerchiefs that you have, you command me only regarding this one.” He said to him: “It is the one that I wore when I was appointed elder.” So too, Moses said before the Holy One, Blessed be He: “Master of the universe, of the seventy governing nations that You have in Your world, You command me regarding only Israel.” He said to him: “It is because they accepted My kingdom upon them at Sinai and said: ‘[Everything that the L-rd has spoken] we will do and we will listen.’ ”⁸ Rabbi Yudan said: “Come and see how much the Holy One, Blessed be He loved Israel, as He mentioned them five times in a single verse, as it is stated: ‘I have given the Levites, given [to Aaron and to his sons from among the children of Israel, to perform the service of the children of Israel in the Tent of Meeting, and to atone for the children of Israel, and there shall not be a stroke against the children of Israel, when the children of Israel approach the Sanctuary].’ ”⁹

- Lev. Rabbah 2:4

תחלה קשה אף רמז זה בפסוק "אדם כִּי־יקריב", ועוד מה הנה קשה למשה על שלוש לשונות אלו "צו", "דבר", "אמר", והלא גם בשאר המצוות לפעמים כתיב "אמר" ופעמים "דבר" ופעמים "צו את־בני ישראל", ואם תאמר דקשני ליה למה הוצרכו כל אלו הלשונות יחד במצוה זו של הקרבנות שבשאר המצוות לא נכתב אלא אחד מהם לבד, אם כן מה צורך הנה לו להקדים, מכל שבועים אומות וכו' אי אתה מצויני אלא על ישראל, שנגזרה שיהיה רוצה שיצוה הקרבנות אף לאומות דמה קנשר יש לקושניא זו עם ההרגש של השלושה לשונות שכללם יחד בקושניא אחת. ועוד מה ענינו של משה להליץ בעד האומות.

Question 1: At first, it is difficult to understand how this is alluded to in the verse, “When one of you brings an offering.”

⁶ Our version of the Lev. Rabbah reads “Rabbi Avin.”

⁷ Ex. 15:18.

⁸ Ex. 24:7.

⁹ Num. 8:19.

Question 2: Also, what was difficult for Moses regarding the three terms: “command,” “speak,” “say”? After all, in other commandments, sometimes the word “say” is used,¹⁰ sometimes “speak,”¹¹ and sometimes “command the children of Israel.”¹² If you say it was difficult for [Moses] to understand why all these terms were needed together in the commandment of the offerings, since for other commandments only one of [the terms] is used per commandment, then what was the need for [Moses] to begin with, “of the seventy governing nations that You have in Your world, You command me regarding only Israel”?

It appears that [Moses] wanted [G-d] to command the offerings even for the nations?

Question 3: What is the connection of this question of why the nations weren’t commanded to bring offerings to the notice that three terms, “command,” “speak,” and “say” are mentioned regarding the command to Israel to bring offerings? Why are these two different things grouped together in one question?

Question 4: Also, what is Moses’ concern about advocating for the nations?

וַיֹּאמֶר לְמַדְרֵשׁ סֵמֶךְ דְּרִשָּׁה זֶה עַל פְּסוּק "אָדָם כִּי־יִקְרִיב" מִשּׁוּם דְּמִהְכָּתוּב הִנֵּה נִפְקָא לֹא בְּפִרְק קִמָּא דְּחִילִין (דָּף ה') "אָדָם כִּי־יִקְרִיב מִכֶּם" וְלֹא כּוּלְכֶם לְהוֹצִיא אֶת הַמּוֹמֵר שְׁאִין מִקְבָּלִין נִדְבָתוֹ, וְאִיתָא עוֹד שָׁם, מִכָּאן אָמְרוּ מִקְבָּלִין קִרְבָּנוֹת מִפּוֹשְׁעֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כְּדִי שְׁיִתְּזְרוּ בִּתְשׁוּבָה, חוּץ מִן הַמּוֹמֵר וּמִנְסָף אֶת הַיֵּין וּמִחֲלָל שַׁבָּתוֹת.

Answer to Question 1, how does the Midrash base its teaching on the verse, “When one of you brings an offering”? **One could say that the Midrash based this teaching on the verse “When one of you brings an offering,” because from this verse we derive, in the first chapter of tractate Chullin (page 5a), that there are some people from whom an offering is not accepted. The verse says, “When one of you brings an offering,” and it doesn’t say “when any of you,” to exclude a heretic with regard to the entire Torah, for whom we do not accept offerings.¹³ It is also brought there in Chullin 5a that we accept offerings from Jewish transgressors so that they will return in repentance, except for the heretic with regard to the entire Torah, and one who pours wine libations to idolatry, and one who desecrates the Sabbath in public.**

וּפִירְשׁוּ שָׁם הַתּוֹסֵפוֹת שֶׁהַפּוֹשְׁעֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּקָל יִתְּזְרוּ בִּתְשׁוּבָה אֲבָל מִי שֶׁהוּא מוֹמֵר וּמִנְסָף אֶת הַיֵּין וְכוּ' הוּא דָּבָר קָשֶׁה שְׁיִתְּזוּר בִּתְשׁוּבָה וְעֵי"ש. וְאִיתָא עוֹד שָׁם, "מִכֶּם" בְּכֶם חִלְקִתִּי וְלֹא בְּאוֹמוֹת, כְּלוּמַר שְׁמִקְבָּלִין קִרְבָּן אֶפִּילוּ מִמִּינִים שְׂבָאוֹמוֹת הָאֲדוּקִים לַעֲבוֹדָה זָרָה, וְהָכִי נָמִי אָמַר רַב נַחֲמָן הֵתָם (דָּף י"ג) אֵין מִינִים בְּאוֹמוֹת לַעֲנֵן קִרְבָּן וְעֵי"ש.

The Tosafot there explain that the sinners of Israel easily return in repentance, but for one who is a heretic regarding the entire Torah or who pours wine for idol worship, etc., it

¹⁰ As indicated in note 4, Ex. 33:5 is the only example of “say to the children of Israel,” and it is unrelated to sacrifices. However, there are other verses that use the verb “אָמַר” [*emor*] [“say”] for commandments unrelated to sacrifices, such as Lev. 21:1, “Say to the priests, the sons of Aaron, and say to them: None shall defile himself for any [dead] person among his kin.”

¹¹ There are many examples unrelated to sacrifices, such as Ex. 14:2, “Speak to the Israelites that they should turn back and encamp before Pi-hahiroth . . .”

¹² Such as Lev. 24:2, “Command the Israelite people to bring you clear oil of beaten olives for lighting, for kindling lamps regularly.”

¹³ The Gemara makes a distinction between a heretic with regard to certain elements of the Torah, from whom we could accept offerings, and a heretic with regard to the entire Torah, from whom we should not accept offerings.

is difficult for them to return in repentance, and see there.¹⁴ Also brought there regarding the text “from you”: I distinguished among you and not among the nations. That is as if to say, that we accept an offering from the heretics of the nations even if they are deeply involved in idolatry.¹⁵ Likewise, Rav Nachman said there in Chullin (page 13b), that we should not be concerned that a non-Jew is such a devout idolater that deriving benefit from his offering is prohibited, for **there are no such heretics among the nations.**

ובזה יובן מאי דקשיא ליה למשה, דנדאי אלו השלושה לשונות שייכי שפיר בישראל השתא דאמרינו, בכם חלקתי, שלפי שהמתנדבים בישראל לפעמים הם צדיקים ולפעמים בינוניים ולפעמים פושעים. משום הכי כתיבי שלוש לשונות, ד"אמר" לשון חיבה, ו"דבור" לשון קשה, ו"צו" הוא כמו מלך שמצוה לעבדיו, וכשישראל אינם עושים רצונו של מקום קרויים עבדים, וכל זה הנה פשיטא ליה למשה. אלא אי קשיא, הא קשיא ליה, איך אפשר שבכל שבועים אומות אין הקב"ה מצוה בהם שום חילוק כמו בישראל, והלא יש באומות שמקולקלים הרבה במעשיהם, וכשם שמביאים נדבות כד הנה יכול נמי לצוות להם, ועוד כשם שאנו מקבלים מהם אף על פי שאין סופם לשוב בתשובה כד הנה לנו נמי לקבל מהמומרים של ישראל. והשיב לו הקב"ה מפני שהם דבוקים וכו', או מפני שהם [לי] כו וכו'. ומר אמר חדא, ומר אמר חדא ולא פליגי, כלומר שהמומרים של ישראל היו בכלל ישראל ויצאו מהכלל, ומימא לו נראה ונדחה, שוב אינו חוזר ונראה, כמו שכתב הר"ן בפרק ג' דסופה ועיי"ש, אבל המינים שפאומות לא היו לעולם בכלל, ומימא לו דדיחוי מעיקרא, לא הוי דיחוי כמסקנת הש"ס שם בפרק ג' דסופה.

Answer to Question 2, what difficulty did Moses have with the use of three verbs in the commands regarding offerings? **In this way, we'll understand Moses' difficulty. Certainly, these three terms are fine for Israel, as we say “From you I have separated,” because those who volunteer in Israel are sometimes righteous, sometimes average, and sometimes sinners. Because of this, these three terms are written. “Say” is a term of affection, “speak” is harsh language, and “command” is like a king commanding his servants. When Israel does not fulfill the will of the Holy One, they are called servants, and all this was clear to Moses.**

Answer to Question 3, why does Moses ask why the nations aren't commanded regarding offerings, and why does he tie it to the use of three verbs regarding Israel being commanded regarding offerings? **Rather, if there is a question, this is what is difficult for him: How is it possible that among all seventy nations, the Holy One, Blessed be He commands no differentiation as with Israel. After all, there are nations that are deeply corrupt in their actions, and just as they are allowed to bring freewill offerings, He could also have commanded them by distinguishing among them, so that the worst of them are forbidden to bring offerings.**

Answer to Question 4, was Moses truly advocating for the nations? **Also, just as we accept offerings from [the idolators of the nations], even though they will never truly repent, so too should we accept from the heretics of Israel who reject the entire Torah. So Moses was really advocating on behalf of the heretics of Israel.**

The Holy One, Blessed be He, answered [Moses]: “Israel is different from the nations, because they are attached to Me,” or “Because they crowned Me,” etc. One rabbi said this and another rabbi said that, but they do not argue. That is, it as if to say that the heretics of

¹⁴ Tosafot for Chullin 5a.

¹⁵ Chullin 5a.

Israel had been in the category of Israel, but left the category. We hold that anything that was first fit and afterward rejected does not return to being fit,¹⁶ as the Ran wrote on the 3rd chapter of Sukkah (33a), and see there.

But the heretics of the nations were never in the category of Israel, and we hold that disqualification from the outset is not permanent disqualification,¹⁷ as concluded by the Talmud in the 3rd chapter of Sukkah.

ומעתה נבא לפרש אלו השלושה תשובות שנותן לו הקב"ה, ומתחלה אומר, שהם דבוקים לי, כלומר שאף שפשעו במצרים שפכו את ה', לא עבדו עבודה זרה אלא מתוך אוינס ולעולם היו דבוקים לי, והראיה שלא שינו את שמם ואת לשונם והיו גדורים מן הערנה ומן לשון הרע. ואל תאמרו כי זה הוא מעט דביקות ואינו נקרא דביקות ממש, שהרי בפרק ט' דחולין מצינו שהאביר והבשר המדולדליו באדם ובבהמה אינם מטמאים ואינם חשובים בתלושים ונפרדים אף על פי שאינם דבוקים אלא כחוט השדרה. ועיי"ש דרך מיתת עושה גיפול, ואף כאן אינו נקרא מת רק כשכופר בכל התורה, כמו המחלל שבת ומומר לעבודה זרה, שאז הוא מת לגמרי. והואיל שהם דבוקים לי הם לי לבנים ואני אהיה להם לאב, וכמו האב שמצוה לבנו כך אני אומר להם "צו את-בני ישראל". ועוד שמיד שיצאו לחירות שלא היו עוד אנוסים קבלו עליהם עול מלכותי בשלימות מרצונם הטוב, וזהו, מפני שהם המליכוני על הים שאמרו "ה' ימלך לעולם ועד" וכו'. משום הכי אני להם כמלך ואומר להם "דבר אל-בני ישראל" לשון קשה, כהניא ד"שום תשים עליך מלך" שפיהא אימתו עליה.

Now we will come to explain the three answers that the Holy One, Blessed be He, gives to Moses, viz, "they are attached to Me;" "they initially crowned Me at the sea and said: 'The L-rd will reign for ever and ever;'" and "they accepted My kingdom at Sinai and said 'we will do and we will listen.'"

Explaining: "They are attached to Me." Initially, He said that "They are attached to Me," as if to say that even though when they were in Egypt they forgot G-d, they only served idolatry out of compulsion, and "They were always attached to Me." The proof of this is that they did not change their names or their language, and they were guarded from immorality and from evil speech. Do not say that this attachment is minimal and shouldn't be called a true attachment. For we find in Chullin (129b) that the limb and the flesh that are partially detached and remain hanging from a person or an animal do not become impure and are not considered as completely detached, even though they are not attached except by a hair's breadth.¹⁸ See there that only death causes complete separation, and here too, one is not called dead unless they deny the entire Torah, such as one who desecrates the Sabbath in public or becomes a heretic with idol worship, for then he is completely dead. Since they are attached to Me, they are My children, and I will be their Father, and just as a father commands his son, so I command you: "Command the children of Israel."

Explaining: "They initially crowned Me at the sea and said: 'The L-rd will reign for ever and ever.'" Also, immediately when they went out to freedom, when they were no longer compelled, they accepted the yoke of My kingship completely and willingly, and this is the meaning of "They crowned Me at the sea and said: 'The L-rd will reign for ever and ever.'" Because of this, I am like a king to them and say to them, "speak to the children of Israel,"

¹⁶ Pesachim 73b.

¹⁷ Sukkah 33b.

¹⁸ Mishnah Chullin 9:7, 9:8; Chullin 129b.

which is harsh language, as with “you shall be free to set a king over yourself,”¹⁹ that his fear should be upon you.²⁰

וגיש לדקדק בלשון המדרש, לפי שהם המליכוני על הים תחלה, דמהו "תחלה". וגיש לומר דאמרין ברכא מציעא (דף ס"ו) שהוא דמכר שדה שלא באחריות, חזייה דהנה עציב, אמר ליה: אמאי עציבת אי טרפו לה מינה, מגבינא לך שבחא, שופרא, ופירי. אמר אמימר: פטומי מילי בעלמא הוא. משום דלוקם קא בעי לאתנוני ואתני מוכר משום הקא פטומי מילי בעלמא הוא. וכתבו התוספות דדוקא הכא דכבר עמדו על סוף לקנות שלא באחריות, אבל אם מתחלה היה תנאי זה ביניהם ולבסוף גמרו את המקח סתם, אין חילוק כלל בין אם אתני לוקם או מוכר, דעל דעת תנאי הראשון גמרו את המקח, וכן פסק שלחן ערוך, חושן משפט (סימן ר"ז), ועיי"ש.

We need to check the language of the Midrash, that “They initially crowned Me at the sea,” for what is the meaning of “initially”? It can be said that it’s stated in Bava Metzia (page 66):

A certain man who sold a field to another without a guarantee [that if the field is repossessed, the seller will compensate the buyer for his loss]. [The seller] observed that [the buyer] was sad, [as he was concerned that he could lose his investment]. [The seller] said: Why are you sad? If [the creditor] seizes it from you, I will pay you [for any] improvement, [and for] the best-quality [land], and [for any] produce [taken from you].

Ameimar [later] said: “These are entirely empty words [and not legally binding],” because the buyer needs to stipulate [this and failed to do so], and here the seller stipulated. Because of this, they are entirely empty words.”

- Bava Metzia 65b–66a

The Tosafot wrote that this is specifically the case here, where they already resolved to a purchase without a guarantee. However, if initially this stipulation existed between them, and at the end they concluded the contract without the stipulation, there is no distinction whether it was the stipulation of the seller or buyer, for it was with the knowledge of the initial stipulation that they concluded the contract.²¹ This is the ruling of the Shulchan Aruch, Choshen Mishpat, siman 207, se’if 1, and see there.

ואף כאן לפי הדין היה לו להקב"ה להתנות תנאי זה לפחות בשעת מתן תורה על מנת שתקבלוני עליכם למלך, שהוא לטובתו והתנו ישראל וסלקא דעתא לומר שפטומי מילי בעלמא הוא, לכן אומר המדרש שהם המליכוני תחלה על הים, דוקא תחלה, ואף אם במעמד הר סיני גמרו את המקח סתם, על דעת התנאי הראשון נגמר המקח והם אינם יכולים לחזור.

Even here, according to the law, the Holy One, Blessed be He should have made this condition, at least at the time of giving the Torah, on the condition “that they accept Me as their king, for their own good.” Israel made this condition, and one might think to say that

¹⁹ Deut. 17:15.

²⁰ Sanhedrin 19b.

²¹ Tosafot, Bava Metzia 66a.

this is just empty words. Therefore, the Midrash is saying that “they initially crowned Me at the sea,” specifically “initially,” and even if it was only while standing at Mount Sinai they concluded the contract, it was with the knowledge of the initial condition that the contract was concluded, and therefore they are not able to retract.

ולא די שקבלו מלכותי בלבד אלא שראו בעצמם אהבה ותיבה במה שהקדימו "נעשה" ל"נשמע". ולכן אמר לו "אמר לבני ישראל" לשון חיבה, אמנם לאומות העולם שלא היה בהם שום ממדות טובות הללו לכן לא צוה להם קרפנות, אלא שאם ירצו להקריב אינו מן הראוי לדחותם מטעם הנזכר לעיל.

Explaining: “They accepted My kingdom at Sinai and said ‘we will do and we will listen.’ ”
It is not enough “that they accepted My kingship” alone, but they also demonstrated an extra measure of love by preceding “we will do” before “we will listen.” Therefore, He said to him, “Say to the children of Israel” in a language of affection. However, for the nations of the world, who did not possess any of these virtues, He did not command them to bring offerings. Nevertheless, if they choose to bring offerings, it would not be appropriate to reject them for the reasons mentioned above.

ועדיין יש לדקדק במדרש זה, מה ראו ישראל שהמליכוהו בים דוקא, דאי משום הגם שנעשה להם, היה די להם ליתן לו שבח ותודה דהיינו השירה שאמרו. ויש לומר דאמרינו במסכת אבות הוי מתפלל בשלומה של מלכות שאלמלא מורא, איש את רעהו חיים בלעו. ומוכח מזה שכשנש מלכות אין גזל אין לסטים בעולם אין מי שיעשה שלא כדיו. ובמדרש ילקוט על פסוק "מקדש ה' כוננו ידיך", משל ללסטים שנקנסו לפלטין של מלך והחריבוהו ובזזו והרגו בני המלך, לאחר זמן ישב עליהם המלך בדין תפס מהם הרג מהם צלב מהם, ישב בפלטין שלו ואחר כך נתוודע מלכותו בעולם עכ"ל. והכי נמי מיום שנברא העולם ועד עכשיו שיצאו ממצרים לא עשה הקב"ה בפרהסיא משפט לעשוקים להצילם מיד עושקיהם, ומעתה שהקב"ה ברוב רחמי הצילנו מידם ועשה בהם נספים, ונפל פחד ואימתה על כל העמים, ראוי הוא למלכה, שהרי יש מוראו הגדול שמתוך כך לא יבלעו עוד איש את רעהו, ומשום הכי אמרו "ה' ימלך לעלם ועד", שבמלכותו דוקא יתקיים העולם, ולפיכך בזכות זה נתן להם התורה שהיא היסוד העיקרי בקיום העולם.

Still, we need to check this Midrash: What did the Israelites see that made them crown Him specifically at the sea? If it was because of the miracle that occurred for them, it would have been sufficient for them to give Him praise and thanks, that is, the song they recited, Ex. 15:1–18. It can be said that it’s stated in tractate Pirkei Avot 3:2: “Pray for the welfare of the kingdom, for were it not for the fear it inspires, every man would swallow his neighbor alive.” It’s proven from this that when there is kingship, there’s no robbery, no robber in the world, there’s no one who will act against the law. In the Midrash Yalkut Shimoni on the verse, “The sanctuary, L-rd, which Your hands established,”²² there is a parable of thieves who entered a king’s palace, destroyed it, looted it, and killed the king’s sons. Later, the king came back, captured them, killed some, and crucified others. He sat in his palace, and afterward, his kingship became known in the world.²³

²² Ex. 15:17.

²³ Yalkut Shimoni, Beshalach, remez 253:3.

Similarly, from the time the world was created until now, when the Israelites left Egypt, the Holy One, Blessed be He, did not secure justice for those who were wronged,²⁴ to save them from the hand of their oppressors. Now that the Holy One, Blessed be He, in His great mercy, saved us from them and executed judgment upon them,²⁵ terror and dread have fallen²⁶ upon all the peoples. He is worthy of kingship, for His great awe prevents people from swallowing his fellow. Therefore, they said, “The L-rd will reign forever and ever,” for it’s particularly by His kingship that the world exists. For this reason, He gave them the Torah, which is the fundamental basis for the existence of the world.

ולפי דרך זה נבין המדרש על פסוק "אשמעה מה' ידבר האל ה' ", אמרו אומות העולם לבלעם מפני מה אמר הקב"ה לישראל שיביאו קרבנות ולנו לא אמר, אמר להם הקרבנות אינם אלא שלום ומי שקבל התורה צריך שיקריב קרבנות ואותם פסלתם אותה מתחלה ועכשיו אתם רוצים להקריב וכו', וזהו "ה' עז לעמו יתן ה' יברך את עמו בשלום" עכ"ל. וגם על תשובה זו קשה, שהרי לעולם יש פתחון פה לאומות שלא כפה עליהם ההר כגיגית כמו שעשה לישראל, ואף על פי שהדור קבלוה בימי אשכנזי שו"ש סוף סוף, כשצוה הקרבנות לישראל עדיין לא קבלו אותה אלא מתוך אוה"ו לו לעשות כן אף לאומות, אלא כד היתה פונת בלעם, בשלמא ישראל שמתחלה היו דבוקים לו והיו לו כבנים, האב יכול לכוף את הבן לעבדו אף בעל כרחו.

According to this approach, we will understand the Midrash on the verse, “Let me hear what G-d, the L-rd, will speak,”²⁷

The nations of the world said to Balaam: “Why did God tell Israel they should bring offerings, but did not say this to us?” He said to them, “The offerings are only for peace, and anyone who accepts the Torah must bring offerings. You rejected it from the beginning, and now you want to bring offerings?” This is the meaning of, ‘May the L-rd grant strength to His people; may the L-rd bestow on His people wellbeing.’”²⁸

- Yalkut Shimoni on Torah 493:1

Regarding this answer, there is also a difficulty, for the nations always have a claim, that the mountain, Mount Sinai, was not overturned over them like a tub, as [G-d] did to Israel, when He said, “If you accept the Torah, excellent, and if not, there will be your burial.”²⁹ Even though the generation finally accepted [the Torah] without compulsion in the days of Ahasuerus, when [G-d] had initially commanded the sacrifices to Israel, they had only accepted [the Torah] out of compulsion. He could have done the same for the nations. I.e., G-d could have also imposed the Torah upon the nations, and then the nations wouldn’t have been able to reject it.

²⁴ Cf. Ps. 146:7.

²⁵ Pesach Haggadah, Magid, Dayenu 2.

²⁶ Cf. Ex. 15:16.

²⁷ Ps. 85:9.

²⁸ Ps. 29:11.

²⁹ Shabbat 88a.

Rather, this was the intent of Balaam: Granted that Israel was initially devoted to [G-d] and they were like sons to Him, and the father is able to force his son to serve him, even against [the son's] will.

וְזֶהוּ שֶׁאָמַר "צוּ אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל" וְעוֹד שֶׁקִּבְּלוּהוּ עָלֵיהֶם לְמַלְכָּה וְכו', אֲבָל אַתֶּם הוֹאִיל שֶׁלֹּא הָיָה לוֹ מְקוֹם לְכוֹף אֶתְכֶם, הָיָה לָכֶם לְקַבֵּלָהּ מֵאַהֲבָה, וְהוֹאִיל שֶׁלֹּא קִבְּלֶתֶם אוֹתָהּ לְכֹן אִין לָכֶם חֵלֶק בְּקִרְבָּנוֹת. וְזֶהוּ נִמְי דְּאַמְרִינוּ בְּמִדְרַשׁ פֶּרֶשֶׁת אֶמֶר, אָמַר ר' יְהוּדָה בַּר סִימּוֹן עֲשֵׂרָה מִיָּנִי בְּהִמּוֹת מִסְרַתִּי לָהּ וְכו' לֹא הִטְרַחֲתִי לָכֶם לְהַתְיַגֵּעַ בְּהָרִים וּלְהַבִּיא מֵאוֹתָן שְׁאִינָם בְּרִשׁוּתָהּ אֲלֵא מֵאוֹתָם שֶׁהֵם בְּרִשׁוּתָהּ וְכו'. דִּהוֹאִיל שֶׁיִּשְׂרָאֵל נִקְרָאוּ בָּנִים וְאַמְרִינוּ בִּיּוֹרָה דְּעָה אֶסּוּר לֵאב לְהַכְבִּיד עוֹלוֹ עַל בָּנָיו וּלְדַקְדֵּק עָלֵיהֶם יוֹתֵר מִדָּאִי שְׂמָא וְבִיָּאֵם לִידֵי מְכָשׁוּל, וְאַף כָּאֵן הַקַּב"ה נִקְרָא אֵב וְאִין לוֹ לְהַכְבִּיד עוֹלוֹ עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל אִף עַל פִּי שְׂמִתְחֵלָה כִּפָּה אוֹתָם לְקַבֵּל הַתּוֹרָה כְּמַלְכָּה.

This is the meaning of what is said, “Command the children of Israel,” and also that they accepted Him upon themselves as a king etc. But you, since there was no reason for [G-d] to compel you, it was for you to accept [the Torah] out of love, and since you didn’t accept [the Torah], therefore you have no share of the sacrifices.

This is also the meaning of what is said in the Midrash Rabbah, parashat Emor:

Rabbi Yehuda bar Rabbi Simon said: The Holy One, Blessed be He, said: **“I have given you ten types of animals, three in your domain and seven that are not in your domain. Three that are in your domain: ‘An ox, a sheep, and a goat.’³⁰ Seven that are not in your domain: ‘A deer, a gazelle, a fallow deer, a wild goat, an oryx, an aurochs, and a wild sheep.’³¹ I did not impose upon you to exhaust yourselves on the mountains in order to bring an offering from those that are not in your domain but rather, from what is in your domain and is raised from your trough.”** That is [the meaning of] what is written: “A bull, or a sheep, or a goat.”³²

- Lev. Rabbah 27:6

Since Israel is called sons, and it is said in Yoreh De'ah (Shulchan Aruch, Siman 240, Se'if 19), it is forbidden for a father to be overly strict with his children or to be too demanding, lest he cause them to stumble. Here, too, the Holy One, Blessed be He, is called Father, and He should not burden Israel excessively, even though He initially compelled them to accept the Torah, as a king would do.

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³⁰ Deut. 14:4.

³¹ Deut. 14:5.

³² Lev. 22:27.