Zera Shimshon

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Chapter XXXI: Emor (Lev. 21:1–24:23)

Essay 6. The judgment of all creatures on Rosh Hashana

גַּמַבָּא דָראשׁ הַשַּׁנַה בָּראשׁ הַשַּׁנַה עוֹבָרִים לְפַנַיו כָּבָנִי מַרוֹן, מַאי כָּבָנֵי מַרוֹן הַכַא חַרְגִּימוּ כִּבָנִי אָמַרַנַא, ר' שָׁמְעוֹן בֶּן לַקִּישׁ אַמֶר כָּמַעֵלוֹת בֶּית חוֹרוֹן, אַמֶר רַב יִהוּדָה אָמֶר שָׁמוּאֵל כָּחַיֵּילוֹת שֶׁל בֶּית דָּוָד ע"כ. צַרִידְ עִיּוּן בָּמַאי פָּלִיגִי, וָאָם כּוּלַם מוֹדִים דַעוֹבָרִים לְפַנַיו אָחָד אָחָד מָה לִי הַמַּשֶׁל דָּמַעֲלוֹת בֵּית חוֹרוֹן וּמָה לִי הַמַּשֶׁל דְּבָנִי אָמֶרְנַא וְכוּ'?

The Gemara of Rosh Hashana (page 18a) states: "[The Mishna teaches that] on Rosh Hashana, all creatures pass before Him like bnei maron. [The Gemara asks:] What is bnei maron? Here [in Babylonia] they interpreted it [to mean]: Like a flock of sheep [kivnei imarna]. Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish said: Like the ascent of Beit-Choron.² Rav Yehuda said that Shmuel said: Like the soldiers of the house of [King] David." This requires investigation: About what do they disagree? If they all acknowledge that all creatures pass before Him single file, what use is the parable of Beit-Choron to me, and what use is the parable of a flock of sheep to me? Thus, it seems likely that these interpretations mean different things.

ָוְיֵשׁ לוֹמַר דָּפְלוּגְתַּיִיהוּ תַּלְיֵיא בִּפְלוּגְתָּא, דְּרַבִּי מֵאִיר סָבַר הַכֹּל נִידּוֹנִים בִּראשׁ הַשַּׁנָה וּגְזַר דִּין שֶׁלְהֶם נֶחְתָּם בִּיוֹם הַכִּיפּוּרִים, ַרַבִּי יִהוּדָה אוֹמֵר הַכֹּל נִידּוֹנִים בָּראשׁ הַשָּׁנָה וּגִזַר דִּין שֶׁלֶּהֶם נָחְתַּם כֹּל אֶחָד וְאֶחָד בִּזְמַנּוֹ, רַבִּי יוֹסִי אוֹמֵר אָדָם נִידּוֹן בְּכַל יוֹם שנאמר וכוּ' עכ"ל.

It can be said that the disagreement depends on the dispute found in the Gemara of Rosh Hashana on page 16a. Rabbi Meir is of the opinion that everything is judged on Rosh Hashana and their sentence is sealed on Yom Kippur. Rabbi Yehuda says: All are judged on Rosh Hashana, and their sentence is sealed each in its own time. Rabbi Yossi says: A person is judged every day, as it says, "You visit him every morning" (Job 7:18).

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¹ Mishna Rosh Hashana 1:2; Rosh Hashana 16a.

² The ascent of Beit-Choron is mentioned in the Bible, e.g. Joshua 10:10. The current Vilna edition and most previous editions and manuscripts of the Gemara read "Beit Maron," but the Munich codex hebr. 140 reads "Beit Choron."

וּמַאי דְּמַרְגִימוּ כָּבָנִי אִמְרָנָא? אֶכְשָׁר דְּסְבִירָא לֵיהּ כְּר' מֵאִיר דְּהַכֹּל נִידּוֹנִים בְּרֹאֹשׁ הַשָּׁנָה וּגְזַר דִּין נֶחְתָּם בְּיוֹם הַכִּיפּוּרִים, דּוֹמָיֵא דָּהַמַעֲשֵׂר דָּהָיוּ מוֹנִים א' ב' ג' וָאָחַר כַּדְ הַעֲשְׂירִי הַיָּה מַעֲשֵׂר אַף כַּאן בִּיוֹם כִּיפּוּר שֵׁהוּא הַעֲשִׂירִי אַז נֵחָתַּם.

What is this interpretation "like a flock of sheep"? Perhaps this is explained as Rabbi Meir, that everyone is judged on Rosh Hashana and their sentence is sealed on Yom Kippur, similar to the tithe of sheep by which they count one, two, three, and after the tenth is a tithe. So too, thus on Yom Kippur, which is the tenth [day of the Ten Days of Repentance, the person's sentence] is sealed.

וְר' שָׁמְעוֹן בֵּן לָקִישׁ דְּאָמַר כְּמַצְלוֹת בֵּית חוֹרוֹן שֶׁפֵּירֵשׁ רַשִּׁ"י שֶׁהַדֶּרֶךְ קַצַר וְאֵין שְׁתַּיִם יְכוֹלִים לֵילֵךְ זֶה בְּצַד זֶה עכ"ל. אֶפְשָׁר דְּסְבִירָא לֵיה כְּרַבִּי יְהוּדָה דִּגְזַר דִּין נֶחְתָּם כֹּל אֶחָד וְאָחָד בִּזְמַנּוֹ, דּוּמְיָא דְּהַדֶּרֶךְ שֶׁהַיּוֹם צָרִיךְ לוֹ לְאָדָם אֶחָד לַעֲבוֹר שָׁם וּמְחָר אָדָם אַחַר וְאֵינָם עוֹבָרִים כָּל הַעוֹלָם שָׁם בִּיוֹם אֶחָד.

Rashi explained that the path is narrow and two [people] are not able to walk side by side. Perhaps this is explained as Rabbi Yehuda, that the sentence is sealed each in its own time, similar to the path that today one man needs to cross there, and tomorrow a different man will cross the path, and the entire world doesn't cross the path there on one day.

וּשְׁמוּאֵל דְּאָמֵר כְּחַיָּילוֹת שֶׁל בֵּית דָּוָד אֶפְשָׁר דָּסְבִירָא לֵיהּ כְּרַבִּי יוֹסִי דְּאָדֶם נִידּוֹן בְּכָל יוֹם, דּוּמְיָא דְּחַיָּילוֹת שֶׁבְּכָל יוֹם עוֹבְרִים לְמִשְׁמַרְהַּם כָּל אֶחָד לִמְקוֹמוֹ וְאָם נִפְקד מֵהֶם אִישׁ יוֹדֵעַ הַחָּסְרוֹן שֶׁ"לֹא־יוּכַל לְהִמְּנוֹת".

For Shmuel, who says like the soldiers of the house of [King] David, perhaps this is explained as Rabbi Yossi, that a man is judged every day, similar to soldiers who every day cross to their watches, each to his place, and if one man of those is missing, [G-d] knows the missing that "cannot be made good" (Eccl. 1:15).

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