## Zera Shimshon

by Rabbi Shimshon Chaim Nachmani zt"l Published Mantua 1778\*

## Chapter XXXIV: Bamidbar (Num. 1:1-4:20)

Essay 4. The love of Israel and the love of Torah

לְּדְרָשׁׁ רַבָּה עַל פָּסוּק הַנַּ"ל, דָבָר אַחָר "וְהָיָה מִסְפַּר" הְדָא הוּא דְכְתִיב "מֵיִם רַבִּים לֹא יוּכְלוּ לְכַבּוֹת אֶת־הָאַהָבָה" וְכוּ', וְהָיָה מִסְפַּר" הְדָא הוּא דְכְתִיב "מֵיִם רַבִּים לֹא יוּכְלוּ לְכַבּוֹת אֶת־בָּל־הוֹן בֵּיתוֹ בָּאַהָבָה", אָמַר ר' שְׁמוּאֵל בַּר נַחְמֶן בִּשְׁתֵּי אָהָבוֹת הַכְּתוֹב מְדַבֵּר. רֹאשׁוֹ מְדַבֵּר בְּאַהָבָתוֹ שְׁנִי יִשְׂרָאֵל שִׁינִם יְכִּנְּסוּ כָּל הָאוּמוֹת לִיטוֹל הָאַהָבָה שֶׁבֵּינוֹ לְבֵין יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵינָם יְכוֹלִים, שֶׁנָּאֱמֵר "מֵיִם רַבִּים לֹא יוּכְלוּ לְכַבּוֹת אֶת־הָאַהְבָה" וְאֵין מֵיִם רַבִּים אֶלָּא אוּמוֹת הָעוֹלָם וְכוּי. וְסוֹפוֹ מְדַבֵּר בְּאַהְבָתָה שֶׁל תּוֹרָה שָׁאִם מִתְכַּנְּסִים כָּל הָאוֹמוֹת וְאוֹמְרִים אָנוֹ מֹלְרִים כָּלְ מְמוֹנֵנוּ וְעוֹשִׁים אֶת הַתּוֹרָה וְאָת הַמְּצְוֹת אֹמֵר לָהֶם הקב"ה אָפִילוּ אַהָּם מוֹכְרִים מָמוֹנְכָם לְקְנוֹת הַתּוֹרָה בָּיוֹן לְנִיל סוֹף בָּלְה עֹל הַדְּעַת נַיִּקְבָּה שָׁבִּין הִקב"ה שָׁבִּין הקב"ה שָׁבִּין לְעִיל סוֹף בָּרְשַׁת נַיַּקְהַל.

There is a **Midrash Rabbah on the verse** discussed in the **above** Essay, Num. 1:1–2.

Another explanation: "The number of the people of Israel shall be like that of the sands of the sea, which cannot be measured or counted; and instead of being told, 'You are Not-My-People,' they shall be called 'Children of the Living G-d.' "1 This is as it is written: "Vast floods cannot quench love, nor rivers drown it." And it says, "if a man offered all his wealth for love, they would utterly scorn him."

Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachman said: The verse speaks of two kinds of love. its beginning is referring to the love of Israel. Were all the nations of the world to assemble, to uproot the love that is between [G-d] and Israel, they would be unable, as it is stated: "Many waters cannot extinguish the love." "Many waters" is nothing other than the nations of the world . . . .

The end speaks of the love for Torah. Were all the nations to come and say, "We will sell all our possessions to fulfill the Torah and the commandments," the Holy One, Blessed be He, would say to them: "Even if you sell all your possessions to acquire the Torah, it is disgraceful to you, as it is written, "If a man offered all his wealth for love, they would utterly scorn him."

- Num. Rabbah 2:17

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Hosea 2:1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Song of Songs 8:7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Ibid.

This is astonishing: how could one even imagine that the nations could nullify the love between the Holy One, Blessed be He, and Israel? See above at the end of Chapter XXII, parashat Vayakhel, essay 9, where we also discuss this question.

ְּוַשׁ לוֹמֵר דְּבְפֶּרֶק ג' דְּיוֹם טוֹב אָמָר ר' שִׁמְעוֹן בֵּן לָקִישׁ שְׁלוֹשָׁה עוּיִם הַם: יִשְׂרָאֵל בָּאוּמוֹת, כֶּלֶב בַּחִּיוֹת, וְכוּ', וּפֵרֵשׁ רַשִּׁ"י בְּבָּרֶיב לְנַצֵּח שֶׁלֹא יָשׁוּבוּ מִפְּנֵי כָּל כְּמוֹ כֶּלֶב בַּחִיוֹת עכ"ל. וְהקב"ה אֵינוֹ מִשְׁרָה שְׁכִינְתוֹ אֶלָּא עַל הָעוּים, נְּקֹב יְּמִים לָבָבְּה וֹשְׁרָבּיְא וּשְׁכַּלְּרוּח", וְלֹא עַל הָעוּים, וְאם יִתְכּנְּסוּ כָּל הָאוּמוֹת לְהַקְשׁוֹת לְהַקְשׁוֹת לְהִקב"ה לָמָה אוֹהָב אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל אָם הָם עוּים וְלֹא עִנּוּיִם, לֹא יוֹעִילוּ כְּלוּם, דְּכְתִיב "מִיִם רַבִּים לֹא יוּכְלוּ לְכַבּוֹת אֶת־הָאַהְבָּה". וְהַטַּעֵם הוּא לְפִי שֶׁאַדְרַבָּא הָעוּוֹת שֶׁלָהָם עוּים וְלֹא עַנִּיּיִם לַמָּה נִיתְּנָה תּוֹרָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל, מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהַם עוּים. וּפִירֵשׁ מִהְרְשִׁ"א מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהָם עוּים וְנִילְא מָבְּנִי שֶׁהָם עוּיִם. וּפִּרְשׁ מָהְרְשִׁי א מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהָם עוּים וְיִלְאָה הַתִּלְבָּה הְּתִּבְּיה שְׁהָרִי וְלֹא הַבִּיְשָׁן לְמָה עִנְים לְּנִשְׁל. וְכְשְׁבִי הְנִינִם הַּלְּכָה וְקִיִימָא חִנְיב בְּבִּלְפוּל וְהַהְלָּכָה וְקִייִמְא לִידִי עְנָוֹה בְּבִּלְפוּלְא וְעוֹד אוֹהָב ה' שַׁעְרִי צִיּוּן הַמְצוּיָינִים בַּהַלְּכָה. וּכְשָׁיֵשׁ חָכְמָה יֵשׁ חָרְיקֹא וֹי לִביי עָנָנָה בְּדְכְתִיב "נְאָה לִידִי עֲנָנָה בְּדְכְתִיב "נְאָה בְּנְנָה יִרְאָת הּי "וְלְאת הּ "רְאָת הּ לִידִי עֲנָנָה בְּדְכְתִיב "עָבֶּר דְיִבְּעְבוּר תִּהְיָה יִרְאָתוֹ עַל־פְּנִיכִם" זָה בּבּוּשָׁה כִּדְאָת ה' וְיִבּי בְּנָנָה בְּדְבְתִיב "נְבָּר דִי דְּנָבָר בוּ וִייִישׁ.

One can say that in chapter 3 of tractate Yom Tov, i.e., Beitzah 25b, we read: "Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish said: There are three who are brazen: The Jewish people among the nations; [the] dog among animals; [and the] rooster among birds."

Rashi and the Maharsha explain: they are difficult to subdue and do not retreat before anyone, like a dog among animals. The Holy One, Blessed be He, only spreads out His Shechinah upon the humble, "with the contrite and lowly of spirit," and not upon the brazen. Thus, because G-d prefers the humble, while Israel is apparently brazen, the nations might think that they can nullify the love between G-d and Israel.

However, even if all the nations were to gather and challenge the Holy One, Blessed be He, "Why do You love Israel, who are brazen and not humble," it would not avail them at all, as it is written, "Many waters cannot extinguish the love."

The reason is that to the contrary, their very brazenness made them worthy to receive the Torah, as it is said there in Beitzah 25b, "Why was the Torah given to Israel? Because they are brazen!" The Maharsha explains: Because they are brazen, and they will learn the Torah as it is intended, for "a timid person cannot learn."

When there are questions and solutions, this is the study of dialectics and halachah, and we hold that "the Holy One, Bless be He, rejoices in dialectics." Also, G-d loves the gates of Zion, which are distinguished in the study of halacha. Also, when there is wisdom, there is fear of Heaven, which brings humility, for the fear of Heaven brings humility, as it is written, "The effect of humility is fear of the L-rd." Also, it is written, "in order that the fear of [G-d] may be ever with you" —this is shame, as it is said in chapter 4 of tractate Nedarim (20a), and see there.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Isaiah 57:15.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Pirkei Avot 2:5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Judah ben Samuel Rosanes (1657-1727), Parshat Derachim 23:29 (Constantinople, 1727).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Berachot 8a.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Prov. 22:4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Ex. 20:17.

ְּסִוֹפוֹ מְדַבֵּר בְּאַהְכָתָה שֶׁל תּוֹרָה שֶׁאָם מִתְכַּנְּסִים וְכוּ' אָנוּ מוֹכְרִים וְכוּ' וְעוֹשִׁים אֶת הַתּוֹרָה וְאֶת הַמְּצְוֹת מֵשִׁיב לָהֶם הקב"ה אָפִילוּ אַתָּם מוֹכְרִים כָּל מְמוֹנְכֶם לְקְנוֹת הַתּוֹרָה וְכוּ'. וְלְכָאוֹרָה קֲשֶׁה דְּמֵה תְּשׁוּבָה הִיא זוֹ, וּמַאי אֲפִילוּ שֻׁיָּיךְ כָּאן הַלֹּא גַּם הֵם אָפִילוּ אַתָּם אָמְרוּ לֹמְכּוֹר כָּל מָמוֹנָם וְכוּ'. אָמְנָם כְּשֶׁנְּדְקְדֵּק שֶׁהֶם אָמְרוּ מוֹכְרִים אָנוּ וְעוֹשִׁים הַתּוֹרָה וְהקב"ה מֵשִׁיב לָהֶם אָפִילוּ אַתָּם מֹּוֹכְרִים לְקְנוֹת הַתּוֹרָה, יוּבֵן הָענְיָן שַׁפִּיר, דְּאִיתָא בְּפֶּרֶק קְמָּא דְּחֲגִיגָה מֵאי דְּכְתִיב "הַנָּה צְרַפְתִּיךְ וְלֹא בְכָסֶף בְּחַרְתִיךְ בְּכוֹר עֹנְיִי, מְלְמֵּד שֶׁחָזַר הקב"ה עַל כֹּל מִדּוֹת טוֹבוֹת וְלֹא מָצָא מִדָּה טוֹבָה לְיִשְׂרָאֵל צְּנְיּוֹת מִדְּה טוֹבָה שְׁמַחַזִירָן לְמוּטָב, וּבְהֵפֶּךְ הָעֲשִׁירוֹת לְּנִיּוֹת מִדְּה טוֹבָה שְׁמַחַזִירָן לְמוּטָב, וּבְהֵפֶּךְ הָעְשִׁירוֹת דְּכָּחָף הָרְבֵּיתִי לָה וְזָהַב" וְכִוּי עכ"ל.

Reviewing the end of our Midrash: "The end speaks of the love for Torah. Were all the nations to come and say, 'We will sell all our possessions to fulfill the Torah and the commandments,' the Holy One, Blessed be He, responded to them: 'Even if you sell all your possessions to acquire the Torah, it is disgraceful to you.' "

Apparently, this is difficult to understand, for what kind of answer is this? Why does it say "even if," as though G-d were suggesting that, for hadn't [the nations themselves] said that, when they said that they would sell all their wealth?

However, when we check that they said, "We will sell all our possessions and fulfill the Torah," and the Holy One, Blessed be He, responded to them, "Even if you sell all your possessions to acquire the Torah," the matter is understood well, for it is brought in the first chapter of tractate Chagigah:

What is the meaning of that which is written, "See, I refine you, but not as silver; I test you in the furnace of affliction." This teaches that the Holy One, Blessed be He, sought after all good character traits, and He found only poverty to give to Israel..., which is as people say: Poverty is good for the Jewish people like a red bridle [is attractive] for a white horse.

- Chagigah 9b

The Maharsha explained that poverty is called a good quality because it brings a person back to proper conduct, and conversely, wealth leads one astray, as it is written, "I increased their silver and gold, which they used for Ba'al." 11

ּוְאָם כֵּן הָאוּמוֹת אוֹמְרִים הוֹאִיל שֶׁהָעוֹשֶׁר מְעַכֵּב לְקַבֵּל הַתּוֹרָה הָרֵי אָנוּ מוֹרְרִם כָּל מְמוֹנֵנוּ וּבְזֶה יוֹעִיל לָנוּ לַעֲשׁוֹת תּוֹרָה וֹמְצִיֹּה לְנוּ לַעֲשׁוֹת תּוֹרָה וֹמָצִּיֹת לְנוּ לַנִּשׁיב לָהָם הקב"ה לֹא דֵּי שֶׁצִין אַהֶם יְכוֹלִים לְזְכּוֹת בַּתּוֹרָה מֵאַחֵר שֶׁפְּסִלְּהָם אוֹתָה מְתְּחָלָּה וּכְּבָּר זָכוּ בָּה יִשְׂרָאַל לְיָהָן שְׁעָסִק בַּתּוֹרָה וּכְּלָנוּ מִשֶׁה מוֹרָשָׁה קְהָלֵּת יַעֲלְבִ", מוֹרְשָׁה הִיא לְנוּ וָלֹא לָהֶם, וְגוֹי שֶׁעָסָק בַּתּוֹרָה וֹנְיָם מִיְרָה צְּלָּה לִיְתָּוֹת אֶת הַתּוֹרָה כְּלוֹמֵר שְׁתִּהִיוּ רוֹצִים לְזְכּוֹת בְּתוֹרָתִם שֶׁל יִשְׂרָאֵל לִיתֵּן לָהֶם הַיִּיב מִיתָה. אֶלָּא אֲפִילוּ אָהָם מוֹכְרִים כְּדֵי לְקְנוֹת אֶת הַתּוֹרָה כְּלוֹמֵר שְׁתִּהְיוֹ בְּכֶּרֶק ג' דְּסוֹטָה הָלֵל וְשֶׁרָגֵא אַחֵי הָווֹ. הָעִל עֲסָק בַּתּוֹרָה, שֶׁבְנָא עֲבָד עִסְקָא. לְסוֹף, אֲמֵר לֵיה: תָּא נַעֲרוֹב וְלְפְלוֹג! יָצְתָה בַּת קוֹל וְאָמְרָה: "אִם־יִתֵּן אִישׁ אֶת־כְּל־הוֹן בִּיתוֹ בָּאַהָבָה בּוֹז יָבוֹזוּ וֹוֹי לִוֹי לִוֹי לְמִי שֶׁהָה לוֹ לֵעְשׁוֹת כֵּן מְתְּחַלְּה.

If so, the nations are saying: "Since wealth is an obstacle to receiving the Torah, we will sell all our possessions, and in this way, it will enable us to fulfill the Torah and commandments, as this will be the "furnace of affliction" for us.

<sup>11</sup> Hosea 2:10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Isaiah 48:10.

The Holy One, Blessed be He, responded to them: "It's not enough, for you are not able to merit the Torah after you initially rejected it, and Israel has already merited it." This is as it is written, "Moses charged us with the Teaching as the heritage of the congregation of Jacob" it is our heritage and not theirs, and a gentile who engages in the Torah is liable to death. Rather, "even if you sell your possessions in order to acquire the Torah"—as if to say, that you want to merit the Torah of Israel by giving them your wealth, in the way that it says, "She is a tree of life to those who grasp her, and whoever holds on to her is enriched" it is disgraceful to you.

As it is said in chapter 3 of tractate Sotah:

Hillel and Shevna were brothers; Hillel engaged in Torah; Shevna entered into a business. In the end, [Shevna] said to [Hillel]: Come, let us join [our wealth] together and divide it. [I.e., Hillel would gain half of Shevna's material wealth, and Shevna would gain half of Hillel's spiritual wealth.] A Divine Voice issued forth and said: "If a man offered all his wealth for love, they would utterly scorn him."

- Sotah 21a

ַנְצְדִיין יֵשׁ לְדַקְדֵּק בְּהָאי קֶרָא גּוּפְיָא מַהוּ הַכֶּפֶל שֶׁל "בּוֹז יָבוּזוּ לוֹ", וּמַהַרְשָׁ"א תֵּירֵץ חָד בָּעוֹלָם הַזָּה וְחָד בָּעוֹלָם הַבָּא עכ"ל.

וְעוֹד יֵשׁ לוֹמֵר דְדַוְקֵא בְּשִׁמְעוֹן אָחִי עֲזַרְיָה הוֹעִיל לַעֲזַרְיָה תּוֹרָתוֹ שֶׁל שָׁמְעוֹן לְפִי שֶׁאָם לֹא הָיָה מַסְפִּיק לוֹ כָּל צָּרְכוֹ שֶׁמָּא לֹא

הָיָה שִׁמְעוֹן לוֹמֵד, אָבָל בְּשֶׁבְּנָא וְהַלֵּל אֶפְשָׁר שֶׁאָפִילוּ מִתְּחַלֶּה לֹא הָיָה מוֹעִיל כְּלוֹם, לְפִי שֶׁבּנְוּנַת הַלֵּל הָיְתָה לֹלְמוֹד עַל כֹּל

בְּנִים כְּמוֹ שֶׁבָּאֱמֶת עַשָּׁה, וּבְהַסְפָּקַת הַמְזוֹנוֹת לֹא הָיָה לוֹמֵד יוֹתֵר מִמָּה שֶׁהָיָה עוֹשֶׂה בְּלֹא הַסְפָּקָה, וּמְשׁוּם הָכִי אָמֵר "בּוֹז יָבוּזוּ לֹוֹ" בִּמְכֹל שֶׁבָן שֶׁהְמְתִּין עַד שֶׁהַלֶּל נְתְחַכֵּם. וְעַיֵּין עוֹד לְקְמָּן בְּשִׁיר הַשִּירִים עַל פָּסוּק "אָח לֹא־פָּדֹה יִפְדָּה אִישׁ" וְכוּי.

We still need to check the verse itself, "they would utterly scorn him." What is the intent of the duplication בּוֹז יָבּוּז [boz yavuzu]? When verbs are duplicated, the traditional interpretation is that it is for emphasis, and thus we have translated, "utterly scorn." The Maharsha, in Sotah 21a, explained: "One [verb] refers to [scorn] in this world, and one [verb] to [scorn] in the World-to-Come."

Also, it can be said that certainly with Shimon, brother of Azarya, also discussed in Sotah 21a, the Torah learning of Shimon helped Azaria, since if he had not supported all his needs, it's possible that Shimon would not have been able to learn. But with Sheva and Hillel, it's possible that even from the outset, it would not have availed [Sheva] to support Hillel, as Hillel's intention was to study Torah regardless, as indeed he did. Even with financial support, he would not have studied more than he already did without it. For this reason, it said, "they would utterly scorn him," since in any case [Shevna] waited until Hillel had already become wise.

See also later, in Chapter LV: Shir haShirim, Essay 17, on the verse, "A brother cannot redeem a man, or pay his ransom to G-d." 15

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Deut. 33:4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Sanhedrin 59a.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Prov. 3:18.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Ps. 49:8.

וּמה שֶׁאָמְרוּ זַ"ל כָּל הַמֶּבִיא דּוֹרוֹן לַתַּלְמִיד חָכָם כְּאִילּוּ הָקְרִיב בָּכּוּרִים וְכָל הַמְּהָבֶּה חָכָם מְנְּכָסִיוֹ וְכוּ'. זָהוּ בְּמִי שֻׁעוֹשֶׁה זָה בְּלִי שׁוּם מְּנָאי, אֲבָל מִי שֻׁעוֹשֶׂה תְּנַאי לְזְכּוֹת בְּתוֹרְתוֹ, בְּזִיּוּן וּגְנַאי הוּא לוֹ, שֻׁמוֹכִיחַ הַדְּבָר שֻׁאֵינוֹ עוֹשֶׁה לְשֵׁם שֶׁמִּים אֶלְּה בְּיוּ לְתְקוֹת פְּרָס וּ"בּוֹז לִוֹ". וְכֵן הוּא הָעִנְיָן בְּאוּמוֹת הָעוֹלָם עם יִשְׂרָאֵל וּבְתְשׁוּבַת הקב"ה לָהָם, לְפִי שֶׁבְּעוֹשֶׁר שֶׁלָהֶם הִיּוּ רוֹצִים לְקנוֹת מְעֵט מֵחֵלֶק שְׂכֵר הַתּוֹרָה שֶׁל יִשְׁרָאֵל, הוֹאִיל שֶׁכְּבָר אֵינָם יְכוֹלִים לְזְכּוֹת בְּתוֹרָה עָצְמָה לְפִי שֶׁפְּסְלוּהָ מִתְּחָלָה. אָבְל אִין הָכִי עָּאֵף הָאוּמוֹת אָם הִיוּ מִחְזִיקִים בְּיָד יִשְׂרָאֵל כְּדֵי שֻׁיַעְסְקוּ בַּתּוֹרָה הָיָה לָהֶם שָׁכָר, בְּדְאָמְרִינַן בְּפֶּרֶק קְמָּא בְּיִב יִשְׁרָצוֹּ וְכִי שָׁצִּאוֹ בְּרִים הָרָבֵּה גְּשֶׁרִים בָּרְבֵּה וְכִוּ וְכוּ וְלֹא עֲשִׂינוּ אֶלָּא כְּדֵי שֻׁיִשְׁרָאֵל יַעַסְקוּ בַּתּוֹרָה, וְאִם הָיָה הָאֱמֶת כָּךְ הְיוּ בִּעבוֹדָה זְרָה שְׁאוֹמְרִים הַרְבֵּה גְּשֶׁרִנוּ וְכוּ וְלֹא עֲשִׂינוּ אֶלָּא כְּדֵי שֻׁיִשְׁרָאֵל יַעַסְקוּ בַּתּוֹרָה, וְאִם הָיָה הָאָמֶרים בְּיִבּ וְעִיישׁר.

As for what the [rabbis] of blessed memory said, "Whoever brings a gift to a Torah scholar, it is as though he has presented first fruits," and one who benefits Torah scholars with his property, [it is as though] he is cleaving to the Shechinah. This is one who does so without condition, but regarding one who does so with the condition to acquire [the scholar's] Torah, it is disgraceful and shameful for him. This proves that he is not doing so for the sake of Heaven, but in hope of reward, and "they would utterly scorn him."

This applies for the nations of the world with Israel, and in the answer of the Holy One, Blessed be He, to them. For with their wealth, they wished to purchase a bit of the portion of the reward for the Torah of Israel, since they were not able to merit the Torah itself, having initially rejected it. However, indeed, even if the nations had supported Israel so they could engage in Torah, they would have received reward, as it is said in the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter of Avodah Zarah (2b), where the nations say: "We have built many bridges, we have conquered many cities, we have fought many wars, and we only did this so that Israel would engage in Torah [study]." If it had been the truth, they would have been saved.

וְסָמַךְּ דְּ[]רוּשׁ זָה עִם הַפָּסוּק "וְהָיָה מִסְפַּר" וְכוּ', לְפִי שֻׁבְּכָאן הִמְשִׁילָם הַכָּתוּב לְחוֹל, וְאָמְרינֵן בְּמִדְרָשׁ פָּרָשָׁה זוֹ שֻׁנִּמְשְׁלוּ לְחוֹל שֻׁבְּמוֹ שֶׁהוֹא אָדָם נוֹטֵל מִמֶּנוּ מְלֹא קוּמְצוֹ וְנוֹתֵן לְעִיסָה אוֹ לְתוֹךְ הַתַּבְשִׁיל אֵין בְּרִיָּה יָכוֹל לְטַ[]עֲמוֹ שָׁהוּא מַקְּהָה אֶת שִׁינְיוֹ לֻעָתִיד לָבוֹא עכ"ל. שֻׁמָּזֶּה נְרְאָה שִׁינְיוֹ, כָּךְּ הֵם יִשְׂרָאֵל, כָּל מִי שֶׁהוּא גּוֹזְלָן אוֹ בּוֹזְזֶן בְּעוֹלָם הַזָּה, הוּא מַקְּהָה אֶת שִׁינְיוֹ לְעָתִיד לָבוֹא עכ"ל. שֶׁמֶּזֶה נְרְאָה שִׁיִּיבָם עַזִּים אֶלָא אַדְרַבָּא הַכֹּל שׁוֹלְלִים וּבּוֹזְזִים אוֹתָם וְנִמְצָּא שֶׁהָם שְׁפָּלִים יוֹתֵר מִכָּל הָאוּמוֹת שְׁמְקְטִרְגִים עֲלֵיהָם וְבִּים". וְזָהוּ שֶׁסְיֵים הַכָּתוּב וְהָיָה "בִּמְקוֹם אֲשֶׁר־יֵאָמֵר לָהֶם לֹא־עַמִּי לָהָם בְּנֵי אַל־חָי". אָהֶם עַוִּים שָׁאֵינָם רְאוּיִים לְהִיוֹת לוֹ לָעֵם, "בַּיִם". וְזָהוּ שֶׁסְיֵים הַכָּתוּב וְהָיָה "בִּמְקוֹם אֲשֶׁר־יֵאָמֵר לָהֶם בְּנִי אֵרָה, יְנִי שֶׁהָם עַוִּים שְׁאֵינִם לְּאִרִים לְהִיוֹת לוֹ לְעַם, "בַּנִם לְהָכִי אַלְּרִי.".

This interpretation relies on the verse, "The number of the people of Israel shall be like that of the sands of the sea, which cannot be measured or counted; and instead of being told, 'You are Not-My-People,' they shall be called 'Children of the Living G-d.' "This is because there the verse compares [Israel] to sand, and it is said in the Midrash for this parashah:

They are compared to sand, for just as when a person takes a handful of sand and places it into dough or a cooked food, no creature can taste it because it dulls the teeth, so too are Israel: anyone who robs or scorns them in this world will have his teeth dulled in the World-to-Come.

- Num. Rabbah 2:13

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Ketubot 105b.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Ketubot 111b.

From this, it seems that Israel are not brazen, but on the contrary, all others overpower and plunder them, and thus they are lower than all the nations. Also, sand is against the sea and water, which is that the water represents the nations who oppose the sand, representing [Israel], as [the nations] are referred to as "many waters," thus, "Many waters cannot extinguish the love." This is what the verse concludes, "and instead of being told, 'You are Not-My-People,'" because they are brazen and unworthy to be His people, "it shall be said to them: 'You are children of the living G-d.'"

ּוּבִפְּשָׁט הַפָּסוּק יֵשׁ לְדַקְדֵּק "וְהָיָה בִּמְקוֹם אֲשֶׁר־יֵאָמֵר לָהֶם לֹא־עַמִּי אַתֶּם" וְכוּ' שֶׁנִּרְאֶה נֶגֶד הַדִּין וְיֵשׁ מְקוֹם לְבַעַל דִּין לַחֲלוֹק. וְבִשׁ הַפְּכוּה בָּירֵר לְנוּ הַמֵּלְכִיּוֹת כְּדֵי שֶׁלֹא וֵלֵךְ לֹגְהִינָם, אִם כֵּן הַגָּלוּת הוּא פְּרִיעַת חוֹבוֹ שֶׁל הקב"ה. וְכִיוָן שְׁלֹא וְלֵךְ לֹנוּ הַמַּלְכִיּוֹת הָדֵי שֶׁלֹא וֵלֶךְ לֹגְהִינָם, אִם כֵּן הַגְּלוִת הוּא בְּאָחִיךְּ, וּמִשׁוּם הָכִי יִרְמְיָהוּ הַנָּבִיא מַזְהִיר אֶת יִשְּׂרָאֵל "אֶל־דְּרֶךְ הַגּוֹיִם אַל־תִּלְמְדוּ" וְכוּ' "כִּי־חַקּוֹת הָעַמִּים הָבֵּל הוּא" וְכוּ'. הַבְּל הוּא" וְכוּי.

וְאִיתָא בְּמִדְרָשׁ רַבָּה עַל פָּסוּק "מָשָׁכוּ וּקְחוּ לָכֶם צֹאֹן", אַתָּה מוֹצֵא אַרְבַּע פְּעָמִים בְּדַף אֶחָד הֶרְאָה יִרְמְיָה גְּנוּתָהּ שֶׁל עֲבוֹדָה זָרָה וְשִׁבְחוֹ שֶׁל מְקוֹם, שֶׁנָּאֱמֵר "כִּי־חֻקּוֹת הָעַמִּים הֶבֶל הוּא" וְכוּ', שְׁמַעְהֶּם גְּנוּתָהּ שֶׁל עֲבוֹדָה זָרָה בּוֹאוּ וְשִׁמְעוּ שִׁבְחוֹ שֶׁל מְקוֹם, "מֵאֵין כָּמוֹדָ ה' " וְכוּ', שְׁמַעְהָּם שִׁבְחוֹ וְכוּ' בּוֹאוּ וְשִׁמְעוּ וְכוּ'.

It is brought in Midrash Rabbah on the verse, "Moses then summoned all the elders of Israel and said to them, 'Draw out and take for yourselves lambs for your families, and slaughter the Passover offering' "21:

You find four times on one page that Jeremiah demonstrated the denigration of idol worship and praise of the Omnipresent, as it is said, "For the laws of the nations are delusions." You have heard the denigration of idol worship; come and hear the praise of the Omnipresent, "There is none like You, L-rd." You have heard the praise of the Omnipresent, come and hear the denigration of idol worship, etc.

- Ex Rabbah 16:2

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Ex. Rabbah 51:7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Megillah 7b.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Jer. 10:2–3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Ex. 12:21.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Jer. 10:6.

ְּהַטַּעַם שֶׁהַמִּדְרָשׁ סָמַךְ זָה הָעַנְיָן עִם פֶּסוּק "מִשְׁכוּ וּקְחוּ לָכֶם", הָיִינוּ מִשׁוּם דְּכְתִיב "וְשַׁחֲטוּ הַפָּסְח", דְּבִשְׁלָמָא בַּפְּסוּקִים הַקּוֹדְמִים דְּהַיִינוּ בְּפָּרָשׁת "הַחֹדֶשׁ הַגָּה לָכֶם" לֹא צִוָּה אֶלָּא שֻׁיִּקְחוּ "שֶׂה תָמִים זָכָר בֶּן־שָׁנָה" וְכוּ', וְלֹא קָרָא לוֹ שָׁם פָּסָח הוּא עַל "אֲשֶׁר פָּסָח עַל־בָּתֵי בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל . . . בְּנְגְפּוֹ אֶת־מִצְרִיִם" וּבִשְׁעַת הַלְּקִיחָה וְהַשְּׁחִיטָה עֲדִיין לֹא שֶׁהְרֵי שֵׁם הַפָּסַח הוּא עַל "אֲשֶׁר פָּסַח מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהַדִּלֹּג וְהַפִּיסוּח הָיָה מַמְשׁ בְּשְׁעָה שֶׁהִיוּ אוֹכְלִים אוֹתוֹ. וְאִם כֵּן שַׁפִּיר אָמֵר שִׁיִּיךְ שֵׁם זָה. אֶלָּא שֶׁבָּאְכִילָה קַרְאוּ פָּסָח מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהַּדִילוּג וְהָפִּיסוּח דְּאֵיךְ קַאָּמַר "וְשַׁחֲטוּ הַפָּסַח" וְהַלֹּא בִּשְׁעַת שְׁחִיטָה הְּדָּיִיךְ אֵינִי מְוֹ שִׁיִּיךְ הַיִּא הַיְּדִיעָה בְּדָּכָר "הַפְּסַח" בְּהַ"א הַיְּדִיעָה וְקֵשֶׁה וְאֵיִךְ שִׁיִּר הַיִּא לְעוֹלְם.

The reason why the Midrash relies upon the verse, "Draw out and take for yourselves lambs" for this matter condemning idolatry, is because it is written at the end of the verse, "and slaughter the Passover offering."

Granted, in the earlier verses, when G-d was instructed Moses, that is, in the section, "This month shall mark for you the beginning of the months; it shall be the first of the months of the year for you,"<sup>23</sup> He only commanded that we take a "lamb shall be without blemish, a yearling male,"<sup>24</sup> and there he did not call it a Passover offering. For the name of the Passover offering relates to "who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt when smiting the Egyptians,"<sup>25</sup> and at the hour of taking the lambs and slaughtering them, this name was not yet relevant. Rather, it was only during the eating of it that it was properly called a Passover offering, because the skipping and passing over the houses of the Israelites was precisely at the time they were eating it. If so, it's fine that Scripture said, "and you shall eat it in haste; it is a Passover offering, for that night I will go through the land of Egypt and strike down every [male] first-born in the land of Egypt."<sup>26</sup>

However, in the later verse, when Moses was instructing the elders, and said, "Draw out and take for yourselves lambs," it is difficult: how can he say "and slaughter the Passover offering," for as we saw when G-d was instructing him, at the time of slaughtering, it was still not appropriate to call it by that name?

Even more so, it says "the Passover offering," with the definite article *heh*, and it is difficult to understand: how is it appropriate to use the definite article for something that has not yet come into being?

לֶכֵן תַּירֵץ שֶׁכַּוְנַת מֹשֶׁה הָיְתָה לְצַוּוֹת לְיִשְׂרָאֵל שֻׁיִּמְשְׁכוּ יְדֵיהֶם מֵהָעֲבוֹדָה זָרָה וְיִקְחוּ לָהֶם צֹאֹן שֶׁל מִצְנָה כְּדְכְתִיב "מְשְׁכוּ וּקְחוּ לָכֶם" וְכוּ', וּכְדֵי שֻׁיַּצְשׁוּ זֶה בְּלֵב שָׁלֵם הֶרְאָה לָהֶם גְּנוּתָה שֶׁל עֲבוֹדָה זָרָה שֶׁאֵין לָה כֹּח לֹא בֶּעָבִיר לֹא בָּעְחוֹר, כְּדֵי כְּדְלֹקמָן בַּסְּמוּך. וְאֶפְשָׁר נָמֵי שֶׁזָּהוּ הַטַּעִם שֶׁהקב"ה רָצָה שֶׁיְדבְּרוּ זֶה הַצִּיוּוּי לְעֵם בְּרֹאשׁ חֹדֶשׁ וְיִקְחוּ הַשֶּׂה בְּעְשוֹר, כְּדֵי שֶׁיְרָאוּ יִשְׂרָא שָׁרָע שֶׁהָעֲבוֹדָה זָרָה אֵין לָה כֹּח לֹא קוֹדֶם הַזְּמַן מַמְשׁ וְלֹא אַחֲרֵי כֵּן, שֶׁהָרֵי הַדִּיבוּר הָיָה בְּרֹאשׁ חֹדֶשׁ וֹבְישׁר שְׁיָבְא שִׁרָב וְנְשְשׁה שֶׁהָרֵי לְזֶה וְהַפִּיסוּחַ בְּט"ו, וַאֲפְלּוּ הָכִי הַפִּיסוּחַ שֶׁיָבֹא אַחֲרֵי כֵּן הוּא כְּאִילוּ כְּכָר נַעֲשֶׂה שֶׁהָרֵי לְזֶה הַשְּׁתֹ בְּיָשׁה שְׁהָרֵי בְּנָשׁה שֶׁהָרֵי לְזֶה הַשָּׁת הַבְּיִם וְקוֹרֵא אוֹתוֹ פֶּסַח.

Therefore, [the author of the Midrash] explained that Moses' intent was to command Israel to withdraw their hands from idolatry and to take for themselves sheep for a mitzvah,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Ex. 12:2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Ex. 12:5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Ex. 12:27.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Ex. 12:11–12.

as it is written, "Draw out and take for yourselves." In order that they do this wholeheartedly, he showed them the disgrace of idolatry, that it has no power, not in the past, not in the future, not in the present, as will be explained shortly. It is also possible that this is the reason why that Holy One, Blessed be He, wanted this command to be spoken to the people on Rosh Chodesh, while the taking of the lamb would happen on the tenth of the month, so that Israel would observe that the idol has no power: not before the time, not at the actual time, and not afterward. For the speech occurred on Rosh Chodesh, the taking of the lambs was on the tenth, the slaughtering was on the fourteenth, and the passing over of the Israelites' homes was on the fifteenth. Even so, the passing over that would occur later was already considered as if it had happened, since even now as Moses instructed the elders, the lamb was already called a Passover offering.

וּמֵעַתָּה נָבֹא לְדִבְרֵי יִרְמְיָה שֶׁכַּנָונָתוֹ הָיְתָה לְהַרְאוֹת לְיִשְׂרָאֵל טְעָמִים נְכוֹחִים כְּדֵי שֶׁיִמְאָסוּ בַּעֲבוֹדָה זָרָה וִיבַטְּחוּ בְּהקב"ה, וְהֶרְאָה לָהֶם שֶׁבַּעֲבוֹדָה זָרָה לֹא הָיָה בָּה מֵעוֹלָם שׁוּם כֹּחַ וְלֹא אֶפְשָׁר שֶׁיּהְיָה בָּה לֶעָתִיד וְגַם עַתָּה אֵין שׁוּם זְמַן שֶׁיּהְיֶה לָה כֹּחַ, דְּהַיְינוּ כָּל הַוְּמֵנִים עָבַר עָתִיד וְהוֹנָה, וְאַף אִם תּאֹמֵר שֶׁהַכִּישׁוּפִים יֵשׁ לָהֶם קְצָת כֹּחַ, זָה אֵינוֹ אֶלָּא עַד שֶׁהקב"ה מִתִּרְצָה, כְּגוֹן שָׁאֵין זְכוּת לִישְׂרָאֵל, אָמְנָם כְּשֶׁאֵינוֹ רוֹצֶה דְּהַיִינוּ כְּשֶׁיִּשְׂרָאֵל זוֹכִים אָז מִיֶּד בָּטֵל כֹּחָם.

Now we return to the words of Jeremiah, whose intention was to show Israel compelling reasons to despise idolatry and place their trust in the Holy One, Blessed be He. He showed them that idolatry never had any power, and it's impossible that it will have any in the future, and also now there is no time that it will have power, that is, in all times, past, future, and present, it has no power. Even if one were to say that sorcerers have some power, this is only as long as the Holy One, Blessed be He, desires it, such as when Israel has no merit. But when He does not desire it, that is, when Israel is meritorious, then their power is immediately nullified.

וּתְחִלָּה אָמַר לָהֶם אֵיךּ תֹאמְרוּ שָׁמִי שֶׁבָּא לָעוֹלָם אַחֲרֵיכֶם יִהְיֶה אֱלוֹהַ עֲלֵיכֶם אַחֵר שֶׁרְאִיתֶם מוֹלַדְתּוֹ וְחִידּוּשׁוֹ. וְלָכֵן אָמַר "כִּיחַקּוֹת הָעַמִּים הָבֶל הוּא כִּירעֵץ מַיַּעַר כְּרָתוֹ מַעֲשֹׁה יְדֵי־חָרָשׁ" וְכוּ'. וְאַהֶם בְּעַצְמְכֶם רְאִיתֶם שֻׁמִּתּ הָבְּלוֹהָ לֹא הָיָה אֱלוֹהַ וְלֹא כֵּן הקב"ה דְּכְתִיב בֵּיה "אֲנִי רִאשׁוֹן" וְכוּ'. וּלְזֶה אָמֵר "מֵאֵין כָּמוֹך ה' גָּדוֹל אַתָּה וְלֵא בְּחָהוּא אֱלוֹהַ. וְלֹא כֵּן הקב"ה דְּכְתִיב בֵּיה "אֲנִי רִאשׁוֹן" וְכוּ'. וּלְזֶה אָמֵר "מֵאֵין כָּמוֹדְ הֹּוֹלְדִים אַחְרִיוּ לְכָל הַאֵּלוֹקוֹת. וּכְשֵׁם שָׁמִי שָׁבּוֹלָד רִאשׁוֹן וְזָהוּ גְּדּוּלְתְּךְ שֶׁהִיּא לְנֵיִם לְעוֹלְם צָּרִיךְ לוֹמֵר שֶׁהוּא אֱלוֹהַ, מַה שָׁאֵין כֵּן בַּעֲבוֹדָה זָרָה שָּירִבְּ שִׁיְכַבְּדוֹהוּ כֵּלְם צְּרִיכִים לְכַבֵּד לוֹ. וְעוֹד לְפִי שָׁהוּא קַיֵּים לְעוֹלְם צָּרִיךְ לוֹמֵר שֶׁהוּא אֵלוֹהַ, מָה שָׁאֵין כָּן בַּעֲבוֹדָה זְרָה לִיבְּרוֹ וְיִכְּלוּ" וְכוּי "מַצְשֵׂה חָכָמִים כֵּלָם", וּכְשֵׁם שֶׁהָּם כָּלִים וְנְפְּסָדִים כֵּן כָּלְ מַעֲשֶׂה הָאָנְשִׁים כָּלָה וְנִפְּסִד וְלֹא עֵּן הִכּלִים לְהָשְׁתַּבֶּר, וְלֹא בֵּן הִםכִּיה שָׁהוּא אַחָרוֹן.

Initially, [Jeremiah] said to them: How can you say that someone who came into the world after you is your god, after you yourselves witnessed its birth and creation? So he said:

For the laws of the nations are delusions: For it is the work of a craftsman's hands. He cuts down a tree in the forest with an ax, he adorns it with silver and gold, he fastens it with nails and hammer, so that it does not totter. They are like a scarecrow in a cucumber patch, they cannot speak. They have to be carried, for they cannot walk. Be not afraid of them, for they can do no harm; nor is it in them to do any good.

- Jer. 10:3-5

But you yourselves saw that initially it was not a god, but rather a tree, so how can you now say that it is a god? But not so is the Holy One, Blessed be He, as it is written regarding him, "I am the first and I am the last, and there is no god but Me."<sup>27</sup> For this reason, [Jeremiah] said, "There is none like You, L-rd, You are great and Your Name is great in power," for You were the first, and that is Your greatness, that You were first among all the gods. Just as one who is born first should be honored by those born after him, so too, all must honor Him. Also, since He exists forever, it must be said that He is G-d, which is not the case with idolatry, for they are "both dull and foolish," 28 etc., "made by skilled workers," 29 and just as [the workers] will wear out and perish, so too the works of man will wear out and perish and not endure, for all vessels eventually break. But not so the Holy One, Blessed be He, Who is "the last."

ָוְזֶהוּ "וָה' אֱלֹהִים אֱמֶת הוּא־אֱלֹהִים חַיִּים וּמֶלֶךְ עוֹלֶם", וַאֲפִילוּ אָם לֹא תִּהְיָה עֲבוֹדָה זָרָה לֹא רָאשׁוֹן וְלֹא אַחַרוֹן רַק יִהְיֶה בָּה בָּחַ לַעֲשׁוֹת שַׁמַיִם וַאָרֵץ חַדַשִּׁים כָּמוֹ שֵׁעֲשָׂה אֱלֹהֵינוּ שֵׁבַּרָא שַׁמַיִם וַאָרֵץ הַיָה נִמְצַא בּוֹ אֵיזֵה מַמַּשׁ. אֲבַל גַּם זָה אֵינוֹ, וַלְכֵן "כַּדָנה הַאמָרוּן לָהוֹם אֱלֹהָיא דִּי־שָׁמֵיא וְאַרָקא לֹא עֲבַדוּ יֵאבַדוּ מָאַרְעא" וְכוּי.

This is the meaning of: "But the L-rd G-d is the true G-d, He is the living G-d, and the everlasting King."30 Even if idolatry had neither a beginning or an end, but had the power to make new heavens and earth, like our G-d who ex nihilo created heaven and earth, then it would have some substance. But even this is not so, and therefore, "Thus shall you say to them: Let the gods, who did not make heaven and earth, perish from the earth and from under these heavens."31

אמנם הקב"ה "עשה אַרֶץ בָּכֹחוֹ מַכִין הַבַל בַּחַכָּמתוֹ" וְכוּ', וָאַף אָם לֹא עשה שׁמַיִם ואַרֶץ וְלֹא עשה כָּלוּם רָק יֵשׁ בּוֹ כֹּחַ לַעֲשׂוֹת אֵיזָה גַס הָיָה בּוֹ אֵיזָה מַקוֹם לִטְעוֹת. אֶלָּא שֶׁאַף זָה אֵינוֹ שֶׁאֵינוֹ רָאוּי לִכְלוּם, "כִּי שֶׁקֶר נִסְכּוֹ וְלֹא־רוּחַ בָּם", אָמְנַם "לא־כָאֵלֶה חַלֶּק יַעֲקֹב", כִּי הוּא תַּקִיף וְיָכוֹל. וּכָמוֹ שֶׁאָמֵר הַכָּתוּב "אָנִי ראשׁוֹן וַאֲנִי אַחַרוֹן וּמִבַּלְעַדִי אֵין אֱלֹהִים", דְּמַשְׁמַע אַפִילוּ כִּשׁפִים.

However, the Holy One, Blessed be He, "made the earth by might, established the world by wisdom, and with understanding stretched out the skies,"32 and even if He had not created the heavens and the earth, and had done nothing else, but merely possessed the power to perform some miracle, there would still be some room for error to question His Divinity. But even this is not the case with idols: they are not fit for anything, for "their molten images are falsehood, and there is no breath in them."33 However, "not like these is the Portion of Jacob,"34 for He is mighty and capable. As Scripture said, "I am the first and I am the last, and there is no god but Me," which means not even sorcery.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Isaiah 44:6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Jer. 10:8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Jer. 10:9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> Jer. 10:10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> Jer. 10:11. <sup>32</sup> Jer. 10:12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> Jer. 10:14.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> Jer. 10:16.

ְּכֵן בִּתְחַלֵּת הַדְּבְּרוֹת אָמַר "אָנֹכִי ה' אֱלֹהֶיףּ", שֶׁ"אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל" נִקְרָא וְלֹא אֱלֹהֵי הָאוּמוֹת, כִּדְאִיתָא בְּיַלְקוּט עַל פָּסוּק "לְכוּ וְנַכְחִידֵם מִגּוֹי", כָּל זְמַן שֻׁיִשְׂרָאֵל קִיְמִין נִקְרָא "אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל", נְעַקּר יִשְׂרָאֵל אֱלֹהֵי מִי נִקְרָא, הָנֵי כִּי "עָלֶיףּ בְּרִית יִכְרֹתוּי" בְּלָמְרִינֵן בְּפֶּרֶק מַמָּא דְּחוּלִין "אֵין עוֹד מִלְּבַדּוֹ" אָמֵר כָּל מַה שֶׁהֶם מִתְרַגְשִׁים עָלֵינוּ בִּשְׁבִילְךְּ עכ"ל. וְאָמֵר "אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיףּ" דְּאָמְרִינֵן בְּפֶּרֶק קַמָּא דְחוּלִין "אֵין עוֹד מִלְבַדּוֹ" אָמֵר לַה שְׁקוּלִי לָא מְסְתַּיִּעְא רְבִּי חֲנִינָא אֲפִילוּ בְּשָׁכִים, הַהִיא אִיתְתָא דַהָּוֶת קָא מְהַדְּרָא לְמִשְׁקַל עַפְּרָא מְתּוּתֵיה דְּרַבִּי חֲנִינָא, אֲמַר לַה שְׁקוּלִי לָא מְסְתַּיִּעְא מִילְתִיךְּ "אֵין עוֹד מִלְבַדּוֹ" כְּתִיב, וְהָאָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנֶן לְמָּה נִקְרָא שְׁמָם בְּשָׁפִים, שֶׁמַּכְחִישִׁין פָּמַלְיָיִא שֶׁל מַעְּלָה, שָׁאנֵי רַבִּי חֲנִינָא דְּבָּי חֲנִינָא דְּבִי חֲנִינָא דְּבָּי חֲנִינָא. דְּבִּי חְנִינָא דְּבִּי חְנִינָא דְּבִי חְנִינָא דְּיִים עוֹד מִלְבַדּוֹ" בְּתִיב, וְהָאָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנֶן לְמָּה נִקְרָא שְׁמָם בְּשָׁפִים, שֶׁמַּלְייִא שֶׁל מַנְלָה, שָׁאנִי רַבִּי חְנִינָא זִּשְׁל מִוֹים.

Similarly, at the beginning of the Ten Commandments, "I the L-rd am your G-d, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt," that He is called "the G-d of Israel" and not "the G-d of the nations." As it is brought in the Yalkut Shimoni on the verse, "Let us wipe them out as a nation," "As long as Israel exists, He is called 'the G-d of Israel.' If Israel were uprooted, whose G-d would He be called? For if 'they have made an alliance against You,' everything they stir up against us is because of You." 38

He said, "Who brought you out of the land of Egypt," as it is said in the first chapter of tractate Chullin:

"There is none other beside Him." Rabbi Chanina says: And even sorcery [is not comparable]. A certain woman would try to take dust from beneath the feet of Rabbi Chanina [to perform sorcery and harm him]. He said to her: Take it; the matter will be ineffective for you. It is written: "There is none other beside Him."

But doesn't Rabbi Yochanan say: Why is [sorcery] called בְּשֶׁכִּים [keshafim]? [It is an acronym for] שמכַחישַין פַמליא של מַעלה ["that they diminish the Heavenly entourage"] [i.e., they function against the will of G-d].

Rabbi Chanina is different, as his merit is great [so sorcery has no effect on him].

- Chullin 7b

ְּעַל זֶה אָמַר "אָנֹכִי ה' אֱלֹהֶיךּ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךּ" וְכוּ' הָרֵי לְךְּ רְאָיָה שֶׁ" אֲנִי רְאשׁוֹן . . . וּמִבּלְעָדִי אֵין אֱלֹהִים" שֶׁהָרֵי "הוֹצֵאתִיךּ מְשֶׁר זָה אָמָר "אָנִים" שֶׁהָרִי "הוֹצֵאתִיךּ מְשֶׁר זָה אָמָר יְמָבְלְצָדִי אֵין אֱלֹהִים" וַאֲפִילוּ מֵאֶרִין מִצְרִיִם", וְהַלֹּא מִצְרִיִם הָּיְתָה מְלַאָּה כְּשָׁפִים וְאַף עַל פִּי כֵן הוֹצֵאתִיךְ מְשֶׁלָה, לְכֵן אָמַר הַכְּוֹה מְלָבִי שְׁאָנִי אָמָם בְּשָׁפִים שֶׁמְּכְחִישִׁין פְּמַלְיָיִא שֶׁל מַעְלָה, לְכֵן אָמַר הַכְּוֹב "אָנֹכִי ה' אֶלְהָיךּ", וְלֹא "אֱלֹהִים", כְּלוֹמֵר בִּשְׁבִיל שֻׁאָנִי אֵלֹהֶיךְ שֻׁאָנִי אוֹהָב אוֹתְדְּ בְּיוֹתֵר לְפִי שֻׁאַהָּם עָתִידִין לְקבֵּל הַתּוֹרָה וְיִהְיָה רַב זְּכוּתְּבָּל הַבְּלֹבִי אַרָב בְּיִבְּלְתִי אֶתְכָם אַף נָגֶד הַכִּישׁוּפִים.

About this, He said, "I am the L-rd your G-d who took you out of the land of Egypt," this is proof that "I am the first and I am the last, and there is no god but Me," for I took you

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> Ex. 20:2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Ps. 83:5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> Ps. 83:6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> Yalkut Shimoni, Psalms, remez 832:3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Deut. 4:35.

out of the land of Egypt." For wasn't Egypt full of sorcery, yet I took you out from there. From here you learn that "there is no god but Me," not even sorcery.

Perhaps you'll say, doesn't Rabbi Yochanan say: Why is [sorcery] called בְּשָׁבִּים [keshafim]? [It is an acronym for] שמכַחישין פַמליא של מַעלה ["that they diminish the Heavenly entourage"] [i.e., they function against the will of G-d]. Therefore, Scripture said, "I am the L-rd your G-d," and did not say "I am the L-rd, G-d," as if to say, "because I am your G-d, that I love you more—because you are destined to receive the Torah, and your merit will be great—therefore, I saved you even in opposition to the sorcery.

ְוֶזֶהוּ הַטַּעַם שֶׁבְּכָל הַמָּצְוֹת אוֹ רוּבָּם נִזְכֵּר בָּהֶם יְצִיאַת מִצְרִיִם, כְּלוֹמֵר הוֹאִיל שֶׁהוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרִיִם וְחָשַׁרְתִּי כְּאִילוּ רָבְּזְרִבְּה שָׁהָם לְהַנָּצֵל אַף מָן הַכִּישׁוּפִים בִּשְׁבִיל שֶׁעָתִידִים אַתֶּם לְקַבֵּל תּוֹרָה וּמִצְוֹת, מִשׁוּם הָכִי חַיָּיבִים אַתֶּם לְקַבֵּל מִצְוֹתִי וְלֹא לְמְרוֹד בִּי כְּלָל וְעָקֶּר, כִּי עַל מְנַת כֵּן הוֹצֵאתִיךְ מִשָּׁם "בְּיָד חֲזָקָה וּבַזְרֹע נְטוּיָה" הַכַּףְ הַמִּנְהָג שֶׁנִּקְרְאוּ כְּשָׁכִים וְכוּי.

וְכוּי.

This is the reason why for all the commandments, or most of them, the Exodus from Egypt is mentioned, as if to say: Since I took you out of the land of Egypt, and I considered your merit as great, and deemed you worthy to be saved even from sorceries, because you are destined to receive the Torah and commandments, because of this, you are obligated to accept my commandments, and not to rebel against Me. For it was on this condition that I took you out from there "with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm," opposite the natural order which is represented by sorceries.

ּוֹבְּדֶּרֶךְ זֶהְ נָבִין מִדְרָשׁ תָּמוּהַ עַל פָּסוּק הַנַּ"ל וְז"ל, דָּבָר אַחֵר "אָנֹכִי ה' אֱלֹהֶיְהְ" הָדָא הוּא דְכְתִיב "אָנֹכִי הָגַּדְתִּי וְהוֹשׁׁצְתִּי וְיִרְדְּפוּ אַחֲרִיכֶם וְיִטְבְּעוּ בַּיָּם שֶׁנֶּאֲמֵר "וַיַּגַּד לְמֶלֶךְ מִצְרִיִם כִּי וְיִשְׁמְעוּ וְיִרְדְּפוּ אַחֲרִיכֶם וְיִטְבְּעוּ בַּיָּם שֶׁנֶּאֲמֵר "וַיַּגַּד לְמֶלֶךְ מִצְרִים כָּי בָּרח הָעָם". "וְהוֹשׁׁצְתִּי" אָתְכֶם דְּכְתִיב "וִיּוֹשֵׁע ה' בַּיּוֹם הָהוּא אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִיֵּד מִצְרִיִם", "וְהִשְׁמִעְתִּי" לְאוּמּוֹת הָעוֹלָם שֶׁנֶּאֱמֵר "שְׁנָאֱמֵר "וַיְשׁלָח מֹשֶׁה אֶת־חֹתְנוֹ" וְכוּ' עכ"ל, דְּקְשֶׁה מֵה בָּא לְלַמְּדִינוּ וְאֵיךְ דְּרְשׁ דְּרִשׁ דְרִשׁ זְּרִשׁ דְּרָשׁ זְרִשׁ דְּרָשׁ זְרִשׁ בְּרִשׁ בְּרִשׁ דְבִשְׁ בְּלִי פָּסוּק זָה.

In this way, we can also understand a puzzling Midrash on the above verse:

Another explanation: "I am the L-rd your G-d"—this is as it is written: "I have foretold, I have saved, and I have announced, and no stranger was among you. So you are My witnesses—declares the L-rd—and I am G-d."<sup>41</sup>

"I have foretold" to Egypt that you had fled, so they would hear and pursue after you and be drowned in the sea, as it says: "It was told to the king of Egypt that the people had fled."<sup>42</sup>

"I have saved, as it is written: "The L-rd saved Israel on that day from the hand of Egypt."  $^{43}$ 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> Deut. 4:34, 5:15, 26:8; Jer. 21:5; Ezek. 20:33, 20:34; Ps. 136:12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> Isaiah 43:12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Ex. 14:5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> Ex. 14:30.

"I have announced" to the nations of the world, as it says: 'The peoples heard, they trembled."  $^{44}$ 

"And no stranger was among you," as it is written: "And Moses sent away his father-in-law." 45

- Ex. Rabbah 29:8

This seems difficult; what is the Midrash trying to teach, and how did it derive this interpretation from this verse?

ּוּבְמָה שֶׁהָקְדַּמְנוּ אָתֵי שֵׁפִּיר, כִּי כַּנָּונַת הקב"ה הָיְתָה לְהוֹדִיעַ לְיִשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁמְתוֹךְ שֶׁהוֹצִיאָם מִמְּצְרַיִם עַל כָּרְחַךְּ צָרִיךְ לוֹמֵר שֻׁכֹּחוֹ גְּדְוֹלְ אַף עַל הַכִּישׁוּפִים. וְהַמְּדְרֶשׁ הְרְגִּישׁ קּוּשְׁיָא אָחָרַת עַל פָּסוּק זֶה, אֵיךְ תָּלָה הַכָּתוּב כָּל הַשֶּׁבַח עַל יְצִיאָתָם מִמְּצְרַיִם, וְהַלֹּא עֲּדִיין נִקְרְאוּ מַּחַת מֶמְשֶׁלֶת מִצְרַיִם, שֶׁהָרֵי בָּקְרִיעַת יָם סוֹף נֶאֱמֵר "נִיּוֹשַׁע ה' בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל" וְכוּ' וּמִשְׁמָע "בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא דָּוְקָא נִיצוּלוֹ מִמְּצְרַיִם וְלֹא קוֹדֶם. וּמְשׁוּם הָכִי הַבִּיאוּ הַדְּרָש שֶׁל "אָנֹכִי הִגּּדְתִּי" כְּדֵי לְהוֹדִיעַ שֶׁהַכֹּל הוּא עַנְיָן אֶחָד, וְאִין הָכִי נָבֵי שֶׁהוֹצְאָה מִמְצְרַיִם הִיא הָעִיקְר וְהַשְּּכֵל נָגְרָר אַחֲרָיהָ.

Regarding what we presented earlier, it now fits well. For the intent of the Holy One, Blessed be He, was to inform Israel that since He took them out of Egypt, one must conclude that His power is greater even than sorcery. The Midrash sensed a different difficulty in this verse: How can the verse attribute all the praise to their Exodus from Egypt, when they were still technically under Egypt's dominion? For at the splitting of the Sea it says, The L-rd saved Israel on that day from the hand of Egypt," and the meaning is "on that day" precisely they were saved from Egypt, and not beforehand. Because of that, [the Midrash] brought the explanation of "I have foretold," to indicate that it is all one matter. Indeed, the Exodus from Egypt is the essential event, and the subsidiary matters follow after it.

ְּנְאָמָר " 'אָנֹכִי הָגַּדְתִּי' לְמִצְרַיִם שֶׁבְּרַחָמֶּם כְּדֵי שֶׁיִּשְׁמְעוּ וְיִרְדְּפּוּ" וְכוּ' וְהַלֹּאׁ מִצְרַיִם הָיְתָה מְלַאָה כִּישׁוּפִּים וְאִצְטִגְּ[]נִינִים וְלָמָה לֹאׁ הִגִּידוּ לָהֶם הָאֱמֶת שֶׁיִשְׁרָאֵל [הִ]ינָם בּוֹרְחִים וְשֶׁהְלִיכָתִם שֶׁל מִצְרַיִם הָיְתָה לַמִּיתָה. אָלָּא וַדַּאי צָרִיךְ לוֹמֵר שֶׁהִקב"ה סִימֵא עֵינֵיהֶם וְ"לֹא יָדְעוּ וְלֹא יָבִינוּ". " 'וְהוֹשַׁעְתִּי' אֶתְכֶם" אַף עַל פִּי שֶׁמֵּכְחִישִׁין פָּמַלְיָיא שֶׁל מַעְלָה, לְפִי שֶׁהֵיִיתֶם חֲבִיבִים לְפָנִי וּמָדֶּה תִּרְאוּ שֶׁ"אֵין עוֹד מִלְבַדּוֹ". וְעוֹד " 'וְהִשְׁמַעְתִּי' לְאוּמוֹת הָעוֹלְם", שָׁאִם לֹא הָיָה מַשְׁמִיע לְאוּמּוֹת הָעוֹלָם הָיִיתִי אוֹמֵר שָׁמָּא אַף הָאוּמוֹת יֵשׁ לָהֶם אֱלוֹהָ אַחֵר כָּזָה, אֲבָל עַתָּה שֶׁהוֹדִיעָם זָה הַנֵּס וְ"שָׁמְעוּ עַמִּים יִרְגָּזוּן" וְכוּ' שְׁמַע מִינַּה שֶׁ"אִין עוֹד מִלְּבָדוֹ".

[The Midrash] said: "I have foretold' to Egypt that you had fled, so they would hear and pursue after you and be drowned in the sea." But wasn't Egypt full of sorcerers and astrologers? Why not tell them the truth, that Israel was fleeing, and that the Egyptians' pursuit would be to their death? Rather, it's certainly necessary to say that the Holy One, Blessed be He, blinded their eyes, so they "neither knew nor understood." "And I saved"

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> Ex. 15:14.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> Ex. 18:27.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> Isaiah 44:18.

you," even though [the Egyptians] diminish the Heavenly entourage, because you were beloved before Me, and from this, you can see that "there is none other beside Him."

Also, "'I have announced' to the nations of the world," for if He had not made it known to the nations of the world, one might have said: perhaps the nations, too, have a god like this one. But now that He publicized this miracle and "the peoples heard, they trembled," we hear from this that "there is none other besides Him."

ְּעִוֹד "וְאֵין בָּכֶם זָר", כְּלוֹמֵר עַל כָּרְחַכֶם אַתָּם חַיָּיבִים לֹשְׁמוֹר מִצְוֹתִי, שֻׁבְּשָׁעָה שֶׁקְדַּשְׁתִּי אֶתְכֶם בְּמִעֲמֵד הַר סִינִי שֻׁאָז הִיוּ בְּכֵלָּה לְחָתֶן לֹא הָיָה בָּכֶם זָר שֻׁאֵינוֹ רָאוּי לְהָעִיד, שֻׁאִלְמְלֵא הָיָה שָׁם זָר הָיָה לָכֶם מְקוֹם לוֹמֵר שֻׁהַקִּדּוֹשִׁין בְּטֵלִין, שֻׁבְּתַב הָשֶׁלְחָן עָרוּךְ, חֹשֶׁן מִשְׁפָּט (סִימָן ל"ו) עִדִים רַבִּים שֻׁנִּמְצָא אַחֵד מֵהֶם קְרוֹב אוֹ פָּסוּל עֵדוּתָם בְּטֵלָה וּבִפְּרָט אִם בָּאוּ לְהָעִיד עַל בְּבוֹדוֹ שֶׁל הקב"ה שֶׁעָשָׁה עִם יִשְׂרָאֵל וְהָיָה נִפְסָל כָּל הָעֵדוּת כַּלָּה. וְאַפִּילוּ הְעֵיִי שֵׁ הָיוּ שְׁמָעוּ קוֹלוֹ שֶׁל הקב"ה בְּסִינֵי וְלֹא רָאוּ אֶת כְּבוֹדוֹ. וְדָבֶר זָה קַבָּלָה בְּיָדִינוּ. וְעַיֵּין בְּשָּ"ךְ פָּרָשַׁת יִעְּהָב רָב שֶׁהָיָה עָמֶהֶם לֹא שָׁמְעוּ קוֹלוֹ שֶׁל הקב"ה בְּסִינֵי וְלֹא רָאוּ אֶת כְּבוֹדוֹ. וְדָבֶר זָה קַבָּלְה בְּיָדִינוּ. וְעַיֵּין בְּשָּ"ךְ פָּרָשׁת יִתְרוֹ "אַהָּם רְאֹיתָם" וְלֹא הָעֶרֶב רַב, "כֹּה תֹאמֵר לְבֵית יַשְׂלְב" דְּוַקְא "וְתַגִּיִד לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאל" וְלֹא הַעֶּרֶב רַב, "כֹּה תֹאמֵר לְבֵית יַעְּלְב" דְּוֹקְא "וְתַגִּיד לְבְנֵי יִשְׁרָאל" וְלֹא הָעֶרֶב רַב. יְבֹי וְלִיא הָעֶרֶב רַב, "כֹּה תֹאמֵר לְבֵית יַבְלְב" בְּוֹקא "וְתַגִּיד לְבְנֵי יִשְׁרָאל" וְלֹא הָעָרָב רָב. רָב יִם וְלֹא הָעֶרֶב רַב רָב. "כֹּה תֹאמֵר בָר בַר בְּיִב יְנִים וְלִיא הָעֶרֶב רָב. רָב. יְבִּי הְשִׁרְבּי וְלִיא הָעֶרֶב רַב. רָב. יְבִית בְּיִבּי וְלִיא הָעְרָב רָב. רָב. וֹיִבּי וֹיִדְי בְּיִבּי בְּיִב יִבְּיִב בְּבִּי בִּיִבְיים בְּיִב בְיבִי בְּיִבּים בְּעָב בְּים בְּיִים בְּיִב בְּיִב בְּיִבְיִי בְּיִים בְּלָּבִי יִישְׁרָב בְּיִב בְּיִב בְּיִים בְּבִי בְּיִבְּים בְּיב הָּבְּיִי בְּיִבְי בִּים לִיב בְּים בְּבִים בְּבִים בְּבָי בִּיִים בְּיִים בְּיִים בְּעִיים בְּבִים בְּיִבּים בְּיבִים בְיבִים זְּבְי בִיּשְׁבְּיִים לִינִים לְּשָּבְּים בְּיִים לְצִים בְּעְבְבִי בְּיִבְּבְּים בְּיבְּבְּיִים בְּינִים לְינִין שָּבְּיִים בְּיבְּיִים בְּיבִים בְּיבִים בְּעִבְיוֹם בְּעִיבְּים בְּיבִּים שִׁנְיבְיִים בְּבְבִיים בְּיבִים בְּבְּיִים בְּיבְים בְּיבְיִין בְּיִים בְּבְבְיים בְּיבִים בְּיבְיִים בְּבְּיִים בְּיבְים בְּ

And furthermore, "and no stranger was among you," as if to say, by necessity, you are obligated to observe My commandments. For at the time that I sanctified you standing at Mount Sinai, when you were like a bride to a groom, there was no stranger among you who was unfit to testify as witnesses to the marriage. For if there had been a stranger present, you could have claimed that the marriage was invalid. As the Shulchan Aruch, Choshen Mishpat (siman 36, se'if 1) writes: "If there were numerous witnesses and one was discovered to be a relative or otherwise disqualified, the entire testimony is void," and especially if they came to testify [together], and see there.

If [such strangers] had been there at Sinai; they would have intended to testify about the glory of the Holy One, Blessed be He, that He performed with Israel, but then despite their good intentions, the entire testimony would have been invalidated. Even the mixed multitude who were with them did not hear the voice of the Holy One, Blessed be He, at Sinai, nor did they see His glory. This is a tradition we have received.

See in the commentary of the Shach on parashat Yitro: "'The L-rd said to Moses: Thus shall you say to the Israelites: You saw that I spoke to you from the very heavens.' You saw,' and not the mixed multitude. 'So shall you say to the house of Jacob,' specifically, and 'tell the children of Israel,' and not to others."

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> Ex. 20:19.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> Ex. 19:3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> Ibid.