

# Toldot Shimshon

by Rabbi Shimshon Chaim Nachmani zt"l

Published Livorno 1776\*

## Chapter VI – Conclusion

רבי חנניא בן עקשיא אומר, רצה הקב"ה לזכות את ישראל, לפיכך הרבה להם תורה ומצוות, שנאמר "ה' חפץ למען צדקו וגדיל תורה ונאדיר".

**Rabbi Hananiah ben Akashya says: It pleased the Holy One, Blessed be He, to grant merit to Israel. Therefore He gave them Torah and commandments in abundance, as it is said, "The Lord was pleased for His righteousness, to make Torah great and glorious."**<sup>1</sup>

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נכבדות מדובר בה כבד למעלה בסוף פרקא קמא. ועוד יש לומר, שידוע הוא שבימי רבי נכתבה המשנה, לפי שראה שנתמעטו הליכות, והשקחה היתה מתרבה והולכת, ורבו השקחה בא מחמת הקליפות, שהיו בעוונות הרבים מתגברות והולכות, כגודע.

**Glorious things are spoken of this<sup>2</sup> already above, at the end of the opening Mishnah of this chapter. It can also be said, that it's known that in the days of Rabbi Yehuda ha-Nasi, the Mishnah was written, because he saw that hearts were diminished, and [people's] forgetting of halacha was growing stronger.<sup>3</sup> This increase in forgetfulness of halacha came about because of the *klipot* [the husks of impurity], which were the sins of the masses which were continually increasing, as is known.<sup>4</sup>**

ואחר כך הוצרך תיקון יותר, ותיקנו התלמוד ירושלמי, פי סוד התלמוד לברר בירוריו ולהוציא הסולת מתוך הפסלת, בסוד קש ותבן של הקושיות. ולכן, "תלמוד" גימטריא לילית, שהוא להכניעה לקחת הניצוצות הקדושות ממנה.

**Afterward, a greater reform was necessary, and [the rabbis] established the Jerusalem Talmud, for the esoteric secret of the Talmud was to clarify clarifications in order**

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<sup>1</sup> Isaiah 42:21.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Ps. 87:3, "Glorious things are spoken of you, O city of G-d. Selah."

<sup>3</sup> Rambam, Introduction to the Mishneh Torah: "Why did Rabbeinu Hakadosh make [such an innovation] instead of perpetuating the status quo? Because he saw the students becoming fewer, new difficulties constantly arising, the Roman Empire spreading itself throughout the world and becoming more powerful, and the Jewish people wandering and becoming dispersed to the far ends of the world. [Therefore,] he composed a single text that would be available to everyone, so that it could be studied quickly and would not be forgotten. Throughout his entire life, he and his court taught the Mishnah to the masses."

<sup>4</sup> Etz Chaim, Sha'ar 15:6:1.

to counter the *klipot*, and to remove the fine flour from the refuse, in the esoteric secret of extracting the fine flour, i.e., the true halacha, from the **straw or hay of the questions** raised by the rabbis in the Gemara's back-and-forth analysis of the Mishnah. **Therefore, "Talmud" has the same gematria of 480 as the harmful spirit Lilith,<sup>5</sup> that is, the study of Talmud can help to subdue her, to take the sparks of holiness from her.**

ואחר כך, תקפה עליהם צרת השעבוד, כי גברה הקליפה ולא היו יכולים עוד לברר אלא בטורח גדול. וזהו מה שאמרו ז"ל "במחשפים הושיבני", זה תלמוד בבלי. ובכל החידושים שאדם כותב, הוא מרבה התיקון בעולם העליון ובשמים הסודיים והארץ הסודשה.

**Afterward, the hardship of the servitude caused by the Roman exile struck them, because the *klipah* grew stronger and they were no longer able to clarify matters, except with great difficulty. This is what [the rabbis] of blessed memory said, " 'He has made me dwell in dark places,'<sup>6</sup> Rabbi Yirmeya says this [refers to] the Babylonian Talmud,"<sup>7</sup> which he felt was not as clear as the Jerusalem Talmud.**

**With all of the novelties that a person writes, he increases the correction in the supernal world, and in "the new heaven and in the new earth."<sup>8</sup>**

ומשום הכי אמר התנא, רצה הקב"ה לזכות ישראל, מתגבורת הקליפה, לפיכך הרבה להם תורה, דהיינו, שמה שיקחו ויחדשו בתורה, שתהיה נקראת תורה קדושה. ואף על פי שמקודם לא היו צריכים לכל אלו הפלפולים, ולא היו בעולם. אי נמי, כדי שיהיו ניצולים מן הקליפות, האיר עיניהם לבאר המשנה והתלמוד ירושלמי, ועוד, אחר זה האיר עיניהם להוסיף אף תלמוד בבלי. וזהו לפיכך הרבה להם "תורה". וכמו שכתבנו לעיל בתחלת הפרק על שני חכמים, ועי"ש.

**Because of this, the Tanna said, "It pleased the Holy One, Blessed be He, to grant merit to Israel," from the intensification of the *klipah*. Therefore, He gave them Torah in abundance, that is, what they would write about and novelties they would derive on the Torah, which is called the Holy Torah. This is despite the fact that in ancient times they didn't need all of these debates, and there weren't any such debates in the world as to the halacha. If so, in the later times, in order that they would be saved from the *klipot*, He enlightened their eyes to explain the Mishnah and the Jerusalem Talmud, and further, after that He enlightened their eyes to add even the Babylonian Talmud. This is the meaning of, "Therefore, He gave them 'Torah' . . . in abundance." As we wrote above at the beginning of the chapter on "The sages taught in the language of the Mishnah," and see there.**

<sup>5</sup> See Isaiah 34:14. The Arizal identified Lilith as a partner of Satan who seeks to bring immorality to man.

<sup>6</sup> Lam. 3:6.

<sup>7</sup> Sanhedrin 24a.

<sup>8</sup> Isaiah 66:22, "Just as the new heaven and the new earth which I will make shall endure by My will, declares the L-rd, so shall your seed and your name endure."

ועוד הרבה להם "מצוות". כמו שכתבו המקובלים, שפנתו החיצונים ורצונם הוא להוסיף בהיתר, ולכן כל עת שהחיצונים גוברים, הלכה כדברי האוסרים. עכ"ל. וזהו שמצינו שהרבה תקנות עשו התכמים ראשונים, ולא קבילו מנייהו, ואחר כך בדורות האחרונים גזרו וקבילו מנייהו, אף על פי שיהיו יותר פחותים במדריגה מן הראשונים. והטעם הוא, שפני אותו הדור הראשון נראה להם שאין כל כך צורך לאותה חומרא, שהחיצונים לא גברו כל כך. והדור האחרון ראו שהחיצונים היו גוברים, משום הכי, קבילו מנייהו אותה החומרא.

**Also, "He gave them . . . commandments in abundance." As the Kabbalists wrote, the force of the *chitzonim*<sup>9</sup> and their will is to add leniencies, and therefore every time that the *chitzonim* gain strength, the halacha is according to the words of those rabbis who rule strictly in opposition to the leniencies, instead saying that something is forbidden.<sup>10</sup> This is why we found that the first sages made many ordinances, and [the people] did not accept them, and afterward in the later generations, they decreed and [the people] accepted them, even though [the later sages] were lower in status than the first [sages].<sup>11</sup> The reason is that it appeared to the members of that early generation that there was no such need for the restrictive measure, that the *chitzonim* were not so strong. But the later generation saw that the *chitzonim* were getting stronger, and because of that, they accepted the restrictive measure.**

וזהו לפיכך הרבה להם תורה ומצוות, שנאמר "ה' תפץ למען צדקו", שלעולם תפץ להצדיק את בריותיו. ומשום הכי, יגדיל תורה ונאדיר, שכל עוד שאנו מוסיפים חומרות וסיגים, אנו מוסיפים עלינו מוראו של הקב"ה, שהוא נאדיר בקדש. "אדיר הוא יבנה ביתו בקרוב", "והשיב לב-אבות על-בנים ולב בנים על-אבותם". אמר, כן יהי רצון.

**This is why "He gave them Torah and commandments in abundance," as it is said, "The Lord was pleased for His righteousness," that He was always pleased to make His creatures righteous. Because of this, "Torah will be made great and glorious," that as long as we add restrictive measures and fences, we increase for ourselves the fear of the Holy One, Blessed be He, Who is "majestic in holiness."<sup>12</sup> "Mighty is He, may He build His house soon,"<sup>13</sup> "He shall reconcile parents with children and children with their parents."<sup>14</sup> Amen, so may it be His will.**

תם ונשלם פירוש מסכת אבות. תהלה נביע לרוכב ערבות.

**Finished and complete is the interpretation of the tractate of Pirkei Avot ("The Ethics of the Fathers"), we will give praise to He Who rides clouds.<sup>15</sup>**

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<sup>9</sup> *Chitzonim* ("external forces") are elements of Creation that act as a spiritual barrier between us and G-d.

<sup>10</sup> Yitzhak Benyamin Wolf, *Nachalat Binyamin* (Amsterdam 1682), mitzvah 121. See also Chapter III, Mishnah 1, above.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Shabbat 14b.

<sup>12</sup> Ex. 15:11.

<sup>13</sup> Pesach Haggadah, Nirtzah, Adir Hu.

<sup>14</sup> Malachi 3:24.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Ps. 68:5.