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| **Esnoga Bet Emunah****4544 Highline Dr. SE****Olympia, WA 98501****United States of America****© 2013**[**http://www.betemunah.org/**](http://www.betemunah.org/)**E-Mail:** **gkilli@aol.com** | **C:\Users\Haggai\Pictures\Menorah 5.jpg** | **Esnoga Bet El****102 Broken Arrow Dr.****Paris TN 38242****United States of America****© 2013**[**http://torahfocus.com/**](http://torahfocus.com/)**E-Mail:** **waltoakley@charter.net** |

**Triennial Cycle (Triennial Torah Cycle) / Septennial Cycle (Septennial Torah Cycle)**

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| **Three and 1/2 year Lectionary Readings** | **Second Year of the Triennial Reading Cycle** |
| **Tammuz 07, 5773 – June 14/15, 2013** | **Fifth Year of the Shmita Cycle** |

**Candle Lighting and Habdalah Times:**

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| **Conroe & Austin, TX, U.S.**Fri. June 14 2013 – Candles at 8:16 PMSat. June 15 2013 – Habdalah 9:15 PM | **Brisbane, Australia**Fri. June 14 2013 – Candles at 4:42 PMSat. June 15 2013 – Habdalah 5:38 PM | **Chattanooga, & Cleveland, TN, U.S.**Fri. June 14 2013 – Candles at 8:38 PMSat. June 15 2013 – Habdalah 9:41 PM |
| **Jakarta, Indonesia**Fri. June 14 2013 – Candles at 5:28 PMSat. June 15 2013 – Habdalah 6:20 PM | **Manila & Cebu, Philippines**Fri. June 14 2013 – Candles at 6:08 PMSat. June 15 2013 – Habdalah 7:01 PM | **Miami, FL, U.S.**Fri. June 14 2013 – Candles at 7:55 PMSat. June 15 2013 – Habdalah 8:52 PM |
| **Olympia, WA, U.S.**Fri. June 14 2013 – Candles at 8:50 PMSat. June 15 2013 – Habdalah 10:09 PM | **Murray, KY, & Paris, TN. U.S.**Fri. June 14 2013 – Candles at 7:57 PMSat. June 15 2013 – Habdalah 9:02 PM | **San Antonio, TX, U.S.**Fri. June 14 2013 – Candles at 8:16 PMSat. June 15 2013 – Habdalah 9:16 PM |
| **Sheboygan & Manitowoc, WI, US**Fri. June 14 2013 – Candles at 8:16 PMSat. June 15 2013 – Habdalah 9:29 PM | **Singapore, Singapore** Fri. June 14 2013 – Candles at 6:52 PMSat. June 15 2013 – Habdalah 7:44 PM | **St. Louis, MO, U.S.**Fri. June 14 2013 – Candles at 8:08 PMSat. June 15 2013 – Habdalah 9:15 PM |

**For other places see:** [**http://chabad.org/calendar/candlelighting.asp**](http://chabad.org/calendar/candlelighting.asp)

**Roll of Honor:**

**This Torah commentary comes to you courtesy of:**

His Eminence Rabbi Dr. Hillel ben David and beloved wife HH Giberet Batsheva bat Sarah

His Honor Paqid Adon David ben Abraham

Her Excellency Giberet Sarai bat Sarah & beloved family

His Excellency Adon Barth Lindemann & beloved family

His Excellency Adon John Batchelor & beloved wife

His Honor Paqid Adon Ezra ben Abraham and beloved wife HH Giberet Karmela bat Sarah,

Her Excellency Giberet Laurie Taylor

His Eminence Rabbi Dr. Adon Eliyahu ben Abraham and beloved wife HH Giberet Dr. Elisheba bat Sarah

Her Excellency Prof. Dr. Conny Williams & beloved family

His Excellency Adon Yoel ben Abraham and beloved family

**For their regular and sacrificial giving, providing the best oil for the lamps, we pray that G-d’s richest blessings be upon their lives and those of their loved ones, together with all Yisrael and her Torah Scholars, amen ve amen!**

**Also a great thank you and great blessings be upon all who send comments to the list about the contents and commentary of the weekly Torah Seder and allied topics**.

**If you want to subscribe to our list and ensure that you never lose any of our commentaries, or would like your friends also to receive this commentary, please do send me an E-Mail to** **benhaggai@GMail.com** **with your E-Mail or the E-Mail addresses of your friends. Toda Rabba!**

**This Torah Sede is dedicated to the Master of the universe in gratitude and thanksgiving for the great healing of Her Excellency Giberet Rachel bat Sarah (a/k/a Vienna Lindemann), as it is said, “For what great nation is there, that has G-d so near unto them, as the LORD our God is when so ever we call upon Him?” (Deuteronomy 4:7)**

**Shabbat: “Midbar Sinai” – Sabbath: “To the wilderness of Sinai”**

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| **Shabbat** | **Torah Reading:** | **Weekday Reading:** |
| מִדְבַּר סִינָי |  |  |
| **“Midbar Sinai”** | Reader 1 – Shemot 19:1-6 | Reader 1 – Shemot 21:1-3 |
| **“to the wilderness of Sinai”** | Reader 2 – Shemot 19:7-9 | Reader 2 – Shemot 21:4-6 |
| **“al desierto de Sinaí”** | Reader 3 – Shemot 19:10-15 | Reader 3 – Shemot 21:1-6 |
| Shemot (Exod.) 19:1 – 20:23 | Reader 4 – Shemot 19:16-25 |  |
| Ashlamatah: Is. 35:1-10 | Reader 5 – Shemot 20:1-14\* |  |
|  | Reader 6 – Shemot 20:15-18 | Reader 1 – Shemot 21:1-3 |
| Psalm 56:1-14 | Reader 7 – Shemot 20:19-22 | Reader 2 – Shemot 21:4-6 |
| Abot: 3:3 |  Maftir: Shemot 20:20-22 | Reader 3 – Shemot 21:1-6 |
| N.C.: Mk 7:14-16; Lk 11:45-54Acts 15:13-18 |  Isaiah 35:1-10 |   |

**\* Note: To be read by the best Torah Scholar available to the congregation**

**Blessings Before Torah Study**

**Blessed are You, Ha-Shem our G-d, King of the universe, Who has sanctified us through Your commandments, and commanded us to actively study Torah. Amen!**

**Please Ha-Shem, our G-d, sweeten the words of Your Torah in our mouths and in the mouths of all Your people Israel. May we and our offspring, and our offspring's offspring, and all the offspring of Your people, the House of Israel, may we all, together, know Your Name and study Your Torah for the sake of fulfilling Your desire. Blessed are You, Ha-Shem, Who teaches Torah to His people Israel. Amen!**

**Blessed are You, Ha-Shem our G-d, King of the universe, Who chose us from all the nations, and gave us the Torah. Blessed are You, Ha-Shem, Giver of the Torah. Amen!**

**Ha-Shem spoke to Moses, explaining a Commandment. "Speak to Aaron and his sons, and teach them the following Commandment: This is how you should bless the Children of Israel. Say to the Children of Israel:**

**May Ha-Shem bless you and keep watch over you; - Amen!**

**May Ha-Shem make His Presence enlighten you, and may He be kind to you; - Amen!**

**May Ha-Shem bestow favor on you, and grant you peace. – Amen!**

**This way, the priests will link My Name with the Israelites, and I will bless them."**

**These are the Laws for which the Torah did not mandate specific amounts: How much growing produce must be left in the corner of the field for the poor; how much of the first fruits must be offered at the Holy Temple; how much one must bring as an offering when one visits the Holy Temple three times a year; how much one must do when doing acts of kindness; and there is no maximum amount of Torah that a person must study.**

**These are the Laws whose benefits a person can often enjoy even in this world, even though the primary reward is in the Next World: They are: Honouring one's father and mother; doing acts of kindness; early attendance at the place of Torah study -- morning and night; showing hospitality to guests; visiting the sick; providing for the financial needs of a bride; escorting the dead; being very engrossed in prayer; bringing peace between two people, and between husband and wife; but the study of Torah is as great as all of them together. Amen!**

**Contents of the Torah Seder**

* Preparations for the Covenant at Sinai – Exodus 19:1-15
* Natural Accompaniments of the Revelation – Exodus 19:16-19
* The Final Directions Before the Revelation – Exodus 19:20-25
* The Ten Words – Exodus 20:1-14
* The Effect of the Revelation – Exodus 20:15-18
* How G-d is to be Worshipped – Exodus 20:19-23

**Reading Assignment:**

**The Torah Anthology: Yalkut Me’Am Lo’Ez - Vol VI: The Ten Commandments**

By: Rabbi Yaaqov Culi, Translated by: Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan

Published by: Moznaim Publishing Corp. (New York, 1979)

Vol. 6 – “The Ten Commandments,” pp. 51-446

**Rashi & Targum Pseudo Jonathan**

**for: Shemot (Exod.) 19:1 – 20:23**

| **RASHI** | **TARGUM PSEUDO JONATHAN** |
| --- | --- |
| 1. ¶ In the third month of the children of Israel's departure from Egypt, on this day they arrived in the desert of Sinai.  | 1. ¶ In the third month of the Exodus of the sons of Israel from the land of Mizraim, on that day, the first of the month, came they to the desert;  |
| 2. They journeyed from Rephidim, and they arrived in the desert of Sinai, and they encamped in the desert, and Israel encamped there opposite the mountain. | 2. for they had journeyed from Rephidim, and had come to the desert of Sinai **and Israel encamped there in the desert, of one heart, near to the mountain.** |
| 3. Moses ascended to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain, saying, "So shall you say to the house of Jacob and tell the sons of Israel, | 3. And Mosheh on the second day went up to the summit of the mount; and the LORD called to him from the mount, saying, This will you speak to the men of the house of Ya’aqob, and instruct the house of Israel.JERUSALEM: And Mosheh went up to seek instruction from before the LORD; and the Word of the LORD anticipated him from the mountain, saying, Thus will you speak to the men of the house of Ya’aqob, and teach the congregation of the sons of Israel. |
| 4. You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and [how] I bore you on eagles' wings, and I brought you to Me. | 4. Ye have seen what I did to the Mizraee; and how I bare you upon the clouds as upon eagles' wings from Pelusin, to take you to the place of the sanctuary, there to solemnize the Pascha; and in the same night brought you back to Pelusin, and from thence have brought you near, to (receive) the doctrine of My Law.JERUSALEM: You have seen what vengeance I have taken of the Mizraee, and (how) I bare you upon the light clouds as upon eagles' wings, and brought you near to the doctrine of My Law.  |
| 5. **And now, if you obey Me and keep My covenant, you shall be to Me a treasure out of all peoples, for Mine is the entire earth.** | 5. **And now, if you will truly hearken to My Word and keep My covenant, you will be more beloved before Me than all the peoples on the face of the earth.****JERUSALEM: And now, if you will truly hearken to the voice of My Word, and will keep My covenant, you will be unto My Name a distinct people, and beloved as a precious treasure above all peoples; for all the earth is to the Name of the LORD.**  |
| 6. **And you shall be to Me a kingdom of princes and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the children of Israel."** | 6. **And before Me you will be crowned kings, and sanctified priests, and a holy people. These are the words you will speak to the sons of Israel.****JERUSALEM: And to My Name will you be kings and priests and a holy people. These are the words you will speak.** |
| 7. Moses came and summoned the elders of Israel and placed before them all these words that the Lord had commanded him. | 7. ¶ And Mosheh came that day, and called the elders of the people, and set in order before them all these words which the LORD had commanded.JERUSALEM: ¶ And Mosheh came and called the Sages of Israel and set in order before them all these words which the Word of the LORD had commanded him.  |
| 8. **And all the people replied in unison and said, "All that the Lord has spoken we shall do!"** and Moses took the words of the people back to the Lord. | 8. **And all the people responded together, and said, All that the LORD has spoken we will do.** And Mosheh carried back the words of the people before the LORD.**JERUSALEM: And all the people answered together in the fulness of their heart, and said, All that the Word of the LORD has spoken, we will do.** And Mosheh returned the words of the people in prayer before the LORD.  |
| 9. And the Lord said to Moses, "Behold, I am coming to you in the thickness of the cloud, in order that the people hear when I speak to you, and they will also believe in you forever." And Moses relayed the words of the people to the Lord. | 9. ¶ And the LORD said to Mosheh, Behold, on the third day I will reveal Myself to you in the depth of the cloud of glory, that the people may hear while I speak with you, and may believe in you forever. And Mosheh delivered the words of the people before the LORD.JERUSALEM: ¶ And the Word of the LORD said to Mosheh, Behold, My Word will be revealed to you in the thickness of the cloud, that the people may hear while I speak with you, and may also believe forever in the words of the prophecy of you, My servant Mosheh. And Mosheh delivered the words of the people in prayer before the LORD.  |
| 10. And the Lord said to Moses, "Go to the people and prepare them today and tomorrow, and they shall wash their garments. | 10. And the LORD said to Mosheh on the fourth day, Go unto the people, and prepare them today and tomorrow; let them wash their clothes, |
| 11. And they shall be prepared for the third day, for on the third day, the Lord will descend before the eyes of all the people upon Mount Sinai. | 11. and he prepared On the third day; for on the third day the LORD will reveal Himself to the eyes of all the people, upon the Mount of Sinai. |
| 12. And you shall set boundaries for the people around, saying, ‘Beware of ascending the mountain or touching its edge; whoever touches the mountain shall surely be put to death.' | 12. And you will set limits for the people that they may stand round about the mountain, and will say, Beware that you ascend not the mount, nor come near its confines; whoever comes near the mount will be surely put to death. |
| 13. No hand shall touch it, for he shall be stoned or cast down; whether man or beast, he shall not live. When the ram's horn sounds a long, drawn out blast, they may ascend the mountain." | 13. Touch it not with the hand; for he will be stoned with hailstone, or be pierced with arrows of fire; whether beast or man, he will not live. But when the voice of the trumpet is heard, they may go up (forwards) towards the mount.JERUSALEM: No man will touch it with the hand; for stoned he will be stoned, or fiery arrows will flee against him; whether beast or man, he will not live. When the trumpet sounds, they may go up toward the mountain. |
| 14. So Moses descended from the mountain to the people, and he prepared the people, and they washed their garments. | 14. And Mosheh went down that day to the people, and prepared the people, and they blanched their clothes. |
| 15. He said to the people, "Be ready for three days; do not go near a woman." | 15. And he said to the people, Be ready for the third day; abstain from the marriage-bed.JERUSALEM: And he said to the people, Be ready for the third day; abstain from the marriage-bed.  |
| 16. It came to pass on the third day when it was morning, that there were thunder claps and lightning flashes, and a thick cloud was upon the mountain, and a very powerful blast of a shofar, and the entire nation that was in the camp shuddered. | 16. ¶ And it was on the third day, on the sixth of the month, in the time of the morning, that on the mountain there were voices of thunders, and lightnings, and mighty clouds of smoke, and a voice of a trumpet exceeding loud; and all the people in the camp trembled. |
| 17. Moses brought the people out toward God from the camp, **and they stood at the bottom of the mountain.** | 17. And Mosheh brought forth the people from the camp to meet the glorious Presence of the LORD; **and suddenly the LORD of the world uprooted the mountain, and lifted it in the air, and it became luminous as a beacon, and they stood beneath the mountain.** |
| 18. And the entire Mount Sinai smoked because the Lord had descended upon it in fire, and its smoke ascended like the smoke of the kiln, and the entire mountain quaked violently. | 18. And all the mount of Sinai was in flame; for the heavens had overspread it, and He was revealed over it in flaming fire, and the smoke went up as the smoke of a furnace, and all the mountain quaked greatly.JERUSALEM: And all mount Sinai sent up smoke, because the glory of the Shekinah of the LORD was revealed upon it in flame of fire. |
| 19. The sound of the shofar grew increasingly stronger; Moses would speak and God would answer him with a voice. | 19. And the voice of the trumpet went forth, and grew stronger: (then) Mosheh spoke, and was answered from before the LORD with a gracious and majestic voice, and with pleasant and gracious words. |
| 20. The Lord descended upon Mount Sinai, to the peak of the mountain, and the Lord summoned Moses to the peak of the mountain, and Moses ascended. | 20. And the LORD revealed Himself on mount Sinai upon the summit of the mountain, and the LORD called unto Mosheh from the summit of the mount, and Mosheh went up. |
| 21. The Lord said to Moses, "Go down, warn the people lest they break [their formation to go nearer] to the Lord, and many of them will fall. | 21. And the LORD said to Mosheh, Descend, and warn the people, lest they come directly before the LORD to gaze, and many of them fall. |
| 22. And also, the priests who go near to the Lord shall prepare themselves, lest the Lord wreak destruction upon them." | 22. The priests, also, who approach to minister before the LORD, must be sanctified, lest the LORD destroy them. |
| 23. And Moses said to the Lord, "The people cannot ascend to Mount Sinai, for You warned us saying, Set boundaries for the mountain and sanctify it.' " | 23. And Mosheh said before the LORD, The people cannot come up to mount Sinai, because You did instruct us, saying, Make limits to the mount, and sanctify it. |
| 24. But the Lord said to him, "Go, descend, and [then] you shall ascend, and Aaron with you, but the priests and the populace shall not break [their formation] to ascend to the Lord, lest He wreak destruction upon them." | 24. And the LORD said to him, Go down, and then ascend, you and Aharon with you; but let not the, priests or the people directly come up to gaze before the LORD, lest He slay them. |
| 25. So Moses went down to the people and said [this] to them. **{S}** | 25. And Mosheh went down from the mountain to the people, and said to them, Draw near and hear the Law with Ten Words.JERUSALEM: And Mosheh went down from the mountain to the people, and said to them, Draw near and receive the Ten Words. |
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| 1. God spoke all these words, to respond: **{S}** | 1. ¶ And the Lord spoke all these words, saying:JERUSALEM: ¶ And the Word of the LORD spoke all the excellency of these words saying:  |
| 2. "I am the Lord, your God, Who took you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. | 2. The first word, as it came forth from the mouth of the Holy One, whose Name be blessed, was like storms, and lightnings, and flames of fire, with a burning light on His right hand and on His left. It winged its way through the air of the heavens, and was made manifest unto the camp of Israel, and returned, and was engraven on the tables of the covenant that were given by the hand of Mosheh, and were turned in them from side to side: and then called He, and said: Sons of Israel My people, I am the LORD your God, who brought you out free from the land of Mizraim, from the house of the bondage of slaves. |
| 3. You shall not have the gods of others in My presence. | 3. ¶ The second word which came forth from the mouth of the Holy One, whose name be blessed, was like storms, and lightnings, and flames of fire. A burning light was on His right hand and on His left and was borne through the air of the heavens, returned, and was made manifest unto the camp of Israel; it returned, and was engraven on the tables of the covenant, and was turned in them from side to side. Then called He, and said, House of Israel, My people, you will have no other God beside Me. |
| 4. You shall not make for yourself a graven image or any likeness which is in the heavens above, which is on the earth below, or which is in the water beneath the earth. | 4. ¶ You shall not make to yourselves image or figure, or any similitude of what is in the heavens above, or on the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth. |
| 5. You shall neither prostrate yourself before them nor worship them, for I, the Lord, your God, am a zealous God, Who visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the sons, upon the third and the fourth generation of those who hate Me, | 5. You will not bow down to them, or worship before them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God and an avenger, punishing with vengeance, recording the guilt of wicked fathers upon rebellious children unto the third and unto the fourth generation of them who hate Me; |
| 6. and [I] perform loving kindness to thousands [of generations], to those who love Me and to those who keep My commandments. **{S}** | 6. but keeping mercy and goodness for thousands of generations of the righteous/generous who love Me, and who keep My commandments and My laws. |
| 7. You shall not take the name of the Lord, your God, in vain, for the Lord will not hold blameless anyone who takes His name in vain. **{P}** | 7. ¶ My people of the house of Israel, Let no one of you swear by the name of the Word of the LORD your God in vain; for in the day of the great judgment the LORD will not hold guiltless any one who swears by His name in vain. |
| 8. Remember the Sabbath day to sanctify it. | 8. ¶ My people of the house of Israel, Remember the day of Shabat, to sanctify it. |
| 9. Six days may you work and perform all your labor, | 9. Six days you will labor, and do all your service: |
| 10. but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord, your God; you shall perform no labor, neither you, your son, your daughter, your manservant, your maidservant, your beast, nor your stranger who is in your cities. | 10. but the seventh day is (for) rest and quietude before the LORD your God: you will not perform any work, you, and your sons, and your daughters, and your servants, and your handmaids, and your sojourners who are in your cities. |
| 11. For [in] six days the Lord made the heaven and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and He rested on the seventh day. Therefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and sanctified it. **{S}** | 11. For in six days the LORD created the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and whatever is therein, and rested on the seventh day: therefore the LORD has blessed the day of Shabbat and sanctified it. |
| 12. Honor your father and your mother, in order **that your days be lengthened on the land that the Lord, your God, is giving you.** **{S}** | 12. ¶ My people, the house of Israel, **Let every man be instructed** in the honor of his father and in the honor of his mother: **that your days may be multiplied upon the land which the LORD your God gives you.** |
| 13. You shall not murder. **{S}** You shall not commit adultery. **{S}** You shall not steal. **{S}**  You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. **{S}** | 13. ¶ My people, the sons of Israel, You. will not be murderers; you will not be companions of or partakers with murderers: in the congregations of Israel there will not be seen a murderous people; neither will your sons rise up after you and teach one another to take part with murderers: **for on account of the guilt of murder the sword comes forth upon the world.** (14) ¶ My people of the house of Israel, Be you not adulterers, nor companions nor partakers with adulterers: nor in the congregations of Israel will there be seen an adulterous people, that your sons may not arise after you to teach one another to have part with adulterers: **for through the guilt of adultery death comes forth upon the world.**(15) ¶ Sons of Israel My people, You will not be kidnappers, nor companions nor partakers with kidnappers: there will not be seen in the congregations of Israel a kidnapping people; that your sons may not arise after you to teach one another to have part with kidnappers: **for on account of the guilt of kidnapping famine comes forth upon the world.**(16) ¶ Sons of Israel My people, You will not testify against your neighbors a testimony of falsehood, nor be companions or partakers with those who bear false witness nor will there be seen in the congregations of Israel a people who testify a testimony of falsehood; neither will your sons arise after you to teach one another to have part with those who testify falsehood: **for because of the guilt of false testimony the clouds go up and the rain comes not down, and dryness comes upon the world.** |
| 14. You shall not covet your neighbor's house. **{S}** You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, his manservant, his maidservant, his ox, his donkey, or whatever belongs to your neighbor." **{P}** | 14. (17) ¶ Sons of Israel My people, You will not be covetous companions or partakers with the covetous: nor will there be seen in the congregations of Israel a covetous people; that your sons may not arise after you to teach one another to have part with the covetous: neither will any among you covet the wife of his neighbor, nor his servant, nor his handmaid, nor his ox, nor his ass nor anything that belongs to his neighbor; **because through the guilt of covetousness the government breaks in upon the possessions of men to take them, and the wealthy are made poor, and slavery comes upon the world.** |
| 15. And all the people saw the voices and the torches, **the sound of the shofar,** and the smoking mountain, and the people saw and trembled; so they stood from afar. | 15. (18) ¶ And all the people saw the thunders, and were turned back, every one as he heard them coming forth from the midst of the lights, **and the voice of the trumpet as it will raise the dead,** and the mountain smoking; and all the people saw and drew back, and stood twelve miles off.JERUSALEM: ¶ And all the people saw the thunders and the lights, and the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and the people saw and trembled, and stood afar off. |
| 16. **They said to Moses, "You speak with us, and we will hear, but let God not speak with us lest we die."** | 16. (19) **And they said to Mosheh, Speak you with us, and we can hear; but let it not be spoken with us any more from before the LORD, lest we die.** |
| 17. But Moses said to the people, "Fear not, for God has come in order to exalt you, and in order that His awe shall be upon your faces, so that you shall not sin." | 17. (20) And Mosheh said to the people, Fear not; for the glory of the LORD is revealed to try you, whether His fear is before your faces, that you may not sin. |
| 18. The people remained far off, but Moses drew near to the opaque darkness, where God was. **{S}** | 18. (21) ¶ And the people stood twelve miles off; but Mosheh drew near to the height of the darkness where was the glory of the LORD. |
| 19. The Lord said to Moses, "So shall you say to the children of Israel, You have seen that from the heavens I have spoken with you. | 19. (22) And the LORD said to Mosheh, Speak thus to the sons of Israel: You have seen that from the heavens I have spoken with you; |
| 20. You shall not make [images of anything that is] with Me. Gods of silver or gods of gold you shall not make for yourselves. | 20. (23) sons of Israel, My people, you will not make, that you may worship, the likeness of the sun or the moon or the stars, or the planets, or the angels who minister before Me; idols of silver, nor idols of gold, you will not make to yourselves. |
| 21. An altar of earth you shall make for Me, and you shall slaughter beside it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your cattle. **Wherever I allow My name to be mentioned, I will come to you and bless you.** | 21. (24) An altar of earth you will make to My Name, and sacrifice upon it your burnt offerings and your sanctified oblations from your sheep and from your oxen. **And in every place where My Shekinah will dwell, and you worship before Me, there will I send My blessing upon you, and will bless you.**JERUSALEM: An altar grounded in the earth will you make unto My name, and will offer upon it your burnt offerings and sacred oblations, your sheep and your oxen. **In every place in which you will memorialize My holy Name, My Word will be revealed to you, and bless you.**  |
| 22. And when you make for Me an altar of stones, you shall not build them of hewn stones, lest you wield your sword upon it and desecrate it. | 22. (25) But if you will make an altar of stones unto My Name, you will not build them sculptured; for if you lift up iron, from which the sword is made, upon the stone, you will profane it.JERUSALEM: But if you make an altar of stones unto My Name, you will not build it with sculptured ones, because the sword is made of iron. If you work with iron upon it, you will profane it. |
| 23. And you shall not ascend with steps upon My altar, so that your nakedness shall not be exposed upon it.' **{P}** | 23. (26) And you, the priests, who stand to minister before Me, will not ascend to My altar by steps, but by (sloping) bridges; that your shame may not be seen thereupon.JERUSALEM: You also, the priests, the sons of Aharon, who stand and minister beside Mine altar, will not ascend by steps unto Mine altar, lest your shame be disclosed upon it. |
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**Welcome to the World of P’shat Exegesis**

In order to understand the finished work of the P’shat mode of interpretation of the Torah, one needs to take into account that the P’shat is intended to produce a catechetical output, whereby a question/s is/are raised and an answer/a is/are given using the seven Hermeneutic Laws of R. Hillel and as well as the laws of Hebrew Grammar and Hebrew expression.

The Seven Hermeneutic Laws of R. Hillel are as follows

[cf. <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/view.jsp?artid=472&letter=R>]:

**1. Ḳal va-ḥomer:** "Argumentum a minori ad majus" or "a majori ad minus"; corresponding to the scholastic proof a fortiori.

**2. Gezerah shavah:** Argument from analogy. Biblical passages containing synonyms or homonyms are subject, however much they differ in other respects, to identical definitions and applications.

**3. Binyan ab mi-katub eḥad:** Application of a provision found in one passage only to passages which are related to the first in content but do not contain the provision in question.

**4. Binyan ab mi-shene ketubim:** The same as the preceding, except that the provision is generalized from two Biblical passages.

**5. Kelal u-Peraṭ and Peraṭ u-kelal:** Definition of the general by the particular, and of the particular by the general.

**6. Ka-yoẓe bo mi-maḳom aḥer:** Similarity in content to another Scriptural passage.

**7. Dabar ha-lamed me-'inyano:** Interpretation deduced from the context.

**Rashi’s Commentary for: Shemot (Exod.) 19:1 – 20:23**

**Chapter 19**

**1** **on this day** On the New Moon (Mechilta, Shab. 86b). It could have said only, “on that day.” What is the meaning of "on this day"? That the words of the Torah shall be new to you, as if they were given just today.-[from Tanchuma Buber, p. 73]

**2** **They journeyed from Rephidim** Why did [Scripture] have to repeat and explain from where they had journeyed? Did it not already state (Exod. 17:1) that they were encamped in Rephidim? It is known that they journeyed from there. But [it is repeated] to compare their journey from Rephidim to their arrival in the Sinai desert. Just as their arrival in the Sinai desert was with repentance, so was their journey from Rephidim with repentance.-[from Mechilta]

**and Israel encamped there** Heb. וַיִחַן, [the singular form, denoting that they encamped there] as one man with one heart, but all the other encampments were [divided] with complaints and with strife.-[from Mechilta]

**opposite the mountain** [This means] to its east. And wherever you find [the word] “opposite (נֶגֶד),” it means facing the eastern side.-[from Mechilta] [This signifies that they were facing west, toward the eastern side of Mount Sinai.]

**3** **Moses ascended** on the second day (Shab. 86a), and all his ascents were early in the morning, as it is said: “And Moses arose early in the morning” (Exod. 34:4).

**So shall you say** With this language and in this order.-[from Mechilta]

**to the house of Jacob** These are the women. Say it to them in a gentle language.-[from Mechilta]

**and tell the sons of Israel** The punishments and the details [of the laws] explain to the males, things that are as harsh as wormwood. -[Mechilta, Shab. 87a]

**4** **You have seen** This is not a tradition that you have. I am not sending you this [message] with words; I am not calling witnesses to testify before you, but you [yourselves] have seen what I did to the Egyptians. They were liable to Me for many sins before they attacked you, but I did not exact retribution from them except through you.-[from Mechilta]

**and [how] I bore you** Heb. וָאֶשָׂא. This is [alluding to] the day that the Israelites came to Rameses-because the Israelites were scattered throughout the land of Goshen. And in a short time, when they came to start on their journey and leave, they all gathered in Rameses (Mechilta). Onkelos, however, rendered וָאֶשָׂא as וְאַטָלִית יַתְכוֹן, and I caused you to travel, like וָאַסִּיעַ אֶתְכֶם He [Onkelos] amended [the translation of] the passage in a way respectful to the One above.

**on eagles’ wings** Like an eagle, which carries its young on its wings, for all other birds place their young between their feet since they fear another bird flying above them. The eagle, however, fears only man, lest he shoot an arrow at it, because no other bird flies above it. Therefore, it places them [its young] on its wings. It says, “Rather the arrow pierce me and not my children.” I [God] too did that: “Then the angel of God…moved, …And he came between the camp of Egypt, etc.” (Exod. 14:19, 20), and the Egyptians shot arrows and catapult stones, and the cloud absorbed them.-[from Mechilta]

**and I brought you to Me** As the Targum [Onkelos renders: and I brought you near to My service]. [This is to avoid ascribing corporeality to God.]

**5** **And now** If now you accept upon yourselves [the yoke of the commandments], it will be pleasant for you in the future, since all beginnings are difficult.-[from Mechilta]

**and keep My covenant** which I will make with you concerning the observance of the Torah.

**a treasure** Heb. סְגֻלִֵֶַָָָּה, a beloved treasure, like “and the treasures (וּסְגְלִֵּת) of the kings” (Eccl. 2:8), [i.e., like] costly vessels and precious stones, which kings store away. So will you be [more of] a treasure to Me than the other nations (Mechilta). Now don’t think (lit., and do not say) that you alone are Mine, and [that] I have no others besides you. So what else do I have, that [My] love for you should be made evident? For the whole earth is Mine, but they [the other nations] mean nothing to Me.

**6** **And you shall be to Me a kingdom of princes** Heb., מַמְלֶכֶת כּֽהֲנִים, princes, as it is said: “and David’s sons were chief officers (כּֽהֲנִים)” (II Sam. 8:18). -[from Mechilta]

**These are the words** No less and no more.-[from Mechilta]

**8** **and Moses took the words of the people back…** on the next day, which was the third day, for he ascended early in the morning (Shab. 86a). Did Moses [really] have to [bring back to God an] answer? Rather, the text comes to teach you etiquette from Moses-he did not say, “Since He Who sent me knows, I do not have to reply.”-[from Mechilta]

**9** **in the thickness of the cloud** Heb. בְּעַב הֶעָנָן, in the thickness of the cloud, and that is the opaque darkness (עֲרָפֶל) [mentioned in Exod. 20:18].-[from Mechilta]

**and…in you forever** Also in the prophets who will follow you.-[from Mechilta]

**And Moses relayed, etc**.-on the following day, which was the fourth day of the month.-[from Jonathan]

**the words of the people, etc.** [Namely] a response to this statement I have heard from them [the Israelites], that they want to hear [directly] from You. [They maintain that] there is no comparison between one who hears [a message] from the mouth of the messenger and one who hears [it] from the mouth of the king [himself]. [They say,] “We want to see our King!”- [from Mechilta]

**10** **And the Lord said to Moses** If [it is] true that they compel [Me] to speak with them, go to the people.

**and prepare them** Heb. וְקִדַָּשְׁתָּם, and you shall prepare them (Mechilta), that they should prepare themselves today and tomorrow.

**11** **And they shall be prepared** Separated from women.-[from Mechilta]

**for on the third day** which is the sixth of the month, and on the fifth [of the month], Moses built the altar at the foot of the mountain, and the twelve monuments, the entire episode stated in the section of וְאֵלֶה הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים (Exod. 24), but there is no sequence of earlier and later incidents in the Torah.-from Mechilta]

**before the eyes of all the people**-[This] teaches [us] that there were no blind [persons] among them, for they were all cured.-[from Mechilta]

**12** **And you shall set boundaries** Set boundaries for them as a sign that they should not come nearer [to the mountain] than the boundary.

**saying** The boundary says to them, “Beware of going up from here on,” and you shall warn them about it.

**or touching its edge** Even the edge of it.

**13** **or cast down** From here [it is derived] that those liable to death by stoning are [first] cast down from the stoning place, which was as high as two heights [of a man].-[from Sanh. 45a] cast down-Heb. יִיָרֶה, shall be

**cast down** to the earth, like “He cast (יָרָה) into the sea” (Exod. 15:4).

**When the ram’s horn sounds a long, drawn-out blast**-When the ram’s horn sounds a long, drawn-out blast,this is the sign of the Shechinah’s withdrawal and the cessation of the voice [of God]. As soon as the Shechinah withdraws, they are permitted to ascend [the mountain].-[from Mechilta]

**the ram’s horn** Heb. הַיוֹבֵל. That is a shofar of a ram, for in Arabia, they call a ram “yuvla.” And this shofar was from Isaac’s ram [the ram that Abraham sacrificed instead of Isaac]. (Pirkei d’Rabbi Eliezer, ch. 31).

**14** **from the mountain to the people** [This] teaches [us] that Moses did not turn to his [own] affairs, but [went directly] from the mountain to the people.-[from Mechilta]

**15** **Be ready for three days** For the end of three days. That is the fourth day, for Moses added one day of his own volition. This is the view of Rabbi Jose [who says that the Torah was given on the seventh of Sivan]. According to the one who says that the Ten Commandments were given on the sixth of the month, however, Moses did not add anything, and “for three days” has the same meaning as “for the third day.” [from Shab. 87a]

**do not go near a woman** [to have intimacy with her] for all these three days [of preparation], in order that the women may immerse themselves on the third day and be pure to receive the Torah. If they have intercourse within the three days, the woman could [involuntarily] emit semen after her immersion and become unclean again. After three days have elapsed [since intercourse], however, the semen has already become putrid and is no longer capable of fertilization, so it is pure from contaminating the [woman] who emits it.-[from Shab. 86a]

**16** **when it was morning** [This] teaches [us] that He preceded them [on Mount Sinai], which is unconventional for a flesh and blood person to do, [i.e.,] having the teacher wait for the pupil. And so we find in Ezekiel (3:22, 23), “‘Arise, go out to the plain, etc.’ So I arose and went out to the plain, and behold, there the glory of the Lord was standing.”-[from unknown Midrashic source]

**17** **toward God** [This expression] tells [us] that the Shechinah came out toward them like a bridegroom going out toward a bride. This is [the meaning of] what is stated: “The Lord came from Sinai” (Deut. 33:2), and it does not say, “came to Sinai.”-[from Mechilta]

**at the bottom of the mountain** According to its simple meaning, at the foot of the mountain. Its midrashic interpretation is, however, that the mountain was uprooted from its place and turned over them like a vat.-[from Shab. 88a]

**18** **the entire Mount Sinai smoked** Heb. עָשַׁן. This word עָשַׁן is not a noun, because the “shin” is vowelized with a “pattach.” But [it is] the past tense of a [singular] verb in the form פָּעַל, like אָמַר, said, שָׁמַר, watched, שָׁמַע, heard. Therefore, its targum is תָּנַן כּוֹלֵית, and [Onkelos] did not translate תְּנָנָא[which would mean: was all smoke]. All [instances of] עָשָׁן in Scriptures are vowelized with a “kamatz” because they are nouns.

**the kiln**-[used for the baking] of lime. I could think that it means [Mount Sinai smoked] like the kiln and no more. Therefore, [to clarify this,] Scripture states: “[the mountain was] blazing with fire up to the heart of the heaven” (Deut. 4:11) [meaning that the fire was far greater than in a lime kiln]. Why then does the Torah say "kiln"? In order to explain to the [human] ear what it is able to hear, [i.e., to give the reader a picture that can be imagined]. He gives the creatures [humans] a sign familiar to them. Similar to this [is the description in reference to God:] “He shall roar like a lion” (Hos. 11:10). Who but Him gave strength to the lion? Yet the Scriptures compare Him to a lion? But we describe Him and compare Him to His creatures in order to explain to [humans] what the ear is able to hear. Similar to this [is], “And its sound [the voice of God] was like the sound of abundant waters” (Ezek. 43:2). Now who gave the water a sound but He? Yet you describe Him and compare Him to His creatures in order to explain to [humans] what the ear is able to hear.- [from Mechilta]

**19** **grew increasingly stronger** It is customary for mortals that the longer one blows long notes [on a horn], the weaker and fainter its sound becomes. Here, however, it constantly grew stronger. Now why at the beginning was this so [i.e., a weak sound]? In order to let their ears hear what they were able to hear [and not shock them suddenly].-[from Mechilta]

**Moses would speak** When Moses would speak and make the Decalogue heard to Israel-for they heard from the mouth of God only “I am…” and “You shall not have” (Mak. 24a)—the Holy One, blessed be He, would assist him [Moses] by giving him strength so that his voice would be strong and audible.- [from Mechilta]

**would answer him with a voice** [This means] He would answer him concerning the voice, [and not with a voice. The ב in בְקוֹל is used], similar to [the ב in בָאֵשׁ in the phrase:] “that will answer with fire” (I Kings 18:24). [בָאֵשׁ means] concerning the fire, [i.e., signifying] to bring it [the fire] down [from Heaven].- [from Mechilta]

**20** **The Lord descended upon Mount Sinai** I may think that He actually descended upon it. Therefore, Scripture says: “You have seen that from the heavens I have spoken with you” (Exod. 20:19). This teaches that [He did descend although still in the heavens,] He bent down the upper heavens and the lower heavens and spread them upon the mountain like a spread on a bed, and the Throne of Glory descended upon them [the upper heavens and the lower heavens].- [from Mechilta]

**21** **warn the people** Heb. הָעֵד. Warn them not to go up the mountain.

**lest they break** their position [i.e., their ranks] because of their longing for God, to see [Him], and they move too close to the side of the mountain.

**and many of them will fall** Heb. וְנָפַל. Whatever [number] falls from them, let it be even a single person, to Me it is considered [as if] many [have fallen].-[from Mechilta]

**lest they break** Heb. יֶהֶרְסוּ. Every [expression of] הֲרִיסָה [denotes] the separation of the collection of [the parts of] the building. Likewise, those who separate from the position of people break up that position.

**22** **And also, the priests** [I.e.,] also the firstborn, who perform the [divine] service.- [from Zev. 115b]

**who go near to the Lord** to offer up sacrifices (targumim), they too shall not rely on their importance to ascend the mountain.

**shall prepare themselves** They shall be ready to stand on their position.

**lest the Lord wreak destruction** Heb. יִפְרֽץ, an expression of a breach. [This means] He will kill some of them and [thus] make a breach in them [their completeness].

**23** **The people cannot** I do not have to warn them because today they have already been warned for three days, and they cannot ascend [the mountain] since they have no permission.

**24** **Go, descend** And warn them a second time. We admonish a person before the act [he is to perform], and we admonish him again at the time of the act [when it is to be performed]. [from Mechilta]

**and [then] you shall ascend, and Aaron with you, but the priests** I might think that they too shall be with you, [that the verse should be rendered: and you shall ascend, and Aaron with you, and the priests, but the people…]. Therefore, the Torah states: “and you shall ascend” [the pronoun is meant for emphasis, in order to exclude the priests]. Consequently, you must say that you [shall have] a partition for yourself, Aaron [shall have] a partition for himself, and the priests [shall have] a partition for themselves. Moses went closer than Aaron, and Aaron closer than the priests, but the people shall altogether not break their position to ascend to the Lord.- [from Mechilta]

**lest He wreak destruction upon them-Heb.** .יִפְרָץ Although יִפְרָץ is vowelized with a short “kamatz,” it has not changed from its grammatical construction. So is the way of every word vowelized with a “melupum” ("cholam"); when it comes next to a “makkaf,” its vowelization changes to a short “kamatz.” [Hence, the word יִפְרֽץ-which in this case appears with a “makkaf,” a hyphen, is changed to .יִפְרָץ]

**25** **and said [this] to them** this warning. [Apparently, Rashi understands “and said to them” to mean that Moses said something to them. Since the object is obscure, Rashi inserts “this warning,” to clarify that the verse means that Moses relayed to the Israelites God’s warning to keep their distance from the mountain.]

**Chapter 20**

**1** **God spoke**-Heb. אֱהִים. [The word] אֱֱהִים always means “a judge.” [This Divine Name is used here] because there are some sections in the Torah [that contain commandments] that if a person performs them, he receives a reward, but if not, he does not receive any punishment for them. I might think that so it is with the Ten Commandments. Therefore, Scripture says: “God (אֱלֽהִים) spoke,” [signifying God’s role as] a Judge, [Whose function is] to mete out punishment [when the Ten Commandments are not obeyed]. [from Mechilta]

**all these words** [This] teaches [us] that the Holy One, blessed be He, said the Ten Commandments in one utterance, something that is impossible for a human being to say [in a similar way]. If so, why does the Torah say again, “I am [the Lord, your God (verse 2)]” and “You shall have no…” (verse 3)? Because He later explained each statement [of the Ten Commandments] individually.- [from Mechilta]

**to respond** Heb. לֵאמֽר, lit., to say. [This] teaches [us] that they responded to the positive [commandments], “Yes,” and to the negative [commandments], “No.”-[from Mechilta]

**2** **Who took you out of the land of Egypt** The taking [you] out [of Egypt] is sufficient reason for you to be subservient to Me. Alternatively, [God mentions the Exodus] since He revealed Himself on the sea as a valiant warrior, and here He revealed Himself as an old man full of mercy, as it is said: “and beneath His feet was like the form of a brick of sapphire” (Exod. 24:10). That [brick] was before Him at the time of the enslavement [to remember the Israelites’ suffering when they made bricks as slaves], “and like the appearance of the heavens” (Exod. 24:10), [i.e., there was joy before Him] when they were redeemed. Since I change in [My] appearances, do not say that they are two [Divine] domains, [but] I am He Who took you out of Egypt and [I am He Who performed the miracles] by the sea (Mechilta). Alternatively, [God mentions the Exodus] since they [the Israelites] heard many voices [during the revelation], as it is said: “And all the people saw the voices” (verse 15), [meaning that] voices came from four directions and from the heavens and from the earth, [so] do not say that there are many domains (Exod. Rabbah 5:9). And why did He say [this] in the singular [possessive], אֱהֶיךָ? In order to give Moses an opening to offer a defense in the incident of the calf. This is [the meaning of] “Why, O Lord, should Your anger be kindled against Your people?” (Exod. 32:11). You did not command them, “You shall not have the gods of others before Me,” but [You commanded] me alone (Exod. Rabbah 43:5).

**out of the house of bondage** Literally, out of the house of slaves. [I.e.,] from Pharaoh’s house, where you were slaves to him. Or perhaps [Scripture] means only: from the house of slaves, that they were slaves to [other] slaves? Therefore, Scripture says: “and He redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt” (Deut. 7:8). Consequently, you must say that they were slaves to Pharaoh, but not slaves to [other] slaves.-[from Exod. Rabbah 43:5]

**3** **You shall not have** Why was this said? Since it says, “You shall not make for yourself, etc.” I know only that one may not make [graven idols, etc.] How do I know that one may not keep what was already made? Therefore, Scripture states: “You shall not have.” -[Mechilta]

**the gods of others** Heb. אֱהִים אֲחֵרִים, which are not gods, but that others have made them for gods over themselves. It is impossible to interpret this passage to mean: gods other than I, since it is a disgrace for Heaven to call them gods along with Him. Alternatively: strange gods, for they are strange to their worshippers. They cry out to them, but they do not answer them, and it appears as if it [the god] were a stranger, who never knew him [the worshipper].-[from Mechilta]

**in My presence** Heb. עַל-פָּנָּי [This means] as long as I exist [signifying forever. God states this so] that you should not say that only that generation was commanded [prohibited] concerning idolatry.-[from Mechilta]

**4** **a graven image** Heb. .פֶּסֶל [It is called by this name] because it is sculpted (נִפְסָל).

**or any likeness** The likeness of anything that is in the heavens.

**5** **a zealous God** Heb. קַנָּא, zealous to mete out punishment. He does not forgo retaliating by forgiving the sin of idolatry. Every [expression of] קַנָּא means enprenemant in Old French, zealous anger. He directs His attention to mete out punishment.

**of those who hate Me** As the Targum [Onkelos paraphrases: when the sons continue to sin following their fathers, i.e.], when they cling to their fathers’ deeds.-[from Sanh. 27b]

**6** **perform loving-kindness** that a person does, to pay the reward until the two-thousandth generation. It is thus found that the measure of reward [from God] exceeds the measure of [His] retribution by [the ratio of] one to five hundred, for this one is for four generations, and that one is for two thousand [generations]. -[from Tosefta Sotah 4:1] **7**

**You shall not take the name of the Lord, your God, in vain** You shall not swear in vain by the name of the Lord, your God.-[Onkelos] לַֽשָוְא-[This word appears twice in this verse.] (The second [mention of ]לַֽשָוְא is an expression of falsehood, as the Targum [Onkelos] renders: לְֽשִיקְרָא, as it says [in Shavuos 21a]: "What constitutes a vain oath? If one swears contrary to what is known, [for example, saying] about a stone pillar that it is [made of] gold. (The first [mention of לַֽשָוְא is an expression of vanity, as the Targum [Onkelos] renders: [לְמַגָּנָא].) This [refers to] one who swears for no reason and in vain, [for example making an oath] concerning [a pillar] of wood, [saying] that it is wood, and concerning [a pillar] of stone, [saying] that it is stone.-[from Shevuoth 29a, Mechilta]

**8** **Remember** Heb. זָכוֹר [The words] “remember (זָכוֹר)” and “keep (שָׁמוֽר)” (Deut. 5:12) were pronounced with one utterance. Similarly [the statements], “Those who profane it shall be put to death” (Exod. 31:14) and “And on the Sabbath day, two lambs” (Num. 28:9) [were said in one utterance], and similarly, “You shall not wear shaatnez,” and “You shall make tzitzith for yourself” (Deut. 22:11, 12). Similarly, [the phrases] “The nakedness of your brother’s wife [you shall not uncover]” (Lev. 18:16), [and] “Her brother-in-law shall come in to her” (Deut. 25:5) [were said in one utterance]. This [occurrence of God saying two phrases simultaneously in one utterance] is the meaning of what is said: “God spoke one thing, I heard two” (Ps. 62:12) (Mechilta). [The word] זָכוֹר is in the פָּעוֹל form, an expression of ongoing action, like “[Let us engage in] eating and drinking אָכוֹל וְשָׁתוֹ))” (Isa. 22: 13), [and] “walking and weeping הָלוֹךְ וָּבָכֽה))” (II Sam. 3:16), and this is its interpretation: Pay attention to always remember the Sabbath day, so that if you chance upon a beautiful thing, you shall prepare it for the Sabbath (Mechilta).

**9** **and perform all your labor** When the Sabbath arrives, it shall seem to you as if all your work is done, that you shall not think about work.

**10** **neither you, your son, your daughter** These are young children. Or perhaps it refers to adult children? You must admit that they have already been warned [to observe the Sabbath]. Rather, [this word] comes only to warn adults concerning young children resting [from work] (Mechilta). This is the meaning of what we learned [in the Mishnah]: If a young child comes to extinguish [a fire on the Sabbath], you may not allow him [to do so] since you are responsible for his resting [from work] (Shab. 121a).

**11** **and He rested on the seventh day** As if [it were] possible, He ascribed rest [even] to Himself to teach (as an example) from Him of kal vachomer [a fortiori] reasoning for man, whose work is with toil and fatigue, that he must rest on the Sabbath. [I.e., although God does not and did not actually rest, He had His cessation of creating recorded as rest, so that humans would learn that if God, Whose work is accomplished without any toil or fatigue, rested on the Sabbath, surely people, whose work is accomplished only with hard work and fatigue, must rest on the Sabbath.]-[from Mechilta]

**blessed…and sanctified it** He blessed it with manna to double it on the sixth day—"double bread"—and He sanctified it with manna, that it did not fall then [on the Sabbath].-[from Mechilta]

**12** **in order that your days be lengthened** If you honor [your parents], your days will be lengthened, and if not, they will be shortened. The words of the Torah are written briefly; they are explained by deriving the negative from the affirmative and the affirmative from the negative.-[from Mechilta]

**13** **You shall not commit adultery** Adultery applies only [to relations] with a married woman, as it is said: "[And a man who commits adultery with the wife of a[nother] man, who commits adultery with the wife of his neighbor,] [both] the adulterer and the adulteress shall be put to death" (Lev. 20:10); [and it says,] “[You are] the adulterous wife, who, instead of her husband, takes strangers” (Ezek. 16:32). [In both these verses, the term “adultery” is used in reference to the extramarital relations of a married woman.]

**You shall not steal** The text refers to kidnapping. [The verse] “You shall not steal” (Lev. 19:11) refers to stealing money. Or perhaps this one [verse] refers only to stealing money and the one written further (in Lev.) refers to kidnapping? You must admit that [the meaning of] a statement is derived from its context. Just as [the former two commandments] “You shall not murder” [and] “You shall not commit adultery” refer to capital sins, “You shall not steal” also refers to a capital sin [i.e., a sin punishable by death].-[from Sanh. 86a]

**15** **And all the people saw** [This] teaches [us] that there was not one blind person among them. From where do we know that [there was] no mute person among them? The Torah states: “And all the people replied” (Exod. 19:8). From where do we know that there was no deaf person among them? The Torah states: “We will do and hear” (Exod. 24:7). [from Mechilta]

**the voices** They saw what was audible, which is impossible to see elsewhere.-[from Mechilta d’Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai]

**the voices** Emanating from the mouth of the Almighty. Many voices, voices coming from every direction, and from the heavens, and from the earth.-[Rashi above, verse 2]

**and trembled** Heb. וַיָנֻעוּ נוֹעַ means only trembling.-[from Mechilta]

**so they stood from afar** They were drawing backwards twelve mil, as far as the length of their camp. The ministering angels came and assisted them [in order] to bring them back, as it is said: “Kings of hosts wander; yea they wander” (Ps. 68:13). [from Shab. 88b]

**17** **in order to exalt you** To magnify you in the world, so that your name should circulate among the nations, that He in His glory revealed Himself to you.-[from Mechilta]

**to exalt** נַסוֹת, an expression of exaltation and greatness, similar to “lift up a banner (נֵס)” (Isa. 62:10); “will I raise My standard (נִסִי)” (Isa. 49:22); “and like a flagpole (וְכַנֵּס) on a hill” (Isa. 30:17), which is upright. [Thus all these words signify “raising up.”]

**and in order that His awe** By way of the fact that you saw that He is feared and dreaded, you will know that there is none beside Him and you will fear him.

**18** **drew near to the opaque darkness** Within three partitions: darkness, cloud, and opaque darkness, as it is said: “And the mountain was burning with fire unto the heart of the heavens, darkness, cloud, and opaque darkness” (Deut. 4:11). Opaque darkness is [synonymous with] “the thickness of the cloud,” [concerning] which He [God] had said to him [Moses], “Behold, I am coming to you in the thickness of the cloud” (Exod. 19:9). [from Mechilta]

**19** **So shall you say** with this language.-[from Mechilta] I.e., with this exact wording and in Hebrew.-[Mechilta]

**You have seen** There is a difference between what a person sees and what others tell him. [Concerning] what others tell him, sometimes his heart is divided whether to believe [it or not].-[from Mechilta]

**from the heavens I have spoken** But another verse states: “The Lord descended upon Mount Sinai” (Exod. 19:20). The third verse comes and harmonizes them: “From the heavens He let you hear His voice in order to discipline you, and on earth He showed you His great fire” (Deut. 4:36). His glory was in heaven, His fire and His power were on the earth. Alternatively, He bent down the [lower] heavens and the highest heavens and spread them out upon the mountain. So [Scripture] says: “And He bent the heavens, and He came down” (Ps. 18:10). [from Mechilta]

**20** **You shall not make [images of anything that is] with Me** You shall not make a likeness of my servants who serve Me on high.-[from Mechilta, R.H. 24]

**Gods of silver** This [statement] comes to warn about the cherubim, which you make to stand with Me [in the Temple], that they may not be [made] of silver, for if you deviate to make them of silver, they are to Me as gods.-[from Mechilta]

**or gods of gold** This [statement] comes to warn [us] that one shall not add [more cherubim] to [the two, which is the number God required]. For if you make four [cherubim], they are to Me as gods of gold.- [from Mechilta]

**you shall not make for yourselves** You shall not say, “I will make cherubim in the synagogues and in the study halls, in the manner that I make [them] in the Temple.” Therefore, it says: “you shall not make for yourselves.”-[from Mechilta]

**21** **An altar of earth** Attached to the ground, [meaning] that it should not be built on pillars or on a block of wood (another version: [on] a base). [According to the Mechilta and Rashi on Zev. 58a, the reading is “archways.”] Alternatively, [מִזְבַָּח אֲדָמָה means] that he [Moses] would fill the hollow of the altar with earth when they [the Israelites] encamped. [from Mechilta]

**you shall make for Me** That from the beginning, it shall be made in My name. [I.e., it should not be made for another purpose and then later used as an altar.]-[from Mechilta]

**and you shall slaughter beside it** Heb. עָלָיו, like “And beside it (וְעָלָיו) was the tribe of Manasseh” (Num. 2:20). Or perhaps עָלָיו means literally “upon it.” Therefore, Scripture says: “the flesh and the blood on the altar of the Lord, your God” (Deut. 12:27), [meaning that only the flesh and blood are to be put on the altar] but the slaughtering is not [to be performed] on top of the altar.-[from Mechilta]

**your burnt offerings and your peace offerings** which are from your sheep and your cattle. “Your sheep and your cattle” is the explanation of “your burnt offerings and your peace offerings.”

**Wherever I allow My name to be mentioned, I will come to you and bless you** Heb. אַזְכִּיר, lit., I will mention. [This should apparently read תַּזְכִּיר, you will mention. Therefore, Rashi explains that it means: whenever] I will permit you to mention My Explicit Name, there I will come to you and bless you. I will cause My Shechinah to rest upon you. From here you learn that permission was given to mention the Explicit Name only in the place to which the Shechinah comes, and that is in the Temple in Jerusalem. There permission was given to the priests to mention the Explicit Name when they raise their hands to bless the people.-[from Mechilta, Sifrei, Num. 6:23, Sotah 38a]

**22** **And when you make for Me an altar of stones** Heb. אִם. Rabbi Ishmael says: Every [mention of] אִם in the Torah is optional except [for] three. [One of them is in this verse:] “And when (אִם) you make Me an altar of stones.” Behold, this אִם serves as an expression of כַּאֲשֶׁר, when, [meaning] and “when you make Me an altar of stones, you shall not build them of hewn stones.” [This אִם cannot mean “if,”] for it is incumbent upon you to build an altar of stones, for it is said: “[Of] whole stones shall you build” (Deut. 27:6). Similarly, “When (אִם) you lend money” (Exod. 22:24) is obligatory, for it is said: “and you shall lend him” (Deut. 15:8). This one, too, serves as an expression of כַּאֲשֶׁר, when. Similarly, “And when (אִם) you offer up a first fruits offering” (Lev. 2:14). This is the omer offering, which is [also] obligatory. Thus [all] these instances of אִם are not conditional but are definite and serve as an expression of כַּאֲשֶׁר, when.-[from Mechilta]

**hewn stones**-Heb. גָזִית, an expression of shearing (גְּזִיזָה), [meaning] that [the stone-cutter] hews them and cuts them (וַּמְסַתְּתָן) with iron [tools].

**lest you wield your sword upon it** Heb. כִּי. This [instance of] כִּי serves as an expression of פֶּן, lest, which is the same as “perhaps.” Perhaps you will wield your sword upon it.

**and desecrate it** Thus you have learned that if you wield iron upon it, you have desecrated it, for the altar was created to lengthen man’s days, and iron was created to shorten man’s days [because it is used to make swords]. It is improper that the “lengthener” be wielded over the “shortener” (Middoth 3:4). Moreover, the altar makes peace between Israel and their Father in heaven. Therefore, the cutter and destroyer shall not come upon it. The matter is a kal vachomer [a fortiori] conclusion-if [concerning the] stones, which neither see, hear, nor speak, because [of the fact that] they make peace, the Torah said, “You shall not wield iron upon them” (Deut. 27:5), how much more [are we certain that] one who makes peace between husband and wife, between family and family, between man and his fellow, will have no troubles befall him!-[from Mechilta]

**23** **And you shall not ascend with steps** When you build a ramp for the altar, do not make it with steps, eschalons in Old French, but it must be smooth and slanting.-[from Mechilta].

**so that your nakedness shall not be exposed** Because due to the steps, you must widen your stride, although it would not be an actual exposure of nakedness, for it is written: “And make them linen pants” (Exod. 28:42). Nevertheless, widening the strides is close to exposing the nakedness [of the one ascending the steps], and you behave toward them [the stones] in a humiliating manner. Now these matters are a kal vachomer [a fortiori] conclusion, that if [concerning] these stones-which have no intelligence to object to their humiliation-the Torah said that because they are necessary, you shall not behave toward them in a humiliating manner. [In contrast,] your friend, who is [created] in the likeness of your Creator and who does object to being humiliated, how much more [must you be careful not to embarrass him]!-[from Mechilta]

**Welcome to the World of Remes Exegesis**

Thirteen rules compiled by Rabbi [Ishmael b. Elisha](http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/8254-ishmael-b-elisha) for the elucidation of the Torah and for making halakic deductions from it. They are, strictly speaking, mere amplifications of the seven [Rules of Hillel](http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/12936-rules-of-hillel-the-seven), and are collected in the [Baraita of R. Ishmael](http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/2490-baraita-of-r-ishmael), forming the introduction to the Sifra and reading a follows:

1. **Ḳal wa-ḥomer:** Identical with the first rule of Hillel.
2. **Gezerah shawah:** Identical with the second rule of Hillel.
3. **Binyan ab:** Rules deduced from a single passage of Scripture and rules deduced from two passages. This rule is a combination of the third and fourth rules of Hillel.
4. **Kelal u-Peraṭ:** The general and the particular.
5. **u-Peraṭ u-kelal:** The particular and the general.
6. **Kelal u-Peraṭ u-kelal:** The general, the particular, and the general.
7. **The general** which requires elucidation by the particular, and the particular which requires elucidation by the general.
8. **The particular** implied in the general and excepted from it for pedagogic purposes elucidates the general as well as the particular.
9. **The particular implied in the general** and excepted from it on account of the special regulation which corresponds in concept to the general, is thus isolated to decrease rather than to increase the rigidity of its application.
10. **The particular implied in the general** and excepted from it on account of some other special regulation which does not correspond in concept to the general, is thus isolated either to decrease or to increase the rigidity of its application.
11. **The particular implied in the general** and excepted from it on account of a new and reversed decision can be referred to the general only in case the passage under consideration makes an explicit reference to it.
12. **Deduction from the context.**
13. **When two Biblical passages contradict each other** the contradiction in question must be solved by reference to a third passage.

Rules seven to eleven are formed by a subdivision of the fifth rule of Hillel; rule twelve corresponds to the seventh rule of Hillel, but is amplified in certain particulars; rule thirteen does not occur in Hillel, while, on the other hand, the sixth rule of Hillel is omitted by Ishmael. These rules are found also on the morning prayers of any Jewish Orthodox Siddur together with a brief explanation for each one of them.\

**Ramban’s Commentary for:**  **Shemot (Exodus) 19:1 – 20:23**

**19:1. IN THE THIRD MONTH.** Scripture should have said, "And they journeyed from Rephidim and they encamped in the wilderness of Sinai, in the third month after their going forth from the land of Egypt," just as it said above concerning the wilderness of Sin.[[1]](#footnote-1) But [Scripture's manner of expression here is] due to the fact that their coming into the wilderness of Sinai was an occasion for joy and a festival to them, and that since they left Egypt they had been yearning for it. They knew that they would receive the Torah there, for Moses had told them what was said to him, ***You will serve G-d upon the mountain***.[[2]](#footnote-2) And to Pharaoh also he said, ***Let us go, we pray, three days' journey, into the wilderness and sacrifice unto the Eternal our G-d.[[3]](#footnote-3)*** For this reason, Scripture begins the section with the statement that ***in the third month ... the same day*** that the month began,[[4]](#footnote-4) ***they came there*** [as they had eagerly anticipated]. Following this opening, Scripture reverts [to the usual style] as in the other journeys: ***And they journeyed from Rephidim***.[[5]](#footnote-5)

Now here too Scripture should have said "and they journeyed from Rephidim ***and encamped*** in the wilderness of Sinai." Instead it writes, ***and they came to the unlderness of Sinai***. This is because Scripture's intent is to state that as soon as they came to the wilderness of Sinai and saw the mountain in front of them, they encamped in the wilderness and did not wait until they would enter a spot better for encampment. Instead, they camped in the wilderness or in Horeb,[[6]](#footnote-6) which was a waste land before the mountain. This is the purport of the verse; ***and they encamped in the wilderness, and there Israel encamped before the mount***.[[7]](#footnote-7)

It is possible that they separated from their midst ***all the mixed multitude that was among them***,[[8]](#footnote-8) and the children of Israel alone camped before the mountain while the mixed multitude was behind them. For the Torah was given to Israel, as He said, ***Thus will you say to the house of Ya’aqob, and tell the children of Israel***,[[9]](#footnote-9) and this is the meaning of the expression, ***and there Israel encamped***.[[10]](#footnote-10) It may be that [the name "Israel"] is mentioned as a mark of honor at the time of their acceptance of the Torah.

Now Rashi wrote: ***"And they journeyed from Rephidim***, What need was there for Scripture to state again expressly from where they set forth on the journey? Is it not already stated that they were encamped in Rephidim[[11]](#footnote-11) and it is thus evident that they journeyed from there? It [i.e., the intent of the verse] is to declare that their departure from Rephidim was like their encampment[[12]](#footnote-12) in the wilderness of Sinai. Just as their encampment[[13]](#footnote-13) [in the wilderness of Sinai] was with repentance,[[14]](#footnote-14) so also was their departure [from Rephidim] with repentance." [[15]](#footnote-15) Thus Rashi's language. But I have not understood this. It says in connection with all journeys: ***and they pitched [camp] in Elim***;[[16]](#footnote-16) ***And they took their journey from Elim ... and they came unto the wilderness of Sin***;[[17]](#footnote-17) ***And they journeyed from the wilderness of Sin ... and encamped in Rephidim***;[[18]](#footnote-18) and so the entire section of Mas'ei[[19]](#footnote-19) is written [with the name of the place whence they set forth on the journey repeated after it had already been mentioned that they had encamped there]. The intent of the repetition by Scripture is that there were no other encampments between them.

In the Mechilta, we find the following text[[20]](#footnote-20) [on the same theme that Rashi mentioned, but presented in such a form that the above difficulties are eliminated]: "***And they departed from Rephidim and came to the desert of Sinai***.[[21]](#footnote-21) Has it not already been stated in the section of the Torah dealing with all stages of the journey [from Egypt to the Jordan]: ***And they journeyed from Rephidim, and pitched in the wilderness of Sinai***?[[22]](#footnote-22) And what need is there for Scripture to state here, ***and they came to the desert of Sinai***? It [i.e., the intent of the verse] is to declare that their departure from Rephidim [was like their encampment in the wilderness of Sinai], etc." The purport of this text of the Mechilta is to explain why, on account of certain new details mentioned there,[[23]](#footnote-23) Scripture repeated in the section of Eileh Mas'ei[[24]](#footnote-24) all stages of the journey from Elim and Rephidim mentioned here, although this journey [from Rephidim to the wilderness of Sinai] is mentioned in identical language both here and there. It was for this reason that [the Mechilta] was compelled to interpret that [the Scriptural restatement] was on account of the above analogy: [Just as their encampment at Sinai was with repentance, so also etc.].

**3. AND MOSES WENT UP UNTO G-D.** From the day they arrived at Mount Sinai, the cloud covered the mountain and the Glory of G-d was there. It is with reference to this that Scripture says, ***And the Glory of the Eternal abode upon Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days***,[[25]](#footnote-25) i.e., before the Giving of the Torah. It is for this reason that Scripture says here, ***And Moses went up unto G-d***, meaning that he went up to the edge of the mountain to be ready for Him, but he did not penetrate the thick darkness where G-d was.[[26]](#footnote-26) ***And the Eternal called unto him from*** the top of ***the mountain, saying:*** ***Thus will you say to the house of Jacob***.

And Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra wrote that the expression, ***and He called unto him***, is an antecedent, meaning that He had called him [to come up to the mountain] and he went up to Him. But this does not appear to me to be correct, for the calling [mentioned in Scripture after Moses ascended the mountain] was: ***Thus will you say to the house of Jacob***. Now Ibn Ezra explains the verse to mean as follows: ***"And the Eternal called unto him to say***[[27]](#footnote-27) to him, ***Thus will you say to the house of Jacob."*** But this is not correct.

The meaning of the expression, ***he went up unto G-d, and the Eternal called unto him***, is that Moses went up towards the Glory of G-d, which was abiding on the mountain to declare the Ten Words to Israel, and with His Great Name [the Tetragrammaton] He would speak with Moses, as is the meaning of the verse, ***If there be a prophet among you***, etc.[[28]](#footnote-28)

**4. AND I BROUGHT YOU UNTO MYSELF**. I.e., "to the place of My Glory, namely, this mountain where My Presence abides there with you." Now Onkelos translated: "and I brought you near to My service." [To avoid a literal translation], Onkelos adapted an expression of respect towards Him Who is on high.

**5. AND YOU WILL KEEP MY COVENANT**. I.e., "the covenant which I have made with your fathers to be a G-d unto them and to their seed after them.,,[[29]](#footnote-29) Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra explained it as referring to the covenant which Moses was to make with Israel after the Giving of the Torah, as he said, ***Behold, the blood of the covenant, which the Eternal has made with you in agreement with all these words***.[[30]](#footnote-30)

**By way of the Truth**, [that is, the mystic lore of the Cabala, the verse is to be understood as meaning] that "you should keep My covenant to cleave unto Me, for if you will indeed hearken unto My voice and do all that I speak,[[31]](#footnote-31) ***then you will be Mine own 's'gulah' (treasure) from among all peoples***."[[32]](#footnote-32) **This means that "you will be a treasure 'in My hand,' "** for a king does not hand over a precious object into the hand of another [for permanent possession]. The word ***s'gulah*** here is similar in meaning to the expression: ***'us'gulath'*** (and treasure) such as kings and the provinces have as their own.[[33]](#footnote-33)

**FOR ALL THE EARTH IS MINE**. This is similar in meaning to the verses: ***Which the Eternal your G-d has allotted unto all the peoples ... But you has the Eternal taken***.[[34]](#footnote-34) And thus He said, ***"And 1 have set you apart from the peoples, that ye should be Mine[[35]](#footnote-35)*** [own] treasure." It may be that the word ***s'gulah*** connotes "attachment." [The sense of the verse would then be: "and you will be attached to Me from among all peoples], for unto Me is the earth called ***kol (all)***," as I have explained on the verse, ***And the Eternal had blessed Abraham 'bakol' (in all things)***.[[36]](#footnote-36) The student learned [in the mystic lore of the Cabala] will understand. Similarly, ***And you will be unto me[[37]](#footnote-37)*** means that "you will be Mine in a special sense, and not as the rest of the peoples." And so did the Rabbis interpret it in the Mechilta:[[38]](#footnote-38) ***"And you will be unto Me***. As though it were possible to say it, [He is stating], 'I will neither appoint nor delegate [any power] to rule over you, but I Myself will rule over you.' And thus it says, ***Behold He that keeps Israel do neither slumber nor sleep***."[[39]](#footnote-39)

**6. A KINGDOM OF PRIESTS.** This means that you will be a kingdom of My servants.

**AND A HOLY NATION**. l.e., to cleave unto the Holy G-d, just as He said, ***You will be holy, for I the Eternal your G-d am Holy***.[[40]](#footnote-40) Thus He has assured them [of life] in this world and in the World to Come.[[41]](#footnote-41)

**7. AND MOSES CAME AND CALLED FOR THE ELDERS OF THE PEOPLE, AND SET BEFORE THEM ALL THESE WORDS.** This means that he said to them: "Behold, I have presented before you the words [of G-d]. ***Choose you this day[[42]](#footnote-42)*** if you will do so." Therefore, they answered him, ***All that the Eternal has spoken we will do***.[[43]](#footnote-43) This is similar in meaning to the verse: ***See, I have set before you this day life and good, and death and evil***,[[44]](#footnote-44) and also: ***And these are the ordinances which you will set before them***,[[45]](#footnote-45) meaning that they are to say if they choose to observe them and accept [them] upon themselves. It is for this reason that it says there, ***And Moses came and told the people all the words of the Eternal, and all the ordinances; and all the people answered******with one voice, and said, All the words which the Eternal has spoken will we do***.[[46]](#footnote-46) Similarly, ***And this is the law which Moses set before the children of Israel[[47]](#footnote-47)*** means that Moses asked the generation that was to come into the Land whether they would accept the Torah upon themselves, for he was about to make a covenant with them in the plains of Moab, just as he had done with their fathers in Horeb.[[48]](#footnote-48) **And the Gaon Rav Saadia[[49]](#footnote-49) said that the expression, *and he set before them*, is similar in meaning to the expression, *put it in their mouth*,[[50]](#footnote-50) [this being a reference to the Oral Law, which is the commentary to the Written Law**]. But the correct interpretation is only as I have explained.

***And all the people answered together***.[[51]](#footnote-51) This also means that Moses called together the elders of the people, who are their wise men and their judges, for theirs is [the power of] choice. And he set before them all these words in the presence of the whole congregation, since it was with reference to all the people that G-d had commanded, ***Thus will you say to the house of Jacob***, ***and tell the children of Israel***.[[52]](#footnote-52) But they did not wait for the counsel and decision [of the elders, but readily], ***all the people answered together - both small and great[[53]](#footnote-53)*** - ***and said, All that the Eternal has spoken will we do***.[[54]](#footnote-54) ***And so it says again, and all the people answered with one voice, and said: All the words which the Eternal has spoken will we do***.[[55]](#footnote-55)

**8. 'VAYASHEV MOSHEH' THE WORDS OF THE PEOPLE UNTO THE ETERNAL.** This means that Moses returned[[56]](#footnote-56) before Him to the mountain with the people's answer. Now everything is revealed to Him, and He did not inquire of him, "What did this people answer you?" It is similar in meaning to the verse: ***And the Eternal heard the voice of your words, when you spoke unto me***.[[57]](#footnote-57) And when Moses came before Him, the Holy One, blessed be He, said, ***Lo, I come unto you in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and may also believe you forever***.[[58]](#footnote-58) Then Moses said before Him,[[59]](#footnote-59) "Master of the universe, your children are people of faith, and they accept upon themselves whatever You will speak."

The above usage [of the word ***vayashev*** as meanmg "returning" or "coming back"] is also found in the verse, ***'vayashivu' unto them word ... and they showed them the fruit of the Land***,[[60]](#footnote-60) which means: "They [i.e., the spies] came back to them with the things which they saw." [It cannot mean that "they reported" to them], for afterwards Scripture says there, ***And they told him, and said***.[[61]](#footnote-61) [Hence, ***vayashivu*** in the preceding verse must mean that "they came back" with the things they had seen.][[62]](#footnote-62) There is thus no need for Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra's interpretation on this point.[[63]](#footnote-63)

**9. IN A THICK CLOUD**. This is ***the thick darkness where G-d was***,[[64]](#footnote-64) and all the people saw it and recognized it as such, as it is said, ***And the appearance of the Glory of the Eternal was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel***.[[65]](#footnote-65)

**IN ORDER THAT THE PEOPLE MAY HEAR WHEN I SPEAK WITH YOU**. Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra commented that there were among the Israelites people who doubted the existence of prophecy. And even though it is written, ***and they believed in the Eternal, and in His servant Moses***,[[66]](#footnote-66) it is said there, ***and 'Israel' saw***,[[67]](#footnote-67) but not "all Israel." It is this which they said to him [after the Giving of the Torah], ***This day we have seen that G-d does speak with man, and he lives***,[[68]](#footnote-68) for at first they did not believe so. This is the meaning of the verse here, ***in order that the people may hear when I speak with you***, the Ten Commandments, ***and also believe in you forever***, i.e., "that you are My prophet," .or henceforth the matter of prophecy will be confirmed to them. [Thus far the words of Ibn Ezra.]

This is not correct. The children of Abraham never doubted prophecy, as they had always believed in it since the time of their forefathers, Scripture already has stated so: ***And the people believed, and they heard that the Eternal has remembered the children of Israel***;[[69]](#footnote-69) ***and they believed in the Eternal, and in His servant Moses***.[[70]](#footnote-70) Even though it does not say there, "and all the people [believed]" or "all Israel believed," neither does it say here "that 'all the people' may hear."

The correct interpretation appears to me to be that G-d said to Moses: ***"I come to you in a thick cloud***, so that you should draw near ***to the thick darkness[[71]](#footnote-71)*** ***in order that the people may hear when I speak***. They themselves will be prophets when I speak, not necessitating] that it should be confirmed to them through others," just as it is said, When the Eternal said unto me: ***Assemble the the people, and I will make them hear My words, that they may learn to fear Me all the days***.[[72]](#footnote-72)

***"And they may also believe in you forever***, i.e., through all the generations. And if there will arise among them ***a prophet or dreamer of dreams[[73]](#footnote-73)*** to refute your words, they will deny him at once, for they have already seen with their own eyes and heard with their own ears that you have reached the highest stage in prophecy. Through you, it will become clear to them that which is written: ***If there be a prophet among you, I the Eternal make Myself known unto him in a vision, I do speak with him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so; he is trusted in all My house; with him do I speak mouth to mouth***.[[74]](#footnote-74) It is for this reason that He said, ***"in order that the people may hear when I speak with you***, for they will hear when I speak ***out of the midst of the fire***,[[75]](#footnote-75) and they will know that it is I the Eternal Who speaks to you. They will believe in My words and also in you forever." Similarly, that which the people said, ***This day we have seen that G-d does speak with man, and he lives***,[[76]](#footnote-76) was to state: "Now the thing has been confirmed to us with the sight of our own eyes, as was the wish of G-d [that we should all become prophets]. Henceforth, ***Go you near***,[[77]](#footnote-77) for we know that you have reached the great stage in prophecy, ***and hear all that the Eternal our G-d may say ... and we will hear it*** from you, ***and do it***,[[78]](#footnote-78) for your prophecy has been confirmed to be above that of all prophets."

Now I have seen the Mechilta where it is written:[[79]](#footnote-79) ***"In order that the people may hear when I speak with you***. This teaches that the Holy One, blessed be He, said to Moses: 'Behold, I will call you from the top of the mountain, and you will come up,' as it is said, ***and the Eternal called Moses to the top of the mount, and Moses went up***.[[80]](#footnote-80) ***And they may also believe in you forever***, i.e., 'in you and also in the prophets who are destined to arise after you.''' The words of the Mechilta incline towards the opinion of Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra.[[81]](#footnote-81)

**10. 'V'KIDASHTAM' TODAY AND TOMORROW**. Rashi explained: **"V'kidashtam** means 'and you will prepare them.''' And so is the opinion of Onkelos. A similar usage is found in the verse: ***I have commanded 'lim 'kudashai' ("those who are prepared for Me" or "My consecrated ones")***,[[82]](#footnote-82) and also in the following verse: ***'hithkadshu' (prepare yourselves) for tomorrow***.[[83]](#footnote-83) Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra explained it as meaning that they should bathe themselves in water. But if so, what is the sense of today and tomorrow when bathing was required only once? The correct interpretation is that they should sanctify themselves by separating from their wives, and from all uncleanness, for he who guards [himself] from being defiled by uncleanness is called ***'m'kudash'*** (consecrated), just as it is said with reference to the priests, ***There will none defile himself for the dead***;[[84]](#footnote-84) ***They shall be holy unto their G-d***.[[85]](#footnote-85) And it is further written, ***because the priests had not sanctified themselves***,[[86]](#footnote-86) that is to say, they had not purified themselves. Similarly, ***And David answered the priest, and said unto him: To a certainty women have been kept from us about these three days; when I came out, the vessels of the young men were holy***.[[87]](#footnote-87) And it is known that [before the Giving of the Torah the people] bathed themselves in water, this being derived logically from the required washing of garments.[[88]](#footnote-88) And so did the Rabbis say in the Mechilta:[[89]](#footnote-89) "There is no case where washing of garments is required in the Torah without the requirement of immersion [of one's body]."

**11. THE ETERNAL WILL COME DOWN IN THE SIGHT OF ALL THE PEOPLE**. I.e., so that all the people will behold His coming down, meaning that they will see ***the appearance of the Glory of the Eternal like devouring fire on the top of the mount***,[[90]](#footnote-90) but they will not see G-d, for it is written, ***for man will not see Me and live***.[[91]](#footnote-91)

**13. WHEN 'HA YOVEIL' (THE RAM'S HORN) SOUNDS LONG, THEY WILL COME UP TO THE MOUNT.** "The Hebrew word ***hayoveil*** denotes a ram's horn, and the horn used here was that of Isaac's ram."[[92]](#footnote-92) Thus Rashi's language. But I have not understood this, for Isaac's ram was burnt as a whole-offering,[[93]](#footnote-93) and horns and hoofs were completely burnt in wholc-offerings.[[94]](#footnote-94) Perhaps the Holy One, blessed be He, shaped the ashes of the horn [of Isaac's ram] and restored it to what it was originally. But in my opinion, this Agadah (homily) contains a secret. Thus they[[95]](#footnote-95) have said that this Voice [heard on Mount Sinai, as stated in Verse 16], was that of ***Pachad Yitzchaq (the Fear of Isaac)***.[[96]](#footnote-96) It is for this reason that Scripture says, and all the people that were in the camp trembled.[[97]](#footnote-97) At this manifestation of G'vurah[[98]](#footnote-98) they did not grasp the commandment itself but only a voice.[[99]](#footnote-99)

**14. AND MOSES WENT DOWN FROM THE MOUNT UNTO THE PEOPLE, AND SANCTIFIED THE PEOPLE.** This verse teaches that the command expressed in the [above] verse, ***And the Eternal said unto Moses: Go unto the people and sanctify them***,[[100]](#footnote-100) was also given to him on the mountain which Moses ascended every time that he was about to speak to Him. In the Mechilta, the Rabbis have explained:[[101]](#footnote-101) "This teaches that Moses did not turn to his personal affairs nor go to his house at all, but he went directly from the mount unto the people."

**19. MOSES SPOKE, AND G-D ANSWERED HIM BY A VOICE.** In the Mechilta, the Rabbis have said[[102]](#footnote-102) that this verse refers to the time of the Giving of the Torah, when Moses was proclaiming the commandments to Israel, as Rashi has written.

By way of the plain meaning of Scripture, the verse here does not yet speak of this. It is rather [to be explained as follows]: ***The Glorious Name***[[103]](#footnote-103) came down upon the mountain[[104]](#footnote-104) on the third day, and ***Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet*** the Glory which appeared to them, ***and they stood at the nether part of the mount***.[[105]](#footnote-105) Moses went up near to the head of the mountain, where the Glory was, in a place designated for himself, and he spoke with Israel, teaching them what to do. The Israelites heard the Voice of G-d answering Moses and commanding him, but they did not understand what He said to him. Thus He commanded Moses the precepts mentioned further on in this section: ***Go down, charge the people***;[[106]](#footnote-106) ***Go, get down, and you will come up, you, and Aaron with you***, etc.[[107]](#footnote-107) This happened before the Giving of the Torah and also during the time when the Ten Commandments were given, for Moses did not go up to ***the top of the mount unto the thick darkness where G-d was[[108]](#footnote-108)*** until after the Giving of the Torah. And so he said, "***I stood between the Eternal and you at that time, to declare unto you the word of the Eternal; for you were afraid because of the fire, and went not up into the mount, saying[[109]](#footnote-109)*** [that you will not ascend] as I did go up." Some scholars[[110]](#footnote-110) explain that the Israelites were very much afraid of ***the voice of the horn which waxed louder and louder***,[[111]](#footnote-111) and Moses would say to them at first: "Direct your thoughts, for now you will hear the Voice in such a manner," and immediately ***G-d answered*** him ***by a voice.***

**20. AND THE ETERNAL CAME DOWN UPON MOUNT SINAI.** If you will succeed in having insight into this section [of the Torah], you will understand that His Great Name, [i.e., the Tetragrammaton], came down upon Mount Sinai, and that He abode thereon in fire and spoke to Moses. The communication to Moses in the entire section was by this Proper Name of the Eternal. However, the ascent [of Moses - as mentioned in Verse 3: ***And Moses went up unto G-d***] - and his bringing forth [the people out of the camp - as mentioned in Verse 17] - were towards the place of the Glory, as I have explained.[[112]](#footnote-112) And He warned, ***lest they break through unto the Eternal to gaze***,[[113]](#footnote-113) because even ***the nobles of the children of Israel[[114]](#footnote-114)*** did not see Him, and all Israel heard the Voice of G-d ***out of the midst of the fire***.[[115]](#footnote-115) It is this which Scripture says, ***And 'Elohim' (G-d) spoke all these words***,[[116]](#footnote-116) just as our Rabbis have said:[[117]](#footnote-117) "***Elohim*** designates the Judge."[[118]](#footnote-118) And they have also said [with reference to the first two commandments]:[[119]](#footnote-119) "We have heard them from ***Hag’vurah*** (the Almighty Himself)." In Deuteronomy it is written: ***These words the Eternal spoke unto all your assembly***.[[120]](#footnote-120) That is because Scripture explains there [in the same verse] that ***He spoke out of the midst of the fire***.[[121]](#footnote-121) And this is the sense of the verse, ***The Eternal spoke with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of the fire***.[[122]](#footnote-122) And this is why it is said, ***I am the Eternal your G-d***.[[123]](#footnote-123) Now do not find a difficulty in what the people said to Moses, ***For who is there of all living flesh, that has heard the Voice of the living G-d speaking out of the midst of the fire***?[[124]](#footnote-124) They did not say "that they heard G-d speaking out of the midst of the fire," but they said ***the Voice of G-d***, referring to what they perceived. This is why they said, ***Go you near, and hear all that the Eternal our G-d may say***.[[125]](#footnote-125) And so did Moses say to them, ***Did ever a people hear the Voice of G-d speaking out of the midst of the fire***?[[126]](#footnote-126) The word "speaking" here is referring to "the Voice," something like the verse, ***and he heard the Voice speaking unto him***.[[127]](#footnote-127)

From this you will understand what the Rabbis have always said in Midrashic homilies, i.e., **that the Torah was given in seven voices**.[[128]](#footnote-128) They are the ones to which David alluded in the psalm: ***Ascribe unto the Eternal, O you sons of might***.[[129]](#footnote-129) This is also the number of times [that the Voice] is alluded to in this section of the Torah.[[130]](#footnote-130) The verse, ***And there were 'koloth' and lightnings***,[[131]](#footnote-131) is written defectively and therefore counted as one; likewise, the verse, ***And all the people perceived 'hakoloth***,[[132]](#footnote-132) is missing the ***vav*** which signifies the plural, [and thus refers to only one voice]. Thus there are six ['voices' mentioned here in the section], and [in addition] it clearly says, ***And G-d spoke***.[[133]](#footnote-133) In Deuteronomy, Scripture likewise mentions seven 'voices' in connection with the Giving of the Torah.[[134]](#footnote-134) In Tractate Berachoth,[[135]](#footnote-135) however, the Rabbis have said in the Gemara[[136]](#footnote-136) that the Torah was given in five 'voices.' That is because they counted only the voices which are concealed, while the two - i.e., ***I am the Eternal your G-d and You will have no other gods before Me***][[137]](#footnote-137) - are explained in Scripture. The purport of this is **that Moses our teacher was given the Torah in seven 'voices,'[[138]](#footnote-138) and he was the one who heard them and contemplated them**. The Israelites, however, heard one voice, as it is said, ***a great voice, and it went on no more***,[[139]](#footnote-139) and it is said again, ***You heard the voice of words, but you saw no form; only a voice***.[[140]](#footnote-140) Here also Scripture alluded thereto in saying, ***And all the people perceived 'hakoloth***,’[[141]](#footnote-141) with one ***vav*** missing, [thus making it singular, 'the voice'], for all voices appeared as one. By way of the Truth, [the mystic lore of the Cabala], this is Scripture's intent in saying, G-d has spoken once, twice we have heard this.[[142]](#footnote-142) The sections of the Torah are thus explained, without anything being changed with another.

**22. AND THE PRIESTS ALSO, THAT COME NEAR TO THE ETERNAL**. I.e., who offer the sacrifices to the Glorious Name[[143]](#footnote-143) and who come near to Him with them. [They also must sanctify themselves and not go outside of their designated place.]

**20:2. I AM THE ETERNAL YOUR G-D.** This Divine utterance constitutes a positive commandment.[[144]](#footnote-144) He said, ***I am the Eternal***, thus teaching and commanding them that they should **know** and **believe** that the Eternal exists and that He is G-d to them. That is to say, **there exists an Eternal Being through Whom everything has come into existence by His will[[145]](#footnote-145)** **and power, and He is G-d to them, who are obligated to worship Him**. He said, ***Who brought you out of the land of Egypt***, because His taking them out from there was the evidence establishing the existence and will of G-d, for it was with His knowledge and providence that we came out from there. **The exodus is also evidence for the creation of the world, for assuming the eternity of the universe, [which precludes a Master of the universe Who is in control of it], it would follow that nothing could be changed from its nature**.[[146]](#footnote-146) And it is also evidence for G-d's infinite power, and His infinite power is an indication of the Unity, as He said, ***that you [i.e., Pharaoh] may know that there is none like Me in all the earth***.[[147]](#footnote-147) This is the intent of the expression, ***Who brought you out***, since they are the ones who know and are witnesses to all these things.

The meaning of ***out of the house of bondage*** is that they stayed in Egypt in a house of bondage as captives of Pharaoh.[[148]](#footnote-148) He said this to them [in order to indicate] that they are obligated [to accept] ***this Great, Glorious and Fearful Name***[[149]](#footnote-149) as their G-d, and to worship Him, because He redeemed them from Egyptian bondage. It is similar in meaning to the verse, ***They are My servants whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt***.[[150]](#footnote-150) I have also already alluded to above[[151]](#footnote-151) by way of the Truth, [the mystic lore of the Cabala], to the reason why the two sacred Names - [the Tetragrammaton and ***Elohim***] - are mentioned here.

This commandment, in the words of our Rabbis,[[152]](#footnote-152) is called **the obligation "to take upon oneself the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven,"** for these words, [i.e., ***the Eternal your G-d***], which I have mentioned, indicate a King addressing His people. Thus the Rabbis have said in the Mechilta:[[153]](#footnote-153) "***You will have no other gods before Me***.[[154]](#footnote-154) Why is this said?[[155]](#footnote-155) Because it says, ***I am the Eternal your G-d***. This can be illustrated by a parable: A king invaded a country, and his attendants said to him, 'Issue decrees to us.'[[156]](#footnote-156) He, however, refused, saying: 'No! When you have accepted my sovereignty, I will issue decrees to you, for if you do not accept my sovereignty, how will you carry out my decrees?' Similarly, G-d said to Israel: ***'I am the Eternal your G-d, you will have no other gods***. I am He Whose sovereignty you have accepted in Egypt.' And when they said to Him: 'Yes,' [He continued]: 'Now, just as you have accepted My sovereignty, so you must also accept My decrees.''' That is to say, **"Since you have accepted upon yourselves and have admitted that I am the Eternal, and that I am your G-d from the [time that you were yet in the] land of Egypt, then accept all My commandments."**

Now all the [Ten] Commandments are expressed in the singular - ***the Eternal your G-d, Who brought 'you' out*** - and not, as He began to say, [before the Giving of the Torah] : 'You' have seen;[[157]](#footnote-157) ***if 'you' will hearken***.[[158]](#footnote-158) This is because His intent is to warn that each individual is subject to punishment for [transgression of] the commandments, Since He addresses Himself to each one individually, commanding him that he should not think that He will judge according to the majority and that the individual will be saved with them. This intent was explained to the people by Moses at the end of the Torah, in the section of Atem Nitzavim.[[159]](#footnote-159)

**3. YOU WILL HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE MY FACE**. Rashi wrote: "***You will have no other gods***. Why is this said?[[160]](#footnote-160) It is because it says, ***You will not make unto you a graven image***.[[161]](#footnote-161) From this I would only know that it is forbidden to make an idol. Whence do I know that one may not keep an idol that has already been made? Scripture therefore says, ***You will have no other gods***." This is indeed a Baraitha[[162]](#footnote-162) taught in the Mechilta.[[163]](#footnote-163) But if this is so, this verse would constitute a negative commandment in itself, being a prohibition against a person who retains an idol on his premises. [The violation thereof] does not make one liable to the death-penalty by the court. So [the question arises]: Why did He state the prohibition against keeping an idol, which makes one liable to whipping, before [He stated] the prohibition against bowing down to idols or worshipping them,[[164]](#footnote-164) which makes one liable to extinction [if done intentionally but with no witnesses present], or death by the court [if there were witnesses]?

In my opinion, the final decision of the Law is not in accordance with this Baraitha,[[165]](#footnote-165) for it represents the opinion of a single Sage [against the opinion of the majority]. Thus we find it taught in the Sifra:[[166]](#footnote-166) "***Nor make to yourselves molten gods***.[[167]](#footnote-167) I might think that others may make it for you. Scripture therefore says, ***Nor... to yourselves***. From this I know only that [others may not make it] for you, but I might think that you may make it for others. Scripture therefore says, ***Nor make***: not for you by others, and not by you for others. It is from here that the Rabbis have derived the principle that he who makes an idol for himself, transgresses two negative commandments: ***Nor make***, and ***Nor... to yourselves***. Rabbi Yosei says, 'He transgresses three negative commandments: ***Nor make, Nor ... to yourselves***, and also ***You will have no other gods***.'" Thus you see that Rabbi Yosei's opinion is that of one against a majority, for it is he who says that the verse ***You will have no other gods*** constitutes a prohibition against retaining an idol [in one's house]. However, according to the opinion of the first Sage, [which is that of the majority of the Rabbis], it is not so.

The correct interpretation even according to the literal meaning of Scripture is that the usage of the language of the verse here is similar to the expressions: ***and the Eternal will be my G-d***;[[168]](#footnote-168) ***to be your G-d***.[[169]](#footnote-169) The verse here thus states that excepting the Eternal only, we are not to have others as gods, neither from all the angels above nor from all the host of heaven who are called ***elohim***. This is something like that which is said, ***he that sacrifices 'la'elohim' (unto the gods) save unto the Eternal only, shall be utterly destroyed***.[[170]](#footnote-170) It is thus a prohibition against believing in any of these beings, accepting them as gods, or saying to them, "you are my god."[[171]](#footnote-171) This is also the opinion of Onkelos, who translated: "[you will have no] other gods excepting Me.” [[172]](#footnote-172)

Know that wherever Scripture says ***elohim acheirim***, the meaning is "others besides the Glorious Name." It uses this expression with reference to accepting G-d or worshipping Him, thus saying: "Do not accept them upon yourselves as G-d, with the exception only of the Eternal." But when Scripture speaks of making idols, it will never say ***acheirim*** (others) - ["other gods"] - Heaven forbid![[173]](#footnote-173) Instead it says, ***Nor make to yourselves molten gods***;[[174]](#footnote-174) ***Molten gods do not make unto yourselves***.[[175]](#footnote-175) They are called [gods] because they were made with the intent of serving their makers as gods, but in reference to them, Scripture says, ***For they were no gods, but the works of men's hands, wood and stone; therefore they have destroyed them***.[[176]](#footnote-176)

**Thus in the second commandment, He admonished us firstly that we should not accept upon ourselves a master from among all gods excepting the Eternal. He then said that we should not make a graven image or any manner of likeness, [and we are not] to bow down to them or worship them in any manner whatsoever.** It is for this reason that He said, ***You will not bow down unto them***[[177]](#footnote-177), since it is connected with the making [of idols - mentioned in the preceding verse] - which He prohibited the people from bowing down to them. Thus all [of the first three verses in this second commandment] constitute prohibitions against worshipping idols, and their violations all entail death by the court. This verse, [i.e., ***You will not make unto yourself a graven image***, etc. (Verse 4)], is thus not a prohibition against making idols which one does not worship oneself, [as Rashi would have it]. Further on [in Verse 20], He indeed warns against this, as it is said, ***gods of silver, or gods of gold, you will not make unto yourself***. Similarly, ***You will not make unto yourself molten gods***,[[178]](#footnote-178) ***You will not make unto yourself idols***.[[179]](#footnote-179)

**'AL PANAI' (BEFORE MY FACE).** This is similar in meaning to these expressions: ***Surely 'al panecha' (to Your face) he will blaspheme You***;[[180]](#footnote-180) ***Now therefore be pleased to look upon me; for surely I will not lie 'al p'neichem' (to your face).[[181]](#footnote-181)*** He thus admonishes here: "Do not make unto yourselves other gods, for they are before My face, as I look and gaze at all times and in all places at those who make them." **A thing which is done in the face of a person when he is aware thereof is called al panav (before his face).** Thus: ***So the present passed over 'al panav' (before him)***.[[182]](#footnote-182) So also: ***And Nadab and Abihu died ... and Eleazar and Ithamar ministered in the priest's office 'al p'nei' (in the presence of) Aaron their father***,[[183]](#footnote-183) meaning that Aaron their father saw it and was aware thereof. In the Book of Chronicles it is written: ***And Nadab and Abihu died 'liphnei' (before) their father, and had no children***.[[184]](#footnote-184) Thus the purport of the verse here is: "Do not make other gods unto yourselves, for I am present with you always and see you in private and in public."

By way of the Truth, [the mystic lore of the Cabala], you will understand the secret of ***panim*** (face) from that which we have written[[185]](#footnote-185) that Scripture warned concerning the Revelation: ***'Panim b 'phanim' (face to face) did the Eternal speak with you***.[[186]](#footnote-186) And you will know the secret of the word ***acheirim*** (others), and then the entire verse will come [to light] in its plain meaning and purport. And so did Onkelos say it.[[187]](#footnote-187) It is this which is said, ***You will not make with Me***.[[188]](#footnote-188) "***For I the Eternal your G-d am a jealous G-d***,[[189]](#footnote-189) i.e., to be worshipped alone, and it is not fitting that you join others to Me. ***And I am El***,[[190]](#footnote-190) ***the Mighty One***,[[191]](#footnote-191) Who has the power in My hand;[[192]](#footnote-192) and I am, furthermore, ***kana***, avenging from the one who gives My glory to another and My praise to graven images."[[193]](#footnote-193)

Now in no place in Scripture is an expression of 'jealousy' found in reference to the Glorious Name except in the matter of idol-worship. Thus the Rabbi [Moshe ben Maimon] wrote in the Moreh Nebuchim[[194]](#footnote-194) that in the entire Torah and in all the books of the Prophets, you will not find the term burning anger, wrath, or jealousy [applied to G-d] except in reference to idolatry. But of the holy ones of the Supreme One it is written: ***And the anger of the Eternal was kindled against Moses***;[[195]](#footnote-195) ***And the anger of the Eternal was kindled against them [i.e., Aaron and Miriam] and He departed***![[196]](#footnote-196) And it is further written, ***My wrath is kindled against you [i.e., Eliphaz the Temanite] and against your two friends, for you have not spoken of Me the thing that is right, as My servant Job has***.[[197]](#footnote-197) However, as far as the term 'jealousy' is concerned, [Rambam] is correct [in maintaining that it is not applied to G-d except in reference to idolatry]. And so did the Rabbis say in the Mechilta:[[198]](#footnote-198) "I zealously exact punishment for idolatry, but in other matters, I am gracious and merciful."

In my opinion, jealousy is mentioned only with reference to idolatry in Israel. The reason for the jealousy is that Israel is the treasured possession of the Glorious Name, which He has separated to Himself, as I have explained above.[[199]](#footnote-199) Now if His people, His servants, turn to other gods, G-d is 'jealous' of them even as a man is jealous of his wife when she goes to other men, and of a servant who makes another master for himself. But Scripture uses no such term of jealousy with reference to other peoples to whom He has allotted the hosts of heaven.[[200]](#footnote-200)

At this point, I make mention of what Scripture teaches concerning idolatry. There were three kinds of idol-worship. **The first [group of idol-worshippers] began to worship the angels**, who are the Separate Intelligences,[[201]](#footnote-201) because it is known that some of them have rulership over the peoples, something like it is written, ***the prince of the kingdom of Greece***,[[202]](#footnote-202) ***the prince of the kingdom of Persia***.[[203]](#footnote-203) They thought that [these angels] have power over them to do good or to do evil, and so each people began to worship the prince appointed over them, as the first [peoples] knew how to identify them. Now these are referred to in the Torah and in all the Writings as ***other gods, the gods of the peoples***,[[204]](#footnote-204) for angels are called ***elohim***, as it is said, ***He is G-d of gods***;[[205]](#footnote-205) ***Bow down to Him, all you gods***;[[206]](#footnote-206) ***For the Eternal is greater than all gods***.[[207]](#footnote-207) **They worshipped the angels even though they admitted that supreme strength and infinite power belonged only to G-d the Most High. Thus did the Rabbis say,[[208]](#footnote-208) [with reference to the peoples of the world], that they call G-d the Most High "G-d of gods." Regarding this kind of idol-worship, Scripture has said,** ***He that sacrifices 'la'elohim' (to the gods) will be utterly destroyed***.[[209]](#footnote-209) It thus mentioned them by the name with which they were known.

**The second kind of idolatry appeared when people began worshipping the visible hosts of heaven, some worshipping the sun or the moon, and others worshipping one of the constellations**. Each of the nations knew the power of the constellation according to the dominion thereof in their land,[[210]](#footnote-210) and they thought that by worshipping them, the constellation would be strengthened and it would help them, something like it is written, ***or the sun, or the moon, or any of the host of heaven***, etc.[[211]](#footnote-211) And it is further written, ***And they will spread them before the sun, and the moon, and all the host of heaven, whom they have loved, and whom they have served, and after whom they have walked, and whom they have sought, and to whom they have bowed***,[[212]](#footnote-212) and as it is said in the Torah with reference to the prohibition of idolatry: ***And lest you lift up your eyes unto heaven, and when you see the sun and the moon and the stars, even all the host of heaven, you be drawn away and worship them and serve them, which the Eternal your G-d has allotted unto all the peoples under the whole heaven***.[[213]](#footnote-213) That is to say, because G-d allotted them to all the peoples and gave each people a star or constellation, you should not let yourself be allured to worshipping them. Now these are the people who began making the many forms of graven images, ***Asherim*** ***and the sun-images***.[[214]](#footnote-214) They would make the forms of the constellations in the hours of their strength according to their rank, and in the opinion of the people, it bestowed power and success upon them. It appears likely to me that this [form of idolatry] began in the Generation of the Dispersion,[[215]](#footnote-215) when G-d scattered the nations to various countries and the stars and the constellations began holding sway over them according to their divisions. The builders of the Tower had declared their intention to make themselves a name[[216]](#footnote-216) and not be scattered, as I have hinted in its place. Now all these groups had false prophets who foretold them future events and informed them through the arts of sorcery and divination some of the things that were to come upon them. The constellations also have lords who abide in the atmosphere as the angels do in the heavens, and know the things that are to come.

Closely related to this kind of idolatry was the worship of human beings. When people of a country saw that a certain individual - such as Nebuchadnezzar - had great power and that his star was very much in the ascendancy, they thought that by accepting his worship upon themselves and directing their thought towards him, their star would also ascend together with his. He would also think that by their attaching their thoughts to him, his success would be augmented on account of the power of their souls directed towards him. This was the opinion of Pharaoh, who, according to the words of our Rabbis, [looked upon himself as a god],[[217]](#footnote-217) and of Sennacherib, concerning whose ideas Scripture says, ***I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High***,[[218]](#footnote-218) and of Hiram[[219]](#footnote-219) and his companions[[220]](#footnote-220) who made themselves gods. They were wicked, but they were not absolute fools.

**The third kind of idolatry appeared afterwards when people began worshipping the demons which are spirits, as I will explain with G-d's help.[[221]](#footnote-221) Some of them too are appointed over the peoples to be masters in their lands and to harm their beleaguered ones and those who have stumbled, as is known of their activity through the art of necromancy, as well as through the words of our Rabbis**.[[222]](#footnote-222) It is with reference to this [third kind of idolatry] that Scripture says, ***They sacrificed unto demons, no-gods, gods that they knew not, new gods that came up of late, which your fathers dreaded not***.[[223]](#footnote-223) Scripture ridicules them, [i.e., the Israelites], saying they sacrifice also to the demons who are no gods at all. **That is to say, they are not like the angels who are called *eloha*.** Instead, they are gods that they knew not, meaning that they found in them no trace of might or power of rulership. Furthermore, they are new to them, having learned only lately to worship them from the Egyptian sorcerers, and even their wicked forefathers such as Terach and Nimrod[[224]](#footnote-224) did not dread them at all. Of this [kind of idolatry] Scripture warns, ***And they will no more sacrifice their sacrifices unto the demons, after whom they go astray***.[[225]](#footnote-225)

Thus in this second commandment, the Torah prohibited all [kinds of] worship, save unto the Eternal only.[[226]](#footnote-226) It is for this reason that He first admonished, ***You will have no other gods 'al panai' (before My face)***, which is a reference to the first kind of idolatry, namely, the worship of the angels. This is the intent of ***al panai***, whose secret I have alluded to. Then He further admonished against graven images and ***any manner of likeness of any thing that is in heaven above***,[[227]](#footnote-227) which also alludes to mental images of spiritual phenomena, something like it is written, ***It stood still, but I could not discern the appearance thereof; a form was before mine eyes***.[[228]](#footnote-228) And so have the Rabbis said:[[229]](#footnote-229) "***That is in heaven***. This includes the sun, moon, stars, and constellations. ***Above***. This includes the ministering angels." Of them, too, [the worshippers] would make figures representing the Separate Intelligences[[230]](#footnote-230) which are the souls of the constellations, as happened in the case of the [golden calf], as I am prepared to explain there with the help of G-d.[[231]](#footnote-231)

**4. ALL THAT IS IN THE WATER UNDER THE EARTH**. This expression includes the demons beneath the waters and the inhabitants thereof[[232]](#footnote-232) And so the Rabbis have said,[[233]](#footnote-233) "***All that is in the water under the earth***: this includes the reflected images [which appear in the water]." Of all of them He said, ***You will not bow down unto them, nor serve them[[234]](#footnote-234)*** in any manner of worship whatsoever, even if the worshipper's intent is not to remove himself from the authority of the Holy One, blessed be He. Thus He has ordered all these services to be devoted to the Proper Name [of the Eternal], blessed be He.

**5. 'POKEID' (VISITING) THE INIQUITY OF THE FATHERS UPON THE CHILDREN UNTO THE THIRD AND FOURTH GENERATION OF THEM THAT HATE ME**. Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra said that the meaning of the term ***p'kidah*** is similar to that of ***z'chirah*** (remembrance), just as in the verse, ***And the Eternal 'pakad' Sarah***,[[235]](#footnote-235) which is like: "***and the Eternal remembered her***." The purport [of the verse here, according to Ibn Ezra], is that G-d will postpone [punishment] of the wicked person because perhaps he will repent and beget a righteous son. Bu t if the son walks in his father's ways, as also the third and fourth generations, their memories will be destroyed, for G-d will 'remember' [to visit punishment upon them for] what the parents have done, and He will no longer postpone their punishment. All the commentators have similarly interpreted [the above Scriptural expression]. But if this be so, the sins of the fathers will not be visited upon their children nor upon the third generation, but only on the fourth. It would have been proper then for Scripture to say that He will visit the iniquity of the fathers and their sons and of the third generation upon the fourth generation! Perhaps these commentators will say that the sense of the verse is that He remembers the iniquity of the fathers upon their sons, saying [to them], "You and your fathers have sinned." He does thus with the third and fourth generations, and then takes vengeance upon them, and never again does He visit it upon them, for He destroys them all in their iniquity.

But their explanation is not correct. Scripture mentions G-d's remembrance of all of them equally, and it does not specify that the vengeance is exacted [only] in the end, i.e., on the fourth generation. Besides, the term ***p'kidah*** in conjunction with the word ***al*** - [as it occurs here: ***'pokeid' avon avoth 'al' banim***] - is not used In connection with remembrance, but rather signifies vengeance [or punishment]. Thus: ***And on the day 'pokdi upakad'ti' (that I do punish, I will punish) them for their sin***;[[236]](#footnote-236) ***In that day 'yiphkod hashem' (the Eternal will punish) with his sore and great and strong sword leviathan the slant serpent, and leviathan the tortuous serpent, and He will slay the dragon that is in the sea***;[[237]](#footnote-237) ***'yiphkod hashem' (the Eternal will punish) the host of the high heaven on high***.[[238]](#footnote-238) All of these are expression of vengeance and punishment.

The correct interpretation thus appears to me to be that Scripture is stating that He visits the iniquity, which the father perpetrated, upon his children, and excises them on account of the iniquity of their father, something like it is said, ***Prepare you slaughter for his children for the iniquity of their fathers***.[[239]](#footnote-239) Similarly, He visits it upon the third generation if the sin of the two generations is not yet full, something like [it is said], ***for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet full***.[[240]](#footnote-240) Sometimes He visits the iniquity of all three generations upon the fourth one when their measure [of iniquity] is filled and then he excises them. But in the fifth generation, no one is punished for the iniquity of his ancestor in the first generation. Now in the Book of Deuteronomy, [where the Ten Commandments are restated], He added a ***vav*** [to the expression ***'al shileishim'*** (unto the third generation), thus making it] ***'ti'al' shileishim v'al ribei'im l'sonai***.[[241]](#footnote-241) But the meaning of the ***vav*** [there is not the usual "and"] but "or" - [" ***'or' unto the third generation 'or' unto the fourth generation of them that hate me***" - as explained above].

Now Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra wrote that children's children are called "children." This is why He used the briefer term.[[242]](#footnote-242) You can understand this from the terms ***shileishim*** (the third generation) and ***ribei'im*** (the fourth generation).[[243]](#footnote-243) But this is not so. ***Shileishim*** means the third generation in that sin. [Hence, it includes only the father, his children, and his children's children.] Likewise, ***ribei'im*** means the fourth generation in that sin, totaling four sinners. And the verse stated in connection with the thirteen attributes of G-d, ***visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third generation and unto the fourth generation***,[[244]](#footnote-244) is to be explained[[245]](#footnote-245) as "the children's children, who are the third and fourth generations." It is for this reason that Moses, [when invoking the thirteen attributes] in the case of the spies, turned back [to this specific attribute as expressed here in the Ten Commandments] and said, ***visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation***.[[246]](#footnote-246) He did not mention "children's children," for it is all one, [i.e., "children's children" is the same as ***shileishim***].

Now Scripture states [that this attribute of punishment applies only to] those that hate Me. That is, if the children hate G-d. If the sinner begot a righteous son, he does not bear the iniquity of the father, as [the prophet] Ezekiel has explained.[[247]](#footnote-247)

From the words of our Rabbis,[[248]](#footnote-248) there appears a proof to the explanation I have presented above, [i.e., that ***'pokeid'*** the sins of the fathers, etc., is to be understood in the sense of "visiting" or "punishing"]. **From here, they have derived the principle that the [Divine] measure of good is greater than the measure of punishment, for the measure of punishment is for four generations [while that of reward is for thousands].** But if it were as the first explanation has it, [namely, that of Ibn Ezra, that ***pokeid*** means "remembers," thus signifying that He postpones the punishment of the sinner until the fourth generation in the hope that perhaps he will beget a righteous son], then "the measure of good" would have been greater if He postponed punishment even to the tenth generation![[249]](#footnote-249)

It is possible that this strict measure [of punishment that is imposed on a sinner and which is felt up to the fourth generation] applies only to idolatry, for it is with regard to this prohibition that He is warning here. However, In the rest of the commandments, [the rule applies that] ***every one will die of his iniquity***.[[250]](#footnote-250) You will find the hidden secret of visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children in the Book of Ecclesiastes.[[251]](#footnote-251) I have already written concerning it.[[252]](#footnote-252)

**6. AND HE SHOWS MERCY UNTO THE THOUSANDTH GENERATION OF THEM THAT LOVE ME AND KEEP MY COMMANDMENTS.** It appears from the sense of the verse that this Divine assurance is with respect to the subject-matter of the commandments that He mentioned. He is thus saying that to those that love Him, He will show mercy to their thousandth generation. **These are the ones who sacrifice their lives for Him, for they are the ones who acknowledge only the Glorious Name and His G-dship and deny all strange gods, refusing to worship them even if they are in mortal danger. They are called "the lovers [of G-d] ," for this is the kind of love that we have been obligated to observe even at the sacrifice of life**, just as He has said, ***And you will love the Eternal your G-d with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might***,[[253]](#footnote-253) meaning that you should give your very life because of your love of Him, that you should not alter Him for another god, nor join Him together with a strange god. It is for this reason that [the prophet] said of Abraham, ***the seed of Abraham my friend***,[[254]](#footnote-254) since he risked his life in order not to worship the idols in Ur of the Chaldees.[[255]](#footnote-255) The rest of the righteous/generous are called ***those that keep My commandments***.

Now many scholars[[256]](#footnote-256) have explained that **"His lovers" are those who worship Him without the intention of receiving a reward, just as our Sages have mentioned**.[[257]](#footnote-257) But I have found in the Mechilta that it is said:[[258]](#footnote-258) ***"Of them that love Me***. This refers to Abraham and those like him. ***And those that keep My commandments***. This refers to the prophets and the elders. Rabbi Nathan says that the verse, ***of them that love Me and keep My commandments***, refers to those who dwell in the Land of Israel and give their lives for the commandments.[[259]](#footnote-259) 'Why are you being led out to be executed?' 'Because I have circumcised my son.' 'Why are you being led out to be burned?' 'Because I read the Torah.' 'Why are you being led out to be hanged?' 'Because I ate the unleavened bread.' 'Why are you being lashed with the whip?'[[260]](#footnote-260) 'Because I took the lulav.[[261]](#footnote-261) And it says, ***Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends***.[[262]](#footnote-262) These are the wounds which have caused me to become beloved of My Father in heaven." Thus Rabbi Nathan explained that the love [of G-d, which is referred to in the verse before us], meant the sacrifice of life for the sake of the commandments. Now the verse here certainly refers to idolatry, for it is with reference to it that we are obligated at all times forever to suffer death rather than transgress [the law].[[263]](#footnote-263) But [Rabbi Nathan] broadened the matter to include all the commandments, [such as circumcision, the study of Torah, the eating of unleavened bread on Passover, the taking of the lulav[[264]](#footnote-264) on Succoth - as mentioned above] - because in the time of religious persecutions, we are obligated to suffer death for any of the commandments[[265]](#footnote-265) [rather than transgress them], as derived from the other verse, ***And you will not profane My holy Name***.[[266]](#footnote-266) And it would also be incorrect to say of the first Sage [in the above Mechilta] - i.e., who said that [those who love Me] refers to Abraham, while [those who keep My commandments] refers to the prophets - that he is of the opinion that the prophets kept the commandments with the intention that they receive a reward! [Thus the explanation of "the many scholars"[[267]](#footnote-267) mentioned above is refuted by the Mechilta.] However, there is a secret in this [Mechilta]: **Abraham risked his life in love**[[268]](#footnote-268) - something like it is written, ***mercy to Abraham[[269]](#footnote-269)*** - and the rest of the prophets in ***g'vurah*** (might).[[270]](#footnote-270) **Understand this!**

**7. 'LO THISA' (YOU WILL NOT TAKE) THE NAME OF THE ETERNAL YOUR G-D IN VAIN.** This verse has already been explained in the words of our Rabbis.[[271]](#footnote-271) He prohibits [here] swearing by the Glorious Name in vain, such as swearing that which is contrary to facts known to man, or swearing to [the truth of] a self-evident fact. For example: if one swears that a pillar of marble is of gold, or that it is of marble, and the pillar is right before them and they recognize it as such [that it is of marble].

By way of the plain meaning of Scripture, **the verse also prohibits the taking of the Glorious Name in vain upon one's lips [even without an oath]**, the usage of the term [***Lo Thisa***] being similar to these expressions: ***'Lo thisa' (You will not utter) a false report***;[[272]](#footnote-272) ***Nor 'esa' (do I take) their names upon my lips***.[[273]](#footnote-273) Speaking is called ***thisa***, [which literally means "lifting"], because the speaker thereby lifts up his voice. Similarly: ***'masa' (The burden) of the word of the Eternal***;[[274]](#footnote-274) also, ***In that day 'yisa' (shall he swear), saying: I will not be a healer***,[[275]](#footnote-275) which means that he will lift up his voice to say so. And in truth, this - [i.e., **just taking G-d's Name in vain even without an oath] - is also forbidden, and in the language of the Sages**,[[276]](#footnote-276) **it is called "pronouncing the Name of Heaven to no purpose."** Thus our Rabbis have already said:[[277]](#footnote-277) "Whence do we know that [in dedicating a beast for a sacrifice] a man should not say, 'Unto the Eternal this is a whole-offering,' or 'Unto the Eternal this is a sin-offering,' but instead he should say, 'This is a whole-offering unto the Eternal,' 'This is a sin-offering unto the Eternal?[[278]](#footnote-278) Scripture therefore says, ***an offering unto the Eternal***.[[279]](#footnote-279) And must we not reason by using the method of ***kal vachomer***?[[280]](#footnote-280) If the Torah said of him who is about to dedicate [something to Heaven], 'Let My Name not rest on it until [he has first said] ***korban*** (sacrifice)', **is it not logical [that we must not pronounce the Name of Heaven to no purpose]!"**

He has placed this commandment after the prohibition of idolatry, because just as it is proper to fear the Great and Fearful Name by not giving His Glory to another,[[281]](#footnote-281) so it is fitting to give glory to His Name. He who takes it in vain profanes it, similar to that which is written, ***And you will not swear by My Name falsely***,[[282]](#footnote-282) ***so that you profane not the Name of your G-d***. Just as He was stringent in the case of idolatry and wrote the punishment [for transgression], i.e., that He is ***a jealous G-d, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children***,[[283]](#footnote-283) so did He record here the punishment that He ***will not hold him guiltless***. He used this expression instead of saying that He will visit his sin upon him, [as He did in the case of idolatry], because people who swear [in vain] do not consider it a real sin, and they think it is proper that He forgive them. Therefore He said that whosoever touches that will not go unpunished.[[284]](#footnote-284) Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra has written appropriately on this verse.[[285]](#footnote-285)

Now the language of this verse, ***the Name of the Eternal your G-d***, implies that it is as if Moses was speaking, and so also in the case of all the following commandments, whereas **in the first two verses**[[286]](#footnote-286) G-d is speaking: ***I; Who brought you out; before Me***; ***For I***; ***Of them that love Me and keep My commandments***. It is for this reason that our Rabbis of blessed memory have said:[[287]](#footnote-287) **"We heard the two commandments - *I am the Eternal your G-d and You will have no other gods* - from the Almighty Himself,"** for they are the root of everything. But Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra asked [concerning this tradition of the Rabbis] that Scripture says, ***And G-d spoke all these words***,[[288]](#footnote-288) and still more clearly it is written [following the Ten Commandments], ***These words the Eternal spoke unto all your assembly***,[[289]](#footnote-289) and again it is written there, ***And He wrote them down upon two Tablets of stone***,[[290]](#footnote-290) meaning that as He said the Ten Commandments to all your assembly, so He wrote them down upon the Tablets![[291]](#footnote-291)

I will explain to you the tradition of our Rabbis [that we heard the first two commandments from the Almighty Himself]. Surely all Israel heard the entire Ten Commandments from the mouth of G-d, as the literal meaning of Scripture indicates. But in the first two commandments, they heard the utterance of speech and understood their words even as Moses understood them. Therefore He spoke to them directly [in the first person], just as a master speaks to his servant, as I have mentioned. From then on, in the rest of the commandments, they heard a voice of speech but they did not understand it, and it became necessary for Moses to explain to them each and every commandment until they understood it from Moses. And so [the Rabbis] explained:[[292]](#footnote-292) ***Moses spoke, and G-d answered him by a voice***.[[293]](#footnote-293) Therefore [the rest of the Ten Commandments] were addressed by G-d to Moses so that he should tell them thus. **The reason [that the first two commandments were spoken to the people directly by G-d] was so that they should all be prophets in the belief of G-d, [His existence, and His Unity], and in the prohibition of idolatry,** as I have explained.[[294]](#footnote-294) Those are the root of the whole Torah and the commandments, just as He said, ***Assemble Me the people, and I will make them hear My words, that they may learn to fear Me all the days***.[[295]](#footnote-295) But in the rest of the Ten Commandments, they received their explanation from the mouth of Moses after having heard a voice of words,[[296]](#footnote-296) while in all other commandments [of the whole Torah], they believed in Moses completely.

**8. REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY, TO KEEP IT HOLY.** After He commanded that we believe in the Proper Name of G-d, blessed be He - i.e., that He exists, that He is the Creator, that He understands [and watches over all that happens to man], and that He is the All-powerful[[297]](#footnote-297) - and [after commanding] that we should direct both our faith in all these matters and all honor towards Him alone,[[298]](#footnote-298) and He further commanded that the remembrance of His Name be done in a manner of respect,[[299]](#footnote-299) He now commanded that we make in this matter a sign and perpetual remembrance to let it be known that He created everything. This is in the commandment of the Sabbath, which is a remembrance of the creation.

Now He said here, ***'Remember' the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy***; and in the Book of Deuteronomy it is written, ***'Observe' the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy***.[[300]](#footnote-300) Our Rabbis have said with respect to these verses:[[301]](#footnote-301) "***Remember*** and ***Observe*** were both spoken with one utterance." Now the Rabbis were not so particular as to comment on the other changes of language [between the Ten Commandments written here and those in the Book of Deuteronomy. They commented only on the above-mentioned change] because their intent is to point out that ***zachor*** (remember) constitutes a positive commandment, i.e., that He commanded that we remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy and that we do not forget it, [as will be explained further on]. [They considered] ***shamor*** (observe), on the other hand, as a negative commandment, just as they have said,[[302]](#footnote-302) "Wherever Scripture says take heed (***'hishamer'***), or ***lest ('pen'),*** or ***do not ('al')***, there is a negative commandment." It warns us that we should watch it [i.e., the Sabbath] to keep it holy and that we should not profane it, [thus clearly implying both a positive commandment and a negative one with respect to the Sabbath]. It would not have been proper for Moses to change G-d's words from a positive commandment to a negative commandment. [Therefore the Rabbis were careful to point out that both ***remember*** and ***observe*** were spoken by G-d in one utterance.] However, the change in the second commandment from ***'and' any manner of likeness***,[[303]](#footnote-303) ***to any manner of likeness***,[[304]](#footnote-304) omitting the ***vav*** (and), and then adding it [to the expression ***al shileishim*** ***(unto the third generation)***, which is found here in Verse 5, rendering it there in Deuteronomy], ***v'al shileishim ('and' unto the third generation),[[305]](#footnote-305)*** and all such similar changes in the rest of the Ten Commandments, do not matter, for it is all one. This explanation [of why the Rabbis were particular to comment only on the change from ***remember*** to ***observe***] **will not be entertained by one who is not used to the ways of the Talmud**.[[306]](#footnote-306) And the Rabbis have expressly said:[[307]](#footnote-307) **"Women are obligated by Law of the Torah to proclaim the sanctity of the Sabbath,[[308]](#footnote-308) because it is said, *remember* and *observe*, thus equating them so that all those who are obligated to *observe* the Sabbath are obligated also to *remember* it.[[309]](#footnote-309) And Since women are obligated in the observance [of the Sabbath] - for women are obligated in the observance thereof, since the observance of all negative commandments is incumbent on women, [and *shamor* *(observe) the Sabbath*, as was mentioned above, constitutes a negative commandment] - they are obligated also to remember the Sabbath. Now women would not have been bound to remember the Sabbath - for it is a positive commandment that is dependent on time and is [therefore] not incumbent on women - were it not for this analogy [of *remember* and *observe*, i.e., that all who are obligated to observe are bound to remember], which does make it incumbent on them.[[310]](#footnote-310)**

But I wonder! If ***remember*** and ***observe*** were both said by the Almighty, why were they not [both] written in the first Tablets? It is possible that in both the first and second Tablets, [only] remember was written, and Moses explained to Israel that observe was [also] said with it. This is indeed the true intent [of the saying of the Rabbis that "***remember*** and ***observe*** were both spoken with one utterance]". And in the Midrash of Rabbi Nechunya ben Hakanah,[[311]](#footnote-311) the Sages have mentioned also a great secret in this matter of ***remember*** and ***observe***.[[312]](#footnote-312) **Generally, [in the mystic lore], *remembrance* is at daytime and *observance* is at night**, and this is the intent of what the Sages used to say on the Sabbath-eve at twilight [when welcoming the Sabbath]:[[313]](#footnote-313) "Come, O Bride; Come, O Bride; Come, let us go forth to meet the Sabbath, the Queen, the Bride.[[314]](#footnote-314) And the Sages call the blessing that is recited [over the Kiddush-cup] on the Sabbath-day "the great Kiddush,"[[315]](#footnote-315) for it is the sanctification of the Great One.[[316]](#footnote-316) **Understand this!**

It is also true that the attribute of "***remembering***" is alluded to in a positive commandment and issues forth from the attribute of love to that of mercy, for he who does his master's command is beloved of him and his master shows him mercy. But the attribute of "***observing***" is alluded to in a negative commandment, which goes to the attribute of justice and issues forth from that of fear, for he who guards himself from doing anything which does not please his master does so out of fear for him. **It is for this reason that a positive commandment is greater than a negative commandment**,[[317]](#footnote-317) **just as love is greater than fear, for he who fulfills and observes the will of his master with his body and his possessions is greater than he who guards himself from doing that which is not pleasing to him.** This is why the Rabbis have said[[318]](#footnote-318) that **a positive commandment overrides a negative commandment.** And it is for this reason that punishment for violation of the negative commandments is great, - the court punishing the transgressor with whipping or death - whereas no punishment at all is meted out in the case of failure to fulfill the positive commandments, excepting when one is in brazen rebelliousness, such as when he says, "I will not take the lulav, I will not make fringes [on my four-cournered garment],[[319]](#footnote-319) I will not make a tabernacle.[[320]](#footnote-320) In these cases, the Sanhedrin would whip him until he accepts upon himself to do them, or until he dies.[[321]](#footnote-321)

In explanation of the word ***zachor*** (remember) - [***remember the Sabbath-day***] - Rashi wrote: "Take care always to remember the Sabbath-day, so that if a food of good quality happens to come your way, you should put it away for the Sabbath." This is a Baraitha taught in the Mechilta[[322]](#footnote-322) in the following way: "Rabbi Eleazar the son of Chananyah the son of Chizkiyah the son of Garon says: ***'Remember the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy***, and remember it from the first day of the week, so that if a good portion happens to come your way, prepare it for the Sabbath.' " But this [Baraitha in the Mechilta] is taught in the name of a single Sage and is not the final decision of the Law. In the Gemara,[[323]](#footnote-323) we find that the Rabbis have said: "We have been taught [in the Baraitha]: They have told about Shammai the Elder that all his life, he ate in honor of the Sabbath. How so? If he found a beautiful animal to buy, he would say, 'This one will be in honor of the Sabbath.' On the following day, if he would find a more beautiful one, he left the second one for the Sabbath, and ate the first.[[324]](#footnote-324) But Hillel the Elder was guided by another principle. All his deeds were for the sake of Heaven, as it is said,[[325]](#footnote-325) Blessed be the Eternal, day by day He bears our burden. We have also been so taught [in another Baraitha]: The School of Shammai say that on the first day of the week, you should begin preparing for your Sabbath. And the School of Hillel say: Blessed be the Eternal, day by day He bears our burden.[[326]](#footnote-326) And in another Mechilta[[327]](#footnote-327) we find: "Shammai the Elder says: '***Remembering***' [***Remember the Sabbath-day***] means remember it before it comes; '***observing***' [***Observe the Sabbath-day[[328]](#footnote-328)*** - means observe it when it comes. It was told of Shammai the Elder that the memory of the Shabbath never left his lips. If he bought a good article he would say, 'This is for the Sabbath;' a new garment, he would say 'This is for the Sabbath.' **But Hillel the Elder was guided by another principle, for he would say, 'Let all your deeds be done for the sake of Heaven.' " And the accepted decision is like that of the School of Hillel.** [Thus it is clear that Rashi's explanation is like that of Shammai the Elder, or of the School of Shammai, while the accepted decision of Law is like that of Hillel or that of the School of Hillel.][[329]](#footnote-329)

In line with the plain meaning of Scripture, the Rabbis have said[[330]](#footnote-330) that this verse commands us that we should always remember the Sabbath on every day, so that we should neither forget it nor confuse it with the other days.[[331]](#footnote-331) By always remembering the Sabbath, it will at all times remind us of the creation, and we will forever acknowledge that the universe has a Creator, and that He commanded us regarding this sign, [i.e., the Sabbath], as He has said, ***for it is a sign between Me and you***,[[332]](#footnote-332) this being a fundamental principle in the belief of G-d. The meaning of ***l'kadsho (to keep it holy)*** is that our remembrance of it should be to the end that it be holy to us, just as He said, ***and call the Sabbath a delight***, ***the sacred of the Eternal honorable***.[[333]](#footnote-333) The purport of this is that the resting thereon should be ours because it is a holy day, [which enables us] to turn away from our mental preoccupations and the vanities of the times **and instead to give delight to our souls in the ways of G-d, and go to the Sages and to the prophets to hear the words of G-d.** This is just as it is said, ***Wherefore will you go to him [the prophet] today? it is neither New Moon nor Sabbath***,[[334]](#footnote-334) for such was their custom. And so did our Rabbis of blessed memory say:[[335]](#footnote-335) **"From this you learn that on the New Moon and on the Sabbath one must go [to the prophet]."** This is the reason [that the Torah commanded us concerning the resting of cattle on the Sabbath], i.e., in order that we should harbor no thought of it in our hearts. And it is for this reason that the Rabbis, of blessed memory, have said[[336]](#footnote-336) that **the Sabbath is equal in importance to all the commandments in the Torah, just as they have said with reference to idolatry,[[337]](#footnote-337) because on the Sabbath we testify to all the fundamentals of the faith - creation, providence, and prophecy.** And in the Mechilta we find:[[338]](#footnote-338) "Rabbi Yitzchak says: 'You should not count [the days of the week] as others count them. Rather you should count them with reference to the Sabbath.' " The meaning of this is that other nations count the days of the week in such a manner that each is independent of the other. Thus they call each day by a separate name or by a name of the ministers [in heaven, such as Sunday, which means "sun's day," Monday which means "moon's day," etc.], or by any other names which they call them. **But Israel counts all days with reference to the Sabbath: "one day after the Sabbath," "two days after the Sabbath."** This is of the essence of the commandment which we have been obligated always to remember the Sabbath every day [of the week]. This is the literal meaning of the verse, and so did Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra interpret it.

And I say further that this is the intent of Shammai the Elder's interpretation [mentioned above], who explained the command ***remember*** as meaning ***"[remember the Sabbath] before it comes***." That is to say, we should by no means forget it. [By counting the days of the week with reference to the Sabbath, forgetting it will thus be impossible.] But in the Baraitha [quoted above], they also mentioned a degree of his piety, i.e., that he would remember the Sabbath even in his eating, for all his life he ate in honor of the Sabbath. Now Hillel himself agreed to the interpretation of Shammai [that we are to count the days of the week with reference to the Sabbath], but in food-matters he followed another principle, for all of his deeds were for the sake of Heaven, and he trusted in G-d that He would provide him with a better portion for the Sabbath than that of all the other days of the week.

However, our Rabbis have yet another Midrash on the word ***l'kadsho*** (to keep it holy),[[339]](#footnote-339) namely, that we are to **sanctify it by utterance of words**. This is similar in usage to the verse, ***And you will hallow the fiftieth year***,[[340]](#footnote-340) which requires the sanctification of the court, i.e., that they say of the Jubilee year, "It is hallowed! It is hallowed![[341]](#footnote-341) Here too He commanded that we remember the Sabbath-day by proclaiming its sanctity.[[342]](#footnote-342) And so the Rabbis have said in the Mechilta:[[343]](#footnote-343) "To keep it holy. Sanctify it by reciting a blessing. Based on this verse, the Rabbis have said: 'On its entrance, proclaim the sanctity of the Sabbath over wine. But from this verse, I know only the sanctification for the day. Whence do we know that this applies also for the night? [We know it] from the words of Scripture, ***And you will keep the Sabbath***."[[344]](#footnote-344) This is "the sanctification of the [Sabbath-] day" l to which the Rabbis refer].[[345]](#footnote-345) It is incumbent upon us by Law of the Torah, and is not a mere ***asmachta***.[[346]](#footnote-346) Thus the Rabbis have said:[[347]](#footnote-347) **"Women are obligated by Law of the Torah to proclaim the sanctity of the day." Now this really refers to the sanctification recited at night, for all things requiring sanctification need to be done only once at the time of their entrance, such as the sanctification of the New Moon and the sanctification of the Jubilee year.** However, the duty to recite it on the day itself is but an ***asmachta***,[[348]](#footnote-348) and [the kiddush at daytime] contains no reference to the holiness of the day - [since only a benediction over the wine is recited] - **because it is sufficient that we proclaimed the sanctity of the Sabbath once at its entrance**. So also is the recital [of the sanctity of the Sabbath] over wine only an ***asmachta***, and is not at all a fixed part of the commandment itself.

And m the Gemara Pesachim,[[349]](#footnote-349) the Rabbis have said: "***Remember the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy***. That is, remember it over wine at its entrance. From this, I know only that it be done at daytime. Whence do we know that it must be done at night? It is from the Scriptural words, ***the Sabbath- 'day.'*** [On the version of the Baraitha, the Sages of the Gemara asked]: 'This Tanna[[350]](#footnote-350) is seeking to find a basis for the sanctification at night, and he mentions a verse which speaks of the day! Besides, the main sanctification is at nighttime!' Rather, you must learn [the above Baraitha] in this way: ***'Remember the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy***. That is, remember it over wine at its entrance. **From this, I know only that the Sabbath is to be sanctified at night.'** Whence do we know that it must be done at daytime? It is from the Scriptural words, ***the Sabbath day***." In a similar way we will explain the Mechilta [mentioned above to make it read as follows]: **"From this, I know only that the sanctification of the Sabbath is to be done at night, which is the main kiddush.** Whence do we know that it must be done at daytime, etc.," this being but a mere ***asmachta***. And from there you will learn that this commandment [of proclaiming the sanctity of the Sabbath] is derived from the word ***l'kadsho (to sanctify it),*** while the expression, ***Remember the Sabbath-day***, constitutes the commandment to remember it continually every day, as we have explained. However, in the number of two hundred and forty-eight positive commandments that we have been commanded to observe, both aspects are included in the one commandment of ***remembering*** the Sabbath. Know this!

**9. SIX DAYS WILL YOU LABOR, AND DO ALL YOUR WORK.** The term "***labor***" applies to work which is not for the needs of the body, such as cooking and the like, something like it is said: ***and in all manner of labor in the field***;[[351]](#footnote-351) ***when you till the ground***;[[352]](#footnote-352) and ***you will be tilled and sown***,[[353]](#footnote-353) and as I will yet explain with the help of G-d.[[354]](#footnote-354) It is for this reason that He said: "Six days you will work the ground and do all your work which is for your physical needs and your benefit, something like, ***bake that which you will bake***.[[355]](#footnote-355) But on the Sabbath, you will not do any kind of work, ***you, your son, nor your daughter*** - i.e., the minors." Thus He has warned us against our minor children doing work on the Sabbath with our knowledge and consent. ***Nor your manservant, nor your maidservant*** means the servants who have undergone circumcision an immersion,[[356]](#footnote-356) who are obligatd to

observe all laws of the Sabbath just as Israelites, even as He said in the Book of Deuteronomy, ***that your manservant and your maidservant may rest as well as you***.[[357]](#footnote-357) In all [other] commandments of the Torah, observance is incumbent upon them as it is upon women, as is explained in the words of our Rabbis.[[358]](#footnote-358) Now it would have been proper that He warn them directly, for they themselves are duty-bound to observe the Sabbath. Scripture, however, speaks to us because the servants are in our possession, thus telling us that their resting is incumbent upon us and that if they are not hindered from doing work, we will be punished on account of them. Besides, it is with Israel that G-d speaks in all of the Ten Commandments, [and for this reason, the command is not given directly to the servants].

**10. NOR YOUR STRANGER THAT IS WITHIN YOUR GATES**. In line with the plain meaning of Scripture, "the stranger of the gate" is always the ***ger toshav***,[[359]](#footnote-359) who came to dwell in "the gates of our cities" and has taken upon himself the Seven Laws of the Noachides.[[360]](#footnote-360) It is he who is called "the stranger who eats the unlawfully-slaughtered animal," of whom Scripture says, ***you may give it to the stranger that is within your gates, that he may eat it***.[[361]](#footnote-361) Therefore, the commandment [prohibiting work on the Sabbath] was not directed to him so that Scripture would be saying: "Do not do any work on it, the home-born or the stranger." Instead, it is we who are commanded that he do no work for our benefit, just as [we are commanded about] our minors and the cattle, but this commandment is not incumbent upon him and he may do work for himself on the Sabbath. The verse which states, ***so that the son of your handmaid, and the stranger, may rest***,[[362]](#footnote-362) speaks of the righteous proselyte who has become Jewish and embraced our Torah, which has commanded him concerning the Sabbath and all the rest of the commandments as well, as He has said, ***One law and one ordinance will be both for you, and for the stranger that sojourns with you***;[[363]](#footnote-363) ***both for the stranger, and for him that is born in the land***.[[364]](#footnote-364)

However, we have found in the words of our Rabbis that they have interpreted it in the opposite manner. Thus they have said[[365]](#footnote-365) that by way of the plain meaning of Scripture**, *your stranger that is within your gates* means the righteous proselyte**, and ceasing from work [on the Sabbath] is incumbent upon him as it is upon us. The verse, ***so that the son of your handmaid*, *and the stranger, may rest*,[[366]](#footnote-366) includes the uncircumcised geir toshav**.[[367]](#footnote-367) The Rabbis' intent in so explaining the verses is that first, [i.e., right here in the Ten Commandments], "***the stranger***" warned is the proselyte who has been circumcised, who is obligated in the observance of the Sabbath as we are. The second verse - [further, 23:12] - includes the uncircumcised [***ger toshav***]. Therefore, he is likened there to the cattle, as the verse says, ***that your ox and your ass may have rest, and the son of your handmaid, and the stranger, may rest***.[[368]](#footnote-368) Thus He commanded us concerning the resting of all of them alike that they should not work for us, but they may do [work] for themselves if they so wish. Similarly, the servant and the stranger mentioned in the Ten Commandments are alike, being obligated in the observance of all laws of the Sabbath as we are, even as He has said, ***that your manservant and your maidservant may rest as well as you***.[[369]](#footnote-369)

**11. THE ETERNAL BLESSED THE SABBATH-DAY, AND SANCTIFIED IT.** The verse is stating that the Sabbath-day will be blessed and hallowed because He has commanded to bless it and glorify it by remembering it. Therefore, He commanded us to rest thereon so that the day will be sacred to us, and that we should not do any work on it. **And Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra wrote that G-d blessed this day and sanctified it by endowing it with a greater capacity to enable the soul to receive additional wisdom than on all of the other days.** I have already written concerning this matter by way of the Truth, [the mystic lore of the Cabala], on the verse in Vayechulu.[[370]](#footnote-370) From there, you will succeed in understanding that the expression ***ki sheshet yamim asa hashem*** - [literally: "for six days the Eternal made,,][[371]](#footnote-371) - is not missing the letter ***beth***, [which would make the verse read: "for in six days the Eternal made"]. Rather, the sense of the verse is that G-d made six days[[372]](#footnote-372) ***and on the seventh day He eeased from work and rested***.[[373]](#footnote-373)

**12. HONOR YOUR FATHER**. Having finished all that we are obligated towards the Creator Himself and His glory, He turns now to command us about those matters which concern created beings. He begins with the father, for in relation to his offspring, he is akin to a creator, being partner with Him in the forming of the child.[[374]](#footnote-374) G-d is our first Father, and he who begets it [i.e., the child] is our last male parent. This is why He said in the Book of Deuteronomy, [***Honor your father... as the Eternal your G-d commanded you***].[[375]](#footnote-375) That is, "just as I have commanded you concerning My honor, so do I command you concerning the honor of those who have joined Me in your formation." Now Scripture has not explained [the nature of the honor we are to give our parents], for it may be derived from the honor mentioned above that we owe to our first Father, blessed be He. **Thus, one is to acknowledge [his male parent] as his father and not deny him, saying of another man that he is his father. Nor should he serve him because of his estate or any other benefit he hopes to derive from him. Nor should he take his father's name and swear "by the life of my father" in vain or falsely. There are other matters which are included within the term "honor," for we are commanded in every aspect thereof, and they are explained in the words of our Rabbis.[[376]](#footnote-376) The Sages have already said[[377]](#footnote-377) that honoring parents has been likened to honoring G-d.**

Now since this commandment refers to creatures on the earth, He has designated its reward to be prolongation of life on earth which He will give us. But in the opinion of our Rabbis,[[378]](#footnote-378) the purport of the verse is "***that your days may be long and upon the Land.***" **[It thus expresses two declarations]: He promises that our lives will be prolonged by observing this commandment - i.e., that G-d will fulfill our days in this world and they will be prolonged in the World to Come, which is unending - and that our dwelling will forever be on the good earth**[[379]](#footnote-379) **which He will give us.** And in the Book of Deuteronomy, He expressly stated it: ***that your day may be long, and that it may go well with you, upon the Land which the Eternal your G-d gives you***.[[380]](#footnote-380) Thus they arc two promises.

**13. YOU WILL NOT MURDER. YOU WILL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY. YOU WILL NOT STEAL**. He is stating: "Now I have commanded you to acknowledge in thought and in deed that I am the Creator of all, and to honor parents because they joined [Me] in your formation. If so, guard against destroying the work of My hands and spilling the blood of man, whom I have created to honor Me and acknowledge Me in all these matters.[[381]](#footnote-381) And do not commit adultery with your fellow-man's wife, because you will thereby destroy the principle of honoring parents, [causing the children] to deny the truth and acknowledge falsehood. They will not know their fathers and will thus give their honor to another, just as the idol-worshippers do, who say to a block of wood, ***'you are my father***,[[382]](#footnote-382) and they do not know their Father who created them out of nothing." After that, He warned against stealing a human being (kidnaping),[[383]](#footnote-383) for that too brings about a similar [disintegration of values].[[384]](#footnote-384)

With respect to their stringency and penalties, the order of the commandments is as follows: after idolatry comes bloodshed, and after that adultery, and then stealing of a human being (kidnaping), and false testimony and robbery;[[385]](#footnote-385) and he who does not covet, will never harm his neighbor. Thus, He completed all obligations that a person owes towards his neighbor. After that, [in the Seder of Mishpatim which follows], He will explain the ordinances in detail, for he who has been found guilty in any suit to pay his neighbor will pay the amount he is so obligated if he does not covet or desire that which is not his.

Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra wrote[[386]](#footnote-386) [of the commandment, ***You will not covet your neighbor's house ... your neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant***, etc.], that Scripture adopted a normal course of life. First, it mentioned the neighbor's house, for an enlightened person will first acquire a house, and then marry a woman to bring her to his house, and only afterwards will he acquire a manservant or a maidservant. But in the Book of Deuteronomy,[[387]](#footnote-387) it mentions the wife first, because young men desire to marry first [before they acquire a house]. It may be[[388]](#footnote-388) that because the coveting of a neighbor's wife is the greatest sin of all things mentioned in that verse, [it is listed first].

Thus, of the Ten Commandments, there are five which refer to the glory of the Creator and five are for the welfare of man, for [the fifth commandment], Honor your father, is for the glory of G-d, since it is for the glory of the Creator that He commanded that one honor one's father who is a partner in the formation of the child. Five commandments thus remain for the needs and welfare of man.

In some commandments, He mentioned their recompense, and in others He did not. Thus, in the second commandment, He mentioned ***a jealous G-d***;[[389]](#footnote-389) in the third, ***for the Eternal will not hold him guiltless***;[[390]](#footnote-390) in the fifth, ***that your days may be long***.[[391]](#footnote-391) But in the others, He mentioned neither punishment [for transgression], nor reward [for fulfillment]. The reason for this is that the last five commandments deal with the welfare of man, ***and behold, His reward is with Him, and His recompense before Him***.[[392]](#footnote-392) But in the case of idolatry, a warning of punishment is needed because of its great stringency, involving as it does the glory of the Creator.

It appears to me that His saying ***a jealous G-d[[393]](#footnote-393)*** refers to the commandment, ***You will have no other gods***,[[394]](#footnote-394) and that His saying, ***And He shows mercy[[395]](#footnote-395)*** refers to ***I am the Eternal***,[[396]](#footnote-396) for punishment comes for [transgressing] the negative commandments, and reward for [fulfillment of] the positive commandments. [He did not mention the reward immediately in the first commandment because] the acceptance of the Kingdom of G-d, [as mentioned in the first commandment], and the admonition against the worship of anything besides Him, constitute one subject. Therefore, He first finished that entire matter and then warned the idol-worshipper of punishment, and then He assured reward for he who fulfills the commandments.

He warned of punishment in case of a vain oath, ***the Eternal will not hold him guiltless***,[[397]](#footnote-397) but He mentioned no reward [for observing it]. For profaning the Sabbath, He mentioned neither excision[[398]](#footnote-398) nor any other punishment, neither did He mention a reward for him that keeps the Sabbath from profaning it.[[399]](#footnote-399) This is because it is included in the first two commandments. **He who observes the Sabbath testifies to the Creation and acknowledges his belief in the commandment, I am the Eternal, while he who profanes the Sabbath denies the Creation and admits the eternity of the universe, thereby denying the commandment, I am the Eternal.** Thus, [the punishment for profaning the Sabbath] is included in: ***a jealous G-d***, ***visiting the iniquity***,[[400]](#footnote-400) while [the reward for he who keeps the Sabbath] is included in the verse, ***And He shows mercy unto the thousandth generation***. In the fifth commandment, which concerns the honor due to parents, He mentioned the reward because it is a positive commandment, [and as mentioned above, reward is for fulfillment of the positive commandments].

With reference to the writing on the Tablets of Law, it would appear that the first five commandments were on one Tablet, for they are for the glory of the Creator, as I have mentioned, and the second five commandments were on another Tablet. Thus there were five opposite five, something like the Rabbis mentioned in the Book of Creation:[[401]](#footnote-401) **"With ten emanations,[[402]](#footnote-402) intangible, as is the number of ten fingers, five opposite five, and the Covenant of the Unity placed directly in the middle."** From this it will be made clear to you why there were two Tablets, for up to ***Honor your father***, it corresponds to the Written Torah, and from there on it corresponds to the Oral Torah. It would appear that it is this that our Rabbis, of blessed memory, have alluded to in saying[[403]](#footnote-403) that the two Tablets correspond to heaven and earth,[[404]](#footnote-404) to a groom and bride,[[405]](#footnote-405) to the two friends [of the groom and bride], and to the two worlds [this world and the World to Come]. All these constitute one allusion, and the person learned in the mystic lore of the Cabala will understand the secret.

**15. AND ALL THE PEOPLE PERCEIVED THE THUNDERINGS... 16. AND THEY SAID UNTO MOSES.** In the opinion of the commentators,[[406]](#footnote-406) this happened after the Giving of the Torah. It is with reference to this that Scripture says, ***And you came near unto me, even all the heads of your tribes, and your elders, and you said: Behold, the Eternal our G-d has shown us His Glory***, etc. ***If we hear the Voice of the Eternal our G-d any more, then we will die***.[[407]](#footnote-407)

But such is not my opinion, for it says here, ***but let not G-d speak with us***,[[408]](#footnote-408) and it does not say "any more." Besides, Moses said here to the people, ***Fear not***,[[409]](#footnote-409) and there it is said, ***They have well said all that they have spoken***.[[410]](#footnote-410) Moreover, here it is told that they feared only the thunderings, the lightnings, and the smoking mountain, and there it is said that they feared the speaking of the Divine Presence, for they said, ***For who is there of all flesh, that has heard the Voice of the living G-d, speaking out of the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived***?[[411]](#footnote-411) Again, here it is said, ***And Moses drew near unto the thick darkness***,[[412]](#footnote-412) but it does not say that "he entered into it." [If the events narrated in this section of the Torah happened after the Revelation. it should have said that he came "into the midst of the cloud," as it says further on in 24:18.)

The correct interpretation regarding this section of the Torah and the [entire] order of events pertaining to the Revelation appears to me to be as follows: ***And all the people perceived ... And they said unto Moses*** - all this happened before the Revelation. Now at first, [in Chapter 19], Scripture mentioned in sequence all the words of G-d that were commanded to Moses regarding the setting of a boundary to Mount Sinai and the admonition given to the people.[[413]](#footnote-413) This is followed [at the beginning of Chapter 20] by the Ten Commandments, and now Scripture refers back and mentions the words of the people to Moses, relating that from the moment they had perceived the thunderings and the lightnings. they moved backwards and stood afar off, further away from the boundary of the mountain that Moses had set for them.

The order of events [on the day of the Revelation] was thus as follows: In the morning, there were thunderings and lightnings and the loud voice of the horn,[[414]](#footnote-414) but the Divine Presence had not yet come down on the mountain, something like it is written, ***And a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and broke in pieces the rocks before the Eternal; but the Eternal was not in the wind***.[[415]](#footnote-415) ***And the people that were in the camp*** - i.e., in their place of encampment - ***trembled***. But Moses encouraged them ***and brought them forth towards G-d ... and they stood at the nether part of the mount***.[[416]](#footnote-416) While they were standing there at the nether part of the mount in anticipation, ***the Eternal descended upon the mount in fire and the smoke thereof ascended[[417]](#footnote-417)*** ***unto the heart of heaven, with darkness, cloud, and thick darkness***.[[418]](#footnote-418) The mountain itself trembled[[419]](#footnote-419) and quivered as mountains do in an earthquake called ***zalzalah***,[[420]](#footnote-420) or even more than that. And so it is written, ***What ails you ... you mountains, that you skip like rams; you hills, like young sheep***?[[421]](#footnote-421) This is not a figure of speech, just as the preceding verse - ***The sea saw it, and fled; the Jordan turned backwards[[422]](#footnote-422)*** - is not a mere figure of speech. Meanwhile, the voice of the horn waxed louder and louder.[[423]](#footnote-423) Then the people saw what was happening, and they moved backwards and stood further away from the boundary [that Moses had set for them]. They all said to Moses that G-d should not speak with them at all lest they die***, for by reason of the vision***, their pains came upon them and they retained no strength,[[424]](#footnote-424) and if they would hear the Divine utterance, they would die. Moses, however, encouraged them, and he said to them, ***Fear not***.[[425]](#footnote-425) And they heard him, ***and the people stood from afar off[[426]](#footnote-426)*** at their positions, for in spite of all his words, they did not want to come near the boundary [he had set for them]. ***And Moses drew near unto the thick darkness[[427]](#footnote-427)*** but did not come into it, and then G-d uttered the Ten Commandments. Now following the Ten Commandments, Scripture did not mention here what the elders said to Moses, for it wanted to explain the commandments and the ordinances in succession. But in the Book of Deuteronomy, Moses mentioned that after the Ten Commandments [were given], all the heads of the tribes and their elders approached him and said to him, ***"If we hear the Voice of the Eternal our G-d any more, then we will die***,[[428]](#footnote-428) for we have estimated our powers [and found] that we could not stand any more the burden of the word of the Eternal G-d." They had thought that G-d wanted to relate to them all the commandments [of the Torah], and therefore they said, ***Go you near, and hear all that the Eternal our G-d may say; and you will speak unto us all that the Eternal our G-d may speak unto you; and we will hear it, and do it***.[[429]](#footnote-429) And the Holy One, blessed be He, agreed to their words, and He said, ***They have well said all that they have spoken***,[[430]](#footnote-430) for such was His desire to proclaim to them only the Ten Commandments, and their fear appeared correct to Him.

**'VAYANU'U.'** In the opinion of our Rabbis,[[431]](#footnote-431) the term ***nu'a*** here can only denote reeling to and fro, and so it says, ***The earth 'no'a tanu'a' (reels to and fro) like a drunken man***.[[432]](#footnote-432) If so, the verse is stating [two things]: that the people were shaken up, and that out of their fear, they retreated farther backwards and stood afar off. But in the opinion of "the masters of the plain meaning of Scnpture,”[[433]](#footnote-433) ***vayanu’u*** means “that ‘they moved’ backwards from their place and stood from afar," the usage of the word being similar to: ***'na'*** ***(a fugitive) and a wanderer will you be in the earth***,[[434]](#footnote-434) and so also: ***'vay'ni'eim' (and Hc made them wander) in the wilderness***.[[435]](#footnote-435)

**16. BUT LET NOT G-D SPEAK WITH US**. The Rabbi [Moshe ben Maimon] noted in the Moreh Nebuchim[[436]](#footnote-436) that Onkelos translated ***but let not G-d speak with us*** as, ***"Let not aught be spoken to us from before G-d."*** However, he did not paraphrase in [a similar manner] in other such places, for he translated literally, ***And G-d spoke all these words***,[[437]](#footnote-437) and so also in all places where it says, ***And the Eternal spoke unto Moses***![[438]](#footnote-438) Now the reason for Onkelos' paraphrasing it here, [according to Maimonides], was that even though all Israel heard the first commandment,[[439]](#footnote-439) their capacity for comprehending it was unlike that of Moses our teacher.[[440]](#footnote-440) But if [Maimonides' opinion is correct], why did Onkelos translate literally, ***For I have talked with you from heaven***,[[441]](#footnote-441) when he should have rendered it, "It was spoken to you from before Me!" Similarly in the Book of Deuteronomy, he translated literally: ***These words the Eternal spoke unto all your assembly***,[[442]](#footnote-442) [and he did not paraphrase it]! So also he translated literally their words, ***and we have heard His Voice***,[[443]](#footnote-443) which he rendered as follows: "we have heard the voice of His word; this day we have seen that G-d speaks with man!" Likewise he translated literally, ***The Eternal spoke with you face to face***.[[444]](#footnote-444) Moreover, [with reference to Moses] he translated, ***And G-d answered him by a voice[[445]](#footnote-445)*** as "and from before G-d he was answered by a voice!" [Here Onkelos paraphrased it with regard to Moses himself, which according to Maimonides he should have translated literally]. In fact, such usage already occurs in the Torah with reference to Moses himself! Thus: ***And he heard the Voice speaking[[446]](#footnote-446)*** ***unto him***,[[447]](#footnote-447) which Onkelos translated as "being spoken." So also in the verse, ***The pillar of the cloud descended, and stood at the door of the Tent, and He spoke with Moses***,[[448]](#footnote-448) which Onkelos translated, "and it was spoken!"

But the reason for Onkelos' translating here, ["***Let not aught be spoken to us from before G-d***"], is clear. In the entire Revelation, we find Israel hearing G-d's word only out ***of the midst of the fire***,[[449]](#footnote-449) and this is what they comprehended. Similarly, ***that I have talked with you from heaven[[450]](#footnote-450)*** means, by way of the Truth, "from out of the midst of heaven," and it is identical with ***out of the midst of the fire***.[[451]](#footnote-451) The purport thereof has already been explained.[[452]](#footnote-452) Now when Onkelos saw here the expression, ***but let not G-d speak with us***, [which indicates direct revelation], and no "partition" is mentioned, he did not deem it fit to translate literally. [That would have implied that in their comprehension of the Revelation, they were equal to Moses], and since in his language [i.e., Aramaic] there is no epithet for the word Elohim,[[453]](#footnote-453) he therefore negated here any direct communication to them, [and translated, ***"Let not aught be spoken to us from before G-d"***] .

Now the amazmg thing in Onkelos' wisdom is that in the Revelation on Mount Sinai, he did not mention "***the Glory of G-d***," or "***the word of G-d***," but instead translated: "***Behold, I will reveal Myself to you***;"[[454]](#footnote-454) "***G-d will reveal Himself in the sight of all the people upon Mount Sinai***;"[[455]](#footnote-455) "***because He revealed Himself upon it***;,,[[456]](#footnote-456) "***And G-d revealed Himself upon Mount Sinai***.,,[[457]](#footnote-457) He did not translate, "and the Glory of G-d revealed itself," as he translated the expression, the mountain of G-d,[[458]](#footnote-458) at the beginning [of this book] as "the mountain upon which the Glory of G-d revealed itself." Likewise, Onkelos did so regarding this descent [upon Mount Sinai]; wherever the Proper Name of G-d [i.e., the Tetragrammaton] is mentioned, [he did not translate "the Glory of G-d"]. But when Scripture mentioned ***Elohim***, such as ***towards 'ha'Elohim***,[[459]](#footnote-459) he translated "***towards the word of G-d***." Similarly, he translated ***'ha'Elokim' is come[[460]](#footnote-460)*** as "***the Glory of G-d has revealed itself to you***," and he did not render it "G-d has revealed Himself to you." Likewise, [he translated ***where*** ***'ha 'Elokim' was[[461]](#footnote-461)*** as] "where the Glory of G-d was." And so also he translated [***'v'ha'Elohim*** ***answered him by a voice[[462]](#footnote-462)*** as] "and from before G-d, he was answered with a voice." All this is clear and lucid to him who comprehends our words explained above.[[463]](#footnote-463) Similarly, I have seen in carefully-edited texts of Onkelos that he translated literally the verse, ***And Moses went up into 'har 'ha'Elohim' (the mount of G-d)***.[[464]](#footnote-464) Since it was after the Giving of the Torah, [he translated even the name ***Elohim*** literally, and he did not render it, "and Moses went up into the mountain upon which the Glory of G-d revealed itself"] , and so it is written, ***And they set forward from the mount of the Eternal***.[[465]](#footnote-465)

**17. FOR G-D IS COME IN ORDER TO 'NASOTH' YOU**. "I.e., to make you 'great' in the world, [to ensure] that you obtain a name amongst the nations [because of the fact] that He in His Glory revealed Himself to you. ***Nasoth*** is a term for 'exalting' and 'greatness,' just as in the verses: ***Lift up a 'nes' (an ensign]***;[[466]](#footnote-466) ***'k'nes' (as an ensign) on a hill***,[[467]](#footnote-467) which is so called because it is high." Thus Rashi's language. But this is not correct.[[468]](#footnote-468) Instead, it is possible that Moses is saying that **"it is in order to get you 'accustomed' to have faith in Him that G-d is come**. Since He has shown you the Revelation of the Divine Presence, your faith in Him has entered your hearts to cleave to Him, and your souls will never be separated from it forever. And that His fear may be before you when you sec that He alone is G-d in heaven and upon the earth, you will have great fear of Him." It may be that Moses is saying that "the fear of this great fire[[469]](#footnote-469) will be before you, .md you will not sin because of your fear of it." And the word ***nasoth***, is similar in expression to the verses: ***And he [David] assayed to go, but could not, for he had 'nisah' (tried) it. And David said unto Saul: I cannot go with these; for I have not 'nisithl' (tried) them***,[[470]](#footnote-470) something like "accustomed."

The Rabbi [Moshe ben Maimon] has said in the Moreh Necbuchim[[471]](#footnote-471) that Moses said to the people, **"Fear not, because the purpose of that which you have seen is that when the Eternal G-d, in order to demonstrate your faithfulness to Him, will test you by sending you a false prophet who will aim to reverse that which you have heard, your steps will never slide from the way of the truth, for you have seen the truth with your own eyes."** But if so, the sense of the verse, [according to Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon], is that "in order to be able to prove you in the future, G-d came now so that you should remain faithful to Him in all trials."

In my opinion, the real "trial" is now, [and not as Rambam has it that "He now came in order to be able to prove you in the future"]. Moses is saying: "Now G-d wanted to try you whether you will keep His commandments,[[472]](#footnote-472) since He has now removed all doubt from your hearts. From now on, He will see whether you do love Him,[[473]](#footnote-473) and whether you want Him and His commandments." So also does every expression of ***nisayon*** mean "test," such as: ***I cannot go with these; for I have not 'nisithi' them***,[[474]](#footnote-474) which means "I have never tried to walk with them."

It is possible that this "trial" is for the good [of the one who is being tried],[[475]](#footnote-475) for the master will sometimes try his servant with hard work in order to know whether he will endure it out of his love for him. Sometimes he will do him good in order to know whether he will requite him with additional service and honor for the good he has done him. This is similar to what the Sages have said:[[476]](#footnote-476) **"Happy is the person who stands through his trials, for there is no man whom the Holy One, blessed be He, does not try. He tries the rich to see if his hand will be open for the poor; He tries the poor if he can bear suffering, etc."** This is why Scripture says here: "G-d has been good to you in showing you His Glory, which ***He has not dealt with any nation[[477]](#footnote-477)*** in order to prove you whether you will requite Him according to the good He has done to you ***to be unto Him a people of inheritance***,[[478]](#footnote-478) similar to what He said, ***Do you thus requite the Eternal***?[[479]](#footnote-479) And it is said. ***"You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will visit upon you all your iniquities***,[[480]](#footnote-480) for the nations are not obligated to me as are you, whom I have known face to face."

**19. YOU YOURSELVES HAVE SEEN THAT I HAVE TALKED WITH YOU FROM HEAVEN**. He commanded that Moses tell them: "Since you yourselves have seen that I have talked with you from heaven and that I am Master in heaven and upon the earth, do not combine ***gods of silver or gods of gold[[481]](#footnote-481)*** with Me, for you have no need of another aid with Me." The purport of the verse is: ***You will not make with Me gods of silver***, ***and you will not make unto you gods of gold***. In my opinion, the explanation of the verse is as follows: "Do not make gods of silver or gods of gold to be to you for gods with Him; and you will not make them altogether." Thus He warned against believing in them, and again warned against merely making them, similar to the verse, Neither will you rear you up a graven image, or a pillar.[[482]](#footnote-482) By way of Truth, [the mystic lore of the Cabala], the meaning of the word ***iti (with Me)*** is like the Expression ***al panai (before My face)***,[[483]](#footnote-483) and I have already alluded to its explanation.[[484]](#footnote-484)

Rashi wrote: "***That I have talked with you from heaven***. But another verse states, ***And the Eternal came down upon Sinai***![[485]](#footnote-485) There comes a third verse to harmonize them: ***Out of heaven He made you to hear His Voice, that He might instruct you; and upon earth He made you to see His great fire***.[[486]](#footnote-486) His Glory was in heaven, and His might was [manifest] upon the earth." Thus Rashi's language. But it is not precise.[[487]](#footnote-487) The harmonizing of the verses is indeed a Midrash of the Sages,[[488]](#footnote-488) and it is true that G-d was in heaven, and His Glory was upon Mount Sinai,[[489]](#footnote-489) for G-d was in the fire, and it is written, ***You came down also upon Mount Sinai, and spoke with them from heaven***.[[490]](#footnote-490) All the verses in their various expressions are thus clear to all who know [the mystic teachings of the Cabala]. I have already explained it all above.[[491]](#footnote-491) And Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra wrote that he who has a discerning heart will understand the meaning thereof in the section of Ki Thisa.[[492]](#footnote-492) ***The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious***.[[493]](#footnote-493)

**21. AN ALTAR OF EARTH YOU WILL MAKE UNTO ME.** Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra explained that He is saying: "***You will not make with Me gods of silver, or gods of gold[[494]](#footnote-494)*** to receive power from heavenly creatures through them, that they be intermediaries between Me and you, ***for in every place where I cause My Name to be mentioned I - I in My Glory - will come unto you and bless you***.[[495]](#footnote-495) You have no need at all for an intermediary." And according to the opinion of the Rabbis concerning [the verses here, i.e., that they speak of] the altars that were made in the Tabernacle and in the Sanctuary,[[496]](#footnote-496) He mentioned the commandment of the altars of earth and of stones[[497]](#footnote-497) in order to say that they also make the altars for G-d alone and that there they will sacrifice the burnt-offerings and the peace-offerings, and not to the demons in the open field.[[498]](#footnote-498) In every place where they will mention His Name, He will come upon them in His Glory to make His Divine Presence dwell among them and to bless them.

**22. AND IF YOU MAKE ME AN ALTAR OF STONE.** The meaning of the word ***v'im (and if)*** in an obligatory commandment[[499]](#footnote-499) is: If the time comes that you will be worthy to inherit the Land and to build Me an altar of stone, ***beware that you will not build it of hewn stones***, for you may think to make it so to enhance the beauty of the structure. In his commentaries,[[500]](#footnote-500) Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra's opinion is that [the verse here refers] to the altar of the covenant [mentioned] in the section of ***V’Eleh Mishpatim***.[[501]](#footnote-501)

By way of the Truth, [the mystic lore of the Cabala], the verses are in methodical arrangement: "***You yourselves have seen that from heaven I have talked with you*** with My Great Name, ***and you will not make before My face gods of silver, or of gold***. But I permit you to make an altar to Me alone and to sacrifice thereon burnt-offerings, and also peace-offerings, ***in every place where I cause My Name to be mentioned for I will come unto you and bless you*** - ***with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that couches beneath***.”[[502]](#footnote-502) The word ***azkir (I will cause it to be mentioned)*** is associated with the expression: ***He has been mindful of us, He will bless***.[[503]](#footnote-503)

**FOR IF YOU LIFT UP 'CHARB'CHA,[[504]](#footnote-504) (YOUR IRON TOOL) UPON IT YOU HAVE PROFANED IT**. This is to prohibit the touching of the stones of the altar with an iron tool, just as He said, ***You will build the altar of the Eternal your G-d of unhewn stones***;[[505]](#footnote-505) ***you will lift up no iron tool upon them***.[[506]](#footnote-506) He mentioned iron here by the term ***cherev (sword),*** because all iron tools that have sharp edges are called ***cherev.*** Thus it is said of a sword, ***And Ehud made him 'cherev' (a sword) which had two edges***;[[507]](#footnote-507) and of a blade it is said, ***Take you a sharp 'cherev' (sword)***.[[508]](#footnote-508) Of hatchet and hammers with which a building is demolished it is said, ***And he will break down your towers 'b'charbothav' (with his axes)***.[[509]](#footnote-509) Similarly, an iron tool with which stones are cut is called ***cherev.***

**23. NEITHER WILL YOU GO UP BY STEPS UNTO MINE ALTAR.** Because He began the commandment of the altar, He therefore completed it and did not postpone it until He would command about the subject of the sacrifices in Torat Kohanim.[[510]](#footnote-510) This is proof to the words of the Sages,[[511]](#footnote-511) which are not really in need of defense.

According to our Rabbis,[[512]](#footnote-512) the reason for the commandment [against building an altar of stones which have been touched by iron] is the glorification of the altar: [It is not right] that that which shortens life [i.e., iron] is to be lifted up against that which prolongs life. **Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra said that this is in order that the chips of the stones should not remain in the dunghills, while part of them [i.e., the stones] is built into G-d's altar, or that the chips should not be taken to make an altar for the idols, since their worshippers might do so, hoping that perhaps this will bring them success.** And the Rabbi [Moshe ben Maimon] wrote in Moreh Nebuchim[[513]](#footnote-513) that this prohibition is an extraordinary precaution against making stones into certain shapes, thus being hewn stones, for such was the custom of the heathens [to build their altars with hewn stones].[[514]](#footnote-514)

But I say that the reason for the commandment is that a sword is made out of iron and is the destroyer of the world. In fact, this is why it is called ***cherev (sword)*** [which is of the same root as ***churban (destruction)***]. And since Esau whom G-d hated[[515]](#footnote-515) is the inheritor of the sword - for to him it was said, ***And by your sword will you live[[516]](#footnote-516)*** - and the sword is his power in heaven and upon the earth - for with [the power of] Mars and the stars [which influence] bloodshed, the sword succeeds, and with them Esau's might is shown - therefore it must not be brought into the House of G-d. It is this reason which Scripture mentions expressly: "You should not build [the altar] of hewn stones, for in lifting up any iron to make them, you have lifted up your murderous sword, and increased victims; and thus you have profaned it." It was for this reason that there was no iron in the Tabernacle, for even its pins, which would have been better if made of iron, were made of copper.[[517]](#footnote-517) Similarly, in the Sanctuary[[518]](#footnote-518) there were no vessels of iron except the ritual slaughtering-knives, for slaughtering [of the sacrifice] was not an act of "worship" [requiring a priest].[[519]](#footnote-519)

Scripture prohibited only the building of an altar with hewn stones if touched by iron, for so it is clearly stated, ***when you lift up your sword upon it you have profaned it***, and still more clearly, ***you will lift up no iron tool upon it***.[[520]](#footnote-520) But if he comes to chisel them with silver tools or the shamir,[[521]](#footnote-521) which our Rabbis have mentioned,[[522]](#footnote-522) it is permissible, even though the stones are not whole. This law will refute the reasoning of Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra.[[523]](#footnote-523) The reason advanced by the Rabbi [Moshe ben Maimon] is also incorrect on account of this law.

Now [when building the Sanctuary], Solomon added a stricture in the commandment, i.e., that ***no tool of iron was heard in the House while it was in building[[524]](#footnote-524)*** even though it was permissible, [the prohibition applying only to the altar]. Thus we were taught in the Mechilta:[[525]](#footnote-525) "***You will not build it of hewn stones***. You are not allowed to build the altar of hewn stones, but you may build the Sanctuary and the Holy of Holies of hewn stones. And how do I explain the verse, ***And there was neither hammer nor axe nor any tool of iron heard in the House, while it was in building?[[526]](#footnote-526)*** They were not heard 'in the House,' but outside of the House they were heard." What happened was thus as follows: They would remove the stones from their mountains with iron tools and chisel them there with iron, just as they also cut with iron the trees and the cypresses[[527]](#footnote-527) which were in the House. And so it is written, ***And they quarried great stones, costly stones, to lay the foundation of the House with hewn stone***.[[528]](#footnote-528) When they brought them to the House to build the walls, they did not fix them with iron, nor did they lift up any iron tool upon them as is the custom of builders. And that which Scripture says, ***It was built of whole stones from the quarry***,[[529]](#footnote-529) does not mean that they were whole and complete; they were whole only insomuch as they had no notch deep enough for the nail to halt over on passing upon the edge,[[530]](#footnote-530) but they were smooth and even. The meaning of the word ***masa[[531]](#footnote-531)*** is "great"; for when they moved them from the mountain, they did not divide the rocks into many stones as is the custom of the builders, and they did not fix them there, nor did they set them into the building with hammers or axes as any other building is built. Solomon did not want it to be built [with any iron tool], or that the sound of iron be even heard in the whole Mount of the House. All these strictures were for the purpose of removing iron from it. This is according to the opinion of Rabbi Yirmiyah in Tractate Sotah.[[532]](#footnote-532) But according to Rabbi Yehudah, the hewn stones were for Solomon's own house, not for the Sanctuary. According to his opinion, the verse stating, ***And they quarried great stones, costly stones, to lay the foundation of the house with hewn stone***,[[533]](#footnote-533) means that they also quarried hewn stones which were for his own house. So also it appears from the plain meaning of Scripture, that he built the court with hewn stone, as it is written, ***And he built the inner court with three rows of hewn stone***,[[534]](#footnote-534) and he placed himself under restriction [to build with unhewn stone] only in the Sanctuary and the Holy of Holies. All this was for the sake of removing iron from the Sanctuary. And regarding the iron without weight which David prepared,[[535]](#footnote-535) that was to make instruments of it [with which] to cut the trees and to quarry the stones.

The reason for [the prohibition against ascending the altar with] steps is that the fear of the altar and its enhancement is for the glory of G-d. Each of G-d's commandments has many reasons, there being many benefits in each for body and soul.

**Ketubim: Tehillim (Psalms) 56:1-14**

| **Rashi** | **Targum** |
| --- | --- |
| 1. For the conductor, on yonath elem rehokim, of David a michtam, when the Philistines seized him in Gath. | 1. For praise, concerning the congregation of Israel which is likened to a quiet dove when they are far from their cities, yet they repeatedly praise the LORD of the World, like David, humble and innocent, when the Philistines seized him in Gath.  |
| 2. Be gracious to me, O God, because men yearn to swallow me; all day long the warrior oppresses me. | 2. Have mercy on me, O LORD God, for a sinful man has crushed me beneath him; all the day the foeman will overpower me. |
| 3. Those who eye me have yearned to swallow me all day long, for many fight against me, O Most High. | 3. My oppressors crush my bones all the day, for many are the oppressors fighting against me, O God Most High, whose throne is on high. |
| 4. The day I fear, I will hope to You. | 4. In the day that I am afraid, I will put my trust in you. |
| 5. With God, I will praise His word; in God I trusted, I will not fear. What can flesh do to me? | 5. I will praise the attribute of the justice of God; in the word of God I will put my trust, I will not be afraid. What will flesh do to me? |
| 6. All day long, my words grieve [me]; all their thoughts about me are for evil. | 6. All day on my account they toil; against me all their thoughts are for evil. |
| 7. They lodge, they hide, they watch my steps, when they hope for my life. | 7. They will gather together and they will conceal a trap, they will watch my tracks; as they have waited, they have done to my soul. |
| 8. For iniquity, they expect rescue. Bring down nations with anger, O God. | 8. For the lies in their possession, drain them; for the rage of the peoples, make them poor, O God. |
| 9. You counted my wanderings; place my tears in Your flask. Is it not in Your accounting? | 9. The days of my wandering You have numbered; place my tears in Your bottle, O LORD; is not the sum total of my humiliation in Your record? |
| 10. Then my enemies will retreat on the day that I call. Thereby I will know that I have a God. | 10. Then my enemies will turn, turning around, on the day that I pray. This I know, for God is my help. |
| 11. With God['s justice] I will praise a word; with the Lord['s kindness] I will praise a word. | 11. In the attribute of justice of God I will give praise in His word; in the attribute of mercy of the LORD I will give praise in His word. |
| 12. In God I trusted, I will not fear. What can man do to me? | 12. In the word of God I have placed my trust, I will not fear what a son of man will do to me. |
| 13. Upon me, O God, are Your vows; I will pay thanksgiving offerings to You. | 13. I have taken Your vows upon myself, O God; I will repay sacrifices of thanksgiving in Your presence. |
| 14. For You saved my soul from death, even my feet from stumbling, to walk before God in the light of life. | 14. For You have delivered my soul from being killed, indeed, my feet from bruising, to walk before the LORD in the light of life. ANOTHER TARGUM: For You have delivered my soul from the death that the sinful die, indeed, my feet from stumbling through sin, so that I will walk before the LORD in the Garden of Eden to behold the light of the righteous/generous. |
|  |  |

**Rashi’s Commentary for: Psalms 56:1-14**

**1** **yonath elem rehokim** He said this concerning himself, for he was with Achish, far from the land of Israel, and Goliath’s brothers were requesting permission from Achish to kill him, as it is said (I Sam. 21:12): “Is this not David, the king of the land?” And he was among them as a mute dove.

**2** **yearn** Heb. שאפנו, yearn to swallow me up, goloseir or goloser, to long, to be impatient. (Cf. Rashi to Amos 2:7.) As (Jer. 2:24): “that snuffs up (שאפה) the wind.”

**the warrior** Heb. לחם, an expression of war (מלחמה).

**3** **O Most High** The Holy One blessed be He, Who dwells on High.

**5** **With God, I will praise His word** **Even when He deals with me with the Divine standard of justice I will praise His word and trust in Him.**

**6** **All day long, my words grieve [me]** My pursuers grieve me until all the words of my mouth are grief and cries.

**7** **They lodge, they hide** They lurk and lodge in the place they hope I will go, and they watch my steps (traces in French, tracks, explained in Gen. 49:19, Song of Songs 1:8) to spy on me and to lead pursuers there. All this he would complain about the wicked of Israel: that they would lie in wait for him and out of fear of them he had fled to Achish.

**they hide** They lurk.

**when they hope for my life** When they know [that I will pass] and hope for me, “He will go this way.”

**8** **For iniquity, they expect rescue** To find rescue and riches for a matter of iniquity and wickedness. And פַלֶט is like לפלט, to rescue. They expect reward from Saul for that.

**Bring down...with anger** With Your anger, bring down this nation in whose midst I am, from their wisdom and from the plots that they devise to kill me.

**9** **You counted my wanderings** You know the number of the places to which I wandered, to flee.

**place my tears in Your flask** Place my tears in Your flask, and let them be preserved before You.

**Is it not in Your accounting** Place them in Your accounting, to count them with the rest of my troubles. Menachem, however, associated it (p. 128) as an expression of an actual book.

**11** **With God I will praise a word; with the Lord I will praise** **For the Divine standard of justice and for the Divine standard of mercy I will praise.**

**14 in the light of life** To return to the Land of Israel.

**Meditation from the Psalms**

**Psalms ‎‎56:1-14**

**By: H.Em. Rabbi Dr. Hillel ben David**

This Psalm was written by David when he recalled being trapped by Yishbi, Goliath’s brother, in the palace of Achish in Gath.[[536]](#footnote-536) David saved himself by pretending to be a madman. Most of the commentaries attribute this psalm to David’s first encounter with Achish in Gath. Some explain that David composed this psalm when Achish asked him to join the war against Saul. This caused him the most terrible anguish and suffering. For on the one hand he did not want to raise a hand against King Saul, despite his persecution of him. On the other hand his refusal would be seen as an act of disloyalty to Achish, and he would be killed. So he kept silent. In the end the princes expressed their opposition to David’s participation in the war. “Make this fellow return[[537]](#footnote-537)”, they said to Achish, and David returned to his own country. He then composed this psalm about his wondrous deliverance.

We read in the Book of Shmuel alef[[538]](#footnote-538) that upon learning of King Saul’s desire to kill him, David fled to the land of the Pelishtim, where he was welcomed by Achish, ruler of the city Gat. Soon after his arrival, however, Achish’s servants objected to David’s presence in the city, noting the fame and heroic stature that David had earned among his people. They quoted the chant, “Shaul killed in his thousands, and David in his tens of thousands[[539]](#footnote-539)”, which the Israelite women would sing upon David’s return from his successful battles against the Philistines.[[540]](#footnote-540) According to a Midrashic tradition which Rashi cites in his commentary to this chapter in Tehillim, these servants who warned Achish about David were family members of the Philistine warrior Goliath, whom David had killed. They warned their ruler about David’s military capabilities and loyalties to B’ne Yisrael, which made him a formidable threat to the city of Gath.

David quickly became aware of what was being said about him to Achish, and was terribly frightened, realizing that he would likely be arrested and killed. In fact, the reference here in our psalm to his “seizure” by the Philistines suggests that he was actually detained. He responded to the threat by reciting this prayer to God, and by feigning insanity.[[541]](#footnote-541) Achish heard reports of his peculiar conduct, and dismissed him as but a crazed fool. David was thus allowed to escape back to Israel unharmed.

In this prayer David emphasizes the anguish he experiences as he is pursued on all sides, that he is under the constant pressure of his adversaries who follow his every step in an attempt to capture him. In Israel he was threatened by King Saul, and now in the Philistine lands he is suddenly threatened by Achish. Despite the relentless attempts of his foes to kill him, David nevertheless feels confident in God’s ability to rescue him:

***Tehillim (Psalms) 56:12*** *In God I trust, I will not fear – what can man do to me?*

In this Psalm’s final verse,[[542]](#footnote-542) David expresses his desire “to walk about before God in the light of life”. According to the *Radak*, this refers to David’s longing to be able to *focus his mind and thoughts on matters of Torah and spirituality*. This period of turmoil has forced him to concentrate on ensuring his very survival, and has not allowed him time or peace of mind to devote himself as he wished to pursuing his spiritual goals. He thus asks the God to bring him back safely to the Land of Israel and to a life of security and tranquillity, so that he could once again focus his time and energies on the service of God and the in-depth study of His Torah.

This psalm is thus called *Michtam*,[[543]](#footnote-543) which means a *vessel of fine gold*. It is a golden prayer composed by David to fortify himself and to help him overcome his troubles, an expression of his trust in God[[544]](#footnote-544) that he would be raised out of his nadir of affliction.[[545]](#footnote-545)

Some Jews recite Psalm 56 for the well-being of an ill person.[[546]](#footnote-546) This is interesting because David feigned illness in our psalm, and the folks at Mt. Sinai, in our Torah portion, gave up their souls twice when HaShem pronounced the first two words of His covenant. This was the ultimate ‘sickness’ in that you are now dead.

***Shabbath 88b*** *R. Joshua b. Levi also said: At every word which went forth from the mouth of the Holy One, blessed be He, the souls of Israel departed, for it is said, My soul went forth when he spake.[[547]](#footnote-547) But since their souls departed at the first word, how could they receive the second word? — He brought down the dew with which He will resurrect the dead and revived them, as it is said, Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain, Thou didst confirm thine inheritance, when it was weary.[[548]](#footnote-548)*

The experience at Mt. Sinai was also, in many ways, an experience of the Olam HaBa.[[549]](#footnote-549) Our psalm reflects this understanding in v.13 with the Midrash’s insight:

***Midrash Rabbah - Leviticus IX:7*** *R. Phinehas and R. Levi and R. Johanan said in the name of R. Menahem of Gallia:[[550]](#footnote-550) In the Time to Come all sacrifices will be annulled, but that of thanksgiving will not be annulled, and all prayers will be annulled, but [that of] Thanksgiving will not be annulled. This is [indicated by] what is written, The voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voice of them that say: Give thanks to the Lord of hosts[[551]](#footnote-551) - this refers to Thanksgiving; ‘That bring offerings of thanksgiving into the house of the Lord’ refers to the sacrifice of thanksgiving. So too did David say: Thy vows are upon me, O God; I will render thanksgivings unto Thee.[[552]](#footnote-552) It is written here not ‘a thanksgiving’ but ‘thanksgivings’, meaning Thanksgiving [in prayer] and the sacrifice of thanksgiving.*

This provides a clear connection between our Torah portion and psalm. This, however, is not the only connection between our psalm and Torah portion. Our psalm also speaks of a *day[[553]](#footnote-553)* when we are afraid:

***Tehillim (Psalms) 56:4*** *In the day that I am afraid, I will put my trust in Thee.*

We find that our Torah portion also speaks of a fearful day:

***Shemot (Exodus) 19:11*** *and be ready against the third day; for the third day HaShem will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai.*

**…**

***Shemot (Exodus) 20:16*** *And Moses said unto the people: ‘Fear not; for God is come to prove you, and that His fear may be before you, that ye sin not.’*

The day of matan Torah, the giving of the Torah, was surely the most awesome day the world has ever seen! If there was ever a day to be scared, Shavuot would have been that day!

**The Sinai Experience**

At Mt. Sinai in the days of Moshe, HaShem gave His Torah to the Children of Israel. According to the Sages, when HaShem gave the Torah **all of nature stood still**. The sea did not roar. No birds sang. No creature stirred or made so much as a peep. Not even a leaf fell from the trees. In short, there was *no movement* whatsoever! The Midrash put it like this:

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***Midrash Rabbah - Exodus XXIX:9*** *What is the meaning of, The Lord God hath spoken; who can but prophesy? (Amos III, 8). Said R. Abbahu in the name of R. Johanan: When God gave the Torah no bird twittered, no fowl flew, no ox lowed, none of the Ophanim stirred a wing, the Seraphim did not say ‘Holy, Holy’, the sea did not roar, the creatures spoke not, the whole world was hushed into breathless silence and the voice went forth: I AM THE LORD THY GOD. So it says, These words the Lord spoke unto all your assembly... with a great voice, and it went on no more’ (Deut. V, I9).*

The lack of movement at Sinai suggests that there were ***no needs*** during this period. At Sinai we lacked nothing, therefore, we had no need to move.

Lack of movement is an indication that there is no force moving it out of it’s place.

Eretz, the Hebrew word for land, comes from a root which means *to move*. This is why the mystics say that this world, eretz, is the world of movement. This world is constantly moving towards *shamayim*, heavens. Shamayim is the place of the infinite. Shamayim comes from the root *shammin* which means “there”. *There* there is no movement because everything has arrived where it should be.

Like a camera, eyes only see things outside of oneself. Seeing is like an instantaneous picture. We perceive everything at once, but it is still picture. We need multiple *seeings* to perceive movement. Seeing is the modality of the next world. We see in the light. We see a world of stillness. We have a proverb which says, “Seeing is believing”. Because we see all at once and there is no assembly necessary. What we see is considered a proof. That is why *seeing* and *proof* both come from the same Hebrew root.

Seeing is the modality of the Zohar and the other mystical writings. In these writings it says, “Come and see”. Here are a few examples:

***Yachanan (John) 1:46*** *And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.*

***Yochanan (John) 11:34*** *And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see.*

***Soncino Zohar, Shemot, Section 2, Page 38b*** *(Ps. CXXXIX, I3). Nothing so miraculous was witnessed since the creation of the world. ‘Come and see,’ he said, ‘it is written: “It is a night (leyl) of observations unto the Lord for bringing them out from the land of Egypt; this is that night (ha-layla) of the Lord, observations to all the children of Israel” (Ex. XII, 42). Now, why “observations” in plural, and “night” first in the masculine gender (layiil), and then in the feminine (layla)? To indicate the union which took place on that night between the Masculine and Feminine aspects in the Divine attributes, and also the same union which will take place in the future Redemption: “As in the days of thy coming out of Egypt will I show unto him marvelous things” (Micah VII, I 5).’*

Ears hear things inside of oneself. The way we hear is one sound at a time. By the time we hear the second sound, the first sound is just a memory. And so it goes with each subsequent sound. We then combine the sounds to make syllables inside our head. Our brain then assembles the syllables into words and the words into sentences, The sentences are assembled into paragraphs and the paragraphs are assembled into the final picture. By the time we have assembled the whole picture, there is no more sound. All of the sounds are just a memory. Since sounds must be assembled by the hearer, hearing is very much a subjective art. Hearing depends on the person and his background. No two persons build the same picture from the words of a speaker. We hear in the darkness. Sound characterizes this world, the world of movement.

In this world we struggle to develop the art of hearing. Those who wrestle with the Gemara are trying to reconstruct the fractured pieces of this world. For this reason the Gemara often says, “*Come and hear[[554]](#footnote-554)*”. The Gemara wants us to take the broken pieces and reconstruct them in the same way that we reconstruct another person’s speech. Here are a couple of examples from remez literature:

***Luqas (Luke) 21:9*** *But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but the end [is] not by and by.*

***Berachoth 2b*** *They pointed to a contradiction [from the following]: From what time may one begin to recite the Shema’ in the evening? From the time that the people come [home] to eat their meal on a Sabbath eve. These are the words of R. Meir. But the Sages say: From the time that the priests are entitled to eat their terumah. A sign for the matter is the appearance of the stars. And though there is no real proof of it, there is a hint for it. For it is written: So we wrought in the work: and half of them held the spears from the rise of the dawn till the appearance of the stars. And it says further: That in the night they may be a guard to us, and may labor in the day. (Why this second citation? — If you object and say that the night really begins with the setting of the sun, but that they left late and came early, [I shall reply]:****Come and hear*** *[the other verse]: ‘That in the night they may be a guard to us, and may labor in the day’). Now it is assumed that the ‘poor man’ and ‘the people’ have the same time [for their evening meal.] And if you say that the poor man and the priest also have the same time, then the Sages would be saying the same thing as R. Meir? Hence you must conclude that the poor man has one time and the priest has another time? — No; the ‘poor man’ and the priest have the same time, but the ‘poor man’ and the ‘people’ have not the same time.*

This world is all about hearing. We do not see things as they are, we merely “hear” small pieces. If we pay attention and work diligently to make sense out of the “sounds”, then we can assemble a fractured picture.

The Olam HaBa, the next world, is a world of seeing. We will see things as they are. Everything will be apparent all at once. We will not have to struggle to reassemble the pieces.

Now we can understand what the Torah meant when it said:

***Shemot (Exodus) 19:19-20*** *And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice. And HaShem came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and HaShem called Moses [up] to the top of the mount; and Moses went up.*

When HaShem came down to Mt. Sinai, it means that shamayim, *there*, intersected, *here*, with this world. The world of sight intersected with the world of hearing. When this happened, we read of something very unusual:

***Shemot (Exodus) 20:18*** *And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw [it], they removed, and stood afar off.*

Now we can understand why the Torah says that we saw the thunder. We perceived the Olam HaBa. We were endowed with the modality of the next world. We no longer *heard*, we *saw*. We were a part of the Olam HaBa. No wonder we had no movement. We had entered another dimension where we perceived that we had arrived at a place where there were no more needs. We lacked nothing, therefore there was no movement. Eretz (earth) became shamayim (heavens). *Here* became *there*! We had arrived at the place we had been moving towards. When we arrived where we were supposed to be, we no longer moved, we had arrived!

It should be obvious now why the Sages said that HaShem suspended Mt. Sinai over our heads, on that awesome day, and told us to accept Torah or be buried:

***Shemot (Exodus) 19:17*** *“They stood on the bottom of [lit. under] the mountain.”*

***Shabbath 88a*** *And they stood under the mount: R. Abdimi b. Hama b. Hasa said: This teaches that the Holy One, blessed be He, overturned the mountain upon them like an [inverted] cask, and said to them, ‘If ye accept the Torah, ‘tis well; if not, there shall be your burial.’ R. Aha b. Jacob observed: This furnishes a strong protest against the Torah. Said Raba, Yet even so, they re-accepted it in the days of Ahasuerus, for it is written, [the Jews] confirmed, and took upon them [etc.]: [i.e.,] they confirmed what they had accepted long before.*

This gemara means we had **no free choice**. We were seeing, and seeing is believing! This is the coercion implied by suspending the mountain over our heads.

When shamayim intersected eretz for a brief time, the nature of things changed. That brief moment was a fore-taste of the Olam HaBa. The Sages discussed this in:

***Sukkah 5a*** *and it has been taught, R. Jose stated, Neither did the Shechinah ever descend to earth, nor did Moses or Elijah ever ascend to Heaven, as it is written, ‘The heavens are the heavens of the Lord, but the earth hath He given to the sons of men’. But did not the Shechinah descend to earth? Is it not in fact written, And the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai? — That was above ten handbreadths [from the summit]. But is it not written, And His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives? — That will be above ten handbreadths. But did not Moses and Elijah ascend to Heaven? Is it not in fact written, And Moses went up unto God.? — [That was] to a level lower than ten [handbreadths from heaven]. But is it not written, And Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.? -[That was] to a level lower than ten handbreadths. But is it not written, He seizeth hold of the face of His throne, and He spreadeth His cloud upon him, and R. Tanhum said: This teaches that the Almighty spread some of the radiance of his Shechinah and his cloud upon him? — That was at a level lower than ten handbreadths. But in any case is it not written, ‘He seizeth hold of the face of His throne’? — The throne was well lowered for his sake until [it reached a level] lower than ten handbreadths [from Heaven] and then hell seized hold of it.*

The mystical writings of the Nazarean Codicil also speak of the time When HaShem and shamayim will intersect eretz:

***Revelation 21:1-4*** *And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God [is] with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, [and be] their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.*

When we arrive *there*, then we will perceive reality as starkly as those who awake from a dream. Then we will realize that eretz is the illusion and shamayim is the reality. *There*, we will no longer have needs that force us to move. *There*, we will no longer move because all of our needs will be met.

\* \* \*

Just as a matter of interest, our psalm also contains a kri and ktiv:

***Tehillim (Psalms) 56:7*** *They gather themselves together,* kri: *they hide themselves* (ktiv: They set an ambush), *they mark my steps; according as they have waited for my soul.*

Tehillim (Psalms) 56:7[[555]](#footnote-555)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **kri -** קרי | **ktiv -** כתיב |
| יִצְפּוֹנוּ | יצפינו |
| *They hide themselves*. Lying in wait to trap him. | They set an ambush. |

Recall that “*kri*-and-*ktiv*”, is a word, in the Tanach, that is read and pronounced (*kri*) one way, but written (*ktiv*) in the scroll a different way. These two ways of reading the word also imply different shades of meaning. These dual word forms are Masoretic vehicles for passing down additional teachings, unavailable without the additional word form. In general, a *kri* is the logical meaning of the word, given its context. The meaning of the *ktiv* however, is often beyond logic,[[556]](#footnote-556) and may even seem to be out of context, yet it reveals unexpected mystical implications. When we encounter a *kri*-and-a-*ktiv* we are invited into contemplation: how can we embrace this conflict in meaning?

*ktiv* **always** indicates the inner meaning, accessible only to those who can understand the deeper aspects of a word.

The ***ktiv*** represents the realm of Divine self-concealment; the ***kri*** represents the realm of Divine self-revelation. In the future, when the Name of HaShem will be read as it is written, these two realms will unite.

**Ashlamatah: Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 35:1-10**

| **Rashi** | **Targum** |
| --- | --- |
| 1. Desert and wasteland shall rejoice over them, and the plain shall rejoice and shall blossom like a rose.  | 1. Those who dwell in the wilderness, in a thirsty land, will be glad, those who settle in the desert will rejoice and blossom like lilies.  |
| 2. It shall blossom and rejoice, even to rejoice and to sing; the glory of the Lebanon has been given to her, the beauty of the Karmel and the Sharon; they shall see the glory of the Lord, the beauty of our God. | 2. They will exult abundantly, and rejoice with joy and gladness. The glory of Lebanon will be given to them, the brilliance of Carmel and Sharon. The house of Israel-these things are said to them, **they will see the glory of the LORD, the brilliance of/ the celebrity of our God.**  |
| 3. Strengthen weak hands, and make firm tottering knees. | 3. The prophet said, Strengthen weak hands, and make firm feeble knees. |
| 4. Say to the hasty of heart, "Be strong, do not fear; behold our God, [with] vengeance He shall come, the recompense of God, that shall come and save you. | 4. Say to those who are eager in their heart to perform the Law, "Be strong, fear not! Behold, your God is revealed to take just retribution, the LORD is master and/recompenses, He will be revealed and save you." |
| 5. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. | 5. Then the eyes of the house of/ Israel, that were as blind to the Law, will be opened, and their ears, which were as deaf to listen to the sayings of the prophets. will listen; |
| 6. Then the lame shall skip like a hart, and the tongue of the mute shall sing, for water has broken out in the desert and streams in the plain. | 6. then, when they see the exiles of Israel who are gathered and going up to their land. even as swift harts. and not to be checked, their tongue which was dumb will sing for joy. For waters have broken out in the wilderness, and streams in the deserts; |
| 7. And the dry place shall become a pool, and the thirsty place [shall become] springs of water; in the habitat of jackals, a resting place, a grassy place for reeds and rushes. | 7. and the parched ground will become pools of water, and the thirsty area springs of water; the place where jackals dwell, there reeds and rushes will increase. |
| 8. And there shall be a highway and a road, and it shall be called the holy way; no unclean one shall traverse it, and it shall be for them; the traveler, even fools shall not go astray therein. | 8. And a fine highway will be there, it will be called **the way of holiness**; the unclean will not pass over it, and wayfarers will not cease, and those who have not learned will not err. |
| 9. No lion shall be there, nor shall a profligate beast ascend thereon, it shall not be found there; and the redeemed ones shall go. | 9. No king who does evil will be there, nor any ruler who distresses pass through it; they will not be found there, but the redeemed will walk there. |
| 10. And the redeemed of Zion shall return, and they shall come to Zion with song, with joy of days of yore shall be upon their heads; they shall achieve gladness and joy, and sadness and sighing shall flee. | 10. And the redeemed of the LORD will be gathered from among their exiles, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy will be theirs. that does not cease. **and a cloud of glory will cover your heads**; they will obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing will cease from them, from the house of Israel. |
|  |  |

**Rashi’s Commentary on Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 35:1-10**

**1** **shall rejoice over them** (יְשֻׂשׂוּם) This is usually the sign of the direct object, inappropriate here in the case of an intransitive verb. (like מֵהֶם יָשׂוּשׂוּ, shall rejoice from them). Comp. (Jer. 10:20) “My sons have gone away from me (יְצָאֻנִי).” Also, (I Kings 19:21) “He cooked the meat for them (בִּשְּׁלָם),” equivalent to בִּשֵּׁל לָהֶם, “He cooked the meat for them.”

**Desert and wasteland** Jerusalem, called ‘wasteland,’ and Zion, called ‘desert,’ they shall rejoice over the downfall of the mighty of the heathens and Persia ([Manuscripts yield:] of Edom and Bozrah). ([The Warsaw edition reads:] the mighty of Seir (and Bozrah).)

**and the plain shall rejoice** the plain of Jerusalem.

**2** **and to sing** (lit., and sing,) like: and to sing.

**the Lebanon** The Temple.

**the beauty of** His glory will be given to Zion.

**3** **Strengthen weak hands** (חַזְּקוּ) All the prophets who brought tidings of salvation consoled Israel and strengthened their weak hands. (The word) is in the intensive conjugation, and its meaning is (the causative, i.e.,) strengthen others. If he intended to say, “Be strong, you whose hands are weak,” it would be vowelized like (2 Chron. 32:7) “Be strong (חִזְקוּ)and be firm (וְאִמְצוּ).” Now that he says to them to strengthen others and to make others firm, it is vowelized, חַזְּקוּ, אַמְּצוּ. “Be strong (חִזְקוּ), do not fear” is vowelized חִזְקוּ, a form of the ‘kal’ conjugation, meaning ‘you be strong by yourselves,’ as one says to singular (Jos. 1:6), “Be strong and be firm (חֲזַק ֶמָץ),” and he does not say, חַזֵּק.

**4** **to the hasty of heart** Who hurry the redemption and are troubled by its delay.

**[with] vengeance He shall come** (lit., vengeance He shall come,) with vengeance He shall come.

**the recompense of God** Upon the wicked ([mss.] upon your enemies) He shall come and save you.

**5** **the eyes of the blind shall be opened** Those who were blind, not to recognize (lit., from recognizing) their fear (sic) ([Warsaw:] this fear;) ([mss.] My fear) upon them.

**and the ears of the deaf** Who did not hearken to the voice of the prophets until now, will be opened and unstopped, for I will give them a proper spirit to fear Me. He says this concerning Israel, whom he called blind and deaf, as the matter is stated (infra 42:18) “You deaf ones, hearken, etc.”

**6** **Then the lame shall skip like a hart, etc.** Israel, who are now lame and weak. We find that he calls the weak with an expression of ‘lame,’ as the matter is stated (above 33:23): “The lame take the prey.”

**shall sing** in My salvation.

**the tongue of the mute** The tongue of Israel, who are among the nations as mutes, for they hear their scorn and do not respond.

**for water has broken out in the desert** For My salvation shall cheer them up, and they shall blossom like a desert wasteland, which thirsts for water, and springs break out into it; i.e., for salvation shall sprout for the crushed ones.

**7** **And the dry place shall become a pool** He who longs for salvation shall be saved. The prophet spoke figuratively.

**in the habitat of jackals, a resting place, etc.** A place that was a desert wasteland, which is the habitat, the resting place of jackals, shall become moist, a place of grass, made for reeds and rushes, and it is not customary for reeds and rushes to grow except in a watery place, as the matter is stated (Job 8:11): “Can the rush shoot upwards without mire?”

**a resting place** (רִבְצָה) This is a noun like מַרְבֵּץ, since it has no ‘mappiq hey.’

**8** **And there shall be a highway** for the travelers.

**no unclean one shall traverse it** No unclean one shall traverse that road; i.e., it will no longer belong to the heathens ([mss.:] nations).

**and it shall be for them** And that is the road of those blind, deaf, lame, and mute mentioned above. They shall travel on this road, and even if they are fools, they shall not go astray, for I will straighten it for them.

**9** **a profligate beast** The boar out of the forest (80:14). There is none as profligate among the beasts as the boar, and also “the lions from his thicket” (Jer. 4:7), i.e., Nebuchadnezzar, shall not be found there.

**nor shall...ascend thereon** On that road (הַדֶּרֶךְ). The word דֶּרֶךְ is used both as masculine and feminine gender, as it is written (Ex. 18:20): “The way (הַדֶּרֶךְ) upon which (בָּהּ) they shall walk.” (Lit., on her.) Thus it is feminine. Comp. (Deut. 28:7) “In one road (בַּדֶּרֶךְ אֶחָד) they shall come out to you.” Thus it is masculine.

**it shall not be found** any wild beast there.

**10** **with joy of days of yore** (Heb. שִׂמְחַתעוֹלָם, joy that is from days of yore, which they already experienced on the way of their Exodus from Egypt, “and the Lord was going before them by day” (Ex. 13:21). **..**

**shall flee** The sadness and the sighing shall flee from them.

**Correlations**

**By: H.Em. Rabbi Dr. Hillel ben David**

**& H.H. Giberet Dr. Elisheba bat Sarah**

**Shemot (Exodus) 19:1 – 20:23**

**Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 35:1-10**

**Tehillim (Psalms) 56**

**Mk 7:14-16, Acts 15:13-18**,

**The verbal tallies between the Torah and the Ashlamata are:**

Came / Come - בוא, Strong’s number 0935.

Wilderness - מדבר, Strong’s number 04057.

**The verbal tallies between the Torah and the Psalm are:**

Day / Daily - יום, Strong’s number 03117.

**Shemot (Exodus) 19:1** In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day <03117> came <0935> (8804) they into the wilderness <04057> of Sinai.

2 For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come <0935> (8799) to the desert <04057> of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness <04057>; and there Israel camped before the mount.

**Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 35:**1 The wilderness <04057> and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.

**Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 35:4** Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come <0935> (8799) with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come <0935> (8799) and save you.

**Tehillim (Psalms) 56:1** « To the chief Musician upon Jonath-elem-rechokim, Michtam of David, when the Philistines took him in Gath. » Be merciful unto me, O God: for man would swallow me up; he fighting daily <03117> oppresseth me.

**Hebrew:**

| **Hebrew** | **English** | **Torah Seder****Ex 19:1 – 20:23** | **Psalms****Psa 56:1-** | **Ashlamatah****Is 35:1-10** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| za' | then |  | Ps 56:9 | Isa 35:5Isa 35:6 |
| ~yhil{a/ | GOD | Exod 19:3Exod 19:17Exod 19:19Exod 20:1Exod 20:2Exod 20:3Exod 20:5Exod 20:7Exod 20:10Exod 20:12Exod 20:19Exod 20:20Exod 20:21Exod 20:23 | Ps 56:1Ps 56:4Ps 56:7Ps 56:9Ps 56:10Ps 56:11Ps 56:12Ps 56:13 | Isa 35:2Isa 35:4 |
| rm;a' | saying, | Exod 19:3Exod 19:8Exod 19:9Exod 19:10Exod 19:12Exod 19:15Exod 19:21Exod 19:23Exod 19:24Exod 19:25Exod 20:1Exod 20:19Exod 20:20Exod 20:2 |  | Isa 35:4 |
| aAB  | came, come | Exod 19:1Exod 19:2Exod 19:4Exod 19:7Exod 19:9Exod 20:20 |  | Isa 35:4Isa 35:10 |
| rb'D' | words | Exod 19:6Exod 19:7Exod 19:8Exod 19:9Exod 20:1 | Ps 56:4Ps 56:5Ps 56:10 |  |
|  hy"h' | came,remain | Exod 19:16Exod 20:3Exod 20:20 |  | Isa 35:7 |
| %l;h' | go, went, walk | Exod 19:10Exod 19:19Exod 19:24Exod 19:25 | Ps 56:13 | Isa 35:8Isa 35:9 |
| hNEhi | behold | Exod 19:9 |  | Isa 35:4 |
| qz"x' | louder, courage | Exod 19:19 |  | Isa 35:3Isa 35:4 |
| dy" | hand | Exod 19:13 |  | Isa 35:3 |
| hwhy  | LORD | Exod 19:3Exod 19:7Exod 19:8Exod 19:9Exod 19:10Exod 19:11Exod 19:18Exod 19:20Exod 19:21Exod 19:22Exod 19:23Exod 19:24Exod 20:2Exod 20:5Exod 20:7Exod 20:10Exod 20:11Exod 20:12Exod 20:22 | Ps 56:10 | Isa 35:2Isa 35:10 |
|  ~Ay  | day | Exod 19:1Exod 19:10Exod 19:11Exod 19:15Exod 19:16Exod 20:8Exod 20:9Exod 20:10Exod 20:11Exod 20:12 | Ps 56:1Ps 56:2Ps 56:3Ps 56:5Ps 56:9 |  |
| dr'y" | come down | Exod 19:11Exod 19:14Exod 19:18Exod 19:20Exod 19:21Exod 19:24Exod 19:25 | Ps 56:7 |  |
| lKo | all, every | Exod 19:5Exod 19:7Exod 19:8Exod 19:11Exod 19:12Exod 19:16Exod 19:18Exod 20:1Exod 20:4Exod 20:9Exod 20:10Exod 20:11Exod 20:17Exod 20:18 | Ps 56:1Ps 56:2Ps 56:5 |  |
| aol  | no, not | Exod 19:13Exod 19:23Exod 20:3 | Ps 56:13 | Isa 35:9 |
| ~yIm; | water | Exod 20:4 |  | Isa 35:6Isa 35:7 |
| !t;n" | gives, given | Exod 20:12 |  | Isa 35:2 |
| ~l'A[  | forever, everlasting | Exod 19:9 |  | Isa 35:10 |
| !yI[; | sight, eyes | Exod 19:11 |  | Isa 35:5 |
| l[; | before, against, because | Exod 20:3Exod 20:11 | Ps 56:5Ps 56:7 |  |
| hl'[' | went, ascend, come, go | Exod 19:3Exod 19:12Exod 19:13Exod 19:18Exod 19:20Exod 19:23Exod 19:24 |  | Isa 35:9 |
| ~ynIP' | before, face | Exod 19:7Exod 19:18Exod 20:3Exod 20:20 | Ps 56:13 |  |
| ar'q' | called | Exod 19:3Exod 19:7Exod 19:20 | Ps 56:9 | Isa 35:8 |
|  ha'r' | see, seen, gaze | Exod 19:4Exod 19:21Exod 20:18Exod 20:22 |  | Isa 35:2 |
| vaor  | top, head | Exod 19:20 |  | Isa 35:10 |
| bWv  | brought back, returned | Exod 19:8 | Ps 56:9 | Isa 35:10 |
| ~Wf  | set, put | Exod 19:7 | Ps 56:8 |  |
| ~v' | there, where | Exod 19:2Exod 20:21 |  | Isa 35:8Isa 35:9 |
| rm;v' | keep, watch, beware | Exod 19:5Exod 19:12Exod 20:6 | Ps 56:6 |  |
| arey" | afraid, fear | Exod 20:20 | Ps 56:3Ps 56:4Ps 56:11 | Isa 35:4 |
| rB'd>mi  | wildrness | Exod 19:1Exod 19:2 |  | Isa 35:1Isa 35:6 |
| ~[;  | people | Exod 19:5Exod 19:7Exod 19:8Exod 19:9Exod 19:10Exod 19:11Exod 19:12Exod 19:14Exod 19:15Exod 19:16Exod 19:17Exod 19:21Exod 19:23Exod 19:24Exod 19:25Exod 20:18Exod 20:20Exod 20:21 | Ps 56:7 |  |
| hf'[' | did, do, make | Exod 19:4Exod 19:8Exod 20:4Exod 20:6Exod 20:9Exod 20:10Exod 20:11Exod 20:23 | Ps 56:4Ps 56:11 |  |
| br'  | many | Exod 19:21 | Ps 56:2 |  |

**Greek:**

| **Greek** | **English** | **Torah Seder****Ex 19:1 – 20:23** | **Psalms****Psa 56:1-13** | **Ashlamatah****Is 35:1-10** | **Peshat****Mk/Jude/Pet****Mk 7:14-16** | **Remes 1****Luke** | **Remes 2****Acts/Romans****Acts 15:13-18** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| αἰών | eon | Exo 19:9 |  |  |  |  | Act 15:18  |
| ἀκούω | heard, hear |  |  |  | Mark 7:14Mark 7:16 |  | Acts 15:13 |
| ἄνθρωπος | man, men | Exo 19:13 | Psa 56:11 |  | Mark 7:15 |  | Acts 15:17 |
| ἀποκρίνομαι | answered | Exo 19:8Exo 19:19 |  |  |  |  | Acts 15:13 |
| δύναμαι | able | Exo 19:23  |  |  | Mark 7:15 |  |  |
| ἔθνος | nation | Exo 19:5 Exo 19:6 |  |  |  |  | Acts 15:14Acts 15:17 |
| ἐπικαλέομαι | upon |  | Psa 56:9  |  |  |  | Acts 15:17 |
| θεός | GOD | Exod 19:3Exod 19:17Exod 19:19Exod 20:1Exod 20:2Exod 20:3Exod 20:5Exod 20:7Exod 20:10Exod 20:12Exod 20:19Exod 20:20Exod 20:21Exod 20:23 | Ps 56:1Ps 56:4Ps 56:7Ps 56:9Ps 56:10Ps 56:11Ps 56:12Ps 56:13 | Isa 35:2Isa 35:4 |  |  | Acts 15:14 |
| κύριος | LORD | Exod 19:3Exod 19:7Exod 19:8Exod 19:9Exod 19:10Exod 19:11Exod 19:18Exod 19:20Exod 19:21Exod 19:22Exod 19:23Exod 19:24Exod 20:2Exod 20:5Exod 20:7Exod 20:10Exod 20:11Exod 20:12Exod 20:22 | Ps 56:10 | Isa 35:2Isa 35:10 |  |  | Acts 15:17 |
| λαμβάνω | take, took | Exo 20:7  |  |  |  |  | Acts 15:14 |
| λαός | people | Exod 19:5Exod 19:7Exod 19:8Exod 19:9Exod 19:10Exod 19:11Exod 19:12Exod 19:14Exod 19:15Exod 19:16Exod 19:17Exod 19:21Exod 19:23Exod 19:24Exod 19:25Exod 20:18Exod 20:20Exod 20:21 | Ps 56:7 |  |  |  | Acts 15:14 |
| λέγω | saying, said | Exo 19:3 Exo 19:12 Exo 19:21 Exo 19:23 Exo 20:1 Exo 20:20  |  |  | Mark 7:14 |  | Acts 15:13 |
| λόγος | words | Exod 19:6Exod 19:7Exod 19:8Exod 19:9Exod 20:1 | Ps 56:4Ps 56:5Ps 56:10 |  |  |  | Acts 15:15 |
| ὄνομα | names | Exo 20:7  |  |  |  |  | Acts 15:14Acts 15:17 |
| οὖς | ears |  |  | Isa 35:5  | Mark 7:16 |  |  |
| πᾶς | whole, all every | Exod 19:5Exod 19:7Exod 19:8Exod 19:11Exod 19:12Exod 19:16Exod 19:18Exod 20:1Exod 20:4Exod 20:9Exod 20:10Exod 20:11Exod 20:17Exod 20:18 | Ps 56:1Ps 56:2Ps 56:5 |  | Mark 7:14 |  | Acts 15:17 |
| πίπτω / πέτω | fall | Exo 19:21  |  |  |  |  | Acts 15:16 |
| ποιέω | do, did | Exod 19:4Exod 19:8Exod 20:4Exod 20:6Exod 20:9Exod 20:10Exod 20:11Exod 20:23 | Ps 56:4Ps 56:11 |  |  |  | Act 15:17 |
| πρῶτος | first |  |  |  |  |  | Acts 15:14 |

**Nazarean Talmud**

**Sidra of Shmot (Ex.) Ex 19:1 – 20:23**

**“O’od Nega Echad” “Yet one plague”**

**By: H. Em Rabbi Dr. Adon Eliyahu ben Abraham &**

**H. Em.Hakham Dr. Yosef ben Haggai**

|  |
| --- |
| **School of Hakham Tsefet****Peshat****Mordechai (Mk) 7:14-16****Mishnah א:א**  |
| ¶ **After he called the congregation to himself again, he** began**saying to them, “Listen to me, all of you, and become wise:[[557]](#footnote-557) there is nothing outside the man which can defile him if it goes into him; but the things which proceed out of the man are what defile the him.”** “**If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.”** |
|  |
| **School of Hakham Shaul****Remes****2 Luqas (Acts) 15:13-18****Mishnah א:א** |
| **And after they had stopped speaking, Hakham Ya’aqob answered, saying, “Anashim** (men of nobility) **andbrothers listen to me! Hakham Tsefet has described how God from the beginning** (B’resheet) **concerned Himself to take from among the Gentiles a people for His name. And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written**: *“****In that day I will raise up the fallen Sukkah*** *(booth****) of David, And wall up its breaches; I will also raise up its ruins And rebuild it as in the days of old; That they may possess the remnant of Edom And all the Nations*** *(Gentiles)* ***who are called by My name,” Declares the LORD who does this.*** *"****Behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, “When the ploughman will overtake the reaper, And the treader of grapes him who sows seed; The mountains will drip with sweet wine, And all the hills shall flow*** *with it.* ***I will bring back the captives of My people Israel; They will build the waste cities and inhabit*** *them****; They will plant vineyards and drink wine from them; They will also make gardens and eat fruit from them. I will plant them in their land, And no longer will they be pulled up from the land I have given them,” Says the LORD your God.*** (Amos 9:11-15)[[558]](#footnote-558) |

**Nazarean Codicil to be read in conjunction with the following Torah Seder**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Ex 19:1 – 20:23** | **Psa 56** | **Is 35:1-10** | **Mk 7:14-16** | **Acts 15:13-18** |

**Commentary to Hakham Tsefet’s School of Peshat**

The subject material of this pericope is “**what defiles a person**.” In Mordechai 7:16 Yeshua addresses the congregation and says: **“There is nothing outside the man which can defile him if it goes into him; but the things which proceed out of the man are what defile him.”** And in v. 17 the Talmidim call this statement a “riddle.” In other words, this statement requires some unpacking. According to Sabin[[559]](#footnote-559) the interpretation of this “riddle” is that though,

“at first glance, Jesus’ saying appears to challenge the Jewish dietary laws, after all, if nothing that one takes in is defiling, then why refuse to eat certain foods? The parenthetical comment “Thus he declared all foods clean” was probably added later and was intended as just such an explanation. We know, however from Acts 10:1-11 that the question of which foods were unclean went on being debated in the early church. And as Jesus goes on teaching here, we see that he is presenting something more morally complex. The complexity is contained in what comes “from within people, from their hearts” (7:21). If we grasp the saying as a whole, we realize that the emphasis is not on dismissing what enters a person but on demonstrating the greater evil of “what comes out” (7:20). As in much of Jesus’ teaching, his intent appears not so much to disregard external rules as to focus on internal realities.”

The problem with this line of argument is that the Jewish dietary laws can be found in the Scriptures, they are NOT, as Sabin states: “external rules”! These rules are **commandments** found in the Torah (Word) of G-d, therefore the explanation to this riddle needs to found in a similar but different line of argumentation.

Edwards[[560]](#footnote-560) noted something interesting, though because his dogma dictates that the Master declared all food clean, something impossible for the Messiah to do, he totally misses the point. The Mishnah in Tractate Kelim 2:1-7, explains that the “interior spaces were the most susceptible of defilement and thus most in need of cleansing.”[[561]](#footnote-561) In other words, the theory is that flat surfaces are normally clean, whereas a hollowed surface or receptacle is susceptible of uncleanness.[[562]](#footnote-562)

While we read the phrase “therefore, he declared all foods clean” parenthetically, we note that Messiah does not have power or authority to invalidate Scripture. Furthermore, we can clearly see that there has been a Monk monkeying with the text to validate whatever propaganda they will have for the sake of their doctrines. However, we can negate the notion of Yeshua declaring “all food clean,” by contextual hermeneutic. No Jewish Rabbi in the first century or present would call pork, “food.” Nor would he consider anything “food” that was not properly outlined in the Levitical code or the Oral Torah whereupon the Rabbis had detailed what is Kosher. No self-respecting Rabbi would honestly declare unacceptable things edible as “food.” Even those liberal branches, while they may eat things that are not deemed Kosher do not set out to abrogate the Torah.

Therefore, the Master is using here, a Kal VaChomer argument that goes like this: “If the inside of vessels is most susceptible to defilement, how much more so the inside of a person!” Thus the words: **“There is nothing** relatively **from outside the man, having entered into him, which is able to defile him”** are correct if we understand that it is in a context of a riddle. For, we know that if a man eats say rotten fish, or rotten food, he surely will have a disease that renders him unclean/defiled, and even more, in peril of death. In the context of a riddle we can understand that “there is nothing [relatively] from outside a man” as relative to the comparison made in a specific riddle – i.e. **“But the things going out from him, those are the things defiling the man.”**

As can be seen the comparison in this riddle has nothing to do with “declaring all foods clean” and thereby abrogating the Torah, but rather the comparison here is between the outer part (less susceptible to defilement) with the inner part of a vessel or human being (which is more susceptible to defilement).

Yeshua’s words are better comprehended when we understand the laws of ritual purity. We will not elaborate at length here other than to make our point. Take for example blood. Blood within the body does not contaminate any other person that we come in contact with. However, when the blood that is inside is exposed to the “outside” and others come in contact with it ritual impurity ensues. This is because blood is to be retained in a vessel, i.e. the body. Likewise, seminal fluid exposed to the outside contaminates. This fluid is to be transferred from vessel to vessel. When it is “spilled” per se, ritual impurity results. These two analogies show that fluids such as blood and semen are analogous of life so long as they are in their proper containers. But, when these fluids are “spilled” they are analogous of death, the principal father of uncleanness.

These ideas are anchored with another interesting one in v, 16 – **“If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear,”** which Delitzsch renders in the Hebrew as: **“כָּל־אֲשֶׁר אָזְנַיִם לוֹ לִשְׁמֹע יִשְׁמָע” – “Kol-Asher Aznayim Lo LiShmo YiShma” - Lit. “All with ears to obey/hear, obey/hear.”** In other words, the Master is anchoring this riddle and its explanation in the Shema (Deut. 6:4 ff.), as it is said: “And you will love Ha-Shem your G-d with all your heart,.” And the most inner part of the human being is “the heart.”

Hakham Tsefet through his amanuensis Mordechai is here to teach us that Yeshua did not come to abrogate the mitzvoth, G-d forbid! Here when the Torah Seder is replete with the establishment of the Mitzvot among the Jewish people, along with their, “we will obey and hear” the present pericope is perfectly timed.

Mt 5:17 **Do not conceive** in your minds **that I have come to do away with[[563]](#footnote-563) the** mitzvot of the **Torah or the words of the Prophets. I have not come to do away with the** mitzvot **but to magnify[[564]](#footnote-564)** them.

The truest sense of this Midrashic passage is that Yeshua came to “magnify the Torah and Mitzvot, and making them honourable.” by interpreting the Torah correctly, according to the teachings of the House of Hillel. Rabbi Yechiel Tzvi Lichtenstein suggests that Yeshua came to “fill the gaps in the faulty Pharisaical interpretations of the Torah.”[[565]](#footnote-565) We would interpret this statement to mean that Yeshua came to fill the gaps (breeches in the wall) that the Pharisaical School of Shammai made in their faulty teaching of the Torah. Consequently, we see the “Marqan Peshat” and “Luqan Remes” as Yeshua’s methodological search for the Shammaite abrogation of the Torah through their “faulty” teachings. This “Nazarean Talmud” corrects the faulty teachings of the Pharisaical School of Shammai. We have cited Abot 1:1 ad nauseam. However, the phrase “make a fence around the Torah” is very apropos here. Yeshua was inspecting the fence (Oral Torah) for places where it had been breached and might be appropriately walled.

**Commentary to Hakham Shaul’s School of Remes**

Hakham Shaul brings to the forefront the attachment of the Gentiles to G-d through the “Sukkah of David” as mentioned in Amos 9:11-15. The Hakhamim/Sages interpret the “Sukkah of David differently. For example, Rashi states that the “Sukkah of David” refers to the “Temple.” We most certainly agree with this assessment from a Nazarean perspective. Here we determine that the Temple in reference is the Temple of “Living Stones,”[[566]](#footnote-566) making the Temple a living Torah community filled with the “sacrifice of praise in their mouths.” And what is the “sacrifice of praise”? The “sacrifice of praise”[[567]](#footnote-567) is Torah study and the repetition of the lessons learned at the feet of the Hakhamim. Hakham Shaul mentions the “Sukkah of David” as a pars pro toto reference for the seven Ushpizin.

During the Festival of Sukkot, we are graced with the presence of seven special Ushpizin (guests). Allegorically speaking the Sukkah bespeaks of Gan Eden. It is here “under the Throne of G-d” (Gan Eden) that the souls of the righteous/generous reside. Likewise, it is from here that the Ushpizin come to visit our Sukkah. The Seven Ushpizin are:

1. Abraham
2. Yitzchak
3. Ya’aqob
4. Moshe
5. Aaron
6. Yosef
7. David

Each special “Ushpiz” (guest) has special qualities and characteristics that bear implication on the present materials. However, we will focus only on what is necessary for the sake of brevity. As each special guest takes his place on the different nights of the festival of Sukkot, it is as if we were seated in his Sukkah rather than our own. Therefore, on the Seventh Night we sit in the Sukkah of David. According to the Targum of the Nabi (Prophet) Amos, the Sukkah of David is the Kingdom of David, which is an allegory for the Messianic Kingdom.[[568]](#footnote-568) Furthermore, Nabi Amos associates the Sukkah of David with the **Remnant** from Edom. We stress the word remnant here concurring with the prophetic thought of Nabi Amos. Who are these “Seven” special guests? And, how do they relate to the giving of the Torah?

**Torah as Wisdom**

By allegorically defining Torah as Wisdom (Heb. Hokhmah, Greek: Sophia) it became the universal law for all humanity. We state these things noting that the structured universe is built on *Nomos*/Torah.

**B’resheet Rabbah I:1** ﻿The Torah declares: I was the working tool of the Holy One, blessed be He. In human practice, when a mortal king builds a palace, he builds it not with his own skill but with the skill of an architect. The architect moreover does not build it out of his head, but employs plans and diagrams to know how to arrange the chambers and the wicket doors. Thus God consulted the Torah and created the world, while the Torah declares, IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED, BEGINNING referring to the Torah, as in the verse, The Lord made me as the beginning of His way (Prov. VIII, 22).[[569]](#footnote-569)

And the Jerusalem Targum at Genesis 1:1, states:

 “**In wisdom (Be-Hokhma)** the LORD created …

Our error is in thinking that creation is something other than the Torah itself. For example, many scholars suggest that the Torah reflects creation i.e. the cosmos. However, the reality is that the cosmos **is** the Torah. Or, the Torah is creation! The Torah, “Word of G-d” is the cosmos. The cosmos exists because G-d spoke the Torah.[[570]](#footnote-570) Why did G-d consult the Torah as the cited Midrash implies? Herein we see that G-d will not establish a “Law” (*Nomos-*Torah) that He Himself does not keep. G-d looked into the Torah to create the cosmos because when a Sofer (Scribe) makes a Torah Scroll he must copy (look at) another Torah Scroll. Therefore, the sum of creation is the Torah. Torah is the architecture and sum of creation. However, in this statement we still have an incomplete idea of creation. This is because G-d did not use a “Written Torah” per se. He used the “Oral Torah” (Mesorah). This is evident from reading B’resheet. But, the lesson learned is that G-d used the Oral Torah of the Hakhamim to create the cosmos. In other words, G-d spoke the Words of the Hakhamim and the cosmos as we see it came into being. Therefore, the true creators of the world are the Hakhamim, as they make their lessons on Torah and Judgments concerning Halakhah. By their halakhic decisions and teachings the Hakhamim have created the structure of the cosmos in a very specific way. It is also for this reason that the intermediaries, (heavenly host) function according to Torah in a very specific way. Here we can gain a better understanding of the angelic rivalry and rage. Not only are these heavenly hosts enraged by the creation of man, they must be subject to his words through G-d’s use of the words of the Sages to create the cosmos. Obviously, we have abbreviated our point on these matters. In the sense that G-d created the cosmos by the words of the Hakhamim, we see here the principle of “handkerchief” hermeneutics, otherwise stated as “the end is in the beginning and the beginning is in the end.”[[571]](#footnote-571)

The Ramban shows us clearly that in the giving of the Torah that when the B’ne Yisrael heard the Shofar it instilled in them a sense of awe. At that point, Moshe would say “TShemu” “pay attention”[[572]](#footnote-572) because you will hear G-d say such and such[[573]](#footnote-573) explicating the Torah. Moshe announced the Torah and G-d repeated it. The point is that G-d repeated the words of Moshe not vice versa.[[574]](#footnote-574)

**﻿Zohar Vayikra 7a** Hence, it says, Moses spoke with his own voice, and God answered him with that mighty Voice, confirming what he said.

**Midrash Rabbah 28:6[[575]](#footnote-575)** ﻿R. Johanan said: It was one voice that divided itself into seven voices, and these into seventy languages.

However, the point of great interest is that the B’ne Yisrael **sees** the responsa as “Seven Voices,” This is the most profound vision of the Congregation of Yisrael. The Voice of the Hakham (im)[[576]](#footnote-576) establishes Torah, which is echoed by the Seven Paqidim of the Congregation.

Because Wisdom of the Hakhamim is the structure of the universe, the *Nomos* – Torah has a universal entreaty. Humanity is subjected to its rule. Because the Oracles of G-d are given by the Hakhamim,[[577]](#footnote-577) they carry these oracles to the entire world. In this sense, the Cosmos was created “in Wisdom” i.e the wisdom of the Hakhamim, making its laws universal. The B’ne Yisrael is the harbinger of that wisdom. In paraphrasing Gaston, he points out that the Gentiles are subjected to the Torah as the universal code of Wisdom upon which all the cosmos stands. Furthermore, Gentiles are held to the standard of the Torah without any covenantal benefit. His summation of the Bible, Talmud and Midrash confines Gentiles to one of two options. They must accept conversion and incorporation into Yisrael or perish in destruction [[578]](#footnote-578)

**Exodus Rabbah 5:9** And all the people **saw** the thunderings (koloth – voices Ex. XX, 15). Note that it does not say the thunder,[[579]](#footnote-579) but the thunderings (voices); wherefore R. Johanan said that God's voice, as it was uttered, split up into seventy voices, in seventy languages, so that all the nations should understand.[[580]](#footnote-580) When each nation heard the Voice in their own vernacular, their souls departed,[[581]](#footnote-581) save Israel who heard but who were not hurt.[[582]](#footnote-582)

The “voice (s)” according to the Ramban/Midrash Rabbah 28:6, split intro seven voices. Here in the Midrash cited above we see that the voice (s) split into seventy voices. So, who is correct? Both versions are correct. For the B’ne Yisrael the voice (s) were the voices of the seven Paqidim of the congregation. Here the Midrash says that the seventy nations heard the voice (s) in their own vernacular. This is because the nations hear seventy voices! In other words, the Nations hear not 70 voices but 490 voices referring to the voices of the seven Paqidim in the seventy congregations attended by the Gentiles. Note that both the B’ne Yisrael and the Gentiles **SEE** the voices. While there are deep mystical implications here, we can explain these terms allegorically with ease. The “voices” **seen** by the congregations of both the B’ne Yisrael and the Nations are the seven Paqidim who are the voices of the congregation. The seventy voices can also be explained as the “Voice” of the Messenger (angel) of the Congregation, i.e. Chazan.

If the Torah – *nomos* is the structure of the universe, we must opine that the Oral Torah is the structure of both the Olam Hazeh (present world) and Y’mot HaMashiach (Days of Messiah). We further state that Halakhic application of the Oral Torah is a means for the restoration of Paradise. How can this be?

The key to understanding the universalistic character of Judaic monotheism lies in its focus on Adam and Israel, Eden and the land (Eretz Yisrael) – and its eagerness to receive “under the wings of God’s presence” all who accept God’s dominion and Torah’s statement thereof.[[583]](#footnote-583)

**The Sukkah of David**

As noted above the Davidic Sukkah refers to the Temple of living stones and the “Kingdom” i.e. of Messiah. The “Voices” of the Paqidim mentioned above unveil the mysteries of the Torah. This unveiling will steadily takes place until the last Paqid has “voiced” his piece of the Torah, and consequently ushering us into the Messianic Kingdom. There are explanations that suggest that there are three “voices.” The voices being the wind (ruach), water and fire. This is related to the passage of Yochanan the Immerser where he states…

Matityahu (Matt). 3:11 “I indeed immerse you with **water** unto repentance, but he (Messiah) who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will immerse you with the **ruach** **haKodesh** and **fire**.

**D’varim** (Deut.) **33:2 And he said: "The LORD came from Sinai, And dawned on them from Seir; He shone forth from Mount Paran, And He came with ten thousands of righteous/generous; From His right hand c**ame**a fiery law for them**.

Note here that the remnant from Edom and Seir accept the “fiery Torah” (Law) from the hand of G-d. The three voices are also heard with the other seven. Now the reader will remember that the allegory is associated with the ten words of creation. Did G-d only speak ten words in creating the cosmos? No, the number ten in this case teaches us that the number ten is an allegory for the whole of creation. Consequently, we deduce that the Decalogue (ten words – Commandments) is also an allegory for the 613 mitzvot. The three voices, wind (ruach), water and fire are an allegory for Hokhmah, Binah and Da’at (ChaBaD). The three voices are principal and repeated by the seven voices. The seven voices are an allegory for the seven lower, of the ten emanations.[[584]](#footnote-584)

**The Big Picture**

Having established the truth that the cosmos is based on the Torah of the Sages/Hakhamim, we must now turn to the principles being established in the II Luqan 15 gathering of the Nazarean Bet Din. For the sake of clarity, we must ask three questions.

1. Is Acts 15 about the Gentile acceptance of the Bet Din?
2. Is Acts 15 about the acceptance of the Gentile by the Bet Din?
3. Or, is there another possibility?

The problem as noted in the previous pericope of II Luqas 15 is that the Gentile were forbidden to convert to Judaism and join to the Jewish people through any level of Torah Observance. This was the result of the 18 edicts of Shammai 20 B.C.E. We have many very similar cases in contemporary halakhah. In brief, the House of Shammai had forbidden the Gentiles entrance into the Olam HaBa.

In the great discussion between the Bet Din and R. Eliezer[[585]](#footnote-585) it is proven that the rulings of the Bet Din are based on majority vote. Furthermore, the words of the Sages establish halakhah in the heavens. So, what does G-d think of the Sages and their established halakhah? As we have stated above, G-d accepts the wisdom of the Sages who have studied His Torah as the means for creation. Furthermore, He loves that fact that they have studied His Torah so thoroughly.

**b. B.M. 59b** ﻿R. Nathan met Elijah and asked him: What did the Holy One, Blessed be He, do in that hour?  He laughed [with joy], he replied, saying, My sons have defeated Me, My sons have defeated Me.

The great travesty of the Shammaite decisions and 18 edicts made it impossible for the Gentiles to enter the Y’mot HaMashiach (Sukkah of David), and become together with Israel a Temple of “Living Stones” or have any part in the commonwealth of Yisrael.[[586]](#footnote-586)

This is what Hakham Shaul addresses in his Letter titled “Ephesians.”

**Eph 2:11-12 Therefore remember, at that time you, were Gentiles by birth, who are called uncircumcision by those who are called circumcision, which refers to what Royal men do to their bodies;[[587]](#footnote-587) and that at one time you were without Messiah, being aliens[[588]](#footnote-588) from the legal administration of Jewish life,[[589]](#footnote-589) and strangers[[590]](#footnote-590) from the covenants of the promise,[[591]](#footnote-591) having no hope, and without God and in union with the worldly system.**

Note that he sums their condition as, **having no hope, and without God and in union with the worldly system.** In other words, the only thing they had to look forward to was their life in the Olam HaZeh (this present world). They would have no part in the Y’mot HaMashiach or the Olam HaBa. The House of Shammai had cut off the Gentiles from any possible connection with G-d. This halakhic ruling existed from the year 20 B.C.E. until about the year 49 C.E. Therefore we have a span of about 60 (allegorically 49)[[592]](#footnote-592) years where the Gentiles walked through the world with no possibility of an afterlife in Gan Eden. The sin of Shammai was equal to the sin of Ya’aqob hiding Dinah from Esau. The Sages teach that had Dinah (Justice) married Esau, he would have repented immediately and the return of Messiah would have ensued instantly.[[593]](#footnote-593) Likewise, the Talmud teaches that it was as miserable for Yisrael as the sin of the Golden Calf.[[594]](#footnote-594)

The Rabbis/Hakhamim of the Nazarean Bet Din make a monumental decision on behalf of the Gentiles. They as Talmidim of the Master break down the “middle wall of partition.”

**Eph 2:13-16 But you** (Gentiles) **who were far away are now brought close by your union with Yeshua HaMashiach, his life of peace bringing us into unity by breaking down the middle wall of partition[[595]](#footnote-595) which stood between us. This was accomplished by abolishing the enactments contained** **in** (Shammaite) **ordinances** (dogma)**[[596]](#footnote-596), that he might establish one new body[[597]](#footnote-597) in himself, by the cross, having broken down conflict** between the Jewish people and the Gentiles**.**

The decision of Yeshua’s talmidim has cosmic repercussions. That which was denied existence and entrance into Gan Eden (The Sukkah of David) is now presented with the door of opportunity. The Nazarean Bet Din established a precedent for the B’ne Yisrael and all later Bate Din, by making it possible to come to G-d. Here we note that the coming Torah Seder will be “Mishpatim” (judgments). Likewise, Hakham Shaul says it is my “judgment” concerning the Gentiles “turning to G-d.” Note here that Hakham Ya’aqob does not say that the Gentiles who have “accepted Messiah.” The “judgment” of the Nazarean Bet Din specifically addresses the Gentiles who are “turning towards G-d.” Again, this makes the monumental decision of the Nazarean Bet Din a precedential case.

**Peroration**

Gentiles of the first century received the Torah because it was presented to them as a gracious covenantal gift. Therefore, acceptance of the Torah was acceptance of the “Grace of G-d.” However, the word “grace” is deficient in its ability to express the gift of the Torah. Matan HaTorah (the gift of the Torah) issues from chesed – the loving kindness of G-d. If Christianity opened their eyes to the gracious gift of the Torah, they would embrace it with their whole being immediately. However, as long as Scholars project the Torah as legalism and relegate Gentiles to the so-called “Seven Laws of Noah” the Gentile world will struggle to find an authentic connection to G-d.

By granting Gentiles, access to the Torah and the Torah education the Nazarean Bet Din walled off those dogmas that the House of Shammai had built. Furthermore, Gentile access to Torah and Torah observance gives them the possibility of life in the Olam HaBa.

Mt 5:17 **Do not conceive** in your minds **that I have come to do away with[[598]](#footnote-598) the** mitzvot of the **Torah or the words of the Prophets. I have not come to do away with the** mitzvot **but to magnify[[599]](#footnote-599)** them.

The truest sense of this Midrashic passage is that Yeshua came to elevate the Torah and Mitzvot by interpreting the Torah correctly, according to the teachings of the House of Hillel. Rabbi Yechiel Tzvi Lichtenstein suggests that Yeshua came to “fill the gaps in the faulty Pharisaical interpretations of the Torah.”[[600]](#footnote-600) We would interpret this statement to mean that Yeshua came to fill the gaps (breeches in the wall) that the Pharisaical School of Shammai made in their faulty teaching of the Torah. Consequently, we see the “Marqan Peshat” and “Luqan Remes” as Yeshua’s methodological search for the Shammaite abrogation of the Torah through their “faulty” teachings. This “Nazarean Talmud” corrects the faulty teachings of the Pharisaical School of Shammai. We have cited Abot 1:1 ad nauseam. However, the phrase “make a fence around the Torah” is very apropos here. Yeshua was inspecting the fence (Oral Torah) for places where it might be appropriately strengthened. And, he has looked for those places in the “fence” that have been unjustly breached.

**Questions for Reflection**

1. From all the readings for this Shabbat which statement touched your heart and fired your imagination?
2. In your opinion, and taking into consideration all the above readings for this Shabbat, what is the prophetic message (the idea that encapsulates all the Scripture passages read) for this week?

**Blessing After Torah Study**

**Barúch Atáh Adonai, Elohénu Meléch HaOlám,**

**Ashér Natán Lánu Torát Emét, V'Chayéi Olám Natá B'Tochénu.**

**Barúch Atáh Adonái, Notén HaToráh. Amen!**

**Blessed is Ha-Shem our God, King of the universe,**

**Who has given us a teaching of truth, implanting within us eternal life.**

**Blessed is Ha-Shem, Giver of the Torah. Amen!**

**“Now unto Him who is able to preserve you faultless, and spotless, and to establish you without a blemish,**

**before His majesty, with joy, [namely,] the only one God, our Deliverer, by means of Yeshua the Messiah our Master, be praise, and dominion, and honor, and majesty, both now and in all ages. Amen!”**

**Next Shabbat**

**Shabbat: “V’Eleh HaMishpatim” – Sabbath: “And these are the judgments”**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Shabbat** | **Torah Reading:** | **Weekday Reading:** |
| וְאֵלֶּה, הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים |  |  |
| **“V’Eleh HaMishpatim”** | Reader 1 – Shemot 21:1-3 | Reader 1 – Shemot 21:28-30 |
| **“And these** are **the judgments”** | Reader 2 – Shemot 21:4-6 | Reader 2 – Shemot 21:30-32 |
| **“Y estas** son **las ordenanzas”** | Reader 3 – Shemot 21:7-11 | Reader 3 – Shemot 21:28-32 |
| Shemot (Exod.) Ex 21:1–27 | Reader 4 – Shemot 21:12-14 |  |
| Ashlamatah: Is. 56:1-9 + 57:19 | Reader 5 – Shemot 21:15-17 |  |
|  | Reader 6 – Shemot 21:18-21 | Reader 1 – Shemot 21:28-30 |
| Psalm 57:1-6 | Reader 7 – Shemot 21:22-27 | Reader 2 – Shemot 21:30-32 |
| Abot: 3:3 |  Maftir: Shemot 21:22-27 | Reader 3 – Shemot 21:28-32 |
| N.C.: Mk 7:17-33;Acts 15:19-21 |  Isaiah 56:1-9 + 57:19 |   |

**Coming Fast**

**Fast of the 17th of Tammuz**

**Forth further info. Please see:**

[**http://www.betemunah.org/mourning.html**](http://www.betemunah.org/mourning.html) **&** [**http://www.betemunah.org/tamuz17.html**](http://www.betemunah.org/tamuz17.html)

Shabbat Shalom!

Hakham Dr. Yosef ben Haggai

Rabbi Dr. Hillel ben David

Rabbi Dr. Eliyahu ben Abraham

1. Above, 17:1: ***And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin... and encamped in Rephidim.*** [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Above, 3:12. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Ibid., 5:3. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Mechilta on the verse here, and mentioned in Rashi. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Verse 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Deuteronomy 4:10. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Verse 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Numbers 11:4. See also above, 12:38. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Verse 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Verse 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Above, 17:1: ***And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin... and encamped in Rephidim.*** [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. "***Encampment***." In our Rashi: "***coming***." [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. The repentance is indicated by the word ***vayichan***, which is in the singular, thus indicating that Israel encamped before the mountain as one man and with one mind, "while all other encampments were with murmurings and with dissension" (Rashi, quoting Mechilta). [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. See above, 17:7, for their sin in Rephidim. The present analogy between their coming into the wilderness of Sinai, which was surely in a spirit of repentance, as explained above, and their departure from Rephidim, thus teaches us that their departure was also with repentance. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. See Numbers 33:9. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Above, 16:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Ibid., 17:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Numbers 33:1-49. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Mechilta on the verse here. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Verse 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Numbers 33:15. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Ibid., Verses 9 and 14. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Numbers 33:1-49. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Further, 24:16. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Ibid., 20:18. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Thus Ibn Ezra here interprets the word ***leimor***, which is generally taken to mean "saying," as meaning "to say." The sense of the verse is thus: And Moses went up to G-d, for He had called him out of the mountain to tell him, "***Thus will you say to the house of Jacob, etc."*** [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Numbers 12:6. ***If there be a prophet among you, I the Eternal do make Myself known unto him in a vision ... My servant Moses is not so... with him do I speak mouth to mouth, even manifestly, and not in dark speeches*** (Verses 6-8). See also Ramban in this chapter, further, Verse 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Genesis 17:7. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Further, 24:8. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. See Ibid., 23:22. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Here In Verse 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Ecclesiastes 2:8. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Deuteronomy 4:19-20. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Leviticus 20:26. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Genesis 24:1 (Vol. I, pp. 290-292). [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Verse 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Mechilta, ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Psalms 121:4. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Leviticus 19:2. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. See Seder Beshalach, Note 346. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Joshua 24:15. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Verse 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Deuteronomy 30:15. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Further,21:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Ibid.,24:3. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Deuteronomy 4:44. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Ibid., 28:69. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Mentioned here in Ibn Ezra. On Rav Saadia Gaon, see Seder Va'eira, Note 229. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Deuteronomy 31:19. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Verse 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Above, Verse 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. II Kings 23:2. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Verse 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Further, 24:3. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Ramban thus interprets the word ***vayashev*** in the sense of "returning," and not of "reporting": "he returned to G-d with the words of the people." "And there was' no need to mention that 'he went up to the mountain,' since Scripture speaks here briefly" (Ibn Ezra). [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Deuteronomy 5:25. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Verse 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. This is the sense of the conclusion of Verse 9: ***and Moses told the words of the people unto the Eternal***, i.e., the words they had said, "Master of the universe, etc." On the significance of this interpretation of Ramban, see further, Note 63. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Numbers 13:26. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Ibid., Verse 27. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Similarly, ***vayashev Mosheh*** here means that "Moses came back" with the words of the people to G-d. Actually, however, as Ramban continues to explain, he did not report them, as everything was revealed to Him. This differs with Ibn Ezra's interpretation, as explained in the following note. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Ibn Ezra asks the following question: Since it says in Verse 8, ***'vayashev Mosheh'*** the words of the people unto the Eternal, why does it say again at the end of Verse 9, and Moses told the words of the people unto the Eternal? To remove this difficulty, Ibn Ezra said that ***vayageid Mosheh*** (and Moses told) in Verse 9 means that "Moses had already told the words of the people to G-d." It is thus clear that Ibn Ezra explained ***vayashev Mosheh*** in Verse 8 as meaning that Moses "reported" the words of the people to G-d. Hence, Ibn Ezra's difficulty and his forced solution. Ramban, however, explains ***vayashev Mosheh*** as meaning that Moses returned to G-d to report these words. Actually, there was no need to report them, as explained above. Then G-d said to him, ***Lo, I come unto you***, etc. (Verse 9), and finally ***vayageid Mosheh***: Moses told these words to G-d, i.e., that His children are men of faith and that they accept upon themselves whatever He will speak. "There is thus no need for Ibn Ezra's interpretation on this point," as Ramban succinctly puts it. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Further, 20:18. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Ibid., 24:17. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Above, 14:31. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Deuteronomy 5:21. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Above, 4:31. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Above, 14:31. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. Further, 20:18. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. Deuteronomy 4:10. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Ibid., 13:2. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. Numbers 12:6-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. Deuteronomy 5:21. This verse had been used by Ibn Ezra to bring proof that before the Revelation there were some Israelites who still doubted the existence of prophecy. Ramban is now to interpret the true purport of the verse. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. Ibid., Verse 24. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. Mechilta on the verse here. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. Further, Verse 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. Since the Mechilta states that "they may believe in you and also 'in all the prophets,' " it would indicate that prophecy itself was still doubted, as Ibn Ezra wrote. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. Isaiah 13:3. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. Numbers 11:18. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. Leviticus 21:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. Ibid., Verse 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. II Chronicles 30:3. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. I Samuel 21:6. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. In other words, it is not necessary to explain ***v'kidashtam***, as Ibn Ezra did, as meaning that they shall bathe themselves in water, for that requirement can be derived from the express commandment, ***and let them wash their garments*** (here, Verse 10). Hence, ***v'kidashtam*** must mean as Ramban explained it. The reasoning for the requirement of bathing or immersion is found here in the Mechilta: "***And let them wash their garments***. And whence do we know that immersion was also required? I reason as follows: If immersion is required in cases where washing of garments is not required (see Leviticus 15:16), is it not logical that immersion is also required in this case where washing of garments is expressly mentioned?" [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. Mechilta, ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. Further, 24:17. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. Ibid., 33:20. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. Genesis 22:13. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. Leviticus 1:9 and 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. Evidently, a reference to the masters of Cabala. The source of this statement, i.e., that the Voice heard on Mount Sinai was that of Pachad Yitzchak, is unknown to me. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. Genesis 31:42 .. See Ramban, ibid. (Vol. I pp. 388-389). And in Bachya's commentary here (Vol. II, p. 172 of my edition): "This is the ***Pachad Yitzchaq*** which they perceived at Mount Sinai." [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. Verse 16. "Just as it says [in Genesis 27:33], in the case of Isaac: ***And Isaac trembled***" (Bachya, ibid.) [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. Literally: "strength." But here it denotes one of the Ten Emanations, the one which is synonymous with ***Pachad Yitzchaq***. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. Deuteronomy 4:12. See also Ramban further on Verse 19. [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. Above, Verse 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. Mechilta on the verse here. [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. Mechilta here. The language is that of Rashi. [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
103. Deuteronomy 28:58. [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
104. Verse 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
105. Verse 17. [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
106. Verse 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
107. Verse 24. [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
108. Further, 20:18. [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
109. Deuteronomy 5:5. [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
110. I have not been able to identify them. See my Hebrew commentary, p. 387, Note 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
111. Verse 19 before us. [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
112. Above, Verse 3, also in Verse 19. [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
113. Verse 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
114. Further, 24:11. [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
115. Deuteronomy 5:21. [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
116. Further,20:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
117. Mechilta, ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
118. "The Judge who is just in meting out punishment and faithful in giving reward" (Mechilta, ibid.) [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
119. Makkoth 24 a. See Maimonides' "The Commandments," Vol. I, p. 1**. The term Hag’vurah (the Almighty) is analogous to "the Judge."** [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
120. Deuteronomy 5: 19. And according to the above explanation, it should have said, "Elohim spoke." That is because, etc. [↑](#footnote-ref-120)
121. Ibid., 5:4. [↑](#footnote-ref-121)
122. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-122)
123. Further, 20:2. "This alludes to the verse [in Deuteronomy 5:4, mentioned above]: ***Face to face***, etc." (Abusaula). The allusion is to the two Divine Names - the Tetragrammaton and ***Elohim*** - mentioned together here in 20:2. [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
124. Deuteronomy 5:23. This would indicate that they heard ***Elohim Chayim*** speaking (Abusaula). [↑](#footnote-ref-124)
125. Ibid., Verse 24. [↑](#footnote-ref-125)
126. Ibid., 4:33. [↑](#footnote-ref-126)
127. Numbers 7:89. [↑](#footnote-ref-127)
128. Shemoth Rabbah 28:4, "Rabbi Yochanan said**: 'The One Voice was divided into seven voices.'**" [↑](#footnote-ref-128)
129. Psalms 29: 1. This psalm was considered by the Sages of the Talmud as referring to the Giving of the Torah (Sifre, V'zoth Habrachah, 343). **The voice of the Eternal appears seven times in this psalm**: ***The voice of the Eternal is upon the waters*** (Verse 3); ***The voice of the Eternal is powerful***; ***the voice of the Eternal is full of majesty*** (Verse 4); ***The voice of the Eternal breakes the cedars*** (Verse 5); ***The voice of the Eternal hews out flames of fire*** (Verse 7); ***The voice of the Eternal shakes the wilderness*** (Verse 8); ***The voice of the Eternal makes the hinds to calve*** (Verse 9). [↑](#footnote-ref-129)
130. 1. ***And there were 'koloth' and lightnings*** (Verse 16). Since the word koloth is written defectively without the letter vav, it signifies the singular: "and there was a voice." 2. ***And the voice of a horn*** (ibid.) 3. ***And the voice of the horn*** (Verse 19). 4. ***And G-d answered him by a voice*** (ibid.) 5***. And all the people perceived 'hakoloth'*** (Verse 15). Here too the Hebrew hakoloth is written defectively and therefore refers only to one voice: "and all the people perceived the voice." 6. ***And the voice of the horn*** (ibid.) 7. ***And G-d spoke*** (20: 1). Thus there are seven voices mentioned in this section of the Torah (Abusaula). [↑](#footnote-ref-130)
131. Ibid., number 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-131)
132. Ibid., number 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-132)
133. Ibid., number 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-133)
134. 1. ***You heard the voice of words*** (Deuteronomy 4:12). 2. ***Only a voice*** (ibid.) 3. ***A great voice*** (5:19).4. ***The voice out of the midst of the fire*** (5:20). 5. ***And we have heard His voice*** (Verse 21). 6. ***If we hear the voice of the Eternal our G-d*** (Verse 22). 7. ***The voice of the living G-d speaking*** (Verse 23). [↑](#footnote-ref-134)
135. Berachoth 6b. [↑](#footnote-ref-135)
136. For the meaning of the word Gemara, see Seder Bo, Note 204. [↑](#footnote-ref-136)
137. So interpreted by Abusaula. See my Hebrew commentary, pp. 387-388. [↑](#footnote-ref-137)
138. **"This is an allusion to the seven [lower of the Ten] Emanations"** (Bachya). [↑](#footnote-ref-138)
139. Deuteronomy 5:19. [↑](#footnote-ref-139)
140. Ibid., 4:12. [↑](#footnote-ref-140)
141. ***And all the people perceived 'hakoloth'*** (Verse 15). Here too the Hebrew hakoloth is written defectively and therefore refers only to one voice: "and all the people perceived the voice." [↑](#footnote-ref-141)
142. Psalms 62:12. The verse actually reads: 'I' have heard this. [↑](#footnote-ref-142)
143. Deuteronomy 28:58. [↑](#footnote-ref-143)
144. See my Hebrew commentary, p. 388. on the position of the Hilchoth Gedoloth on this point. Ramban thus sides with Rambam, who, in his Sefer Hamitzvoth, counted this as the first commandment. See my translation, "The Commandments," I, pp. 1-2. [↑](#footnote-ref-144)
145. The universe is thus a result of design, and not merely of necessity. See Guide of the Perplexed, II, 18. [↑](#footnote-ref-145)
146. "If you believe in the eternity of matter, it leads to the conclusion that if G-d should desire to shorten a fly's wing or lengthen an ant's foot, He would not be able to do it" (Ramban, in his sermon, "G-d's Law Is Perfect," Kithvei Haramban, I, p. 146). The miracles preceding the exodus, in which G-d's mastery of the powers of nature was demonstrated, thus refuted the doctrine of the eternity of matter and established that of Creation. [↑](#footnote-ref-146)
147. Above, 9: 14. [↑](#footnote-ref-147)
148. This accords with the interpretation of the Mechilta here: "***Out of the house of bondage***. They were slaves to kings." And as Rashi puts it, "from the house of Pharaoh where ye were slaves to him." [↑](#footnote-ref-148)
149. Deuteronomy 28:58 [↑](#footnote-ref-149)
150. Leviticus 25:55. [↑](#footnote-ref-150)
151. Above, 19:20. [↑](#footnote-ref-151)
152. Berachoth 13b. [↑](#footnote-ref-152)
153. Mechilta on Verse 3 here. [↑](#footnote-ref-153)
154. Verse 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-154)
155. Since it says, ***I am the Eternal your God***, etc., it already means, "I, am not another." Why then does He state again, ***You will not have other gods before Me***? [↑](#footnote-ref-155)
156. "Us." In the Mechilta: "them," i.e., the people. [↑](#footnote-ref-156)
157. Above, 19:4. [↑](#footnote-ref-157)
158. Ibid., Verse 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-158)
159. Deuteronomy 29:17-19. See Ramban there on Verse 17. [↑](#footnote-ref-159)
160. Since it says, ***I am the Eternal your God***, etc., it already means, "I, am not another." Why then does He state again, ***You will not have other gods before Me***? [↑](#footnote-ref-160)
161. Verse 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-161)
162. See Seder Bo, Note 209. [↑](#footnote-ref-162)
163. Mechilta on the verse here. [↑](#footnote-ref-163)
164. In Verse 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-164)
165. See Seder Bo, Note 209. [↑](#footnote-ref-165)
166. Sifra, beginning of Seder Kedoshim (Leviticus, Chapter 19). [↑](#footnote-ref-166)
167. Leviticus 19:4. [↑](#footnote-ref-167)
168. Genesis 28:21. [↑](#footnote-ref-168)
169. Leviticus 11:45. [↑](#footnote-ref-169)
170. Further, 22:19. [↑](#footnote-ref-170)
171. See Psalms 140:7 and Sanhedrin 60b. [↑](#footnote-ref-171)
172. Ramban's intent is evidently as follows: Since Onkelos always translated ***elohim acheirim*** as ***ta'avath am'maya (the deceptions of the nations)*** - see e.g., further, 23:13 - and here he translated, ***ela acharan*** (other gods), it shows that he referred to the angels of above, etc. [↑](#footnote-ref-172)
173. "When speaking of accepting or worshipping G-d, Scripture could say, 'Do not accept or worship any other god besides the Eternal.' But when Scripture warns against making an idol, how could it say [that we are] not to make 'other gods' when it is G-d Who has made everything and Who was not made!" (Tur.) [↑](#footnote-ref-173)
174. Leviticus 19:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-174)
175. Further, 34:17. [↑](#footnote-ref-175)
176. Isaiah 37:19. [↑](#footnote-ref-176)
177. Verse 5. The intent of Ramban's words is as follows: According to his own interpretation that this entire second commandment is directed against worshipping idols, we can understand why it says here in Verse 5, ***You will not bow down 'to them'*** and it does not say 'other gods,' because the purport of that verse is to be understood in connection with the preceding verse: "***do not make a graven image***, etc., ***to bow down 'unto them.'*** " But according to Rashi, who interpreted ***You will have no other gods*** (Verse 3) as being a prohibition against keeping an idol, ***and You will not make unto yourself***, etc., (Verse 4) as being a prohibition against making idols, Verse 5 should have said, "You will not bow down 'to other gods,''' since the subject of worshipping the idols as gods is here mentioned for the first time. [↑](#footnote-ref-177)
178. Further 34:17. [↑](#footnote-ref-178)
179. Leviticus 26:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-179)
180. Job 1:11. [↑](#footnote-ref-180)
181. Ibid., 6:28. [↑](#footnote-ref-181)
182. Genesis 32:22. [↑](#footnote-ref-182)
183. Numbers 3:4. [↑](#footnote-ref-183)
184. I Chronicles 24:2. Since in the above verse (Numbers 3:4), it says that Nadab and Abihu died before the Eternal, Ramban therefore also quotes the verse from Chronicles, where it is stated that they died before their father. Hence the significance of the statement that he saw the remaining two sons performing the Divine Service in his presence. [↑](#footnote-ref-184)
185. Above, 19:20. [↑](#footnote-ref-185)
186. Deuteronomy 5:4. [↑](#footnote-ref-186)
187. Onkelos translated al ***panai as bar mini (outside of Me).*** Thus the sense of the verse is as follows: "Do not worship elohim acheirim, since they were all created, excepting G-d, Who is eternal and has not been created by any being." [↑](#footnote-ref-187)
188. Verse 20. And as Rashi explains it: "Do not make any likeness of My ministers that serve Me." [↑](#footnote-ref-188)
189. Verse 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-189)
190. Ramban now continues to explain the two Hebrew words in the above Verse: ***El Kana (a jealous G-d).*** [↑](#footnote-ref-190)
191. See Ramban on Genesis 17:1 (Vol. I, pp. 214-215). [↑](#footnote-ref-191)
192. See ibid., 31:29. [↑](#footnote-ref-192)
193. See Isaiah 42:8. [↑](#footnote-ref-193)
194. Guide of the Perplexed, I, 36. [↑](#footnote-ref-194)
195. Exodus 4:14. [↑](#footnote-ref-195)
196. Numbers 12:9. [↑](#footnote-ref-196)
197. Job 42:7. [↑](#footnote-ref-197)
198. Mechilta on Verse 5 here. [↑](#footnote-ref-198)
199. Above,19:4. [↑](#footnote-ref-199)
200. See Deuteronomy 4:19. [↑](#footnote-ref-200)
201. "For the angels are not material bodies but only forms distinguished from each other. .. All these forms live and realize the Creator, and their knowledge of Him is exceedingly great" (Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchoth Yesodei Hatorah 2:3-8). For Rambam's version of the development of idolatry, see his first chapter in Hilchoth Akum. See also Guide of the Perplexed I, 49, on figurative expressions applied to angels. [↑](#footnote-ref-201)
202. Daniel 10:20. [↑](#footnote-ref-202)
203. Ibid., Verse 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-203)
204. Deuteronomy 6:14. [↑](#footnote-ref-204)
205. Ibid., 10:17. [↑](#footnote-ref-205)
206. Psalms 97:7. [↑](#footnote-ref-206)
207. Above,18:11. [↑](#footnote-ref-207)
208. Menachoth 110a. [↑](#footnote-ref-208)
209. Further, 22:19. [↑](#footnote-ref-209)
210. See Job 18:33. [↑](#footnote-ref-210)
211. Deuteronomy 17:3. [↑](#footnote-ref-211)
212. Jeremiah 8:2. [↑](#footnote-ref-212)
213. See Deuteronomy 4:19. [↑](#footnote-ref-213)
214. Isaiah 27:9. [↑](#footnote-ref-214)
215. See Ramban, Genesis 11:2 (Vol. I, pp. 154-155). In describing the beginnings of this second stage of idolatry, Rambam introduces it with this statement: "In the course of time, there arose among men false prophets who said that G-d commanded them, saying 'Worship that particular star'" (Mishneh Torah, Hilchoth Akum 1 :2). Ramban here is more specific and suggests that the beginnings of this kind of idolatry took place in the age of the dispersion of the nations. This would seem to be the intent of Ramban's words, "It appears likely to me ... " [↑](#footnote-ref-215)
216. Genesis 11:4. [↑](#footnote-ref-216)
217. Shemoth Rabbah 9:7. [↑](#footnote-ref-217)
218. Isaiah 14:14. It is to be noted though that this prophecy was said with reference to the king of Babylon (ibid., Verses 4, and 22). Accordingly, it is difficult to understand why Ramban here mentions Sennacherib who was king of Assyria, and not Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. See however, in Sefer Hage'ulah (Kithvei Haramban I, p. 274) where Ramban writes that Scripture sometimes "interchanges from the name of the king of Babylon to the king of Assyria" and he quotes various verses to prove it. In this sense it may be understood here that Ramban mentioned "Sennacherib" when his intent was really to the king of Babylon. [↑](#footnote-ref-218)
219. Ezekiel 28:2. [↑](#footnote-ref-219)
220. Such as Nimrod. See Chullin 89a. [↑](#footnote-ref-220)
221. In Seder Acharei Moth (Leviticus 17:6). [↑](#footnote-ref-221)
222. Berachoth 6a. See my Hebrew commentary, p. 393. [↑](#footnote-ref-222)
223. Deuteronomy 32:17. [↑](#footnote-ref-223)
224. Genesis 10:9. See Ramban there (Vol. I, p. 147). [↑](#footnote-ref-224)
225. Leviticus 17:7. [↑](#footnote-ref-225)
226. Further, 22:19. [↑](#footnote-ref-226)
227. Verse 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-227)
228. Job 4:16. [↑](#footnote-ref-228)
229. Rosh Hashanah 24b. [↑](#footnote-ref-229)
230. "For the angels are not material bodies but only forms distinguished from each other. .. All these forms live and realize the Creator, and their knowledge of Him is exceedingly great" (Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchoth Yesodei Hatorah 2:3-8). For Rambam's version of the development of idolatry, see his first chapter in Hilchoth Akum. See also Guide of the Perplexed I, 49, on figurative expressions applied to angels. [↑](#footnote-ref-230)
231. Further, 32:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-231)
232. Job 26:5. [↑](#footnote-ref-232)
233. Mechilta on the verse here. [↑](#footnote-ref-233)
234. Verse 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-234)
235. Genesis 21:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-235)
236. Further, 32:34. [↑](#footnote-ref-236)
237. Isaiah 27:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-237)
238. Ibid., 24:21. [↑](#footnote-ref-238)
239. Ibid., 14:21. [↑](#footnote-ref-239)
240. Genesis 15:16. [↑](#footnote-ref-240)
241. Deuteronomy 5:9. [↑](#footnote-ref-241)
242. Ibn Ezra tried to answer this question: Since Scripture uses the terms ***shileishim*** and ***ribei'im*** to signify the third and fourth generations, why does it not say ***shni'im*** for the second generation instead of using the term ***banim*** (children)? For this reason, Ibn Ezra interpreted ***banim*** as meaning "children and children's children," for they are both called ***banim***. Hence, Scripture could not use the term ***shni'im***, for that would have meant only the second generation after the sinner, who is the first generation. However, in fact the second and third generations also need to be included here. For this reason, Scripture used ***banim***, which includes the children's children as well, i.e., the third generation after the sinner. Accordingly, in Ibn Ezra's opinion, ***shileishim*** will mean the children of the third generation, who are the fourth generation after the sinner, and ***ribei'im*** will mean the children of the fourth generation, who constitute the fifth generation. Ramban will differ with this entire interpretation. [↑](#footnote-ref-242)
243. Ibn Ezra's intent is that when you consider the words ***shileishim*** and ***ribei'im***, this question will occur: Why does Scripture not use the term ***shni'im*** instead of ***banim***? You must then conclude as explained in the preceding note. [↑](#footnote-ref-243)
244. Further, 34:7. [↑](#footnote-ref-244)
245. The Hebrew text possibly lends itself to this translation: "He - [i.e., G-d, Who is proclaiming these thirteen attributes] - is explaining that ***al b'nei banim*** (upon the children's children) is the ***shileishim*** (the third generation) and ***ribei'im*** (the fourth generation)." In other words, ***al b'nei banim*** is in apposition to ***al shileishim v'al ribei'im.*** [↑](#footnote-ref-245)
246. Numbers 14:18. [↑](#footnote-ref-246)
247. Ezekiel 18:20. [↑](#footnote-ref-247)
248. Tosephta Sotah 4:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-248)
249. According to Ibn Ezra, the phrase in question represents a measure of G-d's mercy. He does not punish the sinner immediately but "remembers" it until the third and fourth generations because perhaps he will repent and beget a righteous son. But, asks Ramban, if that were the interpretation, "the measure of Divine good" would be increased if such "punishment" were withheld even to the tenth generation! Why then did the Rabbis in the above-mentioned text speak of the Divine measure of good being manifested in punishment only to four generations when that Divine manifestation would apply even if it were extended to the tenth generation? But according to Ramban, who asserts that this verse represents a measure of G-d's judgment - for ***pokeid*** means "punishing," and the verse declares that the effects of the punishment are felt up to and including the fourth generation - that question cannot be asked. If punishment were extended to the tenth generation, it would no longer represent "a measure of good." On the contrary, it would be a harsher judgment. [↑](#footnote-ref-249)
250. Jeremiah 31:30. [↑](#footnote-ref-250)
251. The allusion is to the verse, One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh (Ecclesiastes 1:4), upon which the Sefer Habahir commented: "that hath come already." This means that the generation that passes away had come into the sins of the father "that had come already" in a previous generation, and the sins of the father are now visited upon the son, etc. (Ma'or V'shamesh). The mystic doctrine of the transmigration of souls is thus alluded to here. [↑](#footnote-ref-251)
252. Genesis 38:8 (Vol. I, pp. 469-470). [↑](#footnote-ref-252)
253. Deuteronomy 6:5. [↑](#footnote-ref-253)
254. Isaiah 41:8. See Maimonides' "The Commandments," Vol. I, p. 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-254)
255. See Ramban on Genesis 11:28 (Vol. I, pp. 156-161). [↑](#footnote-ref-255)
256. So it appears from Rashi's commentary to Sotah 31a, and from Rambam's introduction to the tenth chapter of Sanhedrin. See my Hebrew commentary here, p. 395. [↑](#footnote-ref-256)
257. **Aboth 1:3, "Be not like servants who minister to their Master with the intention of receiving a reward; but be like the servants who minister to their Master without the intention of receiving a reward."** [↑](#footnote-ref-257)
258. Mechilta on the verse here. [↑](#footnote-ref-258)
259. The reference is obviously to the persecutions by the Roman emperor Hadrian (ll7-I38 Common Era), when the Jews in the Land of Israel were forbidden the practice of Judaism, including the study of Torah. Their determination to remain in the Land of Israel and practice their faith instead of emigrating to more peaceful lands such as Babylon, was at those times constituted as a special manifestation of their love of G-d. [↑](#footnote-ref-259)
260. In our Mechilta: "Why are you whipped with a hundred lashes?" [↑](#footnote-ref-260)
261. "The Palm-branch." See Leviticus 23:40. [↑](#footnote-ref-261)
262. Zechariah 13:6. [↑](#footnote-ref-262)
263. Sanhedrin 74a. See Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchoth Yesodei Hatorah 5:2-3. [↑](#footnote-ref-263)
264. "The Palm-branch." See Leviticus 23:40. [↑](#footnote-ref-264)
265. Sanhedrin 74a. See Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchoth Yesodei Hatorah 5:2-3 [↑](#footnote-ref-265)
266. Leviticus 22:32. For full discussion of this topic, see my translation of Maimonides' "The Commandments." Vol. II, commandment 63, pp. 61-63. [↑](#footnote-ref-266)
267. So it appears from Rashi's commentary to Sotah 31a, and from Rambam's introduction to the tenth chapter of Sanhedrin. See my Hebrew commentary here, p. 395. [↑](#footnote-ref-267)
268. Abusaula, in his commentary on the mystic passages in Ramban, explains this as follows: **"Abraham's power revealed itself in mercy, while that of the rest of the prophets in the ameliorated Divine attribute of justice."** See Ramban, Genesis Vol. I, p. 543. [↑](#footnote-ref-268)
269. Micah 7:20. **"Know that mercy is love"** (Ma'or V'shamesh). [↑](#footnote-ref-269)
270. Abusaula, in his commentary on the mystic passages in Ramban, explains this as follows: **"Abraham's power revealed itself in mercy, while that of the rest of the prophets in the ameliorated Divine attribute of justice."** See Ramban, Genesis Vol. I, p. 543. [↑](#footnote-ref-270)
271. Shebuoth 21a. Maimonides' "The Commandments," Vol. II, commandment 62, pp. 60-61. [↑](#footnote-ref-271)
272. Further, 23:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-272)
273. Psalms 16:4. [↑](#footnote-ref-273)
274. Zechariah 9:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-274)
275. Isaiah 3:7. [↑](#footnote-ref-275)
276. Temurah 3b. [↑](#footnote-ref-276)
277. Sifra, Vayikra 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-277)
278. The reason for the prohibition is that if he mentions the Name of G-d first and he immediately changes his mind about bringing the beast as an offering, he will have taken the Name of Heaven for no purpose (Nedarim 10 b, Rashi). [↑](#footnote-ref-278)
279. Leviticus 1:2. Here the word "offering" is mentioned first and then the Name of G-d follows. [↑](#footnote-ref-279)
280. "Argumentum a minori ad majus" or "a majori ad minus"; corresponding to the scholastic proof a fortiori. [↑](#footnote-ref-280)
281. See Isaiah 42:8. [↑](#footnote-ref-281)
282. Leviticus 19:12. [↑](#footnote-ref-282)
283. Verse 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-283)
284. Proverbs 6:29. [↑](#footnote-ref-284)
285. **The purport of Ibn Ezra's explanation is as follows: When one swears by the Name of G-d, his intent is to imply that just as G-d is true, so is his word true. When he fails to fulfill it, it is thus tantamount to denying Him. The same reasoning applies to an oath taken in vain.** [↑](#footnote-ref-285)
286. **"First two verses." When the Ten Commandments are read in public, all the five verses contained in the first and second commandments are read as if they were one verse. Ramban's language must then be understood as: "the first two commandments."** [↑](#footnote-ref-286)
287. Makkoth 24a. [↑](#footnote-ref-287)
288. Above, Verse 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-288)
289. Deuteronomy 5:19. [↑](#footnote-ref-289)
290. Ibid., 4:13. [↑](#footnote-ref-290)
291. According to Ibn Ezra, all these verses apparently stand in contradiction to that which the Rabbis have said, i.e., that we heard only the first two commandments from the Almighty Himself. Ramban proceeds to remove the difficulty. [↑](#footnote-ref-291)
292. Guide of the Perplexed, II, 33: "Moses spoke, and G-d answered by a voice, In explanation thereof, the Sages said in the Mechilta that Moses brought to them every commandment as he heard it." I have not been able to identify the exact quotation in the Mechilta. [↑](#footnote-ref-292)
293. Above, 19:19. [↑](#footnote-ref-293)
294. Ibid., 19:9. [↑](#footnote-ref-294)
295. Deuteronomy 4:10. [↑](#footnote-ref-295)
296. Ibid., Verse 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-296)
297. All these principles of truth were made evident through expressing the first commandment. See Ramban above, Verse 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-297)
298. This was the theme of the second commandment. [↑](#footnote-ref-298)
299. As opposed to taking His Name in vain, as was stated in the third commandment. [↑](#footnote-ref-299)
300. Deuteronomy 5:12. [↑](#footnote-ref-300)
301. Mechilta on the verse here. Also Shebuoth 20b. [↑](#footnote-ref-301)
302. Erubin 96a, etc. [↑](#footnote-ref-302)
303. Verse 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-303)
304. Deuteronomy 5:8. [↑](#footnote-ref-304)
305. Ibid., Verse 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-305)
306. See my Hebrew commentary, p. 398, that this is a veiled criticism of Ibn Ezra, who, in his commentary on Verse 1, continued to raise difficulties on this saying of the Sages and finally concluded that "reason does not bear out all these words." To this came the retort of Ramban: "this explanation, etc." In a Ramban manuscript, I found this remark expressed in a positive manner: "This explanation will be entertained by him who is used to the ways of the Talmud." Thus Ramban avoids casting a direct aspersion on Ibn Ezra's knowledge of the ways of the Talmud. [↑](#footnote-ref-306)
307. Berachoth 20b. [↑](#footnote-ref-307)
308. The proclaiming of the sanctity of the Sabbath is one of the six hundred thirteen commandments of the Torah. See "The Commandments," Vol. I, pp. 164-165. [↑](#footnote-ref-308)
309. The general rule is: **"The observance of all positive commandments that depend on time is incumbent on men but not on women**, **but the observance of all the negative commandments, whether they depend on time or not, is incumbent both on men and women"** (Kiddushin 29 a). **Now proclaiming the sanctity of the Sabbath is naturally dependent on time - i.e., the arrival of the Sabbath - and one would therefore say that women are not obligated to observe that commandment. But *'shamor' (observe)* the Sabbath-day to keep it holy, as was explained in the text, constitutes a negative commandment, and therefore applies to women as well. Now since the Torah equated *zachor* (remember) with *shamor (observe),* it follows that women are also obligated in the positive commandment of proclaiming the sanctity of the Sabbath.** [↑](#footnote-ref-309)
310. Ramban thus brought proof to his original point that the reason the Rabbis were particular about this change from remember to observe and not about the other changes in the Decalogue, is that here, the change represents a reclassification from a positive to a negative commandment. Hence it became necessary for them to point out that both words were spoken with one Divine utterance. [↑](#footnote-ref-310)
311. Sefer Habahir, 182. See Vol. I, p. 24, Note 42. [↑](#footnote-ref-311)
312. See my Hebrew commentary, p. 399. [↑](#footnote-ref-312)
313. Baba Kamma 32b. [↑](#footnote-ref-313)
314. "The Queen, the Bride." In our Gemara: "the Bride, the Queen." - These words of welcome constitute to this day the official reception of the Sabbath in the Synagogue service as the worshippers bid "the Sabbath bride" come in peace, in the hymn “Lekha Dodi.” [↑](#footnote-ref-314)
315. Pesachim 106a. [↑](#footnote-ref-315)
316. Ma'or V'shamesh. [↑](#footnote-ref-316)
317. The question arises: Since, as Ramban writes, **a positive commandment is greater than a negative one**, why are all punishments for violation of the precepts specified in the Torah only for the negative commandments? This would indicate that the negative commandments are stricter than the positive ones, and indeed, the Rabbis in the Talmud do speak of the negative commandments as being stricter than the positive. Why then did Ramban write that the positive ones are greater? See my Hebrew commentary, p. 399, for lengthy discussion of this problem. In conclusion, the answer presented is as follows: Ramban did not write that a positive commandment is "stricter" than a negative one; he wrote only "greater." **Fulfillment of a Divine positive commandment represents an act of "doing good," while observance of a negative precept is an expression of one's "departing from evil." Between the two - doing good and departing from evil - the former indeed represents "a greater" expression of man's active dedication to the Divine service.** Hence Ramban's statement above. As for the stricter punishment of the negative commandments, see further in text. [↑](#footnote-ref-317)
318. Shabbath 132b, etc. [↑](#footnote-ref-318)
319. Numbers 15:38. [↑](#footnote-ref-319)
320. Leviticus 23:42. [↑](#footnote-ref-320)
321. This rule applies only if the time of the performance is still applicable, but if, for example, the festival of Tabernacles has passed, he is not to be punished for his failure to observe the commandment. See Maimonides', "The Commandments," Vol. II, p. 423, where it is clearly so explained. Ramban's intent is obvious: The violation of a negative commandment entails an act on the part of the sinner, which goes in direct opposition to the King's command. Hence the punishment is "stricter" than in the case of a violation of a positive commandment, which entails only failure to act in accordance with the King's desire. Hence if the time for fulfillment of the positive commandment has not yet passed and he is in open defiance of the law, the court may act against him, but if the time for fulfillment has passed, no punishment is to be imposed on him. [↑](#footnote-ref-321)
322. Mechilta on the verse here. [↑](#footnote-ref-322)
323. Beitza 16a. [↑](#footnote-ref-323)
324. **His eating the first one thus entailed something on which the honor of the Sabbath had rested (see Rashi in Beitza 16a). Thus all his life he ate in honor of the Sabbath.** [↑](#footnote-ref-324)
325. **Psalms 68:20. Hillel was thus confident that before the Sabbath, G-d would provide him with his proper needs (Rashi, Beitza).** [↑](#footnote-ref-325)
326. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-326)
327. This is the Mechilta of Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai (Hoffman edition, p. 107). For the significance of the expression "another Mechilta," see Vol. I, p. 603, Note 245. [↑](#footnote-ref-327)
328. Deuteronomy 5:12. [↑](#footnote-ref-328)
329. See my Hebrew commentary, p. 400, for Mizrachi's defense of Rashi's explanation. [↑](#footnote-ref-329)
330. In the Mechilta quote further on. [↑](#footnote-ref-330)
331. **If each of the days of the week were to have a name of its own - such as Sunday, Monday, etc. - then the Sabbath-day is confused with the other days. But if we refer to the days of the week in relation to the Sabbath - "the first day after the Sabbath," etc. - then the Sabbath-day stands unique.** [↑](#footnote-ref-331)
332. Further 31:13. [↑](#footnote-ref-332)
333. Isaiah 58:13. [↑](#footnote-ref-333)
334. II Kings 4:23. [↑](#footnote-ref-334)
335. Rosh Hashanah 16b. [↑](#footnote-ref-335)
336. Chullin 5a. See also Vol. I, p. 332. [↑](#footnote-ref-336)
337. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-337)
338. Mechilta on the verse here. [↑](#footnote-ref-338)
339. In the Mechilta mentioned further in the text. [↑](#footnote-ref-339)
340. Leviticus 25:10. [↑](#footnote-ref-340)
341. Rosh Hashanah 8b , Rashi. [↑](#footnote-ref-341)
342. See Maimonides', "The Commandments," Vol. I, pp. 164-165. [↑](#footnote-ref-342)
343. Mechilta on the verse here. [↑](#footnote-ref-343)
344. Further, 31:14. Since the word "day" is not mentioned in this verse, as it is in the verse before us, Remember the Sabbath- 'day' to keep it holy, it indicates that the proclamation of the Sabbath is to be observed at its entrance at night. See also further in the text here for a more correct version of this Mechilta as Ramban explains it. [↑](#footnote-ref-344)
345. Berachoth 20b. [↑](#footnote-ref-345)
346. Literally: "Support." Where a law is actually of Rabbinic origin but a Scriptural text is quoted as a support, it is called an ***asmachta***. [↑](#footnote-ref-346)
347. Berachoth 20b. [↑](#footnote-ref-347)
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349. Pesachim 106a. [↑](#footnote-ref-349)
350. A Rabbi mentioned in a Mishnah or Baraitha. [↑](#footnote-ref-350)
351. Above, 1:14. [↑](#footnote-ref-351)
352. Genesis 4:12. [↑](#footnote-ref-352)
353. Ezekiel 36:9. [↑](#footnote-ref-353)
354. Leviticus 23:7. [↑](#footnote-ref-354)
355. Above, 16:23. [↑](#footnote-ref-355)
356. And are thus ***b'ne b'rith*** (children of the covenant). See Mechilta here. [↑](#footnote-ref-356)
357. Deuteronomy 5:14. [↑](#footnote-ref-357)
358. Chagigah 4a, etc. [↑](#footnote-ref-358)
359. Literally: "resident alien," so called because he was permitted to dwell within the Land of Israel. The conditions under which he becomes a ***ger toshav*** are described here in the text. [↑](#footnote-ref-359)
360. See Vol. I, p. 417, Note 148, and see also in index there under "Noachides." [↑](#footnote-ref-360)
361. Deuteronomy 14:21. [↑](#footnote-ref-361)
362. Further, 23:12. [↑](#footnote-ref-362)
363. Numbers 15:16. [↑](#footnote-ref-363)
364. Ibid., 9:14. [↑](#footnote-ref-364)
365. Mechilta on the verse here. [↑](#footnote-ref-365)
366. Further, 23:12. [↑](#footnote-ref-366)
367. Literally: "resident alien," so called because he was permitted to dwell within the Land of Israel. The conditions under which he becomes a ***ger toshav*** are described here in the text. [↑](#footnote-ref-367)
368. Further, 23:12. [↑](#footnote-ref-368)
369. Deuteronomy 5:14. [↑](#footnote-ref-369)
370. Genesis 2:1. Ramban's discussion of the mystic nature of the blessing of the Sabbath is found there on Verse 3 (Vol. I, p. 60). [↑](#footnote-ref-370)
371. Here in the verse before us, which is generally translated: "for in six days the Eternal made." [↑](#footnote-ref-371)
372. Ramban is hinting here to what he wrote on Genesis 2:3, i.e., **that the six days of creation allude to the six thousand years which are "all the days of the world."** See Vol. I, pp. 61-64. Thus the sense of the verse here is clearly, "for G-d made six days," and not, "for in six days G-d made." **The six days represent the six milleniums of world-history, while the seventh millenium "will be wholly a Sabbath and will bring rest for life everlasting"** (ibid., p. 64). [↑](#footnote-ref-372)
373. Further, 31:17. [↑](#footnote-ref-373)
374. Kiddushin 30b: "There are three partners in man: the Holy One, blessed be He, his father and his mother." [↑](#footnote-ref-374)
375. Deuteronomy 5:16. [↑](#footnote-ref-375)
376. **"What is honoring [one's parents? It entails) providing them with food and drink, raiment and warmth, and guiding their footsteps [when they are old and infirm)"** (Kiddushin 31b). [↑](#footnote-ref-376)
377. Ibid., 30b. [↑](#footnote-ref-377)
378. Ibid., 39b. [↑](#footnote-ref-378)
379. A reference to eternal life. [↑](#footnote-ref-379)
380. Deuteronomy 5:16. [↑](#footnote-ref-380)
381. See Ramban at end of Seder Bo. [↑](#footnote-ref-381)
382. Jeremiah 2:27. [↑](#footnote-ref-382)
383. Mechilta on the verse here. [↑](#footnote-ref-383)
384. See Ramban further, 21:15. [↑](#footnote-ref-384)
385. Since coveting also relates to action by robbery, Ramban mentions here "robbery" although the tenth commandment speaks of coveting. [↑](#footnote-ref-385)
386. In his introduction to the Ten Commandments. [↑](#footnote-ref-386)
387. Deuteronomy 5:18. [↑](#footnote-ref-387)
388. This is Ramban's own comment. [↑](#footnote-ref-388)
389. Verse 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-389)
390. Verse 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-390)
391. Verse 12. [↑](#footnote-ref-391)
392. Isaiah 40:10. **In other words, the recompense for the last five commandments is self-evident. If man observes them, his society will prosper, and if not, the whole fabric of society will collapse.** [↑](#footnote-ref-392)
393. Verse 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-393)
394. Verse 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-394)
395. Verse 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-395)
396. Verse 2. [↑](#footnote-ref-396)
397. Verse 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-397)
398. Further, 31 :14. [↑](#footnote-ref-398)
399. Isaiah 56:2. [↑](#footnote-ref-399)
400. Verse 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-400)
401. Sefer Yetzirah 1:3. This is one of the earliest books on the Cabala. Saadia Gaon was among the first great scholars to write a commentary on it. It is written in profound symbolic language. [↑](#footnote-ref-401)
402. In our version of Sefer Yetzirah: "Ten Emanations"; the word "with" is not present. [↑](#footnote-ref-402)
403. Shemoth Rabbah 41:7. [↑](#footnote-ref-403)
404. Since **the Torah was the instrument with which the world was created, the first Tablet containing our duties towards G-d thus corresponds to heaven, while the second Tablet which states our duties to man corresponds to earth** (Etz Yoseph, ibid.) [↑](#footnote-ref-404)
405. The symbol is that of the bestower and the bestowed. Heaven is the bestower and earth is the bestowed. So also is the relationship between G-d and man. [↑](#footnote-ref-405)
406. Ibn Ezra in Verse 16. [↑](#footnote-ref-406)
407. Deuteronomy 5:20-22. [↑](#footnote-ref-407)
408. Verse 16. [↑](#footnote-ref-408)
409. Verse 17. [↑](#footnote-ref-409)
410. Deuteronomy 5:25. [↑](#footnote-ref-410)
411. Ibid., Verse 23. [↑](#footnote-ref-411)
412. Verse 18. [↑](#footnote-ref-412)
413. Above, 19:24. [↑](#footnote-ref-413)
414. Ibid., Verse 16. [↑](#footnote-ref-414)
415. I Kings 19:1l. [↑](#footnote-ref-415)
416. Above, 19:17. [↑](#footnote-ref-416)
417. Ibid., Verse 18. [↑](#footnote-ref-417)
418. Deuteronomy 4:11. [↑](#footnote-ref-418)
419. Verse 18. [↑](#footnote-ref-419)
420. An Arabic word meaning earthquake. In another Ramban manuscript, the reading is ***chalchalah***. [↑](#footnote-ref-420)
421. Psalms 114:6. See Pesachim 118a that this verse refers to the time of the Giving of the Torah. [↑](#footnote-ref-421)
422. Ibid., Verse 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-422)
423. Above 19:19. [↑](#footnote-ref-423)
424. See Daniel 10:16. [↑](#footnote-ref-424)
425. Verse 17. [↑](#footnote-ref-425)
426. Verse 18. [↑](#footnote-ref-426)
427. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-427)
428. Deuteronomy 5:22. [↑](#footnote-ref-428)
429. Ibid., Verse 24. [↑](#footnote-ref-429)
430. Ibid., Verse 25. [↑](#footnote-ref-430)
431. Mechilta on the verse here, and mentioned partly in Rashi. [↑](#footnote-ref-431)
432. Isaiah 24:20. [↑](#footnote-ref-432)
433. The allusion is to Ibn Ezra, who interprets it so. [↑](#footnote-ref-433)
434. Genesis 4:12. [↑](#footnote-ref-434)
435. Numbers 32:13. [↑](#footnote-ref-435)
436. Guide of the Perplexed, II, 33. [↑](#footnote-ref-436)
437. Above, Verse 1. [↑](#footnote-ref-437)
438. Ibid., 6:10, etc. [↑](#footnote-ref-438)
439. Reference is to the first two commandments, for we heard both of them from the Almighty Himself, as explained above. [↑](#footnote-ref-439)
440. Therefore, with reference to Moses, Onkelos translated literally, And G-d spoke, for Moses achieved the highest comprehension humanly possible in prophecy, and therefore he received the word of G-d directly. But where the people were concerned, since their comprehension was of a far lesser degree, Onkelos translated, "from before G-d." [↑](#footnote-ref-440)
441. Further, Verse 19. Now here it refers to G-d speaking to the people, and yet Onkelos did not paraphrase it! [↑](#footnote-ref-441)
442. Deuteronomy 5:19. [↑](#footnote-ref-442)
443. Ibid., Verse 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-443)
444. Ibid., Verse 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-444)
445. Above, 19:19. [↑](#footnote-ref-445)
446. The Hebrew is ***midaber***, not ***m'daber*** (speaking), and Rashi markedly comments that it means "uttering itself" and Moses heard it of himself. It is out of reverence for G-d that this expression is used. [↑](#footnote-ref-446)
447. Numbers 7:89. [↑](#footnote-ref-447)
448. Further, 33:9. [↑](#footnote-ref-448)
449. Deuteronomy 5:21. [↑](#footnote-ref-449)
450. Verse 19. Now here it refers to G-d speaking to the people, and yet Onkelos did not paraphrase it! [↑](#footnote-ref-450)
451. Deuteronomy 5:21. [↑](#footnote-ref-451)
452. Above, 19:20. [↑](#footnote-ref-452)
453. Throughout his translation, Onkelos does not distinguish between ***Elohim*** and the Tetragrammaton. He translates both alike: ***Ado-nai***. [↑](#footnote-ref-453)
454. Above, 19:9. The verse reads: ***Behold, I come unto you***. [↑](#footnote-ref-454)
455. Ibid., Verse 11. the verse reads: ***the Eternal will come down***. [↑](#footnote-ref-455)
456. Ibid., Verse 18. The verse reads: ***because the Eternal descended upon it.*** [↑](#footnote-ref-456)
457. Ibid., Verse 20. The verse reads: ***And the Eternal came down***. [↑](#footnote-ref-457)
458. Above, 3:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-458)
459. Ibid., 19:17. [↑](#footnote-ref-459)
460. Verse 17. [↑](#footnote-ref-460)
461. Further, Verse 18. [↑](#footnote-ref-461)
462. Above, 19:19. [↑](#footnote-ref-462)
463. Ibid., Verse 20. Also in Vol. I, pp. 550-552. [↑](#footnote-ref-463)
464. Further, 24:13. [↑](#footnote-ref-464)
465. Numbers 10:33. [↑](#footnote-ref-465)
466. Isaiah 62:10. [↑](#footnote-ref-466)
467. Ibid., 30:17. [↑](#footnote-ref-467)
468. Rashi connects ***nasoth*** with ***nes*** (ensign, banner). Ramban objects to this because in his opinion, the root of the word ***nasoth*** is ***nasoh*** (try, accustom). [↑](#footnote-ref-468)
469. Deuteronomy 5:22. [↑](#footnote-ref-469)
470. I Samuel 17:39. [↑](#footnote-ref-470)
471. Guide of the Perplexed, III, 24. The Hebrew text here follows Al Charizi's translation, and not that of Ibn Tibbon. [↑](#footnote-ref-471)
472. See Deuteronomy 8:2. [↑](#footnote-ref-472)
473. Ibid., 13:4. [↑](#footnote-ref-473)
474. I Samuel 17:39. [↑](#footnote-ref-474)
475. See Vol. I, p. 275. [↑](#footnote-ref-475)
476. Shemoth Rabbah 31:2. [↑](#footnote-ref-476)
477. Psalms 147:20. [↑](#footnote-ref-477)
478. Deuteronomy 4:20. [↑](#footnote-ref-478)
479. Ibid., 32:6. [↑](#footnote-ref-479)
480. **Amos 3:2.** [↑](#footnote-ref-480)
481. Verse 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-481)
482. Leviticus 26:1. There too He first admonished against believing in the idols - ***You will make you no idols***, i.e., to believe in them - and then He warned against the mere making of them. [↑](#footnote-ref-482)
483. Above, Verse 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-483)
484. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-484)
485. Ibid., 19:20. [↑](#footnote-ref-485)
486. Deuteronomy 4:36. [↑](#footnote-ref-486)
487. Ramban's intent, as is evident from the text which follows, is to this effect: The harmonizing of the verses is correct, for so it is stated in the Mechilta, but that which Rashi added: "His Glory was in heaven, etc.," is not precise, as will be explained that the Glory was upon Mount Sinai. [↑](#footnote-ref-487)
488. Mechilta on the verse here. [↑](#footnote-ref-488)
489. This is unlike Rashi, who wrote that "His Glory was in heaven." [↑](#footnote-ref-489)
490. Nehemiah 9: 13. Thus, it is stated that He was in heaven and His Glory was upon Mount Sinai. [↑](#footnote-ref-490)
491. Ex. 19:20. [↑](#footnote-ref-491)
492. Further, 33:21. In harmonizing the above-mentioned conflicting verses, Ibn Ezra also suggests that His Glory came down upon Mount Sinai and the Voice was heard from heaven. This is identical with Ramban's explanation, and Ramban praises him for it. [↑](#footnote-ref-492)
493. Ecclesiastes 10:12. [↑](#footnote-ref-493)
494. Verse 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-494)
495. Verse 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-495)
496. Mechilta on the verse here. [↑](#footnote-ref-496)
497. Verse 22. [↑](#footnote-ref-497)
498. Leviticus 17:5-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-498)
499. Since it is obligatory upon us to build an altar of stone in the Sanctuary, the question arises: Why does the Torah here use the word ***v'im (and if)***? Ramban proceeds to answer this question. [↑](#footnote-ref-499)
500. Further, 24:4. [↑](#footnote-ref-500)
501. Ibid. The sense of the expression, ***'and if' you make Me an altar of stone*** is thus as follows: "Make Me now an altar of earth, and if you will merit it, then you will make Me an altar of stone for the altar of the covenant." See Ibn Ezra here. [↑](#footnote-ref-501)
502. Genesis 49:25. [↑](#footnote-ref-502)
503. Psalms 115:12. [↑](#footnote-ref-503)
504. Literally: "***your sword***." The significance of it is explained further on in the text. [↑](#footnote-ref-504)
505. Deuteronomy 27:6. [↑](#footnote-ref-505)
506. Ibid., Verse 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-506)
507. Judges 3:16. [↑](#footnote-ref-507)
508. Ezekiel 5:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-508)
509. Ibid., 26:9. [↑](#footnote-ref-509)
510. Literally: "Law of the Priests." Generally, it is another name for the Book of Leviticus. [↑](#footnote-ref-510)
511. Mentioned above in Verse 21, that the altars referred to here are those of the Tabernacle and the Sanctuary. Now since these altars were ascended by a ramp connecting them with the ground, this verse, which states that the altar should not be ascended by steps, fits in with the general subject. But if it is as Ibn Ezra wrote, (mentioned here in the text above, Verse 22), that the altar of stone referred to here was the altar of the covenant made at Mount Sinai the present verse does not fit in here because that altar had no ramp. [↑](#footnote-ref-511)
512. Mechilta on the verse here. [↑](#footnote-ref-512)
513. Guide of the Perplexed, III, 45. [↑](#footnote-ref-513)
514. **Thus by prohibiting the building of an altar with stones which have been touched by iron, the Torah gave us an extraordinary precaution to guard against idolatry.** [↑](#footnote-ref-514)
515. Malachi 1:3. [↑](#footnote-ref-515)
516. Genesis 27:40. [↑](#footnote-ref-516)
517. Further, 27:19. [↑](#footnote-ref-517)
518. Literally: "The Permanent House," a synonym for the Sanctuary in Jerusalem, which cannot be built in any other location. It stands in contrast to the Tabernacle, which could be moved from place to place. [↑](#footnote-ref-518)
519. Yoma 42a. [↑](#footnote-ref-519)
520. Deuteronomy 27:5. [↑](#footnote-ref-520)
521. A worm that pierced stones with its touch. [↑](#footnote-ref-521)
522. Sotah 48b. [↑](#footnote-ref-522)
523. If, as Ibn Ezra suggested, the reason for the commandment is that the chips of the stones should not be on a dunghill while the stones be in the altar of G-d, why then is it permissible if the chiseling is done with a silver tool? The same question applies to Rambam's explanation that the commandment is a precautionary measure against idolatry. [↑](#footnote-ref-523)
524. I Kings 6:7. [↑](#footnote-ref-524)
525. Mechilta on the verse here. [↑](#footnote-ref-525)
526. I Kings 6:7. [↑](#footnote-ref-526)
527. Ibid., Verse 3l. [↑](#footnote-ref-527)
528. Ibid., Verse 3l. [↑](#footnote-ref-528)
529. I Kings 6:7. [↑](#footnote-ref-529)
530. Chullin 18a. [↑](#footnote-ref-530)
531. It was built of whole stones '***masa***' (I Kings 6: 7) is generally translated "***at the quarry***." Ramban interprets ***masa*** to mean "***great***," and the sense of the verse is: "it was built of whole large stones." [↑](#footnote-ref-531)
532. Sotah 48b. In our Gemara: Rabbi Nechemyah. [↑](#footnote-ref-532)
533. I Kings 6:31 [↑](#footnote-ref-533)
534. I Kings 6:36. [↑](#footnote-ref-534)
535. I Chronicles 22:14. [↑](#footnote-ref-535)
536. Shmuel Alef (I Samuel) chapter 21 [↑](#footnote-ref-536)
537. Shmuel Alef (I Samuel) 29:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-537)
538. Shmuel Alef (I Samuel) chapter 21 [↑](#footnote-ref-538)
539. Shmuel Alef (I Samuel) 18:8 [↑](#footnote-ref-539)
540. see Shmuel alef (I Samuel) 18:7, 21:12 [↑](#footnote-ref-540)
541. Ibid. 536 [↑](#footnote-ref-541)
542. Tehillim (Psalms) 56:14 [↑](#footnote-ref-542)
543. See also: ***Sotah 10b*** *For the Chief Musician, the silent dove of them that are afar off. Of David, Michtam* (Psalms 56:1) *— R. Johanan said: At the time when her proofs were removed, she became like a silent dove. ‘Of David’, ‘Michtam’ — [that means] there issued from her David who was meek [mach] and perfect [tam] to all.*(Note: *Ruth*, David’s great grandmother was the *dove*) *Another explanation of ‘Michtam’ is: his wound [makkah]*( I.e., the place where there should have been a wound after circumcision.) *was whole [tammah], since he was born already circumcised. Another explanation of ‘Michtam’ is: just as in his youth [before he became king] he made himself small in the presence of anyone greater than himself to study Torah, so was he the same in his greatness.*( After he became king, he humbled himself to study. So he was meek and perfect.) [↑](#footnote-ref-543)
544. Elohim - אלהים [↑](#footnote-ref-544)
545. *The ArtScroll Tanach Series, Tehillim*, A new translation with a commentary anthologized from Talmudic, Midrashic, and rabbinic sources. Commentary by Rabbi Avrohom Chaim Feuer, Translation by Rabbi Avrohom Chaim Feuer in collaboration with Rabbi Nosson Scherman. [↑](#footnote-ref-545)
546. Siddur Sfat Emet, Rabbi Wolf Heidenheim, Rodelheim [↑](#footnote-ref-546)
547. Shoftim (Judges) 5:31. [↑](#footnote-ref-547)
548. Tehillim (Psalms) 68:10. [↑](#footnote-ref-548)
549. The Coming World [↑](#footnote-ref-549)
550. In Asia Minor. [↑](#footnote-ref-550)
551. Yermiyahu (Jeremiah) 33:2 [↑](#footnote-ref-551)
552. Tehillim (Psalms) 56:13. [↑](#footnote-ref-552)
553. The verbal tally between the Torah and the Psalm are:*Day* / *Daily* - יום, Strong’s number 03117. [↑](#footnote-ref-553)
554. e.g. Berachoth 2b [↑](#footnote-ref-554)
555. Soncino books of the Bible, The Psalms, Hebrew text & English translation with an introduction and commentary, by The Rev Dr. A. Cohen, revised by Rabbi E. Oratz, assisted by Rav Shalom Shahar. [↑](#footnote-ref-555)
556. *Igeret Hakodesh*, Chapter 19 [↑](#footnote-ref-556)
557. **σύνετε** from **συνίημι, συνίω** – *suniemi* [↑](#footnote-ref-557)
558. We have cited Amos 9:11-15 based on the principle of pars pro toto. [↑](#footnote-ref-558)
559. Sabin, M. N. (2006), New Collegeville Bible Commentary: The Gospel According to Mark, Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, pp. 65-66. [↑](#footnote-ref-559)
560. Edwards, J. R. (2002), The Pillar New Testament Commentary: The Gospel According to Mark, Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., pp. 211-212. [↑](#footnote-ref-560)
561. Ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-561)
562. Schürer, E. (1890) A History of the Jewish People in the Times of Jesus Christ, (2008 Reprint), Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, Vol. II, pp.476-77 [↑](#footnote-ref-562)
563. We have used the word “break” rather than “destroy” based on cross-linguistic hermeneutics. This principle is based on the fact tha the LXX translated the Hebrew Bible into Greek. The number of possible words used by the translators of the LXX shows us how the Hebrew words were translated into Greek. In the present case we have Hebrew *avar* (H5674) as a parallel. Lexical data from TWOT is as follows, 1556.0 **עֲבַר** (*abar*) **pass over, by, through, alienate, bring, carry, do away, take, take away, transgress.** [↑](#footnote-ref-563)
564. Cf. Isaiah 42:21**.** [↑](#footnote-ref-564)
565. Vine of David. (2011). *The Delitzsch Hebrew Gospels.* Marshfield, MO: Vine of David. Translators Preface XX [↑](#footnote-ref-565)
566. 1 Tsefet (Pe) 2:5 And as living stones built into a spiritual house, a holy (separated) priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to G-d through Yeshua haMashiach [↑](#footnote-ref-566)
567. Yermi’yahu (Jer). 33:11 the voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voice of those who will say: “Praise the LORD of hosts, For the LORD *is* good, For His mercy *endures* forever " (Psa 136) *and* of those *who will* bring the sacrifice of praise into the house of the LORD.” “For I will cause the captives of the land to return as at the first,” says the LORD. [↑](#footnote-ref-567)
568. **Targum to Amos 9:11-15**  At that *time,* I will set up again the *kingdom of the house* of David that has fallen; I will *rebuild their cities"* and set up their *congregations"* anew. *It will rule over all the kingdoms and it will destroy and make an end of the greatness" of armies:" but it will be rebuilt and reestablished* as in the days of old, 12. So that *the house of Israel,*  who are called by my name, **may possess the remnant from Edom and all the nations**, says the Lord. *Behold,* this is what I will do. 13. Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when the ploughman shall meet the reaper, and the *presser'?* of grapes him who *puts out* the seed; and the mountains shall *produce"* sweet wine, and all the hills shall *be tilled,* 14. I will *bring back* the *exiles* of my people Israel. They shall rebuild ruined cities and inhabit them; they will plant vineyards and drink their wine; they will till gardens and eat their fruit. 15. And I will *establish"* them upon their land, nevermore to be *exiled."* from their land which I have given them," says the Lord your God. [↑](#footnote-ref-568)
569. ﻿ Here too the speaker is the Torah. Thus the verse is translated: By means of the beginning, sc. the Torah, God created, etc. [↑](#footnote-ref-569)
570. B’resheet (Gen) 1:3 “Let there be light;” and light was. [↑](#footnote-ref-570)
571. Yesha’yahu (Isa) 46:10 Rashi, **[I] tell the end from the beginning, and from before, what was not done; [I] say, “My counsel shall stand, and all My desire I will do.”**

Targum Pseudo Yonatan, **declaring from the beginning to the end and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, “My counsel will stand, and I will accomplish all my pleasure,”** [↑](#footnote-ref-571)
572. The Hebrew word **שְׁמַע** “Shema” contains the idea of hearing, listening and those thoughts associated with hearing. However, Shema also means to assemble the “heard” information into practical intelligible application. [↑](#footnote-ref-572)
573. Moshe cites the full Oral Tradition before G-d repeats it. Therefore, the B’ne Yisrael heard the same thing written in the Torah and they heard the full explanation of the Oral Tradition. [↑](#footnote-ref-573)
574. Ramban. (2008 ). *The Torah; with Ramban’s Commentary Translated, Annotated, and Elucidated,* (Vol. Sefer Shmot). Artscroll Series, Mesorah Publications ltd. p. 477 [↑](#footnote-ref-574)
575. Some sources refer to Misrash Rabbah 28:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-575)
576. In this case the established “voice” of a Hakham is Moshe Rabbenu [↑](#footnote-ref-576)
577. Cf. Rom 1:16 [↑](#footnote-ref-577)
578. Gaston, L. (1987). *Paul and the Torah.* Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press. p. 26 [↑](#footnote-ref-578)
579. The Heb. is ha-koloth (plural), not ha-kol (singular). [↑](#footnote-ref-579)
580. A poetic way of saying that the Divine truths promulgated at the Revelation were intended for all mankind, and were not to be the prerogative of Israel. [↑](#footnote-ref-580)
581. A vivid metaphor describing their fear (Y.T.). [↑](#footnote-ref-581)
582. For on the contrary this Revelation was their charter of life. [↑](#footnote-ref-582)
583. Neusner, J. (2001). *Recovering Judaism, The Universal Dimension of Judaism.* Fortress Press. p.35 [↑](#footnote-ref-583)
584. See footnote of the Ramban above Shmot (Exo.) 20.2, see also the Kaplan, A. (1979). *The Bahir, Illumination.* (A. Kaplan, Trans.) Boston, MA: Weiser Books. p. 16-18, fn#28 [↑](#footnote-ref-584)
585. b. B.M. 59b [↑](#footnote-ref-585)
586. Cf. Eph. 2:12 [↑](#footnote-ref-586)
587. The usual translation “made in the flesh by hands” seems to imply certain negativity. The translation “what **Royal men do to their bodies**” shows spiritual conduct. The allegorical meaning is that “circumcision” is a picture of control over the appetites of the “flesh.” This allegorical phrase also refers to the control of the sexual appetite bringing the sexual union into spiritual connection with G-d. “Circumcision” is also an allegorical phrase with the intended meaning of being “Torah Observant.” This allegorical thought shows that the Torah is the “*modus operandi*” for controlling the Yetser HaRa, the “evil inclination.” Therefore, we should not look at “circumcision” as a negative statement. Furthermore, we should now understand that circumcision is indicative of full conversion to Judaism, not some convoluted version of Christianity. Consequently the notion of “uncircumcision” means those who do not have a covenantal relationship with G-d and secondly, those who have not turned to the Torah as a means of controlling the “flesh”/Yetser HaRa. [↑](#footnote-ref-587)
588. It is noteworthy to mention that the “alien” mind is in direct opposition against the Torah, as a way of life. Therefore, it is the mission of two-thirds of the shedim / fallen angels. Therefore, the darkened mind refers to those Gentiles who are either simply ignorant of the Torah as a way of life. And, those who are vehemently opposed to it because of their “**unyielding obstinacy of mind.**” To be “alien” is to be morally bereft of all sensible mores. The depth of this statement is only understood from a Hebraic mindset. To be **כָּרַת** “cut off” means completely estranged from G-d’s presence and protection. Those who were “cut off” while traveling through the wilderness were subjected to every evil influence, without G-d’s protection or chesed/grace. Therefore, this is a crime of excommunication by Divine Decree. cf. Eph. 4:18 below [↑](#footnote-ref-588)
589. cf. Strong’s G4174 #1 (TDNT 6:516) [↑](#footnote-ref-589)
590. ξένοι from ξένος means a stranger who is permitted within the country but has not rights except what he might have agreed to as a treaty, per se. Here we see that idea of the Ger HaSha’ar (Stranger of the Gate). It would appear that the School of Shammai allowed the Gentiles to become “strangers of the gate” but would not allow the Gentile full conversion. Yeshua, a representative from the House of Hillel rescinded these dogmas allowing the Gentile the ability to become a full proselyte. [↑](#footnote-ref-590)
591. Many christian author stumble over this phrase trying to understand the plurality of “covenants.” They fail to realize that the “covenants” are plural because the Covenant is ever changing. While they have been established on firm foundations we must realize that G-d has repeatedly updated the covenant on many occasions. However, the Gentile was never able to join in the benefits of the covenant/s because he was estranged from G-d “ἄθεοι” and subordinate to the worldly system. [↑](#footnote-ref-591)
592. Esau/Edom/Rome sold his birthright in 2123 at the age of 15 years old. The sale of his birthright occurred when Yitzach was 75 years of age. The blessing of his sons occurred at the age of 123. This left Esau with 48 years to reflect and repent. [↑](#footnote-ref-592)
593. Gen Rabbah 80 [↑](#footnote-ref-593)
594. b. Shab. 17a [↑](#footnote-ref-594)
595. The middle wall is not the Soreg of the Temple. This “wall of partition” is the dogma of Shammai separating the Jewish people from the Gentile as noted above. The “Soreg” is a wall in the Temple courtyard, which marked the boundaries of the Court of the Gentiles. This is NOT Hakham Shaul’s reference. This breaking down of the “middle wall” is a reference to the Messianic title “Peretz.” The word ***paretz***, wherever used, signifies the breaching of a fence and passing through, just as: *I will break down* ***('p'rotz')*** *the fence ‎thereof*; (Isaiah 5:5) *Why have You broken down* ***('paratzta')*** *her fences*? (Psalms 80:13) And in the language of the Rabbis: ***“Pirtzah*** (a breach in a wall) calls ‎forth to the thief.” (Sotah 26a) Indeed, the Sacred Language (Hebrew is called “the sacred” language.) uses the term ***p'rotz*** when referring to anything that oversteps its boundary: *And you ‎will break forth* ***('upharatzta')*** *to the west, and to the east;* *And the man broke forth* **(‘vayiphrotz ')** *exceedingly*. [↑](#footnote-ref-595)
596. These δόγμασιν are a reference to the eighteen edicts (middot) of Shammai which separated the Jewish people from the Gentiles by deeming the Gentile “unclean.” cf. Acts 10:28. See Falk, H. (2003). *Jesus the Pharisee, A new Look at the Jewishness of Jesus.* Wipf and Stock Publishers. [↑](#footnote-ref-596)
597. The “New Body” is a conjoining of Jews and Gentiles who have converted to Judaism under the authority of Yeshua HaMashiach. [↑](#footnote-ref-597)
598. We have used the word “do away with” rather than “destroy” based on cross-linguistic hermeneutics. This principle is based on the fact tha the LXX translated the Hebrew Bible into Greek. The number of possible words used by the translators of the LXX shows us how the Hebrew words were translated into Greek. In the present case we have Hebrew *avar* (H5674) as a parallel. Lexical data from TWOT is as follows, 1556.0 **עֲבַר** (*abar*) **pass over, by, through, alienate, bring, carry, do away, take, take away, transgress.** [↑](#footnote-ref-598)
599. Cf. Isaiah 42:21. [↑](#footnote-ref-599)
600. Vine of David. (2011). *The Delitzsch Hebrew Gospels.* Marshfield, MO: Vine of David. Translators Preface XX [↑](#footnote-ref-600)