



ROSH HASHANAH
Study Texts
5773

prepared by
Rabbi Jan R. Uhrbach

www.synagoguehamptons.org
csh1800@aol.com
631-725-8188

P.O. Box 1800
East Hampton, NY 11937

Zohar I, 1a, Prologue

רבי חזקיה פתח.
כתיב (שיר השירים ב ב) כשושנה בין החוחים.
מאן שושנה.
דא כנסת ישראל.
מה שושנה דאיהי בין החוחים אית בה סומק וחור.
אוף כנסת ישראל אית בה דין ורחמי.
מה שושנה אית בה תליסר עלין.
אוף כנסת ישראל אית בה תליסר מכילן דרחמי
דסחרין לה מכל סטרהא

Rabbi Hizkiah began by quoting:
“*As a lily among thorns*” (Song of Songs 2:2).

Who is the lily?
It is the Community of Israel.

Just as the lily, which is among thorns,
contains both red and white,
so the Community of Israel contains both Justice and Mercy.

Just as the lily has thirteen leaves,
so the Community of Israel has thirteen attributes of mercy
which encompass it on every side.

שֵׁשׁ עֶשְׂרֵה מִדּוֹת -- 13 ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

EXODUS 34:6-7

Then Adonai passed before him, and called:

Adonai Adonai

God

Compassionate and Gracious

Slow to Anger

Great in Lovingkindness and Truth

Extending Lovingkindness for Thousands

Forgiving Iniquity and Transgression and Sin

and Exonerating not exonerating;

visiting the iniquity of the fathers

upon the children,

and upon the children's children,

to the third and to the fourth generation.

וַיַּעֲבֹר ה' | עַל־פְּנֵי וַיִּקְרָא

ה' | ה'

אֱלֹ

רַחוּם וְחַנּוּן

אֶרֶךְ אַפַּיִם

וְרַב־חֶסֶד וְאֱמֶת:

נֹזֵר חֶסֶד לְאַלְפִים

נִשְׂא עוֹן וְפָשַׁע וְחַטָּאָה

וְנִקָּה לֹא יִנָּקֶה

פֶּקֶד | עוֹן אֲבוֹת

עַל־בָּנִים

וְעַל־בְּנֵי בָנִים

עַל־שְׁלֹשִׁים וְעַל־רְבַּעִים:

Vaya'vor Adonai al panav, vayikra:

Adonai Adonai El rahum v'hanun

erekh apayim v'rav hesed v'emet,

notzer hesed la'alafim

nosei avon vafesha v'hata'ah v'nakeh . . .

from the Babylonian Talmud, Rosh Hashanah 17b

“Adonai passed by before him and proclaimed” (Exod. 34:6). Rabbi Yohanan said: Were it not written in the text, it would be impossible for us to say such a thing! This teaches that the Holy Blessed One drew enwrapped God's self like a prayer leader (*sh'liah tzibbur*) and showed Moses the order of prayer. [God] said to him: “Whenever Israel sin, let them perform before Me this service, and I will forgive them.”

“God compassionate and gracious” (Exod. 34:6). Rav Yehudah said: A covenant has been made with the thirteen attributes that they will not be turned away empty-handed, as it says, “Behold I make a covenant” (Exod. 34:10).

ויעבר ה' על פניו ויקרא, אמר רבי יוחנן: אלמלא מקרא כתוב אי אפשר לאומרן, מלמד שנתעטף הקדוש ברוך הוא כשליח צבור, והראה לו למשה סדר תפלה. אמר לו: כל זמן שישראל חוטאין - יעשו לפני כסדר הזה, ואני מוחל להם.

אל רחום וחנון, אמר רב יהודה: ברית כרותה לשלש עשרה מדות שאינן חוזרות ריקם, שנאמר (שמות לד) הנה אנכי כרת ברית.

מה המקום . . . אף אתה JUST AS GOD . . . SO TOO YOU . . .

ללכת בכל דרכיו. אלו דרכי הקב"ה שנ' (שמות לד) ה' ה' אל רחום וחנוך ארץ אפים ורב חסד ואמת נוצר חסד לאלפי נושא עון ופשע וחטאה ונקה. ואו' (יואל ג) כל אשר-יקרא בשם ה' ימלט. וכי היאך אפש' לו לאדם לקרא בשמו של הקב"ה אלא מה המקום נקרא רחום וחנוך אף אתה הוי רחום וחנוך ועשה מתנת חנם לכל. מה הקב"ה נקרא צדיק שנ' (תהלים קמה) צדיק ה' בכל דרכיו וחסיד בכל מעשיו אף אתה הוי צדיק. הקב"ה נקרא חסיד שנאמ' וחסיד בכל מעשיו אף אתה הוי חסיד.

"To walk in all [God's] ways" (Deut. 28:9). These are the ways of the Holy Blessed One, as it says, "Adonai, Adonai, God, compassionate and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in lovingkindness and truth, extending lovingkindness for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and exonerating" (Exod. 34:6). And it says, "All who call upon the name Adonai shall be saved" (Joel 3:5).

And how is possible for a human being to call with the name of the Holy Blessed One? Rather, just as God is called "compassionate and gracious" so you too be compassionate and gracious, and give freely to all. As the Holy Blessed One is called Righteous, as it says, (Psalm 145), "God is righteous (*tzaddik*) in all [God's] ways, and loving (*hasid*) in all [God's] deeds," so you too be righteous. As the Holy Blessed One is called Loving . . . so you too be loving.

(*Sifrei*, Ekev, Piska 13)

"Whenever Israel sins, let them perform this service before Me and I shall forgive them" (Rosh Hashanah 17b).

Rabbi Moses Alshekh [16th century] wrote in the name of the author of *Livnat HaSappir*:

"It was not said, 'Let them say this service before Me', for forgiveness does not depend on words alone, but on performance as well. If a person makes his/her qualities resemble the qualities of the Holy Blessed One, his/her iniquities are forgiven.

(Etz Yosef on En Yaakov, quoted in S.Y. Agnon, *Days of Awe*, p. 146)

עד כאן הגיעו שלש עשרה מדות, שבהן יהיה האדם דומה אל קונו, שהן מדות של רחמים עליונות. וסגולתן: כמו שיהיה האדם מתנהג למטה כך יזכה לפתוח לו מדה עליונה מלמעלה, ממש כפי מה שיתנהג כך משפיע מלמעלה, וגורם שאותה המדה תאיר בעולם: ולכך אל ילזו מעיני השכל שלש עשרה מדות אלו והפסוק לא יסוף מפיו, כדי שיהיה לו למזכרת. כאשר יבוא לו מעשה שיצטרך להשתמש במדה אחת מהן, יזכור ויאמר: "הרי דבר זה תלוי במדה פלונית, איני רוצה לזוז ממנה, שלא תתעלם ותסתלק המדה ההיא מן העולם":

These are the Thirteen Attributes (*midot*), through which a person should emulate one's Creator, for they are the Supernal Attributes of Compassion. And their special property is this: just as a person conducts one's self here below, so will he/she be worthy of opening up the channel of the same Supernal Attribute from above. Exactly according to a person's behavior will the outflow of compassion be bestowed from Above, and he/she will cause this attribute to shine in the world.

For this reason, one should never ignore these Thirteen Attributes or allow these verses to depart from one's mouth. Rather, they should be a constant reminder to a person. Whenever the occasion for making use of one of these attributes arises, one should remember and say, "This matter requires this particular attribute. I will not budge from it, lest this attribute become concealed or disappear from the world."

(Moshe Cordovero, *Tomer Devorah*, Chapter 1, pp. 44-46)

אל רחום וחנון EL RAHUM V'HANUN

GOD COMPASSIONATE AND GRACIOUS

Exod. 33:19

וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנִי אֶעֱבִיר כָּל־טוֹבֵי עַל־פְּנֶיךָ
וְקָרָאתִי בְּשֵׁם ה' לְפָנֶיךָ
וְחַנְּתִי אֶת־אֲשֶׁר אָחֹז
וְרַחֲמֹתַי אֶת־אֲשֶׁר אֲרַחֵם:

Then [God] said, "I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name Adonai before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion to whom I will show compassion."

Exod. 34:6

וַיַּעֲבֹר ה' | עַל־פְּנָיו וַיִּקְרָא
ה' | ה' אֵל רַחוּם וְחַנּוּן . . .

Adonai passed by before him, and called,
Adonai, Adonai, God, compassionate and gracious .

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch on Exod 33:19

חנון (*hanen*): Literally to bestow, to endow with powers, abilities, and means, is the first in time, the earliest of the relations of God to a creature. To it, it owes its existence; fundamentally, חנון (*hanen*) is "to allow to be", to grant a future to a creature.

And רחמים (*rahamim*) is the second -- henceforth never to be lost -- that accompanies the creature which has come into existence through God's חנינה (*haninah*), throughout all the phases of its existence, that never gives it up, just because it was the source of its existence, because it had been the *rehem*, the "womb" of its existence, and therefore remains the "protecting and maintaining womb" for its whole existence.

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch on Exod 34:6

[God's goodness manifests as] *Rahum*, Who never forsakes any creature which has been equipped by [God] with energy and movement, surrounds it with loving maintaining care, *because* it is [God's] work, the child of God's creative love (*rehem*, the mother's womb); or as *Hanun*, never becoming tired of granting anew the energy and powers which had been used up or trifled away, and of increasing and enriching by fresh gifts those powers which had already been granted and which had been truly used . . .

Certain times, we are told, are "times of favor" (*eit ratzon*) before God. These include the month of Elul, the time of the third Shabbat meal, and others. We are told this even though we know that time itself does not apply to God!

The truth is that these are times of favor for humans, moments in which we are more able to draw near and attach ourselves to God with the inward desire of our hearts. God is filled with favor, but we must deserve to come close to God.

"As the face in the water is to the face" (Prov. 27:19) -- as a person has compassion on him/her self, seeing that he or she contains a holy point of godliness, while yet formed of matter, so too is great compassion for him/her aroused in Heaven.

(Sfat Emet on Shoftim (5:68), tr. by Arthur Green, in *Language of Truth*)

נִצֵּר חֶסֶד לְאַלְפִים . . . פִּקֵּד | עֵוֹן אָבוֹת
KEEPING LOVINGKINDNESS FOR THOUSANDS
. . . VISITING THE SINS OF THE FATHERS
NOZTER HESED LA'ALAFIM . . . POKEID AVON AVOT

from the Babylonian Talmud, Makkot 24a

אמר ר' יוסי בר חנינא: ארבע גזירות גזר משה רבינו על ישראל, באו ארבעה נביאים וביטלום. . . משה אמר: (שמות ל"ד) פוקד עון אבות על בנים, בא יחזקאל וביטלה: (יחזקאל י"ח) הנפש החוטאת היא תמות.
Said Rabbi Yose ben Hanina: Our Master Moses pronounced four [adverse] sentences on Israel, but four prophets came and revoked them. . . . Moses had said. . . “visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and upon the children's children, to the third and unto the fourth generation.” Ezekiel came and declared, “[When the son has done that which is lawful and right, and has kept all my statutes, and has done them, he shall surely live.] The soul that sins, shall die. [The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.]” (Ezek. 18:19-20)

Tosefta Sotah beginning of Perak 4

מנין אמרת מרובה מדת הטוב ממדת [הפורענות] על אחת מחמש מאות במדת [הפורענות כתוב] (שמות לד) עון אבות על בנים ועל בני בנים על שלשים ועל רבעים במדת הטוב [כתוב] (שם) ועושה חסד לאלפים הוי אומר מרובה מדת הטוב ממדת [פורענות על אחד] מחמש מאות
From where do we say that the attribute of goodness exceeds the attribute of judgment by more than five hundred times? Of the attribute of judgment it is written “visiting the sins of the father on the children to the third and fourth generations.” Of the attribute of goodness it is written, “and dealing lovingly to the two-thousandth generation.” Thus one says that the attribute of goodness exceeds the attribute of judgment by a multiple of five hundred.

Samson Raphael Hirsch on Exod. 34:7

[God's goodness manifests as] *Notzer hesed la'alafim*, Who does not restrict the love God gives to God's beloved ones to themselves . . . but grants them the highest of all blessings, that all blessings become a seed of happiness working on a thousandfold in time and eternity. . . . [S]o that the effect of any person's fate, or that of any nation, is not merely for his/her own individual self and for the duration of his/her own lifetimes, but is felt by all his contemporaries as well as by the whole future . . .

The view of just this particular ‘way’ of God's dealing, connecting the fleeting moment of a man's life and work with this endlessness of its effect, . . . is designed to teach us diffidence in the narrow view with which we are inclined to judge the ways of God according to just what we see happening at any given time. . . .

Notzer from *netzer*, the bud, which closes up the blossom and the fruit seed within itself, to protect and mature it. . . . So that *notzer hesed* can mean (a) God allows the good that a person does to become ‘buds of blessings’ for all his/her descendents . . . or (b) God allows God's greatest love which a good person has won to become a ‘bud’ for his/her descendants . . . Actually both come to the same thing.