



## **Con/Text: “The Citizen in a Democracy”**

**Masua Sagiv**

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1. Leviticus Rabbah 4:6

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**SHALOM HARTMAN מכון  
INSTITUTE שלום הרטמן**

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1. Leviticus Rabbah 4:6

תָּנִי חֲזָקָה (ירמיה נ, יז) : שֶׁהַ פְּזוּרָה יִשְׂרָאֵל, נִמְשָׁלוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל לְשָׂה, מֵהַ שֶׁהַ הִזָּה לֹקֵה עַל רֵאשׁוֹ אוֹ בְּאֶחָד מֵאַבְרָיו וְכָל אַבְרָיו מִרְגִישִׁין, כִּדְ הוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל, אֶחָד מֵהוּ חוּטֵא וְכָל מִרְגִישִׁין, (במדבר טז, כב) : הָאִישׁ אֶחָד יַחֲטֵא, תָּנִי רַבִּי שְׁמַעוֹן בְּרַ יוֹחָאִי, מִשָּׁל לְבַנְי אָדָם שֶׁהָיוּ יוֹשְׁבֵין בְּסַפִּינָה נִטַל אֶחָד מֵהוּ מִקִּדְמָה וְהִתְחִיל קוֹדֵם תַּחְתָּיו, אָמְרוּ לוֹ חֲבָרִיו מֵהַ אֶתְהַ יוֹשֵׁב וְעוֹשֶׂה, אָמַר לָהֶם מָה אַכְפֹּת לָכֶם לֹא תַחְתָּי אֲנִי קוֹדֵם, אָמְרוּ לוֹ שֶׁהַמִּים עוֹלִין וּמְצִיפִין עָלֵינוּ אֶת הַסַּפִּינָה. כִּדְ אָמַר אִיּוֹב (איוב יט, ד) : וְאִף אֲמַנֶם שְׁגִיתִי אֶתִּי תָלִין מְשׁוּגָתִי, אָמְרוּ לוֹ חֲבָרִיו (איוב לד, לז) : כִּי יִסִּיף עַל חֲטָאתוֹ פֶּשַׁע בִּינִינוּ יִשְׁפּוֹק, אֶתְהַ מִסַּפִּיק בִּינִינוּ אֶת עוֹנוֹתֶיךָ. אָמַר רַבִּי אֶלְעָשָׂא גוֹי אֶחָד שָׁאֵל אֶת רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן קַרְחָה, כְּתִיב בְּתוֹרַתְכֶם (שמות כג, ב) : אַחֲרֵי רַבִּים לְהִטֹּת, אֲנִי מִרַבִּים מִכֶּם מִפְּנֵי מָה אֵין אֲתֶם מְשׁוּין עִמָּנוּ בְּעַבְדָּה זָרָה. אָמַר לוֹ, יֵשׁ לָךְ בָּנִים, אָמַר לוֹ הִזְפֵּרְתִּי צָרְתִּי, אָמַר לוֹ לָמָּה, אָמַר לוֹ הִרְבָּה בָּנִים יֵשׁ לִי, בְּשַׁעַה שֶׁהוּ יוֹשְׁבִין עַל שְׁלַחְנֵי זֶה מִבְּרַךְ לְאֱלוֹהֵי פְלוֹנִי וְזֶה מִבְּרַךְ לְאֱלוֹהֵי פְלוֹנִי, וְאֵינֶם עוֹמְדִים מִשֵּׁם עַד שְׁמִפְצָעִין אֶת מַחֵן אֱלוֹ אֶת אֱלוֹ. אָמַר לוֹ וּמִשְׁוֹה אֶתְהַ עִמָּהוּ, אָמַר לוֹ, לֹא. אָמַר לוֹ, עַד שֶׁאֶתְהַ מִשְׁוֹה אוֹתָנוּ, לָךְ הַשְׁוֹה אֶת בְּנִיךָ, נִדְחָף וְהִלָּךְ לוֹ. כִּינֹן שֶׁיִּצְאָ אָמְרוּ לוֹ תַלְמִידֵיו, רַבִּי, לָזֶה דְחִיתָ בְּקִנְיָה רְצוּץ, לָנוּ מָה אֶתְהַ מְשִׁיב, אָמַר לָהֶם בְּעֵשׂוֹ כְּתִיב בֵּיהַ שֵׁשׁ נִפְשׁוֹת וְכְתִיב בּוֹ נִפְשׁוֹת הִרְבָּה, דְּכְתִיב (בראשית לו, ו) : וַיִּקַּח עֵשׂוֹ אֶת נַשְׁוֹ וְאֶת בְּנָיו וְאֶת בְּנֹתָיו וְאֶת כָּל נִפְשׁוֹת בֵּיתוֹ, וַיִּבְעֲקֹב שְׁבַעִים נִפְשׁ וְכְתִיב בֵּיהַ נִפְשׁ אַחַת, דְּכְתִיב (שמות א, ה) : וַיְהִי כָל נִפְשׁ יִצְאֵי יִרְדְּ יַעֲקֹב שְׁבַעִים נִפְשׁ, אֶלָּא עֵשׂוֹ שֶׁהוּא עוֹבֵד לְאֱלֹהוֹת הִרְבָּה כְּתִיב בֵּיהַ נִפְשׁוֹת הִרְבָּה, אֲבָל יַעֲקֹב שֶׁהוּא עוֹבֵד לְאֱלוֹהֵ אֶחָד כְּתִיב בּוֹ נִפְשׁ אַחַת, וַיְהִי כָל נִפְשׁ וּגוֹ.

Hezekiah taught: It is said, *Israel is a scattered sheep* (Jer. L, 17). Why are Israel likened to a sheep? Just as with a lamb, when it is hurt on the head or on any other limb, all its limbs feel it, even so is it with Israel: if [only one] of them sins, all of them feel it. It is said, *Shall one man sin, and will You be angry with all the congregation?* (Num. XVI, 22). R. Simeon b. Yohai taught: This may be compared to the case of men on a ship, one of whom took a borer and began boring beneath his own place. His fellow travellers said to him: "What are you doing?" Said he to them: "What does that matter to you, am I not boring under my own place?" Said they: "Because the water will come up and flood the ship for us all." Even so did Job say, *And be it indeed that I have erred, mine error remains with myself* (Job XIX, 4), and his friends said, *He adds transgression unto his sin, he extends it among us.* [They said to him:] "You extend your sins among us." R. El'asa said: A certain heathen asked R. Joshua b. Karha: "In your Law it is written, It is proper to incline after the many (Ex. XXXIII, 2). We are more numerous than you, why then do you not become like us in respect of idolatry?" Said R. Joshua b. Karha to him: "Have you children?" "You have reminded me of my trouble," said the Gentile. "Why?" asked the former. "I have many children. When they sit at my table, one blasphemes the god of the other, and they do not rise from the table before they have cracked each other's skulls." Said he to him: "And do you bring about agreement among your children?" "No," answered the other.

“Well then,” said he, “before you make us agree with you, go and bring about agreement among your children.” Being thus rebuffed he [the heathen] went away. After he had gone, his [i.e. R. Joshua b. Karha's] disciples said to him: “Rabbi, him you pushed away with a broken reed; but what answer do you give us?” Said he to them: “In the case of Esau six souls are mentioned by Scripture, and yet the word used of them in Scripture is ‘souls,’ in the plural, as it is written, *And Esau took his wives, and his sons, and his daughters, and all the souls of his house*, etc. (Gen. XXXVI, 4). Of Jacob, on the other hand, there were seventy souls, and yet the word used of them in Scripture is ‘soul,’ as it is written, *And all the nefesh [sing., soul] that came out of the loins of Jacob*, etc. (Ex. I, 5). The reason is that in the case of Esau who worshipped many deities the word used by Scripture is ‘souls’ in the plural, but in the case of Jacob who worshipped one God, the word used by Scripture is ‘soul,’ in the singular, [viz.] ‘*And all the nefesh [soul, sing.], etc.*’”

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