



SHALOM HARTMAN מכון
INSTITUTE הרטמן שלום

A God Just Like Us

Sources for Identity/Crisis, Conversation between Yehuda Kurtzer and Benay Lappe

1. Babylonian Talmud Hagigah 5b

”וְאִם לֹא תִשְׁמְעוּהָ בְּמִסְתָּרִים תִּבְכֶּה נִפְשִׁי מִפְּנֵי גְּוָהּ”, אָמַר רַב שְׁמוּאֵל בְּרַ אֲיִנְיָא מִשְׁמִייה דְרַב: מְקוּם יֵשׁ לוֹ לְהַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא וּמִסְתָּרִים שְׁמוֹ. מֵאִי ”מִפְּנֵי גְּוָהּ”? אָמַר רַב שְׁמוּאֵל בְּרַ יִצְחָק: מִפְּנֵי גְּאוּוֹתָן שֶׁל יִשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁנִּיטְלָה מֵהֶם וְנִתְּנָה לְגוֹיִם. רַבִּי שְׁמוּאֵל בְּרַ נַחֲמָנִי אָמַר: מִפְּנֵי גְּאוּוֹתָהּ שֶׁל מַלְכוּת שְׁמַיִם. וּמִי אֵיכָא בְּכִיָּה קַמִּיָּה הַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא? וְהָאֵמַר רַב פָּפָא: אֵין עֲצִיבוּת לְפָנֵי הַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, שְׁנַאֲמַר: ”הוֹד וְהִדָּר לְפָנָיו עוֹז וְחִדּוּהָ בְּמִקְוָמוֹ!” לֹא קִשְׂיָא: הָא בְּבִתֵּי גְּוָאֵי, הָא בְּבִתֵּי בְּרָאֵי...

The verse states: “But if you will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret [*bemistarim*] for your pride” (Jeremiah 13:17). Rav Shmuel bar Inya said in the name of Rav: The Holy One, Blessed be He, has a place where He cries, and its name is Mistarim. What is the meaning of “for your pride”? Rav Shmuel bar Yitzhak said: God cries due to the pride of the Jewish people, which was taken from them and given to the gentile nations. Rav Shmuel bar Nahmani said: He cries due to the pride of the kingdom of Heaven, which was removed from the world. But is there crying before the Holy One, Blessed be He? Didn’t Rav Pappa say: There is no sadness before the Holy One, Blessed be He, as it is stated: “Honor and majesty are before Him; strength and gladness are in His place” (I Chronicles 16:27)? This is not difficult. This statement, that God cries, is referring to the innermost chambers, where He can cry in secret, whereas this statement, that He does not cry, is referring to the outer chambers...

תִּנּוּ רַבָּנָן, שְׁלֹשָׁה הַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא בּוֹכָה עֲלֵיהֶן בְּכָל יוֹם: עַל שְׂאֵפְשָׁר לְעִסוֹק בִּתְוֹרָה וְאִינוּ עוֹסְקִים, וְעַל שְׂאֵי אֶפְשָׁר לְעִסוֹק בִּתְוֹרָה וְעוֹסְקִים, וְעַל פְּרָגְסֵי הַמִּתְגָּאָה עַל הַצְּבוּר.

The Sages taught that there are three types of people for whom the Holy One, Blessed be He, cries every day: For one who is able to engage in Torah study and does not engage in it; and for one who is unable to engage in Torah study and nevertheless he endeavors and engages in it; and for a leader who lords over the community.

2. Babylonian Talmud Berakhot 7a

אמר רבי יוחנן משום רבי יוסי: מנין שהקדוש ברוך הוא מתפלל? שנאמר: "והביאותים אל הר קדשי ושמותים בבית תפלתי", "תפלתם" לא נאמר, אלא "תפלתתי", מכאן שהקדוש ברוך הוא מתפלל. מאי מצלי? אמר רב זוטרא בר טוביה, אמר רב: "יהי רצון מלפני שיקבשו רחמי את פעסי, ויגולו רחמי על מדותי, ואתנהג עם בני במדת רחמים, ואכנס להם לפני משורת הדין".

R. Yohanan said in the name of R. Yosi: From where do we know that the Holy Blessed One prays? As it says, "I will bring them to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in the house of My prayer" (Isaiah 56:7). The verse does not say the house of their prayer, but rather, "the house of My prayer"; from here we see that the Holy Blessed One prays. What does God pray? R. Zutra b. Tuvia said in the name of Rav: May it be my will that my compassion conquers my anger and prevails over my other attributes, and that I behave with my children with the attribute of compassion, and that I refrain from enforcing the full letter of the law with them.

תנא, אמר רבי ישמעאל בן אלישע: פעם אחת, נכנסתי להקטיר קטורת לפני ולפנים, וראיתי אכתיריאל יה' ה' צבאות, שהוא יושב על כסא רם ונשא, ואמר לי: "ישמעאל בני, ברכני!" אמרתי לו: "יהי רצון מלפניך, שיקבשו רחמיך את פעסך, ויגולו רחמיך על מדותיך, ותתנהג עם בני במדת הרחמים, ותכנס להם לפני משורת הדין". ונענע לי בראשו. וקמשמע לו, שלא תהא ברכת הדיוט קלה בעיניך.

It is taught in a baraita: R. Yishmael ben Elisha said, "Once I entered to offer incense in the innermost sanctum, and I saw Acatriel Yah Adonai of Hosts, who was seated on a mighty and exalted throne. And he said to me, 'Yishmael, my son, bless me.' I said to him, 'May it be your will that your compassion conquers your anger and prevails over your other attributes, and that you behave with your children with the attribute of compassion, and that you refrain from enforcing the full letter of the law with them.' And he nodded to me with his head." And this teaches us that you should not take the prayer of a layperson lightly.

3. Babylonian Talmud Berakhot 6a-6b

אמר רבי אבין בר רב אדא, אמר רבי יצחק: מנין שהקדוש ברוך הוא מניח תפילין שנאמר: "נשבע ה' בימינו ובזרוע עזו". "בימינו" — זו תורה, שנאמר: "מימינו אש דת למו", "ובזרוע עזו" — אלו תפילין, שנאמר: "ה' עז לעמו יתן"...

Rabbi Avin bar Rav Adda said that Rabbi Yitzhak said: From where is it derived that the Holy One, Blessed be He, wears phylacteries? As it is stated: "The Lord has sworn by His right hand, and by the arm of His strength" (Isaiah 62:8)—his right hand and the arm of His strength are the holy objects upon which God swore. Specifically, "His right hand" refers to the Torah, as it is stated: "From His right hand, a fiery law for His people" (Deuteronomy 33:2). "The arm of His strength," His left hand, refers to phylacteries, as it is stated: "The Lord gave strength to His nation" (Psalms 29:11)...

אמר ליה רב נחמן בר יצחק לרב חייה בר אבין: הני תפילין דמרי עלמא מה כתיב בהו? אמר ליה "ומי כעמך ישראל גוי אחד בארץ". ומי משתבח קודשא בריך הוא בשבחיהו דישׂראל? אין, דכתיב: "את ה' האמרת היום". וכתיב: "וה' האמירך היום", אמר להם הקדוש ברוך הוא לישראל: אתם עשיתוני חטיבה אחת בעולם, ואני אעשה אתכם חטיבה אחת בעולם. אתם עשיתוני חטיבה אחת בעולם, שנאמר: "שמע ישראל ה' אלהינו ה' אחד", ואני אעשה אתכם חטיבה אחת בעולם, שנאמר "ומי כעמך ישראל גוי אחד בארץ".

Rav Nahman bar Yitzhak said to Rav Hiyva bar Avin: What is written in the phylacteries of the Master of the world? He replied: It is written: "Who is like Your people, Israel, one nation in the land?" (I Chronicles 17:21). Rav Nahman bar Yitzhak continues: Is the Holy One, Blessed be He, glorified through the glory of Israel? Rav Hiyva bar Avin answered: Yes, as it is stated: "You have affirmed, this day, that the Lord is your God." And the subsequent verse states: "And the Lord has affirmed, this day, that you are His treasure, as He spoke to you, to keep His commandments" (Deuteronomy 26:17–18). From these two verses it is derived that the Holy One, Blessed be He, said to Israel: You have made Me a single entity [*hativa*] in the world, as you singled Me out as separate and unique. And because of this, I will make you a single entity in the world. You have made Me a single entity in the world, as it is stated that Israel declares God's oneness by saying: "Hear, Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One" (Deuteronomy 6:4). And because of this, I will make you a single entity in the world, unique and elevated with the utterance: "Who is like Your people, Israel, one nation in the land?"