

Days of Fear: Happy Is One Who is Fearful Always

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I. Fear That Holds Us Back

1. Genesis 8:15-18

God spoke to Noah, saying, "Come out of the ark, together with your wife, your sons, and your sons' wives. Bring out with you every living thing of all flesh that is with you: birds, animals, and everything that creeps on earth; and let them swarm on the earth and be fertile and increase on earth." So Noah came out, together with his sons, his wife, and his sons' wives.

טו וַיְדַבֵּר אֱלֹהִים, אֶל-נֹחַ לֵאמֹר. טז צֵא, מְן-הַתֵּבָה--אַתָּה, וְאִשְׁתְּך וּבָנֶיךְ וּנְשֵׁי-בָנֶיךְ אִתָּך. יז כָּל-הַחַיָּה אֲשֶׁר-אִתְּךְ מִכָּל-בָּשָׂר, בָּעוֹף וּבַבְּהֵמָה וּבְכָל-הָרֶמֶשׁ הָרֹמֵשׁ עַל-הָאָרֶץ--הוצא (הַיְצֵא) אִתָּךְ; וְשָׁרְצוּ בָאָרֶץ, וּפָרוּ וְרָבוּ עַל-הָאָרֶץ. יח וַיֵּצֵא-נֹחַ; וּבַנֵיו וְאִשְׁתּוֹ וּנִשֵּי-בַנֵיו, אִתּוֹ.

2. Genesis Rabba 34:6

Another opinion: 'To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose (Eccl. 3:1): there was a time for Noah to enter the ark, as it is written: 'come you and all your house into the ark (Gen. 7:1), and a time for him to leave it: Go forth from the Ark (Genesis 8:16).

But Noah did not accept the order to go out, saying, 'Am I to go out and be fruitful and multiply for a curse?' Until the Holy One, swore to him that the Holy One would not bring another flood upon the world, as it says, 'For this is the waters of Noah to Me; for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth (Isa. 54:9)'

דָּבָר אַחֵר, כְּתִיב (קהלת ג, א): לַכּּל זְמָן וְעֵת לְכָל חֵפֶץ תַּחַת הַשָּׁמִים, זְמֵן הָיָה לְנֹחַ לִכָּנֵס לַתֵּבָה, שֶׁנָּאֱמֵר (בראשית ז, א): בּאׁ אַתָּה וְכָל בֵּיתְךְ אֶל הַתַּבָה, וּזְמַן הָיָה לוֹ שֶׁיֵצֵא מִמֶּנָּה, שָׁנָּאֱמַר: צֵא מִן הַתֵּבָה... וְלֹא קְבֵּל עָלָיו לָצֵאת, אָמַר אֵצֵא וְאָהְיֶה פָּרֶה וְרָבֶה לִמְאֵרָה, עַד שָׁנִּשְׁבַּע לוֹ הַמָּקוֹם שָׁאֵינוֹ מֵבִיא מַבּוּל לָעוֹלָם, שָׁנָשְׁבַע (ישעיה נד, ט): כִּי מֵי נֹחַ זֹאת לִי אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי מֵעֲבֹר מֵי נֹחַ.

II. The Necessity of Fear

3. Proverbs 28:14

Happy is the man who is fearful always, But he who hardens his heart falls into misfortune. אַשָּׁרֵי אֲדָם מִפַּחֵד תָּמִיד וּמַקְשֵׁה לְבֹּוֹ יִפְּוֹל בִּרָעָה:

III: The Danger of Fear

4. Bavli Berakhot 60a

This student was once walking after Rabbi Yishmael, son of Rabbi Yosei, in the marketplace of Zion. Rabbi Yishmael saw that the student was afraid. He said to him: You are a sinner, as it is written: "The transgressors in Zion are afraid, trembling has seized the ungodly" (Isaiah 33:14). The student replied: And is it not written: "Happy is the man that fears always" (Proverbs 28:14)? Rabbi Yishmael said to him: That verse is written with regard to matters of Torah.

Yehuda bar Natan was coming and going after Rav Hamnuna. Yehuda bar Natan sighed; Rav Hamnuna said to him: Do you wish to bring suffering upon yourself; as it is stated: "For that which I did fear is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of has overtaken me" (Job 3:25)? He responded: Is it not said: "Happy is the man who fears always"? Rav Hamnuna answered: That verse is written with regard to matters of Torah.

הַהוּא תַּלְמִידָא דַּהָוָה קָא אָזֵיל בָּתְרֵיהּ דְּרַבִּי יִשְׁמָעֵאל בְּרַבִּי יוֹסֵי בְּשׁוּקָא דְצִיּוֹן. חַזְיֵיהּ דְּקָא מְפַחֵיד. אֲמַר לֵיהּ: חַטָּאָה אַתְּ, דְּכְתִיב: ״פָּחֲדוּ בְצִיּוֹן חֲטָאִים״. אֲמַר לֵיהּ: וְהָכְתִיב ״אַשְׁרֵי אָדָם מְפַחֵד תַּמִיד״! אֲמַר לֵיהּ: הַהוּא בִּדְבָרֵי תוֹרֵה כָּתִיב.

יְהוּדָה בַּר נָתָן הֲוָה שָׁקֵיל וְאָזֵיל בָּתְרֵיהּ דְּרַב הַמְנוּנָא. אָתְּנַח. אֲמַר לֵיהּ: יִסּוּרִים בָּעֵי הַהוּא גַּבְרָא לְאֵתוּיֵי אַנַּפְשֵׁיהּ? דְּכְתִיב: ״כִּי פַחַד פָּחַדְתִּי וַיֶּאֱתָיֵנִי וַאֲשֶׁר יָגֹרְתִּי יָבֹא לִי״! וְהָא כְּתִיב: ״אַשְׁרֵי אָדָם מְפַחֵד תָּמִיד״! הָהוּא בְּדִבְרֵי תוֹרָה כְּתִיב.

5. Talmud Bavli Shabbat 60a

What is the reason that the Sages prohibited going out with **a spiked sandal** on Shabbat?

תלמוד בבלי שבת ס. סַנְדֵּל הַמִּסוּמַר מַאי טַעְמַא . . .

Rabbi Elai ben Elazar says that the reason for the decree was different. Once they were sitting in a cave and heard the sound of a spiked sandal atop the cave. They thought that their enemies had come upon them. They pushed one another and killed one another in greater numbers than their enemies had killed among them.

Rami bar Yehezkel said that the reason for the decree was different. They were sitting in a synagogue, and they heard the sound of a spiked sandal from behind the synagogue. They thought that their enemies had come upon them. They pushed one another, and killed one another in greater numbers than their enemies had killed among them.

ַרַבִּי אִילְעַאי בֶּן אֶלְעָזָר אוֹמֵר: בִּמְעָרָה הָיוּ יוֹשְׁבִין, וְשָׁמְעוּ קוֹל מֵעַל גַּבֵּי הַמְּעָרָה. כִּסְבוּרִין הָיוּ שֶׁבָּאוּ עֲלֵיהֶם אוֹיְבִים. דָּחֲקוּ זֶה בָּזֶה וְהָרְגוּ זֶה אֶת זֶה יוֹתֵר ממַה שֵׁהַרְגוּ בַּהֵן אוֹיָבים.

ָרְמֵי בַּר יְחֶזְקֵאל אָמַר: בְּבֵית הַכְּנֶסֶת הָיוּ יוֹשְׁבִין, וְשָׁמְעוּ קוֹל מֵאֲחוֹרֵי בֵּית הַכְּנֶסֶת. כִּסְבוּרִין הָיוּ שֶׁבָּאוּ עֲלֵיהֶם אוֹיְבִים. דָּחֲקוּ זֶה בָּזֶה וְהָרְגוּ זֶה אֶת זֶה יוֹתֵר מִמַּה שֶׁהָרְגוּ בָּהֶן אוֹיְבִים.

IV. The Balancing Act Exodus 19:16-2

On the third day, as morning dawned, there was thunder, and lightning, and a dense cloud upon the mountain, and a very loud blast of the horn; and all the people who were in the camp trembled. Moses led the people out of the camp toward God, and they took their places at the foot of the mountain.

Now Mount Sinai was all in smoke, for God had come down upon it in fire; the smoke rose like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled violently.

The blare of the horn grew louder and louder. As Moses spoke, God answered him in thunder.

וַיְהִי[°]בַיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִּׁי בְּהְיֵת הַבּּׁקֶר וַיְהִי[°] קֹלֹת וּבְּרָלִּים וְעָנֵן כָּבֵד עַל־הָהָּר וְקֹל שׁפֶּר חָזֶק מְאֶד וּיֶחֲרָד כל־הָעָם אֲשֶׁר בְּמַּחֲנֶה: וַיּוֹצֵא מֹשֶׁה אֶת־הָעֶם לִקְרַאת הָאֱלֹהָים מִן־הַמַּחֲנֶה וַיִּתְיַצְבָוּ בְּתַחְתִּית הָהָר:

ְוְהַר סִינֵי עֲשַׁן כֵּלוֹ מִּפְּנֵי אֲשֶׁר יָרָד עָלֶיו ה׳ בָּאֵשׁ וַיִּעַל
עַשְׁנוֹ כְּעָשׁן הַכִּבְשָׁן וַיֶּחֲרָד כל־הָהָר מְאְד: וַיְהִי קּוֹל
הַשּׁפָּׁר הוֹלֵךְ וְחָזֵק מְאָד מֹשֶׁה יְדַבֵּׁר וְהָאֱלֹהִים יַעֲנָנוּ
בְּקוֹל: וַיֵּיֶרָד ה׳ עַל־הַר סִינַי אֶל־רָאשׁ הָהֶר וַיִּעָל מֹשֶׁה: וַיִּאמֶר ה׳
לְמֹשֶׁה אֶל־רָאשׁ הָהָר וַיִּעַל מֹשֶׁה: וַיִּאמֶר ה׳
וְנָפַל מִשֶּׁנוּ רָב: וְגַם הַכּּהְנִים הַנִּגָּשִׁים אֶל־ה׳ לִרְאוֹת
בְּנַל מִשֶּה הַיִּלְדְשׁוּ הַּיָּרָ הַבְּעָם ה׳: וַיִּאמֶר מִשֶּׁה אֶל־ה׳ לֹא־יוּכַל הָעָם
לַעַלְת אֶל־הַר סִיְנֵי כִּי־אַתַּה הַעַּדְתָה בַּנוֹ לֵאמֹר הַגְּבָּל

God came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mountain, and God called Moses to the top of the mountain and Moses went up.

God said to Moses, "Go down, warn the people not to break through to God to gaze, lest many of them perish.

The priests also, who come near God, must stay pure, lest God break out against them."

But Moses said to God, "The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai, for You warned us saying, 'Set bounds about the mountain and sanctify it."

So God said to him, "Go down, and come back together with Aaron; but let not the priests or the people break through to come up to God, lest [God] break out against them."

And Moses went down to the people and spoke to them.

אֶת־הָהֶר וְקְדַּשְׁתְּוֹ: וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלֶיו ה׳ לֶךְ־בֵּד וְעָלִיתָ אַתָּה וְאַהָרָן עִמֶּךְ וְהַכּּהֲנִים וְהָעָׁם אַל־יֶהֶרְסָוּ לַעְלָת אָל־ה׳ פֶּן־יִפְרץ־בָּם: וַיֵּרֶד מֹשֶׁה אֶל־הָעֶם וַיָּאמֶר אַלֵהֵם:

Exodus 20:15-18

All the people witnessed the thunder and lightning, the blare of the horn and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they fell back and stood at a distance.

"You speak to us," they said to Moses, "and we will obey; but let not God speak to us, lest we die." Moses answered the people, "Be not afraid; for God has come only in order to test you, and in order that the fear of God may be ever with you, so that you do not go astray."

So the people remained at a distance, while

וְכל־הָעָם רֹאִים אֶת־הַקּוֹלֹת וְאֶת־הַלַּפִּידִּם וְאֵתֹ קּוֹל הַשֹּׁפָּר וְאֶת־הָהֶר עָשֵׁן וַיִּרְא הָעָם וַיָּנֵעוּ וַיְעַמְדָוּ מֵרַחָׂק:

וַיְּאמְרוּ אֶל־מֹשֶׁה דַּבֵּר־אַתָּה עָמֶנוּ וְנִשְׁמֵעָה וְאַל־יְדַבֵּר עָמֶנוּ אֱלֹהָים פֶּן־נָמְוּת: וַיְּאמְרוּ אֶל־מֹשֶׁׁה דַּבֵּר־אַתָּה עָמֶנוּ וְנִשְׁמֵעָה וְאַל־יְדַבֵּר עָמֶנוּ אֱלֹהָים פֶּן־נָמְוּת: וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־הָעָם אַל־תִּירָאוּ כִּי לְבַעֲבוּר נַסְּוֹת אֶתְכֶּם בָּא הָאֱלֹהֵים וּבַעֲבוּר תִּהְיֶה יִרִאָתוֹ עַל־פָּנֵיכֵם לְבָלִתִּי תֵחֱטֵאוּ:

Moses approached the thick cloud where	וַיַּעֲמָד הָעָם מֵרָחֵק וּמֹשֶׁה נַגַּשׁ אֶל־הָעֲרָפֶּׁל אֲשֶׁר־שָׁם
God was.	ָהָאֱלֹהְים: