

Shabbat Awakening Ki Tisa

Source Sheet by Rabbi Max Chaiken

שמות ל"ד:כ"ז-ל"ה

Exodus 34:27-35

27: וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה כְּתֹב־לְךָ אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה כִּי עַל־פִּי וְהַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה כְּרַתִּי אִתְּךָ בְּרִית וְאֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל: 28 וַיְהִי־שָׁם עִם־יְהוָה אַרְבָּעִים יוֹם וְאַרְבָּעִים לַיְלָה לֶחֶם לֹא אָכַל וּמַיִם לֹא שָׁתָה וַיִּכְתֹּב עַל־הַלְחָתוֹת אֶת־דְּבָרֵי הַבְּרִית עֶשְׂרֵת הַדְּבָרִים: 29 וַיְהִי בִּרְדַת מֹשֶׁה מִהַר סִינַי וּשְׁנֵי לַחַת הָעֵדוּת בְּיַד־מֹשֶׁה בִּרְדָתוֹ מִן־הָהָר וּמֹשֶׁה לֹא־יָדַע כִּי קָרַן עוֹר פָּנָיו בְּדַבְּרוֹ אֹתוֹ: 30 וַיֵּרָא אֹהֶרֶן וְכָל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־מֹשֶׁה וְהִנֵּה קָרַן עוֹר פָּנָיו וַיִּירָאוּ מִגִּשְׁתֹּת אֵלָיו: 31 וַיִּקְרָא אֲלֵהֶם מֹשֶׁה וַיֵּשְׁבוּ אֵלָיו אֹהֶרֶן וְכָל־הַנְּשָׂאִים בְּעֵדָה וַיְדַבֵּר מֹשֶׁה אֲלֵהֶם: 32 וְאַחֲרֵי־כֵן נִגְּשׂוּ כָל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּצְוֶם אֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְהוָה אֹתוֹ בְּהַר סִינַי: 33 וַיְכַל מֹשֶׁה מִדַּבֵּר אֹתָם וַיִּתֵּן עַל־פָּנָיו מַסּוֹה: 34 וּבָבֹא מֹשֶׁה לִפְנֵי יְהוָה לְדַבֵּר אִתּוֹ יֹסִיר אֶת־הַמַּסּוֹה עַד־יֵצְאוֹ וַיִּצֵּא וַיְדַבֵּר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־אֲשֶׁר יִצְוֶה: 35 וַרְאוּ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־פָּנָיו מֹשֶׁה כִּי קָרַן עוֹר פָּנָיו מֹשֶׁה וְהִשִּׁיב מֹשֶׁה אֶת־הַמַּסּוֹה עַל־פָּנָיו עַד־בָּאוּ לְדַבֵּר אִתּוֹ: (ו)

27: And the Eternal One said to Moses: Write down these commandments, for in accordance with these commandments I make a covenant with you and with Israel. 28: And he was there with the Eternal One forty days and forty nights; he ate no bread and drank no water; and he wrote down on the tablets the terms of the covenant, the Ten Commandments. So Moses came down from Mount Sinai. 29: And as Moses came down from the mountain bearing the two tablets of the Pact, Moses was not aware that the skin of his face was radiant, since he had spoken with God. 30: Aaron and all the Israelites saw that the skin of Moses' face was radiant; and they shrank from coming near him. 31: But Moses called to them, and Aaron and all the chieftains in the assembly returned to him, and Moses spoke to them. 32: Afterward all the Israelites came near, and he instructed them concerning all that the Eternal One had imparted to him on Mount Sinai. 33: And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil over his face. 34: Whenever Moses went in before the Eternal One to speak with Him, he would leave the veil off until he came out; and when he came out and told the Israelites what he had been commanded, 35: the Israelites would see how radiant the skin of Moses' face was. Moses would then put the veil back over his face until he went in to speak with Him.

מדרש אגדה, שמות ל"ד:כ"ז-ד'

כי על פי הדברים האלה. אלו הוריות של תלמוד, שעיקר הברית נכרת על פירושי התורה, שנאמר ולמדה את בני ישראל שימה בפיהם (דברים לא

Midrash Aggadah, Exodus 34:27:4,

(translated by Rabbi Max Chaiken)

“For in accordance with these words [lit. ‘by the mouth of these words] (Ex. 34:27) - this refers to the instructions of the Talmud, that the essence of the covenant was made upon

יט. שכל הדורש פסוק כצורתו בלא מדרש, ובלא שלש עשרה מדות שהתורה נדרשת בהן, עליו הכתוב אומר והכסיל בחשך הולך (קהלת ב' ד):

the interpretations of Torah, as it says “and you shall teach it to the children of Israel, and put it in their mouths” (Deut. 31:19) - because any who [would] interpret a verse as it is formed without midrash, and without the 13 principles [of Rabbi Ishmael] by which Torah is [traditionally] interpreted, it is written about such a person “the fool shall walk in darkness” (Ecclesiastes 2:14)

רש"י על שמות ל"ד:כ"ט:ב

Rashi on Exodus 34:29:2

כי קרן. לשון קרנים, שפאור מבהיק ובולט כמין קרן; ומהיכן זכה משה לקרני ההוד? רבותינו אמרו מן המערה, שנתן הקדוש ברוך הוא ידו על פניו, שנאמר ושכתי כפי (תנחומא):

THAT THE SKIN OF HIS FACE BEAMED — קרן is an expression connected with the word קרנים “horns”, and the phrase, קרן אור, the light-“horned” is used here because light radiates from a point and projects like a horn. And whence was Moses privileged to have the rays of glory? Our Rabbis said that they originated at the time when he was in the cave, for the Holy One, blessed be He, then put His hand upon his face, as it is said, (Exodus 33:22) “And I will shelter thee with My hand” (Midrash Tanchuma, Ki Tisa 37).

מדרש תנחומא, כי תשא ל"ז:א

Midrash Tanchuma, Ki Tisa 37:1

ויהי ברדת משה מהר סיני, ומשה לא ידע כי קרן. מנין זכה משה לקרני ההוד. אמרו רבותינו זכרונם לברכה: מן המערה, שנאמר: והיה בעבר כבדי ושמתיך בנקרת הצור (שמות לג, כב). נתן הקדוש ברוך הוא כף ידו עליו, ומשם זכה לקרני ההוד. וכן הוא אומר, קרנים מידו לו ושם חביון עזו (חבקוק ג, ד).

And it came to pass, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai ... Moses knew not that the skin of his face sent forth beams (Exod. 34:29). Why did Moses merit the beams of glory? Our sages of blessed memory said: Because of the incident at the rock, as it is said: *And it shall come to pass, while My glory passes by* (Exod. 33:22). The Holy One placed His Hand upon him, and because of that he merited the beams of glory. For so it says: *Rays hath God at God's side; and there is the hiding of God's power* (Hab. 3:4).

מדרש תנחומא, כי תשא ל"ו:א

Midrash Tanchuma, Ki Tisa 36:1

ויהי שם עם ה' ארבעים יום וארבעים לילה. מנין היה יודע משה אימתי יום. אלא כשהקדוש ברוך הוא היה מלמדו תורה בכתב, היה יודע שהוא יום.

And he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights (Exod. 34:28). How did Moses know when it was day? When the Holy One, blessed be He, taught him the Written Law he knew it was the day

וְכִשְׁהָיָה מְלַמְדוֹ עַל פֶּה מִשְׁנָה וְתַלְמוּד,
 הָיָה יוֹדֵעַ שֶׁהוּא לַיְלָה. לְפִי שְׁהִיּוֹם
 וְלַיְלָה שְׁוִין לְפָנָי הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא,
 שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וְנִהוּרָא עִמָּה שָׂרָא (דְּנִיאל ב,
 כב). וְכִתִּיב: גַּם חֲשֵׁךְ לֹא יַחֲשִׁיךְ מִמֶּךָ
 וְלַיְלָה כִּיּוֹם יֵאִיר כְּחֹשֶׁכָה כְּאוֹרָה
 (תְּהִלִּים קלט, יב). וְעוֹד מִנֵּין הָיָה יוֹדֵעַ
 בֵּין יוֹם וּבֵין לַיְלָה. כְּשֶׁהָיָה רוֹאֶה
 הַמַּזְלֹת כּוֹרְעִין וּמִשְׁתַּחֲוִין, הָיָה יוֹדֵעַ
 שֶׁהוּא יוֹם. וְכִשְׁהָיָה רוֹאֶה הַחֲמָה
 מִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה, הָיָה יוֹדֵעַ שֶׁהוּא לַיְלָה.
 דְּכִתִּיב: וְצָבָא הַשָּׁמַיִם לְךָ מִשְׁתַּחֲוִים
 (נְחֻמִּיה ט, ו).

time, and when He taught him the Oral Law, the Mishnah and the Talmud, he was aware that it was night time. This was so because day and night are alike in the presence of the Holy One, blessed be He, as is said: *And the light dwelleth with Him* (Dan. 2:22). And as it is also written elsewhere: *Even the darkness is not too dark for Thee, but the night shineth as the day; the darkness even as the light* (Ps. 139:12). In what other way did he distinguish between night and day? When he beheld the constellations kneeling and bowing (descending), he realized that it was day, and when he saw the sun bowing, he knew that it was night, as it is written: *The host of heaven worship Thee* (Neh. 9:6).

From Sefer Ha-Aggadah / The Book of Legends, based on Exodus Rabbah 42:9, Deut. Rabbah 3:11, Yalkut Ki Tissa 392

"Now therefore let Me alone, that My wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may destroy them" (Exod. 32:10). Does the verse imply that Moses was physically holding the Holy One, so that He had to say, "Let me alone"? How may the matter be understood? By a parable of a king who became angry at his son and brought him into a chamber for punishment. There, as he began preparing himself to beat him, he kept shouting loudly, "let me alone, that I may beat him!"—so loudly that he could be heard outside the chamber. The son's tutor, standing in the reception room, said to himself: The king and his son are [alone] inside the chamber. Why does the king keep sousing, "Let me alone," unless he wants me to come in and plead on behalf of his son? That is why he keeps shouting, "Let me alone." Likewise, when the Holy One said to Moses, "Now therefore let Me alone," Moses reasoned: Because the Holy One wishes me to plead on Israel's behalf, that is why He said, "Now therefore let Me alone." At once, he began to beseech the mercy in their behalf—"Moses besought the Lord his God" (Exod 32:11). During the time Moses besought God, said R. Hiyya, he left no corner in heaven upon which he did not prostrate himself. "Moses... said: 'Oh, this people have sinned a great sin'" (Exod. 32:31). Moses made it appear, said R. Isaac, as though he were angry at Israel. When the Holy One saw Moses' anger, He said: Moses, shall two faces boiling with anger? Shall you and I both be angry at Israel? Both faces should not be boiling with such anger! Rather, when I pour hot, you must pour cold; and when you pour hot, I will be pouring cold. Moses responded: Master of the universe, now I know that You love Your children and are only looking for a person who will plead on their behalf."