

אָמַר רַבִּי שְׁמוּאֵל בַּר נַחֲמָנִי אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹנָתָן – **who go in the ways of complete [faith],**^[1]
 הַנֶּהְיָ אִישׁוֹ דְּרָסוֹן – **it is written**^[2] **about us:** “תָּמַת יִשְׂרָאֵל תִּתְחַם” – **The**
perfect [faith] of the upright shall lead them.^[3] הַנֶּהְיָ אִישׁוֹ דְּרָסוֹן – **Those people who go in the ways of perverseness,**
 בְּעֵלְיוּתָא – **it is written**^[4] **about them:** “וְסָלְף בְּגֵדִים יִשְׂרָאֵל” – **and the perverseness of the faithless shall destroy them.**

Another Aggadic teaching about Israel's acceptance of the Torah:

אָמַר רַבִּי שְׁמוּאֵל בַּר נַחֲמָנִי אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹנָתָן – **R' Shmuel bar**
Nachmani said in the name of R' Yonasan: – **What**
is the meaning of that which is written:^[5] לִבְרַתְנִי אַחֲתִי כְּלָהּ – **You have captured My heart, My sister,**
 אַחֲתִי כְּלָהּ – **At first, when you accepted the Torah,**
 אַחֲתִי כְּלָהּ – **you attracted Me with only one of your eyes.**
 אַחֲתִי כְּלָהּ – **But when you perform the Torah,**
 אַחֲתִי כְּלָהּ – **you attract Me with both of your eyes.**^[6]

While still at Sinai, only a few weeks after accepting the Torah, the Jewish people sinned with the Golden Calf. The Gemara describes this sudden downfall:

אָמַר עוּלָא – **Ulla said:** עֲלוּבָה כְּלָהּ מִזְנָה בְּתוֹךְ חוּפְתָהּ – **How**
shameless is the bride who is unfaithful while still in her
bridal chamber.^[7]

The Gemara supports Ulla's description of Israel's behavior:
 אָמַר רַבִּי מַרִּי בְּרַת שְׁמוּאֵל – **Rav Mari the son of**
Shmuel's daughter^[8] **said:** מָאי קָרָא – **What is the verse**
that reflects Ulla's sentiment? “עַד שֶׁהַמֶּלֶךְ בְּמִסְבּוֹ נִרְדֵּי וְגו'” – **While the King was still at His banquet, my perfume**

etc. [gave out its fragrance].^[9]

Rav remarks:

אָמַר רַב – **Rav said:** וְעַד יוֹן חֲבִיבוּתָא הֵיא נִכְּן – **Though the verse**
describes our nation's disgrace, it is still with a show of
endearment towards us that it does so, ולא קָתַב – **for it is written**
“gave out,” and it is not written
“putrefied.”^[10]

The Gemara records another context in which the root עלב is used:^[11]

תַּנּוּ רַבְּנַן – **The Rabbis taught in a Baraisa:** עוֹלְבִין וְאִינּוּן עוֹלְבִין – **Those who suffer insult but do not insult in response,**
 עוֹלְבִין וְאִינּוּן עוֹלְבִין – **who hear their disgrace but do**
not reply, עוֹשִׂין מְאֵבָה וְשׂוֹמְחִין בְּסוּרִין – **who perform God's**
will out of love^[12] **and are happy even in suffering,**^[13] וְאִינּוּן עוֹלְבִין – **regarding them the verse states:**
 וְאִינּוּן עוֹלְבִין – **regarding them the verse states:**
 וְאִינּוּן עוֹלְבִין – **but they who love Him [God] shall be**
as the sun going forth in its might.^[14]

The Gemara resumes its discussion about the giving of the Ten Commandments:

אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן – **R' Yochanan said:** מָאי דְקָתַב – **What is the**
meaning of that which is written:^[15] הוּא יִתְּן אִמְרֵי הַמְּבַשְׂרוֹת צָבָא – **My Lord made a declaration, the heralds are a mighty**
host? – **Every single**
statement^[16] **that emanated from the mouth of the Holy One,**
Blessed is He, נִחְלַק לְשִׁבְעִים לְשׁוֹנוֹת – **was divided into seventy**
languages.^[17]

A Baraisa derives this point from a different verse:

אָמַר רַבִּי יִשְׁמָאֵל – **A Baraisa of the academy of R' Yishmael**

NOTES

1. We trusted God as one would out of love. We relied on Him not to burden us with something we could not uphold (*Rashi*).
2. *Proverbs* 11:3.
3. To their desired destination (*Ralbag* *ibid.*; see *Maharsha*).
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Song of Songs* 4:9. In this verse, a man (representing God) speaks to his beloved bride (representing Israel).
6. The verse speaks of Israel's connection with God, which was formed at Sinai (see note 7). However, at Sinai there was only acceptance of the Torah, and not observance. [While still at Sinai, the Jews sinned with the Golden Calf (see continuation of the Gemara).] Therefore, the verse specifies “one” of their eyes (*Maharal*).
7. The “eye” represents the process of “seeing,” which can occur either in one's mind or in reality. When the Jewish people accepted the Torah, they saw it only in their mind [“one eye”]. It was not until they carried out the Torah that they saw it (i.e. its practice) physically as well [“two eyes”] (*Maharsha*).
8. Ulla used this allegory to describe the shameful behavior of the Jews who, while still encamped at Sinai – the “bridal chamber” where God had taken them to be His holy nation – were unfaithful to Him by worshipping the Golden Calf (*Rashi*; see *Rashi* to *Gittin* 36b שׁוֹמְחִין וְגו'). [We find elsewhere that the Revelation is likened to a “marriage” between God and Israel (e.g. *Taanis* 26b, end of *Mishnah*).]
9. Furthermore, they were still involved at that time in receiving the Torah, for Moses had not yet brought the Tablets of the Law down from the mountain (*Eitz Yosef*).
10. Rav Mari's father is not mentioned because he was an idolater at the time of Rav Mari's conception. Rav Mari's mother, the daughter of Shmuel, was kidnaped and violated by an idolater (see *Kesubos* 23a) and it was from that union that Rav Mari was born (*Rashbam* to *Bava Basra* 149a דִּיהָ דְאִיסוּר; cf. *Tosafos* *ibid.*).
11. *Song of Songs* 1:12. The entire verse reads: וְעַד שֶׁהַמֶּלֶךְ בְּמִסְבּוֹ נִרְדֵּי וְגו' – **While the King was still at his banquet, my perfume gave out its fragrance.** Rav Mari interprets, נִתְּן עוֹלָה, in the sense of abandoned. Thus, Israel confesses that while the Supreme King still sat at His wedding banquet, so to speak, her perfume abandoned its goodly fragrance to others (*Rashi*), i.e. she was unfaithful to Him.

10. The verse should have said that Israel's scent became putrid, but said instead only that its goodly scent disappeared. This choice of expression is a mark of God's continued love for the Jewish nation, despite its faithlessness towards Him (*Rashi*; cf. *Tosafos*). [In *Gittin* 36b, this teaching is attributed to *Rava*.]
 11. [This passage appears in *Gittin* 36b, where the point under discussion is the meaning of עלב.] See *Hagahos Yavetz*.
 12. That is, they perform God's commandments out of love for Him, not in order to earn reward or to avoid punishment (*Rashi* to *Gittin* *ibid.*).
 13. The suffering caused by the insults and disgrace to which they are subjected (*Rashi*).
 14. *Judges* 5:31. The Baraisa alludes to the Aggadah cited in *Chullin* 60b that the moon was originally as great as the sun, but was reduced in size after complaining that it was not fitting for two equally great luminaries to reign together. The sun, which did not respond to the moon's complaint, remained undiminished. Similarly, those who suffer insult but do not respond will be “as the sun that goes forth in its might”; i.e. they will emerge undiminished by their silence, whereas their antagonists will not only fail in their schemes but will be humbled as well (*Tos. HaRosh, Meiri* to *Gittin* *ibid.*).
 15. *Psalms* 68:12.
 16. I.e. each one of the Ten Commandments (see *Maharsha* שׁוֹמְחִין וְגו').
 17. [That is, it could be heard by each of the seventy nations in its own language.] עָבַד רַב, *mighty host*, is interpreted as referring to all the nations (*Rashi*).
- God did this so that the nations would not be able to claim later: “If we would have heard the Torah in our own language, we would have accepted it” (*Maharsha*).
- [The root of all languages in the world is Hebrew, the Holy Tongue. Hebrew was spoken exclusively until God confused the tongues of mankind at the Tower of Babel. He then distorted the Holy Tongue in seventy different ways, and seventy derivatives of Hebrew emerged. These languages were so corrupt that it was impossible to recognize their holy source. At Sinai, God split every Hebrew word He uttered into seventy languages to display the spark of holiness which is at the core of every foreign tongue (see *Sfas Emes* at the end of *Parashas Noach* and to *Psalms* 68:12).]