

## ADAM AND THE DARKNESS

### B TALMUD, AVODAH ZARAH 8a

#### [Halakhic Context]

**מתני** ואלו אידיהן של עובדי כוכבים קלנדה וסטרנורא וקרטיסים ויום גנוסיא של מלכיהם ויום הלידה ויום המיתה דברי רבי מאיר ...

**MISHNA:** And these are the festivals of idolators [i.e. Rome]: Kalenda, Saturnalia, and Kratesis, and the day of the festival of their kings, and the birthday [of the king], and [the anniversary of] the day of the death [of the king]. This is the statement of Rabbi Meir...

**גמ** אמר רב חנן בר רבא קלנדה ח' ימים אחר תקופה סטרנורא ח' ימים לפני תקופה וסימנך (תהלים קלט, ה) אחר וקדם צרתני וגו'

**GEMARA:** Rav Hanan bar Rava says: [When are these festivals celebrated?] Kalenda during the eight days after the [winter] solstice, and Saturnalia during the eight days before the solstice. And your mnemonic: "You have hemmed me in behind and before, and laid Your Hand upon me" (Psalms 139:5).

#### [STORY 1]

ת"ר לפי שראה אדם הראשון יום שמתמעט והולך אמר אוי לי שמא בשביל שסרחתי עולם חשוך בעדי וחוזר לתוהו ובוהו וזו היא מיתה שנקנסה עלי מן השמים עמד וישב ח' ימים בתענית [ובתפלה]

The Sages taught: When Adam HaRishon saw the day was progressively diminishing, he said: Woe is me; perhaps because I sinned the world is becoming dark around me and will return to chaos and disorder. And this is the death that was sentenced upon me from Heaven ["And to dust shall you return" (Genesis 3:19)]. He arose and spent eight days in fasting and in prayer.

כיון שראה תקופת טבת וראה יום שמאריך והולך אמר מנהגו של עולם הוא הלך ועשה שמונה ימים טובים לשנה האחרת עשאו לאלו ולא לו ימים טובים הוא קבעם לשם שמים והם קבעום לשם עבודת כוכבים...

Once he saw the season of Tevet [i.e., the winter solstice] and saw the day was progressively lengthening, he said: this is the order of the world. He went and observed a festival for eight days. Upon the next year, he observed these [eight days on which he had fasted on the previous year], and these [eight days of his celebration], as days of festivities. He established these for the sake of Heaven, but they established them for the sake of idol worship...

### J TALMUD, AVODAH ZARAH 1:2, 39c

#### [Halakhic Context]

**משנה:** אילו אידיהן של גוים קלנדס וסטרנלייא וקרטיסים ויום גניסיא של מלכים ויום הלידה ויום המיתה דברי רבי מאיר ...

**MISHNAH:** The following are the holidays of the Gentiles: Kalendas, Saturnalia, and Kratesis, and the king's birthday and birthday, and the day of death, the words of Rabbi Meir.

**הלכה:** אילו הן אידיהן של גוים כול'. רב אמר. עידיהן. ושמואל אמר. אידיהן...

**HALAKHA:** "The following are the holidays of the Gentiles," etc. Rav said *edeihen* and Samuel said *edeihen*...

רב אמר. קלנדס אדם הראשון התקינו. כיון דחמא ליליא אריך אמר. אי לי. שמה שכתוב בו הוא לשופך ראש ואתה תשופנו עקב שמה יבוא לנשכיני. ואמר אד-חושף לשופני.

Rav said: Kalendas was established by Adam. When he saw the nights becoming longer, he said, "Woe is me! Perhaps the one of whom it is written, 'He shall strike your head [ישופך ראש] and you shall strike his heel [תשופנו עקב] (*Bereishit* 3:15) – perhaps he will come and bite me: 'I said, Surely darkness shall bruise/envelop me [ישופני] (*Tehillim* 139:11)."

כיון דחמא אימא אריך אמר. קלנדס.

When he saw the days getting longer [again], he said, "Kalendas!"

## [STORY 2]

ת"ר יום שנברא בו אדם הראשון כיון ששקעה עליו חמה  
אמר אוי לי שבשביל שסרחתי עולם חשוך בעדי ויחזור  
עולם לתוהו ובוהו וזו היא מיתה שנקנסה עלי מן השמים

The Sages taught: On the day that Adam HaRishon was created, when the sun set upon him he said: Woe is me, as because I sinned, the world is becoming dark around me, and the world will return to chaos and disorder. And this is the death that was sentenced upon me from Heaven.

היה יושב בתענית ובוכה כל הלילה וחוה בוכה כנגדו כיון  
שעלה עמוד השחר אמר מנהגו של עולם הוא עמד  
והקריב שור שקרניו קודמין לפרסותיו שנאמר (תהלים  
ט, לב) ותיטב לה' משור פר מקרין מפריס

He spent all night fasting and crying, and Eve was crying opposite him [*k'negdo*]. Once dawn broke, he said: this is the order of the world. He arose and sacrificed a bull whose horns preceded its hoofs [in the order that they were created], as it is stated: "And it shall please the Lord better than a bullock that has horns and hoofs" (Psalms 69:32).

ואמר רב יהודה אמר שמואל שור שהקריב אדם הראשון  
קרן אחת היתה [לו] במצחו שנאמר ותיטב לה' משור פר  
מקרין מפריס מקרין תרתי משמע אמר רב נחמן בר יצחק  
מקרין כתיב

And Rav Yehuda says that Shmuel says: The bull that Adam HaRishon sacrificed had one horn in its forehead, as it is stated: "And it shall please the Lord better than a bullock that has horns [*makrin*] and hooves." But isn't *makrin* plural, indicating two? Rav Nahman bar Yitzhak says: *Mikkeren* is written [i.e., the letter *yod* is missing from the word, indicating that there was only one horn.]

כיון ששקעה החמה במוצאי שבת התחיל החשך  
ממשמשש ובא ונתגרא אדם הראשון, שנאמר: ואמר אף  
חשך ישופני, אותו שכתוב בו: הוא ישופך ראש ואתה  
תשופנו עקב, בא להזדוג לי,

Once the sun set on [the first] Saturday night, the darkness began to settle in, Adam HaRishon was frightened and said, "Surely darkness comes to bruise/conceal me" (Psalm 139:11); perhaps the one of whom it is said, "They shall strike at your head" (Genesis 3:15) will come to attack me?"

מה עשה הקדוש ברוך הוא, זמן לו שני רעפים והקישן  
זה לזה ויצא מהן אור וברך עליה, הדיא הוא דכתביב:  
ולילה אור בעדני.

What did the Holy Blessed One do? God presented him with two flints, which he struck together and light came forth, whereupon he blessed it, as it is written, "The night was light for my sake" (Psalm 139:11).

מה בריך עליה, בורא מאורי האש. אתיא כשמואל,  
דאמר שמואל מפני מה מברכין על האור במוצאי שבת,  
מפני שהיא תחלת ברייתה.

What blessing did he say on them? "Who creates the lights of fire." This is consistent with the opinion of Samuel, for Samuel said: "Why do we recite a blessing over light at the end of Shabbat? Because then it was first created.

PSALM 139

<sup>1</sup>For the leader. Of David. A psalm.

O Adonai, You have examined me and know me.

<sup>2</sup>When I sit down or stand up You know it; You discern my thoughts from afar.

<sup>3</sup>You observe my walking and reclining, and are familiar with all my ways.

<sup>4</sup>There is not a word on my tongue but that You, O Adonai, know it well.

<sup>5</sup>**You hedge me before and behind; You lay Your hand upon me.** (אַחֲזֹר וְקִדְמָם צִרְתָּנִי וּתְשִׁית עָלַי כַּפְּכָה:)

<sup>6</sup>It is beyond my knowledge; it is a mystery; I cannot fathom it.

<sup>7</sup>Where can I escape from Your spirit? Where can I flee from Your presence?

<sup>8</sup>If I ascend to heaven, You are there; if I descend to Sheol, You are there too.

<sup>9</sup>If I take wing with the dawn to come to rest on the western horizon,

<sup>10</sup>even there Your hand will be guiding me, Your right hand will be holding me fast.

<sup>11</sup>**If I say, “Surely darkness will conceal me, night will provide me with cover,”** (וְאָמַר אֶדְ-תְּשִׁדָּה יְשׁוּפְנִי וְלַיְלָה)

(אֹרֶךְ בַּעֲדָנִי)

<sup>12</sup>darkness is not dark for You; night is as light as day; darkness and light are the same.

<sup>13</sup>It was You who created my conscience; You fashioned me in my mother’s womb.

<sup>14</sup>I praise You, for I am awesomely, wondrously made; Your work is wonderful; I know it very well.

<sup>15</sup>My frame was not concealed from You when I was shaped in a hidden place, knit together in the recesses of the earth.

<sup>16</sup>Your eyes saw my unformed limbs; they were all recorded in Your book; in due time they were formed, to the very last one of them.

<sup>17</sup>How weighty Your thoughts seem to me, O God, how great their number!

<sup>18</sup>I count them—they exceed the grains of sand; I end—but am still with You.

<sup>19</sup>O God, if You would only slay the wicked— you murderers, away from me!—

<sup>20</sup>who invoke You for intrigue, Your enemies who swear by You falsely.

<sup>21</sup>O LORD, You know I hate those who hate You, and loathe Your adversaries.

<sup>22</sup>I feel a perfect hatred toward them; I count them my enemies.

<sup>23</sup>Examine me, O God, and know my mind; probe me and know my thoughts.

<sup>24</sup>See if I have vexatious ways, and guide me in ways everlasting.