

# Zera Shimshon

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## Chapter I: Bereisheet (Gen. 1:1-6:8)

### Essay 8. Consulting the souls of the righteous

**עוד** איתא במדרש על פסוק הנ"ל, בנפשותן של צדיקים נמלך וכו'. קשה למה הוצרך להיות נמלך עמהם בזה. ויש לומר משום דאמרינן גוה לו לאדם שלא נברא וכו'. ואין חבין לאדם שלא בפניו, משום הכי הוצרך להמלך עמהם.

**It is also brought in the Midrash on the above verse, viz, “And G-d said, ‘Let us make man in our image,’”<sup>1</sup> that “He consulted with the souls of the righteous.”<sup>2</sup>** I.e., before G-d created Adam, and then Eve, leading to the human population of the world, He consulted with the souls that He would be placing within those physical bodies.

**A difficulty is why was it necessary to consult with them. It can be said that it is because it is written, “It would have been better for man not to have been created.”<sup>3</sup> “One cannot act against the interests of a person unless it is in his presence.”<sup>4</sup> Because of this, it was necessary for G-d to consult with them** as to whether they agreed to be brought to Earth in human form.

אבל קשה דאם פו משוא פנים יש בדבר, ואיך חב לרשעים שלא בפניהם, ולמה לא נמלך אף עמהם. אלא אדרבא אומר שם המדרש מה עשה הקב"ה הפליג דרךן של רשעים מכנגד פניו וכן הפתוב אומר "כייודע ה' דרך צדיקים" וכו' עכ"ל. ועוד שהפליגה זו איני יודע מה היא, דסוף סוף הרשעים יהיו בעולם ומה הועיל פי הפליג. ועוד איך יתכן הפליג לפני המקום והלא אין דבר נעלם ממנו.

**But there is a difficulty, for if this is the case, there is favoritism in the matter, as He only consulted with the souls of the righteous. How could he disfavor the wicked, without them being present in front of Him? Why didn't He consult with them? Rather, to the contrary, the Midrash states there: “What did the Holy One, Blessed be He, do? He distanced the paths of the wicked from before His face. Thus, the verse says, ‘For the L-rd knows the way of the righteous, while the ways of the wicked will be lost’ (Ps. 1:6).”<sup>5</sup>**

**Moreover, I do not understand what the intent of this distancing is, since in the end the wicked will exist in the world—what benefit is there in distancing them? Also, how is it**

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<sup>1</sup> Gen. 1:26.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. Rabbah 8:7.

<sup>3</sup> Eruvin 13b.

<sup>4</sup> Bava Metzia 12a; Chullin 83a.

<sup>5</sup> Gen. Rabbah 8:4.

**possible to distance something from before the Holy One, Blessed be He, when nothing is hidden from Him?**

ויש לומר שפֿלל גָדוֹל בְּנִדְנוּ פֿל יִשְׂרָאֵל יֵשׁ לָהֶם חֵלֶק לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא כְּדִכְתִּיב "וְעַמְּךָ כָּלֶם צְדִיקִים", וְכִתִּיב וְלֹא "יִדַּח מִמֶּנּוּ נִדְח", וְמִי שֶׁחָטָא חוֹזֵר לְהִתְגַּלְגֵּל עַד שֶׁיִּתְוַקֵּן. אִם כֵּן כָּל הַנְּפֹשׁוֹת הֵן צְדִיקִים וְאֵף אוֹתָן שֶׁבְּפַעַם אַחַת שִׁבְּאוֹת לְעוֹלָם נִרְאִים רְשָׁעִים סוֹפֵן לְהִתְפַּקֵּן. וְזֶהוּ הַפְּלִיג מִדַּת רְשָׁעִים מְדוּר לְדוּר עַד שֶׁיִּשׁוּבוּ כּוֹלֵן מִתּוֹקְנוֹת. וְאִין הֵכִי נָמִי שֶׁנִּמְלָךְ עִם כָּל הַנְּפֹשׁוֹת שֶׁיֵּשׁ לָהֶם שׁוֹרֵשׁ מִצַּד הַקְּדוּשָׁה, דְּהֵינּוּ אוֹתָן שֶׁהֵיוּ כְּלוּלוֹת בְּאֵדָם הָרֵאשׁוֹן, כְּמוֹ שֶׁהֵאָרְכְּנוּ בְּזֶה בְּפִירוּשֵׁנוּ לְמַסְכַּת אָבוֹת בְּמִשְׁנַת פֿל יִשְׂרָאֵל יֵשׁ לָהֶם חֵלֶק וְעֵי"ש.

**It can be said that there is a great principle in our hands: “All of Israel has a portion in the World-to-Come,”<sup>6</sup> as it is written, “And your people are all righteous,”<sup>7</sup> and it is written, “None of them will be cast off.”<sup>8</sup> Those who have sinned will return to be reincarnated until they are corrected. If so, then all souls are righteous, and even those who appear to be wicked when they come into the world will ultimately be corrected. This is the meaning of distancing of the paths of the wicked: they are reincarnated from generation to generation, until they all return corrected. It is certainly true that He consults with all the souls that have a root in holiness, meaning those who were included in the first Adam, as we elaborated in our commentary on Pirkei Avot regarding the teaching that all of Israel has a portion in the World-to-Come, and see there, *Toldot Shimshon*, Chapter 1, Prologue.**

וְעוֹד יֵשׁ לִזְמַר דְּאִיתָא בְּזוֹהַר (פְּרָשַׁת אַחֲרֵי מוֹת דֵּף ס"א) כֹּל אֵינּוֹן נִשְׁמָתִין דְּבָנֵי נִשְׂאָ, עַד לֹא יַחֲתוּן לְעֵלְמָא, כְּלֵהוּ גְּלִיפִין קַמִּיהּ בְּרַקִּיעָא וְכוּ' וְאֵינּוֹן דְּלֹא מִשְׁתַּכְּחִין וְכֹאֵי [ו] בְּהַאי עֵלְמָא, אֶפִּילוּ תַּמּוּן, מִתְרַחֲקִין מִקַּמִּי קוּדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא, וְעָאֲלִין בְּנוֹקְבָא דְתַהוֹמָא רַבָּא, וְדַחֲקִין שְׁעָתָא, וְנַחֲתִין לְעֵלְמָא. וְאֵינּוֹן קָשִׁי קַדְל וְכוּ' עכ"ל. וְלִכּוֹן לֹא נִמְלָךְ בְּהוֹן שְׂאֵדְרָבָא הִרְחִיקוֹן מִלְּבוֹא בְּעוֹלָם, אֲלֵא שֶׁהֵן דוֹחֲקוֹת עֲצָמוֹן וְכֹאֵת לְעוֹלָם, וְזוֹ הִיא עֵיקַר הַהִפְלָגָה.

**Also, it can be said that it is brought in the Zohar, Acharei Mot, page 61b:**

**All the souls of the children of man, until they descend to the world, are all shining before Him . . . Those who are not found to be righteous in this world, even there in Heaven, are distanced from before the Holy One, Blessed be He. They ascend into the great abyss [joining forces of impurity]. They press to enter this world, and they are stiff-necked in this world, and are [stiff-necked] before descending to this world.**

- Zohar III:61b (Acharei Mot 14:95–96)

**Therefore, He did not consult with them; rather, they have been distanced from entering this world. But they press themselves and come into the world, and this is the essence of the distancing of the ways of the wicked.**

<sup>6</sup> Mishnah Sanhedrin 10:1; Sanhedrin 90a.

<sup>7</sup> Isaiah 60:21.

<sup>8</sup> II Sam. 14:14.

עוד כתב שם הזוהר הנ"ל דאף אינון קשי קדל אי זכ[י] לבתר, ותבו בתיובתא קמי מארייהו נטלין חולקא וכו' הדא הוא דכתביב "מה"שקה פבר הוא" וכו' עכ"ל. ולפי זה יבואר המדרש הנ"ל שהואיל שעל ידי הצדיקים שמוכיחים הרשעים גורמים להם לתזור בתשובה משום הכי נמלך בהם קודם בריאת האדם, שהואיל שהם קשי עורף ובעלי תציפות שנמשכה ממצח אשה זונה טרחתם מרובה.

**It is also written there in the Zohar, above:**

**Even though they are stiff-necked, if they later gain merit and repent before their Master, they will receive back the own [holy] portion [of their souls]. . . . This is [what is meant], as it is written: "That which is, already has been; and that which is to be, has already been."<sup>9</sup>**

- Zohar III:61b (Acharei Mot 14:96)

**According to this, the aforementioned Midrash can be explained: since it is through the righteous who rebuke the wicked that they are caused to repent, it is for this reason that He consulted with [the righteous] before the creation of man. As [the wicked] are stiff-necked and brazen, stemming from the brazenness of a harlot,<sup>10</sup> it takes a great exertion for the righteous to compel them to repent. Thus, G-d asked the righteous whether they were willing to undertake that exertion.**

ועוד שאין להם שייכות בקיום העולם שהרי בשעת בריאתו נתרתקו ממנו, והאדם יש לו דין פועל עם הקב"ה כדכתיב "צא אדם לפעלו". וכשם שבפעל השדה מחוייב להראות לפועל גודל שדהו קודם שיקבל עליו העבודה ואם יש לו גהר קרוב או רחוק אי לא וכדומה, משום הכי הוצרך הקב"ה להמלך בהם בתחלה ולגלות להם את הפל.

**Also, [the wicked] have no connection to maintaining the world, for at the time of Creation, they distanced themselves from Him. Man has an obligation to be a worker with the Holy One, Blessed be He, as it is written, "A man goes out to his work."<sup>11</sup> Just as the owner of a field is obligated to show the worker the size of his field before he takes on the job, and whether there is a nearby or distant river, and whether it is fit to be tilled or not, and similar considerations,<sup>12</sup> therefore the Holy One, Blessed be He, needed to first consult with [the souls of the righteous] and reveal everything to them.**

וענין ההפלה הוא שלאחר ששבו בתשובה אין מזכירים עוד מעשיהם הראשונים, ודניק לומר הפליג מדת הרשעים ואינו אומר הפליג הרשעים, שהרי כשיסורו למדת הצדיקים יזכו כמו הצדיקים.

**The matter of the distancing the paths of the wicked is that after they have repented, their initial wicked deeds are no longer mentioned.<sup>13</sup> It is specifically stated that He distanced *the ways of the wicked* and does not say that He distanced the wicked themselves, for when they return to the ways of the righteous, they will merit a reward just like the righteous.**

<sup>9</sup> Eccl. 3:15.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Jer. 3:3.

<sup>11</sup> Ps. 104:23.

<sup>12</sup> Bava Metzia 76b–77a.

<sup>13</sup> Bava Metzia 58b.

ועוד נוכל לומר שטעם ההמלכה זו שעשה בנפשותיהן של צדיקים הוא לראות אם ירצו לקבל עליהם קיום העולם בזכויותיהם כמו שהאבות הניחו זכותם לבניהם, ומכלל זה נמי אם ירצו לתקן קלקול הדורות שקדמו להם, והם הסכימו על זה. וגם ההפלה שהפליג מדת הרשעים מנגד עיניו, היינו שבזכות הצדיקים מוחל לרשעים ומעביר חטאתם.

**Also, we can say that the reason for this consultation with the souls of the righteous is to see if they would be willing to accept the responsibility for the existence of the world through their merits, just as the patriarchs bequeathed their merit to their descendants.<sup>14</sup> This also includes whether they would want to rectify the flaws of the generations that preceded them, and they agreed to do so. Also, the distancing of the ways of the wicked from His eyes means that in the merit of the righteous, forgiveness is granted to the wicked, and their sins are removed.**

וכן באמת זה הוא הדרך שקשמתגלה אור העליון בשביל הצדיקים דכתיב "אור נרע לצדיק" או בשביל איזו סבה, אז בורחים הקליפות, כמו שהנה ביציאת מצרים דאתנהירית ליליא בתקופת תמוז. וזה מועיל שאחר כך מתתקנים הפגמים יותר בקלות ובדרך מועט, כמו שביציאת מצרים לא הוצרכו אלא לספור העומר של חמשים יום כדי שיטהרו לגמרי [כ]אשה לבעלה אף על פי שהיו להם כל הטומאות של המצרים.

**Indeed, this is the way: When the Supernal Light is revealed for the sake of the righteous, as it is written, "Light is sown for the righteous,"<sup>15</sup> or when the Supernal Light is revealed for some other reason, then the *kliptot* flee. This is just as the *kliptot* fled during the Exodus from Egypt, when it was said that the night was lit up like the period of Tammuz, i.e., like a Summer day.<sup>16</sup> This is effective, as afterward, the flaws are rectified more easily and with less effort. This is just as during the Exodus from Egypt, when they only needed to count the Omer for fifty days to become completely purified, like a woman returning to her husband,<sup>17</sup> even though they had all the impurities of the Egyptians.**

והטעם הוא מפני שהאור העליון הניח בהם רשימו של קדושה ובה ניתוסף בהם התעוררות פנימי למהר תיקונם בלב שלם. ואמיתות הפירוש הזה יצא לנו ממדרש רבה על פסוק "נישם שם את האדם אשר יצר", הדא הוא דכתיב "בנתה לרעי מרחוק", באיזה זכות יעצת לברוא את האדם, בזכות אותו שבא מרחוק דהיינו אברהם ועיי"ש. וזאת העצה היא מה שגמלה בנפשותיהם של צדיקים.

**And the reason is that the Supernal Light left within them an impression of holiness, which instills in them an inner awakening to expedite their rectification with a complete heart. The truth of this explanation comes from the Midrash Gen. Rabbah 15:4 on the verse,**

<sup>14</sup> Lev. Rabbah 36:3: "Rabbi Pinchas said: Anyone who performs a mitzvah and seeks to take his reward for it, . . . he is wicked and will not leave anything to his children. . . . Had the early patriarchs demanded to receive their reward for the minor mitzvot that they performed in this world, from where would merit remain for their descendants?"

<sup>15</sup> Ps. 97:11.

<sup>16</sup> Zohar II:38a (Bo 5:128): "And Judgment was executed against them all. When they were all gathered in their homes, and were not scattered in the wilderness or in the field, the night, which is Malchut, executed its judgments. And we learned that the night shone just like the day, which is the solstice of Tammuz, and the whole people saw the Judgments of the Holy One, Blessed be He."

<sup>17</sup> Zohar III:97a-b (Emor 34:162).

**“and He placed there the human who had been fashioned,”<sup>18</sup> which is as it is written, “You discern my thoughts from afar,”<sup>19</sup> meaning by what merit did He decide to create man? It is through the merit of one who came from afar, namely Abraham, and see there. This counsel is what was revealed in the consultation regarding the souls of the righteous.**

וְהַהִסְפָּמָה הָיְתָה בְּזִכּוֹתָיו שֶׁל אַבְרָהָם, כְּדַאִיתָא הָתָם בְּסֻמוּף עַל פְּסוּק "נִיִּצֵּר ה' אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאָדָם" בְּזִכּוֹתָיו שֶׁל אַבְרָהָם שֶׁהָיָה רֹאוי לְהַבְרִאות קוֹדֵם אָדָם הָרִאשׁוֹן אֶלָּא אָמַר הַקַּב"ה אִם אֲנִי בּוֹרֵא אוֹתוֹ תְּחִלָּה אֵין מִי שִׁיְתַקֵּן אַחֲרָיו. אֶלָּא אֲנִי בּוֹרֵא אֶת הָאָדָם תְּחִלָּה שְׂאֵם יִקְלַקֵּל, יְבּוֹא אַבְרָהָם וַיִּתְקֵן אַחֲרָיו.

**The agreement was in the merit of Abraham, as it is stated there in the adjacent section on the verse, “And the L-rd G-d formed man.”<sup>20</sup> This was in the merit of Abraham, who was worthy of being created before the first man, Adam. However, the Holy One, Blessed be He, said, “If I create him first, there will be no one to rectify afterward. Therefore, I will create man first, so that if he falters, Abraham will come and rectify after him.”<sup>21</sup>**

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<sup>18</sup> Gen. 2:8.

<sup>19</sup> Ps. 139:2.

<sup>20</sup> Gen. 2:7.

<sup>21</sup> Gen. Rabbah 14:5–6.