



א שטיקל תורה A LITTLE SLICE OF TORAH

פון פרשת דער וואָך FROM THE WEEKLY PORTION

March 07, 2026



“Fostering diverse modes of attention to textual details cultivates correlative forms of attention to the world and divine reality”

Michael Fishbane (1943-), *Sacred Attunement: A Jewish Theology*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִלֶּךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ לַעֲסוֹק בְּדַבְרֵי תוֹרָה:

“Tachometer Torah”



...read down to the red line

Parashat-haShavu'a Stats

Weekly Portion: *Ki Tissa*

Consists of: Exodus 30:1-34:35

Sequence—

in annual Torah cycle: 21st of 54

in Exodus: 9th of 11



A Salient Selection from the Portion -

Exodus 32:7-14

Context: *Exodus, second of the Five Books of the Torah, is an account of how God liberated the Israelites from Egypt and entered into a Covenant with us at Mount Sinai, and a record of the legislations we undertook for the conduct of the society we were to establish in the Promised Land.*

Content: *As Moses, still up on the Mountain, receives the final details of the specifications for the fabrication of the Mishkan, God informs him that his constituency down below— impatient for his return— have proceeded to implement their own devotional cult directed to the worship of a golden statue.*

“Go, get down— for **Your people**, whom **you** brought up out of the land of Egypt, **have corrupted themselves** by turning aside speedily from the way which I have instructed them. They have made themselves a molded calf, to which they have bowed low and made offerings, proclaiming: ‘these are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up out of the land of Egypt’.”

לָךְ רַד כִּי שָׁחַת עַמֶּךָ אֲשֶׁר
הָעֲלִיתָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם סָרוּ מֵהָר
מִן הַדֶּרֶךְ אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתָם עָשׂוּ לָהֶם
עֵגֶל מִסֹּכָה וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲווּ לוֹ וַיִּזְבְּחוּ לוֹ
וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלֶּה אֱלֹהֵיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל
אֲשֶׁר הֵעֲלוּךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם

plural form

The Eternal One said further to Moses: “I have seen this people, how arrogant and stubborn they are. So, now, **only let Me be, and My wrath will blaze forth against them** to make an end of them all, and make of you a great nation!”

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֵל מֹשֶׁה רְאִיתִי אֶת
הָעָם הַזֶּה וְהִנֵּה עִם קִשָּׁה עֲרֹף
הוּא וְעַתָּה הִנֵּיחָה לִּי וַיַּחַר אַפִּי
בָהֶם וְאֶכְלֶם וְאַעֲשֶׂה אוֹתָךְ לְגוֹי
גָּדוֹל

more over

Then Moses implored the Presence of The Eternal One, his God, saying: “Why, O Eternal One, should Your fury rage **against Your Own People**, whom You took such pains to bring out of the land of Egypt, with such a dramatic exercise of power?”

“**Why should the Egyptians** [be given occasion to] say: ‘It was with malicious intent that [their God] brought them out, in order to kill them in the hills and to wipe them off the face of the earth!’

“Turn back from the fury of Your wrath; renounce the evil against **Your people**.”

“**Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants**, to whom You swore upon Yourself, telling them: ‘I will multiply your progeny like the stars of the sky’; and all this land— of which you told them ‘I will give it to your descendants’, these [people here] are to have it as their eternal legacy!”

At that, The Eternal One renounced the evil which He had intended to do to **His People**.

וַיַּחַל מֹשֶׁה אֶת פְּנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהָיו
וַיֹּאמֶר לָמָּה יַחְרֶה אַפְּךָ
בְּעַמֶּךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתָ מֵאֶרֶץ
מִצְרַיִם בְּלַח גְּדוֹל וּבְיָד חֲזָקָה

לָמָּה יֹאמְרוּ מִצְרַיִם לֵאמֹר בְּרָעָה
הוֹצִיאָם לְהַרְגֵם אֶתֶם בְּהָרִים
וּלְכַלְתֶּם מֵעַל פְּנֵי הָאָדָמָה

שׁוּב מִחֲרוֹן אַפְּךָ
וְהִנָּחַם עַל הָרָעָה לְעַמֶּךָ

זָכוּ לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וּלְיִשְׂרָאֵל
עַבְדֶּיךָ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתָּ לָהֶם בְּךָ
וַתְּדַבֵּר אֱלֹהִים אַרְבָּה אֶת זַרְעֲכֶם
כְּכּוֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם וְכָל הָאָרֶץ
הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר אָמַרְתִּי אֲתֵן
לְזַרְעֲכֶם וְנִחְלוּ לְעֹלָם

וַיִּנָּחַם יְהוָה עַל הָרָעָה אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר
לַעֲשׂוֹת לְעַמּוֹ

I) The Argument from Self-interest -

verse 11 **בְּלַח גְּדוֹל לָמָּה יַחְרֶה אַפְּךָ בְּעַמֶּךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם**
Why should Your fury rage against **Your Own people**, whom You took such
Pains to bring out of Egypt?

אֲנִי יְהוָה וְהוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם מִתַּחַת סְבִלַת מִצְרַיִם וְהִצַּלְתִּי אֶתְכֶם מֵעַבְדֻתָם
A) Defining intent of affirmative action (Exodus 6:6) - I am the Eternal One. **I will be bringing you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians** and I will rescue you from servitude to them!

וַיִּדְעוּ מִצְרַיִם כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה
B) Articulating intended outcome of affirmative action (Exodus 7:5) - Then the Egyptians shall know that I am the Eternal One,

בְּנִטְתִּי אֶת יָדִי עַל מִצְרַיִם וְהוֹצֵאתִי אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִתּוֹכָם
by means of My exerting My might against the Egyptians, and by My bringing the Israelites out of their midst.

לְמַכָּה מִצְרַיִם בְּבְכוֹרֵיהֶם וַיּוֹצֵא יִשְׂרָאֵל מִתּוֹכָם

C) Celebrating the effort exerted on our behalf (Psalm 136:10-11) - [We render praise] to the One Who struck at the Egyptians by means of their first-born— and Who brought Israel out of their midst....

אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים

D) Making the Covenant (Exodus 20:2) - I am the Eternal One, your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from that place of slavery.

אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לְהִיּוֹת לָכֶם לֵאלֹהִים

E) Reaffirming the Covenant through devotion (Numbers 15:41) - I am the Eternal One, your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt in order to be your God.

אֲנֹכִי כְרַתִּי בְרִית אֶת אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם בְּיוֹם הוֹצֵאִי אוֹתָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם

F) Maintaining the Covenant through the ages (Jeremiah 34:13) - I entered into a Covenant with your forebears at the time I brought them out of the land of Egypt.

וַתִּכְוֶנְנִי לָךְ אֶת עַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל לָךְ לְעַד עוֹלָם

G) An enduring relationship (II Samuel 7:24) - You established Your people, Israel, for Yourself, to be Your people for all time;

וְאַתָּה יְהוָה הָיִיתָ לָהֶם לֵאלֹהִים

while as for You, O Eternal One, You have been theirs as their God.

II) The “P.R.” Argument -

לָמָּה יֹאמְרוּ מִצְרַיִם לֵאמֹר בְּרָעָה הוֹצִיאָם

verse 12 **Why should the Egyptians [be given occasion to] say: “It was with malicious intent that [their God] brought them out”**

וְשָׁמְעוּ מִצְרַיִם כִּי־הִעֲלִיתָ בְּכַחַד אֶת־הָעַם הַזֶּה מִקֶּרְבוֹ וְאָמְרוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ שָׁב הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת

H) Spreading the word (Numbers 14:13, 14:15-16) - Now the Egyptians— from whose midst You had brought up this people with great might— will hear, and they will tell the inhabitants of this land [of Canaan, to which You had intended to bring them].

וְהִמְתָּה אֶת־הָעַם הַזֶּה כְּאִישׁ אֶחָד וְאָמְרוּ הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר שָׁמְעוּ אֶת שְׁמֶעְךָ לֵאמֹר מִבְּלַתִּי יִכְלַת יְהוָה לְהַבִּיא אֶת־הָעַם הַזֶּה אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־נִשְׁבַּע לָהֶם וַיִּשְׁחָטֵם בַּמִּדְבָּר

So if You put this entire people to death, down to the last individual, those nations that have heard of Your fame will say: “It must have been because of the inability of the Eternal One to bring this people to the land which had been sworn to them that He slaughtered them all in the wilderness.”

more over

וְאָמְרוּ הַגּוֹיִם וגו' - פירוש לא מצרים לבד אלא כל הגוים אֲשֶׁר שָׁמְעוּ אֶת שְׁמִיעֶךָ
I) Comprehensive loss of reputation (Chayim ibn-Attar 1696-1742], *Or haChayim* on
Numbers 14:15 - “Then those nations will say” etc., with the plural noun signifying that
not just Egypt alone, but rather all the nations “which have heard of Your fame.”

ויתהפך קידוש ה' לחילול ח"ו בפי כל העמים

Thus the holiness of the Eternal One will be turned instead to defamation (which may
Heaven forbid!) in the mouths of all peoples.

הזכיר משה בתפלתו וְאָמְרוּ הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר שָׁמְעוּ אֶת־שְׁמִיעֶךָ לֵאמֹר וגו'
J) A futile defense of God's Glory (RaMBaN [Bonastruc da Porta, 1194-1270] on
Deuteronomy 32:26) - Moses mentions in his plea [Numbers 14:15] “those nations that have
heard of Your fame will say....”

והטעם בטענה הזאת איננו כרוצה להראות כחו בין שונאיו כל הגוים כְּאִין נִגְדוּ
מֵאִפְס וְתֵהוּ נִחְשְׁבוּ לוֹ

Now the reason for [God's responding to] this plea is **not a desire to demonstrate Divine
Might among His foes** (for “to Him all the nations are as nothing, reckoned as nothing and
emptiness” [Isaiah 40:17])....

- noteworthy refrains in the leaving-Egypt narrative -

וְאֶכְבֹּדָה בְּפָרְעָה

“I will get glory over Pharaoh”

3x in Exodus 14 (at the Sea)

יָדְעוּ מִצְרַיִם כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה

“then **all Egypt shall know** that I am the Eternal One”

2x in Exodus 7, 4x in Exodus 14

K) God's declared awareness of others' opinions (Deuteronomy 32:26-27) -

אָמַרְתִּי אֲפֹאֲהֵם אֲשַׁבִּיתָהּ מֵאֲנוּשׁ זָכָרם

I intended to let My wrath loose on them,
to obliterate them from human memory—

לֹוּלִי כַעַס אוֹיֵב אֶגּוֹר פֶּן יִנְכְּרוּ צָרִימוֹ

had it not been for the furious glee of their enemies,
lest their foes should have claimed the credit;

פֶּן יֹאמְרוּ יָדְנוּ רָמָה וְלֹא יְהוָה פָּעַל כָּל זֹאת

Lest they should say: “The triumph is ours;

it was not the Eternal One Who has wrought all this!”

כִּי אָמַר בְּכַח יָדִי עָשִׂיתִי וּבְחֲכָמָתִי כִּי נִבְנוֹתִי

L) God's insistence on “top billing” (Isaiah 10:13, 10:15) -

For [the arrogant King of Assyria] thinks: “**By my own might have I done it,**
and, in my cleverness, by my own brilliant stratagem!”

הִיתַפְּאָר הַגְּרֹזֶן עַל הַחֲצִיב בּוֹ אִם יִתְגַּדֵּל הַמְּשׁוֹר עַל מְנִיפוֹ

continued

Does the axe glorify itself over the One Who chops with it,
or the saw extol itself above the One Who wields it?

וְאַעַשׂ לְמַעַן שְׁמִי לְבַלְתִּי הִחַל לְעֵינֵי הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר הִמָּה בְּתוֹכָם

M) Preserving an international reputation (Ezekiel 20:9) - I have done it for the sake of My Own Name, **that it not be profaned in the sight of the nations** in whose midst they are,

אֲשֶׁר נֹודַעְתִּי אֲלֵיהֶם לְעֵינֵיהֶם לְהוֹצִיאֵם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם
to all of whom I was made known before their very eyes when I brought [My people] out of the land of Egypt.

III) The Argument of Personal Integrity -

verse 12 **זְכוֹר לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וּלְיִשְׂרָאֵל עֲבָדֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתָּ לָהֶם בְּךָ**
Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants, **to whom You swore upon Yourself**

לא בזכות אבות נתפלל משה עכשיו

N) On the importance of honoring commitments (Isaiah haLeivi Horowitz [1565-1630], *Sh'nei Luchot haB'rit*, 10:7:6) - Note that Moses is not at this juncture praying in terms of **זְכוֹת אָבוֹת** *z'chut avot* [the merit of our worthy forebears].

והטעם בעבור שהארץ נתנה לאבות ומהם ירש

Now the reason for this is that **the land has already been consigned to the Patriarchs, from whom it is enjoined as a legacy** [upon their heirs]—

והם מורדים באבותם ולא חפצים במתנה שלהם אשר האבות היו בוחרים בהם מאד

even if the latter rebel against their forebears, and do not desire that gift which the forebears, for their part, had earnestly desired them to have.

לְהַמִּית צְדִיק עִם־רָשָׁע וְהָיָה כְּצְדִיק כְּרָשָׁע

O) A presumption of Divine integrity going back to the Patriarchs (Genesis 18:24) -

To put the righteous to death, along with the wicked, so as to make the innocent the same as the guilty—

חֲלָלָה לָךְ מַעֲשֵׂת כְּדָבָר הַזֶּה

Heaven forbid that You should do such a thing!

הַשֹּׁפֵט כָּל הָאָרֶץ לֹא יַעֲשֶׂה מִשְׁפָּט

Shall the Judge of all the world not do justly?



Abraham argues for the cities of the Plain

P) The index of human devotion (Psalm 45:8) –

וְתִשָּׂנֵא רָשָׁע אֶהְבֵּת צְדָק
You have loved righteousness, and hated wickedness;
עַל כֵּן מִשְׁחָךְ אֱלֹהִים שָׁמֵן שֶׁשֶׁן מִחֲבֵרֶיךָ
 Accordingly **God**, your God, **has** with the oil of rejoicing **anointed you over your fellows.**

Q1) Midrash Genesis Rabbah 49:9 -

א"ל הקב"ה אברהם
 The Holy And Blessed One declared: **“Abraham,**

Q2) Midrash Leviticus Rabbah 10:3 -

אמ' לו אהרון
 [The Holy And Blessed One] declared: **“Aaron,**

Q3) Midrash P'siqta Rabbati 33:4 -

אמר לדוד
 [The Holy And Blessed One] declared to **David:**

Q4) Midrash Leviticus Rabbah 10:2 -

א"ל הקב"ה ישעיהו
 The Holy And Blessed One declared: **“Isaiah,**

אֶהְבֵּת
 ‘you have loved
צְדָק
 righteousness
 [Psalm 45:8],
 in that
אֶהְבֵּת
you cared enough
לצדק
to argue for the acquittal of
את בריותי
My creatures.”

יְהוָה יְהוָה אֵל רַחוּם וְחַנּוּן אַרְךְּ אַפַּיִם וְרַב חַסֵּד וְאֱמֶת נִצֵּר חַסֵּד לְאֲלֹפִים
נִשְׂא עוֹן וְפָשַׁע וְחִטָּאָה וְנִקְהָ לֹא יִנְקָה פֶקֶד עוֹן אָבוֹת עַל בְּנֵים וְעַל בְּנֵי בְנֵים
עַל שְׁלֵשִׁים וְעַל רַבְעִים

R) Going On-the-Record with 13 Attributes (Exodus 34:6-7) – The Eternal One, The Eternal One, is God— compassionate and gracious; **slow to anger, and abundant in kindness and truth**; bestowing **kindness** to the thousandth generation by forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; while most assuredly not holding blameless— but **taking into account** the iniquity of the parents when judging children and children’s children, to the third and fourth generation.

Honesty and Fairness as Divine Attributes

S1) Deuteronomy 7:9 -

וַיֵּדַעְתָּ כִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים

For you are to know that the Eternal One, your God, is indeed God—

הָאֵל הַנֶּאֱמָן שֹׁמֵר הַבְּרִית וְהַחֶסֶד
the faithful God, keeping the Covenant of kindness....

S2) Second Haftarah blessing -

צְדִיק בְּכָל הַדּוֹרוֹת, הָאֵל הַנֶּאֱמָן
הַאֹמֵר וְעָשָׂה, הַמְדַבֵּר וּמְקַיֵּם,

Righteous One in every generation; **the faithful God** Who says, and then does; Who speaks and fulfills;

שֶׁכָּל דְּבָרָיו אֱמֶת וְצָדִק
Whose every Word is true and just.