



בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ לְעֲסוֹק בְּדַבְרֵי תוֹרָה.

*Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech Ha'Olam,
Asher Kideshanu BeMitzvotav VeTzivanu, La'asok BeDivrei Torah!*

Blessed are You, Adonai Our God, Ruler of the Universe,

Who has made us holy with Mitzvot and commands us to be busy with Torah!

Text A: Deuteronomy 29:9-14

You stand this day, all of you, before the Lord your God, your tribal heads, your elders and your officials, all the men of Israel, your children, your wives, even the stranger within your camp, from woodchopper to water-drawer, to enter into the covenant of the Lord your God, which the Lord your God is concluding with you this day, with its sanctions; to the end that God may establish you this day as God's people and be your God, as God promised you and swore to your ancestors, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. I make this covenant, with its sanctions, not with you alone, but both with those who are standing here with us this day before the Lord your God and with those who are not with us here this day.

ט אַתֶּם נֹצְבִים הַיּוֹם כָּלְכֶם לִפְנֵי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם
ראשֵׁיכֶם שְׂבִיטֵיכֶם וְקִנְיֵיכֶם וְשִׁטְרֵיכֶם כָּל אִישׁ
יִשְׂרָאֵל: י טַפְכֶם זְשִׁיכֶם וְגֵרְךָ אֲשֶׁר בְּקֶרֶב מִוְזְזִיךָ
מִוְזֵטֵב עֲצִיךָ עַד שִׂאֵב מִימִיךָ: יא לְעֹבְרֵךְ בְּבְרִית
ה' אֶל-לְהִיךָ וּבְאֵלֹתָיו אֲשֶׁר ה' אֶל-לְהִיךָ פָּרַת לַעֲמֹד
הַיּוֹם: יב לְמַעַן הַקִּים אֶתְּךָ הַיּוֹם | לֹא לָעַם וְהוּא
יְהִי-הֵכָף לְאֵלֹהִים כְּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר-לְךָ וּכְאֲשֶׁר זָשָׁע
לְאַבְרָהָם לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וּלְיַעֲקֹב: יג וְכֹל אֲתֶכֶם
לְבַדְכֶם אֲנֹכִי פָּרַת אֶת-הַבְּרִית הַזֹּאת וְאֶת-הָאֵלֹהִים
הַזֹּאת: יד כִּי אֶת-אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁנֹו פֹה לְעִמּוֹ עִמְד הַיּוֹם
לִפְנֵי ה' אֶל-לְהִינוּ וְאֶת אֲשֶׁר אֵינְנוּ פֹה לְעִמּוֹ הַיּוֹם:

Text B: Deuteronomy 4:1-8

And now, O Israel, give heed to the laws and rules that I am instructing you to observe, so that you may live to enter and occupy the land that the Lord, the God of your ancestors, is giving you. You shall not add anything to what I command you or take anything away from it, but keep the commandments of the Lord your God that I enjoin upon you. You saw with your own eyes that the Lord did in the matter of Ba'al Pe'or; that the Lord your God wiped out from among you every person who followed Ba'al Pe'or; while you, who held fast to the Lord your God are all alive today. 5 See, I have imparted to you laws and rules, as the Lord my God has commanded me, for you to abide by in the land that you are about to enter and occupy. Observe them faithfully, for that will be proof of your wisdom and discernment to other peoples, who on hearing of all these laws will say, "Surely that great nation is a wise and discerning people." For what great nation is there that has a god so close at hand as is the Lord our God whenever we call upon God? Or what great nation has laws and rules as perfect as all this Torah/Teaching that I set before you this day?

א וְעַתָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל שְׁמַע אֶל-הַצִּוִּיּוֹת וְאֶל-הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים
אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְלַמֵּד אֶתְכֶם לַעֲשׂוֹת לְמַעַן תִּחְיוּ
וּבְאֵתֶם וּיְרִשְׁתֶּם אֶת-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר ה' אֶל-לְהִי
אֲבֹתֵיכֶם זָתַן לְכֶם: ב לֹא תִסְפוּ עַל-הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר
אֲנֹכִי מְצַוֶּה אֶתְכֶם וְלֹא תִגְרְעוּ מִמֶּנּוּ לְשׂוֹמֵר
אֶת-הַמִּצְוֹת ה' אֶל-לְהִיכֶם אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְצַוֶּה אֶתְכֶם:
ג עֵינֵיכֶם הִרְאֹת אֶת אֲשֶׁר-עָשָׂה ה' בְּבַעַל פְּעוֹר
כִּי כָל-הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר הִלֵּךְ אַחֲרָי בַעַל-פְּעוֹר הִשְׁמִידוּ
ה' אֶל-לְהִיךָ מִקֶּרְבְּךָ: ד וְאַתֶּם הִדְבַקְתֶּם בֵּה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם
זָיִים כָּלְכֶם הַיּוֹם: ה רָאֵה | לְמַדְתִּי אֶתְכֶם זָקִים
וּמִשְׁפָּטִים כְּאֲשֶׁר זָנִי ה' אֶל-לְהִי לַעֲשׂוֹת כִּן בְּקֶרֶב
הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֲתֶם בָּאִים שִׁמְהָ לְרִשְׁתָּהּ: ו וְשִׁמְרֶתֶם
וְעֲשִׂיתֶם כִּי הוּא זָכְמִיתְכֶם וּבִינְתְּכֶם לְעֵינֵי הָעַמִּים
אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁמְעוּן אֶת כָּל-הַזָּקִים הָאֵלֶּה וְאָמְרוּ רַק
עִם-זָכְמִים וְנִבְוֹן הַגִּזִּי הַגָּדוֹל הַזֶּה: ז כִּי מִי-גִזִּי גָּדוֹל
אֲשֶׁר-לוֹ אֶל-לְהִים קָרְבִים אֵלָיו פֹּה' אֶל-לְהִינוּ
בְּכָל-קְרָאֵנוּ אֵלָיו: ח וּמִי גִזִּי גָּדוֹל אֲשֶׁר-לוֹ זָקִים
וּמִשְׁפָּטִים צְדִיקִים כָּכָל הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי
זָתַן לִפְנֵיכֶם הַיּוֹם:

Text C: Numbers 27:1-11

The daughters of Zelophehad, of Manassite family - son of Hopher son of Gilead son of Machir son of Manasseh son of Joseph - came forward. The names of the daughters were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. They stood before Moses, Eleazar the priest, the chieftains, and the whole assembly, at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, and they said, "Our father died in the wilderness. He was not one of the faction, Korah's faction, which banded together against the Lord, but died for his own sin; and he has left no sons. Let not our father's name be lost to his clan just because he had no son! Give us a holding among our father's kinsmen!" Moses brought their case before the Lord. And the Lord said to Moses, "The plea of Zelophehad's daughters is just: you should give them a hereditary holding among their father's kinsmen; transfer their father's share to them. Further, speak to the Israelite people as follows: 'If a man dies without leaving a son, you shall transfer his property to his daughter. If he has no daughter, you shall assign his property to his brothers. If he has no brothers, you shall assign his property to his father's brothers. If his father had no brothers, you shall assign his property to his nearest relative in his own clan, and he shall inherit it.' This shall be the law of procedure for the Israelites, in accordance with the Lord's command to Moses."

א ויתקרבנה בנות זלפחד בן-זופר בן-גלעד בן-מכיר בן-מנשה למשפחות מנשה בן-יוסף ואלה שמות בנותיו מיזלה נעה וזגלה ומלכה ותרצה: ב ותעמדנה לפני משה ולפני אלעזר הכהן ולפני הנשיאים וככל העדה פתחו אהל-מועד לאמר: ג אבינו מת במדבר והוא לא היה בתוך העדה הזועדים על-ה' בעדת-קרוח פי-בזחטאו מת ובנים לא-היו לו: ד למה יגרע שם-אבינו מתוך משפחותו פי אין לו בן תנה-לנו אחזה בתוך אחי אבינו: ה ויקרב משה את-משפטן לפני ה': ו ויאמר ה' אל-משה לאמר: ז פן בנות זלפחד הברת נתן נתן להם אחזת זנוכה בתוך אחי אביהם והעברת את-זנוכות אביהן להן: ח ואל-בני ישראל תדבר לאמר איש פי-ימות ובן אין לו והעברתם את-זנוכותו לבתו: ט ואם-אין לו בת ונתתם את-זנוכותו לאחיו: י ואם-אין לו אחים ונתתם את-זנוכותו לאחי אביו: יא ואם-אין אחים לאביו ונתתם את-זנוכותו לשארו הקרב אכיו ממשפחותו וירש אתה והיתת לבני ישראל לזקת משפט כאשר צוה ה' את-משה:

Text D: Deuteronomy 17:8-13

If a case is too baffling for you to decide, be it a controversy over homicide, civil law, or assault - matters of dispute in your courts - you shall promptly repair to the place that the Lord your God will have chosen, and appear before the levitical priests, or the magistrate in charge at the time, and present your problem. When they have announced to you the verdict in the case, you shall carry out the verdict that is announced to you from that place that the Lord chose, observing scrupulously all their instructions to you. You shall act in accordance with the instructions given you and the ruling handed down to you; you must not deviate from the verdict that they announce to you either to the right or to the left. Should a man act presumptuously and disregard the priest charged with serving there the Lord your God, or the magistrate, that man shall die. Thus you will sweep out evil from Israel: all the people will hear and be afraid and will not act presumptuously again.

ח פי יפלא ממך דבר למשפט בין-דם | לדם בין-דין לדין ובין זגע לזגע דברי ריבת בשעריך וקמת ועלית אל-המקום אשר יבחר ה' א-להיך בו: ט ובאת אל-הכהנים הלויים ואל-השופט אשר יהיה בימים ההם ודרשת והגידו לך את דבר המשפט: י ועשית על-פי הדבר אשר יגידו לך מן-המקום ההוא אשר יבחר ה' ושמרת לעשות ככל אשר יורה: יא על-פי התורה אשר יורה ועל-המשפט אשר-יאמרו לך תעשה לא תסור מן-הדבר אשר-יגידו לך ימין ושמאל: יב והאיש אשר-יעשה בזדון לבבתי שמוע אל-הפיהן העמד לשירת שם את-ה' א-להיך או אל-השופט ומת האיש ההוא ובערת הרע מישראל: יג וככל-העם ישמעו ויראו ולא יזידון עוד:

Text E: Abraham Joshua Heschel, *God in Search of Man*, p. 217

And yet mere attachment to events does not fully express the essence of Jewish living. Event is a formal category, describing the fact of pure happening. However, to speak of a pure event, of an event in and by itself, is to speak of an artificial abstraction that exists nowhere except in the minds of some theologians. The moment of revelation must not be separated from the content or substance of revelation. Loyalty to the norms and thoughts conveyed in the event is as essential as the reality of the event. Acceptance was not complete, the fulfillment has not occurred. The decisive moment is yet to come. The event must be fulfilled, not only believed in. What was expected at Sinai comes about in a moment of a good deed. A commandment is a foresight, a deed is a fulfillment. The deed completes the event. Revelation is but a beginning, our deeds must continue, our lives must complete it.

We must not idolize the moment or the event. The will of God is eternal, transcending all moments, all events, including acts of revelation. The significance of time depends upon what is done in time in relation to [God's] will. The moment at Sinai depends for its fulfillment upon the present moment, upon all moments. Had Israel been disloyal subsequent to Sinai, that great moment would have been deprived of all meaning. The Tablets are broken whenever the golden calf is called into being. We believe that every hour is endowed with the power to lend meaning to – or withhold meaning from – all other hours.

Text F: Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, *Kol Dodi Dofek: It Is the Voice of My Beloved That Knocketh*

THE COVENANT OF FATE: What is the nature of a covenant of fate? Fate in the life of a people, as in the life of an individual, signifies an existence of compulsion. A strange necessity binds the particulars into one whole. The individual, against his will, is subjected and subjugated to the national, fate-laden reality. He cannot evade this reality and become assimilated into some other different reality. The environment spits out the Jew who flees from the presence of the Lord, and he is bestirred from his slumber in the same manner as the prophet Jonah, who awoke upon hearing the voice of the ship's captain demanding that he identify himself in both personal and national-religious terms.

THE COVENANT OF DESTINY: What is the nature of the covenant of destiny? Destiny in the life of a people, as in the life of an individual, signifies a deliberate and conscious existence that the people has chosen out of its own free will and in which it finds the full realization of its historical being. Its existence, in place of simply being the experience of an unalterable reality into which the people has been thrust, now appears as the experience of an act possessing teleological dimensions, replete with movement, ascent, striving, and attaining. The people is embedded in its destiny as a result of its longing for a refined, substantive, and purposeful existence. Destiny is the flowing spring of the people's unique exaltation: it is the unceasing stream of supernal influence that will never dry up as long as the people charts its path in accordance with the divine Law. A life of destiny is a life with direction; it is the fruit of cognitive readiness and free choice.