
Shefa: “Wholeness & a Shared Song”

A Fourfold Song — Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, Vol. II, pp. 458-459

There is one who sings the song of her own life, and in herself she finds everything, her full spiritual satisfaction.

There is another who sings the song of his people. He leaves the circle of his own individual self, because he finds it without sufficient breadth, without an idealistic basis. He aspires toward the heights, and he stretches himself with a gentle love to the whole community of Israel. Together with her he sings her songs. He feels grieved in her afflictions and delights in her hopes. He contemplates noble and pure thoughts about her past and her future, and probes with love and wisdom her inner spiritual essence.

There is another who reaches toward more distant realms, and she goes beyond the boundary of Israel to sing the song of humanity, Her vistas of the majesty of humanity's noble essence. general goal and looks higher perfection. From this source of life she draws the subjects of her meditation and study, her aspirations and her visions.

Then there is one who rises toward wider horizons, until he links himself with all existence, with all God's creatures, with all worlds, and he sings his song with all of them. It is of one such as this that tradition has said that whoever sings a portion of song each day is assured of having a share in the world to come.

And then there is one who rises with all these songs in one ensemble, and they all join their voices. Together they sing their songs with beauty, each one lends vitality and life to the other. They are sounds of joy and gladness, sounds of jubilation and celebration, sounds of ecstasy and spirit extends to the wider humanity generally, and She aspires towards humanity's forward toward humankind'

The song of the self, the song of the people, the song of humanity, the song of the world all merge in her at all times, in every hour.

And this full comprehensiveness rises to become the song of holiness, the song of God, the song of Israel, in its full strength and beauty, in its full authenticity and greatness. The name "Israel" stands for “shir el” - the song of God. It is a simple song, a twofold song, a threefold song, and a fourfold song. It is the Song of Songs of Solomon, “shlomo” – which means peace or wholeness.

It is the song of the Highest One in whom is wholeness.

Shefa: "Teiku" & Conflict Resolution

Text 1: Malachi 3:23-24

כ הַיְהוָה אֲנֹכִי שְׁלַח שְׁלַח לְכֶם אֶת אֱלֹהֵי הַתְּבִיא לִפְנֵי בּוֹא יוֹם יְהוָה הַגָּדוֹל
וְהַגּוֹרָא: כִּי וְהָשִׁיב לֵב-אָבוֹת עַל-בָּנִים וְלֵב בָּנִים עַל-אָבוֹתָם. פֶּן-אָבֹא
וְהַכִּיתִי אֶת-הָאָרֶץ חָרָם:

Lo, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before the coming of the awesome, fearful day of the Lord. He shall reconcile fathers with sons and sons with their fathers, so that, when I come, I do not strike the whole land with utter destruction.

Text 2: *adaption of Mishnah Eduyot 8:7*

אָמַר רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻעַ, מִקְבֵּל אֲנִי מֵרַבִּין יוֹחָנָן בֶּן זַכַּי שִׁשְׁמַע מֵרַבּוֹ וְרַבּוֹ מֵרַבּוֹ, הִלְכָה לְמֹשֶׁה
מִסִּינַי שְׁאִין אֵלֵיהוּ בָּא לְטָמֵא וְלִטְהַר לְרַחֵק וְלִקְרֹב, אֲלֵא לְרַחֵק הַמְקוֹרֵבִין בְּזִרְעוֹ וְלִקְרֹב
הַמְרַחֲקִין בְּזִרְעוֹ. מִשְׁפַּחַת בֵּית צְרִיפָה הִיטָה בְּעֶבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן וְרַחֲקָה בֶּן צִיּוֹן בְּזִרְעוֹ, וְעוֹד
אַחֲרֵת הִיטָה שֵׁם וְקָרְבָה בֶּן צִיּוֹן בְּזִרְעוֹ, כְּגוֹן אֵלֵי אֵלֵיהוּ בָּא לְטָמֵא וְלִטְהַר לְרַחֵק וְלִקְרֹב.
רַבִּי יְהוּדָה אָמַר, לְקָרְב, אֲבָל לֹא לְרַחֵק. רַבִּי שְׁמַעוֹן אָמַר, לְהַשׁוּת הַמִּתְלַקֵּת. וְחֻכְמַיִם
אָמְרִים, לֹא לְרַחֵק וְלֹא לְקָרְב, אֲלֵא לַעֲשׂוֹת שְׁלוֹם בְּעוֹלָם, שְׁנֵאמַר (מלאכי ג) הַיְהוָה אֲנֹכִי
שְׁלַח לְכֶם אֶת אֱלֹהֵי הַתְּבִיא וְגו' וְהָשִׁיב לֵב אָבוֹת עַל בָּנִים וְלֵב בָּנִים עַל אָבוֹתָם:

Rabbi Yehudah said: I have received a tradition from Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai, who heard it from his teacher and his teacher heard it from his teacher as a tradition given to Moshe from Sinai, that Elijah will not come to pronounce that which is ritually pure or ritually impure, to send away or to bring near. Rather he will come to send away those brought close by force and to bring close those who were distanced by force....

Rabbi Yehudah says: To draw closer but not to distance.

Rabbi Shimon says: To settle disputes among sages, The sages say: Elijah's purpose is not to bring close nor to distance, rather to make peace in the world, for it is said: *'Behold I will send to you Elijah the prophet... and he will turn the heart of the heart of the fathers to the children and the heart of the children to their fathers.'*

Shefa: “Flexibility and Resilience”

Babylonian Talmud, Ta’anit 20a-b

I. Regarding the verse “*For the Lord will smite Israel as a reed is shaken in the water* (I Kings 14:15) Rab Judah said in the name of Rab: ‘The verse implies blessing, for Rabbi Samuel bar Nachmani said in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: ‘What is the meaning of the verse, ***Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are trying*** (Prov. 17:6)’?”

Better is the curse which Achiyah the Shilonite pronounced on Israel than the blessings with which Balaam the wicked blessed them. Achiyah the Shilonite cursed them by comparing them with the ‘reed.’ He said to Israel, ‘***For the Lord will smite Israel as a reed is shaken in water.***’ Israel is like the reed – as the reed grows by the water and its stock grows new shoots if it is cut and its roots are many, and even though all the winds of the universe come and blow at it they cannot move it from its place for it sways with the winds, and as soon as the winds have dropped the reed resumes its upright position. But Balaam the wicked blessed them by comparing them with the ‘cedar’, as it is said, ‘***As cedars beside the waters*** (Num. 24:6).’ The cedar does not grow by the waterside and its stock does not grow new shoots if it is cut and its roots are not many, and even though all the winds of the universe blow at it does not sway with them’; if however the south wind blows at it, it uproots it and turns it upside down. For this the reed merited that of it should be made a pen for the writing of the Torah, the Prophets and Writings.

II. Our Rabbis have taught: A man should always be gentle as the reed and never unyielding as the cedar.

Once Rabbi Elazar son of Rabbi Simeon was coming from Migdal Gedor, from the house of his teacher, and he was riding leisurely on his donkey by the riverside and was feeling happy and elated because he had studied much Torah. There chanced to meet him an exceedingly ugly man who greeted him, ‘Peace be upon you, Sir’. He, however, did not return his salutation but instead said to him, ‘Empty one, how ugly you are. Are all your fellow citizens as ugly as you are?’ The man replied: ‘I do not know, but go and tell the Craftsman who made me, “How Ugly is the vessel which you have made”.’ When Rabbi Eleazar realized that he had done wrong he dismounted from the ass and prostrated himself before the man and said to him, ‘I submit myself to you, forgive me’. The man replied: ‘I will not forgive you until you go to the craftsman who made me and say to him, “How ugly is the vessel which you have made”.’

Rabbi Elazar walked behind him until he reached his native city. When his fellow citizens came out to meet him greeting him with the words, ‘Peace be upon you O Teacher, O Master,’ the man asked them, ‘Whom are you addressing thus?’ They replied, ‘The man who is walking behind you.’ Thereupon he exclaimed: ‘If this man is a teacher, may there not be any more like him in Israel!’ The people then asked him: ‘Why?’ He replied: ‘Such and such a thing has he done to me. They said to him: ‘Nevertheless, forgive him, for he is a man greatly learned in the Torah.’ The man replied: ‘For your sakes I will forgive him, but only on the condition that he does not act in the same manner in the future.’ Soon after this Rabbi Eleazar son of Rabbi Simeon entered the Beit Midrash and expounded thus, ‘A man should always be gentle as the reed and let him never be unyielding as the cedar.’

And for this reason the reed merited that of it should be made a pen for the writing of the Law, Tefillin and Mezuzot.

Shefa: "How to Lead"

Talmud Bavli Eruvin 54b

תנו רבנן: כיצד סדר משנה? משה למד מפי הגבורה, נכנס אהרן ושנה לו משה פירקו. נסתלק אהרן וישב לשמאל משה. נכנסו בניו ושנה להן משה פירקו, נסתלקו בניו, אלעזר ישב לימין משה ואיתמר לשמאל אהרן. (רבי יהודה אומר: לעולם אהרן לימין משה חוזר.) נכנסו זקנים ושנה להן משה פירקו, נסתלקו זקנים, נכנסו כל העם ושנה להן משה פירקו. נמצאו ביד אהרן ארבעה, ביד בניו שלשה, וביד הזקנים שנים, וביד כל העם אחד. נסתלק משה, ושנה להן אהרן פירקו. נסתלק אהרן שנו להן בניו פירקו. נסתלקו בניו, שנו להן זקנים פירקו. נמצא ביד הכל ארבעה. מכאן אמר רבי אליעזר: חייב אדם לשנות לתלמידו ארבעה פעמים. וקל וחומר, ומה אהרן שלמד מפי משה, ומשה מפי הגבורה - כך, הדיוט מפי הדיוט - על אחת כמה וכמה!

... רבי פרידא הוה ליה ההוא תלמידא דהוה תני ליה ארבע מאה זימני וגמר. יומא חד בעיזה למלתא דמצוה, תנא ליה ולא גמר. אמר ליה: האידינא מאי שנא? אמר ליה: מדהויא שעתא דאמרו ליה למד איכא מילתא דמצוה - אסחאי לדעתאי, וכל שעתא אמינא, השתא קאי מר, השתא קאי מר. אמר ליה: הב דעתך ואתני לך. הדר תנא ליה ארבע מאה זימני [אחרנין] נפקא בת קלא ואמרה ליה: ניהא לך דליספו לך ארבע מאה שני, או דתיזכו את ודרך לעלמא דאתי? אמר: דתיזכו אנא ודריי לעלמא דאתי. אמר להן הקדוש ברוך הוא: תנו לו זו זו.

OUR RABBIS TAUGHT: What was the procedure of the instruction in the Mishnah? Moses learned from the mouth of God. Then Aaron entered and Moses taught him his lesson. Aaron then moved aside and sat down on Moses' left. Thereupon Aaron's sons entered and Moses taught them their lesson. His sons then moved aside, Elazar taking his seat on Moses' right and Itamar on Aaron's left. (Rabbi Judah stated: Aaron was always on Moses' right.) Thereupon the elders entered and Moses taught them their lesson, and when the elders moved aside all the people entered and Moses taught them their lesson.

It thus followed that Aaron heard the lesson four times, his sons heard it three times, the elders twice and all the people once. At this stage Moses departed and Aaron taught them his lesson. Then Aaron departed and his sons taught them their lesson. His sons then departed and the elders taught them their lesson. It thus followed that everybody heard the lesson four times.

From here Rabbi Eliezer inferred: It is a person's duty to teach her pupil a lesson four times. This is learned through deduction: Aaron, who learned from Moses, who had it from God, had to learn his lesson four times. How much more so an "ordinary" pupil who learns from an "ordinary" teacher!

... Rabbi Preida had a pupil to whom he taught the lesson four hundred times before the pupil could master it. On a certain day having been requested to attend to a religious matter Rabbi Preida taught him as usual but the pupil could not master the subject. 'What', the Master asked: 'is the matter today?' - 'From the moment', the pupil replied, 'Master was told that there was a religious matter to be attended to I could not concentrate, for at every moment I imagined, 'now the Master will get up or now the Master will get up'.

'Give me your attention', the Master said, 'and I will teach you again', and so he taught him another four hundred times. A Bat Kol issued forth asking Rabbi Preida, 'Do you prefer that four hundred years shall be added to your life or that you and your generation shall be privileged to have a share in the world to come?' - 'That I and my generation shall be privileged to have a share in the world to come,' answered Rabbi Preida. 'Give him both', said the Holy Blessed One.

Shefa: "How to Love"

a) Talmud Bavli Sanhedrin 7a - "ki rechimtin hava"

ההוא דהוה קאמר ואזיל: כי רחמתינ הוה עזיזא - אפותיא דספטירא שכיבן, השתא דלא עזיזא רחמתינ - פוריא בר שיתין גרמידי לא סגי לן. אמר רב הונא: קראי כתיבי, מעיקרא כתיב (שמות כ"ה) וְנִוְעַדְתִּי לְךָ שָׁם וּדְבַרְתִּי אֵתְךָ מִעַל הַכַּפֹּרֶת, ותניא: ארון תשעה וכפורת טפח - הרי כאן עשרה, וכתיב (מלכים א' ו') וְהַבַּיִת אֲשֶׁר בָּנָה הַמֶּלֶךְ שְׁלֹמֹה לַיהוָה שְׁעֵים אֲמָה אָרְכוֹ וְעֶשְׂרִים רַחְבּוֹ וּשְׁלֹשִׁים אֲמָה קוֹמָתוֹ. ולבסוף כתיב (ישעיהו ס"ו) כֹּה אָמַר ה' הַשָּׁמַיִם כִּסְאִי וְהָאָרֶץ הַדָּם רִגְלֵי אֵיזָה בַּיִת אֲשֶׁר תִּבְנֶנּוּ לִי וְגו'.

A man used to say, "When love was strong, we could have made our bed on a sword-blade; now that our love has grown weak, a bed of sixty cubits is not large enough for us."

Said Rabbi Huna, "This is alluded to in the following verses:

Of the former age, when Israel was loyal to God, it is said, "*And I will meet with you and speak with you from above the ark-cover* (Ex. 25:22)"; and further it is taught that the Ark measured nine hand-breadths high and the cover one hand-breadth (i.e., ten in all).

It is also written, "*The House which King Solomon built for the Lord was 60 cubits long, 20 cubits wide, and 30 cubits high.* (I Kings 6:2)" But of this latter age, when Israel had forsaken God, it is written, "*Thus said the Lord: The Heaven is my throne and the earth my footstool. Where could you build a house for me?* (Is. 66:1)"

b) Talmud Bavli Sanhedrin 105b - "ahavah mevatelet"

תנא משום רבי שמעון בן אלעזר: אהבה מבטלת שורה של גדולה - מאברהם. דכתיב וישלכם אברהם בבקר (בר' כא:ג), שנאה מבטלת שורה של גדולה - מבלעם, שנאמר ויקם בלעם בבקר ויחבש את אתונו (במ' בב:בא).

A Tanna taught in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar, "Love cancels out the rules of dignified conduct. We learn this from Abraham, as it is written, "*And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his donkey.* (Gen 22:3)" Hate likewise cancels out the rules of dignified conduct. We learn this from Balaam, as it is written, "*And Balaam rose up in the morning, and saddled his ass.* (Num. 22:21)"

Shefa: "Resemblance and Identity"

Babylonian Talmud, Menachot 29b

אמר רב יהודה אמר רב: בשעה שעלה משה למרום, מצאו להקב"ה שיושב וקושר כתרים לאותיות, אמר לפניו: רבש"ע, מי מעכב על ידך? אמר לו: אדם אחד יש שעתיד להיות בסוף כמה דורות ועקיבא בן יוסף שמו, שעתיד לדרוש על כל קוץ וקוץ תילין תילין של הלכות. אמר לפניו: רבש"ע, הראהו לי, אמר לו: חזור לאחורך. הלך וישב בסוף שמונה שורות, ולא היה יודע מה הן אומרים, תשש כחו כיון שהגיע לדבר אחד, אמרו לו תלמידיו: רבי, מנין לך? אמר להן: הלכה למשה מסיני, נתיישבה דעתו. חזר ובא לפני הקב"ה, אמר לפניו: רבונו של עולם, יש לך אדם כזה ואתה נותן תורה ע"י? אמר לו: שתוק, כך עלה במחשבה לפני! אמר לפניו: רבונו של עולם, הראני שכרו, אמר לו: חזור ולאחורך. חזר לאחוריו, ראה ששוקלין בשרו במקולין, אמר לפניו: רבש"ע, זו תורה וזו שכרה?! א"ל: שתוק, כך עלה במחשבה לפני!

Rav Yehuda quoted Rav: When Moses ascended to the Heights to receive the Torah he found God sitting and drawing crownlets upon the letters. Moses said to God, "Master of the Universe, what is staying Your hand from giving me the Torah unadorned?"

God replied, "There is a man who will arise many generations in the future, his name is Akiba b. Yosef. He will exegetically infer mound upon mound of *halakhot* (laws) from each and every tittle."

Moses requested, "Master of the Universe, show him to me." God said, "Turn backwards and you will see him."

Moses found himself in R. Akiba's classroom where he sat at the back of the eighth row. He didn't understand what they were talking about and felt weak. Then, they came to a matter about which the students asked Akiba, "Rabbi, how do you know this?" He told them, "It is the law given to Moses at Sinai." Moses felt relieved.

He returned to God and said, "Master of the Universe, you have a person like this and still You choose to give the Torah through my hands?" God replied, "Silence! This is according to My plan."

Moses said, "Master of the Universe, you've shown me his teaching Torah, show me his reward." God said, "Turn backwards and you may see it. Moses turned around and beheld [the Roman torturers] weighing his Akiba's flesh on the market scales. He said to God, "Master of the Universe, that was his Torah and this is his reward!?"

God said, "Silence! This is according to My plan!"

Shefa: "Triangulation"

Gemara- Masechet Bava Metzia 59b

PART I.

- *A new invention (Achnai's oven) is presented for consideration to the assembly of rabbis.*
- *Rabbi Eliezer fiercely debates with the sages, invoking miracles to prove the invention's fitness.*
- *At several crucial points, Rabbi Joshua counters Eliezer's powers, siding with the sages who consider the invention unfit.*
- *In the end the sages, led by their president Rabban Gamliel, win the debate, ruling that the invention championed by Eliezer is unfit for Jewish use.*

Rabbi Natan met Eliyahu the Prophet and asked him: "What did the Holy Blessed One do in that hour?" "God laughed," Eliyahu replied, saying, "My children have defeated Me, My children have defeated Me."

PART II.

On that day all objects which Rabbi Eliezer had declared clean were brought and burnt in fire. Then they took a vote and excommunicated him. Said they, 'Who shall go and inform him?' 'I will go,' answered Rabbi Akiba, 'lest an unsuitable person go and inform him, and thus destroy the whole world.'

What did Rabbi Akiba do? He donned black garments and wrapped himself in black, and sat at a distance of four cubits from him. 'Akiba,' said Rabbi Eliezer to him, 'what is the difference between today and tomorrow?' 'Master,' he replied, 'it appears to me that your companions hold aloof from you.' Thereupon he too rent his garments, put off his shoes, removed his seat and sat on the earth, whilst tears streamed from his eyes. The world was then smitten: a third of the olive crop, a third of the wheat, and a third of the barley crop. Some say, the dough in women's hands swelled up.

A Tanna taught: Great was the calamity that befell that day, for everything at which R. Eliezer cast his eyes was burned up. Rabban Gamaliel too was traveling in a ship, when a huge wave arose to drown him. 'It appears to me,' he reflected, 'that this is on account of none other but Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanus!' Thereupon he arose and exclaimed, 'Sovereign of the Universe! You know full well that I have not acted for my honor, nor for the honor of my paternal house, but for Yours, so that strife may not multiply in Israel!' 'At that the raging sea subsided.

Ima Shalom was Rabbi Eliezer's wife, and sister to Rabban Gamaliel. From the time of this incident onwards she did not permit him to fall upon his face [in prayer]. Now a certain day happened to be New Moon, but she mistook a full month for a defective one. Others say, a poor man came and stood at the door, and she took out some bread to him. On her return she found him fallen on his face. 'Get up!' she cried out to him, 'you have killed my brother!' In the meanwhile an announcement was made from the house of Rabban Gamaliel that he had died.

He said to her, "How did you know?" She replied: "This did I learn from my father's home: 'All Heavenly Gates are locked except for that of pain.'"

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אשכחיה רבי נתן לאליהו, אמר ליה: מאי עביד קודשא בריך הוא בההיא שעתא? – אמר ליה: קא חיך ואמר נצחוני בני, נצחוני בני.

PART II.

אמרו: אותו היום הביאו כל מהרות שטיהר רבי אליעזר ושרפום באש, ונמנו עליו וברכוהו. ואמרו: מי ילך ויודיעו? – אמר להם רבי עקיבא: אני אלך, שמא ילך אדם שאינו הגון ויודיעו, ונמצא מחריב את כל העולם כולו.

מה עשה רבי עקיבא? לבש שחורים, ונתעטף שחורים, וישב לפניו בריחוק ארבע אמות. – אמר לו רבי אליעזר: עקיבא, מה יום מיומים? – אמר לו: רבי, כמדומה לי שחבירים בדילים ממך. – אף הוא קרע בגדיו וחליץ מנעליו, ונשמט וישב על גבי קרקע. זלגו עיניו דמעות, לקה העולם שלישי בזיתים, ושליש בחטים, ושליש בשעורים. ויש אומרים: אף בצק שבידי אשה טפח.

תנא: אך גדול היה באותו היום, שבכל מקום שנתן בו עיניו רבי אליעזר נשרף. ואף רבן גמליאל היה בא בספינה, עמד עליו נחשול לטבעו. אמר: כמדומה לי שאין זה אלא בשביל רבי אליעזר בן הורקנוס. עמד על רגליו ואמר: רבנו של עולם, גלוי וידוע לפניך שלא לכבודי עשיתי, ולא לכבוד בית אבא עשיתי, אלא לכבודך, שלא ירבו מחלוקות בישראל. נח הים מזעפו.

אימא שלום דביתחו דרבי אליעזר אחתיה דרבן גמליאל הואי. מההוא מעשה ואילך לא הוה שבקה ליה לרבי אליעזר למיפל על אפיה. ההוא יומא ריש ירחא הוה, ואיחלף לה בין מלא לחסר. איבא דאמרי: אתא עניא וקאי אבבא, אפיקא ליה ריפתא. אשכחתייה דנפל על אנפיה, אמרה ליה: קום, קטלית לאחי. אדהכי נפק שיפורא מבית רבן גמליאל דשכיב.

אמר לה: מנא ידעת? אמרה ליה: כך מקובלני מבית אבי אבא: כל השערים ננעלים חוץ משערי אונאה.