

Revelation of a hidden God:

Connections between Shavuot and Purim

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מְגִילַת אֶסְתֵּר

reveal

גלה

Scroll

מְגִילָה

אני

will hide סתר

Esther

אֶסְתֵּר

to roll

לְגַלֵּל

גלל

to reveal

לְגַלוֹת

גלה

exile

גְלוֹת

ספר דברים פרק לא

טז וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל-מֹשֶׁה הֲנִיךָ שֹׁכֵב עִם-אֲבוֹתֶיךָ וְקִם הָעָם הַזֶּה וְזָנָה | אַחֲרַי | אֱלֹהֵי גֵבֹר־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר הוּא בָא-שָׁמָּה בְּקִרְבּוֹ וַעֲזָבֵנִי וְהִפִּיר אֶת-בְּרִיתִי אֲשֶׁר כָּרַתִּי אִתּוֹ:

Deuteronomy Chapter 31

16. God said to Moses: Behold you will dwell with your ancestors, and this people will then get up and prostitute themselves after the foreign gods of the land into which it is going. And I will then abandon [them] and cancel my covenant that I have established with it.

יִזְחַרְחַר אַפִּי בּוֹ בַּיּוֹם־הַהוּא וְעִזְבֹתַיִם וְהִסְתַּרְתִּי פָנַי מֵהֶם
וְהָיָה לֶאֱכָל וּמִצָּאָהוּ רָעוֹת רַבּוֹת וְצָרוֹת וְאָמַר בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא הֲלֹא
עַל כִּי־אֵין אֱלֹהִי בְקִרְבִּי מִצָּאוֹנִי הֲרָעוֹת הָאֵלֶּה:

17. My anger will burn against it on that day, and I will abandon them, and **will hide** my face from them, and [this people] will be consumed, and will encounter great evil and difficulties. [The people] will say on that day, it is because God is not in my midst that I encounter such evils.

יִחַ וְאָנֹכִי הִסְתַּר אֶסְתִּיר פָּנַי בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא עַל כָּל־הֲרָעָה אֲשֶׁר
עָשָׂה כִּי פָנָה אֶל־אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים:

18. **I will surely hide** my face on that day, because of all the wickness that [the people] has done, for it turned to other gods.

ספר דברים פרק ד

כֹּז וְהִפְיֵץ ה' אֶתְכֶם בְּעַמִּים וְנִשְׁאַרְתֶּם מִתֵּי מִסְפָּר בְּגוֹלִים אֲשֶׁר
יִנְהַג ה' אֶתְכֶם שָׁמָּה: כֹּחַ וְעַבְדֻתָם-שָׁם אֱלֹהִים מַעֲשֵׂה יַדֵּי אָדָם
עֵץ וָאֶבֶן אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יִרְאוּן וְלֹא יִשְׁמְעוּן וְלֹא יֵאָכְלוּן וְלֹא יִרְיחוּ:
כֹּט וּבִקְשֹׁתֶם מִשָּׁם אֶת-ה' אֱלֹהֵיךָ וּמְצֵאתָ כִּי תִדְרֹשֶׁנּוּ
בְּכָל-לְבָבְךָ וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ:

Deuteronomy Chapter 4

27. God will scatter you among the nations, and there will remain only a few of you left among the nations where God will send you. 28. And there you will serve gods made by the hands of man, wood and stone, that do not see and do not hear and do not eat and do not smell. 29. Yet from there you will seek out the Lord your God, and you will find [Him], for you will seek him with all your heart and all your soul.

ספר שמות פרק יט

טז וַיְהִי בַיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי בַהֲיָת הַבֹּקֶר וַיְהִי קֹלֹת וַיְבַרְקִים וַעֲנָן כָּבֵד
עַל־הַהָר וְקוֹל שֹׁפָר חָזֶק מְאֹד וַיִּחַרְדּוּ כָּל־הָעָם אֲשֶׁר בַּמַּחֲנֶה:
יז וַיּוֹצֵא מֹשֶׁה אֶת־הָעָם לִקְרַאת הָאֱלֹהִים מִן־הַמַּחֲנֶה וַיִּתְיַצְּבוּ
בְּתַחְתִּית הָהָר:

Exodus Chapter 19

16. And it happened on the third day in the morning, that there was thunder and lightning and a heavy cloud on the mountain and a very strong sound of a shofar, and all the people in the camp were afraid.

17. Moses brought the people out from the camp to meet God, and they were stationed **at the bottom of the mountain.**

ספר דברים פרק ד

יֵא וַתִּקְרְבוּ וַתַּעֲמְדוּ תַּחַת הַהָר וְהָרַבֵּעַ בְּעֵר בְּאִגַּשׁ עַד-לֵב
הַשָּׁמַיִם חֹשֶׁךְ עָנָן וְעָרָפֶל:

Deuteronomy Chapter 4

11. And they approached, and they stood **under the mountain**, and the mountain burned with fire to the heart of heaven, darkness and a cloud and smoke.

Talmud - Mas. Shabbath 88a

(שמות יט, יז) ויתיצבו בתחתית ההר

א"ר אבדימי בר חמא בר חסא מלמד שכפה הקב"ה עליהם

את ההר כגיגית

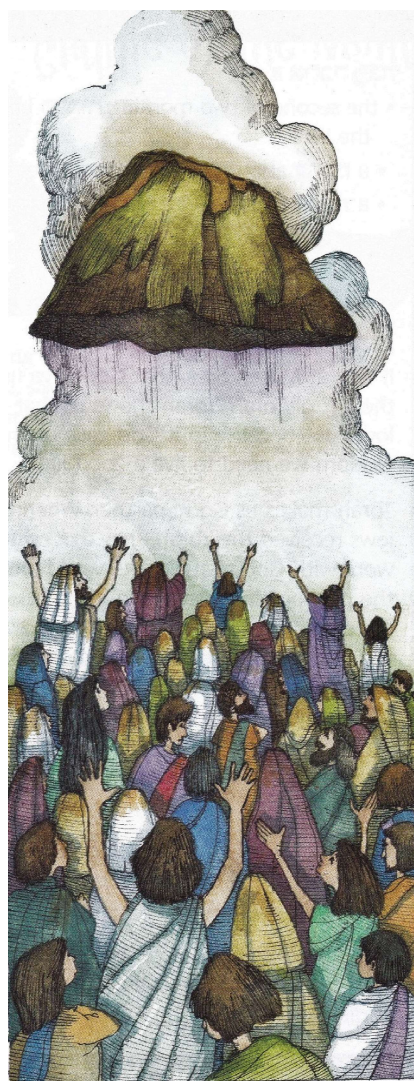
ואמר להם אם אתם מקבלים התורה מוטב ואם לאו שם

תהא קבורתכם

And they stood under the mount:¹⁵

R. Abdimi b. Hama b. Hasa said: This teaches that the Holy One, blessed be He, overturned the mountain upon them like an [inverted] cask, and said to them, 'If ye accept the Torah, 'tis well; if not, there shall be your burial.'

R. Aha b. Jacob observed: **This furnishes a strong protest against the Torah.**¹⁶



אמר רבא: אף על פי כן, הדור קבלוה בימי אחשורוש.
דכתיב (אסתר ט) קימו וקבלו היהודים,
קיימו מה שקיבלו כבר.

Said Raba, Yet even so, they re-accepted it in the days of Ahasuerus, for it is written, [the Jews] confirmed, and took upon them [etc.]:¹⁷ [i.e.,] **they confirmed what they had accepted long before.**

The second memory is very different. Israel really wanted the Torah. They believed that it would be fun to celebrate all the holidays. They thought that it would be an honor to become God's partner. Just like little kids, Israel jumped up and down and hollered, "Choose me! Pick me!"

God said to Israel, "Why should I pick you? The Torah is really valuable. Who will promise that you will treat it well? Who will guarantee that you will not ruin it?"

Israel said, "Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekkah, Leah, Rachel and Jacob will be responsible."

God answered, "Every one of them broke the rules of the Torah at some point and did something wrong. They are not the ones to protect My Torah."

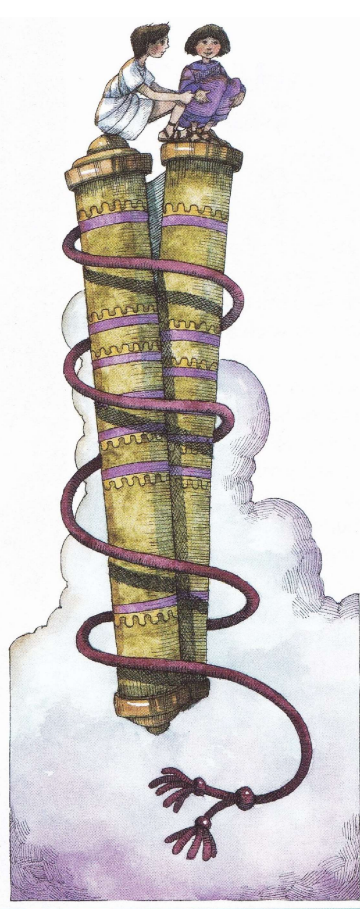
Israel said, "How about the prophets? They all taught Your word."

God answered, "They told you the right things to do, and you usually did not listen to them. If you won't listen to the prophets, how can I make them responsible?"

Finally, Israel had a big conference and said to God, "Our children will be the ones to take responsibility. They promise that they will study the Torah and take it into their hearts. They promise to make the future better."

God thought about it and then said, "The Torah is yours."

As God gave them the Torah, the Families of Israel shouted out, "We will do it and we will obey it." That is how Israel accepted the Torah. (From the Midrash)



מגילת אסתר פרק ט

כֹּז קִיְמוּ וְקַבְּלוּ [וְקַבְּלוּ] הַיְהוּדִים | עֲלֵיהֶם | וְעַל-זַרְעָם וְעַל
כָּל-הַנְּלוּגִים עֲלֵיהֶם וְלֹא יַעֲבֹר לְהַיּוֹת עֲשׂוּיִם אֶת שְׁנֵי הַיָּמִים
הָאֵלֶּה כְּכַתְּבָם וְכַזְּמָנָם בְּכָל-שָׁנָה וְשָׁנָה:

Esther Chapter 9

27. The Jews established and accepted upon themselves and their descendents, and upon all those who would be jointed to them [converts], and [promised] they would not fail to perform these two days, according to their instructions and at their appointed times, every single year.

Teachings of the Kedushat Levi on Purim

(from a source sheet by Nathan Martin)

...There are two types of miracles, the revealed and the hidden. A revealed miracle is like the splitting of the Red Sea and the Exodus where it is clear to all that that nature is transformed. And then there are hidden miracles. A hidden miracle is the sort that took place for Mordecai and Esther, in which the forces of nature went on undisturbed; the miraculous took place within the realm of nature. Our teacher the holy lamp R. Dov Baer taught that she was named Esther because of hester ("hiddenness"), the hiding of the miracle within nature...

Now we can understand why this miracle was so great that their love allowed them to accept the Torah. It took place within nature, where God's kingship is hidden. That made it all the greater. It is no great surprise when the king comes along with a vast army and wins the battle. But what if the king is alone in the forest, without either weapons or troops, and wins by his courage alone? Or imagine the fear and submission that overwhelm you when you come into the king's palace and see all his grandeur...

But suppose you met that same king alone in the forest, without any soldiers and dressed like an ordinary person, yet you were still overcome by fear and shame? Wouldn't that be a much greater wonder? The blessed Holy One can transform nature and make His heavenly kingdom appear. The one who created everything can change things as well.

This is not so great a miracle as when God works through nature, with His kingship hidden, and yet does wonders. That was what happened at the time of Mordecai and Esther, and it was so wondrous that it caused Israel to re-accept God's Torah.

But let us look at this in a more inward way, particularly the issue of [Israel] accepting the Torah in love during the time of Mordechai and Esther. First we should note that the term megillah [used especially for the "scroll" of Esther], when God's kingship was hidden within nature...[derives from the word megalleh "reveals"], since God was revealed to be present in the natural world and still to defeat evil...This idea [of God defeating evil in nature] is connected to the word megillah [revealed] - that God's actions and kingship within nature, which were hidden, are revealed. Hence the name megillah - the revealing of that which is hidden

Why then did they come to accept the Torah?...They read the Megillah in that first year...and through it they saw clearly God's active presence within the natural, physical realm. They then accepted the Torah out of love...

(Source: Speaking Torah, Arthur Green et al. v.2 p.205-6)

<https://www.sefaria.org/sheets/25268>