

A Threatening Mountain...

"וַיִּתְנַצְּבוּ בְּתַחֲתֵית הַהָר" (שמות יט: יז). אָמַר רַב אַבְדִּימִי בַר חָמָא בַר חָסָא : מְלַמֵּד שְׂכַפָּה הַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא עֲלֵיהֶם אֶת הַהָר כְּגִיגִית, וְאָמַר לָהֶם : אִם אַתֶּם מְקַבְּלִים הַתּוֹרָה מוֹטָב, וְאִם לֹא, שָׁם תִּהְיֶה קְבוּרַתְכֶם. אָמַר רַבִּי אַחָא בַר יַעֲקֹב : מִכַּאן מוֹדְעָא רַבָּה לְאוּרֵייתָא.

They stood beneath the mountain (Exodus 19:17). Said Rabbi Avdimi bar Hama bar Hasa, This teaches that the Blessed Holy One vaulted the mountain over them like a barrel and said to them: If you accept the Torah well and good, and if not, there will be your graves. Said Rabbi Ahah bar Ya'akov: Here is a strong indictment against Torah! (Babylonian Talmud Shabbat 88a)

...A Loving Shelter

וְאָמַר רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן לֵוִי : מַאי דְכָתִיב "לַחֲנוּ כְּעֵרוּגַת הַבָּשָׂם"? כָּל דְּבִיר וְדְבִיר שֶׁיֵּצֵא מִפִּי הַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא נִתְמַלֵּא כָּל הָעוֹלָם כּוֹלוּ בְּשָׂמִים. וְכֵיוֹן שֶׁמִּדְּבִיר רֵאשׁוֹן נִתְמַלֵּא, דְּבִיר שֵׁנִי לֵהִיכֹן הַלֵּךְ? הוֹצִיא הַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא הַרוּחַ מֵאוֹצְרוֹתָיו וְהֵיחָה מֵעֲבִיר רֵאשׁוֹן רֵאשׁוֹן שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר : שִׁפְתוֹתָיו שׁוֹשְׁנִים נוֹטְפוֹת מוֹר עֵבֶר. אֵל תִּקְרִי שׁוֹשְׁנִים אֶלָּא שְׁשׁוֹנִים.

Said Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi: *What is the meaning of His cheeks are like a bed of spices?* (Song of Songs 5:13) Every single commandment that came forth from the mouth of the Blessed Holy One filled the world with spices. But when the world became filled with the fragrance of the first commandment, where did the fragrance of the second commandment go? The Blessed Holy One took the wind from his treasury and made each fragrant commandment that he had spoken pass by one by one. As it says: *His lips are like lilies, they drip myrrh that passes by.* (Song of Songs 5:13) (Babylonian Talmud Shabbat 88a)

When God Left the Earth

כְּשֶׁאֱלֹהִים עָזַב אֶת הָאָרֶץ הוּא שָׁכַח אֶת הַתּוֹרָה
אֶצְל הַיְהוּדִים וּמָאָז הֵם מְחַפְּשִׁים אוֹתוֹ
וְצוֹעֲקִים אַחֲרָיו, שְׂכַחַת מִשְׁהוּ, שְׂכַחַת, בְּקוֹל גְּדוֹל
וּבְנֵי אָדָם אַחֲרֵים חוֹשְׁבִים שֶׁזֶה הִי תְּפִילַתְּם שֶׁל הַיְהוּדִים.
וּמָאָז הֵם טוֹרְחִים לְמַצָּא רְמִזִּים בְּתַנ"ךְ
עַל מְקוֹם הַמְצָאוֹ כְּמוֹ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר, דְּרָשׁוּ אֲדוֹנֵי בְּהֵמָצְאוֹ,
קְרְאוּהוּ בְּהִיוֹתוֹ קְרוֹב. אֲבָל הוּא רְחוֹק.

When God left the earth he forgot the Torah
at the Jews' and since then they look for him
and cry after him, you forgot something, you forgot, in a loud voice
and others think that this is the prayer of the Jews.
And ever since they strain to find hints in the Bible
as to the place he might be found as it says, Seek the Lord where he is to be found,
call upon him when he is close. But he is far.

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