



### The Rise to Political Power (continued)

#### 1. *Samuel Ha-Nagid*, The Jewish Encyclopedia

In his exalted position Samuel remained the same pious and modest scholar, and disarmed his enemies, who could not forgive him his Jewish faith, by his gentleness of manner and his liberality. The following is an illustration of his magnanimity: A fanatical Mohammedan dealer in spices, who lived near the calif's palace, once grossly offended Samuel while accompanying the calif. Incensed at the offense, the calif commanded Samuel to punish the fanatic by cutting out his tongue. Instead of executing this order Samuel made a present to the offender, and thus gained his gratitude. When the calif again noticed the seller of spices he was astonished at the change, and questioned Samuel about it. "I have torn out," answered the vizier, "his angry tongue, and given him instead a kind one."

### As a Talmid Chacham

#### 2. Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra (12<sup>th</sup> century Spain), Extended Commentary to Shemot 32:31

אמר הנגיד, כי אנא מבולע הלמ"ד, כמו "אל נא", ופי' "אל" מגזרת הואיל, וזה רחוק.

The Naggid said that *ana* has a 'swallowed' *lamed*, like *al na*, and *al* is from the root *ho'il* (an oath). This is unlikely...

#### 3. Shemuel haNagid, Hilchita Gibarvata, Introduction

ורבים שוטטו מאחריהם, במענה דברות תלמוד בתורת  
והורו לאנשים מאמרות אשר המה לתלמודם מפירות  
וכתבו מחברותיהם ובהם מעט מילים למעקשים חבירות  
ונאמרו בשם ראשים כשרים ואדירים אמרות לא כשרות....  
ולכן הנני חוקר בדת א-ל כפי יכלי ושכלי עוד הקירות  
ומזכיר התעיות להניאם וכותב להקימם ההדורות...  
ואסמוך באשר אתוה ואכתוב עלי אמרות גאונים הבחורות  
ורב האי גדול כולם אשו לי פליאות[יו] להתפאר צפירות...

And many wandered away from them, in answering [or declaring] statements of learning in Torot [or: teachings]

And they taught people statements which contradict their learning [or: their Talmud]

And they wrote their pamphlets, including a few words which are friends to those who are crooked

And they are stated in the name of good and mighty leaders, statements that are not good...

And therefore I am researching in the religion of Hashem, according to my abilities and intellect, further research

And I mention the errors to remove them, and write to establish the correct statements...

And I rely in what I will note and write, upon the choice statements of the Gaonim,

And Rav Hai, greatest of them all, I set for me his wonders, for crowns of splendour...

#### 4. Shemuel haNaggid, Hilchita Gibarvata, as cited by Rabbi Yehudah of Barcelona in Sefer ha'Iltim (12<sup>th</sup> c. Spain)

ואמר מר רב יהודאי מי שקידש לאנשי ביתו ובא אצל אנשים שיודעים לקדש אינו רשאי לקדש להם.

וכת' הנגיד הכי: ולי אית מרבנן דאמ' דה"ה להבדלה ולכל ברכת המצות, והוא שיצא והוא שיודעין לקדש.

And Mar Rav Yehudai said: One who recites kiddush for his household, and then he comes to people who know how to recite kiddush, may not recite kiddush for them.

And the Naggid wrote thus: And I have [learned] from my masters who said that the same is so for havdalah and all blessings on mitzvot, as long as one has fulfilled one's obligation and they know how to recite kiddush.

#### 5. Rabbeinu Asher (13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century Germany/Spain), Commentary to Ketuvot 1:12

כתב רב אחאי (פ' חיי סי' טז) דברכת אירוסין ב'י. וה"ר שמואל הנגיד נחלק עליו ואמר שאין צריך י' אלא לברכת חתנים בלבד שלא הוזכרו י' אלא בה. ועוד הרי קידושין בפני ב' ואתה מצריך עשרה. ול"נ דברי רב אחאי

Rav Achai wrote that ten are required for the blessing of *kiddushin*. And Rabbeinu Shemuel HaNagid disagreed with him, saying only the blessings of marriage (*sheva berachot*) require ten, as the requirement of ten was only mentioned for these. Further, *kiddushin* is in front of two, and you require ten? But Rav Achai appears correct to me...

#### 6. Rabbi Menachem Meiri, Introduction to Pirkei Avot

ובימיו הי' ר' שמואל בן חפני וגם הוא חיבר ספרים הרבה אלא שאין עניינם ראוי לסמוך עליו כל כך. וכן היה באחרית ימיו הנגיד ר' שמואל הלוי היה מקרטב"א וברח מצד גזירות למאליק"א ומצד הפלגת מליצותיו נתגלגל הדבר ונעשה קרוב למלכות בגארנאט"א וגם חיבר ספר בכל התלמוד קראו הלכתא (גיבראתא) בשנת ד' אלפים ותתט"ו... ואלו השלשה ר"ל ר' חננאל ור' נסים ור' שמואל הנגיד היו דור ראשון אחר הגאונים ונקראו רבנים...

And in [Rav Hai Gaon's] time was Rabbi Shemuel ben Chofni, and he also compiled many books, but one should not rely on them so much. Also at the end of his time was the Naggid, Rabbi Shemuel haLevi. He was from Cordoba, and he fled due to persecution to Malaga, and because of his great interventions it developed that he became close to the throne in Granada, and he also compiled a book on the entire Talmud, called Hilchita (Gibarvata) in 4815 (1055)... And these three – Rabbeinu Chananel, Rabbeinu Nisim and Rabbi Shemuel haNaggid – were the first generations after the Gaonim, and were called Rabbanim...

#### 7. Mevo haTalmud, Beginning

אמר המחבר התלמוד נחלק לשני חלקים משנה ופירוש המשנה. המשנה היא הנקראת תורה שבע"פ והיא יסוד התורה שהעתיקו ממשנה רבינו ע"ה עד ימי רבינו הקדוש ע"ה והוא רבי יהודה הנשיא...

The author said: The Talmud is split into two parts: Mishnah and Explanation of the Mishnah. The Mishnah is what is called "The Spoken Torah", and this is the foundation of Torah, recorded from Moshe Rabbeinu until the days of Rabbeinu HaKadosh, Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi...

#### 8. Eliyahu Ashtor, The Jews of Moslem Spain, Vol. 2, pp. 121-122

Yet his most amazing achievement surely was the writing of a treatise against the Koran... Most of the writings about Islam by Jewish scholars were comprehensive theological essays or polemics defending Judaism against the arguments of the Moslems, who sought to demonstrate from the Bible that Mohammed was a real prophet, and so on. But the Jews were careful not to denigrate the sacred book of the Moslems. And then along came Samuel to point out the Koran's contradictions and errors. He called attention to Sura 41:8-11, where it is stated that the world was created in eight days, while according to Sura 32:3 it was created in six days...

## "And We Cried Out"

### Question

#### 1. Our Haggadah

וּנְצַעַק אֶל־יְד' אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, וַיִּשְׁמַע ד' אֶת־קוֹלֵנוּ, וַיִּרְא אֶת־עַנְיָנוּ וְאֶת עֲמָלֵנוּ וְאֶת לְחַצְנוֹ. "וּנְצַעַק אֶל־יְד' אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ" כִּמָּה שְׁנָאָמַר... וַיּוֹצֵאֵנוּ ד' מִמִּצְרַיִם בְּיַד חֲזָקָה, וּבְזֵרַע נְטוּיָה, וּבְמַרְא גָּדֹל, וּבְאֹתוֹת וּבְמִפְתֵּיִם.

And we cried out to Hashem, Gd of our ancestors, and Hashem heard our voice, and He saw our suffering and our struggle and our oppression. "And we cried out to Hashem, Gd of our ancestors" as it is written... And Gd took us out of Egypt with a mighty Hand and an outstretched arm and with great awe and with signs and wonders.

#### 2. Shemot 6:6-9

Therefore, tell the Children of Israel, "I am Gd, and I will take you out from under the strain of Egypt, and I will rescue you from their labour, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and great judgments. And I will take you to Me as a nation, and I will be your Gd, and you will know that I am Hashem your Gd, who has taken you out from under the strain of Egypt. And I will bring you to the land, for which I have raised My hand to give it to Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov, and I will give it to you as an inheritance; I am Gd." And Moshe spoke thus to the Children of Israel, and they did not listen to Moshe, because of short spirits and hard labour.

Question: Why does the Haggadah omit the frustrated communications between Hashem and the Jews?

### Why the communications failed

#### 3. Ramban to Shemot 6:9

שלא הטו אוזן לדבריו מקוצר רוח, כאדם שתקצר נפשו בעמלו...

They did not incline an ear to his words due to their short spirit, like one whose spirit is short due to his struggle...

#### 4. Shemot 4:30

And Aharon said all of the things Hashem had told Moshe, and he performed the signs before the eyes of the nation.

#### 5. Midrash, Mechilta d'Rabbi Yishmael, Bo, Pischa 5

הרי הוא אומר "ולא שמעו אל משה מקוצר רוח וגו'." וכי יש לך אדם שהוא מתבשר בשורה טובה ואינו שמח? נולד לך בן זכר, רבך מוציאך לחירות, ואינו שמח? אם כן למה נאמר "ולא שמעו אל משה"? אלא שהיה קשה בעיניהם לפרוש מעבודה זרה שנ'...

It says, "And they did not listen to Moshe, because of short spirits, etc." – Is there anyone who is told good news, and is not happy? You have a son, your master is freeing you, and he is not happy? Then why does it say, "And they did not listen to Moshe"? But in their eyes it was tough to separate from idolatry, as in Yechezkel 20:7-9...

#### 6. Machzor Vitry 262

כדרך המנחמים לנחם מעט מעט. שהאומ' לנחרב נחמה יותר מדאי דומה כמי שאומר למחזיר על הפתחים למחר אתה מלך שאינו מאמין. כמו שנאמר ולא שמעו אל משה מקוצר רוח ומעבודה וגו'.

This is the like the way of comforters, who console little by little. One who would declare too much consolation to the ruined would be like someone who says to someone who begs door-to-door, "Tomorrow you will be king." He would not believe it. It is as it is said, "And they didn't listen to Moshe, because of short spirits and labour, etc."

#### 7. Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Horowitz, *When and how to mourn: Judaism's many contradictions*

The same Jew who spends his midnight hours reciting *Tikkun Chatzos* in tearful memory of the Destruction, nevertheless marches proudly and happily around the *bimah* in *shul* with his *esrog* and *lulav* on Sukkos – *in commemoration of Temple times*. So he not only cries, in remembrance of the Temple; he dances, too. The same family that sits on the floor on *erev Tish'a B'Av* eating eggs and ashes, several months later sets a luxuriant table for its Pesach meal – and, leaning in a kingly manner, eats *matzah* and *marror* (bitter herbs) wrapped together *to remember how Hillel ate it in the time of the Temple*. *Matzah* and *Marror* are not the only things wrapped together at the *seder*; our joy and our remembrance are intertwined too, not only in *korech* (Matzah Sandwich), but in the roasted egg and shankbone on the *seder*-plate and in the *afikoman* as well, all commemorations of what we had in the *Beis Hamikdash* that is no longer standing.

## "Yaakov did not intend to settle in Egypt"

### Question

1. Our Haggadah, based on Sifri Devarim 301

"ויגר שם" - מלמד שלא ירד יעקב אבינו להשתקע במצרים אלא לגור שם, שנאמר: ויאמרו אל־פרעה לגור בארץ באנו...

"And he sojourned there" – This teaches that Yaakov did not descend to settle in Egypt, but to sojourn there, as it says: And he said to Pharaoh, we have come to sojourn in the land...

2. Yeshayahu 52:4

...מְצָרִים יֵרֵד עַמִּי בְּרֵאשִׁיטָה לְגוֹר שָׁם...

...My nation descended to Egypt at first, to sojourn there...

Question: Why do we emphasize Yaakov's change in plans?

### Answer #1: An Ant-Egypt Polemic

3. Sojourning and leaving Bereishit 12:10 (Avraham and Sarah)

4. A Bad Sojourning Yirmiyahu 42:13-22, 44:7-14, 44:24-29, 43:2

### Answer #2: Unexpected Reversals, and Destiny

5. Examples in the text of the Haggadah

- Lavan sought to uproot everything
- Yaakov intended to sojourn in Egypt
- Your ancestors descended to Egypt as just 70
- "Let us be wise with him, lest he become many"

6. Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik, *Kol Dodi Dofek*, Gordon translation

First, the knock of the Beloved was heard in the political arena. From the point of view of international relations, no one will deny that the rebirth of the State of Israel, in a political sense, was an almost supernatural occurrence... I do not know who the representatives of the press, with their human eyes, saw to be the chairman in that fateful session of the General Assembly in which the creation of the State of Israel was decided, but he who looked carefully with his spiritual eye saw the true Chairman who conducted the proceedings — the Beloved. He knocked with his gavel on the lectern.

7. The conversation that led us down to Egypt Bereishit 15

8. Talmud, Nedarim 32a

א"ר אבהו א"ר אלעזר: מפני מה נענש אברהם אבינו ונשתעבדו בניו למצרים מאתים ועשר שנים? מפני שעשה אנגרייא בת"ח שנאמר "וירק את חניכיו ילידי ביתו." ושמואל אמר מפני שהפריז על מדותיו של הקב"ה שנא' "במה אדע כי אירשנה." ורבי יוחנן אמר שהפריש בני אדם מלהכנס תחת כנפי השכינה שנאמר "תן לי הנפש והרכוש קח לך."

Rabbi Avahu asked, citing Rabbi Elazar: Why was Avraham Avinu punished, and why were his descendants enslaved in Egypt for 210 years? Because he enlisted talmidei chachamim... And Shemuel said: Because he exceeded propriety regarding Divine conduct... And Rabbi Yochanan said: Because he kept people from entering the Divine presence...

9. Beyond the text, the body of the Seder itself emphasizes foiled expectations

- We do things in unusual ways, to inspire questions (Pesachim 108b-109a, 114b, etc.)
- We proclaim, "How different is this night, from all other nights!" (Aruch haShulchan Orach Chaim 473:21)
- The haste of the original Seder (Shemot 12:11)
- We eat matzah to remember that the Jews left in a rush (Devarim 16:3, see Ran Pesachim 25b *b'dapei Rif*)
- This year we are here, next year in Israel! This year we are here, next year we are free!