



# Praying our Praises: Understanding the First Three Brachot of Shmoneh Esrei

Part II:



גבורות

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**1) ברכת גבורות, שמונה עשרה**

<p>You are strong forever, O G-d. You resurrect the dead and you are abundant in salvation.  <b>Winter:</b> He blows the wind and brings down the rain. He sustains life with lovingkindness, resurrects the dead with abundant mercy. He supports the fallen, heals the sick, and releases those who are imprisoned. He fulfills His promise to those who lie in the dust. Who is like you, master of strengths, and who is similar to you? A king who brings death, brings life, and sprouts salvation. You are trustworthy to resurrect the dead. Blessed are you, G-d, who resurrects the dead.</p>	<p>אתה גבור לעולם אָדְנִי. מְחִיָּה מֵתִים אֶתְּהָ רַב לְהוֹשִׁיעַ :  <b>בחורף</b> - מְשִׁיב הַרוּחַ וּמוֹרִיד הַגֶּשֶׁם :  מְכַלְכֵּל חַיִּים בְּחֶסֶד. מְחִיָּה מֵתִים בְּרַחֲמִים רַבִּים.  סוֹמֵךְ נוֹפְלִים. יוֹרֵפָא חוֹלִים וּמַתִּיר אֲסוּרִים.  וּמְקִיָּם אֲמוּנָתוֹ לִישְׁנֵי עֶפְרַיִם.  מִי כְמוֹךָ בְּעַל גְּבוּרוֹת וּמִי דוֹמֶה לָּךְ.  מֶלֶךְ מִמִּית וּמְחִיָּה וּמְצַמֵּחַ יְשׁוּעָה :  וְנֹאמְנָן אֶתְּהָ לְהַחְיֹת מֵתִים :  בְּרוּךְ אַתְּהָ ה', מְחִיָּה הַמֵּתִים :</p>
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**2) שמות פרק ג**

<p><b>1</b> Now Moses was keeping the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian; and he led the flock to the farthest end of the wilderness, and came to the mountain of God, unto Horeb. <b>2</b> And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush; and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. <b>3</b> And Moses said: 'I will turn aside now, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.' <b>4</b> And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said: 'Moses, Moses.' And he said: 'Here am I.' <b>5</b> And He said: 'Draw not nigh hither; put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.' <b>6</b> Moreover He said: 'I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.</p>	<p>(א) וּמֹשֶׁה הָיָה רֹעֶה אֶת צֹאן יִתְרוֹ חֹתְנֵנו כֹּהֵן מִדְיָן וַיְנַהֵג אֶת הַצֹּאן אַחֲרֵי הַמִּדְבָּר וַיָּבֵא אֶל הַר הָאֱלֹהִים חֲרֵבָה:  (ב) וַיֵּרָא מִלְאָךְ יְקֻזְק אֵלָיו בְּלִבַּת אֵשׁ מִתּוֹךְ הַסֵּנֶה וַיֵּרָא וַהֲנֵה הַסֵּנֶה בְּעֵר בְּאֵשׁ וְהַסֵּנֶה אֵינּוּ אֲכָל:  (ג) וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶסְרָה נָא וְאֶרְאֶה אֶת הַמְרָאָה הַגְּדֹל הַזֶּה מִדּוֹעַ לֹא יִבְעַר הַסֵּנֶה:  (ד) וַיֵּרָא יְקֻזְק כִּי סָר לִרְאוֹת וַיִּקְרָא אֵלָיו אֱלֹהִים מִתּוֹךְ הַסֵּנֶה וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמֶר הַנְּנִי:  (ה) וַיֹּאמֶר אֵל תִּקְרַב הֵלֶם שֶׁל נְעֻלֶיךָ מֵעַל רַגְלֶיךָ כִּי הַמְקוֹם אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה עוֹמֵד עָלָיו אֲדָמַת קֹדֶשׁ הוּא:  (ו) וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנֹכִי אֱלֹהֵי אָבִיךָ אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב וַיִּסְתֵּר מֹשֶׁה פָּנָיו כִּי יֵרָא מֵהִבִּיט אֶל הָאֱלֹהִים:</p>
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**3) אבן עזרא שמות (הפירוש הארוך) ג:ג**

<p>Moshe said "asura na" from the verb type of "sar." If it's followed by a 'מ', it refers to distance like "distance yourselves from me" (Psalms 6:9). But if it's followed by "אל" with a segol, it switches, like "come close to me" (Judges 4:18), distance yourself from your place and come to me, that he should distance himself from his place and come close to the place of the bush.</p>	<p>וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶסְרָה נָא גִזְרַת סָר, אִם בָּא אַחֲרֵיהֶם מִ"ם הָיָה לְמַרְחוּק כְּמוֹ סוּרוֹ מִמֶּנִּי (תה' ו, ט), הוּא אוֹמֵר לָהֶם רַחֲקוּ מִמֶּנִּי, וְאִם אַחֲרֵיהֶם אֵל בְּשֵׁלֶשׁ נְקוּדוֹת תֵּהֱפֹךְ הַדָּבָר, כְּמוֹ סוּרוֹ אֵלַי (שופ' ד, יח), סוּר מִמְקוֹמְךָ וּבֵא אֵלַי, שִׁיּוּר מִמְקוֹמוֹ וַיִּקְרַב אֵל מְקוֹם הַסֵּנֶה.</p>
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**4) שמות פרק יט**

<p><b>11</b> and be ready against the third day; for the third day the LORD will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai. <b>12</b> And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying: Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it; whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death; <b>13</b> no hand shall touch him, but</p>	<p>(יא) וְהָיָה וְנִכְנְיָם לַיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי כִּי בַיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי יֵרֵד יְקֻזְק לְעֵינֵי כָל הָעָם עַל הַר סִינַי:  (יב) וְהִגַּבְלַת אֶת הָעָם סָבִיב לְאֹמַר הַשְּׁמֵרוּ לָכֶם עֲלוֹת בְּהָר וּנְגַע בְּקַצְהוּ כֹל הַנֹּגַע בְּהָר מוֹת יוֹמֵת:  (יג) לֹא תִגַּע בּוֹ יָד כִּי סָקוּל יִסְקַל אוֹ יָרֵה יִיָּרֶה אִם בְּהֵמָה אִם אִישׁ לֹא יִחַיָּה בְּמִשְׁךְ הַיִּבְל הַמָּה יַעֲלוּ בְּהָר:  ...</p>
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<p>he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether it be beast or man, it shall not live; when the ram's horn soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount.' ...</p> <p><b>20</b> And the LORD came down upon mount Sinai, to the top of the mount; and the LORD called Moses to the top of the mount; and Moses went up. <b>21</b> And the LORD said unto Moses: 'Go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto the LORD to gaze, and many of them perish...</p> <p><b>23</b> And Moses said unto the LORD: 'The people cannot come up to mount Sinai; for thou didst charge us, saying: Set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it.' <b>24</b> And the LORD said unto him: 'Go, get thee down, and thou shalt come up, thou, and Aaron with thee; but let not the priests and the people break through to come up unto the LORD, lest He break forth upon them.'</p>	<p>(כ) וַיֵּרַד יְקֹנֶק עַל הַר סִינַי אֶל רֹאשׁ הַהָר וַיִּקְרָא יְקֹנֶק לַמֹּשֶׁה אֶל רֹאשׁ הַהָר וַיַּעַל מֹשֶׁה:  (כא) וַיֹּאמֶר יְקֹנֶק אֶל מֹשֶׁה רַד הָעֵד בָּעַם פֶּן יַהֲרֹסוּ אֶל יְקֹנֶק לְרֹאוֹת וּנְפֹל מִמֶּנּוּ רַב:  ...  (כג) וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל יְקֹנֶק לֹא יִכַּל הָעַם לַעֲלֹת אֶל הַר סִינַי כִּי אַתָּה הִעַדְתָּה בְּנֹו לֵאמֹר הַגְּבַל אֶת הַהָר וְקִדְשְׁתָּו:  (כד) וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹו יְקֹנֶק לְךָ רַד וְעֲלִית אִתָּה וְאַהֲרֹן עִמָּךְ וְהַכֹּהֲנִים וְהָעָם אֶל יַהֲרֹסוּ לַעֲלֹת אֶל יְקֹנֶק פֶּן יַפְרֹץ בָּם:</p>
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### 5 שמות פרק כד

<p><b>9</b> Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; <b>10</b> and they saw the God of Israel; and there was under His feet the like of a paved work of sapphire stone, and the like of the very heaven for clearness. <b>11</b> And upon the nobles of the children of Israel He laid not His hand; and they beheld God, and did eat and drink.</p>	<p>(ט) וַיַּעַל מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן נָדָב וַאֲבִיהוּא וְשִׁבְעִים מִזְקֵנָי יִשְׂרָאֵל:  (י) וַיֵּרְאוּ אֶת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַתַּחַת רַגְלָיו כְּמַעֲשֵׂה לְבַנֵּי הַסַּפִּיר וּכְעֶצֶם הַשָּׁמַיִם לְטָהָר:  (יא) וְאֶל אֲצִילֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא שָׁלַח יָדוֹ וַיַּחֲזֹו אֶת הָאֱלֹהִים וַיֹּאכְלוּ וַיִּשְׁתּוּ:</p>
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### 6 רב אהרן ליכטנשטיין, "אל תקרב הלים", סעודה שלישית תשנ"ו

<p>These verses deal with a very common problem. When there is a great spiritual pull, when there is a strong desire to come close to the Shechinah, there arises a concern that someone will cross the boundary and come closer than is warranted. There exists a tension between two positive things—the desire to cleave unto 'ה and to come close to Him and the requirement to fear Him and keep a distance from Him. Hashem doesn't berate Moshe about his wanting to approach the bush, but the opposite—there is a great obligation in that, Hashem just wanted to stop him so that he wouldn't come too forward.</p>	<p>פסוקים אלו עוסקים בבעיה שכיחה מאד. כאשר יש מתח רוחני גבוה, כאשר יש רצון עז להתקרב לשכינה, קיים החשש שמישהו יעבור את הגבול ויתקרב יתר על המידה. קיים מתח בין שני דברים חיוביים - הרצון להידיבק בה' ולהתקרב אליו והדרישה לירא מפניו ולשמור על מרחב ממנו. הקב"ה לא גוער במשה על כך שרצה לגשת אל הסנה, להפך - יש בכך חיוב רב, הקב"ה רק רצה לעצור אותו שלא יתקדם יותר.</p>
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### 7 רמב"ם הלכות יסודי התורה פרק ב

<p>Halacha Aleph: This honorable and awesome G-d commands us to love him and fear him, as it says "and you shall love Hashem your G-d" and it says "you shall fear your G-d."  Halacha Bet: What is the way to love and fear Him? At the time when man contemplates His wonderful and great deeds and creations and sees from them His wisdom that is invaluable and endless, immediately he</p>	<p>הלכה א  האל הנכבד והנורא הזה מצוה לאהבו וליראה אותו שנאמר ואהבת את ה' אלהיך, ונאמר את ה' אלהיך תירא.  הלכה ב  והיאך היא הדרך לאהבתו ויראתו, בשעה שיתבונן האדם במעשיו וברואיו הנפלאים הגדולים ויראה מה</p>
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<p>will love and praise and glorify and desires a great desire to know the great G-d, like David says "my soul thirsts for G-d, for the living G-d. And when he thinks about these things themselves, immediately he recoils backward and is afraid and knows that he is a small, humble creature with a small mind as compared to the Perfect Mind, as David said "Because I see your heavens, the actions of your fingers, what is man that You should remember him." And according to these things, I can explain great ideas from the actions of the master of the worlds so that they can be an opening to understanding how to love Hashem, like the sages said about love "that from it you recognize He who spoke and there was a world."</p>	<p>חכמתו שאין לה ערך ולא קץ, מיד הוא אוהב ומשבח ומפאר ומתאווה תאוה גדולה לידע השם הגדול, כמו שאמר דוד "צמאה נפשי לאלהים לאל חי", וכשמחשב בדברים האלו עצמן, מיד הוא נרתע לאחוריו ויפחד ויודע שהוא בריה קטנה שפלה אפלה עומדת בדעת קלה מעוטה לפני תמים דעות, כמו שאמר דוד "כי אראה שמיך מעשה אצבעותיך מה אנוש כי תזכרנו", ולפי הדברים האלו אני מבאר כללים גדולים ממעשה רבון העולמים כדי שיהיו פתח למבין לאהוב את השם, כמו שאמרו חכמים בענין אהבה "שמתוך כך אתה מכיר את מי שאמר והיה העולם."</p>
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**The Shema: Spirituality and Law in Judaism, Rabbi Dr. Norman Lamm, pg. 79-80 (8)**

According to Maimonides, the two religious emotions of love and fear share a common origina: the contemplation of the cosmos. Deep reflection on the creation leads to two apparently divergent religious effects: *ahavat Hashem* and *yirat Hashem*. Although different, these two emotions are fundamentally linked to each other. We cannot discuss, let alone understand, the one without the other.

Furthermore, love and fear serve as mirror images of each other. Love for God represents a centrifugal motion of the self: overwhelmed by the wisdom we see revealed in the marvels of creation, we seek to reach outward and upward toward the Creator in order to know Him better. Fear of God is the precise opposite: overwhelmed by the greatness of the Creator, we realize our own triviality, our marginality, and our very nothingness. And so, in a centripetal counter-motion we pull ourselves inward and retreat into ourselves.

Note the implicit relationship between love and fear: our first reaction as we contemplate Nature is, instinctively and impulsively, to feel love. But our reaching out to know the Creator is , intuitively and instinctively, countered and curtailed by the limiting impulse of fear...

**Worship of the Heart: Essays on Jewish Prayer, Rav Yosef B. Soloveitchik, pg. 163-164 (9)**

...First, man yearns for God and discovers Him via that which surrounds him... In Him we find a refuge and stronghold, a protective fortress. We approach Him calmly and confidently... The God of Abraham participates in the sorrow of the miserable, impoverished human being. He responds to his entreaty and hears his cry. Unto Him do we pray...

The situation is altered when we move from *Avot* to *Gevurot*. Here prayer changes direction. At the outset, in the benediction of *Avot*, the praying individual did not feel confusion, need, or inadequacy. At this first stage he lacked nothing; he had more than enough. He was close to God and was nourished by a perfect existence, devoid of deficiency or flaw.

In the second benediction, a new motif wells up. The human being discovers his emptiness, and begins to understand that he has no standing at all... God is mighty and omnipotent, whereas man is weak and miserable, incapable of earning his bread and fulfilling his needs... In the first benediction man is aware of his greatness and singularity—he was created in the Divine image, and therefore can

approach God; the second benediction expresses man's self-abnegation, his feeling of weakness and his recognition of his own nothingness.

**(10) תלמוד בבלי מסכת תענית ב:**

<p>Rav Yochanan said: there are 3 keys in Hashem's hands that haven't been transferred to a messenger, and they are these: the key for rain, the key for life, and the key for resurrection.</p>	<p>אמר רבי יוחנן: שלשה מפתחות בידו של הקדוש ברוך הוא שלא נמסרו ביד שליח, ואלו הן: מפתח של גשמים, מפתח של חיה, ומפתח של תחיית המתים.</p>
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