

באתי לכן אין כתיב כאן אלא באתי למי לאורתי גן שונתלקתי ממנו שונאמר
 וישמעו את קול ה' אלהים מתהלך בנן וגו' ...

“And it was on the day that Moshe completed [the *Mishkan*].” That is what the text says, “Awake, north wind, and come, south; blow upon my garden, so that their spices flow out. Let my beloved enter his garden.” “Awake, north wind” – this refers to the burnt offerings that are slaughtered in the north; as our Rabbis taught: “The burnt offering is Holy of Holies and therefore it is slaughtered in the north.” “And come, south” – this refers to the peace offerings that are slaughtered in the south.” “Blow upon my garden, so that their spices flow out” – this refers to the spice offering. “Let my beloved enter his garden” – Rabbi Avahu taught: The Torah teaches us etiquette, that the groom should not enter the room until the bride grants him permission. “And eat his precious fruits” – this refers to the sacrifices. Another interpretation: “I have come to my garden, my sister, my bride” – this is analogous to a king who said to the people of his province that they should build the palace for him. When they completed it, they stood at the entrance of the palace and shouted for the king to enter his palace and were asking when the king would enter it. What did the king do? He entered secretly and then sent out a declaration saying, “Why are you screaming? I already have entered the palace!” So too, when the *Mishkan* was erected, *Bnei Yisrael* were saying, “Let my beloved enter his garden.” What did *Hakadosh Baruch Hudo*? He sent and said, “What are you concerned about? I have already entered My garden.” Another interpretation: “I have come to my garden” – Rabbi Shimon ben Asini said: It does not say, “I have come to the garden.” Rather it says, “I have come to my garden.” This means that it is referring to the very garden I departed from, as it says, “And they heard the sound of Hashem, God, traveling through the garden...”

Appendix: Moshe Rabbeinu’s commentary on the Aseret Hadibrot²⁰⁹

There are many approaches to the overall significance and meaning of the *Aseret Hadibrot*.²¹⁰ In this chapter, we will present a particular interpretation of the *Aseret Hadibrot*, one which is offered by Moshe Rabbeinu in *Sefer Devarim*. This interpretation reveals another dimension of the text of the *Aseret Hadibrot*.

The Torah defines *Sefer Devarim* as Moshe’s interpretation of the Torah. Thus, we read in *Devarim* (1:5):

עבר הירדן בארץ מואב הואיל משה באר את התורה הזאת לאמר:

On the other side of the Jordan, in the land of Moab, Moshe undertook to expound this Torah. He said:

Moshe paraphrases the *Aseret Hadibrot* in the fifth chapter of *Sefer Devarim*, thereby giving us a fresh perspective on their structure and meaning. A careful reading of the text of the *Aseret Hadibrot* in *Devarim* reveals that the *Aseret Hadibrot* are divided there into three clusters of *mitzvot*, which we will examine one by one as well as collectively. The first group of *mitzvot* (5:6-11) deals with the idea of Hashem being God and all that relates to that concept:

209. This chapter obviously belongs in the previous volume, in the Shavuot section. It was developed after the publication of that volume, and therefore finds its home here instead.

210. See Rashi on *Shemot* (24:12) based on Rav Saadiah Gaon, *Armittah shel Torah on the Torah*, *Parshat Vá'era* and *Parshat Yitro*, etc.

(ו - ז) אני ה' אלהיך אשר הוצאתיך מארץ מצרים מבית עבדים לא יהיה לך אלהים אחרים על פני:

(ח) לא תעשה לך פסל כל תמונה אשר בשמים ממעל ואשר בארץ מתחת ואשר במים מתחת לארץ:

(ט) לא תשתחוה להם ולא תעבדם כי אני ה' אלהיך אל קנא פקד עון אבות על בנים ועל שלשים ועל רבעים לשנא:

(י) ועשה חסד לאלפים לאהבי ולשמרי מצותי מצותי: ם

(יא) לא תשא את שם ה' אלהיך לשוא כי לא ינקח ה' את אשר ישא את שמו לישוא: ם

6 I the Lord am your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, the house of bondage:

7 You shall have no other gods beside Me.

8 You shall not make for yourself a sculptured image, any likeness of what is in the heavens above, or on the earth below, or in the waters below the earth.

9 You shall not bow down to them or serve them. For I the Lord your God am an impassioned God, visiting the guilt of the parents upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generations of those who reject Me,

10 but showing kindness to the thousandth generation of those who love Me and keep My commandments.

11 You shall not swear falsely by the name of the Lord your God; for the Lord will not clear one who swears falsely by His name.

The second section (5:12-16) consists of the *mitzvot* of Shabbat and honoring one's parents:

(יב) שמור את יום השבת לקדשו כאשר צוך ה' אלהיך:

(יג) ששת ימים תעבד ועשית כל מלאכותי:

(יד) ויום השביעי שבת לה' אלהיך לא תעשה כל מלאכה אתה ובנך ובתך ועבדך ואמתך ושורך וחמורך וכל בהמותי וגרך אשר בשעריך למען ינוח עבדך ואמתך כמוך:

(טו) וזכרת כי עבד היית בארץ מצרים ויצאך ה' אלהיך משם ביד חזקה וברוע נטויה על כן צוך ה' אלהיך לעשות את יום השבת: ם

(טז) כבד את אביך ואת אמך כאשר צוך ה' אלהיך למען יאריך ימך ולמען יטב לך על האדמה אשר ה' אלהיך נתן לך: ם

12 Observe the Sabbath day and keep it holy, as the Lord your God has commanded you.

13 Six days you shall labor and do all your work,

14 but the seventh day is a Sabbath of the Lord your God; you shall not do any work – you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your ox or your ass, or any of your cattle, or the stranger in your settlements, so that your male and female slave may rest as you do.

15 Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt and the Lord your God freed you from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore the Lord your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day.

16 Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God has commanded you, that you may long endure, and that you may fare well [yitav] in the land that the Lord your God is assigning to you.

Both of these open with the unique admonition to observe these commandments “as the Lord, your God, commanded you.” Only these two commandments contain this admonition, even though it ostensibly is equally applicable to all of the commandments. This sets these commandments apart from the rest and defines this cluster as a discrete section. We will explain the significance of this phrase and its relevance to this section, *be”H*, but for now it

is sufficient to note that it defines the section from a textual perspective.

These commandments form a distinct unit from a conceptual perspective as well. Both of these commandments are based on the principle of man having been created in God's image. Shabbat is, of course, rooted in our imitating God's pattern of creating for six time periods and desisting from creation on the seventh. Similarly, honoring parents is rooted in the concept of their being partners with God in man's creation.²¹¹ The common denominator is the idea of *tzelem Elokim*. It is this concept that lies at the core of this section.

The third section (5:17-18) consists of a series of commandments, all linked by a *vav hachibur* ("and"), thereby forming a distinct third section:

(יז) לא תרצח ם ולא תנאק ם ולא תגנב ם ולא תענה כרעך עד שוא: ם
(יח) ולא תקמח אשת רעך ם ולא תתאוה בית רעך שדדו ועבדו ואמתו שוור
והמרו וכל אשר לרעך: ם

¹⁷ You shall not murder. And you shall not commit adultery. And you shall not steal. And you shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

¹⁸ And you shall not covet your neighbor's wife. And you shall not crave your neighbor's house, or his field, or his male or female slave, or his ox, or his ass, or anything that is your neighbor's.

It is obvious that these commandments proscribe negative actions between man and his fellow.

Given this tripartite structure and the themes of each of the three sections, it is clear that this structure parallels the three opening narratives of the Torah! The three parts of the *Aseret Hadibrot* convey the same basic message as the

three foundation stories of the Torah.

The first narrative of the Torah (*Bereshit* chapter one), the creation narrative, deals with Hashem as God and man as being created in His image:

(א) בראשית ברא אלהים את השמים ואת הארץ:
(ב) ויאמר אלהים נעשה אדם בצלמנו כדמותנו ויבדו בדגת הים ובעוף השמים
ובבהמה וכל הארץ וכל הרמש הרמש על הארץ:
(ג) ויברא אלהים את האדם בצלמו כאלם ברא אתו זכר ונקבה ברא
אדם:

¹ When God began to create heaven and earth—

²⁶ And God said, "Let us make man in Our image, after Our likeness. They shall rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the cattle, the whole earth, and all the creeping things that creep on earth."

²⁷ And God created man in His image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

This theme is reflected in the first section of the *Aseret Hadibrot*, as we have seen.

The second narrative of the Torah is the *Eitz Hada'at* incident. It commences in the second chapter of *Bereshit* with the prohibition of eating from the tree of life, prefaced by the concept of Shabbat (which is discussed in the second segment of the *Aseret Hadibrot*):

(א) ויכלו השמים והארץ וכל צבאם:
(ב) ויכל אלהים כיום השביעי מלאכתו אשר עשה וישבת כיום השביעי מכל
מלאכתו אשר עשה:
(ג) ויברך אלהים את יום השביעי ויקדש אותו כי בו שבת מכל מלאכתו אשר

211. *Niddah* 31a.

ברא אלהים לעשות: פ

(טז) ויצו ה' אלהים על האדם לאמר מכל עץ הגן אכל תאכל:

(יז) ומען הדעת טוב ורע לא תאכל ממנו כי ביום אכלך ממנו מות תמות:

¹ The heaven and the earth were finished, and all their array.

² On the seventh day God finished the work that He had been doing, and He ceased on the seventh day from all the work that He had done.

³ And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because on it God ceased from all the work of creation that He had done.

¹⁶ And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you are free to eat:

¹⁷ but as for the tree of knowledge of good and bad, you must not eat of it; for as soon as you eat of it, you shall surely die."

The narrative continues in the following chapter with the sin of eating the fruit of the tree:

(ה) כי ידע אלהים כי ביום אכלכם ממנו ונפקחו עיניכם והייתם כאלהים ידעו טוב ורע:

(זכ) ויאמר ה' אלהים הן האדם היה כאחד ממנו לדעת טוב ורע ועתה פן ישלח ידו ולקח גם מעץ החיים ואכל והי ליעלים:

⁵ But God knows that as soon as you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like Divine beings who know good and evil.

²² And the Lord God said, "Now that the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil, what if he should stretch out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever!"

This sin is fundamentally about man usurping the place of God in defining good and evil. Throughout the first chapter of *Bereshit*, the refrain is "vayar

Elokim ki tov," where Hashem decided what is good. Here Chavah takes God's place and "vateirah ha ishah ki tov" – she decided what is good (3:6)!

והרא האשה כי טוב העץ למאכל וכי תאוה הוא לעינים ונתמדם העץ להשכלי תקח מפריה ותאכל ותתן גם לאישה עמה ויאכל:

When the woman saw that the tree was good for eating and a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable as a source of wisdom, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave some to her husband, and he ate.

This is a corruption of the concept of *tzelem Elokim*. Man is meant to become more Godlike by following God's commands, not by trying to replace God as the arbiter of right and wrong.²¹² Instead of becoming more Divine, this sin causes man to become less godlike and more mortal.

The second section of the *Aseret Hadibrot* parallels this second narrative. It is based on the idea that we must actualize our *tzelem Elokim* by obeying God's commandments, not by rebelling against them. It is fascinating that the phrase that defines this section is: "As the Lord, your God, commanded you." This parallels the introduction to the sin of the tree of knowledge: "The Lord, God, commanded man."²¹³

It is also interesting to note that this middle section of the *Aseret Hadibrot* concludes with: "That you may long endure, and that you may fare well [*yitav*]." This is a direct response to the sin of the tree of knowledge. Adam's life was shortened because he chose a false notion of "good" [*rov*] by disobeying God and misusing his Divine image. By contrast, if one properly utilizes his Divine

212. Concerning the meaning of the sin and the narrative as a whole, see further *Amitah shel Torah on the Torah (Parshat Bereshit)*.

213. This is highly significant because it is the first usage of this term in the Torah, as noted in the 32 methodologies of Rabbi Eliezer, the son of Rabbi Yossi Hagelili.

image by obeying God, then he will attain true good and long life.

The third foundation narrative is the story of Kayin and Hevel in chapter four:

- (ג) ויהי מקץ ימים יבא קין מפרי האדמה מנחה לה':
 (ד) והבל הביא גם הוא מנכרות צאנו ומחלבוני וישע ה' אל הבל ואל מנחתו:
 (ה) ואל קין ואל מנחתו לא שעה ויחד לקין מאד ויפלו פניו:
 (ו) ויאמר ה' אל קין למה חרדה לך ולמה נפלו פניך:
 (ז) הלא אם תשיב שאת ואם לא תשיב לפתח חטאת רבץ ואלך תשוקתו ואתה תמשל בו:
 (ח) ויאמר קין הלא הבל אחיו והיה בהיותם כשדה ויקם קין אל הבל אחיו ויהרגוהו:
 (ט) ויאמר ה' אל קין אי הבל אחיך ויאמר לא ידעתי השמר אחיך אנכי:
 (י) ויאמר מה עשית קול דמי אחיך צעקים אלי מן האדמה:
 3 In the course of time, Kayin brought an offering to the Lord from the fruit of the soil.
 4 And Hevel, for his part, brought the choicest of the firstlings of his flock.
 The Lord paid heed to Hevel and his offering,
 5 But to Kayin and his offering He paid no heed. Kayin was much distressed, and his face fell.
 6 And the Lord said to Kayin, "Why are you distressed, and why is your face fallen?
 7 Surely, if you do right, there is uplift. But if you do not do right sin couches at the door; its urge is toward you, yet you can be its master."
 8 Kayin said to his brother Hevel ... and when they were in the field, Kayin set upon his brother Hevel and killed him.
 9 The Lord said to Kayin, "Where is your brother Hevel?" And he said, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?"
 10 Then He said, "What have you done? Hark, your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground!"

This narrative relates to interpersonal relationships. Kayin also corrupts the concept of Divine image, albeit in the context of man-man rather than man-God. He believes that he is the center of the universe and that if Hevel has won God's approval whereas he has not, then Hevel must have "cheated" him and should be dealt with accordingly. The final section of the *Aseret Hadibrot* clearly parallels this narrative. In this vein, it is very interesting to note that this section opens with murder and concludes with jealousy, which constitute the very essence of the Kayin narrative!

Essentially, the three narratives (and by extension, the three sections of the *Aseret Hadibrot*) deal with the need to properly relate to our Divine image. This is the very foundation of the Torah, as noted by *Chazal* in a number of places – for example the Yerushalmi in *Nedarim*, (chapter IX):

ואהבת לרעך כמוך . רבי עקיבה אומר זהו כלל גדול בתורה. כן עזאי אומר זה ספר תולדות אדם זה כלל גדול מזה.

"Love your fellow as yourself." Rabbi Akiva says, "This is a major principle in the Torah. Ben Azzai says, "This is the record of Adam's line," is an even more major principle than that.

The verse which Ben Azzai points to as the most fundamental reads in full (*Bereshit* 5:1):

זה ספר תולדת אדם ביום ברא אלהים אדם בדמות אלהים עשה אתו:

This is the record of Adam's line: When God created man, He made him in the likeness of God.

Ben Azzai's point is that the most fundamental issue in the Torah is the proper understanding of our Divine image. As we have seen, this is the core of the trilogy of narratives that the Torah opens with, and the focus of the *Aseret Hadibrot*. Our analysis of these two constellations of texts is thus corroborated by the teaching of Ben Azzai.

To some degree, this interpretation of the *Aseret Hadibrot* is alluded to in the Gemara in *Bava Kama* (54b-55a):

שאל רבי הנינא בן עגיל את רבי חייה בר אבא מפני מה דברות הראשונות לא
נאמר בהם טוב ובדברות האחרונות נאמר בהם טוב אמר לו עד שאתה שואלי
למה נאמר בהם טוב שואלי אם נאמר בהן טוב אם לא שואני יודע אם נאמר
בהן טוב אם לא כלך אצל ר' תנחום בר חיילאי שהיה רגיל אצל ר' יהושע בן
לוי שהיה בקי באגדה...

Rabbi Hanina ben Agil asked Rabbi Hiyya bar Abba: For what reason is the word "good" not stated in the first version of the *Aseret Hadibrot*, whereas in the latter version of the *Aseret Hadibrot*, the word "good" is stated there? He said to him: Before you ask me why the word "good" is stated, ask me if the word "good" is actually stated there or not, as I do not know if the word "good" is stated there or not. Go to Rabbi Tanhum bar Hamilai, who was commonly found at the academy of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi, who was an expert in Aggadah...

At first glance, this *gemara* is jarring. Was the great Rabbi Hiyya not familiar with the wording of the *Aseret Hadibrot*? And if he wasn't, why didn't he ask that a *sefer Torah* be brought so that he could check the text, as the Sages so often did? These questions are discussed by *Rishonim* and *Acharonim*, but the most

compelling understanding of this text is offered by Rav Reuven Margoliot.²¹⁴

He explains that Rav Hiyya knew very well what is written in *Shemot* and *Devarim*. The issue was not what the texts said, but rather how to understand them. One can explain the differences between the texts in *Shemot* and *Devarim* in one of two ways. One possibility is that the version in *Shemot* reflects the first tablets, prior to the *Cheit Ha'egel*, whereas the version in *Devarim* reflects the second tablets, following the sin. The second possibility is that the texts on the two sets of tablets were identical,²¹⁵ as they are cited in *Shemot*, and that the version in *Devarim* is a paraphrase, adding interpretation and commentary, as befits *Mishneh Torah*.

Rabbi Hanina ben Agil assumed the first approach and therefore ascribed the absence of the term "tov" in *Shemot* to its absence in the original tablets and its presence in *Devarim* to its inclusion in the replacement tablets. Rabbi Hiyya questioned this assumption and noted that it was subject to interpretation, depending on the two approaches.

We have seen here a powerful example of the type of "commentary" to the *Dibrot* which Moshe Rabbeinu gives us in *Devarim*. It is fascinating that this *gemara* alludes to the fact that the issue of "tov," which references the sin of the tree of knowledge, is specifically added in the *Devarim* version which adds this interpretation. This is true of all of the terms which define the tripartite division of the *Aseret Hadibrot* and its reflection of the trilogy of foundation narratives.

214. *Hamikrah v' Hamesorah*, chapter one.

215. In my opinion, this approach is more compelling for several reasons (see e.g. *Shemot* 34:1; *Devarim* 10:2, 4), but this is beyond the scope of our discussion.