



## CLASS 2

### PEOPLEHOOD IN THE HIERARCHY OF JEWISH VALUES

#### Source 1



Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Repentance 3:11

הפורש מדרכי ציבור: אף על פי שלא עבר עבירות, אלא נבדל מעדת ישראל ואינו עושה מצוות בכללן ולא נכנס בצרתן ולא מתענה בתעניתן, אלא הולך בדרכו כאחד מגויי הארץ, וכאילו אינו מהן--אין לו חלק לעולם הבא...

An individual who separates themselves from the community, even if they did not commit any sins, but sets themselves apart from the congregation of Israel, and does not fulfill the *mitzvot* together with them, and does not include themselves in communal sorrows or in communal fasts, and instead, goes down a separate path like one of the [other] nations of the earth and not one of them (=the Jews)—has no portion in the World To Come...

#### Source 2



Exodus (Shemot) 32:7-20

ז וַיִּדְבֹר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר הֲלוֹא אֲנִי הֵבִיאֲךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם.

7 The LORD spoke to Moses, "Hurry down, for your people, whom you brought out of the land of Egypt, have acted basely.

ח סָרוּ מִהַר מִן הַדֶּרֶךְ אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתָם עָשׂוּ לָהֶם עֵגֶל מִסִּכָּה וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲווּ לוֹ וַיִּזְבְּחוּ לוֹ וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלֶּה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֲשֶׁר הֵבִיאָנוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם.

8 They have been quick to turn aside from the way that I enjoined upon them. They have made themselves a molten calf and bowed low to it and sacrificed to it, saying: "This is your god, O Israel, who brought you out of the land of Egypt!"

ט וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה רְאִיתִי אֶת הָעָם הַזֶּה וְהִנֵּה עִם קֹשֶׁה עֲרָף הוּא.

9 The LORD further said to Moses, "I see that this is a stiffnecked people.



י ועָתָה הַנִּיחָה לִי וַיַּחַר אַפִּי בָהֶם וְאֶכְלֵם וְאַעֲשֶׂה אוֹתָךְ לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל.

- 10 Now, let Me be, that My anger may blaze forth against them and that I may destroy them, and make of you a great nation.”

יא וַיַּחַל מֹשֶׁה אֶת פְּנֵי ה' אֱ-לֹהֵי וַיֹּאמֶר לָמָּה ה' יַחַרְהֵ אַפְּךָ בְּעַמֶּךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם בְּכַח גָּדוֹל וּבְיַד חֲזָקָה.

- 11 But Moses implored the LORD his God, saying, “Let not Your anger, O Lord, blaze forth against Your people, whom You delivered from the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand.

יב לָמָּה יֹאמְרוּ מִצְרַיִם לֵאמֹר בְּרָעָה הוֹצִיאָם לְהַרְגֵם בְּהָרִים וּלְכַלְתֵּם מֵעַל פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה שׁוֹב מִחֲרוֹן אַפְּךָ וְהִנַּחֲתָם עַל הָרָעָה לְעַמֶּךָ.

- 12 Let not the Egyptians say, ‘It was with evil intent that He delivered them, only to kill them off in the mountains and annihilate them from the face of the earth.’ Turn from Your blazing anger, and renounce the plan to punish Your people.

יג זָכֹר לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וְלִישְׂרָאֵל עֲבָדֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתָּ לָהֶם בְּךָ וַתְּדַבֵּר אֱלֹהִים אֲרָבָה אֶת זַרְעֲכֶם כְּכּוֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם וְכָל הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת אֲשֶׁר אָמַרְתִּי אֲתָן לְזַרְעֲכֶם וְנָחֳלוּ לָעַלְמִים.

- 13 Remember Your servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, how You swore to them by Your Self and said to them: I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven, and I will give to your offspring this whole land of which I spoke, to possess forever.”

יד וַיִּנָּחֵם ה' עַל הָרָעָה אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּר לַעֲשׂוֹת לְעַמּוֹ. {פ}

- 14 And the LORD renounced the punishment He had planned to bring upon His people. {P}

טו וַיִּפֶּן וַיֵּרָד מֹשֶׁה מִן הָהָר וּשְׁנֵי לַחַת הָעֵדוּת בְּיָדוֹ לַחַת כְּתָבִים מִשְׁנֵי עֲבָרֵיהֶם מִזֶּה וּמִזֶּה הֵם כְּתָבִים.

- 15 Thereupon Moses turned and went down from the mountain bearing the two tablets of the Pact, tablets inscribed on both their surfaces: they were inscribed on the one side and on the other.



טז והלחת מעשה אֱלֹהִים הֵמָּה וְהַמְּכֻתָּב מְכֻתָּב אֱלֹהִים הוּא חֲרוּת עַל הַלְּחָת.

- 16 The tablets were God’s work, and the writing was God’s writing, incised upon the tablets.

יז וַיִּשְׁמַע יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אֶת קוֹל הָעָם בְּרִעָה וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל מֹשֶׁה קוֹל מִלְחָמָה בַּמַּחֲנֶה.

- 17 When Joshua heard the sound of the people in its boisterousness, he said to Moses, “There is a cry of war in the camp.”

יח וַיֹּאמֶר אֵין קוֹל עֲנוֹת גְּבוּרָה וְאֵין קוֹל עֲנוֹת חִלּוּשָׁה קוֹל עֲנוֹת אֲנָכִי שָׁמַע.

- 18 But he answered, “It is not the sound of the tune of triumph, Or the sound of the tune of defeat; It is the sound of song that I hear!”

יט וַיְהִי כַּאֲשֶׁר קָרַב אֶל הַמַּחֲנֶה וַיֵּרָא אֶת הָעֵגֶל וּמַחֲלַת וַיַּחַר אַף מֹשֶׁה וַיִּשְׁלַךְ מִיָּדוֹ אֶת הַלְּחָת וַיִּשְׁבֵּר אֹתָם תַּחַת הַהָר.

- 19 As soon as Moses came near the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, he became enraged; and he hurled the tablets from his hands and shattered them at the foot of the mountain.

כ וַיִּקַּח אֶת הָעֵגֶל אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ וַיִּשְׂרֹף בְּאֵשׁ וַיִּטְחֵן עַד אֲשֶׁר דָּק וַיִּזֶר עַל פְּנֵי הַמַּיִם וַיִּשְׂק אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל.

- 20 He took the calf that they had made and burned it; he ground it to powder and strewed it upon the water and so made the Israelites drink it.

כז וַיַּעֲמֵד מֹשֶׁה בְּשַׁעַר הַמַּחֲנֶה וַיֹּאמֶר מִי לַהּ אֱלֹהֵי וַיֵּאֲסֹפוּ אֵלָיו כָּל בְּנֵי לֵוִי.

- 26 Moses stood up in the gate of the camp and said, “Whoever is for the LORD, come here!” And all the Levites rallied to him.

כז וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם כֹּה אָמַר ה' אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל שִׁימוּ אִישׁ חֶרְבוֹ עַל יָרְכוֹ עִבְרוּ וְשׁוּבוּ מִשַׁעַר לְשַׁעַר בַּמַּחֲנֶה וְהִרְגוּ אִישׁ אֶת אָחִיו וְאִישׁ אֶת רֵעֵהוּ וְאִישׁ אֶת קָרְבוֹ.

- 27 He said to them, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Each of you put sword on thigh, go back and forth from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay brother, neighbor, and kin.”



כח ויעשו בני לוי כדבר משה ויפל מן העם ביום ההוא כשלושת אלפי איש.

28 The Levites did as Moses had bidden; and some three thousand of the people fell that day.

כט ויאמר משה מלאו ידכם היום לה' כי איש בבנו ובאחיו ולתת עליכם היום ברכה.

29 And Moses said, "Dedicate yourselves to the LORD this day—for each of you has been against son and brother—that He may bestow a blessing upon you today."

### Source 3



#### Avot d'Rabbi Natan 2

...שבר את הלוחות והסכימה דעתו לדעת המקום...כיצד? אמרו, בשעה שעלה משה למרום לקבל את הלוחות שהן כתובות ומונחות מששת ימי בראשית... באותה שעה היו מלאכי השרת קושרין קטיגור על משה, והיו אומרים: ריבנו של עולם (תהלים ח) "מה אנוש כי תזכרנו ובן אדם כי תפקדנו, ותחסרהו מעט מא-לוהים, וכבוד והדר תעטרהו, תמשילהו במעשי ידיך, כל שתה תחת רגליו, צנה ואלפים כלם וגם בהמות שדי, צפור שמים ודגי הים." היו מרננים אחריו של משה והיו אומרים, מה טיבו של ילוד אישה שעלה למרום, שנאמר: (שם סח) "עלית למרום שבית שבי לקחת מתנות." נטלן וירד והיה שמח שמחה גדולה.

Moses broke the tablets of the commandments, and his judgment coincided with God's...How so? They said: when Moses went to the heavens to receive the tablets which had been written and placed there since creation...the ministering angels advocated against Moses and were saying: Lord of the universe, "What is humanity that you should remember it and the human being that you should pay it attention? Yet you have made them just a little lower than angels and crowned them with glory and honor. You have given them dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under their feet; sheep and oxen, all of them, and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea (PSALMS 8)!" They murmured about Moses and were saying: Who is this one born of woman who has ascended to heaven, as is said: "You have ascended to the heights, taken captive and taken gifts (PSALMS 68)." But he took the tablets of the Commandments and descended, and was exceedingly glad.



כיון שראה אותו סרחון שסרחו במעשה העגל אמר: היאך אני נותן להם את הלוחות, מזקיני אותן למצות חמורות, ומחייבני אותן מיתה לשמים, שכן כתוב בהן "לא יהיה לך אלוהים אחרים על פני." חזר לאחוריו. וראו אותו שבעים זקנים ורצו אחריו. הוא אחז בראש הלוח, והן אחזו בראש הלוח. חזק כוחו של משה מכולן, שנאמר: (דברים לד) "ולכל היד החזקה ולכל המורא הגדול אשר עשה משה לעיני כל ישראל." נסתכל בהן וראה שפרח כתב מעליהן. אמר: היאך אני נותן להם לישראל את הלוחות שאין בהם ממש? אלא אאחזו ואשברם, שנאמר: (שם ט) "ואתפוש בשני הלוחות ואשליכם מעל שתי ידי ואשברם." רבי יוסי הגלילי אומר: אמשול לך משל. למה הדבר דומה? למלך בשר ודם שאמר לשלוחו צא וקדש לי נערה יפה וחסודה ומעשיה נאין. הלך אותו שליח וקידשה. לאחר שקידשה הלך ומצאה שזינתה תחת אחר. מיד היה דן מעצמו ואומר: אם אני נותן לה כתובה מעכשיו, נמצא מחייבה מיתה, ונפטרוהו מאדוני לעולם. כך היה משה הצדיק דן מעצמו. אמר: היאך אני נותן להם לישראל את הלוחות הללו, מזקיני אותן למצות חמורות, ומחייבני אותן מיתה, שכך כתוב בהן (שמות כב) "זוכה לאלוהים יחרם בלתי לה' לבדו." אלא אאחזו בהן ואשברם, וחזרן למוטב.

When he beheld that offense which they committed in the making of the golden calf, he said to himself, "How can I give them the tablets of the Commandments? I shall be obligating them to major commandments and condemning them to death in the hands of Heaven; for thus is it written in the Commandments, You shall have no other gods before Me" (EXODUS 20:3).

He then started back but the seventy Elders saw him and ran after him. He held fast to one end of the tablets and they held fast to the other end of the tablets; but the strength of Moses prevailed over theirs, as it is said, And in all the mighty hand, and in all the great terror, which Moses wrought in the sight of all Israel (DEUTERONOMY 34:12).

He looked at the tablets and saw that the writing had disappeared from them. How can I give Israel tablets which have naught to them, he thought; better that I take hold and break them. As it is said, And I took hold of the two tablets, and cast them out of my two hands, and broke them (DEUTERONOMY 9:17).

Rabbi Yose the Galilean says: I shall tell you a parable; to what may this be likened? To a king of flesh and blood who said to his steward, "Go and betroth unto me a beautiful and pious maiden, of seemly conduct." That steward went and betrothed her. After he had betrothed her, he went and discovered that she played the harlot with another man. Forthwith, of his own accord, he made the following inference; said he, "If I now go ahead and give her the marriage



deed, she will be liable to the penalty of death, and thus we shall have separated her from my master forever.”

So too did Moses the righteous make an inference of his own accord. He said: “How shall I give these tablets to Israel? I shall be obligating them to major commandments and make them liable to the penalty of death, for thus is it written in the tablets, He that sacrifices unto the gods, save unto the Lord only, shall be utterly destroyed (EXODUS 22:19). Rather, I shall take hold of them and break them, and bring Israel back to good conduct.”

#### Source 4

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Joseph Soloveitchik, “The Covenant of Sinai and The Covenant of Egypt,” in *Fate and Destiny: From Holocaust to the State of Israel* (2000)

When we probe the nature of our historical existence we arrive at a very important insight, one that constitutes a fundamental element of our world-view. The Torah relates that God made two covenants with the Israelites .... The individual is tied to his people both with the chains of fate and with the bonds of destiny. The covenant in Egypt was a covenant of fate, while the covenant at Sinai was a covenant of destiny.

What is the nature of a covenant of fate? Fate in the life of a people, as in the life of an individual, signifies an existence of compulsion. A strange necessity binds the particulars into one whole. The individual, against his will, is subjected and subjugated to the national, fate-laden, reality. He cannot evade this reality and become assimilated into some other, different reality. .... This sense of a fate-laden existence of necessity gives rise to the historical loneliness of the Jew. .... The covenant of fate expresses itself as well in positive categories which derive from the consciousness of a shared fate. There are four aspects to this rare mode of consciousness.

First, the consciousness of a shared fate manifests itself as a consciousness of shared circumstances...

Second, the consciousness of shared historical circumstances results in the experience of shared suffering... If boiling water is poured upon the head of the Jew in Morocco, the fashionably attired Jew in Paris or London has to scream at the top of his voice, and through feeling the pain he will remain faithful to his people...



Third, shared suffering finds its expression in the awareness of shared responsibility and liability...

Fourth, shared historical circumstances give rise to shared activity. The obligation to give charity and perform deeds of loving-kindness derives its force from the all-penetrating and all-encompassing experience of brotherhood...

What is the Covenant of Destiny? In the life of a people (as in the life of an individual), destiny signifies an existence that it has chosen of its own free will and in which it finds the full realization of its historical existence. Instead of a passive, inexorable existence into which a nation is thrust, an Existence of Destiny manifests itself as an active experience full of purposeful movement, ascension, aspirations, and fulfillment. The nation is enmeshed in its destiny because of its longing for an enhanced state of being, an existence replete with substance and direction. Destiny is the font out of which flows the unique self-elevation of the nation and the unending stream of Divine inspiration that will not run dry so long as the path of the People is demarcated by the laws of God. The life of destiny is a directed life, the result of conscious direction and free will.

While the Covenant of Egypt was concluded without the consent of the people of Israel (the Holy One took them unto Him before He consulted with them: And I will take you unto Me as a people (EXODUS 6:7), the Covenant of Sinai was offered to them before it was promulgated. The Holy One sent Moses to tell them His message, and Moses returned to the Holy One with the peoples answer. The *halakha* perceives the Covenant of Sinai as a contract which is valid if written with the consent of the obligated party, in this case, the community of Israel. The proclamation that We shall do and we shall hear (EXODUS 24:7) is the foundation of the Torah. What is the content of the Covenant of Sinai? It is a special way of life that directs the individual to the fulfilment of an end beyond the reach of the man of fate—the striving of man to resemble his Creator via self-transcendence.