

על סיזיפוס, תקווה ומשמעות
הרב מואיז נבון

~ מוות ומשמעות ~

Albert Camus, "The Myth of Sisyphus"

MN: life is absurd for "there is but one world" and so with death, all of man's toil is found to be for naught, there being "no higher destiny".

R. Soloveitchik, Out of the Whirlwind, p.47

Human death, however, terminates a personality ... which was driven by vision and hope, which despaired, rejoiced and grieved ... It is the tragic experience of the human being who is endowed with time-awareness, and knows that his existence is a mockery.
... Death denies the very worth of existence.

~ אלבר קאמי על סיזיפוס ~

... His scorn of the gods, his hatred of death, and his passion for life won him that unspeakable penalty in which the whole being is exerted toward accomplishing nothing.
... The workman of today works everyday in his life at the same tasks, and his fate is no less absurd. But it is **tragic** only at the rare moments when it becomes conscious.
... There is but one world, however. Happiness and the absurd are two sons of the same earth.
... If the descent is thus sometimes performed in sorrow, it can also take place in joy. This word is not too much.
... **Discovery**. ... It drives out of this world a god who had come into it with dissatisfaction and a preference for futile suffering. It makes of fate a human matter, which must be settled among men.
... All Sisyphus' silent joy is contained therein. His fate belongs to him. His rock is a thing.
... I leave Sisyphus at the foot of the mountain! One always finds one's burden again. But Sisyphus teaches the higher fidelity that negates the gods and raises rocks. He too concludes that all is well. This universe henceforth without a master seems to him neither sterile nor futile. Each atom of that stone, each mineral flake of that night filled mountain, in itself forms a world. The struggle itself toward the heights is enough to fill a man's heart. One **must** imagine Sisyphus happy.

~ רב סולוביצ'יק על פרה אדומה ~

במדבר פרק יט (א) וַיְדַבֵּר יְקֹנָק אֶל מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל אֶהֱרֹן לֵאמֹר: (ב) **זאת חַקַּת הַתּוֹרָה** אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְקֹנָק לֵאמֹר דַּבֵּר אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּקְחוּ אֵלֶיךָ פָּרָה אֲדָמָה תְּמִימָה אֲשֶׁר אֵין בָּהּ מוֹם אֲשֶׁר לֹא עָלָה עָלֶיהָ עַל: ... (יג) **כָּל הַנֶּגַע בְּמַת בְּנֶפֶשׁ הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר יָמוּת** וְלֹא יִתְחַטָּא אֶת מִשְׁכַּן יְקֹנָק טָמֵא וְנִכְרַתָּה הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַהוּא מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל כִּי מִי נָדָה לֹא זָרַק עָלָיו טָמֵא יִהְיֶה עוֹד טָמֵאתוּ בוּ: (יד) **זאת הַתּוֹרָה אֲדָם כִּי יָמוּת** ...

ספורנו: ומעיקרי ההעלם בזה (לשלמה) הוא שהיא מטמאה את הטהורים ומטהרת את הטמאים.

R. Soloveitchik, Man Of Faith in the Modern World, p.103

The *bukkab* ... is death itself, which is the ultimate mystery of human existence.

רש"י הירש במדבר פרק יט

"**נפש האדם אשר ימות**" היא האדם החי שלא יוכל להימלט מגזירת המוות, וכל גופה מפגינה את הגזירה הזאת השולטת באדם כהכרח גמור. כל אדם שמת מייצג את האדם בשעת מותו; המת מייצג את האדם החי הנכנע למר המוות. ולפיכך הנוגע במת נחשב - מבחינת הרעיון - כאילו הוא נוגע "בנפש אדם אשר ימות", ולא בנפש אדם מסויים, אלא ב"נפש האדם" וגו', כי המוות הוא גורל כל אדם באשר הוא אדם. נמצאת אומר: "בנפש האדם" וגו' מנמק את הדין האמור ב"הנוגע במת". והוא טעון חיטוי - לא מפני שהוא "נוגע במת" אלא מפני שהנגיעה במת מכוננת את דעתו אל "נפש האדם אשר ימות". ולפיכך יש לפרש את "בנפש האדם אשר - ימות" כתמורה של "במת"; או אות ב' של "במת" מורה על האמצעי המתווך: באמצעות המת הוא בא במגע עם נפש האדם אשר ימות, וכך תרגמנו (השוה פי' לעיל ו, ו).

R. Soloveitchik, Man Of Faith in the Modern World

(p102) We propose that the singular *bukab* here is not merely in the performance of the ritual but rather in the mind-defying mystery of death itself, whose defiling effects the watery ashes seek to counter.

(p.107) *Tevillab* requires that the defiled enter the water entirely of his own initiative ... submerging in a ... *mikveh*. ... Only he can do it... *Tevillab*, therefore, implies a capacity to change one's condition. It is suggestive of all forms of human initiative... the ability of man to transform his life.

Haḥa'ab ... the *tamei* cannot sprinkle it on himself; it must always be "and a clean person shall sprinkle it upon the unclean person. ... He cannot liberate himself; he is dependent upon others; only a *tabor* can help him".

מדרש תנחומא (בובר) פרשת חקת סימן כח

[וְאֶסְף אִישׁ טְהוֹר אֶת אֶפְרַיִם הַפָּרָה (במ' יט) -] "ואסף", זה הקדוש ברוך הוא, שנאמר "ונשא נס לגוים ואסף נדחי ישראל" (ישעיה יא יב). "איש", זה הקדוש ברוך הוא, שנאמר "ה' איש מלחמה (שמות טו ג). "טהור", זה הקדוש ברוך הוא, שנאמר טהור עינים (חבקוק א ג).

במדבר פרק יט (יז) וְלָקְחוּ לְטָמֵא מֵעֵפֶר שְׂרָפָת הַחֲטָאת וְנָתַן עָלָיו מִיַּם חַיִּים אֶל כָּלִי :

R. Soloveitchik, Man Of Faith in the Modern World, p109

"all human efforts to comprehend death and to lessen its dread are futile without an acceptance of a providential God."

~ The Myth of Sisyphus: Revisited ~

Nothing is told us about Sisyphus in the underworld. Myths are made for the imagination to breathe life into them....

If one believes Homer, Sisyphus was the wisest and most prudent of mortals. According to another tradition, however, he was disposed to practice the profession of highwayman. I see no contradiction in this. Opinions differ as to the reasons why he became the futile laborer of the underworld. To begin with, he is accused of a certain levity in regard to the gods. He stole their secrets. Egina, the daughter of Esopus, was carried off by Jupiter. The father was shocked by that disappearance and complained to Sisyphus. He, who knew of the abduction, offered to tell about it on condition that Esopus would give water to the citadel of Corinth. To the celestial thunderbolts he preferred the benediction of water. He was punished for this in the underworld. Homer tells us also that Sisyphus had put Death in chains. Pluto could not endure the sight of his deserted, silent empire. He dispatched the god of war, who liberated Death from the hands of her conqueror.

It is said that Sisyphus, being near to death, rashly wanted to test his wife's love. He ordered her to cast his unburied body into the middle of the public square. Sisyphus woke up in the underworld. And there, annoyed by an obedience so contrary to human love, he obtained from Pluto permission to return to earth in order to chastise his wife. But when he had seen again the face of this world, enjoyed water and sun, warm stones and the sea, he no longer wanted to go back to the infernal darkness. Recalls, signs of anger, warnings were of no avail. Many years more he lived facing the curve of the gulf, the sparkling sea, and the smiles of earth. A decree of the gods was necessary. Mercury came and seized the impudent man by the collar and, snatching him from his joys, lead him forcibly back to the underworld, where his rock was ready for him....

MN:

- 1) The lesson is that life is about meaning - one must be purposive, one must seek out meaning.
- 2) The lesson is that your eternity is a reflection of your life in this world.



תהלים פרק לו (לד) קוּה אֶל יְקוֹק וְשֹׁמֵר דְּרָכָיו וִירוֹמָמֶד לְרֵשֶׁת אֶרֶץ
: (שהיא ארץ החיים הנצחיים – מלבנים) בְּהַכְרַת רְשָׁעִים תִּרְאֶה :

יחזקאל לו (כד) וְלִקְחֹתִי אֶתְכֶם מִן הַגּוֹיִם וְקִבַּצְתִּי אֶתְכֶם מִכָּל
הָאֲרָצוֹת וְהִבֵּאתִי אֶתְכֶם אֶל אֲדַמְתְּכֶם : (כה) וְזָרַקְתִּי עֲלֵיכֶם מִיַּם
טְהוֹרִים וְטַהַרְתֶּם מִכָּל טְמֵאוֹתֵיכֶם וּמִכָּל גִּלְגֻלֵיכֶם אֲטַהַר אֶתְכֶם :