

The Great, Mighty, and Awesome God isn't What God Used to be

Rabbi Yitz Greenberg- ygreenberg@hadar.org

Summer Learning Retreat 2021

Talmud Bavli Yoma 69b	תלמוד בבלי, מסכת יומא סט:
And Rav Mattana said: “The great, the mighty, and the awesome God” (Nehemiah 9:32). This interpretation that Rav Mattana said leans to the exposition of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi. As Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: Why are the Sages of those generations called the members of the Great Assembly? It is because they returned the crown to its former glory. Moses came and said: “The great, the mighty, and the awesome God” (Deuteronomy 10:17). Jeremiah came and said: Gentiles are carousing in His sanctuary; where is His awesomeness? He did not say awesome in his prayer: “The great God, the mighty Lord of Hosts, is His name” (Jeremiah 32:18). Daniel came and said: Gentiles are enslaving His children; where is His might? Therefore he did not say mighty in his prayer: “The great and awesome God” (Daniel 9:4). The members of the Great Assembly came and said:	ורב מתנא אמר האל הגדול הגבור והנורא והא דרב מתנא מטיא לדברי יהושע בן לוי דאמר רבי יהושע בן לוי למה נקרא שמן אנשי כנסת הגדולה שהחזירו עטרה ליושנה אתא משה אמר האל הגדול הגבור והנורא אתא ירמיה ואמר גוים מקרקרין בהיכלו איה נוראותיו לא אמר נורא אתא דניאל אמר גוים משתעבדים בבניו איה גבורותיו לא אמר גבור אתו אינהו ואמרו אדרבה זו היא (גבורת) גבורתו שכוּבַשׁ את יצרו שנותן ארץ אפים לרשעים



On the contrary, this is the might of His might that He conquers His inclination in that He exercises patience toward the wicked.

And these acts also express His awesomeness: Were it not for the awesomeness of the Holy One, Blessed be He, how could one people survive among the nations?

And the Rabbis [Jeremiah and Daniel], how could they do this and uproot an ordinance instituted by Moses?

Rabbi Elazar said: Because they knew of the Holy One Blessed be He, that He is truthful. Consequently, they did not speak falsely about Him.

וְאֵלֵינוּ הֵן נִרְאוּתָיו שֶׁאֵלֵמְלָא מוֹרְאוֹ שֶׁל
 הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא הֵיכֵל אִוְמָה אַחַת
 יְכוּלָה לְהִתְקַיֵּים בֵּין הָאוֹמוֹת

וְרַבְּנָן הֵיכֵי עֲבָדֵי הָכִי וְעִקְרֵי תִקְוַתָא
 דְּתַקִּין מֹשֶׁה

אָמַר רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר מִתּוֹךְ שְׂוִדְעִין
 בְּהַקְדָּוֶשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא שֶׁאִמְתִּי הוּא לְפִיכָךְ
 לֹא כִיזְבוּ בוֹ

