

(How Much) Power to the People?

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Judaism and Democracy – Session 3

1. Exodus 2:14	1. שמות ב:יד
¹⁴ He retorted, “Who made you chief and ruler over us? Do you mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?” Moses was frightened, and thought: Then the matter is known!	¹⁴ וַיֹּאמֶר מִי שָׂמָה לְאִישׁ שֶׁר וְשָׁפֹט עָלֵינוּ הֲלֹהֵרְגָנִי אֵתָּה אִמָּר כְּאִשֶּׁר הֲרַגְתָּ אֶת־הַמִּצְרִי וַיֵּרָא מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמֶר אָכֵן נֹדַע הַדָּבָר:

2. Georg Fischer, S.J., “Israel’s Struggle with Political Governance: Democratic Tendencies and Leadership in the Old Testament” <i>in Gott und sein Wort: Studien zu Hermeneutik und biblischer Theologie</i> (2019)	
Right at the beginning, and with respect to Moses, the very first person to exercise leadership within ‘Israel’, we find the decisive question: “Who has made you a ruling person and a judge above us?” (Exod 2:14). In this way, the Israelite who was acting unjustly focuses on the crucial issue, namely, who has authority in a society? In the background of this is the sentiment that such a position as ruler or judge ‘destroys’ the ‘original’ equality of all members within a people, and therefore needs a special legitimization. That the Bible addresses this issue at the very first possible moment indicates its awareness and sensitivity to the precarious matter of governance.	

3. Exodus 18:21	3. שמות יח:כא
²¹ You shall also seek out, from among all the people,	²¹ וְאַתָּה תִּחְזֶה מִכָּל־הָעָם אֲנָשִׁי־חַיִּל יִרְאִי אֱלֹהִים אֲנָשִׁי אֲמֶת שְׂגָאִי בָצַע וְשָׁמַת עֲלֵהֶם



capable individuals who fear God—trustworthy ones who spurn ill-gotten gain. Set these over them as chiefs of thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens.	שְׂרֵי אֲלָפִים שְׂרֵי מֵאוֹת שְׂרֵי חֲמִשִּׁים וְשָׂרֵי עֶשְׂרֹת:
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4. Exodus 24:1, 9-11	4. שמות כד:א, ט-יא
¹ Then [God] said to Moses, “Come up to God, with Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy elders of Israel, and bow low from afar.	¹ וְאֶל־מֹשֶׁה אָמַר עֲלֵה אֵל־יְהוָה אִתָּה וְאַהֲרֹן נָדָב וַאֲבִיהוּא וְשִׁבְעִים מִזִּקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתֶם מֵרָחֹק:
⁹ Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy elders of Israel ascended; ¹⁰ and they saw the God of Israel—under whose feet was the likeness of a pavement of sapphire, like the very sky for purity. ¹¹ Yet [God] did not raise a hand against the leaders of the Israelites; they beheld God, and they ate and drank.	⁹ וַיַּעַל מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן נָדָב וַאֲבִיהוּא וְשִׁבְעִים מִזִּקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: ¹⁰ וַיֵּרְאוּ אֶת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַתַּחַת רַגְלָיו כְּמַעֲשֵׂה לְבִנְתַּת הַסַּפִּיר וּכְעֶצֶם הַשָּׁמַיִם לְטָהָר: ¹¹ וְאֶל־אַצִּילִי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא שָׁלַח יָדוֹ וַיַּחֲזוּ אֶת־הָאֱלֹהִים וַיֹּאכְלוּ וַיִּשְׁתּוּ:

5. Numbers 11:10-17, 24-29	5. במדבר יא:יז-כד, כט
¹⁰ Moses heard the people weeping, every clan apart, at the entrance of each tent. God was very angry, and Moses was distressed. ¹¹ And Moses said to God, “Why have You dealt ill with Your servant, and why have I not enjoyed Your favor, that You have laid the burden of all this people upon me? ¹² Did I produce all these people, did I engender them, that You should say to me, ‘Carry them in your bosom as a caregiver carries an infant,’ to the land that You have promised on oath to their fathers? ¹³ Where am I to get meat to give to all this people, when they whine before me and say, ‘Give us meat to eat!’ ¹⁴ I cannot carry all this people by myself, for it is too much for me. ¹⁵ If You would deal thus with me, kill me rather, I beg You, and let me see no more of my wretchedness!” ¹⁶ Then God said to Moses, “Gather for Me seventy of	¹⁰ וַיִּשְׁמַע מֹשֶׁה אֶת־הָעָם בֹּכֶה לְמִשְׁפְּחֹתָיו אִישׁ לְפָתַח אֹהֶלוֹ וַיַּחֲרֹאֲף יְהוָה מְאֹד וַיַּבְעִינִי מֹשֶׁה רָע: ¹¹ וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֵל־יְהוָה לְמָה הִרְעַנְתָּ לַעֲבָדְךָ וְלָמָּה לֹא־מָצִיתִי חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ לְשׁוֹם אֶת־מִשְׁאָל כָּל־הָעָם הַזֶּה עָלַי: ¹² הֲאֹנֲכִי הִרִיתִי אֶת כָּל־הָעָם הַזֶּה אִם־אֹנֲכִי יִלְדֹתִיהוּ כִּי־תֹאמַר אֵלַי שְׂאֵהוּ בְּחִיקְךָ כְּאִשֶּׁר יִשָּׂא הָאִמָּן אֶת־הַיֶּלֶד עַל הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתָּ לְאַבְרָהָם: ¹³ מֵאֵין לִי בָשָׂר לָתֵת לְכָל־הָעָם הַזֶּה כִּי־יִבְכוּ עָלַי לֵאמֹר תִּנְהַלְנוּ בָשָׂר וְנֹאכְלָהּ: ¹⁴ לֹא־אוֹכֵל אֹנֲכִי לְבָדִי לְשֹׂאת אֶת־כָּל־הָעָם הַזֶּה כִּי כִבֵּד מִמֶּנִּי: ¹⁵ וְאִם־כֵּכָה אֶת־עֲשֵׂה לִי הֲרַגְנִי נָא הָרֹג אִם־מָצִאתִי חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ וְאֶל־אַרְאֶה בְּרַעְיִתִּי: ¹⁶ וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה אֶסְפֶּה־לִּי שִׁבְעִים אִישׁ מִזִּקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר יֵדְעֶתָ כִּי־הֵם זִקְנֵי



Israel's elders of whom you have experience as elders and officers of the people, and bring them to the Tent of Meeting and let them take their place there with you. ¹⁷ I will come down and speak with you there, and I will draw upon the spirit that is on you and put it upon them; they shall share the burden of the people with you, and you shall not bear it alone.	הָעָם וְשִׁטְרוֹ וְלָקַחְתָּ אֹתָם אֶל־אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וְהִתְיַצְבוּ שָׁם עִמָּךְ: ¹⁷ וַיֵּרְדֹתִי וּדְבַרְתִּי עִמָּךְ שָׁם וְאָצַלְתִּי מִן־הָרוּחַ אֲשֶׁר עָלַי וְשִׁמְתִּי עֲלֵיהֶם וְנָשָׂאוּ אִתְּךָ בְּמִשְׁאָל הָעָם וְלֹא־תִשָּׂא אֶתָּה לְבַדָּךְ:
²⁴ Moses went out and reported the words of God to the people. He gathered seventy of the people's elders and stationed them around the Tent. ²⁵ Then, after coming down in a cloud and speaking to him, God drew upon the spirit that was on him and put it upon the seventy participating elders. And when the spirit rested upon them, they spoke in ecstasy, but did not continue. ²⁶ Two of the participants, one named Eldad and the other Medad, had remained in camp; yet the spirit rested upon them—they were among those recorded, but they had not gone out to the Tent—and they spoke in ecstasy in the camp. ²⁷ An assistant ran out and told Moses, saying, "Eldad and Medad are acting the prophet in the camp!" ²⁸ And Joshua son of Nun, Moses' attendant from his youth, spoke up and said, "My lord Moses, restrain them!" ²⁹ But Moses said to him, "Are you wrought up on my account? Would that all God's people were prophets, that God put [the divine] spirit upon them!"	²⁴ וַיֵּצֵא מֹשֶׁה וַיְדַבֵּר אֶל־הָעָם אֵת דְּבָרֵי יְהוָה וַיֵּאסֹף שִׁבְעִים אִישׁ מִזִּקְנֵי הָעָם וַיַּעֲמֵד אֹתָם סְבִיבֹת הָאֹהֶל: ²⁵ וַיֵּרֶד יְהוָה בְּעָנָן וַיְדַבֵּר אֵלָיו וַיֵּאָצֶל מִן־הָרוּחַ אֲשֶׁר עָלָיו וַיִּתֵּן עַל־שִׁבְעִים אִישׁ הַזִּקְנִים וַיְהִי כְנוּחַ עֲלֵיהֶם הָרוּחַ וַיִּתְנַבְּאוּ וְלֹא יָסֻפוּ: ²⁶ וַיִּשָּׂאָרוּ שְׁנֵי־אֲנָשִׁים בְּמַחְנֶה שָׁם הָאֶחָד אֶלְדָּד וְשֵׁם הַשֵּׁנִי מִדְּד וַתָּנַח עֲלֵיהֶם הָרוּחַ וְהֵמָּה בְּכַתְּבִים וְלֹא יָצְאוּ הָאֲהֻלָּה וַיִּתְנַבְּאוּ בְּמַחְנֶה: ²⁷ וַיֵּרֶץ הַנָּעַר וַיֵּגֵד לְמֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמֶר אֶלְדָּד וּמִדְּד מְתַנַּבְּאִים בְּמַחְנֶה: ²⁸ וַיַּעַן יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן־נוּן מִשְׁרֵת מֹשֶׁה מִבְּחָרָיו וַיֹּאמֶר אֲדֹנָי מֹשֶׁה כֵּלָאִם: ²⁹ וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ מֹשֶׁה הֲמִקְנָא אֶתָּה לִּי וּמִי יִתֵּן כָּל־עָם יְהוָה נְבִיאִים כִּי־יִתֵּן יְהוָה אֶת־רוּחוֹ עֲלֵיהֶם:

6. Numbers 14:1-4, 12, 40-45	6. במדבר יד:א-ד, יב, מ-מה
¹ The whole community broke into loud cries, and the people wept that night. ² All the Israelites railed against Moses and Aaron. "If only we had died in the land of Egypt," the whole community shouted at them, "or if only we might die in this wilderness!" ³ "Why is God taking us to that land to fall by the sword?"	¹ וַתִּשָּׂא כָל־הָעֵדָה וַיִּתְּנוּ אֶת־קוֹלָם וַיִּבְכוּ הָעָם בְּלֵילָה הַהוּא: ² וַיִּלְנוּ עַל־מֹשֶׁה וְעַל־אַהֲרֹן כָּל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֲלֵהֶם כָּל־הָעֵדָה לוֹ־מָתָנוּ בָּאָרֶץ מִצְרַיִם אוֹ בַּמִּדְבָּר הַזֶּה לוֹ־מָתָנוּ:



“Our wives and children will be carried off!” “It would be better for us to go back to Egypt!” ⁴ And they said to one another, “Let us head back for Egypt.”	³ וְלֵמָּה יְהוָה מְבִיא אֹתָנוּ אֶל-הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת לְפָלַל בְּחָרֵב נַשִּׁינוּ וְטַפּוּנוּ יִהְיוּ לְבִזָּה לְלוֹא טוֹב לָנוּ שׁוּב מִצְרָיִם: ⁴ וַיֹּאמְרוּ אִישׁ אֶל-אָחִיו נָתַנָּה רֹאשׁ וְנָשׁוּבָה מִצְרָיִם:
¹² I will strike them with pestilence and disown them, and I will make of you a nation far more numerous than they!”	¹² אֶכְנֶה בְּדִבְרִי וְאוֹרְשָׁנִי וְאֶעֱשֶׂה אֹתְךָ לְגוֹי-גָדוֹל וְעַצוּם מְמֹנִי:
⁴⁰ Early next morning [their fighting force] set out toward the crest of the hill country, saying, “We are prepared to go up to the place that God has spoken of, for we were wrong.” ⁴¹ But Moses said, “Why do you transgress God’s command? This will not succeed. ⁴² Do not go up, lest you be routed by your enemies, for God is not in your midst. ⁴³ For the Amalekites and the Canaanites will be there to face you, and you will fall by the sword, inasmuch as you have turned from following God and God will not be with you.” ⁴⁴ Yet defiantly they marched toward the crest of the hill country, though neither God’s Ark of the Covenant nor Moses stirred from the camp. ⁴⁵ And the Amalekites and the Canaanites who dwelt in that hill country came down and dealt them a shattering blow at Hormah.	⁴⁰ וַיִּשְׁכְּמוּ בַבֹּקֶר וַיַּעֲלוּ אֶל-רֹאשׁ-הַהָר לֵאמֹר הִנֵּנוּ וְעַלִּינוּ אֶל-הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר-אָמַר יְהוָה כִּי חָטָאנוּ: ⁴¹ וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה לָּמָּה זֶה אַתֶּם עֹבְרִים אֶת-פִּי יְהוָה וְהוּא לֹא תִצְלַח: ⁴² אֶל-תַּעֲלוּ כִּי אֵין יְהוָה בְּקִרְבְּכֶם וְלֹא תִנָּצְפוּ לִפְנֵי אֹיְבֵיכֶם: ⁴³ כִּי הָעַמְלָקִי וְהַכְנַעֲנִי שָׁם לִפְנֵיכֶם וְנִפְלִיתֶם בְּחָרֵב כִּי-עַל-כֵּן שָׁבַתֶּם מֵאֲחֵרֵי יְהוָה וְלֹא-יְהִי יְהוָה עִמָּכֶם: ⁴⁴ וַיַּעֲפְלוּ לַעֲלוֹת אֶל-רֹאשׁ הָהָר וְאַרְוֶן בְּרִית-יְהוָה וּמֹשֶׁה לֹא-מָשׁוּ מִקְרֵב הַמַּחֲנֶה: ⁴⁵ וַיֵּרֶד הָעַמְלָקִי וְהַכְנַעֲנִי הַיֹּשֵׁב בְּהָר הַהוּא וַיַּכּוּם וַיָּקְחוּם עַד-הַחֲרָמָה:

7. Fischer, “Israel’s Struggle”

It seems as if Num 14 deliberately draws the outcome of ‘democratic’ decisions as terrible and deterrent.

The Old Testament testifies to a number of essential features for democracies, among them the feeling for, and appreciation of the equal value of all members of a society, the need to distribute power, and the complexity of the issue of authority within a people, especially of exercising it. However, the only two instances of democratic decisions (in Num 14) turn out to be complete failures. One cannot but interpret this as a stern warning against ‘people power’.



8. Exodus 19:3-8	8. שמות יט:ג-ח
³ And Moses went up to God. God called to him from the mountain, saying, “Thus shall you say to the house of Jacob and declare to the children of Israel: ⁴ ‘You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to Me. ⁵ Now then, if you will obey Me faithfully and keep My covenant, you shall be My treasured possession among all the peoples. Indeed, all the earth is Mine, ⁶ but you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words that you shall speak to the children of Israel.” ⁷ Moses came and summoned the elders of the people and put before them all that God had commanded him. ⁸ All those assembled answered as one, saying, “All that God has spoken we will do!” And Moses brought back the people’s words to God.	³ וּמֹשֶׁה עָלָה אֶל־הָאֱלֹהִים וַיִּקְרָא אֵלָיו יְהוָה מִן־הָהָר לֵאמֹר כֹּה תֹאמַר לְבֵית יִעֲקֹב וְתִגִּיד לִבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: ⁴ אַתֶּם רְאִיתֶם אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתִי לְמִצְרַיִם וְאֲשָׂא אֶתְכֶם עַל־כַּנְפֵי נְשָׁרִים וְאָבָא אֶתְכֶם אֵלָי: ⁵ וְעַתָּה אִם־שְׁמוּעַ תִּשְׁמָעוּ בְּקוֹלִי וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת־בְּרִיתִי וְהָיִיתֶם לִי סֻגְלָה מִכָּל־הָעַמִּים כִּי־לִי כָל־הָאָרֶץ: ⁶ וְאַתֶּם תִּהְיוּ־לִי מְמַלְכֶת כֹּהֲנִים וְגוֹי קָדוֹשׁ אֵלֶּה הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר תִּדְבֹּר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: ⁷ וַיָּבֹא מֹשֶׁה וַיִּקְרָא לְזִקְנֵי הָעָם וַיֵּשֶׁם לִפְנֵיהֶם אֶת כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר צִוָּהוּ יְהוָה: ⁸ וַיַּעֲנוּ כָל־הָעָם יְחִידוֹ וַיֹּאמְרוּ כָל אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר יְהוָה נַעֲשֶׂה וְנִשְׁמָע מֹשֶׁה אֶת־דְּבָרֵי הָעָם אֶל־יְהוָה:

9. Talmud Bavli Shabbat 88a	9. תלמוד בבלי שבת פח.
“And they stood at the lowermost part of the mount” (Exodus 19:17). Rabbi Avdimi bar Ḥama bar Ḥasa said: this teaches that the Holy Blessed One overturned the mountain above them like a tub, and said to them: If you accept the Torah, excellent, and if not – there will be your burial. Rav Aḥa bar Ya’akov said: From here there is a substantial caveat to the obligation to fulfill the Torah! Rava said: Even so, they again accepted it in the time of Aḥashverosh, as it is written: “The Jews upheld and accepted” (Esther 9:27) – the Jews upheld what they had already accepted.	”וַיִּתְּצֻבוּ בְּתַחֲתִית הָהָר”, אָמַר רַב אַבְדִּימִי בַר חָמָא בַר חָסָא: מְלַמֵּד שְׁכָפָה הִקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא עֲלֵיהֶם אֶת הָהָר כְּגִיגִית, וְאָמַר לָהֶם: אִם אַתֶּם מְקַבְּלִים הַתּוֹרָה מוֹטָב, וְאִם לֹא – שָׁם תִּהְיָא קְבוּרַתְכֶם. אָמַר רַב אַחָא בַר יַעֲקֹב: מִכָּאן מוֹדְעָא רַבָּה לְאוּרִייתָא. אָמַר רַבָּא: אַף עַל פִּי כֵן הָדוּר קִבְּלוּהּ בִּימֵי אַחַשְׁוֶרוּשׁ, דְּכֹתִיב: “קִיְּמוּ וְקִבְּלוּ הַיהוּדִים” – קִיְּמוּ מַה שְּׁקִיבְלוּ כִּבְר.
10. Rashi on “a substantial caveat”	10. רש"י ד"ה מודעא רבה
Because if they were called to judgment as to why they did not fulfill what they had accepted upon themselves, they would	מודעא רבה - שאם יזמינם לדין למה לא קיימתם מה שקבלתם עליכם - יש



have an answer – that they were forced to accept it.	להם תשובה, שקבלוה באונס.
11. Exodus 24:3, 7, 8	11. שמות כד:ג, ז, ח
³ Moses went and repeated to the people all the commands of God and all the rules; and all the people answered with one voice, saying, “All the things that God has commanded we will do!”	³ וַיָּבֹא מֹשֶׁה וַיְסַפֵּר לָעָם אֶת כָּל־דִּבְרֵי יְהוָה וְאֵת כָּל־הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים וַיַּעַן כָּל־הָעָם קוֹל אֶחָד וַיֹּאמְרוּ כָל־הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר יְהוָה נַעֲשֶׂה:
⁷ Then he took the record of the covenant and read it aloud to the people. And they said, “All that God has spoken we will faithfully do!”	⁷ וַיִּקַּח סֵפֶר הַבְּרִית וַיִּקְרָא בְּאָזְנֵי הָעָם וַיֹּאמְרוּ כָל אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר יְהוָה נַעֲשֶׂה וְנִשְׁמָע:
⁸ Moses took the blood and dashed it on the people and said, “This is the blood of the covenant that God now makes with you concerning all these commands.”	⁸ וַיִּקַּח מֹשֶׁה אֶת־הַדָּם אֶת־הַדָּם וַיִּזְרֹק עַל־הָעָם וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה דַם־הַבְּרִית אֲשֶׁר כָּרַת יְהוָה עִמָּכֶם עַל כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה:
12. Deuteronomy 26:17-18	12. דברים כו:יז-יח
¹⁷ You have affirmed this day that God is your God, in whose ways you will walk, whose laws and commandments and rules you will observe, and whom you will obey. ¹⁸ And God has affirmed this day that you are, as promised, God’s treasured people who shall observe all the divine commandments.	¹⁷ אֶת־יְהוָה הָאֱמֹרֶת הַיּוֹם לֵהיוֹת לָךְ לֵאלֹהִים וּלְלַכֵּת בְּדַרְכָּיו וּלְשַׁמֵּר חֻקָּיו וּמִצְוֹתָיו וּמִשְׁפָּטָיו וּלְשַׁמֵּעַ בְּקוֹלוֹ: ¹⁸ וַיְהִי הָאֱמֹרֶת הַיּוֹם לֵהיוֹת לוֹ לְעָם סֻגְלָה כְּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר־לָךְ וּלְשַׁמֵּר כָּל־מִצְוֹתָיו:
13. Deuteronomy 28:69	13. דברים כח:טט
⁶⁹ These are the terms of the covenant which God commanded Moses to conclude with the Israelites in the land of Moab, in addition to the covenant which was made with them at Horeb.	⁶⁹ אֵלֶּה דִּבְרֵי הַבְּרִית אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה לְכַרֵּת אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּאֶרֶץ מוֹאָב מִלְּבַד הַבְּרִית אֲשֶׁר־כָּרַת אִתָּם בְּחֹרֵב:



14. Fischer, "Israel's Struggle"

Obviously the Book of Deuteronomy conceives the role of the people and the importance of their consent for ponderous (sic) decisions *very differently* from the Book of Exodus. Whereas the latter requires the consensus of the whole community, the former can do without it, laying everything in the hands of Moses as the publicly proposed and divinely installed mediator. As Exodus predates Deuteronomy, it becomes clear that an originally diverse (sic) concept has later, in Deuteronomy, been changed, giving less weight to 'democratic' participation in governing the society.

15. Joshua 24:14-18, 21, 24	15. יהושע כד:יד-יח, כא, כד
¹⁴ "Now, therefore, revere God and render service with undivided loyalty; put away the gods that your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates and in Egypt, and serve Adonai. ¹⁵ Or, if you are loath to serve Adonai, choose this day which ones you are going to serve—the gods that your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or those of the Amorites in whose land you are settled; but I and my household will serve God." ¹⁶ In reply, the people declared, "Far be it from us to forsake God and serve other gods! ¹⁷ For it was Adonai our God who brought us and our ancestors up from the land of Egypt, the house of bondage, and who wrought those wondrous signs before our very eyes, and guarded us all along the way that we traveled and among all the peoples through whose midst we passed. ¹⁸ And then God drove out before us all the peoples—the Amorites—that inhabited the country. We too will serve Adonai—who is our God."	¹⁴ וְעַתָּה יִרְאוּ אֶת־יְהוָה וְעָבְדוּ אוֹתוֹ בְּתַמִּים וּבְאַמֶּת וְהִסִּירוּ אֶת־אֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר עָבְדוּ אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם בְּעֵבֶר הַנָּהָר וּבְמִצְרַיִם וְעָבְדוּ אֶת־יְהוָה: ¹⁵ וְאִם רַע בְּעֵינֵיכֶם לַעֲבֹד אֶת־יְהוָה בְּחָרוּ לָכֶם הַיּוֹם אֶת־מִי תַעֲבֹדוּן אִם אֶת־אֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר־עָבְדוּ אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר (בַּעֲבֹר) [מִעֵבֶר] הַנָּהָר וְאִם אֶת־אֱלֹהֵי הָאֻמִּי אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם יֹשְׁבִים בְּאֶרֶץ וְאֲנִי וּבֵיתִי נַעֲבֹד אֶת־יְהוָה: ¹⁶ וַיַּעַן הָעָם וַיֹּאמְרוּ חֲלִילָה לָנוּ מֵעַזֹּב אֶת־יְהוָה לַעֲבֹד אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים: ¹⁷ כִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ הוּא הַמַּעֲלָה אֶתֶּנּוּ וְאֶת־אֲבוֹתֵינוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים וְאֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה לַעֲיֵנֵינוּ אֶת־הָאֲתוֹת הַגְּדֹלוֹת הָאֵלֶּה וַיִּשְׁמְרֵנוּ בְּכָל־הַדֶּרֶךְ אֲשֶׁר הֵלַכְנוּ בָּהּ וּבְכָל הָעַמִּים אֲשֶׁר עָבְרָנוּ בְּקִרְבָּם: ¹⁸ וַיִּגְרֹשׁ יְהוָה אֶת־כָּל־הָעַמִּים וְאֶת־הָאֻמִּי יֹשֵׁב הָאֶרֶץ מִפְּנֵינוּ גַם־אֲנַחְנוּ נַעֲבֹד אֶת־יְהוָה כִּי־הוּא אֱלֹהֵינוּ:
²¹ But the people replied to Joshua, "No, we will serve Adonai!"	²¹ וַיֹּאמְרוּ הָעָם אֶל־יְהוֹשֻׁעַ לֹא כִי אֶת־יְהוָה נַעֲבֹד:
²⁴ And the people declared to Joshua, "It is Adonai our God whom we will serve—and whom we will obey."	²⁴ וַיֹּאמְרוּ הָעָם אֶל־יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ נַעֲבֹד וּבִקְוֹלוֹ נִשְׁמָע:



16. Numbers 16	16. במדבר טז
¹ Now Korah, son of Izhar son of Kohath son of Levi, betook himself, along with Dathan and Abiram sons of Eliab, and On son of Peleth—descendants of Reuben — ² to rise up against Moses, together with two hundred and fifty Israelites, chieftains of the community, chosen in the assembly, men of repute. ³ They combined against Moses and Aaron and said to them, “You have gone too far! For all the community are holy, all of them, and God is in their midst. Why then do you raise yourselves above God’s congregation?” ⁴ When Moses heard this, he fell on his face. ⁵ Then he spoke to Korah and all his company, saying, “Come morning, God will make known who is [God’s] and who is holy by granting direct access; the one whom [God] has chosen will be granted access. ⁶ Do this: You, Korah and all your band, take fire pans, ⁷ and tomorrow put fire in them and lay incense on them before God. Then the candidate whom God chooses, he shall be the holy one. You have gone too far, sons of Levi!” ⁸ Moses said further to Korah, “Hear me, sons of Levi. ⁹ Is it not enough for you that the God of Israel has set you apart from the community of Israel and given you direct access, to perform the duties of God’s Tabernacle and to minister to the community and serve them? ¹⁰ Now that [God] has advanced you and all your fellow Levites with you, do you seek the priesthood too? ¹¹ Truly, it is against God that you and all your company have banded together. For who is Aaron that you should rail against him?” ¹² Moses sent for Dathan and Abiram, sons of Eliab; but they said, “We will not come! ¹³ Is it not enough that you brought us from a land flowing with milk and honey to have us die in the wilderness, that you would also lord it over us? ¹⁴ Even if you had brought us to a land flowing with milk and honey, and given us possession of fields and vineyards, should	¹ וַיִּקַּח קֹרַח בֶּן־יִצְחָר בֶּן־קֹהַת בֶּן־לֵוִי וְדָתָן וָאֲבִירָם בְּנֵי אֱלִיאָב וְאוֹן בֶּן־פִּלֶּת בְּנֵי רְאוּבֵן: ² וַיִּקְמוּ לִפְנֵי מֹשֶׁה וְאֲנָשִׁים מִבְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל חֲמִשִּׁים וּמֵאֲתָיִם נָשִׂיאִי עֵדָה קְרָאִי מוֹעֵד אֲנָשֵׁי־שֵׁם: ³ וַיִּקְהָלוּ עַל־מֹשֶׁה וְעַל־אַהֲרֹן וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֲלֵהֶם רַב־לָכֶם כִּי כָל־הָעֵדָה כֹּהֲלִים קְדֹשִׁים וּבְתוֹכְכֶם יְהוָה וּמִדּוּעַ תִּתְנַשְּׂאוּ עַל־קְהָל יְהוָה: ⁴ וַיִּשְׁמַע מֹשֶׁה וַיִּפֹּל עַל־פָּנָיו: ⁵ וַיְדַבֵּר אֶל־קֹרַח וְאֶל־כָּל־עֲדָתוֹ לֵאמֹר בֹּקֶר וַיֵּדַע יְהוָה אֶת־אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ וְאֶת־הַקְּדוֹשׁ וְהַקָּרִיב אֵלָיו וְאֵת אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר־בוֹ יִקְרִיב אֵלָיו: ⁶ זֹאת עֲשׂוּ קַחוּ־לָכֶם מִחֲתוֹת קֹרַח וְכָל־עֲדָתוֹ: ⁷ וַתֵּנוּ בָהֶן אֵשׁ וְשִׂימוּ עֲלֵיהֶן קִטְרֶת לִפְנֵי יְהוָה מִחַר וְהָיָה הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר־יִבְחַר יְהוָה הוּא הַקְּדוֹשׁ רַב־לָכֶם בְּנֵי לֵוִי: ⁸ וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־קֹרַח שְׁמַע־נָא בְנֵי לֵוִי: ⁹ הֲמַעַט מִכֶּם כִּי־הִבְדִּיל אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶתְכֶם מֵעֵדַת יִשְׂרָאֵל לְהַקְרִיב אֶתְכֶם אֵלָיו לַעֲבֹד אֶת־עֲבֹדַת מִשְׁכַּן יְהוָה וְלַעֲמֹד לִפְנֵי הָעֵדָה לְשִׁרְתָּם: ¹⁰ וַיִּקְרַב אֶתְּךָ וְאֶת־כָּל־אֲחִיךָ בְּנֵי־לֵוִי אֶתְּךָ וּבִקְשָׁתֶם גַּם־כֹּהֲנָה: ¹¹ לָכֵן אֲתָה וְכָל־עֲדָתְךָ הַנֹּעֲדִים עַל־יְהוָה וְאַהֲרֹן מֵה־הוּא כִּי (תִּלְוֹנוּ) [תִּלְוִינוּ] עָלֵינוּ: ¹² וַיִּשְׁלַח מֹשֶׁה לְקַרְא לְדָתָן וְלֵאבִירָם בְּנֵי אֱלִיאָב וַיֹּאמְרוּ לֹא נֵעֲלֶה: ¹³ הֲמַעַט כִּי הָעֲלִיתָנוּ מֵאֶרֶץ זֵבֶת חֶלֶב וְדִבַּשׁ לְהַמִּיתָנוּ בַּמִּדְבָּר כִּי־תִשְׁתָּרֵר עָלֵינוּ גַם־הַשְׁתָּרֵר: ¹⁴ אָף לֹא אֶל־אֶרֶץ זֵבֶת חֶלֶב וְדִבַּשׁ הִבִּיאָתָנוּ וַתִּתֵּן־לָנוּ נַחֲלֹת שָׂדֶה וְכָרֶם הַעֲיִנִי הָאֲנָשִׁים הָהֵם תִּנָּקֵר לֹא נֵעֲלֶה:



you gouge out the eyes of those involved? We will not come!”

¹⁵ Moses was much aggrieved and he said to God, “Pay no regard to their oblation. I have not taken the ass of any one of them, nor have I wronged any one of them.”

¹⁶ And Moses said to Korah, “Tomorrow, you and all your company appear before God, you and they and Aaron.

¹⁷ Each of you take your fire pan and lay incense on it, and each of you bring that fire pan before God, two hundred and fifty fire pans; you and Aaron also [bring] your fire pans.”

¹⁸ They each took their fire pan, put fire in it, laid incense on it, and took a place at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, as did Moses and Aaron.

¹⁹ Korah gathered the whole community against them at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting. Then the Presence of God appeared to the whole community,

²⁰ and God spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying,

²¹ “Stand back from this community that I may annihilate them in an instant!”

²² But they fell on their faces and said, “O God, Source of the breath of all flesh! When one member sins, will You be wrathful with the whole community?”

²³ God spoke to Moses, saying,

²⁴ “Speak to the community and say: Withdraw from about the abodes of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.”

²⁵ Moses rose and went to Dathan and Abiram, the elders of Israel following him.

²⁶ He addressed the community, saying, “Move away from the tents of these wicked men and touch nothing that belongs to them, lest you be wiped out for all their sins.”

²⁷ So they withdrew from about the abodes of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. Now Dathan and Abiram had come out and they stood at the entrance of their tents, with their wives, their adult children, and their little ones.

²⁸ And Moses said, “By this you shall know that it was God who sent me to do all these things; that they are not of my own devising:

²⁹ if these people’s death is that of all humankind, if their lot is

¹⁵ וַיִּחַר לְמֹשֶׁה מְאֹד וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־יְהוָה
אֶל־תִּפֶּן אֶל־מִנְחֹתָם לֹא חֲמוֹר אֶחָד
מֵהֶם נִשְׁאַתִּי וְלֹא הִרְעַתִּי אֶת־אֶחָד
מֵהֶם:

¹⁶ וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־קֹרַח אַתָּה וְכָל־עַדְתְּךָ
הַיּוֹ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אַתָּה וְהֵם וְאַהֲרֹן מִחֵר:
¹⁷ וַיִּקְחוּ אִישׁ מִחֻתּוֹ וַיִּתְּנוּ עֲלֵיהֶם
קִטְרֹת וְהִקְרְבָתָם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אִישׁ
מִחֻתּוֹ חֲמִשִּׁים וּמֵאֵתִים מִחֻתּוֹ וְאַהֲרֹן
אִישׁ מִחֻתּוֹ:

¹⁸ וַיִּקְחוּ אִישׁ מִחֻתּוֹ וַיִּתְּנוּ עֲלֵיהֶם אֵשׁ
וַיִּשִׁימוּ עֲלֵיהֶם קִטְרֹת וַיַּעֲמְדוּ פֶתַח אֹהֶל
מוֹעֵד וּמֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן:

¹⁹ וַיִּקְהַל עֲלֵיהֶם קֹרַח אֶת־כָּל־הָעֵדָה
אֶל־פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וַיֵּרָא כְבוֹד־יְהוָה
אֶל־כָּל־הָעֵדָה:

²⁰ וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל־אַהֲרֹן
לֵאמֹר:

²¹ הִבְדְּלוּ מִתּוֹךְ הָעֵדָה הַזֹּאת וְאֶכְלָה
אֹתָם כָּרָגָע:

²² וַיִּפְּלוּ עַל־פְּנֵיהֶם וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל אֱלֹהֵי
הָרוּחַת לְכָל־בָּשָׂר הָאִישׁ אֶחָד יִחָטֵא וְעַל
כָּל־הָעֵדָה תִּקְצָף:

²³ וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר:

²⁴ דַּבֵּר אֶל־הָעֵדָה לֵאמֹר הִעֲלוּ מִסִּבִּיב
לְמִשְׁכַּן־קֹרַח דָּתָן וְאַבִּירָם:

²⁵ וַיִּקָּם מֹשֶׁה וַיֵּלֶךְ אֶל־דָּתָן וְאַבִּירָם וַיִּלְכוּ
אַחֲרָיו זָקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

²⁶ וַיְדַבֵּר אֶל־הָעֵדָה לֵאמֹר סוּרוּ נָא מֵעַל
אֲהֲלֵי הָאֲנָשִׁים הָרָשָׁעִים הָאֵלֶּה
וְאַל־תִּגְעוּ בְּכָל־אֲשֶׁר לָהֶם פֶּן־תִּסָּפוּ
בְּכָל־חַטָּאתָם:

²⁷ וַיַּעֲלוּ מֵעַל מִשְׁכַּן־קֹרַח דָּתָן וְאַבִּירָם
מִסִּבִּיב וְדָתָן וְאַבִּירָם יָצְאוּ נֹצְבִים פֶּתַח
אֲהֲלֵיהֶם וּנְשֵׁיהֶם וּבְנֵיהֶם וְטַפָּם:

²⁸ וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה בְּזֹאת תֵּדָעוּן כִּי־יְהוָה
שְׁלַחְנִי לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־כָּל־הַמַּעֲשִׂים הָאֵלֶּה
כִּי־לֹא מִלְּבִי:



humankind's common fate, it was not God who sent me. ³⁰ But if God brings about something unheard-of, so that the ground opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that belongs to them, and they go down alive into Sheol, you shall know that those involved have spurned God." ³¹ Scarcely had he finished speaking all these words when the ground under them burst asunder, ³² and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up with their households, all Korah's people and all their possessions. ³³ They went down alive into Sheol, with all that belonged to them; the earth closed over them and they vanished from the midst of the congregation. ³⁴ All Israel around them fled at their shrieks, for they said, "The earth might swallow us!" ³⁵ And a fire went forth from God and consumed the two hundred and fifty contestants offering the incense.	²⁹ אִם-כְּמוֹת כָּל-הָאָדָם יִמְתּוּן אֵלֶּה וּפְקֻדַּת כָּל-הָאָדָם יִפְקֹד עֲלֵיהֶם לֹא יִהְיֶה שְׁלֹחַנִי: ³⁰ וְאִם-בְּרִיאָה יִבְרָא יְהוָה וּפָצְתָה הָאֲדָמָה אֶת-פִּיהָ וּבָלְעָה אֹתָם וְאֶת-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר לָהֶם וַיֵּרְדּוּ חַיִּים שְׁאֵלָה וַיִּדְעֻתָם כִּי נִאֲצוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים הָאֵלֶּה אֶת-יְהוָה: ³¹ וַיְהִי כִכְלָתוֹ לְדַבֵּר אֶת כָּל-הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וַתִּבָּקַע הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר תַּחְתֵּיהֶם: ³² וַתִּפְתַּח הָאָרֶץ אֶת-פִּיהָ וַתִּבְלַע אֹתָם וְאֶת-בְּתֵיהֶם וְאֶת כָּל-הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר לָקְרָח וְאֶת כָּל-הַרְכֹּשׁ: ³³ וַיֵּרְדּוּ הֵם וְכָל-אֲשֶׁר לָהֶם חַיִּים שְׁאֵלָה וַתִּכַּס עֲלֵיהֶם הָאָרֶץ וַיִּאֲבְדּוּ מִתּוֹךְ הַקֶּהֶל: ³⁴ וְכָל-יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר סָבִיבֵתֵיהֶם נָסוּ לִקְלָם כִּי אָמְרוּ פֶן-תִּבְלַעֵנּוּ הָאָרֶץ: ³⁵ וְאִשׁ יִצָּאָה מֵאֵת יְהוָה וַתֹּאכַל אֶת הַחֲמִשִּׁים וּמֵאֲתִים אִישׁ מִקְרִיבֵי הַקֶּטֶר:
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17. II Samuel 7:14	17. שמואל ב ז:ד-יז
¹⁴ I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to Me. When he does wrong, I will chastise him with the rod of men and the affliction of mortals.	¹⁴ אֲנִי אֶהְיֶה-לוֹ לְאָב וְהוּא יִהְיֶה-לִּי לְבֵן אֲשֶׁר בַּהֲעוֹתוֹ וּבְחַתָּתוֹ בְּשֹׁבֵט אֲנָשִׁים וּבִנְגָעֵי בְנֵי אָדָם:

18. Jeremiah 31:9	18. ירמיהו לא:ט
⁹ They shall come with weeping, And with compassion will I guide them. I will lead them to streams of water, By a level road where they will not stumble. For I am ever a Father to Israel, Ephraim is My first-born.	⁹ בָּבְכִי יָבֹאוּ וּבְרַחֲמֵינוּ אֲנִי אֲדִלֵּם אוֹלֵיכֶם אֶל-נַחְלֵי מַיִם בְּדֶרֶךְ יִשָּׁר לֹא יִכְשְׁלוּ בָּהּ כִּי-הָיִיתִי לְיִשְׂרָאֵל לְאָב וְאֶפְרַיִם בְּכֹרִי הוּא:



19. Jeremiah 31:31-34	19. ירמיהו לא:לא-לד
³¹ See, a time is coming—declares God —when I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel and the House of Judah. ³² It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors, when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, a covenant that they broke, though I espoused them—declares God. ³³ But such is the covenant I will make with the House of Israel after these days—declares God: I will put My Teaching into their inmost being and inscribe it upon their hearts. Then I will be their God, and they shall be My people. ³⁴ No longer will they need to teach one another and say to one another, “Heed God ”; for all of them, from the least of them to the greatest, shall heed Me—declares God. For I will forgive their iniquities, And remember their sins no more.	³¹ הִנֵּה יָמִים בָּאִים נֹאֲמ־יְהוָה וְכָרַתִּי אֶת־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶת־בֵּית יְהוּדָה בְּרִית חֲדָשָׁה: ³² לֹא כַּבְרִית אֲשֶׁר כָּרַתִּי אֶת־אֲבוֹתָם בַּיּוֹם הַחֲזִיקִי בְיָדָם לְהוֹצִיאָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם אֲשֶׁר־הִמָּה הִפְרוּ אֶת־בְּרִיתִי וְאֲנִי בָעֵלְתִּי בָם נֹאֲמ־יְהוָה: ³³ כִּי זֹאת הַבְּרִית אֲשֶׁר אֶכְרֹת אֶת־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל אַחֲרֵי הַיָּמִים הָהֵם נֹאֲמ־יְהוָה נִתְּנִי אֶת־תּוֹרָתִי בְקֶרְבָּם וְעַל־לִבָּם אֶכְתְּבֶנָּה וְהָיִיתִי לָהֶם לֵאלֹהִים וְהִמָּה יְהִי־לִי לְעָם: ³⁴ וְלֹא יִלְמְדוּ עוֹד אִישׁ אֶת־רֵעֵהוּ וְאִישׁ אֶת־אֲחִיו לֵאמֹר דַּע אֶת־יְהוָה כִּי־כֹלָם יִדְעוּ אוֹתִי לְמִקְטָנָם וְעַד־גְּדֹלָם נֹאֲמ־יְהוָה כִּי אֶסְלַח לְעֹנְוֵם וְלִחַטָּאתָם לֹא אֶזְכֹּר־עוֹד:
20. Deuteronomy 31:10-12	20. דברים לא:י-יב
¹⁰ And Moses instructed them as follows: Every seventh year, the year set for remission, at the Feast of Booths, ¹¹ when all Israel comes to appear before Adonai God in the place that [God] will choose, you shall read this Teaching aloud in the presence of all Israel. ¹² Gather the people—men, women, children, and the strangers in your communities—that they may hear and so learn to revere your God God and to observe faithfully every word of this Teaching.	¹⁰ וַיֹּצֵא מֹשֶׁה אוֹתָם לֵאמֹר מִקֵּץ שִׁבְעֵי שָׁנִים בְּמַעַד שָׁנֹת הַשְּׁמִטָּה בַּחֹג הַסֻּכּוֹת: ¹¹ בָּבוֹא כָל־יִשְׂרָאֵל לִרְאוֹת אֶת־פְּנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בַּמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר תִּקְרָא אֶת־הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת וְגַדְלָהּ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּאָזְנֵיהֶם: ¹² הִקְהֵל אֶת־הָעָם הָאֲנָשִׁים וְהַנָּשִׁים וְהַטָּף וְגֵרְךָ אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ לְמַעַן יִשְׁמְעוּ וְלִמְעַן יִלְמְדוּ וַיֵּרְאוּ אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וְשָׁמְרוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת־כָּל־דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת:

