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God: A Pastoral Counselor?

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Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of Requirements for
Ordination

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SUMMARY

May God function effectively in a role as a pastoral counselor? Was God an effective pastoral counselor for Miriam and Moses when they were in pain and in clear need for answers and guidance? Can God be an effective pastoral counselor for today's modern Jew? Can God be an effective pastoral counselor for those studying to enter the rabbinate, and who are trying to make sense of the pain of separation or the pain of loss for themselves or for those who look to them for guidance? The goal of this thesis is to provide insight for those seeking God's guidance and support as a Pastoral Counselor.

In seven chapters, this thesis explores the role of the pastoral counselor, through monologues and potential dialogues with God, both biblical and modern, and subsequently examines the effectiveness and value of these monologues and dialogues, and God's ultimate role in it all. Chapter one outlines the evolution of this thesis. Chapter two defines pastoral counseling, explores how one chooses pastoral counseling, and then addresses God's potential presence within a pastoral counseling relationship. The next four chapters take a stepwise creative modern Midrashic approach through a multifaceted exploration of the idea of God as Pastoral Counselor with chapters three and four addressing biblical relationships with God, while chapters five and six address modern relationships with God. Chapter seven draws conclusion and offers analysis.

In addition to using rabbinic medieval commentators and modern Jewish thought philosophers, this thesis also explores rabbinic texts to offer suggestions or support to the questions of the spoken text of the given modern Midrashic character. Some of these texts derive from Midrash (*Midrash Rabbah*, *Sifre*, *Mekhilta*) and some take the form of a Mishnah or a *Sugya* from Talmud. Each was studied in the Hebrew and with help from many different sources with a translation of the text provided within the chapter.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Throughout my third year of rabbinical school, I met with Dr. Carol Ochs on Mondays to focus my thoughts, gather strength for my upcoming week, and essentially to make a plan to guide my growth and development as a rabbi. We would talk about anything I brought into the room. I set the tone and painted the picture. Dr. Ochs would help me see my picture with different eyes, and very often, with greater focus and clarity than I ever did. I followed her guidelines, of which there were two: what is discussed in this room, stays in this room, and the second, I set the agenda. Easy enough as I always had something to talk about, even though many times it was difficult to get the words out. But somehow, by the end of our meeting, I felt lighter, stronger and ready to really begin my week. Her guidance gave me greater strength and purpose.

As a byproduct of these exercises, Dr. Ochs helped me peer into a world that I had yet to find in rabbinical school. It was a world where God was alive and present and a real, vibrant part of my life. I never felt closer to God, and my prayer that year was the most honest, open and real as I never thought possible. I was able to talk to God without barriers. I felt safe revealing in my prayer that year, the most personal, the most private, and the most heartfelt parts of my heart and soul. She helped me experience real, unmistakable, palpable spiritual growth.

Through this enhanced relationship with God, and with my spiritual growth guided by Dr. Ochs, I found myself asking more and more "God" questions. One, which I still question and which happens to be the focus of this thesis, is the question of "How

does God function as a modern pastoral counselor?" This question evolved from a thought that I had, for the first time honestly connecting the "God of the Israelites" with the "God of the Jewish people of today." I was awestruck when, in my head, the connection somehow became clearer and had enhanced meaning. The "God of the Israelites" and the "God of the Jewish people of today" is the exact same God! Throughout all of my Jewish educational years, that connection was never made for me. Until my third year, I never connected with the words, "Barukh atah adonai eloheynu velohey avotenu, elohey avraham, elohey yitzhak, velohey yaakov..."¹ - Blessed are You, Adonai our God, and God of our ancestors, God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob..." This is the same God.

We are taught in rabbinical school to not only understand the text but to also make meaning from the text for ourselves and for the communities we serve. If this is the case, and since I want my rabbinate to focus as more of a counselor than anything else, then the text is precisely where I must begin. I have to understand the text and connect the world of the Israelites to my own world and the world of my future community. And so, the arrival of the question is upon us.

Dr. Ochs once said to me, "God can build a bigger dream for you than you can dream for yourself." If this is the case, and one that I believe in my heart of hearts, then God is my guide and my ultimate pastoral counselor. Therefore, this forces me to make that same connection once again. The "God of the Israelites" and the "God of the Jewish people today" is the exact same God! If God is my ultimate pastoral counselor, and if

¹ This phrase is the beginning of the first benediction of the *Amidah*- the eighteen benedictions recited during the *Shaharit* (the morning service), *Minhah* (the afternoon service), and *Ma'ariv* (the evening service).

this is the same God that wandered with the Israelites, than has God been the ultimate pastoral counselor for the Israelites? What about for today's modern Jew? What does God give us, inspire in us, teach us directly, or teach us to learn for ourselves vis-à-vis God's role as pastoral counselor?

The next five chapters explore the role of the pastoral counselor, through monologues and potential dialogues with God, both biblical and modern, which then examine the effectiveness and value of these monologues and dialogues, and God's ultimate role in it all. Chapter two defines pastoral counseling, explores how one chooses pastoral counseling, and then addresses God's potential presence within a pastoral counseling relationship. The next four chapters take a stepwise creative approach through a multifaceted exploration of the idea of God as Pastoral Counselor.

Chapters three and four take a modern Midrashic approach towards understanding God's role in biblical times. Using this "same God" understanding, chapters three and four address two specific biblical relationships with God, those of Miriam and Moses. Given the fact that the biblical text provides somewhat limited information about these biblical characters, their thoughts and their relationships, our tradition provides us with Midrash, a particular technique or method used to expound on the Biblical text and to fill in the textual gaps in order to provide a deeper meaning and relationship with the text. With these particular chapters, modern *Midrashim* were created to explore the possible thoughts and feelings that affected Miriam and Moses during two potentially difficult times in their lives. Thus we learn how they made sense of their individually trying situations. For Miriam, the modern Midrash addresses Numbers 12, when she was sent out of the camp because of her impurity. For Moses, the modern Midrash addresses

Numbers 27, when God commanded his ascension up Mount Nebo to look out on the land that he will never enter and, for both, when they and their people are wandering in a state of uncertainty and instability.

These two chapters address many questions that guide us to the big question of what is/was God's role as a pastoral counselor? Was God present for them during their times of need? Was God available to them? Did God give them strength? Did God listen? Did God care? Was God able to help them figure out their own path? Was their relationship with God conducive to allowing, and to being open to such help?

In some form, each of the above questions is answered or addressed, though sometimes there is no answer. Even with no answers, however, there is always speculation, which can take many different forms. In addition to using rabbinic medieval commentators and modern Jewish thought philosophers to support the given character's thoughts or feelings, these chapters along with five and six, also explore rabbinic texts to offer suggestions or support to the questions of the spoken text of the given modern Midrashic character. Some of these texts derive from Midrash (*Midrash Rabbah* or *Sifre*) and some take the form of a Mishnah or a *Sugya* from Talmud. Each was studied in the Hebrew and with help from many different sources with a translation of the text provided within the chapter.

Continuing along, chapters five and six address similar questions to those of chapters two and three, but they do so with a different understanding of how God plays a role in the lives of two individuals between 2002-2006. These two chapters are modern conversations with God where the speaker, a rabbinical student, is in pain, in need, lost, or reflective, like Miriam and Moses are in chapters three and four. Here, they ask God

to guide them and open their eyes to paths they should take. They engage with God using their foundation of Jewish text, accessing modern Jewish thought, and their own words.

Through this process of dialoguing, and asking God for guidance and answers, one must have the proper tools to access God in such a way. The first step in this process must be to understand oneself. There are many different approaches that one can take towards honest, in depth self-understanding. Some include: traditional therapy, spiritual guidance, or Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE). Each, in their own way, helps a person gain more understanding of who they are, how they interact with others, how they react to others, and how they perceive themselves in the world. Both traditional therapy (or counseling) and spiritual guidance are discussed at later points, but it is important that I address Clinical Pastoral Education here.

Clinical Pastoral Education is an opportunity for clergy students to develop a new awareness of themselves as persons and of the needs of those to whom they minister. This forms out of an intense involvement with persons in need and the feedback, reflection, discussion, and evaluation with other students and a supervisor. The goal of this process is for the student to discover and identify his/her own challenges, boundaries, strengths and potential growth opportunities. Once identified, the student can then encounter patients at their bedsides or families in the waiting room, and leave his/her own issues at the door. When encountering a person in need, the student's focus is on the person in need, not on the student's needs. Therefore, the discussions and processing that happen outside of the patient's room are just as important as the encounter itself. There are some who are naturally more aware of themselves than others, but there is always

something new that a person can learn about him/herself. This is why CPE is so invaluable.

The rabbinical students in chapters five and six both experienced CPE. Through their experiences with CPE, they gained an immense amount of self-awareness, which has only brought them closer with God and more willing to speak openly with God. Additionally, their encounters with spiritual guidance have also heightened their connection and honesty with God.

The next step in this dialogue comes in the form of prayer. Prayer can be defined and experienced in many different ways. Physically, prayer can take place anywhere, in the synagogue, in the woods, on top of a mountain, in a hospital room, on an airplane, in conversation with a person, or even on the subway. The words for prayer can also take many different forms. Some forms can be from the *siddur* itself or the words can be from one's own thoughts that will never be written down or even spoken aloud. The key to prayer is honesty. The more honest a person is in his/her prayer, the more likely God can respond in a healing fashion.

The final step is listening. This is perhaps the most difficult step because the answer for guidance can come in many different forms. One form can surface with a newfound confidence, while another form can surface through a feeling of strength to get through the rest of the day, and yet another can surface through a human interaction filled with compassion and concern for the person in need. These are but a few options for how one can listen for God's guidance. There are many more.

A technique used to listen for God's guidance is through using one's inner chaplain. Just like the perfection of any technique, one's inner chaplain must be

conditioned and trained. The more experience, exposure, and awareness one has of him/herself in CPE-type situations, the better one's inner chaplain will be. The inner chaplain is the voice inside that offers an honest, reflective, and sincere response to one's own actions and thoughts. Perhaps the inner chaplain is in fact God's voice taking the form of the inner self?

The goal of this thesis is then to answer the questions: Does God function effectively in a role as a pastoral counselor? Was God an effective pastoral counselor for Miriam and Moses when they were in pain and in clear need for answers and guidance? Can God be an effective pastoral counselor for today's modern Jew? Can God be an effective pastoral counselor for those studying to enter the rabbinate, and who are trying to make sense of the pain of separation or the pain of loss for themselves or for those who look to them for guidance? The next chapters will explore these questions, and we will return in chapter seven to draw parallels between historic and modern thought on these issues, and with concluding thoughts of whether or not God can be an effective pastoral counselor.

CHAPTER 2

WHAT IS PASTORAL COUNSELING?

Life is a constant battle. There are some battles that are much easier to conquer than others. Those battles lend themselves to self-conquering. Often times with inner strength, and the help of family, friends, and other supports, an individual can step through his/her darkness into the light, that is, until another wave of darkness rolls around. This is how life works. Life presents us with highs and lows, battles, trials, decisions, each of which is found within a spectrum of mild, moderate, and severe. Depending upon the combination of personality, person, support network, and severity of the situation, a person may be able to solve his/her battle through various coping mechanisms and strategies.

Sometimes though, the battle or trial is out of the hands of the individual; it is just too large in scope or impact, and in a sense, the situation just cannot be handled in one's own house or in one's own mind. In some cases, this is when the person looks to outsource for help and guidance. This need to outsource arises because a set of fresh and objective ears is often craved because the battle may seem out of control. For many, asking for help can feel like a "blow to the ego," a sign of "giving up," or even weakness. An alternative perspective, and perhaps an empowering one, suggests that asking for help is a sign of inner strength and deep love for the self, which the individual will hopefully be able to realize at some point in the healing process.

Certainly since its inception, psychotherapy with Sigmund Freud at the helm, viewed religion as the "universal obsessional neurosis of humanity."² Both the secular and religious literature is sated with empirical and speculative studies signifying that the behavioral and social sciences, including and especially psychology and psychiatry, have methodically ignored and resisted the possible importance of religion and spirituality in the lives of individuals, couples, families, and cultures."³ But, as Ismar Schorsch⁴ explains, "the essence of psychoanalysis, of Freud's creation, is interpretation. Reading symbols. Understanding stories. It's this interpretive thrust, which I've always felt is so Jewish in Freud. Judaism is an interpretive religion and psychoanalysis is an intellectual discourse, which turns on interpretation."⁵ From these two divergent areas, religion and science, that have a history of hostility, Schorsch attempts to mold them together to create a middle ground. "Pastoral counseling does this."⁶ And so, following Schorsch's definition provides for us an entry into the world of pastoral counseling.

Counseling is sought out when there is pain or confusion that reaches a level where the person cannot find clarity alone. It is sought out for the purpose of clarity or healing or, perhaps both. "Counseling is a helping process, the aim of which is not to change the person, but rather to enable him to utilize the resources he has for coping with

² Freud saw religion as childish- an illusion fulfilling people's infantile needs for safety and support. Illusions can be correct but one does not need to hold them because of their correctness but rather because of one's need. According to Freud, it is the source of religion that keeps people locked into childish beliefs.

³ Orlo Strunk, Jr. Ph.D, Introduction to *The Guide to Pastoral Counseling and Care*, Gary Ahlskog and Harry Sands, eds. (Madison: Psychosocial Press, 2000), xviii.

⁴ Ismar Schorsch is the former chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York City.

⁵ *The Question of God*. dir. Catherine Tatge. 240 min.,. PBS, 2004, dvd.

⁶ Alison Buckholtz, "Help From Above: in Times of Trouble, Growing Numbers of People Take Comfort in Faith-Based Therapy," *The Washington Post* December 6, 2005, Page HE04.

life. The outcome we would then expect from counseling is that the client do something, take some constructive action on his own behalf."⁷ Through defining pastoral counseling, a better understanding of counseling will surface.

Pastoral counseling opens a world of definitions. Many will ask, "What is the difference between 'regular counseling' and 'pastoral counseling?'" Simply put, pastoral counseling involves a more religious or spiritual element, while counseling tends to move away from the religious realm. In pastoral counseling, as Betsy Stone⁸ suggests, "there is an underlying assumption that God is invited into the room. It's an assumption you don't get in [mainstream] therapy."⁹ Mainstream psychotherapists, psychologists and psychiatrists, are not trained to deal with religious or spiritual issues.

According to the home web page of the American Association of Pastoral Counselors, the AAPC defines pastoral counseling as "a process in which a pastoral counselor utilizes insights and principles derived from the disciplines of theology and the behavioral sciences in working with individuals, couples, families, groups and social systems toward the achievement of wholeness and health."¹⁰ And, according to the same site, the pastoral counselor is "a minister who practices pastoral counseling at an

⁷ Richard D. Parsons. "The Counseling Relationship," in *Clinical Handbook of Pastoral Counseling*, ed. Robert J. Wicks, Richard D. Parsons, and Donald E. Capps (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1985) 97.

⁸ Betsy Stone is an adjunct instructor of pastoral care and counseling at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion's Jacob and Hilda Blaustein Center for Pastoral Counseling in New York City.

⁹ Alison Buckholtz, "When Your Rabbi is Also Your Psychologist," *World Jewish Digest*, May 2006.

<http://www.worldjewishdigest.com/ME2/dirmod.asp?sid=&nm=&type=Publishing&mod=Publications%3A%3AArticle&mid=8F3A7027421841978F18BE895F87F791&tier=4&id=9E70E491094B48B3A75085BFE4F05AAD>.

¹⁰ American Association of Pastoral Counselors. "Membership," <http://www.aapc.org/membership.cfm#fellow>.

advanced level, which integrates religious resources with insights from the behavioral sciences.¹¹

Harold G. Koenig¹² says, "For most of our country's history, counseling has been done by pastors," with a heavy focus on clergy/congregant one-on-one sessions. Koenig's research estimates a total of approximately 350,000 clergy in the United States spend an average of 15 percent of their time on counseling.¹³ This, according to Koenig, adds up to more time spent on counseling than the entire membership of the American Psychological Association working 40 hours per week.¹⁴ While many of these sessions deal with an immediate crisis, and for which many clergy are trained in crisis counseling, there is, often times, a need for more long term sessions requiring the clergy to have training to deal with more complex psychological issues. Many clergy do not have such training,¹⁵ and so, there is a need for a further referral because the clergy, in not being trained for such an extensive counseling relationship, has exceeded their capabilities.

Even though there may be a need for a referral, the clergy must ask the question, "Why is this person coming to me, the rabbi or minister or priest and not to a therapist?" The answer to this question will help guide the referral process as two specific factors come into play. These factors, specifically, are those of financial concerns and comfort levels.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Harold G. Koenig is a professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Duke University Medical Center.

¹³ Buckholtz, *Help From Above: in Times of Trouble, Growing Numbers of People Take Comfort in Faith-Based Therapy*.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

For many seeking counseling, cost is emphatically an issue. Meeting with a member of the clergy alleviates that concern, as a session is free when sought through a synagogue or church. For those who are not members of a house of worship though, cost may still be an issue.

Long-term therapy is a luxury that many cannot afford. This is true even through places like pastoral counseling centers (like some conventional psychotherapy practices) operate on a sliding scale, charging less than \$100 per session in the beginning.¹⁶ But even with cost limiting strategies like these centers have, many cannot continue with therapy because cost is still an all-pervasive issue. The Pastoral Counseling and Consultation Center, PC&CC, which runs pastoral counseling clinics at seven locations in the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia, sees approximately 400 clients per month. They also charge clients based upon a sliding fee scale. The Rev. Carl D. Siegel, Ph.D., the executive director, says that "clients pay anywhere from nothing to \$200 per session, with an average fee around \$110...insurance providers cover the cost of therapy sessions for about 60 percent of its clients."¹⁷ With money always being a practical concern for so many, comfort also plays a role in how a person seeks out a member of clergy versus a therapist with no religious affiliation.

It is not unlikely for people to feel more comfortable in speaking with a member of the clergy, rather than with a counselor. This is especially the case when the concern is of a religious or spiritual matter. Many people in need see a member of the clergy as a competent, trusted shepherd whom they will ask to walk with them through their shadowed valleys. Frequently [a clergy member] is the only person who people allow to

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

enter their private hells.¹⁸ Kristin J. Leslie¹⁹ believes that many clients choose pastoral counseling over psychotherapy because "there is a perception that the psychologist would medicalize a spiritual problem."²⁰ She also claims that those working in the counseling field tend to not be religious and may not be able to tap into the certain spiritual depths of their own personal experiences to understand the perspective delivered by a client. Also, the client may be looking for the forgiveness that religion often embodies, rather than the somewhat more clinically judgmental perspective of the therapist. The decidedly accepting approach to human frailty that religious counseling often embodies is sometimes easier for some to accept.

The issues raised by the client will often determine the approach that the pastoral counselor will or must take. There are times, however, when God, or even religion, do not play a role in a client's problems or in the necessary healing process. This is something that the pastoral counselor must be aware of, and constructively embrace. The pastoral counselor is still a counselor, nonetheless. As Gary Ahlskog²¹ writes, when you sit as a counselor, "your first responsibility is to open yourself to someone else's way of thinking, enter into the client's framework, and commit yourself to understanding a

¹⁸ Howard Clinebell, *Basic Types of Pastoral Care and Counseling: Resources for the Ministry of Healing and Growth* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984), 47.

¹⁹ Kristin J. Leslie is an assistant professor of pastoral care and counseling at Yale Divinity School.

²⁰ Buckholtz, *Help From Above: in Times of Trouble, Growing Numbers of People Take Comfort in Faith-Based Therapy*.

²¹ Gary Ahlskog a psychologist and psychoanalyst practicing in New York City and East Hampton, NY. He is the director of the Pastoral Counseling Training Program for the Postgraduate Center for Mental Health in New York City, the codirector of the Doctor of Ministry Program of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in New York City, and the president of the Training Institute of the National Psychological Association for Psychoanalysis in New York City.

different point of view...this commitment to openness lies at the heart of a counselor's ethical responsibility."²²

Clients will walk into any counselor's office with issues uncontrolled by common logic. The turmoil that they will express attacks them at their innermost core. It is the counselor's obligation to recognize this turmoil, identify its source and then, and only then, can the counselor help the client grow in his/her thinking and feeling. Ahlskog emphasizes the pastoral counselor's responsibility to understand the pain, the worry, the options, and the perspective of the client- *not* the counselor's. He takes the *golden rule* of "do unto others as you would have them done unto you"²³ and adds a twist; "do unto others what you would want them to do if you were living their lives in their shoes."²⁴ The counselor who can walk with a client in the client's pain and help the client discern the client's optimal path, not the counselor's, will be most effective. The counselor's role is not to create a clone of the counselor. The counselor's role is to guide the client. The counselor is the navigator who provides options for all directions, but the client is the captain who decides which direction to turn. The captain is often privy to information about the ship that the navigator may not have. The captain must still have free will to make his own best decisions; it is not for the navigator to usurp this critical measure of human self-destiny.

The options presented to the client will vary, depending on the issue at hand and the client him/herself. Through this process though, the client is presented with a gift of

²² Gary Ahlskog, "Essential Theory and Technique," in *The Guide to Pastoral Counseling and Care*, ed. Gary Ahlskog and Harry Sands (Madison: Psychosocial Press, 2000), 5.

²³ *Shabbat* 31a.

²⁴ Ahlskog, 5.

space. This space is separate from the outside world. It is a space that offers permission to feel, to hurt, to mourn, to question, to be angry, to reflect, or to just be. Pastoral counseling offers, "a safe place for the client, an unthreatening, undemanding, unscripted, supportive atmosphere."²⁵ James Dittes²⁶ refers to a pastoral counselor's presence as a "gracious nonchalance or a Godly cool."²⁷ Gracious nonchalance stems from an unblinking comfort with being the person one is and the "dissolving of chagrin and apology for not satisfying some other expectations."²⁸ This then opens the floor and gives permission for the counselee to do the same. In his introduction, Dittes describes the pastoral counseling conversation like the conversation God would have with us, "the starkness of an honesty that is felt both as judgment and as grace just because it regards us as we are, an honesty empowered by a regard that is both utterly transcendent and intimately immanent."²⁹ He continues with the idea that in this conversation with God, God has nothing to prove, nothing to need, nothing at risk, so God can be "unreservedly risky. God has nothing on the line, so God can put it all on the line."³⁰ The conversation a client has with the pastoral counselor is one where God is present. This feeling is a reminder for the client, and also for the pastoral counselor, that God's investment in our lives is solid, absolute, and unconditional. This unconditional nature of the relationship and God's investment in us may provide exceptional comfort to the soul in consternation.

²⁵ James E. Dittes, *Pastoral Counseling: The Basics* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 81.

²⁶ James E. Dittes is a professor of pastoral theology and psychology at Yale Divinity School.

²⁷ Dittes, 81.

²⁸ Ibid, 87.

²⁹ Ibid, 14.

³⁰ Ibid, 14.

It is within this spiritual safe haven that human growth, healing, and self-improvement, with proper guidance, will hopefully occur.

With this, we have arrived at the next portion of this thesis of God as a Pastoral Counselor. The next four chapters will attempt to recreate potential conversations, or some will categorize them as monologues, with or to God. These conversations address true emotion and genuine concern for the self at its core. They ask the question of God's presence in their lives and ultimately address the possibility of God playing the role of Pastoral Counselor as they walk through shadowed valleys.

CHAPTER 3

MIRIAM: CRAVING RELATIONSHIP

For such a profound player in Jewish women's biblical history, Miriam, the prophetess³¹ - the daughter of Amram and Yokheved and sister of Moses and Aaron³² is only introduced to its readers in five different places in TaNaKh.³³ We are introduced to Miriam in Exodus 2:4-7. Yokheved left Moses at the river. Miriam watched her brother's basket from a distance until Pharaoh's daughter found him. Miriam suggested to the princess to find a Hebrew nurse and, after the princess' agreement, Miriam returned with her mother. In our second meeting with Miriam, we find ourselves in Exodus 15:20. After the Israelites had crossed the Red Sea, Miriam sang a song of triumph, in which all the women joined. Numbers 12 is our third meeting. Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses on account of the Kushite woman whom he had married, whereupon God summoned Moses, Aaron, and Miriam to the tabernacle of the congregation, reproved her, and punished her with leprosy. She was healed through the prayers of Moses, but was obliged to remain without the camp of the Israelites for seven days, although the people did not proceed until she had returned. Our fourth meeting is in Numbers 20:1 when Miriam died in the desert at *Qadesh*, where she was buried. And, our scriptural farewell to a beloved prophetess is in Micah 6:4 when Miriam is mentioned with her brothers as a leader of the people.

³¹ Exodus 15:20.

³² Num 26:59.

³³ Carol Ochs, "Miriam's Way," *CrossCurrents*, vol. 45, no. 4 (1995/1996), <http://www.crosscurrents.org/Miriamsway.htm>.

Each of these references to Miriam's character provides us with more insight into who she was and how she was seen in the eyes of her brothers, in the eyes of the Israelites, and in the eyes of God. For purposes of my studies, however, the last Biblical mention of Miriam in Micah 6:4 is perhaps the most profound.

Miriam was seen as one of the leaders for the Israelites. Her title was placed upon her. Biblically speaking, only God can ordain a leader. And so, certainly in the eyes of God, Miriam held a high rank. With so many mentions of Moses and Aaron, how is it that Miriam was also an important leader for the Israelites but with so many fewer references? From the text, we rarely hear about her thoughts or her feelings. This also flows into commentary and Midrash, with a rarity of exploration into Miriam's personality and the important relationships in her life. With an entire chapter devoted to Miriam and her actions, chapter 12 in Numbers lends itself to a new exploration of Miriam and her thoughts as she sits and waits out the days of her excommunication from the camp due to her impurity. What was going on in her head? What was she feeling? What did she need? From a biblical perspective, only God could help her. Was God there for her? Did God comfort her?

I want to talk to God. My brother Moses can. Why can't I?
I spoke up where many could hear my words. Now, I sit here with no one around. Not a single person can hear my words. I listen to my own words. I am my own audience.
What am I saying? What do I want to say? I questioned my brother Moses.³⁴ But is that

³⁴ Who is questioning Moses? The verb used in Numbers 12:1 is *vatedaber*. If the verb were to agree with the subject of the sentence, it would read *vayidabru*. Rather, we find the text using the feminine singular form to convey that perhaps Miriam may have been

what I wanted to say? I spoke those words against him, but were those in fact the words I wanted so desperately to say? I love my brother Moses. I brought him to the water. I looked after him.³⁵ Was it he to whom I spoke against? I did not intend this. My anger is towards God. God is whom I want to speak against. God is the one I have the issue with. Moses has what I want. He is not the one who can help me. I want to talk to God. My brother Moses can. Why can't I?

I want to talk to God. My brother Moses can. Why can't I?

I want God to talk to me.³⁶ Is it so much to ask? Why can't I have a relationship with God like my brother Moses? Why am I the one to be punished?³⁷ Aaron and I spoke

the only one to speak out against Moses. Miriam, the woman, would therefore be taking initiative in confronting a person of great authority, Moses, while Aaron just goes along with Miriam and remains silent. This would then support the fact that Miriam is punished and Aaron is not. However, most likely this is not the case. The verb is feminine singular because Miriam is the first subject mentioned. This is not because she is the only person involved. Though she does not act completely independently, Miriam still takes initiative when confronting Moses. She is unhappy with the situation of Moses and his wife. Therefore, she chooses to act on her thoughts rather than sit back and let it happen. Aaron is the one who remains silent and, passively, goes along with Miriam.

³⁵ Referring to Exodus 2:4, "and his sister stationed herself at a distance to learn what would befall him [Moses]."

³⁶ Referring to Numbers 12:2, "Has God spoken only through Moses?" Exodus 4:16 and 15:20 both refer to Miriam and Aaron as prophets. The JPS commentary on Numbers points out that perhaps Miriam and Aaron thought entitled to God speaking to them the way God speaks to Moses. We learn that from this point, prophecy is "an individual not a group phenomenon" (Milgrom 1990, 94).

³⁷ "That Miriam was the initiator of the offensive action against Moses we learn from the outcome: she is punished, then saved by Moses' plea on her behalf, while Aaron remains unscathed. The conflict, by and large, is a power struggle between Miriam and Moses. God is on Moses' side, and therefore she loses. Nevertheless, she felt confident enough to bid for the supreme position of community leadership. In so doing she does not cite her alleged blood kinship with Moses himself., but regards prophetic gifts equal to Moses' as the basis for her challenge... The conclusion we might draw is that Miriam was an important enough figure in her own right- not only just as a leader of women, not only just a woman identified as Moses' or Aaron's sister- to wish for greater authority." (Brenner 1985, 53)

together.³⁸ How did my brother Aaron walk away from this with no punishment and I sit here looking at the camp from far way?³⁹ Aaron spoke with me.⁴⁰ I am torn. He is my

³⁸ Martin Buber claims that the reason for Miriam and Aaron speaking against Moses is because of his wife. He says that Miriam "takes the lead because this is a family affair...what the brother and sister reproach Moses with is conditioned not by a general tendency to keep the blood pure but by the concept that continuation of the gift of prophecy...would be unfavorably affected by the alien element" (Buber 1958, 167-168).

Sifre on Numbers takes a different approach to verse 1 in Numbers 12 that reads, "Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses." The text of the *Midrash* in *Sifre* explains that it was because Moses neglected his conjugal obligations. The text reads, "How did Miriam know that Moses neglected his conjugal obligations? Because she saw that Zipporah, his wife, took no care for her personal appearance, as is the manner of women. Miriam said to her: 'What is the matter with you that you neglect your appearance?' She replied: 'Your brother does not mind!' Thus Miriam knew, and she told it to her brother and they both spoke against Moses. R. Natan says: 'Miriam was standing beside Zipporah when the young man ran and told Moses [that Eldad and Medad were prophesying]. When Zipporah heard that, she said: 'Woe onto the wives of these men!' (This refers to the fact that these men were becoming prophets and they will, like Moses, also neglect their conjugal obligations.) And thus Miriam knew, and she told it to her brother, and both spoke against Moses.' The inference to be drawn from this is: If Miriam, who did not intend to disparage her brother, but, on the contrary, spoke out of her great respect for him, and because she intended that the commandments of God should be fulfilled, and then talked it over with Aaron only, was thus punished, how heavy will the punishment of him who speaks disparagingly of his neighbor, with the intention, and causes him to disregard the law of propagation, and speaks evil of him in the presence of others! There is a similar inference: If King Uzziah, who did not intend to magnify himself, and did not seek his own honor, but that of his Creator, was so punished, how much more heavily will he be punished who intends to magnify himself, and seeks his own honor and not the honor of his Creator" (H.S. Horovitz 1966, 98).

[Fig. 1]

³⁹ Perhaps Aaron did not receive punishment because he was the High Priest. As priest, any form of skin disease made him unclean and unfit to serve (Leviticus 22:4). Miriam was clearly unclean because she was set out of the camp for seven days.

⁴⁰ Miriam and Aaron (who is backing her up, while remaining silent) make the point that they too are prophets. Exodus 15:20 says, "Then Miriam the prophetess, Aaron's sister...". Two things are clear from this passage, Miriam was a prophetess and she was closer to Aaron than Moses. Moses was not raised with his siblings, and so there is truth to the notion that the relationship Miriam had with Aaron is stronger than the relationship Miriam had with Moses because of the sheer amount of time Miriam had with Aaron as they grew up together. God also spoke through Aaron, that is clear from Exodus 4:27 "God said to Aaron...". Perhaps their complaint is related to the fact that Moses is now sharing some of his power with the 70 elders. Miriam and Aaron have not been given the position of leadership in this way, even though they are prophets. Ibn Ezra says that the

brother, but he is a leader for me too. I do not wish ill upon my brother and I certainly do not wish ill upon my leader, but if a person acts wrongly, should he not be punished too?!

⁴¹ I am torn. Aaron has priestly responsibilities that only he can tend to. No one can fill that role. He is just as much of a leader as I am. But, if that is the case, should he not be reprimanded? Absolutely! If we do something wrong, we must be punished and set right. If Aaron is punished, will people learn from him or am I the only one used to set this example? Why am I the chosen one? Aaron just knows to keep his mouth shut. I could learn from his wisdom. Although, because Aaron was in fact silent, perhaps his punishment was silence...⁴² I want to talk to God. My brother Moses can. Why can't I?

I want to talk to God. My brother Moses can. Why can't I?

I'm sitting here alone because I have a disease. My skin is so itchy. I have scabs all over my body. I bleed out from, what seems to be, every orifice of my body. I cannot scratch, as my flesh is half-consumed.⁴³ I don't want anyone to see me. But why has my

whole matter relates to the fact that Miriam and Aaron were still having relations with their spouses, while Moses was not. This points out a difference between the type of prophets Miriam and Aaron were, and the type of prophet Moses was.

⁴¹ This question of 'unfairness' does not surface with any of the commentators. There seems to be no "concern for the difference in treatment of Aaron and Miriam" (Sakenfeld 1998, 52).

⁴² Perhaps Aaron's punishment was that he was not able to check Miriam and declare her pure. He could not play his own role because of the familial status between him and Miriam. See *Sifre* in note 15.

⁴³ Making a reference to Numbers 12:12 where Aaron said to Moses, "Let her [Miriam] not remain like a corpse as one who came out from the womb of its mother it would be as if half of its flesh were consumed." As Samson Raphael Hirsch explains in his commentary, we learn from Leviticus 13:46 that one who is affected by this kind of leprosy is considered as a dead body. Sforno and Rashbam take this statement a bit differently. They both say that if someone from the "same womb," ie. siblings with the same mother, is "dead" like this leprosy brings about, than it is as though half of the non-ill sibling is dead too. The Sforno continues to say that this is Aaron asking Moses not to

brother Aaron⁴⁴ not come to see me?⁴⁵ I miss him. Moses did pray for me.⁴⁶ I heard him.⁴⁷ But his prayer didn't help. As I am here- alone- in pain. There are white flakes

leave their sister "dead" in the desert being that if he did, he would be leaving half his body there.

⁴⁴ As suggested earlier in note 4, perhaps Miriam was closer with Aaron and wished for him to visit.

⁴⁵ According to the *Sifre*, only the priests could check on the person who was impure to change their status back to a pure one. However, because Aaron and his sons were related to the impure person, they could not go to check on her. The *Sifre* explains that this is why God sent Miriam out of the camp for seven days. God set the time frame of Miriam's impurity because Aaron could not.

Pirke De Rabbi Eliezer Hagadol addresses this notion of priestly impurity. The text reads, "And Adonai descended into the Tabernacle, as it is said, 'And Adonai came down in a pillar of cloud, and stood at the door of the Tent, and called Aaron and Miriam; and they both came forth' (Numbers 12:5). The Holy One, blessed be God, said to them" whoever speaks slander against his fellow in secret, has no cure; if he slanders against his brother, the son of his father or the son of his mother, how much more so is this the case? The Holy One, blessed be God, was angry with them, and God departed from the tent, as it is said, "And the anger of Adonai was lit before them; and God departed" (Numbers 12:9)...Then Miriam became leprous. The Holy One, blessed be God, said: If Aaron also becomes leprous, the High Priest, who is afflicted with a blemish, will not be able to bring an offering upon My altar; but he shall look upon his sister and become afraid, as it is said, "And Aaron looked upon Miriam, and behold, she was leprous" (Numbers 12:10). Aaron went to Moses and said to him: My lord Moses! Brothers do not suffer themselves to be separated one from the other except through death, as it is said, "though he be fruitful among the reed-plants" (Hosea 13:15). Our sister, while still among the living, is separated from us by death, as it is said, "Let her not, I pray, be as one dead" (Numbers 12:12). Not only this, but now all Israel will hear and say that the sister of Moses and Aaron is leprous. Half of this infamous report concerns you. Moses was appeased by the words, and he arose and prayed for her, and God was entreated of him, as it is said, "And Moses cried unto God saying, 'Heal her, God, I pray to You' (Numbers 12:13)" (*Pirke Rabbi Eliezer Hagadol* 1946, 128). [Fig. 2]

⁴⁶ "El na, refa na la" (Numbers 12:13). Rashi explains that even a short prayer like this one, we are still asked to conduct ourselves in a proper way. Therefore, "one who requests something from his fellow must say two or three words of supplication, then, afterward, make his requests" (Rashi on Numbers 12:13).

Targum Unkelos explains that because "na" is repeated twice, the first is translated as "please" while the second is translated as "now."

⁴⁷ The JPS commentary explains that Moses is found in a difficult position. His sister spoke out against him and has earned a punishment for herself, but because he saw his sister with an illness, he had compassion for her. JPS offers an explanation to the brevity of Moses' prayer saying that, "it indicates Moses' lack of enthusiasm and minimal

everywhere. I am afraid to look at my own skin. What is happening to me? Am I going to die? I have to be here for seven days but will I heal? Why would God want to help me now? I spoke against God. Who would want to help me? I want to talk to God. My brother Moses can. Why can't I?

I want to talk to God. My brother Moses can. Why can't I?

I sit here as I look onto the camp from afar. My community is there.⁴⁸ I am here. They are all together. I am alone. I am in a foreign place. I am not with my community.

compliance with Aaron's plea, an attitude supported by the fact that Miriam is not referred to by name but by the impersonal third person" (Milgrom 1990, 98).

⁴⁸ In Numbers 12:15, we learned that the Israelites did not travel. They stayed back and waited for Miriam until she was in a pure state to rejoin the community. This is seen as a *measure for measure* response. The *Mishnah* in *Sotah* chapter 1 explains the use of *measure for measure* – first in relation to punishment and then in relation to rewards, of which Miriam falls into the latter category.

The *Mishnah* in *Sotah* explains the punishment taken against a wife suspected of adultery. *Sotah* chapter 1 *Mishnah* 7 reads: "With the very measure that a man measures that they mete him: she adorned herself for transgression, [the Source] God reduced her to shame; she exposed herself for transgression, [the Source] God laid her bare; with her thigh she began the transgression, and then with the belly, therefore the thigh is stricken first and then the belly; the rest of all the body shall not escape [every part of the body will subsequently suffer punishment]." *Sotah* chapter 1 *Mishnah* 8 provides textual examples of punishments for evil doing; "Samson went after his eyes therefore the Philistines gouged out his eyes, as it is said, "And the Philistines laid hold on him, and put out his eyes" (Judges 16:21). Absalom gloried in his hair, hence he was suspended by his hair; and because he copulated with the ten concubines of his father, therefore they thrust ten javelins into him as it is said, "And ten young men that bore Joab's armor compassed about [and smote Absalom and slew him]" (2 Samuel 18:22); and since he stole three hearts- the heart of his father, the heart of the court and the heart of Israel, therefore three darts we thrust into him, as it is said, "And he took three darts in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of Absalom" (2 Samuel 15:6). The *Mishnah* continues with the measure for measure discussion, though in this next *Mishnah* the measure for measure situations result in rewards for good deeds rather than punishments for evil deeds. *Sotah* chapter 1 *Mishnah* 9 reads: "And thus in the matter of a good deed. Miriam waited over Moses one hour, as it is said, "And his sister stood afar off" (Exodus 2:4), therefore Israel waited for her seven days in the wilderness, as it is said, "And the people journeyed not until Miriam was brought back" (Numbers 12:15). Joseph was privileged to bury his father, and none of his brothers were greater than he, as it is said, "And Joseph went up to bury his father, and chariots and horsemen went up with him" (Genesis 50:7-

I am not with my family. I am a foreigner like my brother's wife.⁴⁹ I want to talk to God. My brother Moses can. Why can't I?

I want to talk to God. My brother Moses can. Why can't I?

I do have to own up to my actions though. I was in the wrong.⁵⁰ I am a leader of the Israelites. After we crossed the sea, the women danced⁵¹ with me and I chanted for

9). Whom have we greater than Joseph, since none but Moses occupied himself with him: Moses was privileged with the bones of Joseph and there is no one in Israel greater than he, as it is said, "And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him" (Exodus 13:19). Who is greater than Moses, seeing that none save the Almighty occupied with him, as it is said, "And he buried him in the valley" (Deuteronomy 34:6). And not only of Moses have they spoken in this wise but also of all the righteous, as it is said, "And your righteousness shall go before you, the glory of Adonai shall gather you" (Isaiah 58:8). [Fig. 3]

The *Mishnah* in *Sotah* teaches us that God granted Miriam great honor because of the hour she waited for Moses when she placed him in the river. And so, the textual tradition we have explains that the community waited for Miriam because not only was she an important leader in their community, but they also waited for her because God required a measure for measure response to Miriam's waiting for Moses.

⁴⁹ Perhaps Miriam's punishment was not leprosy itself, but rather it was the affect that the actions have when dealing with a person with leprosy. Miriam speaks out against Moses but perhaps even more so, she speaks out against his wife. In Numbers 12:1, "*ishah kushit*" is repeated twice. Here, the text stresses the fact that Moses' wife is foreign. Because she spoke against someone from a foreign place, she is sent to a foreign place through a measure for measure punishment.

⁵⁰ According to the words of Rabbi Eliezer Ben Hyrcanus, Miriam was in the wrong because she spoke against Moses secretly behind his back. Rabbi Eliezer's "One who slanders another in secret has no place in the world to come..." "And Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Kushite woman whom he had married" (Numbers 12:1). Was she then a Kushite woman? Was she not Zipporah? But just as this Kushite is different as regards his body from all other people, so was Zipporah different from all other women by her words and by her good deeds; therefore she was called a Kushite, as it is said, "For he had married a Kushite woman" (Numbers 12:1) (*Pirke Rabbi Eliezer Hagadol* 1946, 126a-126b). [Fig.4]

⁵¹ There is significance to the fact that the women danced in public. While not great in abundance, this is an example that shows women having a place in public life. As the leader of the dance and song, therefore, Miriam's "leadership abilities would easily have transcended the female context and exerted themselves in other community settings" (Meyers 1994, 227).

the whole community.⁵² I need to take responsibility for my actions. I am a role model for my people.⁵³ What I do can influence them.⁵⁴ I cannot let them down. They look to

⁵² "Then Miriam the prophetess, Aaron's sister, took a timbrel in her hand and all the women went out after her in dance with timbrels. And Miriam chanted for them." (Leviticus 15:20-21) If she only led the women, the text would read, "*lahen*." However, the text reads, "*lahem*," thereby establishing the fact that Miriam is a leader of the community because she chanted for the entire community and not just for the men. (Burns 1987, 12)

⁵³ The *Gemara* in *Gittin* 88b discusses whether or not Jewish judges in Babylonia are authorized to coerce divorce. The *Gemara* reads: Abaye found Rav Yosef sitting and forcing a get. [Abaye] said to him: "But we are commoners (not ordained)," and it was taught in a *Baraita*: "R' Tarfon used to say wherever you find gatherings of idolators [serving as judges] even though their laws are identical to the laws of Jews, you are not permitted to submit to them. As it is said: "And these are the judgments that you (Moses) shall place before them [the seventy ordained elders];" before them [Jewish judges] but not before idolators. (From this verse it is derived that judicial proceedings are valid only when conducted before Jewish judges.) Another ruling (can be derived from this verse)- Before them but not before unordained (judges).

The *Tosafot* on this *Gemara* pick up on the phrase, "but not before unordained judges." Their commentary reads, "You might say that it is a logical conclusion that the verse argues that they are fit to judge the following in the holy words of *Kedushin* 35a and in *Bava Kamma* 15a. We expound on this that Scripture equated in this verse a woman to a man in regard to all the judgments of the Torah (i.e. that both are equally fit to judge according to this verse). But, a woman is disqualified to judge as it is taught in a *Baraita* from *Niddah* 49b that all who are fit to judge are fit to witness. But, a woman is also disqualified from being a witness as proving clear in *Bava Kamma* 88a and in *Shavuot* 30a that there are those who say that there is a gender rule that chapter *Ba Siman* refers to a man arguing as it says every man who is fit to judge is fit to be a witness. But, for Deborah it is written in Judges 4 that she judges Israel. This is not proof that a woman is fit to judge. That perhaps it is not that she judged rather she was teaching them the laws or else perhaps they accepted her (judgments/authority) over them because the *Shechinah* was with her. But in the *Talmud Yerushalmi Yoma* chapter 6, from this we derive that a woman does not judge or give testimony in court. But R. Yose says that the meaning of the verse argues that in any matter whether judging or being judged" (*Tosafot* on *Gittin* 88b). [Fig. 5]

Here, the *Tosafot* talk of a woman being a law teacher. The sages take this to understand that a woman can teach law to sages thereby giving her power and legitimacy. This power and legitimacy of a woman can then be taken to the extent of leading a generation. This then puts Miriam in a similar place as Deborah, to whom the *Gemara* refers, as a leader of the community.

⁵⁴ Miriam's song held a substantial amount of influence on future generations. This type of performance, song accompanied with dance, is the first of many such performances in the Bible. They are celebrations that are commonly conducted by women after a victory

me for guidance and my actions must reflect the guidance I share with them. I want to talk to God. My brother Moses can. Why can't I?

I want to talk to God. My brother Moses can. Why can't I?

My people waited for me.⁵⁵ They did not have to.⁵⁶ I feel comforted that my community stayed to wait for me. Maybe I am doing something right. Maybe what they see me do actually does have a positive affect on the way they live their lives. If this were to happen to anyone in our community, I would ask that we do the same thing. Here, I did not have to ask. No one said anything to them- they just waited. Moses probably had something to do with their decision after all he is our leader. In a situation like this, only Moses would be able to arrange a hold in our group's movement. If God will listen to anyone, God will listen to Moses. They have a special relationship. How did Moses get to be so lucky?

I want to talk to God. My brother Moses can. Why can't I?

of the Israelites' over their enemies. Through leading the first of these celebrations found in the Bible, Miriam becomes a role model for women and sets an example for them. Another example can be found in Judges 11:34, when Jephthah's daughter dances with a timbrel in her hand while she eagerly emerges from the house to greet her father, who is returning from a successful battle. Though in Miriam's case, she is a religious leader, leading the community in praising God. Miriam's actions "...do not honor a victorious warrior who was a charismatic leader in the Hebrew Community. Rather her celebration is in honor of Yahweh, the Divine Warrior of Israel" (Burns 1987, 17).

⁵⁵ "...those whom she has served do not forsake her in the time of tribulation. They wait" (Trible 1994, 180).

⁵⁶ Some explain that the people waited because they wanted to. They did not have to. The movement of the cloud determined the movement of the people. Because the cloud moved (Numbers 12:10), the Israelites needed to follow it for protection. However, the Israelites chose to stay and wait thereby inconveniencing themselves on account of Miriam's merits (Attar 1995, 1441).

Throughout this modern Midrash, Miriam acknowledges her relationship with Moses, Aaron, the Israelites and the inadequate relationship she feels with God. She speaks of her feelings of isolation. She describes the pain of her skin disease. She acknowledges her role as one of the leaders of her community. She takes ownership of her wrongdoing. Who knows if Miriam actually thought any of this or felt any of this, but she may very well have thought and felt these things. Even if she had not, the feelings are still real and very human, a longing to speak with God and a craving to have a relationship with God.

This Midrash portrays a female leader in physical and emotional pain. She is in need of support. Through her monologue, we see that she is capable of accessing her own feelings and through her own internal exploration discovers her pain and, through that process, she seeks out her own form of comfort through her thoughts about her community. The support she craves, however, is from God.

The relationship Miriam craves with God is impossible. In this time of isolation and thought, Miriam seeks to have a relationship with God, one that God will not provide. The relationship that Miriam craves is one that only Moses will ever experience. However, in a modern Midrashic exploration of Moses' experience on the peak of Mount Nebo in the next chapter, we will discover that the relationship that Miriam covets is perhaps one that Moses shares with his sister.

CHAPTER 4

MOSES: WHY AM I THE ONE?

Moses is the middleman who desperately wants to keep peace on both sides, with God and with the Israelites. With all of the excitement of Miriam's disfigurement, was there space for Moses pain? Was there an opportunity for Moses to express his concerns and fears? Was there ever a place and space for Moses to express himself? He is responsible for everyone's happiness. But, what happens when everyone is unhappy? What happens when his sister is struck with a severe skin disease and she is sent out of the camp? What happens when his brother dies? What happens when he is told that he will not see the land that his people were promised? What happens when he is unhappy? Upset? Sad? Moses is, in fact, human. He has feelings. What happens when he is the one who is upset and needs someone or something to support him and give him strength when he is too weak to support himself?

According to scholars, Moses is most human in the book of Numbers, more so than in any other of the five books.⁵⁷ Within this book he betrays an unbroken run of self-doubt,⁵⁸ gives into self-pity,⁵⁹ and, in the most human of ways, he questions God.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Jacob Milgrom, introduction to *The JPS Torah Commentary: Numbers*, edited by Jacob Milgrom (New York: The Jewish Publication Society, 1990), xli.

⁵⁸ Moses is at a loss. The Israelites are weeping (Numbers 11:10) and complaining about not having meat to eat. This distressed Moses. He feels like he is failing them and has no support. And he says, "I cannot carry all this people by myself, for it is too much for me. If You would deal thus with me, kill me rather than, I beg You, and let me see no more of my wretchedness" (Numbers 11:14-15).

⁵⁹ Moses asks God, what he has done to deserve a group of people like the Israelites. He deals with them and their complaints and he feels like he receives nothing in return. "And Moses said to Adonai, 'Why have You dealt ill with Your servant, and why have I

He lets his anger grow and explode, as his people need him. He is spent. The position is hard and draining. Moses leads a group of people out of slavery, through the Reed Sea and into the wilderness. This is a very different life from what they knew and, because of so much change, the Israelites have a hard time and thus Moses feels the brunt of it all as the people complain to him. Who would want to lead a group of complainers? Who would want to lead a group of people who blame you for their current condition? Who would want to lead a group of people who blame your boss, someone whom you respect, care for and act for, for their current condition? How does someone respond to these conditions? What goes on in the leader's head when there is a communal blow-up aimed at the leader? What is the proper response? How is the leader supposed to react? How does the leader want to react? What if the two responses are in complete discord? How then is the decision made? What is the leader to do? With whom does the leader's loyalty lay? His boss? His people? Himself?

Of course, Moses was a man of greatness and there are few, if any, who will oppose that statement. Certainly, as a leader, he represents his people though, with humility at his core,⁶¹ Moses never represented himself. He accepted his fate. He accepted the words uttered by his sister. He accepted his brother's silence. Though, this

not enjoyed Your favor, that You have laid the burden of all this people upon me?" (Numbers 11:11).

⁶⁰ Moses questions God. God said that the Israelites will eat meat "until it comes out of your nostrils and becomes loathsome to you" (Numbers 11:20). And Moses' response is, "The people who are with me number six hundred thousand men; yet You say, 'I will give them enough meat to eat for a whole month.' Could enough flocks and herds be slaughtered to suffice them? Or could all the fish of the sea be gathered for them to suffice them?" (Numbers 11:21-22). How is this going to work? How will You, God, provide enough meat for all of these people?

⁶¹ "Moses was a very humble man, more so than any other man on earth" (Numbers 12:3).

returns us to all the questions posited above. What about Moses? What happens when there is an act against him? What happens when God tells him he will not enter the land promised by God to the people?

Moses guided the Israelites for forty years. He led them from Egypt into the wilderness and longed for the land that was promised to him and the people he led. What happened when God said, "because you did not trust Me enough to affirm My sanctity in the sight of the Israelite people, therefore you shall not lead this congregation into the land that I have given them."⁶² And, what goes on in Moses' head when God told Moses to ascend Mount Nebo⁶³ and look at the land that he will not enter?⁶⁴ And what happens when God commands Moses to anoint Joshua as the next leader of the Israelites who will shepherd the flock of Israel into the land?

I want to enter the land. The Israelites can. Why can't I?

I stand on the peak of Mt. Nebo⁶⁵ with the clearest view of a promised land. I can see every rolling hill. I can see every green tree in the north. I can see every sand dune in the south. I can see the Jordan River flow from north to south down the eastern boarder. I can see the Nile, oh that river in Egypt that left my people with bitter bitter memories, flowing from south to north. I see the animals move about the land, just like

⁶² Numbers 20:12.

⁶³ Understood from Deuteronomy 32:49. At 2,740 feet high, Mount Nebo, from its peak, provides a view of Cisjordan- a region west of the Jordan River and east of the Mediterranean Sea. It is bordered on the south by Egypt and on the north by Lebanon and Syria. And so, with this definition of borders, Cisjordan is the Land of Israel- the land that God promised the Israelites.

⁶⁴ "Adonai said to Moses, 'ascend these heights of *Avarim* and view the land that I have given to the Israelite people'" (Numbers 27:12).

⁶⁵ Ibid.

the people will who stand at the base of this mountain. This land is theirs. It is promised to those people. Not to me though.⁶⁶ That land was taken from me. I want to enter the land. The Israelites can. Why can't I?

⁶⁶ This relates to Rashi comments on the phrase "*Aleh el har haavarim*- Go up to [this] mountain of *Avarim*." He first speaks of the idea of inheritance. This is because this passage succeeds the passage about the daughters of Zelophehad, which addresses a daughter's right to the inheritance of her father's possessions should there be no sons. And so, this connection is through inheritance as the Israelites inherit the land that God has promised them. Moses ascends the mountain of *Avarim* to view the Israelites' inheritance. And, according to the map of tribal divisions, the mountain Moses ascended fell into the borders of the portion of land promised to the tribes of Gad and Reuben.

Rashi uses the *Sifre* to explain how Moses was inside of the borders of the promised land, but even with this entry, he will not enter the Land of Israel with the Israelites. Moses, according to the *Sifre*, thought that if he could enter a part of the promised land, then perhaps God will allow him to enter the Land of Israel. However, as we learn in the quoted text, the king did not allow his son to enter the most inner confines of the palace. The Midrash compares this to Moses' situation. He was allowed to enter a portion of the promised land, but the most inner confines of the promised land- The Land of Israel- will remain off limits for Moses.

The *Sifre* reads, "And God said to Moses, 'Ascend these heights of *Avarim*'- Mount Nebo- as this is the inheritance of the tribe of Reuben and the tribe of Gad. In the hour that Moses happily entered into the inheritance of the tribe of Reuben and the tribe of Gad he said, 'I am like the one who had my vows absolved- so he began pouring out supplications before God. A parable- to what does this compare? To a flesh and blood king who decreed against his son that he may not enter his palace. He [the son] entered the gate and after it he entered through the courtyard and after it he entered the reception room and after it, when he entered the bed chamber he [the king] said to him [his son], 'From here and further- you are forbidden.' So in the hour that Moses entered into the inheritance of Gad and Reuben, he was happy and said, 'I am like the one who had my vow absolved' [so] he began pouring out supplications to God. Is this not something that we could use a *kol v'chomer* (all the more so) argument [in saying] but what if Moses, the wisest of the wise, the greatest of the great, father of the prophets, even though he knew that a decree had been made against him. God did not withhold Godself from mercy, all the more so to the gate of humanity as it is said, "And I pleaded to God" (Deuteronomy 3:23). What was this type of supplication? At that time, "*Lemor*- saying." [In this instance] the Torah does not say "*Lemor*" but rather it says "make it know to me- if I am entering into the land or if I am not, Adonai, You are the Master to all who come into the world. God in judgment, You created the world" (Deuteronomy 3:24). "You began" - You began to open the opportunity to Your servant in the hour that You caused me to enter the inheritance of the tribe of Reuben and the tribe of Gad. Another point on this phrase "You began." You began to show Your servant miracles and wonders as it is said,

"And Moses said, 'I must turn aside in order to look'" [at this marvelous sight of the burning bush] (Exodus 3:3). Another point on this phrase "You began." You began the oath when You wrote in the Torah, "One who sacrifices to a god will be excommunicated" (Exodus 22:19). And Your children, they worshipped idols and I requested mercy upon them and You forgave them and were lenient (You softened Your stance) on the oath. "Your greatness" –this is a measure of your goodness, as it is said, "And now let Your strength increase" (Numbers 14:17). "And Your hand" –this is your right one (your strong one) that this is simple for all who come into the world as it is said, "Your right hand, O God, is glorious in power" (Exodus 15:6). Also, it says, "By myself I have sworn, from my mouth has issued truth, a word that shall not turn back" (Isaiah 45:23). "The strong one" –that you suppress with mercy the measure of judgment as it is said, "Who is like You forgiving iniquity and remitting transgression... God will take us back in love and God will cover up our iniquities... you will keep faith with Jacob..." (Micah 7:18-20). "You are the God of heaven and earth" –that the measurement of God is not like the measurement of flesh and blood. The measure of a person who is greater than his fellow- he can nullify the decree of his fellow but You, God, who is able to erase Your hand (who can nullify Your decree?)? And thus it says, "He is one who can dissuade him" (Job 23:13)? R' Judah son of Babah said a parable: A man was given a document of the kingdom (a binding document) –even if he gives a lot of money, it is impossible for him to uproot (he cannot nullify it), but You say repent and I will acknowledge. As it is said, "I wipe away your sins like a cloud, your transgressions like a mist" (Isaiah 44:22). Another point on [this phrase] "Who is God of heaven and earth" <and there are those who say> "Know therefore this day and keep in mind that Adonai alone is God in heaven above and on earth below; there is no other" (Deuteronomy 4:39), but not in the air of the world. "That You have done in Your deeds and Your feats of strength" –like Your deeds in Egypt and Your feats at the sea. Another point on [this phrase] "Your deeds and Your feats of strength." On the Wadi of Arnon, let me cross over and see –there is no "Nah (please) except in the language of request. And let me see the good on the other side of the Jordan and this is what R' Judah says is the Land of Canaan, which is good and not the inheritance of the tribe of Reuben and the tribe of Gad. "And the Lebanon" –this is the Temple and thus it says "Throw open your gates O Lebanon" (Zechariah 11:1) And it says "And the Lebanon tree shall fall in their majesty" (Isaiah 10:34) And there are those who say Lebanon appoint over them their rulers" (H.S. Horovitz 1966, 179-181). [Fig. 6]

According to this Midrash, it is only God who can nullify the oath. In relation to Moses entering the land, Moses does not get into the actual inheritance. God only allows Moses to enter the outskirts of the land in order for Moses to climb the mountain to see the actual land that he will not know as his own.

I want to enter the land. The Israelites can. Why can't I?

Why did I strike the rock?⁶⁷ What got me so riled up that I couldn't follow God's command? What pushed me? Why did the Israelites get under my skin? Why did I let them? Could I have prevented that from happening? Was there a way? Why was I punished?⁶⁸ Did God use me as an example? I thought I had a special relationship with

⁶⁷ God's command to Moses in Numbers 20:8 was to "*kah et hamateh vehakhel et ha'edah atah veaharon ahiykha ve'ibartem el hasela le'eyneyhem venatan meymav*...take the staff and gather together the assembly, you and Aaron your brother, and you shall speak to the rock before their eyes and it shall give its waters." And so, perhaps Moses kicks himself and asks, "Why did I strike the rock? Why did I not speak to the rock like God commanded me?"

Many different factors could have played into Moses' need to strike the rock, rather than obeying God's command to speak to the rock. We learn in the first verses of Numbers 20 that Miriam died and was buried. However, in the succeeding verse, the passage shifts its mood to the Israelites gathered together against Moses and Aaron because there was no water. There was no space or time, as far as the text leads us to believe, for Moses to mourn the death of his sister. Perhaps Moses' episode of striking the rock was an act of mourning. Perhaps God did not create a space for Moses to mourn Miriam's death and this was Moses' way to tell God, "I need this space."

Moses may have also struck the rock because he was fed up with the Israelites. He was in a constant battle trying to please God and trying to please the Israelites. With constant complaining from the Israelites, perhaps Moses "lost his cool" with the people and this is why he struck the rock.

Another reason Moses struck the rock could have been an issue of power. Perhaps Moses lost this test before he even began. He had an enormous amount of success with God's staff and this is how he grows into his downfall. The staff proved success with the plagues in Egypt. It proved success when the Israelites left Egypt. It proved success in Numbers 20 parallel passage, Exodus 17, when God commands Moses to strike the rock to produce water for the Israelites. With all of these wonderful outcomes, Moses begins on his power trip. Just after God gives Moses the list of ordered commands, the next line tells us that Moses takes matters into his own hands with verse 9 saying, "Moses took the staff from before God." The staff is not only God's medium for God's magic, but it also represents authority as seen in the story of Judah and Tamar. Thus, Moses took God's authority from God and proceeded with his newly self-acquired role.

⁶⁸ Moses was punished because, as God says, he "did not believe in Me to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel" (Numbers 20:12). And so, we follow the various reasons from note 11. On a reason of mourning, Moses did not trust God as perhaps God had God's own plan for Moses' mourning process. This however is not evident in the text. On a reason of "losing his cool," Moses did not trust God as perhaps God did not

God. God talks to me differently from any other person.⁶⁹ If my relationship with God is that special, why am I punished so severely? I want to enter the land. The Israelites can. Why can't I?

I want to enter the land. The Israelites can. Why can't I?

God commanded⁷⁰ me to pass on my leadership⁷¹ to Joshua.⁷² Am I ready to give up my role?⁷³ Am I ready to give up my life after more than forty years? Am I ready to

allow for Moses' mourning needs to be met and so, out of frustration, this was the only way he could of mourned the death of his sister. On a reason of passion, Moses did not trust God as he took the staff from God and attempted to formulate his own form of leadership, one that God did not sanction.

⁶⁹ Numbers 12:8

⁷⁰ According to the biblical commentators, when Moses spoke to Joshua, there were certain words about the Israelites Moses shared with Joshua.

⁷¹ According to Rashi, when Moses passed leadership over to Joshua, he said, "And he took him with (kind words) and made known to him the reward of the leaders of Israel in the world to come. And he laid his hands with a benevolent eye, much more than he was commanded; for the Holy One Blessed be God had said to him, 'And lay your hand [singular],' but he [Moses] did [it] with his two hands, and made him [Joshua] like a vessel filled to overflowing, and filled him with his own wisdom with a benevolent eye" (Rashi on Numbers 27:19). According to Ramban however, those words would have had to been said in private. Had the Israelites heard those words, "it would only have caused them to break off all restraint." (Chavel 1975, 331). The purpose of investing authority onto Joshua, specifically in the presence of the Israelites was for the Israelites to witness the shift in authority "in order that they should trust him and listen to him, for they should know that he will treat their affairs in a truthful manner, since his Master had so commanded him" (Ibid).

⁷² Refers to Numbers 27:18-19 when God says to Moses to "Single out Joshua son of Nun, an inspired man, and lay your hand upon him. Have him stand before Eleazar the priest and before the whole community, and commission him in their sight."

⁷³ According to the Ramban, Moses passed over his leadership to Joshua wholeheartedly. Ramban explains that God instructs Moses to "*vesamahta et yadkhah alav*- lay your hand upon him" (Numbers 27:18). Here the word used is *yadkhah*, "your hand," which is in the singular form. However, we read in verse 23 that when Moses followed through with God's instructions, "he laid his hands upon him- *vayismokh et yadav*." According to Ramban, Moses was so wholeheartedly ready, or perhaps accepting of Joshua's as his successor, that Moses placed both of his hands on Joshua's head, rather than just the one that God instructed him.

retire? Can Joshua handle these people? God, "Source of the breath of all flesh,"⁷⁴

thinks he can. I think he can too.⁷⁵ Are the people ready for a change? Will they be able

⁷⁴ Numbers 27:16. The phrasing used is significant. Here, Moses addresses God in the third person. However, he also uses this same phrase to address God in Numbers 16:22 with his brother. There they pray for God not to destroy all of the community for it was only one person who sinned, not the entire community. So Moses and Aaron plea with God using the phrase "*el elohey haruhot lekhol basar haesh ehad yeheta ve'al kol ha'edah tiktzof* - O God Source of all flesh! When one man sins, will You be wrathful with the whole community?" They address God in the second person. In Numbers 27:16, the text uses the jussive form "*yifkod Adonai elohey harukhot l'khol basar* - Let Adonai, Source of all the breath of all flesh, appoint..." The jussive form takes on the third person. According to Milgrom, this change in address may have an affiliation with Numbers 27:14, where God rebukes Moses and reminds him of his sin. Milgrom suggests that Moses feels that he is no longer the intimate of God. Whenever Moses addresses God directly from this point forward, he does so in the third person.

⁷⁵ *Midrash Rabbah* explains the verse, "And Moses spoke to God, saying, 'Let God, Source of the breath of all flesh, appoint someone over the community.'" The Midrash says, "Whoever petitions for the needs of a community is like one who comes with main force. Let God appoint someone over the community (Numbers 15:16). What was his reason for asking this after declaring the order of inheritance? Just this: that when the daughters of Zelophechad inherited for their father, Moses argued: 'the time is opportune for me to demand my own needs. If daughters inherit, it is surely right that my sons should inherit my glory.' The Holy One, blessed be God, said to him: 'he who tends a fig tree will enjoy its fruit, and he who cares for his master will be honored' (Proverbs 27:18). 'Your sons sat idly by and did not study the Torah. Joshua served You much and he showed You great honor. It was he who rose early in the morning and remained late at night at Your House of Assembly- he used to arrange the benches, and he used to spread the mats. Seeing that he has served You with all his might, he is worthy to serve Israel, for he shall not lose his reward, [replied Moses]. 'Single out Joshua son of Nun' (Numbers 27:18). This serves to confirm the text, 'he who tends a fig tree will enjoy its fruit' (*Midrash Rabbah* 1957, 133). [Fig. 7]

Sefer HaAggadah also comments on this verse in the form of Moses praying to God for the protection and guidance of the flock he has been leading all this time. The text reads, "'Moses spoke to Adonai, saying: 'Let Adonai, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation' (Num. 27:15-16).'" The verse proclaims the excellence of the righteous: even when about to depart from the world, they set aside their own needs and occupy themselves with the needs of the community.

'Let Adonai, the God of the spirits of all flesh.' When Moses saw that his sons were not worthy to succeed him in the dignity of his office, he wrapped himself in his *talit* and, standing up in prayer before the Holy One, said: 'Master of the universe, let me know who shall come and go [in leadership] before the people. Let Adonai, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set [the right] man over the congregation. Master of the universe, the disposition of every one of them is revealed to You- the disposition of one is not at all

to handle a new person in charge? Is Joshua ready? Does he want the job? I want to enter the land. The Israelites can. Why can't I?

I want to enter the land. The Israelites can. Why can't I?

I am not going to see that land. I will die in this land. Am I ready to die?⁷⁶ Have I fulfilled my duties and obligations as a servant to God? Have I had a meaningful

like the disposition of another. After I depart from them, when You will be setting another leader over them, I beg you, set over them a leader who will put up with each and every man, according to his particular disposition.' So, in saying, 'Let Adonai, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set [the right] man over the congregation,' Moses asked: 'Will the man You set over the congregation have within himself the spirits of sixty myriads, so that he will be able to converse with each man according to his particular disposition?' The Holy One replied: 'Moses, you have made a proper request. So I shall show you all the judges and all the prophets whom I will set up over My children from this time until the dead shall be brought back to life.' For, as R. Simon said, the verse 'He showed him all the earth' (Deuteronomy 34:1) means: He showed him that Joshua would rise up in his stead, and Joshua would turn over his authority to Othniel, as will all subsequent leaders to their successors. Then the Holy One said to Moses: "Each of these I showed you has one disposition and one spirit. But as to what you asked for earlier, at the end of time there will be a person within whom, to be sure, there will be but one spirit, yet it will have the capacity to bear the weight of the spirits of all men--that person is the Messiah."

'A man over the congregation, who may go out before them, and who may come in before them' (Numbers 27:17)- that he not act like others, who have their legions go forth while they themselves remain in their homes; 'who may lead them out, and who may bring them in' (Numbers 27:17)- that he not lead them out in myriads and bring them back in thousands, or lead them out in thousands and bring them back in hundreds.

[Moses went on]: 'That the congregation of the Lord be not as sheep that have no shepherd' (Numbers 27:17). To whom may Moses be compared? To a faithful shepherd. When the owner of the flock said to him, 'Remove yourself from my flock,' he replied, 'I will not remove myself until you tell me whom you will set as shepherd in my place.'

'Adonai said to Moses: 'Single out' (Numbers 27:18)- one you trust; 'single out' one who has been tested by you: 'Joshua the son of Nun' (Numbers 27:18). You know how long Joshua has served you, how much honor he accorded you, how he came early and stayed late in your meeting place, arranging the benches and spreading the mats. 'A man in whom there is spirit' (Numbers 27:18) one who will know how to face up to the spirit of everyone. Let him take on authority, to confirm the verse he who tends a fig tree will enjoy its fruit...' (Proverbs 27:18)" (Hayyim Nachman Bialik and Yehoshua Hana Ravnitsky 1956, 76:134). [Fig. 8]

⁷⁶http://www.myjewishlearning.com/texts/Midrash/MidrashAggadah/FillingGaps/Midrash_MosesDeath.htm

enough life to die now? My sister died.⁷⁷ My brother will not enter the land either. Who will remember me?⁷⁸ I want to enter the land. The Israelites can. Why can't I?

While Moses possesses the closest human relationship with God that the biblical writers account, the counselor that Moses may have wanted was not available to him. God could not fulfill that role for Moses. They had what many may define as a business or professional relationship. God was the boss and Moses was God's employee. God was the CEO and Moses was the President and COO. And, with that relationship, while a close one is necessary, God has too much of an upper hand to be a counselor for Moses, let alone an effective pastoral counselor.

With the biblical characters of Moses and Miriam it is impossible for God to act an effective pastoral counselor. One may argue, well certainly in the biblical sense, that God can do anything and act however God chooses and so God could have been an effective pastoral counselor for both Moses and Miriam in their respective times of need. However, according to the biblical text- Numbers 12 and Numbers 27: 12-23, and to the

⁷⁷ Numbers 20:1

⁷⁸ When Miriam died, there was no documented mourning process. In Numbers 20:1, the text reads, "The Israelites arrived in a body at the Wilderness of *Zin* on the first new moon, and the people stayed at *Kadesh*. Miriam died there and was buried there." The text continues with the community rising up against Moses and Aaron because they were without water. From a surface reading of the text, it is clear that the community did not mourn Miriam's death. However, upon examining the situation, one could argue that the community rising up and complaining to Moses and Aaron was the community's way to express their feelings towards Miriam's death. Perhaps their anger surfaced because there was not an opportunity for them to mourn Miriam's death and so the anger that fueled their complaining because of a lack of water was actually founded on the fact that they needed to mourn Miriam's death. Whether this was the case or not, it is clear from the text that there is no documentation of mourning. Therefore, Moses holds a valid fear of being remembered because the community that he fears will not remember him, while they waited for Miriam to heal from *tzaraat*, they did not publicly mourn his sister.

modern Midrashic texts of both Moses in chapter 4 and Miriam in chapter 3 of this thesis, God does not play a pastoral counseling role. The biblical God has a vision and a goal of how God wants the Israelites to act and live. God as compassionate listener and guide are not two images of the biblical God in these two Numbers' passages.

Living in a postmodern age, the way people believe in, trust, speak with, and relate to God is very different from our biblical ancestors of Miriam and Moses. The way God acts in the world is also very different from the way God acted during time our ancestors wandered in the wilderness. And so, as time has progressed, so has God and God's people. With this progression, the relationship between God and person has also changed and has become more individually defined, rather than communally defined. Each person has his or her own relationship with God, should the person choose. This brings us to the next two sections of this thesis.

With the discussion of God as an effective pastoral counselor, specifically now in modern day- 21st century, many do not have access to this particular role of God because they may not necessarily have the training to ask the right questions or pray in the right way. The next two chapters will address a modern day Miriam and a modern day Moses, both of whom are rabbinical students who use God as a guide and advisor in their lives and who have a connection and relationship with God and God's presence in their lives. During the writing of these next two chapters, Modern day Miriam and modern day Moses experienced life-altering changes. Each used God through their questions, through their emotions, and ultimately through their prayer.

CHAPTER 5

MOSES, M.D.: I MUST OPEN MY EYES TO YOU

Modern understanding of God is very different from the biblical understanding of God. As people grow and form, God's role, the way people view God and the way people seem to need God all metamorphize and change with time. The Israelites needed God in very concrete ways. They needed food. They needed water. They needed protection. And as the words of the text tell us, God provided food, water, and protection for the Israelites.

In Exodus 16:4, God provides food for the Israelites. The text reads: And Adonai said to Moses, 'I will rain down bread for you from the sky [Heavens], and the people shall go out and gather each day that day's portion...' Exodus Rabbah expounds on this verse:

It is written, "You give it openhandedly, feeding every creature to its heart's content [with favor]"⁷⁹. See how the ways of men differ from those of God; for a sponge held by a man only drips water when he shuts his hand, but not when it is open, but with God the contrary is the case. The sponge is in God's hand, for it says, "with the channel of God full of water"⁸⁰, and "Who measured the waters with the hollow of God's hand"⁸¹; but if God shuts it no water descends, for it says, "when God holds back the waters, they dry up"⁸², and "God will shut up the skies so that there will be no rain"⁸³. When God opens God's hand, however, the rains descends, as it says, "Adonai will open for you God's bounteous store, the heavens, to provide rain for your land"⁸⁴, and also, "God gives it openhandedly, feeding every creature to its heart's content [with favor]"⁸⁵. It does not say every living thing with food, but rather with 'favor,' that is God grants to each his

⁷⁹ Psalms 145:16.

⁸⁰ Psalms 65:10.

⁸¹ Isaiah 40:12.

⁸² Job 12:15.

⁸³ Deuteronomy 11:17.

⁸⁴ Deuteronomy 28:12.

⁸⁵ Psalms 145:16.

request. In the millennium, too, God will grant the request of each individual. Should you wonder at this, then see what God has done for Israel in this world, when God brought down for them the manna, in which all kinds of flavors lodged, so that each Israelite could taste therein anything he particularly liked, for it is written, "Adonai your God has been with you these past forty years: you have lacked nothing"⁸⁶. What is the meaning of, 'you have lacked nothing [*davar*]?' When a man desired anything special to eat, he had only to say, 'I wish I had a fat capon to eat,' and the morsel of manna in his mouth immediately acquired the taste of a fat capon. They had only to say the word [*davar*] Adonai performed their will. Rabbi Abba said: They were even spared the utterance of their wish, for God fulfilled the thought still in their heart and they tasted their heart's desire. A proof that it was so? For Ezekial says, 'The food that I had given you- the choice flour, the oil, and the honey, which I provided you to eat'⁸⁷. One verse tells us, 'I will rain down bread for you from the sky [Heavens]'⁸⁸, and another verse says, 'and it tasted like wafers in honey'⁸⁹, and yet another, 'and the taste of it was the taste of cake baked with cream of oil'⁹⁰. How do you reconcile these three verses? The Young tasted therein the taste of bread, the old the taste of honey, and the babies the taste of cream of oil.⁹¹

In typical Midrashic style, the text from Exodus Rabbah uses biblical text after biblical text to explain God's power over humanity and how God provided sustenance for the Israelites during their journey in the wilderness.

Continuing with the sustenance that God provided for the Israelites while they were in the wilderness, God also provided water for them to drink. Exodus 17:5-6 reads, "Then Adonai said to Moses, 'Pass before the people; take with you some of the elders of Israel, and take along the rod which you struck the Nile, and set out. I will be standing there before you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock and water will issue from it, and the people will drink.' And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel."⁹² "And

⁸⁶ Deuteronomy 2:7.

⁸⁷ Ezekiel 16:19.

⁸⁸ Exodus 16:4.

⁸⁹ Exodus 16:31.

⁹⁰ Numbers 11:8.

⁹¹ *Midrash Rabbah* (New York, E. Grossman, 1957) 158. [Fig. 9]

⁹² Numbers 20:11.

Moses raised his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod. Out came copious water, and the community and their beasts drank.”

Physically, God protects the Israelites in Numbers 9:15-23. The text explains that a cloud covered the Tabernacle by day, and by night it rested over the Tabernacle in the likeness of fire by night. When the cloud lifted, the Israelites could break camp and continue their journey. When the cloud returned, that was where the Israelites would make camp.

We are first introduced to God’s presence within pillars of cloud and fire in Exodus. The first place we see this is in Exodus 13: 21-22 when the texts tells us that “Adonai went before them [the Israelites] in a pillar of cloud by day, to guide them along the way, and a pillar of fire by night, to give them light, that they might travel day and night. The pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night did not depart from before the people.” The pillars of cloud and fire take the form of a guidance system to help them navigate their way.

Our rabbinic commentators take a slightly different approach to the role of the pillar of cloud and fire when the texts reveal a change in the pillar’s placement. In Exodus 14:19-20 and 24, the text reads, “... The pillar of cloud shifted from in front of them and took up a place behind them and it came between the camp of Egypt and the camp of Israel. Thus, there was the cloud with the darkness and it lit up the night so that no one could come near to each other all night.... At the morning watch, the Lord looked down upon the Egyptian army from a pillar of fire and cloud and threw the Egyptian army into panic.” The precise details of this incident are too vague to decipher in full. However, a few points would seem to be worth greater emphasis. Here, the pillars of

cloud/fire would seem to have taken on a new protective role. They act as a shield between the Israelites and the Egyptians holding the armies back and preventing them from engaging in warfare. The following morning it would appear that God, in the guise of the cloud/fire adopts a more active role, sending the entire Egyptian army into panic. So the clouds are not exclusively positioned at the front of the camp, in leadership position- functioning solely in the driver's seat. The fire/cloud have the capability to move to the rear of the camp, with the purpose of ensuring its protection. God's presence that, from this text, would seem to be contained within the cloud has the capability of protecting Israel from danger.

This notion, of clouds serving in a protective capacity, is taken a step further by the *Midrash*. The *Mekhilta* on *Parshat Beshalach* expounds, "There were seven clouds: Four of them to each side/direction (of the Israelites), one was above them and another below their feet. A further cloud would pass in front of them leveling the valleys and flattening the mountains."⁹³ This *Midrash* expands the theme of protection in two ways. First, the protecting cloud concept is not limited to a particular historical moment at the Red Sea. Rather, the protection is seen as ongoing and constant throughout the wilderness years. The second way in which the *Midrash* expands the concepts of the verses here is on the number of clouds. The notion of a single pillar of cloud is expanded here to an entire collection of seven protective clouds, which surround the Jewish people on all sides. With these examples of protection and the subsequent examples of God providing food and water for the Israelites, we now turn to an alternative, modern approach to understanding God.

⁹³ *Mekhilta D'Rabbi Ismael cum variis lectionibus et adnotationibus*, ed. H. S. (Saul) Horovitz and Israel A. Rabin, 81. Jerusalem: Wahrman Books. [Fig. 10]

Today, it is not a matter of whether or not God will provide food or water or protection- well many would claim that it is, though for purposes of this thesis, the theological issues that many face are issues of belief in God. Is there a God? If there is a God, do I believe in that God? How can I believe in a God who is said to have created the world and that world is filled with injustice and pain? Or, we have the opposite end of the spectrum; I believe in God and I want- so desperately, to connect with the Divine, how? I want to have a relationship with God, how? As this thesis addressed in the last two chapters, we have taken the latter approach of: 1. that God exists, 2. that there is a desire to connect with God, and 3. that God failed Moses and Miriam in their time of need.

As discussed in chapters two and three, both Moses and Miriam cried out to God in their own ways. They both had very different, yet special relationships with God, but what they perhaps needed most, God could not give to them. God was an active presence in their lives. Many would argue that God is an active presence in our lives today, though in terms of these biblical relationships, I use the term active in the sense that: God physically speaks,⁹⁴ whether face to face or through prophecy, God's presence is physically known⁹⁵, God's actions are distinct and unquestioned. These biblical forms of active presence are much different from how many understand a modern-day relationship

⁹⁴ In these citations, God either "speaks [*vayidaber*]" to Moses or "says [*vayomer*]" to Moses. Numbers 1:1, 48; 2:1; 3:5, 11, 14, 40, 44; 4:17, 21, 26; 5:1, 5, 11; 6:1, 22; 7:4, 11; 8:1, 5, 23; 9:1, 9; 10:1; 11:16, 23; 12:14; 13:1; 14:11; 15:1, 17, 35, 37; 16:20, 23; 17:1, 9, 16, 25; 18:15; 19:1; 20:7, 12, 23; 21:8, 34; 25:4, 10, 16; 26:1, 52; 27:6, 12, 18; 28:1; 31:1, 25; 33:50; 34:1, 16; 35:1, 9.

⁹⁵ Instances when God's presence manifests itself in clouds. Numbers 9:15-19, 21-22; 10:11, 12, 34; 11:25; 12:5, 10; 14:14; 17:7.

with God. However, with all of these biblical forms of active presence, God as pastoral counselor is non-existent.

Biblically, God maintains a clear "hands on" relationship with pretty much everything that occurs in Torah. But, the way the Israelites experience God in the Torah is very different from the way that today's modern Jew experiences God. As seen in the footnotes on the preceding page, God's active presence, speaking through prophecy, God's physical presence in the *ohel moed*, and God providing food (in the literal sense) for the Israelites, are not relevant for today's modern Jew in a literal sense. And so for Jews today, we ask these questions vis-à-vis modern-day experiences with God, is it possible for a person with sufficient capability and desire to access God through a pastoral counseling relationship?

The average Jew has some form of relationship with God, yet he or she may not necessarily have the words or the language to describe the relationship. Rabbis are much more familiar with the language and so, for purposes of this thesis as presented at the end of chapter 4, the modern relationship that will be addressed will be a clerical one. However, to get to the root of this question, we must ask how training plays a role in this relationship? Does the training of rabbis cater to the student's relationship with God? If the student is having some form of crisis or problem, does the student know to look to God for guidance? Does the student want to look to God for guidance? Even if the student did want to look to God for guidance, does the student have the ability to ask the right questions? Did the student learn to have this relationship with God? Is this relationship fostered and supported by the school community?

These next two chapters will address the role of God as a pastoral counselor for two modern-day rabbinical students. One student will take the form of a modern-day Moses, while the other will take the form of a modern-day Miriam. The questions most recently presented are just a handful of questions asked to each of the students.

For purposes of anonymity, Modern Day Moses will be named, Moses, M.D.-Moses, Modern Day. Moses, M.D. is a rabbinical student at Hebrew Union College. He is a second career student, who always saw himself entering the rabbinate. Moses, M.D. is married with children. His family embraces and celebrates his professional calling. He has always felt a connection with God even before entering rabbinical school,⁹⁶ whether it was through prayer, through his personal relationships, or in nature when he took his dog for walks in the woods behind his home.⁹⁷ Much of Moses M.D.'s relationship with God, while very much present before rabbinical school, only became labeled and defined in rabbinical school through his studies. In his third year theology course, Moses M.D.

⁹⁶ Moses, M.D. [pseudo], interview by Edie Meyerson, tape recording, New York, NY, 24 Oct. 2006.

⁹⁷ Rabbinic Fellow of COEJL (The Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life), Rabbi Lawrence Troster, believes that humanity should view their place in Creation with love and awe. He writes, "We feel a sense of wonder but also a sense of awe and humility, as we perceive how small we are in the universe as well as within the history of evolution... We should, according to Abraham Joshua Heschel see the world as God-centered, not human-centered. By putting God at the center of life, we see the sacred in everything and the natural world becomes a source of wonder and not only a resource for our use and abuse" (Troster).

The Rambam also addresses the idea of wonder that comes from being witness to God's creation and what happens when one is struck by the awe. In the *Mishnah Torah*, he writes that "when a person observes God's works and God's great and marvelous creatures, and they see from them God wisdom that is without estimate or end, immediately they will love God, praise God and long with a great desire to know God's Great Name... And when a person thinks about these things they draw back and are afraid and realizes that they are small, lowly and obscure, endowed with slight and slender intelligence, standing in the presence of God who is perfect in knowledge" (*Hilkhot Yesodei Ha-Torah* 2:1-2). [Fig. 11]

discovered a language that resonated with his belief and love for God. This language belonged to that of Martin Buber.

According to Martin Buber, all life is relation. The experiencing self, or the *I*, is always situated in history and within the world. The experiencing self cannot be detached; an isolated *I* cannot exist because it is always in relation to something. How we characterize the human condition is living in the world. The world is one unity, one entity for us. He poses another view that says that the *I* is the center and anything outside of *I* is the world and everything in it. *I* is fundamentally interconnected to the world and that which resides within it. *I* exists only in relation to the other.

Buber writes, "I perceive something. I feel something. I imagine something. I want something. I sense something. I think something."⁹⁸ We are related to our culture, to our language, to our expectations. We are always embedded in something. These somethings are what Buber refers to as *It*. *It* is one of the modes of how people live in the world. The *I-It* relationship is a relationship that is detached from the world. The *I-It* mode is in relation to everyday life and living in the world. *It* is spoken in space and time and is single-sided.⁹⁹ This brings us to the second mode in which the *I* relates in the world; the *I-Thou* relationship.

According to Buber, the *I-Thou* relationship is essential for becoming a whole person. We are not complete without *I-Thou* encounters. The *I-Thou* is something that is always in an *It*. *I-Thou* is a two-sided moment or happening when one's own uniqueness meets another's own uniqueness. This moment of exposure to uniqueness will have a certain impact on the lives of those involved in the *I-Thou* encounter. The *I-Thou*

⁹⁸ Buber, 54.

⁹⁹ Ibid, 84.

relationship can only exist from an *I-It* relationship. The *I-It* relationship is the relationship that is most prevalent in our lives. Buber would claim that the human condition is one that includes fact and values. If one only lived in an *I-It* world, value would be circumscribed and limited. *I-Thou* lets in a sense of value. It is why things have the significance they do for the *I*.

Buber says that one can always live in an *I-It* relationship. He writes, "and in all the seriousness of truth, listen: without *It* a human being cannot live. But whoever lives only with that is not human."¹⁰⁰ *I-Thou* moments give us a purpose in life. When we realize that other people need us and that what we should care about is what we need to do for them, we transform ourselves from having mechanical experiences to having meaningful experiences. The meaning of life, according to Buber, comes from our interpersonal relationships and our connections with others.

I-It and *I-Thou* are modes of living that are not dualistic. Buber believes that these modes continually flow into and out of each other. He writes, "this, is the sublime melancholy of our lot that every *Thou* must become an *It* in our world."¹⁰¹

Buber explains that the *I-Thou* relationship is closely mirrors the relationship that each person has with God. A genuine *I-Thou* encounter is a glance of the eternal *Thou*, God. At the same moment one is related to another in an *I-Thou* encounter, each is related to God. There is a human need to have *I-Thou* relationships. When this happens with a group of people, or a community, there is a common center based on the mutual commitments and concerns for the others in the community. This common center is the relationship with the *eternal Thou*. The *eternal Thou* is the only *Thou* that can never

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 85.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 68.

become an *It*. The power of this *eternal Thou* relationship comes from that of a genuine community that has this common center. With this understanding of Buber's theology and Moses M.D.'s resonance with it, we now enter Moses M.D.'s personal thoughts and conversation with the Divine.

I walk the path of my journey. You are there. Help me open my eyes.

The four of us traveled together to Israel for my first year of rabbinical school. It was the year for all of us. We were all starting this journey together. You were there when we had my classmates over for Shabbat. You were there when I prayed with the same group of people, day in and day out. I even felt your absence when that group did not meet because the entire community was required to join together in prayer. On those days, I missed the intimate connection I felt with my fellow classmates with whom I davened with every morning. That intimate connection was You.¹⁰² I walk the path of my journey. You are there. Help me open my eyes.

I walk the path of my journey. You are there. Help me open my eyes.

The closest people in my life are five hours away from me. I travel every week. I am away from them four out of the seven nights of the week. I hurt when I have to leave them. They hurt too. There are tears. Every week. "Daddy, please don't go." Is this what I started rabbinical school for? So I could say goodbye to my family every Sunday and not return until after the kids are asleep on Thursday night? Maybe this sacrifice is

¹⁰² The sages of the Talmud teach that when ten pray together, the Divine Presence dwells. (*Berakhot* 6a)

not worth jeopardizing *shalom bayit*?¹⁰³ I walk the path of my journey. You are there.
Help me open my eyes.

I walk the path of my journey. You are there. Help me open my eyes.

You opened my eyes to your presence after I sat with a mother and her son. He was battling cancer. She said, "I'm done with this." He said, "Yeah, me too." All we could do was sit together. There were no words.¹⁰⁴ Silence filled the room, like the warmth of a fire in a fireplace, heating a room on a cold winter day. Afterwards, I cried. They were tears of sadness for the mother and son. They were also tears of intense feeling- for I knew You were there with us in that moment.¹⁰⁵ I walk the path of my journey. You are there. Help me open my eyes.

I walk the path of my journey. You are there. Help me open my eyes.

I don't know when this is going to end. The pain of my best friend, my lover, my wife. She is hurting. She is in so much pain. I have to care for her; 35 years ago I made that promise. This hell has to have an end. When? Oh God, give me a sign. Out of the depths I call to you!¹⁰⁶ When will this end? Give me the strength to go on.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ *Shalom bayit* is a Jewish concept of maintaining peace and harmony in the home.

¹⁰⁴ There are times when the only offer a pastoral care giver can give is silence and a gentle presence. Sometimes there are no words that can help describe or depict a situation or the emotions felt at that moment and sitting with a person in his or her pain is an appropriate approach to the patient's or family's needs.

¹⁰⁵ In his interview, Moses, M.D. discussed his resonance with Martin Buber's *I/Thou* theology.

¹⁰⁶ Psalm 130 reads, "Out of the depths I call You, Adonai. Adonai, listen to my cry; Let Your ears be attentive to my plea for mercy." Here the Psalmist exhibits a personal petition for God to have mercy on him and ease his suffering. Moses, M.D. uses this phrase to attempt to illustrate his pain and for God to help carry him out from a dark place.

¹⁰⁷ Rather than teaching that one should pray to God for things like sustenance or rain, Mordichai Kaplan suggested that one should pray with a yearning for the abilities of mind and body and for the attitude and character which will allow a person to engage

Show me a sign that I should continue. Are you there? Will you sit with me in my pain? Will you give me the strength to go to the hospital to sit with her? How do I care for the kids? I have to be home for them too? I'm being tugged every which way. Where do I go? I have two jobs- one with the shul and one at the bookstore. With me being the only one working, I have to somehow keep food on the table and a roof over our heads. But how much longer do I have to keep doing this? I walk the path of my journey. You are there. Help me open my eyes.

I walk the path of my journey. YOU are there if I just open my eyes.

You continue to show me signs. You continue to be present in my life. You continue to show Your love for me. You opened my eyes and gave me the strength to say "Yes!." I said "yes," the temple president who said, "How can we help? And, 'no' is not an answer." You sent me my classmate who offered to help me for a weekend when my wife had her surgery. When I need it the most, checks come in the mail to help us with the week's groceries. You are in the relationships in my life.¹⁰⁸ I walk the path of my journey. You are there. Help me open my eyes.

Through this dialogue¹⁰⁹, Moses, M.D. uses God to pour out his innermost thoughts and feelings. He addresses his weaknesses. He is willing to put himself in a vulnerable place in God's presence. Through this, he allows his relationships- how he experiences God- to carry him as he journeys through his shadowed valleys.

with the most worthwhile aspects of life, which, in their totality, spell God (Rachel Sabath-Beit Halachmi).

¹⁰⁸ Moses, M.D. resonates with Martin Buber's *I/Thou* theology.

¹⁰⁹ Moses, M.D. defines prayer as his dialogue with God (Moses, M.D. 2006, Personal Interview).

For Moses, M.D., God is present in his life. God can play the role of a pastoral counselor because God's presence in our world has changed since our days of wandering in the desert. While our form of love and devotion to God is shown through prayer, which can be a very public act- like sacrifice, our relationship with God has the ability to take an inward approach. God allows Moses, M.D. to find his own words, express them, and then allows Moses, M.D. to experience God in a pastoral way. As Moses, M.D. walks the path of his journey the strength he prays for allows him to open his eyes to God's presence. God is walking with him- providing strength, love, relationship, and guidance.

CHAPTER 6

MIRIAM, M.D.: PLEASE GUIDE MY STEPS

As with any counseling relationship, a trust must form. This trust does not fall out of thin air; it is fostered over time with patience, love, and commitment. According to Rabbi Yisrael Levitz, Ph.D.¹¹⁰, the function of a rabbi is to have “ongoing intense relationships with the members of his congregation, and it is precisely because of the trust and closeness engendered that congregants feel comfortable turning to their rabbi in times of need.”¹¹¹ One’s relationship with God is no different. In order to even think about accessing God as a pastoral counselor, one must be potentially open to a relationship with God- otherwise, there is no chance for God to serve that role for a person. Spiritual guidance will help guide those who wish to deepen their relationship with God to the point where God can serve a pastoral counseling role.

Spiritual guidance is “the process that helps us recognize God’s direction, which is there for us only when we are open to it.”¹¹² The focus of this process is the seeker’s relationship with God. Barbara Eve Breitman¹¹³ MSW, LCSW writes:

¹¹⁰ Rabbi Yisrael Levitz, Ph.D. is a clinical psychologist, former pulpit rabbi, and Professor Emeritus of Yeshiva University’s Wurzweiler School of Social Work where he held the Bennet chair in Pastoral Counseling.

¹¹¹ Yisrael N. Levitz, Ph.D., “The Rabbi as Mental Health Practitioner,” in *A Practical Guide to Rabbinic Counseling*, ed. Yisrael N. Levitz, Ph.D. and Abraham J. Twerski, M.D. (Jerusalem: Feldheim Publishers, 2005), 12.

¹¹² Ochs, Carol, Kerry M. Olitzky. *Jewish Spiritual Guidance: Finding Our Way To God* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1997), 11.

¹¹³ Barbara Eve Breitman, MSW, LCSW is a psychotherapist, teacher, and writer. She is the cofounder of Lev Shomea- the first institute to train spiritual directors outside a rabbinical seminary. She teaches spiritual directors at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Seminary, the rabbinical seminary at Hebrew College in Boston, and the ALEPH rabbinical program

ultimately, this practice reflects the belief that for Judaism and the Jewish people to be vital, contemporary Jews need not only to observe mitzvot and to study the received tradition, but to be in relationship with the living God: with the creating, revealing, redeeming Holy One of Being who ever calls us beyond ourselves and into deeper ethical relationship with all of Creation- with the earth, the stranger, and more familiar others- to a place we do not know.”¹¹⁴

This relationship with God is one that can provide strength, growth, purpose, and insight into one's own life and the relationships within. As one progresses on this path, God creates possibility that one may be privileged to see. As Dr. Carol Ochs¹¹⁵ has pointed out in spiritual guidance sessions, “God can build a bigger dream for you than you can for yourself.” And so, this will only work if one is open to it. Miriam, M.D. is an example.

The focus of this chapter is on Modern Day Rabbinical Student Miriam who will bear the name Miriam M.D, for purposes of anonymity. Miriam M.D. is a female rabbinical student who entered rabbinical school fresh out of college. She attended Jewish day school growing up and during that time, her family never affiliated with a synagogue to the point of membership.

¹¹⁴ Barbara Eve Breitman, “Holy Listening: Cultivating a Hearing Heart,” in *Jewish Spiritual Direction: An Innovative Guide From Traditional and Contemporary Sources*, eds. Howard Avruhm Addison and Barbara Eve Breitman (Woodstock, Jewish Lights, 2006), 75.

¹¹⁵ Carol Ochs, PhD is Director of the Graduate School and Adjunct Full Professor of Jewish Religious Thought at HUC-JIR, New York. Her research, writing, and teaching fall into three categories: Jewish spirituality, comparative religion, and Jewish feminism. In addition to teaching spiritual guidance, she serves as spiritual guide to Rabbinic, cantorial, and Doctor of Ministry students. Prior to joining the faculty of HUC-JIR, she taught philosophy at Simmons College in Boston, where she is professor emerita.

Miriam M.D. remembered her first inquiry of God. She was in second grade and asked her father, "Daddy, when did God start?"¹¹⁶ She knew that God always existed, but she could not grasp the idea that God did not start or was not created. She met with the principal of her day school and asked her the same question. Her principal's response to Miriam M.D. took them to the words of *Adon Olam* that read, "*beli reishit beli tahlit*"- without beginning, without end. They discussed that God never had a beginning nor will ever have an end. The conversation continued and Miriam, M.D., while not remembering the outcome of the conversation, remembers being satisfied with the answer; she continued to question throughout high school.

After high school, she attended a well-regarded university in the northeast. During her tenure there, Miriam M.D. wanted a separation from her day school schooling and organized religion so she could make her own religious choices as an adult. Her school equipped her with a wealth of knowledge and foundation in an orthodox approach, but she wanted some space to figure out the right approach for her.

She engaged herself in the intense sport of rowing that required 6 days of practice a week. The day off was Sunday, not Saturday. This was a bit jarring at first, but ultimately welcomed and embraced. She got a thrill from rowing and racing with her team.¹¹⁷ The combination of being out in the awe of nature and engaging with a group of

¹¹⁶ Miriam, M.D. [pseudo], interview by Edie Meyerson, tape recording, New York, NY, 10 Oct 2006.

¹¹⁷ In her interview, she described her experience of rowing with her team and what racing was like. She said, "I am a rower. My team was my community. Our rowing and racing was all about teamwork. When I reminisce [closing her eyes], I remember rowing at full speed, boats are neck on either side of us. I hear is the voice of my coxswain coming out of the speakers by my feet. I hear the sound of all eight oars hitting the water at the same time at the beginning of the stroke and feathering out at the same exact time at the end of the stroke. I hear the sound of the water rushing underneath the boat as we

people who were just as committed as she was to the task at hand, created a holy space for her. Rowing was her time to separate from the world around her and become lost in her thoughts. It became a form of prayer for her. This lasted four years until her graduation in 2002. Miriam, M.D. started rabbinical school in the fall of 2002. This chapter is devoted to her modern Midrash, which begins in her second year as a rabbinical student. She recalls how her relationship with God has carried her through the past four years.

How should I continue? Please God. Guide my next steps.

*Elohai, Elohai. Neshamah, neshamah. Shenatatah bi, shenatatah bi. Tehorah hi, tehorah hi.*¹¹⁸ I close my eyes. I take a breath. I take another. Each one deeper than the last. The breaths travel deep into my soul- the one that You breathed into me. I remember that You are here. You are with me. I talk to you. I tell you that I am so grateful to be alive, to be loved, and to love. I give thanks for strength in my ability to be vulnerable with a constant group of fellow seekers.¹¹⁹ I thank You for your constant

fly by the other boats. We have never rowed so hard. The boat has never felt so light. I feel my heart pounding in sync with the rest of the rowers. We inhale when the oar goes in the water and exhale when the oar comes out. At the end of the race we grunt the last 250 meters, pulling the hardest we have ever pulled. We each whisper to ourselves... 'WE're going to do this'" (Miriam, M.D. 2006, Personal Interview)!!!

¹¹⁸ Miriam, M.D. recalls Craig Taubman's melody of *Elohay Neshamah*. She feels God's presence through hearing the harmonies of music. She describes this feeling as "getting chills through her spine" (Ibid).

Berakhot 60b records "*Elohay neshamah...*" as the prayer one says upon awakening. This prayer voices the feeling of rebirth that we receive each morning and stresses the purity of the soul. Ellen Frankel describes the *neshamah*- soul or breath- as the "image of God within us, incorruptible, deriving its life force from each breath" (Hoffman 2001, 135).

¹¹⁹ Miriam, M.D. shared some of her writing from her prayer journal. This was written after Yom Kippur 5764 (2003):

presence as I walk my journey with You by my side, though I am not sure where I am going. I sit in class and I don't belong. My classmates seem to all enjoy the intellectual conversation- why don't I? I feel lost. Am I not cut out to be a rabbi? I take another deep breath. We all have our own gifts.¹²⁰ Where will my gifts take me? How should I continue? Please God. Guide my next steps.

Yom Kippur this year, I had the privilege of davening as a congregant in my shul, where I was left to my deepest thoughts and feelings. Throughout the entire day, I thought, "How am I going to change? How can I return to my best self? What does that even mean? Is it possible? What do I need to change? What do I need to do for myself this year? What do I need to do for my family? Friends? Where is God in all of this? Where does God fit in? How will I make sure God is here, with me, beside me, in my words, in my actions, in my thoughts, in my prayers, in my life?" These questions filled my head throughout Yom Kippur.

With these thoughts and questions running through my head, I entered *minha* and *neilah*. The heaviness of what I brought into my davening, was somehow lifted out of me into the air. Every breath I took got lighter and lighter, though deeper and deeper. My singing grew louder and louder. My eyes closed tighter and tighter. My schuckeling became a dance with the Sacred as the gates inched their way together. God was without a doubt in that place. My tears proved that. I heard the singing plea of those around me. The passionate pleas, each something different, each just as valid as the next, all aimed toward our Source. The room was heavy with God's presence, but by *tekiat gedolah*, my own heaviness was completely lifted and my lips grew into the most content smile. I danced with the Divine. I sang with the Sacred. I was in that place and God was right beside me.

Miriam M.D. uses biblical text to describe her experience. She is inspired by Jacob's familiar phrase in Genesis 28:16 where he says, "Surely Adonai is present in this place, and I did not know it." According to the text, Jacob had a prophetic dream where God tells him that the ground that he lays on is assigned to him and his offspring. God says that Jacob's descendants will scatter in all directions and God will protect him wherever he goes. God promises to stay with Jacob until God has done what God has promised. Jacob awakes from this dream and says, "Surely Adonai is present in this place, and I did not know it." Miriam M.D. knew God was there at that moment.

¹²⁰ "Rabbi Norman Hirsh talks about the notion of gifts. Gifts are a free act of kindness, friendship, or love. He describes the soul as the inner gift but he acknowledges that we cannot be grateful of this gift until we can acknowledge our need for the other. 'To be human is to be a needy being' (Hirsh 1987, 119). We need others with whom to share our gifts.

Every one of us brings our own gifts to the table. We each have our own capabilities and strengths and it is our obligation to humanity to share our gifts. But, we must proceed with caution. Often times we get wrapped up in trying to do everything-

How should I continue? Please God. Guide my next steps.

I decided to postpone my Year-In-Israel¹²¹ So now, as a fourth year student, I am here in this ancient city. The hardest part about being here is knowing that I will return to a crumbled community. Even the thought of coming home, knowing that the dearest people in my life have moved away- the people who were in the inner core of my daily life before I left for Jerusalem- this is most painful. The feeling of loneliness- it is hell. People too busy to check in with me. Feeling like I'm ignored and not important. It is

and perfectly. Though, we are not perfect. We have our strengths but along with those strengths come weaknesses- or growing edges. Growing edges are rough and sometimes very sharp. We must acknowledge however, that what may be a growing edge for one person may, in fact, be a strength, a gift, and a smooth edge for another! Thus, creating space for others to share their gifts is essential" (Meyerson 2006).

Here, Meyerson acknowledges exactly what Miriam, M.D. grapples with. Miriam, M.D. admits that she may not have similar learning or intellectual interests as her classmates. She admits that she feels lost. She is trying to find her way but stumbles in the presence of her classmates.

In her interview, Miriam, M.D. described a conversation with her mentor. A classmate of hers needed to talk. Miriam, M.D. agreed to chat. The conversation made Miriam, M.D. late for davening, but because this was another method that Miriam, M.D. experienced God- through relationship and one-on-one conversation- Miriam, M.D. gave herself permission to remain in the conversation and be late to davening.

As her conversation with her mentor continued, Miriam M.D. described a very uncomfortable situation she found herself in while she shopped for classes. Miriam, M.D. sat in on a literature class. The class discussion lent itself to poetry and literature focusing on a particular holiday. Miriam, M.D. described herself as feeling stupid and lost in the conversation. The students and professor see-sawed ideas and images back and forth while Miriam, M.D. sat there feeling like she was shrinking in her seat.

Miriam, M.D.'s mentor sat for a moment and took in everything Miriam, M.D. said. She responded with the words, "How many gifts do you need? You just shared with me one of the most important qualities of a rabbi- the ability to sit, listen, and be present for someone" (Miriam, M.D. 2006, Personal Interview). These thoughts were what Miriam, M.D. needed to hear. She needed to hear that the path she was walking on was legitimate, valid, and genuine.

¹²¹ Traditionally, the first year of rabbinical at the Hebrew Union College is spent on its Jerusalem campus. In 2002, Rabbi David Ellenson gave the class of 2007 the option to postpone their year in Jerusalem with the understanding that they were required to study there at a later point in their rabbinic training. Miriam, M.D. spent her fourth year of her rabbinic studies in Jerusalem.

awful. I hold onto going to shul on Friday nights while I'm here though. After the community welcomes in Shabbat with *Lekha Dodi*, we praise God with the 92nd Psalm. We sing, '*Tov lehodot lashem, tov lehodot lashem, ulezamer ulezamer leshimkha elyon. Tov lehodot lashem. Lehagid baboker hasdekha, lehagid baboker hasdekha, veemunatkha baleylot, veemunatkha baleilot, tov lehodot lashem.*'¹²² The last part- *lehagid baboker hasdekha, veemunatkha baleilot*- to announce Your love by morning and by night Your faithfulness. You were there for the Psalmist- by day and by night. I beg

¹²² Psalm 92 was written for recitation on Shabbat and was chanted by the Levites in the Temple on Shabbat. It was the ancient practice in the Land of Israel to precede the Evening Services on Shabbat and holy days with a special Psalm (Hammer 2003, 23). Here, Miriam, M.D. recalls a Shlomo Carlebach-like melody sung at *Kehillat Shirah Hadashah* in Jerusalem. She described all the voices in the synagogue rise at their own pace. The melody builds and, by the end, the harmonies that are created throughout different pockets of the room and all the different sounds mold into one glorious sound.

Avot D'Rabbi Natan, part of the Minor Tractates of the Talmud and a commentary on an early version of *Pirkei Avot* dating to the third century, offers an explanation as to why the prescribed daily Psalm is read on a particular day. The text concludes with Psalm 92 for Shabbat. It reads, "What is recited on Sunday? "The earth and its grandeur belong to Adonai" (Psalm 24:1). God possesses and will continue to possess it and will judge the world. What is recited on Monday? 'Great is Adonai and highly praised in the city of our God' (Psalm 48:2). God divided creation and became Sovereign of the world. What is recited on Tuesday? 'God rises in the court of the mighty, pronouncing judgment over judges' (Psalm 82:1). God created the sea and dry land, unfolding the earth in its place so that room was made for God's court. What is recited on Wednesday? 'God of retribution, Adonai, God of retribution appear' (Psalm 94:1). God created the sun, the moon, the stars, and the planets that give light to the world, but in the future God will requite those who worship them. What is recited on Thursday? 'Sing with joy to God our strength; shout with gladness to the God of Jacob' (Psalm 81:2). God created fowl and fish and the great sea monsters that sing in the world. What is recited on Friday? 'Adonai is sovereign, crowned with splendor; Adonai reigns, robed in strength. You set the earth on a firm foundation' (Psalm 93:1). God completed all the work of creation, and then ascended and sat enthroned in the heights of the world. What is recited on the seventh day? 'A song for the day of Shabbat' (Psalm 92:1)- the day that will be entirely Shabbat, in which there will be no eating or drinking, no business dealings, but the righteous will sit with their crowns on their heads and imbibe the splendor of the Shechinah, like the ministering angels; as it is said, "And they beheld God, and did eat and drink" (Exodus 24:11) (*Avot de-Rabbi Nathan* 1997).

[Fig. 12]

you to be there for me. The nights¹²³ are the hardest. Please be there for me. How should I continue? Please God. Guide my next steps.

How should I continue? Please God. Guide my next steps.

My God. I am in a new place. I returned from Israel and my world is upside down. The community that I knew is gone. They became doctors and teachers and artists. They have moved on to new cities with new day-to-day lives. I've returned.¹²⁴ Just like they've moved forward, I must continue to go forward.¹²⁵ But how? How can I keep going without them here? Having them here in my day-to-day life, means that You are with me.¹²⁶ With them not here, how can I find You? How do I find You? I sit here

¹²³ "'Night' is a recurrent symbol in Jewish myth, signifying the fertile and transformative power of the unknown- the hidden face of the divine in this world" (Frankel, 18). Light surfaces out of darkness. The Biblical account of creation emphasizes 'there was evening and there was morning.' There was darkness and there was light. Light surfaces out of the darkness, thus creating a metaphor for healing. "All life moves in cycles from darkness into light, from contraction into expansion, brokenness into wholeness...the darkness of night is associated with the fragmented state known as exile- the state of being disconnected and dislocated from one's true place" (Frankel 2003, 19).

¹²⁴ "*Hashiveynu*" (Lamentations 5:21) – help us turn. This is a plea for God to accept the repentance of the people and permit them once again to return to God and God's teachings. Lamentations Rabbah explains that God's return depends on the people's return. This emphasizes the mutual relationship between God and Israel. "The community of Israel spoke before the Holy One: 'Adonai of the Universe, it depends upon You, so turn us to You.' Adonai said to them, 'It depends upon you, as it is said, 'return unto Me, and I will return unto you, Adonai of hosts said' (Malachi 3:7). The community spoke before God: 'Adonai of the Universe, it depends upon You, as it is said, 'restore us, O God of our salvation' (Psalm 85:5), and therefore it is said, 'Turn us to You, Adonai, and we shall be turned.'"

¹²⁵ "As I walk toward an unseen end, I grow anxious and fearful. And when I call to mind the good companions who once shared my journey, the pain of their loss returns. I feel like crying. Yet in a strange way they seem to help me move along my way, and we walk together" (Stern 1998, 16).

¹²⁶ Miriam, M.D. experiences God through her relationships. She sees God in her community and the individuals that make it up- even though her community is no longer in the city as she. There is sanctity and holiness in her relationships, and since her return from Israel, Miriam, M.D. feels the brunt of that heaviness due to their absence. Like

in a familiar place.¹²⁷ The words are the same. I've said these words for years.

"Halleluyah, haleli nafshi et yah. Ahalelah adonai behayay, azamerah leylohey

*beodi."*¹²⁸ The melody. I've never heard that melody.¹²⁹ Somehow I open up to listen.

What am I listening to? What am I listening for? How should I continue? Please God.

Guide my next steps.

How should I continue? Please God. Guide my next steps.

I am just months away from the next phase. I know where I am going. I am not certain how I will get there, but knowing where I am going brings relief. God, Source of calm and peace, You have opened my eyes to an inner peace. My community may have moved to different cities, but they have not moved from my life. I am slowly creating a new community for myself here. My world is still rocky. There will always be stumbling blocks in my way but I know *"veim rukhi geviati adonai li velo irah* –You are

Martin Buber describes, the *I/Thou* relationship includes encounter, meeting, dialogue, mutuality, and exchange. It is through *I/Thou* relationships that make it possible to connect with God. An *I/Thou* relationship in some way connects with the eternal relation to God.

¹²⁷ Miriam, M.D. makes it a point to attend daily services at school when she is on campus.

¹²⁸ *"Halleluyah!* Let my soul praise Adonai. I will praise Adonai all my life, and sing to my God with all my being" (Psalm 146:1). Psalm 146 is found in the *P'sukei D'zimrah* rubric of the *Shacharit* service. Here, the Psalmist speaks to both himself and to the general audience, teaching how much better it is to depend on God than on frail undependable human beings. This Psalm addresses God's care for the poor and oppressed and ends with a proclamation of God's eternal sovereignty. As Elliot Dorff writes, this Psalm "simultaneously bespeaks the awesomeness of God and the loving care of God in remarkably simple, but eloquent language" (Hoffman 1999, 127).

¹²⁹ Returning from her year in Israel, Miriam, M.D. witnessed many new service leaders who used new melodies when leading campus services. This particular melody that caught Miriam, M.D.'s ear, allowed her to have a different entry into the words. The Psalmist asks for God's perspective. Miriam, M.D. is lost and confused. She needs God to share God's perspective. She craves God's guidance. As she slowly opens herself up to the changes around her, Miriam, M.D.'s safety walls slowly crumble for God's presence to enter and help guide her on her path.

with me.”¹³⁰ You always have been. I will always turn to You. I will always ask You, ‘How should I continue? Please God. Guide my next steps.’

Miriam, M.D.’s relationship with God parallels each of the melodies shared in her private thoughts throughout this chapter. The melodies begin slowly like a healthy relationship. Both parties involved take their time to get to know each other and become more comfortable with each other. They slowly peel away the layers that protect them and as they grow closer to each other, there are fewer layers, thereby exposing more and more of their vulnerabilities. A greater comfort between the two forms, and fewer surprises arise. For Miriam, M.D., her relationship with God is quite similar.

Specifically throughout rabbinical school, Miriam, M.D.’s relationship with God has grown stronger and more secure. Daily prayer, spontaneous prayer, personal work in spiritual guidance, and the strengthening of her relationships have each allowed Miriam, M.D. to strengthen her relationship with God. When these main elements are present and strong, Miriam, M.D. is open and capable of listening to God and God’s perspective on her life. She is vulnerable, though she feels safe enough to honestly present her thoughts and feelings to God. When the time is right, she will not only hear¹³¹ God’s counsel, but

¹³⁰ *Adon Olam* begins with the poet glorifying God as the Creator of all and intended to reign over all. The end, however, turns to a more personal connection where the poet places all of his trust into God with his words, ‘Adonai is with me, I have no fear.’ And so, according to this poem, God’s majesty does not prevent or limit God from also being the God who cares for all of God’s creatures and protects them from terror and danger. Many believe that this prayer was recited originally at nighttime because the last two lines, which are shared with Psalm 118:6 read, “When I sleep as when I wake, Adonai is with me, I have no fear.”

¹³¹ This refers to the “still small voice” found in 1 Kings 19. The text reads, “And God said: Go and stand before the Eternal, on the mountaintop . . . A furious wind split mountains and shattered rocks in the presence of the Eternal, but the Eternal was not in

she will also be open act on God's counsel. And so, as Miriam M.D. mourns the loss of her community and her adoptive family, she continues to use prayer as her medium to access her spiritual counselor and to avail herself to God's guidance and direction.

the wind. After the wind, an earthquake occurred-but the Eternal was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake, fire-but the Eternal was not in the fire. And after the fire, a still, small voice. When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his mantle about his face and went out, standing at the entrance of the cave. A still small voice called to him, saying: What are you doing here, Elijah? (1 Kings 19:11-13) The still small voice can be described as our conscience. But perhaps it is more. Perhaps it is the voice that offers wisdom when there isn't any around. It is the voice that brings patience when there seems to be no more; it is the voice that offers strength when it is most needed. This is God's voice.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

The focus of this rabbinic thesis is an attempt to examine whether God has a role in pastoral counseling, what the extent of that role should be, how to access God for that purpose, and finally to address the question of the effectiveness of God in the role of pastoral counselor. The thesis began with an introductory chapter explaining a part of my own journey through rabbinical school and my studies with Dr. Carol Ochs. I discussed the powerful role that Dr. Ochs plays as my own spiritual guide and counselor and how she helps me deepen my relationship with God. And, it is through this work that the essence of this thesis arose. Can God be an effective pastoral counselor?

Before being so bold as to state a conclusion of this thesis, it might be well to reserve a moment to review the steps taken toward reaching for and developing the conclusion. The first step addressed the idea of a pastoral counselor. And so, simply put, a pastoral counselor is a person who uses insights and values drawn from the disciplines of theology and the behavioral sciences in working with individuals, couples, families, groups and social systems toward the achievement of wholeness and health. There is the option for God to play a role in this process, but that is a decision for the client to make. Therefore it should be emphasized that God does not just show up to do miracles in a pastoral counseling scenario, rather, it is the human psyche that must invite God within. Hence, as almost an invited guest, pastoral counseling allows for the opportunity to bring God into the conversation. Should God and related concepts be invited in, and thus play effective roles within this pastoral counseling conversation, the client, as a result may feel

an exceptional comfort in God's solid, absolute, and unconditional presence. With this concept, the question then becomes how a pastoral counselor is and is not God? - Lest we allow pastoral counselors to be the object of similar jokes aimed often at doctors, e.g. "She only thinks she's God." We are not talking about a person walking in and usurping the role of God, rather, we are thinking about how God is perceived in the mind of a person, and often in the mind of a medically, physically, and possibly spiritually challenged person. This is a special subset of pastoral counseling when God, rather than rabbi or other spiritual counselor, actually can play that role of Pastoral Counselor.

A pastoral counselor is God only when it is God with which we are dealing. Only God can be God- no one else can play that role. However, it may also be best to discuss how a pastoral counselor is not God. This will then help identify how God's role as pastoral counselor can be developed and nurtured within the mind and heart of someone who needs, invites in, and accepts God.

It must be noted, however, that pastoral counseling is not psychotherapy, nor spiritual guidance. Psychotherapy understands the use of God language as a symptom and will therefore, often times, address one's belief in God and God's role in the patient's life as a problem. On the other end of the spectrum, spiritual guidance is a facilitation of a relationship between the guidee and God. With any of the issues discussed in this thesis, both therapy and spiritual guidance are appropriate methods for healing, however pastoral counseling will use overlapping methods from each of those disciplines to help assess the situation and, in turn, know to whom to make a referral.

A pastoral counselor helps guide the counselee, within a spiritual safe haven, towards human growth, healing, and self-improvement. This spiritual safe haven has a

role beyond comfort in sharing what is in his or her heart without fear of saying, thinking or feeling the wrong thing when under such physical, emotional, or spiritual stress. The same spiritual safe haven actually opens the door to a deepening relationship with God. It is through this deepening relationship with God- through the help and guidance of a pastoral counselor- that one can potentially access God as a pastoral counselor. The pastoral counselor, through a complex and evolving understanding of the patient, and by inviting God into the conversation with the subject's permission, actually facilitates this highest referral, which invites God to step into the shoes of the pastoral counselor.

Before jumping into contemporary territory, this thesis begins with a textual approach, much the way formal Jewish learning often does. The biblical texts explored in chapters three and four articulate the potential thoughts and feelings stirring inside Miriam and Moses during crucial moments within the book of Numbers. Miriam's case occurs when she was removed from the camp due to an impure skin infliction. Moses' case was when he was asked to trek to the top of Mount Nebo and peer out over the land that he would never be able to enter. These two chapters take a modern Midrash approach, outlining the thought and concerns that these biblical characters had and how they addressed them to God.

The biblical relationships between God and Miriam and God and Moses do not facilitate a pastoral counselor role for God because God's presence for these characters is unbalanced, and perhaps God's role is too active here to be considered a counselor. God has a vision and a goal of how God wanted the Israelites to act and live. A role of the pastoral counselor must involve an objective and unbiased approach to one's situation and God cannot provide that approach for Moses and Miriam.

With the understanding that it is not God that has changed though time, rather it is the way that humanity understands (or does not understand) God that has evolved. God is the constant. God's people are the variable. This then asks us to examine the relationship that contemporary Jews have with God.

As rabbis go out into the field to help guide their congregants and constituents to find and, sometimes create meaning, rabbis need to know the right questions to ask and the proper techniques that can help a person through a difficult time. In order for the rabbi to know and understand the proper approach and questions, the rabbi must have those questions asked of him/her. This is why chapters five and six are essential to this thesis.

Rabbinical students are faced with a multitude of ideas and concepts that they must tackle throughout rabbinical school. One concept is God- their relationship with God and the role that God does or does not play in their lives. This concept is heavily explored in the spiritual guidance course that students have the option to take. It is through these explorations and discussions that guide the voices of Modern Day Moses and Modern Day Miriam.

Moses M.D. and Miriam M.D. shared their personal conversations with God in chapters five and six. Their access and their cries are different, but the response and comfort they receive from God is similar. They each use God as a pastoral counselor though God is not their only outlet. God for them is the Essence, but the Essence is created through the relationships they have with others, the connection they have with themselves, and the belief that God is truly present in their lives- a Source of support, comfort, love, and guidance.

And so, the essential question- Can God be an effective pastoral counselor? Yes, God can be an effective pastoral counselor with the proper access tools in place.

However, God cannot be the only form of guidance. There needs to be a balance. In the Talmud,¹³² we learn that if a person in a dangerous situation, the person may recite a shortened *Amidah*¹³³. This shortened version¹³⁴ of the *Amidah* is not a permanent change to *Amidah*, but rather it serves a purpose for a specific time and need. With the scenario in the Talmud, the person reciting the *Amidah* is obligated to recite the *Amidah*.

However, if bandits are chasing him, he may recite a shortened version. This shortened version does not replace the mandated liturgy of the *Amidah*, but it acts as an answer for this particular case.

To compare this text with our question, the use of the Inner Counselor is not a replacement for therapy, long-term counseling, or spiritual guidance, but rather it is an additional opportunity for one to access God as a pastoral counselor. God can always be accessed, especially in a time of danger, but God cannot be the only method of guidance. The alternative *Amidah* can be used in a time of danger, but it does replace the full text.

¹³² *Berakhot* 28b, 29a

¹³³ The eighteen benedictions are recited three times daily.

¹³⁴ *Berakhot* 29a explains this shortened version. "R. Joshua says: An abridgement of the eighteen is recited. The *Gemara* asks: What is the meaning of "an abridgement of the eighteen?" The *Gemara* answers: Rav Said: An abridgement of each and every blessing [the middle thirteen blessings]. And Samuel said: The middle thirteen blessings are condensed into one blessing, using the following text: "Give us discernment, Adonai, our God, to know Your ways, and circumcise our hearts to fear You, and forgive us so that we may be redeemed, and keep us far from our sufferings, and fatten us in the pastures of Your land, and our dispersions gather in from the four corners of the earth, and those judges who err, let them be inspired to judge according to Your mind, and against the wicked lift up Your hand, and let the righteous rejoice in the building of Your city and in the perfection of Your sanctuary, and in the flourishing of the pride of David, Your servant, and in the preparation of a lamp for the son of Jesse, Your anointed. Before we call, You answer; Blessed are You, Adonai, who hears prayer." [Fig. 13]

God does not replace the support system, the additional forms of guidance, and the opportunities for self-awareness growth. God enhances all of those but cannot and should not be the only outlet.

God is frequently found or known better through a combination of routes including guidance, counseling, communal prayer, personal prayer and the amazing sense of presence. In the person who freely invites the opportunity, and often getting to that threshold through the support of the human pastoral counselor, God can be allowed to step into a role as what we might term The Senior Pastoral Counselor. It is through each of these routes that God can begin to serve as Senior Pastoral Counselor. Each person is different and will meet God in his/her own way. Perhaps this thesis will provide some semblance of insight for those seeking God's guidance and support.

APPENDIX

Figure 1
Sifre

בהעלתך

פיסקא צט

ספרי

98

שמעו נא דברי (במדבר יב ו): ותדבר מרים ואהרן במשה, מלמד ששניהם דברו בו אלא שמרים פתחה בדבר שלא היתה מרים רגילה לדבר בפני אהרן אלא מפני צורך השעה כיוצא בו אתה אומר ובאת אתה וקראת במנילה אשר כתבת מפי (ירמיה לו ב) ולא שהיה ברוך רגיל לדבר בפני ירמיה אלא מפני צורך השעה.

5 ותדבר מרים ואהרן במשה, מנין היתה מרים יודעת שפירש משה מפריה ורביה אלא שראת את צפורה שאנה מתקשמת בתכשימי נשים אמרה לה מה לך שאין את מתקשמת בתכשימי נשים אמרה לה אין אחיך מקפיד בדבר לכך ידעה מרים ואמרה לאחיה ושניהם דברו בו <ר' נתן אומר מרים היתה בצד צפורה כשעה שנא' וירץ הנער כיון ששמעה צפורה אמרה אי לנשותיהם של אלו בכך ידעה מרים ואמרה לאחיה ושניהם דברו בו> והרי דברים קיז ומה מרים שלא נחכונה לדבר באחיה 10 לגניי אלא לשבח ולא למעט מפריה ורביה אלא לרבות ובינה לבין עצמה כך נענשה המתכוון לדבר בחבירו לגניי ולא לשבח ולמעט מפריה ורביה ולא לרבות וכינו לבין אחרים ולא בינו לבין עצמו עאכז והרי דברים קיז ומה עוויה המלך שלא נחכון ליטול לו גדולה בשביל כבוד עצמו אלא בשביל קונו כך נענש המתכוון ליטול לו גדולה 15 בשביל כבוד עצמו ולא בשביל קונו עאכז.

על אודות האשה הכושית, מנין הכתוב שכל מי שהיה רואה אותה היה מודה בנוייה וכן הוא אומ' אבי מלכה ואבי יסכה (כראשית יא כט) <שאין תיל יסכה> אלא שהכל סכך כיופיה שנא' וייראו אותה שרי פרעה ויהללו אותה אל פרעה (שם יב טו), ר' אליעזר בן שז' רבי יוסי הגלילי אומר צפורה צפו וראו מה נאה: האשה הכושית, וכי כושית היתה והלא מדיינית היתה שנאמר ולכהן מדין שבע כנות 20 (שמות ב טז) ומה תל כושית אלא מה כושי משונה בעורו כך צפורה משונה בעויה

(צט) 1 שמעו נא דברי מכליתא יתרו מסי' דבחדש מ"ב:

15 עאכזי לקמן פיסקא ק' ודברים פ"א וסי' רע"ה אור"ג ג"א מ"ס ילק' תשל"ו ילק' המכירי עמס דף ר' תנצמא א' צו ותנצמא א' וב' מ"ס מ"ס צדוק, חסמ' יבמות ס"ב ר"ה וכתוב: 17 בניה. דורש כושית כמו שוכית רד"ף ולשון הפ"ו כאלו סמך על הדרשה צפו וראו ונראה דדורש כושית כמו לקמן והא דלקמן הוא ד"א ואין חלוק ביניהם רק בסגנון הלשון: — ואבי יסכה. הגר"א מגיה יסכה זו שרה ולמה נקרא שמה יסכה אלא ובמ"ע מגיה והלא שרה שמה, מגילה י"ד. סנהדרין ס"ט: 19 האשה וכי' לשון הפ"ו ד"א

2 ד' בדבר | מ' בדבר תהלה | רגילה | ד' יטלה | 3 במגילה | ר' וביה במקרא אבל ד"מ אה המגילה, כל המגילה | ד' כתבת אותה | מ"ס | מ' דל' ג' ירמיה וליהא כן במקרא | 4 ולא | טר לא | מ' ולא היה רגיל ברוך | השעה | ד' ח' | כ' ג' כיוצא בו | 5 ותדבר וכו' במשה | מ' ח' | מ' על אודות האשה | מ' וכי מנין | מ' משה מן האשה | 6 מ' לה מרים מה זה שאין את מתקשמת כקדמך | ל' ליד | 7 בתכשימי נשים | ט' ח' | בתכשימי | ר' בקישוטי, ל' בתכשימי | מ' בדבר הזה | מ' לכן, טר בכך וכן בסמך | 8 לאחיה | מ' לארץ | המוסר ח' | מרים וכו' | מ' כד צמרה היתה יושבת בשעה, ר' בצד צמרה מרים בשעה | 9 ל' הנער אל משה ואמר כיון | כיון וכו' | מ' אמרה מרים אשרי בניהם ואשרי נשיםם של אלו שוכי לנבואה אמרה לה ציפורה אשרי בניהם ואי להם לנשותיהן של אלו מעתה בכך ידעה | ל' ווי | מ' מרים הדבר | מ' ר' ואמרה לו (מ' ח') לארץ | 10 לדבר באחיה | מ' ח' | 11 ולא | ט' ח' | טלמ' פריה | מ' להרבות | ובינה | דל' בינה, מ' ובאחיה ובינה, ט' באחיה והן (צ"ל הקטן) ממנה ובינה | עצמה | מ' ג' שני' ושמע ח' | 12 ולמעט וכו' ולרבות | מ' ח' | כ' להרבות במי שגדול ממנו ולמני אחרים וכו' עאכז | ובינה | ד' בינה, ר' בינו | 13 ולא וכו' עצמן | מ' ח' | והרי וכו' קיז | מ' ח' | ר' ודברים קיז, טל ועוד קיז | ומה | ד' ח' | מ' מלך יהודה | מ' ליטול הגדולה לעצמו אלא בשביל קונו כך | 14 גדולה | ר' ג' ולא | טר כבוד קונו | נענש | מ' ח' | מ' המתכוון לכבוד עצמו עאכז | 15 ולא בשביל קונו | מ' ח' | ר' כבוד קונו | 16 ד' שרה | מ' שרה | 17 טר מ"ו לניה, מ' ליוסיה | ט' בת חין אבי | המוסר ח' | ד"ל | ר' אין חיל | 18 אלא | מ' ח' | סכין | כ"ה גם מ"ו אבל דל' סוכים | ביניהם | טלמ' בה | 19 מ' ראו | מה | ל' כמה | 20 מלמד אשה (ל' אשה) כושית | והלא | ד' אלא | 21 ומה ח"ל כושית | מ' ח' | אלא | דלמ' ח' | ל' מה כושית | מ' ח' | כ' אף | ר' היתה משונה | מ' ביוסיה |

בשעה, ר' בצד צמרה מרים בשעה | 9 ל' הנער אל משה ואמר כיון | כיון וכו' | מ' אמרה מרים אשרי בניהם ואשרי נשיםם של אלו שוכי לנבואה אמרה לה ציפורה אשרי בניהם ואי להם לנשותיהן של אלו מעתה בכך ידעה | ל' ווי | מ' מרים הדבר | מ' ר' ואמרה לו (מ' ח') לארץ | 10 לדבר באחיה | מ' ח' | 11 ולא | ט' ח' | טלמ' פריה | מ' להרבות | ובינה | דל' בינה, מ' ובאחיה ובינה, ט' באחיה והן (צ"ל הקטן) ממנה ובינה | עצמה | מ' ג' שני' ושמע ח' | 12 ולמעט וכו' ולרבות | מ' ח' | כ' להרבות במי שגדול ממנו ולמני אחרים וכו' עאכז | ובינה | ד' בינה, ר' בינו | 13 ולא וכו' עצמן | מ' ח' | והרי וכו' קיז | מ' ח' | ר' ודברים קיז, טל ועוד קיז | ומה | ד' ח' | מ' מלך יהודה | מ' ליטול הגדולה לעצמו אלא בשביל קונו כך | 14 גדולה | ר' ג' ולא | טר כבוד קונו | נענש | מ' ח' | מ' המתכוון לכבוד עצמו עאכז | 15 ולא בשביל קונו | מ' ח' | ר' כבוד קונו | 16 ד' שרה | מ' שרה | 17 טר מ"ו לניה, מ' ליוסיה | ט' בת חין אבי | המוסר ח' | ד"ל | ר' אין חיל | 18 אלא | מ' ח' | סכין | כ"ה גם מ"ו אבל דל' סוכים | ביניהם | טלמ' בה | 19 מ' ראו | מה | ל' כמה | 20 מלמד אשה (ל' אשה) כושית | והלא | ד' אלא | 21 ומה ח"ל כושית | מ' ח' | אלא | דלמ' ח' | ל' מה כושית | מ' ח' | כ' אף | ר' היתה משונה | מ' ביוסיה |

Figure 3
M. Sotah

משנה ו

במדה שאדם מודד בה מודדין לו. היא קשטה את-עצמה לעבירה המקום יגדלה; היא יגלתה את-עצמה לעבירה המקום יגלה עליה; בדרך התחילה בעבירה תחלה ואחר כך הפטן לפיכך; תלקה הדרך תחלה ואחר כך הפטן; ושאר כל-הנף לא יפלט. in some texts. גידלה +

משנה ח

שמשון הלך אחר יצייו, לפיכך ינקרו פלשתים את-יצייו, יצאמר, יאחזוהו פלשתים ונקרו את-יצייו. אבשלום נתנא יבשערו, לפיכך נתלה בשערו; ולפי שבא על עשר פילגש אביו, לפיכך נתנו בו עשר ילונבית, יצאמר, הסובו עשרה אנשים נושאי כלי יואב ייכפו את-אבשלום ומיתוהו; ולפי שגב שלש ילקבות, לב יאביו

משנה ט

וכן לענין הטובה. מרים המתינה למשה שעה אחת, יצאמר, ותמצב יאחותו מרחוק, לפיכך נתעכבו לה ישראל שבעה ימים במדבר, יצאמר, והעם לא נסע עד-האסף מרים. יוסף וכה לקבור את-אביו, ואין באחיו גדול ממנו, יצאמר, יתעל יוסף לקבור את-אביו, יתעל עמו גם-כך גם-פרשים. מי לנו גדול מיוסף, שלא נתעסק בו אלא משה, משה ינכה בעצמות יוסף ואין בישראל גדול ממנו, יצאמר, נקח משה את-עצמות יוסף עמו. מי גדול ממשה, שלא נתעסק ייבו אלא המקום, יצאמר, נקבור יאוחזו בניא, ולא על משה בלבד אמרו אלא על כל-הצדיקים, יצאמר, יתהלך לפניך צדקך כבוד ה' יאספקך.

Figure 6
Sifre

פנחס

פיסקא קלר

ספרי

ויאמר ה' אל משה עלה אל הר העברים הנה הר נבו, וזו נחלת בני ראובן
ובני נדב בשעה שנכנס משה לנחלת בני ראובן ובני נדב שמת ואמר דומה אני שהחזיר
לי נדרי התחיל שופך תחנינים לפני המקום. משל למה הדבר דומה למלך כשר ודם
שנזר על בנו שלא יכנס לפהח פלטרין שלו וכנס לשער והוא אחריו להצר והוא
אחריו למריקלין והוא אחריו כיון שבא ליכנס לקימון אמר לו בני מיכן ואילך אחה
אסור כך בשעה שנכנס משה לנחלת בני נדב ובני ראובן שמת ואמר דומה אני שהחזיר
לי נדרי התחיל שופך תחנינים לפני המקום והלא דברים קל וחומר ומה אם משה
חכם חכמים גדול גדולים אבי דנביאים אפי' שידע שנגזרה עליו גזירה לא מנע עצמו
מן הרחמים קל וחומר לשאר בני אדם שנאמר ואתחנן אל ה' (דברים ג כג) במיני
תחנונים. בעת ההיא לאמר שאן תלמוד לומר לאמר אלא אמר לו הודיעני אם אני
נכנס לארץ ואם איני נכנס אדוני ארון אתה לכל באי העולם. אלהים בדין בראת את
העולם. אחה החילות אתה החילות לפתוח פהח לעבדך בשעה שהכנכתני לנחלת בני
ראובן ובני נדב. ד"א אתה החלות אתה התחלת להראות לעבדך נסין ונבירות שנאמר
ויאמר משה אסורה נא ואראה (שמות ג ג) ד"א אתה החלות אתה התחלת את השבועה
כתבת בתורה וזבח לאלהים יחרם ונ' (שם כב יט) ובניך עבדו עבודה זרה ובקשתי
עליהן רחמים וסלחת אתה החלת את השבועה. את גדלך זו מדת טובך שנאמר ועתה
יגדל נא כח ה' (במדבר יד יז). ואת ידך זו ימינך שפשוטה לכל באי העולם שנאמר
ימינך ה' נאדרי בכח (שמות טו ו) ואומר כי ימינך וזרועך ואור פניך (תהלים מד ד)
ואומר כי נשבעתי יצא מפי צדקה דבר ולא ישוב (ישעיה מה כג). החוקה שאתה
כובש ברחמים את מדת הדין שנאמר מי אל כמוך טשא עין ועובר על פשע ואומר
ישוב ירחמנו יכבש עוונותינו הן אמת גיעקב (מיכה ו יח-כ) אשר מי אל בשמים
ובארץ שלא כמדת בשר ודם מדת המקום מדת בשר ודם הגדול מחבירו מבטל
גזירת חבירו אבל אתה מי יכול למחות על ידך וכן הוא אומר ודוא באחד ומי ישיבנו
ונ' (איוב כג יג). רבי יהודה בן כבא אומר משל לאדם שנתון בקונטרסים של מלכות
אפילו נתן ממון הרבה אי אפשר ליעקב אבל אתה אומר עשו תשובה ואני מקבל
שנאמר מחיתי כעב פשעך וכענן הטאתיך (ישעיה מד כב) ד"א אשר מי אל בשמים
ובארץ >הא חוק מכאן יש ת"ל< וידעת היום והשבות אל לבבך כי ה' הוא האלהים
אין עור (דברים ד לט) אף לא באויר העולם. אשר יעשה כמעשיך וכנבירותיך
כמעשיך במצרים וכנבירותיך על הים. ד"א כמעשיך וכנבירותיך על נחלי ארען.
אעברה נא ואראה אין נא אלא לשון בקשה. ואראה את הארץ המוכה אשר בעבר
הירדן וזו היא שרבי יהודה אומר ארץ כנען היא מוכה ולא נחלת בני ראובן ובני נדב.
ההר המוכה זו ירושלים. והלכנון זה בית המקדש וכן הוא אומר פתח לבנון דלתיך
(זכריה יא א) ואומר והלכנון באדיר יפול (ישעיה י לד) ויש אימרים לכנון מינה
עליהם את מלכיהם (סליק פיסקא)

Figure 7
Midrash Rabbah

קרב

ה

שמות רבה

פרשה

הקב"ה שלא ישלח פרעה את ישראל עד מכת בכורים. ולכך לא הוצרך הכתוב לפרסם לו בסוף. מרד בני בכורי ישראל על יעקב אביהם אמר שקנה הבכורה כדי שיוכל לעבוד למקום. ואמרת אליו שלח את בני ויעבדני. א"ל אם אתה מונע ממני בני בכורי מלעבדני אני אמונע ממך בנך בכורך מלעבדך שאני אהרונ את כולן: (ח) ויהי בדרך במלון. יחביכה מילה שלא נתלה למשה עליה אפילו שעה אחת. לפיכך כשהיה בדרך ונתעסק במלון ונתעצל למול ה' אליעזר בנו מיד ופנשהו ה' ויבקש המיתו את מוצא מלאך של רחמים היה ואעפ"כ ויבקש המיתו. ותקח צפורה צור. ובי מנח ידעה צפורה שעל עסקי מילה נסתכן משה אלא בא המלאך ובלע למשה מראשו ועד המילה כיון שראתה צפורה שלא בלע אותו אלא עד המילה הכירה שעל עסקי המילה הוא ניווק וידעה כמה גדול כח המילה שלא היה יכול לבלעו יותר מכאן. מיד ותברת את ערלת בנה ותגע לרגליו ותאמר כי תתן דמים אתה לי. אמרה חתני תהיה אתה נתון לי בזכות דמים הללו של מילה שדרי קיימתי המצוה מיד וירף המלאך ממנו. אז אמרה חתן דמים למולות אמרה כמה גדול כח המילה שחתני היה הייב מיתה שנתעצל סמכות המילה לעשותה ולולי היא לא ניצל: (ט) ויאמר ה' אל אהרן לך לקראת משה המדברה. ה' הה"ד (י) ירעם אל בקולו נפלאות מהו ירעם כשנתן הקב"ה את התורה בסני הראה בקולו לישראל פלאי פלאים. כיצד היה הקב"ה מדבר ותקול יוצא ומחזיר בכל העולם. ישראל שומעין את הקול בא אליהם מן הדרום והיו רצים לדרום לקבל את הקול. ומדרום נהפך להם לצפון והיו רצים לצפון ומצפון נהפך למזרח והיו רצים למזרח. וממזרח נהפך להם למערב והיו רצים למערב. ומן המערב נהפך להן מן השמים והיו תולין עיניהן והיה נהפך בארץ והיו מביטין לארץ שנא' (ימ"ו) מן השמים השמיעך את קולו ליסרך. והיו ישראל אומרים זה לזה (י"ז) ותחכמה מאין תמצא. והיו ישראל אומרים מהיכן הקב"ה בא מן המזרח או מן הדרום. שנאמר (י"ח) ה' מסיני בא וזרח משעיר לשו וכתיב אלוה מתוכן יבא. ואומר וכל

וכנשקתו אמרה לו איני מרגלת לך אלא פחדתי דהוית אחי באנזקי ופלטת ממנה. (י"ט) אמצאך בהוין אשקך. באי זה הוין במדבר מקום שונשקו אחים זה לזה משה ואהרן. א"ר המא בן י"ב שנה נתלש משה רבינו מבית אביו. למה בן שאילו גירל בבית אביו ובא ואמר להן לישראל המעשים לא היו מאמינים בו שהיו אומרים אביו מסרה לו. לפי שיוסף מסרה ללוי ולוי לקחה וקרה לעמרם. ולכך נתלש מבית אביו וכשהלך והגיד לישראל כל הדברים לפיכך האמינו בו שנא' ויאמן העם: (כ) ויאמר לו אלכה נא ואשובה. אתה מוצא כל מי שנא' בו לך לשלום הלך והזר. וכל מי שכתוב בו בשלום הלך ולא חזר. יתרו אמר למשה לך לשלום הלך וחזר: (ג) ויאמר ה' אל משה במדין לך שוב מצרים. א"ר יותנן למדתך תורה דרך ארץ שהנשבע בפני הבירוי לא יתירנו אלא בפניו שלא יחדנו שהוא נשבע לשקר. שכן אתה מוצא ששבע נשבע ליתרו והלך למדין והתיר שבעתו בפניו שנא' ויאמר ה' אל משה במדין. א"ל הקב"ה במדין נשבעת לך והתיר שבעתך במדין: (ד) כי מתו כל האנשים וגו'. וכי מתו והלא דהן ואבירם הם והן היו עם קרה במחלוקתו אלא מה מתו. י שנתענו ה' הן השוכין במדבר סמא ומצורע ועני ומי שאין לו בנים (וכולן קרא במסכת ע"ז): (ה) ויקח משה את אשתו ואת בניו. למה תולין כרי שיהיו עם ישראל לקבל התורה. וירכיבם על החמור. זה א' י מ"ח דברים ששינו חכמים לתלמי המלך. ויקח משה את משה וגו'. עשה כמו שאמר לו הקב"ה ואת המטה הזה תקח בידך: (ו) ויאמר ה' אל משה בלכתך וגו'. וכי על איזה מופת אמר א"ת על הנחש והצרעת והדם והלא אותן נסים לא א"ל הקב"ה לעשות אלא לישראל. ועוד לא מצינו שעשה משה אותן האותות לפני פרעה. אלא מהו כל המופתים אשר שמתי בידך. זה המטה שהיו כתובין עליו י' מכות שהיה כתוב עליו נוסריקון דצ"ך עד"ש באח"ב. א"ל הקב"ה אלו המכות אשר שמתי בידך עשה אותם לפני פרעה ע"י המטה הזה. ואני אחזק את לבו כדי לפרוע דינם מהם: (ז) ואמרת אל פרעה כה אמר ה' בני וגו'. נלה לו

Figure 8
Sefer HaAggadah

קלו. ויברך משה אל-י: לאמר יפקד יי אלהי הרוחות
לכל-בשר: - להודיע שבחם של צדיקים, שבשונסרין מן
העולם מניחין צרכי עצמן ועוסקין בצרכי צבור.
יפקד יי אלהי הרוחות לכל-בשר: - בשמחה משה
רבנו שאין בניו ראויים לצמוד בגשיות אחריו, נתעטף ופמד
בתפלה לפני הקדוש-ברוך-הוא, אמר לפניו: רבונו-של-עולם,
הודיעני מי יבא ומי יבא לפניך: יפקד יי אלהי הרוחות
לכל-בשר: - רבונו-של-עולם, גלוי לפניך דעתו של כל-אחד
ואחד מהם, אין דעתו של זה דומה לדעתו של זה, ובשעה
שאני מסתלק מהם, בבקשה מפקד, אם בבקשה למנות עליהם
מנהיג, מנה עליהם אדם שיהא סובל כל-אחד ואחד לפי דעתו.
יפקד יי אלהי הרוחות לכל-בשר: - אמר לו: תאיש
שאתה מעמיד עליהם יש בו רוח של ששים רבוא, שיהא
מסית לכל אחד ואחד לפי דעתו: אמר לו הקדוש-ברוך-הוא:
משה, וכך דברת: הריני מראה אותך כל-השופטים וכל-
הנביאים שאני מעמיד על בני מעכשיו עד שיחיו תמתיים.
אמר רב סימון: ויראהו יי את-כל-האנן: - הנה
מראה אותו יהושע עומד תחתיו ומוטר לדתניאל, וכן כלם.
אמר לו הקדוש-ברוך-הוא: כל-אלו שהראיתי לך דעה אחת
ורוח אחת יש בהם: אבל מה שבקשת לראות מראש בסוף
רוח אחת יש בו והיא שנקלת כל הרוחות - זה משית.
איש על-הענה אשר-יצא לפניך ואשר יבא לפניך: -
שלא יהא עושה כדרך שאחרים עושים, שהם מוציאים את-
לגיונם ויושבים להם בתוך בתיהם, ואשר יוציאו ואשר
יביאו: - שלא יהא מוציאו רבבות ומכניסם אלמים, מוציאו
אלמים ומכניסם מאות.
ולא תהיה צדק יי כצאן אשר אין-להם רעה: -
למה הנה משה דומה: לרועה נאמן שאמר בעל צאנו:
הסתלק מצאני. אמר: איני מסתלק עד שתודיעני את-מי אתה
ממנה תחתי.
ויאמר יי אל-משה קח-לך: - מה שבלבך, קח
לך: - מה שבדיוק לך, את-יהושע בן-נון: - אתה יודע
שערבה שרתך יהושע ותרבה חלק לך בבור, שהוא הנה
משכים ומצריב בבית-הנער שלך, מסדר הספסלין ופורס את-
המחצלות: הוא יטול שררות, לקים מה שנאמר: גזר
תאנה יאכל פריה: - איש אשר רוח בו: - שידע להלוך
בנגד רוחו של כל-אחד ואחד (ילק"ש סינחס ע"י ספרי, ספרי
ווסא; ילמדנו).

Figure 9
Midrash Rabbah

סדר בשלח

שמות רבה

פרשה בה

קנה

וחת האלה . ופעמים עושה אותם עומדים שנא' (פס' ו) שרפים עומדים
ובתיב (ומי' ג) ונתתי לך מחלכים בין העומדים האלה . ופעמים עושה
אותם ב' בדמות נשים שנא' (פ' ס) והנה שתי נשים יוצאים ורוח
בכנפיהם . ופעמים בדמות אנשים שנא' (פס' יח) והנה שלשה אנשים .
ופעמים עושה אותן רוחות שנא' (פס' קד) עושה מלאכי רוחות . ופעמים
אש שנא' (פ' סג) משרתיו אש לוהט . ד"א וה' אלהי הצבאות שהוא עושה
צביונו בעולם . כשבקש הוציא לחם מן הארץ שנא' (פ' סג) להוציא לחם מן
הארץ . והוריד מים מן השמים שנא' (פס' יח) למטר השמים תשתה מים .
וכשבקש העלה מים מן הארץ שנא' (פס' כה) עלי באר ענו לה . והוריד
מן ישראל מן השמים שנא' הנני ממטיר לכם לחם מן השמים : (ג) ד"א
הנני ממטיר לכם לחם מן השמים הה"ד (פס' קמ"ב) פותח את ירך ומשביע
לכל חי רצון . בא וראה שלא כמדת הקב"ה : מדת ב"ו . מדת ב"ו כ"ו שהמפוג
בירו פותח ידו אין טיפה יורד קפץ ידו הוא מוריד מים . אבל הקב"ה אינו
כן הספוג בידו שנא' (פס' סג) פלג אלהים מלא מים וכן (פס' סג) מי מרד
כשעלו מים . אם עצר אין המים יורדן שנא' (פס' יג) הן יעצרו במים ויבשו
ואומר (פס' יח) ועצר את השמים ולא יהיה מטר . פותח ידו המטר יורד
שנא' (פס' כה) יפתח ה' לך את אוצרו המזב ואומר פותח את ירך ומשביע
לכל חי רצון . לכל חי מזון אכ"ב אלא לכל חי רצון שהוא נותן לכל א"א
רצונו מה שהוא מבקש . וכן לע"ל נותן הקב"ה לכא"א כל מה שהיא מבקש .
ואם תמה אתה על הדבר ראה מה עשה לישראל בעוה"ז שהוריד להם המן
שהיה בו כל מיני מעעים . והיה כל א' מישראל מועם כל מה שהיה רוצה .
שכן כתיב (פ' ס) זה ארבעים שנה ה' אלהיך עמך לא חסרת דבר ד' מהו
דבר כשהיה מתאוה לאכול דבר והיה אומר בפיו אילולא היה לי פטמא
א' לאכול . מיד היה נעשה לתוך פיו מעם פטמא . דבר היו אומרים והקב"ה
היה עושה רצונם . א"ר אבא אף דבר לא היה אומר בפיו אלא התשב
כלבו לומר מה שנפשו מתאוה היה הקב"ה עושה רצונו והיה מועם מעם
מה שהיה מתאוה . תדע לך שהוא כן שכן אמר יהוקאל (פס' סג) ולחמי
אשר נתתי לך מילת ושטן ודבש האכלתיך . כתוב א' אומר הנני ממטיר
לכם לחם מן השמים . וכתוב א' אומר ומעמם כצפירת בדבש . ואומר והיה
מעמם כמעם לשד השמן . כיצד מתקיימין ג' כתובין הללו בתורים היו
שעמין מעם לחם זקנים מעם דבש תינוקות מעם שמן : (ד) ד"א הנני
ממטיר לכם לחם מן השמים הה"ד (פס' סג) נדרשתי ללא שאלו . מה
כתיב למעלה מהענין וילוו כל עדת בני ישראל מה הלגה היה שם . אלא
הצידה שהוציאו ביום ממצרים עושה להם ס"א מעודות ואכלו אותה ל"א

יום נשלם אותי הכצק וכערב הליו שנא' וילוו כל עדת בני ישראל .
היה להם לכאול ולמר למשה הוי יודע שנשם אותו הכצק . אלא באו עליו
במריבה ואמר כי הוצאתם אותנו (ממצרים) אל הסדר הזה להמית את
כל הקהל הזה כרעב . אמרו רעב של לחם ורעב של מים . וביון שהליו
היה צריך מיד שיצא הכעס עליהם . ולא עשה להם כך . אמר הקב"ה הן
עשו כמות שהן . ואני אעשה כמות שאני . אמר להם בשחרית יהיה
המן יורד לכם . הוי נדרשתי ללא שאלו נמצאתי ללא בקשוני . היה להם
שכיון שכלתה העונה יעמדו ויבקשו רחמים מלפני אלא עמדו ושפכו
תרעומות כלפי מעלה . לפיכך אמר הכתוב (פס' סג) הנני הנני אל טי לא קרא
בשמי . מיד הנני הנני ב"פ אלא הנני על הבאר שנא' (פס' יח) הנני עומד
לפניך שם על הצור . והנני על המן שנא' הנני ממטיר לכם לחם מן השמים :
(ה) ד"א הנני ממטיר לכם לחם מן השמים הה"ד (פס' יח) שלח לחמך על
פני המים כי ברוב הימים תמצאו . ר' חנין אמר בשעה שקרא הקב"ה
לאברהם ענה לו ויאמר הנני . א"ל הקב"ה חייך בו בלשון אני משום שבר
לבניך שנא' הנני ממטיר לכם לחם מן השמים . ועליו הכתוב ואמר (פס' יח)
פתחלך בתומי צדיק . זה אברהם דכתיב ביה (פס' יח) הנהלך לפני
והיה תמים . (פס' יח) אשרי בניו אחריו . אתה מוצא כל מה שעשה אברהם
אבינו למלאכי השרת בעצמו עשה הקב"ה לבניו : כמרבר . הוא אמר (פס'
יח) יוקח נא מעט מים ע"י שליח והקב"ה נתן מים ע"י שליח מנין שנא'
(פס' יח) הנני עומד לפניך שם על הצור . הוא אמר ורחצו רגליכם ופרע
להם במדבר שנא' (פס' יח) וארחצך במים . הוא אמר והשענו תחת העץ
והקב"ה (פס' קס) פרש ענן למסך . הוא לוח אותם שנא' (פס' יח) ואברהם
הולך עמם לשלחם ופרע הקב"ה לבניו שנא' (פס' יח) הולך לפניו
יוםם . הוא אמר ואקחה פת לחם והקב"ה אמר הנני ממטיר לכם לחם .
א"ר יהודה הלוי ב"ר שלום בשם ר' יונה ואף ר' לוי בשם ר' חמא ב"ר חנינא
אמר למ"ב מסעות ירד להם חמן והיכן ירד באלוש . ולמה באלוש בזכות
שאמר אברהם (פס' יח) לוחי ועשי עונות . כך הקב"ה פרע לבניו שנא'
הנני ממטיר לכם לחם מן השמים : (ו) ד"א הנני ממטיר לכם לחם מן
השמים הה"ד (פס' סג) אין כמוך באלהים ה' ואין כמעשיך . למח אין
כמוך באלהים ה' שאין מי שיעשה כמעשיך . כיצד כנוהג שבועלם ב"ו
עושה לו שכול בדרך שמא וכול הוא לעשות לו שכול בים . והקב"ה אינו
כן אלא עושה לו שכול בתוך הים שנא' (פס' סג) בים דרך ושכילך במים
רבים ועקבותיך לא נדעו . ב"ו מפשפש שמתותיו אם מצא שמתותיו
לו בני אדם הוא מוציא שמתותיו וגובה מהם . ואם מצא שהוא הייב
לאדם

Figure 10
Mekhila D'Rabbi Ismael

מסכתא דרבי בשלח פתיחתא

וה' הולך לפנייהם יומם, נמצאת אומר שכמה עננים הם והשם הולך לפנייהם יומם בעמוד ענן וענן עומד עליהם ובעמוד ענן (במדבר יד יד) ובהארץ הענן (שם ט יט) ובהצללות הענן ואם לא יעלה הענן כי ענן ה' על המשכן (שמות מ לו—לח) הא שבעה עננים ארבעה מארבע רוחותיהם אחד למעלה ואחד למטה אחד שהיה מהלך לפנייהם כל הגמוך מגביהו וכל הגבוה משפילו שני כל ניא ינשא וכל הר ונבעה ישפלו והיה העקוב למישור והרכסים לבקעה (ישעיה מ ד) והיה מכה נחשים ועקרבים מכבד ומרבץ לפנייהם. ר' יהודה אומר שלשה עשר עננים היו שנים שנים לכל רוח ורוח שנים מלמעלה ושנים מלמטה ואחד שהיה מהלך לפנייהם. ר' יאשיה אומר ארבעה אחד לפנייהם ואחד לאחריהם אחד למעלה ואחד למטה. רבי אומר שנים: וה' הולך לפנייהם יומם, ללמדך שבמדה שאדם מודד בה מודדין לו. אברהם לווה מלאכי השרת שני ואברהם הולך עמם לשלחם (בראשית יח טו) והמקום לווה את בניו במדבר ארבעים שנה שני וה' הולך לפנייהם יומם בעמוד ענן. באברהם כתיב יוקח נא מעט מים והביה העלה לבניו את הבאר במדבר שני או ישיר ישראל את השירה הזאת עלי באר עט לה (במדבר כא יז). באברהם כתיב ואקחה פת לחם והביה הוריד לבניו את המן במדבר שני הנני ממסיר לכם לחם מן השמים (שמות טז ד). באברהם הוא אומר וא' הבקר רץ אברהם והקב"ה הגיו שלי לבניו שני ורוח נסע מאת ה' ויגו שליוס מן הים (במדבר יא לא). באברהם הוא אומר והשענו תחת העץ והקב"ה פרש לבניו שכמה ענני כבוד שני פרש ענן למסך ואש להאיר לילה (תהלים קה מ). באברהם כתיב והוא עומד עליהם והקב"ה הגיו על בתי בניו במצרים שלא ינפלו שני ופסח ה' על הפתח (שמות יב כג):

1 כ לפנייהם וגר | מ לפנייהם בעמוד ענן נמצאת | נמצאת
וכר בעמוד ענן | כ ח' | נמצאת | א ג' את | מ ח' | אמ
ח' | והשם וכו' | מ ח' הולך בעמוד ענן | ו לפנייהם ולא
ימש עמוד הענן וענן | 2 יומם | קו ג' וגר וענן | בעמוד
ענן | א ח' | וענן | מ וענן | קו עליהם | ובעמוד ענן | ו ח'
ובעמוד ענן | א ג' וגר, | כ ג' יומם, | מ ג' ארבעה הולך
לפניהם | 3 ואם וכו' הענן | ו ח' | המשכן | מ ג' יומם | הא
ד ח' | 4 אטם עננים היו (אט הם) | אוסף ארבעה ברא
ט רוחות, אוכם רוחות | ואת וכן כולן | אטם ואחר | כג
מלמעלה אט מלמעלן—מלמעלן | כמ מלמעלה | אטם ואחר |
| שהיתה מהלכת | 5 משפילו | ק ג' מיניו | מ ג' | מכבד,
מ מיניו | אכ ינשא וגר | 6 והיה וכו' | מ ח' | והיה ב' | ב

2 ובעמוד וכו'. בא"צ מגיה ובענן יומם (דברים א לג)
נעלה הענן מעל המשכן (במדבר י יא) וענן ה' עליהם (שם
לד) כי ענן ה' על המשכן יומם, ובדברי רבי גורס שנים
וענן עומד וגר. ועין ספרי במדבר צד עט וספרי ווסא
צד רסו ורשט כאן: 5 שני, בא"צ מגיה כענין שני: 9 וה'
הולך. בא"צ מגיה וענן עומד עליהם ללמדך: 10 אברהם
וכר. וחספתא טוטה פ"ד ה"ב, בבא מציעא פ"ו, מכלילתא
דרשבתי פ' וזאב דף ת, בראשית רבה פ"ח ס"י, שמות
רבה פ"ה ס"ו, במדבר רבה פ"ד ס"ב, קהלת רבה פ"א
טטק ת, פס"ר פ"ד דף גי, תד"א פ"ג דף נט, תנחומא
כאן פ"ד ופ' וירא פ"ד ותנחומא ב' וירא ס"ה, ילקוט וירא
פ"ו שם ס' והזכיר, פ"ו ורש"י.

א ח' | ועקרבים | ד ג' לפנייהם | א נחשים מכה עקרבים | מ ומכבד | 7 מ ומרבין | אטם שלש | אטם עשרה | עננים | אטם
ח' | היו | אטם ח' | שנים בפ"ב | ד ח' | ורוח | ט ח' | א שנים לכל רוח | מ ושנים | 8 אטם מלמעלן—מלמעלן | כ למעלה | א
שנים | מ ח' | ר' יאשיה וכו' יומם | מ ח' | אחד וכו' למטה | אטם ח' | 9 כ שנים שני | ח' | 10 כ לפנייהם וגר | אטם את
מלאכי | 11 שני | א ח' | מ והביה, א והק', מ הקב"ה | במדבר | כמ ח' | 12 כמ שנה במדבר | שני | מ ח' | שני וכו' ענן | מ
ח' | יומם וכו' ענן | מ ח' | כ יומם וגר | בעמ' ענן | א ח' | באברהם וכו' | ד הסדר מהפך באברהם אבינו אומר ואקחה וכו'
והביה | ל והק' | והוריד את המן ארבעים שנה שני הנני ממסיר באברהם אומר יוקח וכו' לבניו באר | 13 א והק', כמ והקב"ה
מ את הבאר לבניו | במדבר | ט ח' | מ ישראל עלי באר | את וכו' | ט ח' | א וגר | והוא וכו' | כ ח' | ענן לה | מ ח' | 14 באברהם
וכו' השמים | מ ח' | כ באברהם אומר | א והק', כ והקב"ה | אטם לבניו מן | א ג' במדבר | שני | 15 לחם מן השמים | א ח' | מן
השמים | כ ח' | ככמ כתיב | הוא אומר | א ח' | א הבקר והק' | 16 כ אברהם וגר והק' | מ ח' | אטם לבניו את השליו
(אכ ג' במדבר) | אטם מאת ה' וגר | ט ח' | מאת ה' | מ ח' | מן חיים | מ ח' | 17 טכמ כתיב | הוא אומר | א ח' | אכ והשענו
(כ' תחת העץ) והק' פרש עליהם | מ ח' | והביה | לבניו | מ ח' | שבעה | כ ח' | מ כבוד לבניו | 18 ק פרץ | ואש וכו' | אטם ח', כ
וגר | באברהם | ד ג' הוא | כתיב | ל אומר | אכ באברהם אומר והוא | כ עליהם וגר | 19 א והק', מ ח' | והיה | מ על בתיהם |

Figure 11
Hilkhoh Yesodei HaTorah

פרק שני

א האל הנכבד והנורא הזה, מצוה לאהבו וליראה אותו, שנאמר: "ואהבת את ה' אלהיך",
ונאמר: את ה' אלהיך תירא.

ב והיאך היא הדרך לאהבתו ויראתו?
בשעה שיתבונן האדם במעשיו וברואיו הנפלאים, הגדולים, ויראה מהן חכמתו, שאין לה ערך ולא קץ — מיד הוא אוהב ומשבח ומפאר ומתאנה מאנה גדולה לידע השם הגדול.
כמו שאמר רוד: "צמאה נפשי לאלהים לאל חי".
וכשמחשב בדברים האלו עצמן, מיד הוא נרתע לאחוריו ויפחד, ויודע שהוא בריה קטנה, שפלה, אפלה, עומדת בדעת קלה, מעוטה, לפני חמים דעות,
כמו שאמר רוד: "כי אראה שמיד מעשה אצבעתיך — מה אנוש כי תזכרנו".
ולפי הדברים האלו אני מבאר כללים גדולים ממעשה רבון העולמים, כדי שיהיו פתח למבין לאהב את השם;
כמו שאמרו חכמים בענין אהבה, שמתוך כך אתה מכיר את מי שאמר והיה העולם.

Figure 12
Avot D'Rabbi Natan

נוסחא א פרק א אבות דרבי נתן נוסחא ב פרק א ג

אמר ליה ר' יוסי אומר
עשרה טפחים ועומד ממאה. אמר ונופל נה:
מה חשב נחש הרשע באותה שעה (ו). אלך ואדרוג
את אדם ואישא את אשתו (ו) ואהיה מלך על כל העולם כולו
ואלך בקומה זקופה ואוכל כל מערני עולם א"ל הקב"ה
אתה אמרת אדרוג את אדם ואישא את חוה לפיכך איבה
אשית (ש"י"ד). אתה אמרת אהיה מלך על כל העולם לפיכך
אחור אתה מכל הבהמה (ש"י). אתה אמרת אלך בקומה
זקופה לפיכך על נחונך תלך (ש"י). אתה אמרת אוכל כל
מערני עולם לפיכך עפר תאכל כל ימי חיך (ש"י). נה:
ר' שמעון בן מנסיא אומר חבל על שמש גדול שאבד
סן העולם שאלמלא לא נתקלקל הגחש היה לו לכל אחד
ואחד מ"שאל ב' נחשים בתוך ביתו (י"ט) אחד משגרו
למערב ואחד משגרו למזרח וכביאים להם סנדלכים טובים
אבנים טובות ומרגליות וכל כלי חמד טוב שבועולם (ס) ואין
כל בריה יכולה להזיק אותן (ס"א) ולא עוד אלא שהיו מכניסין
אותן תחת גמל תחת חמור תחת פרד ומוציאין זבלים לנגות.
ולפרדסות (ס"ב):

מכאן אמרו אל יוסף אדם על דברים ששומע ר' יוסי אומר
טוב עשרה טפחים ועומד ממאה. אמר ונופל נה:
מה חשב נחש הרשע באותה שעה (ו). אלך ואדרוג
את אדם ואישא את אשתו (ו) ואהיה מלך על כל העולם כולו
ואלך בקומה זקופה ואוכל כל מערני עולם א"ל הקב"ה
אתה אמרת אדרוג את אדם ואישא את חוה לפיכך איבה
אשית (ש"י"ד). אתה אמרת אהיה מלך על כל העולם לפיכך
אחור אתה מכל הבהמה (ש"י). אתה אמרת אלך בקומה
זקופה לפיכך על נחונך תלך (ש"י). אתה אמרת אוכל כל
מערני עולם לפיכך עפר תאכל כל ימי חיך (ש"י). נה:
ר' שמעון בן מנסיא אומר חבל על שמש גדול שאבד
סן העולם שאלמלא לא נתקלקל הגחש היה לו לכל אחד
ואחד מ"שאל ב' נחשים בתוך ביתו (י"ט) אחד משגרו
למערב ואחד משגרו למזרח וכביאים להם סנדלכים טובים
אבנים טובות ומרגליות וכל כלי חמד טוב שבועולם (ס) ואין
כל בריה יכולה להזיק אותן (ס"א) ולא עוד אלא שהיו מכניסין
אותן תחת גמל תחת חמור תחת פרד ומוציאין זבלים לנגות.
ולפרדסות (ס"ב):

ר' יהודה בן בתירה אומר אדם הראשון היה מיסב בנ"ע
ומלאכי השרת עובדין לקראתו וצולין לו בשר ומצננין לו יין בא נחש וראה אותו והציץ בכבודו ונתקנא בו (ס"ג):
כיצד נברא אדם הראשון שעה ראשונה וצנן עפרו. שניה נברא צורתו. שלישית נעשה גולם. רביעית
נתקשרו אבריו. חמישית נתפתחו נקביו. ששית נתנה בו נשמה. שביעית עמד על רגליו. שמינית נזרונה
לו חוה. תשיעית הכניסו לנן ערן. עשירית צורה. אחד עשר סרח. שתים עשר נסרר והלך לו לקיים מה
שנאמר ואדם ביקר כל ילין (תהלים כ"ד ס"ד): יום ראשון מרו אומר ה' הארץ ומלואה תכל ויושבי בה
(ש"ס כ"ד א') כי הוא קנה ויקנה והוא ידן את העולם (ס"ה). ביום שני מרו אומר גרול ה' ומרגלל מאד בעיר אלהינו
(ש"ס ס"ה ב') (ס"ו) חילק את כל מעשיו ונעשה מלך על עולמו (ס"ז). בשלישי מרו אומר אלהים נצב בעדנת אל
בקרב אלהים ישופט (ש"ס ס"ב) ברא את הים ואת היבשה ונכסלה או"ן למקומה ונעשה מקום לעדתו. כרביעי
מרו אומר אל נקמות ה' אל נקמות רופיע (ש"ס צ"ד) ברא את החמה ואת הלבנה והכוכבים והמזלות שהן
מאדין בעולם ועתיד ליפרע מעובדיהם (ס"ח). בחמישי מרו אומר הרנינו לאלהים עוזנו רריעו לאלהי יעקב (ש"ס ט"א)
ברא עופות ודגים וזאת התנינים שהם מרגלים בעולם. בששי מרו אומר ה' מלך גאות לבש לבש ה' עוה התאזר
אף תכון תכל כל תכום (ש"ס צ"ג) גמר את כל מעשיו ונתעלה וישב כמרומו של עולם (ס"ט). בשביעי מרו אומר מזכור
שיר ליום השבת (ש"ס צ"ג) יום שכולו שבת שאין בו לא אכילה ולא שתיה ולא משא ומתן אלא צדיקים יושבין
ועטרותיהן בראשיהן וגזונין מזיו השכינה שנאמר ויחוו את האלהים ואכלו וישתו (שמות כ"ד) כמלאכי השרת (ע):

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