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☞ The Thirteen Middos in Ki Sisa ☞

(as divided by Ramak).

(Shemos 34:6-7)

יהוה, יהוה!

[א] אֵל, [ב] רַחוּם, [ג] וְחַנוּן, [ד] אַרְךְּ אַפַּיִם, [ה] וְרַב חַסֵּד,
[ו] וְאֵמֶת, [ז] נֹצֵר חַסֵּד לְאֲלָפִים, [ח] נִשְׂא עוֹן, [ט] וְפָשַׁע,
[י] וְחַטָּאָה, [יא-יג] וְנִקָּה עוֹן, וְפָשַׁע, וְחַטָּאָה.

HASHEM, HASHEM!

[1] God, [2] Compassionate [3] and Gracious, [4] Slow to anger, [5] Abundant in kindness [6] and Truthful, [7] Preserver of kindness for thousands [of generations], [8] Forgiver of iniquity, [9] willful sin, [10] and error, and [11-13] Who cleanses [iniquity, willful sin, and error].

☞ The Thirteen Middos in Michah ☞

(Michah 7:18-20)

[א] מִי אֵל כְּמוֹךָ, [ב] נִשְׂא עוֹן, [ג] וְעֵבֵר עַל פְּשַׁע [ד] לְשֹׂאֲרֵי
נִחַלְתּוֹ. [ה] לֹא הִחֲזִיק לְעַד אָפוּ [ו] כִּי חָפַץ חַסֵּד הוּא.
[ז] יִשׁוּב יִרְחַמְנוּ, [ח] יִכְבֹּשׂ עֲוֹנֵתֵינוּ, [ט] וְתִשְׁלִיךְ בְּמַצְלוֹת
יָם כָּל חַטָּאתָם. [י] תִּתֵּן אֵמֶת לְיַעֲקֹב, [יא] חַסֵּד לְאַבְרָהָם,
[יב] אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתָּ לְאַבְתֵּינוּ, [יג] מִימֵי קֶדֶם.

[1] Who is a God like You? [2] Who bears sin [3] Who removes iniquity [4] to His closely bound family. [5] He does not persist in His wrath forever, [6] He desires kindness, [7] He will once again show us mercy, [8] He will suppress our sins [9] and You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. [10] Truthfulness to Yaakov, [11] kindness to Avraham, [12] as You swore to our forefathers [13] in days of old.

א: מי אל כמוך

האחת — "מי אל כמוך" הורה על היות הקדוש ברוך הוא מלך נעלב וסובל עלבון מה שלא יכילו רעיון הרי אין דבר נסתר מהשגחתו בלי ספק, ועוד, אין רגע שלא יהיה האדם נזון ומתקנים מכח עליון השופע עליו, והרי תמצא שמעולם לא חטא אדם נגדו שלא יהיה הוא באותו הרגע ממש שופע שפע קיומו ותנועת אבריו

☞The First Middah☞

מי אל כמוך — Who Is a God Like You?^[9]

"מי אל כמוך" — האחת — The first Middah is expressed with the words *Who is a God like You*, הורה על היות הקדוש ברוך הוא מלך נעלב — which attest to that the Holy One, Blessed is He, is "a King Who endures insult," סובל הרי אין דבר נסתר — meaning that He tolerates insult in a way that defies comprehension. This can be explained as follows: מהשגחתו בלי ספק הרי אין דבר נסתר — Without a doubt, there is nothing that transpires in our world, no matter how minute or mundane, that is concealed from His constant scrutiny. ועוד אין רגע שלא יהיה האדם נזון ומתקנים מכח עליון השופע — and, in addition, there is never a moment that a person is not sustained and does not exist due to the Heavenly force that Hashem is constantly granting him.^[10] והרי תמצא — If we put these two factors together, it emerges שלא יהיה הוא באותו הרגע ממש שופע — that there was never an instance of someone sinning against Hashem שפע קיומו ותנועת אבריו — without He, at that very moment, bestowing on the person his very power to exist and the ability to move his limbs.^[11]

9. The Name "El" refers to Hashem in His capacity as the One Who has active control over the world. Essentially, the phrase *mi El kamocha* is expressing, "Who can possibly compare to You in the way You control and constantly sustain the entire world?" This sentiment is echoed in the *tefillah* of "Ein keilokeinu... mi keilokeinu" ("There is none like our God... Who is like our God?"). The phrase *mi El kamocha* is not a question, but a rhetorical statement of wonder: "You are so amazing that we could not possibly envision anything being comparable."

10. When a person creates a table, a computer program, an opera aria, or anything else, the creation is not dependent upon him for its continued existence. Whether he

remains involved with it or walks away, the item will continue to exist. The world's relationship with Hashem, however, is entirely different. The universe exists only in the moment, and has no independent staying power. It is only because Hashem wills the world to exist at each successive moment that it endures. In other words, our energy and existence were not a one-time grant; they reflect a new infusion of God-given life every single moment. For a more detailed explanation, see *Ani Maamin — A Mission for Life*, pp. 55-59.

11. Given these two factors — that Hashem is aware of every detail of every occurrence, and that He "feeds" energy to each person at every instant — it emerges that

ועם היות שהאדם חטא בכח ההוא לא מנעו ממנו כלל אלא סובל הקדוש ברוך הוא עלבון כזה להיות משפיע בו כח תנועת אבריו והוא מוציא אותו כח באותו רגע בחטא ועון ומכעיס והקדוש ברוך הוא סובל, ולא תאמר שאינו יכול למנוע ממנו הטוב ההוא, חס ושלום, שהרי בכחו ברגע במימריה ליבש ידיו ורגליו בעין שעשה לירבעם (מלכים א יג. ד) ועם כל זה שהכח בידו להחזיר הכח הנשפע ההוא והיה לו לומר ביון שאתה חטא נגדי תחטא בשלך לא בשלי, לא מפני זה מנע טובו מן האדם אלא סבל עלבון והשפיע הכח והטיב

Now, even as the person uses that very energy to sin, and Hashem is eminently aware of how His gift is being mis-used, — לא מנעו ממנו כלל — He nevertheless does not withhold this energy from him at all. Rather, the Holy One, Blessed is He, tolerates this insult, — אלא סובל הקדוש ברוך הוא עלבון כזה — as He continues to grant him the ability to move his limbs, — הוא מוציא — even as the person uses that energy at that moment for sin and wrongdoing, even acting deliberately to anger his Creator; — והקדוש ברוך הוא סובל — yet the Holy One, Blessed is He, nevertheless remains tolerant.

Now, you surely cannot say, Heaven forbid, that He is unable to withhold this benefit from the sinner, — שהרי בכחו ברגע במימרא ליבש ידיו ורגליו — for it is certainly within His power to cause, for example, someone's hands and feet to wither instantly, literally, — just as He did to Yeravam (*Imelachim* 13:4).^[12] — כעין שעשה לירבעם — Although He has the power in His hands to retract that energy that has been bestowed, — והיה לו לומר — and He rightfully ought to say, — ביון שאתה חטא נגדי תחטא בשלך לא בשלי — “Since you are attempting to sin against Me, go try to find, and sin with, your own source of life and energy, not Mine,” — אלא — He does not, on account of this, withhold His goodness from the person, but tolerates an incredible amount of insult, — והשפיע הכח והטיב

He is actively gifting a person the ability to sin even as He sees, and is well aware of, that very gift being used against Him.

12. King Yeravam actively encouraged idol worship in Eretz Yisrael during his reign. In one instance, he stood ready to offer sacrifices to idols when Ido HaNavi arrived on the scene, delivering a prophecy that the day would soon come when the

priests of idolatry would be slaughtered. Ido further proclaimed that as a sign, the altar on which Yeravam was standing would immediately collapse. Hearing this, Yeravam extended his hand to grab the navi, attempting to silence and punish him. As he did so, however, his hand immediately became paralyzed. Moments later, the altar collapsed just as Ido had predicted.

לְאָדָם טוֹבוּ הָרִי זֶה עֲלֵבוֹן וְסִבְלָנוּת מֵה שְׁלֵא יִשׁוּעַר, וְעַל זֶה קוֹרְאִים מִלְאֲכֵי הַשָּׁרֵת לְהִקְרוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא מֶלֶךְ עֲלוֹב וְהֵינּוּ אוֹמְרוּ מִי אֵל כְּמוֹךָ אֲתָה אֵל בְּעַל חֶסֶד הַמְטִיב, אֵל בְּעַל כַּח לִנְקָם וְלְאַסֵּף אֶת שְׁלֹךְ וְעַם כָּל זֶה אֲתָה סוֹבֵל וְנִעְלָב עַד יָשׁוּב בְּתִשׁוּבָה, הָרִי זֶה מְדָה שְׁצִרִיךְ הָאָדָם לְהִתְנַהֵג בָּהּ, רְצוֹנִי הַסִּבְלָנוּת, וְכֵן הָיִיתוּ נִעְלָב אֶפְלוּ לְמִדְרָגָה זֹו וְעַם כָּל זֶה לֹא יֵאָסֵף טוֹבָתוֹ מִן הַמְקַבֵּל.

לְאָדָם טוֹבוּ — and continues granting energy and benefacting man with His goodness.

הָרִי זֶה עֲלֵבוֹן וְסִבְלָנוּת מֵה שְׁלֵא יִסְפָּר — This evinces both indescribable insult as well as unfathomable tolerance, וְעַל זֶה קוֹרְאִים מִלְאֲכֵי הַשָּׁרֵת לְהִקְרוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ — and it is for this reason that the ministering angels describe the Holy One, Blessed is He, as a “King Who tolerates insult.” וְהֵינּוּ אוֹמְרוּ — This middah is what the prophet Michah refers to when he says, *Who is a God like You?* What he means is: אֲתָה אֵל בְּעַל חֶסֶד הַמְטִיב — “You are the God Who is the Source of all and any kindness, Who benefits humanity, אֵל בְּעַל כַּח לִנְקָם וְלְאַסֵּף אֶת שְׁלֹךְ — and You are also the God Who has the power to avenge and gather back that which is Yours; וְעַם כָּל זֶה — nevertheless You tolerate and absorb insult, עַד יָשׁוּב — until, and with the hope that, this person ultimately returns in repentance.”

הָרִי זֶה מְדָה שְׁצִרִיךְ הָאָדָם לְהִתְנַהֵג בָּהּ — Indeed, this is a middah with which a person must conduct himself; רְצוֹנִי הַסִּבְלָנוּת — by this I refer to both exhibiting tolerance — וְכֵן הָיִיתוּ נִעְלָב אֶפְלוּ לְמִדְרָגָה זֹו — as well as being able to absorb insult, even to such an extreme degree, וְעַם כָּל זֶה לֹא יֵאָסֵף — while, even after all that insult and injury, not withholding his goodness from the recipient.