

הֲלֹא־חֲקָמָה תִּקְרָא וּתְבוּנָה תִּתֵּן קוֹלָהּ: בְּרֹאש־מַרְמִים עֲלִי־דָרָךְ בֵּית נְתִיבוֹת נִצְבָּה: לִיד־שְׁעָרִים לִפְי־קֶרֶת מְבוֹא פְתָחִים
תְּרֹפָה: אֲלֵיכֶם אִישִׁים אֶקְרָא וְקוֹלִי אֶל־בְּנֵי אָדָם: הִבִּינוּ פְתָאִים עֲרֻמָּה וְכִסְיִלִּים הִבִּינוּ לָב: שְׁמְעוּ כִּי־נְגִידִים אֲדָבָר וּמִפְתַּח
שְׁפָתַי מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל: כִּי־אֲמַת יִהְיֶה חֲכִי וְתוֹעֵבַת שְׁפָתַי רָשָׁע:

It is Wisdom calling, Understanding raising her voice. She takes her stand at the topmost heights, By the wayside, at the crossroads, Near the gates at the city entrance; At the entryways, she shouts, “O men, I call to you; My cry is to all mankind. O simple ones, learn shrewdness; O dullards, instruct your minds. Listen, for I speak noble things; Uprightness comes from my lips; My mouth utters truth; Wickedness is abhorrent to my lips.”

II. Universalism in Second Temple Sources

5. **Ben Sira 1:1-4**

All wisdom is from the Lord and remains with him forever. The sands of the sea, the drops of rain, the days of eternity—who can count them? Heaven’s height, earth’s extent, the abyss and wisdom—who can explore them? Before all other things wisdom was created; and prudent understanding, from eternity.

6. **Ben Sira 24:1-8**

Wisdom will praise herself, and will glory in the midst of her people. In the assembly of the Most High she opens her mouth, in the presence of his host she tells of her glory: “I came forth from the mouth of the Most High, and covered the earth like a mist. In the heights of heaven I dwelt, and my throne was in a pillar of cloud. The vault of heaven I compassed alone, and walked through the deep abyss. Over waves of the sea, over all the land, over every people and nation I held sway. Among all these I sought a resting place. In whose inheritance should I abide? Then the Creator of all gave me his command, and my Creator chose the spot for my tent. He said, ‘In Jacob make your dwelling, in Israel your inheritance.’

7. **Philo, *On Creation* 3**

[The Torah begins with an account of creation because] the cosmos is in harmony with the law and the law with the cosmos, and the man who observes the law is at once a citizen of the cosmos, directing his actions in relation to the rational purpose of nature, in accordance with which the entire cosmos also is administered.

8. **Philo, *On the Life of Moses* 2.14, 2.43-44**

But Moses is alone in this, that his laws firm, unshaken, immovable, stamped, as it were, with the seals of nature herself, remain secure from the day when they were first enacted to now, and we may hope that they will remain for all future ages as though immortal, so long as the sun and moon and the whole heaven and universe exist...

Thus the laws are shown to be desirable and precious in the eyes of all, ordinary citizens and rulers alike, and that too though our nation has not prospered for many a year...I believe that each nation would abandon its peculiar ways, and throwing overboard their ancestral customs, turn to honoring our laws alone.

III. Rabbi Ishmael: Early Rabbinic Universalism

9. Mekhilta de-Rabbi Yishmael Bahodesh 1

ויחנו במדבר. נתנה תורה דימוס פרהסיא במקום הפקר, שאלו נתנה בארץ ישראל, היו אומרים לאומות העולם אין להם חלק בה, לפיכך נתנה במדבר דימוס פרהסיא במקום הפקר, וכל הרוצה לקבל יבא ויקבל.
“They encamped in the wilderness” (Exod. 19:2). The Torah was given in a free place [*demos*, *parrhesia*]. For had the Torah been given in the land of Israel, the Israelites could have said to the nations of the world, ‘You have no share in it.’ But now that it was given in the wilderness publicly and openly, in a place that is free for all, everyone wishing to accept it, could come and accept it.

10. Sifre Bemidbar 119

Beloved are Israel for when God gives them a nickname, God names them none other than ministering angels, as it says “For the lips of the priest keep knowledge and they seek teaching at his mouth for he is the angel of the Lord” (Malachi 2:7). At the time that Torah comes from his mouth he is like an angel; when [it does] not, he is like a beast and an animal that knows not its creator.
Beloved is Torah, for when David the King of Israel asked, he asked only Torah. Thus it says, “You are good and do good, teach me your laws” (Psalms 119:68). Your good has been ample to all who come into the world, let your good be ample to me and teach me your laws.

חביבים ישראל... וכשהוא מכנן – אין מכנן אלא במלאכי השרת, שנאמר (מלאכי ב) כי שפתי כהן ישמרו דעת ותורה יבקשו מפיהו כי מלאך ה' צבאות הוא, בזמן שהתורה יוצאה מפיו – הרי הוא כמלאכי השרת, ואם לאו – הרי הם כחיה וכבהמה שאינה מכרת את קונה. חביבה תורה, כששאל דוד מלך ישראל לא שאל אלא תורה, שנאמר (תהילים קי"ט:ס"ח) טוב אתה ומטיב למדני חקיד. טובך עדיף עלי ועל כל באי העולם יעדיף טובך עלי, ולמדני חקיד.

11. Sifre Bemidbar 119 (cont.)

וזאת תורת האדם. נמצאת אומר: שלושה כתרים הם: כתרי תורה וכתרי כהונה וכתרי מלכות. כתרי כהונה – זכה אהרן ונטלו. כתרי מלכות – זכה דוד ונטלו. הרי כתרי תורה מונח, כדי שלא יתן פתחון פה לבאי העולם לומר "אלו היה כתרי מלכות וכתרי כהונה מונחים – הייתי זוכה בהן ונטלן", הרי כתרי תורה מונח לכל באי העולם, שכל שזוכה בו – מעלה אני עליו כאלו שלשתם מונחים וזוכה בכולם; וכל מי שאין זוכה בו – מעלה אני עליו כאלו שלשתם מונחים ולא זכה באחת מהם.

“This is the Torah of man” (*lit. “this is the law of a person”*) (II Samuel 7:19). You may say that there are three crowns: the crown of priesthood and the crown of royalty and the crown of Torah. The crown of priesthood, Aaron won it and took it. The crown of royalty, David won it and took it. The crown of Torah rests in place in order not to give those who come into the world an opportunity to argue ‘had the crowns of priesthood and royalty been in place I could have won them and taken them.’ The crown of Torah rests in place for all those who come into the world, for whoever wins it, I reckon it as if all three crowns had [remained] in their place and he had won them all. And whoever does not win it, I reckon it as if all three crowns had remained in their place and he had not won any of them.

12. Midrash Tannaim 33:2

ד"א ה' מסיני בא מלמד כשנגלה הקב"ה ליתן תורה לישראל לא לישראל נתנה בלבד אלא לכל אומות העולם שנ' (ישעיהו מה:יט) לא בסתר דברתי כשנתתיה מתחלה לא נתתיה בסתר במקום ארץ חשך לא אמרתי לזרע יעקב לאלו אני נותנה תהו בקשוני לא נתתיה בטכס אלא אני ה' דובר צדק מגיד מישרים

Another interpretation: "God came from Sinai": this teaches us that when the Holy One blessed be He revealed himself to give to the Torah to Israel, it was not only given to Israel alone but to all the nations of the world as the verse states "I did not speak in secret" (Isiah 45:19), when I originally gave it I did not give it in secret, "at a site in a land of darkness, I did not stay to the stock of Jacob" to these alone I am giving it, "Seek me out in a wasteland": I did not give it in a ceremony, but rather "I am the Lord who foretells reliably, who announces what is true."

13. Mekhilta de-Rabbi Yishmael Bahodesh 5

And it was for the following reason that the nations of the world were asked to accept the Torah: In order that they should have no excuse for saying: Had we been asked we would have accepted it. For, behold, they were asked and they refused to accept it, for it is said: "And he said: 'The Lord came from Sinai,'" etc. (Deut. 33:2).

He appeared to the children of Esau the wicked and said to them: Will you accept the Torah? They said to Him: What is written in it? He said to them: "Thou shalt not murder" (Deut. 5:17). They then said to Him: The very heritage which our father left us was: "And by thy sword shalt thou live" (Gen. 27:40)....(continues asking the other nations)

Why was the Torah not given in the land of Israel? In order that the nations of the world should not have the excuse for saying: Because it was given in Israel's land, therefore we have not accepted it.

Another Reason: To avoid causing dissension among the tribes. Else one might have said: In my territory the Torah was given. And the other might have said: In my territory the Torah was given. Therefore, the Torah was given in the desert, publicly and openly [*demos, parrhesia*], in a place belonging to no one. To three things the Torah is likened: To the desert, to fire, and to water. This is to tell you that just as these three things are free to all who come into the world, so also are the words of the Torah free to all who come into the world.

ולפיכך נתבעו אומות העולם, כדי שלא ליתן פתחון פה להם כלפי שכינה, לומר אלו נתבענו כבר קיבלנו עלינו. הרי שנתבעו – ולא קבלו עליהם! שנאמר (דברים לג ב) "ויאמר ה' מסיני בא..." ונגלה על בני עשו הרשע ואומר להם: מקבלים אתם את התורה? אמרו לו: מה כתיב בה? – אמר להם "לא תרצח". אמרו: זו היא ירושה שהורישנו אבינו, שנאמר (בראשית כז מ) "על חרבך תחיה"...! מפני מה לא ניתנה תורה בארץ ישראל? שלא ליתן פתחון פה לאומות העולם, לומר לפי שנתנה בארצו לפיכך לא קבלנו. דבר אחר: שלא להטיל מחלוקת בין השבטים, שלא יהא זה אומר בארצי נתנה וזה אומר בארצי נתנה, לפיכך נתנה במדבר, דימוס פרהסיא במקום הפקר. בשלשה דברים נמשלה תורה במדבר ובאש ובמים לומר לך מה אלו חנם לכל באי העולם אף דברי תורה חנם לכל באי העולם.