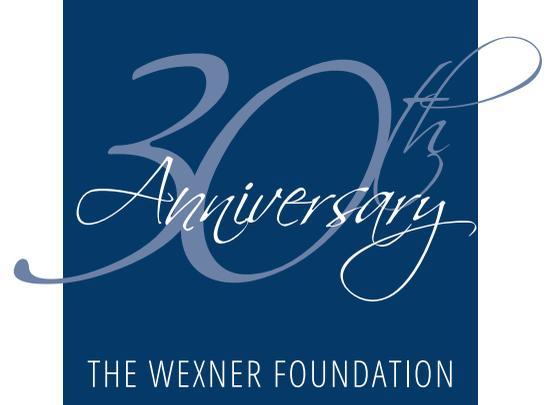


THE BLESSING OF AUTHENTICITY AND VULNERABILITY

SHIRA STUTMAN



With great thanks to Karen Miller Jackson, chevruta/partner in preparing these texts.

GENESIS 2:25

(25) And they were both naked, the Adam and his wife, and were not ashamed.

GENESIS 3:7-12

(7) Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they perceived that they were naked; and they sewed together fig leaves and made themselves loin-cloths. (8) They heard the sound of the Lord God moving about in the garden at the breezy time of day; and the Adam and his wife hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. (9) The Lord God called out to the Adam and said to him, "Where are you?" (10) He replied, "I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid." (11) Then He asked, "Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat of the tree from which I had forbidden you to eat?" The Adam said, "The woman You put at my side--she gave me of the tree, and I ate..."

- *Why do Adam and his wife hide?*
- *Why does God shame them? What else could God have done?*

BABYLONIAN TALMUD, YOMA 72b

Within and without shalt thou overlay it (Exodus 25.11). Raba said: Any scholar whose inside is not like his outside, is no scholar. Abaye, or, as some say, Rabbah b. Ulla said: He is called abominable, as it is said: How much less one that is abominable and impure, man who drinks iniquity like water (Job 15:16).

- *If we inserted the word "leader" instead of "scholar," would you argue for or against this text?*

LIKUTEI MOHARAN 2:48

And know, that all the of the efforts/motions and movements that you detach and remove yourself, each time, even slightly from the material/materialism toward the service of Hashem, all gather, join and bind together to aid you in your time of need, such as a crisis or time of trouble, Heaven Forbid... And know that [in life] a person has to cross a very, very narrow bridge, and the main thing is not to make oneself afraid at all.

- *You're crossing a very, very narrow bridge--how is it possible not to be afraid? We're all afraid of something. What does Rebbe Nachman want from us?*

יְהִיוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם עֲרוּמִים הָאָדָם וְאִשְׁתּוֹ וְלֹא יִתְבַּשְׂשׁוּ:

ז) וְתִפְקַחְנָה עֵינֵי שְׁנֵיהֶם וַיֵּדְעוּ כִּי עֲרוּמִם הֵם וַיִּתְפְּרוּ עָלֶיהָ תְּאֵנָה וַיַּעֲשׂוּ לָהֶם חֲגֹרֹת: (ח) וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ אֶת־קוֹל יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים מִתְהַלֵּךְ בְּגֵן לְרוּחַ הַיּוֹם וַיִּתְחַבֵּא הָאָדָם וְאִשְׁתּוֹ מִפְּנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים בְּתוֹךְ עֵץ הַגֵּן: (ט) וַיִּקְרָא יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶל־הָאָדָם וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ אֵיכָה: (י) וַיֹּאמֶר אֶת־קוֹלְךָ שָׁמַעְתִּי בְּגֵן וַאֲרָא כִּי־עִירַם אָנֹכִי וְאֶחָבָא: (יא) וַיֹּאמֶר מִי הִגִּיד לְךָ כִּי עִירַם אַתָּה הַמְּוַדְעֵץ אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִיךָ לִבְלֹתִי אֶל־מִמְנוֹ אֶכְלֹת: (יב) וַיֹּאמֶר הָאָדָם הַאִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר נָתַתָּה עִמָּדִי הִוא נָתְנָהּ־לִי מִן־הָעֵץ וְאָכַל:

שמות כה, יא) מבית ומחוץ תצפנו אמר רבא כל תלמיד חכם שאין תוכו כברו אינו תלמיד חכם (אמר) אבהי ואיתימא רבה בר עולא נקרא נתעב שגאמר (איוב טו, טז) אף כי נתעב ונאלח איש שותה כמים עולה

ודע שכל התנועות וההעסקות שאתה נתק ונעתק בכל פעם איזה מעט מן גשמיות לעבודתו יתברך כלם מתקבצים ומתחברים ומתקשרים ובאים לעזרתך בעת הצורך דהינו כשיש חס וש- לום איזה דחק ועת צרה חס ושלום: ודע שהאדם צריך לעבר על גשר צר מאד מאד והכלל והעקר שלא יתפחד כלל:

THE BLESSING OF AUTHENTICITY AND VULNERABILITY

SHIRA STUTMAN

30th
Anniversary

THE WEXNER FOUNDATION

YITCHAK BUXBAUM, THE LIGHT AND FIRE OF THE BAAL SHEM TOV

Rabbi Zev Wolf Kitzes was the shofarblower in the Besht's synagogue during the Days of Awe. The Besht called out the order of the blasts, and Rabbi Wolf blew the shofar. Rabbi Wolf had long been familiar with various kabbalistic kavvanot for shofar blowing, but one year he devoted a great deal of time and effort to prepare himself thoroughly for this holy task, with fear and awe, studying and reviewing all the kavvanot of the Ari. Worried that he might forget some of them, he wrote them all down on a piece of paper that he could look at during the shofar blowing. He then put the paper between the pages of his mahzor and, before the services, placed the mahzor on the bimah, to be ready when he needed it.

The Baal Shem Tov became aware of this and was displeased. When he ascended the bimah during the services to call out the order of the shofar blasts to Rabbi Wolf, he quietly removed Rabbi Wolf's notes from the mahzor. When Rabbi Wolf opened the mahzor to say the blessing before blowing the shofar, he realized to his great dismay that the paper with his notes had disappeared. He was crushed. He had gone to such lengths to prepare himself, and now it was all for nothing! He was so upset that he became confused and even forgot the kavvanot that he had always been familiar with and knew. He had no other choice than to blow the shofar with the simple intention of fulfilling the commandment of his Creator.

After the service, the Baal Shem Tov said to him, "Today you blew the shofar better than ever." And he explained, "In the King's palace there are many halls and chambers, and there are different keys for each gate. The Kavvanot serve as keys to open the various gates of heaven, but it's not always possible to find the right one for each lock and to make them fit what you are doing or saying at the moment. Furthermore, these keys tend to become rusty when someone meditates on the formulas by rote. But there's one simple and direct way," said the Besht, "to open all the gates and that's with an axe, which can smash open every lock so that one can gain entrance to all the chambers. A broken heart is like an axe that can break through all the barriers and reach right to the Throne of Glory."

- *Why was the Besht displeased? What's wrong with doing something precisely? Do a bunch of notes in the Mahzor really get in the way of kavannah? For whom?*

SIDDUR, ASHKENAZ 1:6

Blessed are You, Adonai our Gd, ruler of the universe, who clothes the naked.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם. מְלַבֵּישׁ עֲרֻמִּים: