YESHIVAT HAR ETZION

ISRAEL KOSCHITZKY VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH (VBM)

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

**On Being Chosen:**

**A Philosophical Investigation into the Election of the Jewish People**

**Prof. Samuel Lebens**

**Shiur #19: Stiff-Necked Arsonists**

In last week’s lesson, we explored a major debate between two large schools of thought that plays out in a variety of Talmudic and midrashic locations. This week, we explore what is, essentially, just one perplexing pericope found in Tractate *Beitza*. It states:

It is taught in the name of Rabbi Meir: For what reason was the Torah given to the Jewish people? It is because they are impudent.

A sage of the school of Rabbi Yishmael taught [regarding the verse]: “From His right hand went a fiery law for them” (Deuteronomy 33:2) – the Holy One, blessed be He, said: these people are fit to be given a fiery law. Some say a different version of [this teaching]: The ways of this people are like fire, such that had the Torah not been given to Israel, no nation or tongue could withstand them.

And this accords with what Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish said: “There are three impudent ones: the Jewish people among the nations; the dog among animals; and the rooster among birds.” And some say also “the goat among small cattle.” And some say also “the caper bush among trees.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

These views seem to fly in the face of the Biblical data. Wasn’t Abraham chosen because he had faith in God,[[2]](#footnote-2) or because he was sufficiently righteous to serve as God’s elect,[[3]](#footnote-3) or because God fell in love with him?[[4]](#footnote-4) Weren’t the Jewish people chosen to be a treasured possession of the Lord because He loved them above all others – because He set His heart upon them,[[5]](#footnote-5) because they were the apple of His eye?[[6]](#footnote-6) Now, admittedly, God may have fallen in love with us *despite* our impudence. Or, God may have fallen in love with Abraham *despite* the impudence of his descendants. But that’s not the picture that emerged from the Bible. Weren’t the Jewish people chosen because they were qualified to become a kingdom of priests within the community of nations?[[7]](#footnote-7) How does that sit with our being the most impudent and potentially destructive of all people?

To be more precise, the Talmud isn’t talking about why the Jewish people were *chosen*. It’s talking about why the Jewish people, who may have been chosen for some other reason, were given the Torah. But to separate the giving of the Torah so radically from the notion of the election seems unnatural, as does the notion that God happened to fall in love with the most destructive and impudent people on earth – whom He then had to constrain with the giving of the Torah because, had it not been for the Torah, the Jews would have destroyed the entire world.

On the contrary, it sounds as if the Rabbis, in this Talmudic passage, are talking about the election as a whole. They are offering a perspective that is in stark contrast with any straightforward reading of the narratives of the Torah. There’s no doubt that the Bible presents the Jews as prone to impudence, as a “stiff-necked people,”[[8]](#footnote-8) but the notion that God chose us *because* of that feature nowhere jumps off the page. Yet, according to our new Rabbinic perspective, the only reason God distinguishes the Jewish people from others, treating them differently from the way He treats others, is that it would have been too dangerous to leave them to their own devices. The Jews were too wild to be left alone.

It might be important to distinguish here between the views of Rabbi Meir and Reish Lakish, on the one hand, and the sage of the school of Rabbi Yishmael, on the other. The former characterize the Jewish people as *impudent*, using the Hebrew word *az*. The latter, by contrast, characterizes the Jewish people as *fiery*, with the implication – made explicit by the second version of that teaching – that they are a potentially destructive force. Are these two views the same? I think it depends on how we translate *az*. The notion that it relates to *impudence* or *shameless disobedience* stems from the Rabbinic idiom of *azut panim*, which means *to set one’s face* *against* another and is used to describe a sort of brazenness or shamelessness. If that’s what Rabbi Meir and Reish Lakish are talking about, then their view does seem very close to the anonymous scholar from the school of Rabbi Yishmael. A nation of shameless and brazen disobedience to moral norms would, indeed, be a danger to the entire world. This view should lead us to wonder where the evidence is, in the Bible, that before the giving of the Torah, the Jews posed such a threat. On the contrary, doesn’t the Bible present our founding ancestors as ethically upstanding (albeit human, and thus imperfect) individuals?[[9]](#footnote-9)

On the other hand, perhaps the two views come apart. We shouldn’t forget the more literal meaning of the word *az,* which has to do with *strength* or *fortitude*. Now, the fact that the editor of the Talmud chose to place these views together, in this particular fashion, seems to suggest that he took them all to be roughly equivalent. To suggest that Rabbi Meir and Reish Lakish are actually *praising* the Jewish people for their moral fortitude – suggesting that this strength was what caused them to deserve the honor of the Torah – would be going too far. All of the views here are (at least putatively) negative. That much seems clear. But rather than brazenfaced and shameless disobedience, Rabbi Meir and Reish Lakish might, instead, be characterizing the Jews merely as *stubborn*. If that’s the case, then despite the unanimous negativity in their appraisal of the Jews, the two views in this excerpt of the Gemara are actually very different. Were the Jews chosen to protect the world from their fire, or because of their stubbornness?

**Rabbi Yishmael and Phantom Limbs**

The sage of the school of Rabbi Yishmael is apparently saying that the Jewish people were given such a multitude of laws because their nature harbors a certain wildness, such that they were in need of heavenly constraints that weren’t necessary for others. It’s hardly believable as a claim. Surely there have been plenty of nations, in the history of humanity, who were far more barbarous but were not given a Torah to rein them in.[[10]](#footnote-10) In fact, it’s hard to know what to do with this view. It conflicts with so much of what we’ve seen so far in the Bible and from other Rabbis. In a striking example, it conflicts directly with the famous saying of Rabbi Chananya ben Okashya, according to which the fact that God gave us so many laws is a sign of His great love and appreciation for us, or at least, for the righteous among us.[[11]](#footnote-11) Given these tensions, I think it might be better to relate to the view of Rabbi Yishmael’s intellectual heir as something like a game of “corrective make-believe.”

What do I mean by corrective make-believe? Let’s unpack the notion with the help of Maimonides, who tells us, based upon the Talmud, the following:

A person needs to view himself, throughout the entire year, as if he were equally balanced between merit and sin and the world were equally balanced between merit and sin. If he performs one sin, he tips his balance and that of the entire world to the side of guilt and brings destruction upon himself. [But] if he fulfils one commandment, he tips his balance and that of the entire world to the side of merit and brings deliverance and salvation to himself and others. As it is said (Proverbs 10:25): A righteous man is the foundation of the world. [I.e.,] he, who acted righteously, tipped the balance of the entire world to merit, and saved it.[[12]](#footnote-12)

The idea is that we must view the world as if things are very evenly balanced, so that, on one hand, if you put even one step wrong, everything will come tumbling down, while on the other hand, if you do something marginally good, for instance, putting a tiny amount of money into a charity box, you save the world. Maimonides isn’t telling us that this perspective reflects the literal truth. You’re not supposed to *believe* it. But you are supposed to *make believe* it. This, I think, is an exercise of corrective make-believe: by pretending that something literally false is true, you end up acting more appropriately – you’ll end up acting in ways that are more fitting to the reality in which you live than you would have without the make-believe.

One of my favorite secular examples of corrective make-believe is drawn from the world of neuroscience. V. S. Ramachandran is the first physician to have cured the pain of amputees’ phantom limbs. Phantom hands are often clenched so tightly that the phantom fingers and fingernails inflict unbearable pain upon the phantom palm. Many of these patients can’t escape the pain because their phantom fists are paralyzed in this eye-watering clench. Ramachandran discovered a surprisingly low-tech solution. He got his patients to put their remaining hands into a box, mimicking the position that they felt their phantom hands to be in. Inside the box was a mirror. When the patient looked down, he didn’t merely see his actual hand; he saw its reflection as well. This looked just like seeing his actual hand and his phantom. By slowly opening his only real hand, he could make it look as if he were opening both hands. Sure enough, this deceived the brain into thinking that the phantom hand had opened. This relieved the pain.

A halakhic example emerges on the seder night. When we recite the Haggadah*,* we say that “We were slaves in Egypt, and the Lord our God took us out from there with a strong hand and an outstretched arm.” So far so good, but then we say, “If the Holy One, blessed be He, had not taken us out of Egypt, then we, our children, and our children’s children would have remained slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt.” But that’s not true. Do contemporary Jews really believe that however many thousands of years after the fact, we would still have been slaves to Pharaoh? There is no Pharaoh. Do we really believe that had we stayed enslaved, then the only political institutions in the history of man to have lasted for that many millennia would have been the Pharaonic ones, which would still be going strong? This all seems highly unlikely. But then, later in the Haggadah, we read that “In every generation, a person is obliged to regard himself as if he had come out of Egypt.” *As if*. The task isn’t to believe; the task is to make-believe.

The Rabbis, I think, are inviting you to experience yourself as personally liberated by God, and to see all those other people in the world who are suffering forms of modern-day slavery as comrades with whom you can empathize because you were once where they are. To bring this back to the school of Rabbi Yishmael and its denigration of the Jewish people, let me offer one more example of a creative, or perhaps in this instance we should call it a “regulative,” make-believe. It appears in a *beraita* that asks why humans were the last of the creations and presents a number of possible answers. I quote two of them:

So that if [a person] becomes haughty, [one could] say to him: The mosquito preceded you in the work of Creation…

Alternatively, [humanity was created last] in order that he enter into a feast immediately. This is comparable to a king of flesh and blood, who [first] built palaces and improved them, and prepared a feast, and [only] afterward brought in his guests.[[13]](#footnote-13)

Which of these two views should we accept? It’s far from clear to me that this *beraita* is concerned with uncovering the deep theological facts of the matter. It seems more interested in regulating our feelings and attitudes – from two directions. When a person gets thoughts above himself, he should be reminded that humans were created last, such that even the mosquito can be thought of as prior to him. On the other hand, there may be times when it’s appropriate to view humanity as God’s guest of honor, only brought onto the scene once all of the necessary preparations had been made. Perhaps the ideal is to somehow hold both attitudes concurrently.[[14]](#footnote-14) Don’t ask which of these opinions is *true*. To ask the question is to misunderstand what we’re doing. Ask instead, which one should I be telling myself at this particular time in my life? Sometimes we need to pick ourselves up, and sometimes we need to keep ourselves in check.

Perhaps something similar is happening with the sage from the school of Rabbi Yishmael. The Jewish people have been singled out, among all the peoples on earth, in that we were given 613 commandments from God. Others were only given 7. This knowledge is liable to go to our heads. When that happens, perhaps we should remember that God’s will is ultimately inscrutable and that there are many reasons why we might have been so singled out. When we’re feeling battered by the waves of antisemitic oppression, or when our halakhic obligations start to feel like a burden, perhaps it’s appropriate to view the multitude of commandments as Rabbi Chananya tells us to view them – as signs of God’s great love for us. When the fact of our election goes to our head, by contrast, we should remember the words of Rabbi Yishmael, and recognize that one reason a people might be given many laws is that they’re a people in particular need of being restrained. The deep theological facts of the matter may be beyond us. There may, indeed, be a kernel of truth in both perspectives. But whatever its exact relationship to the truth, the words of Rabbi Yishmael’s intellectual heir provide us with an important regulative make-believe.

In fact, cultural arrogance would be, in the eyes of many rabbis, an obstacle to the mission of the election. God, we are told, cannot dwell in a person’s heart when that heart is full of arrogance.[[15]](#footnote-15) It’s as if there’s no space in such a heart. So too, God cannot dwell in the midst of a people, thus empowering their mission, if they are full of themselves. According to the Rabbis, God only chose Mount Sinai as the site of the revelation because it was the least imposing of the mountains in the region, a symbol for the lack of arrogance.[[16]](#footnote-16) The election is an honor, but only when we’re not looking for honor. At such times, the 613 laws of the Torah are a privilege. But if there are times when the people of the elect become full of themselves, then those same laws should perhaps be regarded, at those times, as nothing more than reins to hold back the people’s destructive fire.

**A Stiff-Necked People**

If Rabbi Meir and Reish Lakish are describing the Jews as brazen and shameless and disobedient by nature, then their view might be equivalent to the student of Rabbi Yishmael’s school. But what if they’re merely describing the Jews as *stubborn*? If that’s the case, then I think they’re proposing something much more substantial than a regulative make-believe. Indeed, there is a strain of Rabbinic thought according to which the stubbornness of the Jewish people, though a constant annoyance to God in the Bible, is also one of the characteristics for which we were chosen in the first place. God frequently lambasts the Jews for being stiff-necked, but on one occasion, Moses uses this description in their defense. After the fiasco with the golden calf, Moses entreats the Lord and says:

If I have found favor in your eyes, my Master, let my Master go among us, because it is a stiff-necked people. Pardon our iniquities and our sins and take us as Your own possession.[[17]](#footnote-17)

Of course, this appeal to our stiff-neckedness could have been an effort in mitigation. It’s as if Moses is saying, “please forgive them, because it’s their stubborn nature to sin. They can’t easily help themselves.”[[18]](#footnote-18) But there’s a *midrash* that suggests the opposite: Moses isn’t describing our stiff-neckedness, on this occasion, as a vice, but as a crowning virtue, one that should cause God to love us and make us His possession:

Rav Yakim said that there are three *chatzuf* creations: among the animals, the dog; among the birds, the chicken; and among the nations, the Jews. Rav Yitzchak bar Radifa said in the name of Rabbi Ammi, You [might] think this is an insult, but it isn’t anything other than their praise.[[19]](#footnote-19)

On this occasion, the word that’s used to describe the Jews is less ambiguous, which is why you’d be quick to think it’s an insult. The primary meaning of *chatzuf* really is about brazenness, rather than mere stubbornness. But we’re promptly and explicitly told that it isn’t *intended* as an insult. And indeed, Marcus Jastrow lists, in his dictionary, as a secondary meaning of *chatzuf*, “*undaunted, energetic, strong*.” Once again, I would urge us to translate the word in terms of stubbornness. The *midrash* ends with a strange phrase, bolted directly onto the end of the excerpt I’ve quoted above, with no explanation, that translates, roughly, to “Jewish or hanged.” I take it to be expressing the following ides: so stubborn are the Jews that even when they’ve been given the choice between being Jewish and being executed (Jewish or hanged), myriad Jews throughout history have clung to their Judaism. On this midrashic understanding, Moses is telling God something like this: “Yes, it’s true that they’re stiff-necked, and that can be a big challenge. But remember that it is this very quality – this stubbornness of theirs – that, in the fullness of time, will be manifest in a stubborn refusal ever to reject You, even when the stakes couldn’t be higher.”

Indeed, the remarkable stubbornness of the Jewish people has often been associated with their sanctification of God’s name. In the words of Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch:

A thousand times delusions, armed with material power and passions aroused by these delusions, opened to Israel the path to the full enjoyment of earthly happiness, if it would, with but a single word, declare its rejection of the All-One – its disregard of His Torah; but, as often as temptation met it, it would cast away in scorn this easy key, preferring rather to extend the neck to the blow of the executioner. It sacrificed its own scanty measure of happiness, the most precious possession of earthly existence, wives, children, parents, brothers, and sisters, life, property, and all the joys of life. With Israel’s heart-blood is written on all the pages of history the doctrine that there is but one God, and that there are higher and better things for mankind than wealth and pleasure. Its entire *Galuth* [exile] history is one vast altar, upon which it sacrificed all that men desire and love for the sake of acknowledging God and His law. Among all nations and in every region such altars have smoked. Did they not teach, could they fail to teach, a most impressive lesson?[[20]](#footnote-20)

The stubborn refusal of so many Jews to relinquish their Judaism, even on pain of death, should serve as a lesson to the nations that there are things more sacred than any earthly power can offer. In this text, it is the stubbornness of the Jews that enables them to be a light unto the nations.

A story is told of Jewish inmates in a Nazi labor camp who, one year, insisted on fasting on Yom Kippur. They were ordered to eat. But they refused. After their fast, a Nazi commander approached them, and said,

I know that you fasted today, but I am not going to invoke the death penalty... Instead you are going to climb that mountain and slide down on your stomachs. Those among you who would like to repent [of your fasting] may say [that] they were wrong to disobey army regulations and fast today. Those who wish to do so may raise their hands.[[21]](#footnote-21)

Not a single hand was raised. Instead, they hauled their exhausted bodies to the top of the mountain and slid down on their stomachs. Upon the completion of this cruel task, they were ordered to line up again. They were asked again if they would like to repent, or whether they’d rather climb the mountain once more, and slide down again on their stomachs. Not one hand was raised. They repeated this ordeal ten times, each time with more determination. When it was over,

a young German officer of low rank walked over to the group and said “I don’t know who will win this war, but one thing I am sure of – people like you, a nation like yours, will never be defeated, never.”[[22]](#footnote-22)

In fact, Jewish history is as much characterized by the Jews’ stubborn refusal to betray their identity as it has been by their slipping and sliding in terms of other religious and moral obligations. But, in light of the Name-bearing Model of the election, we know that Jewish identity itself is indelibly connected, even in the eyes of the non-Jewish world, with the God of the Bible. Accordingly, a stubborn refusal to shed that Jewish identity, even if a person isn’t particularly observant of other Jewish laws, is tantamount to a stubborn refusal to shed an association with God. The Rabbis saw religious significance in this stubbornness. Witness the following somewhat shocking *midrash*:

The guardian angels of the nations are destined in the future to come to denounce Israel before the Holy One blessed be He, and say: “These [nations] engaged in idol worship, and those [i.e., the Jews] engaged in idol worship; these engaged in forbidden sexual relations, and those engaged in forbidden sexual relations; these shed blood, and those shed blood. Why are these descending to hell and those are not descending?”[[23]](#footnote-23) The Holy One blessed be He responds to them and says: “If that is so, all the peoples will descend with their gods to hell.” That is what is written: “For all the peoples will walk, each in the name of its god, [but we will walk in the name of the Lord our God forever and ever]” (Micah 4:5). [That is to say: at the end of days, every nation will go to hell *with* its god, and we will go to hell with the Lord our God]. Rabbi Reuven said: Had this matter not been written, it would have been impossible to say it: As it were, “for the Lord will judge [*nishpat*] in fire” (Isaiah 66:16). *Shofet* is not written here, but rather *nishpat* [i.e., the passive form of the verb, which implies that God too will be judged]. This is what David said, inspired by the Divine Spirit: “Even if I were to walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me[; Your rod and Your staff, they will comfort me]” (Psalms 23:4).[[24]](#footnote-24)

The Jews (both as individuals and as a collective) have often behaved abominably, no more nor less than many other nations. But one thing sets them apart. As a nation, throughout their history, they have clung to their God. They have done so stubbornly. And thus, even if God sends all people to hell, because they may all deserve such a fate, He will stubbornly cling to the Jewish people much like they’ve always clung to Him. Accordingly, if that’s what required, God will descend to hell with His people, and save them there. Other peoples, who have clung to other gods, can go to hell with *their* gods. But their gods won’t save them from hell, because their gods don’t exist.

Now, of course, it isn’t only Jews who have clung to the God of the Jews – which is to say, to God as Judaism understands Him to be. There are many righteous gentiles who have clung to Him too. But this *midrash* isn’t addressing them; it is addressing those gentiles who deserve posthumous punishment, on the basis of their own behavior, and who didn’t cling to the God of Judaism. What’s more, one might read a hidden implication in this *midrash* that even Jews who don’t cling to God as tenaciously as their brethren will not benefit from Divine protection in hell.[[25]](#footnote-25)

And thus, we’ve discovered a new model of the election. The Stiff-necked Model. As with our liminality, our stiff-neckedness is often associated with our moral failings. But, at the same time, and once again, like our liminality, it is our stiff-neckedness that has allowed us to function as God’s ambassadors throughout the outrageous trials and tribulations of Jewish history. An uncomfortable detail of this model, of course, is its proximity to a sort of racial essentialism. Indeed, our stubbornness is described by the Rabbis in almost biological terms: the dogs among the animals, the chickens among the birds, the caper bush among the trees, and the Jews among the nations. Despite that appearance, we’d do better to regard our stubbornness not as a *racial* property – since the Jewish people are, as we’ve already pointed out, a multi-racial people, one that happily accepts converts from outside – but as something like a *cultural* inheritance. In any case, without a doubt, a prominent strain of Rabbinic thinking views our stubbornness as central to God’s election of the Jews. When chosenness goes to our head, however, we should recall both the regulative make-believe of the sage from Rabbi Yishmael’s academy and the fact that stubbornness itself is a double-edged sword.

1. BT *Beitza* 25b. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Genesis 15:6. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Genesis 18:19. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Isaiah 41:8. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Deuteronomy 7:6-8. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Deuteronomy 32:10. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Exodus 19:6. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. See, for example, Exodus 32:9 and Deuteronomy 9:6. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Thanks to Ellis Jackson for raising this question with me. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. This was the fair reaction of Ethan Gubin, who read an earlier draft of this lesson. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Mishna *Makkot* 3:16. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. *Mishneh Torah*, *Hilkhot Teshuva* 3:4. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. BT *Sanhedrin* 38a. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Thanks to Quincy Barrett for making this point to me. In fact, it’s a point that’s reminiscent of the story told of Rabbi Simcha Bunim of Peshischa, who reportedly carried a slip of paper in each pocket: On one, he had written, in accordance with the saying of the Mishna (*Sanhedrin* 4:5): “for my sake was the world created.” On the other, he had written the words of Abraham (Genesis 18:27): “I am dust and ashes.” He wanted to carry both perspectives with him at all times. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. BT *Sota* 5a. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. BT *Megilla* 29a; *Midrash Tehillim*, Buber edition, 68:9. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Exodus 34:9. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. See the Ibn Ezra to Exodus 34:9. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. *Shemot Rabba* 42:9. Note that, despite the clear similarities between this *midrash* and the position of Rabbi Meir and Reish Lakish in BT *Sanhedrin* 38a, this view is not here stated in the name of Rabbi Meir. In fact, Rabbi Meir is quoted earlier on in this *midrash* as saying that the Jews are described as stiff-necked because they deserve to be beheaded! I imagine that this represents a Rabbinic dispute regarding what Rabbi Meir’s opinion was and whether he was well- or ill-disposed toward Jewish stubbornness. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. *Nineteen Letters*, letter 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. I discovered this story in Rabbi Chaim Jachter’s, *Reason to Believe: Rational Explanations of Orthodox Jewish Faith* (Jerusalem: Menorah, 2017), citing Yaffa Eliach, *Hasidic Tales of the Holocaust* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 101-105. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Yaffa Eliach, *Hasidic Tales of the Holocaust*, p. 105. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. The Hebrew word for “hell” in this instance is *gehinom.* Jewish theology doesn’t tend to endorse a belief in eternal damnation, and *Gehinom* is in generally conceived to be more like the Catholic notion of limbo than hell. That is to say: it is thought of as temporary stage for those souls who need some sort of repair before being elevated to heaven. Perhaps, even here, the descent to hell was only intended to be temporary. On the other hand, this may be a source that bucks the general trend and thinks in terms of heaven and hell as two opposing final destinations. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. *Shir Ha-shirim Rabba* 2:1:3. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Quincy Barrett worries that this sounds more like Christian theology than anything Rabbinic. Various strands of Christianity have placed faith above deeds to such a degree that they might expect God to save them, irrespective of how they’ve behaved in this life, so long as they’ve clung to God in faith. Surely, Rabbinic theology requires more, in terms of a person living up to the demands of *halakha* and the moral life. My response would be that Judaism might demand more in order to enjoy the full benefits stored away for the righteous in the world to come – but, so far as this *midrash* is concerned, to be saved from hell, it might be enough simply to cling to God. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)