

Vayikra Rabbah 1:5

Rabbi Joshua of Sikhnin in the name of R. Levi opened [discourse by citing the following] verse: *For it is better to be told, "Come up here," than to be put lower in the presence of the prince* (Prov. 25:7).

Rabbi Akiba taught [the following tradition] in the name of R. Simeon b. Azzai, Take a place two or three lower and sit down, so that people may tell you, "Come up," but do not go up [beyond your station] lest people say to you, "Go down." It is better for people to say to you, "Come up, come up," than that they say to you, "Go down, go down." And so did Hillel say, When I am degraded, I am exalted, but when I am exalted, I am degraded. What is the pertinent biblical verse? *He who raises himself is to be made to sit down, he who lowers himself is to [raised so that he is] seen* (Ps. 113:5). So too you find that, when the Holy One, blessed be He, revealed himself to Moses from the midst of the bush, Moses hid his face from Him. That is in line with the following verse of Scripture, *Moses hid his face* (Ex. 3:6).

Said to him the Holy One, blessed be He, *And now go* (לך) *I am sending you to Pharaoh* (Ex. 3:10). Said R. Eleazar, It would have been sufficient to write, "You (lk לך) [without adding] an *h* (ה) at the end of the word. [Why then did Scripture add the *h*?] The letter *h* (ה) at the end of the word signifies, If you are not the one who will redeem them, no one else is going to redeem them. At the Red Sea, Moses stood aside. Said to him the Holy One, blessed be He, *Now you, raise your rod and stretch out your hand [over the sea and divide it]* (Ex. 14:16). That is to say, If you do not split the sea, no one else is going to split it. At Sinai Moses stood aside. Said to him the Holy One, blessed be He, *Come up to the Lord, you and Aaron* (Ex. 24:1). That is to say, If you do not come up, no one else is going to come up. At the [revelation of the instructions governing sacrifices at] the tent of meeting, [Moses] stood to the side. Said to him the Holy One, blessed be He, How long are you going to humble yourself? For the times demand only you. You must recognize that that is the case, for among them all, the Word [of God] called only to Moses, as it is written, *And [God] called to Moses* (Lev. 1:1).