

The Whole Tree Shakes

Source Sheet by Joshua Jacobs

Leviticus 26:37

With no one pursuing, they shall stumble over one another as before the sword...

ויקרא כ"ו:ל"ז

וְכָשְׁלוּ אִישׁ-בְּאֶחָיו כְּמִפְּנֵי-חֶרֶב
וְרִדְף אָזַן וְלֹא-תִהְיֶה לְכֶם תְּקוּמָה
לִפְנֵי אֲיִבֵיכֶם:

Rabbeinu Bahya, Vayikra 26:37:1

וכשלו איש באחיו, "they will stumble over one another, etc." ...they will stumble each over the sins committed by the other. G'd tells Joshua that "Israel has sinned;" G'd did not tell him that "an Israelite had sinned." The whole nation was held responsible for the sin of an individual. Someone who does not admonish the sinner has made himself his partner. This incident prompted the sages to comment that the use of the word "nut" in אל גנת (ו) אל גנת אגוז, "I went down to the nut-grove" (Song of Songs, 6:11), describes that just as it is impossible to pluck one walnut without making the whole tree shake, so it is impossible for an individual to commit a sin without ripples of what he did affecting the entire Jewish people.

רבנו בחיי, ויקרא כ"ו:ל"ז:א

וכשלו איש באחיו. דרשו רז"ל בעון אחיו, מלמד שכל ישראל ערבים זה לזה. שנאמר (יהושע ז) חטא ישראל וגם גנבו וגם כחשו וגם שמו בכליהם, חטא היחיד תלאו על כל ישראל. ומזה אמרו בשיר השירים רבה (ו) אל גנת אגוז ירדתי, למה נמשלו ישראל לאגוז, מה אגוז אתה נוטל אחד מן הכרי כולם מדרדרין ומתגלגלין זה אחר זה, כך ישראל לקה אחד מהם כולם מרגישיין...

Shevuot 39a:22

“And they shall stumble one upon another” (Leviticus 26:37)?
...they shall stumble spiritually, **one due to the iniquity of another**, which **teaches that the entire Jewish people are considered guarantors for one another.**

שבועות ל"ט א:כ"ב

וכל עבירות שבתורה מכל העולם לא והכתיב (ויקרא כו, לז) וכשלו איש באחיו איש בעון אחיו מלמד שכל ישראל ערבים זה בזה

"Pronouns" by Carly Wilson Baker

O God, You said,
“Say, ‘We’”;
But I shook my head,
Hid my hands tight behind my back, and said,
Stubbornly,
“I.”
Again You said,
“Say, ‘We’”;
But I looked upon them, grimy and all awry.
Myself in those twisted shapes? Ah, no!
Distastefully I turned my head away,
Persisting,
“They.”
Again You said,
“Say, ‘We’”;
And I
At last,
Richer by a hoard
Of years,
Looked in their eyes and found the heavy word
That bent my neck and bowed my head:
Like a shamed school child then I mumbled low,
“We, O God.”