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Fearing God

Rabbi Chelbo said in the name of Rav Huna: If one is filled with the fear of Heaven, his words are heard, for it is written: *The end of the matter, when all has been heard: Fear God, etc.*

[*The verse continues: and keep his commandments, for this is all of man.*] Rabbi Elozar explains that the meaning of ‘for this is all of man’ is that the Holy One, Blessed be He, says: The entire world was created for his sake only.

Rabbi Abba bar Kahana says: He (*who fears God and keeps his mitzvos*) is equal in value to the whole world.

Rabbi Shimon ben Azzai said, and some say, Rabbi Shimon ben Zoma said that the entire world was created just as an accompaniment for him.

Rabbi Chelbo said in the name of Rav Huna: If one knows that his friend is used to greeting him, he should greet him first, for it is written: *Seek peace and pursue it.* And if one’s friend greets him and he does not return the greeting, he is called a robber, for it is written: *You have eaten up the vineyard; the property robbed from the poor is in your houses.* (6b)

Hashem’s Prayer

Rabbi Yochanan said in the name of Rabbi Yosi: How do we know that the Holy One, Blessed be He, prays? It is because it is written: *I will bring them to My holy mountain and make them joyful in the house of My prayer.* It does not say, ‘their prayer,’ but ‘My prayer’; therefore you may derive that the Holy One, Blessed be He, prays.

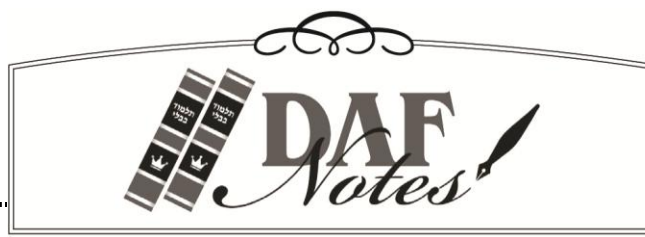
Rav Zutra bar Toviya said in the name of Rav: The following is Hashem’s prayer: May it be My will that My mercy may suppress My anger, and that My mercy may prevail over My sterner attributes, so that I may deal with My children in the attribute of mercy, and on their behalf, I go beyond the limit of strict justice.

It was taught in a *braisa*: Rabbi Yishmael ben Elisha said: I once entered into the innermost part (*of the Sanctuary – the Holy of Holies*) to offer incense, and I saw *Akatriel, Kah, Hashem, Tzevakos (all Names of God)* seated upon a high and exalted throne. He said to me: Yishmael, My son, bless Me! I replied: May it be your will that Your mercy may suppress Your anger, and that Your mercy may prevail over Your sterner attributes, so that You may deal with Your children in the attribute of mercy, and on their behalf, You go beyond the limit of strict justice! And He nodded to me with His head (*showing His consent*).

The *Gemora* notes that we learn here incidentally that the blessing of an ordinary man must not be regarded lightly in your eyes. (7a)

Hashem’s Anger

And Rabbi Yochanan said in the name of Rabbi Yosi: How do we know that we must not try to placate a man in the time of his anger? For it is written: *My face will go and I will give you rest.* The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to Moshe: Wait until My countenance of anger shall pass away and then I shall give you rest.



The *Gemora* asks: But is there anger before the Holy One, Blessed be He?

The *Gemora* answers: Yes, for it has been taught in a *braisa*: God is angry every day, but how long does His anger last? It lasts only a moment. And how long is a moment? It is one fifty-three thousand eight hundred eighty eighth of an hour. No creature could ever precisely calculate this moment, except Bilaam the wicked, of whom it is written: *one who knows the mind of the Supreme One*. Now Bilaam did not even know what was on his animal's mind - could he possibly have known what was on the mind of the Supreme One? Of course not! [The *Gemora* here is eluding to what was taught in a *Gemora* elsewhere: *What do we mean when we say that he did not know what was on the mind of his animal? The Moabite emissaries said to Bilaam: Why did you not ride a horse? He said to them: Usually I ride a horse. However, today I am riding a donkey, because I put my horses in the marshland to graze. Thereupon, the she-donkey said to Bilaam in front of the Moabites: "Am I not your she-donkey?" "Merely for carrying burdens," Bilaam said, trying to cut her off before she could contradict him further. "That you have ridden on," the donkey continued, contradicting Bilaam's contention that she was merely a beast of burden. "Only occasionally," Bilaam said, implying that ordinarily he did not ride her. "All your life until this day," the donkey went on, contradicting Bilaam's contention that he had never ridden her except on rare occasions. "And not only that," she continued, "but at night I perform marital acts with you." Bilaam was unable to respond to this retort of the donkey.] Rather, what is the meaning of Bilaam's description of himself as *one who knows the mind of the Supreme One*? It means that he knew how to determine the precise moment at which The Holy One, Blessed be He, becomes angry. If Bilaam cursed someone at that exact moment, the curse would be effective. And this is the meaning of what the prophet Michah said to Israel: *My people, remember, please, what Balak king of Moav plotted, and what Bilaam the son of Beor answered him; [remember the period] from the Shittim to the Gilgal, so that you may realize the benevolences of Hashem*. What is the meaning of *so that you may realize the benevolences of Hashem*? The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to Israel: Realize, please, how much compassion I carried out for you in that I did not become angry all those days, in the days of the wicked Bilaam when he was looking to curse you, for had I become angry during any of*

those days, no remnant at all would have remained from the enemies of Israel (*referring to the Jewish people*). This is the meaning of that which Bilaam said to Balak: *How can I curse? God has not cursed, etc. How can I anger? Hashem has not become angry*. This teaches that throughout all those days God did not become angry.

The *Gemora* states that His anger lasts a moment, and Rabbi Avin said, and others say that Rabbi Avina said, the moment is equal to the amount of time it takes to say the word (*re'ga*, meaning 'moment').

It is written: *God is angered every day*. And how long does His anger last? It is but a moment, as it is written: *for His anger endures but a moment, life results from His favor* etc. Alternatively, the length of His anger is derived from the following verse: *Go, my people, enter your rooms, and close your doors behind you; hide for a moment till anger passes*. This clearly indicates that Hashem's anger does not last longer than a moment.

The *Gemora* asks: And when exactly does that moment of anger occur?

The *Gemora* answers: It is during the first three hours of the day, when the comb of the rooster pales. Although it is always pale, at all other times there are red streaks inside it; however, at that time, there are no red streaks in it.

The *Gemora* relates an incident: There was a certain heretic who was in the neighborhood of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi, who used to annoy Rabbi Yehoshua. One day, Rabbi Yehoshua took a rooster, tied it by its foot, sat it up, and gazed intently at it. He said: When that moment comes that the rooster's comb pales, I will curse the heretic, for then my curse will be effective. When that moment came, however, Rabbi Yehoshua dozed off. Rabbi Yehoshua thereupon said: One may deduce from here that it is not proper to have another punished on one's account, as it is written: *It is also not good for a righteous person to punish*, which implies that one should not pronounce curses even against heretics.

A *Tanna* taught in the name of Rabbi Meir: At the hour the sun shines in the morning, and the pagan kings place their crowns



on their heads and bow to their sun in worship, at that moment Hashem immediately becomes angry. (7a)

When Bad things happen....

And Rabbi Yochanan said in the name of Rabbi Yosi: Better is one self-discipline in the heart of a man than many lashes, for it is written: And she shall run after her lovers ... then she shall say, "I shall go and return to my first husband; for then was it better with me than now."

Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish said: It is better than a hundred lashes, for it is written: *The humbleness from rebuke enters deeper into a man of understanding than a hundred lashes into a fool.*

And Rabbi Yochanan said in the name of Rabbi Yosi: Three things did Moshe ask of the Holy One, Blessed be He, and they were granted to him. He asked that the Divine Presence should rest upon Israel, and it was granted to him, for it is written: *Is it not in that You accompany us [so that it is known that I have found favor in Your eyes].* He asked that the Divine Presence should not rest upon the idolaters, and it was granted to him, for it is written: *so that I and your people will be made distinguished.* He asked that He should show him the ways of the Holy One, Blessed be He (*regarding administering justice*), and it was granted to him, for it is written: *Show me now Your ways.* Moshe said before Him: Master of the Universe, why is it that some righteous men have it good and others have it bad, some wicked men have it good and others have it bad? He replied to him: Moshe, the righteous man who has it good is the righteous man the son of a righteous man; the righteous man who has it bad is a righteous man the son of a wicked man. The wicked man who has it good is a wicked man son of a righteous man; the wicked man who has it bad is a wicked man son of a wicked man.

The master had stated: The righteous man who has it good is the righteous man the son of a righteous man; the righteous man who has it bad is a righteous man the son of a wicked man.

The *Gemora* asks: But is this so? For one verse states: *He visits the sin of the fathers upon the sons,* and another verse states: *Children will not be killed because of the sin of their fathers;*

and a contradiction was pointed out between these two verses, and the answer was given that there is no difficulty. They are punished on account of the sin of their fathers when they retain the sinful ways of their fathers, and they are not punished when they do not continue in the course of their fathers! [*Accordingly, you cannot say here that the righteous man who has it bad is a righteous man the son of a wicked man, for he would not be punished for the sins of his father!*]

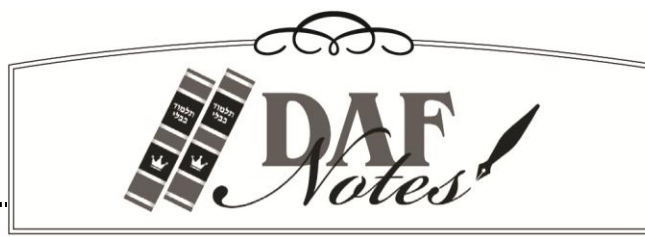
Rather, it must be that Hashem said to Moshe as follows: A righteous man who has it good is a completely righteous man; the righteous man who has it bad is not a completely righteous man. The wicked man who has it good is not a completely wicked man; the wicked man who has it bad is a completely wicked man. (7a)

Moshe's Requests

The *Gemora* notes that this statement of Rabbi Yochanan (*that Moshe was granted his three requests*) is in disagreement with the saying of Rabbi Meir, for Rabbi Meir said: Two requests were granted to him, and one was not granted to him, for it is written: *And I will show favor to whom I decide to show favor,* which we may infer from here that he will be shown favor - although he may not deserve it. And the verse continues: *And I will show mercy to whom I decide to show mercy,* which we may infer from here that he will be shown favor - although he may not deserve it.

The passage continues: *And He said, "You will not be able to see My face."* A *braisa* was taught in the name of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Karchah: The Holy One, Blessed be He, said the following to Moshe: When I wanted (*to show Myself to you - by the burning bush*), you did not want (*to see My face*); now that you want, I do not want.

The *Gemora* notes that this is in disagreement with the interpretation of this verse given by Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachmeini in the name of Rabbi Yonasan, for Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachmeini said in the name of Rabbi Yonasan: As a reward of three acts (*by the burning bush*), Moshe was privileged to obtain three things: In reward of '*And Moshe hid his face,*' he obtained the brightness of his face. In reward of '*for he was afraid,*' he obtained the privilege that they were afraid to come



near him. In reward of 'to gaze upon God's Face,' he obtained 'the image of Hashem does he gaze.'

The passage concludes: *And I will take away My and, and you shall see My back.* Rav Chana bar Bizna said in the name of Rabbi Shimon Chasida: This teaches us that the Holy One, Blessed be He, showed Moshe the knot of the *tefillin* that He wears. (7a)

R' Yochanan

And Rabbi Yochanan said in the name of Rabbi Yosi: No word in a person's favor that issued from the Holy One, Blessed be He, even if based upon a condition, was ever rescinded by Him. How do we know this? It is from our teacher Moshe, for it is written (*by the sin of the Golden Calf*): *Leave me alone that I may destroy them ... and I will make of you a nation mightier and more numerous than they.* Though Moshe prayed that this might be mercifully averted and it was cancelled (*for he did not want the Nation of Israel to be destroyed*), the blessing (*that he will father a great nation*) was nevertheless fulfilled towards his children, for it is written: *The sons of Moshe: Gershom and Eliezer. And the sons of Eliezer were Rechaviah, the chief etc. And the sons of Rechaviah were very numerous etc.* And Rav Yosef taught a *braisa*: They were more than sixty myriads (600,000). This is to be learned through a *gezeirah shavah* (*one of the thirteen principles of Biblical hermeneutics; it links two similar words from dissimilar verses in the Torah*) from the two occurrences of the term 'numerous.' Here it is written: *very numerous*, and elsewhere it is written: *And the children of Israel were very fruitful and increased abundantly, and became numerous.*

And Rabbi Yochanan said in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai: From the day that the Holy One, Blessed be He, created the world, there was no man that called the Holy One, Blessed be He, "Lord," until Abraham came and called Him "Lord," for it is written: *And he said, My Lord Hashem, from where shall I know that I shall inherit it?*

Rav said: Even Daniel was answered (*in his prayer*) only for the sake of Abraham, as it is written: *Now therefore, our God, pay heed to the prayer of Your servant and to his supplications, and cause Your face to shine upon your Sanctuary that is desolate, for the sake of My Lord.* He ought to have said: 'for Your sake'?

The meaning must be: For the sake of Abraham, who (*was the first who*) called You 'Lord.'

And Rabbi Yochanan said in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai: How do we know that we must not try to placate a man in the time of his anger? For it is written: *My face will go and I will give you rest.*

And Rabbi Yochanan said in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai: From the day that the Holy One, Blessed be He, created His world there was no man that thanked the Holy One, Blessed be He, until Leah came and thanked Him, for it is written (*when she had her fourth son, Yehudah – seemingly one more than her share*): *This time will I thank God.* (7a – 7b)

Name's are Significant

[*The Gemora expounds on the meaning of her other son Reuven.*] What is the meaning of 'Reuven'? Rabbi Elozar said: Leah said: See the difference between my son ('Re'u' – see; 'ven' – my son) and the son (*Esav*) of my father-in-law (*Yitzchak*). The son of my father-in-law voluntarily sold his firstborn right (*to Yaakov*), for it is written: *And he sold his birthright to Yaakov*, and nonetheless, see what is written of him: *And Esav hated Yaakov*, and it is also written: *And he said: Isn't he rightly named Yaakov, for he has unseated me these two times (with the birthright and the blessing)?* [*Leah continued:*] My son, however, although Yosef took his firstborn right from him against his will, as it is written: For because he defiled his father's bed, his firstborn right was given to the sons of Yosef, and nonetheless, he (*Reuven*) was not jealous of him, for it is written: *And Reuven heard it (about Yosef in the pit), and rescued him out of their hand.*

What is the meaning of the name Ruth (*the Moabite*)? Rabbi Yochanan said: It is because she was privileged that David descended from her, who saturated the Holy One, Blessed be He, with songs and praises.

Rabbi Elozar said: We know that the name of a person has an effect upon his life from that which: Come and see the works of God, who has made desolations (*shamos*) in the earth. Do not read it as *shamos* – desolations, but rather as *sheimos* – names. (7b)



David and Absalom

And Rabbi Yochanan said in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai: A degenerate son in a man's house is worse (*suffering*) than the war of Gog and Magog, for it is written: *A song of David, when he fled from Absalom his son*, and it is written after that: *Hashem, how many are my adversaries! Many are they that rise up against me*. But in regard to the war of Gog and Magog it is written: *Why are the people gathering? And why do the nations mutter in vain*, but it is not written: *'how many are my adversaries!'*

A song of David, when he fled from Absalom his son 'A song of David?' He ought to have said: *'A lament of David!'*

Rabbi Shimon ben Avshalom answers: A parable - to what is this to be compared? To a man who has a loan outstanding against him: until he pays it, he is sad, but after he has paid it, he rejoices. So was it with David. When the Holy One, Blessed be He, said to him: Behold, I will raise up evil against you from out of your own house, he was sad. He said, "It may be a slave or an illegitimate child who will have no pity on me." When he saw that it was Absalom, he rejoiced, and therefore he said, *'A song.'* (7b)

Provoking the Wicked

And Rabbi Yochanan said in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai: One has permission to provoke the wicked in this world, as it is written: *They that forsake Torah praise the wicked, but those who keep the Torah contend with them*.

It has been taught in a *braisa* to the same effect: Rabbi Dostai son of Rabbi Masun said: One has permission to provoke the wicked in this world, as it is written: *They that forsake Torah praise the wicked* etc. And should somebody whisper to you that it is written: *Do not contend with the wicked, neither be zealous against evildoers*, then you may tell him that only one whose conscience knocks him understands the verse in that manner. Rather, this is what the verse means: *Do not 'compete' with the wicked* - meaning to be like them; *neither be 'jealous' against evildoers* - meaning to be like them. And so it is written: *Let not your heart envy sinners, but only those who fear Hashem all day*.

The *Gemora* asks: But is this so? Didn't Rabbi Yitzchak say: If you have seen a wicked man who enjoys good fortune, do not provoke him – and furthermore, his ways will be successful. Not only this, but he will always win in a lawsuit. Furthermore, he will see vengeance on his enemies.

The *Gemora* answers: There is no difficulty, for Rabbi Yitzchak is referring to one's own interests but regarding heavenly matters, one can defend the Torah and the mitzvos.

Alternatively, we can answer that Rabbi Yitzchak is referring to a wicked person who is enjoying success, but otherwise, one may contend with the wicked.

A third explanation offered is that it depends if the person antagonizing the wicked is entirely righteous or not.

Lastly, the *Gemora* answers that Rabbi Yitzchak is referring to a wicked person who is enjoying success (*and a partially righteous person should not provoke him; the braisa, however, teaches us that a partially righteous person may provoke an unsuccessful evildoer*). (7b)

DAILY MASHAL

Giving an Infant a Name

By: Meoros HaDaf HaYomi

After the Creation, Hashem gathered all the animals to Adam so that he could name them (Bereishis 2:19-20) and the Midrashim say that Adam also named towns, deserts and angels.

Giving an infant a name is not something arbitrary. Ancient authors mention that a name is a fundamental part of a person and not a mere label (the Chida in *Devash Lefi, ma'areches shin, os 20*). *Pirkei DeRabbi Eli'ezer* says (Ch. 13) that Adam was requested to name the creatures, after the angels tried to do so and didn't succeed.

Hashem puts the fitting name into the mouth of the parents: When a person names his child, Hashem directs him to give the

right name, according to Rabbi Chayim Vital zt"l (*Sha'ar HaGilgulim, Hakdamah*, 23). It is interesting that because of this, there were *tzadikim* who avoided deciding for those who asked what name to give their child because only the name which comes to the parents' mouth without intervention is the right name for the child (*Kuntres Shema Garim* by HaGaon Rav M. Gross, 8).

If each parent gave the child a different name: The parents' authority to give a name is identical and equal and each of them may give a different name and both will be the child's names! Thus states HaGaon Rabbi Moshe Feinstein zt"l (*Responsa Igros Moshe, Y.D.*, III, 97) as Yaakov called his youngest son Binyamin while Rachel called him Ben-Oni. However, it is accepted custom that the father and mother determine their children's names alternately, one time by the father and one time by the mother.

The Ashkenazic custom: The Ashkenazic custom is to give the mother the right to name the first child but the sources of this custom are not clear at all such that some wrote that it has no basis (*Bris Avos*, 8). Some suggested a fine idea according to the Chida (*Nachal Kedumim*, Shemos 18:3) that the foundations of this custom are holy as Moshe and his wife Tziporah did so: Tziporah named their firstborn Gershom and Moshe named their second son Eliezer (see however Shemos 2:22; we should mention that after examining the Chida's statements, it is difficult to attribute the said custom to him).

Giving a name in exchange for a *nedunyah*: Some say that the custom stemmed from the European lifestyle, according to which young couples were supported by the bride's parents for a few years after their marriage and they honored the wife's parents to name the first grandchild growing up in their home (*Otzar HaBris*, I, p. 335).

The Sephardic custom: The Sephardic custom is for the father to give the first name and so wrote the Rishonim when they explained the order of naming Yehudah's sons. When his first son was born, it is said "...and she bore a son and **he** called his name 'Er" (*Bereishis* 38:3) – Yehudah named him. When the second son was born, we are told "...and she bore a son and **she** named him Onan" (*ibid*, 4) – his wife named him. When the third son was born, we are told "...and she bore a son and **she** named him Sheilah and he was in Keziv when she bore him"

(*ibid*, 5). In other words, the verse gives a reason for her naming her son, because he was far from home and was staying in Keziv. Were he present, he would have named his son (*Da'as Zekeinim MiBa'alei HaTosfos, Radak, Chizkuni* and *Alsheich*). Ramban (on the Torah, *ibid*) strongly disagrees with this explanation, saying that "it has no taste or smell" but doesn't disagree with the custom (see *Responsa Rashbash*, 291).

One way or the other, the holy works warn that no argument should develop about giving a name as aside from the need for polite behavior, arguing about the name endangers the child! (*Responsa Mishneh Halachos, chelek 12, siman 361*).

Who names the second twin, circumcised first? We conclude with an interesting ruling by Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (*Responsa, ibid*, 101). If twins are born and the circumcision of the second twin is held first, the Ashkenazic mother or the Sephardic father name him and don't have to wait for the circumcision of the twin who was born first, as the right to give a name does not relate to the infant born first but to the first infant to be named regardless of the order of birth.