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Megillah Daf 16

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May the studying of the Daf Notes be a zechus for his neshamah and may his soul find peace in Gan Eden and be bound up in the Bond of life

It is written in the Megillah [6:1]: On that night, the sleep of the king was disturbed. Rabbi Tanchum said: This is referring to Hashem (*to take action against His enemies*). The Rabbis said: This is referring to the angels and Achashverosh (*the angels were pestering him to reward Mordechai for saving him*). Rava said: It is referring to Achashverosh’s sleep. He began to think: Why was Haman invited by Esther to the feast? Is there a plot to assassinate me? Why wouldn’t a friend inform me? Perhaps I have not paid back someone who deserves being rewarded? Immediately, he instructed his servants to bring him the chronicles of the kingdom.

The Gemora states that the record book was read by itself. Shimshai, the king’s scribe was erasing the incident of Mordechai saving the king’s life and the angel Gavriel rewrote it.

Rabbi Assi said: Rabbi Sheila, a man from the village of Temarta, drew a lesson from this, saying: If a record on earth, which is for the benefit of Israel, cannot be erased, how much more so regarding a record in Heaven (that it will not become erased)!

It is written: Nothing has been done for him. Rava said: They answered him like that (that some small token of reward was necessary) not because they

loved Mordechai, but rather, because they hated Haman (and they knew it would infuriate him).

It is written: He had prepared for him. A Tanna stated: This means that he (Haman) had prepared (the gallows) for himself.

It is written: And do so to Mordechai etc. Haman said to him: Who is Mordechai? Achashverosh said to him: The Jew. He said: There are many Mordechais among the Jews. He replied: The one who sits at the king’s gate. Haman said to him: For him (the reward) of one village or one river (from which taxes can be collected) is sufficient! Achashverosh replied: Give him that as well; let nothing be omitted from that which you have spoken. (15b – 16a)

The Gemora relates that Achashverosh ordered Haman to get Mordechai, dress him in the royal garments and lead him through the city on the king’s horse proclaiming, “Thus shall be done for the man whom the king wishes to honor.” Haman located Mordechai teaching his students the laws of kemitzah (*scooping the flour for the minchah offering*). Mordechai observed Haman arriving and he told his students to leave the area for Haman is coming to kill him. Mordechai wrapped himself and began to pray.

Haman sat before the students and waited for Mordechai to finish praying. Haman asked them: What were you studying? They replied: When the Beis Hamikdosh was in existence, one can offer a fistful of flour and receive atonement through it. Haman responded: Your fistful of flour came and has overridden my ten thousand silver coins. When Mordechai heard this, he said to Haman: Wicked person that you are; if a slave acquires property, to whom does the property belong? (*Since Haman was Mordechai's servant, the money was rightfully Mordechai's.*)

Haman said to Mordechai: Get up, don these clothes and ride this horse. Mordechai said: I must first go to the bathhouse and get a haircut since it would not be proper to wear the king's clothes otherwise. Haman was forced to bath Mordechai himself and cut his hair because Esther had issued an order that all bathhouses and barbers must close for the day. Haman was groaning while he was cutting Mordechai's hair. He said: Is it proper for a person with such prominence (*referring to himself*) to become an attendant for a bathhouse and a barber. Mordechai reminded him that he (*Haman*) was the barber in Kartzum for twenty-two years.

When Haman finished cutting Mordechai's hair, he dressed him and told him to climb onto the horse. Mordechai responded: I am too weak on the account of the days of fasting. Haman bent down so Mordechai could step on his back and ascend the horse. As Mordechai was climbing up, he kicked Haman. Haman asked him: Doesn't it say in your Torah that one should not rejoice when his enemy

falls? Mordechai responded: That is only by a Jewish enemy.

As Haman was leading Mordechai through the streets, they passed by Haman's house. Haman's daughter witnessed the scene and thought that Mordechai was leading her father. She took the bowl from the bathroom and threw it on her father's head. When she realized that it was her father, she fell off the roof and died.

Mordechai returned to his sackcloth and to his fasting and Haman rushed to his house, mourning for his daughter and with his head covered from the garbage that was thrown upon his head. (16a)

It is written in the Megillah [6:13]: Haman told his wife Zeresh and all his friends about all that had happened to him. And his wise men and his wife Zeresh told him, "If this Mordechai, before whom you have begun to fall, is of Jewish descent, you will not prevail over him, for you will certainly fall before him." The Gemora asks: They are initially called 'his friends' and then they are referred to as 'his wise men.' Rabbi Yochanan said: Whoever says a wise thing, even a gentile, is called wise.

They said to Haman: If Mordechai comes from the other tribes, you can prevail over him, but if he is from the tribe of Yehudah, Binyamin, Ephraim or Menasheh, you will not prevail over him. The Gemora cites Scriptural proofs for this. (16a)

It is written: But you shall surely fall before him. Rabbi Yehudah bar Ila'i expounded: Why are two fallings mentioned here? Haman's friends said to him: This



people is likened to the dust and it is likened to the stars. When they go down, they go down to the dust, and when they rise they rise to the stars.

It is written: And the king's chamberlains came and hastened [va-yavhilu] to bring Haman. The use of this word [va-yavhilu] tells us that they brought him while he was in a state of confusion [behalah].

It is written: For we have been sold, I and my people etc . . . for the adversary does not care that the king will be damaged. She said to him: This adversary does not care for the damage of the king. He was jealous with Vashti and had her killed, and he is jealous with me and wants to kill me.

It is written: Then the king Ahasuerus said, and he said to Esther the queen. Why 'said' and again 'said'? Rabbi Avahu replied: He first spoke to her through an intermediary. When she told him that she came from the house of Shaul, immediately, 'he said to Esther the queen.'

It is written in the Megillah [7:6]: "A man who is a persecutor and an enemy: this evil Haman!" Esther replied. Rabbi Elozar said: This teaches us that she was actually pointing to Achashverosh (*derived from the extra words 'a persecutor and an enemy'*) and an angel came and pushed her hand so as to point to Haman. (16a)

The Megillah writes further [7:7-9]: The king arose in wrath and left the wine feast and went to the palace garden, while Haman stood up to beg Queen Esther for his life, for he realized that the king's hostility towards him was irrevocable.

And the king returned from the palace garden to the wine-feast chamber, and Haman had fallen upon the divan upon which Esther was reclining. The king said, "Does he even intend to seduce the queen while I am in the palace!" As soon as these words left the king's mouth the face of Haman was covered.

Then Charvonah, one of the chamberlains that attended the king, said, "In addition, there is the gallows that Haman erected for Mordechai, who spoke for the King's good, standing at Haman's house, fifty cubits high!" "Hang him upon it!" said the king

The Gemora expounds: Achashverosh's returning is compared to his arising. Just as the arising was in wrath, so too, the returning was in wrath. Achashverosh went to the garden and found ministering angels in the form of men who were uprooting trees from the garden. He said to them: What are you doing? They replied: Haman has ordered us to do this. He came into the house, and witnessed Haman falling upon the couch. Rabbi Elozar said: (*Since it is written 'falling' and not 'fallen'*) This teaches us that an angel came and forced him to fall on it and he couldn't get up. Achashverosh then exclaimed: Woe on the inside, and woe on the outside! Will you assault the queen before me in the house? Rabbi Elozar said: Charvonah also was a wicked man and implicated in the plot to destroy the Jewish people. When he saw that his plan was not succeeding, he at once fled, and so it is written [Iyuv 27:22]: And he cast upon him and did not pity, from his hand he surely flees.

The Megillah continues [7:10]: And they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordechai and the king's wrath abated. The Gemora asks: Why are there two abatements mentioned (*an extra letter written*)? The Gemora answers: One referring to Hashem and the other to Achasverosh. Others answer: One is on account of Esther and the other on account of Vashti. (16a)

It is written in the Torah [45:22]: He [Yosef] gave them all changes of clothes, and to Binyamin he gave three hundred [*pieces of*] silver and five changes of clothes. The Gemora asks: Is it possible that Yosef would stumble on the precise action that caused him to suffer? Yaakov had given Yosef a nice woolen garment which caused the brothers to become jealous and prompted them to sell him to Mitzrayim. Should Yosef now favor Binyamin over the other brothers? Rabbi Binyamin bar Yefes answers: Yosef was hinting that a descendant of his will go in front of a king dressed in five royal garments (*referring to Mordechai*).

The Gemora proceeds to expound on other Scriptural verses dealing with Yosef and his brothers in Mitzrayim.

It is written: And he fell upon his brother Binyamin's neck. How many necks did Binyamin have? Rabbi Elozar said: He wept for the two Temples which were destined to be in the territory of Binyamin and would eventually be destroyed.

And Binyamin wept upon his neck: he wept for the tabernacle of Shiloh which was destined to be in the territory of Yosef and would eventually be destroyed.

And behold your eyes see and the eyes of my brother Binyamin. Rabbi Elozar said: He said to them: Just as I bear no resentment against my brother Binyamin who had no part in my selling, so too I have no resentment against you.

That it is my mouth that speaksto you. As my mouth is, so is my heart.

And to his father he sent the following: ten donkeys laden with the good things of Egypt. What are 'the good things of Egypt'? Rabbi Binyamin bar Yefes said in the name of Rabbi Elozar: He sent him aged wine which old men find very comforting.

And his brethren also went and fell down before him. Rabbi Binyamin bar Yefes said in the name of Rabbi Elozar: This bears out the popular saying: A fox in its hour — bow down to it.

The Gemora asks: You compare Yosef to a fox! Where was his inferiority to his brothers? Rather, if this was said by Rabbi Elozar, it was stated as follows: And Israel prostrated himself upon the bed's head. Rabbi Binyamin bar Yefes said in the name of Rabbi Elozar: A fox in its hour — bow down to it.

And he (Yosef) comforted them (the brothers) and spoke kindly to them. Rabbi Binyamin bar Yefes said in the name of Rabbi Elozar: This tells us that he spoke to them words which greatly reassured them, saying: If ten lights were not able to put out one, how can one light put out ten? (16a – 16b)

It is written in the Megillah [8:16]: The Jews had light and gladness and joy and honor. Rav Yehudah said:



Light is referring to Torah; Gladness is referring to the festivals; Joy is referring to circumcision; Glory is referring to tefillin. (16b)

Rabbi Adda of Yaffo rules: When one is reading the Megillah, he must recite the names of the ten sons of Haman in one breath. This is because they all died at precisely the same moment.

Rabbi Yochanan said: The 'vav' of the name Veyezasa (the last son of Haman mentioned in the Megillah) must be elongated like a pole, for they all were hanged on one pole.

Rabbi Chanina bar Pappa rules in the name of Rabbi Sheila, a man from the village of Temarta: The ten sons of Haman and the songs of praise regarding the thirty-one kings of Canaan who were defeated by Yehoshua are written in the form of a half-brick on top of a half-brick (*referring to the written words*) and a full-brick on top of a full-brick (*referring to the empty spaces*). (*This is in contrast to other songs that are written in the form of a half-brick on top of a full-brick.*) The Gemora offers a reason for this: It is to indicate that our enemies shall never recover from their downfall.

It is written: And the king said to the queen, "In Shushan the capital the Jews have slain, etc." The mode of expression informs us that an angel came and slapped him on his mouth (in order that he shouldn't complete his tirade against the Jews).

But when she came before the king, he said with a letter 'He said'? It should be, 'she said'!? Rabbi Yochanan rules: The Megillah should be recited by

what is written in the scroll (*it should not be read by heart*).

It is written: Words of peace and truth. Rabbi Tanchum said, or, according to some, Rabbi Assi: This shows that the Megillah requires to be written on etched lines, like an actual Torah scroll.

It is written: And Esther's words confirmed. The Gemora asks: Only Esther's words (contributed to the miracle), and not the matters of the fasts? Rabbi Yochanan said: We must read as follows: The matters of the fasts ... and Esther's words confirmed these regulations of Purim.

It is written: For Mordechai the Jew was viceroy to king Achashverosh, and great among the Jews and popular with the majority of his brethren. The Gemora asks: Of the majority of his brethren but not of all his brethren? This informs us that some members of the Sanhedrin separated from him. (16b)

## INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

### *Three Hundred Pieces of Silver*

The Gemora states: It is written [Breishis: 45:22]: *He [Yosef] gave them all changes of clothes, and to Binyamin he gave three hundred [pieces of] silver and five changes of clothes.* The Gemora asks: Is it possible that Yosef would stumble on the precise action that caused him to suffer? Yaakov had given Yosef a nice woolen garment which caused the brothers to become jealous and prompted them to

sell him to Mitzrayim. Should Yosef now favor Binyamin over the other brothers? Rabbi Binyamin bar Yefes answers: Yosef was hinting that a descendant of his will go in front of a king dressed in five royal garments (*referring to Mordechai*).

The commentators ask: Why didn't it bother the *Gemora* that Yosef gave to Binyamin three hundred pieces of silver, and none to the other brothers? Wouldn't that have caused jealousy as well?

The Chasam Sofer answers based upon the *Gemora* in Gittin (44a), which states: Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: One who sells his slave to an idolater; we penalize him and force him to buy him back for up to ten times the value of the slave.

An ordinary slave is worth thirty silver coins, as we know from the *halachah* in the Torah that if an ox gores and kills a slave, the owner must pay the master thirty silver coins.

Accordingly, the brothers who sold Yosef should have been obligated to pay the penalty of ten times Yosef's value in order to redeem him. Since they did not redeem him, they therefore owed to Yosef three hundred silver coins ( $30 \cdot 10 = 300$ ). This is why Yosef did not give them the three hundred silver coins that he gave to Binyamin. Binyamin, who was not involved in the selling at all, rightfully deserved this amount, and therefore, Yosef was not concerned that this would be a cause for jealousy.

## DAILY MASHAL

### HAMAN AND THE OMER

The *Gemora* relates that Achashverosh ordered Haman to get Mordechai, dress him in the royal garments and lead him through the city on the king's horse proclaiming, "Thus shall be done for the man whom the king wishes to honor." Haman located Mordechai teaching his students the laws of *kemitzah* (*scooping the flour for the mincha offering*).

Rashi states that this occurred on the sixteenth of Nissan, the day the *korban omer* is offered in the Beis Hamikdosh.

The Maharal explains the connection between the omer offering and the story of Purim. The Omer offering reveals the miracles that are hidden inside of nature. By bringing the first grain to the Beis Hamikdosh, we are demonstrating that even the nature of the world is governed by Hashem. This was the method used to overcome Haman. The miracles were concealed from the human eye. The means to conquer Haman and Amalek is by exposing the concealed miracles, thus confirming that all which appears natural is controlled by Hashem.

The idea that Amalek can only be defeated through natural means was mentioned before and it bears repeating.

The Mishna states that whenever Moshe held up his hand, Israel prevailed [against Amalek]...'. The Mishna asks, do Moshe's hands make or break the

battle? Rather, this teaches you that so long as Israel were looking upwards and subjugating their hearts to their Father in Heaven, they were victorious; if not, they would fall.

The Netziv in Merumei Sadeh asks on the Mishna's question. What was so strange about Moshe's hands making the battle? Didn't Moshe's hands split the sea and perform other miracles as well through his hand?

He answers that the fight against Amalek had to be won in a natural way and not through a miracle. Perhaps we can add that fighting Amalek is in essence the fight that we have daily with our evil inclination. This fight could not be left to miracles. This is what is bothering the Mishna. Could the battle have been won through Moshe's hands like the other miracles? The Mishna's answer is no, it could not have been since this battle required a victory through natural means.

Let us examine the answer of the Mishna. Rather, this teaches you that so long as Israel were looking upwards and subjugating their hearts to their Father in Heaven, they were victorious; if not, they would fall. Isn't the Mishna stating that they relied on a miracle from Above. They looked upwards and they were victorious. How can this be explained?

The Gemora in Kiddushin (29b) relates an incident with Abaye and Rav Acha bar Yaakov. There was a certain demon that haunted Abaye's Beis Medrash, so that when two people entered, even by day, they were injured. Abaye instructed the community not to provide Rav Acha shelter when he would arrive in the city, thus forcing the father to spend the night at the

Beis Medrash; perhaps a miracle will happen [in his merit]. Rav Acha entered the city and spent the night in that Beis Medrash, during which the demon appeared to him in the guise of a seven-headed dragon. Every time Rav Acha fell on his knees in prayer one head fell off. The next day he reproached them: 'Had not a miracle occurred, you would have endangered my life.'

The Maharsha in his commentary to Kiddushin asks that how did Abaye have permission to place Rav Acha in such a precarious position. One is forbidden to rely on a miracle? He answers that Abaye understood the potency of Rav Acha's prayer. Abaye was certain that Rav Acha's prayers to the Almighty would be answered and that this is not a miracle. Hashem has instilled in this world the power of prayer and incorporated it into the natural order of the world.

This is what our Mishna is answering. Amalek has to be defeated through natural means and that is what Klal Yisroel did at that time. They cried out to Hashem and subjugated their hearts towards Him and were answered.