

26 Tammuz 5775
July 13, 2015



Nedarim Daf 50

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May the studying of the Daf Notes be a zechus for their neshamot and may their souls find peace in Gan Eden and be bound up in the Bond of life

The Story of Rabbi Akiva

Rabbi Akiva betrothed the daughter of Kalba Savua. When Kalba Savua heard about it (*their betrothal*), he (threw her out of his house, and) vowed that she would be forbidden from benefitting from any of his assets. She went and proceeded to marry Rabbi Akiva (*anyway*) in the winter. They would sleep on straw (*as they were so poor*). Rabbi Akiva would pick the straw out of his wife’s hair, commenting: “If I had the money, I would place upon you a Yerushalayim of Gold (*referring to a golden crown piece of jewelry depicting Yerushalayim*). Eliyahu the Prophet appeared to them as a pauper by their doorway, saying: “Please give me some straw, as my wife has just given birth and she has nothing to sleep on.” Rabbi Akiva remarked to his wife: “See, here are some people who do not even have straw.” *[The Ran explains that the point of his visit was to comfort them that they were not as poor as some other people who did not even have straw to sleep on.]*

She said to him: “Go learn in a Yeshiva.” He went and learned for twelve years by Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yehoshua. After twelve years he returned to his house, and he heard from behind his house that an evil person was saying to his wife: “It was good what your father did (*disowning you*). First of all, he is not like you (*as he is not from a prominent family*). Additionally, he has left you to be a live widow all of these years!” She replied: “If he would listen to me, he would go learn for another

twelve years.” *[Overhearing the conversation]* Rabbi Akiva said: “Being that she gives permission, I will go back.” He therefore went back for another twelve years of learning.

He came back with twenty four thousand pairs of students. Everyone (*from his town*) came to greet him. His wife also came to greet him. The aforementioned evildoer said to her: “Where are you going (with those torn clothes)?” She replied: “*A righteous person knows the soul of his animal.*” She tried to be seen by him (R’ Akiva), but the Rabbis (his disciples) pushed her away. *[Seeing her]* Rabbi Akiva said: “Leave her be, as (the Torah which is) mine and (that which is) yours is because of her.” (50a1 – 50a2)

How Rabbi Akiva Became Rich

Kalba Savua heard of the prominence of his son-in-law, and he went and asked (a sage) that his vow be permitted, and he was released (from it). [Kalba Savua gave R’ Akiva half of his assets.]

Rabbi Akiva proceeded to become rich for six reasons. One was because of Kalba Savua. Another was because of the (head of a) hart on the boat. There was a custom that every boat would make a wooden hart (*and fill it with gold coins in order to have good luck on their trip*). One of them was forgotten on the seashore, and Rabbi Akiva came along and found it.

Another reason he became rich was a treasure chest. He once gave four zuz to some sailors and he said to them: "Bring me something (*from your journey*)!" They found nothing except a chest that they found on the seashore. They brought it to Rabbi Akiva. They said to him, "Make use of this." It emerged that it was filled with gold coins.

The Gemora relates: This (that it was filled with gold coins) was because there had once been a ship (owned by Arabian traders) that sunk, and they had put all of their profits in this chest. This remained lost until it was found by the sailors (and then it was given to Rabbi Akiva).

Another reason was because of a certain noblewoman. *[The Ran says that once Rabbi Akiva's student needed a loan from this rich noblewoman, and she demanded a guarantor from Rabbi Akiva. When he asked who she wanted as a guarantor, she replied, "Hashem and the sea." When the time came to repay the loan Rabbi Akiva was sick, and therefore was unable to come repay. She went to the sea, and said, "Hashem! Rabbi Akiva your servant is sick and he made You a guarantor!" Miraculously, a chest filled with silver and gold floated to her at that moment. When Rabbi Akiva came to pay back the loan after he recovered, she instead gave him many riches.]*

Another reason was because of the wife of Turnusrufus (*whom was very wealthy, and he ended up marrying her after she converted*).

Another reason was from the assets of Ketiya bar Shalom (*who sacrificed his life to save the Jews and left all of his assets to Rabbi Akiva and his friends*).

Rav Gamda gave four zuz to some sailors to bring him something (from their journeys) for them (in exchange for the money). They didn't find anything. The sailors eventually brought him a monkey (purchased with the money given to them). The monkey escaped into a hole, and when they dug after him (the monkey), they found it crouching over pearls, which the sailors then gave to Rav Gamda. (50a2 – 50b1)

A Talmid Chacham who is not Handsome

The daughter of the Caesar said to Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chanayah: "Splendid Torah in such an ugly vessel (*he was not handsome*)!" He said to her: "Learn (the answer) from your father's house; in what do they store wine?" She replied: "Earthenware vessels." He said: "Everyone uses earthenware vessels and you (the royal family), are also using earthenware vessels!? You should rather put it in vessels of gold and silver!" She went and placed the wine in vessels of gold and silver, and it soured. He told her: "Torah is the same." She asked: "Aren't there handsome scholars as well?" He replied: "If they would have been ugly, they would learn even more."

There was a woman from Nehardea who came before Rav Yehudah for a court case, and he found her guilty. She asked: "Would Shmuel, your teacher, have judged you the same way?" He said: "Did you know him?" She said: "Yes, he was short and pot-bellied, dark complexioned, and with long teeth." He said: "You are merely denigrating him! You should be excommunicated!" She swelled and died. (50b1 – 50b2)

Turmuta Eggs and Delicacies

The Mishna had stated: [If a person said, “*Konam* cooked food that I do not taste,” he is prohibited to eat that which is cooked softly and he is permitted to eat solid food.] He is permitted to eat a *turmuta* egg.

The Gemora asks: What is a *turmuta* egg?

Shmuel answered: A slave who knows how to cook it is worth a thousand gold dinars. He must put it one thousand times in hot water and one thousand times in cold water, until it is small enough that it can be swallowed (in its entirety without chewing it). If someone has an affliction, it forms a residue on the egg. When the egg emerges from the body, the doctor would know (*by looking at it*) the precise medicine to prescribe for the patient and how he would be healed.

Shmuel would check himself with a kulcha (*Tosfos says it is another name for a turmuta egg, and the Ran says it is something else but he is unsure of its exact nature*), until the people of his household would be tearing their (braids of their) hair out from worry. [*The Ran explains that apparently these checks made him feel faint.*]

The Mishnah had stated: If he (*a field worker*) was working with (the inferior quality) Klufsin figs, he is not permitted to eat from the (superior) Bnos Sheva figs. If he was hired to work with the Bnos Sheva figs, he cannot eat from the Klufsin figs. [*Workers are allowed to eat from fruits they are working with, but not other fruits.*]

The Gemora asks: What is Klufsin?

The Gemora answers: It is a type of fig with which people make cooked dishes.

The Gemora relates: A person sent one of his servants to his friend (*and paid him money*), in order that his friend should teach his servant how to make one thousand types of cooked fig dishes. He, however, only taught his eight hundred, and the servant’s owner therefore summoned his friend for judgment before Rebbe. Rebbe remarked: “Our fathers said: ‘We have forgotten luxury,’ but we have not even seen such luxury.” (50b1 – 50b2)

Rebbe made a wedding feast for his son Shimon, (and did not invite the sage Bar Kappara). He (Bar Kappara) wrote above the banquet hall: “Two hundred and forty million dinarim have been expended on these festivities, yet, he did not invite Bar Kappara.” Bar Kappara said to Rebbe, “If He does good things (by providing this incredible wealth) for those who go against His will, certainly He will do great things for those who fulfill his will! Rebbe subsequently invited him. Bar Kappara said, “If He does this for those who do His will in this world, certainly He will do so in the world to Come!”

The Gemora relates: On the day that Rebbe laughed, misfortune would come upon the world. So he (Rebbe) said to Bar Kappara, “Do not make me laugh, and I will give you forty measures of wheat.” He said to him, “Let the master see that I may take whatever measure I desire.” So he took a large basket, coated it with pitched (so that no wheat would escape through the holes), turned it upside down, went to Rebbe and said to him, “Fill me the forty measures of wheat which I may demand from you.” [This was obviously for comic relief, as no wheat could be placed in an upside down basket.] Thereupon Rebbe burst into laughter, and said to him, “Did I not warn you not to make me laugh?”

He replied, "I wish but to take the wheat which I have a claim on." (50b3 – 51a1)

DAILY MASHAL

Can't Say Hello?

Rabbi Akiva betrothed the daughter of Kalba Savua. When Kalba Savua heard about it (*their betrothal*), he (threw her out of his house, and) vowed that she would be forbidden from benefitting from any of his assets. She went and proceeded to marry Rabbi Akiva (*anyway*) in the winter. They would sleep on straw (*as they were so poor*). She said to him: "Go learn in a Yeshiva." He went and learned for twelve years by Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yehoshua. After twelve years he returned to his house, and he heard from behind his house that an evil person was saying to his wife: "It was good what your father did (*disowning you*). First of all, he is not like you (*as he is not from a prominent family*). Additionally, he has left you to be a live widow all of these years!" She replied: "If he would listen to me, he would go learn for another twelve years." [*Overhearing the conversation*] Rabbi Akiva said: "Being that she gives permission, I will go back." He therefore went back for another twelve years of learning.

The question is asked: Why didn't Rabbi Akiva, at least, say hello to his wife, and then return to study for another twelve years? He was already home; wouldn't that have been the decent thing to do?

We always heard in Yeshiva from Rabbi Gifter that "two times twelve" is not comparable at all with "one times twenty-four." Rabbi Akiva was returning home, for he thought that his wife wished for him to be home; once

he had permission from her to study longer, it would have been an interruption in his learning.

This was always used as a lesson for us as to how vital it is for one studying Torah to utilize every second for learning, even during a lunch hour or by vacation. It is important to relax, but a true Torah scholar must always remain focused on his learning even when he is occupied with other mundane matters.

Rav Chatzkel Levinstein said that Rabbi Akiva was concerned that if he would enter his house, he would get involved in other matters, and he would not be able to return to the Beis Medrash.