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Rosh Hashanah Daf 17

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Daf Notes is currently being dedicated to the neshamah of

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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 has been taught in a Baraisa: Beis Shammai say: There will be three groups at the Day of Judgment (at the time of the Resurrection) — one of completely righteous, one of completely wicked, and one of intermediate. The completely righteous will immediately be written and sealed as entitled to everlasting life; the completely wicked will immediately be written and sealed as doomed to Gehinnom, as it says: And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth will awaken, some to everlasting life and some to shame and everlasting abhorrence. The intermediate will go down to Gehinnom, scream in pain and rise again, as it says: And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will purify them as silver is purified, and will purify them as gold is purified. It shall call out in my name and I will answer it. Of them, too, Chanah said: Hashem puts to death and brings to life, he brings down to Sheol (Gehinnom) and brings up. Beis Hillel, however, say: He that abounds in kindness - He inclines [the scales] towards kindness.¹ And of them David said: I love when Hashem hears my voice, and on their behalf David composed the entire chapter: I was poor, but He saved me.

The Baraisa explains: Those that sin with their body and those of the nations of the world who sin with their body will go down to Gehinom and will be punished there for twelve months. After twelve months, their body is consumed and their soul is burned, and a wind scatters their remains under the soles of the feet of the righteous, as it is stated: And you will trample the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet. But the sectarians, informers, apikorsim, those who denied the Divinity of the Torah, those who denied the Resurrection of the Dead, those who separated themselves from the ways of the community, those who

instilled their terror in the Land of Life, and those who sinned and caused others to sin, such as Yeravam ben Nevat and his colleagues, descend to Gehinnom and are punished there forever, as it is stated: And they shall go forth and look upon the corpses of the men who have rebelled against me etc. Gehinnom will end, but they will not come to an end, as it is stated: and their form shall outlast Sheol. Why all this? Because they laid their hands against the abode (for their transgressions caused the destruction of the Temple), as it is stated: Because of His zevul, and zevul signifies the Temple, as it is stated: I have surely built a house of Zevul for You. Of them Chanah said: May those that contend with Him be broken to pieces.

Rabbi Yitzchak bar Avin said: And their faces (those who descend to Gehinnom for a short amount of time, cry out in pain and then go down again) shall be [black] like the bottom of a pot. Rava added: Among them are the most handsome of the most handsome inhabitants of Mechoza (who lived in opulence), and they shall be called ‘sons of Gehinnom.’ (16b4 - 17a2)

The master said: Beis Hillel, however, say: He that abounds in kindness - He inclines [the scales] towards kindness. – But it is written: And I will bring the third part through the fire? That refers to those of Israel who sin with their body. Those of Israel who sin with their body! But you said that there is no remedy for them? — There is no remedy for them when their transgressions are more numerous [than their good deeds]. We now speak of those who have precisely the same amount of transgressions as good deeds, and included in his transgressions is a sin that is in the category of rebels of Israel

¹ So that they dwell not descend to Gehinnom at all.

with their body – it is insufficient for such a person if he is not punished with (some Gehinnom, as it is stated:) And I will bring the third part through the fire. But if not (i.e., one who has precisely the same amount of transgressions as good deeds, but does not have any transgressions that are in the category of the rebellious sins), *He that abounds in kindness* - He inclines [the scales] towards kindness. (17a2)

'And of them David said: I love when Hashem hears my voice.' Rava discoursed as follows: What is meant by the words: *I love when Hashem hears my voice?* The Assembly of Israel exclaimed before the Holy One, Blessed be He: Master of the Universe, when am I beloved before You? It is at the time when you listen to the voice of my supplications. *I was poor and He saved me:* Although I am poor in the performance of mitzvos, yet it is fitting to save me. (17a3)

'Those of Israel who sin with their body.' Rav explains this to refer to a head that did not wear tefillin. *'Those of the nations of the world who sin with their body.'* Rav explains this to refer to the transgression of illicit relations. (17a3)

'Those who instilled their terror in the Land of Life.' Rav Chisda said: This refers to a communal leader who makes himself unduly feared by the community for purposes other than the sake of Heaven.

Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav: Any communal leader who makes himself unduly feared by the community for purposes other than the sake of Heaven will not see a son who is a Torah scholar, as it is stated: Therefore, if men fear him, he shall not see (among his sons) any wise of heart. (17a4)

Beis Hillel say: *He that abounds in kindness* - He inclines [the scales] towards kindness (in order that they do not need to descend to Gehinnom).

How does He do it? Rabbi Eliezer explains how He does this: He presses down (the side of merit), as it is written: *He will*

again have compassion on us, He will press down our iniquities.

Rabbi Yosi bar Chanina says: He does so by raising (the side of iniquities), as it is written: *He raises iniquity and passes over transgression.*

It was taught in the Academy of Rabbi Yishmael: He removes the first sin in the beginning (before weighing all the sins on the scale), and that is the attribute of Kindness.

Rava says: The first sin is not erased, for if there is a majority of sins (together with the first one), it is also counted together with them. (17a4)

Rava said: He who relinquishes his right to exact punishment is forgiven of all his iniquities, as it is stated: *He pardons iniquity and overlooks transgressions.* Whose iniquity is pardoned? One who overlooks transgressions (that others committed against himself).

The Gemora relates: Rav Huna the son of Rav Yehoshua was once ill. Rav Pappa went to inquire about him. He saw that he was on the brink of death and said to those present, "Make ready provisions (shrouds) for his journey." Eventually, however, Rav Huna recovered, and Rav Pappa was embarrassed to see him. They said to him, "What did you see (in your illness)?" Rav Huna replied, "It was indeed as he (Rav Pappa) thought, but the Holy One, Blessed be He, said to them (the angels): 'Because he does not insist upon his rights (and he tolerates people who wrong him), do not be particular with him,' as it is stated: *He pardons iniquity and overlooks transgressions.* Whose iniquity is pardoned? One who overlooks transgressions (that others committed against himself).

[The verse continues:] *To the remnant of His heritage.* Rav Acha the son of Chanina said: We have here a fat tail (a comforting thought), but with a thorn in it (for it is not applicable to all): 'for the remnant of his inheritance', but not

for all his inheritance – it is only for someone who makes himself like remnants. (17a4 – 17b1)

Rav Huna posed a contradiction: It is written: *Hashem is just in all His ways*, and then it is written: *and magnanimous in all His works*. [How is this?] — In the beginning, Hashem judges strictly (according to a person’s deeds) but in the end (when He saw that the world could not survive under such a system), He is magnanimous.

Rabbi Elozar (similarly) contrasted two verses. It is written: *Also to you, Hashem, is magnanimity*, and then it is written: *For You repay to every man according to his deeds*. [How is this?] At first: You repay to every man according to his deeds, but at the end, Also to you, Hashem, is magnanimity.

Ilfi, or, as some report, Ilfa (similarly) contrasted two verses: It is written: *Abundant in Kindness*, and then it is written: *and in Truth*. [How is this?] At first, there is Truth, and at the end, Abundant in Kindness. (17b1)

Rabbi Yochanan expounds on the verse preceding the Thirteen Attributes. It is written “And Hashem passed before him and proclaimed.” Rabbi Yochanan said: If the verse would not be written, it would be impossible to say it. He explains that this verse teaches us that the Holy One, Blessed be He, wrapped Himself [with a tallis] like a chazzan² leading the prayer and showed Moshe the proper way to pray before Him. He said to him, “Anytime that Israel transgresses, they should perform before me this procedure³ and I will forgive them.”

“Hashem, Hashem.” I am He before the person sins, and I am He after the person sins and performs repentance.⁴ “God, Compassionate and Generous.” Rav Yehudah said: A covenant has been made with the [recital of] the Thirteen Attributes that they will never return empty-handed, as it is stated: Behold! I see a covenant. (17b1)

² A prayer leader.

³ Recite the Thirteen Attributes.

⁴ Hashem shows compassion before a person sins and afterwards, providing that the sinner repents.

Rabbi Yochanan said: The power of repentance is so great that it can have the ability to rip up one’s evil decree, as it is said: This people is fattening its heart, hardening its ears and shutting its eyes, lest it see with its eyes, hear with its ears and understand with its heart and then repent and be healed.⁵ Said Rav Pappa said to Abaye: Perhaps this was before the final decree [was issued]? — He replied: It is written: and be healed. What is that which requires healing? You must say, the final decree.

An objection [against this view] was raised [from the following Baraisa]: If one repents in the interval,⁶ he is forgiven; if he does not repent in the interval, should he even offer [subsequently] all the rams of Nevaioth,⁷ he is not forgiven! — There is no contradiction: the latter statement refers to an individual, the former to a community.

A further objection was raised from the following Baraisa: *The eyes of Hashem your God are upon it* (the land of Israel) - sometimes for good, sometimes for evil. How sometimes for good? Suppose the Jewish people were (in the class of) the completely wicked on Rosh Hashanah, and little rain was decreed for them, and afterwards they repented. (For God) to increase the supply of rain is impossible, because the decree has already been issued. The Holy One, Blessed be He, therefore sends down the rain in the most opportune time - on the land that requires it, all according to that particular land. How sometimes for evil? Suppose the Jewish people were (in the class of) the completely righteous on Rosh Hashanah, and abundant rains were decreed for them, but afterwards they retracted. To diminish the rains is impossible, because the decree has been issued. The Holy One, Blessed be He, therefore sends them down not in their most opportune time and on land that does not require them.

⁵ Evidently, repentance has the power to heal an evil decree.

⁶ Between Rosh hashanah and Yom Kippur.

⁷ The choicest rams.

The Gemora concludes its question: Now, (if the decree can be rescinded), for good at any rate, let the decree be rescinded and let the rains be increased? The Gemora answers: There is a special reason there, namely, that this is possible.

Come and hear (a further objection) from the following Baraisa: *They that go down to the sea in ships, that do their work in great waters, they saw the deeds of Hashem . . . For he commanded and raised the stormy wind which lifted up its waves . . . they reeled to and fro and staggered like a drunkard . . . They cried out to Hashem in their trouble . . . let them give thanks to Hashem for his mercy*, etc. [The Holy One, Blessed be He] inserted here signs (between the verses) having the same force as 'but' and 'only' of the Torah, to indicate to us that if they cried before the decree (is issued), they were answered, but if they cried after the decree, they were not answered! The Gemora answers: These also are regarded as individuals.

Come and hear (another objection from the following Baraisa): Bluria the proselyte put this question to Rabban Gamliel: It is written in your Torah: *who does not show favor*, and it is also written: *Hashem shall show favor to you*. Rabbi Yosi the Kohen joined the conversation and said to her: I will give you a parable which will illustrate the matter. A man had a claim of a maneh against his fellow and fixed a time for payment in the presence of the king, while the other swore to pay him by the life of the king. When the time arrived he did not pay him, and he went to appease the king. The king, however, said to him: The embarrassment to me I forgive you, but go and obtain forgiveness from your fellow. So here: one verse speaks of transgressions committed by a man against God, the other of transgressions committed by a man against his fellow man. The Baraisa concludes: [This explanation was generally accepted] until Rabbi Akiva came and taught that one verse refers to the time before the decree was issued, and the other verse refers to the time after the decree was issued. [Evidently, a decree cannot be overturned!?] The Gemora answers: The Baraisa refers to individuals. (17b1 – 18a1)

DAILY MASHAL

COMPASSION

The Gemora states that Hashem shows compassion before a person sins and afterwards, providing that the sinner repents. The Rosh questions the necessity for Hashem's mercy before the person commits a transgression. His first answer is that that Hashem's compassion is required even though He knows that the person will ultimately sin, nonetheless justice is not issued until the person actually transgresses. The Rosh offers an alternative answer that this is referring specifically to the sin of idolatry where Hashem views a person's thoughts as if he committed an action as the Gemora in Kiddushin proves from a passuk. Hashem has mercy on the person and does not administer punishment until he actually worships other gods and then he will be punished for the thoughts as well.

Rav Meir Bergman comments that with the second answer of the Rosh, we can understand a difference between the language of the tefilah of Moshe Rabbeinu by the sin of the golden calf and by the sin of the spies. Moshe prays for forgiveness on behalf of Klal Yisroel for their sin with the calf and he cries out "Hashem, Hashem!" When he prays by the sin of the spies, he calls out Hashem's name only once. It is by a sin of idolatry, such as the golden calf, that Hashem's compassion is required even before the sin is committed.

The Korban Nesanel asks on the Rosh from a Gemora in Chulin where it is evident that Hashem punishes for the thoughts of idolatry even if the person did not actually serve any idols. Harav Elyashiv Shlita answers that the Rosh is discussing a case regarding a person who is intending in the very near future to commit idolatry. Hashem does not administer justice on such thoughts until after the transgression is not committed. The Gemora in Chulin is referring to a person who accepts another god in his mind. This is regarded as idolatry and the person can be punished even without performing an action.