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Tzvi Gershon Ben Yoel (Harvey Felsen) o"n

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

When a person ages, his limbs become less functional.

Expounding a verse in Koheles, the *Gemora* comments as follows: *In the day when the guards of the house will tremble*; this refers to a man's flanks and ribs which guard the intestinal organs of a person. *And the powerful men will stoop* refers to one's legs that will weaken. *And the grinders are idle* refers to the teeth that weaken, or alternatively, to the stomach that does not digest food well. *And the gazers through the windows are dimmed* refers to a person's eyesight that is weakened in old age. (152a)

A eunuch and Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korchah engage in a verbal sparring match.

A eunuch, wishing to taunt Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korchah, who was bald (Korchah means bald) said to him: How far is it from here to Karichna, alluding to Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korchah being bald. Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korchah responded, "As far as from here to Gozayana, a reference to being castrated." The eunuch said back, "A bald goat is worth four dinar," to which Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korchah responded, "A castrated goat is worth even more, as it sells for eight dinar." The eunuch then noticed that Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korchah was not wearing shoes, so the eunuch said, "one who rides a horse is a king, one who rides a donkey is a free man, and one who walks with shoes on his feet is a man. One without shoes, like you, one

who has a grave dug for him and is buried in it is better than one without shoes." Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korchah responded, "You told me three things, so I will tell you three things. The splendor of ones face is the beard, the happiness in ones heart is having a wife, and the heritage that Hashem gives a person is children. Blessed is Hashem that has denied these things from you." The eunuch was upset by this remark, so he asked Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korchah if he was trying to stir up trouble, to which Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korchah responded, "You castrated, emasculated one! Are you daring to provoke me?"(152a)

An old man cannot hear the singing of male and female singers.

Continuing the exegesis of the verses in Koheles, the *Gemora* comments: *When the doors in the street are shut* refers to ones cavities that get blocked with age. *When the sound of the grinding is low* refers to the stomach that cannot digest the food properly. *When one rises at the voice of a bird* refers to an old person who is awakened even from the chirping of birds. *And all the voices of song grow dim* refers to the voices of male and female singers that sound to the old man like a whisper because he has grown hard of hearing. Barzilai Hagiladi, who had supported Dovid HaMelech when faced with rebellion by his son Avshalom, told Dovid that he had become old and he could no longer hear the singing of male and female singers. (152a)



Barzilai Hagiladi was a liar and immoral.

Barzilai told Dovid that he was old and therefore was not able to taste food and drink. The *Gemora* states that he lied, because the maidservant of Rebbe, who was ninety-two years old, would taste the food that was cooking to see if it required more seasoning. Barzilai was eighty years old and claimed that he could not taste, and this woman was ninety-two years old and was still able to taste food. Furthermore, Barzilai said that he was old, and this led to his weakened condition, when in reality, Barzilai was steeped in immorality, and excess immorality leads one to become old suddenly. (152a)

Torah scholars become wiser as they grow older.

A Torah scholar becomes wiser as he grows older, as it is said: *in the aged is wisdom and in the length of days is understanding*. Regarding those who are ignorant in Torah knowledge, the older they become, the more foolish they become, as it is said: *He distorts the utterances of the trustworthy, and takes reason away from the elders*. (152a)

Man chases a woman although she is not really appealing.

The *Gemora* expounds the verse *for Hashem spoke and it came to be, He commanded, and it took form*, as follows: *for Hashem spoke and it came to be* refers to a woman, that one desires even though she is not really appealing. *He commanded, and it took form* refers to one's children. This is also something that Hashem dictates, because children take up one's time, energy, and resources that he could have used for himself. A woman is like a flask full of excretion and she is full of menstrual blood, and nonetheless, everyone runs after her. (152a)

If a deceased person has no one to mourn him, ten men should gather where the man died and mourn him for seven days.

If a person dies without leaving behind any relatives, ten men should go to the place where he died and mourn for him for seven days following his death. A person died in the neighborhood of Rav Yehudah without leaving any relatives. Rav Yehudah brought ten men to mourn over the deceased. After doing this for seven days, the deceased appeared to Rav Yehudah in a dream and told him that you can now relax as your efforts have put my mind at ease. (152a -152b)

There is a dispute regarding until when a deceased person knows what is said about him.

Rabbi Avahu said that a person's soul is aware of everything said about him in his presence until after the top of the coffin is closed before the deceased is buried. The *Gemora* records a dispute regarding this matter, as one opinion maintains that the deceased knows what is said about him until the top of the coffin is closed over him, whereas the other opinion maintains that the deceased is cognizant of what is said about him until the flesh of his body decomposes in the grave. The opinion that maintains that the deceased is aware of what is said about him until his flesh decomposes brings proof from the verse where it is said: *but his flesh will be pained over its demise and his soul shall mourn itself*. The opinion that maintains that the deceased knows what is said about him until after the top of the coffin is closed brings proof from the verse that states: *the dust shall return to the earth as it was*. (152b)



A person should return his soul to Hashem in the same pure state that he received the soul when he was born.

It is said in Koheles: *and the spirit returns to Hashem who gave it*. Since the words *who gave it* appear to be extra, the *Gemora* expounds the verse as follows: Give Hashem your soul back like He gave your soul to you. Just like Hashem gave you your soul at birth in a pure state, you should ensure that when you die, your soul is still pure like when you were born. This is compared to a king who distributes clothing of royalty to his servants, the smart servants ensure that the clothing does not get soiled, and they return the clothing to the king in perfect form. The foolish servants, however, are not concerned if the clothing gets soiled, and they return the clothing to the king dirty. The king is happy with the smart servants, and he returns their clothing that he lent them to his treasure chest, and the smart servants return to their homes in peace. The clothing of the foolish servants however, must go to the laundry, and the servants are incarcerated for their lack of responsibility. (152b)

The souls of the righteous are ensconced under the Heavenly Throne and angels toss about the souls of the wicked.

Hashem rewards the righteous for preserving the purity of their souls, and their bodies lie respectfully in their graves. Regarding their souls, it is said: *may the soul of my master be bundled in the bundle of life*. Regarding the souls of the wicked, however, it is said: *there shall be no peace, says Hashem, for the wicked*. Concerning the souls of the wicked, it is said: *and as for the soul of your enemy. May Hashem sling it as from the hollow of a sling*. The souls of the wicked are trapped in the hollow of the sling, and one angel stands at one end of the world and another angel

stands at the other end of the world. The angels then sling the soul of the wicked back and forth to each other. [*This reflects on the lifestyle that a sinner led, reflected in violence and instability. Alternatively, this slingshot reflects the concept of gilgul, the reincarnation of the soul that must find atonement in another life.*] (152b)

Rabbah asked Rav Nachman: What about those who are intermediate? He replied: Had I died I could not have told you this. Thus did Shmuel say: Both these and those (*the wicked and the intermediate*) are delivered to (*the angel*) Dumah; these (*the souls of the intermediate people*) enjoy rest, whereas the others (*the souls of the wicked*) have no rest.

Rav Mari said: Even the (*bodies of the*) righteous are destined to be dust, for it is written: *and the dust shall return to the earth as it was*. (152b)

Rav Nachman and the Corpse

The *Gemora* relates: Certain diggers were digging in Rav Nachman's land, when (*the body of*) Rav Achai bar Yoshiyah snorted at them. So they went and told Rav Nachman that a dead man snorted at them. He went and asked him, "Who are you?" It replied, "I am Achai bar Yoshiyah." Rav Nachman asked, "But didn't Rav Mari say that even the righteous are destined to be dust?" [*Why did you not decompose?*] The corpse replied, "And who is Mari, I do not know him." Rav Nachman persisted, "But surely a verse is written: *and the dust returns to the earth as it was?*" The corpse responded, "He who taught you Koheles did not teach you Mishlei, for it is written: *But the rotting of the bones is from envy in his heart*. Whoever has envy in his heart, his bones will rot away; but he who has no envy in his heart, his bones do not rot away."



He then felt him and perceived that there was substance in him. Rav Nachman said to him, "Let master arise and come to my house." The corpse replied, "You have thus disclosed that (*besides not being proficient in Mishlei*) you have not even studied the prophets, for it is written: *And you shall know that I am Hashem, when I open your graves (and it He alone who can free us from our graves; we have no permission to do so ourselves).*"

Rav Nachman asked: But it is written: *for you are dust, and to dust you shall return?* [*How is it that you did not decompose?*] The corpse replied: That means one hour before the resurrection of the dead (*but until then, the bodies of the righteous may remain intact*). (152b)

A Sadducee and Rabbi Avahu

A certain Sadducee said to Rabbi Avahu: You maintain that the souls of the righteous are ensconced under the Heavenly Throne of God; then how did the bone-necromancer bring up Shmuel by means of his necromancy? He replied: There it was within twelve months of his death (*and his soul did not yet reach its final resting place*), for it was Taught in a *braisa*: For twelve months, the body is in existence and the soul ascends (*to the next world*) and descends (*back towards its body*); after twelve months, the body ceases to exist, and the soul ascends (*to the next world*), but descends no longer. (152b – 153a)

INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

As Painful as Needles

By: Meoros HaDaf HaYomi

The *Gemora* tells us that a person after his death suffers from his body's decomposition, as much as a living person would suffer if his flesh were to be stabbed by needles. R' Yehuda HaChassid (Sefer

Chassidim 1163) explained that this does not mean that the deceased actually feels the pain of his body. Rather, his neshama feels the pain of disgrace in seeing the flesh that once housed it in such a pathetic condition.

Accelerating the decay of a body: Based on this explanation, the Rashba (Teshuvos I, 369) offered a fascinating ruling, which is cited in Shulchan Aruch by the Rema (Y.D. 363:2). A person once instructed his children that after his death, he should be buried in the ancestral burial place of his family. His children were unable to fulfill his request immediately after his death, so they buried his body temporarily in a local graveyard, to be exhumed and reburied later.

When the opportunity to inter him presented itself, they found that the body was in the process of decomposing, and the horrible stench it emitted made it impossible for them to move it. They therefore asked the Rashba if they should pour acid over the body, to accelerate its decay. After the flesh had dissolved, they could then move the bones. Would this bring their father pain, as the *Gemora* implies, or would he be pleased to see his last wish fulfilled sooner? The Rashba permitted them to pour acid over his body, explaining that anything done to fulfill the wishes of the deceased is not considered a disgrace to him.

The Chasam Sofer (Teshuvos VI, Likutim 37) explained this ruling based on the R' Yehuda HaChassid's interpretation of the *Gemora*. The *niftar* does not actually feel the pain of his former body. Rather the neshama mourns over the disgrace of its decay. In this case, furthering the decay of the body is an honor to it, since this would allow it to be buried in its ancestral burying place, as he had requested. If we would interpret the *Gemora* literally, they would certainly be forbidden to cause pain to their father.



The Pischei Teshuva (Y.D., ibid s.k. 5) cites from Har Eival (11), that strictly speaking one may instruct his children to pour acid over his remains to facilitate his burial, but it is best not to do so. One should not circumvent the natural order with which Hashem returns bodies to the earth.

DAILY MASHAL

Souls of the Righteous under the Heavenly Throne

The *Gemora* states that the souls of the righteous are ensconced beneath the Heavenly Throne. The *Gemora* records an incident where a Sadducee challenged Rabbi Avahu from the episode where Shaul had a necromancer (one who communicates with the dead) raise the soul of Shmuel through necromancy. Rabbi Avahu responded that in that case, it was within twelve months since Shmuel's passing, so his soul had not yet been ensconced under the Heavenly Throne. The body remains intact for twelve months after death, and the soul rises into the next worlds and descends back into the body. Once twelve months is completed, the body ceases to exist and the soul rises into the next world, ever to descend again. This was the reason that the necromancer was able to communicate with the soul of Shmuel.

There is a difficulty with this *Gemora*, as the *Gemora*¹ states that when the necromancer summoned the soul of Shmuel, Shmuel became frightened, fearing that this was the ultimate Day of Judgment. Out of fear Shmuel brought along with him the soul of Moshe Rabbeinu so he would be protected. Now, if the souls of the righteous do not return to this world after the twelve months from its demise, how could the soul of Moshe

have returned to this world? Moshe had already been deceased for hundreds of years.

The answer to this question can be found in the words of the Malbim, who writes regarding the incident with Shaul requesting that the necromancer summon the soul of Shmuel, as follows: The necromancer said, *I saw a great man (Elohim) ascending from the earth*. The *Gemora* interprets the plural form of Elohim to refer to mena another soul, that of Moshe. Since all prophets throughout history received their tradition from Moshe, they all are empowered with a part of Moshe, and it was this power that ascended with Shmuel. The necromancer was able to perceive the physical aspect of this power, and for this reason she declared that she saw two ascending. According to the Malbim, it was not the soul of Moshe that actually descended from the upper worlds, but a manifestation of Moshe's power that is instilled into every prophet that descended. Thus, the statement that Moshe ascended with Shmuel does not contradict the *Gemora* here that states that after twelve months the soul does not return to this world.

Spiritual Growth

When a person applies himself to spiritual growth, his faculties become more and more powerful as he grows older. He gains in wisdom, inner strength and purity. The opposite is true of physical pursuits. As a person grows older he becomes weaker, slower and more hindered. The ultimate realization of this dichotomy is on the day of one's death. The powers of the body are lost entirely, while simultaneously the powers of the soul reach their zenith. The neshama is freed from the shackles of the physical body. It ascends to the Yeshiva of Heaven, where it enjoys a level of attachment to the Torah that had previously been impossible (Yisrael Kedoshim, by R' Tzadok HaKohen of Lublin, p. 78).

¹ Chagiga 4b