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Sotah Daf 10

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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

Shimshon

Shimshon called to Hashem and he said, “Hashem! Lord! Please remember me and please strengthen me this time as well...and I will exact vengeance from the Philistines for one of my eyes.”

Rav said: Shimshon said the following before the Holy One, Blessed be He. Master of the Universe! Remember me for the twenty (two) years that I judged Bnei Yisroel, and I did not even say to one of them, “Move a stick for me from one place to another.”

And Shimshon went and he captured three hundred foxes.

The Gemora asks: Why (did he choose) foxes (to destroy the crops of the Philistines)?

Rabbi Ayvu bar Nagdi said in the name of Rabbi Chiya bar Abba: Shimshon said, “Let an animal who retreats backward (when confronted) collect payment from the Philistines, who retreated from their vow.”

The Gemora cites a braisa: Rabbi Shimon the pious one said: Between the shoulders of Shimshon was a distance of sixty cubits. This is as implied by the verse: *And Shimshon slept until midnight. He got up at midnight, and he took hold of the gate of the city and the two doorposts. And he tore them out with their bolt*

and put them on his shoulders. And we have a tradition that the doors of Gaza were not less than sixty cubits wide.

And he was grinding in the jail. Rabbi Yochanan said: The term ‘grinding’ implies nothing other than sin (adultery). This is as the verse says: *Let my wife grind for another man.* This teaches us that each person (of the Philistines) brought his wife to the jail so that she should become pregnant from him.

Rav Pappa said: This is as people say: Before someone who drinks wine, bring wine. Before someone who is a gardener (and eats vegetables), bring vegetables. [Evidently, Shimshon was accustomed to frequent the Philistine women.]

Rabbi Yochanan said: Whoever commits adultery, his wife will commit adultery against him as well. This is as the verse says: *If my heart was seduced by a woman, or if I waited by the door of my friend’s house,* and it is also written (in the next verse): *Let my wife grind for another man, and strangers will bend over her.* This is as people say: He is busy with big gourds, while she is busy with small gourds (*they are both doing the same thing*).

Rabbi Yochanan said: Shimshon judged Bnei Yisroel like their Father in Heaven. This is as the verse states: *Dan will judge his nation like one.* [The Gemora understands



like “one” as referring to The One, and Shimshon was from the Tribe of Dan.]

Rabbi Yochanan said: Shimshon was called by the name of the Holy One, Blessed be He. This is as the verse states: *For a wall (shemesh) and shield is Hashem, Lord.*

The Gemora asks: If so, it should be forbidden to erase his name (*just as it is forbidden to erase the Name of Hashem*)!?

The Gemora answers: Rather, it is partially like the Name of the Holy One, Blessed be He. Just as the Holy One, Blessed be He, protects the entire world, so too Shimshon protected Bnei Yisroel in his generation.

Rabbi Yochanan said: Bila’am was lame in one of his legs, as the verse says: *And he walked limping (“Shefi” – “alone”).* Shimshon was lame in both of his legs, as the verse says: *slithering (shefifon) on the path.* [This implies “Shefi” twice, that he was lame in both legs. The simple explanation is that this happened to him after the Philistines captured him.]

The Gemora cites a braisa: Five were created with attributes that were akin to those of Heaven (*in a specific characteristic*), and they all ended up being punished with them. Shimshon with his strength, Shaul with his neck, Avshalom with his hair, Tzidkiyah with his eyes, and Asa with his legs.

Shimshon’s strength (*was punished*), as it says “And his strength left him.” Shaul with his neck, as the verse says, “And Shaul took the sword and fell on it.” Avshalom with his hair, as we will elaborate on later. Tzidkiya with his eyes, as the verse says, “And the eyes of Tzidkiya he blinded.” Asa with his feet, as the verse says, “Only when he was older did his feet become

sick.” Rav Yehuda says in the name of Rav: He got “Padagra” (*presumably gout*). Mar Zutra the son of Rav Nachman asked Rav Nachman: What is “Padagra” like? He replied: It is like a needle sticking into live flesh. How did Rav Nachman know? Some say he had it, others say he heard this from his Rabbi, while others say that (*he had this knowledge from Heaven*) about this the verse states, “The secret of Hashem is to those who fear Him, and his covenant is to inform them.”

Rava taught: Why was Asa punished? He was punished because he used Torah scholars. This is as the verse states, “And King Asa made it be known in all of Yehuda” (*and he made them all work*), there was no one who was free.” What does this mean? Rav Yehuda says in the name of Rav: Even a groom from his room and a bride from her wedding canopy.

The verse states: “And Shimshon went down to Timna.” Another verse states: “Behold your father-in-law is coming up to Timna.” Rav Elazar says: About Shimshon who was denigrated there the verse describes him as going down. Yehuda who ended up rising because of this situation is described as going up. Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachmeini says: There were two places called Timna, one which required going down, and one which required going up. Rav Papa answered: There was one Timna. If one came from one side, he went down. If he came from another, he had to go up. This is like the cities Vardunya, Bei Bari, and Shuka d’Narsh (*that were all located on the slant of a large hill*). (10a)

Yehuda and Tamar

“She sat on the opening of the eyes.” Rav Aleksandri says: This teaches that she (*Tamar*) sat on the entrance to the tent of Avraham Aviunu, which was a place that all eyes looked at. Rav Chanin said in the name of Rav:

It was a place called “Einayim.” [*She sat at the opening of a place called “Einayim” – “eyes.”*] This is as found in the verse, “Tafuach and Einam.”

Rav Shmuel bar Nachmeini says: She gave “eyes” to her words. He (*Yehuda*) asked her: “Perhaps you are a non-Jew?” She answered: “I am a convert.” He asked: “Perhaps you are married?” She answered: “I am single.” He asked: “Perhaps your father accepted kidushin for you when you were a minor?” She answered: “I am an orphan.” He asked: “Perhaps you are impure (*nidah*)?” She answered: “I am pure.”

“And he planted a tree in Be’air Sheva.” Reish Lakish says: This teaches that he made an orchard and planted all kinds of delicacies there. Rabbi Yehuda and Rabbi Nechemya argue. One says that he planted an orchard, and one says that he made an inn.

The *Gemora* asks: This is understandable according to the opinion that it was an orchard, as it says, “And he planted.” However, according to the opinion that this was an inn, why does the verse say, “And he planted?”

The *Gemora* answers: This is as the verse states, “And he planted his tent that was like a palace.”

“And he called out there in the name of Hashem, G-d of the Universe.” Reish Lakish says: Do not read the verse as (*only*) saying “And he called,” but rather “And he made others call.” This teaches that Avraham Avinu made all people passing by call out in the name of Hashem. How did he do this? After they ate and drank they stood up to bless him. He said: Did you ate from my food? You ate from the food of the G-d of the Universe! Thank, bless, and praise the One who said, and thereby created the world!

“Yehuda thought she was a prostitute, as she covered her face.” Is it logical that because she covered her face he thought she was a prostitute? Rabbi Elazar says: The verse means that because she covered her face in her father-in-law’s house (*he therefore didn’t recognize her when she uncovered her face now*) he therefore thought she was a mere prostitute. This is as stated by Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachmeini in the name of Rabbi Yonasan: Any daughter-in-law who is modest in her father-in-law’s house merits to have descendants who are kings and prophets. How do we know this? From Tamar. Where do we see that she had descendants who were prophets? The verse states, “The vision of Yeshayahu son of Amotz.” Where do we see she had descendants who were kings? From King David. Rabbi Levi says: We have a tradition that Amotz and Amatziyah were brothers. [*Amatziyah was a king of Yehudah, proving Yeshaya was also from Yehuda.*]

“She was being taken out.” It should say, “She was being forcibly taken out.” Rabbi Elazar says: After the signs were found (*that Yehuda was actually the father*), the angel Samael started trying to distance them, while the angel Gavirel brought them close. This is referred to in the Pesukim, “Lamnatzei’ach, on the silent dove who was distanced, to David this (prayer) was favored.” Rabbi Yochanan says: When her signs were distanced, she was made into a silent dove. “L’David Michtam” -- “to David this was favored.” This alludes to the fact that David descended from her (Tamar), and he was low and simple (towards people, he did not view himself haughtily). Another explanation is that “Michtam” refers to the fact that his strike was pure, meaning that he was born already circumcised. Another explanation of “Michtam” is that just as when he was young he made himself small compared to people who were

greater than him in Torah, so did he remain with this attitude when he was older.

“She sent to her father-in-law saying that to the person who these belong to she is pregnant.” The *Gemora* asks: Why didn’t she openly state this (*that she was pregnant from Yehuda*)? Rav Zutra bar Tuvya said in the name of Rav, and some say that Rav Chana bar Bizna said in the name of Rabbi Shimon Chasida, and some say Rabbi Yochanan said in the name of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai: Better that a person should throw himself into a burning furnace than embarrass his friend in public. How do we know this? We know this from Tamar.

“Please recognize.” Rabbi Chama b’Rabbi Chanina stated: He told his father (*the news of Yosef’s apparent demise*) using the word “Haker,” so too he was informed of this with the word “Haker.” He told his father, “Please recognize, is this the coat of your son.” He was told this as well, “Please recognize who etc.” “Please.” This is a language of asking. She was asking him, please recognize your Creator and do not turn your face away from me. “Yehuda recognized and said “She is more righteous than me.” This is as Rav Chanin bar Bizna says in the name of Rabbi Shimon Chasida: Yosef who sanctified Hashem’s name privately received a letter of Hashem’s name added onto his name. This is as the verse says, “Testimony with Yehosef his name.” Yehuda who sanctified Hashem’s name in public merited that his name should be based on the entire name of Hashem.

Once he admitted, a Heavenly voice rang out and said: “You saved Tamar and her two children (*she was carrying*) from the fire, on your life I will save three of your children from the fire. Who were they? Chananyah, Mishael and Azaryah.

“She is more righteous than me.” The *Gemora* asks: How did he know (*that these children were indeed his*)? The *Gemora* answers: A Heavenly voice came out and said, “From Me (*My plans that this is how things should happen*) did these hidden ones come.”

“He did not continue to know her.” Shmuel Saba the father-in-law of Rav Shmuel bar Ami said in the name of Rav Shmuel bar Ami: Once he knew her, he did not stop knowing her. [*He understands that “Yasaf” should not be translated “continue” but rather “stop.”*] It says here, “He was not “yasaf” to know her.” A different verse says, “A great sound that did not “yasaf” – “stop.” [*We therefore see that yasaf can also mean “stop.”*] (10b)

Avshalom

The braisa states: Avshalom rebelled with his hair, as the verse says, “And there was no more handsome man than Avshalom...And when he shaved his hair...And it was at the end of the time when he would shave because his hair was heavy on him. And he shaved his hair and weighed it, and it was two hundred shekalim by the weights of the king.” The braisa taught: This is the stone that the people of Teverya and Tzipori used to use to weigh things. This is why he was hung by his hair. “And Avshalom met the servants of David, and he was riding a mule. And his mule went under a tangle of the branches of a big tree, and his head got stuck in the branches, causing him to hang between heaven and earth. And the mule that was underneath him passed.” He took a scissors and wanted to cut himself free. The (*study*) house of Rabbi Yishmael taught: At that moment, Gehinnom opened underneath him.

“And the king was angry (*upon hearing of Avshalom’s death*), and he went up to the attic of the gate. And he cried, and he said as he was walking, “My son Avshalom, my son, my son, Avshalom, who would make it so that I could die instead of you Avshalom my son, my son...And the king held his face and he cried out in a great voice my son Avshalom! Avshalom, my son, my son!” Why did he say the word “son” eight times? Seven times were to elevate him from the seven levels of Gehinnom. And the eighth? Some say it was to make his head reattach to his body, and some say it was to enable him to enter the next world. (10b)

DAILY MASHAL

Not Truly Yours

Rabbi Yochanan describes Bilam’s deformities and depravities:

Rabbi Yochanan said: Bilam was lame in one of his feet, as it is stated:¹ *He walked limping (shefi)*. Shimshon was lame in both of his legs, as it is stated:² *Dan will be a serpent on the highway, slithering (shefifon) along the path, biting a horse’s heels*. Bilam was blind in one of his eyes, as it is stated:³ [*the man*] *with the open eye*. He used to perform sorcery with his male organ, as may be deduced from the following verses: Here, describing Bilam it is written:⁴ *fallen and with uncovered eyes*. And elsewhere it is written:⁵ *And Haman was fallen upon the couch etc.*

One must wonder why Hashem chose to rest His spirit on Bilam, who was depraved and wicked. Rashi⁶ quotes the Medrash⁷ that states that Hashem rested His spirit on Bilam for the honor of the Jewish People. Although the Jews were the recipients of Bilam’s blessings, it would seem that the blessings should have come from a different source other than the wicked Bilam.

Let us understand the purpose of Bilam blessing the Jewish People. The Ohr Hachaim⁸ writes that Bilam’s blessings were analogous to what the Gemara⁹ states concerning the good angel and prosecuting angel who escort a Jew home on Friday night. If the house is peaceful, then the good angel declares, “So it shall be next week,” and the prosecuting angel must respond by saying “Amen.” Similarly, Bilam, the archenemy of the Jewish People, was forced against his will to bless the Jewish People. Based on this perspective, it follows that the biggest prosecutor of all should bless the Jewish People. Only Bilam, in his wickedness and depravity, was considered “worthy” of involuntarily blessing the Jewish People.

¹ Bamidbar 23:3

² Breishis 49:17

³ Bamidbar 24:3; 15

⁴ Ibid verse 4

⁵ Esther 7:8

⁶ Bamidbar 23:4; see also Ramban 22:31

⁷ Breishis Rabbah 52:5

⁸ Bamidbar 23:24; See also Rama Mipanno Maamar Tzivos Hashem 1

⁹ Shabbos 119b