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Bava Metzia Daf 85

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Daf Notes is currently being dedicated to the neshamot of

Moshe Raphael ben Yehoshua (Morris Stadtmauer) o”h

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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

Suffering

Rebbe said: Suffering is beloved. Thereupon, he undertook to suffer for thirteen years, six through *tzemirta* (stones in the kidneys) and seven through *tzefarna* (disease in the mouth). Others reverse it that it was seven through *tzemirta* and six through *tzefarna*.

The *Gemora* relates that Rebbe’s stableman was wealthier (from selling the manure from all of Rebbe’s horses) than the King of Persia. When he placed fodder for the animals, their noises could be heard for three *mils*, and he intentionally threw it before them just when Rebbe entered the bathroom (in order that the noises emanating from Rebbe, due to his pain, would not be heard). Yet even so, his cry was louder than theirs, and was heard even by the seafarers.

Nevertheless, the sufferings of Rabbi Elozar the son of Rabbi Shimon were superior in virtue to those of Rebbe. For the suffering of Rabbi Elozar the son of Rabbi Shimon came to him through love, and departed in love (and therefore would not hamper his Torah studying), while those of Rebbe came to him through a certain incident, and departed through a certain incident.

The *Gemora* records the incident that brought about his suffering: A calf was once being taken to be slaughtered, when it escaped and hid its head under Rebbe’s garments, and it began to cry. Rebbe said, “Go, for to be slaughtered is why you were created.” Thereupon, they said in Heaven, “Since he did not display pity, let us bring suffering upon him.”

The *Gemora* records the incident that caused his suffering to leave him: One day Rebbe’s maidservant was sweeping the

house. She saw some young weasels lying there and she began to sweep them away. Rebbe said, “Let them be, for it is written: *and His mercy is upon all his creations.*” Thereupon, they said in Heaven, “Since he is compassionate, let us be compassionate to him.” (85a)

Rebbe and R’ Elozar son of R’ Shimon

During all the years that Rabbi Elozar suffered, no man died prematurely. During all the years of Rebbe’s suffering, the world needed no rain (which was regarded as a blessing), for Rabbah the son of Rav Shila said: The day of rain is as difficult (for people are inconvenienced) as the day of judgment (Mondays and Thursdays – the days that the courts were in session). And Ameimar said: If not that rain was necessary to the world, the Rabbis would have prayed that it might cease to be. Nevertheless, when a radish was pulled out of its bed (in Rebbe’s days), there remained a hole filled with water.

Rebbe once visited the town of Rabbi Elozar the son of Rabbi Shimon. He inquired, “Did that righteous man (Rabbi Elozar) leave a son?” “Yes,” they replied, “and every harlot who is hired for two zuz (on account of her beauty), hires him for eight (due to his handsomeness).” So he had him brought before him, ordained him as a Rabbi, and entrusted him (to study Torah with him) to Rabbi Shimon ben Issi ben Lakonia, his mother’s brother. Every day he would say, “I am going to return to my town.” Rabbi Shimon ben Issi replied, “They want to make you a Sage, spread a gold trimmed cloak over you and designated you ‘Rabbi,’ and yet you say, ‘I am going back to my town!’” He said, “I swear that this desire has now been abandoned.” When he grew up, he went and sat in Rebbe’s *Beis Medrash*. On hearing his voice, Rebbe observed, “This voice is similar to that of Rabbi Elozar the son of Rabbi Shimon.” They told him, “He is his son.” Thereupon, he applied to him the verse: *The fruit of the*

righteous is a tree of life; and he that acquires souls is wise. The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life refers to Rabbi Yosi, the son of Rabbi Elozar, the son of Rabbi Shimon. *And he that acquires souls is wise* refers to Rabbi Shimon ben Issi ben Lakonia. When he died, he was carried to his father's burial cave, which was surrounded by a snake. They told it, "Snake, snake, open your mouth and let the son enter to his father," but it would not open for them (*and they were forced to bury him elsewhere*). Now, the people thought that this one (*Rabbi Elozar the son of Rabbi Shimon*) was greater than the other (*Rabbi Yosi*), but a Heavenly Voice proclaimed, "It is not because this one is greater than the other, but because this one (*Rabbi Elozar the son of Rabbi Shimon*) underwent the suffering of the cave (*during his lifetime*), and the other did not."

Rebbe once visited the town of Rabbi Tarfon. He said to them, "Has that righteous man, who used to swear by the life of his children, left a son?" They replied, "He has left no son, but his daughter's son remains, and every harlot who is hired for two zuz (*on account of her beauty*), hires him for eight (*due to his handsomeness*)." So he had him brought before him and said to him, "Should you repent, I will give you my daughter." He repented. Some say that he married her and later divorced her. Others say that he did not marry her at all, for he was concerned that people will say that his repentance was on her account.

The *Gemora* asks: And why did Rebbe take such measures? The *Gemora* answers: It was because Rav Yehudah said in Rav's name, and others say that it was Rabbi Chiya bar Abba, who said in Rabbi Yochanan's name, and even others say that it was Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachmeini, who said in Rabbi Yonasan's name: He who teaches Torah to his fellow's son will be privileged to sit in the Heavenly Academy, for it is written: *If Israel will return, then I will return you, and you shall stand before me*. And he who teaches Torah to the son of an *am haaretz* (*an ignorant person*), even if the Holy One, blessed be He, makes a decree, He annuls it for his sake, as it is written: *and if you shall take forth the precious from the base, you will be as My mouth*. (85a)

Torah Scholars

Rabbi Parnach said in Rabbi Yochanan's name: He who is himself a scholar, and his son is a scholar, and his son's son too, the Torah will nevermore cease from his offspring, as it is written: *As for me, this is my covenant with them, said Hashem; My spirit is upon you, and my words which I have put in your mouth shall not depart from your mouth, nor out of the mouth of your offspring, nor out of the mouth of your offspring's offspring, said Hashem, from now and forever*. What is meant by 'said Hashem'? The Holy one, blessed be He, said, "I am a guarantor for you in this matter." What is the meaning of *from now and forever*? Rabbi Yirmiyah said: From now on, the Torah will seek its home (*and aid their offspring's offspring in their studying of Torah*).

Rav Yosef fasted forty fasts (*so that his children should be Torah scholars*), when he was shown in his dream the verse: *They shall not depart from your mouth*. He fasted another forty days, and was read the verse: *They shall not depart from your mouth, nor out of the mouth of your offspring*. He fasted another one hundred fasts, and was made to read the verse: *They shall not depart from your mouth, nor out of the mouth of your offspring's offspring*. He said, "From now on, I have no need to fast, for the Torah seeks its home."

When Rabbi Zeira emigrated to *Eretz Yisroel*, he fasted a hundred fasts to forget the (*style of the*) Babylonian *Gemora* that it should not trouble him. He also fasted a hundred times that Rabbi Elozar might not die in his lifetime, so that the communal matters should not fall upon him. And he fasted yet another hundred fasts that the fire of Gehinnom should not overpower him. Every thirty days he used to examine himself as follows: He would heat the oven and sit inside of it, but the fire had no power against him. One day, however, the Rabbis cast an eye upon him, and his legs were singed. From then on he was called, "Short man and singed thighs."

Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav: What does the verse mean when it says: *Who is the man who is wise and can*

understand this and that the mouth of Hashem spoke to him and can tell it. Why did the Land go lost? This (the reason for the destruction of the Second Temple) was asked to scholars and prophets and they could not explain it, until Hashem explained it Himself, as it says: *And Hashem said that it is because they have forsaken My Torah.* Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav: This means that they did not recite a blessing before learning Torah (explanation of *Tosfos*, see also *Ran* in *Nedarim* who explains that they demonstrated their lack of appreciation for the Torah).

Rav Chama said: What is meant by the verse: *Wisdom rests quietly in the heart of he that understands; but that which is in the midst of fools is made known?* *Wisdom rests quietly in the heart of he that understands* refers to a scholar, the son of a scholar; *but that which is in the midst of fools is made known* refers to a scholar, the son of an *am haaretz*. Ulla said: This explains what people say, “One stone in a pitcher makes a lot of noise” (but a lot of stones will make little noise; one scholar amongst a family of scholars will not be significant).

Rabbi Yirmiyah asked Rabbi Zeira: What is meant by the following verse: *The small and great are there; and the servant is free from his master?* Do we not know that the small and great are there (in the grave)? It means that he who humbles himself for the sake of the Torah in this world becomes great in the World to Come; and he who makes himself a servant to the study of the Torah in this world becomes free in the World to Come. (85a – 85b)

Rabbi Chiya

Rish Lakish was marking the burial crypts of the Rabbis (so that the *Kohanim* would not accidentally become *tamei*). But when he came to the grave of Rabbi Chiya, it was hidden from him. He became disheartened and exclaimed, “Master of the Universe! Did I not delve into the Torah as he did?” Thereupon, a Heavenly Voice proclaimed, “You did indeed delve into the Torah as he did, but you did not spread the Torah as he did.”

The *Gemora* relates: When Rabbi Chanina and Rabbi Chiya were once in an argument, Rabbi Chanina said to Rabbi Chiya, “How can you dispute me? If, Heaven forbid, the Torah were forgotten in Israel, I would restore it by my deliberations.” Rabbi Chiya rejoined, “How can you dispute me, who I caused that the Torah should not be forgotten in Israel? What did I do? I planted flax from which I made nets to capture deer. The meat from those deer I would give to poor orphans and I would convert their skins into parchments upon which I would write the five books of the Chumash. I brought these to a community where there was no Torah study and I would teach each one of five children one of the five scrolls. I would also teach orally each one of six youngsters one of the six orders of the *Mishna*. I would tell each of these young pupils, ‘Teach the others what you have learned before I return to see if you succeeded.’ It was because of this that I said that I caused that the Torah should not be forgotten in Israel.”

This is what Rebbe meant when he said, “How great are Chiya’s deeds!” Rabbi Yishmael the son of Rabbi Yosi asked him, “Are they even greater than yours?” “Yes,” he replied. Rabbi Yishmael asked him, “And are they even greater than the deeds of my father?” He rejoined, “Heaven forbid! Such a thing should not be heard in Israel!”

Rabbi Zeira said, “Last night, Rabbi Yosi the son of Rabbi Chanina appeared to me in a dream, and I asked him, ‘Near whom are you stationed in the Heavenly Academy?’ He replied, ‘Near Rabbi Yochanan.’ I asked him, ‘And Rabbi Yochanan is near whom?’ He replied, ‘Near Rabbi Yannai.’ I asked him, ‘And Rabbi Yannai is near whom?’ He replied, ‘Near Rabbi Chanina.’ I asked him, ‘And Rabbi Chanina is near whom?’ He replied, ‘Near Rabbi Chiya.’ I asked him, ‘And is Rabbi Yochanan not worthy of a seat near Rabbi Chiya?’ He replied, ‘In the region of lightning bolts and flaming torches, who will let bar Nafcha (son of a blacksmith) enter?’”

Rav Chaviva said: Rav Chaviva bar Surmakei told me: I saw one of the Rabbis whom Eliyahu used to frequent, whose

eyes were clear in the morning, but in the evening, they looked as though they were singed by fire. I questioned him, "What is the meaning of this?" He answered me as follows, "I requested of Eliyahu to show me the departed Rabbis as they ascend to the Heavenly Academy. He replied, 'You can look upon all of them, except for the throne of Rabbi Chiya. How will you be able to tell? All are accompanied by angels when they ascend and descend, except for Rabbi Chiya's throne, for his ascends and descends by itself.' But unable to control myself, I gazed upon it, and two fiery sparks came and blinded me in one eye. The following day I went and prostrated myself upon his grave, crying out, 'It is your Tosefta that I study!' and I was healed."

Eliyahu used to frequent Rebbe's academy. One Rosh Chodesh, he was waiting for him, but he failed to come. When he finally arrived, Rebbe asked him, "Why did you delay?" Eliyahu replied, "I had to wait until I awoke Avraham, washed his hands, and he prayed and I put him to rest again; likewise to Yitzchak and to Yaakov." Rebbe asked him, "But why not wake them all at the same time?" Eliyahu replied, "I feared that their prayers would be so strong that they would bring Mashiach before his time." Rebbe asked him, "And is there anyone similar to them to be found in this world?" Eliyahu replied, "There is Rabbi Chiya and his sons." Thereupon, Rebbe proclaimed a fast, and Rabbi Chiya and his sons were requested to descend to the *amud* (to lead the congregation in prayer). As Rabbi Chiya said, "He causes the wind to blow," a wind immediately blew. As he said, "He causes the rain to descend," the rain immediately descended. When he was about to say, "He restores the dead," the entire world trembled, and in Heaven it was asked, "Who has revealed our secrets to the world?" they answered, "It was Eliyahu." Eliyahu was therefore brought and smitten with sixty lashes of fire. Eliyahu therefore went and appearing as a fiery bear, entered amongst them and disturbed their prayers. (85b)

INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

The Land Became Lost

Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav: What does the verse mean when it says: *Who is the man who is wise and can*

understand this? This (the reason for the destruction of the Second Temple) was asked to scholars and prophets and they could not explain it, until Hashem explained it Himself, as it says: *And Hashem said that it is because they left my Torah. Isn't the phrase "and they did not listen to My voice" the same as the phrase "and they did not go in its ways"?* Rav Yehudah explains in the name of Rav: This means that they did not recite a blessing before learning Torah.

The Chanukas HaTorah explains: The *Gemora* in *Brochos* (48b) asks: From where do we derive that one should recite a blessing prior to studying Torah? Rabbi Yishmael says: It is derived by means of a *kal vachomer*. If a blessing is recited before partaking in "sustenance for the moment" (*food*), it certainly follows that a blessing should be recited on "eternal sustenance"! The *Gemora* (*Brochos* 38a) also states: Prior to reciting a blessing, the land belongs to Hashem; after the blessing is recited, the land is given over to man.

Accordingly, it can be said that if they refrained from reciting a blessing before studying Torah, it is clearly evident that they did not recite a blessing before eating as well. For if they would have made a blessing before the consumption of food, they certainly would have made a blessing before studying Torah (based upon the *kal vachomer*). Since they didn't recite a blessing on their food, *the land became lost*, for prior to a blessing, the land belongs to Hashem.

They didn't Recite the Blessing on the Torah "First"

Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav: What does the verse mean when it says: *Who is the man who is wise and can understand this?* This (the reason for the destruction of the Second Temple) was asked to scholars and prophets and they could not explain it, until Hashem explained it Himself, as it says: *And Hashem said that it is because they left my Torah. Isn't the phrase "and they did not listen to My voice" the same as the phrase "and they did not go in its ways"?* Rav Yehudah explains in the name of Rav: This means that they did not recite a blessing before learning Torah.

The language of the *Gemora* is that they didn't recite a blessing on the Torah "*techilah*." What is that word coming

to exclude? We do not recite any blessings after we conclude learning Torah! (*The Levush says that the two blessings that we recite before studying Torah are actually "one before" and "one after," except that we never finish studying Torah, so the Rabbis instituted that both blessings should be recited beforehand.*)

The Orach Yescharim explains: When a person receives a present, he values both the gift and the giver. Even if the gift is a small one, he will value it, if it was given to him by a prominent person. Similarly, he will appreciate something given to him by an ordinary person, if the item is a valuable one.

The Torah is praised with both elements. It is written: *Ki lekech tov nasati lachem*, the Torah itself is valuable, and that it is being gifted to Klal Yisroel from Hashem.

This could be the explanation as to why we recite two blessings before studying Torah. The first *brocha* is *asher bachar banu*, Hashem chose us; Torah is special because Hashem has given it to us. The second *bracha* is *v'chayei olam nata b'socheinu*, Torah is precious because of its inherent value.

This is the meaning of our *Gemora*: They appreciated the value of Torah, and therefore, they recited the second blessing. However, they were not fully appreciative of the Giver of the Torah, and they therefore refrained from reciting the first blessing on the Torah. This is why the Torah did not continue to flourish with their children.

Every Step of the Way

The *Gemora* records a story which demonstrates the greatness of Rabbi Chiya. The *Gemora* relates: When Rabbi Chanina and Rabbi Chiya were once in an argument, Rabbi Chanina said to Rabbi Chiya, "How can you dispute me? If, Heaven forbid, the Torah were forgotten in Israel, I would restore it by my deliberations." Rabbi Chiya rejoined, "How can you dispute me, who I caused that the Torah should not be forgotten in Israel? What did I do? I planted flax from which I made nets to capture deer. The meat from those

deer I would give to poor orphans and I would convert their skins into parchments upon which I would write the five books of the Chumash. I brought these to a community where there was no Torah study and I would teach each one of five children one of the five scrolls. I would also teach orally each one of six youngsters one of the six orders of the *Mishna*. I would tell each of these young pupils, 'Teach the others what you have learned before I return to see if you succeeded.' It was because of this that I said that I caused that the Torah should not be forgotten in Israel."

The Maharsha explains why it was necessary for him to go to such great lengths: Rabbi Chiya was determined that every step of the way be done purely for Heaven's sake, and no person should be deriving any profit. It was for this reason that he could not simply go to a store and buy parchment. Even the meat of the animal, whose skins he used for parchment, was donated to needy orphans. It was only on account of such meticulous attention to every detail of the process that he could be certain that Heaven would bless his efforts with success.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FROM YESTERDAY'S DAF to refresh your memory

Q: Why did R' Elozar and R' Yishmael feel the necessity to answer the noblewoman's question?

A: They didn't want there to be a false rumor about their children.

Q: Why didn't Rish Lakish have the strength to retrieve his clothes?

A: Because Torah tends to weaken a person's strength.

Q: Why did a worm emerge from R' Elozar's ear?

A: For he didn't protest when he heard a disparaging remark regarding a Rabbinical student.