

8 Mar-Cheshvan 5778  
Oct. 28, 2017



Sanhedrin Daf 104

Produced by Rabbi Avrohom Adler, Kollel Boker Beachwood

Daf Notes is currently being dedicated to the neshamot of

**Moshe Raphael ben Yehoshua (Morris Stadtmauer) o”h**

**Tzvi Gershon ben Yoel (Harvey Felsen) o”h**

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 Importance of Feeding Guests***

Rabbi Yochanan said in the name of Rabbi Yosi ben Kisma: Providing food for travelers and guests is a great need, for *(the failure to do so)* distanced two families from Israel, as it is written: *(An Ammonite and a Moabite may not enter the Congregation of Hashem, even their tenth generation shall not enter the Congregation of Hashem, to eternity.) This is because they did not greet you with bread and water on the road when you were leaving Egypt.*

And Rabbi Yochanan said in his own name: The failure to display hospitality distances those who would otherwise be near, while it brings close those who would otherwise be far away, and causes the eyes of God to look away from the wicked, and causes the Divine Spirit to descend upon the prophets of Baal; furthermore, one, who inadvertently fails to display proper hospitality, is regarded by God as willfully failing to do so.

Rabbi Yochanan explains each of his five points:

“It distances those who would otherwise be near”- as is evident from what happened to Ammon and Moav.

“And brings close those who would otherwise be far away”- as is evident from what happened to Yisro, for Rabbi Yochanan said: As a reward for Yisro’s saying: *Call him and let him eat bread*, his descendants merited to sit in the Chamber of Hewn Stone, as it is written: *The families of scribes, dwellers in Yabetz - the Tirathites, the Shimathites, and the Suchatites; they are the Kenites who are descended from Chammas, father of Beis Rachav.* And it is also written: *The children of the Kenite, Moshe’s father-in-law, went up out of the city of*

*palm trees with the children of Yehudah into the wilderness of Yehudah, which is south of Arad; they went and dwelt with the people. [Yisro’s descendants were members of the Sanhedrin who sat in the Chamber of Hewn Stone. This was on account of Yisro’s hospitality to Moshe.]*

“It causes the eyes of God to look away from the wicked” - as is evident from what happened to Michah.

“And causes the Divine Spirit to descend upon the prophets of the Baal” - as may be seen from what happened to the friends of Iddo the prophet, as it is written: *While they were sitting at the table, the word of Hashem came to the prophet who had brought him back. [The false prophet received actual prophecy because of his hospitality to the prophet Iddo.]*

“One, who inadvertently fails to display proper hospitality, is regarded by God as willfully failing to do so” - for Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav: If only Yonasan had provided Dovid with two loaves of his bread for his escape, the people of Nov, the city of the *Kohanim*, would not have been killed, Doeg the Edomite would not have been banished from the World to Come, and Shaul and his three sons would not have been killed. (103b – 104a)

### ***Kings***

The *Gemora* asks: Why wasn’t Achaz listed as one of the kings without a portion in the World to Come?

Rabbi Yirmiyah bar Abba says: This is because he was placed between two kings who were righteous, namely Yosam and Chizkiyahu.



Rav Yosef says: This is because he was embarrassed from Yeshaya. This is as the verse says: *And Hashem said to Yeshayahu, go out to greet Achaz, you and Shar Yashuv your son, by the edge of the upper pool by the field of the koveis.* What does *koveis* mean? Some say this means that he covered his face and turned away. Some say this means that he put the vessel used for spraying the clothes with water over his head so that he should not be recognized by Yeshayahu.

The *Gemora* asks: Why wasn't Amon listed as one of the kings without a portion in the World to Come?

The *Gemora* answers: This is due to the honor of Yoshiyahu (*his righteous son*).

The *Gemora* asks: If so, the *Mishna* should not have listed Menasheh because of the honor of Chizkiyah!?

The *Gemora* answers: A son gives merit to his father; a father does not give merit to his son. This is as the verse states: *And there is not a rescuer from My hand.* Avraham will not save Yishmael, and Yitzchak will not save Esav. Once we have said this answer, we can also say that the reason Achaz was not listed was because of the honor of Chizkiyahu.

The *Gemora* asks: Why wasn't Yehoyakim listed as one of the kings without a portion in the World to Come?

The *Gemora* answers: This is according to the teaching of Rabbi Chiya the son of Rabbi Avuyah. "This and still another" is written upon the skull of Yehoyakim. [*He was an evil king – from the last of the Kingdom of Yehudah; he was told that he received this retribution, and he has yet to receive the other.*] Rabbi Pereida's grandfather found a skull thrown down at the gates of Yerushalayim, upon which "this and still another" was written. So he buried it, but it reemerged on the surface; again he buried it, and again it reemerged. Thereupon he said, "This must be Yehoyakim's skull." Yet, he reflected, since he was a king, and it is not proper conduct to disgrace him, he took it, wrapped it up in silk, and placed it in a chest. When his wife

came home and saw it, she went and told her neighbors about it. They told her, "It must be the skull of his first wife, whom he cannot forget." So she burned it in the oven. When he came home, he said to her, "This is what was meant by its inscription, 'This (*that the skull was discarded by the gates of Yerushalayim*) and still another (*that it was burnt in the oven*).'"

The *braisa* says: Rabbi Shimon ben Elozar says that because of Chizkiyahu's self praise: *The good in your eyes I have done*, he ended up wrongly asking, *what is a sign etc.* Due to his question, *what is a sign*, idolaters started eating at his table. Due to the idolaters who started eating at his table, he caused exile for his children. This is a support to a statement of Chizkiyah (*the Amora*). He says: Whoever invites a person who serves idols into his house and serves him, causes exile for his children. This is as the verse says: *And from your sons that will come from you that you have fathered, they will take, and they will be officers in the court of the king of Babylon.*

*And Chizkiyahu rejoiced regarding them, and he showed them his beis nechos, and the silver, gold, spices, and the good oil etc.* Rav says: What is *beis nechos*? This means that his wife was serving them. Shmuel says: He showed them his treasure house. Rabbi Yochanan says: He showed them weapons that could destroy other weapons.

*How can it be that she sits alone?* Rava says in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: Why were *Bnei Yisroel* stricken with *How*? This is because they transgressed the thirty-six sins punishable by *kares* stated in the Torah (*the numerical value of "Eichah" - "How"*).

Rabbi Yochanan says: Why were they stricken with the *Alef Beis* (*as their punishments are discussed in Eichah with a verse for each letter of the Alef Beis*)? This is because they transgressed the Torah which was given (*i.e. written*) with the letters of the *Alef Beis*.

*She sits alone.* Rava says in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: *Hashem says, I said, And Yisroel will dwell securely alone, the*



*Eye of Jacob, in a land of grain and grapes, even its heavens will give dew. Now they will live alone.*

*The city that was great with people.* Rava says in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: They would marry off a minor girl to an older man and an older woman to a younger man, in order to have many children. (Rashi explains that the chances of a minor boy and girl having children together was slim.)

*She was like a widow.* Rav Yehudah says in the name of Rav: She was like a widow, but not exactly like a widow. Rather, she was like a woman whose husband went overseas and he has in mind to eventually come home to her.

*I was the greatest amongst the nations and a princess amongst the countries.* Rava says in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: Wherever they went, they became officers to their masters.

The *braisa* says: There was an incident where two (Jewish) people were captured on Mount Carmel, and their abductor was traveling behind them. One said to his friend: The camel traveling in front of us is blind in one eye, and is carrying two jugs, one of wine and one of oil. One of the two people leading it is Jewish and one is a gentile. The abductor said: You stubborn-necked nation! How would you know that? They said to him: We know this about the camel from the grass in front of it. It eats from the side it sees from, but does not eat from the other side. It carries two jugs, one of wine and one of oil, as is apparent from their drops. The drops of wine sink into the ground, and the drops of oil float over the surface of the ground. One of the two people leading it is Jewish and one is a gentile, as the gentile relieves himself in the middle of road, while the Jew relieves himself on the side of the road (as Jews are more modest). Their abductor chased after them and found that their information was correct. He came and kissed them on their heads, and brought them to their houses and made a big meal for them. He danced before them and said: Blessed is the one who chose the children of Avraham, and gave them from His wisdom, and everywhere they go

they are made into officers for their masters. He then let them go to their houses in peace.

*She will surely cry at night.* Why does it say “cry” twice? Rabbah says in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: One is for the first Beis Hamikdash, and the second is for the second Beis Hamikdash. *At night.* This means they cried because of things that happen at night. This is as the verse says: *And all of the nation raised their voices, and they cried on that night.* Rabbah says in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: That night was the ninth of Av. Hashem said to *Bnei Yisroel*: You cried for no reason tonight. I will give you a reason to cry for generations (on this night). Alternatively, it says *at night* because cries carry further at night. Alternatively, this is because the stars and constellations cry along with someone who cries at night. Alternatively, this is because when someone cries at night, the person who hears him cries as well. There was an incident where the son of Rabban Gamliel’s neighbor died. She would cry about him at night. Rabban Gamliel would hear her crying and he would also cry until his eyebrows fell out. The next day the students recognized what had happened, and they arranged that she should move to a different neighborhood.

*And her tears are on her cheeks.* Rava says in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: This is like a woman crying over the husband of her youth. This is as the verse says: *Woe, like a virgin wearing sackcloth over the husband of her youth.*

*Its enemies became leaders.* Rava says in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: Whoever bothers *Bnei Yisroel* becomes a leader. This is as the verse says: *For there was no weariness from the one who was oppressing them. The first to be lightened from the land were Zevulun and Naftali. The last one was more difficult, it was through the sea, the other side of the Jordan, and the attraction of the nations.* Rava says in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: [We see from here that] one who oppresses *Bnei Yisroel* does not become tired.

*May it not be to you, all travelers.* Rava says in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: We see from here a source that one should



say, "it should not happen to you," when speaking about one's misfortune.

*All travelers.* Rav Amram says in the name of Rav: They have made me like one who transgresses of the law. Regarding Sodom the verse states: *And Hashem rained down on Sodom.* Regarding Yerushalayim, the verse says: *From the heavens He sent fire into my bones and burned them etc.* The verse also says: *And the sin of the daughter of My nation was greater than the sin of Sodom.*

The *Gemora* asks: Is there favoritism? (*Why wasn't Yerushalayim turned over as was Sodom if there sin was greater than Sodom?*)

Rava says in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: There was an added dimension to Yerushalayim that was not present by Sodom. Regarding Sodom the verse says: *Behold, this was the sin of your sister Sodom, it was haughty regarding its being full of bread...and they did not hold the hand of the poor and destitute.* Regarding Yerushalayim the verse states: *The hands of merciful women cooked their children. (They would invite others to eat from their children, showing they cared to make sure that others were fed. This was why they not punished as was Sodom who would never feed others.)*

*The Lord has trampled all my mighty ones in my midst.* This is like a person who says to his friend: This coin is no longer valid.

*They jeered at you.* Rava says in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: Why is the verse starting with the letter *pei* before the verse starting with the letter *ayin*? This is due to the spies (*in the generation of Moshe*), who said with their mouths (*pei*) what they did not see with their eyes (*ayin*).

*The ones who devour My nation are the ones who eat the bread, Hashem they did not call.* Rava says in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: Whoever eats (*i.e. gentiles that plunder*) from the bread of Israel tastes bread. Whoever does not, does not taste bread. *Hashem they did not call.* Rav says: This refers

to the judges (*of the time who did not judge appropriately*). Shmuel says: This refers to the teachers of children (*who did not teach appropriately*).

The *Gemora* asks: Who was the one who counted out the kings and people who have no portion in the World to Come?

Rav Ashi says: The Men of the Great Assembly did this. Rav Yehudah says in the name of Rav: They wanted to count another person (*King Solomon*). The image of his father came down and bowed down before them (*imploing them not to do so*), but this did not make a difference to them. Fire came down from the heavens and licked their benches, but this did not make a difference. A Heavenly Voice rang out and said: *You see a person who works dilligently, before kings he stood, he should not stand before darkness (in genhinnom).* The one who built My house before his house, and moreover, he built My house in seven years and his house in thirteen years, he should stand before kings and not in darkness. This Heavenly voice did not make a difference to them. Another Heavenly voice rang out and said: *Is it from the people he should pay, for you have despised him, that you should choose and not !!* [They then agreed not to include him.]

The Interpreters of Verses said: All of those people really have a portion in the World to Come. They cited Scriptural verses to prove this. (104a – 105a)

## INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

### Hospitality

Rabbi Yochanan explains each of his five points:

"It distances those who would otherwise be near"- as is evident from what happened to Ammon and Moav.

"And brings close those who would otherwise be far away"- as is evident from what happened to Yisro, for Rabbi Yochanan said: As a reward for Yisro's saying: *Call him and let him eat bread*, his descendants merited to sit in the Chamber

of Hewn Stone, as it is written: *The families of scribes, dwellers in Yabetz - the Tirathites, the Shimathites, and the Suchatites; they are the Kenites who are descended from Chammas, father of Beis Rachav.* And it is also written: *The children of the Kenite, Moshe's father-in-law, went up out of the city of palm trees with the children of Yehudah into the wilderness of Yehudah, which is south of Arad; they went and dwelt with the people. [Yisro's descendants were members of the Sanhedrin who sat in the Chamber of Hewn Stone. This was on account of Yisro's hospitality to Moshe.]*

"It causes the eyes of God to look away from the wicked" - as is evident from what happened to Michah.

"And causes the Divine Spirit to descend upon the prophets of the Baal" - as may be seen from what happened to the friends of Iddo the prophet, as it is written: *While they were sitting at the table, the word of Hashem came to the prophet who had brought him back. [The false prophet received actual prophecy because of his hospitality to the prophet Iddo.]*

"One, who inadvertently fails to display proper hospitality, is regarded by God as willfully failing to do so" - for Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav: If only Yonasan had provided Dovid with two loaves of his bread for his escape, the people of Nov, the city of the *Kohanim*, would not have been killed, Doeg the Edomite would not have been banished from the World to Come, and Shaul and his three sons would not have been killed.

To understand the *Gemora*, we must delve into the five points mentioned by Rabbi Yochanan that are the results of providing or not providing hospitality:

1. The failure to display hospitality repulses those who would otherwise be near.

This is evident from what happened to Ammon and Moav. What was so bad about Moav not offering food to the Jews? The Jewish People still had the manna, so it would appear that any other provision would have been excessive.

2. Timely hospitality draws near those who would otherwise be far away.

There is a difficulty with the words of the *Gemora* that state "As a reward for Yisro's saying<sup>1</sup>: Call him and let him eat bread<sup>2</sup>, his descendants merited to sit in the Chamber of Hewn Stone". Why does the *Gemora* state that Yisro's reward was that his descendants merited sitting in the Chamber of Hewn Stone, when there was a more obvious reward? By inviting Moshe to dine with them, Moshe married Yisro's daughter. This was an immediate benefit, and was even a benefit to the Jewish People, as Yisro and his family converted to Judaism.

In a simple sense, the answer to this question is that the *Gemora* is demonstrating the long-term effects of a good deed. By inviting Moshe to dine with him, Yisro merited that his descendants would sit in the Chamber of Hewn Stone. What is not clear, however, is the connection between giving someone food and sitting in the Chamber of Hewn Stone. The *Gemora* does not use terminologies at random. What is the deeper meaning here?

3. It causes the eyes of G-d to look away from the wicked, i.e. wins the wicked reprieve for their sins.

This is evident from what happened to Micha, who, on account of the hospitality he displayed to wayfarers, merited having Hashem overlook his sins. Why was he so meritorious?

4. It causes the Divine Spirit to descend upon the prophets of Baal, i.e. grants pagan prophets genuine prophecies from G-d.

<sup>1</sup> Shemos 2:20

<sup>2</sup> After killing an Egyptian, Moshe was compelled to flee for his life to Midian. There, alone and a fugitive from Pharaoh, he aided the daughters of Yisro, the

priest of Midian. Upon hearing of this, Yisro instructed his daughters to invite Moshe to dine. Moshe came, and eventually married one of Yisro's daughters.

Despite being a false prophet, the second prophet was privileged to receive a genuine prophetic communication from Hashem in the merit of the refreshment he provided Iddo. Why did he earn this immense merit just for providing hospitality?

5. Furthermore, [one's] inadvertent failure to display proper hospitality is accounted by G-d as willful failure to do so.

Yonasan was Dovid's intimate friend. He certainly did not want to cause Dovid harm physically or spiritually. Why was it considered as if he willfully failed to display proper hospitality?

The Ramban writes regarding the blessings that Yitzchak wished to bestow upon Esav as follows:<sup>3</sup> That what Yitzchak said that he would bless Esav after he would prepare for him delicacies, was not meant as a reward for having provided him food, or an instrument of bribery. Rather, Yitzchak desired to benefit from Esav, so that his soul would be bound up with his soul at the time Esav would bring the food. In this way, Yitzchak would bless him with wholly good intentions. An alternative reason is that Yitzchak knew that upon eating the delicacies, he would feel joyful and elated, and the Divine Spirit would rest upon him. This is akin to that what is said:<sup>4</sup> It happened that as the musician played, the hand of Hashem came upon him".

From the words of the Ramban it is evident that the consumption of food can be a prerequisite for attaining a high level of spirituality, even resulting in prophecy. Based on this premise, the *Gemora* can be understood to mean that "great indeed is the need of providing food to travelers and guests", because it is a catalyst for spirituality. All five points mentioned by Rabbi Yochanan reflect this idea.

1. The failure to display hospitality] repulses those who would otherwise be near.

The Ramban writes<sup>5</sup> "that although Moshe told the Jewish People,<sup>6</sup> "Bread you did not eat, and wine or intoxicant you did not drink", this is only said regarding the time the manna descended until they arrived at Seir. From then on, the Edomites and Moabites proffered bread and water, and the leaders of the Jewish People purchased from them, and they consumed it for pleasure. This was not out of necessity or for satiation, as their essential sustenance was from the manna".

According to the Ramban, the sole basis for the leaders purchasing food was that they could attain greater spiritual heights. This is the fundamental of providing hospitality. The converse is also true. One who refrains from providing hospitality will be distanced from spirituality, as was the case with Ammon and Moav.

2. Timely hospitality] near those who would otherwise be far away.

Yisro understood the importance of providing hospitality. When he arrived at the Israeli Camp, it is said,<sup>7</sup> Yisro, the father-in-law of Moshe, took a burnt-offering and feast-offerings for G-d; and Aharon and all the elders of Israel came to eat bread with the father-in-law of Moshe before G-d. Rashi<sup>8</sup>, quoting the *Gemora*,<sup>9</sup> writes, "From here we learn that one who benefits from a feats of a scholar is akin to one who benefits from the Divine Presence". It is obvious that Yisro merited a son-in-law like Moshe and descendants who would be from the Sanhedrin, because he provided food for a spiritual gain.

3. It causes the eyes of G-d to look away from the wicked, i.e. wins the wicked reprieve for their sins.

<sup>3</sup> Breishis 25:34

<sup>4</sup> Melachim II 3:15

<sup>5</sup> Devarim 29:5

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

<sup>7</sup> Shemos 18:12

<sup>8</sup> Ibid

<sup>9</sup> Berachos 64a

Micha was an idolater. Nonetheless, on account of the hospitality he displayed to wayfarers, he merited to have Hashem overlook his sins.

4. It causes the Divine Spirit to descend upon the prophets of Baal, i.e. grants pagan prophets genuine prophecies from G-d.

Similar to Micha, the false prophet was privileged to receive a genuine prophetic communication from Hashem in the merit of the refreshment he provided Iddo. Although his ideology was misguided, he sought to attain spirituality, and by providing a true prophet with hospitality, he was rewarded with a genuine prophetic communication from Hashem.

5. Furthermore, [one's] inadvertent failure to display proper hospitality is accounted by G-d as willful failure to do so.

Yonasan's inadvertent failure to provide Dovid with food caused much misfortune. A parallel to this is the portion in the Torah regarding *eglah arufah* (the axed heifer). It is said,<sup>10</sup> all the elders of that city, who are closest to the corpse, shall wash their hands over the heifer that was axed in the valley. They shall speak up and say, "our hands have not spilled this blood, and our eyes did not see". Rashi,<sup>11</sup> quotes the *Gemora*<sup>12</sup> which queries, "Is it possible that the elders of the court are murderers? Rather, they are implying that they had no part in allowing him to go on his lonely way without food or escort". The Torah is sensitive to the needs of the wayfarer, and one who does not provide hospitality is guilty of murder.

We should merit to provide hospitality like our forefather Avraham Avinu, of whom it is said,<sup>13</sup> He planted an "eshel" in Beer-sheba". Rashi,<sup>14</sup> quotes the *Gemora*<sup>15</sup>, which states: One opinion is that "eshel" was an orchard from which Avraham would provide his guests with food, and one opinion is that it was a hotel for hospitality, and it was stocked with all types of

fruit. Through this "eshel", Hashem was declared G-d of the entire world. Upon finishing their meal, Avraham would request that his guests bless Hashem for the nourishment. Even a simple meal was a vehicle for spiritual growth.

### ***Cameleers***

The *braisa* says: There was an incident where two (*Jewish*) people were captured on Mount Carmel, and their abductor was traveling behind them. One said to his friend: The camel traveling in front of us is blind in one eye, and is carrying two jugs, one of wine and one of oil. One of the two people leading it is Jewish and one is a gentile. The abductor said: You stubborn-necked nation! How would you know that? They said to him: We know this about the camel from the grass in front of it. It eats from the side it sees from, but does not eat from the other side. It carries two jugs, one of wine and one of oil, as is apparent from their drops. The drops of wine sink into the ground, and the drops of oil float over the surface of the ground. One of the two people leading it is Jewish and one is a gentile, as the gentile relieves himself in the middle of road, while the Jew relieves himself on the side of the road (*as Jews are more modest*). Their abductor chased after them and found that their information was correct. He came and kissed them on their heads, and brought them to their houses and made a big meal for them. He danced before them and said: Blessed is the one who chose the children of Avraham, and gave them from His wisdom, and everywhere they go they are made into officers for their masters. He then let them go to their houses in peace.

This episode that is recorded in the *Gemora* is clearly a riddle that requires deciphering.

1. What is the significance in the Jews being perceptive enough to ascertain that the camel was blind in one eye and that one flask was laden with oil and one with wine?

<sup>10</sup> Devarim 21:6-7

<sup>11</sup> Ibid

<sup>12</sup> Sota 45b

<sup>13</sup> Breishis 21:33

<sup>14</sup> Ibid

<sup>15</sup> Sota 10a

2. The fact that the two men who were leading the camel were a Jew and a gentile does not seem to be such a keen observation. If the distinction between a Jew and a gentile were modesty, then even a gentile would notice the discrepancy in their conduct.
3. Furthermore, why were they praised as the seed of *Avraham*? How is *Avraham* connected to their observations?

3. A greedy soul.

The hidden meaning in this *Gemora* can be understood from a Mishna in Pirkei Avos.<sup>16</sup> It is said, 'whoever has the following three traits is among the disciples of our forefather Abraham; and whoever has three different traits is among the disciples of the wicked Balaam. Those who have a good eye, a humble spirit, and a meek soul are among the disciples of our forefather Abraham. Those who have an evil eye, an arrogant spirit, and a greedy soul are among the disciples of the wicked Balaam. How are the disciples of our forefather Abraham different from the disciples of the wicked Balaam? The disciples of our forefather Abraham enjoy the fruits of their good deeds in this world and inherit the World to Come, as is said:<sup>17</sup> 'To cause those who love Me to inherit an everlasting possession [the World to Come], and I will fill their storehouses [in this world]'. But the disciples of the wicked Balaam inherit Gehinnom and descend into the well of destruction, as is said:<sup>18</sup> 'And You, O G-d, shall lower them into the well of destruction, men of bloodshed and deceit shall not live out half their days; but as for me, I will trust in You'.

The Mishna records three traits that are inherent in the disciples of *Avraham*. They are:

1. A good eye.
2. A humble spirit.
3. A meek soul.

The disciples of Balaam are those who have:

1. An evil eye.
2. An arrogant spirit.

What is a good eye? The eye is capable of viewing different situations and assessing them. One can see a beggar on the street, and think, how despicable. Here is a man who is dressed in rags and emits an awful odor, and he dares lie on the street in public view. Conversely, one can perceive this situation as an opportunity to fulfill a mitzvah of helping someone in dire need. The former has a bad eye, and the latter has a good eye. *Avraham* had a good eye. When *Avraham's* servant, *Eliezer*, arrived at the well in the city of *Aram Naharaim*, he proclaimed:<sup>19</sup> 'Behold, I am standing here by the spring of water, and the daughters of the townsmen come out to draw water'. I heard Rabbi Moshe *Mordechai Lowe, Shlita*<sup>20</sup> ask, 'why was it necessary for *Eliezer* to say that he was standing by the spring of water? Rabbi Lowe explained that this would show the kindness of the maiden. If she were to offer him to drink even though he was standing by the water and was capable of obtaining a drink by himself, this would be the maiden who *Hashem* had designated as a wife for *Yitzchak*'.

I would like to suggest a corollary to this beautiful interpretation. The term used for spring of water is '*Ein hamaim*'. *Ein* can mean a spring, but it also can be pronounced *ayin*, meaning an eye. One person can be standing by a spring of water and someone will offer him a drink. He drinks and carries on his way. The person with the 'good eye' will be able to discern the virtue of one who offers him a drink even though he is standing by the well. It is said,<sup>21</sup> 'And Abram said, "My Lord, *Hashem*/ *Elokim*: What can You give me seeing that I go childless, and the steward of my house is the Damascene *Eliezer*?"' The *Gemora*<sup>22</sup> interprets the words 'and the steward of my house (*Uven meshek beisi*)' as a reference to *Eliezer*, who drew and gave to drink from his masters *Torah* to others. Again we see what a good eye can accomplish. One person can learn *Torah*, and retain all his knowledge for his own benefit. The person with the good eye,

<sup>16</sup> 5:22

<sup>17</sup> Mishlei 8:21

<sup>18</sup> Tehillim 55:24

<sup>19</sup> Breishis 24:13

<sup>20</sup> Rav in Toronto, Ontario

<sup>21</sup> Breishis 15:2

<sup>22</sup> Yoma 28b



the disciple of *Avraham Avinu*, will allow others to drink from his wellspring.

What is a humble spirit? *Avraham* beseeches *Hashem* to have mercy on Sodom and the surrounding cities, and it is said:<sup>23</sup> 'Abraham responded and said, "Behold, now I desire to speak to my Lord although I am but dust and ash". This is incredible. Here *Avraham* is requesting that *Hashem* show compassion for wicked people, and he humbles himself by declaring that he is merely dust and ash. One would expect that an advocate for the wicked would at the minimum display an aura of confidence and self esteem. *Avraham* did the exact opposite. *Balaam*, on the other hand, displayed a truly arrogant spirit. It is said:<sup>24</sup> 'G-d came to *Balaam* and said, "Who are these men with you?" *Balaam* said to G-d, "Balak son of Zippor, king of Moab, sent to me". *Rashi*, quoting the *Medrash*,<sup>25</sup> writes, "Hashem intended to trick *Balaam*, but *Balaam* thought, at times Hashem is not aware of everything. I will seek an appropriate time to curse Israel and He will not realize. - *Balaam* was telling Hashem, although I am insignificant in Your eyes, kings honor me.

The third character trait that distinguishes a disciple of *Avraham* from the disciple of *Balaam* is a meek soul. Hashem tested *Avraham* ten times.<sup>26</sup> The greatest test was the *Akeidah*, (binding of *Yitzchak*), and even after successfully assign that test, he was still tested when he sought a burial place for his wife *Sara*. It is said:<sup>27</sup> *Abraham* rose up from the presence of his dead, and spoke to the children of *Heth*, saying: I am an alien and a resident among you; grant me an estate for a burial site with you, that I may bury my dead from before me. *Rashi*<sup>28</sup> writes: 'an alien from another land, and I have settled amongst you. An interpretation in the *Medrash*<sup>29</sup> is, "if you desire, I am an alien, and if not, I am a resident and I will take the land by right, because Hashem promised me,<sup>30</sup> 'to your offspring I will give this land'".

Although *Avraham* had the right to demand the land as a resident, he chose to mention that he was an alien first. He had a meek soul. He did not desire property that belonged to others, and he was cautious even regarding property that was rightfully his. *Balaam*, however, was greedy. It is said,<sup>31</sup> 'Balak kept on sending officers-more, and higher ranking than these. They came to *Balaam* and said to him, "So said *Balak* son of *Zippor*, 'Do not refrain from going to me, for I shall honor you greatly, and everything that you say to me I shall do; so go now and curse this people for me". *Balaam* answered and said to the servants of *Balak*, "if *Balak* will give me his houseful of silver and gold, I cannot transgress the word of Hashem, my G-d, to do anything small or great".

*Balaam* was acutely aware that he could not transgress the word of Hashem, but given that his desire for wealth was so great, he demonstrated his greed by informing that *Balak* that all the money in the world would not satisfy him.

Based on the clear delineation between disciples of *Avraham* and disciples of *Balaam*, we can understand the lesson in the incident recorded in the *Gemora*.

Said one of them to his fellow: the camel walking in front of us is blind in one eye.... They said to him: "we can ascertain that the camel is blind in one eye by the grass on the ground in front of it. On the side it can see, it eats. On the side it cannot see, it does not eat, i.e. from the fact that that it only eats the grass on one side, we can tell that it cannot see the grass on the other side".

Camel in Hebrew is *gamal*. The *Kli Yakar*<sup>32</sup> writes that *gamal* is synonymous with *gemilus* (*chasadim*) acts of kindness. The two captives were alluding to this, by saying that in every situation in life, one has the opportunity to perform an act of

<sup>23</sup> Breishis 18:27

<sup>24</sup> Bamidbar 22:9-10

<sup>25</sup> Tanchuma 5

<sup>26</sup> Avos 5:4

<sup>27</sup> Breishis 23:3-4

<sup>28</sup> Ibid s.v. Ger v'soshav onochi imochem

<sup>29</sup> Breishis Rabbah 58:6

<sup>30</sup> Breishis 12:7

<sup>31</sup> Bamidbar 22:15-18

<sup>32</sup> Breishis 24:14



kindness.<sup>33</sup> One who is not cognizant of this, and only seeks self-gratification, is akin to the camel eating from one side of the road and completely ignoring the other side.

And is laden with two flasks, one containing wine and one containing oil... We can ascertain that it is laden with two flasks, one containing wine and one containing oil, because we know that wine drips and sinks into the ground, whereas oil drips and floats on the earth's surface and does not become absorbed into the ground. From the fact that the contents of one flask dripped and was absorbed into the ground, while the contents of the other flask dripped but would not sink into the ground, we were able to ascertain that one flask contained wine, while the other contained oil.

Wine is a precious commodity. Oil is a cheaper and less in demand. It is said:<sup>34</sup> 'A good name is better than good oil'. Wine is more precious, but it drips and sinks into the ground. A good name is found by someone who is humble in spirit. The *Gemora*<sup>35</sup> *wham* will be with him. When this person passes away, it is said regarding him, "where is the humble, where is the pious, from the disciples of Avraham Avinu. Oil floats and does not become absorbed. One who seeks honor will always stand out. Arrogance is easily noted, and thoroughly despised.

We could ascertain that of the two men leading the camel, one is gentile and one is Jewish, because a gentile relieves himself on the road, whereas a Jew relieves himself on the side of the road, out of a sense of modesty. Thus, when we observed what remained after they relieved themselves and noticed that some was in the middle of the road and some was off on the sides, we deduced that one driver was an idolater and the other was a Jew.

Modesty is not merely a virtue. One who is modest is essentially a G-d fearing person. Lack of modesty stems from arrogance. The Greeks of yore were boastful about their

physique, and their greatest philosopher and scholar was not able to accept the belief in One Supreme being. The *Gemora* writes<sup>36</sup> that one who is arrogant will eventually commit adultery.<sup>37</sup>

The captor chased after the cameleers and he found that it was as the captives had said. He came and kissed them on their heads, brought them to his house, made them a great feast, and danced before them, saying, "blessed is He who chose the seed of Abraham and gave them of His wisdom; wherever they go they become the princes of their masters!" - And he released them and they went to their homes in peace.

The captor understood from their observations that they were alluding to the importance of proper values. He was able to comprehend the concept that the Ibn Ezra expresses so eloquently regarding a Nazir<sup>38</sup>: 'know that all of mankind are enslaved to the desires of the world. The true king who bears a crown and a wreath on his head is one who is free from his desires'.

This is the reason the captor freed his captives from slavery. May Hashem remove the fetters of slavery that shackle us to the desires of the world. May we merit acting as our forefather Avraham did, with a good eye, a humble spirit, and a meek soul. Bearing these virtues reflect true freedom, and allow us to be princes of the masters.

## DAILY MASHAL

### *Earning Merit for a Father*

The *Gemora* asks: Why wasn't Amon listed as one of the kings without a portion in the World to Come?

The *Gemora* answers: This is due to the honor of Yoshiyahu (*his righteous son*).

<sup>36</sup> Sota 4b

<sup>37</sup> See Kli Yakar to Parashas Korach 16:4 for elaboration on this issue

<sup>38</sup> Bamidbar 6:7

<sup>33</sup> See Mesilas Yesharim, quoting Zohar, that a Chasid, a pious person, is one who is mischased, performs acts of kindness to his creator.

<sup>34</sup> Koheles 7:1

<sup>35</sup> Berachos 6b

The *Gemora* asks: If so, the *Mishna* should not have listed Menasheh because of the honor of Chizkiyah!?

The *Gemora* answers: A son gives merit to his father; a father does not give merit to his son. This is as the verse states: *And there is not a rescuer from My hand*. Avraham will not save Yishmael, and Yitzchak will not save Esav. Once we have said this answer, we can also say that the reason Achaz was not listed was because of the honor of Chizkiyahu.

There is clearly a difficulty with this passage of *Gemora*. Why should it be that a righteous son can earn merit for a wicked father, but a righteous father cannot earn merit for a wicked son? In fact, the *Gemora* teaches us<sup>39</sup> that a father merits his son with five virtues. Although it is evident that a father can only merit a son in this world, but in the World to Come the son must depend solely on his own merits<sup>40</sup>, this distinction requires clarification.

Another puzzling aspect of this *Gemora* is that the proof that a righteous father cannot earn merit for a wicked son is from the verse 'there is no rescuer from My hand'. This verse is said about Hashem, not a human being. Why does the *Gemora* choose to prove its point from this verse, which does not seem to be related to a father earning merit for his son?

In order to understand the concept expressed in the *Gemora*, it is incumbent upon us to examine one of the most dynamic father and son relationships that ever existed in history. In Parashas Toldos, the Torah describes the relationship between Yitzchak and his wicked son Esav. It is said,<sup>41</sup> Yitzchak loved Esav, for game was in his mouth, but Rivkah loved Yaakov. How is it possible that Yitzchak loved Esav, who was wicked? Rashi<sup>42</sup> offers two explanations to the meaning of the words 'for game was in his mouth'. One is that 'his mouth' refers to Yitzchak, because Esav actually hunted animals and provided his father with food. The second interpretation is

that 'his mouth' refers to Esav tricking his father with his speech, by pretending to be righteous and asking him questions regarding Jewish law.

Although both explanations are easily understood, there is also a deeper understanding of the words 'for game was in his mouth'. The mouth is symbolic of prayer. Only the Jewish People pray with the right intentions. Esav, symbolic of the gentile, is deceptive in prayer. The non-Jew prays with ulterior motives. The *Gemora*<sup>43</sup> states that a Jew can declare, "I will contribute this coin to charity in order that my son should live. Although it appears that the Jew has an ulterior motive, he is considered to be righteous. Why is this so? Rashi<sup>44</sup> explains that the Jew's heart is directed towards heaven. If he is afflicted in life, he does not complain against Hashem. He views the afflictions as punishment for his sins. If a gentile is not rewarded commensurate with his deeds, he will complain.

Rashi in his commentary on Chumash echoes this idea regarding the blessing that Yitzchak gave Yaakov. It is said,<sup>45</sup> and may G-d give you of the dew of the heavens and of the fatness of the earth, and abundant grain and wine. Rashi, quoting the Medrash,<sup>46</sup> writes: 'what is meant by the term *Hoelokim* (G-d)? Elokim implies the attribute of judgment. If you (Yaakov) deserve, Hashem will reward you. If you do not deserve, He will not reward you. To Esav, however, Yitzchak said,<sup>47</sup> ...Behold, of the fatness of the earth shall be your dwelling.... Whether you are righteous or wicked, Hashem will reward you.

Why should a gentile be so lucky that whether he is righteous or wicked, he will be rewarded? The answer lies in the words of the *Gemora* regarding a righteous father who cannot earn merit for a wicked son. The verse quoted as proof of this is 'there is no rescuer from My hand'. Although this verse is said regarding Hashem, the *Gemora* interprets 'rescuer' to be a

<sup>39</sup> Idiyos 2:9 The five virtues are 1. Beauty 2. Strength 3. Wealth 4. Wisdom 5. Years of life

<sup>40</sup> See Rashba

<sup>41</sup> Breishis 25:28

<sup>42</sup> Ibid s.v. Bpiv

<sup>43</sup> Rosh Hashanah 4a

<sup>44</sup> Ibid s.v. Kan B'Yisroel

<sup>45</sup> Breishis 27:28

<sup>46</sup> Tanchuma 14

<sup>47</sup> Breishis 27:39

reference to the Patriarchs. It is clear that the relationship that the Patriarchs had with their children is parallel to every father and son relationship. The righteous son can earn merit for the wicked father, because the righteous son serves Hashem whether he will be rewarded or not. His deeds and prayers are pure, devoid of any ulterior motive. The wicked son, however, is conniving and deceitful. He is rewarded regardless of his intentions and actions. A wicked son cannot be a beneficiary of his father's merits. Merits do not play a role in his life.

This idea has serious ramifications. If one is considered wicked in the eyes of Hashem, then all his attempts to appear righteous are in vain. Esav thought he could deceive Yitzchak, either by providing him with gourmet food, or by asking questions related to Jewish law. Yitzhak was prepared to bless him, which would have contradicted the rule that a righteous father cannot earn merit for a wicked son. Hashem did not allow this, and Yaakov received the blessings instead. The only blessing that Esav received was 'Behold, of the fatness of the earth shall be your dwelling, and of the dew of the heavens from above'.

In blessing Yaakov, Yitzchak said,<sup>48</sup> 'and may G-d give you of the dew of the heavens and of the fatness of the earth, and abundant grain and wine'. Why did Yitzchak reverse the order? The answer is that Yaakov would only be rewarded from heaven if his actions on earth would be worthy. Esav, however, regardless of his actions on earth, would always be rewarded from heaven.

Now we can understand why it is said that Yitzhak loved Esav. Yitzchak understood that Esav also had the ability to perform good deeds and pray. Albeit Esav was wicked, but Yitzchak thought that he could be 'saved'. His good deeds and prayer would save him. Hashem showed Yitzchak that this was not the case. It is said,<sup>49</sup> I loved you, says Hashem; but you say, 'How have You loved us'? Was not Esav the brother of Yaakov-the word of Hashem-yet I loved Yaakov. But I hated Esav; I

made his mountains a desolation and [gave] his heritage to the desert serpents.

Hashem Himself proclaimed that he hates Esav. If the father of all of us expresses His hatred towards Esav, certainly Yitzchak had no right to favor him. May we merit seeing the fulfillment of the prophet's words:<sup>50</sup> And saviors will ascend Mount Zion to judge the mountain of Esav, and the kingdom will be Hashem's.

<sup>48</sup> Breishis 27:28

<sup>49</sup> Malachi 1:2

<sup>50</sup> Ovadiah 1:21