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Sanhedrin Daf 89

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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

**Zaken Mamrei**

They do not put him (a sage who continues to rule in accordance with his view even after the High Court has ruled otherwise) to death, neither in the Court which is in his city, nor in the Court which is in Yavneh, but they bring him up to the High Court that is in Yerushalayim, and they guard him until the next Festival, and they put him to death on the Festival, for it is written: And the entire nation shall hear and fear, and they shall not act willfully anymore; these are the words of Rabbi Akiva. Rabbi Yehudah says: They do not delay carrying out his execution, but they put him to death immediately, and they write and send messengers to all the places, saying: So-and-so has been sentenced to death by the Court.

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: They do not put him to death, neither in the Court which is in his city, nor in the Court which is in Yavneh, but they bring him up to the High Court that is in Yerushalayim, and they guard him until the next Festival, and they put him to death on the Festival, for it is written: And the entire nation shall hear and fear, and they shall not act willfully anymore; these are the words of Rabbi Akiva. Rabbi Yehudah said to him: Is it written: *they shall “see” and fear?* It is written: *they shall “hear” and fear.* Why should his sentence be delayed? Rather, he is executed immediately, and a proclamation is written and sent to all places: So-and-so has been sentenced to death by the Court.

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: Public announcements must be made for four people who have been executed: the instigator, a stubborn and rebellious son, a rebellious sage and witnesses who were proven to be *zomemin*. (89a)

**False Prophets**

The false prophet (*who is punished by strangulation*) is one who prophesies about what he did not hear and what was not said to him. His death is by the hands of man; but one who suppresses his prophecy, and one who disregards the words of the prophet, and the prophet who transgressed his own words - his death is by the hands of Heaven, for it is written: *I will demand it of him.*

One who prophesies in the name of an idol, and says, “The idol said like this,” even if it conformed to the *halachah* - to make *tamei* that which was *tamei*, and to make *tahor* that which is *tahor*.

One who cohabits with a married woman - as soon as she came under the control of her husband for the purpose of marriage, even though she has not had marital relations - if one cohabits with her, he is strangled.

*Zomemin* witnesses against a *Kohen’s* daughter and he who has illicitly cohabited with her (*are killed by strangulation*), for all the *zomemin* witnesses receive the same death (*that they intended to impose upon the defendant*), except for *zomemin* witnesses against a *Kohen’s* daughter (*for she would be executed through burning*) and he who cohabits with her (*for the adulterer is executed through strangulation*).

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: Three are executed by the hands of man, and three by Heaven: He who prophesies what he has not heard or what has not been told him, and he who prophesies in the name of an idol are executed by the hands of man. But he who suppresses his prophecy, or disregards the words of a prophet, and a prophet who transgresses his

own words are executed by the hands of Heaven. The *Gemora* cites the Scriptural sources for these *halachos*.

The *Gemora* cites a Scriptural example of one who prophesied what he did not hear. It is written: And Tzidkiah the son of Kenaanah made for himself horns of iron (*and he said in Hashem's Name, "With these you shall gore the Arameans until they are destroyed"*).

The *Gemora* asks: But what could he possibly have done, seeing that the spirit of Navos had deceived him, as it is written: *And Hashem said, "Who shall convince Achav that he may go up and fall at Ramos Gilead? ... And there came forth a spirit and stood before Hashem, and said, "I will convince him." ... And Hashem said, "You shall convince him and also prevail; go forth and do so."*

Rav Yehudah interjects: What is meant by "Go forth"? "Go forth" from My partitions (*for falsehood has no place by God*). What "spirit" is meant? Rabbi Yochanan said: It is the spirit of Navos the Yizraelite.

The *Gemora* answers: He should have realized that his prophecy was false, as Rabbi Yitzchak said: The same prophecy is revealed to many prophets, yet no two prophets prophecy in the identical words. And since all these four hundred prophets used exactly the same expression, it proved that they were saying nothing at all.

The *Gemora* asks: But perhaps he did not know of this principle laid down by Rabbi Yitzchak?

The *Gemora* answers: Yehoshofat was there and he warned them that their prophecy could not be genuine.

The *Gemora* cites a Scriptural example of one who prophesied what he did not hear, but rather, it was told to a different prophet - Chananiah the son of Azur. *Now Yirmiah stood in the upper market place, and said, "Hashem, the Lord of Hosts said, 'Behold, I will break the strength of Eilam.'" Thereupon, Chananiah the son of Azur made the following kal vachomer:*

If Eilam, which only came to assist Babylonia, yet the Holy One, Blessed be He, said: Behold, I will break the strength of Eilam; then how much more so the Chaldeans (i.e., Babylonians) themselves! So he went to the lower market place and proclaimed, "*Hashem, the Lord of Hosts said, 'Behold, I will break the strength of Babylon.'*"

Rav Pappa asked Abaye: But this prophecy was not told to any other prophet?

He answered: Since a *kal vachomer* reasoning has been given for Biblical exposition, it is as though it had been told to Yirmiah; therefore it can be said that to Chananiah it was not revealed.

An example from Scripture where someone prophesied in the name of an idol is from the prophets of Baal.

An example from Scripture where someone suppressed his prophecy is from Yonah ben Amitai.

An example from Scripture where someone did not listen to the words of a prophet is from the colleague of Michah, as it is written: And a certain man [Michah] of the son of the prophets said to his fellow in the word of Hashem, "Smite me now." And the man refused to smite him. And it is further written: And he [Michah] said to him, "Because you have not obeyed [the voice of the Lord, behold as soon as you depart from me, a lion shall slay you.]"

An example from Scripture where someone transgressed his own prophecy is from Iddo the prophet, as instanced by the following verses: For so it was charged me by the word of the Lord [saying, Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor return home by the same way that you came]. [On his way home, he passed by the house of an old prophet, who invited him inside for a meal.] And he [the old prophet] said to him, "I am a prophet also as you are [and an angel spoke to me by the word of the Lord, saying, 'Bring him back with you into your house that he may eat bread, and drink water].'" [But, he lied to him.] So he



went back with him. And then it is written: And when he [Iddo] went, a lion found him [by the way, and slew him].

A *braisa* was taught before Rav Chisda: If one suppresses his prophecy, he receives lashes.

Rav Chisda asked: Who then warned him?

Abaye answered; His fellow prophets warned him.

The *Gemora* asks: How do they know (*that he received a prophecy*)?

Abaye answered: Hashem does not do something unless He reveals His secret to His servants (*so other prophets heard about it as well*).

The *Gemora* asks: But perhaps the Heavenly Court recanted the decree?

The *Gemora* answers: Had they recanted, all the other prophets would have been informed.

The *Gemora* asks: But in the case of Yonah they did recant, yet Yonah himself was not informed?

The *Gemora* answers: Yonah was originally told that Nineveh would be overturned, but he did not know whether it was for good (*for the people would repent*) or for bad.

The *Gemora* asks: How can we punish someone for not listening to a prophet? How do we know that he is a genuine prophet?

The *Gemora* answers: Either through a sign (*by foretelling the future*), or if he was established as a prophet beforehand. Proof to this is from the fact that Yitzchak listened to Avraham and the Jewish people listened to Eliyahu by Mt. Carmel. They offered a sacrifice outside of the Temple! It must be that if the prophet was established as genuine from beforehand, he must be listened to. (89a – 89b)

### **Avraham and Yitzchak**

*And it came to pass after these things that God did test Avraham.* What is meant by *after*? Rabbi Yochanan said in the name of Rabbi Yosi ben Zimra: It was after the words of Satan, as it is written: *And the child grew and was weaned (and Avraham made a feast)*: The Satan said to the Holy one, Blessed be He: Master of the Universe! To this old man You did grace with the fruit of the womb at the age of a hundred, yet of all that feast which he prepared, he did not have one turtle-dove or pigeon to sacrifice before You?! Hashem responded: Has he done this but in honor of his son! Yet were I to say to him, "Sacrifice your son before Me," he would do so immediately. Immediately afterwards, it is written: *And God tested Avraham.*

*And he said, Take now (na) your son.* Rabbi Shimon ben Abba said: The word *na* connotes a request ("*please*"). This may be compared to a king of flesh and blood who was confronted by many wars, which he won by the aid of one mighty warrior. Subsequently he was faced with a fierce battle. Thereupon he said to him, "I beg of you, assist me in battle, that people should not say that there was no reality in the earlier battles." So also did the Holy One, Blessed be He, say to Avraham, "I have tested you with many trials and you withstood them all. Now, be firm, for My sake in this trial that people should not say that there was no reality in the earlier ones."

It is written: *Your son.* Avraham asked: But I have two sons! *your only one.* Avraham asked again: but each of them (*Yitzchak and Yishmael*) is the only one of his mother! *Whom you love.* He asked: But I love them both! *Yitzchak!*

The *Gemora* explains: This was necessary so that his mind should not reel from the sudden shock (*of being told to sacrifice his son*).

On the way Satan came towards him and said to him, "Why would someone who loves you so much, request of you to sacrifice your only son?" He replied, "*I will walk in my perfect innocence (and follow the literal meaning of Hashem's*



command to me)." Satan told him, "I have heard from behind the curtain the following thing, 'the lamb shall be for a burnt offering, but not Yitzchak for a burnt offering.'" He replied, "It is the punishment of a liar, that should he even tell the truth, he is not listened to."

Rabbi Levi said (*in explanation of the words: "after these things"*): After Yishmael's words to Yitzchak. Yishmael said to Yitzchak, "I am more virtuous than you in the fulfilling of commandments, for you were circumcised at eight days (*and so could not prevent it*), but I was circumcised at thirteen years old." Yitzchak responded, "On account of one limb you challenge me! Were the Holy One, Blessed be He, say to me, 'Sacrifice yourself before Me,' I would do so." Immediately afterwards, it is written: *And God tested Avraham.*

#### INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

##### ***Are there false prophets in our era?***

Our *Mishna* lists a number of people punishable by death, including a false prophet – a person whose prophecy was never said to him. It is obvious that a comedian or town fool pronouncing a so-called prophecy is not punishable by death as no one regards his pronouncements as prophecy: he is merely a liar but not a false **prophet**. On the other hand, it is clear from our *sugya* that a false prophet is not always a true prophet who defected: he could be someone who never prophesied but now pronounces a false prophecy. Our *Gemora* cites Tzidkiyah ben Kenaanah as an example of a false prophet, though he was never a true one (*Chazon Ish*). What, then, are the rules for defining a false prophet?

**A false prophet is someone suitable to be a prophet:** Indeed, *Minchas Chinuch* (end of mitzvah 517) and others explain that a false prophet is someone fulfilling all the conditions for receiving prophecy (see Rambam, *Hilchos Yesodei HaTorah*, 7:7). People may therefore follow him and believe his prophecy. Still, *Minchas Chinuch* cites the *Mishnas Chachamim* that every person should avoid "prophesying" and though there is no death penalty for it, it is forbidden by

the Torah. Rabbi Eliezer of Metz (cited in *Hagahos Maimoniyos, Hilchos 'Avodas Kochavim*, 5:8) asserts that it is forbidden even as a joke.

#### DAILY MASHAL

By: Daf Digest

When the chassidim of Petrashen asked the Imrei Chaim of Vizhnitz, zt"l, to come for a visit to their town, the rebbe agreed to do so. This visit afforded such honor to the city that dozens of people rode the trains to Klausenberg to join the rebbe's entourage for the final leg of the journey. Hundreds of men, women, and children came out to greet the rebbe's train when he finally arrived in the town. The Vizhnitzer Rebbe's first move was to visit the rav of the town. Only when he finished this visit did he consent to go to his host. The rav commented about the visit, "From the rebbe's conversation I found that he is not only an important rebbe but also a gadol baTorah." The next day was erev Shabbos and the rebbe—a renowned darshan—was asked to speak in the main shul of the town. His remark when asked to speak was very telling. "You know when Rav Yechezkel of Shinovah, zt"l, was asked to speak in public he would always refuse. When asked to explain why, he would say: In Sanhedrin 89 we find that one who says a false prophecy is killed in earthly courts. But one who received a bona fide prophecy that should be told to others and withholds the prophecy is punished by death from heaven. In light of this Gemara I am in trouble whatever I do. If I merit true Torah from heaven and do not tell this over, there are very heavy consequences. But what if what I wish to say is not Toras emes? In that case, I will be in the category of those who deserve capital punishment from human hands. Since I cannot be sure which type of Torah I will give over, I must choose between these two options. I prefer to refrain from saying over even at the risk of withholding genuine Torah. Like Dovid Hamelech famously said in the verse: I prefer to fall into the hands of Hashem, not man.

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