

29 Tishrei 5778  
Oct. 19, 2017



Sanhedrin Daf 95

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

What is meant by the verse: *Sancheirev intends to stand at Nov on that day?* Rav Huna said: Only that day was left for the possibility of punishment for the sin which transpired in Nov. [When the Kohanim of Nov were massacred when David was fleeing from Shaul. Hashem had set a term for punishment, of which that day was the last.]

Sancheirev’s astrologers said to him, “If you proceed to attack now, you will conquer it; if not, you will not conquer it.

Therefore the journey that should have taken ten days to make, he completed in one day. When he arrived by the gates of Yerushalayim, rugs were piled up for him until, by ascending and sitting on the top, he saw the entire city of Yerushalayim. It appeared small in his eyes. He exclaimed, “Is this the city of Yerushalayim, for which I mobilized all my troops, and conquered all these country? Why, it is smaller and weaker than all the foreign cities of the nations which I have conquered with my might!” Then he stood up and shook his head and waved his hand toward the Temple Mount in Zion, and against the Temple Courtyard in Yerushalayim.

The soldiers urged him to attack immediately, but he replied, “You are too worn out, but tomorrow, let each of you bring me a stone from this wall, and we shall destroy it.” *And it came to pass that night that the angel of God went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and eighty-five thousand men, and when they arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead*

*corpses.* Rav Pappa said: This is what people mean when they say: If justice is delayed, justice is cancelled.

*And Yishbi of Nov, who was of the sons of Orpah, the weight of whose spear weighed three hundred shekels of brass in weight, he being girded with new armor, decided to kill David.* What is meant by “*And Yishbi of Nov*”? Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav: A man who came (*to kill David*) on account of Nov. For the Holy One, Blessed be He, had said to David, “How long will this sin (*that since he took refuge in Nov, Shaul had the Kohanim killed*) be hidden in your hand? Through you, Nov, the city of *Kohanim*, was massacred (*for they assisted you in your escape*); through you, Doeg the Edomite was banished from the World to Come (*for it was he who advised Shaul to kill the Kohanim*); and through you, Shaul and his three sons were slain (*by the Philistines*). Would you rather that your descendants should be destroyed, or be delivered into the enemy’s hand? He replied: Master of the Universe! I would rather be delivered into the enemy’s hand than that my children be destroyed.

One day, when David ventured out to hunt, Satan appeared before him in the guise of a deer. He shot arrows at him, but did not reach him, and was thus led on until he reached the land of the Philistines. When Yishbi of Nov spotted him, he exclaimed, “It is he who killed my brother Goliath.” So he bound him, doubled him up and cast him under an olive press (*intending to crush him to death*); but a miracle occurred, and the ground softened under him. Now that day was Friday, and Avishai the son of Tzeruiah was shampooing his head in four measures of water. He



saw some blood stains in the water. Others say that a dove came and beat its wings before him. He reasoned: Israel is likened to a dove. This must be an indication that David is in trouble. So he went to his palace, but did not find him. Now, he said, we have learned in a *Mishna*: One may not ride upon a king's horse, nor sit upon his throne, nor use his scepter; but what is the *halachah* in a time of danger? So he went and asked the question in the study hall, and was answered that in a time of danger, it is permitted. He then mounted David's mule and rode off, and the earth contracted under him. On his way, he saw Orpah, Yishbi's mother spinning. When she spotted him, she broke off the thread of the spindle and threw the spindle at him, intending to kill him. Then (*when she missed her intended target*) she said, "Young man, bring me the spindle." He picked it up and threw it at her head instead, and killed her. When Yishbi saw him, he said to himself, "Now that there are two, they will kill me." So he threw David in the air and thrust his spear into the ground, saying, "Let him fall upon it, and die." Avishai pronounced the Divine Name, and David was held suspended between heaven and earth.

The *Gemora* interjects: Why didn't David pronounce it himself? The *Gemora* answers: It is because a prisoner cannot free himself from prison.

Avishai then asked David, "What are you doing here?" David replied, "Like so did God speak to me, and like so did I answer Him." Avishai told him, "Reverse your prayer; let your grandson sell wax rather than that you should suffer." David agreed and they then prayed together. Avishai again pronounced the Divine Name and brought him down from midair, where he was still suspended. Yishbi began to pursue them. When they reached Kubei, they said, "Let us stop and fight against him." They were still afraid, and proceeded further. When they reached Bei Trei, they said, "Can two whelps kill a lion?" They taunted him by saying, "Go and find your mother Orpah in the grave." On their mentioning his mother's name to him, his strength weakened, and they killed him.

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa* that lists three people for whom the earth contracted to facilitate their quick journey from one place to another. These were Eliezer, the servant of Avraham, our patriarch Yaakov, and Avishai the son of Tzeruiah. The *Gemora* now elaborates on each of these miracles: In the case of Avishai ben Tzeruiah, we know what happened from the incident we just related. As for Eliezer, the servant of Avraham, the fact that the earth contracted for him can be demonstrated from Scripture, for it is written: *I came today to the spring*, which implies that he had left Canaan and arrived in Aram that very same day. That the earth contracted for the Patriarch Yaakov can also be seen from Scripture, for it is written: *Yaakov departed from Beersheva and went to Charan*. And it is written further: *He encountered the place and slept there because the sun had set*. Now, the two verses seem to contradict each other, for the first verse states that Yaakov came to Charan, but the next verse states that he spent the night in Beis El, thus implying that he did not, in fact, travel to Charan!? To answer this apparent contradiction, the *Gemora* introduces a different understanding of the verse: Actually Yaakov did get as far as Charan, but once he reached Charan, he said to himself, "Is it possible that I have passed on my journey the place where my fathers prayed (*Beis El*), and I did not pray there myself? I must go back to Beis El, and fix this! He decided to return to *Eretz Yisroel* and pray at Beis El. As soon as he thought to do this, the ground between Charan and Beis El miraculously contracted for him, and Yaakov found himself instantaneously transported back to Beis El. And this is confirmed by Scripture, for immediately after Yaakov reached Charan, it is written: *He encountered the place (Beis El)* It is from here that we find that the ground miraculously contracted for the patriarch Yaakov.

The *Gemora* expounds further on the word *vayifga* used in connection with Yaakov: The word *pegiah* found in this verse denotes nothing other than prayer, as it is written elsewhere: *And as for you, do not pray on behalf of this*



people, do not raise any cry or prayer on their behalf, and do not entreat Me in prayer (*tifga*).

The *Gemora* continues its exposition of the verse: Now, when it is written that Yaakov slept there because the sun had set, it means that after he prayed in Beis El, he wished to return to Charan. However, the Holy One, Blessed be He, declared: This righteous man has come to My lodging place. Shall he leave without spending a night? Certainly not! Therefore, a miracle occurred and the sun immediately set, forcing Yaakov to spend the night there. And this is the meaning of the verse: *The sun rose for Yaakov as he passed Peniel*. Now, was it only for him that the sun rose? Did it not rise for the entire world? Rather, said Rabbi Yitzchak, the verse is implying that the same sun that had prematurely set on his account at Beis El, now rose prematurely on his account at Peniel.

Earlier it was stated that David chose to have his own life spared, and to instead allow his descendants to perish on account of his sin. The *Gemora* cites the verse which shows that David's descendants were obliterated: *Asaliah the mother of Achaziah saw that her son was dead, and she arose and destroyed the entire royal family*.

The *Gemora* asks: But Yoash remained alive?

The *Gemora* answers: In the case of Nov as well, a single *Kohen* named Evyasar survived, as it is written: *One son of Achimelech ben Achituv escaped, and his name was Evyasar. [Just as his negligence had resulted in the death of all but one of the Kohanim of Nov, similarly, all but one of his descendants were put to death by Asaliah.]*

Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav: Had not at least one son, Evyasar, been left to Achimelech ben Achituv after the massacre, not a single survivor would have remained of David's progeny.

The *Gemora* returns to its discussion of Sancheirev's invasion of Yehudah. Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav: The wicked Sancheirev came upon them with an army of forty-five thousand princes seated in golden chariots. They were accompanied by princesses and harlots. He came upon them with an additional eighty thousand warriors clad in coats of mail, and sixty thousand swordsmen running before him. And the rest of his troops were cavalry.

And so (*a force so vast*) they came upon Avraham, and so they will eventually come with Gog and Magog (*in the time of Mashiach*).

The *Gemora* cites another *braisa*: Sancheirev's army was so numerous that the length of his camp extended for four hundred *parsaos*, and the width of all his horses' necks would extend for forty *parsaos*. The total number of soldiers in his camp was two hundred and sixty myriad thousands (*two billion, six hundred million*) minus one.

Abaye inquired: Does it mean minus one entire myriad? Or does it mean minus a thousand, or minus a hundred, or minus just one person? The *Gemora* leaves this question unresolved.

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: The first group of the Assyrian army crossed the river swimming, as it is written: *It will sweep into Yehudah, overflowing and passing through*. The middle units marched erect across the Jordan, as it is written: *It will reach to the neck*. And the last group raised clouds of dust with their feet as they marched across; as a matter of fact, they did not even find enough water left in the river to drink, and they were thirsty until they finally brought water from somewhere else to drink; for it is written: *I dug springs and drank water* etc. [*with the soles of my feet, I cause all the mighty rivers to dry up*.]

Above the *Gemora* described Sancheirev's army as totaling over two billion troops. The *Gemora* asks: But it is written:



and an angel of Hashem went forth and slew one hundred and eighty-five thousand of the camp of Assyria, and they arose in the morning, and behold they were all dead corpses. Evidently, his army numbered far less than two billion men!?

Rabbi Abahu answered: The one hundred and eighty-five thousand men mentioned by the verse were just the commanders of the legions. The entire army, however, was much larger.

Rav Ashi corroborates this explanation: A precise reading of Scripture supports this conclusion, for it is written: *then the Lord G-d of Hosts will send leanness into his fat ones*, which implies that Scripture is dealing only with the “fat ones” among Sancheirev’s army, i.e. his commanders.

Ravina also proves this: A precise reading of Scripture also supports this conclusion, for it is written: *Hashem sent an angel who destroyed every warrior, commander and officer in the army [of the King of Assyria]; then, [Sancheirev] returned in humiliation to his own land, and came to his idol’s temple, where his own offspring felled him by the sword*. Now, here, Scripture describes those killed by the angel as being officers, not common soldiers. This leads us to conclude that the total amount of Sancheirev’s army well exceeded one hundred and eighty-five thousand men.

The *Gemora* asks: How did the angel kill them? Rabbi Eliezer says: The angel hit them with his hand, for it is written: *Israel saw the great hand*. This implies that the Jews who witnessed the splitting of the Sea saw the same hand that would eventually punish Sancheirev.

Rabbi Yehoshua says: The angel hit them with its finger, for it is written: *the sorcerers said to Pharaoh, “it is the finger of G-d!”* This implies that it was the same finger that would eventually punish Sancheirev.

Rabbi Eliezer the son of Rabbi Yosi HaGlili says: Just before the plague descended on the Assyrians, the Holy One, Blessed be He, said to the angel Gavriel: Is your scythe sharpened to begin destroying the Assyrian enemy? Gavriel replied to Hashem: “Master of the Universe! It has been sharpened and ready ever since the Six Days of Creation!” For it is written: *They fled from the swords* etc. from the sharpened sword.

Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai says: That season during which Sancheirev’s army besieged Yerushalayim was the season when the fruits of *Eretz Yisroel* were due to ripen. At that time, the Holy One, Blessed be He, said to Gavriel: When you go to the land to ripen the fruits, engage the Assyrians in battle! For it is written: *When he passes through he shall take you, for he shall pass through every morning, by day and by night. When this message is truly understood it shall inspire sheer terror*.

Rav Pappa said: Gavriel’s actions are an example of that which people say: “as you happen to pass by, make your voice heard to your enemy.”

And some say: Gavriel breathed into their nostrils and they died, as it is written: *When he blows upon them, they wither*. Rabbi Yirmiah bar Abba said: Gavriel clapped his hands and they died, as it is written: *I too shall pound My hand upon My hand, and I shall thereby put My fury to rest*. Rabbi Yitzchak Nafcha said: Gavriel opened their ears so that they heard the Heavenly song being sung by the Chayos, and because of that, they died. For it is written: *The nations scattered because of Your exaltedness*.

The *Gemora* asks: How many of them remained alive? Rav said: Ten soldiers survived, for it is written: *and the remnant of the trees of his forest shall be few, such that a child can write the down*. Now, what numeral is a child able to write down? The numeral ten.





Shmuel said: Nine soldiers survived, for it is written: *and there shall be left therein small, lone grapes; like one who cuts olives [from a tree] and leaves two or three lone clusters at the top of the highest bough, four or five in its branches.*

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: Fourteen soldiers survived, as it is written: *Two and three, etc.; four and five.* The total of all these numbers is fourteen.

Rabbi Yochanan said: Five Assyrians survived. They were: Sancheirev and his two sons, as well as Nevuchadnezzar and Nevuzaradan.

The *Gemora* proves this: That Nevuzaradan survived is known through an oral tradition. We also know that Nevuchadnezzar survived, for it is written that Nevuchadnezzar said: *The form of the fourth is like an angel.* Now, if Nevuchadnezzar had never seen an angel once before, how did he know what one looked like now? [It must be that Nevuchadnezzar had seen an angel previously.] And we also know that Sancheirev and his two sons survived the angel's attack, for it is written: *As Sancheirev was prostrating himself in the temple of Nisroch his god, his sons Adramelech and Sharezer slew him with a sword. [This took place after Sancheirev's return from Yerushalayim; obviously he and his two sons mentioned in the verse survived Gavriel's attack.]* (95a – 95b)

## INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

### Meeting through Prayer

The *Gemora* requires clarification. Yaakov is fleeing from his brother Esav, and after taking a break for fourteen years to study in the Bais Medrash of Ever<sup>1</sup>, he begins his journey

to his uncle Lavan in Charan. Upon realizing that he forgot to pay homage at the prayer site of his fathers, he ponders returning there. Hashem performs a miracle, and the ground between Charan and Beth El miraculously contracted for him. Once he has fulfilled his obligations of prayer, why did Hashem deem it necessary for Yaakov to spend a night at the future site of the Bais Hamikdash? Furthermore, why is the Bais Hamikdash referred to as a lodging place?

In order to gain a perspective of this incident, it is important to understand a fundamental of prayer. The Shem Mishmuel writes that Naftali the son of Yaakov was called by this name because the root of the word means attachment<sup>2</sup>. Tefillah also means attachment, as the focus of prayer should be that one attaches himself to Hashem. Why is this necessary? It would seem that by merely beseeching Hashem to assist us in our daily lives, we would be getting the most out of prayer. Our days are occupied with work and Torah study. How does one become attached to Hashem through prayer?

The *Gemora*<sup>3</sup> states: Rabbi Eliezer said, what is meant by the verse:<sup>4</sup> Many people will go and say, 'Come, let us go up to the Mountain of Hashem, to the Temple of the G-d of Yaakov, [and He will teach us of His ways and we will walk in His path]. The *Gemora* explains: The verse reads: 'the G-d of Yaakov', and not the G-d of Avraham and the G-d of Yitzchak. Not like Avraham, who referred to the site as a mountain, as is said<sup>5</sup> 'on the mountain Hashem will be seen'. Nor like Yitzchak, who regarding him the site is referred to as a field, as is said;<sup>6</sup> Yitzchak went out to supplicate in the field towards evening. Rather, like Yaakov, who referred to the site as a house, as is said,<sup>7</sup> and he named that place Beth El.

<sup>1</sup> Rashi quoting Gemara Megillah 17a

<sup>2</sup> See Rashi Breishis 30:8

<sup>3</sup> Pesachim 88a

<sup>4</sup> Yeshaya 2:3

<sup>5</sup> Breishis 22:14

<sup>6</sup> Ibid 24:63

<sup>7</sup> Ibid 28:19



What is the difference if the Temple Mount is called a mountain, a field, or a house? Furthermore, why did each of the patriarchs refer to the site differently?

Yaakov called the site a house. Regarding Avraham and Yitzchak, we find numerous occasions where it is said<sup>8</sup>, and he invoked Hashem by name. Targum Onkelos renders the translation as: 'he prayed there in the name of G-d'. The calling of the patriarchs was through prayer. Avraham introduced civilization to the oneness of G-d. Yitzchak followed in his father's footsteps. Yaakov, however, forged a new path in prayer. Yaakov felt it was necessary to do more than proclaiming Hashem's oneness in the world. It was now essential to cleave to Hashem, by establishing a house of prayer. A mountain and a field are open areas, where one is exposed to the elements. A person can see Hashem's wonders of creation in the open terrain, but for one to be attached to Hashem, one must pray in a house of prayer. The *Gemora*<sup>9</sup> frowns upon one who prays in an open area. Yaakov did not merely pray to Hashem and then go on his way. He cleaved to Hashem through prayer.<sup>10</sup>

The Bais Hamikdash is a house of prayer. It is said,<sup>11</sup> I will bring them to My holy mountain, and I will gladden them in My house of prayer; their elevation-offerings and their feast offerings will find favor on My Altar, for My house will be called a house of prayer for all the peoples. Yaakov chose to pray at the site that his fathers prayed, but he added a dimension. Avraham enacted Shacharis (morning prayer) and Yitzchak introduced Mincha (afternoon prayer). These prayers are obligatory. Yaakov added Maariv (evening prayer), which is voluntary<sup>12</sup>. Hashem wanted Yaakov to spend the night at His lodging place, so that Yaakov would commence the new order of prayer in

the world. We all beseech Hashem to grant us health and wealth and long life. The person who prays to Hashem and cleaves to him has truly attained a deeper understanding of prayer.

The word *pegiah* found in this verse [i.e. the word *vayifga*, which literally means he encountered] denotes nothing other than prayer.

This is not merely an arbitrary term used for prayer. *Pegiah* means to meet. To meet Hashem and cleave to him is the deepest level of prayer. May we merit going up to the Mountain of Hashem, to the Temple of the G-d of Yaakov, and He will teach us of His ways and we will walk in His path.

### ***Silver Lining***

Earlier it was stated that David chose to have his own life spared, and to instead allow his descendants to perish on account of his sin. The *Gemora* cites the verse which shows that David's descendants were obliterated: *Asaliah the mother of Achaziah saw that her son was dead, and she arose and destroyed the entire royal family.*

The *Gemora* asks: But Yoash remained alive?

The *Gemora* answers: In the case of Nov as well, a single *Kohen* named Evyasar survived, as it is written: *One son of Achimelech ben Achituv escaped, and his name was Evyasar. [Just as his negligence had resulted in the death of all but one of the Kohanim of Nov, similarly, all but one of his descendants were put to death by Asaliah.]*

<sup>8</sup> Ibid 12:8; 13:4, and other instances, and by Yitzchak 26:25, see Sforno Ibid

<sup>9</sup> Berachos 34b see Tosfos Ibid s.v. Chatzif regarding Yitzchak praying in the field

<sup>10</sup> On a different note, Rabbeinu Bachye writes (Chaye Sara) that Chevron was thus named because of the root *chibur*, attachment.

Since Rachel passed up her chance to be attached to Yaakov (see Rashi Breishis 30:15 s.v. *lachen* quoting Breishis Rabbah 72:3), she forfeited her right to be buried in Chevron, in the Mearas Hamachpela.

<sup>11</sup> Yeshaya 56:7

<sup>12</sup> See Berachos 26b

Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav: Had not at least one son, Evyasar, been left to Achimelech ben Achituv after the massacre, not a single survivor would have remained of David's progeny.

It is difficult to understand why David had to have his descendants perish. David had already been delivered into the hands of his enemy. Yishbi, the brother of Goliath, chased after him, bound him, and cast him under an olive press, hoping to crush David to death. Avishai the son of Tzeruiah discovered David and saved him from death<sup>13</sup>. Why was it necessary for David to undergo further retribution?

In order to gain insight into this particular episode, it is important to examine a chapter in Jewish history that we still commemorate today. This is the Egyptian exile. The Jewish People were predestined to descend to Mitzrayim and suffer in slavery. According to one opinion in the *Gemora*<sup>14</sup>, this punishment was a result of Avraham Avinu's question to Hashem by the Pact of Halves. Upon being informed that his descendants would inherit Eretz Yisroel, Avraham asked Hashem:<sup>15</sup> *My Lord, Hashem/Elokim: whereby shall I know that I am to inherit it?* Hashem responded with the words:<sup>16</sup> *know with certainty that your offspring shall be aliens in a land not their own-and they will serve them, and they will oppress them- four hundred years.* There are various reasons offered in the *Gemora* why the Jewish People suffered through the Egyptian exile<sup>17</sup>, but the foremost reason expounded upon by the commentaries are the two words that Avraham uttered, *bamah aeida*, whereby shall I know.

Avraham Avinu certainly did not intend with his question that his descendants should be subject to harsh slavery. In

fact, Rashi<sup>18</sup> explains that Avraham's query was, "in what merit will my descendants be allowed to remain in Eretz Yisroel?" It is ironic that Avraham was concerned about his descendants being worthy of living in Eretz Yisroel, and he was subsequently punished that his descendants would have to suffer a long and tenuous exile.

The Shelah<sup>19</sup> writes that there are two forms of justice with which Hashem conducts the world. One method is justice that is tempered with mercy. This is the conduct with which the majority of the world is subject to. The other manner of justice is where Hashem metes out complete justice, and this is the standard by which Hashem held the Avos. When Avraham asked *bamah aeida*, it was a minor infraction. Nonetheless, because of his greatness, Hashem held him accountable, and his descendants suffered greatly in Mitzrayim.

There is, however, an added dimension to the words of the Shelah. It is said:<sup>20</sup> *I, only I, am He Who wipes away your willful sins for My sake, and I shall not recall your sins. Remind me; let us go together for judgment; tell your side first that you may be vindicated. Your first ancestor sinned, and your advocates betrayed Me. Therefore I have profaned the holy princes; I handed Yaakov over to devastation and Israel to rebukes.* Rashi<sup>21</sup> writes: your first ancestor, this is Avraham Avinu who said *bamah aeida*, whereby shall I know. And your advocates betrayed Me: none of your advocates who you rely on their merits are innocent, as Yitzchak loved Esav, the one whom I (Hashem) hated.

Hashem is telling the Jewish People that only He can wipe away our sins, and we must acknowledge our ancestor's actions. Although it may be difficult to associate the

<sup>13</sup> See episode in Sanhedrin 95a

<sup>14</sup> Nedarim 32a

<sup>15</sup> Breishis 15:8

<sup>16</sup> Ibid verse 913

<sup>17</sup> See further Nedarim 32a

<sup>18</sup> Breishis 15:6

<sup>19</sup> Parashas Mishpatim Torah Ohr

<sup>20</sup> Yeshaya 43:25-28

<sup>21</sup> Ibid verse 27

oversights of the Avos with the suffering of their descendants, ultimately the repercussions are for our benefit, as the verse continues:<sup>22</sup> *but hear now, Yaakov, my servant, whom I have chosen! Thus said Hashem Who made you and fashioned you from the womb, Who will help you: fear not, My servant, Yaakov and Yeshurun, whom I have chosen. Just as I pour water upon the thirsty land and flowing water upon the dry ground, so shall I pour out My spirit upon your offspring and My blessing upon your progeny, and they will flourish among the grass like willows by streams of water. This one will say: 'I am Hashem's,' and the other one will call himself by the name of Yaakov; this one will sign his allegiance to Hashem, and adopt the name of Israel.* In the end all our suffering will have been for a purpose. This is because our first ancestor, Avraham, was seeking our benefit. Avraham desired to know how we as a nation would survive even after having sinned.

The same idea applies to the episode with David Hamelech. David initially chose to be delivered into the hands of his enemies. This punishment should have been sufficient to atone for David being a catalyst for Nov the city of Kohanim being massacred, Doeg the Edomite driven from the World to Come, and Shaul and his three sons being killed. Nonetheless, Avishai told him: "Reverse your prayer, i.e. pray to Hashem that you prefer your descendants to suffer instead of yourself." The reversal of the prayer was the cause of almost the entire Davidic dynasty being obliterated. Without the Davidic dynasty, from who would Mashiach descend? The salvation came through Evyasar, who was the son of Achimelech ben Achituv, the Kohen who aided David in Nov. This benevolent act saved the whole Davidic dynasty.

We have to reflect further into the chapters of Jewish history. There is always a silver lining in every misfortune that befalls our people. Even when complete justice is

meted out, it is followed by Hashem's infinite compassion. May Hashem deliver us from our enemies and allow us to witness the Final Redemption speedily in our days.

## DAILY MASHAL

### *Spiritual Eyes*

Rabbi Yochanan said: Five Assyrians survived. They were: Sancheirev and his two sons, as well as Nevuchadnezzar and Nevuzaradan.

The *Gemora* proves this: That Nevuzaradan survived is known through an oral tradition. We also know that Nevuchadnezzar survived, for it is written that Nevuchadnezzar said: *The form of the fourth is like an angel.* Now, if Nevuchadnezzar had never seen an angel once before, how did he know what one looked like now? [*It must be that Nevuchadnezzar had seen an angel previously.*] And we also know that Sancheirev and his two sons survived the angel's attack, for it is written: *As Sancheirev was prostrating himself in the temple of Nisroch his god, his sons Adramelech and Sharezer slew him with a sword.* [*This took place after Sancheirev's return from Yerushalayim; obviously he and his two sons mentioned in the verse survived Gavriel's attack.*]

One must wonder how Nevuchadnezzar merited seeing an angel. There are numerous instances recorded in the Medrash where people of apparently low stature merited seeing angels. One of the better-known examples of this is Hagar, the maidservant of Avraham and Sarah. It is said:<sup>23</sup> *And she called the name of Hashem Who spoke to her, "You are the G-d of vision," for she said, "Could I have seen even here after being seen?"* Rashi<sup>24</sup> quotes the Medrash that states: Hagar exclaimed, "Did I ever imagine that I would see angels after having been accustomed to seeing angels

<sup>22</sup> Ibid 44:1-5

<sup>23</sup> Breishis 16:13

<sup>24</sup> Ibid



in the house of Avraham?" How are we to understand this phenomenon of Hagar, a mere maidservant, witnessing angels?

When the Jewish People received the Torah, it is said:<sup>25</sup> *Moshe, Aharon, Nadav, and Avihu, and seventy elders of Israel ascended. They saw the G-d of Israel, and under His feet was the likeness of sapphire brickwork, and it was like the essence of the heaven in purity. Against the great men of the Children of Israel, He did not stretch out His hand—they gazed at G-d, yet they ate and drank.*

The sight that the elders and Nadav and Avihu witnessed at Matan Torah was beyond human comprehension. Nonetheless, the Torah records this revelation, and according to the Medrash,<sup>26</sup> the elders and Nadav and Avihu were punished with death for viewing this sight in an arrogant manner.

When we refer to sight, we are accustomed to viewing objects through our physical eyes. Concerning the viewing of Hashem and the angels, however, we must adopt a different approach. The eyes that view these revelations are clearly the spiritual eyes. Hashem creates situations where the spiritual eyes are given the opportunity to view matters that normally are hidden from the eye. Although this may appear to be beyond our capabilities, the truth is that we are constantly exposed to heavenly revelations but we need to "open our eyes" to witness them. Reb Tzadok Hakohen<sup>27</sup> writes that when the spiritual eyes increase in strength, then the physical eyes become weaker. Reb Tzadok explains that this is why Yitzchak, who saw the Shechinah by the Akeidah, lost his physical eyesight. In a novel parallel, Reb Tzadok writes that the names Hagar and Yitzchak are equal in numerical value (208). Clearly, Hagar was on a lower spiritual level than Yitzchak, but nonetheless, she merited seeing angels. This idea can

also be applied to Nevuchadnezzar. Although Nevuchadnezzar is depicted as an evil man, there are various statements in the *Gemora* that imply that he was more than the average brute. The fact that he witnessed angels more than once should prompt us to "open our eyes" and realize that we are surrounded by spirituality. Then we will merit the fulfillment of our prayers: *May our eyes behold Your return to Zion in compassion.*

<sup>25</sup> Shemos 24:9-11

<sup>26</sup> Vayikra Rabbah 20:10

<sup>27</sup> Kometz Haminchah 2:42