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Sanhedrin Daf 90

Produced by Rabbi Avrohom Adler, Kollel Boker Beachwood

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A False Prophet

Rav Chisda says: The argument (*between Rabbi Shimon and the Chachamim*) is regarding a “prophet” who wants to uproot the entire *mitzvah* of *avodah zarah* from the Torah, or to uproot part of it. This is because the Torah says, *from the path*, implying even partially from the path. However, a “prophet” who wants to uproot any of the other *mitzvos* is killed by strangulation. If a prophet says to uproot part of any of the other *mitzvos*, everyone agrees he is exempt.

Rav Hamnuna asked a question from a *braisa* (*regarding the suggestion of a false prophet*). The *braisa* states: *To go is a positive mitzvah. In it is a negative commandment. How can this braisa be referring to idolatry? What positive mitzvah do we find regarding idolatry?*

Rav Chisda answered: [*The positive mitzvah is*] *And you will break their altars.*

Rav Hamnuna says: The argument (*between Rabbi Shimon and the Chachamim*) is regarding a “prophet” who wants to uproot any entire *mitzvah* from the Torah, or part of the *mitzvos* regarding idolatry. This is because the Torah says, *from the path*, implying even partially from the path. However, if a prophet says to uproot part of any of the other *mitzvos*, everyone agrees he is exempt.

The *braisa* states: If someone prophesizes to uproot one of the *mitzvos*, he is liable. If he prophesizes to uproot part of a *mitzvah*, Rabbi Shimon says he is exempt. Regarding idolatry, even if he says to serve a certain idol today and nullify it tomorrow, everyone agrees he is liable.

Abaye holds like Rav Chisda, and therefore explains the *braisa* according to Rav Chisda. Rava holds like Rav Hamnuna, and therefore explains the *braisa* according to Rav Hamnuna.

Abaye holds like Rav Chisda, and therefore explains the *braisa* according to Rav Chisda. If someone prophesizes to uproot one of the *mitzvos*, he is liable to be strangled. If he prophesizes to uproot part of a *mitzvah*, Rabbi Shimon says he is exempt, as do the *Chachamim*. Regarding idolatry, even if he says to serve a certain idol today and nullify it tomorrow, everyone agrees he is liable, everyone according to their opinion (*Rabbi Shimon says he is strangled and the Chachamim says he is stoned*).

Rava holds like Rav Hamnuna, and therefore explains the *braisa* according to Rav Hamnuna. The *braisa* says: If someone prophesizes to uproot any of the *mitzvos* including idolatry, he is liable, everyone according to their opinion (*Rabbi Shimon says he is strangled and the Chachamim says he is stoned*). If he prophesizes to uproot part of a regular *mitzvah* (*not idolatry*), Rabbi Shimon says he is exempt, as do the *Chachamim*. Regarding idolatry, even if he says to serve a certain idol today and nullify it tomorrow, everyone agrees he is liable, each according to their opinion (*Rabbi Shimon says he is strangled and the Chachamim says he is stoned*).

Rabbi Avahu says: If any prophet tells you to sin you should listen to him, unless he tells you to commit idolatry. Even if he makes the sun stand still in the middle of the sky, do not listen to him to serve idols.

The *braisa* says: Rabbi Yosi ha’Glili says that the Torah understood the powers commonly used to spread idolatry (*including forms of witchcraft etc.*), and therefore recognized

that they would be used by such a prophet. This is why the Torah said that even if he makes the sun stand still in the middle of the sky, do not listen to him to serve idols. Rabbi Akiva says: Heaven Forbid that the Holy one, Blessed be He, would allow a sinner to make the sun stand still in the middle of the sky. Rather, it is referring to someone like Chananya ben Azor, who originally was a real prophet (*and made the sun stand still at the time*) and then turned into an evildoer. [The above is based on the explanation of the Aruch Laner.] (89b – 90a)

Bas Kohen

The *Mishna* had stated that the *zomemin* of a *bas Kohen* receive strangulation.

The *Gemora* asks: How do we know this?

Rav Acha the son of Rav Ikka says that the answer is found in a *braisa*. The *braisa* says: Rabbi Yosi says that the verse states: *And you will do to him as he planned to do to his brother*. All other *zomemin* and people who are accused of having promiscuous relationships are supposed to receive the same punishment. However, the daughter of a *Kohen* is supposed to receive burning while the one who cohabits with her does not receive burning. We therefore are unclear whether the *zomemin* should receive her punishment or his punishment. Being that the verse says *to his brother*, we derive that they should receive his punishment, not her punishment. (90a)

Mishna

All Israel has a share in the world to come, as it is written: *And your people [Israel] are all righteous, forever shall they inherit the land, the branch of My plantings, My handiwork, in which to take pride*.

However, the following are people who do not have a share in the World to Come: One who says that there is no reference to the Resurrection of the Dead in the Torah, or that the Torah is not from Heaven, or an *apikoros*. Rabbi Akiva says: Also one

who reads external books, or one who incants over a wound and says the verse: *All the diseases that I have placed upon Egypt I shall not place upon you because I am Hashem your healer*. Abba Shaul says: Also one who pronounces Hashem's Name according to its letters.

Three kings and four commoners have no share in the World to Come. The three kings are: Yaravam, Achav, and Menasheh. Rabbi Yehudah says: Menasheh has a portion in the World to Come, as it is stated: *And he prayed to him... And He allowed Himself to be entreated and heard his plea, and he returned him to Jerusalem to his kingdom*. The *Chachamim* said to Rabbi Yehudah: From this very verse we infer that only to his kingdom did Hashem return him, but He did not return him to the life of the World to Come. The four commoners are: Bilam, Doeg, Achitophel, and Geichazi. (90a)

Not Believing

The *Gemora* asks: Why does a person who does not believe in the Resurrection of the Dead get such a harsh punishment that he does not merit rising?

The *braisa* states: He denied the Resurrection of the Dead, and therefore he will not take part in it. This is because Hashem's justice is a measure for a measure. This is as Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachmeini says in the name of Rabbi Yonasan: How do we know that Hashem's justice is always a measure for a measure? This is as the verse says, *And Elisha said, Listen to the word of Hashem. At this time tomorrow a sa'ah of fine flour will cost a shekel and two sa'ah of barley will cost a shekel at the gate of Shomron*. The verse continues: *And the officer that the king relied on answered the prophet. And he said: Even if Hashem made windows in the heavens (to throw down grain), would it be so cheap? And the prophet replied, you will see that it will be true, but you will not eat from it*. The verse continues: *And it was so, and the people trampled him with their feet at the gate, and he died*.

The *Gemora* asks: Perhaps it was merely the curse of Elisha that made this occur (*and it is not a sign that Hashem punishes*



a measure for a measure)? This is as Rav Yehudah states in the name of Rav that the curse of a scholar will always come true, even if the reason (*the curse was given*) does not apply.

The *Gemora* answers: If so, the verse should merely say: “*And they trampled him and he died.*” Why would it say: *And they trampled him at the gate and he died?* It must be to show that this was due to the prices (*the word sha’ar can also mean price*) that he mocked. He was punished measure for measure. (90a – 90b)

Sources for Resurrection

The *Gemora* asks: Where do we see that the Resurrection of the Dead is alluded to in the Torah?

Rabbi Yochanan answers: The verse states: *And you will give from it the terumah of Hashem to Aharon Ha’Kohen.* Did Aharon live forever? He did not even go into *Eretz Yisroel!* How can we give him *terumah*? It must be that he is destined to live again in bodily form, and we will then give him *terumah*. This is a source that the Resurrection of the Dead is alluded to in the Torah.

In Rabbi Yishmael’s academy, a *Tanna* taught that Aharon is mentioned in this passage for a different reason (*and not for an allusion to resurrection of the Dead*): By stating that the *terumah* is to be given to Aharon, the Torah is indicating to us that *terumah* is to be given specifically to a *Kohen* like Aharon. Just as Aharon was a *chaver* (*one who is careful about all the laws of tumah and taharah*), so too, his children must be *chaverim* in order to receive *terumah*.

Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachmeini says in the name of Rabbi Yonasan: How do we know that one should not give *terumah* to a *Kohen* who is an *am ha’aretz* (*not careful about tumah*)? This is as the verse states: *And Chizkiah instructed the people, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to give the portion of the Kohanim and the Leviim so that the Kohanim and Leviim might be strong in Hashem’s Torah.* It can be derived from here that any *Kohen* who holds strongly to Hashem’s Torah is entitled

to a *terumah* portion, whereas one who does not hold strongly to Hashem’s Torah is not entitled to a *terumah* portion.

Rav Acha bar Ada says in the name of Rav Yehudah: Whoever gives *terumah* to a *Kohen* who is an *am ha’aretz* is as if he puts it in front of a lion. Just like a lion might maul its prey and devour it immediately, or perhaps it will wait for later; so too a *Kohen* who is an *am ha’aretz* – he might eat *terumah* when he is *tahor* and he might eat it when he is *tamei*. Rabbi Yochanan says: One who gives *terumah* to a *Kohen* who is an *am ha’aretz* causes this *Kohen* to die. This is as the verse says: *And they will die because of it, for they have desecrated it.*

The academy of Rabbi Eliezer ben Yaakov taught: He causes him to bear many destructive sins. This is as the verse says: *And they will burden them with sin and guilt when they eat their foods (when impure).*

The *braisa* states: Rabbi Simai asks: Where do we see that the Resurrection of the Dead is alluded to in the Torah? This is as the verse says: *And I will also establish My covenant with them to give them the Land of Canaan.* It does not say “*to you,*” but rather “*to them*” (*implying the Avos*). This shows that the Resurrection of the Dead is alluded to in the Torah.

The sectarians asked Rabban Gamliel: How do we know that Hashem resurrects people? He said: He cited them sources from the Torah, Prophets, and Holy Writings. They did not accept this.

He said: The Torah states: *And Hashem said to Moshe, behold you will lie with your forefathers and rise.* They answered him: Perhaps the rising refers to the next part of the verse: *and this nation will rise and stray after (the gods of the land)!*

He brought a proof from prophets. The verse says: *Your dead will live, your corpses will rise! Awake and sing dwellers of the land, for the dew of light is your dew, and the land of giants you will make fall.* They answered: Perhaps this refers to the dead whom the prophet Yechezkel resurrected?

He brought a proof from the Holy Writings. The verse says: *Your palate is like the choicest wine that goes straight to my Beloved, and stirs the lips of those sleeping in the grave.* They answered: Perhaps this refers to people's lips moving slightly in the grave, as stated by Rabbi Yochanan. Rabbi Yochanan says in the name of Rabbi Shimon the son of Yehotzadak: If a *halachah* is said over in someone's name in this world, his lips move in his grave. This is as the verse says: *and stirs the lips of those sleeping in the grave.*

He could not convince them until he told them this verse: *The land that Hashem swore to your forefathers to give to them.* It does not say "to you," but rather "to them." This shows that the Torah alludes to the Resurrection of the Dead. Some say that the proof is from the following verse: *And you who cleave to Hashem your God are all alive today.* Even on the day when all others are dead, you are alive. The extra word "today" indicates that just as today you are all alive, so too, in the World to Come, you will be alive.

The Romans asked Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chanania two questions: How do we know that the Holy One, Blessed be He, resurrects the dead, and how do we know that He knows the future? He answered: Both principles can be derived from the following verse. The verse says: *And Hashem said to Moshe, "behold you will lie with your forefathers and rise will this nation will and stray after the gods of the land. [The first part proves resurrection; the second proves that Hashem knows the future.]* They answered him: Perhaps the rising refers to the next part of the verse, *and rise will this nation and go astray (after the gods of the land)!* He said: Take at least half an answer, that He knows the future.

It was also taught that Rabbi Yochanan said in the name of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai: How do we know that Hashem resurrects the dead, and knows the future? The verse says: *Behold you will lie with your forefathers and rise will this nation will and stray after the gods of the land.*

The *braisa* states: Rabbi Elozar the son of Rabbi Yosi says that in this matter I have shown that the books of the sectarians to be false. They used to say that the Torah does not allude to the Resurrection of the Dead. I told them: You have falsified your Torah, and have not gained by doing so. You say that the Torah does not allude to the Resurrection of the Dead. The verse says: *That soul shall surely be cut off, its sin is upon it. Shall surely be cut off* refers to this world (*that he will die*). What, then, does the verse mean when it says *its sin is upon it*? It must mean that it will bear its sin in the World to Come (*indicating that there is Resurrection of the Dead*)!

Rav Papa said to Abaye: Why didn't he say that from the verse *hi'kares ti'kares (he shall surely be cut off)* that the implication is *hi'kares* in this world, and *ti'kares* in the next world?

Abaye answered: They would have told him that the double term is used because the Torah uses phraseology similar to that of people.

This is similar to the following *Tannaic* argument. *Hi'kares tikares* means *hi'kares* in this world, and *ti'kares* in the next world. These are the words of Rabbi Akiva. Rabbi Yishmael says: The verse already states: *He is blaspheming Hashem and he will be cut off.* Are there three worlds?! Rather, *it will be cut off* refers to this world, *hi'kares* refers to the next world, and *hi'kares ti'kares* is stated because the Torah uses phraseology similar to that of people.

The *Gemora* asks: Both according to Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Yishmael, what do they do with the verse, *its sin is in it*?

The *Gemora* answers: They use this for the teaching of the following *braisa*. The *braisa* states: One might think he is cut off even if he repented. The verse therefore says *its sin is upon it*. I only said his soul is cut off except when his sin is still upon it (*and did not repent*).

Queen Cleopatra asked Rabbi Meir: I know that the dead will live again, as the verse states: *And they will sprout from the city like the grass of the land.* However, when they rise, do



they rise naked, or with their clothing? He said: We can derive a *kal vachomer* from a wheat kernel. Just as wheat is buried in the ground naked, yet it comes out from the ground fully grown with many layers of “clothing,” the righteous who are buried with clothing will certainly emerge (at the time of Resurrection) with their clothing. (90b)

DAILY MASHAL

By: Rabbi Binyomin Adler

Meritorious in Judgment

All Israel has a share in the world to come, as it is written: *And your people [Israel] are all righteous, forever shall they inherit the land, the branch of My plantings, My handiwork, in which to take pride.*

It appears from the *Mishna* that in order to merit a share in the World to Come, one must be righteous. What is the definition of righteous? The Ramban writes that righteous means righteous in judgment. This can be the explanation here. One does not necessarily have to be righteous all his life to merit a share in the World to Come. As long as one is meritorious in judgment, one will earn his share in the World to Come.

With this premise, we can understand the *Gemora* later on that states:¹ *Scripture states:*² *After this thing, Yarovam did not turn back from his evil ways. What is the meaning of after this thing? Rabbi Abba said: After the Holy One, blessed is He, seized Yarovam by his garment and said to him, “Return! i.e. repent, and I, you, and the son of Yishai (Dovid) will stroll together in the Garden of Eden!” Yarovam thereupon said to Hashem: “Who will be at the head”? Hashem replied, “The son of Yishai will be at the head”. “If so,” Yarovam replied, “I do not desire it.”*

Regarding Yarovam, we have learned: *Whoever influences the masses to become meritorious shall not be the cause of sin; but one who influences the masses to sin will not be given the means to repent. Moshe was meritorious and influenced the masses to be meritorious, so the merit of the masses was to his credit, as it is said:*³ *He performed the righteousness of Hashem, and His laws together with Israel. Yarovam ben Nevat sinned and caused the masses to sin, so the sin of the masses is charged against him, as it is said: For the sins of Yarovam which he committed and which he caused Israel to commit.*

Nonetheless, even Yarovam was granted an opportunity to earn his place in the Garden of Eden, because if he had repented, he would be considered as righteous in his judgment.

External Books

The *Mishna* had stated: However, the following are the ones who do not have a share in the World to Come: One who says that there is no reference to the Resurrection of the Dead in the Torah, or that the Torah is not from Heaven, or an *apikoros*. Rabbi Akiva says: Also one who reads external books, or one who incants over a wound and says the verse:⁴ *All the diseases that I have placed upon Egypt I shall not place upon you because I am Hashem your healer.* Abba Shaul says: Also one who pronounces the Name of G-d according to its letters.

It is understandable why one who denies the Resurrection of the Dead or that the Torah is not from Heaven does not have a share in the World to Come. These are fundamentals of the Jewish faith, and one who denies these basic tenets surely does not deserve to share in the eternal reward that has been promised by Hashem to the Jewish People. An *apikoros*, one who disparages a Torah scholar,⁵ also does not deserve a share in the World to Come, as a Torah scholar defines the

¹ 102a

² Melachim I 13:33

³ Devarim 33:21

⁴ Shemos 15:26

⁵ Gemara 99b

essence of the World to Come.⁶ What needs to be understood, however, is why one who reads external books or incants over a wound and recites verses, or pronounces the Name of G-d according to its letters would lose his share in the World to Come. Why are these sins considered so grievous?

The Maharal⁷ writes that one who reads external books does not deserve a share in the World to Come because Torah is true and just and one who studies external books is engaging in matters that have no true existence. This type of behavior is not conforming to the World to Come, which is all spiritual and intellectual. Similarly, one who incants over a wound and recites verses from the Torah is using the Torah as a physical means, and Torah is only spiritual. This deviation from the spiritual and intellectual also warrants that one not earn a share in the World to Come. The Maharal continues and writes that one who pronounces the Name of G-d according to its letters also forfeits his share in the World to Come, because the Name of G-d is meant to be concealed. The World to Come contains an element of concealment, as it is said:⁸ *How abundant is Your goodness that You have stored away for those who fear You.* The Maharal adds⁹ that these three sins are not physical sins but deficiencies in spirituality, and that is why one who commits these sins forfeits his share in the World to Come.

It is important to understand the ramifications of this statement of the Maharal. One who wastes time with non-spiritual pursuits is in danger of losing his share in the World to Come. Although the beginning of the *Mishna* states that all Israel has a share in the World to Come, it is critical not to forfeit that share by engaging in frivolous matters. One should study Torah and perform *mitzvos* at every opportunity, thus earning a place with the righteous in the World to Come.

Knowledge

Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachmeini says in the name of Rabbi Yonasan: How do we know that one should not give *terumah* to a *Kohen* who is an *am ha'aretz* (not careful about *tumah*)? This is as the verse states: *And Chizkiah instructed the people, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to give the portion of the Kohanim and the Leviim so that the Kohanim and Leviim might be strong in Hashem's Torah.* It can be derived from here that any *Kohen* who holds strongly to Hashem's Torah is entitled to a *terumah* portion, whereas one who does not hold strongly to Hashem's Torah is not entitled to a *terumah* portion.

The *Gemora* refers to a *Kohen* who does not hold strongly to Hashem's Torah; thereby he is not entitled to a *terumah* portion. It appears that this idea is equated with the uncertainty of whether the *Kohen am ha'aretz* will eat *terumah* in a state of *taharah* or whether he will eat it in a state of *tumah*. This is difficult to understand, as it would seem obvious that if a *Kohen* does not hold strongly to Hashem's Torah, he certainly will not concern himself with the laws of purity.

In order to comprehend the words of the *Gemora*, we must gain a clear definition of knowledge. The *Gemora* states¹⁰ that one who has knowledge has everything, and if one lacks knowledge, he has nothing. We normally perceive an ignoramus as one who is not learned, and has yet to achieve scholastic acumen. The *Gemora* teaches us that this is incorrect. The *Mishna*¹¹ states that a *mamzer* (illegitimate) who is a scholar precedes a *Kohen am ha'aretz*. The Maharal¹² explains that a *Kohen's* sanctity is intertwined with his physical makeup. A *Kohen* bears a son who is a *Kohen*. Regarding a scholar, however, it is not a given that a scholar will bear a son who is a scholar. This is because knowledge, intellect, is distinct from the physical. A *mamzer* is invalidated from the physical aspect of birth, but this does not affect him intellectually.

⁶ See Gemara 99a

⁷ Tiferes Yisroel 15

⁸ Tehillim 31:20

⁹ Chiddushei Agados Sanhedrin

¹⁰ Nedarim 41a

¹¹ Horyos 3:8

¹² Nesivos Olam Nesiv Hatorah 11

Based on the words of the Maharal, we can understand our *Gemora*. A *Kohen* who does not hold strongly to Hashem's Torah is not merely an unlearned *Kohen*. His whole essence is now physical, and therefore it is uncertain as to how he will eat *terumah*. *Kedushah* can only be maintained when there is knowledge of Hashem and his Torah. This is the meaning of what is said:¹³ *for the lips of the Kohen should safeguard knowledge, and people should seek teaching from his mouth, for he is an agent of Hashem, Master of Legions*. It is clear that only a *Kohen* who has attained and safeguarded knowledge is comparable to an agent of Hashem. Without knowledge, sanctity is in jeopardy.

This is a strong lesson for us as we approach the day when the Jewish People celebrate the joy of the Torah. Torah is the knowledge that predicates a life of sanctity. Hashem instructed the Jewish People:¹⁴ *And now, if you hearken well to Me and observe My covenant, you shall be to Me the most beloved treasure of all peoples, for Mine is the entire world. You shall be to Me a kingdom of ministers and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the Children of Israel. Only if we observe the Torah, and toil in its study, can we merit being a holy nation.*

Purpose of the Resurrection

The *braisa* states: Rabbi Simai asks: Where do we see that the Resurrection of the Dead is alluded to in the Torah? This is as the verse says: *And I will also establish My covenant with them to give them the Land of Canaan*. It does not say "to you," but rather "to them" (*implying the Avos*). This shows that the Resurrection of the Dead is alluded to in the Torah.

Rashi¹⁵ writes that the verse infers that the Land was to be given to the Avos, but we know that it was not given to them directly. Rather, it was given to their descendants. The *Gemora* derives from this that the Avos will be brought back to life and Hashem will bestow upon them the Land.

The Kli Yakar¹⁶ questions the explanation of Rashi. One of the questions posed by the Kli Yakar is that the *Gemora*¹⁷ states that Hashem told Moshe, "Alas for the ones who are gone and no more to be found! Many times did I appear to Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov, promising the Land of Israel to them and their progeny under the name E-I Sh-addai, yet though they did not see the fulfillment of those promises, they did not question the justice of My ways." The Kli Yakar asks, if Hashem had promised the Land to their progeny, why would the Avos question the justice of Hashem's ways. If, on the other hand, Hashem had promised the Avos themselves the Land, how did Hashem fulfill His promise to them? The Kli Yakar answers that the promise Hashem made to the Avos was concerning the privilege to be buried in *Eretz Yisroel*. Being buried in *Eretz Yisroel* would ensure that the Avos would not have to suffer the pain of rolling to *Eretz Yisroel* at the time of the Resurrection of the Dead. Their progeny, however, would earn the right to inherit *Eretz Yisroel* in this world. This is the reason why the Avos would have been justified in questioning Hashem's ways, as each one of the Avos was challenged with obtaining a burial site in the Land.

The commentaries point out that in the verse quoted by the *Gemora*, it is said: *And I have also established My covenant with them to give them the Land of Canaan, the land of their sojourning, in which they sojourned*. Why is it necessary to state the land was of their sojourning in which they sojourned? The Malbim¹⁸ writes that in this world, the Avos were like strangers, as their essential abode was in the upper World, walking before Hashem. For this reason they were promised *Eretz Yisroel*, which is the land of Divine Providence, holiness, and prophecy.

It is said further;¹⁹ *Therefore, say to the Children of Israel: I am Hashem, and I shall take you out from under the burdens of Egypt; I shall rescue you from their service; I shall redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. I shall*

¹³ Malachi 2:7

¹⁴ Shemos 19:6

¹⁵ Sanhedrin 90b s.v. Ela

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ Sanhedrin 111a

¹⁸ Shemos 6:4

¹⁹ Ibid verses 6-8

take you to me for a people and I shall be a G-d to you; and you shall know that I am Hashem your G-d, Who takes you out from under the burdens of Egypt. I shall bring you to the land about which I raised My hand to give it to Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov; and I shall give it to you as a heritage-I am Hashem. The Yerushalmi²⁰ states that the four terms of redemption mentioned in the subsequent verses correspond to the four cups of wine that we drink at the Seder on Pesach. These are the words, *vhotzeisi*, and I shall take you out, *vhitzalti*, I shall rescue you, *vegalti*, I shall redeem you, and *velakachti*, I shall take you for a people. Rav Moshe Shternbuch asks²¹, why is there not a fifth cup corresponding to the words *vheievisi*, I shall bring you to the land? The Vilna Gaon said that the cup that we prepare for Eliyahu Hanavi corresponds to *vheievisi*. Nonetheless, Rav Shternbuch is bothered why we are not obligated to drink this fifth cup? Rav Shternbuch suggests that the four cups correspond to the four acts of kindness that Hashem performed on our behalf. The fifth act of bringing us to *Eretz Yisroel*, however, is conditional on us becoming a people and knowing that Hashem is our G-d. This, Rav Shternbuch writes, is a fitting answer to those who claim that even Jews who deny Hashem's existence also have a claim to *Eretz Yisroel*. This is a false ideology, as the essence of dwelling in *Eretz Yisroel* is contingent on accepting Hashem as our G-d.

It is clear from the words of the Kli Yakar, the Malbim, and Rav Shternbuch that the ultimate purpose of *Techiyas Hameisim*, the Resurrection of The Dead, is that we should live in *Eretz Yisroel* and accept Hashem as our G-d. It is not sufficient to live in *Eretz Yisroel* and not maintain a connection to Hashem and His Torah. *Eretz Yisroel* is the Land of our Forefathers, who were promised the Land based on their progeny's adherence to the Torah. This concept is reflected in the words of Dovid HaMelech, who writes:²² *For He remembered His holy promise, to Avraham, his servant, and He led out His nation with joy, His chosen ones with joyous song. And He gave them the lands of nations, and they inherited the toil of regimes. So that they may safeguard His statutes and observe*

His Teachings. Halleluy-ah! It is noteworthy that Dovid HaMelech used the words *dvar kadsho*, His holy promise. This refers to the promise that Hashem made to Avraham, that the Avos would receive *Eretz Yisroel* for spiritual gains, and this legacy would be passed down to their descendants. May Hashem grant us the privilege of returning to *Eretz Yisroel*, where we will serve Him with great love and joy.

Sectarians

The sectarians asked Rabban Gamliel: How do we know that Hashem resurrects people? He said: He cited them sources from the Torah, Prophets, and Holy Writings. They did not accept this.

He said: The Torah states: *And Hashem said to Moshe, behold you will lie with your forefathers and rise.* They answered him: Perhaps the rising refers to the next part of the verse: *and this nation will rise and stray after (the gods of the land)!*

He brought a proof from prophets. The verse says: *Your dead will live, your corpses will rise! Awake and sing dwellers of the land, for the dew of light is your dew, and the land of giants you will make fall.* They answered: Perhaps this refers to the dead whom the prophet Yechezkel resurrected?

He brought a proof from the Holy Writings. The verse says: *Your palate is like the choicest wine that goes straight to my Beloved, and stirs the lips of those sleeping in the grave.* They answered: Perhaps this refers to people's lips moving slightly in the grave, as stated by Rabbi Yochanan. Rabbi Yochanan says in the name of Rabbi Shimon the son of Yehotzadak: If a *halachah* is said over in someone's name in this world, his lips move in his grave. This is as the verse says: *and stirs the lips of those sleeping in the grave.*

He could not convince them until he told them this verse: *The land that Hashem swore to your forefathers to give to them.* It does not say "to you," but rather "to them." This shows that

²⁰ Pesachim 10:1

²¹ Taam Vdaas Ibid

²² Tehillim 105:42-45

the Torah alludes to the Resurrection of the Dead. Some say that the proof is from the following verse: *And you who cleave to Hashem your God are all alive today*. Even on the day when all others are dead, you are alive. The extra word “today” indicates that just as today you are all alive, so too, in the World to Come, you will be alive.

There are two interesting observations regarding this passage in the *Gemora*. First, the sectarians only believed the literal reading of Scripture, and that is why they challenged the proofs that Rabban Gamliel cited to them. It is difficult to fathom why Rabban Gamliel would even attempt to prove to this deviant sect that the Resurrection of the Dead is alluded to in the Written Torah. One who only accepts the literal explanation of Scripture and does not subscribe to the interpretation of the Rabbis is not deserving of a portion in the World to Come and resurrection in the future. The second observation is that in the end, it appears from the words of the *Gemora* that Rabban Gamliel was actually able to prove to them from the Torah that there will be a Resurrection of the Dead in the future. One who believes in the Rabbi’s interpretations can easily accept the exegesis of the verses mentioned in the *Gemora*. The sectarians themselves, however, should have been skeptical towards this method of deduction.

The incident recorded in the *Gemora* teaches us a profound lesson concerning our responses towards other Jews. There are some Jews who may have adopted a path of self-destruction, but there is still justification for proving to these deviant people the truth of the Torah. The two verses mentioned in the *Gemora* that Rabban Gamliel cited to the sectarians as proof of the Resurrection of the Dead are indicative of this philosophy. The first verse states: ***On the land that Hashem swore to your forefathers to give to them.*** The sectarians could easily have retorted that this verse was merely said by Hashem to Moshe on an optimistic note. Certainly one should not interpret the verse literally. Nonetheless, Rabban Gamliel demonstrated from this verse

the hope that the Jewish People have in the ultimate liberation and the Resurrection of the Dead. Similarly, the verse that states: ***And you who cleave to Hashem your G-d are alive all of you today***, is clear proof of the love that Hashem has for the Jewish People. Even though we have undergone trials and tribulations throughout history, if we cleave to Hashem, He will surely keep us alive, i.e. at the time of the resurrection. Those who deny the Resurrection of the Dead merely do so as a way of declaring: I can do whatever I want in this world, as there are no consequences in the future. The Torah observant Jew, however, is cognizant of the love that Hashem has for His people. This is why we mention in our daily prayers that Hashem maintains His faith to those who lie in the dust. Rav Shimon Schwab²³ points out that we do not say *lisheinei b’efor*, those who sleep in the dust. Rather, we say *lisheinei ofor*, those who sleep the dust. Rav Schwab said that this is a reference to the verse:²⁴ *for you are dust, and to dust shall you return*. It means that those who have died have, themselves, become nothing but dust, and yet Hashem will make them live again forever at the Resurrection of the Dead. Perhaps there is another idea that is alluded to in these words. “Those who sleep the dust” are those who have been downtrodden in this world, and this symbolizes the Jewish People. Our nation has always been blessed as “the dust of the earth”²⁵, and “the stars of the heaven”²⁶. If we persevere in this world as the dust of the earth, then Hashem will maintain His faithfulness to those who “sleep the dust” and bring us the redemption, when we will rise like “the stars of the heaven.”

Finding the Source

The Romans asked Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chanania two questions: How do we know that the Holy One, Blessed be He, resurrects the dead, and how do we know that He knows the future? He answered: Both principles can be derived from the following verse. The verse says: *And Hashem said to Moshe, “behold you will lie with your forefathers and rise will this nation will and stray after the gods of the land.* [The first part

²³ Rav Schwab on Prayer page 429

²⁴ Breishis 3:19

²⁵ Breishis 13:16

²⁶ Ibid 15:5

proves resurrection; the second proves that Hashem knows the future.]

One may wonder why the Romans would be concerned about proof from Scripture that Hashem will resurrect the dead and that Hashem knows the future? Is it not sufficient to believe in these two basic tenets of faith without actually deriving proof from Scripture?

The *Gemora* offers a great lesson that we can apply in our daily lives. Too many times we find ourselves “quoting ourselves,” i.e. opinions that we have formed through our life experiences, but we never took the time and the effort to examine if these are the opinions of the Torah. From the dialogue that Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chananiah had with the Romans, we learn that everything has its source in the Torah. The Tanna in the short but profound statement expresses this idea:²⁷ *turn it over and turn it over, because everything is contained within it.* Rav Chaim Volozhiner²⁸ writes that an infant that nurses from its mother is drawing milk from meat. Similarly, one can derive from the laws of a *Sukkah* how to permit an *agunah* (estranged wife) to remarry. This thought is incredible. Were we to realize that Torah is not just a subject to study, but also the guide to our very existence, Hashem would surely allow us to exceed beyond our expectations.

Let us bear in mind the first *Mishna* in *Avos* that states:²⁹ Moshe received the Torah from Sinai... This is our first lesson in ethics, and that is that everything we do and say should all be part of the Torah that Moshe received from Sinai. With this perspective, we should merit to be properly prepared for the day when we will receive the Torah anew.

Altering the Torah

The *braisa* states: Rabbi Elozar the son of Rabbi Yosi says that in this matter I have shown that the books of the sectarians

to be false. They used to say that the Torah does not allude to the Resurrection of the Dead. I told them: You have falsified your Torah, and have not gained by doing so. You say that the Torah does not allude to the Resurrection of the Dead. The verse says: *That soul shall surely be cut off, its sin is upon it. Shall surely be cut off* refers to this world (*that he will die*). What, then, does the verse mean when it says *its sin is upon it*? It must mean that it will bear its sin in the World to Come (*indicating that there is Resurrection of the Dead*)!

The Maharsha writes that the sectarians deliberately altered their copies of the Holy Scriptures to eliminate all allusions to the Resurrection of the Dead. Rabbi Dovid Tzvi Hoffman³⁰ notes that to this very day the Samaritan scrolls contain altered versions of various Scriptural proof texts for the Resurrection of the Dead. It is incredible to know that these deviant sects would go so far as to alter the text of the Torah to prove their point. Why would it not have been sufficient for the sectarians to merely deny the tenet of the Resurrection of the Dead? It seems like an exercise in futility to alter the text of Scripture.

In order to understand this mindset, we must examine our own actions concerning Torah study and performance of Mitzvos. Everyone is obligated to study Torah to the best of their abilities³¹. Nonetheless, one may find himself in a situation where he can only study Torah for a limited time every day. Does this now absolve him from studying more? Certainly not. We are instructed to *contemplate it day and night*,³² a reference to the obligation of studying Torah. Yet, one will justify his lack of studying by declaring that this is all he has time for. Has he violated a commandment of the Torah? Perhaps he has committed a worse sin. This is the injunction of:³³ *Accursed is one who will not uphold the words of this Torah, to perform them.* Rabbeinu Yonah³⁴ writes that one who does not wish to fulfill one mitzvah is regarded as having not upheld the whole Torah.

²⁷ Avos 5:22

²⁸ Ruach Chaim Ibid

²⁹ 1:1

³⁰ Melamed LeHo'il 3:79

³¹ Rambam Hilchos Talmud Torah 1:8

³² Yehoshua 1:8

³³ Devarim 27:26

³⁴ Shaarei Teshuvah 1:6



Although one may not actually obliterate a word or passage from the Torah, by not fulfilling the words of the Torah one is essentially denying the complete Torah. Is it small wonder, then, that those sects who did not believe in the Resurrection of the Dead, one of the thirteen principles of faith that is listed by the Rambam, would do their utmost to ensure that they would have no reason to subscribe to this basic Jewish belief? They chose to alter the words of the Torah, thus they were guilty of denying the whole Torah.

We should be aware that every one of our actions can reflect an acceptance of the whole Torah, or, heaven forbid, a denial of the whole Torah. May Hashem allow that we acknowledge every one of His commandments, and then we will truly accept the complete Torah.

Queen Cleopatra's Question

Queen Cleopatra asked Rabbi Meir: I know that the dead will live again, as the verse states: *And they will sprout from the city like the grass of the land.* However, when they rise, do they rise naked, or with their clothing? He said: We can derive a *kal vachomer* from a wheat kernel. Just as wheat is buried in the ground naked, yet it comes out from the ground fully grown with many layers of "clothing," the righteous who are buried with clothing will certainly emerge (*at the time of Resurrection*) with their clothing.

This *Gemora* poses several difficulties. Why did Cleopatra state that I know that the dead will live again? It would seem that she was professing this knowledge on her own, and it is the *Gemora* is quoting the verse in Tehillim. Furthermore, her question appears rather strange. Why would she be interested in knowing whether the dead arise clothed or not? Rabbi Meir's response is no less clear. Why is it readily inferred from a wheat grain that the righteous will emerge fully clothed at the resurrection? A grain of wheat undergoes the natural process of planting and harvesting? Is it natural for a dead person to be resurrected?

Upon Yaakov's death, it is said,³⁵ When Yaakov finished instructing his sons, he drew his feet onto the bed; he expired and was gathered to his people. Then Yosef fell upon his father's face; he wept over him and kissed him. Yosef ordered his servants, the physicians, to embalm his father; so the physicians embalmed *Yisroel*. His forty-day term was completed, for such is the term of the embalmed; and Egypt bewailed him for seventy days.

The Malbim in his classical commentary on the Torah writes as follows³⁶: Yosef ordered his servants: This instruction reveals Yosef's greatness, in which he had personal doctors who were his servants. The idea of embalment that the Egyptians were accustomed to performing is known from the mummification process. Embalming would preserve the bodies for thousands of years, and no spoilage and rotting would set in. It is then a wonder if the Egyptians practiced this according to their beliefs at that time, how could Yosef have embalmed the holy body of his father? You should know that burial of the deceased is necessary that the body should decompose. Although the G-dly soul in man departs from man immediately upon the expiration of the body, and it returns to its source, the spirit does not leave immediately. A person in his lifetime may strive to transform the physical into spiritual through introspection and action,³⁷ thus detaching the material from the spiritual, and allowing the spiritual to merit eternal reward. Nonetheless, not all men are successful to perform this perfectly, because this soul that is born with the material and is intertwined with it, will not break loose so easily. Even the introspection and action are mingled with materialism. Introspection comes through thought and senses, and action is interspersed with materialistic leanings. This is what prevents the complete purification process from taking effect. Subsequently, even after a person dies, the spiritual components do not leave the physical until the body decomposes. Only then does the spirit return to its source. The impurity emanating from the dead person is a result of the spiritual components hovering about before the complete

³⁵ Breishis 49:33; 50:1-3

³⁶ Ibid

³⁷ I.e. Torah study and mitzvah observance



decomposition. Righteous and holy people like Yaakov, however, completed the purification process in their lifetime, so that immediately upon expiring, the spirit leaves the flesh, and there are no impurities in the body. This is why the righteous do not cause impurity [after death] and their bodies do not require decomposition to separate the spiritual from the physical. While living they achieved this feat, and when they expire, they are completely pure. The Egyptians embalmed their dead because while live they became entirely physical, thus there was no need for burial to separate the soul and the spirit. Their spirit transformed to flesh, and would not cause impurities, similar to an animal that does not become impure. Concerning Yaakov it was the exact opposite. All the spiritual components disassociated themselves in his lifetime, and his body remained pure. This is why Yosef embalmed him, so that his body would be preserved like a pure garment that adorned his great soul that is called *Yisroel*. He was called *Yisroel* because he struggled with g-d and man, and became detached in his lifetime and therefore it is said: so the physicians embalmed *Yisroel*. This embalment was from the aspect of *Yisroel*.

From the penetrating words of the Malbim we can understand the dialogue between Cleopatra and Rabbi Meir. Cleopatra, being Egyptian, believed in the idea of preserving the body. She therefore declared I know that the dead will live again. Her question to Rabbi Meir was, when they rise from the dead, do they rise naked, or do they rise in their clothes? She did not want to know if they would be wearing the same shrouds, because this was not a philosophical issue. Cleopatra wished to gain insight into the Jewish faith regarding the resurrection of the dead. Rabbi Meir's response was that if a wheat grain, which was buried in the ground naked, emerges from the ground fully grown and wearing several garments, then how much more so will the righteous, who are buried in their clothes, emerge fully clothed at the resurrection? This response demonstrated that a Jew's perspective is not what will be after life, but how one conducts himself during his lifetime. Resurrection of the dead is the second blessing in the *Shemoneh Esrei*. This is because it is not merely a statement of faith, but a daily obligation for a Jew to elevate the

mundane and transform the physical to spiritual. This transformation should be no different than a grain of wheat, which, after being buried in the ground naked, emerges from the ground fully grown. The grain no longer resembles the original form. Similarly, the Jew who follows in the ways of Hashem is a different person than when he entered the world. This is the powerful lesson of *Techiyas Hameisim* [Resurrection of the Dead] and how every second Hashem allows us to resurrect the dead, and make ourselves come alive, with the spirit of Hashem in our very being.