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Megillah Daf 13

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May the studying of the Daf Notes be a zechus for his neshamah and may his soul find peace in Gan Eden and be bound up in the Bond of life

It is written in the Megillah [2:5]: There was a Jewish man in Shushan the capital, whose name was Mordechai, son of Yair, son of Shimei, son of Kish, from the tribe of Binyamin. The Gemora asks: He is called a Jew (Yehudi), which would imply that he is from the tribe of Yehudah but the end of the verse explicitly states that he was from Binyamin. Rabbah bar bar Chanah answers in the name of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi: His father was from Binyamin and his mother was from Yehudah.

Rabbi Nachman said: He was a man of distinguished character.

The Rabbis, however, said: The tribes would fight with one another. The tribe of Yehudah said: I am responsible for the birth of Mordechai, because David did not kill Shimei the son of Gera (*who was an ancestor of Mordechai*), and the tribe of Binyamin said: He is actually descended from me.

Rava disagrees and posits that in fact, the opposite is true. The Congregation of Israel attributed the blame for Haman’s decree to be Mordechai’s doing, as Mordechai’s birth was the cause for their current difficulties. The Congregation of Israel declared: “See what Yehudah and Binyamin did to me. Dovid, who was from the tribe of Yehudah, did not kill Shimei. This act of passivity allowed for the birth of

Mordechai, of whom Haman became jealous. Furthermore, King Shaul, who was a descendant of the tribe of Binyamin, did not kill Agag, and this oversight allowed for Haman, the enemy of the Jewish People, to be born.”

Rabbi Yochanan answers: Mordechai descended from Binyamin; the reason he was referred to as Yehudi is because he rejected idolatry and Yehudi is the name given to one who denounces idolatry. (12b – 13a)

Rabbi Shimon ben Pazzi once introduced an exposition of the Book of Chronicles as follows: ‘All your words are one, and we know how to find their interpretation.’ He illustrates this as follows: It is written: And his wife Yehudiyah bore Yered the father of Gedor, and Chever, the father of Socho, and Yekusiel the father of Zanoach, and these are the sons of Bisyah the daughter of Pharaoh, whom Mered took. He explains: Why was she the daughter of Pharaoh called Yehudiyah (if her name in fact was Bisyah)? It is because she repudiated idolatry, as it is written: *And Pharaoh’s daughter went down to wash herself by the river*. Rabbi Yochanan said: This teaches us that she went down in order to cleanse herself from her father’s idols. He continues: ‘Bore,’ but she only raised him (Moshe)? This teaches us that if

anyone raises an orphan boy or girl in his house, the Scripture accounts it as if he gave birth to him.

He continues: 'Yered': this is Moshe. Why was he called Yered? This is because manna came down (yarad) for Israel in his days. 'Gedor' - he was so called because he fenced in (gadar) the breaches of Israel. 'Chever' - because he joined (chibar) Israel to their Father in Heaven. 'Socho' - because he was like a protective covering (sukkah) for Israel. 'Yekusiel' - because Israel hoped in God (kavu la'Keil) in his days. 'Zanoach' - because he cast off their iniquities (through his prayers). 'Father of,' 'father of,' 'father of': he was a father in Torah, a father in wisdom and a father in prophecy. 'These are the sons of Bisyah... whom Mered married.' Was Mered his name? Wasn't Caleb his name? The Holy One, Blessed be He, said: Let Caleb who rebelled (marad) against the plan of the spies come and marry the daughter of Pharaoh who rebelled against the idols of her father's house.

It is written in the Megillah [2:6]: Who (*Mordechai*) had been exiled from Jerusalem with the exiles that had been exiled along with Yechonyah, King of Yehudahh, whom Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, had sent into exile. Rava said: He was not forced into exile, but went by his own will. (13a)

It is written in the Megillah [2:7]: He raised his cousin Hadassah, also called Esther, for she had neither father nor mother. She is called Hadassah and Esther. What, in fact, was her actual name? Rabbi Meir said: Her real name was Esther, but she was referred to as Hadassah, because the righteous are called myrtles. Rabbi Yehudah said: Her real name was Hadassah, but she was referred to as Esther because she

concealed her words (*regarding her origin*). Rabbi Nechemyah said: Her real name was Hadassah, but she was referred to as Esther because the other nations called her Esther, saying that she was as beautiful as the moon (*istaher*). Ben Azzai said: Esther was neither too tall nor too short, but of medium size, like a myrtle. Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korchah said: Esther's complexion was greenish (*similar to a myrtle*), but she had grace (*provided to her by Hashem, making her appear beautiful*). (13a)

It is written in the Megillah [2:7]: And when her father and mother died, Mordechai adopted her as his daughter. Rav Acha said: When her mother became pregnant with her, her father died; when she was born, her mother died.

A Tanna learned in the name of Rabbi Meir: Do not read 'as his daughter', but 'for a house,' meaning to say that Mordechai married Esther. (13a)

It is written in the Megillah [2:9]: And the seven maids that were to be given her from the palace. Rava said: She would count the days of the week by them. (*She would know which day is Shabbos when her "Shabbos" maid arrived*).

The verse continues: He also transferred her and her maids to the best quarters in the harem. Rav said: He gave her kosher food to eat. Shmuel said: He gave her fatty pork to eat. (*There is a dispute between Rashi and Tosfos whether Esther actually ate the pork.*) Rabbi Yochanan said: He fed her seeds. (13a)

It is written in the Megillah: Six months with the oil of myrrh. What is the oil of myrrh? Rabbi Chiya bar Abba



said: Balsam. Rav Huna said: Oil from olives not a third grown. It has been taught in a braisa: Rabbi Yehudah says that anpikinun is oil of olives not a third grown. Why is it (myrrh oil) used for smearing? It is because it removes hair and makes the skin soft.

It is further written: In the evening she would come and the next morning she returned. The Gemora notes: From the discreditable account of that wicked man we can learn something to his credit, namely, that he did not have marital relations by day.

It is written: And Esther obtained favor. Rabbi Elozar said: This informs us that she appeared to every man as a member of his own people.

It is written: So Esther was taken to king Achashverosh into his palace in the tenth month, which is the month of Teves. This is the month (due to its coldness) when a body warms up another body.

And the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favor in his sight more than all the other virgins. Rav said: If he wanted to experience in her the taste of a virgin he found it; if the taste of a married woman, he found it.

It is written in the Megillah [2:18]: Then the king made a grand feast for all his ministers and servants, The Feast of Esther. The Gemora explains that the purpose of this feast was to persuade Esther into disclosing her true origins; Mordechai had instructed her not to disclose that she was Jewish. The feast was made in her honor, but she did not concede. Achashverosh remitted the head tax in her name, but she did not disclose her origins. He sent gifts (to

important people in her name), but she refused to reveal her origins. Achashverosh sought advice from Mordechai and he went and gathered the maidens again, with the intent of making Esther jealous, causing her to disclose her origins, but she still refused. (13a)

Rabbi Elozar said: Hashem always rewards the righteous person measure for measure. Because of the modesty displayed by Rachel; the modest Shaul descended from her. And because of the modesty displayed by Shaul; the modest Esther descended from him.

The Gemora proceeds to record the incident of Rachel's modesty. It is written [Breishis 29:12]: And Yaakov told Rachel that he was her father's brother. Was he her father's brother? Wasn't he in fact the son of her father's sister? This is the explanation: Yaakov said to Rachel, Will you marry me? She replied, yes, but my father is a trickster, and he will outwit you. He replied: I am his brother in trickery. Rachel asked him: Is it permitted for the righteous to indulge in trickery? He replied: Yes, and the Gemora cites a verse in Shmuel proving that one is permitted to act crookedly with a crook. Yaakov asked her: What is his trickery? She replied: I have a sister who is older than me and he will not let me get married before her. Yaakov gave to Rachel certain identifying signs in order that Lavan would not be able to exchange Leah, the older sister, with Rachel. When the wedding night came, Rachel said to herself (*upon realizing that her father intended to give Leah to Yaakov instead of her*), my sister will be embarrassed. She handed over the secret signs to her. It was due to

this act of modesty that Rachel merited having Shaul descend from her.

The Gemora records the modesty of Shaul. After Shmuel had anointed Shaul as the king, he met his uncle who inquired of him where he was. Shaul did not tell him that he was anointed to be the king and it was due to his modesty that he was rewarded with having Esther descend from him. (13a – 13b)

Rabbi Elozar further said: When the Holy One, Blessed be He, assigns greatness to a man, he assigns it to his sons and his sons' sons for all generations, as it is written: He establishes them forever and they are exalted. If, however, he becomes haughty, the Holy One, Blessed be He, lowers him, as it is written: And if they are bound in chains, etc.

It is written further: For Esther did the bidding of Mordechai. Rabbi Yirmiyah said: This means that she used to show her menstrual blood to the Sages.

'Like as when she was raised with him.' Rabbah bar Lima said in the name of Rav: This means that she used to rise from the lap of Achashverosh and immerse herself and sit in the lap of Mordechai.

It is written in the Megillah [2:21]: In those days, while Mordechai sat at the king's gate, Bigsan and Seresh, two of the king's chamberlains from the threshold guards, became angry and planned to assassinate King Achashverosh. Rabbi Yochanan said: Bigsan and Seresh were talking in the Tarsian language, saying to each other how they were losing sleep on the account of Achashverosh. (*He was always thirsty and they had to provide him with*

water.) They plotted to poison the king. They did not realize that Mordechai knew all seventy languages, including Tarsian. He told Esther, who subsequently warned Achashverosh and they were killed. (13b)

It is written: After these things. After what? Rava said: After God had created a remedy for the affliction (which was about to transpire). For Rish Lakish has said: The Holy One, Blessed be He, does not smite Israel unless He has created for them a remedy beforehand, as it is written: When I have healed Israel, then the iniquity of Ephraim will be uncovered. Not so, however, with the other nations: He smites them first, and then creates for them a remedy, as it says: Hashem will smite Egypt, smiting and healing.

It is further written: But it seemed contemptible in his eyes to lay hands on Mordechai alone. At first he (Haman) aimed at 'Mordechai alone,' then at 'the people of Mordechai' — and who are these? The Rabbis; and finally at 'all the Jews.' (13b)

It is written in the Megillah [3:7] In the first month, which is the month of Nissan, in the twelfth year of King Achashverosh's reign, a *pur*, which is a lot, was cast before Haman, for every day and every month, [and it fell] on the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar. We learned in a braisa: When the lot fell on the month of Adar, Haman rejoiced greatly. He said: The lot has fallen for me on the month in which Moshe died. He did not know, however, that Moshe died on the seventh of Adar and was born on the seventh of Adar. (13b)

It is written: There is one people. Rava said: There never was a slanderer so skillful as Haman. He said to

Achashverosh, "Come, let us destroy them." He replied:, "I am afraid of their God, lest He do to me as He did to my predecessors." Haman replied, "They are 'negligent' of the mitzvos." He said, "There are Rabbis among them." Haman replied, "They are 'one people.' Should you say that I will make a bald spot in your kingdom, I will reply that they are 'scattered abroad among the peoples.' Should you say that there is some benefit in them, I will reply that 'they are dispersed' (mefurad) like a mule (pereidah) that does not bear fruit. Should you say that they occupy one province, I will reply that 'they are in all the provinces of your kingdom.' Haman continued: 'Their laws are diverse from those of every other people': they do not eat of our food, nor do they marry our women, nor give us theirs in marriage. And they do not keep the king's laws,' since they waste the whole year by saying that today is the Shabbos or Passover. 'Therefore it is not beneficial for the king to tolerate them,' because they eat and drink and mock the throne. For even if a fly falls into the cup of one of them, he throws it out and drinks the wine, but if my master, the king, were to touch his cup, he would throw it on the ground and not drink from it. (13b)

The Megillah states further [3:9]: If it pleases the King, let them be written for destruction, and I will pay ten thousand silver talents to the functionaries, to be deposited in the King's treasuries. Rish Lakish said: It was well known to Hashem that Haman would one day pay shekels for the destruction of the Jewish people. Therefore He anticipated Haman's shekalim with those of the Jews. We have learned in a Mishna: On the first of Adar proclamation is made regarding the shekalim. (13b)

DAILY MASHAL

RACHEL'S MODESTY

The Gemora proceeds to record the incident of Rachel's modesty. It is written [Breishis 29:12]: And Yaakov told Rachel that he was her father's brother. Was he her father's brother? Wasn't he in fact the son of her father's sister? This is the explanation: Yaakov said to Rachel, Will you marry me? She replied, yes, but my father is a trickster, and he will outwit you. He replied: I am his brother in trickery. Rachel asked him: Is it permitted for the righteous to indulge in trickery? He replied: Yes, and the Gemora cites a verse in Shmuel proving that one is permitted to act crookedly with a crook. Yaakov asked her: What is his trickery? She replied: I have a sister who is older than me and he will not let me get married before her. Yaakov gave to Rachel certain identifying signs in order that Lavan would not be able to exchange Leah, the older sister, with Rachel. When the wedding night came, Rachel said to herself (*upon realizing that her father intended to give Leah to Yaakov instead of her*), my sister will be embarrassed. She handed over the secret signs to her. It was due to this act of modesty that Rachel merited having Shaul descend from her.

Dr. Mark Berkowitz cited the Ben Yehoyadah who explains this Gemora. He states that the secret message and signs that Rachel and Yaakov exchanged on the first day that they spoke at the well were kept secret by both of them for the seven years that Yaakov labored for Rachel's hand in marriage. He states that the only way that this secret could have worked and Leah could have possibly replaced Rachel was if Yaakov and Rachel did not meet or talk during

those seven years. He points out that this is the great modesty that she displayed over these seven years.

Rabbi Aryeh Leib Scheinbaum in Peninim on the Torah Parshas Korach provides a similar explanation. [This article is provided as part of Shema Yisrael Torah Network.] The Midrash teaches us that On ben Peles was saved as a result of listening to his wife. She asked him, "What do you gain by being involved in this dispute? Regardless who triumphs, you still emerge as the loser. If Aharon is selected as Kohein Gadol - you are his student. If Korach becomes the Kohein Gadol - you are still nothing more than a student. Why involve yourself in a 'no win' situation?" On's wife spoke with seichel, common sense. Is this a reason to praise her? Basically, she only did what any level-headed person would do.

Horav Nosson Vachtfogel, zl, offers a penetrating insight into the matter. He cites the Talmud in Megillah 13b where Rabbi Elazar claims that as reward for Rachel Imeinu's tznius, modesty, she merited that Shaul Hamelech be descended from her. When did she demonstrate such exemplary tznius? Chazal explain that when she gave her sister, Leah, the simanim, special signs, that Yaakov Avinu had given her, she acted with exemplary modesty. Rashi explains that her tznius lay in the fact that she never publicized her selfless act of devotion to her sister. She never divulged to Yaakov what she had done. She was prepared to give up that for which she had strived for so much - the opportunity to be the progenitor of the Shivtei Kah, tribes of Klal Yisrael. She did not once call attention to her exemplary act of kindness. This is tznius at its zenith.

Rav Nosson posits that included in the middah of tznius is the ability to maintain a shev v'al taaseh, status quo, attitude in regard to a situation in which one is unsure of what to do. He does not take a chance and plunge forward regardless of the consequences. No - tznius demands that one sit back and not act, rather than act rashly. Likewise, one who is a tzanua will not divulge a secret. If one is asked for information about someone and he does not know the person, it takes tznius to say, "I do not know." Regrettably, there are those who are quick to conjecture and state their own opinions about someone, even though they are baseless.

Rav Nosson remembers that, prior to being asked by Horav Aharon Kotler, zl, to become the first Mashgiach of the Beth Medrash Govohah, he was asked by a talmid, close student, of Rav Aharon regarding a controversial sefer that was on the table in one of the yeshivah's classrooms. The Mashgiach responded, "I do not know." This response prompted the talmid to approach Rav Aharon and suggest that Rav Nosson be appointed as Mashgiach of the yeshivah. It takes someone who possesses the strength of character to assert "I do not know" to be the Mashgiach of the Lakewood Yeshivah. This was the power of On ben Peles' wife. She had the ability to see and stress the shev v'al taaseh attitude: "If either way you will not be the victor, why bother involving yourself in the fray of the controversy? Stay at home and stay out of trouble." It takes tznius to act in such a manner. On was fortunate that his wife had the necessary character trait - and he had the wisdom to listen to her.