



Produced by Rabbi Avrohom Adler, Kollel Boker Beachwood

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Moshe Raphael ben Yehoshua (Morris Stadtmauer) o”h

Tzvi Gershon ben Yoel (Harvey Felsen) o”h

Mav the studying of the Daf Notes be a zechus for their neshamot and mav their souls find peace in Gan Eden and be bound up in the Bond of life

When a person ages, his limbs become less functional.

Expounding a verse in Koheles, the *Gemora* comments as follows: *In the day when the guards of the house will tremble;* this refers to a man’s flanks and ribs which guard the intestinal organs of a person. *And the powerful men will stoop* refers to one’s legs that will weaken. *And the grinders are idle* refers to the teeth that weaken, or alternatively, to the stomach that does not digest food well. *And the gazers through the windows are dimmed* refers to a person’s eyesight that is weakened in old age. (152a)

The emperor asked Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chananiah: ‘Why did you not attend the Bei Avidan?’ ‘The mountain is snowy, it is surrounded by ice, the dog does not bark and the grinders do not grind,’¹ he replied. The School of Rav was wont to say: ‘What I did not lose I seek.’² It was taught, Rabbi Yosi ben Kisma said: Two are better than three,³ and woe for the one thing that goes and does not return. What is that? Said Rav Chisda: One’s youth. When Rav Dimi came, he said: Youth is a crown of roses; old age is a crown of willowrods. It was taught in Rabbi Meir’s name: Chew well with your teeth, and you will find it in your steps, as it is said, for then we had plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil. Shmuel said to Rav Yehudah: O keen scholar! open your mouth and let your food enter. Until the age of forty food is more beneficial; from then on drink is more beneficial. (152a)

¹ My head is snowy white, my beard likewise, my voice feeble and my teeth do not function. — I am too old to attend.

² This was their description of old age. One goes about bent and stooping, appearing to seek an article which he has not lost.

A eunuch and Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korchah engage in a verbal sparring match.

A eunuch, wishing to taunt Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korchah, who was bald (Korchah means bald) said to him: How far is it from here to Karichna, alluding to Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korchah being bald. Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korchah responded, “As far as from here to Gozayana, a reference to being castrated.” The eunuch said back, “A bald goat is worth four dinar,” to which Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korchah responded, “A castrated goat is worth even more, as it sells for eight dinar.” The eunuch then noticed that Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korchah was not wearing shoes, so the eunuch said, “one who rides a horse is a king, one who rides a donkey is a free man, and one who walks with shoes on his feet is a man. One without shoes, like you, one who has a grave dug for him and is buried in it is better than one without shoes.” Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korchah responded, “You told me three things, so I will tell you three things. The splendor of ones face is the beard, the happiness in ones heart is having a wife, and the heritage that Hashem gives a person is children. Blessed is Hashem that has denied these things from you.” The eunuch was upset by this remark, so he asked Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korchah if he was trying to stir up trouble, to which Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korchah responded, “You castrated, emasculated one! Are you daring to provoke me?”(152a)

Rebbe asked Rabbi Shimon ben Chalafta: ‘Why were we not permitted to receive you on the Festival, as my ancestors

³ The two legs in youth are better than the three — i.e., the additional stick — of old age.

used to receive your ancestors?' 'The rocks have grown tall, the near have become distant, two have turned into three, and the peacemaker of the home has ceased, he replied.⁴ (152a)

An old man cannot hear the singing of male and female singers.

Continuing the exegesis of the verses in Koheles, the *Gemora* comments: *When the doors in the street are shut* refers to ones cavities that get blocked with age. *When the sound of the grinding is low* refers to the stomach that cannot digest the food properly. *When one rises at the voice of a bird* refers to an old person who is awakened even from the chirping of birds. *And all the voices of song grow dim* refers to the voices of male and female singers that sound to the old man like a whisper because he has grown hard of hearing. Barzilai Hagiladi, who had supported Dovid HaMelech when faced with rebellion by his son Avshalom, told Dovid that he had become old and he could no longer hear the singing of male and female singers. (152a)

Barzilai Hagiladi was a liar and immoral.

Barzilai told Dovid that he was old and therefore was not able to taste food and drink. Rav says that he lied, because the maidservant of Rebbe, who was ninety-two years old, would taste the food that was cooking to see if it required more seasoning. [Barzilai was eighty years old and claimed that he could not taste, and this woman was ninety-two years old and was still able to taste food.] Furthermore, Rava says, Barzilai said that he was old, and this led to his weakened condition, when in reality, Barzilai was steeped in immorality, and excess immorality leads one to become old suddenly. (152a)

Torah scholars become wiser as they grow older.

It was taught in a Baraisa: Rabbi Yishmael son of Rabbi Yosi said: A Torah scholar becomes wiser as he grows older, as it

⁴ I.e., I have grown old, even those near are as difficult to visit as those at a distance, my two legs need an additional stick for walking, and I can no longer exercise a man's functions.

⁵ The desire a man has for a woman, which wane in old age.

is said: *in the aged is wisdom and in the length of days is understanding*. Regarding those who are ignorant in Torah knowledge, the older they become, the more foolish they become, as it is said: *He distorts the utterances of the trustworthy, and takes reason away from the elders*. (152a)

'They shall be afraid of that which is high' — even a small mound looks to him like the highest of mountains; 'and terrors shall be in the way' — when he walks on a road his heart is filled with fears; and the almond tree shall blossom' — that refers to the hip; 'and the grasshopper shall be a burden' — the buttocks; 'and desire shall fail' the passions.⁵ Rav Kahana was expounding a portion [of scripture] before Rav. When he came to this verse, he [Rav] uttered a long sigh. This shows that Rav's desires have ceased, observed he. Rav Kahana said: What is meant by, 'For he decreed, and it was': this refers to a woman; 'he commanded; and it did stand' — this refers to children.⁶ A Tanna taught: Though a woman be as a pitcher full of filth and her opening be full of blood, yet all chase after her. (152a)

Because man goes to his long home. Rabbi Yitzchak observed: This teaches that every righteous person is given a habitation as befits his honor. This may be compared to a king who enters a town together with his servants. They all enter through the same gate, [yet] when they spend the night [there] each is given a lodging as befits his honor.

Rabbi Yitzchak also said: What means the verse, For youth and the prime of life are vanity? The things a man does in his youth blacken his face in his old age.

Rabbi Yitzchak also said: Worms are as painful to the dead as a needle in the flesh of the living, for it is said, But his flesh upon him has pain.

Rav Chisda said: A man's soul mourns for him [after death] seven whole [days]. for it is said, And his soul mourned for

⁶ This is also something that Hashem dictates, because children take up ones time, energy, and resources that he could have used for himself.



him; and it is written, and he made a mourning for his father seven days.

Rav Yehudah said: If there are none to be comforted for a dead person. Ten people go and sit in his place. A certain man died in the neighborhood of Rav Yehudah. As there were none to be comforted, Rav Yehudah assembled ten men every day and they sat in his place. After seven days he [the dead man] appeared to him in a dream and said to him, 'Your mind be at rest, for you have set my mind at rest.' (152a - 152b)

There is a dispute regarding until when a deceased person knows what is said about him.

Rabbi Avahu said that a person's soul is aware of everything said about him in his presence until after the top of the coffin is closed before the deceased is buried. The *Gemora* records a dispute between Rabbi Chiya and Rabbi Shimon son of Rebbe regarding this matter, as one opinion maintains that the deceased knows what is said about him until the top of the coffin is closed over him, whereas the other opinion maintains that the deceased is cognizant of what is said about him until the flesh of his body decomposes in the grave. The opinion that maintains that the deceased is aware of what is said about him until his flesh decomposes brings proof from the verse where it is said: *but his flesh will be pained over its demise and his soul shall mourn itself*. The opinion that maintains that the deceased knows what is said about him until after the top of the coffin is closed brings proof from the verse that states: *the dust shall return to the earth as it was*. (152b)

A person should return his soul to Hashem in the same pure state that he received the soul when he was born.

It is said in Koheles: *and the spirit returns to Hashem who gave it*. Since the words *who gave it* appear to be extra, the *Gemora* expounds the verse as follows: Give Hashem your soul back like He gave your soul to you. Just like Hashem gave you your soul at birth in a pure state, you should ensure that when you die, your soul is still pure like when you were born. This is compared to a king who distributes clothing of royalty

to his servants, the smart servants ensure that the clothing does not get soiled, and they return the clothing to the king in perfect form. The foolish servants, however, are not concerned if the clothing gets soiled, and they return the clothing to the king dirty. The king is happy with the smart servants, and he returns their clothing that he lent them to his treasure chest, and the smart servants return to their homes in peace. The clothing of the foolish servants however, must go the laundry, and the servants are incarcerated for their lack of responsibility. (152b)

The souls of the righteous are ensconced under the Heavenly Throne and angels toss about the souls of the wicked.

The Baraisa continues: Hashem rewards the righteous for preserving the purity of their souls, and their bodies lie respectfully in their graves. Regarding their souls, it is said: *may the soul of my master be bundled in the bundle of life*. Regarding the souls of the wicked, however, it is said: *there shall be no peace, says Hashem, for the wicked*. Concerning the souls of the wicked, it is said: *and as for the soul of your enemy. May Hashem sling it as from the hollow of a sling*. The souls of the wicked are trapped in the hollow of the sling, and one angel stands at one end of the world and another angel stands at the other end of the world. The angels then sling the soul of the wicked back and forth to each other. [This reflects on the lifestyle that a sinner led, reflected in violence and instability. Alternatively, this slingshot reflects the concept of *gilgul*, the reincarnation of the soul that must find atonement in another life.] (152b)

It was taught in a Baraisa: Rabbi Eliezer said: The souls of the righteous are hidden under the Throne of Glory, as it is said, The soul of my master shall be bound up in the bundle of life [with Hashem your God]. But those of the wicked continue to be imprisoned, while one angel stands at one end of the world and a second stands at the other end, and they sling their souls to each other, for it is said, and the souls of your enemies, them shall He sling out, as from the hollow of a sling.

Rabbah asked Rav Nachman: What about those who are intermediate? He replied: Had I died I could not have told you this. Thus did Shmuel say: Both these and those (*the wicked and the intermediate*) are delivered to (*the angel*) Dumah; these (*the souls of the intermediate people*) enjoy rest, whereas the others (*the souls of the wicked*) have no rest.

Rav Mari said: Even the (*bodies of the*) righteous are destined to be dust, for it is written: *and the dust shall return to the earth as it was.* (152b)

Rav Nachman and the Corpse

The *Gemora* relates: Certain diggers were digging in Rav Nachman's land, when (*the body of*) Rav Achai bar Yoshiyah snorted at them. So they went and told Rav Nachman that a dead man snorted at them. He went and asked him, "Who are you?" It replied, "I am Achai bar Yoshiyah." Rav Nachman asked, "But didn't Rav Mari say that even the righteous are destined to be dust?" [*Why did you not decompose?*] The corpse replied, "And who is Mari, I do not know him." Rav Nachman persisted, "But surely a verse is written: *and the dust returns to the earth as it was?*" The corpse responded, "He who taught you Koheles did not teach you Mishlei, for it is written: *But the rotting of the bones is from envy in his heart.* Whoever has envy in his heart, his bones will rot away; but he who has no envy in his heart, his bones do not rot away."

He then felt him and perceived that there was substance in him. Rav Nachman said to him, "Let master arise and come to my house." The corpse replied, "You have thus disclosed that (*besides not being proficient in Mishlei*) you have not even studied the prophets, for it is written: *And you shall know that I am Hashem, when I open your graves (and it He alone who can free us from our graves; we have no permission to do so ourselves).*"

Rav Nachman asked: But it is written: *for you are dust, and to dust you shall return?* [*How is it that you did not decompose?*] The corpse replied: That means one hour before the resurrection of the dead (*but until then, the bodies of the righteous may remain intact*). (152b)

A Sadducee and Rabbi Avahu

A certain Sadducee said to Rabbi Avahu: You maintain that the souls of the righteous are ensconced under the Heavenly Throne of God; then how did the bone-necromancer bring up Shmuel by means of his necromancy? He replied: There it was within twelve months of his death (*and his soul did not yet reach its final resting place*), for it was Taught in a *braisa*: For twelve months, the body is in existence and the soul ascends (*to the next world*) and descends (*back towards its body*); after twelve months, the body ceases to exist, and the soul ascends (*to the next world*), but descends no longer. (152b – 153a)

INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

As Painful as Needles

The *Gemora* tells us that a person after his death suffers from his body's decomposition, as much as a living person would suffer if his flesh were to be stabbed by needles. R' Yehuda HaChassid (Sefer Chassidim 1163) explained that this does not mean that the deceased actually feels the pain of his body. Rather, his neshama feels the pain of disgrace in seeing the flesh that once housed it in such a pathetic condition.

Accelerating the decay of a body: Based on this explanation, the Rashba (Teshuvos I, 369) offered a fascinating ruling, which is cited in Shulchan Aruch by the Rema (Y.D. 363:2). A person once instructed his children that after his death, he should be buried in the ancestral burial place of his family. His children were unable to fulfill his request immediately after his death, so they buried his body temporarily in a local graveyard, to be exhumed and reburied later.

When the opportunity to inter him presented itself, they found that the body was in the process of decomposing, and the horrible stench it emitted made it impossible for them to move it. They therefore asked the Rashba if they should pour acid over the body, to accelerate its decay. After the flesh had dissolved, they could then move the bones. Would this bring their father pain, as the *Gemora* implies, or would he be

pleased to see his last wish fulfilled sooner? The Rashba permitted them to pour acid over his body, explaining that anything done to fulfill the wishes of the deceased is not considered a disgrace to him.

The Chasam Sofer (Teshuvos VI, Likutim 37) explained this ruling based on the R' Yehuda HaChassid's interpretation of the *Gemora*. The *niftar* does not actually feel the pain of his former body. Rather the neshama mourns over the disgrace of its decay. In this case, furthering the decay of the body is an honor to it, since this would allow it to be buried in its ancestral burying place, as he had requested. If we would interpret the *Gemora* literally, they would certainly be forbidden to cause pain to their father.

The Pischei Teshuva (Y.D., *ibid* s.k. 5) cites from Har Eival (11), that strictly speaking one may instruct his children to pour acid over his remains to facilitate his burial, but it is best not to do so. One should not circumvent the natural order with which Hashem returns bodies to the earth.

DAILY MASHAL

Souls of the Righteous under the Heavenly Throne

The *Gemora* states that the souls of the righteous are ensconced beneath the Heavenly Throne. The *Gemora* records an incident where a Sadducee challenged Rabbi Avahu from the episode where Shaul had a necromancer (one who communicates with the dead) raise the soul of Shmuel through necromancy. Rabbi Avahu responded that in that case, it was within twelve months since Shmuel's passing, so his soul had not yet been ensconced under the Heavenly Throne. The body remains intact for twelve months after death, and the soul rises into the next worlds and descends back into the body. Once twelve months is completed, the body ceases to exist and the soul rises into the next world, ever to descend again. This was the reason that the necromancer was able to communicate with the soul of Shmuel.

There is a difficulty with this *Gemora*, as the *Gemora*⁷ states that when the necromancer summoned the soul of Shmuel, Shmuel became frightened, fearing that this was the ultimate Day of Judgment. Out of fear Shmuel brought along with him the soul of Moshe Rabbeinu so he would be protected. Now, if the souls of the righteous do not return to this world after the twelve months from its demise, how could the soul of Moshe have returned to this world? Moshe had already been deceased for hundreds of years.

The answer to this question can be found in the words of the Malbim, who writes regarding the incident with Shaul requesting that the necromancer summon the soul of Shmuel, as follows: The necromancer said, *I saw a great man (Elohim) ascending from the earth*. The *Gemora* interprets the plural form of Elohim to refer to mena another soul, that of Moshe. Since all prophets throughout history received their tradition from Moshe, they all are empowered with a part of Moshe, and it was this power that ascended with Shmuel. The necromancer was able to perceive the physical aspect of this power, and for this reason she declared that she saw two ascending. According to the Malbim, it was not the soul of Moshe that actually descended from the upper worlds, but a manifestation of Moshe's power that is instilled into every prophet that descended. Thus, the statement that Moshe ascended with Shmuel does not contradict the *Gemora* here that states that after twelve months the soul does not return to this world.

⁷ Chagiga 4b