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Sotah Daf 12

Produced by Rabbi Avrohom Adler, Kollel Boker Beachwood

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

Miriam and Calev

It is written: And it came to pass, because the midwives feared God, that He made houses for them. Rav and Shmuel differ in their interpretation: One said that He made for them houses of Kehunah and Leviah, and the other said that He made for them houses of royalty. The one who said that He made for them houses of Kehunah and Leviah is referring to Aaron and Moshe; and the one who said that He made for them houses of royalty is referring to Dovid, who descended from Miriam, as it is written: And Azuvah died, and Calev married Ephrath (Miriam), which bore him Chur, and it is written: Now Dovid was the son of an Ephrathite man.

It is written [I Divrei Hayamim 2:18]: And Calev the son of Chetzron sired Azuvah, wife and Yerios. And these were her sons: Yesher and Shovav and Ardon. The Gemora asks: Was Calev the son of Chetzron? Behold he was the son of Yefuneh! The Gemora answers: His father was called Yefuneh (in truth, his father’s name was Chatzron) because Calev was a son who turned away from the plot of the other spies. The Gemora asks: But wasn’t Calev the son of Kenaz, as it is written: And Osniel the son of Kenaz, Calev’s brother, captured it? Rava answers: He was the stepson of Kenaz. There is also evidence for this, since it is written: [And Calev the son of Yefuneh] the Kenizzite. Learn from this.

Azuvah is in fact Miriam; and why was she called Azuvah? It was because all men abandoned her at first (she was sick and nobody wished to marry her).

The Gemora asks: Did Calev sire Azuvah? But he was married to her! Rabbi Yochanan said: Whoever marries a woman for the sake of Heaven (and Calev realized that she would produce outstanding children, for children take after their mother’s brothers; in this case, the mother’s brothers were Moshe and Aaron), the Torah considers it as though he had sired her.

‘Yerios’ — [she was so named] because her face was like curtains. ‘And these were her sons’ — read not baneha [her sons] but boneha [her builders]. ‘Yesher’ [he was so called] because he set himself right [yishsher]. ‘Shovav’ — [he was so called] because he turned his inclination aside [shebeiv]. ‘And Ardon’ — [he was so called] because he disciplined [radah] his inclination. Others say: Because his face was like a rose [vered].

A different verse states [ibid. 4:5]: And Ashchur the father of Tekoa, had two wives, Chelah and Naarah. Ashchur is in fact Calev; and why was he called Ashchur? It was because his face was blackened through his many fasts (so that Hashem should help him resist joining the other spies). Calev was referred to as “the father,” for he was like a father to her (taking care of her needs when she was sick). He was also referred to as Tekoa, because he fixed his heart to his Father in Heaven (by not joining with the other spies). The verse states that he “had two wives,” for Miriam was like two wives. She was called Chelah and Naarah, for at first she was Chelah (sickly), and finally Naarah (a young girl).

And the sons of Chelah were Tzeres, Tzohar and Esnan. 'Tzeres' — [Miriam was so called] — because she became the rival [tzarah] of her contemporaries [in beauty]. 'Tzohar' — because her face was [beautiful] like the noon [tzoharayim]. 'Esnan' — because whoever saw her took a present [esnan] to his wife. (11b5 – 12a2)

Pharaoh's Decrees

It is written: And Pharaoh commanded all his people (that all baby boys should be thrown into the river). Rabbi Yosi the son of Rabbi Chanina said: He imposed the same decree upon his own people (for his astrologers had warned him that a boy was soon to be born who would save the Jews, but they did not know if that boy would be born to a Jewish woman or an Egyptian one).

Rabbi Yosi the son of Rabbi Chanina also said: He made three decrees: Firstly, "If it will be a son, then you shall kill him"; then "Every son that is born you shall cast into the river"; and finally he imposed the same decree upon his own people.

The following verse states: And a man went from the house of Levi (and took a daughter of Levi). Rav Yehudah bar Zevinah said: He went in the advice of his daughter.

The Gemora cites a Baraisa: Amram was the greatest man of his generation. When he saw that the wicked Pharaoh had decreed "Every son that is born you shall cast into the river," he said: We are laboring in vain. He arose and divorced his wife. All the other Jewish men thereupon arose and divorced their wives. His daughter said to him, "Father, your decree is more severe than Pharaoh's, for Pharaoh decreed only against the males, whereas you have decreed against the males and females. Pharaoh only decreed concerning this world, whereas you have decreed concerning this world and the World to Come (for you are not even allowing the children to enter this world, and therefore, they will not enter the World to Come). Concerning the wicked Pharaoh, there is a doubt

whether his decree will be fulfilled or not, whereas in your case, since you are righteous, it is certain that your decree will be fulfilled." Amram arose and took his wife back. They all arose and took their wives back.

"And he took" — it should have said, "and he retook"! Rav Yehudah bar Zevinah said: He acted towards her as though it had been the first marriage. He seated her in a sedan chair; Aaron and Miriam danced before her, and the Ministering Angels proclaimed, "A joyful mother of children."

"A daughter of Levi" — could a one hundred and thirty year old woman be called "a daughter"? (The Gemora cites proof to her age.) Rabbi Chama the son of Rabbi Chanina said: (The Torah mentions that seventy Jews came to Egypt, whereas there are only sixty-nine names in the list.) This (the seventieth person) refers to Yocheved whose conception occurred on the way to Egypt, and her birth was between the walls of Egypt, as it is said: Who was born to Levi in Egypt. Her birth occurred in Egypt, but her conception did not occur there. [Since the Jewish people were in Egypt for two hundred and ten years, and Moshe was eighty years old when they left, Yocheved must have been one hundred and thirty years old when Amram married her. Why was she called "a daughter"?] Rav Yehudah said: She is called "a daughter" because the signs of a young woman were reborn in her.

And the woman conceived and gave birth to a son. But she had already been pregnant three months! — Rav Yehudah bar Zevina said: It compares the bearing of the child to its conception; as the conception was painless so was the bearing painless. Hence [it is learned] that righteous women were not included in the decree upon Eve. (12a2 – 12a4)

Moshe and the Basket

And she saw him that he was good. It has been taught in a Baraisa: Rabbi Meir says: Moshe's name was Tov (good).

Rabbi Yehudah says: His name was Toviah. Rabbi Nechemia says: He was worthy of prophecy. Others say: He was born circumcised. The Chachamim say: At the time when Moshe was born, the whole house was filled with light, as it is written here: And she saw him that he was good, and elsewhere it is written: And God saw the light was good.

And she hid him three months. The Egyptians only counted the months of her pregnancy from the time that she remarried, but by then, she was already pregnant three months (until the Egyptians came nine months after her remarriage).

She could not hide him any longer. The Gemora asks: Couldn't she continue hiding him? The Gemora answers: Whenever the Egyptians heard that a child was born, they would take other children there so that the Jewish baby should hear them crying and cry with them, as it is written: Take us the foxes, the little foxes etc.

So she took for him a wicker basket. The Gemora asks: Why did she choose wicker? Rabbi Elazar said: This teaches us that to the righteous, their money is dearer than their body (she selected wicker because it is inexpensive, although wood would have been a better protection for the child). And why are they careful about their money? It is because they do not stretch out their hand to robbery (their money is more precious to them, for it comes through tremendous exertion). Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachmeini says: She chose wicker because they are a soft material which can withstand both soft and hard materials.

And she smeared it with clay and tar. We learned in a Baraisa: The tar was on the outside, in order that the righteous child should not be compelled to smell the bad odor.

And she placed the child into it and placed it in the suf. Rabbi Elozar said: This refers to the Sea of Reeds. Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachmeini said: It refers to a marsh.

And Pharaoh's daughter went down to wash herself by the river. Rabbi Yochanan said in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai: This teaches us that she went down in order to wash herself from her father's idols. And similarly it says: When my Lord shall have cleaned away the filth of the daughters of Zion etc.

And her maidens were walking along the river. Rabbi Yochanan said: This "walking" means nothing else but to bring them nearer to death. And similarly it says: Behold I am going to die.

And she saw the basket among the reeds. Once the maidens saw that she wanted to save Moshe, they said to her: "Our lady, it is the custom of the world that when a human king makes a decree, though everybody else does not obey it, at least his children and the members of his household observe it; but you are transgressing your father's decree!" Gavriel came and struck them to the ground.

And she sent forth her amah and fetched it. Rabbi Yehudah and Rabbi Nechemia disagree on the meaning of the word "amah": One of them says that it means her arm, and the other says that it means her maidservant. He who said that it means 'her hand' did so because it is written her amah; he who said that it means 'her maidservant' did so because the text does not say yadah [her hand]. But according to the one who said that it means 'her maidservant', it has just been stated that Gavriel came and beat them to the ground!? — We are forced to say that Gavriel left one of her maidservants alive, for it is not proper for the daughter of a king to stand by herself.

According to the one who understands the word “amah” to be referring to her hand, let the Torah say “her hand”? – It is to teach us that a miracle occurred, and her arm extended far, for a master has said: You find it so with the arm of Pharaoh's daughter and similarly with the teeth of the wicked, as it is written: You have broken [shibarta] the teeth of the wicked, and Rish Lakish said: Read not shibarta but shirbarta [you have lengthened].

She opened it and saw him, the child. ‘and she saw the child’ it should have simply said? Rabbi Yosi the son of Chanina said: She saw the Divine Presence together with him.

And behold, a youth was crying. The Gemora asks: First, he was called a child, and now he is called a youth!? The Gemora explains with the following Baraisa: He was a child, but his voice was like that of a youth (it was much deeper than normal). These are the words of Rabbi Yehudah. Rabbi Nechemia said to him: If so, you have made Moshe possess a defect (and this would disqualify him from singing in the Temple)!? Rather, the Torah is teaching us that his mother made for him a wedding canopy, for she thought, “Perhaps I will not merit seeing his chupah.”

And she had compassion on him and she said, “This one of the Hebrew boys.” The Gemora asks: How did she know? Rabbi Yosi the son of Chanina said: She saw that he was circumcised.

Rabbi Yochanan said: ‘This one’ teaches us that she prophesied without realizing it. This one fell into the river, but no others will fall (for that day the decree was abolished, since the astrologers said that it is not a concern any longer). And this bears out what Rabbi Elozar said: what is the meaning of that which is written: And when they shall say to you, “Seek of the necromancers and the diviners,” who chirp and mutter? They envision

events of the future, but they do not understand it. They speak it out, but do not know what they are saying.

Pharaoh's astrologers saw that the savior of the Jews would be punished by water. They therefore decreed: Every son that is born you shall cast into the river. After Moshe was thrown into the water, they said: “We do not see that sign any longer.” They thereupon abolished their decree. But they did not realize that he was to be punished through the water of Merivah (when Moshe hit the stone to produce water instead of speaking to it). And this bears out what Rabbi Chama bar Chanina said: What is the meaning of the following text: These are the waters of Merivah, where they contended with Hashem? These are the waters about which Pharaoh's astrologers saw and made a mistake. And concerning this Moshe said: Six hundred thousand footmen etc. Moshe said to the Jewish people: On my account, you were all saved from drowning by the edict of Pharaoh (for after I was cast into the river, the decree was abolished).

Rabbi Chanina bar Pappa expounds “this one” differently: That day was the twenty-first of Nissan, and the Ministering Angels spoke before the Holy One, Blessed be He, “Lord of the Universe! Shall he who is destined to utter a song to You by the Reed Sea on this day (eighty years later) be punished on this day?” Rabbi Acha bar Chanina said: That day was the sixth of Sivan, and the Ministering Angels spoke before the Holy One, blessed be He, “Lord of the Universe! Shall he who is destined to receive the Torah on Mount Sinai on this day be punished on this day?”

The Gemora notes: It is understandable according to the one who said that it was the sixth of Sivan, for then it occurred (his being cast into the river) three months after his birth. For a master has said: Moshe died on the seventh of Adar and was born on the seventh of Adar, and from the seventh of Adar to the sixth of Sivan is three months. But according to the one who said that it was the

twenty-first of Nissan, how could it have been (it is considerably less than three months)? The Gemora answers: That year was a leap year. It emerges that we have the greater part of the first Adar and the greater part of the last month (Nissan) and a full month in between.

And his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and call for you a wet-nurse from the Hebrew women?" The Gemora asks: Why was it necessary to summon a Hebrew woman? The Gemora answers: This teaches us that they handed Moshe to all the Egyptian women, but he would not nurse from them. He said: "Shall a mouth that is destined to speak with the Shechinah nurse from something which is not kosher?" That is what is written: With whom will He teach knowledge etc.? — To whom will He teach knowledge and to whom will He make the message understandable? To those who are weaned from the milk, and to those removed from the breasts.

And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Go" etc. Rabbi Elazar said: It teaches us that she went quickly like a young woman. Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachmani said: [She is called] the maid [almah] because she concealed [he'elimah] the facts.

And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this boy." Rabbi Chama ben Chanina said: She prophesied without knowing what she prophesied¹ — Hei'lichy — behold what is yours [shelichy].

And I will give you your wages. Rabbi Chama ben Chanina said: Not enough that the righteous have their loss restored to them but they also receive their reward in addition. (12a5 – 12b5)

¹ By saying to Yocheved, "Take what is truly yours."

INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

The Consumption of Non-Kosher Food Causing "Timtum"

And his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and call for you a wet-nurse from the Hebrew women?" The Gemora asks: Why was it necessary to summon a Hebrew woman? The Gemora answers: This teaches us that they handed Moshe to all the Egyptian women, but he would not nurse from them. He said: "Shall a mouth that is destined to speak with the Shechinah nurse from something which is not kosher?"

The question is asked: Why does the Gemora state this reason with respect to Moshe, when the halachah clearly rules that all Jews must refrain from having an idolater nurse their child, if a Jewish nurse is available (Rama Y"D 81:7)?

Maharatz Chayos suggests that this halachah applied only after the Giving of the Torah, for then many of the foods consumed by non-Jewish women are forbidden to Jews. Since this reason was not applicable to Moshe in Egypt, it was necessary to provide a different explanation for his refusal to be nursed by an Egyptian woman.

Shulchan Aruch rules that a Jewish baby is permitted to have a non-Jewish wet nurse; however it is not preferable because the non-kosher food will harm the baby spiritually. The Rama adds that a Jewish woman who must eat non-kosher food for health reasons should not nurse her baby because the non-kosher food will be detrimental for the child.

The Gr"a cites our Gemora that Moshe refused to nurse from an Egyptian woman because he was destined for prophecy, so it would be improper for him to consume non-kosher food. It would seem that the non-kosher food

would have affected his soul, and disqualify him to be the Prophet that he became.

Reb Micha Berger gleans from here that non-kosher food is intrinsically harmful for a person's soul even if it is permissible to eat. He cites a Ran in his Drashos (11) that states this explicitly. In his discussion as to why halachah is decided by the Chachamim and not by the Prophets, he asks the following question: If a sage errs and permits a forbidden food, it is like a doctor who makes a mistake and gives a patient poison instead of medicine. In both cases, the person is harmed. Accordingly, wouldn't it be preferable for the Prophets to decide halachic matters, and then, there would be no mistakes?

He answers that prophecy is not always available. He then adds that even though eating non-kosher food is harmful, the mitzvah of listening to our sages may offset the harmful effects. It is however evident from the Ran that the consumption of non-kosher food is objectively poison, and detrimental to one's soul even if it is done permissibly.

The Abarbanel (Devarim 17:4) disagrees with the Ran. He maintains that it is impossible for harm to befall a person if he is following the Chachamim. If the food is permitted, it cannot be harmful. Reb Micha explains that it would seem from the Abarbanel that he maintains that the consumption of non-kosher food is not intrinsically harmful; rather, it is harmful only because it is prohibited. If for some reason, there is no prohibition, then it is not harmful.

Reb Moshe (O" C 2:88) quotes the Chasam Sofer where he was discussing a handicapped girl in the following situation: If she would remain at home, she would not develop properly and remain ignorant her entire life. However, if the parents would send her to a special school, they claimed that she would then reach the potential of a teenager. However, the school was in a non-

Jewish area, and there was no possibility of providing kosher food. The Chasam Sofer ruled that it is permitted to send her there, but he recommended against sending her, for the following reason: If they send her to that school, she will become intelligent enough to be obligated in mitzvos. The non-kosher food that she will consume will affect her heart, and she will probably violate Torah and mitzvos. It is therefore preferable for her to remain in her present situation. (He concludes: Her present situation is more preferable than being "b'timtum" before the Holy One, Blessed is He for one moment.)

DAILY MASHAL

Miracle of Yocheved

The Gemora states that Yocheved bore Moshe when she was 130 years old, as Hashem performed a miracle and restored her to a youthful state.

The Ibn Ezra (Braishis 46:23) questions why the Torah does not even mention this miracle, when it goes to such length to describe and expand upon the miracle Hashem did to allow Sarah to conceive at the age of 90.

The Magid Midubno says that at the time of Sarah, it was rare for a woman to miraculously conceive a child under such conditions, and thus the miracle was a rarity and deserving of elaborate mention. However, at the time of Moshe's birth, Chazal tell us that the women gave birth to six children at a time. At a time when miraculous childbirth was so common, the miracle of Yocheved conceiving at the age of 130 was not as outstanding, and therefore is not mentioned explicitly.