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Yoma Daf 38

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**Tzvi Gershon Ben Yoel (Harvey Felsen) o”h**

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

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: What miracles happened to Nikanor’s doors? It was reported that when he had gone to bring doors from Alexandria in Egypt, on his return, a gale arose in the sea to drown him. The sailors took one of his doors and cast it into the sea, and yet the sea would not stop its rage. When they prepared to cast the other into the sea, he rose and hugged it, saying, “Cast me in with it!” Immediately, the sea stopped its raging. He was deeply pained about the other door. As he arrived at the harbor of Acco (in Eretz Yisroel), it poked through and came up from under the sides of the boat. Others say: A creature of the sea swallowed it and spat it out on the dry land. Regarding this, Solomon said: *The beams of our houses are cedars, and our doors are [berosim] cypresses. Do not read ‘berosim,’ but ‘briyas yam’ (i.e., creature of the sea).* Therefore all the gates in the Sanctuary were changed for golden ones with the exception of the Nikanor gates, because of the miracles that occurred with them. But some say: It was because the copper of which they were made had a brilliant shine. Rabbi Eliezer ben Yaakov said: It was refined copper, which shone like gold.

And these were mentioned to their shame: They of the house of Garmu would not teach anything about the preparation of the lechem hapanim (the showbread); they of the house of Avtinas would not teach anything about the preparation of the incense; Hugros, of the tribe of Levi, knew a special rhythm in song, but would not teach it; Ben Kamtzar would not

teach anyone his art of writing. Concerning the former, it is said: *the mention of the righteous shall be for a blessing;* concerning the others, it is said: *but the name of the wicked shall rot.*

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: The house of Garmu was expert in preparing the showbread, but would not teach it. The Sages sent for specialists from Alexandria of Egypt, who knew how to bake as well as they, but they did not know how to remove (the loaves) down (from the oven) as well as the former, for they were heating the oven outside of it and baked from outside, whereas the latter heated the oven from inside and baked from inside (with the result) that the bread of the latter would spoil, whereas the bread of the former did not spoil. When the Sages heard that, they quoted: *Everyone that is called by My name, I have created for My honor.* They said: Let the house of Garmu return to their position. The Sages sent for them, but they would not come. Then they doubled their wages and they came. Until now they used to get twelve maneh for the day, from that day and on, they received twenty-four. Rabbi Yehudah said: Until then they received twenty-four maneh per day, from that day and on, they received forty-eight. The Sages said to them: What reason did you have for refusing to teach your art? They said to them: In our father’s house they knew that this Temple will be destroyed, and perhaps an unworthy man would learn it and then proceed to serve idols with it.

For the following matter, their memory was praised: Never was refined bread to be found in their children’s hand, lest people say, “They are being fed from the production of the showbread.” They endeavored to fulfill the commandment: You shall be innocent before Hashem and before Israel.

The *Mishna* had stated: They of the house of Avtinas would not teach anything about the preparation of the incense.

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: The house of Avtinas were expert in preparing the incense, but would not teach their art. The

Sages sent for specialists from Alexandria in Egypt, who knew how to compound incense as well as they, but did not know how to make the smoke ascend as well as they. The smoke of the former rose as straight as a stick, whereas the smoke of the latter was scattered in every direction. When the Sages heard that, they quoted: *Everyone that is called by My name, I have created for My honor.* They said: Let the house of Avtinas return to their position. The Sages sent for them, but they would not come. Then they doubled their wages and they came. Until now they used to get twelve maneh for the day, from that day and on, they received twenty-four. Rabbi Yehudah said: Until then they received twenty-four maneh per day, from that day and on, they received forty-eight. The Sages said to them: What reason did you have for refusing to teach your art? They said to them: In our father's house they knew that this Temple will be destroyed, and perhaps an unworthy man would learn it and then proceed to serve idols with it.

For the following matter, their memory was praised: Never did a bride of their house go out perfumed, and when they married a woman from elsewhere, they expressly forbade her to do so, lest people say, "They are perfuming themselves from the production of the incense." They endeavored to fulfill the commandment: You shall be innocent before Hashem and before Israel.

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: Rabbi Yishmael said: Once I was walking on the way and I came upon one of their descendants, and I said to him: Your forefathers sought to increase their honor and to reduce the honor of the Omnipresent; now the honor of the Omnipresent is at its place, and He has reduced their honor.

Rabbi Akiva said: Rabbi Yishmael ben Loga related to me: One day I and one of their descendants went to the field to gather herbs and I saw him crying and laughing. I said to him: Why did you cry? He answered: I recalled the glory of my forefathers. And why did you laugh? He replied: It is because the Holy One, Blessed be He, will restore it to us. I asked him: And what caused you to remember? He said: There is the

herb that causes the smoke to raise straight up before me. I said: Show it to me! He said to me: We are bound by an oath not to show it to any person.

Rabbi Yochanan ben Nuri said: Once I came upon an old man, who had a scroll (containing the names) of spices in his hand. I asked him: Where are you from? He said: I come from the house of Avtinas. I asked him: What do you have in your hand? He replied: It is a scroll of spices. I said: Show it to me! He said: As long as members of my father's house was alive they would not hand it over to anyone, but now, here it is, but be very careful about it. When I came and told this to Rabbi Akiva, he said: From here and on, it is forbidden to speak of them in dispraise.

Referring to this, Ben Azzai said: By your name you will be called, and to your place you will be restored, and from what belongs to you, you will be given. No man can touch what is prepared for his fellow, and one kingdom does not interfere with the other - even to the extent of one hairsbreadth.

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: When Hurgos tuned his voice with sweetness, he would put his thumb into his mouth and place his finger between the two parts of his mustache, so that his brethren, the Kohanim, staggered backward all at once.

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: Ben Kamtzar would not teach anything about (his art of) writing. It was said about him that he would take four pens between his fingers, and if there was a word of four letters, he would write it at one time. They said to him: What reason do you have for refusing to teach it? All of them found an answer for their matter (attitude). Ben Kamtzar could not find one. Concerning the first ones, it is said: *the mention of the righteous shall be for a blessing*; concerning Ben Kamtzar and the others, it is said: *but the name of the wicked shall rot.*

What is the meaning of: *But the name of the wicked shall rot*? Rabbi Elozar said: Rust enters their names, which means that we do not use their names.

Ravina asks from a *braisa*: The story of Doeg ben Yosef whom his father left him with his mother when he was a young child: Every day his mother would measure him by handbreadths, and would give his weight in gold to the Temple. And when the enemy prevailed, she slaughtered him and ate him, and concerning her Yirmiyah lamented: *Shall the women eat their offspring, their babes that are handled in the hands?* The Divine Spirit replied: *Shall the Kohen and the prophet be slain in the Sanctuary of Hashem?* [We see a boy named Doeg, even though there was a wicked person with that name!?]

The *Gemora* answers: See what happened to him!

Rabbi Elozar said: The righteous man is remembered by his own (good deeds); the wicked (also) by those of his fellow. Proof that the righteous is remembered by his own (good deeds), for it is written: *the mention of the righteous shall be for a blessing*. The wicked is remembered also by his fellow's wickedness, for it is written: *but the name of the wicked (in plural) shall rot*.

Ravina said to one of the Rabbis who expounded Aggada before him: From where is this statement, which the Rabbis mention: The mention of the righteous shall be for a blessing? He replied: It is a Scriptural verse: *the mention of the righteous shall be for a blessing*. Ravina persisted: From where, in the Torah, may that teaching be derived? He answered: It is from that which is written: *And God said: Shall I hide from Avraham that which I am doing?* And it is (there) also written (after his name was mentioned): *And Avraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation*.

Ravina asked: From where is this statement, which the Rabbis mention: *But the name of the wicked shall rot?* He replied: It is a Scriptural verse: *But the name of the wicked shall rot*. Ravina persisted: From where, in the Torah, may that teaching be derived? He answered: It is from that which is written: *And he pitched his tent as far as Sodom*, and it is written: *Now the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners against Hashem, exceedingly*.

Rabbi Elozar said: A righteous man once lived between two wicked men and did not learn from their deeds; a wicked man lived between two righteous men and did not learn from their ways.

The *Gemora* explains: The righteous who lived between two wicked men and did not learn from their wicked ways was Ovadiah. The wicked man who lived between two righteous men and did not learn from their ways was Esav.

And Rabbi Elozar also said: From the blessing of the righteous you can infer the curse for the wicked, and from the curse of the wicked you may infer the blessing for the righteous.

The *Gemora* explains: From the blessing of the righteous you can infer the curse for the wicked, as it is written: *For I have known him* (Avraham) ... *that he may command*, and after that it is written: *And Hashem said: The cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great*. From the curse of the wicked you can infer the blessing for the righteous, for it is written: *Now the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners against Hashem, exceedingly*. *And Hashem said to Avram, after Lot was separated from him . . .* (all the land, which you see, to you I will give).

Rabbi Elozar further said: Even for the sake of a single righteous man, this world would have been created, for it is written: *And God saw the light that it was good*, and 'good' means none other than the righteous, as it is said: *Say of the righteous that he is the good one*.

Rabbi Elozar said: Whoever forgets (through neglect) any part of his study, causes his children to go into exile, as it is said: *Seeing that you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children*.

Rabbi Avahu said: Such a one is demoted from his greatness, as it is said: *Because you have rejected knowledge, I will also reject you - that you shall not be able to serve Me*.

Rabbi Chiya bar Abba said in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: A righteous person does not leave this world until a righteous person like him is created. This is as it says: *And the sun rises and the sun sets.*

Before the sun of Eli was extinguished, the sun of Shmuel the Ramasi rose.

Rabbi Chiya bar Abba said in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: The Holy One, Blessed be He, saw that the righteous are but few, therefore He planted them throughout all generations, as it is said: *For the pillars of the earth are to God, and He has set the world upon them.*

Rabbi Chiya bar Abba said in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: Even for the sake of a single righteous man, the world will endure, as it is said: *But the righteous one is the foundation of the world.*

Rabbi Chiya himself infers this from here: *He will preserve (the world) because of His devout ones.* And since it is written: 'his devout one,' it connotes even one.

Rabbi Chiya bar Abba said in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: When the majority of a man's years have passed without sin, he will no longer sin, as it is said: *He will guard the conclusions of His devout ones.*

In the School of Rabbi Shila it was taught that if the opportunity for sin has come to a man the first and the second time and he resisted, he will never sin, as it is said: *He will guard the conclusions of His devout ones.*

Rish Lakish said: What does the verse mean when it says, *If one wants to join scoffers He will give him a path to do so, and if he wants to join the humble He will give him favor?* This indicates that if one wants to be impure, Hashem opens a way for him to do that. If he wants to become pure, Hashem helps him.

In the school of Rabbi Yishmael it was taught: It is as when a man sells naphtha and balsam. If a buyer comes to measure

naphtha, he (the shopkeeper) says to him: Measure it out for yourself (for it has a foul odor); but to one who would measure out balsam he says: Wait, until I measure together with you, so that both I and you, may become perfumed.

#### INSIGHT TO THE DAF

##### ***Four Pens in One Hand***

The Gemora states that Ben Kamtzar had a unique talent that he was able to write four letters with one hand at the same time and he did not teach this talent to anyone else. The Gemora says that was considered a shame and due to this, he was called a 'rasha.'

What were the Chachamim concerned about? Rashi comments that this was referring to the name of Hashem which has four letters. The Tosfos Yom Tov explains that there is an advantage for the name of Hashem to be written at one time, so that His name should not be missing for a moment.

The Minchas Chinuch has a novel approach and says that if one writes the first two letters of the name of Hashem which is the yud and the hey, that itself is one of the names of Hashem and by subsequently writing the third letter, the vav, it constitutes erasing Hashem's name. Ben Kamtzar was able to avoid with his special skill.

The Emek Brachah asks that if the name of Hashem is written without proper intent, there is no prohibition to erase it, so why should there be an issur here when the scribe did not intend to write the 'two letter' name of Hashem, but rather His 'four letter' name?

##### ***Ingredients of the Ketores***

The Gemora relates that there was a family named Avtinas that knew how to make the ketores but they didn't want to teach anyone else. Experts were brought in without success. Avtinas knew how to make it that the smoke would rise in a

column and the experts from Mitzrayim could not duplicate this.

Rashi says they didn't know which herb, grass was the correct one.

The Beis Yosef (133) learns from here that even if this particular ingredient is missing, the ketores is still good.

The Mishna L'melech and others are bewildered that the Beis Yosef is against a later Gemora that states explicitly that if this ingredient is missing, the one who produced it is liable to death!?

Maharitz Chiyus answers that there will not be a liability if the ingredient is not available.

Tosfos Yeshonim explains our Gemora by saying that they had an ingredient which was called 'ma'aleh ashan,' and therefore it was valid; however it was not the one that could produce the smoke in the correct way.

Rav Elozar Landau notes that they had the correct one, but they couldn't ascertain which was the best quality for the correct result.

### **Overboard!?**

The Gemora tells us that on Nikanor's way back from Mitzrayim with the doors, there was a terrible storm. They were forced to throw one of them overboard. The storm did not subside and they subsequently wanted to throw the second one off, as well. Nikanor proclaimed that if so, throw me overboard with it. With that proclamation, the storm subsided.

What allowed him to make such a statement? (See Asifas Zkeinim)

### ***Sheim Reshai'im Yirkav***

First of all, why is Ben Kamtzar called a rasha for not revealing his special method of writing? Furthermore, according to the *Gemora*, it means that his name is supposed to fall into disuse. Do we know that no one else was called Ben Kamtzar? Also, from this *Gemora* it would seem to be very difficult to determine who is a rasha.

For the record, Maharsha in Sanhedrin (Chelek) says that Korach was korchia (bald) ba'olam, because no one after him was named Korach. (There's a Medrash Rabbah that states that no one ever calls their children Sancheirev, Pharaoh, etc, and that implies that we only don't use names of wicked goyim.)

Chasam Sofer asks the other way: how could Shevet Levi call their prize son Korach, if one of the alufim of Esav was called Korach?

From Tosfos here s.v. delo it seems that if there's another Korach who was not a rasha, it would be fine. I don't remember if the Chasam Sofer says this answer or someone told me this.

### ***Back to Egypt?***

Nikanor went to get the doors for the azarah from Alexandria, Egypt.

The Ritva asks that there is a prohibition in the Torah to go back to Mitzrayim!? He answers that this applies only if his intent is to dwell there, but for business it will be permitted.

He proceeds to ask on the Rambam and others who lived in Mitzrayim on a permanent basis?

The Rishonim give different answers on this question. Some say that the cities were destroyed and rebuilt and therefore the prohibition does not apply.

The S'mag answers that Sancheiriv mixed up the world and the people living there are not Egyptians, and the reason behind the prohibition is that we should not emulate the Egyptians' actions.

Reb Eliexer Mi'Mitz answers that the prohibition is only if one goes back to Mitzrayim in the same way Bnei Yisroel left there. (That could explain how the passuk in the Tochachah says that Hashem will take us back there on ships, for that is not the way we left.)

The Ritva concludes that the prohibition is only when Klal Yisroel are all living in Eretz Yisroel, however now that there is a decree of exile, all lands are equal.

The Gevoros Ari seems to hold that it is forbidden even nowadays.

The Chidah says that there is a source to what the Ritva says from the Arizal.

It is brought down in some seforim that the Rambam used to sign his name "I am Moshe the son of Maimon who is transgressing three aveiros every day." Obviously, he held that under the conditions, he was compelled to stay.

#### **DAILY MASHAL**

#### ***A Righteous Person will be Born on that Day***

A master taught: When Rabbi Akiva died, Rebbe was born. When Rebbe died, Rav Yehudah was born. When Rav Yehudah died, Rava was born. When Rava died, Rav Ashi was born. This teaches you that a righteous person does not leave this world until a righteous person like him is created. This is as it says: *And the sun rises and the sun sets*. Before the sun of Eli was extinguished, the sun of Shmuel the Ramasi rose.

The commentators ask: Why is it necessary to be anguished when a righteous person departs from this world? Why, behold, another righteous person was born and will be capable of taking his place?

The Chidah offers several answers:

- 1) It is not definite that the new righteous person will find himself in the same location as the previous one; it is therefore incumbent on the residents of the city to mourn their loss.
- 2) Although there will be an eventual replacement for the deceased *tzaddik*, but it will take some time until he reaches the level of his predecessor. It is for this period of time, when there will be a void of a righteous person, that people are required to mourn for.

#### ***He Who Comes to Be Pure Is Helped***

Our *Gemora* says: "He who comes to be pure is helped; he who comes to be impure has the way open for him." This is hinted in the Torah: "And you will sanctify yourselves and you will be holy" - it is promised that he who comes to be pure is helped. However, concerning impurity the Torah says: "And you will become impure through them" but it doesn't say "and you will be impure". It is unsure as a person is not helped to be impure but the way is merely open for him and he may repent (*Kli Yekar*).