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Sotah Daf 36

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

Miracles

The *Baraisa* continues: Come and see how many miracles were performed on that day. Israel crossed the Jordan (*which was a miracle, since the water split for them*) and they arrived at Mount Gerizim and Mount Eival, a distance of more than sixty *mil*. No creature was able to stand against them and whoever tried, lost control of their bowels; as it is said: *I will send My terror before you, and will baffle all the people to whom you shall come, etc.,* and it states: *May terror and dread befall upon them.*

Until Your people pass over, Hashem. This alludes to the first entering of Israel into *Eretz Yisroel* in the days of Yehoshua and *Until the people which You have acquired pass over* alludes to the second entering (*in the days of Ezra*). Conclude from this that the Jewish people were worthy that a miracle should be performed on their behalf during the second entering just as in the first entering, but their sins caused them to lose it.

The *Baraisa* continues: And afterwards, they brought the stones, built an altar, plastered it with plaster, and wrote on them all the words of the Torah in seventy languages; as it is said: *well clarified*. Then they sacrificed *olah* and *shelamim* offerings, ate, drank and rejoiced, pronounced the blessings and the curses, took apart the stones, and came and lodged in Gilgal; as it is said: *Carry them across with you and set them down in the lodging place*. You might think that they were to bring them to every lodging place; therefore, it states: *where you shall lodge this night*. And then it is written: And those twelve stones,

which they took [out of Jordan, did Yehoshua set up in Gilgal] (36a)

Tzirah

The *Gemora* cites a *Baraisa*: The *tzirah* (a type of flying insect similar to a hornet) did not pass over the Jordan with them.

The *Gemora* asks: But behold it is written: *And I will send the tzirah before you? [Hashem promised them that the tzirah will assist them when they fight the Canaanites!]*

Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish said: It stood by the bank of the Jordan and shot venom into the Canaanites, which blinded their eyes above and castrated them below; as it is said: *And I destroyed the Amorite before them, whose height was like the height of the cedars, and who were as strong as the oaks, and I destroyed his fruit from above and his roots from below.*

Rav Pappa said: There were two *tzirahs*, one in the period of Moshe and the other in the period of Yehoshua. Moshe’s *tzirah* did not pass over the Jordan, but Yehoshua’s did. (36a)

The Division of the Tribes

The *Mishnah* had stated: Six tribes ascended to the top of Mount Gerizim and six tribes ascended to the top of Mount Eival, and the *Kohanim*, the Levites and the Ark stood below, in between. The *Kohanim* surrounded the Ark, the Levites surrounded the *Kohanim*, and all the Jewish people were on this side and on that, as it is said:

And all Israel, and their elders and officers, stood on this side and on that side of the Ark etc. [The verse continues: half of them on the slope of Mount Gerizim and the half of them on the slope of Mount Eival.]

The *Gemora* asks: What is the meaning of the verse: *and the half of them?*

Rav Kahana answers: Just as the tribes were divided here (*by the mountains*), so too, they were divided on the stones of the *ephod* (*the apron garment worn by the Kohen Gadol; there was a precious stone placed on each shoulder; six names were engraved on one stone and six on the other*).

The *Gemora* asks from a *Baraisa*: The *Kohen Gadol* had two precious stones on his shoulders: one on this side and one on the other side. The names of the twelve tribes were inscribed upon them: six on one stone and six on the other, as it is said: *Six of their names on one stone, (and the names of the six remaining ones on the other stone, according to their order of birth)*. The second six names were inscribed according to their birth (*Gad, Asher, Yissochar, Zevulun, Yosef and Binyamin*), but the first six names were not inscribed (*exactly*) according to their birth, because the name of Yehudah was inscribed first (*Yehudah, Reuven, Shimon, Levi, Dan and Naftali*). There were fifty letters (*altogether from their names*), twenty-five on one stone and twenty-five on the other stone. Rabbi Chanina ben Gamliel says: They were not assigned upon the stones of the *ephod* as they were assigned in Bamidbar (*Reuven, Shimon, Yehudah, Yissochar, Zevulun, Yosef, Binyamin, Dan, Asher, Gad and Naftali*) but rather, as they were assigned in Shmos (*Reuven, Shimon, Levi and Yehudah; Yissochar, Zevulun and Binyamin; Dan and Naftali; Gad and Asher*). How was this done? The sons of Leah were inscribed in order of their birth on one stone (*Reuven, Shimon, Levi, Yehudah, Yissochar and Zevulun*), and the sons of Rachel, one on top (*Binyamin*) and the other at the bottom (*Yosef*), with the sons of the

maidservants (*Dan, Naftali, Gad and Asher*) in the middle. Now, what does it mean, "*according to their birth*"? It means that the inscription was according to the names which their father called them, and not according to the names which Moshe called them. It was written Reuven and not Reuveini, Shimon and not Shim'oni, Dan and not ha'Dani, Gad and not ha'Gadi. This is a refutation of Rav Kahana (*for according to both opinions, the manner in which the names were divided on the ephod were not the same as the way they were divided by the mountains*)! The *Gemora* concludes that it is indeed a refutation.

The *Gemora* asks: So, what is the meaning of the verse: *and the half of them?*

The *Gemora* cites a *Baraisa* (*to answer*): The half that stood on the slope of Mount Gerizim was larger than the half that stood on the slope of Mount Eival, because the tribe of Levi was below with the Ark.

The *Gemora* asks: On the contrary! For the reason that Levi was below, the amount of people on the slope of Mount Gerizim must have been smaller (*since Levi was one of the tribes listed as standing on Mount Gerizim*)?

The *Gemora* explains the answer: Even though Levi was below, the people standing by Mount Gerizim were more numerous because the descendants of Yosef (*who were very populous*) were with them; as it says: And the descendants of Yosef spoke to Yehoshua, saying, "Why have you given me but one lot and one portion for an inheritance, seeing that I am a huge nation?" And Yehoshua said to them, "If you are such a huge nation, go to the forest." He said to them, "Go and hide yourselves in the forests that the evil eye may not have power over you." They replied to him, "The evil eye has no power over the seed of Yosef," for it is written: Yosef is a charming son, a charming son to the eye." And Rabbi Avahu said: Do not read these words *alei ayin*, but rather, *olei ayin*, rising above the eye. Rabbi Yosi bar Chanina said: It is

derived from the following verse: *And let them (the children of Yosef) grow into a multitude like fish in the land.* Just as water covers the fish in the sea, so that the eye has no power over them, so too, the eye has no power over the seed of Yosef. (36a – 36b)

Fifty Letters

The *Gemora* asks on the *Baraisa* mentioned above: There are not fifty letters (*from the twelve tribes*) on the *ephod*; there are only forty-nine!?

Rabbi Yitzchak answered: A letter (*hey*) was added to the name of Yosef; as it says: *He appointed it as a testimony for Yehosef when he went out over the land of Egypt.*

Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak asked: But the inscription was according to the names which their father called them by birth!?

Rather, the *Gemora* answers: The name Binyamin was written with a “*yud*” between the “*mem*” and the “*nun*.”

Rav Chana bar Bizna said in the name of Rabbi Shimon Chasida: Yosef who sanctified Hashem’s name privately (*by controlling his desires when he was secluded with an ervah*), had a letter of Hashem’s name added onto his name. Yehudah, who sanctified Hashem’s name in public merited that his name should be based on the entire name of the Holy One, Blessed be He. (36b)

Yosef and Potiphar’s Wife

The *Gemora* asks: What was the incident with Yosef? It is written: *There was one such day that he went into the house to do his work.* Rabbi Yochanan said: This teaches us that both Yosef and Potiphar’s wife had the intention of sinning.

He went into the house to do his work. Rav and Shmuel disagree in their interpretation. One of them said that it literally means that he entered the house in order to do

his work; but the other one said that he entered to satisfy his desires with her.

And there were no men of the house in the house. Is it possible that no one was around in a huge house like that of the wicked Potiphar? It was taught in the *Beis Medrash* of Rabbi Yishmael: That day was their idolatrous feast-day, and they had all gone to their pagan temple; but she had pretended to be sick and therefore stayed home. She thought, “I shall not have an opportunity like today for Yosef to be intimate with me.”

And she caught him by his garment, saying etc. At that moment, the image of his father came and appeared to him through the window and said: “Yosef, in the future, your brothers will have their names inscribed upon the stones of the *ephod*, and yours will be among theirs; is it your wish to have your name erased from among theirs and be called an associate of harlots?” As it is written: He that keeps company with harlots wastes his substance.

Immediately, his bow was firmly emplaced. Rabbi Yochanan said in the name of Rabbi Meir: This means that his “*bow*” (*his male organ*) subsided.

And the arms of his hands were covered with gold. This means that he stuck his hands in the ground (*he leaned upon his fingers in order to cause himself discomfort; this way, he could overcome his desire*) and his semen came out from between his fingernails.

From the hands of the mighty power of Yaakov. Who caused Yosef’s name to be engraved upon the stones of the *ephod*? It was Yaakov.

From there, a shepherd, the stone of Israel. Yosef merited to be made a shepherd of the Jews, as it is said: O Shepherd of Israel hearken, You who leads them like the flock of Yosef.

The *Gemora* cites a *Baraisa*: Yosef was worthy that twelve tribes should come out from him just as they came out from his father Yaakov, as it is said: These are the generations of Yaakov, Yosef. It was due to the fact that his semen came out from between his fingernails (*he therefore lost ten out of the twelve*). Nevertheless, they came out from his brother Binyamin, and they were all given names alluding to Yosef, as it says: *And the sons of Binyamin were Bela, Becher, Ashbel* etc. He was called Bela because Yosef was swallowed up among the nations. One was called Becher because Yosef was the firstborn from his mother. Another was called Ashbel because God sent Yosef into captivity. One was called Gera because Yosef dwelt in lodgings (*in a foreign land*). Another was called Naaman because Yosef was especially pleasant. Two of them were called Eichi and Rosh, because Yosef was his (*Binyamin's*) brother and chief. They were called Muppim and Chuppim, because he (*Yosef*) did not see my (*Binyamin's*) *chupah* and I did not see his. One was called Ard because Yosef descended among all the other nations. Others explain that he was called Ard because Yosef's face was like a rose.

Rabbi Chiya bar Abba said in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: At the moment when Pharaoh said to Yosef, *And without you no man may lift up his hand* etc., Pharaoh's astrologers asked, "Will you appoint a ruler over us a slave whom his master bought for only twenty pieces of silver?" He replied to them, "I recognize in him royal characteristics." They said to him, "In that case, he must become acquainted with the seventy languages." Gavriel came and taught Yosef the seventy languages, but he could not learn them. Gavriel added a letter from the Name of the Holy One, blessed be He to Yosef's name, and then he learned the languages. The next day, in whatever language Pharaoh spoke with him he replied to him. However, when Yosef spoke to him in the Holy Tongue, he did not understand what he said. Pharaoh asked him to teach it to him, but he could not learn it. Pharaoh said to him, "Swear to me that you will not reveal this." Yosef

swore to him. When Yosef later said to him, "*My father made me swear, saying* etc. (*that Yosef will ensure that Yaakov will be buried in the Land of Canaan*), Pharaoh told him, "Go and ask to be released from your oath." Yosef replied to him, "I will also ask to be released from my oath concerning you." Therefore, although it was displeasing to him, Pharaoh said to him, "*Go up and bury your father as he compelled you to swear.*" (36b)

INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

Descendants of Yosef

The *Gemora* explains: Even though Levi was below, the people standing by Mount Gerizim were more numerous because the descendants of Yosef (*who were very populous*) were with them; as it says: And the descendants of Yosef spoke to Yehoshua, saying, "Why have you given me but one lot and one portion for an inheritance, seeing that I am a huge nation?"

Rashi in Yehoshua notes that the descendants of Yosef were from the Tribe of Menasheh. The Radak explains that the descendants of Efraim did not have any legitimate complaint, for they had more people in their tribe when they left Egypt than now, when they entered *Eretz Yisroel*. Menasheh, on the other hand, had a valid complaint, for they had twenty thousand and five hundred more people now than when they left Egypt. The portions of land were allocated according to the amount of people each tribe had when they left Egypt, and since they were more numerous when they entered *Eretz Yisroel* than when they left Egypt, each one of them would be receiving a lesser portion.

Minchas Yaakov adds that this explanation can be inferred from the verse which states that the descendants of Yosef spoke to Yehoshua. Reb Yaakov Kaminetzky in *Emes l'Yaakov* asks: Why by the spies, does the Torah state, *to the Tribe of Yosef, to the tribe of Menasheh*, but by Efraim, the Torah only writes, *to the Tribe of Efraim*? Why isn't

Yosef's name mentioned? He answers that it is written [Breishis 48: 5 – 6]: *And now, as for your two sons, who were born to you in the land of Egypt, until I came to you, to the land of Egypt they are mine. Efraim and Menasheh shall be mine like Reuven and Shimon. But your children, if you beget any after them, shall be yours; by their brothers' names, they shall be called in their inheritance.* The children born to Yosef afterwards did not merit being included in the Tribe of Yosef. Yosef had the choice of delivering them to any tribe that he wished. Since Menasheh was the firstborn, he combined all of his other children with them. It emerges that the descendants of Yosef, who were not offspring of Menasheh and Efraim, were included in the Tribe of Menasheh. It is for this reason that the Torah writes, *to the Tribe of Yosef, to the tribe of Menasheh.*

Our verse, which states that *"the descendants of Yosef spoke to Yehoshua"* is referring to the Tribe of Menasheh, which consisted of Menasheh's offspring, plus the offspring of Yosef.

DAILY MASHAL

It is Written in the Stars

The Torah tells us that when Joseph was being enticed by Potiphar's wife, "And he came to the house to do his work." (Genesis 9:11). There is a dispute in the Gemara how to understand the meaning of this verse. One interpretation is that he was about to succumb to the temptation when the form of his father appeared to him through the window and cautioned him that in the future, there would be a Kohen Gadol who would wear an ephod with the names of the 12 Tribes engraved upon the precious stones set in the Ephod, and if he were to commit this sin, his name would not be included.

The Gaon Yaakov asks the following 3 questions. First, how can we entertain the thought that the righteous

Joseph was considering committing this vile sin? Second, why did the vision of his father not rebuke him for planning to commit an act that was a rebellion against Hashem? Third, what was significant about the Ephod that it was effective in changing Joseph's mind?

He answers that both Potiphar's wife and Joseph had righteous intentions, as they knew through the power of astrology that they were destined to have offspring together. It is with this knowledge that she convinced Joseph to be with her, but not G-d forbid that he was succumbing to a base urge. The mistake she was making is that Joseph was destined to marry her daughter, not her. This is a common issue with astrologers that they see a partial truth but do not understand the full context of what they are seeing. The Urim V'tumin on the other hand, which was housed in the Choshen connected to the Ephod, would provide clear instructions with no room for mistakes. This was the message that the vision of Jacob was relaying; he was telling Joseph that if he lends credence to the wisdom of astrology then he would not be included in the names of the Tribes inscribed on the Ephod. This stressed the difference between the two forms of foreknowledge, and alerted Joseph that his reasoning was faulty, being based on incomplete knowledge.

There also seems to be an interesting stress that the vision appeared to Joseph through the window. The Sterelisker Rebbe explains this based on the Gemara in Berachos 31a that it is preferable to pray in a room that has windows. When Joseph saw that he was being tempted, his response was to immerse himself in payers to Hashem to help him overcome the test. It is due to these prayers that Joseph merited to see this vision that saved him from sinning.