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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

A similar thing befell Rabbi Yishmael the son of Rabbi Yosi. [One day] Eliyahu met him and said to him, “How long will you deliver the people of our God to execution!” — “What can I do,” he replied, “it is the royal decree.” Eliyahu said to him, “Your father fled to Assia, you should flee to Ludkia!” (83b3 – 84a1)

Sages' Appearances

The *Gemara* relates that Rabbi Yishmael the son of Rabbi Yosi and Rabbi Elazar the son of Rabbi Shimon had such large stomachs that if they would face their stomachs together, a pair of cattle could pass under them, without touching them. A noblewoman once challenged them that if they are so large, they would not be able to have relations with their wives, and therefore their children must be illegitimate. They answered that in fact their wives were even larger than them, but that did not preclude marital relations, either because it is written: For as a man is, so is their might (their organs were proportionately larger as well), or they said to her: Love compresses the flesh. - But why should they have answered her at all; is it not written: do not answer a fool according to his folly? - They needed to reply in order to remove any suspicion regarding their children.

[The *Gemara* then lists the large dimensions of the various Sages.] Rabbi Yochanan said: The waist of Rabbi Yishmael the son of Rabbi Yosi was as a bottle of nine kavs. Rav Pappa said: Rabbi Yochanan's waist was as a bottle containing five kavs; others say, three kavs. That of Rav Pappa himself was as [large as] the wicker baskets of Harpinia. (84a1)

Rabbi Yochanan said: It is only I that remained from the beautiful families of Yerushalayim. The *Gemara* says that if one wishes to see the beauty of Rabbi Yochanan, he should take a freshly minted silver cup, fill it up with red pomegranate seeds, line the rim of the cup with red roses, and place the cup at the edge of shade and sunlight. The luminance that emerges is akin to Rabbi Yochanan's beauty.

But that is not so; for did not a Master say: Rav Kahana's beauty is a reflection of Rabbi Avahu's; Rabbi Avahu's is a reflection of our forefather Jacob's; our forefather Jacob's was a reflection of Adam's; whereas Rabbi Yochanan is omitted! —Rabbi Yochanan is different, since he did not have a beard.

Rabbi Yochanan would sit at the entrance of the immersion baths. He said, “When the Jewish women will emerge from their mitzvah immersion, they will see me (and retain that image in their mind), so that they will conceive children who are beautiful as I and as learned of the Torah as I. the Rabbis said to him: Is master not concerned of an evil eye? Rabbi Yochanan explained: I am of the seed of Yosef, against whom an evil eye is powerless. For it is written: Yosef is a charming son, a charming son to the eye [alei ayin]. Whereon Rabbi Avahu observed: Do not pronounce the words: alei ayin, but, olei ayin - above the power of the eye. Rabbi Yosi son of Rabbi Chanina deduced it from the following: and let them multiply abundantly like fish within the land: just as fish in the seas are covered by water and the eye has no power



over them, so also are the seed of Yosef — the eye has no power over them. (84a1 – 84a2)

Rabbi Yochanan and Rish Lakish

One day, Rabbi Yochanan was bathing in the Jordan River. Rish Lakish, who was at this point a robber, saw him, and jumped into the Jordan after him. Rabbi Yochanan said to Rish Lakish that his strength was fitting for learning Torah, and Rish Lakish replied that Rabbi Yochanan's beauty was fitting for a woman. Rabbi Yochanan offered Rish Lakish marriage to his sister – who was more beautiful than him – if he will repent. Rish Lakish agreed, and immediately was unable to jump back to get his clothes, as Torah reduces one's physical strength. Rabbi Yochanan taught Rish Lakish Scripture and Mishnah, and made him into a prominent Torah scholar.

One day, they were debating in the study hall: The Mishnah states: A sword, knife, hunting-spear, military spear, hand-sickle and a harvesting sickle — at what stage [of their manufacture] can they become tamei? When their manufacture is finished. And when is their manufacture finished? — Rabbi Yochanan said they are complete when they are put in the furnace to be formed, while Rish Lakish said they are only complete when they are cooled off in water afterwards. Rabbi Yochanan said to Rish Lakish: A robber understands his trade. Rish Lakish retorted: And how have you benefited me: there [as a robber] I was called Rabbi, and here I am called Rabbi. Rabbi Yochanan replied: By bringing you under the wings of the Divine Presence.

Rabbi Yochanan was upset at Rish Lakish's statement, and Rish Lakish get deathly ill as a result. Rabbi Yochanan's sister (Rish Lakish's wife) came and wept before him: Forgive him for the sake of my son, she pleaded. He replied: Leave your orphans, I will sustain them. She said: For the sake of my widowhood then! He said to her: And let your widows trust in me. Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish died, and Rabbi Yochanan grieved after him considerably

(at having caused his death, and at losing his outstanding student and Torah study partner). The Sages sent Rabbi Elazar ben Pdas, who was very sharp in his learning, to learn with Rabbi Yochanan. Whenever Rabbi Yochanan would make a point in learning, Rabbi Elazar would provide a Baraisa as proof to it. Rabbi Yochanan said to him: you are supposed to be like bar Lakisha! With bar Lakisha, when I stated a law, he used to raise twenty-four objections, to which I gave twenty-four answers, which consequently led to a fuller comprehension of the law; while you say, "A Baraisa has been taught which supports you." Do I not know myself that what I said is right? Thus he went on rending his garments and weeping, "Where are you, bar Lakisha, where are you, bar Lakisha;" and he cried thus until his sanity wore away from him. Thereupon the Rabbis prayed for him, and he passed away. (84a2 – 84a3)

Rabbi Elazar b'Rabbi Shimon

The *Gemara* returns to discuss Rabbi Elazar the son of Rabbi Shimon. Even though he saw that his doubtful arrests were justified, he was distressed that he may have caused innocent people to be killed when enforcing the Roman law. He therefore accepted physical suffering as punishment. Every evening they spread sixty sheets for him, and every morning sixty basins of blood and discharge were removed from under him. In the mornings his wife prepared him sixty kinds of lifda (food made from figs) which he ate, and then recovered. Due to his frail physical condition, his wife did not allow him to learn Torah in the morning; for fear that the Sages would torment him (over their relatives that he had handed over to the government). Therefore, at night, he would (invite the physical suffering) say: "My brothers and friends, come (and afflict me)," but then (send them off) in the morning say: "go, because of the disruption of Torah."

One day, his wife heard him inviting the suffering, and she cried out, "You yourself bring them upon you; you have

[already] squandered the money of my father's house!" So she left him and returned to her father's house.

Once, a group of sixty sailors came to Rabbi Elazar, bearing gifts of sixty slaves carrying sixty moneybags. They prepared for him sixty kinds of lifda and he ate them. One day, Rabbi Elazar's wife said to her daughter: Go and find out what your father is doing today. She came. He said to her: Go and tell your mother: Ours (money) is greater than theirs. He quoted the following verse about himself: She (the Torah) is like merchant ships, that bring food from far places. Rabbi Elazar then ate and drank, regaining his strength, and returned to the *Beis Medrash*. Sixty specimens of women's blood were brought to him, and he ruled that all of them were not menstrual, and permitted the women to their husbands. The Sages were murmuring against Rabbi Elazar's ruling, saying: Is it possible that there was not [at least] one about which there was some doubt! In response, Rabbi Elazar said to them: If I am correct, each woman will conceive a boy, while if not, one of them will conceive a girl. All of the women conceived boys, and all were named Elazar after him.

It was taught in a Baraisa: Rebbe said: The evil government (that appointed Rabbi Elazar as a marshal) eliminated much procreation in the interim (since Rabbi Elazar was not available to view the specimens that women brought to the *Beis Medrash*). (84b1)

Rabbi Elazar's Death

When he was dying, he told his wife that he knew that the Sages were upset at him, since he had handed some of their relatives over to the government, and they will not give him a proper funeral and burial. Therefore, he told her that when he dies, she should put his body in the attic, and not be afraid of him.

Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachmeini said that Rabbi Yonasan's mother told me that Rabbi Elazar the son of Rabbi

Shimon's wife had related to her the following: His body was laid to rest in the attic for not less than eighteen years but not more than twenty-two years. When I would go up I would look at his hair, and when a single hair fell out, blood could be seen at the wound (just as in a live person). One day, I saw a worm exit his ear, and I was concerned that he may be decomposing. He appeared to me in a dream and said to me: Do not worry, since the worm was simply a punishment for one time that I heard a Torah scholar being disgraced, and I didn't protest sufficiently.

During this period, when two litigants would come to Rabbi Elazar's house, they would each present their arguments at the attic, and a voice from the attic would emanate and say: "So-and-so, you are liable, or, "so-and-so, you are not liable." (84b1 – 84b2)

Rabbi Elazar's Burial

One day, Rabbi Elazar's wife was arguing with a neighbor. In the course of the argument, the neighbor cursed her, saying, "You should not be buried, just like your husband." The Sages realized that they should bury Rabbi Elazar, since it was disrespectful for him that people knew that he was not buried. Another version says that Rabbi Shimon appeared to the Sages in a dream, and said to them: "I have a pigeon amongst you which you refuse to bring to me." When the Sages starting working on burying Rabbi Elazar, the town residents of Achbaria, near Rabbi Elazar's house, prevented them. They said: During all the years Rabbi Elazar son of Rabbi Shimon slept in his attic, no wild animal came to their town.

One Erev Yom Kippur, when the Achbaria people were busy in preparation for the fast, the Sages told the people of Biri to bury Rabbi Elazar in the cave where his father was buried. When they reached the cave, a snake blocked the entrance. They said to the snake: Snake, snake, open your mouth and allow the son to join his father. Whereupon, the snake allowed them in. (84b2)



Rabbi Elazar's Widow

Rebbe inquired whether Rabbi Elazar's widow would marry him. She sent back: Shall a utensil, in which holy food has been used, be used for secular purposes! There [sc. in Eretz Yisrael] the proverb runs: Where the master hung up his weapons, there the coarse shepherd hung up his knapsack. He sent back word: Granted that he was greater than me in Torah learning, was he [also] my superior in good deeds? She returned: That he was superior in Torah learning, I did not know it, but I do know [that he exceeded you] in [virtuous] practice, since he accepted physical suffering upon himself.

The *Gemara* tells the story that shows that Rabbi Elazar was superior to Rebbe in Torah learning. When Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel and Rabbi Yehoshua ben Karchah were sitting on benches in the *Beis Medrash*, Rabbi Elazar the son of Rabbi Shimon and Rebbe were on the floor (as students in front of their mentors), asking and answering (like Torah scholars). The teachers remarked: We drink their water [i.e., benefit from their learning], yet they sit upon the ground; let seats be placed for them! Benches were made for them and they were promoted. Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel (Rebbe's father) said to them: I have a pigeon amongst you, and you wish to destroy it! [He objected to Rebbe's conspicuous placement on the benches, due to fears of an evil eye.] They lowered Rebbe to the floor. Rabbi Yehoshua ben Karchah said: Shall he, who has a father, live, while he who has no father die, so they lowered Rabbi Elazar to the floor as well. Rabbi Elazar became disheartened and he said: You have made him equal to me! Until that point, whenever Rebbe would say something, Rabbi Elazar the son of Rabbi Shimon would bring proofs to his statement. From then on, whenever Rebbe would begin to say, "I have an objection to raise," Rabbi Elazar the son of Rabbi Shimon would preempt him, saying, "such-and-such is what he was going to ask and this is the answer; now have you encompassed us with loads of answers in which there is no substance." Rebbe was upset that Rabbi Elazar was

so further advanced in Torah study than him, and went and told his father. His father said to him: Do not be distressed, for he is a lion, and the son of a lion, whereas you are a lion, the son of a fox. This humility prompted Rebbe to say: There are three truly humble people – my father, the sons of Beseirah, and Yonasan, the son of King Shaul.

This story of Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel illustrates the humility of his father. The sons of Beseirah – for the master said: They placed him at the head and appointed him Nasi over them. Yonasan, the son of Shaul, for he said to David: And you shall be king over Israel, and I shall be second (in command). - But how does this prove it: perhaps Yonasan the son of Shaul [spoke thus] because he saw that the people were flocking to David? The sons of Beseirah too, because they saw that Hillel was their superior [in learning]? But Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel was certainly very humble. (84b2 – 85a1)

INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

Sages' Appearance

The *Gemara* discusses the large dimensions of a number of the Sages. Tosfos understands the *Gemara* to be discussing the dimensions of these Sages' organs, and explains that the *Gemara* only does this to dispel any suspicion of illegitimacy of large people's children.

Rabbeinu Peretz says that *Gemara* is referring to how much each of the Sages would eat, while the Ritva says the *Gemara* is discussing the arm or thigh of these Sages, as an indication of their overall size.

Rish Lakish's Life Story

The *Gemara* tells us the story of how Rish Lakish came to learn Torah with Rabbi Yochanan, leaving behind a life of robbery.

Rabbeinu Tam (Tosfos 84a Ee) notes the phrase Rabbi Yochanan used in addressing Rish Lakish – if you return (*to learn Torah*), I will give you my sister in marriage. This phrase indicates that Rish Lakish was originally a Torah scholar before being a robber. Therefore, Rabbi Yochanan implored him to *return* to learning Torah. If Rish Lakish had never studied Torah before, and began his life as a robber, Rabbi Yochanan could not call his acceptance of Torah study a return. Rabbeinu Tam explains that when Rish Lakish told Rabbi Yochanan that “I was a leader before I met you,” he was referring to his earlier Torah scholarship days, and not to his robbery days. Indeed, true *teshuvah* (*repentance, but literally, returning*) is for someone who began free of sin, then sinned, and then *returns* to his pre-sin state. Although one may feel that to have fallen from a sin-free state makes one worse than one who always sinned, true *teshuvah* is only in such a situation.

The Ben Yehoyada explains that Rabbi Yochanan did not mean to insult Rish Lakish when he remarked that Rish Lakish has experience with cutting tools. Instead, he sincerely meant that Rish Lakish’s life experience gives him insight into the use of such utensils, and he is therefore correct in his ruling. Rish Lakish was still slighted at the mention of his earlier activities.

DAILY MASHAL

Rish Lakish and Rabbi Yochanan’s Deaths

Rav Chaim Shmulevitz asks why the Sages prayed for Rabbi Yochanan to pass away, instead of praying for him to get better. In addition, Rabbi Yochanan lost ten sons, and remained steadfast in his service of God, so why was he not able to handle the loss of Rish Lakish?

Rav Chaim answers that when he lost Rish Lakish, he lost the ability to delve deeply and insightfully into Torah, and that was more unbearable than the loss of his sons. If the Sages were to pray for Rabbi Yochanan to feel better, he

would once more fall into his mad state, due to the loss of Rish Lakish. Rav Chaim explains that Rabbi Yochanan felt he could not pray for Rish Lakish’s recovery, since his mocking reply to Rabbi Yochanan damaged the position of a Torah teacher, and there is no room for forgiveness in that area. See Sichos Musar (5731:19. 5732:33, 5733:13)