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Sanhedrin Daf 91

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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

Resurrection of the Dead

Caesar said to Rabban Gamliel: You Jews say that the dead will live again. How can this be? Do they not become dust, and can dust come alive?!

Caesar's daughter said to Rabban Gamliel: Rabbi, leave him be and I will answer him for you. She turned to her father and said: Suppose there were two potters in our city, one who makes pottery out of water and another one who makes pottery out of clay. Which one of them would you say is superior? Caesar replied to her: Certainly it is the one who makes pottery out of water. She then said to him: If Hashem creates human beings out of water, certainly then, He can create them out of clay or dust?!

In Rabbi Yishmael's academy, a Tanna taught a different version of what Caesar's daughter answered to her father: Resurrection can be derived through a kal vachomer from glassware: If glassware is worked into shape through the breath of flesh and blood, and it can be fixed if they are broken; then a person of flesh and blood, who is created by the breath of the Holy One, Blessed be He, how much more so should it be that he can be resurrected after he has disintegrated into dust!

A certain sectarian said to Rabbi Ami: You Jews say that the dead will live again. How can this be? Do they not become dust, and can dust come alive?!

Rabbi Ami answered him: I will give you a parable: Your question can be compared to a king of flesh and blood who said to his servants: "Go and build me a great palace in a place where there is no water or earth with which to make bricks."

They went and built it using other materials. Some time later, the palace collapsed. The king said to them: "Rebuild it in a place where there is earth and water." They said to him, "We cannot do so." The king became angry with them and said to them: "If you built the palace in a place where there is no water or earth with which to make bricks, now certainly with water and earth, you should be able to build it!" [If God can create man from mere semen, certainly He will be able to resuscitate their dust.] And if you cannot believe that living beings can be created from dust, go to the field and see the squirrel that one day is half flesh and half earth and the next day it has metamorphosed into a creeping thing and become entirely flesh! This proves that not only is such a thing possible, but it takes place before our very eyes! Perhaps you will say that it takes a long time for this to happen. Then go up to the mountain and see that one day there is only one chilazon there, and the next day, when the rain falls, the entire mountain will be full of chilzonos!

A certain sectarian said to Geviha ben Pesisa: Woe to you, O sinners, for you say that the dead will live. Now, if even the living will eventually die, does it make sense to say that the dead will live? Geviha said to him: Woe to you, O sinners, for you say that the dead will not live. Now, if even those that were non-existent (babies) come to life, is it not all the more possible that those who once lived will live again? The sectarian responded angrily: You dare call me a "sinner"? Why, if I arise, I will kick you so hard that I will straighten out your hump! Geviha said to him: If you do that, you will be called a skilled doctor and you will collect a large fee for your medical services! (90b – 91a)

Defending the Claim against Eretz Yisroel







The Rabbis taught in a braisa: On the twenty-fourth of Nissan, the challengers were removed from Judea and Jerusalem: For when the Africans came to contend with the Jews before Alexander the Macedonian, the Africans said to him: The Land of Canaan is rightfully ours. For it is written in the Torah of the Jews that they were to take as their inheritance the land of Canaan according to its borders. And Canaan was our ancestor (i.e. we Africans). Geviha ben Pesisa said to the sages who had to respond to the African's claim: Give me permission and I will go and debate them before Alexander the Macedonian. If they defeat me in the debate, say to them that it was only an ordinary person among us that you have defeated, so your victory proves nothing. And if I defeat them, say to them that the Torah of Moshe has defeated you! The sages gave him permission and he went and debated the Africans. He said to them: From where do you cite proof to your claim that the Land of Canaan belongs to you? They said to him: It is from the Torah. He said to them: I, too, will bring you proof only from the Torah! For it is written in the Torah: And Noach said, "accursed is Canaan; a slave of slaves shall he be to his brothers." Now, if a slave acquires property, who is the rightful owner of the property? It certainly belongs to the master! Since your ancestor Canaan was the slave of Shem and Yefes, the land of Canaan belongs to us, the descendants of Shem! And not only that, but it is now many years that you have not served us (so you owe us compensation for that)! Alexander the King said to them: Respond to him! They said to Alexander: Give us three days so we can prepare a reply. He gave them the time. They searched, but were not able to find an adequate answer. They fled immediately, abandoning their planted fields and vineyards, and that year was Shemittah (which enabled the Jews to eat from these fields when they had a shortage of food).

A different time, the Egyptians came to contend with the Jews before Alexander the Macedonian. The Egyptians said to him: Behold it says in the Torah of the Jews: and Hashem gave the Jewish People favor in the eyes of the Egyptians and they lent them gold and silver and other valuables, which the Jews never returned. Thus, we claim from the Jews: Give us the silver and the gold that you took from us! Geviha ben Pesisa

said to the Sages: Give me permission and I will go and debate them before Alexander. If they defeat me in the debate, say to them that it was only an ordinary person among us that you have defeated, so your victory proves nothing. And if I defeat them, say to them that the Torah of Moshe has defeated you! The sages gave him permission and he went and debated the Egyptians. He said to them: From where do you cite proof that we took gold and silver from you in Egypt? They said to him: It is from the Torah. He said to them: I, too, will bring you proof only from the Torah! For it is written in the Torah: And the children of Israel stayed in Egypt four hundred and thirty years. Give us the wages for the work of the six hundred thousand men that you enslaved in Egypt for four hundred and thirty years! This amount is surely more than anything we might owe you. Alexander the Macedonian said to them: Respond to him! They said to Alexander: Give us three days so we can prepare a reply. He gave them the time. They searched, but were not able to find an adequate answer. Immediately, they abandoned their planted fields and vineyards, and they fled, and that year was Shemittah.

And yet another time, the descendants of Yishmael and the descendants of Keturah came to contend with the Jews before Alexander the Macedonian. They said to him: The land of Canaan belongs to us and to the Jews. For it is written in your Torah: And these are the descendants of Yishmael the son of Avraham. And it is also written: And these are the descendants of Yitzchak the son of Avraham. Geviha ben Pesisa said to the Sages: Give me permission and I will go and debate them before Alexander the Macedonian. If they defeat me in the debate, say to them that it was only an ordinary person among us that you have defeated, so your victory proves nothing. And if I defeat them, say to them that the Torah of Moshe has defeated you! The sages gave him permission and he went and debated the descendants of Yishmael and Keturah. He said to them: From where do you cite proof to your claim that part of the land belongs to you? They said to him: It is from the Torah. He said to them: I, too, will bring you proof only from the Torah! For it is written: And Avraham gave all that was his to Yitzchak. And to the concubines-children whom Avraham had, Avraham gave







presents (and he sent them away from Yitzchak, his son). Now, if a father gave presents to his sons in his lifetime and sent one away from the other to avoid rivalry after his death, does one son have any claim at all on the other? Certainly not! Therefore, you have no claim on *Eretz Yisroel*, for Avraham gave your ancestors part of his possessions and then sent them out of *Eretz Yisroel* to a different land, thereby indicating that they should not have any part in *Eretz Yisroel*.

Rabbi Yirmiah bar Abba says that the gifts he gave them was the knowledge of unholy utterance (*sorcery and demons*). (91a)

Antoninus and Rebbe

Antoninus said to Rebbe: Seemingly, a person's body and soul are each able to excuse themselves from being punished for their sins after death. How so? The body says: It is the soul that has sinned, for from the day that it has departed from me, I have been lying like a silent rock in the grave. And the soul says: It is the body that has sinned, for from the day that I have departed from it, I have been flying in the air like a bird.

Rebbe answered: I will give you a parable as to what this matter can be compared to: It is compared to a king of flesh and blood who has a beautiful orchard, which contained beautiful early figs. And he placed in the orchard two guards; one was lame and the other was blind. The lame one said to the blind one: I see beautiful early figs in the orchard. Come, pick me up on your shoulders and together we will bring the figs here to eat them. The lame one climbed on top of the back of the blind person and they brought the figs and they ate them. Some days later, the royal owner of the orchard came, and found his precious figs missing. He accused the guards: Where are my beautiful figs? The lame one excused himself by saying that he has no feet with which to travel to the figs, and he certainly could not have taken them. The blind excused himself by saying that he has no eyes with which to see where the figs are, and he certainly could not have taken them. What did the king do? He placed the lame one on the back of the blind one, and he judged them as onet. So too, on

the Day of Judgment, the Holy One, Blessed be He, brings the soul and injects it into the body, and judges them as one for the sins they committed together in this life. This is as it is written: He, [Hashem] will call to the heavens above, and to the earth to judge His people. Rebbe explains that "He will call to the heavens above" refers to the soul; "and to the earth to judge His people" refers to the body.

Antoninus said to Rebbe: Why does the sun rise in the east and set in the west? He replied: If it were reversed, you would ask me the same question. Antoninus rephrased his question: Why does it set in the west when it rose in the east? He answered: It is in order to greet its Maker. Antoninus persisted: It should go only until the middle of the sky, greet its Maker, and then set there? Rebbe answered: It is on account of the workers and travelers (who would have no warning as to when darkness is coming).

Rebbe told Antoninus that the soul enters the body at the time of "attention" (when the angel brings the germ before God to determine its physical and intellectual capabilities), for just as a piece of meat cannot remain for three days without being salted (for otherwise, it will spoil), so too, the body cannot remain without the soul. Rebbe noted that Antoninus taught this to him, but there is a Scriptural verse which supports this as well.

Rebbe also said that Antoninus taught him that the Evil Inclination has influence over a person only once he leaves his mother's womb, for otherwise (if it would have influence even beforehand), it would kick and leave the womb prematurely. Rebbe cites a Scriptural verse that supports this as well. (91a - 91b)

Reconciling Verses

Ulla explains two contradictory verses as follows: When the verse states that there will be no death in the Future World, that is in reference to the Jews; however, a different verse which implies that there will be death, is in reference to







idolaters. The idolaters will be there in order to attend to the Jewish people's physical needs.

Rav Chisda explains two contradictory verses as follows: When the verse states that the light emanating from the sun and the moon will become more intense, it is referring to the Messianic era (which precedes the World to Come); and the verse which states that they will cease to shine altogether, that is referring to the World to Come.

The *Gemora* asks: How can this be explained according to Shmuel who maintains that there is no distinction between this world and the Messianic era except for the fact that the Jews will not be subjugated by other nations?

The *Gemora* answers that both verses refer to the World to Come. The luminaries will intensify in the camp of the righteous, but it will pale in the camp of the Divine Presence.

Rish Lakish explains (based upon contradictory verses) that Hashem will resurrect the dead with their deformities, and afterwards, He will heal them.

Rabbi Meir said: By the fact that Scripture writes, "Then will Moshe and the children of Israel sing this song to Hashem," and it does not say, "He sang," this indicates that there will be a Resurrection of the Dead (and they will sing then).

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi cites another verse which alludes to the Resurrection of the Dead in the Written Torah. This is because it is stated, "Fortunate are those that dwell in Your house; yet again they shall praise you," and it does not say, "They have praised you." (91b)

INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

Resurrection from Dust

Caesar said to Rabban Gamliel: You Jews say that the dead will live again. How can this be? Do they not become dust, and can dust come alive?!

Caesar's daughter said to Rabban Gamliel: Rabbi, leave him be and I will answer him for you. She turned to her father and said: Suppose there were two potters in our city, one who makes pottery out of water and another one who makes pottery out of clay. Which one of them would you say is superior? Caesar replied to her: Certainly it is the one who makes pottery out of water. She then said to him: If Hashem creates human beings out of water, certainly then, He can create them out of clay or dust?!

In Rabbi Yishmael's academy, a *Tanna* taught a different version of what Caesar's daughter answered to her father: Resurrection can be derived through a *kal vachomer* from glassware: If glassware is worked into shape through the breath of flesh and blood, and it can be fixed if they are broken; then a person of flesh and blood, who is created by the breath of the Holy One, Blessed be He, how much more so should it be that he can be resurrected after he has disintegrated into dust!

The Mabit¹ writes that the intention of the Caesar's challenge was there is no true resurrection of the dead because something that is fashioned from dust is a new creation. This is similar to the creation of Adam from dust, and thus it is not considered that the dead person actually is resurrected. The Caesar's daughter responded that the potter who fashions pottery out of water is analogous to the fashioning of man from his father's seed. The potter who fashions pottery out of clay is akin to the resurrection of the dead. The Caesar's daughter did not use the word 'dust' like her father. Rather, she compared the resurrection to fashioning from 'clay,' which is a mixture of water and dust. The idea is that there is (so to speak) less effort involved in resurrecting the dead who was once alive than the effort that was necessary to fashion the first man and in the formation of man from the union of man and woman. Adam was fashioned from mere dust, and the rest of mankind was created from water. Resurrecting the dead is (so to speak) easier to accomplish, because the dust is

¹ Shaar Hayesodos 55





already prepared from the fashioning of Adam, and the water is already existent from the seed of the father.

The academy of Rabbi Yishmael attributed the merit of resurrection to the soul that is fashioned by the breath of Hashem. In response to the challenge of the Caesar that dust cannot become alive, his daughter responded that the glassmaker shapes his wares by blowing into the molten glass through a tube. Once this is accomplished, the breath of the glassmaker is no longer inside the glass, yet the vessel remains intact. If the glass shatters, the craftsman melts the shards and reshapes them. It follows that man, who was created and kept alive by Hashem, even after he dies and becomes dust, is still considered alive, because his spirit is nourished from Hashem's Heavenly Throne. It can certainly be said that the living spirit of man will return to his body and through the life of the spirit the dust will return to be a living being as it was in its previous life.

Bricks without Earth and Water

A certain sectarian said to Rabbi Ami: You Jews say that the dead will live again. How can this be? Do they not become dust, and can dust come alive?!

Rabbi Ami answered him: I will give you a parable: Your question can be compared to a king of flesh and blood who said to his servants: "Go and build me a great palace in a place where there is no water or earth with which to make bricks." They went and built it using other materials. Some time later, the palace collapsed. The king said to them: "Rebuild it in a place where there is earth and water." They said to him, "We cannot do so." The king became angry with them and said to them: "If you built the palace in a place where there is no water or earth with which to make bricks, now certainly with water and earth, you should be able to build it!" [If God can create man from mere semen, certainly He will be able to resuscitate their dust.] And if you cannot believe that living beings can be created from dust, go to the field and see the squirrel that one day is half flesh and half earth and the next

day it has metamorphosed into a creeping thing and become entirely flesh! This proves that not only is such a thing possible, but it takes place before our very eyes! Perhaps you will say that it takes a long time for this to happen. Then go up to the mountain and see that one day there is only one *chilazon* there, and the next day, when the rain falls, the entire mountain will be full of *chilzonos*!

There is an obvious difficulty with the parable that Rabbi Ami offered the sectarians. How were the servants able to build a palace without water and earth with which to make bricks? The Mabit² writes that the idea is that they brought the water and earth from a different location. The analogy is that Hashem fashioned Adam Harishon from the dust, and his progeny were dispersed throughout the world, although they were not fashioned from the same location. Certainly, then, once man dies and returns to dust, he can be resurrected form the dust that is available everywhere. This is similar to the servants in the parable who built the palace in a place where there was water and earth.

Let us suggest an alternative explanation. A recurring theme throughout the Gemora is that the sectarians and other nonbelievers challenged the premise that dust could come to life. Rabbi Ami responded that Hashem could create the world out of nothing, so certainly He could fashion man out of dust. Essentially Rabbi Ami was positing that the flaw in the sectarian's argument is not in the science of the resurrection, but rather in Hashem's abilities to fashion and create anew. Yet, we have only to look at the world around us and realize that Hashem in His goodness renews daily, perpetually, the work of creation.³ This renewal is described as creating something from nothing (yesh m'ayin). Once one accepts this concept, then it is easier to comprehend the process of resurrecting the dead. Perhaps this is the explanation for the words that we recite in the Shmoneh Esrei, He sustains the living with kindness, resuscitates the dead with abundant mercy. Although the simple explanation for this praise is that Hashem is kind and compassionate, there is a deeper association between these two ideas. Hashem sustaining the



² Shaar Hayesodos 55

³ Tefillas Shacharis



living with kindness is parallel to the resurrection of the dead. Just as resurrecting the dead appears to be fashioning something from nothing, so too is our daily sustenance fashioning something from nothing. This is because Hashem is constantly renewing the world, and our very lives are constantly hanging in the balance. When we accept this notion as a basic tenet of our faith, Hashem will reward us

Life

with the coming of Moshiach to be followed by the

resurrection of the dead.

A certain sectarian said to Geviha ben Pesisa: Woe to you, O sinners, for you say that the dead will live. Now, if even the living will eventually die, does it make sense to say that the dead will live? Geviha said to him: Woe to you, O sinners, for you say that the dead will not live. Now, if even those that were non-existent (babies) come to life, is it not all the more possible that those who once lived will live again? The sectarian responded angrily: You dare call me a "sinner"? Why, if I arise, I will kick you so hard that I will straighten out your hump! Geviha said to him: If you do that, you will be called a skilled doctor and you will collect a large fee for your medical services!

It is interesting to note the premise of the sectarian. He claimed that the living die, but it is not credible that the dead will live. One must wonder what the association is between these two ideas. How can one assume that the dead will not live just because the living die?

The Mabit⁴ writes that the sectarian thought that since all men die because of sin, it is not justified that they should live again. For this reason the sectarian referred to the Jews as sinners, because it is their sins that cause their death, and therefore they should not live. Geviha responded that if man were created without any merit, and only through the infinite kindness of Hashem, certainly he would live after death. Although he may have sinned, it is probable that he will merit

being resurrected due to his performance of Mitzvos and Torah study. It is also likely that he repented from his sins before he died. For this reason Geviha responded by referring to the sectarians as sinners, as they did not even fulfill the seven Noahide laws, nor did they repent from their sins, so they will not merit to be resurrected. This response angered the sectarian and he threatened Geviha with revenge.

The explanation of the Mabit offers us to reflect on how we view life. Life can be living each day for itself, and this may be a life that is filled with sin. The correct approach, however, is that one should view life as a bridge to the next world and the ultimate resurrection. One who studies Torah and performs Mitzvos will realize that every second of life is an opportunity to perfect himself and not succumb to "death from sins." Life is all about "life because of Torah study and mitzvah performance," as these are the only merits that will allow one to live again.

DAILY MASHAL

The Torah is our Guide

The Gemorg discusses three incidents where the nations of the world approached Alexander the Great and disputed territory and finances with the Jewish people. What is fascinating is that the gentiles attempt to claim land and money was from the Torah. Geviha ben Pesisa disputed their claims from the Torah itself. There was no outside rationale, merely clear logical proof from the Torah. What is even more impressive, however, is as soon as they saw their claims repudiated they fled and left the Jewish people with an unexpected windfall. These incidents are not historical blurbs. They reflect true Divine Justice. It is further compelling that Eretz Yisroel is not merely a land that is there for the taking. Rashi⁵, quoting the Medrash⁶, writes that the reason the Torah commences with the story of creation is that in case the nations of the world were to claim to the Jewish People "You are thieves and have stolen our land", we have a simple



⁴ Shaar Hayesodos 55

⁵ Breishis 1:1 s.v. Breishis

⁶ Yalkut Shimoni Shemos 187







response. Hashem created the world and saw fit to bequeath land to whomever He decided. We cannot view the dispute over *Eretz Yisroel* currently or at any time in history as territorial feuds. From this Gemora we see that territorial disputes are based on interpreting the Torah The Egyptians read the verse literally. "Behold it says in the Torah of the Jews: and Hashem gave the Jewish People favor in the eyes of the Egyptians and they lent them gold and silver and other valuables, which the Jews never returned. Thus, we claim from the Jews: "Give us the silver and the gold that you took from us!" Geviha's response to the Egyptians was, "from where do you bring proof that we took gold and silver from you in Egypt? They said to him: from the Torah. He said to them: I, too, will bring you proof only from the Torah! For it is stated in the Torah: ⁷ and the stay of the children of Israel that they stayed in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years". Geviha was demonstrating to the Egyptians that of you read the verse literally, then the Jewish People were actually in Egypt for four hundred and thirty years. We know from tradition that this was not the case. Rather, they were enslaved in Egypt for two hundred and ten years, but it as if they resided in lands that were not their own for four hundred and thirty years.8

People tend to explain current events based upon historical writings and scholarly interpretations. The *Gemora* provides an illuminating explanation for vents that we witness unfolding today. The struggle over *Eretz Yisroel* is one that is found in the Torah, and cannot be understood by human intellect. Hashem decides who receives land and who does not.

There is another profound lesson to be gleaned from this *Gemora*. We are a generation that is witness to Jews receiving reparations from governments who fifty years ago were bent on annihilating the Jewish People, heaven forbid. This *Gemora* sets the precedent. Hashem assures us that the Jewish People were compensated for the time they were

enslaved, and for the years that Canaan was not enslaved to the Jews. Here again we have to recognize that Hashem is the true Judge. May we merit to see in our lifetime the fulfillment of the verse,⁹ O nations-sing the praises of His people, for He will avenge the blood of His servants; He will bring retribution upon His foes, and he will appease His Land and His people.

Body and Soul

Antoninus said to Rebbe: Seemingly, a person's body and soul are each able to excuse themselves from being punished for their sins after death. How so? The body says: It is the soul that has sinned, for from the day that it has departed from me, I have been lying like a silent rock in the grave. And the soul says: It is the body that has sinned, for from the day that I have departed from it, I have been flying in the air like a bird.

Rebbe answered: I will give you a parable as to what this matter can be compared to: It is compared to a king of flesh and blood who has a beautiful orchard, which contained beautiful early figs. And he placed in the orchard two guards; one was lame and the other was blind. The lame one said to the blind one: I see beautiful early figs in the orchard. Come, pick me up on your shoulders and together we will bring the figs here to eat them. The lame one climbed on top of the back of the blind person and they brought the figs and they ate them. Some days later, the royal owner of the orchard came, and found his precious figs missing. He accused the guards: Where are my beautiful figs? The lame one excused himself by saying that he has no feet with which to travel to the figs, and he certainly could not have taken them. The blind excused himself by saying that he has no eyes with which to see where the figs are, and he certainly could not have taken them. What did the king do? He placed the lame one on the back of the blind one, and he judged them as onet. So too, on the Day of Judgment, the Holy One, Blessed be He, brings the soul and injects it into the body, and judges them as one for the sins they committed together in this life.



⁷ Shemos 12:40

 $^{^8}$ See Rashi Breishis 15:13 s.v. Beretz Lo Lahem; Shemos 12:40 s.v. Shloshim Shana V'arba meos shana

⁹ Devarim 32:43





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This *Gemora* is obviously transmitting an important message about life. The body is constantly trying to vanquish the soul, as the ultimate challenge in life is for the soul to be victorious over the body. The dilemma, however, is that the soul requires the body in order to function. Hence, the claim of the soul 'that from the day that I have departed from the body, I have been flying in the air like a bird' does not appear to be based on reality.

It is said:¹⁰ And Hashem reconsidered having made Man on earth, and he had heartfelt sadness. Rashi¹¹ quotes the Medrash¹² that states: Hashem was comforted that He had created man as an earthly being, for had he fashioned man as a celestial being, man would have caused the angels to sin. The Maharal¹³ wonders what the point of this statement is, if the reality is that man was created as an earthly being. The Maharal writes that man has a soul from the upper worlds and a body that is from this world. Scripture is teaching us that sin is also catalyzed through the soul. Although it cannot be said that the soul has an Evil Inclination, the soul of the evildoer desires evil,¹⁴ even without an Evil Inclination. For this reason the Medrash states that had man been fashioned as a celestial being, he would have caused the angels to sin.

The words of the Maharal are novel, in that we always view spirituality as untainted from sin. It is possible for one to "live in heaven" and sin. Evidence of this is from the generation of Jews in the desert. Sustained by Manna from heaven, a mobile rock that provided all their needs for water and countless other miracles certainly earned them the title of "residing in paradise." Nonetheless, they were able to step out of their glass box and demand physical pleasures, such as meat and other delicacies that were seemingly unnecessary for their lifestyle. Man can sin in heaven. This is the message of the *Gemora*. Although one can claim that the body is s at fault, Hashem will bring the soul and inject it into the body, and judge them as a unit for the sins they committed together

in this life. If man were to remember that the soul is from heaven and it is his obligation to let the soul leave the body untainted, then he will not have to worry about the deficiency of the body. May Hashem satisfy us from His goodness and gladden our souls with His salvation, and purify our hearts to serve Him sincerely¹⁵.



¹⁰ Breishis 6:6

¹¹ Ibid s.v. vayenachem Hashem

¹² Breishis Rabbah 27:4

¹³ Gur Aryeh Ibid

¹⁴ Mishlei 21:10

¹⁵ Shabbos Shemone Esrei