



מרדכי מלכא

רב ואב"ד עיה"ק אלעד ת"ו

יו"ר ועדת סת"ם העולמית

הרבנות הראשית לישראל

לשכת הרבנות הראשית אלעד. ראש העין. הרצליה

בד"צ אלעד*בתי הוראה*שרותי דת*רישום נישואין*כשרות*מקואות*עירובין

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Parashat Behaalotcha

Freedom is serving Hashem:

Bamidbar chapter 10 [35] “So it was, whenever the ark set out, Moshe would say, Arise, O Hashem, may Your enemies be scattered and may those who hate You flee from You. [36] And when it came to rest he would say, Repose O Hashem, among the myriad of thousands of Israel.”

Chazal's dispute on the Pasuk:

In Gemara tract Shabbat page 115b: Apropos the portion: “And when the Ark traveled,” the Gemara cites that which the Sages taught in a braita. It is stated: “And when the Ark traveled and Moshe proclaimed: Rise up, G-d, and Your enemies will scatter and those who hate You will flee from before You.” And The Holy One, Blessed be He, made signs in the Torah for this portion, above and below, i.e., before and after it, in order to say that this is not its place, as the previous portion does not discuss the nation's travels. Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi says: It is not for that reason that signs were inserted. Rather, the signs are there because this portion is considered a book unto itself. The Gemara asks: According to whose opinion is that which Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahman said that Rabbi Yonatan said, that with regard to the verse: “With wisdom she built her house, she carved its seven pillars” (Mishley 9:1), these are the seven books of the Torah? According to whose opinion? It is according to the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi, as by his count there are seven books of the Torah: Bereshit; Shmot; Vayikra; Bamidbar until: “Vayehi binBamidbar; and Dvarim. Who is the tanna who disagrees with Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi? It is Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel. As it was taught in a braita that Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says: In the future, this portion will be uprooted from here, where it appears, and will be written in its proper place. And why was it written here, even though it discusses the travels of the Bnei Israel, and the portion before it does not? It is in order to separate between the first punishment and the second punishment. What is the second punishment that appears immediately afterward? It is the verse: “And the people complained wickedly in G-d's ears, and G-d heard and became angry, and the fire of G-d burned in them and it consumed the edge of the camp” (Bamidbar 11:1). What is the first punishment? It is the verse: “And they traveled from the mountain of G-d [mehar Hashem] for three days” (Bamidbar 10:33), and Rabbi Hama, son of Rabbi Hanina, said: That they turned from after G-d [me'acharei Hashem] and hurriedly fled Mount Sinai. The Gemara asks: And if so, where is the proper place for this paragraph? Rav Ashi said: In the portion of the flags, where there is a description of the manner in which the Jewish people traveled through the desert.

It is explained that there is a dispute between Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi and Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel. According to Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi the signs are there because this portion is considered a book unto itself. And according to Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel, It is in order to separate between the first punishment and the second punishment.

Questions:

1. How can these two Pesukim separate between the punishments? Or even more so how can it be considered a book unto itself?
2. Further we need to understand in the Parashah [11:1] the Pasuk says: “The people were looking to



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complain” etc. and Rashi explains in the name of the Sifre that the people refer to the evil ones. Where and how did he learn this from?

3. Later in the Parasha it says [11:5] “We remember the fish that we ate in Egypt free of charge” etc. and Rashi explains in the name of the Sifre: Is it possible that they ate free of charge? They did not even get hay! Free of charge means free from the Commandments. As the Sifte Chachamim explains that in Egypt they recieved food without any obligations to the commencements and now their livelihood depends on their Mitzvot and without observing the Commandments there will be no livelihood.

It is puzzling how the Sages and the commentators drew so far away from the Pasuk's simple meaning?

The definition of the mitzvah is servitude to Hashem:

In tractate Kedushin 31a: “Rabbi Hanina says: Greater is one who is commanded to do a mitzvah and performs it than one who is not commanded to do a mitzvah and performs it. Rav Yosef, who was blind, said: At first I would say: If someone would tell me that the halacha is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda, who says: A blind person is exempt from fulfilling the mitzvot, I would make a festive day for the rabbis, as I am not commanded and yet I perform the mitzvot. This means my reward is very great. Now that I have heard that which Rabbi Hanina says: Greater is one who is commanded to do a mitzvah and performs it than one who is not commanded to do a mitzvah and performs it, on the contrary: If someone would tell me that the halacha is not in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda, and a blind person is obligated by mitzvot, I would make a festive day for the rabbis.” and the Tosfot asks: it seems like the reason that he who is commanded is greater is because he worries and is more anxious that he may transgress more than someone who does not have a Mitzvah, who has ‘his bread in his basket’, seeing as he can quit at will. However, it seems like it should be the other way around since a volunteer has more considerable merit than the worker that gets paid and is obligated to deliver not like the volunteer who is not obligated and does it nevertheless out of kindness? The Tosfot in Avoda Zarah [3a] answers that someone who's obligated, always worries in order to negate his evil inclination, and to fulfill the Mitzvot of his Creator.

In my humble opinion, the deeper meaning of their explanation in the distinction between someone who is commanded and someone who's not is in serving Hashem with obedience. When serving Hashem like a servant who's following his master's orders, it's harder to obey since his comfort and preferences have not been taken into consideration, and despite that, he is fulfilling his master's orders with obedience and subservience. The case is not so with a volunteer, there is no aspect of slavery for he is doing it at his convenience and on his terms. And when it gets hard for him, he can stop because he cannot be forced. Therefore it's easier to volunteer and there's no obligation towards Hashem.

There is no free man but one that occupies himself with the study of Torah:

According to the above, there seems to be a contradiction between Chazal's teachings. In Pirkei Avot 6:2 it states: “Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: every day a bat kol (a heavenly voice) goes forth from Mount Horev and makes a proclamation and says: “Woe unto humankind for their contempt towards the Torah”, for whoever does not occupy himself with the study of Torah is called, nazuf (the rebuked). As it is said, “Like a gold ring in the snout of a pig is a beautiful woman bereft of sense” (Mishley 22:11). And it says,



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“And the tablets were the work of G-d, and the writing was the writing of G-d, graven upon the tablets” (Shemot 32:16). Read not haruth [‘engraved’] but heruth [‘freedom’]. For there is no free man but one that occupies himself with the study of the Torah.” As we have seen someone who occupies himself with Torah is called a free man. How does this not contradict the aforesaid that greater is the one who is commanded because of his subservience?

Who is mighty? He who subdues his [evil] inclination:

Furthermore, we must understand the saying of the Tana in Pirkei Avot 4:1 “Ben Zoma said: Who is wise? He who learns from every man, as it is said: “From all who taught me have I gained understanding” (Tehilim 119:99). Who is mighty? He who subdues his [evil] inclination, as it is said: “He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that rules his spirit than he that takes a city” (Mishley 16:3). Who is rich? He who rejoices in his lot, as it is said: “You shall enjoy the fruits of your labor, you shall be happy and you shall prosper” (Tehilim 128:2) “You shall be happy” in this world, “and you shall prosper” in the world to come. Who is he that is honored? He who honors his fellow human beings as it is said: “For I honor those that honor Me, but those who spurn Me shall be dishonored.”

The question arises: logic seems to indicate the opposite of what the wise man teaches, the rich is someone who has many assets and the mighty is the one who all are intimidated by and the honored is he who is respected by all. How does the Tana teach the opposite?

The Sages are called kings:

We will understand the Tana's saying by realizing his worldview. When someone thinks and treats his bodily life as the most important thing and invests so much in satiating his physical desires surely his worldview will differ than the Mishnah since this man counts on his wisdom and success to achieve status in society and to attain many assets and to nurture his body to become strong and intimidate others. He might have wished to be free from the Mitzvot and do as he pleases and that way he will indeed be free. But Chazal teach us that this way of thinking is wrong since everyone has wishes and desires that he'll never achieve for no person leaves this world having fulfilled even half his desires. Once he realizes that he is becoming a slave to his desires, like a baby that craves whatever he sees and feels entitled to it and weeps and whines to get what he wants -can this be called a truly free person? Some people drink coffee or smoke, and they are used to it, they are practically slaves of their own habits. Would this be called a free man? But Torah instructs us how to restrain ourselves, master our desires and to live a sanely free life.

That's the meaning of “Who is mighty? He who subdues his [evil] inclination.” and why the Sages are called kings because they govern themselves.

As the Gemara in Gittin [62a] states that Rav Huna and Rav Hisda were once sitting when the Sage Bereshiteiva passed by alongside them. One of them said to the other: We should stand before him, in his honor, for he is a son of Torah. The other one said to him: But should we stand before an argumentative person? In the meantime, Bereshiteiva approached them and said to them: Peace be upon you, kings, peace be upon you, kings. They said to him: From where do you know that the Sages are called kings? He said to them: As it is written with regard to the Torah in the book of Mishley: “Through me kings rule” (Mishley 8:15) rule and master our desires and inclinations. And in this way, a person can always rejoice in

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his lot because not only is he resisting bad inclinations, he doesn't even desire them. For example, someone who never smoked not only is he not missing out, he is better without smoking and happier without. "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that rules his spirit than he that takes a city." Only a person who believes in his true purpose and mission in life from Hashem, the true king and ruler, and serves him and not his physical desires and cherishes and appreciates the wisdom of Torah so much, he is willing to learn from everyone and honor anyone and he becomes noble and honorable.

The Medrash:

The Medrash in The wicked are under control of their heart: 'The fool has said in his heart' (Ps. 14:1); 'And Esav said in his heart' (Bereshit.27:41); 'And Yerovoam said in his heart' (I Kings 12:25); 'Now Haman said in his heart' (Est. 6:6). But the righteous have their hearts under their control since it is written 'Now Hannah, she spoke at her heart' (I Sam. 1:13); 'And David said to his heart' (I Sam. 27:1); 'But Daniel put to his heart' (Dan. 1:8); [so too] 'And the Hashem said to his heart: I will not again/add curse to the ground' (Bereshit. 8:21):

The wicked are subjected to their heart which is the source of all desires and rush to satisfy their physical desires. The righteous, on the other hand, are in control of their body and heart and master them to serve Hashem all mighty with all his might.

A story with Rabbi Zusha:

Once the Ba'al Shem Tov sent a man to Rabbi Simcha Zusha to ask him how he reconciles what the Gemara says in tractate Berachot 33b and 48b and 54a and 60b and in tractate Megillah 25a that One is required to bless G-d for the bad just as he blesses Him for the good. It doesn't make sense. When the man came to Rabbi Zusha's house, he saw that he lived in a little shack in great poverty and still, he welcomed him with open arms and shared with him all the food he had, an onion and soup water. After he ate he asked Rabbi Zusha the Ba'al Shem Tov's question. Rabbi Zusha thought about it and said that he's afraid he's not the right person to answer because in order to know the true meaning of this, you need to experience both situations, the good and the bad, and to know the difference between them. But I, said Rabbi Zusha, have never experienced bad and can't attribute to that. Then the man realized the meaning of the Gemara. It is our interpretation and way of thinking that makes an experience good or bad, like Rabbi Zusha who was so happy with what he had because he was in control of his desires and was free.

Three people tasted Gan Eden already in this world:

Chazal said that three people tasted Gan Eden already in this world. Avraham, Itzhak and Yakov, as it states in Baba Batra 16b: "There were three people to whom the Holy One, Blessed be He, gave already in this world a taste of the World-to-Come. They are: Avraham, itzhak, and Yakov. Avraham, as is written with regard to him: "And the Hashem blessed Abraham with everything" (Bereshit 24:1). Itzhak, as is written with regard to him: "And I have eaten from everything" (Bereshit 27:33). Yakov, as is written with regard to him: "Because I have everything" (Bereshit 33:11). This teaches that already in their lifetimes they merited everything, i.e., perfection. There were three people over whom the evil inclination had no sway. They are: Avraham, Itzhak, and Yakov, as is written with regard to them, respectively:



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“With everything,” “from everything,” “everything.” The completeness of their blessings means that they did not have to contend with their evil inclinations.” although all three of them suffered many tragedies. By elevating the soul over the body and the mind over the heart, by earning this mindset a person can have a taste of the World-to-Come in this world and reach the level of our holy fathers as Chazal instruct us to aspire and say “When will my actions reach those of my forefathers.”

One hour of the tranquility in the world to come is more precious than all the life in this world.

Moreover, when a person reflects on what Chazal say in Pirkei Avot 4:16 “This world is like a vestibule before the world to come” he realizes how worthless this physical world is in comparison to the spiritual life in the world to come and its eternal value, that there is no comparison between them. He would live a better, happier life. And his temporary discomfort is merely an investment for the true reward that will follow, like someone who works hard to earn a living, not only he is not sad, he is grateful for having a job to begin with, and realizes that it’s a means to an end. So too a person that knows his purpose and mission in life and the value of Torah and Mitzvot and their reward, is always happy and eager to learn more Torah and serve Hashem.

The entire world is sustained by Hanina ben Dosa, yet he is poor:

Now we can also explain the Gemara in tractate Berakhot 17b and Chulin 86a and in Taanit 24b: Rav Yehuda said that Rav said: Each and every day a Divine Voice emerges from Mount Horev and says: The entire world is sustained by the merit of My son Hanina ben Dosa, and yet for Hanina, my son, a kav of carobs, a very small amount of inferior food, is sufficient to sustain him for an entire week, from one erev Shabbat to the next. The Gemara relates: Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa’s wife would heat the oven every erev Shabbat and create a great amount of smoke, to avoid embarrassment, to make it appear as if she were baking, despite the fact that there was no bread in her house. She had a certain evil neighbor who said to herself: Now, I know that they have nothing. What, then, is all this smoke? She went and knocked on the door to find out what was in the oven. Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa’s wife was embarrassed, and she went to an inner room [inderona]. A miracle occurred for Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa’s wife, as her neighbor saw the oven filled with bread and the kneading basin filled with dough. She said to Rabbi Hanina’s wife, calling her by name: So-and-so, so-and-so, bring a shovel, as your bread is burning. She said to her neighbor: I too went inside for that very purpose. A tanna taught: She too had entered the inner room to bring a shovel, because she was accustomed to miracles and anticipated that one would occur to spare her embarrassment. The Gemara further relates: Rabbi Hanina’s wife said to him: Until when will we continue to suffer this poverty? He said to her: What can we do? She responded: Pray for mercy so something will be given to you from Heaven. He prayed for mercy and something like the palm of a hand emerged from heaven and gave him one leg of a golden table. That night, his wife saw in a dream that in the future, i.e., in the World-to-Come, the righteous will eat at a golden table that has three legs, but she will be eating on a table that has only two legs. When she told her husband this story, he said to her: Are you content that everyone will eat at a complete table and we will eat at a defective table? She said to him: But what can we do? Pray for mercy, that the leg of the golden table should be taken from you. He prayed for mercy, and it was taken from him. A tanna taught in a baraita: The last miracle was greater than the first, as it is learned as a tradition that Heaven gives but does not take back. The Gemara relates that one Shabbat evening,



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Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa saw that his daughter was sad. He said to her: My daughter, why are you sad? She said to him: I confused a vessel of vinegar for a vessel of oil and I lit the Shabbat lamp with vinegar. Soon the lamp will be extinguished and we will be left in the dark. He said to her: My daughter, what are you concerned about? He who told the oil to burn can tell the vinegar to burn. A tanna taught: That lamp burned continuously the entire day, until they took from it light for havdalah. Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa had some goats. His neighbors said to him: Your goats are damaging our property by grazing in our fields. He said to them: If they are causing damage, let them be eaten by bears. But if they are not damaging your property, let each of them, this evening, bring a bear impaled between its horns. That evening, each one brought in a bear impaled between its horns. Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa had a certain neighbor who was building a house, but the ceiling beams were not long enough to reach from one wall to the other. She came before Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa and said to him: I built my house, but my ceiling beams do not reach the walls. He said to her: What is your name? She said to him: My name is Ikku. He said: If so [ikku], may your beams reach your walls. A tanna taught: The beams were lengthened to such an extent that they not only reached the walls, but they continued until they jutted out a cubit from each side. And some say that they extended with segments [senifin], adding new walls at both ends of the beams. It is taught in a baraita that the Sage Palaimo says: I saw that house, and its beams jutted out a cubit on each side. And they said to me: This is the house that Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa roofed by means of his prayer. The Gemara asks a question about one of the details of this story. Where did Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa have goats from? Wasn't he poor, as stated above? And furthermore, the Sages have said: One may not raise small, domesticated animals in Eretz Yisrael, as they destroy the fields and property of others. How, then, could Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa raise goats? Rav Pine as said that this is how it came to pass: An incident occurred in which a certain man passed by the entrance of Rabbi Hanina's house and left chickens there. And Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa's wife found them and cared for them. And Rabbi Hanina said her: Do not eat of their eggs, as they are not ours. The chickens laid many eggs, and chicks hatched from the eggs. As the noise and mess of the chickens were distressing them, they sold them and bought goats with their proceeds. Once that same man who lost the chickens passed by and said to his companion: Here is where I left my chickens. Rabbi Hanina heard this and said to him: Do you have a sign by which to identify them? He said to him: Yes. He gave him the sign and took the goats. The Gemara concludes: And these are the very goats that brought bears impaled between their horns. The question begs to be asked, on the one hand Hashem performed great miracles for him to prevent him from hardships and on the other hand he lived in extreme poverty and a kav of carobs, was sufficient to sustain him for an entire week. How was the entire world sustained by Rabbi Hanina's merit while he was suffering? But according to the aforementioned, we can solemnly say Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa was really not suffering at all and was satisfied and content with a kav of carobs, as if he had all of his needs, it was truly sufficient for him. As the Gemara in tractate Taanit 24b tells a story. "Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa was traveling along a road when it began to rain. He said before G-d: Master of the Universe, the entire world is comfortable, because they needed rain, but Hanina is suffering, as he is getting wet. The rain ceased. When he arrived at his home, he said before G-d: Master of the Universe, the entire world is suffering that the rain stopped, and Hanina is comfortable? The rain began to come again. We see how carefully Hashem took care of Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa and changed world orders to prevent his suffering, clearly he did not suffer by eating a kav of carobs for an entire week. The Tzlach wrote about Gemara Berakhot 4b.



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Am Israel's complaints were because a lack in accepting malchut shamayim:

hence the questions on our Parshah have been answered, since the complaints stems from the sneaky thought of the human heart, that this world is abandoned and there is no ruler and resenting a lack of materialistic pleasures is a grave wickedness and heresy. This is what Am Israel said "free of charge" since they had no obligation to serve Hashem.

"Vayehi bensoah haaron" - "makes firm a person's steps"

Now we can understand how these two Pesukim of "Vayehi binsoah haron" separates between the punishments. Since these Pesukim describe the travel of Am Israel in the desert with Hashem's guidance "At the bidding of the Hashem, Bnei Israel traveled, and at the bidding of the Hashem, they encamped." To teach us how, every state in life is directed by divine providence to accomplish his specific task and mission in life. As has been discussed numerous times about the blessing we say every morning "He who makes firm a person's steps" Hashem directs every step of every person in all aspects throughout the day. So how can someone who believes in divine providence have complaints? That's why these pesukim separate between the punishments. to show us the right way in which to live life.

There is no free man but one that occupies himself with the study of Torah:

We have learned that the advantage of Bnei Yisrael is that they accepted upon themselves the service of Hashem, which means that he doesn't keep the Torah and mitzvot according to his convenience, rather accustoms himself to the divine will, so even when it's difficult for him he goes to pray in a minyan. Even when there are obstacles, he goes to learn Torah and obviously doesn't complain or behave against the mitzvot. Chazal have already defined the true free person as the one who occupies himself with Torah, for real freedom from his own enslavement to material pleasures, comes through total subordination to fulfilling the Torah and mitzvot which are the real purpose of a person in the world.

Shabbat Shalom,

Rav Mordechai Malka