

Daf Notes

Insights into the Daily Daf
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Daily Daf

Light or Dark?

The verse says “*woe to those who are awaiting the day of Hashem, why are you waiting for the day which is dark and not light?*” Rabbi Simlai explained this verse with a parable of a rooster and a bat who were both awaiting daybreak. The rooster told the bat that he was awaiting it since he can see the light, but the bat had no reason to await it, since he is blind. Similarly, the verse is saying that the day of Hashem will be good for the righteous, but bad for the wicked.

A heretic asked Rabbi Avahu when the redemption will come, and Rabbi Avahu asked him why he would want the era when he will be in darkness? Rabbi Avahu explained that he is not cursing him, but rather paraphrasing the verse, which states that in the time of redemption, the world will be dark, but the light of Hashem will shine on the righteous.

Length of the Messianic Era

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa* with different opinions on the length of the Messianic era:

1. 40 years, as the verse says that for “*forty years I will take the generation.*” (Rabb Eliezer)
2. 70 years, as the verse says that Tzor will be destroyed and forgotten for 70 years, like the reign of the unique king, i.e., Moshiach. (Rabbi Elazar ben Azaria)
3. 3 generations, as the verse says that they will fear you with the sun, and in front of the moon *dor dorim – a generation and generations*, i.e., 3 in total. (Rebbi)
4. There will not be another Moshiach, as that era was fulfilled in the time of Chizkiya. (Rabbi Hillel)

Rav Yosef says that Hashem must forgive Rabbi Hillel for this erroneous statement, since Chizkiya was during the first Bais Hamikdosh, while the prophecies of Zecharia about the era of

Moshiach were said during the second Bais Hamikdosh, obviously referring to a future era.

The *Gemora* cites another *braisa* with other opinions:

1. 40 years, as the verse refers to the 40 years in the desert as a time of *inui – suffering*, and the other verse says that Hashem will make us glad like the days that we suffered. (Rabbi Eliezer)
2. 400 years, as the verse refers to the 400 years of the exile of Egypt as *inui – suffering*. (Rabbi Dosa)
3. 365 years, as the verse refers to a day of reckoning in Hashem's heart, and a year of redemption. Just as Hashem repaid the spies one year per day, so the “year” of redemption (365 days) will be paid one year per day, i.e., 365 years (Rebbi).

Rabbi Yochanan says that the verse refers to the reckoning in Hashem's heart, since it was never expressed verbally, while Raish Lakish says it was never even revealed to the angels.

Avimi brai deRabbi Avahu says that the era will be 7000 years, since the verse says that Hashem will rejoice over the Jews as a groom rejoices over his bride. The period of marital celebration is 7 days, and 1000 years is considered a day for Hashem.

Rav Yehudah quotes Shmuel saying that the era will last as long as the duration of the world, as the verse says that the days of the Jews will last *keemai hashamaim al ha'aretz – like the days of the sky on the earth*.

Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak says it will last as long as the time from Noach until the present, since the verse refers to this era as like the days of Noach, when Hashem swore not to destroy the world.

Beyond our Comprehension

The verse says that no one but Hashem ever saw the ultimate

reward. Rabbi Chiya bar Abba quotes Rabbi Yochanan, who explained this verse refers to three limitations on the prophecies recorded by the prophets:

1. The prophets only referred to the Messianic era, but the world to come has never been perceived. The *Gemora* notes that this differs with Shmuel, who says that the Messianic era will be the same natural order, but with the Jews not subjugated by the nations.
2. The prophets only referred to repentant sinners, but the righteous who never sinned will receive a reward only perceived by Hashem. The *Gemora* notes that this differs with Rabbi Avahu, who says that repentant sinners are superior to righteous who never sinned.
3. The prophets referred to one who has favorable interactions with Torah scholars, e.g., marrying off a daughter to one, and giving them business. However, only Hashem perceives the reward awaiting Torah scholars themselves.

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi explains that this reward that only Hashem perceives is wine aged since creation, while Rish Lakish explains it is the Eden region, as Adam only lived in its garden, but not the region itself.

Denigrating the Word of Hashem

The *Mishna* listed one who denies the divinity of Torah as one who does not have a share in the world to come. The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*, which offers a number of explanations for the category of one who is cut off because *dvar Hashem baza – he denigrated the word of Hashem*:

1. One who denies the divinity of the Torah
2. An *apikorus*, which will be further defined below.
3. One who perverts the words of the Torah, which will be further defined below.
4. One who abrogates the treaty of Avraham, by not being circumcised.

The Torah decrees that such a person *hikarais tikarais – will be cut off*. The repetition teaches that he is cut off both in this world and the world to come. Therefore, Rabbi Elozar Hamodai says that one who desecrates consecrated items, one who denigrates the holidays, one who abrogates the treaty of Avraham, one who perverts the words of Torah, and one who disgraces his friend in public, even if they have Torah and good deeds, does not have a portion in the world to come.

The *Gemora* cites another similar *braisa*, explaining who is one who denigrated the word of Hashem:

1. One who denies the divinity of the Torah, even the smallest detail.
2. One who learns Torah, but does not teach. (Rabbi Meir)
3. One who denies the importance of the *Mishna*. (Rabbi Nasan)
4. One who can learn Torah, but does not. (Rabbi Nehorai)
5. One who worships idolatry. (Rabbi Yishmael) The *Gemora* explains that the phrase *dvar Hashem – the word of Hashem* refers to the statement heard by the Jews directly from Hashem, i.e., I am Hashem, and you shall have no other deity,

the first two of the Ten Commandments.

Learning Torah

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Karcha says that one who learns Torah but does not review is similar to one who sows but does not reap.

Rabbi Yehoshua says that one who learns Torah and forgets it is like a woman who gives birth and then buries the child.

Rabbi Akiva says that if one repeats the words of Torah every day, he will have them with him for the world to come.

Rav Yitzchak bar Avdimi says that the source for this is the verse which states a soul that toils will be toiled for, since he subjugated his mouth. This verse means that since one subjugated his mouth to learn Torah, the toil he put into Torah will be repaid to him in the future.

Rabbi Elozar says that all were created to toil, as the verse says that a person was born for work. The verse that states that one subjugates his mouth indicates that the toil is by speaking. The verse that states that the words of Torah should not leave your mouth, and you should speak them day and night teaches that the speaking is of Torah.

Rava similarly said that all bodies are for work, and fortunate are those who merit working for Torah.

Rish Lakish says that the verse that says that one who commits adultery loses his bearings refers to one who learns Torah intermittently, as the verse says that one who constantly learns will retain the Torah.

The *braisa* says that the verse that punishes the soul that rebels with a raised hand is referring to Menasheh the son of Chizkiya, who would sit and make mocking explanations of the Torah. He asked why the Torah needed to say that Timna (the concubine of Elifaz, the son of Eisav) was the sister of Lotan.

Further, he asked, why the Torah, in relating the story of Reuven who brought herbs to his mother, states that it was during the wheat harvest? A Heavenly voice came out and said that once Menasheh has cast aspersions on the Torah of Moshe, if Hashem does not respond, people will think the Torah is as false as Menasheh. The verse that says woe to those who pull sin by the ropes of emptiness is referring to Menasheh, who sinned for no benefit (i.e., emptiness).

Rabbi Assi explains that the verse, which continues to refer to those who pull sins with ropes of the wagon, refers to the evil inclination, which begins with light sins (like spider webs), and builds up to severe sins (like thick ropes).

The *Gemora* explains that the Torah details the lineage of Timna, to explain how she ended up a concubine of Elifaz, since Timna wanted to convert and join Avraham's family.

When she was rebuffed, she decided that although she was from royalty, she'd prefer to even be a concubine within Avraham's family than to be royalty to another family. Her union with Elifaz produced Amalek, who persecuted the Jews, since the forefathers should have not distanced her.

The *Gemora* explains that the Torah says that Reuven got the herbs during the wheat harvest, to show that righteous do not steal other's property, since it was only in the season of the harvest, when all are permitted to enter the fields.

The *Gemora* records different opinions on the exact identity of the *dudaim* herbs that Reuven brought his mother.

The *Gemora* praises one who studies Torah for its sake:

1. He makes peace in the Heavenly and worldly court, as the verse says that one who grabs onto the Torah makes peace. (Rabbi Alexandri)
2. He is considered to have built palaces in heaven and Earth, as the verse says that I (Hashem) put my word in your mouth, and I cover you with my shadow, to plant the heaven and found the Earth, i.e., build structures. (Rav)
3. He protects the whole world, as the verse (above) says that Hashem covers with his shadow (Rabbi Yochanan)
4. He hastens the redemption, as the verse (above) continues that this will lead to Hashem claiming the Jews as his nation (Levi).

The *Gemora* praises one who teaches his friend's child Torah:

1. He made the child, as the verse refers to those that Avraham and Sara taught as the souls that they made in Charan. (Rish Lakish)
2. He made the words of Torah, as the verse commands us to guard the words of the Torah *va'asisem osam – and do them*. The phrase can also mean *make them*. (Rabbi Elozar)
3. He made himself, as the verse can be read *va'asisem atem – and you will make yourselves*. (Rava)

Rabbi Avahu says that one who gets someone else to do a *mitzvah* is considered to have done the *mitzvah*, as Hashem refers to the Moshe's staff as the one that *Moshe* used to hit the Nile, although Moshe only told Aharon to do so.

Apikorus vs. Perverting Torah

The *braisa* above listed an *apikorus*, and one who perverts the Torah, which is more severe.

The *Gemora* records a dispute on the category of *apikorus*:

1. One who disgraces a Torah scholar. (Rebbi, Rabbi Chanina)
2. One who disgraces his friend in the presence of a Torah scholar. (Rabbi Yochanan and Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi)

The *Gemora* says that according the second opinion, the more severe category of perverting the Torah is one who disgraces a Torah scholar, while according to the first opinion, perverting the Torah refers to Menasheh, who mocked the words of the Torah itself.

The *Gemora* cites another version, which records these opinions about the category of one who perverts the Torah. The *Gemora* says that according to the first opinion, an *apikorus* is one who disgraces his friend in the presence of a Torah scholar.

The *Gemora* questions what the second opinion says an *apikorus* is:

1. Rav Yosef suggests it is one who complains that the Rabbis give us no benefit, since they just learn for their own sake.

Abaye says that this is considered one who perverts Torah, since the verse says that if not for Torah, the world would not exist.

Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak adds that the verse also says that Hashem would forgive Sedom for the sake of the righteous. Rather, this refers to a student sitting in front of his teacher, who remembers another topic related to the current discussion. Instead of saying, "So said Rebbi", he says "We said such".

2. Rava says that it is one who complains that the Sages do not supplement anything to the rules of the Torah, since they never permit a non kosher bird, nor forbid a kosher bird.

The *Gemora* relates that when a potential *tereifah* bird was brought to Rava, he would comment on his decision. If he permitted it, he would tell them that he was permitting something that they may have considered non kosher. If he forbade it, he would tell them that he was forbidding something they may have considered kosher.

3. Rav Pappa says it is one who refers to "those Rabbis", instead of the more formal, "the Rabbis of that place". The *Gemora* relates that Rav Papa once forgot and used the phrase "those Rabbis", and fasted in repentance.

INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

By: Reb Yechezkel Khayyat

No one but Hashem

The *Gemora* lists various explanations for the verse that refers to the reward which is unseen by anyone but Hashem. Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi says that this unseen reward is wine that has been aged since creation. The Maharsha explains that creation was *ex nihilo* – something from nothing, which is above the perception of anything in the world but Hashem. Since it was from creation, it preceded Adam before the sin, while he was still in Gan Eden, and could not even be perceived by him.

The *Sefer Ikarim* says that the comparison to wine is due to its relation to grapes. Someone who has never experienced wine cannot imagine that the grapes can produce something that is even more enjoyable. Similarly, one who exists in the physical world cannot perceive how physical acts of *mitzvos* can lead to a higher level of enjoyment in the spiritual realm.

As if he made the Torah

The *Gemora* says that one who teaches his friend's son Torah is considered to have made the Torah. The Maharsha explains based on the *Gemora* (Makos 10a) where Rebbi says that he learned most from his students, since their questions and comments forced him to sharpen his lessons. Therefore, the teaching of someone else “makes” the sharper understanding of Torah that the teacher has.

The Ben Yehoyada explains that the Sages say that one who learns but never teaches will ultimately forget his Torah. Therefore, by teaching someone else, he has “made” his Torah, by enabling it to remain with him.

Getting someone to do a Mitzvah

The *Gemora* says that one who gets someone else to do a *mitzvah* is considered the one who did the *mitzvah*. The *Gemora* proves this from Moshe's staff, which Hashem refers to as the staff with which Moshe hit the Nile. This statement was made when the Jews asked for water, and Hashem told Moshe to hit a rock with his staff. He refers to the hitting of the Nile, since the Jews said that the staff was only good for punishment, as it was used for the plagues. Hashem therefore told Moshe to take the same staff, and use it for kindness.

The Maharsha notes that the Jews could still have said that when Aharon used it, it was for punishment, and when Moshe used it, it would be for kindness. Therefore, Hashem referred to the staff that *Moshe* used to hit the Nile (since *he* got Aharon to hit it), to show that neither the staff nor the person limits the action, since Hashem is the one doing the action, and He can do either punishment or kindness.

Gan and Eden

By: Rabbi Binyomin Adler

The verse says that no one but Hashem ever saw the ultimate reward. Rabbi Chiya bar Abba quotes Rabbi Yochanan, who explained this verse refers to three limitations on the prophecies recorded by the prophets:

1. The prophets only referred to the Messianic era, but the world to come has never been perceived. The *Gemora* notes that this differs with Shmuel, who says that the Messianic era will be the same natural order, but with the Jews not subjugated by the nations.
2. The prophets only referred to repentant sinners, but the righteous who never sinned will receive a reward only perceived by Hashem. The *Gemora* notes that this differs with Rabbi Avahu, who says that repentant sinners are superior to righteous who never sinned.
3. The prophets referred to one who has favorable interactions

with Torah scholars, e.g., marrying off a daughter to one, and giving them business. However, only Hashem perceives the reward awaiting Torah scholars themselves.

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi explains that this reward that only Hashem perceives is wine aged since creation, while Raish Lakish explains it is the Eden region, as Adam only lived in its garden, but not the region itself.

It is interesting to note that the *Gemora* distinguishes between Eden and the Garden. We are apt to refer to the location of eternal reward as *Gan Eden*, the Garden of Eden. Is this a misnomer, or is there a deeper understanding concerning these distinct terminologies?

There is a kabalistic statement¹ that the word *oneg*², which means delight, is an acrostic for the words *Eden*, *Nahar*, and *Gan*. Although the explanation for this idea is beyond the scope of this exegesis, there is a fundamental concept that can be easily understood. The word *Eden* is defined as a form of pleasure, as it is said:³ *after I have withered shall I again have delicate (Edna) skin?* *Nahar* means river, and *Gan* means garden. What is the association between these three words? Pleasure has a source, and that is *Eden*, and that pleasure is continuous, like a flowing river. How does one arrive at this pleasure? We are familiar with the term *Oneg Shabbos*, which means delighting in the Sabbath. How does one derive pleasure from Shabbos? The Sfas Emes⁴ writes that the *Gemora*⁵ does not state that one who delights in the Shabbos for his personal pleasure merits all of his desires being fulfilled. Rather, it states that one who delights in the Shabbos will merit his desires being fulfilled. If one recognizes that the source of the pleasure is the Shabbos, which is the present that Hashem proffered to the Jewish People⁶, then he will be rewarded with the dividends of Shabbos.

It is important to recognize that Shabbos is not merely a day like any other day of the week. Regarding Shabbos it is said:⁷ *Hashem said to Moshe saying: Now you speak to the Children of Israel, saying: 'However, you must observe My Sabbaths, for it is a sign between Me and you for your generations, to know that I am Hashem, who makes you holy'.* Rabbi Yehonasan Eibshetz⁸ writes that because Shabbos is a protection from the nations of the world, one must be well versed in the laws of Shabbos, and furthermore, that he delights in the Shabbos.

¹ Zohar Breishis 1:26; See Rabbeinu Bachye Shemos 20:8, Rashi to Tehillim 46:5

² Spelled in Hebrew: ayin, nun, gimel

³ Breishis 18:6

⁴ Bamidbar 5738

⁵ Shabbos 118b

⁶ Ibid 10b

⁷ Shemos 31:12-13

⁸ Yaaros Devash Volume 2 Derush 3

With this idea we can explain what appears to be a discrepancy in Scripture. First it is said:⁹ *Hashem G-d planted a garden in Eden, to the east, and placed (vayasem) there the man whom He had formed.* In the subsequent verse it is said:¹⁰ *Hashem G-d took the man and placed him (vayanecheihu) in the Garden of Eden, to work it and to guard it.* Why in the first verse does it state *vayasem* and in the second verse the word *vayanecheihu* is used? The answer is that the Medrash states¹¹ that *vayanecheihu* is a reference to Shabbos, which is called *Yom Hamenucha*, a day of rest. Initially, Hashem placed Adam in the Garden without any responsibilities. This is similar to the ‘gift’ of Shabbos. Then Hashem willed that Adam appreciate the gift, and he gave him the commandment of Shabbos to fulfill. Adam was banished from Gan Eden before Shabbos. Apparently, in order for one to benefit from Shabbos, one has to understand its laws and appreciate the pleasure of this Holy Day. May we all merit the day that will be all Shabbos.

Wine

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi interpreted the verse *no eye has seen* to be said concerning wine preserved in its grapes since the six days of Creation. What is so significant about wine preserved in its grapes? In order to understand this cryptic statement, we must first examine the impact of wine in Judaism. The Vilna Gaon was of the opinion that one should not eat grapes on Rosh Hashanah¹². The reason for this is based on kabalistic teachings, but perhaps there is a simple understanding to this also. The Medrash¹³ states that according to one opinion, Chava squeezed grapes and gave the juice to Adam to drink. This was the sin of eating from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Bad. Adam and Chava were created on Rosh Hashanah,¹⁴ so it would follow that we should not eat grapes on that day as that would serve as a reminder of their sin. The difficulty with this explanation is that we drink wine on Rosh Hashanah, and from the Medrash it is clear that Chava gave Adam the juice from the grapes and not the grapes themselves.

Wine that is preserved in its grapes is a metaphor for modesty. After the flood, it is said:¹⁵ *Noach, the man of the earth, debased himself and planted a vineyard. He drank of the wine and became drunk, and he uncovered himself within his tent.* Rashi writes: it [*his tent*] is written *oholo*, and this alludes to the Ten Tribes who were called on the name of Shomron that is referred to as *Oholo*. The Ten Tribes were exiled because of wine, as it is said:¹⁶ *who drink wine out of bowls.... [anoint themselves with choicest oils, and are not pained by the destruction of Yosef. Therefore, they will now be exiled at the*

heads of the exiles, and the banquets of the haughty will cease]. The Maharal¹⁷ is bothered that the Medrash,¹⁸ which appears to be the source of Rashi’s words, does not use the word *oholo* to derive this teaching. The Medrash states that the Torah does not state *vayigal*, which would imply that Noach alone was affected by his nakedness. Rather, it states *vayisgal*, which implies that his nakedness affected his whole tent, i.e. all future generations¹⁹.

Perhaps we can suggest an answer to the Maharal’s question. Rashi specifically derived this exegesis from the word *oholo*, because there were two aspects to Noach’s disgrace. One element was that he was uncovered, and the second was that he was uncovered in his tent. The word *ohel* in Tanach refers to modesty²⁰. By intoxicating himself with wine, Noach left the arena of modesty. This behavior was a sign that his descendants would also forsake the modest lifestyle and be exiled. We are accustomed to viewing modesty in areas of dress and behavior. There is another modesty, and that is the inner modesty of a person, as it is said:²¹ *when a willful sinner comes, shame comes, but with modest ones comes wisdom.* This modesty is symbolized by wine that is preserved in its grapes. When the Medrash states that Chava squeezed grapes and gave Adam the juice to drink, this means that she was shedding the modesty of wisdom that had been granted to them by Hashem. It is said:²² *and the woman perceived that the tree was good for eating and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable as a means to wisdom, and she took of its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they realized that they were naked; and they sewed together a fig leaf and made themselves aprons.* It is fascinating that upon eating from the fruit of the tree, it states that their eyes were opened (*vatipukachna*). This is similar to what the *Gemora*²³ states: wine and scents enlighten (*pikchin*). In this case, the wine opened their eyes and they realized that they had shed the cloak of inner modesty. The *Gemora* states²⁴ enter wine, exit secret. This statement has many ramifications, but in the simple sense it can be understood to mean that by imbibing wine, the secret of creation departs.

Now we can begin to comprehend the statement of the *Gemora*: What is that which *no eye has seen*? Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: This is wine preserved in its grapes since the six days of Creation. The wisdom of creation will only be revealed in the World to Come. The experience of Adam and Chava in Gan Eden was akin to the World to Come, as the *Gemora*

⁹ Breishis 2:8

¹⁰ Ibid verse 15

¹¹ Yalkut Shimoni Breishis 2: 22

¹² Maaseh Rav

¹³ Breishis Rabbah 19:5; see also Sanhedrin 70a

¹⁴ See Rosh Hashanah 27a

¹⁵ Breishis 9:19-20

¹⁶ Amos 6:6

¹⁷ Gur Aryeh Ibid

¹⁸ Breishis Rabbah 36:4

¹⁹ Yefe Toar ibid

²⁰ An example of this is when the angels queried Avrohom Avinu as to Sarah’s whereabouts, he responded (Breishis 18:9) *hinei b’ohel*, “behold, in the tent”

²¹ Mishlei 11:2

²² Breishis 3:6-7

²³ Sanhedrin 70a

²⁴ Ibid

states further: Rish Lakish says: This is Eden, which no eye has ever seen. The Arizal²⁵ writes that had Adam waited until Shabbos to eat from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Bad, he never would have been exiled from Gan Eden. The lack of inner modesty, i.e. concealing the wisdom that Hashem had bestowed upon them, was what catalyzed their exile. Similarly, the lack of modesty displayed by Noach affected the future generations, and they went into exile.

When we recite Kiddush on Friday night, it is important to have in mind that we are sanctifying the Shabbos through wine, and this will lead to the rectification of Adam and Chava's sin and the ultimate redemption speedily in our days.

Menasheh

The *braisa* says that the verse that punishes the soul that rebels with a raised hand is referring to Menasheh the son of Chizkiya, who would sit and make mocking explanations of the Torah. He asked why the Torah needed to say that Timna (the concubine of Elifaz, the son of Eisav) was the sister of Lotan? Further, he asked why the Torah, in relating the story of Reuven who brought herbs to his mother, states that it was during the wheat harvest? A heavenly voice came out and said that once Menasheh has cast aspersions on the Torah of Moshe, if Hashem does not respond, people will think the Torah is as false as Menasheh. The verse that says woe to those who pull sin by the ropes of emptiness is referring to Menasheh, who sinned for no benefit (i.e., emptiness). Rabbi Asi explains that the verse, which continues to refer to those who pull sins with ropes of the wagon, refers to the evil inclination, which begins with light sins (like spider webs), and builds up to severe sins (like thick ropes).

There is a great difficulty with the statement of the *Gemora* regarding Menasheh. Further on²⁶ we learn that Menasheh used to study, i.e. expound fifty-five different facets of meaning in the book of Vayikra, corresponding to the number of years of his reign. If Menasheh was so learned and proficient in expounding on the laws of the sacrifices, we can assume that he was capable of expounding on narratives in the book of Breishis.

The Medrash²⁷ states that Hashem cherished the speech of the servants of the Patriarchs more than the Torah of their descendants. Proof of this is the fact that the portion in the Torah concerning the episode of Eliezer with Rivkah is recorded twice, while many detailed laws are only alluded to in the Torah. Surely Menasheh understood that the book of Breishis contained invaluable lessons in every word. How then are we to comprehend his ridiculing of Moshe and these verses?

²⁵ Shaar Hakavanos Drushei Rosh Hashanah Drush 1

²⁶ Sanhedrin 103b

²⁷ Breishis Rabbah 60:8

The Rambam²⁸ offers us an invaluable insight into understanding what appear to be trivial narratives that are recorded in the Torah. The Rambam writes that every episode or recording of the genealogy of a family in the Torah is to teach us a lesson. The Torah records the genealogy of the family of Seir, of which Timnah was a part, to instruct us that the nation of Amalek must be obliterated. However, we are prohibited from annihilating the family of Esav that is not descended from Amalek.

What was Menasheh attempting to do by expounding on the scriptural narratives in a ridiculous fashion? Menasheh chose two verses that appear to have no significance, but in reality, both verses underscore an important principle in Judaism. It is said:²⁹ *and Timnah was a concubine of Eliphaz*. We will see in the *Gemora* further on that Timnah sought to convert to the faith of Avraham. In a sense, she was allowing herself to be *hefker*, i.e. public property. Normally, someone who is of noble lineage views others as being inferior. Converts to Judaism, however, are often willing to sacrifice all their materialistic gains to become part of the Jewish People. This is reflected in *Yisro*, *Rachav*, and *Rus*, to mention but a few. Timnah also proclaimed, "it is better to be a maidservant to this nation (Avraham's faith) than to be a princess to any other nation. She was even willing to become a concubine to Eliphaz, who was instructed by his father Esav to kill Yaakov. Her ambition in life was to cleave to the family of Avraham.

In the same vein, it is said:³⁰ *Reuven went out in the days of the wheat harvest; he found dudaim in the field*. The *Gemora*³¹ states that from here we learn that righteous people are careful not to stretch forth their hands in acts of robbery. This is an incredible lesson for us that Reuven, the son of Yaakov Avinu, did not succumb to thievery. The *Gemora*³² states that even if we had not received the Torah, we would still learn modesty from the cat, not to steal from the ant, morality from the dove, and proper marital conduct from the rooster. If this is what we would know without having received the Torah, can we begin to imagine the lessons that are to be gained from the words of the Holy Torah? The Ramban³³ writes that the whole Torah is comprised of the names of Hashem. It is impossible to fathom the secrets that lie within each word of the Torah. For one to appreciate the holiness of the Torah, one has to make himself like *hefker*. Menasheh was deficient in the character trait of humility. To learn Torah correctly, without being tempted to ridicule the Torah and the giver of the Torah, one has to be humble like Moshe, of whom it is said:³⁴ *now the man Moshe was exceedingly humble, more than any person on the face of the earth*. When we study Torah, we should always bear in

²⁸ Moreh Nevuchim 3:50

²⁹ Breishis 36:22

³⁰ Ibid 30:14

³¹ Sanhedrin 99b

³² Eiruvim

³³ Introduction to commentary on Chumash, based on Zohar

Yisro 87:1

³⁴ Bamidbar 12:3

mind that every word has significance. Only then can we learn the timeless values that Hashem intended for us. This was the prayer of Dovid HaMelech, who requested from Hashem:³⁵ *unveil my eyes that I may perceive wonders from your Torah.*

Dudaim

The essentials of the episode involving the dudaim, a fertility-inducing plant, are that Reuven gave them to his mother Leah, who then gave them to her sister Rachel in exchange for the latter's night with Yaakov. The result of that union was the birth of Yissachar, the progenitor of one of the twelve tribes of Israel.

The *Gemora* derives from here the lesson that righteous people are careful not to stretch forth their hands in acts of robbery. The fact that Reuven found the dudaim at the time of the wheat harvest is but a minor detail. Once again, Menashehh argued, the inclusion of such unnecessary information indicates Moshe's inadequacy as the writer of the Torah.

What is the significance of Reuven finding dudaim in the field? How can we understand the magnitude of Reuven's actions? The answer to these questions can be found in a puzzling Medrash that has various interpretations, and the words of the Medrash have a special connection to the festival of Chanukah. The Medrash³⁶ states regarding the verse where it is said:³⁷ *Hadudaim nasnu reiach*, all my baskets, good and bad, emit a fragrance, refers to Reuven, who saved Yosef from the pit. *V'al pesacheinu kol megadim*, all at our doors have the precious fruits of comely deeds, this is the Chanukah light. *Chadashim gam yeshanim dodi tzafanti loch*, both the scribes' new ordinances and the Torah's timeless wisdom, refers to the Written Law and the Oral Law.

What is the connection between Reuven's deed and the miracle of Chanukah? Reuven was not merely offering his mother a present from the field. It is said:³⁸ he found dudaim in the field. The Torah chooses its words carefully. We find that when Yaakov appeared before Yitzchak to receive the blessings, it is said:³⁹ so he drew close and kissed him; he smelled the fragrance of his garments and blessed him; he said, "see, the fragrance of my son is like the fragrance of a field which Hashem has blessed." The *Gemora*⁴⁰ states that Yitzchak referred to the Bais HaMikdash as *sadeh*, a field. When Yitzchak instructed Esav to bring him food in order that he should bless him, it is said:⁴¹ and he said, "now, sharpen, if you please, your gear-your sword and your bow-and go out to the

field and hunt game for me." The field that Yitzchak mentioned refers to the Bais HaMikdash. It follows that when Yitzchak smelled the fragrance of Yaakov, he was inhaling the fragrance of the Bais HaMikdash.⁴²

Reuven found dudaim in the field. Reuven understood that his mother Leah was intent on bearing as many of the twelve tribes as she was capable of. He therefore sought to present her with dudaim that were holy and were not tainted by foreign influence. This is the meaning of the statement that righteous people are careful not to stretch forth their hands in acts of robbery. When Yitzchak instructed Esav to bring him food, he said, "Go out to the field." Rashi⁴³ comments that Yitzchak was implying that Esav should bring him food from *hefker*, the public domain. Esav, however, set out with the intention of hunting game, and if he were unsuccessful, then he would even steal to achieve his goal.

The miracle of Chanukah bears a striking parallel to the deed of Reuven. The *Gemora*⁴⁴ states: What blessing do we recite on the lighting of the Chanukah Menorah? Blessed are You, Hashem our G-d, King of the universe, Who has sanctified us with His commandments, and has commanded us to kindle the Chanukah light. Where is the source in the Torah for this commandment? One opinion is that the source is from the verse that states:⁴⁵ [according to the teaching that they will teach you and according to the judgment that they will say to you, shall you do]; you shall not deviate from the word that they will tell you, right or left. The second opinion is that the source is from the verse that states:⁴⁶ [remember the days of yore, understand the years of generation after generation.] Ask your father and he will relate it to you, your elders and they will tell you.

Why is it necessary for the *Gemora* to quote two opinions for the source of one *mitzvah*? The lesson is very profound. Normally we say that one cannot add on a *mitzvah* to the Torah. In a sense, adding or detracting from the mitzvos of the Torah is akin to stealing. The act of stealing is defined as taking an object without the owner's permission. If one were to add on to or detract from the mitzvos of the Torah, he would be stealing from Hashem. The Torah bestowed the sages with the authority to add a *mitzvah* such as lighting the Menorah on Chanukah. This phenomenon should not be viewed as an exercise of power. Rather, it reflects the control that the Sages exhibit in not abusing their privileges by adding on more mitzvos to the Torah. Refraining from stealing is indicative of holiness and recognizing that everything in this world belongs to Hashem. This is the lesson of Reuven bringing dudaim from the field, and in the Sages instituting the lighting of the Chanukah candles.

³⁵ Tehillim 119:18

³⁶ Medrash Pliah (recorded as Medrash Shir HaShirim Rabbah, but not found in our editions of the Medrash Rabbah)

³⁷ Shir HaShirim 7:14

³⁸ Breishis 30:14

³⁹ Ibid 27:27

⁴⁰ Pesachim 88a

⁴¹ Breishis 27:3

⁴² HaKesav V'haKabalah ibid verse 4

⁴³ Breishis 27:3 and verse 5

⁴⁴ Shabbos 23a

⁴⁵ Devarim 17:11

⁴⁶ Ibid 32:7

At first glance, the *Gemora* seems to be implying that there is a great lesson to be derived from the fact that Timna desired to convert to the faith of Avraham. In the end, however, it appears that her wish was denied and she gave birth to Amalek, the archenemy of the Jewish People. How can these two ideas be reconciled?

Rav Tzadok HaKohen⁴⁷ writes that the essence of Amalek is expressed in the verse where it is said:⁴⁸ *Amalek is the first among nations, but its end will be eternal destruction*. Amalek is similar to the Jewish People in that both nations are balanced. Both nations have various capabilities, but the Jewish People subjugate their abilities to the will of Hashem. This is a philosophy that Amalek does not conform to. Amalek stands for effort in all areas of this world. This explains why we do not accept converts from Amalek⁴⁹, and also why gentiles will not be allowed to convert in the Messianic Era⁵⁰. Amalek attempts to emulate the Jewish People, but they are lacking in true conviction. This is why the Patriarchs did not accept Timna as a convert. Eliphaz, the son of Esav, readily accepted her. Although Eliphaz was a prophet⁵¹, he exercised his freedom of choice and was not willing to humble himself before the will of Hashem. This is the antithesis of the Jewish People, who suppress all their desires to fulfill the will of Hashem. Timna wished to convert to the faith of Avraham, and she was even willing to be a maidservant to Eliphaz. Nonetheless, the Patriarchs were so pure and void of ulterior motives that they could not accept her conversion. This decision was the catalyst that led to the birth of Amalek, and the goal of Amalek is to put forth every effort in this world. This is the homiletic interpretation of the verses:⁵² *Remember what Amalek did to you, on the way when you were leaving Egypt, that he happened upon you on the way, and he struck those of you who were hindmost, all the weaklings at your rear, when you were faint and exhausted, and he did not fear G-d. It shall be that when Hashem, your G-d, gives you rest from all your enemies all around...* On the way is a reference to man's efforts in this world, and the Jewish People left Egypt to abandon the lifestyle of man's effort and to rely solely on Hashem. When the Jewish People have vanquished all the nations with this philosophy, then Amalek will arise and attack at the time of the Jewish People's vulnerability.

The words of Rav Tzadok are complemented by the words of the Shelah⁵³ who writes that there is no difference between the verse of⁵⁴ *Shema Yisroel* and the verse⁵⁵ *and Timna was a concubine of Eliphaz*. The Shelah writes that this idea is reflected in the word *Timna*, which forms the acrostic of the

⁴⁷ Resisei Laylah 37

⁴⁸ Bamidbar 24:20

⁴⁹ Mechilta end of Bashalach

⁵⁰ Yevamos 24b

⁵¹ See Rashi Iyov 4:1

⁵² Devarim 25:17-19

⁵³ Introduction to Torah Shebiksav Ohr Chodosh 1

⁵⁴ Devarim 6:4

⁵⁵ Breishis 36:12

verse⁵⁶ [*Toras Hashem*] *Temimah Mishivas Nefesh Edus...* the Torah of Hashem is perfect, restoring the soul; the testimony [of Hashem is trustworthy, making the simple wise].

To summarize, the Torah of Hashem is perfect, and all our studies and every one of our actions has to reflect this ideology. If one has other motives, even while studying Torah or performing a *mitzvah*, he is already suspect of belonging to the camp of Amalek, and will only cause distress for the Jewish People. May Hashem purify our hearts to serve Him sincerely.

Teaching Torah

The *Gemora* praises one who teaches his friend's child Torah:

1. He made the child, as the verse refers to those that Avraham and Sara taught as the souls that they made in Charan (Raish Lakish).
2. He made the words of Torah, as the verse commands us to guard the words of the Torah *va'asisem osam – and do them*. The phrase can also mean *make them*. (Rabbi Elazar)
3. He made himself, as the verse can be read *va'asisem atem – and you will make yourselves* (Rava)

One may wonder why the Torah felt it necessary to point out in the beginning of Avraham Avinu's quest in life the fact that he taught others Torah? Furthermore, why did Onkelos deviate from his normal practice of rendering the simple translation of the verse and instead interpreted the words *and the people they made in Charan* to mean, "The people [Avraham and Sarah] made subject to the Torah in Charan" (by converting them to Avraham's faith)?

The Maharsha⁵⁷ writes that teaching someone Torah is elevating the person from the status of an animal to a human being. Without Torah study, there is essentially no distinction between man and animal. We are often misled to believe that one who studies Torah is diligent, scholarly, and perhaps blessed with special abilities. This *Gemora* teaches us otherwise.

There is a fascinating idea that is reflected in Avraham teaching Torah to the people he converted to his faith. The Medrash⁵⁸ states regarding the verse: *these are the products of the heaven and the earth when they were created on the day that Hashem G-d made earth and heaven*.⁵⁹ Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korcha said: *when they were created, behiborom* can be read *b'Avraham*, in the merit of Avraham. What is the message in the words of the Medrash? Why was the world created in the merit of Avraham? Was it merely because the letters of *behiborom* and *b'Avraham* are identical⁶⁰? There is surely a profound lesson to be derived from this deceptively simple

⁵⁶ Tehillim 19:8-9

⁵⁷ See also Maharal in Nesivos Olam Nesiv HaTorah Perek 8

⁵⁸ Breishis Rabbah 12:9

⁵⁹ Breishis 2:4

⁶⁰ Matnos Kehunah Ibid

Medrash. Upon examining the verse that is the basis of the Medrash, we will notice that it is said: *on the day that Hashem G-d made earth and heaven*. Initially the verse mentions creation, and then it uses the term “made”. What is the difference between creation and the making of something?

Concerning the beautiful woman who is taken captive by a Jewish warrior, it is said:⁶¹ *you shall bring her to the midst of your house; she shall shave her head and let her nails grow*. Rashi⁶² comments: *and let her nails grow*: she should let them grow, in order to make her despised. On the verse:⁶³ *so G-d made the firmament*, Rashi⁶⁴ writes: Hashem set it straight, and that is its making, as it is said:⁶⁵ *and let her nails grow*. It appears that the words of Rashi are contradictory⁶⁶. In reality, there is a dispute in the *Gemora*⁶⁷ as to the meaning of the words *and let her nails grow*. Rabbi Eliezer is of the opinion that the word *v'osesoh* means to cut her nails, and Rabbi Akiva posits that it means to grow them. Nonetheless, it can be said that Rashi is teaching us that regarding creation, there is an aspect of rectification. When one makes something, this implies that he is perfecting something that until now was either non-existent or was deficient. This construction is also a form of growth. Similarly, when one studies Torah, he is creating through rectification and growth. This idea is alluded to in the Medrash⁶⁸ that states: there is no grass that does not have a constellation (*Mazel*) in heaven that hits it and tells it to grow. The grass is created and is prompted to grow. One must realize that by taking on the responsibility of studying Torah, he is regarded as making himself into an existing entity. This is why the Medrash states that the world was created in the merit of Avraham. He not only was responsible for the creation of people, i.e. making them into human beings, but he nurtured them and allowed them to grow in the ways of Hashem. With this penetrating insight, we should begin to view our Torah study as a partnership in creation. Then Hashem will assist us in reaching our true potential.

⁶¹ Devarim 21:12

⁶² Ibid

⁶³ Breishis 1:7

⁶⁴ Ibid

⁶⁵ Devarim 21:12

⁶⁶ See Mizrachi, Gur Aryeh to Breishis 1:7

⁶⁷ Yevamos 48

⁶⁸ Breishis Rabbah 10:6