

Timely Torah, March 5<sup>th</sup> 2023 Purim 5783

## 1. TB Megillah 16a

"וַיִּפֶּח הָמֶן אֶת הַלְּבוּשׁ וְאֶת הַפּוּס". אֲזַל אַשְּׁבְּחִיה דְּיָתְבִי רַבְּנַן קַמֵּיה וּמַּחְוֵי לְהוּ לְרַבְּנַן: הַאי לְרַבְּנַן, בֵּיון דְּחַוְיֵיה מָרְדְּכִי דְאַפֵּיק לְקְבְלֵיה וְסוּסְיָא מֵיחַד בִּירֵה, מִירְתַת. אֲמַר לְהוּ לְרַבְּנַן: הַאי לְרַבְּנַן, בִּיון דְּחַוְיֵיה מָרְדְּכִי לְּאָבִי לְּבְּלִיה וְסוּסְיָא מֵיחַד בְּיַדִּיה, מִירְתַת. אֲמָה נְתְעַמֵּף מְרְדְּכִי רְשִׁרְבְי לְבְּלוֹתֵיה.

The Gemara describes what occurred as Haman went to follow the king's orders, as the verse states: "Then Haman took the apparel and the horse" (Esther 6:11).

When he went, he found Mordecai as the Sages were sitting before him, and he was demonstrating to them the halakhot of the handful, i.e., the scooping out of a handful of flour from the meal—offering in order to burn it on the altar. Once Mordecai saw him coming toward him with his horse's reins held in his hands, he became frightened, and he said to the Sages: This evil man has come to kill me. Go away from him so that you should not get burnt from his coals, i.e., that

אֲמֵר לְהוּ: בְּמָאי עָסְקִיתוּ? אֲמֵרוּ לֵיהּ: בִּוְמֵן שֶׁבֵּית הַמִּקְדֵּשׁ קַנִּים, מֵאן דִּמְנַדֵּב מִנְחָה מַיְיתֵי מְלֵי קוּמְצִיה דְסוּלְתָא וּמִתְבַּפֵּר לֵיהּ. אֲמֵר לְהוּ: אֲתָא מְלֵי קוּמְצֵי קִמְהָא דִּיְדְכוּ וְדָחֵי עַשְּׁרָה אַלְפֵּי בַּבְּרִי כַסָבָּא דִידִי. אָמֵר לֵיהּ: רַשָּׁע, עָבָד שֵׁקָנָה נָכָסִים, עָבֵד לְמִי וּנָכַסִים לְמִי?

you should not suffer harm as well. At that moment Mordecai wrapped himself in his prayer shawl and stood up to pray. Haman came over to where they were and

sat down before them and waited until Mordecai finished his prayer.

In the interim, as he waited, Haman said to the other Sages: With what were you occupied? They said to him: When the Temple is standing, one who pledges a meal—offering would bring a handful of fine flour and achieve atonement with it. He said to them: Your handful of fine flour has come and cast aside my ten thousand pieces of silver, which I had pledged toward the destruction of the Jewish people. When Mordecai finished praying, he said to Haman: Wicked man, when a slave buys property, to whom belongs the slave and to whom belongs the property? As I once bought you as a slave, what silver can be yours?

2. Rashi, ad loc.

:הלכות קמיצה - דורש בענינו של יום וששה עשר בניסן היה הוא יום תנופת העומר:

3. Vayikra 2:1

וְנָפֶשׁ בִּי־מַקְרִיב קַרְבַּן מִנְחָה לִיהוָה סְלֶת יִהְיָה קּרְבָּגוֹ וְיָצֵק עָלֶיהָ שֶׁמֶו וְנָתַן עָלֶיה לְבֹנָה: When a person presents an offering of meal to יהוה: The offering shall be of choice flour; the offerer shall pour oil upon it, lay frankincense on it,

#### 4. TB, Menachos 104b

אמר ר' יצחק מפני מה נשתנית מנחה שנאמר בה נפש אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא מי דרכו להביא מנחה עני מעלה אני עליו כאילו הקריב נפשו לפני

The Gemara cites another comment about the fact that the Torah introduces the voluntary meal offering by emphasizing that it is brought by an individual. Rabbi Yitzḥak says: For what reason is the meal offering different from other offerings in that the term "an individual [nefesh]" is stated with regard to it? The Holy One, Blessed be He, said: Whose practice is it to bring a meal offering? It is that of a poor individual; and I will ascribe him credit as if he offered up his soul [nafsho] in front of Me.

## Theory 1: Tzedakah as a Kapara

#### 5. Menachos 97a

שאני שולחן דרחמנא קרייה עץ שנאמר (יחזקאל מא, כב) המזבח עץ שלש אמות גבוה ארכו שאני שולחן דרחמנא קרייה עץ שנאמר (יחזקאל מא, כב) המזבח עץ שליה ארכו שתים אמות ומקצעות לו וארכו וקירותיו עץ וידבר אלי זה השולחן אשר לפני ה'
The Gemara answers: The Table is different, because the Merciful One called it wood, as it is stated: "The altar was of wood, three cubits high, and its length two cubits, and so its corners; and its length, and its walls were also of wood, and he said to me: This is the Table that is before the Lord" (Ezekiel 41:22). This verse is referring to the shewbread Table, and it describes it as being made of wood, even though the wood was not visible. This indicates that its status is like that of all

wooden vessels, which are not susceptible to impurity unless they are carried both when empty and when full.

פתח במזבח וסיים בשולחן ר' יוחנן ור' אלעזר דאמרי תרוייהו בזמן שבית המקדש קיים מזבח מכפר על אדם ועכשיו שאין בית המקדש קיים שולחנו של אדם מכפר עליו:

The Gemara challenges: Why does the verse begin with the word "altar" and conclude with the word "Table," even though both terms are referring to the same item? Rabbi Yoḥanan and Rabbi Elazar both say the following interpretation: When the Temple is standing, the altar effects atonement for the transgressions of a person, but now that the Temple is not standing, a person's table effects atonement for his transgressions, if he provides for the poor and needy from the food on his table.

#### **Proof:**

6. TB Sukkah 49b

אָפֵר רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר: גְּרוֹל הָעוֹשֶׁה צְּדָקָה יוֹתֵר מִכְּל הַקְּרְבָּנוֹת, שֶׁנֶאֲמֵר: "עֲשֹׁה צְּדְקָה וּמִיּשְׁכָּם נִבְּחָר שְׁנָבְּי יִנְרְעוּ לְכֶּם לְּהֹי מִוְּבְחֹי. וְאָפֵר רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר: גְּרוֹלָה גְּמִילּוֹת חֲסָבִים יוֹתֵר מִן הַצְּדְקָה, שֶׁנֶאֲמֵר: "זְרְעוּ לְכֶּם לָּהֹי מִוֹבְע – וַבְּאי אוֹכֵל. לְבִּי הְמָרוֹ וְבְּצִי הְמֶרִי. אִם אָרָם וּוֹרֵע – סְפֵּק אוֹכֵל סְפֵּק אֵינוֹ אוֹכֵל, אָרָם קוֹצֵר – וַדָּאי אוֹכֵל. Rabbi Elazar said: One who performs acts of charity is greater than one who sacrifices all types of offerings, as it is stated: "To perform charity and justice is more acceptable to the Lord than an offering" (Proverbs 21:3), including all types of offerings. And Rabbi Elazar said: Acts of kindness, assisting someone in need, are greater than charity, as it is stated: "Sow to yourselves according to charity, and reap according to kindness" (Hosea 10:12). This means: If a person sows, it is uncertain whether he will eat or whether he will not eat, since much can go wrong before the seed becomes food. However, if a person reaps, he certainly eats. In this verse, charity is likened to sowing, while acts of kindness are likened to reaping.

Apiryon: In the absence of the Beis Hamikdash we no longer have korbanos, instead we share of our table to the poor.

7. TB Bava Basra 10a

תּגְיָא הָיָה רַבִּי מֵאִיר אוֹמֵר יֵשׁ לוֹ לְבַעַל הַדִּין לַהֲשִּׁיבְדּ וְלוֹמֵר לְדּ אִם אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אוֹהֵב עֲגִיִּים הוּא מִּבְּנִי מָה אֵינוֹ מְפַרְנְסָן אֱמוֹר לוֹ כְּדֵי שָׁנִיצוֹל אָנוּ בָהֶן מִדִּינָה שֶׁל גִּיהנָם וְזוֹ שְׁאֵלְ מוֹרְנוּסְרוּפוּם הָרָשָׁע אֶת רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא אִם אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אוֹהֵב עֲנִיִּים הוּא מִפְּנֵי מָה אֵינוֹ מְפַרְנְסָם אָמֵר לוֹ בָּדִי שֵׁנִיצוֹל אָנוּ בָּהֵן מִדִּינָה שֵׁל גֵּיהָנָם

§ It is taught in a baraita: Rabbi Meir would say: An opponent may bring an argument against you and say to you: If your God loves the poor, for what reason does He not support them Himself? In such a case, say to him: He commands us to act as His agents in sustaining the poor, so that through them we will be credited with the performance of mitzvot and therefore be saved from the judgment of Gehenna. And this is the question that Turnus Rufus the wicked asked Rabbi

Akiva: If your God loves the poor, for what reason does He not support them Himself? Rabbi Akiva said to him: He commands us to sustain the poor, so that through them and the charity we give them we will be saved from the judgment of Gehenna.

אָמַר לוֹ [אַדְרַבָּה] זוֹ שֶׁמְּחַיַּיבְתָּן לְגִיהִנָּם אֶמְשׁוֹל לְךְּ מָשָׁל לְמָה הַדְּבָר דּוֹמֶה לְמֶלֶדְ בָּשְׁר וָדָם שֶׁבָּעֵם עַל עַבְדּוֹ וַחֲבָשׁוֹ בְּבֵית הָאֲסוּרִין וְצִיָּה עָלָיו שָׁלֹא לְהַאָּכִילוֹ וְשֵׁלֹא לְהַשְׁקוֹתוֹ וְהָלֵךְ אָדָם אֶחָד וְהָאֶבִילוֹ וְהִשְׁקָהוּ בְּשֶׁשְּׁמַע הַמֶּלֶךְ לֹא כּוֹעֵם עָלָיו וְאַתֶּם קְרוּיִן עֲבָדִים שֶׁנָּאֲמֵר כִּי לִי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עבדים

Turnus Rufus said to Rabbi Akiva: On the contrary, it is this charity which condemns you, the Jewish people, to Gehenna because you give it. I will illustrate this to you with a parable. To what is this matter comparable? It is comparable to a king of flesh and blood who was angry with his slave and put him in prison and ordered that he should not be fed or given to drink. And one person went ahead and fed him and gave him to drink. If the king heard about this, would he not be angry with that person? And you, after all, are called slaves, as it is stated: "For the children of Israel are slaves to Me" (Leviticus 25:55). If God decreed that a certain person should be impoverished, one who gives him charity defies the will of God.

אָמַר לוֹ רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא אֶמְשׁוֹל לְךְּ מְשָׁל לְמָה הַדְּבָר דּוֹמֶה לְמֶלֶךְ בָּשָׂר וָדָם שֶׁבָּעַם עַל בְּנוֹ וַחֲבְשׁוֹ בְּבִית הָאֲסוּרִין וְצִּוָּה עָלָיו שֶׁלֹא לְהַאֲבִילוֹ וְשֶׁלֹא לְהַשְּׁקוֹתוֹ וְהָלַךְ אָדָם אֶחָד וְהָאֱבִילוֹ וְהִשְּׁקְהוּ בִּשִּׁשַׂמֵע הַמֵּלֶךְ לֹא דּוֹרוֹן מִשַּׁנֵּר לוֹ וַאֲנַן קרוּיִן בָּנִים דְּכִתִיב בָּנִים אַתֵּם לַה׳ אֱלֹהֵיבֵם

Rabbi Akiva said to Turnus Rufus: I will illustrate the opposite to you with a different parable. To what is this matter comparable? It is comparable to a king of flesh and blood who was angry with his son and put him in prison and ordered that he should not be fed or given to drink. And one person went ahead and fed him and gave him to drink. If the king heard about this once his anger abated, would he not react by sending that person a gift? And we are called sons, as it is written: "You are sons of the Lord your God" (Deuteronomy 14:1).

#### 8. Mishna Torah, Hilchos Megilah 2:17

מוּטָב לָאָדָם לְהַרְבּוֹת בְּמַתְּנוֹת אֶבְיוֹנִים מִלְּהַרְבּוֹת בִּסְעֻדָּתוֹ וּבְשִׁלּוּחַ מָנוֹת לְרַעִיו. שֶׁאֵין שֶׁם שִׁמְחָה גְּדוֹלָה וּמְפֹאָרָה אֶלָּא לְשַׂמֵּח לֵב עֲנִיִּים וִיתוֹמִים וְאַלְמָנוֹת וְגַרִים. שֶׁהַמְשֹׁמֵח לֵב הָאֵמְלָלִים הָאֵלּוּ דּוֹמֶה לִשְׁכִינָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמֵר (ישעיה נז טו) "לְהַחְיוֹת רוּח שְׁפָלִים וּלְהַחֵיוֹת לֵב נִדְכָּאִים":

It is preferable for a person to be more liberal with his donations to the poor than to be lavish in his preparation of the Purim feast or in sending portions to his friends. For there is no greater and more splendid happiness than to gladden the hearts of the poor, the orphans, the widows, and the converts.

One who brings happiness to the hearts of these unfortunate individuals resembles the Divine Presence, which Isaiah 57:15 describes as having the tendency "to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive those with broken hearts."

# Theory 2: The Value of Purpose

9. Ohr Gedaliyahu, Terumah

ועיקר השראת השכינה שהיחה במשכן היתה ע"י הנדיבות לב, וכמו שכחיב (שה"ש ני י"ח) "עמודיו עשה כסף וגר תוכו רלוף אהבה", שהתוך של הביהמ"ק כיי חכבת בני ישרחל, הנדיבות הלב של כלל ישראל, ואף שהחילוניות של המשכן היתה העמודים של כסף ורפידתו זהב, אבל החוך **– הפנימיות – היחה האהבה, הבריח** התיכון שהיי מחבר הכל ושעל ידו היחה השרחת השכינה במשכן היי החהבה שבה נדבו ישראל להמשכן, ובעל הנחיבות בספרו לרור המור מפרש רלוף אהבה מלשון גחלת [ערי ישערי וי], "א ברענידיקע אהבה", וזה כיי הקיום של המשכן, התוך והפנימיות שעל ידה שרתה השכינה במעשה ידיהם, ותוכו רלוף אהבה הוא מלשון רלפה, שכמו ברופה הוא מה שמורפת את כל הבית ומחחדו יחד, כן החהבה של כלל ישרחל היח כתוך המחתד את המשכן.

### 10. Alan Paton

"When I go up there, which is my intention, the Big Judge will say to me, Where are your wounds? and if I say I haven't any, he will say, Was there nothing to fight for? I couldn't face that question."