

מסכת תענית · דף ל"א

Elucidated Talmud · Statement and Proof · Navy & Gold Edition

THE SUGYA

We begin this final segment of the maseches by learning about the incredible simcha of the fifteenth of Av. The Gemara brings down the beautiful chassadim of Hashem on this day, including the miracle that the holy bodies of the slain of Beitar did not decompose and were finally brought to a proper Jewish burial, which is why the Chachamim established the brachah of "HaTov VeHaMeitiv" in Birkas HaMazon. We also learn about the "day of the breaking of the scythe," when they stopped cutting wood for the Mizbe'ach because the sun's strength began to weaken, teaching us a powerful lesson about utilizing the longer nights to add to our nightly Torah study to merit long life.

We then move into the beautiful and moving description of the daughters of Yerushalayim dancing in the vineyards to find their shidduchim. In a beautiful display of ahavas Yisrael and sensitivity, the daughters of Israel—from the daughter of the Kohen Gadol to the simplest family—would borrow white garments from one another so as not to embarrass anyone who did not have her own. The Gemara details the holy intentions of these daughters as they spoke to the young men, encouraging them to look for true yiras Shamayim, noble family lineage, and marriages built purely for the sake of Heaven.

All introductions, summaries, and contextual notes are the editor's commentary and are not part of the original text.

EXPLANATION

לְאִיזָה שְׂיָרְצוּ יַעֲלוּ.

The members of the tribes were permitted to travel; **to whichever place that they wished, they could ascend**, whether to Yerushalayim or to other cities.

STATEMENT

רַב מַתְנָה אָמַר: יוֹם שְׁנִתְּנוּ הָרוּגֵי בֵּיתֵר לְקִבּוּרָהּ.

Rav Mattana said: The fifteenth of Av was the **day that the slain of Beitar were given over for burial**, after they had lain in the open for many years.

STATEMENT

וְאָמַר רַב מַתְנָה: אוֹתוֹ יוֹם שְׁנִתְּנוּ הָרוּגֵי בֵּיתֵר לְקִבּוּרָהּ, תִּקְּנוּ בְּיָבֵנָה "הַטּוֹב וְהַמֵּיטִיב",

And Rav Mattana said: On that very day that the slain of Beitar were given over for burial, the Sages instituted in Yavneh the fourth berachah of Birkas HaMazon, which is "**Who is good and does good.**"

EXPLANATION

"הַטּוֹב" — שֶׁלֹּא הִסְרִיחוּ, "וְהַמֵּיטִיב" — שְׁנִתְּנוּ לְקִבּוּרָהּ.

They established the blessing of "**Who is good**" because of the miracle **that** the bodies **did not decompose** during all that time, "**and does good**" because of the kindness **that they were** finally **given over for burial.**

STATEMENT

רַבָּה וְרַב יוֹסֵף דְּאָמְרֵי תְּרִיִּיחוּ: יוֹם שֶׁפָּסְקוּ מִלְכְּרוֹת עֲצִים לַמַּעֲרֶכָה.

It was Rabba and Rav Yosef who both say: The fifteenth of Av was the day on which they ceased from cutting wood for the Altar's pyre for that year.

BRAISA

דִּתְנִינָא, רַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר הַגָּדוֹל אוֹמֵר: מִחֻמְשָׁה עָשָׂר בָּאָב וְאֵילָּה תִּשָּׁשׁ כּוֹחָהּ שֶׁל חֶמֶה,

As it is taught in a braisa, Rabbi Eliezer the Great says: From the fifteenth of Av and onward, the strength of the sun weakens,

BRAISA

וְלֹא הָיוּ כוֹרֵתִין עֲצִים לַמַּעֲרֶכָה, לְפִי שֶׁאֵינָן יִבְשִׁין.

and they would not cut any more wood for the Altar's pyre, because the freshly cut logs would not dry properly due to the weaker sun, and damp wood is unfit for the Altar because of the concern of worms.

STATEMENT

אָמַר רַב מְנַשֶּׁיָּא: וְקָרוּ לֵיהּ יוֹם תְּכַר מַגָּל.

Rav Menashya said: And they called this day the day of the breaking of the scythe, since they no longer needed the tools to cut wood.

STATEMENT

מִכָּאֵן וְאֵילָּה, דְּמוֹסִיף — יוֹסִיף, וְדִלָּא מוֹסִיף — יֵאָסֵף.

The Gemara adds: **From this time and onward**, when the nights grow longer, **one who adds** to his nightly Torah study **will add** years to his life, **but one who does not add** to his study **will be gathered** before his time.

QUESTION

מַאי "יֵאָסֵף"? אָמַר רַב יוֹסֵף: תִּקְבְּרִיהּ אִימִיהּ.

The Gemara asks: **What is** the meaning of "**will be gathered**"? Rav Yosef said: **His mother will bury him**, meaning he will die young and be gathered to his grave.

מִשְׁנָה MISHNAH

MISHNAH

שֶׁפָּהָן בָּנוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַיִם כּוֹי.

The Mishnah taught: **On them the daughters of Yerushalayim** would go out in borrowed white garments, etc.

גְּמָרָא GEMARA

BRAISA

תָּנוּ רַבָּנֵינוּ: כַּת מְלָה שׁוֹאֵלָת מִבֵּית כֶּהֱן גָּדוֹל, כַּת כֶּהֱן גָּדוֹל — מִבֵּית סֹגֵן,

The Rabbis taught in a braisa: The daughter of the king borrows garments from the daughter of the High Priest; the daughter of the High Priest borrows from the daughter of the Deputy High Priest;

BRAISA

ובת סגן — מבית משוח מלחמה, ובת משוח מלחמה — מבית כהן הדיוט,

and the daughter of the Deputy High Priest borrows from the daughter of the priest anointed for war; and the daughter of the priest anointed for war borrows from the daughter of a common priest;

BRAISA

וכל ישראל שואלין זה מזה כדי שלא לבייש את מי שאין לו.

and all of Israel borrow from one another, so as not to embarrass anyone who does not have her own beautiful garments.

משנה MISHNAH

MISHNAH

כל הכלים טעונין טבילה.

The Mishnah stated: **All the garments** that were borrowed **require immersion** in a mikveh, because we do not know if the previous wearer was ritually pure.

גמרא GEMARA

STATEMENT

אמר רבי אלעזר: אפילו מקופלין ומונחין בקופסא.

Rabbi Elazar said: **Even** if the garments were found **folded and placed in a chest**, indicating they had not been worn for a long time, they still require immersion.

משנה MISHNAH

MISHNAH

בנות ישראל יוצאות וחולות בכרמים.

The Mishnah stated: **The daughters of Israel** would go out and dance in the vineyards.

גמרא GEMARA

BRAISA

תנא: מי שאין לו אשה, נפנה לשם.

A Tanna taught: Anyone who did not have a wife would turn to there to find a suitable bride.

משנה MISHNAH

MISHNAH

מיוחסות שבהן היו אומרות: בָּחוּר וְכוּי.

The Mishnah stated: The distinguished ones among them would say: Young man, lift up your eyes, etc.

גמרא GEMARA

BRAISA

תנו רבנן: יְפִיפּוּיּוֹת שֶׁבָּהֶן מָה הָיוּ אוֹמְרוֹת — תְּנוּ עֵינֵיכֶם לְיוֹפִי, שֶׁאֵין הָאִשָּׁה אֶלָּא לְיוֹפִי.

The Rabbis taught in a braisa: The beautiful ones among them, what would they say? "Direct your eyes to beauty, for a wife is only for beauty to bring joy to her husband."

BRAISA

מיוחסות שבהן מה היו אומרות — תנו עיניכם למשפחה, לפי שאין האשה אלא לבנים.

The distinguished ones among them, what would they say? "Direct your eyes to family, because a wife is only for raising worthy children who will inherit her fine lineage."

BRAISA

מכוערות שבהם מה היו אומרות — קחו מקחכם לשום שמים, ובלבד שתעטרונו בזהובים.

The plain ones among them, what would they say? "Acquire your purchase for the sake of Heaven, provided that you adorn us with golden jewelry after marriage to make us beautiful."

STATEMENT

אמר עולא בירא, אמר רבי אלעזר: עתיד הקדוש ברוך הוא לעשות מחול לצדיקים,

Ulla of Bira said that Rabbi Elazar said: In the future, the Holy One, Blessed be He, will arrange a dance for the righteous,

STATEMENT

והוא יושב ביניהם בגן עדן, וכל אחד ואחד מראה באצבעו,

and He will sit among them in Gan Eden, and each and every one of the tzaddikim will point with his finger toward Him in recognition,

PROOF

שנאמר: "וְאָמַר בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ זֶה קוֹיֵנוּ לוֹ וְיִוָּשִׁיעֵנוּ זֶה ה' קוֹיֵנוּ לוֹ נְגִילָה וְנִשְׁמָחָה בִּישׁוּעָתוֹ".

as it is stated: "And it shall be said on that day: Behold, this is our God, we have waited for Him, and He will save us; this is Hashem, we have waited for Him, let us be glad and rejoice in His salvation."

STATEMENT

הִדְרֵנוּ עֲלֵה בְּשִׁלּוֹשָׁה פְּרָקִים וְסָלִיקָא לֵה מִסְכַּת תַּעֲנִית

May we return to you, the chapter of "Bishlosha Perakim," and completed is Tractate Taanis!

SUMMARY

The Gemara concludes Maseches Taanis with a beautiful and inspiring discussion of the shidduchim on the fifteenth of Av, detailing how the borrowed white garments required tevilah to ensure taharah, and how the different young women would call out to the young men—the beautiful ones emphasizing physical grace, those of distinguished lineage emphasizing the building of a holy family, and those who lacked these advantages pleading that they be chosen for the sake of Heaven and adorned afterward. Finally, the maseches closes with a warm, comforting vision of the future, where the Aibershter will arrange a magnificent dance for the tzaddikim in the Gan Eden, and every single one of us will point with our finger in pure emunah and joy, declaring that this is Hashem for whom we have waited, and we will rejoice in His salvation.

לְמַעֲשָׂה WHAT TO TAKE HOME

Look at the beautiful, holy picture the Gemara paints of the daughters of Yerushalayim dancing in the vineyards on Tu B'Av. The daughter of the king borrows a dress from the daughter of the Kohen Gadol, and she borrows from the next, and everyone borrows from one another. Why? The Gemara tells us clearly: "so as not to embarrass one who did not have." Think about this. At the very moment these young women were hoping to find their shidduch, when every human instinct would tell a person to stand out, to look wealthier, and to outshine the rest, they chose to wear borrowed clothing. They willingly covered their own status so that another Jewish girl would not feel the pinch of poverty.

This is the ultimate secret of Jewish unity and the key to the greatest joy. True simcha is never built on the back of someone else's feelings. When we make ourselves equal, when we refuse to show off our blessings at the expense of those who are still waiting for theirs, we create a vessel for the Shechinah to dwell among us. The Gemara ends the entire Maseches Taanis with the beautiful image of the tzaddikim dancing in a circle in the future, pointing to the Aibershter and saying, "Behold, this is our God." In a circle, there is no head and no tail; everyone is equidistant from the center. When we live with the sensitivity of the daughters of Yerushalayim, we merit to join that ultimate circle.

Today, make a conscious choice to hide a bit of your own success or comfort to protect someone else's feelings. Whether it means not talking about an achievement in front of someone struggling, or keeping your lifestyle modest so others do not feel lacking, borrow the "garment" of sensitivity and bring a little more of the Geulah closer.