

Bava Basra – Simanim

פרק א - השותפין

דף ח – Daf 8

1. Rebbe's policy to only provide sustenance in a famine to the learned

Rebbe opened storehouses of food during years of famine, but only allowed masters of Torah, Mishnah, Gemara, *halachah*, or Aggadah to enter, but not the ignorant, for fear that there were not enough provisions for everyone. Rebbe's talmid, Rebbe Yonasan ben Amram, pushed his way in and asked for sustenance. Rebbe asked him if he was learned, and when Rebbe Yonasan said he was not, Rebbe responded: *אם כן במה אפרנסך* – “If so, based on what can I sustain you?” Rebbe Yonasan answered: *פרנסני ככלב וכעורב* – “Sustain me like a dog and a raven, whom Hashem sustains!” Rebbe gave him food but was later upset at having provided for an *am haaretz*. His son Rebbe Shimon suggested that this was perhaps Rebbe Yonasan, שאינו רוצה ליהנות מכבוד – *who does not want to ever benefit from the honor of Torah*. This was found to be correct, and Rebbe then allowed everyone to receive sustenance. Rebbe's original policy was based on his position: *אין פורענות בא לעולם אלא בשביל עמי הארץ* – *misfortune only comes to the world because of the unlearned*. He proved this from a tax which was levied on Teveria, and when Rebbe refused to compel the Rabbis to contribute, the other townspeople fled, and the tax was canceled.

2. "מצוה רבה" is a פדיון שבויים

Ifra Hurmiz, mother of King Shapur, sent a pouch of gold *dinarim* to Rav Yosef and said: *ליהוי למצוה רבה* – “Let it be used for a great *mitzvah*.” Rav Yosef sat and investigated what might be called “a great *mitzvah*,” and Abaye said that since Rav Shmuel bar Yehudah taught: *אין פוסקין צדקה על היתומים* – *we do not impose any tzedakah obligations on orphans*, אפילו לפדיון שבויים – “even” for *redeeming captives*, this indicates that פדיון שבויים is a great *mitzvah*. Rava asked Rabbah bar Mari for the source of this principle, and he answered with a *passuk* listing impending calamities, which mentions those destined to die naturally, by the sword, by famine, and those destined for captivity. Rebbe Yochanan said each misfortune written is worse than the one before it. Death by the sword is worse than a natural death, because the body is disgraced. Death by hunger is worse still, because he suffers. [He also quotes *pesukim* proving the above]. *שבי קשה מכולם* – *Captivity is worse than all [the others]*, *דכולהו איתנהו ביה* – *because all of them are included in it*.

3. ומצדיקי הרבים ככוכבים לעולם ועד

The Gemara *darshens* the *passuk*: *והמשכילים יזהירו כזוהר הרקיע* – *And the wise will shine like the shine of the firmament*, *זה דין שדן דין אמת לאמתו* – *this refers to a judge who decides a perfectly truthful judgement*. *ומצדיקי הרבים ככוכבים לעולם ועד* – *And those who make the many righteous will shine like the stars forever and ever*, *אלו גבאי צדקה* – *this refers to charity collectors, who cause others to righteously give tzedakah*. A Baraisa explains that the first phrase refers both to a judge who judges truthfully and *tzedakah* collectors and explains the second phrase: *אלו מלמדי תינוקות* – *this refers to teachers of children, who make them righteous by teaching them the correct path*. Rav says that Rav Shmuel bar Shilas exemplifies such a teacher: Rav once found him in a garden and said: *שבקתיה להימנותך* – *Have you abandoned your integrity?* Rav was surprised to see him, since he was always faithfully teaching his students. Rav Shmuel responded: *הא תליסר שנין דלא חזיא* – *and even now, my mind is on [my students].* Ravina says that regarding the Rabbis, who themselves learn Torah, it is written: *ואוהביו כצאת* – *and those who love Him will be like the sun going forth in its might*. Tosafos says this refers to the sun in the time of Moshiach.

Siman – Challah

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3 things to remember

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2. "מצוה רבה" is a *פדיון שבויים*
3. ומצדיקי הרבים ככוכבים לעולם ועד

