THE TALMUD
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PART VII
TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY

They said: “He who has one ox must graze one day. 2 He who does not have must graze two days.” 3 To a certain orphan, the son of a widow, they gave oxen to graze. 4 He went and took them and killed them. 5 He said to them: [109B] 6 “Who has an ox may take one hide. 7 Who does not have an ox may take two hides.” 8 They said to him: “What is this?” 9 He said to them: “The end of the judgment is like the beginning of the judgment. 10 Just as at the beginning of the judgment, he who has one ox may take one, and who does not have an ox may take two.” 11 He who crosses by ferry must pay one zuz. 12 He who does not cross by ferry must pay two. 13 He who has a row of bricks — everyone comes [and] takes one, 14 [and] says to him: “I took one.” 15 He who spread out garlic or onions — everyone comes [and] takes one, 16 [and] says to him: “I took one.” 17 There were four judges in Sodom:

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what he had said in his lecture, even though it had caused them financial loss (see Binyan Shlomo, Rambam). According to an alternative reading, when Rabbi Yose died, the people of Sephoris did not want to involve themselves in his burial at first. The spouts of the city flowed with blood in order to convince the residents to prepare for Rabbi Yose’s funeral and show him proper respect.

The practices of Sodom. Most of the Sodomite practices mentioned here are alluded to by the verses in Job 24 cited above: “They lie all night naked without
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Shakral, Shakturul, Zai'af, and Miltzal Dina: If someone strikes his fellow's wife and causes her tomiscarry, they say to him: "Give her to him so that he can impregnate her for you." Someone who cuts off the ear of his fellow's ass— they say to him: "Give it to him until it is grown in.

Someone who injured his fellow—they say to him: "Pay him a fee for he bled you." Someone who crosses by ferry must pay four zuz. Someone who crosses in the water must pay eight zuz.

Once a certain washerman happened to come there. They said to him: "Pay four zuz." He said to them: "If so, pay eight, for you crossed in the water." He did not pay, and they injured him. He came before a judge, who said to him: "Pay him a fee for he bled you, and eight zuz for you crossed in the water." Eliezer the servant of Abraham happened to come there, and one of the local residents struck and injured him. He came before a judge demanding compensation, but the judge said to him: "Pay your assailant a fee, for he bled you, and deserves to be paid for his services, and pay another eight zuz for crossing the river in the water." It was related that Eliezer, the servant of Abraham, once happened to come there, and one of the local residents struck and injured him. Eliezer then took a stone.

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clothing alludes to the enactment passed in Sodom to strip a person of his cloak if he invites a guest for a meal. They drive away the ass of the fatherless alludes to their ruling regarding someone who cut off the ear of another person's ass. They take the widow's ox for a pledge alludes to their rules regarding grazing the city's oxen. The orphan and the widow mentioned in these verses allude to the story about the orphan, the son of a widow, who grazed the city's oxen (Maharsha). The various practices are cited here to show that not only did the people of Sodom sin in the most evil manner as individuals, but they also enacted wicked laws as a community in order to oppress the weakest members of society.

Who crosses in the water. The commentators explained the devious reasoning behind these perverse laws. The people of Sodom argued that those who cross a river in the water must pay double, for they reduce the amount of water in the river (Ramah). Alternatively, they imposed a double fine, because they suspected those who crossed a river in the water of smuggling in order to avoid paying customs (Margoliot Hayam). Of else, they argued that they enacted the fine in order to discourage people from crossing the river in the water, which would put their lives in danger (Yad Yosef).
and struck and wounded the judge. The judge asked: “What is the meaning of this?” Eliezer said to the judge: “The fee that you now owe me for bleeding you, you pay it on my behalf to the one who bled me, and my money will remain by me where it is.”

It was further related that the people of Sodom had a bed upon which they would make guests passing through the city lie down. If the guest was too long for the bed, they would cut his limbs to make him fit, and if he was too short, they would stretch him. Eliezer, the servant of Abraham, happened to come to Sodom, and the local residents said to him: “Come, lie down on this bed.” Eliezer outsmarted them and said: “I took a vow on the day that my mother died never to lie down again on a bed.”

Whenever a poor person happened to come to Sodom, everyone would give him a dinar, and each of the donors would write his name on the coin that he gave. But after they provided the pauper with money, nobody would give him any bread for it, and the poor person would starve to death. After the pauper died, everyone would come and take back his dinar. The people of Sodom also agreed, among themselves as follows: Whoever invites a stranger to a wedding will be publicly humiliated and have his cloak removed. There once was a certain wedding, and Eliezer, the servant of Abraham, happened to attend, but he was not given any bread to eat. When he wanted to eat, Eliezer went and sat down at the end of the crowd. The other guests said to him: “Who invited you here?” Eliezer said to the person who was sitting next to him: “Was it not you who invited me to the wedding?” The person sitting next to Eliezer said to himself: “Perhaps the others will hear rumors about me, that they had a bed upon which they made guests lie down. If he was [too] long, they would cut him. If he was [too] short, they would stretch him. Eliezer the servant of Abraham happened to come there, [and] they said to him: “Come, lie down on the bed.” He said to them: “I took a vow from the day that my mother died not to lie down on a bed.”

When a poor person happened to come to them, everyone would give him a dinar, and his name was written on it, and they would not give him bread. When he died, everyone would come and take his [dinar]. Thus they agreed among themselves: Whoever invites someone to a wedding — they will remove his cloak. There was a certain wedding, [and] Eliezer happened to come there, and they did not give him bread. When he wanted to eat, Eliezer came and sat at the end of all of them. They said to him: “Who invited you here?” He said to the one who was sitting: “You invited me.” He said: “Perhaps they will hear...”
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I invited Eliezer as my guest, and they will come and have my cloak removed from me in public. 1 To avoid this, the person who sat next to Eliezer took his cloak, and ran outside. 2 Eliezer did the same thing to all the people at the table until all the people left the wedding hall, and he ate the entire meal by himself.

It was further related that once there was a certain girl in Sodom who carried bread out to a poor person in a pitcher, so that nobody would see her charitable act, but the matter nevertheless became known. 4 The people of Sodom decided to punish her, and so they smeared her with honey and placed her on the roof of the city’s wall. 5 Wasps came and ate her. 5 And this is what is written: “And the Lord said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great.” 6 And Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav: “About the matter of a girl.

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about me that I invited him and they will remove the garment of that man.” 1 The one who sat next to him took his cloak, and ran outside. 2 And he did the same thing to all of them until they all went out, and he ate the meal.

There was a certain girl who carried bread to a poor person in a pitcher. 4 The matter became known. 5 They smeared her with honey and placed her on the roof of the wall. 6 Wasps came and ate her. 5 And this is what is written: “And the Lord said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great.” 6 And Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav: “About the matter of a girl.

10 The spies do not have a portion in the World to Come, 11 as it is stated: ‘Now those men who brought the evil report about the land died of the plague.’ 12 ‘They died’ — in this world. 13 ‘Of the plague’ — in the World to Come.” 14 The company of Korah do not have a portion in the World to Come, as it is stated: 15 ‘And the earth closed upon them’ — in this world. 16 ‘And they perished from among the congregation’ — in the World to Come. 17 [These are] the words of Rabbi Akiva.

RASHI

We have learned in our Mishnah: ‘The spies whom Moses sent out to scout the Land of Israel do not have a portion in the World to Come, 11 as the verse states (Numbers 14:37): ‘Now those men who brought the evil report about the land died of the plague before the Lord.’ 12 ‘They died’ — in this world. 13 ‘By the plague before the Lord’ — in the World to Come. 14 ‘The company of Korah do not have a portion in the World to Come, as the verse states (Numbers 16:33): ‘And the earth closed upon them, and they perished from among the congregation.’ 15 ‘And the earth closed upon them’ — in this world. 16 ‘And they perished from among the congregation’ — in the World to Come. 17 ‘This is the position of Rabbi Akiva.

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Who carried bread to a poor person.

According to the Midrash, the girl who served the poor person bread was one of the daughters of Lot. The Midrash adds that it was regarding this girl that God said (Genesis 18:21): ‘I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to her cry, which is come to me.’

‘By the plague’ — in the World to Come. It may be asked: How does the word ‘plague’ imply punishment in the World to Come? It has been argued that the spies’ punishment in the World to Come is derived from the expression: ‘By the plague before the Lord,’ which implies that the spies were smitten before the Lord, so they would no longer exist before Him (Nephyon Shemoyin Yechezkel).