Toldot Shimshon

by Rabbi Shimshon Chaim Nachmani zt"l Published Livorno 1776*

Chapter II – Mishnah 13

ַרַבִּי יָהוֹשֶׁעַ אוֹמֶר, עַיָן הַרַע, וַיָּצֵר הַרַע, וְשִׂנָאַת הַבְּרִיוֹת, מוֹצִיאִין אֵת הַאַדַם מְן הַעוֹלַם.

Rabbi Yehoshua said: an evil eye, the evil inclination, and hatred for humankind puts a person out of the world.

בְּכֶּרֶק ט' דָּמְצִיעָא אָמְרִינַן, רַב סָלִיק לְבֵי קַבְרֵי, עָבַד מַאי דַּצְבַד, אָמַר, תִּשְׁעִים וְתִשְׁעָה בְּעַיִן הָרַע, וְאֶחָד בְּדֶרֶךְ אֶרֶץ. וְהָקְשׁוּ בַּתּוֹסָפּוֹת, וְאָם תּאֹמֵר בְּנֵי יוֹסֵף שֶׁלֹּא שָׁלְטָה בָּהֶם הָעַיִן, הָיָה לָהֶם לְחִיוֹת הַרְבֵּה מִשְּׁאַר הַשְּׁבָטִים, נְיֵשׁ לוֹמֵר, שֶׁמֵתוּ בְּדֶרֶךְ אֶרֶץ, יוֹתֵר מִשְׁאַר הַשְּׁבָטִים, כְּשֶׁהַקּדִּישׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא הָיָה רוֹצֶה לַהְמִיתָם, הָיָה שׁוֹלֵט לָהֶם חוֹלָאִים אֲחַרִים. עכ"ל.

In the 9th chapter of tractate Bava Metzia, it is said: "Rav went to a graveyard, [and] did what he did [i.e., he used an incantation to find out how those buried there died], [and] he said: Ninety-nine [of these died] by the evil eye, and one [died] by natural means."

The Tosafot question: "If so, the descendants of Joseph, over whom the evil eye does not rule, should live much longer than the other tribes!" The Tosafot answer: "They died by natural means more than the others, for when G-d wants to kill them, he sends them other illnesses."

ְּעַל זָה אָמַר הַתַּנָּא, עַל אֶחָד מִשְׁלֹשָׁה דְּבָרִים הָאָדָם מֵת: אוֹ עַיִן הָרע, אוֹ יֵצֶר הָרע, אוֹ שִׂנְאַת הַבְּרִיּוֹת. דְּמִי שֶׁשׁוֹלֵט בּוֹ עַיִן הָרע, אוֹ יֵצֶר הָרע, אוֹ שִׁנְאִים אֲחַרִים שֶׁהַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּדְ הוּא שׁוֹלֵם לוֹ. וְזֶהוּ מֵחֲמַת יֵצֶר הָרַע, דְּהָא אֵין יִּפּוּרִין בְּלֹא עָוֹן, וְאֵין מִיתָה בְּלֹא חֵטְא. וּמִי שֶׁאֵין לוֹ לֹא עַיִן הָרע וְלֹא יֵצֶר הָרַע, שׁוֹלֵם לוֹ. וְזֶהוּ מֵחֲמַת יֵצֶר הָרַע, דְּהָא אֵין יִּפּוּרִין בְּלֹא עָוֹן, וְאֵין מִיתָה בְּלֹא חֵטְא. וּמִי שָׁאֵין לוֹ לֹא עַיִן הָרַע וְלֹא יֵצֶר הָרַע, רַק שְׁאֵינוֹ אָהוּב עַל הַבְּרָכוֹת, יְהֵא אָדָם עָרוּם בְּיִרְאָה, בְּדִ שִׁיּהִינֶּן בְּפֶרֶק ב' דְּבְרָכוֹת, יְהֵא אָדָם עָרוּם בְּיִרְאָה, בְּדֵי שִׁיּהִיָּה אָהוּב לַמַּצְלָה וְנָחְמָד לְמַשָּה. וּכְשֶׁהַבְּרִיּוֹת שוֹנְאִים אוֹתוֹ אֵינוֹ נָחְמָד לְמַשָּה, וּמַה יַצְשֶׂה בָּעוֹלָם הַזָּה, כְּמוֹ שֶׁכְּתַב בְּעַל מִדְרָשׁ שִׁמוֹאֵל.

About this, the Tanna said, for one of three things a person dies: either the evil eye, or the evil inclination, or hatred of humanity. For one ruled by the evil eye, dies by the evil eye, that is the meaning of "ninety-nine [of these died] by the evil eye."

One who is not ruled over by the evil eye, like the descendants of Joseph, dies by other illnesses that the Holy One, Blessed be He, sends to him. This is the meaning of "the

1

^{*} English translation: Copyright © 2022 by Charles S. Stein. Additional essays at https://zstorah.com

¹ Bava Metzia 107b.

evil inclination," for there is no suffering without injustice, and there is no death without sin.²

One who does not have an evil eye, and does not have an evil inclination, but he does not love mankind, because of his personality—this also causes death to him. As it says in the second chapter of tractate Berachot: "Abaye used to say: One must always be shrewd in [achieving] fear [of Heaven] . . . so that he will be loved above [in G-d's eyes], [and] pleasant below [in the eyes of the people]." When mankind hate him, he is not "pleasant below [in the eyes of the people]," and what can he do in this world, as the author of the Midrash Shmuel wrote.⁴

ְּוָאֵלוּ הַדְּבָרִים הֵם לְפִי שִׁיטָתוֹ שֶׁל רַבִּי יְהוֹשֵׁעַ שֶׁאָמַר לְעֵיל, "חָבֵר טוֹב" בַּדֶּרֶדְ הַטוֹבָה, וְ"חָבֵר רַע" בַּדֶּרֶדְ הַרָּעָה. וְכָאן הוֹסִיף שֻׁצְּרִיךְ שֻׁיְּהָיֶה לוֹ חָבֵר טוֹב מִצִּד הַטְּבָּר, שֶׁלֹּא יִהְיָה לוֹ עֵיִן הָרַע. טוֹב מִצִּד מַעֲשִׂיו, שֶׁיּהְיֶה דְּבוּק עִם הַיֵּצֶר הָטוֹב וְלֹא עִם הַיֵּצֶר הָרַע. וְטוֹב מֵחֲמַת מִדּוֹתִיו, שֶׁיָּצֶהָבָהוּ כְּנַפְשׁוֹ וְיַדְרִיכֵהוּ בְּמִדּוֹת טוֹבוֹת, וְאָז לֹא יִהְיֶה לוֹ שִׁנְאַת הַבְּרִיּוֹת. וְאָם לֹא יִהְיֶה לוֹ זֶה הָחָבֵר טוֹב לוֹ הַמָּנֶת, וְזֶהוּ מוֹצִיאִין אֶת הָאָדָם מִן הָעוֹלָם, כִּדְאָמְרִינַן בְּפֶּרֶק קְמָּא דְּבָתְרָא אוֹ חַבְרוּתִּא לֹא יִהְיָה לוֹ זֶה הָחָבֵר טוֹב לוֹ הַמָּנֶת, וְזֶהוּ מוֹצִיאִין אֶת הָאָדָם מִן הָעוֹלָם, כִּדְאָמְרִינַן בְּפֶּרֶק קְמָּא דְּבָתְרָא אוֹ חַבְרוּתִא דְּהַרִּיִּר, דְּאִיּוֹב, אוֹ מִיתוּתַא.

These things are according to the opinion of Rabbi Yehoshua, who said above, in Mishnah 11 of this chapter, that cleaving to "a good companion," is following in a good path, and that cleaving to "a bad companion," is following in a bad path.

Here, in this Mishnah, [Rabbi Yehoshua] adds that it's necessary that a man should seek for himself a good companion in a natural course, so that he shouldn't have the evil eye.

It is good on the part of his actions, that he should adhere to the good inclination and not to the bad inclination.

Also, it is good because of his virtues, that they love him as himself⁵ and guide him with good virtues, and then he will not have hatred of mankind. If he won't have such a good companion, it's better for him to die, and this is the meaning of "puts a person out of the world." This is as it says in the first chapter of tractate Bava Batra, "Rava said that the closeness between Job and his friends explains the adage: Either a friend like the friends of Job, or death." I.e., if a person lacks close friends, he is better off dead.

* * *

² Shabbat 55a.

³ Berachot 17a.

⁴Rabbi Samuel de Uçeda (1546–1604) was a Rosh Yeshiva and Kabbalist in Safed, a disciple of the Arizal and Rabbi Chaim Vital. In *Midrash Shmuel* (Venice 1579), he writes on Avot 2:11: "As for one who hates mankind because his disposition is not empathetic with humanity, they eliminate him from this world. [They do this] by their saying that because his disposition is not empathetic with the human race, which is in this material world, if so, he is not part of society, and why should he reside there. [Thus], they eliminate him and take him out from the world."

⁵ Cf. I Sam. 18:1: "When [David] finished speaking with Saul, Jonathan's soul became bound up with the soul of David; Jonathan loved David as himself."

⁶ Bava Batra 16b.