

# Toldot Shimshon

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## Chapter III – Mishnah 12

רבי דוסא בן הרפינס אומר, שינה של שחרית, ויין של צהריים, ושיחת הילדים, וישיבת בתי כנסיות של עמי הארץ, מוציאים את האדם מן העולם.

**Rabbi Dosa ben Harkinas said: Morning sleep and midday wine; and conversing with the children and sitting in the assemblies of the ignorant; take a man out of the world.**

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**חכמתו** עמדה לו לרבי דוסא בן הרפינס, להעלות את האדם מטומאה לטהרה, בידיעות הטומאה שנים שהן ארבע, ולסדר דבריו על דרך פרטי דסתרון אהדדי, כי מי שעושה שינה של שחרית, הנה לו מקום להתנצל, אמנם מתמת יין של צהריים, אבד התנצלותו. וכן מי שעושה יין של צהריים, אם לא הנה לו שינה של שחרית, הנה מתנצל. אמנם בהצטרף שניהם יחד, אין לו תקנה. וכן על זה הדרך ממש, בשיחת הילדים, עם ישיבת בתי כנסיות של עמי הארץ.

**Wisdom stands with him, with Rabbi Dosa ben Harkinas, to elevate a person from impurity to purity,<sup>1</sup> with awareness of ritual impurity, that there are two cases that comprise four.<sup>2</sup> Also, wisdom stands with him to arrange his words in a way of two that contradict one another, for one who sleeps in the morning has room to excuse himself, as will be explained, but truly, because of his midday wine, he lost his excuse. Likewise, one who partakes of midday wine, if he does not have morning sleep, he can excuse himself. But surely, with the combination of both of them together, he has no remedy. I.e., each behavior may be separately excused, but there is no excuse to do both.**

**Similarly on this exact path, with conversing with the children, with sitting in the assemblies of the ignorant.** That is, each behavior may be separately excused, but there is no excuse to do both.

This is what the Tanna means by Rabbi Dosa having arranged his words of two that contradict one another. We will see that morning sleep and midday wine are two that contradict each other, and that sitting in the assemblies of the ignorant and conversing with the children are two that contradict one another. These are two cases (i.e., pairs that contradict each other), that comprise four individual behaviors.

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<sup>1</sup> Berachot 16a: “Just as streams elevate a person from ritual impurity to purity [after he immerses himself in their water], so too tents [of Torah] elevate a person from the scale of guilt to the scale of merit.”

<sup>2</sup> Mishnah Shevuot 2:1.

ונקדים, מאי דאמרינו בפרק ו' דערוובין, אמר רבי חנינא, כל המפיק מגן בשעת גאונה, סוגרין וחוזמין צרות בעדו. רבי יוחנן אמר: "כל שאינו מפיק" אתמר. מכדי, קראי משמע כמר ומשמע כמר, במאי פליגי, בדרב ששית. דרב ששית מסר שינתיה לשמעיה. מר אית ליה דרב ששית, ומר לית ליה דרב ששית. ופרש רש"י, המפיק מגן, המעביר בתפלה מגן אברהם, שאינו אומרה. בשעת גאונה, בשעת שכרות אינו מתפלל. מסר שינתיה לשמעיה, אמר ליה, הניחני לישן מעט, וכשיגיע זמן תפלה, הקיצוני. רבי חנינא דאמר אעבורי בעי, לית ליה דרב ששית, ואסור להתפלל עד שיעור מאליו. עד כאן לשונו.

**We advance what was said in the sixth chapter of tractate Eruvin:**

**Rabbi Chanina said, whoever passes a shield [over himself] at a time of arrogance, troubles will be closed and sealed from him . . . .**

**Rabbi Yochanan said:** [Rather,] **it was stated [that] whoever does not [cover, but] draws out [a shield at a time of arrogance, troubles will be closed and sealed from him.] . . .**

[The Gemara asks:] **Now, since the [supporting] verses could mean as [the opinion] of [this] Master and could mean as [the opinion of the other] Master, what is the dispute? The [dispute] between them is [with regard to the following practice of] Rav Sheshet, as Rav Sheshet gave [the responsibility for monitoring] his sleep to his attendant [instructing the attendant to wake him when the time for prayer arrived]. [One] sage [i.e., Rabbi Chanina,] is of [the opinion that the practice of] Rav Sheshet [is correct, as Rabbi Chanina maintains that if one is in great need of sleep, it is better to nap for a while and then wake up with renewed vigor]. And one sage, [Rabbi Yochanan], is not of [the opinion] of Rav Sheshet.**

- Eruvin 65a

**Rashi explained:**

**“Whoever passes a shield” [means] one who passes over the [Shemoneh Esreh] prayer [which starts with the blessing], “the shield of Abraham,” [i.e.,] he doesn’t say it.**

**“At a time of arrogance” [means] at the time he is drunk, he should not pray.**

[Regarding] **“[Rav Sheshet] gave [the responsibility for monitoring] his sleep to his attendant,” he said to him, “Allow me to sleep a bit, and when the time for prayer arrives, wake me.”**

**Rabbi Chanina, who said, removal [of the alcohol from his system] is required, is not [in agreement] with Rav Sheshet, and [he holds that] it is forbidden to pray until he awakens on his own.**

- Rashi on Eruvin 65a <sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Rabbeinu Chananel had a different interpretation of the Mishnah. “Whoever passes a shield at a time of arrogance” means that he suppresses his evil inclination when intoxicated. “Whoever . . . draws out” means that he draws his weapons and shield to fight the evil inclination when it tries to overpower him. He holds that a person must marshal his strength and pray, rather than succumb to the need for sleep.

הנה יש בכאן מחלוקת על מי ששתה יין וצריך לישן כדי להעביר יינו מעליו, דסד אמר, יכול לומר לעבדו, הקיצני. וסד אמר, צריך שיעור מאליו. ומן הסתם, זמן שתיית האדם הם שתי פעמים ביום, אחת באכילת היום, ואחת באכילת הלילה.

**Behold, we have here a dispute about one who drank wine and needs to sleep in order to rid himself of his wine. One [rabbi] said he is able to say to his servant, “wake me when it is time for prayer,” and one said, it is necessary that he awaken on his own after the wine has left his system. Obviously, the time for a person to drink is two times a day, at mealtimes, once when eating during the day, and once when eating at night.**

ואמר התנא, שינה של שחרית ויין של צהרים. מי שהוא ישן שחרית בשעת התפלה, יכול להתנצל ולומר, בלא שתיית יין אי אפשר, שהרי אדרבא, סמרא וריחני, פקחין. ולפחות צריך לשתות בלילה, מפני שאז כבר אנו הולכים לישן. ואם תאמר, למה איני עושה שליח שיקיצני בשעת התפלה, משום דאנא סבירא לי כמאן דאמר, אסור להתפלל עד שיעור מאליו. אלא דאי הכי קשיא, למה שותה יין בצצהרים, שהרי לאחר ששתה, צריך הוא לישן, ולא יוכלו להקיצו, ויאבד כל היום בשינה. בשלמא אם לא היתה שינה של שחרית, היתי אומר דסבירא ליה כמאן דאמר שייכול לעשות שליח שיקיצהו משנתו, ומשום הכי יכול לשתות אף בצצהרים, ולא יאבד לימודו של יום. אבל עתה שישן שחרית ואינו עושה שליח שיקיצהו, על כרחך לומר דסבירא ליה כמאן דאמר שצריך שיעור מאליו. וזה נדאי מוציא האדם מן העולם, דממה נפשך מקלקל הוא.

Regarding the first pair, the Tanah said, **“Morning sleep, midday wine.” One who sleeps [in the] morning at the hour of prayer, will be able to excuse himself by saying, “It is impossible not to drink wine, because rather, as Rava said, ‘wine and fragrant spices have made me wise.’<sup>4</sup> At least it’s necessary to drink at night, because then we are already going to sleep. If you’ll [ask me], why I don’t appoint an agent who will wake me at the time of prayer, it’s because I hold for myself as it is said, that it’s forbidden to pray after drinking wine until one awakens on his own.”**

**Rather, if so, there is a question: Why drink wine at noon, for after he drank, he needs to sleep, and he won’t be able to wake him, and he will lose the entire day in sleep. Granted, if there was no midday sleep, I would say that his opinion is like the one who said that he can appoint an agent to wake him from his sleep, and because of this, he is able to even drink at midday, and not to lose the daytime learning. But now that he will sleep in the morning, and he doesn’t appoint an agent who will wake him, you must necessarily say that his opinion is as the one who said that he needs to awaken on his own. This certainly takes a man out of the world, for whichever way you look at it, this is destructive.**

That is, one person excuses drinking at night because it helps him sleep, and he can excuse missing the morning prayer by saying that he believes he can’t allow a servant to wake him. Likewise, if a different person drinks wine with lunch, but it either doesn’t cause him to sleep in the afternoon, or he only sleeps a bit and has a servant wake him, he can excuse the midday drinking by saying that it makes him wise. But if the same person drinks wine both at night and

<sup>4</sup> Yoma 76b; Sanhedrin 70a; Horayot 13b.

also with lunch, and he doesn't believe in having a servant wake him, then he will miss both the morning prayer and the afternoon Torah learning, and that is inexcusable.

אחר זה אמר ושיחת הילדים, ושיבת בתי כנסיות של עמי הארץ" וכו', ואף אלו הם פרמי דסתרו אהדדי. שמי שמתעסק בשיחת הילדים, יש לו התנצלות לומר שהוא אוהב אותם ומשתעשע בהם, לפי שחביבים בעיניו, שבזכותם מתקיים העולם, וכדאיתא במדרש קהלת "גם את-העולם נתן בלבם", אהבת התינוקות נתן בלבם. אלא דאם כן קשה, למה יושב בשיבת בתי כנסיות של עמי הארץ, הרי הם עסוקים בדברים בטלים ובבטול העולם. ואמרינו בפרק קמא דבתרא, אין פורענות באה לעולם אלא בשביל עמי הארץ, ואדרבא היה לו לשנא אותם. ובשלמא אם לא היה מתעסק בשיחת הילדים, היה יכול להתנצל ולומר שעושה זה בכוונה טובה ולישם שמים, כדי לקרב איזה מהם ליראת שמים.

After that, [the Tanna] said, presenting the second pair, “conversing with the children and sitting in the assemblies of the ignorant, take a man out of the world.” Even these are two that contradict one another. That is, one who occupies himself with conversing with the children can excuse himself by saying that he loves them and has amusement from them, as they are dear in his eyes, and that thanks to them the world exists.<sup>5</sup> As it is brought in Midrash Ecclesiastes Rabbah on the verse, “He also puts the world in their heart,”<sup>6</sup> He placed in their heart love of young children.”<sup>7</sup>

But even if so, there is still a problem: Why does he sit in the assemblies of the ignorant? They are busy in idle things and in the idleness of the world, and it is said in the first chapter of tractate Bava Batra, “Calamity only comes to the world because of the ignorant.”<sup>8</sup> To the contrary, rather than be sitting with them, he should hate them. Granted, if he hadn't occupied himself with conversing with the children, he would be able to excuse himself and say that he did this with good intent and for the sake of Heaven, in order to bring some of them close to Judaism, viz, to the fear of Heaven.

I.e., each behavior on its own may be excusable, but we will see that the combination is not excusable.

אבל עתה שמתעסק בשיחת הילדים שהם דברים בטלים, ואדרבא, היה לו להתעסק עמם בדברי תורה וילמדם, שיהי עיקר קיום העולם בהם, הוא בתורה שלומדים, שהוא הקל שאין בו חטא. על פרק צריך לומר שאינו חושש על ביטול תורה, וכמו שפירש הרב עובדיה ברטנורא, ששיחת הילדים מבטלת אבותיהם מלעסוק בתורה, והכי אמרינו בפרק ב' דשבת, תינוקות יוכיחו, שמבטלין את אביהם. ואם כן, מוכח שכונתו לקלקל ולא לתקן.

But now that he occupies himself with conversing with the children, and these are idle matters that he is discussing with them, there is a problem that he also spends time with the ignorant. To the contrary, he could be occupying himself with [the children] in matters of

<sup>5</sup> Eccl. 3:11.

<sup>6</sup> I.e., people eventually die, so if there were no children, humankind would cease to exist.

<sup>7</sup> Eccl. Rabbah 3:11.

<sup>8</sup> Bava Batra 8a.

**Torah and teaching them, for the foundation of the existence of the world is through [the children], by the Torah that they learn, which is breath in which there is no sin.<sup>9</sup>**

**You must necessarily say that he doesn't fear nullifying the Torah** through his idle chatter with them. He should fear this, **as Rabbi Ovadiah Bartenura explained** on this Mishnah, **that conversing with the children prevents their fathers from occupying themselves with Torah study. Thus it says in the second chapter of tractate Shabbat:** “[Rabbi Shimon said that croup<sup>10</sup> comes because of dereliction in the study of Torah. Other rabbis argued with him that] **children will prove** [that this is not so, for they are not obligated to study Torah and they also suffer from croup. He answered them: They are punished because] **they cause their fathers to be idle** [from the study of Torah.]”<sup>11</sup> **If so, it is proven that his intent is to destroy the world and not to repair** the world.

I.e., someone could be spending time with children, not with idle chatter, but in teaching them Torah, and then if he also engaged in Torah outreach to the ignorant, that would be laudable. But this Mishnah is warning against spending time with children in idle chatter while also spending time with the ignorant, because his action with the children shows that he is not interested in teaching Torah, and thus he also won't be teaching Torah to the ignorant. Such a person won't be repairing the world, but instead will be destroying it.

וְנִהְיֶה מוֹצִיאֵינָם אֶת הָאָדָם "מִן הָעוֹלָם", שֶׁלִּגְבֵי הַקֶּבֶ"ה הַמְכִיר לְבוֹת וּמִחֻשְׁבוֹת בְּנֵי אָדָם, אֲפִילוּ בְּאֶחָד מֵהֶן סָגִי לְהִרְשִׁיעוֹ. אֲבָל לְגַבֵי הָעוֹלָם, בְּאֶחָד מֵהֶן לְבַד, הֵיךָ יָכוֹל לְהִתְנַצֵּל. אֲלֵא שֶׁכְּשֶׁעוֹשֶׂה פִּרְתֵי דְסִתְרוֹ, אִף הָעוֹלָם יִרְשִׁיעוֹ אוֹתוֹ, מִמָּה נִכְשָׁד.

**This is the meaning of “takes the man ‘out of this world,’ ” that concerning the Holy One, Blessed be He, Who knows the hearts and thoughts of man, even one of [these behaviors] is enough to condemn him, G-d will know if the man has a valid excuse or not.**

**But concerning the world, for one of [these behaviors] alone, it is possible for a man to excuse himself. Rather, that when he does two that contradict one another, i.e., sleeping through the morning prayers and drinking at lunch, or engaging in idle chatter with children and spending time with the ignorant, then even the world condemns him, whichever way you look at it.**

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<sup>9</sup> Shabbat 119b: “Reish Lakish said in the name of Rabbi Yehuda Nesia: The world only exists because of the breath [i.e., reciting Torah,] of schoolchildren. Rav Pappa said to Abaye: My [Torah study] and yours, what [is its status? Why is the Torah study of adults worth less?] He said to him: The breath [of adults], which is [tainted by] sin, is not similar to the breath [of children], which is not [tainted by] sin.”

<sup>10</sup> Croup is an upper airway infection, occurring most often in younger children, that affects the windpipe, the airways to the lungs, and the voice box. Children with croup have a distinctive barking cough and make a whistling sound when they take a breath.

<sup>11</sup> Shabbat 33b.