



Season 2 Episode 6

Central Guest: Rabbi Jay Henry Moses

Babylonian Talmud, Megilla 15a-15b

The verse states: **“And it came to pass on the third day, that Esther clothed herself in royalty”** (Esther 5:1). The Gemara asks: **It should have said: Esther clothed herself in royal garments. Rabbi Elazar said that Rabbi Ḥanina said: This teaches that she clothed herself with a divine spirit of inspiration, as it is written here: “And she clothed herself,” and it is written elsewhere: “And the spirit clothed Amasai”** (I Chronicles 12:19). Just as there the reference is to the spirit of divine inspiration, so too here, the term royalty is referring to the spirit of divine inspiration.

Apropos a statement that Rabbi Elazar said that Rabbi Ḥanina said, the Gemara records other such statements: **And Rabbi Elazar further said that Rabbi Ḥanina said: One should never regard the blessing of an ordinary person [hedyot] as light in your eyes, as two of the great men of their generations received blessings from ordinary people and those blessings were fulfilled in them. And they were David and Daniel. David, for Araunah blessed him, as it is written: “And Araunah said to the king, May the Lord your God accept you”** (II Samuel 24:23), and it was fulfilled. **Daniel, for Darius blessed him, as it is written: “Your God Whom you serve continually, He will rescue you”** (Daniel 6:17), and this too was fulfilled when Daniel was saved from the lions’ den.

And Rabbi Elazar further said that Rabbi Ḥanina said: One should not regard the curse of an ordinary person as light in your eyes, for Abimelech cursed Sarah, saying: “Behold, it is to you a covering of the eyes to all that are with you” (Genesis 20:16), and indeed this was fulfilled in her descendant, as it is stated: **“And it came to pass, that when Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim, so that he could not see”** (Genesis 27:1). Abimelech’s curse of covered eyes was fulfilled through her son Isaac’s blindness.

And Rabbi Elazar further said that Rabbi Ḥanina said: Come and see that the attribute of the Holy One, Blessed be He, is unlike the attribute of a man of flesh and blood; for it is the attribute of flesh and blood that a man places the pot on the fire and then puts in the water. However, the

תלמוד בבלי, מסכת מגילה

טו ע”א – טו ע”ב

“וְיִהְיֶה בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי וְתִלְבַּשׁ אֶסְתֵּר מְלֻכוֹת”. “בְּגָדֵי מְלֻכוֹת” מִיַּבֵּעֵי לִיָּהּ! אָמַר רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר אָמַר רַבִּי חֲנִינָא: מִלְמַד שְׁלֵבַשְׁתָּהּ רוּחַ הַקֹּדֶשׁ. כְּתִיב הִכָּא: “וְתִלְבַּשׁ”, וְכִתִּיב הֵתָם: “וְרוּחַ לְבָשָׂה אֶת עַמְשֵׁי”.

וְאָמַר רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר אָמַר רַבִּי חֲנִינָא: לְעוֹלָם אַל תְּהִי בְרַבְתַּת הַדְּיוֹט קְלָה בְּעֵינַיָּךְ, שְׁהֵרִי שְׂנֵי גְדוּלֵי הַדּוֹר בְּרֻכּוֹם שְׂנֵי הַדְּיוֹטוֹת, וְנִתְקַיְּמָה בָּהֶן, וְאַל הֵן: דָּוִד וְדָנִיֵּאל. דָּוִד — דְּכָרְכִיָּה אַרְוֹנָה, דְּכָתִיב: “וַיֹּאמֶר אַרְוֹנָה אֶל הַמֶּלֶךְ וְגו’”. דְּנִיֵּאל — דְּכָרְכִיָּה דְרָוּשׁ, דְּכָתִיב: “אֶלְהֶךָ דִּי אֲנִתְּ פִּלַּח לִיָּהּ בְּתַדִּירָא הוּא יִשְׂיַזְבִּינְךָ”.

וְאָמַר רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר אָמַר רַבִּי חֲנִינָא: אַל תְּהִי קְלִלַת הַדְּיוֹט קְלָה בְּעֵינַיָּךְ, שְׁהֵרִי אַבִּימֶלֶךְ קִלַּל אֶת שָׂרָה “הִנֵּה הוּא לָךְ כְּסוּיַת עֵינַיִם”, וְנִתְקַיְּמָם בְּזַרְעָה: “וְיִהְיֶה כִּי זָקַן יִצְחָק וְתַכְהִיֵּן עֵינָיו”.

וְאָמַר רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר אָמַר רַבִּי חֲנִינָא: בְּאֵ וְרָאָה שְׁלֵמָה בְּמַדַּת הַקְּדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא מַדַּת בְּשָׂר וְדָם. מַדַּת בְּשָׂר וְדָם — אֵדָם שׁוֹפֵת קְדִירָה וְאַחַר כֵּן נוֹתֵן

Holy One, Blessed be He, first puts in the water and then places the pot on the fire, to fulfill that which is stated: “At the sound of His giving a multitude of waters in the heavens” (Jeremiah 10:13), which he explains as follows: First God set the multitudes of water in place, and afterward He created the heavens to hold the water.

And Rabbi Elazar further said that Rabbi Ḥanina said: Whoever reports a saying in the name of he who said it brings redemption to the world. As it is stated with respect to the incident of Bigthan and Teresh: **“And Esther reported it to the king in the name of Mordecai”** (Esther 2:22), and this eventually brought redemption, as Mordecai was later rewarded for saving the king’s life, paving the way for the miraculous salvation.

And Rabbi Elazar further said that Rabbi Ḥanina said: When a righteous man passes from this earth and is lost, he is lost only for the rest of his generation, who is now deprived of him, not for the righteous individual himself. This is similar to a man who has lost a pearl. The pearl does not care if it is lost, as wherever it is found, it is still a pearl; it is lost only to its owner.

Haman said: **“Yet all this avails me nothing”** (Esther 5:13). **Rabbi Elazar said that Rabbi Ḥanina said: When Haman saw Mordecai sitting at the king’s gate he said: Yet all this avails me nothing.** This may be understood as was suggested by Rav Ḥisda, for Rav Ḥisda said: **This one, Mordecai, came as one with the heritage of a rich man [perozebuli], whereas that one, Haman, came as one with the heritage of a poor man [perozeboti],** as Mordecai had been Haman’s slave master and was aware of Haman’s lowly lineage. **Rav Pappa said: And he was called: The slave who was sold for a loaf of bread.**

Haman’s previously quoted statement: **“Yet all this avails me nothing”** (Esther 5:13), **teaches that all the treasures of that wicked one were engraved on his heart, and when he saw Mordecai sitting at the king’s gate, he said:** As long as Mordecai is around, **all this that I wear on my heart avails me nothing.**

And Rabbi Elazar further said that Rabbi Ḥanina said: In the future, the Holy One, Blessed be He, will be a crown on the head of each and every righteous man. As it is stated: “In that day shall the Lord of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, to the residue of His people” (Isaiah 28:5). **What is the meaning of “for a crown of glory [tzevi], and for a diadem [velitzefirat] of beauty”? A crown for those that do His will [tzivyono] and a diadem for those that await [velamtzapin] His glory.** One might have thought that this extends to all such individuals. Therefore, **the verse states: “To the residue of his people,” to whoever regards himself as a remainder, i.e., small and unimportant like residue. But whoever holds himself in high esteem will not merit this.**

לתוכה מים, אבל הקדוש ברוך הוא — נותן מים ואחר כך שופת הקדרה, לקיים מה שנאמר: “לקול תתו המון מים בשמים”.

ואמר רבי אלעזר אמר רבי חנינא: כל האומר דבר בשם אומרו מביא גאולה לעולם, שנאמר: “ותאמר אסתר למלך בשם מרדכי”.

ואמר רבי אלעזר אמר רבי חנינא: צדיק אבד — לדורו אבד. משל לאדם שאבדה לו מרגלית, כל מקום שהיא — מרגלית שמה, לא אבדה אלא לבעלה.

“וכל זה איננו שוה לי.” אמר רבי אלעזר אמר רבי חנינא: בשעה שראה המן את מרדכי יושב בשער המלך, אמר: “כל זה אינו שוה לי.” כדרך חסדא, דאמר רב חסדא: זה בא בפרוזבולי וזה בא

בפרוזבוטי. אמר רב פפא: יקרו ליה עבדא דמזדבן בטלמי.

“וכל זה איננו שוה לי” — מלמד שכל גנזיו של אותו רשע תקיין על לבו, ובשעה שראה את מרדכי יושב בשער המלך, אמר: כל זה איננו שוה לי.

ואמר רבי אלעזר אמר רבי חנינא: עתיד הקדוש ברוך הוא להיות עטרה בראש כל צדיק וצדיק, שנאמר: “ביום ההוא יהיה ה’ צבאות לעטרת צבי [וגו]”. מאי “לעטרת צבי ולצפירת תפארה” — לעושיין צבינו ולמצפין תפארתו.

which he has sunk, and I shall guide him in his perplexity until he becomes perfect and he finds rest.

INTRODUCTION

One of seven causes should account for the contradictory or contrary statements to be found in any book or compilation.

The first cause. The author | has collected the remarks of various people with differing opinions, but has omitted citing his authorities and has not attributed each remark to the one who said it. Contradictory or contrary statements can be found in such compilations because one of the two propositions is the opinion of one individual while the other proposition is the opinion of another individual.

The second cause. The author of a particular book has adopted a certain opinion that he later rejects; both his original and later⁶³ statements are retained in the book.

The third cause. Not all the statements in question are to be taken in their external sense; some are to be taken in their external sense, while some others are parables and hence have an inner content. Alternatively, two apparently contradictory propositions may both be parables and when taken in their external sense may contradict, or be contrary to, one another.

The fourth cause. There is a proviso that, because of a certain necessity, has not been explicitly stated in its proper place; or the two subjects may differ, but one of them has not been explained in its proper place, so that a contradiction appears to have been said, whereas there is no contradiction.

The fifth cause arises from the necessity of teaching and making someone understand. For there may be a certain obscure matter that is difficult to conceive. One has to mention it or to take it as a premise in explaining something that is easy to conceive and that by rights ought to be taught

63. Literally: his first and his second.

before the former, since one always begins with what is easier. The teacher, accordingly, will have to be lax and, using any means that occur to him or gross speculation, will try to make that first matter somehow understood. He will not undertake to state the matter as it truly is in exact terms, but rather will leave it so in accord with the listener's imagination that the latter will understand only what he now wants him to understand. Afterwards, in the appropriate place, that obscure matter is stated in exact terms and explained as it truly is.

The sixth cause. | The contradiction is concealed and becomes evident only after many premises. The greater the number of premises needed to make the contradiction evident, the more concealed it is. It thus may escape the author, who thinks there is no contradiction between his two original propositions. But if each proposition is considered separately – a true premise being joined to it and the necessary conclusion drawn – and this is done to every conclusion – a true premise being joined to it and the necessary conclusion drawn –, after many syllogisms the outcome of the matter will be that the two final conclusions are contradictory or contrary to each other. That is the kind of thing that escapes the attention of scholars who write books. If, however, the two original propositions are evidently contradictory, but the author has simply forgotten the first when writing down the second in another part⁶⁴ of his compilation, this is a very great weakness, and that man should not be reckoned among those whose speeches deserve consideration.

The seventh cause. In speaking about very obscure matters it is necessary to conceal some parts and to disclose others. Sometimes in the case of certain dicta this necessity requires that the discussion proceed on the basis of a certain premise, whereas in another place necessity requires that the discussion proceed on the basis of another premise contradicting the first one. In such cases the vulgar must in no way be aware of the contradiction; the author accordingly uses some device to conceal it by all means.

The contradictions that are to be found in the *Mishnah* and the *Baraitoth* are due to the first cause. Thus you will find that they constantly ask: *Does not the beginning [of the passage] constitute an objection against its end?* In such cases the answer is: *The beginning is the opinion of a certain rabbi and the end that of another rabbi.* You likewise will find that

64. Literally: place.

they say: *Rabbi [Judah ha-Nasi] agreed with the opinion of a certain rabbi in this one | matter and therefore cited it anonymously. In that other matter he agreed with the opinion of that other rabbi and therefore cited it anonymously.* You often will find them also saying: *Who is the author of this anonymous passage? Such and such rabbi. Who is the author of that passage of the Mishnah? Such and such rabbi.* Such cases are innumerable. The contradictions or divergences to be found in the *Talmud* are due to the first cause and to the second. Thus you find them constantly saying: *In this matter he agreed with this rabbi and in that with another rabbi.* They likewise say: *He agreed with him on one point and disagreed on another.* They also say: *[The two statements are made by] two Amoraim who disagree as to the opinion of a certain rabbi.* All contradictions of this kind are due to the first cause. Contradictions due to the second cause are referred to when they say: *Rab abandoned this opinion. Raba abandoned that opinion.* In such cases an inquiry is made as to which of the two statements is the later one. This is similar to their saying: *In the first recension [of the Talmud] by Rabbi Ashi, he said one thing, and in the second another.* That some passages in every prophetic book, when taken in their external sense, appear to contradict or to be contrary to one another is due to the third cause and to the fourth. And it was with this in view that this entire introduction was written. You already know how often [the Sages], *may their memory be blessed*, say: *One verse says this and another verse says that.* They straightway establish that there is an apparent contradiction. Thereupon they explain that a proviso is lacking in the statement of the subject or that the two texts have different subjects. Thus they say: *Solomon, is it not enough for you that your words contradict those of your father? They also contradict themselves, and so on.*⁶⁵ Cases of this are frequent in the sayings of the *Sages*, *may their memory be blessed*; however, most of the prophetic statements they refer to concern commandments or precepts regarding conduct. We, on the other hand, | propose to draw attention to *verses* that are apparently contradictory with regard to opinions and beliefs. Part of this will be explained in some of the chapters of this Treatise, for this subject too belongs to *the mysteries of the Torah*. Whether contradictions due to the seventh cause are to be found in the books of the prophets is a matter for speculative study and investigation. Statements about this should not be a matter of conjecture. As for the divergences occurring in the books of the philosophers, or rather of those who know the truth, they are due to the fifth cause. On

65. B.T., Shabbath, 30a.

the other hand, the contradictions occurring in most of the books of authors and commentators other than those we have mentioned are due to the sixth cause. Likewise in the *Midrashim* and the *Haggadah* there is to be found great contradiction due to this cause. That is why the Sages have said: *No questions should be asked about difficulties in the Haggadah*. There are also to be found therein contradictions due to the seventh cause. Divergences that are to be found in this Treatise are due to the fifth cause and the seventh. Know this, grasp its true meaning, and remember it very well so as not to become perplexed by some of its chapters.

And after these introductory remarks, I shall begin to mention the terms whose true meaning, as intended in every passage according to its context, must be indicated. This, then, will be a key permitting one to enter places the gates to which were locked. And when these gates are opened and these places are entered into, the souls will find rest therein, the eyes will be delighted, and the bodies will be eased of their toil and of their labor. |