

12 Berachot 7b

Source Sheet by Nasanayl Braun

Berachot 7b

Until now, the Gemara has cited statements made by Rabbi Yohanan in the name of the *tanna*, Rabbi Yosei. Now, the Gemara begins to cite what **Rabbi Yohanan said in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yohai: From the day that the Holy One, Blessed be He, created the world there was no person who called him “Lord” until Abraham came and called him Lord. As it is stated: “And he said, ‘My Lord, God, by what shall I know that I will inherit it?’”** (Genesis 15:8). The Gemara cites another statement extolling that virtue of Abraham is mentioned, as **Rav said: Even Daniel’s prayers were only answered on account of Abraham, as it is stated: “And now listen, God, to the prayer of Your servant and to his supplication; and cause Your face to shine upon Your desolate Temple, for the sake of the Lord”** (Daniel 9:17). The verse **should have said:** And cause Your face to shine upon Your desolate Temple, **for Your sake**, as Daniel was addressing the Lord. **Rather**, this verse contains an allusion that

ברכות ז' ב

אמר רבי יוחנן משום רבי שמעון בן יוחי: מיום שברא הקדוש ברוך הוא את העולם, לא היה אדם שקראו להקדוש ברוך הוא “אדון”, עד שבא אברהם וקראו אדון, שנאמר: “ויאמר אדני אלהים במה אדע כי אירשנה”. אמר רב: אף דניאל לא נענה אלא בשביל אברהם, שנאמר: “ועתה שמע אלהינו אל תפלת עבדך ואל תחנוניו והאר פניך על מקדשך השמים למען אדני”, “למענך” מבעי ליה. אלא — למען אברהם שקראך “אדון”. ואמר רבי יוחנן משום רבי שמעון בן יוחי: מנין שאין מרצין לו לאדם בשעת כעסו — שנאמר: “פני ילכו והנחותי לך”. ואמר רבי יוחנן משום רבי שמעון בן יוחי: מיום שברא הקדוש ברוך הוא את עולמו לא היה אדם שהודה להקדוש ברוך הוא, עד שבאתה לאה והודתו, שנאמר: “הפעם

the prayer should be accepted **for the sake of Abraham, who called You, Lord.** Daniel utilized that name of God in order to evoke Abraham's virtue and enhance his prayer. **And Rabbi Yohanan said in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yohai: From where is it derived that one must not placate a person while the person is in the throes of his anger? As it is stated: "My face will go, and I will give you rest" (Exodus 33:14).** **And Rabbi Yohanan said in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yohai: From the day the Holy One, Blessed be He, created the world, no one thanked the Holy One, Blessed be He, until Leah came and thanked Him, as it is stated: "And she became pregnant and gave birth to a son, and she said, 'This time I will give thanks to God,' and thus he was called Judah" (Genesis 29:35).** Tangential to the mention of Leah's son, Judah, and the reason for his name, the Gemara explains the sources for other names, including **Reuben. Rabbi Elazar said:** Reuben's name should be considered a prophecy by Leah, as **Leah said: See [re'u] the difference between my son [beni] and the son of my father-in-law, Esau, son of Isaac. Even though Esau knowingly sold his birthright** to his brother Jacob,

אודה את ה'". ראוּבֵן. אָמַר רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר: אָמְרָה לָאָה: רְאוּ מָה בֵּין בְּנֵי לֵבָן חָמִי. דְּאִילוּ בֶן חָמִי, אִף עַל גַּב דְּמִדַּעְתִּיהּ זַבְנִיהּ לְבְכִירוּתֶיהּ, דְּכָתִיב: "וַיִּמְכֹּר אֶת בְּכֹרְתּוֹ לְיַעֲקֹב", חֲזוּ מָה כְּתִיב בֵּיהּ: "וַיִּשְׁטֹם עֲשׂוֹ אֶת יַעֲקֹב". וְכָתִיב: "וַיֹּאמֶר הָכִי קִרְא שְׁמוֹ יַעֲקֹב וַיַּעֲקֹבֵנִי זֶה פַעַמִּים" וְגו'. וְאִילוּ בְּנֵי, אִף עַל גַּב דְּעַל כְּרַחֲמֵיהּ שְׁקָלֶיהּ יוֹסֵף לְבְכִירוּתֶיהּ מִנִּיהּ, דְּכָתִיב: "וּבְחַלְלוּ יְצוּעֵי אָבִיו נִתְּנָה בְּכֹרְתּוֹ לְבְנֵי יוֹסֵף", אֲפִילוּ הָכִי — לֹא אֶקְנָא בֵּיהּ, דְּכָתִיב: "וַיִּשְׁמַע רְאוּבֵן וַיִּצְלְהוּ מִיָּדָם". רוּת, מֵאִי "רוּת"? אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן: שְׂזַכְתָּה וַיִּצָּא מִמֶּנָּה דָּוִד שְׂרִיָּוָהּ לְהַקְדֹּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא בְּשִׁירוֹת וְתַשְׁבְּחוֹת. מִנָּא לֵן דְּשִׁמְא גָרִים? אָמַר רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר, דְּאָמַר קִרְא: "לְכוּ חֲזוּ מַפְעָלוֹת יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר שָׁם שְׁמוֹת בְּאַרְצָ", אֶל תִּקְרִי "שְׁמוֹת" אֶלֹא "שְׁמוֹת". וְאָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן מִשּׁוּם רַבִּי שְׁמַעוֹן בֶּן יוֹחִי: קִשָּׁה תְּרַבּוֹת רָעָה בְּתוֹךְ בֵּיתוֹ שֶׁל אָדָם יוֹתֵר מִמִּלְחָמָת גּוֹג וּמָגוּג. שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: "מִזְמֹר לְדָוִד בְּבִרְחוֹ מִפְּנֵי אֲבִשָׁלוֹם בְּנוֹ", וְכָתִיב

as it is written: **“And he sold his birthright to Jacob”** (Genesis 25:33), nonetheless, **behold what is written about him: “And Esau hated Jacob”** (Genesis 27:41). Esau was not only angry over Isaac’s blessing, but he was angry about another matter as well, **as it is written: “And he said, ‘Is he not rightly named Jacob, for he has supplanted me twice? He took my birthright, and behold, now he has taken my blessing’”** (Genesis 27:36). Despite having sold his birthright, he refused to relinquish it. **While my son, Reuben, even though Joseph took his birthright from him by force, as it is written: “And the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel, for he was the firstborn; but, since he defiled his father’s bed, his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph, son of Israel”** (I Chronicles 5:1). **Nevertheless, he was not jealous of him, as it is written** when Joseph’s brothers sought to kill him: **“And Reuben heard and he saved him from their hands, saying ‘Let us not take his life’”** (Genesis 37:21). Continuing on the topic of names, the Gemara asks: **What is the meaning of the name Ruth? Rabbi Yohanan said: That she had the privilege that David, who inundated the Holy One, Blessed be He, with songs and**

בתריה: **“ה' מה רבו צרי רבים קמים עליי”, ואילו גבי מלחמת גוג ומגוג, כתיב: “למה רגשו גוים ולאמים יהגו ריק”. ואילו “מה רבו צרי” לא כתיב. “מזמור לדוד בברחו מפני אבשלום בנו”, “מזמור לדוד”! “קינה לדוד” מיבעי ליה! אמר רבי שמעון בן אבשלום: משל למה הדבר דומה? — לאדם שיצא עליו שטר חוב. קודם שפרעו היה עצב, לאחר שפרעו שמח. אף כן דוד, כיון שאמר לו הקדוש ברוך הוא: **“הנני מקים עליך רעה מביתך”**, היה עצב, אמר: **שמא עבד או ממזר הוא, דלא חייס עלי. כיון דחזא דאבשלום הוא — שמח. משום הכי אמר “מזמור”**. ואמר רבי יוחנן משום רבי שמעון בן יוחי: מותר להתגרות ברשעים בעולם הזה, שנאמר: **“עזבי תורה יהללו רשע ושמרי תורה יתגרו בם”**. תניא נמי הכי, רבי דוסתאי ברבי מתון אומר: מותר להתגרות ברשעים בעולם הזה, שנאמר: **“עזבי תורה יהללו רשע וגו'”**. ואם לחשך אדם לומר: והא כתיב **“אל תתחר****

praises, would descend from her. The name Ruth [*Rut*] is etymologically similar in Hebrew to the word inundate [*riva*]. Regarding the basic assumption that these homiletic interpretations of names are allusions to one's future, the Gemara asks: **From where do we derive that the name affects one's life?** **Rabbi Eliezer said** that the verse says: **"Go, see the works of the Lord, who has made desolations [*shamot*] upon the earth"** (Psalms 46:9). **Do not read** the word as *shamot*, rather as *shemot*, names. The names given to people are, therefore, "the works of the Lord upon the earth." **And Rabbi Yohanan said** other aggadic statements **in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yoḥai**: The existence of wayward children in a person's home is more troublesome than the war of Gog and Magog, the ultimate war, the climax of the travails of Messianic times. **As it is stated**: **"A Psalm of David, when he fled from his son, Absalom"** (Psalms 3:1). **And it is written thereafter**: **"Lord, how numerous are my enemies, many have risen against me"** (Psalms 3:2). **While concerning the war of Gog and Magog**, which is alluded to in the second chapter of Psalms, **it is written**: **"Why are the nations in**

בְּמִרְעִים אֶל תִּקְנָא בְּעֹשֵׁי עוֹלָה" — אָמַר לוֹ: מִי שֶׁלְּבוּ נֹקְפוֹ אוֹמֵר בֶּן. אֶלָּא: "אֶל תִּתְחַר בְּמִרְעִים" — אֶל תִּקְנָא בְּעֹשֵׁי עוֹלָה" — לְהִיט בְּעֹשֵׁי עוֹלָה. וְאוֹמֵר: "אֶל יִקְנָא לְבָב בְּחֻטָּאִים כִּי אִם בִּירְאָת יְהוָה כָּל הַיּוֹם". אֵינִי? וְהָאֵמַר רַבִּי יִצְחָק: אִם רְאִיתָ רָשָׁע שֶׁהִשְׁעָה מְשַׁחֲקֵת לוֹ אֶל תִּתְגַּרָּה בּוֹ, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: "יִחִילוּ דִרְכֵּיו בְּכָל עֵת". וְלֹא עוֹד אֶלָּא שְׂזוּכָה בְּדִין, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: "מָרוֹם מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ מִנְּגִדוֹ". וְלֹא עוֹד אֶלָּא שְׂרוּאָה בְּצָרֵיו, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: "כָּל צוֹרָרָיו יִפְיחַ בָּהֶם"! לֹא קִשְׁיָא, הָא בְּמִילֵי דִידֵיהּ, הָא בְּמִילֵי דְשָׁמְיָא. וְאִיבְעִית אִימָא הָא וְהָא בְּמִילֵי דְשָׁמְיָא, וְלֹא קִשְׁיָא: הָא בְּרָשָׁע שֶׁהִשְׁעָה מְשַׁחֲקֵת לוֹ, הָא בְּרָשָׁע שֶׁאֵין הִשְׁעָה מְשַׁחֲקֵת לוֹ. וְאִיבְעִית אִימָא: הָא וְהָא, בְּרָשָׁע שֶׁהִשְׁעָה מְשַׁחֲקֵת לוֹ, וְלֹא קִשְׁיָא, הָא, בְּצַדִּיק גָּמוֹר, הָא, בְּצַדִּיק שֶׁאֵינוֹ גָּמוֹר. דֹּאֲמַר רַב הוֹנָא: מַאי דְכָתִיב, "לָמָּה תִּבְטֹחַ בּוֹגְדִים תִּחְרִישׁ בְּבֹלַע רָשָׁע צַדִּיק מִמֶּנּוּ", וְכִי רָשָׁע בּוֹלַע צַדִּיק? וְהָא כְּתִיב: יְהוָה לֹא

an uproar? And why do the peoples speak for naught? The kings of the earth stand up and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His anointed...He that sits in heaven laughs, the Lord mocks them” (Psalms 2:1–4). Yet in this chapter describing the war of Gog and Magog “**how numerous are my enemies**” is not written, as it is not as difficult as raising a wayward son like Absalom. Regarding the opening phrase of the psalm, which serves as its title, the Gemara wonders: It is said: “**A Psalm of David, when fleeing his son, Absalom.**” A Psalm of David? It should have said: A lament of David. Rabbi Shimon ben Avishalom said a parable: To what is this similar? It is similar to a person about whom a promissory note was issued stating that he must repay a debt to the lender. Before he repaid it, he was despondent, worried how he will manage to repay the debt. After he repaid it, he was glad. So too was the case with David. When the Holy One, Blessed be He, told him, through Natan the prophet, after the incident with Bathsheba, “**Behold, I will raise up evil against you from your house**” (II Samuel 12:11), David was despondent. He said: Perhaps it will be a slave or a *mamzer* who

יעֲזֹבֵנו בְּיָדוֹ, וּכְתִיב: “לֹא יֵאָנֶה לְצַדִּיק כָּל אֹוֶן.” אֵלֶּא: צַדִּיק מִמֶּנּוּ — בּוֹלַע, צַדִּיק גָּמּוּר — אִינוּ בּוֹלַע. וְאִיבָעִית אִימָא, שְׁעָה מְשַׁחֶקֶת לוֹ — שְׂאֲנִי. וְאָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן מִשּׁוּם רַבִּי שְׁמַעוֹן בֶּן יוֹחִי: כָּל הַקּוֹבֵעַ מְקוֹם לְתַפְלָתוֹ אוֹיְבָיו נוֹפְלִים תַּחַתָּיו. שְׁנֵאמַר: “וְשִׁמְתִּי מְקוֹם לְעַמִּי לְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְנִטְעָתִיו וְשִׁכְן תַּחַתָּיו וְלֹא יִרְגֹּז עוֹד וְלֹא יִסִּיפוּ בְנֵי עוֹלָה לְעַנּוֹתוֹ כַּאֲשֶׁר בָּרַאשׁוֹנָה.” רַב הוֹנָא רְמִי כְּתִיב “לְעַנּוֹתוֹ”, וּכְתִיב: “לְכָלוֹתוֹ.” בְּתַחֲלִילָה — לְעַנּוֹתוֹ, וּלְבִסּוּף — לְכָלוֹתוֹ. וְאָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן מִשּׁוּם רַבִּי שְׁמַעוֹן בֶּן יוֹחִי: גְּדוּלָה שְׁמוּשָׁה שֶׁל תּוֹרָה יוֹתֵר מִלְמוּדָה, שְׁנֵאמַר: “כֹּה אֶלִישָׁע בֶּן שָׁפַט אֲשֶׁר יֵצֶק מִים עַל יָדֵי אֱלֹהֵיו.” “לִמַּד” לֹא נֵאמַר, אֵלֶּא “יֵצֶק” — מִלְמַד שְׁגָדוּלָה שְׁמוּשָׁה יוֹתֵר מִלְמוּדָה. אָמַר לִיה רַבִּי יֵצֶק לְרַב נַחֲמָן: מֵאִי טַעֲמָא לֹא אֲתִי מֶר לְבִי כְּנִישְׁתָּא לְצִלּוּיִי? אָמַר לִיה: לֹא יְכִילָנָא. אָמַר לִיה: לְכַנְפִּי לְמַר עֲשֶׂרָה וְלִיצְלִי. אָמַר לִיה: טְרִיחָא לִי מִלְתָּא. וְלִימָא לִיה מֶר לְשִׁלּוּחָא

will rise up in my house, a person of such lowly status, who **will have no pity on me. But once** David **saw that Absalom was the one** through whom the prophecy was to be fulfilled, **he rejoiced**, as he was certain that Absalom would show him mercy. **That is why** David **said a psalm**, not a lament, thanking God for punishing him in the least severe manner possible. **And Rabbi Yohanan said in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yohai: One is permitted to provoke the wicked in this world.** Though the ways of the wicked prosper, one is still permitted to provoke them and need not fear (Maharsha), **as it is stated: “Those who abandon the Torah will praise wickedness, and the keepers of the Torah will fight them”** (Proverbs 28:4). That statement was also taught in a *baraita*, as Rabbi Dostai, son of Rabbi Matun, says: One is permitted to provoke the wicked in this world, as it is stated: “Those who abandon the Torah will praise wickedness, and the keepers of the Torah will fight them.” And if someone whispered to you, saying, on the contrary, isn’t it also written: “**Do not compete with evil-doers, and do not envy the unjust**” (Psalms 37:1), meaning that one should avoid

דְּצַבּוּרָא, בְּעִידָנָא דְּמִצְלִי צַבּוּרָא
לִיתִי וְלוֹדְעִיהָ לָמַר. אָמַר לִיהָ
מֵאִי כּוֹלִי הָאִי? אָמַר לִיהָ דְּאָמַר
רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן מִשּׁוּם רַבִּי שְׁמַעוֹן בֶּן
יוֹחִי:

provoking the wicked, **say to him:** Only **one whose heart strikes him** with pangs of conscience over sins that he committed **says this.** **Rather,** the true meaning of the verse is: **Do not compete with evil-doers, to be like the evil-doers, and do not envy the unjust to be like the unjust.** The Gemara cites proof from another verse. **And it says: “One shall not envy the unjust, but be in fear of the Lord all the day”** (Proverbs 23:17). In this context, to envy means to seek to emulate the unjust. From these verses in Psalms and Proverbs, it would seem that one is encouraged to provoke the wicked. The Gemara asks: **Is this so? Didn’t Rabbi Yitzhak say: If you see a wicked person upon whom the hour is smiling, do not provoke him.** As long as he is enjoying good fortune, there is no point in confronting him. **As it is stated: “His ways prosper at all times; Your judgments are far beyond him; as for his adversaries, he snorts at them”** (Psalms 10:5). The verse teaches us that the ways of the wicked will always succeed. **And not only that, but he emerges victorious in judgment, as it is stated: “Your judgments are far beyond him,”** meaning that even when he is brought to justice, it does

not affect him. **And not only that, but he witnesses his enemies' downfall, as it is stated: "As for all his adversaries, he snorts at them."**To resolve this contradiction with regard to whether or not one may provoke the wicked, the Gemara offers several explanations: **This is not difficult**, as it can be understood that **this**, which says that one may not provoke the wicked, is referring **to his personal matters, while that**, which says that it is a mitzva to confront them, is referring **to matters of Heaven. And if you wish, say instead that this**, which says not to confront the wicked **and that**, which says to confront the wicked, are both referring **to matters of Heaven, and, nevertheless, it is not difficult. This**, which says that one may not provoke the wicked, is referring **to a wicked person upon whom the hour is smiling**, who is enjoying good fortune. **While that**, which says that it is a mitzva to confront them, is referring **to a wicked person upon whom the hour is not smiling. And if you wish, say instead that this**, which says not to confront **and that**, which says to confront, are both referring **to a wicked person upon whom the hour is smiling**, but the question of whether one is permitted to

confront him depends on who is confronting him. **And** nevertheless, this is **not difficult**. **This**, which says that it is a mitzva to confront them, is referring **to a completely righteous person, while this**, which says that one may not confront the wicked, is referring **to one who is not completely righteous, as Rav Huna said: What is the meaning of that which is written: “Why do You look on those who deal treacherously and hold Your peace? When the wicked swallows the man more righteous than he?”** (Habakkuk 1:13). This verse is difficult to understand. **Do the wicked swallow the righteous? Isn’t it written: “The wicked looks to the righteous and seeks to kill him; the Lord will not leave him in his hand, nor allow him to be condemned when he is judged”** (Psalms 37:32–33), **and it is written: “No mischief shall befall the righteous”** (Proverbs 12:21)? **Rather**, in light of these verses, the verse: “The wicked swallows the man more righteous than he” means: **The man who is more righteous than he**, but not completely righteous, **he swallows. The completely righteous he does not swallow.** **And if you wish, say:** In general, the wicked cannot

swallow the righteous, but **when the hour is smiling upon him, it is different.** When the wicked are enjoying good fortune, even the righteous can be harmed (*Birkat Hashem*). **And Rabbi Yohanan said in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yohai:** Setting a fixed place for prayer is so important that **one who sets a fixed place for his prayer, his enemies fall beneath him, as it is said: “And I will appoint a place for My nation, Israel, and I will plant them, that they may dwell in their own place.”** Through setting aside a place for prayer, they will merit to **“be disturbed no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them anymore, as in the beginning”** (II Samuel 7:10). This verse, cited by the Gemara, leads to an additional point. **Rav Huna raised a contradiction:** In the book of Samuel, in this verse it is written: **“To afflict them,”** while in the parallel verse in I Chronicles (17:9) it is written: **“To destroy them.”** The Gemara resolves this contradiction: The enemies of Israel intend first **to afflict them, and, ultimately, to destroy them** entirely. **And Rabbi Yohanan said in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yohai: Service of Torah is greater than its study, i.e.,** serving a Torah scholar and

spending time in his company is greater than learning Torah from him. Torah study is one component of a Torah life, but one who serves a Torah scholar learns about every aspect of life from his actions. This is derived from the verse that speaks in praise of Elisha, **as it is stated: “Here is Elisha son of Shafat, who poured water over Elijah’s hands”** (II Kings 3:11). The verse **does not** say that **he learned** from Elijah, **rather** that **he poured** water, which **teaches** that **the service of Torah** represented by Elisha pouring water over Elijah’s hands **is greater than its study**. As a prelude to another of the statements by Rabbi Yoḥanan in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yoḥai, the Gemara relates the following incident. **Rabbi Yitzḥak said to Rav Naḥman: Why did the Master not come to the synagogue to pray?** Rav Naḥman **said to him: I was weak and unable** to come. Rabbi Yitzḥak **said to him: Let the Master gather ten** individuals, a prayer quorum, at your home **and pray**. Rav Naḥman **said to him: It is difficult for me** to impose upon the members of the community to come to my home to pray with me (*Sefer Mitzvot Gadol*). Rabbi Yitzḥak suggested another option: **The Master should tell the congregation** to send a **messenger**

when the congregation is praying to come and inform the Master so you may pray at the same time. Rav Naḥman saw that Rabbi Yitzḥak was struggling to find a way for him to engage in communal prayer. **He asked: What is the reason for all this fuss?** Rabbi Yitzḥak said **to him:** **As Rabbi Yoḥanan said in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yoḥai:**

Source Sheet created on Sefaria by Nasanayl Braun