

Nakdimon ben Guryon – נַקְדִּימוֹן בֶּן גּוּרְיוֹן: Nakdimon ben Guryon, whose Hebrew name was Boni, was one of the wealthiest residents of Jerusalem in the generation of the destruction of the Second Temple. The Gemara recounts that he gave large sums for communal causes, and a great miracle befell him in the merit of his efforts (*Taanit* 19b–20a). In this light, the Gemara's incredulity concerning the deficiencies of his philanthropic record is well understood.

Elsewhere, the Gemara relates that Nakdimon ben Guryon and two other exceptionally wealthy individuals undertook to provide all the needs of Jerusalem for twenty years, when the city was under Roman siege. However, all his stores were destroyed by the infighting of Jewish groups inside the city. The loss of his property was so complete that his daughter was reduced to utter destitution and hunger.

## Perek VI

## Daf 67 Amud a

## NOTES

Gold, the court appraises it and it is according to its value – **הַבַּיִת שֶׁמִּן אוֹתוֹ הָרִי הוּא כְּשׁוֹוִי**: Commentaries debate what is indicated by the generic term gold. Rashi claims that it refers to pieces of gold metal that are not used for jewelry, money, or any other purpose. Consequently, the gold is appraised based on its actual market value. By contrast, others, based on Rabeinu Hananel, interpret gold as gold jewelry, which does not generally depreciate from usage (*Tosafot*). Consequently, it is treated like other gold utensils that are appraised based on their actual market value.

Like silver vessels, which diminish – **כְּכֵלִים שֶׁל כֶּסֶף דּוֹפְחִי**: The Rashba and others understood Rashi as saying the diminishment of which the Gemara speaks is the reduction calculated at the time of the appraisal, in the manner of all utensils. Others explain that the Gemara speaks of physical deterioration of the silver utensils, which occurs over the course of use (Rabeinu Hananel).

וְנַקְדִּימוֹן בֶּן גּוּרְיוֹן לֹא עָבַד צְדָקָה?  
וְהִתְנָא: אָמְרוּ עָלָיו עַל נַקְדִּימוֹן בֶּן  
גּוּרְיוֹן, כְּשֶׁהָיָה יוֹצֵא מִבֵּיתוֹ לְבֵית  
הַמְדְרָשׁ, כְּלֵי מִילֵת הָיוּ

The recorded incident implies that Nakdimon lost all of his wealth after having failed to use it for acts of kindness. The Gemara asks: **And did not Nakdimon ben Guryon<sup>6</sup> perform charity? Isn't it taught in a *baraita*: They said about Nakdimon ben Guryon that when he would leave his home to go to the study hall, there were fine woolen garments his attendants would**

מְצִיעִין תַּחְתָּיו, וּבְאִין עֲנִיִּים וּמְקַפְּלִין  
אוֹתָן מֵאַחֲרָיו! אִיבְעִית אִימָא: לְכַבּוֹד  
הוּא דְעֵבֵד, וְאִיבְעִית אִימָא: כְּדָבְעִי  
לִיה לְמִיעֵבֵד לֹא עָבַד. כְּדָאֲמְרֵי אִינְשֵׁי:  
לְפִים גְּמֻלָּא שִׁחְחָא.

תְּנֵי, אָמַר רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר בְּרַבִּי צְדוֹק:  
אֲרָאָה בְּנַחְמָה אִם לֹא רְאִיתִיָּה  
שְׁהִיתָה מְלַקְטֵת שְׁעוּרִים מִבֵּין טְלָפִי  
סוּסִים בְּעֵבוֹ, קָרָאתִי עָלֶיהָ מְקָרָא זֶה  
"אִם לֹא תִדְעִי לָךְ הִיפָּה בְּנָשִׁים צְאִי  
לָךְ בְּעַקְבֵי הַצֹּאן וְרַעִי אֶת גְּדֵי־תִיךְ",  
אֶל תִּקְרִי "גְּדֵי־תִיךְ" אֶלָּא "גְּדֵי־תִיךְ".

אָמַר רַב שְׁמֵן בַּר אַבָּא אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן:  
הַכְּנִסָּה לוֹ זָהָב – שְׁמֵן אוֹתוֹ, וְהָרִי  
הוּא כְּשׁוֹוִי. מִיתִּבִּי: זָהָב הָרִי הוּא  
כְּכֵלִים. מֵאִי לָאוּ – כְּכֵלִים שֶׁל כֶּסֶף,  
דְּפָחִיתִי! לֹא, כְּכֵלִים שֶׁל זָהָב, דְּלֹא  
פָּחִיתִי. אִם בֶּן כְּכֵלֵי מִיבְעִי לִיה!

spread underneath him to walk on, and with his blessing, the poor would come and fold them up from behind him for themselves? Clearly he gave abundant charity. The Gemara offers two possible explanations: **If you wish, say that he acted that way for his own honor**, to demonstrate that he considered the exorbitant expense trivial. **And if you wish, say that as he should have done, he did not do. As people say, according to the camel is the burden.** The stronger the camel, the heavier the load it must bear. Even if he gave altruistically, Nakdimon ben Guryon did not give as much as he was expected to give.

It is taught in a *baraita* (*Tosefta* 5:8) with regard to the daughter of Nakdimon ben Guryon: **Rabbi Elazar, son of Rabbi Tzadok, said in the form of an oath: I pray that I will not see the consolation of the Jewish people if I did not see her gathering barley kernels from between the hooves of horses in Akko. I recited this verse about her: "If you know not, O you fairest among women, go your way forth by the footsteps of the flock and feed your kids, beside the shepherds' tents" (Song of Songs 1:8). Do not read it as "your kids [*gediyotayikh*]" but rather read it as your bodies [*geviyotayikh*].** This woman is compelled to follow the sheep to the pastures in order to sustain her own body from the leftovers of their food.

**S** The Gemara returns to the topic of how the groom records the bride's dowry in the marriage contract: **Rav Shemen bar Abba said that Rabbi Yoḥanan said: If she brings him gold in her dowry, the court appraises it, and it is recorded in the marriage contract according to its value,<sup>6</sup> without additions or subtractions. The Gemara raises an objection from that which was taught in a *baraita*: The *halakha* is that the gold is like utensils and not like cash for purposes of the dowry. The Gemara qualifies its objection: **What, is it not that gold is like silver vessels, which diminish,<sup>6b</sup> so that they resemble all other goods in the dowry whose values are reduced in the marriage contract? The Gemara responds: No, the intent is that gold is like utensils of gold, which do not diminish.** The Gemara asks: **If so, the *baraita* should have stated that gold is like its own utensils, which would demonstrate that gold is appraised according to its true value. Evidently, then, this is not true of gold.****

## BACKGROUND

Like silver vessels, which diminish – **כְּכֵלִים שֶׁל כֶּסֶף דּוֹפְחִי**: (Ag, S). Although silver is a noble metal, which does not easily react with other materials, when it comes into contact with hydrogen sulfide (H<sub>2</sub>S), found at low concentrations in the air, it becomes covered with a black, very thin layer of silver sulfide

(Ag<sub>2</sub>S). When the silver is cleaned, this layer is scratched and removed altogether. Therefore, in contrast to the case of a utensil made of gold, which is resistant to this form of chemical reaction, the weight of a silver utensil itself is gradually reduced over time.

With smashed gold fragments – **בְּדִהְבָּא פְּרִיכָא**: Rashi explains that collections of small pieces of gold and gold dust also depreciate simply because their components are occasionally lost due to their small size. Therefore, the Gemara compares them to silver utensils, which also depreciate. However, *Tosafot* and others indicate that these do not depreciate in and of themselves, and consequently the *baraita* compares them to gold utensils, which do not depreciate.

ועוד, תנא: זהב – הרי הוא ככלים, דינרי זהב – הרי הן ככספים. רבן שמעון בן גמליאל אומר: במקום שנהגו שלא לפורטן – שמין אותן, והרי הן בשווייהן. רבן שמעון בן גמליאל אהיא? אילימא אסיפא – מכלל דתנא קמא סבר אפילו במקום שנהגו שלא לפורטן? הא לא נפקי!

And moreover, one can ask: **It is taught in a baraita (Tosefta 6:2) that the halakha is that gold is like utensils and that gold dinars are like silver coins. Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says: In a place where people were accustomed not to exchange them, the court appraises them, and they are recorded at their appraised worth, no more or less. The Gemara clarifies: To which clause is Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel referring, when he comments that they are not exchanged? If we say he is commenting on the latter clause concerning the gold dinars, by inference it may be understood that the first tanna holds that gold dinars have the same status as cash, even in a place where people were accustomed not to exchange them. But they are not used and do not function as liquid money in a place where they are not exchanged. Why, then, does the husband need to raise the value as though they were functional cash?**

אָלָא לָאוּ – אַרִישָׁא, וְהָכִי קָאָמַר: זֶהֱבַ הָרִי הוּא כְּכֵלִים, מֵאֵי כְּלִים – כְּלִים שֶׁל כֶּסֶף, רַבֵּן שְׁמַעוֹן בֶּן גַּמְלִיאֵל אָמַר: הָרִי הוּא בְּדִינְרֵין שֶׁל זֶהֱבַ בְּמָקוֹם שֶׁנֶּהְגוּ שְׁלֹא לְפֹרְטָן?

Rather, is it not that Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel commented on the first clause of the *baraita*, and this is what the *baraita* is saying: *The halakha is that gold is like utensils. What is meant by the ambiguous term utensils? Utensils of silver. Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel qualifies this ruling and says: The halakha is that it is like gold dinars, whose value remains constant, in a place where they are accustomed not to exchange it or use it for business. In any event, the opinion of the first tanna in this baraita, that gold is treated like silver utensils, contradicts the previous assertion that gold must have the status of gold utensils, not silver utensils.*

לָא, לְעוֹלָם אִסִּיפָא, וְדִנְפָקִי עַל יְדֵי הַדָּחֶק. וְבָהָא קָמִיפְלִגִי מִרְ סָבַר: בֵּינּוֹן דְּנָפְקִי – מִשְׁבַּחִינָן לָהּ, וְמִרְ סָבַר: בֵּינּוֹן דְּלֵא נָפְקִי אָלָא עַל יְדֵי הַדָּחֶק – לָא מִשְׁבַּחִינָן לָהּ.

The Gemara responds: **No, actually it must be that Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel commented on the latter clause of the baraita, which deals with gold dinars, and they are not exchanged because they are used as cash only with difficulty. They are not typically used for business, but they could be used when necessary. And consequently, they disagree about this: One Sage, the first tanna, holds since they are used when necessary, we increase the value of gold dinars for the wife in the dowry, and the husband writes an increased sum in the marriage contract. And one Sage, Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel, holds since they are used for commerce only with difficulty, we do not increase the value of gold dinars for her. According to this interpretation, the first opinion can still subscribe to the notion that gold pieces, like gold utensils, are appraised at their actual value.**

אִיבְעִית אִימָא: בּוֹלָה רַבֵּן שְׁמַעוֹן בֶּן גַּמְלִיאֵל הִיא, וְחִסּוּרֵי מִיחְסָרָא וְהָכִי קָתַנִּי: זֶהֱבַ הָרִי הוּא כְּכֵלִים, דִּינְרֵי זֶהֱבַ הָרִי הֵן כְּכֵסְפִים. בְּמָה דְּבָרִים אָמוּרִים – בְּמָקוֹם שֶׁנֶּהְגוּ לְפֹרְטָן, אָבָל בְּמָקוֹם שֶׁנֶּהְגוּ שְׁלֹא לְפֹרְטָן – שְׁמִין אוֹתָם וְהָרִי הֵן בְּשׁוּוִייהֶן. דְּבָרֵי רַבֵּן שְׁמַעוֹן בֶּן גַּמְלִיאֵל. שְׂרָבֵן שְׁמַעוֹן בֶּן גַּמְלִיאֵל אָמַר: בְּמָקוֹם שֶׁנֶּהְגוּ שְׁלֹא לְפֹרְטָן – שְׁמִין אוֹתָם וְהָרִי הֵן בְּשׁוּוִייהֶן.

If you wish, say instead that the entire *baraita* is in accordance with the opinion of Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel, and the *baraita* is incomplete and this is what it is teaching: *The halakha is that a piece of gold is like utensils and gold dinars are like money. In what case is this statement said? In a place where the people were accustomed to exchange the dinars. However, in a place where the people were accustomed not to exchange the dinars, the court appraises their worth, and they are recorded at their appraised worth. This is the statement of Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel, as Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says: In a place where the people were accustomed not to exchange them, the court appraises their worth, and they are recorded at their appraised worth.*

מִכְּלֵי מָקוֹם. כְּכֵלֵי מִיבְעִי לִיהָ! קִשְׂיָא. אִיבְעִית אִימָא: הָכָא בְּמֵאֵי עֲסָקִינָן – בְּדִהְבָּא פְּרִיכָא. רַב אֲשֵׁי אָמַר: בְּמַמְלָא.

The contradiction from this *baraita* has been resolved, but in any case, a difficulty remains: If the status of gold is similar to that of gold utensils and it is appraised at its actual value, the *baraita* should have stated that gold is like its own utensils and not simply like any utensils. The Gemara answers: The language is difficult. If you wish, say the following answer instead: **With what are we dealing here? With smashed gold fragments.<sup>N</sup> Rav Ashi said: We are dealing with granules of gold. Certainly, then, they are not treated as gold utensils, but the novel element of the baraita is that they have the status of regular utensils and not of gold dinars.**

NOTES

**Arabian camels – גמלים של ערבא:** Rashi explains that with respect to most of the items described here, the Gemara seeks to demonstrate that these movable items are treated like money. Consequently, when a woman brings any of these items into the marriage, the husband must add 50 percent of their value in the marriage contract. *Shita Mekubbetzet* notes that Rashi's explanation is quite reasonable, since the Gemara flows nicely according to it. However, most other commentaries, including Rav Natronai Gaon, *Talmidei HaRamban*, and Rabbeinu Tam, cited in *Tosafot*, maintain that since these items were the primary means of commerce in their respective locations, they are treated like land. As such, the Gemara rules that a woman may collect her marriage contract from them. According to this opinion, this discussion serves as the primary basis for the ordinance instituted by the *ge'onim* that a marriage settlement may be collected from movable property and not only from land.

**Money pouches in Mehoza – ארנקי דמחוזא:** According to Rashi, these were purses used to hold cash. Although there was active commerce in Mehoza, the economy relied primarily upon real estate, and not upon specific movable goods, for the guarantee of loans. By contrast, the Meiri explains that pouches were a chief product of Mehoza. They were used for commerce, similar to the sacks of Kimhonya and the other goods mentioned in the Gemara.

BACKGROUND

**Arabian camels – גמלים של ערבא:** A small number of sources indicate that there were Jewish settlements in Arabia in the talmudic period. From the Gemara's statement here, it would seem that the local Jews earned a living in consonance with most of the other locals and that camels were their foremost property. Arabian Jewish communities continued to exist in Khaybar and other places for many generations after the talmudic period.

**Rodya – רודיא:** There are different opinions concerning the location of Rodya. Some claim that it refers to the island of Rhodes next to Greece, while others suggest that the intention here is the Babylonian city of Ρόδος, *Rhodos*.

LANGUAGE

**Marriage settlement [parna] – פרנא:** From the Greek φερνή, *fernē*, meaning dowry. However, as the term is used here by the Sages, it apparently includes the money that the wife receives in her marriage settlement.

**Money pouches [arnakei] – ארנקי:** From the Greek ἀρνάκις, *arnakis*, a garment made from leather. As used by the Sages, the term refers to a pouch or purse, perhaps made from leather, used for holding coins.



Money pouch like those used in ancient Rome

אמר רבי ינאי: בשמים של אנטוכיא הרי הן ככסף. אמר רבי שמואל בר נחמני אמר רבי יוחנן: גמלים של ערבא אשה גובה פרנא מהם.

אמר רב פפי: הני תותבי דבי מכסי – אשה גובה פרנא מהם. ואמר רב פפי הני שקי דרודיא ואשלי דקמחוזא אשה גובה פרנא מהון. אמר רבא: מריש הוה אמנא הני ארנקי דמחוזא אשה גובה פרנא מהם. מאי טעמא – אסמכתיהו עליהו. כיון דחוזאי דשקלי להו ונפקי וכי משבחי ארעא זבגי בהו – אמנא: אסמכתיהו אארעא הוא.

מתני' המשיא את בתו קתם לא יפחות לה מחמשים וזו. פסק להכניסה ערומה – לא יאמר הבעל – כשאכניסנה לביתי אכנסנה בכסותי, אלא מכסה ועודה בבית אביה. וכן המשיא את היתומה – לא יפחות לה מחמשים וזו, אם יש בביים – מפרנסין אותה לפי כבודה.

§ Apropos the preceding discussion concerning the appraisal of objects used for commerce, the Gemara cites a series of related comments. **Rabbi Yannai said:** With regard to spices in Antioch, they are like money. Since in Antioch they would conduct business with spices, they should be treated like cash when a woman brings them in her dowry. Similarly, **Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahmani said that Rabbi Yohanan said:** Concerning camels in Arabia,<sup>NBH</sup> a woman may collect the amount of her marriage settlement<sup>t</sup> from them. Since they conduct business using camels in Arabia, the camels are consequently given the status that money has in other places.

Similarly, **Rav Pappi said:** With regard to those robes in Bei Mikhsei, a woman may collect her marriage settlement from them because they use dresses for commerce. **And Rav Pappi said:** With regard to these sacks in Rodya<sup>b</sup> and ropes in Kimhonya, a woman may collect her marriage settlement from them. **Rava said:** Initially, I would have said that concerning those money pouches [arnakei]<sup>i</sup> in Mehoza,<sup>n</sup> a woman may collect her marriage settlement from them. **What is the reason? They rely on them,** and they serve the commercial function served by real estate in other places. **Once I saw that they take them and the pouches are used, and when they find land they buy it with them and do not retain them, I said that they too rely on land.** The money pouches are used in a fluid manner, but these pouches do not serve the same role served by real estate.

**MISHNA** With regard to one who marries off his daughter with the terms of the dowry unspecified,<sup>h</sup> he must not give her less than fifty dinars. If the bride's father pledged to bring her into the marriage bare,<sup>l</sup> by saying that he refuses to give her anything, the husband should not say: When I bring her into my house, I will clothe her with my clothing, but not beforehand. Rather, he must clothe her while she is yet in her father's house, and she enters the marriage with the clothing in hand. **And similarly,** with regard to a charity administrator who marries off an orphan girl,<sup>l</sup> he must not give her less than fifty dinars. If there are sufficient resources in the charity fund, the charities provide even more for her, furnishing a dowry and her other needs according to her dignity.

HALAKHA

**Arabian camels – גמלים של ערבא:** The *ge'onim* instituted that a woman may collect her marriage contract even from movable property, since at that time most Jews did not own land but relied financially on movable property. This ordinance spread among all Jewish communities, and the marriage contracts are written accordingly, with respect to the main sum, the additional sum, and all other conditions recorded in the marriage contract, except for the provision for her sons (see 50b).

Many early commentaries note that one can already discern the basis for this ordinance in the Gemara's stance concerning camels and the other movable property it enumerates (*Maggid Mishne*). The *ge'onim* simply expanded the concept from specific examples and established a broad regulation (Rambam *Sefer Nashim*, *Hilkhot Ishut* 16:7; *Shulhan Arukh*, *Even HaEzer* 100:1).

**One who marries off his daughter unspecified – המשיא את בתו קתם:** The Sages said that one should give some of his property to his daughter when he marries her off, and this is what the Sages meant by the term: Provide. If someone marries off his daughter without specifying a different amount for her dowry, he is required to provide her with no less than the clothing that the court allocates to the bride of a pauper. This is the sum for a father who is poor, but one who is wealthy should add to the amount according to his wealth. This ruling follows the mishna

(Rambam *Sefer Nashim*, *Hilkhot Ishut* 20:1; *Shulhan Arukh*, *Even HaEzer* 58:1).

**He pledged to bring her into the marriage bare – פסק להכניסה ערומה:** If the father stipulated that he would bring her into marriage bare, the husband should not say: When I bring her into my house I will clothe her. Rather, he clothes her while she is still in her father's house. This ruling is in accordance with the mishna (Rambam *Sefer Nashim*, *Hilkhot Ishut* 20:2; *Shulhan Arukh*, *Even HaEzer* 58:2).

**One who marries off an orphan girl – המשיא את היתומה:** When a charity administrator marries off an orphan girl, he must give her at least fifty dinars of provincial coins, which sum equals six and one quarter standard dinars. If the charity has more funds available, she is to be given an amount that befits her stature. It stands to reason that the sums delineated were stipulated only for their time and that nowadays these matters follow local contemporary practice. The authorities write that if the charity fund does not have the stipulated baseline sum, the administrators must take out loans. However, there is no need to borrow in order to give a higher amount to a woman who would otherwise receive more (*Shakh*, based on *Beit Yosef*; Rambam *Sefer Zera'im*, *Hilkhot Mattenot Aniyyim* 8:16; *Shulhan Arukh*, *Yoreh De'a* 250:2, 253:2).

An orphan boy and an orphan girl who have come – יתום ויתומה שָׁבְאוּ: If an orphan boy and an orphan girl require charity, the girl is given priority to receive food or clothing. A woman is similarly prioritized over a man (Rambam *Sefer Zera'im, Hilkhoh Mattenot Aniyyim* 8:15; *Shulhan Arukh, Yoreh De'a* 251:8).

**גמ'** אמר אביי: חמשים זוזי פְּשִׁיטִי מִמָּאִי – מִדְּקִתְנֵי סִיפָא: אִם יֵשׁ בְּבֵינֵי – מִפְּרָסִין אוֹתָהּ לְפִי כְבוֹדָהּ. וְאִמְרִינָן: מֵאִי בֵּינֵי? אָמַר רַחְבָּהּ: אֲרָנְקֵי שֶׁל צְדָקָה. וְאִי סְלִיקָא דְעֵתֵינִי חֲמִשִּׁים זוּזֵי מִמֶּשׁ – אִם יֵשׁ בְּבֵינֵי בְּמָה יִהְיִינָן לָהּ? אֵלֶּא שְׂמַע מִינָהּ חֲמִשִּׁים זוּזֵי פְּשִׁיטִי.

**GEMARA** Abaye said: The fifty dinars mentioned in the mishna is referring to fifty provincial dinars, each of which is worth one-eighth the amount of a standard dinar. **From where do I know that this is so? From the fact that the latter clause teaches: If there are sufficient resources in the charity fund, the charities provide more for her, furnishing a dowry and her other needs according to her dignity. And we say: What is this fund? Raḥava said: The charity fund. And if it enters our minds to say that the mishna is referring to fifty actual, i.e., standard, dinars, if there are sufficient resources in the fund, how many standard dinars do we give him? Fifty standard dinars is already a sizable sum to distribute as charity. Rather, conclude from this comment that the mishna is referring to fifty provincial dinars.**

תָּנוּ רַבָּנָן: יתום ויתומה שָׁבְאוּ לְהִתְפָּרֵס – מִפְּרָסִין אֶת הַיְתוּמָה, וְאַחַר כֵּן מִפְּרָסִין אֶת הַיְתוּם, מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהָאִישׁ דְּרָכּוֹ לְחֹזֵר עַל הַפְּתָחִים, וְאִין אִשָּׁה דְרָכָהּ לְחֹזֵר. יתום ויתומה

**The Sages taught:** Concerning an orphan boy and an orphan girl who have come<sup>h</sup> and appealed to be supported by the charity fund, the distributors provide for the orphan girl first and afterward they provide for the orphan boy. This is because it is the way of a man to circulate about the entryways to ask for charity, and it is not a woman's way to circulate for charity. Therefore, her need is greater. Concerning an orphan boy and orphan girl

Perek VI  
Daf 67 Amud b

שָׁבְאוּ לִינְשָׂא – מְשִׁיאִין אֶת הַיְתוּמָה וְאַחַר כֵּן מְשִׁיאִין אֶת הַיְתוּם, מִפְּנֵי שֶׁבּוֹשְׁתָּהּ שֶׁל אִשָּׁה מְרוֹבָה מִשֶּׁל אִישׁ.

who have come to appeal to the charity fund to be married<sup>h</sup> off, the administrators marry off the orphan girl first and afterward they marry off the orphan boy, because the humiliation of a woman who is not married is greater than that of an unmarried man.

תָּנוּ רַבָּנָן: יתום שָׁבְאוּ לִינְשָׂא – שׂוֹכְרִין לוֹ בֵּית וּמִצְעִיעִין לוֹ מִטָּה וְכֹל כְּלֵי תַשְׁמִישׁוֹ, וְאַחַר כֵּן מְשִׁיאִין לוֹ אִשָּׁה, שְׁנָאֵמַר "דִּי מְחִסְרוֹ אֲשֶׁר יְחַסֵּר לוֹ." "דִּי מְחִסְרוֹ" – זֶה הַבֵּית. "אֲשֶׁר יְחַסֵּר" – זֶה מִטָּה וְשִׁלְחָן. "לוֹ" – זוֹ אִשָּׁה, וְכֵן הוּא אוֹמֵר "אֶעֱשֶׂה לוֹ עֹזר כְּנַגְדּוֹ".

**The Sages taught:** Concerning an orphan boy who has come to marry,<sup>h</sup> the community tries its utmost to provide for all of his needs. The charities rent a house for him, arrange for him a bed and all his utensils, and thereafter they marry him a wife, as it is stated: "But you shall surely open your hand to him, and shall surely lend him sufficient for his deficiency<sup>h</sup> in that which is deficient for him" (Deuteronomy 15:8). With regard to the phrase "sufficient for his deficiency," this is referring to the house. "Which is deficient"; this is referring to a bed and table. "For him [lo]"; this is referring to a wife. And similarly the verse states: "I will make him [lo] a helpmate for him" (Genesis 2:18), when God created a wife for Adam.

HALAKHA

An orphan boy and an orphan girl who have come to be married – יתום ויתומה שָׁבְאוּ לְהִינְשָׂא: If the charity fund is marrying off an orphan boy and an orphan girl, the charity tends first to the needs of the orphan girl, and only thereafter to the needs of the orphan boy. This follows the *baraita* quoted in the Gemara (Rambam *Sefer Zera'im, Hilkhoh Mattenot Aniyyim* 8:16; *Shulhan Arukh, Yoreh De'a* 251:8).

Sufficient for his deficiency – דִּי מְחִסְרוֹ: It is a mitzva to give a poor individual a sum commensurate with his needs, both for regular support and for any of his particular additional needs. If he requires special foods, they must be provided for him. Similarly, if one grew accustomed to certain luxuries during his time of wealth, they are provided for him if he feels that he needs them. This includes even a horse upon which to ride and a servant to run before it. Although there is an obligation to provide a poor man with the luxuries from his previous lifestyle that he now lacks, the community has no responsibility to make him wealthy (Rambam *Sefer Zera'im, Hilkhoh Mattenot Aniyyim* 7:3; *Shulhan Arukh, Yoreh De'a* 250:1).

An orphan boy who has come to marry – יתום שָׁבְאוּ לִינְשָׂא: With regard to an orphan boy who appeals for financial aid in getting married, a house is rented for him, a bed and all other furnishings are prepared for him, and then his wedding is financed. This ruling is in accordance with the *baraita* cited in the Gemara (Rambam *Sefer Zera'im, Hilkhoh Mattenot Aniyyim* 7:4; *Shulhan Arukh, Yoreh De'a* 250:1).

NOTES

Even a horse upon which to ride – אפילו סוס לרכוב עליו – Some say that the Gemara is referring specifically to a pauper who comes from a wealthy family and was previously accustomed to these benefits (Talmidei Rabbeinu Yona). Significantly, it was said in the name of the *geonim* that the obligation to provide luxuries, such as a horse and servant, applies only to a pauper whose financial decline is not public knowledge. Therefore, he receives these privileges so that his reputation is maintained. But once his condition becomes widely known, he is not entitled to anything more than other paupers.

Pampered himself – לפנקי נפשיה – Throughout this discussion in the Gemara, there seems to be some inconsistency with regard to the quantity and quality of aid that should be given to any one pauper. To resolve this inconsistency, several commentaries present a basic distinction between two kinds of paupers. In the case of someone who has been indulged with extravagancies and luxuries from a very young age, missing something to which he has grown accustomed is categorized as his deficiency, and it should be provided for him. However, the same cannot be said of an opportunist who seeks to take advantage of the community's support to satiate his cravings for extra comforts.

BACKGROUND

Mil – מיל: A mil is a unit of distance related to, but not identical to, the Roman mile, from which it received its name. One mil equals 2,000 cubits. This is equivalent to 960 m according to Rav Ḥayyim Na'e, and 1,150 m according to the *Ḥazon Ish*.

LANGUAGE

Litra – ליטרא: From the Greek λίτρα, *litra*, which is variously used as a measure of volume or weight, or as the name of a coin. The volume of a *litra* is less than 300 cubic cm and is therefore a very small amount of meat. Even as a measure of weight, a Greek *litra* is a moderate 327 g. The weight of a *litra* of silver coins, however, is a very large sum of money.

תנו רבנן: "די מחסורו" – אתה מצווה עליו לפרנסו, ואי אתה מצווה עליו לעשור. "אשר יחסר לו" – אפילו סוס לרכוב עליו, ועבד לרוץ לפניו. אמרו עליו על הלל הזקן שלקח לעני בן טובים אחד סוס לרכוב עליו, ועבד לרוץ לפניו. פעם אחת לא מצא עבד לרוץ לפניו – ורץ לפניו שלשה מילין.

תנו רבנן: מעשה באנשי גליל העליון שלקחו לעני בן טובים אחד מצופרי ליטרא בשר בכל יום. ליטרא בשר מאי רבותא? אמר רב הונא: ליטרא בשר משל עופות. ואיבעית אימא: בליטרא בשר ממש. רב אשי אמר: הַתָּם פָּרוּ קֶטֶן הָיָה, בְּכָל יוֹמָא הָוָה מִפְסָדֵי חַיּוֹתָא אֲמַטּוּלְתֵיהּ.

ההוא דאתא לקמיה דרבי נחמיה, אמר ליה: במה אתה סועד? אמר ליה: בבשר שמן ויין ישן. רצונך שתגלגל עמי בעדשים? גלגל עמו בעדשים – ומת. אמר: אוי לו לזה שהרגו נחמיה. אדרבה, אוי לו לנחמיה שהרגו לזה מיבעי ליה! אלא, איהו הוא דלא איבעי ליה לפנקי נפשיה כולי האי.

Concerning this issue, the Sages taught: "Sufficient for his deficiency"; this teaches that you are commanded with respect to the pauper to support him, but you are not commanded with respect to him to make him wealthy, as the obligation encompasses only that which he lacks, as indicated by the word deficient. However, the verse also states: "Which is deficient for him"; this includes even a horse upon which to ride<sup>N</sup> and a servant to run in front of him for the sake of his stature, if necessary. For someone accustomed to these advantages, their absences constitute a true deficiency, not an extravagant indulgence. The Gemara relates: They said about Hillel the Elder<sup>P</sup> that he obtained for a poor person of noble descent a horse upon which to ride and a servant to run in front of him. One time he did not find a servant to run in front of him, and Hillel himself ran in front of him for three mil,<sup>B</sup> to fulfill the dictate "which is deficient for him."

The Sages taught: There was an incident involving the people of the Upper Galilee, who bought for a poor person of noble descent from the city of Tzippori a *litra*<sup>L</sup> of meat every day. The Gemara asks: If they provided him with the reasonable ration of a *litra* of meat, what is the novelty in this incident? Why does it bear repeating? Rav Huna said: It was a *litra* of meat of poultry, which is very expensive. And if you wish, say instead that for the weight of a *litra* of coins, they bought him actual red meat. The price of ordinary meat was so expensive that they had to pay the exorbitant price of a *litra* of coins. Rav Ashi said they did not spend a *litra* of coins for him. Rather, there, in the Galilee, it was a small village, and every day they would lose an entire animal just for him. They would slaughter an animal daily, simply to provide him with fresh meat, although there was otherwise no market for such a plentiful supply of meat in the village.

The Gemara relates another incident concerning charity. A certain person came before Rabbi Neḥemya to request charity. He said to him: On what do you normally dine? He said to him: I usually dine on fatty meat and aged wine. Rabbi Neḥemya asked him: Is it your wish to belittle yourself and partake together with me in a meal of lentils, which is my regular food? He partook with him of lentils, and he died, since he was not accustomed to this food. Rabbi Neḥemya said: Woe to this one who was killed by Neḥemya. The Gemara wonders: On the contrary, Rabbi Neḥemya should have said: Woe to Neḥemya who killed this one. The Gemara responds: Rather, Rabbi Neḥemya meant that it was he, the pauper, who should not have pampered himself<sup>N</sup> so much. The poor man was to blame for his own death. His excessive indulgence rendered him incapable of digesting simple foods such as lentils.

PERSONALITIES

Hillel the Elder – הלל הזקן: Hillel the Elder and his colleague Shammai were the last of the *zugot*, the pairs of *tanna'im* who led the Sanhedrin throughout much of the Second Temple period. Hillel served as *Nasi* of the Sanhedrin, and Shammai was the president of the court, approximately one hundred years prior to the destruction of the Temple, at the beginning of Herod's reign.

As individuals, Hillel and Shammai had markedly different personalities. Hillel was easygoing and accommodating in his approach to himself and to others, championing pleasantness and avoiding conflict wherever possible. Shammai took a more exacting approach, scrutinizing people's motives and actions. Each founded a school, Beit Hillel and Beit Shammai respectively, and the schools continued to operate many years after their founders' passing. Notably, Hillel and Shammai themselves disagreed in only three or four matters of *halakha*, but their schools, over time, were known to differ in many areas of *halakha*.

According to tradition, Hillel began his studies as an impoverished student engaged in menial labor to earn money to pay the entrance fee to attend the lectures of Shemaya and Avtalyon. Ultimately his achievements and influence were so great that the Gemara likens Hillel to Ezra the Scribe, crediting him with reestablishing Torah during a period in history when it was in danger of being forgotten (*Sukka* 20a).

Hillel's disciples were also recognized for their distinction, reflecting his success as a teacher. According to the Gemara, Hillel the Elder had eighty students. Thirty were worthy to have the Divine Presence rest upon them in the manner that it rested upon Moses; thirty were worthy to have the sun stand still for them, as it did for Joshua; and twenty fell in between these two standards. The greatest among them was Yonatan ben Uziel, and the youngest was Rabban Yoḥanan ben Zakkai (*Sukka* 28a).

I have responded [*na'aneti*] – נַעַנְתִּי: The Sages used the phrase *na'aneti lakh* as an expression of apology. Rashi apparently interprets the term as related to the word *ana*, meaning responded or spoke, as if to say: I said too much. Others explain that the term relates to the word *inui*, meaning suffering, with the implication: I have sinned before you.

ואינו רוצה – וְאִינוֹ רוֹצֵה: And he does not want to be supported – לְהִתְפָּרֵם: If a pauper requires charity but refuses to accept money from the charity fund, then the charity administrators employ artifice. Money is presented to him as a gift or as a loan, so that he will agree to take aid on his preferred terms. This ruling follows the opinion of the Rabbis in the *baraita* (Rambam *Sefer Zera'im, Hilkhot Mattenot Aniyyim* 7:9; *Shulhan Arukh, Yoreh De'a* 253:9).

One who has funds but does not want to support himself – יֵשׁ לוֹ וְאִינוֹ רוֹצֵה לְהִתְפָּרֵם: If a wealthy person starves himself because he is overly frugal, his appeals for charitable aid are not approved. This ruling is in accordance with Rabbi Shimon's statement and the opinion of the Rabbis as recorded later in the Gemara (Rambam *Sefer Zera'im, Hilkhot Mattenot Aniyyim* 7:9; *Shulhan Arukh, Yoreh De'a* 253:10).

נותנין לוֹ לְשׁוֹם – גִּיְתָהּ: Give the funds to him as a gift – מִתְּנָה: The Rabbis reject Rabbi Meir's opinion, as they suspect that the pauper will refuse an outright loan, since he does not have the means to pay it back. For this reason, the charity first offers him a gift (*Ayelet Avahim*).

הוא דאָתא לקמיה דרבא. אָמַר לוֹ: בְּמַה אַתָּה סוֹעֵד? אָמַר לוֹ: בְּתַרְנֻגְלוֹת פְּטוּמָה וַיִּין יִשָּׁן. אָמַר לֵיהּ: וְלֹא חִיִּישֵׁת לְדוּחֻקָּא דְצִיבוּרָא? אָמַר לֵיהּ: אִטוּ מְדִידֵהוּ קְאָכִילְנָא? מְדַרְחֻמְנָא קְאָכִילְנָא. דְתַנְיָנָא: "עֵינֵי כָל אֱלִיךָ יִשְׁבְּרוּ וְאַתָּה נוֹתֵן לָהֶם אֶת אֲכֻלָּם בְּעֵתוֹ", "בְּעֵתָם" לֹא נֶאֱמַר אֱלָא "בְּעֵתוֹ", מִלְּמַד שְׂכַל אֶחָד וְאֶחָד נוֹתֵן הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא פְּרַנְסָתוֹ בְּעֵתוֹ.

The Gemara relates another story. A certain person came before Rava to request charity. He said to him: On what do you normally dine? He said to him: On a fattened hen and aged wine. He said to him: And were you not concerned for causing a burden to the community by expecting such opulent foods? He said to him: Is that to say that it is from their funds that I eat? I eat from the support of the Merciful One. This would seem to be a reasonable argument, as we already learned that in the verse "the eyes of all wait for You, and You give them their food in its time" (Psalms 145:15), the phrase: At their time, is not stated, rather "in its time." This teaches that the Holy One, Blessed be He, gives each and every one his personally appropriate sustenance at its proper time, and the community is merely His agent in discharging His will. Therefore, the man is justified in maintaining his standard.

אָדָּהֵכִי אַתָּאִי אַחְתֵּיהּ דְּרַבָּא. דְּלֹא חִוּיָא לֵיהּ תְּלִיסְרֵי שָׁנִי, וְאַתְיָא לֵיהּ תְּרַנְגוּלוֹת פְּטוּמָה וַיִּין יִשָּׁן. אָמַר: מַאי דְקָמָא? אָמַר לֵיהּ: נַעַנְתִּי לָךְ, קוּם אֲכוּל.

In the meantime, while they were talking, Rava's sister, who had not seen him for thirteen years, came. And as a gift, she brought him a fattened hen and aged wine. Rava said to himself: What is this that happened in front of me that suddenly I am brought food that I do not usually eat? He then understood that this was a providential response to what he had earlier said to the man. Rava said to him: I have responded [*na'aneti*]<sup>4</sup> to your contention. Arise and eat.

תְּנִי רַבְנָן: אִין לוֹ וְאִינוֹ רוֹצֵה לְהִתְפָּרֵם – נוֹתְנִין לוֹ לְשׁוֹם הַלְוָאָה, וְחוֹזְרִין וְנוֹתְנִין לוֹ לְשׁוֹם מִתְּנָה, דְּבִרֵי רַבִּי מֵאִיר. וְחֻכְמִים אוֹמְרִים: נוֹתְנִין לוֹ לְשׁוֹם מִתְּנָה, וְחוֹזְרִין וְנוֹתְנִין לוֹ לְשׁוֹם הַלְוָאָה. לְשׁוֹם מִתְּנָה? הֵא לֹא שְׂקִיל! אָמַר רַבָּא: לְפִתּוּחַ לוֹ לְשׁוֹם מִתְּנָה.

§ The Sages taught: If an individual does not have sufficient means of support and does not want to be supported<sup>h</sup> from charity funds, the charities provide him funds as a loan in a dignified manner, and then they go back and give the funds to him as a gift;<sup>n</sup> this is the statement of Rabbi Meir. And the Rabbis say: They give him funds as a gift, and then they go back and give the funds to him as a loan. The Gemara wonders about the Rabbis' ruling: How can we give it as a gift? After all, he does not want to take it as a gift. The Gemara answers that Rava said: The Rabbis' instruction is to begin discussions with him by offering the assistance as a gift. If he refuses, the charities give it to him as a loan, but they treat it as a gift and refrain from attempting to collect a debt.

יֵשׁ לוֹ וְאִינוֹ רוֹצֵה לְהִתְפָּרֵם – נוֹתְנִין לוֹ לְשׁוֹם מִתְּנָה, וְחוֹזְרִין וְנִפְרְעִין מִמֶּנּוּ. חוֹזְרִין וְנִפְרְעִין הֵימְנוּ? תּוֹ לֹא שְׂקִיל! אָמַר רַב פָּפָא: לְאַחַר מִיתָה. רַבִּי שְׁמַעוֹן אוֹמֵר: יֵשׁ לוֹ וְאִינוֹ רוֹצֵה לְהִתְפָּרֵם – אִין נִקְקִין לוֹ. אִין לוֹ וְאִינוֹ רוֹצֵה לְהִתְפָּרֵם – אוֹמְרִים לוֹ: הֵבֵא מִשְׁכּוֹן וְטוּל, כְּדֵי שְׁתּוּחַ דְּעֵתוֹ עָלָיו.

If he has sufficient funds of his own but does not want to support himself<sup>h</sup> by his own funds without the assistance of charity, the charities give him aid as a gift, and then they go back and collect the debt from him. The Gemara asks: How can the administrators of the fund go back and collect from him? Would their efforts not be in vain, as subsequently he would not take their support, knowing that he would still have to pay for it? Rav Pappa said: The charities collect the accrued debt from his estate only after his death. The *baraita* continues: Rabbi Shimon says, disputing the opinion of the Rabbis: If he has sufficient funds and does not want to be supported by his own means, they do not get involved with him, as the community is not obligated to support him. If he does not have and does not want to be supported from charity, the charities say to him: Bring collateral and take a loan, so that his mindset should be raised for him, with the false impression that he is not receiving a handout.

תְּנִי רַבְנָן: "הֵעֲבַט" – זֶה שְׂאִין לוֹ וְאִינוֹ רוֹצֵה לְהִתְפָּרֵם שְׁנוֹתְנִים לוֹ לְשׁוֹם הַלְוָאָה, וְחוֹזְרִין וְנוֹתְנִין לוֹ לְשׁוֹם מִתְּנָה. "תַּעֲבִיטְנוּ" – זֶה שִׁישׁ לוֹ וְאִינוֹ רוֹצֵה לְהִתְפָּרֵם, שְׁנוֹתְנִין לוֹ לְשׁוֹם מִתְּנָה וְחוֹזְרִין וְנִפְרְעִין הֵימְנוּ לְאַחַר מִיתָה, דְּבִרֵי רַבִּי יְהוּדָה.

The Gemara cites a dispute related to the previous discussions. The Sages taught in a *baraita* with regard to the double expression in the Torah: "You shall open your hand to him [*ha'avet ta'avitenu*]" (Deuteronomy 15:8). "*Ha'avet*"; this is referring to one who does not have funds and does not want to be supported by charity. The policy is that the charities provide him funds as a loan and go back and give the funds to him as a gift. "*Ta'avitenu*"; this is referring to one who has means and does not want to support himself. The policy is that the charities provide money as a gift, and then they go back and collect from his estate after his death. This is the statement of Rabbi Yehuda.

BACKGROUND

Hinge of the door – צינורא דדשא: Apparently there was a hole in the threshold into which the outer hinge of the door was inserted. For convenient insertion and removal of the door, there was a slot adjacent to this hinge, through which it was also possible to pass small items into the house.

HALAKHA

To toss...for him into the hinge of the door – דשדי ליה...בצינורא דדשא: One of the highest levels of charity is giving anonymously, so that the recipient does not know the identity of the donor, as in the case of Mar Ukva, who left the money at the entrance to the house (Rambam Sefer Zera'im, Hilkhhot Mattenot Aniyyim 10:9; Shulhan Arukh, Yoreh De'a 249:8).

וחכמים אומרים: יש לו ואינו רוצה להתפרנס, אין נזקקין לו. ואלא מה אני מקיים "תעבטנו" – דברה תורה כלשון בני אדם.

מר עוקבא הוה עניא בשיבביתיה, דהוה רגיל כל יומא דשדי ליה ארבעה זוזי בצינורא דדשא. יום אחד אמר: איזיל איתנו מאן קעביד בי ההוא טיבותא. ההוא יומא נגהא ליה למר עוקבא לבי מדרשא. אתיא דביתהו בהדיה.

בין דחזויה דקא מצלי ליה לדשא – נפק בתרייהו. והוט מקמיה, עיילי לההוא אתונא דהוה גרופה נורא. הוה קא מיקליין פרעיה דמר עוקבא. אמרה ליה דביתהו: שקול ברעד אותיב אפרעאי. חלש דעתיה. אמרה ליה: אנא שכחנא בגויה דביתא, ומקרבא אהניתי.

ומאי כולי האי? דאמר מר זוטרא בר טוביה אמר רב, ואמרי לה אמר רב הונא בר ביזנא אמר רבי שמעון חסידיא, ואמרי לה אמר רבי יוחנן משום רבי שמעון בן יוחי: נוח לו לאדם שימסור עצמו לתוך כבשן האש, ואל ילבין פני חברו ברבים. מנא לן – מתמר. דכתוב "היא מוצאת".

מר עוקבא הוה עניא בשיבביתיה דהוה רגיל לשדורי ליה ארבע מאה זוזי כל מעלי יומא דכיפורא. יומא חד שדרינהו ניהליה ביד בריה, אתא אמר ליה: לא צריך. אמר: מאי חזית? תואי דקא מולפי ליה זין ישן, אמר: מפנק כולי האי! עיפינהו ושדרינהו ניהליה.

The baraita continues: **And the Rabbis say: If he has money and does not want to support himself, they do not get involved with him.** The baraita asks: **How then do I uphold the double expression "ha'avet ta'avitenu"?** The baraita answers: **The Torah spoke in the language of men,** and the double form does not have halakhic significance.

The Gemara recounts another incident related to charity. **Mar Ukva<sup>p</sup> had a pauper in his neighborhood, and Mar Ukva was accustomed every day to toss four dinars for him into the slot adjacent to the hinge of the door.<sup>BH</sup> One day the poor person said: I will go and see who is doing this service for me. That day Mar Ukva was delayed in the study hall, and his wife came with him to distribute the charity.**

**When the people in the poor man's house saw that someone was turning the door, the pauper went out after them to see who it was. Mar Ukva and his wife ran away from before him so that he would not determine their identity, and they entered a certain furnace whose fire was already raked over and tempered but was still burning. Mar Ukva's legs were being singed, and his wife said to him: Raise your legs and set them on my legs, which are not burned. Understanding that only his wife was spared from burns, because she was more worthy, Mar Ukva became distraught. By way of explanation, she said to him: I am normally found inside the house, and when I give charity, my assistance is ready and immediate, insofar as I distribute actual food items. Since you distribute money, which is not as readily helpful, my aid is greater than yours.**

The Gemara asks: **And what is all this?** Why did they go to such extreme lengths to avoid being discovered? The Gemara answers: It is as **Mar Zutra bar Toviyā said that Rav said, and some say that Rav Huna bar Bizna said that Rabbi Shimon Ḥasida said, and some say that Rabbi Yoḥanan said in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yoḥai: It is preferable for a person to deliver himself into a fiery furnace so that he not whiten the face of, i.e., embarrass, his friend in public. From where do we derive this? From the conduct of Tamar, as it is written: "And Judah said: Bring her forth, and let her be burnt. When she was brought forth, she sent to her father-in-law, saying: By the man, whose these are, am I with child"** (Genesis 38:24–25). Although Tamar was taken to be executed by burning, she privately and directly appealed to Judah, rather than publicly identifying him as the father of her unborn children and causing him embarrassment.

The Gemara relates another incident involving Mar Ukva. **Mar Ukva had another pauper in his neighborhood, and Mar Ukva was accustomed to send to him four hundred dinars every year on the eve of Yom Kippur. One day he sent the money to him by the hand of his son. The son returned and said to him: The poor individual does not need the charity. Mar Ukva said: What did you see that prompted you to say this? He said to him: I saw them spilling old wine on the ground for him, to give the room a pleasant smell. Mar Ukva said: If he is pampered this much and requires even this luxury, then he needs even more money. He doubled the funds and sent them to him.**

PERSONALITIES

Mar Ukva – מר עוקבא: Mar Ukva was the Exilarch during the first generation of the Babylonian *amora'im*. He resided in the town of Kafri, where he also held his rabbinic court. In addition to his political office, which may not have carried the same weight then as it did later, Mar Ukva was one of the prominent Sages of his generation. He was principally a student of Shmuel, and was regarded as the latter's disciple-colleague.

He is mentioned many times in the Talmud, and he engaged in exchanges with the Sages of his generation. Later generations of *amora'im* reported a number of his statements as well. He enjoyed close correspondence with the Sages of Eretz Yisrael. He was noted for his Torah knowledge as well as his piety in general, particularly his acts of charity and kindness. It may be that the Sages Rav Natan bar Mar Ukva and Mari bar Mar Ukva were his sons.

*Siankei* – סיאנקי: The meaning of this word is unclear. Some say that it is a weight or coin equaling half a drachma, or 2.9 g of silver. Gold coins of this type are mentioned in other sources.

He should not spend more than one-fifth – אַל יבְּזֹבֵז – יותר מחומש: A person should not give away more than one-fifth of his property to charity, so that he not ultimately require the assistance of others as well. This principle is true while the donor is living. At the time of his death, he may donate as much charity as he desires, as the Gemara learns this from Mar Ukva's example (*Shulhan Arukh, Yoreh De'a* 249:1, and in the comment of Rema).

He would wrap coins...and toss the money behind him – הָהָה צִייר וְזוּי...וְשָׂדֵי לֵיהּ לְאַחֲרֵיהּ – One of the higher levels of charity is giving in a way that the benefactor does not know the identity of the recipient, similar to the method employed by Rabbi Abba. However, this method is not as meritorious as giving anonymously, as it is better for the identity of the donor to remain unknown (*Rambam Sefer Zera'im, Hilkhot Mattenot Aniyyim* 10:10; *Shulhan Arukh, Yoreh De'a* 249:9).

כי קא נחא נפשיה אמר: איתתו לי חושבנאי דצדקה. אשכח דהוה כתביב ביה שבעת אלפי דינרי סיאנקי. אמר: וודאי קלילי, ואורחא רחיקתא. קם בובויה לפלגיה ממוניה. היכי עבד הכי? והאמר רבי אילעאי, באושא התקינו: המבובז – אל יבזבוז יותר מחומש! הני מילי – מחיים, שמא ירד מנכסיו, אבל לאחר מיתה – לית לן בה.

When Mar Ukva was dying, he said: Bring me my charity records. He found that it was written there that he had given seven thousand fine, *siankei*,<sup>1</sup> i.e., gold, dinars, to charity. He said: My provisions are light, and the way is far. This meager sum is insufficient for me to merit the World-to-Come. He got up and spent half of his remaining money on charity. The Gemara asks: How did he do this? But didn't Rabbi Ilai say: In Usha they instituted: One who spends money on charity, he should not spend more than one-fifth<sup>h</sup> of his money for this purpose. The Gemara answers: This restriction on giving too much charity applies only while he is alive, because perhaps he will descend from his holdings and become destitute. Therefore, for his own financial security, he should never distribute more than one-fifth. But after death, we have no problem with it. One need not save money in his estate anymore.

רבי אבא הוה צייר זווי בסודריה ושדי ליה לאחוריה, וממצי נפשיה לבי עניי, ומצלי עיניה מרמאי.

The Gemara recounts more stories related to charity. Rabbi Abba would wrap coins in his scarf and toss the money behind him<sup>h</sup> over his shoulder. And he would place himself at the homes of the poor without being seen, so the poor could receive the aid without being embarrassed. And he would incline his eyes just enough so he could safeguard the handouts from swindlers who might take the money dishonestly.

רבי חננא הוה ההוא עניא דהוה רגיל לשדורי ליה ארבעה זווי כל מעלי שבתא. יומא חד שדרינהו גיהליה ביד דביתיהו. אתאי אמרה ליה: לא צריך. מאי חזית? שמעי דהוה קאמרי ליה: במה אתה סועד.

Rabbi Hanina knew a certain pauper and was accustomed to send to him four dinars on every Shabbat eve. One day he sent it in the hand of his wife. She came back home and said to him: The man does not need charity. Rabbi Hanina asked her: What did you see that prompted you to say this? She said to him: I heard them saying to him inside the house: With what do you normally dine:

## Perek VI

Daf 68 Amud a

בטלי כסף או בטלי זהב? אמר: היינו דאמר רבי אלעזר: בואו ונחזיק טובה לרמאין, שאלמלא הן היינו חוטאין בכל יום, שנאמר "וקרא עליך אל ה' והיה בך חטא".

Silver, i.e., white, tablecloths [*telei*]<sup>NL</sup> or gold, i.e., colored, tablecloths? Clearly, then, they are not entitled to charity. Rabbi Hanina said: This is what Rabbi Elazar said: Come and let us appreciate the swindlers who ask for charity that they do not need, because were it not for them, who command our attention and receive our charity, we would be sinning every day in failing to properly support the truly poor, as it is stated: "Beware that there be not a base thought in your heart, saying: The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand; and your eye be evil against your needy brother, and you will not give him; and he cry to the Lord against you, and it be sin in you" (Deuteronomy 15:9). Because the swindlers take our money in the name of charity, we have an excuse of sorts for failing to fully meet the needs of the truly poor.

Tablecloths [*telei*] – טלי: The source of this word and its precise meaning are not clear. Some say that it is derived from the Greek *τῦλη*, *tulē*, meaning bedding, couch, cushion, or mattress. However, in this context it seems to be a kind of utensil or tablecloth used for a meal.

## NOTES

Silver tablecloths, etc. – בטלי כסף וכו': Rabbeinu Hananel writes that the Gemara is referring to bowls of silver and gold, respectively. However, Rashi and *Tosafot* explain that the Gemara is describing tablecloths of a silvery white or a golden hue, based on a discussion elsewhere (*Bava Metzia* 78b). Others say that these articles are tablecloths embroidered with silver or gold threads.

In any case, a number of commentaries explored why Rabbi Hanina understood that his opulent beneficiaries were actually unworthy of charity, in contrast to Mar Ukva, who in a similar situation doubled his support. *Tosafot* indicate that under these circumstances, the poor should be required to sell their expensive items, because these items do not directly serve a person's body. This complements their opinion that the items in question are tablecloths and not bowls, because bowls and other eating utensils

serve the body more directly and need not be sold. According to others, they should have sold these utensils simply because they had a large quantity of them, allowing them to choose which ones they would use at a given meal. With such wealth, it is illegitimate to collect charity (*Shita Mekubbetzet; Ayelet Ahavim*).

The Meiri offers two additional explanations. One possibility is that this family was collecting from the charity fund, of which Rabbi Hanina was the administrator. Although an individual donor has an obligation to help a pauper maintain his previous standard, the communal fund does not need to provide extra support. Consequently, Rabbi Hanina understood that they should not be receiving public funds. Alternatively, the Meiri suggests that the family in question was not wealthy originally and was using the support of the charity to amass great wealth.