

Wisdom in Pursuit of Wind

✓ Saved

EG Eric Grossman

Lecture 2: Friendship, Power, and an Appointment in Samarra

סוכה נ"ג א

הָנָהוּ תְּרֵמִי כּוֹשָׁאֵי דְהוּוּ קָיִימִי קָמִי
שְׁלֹמָה, אֱלִיחֶרֶף וְאַחִיָּה בְּנֵי שִׁישָׁא,
סוֹפְרִים דְּשְׁלֹמָה הָווּ.

יוֹמָא חַד חֲזִיִּיה מְלָאךְ הַמָּוֶת דְּהָוָה קָא
עֲצִיב, אָמַר לֵיהּ: אַמַּאי עֲצִיבָתָּ? אָמַר
לֵיהּ: דְּקָא בָּעוּ מִינַאי הָנִי תְּרֵמִי כּוֹשָׁאֵי
דִּיתְבִּי הֶכָא.

מִסְרִינְהוּ לְשַׁעֲרִים, שְׁדִּרִינְהוּ לְמַחֲזָא
דְּלוּז. כִּי מָטוּ לְמַחֲזָא דְּלוּז — שְׂכִיבוּ.

לְמַחֵר, חֲזִיִּיה מְלָאךְ הַמָּוֶת דְּהָוָה קְבֻדָּח!
אָמַר לֵיהּ: אַמַּאי בְּדִיתָתָּ? אָמַר לֵיהּ:

Sukkah 53a

There were two Cushites who were servants of Solomon, Elihoreph and Ahijah, the sons of Shisha (mentioned in I Kings 4:3), and **they were scribes of Solomon.**

One day Solomon saw that the Angel of Death was sad. He said to him: Why are you sad? He said to him: They are asking me to take the lives of these two Cushites who are sitting here.

Solomon **handed** [the two Cushites] **to the demons** who were in his service, and **sent them to the district of Luz**, a place where the Angel of Death has no dominion. **When they arrived at the district of Luz, they died.**

The following day, Solomon saw that the Angel of Death was happy. He said

בְּאַתֵּר דָּבְעוּ מִיָּנְאִי, תָּמָן שְׁדַרְתִּינְהוּ.

מִיַּד פָּתַח שְׁלֹמֹה וְאָמַר: רַגְלוֹהִי דָּבַר
אֵינִישׁ אֵינוֹן עֶרְבִין בֵּיהּ, לְאַתֵּר דְּמִיתְבְּעִי
— תָּמָן מוֹבִילִין יְתִיָּה.

to him: Why are you happy? He
replied: To the place that they asked
me to kill them, there you sent them.

Thereupon **Solomon** pronounced a
proverb saying: **The feet of a person are
responsible for him; to the place
where he is required to be, there they
lead him.**

קהלת ג' א'-י"ג

(א) לְכָל זְמַן וְעַת לְכָל-חֶפֶץ תַּחַת
הַשָּׁמַיִם: {ס}(ב) עַת לְלֵדָת וְעַת לְמוֹת
עַת לְטָעַת וְעַת לְעֻקּוֹר נְטוּעַ: (ג) עַת
לְהַרְוֹג וְעַת לְרַפּוֹא עַת לְפָרוֹץ וְעַת
לְבָנוֹת: (ד) עַת לְבִכּוֹת וְעַת לְשַׁחֵק עַת
סִפּוֹד וְעַת רִקּוֹד: (ה) עַת לְהַשְׁלִיךְ
אֲבָנִים וְעַת כְּנוֹס אֲבָנִים עַת לְחַבֹּק וְעַת
לְרַחֵק מִחֶבֶק: (ו) עַת לְבַקֵּשׁ וְעַת לְאַבֹּד
עַת לְשַׁמּוֹר וְעַת לְהַשְׁלִיךְ: (ז) עַת לְקַרְוֵעַ
וְעַת לְתַפּוֹר עַת לְחַשׂוֹת וְעַת לְדַבֵּר: (ח)
עַת לְאַהֲבַל וְעַת לְשֹׂנְאָ עַת מְלַחֲמָה וְעַת
שָׁלוֹם:

Ecclesiastes 3:1-13

(1) A season is set for everything, a time
for every experience under heaven: (2) A
time for being born and a time for
dying, A time for planting and a time
for uprooting the planted; (3) A time for
slaying and a time for healing, A time
for tearing down and a time for building
up; (4) A time for weeping and a time
for laughing, A time for wailing and a
time for dancing; (5) A time for
throwing stones and a time for gathering
stones, A time for embracing and a time
for shunning embraces; (6) A time for
seeking and a time for losing, A time for
keeping and a time for discarding; (7) A
time for ripping and a time for sewing,
A time for silence and a time for

speaking; (8) A time for loving and a time for hating; A time for war and a time for peace.

(ט) מִה־יִתְרוֹן הָעוֹשֶׂה בְּאִשֶּׁר הוּא עֹמֵל:
(י) רָאִיתִי אֶת־הָעֲנָן אֲשֶׁר נָתַן אֱלֹהִים
לְבִנֵי הָאָדָם לְעֲנוּת בּוֹ: (יא) אֶת־הַכֹּל
עָשָׂה יָפָה בְּעֵתוֹ גַּם אֶת־הָעֵלֶם נָתַן
בְּלִבָּם מִבְּלִי אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִמָּצֵא הָאָדָם
אֶת־הַמַּעֲשֵׂה אֲשֶׁר־עָשָׂה הָאֱלֹהִים
מֵרֵאשׁ וְעַד־סוֹף:

(9) What value, then, can the man of affairs get from what he earns? (10) I have observed the business that God gave man to be concerned with: (11) He brings everything to pass precisely at its time; He also puts eternity in their mind, but without man ever guessing, from first to last, all the things that God brings to pass.

(יב) יָדַעְתִּי כִּי אֵין טוֹב בָּם כִּי
אִם־לְשִׂמּוֹחַ וְלַעֲשׂוֹת טוֹב בְּחַיָּיו: (יג) וְגַם
כָּל־הָאָדָם שְׂיֵאכֹל וְשָׂתֶה וְרָאָה טוֹב
בְּכָל־עֲמָלֹו מִתַּת אֱלֹהִים הִיא:

(12) Thus I realized that the only worthwhile thing there is for them is to enjoy themselves and do what is good in their lifetime; (13) also, that whenever a man does eat and drink and get enjoyment out of all his wealth, it is a gift of God.

קהלת ג': י"ט-כ"א

(יט) כִּי מִקְרָה בְּנִי־הָאָדָם וּמִקְרָה
הַבְּהֵמָה וּמִקְרָה אֶחָד לָהֶם כָּמוֹת זֶה כֵּן
מוֹת זֶה וְרוּחַ אֶחָד לְכֹל וּמוֹתֵר הָאָדָם

Ecclesiastes 3:19-21

(19) For in respect of the fate of man and the fate of beast, they have one and the same fate: as the one dies so dies the other, and both have the same lifebreath;

מִן־הַבְּהֵמָה אֵין כִּי הַכֹּל הֶבֶל: (כ) הַכֹּל
הוֹלֵךְ אֶל־מָקוֹם אֶחָד הַכֹּל הִיָּה
מִן־הָעֶפֶר וְהַכֹּל שָׁב אֶל־הָעֶפֶר: (כא) מִי
יֹדַע רוּחַ בְּנֵי הָאָדָם הָעֹלָה הִיא לְמַעְלָה
וְרוּחַ הַבְּהֵמָה הֵיכָדָת הִיא לְמַטָּה
לְאָרֶץ:

humans have no superiority over beasts,
since all is *havel*. (20) Both go to the
same place; both came from dust and
both return to dust. (21) Who knows if a
man's lifebreath does rise upward and if
a beast's breath does sink down into the
earth?

סידור אשכנז, ימי חול, תפילת שחרית,
הכנה לתפילה, עול מלכות שמים
לְעוֹלָם יֵהָא אָדָם יִרָא שָׁמַיִם בְּסֶתֶר
וּבְגִלּוּי וּמוֹדָה עַל־הָאֱמֶת וְדוֹבֵר אֱמֶת
בְּלִבּוֹ וַיִּשְׁכֵּם וַיֹּאמֶר:

Siddur Ashkenaz, Weekday, Shacharit,
Preparatory Prayers, Sovereignty of
Heaven

A person should always be in fear of
God, privately as well as openly, [he
should] admit the truth, and speak truth
in his heart, and rise early and proclaim:

רְבוֹן כָּל הָעוֹלָמִים לֹא עַל צְדָקוֹתֵינוּ
אֶנְחָנוּ מִפִּילִים תַּחֲנוּגֵינוּ לְפָנֶיךָ כִּי עַל
רַחֲמֶיךָ הָרַבִּים, מָה אָנוּ מָה חַיֵּינוּ מָה
חֲסִדָּנוּ, מָה צְדָקוֹתֵינוּ, מָה יְשׁוּעָתָנוּ, מָה
כְּחָנוּ מָה גְבוּרָתָנוּ, מָה נֹאמַר לְפָנֶיךָ
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאַלֵּהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ הֲלֹא כָּל
הַגְּבוּרִים כָּאֵין לְפָנֶיךָ וְאֲנָשֵׁי הַשָּׁם כְּלֹא

Lord of all the worlds! Not on account
of our righteousness do we offer our
supplications before You, but on account
of Your abundant mercy. What are we?
What is our life? What are our acts of
kindness? What is our righteousness?
What is our deliverance? What is our
strength? What is our might? What can

הָיוּ וְחֻכָּמִים כְּבֹלֵי מַדָּע וְנְבוֹנִים כְּבֹלֵי
הַשִּׁכֵּל כִּי רֹב מַעֲשֵׂיהֶם תָּהוּ וַיְמִי
חַיֵּיהֶם הָבֵל לְפָנֶיךָ, וּמוֹתָר הָאָדָם מִן
הַבְּהֵמָה אֵין כִּי הַכֹּל הָבֵל:

we say before You, Adonoy, our God and
God of our fathers? Are not all the
mighty men as nothing before You?
Famous men as though they had never
been? The wise as if they were without
knowledge? And men of understanding,
as if they were devoid of intelligence?
For most of their actions are a waste,
and the days of their life are trivial in
Your presence. **Humans have no
superiority over beasts, since all is
havel.**

אֲבָל אֲנַחְנוּ עַמְּךָ בְּנֵי בְרִיתְךָ...

However, we are Your people, children
of Your covenant...

אֲשֶׁרֵינוּ מֵה־טוֹב חֶלְקֵנוּ וּמֵה־נָּעִים
גּוֹרְלֵנוּ וּמֵה־יָפָה יְרֻשָּׁתֵנוּ: אֲשֶׁרֵינוּ
שְׂאֲנָנֵנוּ מִשְׁכִּימִים וּמַעֲרִיבִים עֶרֶב וּבֹקֶר
וְאוֹמְרִים פַּעַמִּים בְּכָל־יוֹם: שְ�מַע יִשְׂרָאֵל
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד:

We are fortunate! How good is our
portion! How pleasant is our destiny!
How beautiful is our heritage! We are
fortunate that we rise early and stay late
- morning and evening - and twice daily
say: Hear O Israel, the LORD our God,
the LORD is one.

קהלת ד':ז'-י"ב

Ecclesiastes 4:7-12

(ז) וְשִׁבְתִּי אֲנִי וְאַרְאֶה הָבֵל תַּחַת
הַשָּׁמֶשׁ: (ח) יֵשׁ אֶחָד וְאֵין שֹׁנֵי גַם בֶּן

(7) And I have noted this further futility
under the sun: (8) the case of the man
who is alone, with no companion, who

וְאֵחָא אֵין-לֹו וְאֵין קָזַל לְכָל-עֲמָלֹו
גַּם-עֵינֹו לֹא-תִשְׂבַּע עֹשֶׁר וְלִמִּי ׀
אֲנִי עֹמֵל וּמַחֲסֵר אֶת-נַפְשִׁי מִטּוֹבָה
גַּם-זֶה הֶבֶל וְעֵנִין רָע הוּא:(ט) טוֹבִים
הַשְּׁנַיִם מִן-הָאֶחָד אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁלַח שְׂכָר
טוֹב בְּעֲמָלָם: (י) כִּי אִם-יָפְלוּ הָאֶחָד
יָקִים אֶת-חֵבְרוֹ וְאִילוּ הָאֶחָד שָׁיְפוֹל וְאֵין
שְׁנִי לְהַקִּימוֹ: (יא) גַּם אִם-יִשְׁכְּבוּ שְׁנַיִם
וְחָם לָהֶם וּלְאֶחָד אֵין יָחֵם: (יב)
וְאִם-יִתְקַפֵּל הָאֶחָד הַשְּׁנַיִם יַעֲמִדוּ נִגְדֹו
וְהַחוּט הַמְּשֻׁלָּשׁ לֹא בִמְהֵרָה יִנָּתֵק:

has neither son nor brother; yet he
amasses wealth without limit, and his eye
is never sated with riches. For whom, now,
is he amassing it while denying himself
enjoyment? That too is a futility and an
unhappy business.(9) Two are better off
than one, in that they have greater
benefit from their earnings. (10) For
should they fall, one can raise the other;
but woe betide him who is alone and
falls with no companion to raise him!
(11) Further, when two lie together they
are warm; but how can he who is alone
get warm? (12) Also, if one attacks, two
can stand up to him. A threefold cord is
not readily broken!

בראשית ב':י"ח

(יח) וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים לֹא-טוֹב הָיִיתָ
הָאָדָם לְבָדֹו אֶעֱשֶׂה-לֹו עֵזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ:

Genesis 2:18

(18) God יהוה said, "It is not good for the
Human to be alone; I will make a fitting
counterpart for him."

קהלת ד':י"ג-ט"ז

Ecclesiastes 4:13-16

(יג) טוֹב יֶלֶד מִסֶּכֶן וְחָכָם מִמֶּלֶךְ זָקֵן
 וְכִסִּיל אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִדְעֶה לְהִזָּהֵר עוֹד: (יד)
 כִּי־מִבֵּית הַסּוּרִים יֵצֵא לְמֶלֶךְ כִּי גַם
 בְּמַלְכוּתוֹ נוֹלֵד רָשָׁ: (טו) רְאִיתִי
 אֶת־כָּל־הַחַיִּים הַמְהֻלָּכִים תַּחַת הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ
 עִם הַיֶּלֶד הַשֵּׁנִי אֲשֶׁר יַעֲמִיד תַּחְתָּיו: (טז)
 אִין־קֶץ לְכָל־הָעַם לְכֹל אֲשֶׁר־הָיָה
 לִפְנֵיהֶם גַּם הָאַחֲרוֹנִים לֹא יִשְׁמְחוּ־בּוֹ
 כִּי־גַם־זֶה הֶבֶל וְרֵעִיוֹן רוּחַ:

(13) Better a poor but wise youth than an old but foolish king who no longer has the sense to heed warnings. (14) For the former can emerge from a dungeon to become king; while the latter, even if born to kingship, can become a pauper. (15) [However,] I reflected about all the living who walk under the sun with that youthful successor who steps into his place. (16) Unnumbered are the multitudes of all those who preceded them; and later generations will not acclaim him either. For that too is futile and pursuit of wind.

קהלת ה':ז'-ח'

(ז) אִם־עֲשֶׂק רָשׁ וְגִזְלַת מִשְׁפָּט וְצָדִיק
 תִּרְאֶה בְּמִדְיָנָה אֶל־תִּתְמָה עַל־הַחֲפִץ כִּי
 גִבֹּהַ מֵעַל גִּבֹּהַ שֹׁמֵר וּגְבוּהִים עָלֵיהֶם:
 (ח) וַיִּתְּרוֹן אֶרֶץ בְּכָל (היא)[הוא] מֶלֶךְ
 לְשָׂדֶה נֶעֱבַד:

Ecclesiastes 5:7-8

(7) If you see in a province oppression of the poor and suppression of right and justice, don't wonder at the fact; for one high official is protected by a higher one, and both of them by still higher ones. (8) Thus the greatest advantage in all the land is his: he controls a field that is cultivated.

קהלת ה': י"ב-י"ט

(יב) יֵשׁ רָעָה חוֹלָה רָאִיתִי תַּחַת הַשָּׁמֶשׁ
עֹשֶׂה שָׁמֹר לְבַעְלָיו לְרַעְתּוֹ: (יג) וְאָבֵד
הָעֹשֶׂה הֵהוּא בְּעֵנָן רַע וְהוֹלִיד בֶּן וְאִין
בִּידוֹ מְאוּמָּה: (יד) כִּאֲשֶׁר יֵצֵא מִבֶּטֶן
אִמּוֹ עָרוֹם יָשׁוּב לָלֶכֶת כְּשֶׁבֵא וּמְאוּמָּה
לֹא־יֵשֵׁא בַּעֲמָלוֹ שִׁילָךְ בִּידוֹ: (טו) וְגַם־זֶה
רָעָה חוֹלָה כָּל־עֲמֶת שָׁבָא כֵּן יֵלֶךְ
וּמֵה־יִתְּרוֹן לוֹ שִׁיעֵמָל לְרוּחַ: (טז) גַּם
כָּל־יָמָיו בַּחֲשֹׁךְ יֹאכֵל וְכַעַס הָרַבָּה וְחָלְיוֹ
וְקֶצֶף: (יז) הִנֵּה אֲשֶׁר־רָאִיתִי אֲנִי טוֹב
אֲשֶׁר־יָפָה לֶאֱכֹל־וְלִשְׁתּוֹת וְלִרְאוֹת טוֹבָה
בְּכָל־עֲמָלוֹ | שִׁיעֵמָל תַּחַת־הַשָּׁמֶשׁ
מִסֶּפֶר יְמֵי־חַיּוֹ אֲשֶׁר־נָתַן־לוֹ הָאֱלֹהִים
כִּי־הוּא חָלָקוֹ: (יח) גַּם כָּל־הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר
נָתַן־לוֹ הָאֱלֹהִים עֹשֶׂה וּנְכָסִים וְהַשְׁלִיטוֹ
לֶאֱכֹל מִמֶּנּוּ וּלְשָׂאת אֶת־חָלָקוֹ וְלִשְׁמֹחַ
בַּעֲמָלוֹ זֶה מַתַּת אֱלֹהִים הִיא: (יט) כִּי
לֹא הָרַבָּה יִזְכֹּר אֶת־יָמָיו חַיּוֹ כִּי
הָאֱלֹהִים מַעֲנֶה בְּשִׂמְחַת לְבָבוֹ:

Ecclesiastes 5:12-19

(12) Here is a grave evil I have observed under the sun: riches hoarded by their owner to his misfortune, (13) in that those riches are lost in some unlucky venture; and if he begets a son, he has nothing in hand. (14) Another grave evil is this: He must depart just as he came. As he came out of his mother's womb, so must he depart at last, naked as he came. He can take nothing of his wealth to carry with him. (15) So what is the good of his toiling for the wind? (16) Besides, all his days he eats in darkness, with much vexation and grief and anger. (17) Only this, I have found, is a real good: that one should eat and drink and get pleasure with all the gains he makes under the sun, during the numbered days of life that God has given him; **for that is his portion.** (18) Also, whenever a man is given riches and property by God, and is also permitted by Him to enjoy them and to take his portion and get pleasure for his gains—that is a gift of God. (19) For [such a man] will not brood much over the days of his life, because God keeps him busy enjoying

himself.

משנה אבות ד:א'

(א) בן זומא אומר... איזהו עשיר,
השמח בחלקו, שנאמר (תהלים קכח)
יגיע כפיו כי תאכל אשריו וטוב לו.
אשריו, בעולם הזה. וטוב לו, לעולם
הבא.

Pirkei Avot 4:1

(1) Ben Zoma said... Who is rich? He who is happy with **his portion**, as it is said: "You shall enjoy the fruit of your labors, you shall be happy and you shall prosper" (Psalms 128:2) "You shall be happy" in this world, "and you shall prosper" in the world to come.