

# NACH NUGGETS

## Sefer Yehoshua Perek 5:4 through Perek 6:14

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Vol. 4

Welcome everyone to our fourth installment of Nach Nuggets. This week we covered Sefer Yehoshua Perek 5 starting from pasuk 4 and going up to and including Perek 6 Pasuk 14.

This week's learning is mentioned many many times in Talmud Bavli. For this week's Nach Nuggets we'll focus more on Perek 5 than perek 6.

In this week's learning we learned about Yehoshua's encounter with the Angel of Hashem. The pesukim tell us that the Angel appeared to Yehoshua and explained his appearance with the cryptic words "עתה באתי" - "now I have come". On the surface this seems hard to understand - it implies an answer to a question, but we don't find Yehoshua's question in the pasuk. As Rashi explains, the Gemarah understands that Yehoshua and the Angel actually had a more lengthy exchange, but the pasuk only records the last part of it - the response of "עתה באתי" - "now I have come". The Gemarah fills in the missing dialogue. Note that the Gemarah actually brings this exchange in several places. (Sanhedrin 44b, Megillah 3a, and Eruvin 63b) . Before tackling that issue the Gemarah discusses what seems to be a misjudgment on the part of Yehoshua. The Gemarah begins by quoting the pasuk in Perek 5 Pasuk 13.

וַיְהִי בַּהֲיוֹת יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בִּירִיחוֹ וַיֵּשֶׂא עֵינָיו וַיִּרְא (וְהִנֵּה-אִישׁ עֹמֵד לִנְגֹדוֹ וְחַרְבּוֹ שְׁלֹפָה בְּיָדוֹ וַיֵּלֶךְ יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אֵלָיו וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ הֲלֹנִי אַתָּה אִם-לְצַרְיָנוּ:)

Once, when Joshua was near Jericho, he looked up and saw (a man standing before him, drawn sword in hand. Joshua went up to him and asked him, "Are you one of us or of our enemies?")

The Gemarah continues with the next pasuk:

וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא כִי אֲנִי שַׂר-צְבָאָה עֹתָה בָּאתִי וַיִּפֹּל יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אֶל-פָּנָיו אֶרְצָה וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה....

He replied, "No, I am captain of the LORD's host. Now I have come!" Joshua threw himself face down to the ground and, prostrating himself....

The Gemarah asks:

הִיכִי עֲבִיד הִכִּי וְהֵאמֵר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן אֲסוּר לּוֹ לְאָדָם שִׁיתֵן שְׁלוֹם לְחַבְרֵירוֹ בְּלֵילָה חִישִׁינן שְׁמַא שֶׁד הוּא

**How could Joshua do so,** bowing down to a stranger at night? **But doesn't Rabbi Yoḥanan say:** It is **prohibited for a person to greet another** whom he does not recognize **at night**, as **we are concerned that perhaps** the one he doesn't recognize **is a demon?** Why was Joshua not concerned about this possibility?

As we know the word Shalom is one of the names of Hashem. It is proper to greet someone in this way, however, it would be wrong to do this when speaking to a *shed* (demon). Additionally bowing down to a demon would constitute idolatry!

The Gemarah answers:

שאי התם דקאמר ליה אני שר צבא ה' עתה באתי וגו' ודילמא משקרי גמירי דלא מפקי שם שמים לבטלה

The Gemara answers: **It is different there, as the stranger said to Joshua: "I am captain of the host of the Lord; I have now come."** The Gemara asks: **But perhaps** he was in fact a demon and **he was lying?** The Gemara answers: **It is learned** as a tradition **that demons do not utter the name of Heaven in vain**, and since this figure mentioned the name of Heaven, he must have been speaking the truth.

It's interesting to note, that the fact that Yehoshua knew that it was an angel, does not explain his action of bowing. The halachah states that it is, in fact, forbidden to bow down before an angel because this too is viewed as an act of idolatry! The Sefer Ha'Ikrim (2:28) explains that the prohibition to bow applies only when one views the angel as an independent force. This is forbidden as the angel actually possesses no will or strength of his own. He is powerless to do anything but follow the strict directive of Hashem. The prohibition does not apply, however, if one bows merely as a mark of respect to Hashem who sent the angel on his mission.

The Gemarah now addresses the conversation between Yehoshua and the angel. א"ל אמש ביטלתם תמיד של בין הערביים ועכשיו ביטלתם תלמוד תורה על איזה מהן באת א"ל עתה באתי

The Gemara understands the words of the angel that Joshua encountered as a rebuke for some offense Joshua committed: The angel **said to Joshua: Yesterday**, in the afternoon, **you neglected** sacrificing **the daily afternoon offering** because you were engaged in warfare, **and now**, when it is dark, **you neglected Torah study**. Joshua asked him: **For which of these sins have you come** to reprove me? The angel **said to him: "I have now come,"** i.e., the fact that I did not come before, but waited until now, when it is dark, indicates that the sin of neglecting Torah study is the more severe one. Once again the importance of learning Torah is highlighted in these early stages of Yehoshua's reign.

A couple of other notes regarding this week's learning:

The pasuk (Perek 5 Pasuk 13) בידו שלופה בידו יהי בהיות יהושע ביריחו וחרבו שלופה בידו is brought in Maseches Megilah as one of the proofs that the word יהי is a צער. As Rashi explains: על וציערו שהוכיחו על לשון צער. Yehoshua was reprimanded for neglecting Torah study as we explained earlier on.

Also noteworthy is the fact that the Mishna brought in the Gemarah in Taanis 15a says על השלישית הוא אומר מי שענה את יהושע בגלגל הוא יענה אתכם וישמע בקול צעקתכם היום הזה ברוך אתה ה' For the third (blessing, which includes the verses of *Shofarot*), he recites: He Who answered Joshua at Gilgal, (when they sounded the *shofar* in Jericho (see Joshua 5:6)), He will answer you and hear the sound of your cry on this day. Blessed are You, Lord, Who hears the *terua*. As Rashi explains: לפי שנענה בשופרות ביריחו וזהו בעוד שהיו ישראל בגלגל. Since Bnei Yisroel were answered with Shofros in regards to Jericho while they were in Gilgal we mention this in

the Shofros section during the prayer on a fast day. Note that we still keep this form of the prayer to some degree when we say selichos on every fast day *מי ששׁענה ליהושׁע בגלגל הוא יעננו*.

One final note on this week's learning: In Perek 6 Pasuk 5 it says: *וְנָפְלָה חוֹמַת הָעִיר תַּחֲתֶיהָ* - The walls of the city will collapse. In a 1983 interview, Israel's first Chief of Staff and renowned archaeologist, Yigdal Yadin, addressed the limits of biblical archaeology. The past 150 years of archeological finds have given us some significant understanding and insight into the ancient times of the Tanach. However in describing the collapsing of the walls of Jericho, Yadin opined: "That's beyond the realm of archeology, and I think it's beyond the realm of history as well. It's a matter of faith.... The fact is that there was a city there, in my opinion, and it was conquered. There can be no doubt." Science and nature are not meant to validate our faith, nor is archeology. At times they can serve as powerful tools in bolstering our faith in a more complete fashion. Other times we have the pesukim of the Torah to tell us what happened and we take it on faith alone.

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Haftoros mentioned in this week's learning:

- 1) The haftarah for the first day of Pesach. Perek 5:2 - 6:1. This is actually brought in the Gemarah in Megilah 31a *גלגל (יהושע ה, י) גלגל* ת"ר בפסח קורין בפרשת מועדות ומפטירין בפסח *(יהושע ה, י) גלגל* והאידנא דאיכא תרי יומי יומא קמא בפסח גלגל ולמחר בפסח *(מלכים ב כג)* יאשיהו

**The Sages taught in a *baraita*:** On the first day of **Passover**, the congregation **reads from the portion of the Festivals, and they read as the *haftara*** the account of the **Passover** celebrated at **Gilgal (Joshua 5:2–14)**. The Gemara comments: **And nowadays**, in the Diaspora, **when there are two Festival days of Passover, on the first day** they read as the *haftara* the account of the **Passover** celebrated at **Gilgal, and on the next day** they read **from** the account of the **Passover** observed by **Josiah (II Kings 23)**.