

# NACH NUGGETS

## Sefer Yehoshua Perek 6:15 through Perek 7:15

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Welcome everyone to our fifth installment of Nach Nuggets. This week we covered Sefer Yehoshua Perek 6 starting from pasuk 15 and going up to and including Perek 7 Pasuk 15.

The Gemarah in Moed Katan daf 17a discusses the concept of “cherem” or excommunication. The severity of the punishment of excommunication is debated. Whereas Shmuel maintained that once one is excommunicated, he can never really get rid of that punishment, as it sticks to him as “fat smeared on an oven”. Reish Lakish disagreed. As the Gemarah says:

ופליגא דריש לקיש דאמר ריש לקיש כשם שנכנסת במאתים וארבעים ושמונה איברים כך כשהיא יוצאה יוצאה ממאתים וארבעים ושמונה איברים

And this opinion disagrees with the opinion of Reish Lakish, for Reish Lakish said: Just as ostracism enters the two hundred and forty-eight organs of one’s body when it is first pronounced, so too when it leaves, it leaves from his two hundred and forty-eight organs.

Reish Lakish is saying that once he is done with “cherem”, the punishment is over. The Gemarah elaborates:

כשהיא נכנסת דכתיב (יהושע ו, יז) והיתה העיר חרם חרם בגימטריא מאתים וארבעים ושמונה הוּו כשהיא יוצאה דכתיב (חבקוק ג, ב) ברוגז רחם תזכור רחם בגימטריא הכי הוּו

When it enters, it enters all the organs, as it is written: “And the city shall be a curse [*herem*]” (Joshua 6:17), and the numerical value [*gimatriyya*] of the word *herem*, a concept similar to ostracism, is two hundred and forty-eight. Therefore, the verse alludes to the fact that a decree of ostracism penetrates one’s two hundred and forty-eight organs. When it leaves, it leaves all the organs, as it is written: “In wrath remember mercy [*rahem*]” (Habakkuk 3:2), and the numerical value of the word *rahem* is also two hundred and forty-eight, thereby teaching that when the decree of ostracism is revoked, it disappears entirely.

Part of the proof is our pasuk from this week’s learning that discusses the “cherem” of the city of Jericho. Yehoshua commands all the people that the city of Jericho is off limits. Remember, Yehoshua did this on his own - Hashem did not tell him to do this. The concept of excommunication normally applies to a person - not a city. With this in mind the Maharsha wonders why the Gemarah chose this specific pasuk to learn out a law of excommunication. After all, there are many times that the word “cherem” is written in the Torah! The Maharsha explains that the reason this specific pasuk was used, is because there’s a parallel that exists

between a person and a city. The Maharsha brings a pasuk from Koheles that says עִיר קְטַנָּה וְאֲנָשִׁים בָּהּ מְעַט - "A little city with few men in it". The city refers to the body of the person and the people of the city refer to the limbs of the person. It is specifically this lesson that we are trying to learn in this Gemarah. The Ein Yaakov wonders the same thing, and also brings this Maharsha, but then says that the simple explanation of the Gemarah using this specific pasuk, is that this was the first "cherem" that was ever enforced by a human being. Furthermore, when the "cherem" was violated the pasuk says (Perek 7:1) וַיִּחַרְאֶף יְהוָה בְּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל - Hashem was incensed with the Israelites. This is in contrast with the pasuk brought by the Gemarah בְּרוּגַח רַחֵם תִּזְכֹּר - "In wrath remember mercy."

The "cherem" of Jericho is ultimately violated by Achan. The Gemarah in Sanhedrin daf 44a says, that when Hashem explained to Yehoshua the reason for the Jewish people's defeat at the city of Ai, He said (Yehoshua 7:11) "חַטָּא יִשְׂרָאֵל" "Israel has sinned" From this we learn the famous lesson as brought in that Gemarah "אע"פ שחטא ישראל הוא" - Even when the Jewish people have sinned, they are still called "Israel". Though Hashem may "get angry" at us, and though we may continue to sin against Him and His Holy Torah, he never abandons us.

The very next words of the Gemarah also explain why the word "gam" is mentioned five times in this pasuk. (וגם עברו את בריתי אשר צויתי אותם גם לקחו מן החרם גם גנבו גם כחשו גם שמו בכליהם) The Gemarah explains the reason as follows: מלמד שעבר עכן על חמשה חומשי תורה: - It is to teach us that Achan transgressed all five books of the Torah.

A pasuk from this weeks learning is also brought in Bereishis Rabbah 39:11. The Midrash discuss four times that coins were circulated throughout the world.

1. 1) Avrohom: as it says: וְאֶעֱשֶׂךָ לְגוֹי גָדוֹל 'And I will make you a great nation,' [a verse which indicates] that his coins were circulated. And what were his coins? An old man and an old woman on one side, and a youth and maiden on the other.
2. 2) "Yehoshua: as it says וְיָהִי ה' אֶת יְהוֹשֻׁעַ וְיָהִי שְׁמֵעוֹ בְּכָל הָאָרֶץ 'And Hashem was with Yehoshua and his fame was in the land' [indicating] that his coins went out. What [were his coins]? An ox on this side and a re'em on the other side, hinted in the verse, וְיָהִי שֵׁם ה' אֶת יְהוֹשֻׁעַ וְיָהִי שְׁמֵעוֹ בְּכָל הָאָרֶץ 'The firstborn of his bull is a glory for him and his horns are the horns of a re'em.' This pasuk, of course, is from the blessings that Moshe gave to Shevet Yosef. Yehoshua was from shevet Efraim, who came from Yosef.
3. 3) "Dovid: as it says וַיֵּצֵא שֵׁם דָּוִד בְּכָל הָאָרְצוֹת 'And the fame of Dovid went out in all the lands' [indicates] that his coins went out in the world. And what were his coins? A [shepherd's] staff and bag on one side, and a tower on the other, alluded to in the verse, 'Your neck is like the tower of Dovid.'
4. 4) "Mordechai: as it says וְיָהִי שֵׁם מֹרְדֵכַי בְּבֵית הַמֶּלֶךְ וְשְׁמֵעוֹ הוֹלֵךְ בְּכָל הַמְּדִינוֹת 'For Mordechai was great in the house of the king and his fame went out in all the countries' [implying] that his coins went out in the world. And what were his coins? Sackcloth and ashes on one side, and a golden crown on the other."

In all these cases the coins were used throughout the entire world, and as a result, many people - even non - Jews began to be interested in serving Hashem.

Lastly, in the very first pasuk of this week's learning it says: ויהי ביום השביעי וישכמו כעלות השחר - On the seventh day, they rose at daybreak and marched around the city ..

On the seventh day, Bnei Yisroel walked around Jericho seven times. They blew the shofros, the walls miraculously fell, and they were able to take the city. Rashi points out, that the seventh day was actually the seventh day of the week, Shabbos. Perhaps this is teaching us that war on behalf of defending the people and Land of Israel is permitted and required even on Shabbos - the most peaceful and holy day of the week. Even today, though Shabbos is honored and kept holy, the State of Israel is required to protect itself seven days a week. Thus, in the Israeli army, essential tasks to protect the nation must and do continue, even on Shabbos.

Let us always remember that "אע"פ שחטא ישראל הוא" - Though we may sin we are still Hashem's nation. Even when Hashem's wrath is raised, He still considers us His children and His nation. May the day soon come when His greatness is once again spread throughout the world and we merit the coming of Mashiach.

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Haftoros mentioned in this week's learning: This week's learning is not mentioned in any haftoros
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