

## NACH NUGGETS

### Sefer Yehoshua Perek 9:21 through Perek 10:20

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This week we covered Sefer Yehoshua Perek 9 starting from pasuk 21 and going up to and including Perek 10 Pasuk 20.

This weeks learning was highlighted by the famous miracle of the sun “stopping” in the sky for Yehoshua. We will delve into that story shortly. Before we delve into that, there are a couple of other interesting notes about this weeks learning. Throughout the Mishna and Talmud Bavli we find the word “*nasin*” or “*nisina*” (See for example Kesuvos Perek 3 Mishna 1) mentioned as a group of people. The source for this is actually in Perek 9 Pasuk 27.

**וַיִּתְּנֵם** יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא חֹטְבֵי עֵצִים וְשֹׂאבֵי מַיִם לַעֲדָה וּלְמִזְבַּח הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה אֶל-הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר  
*That day Joshua made them hewers of wood and drawers of water—as they still are—for the community and for the altar of the LORD, in the place that He would choose.*

The word **וַיִּתְּנֵם** in the pasuk is the source of this group of people. A “Nasin” actually refers to one who comes from the Givonim - or those who are given [netunim] to the service of the people and the altar.

Also in this week’s learning - actually the very next pasuk - in Perek 10 Pasuk 1 - we have the very first mention of the name Yerushalayim in the Torah. King Adoni-tzedek, like Malkitzedek King of Shalom (Bereishis 14:18), gets his name *tzedek*, righteousness, because he resides in Yerushalayim, the city of righteousness, as it says (Isaiah 1:21)

אֵיכָה הִיטָה לְזוֹנָה קָרְיָה נְאֻמָּה מְלֹאֲתֵי צְדָק יָלִין בָּהּ  
*Alas, she has become a harlot, The faithful city That was filled with justice, Where righteousness dwelt..*

The Ramban (Bereishis 14:18) points out:

מְלֹכֵי צְדָק מֶלֶךְ שָׁלֵם - הִיא יְרוּשָׁלַיִם כַּעֲנִין שְׁנֹאמֵר (תְּהִלִּים עו ג) וַיְהִי בְשָׁלֵם סוֹכּוֹ וּמְלֹכָה יִקְרָא גַם בְּיַמֵּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ "אֲדֹנֵי צְדָק" (יְהוֹשֻׁעַ י א) כִּי מֵאִזּוֹ יָדְעוּ הַגּוֹיִם כִּי הַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא מְבַחֵר הַמְּקוֹמוֹת בְּאֲמֻצָּע הַיִּשׁוּב אוֹ שִׁידְעוּ מֵעֵלְתוֹ בְּקִבְלָהּ שֶׁהוּא מְכוּוֵן כְּנֶגֶד בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ שֶׁל מַעְלָה שֶׁשָׁם שְׁכִינְתּוֹ שֶׁל הַקֹּב"ה שֶׁנִּקְרָא "צְדָק"

*And Malchitzedek king of Shalem – This is Jerusalem as it says, “His Tabernacle was in Shalem...” (Tehillim 76:3) And in the days of Yehoshua her king was also called “Adonitzedek” (Yehoshua 10:1) because from long ago the nations knew that site was the choicest of all places, located at the center of the settled world. Or they knew its value through received tradition, that it was aligned counter to the heavenly Temple where the Holy One’s Presence dwells, which is called “tzedek” (righteousness).*

This brings us to the “highlight” of the perek. The standing of the sun in its place.

The Gemarah in Taanis 20a says that the sun actually stopped for three different people over the course of history.

תנו רבנן שלשה נקדמה להם חמה בעבורן משה ויהושע ונקדימון בן גוריון

*The Sages taught: With regard to three people, the sun broke through and shone at an irregular time for their sake: Moses, Joshua, and Nakdimon ben Guryon.*

The Gemarah elaborated on the previous daf regarding the story of Nakdimon.

Once during the pilgrimage there was no drinking water. Nakdimon b. Guryon borrowed twelve cisterns of water from a Roman nobleman against twelve Kikar of silver (a huge sum of money) if it was not repaid by a certain day. When the morning of the given date arrived, then midday, and then late afternoon, and no rain came, he kept telling the Roman that there was still time. The Roman scoffed that if had not rained the whole year, it certainly wouldn't rain now. He happily went to the bathhouse while Nakdimon sadly went to the Beis Hamikdash. Nakdimon prayed that he had taken the water not for his own honor but rather for Hashems honor and to benefit the pilgrims that had come up to Yerushalayim. The rain then promptly fell and filled up and even overflowed the cisterns of the nobleman. When Nakdimon asked the nobleman for the surplus water to be returned, the Roman replied that it was too late anyway, as it was after sunset. Nakdimon prayed again, the clouds parted and the sun came out even though it was already past the time for sunset. In fact this is how he got his name. Nakdimon's name was really Buni; he was called Nakdimon because the sun shone for him (Nikdarah Chama).

The Gemarah continues and asks: We know Nakidomin's story (as elaborated on earlier in the Gemarah) and we know Yehoshua's story as it is stated specifically in the pasuk (Yehoshua 10:13): וידם השמש וירח עמד עד-יקם גוי איביו הלא-היא כתובה על-ספר הישר ויעמד השמש בחצי השמים ולא-אץ לבוא כיום תמים

*And the sun stood still And the moon halted, While a nation wreaked judgment on its foes —as is written in the Book of Jashar. Thus the sun halted in midheaven, and did not press on to set, for a whole day*

What about Moshe? How do we know that the sun stood in a supernatural way for Moshe?

אמר רבי אלעזר אתיא אחל אחל כתיב הכא (דברים ב, כה) אחל תת פחדך וכתוב התם (יהושע ג, ז) אחל גדלך

*Rabbi Elazar said: It is derived by verbal analogy between “I will begin” and “I will begin.” Here, with regard to Moses, it is written: “This day I will begin to put the dread of you and the fear of you upon the peoples that are under all the whole heaven” (Deuteronomy 2:25). And there, with regard to Joshua, it is written: “On this day I will begin to magnify you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you” (Joshua 3:7). The*

repeated use of the phrase “I will begin” indicates that all the miracles performed for Joshua were also performed for Moses.

רבי שמואל בר נחמני אמר אתיא תת תת כתיב הכא אחל תת פחדך וכתוב התם (יהושע י, יב) ביום תת ה' את האמרי

*Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahmani said: The fact that the sun stood still for Moses is derived by a different verbal analogy, between the terms “put” and “put.” Here, with regard to Moses, it is written: “I will begin to put the dread of you” (Deuteronomy 2:25). And there, with regard to Joshua, it is written: “Then Joshua spoke to the Lord, on the day when the Lord put the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel: Sun, stand still upon Gibeon, and you, moon, in the valley of Aijalon” (Joshua 10:12).*

רבי יוחנן אמר אתיא מגופיה דקרא (דברים ב, כה) אשר ישמעון שמעך ורגזו וחלו מפניך אימתי רגזו וחלו מפניך בשעה שנקדמה לו חמה למשה:

*Rabbi Yohanan said: This idea is derived from the verse itself, as it says with regard to Moses: “This day I will begin to put the dread of you and the fear of you upon the peoples that are under all the whole heaven, who, when they hear the report of you, shall tremble, and be in anguish due to you” (Deuteronomy 2:25). When did the nations of the world tremble and when were they in anguish due to you? When the sun broke through for Moses.*

The Gemarah in Avodah Zarah 25a also brings this narrative. Interestingly the Gemarah does not elaborate on *when* the sun actually stood still. Rashi in Avoda Zara understands this to be referring to the sun standing still during Moshe's battle with Sichon. Devarim Rabbah (to Parashat Va'etchannan) says that the sun stood still for Moshe on five occasions: the day of the Exodus, of the Splitting of the Sea, of the war with Amalek, of the Revelation at Mount Sinai, and of the crossing of the Arnon Valley. It's worth noting that Ralbag in his commentary to Joshua (10:12) rejects that the sun stood still for Moshe, because that would be so great a miracle that the Torah, which is meant to inspire us, would certainly have told us about it. (More interestingly, he then rejects that the sun stood still for Yehoshua because that would make Yehoshua a greater prophet than Moshe. He explains the verse to mean that the battle finished extremely quickly before the sun and moon made it to Givon and Emek Ayalon respectively.) The Ralbag is not alone in asserting that the sun didn't actually stand still. Others explain it in various different ways as well. Rambam (Morah Nevuchim (2:35)) states that there was no miracle at all, just a perception by the soldiers that time stood still. R. Moshe ibn Chiquitilla and others take a middle position and minimize the wonder of the miracle, claiming that though Hashem did play with the sunlight, He did not stop the sun in its tracks to do so.

The Gemarah in Avodah Zarah continues and elaborates on how long the sun actually stood still for. Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said that it took twenty-four hours: It traveled across the sky for six hours and stood still for six hours, and again traveled six hours and stood still for six hours, so that the entire matter lasted the duration of an entire day. Rabbi Elazar said that it lasted thirty-six hours: The sun traveled for six hours and stood for twelve hours, and again traveled six hours and stood for twelve hours, so that the accumulated time of its suspension was that of an entire day. Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahmani said: Forty-eight hours elapsed before it

set. It traveled six hours and stood for twelve hours, and then traveled six hours and stood for twenty-four hours.

We'll end with this interesting tidbit. (NOTE: I do not profess to know the exact calculations in this story nor is this story meant to "prove" anything. We don't need NASA to prove anything in the Torah. This is just meant as an interesting tidbit.) There is a tale that NASA computers have confirmed the Biblical account of the long day of Yehoshua. The most common version of the story is that some years ago, NASA scientists were doing some advanced computer computations to determine the positions of the sun, planets, and stars. In the course of completing these calculations, the computers ground to a halt. As scientists investigated the problem, they found that the computers had discovered that a day was missing. The team was totally frustrated and unable to solve the problem. Then a member of the team, who was a Christian, recalled the story of Yehoshua and the missing day. He quoted our pasuk in Yehoshua. Then after taking this into account, the NASA team was able to account for 23 hours and 20 minutes of the missing time. Pretty close to the opinion of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi. But what about the remaining 40 minutes? In Melachim 2 perek 20 the Navi discuss the story of Chizkiyahu and his illness. The Navi Yeshayahu came to tell Chizkiyahu that he was going to die. Chizkiyahu prayed to Hashem that he be healed. After this prayer, Yeshayahu received a prophecy from Hashem that Chizkiah would be healed. At this point Chizkiyahu asked for a sign that he would actually be healed.

ויאמר ישעיהו זה־לך האות מאת ה' כי יעשה ה' את־הדבר אשר דבר הלך הצל עשר מעלות אם־ישוב עשר מעלות ויאמר יחזקיהו נקל לצל לנטות עשר מעלות לא כי ישוב הצל אחרנית עשר מעלות ויקרא ישעיהו הנביא אל־ה' וישב את־הצל במעלות אשר ירדה במעלות אחז אחרנית עשר מעלות

*Isaiah replied, "This is the sign for you from Hashem that Hashem will do the thing that He has promised: Shall the shadow advance ten degrees or recede ten degrees?" Hezekiah said, "It is easy for the shadow to lengthen ten degrees, but not for the shadow to recede ten degrees."* So the prophet Isaiah called to Hashem, and He made the shadow which had descended on the dial of Ahaz recede ten degrees.

This 10-degree movement would precisely account for that missing 40 minutes!

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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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