

The Urban Well

The Mercy Seminar 2026, Term II.3

Sanhedrin 90ff.

§ Reish Lakish raises a contradiction between two verses written with regard to the resurrection of the dead. It is written: “I will bring them from the north country and gather them from the ends of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and the woman giving birth together” (Jeremiah 31:7), indicating that at the end of days there will still be people with physical defects. And it is written: “Then shall the lame man leap as a deer and the tongue of the mute sing; for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert” (Isaiah 35:6), indicating that at the end of days there will be no people with physical defects. How so? When resurrected, the dead will arise still afflicted with their defects, and they will then be healed.

Ulla raises a contradiction. It is written: “He will swallow death forever; and the Lord God will wipe tears from all faces” (Isaiah 25:8), indicating that death will no longer exist at the end of days. And it is written: “There shall be no more an infant a few days old then...for the youngest shall die one hundred years old” (Isaiah 65:20). The Gemara answers that this contradiction is not difficult. The verse here, in Isaiah chapter 25, is written with regard to the Jewish people, who will live forever after resurrection; the verse there, in Isaiah chapter 65, is written with regard to gentiles, who will ultimately die after an extremely long life. The Gemara asks: And what do gentiles seek, i.e., why will they merit to live, in that era? The Gemara answers that the verse is referring to those gentiles about whom it is written: “And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and aliens shall be your plowmen and vinedressers” (Isaiah 61:5).

Rav Hisda raises a contradiction. It is written: “Then the moon shall be confounded and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts will reign in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem, and before His elders shall be His glory” (Isaiah 24:23), indicating that the sun and the moon will no longer shine at the end of days. And it is written: “And the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days” (Isaiah 30:26), indicating that the sun and the moon will exist then and they will shine more brightly. The Gemara answers that this is not difficult. The verse here, in Isaiah chapter 30, is written with regard to the days of the Messiah, when the sun and moon will shine more brightly; the verse there, in Isaiah chapter 24, is written with regard to the World-to-Come, when the only light will be the light of God.

The Gemara asks: And according to Shmuel, who says: The difference between this world and the messianic era is only subjugation of the exiles, as during that era the Jewish people will be freed from that subjugation, how is the contradiction resolved? The Gemara answers that even according to Shmuel this contradiction is not difficult. The verse here, in Isaiah chapter 30, is written with regard to the light in the camp of the righteous; the verse there, in Isaiah chapter 24, the verse is written with regard to the camp of the Divine Presence, when the only light will be the light of God.

Rava raises a contradiction. It is written: “I will kill and I will bring to life” (Deuteronomy 32:39), indicating that God is capable of reviving the dead. And it is written immediately afterward: “I wounded and I will heal,” which indicates that God will only heal the wounded. Rather, it should be understood: The Holy One, Blessed be He, is saying: What I kill, I bring to life, indicating that God revives the dead. And then what I wounded, I will heal.

§ The Sages taught in a *baraita* with regard to the verse: “I will kill and I will bring to life.” One might have thought that it means that there will be death for one person and life for one other person, in the typical manner that the world operates. Therefore, the verse states: “I wounded and I will heal.” Just as wounding and healing take place in one person, so too, death and bringing back to life take place in one person. From here there is a response to those who say that there is no resurrection of the dead derived from the Torah.

It is taught in a *baraita* that Rabbi Meir said: From where is resurrection of the dead derived from the Torah? It is derived from a verse, as it is stated: “Then Moses and the children of Israel will sing this song to the Lord” (Exodus 15:1). It is not stated: Sang, in the verse; rather, the term “they will sing” is stated, indicating that Moses will come back to life and sing the song in the future. From here it is proved that resurrection of the dead is derived from the Torah. On a similar note, you can say: “Then Joshua will build an altar to the Lord God of Israel on Mount Ebal” (Joshua 8:30). It is not stated: Built, in the verse; rather, the term “will build” is stated. From here, resurrection of the dead is derived from the Torah.

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi says: From where is resurrection of the dead derived from the Torah? It is derived from a verse, as it is stated: “Happy are they who dwell in Your house; they will yet praise You, Selah” (Psalms 84:5). It is not stated: They praised you, in the verse; rather, the term “they will praise you” is stated. From here, resurrection of the dead is derived from the Torah. And Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi says: Anyone who recites song to God in this world is privileged and recites it in the World-to-Come, as it is stated: “Happy are they who dwell in Your house; they will yet praise You, Selah.”

Rabbi Ḥiyya bar Abba says that Rabbi Yoḥanan says: From where is resurrection of the dead derived from the Torah? It is derived from a verse, as it is stated: “Your watchmen, they raise the voice; together shall they sing, for they shall see eye to eye the Lord returning to Zion” (Isaiah 52:8). It is not stated: They sang, in the verse; rather, the term “together shall they sing” is stated. From here resurrection of the dead is derived from the Torah. And Rabbi Ḥiyya bar Abba says that Rabbi Yoḥanan says: All the prophets are all destined to recite song in one voice, as it is stated: “Your watchmen, they raise the voice; together shall they sing.”

The Gemara returns to the topic of the source for resurrection in the Torah. Rava says: From where is resurrection of the dead derived from the Torah? It is derived from a verse, as it is stated: “Let Reuben live and not die, in that his men become few” (Deuteronomy 33:6). This is interpreted: “Let Reuben live” in this world “and not die” in the World-to-Come. Ravina says that resurrection is derived from here: “And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awaken, some to everlasting life, and some to reproaches and everlasting disgrace” (Daniel 12:2). Rav Ashi says proof is derived from here: “But go you your way until the end be; and you shall rest, and arise to your lot at the end of days” (Daniel 12:13).

§ Apropos exchanges with prominent gentile leaders, the Gemara cites an exchange where Antoninos, the Roman emperor, said to Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi: The body and the soul are able to exempt themselves from judgment for their sins. How so? The body says: The soul sinned, as from the day of my death when it departed from me, I am cast like a silent stone in the grave, and do not sin. And the soul says: The body sinned, as from the day that I departed from it, I am flying in the air like a bird, incapable of sin. Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi said to him: I will tell you a parable. To what is this matter comparable? It is comparable to a king of flesh and blood who had a fine orchard, and in it there were fine first fruits of a fig tree, and he stationed two guards in the orchard, one lame, who was unable to walk, and one blind. Neither was capable of reaching the fruit on the trees in the orchard without the assistance of the other. The lame person said to the blind person: I see fine first fruits of a fig tree in the orchard; come and place me upon your shoulders. I will guide you to the tree, and we will bring the figs to eat them. The lame person rode upon the shoulders of the blind person and they brought the figs and ate them.

Sometime later the owner of the orchard came to the orchard. He said to the guards: The fine first fruits of a fig tree that were in the orchard, where are they? The lame person said: Do I have any legs with which I would be able to walk and take the figs? The blind person said: Do I have any eyes with which I would be able to see the way to the figs? What did the owner of the orchard do? He placed the lame person upon the shoulders of the blind person just as they did when they stole the figs, and he judged them as one.

So too, the Holy One, Blessed be He, brings the soul on the day of judgment and casts it back into the body, as they were when they sinned, and He judges them as one, as it is stated: “He calls to the heavens above and to the earth that He may judge His people” (Psalms 50:4). “He calls to the heavens above”; this is the soul, which is heavenly. “And to the earth that He may judge His people”; this is the body, which is earthly.

§ Rabbi Elazar says: Any communal leader who leads the community calmly, without anger and honestly, is privileged and leads them in the World-to-Come, as it is stated: “For he that has compassion upon them will lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them” (Isaiah 49:10). Just as he led them in this world, so too will he guide them in the World-to-Come.

MISHNA: All of the Jewish people, even sinners and those who are liable to be executed with a court-imposed death penalty, have a share in the World-to-Come, as it is stated: “And your people also shall be all righteous, they shall inherit the land forever; the branch of My planting, the work of My hands, for My name to be glorified” (Isaiah 60:21). And these are the exceptions, the people who have no share in the World-to-Come, even when they fulfilled many *mitzvot*: One who says: There is no resurrection of the dead derived from the Torah, and one who says: The Torah did not originate from Heaven, and an *epikoros*, who treats Torah scholars and the Torah that they teach with contempt.

Rabbi Akiva says: Also included in the exceptions are one who reads external literature, and one who whispers invocations over a wound and says as an invocation for healing: “Every illness that I placed upon Egypt I will not place upon you, for I am the Lord, your Healer” (Exodus 15:26). By doing so, he shows contempt for the sanctity of the name of God and therefore has no share in the World-to-Come. Abba Shaul says: Also included in the exceptions is one who pronounces the ineffable name of God as it is written, with its letters.

Three prominent kings mentioned in the Bible and four prominent commoners who are described in the Bible as men of great wisdom have no share in the World-to-Come. The three kings are: Jeroboam, son of Nebat, and Ahab, both of whom were kings of Israel, and Manasseh, king of Judea. Rabbi Yehuda says: Manasseh has a share in the World-to-Come, as it is stated concerning Manasseh: “And he prayed to Him, and He received his entreaty, and heard his supplication and brought him back to Jerusalem unto his kingdom” (II Chronicles 33:13), indicating that he repented wholeheartedly and effectively. The Rabbis said to Rabbi Yehuda: He regretted his actions, and his repentance was effective to the extent that God restored him to his kingdom, but God did not restore him to his share in life in the World-to-Come. The four commoners are: Balaam, son of Beor; Doeg the Edomite; Ahithophel; and Gehazi.

GEMARA: And why is one punished to that extent for saying that there is no resurrection of the dead derived from the Torah? The Sages taught in a *baraita*: He denied the resurrection of the dead; therefore he will not have a share in the resurrection of the dead, as all measures dispensed by the Holy One, Blessed be He, to His people are dispensed measure for measure, i.e., the response is commensurate with the action.

Mishnah Sanhedrin 10:1

The members of the generation of the flood have no share in the World-to-Come and will not stand in judgment at the end of days, as it is stated: “My soul shall not abide [*yadon*] in man forever” (Genesis 6:3); neither will they stand in judgment [*din*] nor shall their souls be restored to them. The members of the generation of the dispersion have no share in the World-to-Come, as it is stated: “And the Lord scattered them from there upon the face of all the earth” (Genesis 11:8), and it is written: “And from there did the Lord scatter them upon the face of all the earth” (Genesis 11:9). “And the Lord scattered them” indicates in this world; “and from there did the Lord scatter them” indicates for the World-to-Come. The people of Sodom have no share in the World-to-Come, as it is stated: “And the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners before the Lord exceedingly” (Genesis 13:13). “Wicked” indicates in this world; “and sinners” indicates for the World-to-Come. But they will stand in judgment and they will be sentenced to eternal contempt. Rabbi Neḥemya says: Both these, the people of Sodom, and those, the members of the generation of the flood, will not stand in judgment, as it is stated: “Therefore the wicked shall not stand in judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous” (Psalms 1:5). “Therefore the wicked shall not stand in judgment”; this is referring to the generation of the flood, about whom it is written: “The wickedness of man was great upon the earth” (Genesis 6:5). “Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous”; these are the people of Sodom, about whom it is written: “And the men of Sodom were wicked and sinners” (Genesis 13:13). The Sages said to Rabbi Neḥemya: They will not stand in judgment for resurrection in the congregation of the righteous, but they will stand in judgment in the congregation of the wicked. The spies who spread an evil report of their visit to Canaan have no share in the World-to-Come, as it is stated: “And those men who spread the evil report about the land died by plague before the Lord” (Numbers 14:37). “And...died” indicates in this world; “by plague” indicates for the World-to-Come. The members of the generation of the wilderness have no share in the World-to-Come and will not stand in judgment, as it is stated: “In this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die” (Numbers 14:35). “They shall be consumed” indicates in this world; “and there they shall die” indicates for the World-to-Come; this is the statement of Rabbi Akiva. Rabbi Eliezer says: The members of the generation of the wilderness were essentially righteous, and about them the verse says: “Gather My pious together to Me, those that have entered into My covenant by offering” (Psalms 50:5). It is they who entered into the covenant with God and they will certainly be

rewarded in the future. The assembly of Korah is not destined to arise for resurrection, as it is stated: “And the earth closed upon them” (Numbers 16:33), meaning in this world, and also: “And they perished from among the assembly” (Numbers 16:33), meaning in the World-to-Come; this is the statement of Rabbi Akiva. Rabbi Eliezer says: About them the verse says: “The Lord kills and makes alive; He lowers to the grave, and raises” (I Samuel 2:6), indicating that the assembly of Korah has a share in the World-to-Come. The ten tribes are not destined to return to Eretz Yisrael, even during the messianic era, as it is stated: “And He cast them into another land, as it is this day” (Deuteronomy 29:27). Just as the day passes never to return, so too, the ten tribes go into exile and do not return; this is the statement of Rabbi Akiva. Rabbi Eliezer says: “As it is this day,” meaning just as the day darkens and then the sky brightens the next day, with regard to the ten tribes as well, although it is dark for them now, so it is destined to brighten for them.

The residents of an idolatrous city have no share in the World-to-Come, as it is stated: “Certain men, wicked persons, are gone out from your midst, and have subverted the inhabitants of their city, saying: ‘Let us go and let us worship other gods’” (Deuteronomy 13:14). And idol worshippers are not executed as residents of an idolatrous city unless its subverters are from that city and from that tribe, and unless most of the inhabitants of the city are subverted, and unless men subvert the inhabitants of the city.

Berakhot 17a

Rav was wont to say:

The World-to-Come is not like this world.

In the World-to-Come there is no eating, no drinking,
no procreation, no business negotiations,
no jealousy, no hatred, and no competition.

Rather, the righteous sit with their crowns upon their heads, enjoying the splendor of the Divine Presence, as it is stated:

“And they beheld God, and they ate and drank” (Exodus 24:11), meaning that beholding God’s countenance is tantamount to eating and drinking.

Rosh Hashanah 16b ff.

§ The Gemara goes back to discuss the Day of Judgment. Rabbi Kruspedai said that Rabbi Yohanan said: Three books are opened on Rosh HaShana before the Holy One, Blessed be He: One of wholly wicked people, and one of wholly righteous people, and one of middling people whose good and bad deeds are equally balanced. Wholly righteous people are immediately written and sealed for life; wholly wicked people are immediately written and sealed for death; and middling people are left with their judgment suspended from Rosh HaShana until Yom Kippur, their fate remaining undecided. If they merit, through the good deeds and *mitzvot* that they perform during this period, they are written for life; if they do not so merit, they are written for death.

Rabbi Avin said: What is the verse that alludes to this? “Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, but not be written with the righteous” (Psalms 69:29). “Let them be blotted out of the book”; this is the book of wholly wicked people, who are blotted out from the world. “Of the living”; this is the book of wholly righteous people. “But not be written with the righteous”; this is the book of middling people, who are written in a separate book, not with the righteous.

Rav Nahman bar Yitzhak said: This matter is derived from here: “And if not, blot me, I pray You, out of Your book which you have written” (Exodus 32:32). “Blot me, I pray You”; this is the book of wholly wicked people, who are blotted out from the world. “Out of Your book”; this is the book of wholly righteous people, which is special and attributed to God Himself. “Which You have written”; this is the book of middling people. It is taught in a *baraita*: Beit Shammai say: There will be three groups of people on the great Day of Judgment at the end of days: One of wholly righteous people, one of wholly wicked people, and one of middling people. Wholly righteous people will immediately be written and sealed for eternal life. Wholly wicked people will immediately be written and sealed for *Gehenna*, as it is stated: “And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall wake, some to eternal life and some to shame and everlasting contempt” (Daniel 12:2). Middling people will descend to *Gehenna* to be cleansed and to achieve atonement for their sins, and they will cry out in their pain and eventually ascend from there, as it is stated: “And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried; they shall call on My name, and I will answer them” (Zechariah 13:9). This is referring to the members of the third group, who require refinement and cleansing. And about them, Hannah said: “The Lord kills, and gives life; he brings down to the grave, and brings up” (I Samuel 2:6).

Beit Hillel say: He Who is “and abundant in kindness” (Exodus 34:6) tilts the scales in favor of kindness, so that middling people should not have to pass through *Gehenna*. And about them, David said: “I love the Lord, Who hears my voice and my supplications” (Psalms 116:1). And about them, David said the entire passage: “I was brought low [*daloti*] and He saved me” (Psalms 116:6). Although they are poor [*dalim*] in *mitzvot*, God saves them.

The rebellious Jews who have sinned with their bodies and also the rebellious people of the nations of the world who have sinned with their bodies descend to *Gehenna* and are judged there for twelve months. After twelve months, their bodies are consumed, their souls are burned, and a wind scatters them under the soles of the feet of the righteous, as it is stated: “And you shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet” (Malachi 3:21).

But the heretics; and the informers; and the apostates [*apikorsim*]; and those who denied the Torah; and those who denied the resurrection of the dead; and those who separated from the ways of the Jewish community and refused to share the suffering; and those who cast their fear over the land of the living; and those who sinned and caused the masses to sin, for example, Jeroboam, son of Nebat, and his company; all of these people descend to *Gehenna* and are judged there for generations and generations, as it is stated: “And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have rebelled against Me; for their worm shall not die; neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh” (Isaiah 66:24).

Gehenna will terminate, but they still will not terminate, as it is stated: “And their form shall wear away the netherworld, so that there be no dwelling for Him” (Psalms 49:15); that is to say, *Gehenna* itself will be worn away before their punishment has come to an end. And why are they punished so severely? Because they stretched out their hands against God’s dwelling, the Temple, and everything else that is sanctified, as it is stated: “So that there be no dwelling [*zevul*] for Him.” Dwelling [*zevul*] is referring here only to the Temple, as it is stated: “I have built You a house for dwelling [*zevul*] in” (I Kings 8:13). And about them Hannah said: “The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken in pieces” (I Samuel 2:10).

Rabbi Yitzhak bar Avin said: And their faces on the Day of Judgment will be black and sooty like the bottom of a pot. And Rava said: And they shall include the most handsome, i.e., upstanding, of the people of Mehoza, as Rava thought that even the most upstanding people of the city of Mehoza were wicked, and they shall be called the people of *Gehenna*.

The Master said in the *baraita* above: It stated that Beit Hillel say: He Who is “and abundant in kindness” (Exodus 34:6) tilts the scales in favor of kindness, so that middling people will not have to pass through *Gehenna*. The Gemara asks: But isn’t it written: “And I will bring the third part through the fire” (Zechariah 13:9), implying that there is a third group, which is sent to *Gehenna* temporarily? The Gemara answers: There, the verse is referring to the rebellious Jews who have sinned with their bodies.

The Gemara asks: Can the verse be referring to the rebellious Jews who have sinned with their bodies? But didn’t you say that they have no rectification? The Gemara responds: When do they have no rectification? When in addition to their having sinned with their bodies, the majority of their actions are sins. But here, the verse is referring to people for whom half of their actions are sins and half are meritorious deeds, and those sins include the sin of the rebellious Jews who sin with their bodies. It is not sufficient that they not be subject to the verse: “And I will bring the third part through the fire.” However, if their sins and meritorious deeds are equally balanced, and they did not sin with their bodies, He Who is “abundant in kindness” tilts the scales in favor of kindness. And about them, David said: “I love the Lord, Who hears my voice and my supplications” (Psalms 116:1).

THE AMIDAH

1. THE GOD OF HISTORY:

Blessed are you, O Lord our God and God of our fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob, the great, mighty and revered God, the Most High God who bestows loving-kindnesses, the creator of all things, who remembers the good deeds of the patriarchs and in love will bring a redeemer to their children's children for his name's sake. O king, helper, savior and shield. Blessed are you, O Lord, the shield of Abraham.

2. THE GOD OF NATURE:

You, O Lord, are mighty forever, you revive the dead, you have the power to save. You sustain the living with lovingkindness, you revive the dead with great mercy, you support the falling, heal the sick, set free the bound and keep faith with those who sleep in the dust. Who is like you, O doer of mighty acts? Who resembles you, a king who puts to death and restores to life, and causes salvation to flourish? And you are certain to revive the dead. Blessed are you, O Lord, who revives the dead.