

Bad Vibes

בתענית דף כט. אמר רב יהודה בריה דרב שמואל בר שילת משמיה דרב כשם שמשנכנס אב ממעטין בשמחה כך משנכנס אדר מרבין בשמחה אמר רב פפא הלכך בר ישראל דאית ליה דינא בהדי נכרי לישתמיט מיניה באב דריע מזליה ולימצי נפשיה באדר דבריא מזליה

The Gemara in Taanis 28a says the just like when the month of Av enters we decrease our happiness, so to when the month of Adar begins we increase our happiness. Rav Papa continues, therefore a Jew that has a court case with a non-Jew should avoid having it in the month of Av because we have bad *mazal* and instead have it in Adar when we have healthy *mazal*.

The usage of the words הלכך-therefore in the beginning of Rav Papas statement seems to indicate that the statement he is about to make is a direct result of the statement made before him. This would imply that the reason why Jews have bad *mazal* during the month of Av (and therefore shouldn't go to court with a non-Jew) is because during the month of Av, we decrease in happiness and vice versa for the month of Adar.

The question is what does a person's mood and state of mind, be it positive or negative, have to do with his *mazal*?

It would seem that Tosfos on 28b was bothered by this question and therefore explains the reason why a Jew who has a court case shouldn't go in the month of Av is because the Gemara says earlier on 28a - ליום החייב חובה ליום החייב - פירוש משום דאמר לעיל מגלגלין חובה ליום החייב - Tosfos is referring to the Gemara that asks how we know the second Beis Hamikdash was destroyed on the ninth of Av, to which the Gemara answers מגלגלין חובה ליום החייב. Rashi says דרגילין להיות בו רעות that since Tisha BaAv is a day that bad things happened to the Jews, therefore it can be assumed that the destruction of the second Beis Hamikdash also happened on that day. Tosfos uses this Gemara to explain why a Jew who has a court case with a non-Jew should not go during Av because it's a time designated for bad things and that's why we have bad *mazal* during that time.

We see from Tosfos that he didn't learn the word הלכך-therefore literally because he used a previous Gemara to explain the statement of Rav Papa and not the statement that immediately preceded it.

But how could the Gemara be explained in its simplest sense that the reason for Rav Papas statement is because of the statement before it?

Furthermore, the Korban Nesanel debates with the Magen Avraham until when should a person push off the court case, until after Tisha BaAv or until Rosh Chodesh Elul. He quotes the Magen Avraham saying that one should push it off until Rosh Chodesh Elul. But the Korban Nesanel disagrees with the logic that the indication of the Gemara is one need to push it off only until

after Tisha BaAv because the whole Halacha of minimizing in happiness is only until Tisha BaAv but not for the remainder of the month and therefore the bad *mazal* is only an issue up until that point. It would seem clear that the Korban Nesanel understood that the statement of Rav Papa was directly related to the statement that preceded it.

Perhaps we could suggest that we see from this Gemara that a person's mood and state of mind, be it happy or sad, has an effect on his *mazal*. When a person decreases his *simcha*, it results in bad *mazal* and therefore he is advised to not attend a court case with a non-Jew. However, when a person is in a happy mood and state of mind, then his *mazal* is healthy. We see that a person's *mazal* is not something out of his control, but on the contrary it is very much in his power and control.

Perhaps we can bring a proof to this from the Gemara in Horiyos 12a. The Gemara says if a person wants to know if he will return to his house after going on a trip, he should stand in a dark house and if he sees his shadows shadow, that is a sign that he will return and if he doesn't see it, then it's a sign that he won't return. The Gemara challenges this and says not to do it because דלמא חלשא דעתיה ומיתרע מזליה. Rashi explains that since this sign is not full proof, therefore it could be that a person won't see his shadows shadow and he was still destined to return home from his trip but because he was חלשא דעתיה- became sad, that affected and worsened his *mazal* and not he won't return. But not because he didn't see the sign, rather because he became depressed, his *mazal* took a turn for the worse and resulted in him not coming back from his trip. We see clearly from this Gemara this idea that a person's mood and state of mind can either have a positive affect or negative affect on his *mazal*.

My friend, Dr. Menasche Krupka wanted to use this idea to explain a point in the story of the Eglah Arufah. The Pasuk in Parshas Shoftim says וענו ואמרו ידינו לא שפכו את הדם הזה ועינינו לא ראו They (Beis Din) shall speak up and say "our hands have not spilled this blood, and our eyes did not see". Rashi explains that this statement seems odd because did anyone actually suspect the Beis Din of murder that they need to declare that they didn't spill any blood? Rather they mean to say that they did not know of the traveler and had no part in allowing him to go on his lonely way without food or escort. The implication of this Rashi is that had the Beis Din known about this traveler and neglected him without giving him the proper escort, they would be accountable and it would be considered as if they spilled his blood. How could it be that just because they didn't escort him and give him the proper respect is it as if they killed him?

The answer could be based on what we suggested earlier. If a person was not escorted when leaving a city, that could have a negative effect on his mood and state of mind causing him to be depressed and down about himself. This could further result in affecting his *mazal* which could lead to his death. However, if a person leaving a city was escorted by the elders and given the proper attention and respect, such an act could boost a person's self-confidence generating a



happy state of mind which would result in healthy *mazal* saving him from being killed. Therefore, the Beis Din must declare that they didn't know of the traveler and therefore did not neglect him because had they known and neglected him, they would directly be accountable for his death by the fact that they didn't escort him and give him the proper respect.

As we continue through this difficult and challenging time, it is incumbent upon us to understand and internalize this message, to remain positive and have good vibes and not bad vibes, and strive to be *מרבה בשמחה* in order to have a strong and healthy *mazal* during these unprecedented times.