
MORDECHAI'S PERICOPE #95

MORDECHAI 10:23-31

BESB

²³ And Yeshua, looking around, said [to] His Talmidim, "How troublesome it will be for those who have [keep on holding on to their] wealth to enter [accept] the Government (kingdom) of God!" ²⁴ The Talmidim were astonished at his words. But Yeshua responded again and said to them, "My Sons, how troublesome it is for those who are misled by wealth to enter (accept) the Government (kingdom) of God!" ²⁵ "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a man of wealth to enter (accept) the Government (kingdom) of God." ²⁶ They were even more astonished and said to him, "Then who can merit the Olam HaBa (age to come)?" ²⁷ But Yeshua looked at them, and said, "this is beyond man's possibilities, but possible with God; for all possibilities exist in God." ²⁸ Tsefet was the first to say to him, "Behold, we have left everything and cling (walk and live as you walk and live) to You." ²⁹ Yeshua said, "Amen ve amen I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for my sake and for the sake of the Mesorah, ³⁰ but that he will receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, who follows [the Mesorah] zealously; and in the Olam Haba (age to come), life unending. ³¹ "But many who are first (or, chiefs) will be last, and the last, first (or chiefs)."

GREEK TEXT

²³ Καὶ περιβλεψάμενος ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγει τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ Πῶς δυσκόλως οἱ τὰ χρήματα ἔχοντες εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ εἰσελεύσονται ²⁴ οἱ δὲ μαθηταὶ ἐθαμβοῦντο ἐπὶ τοῖς λόγοις αὐτοῦ ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς πάλιν ἀποκριθεὶς λέγει αὐτοῖς Τέκνα πῶς δύσκολόν ἐστιν τοὺς πεποιθότας ἐπὶ τοῖς χρήμασιν, εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ εἰσελθεῖν· ²⁵ εὐκοπώτερόν ἐστιν κάμηλον διὰ τῆς τρυμαλιαῖς τῆς ῥαφίδος εἰσελθεῖν ἢ πλούσιον εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ εἰσελθεῖν. ²⁶ οἱ δὲ περισσῶς ἐξεπλήσσαντο λέγοντες πρὸς ἑαυτοὺς Καὶ τίς δύναται σωθῆναι ²⁷ ἐμβλέψας δὲ αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγει Παρὰ ἀνθρώποις ἀδύνατον ἄλλ οὐ παρὰ τῷ θεῷ· πάντα γὰρ δυνατὰ ἐστὶν παρὰ τῷ θεῷ²⁸ καὶ Ἦρξατο ὁ Πέτρος λέγειν αὐτῷ Ἰδοὺ ἡμεῖς ἀφήκαμεν πάντα καὶ ἠκολουθήσαμεν σοι ²⁹ ἀποκριθεὶς δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν Ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν οὐδεὶς ἐστὶν ὃς ἀφήκεν οἰκίαν ἢ ἀδελφούς ἢ ἀδελφὰς ἢ πατέρα ἢ μητέρα ἢ γυναῖκα, ἢ τέκνα ἢ ἀγροὺς ἔνεκεν ἐμοῦ καὶ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ³⁰ ἐὰν μὴ λάβῃ ἑκατονταπλασίονα νῦν ἐν τῷ καιρῷ τούτῳ οἰκίας καὶ ἀδελφούς καὶ ἀδελφὰς καὶ μητέρας καὶ τέκνα καὶ ἀγροὺς μετὰ διωγμῶν καὶ ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι τῷ ἐρχομένῳ ζοῆν αἰώνιον³¹ πολλοὶ δὲ ἔσονται πρῶτοι ἔσχατοι καὶ οἱ ἔσχατοι πρῶτοι

DELITZSCH HEBREW TRANSLATIONⁱ

²³ וַיִּבֹט יֵשׁוּעַ סְבִיב וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל־תְּלַמְדָיו כִּמָּה יִקְשֶׁה לְבַעֲלֵי נַכְסִים לְבוֹא בְּמַלְכוּת הָאֱלֹהִים: ²⁴ וַיִּבְהָלוּ הַתְּלַמְדִים עַל־דְּבָרָיו וַיִּסֶף יֵשׁוּעַ וַיַּעַן וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם בְּנֵי מֶה קָשֶׁה לְבַטְחִים עַל־חֵילָם לְבוֹא אֶל־מַלְכוּת הָאֱלֹהִים: ²⁵ נִקְל לְגַמֵּל לְעֵבֶר בְּנִקְב הַמַּחַט מִבוֹא עֶשֶׂר אֶל־מַלְכוּת הָאֱלֹהִים: ²⁶ וַיִּוְסְפוּ עוֹד לְהַשְׁתּוֹמֵם וַיֹּאמְרוּ אִישׁ אֶל־אַחִיו וּמִי־אֶפְּוֵא יוֹכֵל לְהוֹשִׁיעַ: ²⁷ וַיִּבְטֹבֵם יֵשׁוּעַ וַיֹּאמֶר מִבְּנֵי אָדָם תִּפְּלֵא זֹאת אֲדָךְ לֹא מֵאֱלֹהִים כִּי מֵאֱלֹהִים לֹא יִפְּלֵא כָל־דְּבָר: ²⁸ וַיַּחֲל פְּטָרוֹס לֵאמֹר אֵלָיו הֵן אֲנַחְנוּ עֹזְבָנוּ אֶת־הַכֹּל וַנִּלְךָ אַחֲרֶיךָ: ²⁹ וַיַּעַן יֵשׁוּעַ וַיֹּאמֶר אָמֵן אָמֵן אֲנִי לָכֶם כִּי אֵין אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר עֹזֵב

אֶת־בֵּיתוֹ אוֹ אֶת־אָחִיו אוֹ אֶת־אֲחֵי־תּוֹתוֹ אוֹ אֶת־אָבִיו אוֹ אֶת־אִמּוֹ אוֹ אֶת־אִשְׁתּוֹ אוֹ אֶת־בְּנָיו אוֹ אֶת שְׂדוֹתָיו לְמַעַן וּלְמַעַן הַבְּשׂוּרָה: ³⁰ אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִקַּח עִתָּהּ בְּזִמְנָהּ בְּכָל־הֶרְדִּיפּוֹת מָאָה פְּעָמִים כִּהְמָה בְּתִים וְאֲחִים וְאֲחִיּוֹת וְאִמּוֹת וּבָנִים וְשָׂדוֹת וְלְעוֹלָם הַבָּא חַיֵּי עוֹלָם: ³¹ וְאוֹלָם רַבִּים מִן־הָרְאשׁוֹנִים יְהִיו אַחֲרֵיָם וְהָאֲחֲרֵיָם רִאשׁוֹנִים:

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INTRODUCTION

Once again, Hakham Tsefet's mastery of Torah wisdom is overwhelming. His connection to the Torah Seder and related materials is astonishing. Furthermore, I am certain that many of the traditions that we have in present Torah Commentaries and materials are from antiquity. These thoughts of antiquity are still relevant for us today. While the continuity of Jewish thought should not overwhelm us, it often perplexes us to see the continuity between antiquity and the present in Torah Scholarship. How could I begin to elaborate on what excellence has gone before me? What is more amazing is that most scholars never really understand how to interpret the Nazarean Codicil because of their lack of understanding of the Triennial reading cycles. Pastors want to teach from every schedule imaginable but the authentic self-explanatory schedule. Perhaps that is why they will not read from the legitimate Torah reading schedule. Reading from this schedule would lead to the truth of Torah.

YESHUA, LOOKING AROUND

Twice in this pericope, we have Yeshua looking around at someone or something. Here it is evident that Hakham Tsefet is making a connection to the Torah Seder, specifically the Aaronic blessing.

Numbers 6:25. May the Lord cause His countenance to shine to you and favor you.

²⁶. May the Lord raise His countenance toward you and grant you peace."

However, this in NO WAY implies that Yeshua is any form of deity! It is simply Hakham Tsefet's way of making a connection to the Torah Seder teaching us that we are to read the Nazarean Codicil with specific sections of the Torah.

Yeshua' observance notes that the "man of property" is no longer present. I am certain that this is grieving to the Master.

THE TROUBLE WITH MONEY

"How troublesome it will be for those who have [keep on holding on to their] wealth to enter [accept] the Government (kingdom) of G-d!"

The Greek text carries the connotations of those who are hard to please. *δυσκόλως* - *duskolos* contains the idea of harassment as well as trouble. Those who hold to wealth find the Government of G-d troublesome. Why is this? The real problem is like the "man of property" they believe that they gained their prosperity by their own means. They also consider the money theirs. In all of this they forget the true origin of wealth.

Deu 8:17-18 ¹⁷ and so that you might not say in your heart, My power and the might of my hand has gotten me this wealth. ¹⁸ But you shall remember L-rd your G-d, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth, so that He may confirm His covenant which He has sworn to your fathers, as it is today.

This is very troublesome when we bring the Government of G-d into the conversation. Again, I ask why? Here again the difficulty is that the Government of G-d [Mesorah] tells us, inhabitants of G-d's Kingdom how we are to distribute our monies. If the money is G-d's we have no problem being its treasurer. We will dispense it freely to those who need it because it is not our money. On the other hand, when the money is my personal possession we have a change of thought. We want to hold on to it because it is ours. Furthermore, we do not want someone, even if it is G-d, to tell us how to dispense that money.

As someone who has been involved with teaching for many years I have had varied experiences with people of this sort. So long as the teaching is exhilarating you are financially supported. The minute you begin to teach how people are to walk, conduct themselves within the Government of G-d you will be cut off. Again, these people believe that the money is theirs to do with as they please.

Yeshua had an opportunity to tell the "man of property" something exciting and awesome to win his favor. The news Yeshua gave him would have submitted him to the Government of G-d. This would have meant that the man would have had to do something with the money other than count it. The opportunity to be a part of the Government of G-d was his. But "Yeshua looking around" he found that he was gone. These sorts of people will ALWAYS abandon true Torah Teachers, settling for those who love to grandstand and bloat their chests before gullible people.

χρήματα - *chemata* is something some uses^a not something one posses or owns. Consequently, we have the idea that G-d grants wealth for charitable distribution. Herein is the test and burden of wealth.

WHY SO AMAZED?

Why were the Talmidim so amazed?

Why am I so amazed?

When I read Christian commentaries on subjects such as these, I am amazed at the asinities of these “scholars.” I am convinced that they do not have the first clue what they are talking about.

We may perhaps wonder why this saying 'so astonished the disciples. Twice their amazement is stressed. The reason for their amazement was that Jesus was turning accepted Jewish standards completely upside down. Popular Jewish morality was simple. It believed that prosperity, was the sign of, a good man. If a; man was rich, God must., have honoured and blessed. him. Wealth was proof of excellence of, character and of favour with God. The psalmist sums it up, 'I have been young, and now am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread' (Psalm 37:25).^b

Will someone please help this poor soul! Vincent Taylor echoes William Barkley.^c While there were those men of the first century, who held this opinion it was not the norm, unlike today where a “Prosperity Gospel” has all but destroyed innocent souls.

I am certain that William Barkley or Vincent Taylor never read of men like Hillel and others who saw Torah as the mainstay of life.^d Hillel himself might have taught these same words that Yeshua taught as an abbreviation to the Amidah.^e

¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread; (Mat 6:11)

The petition is not for wealth but daily sustenance. The mindset of the pious was not on money and how to earn masses of it. The mindset of the pious was on the study of the Torah. Like the prayer of Yeshua which is also found in Talmudic sources^f we note that the Rabbis were concerned with G-d’s daily provision not great wealth.

^a Vincent Taylor, The Gospel according to Mark, The Greek Text with Introduction Notes, and Indexes, MacMillan & Co, 1955 p. 431

^b William Barkley, The New Daily Study Bible, The Gospel of Mark, Westminster John Knox Press p.286-267

^c Vincent Taylor, The Gospel according to Mark, The Greek Text with Introduction Notes, and Indexes, MacMillan & Co, 1955 p.424-431

^d **Ber. 17a** A favourite saying of Rab was: [The future world is not like this world.] In the future world there is no eating nor drinking nor propagation nor business nor jealousy nor hatred nor competition, but the righteous sit with their crowns on their heads feasting on the brightness of the divine presence, as it says, And they beheld God, and did eat and drink. (Ex. XXIV, 11 . These words are interpreted to mean that the vision of God seen by the young men was like food and drink to them.)

^e See commentary by His Eminence Rabbi Dr. Yoseph ben Haggai <http://www.betemunah.org/amida.html> and **Berakot 4:3** R. Gamaliel says, “Each day a man should pray the Eighteen [Benedictions].” R. Joshua says, “[Each day one should pray] an abstract of the Eighteen.” R. Aqiba says, “If one’s prayer is fluent he prays the [full] Eighteen [Benedictions]. “But if not [he should pray] an abstract of the Eighteen.”

^f **Ber. 16b** Rab on concluding his prayer added the following: May it be Thy will, O Lord our God, to grant us long life, a life of peace, a life of good, a life of blessing, a life of sustenance, a life of bodily vigour, (strength of bones) a life in which there is fear of sin, a life free from shame and confusion, a life of riches and honour, a life in which we may be filled with

My Sons, how troublesome it is for those who are misled by wealth to enter (accept) the Government (kingdom) of God!"

Money is troublesome to those who are misled! It is NOT a problem to the pious. For the past several years, the world's economy has suffered. Men have tried to strengthen, boost and stimulate the economy to no avail. The pious continue in practice of charity and faithfulness. How and why can do this? This is because of two things

1. The trust in the economy of G-d.
2. They see all blessings as thought they originated from G-d.

MY SONS

The Greek word τέκνα - *tekna* is a child, son or daughter equivalent to Hebrew בְּנֵי. The context of this use of "sons" is found in the Mishnah.

Berakot 1:1 *From what time may they recite the Shema in the evening? From the hour that the priests enter [their homes] to eat their heave offering, "until the end of the first watch"— the words of R. Eliezer. But sages say, "Until midnight." Rabban Gamaliel says, "Until the rise of dawn." M'H Š: His [Gamaliel's] sons returned from a banquet hall [after midnight]. They said to him, "We did not [yet] recite the Shema.*

The "sons" of Rabban Gamaliel were his talmidim. Here Yeshua addresses his talmidim with a term of endearment. The term "sons" accentuates the endearment a Rabbi has for his talmidim. The Rambam accentuates this preoccupation of a Rabbi with the souls of his students in Hilchos Talmud Torah.

"Just as students are obligated to honor the Rav, so is a Rav obligated to honor his students and draw them close to him. Our Rabbis said: Let the honor of your student be as dear to you as your own. A person should be exceedingly careful with his students and love them for they are the sons who provide pleasure in this world and the next world".^h

Sanhedrin 105b *Now, this conflicts with R. Jose b. Honi. For R. Jose b. Honi said: Of everyone a man is jealous, except his son and disciple. His son this is deduced from Solomon.ⁱ His disciple [is deduced] if you like, say, from Let a double quantity of thy spirit be upon me;^j or if you like, say, from And he laid his hands upon him, and gave him a charge.^k*

Abot 4:12 *R. Eleazar b. Shammua says, "The honor owing to your disciple should be as precious to you as yours. "And the honor owing to your fellow should be like the reverence owing to your master. "And the reverence owing to your master should be like the awe owing to Heaven."*

the love of Torah and the fear of heaven, a life in which Thou shalt fulfil all the desires of our heart for good! (This prayer is now said on the Sabbath on which the New Moon is announced.)

^g Soul or spiritual wellbeing.

^h Mamonidies, Hilchos Talmud Torah Moznaim Publishing Corporation, Chapter 5 Halacha 12

ⁱ I.e., from the passage under discussion; David's servants were not afraid to wish Solomon a greater name than his own, knowing that he would not be jealous of his own son. He thus translates the verse literally.

^j II Kings II, 9. Elisha asked this of his master Elijah.

^k Num. XXVII, 23. This alludes to Moses' giving of his spirit to Joshua.

Yeshua demonstrates the tenure of these thoughts completely. The Talmidim have left everything. Yeshua acknowledges this by calling his talmidim sons.

POSSIBILITIES

27 But Yeshua looked at them, and said, "this is beyond man's possibilities, but possible with God; for all possibilities exist in God."

In short, money cannot buy souls. Nor can money pay ones way into the olam haba unless you give it all away. This does not imply that one has to give away so much that he cannot survive. However, the Government of G-d must be our priority.

CAMELS, CADILLAC'S AND CASH

"It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a man of wealth to enter (accept) the Government (kingdom) of God."

On my last trip to Yisrael, I experienced, once again the negotiation of Camels for the sale of a beautiful young woman. On our trip, we were privileged to have the young Melinda Jones with us. At one juncture, a young Jewish maître d' offered a number of camels in exchange for the beautiful young woman. As the Tour leader (in absence of her father), I realized that I would have to negotiate the sale of this young woman on her father behalf. I had been involved in this type of negotiation some years before assisting a mother in the sale of her daughter.

Here I jest concerning the sale of women. However, the story is true, for more than one occasion. However, this begs a question. Why do the young Jewish men offer camels instead of Cadillac's or cash? From antiquity, the camel has always been the symbol of prosperity. Therefore, the young man offering a camel was an indication that they would pay great sums of cash for a beautiful woman. Consequently, I believe that the equation with the camel in our pericope is apropos. Ropes, cables and other possibilities are noteworthy. However, I believe that the camel hyperbole makes the most sense. (Just as a personal note, we were offered 100 camels for the beautiful young maiden)

I further concur with his Eminence concerning the Passage noted from Nehemiah. The camel (rich man) divested of his wealth can enter the olam haba uninhibited.

FOLLOWING YESHUA, TEACHING TORAH FOR VAINGLORY

28 Tsefet was the first to say to him, "Behold, we have left everything and cling (walk and live as you walk and live) to You."

The Talmidim note that they have left everything to follow and walk as Yeshua. Why this statement is made is troublesome. However, we must conclude that we cannot use the Torah as a spade.

Abot 4:7 Rabbi Zadok says: Do not separate yourself from the community; in the office of judge do not act as counsel; do not make of the Torah a crown for self-aggrandizement, nor a spade wherewith to dig. And thus Hillel used to say — "One who makes use of the crown will die." Thus you may derive that one who reaps personal profit from the words of the Torah takes one's own life from the world.

MISHNA 7

Continuing along the theme of orientation around community, this mishna asserts that communal concerns should be foremost, that even if one is not a giver towards the community, at least one should be a receiver, one should not separate oneself from the community. However, there is always the danger that wanting to satisfy communal needs can clash with other values, which momentarily, at least, demand more scrupulousness. Communal concern should not interfere with an appointed task. For example, a judge should not act as a counsel — a judge should not employ concern for community when it compromises the position of judge. Do not advise those you would normally like to help when, as a judge, you have to give a strictly legal decision.

In the pursuit of community position, which is normally gained by acquisition of superior knowledge, there is a caution that the knowledge gained should of its own bring the recognition, but one should not project that knowledge either to catapult the self or to downgrade others. It should not be for self-aggrandizement or a spade wherewith to dig, as per the statement by Hillel. The individual who reaps personal profit from the words of Torah takes one's own life from the world, takes away the life fulfillment which is available through Torah by making it a means for profit, a tool rather than a life orientation. Such an individual strips the Torah of its beauty and thus denies the self the real opportunity for meaningful expression.¹

²⁹ Yeshua said, "Amen ve amen I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for my sake and for the sake of the Mesorah,³⁰ but that he will receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, **who follows [the Mesorah] zealously**; and in the Olam Haba (age to come), life unending.

Who will be rewarded?

He **who follows [the Mesorah] zealously**. Most translations read...

30 but he shall receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands with persecutions, and in the world to come, eternal life. (Mar 10:30)

Context demands $\delta\iota\omega\gamma\mu\acute{\omega}\nu$ – *diogmon* be translated zealously.^m This word is so misused and confused. The Theological Dictionary of the New Testaments tells us that this word should be translated, zealously to follow, to run after a person or things, to attach oneself to someone and to pursue or promote a cause.ⁿ

Who gets the reward of the Olam haba? He **who follows [the Mesorah] zealously**.

¹ Bulka, R.P. (1993), Chapters of the Sages: A Psychological Commentary on Pirkey Avoth, Northvale, New Jersey: Jason Aronson Inc., p. 150

^m TDNT 2:230

ⁿ Ibid

IN CONCLUSION

It is no crime to have money. Nor is it a crime to have a lot of money unless it becomes an obstacle to one's piety. The words of Hakham Tsefet might be summed as saying "seek the Government (kingdom) of G-d as a priority and you will be duly rewarded. This may not be monetarily. I would far rather have Torah knowledge and wisdom than money any day.

BS"D (B'Siyata D'Shamaya)
Aramaic: With the help of Heaven
Dr. Eliyahu ben Abraham

CONNECTIONS TO TORAH READINGS

Torah Seder

Countenance, look and face all bear similarities of use in Hebrew. The opening of our Torah Seder begins with the Aaronic blessing where countenance is used twice. Numbers 6:25-26 In our pericope the idea of looking is used twice. Mordechai 10:23 and verse 27

The Torah Seder deals with the gifts of the Chieftains, 7:10ff Mordechai speaks of the order of those chiefs (first ones) in his pericope. Mordechai 10:31

Contextually the Chieftains give elaborate gifts for the construction of the Mishkan. Mordechai deals with the idea of amassing wealth demonstrating its true purpose.

Tehillim

The Psalmist speaks of the "Hardening of the heart" 95:8ff Yeshua draws a parallel demonstrating that wealth can harden the heart, per se. Mordechai 10:24 where the wealthy are misled by their wealth. Furthermore, those who will not be able to enter into G-d's resting place (95:11) are paralleled to those who will not enter the Kingdom (Government) of G-d and the olam haba Mordechai 10:24-26

Ashlamatah

By inference, Yeshua refers to the idea of relying on G-d for daily sustenance. Solomon mentions this in his prayer verse 59. In verse 61 Solomon prays for the wholeness of the heart implying that those who are whole seek G-d's mitzvot wholly. Yeshua says this same thing by saying that we must follow the Mesorah zealously. Mordechai 10:30 v63 mentions the generous number of offerings Solomon offered for the Temple's consecration like the chieftains and their loaded wagons. This matches the theme of Mordechai throughout.

Special Ashlamatah

The two pillars Jachin and Boaz form a narrow gate that narrows the entire court of the women into the court of the Israelites. 1 Kings 7:14-22 This is paralleled to our Nazarean Codicil where the camel must enter through the eye of the needle. Mordechai 10:25 The twelve oxen that supported the Brazen sea 1 Kings 7:25 are a symbol of wealth in its appropriate place, i.e Temple and Torah service.

MITZVOT

Torah Add	M#	Mitzvah	Oral Torah
B'Midbar 6:23	378	Precept of the Kohanic Blessing each day	Taanit 4:1
B'Midbar 7.9	379	Precept of the Kohanim carrying the Ark	

Endnotes

ⁱ The Delitzsch Hebrew New Testament was translated from the Elzevir 1624 Received Greek Text by the 19th century German scholar Franz Julius Delitzsch (1813 to 1890), co-author of the well-known multi-volume Keil and Delitzsch Commentary of the Old Testament. Delitzsch's New Testament was first published in 1877. Since the first publication his work has been republished with only minor revisions, and it has maintained its literal style for the Hebrew of Delitzsch's day. This was before Modern Hebrew was created, and consequently the Hebrew leans heavily on the Tanakh for vocabulary, words and expressions. Students of the Tanakh should therefore be able to understand Delitzsch's translation without much difficulty.

The current text was entered by Ewan MacLeod and proofread against a printed copy of Delitzsch's work. As Delitzsch's work goes back to 1877, it is now in the public domain.