

The Book of Job
Chapters 4 - 9
JSI at Beth Torah, December 1, 2011
Source Sheet

Chapter 4

Chapter 5, verses 6, 7, 17

Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Brachot page 7a

R. Johanan further said in the name of R. Jose: Three things did Moses ask of the Holy One, blessed be He, and they were granted to him. He asked that the Divine Presence should rest upon Israel, and it was granted to him. For it is said: Is it not in that Thou goest with us [so that we are distinguished, I and Thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth].²² He asked that the Divine Presence should not rest upon the idolaters, and it was granted to him. For it is said: 'So that we are distinguished, I and Thy people'. He asked that He should show him the ways of the Holy One, blessed be He, and it was granted to him. For it is said: Show me now Thy ways.²³ Moses said before Him: Lord of the Universe, why is it that some righteous men prosper and others are in adversity, some wicked men prosper and others are in adversity? He replied to him: Moses, the righteous man who prospers is the righteous man the son of a righteous man; the righteous man who is in adversity is a righteous man the son of a wicked man. The wicked man who prospers is a wicked man son of a righteous man; the wicked man who is in adversity is a wicked man son of a wicked man.

The Master said above: 'The righteous man who prospers is a righteous man son of a righteous man; the righteous man who is in adversity is a righteous man son of a wicked man'. But this is not so! For, lo, one verse says: Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children,²⁴ and another verse says: Neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers.²⁵ And a contradiction was pointed out between these two verses, and the answer was given that there is no contradiction. The one verse deals with children who continue in the same course as their fathers, and the other verse with children who do not continue in the course of their fathers! — [You must] therefore [say that] the Lord said thus to Moses: A righteous man who prospers is a perfectly righteous man; the righteous man who is in adversity is not a perfectly righteous man. The wicked man who prospers is not a perfectly wicked man; the wicked man who is in adversity is a perfectly wicked man. Now this [saying of R. Johanan]²⁶ is in opposition to the saying of R. Meir. For R. Meir said: only two [requests] were granted to him, and one was not granted to him. For it is said: And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, although he may not deserve it, And I will show mercy on whom I will show mercy,²⁷ although he may not deserve it.²⁸

(22) Ex. XXXIII, 16.

(23) Ex. XXXIII, 13.

(24) Ibid. XXXIV, 7.

(25) Deut. XXIV, 16.

(26) That all the three requests of Moses were granted.

(27) Ex. XXXIII, 19.

(28) And God's ways therefore cannot be known.

Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Brachot, page 33a

Our rabbis taught in a breita: In a certain place there was once a viper that used to injure people. They came to Rebbi Hanina ben Dosa. He said to them, "Show me its hole."

They showed him its hole, and he put his heel over the hole, the viper came out, bit Rebbi Hanina, and died.

Rebbi Hanina put it on his shoulder, brought it to the House of Study, and sent to them: "See my sons, it is not the viper that kills, it is sin that kills!"

Mechilta, Nezikin, 95b, paragraph 18

Rebbi Yishmael ben Elisha the High Priest and Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel were on their way out to be killed by the Romans, when Rabban Shimon said to Rebbi Yishmael, "Rebbi, my heart goes out, for I do not know why I am being killed."

Rebbi Yishmael said to Rabban Shimon, "Has it ever happened that a person came to you for judgement or with a question and you delayed him until you swallowed what was in your bag or until you tied your sandal or until you wrapped yourself in your shawl? Remember, the Torah says; 'You shall not ill treat any widow or orphan. If you do mistreat them in any way, and they cry out to Me. I will surely hear their cry.'"

And for this explanation, Rabban Shimon said to him, "You have comforted me, Rebbi."

Chapter 6, verses 24 – 30

Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Shabat, page 55a-b (which we already saw)

R. Ammi said: There is no death without sin, and there is no suffering without iniquity. There is no death without sin, for it is written, The soul that sinneth, it shall die: the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son, the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him, etc.,²⁸ There is no suffering without iniquity, for it is written, Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes.²⁹

(28) Ezek. XVIII, 20.

(29) Ps. LXXXIX, 33.

An objection is raised: The ministering angels asked the Holy One, blessed be He: 'Sovereign of the Universe! Why didst Thou impose the penalty of death upon Adam?' Said He to them, I gave him an easy command, yet he violated it.' 'But Moses and Aaron fulfilled the whole Torah,' they pursued — 'yet they died'. 'There is one event to the righteous and to the wicked; to the good, etc.,¹ ... Four died through the

serpent's machinations,⁵ viz., Benjamin the son of Jacob, Amram the father of Moses, Jesse the father of David, and Caleb the son of David. ... which proves that there is death without sin and suffering without iniquity. Thus the refutation of R. Ammi is [indeed] a refutation.

(1) Eccl. IX, 2.

(5) I.e., because the serpent caused Adam and Eve to sin, but not on account of their own sin. — This is not to be confused with the doctrine of Original sin, which is rejected by Judaism, v. B.B., Sonc. ed., p. 86, n. 11.

Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Shabat, page 13a – 13b

[It is taught in the] Tanna debe Eliyahu:²³ It once happened that a certain scholar who had studied much Bible and Mishnah²⁴ and had served scholars much,²⁵ yet died in middle age. His wife took his tefillin and carried them about in the synagogues and schoolhouses and complained to them, It is written in the Torah, for that is thy life, and the length of thy days:²⁶ my husband, who read [Bible], learned [Mishnah],

(23) This is the Midrash consisting of two parts, 'Seder Eliyahu Rabbah' and 'Seder Eliyahu Zuta'. According to the Talmud Keth. 106a the Prophet Elijah taught this Midrash, the Seder Eliyahu, to R. 'Anan, a Babylonian amora of the third century. Scholars are agreed that the work in its present form received its final redaction in the tenth century C.E., though they are not agreed as to where it was written. V. Bacher, Monatsschrift, XXIII, 267 et seqq.; in R.E.J. XX, 144-146; Friedmann, introduction to his edition of Seder Eliyahu.

(24) Kara refers to the study of the Bible; shanah to the study of the Mishnah.

(25) 'Serving scholars', i.e., being in personal attendance on scholars, was one of the requisites of an academical course.

(26) Deut. XXX, 20.

and served scholars much, why did he die in middle age? and no man could answer her. On one occasion I¹ was a guest at her house,² and she related the whole story to me. Said I to her, 'My daughter! how was he to thee in thy days of menstruation?' 'God forbid!' she rejoined; 'he did not touch me even with his little finger.' 'And how was he to thee in thy days of white [garments]?'³ 'He ate with me, drank with me and slept with me in bodily contact, and it did not occur to him to be intimate [with me].' Said I to her, 'Blessed be the Omnipresent for slaying him, that He did not condone on account of the Torah!⁴ For lo! the Torah hath said, And thou shalt not approach unto a woman as long as she is impure by her uncleanness.'⁵ When R. Dimi came,⁶ he said, It was a broad bed. In the West [Palestine] they said, R. Isaac b. Joseph said: A divider was set between them.⁷

(1) Elijah, the supposed author of the Tanna debe Eliyahu; v. n. 1.

(2) Elijah was believed to visit the earth and speak to people.

(3) When a niddah's discharge ceased, she donned white garments and examined herself for seven consecutive days, which had to pass without any further discharge of blood before she became clean. During this time she was forbidden to her husband.

(4) He showed no unfair favoritism because of the man's learning.

(5) Lev. XVIII, 19.

(6) V. p. 12, n. 9.

(7) But they were not actually in bodily contact.

Chapter 7, verses 17 – 21

Chapter 8

Chapter 9