

The Dee Pirkei Avot Project

Dedicated
to those who have tragically been murdered,
for the safe return of those missing or held hostage,
for the refuah of those injured,
the continued strength and bravery of our chyalim in the IDF
and safety of all those in our homeland of Israel.

אמר רבי יוסי בן קסמא, פעם אחת הייתי מהלך בדרך ופגע בי אדם אחד, ונתן לי שלום, והחזרתי לו שלום. אמר לי, רבי, מאיזה מקום אתה. אמרתי לו, מעיר גדולה של חכמים ושל סופרים אני. אמר לי, רבי, רצונך שתדור עמנו במקומנו, ואני אתן לך אלף אלפים דינרי זהב ואבנים טובות ומרגליות. אמרתי לו, בני, אם אתה נותן לי כל כסף וזהב ואבנים טובות ומרגליות שבועולם, איני דר אלא במקום תורה. ולא עוד, אלא שבשעת פטירתו של אדם אין מליון לו לאדם לא כסף ולא זהב ולא אבנים טובות ומרגליות, אלא תורה ומעשים טובים בלבד, שנאמר (משלי ו) בהתהלךך תנחה אתה, בשכבך תשמר עליך, והקיצות היא תשיחך. בהתהלךך תנחה אתה, בעולם הזה, בשכבך תשמר עליך, בקבר, והקיצות היא תשיחך, לעולם הבא. וכן כתוב בספר תהלים על ידי דוד מלך ישראל (תהלים קיט), טוב לי תורת פיך מאלפי זהב וכסף. ואומר (חגי ב) לי הכסף ולי הזהב אמר ה' צבאות:

Rabbi Yose ben Kisma said: Once I was walking by the way when a man met me, and greeted me and I greeted him. He said to me, "Rabbi, where are you from?" I said to him, "I am from a great city of sages and scribes". He said to me, "Rabbi, would you consider living with us in our place? I would give you a thousand thousand denarii of gold, and precious stones and pearls." I said to him: "My son, even if you were to give me all the silver and gold, precious stones and pearls that are in the world, I would not dwell anywhere except in a place of Torah; for when a man passes away there accompany him neither gold nor silver, nor precious stones nor pearls, but Torah and good deeds alone, as it is said, "When you walk it will lead you. When you lie down it will watch over you; and when you are awake it will talk with you" (Proverbs 6:22). "When you walk it will lead you" in this world. "When you lie down it will watch over you" in the grave; "And when you are awake it will talk with you" in the world to come. And thus it is written in the book of Psalms by David, king of Israel, "I prefer the teaching You proclaimed to thousands of pieces of gold and silver" (Psalms 119:72), And it says: "Mine is the silver, and mine the gold, says the Lord of Hosts" (Haggai 2:8).

Rabbi Yossi is telling us a story. Did it really happen? Is it 'just' a parable? Does it matter? Often, our teachers use stories to grab our attention. In fact, we could look at the Torah itself as a story.

If the above is true, what does it mean? Rabbi Yossi is sharing how he met someone who saw him as different, but also as valuable. The man noticed that the rabbi wasn't from his area and was intrigued. Rather than being put off by the rabbi's appearance, though, he offers riches so that Rabbi Yossi would move to his town. Is Rabbi Yossi telling this story to make himself look good? That is unlikely. He is modeling proper behavior. Is it unreasonable to live in a place where there is no Torah, or where rabbis are noticeably different? It also doesn't seem like this is the point. However, as mentioned on Torah.org by Rabbi Dovid Rosenfeld quoting Rabbi Zev Leff, it was the wording of the request itself that R' Yossi rejects; he would not accept any offer to live among them, if it means living like them, in a place where learning is rare.

In the second part of the mishna, we are given a deeper understanding of why the rabbi rejected this offer of riches: it is Torah itself, and the values that we learn from it, that enriches us more than any coins or jewels. And not just learning torah, but doing good deeds learned from Torah study: this is what will "guide, protect, and speak for" us, here- when we sleep, arise, and walk, and also in the World to Come.

Finally, if we look back at chapter 1:6 of Pirkei avot, we remember the line "Aseh lecha rav, kaneh lecha chaver". One cannot buy a Rav, you need to go and find a rav, follow a rabbi and "make" them your rav. Even the use of "kaneh" for chaver means acquire rather than purchase, which we can only do through work on our relationship. We "earn" friends through trust and sharing, and also give and take, just as we work on our relationship with Hashem through Torah study and doing what Hashem asks. Ultimately, anything worth having in life requires effort, but then we see the richness it brings to our lives.

Discussion Questions:

How can we be a good example rather than a horrible warning?

What are we modeling with the way we live our lives? What offer would we turn down, no matter how good it seems, so we could stand by our Torah values?

And what "riches" do we want to acquire that we will be able to take with us to Olam Haba?

Idea by Mori Sokal

לעילוי נשמת:

לאה בת רפאל הכהן וציפורה

מאיה אסתר בת הרב אריה מרדכי ולאה

רינה מרים בת הרב אריה מרדכי ולאה



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Protection of Soldiers in the IDF

[illegible]

Hostages in Gaza:
Alon ben Idit (Ohel)
Ariel ben Sylvia (Konio)
Avinathan ben Ditzza Tirtza (Or)
Bar Avraham ben Julia (Kuperstein)
Bipin Joshi
David ben Sylvia (Konio)
Edan ben Yael (Alexander)
Eitan Avraham ben Efrat (Mor)
Eitan ben Rut Eedit (Horn)
Elkana ben Ruchama (Bohbot)
Evyatar ben Galya (David)
Gali ben Tamar (Berman)
Guy ben Meirav (Gilboa-Dalal)
Matan Shachar ben Anat (Angrest)
Matan ben Einav (Zangauker)
Maxim ben Tella (Herkin)
Nimrod ben Vicky (Cohen)
Omri ben Veronica Esther (Miran)
Pinta Nattapong
Rom ben Tamar Noa (Braslavski)
Sasiwan Pankong
Segev ben Galit (Kalfon)
Tamir ben Cherut (Nimrod)
Yosef Chaim ben Miriam (Ohana)
Ziv ben Tamar (Berman)

Refuah:
יונתן צבי בן שרון
מיחי שמעון בן בתיה
איתי בן ליז
מיכאל בן אסתר
יאיר בן דרורה
נתנאל בן חיה אסתר
עמיחי שמעון בן בתיה
יאיר יונה בן דרורה ציפורה מלכה
Kinneret D
Hadar bat Galiya
ענר שפירא
Natalie
בת יהודית and יהודית בת תמר
נועה בת עדי מרציאנו
נבו בן מירב
דביר בן אורית
Shlomo Yair Chaim Ben Gittle Sara
רז בן דליה
Yonatan tzvi Ben Sharon
Nadav Ephraim Ben Shulamit Leah
יאיר בן דרורה

L'ilui Nishmat:
אריאל בן אחיה ועידית אליהו הי"ד
רועי וייזר
רועי חיים בן נעמי וישראל
תומר בן מיכל
Yishai ben Yitzchak
Avraham Ben Yaffa
חנן (חנניה) בן יולנדה
יונתן צור בן רבקה
Nathanel Abraham Shalom ben
Nahoum Maimon
ישי בן ענבל
רועי חיים בן ישראל מאיר ונעמי
אור מלכה
Ro'ee Ben yaron
אריה בן דבורה
Sgt. Roey Chaim Ben Yisrael Meir
מתן בן מירי וארז
רועי חיים בן נעמי וימי
אריאל בן אחיה ועידית
יוסף מרדכי בן דינה
אלחנן קלמנזון
אריאל בן עידית ואחיה
דביר חיים בן ישראל עמיחי
יוסף מלאכי בן דינה ודוד
דביר חיים בן ישראל עמיחי
יהונתן אהרון שטינברג
Paul Kessler
Sharona shumnit harel
אלחנן אריאל בן יהודה הי"ד
Elisheva Rose Ida Lubin
לורן בת חוה
אוריה בן ריטה
Daniel Shimon ben Doron
Zecharia Pesach ben Aharon Baruch
ilan Cohen

These lists are not comprehensive.

We pray for the welfare of those released from captivity, for them to recover their physical and mental wellbeing. We learn in memory of all those murdered in Hamas captivity.

May our learning be in the zechut of ALL those in need in Israel.