

Parashat Hukat: No Pain, No Gain

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Bemidbar 19:14	
זֹאת הַתּוֹרָה אֲדָם כִּי-יָמוּת בְּאֶהֱל כָּל-הֶבֶא אֶל-הָאֶהֱל וְכָל-אֲשֶׁר בְּאֶהֱל יִטְמָא שִׁבְעַת יָמִים:	This is the ritual: When a person dies in a tent, whoever enters the tent and whoever is in the tent shall be impure for seven days;

1. Killing Yourself Over Torah

Bavli Gittin 57b-58a	
<p>רַב נַחֲמָן בַּר יִצְחָק אָמַר: אֵלּוּ תַלְמִידֵי חֲכָמִים שֶׁמָּמְתִין עַצְמָן עַל דְּבַרֵי תוֹרָה, כְּדֹרְבֵי שְׁמֵעוֹן בֶּן לִקְיָשׁ – דָּאָמַר רַבִּי שְׁמֵעוֹן בֶּן לִקְיָשׁ: אֵין דְּבַרֵי תוֹרָה מִתְקַיְּמִין אֲלָא בְּמִי שֶׁמָּמְתִית עַצְמוֹ עֲלֵיהֶם, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: "זֹאת הַתּוֹרָה אֲדָם כִּי יָמוּת בְּאֶהֱל וְגו'". אָמַר רַבֵּה בַר בַּר חֲנָה אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן: אֲרַבְעִים סָאָה קְצוּצֵי תְּפִלִּין נִמְצְאוּ בְּרֹאשֵׁי הַרוּגֵי בֵּיתֵר. רַבִּי יְנָאי בְּרַבִּי יִשְׁמַעֵאל אָמַר: שְׁלֹשׁ קוּפוֹת שֶׁל אֲרַבְעִים אֲרַבְעִים סָאָה. בְּמַתְנִיתָא תָּנָא: אֲרַבְעִים קוּפוֹת שֶׁל שְׁלֹשׁ שְׁלֹשׁ סָאִין.</p>	<p>Rav Nahman bar Yitzhak says: These people in the verse are Torah scholars who kill themselves over the words of Torah, in accordance with the statement of Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish. As Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish says: The words of the Torah endure only for one who kills himself over them, as it is stated: "This is the Torah, when a man dies in a tent" (Numbers 19:14). Rabba bar bar Hana says that Rabbi Yohanan says: Forty se'a of tefillin boxes were found on the heads of those killed in Beitar. Rabbi Yannai, son of Rabbi Yishmael, says: There were found three large baskets, each holding forty se'a of phylactery boxes. And it was taught in a <i>baraita</i>: There were forty large baskets, each holding three se'a.</p>

Meir on Bavli Gittin 57b	
<p>לעולם יהא אדם שוקד ללמוד תורה ולא יפנה שעותיו לבטלה שאין קיום התורה אלא ברוב שקידה דרך הערה אמרו זאת התורה אדם כי ימות באהל:</p>	<p>A person should always be diligent in learning the Torah and not turn his hours to idleness because keeping the Torah is impossible except with great diligence, as it says, "This is the Torah of a man who dies in the tent."</p>

2. Bitul Torah

Bavli Sanhedrin 99a	
<p>תניא היה רבי מאיר אומר הלומד תורה ואינו מלמדה זה הוא דבר ה' בזה רבי נתן אומר כל מי</p>	<p>It is taught in a <i>baraita</i> that Rabbi Meir would say: With regard to one who studies Torah and does not teach it to others, this person is included in the</p>

¹ All translations are from Sefaria, unless otherwise noted.

² Translation is from Rabbi Samuel Feinsmith.

שאינו משגיח על המשנה ר' נהוראי אומר כל שאפשר לעסוק בתורה ואינו עוסק	category of: "He has despised the word of the Lord," as his conduct indicates that he does not consider the word of God significant enough to teach others. Rabbi Natan says: Anyone who does not pay the requisite attention to the Mishna and does not consider it essential <i>halakha</i> is included in the category of: "Because he has despised the word of the Lord." Rabbi Nehorai says: Anyone for whom it is possible to engage in Torah study and who nevertheless does not engage in its study is included in the category of: "Because he has despised the word of the Lord."
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Bavli Shabbat 32b	
<p>תנו רבנן: בעון נדרים בנים מתים, דברי רבי אלעזר ברבי שמעון. רבי יהודה הנשיא אומר: בעון ביטול תורה. בשלמא למאן דאמר בעון נדרים — קדאמרן, אלא למאן דאמר בעון ביטול תורה מאי קראה? דכתיב: "לשוא הכיתי את בניכם מוסר לא לקחי". רב נחמן בר יצחק אמר: למאן דאמר בעון נדרים נמי מהכא: "לשוא הכיתי את בניכם" — על עסקי שוא. מכדי רבי יהודה הנשיא היינו רבי, ורבי בעון נדרים קאמר! בתר דשמעה מרבי אלעזר ברבי שמעון.</p>	<p>In order to clarify which sins cause one's young children to die, the Gemara cites what the Sages taught in a <i>baraita</i>: For the sin of vows, one's children die, this is the statement of Rabbi Elazar, son of Rabbi Shimon. Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi says: For the sin of dereliction in the study of Torah. The Gemara asks: Granted, according to the opinion of the one who said that one's children die due to the sin of vows, as we stated above. However, according to the opinion of the one who said that one's children die due to sin of dereliction in the study of Torah, what is the verse that supports this? The Gemara replies: As it is written: "In vain have I smitten your children; they received no morality" (Jeremiah 2:30). Children die because their fathers did not accept the morality, the Torah. Rav Nahman bar Yitzhak said: According to the one who said that one's children die because of the sin of vows, it can also be derived from here: In vain have I smitten your children; on matters of vanity, i.e., when one vows in vain and does not fulfill it. The Gemara asks: After all, Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi is Rabbi, and it was taught in a Tosefta that Rabbi said that one's children die because of the sin of vows. How then could it be that Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi said that it is due to the sin of dereliction in the study of Torah? The Gemara answers: After he heard it from Rabbi Elazar, son of Rabbi Shimon, he reconsidered and taught in accordance with Rabbi Elazar's opinion.</p>

3. No Pain, No Gain

Alex Hutchinson, <i>Endure: Mind, Body, and the Curiously Elastic Limits of Human Performance</i>, 89
<p>pain in training leads to greater...tolerance [to severe pain], which predicts better race performance. Many athletes, of course, make this link intuitively. Triathlete Jesse Thomas, for example, learned to use his deep-tissue massage sessions as a form of pain training: "When I'm hurting like crazy," he explains, "instead of blocking out the pain, I try to accept it, feel it as much as possible"... at least in recreational athletes, pain tolerance is both a trainable trait and a limiting factor in endurance. And it leaves a ripe and juicy question dangling for future researchers: can you get faster by simply training yourself to better tolerate or block out pain?</p>
Bob Marley
You never know how strong you are until being strong is the only choice you have.