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Now or Later?

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*and *siyum* of tractate *Kiddushin*

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1.

BINYAMIN THE WOLF

Targum Onkelos understands the verse,¹ “Binyamin is a wolf that will maul” to mean: “Binyamin — the *Shechina*² will dwell in his land; and in his portion, the consecrated³ {place} will be built.” *Targum Yonason ben Uziel* remarks on this verse, “Binyamin is a strong tribe like a mauling wolf. The *Shechina* of the Master of the Universe will dwell in his land; and in his portion, the consecrated **house** {the Temple} will be built.”

At first glance, both Targums seem to say the same thing. The Rogatchover explains,⁴ however, that there is a distinction between them: The phrase, “in his portion, the **consecrated** {מקדש} will be built” refers to “the place consecrated {מקודש} **for blood**” — the altar (according to the opinion of Levi in the Gemara,⁵ who maintains that the altar’s base, on which “the blood was placed,” was in Binyamin’s portion [the portion of the one who mauls], whereas on the part of the {altar’s} base that was in Yehudah’s portion, “blood was not placed”).⁶ The clause, “in his portion, the consecrated **house** will be built” refers to the Temple as a whole, which is in the portion of the one who mauls (Binyamin).

We need to clarify: What is the basis of the argument between the two Targums, and their respective reasons, especially since both Targums begin with the same idea that “the *Shechina* will dwell in his land”?

¹ *Bereishis* 49:27.

² {Divine Presence.}

³ {In the original Aramaic, “מקדש.” What precisely this term refers to is clarified shortly.}

⁴ *Tzafnas Paaneach* on the Torah on this verse.

⁵ *Zevachim* 54a; see *Bartenura* on *Zevachim* 5:4; *Tosfos Yom Tov*, loc. cit.; see also *Or HaTorah*, “*Vayechi*,” 416a; *Or HaTorah*, “*Yisro*,” p. 927, fn.; wording of *Tzafnas Paaneach*.

⁶ *Rashi* on *Zevachim* 54a, s.v., “*levi*.”

2.

TRIBES ARE ANIMALS?

These questions will be answered by prefacing with an explanation of the general intent of comparing several tribes to animals (“a lion cub is Yehudah”;⁷ “Dan... a snake”;⁸ “Naftali... a gazelle”;⁹ until the conclusion {of this passage} — “Binyamin is a wolf that will maul”): The use of these metaphors leads us to the understanding that because a tribe’s particular character or behavior is described (not as “strong,” or “mauls,” or the like, but) as a “lion” or a “wolf,” i.e., characteristic of an animal’s nature, the fact that a tribe possesses this quality is (not due their human character, but) because they are endowed with the characteristic of a specific animal.

It is also clear that (although each tribe possessed a certain characteristic resembling that of a particular animal, nonetheless,) the common denominator shared by all animals is connected with the common denominator shared by all the tribes.

3.

IT’S ALL IN THE ORDER

Concerning the nature of animals, the Gemara says at the end of tractate *Kiddushin*:¹⁰

It has been taught {in a *Beraisai*}: Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar stated : Never have I seen a deer that is a fig-drier, or a lion that is a porter, or a fox that is a storekeeper, and {yet} they obtain their livelihoods without anguish. And they were created only to serve me, while I was created to serve my Creator. If they, who were created only to serve me, obtain their livelihoods without anguish, then is it not appropriate that I, who was created to serve my Creator, should earn my livelihood without anguish? But I have debased my deeds and have forfeited an {easy} livelihood, as it says,¹¹ “your iniquities have turned away.”

⁷ *Bereishis* 49:9.

⁸ *Bereishis* 49:17.

⁹ *Bereishis* 49:21.

¹⁰ {*Kiddushin* 82b.}

¹¹ *Yirmiyahu* 5:25.

Commentators¹² explain that the different trades¹³ mentioned — “fig-drier,” “porter,” and “storekeeper” — correspond to the respective nature of the animals mentioned: The characteristic of a deer to sleep with “one eye is open,” is appropriate for the trade of a “fig-drier,” guarding figs that are drying in the field. A lion, the strongest of the animals, is qualified to be a “porter” who “carries loads.” A fox, because of his cunning, is fit to be a storekeeper who profits from buying and selling.

However, we need to explain why the Gemara chose these types of trades specifically and did not (also) list other trades that are suited to the characteristics of other animals. For example, the Gemara could also have mentioned “swift gazelles.” Since their nature is to be light-footed, this characteristic would make it appropriate to obtain their livelihood working as messengers, yet we don’t find that they earn their livelihood with this trade, etc.)

The above teaching of the Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar is also brought in the Jerusalem Talmud (although it is recorded there in the name of Rabbi Meir, it is in a different order, and has an additional clause): “Did you ever see a lion that is a porter, a deer that is a fig-drier, a fox that is a storekeeper, or a wolf that sells pots?”

We need to clarify:

- a) Why {in the Jerusalem Talmud} does he say “porter” before “fig-drier,” changing the order? Particularly, considering that this order (as stated in the Babylonian Talmud) seems more logical: A deer that is a fig-drier, and a lion that is a porter (or a fox that is a storekeeper) because this is the usual order the trades are engaged in when drying figs: First we dry them, (a deer that is a) “fig-drier,” then when they are already dried and are in barrels, or something similar, we need the (a lion that is a) “porter” to carry them (then) to a (fox that is a) storekeeper.

¹² *Iyun Yaakov* on *Ein Yaakov* “*Kiddushin* 82b”; *Chasdei David* on *Tosefta*, “*Kiddushin*,” 5:13.

¹³ As Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar refers to them {“trades,” or in the original, “*umnos*”}, in the mishnah in tractate *Kiddushin*, *ibid*.

It would be very strained to say that he **changes** the order so that the “lion (i.e., a porter)” is mentioned first since the lion is the king of the animals.¹⁴

This is especially so, because according to this, right after the lion, it should have mentioned a fox (that is a storekeeper), etc., which also has an advantage of leadership, the advantage of being the smartest of animals.

It is also more similar to a lion than to a deer, whose nature is not to eat meat,¹⁵ and other similar reasons.

b) The Jerusalem Talmud **adds**, “A wolf that **sells pots.**” {Why?}

c) Seemingly, why tack on a “wolf that **sells...**” to a “fox that is a **storekeeper**”? Substantively, they are in the same category (a storekeeper is one who sells, etc.)!

d) What is the correlation of a wolf to one who sells pots?

[Commentaries¹⁶ explain that selling pots is a simple trade; therefore, a seller needn't be especially clever (like a fox), as anyone can sell pots. However, the context of this clause implies that this trade (selling pots) is also correlated with the unique quality of a wolf, similar to the previous examples of “a porter,” “a fig-drier,” and “a storekeeper,” which are all linked with the unique qualities of a lion, a deer, and a fox.¹⁷]

¹⁴ *Chagigah* 13b.

¹⁵ *Bava Kamma* 19b.

¹⁶ *Hagahos HaRadal* on *Kiddushin* 82b.

¹⁷ *Chasdei Dovid* on *Tosefta*, “*Kiddushin*,” 5:13.

4.

IT'S ALL FOR THE JEW TO SERVE HASHEM

We can clarify the above difficulties by prefacing with an examination of the nuanced wording of Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar: He says later explicitly (in the *kal vachomer*):¹⁸ “If they, who were created only to serve me, obtain their livelihood without anguish, then is it not right that I, who was created to serve my Creator...?” Why does he need to mention the same point made earlier: “And they were created only to serve me, and I was created to serve my Creator”?

The explanation: The intent and purpose of all the world’s creations is for the Jews.¹⁹ The Jews are the purpose for all things and creations in the world — plants, animals and humans. Rambam explains at length in his Introduction to his *Commentary on Mishnah*:²⁰

All that is found under the moon exists for Man alone, and of all species of animals, some are for his consumption, such as sheep, cattle, among others, and some are to assist him, aside from serving as his food, like the donkey, to carry for him what he is unable to carry by hand, and horses to carry him great distances....

(The same applies to trees and plants.) So, too, concerning human beings: In order for the “perfect man” to occupy himself with (G-dly) wisdom and (good) deeds, he needs an entire world of humans who can satisfy all of his needs so that he is afforded the time and opportunity to learn and gain wisdom (as Rambam explains there at length).

This means that the role of every type of creation, including Gentiles, is to furnish a Jew with his needs, and **as a matter of course**, he will occupy himself in the study of Torah and in the fulfillment of mitzvos.

Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar adds and **innovates** (the fact that) “they were created only to serve me (is because) and I (as I) was created to serve my

¹⁸ Lit., “light and heavy,” *kal vachomer* is a talmudic logical proof, whereby a strict ruling in a lenient case demands a similarly strict ruling in a more stringent case; alternatively, a lenient ruling in stringent case demands a similarly lenient ruling in a lenient case.

¹⁹ See *Berachos* 6b; *Sanhedrin* 37a; **et al.**

²⁰ S.v., “*acharei chein raah lehistapek*” {Mossad HaRav Kook, ed., ch. 8, p. 74}.

Creator.” The deer, the lion, and the fox were created with the characteristics reminiscent of a fig-drier, a porter, and a storekeeper not only to serve me, and for no other purpose. Rather, their {purpose in} “serving me” is specifically in such a way that “I” should “serve my Creator” (through) fulfilling Torah and mitzvos.

This is because in order for a Jew to transform a material object into a mitzvah object possessing sanctity (by fulfilling a mitzvah), one first needs the three operations performed by “a fig-drier,” “a porter,” and “a storekeeper.” They prepare and get material objects ready to be used in the fulfillment of a mitzvah.

[We could posit that the reason that **in actuality** the trades of a “fig-drier...” are not done by deer, etc., “I have **never** seen a deer...,” is because (as Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar concludes his statement), “I have debased my deeds.” Meaning, our spiritual downfall is the reason for the “anguish” we experience in earning our livelihood. It is also the reason for the loss of our natural source of sustenance and even for the need to labor altogether. (This is consonant with the statement of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai:²¹ “When Israel fulfills the will of Hashem, their work is done by others.... When Israel does not fulfill the will of Hashem, they do their work themselves.”)²² Analogously, this spiritual descent (even more so) impedes others from making the preparations to fulfill the mitzvah for us — “a deer that is a fig-drier, or a lion that is a porter, or a fox that is a storekeeper” (nor even by the nations of the world who are analogized to animals)].²³

²¹ *Berachos* 35b.

²² See *Pnei Yehoshua* on *Kiddushin* 35b; note *Chiddushei Agaddos Maharal*, end of *Kiddushin*; and *Tiferes Yisrael*, ch. 1.

²³ See *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Melachim*,” ch. 12, par. 1. {In the Messianic era, “The wolf will dwell with the lamb, the leopard with the young goat,” alluding to an era of peace among the nations.}

5.

THREE CHANGES

To understand the {deeper} meaning of the three previously mentioned trades, which set the stage “to serve my Creator,” we need to first explain them on a simple level:

The three types of trades are listed in ascending order (from the simplest to the most complex): “A deer that is a fig-drier” — “one who dries figs in the field.”²⁴ His purpose is to bring the figs to the field, an open space exposed to the sun, and to ensure that they remain there until they dry, when they become ready to consume. “A lion that is a **porter**” — “one who carries loads”²⁵ — his task is to transport them from one place to another. The purpose of “a fox that is a **storekeeper**” is not to change the location of the figs, but to change their ownership so that the figs will be transferred from one authority and ownership to another.

To summarize: These three activities consist of altering (a) the thing itself ; (b) the item’s location; (c) and the item's ownership.

The spiritual significance of these three activities as they pertain to preparing for fulfilling Torah and mitzvos:

“A deer that is a **fig-drier.**” There are many situations when a Jew may be impeded from fulfilling Torah and mitzvos, because:

a) He lacks some knowledge: To illustrate, some mitzvos may touch upon matters of life and death, and so he first needs to consult with a doctor whether performing this situation is indeed a matter (in the category) of life and death.

²⁴ Rashi, end of *Kiddushin*.

²⁵ Rashi, end of *Kiddushin*.

Or, for example, as Rav said,²⁶ “I spent eighteen months with a cattle herder to know which blemishes are permanent and which are temporary.”

b) The object requires preparation so that it is completely ready.

For example, in preparing parchment for tefillin — and the entire Torah is linked to tefillin,²⁷ an animal has to be skinned first, and then the hide needs to be prepared by stripping it, tanning it, and so forth.

Similarly, the trade of “a (deer that is a) fig-drier” is that the item (the figs) should not be left in a dark and concealed place, but somewhere that is exposed to sunlight. Meaning, a person needs a clear understanding of the subject, which must be prepared completely. Only then, can a person learn and know when and how to fulfill the Torah and its mitzvos, as explained at length below.

“A lion that is a **porter**.” This alludes to a change in location. The object must move to the place of the Jew, who can then use it to do the mitzvah.

This is especially so when a permissible item that a Jew can, and needs to, use for a mitzvah is somewhere a Jew may not enter, e.g., a marketplace full of idolatry, or a marketplace of harlots,²⁸ or the like. In such a case, we need the services of a (lion that is a) “porter” who has the “strength” to transport the item to a place that the Jew can get hold of it and fulfill a mitzvah with it or make it into a holy object.

“A fox that is a **storekeeper**”: Sometimes in order for a Jew to fulfill a mitzvah with the object, the object needs to change ownership²⁹ even before it a Jew can bring it into his possession, **analogous** to {what is says},³⁰ “Ammon

²⁶ *Sanhedrin* 5b.

²⁷ *Kiddushin* 35a.

²⁸ *Avodah Zarah* 11b, 17a ff.; *Tur* and *Shulchan Aruch*, “*Yoreh Deah*,” beg. of sec. 149; “*Even HaEzer*,” sec. 21.

²⁹ Note *Shulchan Aruch*, “*Orach Chaim*,” beg. of sec. 649; the laws regarding the nullification of an idol by a Gentile (*Avodah Zarah* 52b, 64b; *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Avodah Zarah*,” ch. 8, par. 8; *Tur* and *Shulchan Aruch*, “*Yoreh Deah*,” beg. of ch. 146); et al.

³⁰ *Chullin* 60b; see Rashi on *Bamidbar* 21:26. {Regarding another apparently unnecessary verse describing a city conquered by the Israelites: “For Cheshbon was the city of Sichon, the king of the Amorites, who had fought

and Moav were purified by Sichon.” In order for the lands of Ammon and Moav to become a settled land belonging to Jews, where they could fulfill mitzvos, these lands first needed to be conquered by Sichon.

6.

PREPARATIONS

The first function of “a deer that is a fig-drier” is that this trade entails exposing (the figs) {to the sunlight} and watching over them {which causes no actual change in the figs}. This function, alone, though, does not satisfy the explanation that “a fig-drier” means — as Rashi comments — “one who **dries** figs in the field,” which in effect **changes** the actual item.

Therefore, a second function is introduced, as discussed, that “a deer that is a fig-drier,” and similarly, “a lion that is a porter,” exemplify (also) general preconditions regarding mitzvah observance: For a Jew to fulfill a mitzvah with a physical object, for example (tefillin, as discussed above, or) taking hold of an esrog and lulav, the objects first need to be detached from the tree. This entails making a change in the actual objects, in the esrog and lulav, since after they are detached from the tree, they no longer grow or draw nurture from it. (This **resembles** dehydration — **drying** figs.) Next, after altering the body of the object, the object needs to be moved — a “(lion that is a) porter,” as discussed above.

Analogously, there are two details concerning the wool used for tzitzis: The wool is shorn from an animal’s body (a deer that is a fig-drier), and then it is brought to a Jew (a lion that is a porter). The same {two steps} are applied to the horn used as a shofar, the *schach* and walls used for a Sukkah, and many similar mitzvos.

against the former king of Moav, and taken all his land out of his hand.” (*Bamidbar* 21:26). What is the practical difference in knowing this? It teaches that since Hashem said to Israel: “Be not at enmity with Moav” (*Devarim* 2:9), the Jewish people were prohibited from conquering the land of Moav. Therefore, Hashem said: Let Sichon come and remove the land from Moav, and let Israel come and remove it from Sichon. The Gemara notes: “And this is what Rav Papa says: The lands of **Ammon and Moav were purified by Sichon**,” i.e., Sichon made the conquest of these lands permissible.}

This idea applies even more so regarding the hide used for tefillin (and for a mezuzah and for a Torah scroll). First, we skin the hide from the animal, and then process it, effecting a tangible and significant change in the hide itself. Then the hide is transported to a place where Jews can put it to use.

[According to this, the two details — “A deer that is a fig-drier, and a lion that is a porter” — allude to necessary stages in many mitzvos. (Therefore, concerning these details, a distinction is evident between the *Babylonian Talmud* and the *Jerusalem Talmud*, as will be explained below.) A fox that is a storekeeper, however, which refers to the change in proprietorship and ownership prior to coming into the possession of a Jew, refers to a stage relevant to some matters of holiness and mitzvos, which are less common.]

7.

BACK TO THE TRIBES

Accordingly, we can explain the reason that Yaakov specifically referred to the tribes by using the names of animals. The purpose of animals is (in general, as mentioned) to prepare objects in the world, and to make them ready to be used by Jews in fulfilling Torah and mitzvos (the preparations include the three stages of drying, transporting, and storekeeping). So, too, the general spiritual purpose of (Yaakov and) the tribes was to work on preparing themselves, and making the world ready, for the giving of the Torah.

In several places,³¹ it is explained that one reason that the Jewish people had to undergo the Egyptian exile prior to the Giving of the Torah was because otherwise, the Jews — and therefore, also the world — would not be ready to turn physical objects into holy mitzvah objects. Egypt was the “iron crucible,” that refined and purified the Jewish people, and the world at large. It prepped material objects so Jews could use them to fulfill Torah and mitzvos.

³¹ *Torah Or*, 74a ff.; et al.

The Egyptian exile began with the tribes emigrating to Egypt, together with Yaakov.³² The main “Egyptian enslavement,”³³ however, began only after Yaakov and Yosef had died, while “all his brothers and all that generation” were still alive in Egypt.

It turns out that the above trades (the work) of the “deer,” “lion,” and “fox” that prepared material objects (for the Giving of the Torah) so Jews could use them to fulfill Torah and mitzvos, all began when the tribes dwelled in Egypt.

8.

NOW OR LATER?

We have had occasion to discuss,³⁴ at length, during an explanation of several differences between the outlook of *Babylonian Talmud* and the *Jerusalem Talmud*: Concerning any matter whose present state is compared with its future state, the *Babylonian Talmud* prioritizes the immediacy of its present state. This is true although we may miss out on something valuable that would be added later. According to the *Jerusalem Talmud*, however, due consideration must be given to the future state. If a qualitative benefit will be contributed in the future, then this advantage outweighs the present situation.

To illustrate:³⁵ There is the well-known debate whether the principle that “those who are diligent perform mitzvos with alacrity”³⁶ would require a mitzvah to be performed immediately, even though this would result in the mitzvah not being done in its ideal state (for example, performing the mitzvah in the company of a large group, to enhance the glory of the King).³⁷ Alternatively, the

³² Because that is when the 210 years of slavery began. See *Pirkei DRabbi Eliezer*, ch. 48; *Shemos Rabbah*, ch. 18, sec. 11; *Targum Yonason Ben Uziel* on *Shemos* 12:40; et al.

³³ *Shemos Rabbah*, ch. 1, sec. 4.

³⁴ See *Likkutei Sichos*, vol 4., p. 1338.

³⁵ For the foregoing, see *Sdei Chemed*, “*Klalim*,” section “*zayin*,” *klal* 1-3; section “*pei*,” *klal* 39; *Encyclopedia Talmudis*, “*zrizin u’makdimim*”; *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 19, p. 73 ff.

³⁶ {“זריזין מקדימין למצות” in the Aramaic original; meaning, it is meritorious to perform *mitzvos* at the earliest viable opportunity.}

³⁷ {“ברוב עם הדרת מלך” (*Mishlei* 14:28) — “a multitude of people constitutes a king’s glory.” This verse is taken to mean that we should try to perform mitzvos in as large a group as possible, for the larger the group involved in the mitzvah, the more Hashem is glorified.}

advantage of performing a mitzvah in its ideal state in the future takes priority. It is preferable to wait in order to perform the mitzvah in a larger group, although by doing so, the principle of performing mitzvos with alacrity, in the present, would not be fulfilled.

[Another example would be a case when someone (on the morning of Sukkos) has a set of the Four Species that is not the most beautiful. Later in the day, though, he will have access to much nicer ones. Is it better to fulfill the mitzvah as soon as possible with the set he has? Or should he wait until he gets the nicer set?]

9.

THE SAME FOR PREPARATIONS

This question, which is posed concerning the fulfillment of mitzvos, also applies to preparing for mitzvos. This matter is hinted at in the two ideas of “a deer that is a fig-drier” and “a lion that is a porter”:

Regarding figs: “Figs are not harvested at one time. Instead, on the tree, there are some that will ripen on one particular day, and others that will not ripen until after several days.”³⁸ When a fig ripens, there are two options. Either we can immediately take the individual ripened figs to be dried out in the field — “a deer that is a **fig-drier**”; or we can wait until many figs ripen and then — use “a lion that is a porter,” “one who carries loads” — they can be transported to be dried.

Similarly, we can ask a question with respect to preparing something for a mitzvah. Should we take the earliest opportunity to prepare an object for a mitzvah — “a deer that is a fig-drier” — even when there is only one portion of hide (quantity) or it is not the very best (quality), or is it worth waiting to get a greater quantity, or those of better quality, to be prepared for the mitzvah? For

³⁸ *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Matnos Aniyim*,” ch. 2, par.2; see Rambam’s *Commentary on Mishnah* and *Bartenura on Peah* 1:4.

example, waiting to get a larger and better hide for tefillin, or the like — “a lion that is a porter”? Because preparing something for a mitzvah (even before actually using it) is still part of perfecting and beautifying it.³⁹ Preparation for a mitzvah already has **some** relevance to {the principle based on the verse}, “Present it, if you please, to your governor,”⁴⁰ and, “All the choice parts for Hashem.”⁴¹ Therefore, an argument can also be made here whether one should strive for greater quantity and better quality when making something ready for a mitzvah.

We could say that this is the basis for the difference between the *Babylonian* and *Jerusalem Talmud*: According to the *Babylonian Talmud*, since the “present” takes priority, we need to consider the principle of performing mitzvos with alacrity, even regarding the initial preparations for a mitzvah. Therefore, “a deer that is a fig-drier” is mentioned first {in the *Babylonian Talmud*}, although the preparation is quantitatively only small, and even qualitatively, is not ideal, and so forth.

According to the *Jerusalem Talmud*, which prioritizes performing mitzvos in a large group, and ascribes greater value to perfection in the future than to “alacrity” in the present, the same would also apply to the preparation for a mitzvah. Priority would be given to a future time when the quantity will be greater; and the quality, superior. Therefore, {in the *Jerusalem Talmud*} “a lion porter” **comes before** “a deer that is a fig-drier.”

³⁹ See *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 11, p. 131 regarding the dispute between Rashi and *Bartenura*.

⁴⁰ *Malachi* 1:8. {Our Sages learn from this verse that it would be scornful to bring to Hashem an offering that a human governor would not accept because of its inferiority. The same applies to an item used for a mitzvah.}

⁴¹ *Vayikra* 3:16. {Our Sages learn from this verse that the highest quality items should be used for a mitzvah.}

10.

JERUSALEM VS. BABYLONIA

Now we can explain why it is specifically the *Jerusalem Talmud* that adds “a wolf that sells pots.” The connection between a wolf and selling pots is understood based on the Gemara’s⁴² explanation of the difference between a lion and a wolf. A lion “**tramples** {its prey} and eats” — “immediately,”⁴³ whereas a wolf “**mauls** and eats” (“the wolf drags its prey to the wolf’s lair where it is eaten”).⁴⁴ “Yet, both {wolves and lions} take pleasure {in eating their prey}.”⁴⁵

Therefore, it is clear that based on a lion’s behavior, there is no place for a “pot” (which involves waiting until the raw meat is cooked) because a lion “**tramples** and eats (immediately).” A wolf, however, eats its prey later after the wolf has mauled and dragged it to its lair. Accordingly, the wolf’s behavior is analogous with (cooking in)⁴⁶ a pot, so that the food that was caught should be “more enjoyable,” tastier.

The deeper idea and message of this statement relates to the preparation for a mitzvah: Specifically after the previous preparations for a mitzvah have already been completed — “a fig-drier,” “a porter,” and (when necessary, even) “a storekeeper” — only then comes the added preparation of the “wolf” by means of the “pot,” so that the mitzvah should be done in the most beautiful way and with greatest perfection.

In this context, clearly the *Babylonian Talmud* and the *Jerusalem Talmud* follow their respective approaches. According to the *Babylonian Talmud*, since the virtue of performing mitzvos with alacrity, **right now**, takes priority over beautifying mitzvos **in the future** {by performing it in a larger group} — “a multitude of people is a king’s glory”⁴⁷ — the *Babylonian Talmud* does not

⁴² *Taanis* 8a; *Erchin* 15b.

⁴³ Rashi on *Taanis* 8a.

⁴⁴ Rashi on *Taanis* 8a; see Rashi on *Bava Metzia* 93b (top), s.v., “*ari daras*.”

⁴⁵ Rashi on *Taanis* 8a (end).

⁴⁶ The reason it says a wolf **sells** pots {and not just that it cooks in them} is to emphasize that pots are essential to him and to **his fellow** wolves — the wolf becomes knowledgeable about pots, takes an interest in them, etc.

⁴⁷ {*Mishlei* 14:28.}

include the clause, “a wolf that sells pots.” **This** preparation is not (necessary for) the approach of the *Babylonian Talmud*. The *Jerusalem Talmud*, however — which maintains that beautifying mitzvos in the future outweighs the value of performing mitzvos with alacrity — *does* add the preparation of “a wolf that sells pots,” which is about beautifying mitzvos in the future.

We find the above difference between the *Babylonian Talmud* and the *Jerusalem Talmud* recorded (almost) explicitly in a mishnah:⁴⁸ “If (Yom Kippur) falls on Friday, the goat of Yom Kippur is eaten on Friday night (after Shabbos begins, although one may not cook it on Shabbos);⁴⁹ the **Babylonians** (the kohanim from outside of Israel⁵⁰) would eat it **raw**.” However, by eating the he-goat raw, they were not fulfilling the mitzvah of eating sacrificial food in its ideal state, in a way of “לְמַשְׁקָה”⁵¹ {which Rashi explains to mean} “לְגִדְלָה” {for greatness} (which means specifically when the meat is roasted, boiled or cooked).⁵² Nevertheless, the mishnah makes mention that (specifically) “the **Babylonians** would eat it raw” in order to fulfill the mitzvah at the earliest opportunity. We don’t find, however, that the kohanim in Israel did so, because the mitzvah would not have been fulfilled in its most beautiful way⁵³ {were they to eat the goat when it was raw}.⁵⁴

⁴⁸ *Menachos* 99b.

⁴⁹ Rashi on *Menachos* 99b.

⁵⁰ *Menachos* 100a: “They weren’t Babylonians; they were Alexandrians. But since they hated the Babylonians... {they would call the gluttonous Alexandrians *Babylonians*}”. In any case, they were kohanim from outside the land of Israel (“from Egypt” — Rashi, loc. cit.), and not from Israel.

⁵¹ *Bamidbar* 18:8.

⁵² *Zevachim* 90b.

⁵³ See *Likkutei Sichos*, vol 3 (p. 949 and fn. 11) which explains that by eating the meat raw, we only fulfill the mitzvah of ensuring that there are no leftovers {נותר}, and not the mitzvah of eating a sacrifice.

⁵⁴ Accordingly, a novelty is introduced, since in the end, the sacrifice was never consumed. This was because after Shabbos, it was too late to be eaten — it could only be eaten only on Friday night. Nonetheless, the kohanim didn’t violate a prohibition of leaving the sacrifice uneaten, for this mitzvah of ensuring that no leftovers remain isn’t a חיוב גברא, an obligation on the person to perform.

11.

ONKELOS VS. YONASON

From all the above, we can explain the difference between *Targum Yonason ben Uziel* and *Targum Onkelos* regarding the verse, “Binyamin is a wolf that will maul”:

The difference between the two *Targums* {the two Aramaic translations} is that *Targum Onkelos* is a Babylonian⁵⁵ translation, whereas *Targum Yonason ben Uziel* is from Israel (Jerusalem).⁵⁶ Therefore, regarding the clause, “Binyamin is a wolf that will maul,” they follow their respective approaches, whether “a wolf” is a metaphor for how we ought to prepare for a mitzvah (as discussed above in Section 10):

According to the *Targum Yonasan — Targum Jerusalem* — “Binyamin is a wolf that will maul” is a preparation for the continuation of the verse: “In the morning he will devour spoils, and in the evening he will distribute plunder,” which refers to the offering and consumption of the sacrifices.⁵⁷ Therefore, *Targum Yonasan* translates it as, “in his portion the holy **house** will be built,” because the Temple is a prerequisite and preparation for⁵⁸ the sacrificial service. In the words of Rambam,⁵⁹ the Temple is “a house for a Hashem, prepared for sacrifices to be offered within it.”

As discussed above, the term “wolf” symbolizes the importance of ensuring beauty and perfection in preparing for a mitzvah. Similarly, in this case, we can offer sacrifices even if we have no Temple, as the law states: “We can offer sacrifices (and) even though we have no Temple.”⁶⁰ Nevertheless, it is

⁵⁵ *Aruch*, first entry “*chilazon*”; addenda to *Aruch*, second entry “*ishon*”; *Menachos* 44a, *Tosafos*, s.v., “*kol*”; et al.

⁵⁶ See addenda to *Aruch*, second entry “*ishon*”; et al.

⁵⁷ Like the continuation of *Targum Yonason ben Uziel* (and *Targum Yerushalmi*); similarly in *Targum Onkelos*.

⁵⁸ Although it’s not **only** a preparation for a mitzvah because the building of the Temple itself is a positive mitzvah, its primary purpose was for the *avodah* of offering sacrifices, as mentioned inside. See *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 1, p. 120 ff.

⁵⁹ *Mishneh Torah*, beg. of “*Hilchos Beis HaBechirah*”; Rambam’s *Sefer HaMitzvos*, “Positive Mitzvah 20”: “We are commanded to build a *Beis HaBechirah* to perform *avodah* in it. Sacrifices are offered in it...”; see *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 1, p. 120 ff.

⁶⁰ *Eiduyos* 8:6; *Zevachim* 62a; *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Beis HaBechirah*,” ch. 6, par. 15. However, this is based on the opinion that קדושה ראשונה (the sanctity of the First Temple) will never cease.

understood that when we offer sacrifices on an altar that is part of the **Temple**, this is ideal for both the altar and the sacrifices.⁶¹

However, according to *Targum Onkelos* — a Babylonian translation — the idea behind the term “wolf” is not mandatory in preparing for a mitzvah. Therefore, *Targum Onkelos* translates that the idea alluded to by the “wolf” metaphor refers to the primary purpose of the mitzvah to offer sacrifices (which is alluded to in the next part of the verse, “in the morning he will devour spoils...” as mentioned above. This is the idea that “in his portion, the **consecrated** {מקדש} will be built,” which means the consecrated {מקדש} place **for blood** — the concept of the throwing⁶² the blood {on the altar}⁶³ (and the atonement is by means of blood).⁶⁴

From all the above, apparently, this would also make a difference in Jewish law if we could construct an altar to offer sacrifices but unable to build the entire Temple:⁶⁵ According to the Babylonian perspective — *Targum Onkelos* — it is feasible for us to build an altar to offer sacrifices, since it allows us to fulfill the mitzvah to offer sacrifices (although the mitzvah would not be fulfilled in its ideal way, since there is no Temple). However, according to the Jerusalem perspective — *Targum Yonason Ben Uziel* — any sacrifices must wait until we will build⁶⁶ the Temple,⁶⁷ because sacrifices need to be offered in the ideal way. (This is analogous to what was discussed in Section 10 — that it was specifically the **Babylonians** who ate the sacrifice when it was raw.)

— Based on talks delivered on the 19th of Kislev, 5739 (1978) and the subsequent *farbrengen*

⁶¹ See below in the body of the *sichah*.

⁶² See *Zevachim* 53b (in the mishnah): “As long as it is placed next to the altar’s base,” and also, “the *olah* requires the altar’s base” (ibid.).

⁶³ Similarly (the completion of –) the pouring of the blood is on the altar’s base.

⁶⁴ See *Toras Kohanim* on *Vayikra* 1:4; *Zevachim* 6:1; see Rashi on *Pesachim* 77b, s.v., “*dam*”; **et al.**

⁶⁵ As known, there has been debate regarding the offering of sacrifices nowadays.

⁶⁶ See *Jerusalem Talmud*, *Pesachim*, ch. 9, halachah 1, regarding the dispute whether the *pesach sheini* sacrifice is to be offered specifically if “the Jews are given {ability} to build the **Temple**” (but not the altar).

⁶⁷ According to *Bereishis Rabbah* (end of ch. 64), in the days of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chananiah, they wanted to rebuild the Temple (see *Minchas Chinuch*, “*Mitzvah 95*”) — we can posit that this also applies nowadays.