

B”H

## **G-d’s Arrows**

**During the Exodus from Egypt, the Energy of Moshiach was Unleashed;  
There is No Turning Back.**

**An In-Depth Talmudic Analysis**

**By Rabbi Y.Y. Jacobson**

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Dedicated by Ira J. Perlmutter

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Dedicated by **David and Eda Schottenstein**

in the loving memory of

**Alta Shula bas Yosef Yitzchak Swerdlov**

And in honor of **Yetta Alta Shula, "Aliyah," Schottenstein**

And in the loving memory of

**Rabbi Levi Yitzchak ben R’ Zalman Yuda Deitch**

~~~

**In honor of:**

**Estelle L. Davidson**

For her 92nd birthday, and 120 more healthy,  
joyous years

**David Yisrael ben Rachel**

for a complete and speedy recovery

**In memory of:**

**Mary L. Antione**

**Avraham Yoel ben Reuven**

**Esther Straus**

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**Curriculum:**

1. Class Summary
2. Sources
3. Bibliography
4. Questions and Exercises

### **1. Class Summary:**

The deadliest fire in Israel's history in December 2010 has confronted us with some tough questions. Who is responsible for forty one deaths? For the devastation of Israel's most beautiful forests? The two Druze teenagers trying to burn their garbage? How do we evaluate the accountability of an arsonist?

A Talmudic debate on the liability of a person who ignites a fire and it spreads, sheds light on the voyage of history from exile to redemption.

When Moses began the Exodus, he unleashed a 'fire,' an "arrow," that continues to move until the coming of Moshiach.

Rabbi Yochanan and Reish Lakish debate (Talmud Bava Kama 22a) whether the fire you ignite is deemed as your "arrow" or your "property." "Your arrow" means your responsibility is based on the fact that your fire is an extension of your energy and power, similar to one who shoots a bullet, and "your property" means you are responsible because you own it, similar to damages done by your dog. The difference is huge: If my fire spreads and kills people, can I be held fully accountable? If it is my arrow, yes. My property, no.

Another fire related question: If it is forbidden to burn something on Shabbos, then how can we light candles Friday night, knowing that they will burn all Shabbos? If fire is 'my property', I can understand, it's not me. But if fire is 'my arrow' then I am burning something now on Shabbos?

The class offers an in-depth discussion of the meaning behind this disputation, its ramifications in Jewish law and history, and its psychological and spiritual applications.

**2. Sources:****מקורות:**

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| <p><b>1. Exodus</b></p> <p>6:6-8</p> <p>6. Therefore, say to the children of Israel... <b>I will take you out</b> from under the burdens of the Egyptians, <b>and I will save you</b> from their labor, and <b>I will redeem you</b> with an outstretched arm ...</p> <p>7. <b>And I will take you</b> to Me as a people...</p> <p>8. <b>I will bring you</b> to the land, concerning which I raised My hand to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, and I will give it to you as a heritage; I am the Lord.' "</p> | <p><b>1. וארא</b></p> <p>ו-ו ח</p> <p>לְכֹן אָמַר לְבְנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל... וְהוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם מִתַּחַת סְבִלַת מִצְרַיִם, וְהִצַּלְתִּי אֶתְכֶם מֵעֲבָדְתֶּם; וְגִאלְתִּי אֶתְכֶם בְּזְרוּעַ נְטוּיָה... וְלִקַּחְתִּי אֶתְכֶם לִי לְעָם... וְהִבֵּאתִי אֶתְכֶם, אֶל-הָאָרֶץ, אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁאַתִּי אֶת-יָדִי, לָתֵת אֹתָהּ לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וּלְיַעֲקֹב; וְנָתַתִּי אֹתָהּ לְכֶם מוֹרְשָׁה, אֲנִי ה'.</p> |
| <p><b>2. Talmud Pesachim</b></p> <p>118b</p> <p>Over the fifth cup we conclude the Hallel, and then recite the Great Hallel. These are the words of Rabbi Tarfon.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <p><b>2. מסכת פסחים</b></p> <p>קיח, א</p> <p>כוס חמישי, גומר עליו את ההלל, ואחריו הלל הגדול, דברי רבי טרפון.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <p><b>3. Tosafos Yom Tov</b></p> <p>Tractate Ediyos 8:7</p> <p>'Teiku' (תיקו) is an acronym for "Elijah the Tishbi will answer questions and inquiries."</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <p><b>3. תוספות יום טוב</b></p> <p>מס' עדיות ח, ז</p> <p>תיקו—תשבי יתרוץ קושיות ואבעיות</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <p><b>4. Talmud Bava Kama</b></p> <p>22a</p> <p>Rabbi Yochanan said: One is responsible for his Fire because it is his arrows. Reish Lakish said: Because it is his property.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <p><b>4. מסכת בבא קמא</b></p> <p>כב, א</p> <p>רבי יוחנן אמר: אשו משום חציו, וריש לקיש אמר: אשו משום ממונו.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <p><b>5. Exodus</b></p> <p>22:5</p> <p>5. If a fire goes forth and finds thorns, and a stack of grain or standing grain or the field be consumed, the one who ignited the fire shall surely pay.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <p><b>5. משפטים</b></p> <p>כב, ה</p> <p>כי-תצא אש ומצאה קצים, ונאכל גדיש, או הקמה, או השדה, שלם שלם, המבער את הבערה.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <p><b>6. Talmud Bava Kama</b></p> <p>22a</p> <p>R. Yochanan said: One is responsible for his Fire because it is his arrows. Reish Lakish said: Because it is his property.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <p><b>6. מסכת בבא קמא</b></p> <p>כב, א</p> <p>רבי יוחנן אמר אשו משום חציו, וריש לקיש אמר משום ממונו.</p> <p>ריש לקיש מאי טעמא לא אמר כרבי יוחנן?</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

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| <p>Why does Reish Lakish not agree with Rabbi Yochanan? Because he says arrows are propelled by your strength, and fire is not.</p> <p>Why does R. Yochanan not agree with Reish Lakish? Because he says your property must have substance to it, and fire does not have substance.</p> <p>Rava said: Both a verse and a Braisa support R. Yochanan. The verse states 'When a fire goes out', implying a fire that spread out on its own, and then concludes 'the one who lit the fire must pay.' We see from this that fire is because of 'his arrows.' (Because he is considered having lit even the fire that spread on its own.)</p> <p>The Braisa states: The verse began talking about his property damaging, but concludes talking about him lighting it, to teach you that 'Fire is because of his arrows'.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <p>אמר לך, חציו מכחו קאזלי, האי לא מכחו קאזיל.</p> <p>ורבי יוחנן מאי טעמא לא אמר כריש לקיש? אמר לך, ממונא אית ביה ממשא, הא לית ביה ממשא.</p> <p>אמר רבא, קרא ומתניתא מסייע ליה לרבי יוחנן. קרא, דכתיב 'כי תצא אש' תצא מעצמה ישלם המבעיר את הבערה, שמע מינה אשו משום חציו.</p> <p>מתניתא, דתניא פתח הכתוב בנזקי ממונו וסיים בנזקי גופו, לומר לך אשו משום חציו.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <p><b>7. Nimukei Yosef</b></p> <p><b>Bava Kama 22a</b></p> <p>How can one light candles Friday evening if they will continue to burn on Shabbos, and it is as if he himself is burning something on Shabbos?</p> <p>And if he is responsible for kindling a fire even though he did not wish it to burn his neighbor's wheat, how much more so here, where he wants it to burn all Shabbos!</p> <p>When we examine the matter thoroughly, there is no difficulty. Because man's responsibility for fire is because it is 'his arrows,' it is like when he shoots an arrow: at the time of the release of the arrows, we hold him liable for everything that will happen as a result, as though it has all occurred.</p> <p>If we would hold him liable for the time when the arrows actually do the damage [not for the moment of shooting], then he would be exempt, because it is out of his control to retrieve the arrow. Even if he died before his fire burnt the wheat, surely the one damaged would collect payment from his property, as the verse states 'the one who lit the fire must pay', and why should he be obligated if he is dead, and the dead are exempt?</p> <p>We can see from here that it is not as if he is lighting the fire now with his hands, rather we hold him accountable for the moment when he lit the fire initially</p> | <p><b>7. נמוקי יוסף</b></p> <p>בבא קמא כב, א:</p> <p>אם כן היכי שרינן עם חשיכה להדליק את הנרות, והדלקתה הולכת ונגמרת בשבת, הרי הוא כאילו הבעירה בעצמו בשבת?</p> <p>וכל שכן הוא דאילו הכא לא נתכוין להדליק גדיש של חבירו כלל, והכא עיקר כוונתו היא שתדלק ותלך בשבת!...</p> <p>כי נעיין במילתא שפיר לא קשיא לן, שהרי חיובו משום חציו, כזורק החץ, שבשעה שיצא החץ מתחת ידו <u>באותה שעה נעשה הכל</u>, ולא חשבינן ליה מעשה דמכאן ולהבא.</p> <p>דאי חשבינן ליה הוה לן למפטריה, דאנוס הוא שאין בידו להחזירה וה"נ אילו מת קודם שהספיק להדליק הגדיש ודאי משתלם ניזק מאחריות נכסים דידיה, דהא קרי כאן כי תצא אש שלם ישלם, ואמאי מחייב, הרי מת, ומת לאו בר חיובא הוא?</p> <p>אלא לאו שמע מינה דלאו כמאן דאדליק השתא בידיים חשבינן ליה, אלא כמאן דאדליק מעיקרא משעת פשיעה חשבינן ליה.</p> <p>וכן הדין לענין שבת, דכי אתחיל מערב שבת אתחיל, וכמאן דאגמריה בידיים בהווא עידנא</p> |

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| <p>and carelessly.</p> <p>Likewise in regards to Shabbos, when he lit the candles Friday eve, erev Shabbos, it is as if he concluded the entire job at that time when there is no prohibition for igniting a candle.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <p>דלית ביה איסור חשיב.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <p><b>8. Talmud Taanis</b></p> <p><b>29a</b></p> <p>On the seventh [day of the month of Av] the heathens entered the Temple and ate there and desecrated it throughout the seventh and eighth [of Av], and towards dusk of the ninth they set fire to it and it continued to burn the whole of that day.</p> <p>And this is what R. Yochanan meant when he said: Had I been alive in that generation I should have fixed [the mourning] for the tenth, because the greater part of the Temple was burnt then.</p> <p>And the Rabbis? [They say that the] beginning of any misfortune is of greater importance.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <p><b>8. מסכת תענית</b></p> <p>כט, א :</p> <p>בשבעה נכנסו נכרים להיכל ואכלו וקלקלו בו שביעי שמיני. ותשיעי סמוך לחשכה הציתו בו את האור והיה דולק והולך כל היום כולו... והיינו דאמר רבי יוחנן אלמלי הייתי באותו הדור לא קבעתיו אלא בעשירי מפני שרובו של היכל בו נשרף. ורבנן אתחלתא דפורענותא עדיפא.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <p><b>9. Talmud Bava Kama</b></p> <p><b>60b</b></p> <p>When R. Ammi and R. Assi were sitting before R. Isaac the Smith, one of them said to him: 'Will the Master please teach us Law?' while the other said: 'Will the Master please give us some homiletical instruction?'</p> <p>When he commenced a homiletical discourse he was prevented by the one, and when he commenced a legal discourse he was prevented by the other.</p> <p>He therefore said to them: I will tell you a parable: To what is this like? To a man who has had two wives, one young and one old. The young one used to pluck out his white hair, whereas the old one used to pluck out his black hair. He thus finally remained bald on both sides.</p> <p>He further said to them: I will accordingly tell you something which will be equally interesting to both of you: "If fire breaks out and catches thorns"; 'breaks out' implies 'of itself'. "He that kindled the fire shall surely pay".</p> <p>The Holy One, blessed be He, said: It is incumbent upon me to pay back for the fire which I kindled. It was I who kindled a fire in Zion... and it is I who will one day build it anew by fire...</p> <p>On the legal side, the verse commences with damage</p> | <p><b>9. מסכת בבא קמא</b></p> <p>ס, ב :</p> <p>יתיב רב אמי ורב אסי קמיה דר' יצחק נפחא, מר אמר ליה לימא מר שמעתתא, ומר אמר ליה לימא מר אגדתא.</p> <p>פתח למימר אגדתא ולא שביק מר פתח למימר שמעתתא ולא שביק מר.</p> <p>אמר להם אמשול לכם משל למה הדבר דומה לאדם שיש לו שתי נשים, אחת ילדה ואחת זקינה, ילדה מלקטת לו לבנות זקינה מלקטת לו שחורות, נמצא קרח מכאן ומכאן.</p> <p>אמר להן אי הכי אימא לכו מלתא דשויה לתרויכו, כי תצא אש ומצאה קוצים תצא מעצמה שלם ישלם המבעיר את הבערה.</p> <p>אמר הקב"ה עלי לשלם את הבערה שהבערתי, אני הציתי אש בציון... ואני עתיד לבנותה באש...</p> <p>שמעתתא פתח הכתוב בנוקי ממונו וסיים בנוקי גופו לומר לך אשו משום חציו.</p> |

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| <p>done by property, and concludes with damage done by the person, [in order] to show that Fire is because its 'his arrows', and implies also human agency.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <p><b><u>10. Deuteronomy</u></b></p> <p><b>32:41</b></p> <p>41. When I sharpen the lightning of My sword, and My hand grasps judgment, I will bring vengeance upon My adversaries and repay those who hate Me.</p> <p><b><u>Rashi:</u></b></p> <p><i>My hand grasps judgment—</i></p> <p>The way of G-d is not like the ways of flesh and blood. Man of flesh and blood shoots an arrow and cannot retrieve it, bur G-d Almighty shoots His arrows and has the power to retrieve them as if He is still holding them in His hand. Lightning is His arrows, and here it is written "<i>the lightning of My sword, and My hand grasps judgment</i>"...</p> | <p><b><u>10. האזינו</u></b></p> <p>לב, מא :</p> <p>אם שנותי ברק חרבי ותאחז במשפט ידי אשיב נקם לצרי ולמשנאי אשלים.</p> <p><b><u>רש"י</u></b></p> <p>ותאחז במשפט ידי—</p> <p>לא כמדת בשר ודם מדת הקב"ה, מדת בשר ודם זורק חץ ואינו יכול להשיבו, והקב"ה זורק חציו ויש בידו להשיבם, כאלו אוחזן בידו, שהרי ברק הוא חצו, ונאמר כאן ברק חרבי ותאחז במשפט ידי...</p> |
| <p><b><u>11. Talmud Shabbos</u></b></p> <p><b>70a</b></p> <p>Lighting a fire was included [with all other prohibited labor of Shabbos]. So why was it singled out?...</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <p><b><u>11. מסכת שבת</u></b></p> <p>ע, א :</p> <p>הבערה בכלל היתה. ולמה יצאת?...</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

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לקוטי שיחות חלק א' פרשת וארא

#### **4. Questions and Exercises**

1. Why do we fill up a fifth cup on the Seder night? Why is it called the cup of Elijah? (Two reasons)
2. Why don't we drink this fifth cup? (Two reasons)
3. Why is the coming of Moshiach intimated in the story of the Egyptian exodus?
4. What is the Talmudic argument between Rabbi Yochanan and Reish Lakish about fire, if it is like an arrow or like one's property? Explain.
5. If "fire is like an arrow," then when my fire spreads to your property and damages it, it is like my arrow hitting your object. If so, how are we permitted to light candles before Shabbos to burn on Shabbos? What is the answer presented by the Nemukey Yosef?
6. How can we reconcile Rabbi Yochanan's view that fire is like an arrow with his view that the fast for the destruction of the Temple should have been on the 10th of Av? (Two explanations)
7. Why does the Talmud compare two types of Torah students to two wives plucking the hair of their husband?
8. What is the meaning of G-d's promise that "I ignited a fire in Zion, I will rebuild it with fire?"
9. Do you have fire in your life? What do you use it for?

Prepared by Rabbi Avraham Shlomo