

It's Hard to Raise Parents: Rabbi Akiva & His Daughter

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Midrash Tanchuma, Tazri'a 5:

<p>It once happened that the evil Turnus Rufus asked Rabbi Akiva, "which are the greater works, those of the Holy One Blessed is He or those of flesh and blood?" He said to him, "Those of flesh and blood are greater." Turnus Rufus said, "But the Heavens and Earth — is Man able to make such as those?" Rabbi Akiva said to him, "Don't speak to me about something which is beyond Man, which he has no mastery over, rather speak of things which are found among people."</p>	<p>מַעֲשֵׂה שְׂשָׁאֵל טוּרְנוֹסְרוּפוּסִי הִרְשָׁע אֶת רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא, אִיזוֹ מַעֲשִׂים נְאִים, שֶׁל הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא אוֹ שֶׁל בֶּשָׂר וְדָם? אָמַר לוֹ: שֶׁל בֶּשָׂר וְדָם נְאִים. אָמַר לוֹ טוּרְנוֹסְרוּפוּסִי, הֲרֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ, יִכַל אָדָם לַעֲשׂוֹת כִּיּוֹצֵא בָהֶם? אָמַר לוֹ רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא, לֹא תֹאמַר לִי בְּדַבָּר שֶׁהוּא לְמַעַל מִן הַבְּרִיּוֹת שֶׁאֵין שׁוֹלְטִין עָלָיו, אֲלֵא אָמַר דְּבָרִים שֶׁהֵם מְצוּיִין בְּבְנֵי אָדָם.</p>
<p>He said, "Why do you circumcise?" He replied, "I knew you were going to ask me about that, which is why I started by telling you that the works of Man are better than the works of the Holy One Blessed is He." Rabbi Akiva brought him stalks [of grain] and loaves [of bread]. He said to him, "These are the works of the Holy One Blessed is He, and these are the works of Man." He said, "Those are no better than than the stalks.'</p>	<p>אָמַר לוֹ: לָמָּה אַתֶּם מוֹלִיין? אָמַר לוֹ: אֲנִי הֵייתִי יוֹדֵעַ שֶׁעַל דְּבַר זֶה אַתָּה שׁוֹאֵלנִי, וְלִכְךָ הִקְדַּמְתִּי וְאָמַרְתִּי לָךְ, שֶׁמַּעֲשֵׂה בְנֵי אָדָם נְאִים מִשֶּׁל הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא. הִבִּיא לוֹ רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא שְׂבָלִים וּגְלִסְקָאוֹת, אָמַר לוֹ: אֵלּוּ מַעֲשֵׂה הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, וְאֵלּוּ מַעֲשֵׂה יְדֵי אָדָם. אָמַר לוֹ: אֵין אֵלּוּ נְאִים יוֹתֵר מִן הַשְּׂבָלִים?</p>
<p>Turnus Rufus [then] said to him, "If He wants circumcision, why does the infant not emerge circumcised from his mother's womb?" Rabbi Akiva said to him, "And why does his umbilical chord emerge with him, [so] he hangs from the belly, and his mother [has to] cut it? And this that you said 'Why doesn't he emerge circumcised?', [the reason is] because the Holy One Blessed is He gave the Israel the commandments only in order to refine them [Israel] through them [the commandments]. And that's why David said (Psalms 18:31) (all) 'the word of the LORD is refined.'"</p>	<p>אָמַר לוֹ טוּרְנוֹסְרוּפוּסִי, אִם הוּא חֲפֵץ בְּמִילָה, לָמָּה אֵינוֹ יוֹצֵא הַיּוֹלֵד מִהוּל מִמַּעַי אָמוֹ? אָמַר לוֹ רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא, וְלָמָּה שׁוֹרְרוֹ יוֹצֵא עִמּוֹ וְהוּא תְלִי בְּבִטְנוֹ וְאָמוֹ חוֹתְכוֹ? וּמָה שֶׁאַתָּה אוֹמֵר לָמָּה אֵינוֹ יוֹצֵא מִהוּל, לְפִי שֶׁלֹּא נָתַן הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא אֶת הַמִּצְוֹת לְיִשְׂרָאֵל אֲלֵא לְצַרְף אוֹתָם בָּהֶם. וְלִכְךָ אָמַר דָּוִד, "אִמְרַת ה' צְרוּפָה" (תהלים יח, לא).</p>

Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 156:b

<p>And from that which transpired to Rabbi Akiva as well it can be derived that there is no constellation for the Jewish people, as Rabbi Akiva had a daughter, and the Chaldean told him that on the same day that she enters the wedding canopy, a snake will bite her and she will die. He was very worried about this.</p>	<p>ומדר"ע (ומדברי רבי עקיבא) נמי אין מזל לישראל דר"ע (דרבי עקיבא) הוא ליה ברתא. אמרי ליה כלדאי: ההוא יומא דעיילה לבי גננא, טריק לה חיויא ומיתא. הוה דאיגא אמילתא טובא.</p>
<p>On that day, she took the ornamental pin from her hair and stuck it in the wall for safekeeping. It happened that it entered into the eye of the snake. In the morning, when she took it, the snake was pulled and came out with it.</p>	<p>ההוא יומא שקלתה למכבנתא דצתא בגודא איתרמי איתיב בעיניה דחיויא לצפרא כי קא שקלה לה הוה קא סריך ואתי חיויא בתרה</p>
<p>Her father Rabbi Akiva said to her: What did you do?</p> <p>She told him: In the evening a poor person came and knocked on the door, and everyone was preoccupied with the feast and nobody heard him.</p> <p>I stood and took my portion that you had given me and gave it to him.</p>	<p>אמר לה אבוה מאי עבדת? אמרה ליה בפניא אתא עניא קרא אבבא והוו טרידי כולי עלמא בסעודתא וליכא דשמעיה קאימנא שקלתי לריסתנאי דיהבית לי יהבתיה ניהליה</p>
<p>Rabbi Akiva said to her: You performed a mitzva, and you were saved in its merit.</p> <p>Rabbi Akiva went out and taught based on this incident that even though it is written: "And charity will save from death" (Proverbs 10:2), it does not mean that it will save a person only from an unusual death, but even from death itself.</p>	<p>אמר לה, מצוה עבדת! נפק ר"ע ודרש "וצדקה תציל ממות" (משלי י, ב: משלי יא, ד) ולא ממיתה משונה אלא ממיתה עצמה.</p>

