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What is My "Portion"?

The tenth *perek* begins¹:

All *Yisrael* have a share to the World to Come², as it says, "And your nation, they are all righteous, they will inherit the land forever, the branch of my planting, my handiwork in which I delight" (*Yeshayahu* 60:21).

At a cursory glance, this statement could lead to complacency. By virtue of being part of *Yisrael*, one has their share without doing anything. People might then, G-d forbid, only heed to *Hashem's* command or be motivated in spiritual endeavours at their convenience, as their share appears to be guaranteed. A closer analysis of this statement however leads to the opposite conclusion.

The initial assumption that a guaranteed share implies a utopian result for all is smashed by the *Meiri* (*Sanhedrin* 90a). He writes that indeed both *tzadikim* and *resha'im*³ have share, but we forget about the process that a *rasha* undergoes before he can enjoy that share. The *Meiri* explains that first the *rasha* is judged and then punished appropriately, both in terms of severity and duration. Similarly, the *Tosfot* (*Ketubot* 103b, *mezuman*) explain that there are exceptional individuals that avoid this process altogether.

The *Maharsha* highlights a different implication of the above statement. Granted that even those given a capital punishment have a "share", not all "shares" are equal. He cites another *Gemara* (*Bava Batra* 75a) that states in the future each *tzadik* will be "singed" by the "canopy" of other *tzadikim*. The *Maharsha* there explains that the "canopies" will be constructed in merit of the *mitzvot* performed. It will be recognisable in these "canopies" the excellence in which the *mitzvah* was performed. Now each *tzadik* has a particular *mitzvah* in which they excelled over and above other *tzadikim*. Therefore they will not be embarrassed in the face of other *tzadikim*, but rather "singed" at the recognition of how they could have better performed other *mitzvot*. The natural reaction should be dread for those that have not excelled in any. This is supported as the *Gemara* continues by lamenting "Woe to the [future] shame, woe to the [future] disgrace."

R' Chaim Volozhiner (*Ruach Chaim*) hits a similar point by being precise in the language in the *Mishnah*. He explains that the *Mishnah* is commonly explained as saying that "All *Yisrael* have a share in the World to Come". Such a reading would imply that there is a fixed share awaiting each person; one just needs to earn the "entry-pass". The real translation however is that "All *Yisrael* have a share to the world to come." The difference is astounding. All *Yisrael* have the entry-pass; what one finds there however is a direct product of his actions.

What does *R' Chaim* then derive from the word "*chelek*" (essential to the opinion of the *Maharsha*)? One could perhaps suggest that this "entry-pass" is not a dedicated pass for each individual, but rather each person has a share in this pass – the "*le'olam*". Who are the "share-holders"? "*Kol Yisrael*" – those that bear the name *Yisrael* – explaining the continuation of the *Mishnah* that enumerates those that lose that title.

One could suggest that there is a difference between the *Maharsha* and *R' Chaim*. We have stated that according to the *R' Chaim* all that is there in the World to Come is product of one's actions; all we have guaranteed is the "*le'olam*" – the entry pass. The *Maharsha* derives his point from the word "*chelek*". One could suggest that accordingly even a portion is guaranteed, but the quality of that portion is determined by our actions. The "land" can either be nourished and developed or, G-d forbid, sullied and ruined.⁴ This is perhaps what is implied by the *Maharal* who explains that when the *pasuk* writes "And your nation, they are all righteous", it means that the nation, prior even to any *mitzvot* or good deeds have a share as they were created in a pristine condition. One learns that we were given a treasure – do not spoil it!

Therefore while the *Mishnah* provides consolation for those punished for a capital offence, it also serves as a stark reminder of the very real ramification of our actions.

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¹ The *Gemara* reverses the order of the last two *perakim* (this *perek* the eleventh). See the *Tosfot Yom Tov* for the rationale of both orderings. Also, the *Chochmat Shlomo* has a version of *Rashi* that explains that this statement is an *agadah* and instead the *Mishnah* really begins with, "These are the people that have no share to the world to come." It was added to ensure that the *perek* begins on a high note.

² The meaning of this term is debated by the *Rishonim*, which is however beyond the scope of this article.

³ The *Meiri* explains that the term "*rasha*" here refers to those whose sins outweigh (not outnumber) their good deeds.

⁴ See *Shmirat HaLashon* (2:2) for a vivid description of this concept.

Revision Questions

סנהדרין ח' ז' – י"א א'

- Which three crimes can one kill a person trying to perpetrate them? (ח' ז')
- Which three crimes are listed in the *Mishnah*, that one might think share the same law as stated in the previous question, but do not? (ח' ז')
- Aside from a person having a relationship with “*isha u'bitah*” what other crime is punishable with *sreifah*? (ט' א')
- What falls under the category of “*isha u'bitah*”? (ט' א')
- Which two crimes are punishable with *hereg*? (ט' א')
- If someone pushed another into the water and they drowned, when are they not charged with murder? (ט' א')
- Which murder case is the subject of debate between the *Tana Kama* and *R' Nechemya*? (ט' א')
- If one strikes another and the person dies, assuming he was warned, what two component a critical to charge the person with murder? (ט' ב')
- Explain the murder case where *R' Yehuda* argues. (ט' ב')
- What is law if one of two people committed murder and one of the people is righteous? (ט' ג')
- In general, what does *beit din* do if people found of guilty capital punishments, each carry different punishments, get mixed together? (ט' ג')
- Regarding the previous question, which specific cases are debated between the *Chachamim* and *R' Shimon*? (ט' ג')
- How is a person punished if *beit din* ruled he must received two different capital punishments? (ט' ד')
- Regarding the previous question, in what case does *R' Yosi* argue? (ט' ד')
- What does *beit din* do to a repeated offender that has already received lashes? (To which sins is the *Mishnah* referring?) (ט' ה')
- Regarding the previous question, who else is treated in this manner? (ט' ה')
- For which three crimes do “*kana'in pog'in bo*”? (ט' ו')
- For which offence committed by a *kohen* do his “brothers” deal with him? Explain. (ט' ו')
- Explain the debate regarding the punishment for a non-*kohen* that serves in the *Beit Ha'Mikdash*. (ט' ו')
- Complete the phrase: “_____ _____ להם” (ט' ז')
- For which three offences does one loose their *chelek*? (ט' ח')
- Which offences do *R' Akiva* and *Abba Sha'ul* add? (ט' ח')
- Which three kings and four individuals lost their *chelek*? (ט' ט')
- Which three groups of people lost their *chelek* and which three groups are a subject of debate? (ט' ט')
- Regarding the previous question, with respect to what detail does *R' Nechemya* argue? (ט' י')
- What are the requirements for a city to be judged as an *ir ha'nidachat*? (ט' י' ד')
- What is the difference between the way the possessions of the righteous and wicked are treated in an *ir ha'nidachat*? (ט' י' ה')
- What happens to the *hekdesh*, *trumah*, *ma'aser sheni* and *kitvei kodesh* of an *ir ha'nidachat*? (ט' י' ו')
- What seven crimes are punished with *chenek*? (ט' י"א א')
- In what two ways is cursing a parent harsher than striking a parent? (ט' י"א א')

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Mizrachi Shul

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Next Week's Mishnayot...

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	שבת קודש
4 th November כ"ג חשוון	5 th November כ"ד חשוון	6 th November כ"ה חשוון	7 th November כ"ו חשוון	8 th November כ"ז חשוון	9 th November כ"ח חשוון	10 th November כ"ט חשוון
Sanhedrin 11:2-3	Sanhedrin 11:4-5	Sanhedrin 11:6 – Makkot 1:1	Makkot 1:2-3	Makkot 1:4-5	Makkot 1:6-7	Makkot 1:8-9

