

UNDERSTANDING AND ELIMINATING JEALOUSY

Background

Shlomo Hamelech had done what was wrong in the eyes of HASHEM. As a result, his monarchy was to be taken from his children. Yiravam was the king who was to take over the majority of the Jewish kingdom. HASHEM promised Yiravam that if he would go in the ways of HASHEM, his reign would rival that of Dovid Hamelech. Yet Yiravam turned against HASHEM and brought the Jewish nation to idol worship. After many years of rebelling, HASHEM offers Yiravam a chance to return.

תלמוד בבלי מסכת סנהדרין דף קב/א

אחר הדבר הזה לא שב ירבעם מדרכו הרעה מאי אחר אמר רבי אבא אחר שתפשו הקדוש ברוך הוא לירבעם בבגדו ואמר לו חזור בך ואני ואתה ובן ישי נטייל בגן עדן אמר לו מי בראש בן ישי בראש אי הכי לא

“After this matter, Yiravam didn’t return from his evil ways.” What does this matter refer to? Rebbe Abba says: After HASHEM grabbed Yiravam by his clothes and said, “Return, and you, I and Ben Yishai (Dovid) will walk together in Gan Eden.” Yiravam then asked, “Who will walk first?” HASHEM answered, “Ben Yishai will lead.” “If so,” Yiravam responded, “I don’t want (to return).”

Questions

It is obvious that Yiravam cares about his place in *Olam Habba*, as seen in his concern with “who will walk first.” But even if he wouldn’t be the number one man in Gan Eden, is that a reason to give up totally on *Olam Habba*? What is the logic to his saying, “If I can’t be the number one man, I won’t play at all?”