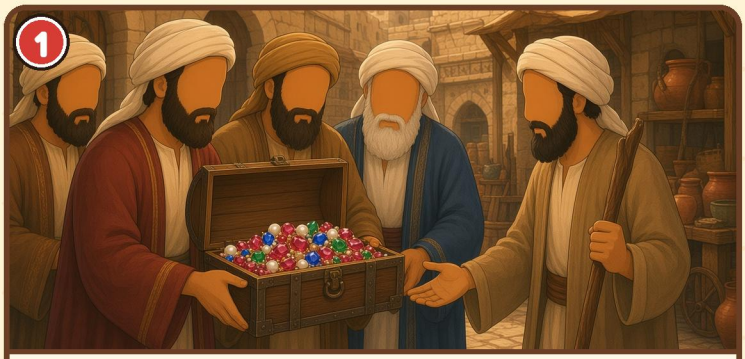
Nachum Ish Gamzu

נַחוּם אִישׁ גַּם זוֹ

Illustrated Story · Gemara Taanis 21a

Name: _____



A gift for the Emperor

דְּמִלּוֹמָד בְּנִיסִּין הוּא

Why was he called Nachum Ish Gamzu? Because whatever happened to him, he said: “Gam zu [ ] ” – this too is for the good!

Once the Jews wanted to send a gift to the Emperor (Keisar). “Who should go? Let Nachum Ish Gamzu go, because he is used to miracles.” They sent with him a chest full of precious stones and pearls.

Rashi says: “Whatever happened to him” means everything, even something that looked bad.

Did you know? Nachum Ish Gamzu was the rebbe of Rabbi Akiva.



A night at the inn

וּמְלוֹנְתוֹ עַפְרָא

On the way he slept one night at an inn. In the night, the people of the inn got up, took everything out of the chest and filled it with [ ] .

In the morning Nachum saw what had happened. What did he say? “Gam zu letova!” And he carried on to the Emperor.

Rashi says: “Sifta” means his box (chest).



Only earth!

קָא מְחַיְיכוּ בִּי יְהוּדָאֵי

When he arrived, they opened the chest and saw it was full of earth. The king was very [ ] and said: “The Jews are making fun of me!” He wanted to punish them all.

Even now Nachum said: “Gam zu letova!”

Rashi says: The Gemara speaks politely here: it really means the king wanted to harm the Jews.



Eliyahu Hanavi comes

יִתֵּן כְּעָפָר חַרְבּוֹ

Eliyahu Hanavi came, looking like one of the king’s ministers. He said: “Maybe this is the earth of their father [ ] ! When he threw earth, it became swords; when he threw straw, it became arrows.”

Gemara: As the pasuk says: “His sword makes them like dust, his bow like blown straw.” (Yeshayahu 41:2)

Rashi says: Eliyahu looked like one of the Emperor’s ministers. Avraham used this earth when he fought the kings.

Nachum Ish Gamzu – the story continues



The test

בְּדַקוּ מִינֵּיהּ וְכַבְּשׁוּהָ

There was one country that the Romans could not _____. They tested some of the earth there, and they conquered it!

Lesson: The earth was not special. The miracle came only in the zechus (merit) of Nachum Ish Gamzu.



Sent home with honour

וְשַׁדְּרוּהוּ בִּיקָרָא רַבָּה

They went into the king's treasure-house, filled Nachum's chest with precious stones and _____, and sent him home with great honour.

Lesson: Something that looked bad turned out to be for the good: gam zu letova!



Back at the inn

מַאי דְּשַׁקְלִי מֵהָכָא

On the way home he slept at the same inn. The people asked: "What did you bring to the king that he gave you so much honour?"

He answered: "What I _____ from here, I brought there."

Rashi says: "Bisu" means they slept at the inn.



Just earth

בַּדְקוּה וְלָא אַשְׁכְּחוּה

The innkeepers knocked down their house and brought its earth to the king: "That earth was ours!" The king tested it, but it was just ordinary _____.

So the king punished the innkeepers with death.

Lesson: The miracle was never in the earth. It came because of Nachum's trust in Hashem.

Word bank – write each word in the right box

letova | earth (×2) | angry | Avraham | conquer | pearls | took

Nachum Ish Gamzu – Think and Answer

Gam zu letova!

גַּם זוֹ לְטוֹבָה

Nachum said these words when the jewels were stolen and again when the king was angry. In the end, everything really was for the good.

Questions

1. Why did the Jews choose Nachum to bring the gift?

2. What did the innkeepers put in the chest?

3. Who came looking like one of the king's ministers?

4. What happened when Avraham threw earth? And straw?

5. Why did the innkeepers' earth not work?

6. Write about a time something seemed bad but turned out good.

Draw: the chest full of earth – and full of jewels!

Answer Key – Nachum Ish Gamzu

Panel fill-ins

1 letova · 2 earth · 3 angry · 4 Avraham · 5 conquer · 6 pearls · 7 took · 8 earth

Questions

1 He was used to miracles. · 2 Earth. · 3 Eliyahu Hanavi. · 4 Earth became swords; straw became arrows. · 5 The miracle was only in Nachum's merit (zechus). · 6 Own answer.

For the teacher

Follows Taanis 21a (from "Why was he called Nachum Ish Gamzu?") with Rashi. The earlier story about Nachum's suffering on the same daf is not included. The innkeepers' punishment is told in one line and not shown.