

Prov. 12:10

A righteous man has regard for the desire of his beast, but the mercy of the wicked is cruel.

Rashi

What his beasts and his household members need.

Zohar Emor 278 (103b-104a)

One must also gladden the poor, and the portion [that would otherwise have been set aside for these **Ushpizin**] guests should go to the poor. For if a person sits in the shadow of faith and invites those guests and does not give their portion [to the poor], they all remain distant from him... One should not say "I will first satisfy myself with food and drink, and I shall give the leftovers to the poor." Rather, the first of everything must be for one's guests. If one gladdens his guests and satisfies them, God rejoices over him. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the others shower him...

S.Y. Agnon, "The Etrog" in *The Outcast & Other Tales* (Toby Press)

I asked him, "Rabbi, where is your etrog? You bought a lovely etrog, and with 'kosher' money did you purchase it."... He sat and said, "In my neighborhood there resides a certain householder. A tough, angry, irritable man, but careful about mitzvot. He bought an etrog for a half lira, maybe more. He bragged about it in front of his neighbors, that there was none finer. I'm not sure how beautiful it really was, but there's no one in this neighborhood who can afford to buy an etrog for a half lira. This morning I heard a sound of crying coming from his house. I told my wife, I hear a child crying, go see why she is crying. My wife said, The girl was playing with the etrog her step-father bought for a half lira, the etrog fell from her hand, broke its *pitam* becoming invalid for the mitzvah, and her mother smacked her. My wife added, That poor wretch knows what's in store for her from her husband on account of her daughter from her first marriage. I asked my wife, Where is he now? – He ran to the mikveh to immerse prior to taking the lulav. If he's come out of the mikveh, he must be sitting in the sukkah of Rebbe Shlomo of Zv'nil, to observe him as he waves the lulav, for his waving is like that of his father, who received the tradition from his father, and his father from his father back to the Maggid of Zloczow. I took my etrog to the girl and said to her, Don't cry. Here is my etrog, give it to your mother. If your father asks, have your mother tell him: The rabbi was here and saw that your etrog was not kosher. To enable you to perform the mitzvah properly, he gave you his etrog as an unconditional gift. Because of that trouble I didn't have time to recite the blessing on my own etrog."

ברכות סד.

דרב יוסף סיני, ורבה עוקר הרים.

רש"י

סיני - היו קורין לרב יוסף, שהיה בקי בברייתות הרבה. עוקר הרים - לרבה בר נחמני, שהיה מחודד יותר בפלפול.

תענית ז.

מה ברזל זה אחד מחדד את חבירו, אף שני תלמידי חכמים מחדדין זה את זה בהלכה.

סוטה מ"ט.

וא"ר אילעא בר יברכיה: שני תלמידי חכמים הדרין בעיר אחת ואין נוחין זה לזה בהלכה – אחד מת ואחד גולה.

סנהדרין כד.

והאמר עולא: הרואה את ריש לקיש בבית המדרש כאילו עוקר הרים וטוחנן זה בזה!

"Two Scholars Who Were in Our Town," in *Two Scholars...* (Toby Press)

And when Reb Moshe Pinchas donned his new clothes, his appearance truly was transformed into that of a rabbi...

And even his mother came to part from her only son, leaning on her cane... She gazed upon her son and said,

"My son, you look a rabbi. If only your father had been fortunate enough to see you this way, he would still be alive. The miller mills all his days, mills and mills endlessly, and in the end he mills his own bones until he dies. And I too shall die, and I don't know where I will be taken. Remember, my son, and don't forget that I carried you and gave birth to you and nursed you, and I implore you now to admonish the evil angels lest they vilify me."

שני תלמידי חכמים שהיו בעירנו

נסתכלה בבנה ואמרה לו, בני דומה אתה לרב. אילמלא זכה אביך לראותך כך היה עדיין חי.

הטוחן טוחן כל ימותיו, / טוחן טוחן בכל עת, / ולבסוף טוחן את עצמותיו, / עד שהוא מת.

“In the Prime of Her Life” in *Two Scholars Who Were in Our Town and Other Novellas* (Toby Press)

My mother died in the prime of her life. She was barely thirty-one years old. Few and harsh were the days of her life. She sat at home the entire day and never stirred from within. Her friends and neighbors did not visit, nor did

בדמי ימיה מתה אמי. כבת שלושים שנה ושנה היתה אמי במותה. מעט ורעים היו ימי שני חייה. כל היום ישבה בבית ומן הבית לא יצאה. רעותיה ושכנותיה לא באו לבקרה וגם אבי לא הקדיש את קרואיו. דומם עמד ביתנו ביגונו, דלתיו לזר לא נפתחו...

my father welcome guests. Our house stood hushed in sorrow, its doors did not open to a stranger. Lying on her bed my mother spoke scarcely a word. But when she did speak it was as though limpid wings had spread forth and led me to the hall of blessing. How I loved her voice. Often I would open her door just to hear her ask, Who’s there? I was still a child. Sometimes she rose from her bed to sit by the window. She would sit by the window dressed in white. She always wore white. Once a relative of my father’s was called into town and seeing my mother, took her for a nurse, for her clothes misled him and he did not realize it was she who was unwell.

*Only Yesterday* (Princeton University Press)

In those days when Isaac lived in an enviable good fortune, he got up early for prayer and so forth and observed his Judaism as a Jew, in those days a bitter drop fell into the goblet of his happiness. It seemed that evil angels who received their vitality from his early transgressions envied him and wanted to annoy him. And since they had no control during the day, for in the day a person governs his mind, they came to him at night. For at night a person’s mind is not in his own hands. And since they could not approach him, for their force was sapped by his good deeds, they sent the Lord of Dreams as an agent, for he is halfway between good and bad. The Lord of Dreams came to Isaac and pulled him to the sea. There he forgot his shoes. He went back to his shoes and the wind flew his hat off. A man encountered him and said to him, Come and I’ll show you where your hat is. When he went with him, the man disappeared. Isaac stood in the street barefoot without shoes, his head bare. He heard the sound of prayer and followed the sound. He came to a two-story house, the bottom story in ruins and you climbed a ladder to the top story where they were praying. And the ladder stood straight. He leaned the ladder and ascended. When he put his head in, the door closed on him from inside and his body was outside. That’s how it was one night and two nights and three nights. And he thought he would never get rid of his bad dream. Finally, the dream went and didn’t come back. His soul came back to him and he forgot the dream, as he had forgotten many things he saw while awake, like Jaffa and all its pleasures.



אושפיזין Ushpizin

For more on S.Y. Agnon, and online learning opportunities, visit [www.webyeshiva.org/agnon](http://www.webyeshiva.org/agnon)  
Agnon Library at Toby Press – [www.tobypress.com/agnon](http://www.tobypress.com/agnon)

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