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Megillah Daf 3

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May the studying of the Daf Notes be a zechus for his neshamah and may his soul find peace in Gan Eden and be bound up in the Bond of life

Rabbi Yirmiyah said, and others say that it was Rabbi Chiya bar Abba who said: The final letters in the Hebrew alphabet - mem, nun, tzadi, pey, kaf; were established by the prophets.

The Gemora questions this statement: Could the prophets have introduced such an original enactment? Is it not written: "*These* are the commandments"; from which we infer that *these* are the commandments, and no prophet has the right to institute new ones from that time? And furthermore, the Gemora asks, didn't Rav Chisda state that the mem (when it is the last letter of the word) and the samech (which is round) of the Tablets were stayed in place only by a miracle? (*The letters in the Tablets were engraved from one side to the other and the middle sections of these two letters were completely unattached. They remained in place only through a miracle.*) [Evidently, these final letters were in existence prior to the prophets.]

The Gemora answers that these letters did exist beforehand, but it was not known which form of the letter should be in the middle of the word and which at the end; the prophets ordained that the open form should be in the middle of a word and the closed form should be at the end of the word.

The Gemora persists: But at the end of it, *these* are the commandments, and no prophet has the right to institute new ones from that time?<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The prophets did not even have a right to establish where each form should be placed.

The Gemora answers: Rather, this information was forgotten through the passage of time and the prophets only restored them. (2b – 3a)

Rabbi Yirmiyah said, and others say that it was Rabbi Chiya bar Abba who said: The Targum [translation] of the Torah was composed by Onkelus HaGer, who learned it from Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yehoshua. The Targum of the Prophets was composed by Yonasan ben Uziel, who learned it from Chaggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. At that time (when the Targum of the Prophets was composed), the ground of Eretz Yisroel trembled over an area of four hundred parsah by four hundred parsah. A Heavenly voice called out, saying, "Who is this that has revealed My secrets to human beings?" Yonasan ben Uziel rose to his feet and said, "I am the one who revealed Your secrets to human beings. It is revealed and known to You that I did not act for my own glory or for the glory of my father's house, but rather for Your glory, that disagreement should not spread in Israel." Yonasan ben Uziel also wished to reveal the Targum of Writings. A Heavenly voice called out and said to him, "Enough!" – what is the reason (that he was not granted permission to compose the Targum of Writings)? Because it contains the date of the arrival of Moshiach.

The Gemora asks: But did Onkelos HaGer compose the Targum to the Torah? Hasn't Rav Ika said in the name of

Rabbi Chananel who said in the name of Rav: What is meant by the verse: And they read the scroll of God's Torah, clearly, with the application of wisdom, and caused them to understand the reading? 'And they read the scroll of God's Torah': this indicates the Hebrew text; 'clearly': this indicates the Targum, 'with the application of wisdom': this indicates the verse stops; 'and caused them to understand the reading': this indicates the notes of cantillation, or, according to another version, the tradition (of the correct pronunciation and spelling of each word)? [Evidently, the Targum was written well before Onkelus HaGer!?!]

The Gemora answers: These had been forgotten, and were now established again (by Onkelus HaGer).

The Gemora asks: Why at the translation of the Torah did the ground not tremble, and at the translation of the Prophets, it did tremble?

The Gemora answers: It is because regarding the Torah; no secrets were revealed; but regarding the Prophets; there are parts that are clear but some parts that were intended to remain hidden became revealed. The Gemora provides an example of a verse in the Prophets that cannot be understood without the assistance of the Targum. It is written: On that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon, and Rav Yosef (commenting on this) said: Were it not for the Targum of this verse, we would not know what it means (for such an incident is not recorded anywhere). The Targum explains: 'On that day shall there be great mourning in Jerusalem - like the mourning of Achav son of Omri who was killed by Hadadrimmon son of Tavrimum in Ramos Gilad, and like the mourning of Yoshiyah son of Ammon who was killed by Pharaoh the Lame in the valley of Megiddo.' (3a)

It is written [Daniel 10:7]: "And I, Daniel, alone saw this appearance, but the men that were with me did not see

the appearance; nevertheless, a great terror fell upon them, and they fled into hiding." Who were these men? Rabbi Yirmiyah said, and others say that it was Rabbi Chiya bar Abba who said: They were Chaggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. They were considered superior to him and he was superior to them. They were considered superior to him because they were prophets, and he, Daniel, was not a prophet. He was superior to them because he saw the vision and they did not. The Gemora asks: If they did not see, why did they tremble? The Gemora answers that although they literally did not see, their angel saw. Ravina states that we can learn from here that one who becomes terrified, although he himself does not see, his angel sees.

What is the remedy (for a person who becomes terrified and he doesn't know why)? He should recite Krias Shema. If he is standing in a dirty place (where Krias Shema cannot be recited), he should jump four amos away from his original place. If he is not able to jump, he should say the following: "The goat by the slaughterhouse is fatter than me." (3a)

The Gemora returns to its earlier discussion, and asks: Now that you have decided that the words 'province and province' and 'city and city' serve as a derivation, what is derived from the words 'family and family'?

Rabbi Yosi bar Chanina states that the kohanim and levi'im must abandon their service in the Beis Hamikdosh to come hear the Megillah. For Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav: The kohanim while they were engaged in the service of the Beis Hamikdosh, the levi'im from the balcony (*while they were singing and playing musical instruments*) and the people who were standing by the korbanos representing all of Klal Yisroel (ma'amados), all must forsake their service and go hear the Megillah.

The Gemora cites a supporting Baraisa: The kohanim while they were engaged in the service of the Beis Hamikdosh, the levi'im from the balcony and the people who were

standing by the korbanos representing all of Klal Yisroel (ma'amados), all must forsake their service and go hear the Megillah. The scholars of the school of Rebbe learned from here that one must cease from learning Torah in order to go and hear the Megillah. This is derived through the following kal vachomer: If the service in the Beis Hamikdash, which is generally a stringent matter, must be suspended on the account of the reading of the Megillah; certainly the mitzvah of reading the Megillah overrides Torah studying (*which is usually not so strict*).

The Gemora asks: And is the Temple service stricter than torah studying? But it is written: And it came to pass when Yehoshua was by Yericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold there stood a man over against him, . . . and he fell on his face. – [The Gemora interrupts:] Now how could he do such a thing? Didn't Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi say: It is forbidden to greet someone at night using the word Shalom, for we are concerned that it might be a demon (and certainly it should be forbidden to prostrate oneself before a stranger at night)? - There it is different, for the angel said: I am an officer in the army of Hashem. - But perhaps the stranger was lying? - We have a tradition that demons do not utter the Name of God in vain. - The Gemora continues: The angel was standing facing Yehoshua, his sword drawn (*indicating that Yehoshua deserved to die*). The angel confronted him, "Yesterday, you neglected to bring the *korban tamid* of the afternoon, and this evening, you have been lax regarding the studying of Torah!" Yehoshua replied, "For which one of these transgressions have you come?" The angel answered, "I have come now."<sup>2</sup> Immediately, Yehoshua lodged that night in the valley. Rabbi Yochanan said: This teaches us that Yehoshua delved into the depths of Torah law. And Rav Shmuel bar Unya said: Torah study is greater than the offering of the daily sacrifices, for it is written: Now I have come. [This indicated that the angel's appearance was due

<sup>2</sup> Indicating that it was the present neglect of Torah study that he was coming for.

to the neglect of Torah learning which was being committed now and not because of the sacrificial service. This is inconsistent with that which we have learned before!?] – This is not difficult, as there is a distinction between the Torah study of an individual and that of many people. [Sacrificial service is superior to the learning of an individual, but the studying of Torah of all the Jewish people (*like by Yehoshua*) is greater than the sacrificial service.]

The Gemora asks: But is the Torah study of an individual a light matter? Did we not learn in a Mishnah: Women may chant a funeral song during Chol Hamoed but they may not clap (*hitting one hand against the other, demonstrating grief*). Rabbi Yishmael says: Those that are near the coffin, they are permitted. On Rosh Chodesh, Chanukah and Purim, they are permitted to chant a funeral song and clap. During Chol Hamoed, Rosh Chodesh, Chanukah and Purim, they are forbidden to respond in lamentation. And Rabbah bar Huna said: There is no Chol Hamoed with regard to a Torah scholar (and all expressions of grief are permitted – even responding in lamentation), and certainly with regard to Chanukah and Purim (the restrictions are waived; this indicates that the Torah study of an individual is greater than the reading of the Megillah)!?

The Gemora answers: While it is true that honoring the Torah of an individual is a stringent matter (and even overrides the reading of the Megillah), the Torah study of an individual is considered a lenient matter (relatively speaking, and the reading of the Megillah takes precedence). (3a – 3b)

Rava said: It is obvious to me that if there is a conflict between the mitzvah of offering a korban and the mitzvah of reading the Megillah, reading the Megillah takes

precedence. This is derived from that which Rabbi Yosi son of Chanina said (above). If there is a conflict between Torah study and the mitzvah of reading the Megillah, reading the Megillah takes precedence. This is derived from the fact that the house of Rebbe relied upon this. If there is a conflict between Torah study and the burying of an unattended corpse, the burying of an unattended corpse takes precedence. For it was taught in a Baraisa: The study of the Torah may be neglected in order to perform the burying of an unattended corpse, or to accompany a bride (from her father's house to the chuppah). If there is a conflict between the sacrificial service and the burying of an unattended corpse, the burying of an unattended corpse takes precedence. This is derived from verse: and to his sister, for it was taught in a Baraisa: *And to his sister (which is written by nazir that he cannot make himself tamei for his father (if he dies) or his mother or his sister) – what does this teach? If someone was traveling to bring his korban pesach or to circumcise his son, and he heard that one of his close relatives died, perhaps he should become tamei to them (although one who nullifies the positive commandment of the korban pesach or circumcision will receive the penalty of kares). We say that he should not become tamei. Perhaps just as he does not become tamei on account of his sister, he should not become tamei to the burying of an unattended corpse either. The Torah writes to his sister to teach us that a nazir cannot become tamei to his sister, but he may become tamei to an unattended corpse (and this overrides the offering of the korban pesach; evidently, the burying of an unattended corpse takes precedence over the service in the Temple).*

Rava inquires: If there is a conflict between the mitzvah of reading the Megillah and burying of an unattended corpse; which takes precedence? Shall we assume that the reading of the Megillah takes precedence because it publicizes the miracle or does the burying of the unattended corpse take precedence because we are concerned on account of the human dignity factor? After

he inquired, he himself decided that the burying takes precedence, for a master has stated (Shabbos 81b) that human dignity is so great that it even supersedes a negative commandment of the Torah (certainly it will take precedence over the mitzvah of reading the Megillah, which is only Rabbinical). (3b)

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi had stated previously that a walled city, and its neighborhood, and all the places around that can be seen with it, must be considered like the walled city itself and they too would celebrate Purim on the fifteenth. The Gemora elaborates on this halachah and states from a Baraisa: If the open town is near the walled city even if it cannot be seen from a distance together with the city; it would celebrate Purim on the fifteenth. If an open town can be seen with the city, although it is not near the city; it would celebrate Purim on the fifteenth. Now we understand what is meant by 'visible even though not near': this can occur for instance with a city situated on the top of a hill. But how can there be 'near but not visible'? — Rabbi Yirmiyah replied: If it is situated in a valley. (3b)

And Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: A city where the inhabitants had settled into and later it was surrounded with a wall; it is regarded as a village and will read the Megillah on the fourteenth. What is the reason? Because it is written: And if a man sells a dwelling house of a walled city, one, [that is,] which was first walled and then settled, but not first settled and then walled. (3b)

And Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: A city where there are not ten unoccupied men who dedicate all their time to Torah study; it is regarded as a village (and may advance their Megillah reading to an earlier date). What does he tell us? We have already learned this: What is a large town? One in which there are ten unoccupied men who dedicate all their time to Torah study. If there are less than this, it is reckoned as a village. — He had to point out that



the rule applies to a city, even though [unoccupied] people come there from outside. (3b)

And Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: A city which has been laid waste and afterwards settled is reckoned as a city. What is meant by 'laid waste'? Shall I say, that its walls have been destroyed, in which case if it became settled, it is reckoned as a city but otherwise not? [How can this be], seeing that it has been taught: Rabbi Eliezer son of Rabbi Yosi says: [The text says], which has a wall; [which implies that it is to be reckoned as a city] even though it has not a wall now, provided it had one previously? What then is meant by 'laid waste'? Laid waste of its ten unoccupied men. (3b)

#### **INSIGHTS TO THE DAF**

##### **WILL MEGILLAH READING BE CONSIDERED LEARNING?**

The Gemora learns that one must cease from learning Torah in order to go and hear the Megillah.

The Beis Efraim asked the son of the Noda B'Yehuda as to why this would be considered bitul Torah. Isn't the reading of the Megillah also considered learning? The Beis Efraim maintains that one who reads the Megillah or listens to it will not be fulfilling a mitzvah of studying Torah. The Avnei Neizer (O"C 517) disagrees with him vehemently to such an extent that he writes: "I do not believe that those words came out of the mouth from such a righteous person as the Beis Efraim."

Reb Chaim Voloziner talks at great length that there is a concept of neglecting to study Torah in depth and not only time. According to this, the Gemora can be explained to mean that even though reading the Megillah is considered learning, nonetheless it would be regarded as bitul Torah since he is not delving into the depths of Torah; if not for the special halacha that one is obligated to close the Gemora and hear the Megillah.

The Beis Efraim himself speculates that perhaps one cannot fulfill the Mitzvah of learning Torah through the reading of the Megillah because it is part of Tefillah. This is based on the viewpoint of the Beis Yosef, who rules regarding one who had forgotten to recite birchas hatorah in the morning. The blessing of Ahava Rabbah can be utilized as a birchas hatorah, providing that he learns immediately after Shemoneh Esrei. The recital of Krias Shema will not be sufficient because that is part of Tefillah. Perhaps, the same logic can be used for the reading of the Megillah.

The Chochmas Shlomo answers that according to those that rule that one needs intent in order for him to discharge his obligation; it is impossible to have in mind for two mitzvos when he is only performing one action.

#### **DAILY MASHAL**

##### **Studying Torah during a War**

The Sabba from Kelm used to quote the famous Gemora in Megillah which says that an angel appeared to Yehoshua while he was fighting the seven nations with a sword in his hand and threatened to kill Yehoshua. The angel explained that although the Jews had forgotten to offer the afternoon sacrifice the previous day, that was not why he was coming. Rather he was coming because the Jews hadn't been learning a sufficient amount of Torah during the war. The Sabba pointed out that during a war, it is quite difficult to learn and furthermore, the angel implied that they were learning, just not enough. Rashi explains that granted during the day, it would have been impossible to learn, but they could have learned at night. And even though they did learn, they were expected to learn more seriously and professionally, even though they were in the middle of a war. From here we see how seriously Hashem expects us to take the Mitzvah of learning Torah and toiling in the Torah with all of our might.