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Brachos Daf 17

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Daf Notes is currently being dedicated to the neshamah of

Tzvi Gershon Ben Yoel (Harvey Felsen) o"n

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

Personal Prayers and Sayings

The *Gemora* continues to list the prayers after *Shemoneh Esrei*:

Rav Safra: May it be Your will to grant peace to the heavenly assembly (*the angels*) and the worldly assembly (*the Torah scholars*), and among the students toiling in Torah, whether for its sake or not for its sake, and may those who toil in Torah not for its sake instead toil for its sake.

Rabbi Alexandri: May it be Your will to raise me up in a lit area, and not a dark one, and may our hearts not suffer, and may our eyes not dim.

Some say the preceding was Rav Hamnuna's prayer, and Rav Alexandri's was: Master of the universe, You know that we desire to fulfill Your will, but we are prevented from doing so only by the yeast in the dough (*i.e., the evil inclination*) and our subservience to the nations of the world. May it be Your will that you save us from them, and we will then return to wholeheartedly fulfill Your will.

Rava: My God, until I was created, I was worthless, and now that I was created, it is as if I wasn't. I am dust while living, and how much more so when I die. I stand in front of You like a utensil full of shame and embarrassment. May it be Your will that I sin no more, and cleanse my existing sins, albeit not with suffering and harsh sickness. This was also the confession said by Rav Hamnuna on Yom Kippur.

Mar the son of Ravina: My God, guard my tongue from saying bad, and my lips from speaking inequity. May my soul be quiet in the face of those who curse me, and my soul should be like dust to everyone (*i.e., indestructible*). Open my heart in Your Torah, and may my soul pursue Your *mitzvos*. Save me from evil events, the evil inclination, an evil woman, and any other evil that is agitating

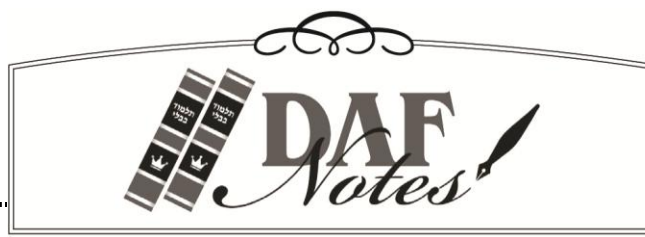
to enter the world. Disrupt the plans and ruin the thoughts of all who plan evil against me. He would then conclude with the verse from Tehillim asking Hashem, his strength and redeemer, to accept his words and thoughts of his heart.

When Rav Sheishes would fast, he would conclude his *Shemoneh Esrei* at the end of the fast with the following prayer: Master of the universe, You know that in the times of the Bais Hamikdash, if one would sin, he would offer a sacrifice, from which only the blood and fat were burned, and this would atone. Now that I fasted, and thereby reduced my blood and fat, may You consider my blood and fat as if I offered it on the altar, and accept my offer.

When Rabbi Yochanan would conclude the book of Iyov, he would say that all people die, and all animals are slaughtered, and all are destined to die. Fortunate is the one who grew in Torah, toiled in Torah, was pleasant to his Creator, growing with a good name, and passing away with a good name. On such a person did Shlomo say that a good name is greater than good oil, and the day of death is greater than the day of birth.

Rabbi Meir would often paraphrase Hashem's command to us: Learn Torah with all your heart and soul, in order to know My ways, and to stay at the doors of My Torah. Guard My Torah in your heart, and always keep My fear in your vision. Guard your mouth from any sin, and purify and sanctify yourself from any sin or guilt. If you do this, I will be with you everywhere.

The Sages of Yavne would often say: I am a creature, and my unlearned colleague is a creature. I work (*by learning*) in the city, and he works in the field. I awake early for my "work" and so does he. Just as he doesn't claim to have a right to my realm, so I may not claim a right to his. Even though I learn more than he does, we are both rewarded, as we have learned (*from the different types of sacrifices*) that whether one does more or less is irrelevant, as long as they are doing so for the sake of Heaven.



Abaye would often say that one should be clever to find ways to fear Hashem, speak softly, dispel anger, and increase peace with one's brothers, relatives, and everyone, including non-Jews in the street. By doing so, he will be beloved in heaven, adored in this world, and pleasing to everyone. The *Gemora* says that no one ever preempted Rabban Yochanan ben Zakai with a greeting, including non-Jews in the street.

Rava would often say that the goal of learning Torah is repentance and good deeds. Therefore, a person should not learn all areas of Torah, but rebel against his parents, teachers, and others greater than him, as the verse says that the source of the wisdom (*of Torah*) is fear of Hashem, and it is good sense to all who do *them*, limiting this verse to those who learn Torah in order to fulfill its mitzvos. Those who learn Torah with no such intent would have been better off if they were not created.

Rav would often contrast this world with the World to Come. The World to Come has none of the physical pursuits and pleasures of this world (*eating, drinking, reproducing, business, jealousy, hatred, competition*), but instead the righteous sit with their crowns on their heads, enjoying the aura of Hashem's presence. This is what the verse about the giving of the Torah describes when it says that the Sages "saw Hashem, and they ate and drank," as their enjoyment was akin to eating and drinking. (16b – 17a)

Merit for Women

Rav asked Rabbi Chiya what merit women have to enter the next world, and he answered that they enable others to learn – by bringing their young boys to learn, by allowing their husbands to toil in Torah in the Beis Midrash, and waiting for their husbands when they go far away to learn. (17a)

Blessings of the Sages to Each Other

When the Sages left Rabbi Ami's (*or Rabbi Chanina's*) Beis Midrash, they would bless each other with the following: May all your worldly needs be fulfilled, may your end result be the world to come, and may your ultimately merit eternal life. May your heart express insight, your mouth speak wisdom, your tongue say praises, your eyelids see straight ahead (*in your understanding of Torah*), your eyes illuminate in the light of Torah, your face shine like the sky, your lips express understanding, your kidneys praise in a straight way, and your feet run to hear the words of Hashem.

When the Sages left Rav Chisda's (*or Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachmeini's*) Beis Midrash, they would each other with the verse in Tehillim describing a pleasant life.

The *Gemora* discusses this verse in depth, with various explanations:

Verse	Explanation
<i>Alufeinu</i> – our learning	Rav and Shmuel (<i>or Rabbi Yochanan and Rabbi Elazar</i>) differ: In Torah/In Torah <i>or mitzvos</i>
<u>Mesubalim</u> – laden down	Rav and Shmuel (<i>or Rabbi Yochanan and Rabbi Elazar</i>) differ: In <i>mitzvos</i> /In suffering
<i>Ein peretz</i> – none breaks through	May we not be like the entourage of Dovid, from which came Achitofel, who broke through the kingdom
<i>V'ein yotzeis</i> – and none leaves	May we not be like the entourage of Shaul, from which came Do'eg, who left the path of Torah
<i>V'ein tzevacha</i> – and there is no cry	May we not be like the entourage of Elisha, from which came Gaichazi, who had to announce to others that he had tzara'as
<i>Birchovoseinu</i> – in our streets	May we not have any child or student who publicly (in the "street") disowns Torah

(17a – 17b)

Strong of Heart

The *Gemora* explains the verse in which Yeshaya says, "*Listen to me, the strong of heart, who are far from charity.*" Rav and Shmuel (*or Rabbi Yochanan and Rabbi Elozar*) differ in their explanations of what the verse is saying about the righteous ("strong of heart"):

1. The whole world is sustained through undeserved charity from Hashem, but they are sustained by rights, due to their merits.
2. The whole world is sustained in their merit, and they themselves are not even fully sustained in their merit. This is like Rav Yehuda's statement in the name of Rav that a heavenly voice declared each day that the whole world was sustained in the merit of Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa, while Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa himself was content with only a *kav* of carob each week.

These explanations, which understand the "strong of heart" to refer to the righteous, differ with Rav Yehudah, who says that it refers to stupid nation of *gova'im*.



Rav Yosef says you can see this from the fact that not one of them ever converted.

Rav Ashi similarly said that it refers to the residents of Masa Mechasya, who are so hard-hearted that they witness the honor of the Torah (*during the kallah months of communal Torah lessons*) twice a year, with not one of them converting. (17b)

Does it Look Arrogant?

The *Mishna* stated that if a groom wants to recite the *Shema* when he gets married, he may do so, but Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says he may not, to not appear arrogant.

The *Gemora* poses a possible contradiction to their positions from the issue of work on *Tisha b'Av*. The Sages say that although the prohibition depends on the local custom, Torah scholars can always refrain from work, implying that others should not, lest they seem arrogant. Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says that one should act like a Torah scholar and refrain, indicating that he is not concerned with them seeming arrogant.

Rabbi Yochanan says that we must therefore reverse their positions in one of these cases, to keep their positions consistent.

Rav Shisha the son of Rav Idi says that the cases are different, leading to the opposite conditions. The Sages are not concerned with haughtiness in the case of a groom, since by reciting *Shema*, he is simply doing what everyone else is doing. However, if someone refrains from doing work on *Tisha b'Av* in a place where they do not, his difference from everyone else is conspicuous, leading to a concern of haughtiness. Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel is concerned with haughtiness in the case of *Shema*, since one must concentrate when reading it, and we know that he cannot concentrate. However, if one refrains from work, it is not obvious that he is doing so for religious reasons, as there are always many idle people who don't work on any given day. (17b)

WE SHALL RETURN TO YOU, HAYAH KOREI

Exemptions Due to Caring for the Dead

The *Mishna* says that if one has his relative's dead body in front of him to be buried, he is exempt from reciting the *Shema*, prayer, donning *tefillin*, and the performance of all other *mitzvos*. Those

who are carrying the coffin, their replacements, and their second level replacements, are exempt from *Shema* only while they are needed to carry. Therefore, those that are in front of the coffin, and will therefore still carry it, are exempt, while they are needed, but those that are behind it are obligated, since the coffin has already passed them. All of them are exempt from prayer. Once they buried the dead person and they returned, if they have time to begin and complete the *Shema* before the mourners reach the line of consolors, they must do so; otherwise, they should not begin it. Those who are standing in the inner line of consolors are exempt, but those in the outer line are obligated. (17b)

Must one be in Front of the Dead to be Exempt?

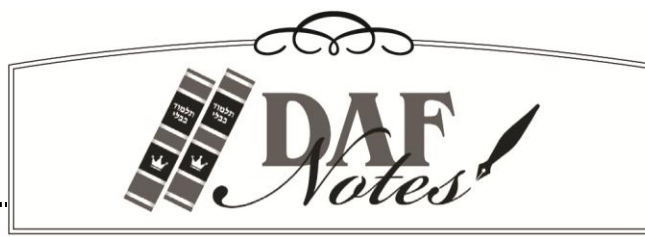
The *Mishna* implies that only if the dead relative is in front of him is he exempt.

The *Gemora* challenges this implication from a *braisa* which discusses how one must act in the presence of a dead relative's body. If he can, he must eat in another house. If he has no other house, he should eat in his friend's house. If he has no friend's house available, he should make a dividing wall between him and the body. If he cannot, he should face the other direction and eat. He may not lean when eating, nor may he eat meat or drink wine. He does not say a *brachah* before or after eating, nor lead a *mezuman* group blessing after a meal, nor do others need to make *brachos* or a *mezuman* for him. He is exempt from *Shema*, prayer, donning *tefillin*, and the performance of all other *mitzvos*. On Shabbos, he may lean when eating, and eat meat and drink wine, and he is obligated in all *mitzvos*. Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says that once he is obligated in these, he is obligated in all *mitzvos*.

Rabbi Yochanan explains that their dispute is whether he is obligated in marital relations. This *braisa* says that he is exempt from all *mitzvos*, even if he is not in front of the body.

Rav Pappa answers that the exemption only refers to the last case, in which he is still in the presence of the body, but just turning around.

Rav Ashi answers that he is indeed exempt in all cases, but this doesn't contradict the *Mishna*, since the dead body is considered "in front of him" as long as he is responsible for burying it. We find a source for this in the case of Avraham, who first "got up from the presence of his dead [wife]", but then told the people of Chais that he wanted to bury "my dead [wife, which is] in front of me,"



indicating that she was considered in front of him, even though he was not in her physical presence. (17b – 18a)

INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

Groom Reciting the Shema

The *Gemora* discusses the differing opinions about whether a groom may read *Shema* on his wedding night. The Sages say he may, while Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says it is arrogant, as it is arrogant for him to claim that he can concentrate on that night.

The *Gemora* raises a possible contradiction with their positions in the case of work on *Tisha b'Av*, and offers two answers. Rabbi Yochanan says that we reverse their positions, while Rav Shisha the son of Rav Idi distinguishes between the concerns in either case.

Tosfos (17b) cites Rabbeinu Chananel who rules like Rav Shisha, and therefore rules like Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel in both cases. Therefore, a groom would not be allowed to read *Shema* on his wedding night, lest he seem arrogant.

Tosfos says that, nowadays, when no one really concentrates on *Shema* properly, it would be arrogant for a groom to *not* read *Shema* on his wedding night, as he would be implying that every other night, he does concentrate properly. Therefore, to avoid arrogance, a groom *must* say *Shema* on his wedding night. However, on *Tisha b'Av*, we do rule that one should refrain from work, even in a place where they have the custom to work.

Onein Doing Mitzvos

The *Mishna* (17b) lists the *mitzvos* from which an *onein* is exempt, until his dead relative is buried.

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa* which expands on this, stating that he need not make any blessings, before or after food.

Rashi says that the *braisa* means that he *need* not make blessings, since he is involved in the overriding *mitzvah* of burying the dead.

Tosfos (17b v'aino) cites a Yerushalmi, which says that if an *onein* wants to make a blessing, we do not allow him to. The Yerushalmi offers two possible reasons for this:

1. To show honor for the dead relative
2. No one else is dealing with the dead relative, so we do not allow him to turn to anything else

Tosfos notes that according to the second reason, if someone else is already caring for the burial, or the *onein* is unable to attend to the dead relative, he has no *onein* restrictions, and may make blessings.

Tosfos says that when Rabbeinu Tam was told after Shabbos that his sister had died, he still ate meat and drank wine, since her husband was taking care of her burial.

The Shulchan Aruch (OH 71:1) rules that an *onein* may not perform *mitzvos*. However, if someone is taking care of the burial, and the *onein* wishes to perform a *mitzvah*, we do not protest.

DAILY MASHAL

Torah for its Sake

The *Gemora* says that if someone who learns Torah not for its sake, it would have been better if he were not created.

Tosfos (17a Ha'oseh) challenges this statement, from Rav's statement that one should fulfill *mitzvos* and learn Torah, even for ulterior motives, as this will lead him to ultimately do these for their own sake.

Tosfos answers that the *Gemora* here is referring to one who learns just in order to argue with his peers, but not to seek the truth of Torah, while Rav is referring to one who learns and fulfills the *mitzvos* correctly, albeit for an ulterior motive, such as for respect. Since he is not doing it incorrectly, he is encouraged to do it for his current motive, as that will ultimately lead to the correct motives.

Tosfos (Sota 22b l'olam) says that if the person fulfills the *mitzvos* and learns Torah for the sake of reward, this is encouraged, as it will lead him to do so for the right reasons. However, the *Gemora* here is referring to one who learns Torah with no intention of fulfilling anything he learns, and therefore it is better that he were not created.