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Brachos Daf 20

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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

## Different Generations

Rav Pappa said to Abaye: Why is it that for the former generations, miracles were performed, and for us, miracles are not performed? It cannot be because of their (*superiority in*) study, for we are better than they, for in the years of Rav Yehudah all their study was in (*the order of*) Nezikin, but we teach the six orders (*all six sedorim of the Mishnayos*), and when Rav Yehudah reached in *Uktzin*: If a woman was pickling vegetables in a pot, and some say: ‘Olives that were picked with their leaves are ritually pure, he said: I see (*matters that are as difficult for me to understand as all the*) arguments (*raised by my teachers*) of Rav and Shmuel here! And we teach *Uktzin* in thirteen academies! But nevertheless when Rav Yehudah took off one shoe, rain came, and we cry out all day, and there is no one who pays attention to us!

He replied: The former generations would sacrifice their lives for the sanctity of God’s Name; we do not sacrifice our lives for the sanctity of God’s Name.

The *Gemora* cites an example for this: Rav Adda bar Ahavah saw a Cuthean woman wearing a *karbalta* in the street (*some type of garment; perhaps a red head-dress, that is regarded as being ostentatious*), and thinking that she was a Jewish woman, he rose and tore it from her. It emerged that she was a Cuthean woman, and they fined him four hundred zuz. He said to her: What is your name? She replied: Matun. Matun, Matun, he said to her, which is valued at four hundred zuz (*for the name “Matun” is similar to the Aramaic word for two hundred; twice that equals four hundred*). (20a)

## Sitting in Front of the Mikvah

The *Gemora* relates: Rav Giddal was accustomed to go and sit at the entrance of the *mikvah* (*in order to instruct the women how to properly immerse*). He used to say to the women: Immerse like this; or immerse like this. The Rabbis said to him: Isn’t the master

concerned that his Evil Inclination will get the better of him? He replied: They look to me like white geese (*and they have no effect upon me*).

Rabbi Yochanan was accustomed to go and sit at the entrance of the *mikvah*. He said: This way, the women emerging will see my beauty, and so conceive children who are beautiful (*and would become Torah scholars, according to the Gemora in Bava Metzia*), like me. The Rabbis said to him: Isn’t the master concerned that his Evil Inclination will get the better of him? He replied: I come from the tribe of Yosef, which is immune to the evil eye, as the verse states: *A charming son is Yosef, a charming son to the eye*; and Rabbi Avahu says: Do not read this as “*to the eye*,” but rather, “*above the (evil) eye*.” Rabbi Yosi the son of Rabbi Chanina says the source of Yosef being above the evil eye is from a different verse. The verse states: “*v’Yidgu*” -- “*And they will multiply*” *into many like fish in the midst of the land*.” Just as the water cover the fish (*v’Yidgu implies fish, from the word dag*) in the sea and they are thereby immune to the evil eye, so too, the children of Yosef are immune to the evil eye. Alternatively, it is because the evil eye has no power over the eye which refused to enjoy on what did not belong to it (*the wife of Potifar, when she tried to seduce Yosef in Mitzrayim*). (20a)

## Mishna

Women, slaves and minors are exempt from reciting the *Shema*, and from putting on *tefillin*, but they are subject to the obligations of prayer and *mezuzah* and *Birkas Hamazon* (*Grace after Meals*). (20a – 20b)

## Women and Shema

The *Gemora* asks: That women are exempt from the *Shema* is obvious!? It is a positive *mitzvah* which is caused by time (*for one must recite it once by day and once by night*), and the rule is that



women are exempt from any positive *mitzvah* that is caused by time!?

The *Gemora* answers: You might say that because the *Shema* includes the acceptance of the Kingship of Heaven (*it is special and women should be obligated to recite it*); we are therefore taught that this is not so. (20b)

## Women and Tefillin

The *Mishna* had stated: and she is exempt from putting on *tefillin*.

The *Gemora* asks: This is obvious as well (*for it is a positive mitzvah which is caused by time*)!?

The *Gemora* answers: You might say that because it is compared to *mezuzah* (*since the verse of 'and you shall bind them' is juxtaposed to the verse of 'and you shall write them'; perhaps women should be subject to tefillin just as they are required to affix a mezuzah to their doorposts*); therefore, we are taught that this is not so. (20b)

## Women and Prayer

The *Mishna* had stated: They are subject to the obligations of prayer.

The *Gemora* explains that this is so because praying, in essence, is a supplication for Divine mercy.

[Some editions add: You might have thought that since it is written in connection to *tefillah*: Evening, morning and at afternoon, therefore it is like a positive *mitzvah* which is caused by time (and women should be exempt); therefore, we are taught that this is not so.] (20b)

## Women and Mezuzah

The *Mishna* had stated: [Women are obligated] in *mezuzah*.

The *Gemora* asks: This is obvious (*for it is a positive mitzvah which is not caused by time*)!?

The *Gemora* answers: You might have thought that because it is compared with the *mitzvah* of studying Torah (*since the verse of 'teach them to your sons' is juxtaposed to the verse of 'and you shall write them on the doorposts of your house'; perhaps women should be exempt from mezuzah just as they are exempt from*

*studying Torah*); therefore, the *Mishna* teaches us that this is not so. (20b)

## Birkas Hamazon

The *Mishna* had stated: [Women are obligated] in *Birkas Hamazon*.

The *Gemora* asks: This is obvious (*for it is a positive mitzvah which is not caused by time*)!?

The *Gemora* answers: You might have thought that because it is written: When Hashem gives you in the evening meat to eat and in the morning bread to satiate you; therefore it is like a positive *mitzvah* which is caused by time; therefore, it tells us that this is not so.

Rav Adda bar Ahavah said: Women are Biblically obligated in the *mitzvah* of *kiddush* on the *Shabbos* day (*i.e., the Friday night kiddush*).

The *Gemora* asks: But why should this be? It is a positive *mitzvah* which is caused by time, and the rule is that women are exempt from any positive *mitzvah* that is caused by time!?

Abaye said: The obligation is only Rabbinical.

Rava said to him: But he specifically said: By Biblical law!? And furthermore, according to you, they should be obligated by Rabbinical authority for every positive *mitzvah*?

Rather, said Rava: It is written: *Zachor* – remember, and *Shamor* – Observe. We therefore learn that whomever is obligated in *shamor* is obligated in *zachor*, and since women are obligated in the negative commandment of *shamor*, they are also obligated in the positive commandment of *zachor* – (*and are subject to the mitzvah of kiddush - although it is time limited*).

Ravina said to Rava: Is the obligation of women to say *Birkas Hamazon* a Rabbinical requirement, or is it Biblical?

The *Gemora* explains that the practical difference between the two would be regarding whether they can discharge the public of their obligation. If you say the obligation is Biblical, then one who is bound by Biblical law can come and discharge the obligation of another who is bound by Biblical law, but if you say that their obligation is only Rabbinical, then she is regarded as someone “who is not obligated in this matter,” and whoever is not obligated



to do something cannot discharge the obligation of another. So, what is the answer?

The *Gemora* attempts to resolve this from the following *braisa*: In truth, they did say: A son (*who is a minor*) may bless *Birkas Hamazon* on behalf of his father, and a slave may bless *Birkas Hamazon* on behalf of his master, and a woman may bless *Birkas Hamazon* on behalf of her husband. But the Sages said: A curse should come upon the man whose wife or children have to bless for him (*because he cannot recite the words himself*). Now, if you say that the (*woman's*) obligation is a Biblical one, then there is no difficulty, for one who is bound by Biblical law can come and discharge the obligation of another who is bound by Biblical law; but if you say that the (*woman's*) obligation is Rabbinic, can one, who is bound only Rabbinically, come and discharge the obligation of another who is bound by Biblical law? [*They cannot! This would prove that women are Biblically obligated in the mitzvah of Birkas Hamazon.*]

The *Gemora* retorts: But even according to your reasoning, is a minor Biblically obligated in *Birkas Hamazon*? [*No; they are not, and nevertheless, the braisa rules that a minor can discharge the obligation of an adult.*]

Rather, what is the case that we are dealing with here? It is a case where, for instance, he (*the father, master or husband*) ate a quantity for which he is only Rabbinically bound (*to bless Birkas Hamazon; i.e., he ate an amount equal to the size of an olive or an egg, but he was not completely satisfied*), in which case, one who is Rabbinically bound may come and discharge the obligation of another who is only Rabbinically bound. [*The father, master or husband ate less than the minimum quantity; it is only in such a case that a minor, slave or woman may discharge their obligation.*]

Rav Avira expounded; sometimes he said it in the name of Rabbi Ami, and sometimes he said it in the name of Rabbi Assi: The ministering angels said before the Holy One, Blessed be He: Master of the Universe, it is written in Your Torah: *Asher lo yisa panim v'lo yikach shochad* -- *Who does not show favor and Who does not take a bribe*, but You do, in fact, show favor to the people of Israel, as it is written: *Yisa Hashem panav ei'lecha* -- *May Hashem show you favor!?* Hashem replied to them: And shall I not show favor to the people of Israel, seeing that I wrote for them in the Torah: *V'achalta v'savata u'veirachta es Hashem Elokecha* -- *And you shall eat and be satisfied and bless Hashem, your God*, and they are stringent upon themselves that even if the quantity is but an olive or an egg (*they recite Birkas Hamazon*). (20b)

## HALACHAH ON THE DAF

### *Kiddush*

The *Gemora* cites the statement of Rav Ada bar Ahava that from the simultaneous expression of *zachor* and *shamor* we learn that women are obligated in *kiddush* (*from zachor*) just as they are obligated in the negative commandments of Shabbos (*shamor*).

Rav Adda bar Ahavah says that women are obligated in *kiddush* d'var Torah – from the Torah, indicating that *kiddush* itself is a Torah obligation.

Tosfos (in *Shavuos* 20b) questions this from the *Gemora* in Nazir (4a), which says that drinking the wine of *kiddush* is not a Torah obligation. Tosfos offers the following answers:

1. The obligation to recite *kiddush* is from the Torah, but the obligation to do so on a cup of wine is Rabbinic.
2. *Kiddush* over wine is a Torah obligation, but the obligation to drink the wine is Rabbinic.

The Magen Avraham (O" C 271:1) therefore assumes that once one says *maariv* on Friday night, he has fulfilled his Torah obligation of *kiddush* and is left only with the Rabbinic obligation of *kiddush* on wine.

The later Acharonim discuss the implications of this statement at length. See Dagul Merevava, Biur *Halachah*, Livyas Chen on O" C 271 and Rabbi Akiva Eiger (Responso 7) for discussions on how a man who has said *maariv* can release his wife from her Torah obligation. See Yabia Omer (1:15:6-15) on sources for and challenges to the Magen Avraham's statement.

## DAILY MASHAL

### *Living in the World to Come*

Rav Avira expounded; sometimes he said it in the name of Rabbi Ami, and sometimes he said it in the name of Rabbi Assi: The ministering angels said before the Holy One, Blessed be He: Master of the Universe, it is written in Your Torah: *Asher lo yisa panim v'lo yikach shochad* -- *Who does not show favor and Who does not take a bribe*, but You do, in fact, show favor to the people of Israel, as it is written: *Yisa Hashem panav ei'lecha* -- *May Hashem show you favor!?* Hashem replied to them: And shall I not show favor to the people of Israel, seeing that I wrote for them in the Torah: *V'achalta v'savata u'veirachta es Hashem Elokecha* -- *And you shall eat and be satisfied and bless Hashem, your God*, and they are



stringent upon themselves that even if the quantity is but an olive or an egg (*they recite Birkas Hamazon*).

HaRav Shimon Schwab asks: How did this answer the question? The verse explicitly states that Hashem will not show favor to the Jewish people!?

Furthermore, how did the Sages institute that Birkas Hamazon should be recited even after eating an amount of an olive or an egg? The Torah clearly mandates that the obligation is dependent upon satiation, and food in the quantity of an olive or an egg will not satisfy a person!? This why there is no blessing after a pleasant aroma, for it is not satiating.

He answers by citing the *Toras Kohanim*, which states that in the future, in the World to Come, one will eat a little and be satisfied (*similar to the minchah offerings in the Temple*). The Sages based their ordinance on this concept – consuming food in the amount of an olive or an egg is regarded as satisfaction – not in this world, but in the next one.

This explains why Hashem can favor the Jewish people. They have shown that they are living in this world, but it is with a constant anxiousness to be living in the World to Come, one where one can be satisfied with a mere morsel of food. When Hashem said that he will not favor the Jewish people – that was specifically a practice for this world, but not for the next one. By the Jewish people's display of "living in the World to Come" even in this world, Hashem shows favor to them, as if they were actually living in the World to Come.

## ***Hashem will Show you Favor and Grant you Peace***

Arvei Nachal

Chazal taught in the *Gemora* that the ministering angels asked Hashem that the Torah writes that Hashem "will not show favor nor will He take any bribe" (Devarim 10,17), yet He shows favor to Yisrael, as it says "Hashem will show you favor". Hashem replied: How can I not show them favor when it says in My Torah "and you shall eat and be satisfied and bless", but they are particular to bless even if the quantity is but the size of an olive or an egg!

Now, it is clear that one does not show favor to a person unless there is a good reason for doing so, for example, because of his

righteousness or wisdom. So when it says that Hashem "will not show favor" it must be referring to Tzaddikim, since it is obvious that He will not treat the wicked favorably. If so, how does Hashem's reply to the ministering angels that Yisrael are particular to bless even on small quantities - meaning that they are very righteous - answer their question?

But we can understand it with the explanation of the Rambam on the Mishna in the fourth perek of Pirkei Avos which says that Hashem does not show favor nor take a bribe, like the passuk that was quoted above. He explains that this means that when a person sins Hashem does not deduct from his mitzvos, but rather He punishes the person for his sin and the reward for his mitzvos remains untouched.

It seems to me that reason for this is because Chazal taught that reward is not given for the mitzvos in this world, since the reward for even one mitzvah is infinite and so cannot be contained by this finite world. But this world does suffice for finite punishment to be given here. If so, it is not possible to deduct from a person's mitzvos because of a sin, because this would be like taking a drop from the ocean, which would leave the ocean virtually untouched. So too if the reward of a person's mitzvos would be reduced corresponding to the amount of the sin, his reward would remain as it was without any reduction at all. However, the Marhasha wrote that when a person adds of his own volition a safeguard to a mitzvah he does receive reward for it in this world. We see from this that the power and the reward of the safeguard is not like that of the mitzvah itself, and therefore could be used as a bribe.

This is the explanation of the *Gemora*. Showing favor to someone means that although he does something improper, because he is righteous people are silent about it and treat him favorably. But the *passuk* says that Hashem "does not show favor", and punishes the Tzaddik in this world even for a small sin. Similarly, the end of the previous *passuk* in this parsha "and He will be gracious to you" is the same as the expression used in the *passuk* in Shemos (33,19) "and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious", which the *Gemora* in Brachos 7a explains means that Hashem will be gracious to a person even though he is not deserving, and that is why there are wicked people who enjoy a good life. But there are Tzaddikim who suffer a hard life because He punishes them for their sins in this world. On this the ministering angels asked from the *passuk* "He shall show favor to you", which implies that since they are righteous He will keep silent and not punish them even in this world. Hashem answered that since they are particular to make safeguards to the mitzvos He can show them favor and allow them to enjoy a good life even in this world.