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Brachos Daf 55

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**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

And Rav Yehudah said: There are three things - the prolonging of them prolongs a man's days and years; the prolonging of prayer, the prolonging of a meal, and spending a long amount of time in a privy.

The *Gemora* asks: But is the prolonging of prayer a positive thing? Hasn't Rabbi Chiya bar Abba said in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: If one prays long and analyzes it (*thinking that it will be fulfilled due to its length*), in the end he will suffer heartache, as it is written: *Prolonged prayer makes the heart sick*. And Rabbi Yitzchak also said: Three things cause a man's sins to be remembered (*for since he is displaying confidence in his merits, Heaven analyzes his deeds*), and these are they: Passing under a leaning wall, expectation the fulfillment of his prayer, and calling on Heaven to administer judgment to his fellow!?

The *Gemora* answers: There is no difficulty, as one statement speaks of a man who prays long and analyzes it (*thinking that it will be fulfilled due to its length; and that is why R' Yochanan rules that he will be disappointed*), whereas the other refers to one who prays long without analyzing it.

The *Gemora* asks: What then does he do (*in order to have his request fulfilled*)?

The *Gemora* answers: He should increase his faith in Hashem's mercy.

Rav Yehudah had stated: He who prolongs his meal. This is because perhaps a poor man will come and he will give him some food, as it is written: The Altar was of wood, three

cubits high, and it is written (*in that same verse*): "and he (*the angel Gavriel*) said to me, 'This is the Table that is before Hashem.'" Now, the verse begins with 'Altar' and finishes with 'Table'? Rabbi Yochanan and Rabbi Elozar both explain that as long as the Temple stood, the Altar atoned for Israel, but now a man's table (*by giving food to the poor*) atones for him.

Rav Yehudah had stated: One who spends a long amount of time in a privy.

The *Gemora* asks: Is this a good thing? Has it not been taught in a *braisa*: Ten things bring on hemorrhoids: One who eats the leaves of reeds, or the leaves of grapevines, or the sprouts of grapevines, or the ridged parts of the meat of an animal (*such as the tongue*), or the backbone of a fish, or salted fish not sufficiently cooked, or one who drinks wine lees, or one who wipes himself with lime, potters' clay or pebbles which have been used by another. Some add: one who suspends himself unduly in a privy!

The *Gemora* answers: There is no difficulty, as one statement refers to one who stays long and suspends himself (*by squatting*), whereas the other refer to one who stays long without suspending himself.

This may be supported by what a certain noblewoman said to Rabbi Yehudah the son of Rabbi Ila'i: Your (*radiant*) face is like that of pigbreeders and usurers (*who work minimally, but earn a lot*). He said to her: On my faith (*as a type of oath*), both of those occupations are forbidden to me, but there are twenty-four privies between my lodging and the



study hall, and when I go there (*from one place to the other*), I test myself in all of them.

And Rav Yehudah said: Three things shorten a man's days and years: One who is given a Torah scroll to read from and he refuses; if he is given a cup of benediction to say grace over and he refuses; and one who assumes an air of authority.

The *Gemora* provides the Scriptural sources for these things: One who is given a Torah scroll to read from and he refuses, as it is written: *For it (the Torah) is your life and the length of your days*. If he is given a cup of benediction to say grace over and he refuses, as it is written: *I will bless those that bless you*. One who assumes an air of authority, as Rabbi Chama the son of Rabbi Chanina said: Yosef died prior to his brothers because he carried himself with excessive power.

And Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav: There are three things for which one requires mercy (*from Above*): A good king, a good year, and a good dream.

The *Gemora* provides the Scriptural sources for these things: A good king, as it is written: *A king's heart in the hands of Hashem is like streams of water*. A good year, as it is written: *The eyes of Hashem, your God, are always upon it, from the beginning of the year until the end of the year*. A good dream, as it is written: *May You cause me to dream and allow me to live*.

And Rabbi Yochanan said: There are three things which the Holy One, Blessed be He, Himself proclaims: famine, plenty, and a good leader.

The *Gemora* provides the Scriptural sources for these things: Famine, as it is written: *Hashem has called for a famine*. Plenty, as it is written: *I will call for the grain and will increase it*. A good leader, as it is written: *And Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying: See I have called by name Betzalel, etc.*

Rabbi Yitzchak said: We must not appoint a leader over a community without first consulting it, as it is written: *And*

*Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying: See I have called by name Betzalel, the son of Uri*. The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to Moshe: Do you consider Betzalel suitable? He replied: Master of the Universe, if You think that he is suitable, surely I must also! Hashem said to him: All the same, go and consult them. He went and asked Israel: Do you consider Betzalel suitable? They replied: If the Holy One, Blessed be He, and you consider him suitable, surely we must!

Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachmeini said in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: Betzalel was so called on account of his wisdom. At the time when the Holy One, Blessed be He, said to Moshe, "Go and tell Betzalel to make me a Tabernacle, an ark and vessels," Moshe went and reversed the order, saying, "Make an Ark, and vessels and a Tabernacle." Betzalel said to him, "Moshe, our Teacher, it is customary in the world that a man first builds a house and then brings vessels into it; but you say, 'Make me an Ark, and vessels and a Tabernacle.' Where shall I put the vessels that I am to make? Perhaps the Holy One, Blessed be He, said to you, 'Make a Tabernacle, an Ark and vessels?'" Moshe replied, "Perhaps you were in the shadow of God (*"tzeil" – shadow; "keil" of Hashem*) and knew!"

Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav: Betzalel knew how to combine the letters by which the heavens and earth were created. It is written here: *And He has filled him (Betzalel) with the spirit of God, with wisdom and with understanding, and with knowledge*, and it is written elsewhere: Hashem - by wisdom, founded the earth; by understanding, He established the heavens, and it is also written: By His Knowledge, the depths were cleaved.

Rabbi Yochanan said: The Holy One, Blessed be He, gives wisdom only to one who already has wisdom, as it is written: *He gives wisdom to the wise, and knowledge to those that know understanding*.

Rav Tachlifa from the West heard and repeated it before Rabbi Avahu. He said to him: You learn it from there, but we learn it from that which is written: *In the hearts of all that are wise-hearted I have put wisdom*.



Rav Chisda said: Any dream rather than one of a fast (*for it is a bad omen to dream that one is fasting*).

Rav Chisda also said: A dream which is not interpreted is like a letter which is not read.

Rav Chisda also said: Neither a good dream nor a bad dream is ever completely fulfilled.

Rav Chisda also said: A bad dream is better than a good dream (*for it will inspire him to repent*).

Rav Chisda also said: The sadness caused by a bad dream is sufficient for it (*and can be regarded as being fulfilled*), and the joy which a good dream gives is sufficient for it.

Rav Yosef (*who was blind*) said: Even for me, the joy caused by a good dream nullifies it (*for he experienced the pleasantness of the dream itself*).

Rav Chisda also said: A bad dream is worse (*for the body*) than lashes (*for he is worried about it*), since it is written: And God has so made it that men should fear before Him, and Rabbah bar bar Chanah said in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: This refers to a bad dream.

*A prophet that has a dream tells a dream, but he that has My word speaks My word of truth. What has the chaff to do with the wheat? So says Hashem.* What is the connection of chaff and wheat with a dream? Rather, said Rabbi Yochanan in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai: Just as wheat cannot be without chaff, so there cannot be a dream without some nonsense.

Rabbi Berachyah said: While a part of a dream may be fulfilled, the whole of it is never fulfilled.

The *Gemora* asks: From where do we know this?

The *Gemora* answers: It is from Yosef, as it is written: *And behold the sun and the moon [and eleven stars bowed down to me]*, and at that time his mother was not living. [*The sun referred to his father, and the moon referred to his mother,*

*Rachel, but she never bowed down to him, for she had died much earlier.*]

Rabbi Levi said: A man should await the fulfillment of a good dream for as much as twenty-two years. From where do we know this? It is from Yosef, for it is written: *These are the chronicles of Yaakov; Yosef being seventeen years old, etc.*; and it is further written: *And Yosef was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh.* How many years is it from seventeen to thirty? Thirteen. Add the seven years of plenty and two of famine, and you have twenty-two. [*It wasn't until then that his dreams were fulfilled.*]

Rav Huna said: A good man is not shown a good dream, and a bad man is not shown a bad dream.

It has been taught similarly in a *braisa*: David, during his entire lifetime, never saw a good dream, and Achitofel, during his entire lifetime, never saw a bad dream.

The *Gemora* asks: But it is written: *No evil shall befall you*, and Rav Chisda said in the name of Rabbi Yirmiyah: This means that you will not be disturbed either by bad dreams or by evil thoughts, (*and it is written*): *neither shall any plague come near your tent*, i.e., you shall not find your wife doubtfully a *niddah* when you return from a journey? [*Here we see that it is a blessing for a righteous person to be spared the experience of having a bad dream!?*]

The *Gemora* answers: Though he (*the righteous person*) does not see an evil dream, others see one about him.

The *Gemora* asks: But if he does not see one, is this considered an advantage? Why, Rabbi Ze'ira said: Whoever goes seven days without a dream is called wicked, as it is written: *He will sleep satisfied, and he shall not be visited with evil.* Do not read it as *savei'ah* – satisfied, but rather, as *sheva* - seven.

The *Gemora* answers: What Rav Huna means is as follows: He sees, but he does not remember what he has seen.



Rav Huna bar Ami said in the name of Rabbi Pedas, who said in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: If one has a dream which makes his soul depressed, he should go and have it interpreted in the presence of three.

The *Gemora* asks: He should have it interpreted!? Han't Rav Chisda said: A dream which is not interpreted is like a letter which is not read (*so as long as it hasn't been interpreted, there should be no concern at all!*)?

The *Gemora* answers: Rathe, he should "remedy" it in the presence of three.

The following is the procedure for one who is distressed on account of a bad dream: Let him bring three people and say to them, "I have seen a good dream," and they should say to him, "Good it is and good may it be. May the Merciful One turn it for the better. Seven times may it be decreed from Heaven that it should be good and may it be good." They should say three verses of transformation (*whose theme is turning suffering into joy*) and three verses of redemption and three verses of peace.

The three verses of transformation are: (1) *You did transform for me my lamenting into dancing, You loosened my sackcloth and girded me with gladness.* (2) *Then shall the maiden rejoice with dance, and the young men and the old together (shall rejoice); for I will transform their mourning into joy* etc. (3) *Nevertheless Hashem, your God would not listen to Bilaam; and He transformed (the curse into a blessing).*

The three verses of redemption are: (1) It is written: *He has redeemed my soul in peace from battles against me.* (2) *And the redeemed of God shall return (and come with singing to Zion).* (3) *And the people said to Shaul, "Shall Yonasan die who has achieved this great salvation in Israel?"* [The verse concludes: *So the people redeemed Yonasan and he did not die.*]

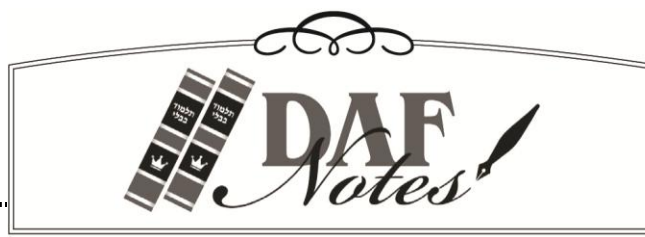
The three verses of peace are: (1) It is written: I will create a speech of the lips: "Peace, peace, to him that is far off and to him that is near," said Hashem, "And I will heal him." (2)

Then the spirit clothed Amasai (*who was chief of the captains: We are yours, David, and on your side, son of Yishai, Peace, peace, be to you and peace be to your helpers*). (3) *Thus you shall say to him: Such success for life! Peace be upon you, and peace be upon your household, etc.*

Ameimar, Mar Zutra and Rav Ashi were once sitting together. They said: Let each of us say something which the others have not heard. One of them began: If one has seen a dream and does not know what he saw (*if it was for good tidings or for bad*), let him stand before the *Kohanim* at the time when they spread out their hands, and say as follows: 'Master of the Universe, I am Yours and my dreams are Yours. I have dreamt a dream and I do not know what it is. Whether I have dreamt about myself or my companions have dreamt about me, or I have dreamt about others, if they are good dreams, strengthen them and reinforce them like the dreams of Yosef, and if they require healing, heal them as (*You healed*) the waters of Marah through Moshe, our teacher, and as (*You healed*) Miriam from her *tzara'as*, and as (*You healed*) Chizkiyah of his sickness, and as (*You healed*) the waters of Yericho by Elisha. And just as You transformed the curse of the wicked Bilaam into a blessing, so transform all my dreams into something good for me.

He should conclude his prayer along with the *Kohanim*, so that the congregation may answer, "Amen!" If he cannot (*because he finished early*), he should say: Mighty One on high, He Who abides in power, You art peace and your Name is peace. May it be Your will to bestow peace on us!

The second one commenced and said: If a man is going to a city and is afraid of the evil eye, let him take the thumb of his right hand in his left hand, and take the thumb of his left hand in his right hand, and say: I, So-and-So, the son of So-and-So, am of the seed of Yosef - over which the evil eye has no power, as it is written: *Yosef is a charming son, a charming son to the eye.* Do not read these words *alei ayin*, but rather, *olei ayin*, rising above the eye. Rabbi Yosi bar Chanina said: It is derived from the following verse: *And let them (the children of Yosef) grow into a multitude like fish in the land.* Just as water covers the fish in the sea, so that the eye has no power over them, so too, the



eye has no power over the seed of Yosef. If he is afraid of his own evil eye, he should look at the side of his left nostril.

The third commenced and said: If a man falls ill, the first day he should not tell anyone, so that he should not have bad luck; but after that he may tell.

The *Gemora* relates that when Rava fell ill, on the first day he did not tell anyone, but after that he said to his attendant: Go and announce that Rava is ill. Whoever loves him, let him pray for him, and whoever hates him, let him rejoice over him; for it is written: *Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles, lest Hashem will see it and it will displease Him and He will turn away His anger from him.*

When Shmuel had a bad dream, he would recite the following verse: *The dreams speak falsely.* When he had a good dream, he used to say: *Do the dreams speak falsely?* Behold it is written: *I (God) shall speak with him in a dream.*

Rava pointed out a contradiction. It is written: *I shall speak with him in a dream,* and it is written: *the dreams speak falsely!*?

He answers that there is no contradiction, for in one case it is through an angel (*where it is the truth*), and the other is referring to one sent through a demon (*where it has no meaning*).

Rabbi Bizna bar Zavda said in the name of Rabbi Akiva, who said it in the name of Rabbi Panda, who said it in the name of Rabbi Nachum, who said it in the name of Rabbi Birayim, who said it in the name of a certain elder; and who was this elder? It was Rabbi Bana'ah: There were twenty-four interpreters of dreams in Jerusalem. Once I dreamt a dream and I went to all of them and they all gave different interpretations, and all were fulfilled, thus confirming that which is said: All dreams follow the mouth.

The *Gemora* asks: Is the statement that all dreams follow the mouth Scriptural?

The *Gemora* answers: Yes indeed, as stated by Rabbi Elozar, for Rabbi Elozar said: From where do we know that all dreams follow the mouth? It is because it is written: *and it came to pass, as he interpreted to us, so it was.*

Rava said: This is only if the interpretation corresponds to the content of the dream (*but if the interpretation has no connection to the dream at all, the interpretation will be meaningless*), for it is written: *to each man according to his dream he did interpret.*

It is written: *When the chief baker saw that the interpretation was good.*

The *Gemora* asks: How did he know this?

Rabbi Elozar says: This tells us that each of them was shown his own dream and the interpretation of the other one's dream.

Rabbi Yochanan said: If one rises early and a Scriptural verse comes to his mouth, this is a kind of minor prophecy.

Rabbi Yochanan also said: Three kinds of dream are fulfilled: an early morning dream, a dream which a friend has about one, and a dream which is interpreted in the midst of a dream. Some add also, a dream which is repeated, as it is written: *and for that the dream was repeated to Pharaoh,* etc.

Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachmeini said in the name of Rabbi Yonasan: A man is shown in a dream only what is suggested by his own thoughts, as it is written: *As for you, O King, your thoughts came into your mind upon your bed.* Alternatively, I can derive it from here: *That you may know the thoughts of the heart.*

Rava said: This is proven by the fact that a man is never shown in a dream a date palm of gold, or an elephant going through the eye of a needle.

## DAILY MASHAL

### ***A Person's Table Is Like A Mizbeiach***

The *Gemara* states that when a person hosts a poor man at his table, he is rewarded with long life. While the *Beis Hamikdash* stood, the *mizbeiach* atoned for our sins. Now that the *Beis Hamikdash* is in ruins, the table upon which we eat takes the place of the *mizbeiach* and atones for us. This comparison is learned from the *pasuk* in Yechezkel, “The *mizbeiach* of wood should be three *amos* tall...this is the **table** that is before Hashem” (Yechezkel 41:22). According to Rashi and Metzudas David this *pasuk* refers to the table in the *Beis Hamikdash*, and calls it a *mizbeiach* to teach us that the tables within our homes can serve as an altar. (See Radak and Malbim, *ibid.*, who interpret the *pasuk* just the opposite, explaining that the *mizbeiach* is termed as a table.)

From the same *pasuk*, the Mishna in Pirkei Avos (3:3) learns that when a person recites a *dvar Torah* during the course of his meal, his table becomes like a *mizbeiach*. This is also a reference to the ability of our table to atone for our sins.

**Feeding poor people and reciting words of Torah are two advantages that complement one another:** The Shlah (*Sha'ar HaOsiyos, Emek Brachah, 6*) explains that whereas the food we offer to poor people represents the offering of the *korbanos* to Hashem, the discussion of Torah at the table represents the slaughtering of the *korbanos*. By absorbing the holy Torah into our hearts, we slaughter our *yetzer hora*.

Alternatively, he cites earlier commentators who wrote that feeding the poor and reciting *divrei Torah* are not two independent advantages. They complement one another, and together enact a full atonement. The food offered to the poor man represents the sacrifices, and the words of Torah represent the songs of the Leviim that accompanied them. This is also one of the underlying reasons for the *zemiros* that are sung during *seudos*. The words of Torah are even more significant in this respect than the *zemiros*. (The

Shlah also cites yet another explanation in the name of *Tola'as Yaakov*.)

Since the food given to the poor takes the place of the *korban*, it is important to feed them the choicest portions, just as the choicest animals should be offered on the *mizbeiach*.

**Eating “days”:** Based on this, the Shlah praised the time-hallowed custom in many communities of families having yeshiva students at their tables regularly, sharing their food with them. In the earlier yeshivos of Europe, there were no organized eating facilities. Rather, the students ate at the houses of people in the community. This custom was known as eating “days” (*teg*), since each student had a schedule for each day of the week, to eat at a particular house.

The Shlah stresses that a person who supports a yeshiva student transforms his table into a *mizbeiach* in the most splendid and perfect fashion. He supports poor yeshiva students, while simultaneously hearing the words of Torah that the students speak at his table. In conclusion, he writes, “I have written at length about how a meal should be properly conducted, in order to tell you that ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on all that comes from Hashem’s mouth’ (Devarim 8:3). This *pasuk* refers primarily to the *mitzvos* that surround the meal.”

**The custom to deliver a Torah-speech at celebratory meals:** The Rashbatz also discusses how one should conduct meals. In *Magen Avos*, his commentary to Pirkei Avos (3:4), he writes as follows. “A person must speak words of Torah during the course of his meal. Only then does his table become like a *mizbeiach* before Hashem. This is the source of the custom to deliver a Torah discourse at a *chassan-banquet* before *birkas hamazon*. This ancient custom was kept and encouraged by the wise Torah leaders of previous generations. It is more appropriate than speaking in shul before the meal, as the custom has recently become.