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Megillah Daf 22

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The Mishna had stated: On Rosh Chodesh and Chol Hamoed (*Intermediary Days*) four people are called to the Torah; not less than four and not more.

Ula bar Rav inquires of Rava: How do we divide the reading of Rosh Chodesh?

The Gemora explains the inquiry: There are fifteen verses in this reading. They consist of three paragraphs. How should the first section (eight verses) be divided? If the first two people called each read three verses, we are left with just two verses remaining in this section and the halachah is that we must end not less than three verses away from the end of a section. If we will read four verses for each of the first two people, we will be left seven verses; two discussing Shabbos and five discussing Rosh Chodesh. How shall those seven verses be divided? We cannot read the first two verses and one from the next paragraph since the halachah is that when a paragraph has begun, one is required to read at least three verses. If we will read the first two verses and three verses from the next paragraph, we will be left with only two verses for the fourth person and the halachah is that each person is required to read at least three verses.

Rava responded that he didn't hear the halachah regarding the Rosh Chodesh reading but he heard a

different halachah which is similar to this and perhaps the two can be compared. The Mishna in Taanis (26a) states that the men of the Ma'amados (*What are the ma'amados? The Mishna in Taanis explains that it is written, "Command the children of Israel, and say to them: My offering my food" (Num. 28:2); and how can the korban of one be performed, if he does not stand by its side? The Early Prophets established twenty-four divisions; for each division there was in Jerusalem a delegation [ma'amad] of Kohanim, of Levites, and Israelites. When the time of the division arrives, the Kohanim and Levites go up to Yerushalayim, and Israelites of the division gather in their towns to read the section of the Creation.*) would read from the Torah every day of the week. A section that had five verses would be split into two. The Gemora in Taanis discussed how a section consisting of only five verses can be divided into two. Rav said: The second person would go back and rereads the last verse which was read by the first one. Shmuel said: The third verse of the section is split into two parts and the first reader reads the first half and the second reader reads the second half. Rav doesn't say like Shmuel since he maintains that any verse in the Torah which Moshe did not divide, we are not permitted to divide it. Shmuel holds that since there is no choice, we are permitted to split the verse into two parts. Shmuel does not say like Rav since he wishes to protect against the false impression that



only two verses were read. (*Those who enter the synagogue late and those who leave early will not realize that the third verse was repeated.*) (22a)

The Gemora inquires: How many people do we call to the Torah on a public fast day? Rosh Chodesh and Chol Hamoed have four because of the Mussaf, but a fast day which does not have Mussaf, only three people will be called. Or, do we say, that since an extra tefillah is recited (*aneinu*), four people are called.

The Gemora attempts to prove that four people are called from an incident that occurred with Rav. Rav was in Bavel on a public fast day. Rav went up to read the Torah. He recited a blessing before he began but did not recite one when he concluded reading. When the congregation fell on their faces to recite *tachanun*, Rav did not fall on his face (*the Gemora will discuss this later*). Obviously, Rav was the third person called and not the first or second since he was neither a Kohen nor a Levi. Why didn't he recite a blessing upon conclusion of the reading? Is it not because another person would be reading after him and that person will recite the final blessing. This proves that there were four people called to the Torah.

The Gemora discards this proof: Perhaps Rav was the first person called to the Torah. Although Rav was not a Kohen, he would be the first reader since he was an extremely respected Torah scholar. This would explain why Rav recited the blessing before he began (*since he was the first reader*).

The Gemora replies: This incident transpired after they already established that every reader recites a blessing prior to reading from the Torah (*and not only the first*).

If so, asks the Gemora, he should have recited a blessing upon conclusion of the reading.

The Gemora answers: Since Rav was there, the people would not leave early (*out of respect for Rav*) and therefore there was no necessity to recite the blessing at the conclusion of the reading. [*In conclusion – there is no proof from this incident as to how many people are called to the Torah on a public fast day because Rav might have been called first.*]

The Gemora cites a braisa: This is the general rule: Any day where prolonging the tefillah would cause a loss of work, such as a public fast day or Tisha b'Av (*where work is halachically permitted*); we call three people to the Torah, but a day where prolonging the tefillah would not cause a loss of work, such as Rosh Chodesh (*women have the custom of refraining to work*) and Chol Hamoed; we call four people to the Torah. (22a – 22b)

The Gemora proceeds to discuss the other part of the incident that transpired with Rav in Bavel. Rav was in Bavel on a public fast day. When the congregation fell on their faces to recite *tachanun*, Rav did not fall on his face.

The Gemora asks: Why didn't Rav fall on his face to recite *tachanun*?



The Gemora answers: It was a stone floor and there is a biblical prohibition against prostrating oneself upon stones except in the Beis Hamikdosh.

The Gemora asks: The entire congregation should have avoided falling on the floor as well?

The Gemora answers: The stones were only in front of Rav.

The Gemora persists: Rav should have went to where everyone else was and fall there?

The Gemora answers: Rav did not want to burden the congregation by walking past them; they would be compelled to stand up for him (*out of respect*).

Alternatively, the Gemora answers (*its original question*): Rav prostrated himself with his arms and legs extended when he recited *tachanun* and Ula maintains that the Torah only prohibited this type of prostration.

The Gemora asks: Let Rav prostrate himself and not extend his arms and legs (*like the rest of the congregation*)?

The Gemora answers: He did not want to change from his usual custom.

Alternatively, the Gemora answers that Rav being a prominent person is different as Rabbi Elozar said: A prominent person is not permitted to prostrate himself while praying in public unless he is certain that he will be answered like Yehoshua bin Nun. (22b)

We learned in a braisa: There are different types of prostration. “Kidah” means bowing on the face. “Keriah” means falling down on one’s knees. “Hishtachava’ah” means bowing down and extending one’s arms and legs.

The Gemora relates that Levi once demonstrated how to perform a kidah-bowing (one brings his face to the ground while standing and using only his thumbs for support, he rises back up again) in front of Rebbe and became lame because of it. The Gemora asks that there is an incident recorded that Levi became lame for a different reason. Levi once complained towards Heaven and became lame because of it. (*Levi ordered a fast-day, but no rain descended. He said: "Creator of the universe! You did ascend to the heavens, and did sit down, but have no compassion upon Your children." As he said that, rain descended, but Levi fell and became lame.*) The Gemora answers that it was both matters that contributed to him becoming lame. (22b)

Rav Chiya bar Avin said: I observed Abaye and Rava leaning on their sides when they recited *tachanun*. (*Since they were prominent, they didn't fall on their faces, but they were permitted to lean.*) (22b – 23a)

INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

Rosh Chodesh reading

After discussing the options for reading the 4 aliyos on Rosh Chodesh, the Gemora rules that we repeat the middle aliyah.

The Rishonim and later poskim differ on how to apply this to the Rosh Chodesh reading.

The Rif says that the conclusion of the Gemora is that the first aliyah reads 3 verses, then the second aliyah starts from the 3rd verse (just read by the first), and reads 3 verses.

The Ramban challenges this explanation, as we still have to be concerned about people who enter before the second aliyah. Just as we don't start only one verse into a paragraph, since those who enter when the next aliyah starts will mistakenly think that the previous one was less than 3, so we shouldn't start the second aliyah here, since people will think that the previous one was only 2. If we aren't concerned about people making this mistake, we can just as easily have 4 aliyos without repetition: the first 2 aliyos can split up the 8 verses of the first paragraph, the 3rd can read the 2 verses of the middle paragraph and the first of the last, and the last can read the remaining 4 verses. The objection the Gemora initially raised was that the 3rd aliyah would be reading only one verse in the last paragraph, leaving the next aliyah to start there, but with the Rif's solution, we also start the second aliyah less than 3 verses in.

The Ramban therefore says that the Gemora's conclusion is only about the dispute of Rav and Shmuel about the verses of the ma'amados, which are a total of 8, which must be split into 3 aliyos. In such a case, we have no option but to split or repeat, and the Gemora rules that the middle aliyah repeats. However, on Rosh Chodesh, we read 4 aliyos without

any repetition, simply reading one verse from the last paragraph for the 3rd aliyah.

The Rashba answers the Ramban's challenge by saying that the advantage of the Rif's explanation is that there is only one possible mistake – that someone who comes in before the second aliyah will assume the prior one only read 2. However, with the Ramban's method of reading for Rosh Chodesh, there is the additional concern that someone will walk in as the 3rd aliyah is starting the first verse of the last paragraph, and assume that that verse was the full aliyah. Since the Rif's method has the first aliyah read 3 verses, this concern isn't present.

The Ran says that although the Ramban is correct in identifying the same issue with the Rif's method, we do not decide how to rule simply based on the application of these concerns. Due to the concerns of people entering late and exiting early, the Sages enacted fixed rules of how one may split up aliyos, and once these were enacted, we may not violate them. Therefore, although the concern is present in the Rif's method, it is preferable to the Ramban's, because it doesn't violate any of the rules. On the contrary, by repeating a verse, this will highlight the rules to people, as they will inquire why we are repeating.

The Gra (OH 423) accepts the Ramban's concern, but says that we do repeat, but in a method that addresses this concern: the first reads 3 verses, the next reads the remaining 5 of that paragraph, the 3rd repeats the last 3 of the first paragraph and the whole next paragraph, and the fourth reads the last paragraph.

CONCERN FOR BURDENING THE CONGREGATION

The Gemora proceeds to discuss the other part of the incident that transpired with Rav in Bavel. Rav was in Bavel on a public fast day. When the congregation fell on their faces to recite *tachanun*, Rav did not fall on his face.

The Gemora asks: Why didn't Rav fall on his face to recite *tachanun*?

The Gemora answers: It was a stone floor and there is a biblical prohibition against prostrating oneself upon stones except in the Beis Hamikdosh.

The Gemora asks: The entire congregation should have avoided falling on the floor as well?

The Gemora answers: The stones were only in front of Rav.

The Gemora persists: Rav should have gone to where everyone else was and fall there?

The Gemora answers: Rav did not want to burden the congregation by walking past them; they would be compelled to stand up for him (*out of respect*).

The sefer Reach Dudaim comments: Although prostrating during *tachanun* is a mitzva, Rebbe did not want to burden the congregation to stand up for him. This was not an act of piety on Rebbe's account since it involved a leniency in his own mitzva; rather it is preferable according to halachah to be *mevatel* some specifics of the mitzva and not disrupt the congregation.

Reb Yitzchak Zilberstein makes a correlation between this Gemora and the following *shaila*: A congregation does not begin the tefillah until the Rabbi enters the synagogue. The Rabbi was walking to the synagogue when he realized that he had forgotten his lulav and esrog in his house. Should he reverse himself to get the lulav and esrog in order to have them by Hallel or would the time it would take be an unnecessary burden on his congregation? Rav did not perform the mitzva of *tachanun* in its proper way because he was concerned of burdening the congregation, so here too, the Rabbi should not cause the congregation to wait for him even though it will diminish somewhat his mitzva of Hallel.

However, he concludes that perhaps *tachanun* is different. The Tur writes (O" C 131) that *tachanun* is not an obligation like other portions of tefillah and this is why it is not recited when a *choson* (groom) is there. That is why Rav conceded part of the *tachanun* on the account of the congregation. This principle would not have been applicable if *tachanun* was compulsory. Shaking the lulav and esrog during the recital of Hallel is an essential part of the mitzva of the lulav and esrog and perhaps would override the burdening on the congregation.

WORKING ON ROSH CHODESH

The Gemora cites a braisa: This is the general rule: Any day where prolonging the tefillah would cause a loss of work, such as a public fast day or Tisha b'Av (*where work is halachically permitted*); we call three people to the Torah, but a day where prolonging the tefillah would not cause a loss of work, such as Rosh



Chodesh (women have the custom of refraining to work) and Chol Hamoed; we call four people to the Torah.

Rashi in Megillah (22b) states that the women abstained from performing work on Rosh Chodesh.

Tosfos (in Rosh Hashanah) states that there is a prohibition against working on Rosh Chodesh.

Turei Even writes that in the times that the Beis Hamikdosh was in existence, there was a prohibition of refraining from work which applied to the men as well. This was due to the korban mussaf which was offered for all of Klal Yisroel on that day. A person is forbidden from doing work on a day that he brings a korban. The Yerushalmi states that in truth, there should be a prohibition against working every day because of the korban tammid which is offered twice daily on behalf of the entire Klal Yisroel but since it is impossible to exist if no one is working; the korban tammid was excluded from this halachah. However, a korban offered on Rosh Chodesh or Yom Tov which is not a daily korban would require that a person should abstain from work.

According to this, it would not be necessary to have a new halachah that work is forbidden on Chol Hamoed (Intermediary Days) since there is the korban mussaf offered on that day. The new halachah teaches us that there is a prohibition against working even at night, when there are no korbanos being brought.

Truas Melech (59) applies this principle to answer why a new reason was necessary to forbid women from working on Rosh Chodesh. They are included in

the korban just like a man and they should be prohibited from working on account of the korban. He answers that the women accepted Rosh Chodesh like a festival accomplished that they will refrain from working even at night when the korban cannot be offered.

The Biur Halachah (417) cites Rav Yaakov Emden in sefer Mor U'ktziah that there is no prohibition against a woman working during the night of Rosh Chodesh. Biur Halachah writes that he is unsure as to what the practicing custom is.

The Biur Halachah is also unsure if the prohibition against working on Rosh Chodesh is an established custom and the women are obligated not to work on Rosh Chodesh or is it just that a woman who abstains from work is fulfilling a nice custom.