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Daf Notes is currently being dedicated to the neshamah of

Tzvi Gershon Ben Yoel (Harvey Felsen) o”h

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

ASHES ON THE HEAD

➤ The Mishna had stated that they would place ashes on the head of the Nasi and upon the head of the Rosh Beis Din (Head of the Court). Each person would place the ashes on his own head. The Gemora questions why the Nasi and Rosh Beis Din do not place the ashes on their head by themselves. Rabbi Abba answers that being embarrassed by one’s own hand pales in comparison to being embarrassed by the hands of others and this will help make their prayers more successful.

The Gemora states that they would place the ashes on the place where the tefillin are worn on one’s head. (15b – 16a)

ASHES ON THE ARK

➤ The Mishna had stated that they would take the Ark into the streets of the town and pray there. The Gemora offers two reasons as to why they went into the center of town. Rabbi Chiya bar Abba says that they previously prayed in private to no avail, so now let them try praying in public where there is more shame and can bring about true repentance. Rish Lakish says that perhaps the exile from their synagogues will atone for them. A difference

between the two of them would be if they went from one synagogue to another. It would be considered exile but there is no public humiliation.

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi explains the purpose of taking the Ark outside. It is to convey the idea that the Ark, which is private, has been degraded as a consequence of our sins. This will help lead to a true repentance.

The Gemora explains that the significance of wearing sackcloth is to convey the idea that we are regarded as animals (sackcloth is generally made from goats’ hair).

The Gemora presents two reasons as to why they would place ashes on the Ark. Rabbi Yehuda ben Pazi says that it is as if Hashem is saying “I am with him in distress.” Rish Lakish states that it is as if to say: In their every distress, He is in distress. Rabbi Zeira commented that when he initially observed them placing the ashes on the Ark, his entire body trembled.

The Gemora offers two opinions as to why each person placed ashes on his head. One opinion cited is because Klal Yisroel is regarding themselves unworthy like ashes. The other opinion is that they were beseeching Hashem to remember the ashes of Yitzchak. (16a)

GOING TO THE CEMETERY

➤ The Gemora states that it was the custom to visit a cemetery on a fast day. One reason given is that the Jewish people were saying that they consider themselves like corpses and this will stimulate them to repent. Another reason is that this will enable the deceased who are buried in the cemetery to pray for them. According to the second reason, they would not visit a cemetery that contained the graves of gentiles. (16a)

CHAZAN

➤ The Mishna had stated that the eldest among them addressed them and said words that would inspire them to mend their ways. Abaye elaborates that if there is an elderly person who is also a scholar, he would address the people. If not, then a young scholar would address them. If there were no scholars present, a man of stature (**Rashi** – tall man **Rosh** – a learned man **Meiri** – a pious individual) would address them.

Rav Adda bar Ahava said that a person who stole and repented but did not return the stolen object is compared to a person who is holding a dead sheretz in his hand; even if he immerses himself in all the

waters of the world, the immersion is not valid. Once he releases the sheretz and immerses himself in a mikvah which contains forty se'ah, he is tahor.

The Mishna had stated that they would send a chazzan to lead the prayer who was an elder and fluent in the prayers. He should have children and his house should be empty (lacking the necessary funds to support his family) in order that his heart will be completely devoted in the prayer.

The Gemora cites a braisa which rules that even if there is an elderly person who is a scholar, it is still preferable to send someone to be the chazzan who is fluent in the prayers.

Rabbi Yehuda elaborates on the attributes which are necessary for the chazzan to have. He should have small children and no means to support them. He should be someone who works on a farm and needs rain but his house is empty (from sin). He should be a person that does not have a bad reputation even from his younger years. He should be humble, acceptable to the congregation and have a sweet voice. He should be an expert in Scripture, halacha and aggadah. The Rabbis heard this braisa and looked at Rabbi Yitzchak bar Ami who possessed all these attributes.

The Mishna had stated that the chazzan will recite the eighteen brochos of Shemoneh Esrei plus an

additional six brochos. The Gemora asks that the Mishna actually lists seven conclusions. Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak answers that the first conclusion mentioned in the Mishna is the conclusion of the brachah of Geulah. (16a - 16b)

ELABORATION OF MISHNA

➤ The Gemora cites a braisa that explains the soundings of the shofar which the Mishna mentioned. After each one of the extra blessings, they sounded the shofar. They alternated between sounding a tekiah after one of the brochos with sounding a teruah afterwards. Rashi explains that when it was announced “tekiah,” they blew a tekiah, teruah, tekiah and when it was announced “teruah,” they blew teruah, tekiah, teruah.

The Gemora cites a Scriptural verse proving that they didn’t answer Amen in the Beis Hamikdosh; rather they answered Boruch shem kevod malchuso l’olam vo’ed.

The Gemora asks from a braisa which states that regarding matters of misfortune, we would always begin with the least important person.

The Gemora answers that placing the ashes on the head of the Nasi and the Rosh Beis Din is an honor for them since the people are telling them that they are prominent enough to beg for compassion for the entire congregation. (16b)

RABBI YEHUDAH

➤ The Mishna had stated that there were six additional brachos recited on the public fast day. The six additional brachos are: Zichronos and Shofaros, "To Hashem, in my distress I called Him and he answered me," "I will lift up my eyes to the mountains...," "From the depths, I have called you, Hashem," "A prayer of the afflicted, when he faints." Rabbi Yehuda says that he did not have to say Zichronos and Shofaros, but instead he said, "If there be a famine in the land, if there will be a plague...," and "The word of the Hashem that came to Yeremiya concerning the droughts."

The Gemora explains that Rabbi Yehuda maintains that the brachos of Zichronos and Shofaros are only recited on Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur during a Yovel year and during war time. (16b – 17a)

INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

PRAYING BY A CEMETERY

➤ The Gemora states that it was the custom to visit a cemetery on a fast day. One reason given is that the Jewish people were saying that they consider themselves like corpses and this will stimulate them to repent. Another reason is that this will enable the deceased who are buried in the cemetery to pray for them. According to the second reason, they would not visit a cemetery that contained the graves of gentiles.

The Ritva writes that they didn't go to the cemetery in order to daven there because that is forbidden on the account of "loeg lerosh" – it is considered mocking to the dead who cannot perform the mitzvos; rather they davened in the streets and went to the cemetery afterwards.

The Ran adds that they did not take the sefer Torah with them when they went to the cemetery.

The Noda B'yehuda (O"C 2:109) was asked on a year that there was no rain and there was tremendous suffering; if they would be permitted to go to a cemetery with a sefer Torah and daven there for rain.

He cites a Zohar (Acharei Mos) which states that davening by a cemetery inspires the souls of those buried there to inform those that are buried in Chevron (Patriarchs and the Matriarchs) who subsequently will arouse Hashem's compassion.

However, there is a Gemora in Brachos (18a) which rules that a person should not enter a cemetery with tefillin on his head or read from a sefer Torah in his arm. We can infer from this Gemora that reading from the sefer Torah is forbidden but holding it would be permitted. The Kesef Mishna in Hilchos Sefer Torah (10:6) learns that both are forbidden; reading from the sefer Torah or holding it.

The Noda B'yehuda concludes that although he is not an expert in the hidden portions of Torah, the Zohar cited does warn against bringing a sefer Torah that might be missing letters into a cemetery since this can cause terrible consequences.

The sefer Igra D'taanisa wonders why the Noda B'yehuda makes no mention of our Gemora which would indicate that one can go daven by a cemetery.

The Minchas Elozar discusses the permissibility of people davening by Kever Rochel. Some say that we are not mocking Rochel since she was living before the Torah was given; she was never obligated in mitzvos.

The Netziv rules that in his days, it would be permitted because the custom was to bury them deeper than ten tefachim from the ground and it is considered like a different domain.

The Rama (O"C 581:4) writes that there are places that have the custom to go to cemeteries on Erev Rosh Hashanah and to recite lengthy Tefillos there. The Chidah asks on this Rama from the Ritva here that states explicitly that one should not daven in the cemetery.



There are those that create a distinction between a compulsory tefillah and a tefillah which is only voluntary.

The Elya Rabbah (581) quotes from the Maharil that one should be careful when going to the graves of Tzadikim that your tefillos should not be directed towards those that are buried there, rather one should daven to Hashem and ask for compassion in the merit of these Tzadikim.

Some say that you can ask the dead to be an advocate on your behalf.

The Bach (Y"D 217) rules that it is forbidden to daven to the dead because of the prohibition of being "doresh el hameisim." He points out that even though we find that Calev did daven in Chevron by the Meoras Hamachpeila, he wasn't davening to the Avos. Rather, since a cemetery is a place of holiness and purity, the tefillos davened there will be more readily accepted.

DAILY MASHAL

HASHEM'S DISTRESS - ONLY BY A TZIBUR

AND NOT BY AN INDIVIDUAL

➤ The Gemora presents two reasons as to why they would place ashes on the Ark. Rabbi Yehuda ben Pazi says that it is as if Hashem is saying "I am with

him in distress." Rish Lakish states that it is as if to say: In their every distress, He is in distress.

The Beis HaLevi in his Dorshos (7) states that there is a huge difference between the two verses. Rabbi Yehuda ben Pazi maintains that Hashem, so to speak, suffers even when an individual member of Klal Yisroel is suffering. Rish Lakish holds that Hashem is in distress only when Klal Yisroel is in distress but not by an individual.

Based on this, the Beis HaLevi explains a Gemora in Megillah (31b). Rish Lakish maintains that we cannot recite a brachah on the curses mentioned in the Torah. Tosfos cites a Medrash that since Klal Yisroel is suffering, Hashem is distressed and it is not proper for us to be making a blessing when Hashem is in pain. The Ran asks on this explanation from a Mishna inn Brachos which explicitly states that one is obligated to recite a brachah on misfortunes in the same manner that he would recite a brachah if something good occurred to him. The Beis HaLevi answers that the Mishna in Brachos is referring to a misfortune of an individual where Hashem is not in distress and therefore a brachah can be recited, however the Gemora in Megillah, which is discussing the curses for the entire Klal Yisroel, Hashem is in pain and therefore a brachah cannot be recited.