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Taanis Daf 2

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Daf Notes is currently being dedicated to the neshamah of

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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

### TIME TO MENTION RAIN

The Mishnah begins by asking when is the time in the year that we begin to mention the Powers of Rain. [*This is referring to the “morid hageshem” that we recite in the second brachah of Shemoneh Esrei.*] Rabbi Eliezer maintains that we begin on the first day of Sukkos and Rabbi Yehoshua holds that we begin on the last day of Sukkos. Rabbi Yehoshua asked Rabbi Eliezer that it is not proper to mention rain during Sukkos when rain is regarded as a curse (since there is no obligation to sit in a sukkah during the rain). Rabbi Eliezer responded: I did not say that one should ask for rain; only that one should mention: He makes the wind blow and He makes the rain fall in its proper time. Rabbi Yehoshua said to him: if so, one should mention it at all times (even in the summer)!?

We do not ask for rain except close to the rainy season.

Rabbi Yehudah said [he holds that we begin mentioning the Powers of Rain on Shemini Atzeres (the last day of Sukkos)]: The one who goes before the Ark [i.e., the chazzan] on the last Yom Tov of the Festival [i.e., Shemini Atzeres], the last one (the one who is praying Mussaf) mentions [the Powers of Rain], but the first one (the one who is praying Shacharis) does not mention it.

We cease to mention the Powers of Rain on the first day of Pesach. The first one (the one who is praying Shacharis) mentions it, but the last one (the one who is praying Mussaf) does not. (2a1 – 2a2)

### POWER OF RAIN

The Gemora asks: What is the Tanna referring to when he asked “When”?

The Gemora answers: The Tanna refers to a Mishnah elsewhere which teaches: The powers of rain (*Gevuros geshamim*) are mentioned in the blessing of the Resurrection of the Dead (*Techiyas ha-meisim*), and the request for rain in the blessing of years (*Birchas ha-shanim*), and *havdalah* (on *Motzei Shabbos*) in (the fourth blessing, which is) the gracious giver of knowledge (*Chonein ha’da’as*). With that in mind, the Tanna now teaches: When do we begin to make mention of the Power of Rain?

The Gemora asks: Would it not have been more appropriate to teach it there, why did he leave it until now?

The Gemora answers: Rather, it is because the Tanna had just completed learning the Tractate of Rosh Hashanah, where we have learned in a Mishnah: And on Sukkos, the world is judged regarding water. And, as there it taught that on Sukkos, the world is judged regarding water, therefore our Tanna teaches: When do we begin to make mention of the Power of Rain. (2a2)

The Gemora asks: Let the Mishnah say: When do we begin to mention rain? What is this addition that we mention referred to as the Powers of Rain?

Rabbi Yochanan answers: It is because rain descends with power, as it is said: Who does great things beyond comprehension, and wonders beyond number. And it is [further] written: Who gives rain upon the face of the earth, and sends water upon the face of the outskirts. - Where [in these verses is the idea that rain is associated with power] implied? — Rabbah bar Shila replied: It is derived from the analogous use of the word cheker (comprehension) in verses discussing Creation. Here it is written: Who does great things beyond comprehension. And there it is written: Do you not know? Have you not heard that the God of the world, Hashem, the Creator of the ends of the earth, does not weary or become tired? His wisdom is beyond comprehension. And [of Creation] it is [also] written: Who sets mountains with His strength, Who is girded with power.<sup>1</sup> (2a2 – 2a3)

The Gemora asks: And from where do we know that it is mentioned in prayer (during Shemoneh Esrei)?

The Gemora answers with a Baraisa: To love Hashem your God and to serve Him with all your heart. What is regarded as a service of the heart? This is prayer. And immediately afterwards it is written: And I will provide rain for your land in its proper time, the early and the late rains. (2a3)

#### HASHEM'S KEYS

Rabbi Yochanan states that there are three keys in the hand of the Holy One, Blessed be He that are not delegated to the hands of an agent. They are the key to rain, the key for childbirth and the key for reviving the dead. [The Gemora cites Scriptural sources which indicate that these three matters are not entrusted to a messenger but rather are administered by Hashem Himself.] The Key of Rain, for It is written: Hashem will open for you His good storehouse, the heaven, to give the rain for your land in its

season. The Key of Childbirth – from where is it known? For it is written: And God remembered Rachel, and God hearkened to her, and opened her womb. The Key of the Revival of the Dead – from where is it known? For it is written: And you shall recognize that I am Hashem, when I have opened your graves.

In the West (Eretz Yisroel) they added that Hashem does not give over the key for sustenance either, for it is said: You [God] open Your hand etc. Why doesn't Rabbi Yochanan include also this [key]? — Because it is included in the key for rain since rain provides basic sustenance. (2a3 – 2b1)

#### WHEN TO BEGIN – BY NIGHT OR BY DAY?

Rabbi Eliezer maintains that we begin mentioning rain on the first day of Sukkos. The Gemora inquires [if we begin on the first night of Sukkos or during the daytime on the first day. This depends on where Rabbi Eliezer learned that the time to begin mentioning rain is the first day of Sukkos]: Where did he derive it from? Did he derive it from the mitzvah of lulav, or perhaps he learns from the water-libation service? If he derived it from lulav - we can say that just like the mitzvah of lulav begins by day, so too the mentioning of rain begins by day? Or perhaps, he derived it from the water-libation service, and just as the water-libation service may be performed at night, as the master stated: And their meal offerings and their [wine] libations – even at night; so too, the mention (of the Powers of Rain) begins at night?

Come and learn, for Rabbi Avahu cites a Baraisa which explicitly states that Rabbi Eliezer derived the designated time for mentioning rain from the mitzvah of lulav. [This would indicate that we begin mentioning rain during the daytime and not at night.] Some say that Rabbi Avahu had

<sup>1</sup> [The Gemora states that rain descends by Hashem's power. The Perishah (114) writes that the second brachah of Shemoneh Esrei begins with the word 'gibor,' strength, so too it was

*instituted to mention rain in this brachah with a language of strength and power.]*



such a tradition to that effect, and others say that he heard a Baraisa like that.

Which Baraisa? For it was taught in a Baraisa: From when do we mention rain? Rabbi Eliezer says: It is from the time that the lulav is taken. Rabbi Yehoshua said: It is from the time that the lulav is put down (on Shemini Atzeres). (2b1)

### **WHICH DAY SHOULD WE BEGIN?**

[The Gemora had cited a Baraisa which discusses several different opinions regarding the correct date to begin mentioning rain. Rabbi Eliezer states that we begin on the first day of Sukkos and this is derived from the mitzvah of taking the lulav. Rabbi Yehoshua maintains that we begin mentioning rain on Shmini Atzeres, the day after we put down the lulav.] The Baraisa continues: Rabbi Eliezer explained his opinion by saying that just like the lulav and the other species are taken in order to beseech from Hashem to issue a positive judgment regarding water, and just like these four species cannot grow without water, so too the entire world cannot survive without water. [This would indicate that we should begin to mention rain on the first day of Sukkos corresponding to the day in which we begin to take the lulav.] Rabbi Yehoshua asked him: But it is not proper to mention rain during Sukkos when rain is regarded as a curse (since there is no obligation to sit in a sukkah during the rain). Rabbi Eliezer responded: I did not say that one should ask for rain; only that one should mention. [Rabbi Eliezer proves that it is fitting to mention rain even prior to its appropriate season from the fact that we constantly mention the Resurrection of the Dead even though it will only happen in its proper time.] And just as one makes mention of the Resurrection of the Dead all the year round although it will take place only in its proper time, so too should mention be made of the Power of Rain all the year round although it comes only in its due season. Therefore, if one desires to make mention all the year round he may do so.

Rebbe said: I say that where one discontinues the request for rain (which is on Pesach) he discontinues the mentioning (of the Powers of Rain). Rabbi Yehudah ben Beseirah maintains that we begin mentioning rain on the second day of Sukkos. Rabbi Akiva rules that we begin on the sixth day of Sukkos. Rabbi Yehudah said in the name of Rabbi Yehoshua: The one who goes before the Ark [i.e., the chazzan] on the last Yom Tov of the Festival [i.e., Shemini Atzeres], the last one (the one who is praying Mussaf) mentions [the Powers of Rain], but the first one (the one who is praying Shacharis) does not mention it. On the first day of Pesach - the first one (the one who is praying Shacharis) mentions it, but the last one (the one who is praying Mussaf) does not.

The Gemora asks: Didn't Rabbi Eliezer respond properly to Rabbi Yehoshua? The Gemora answers: Rabbi Yehoshua could counter that the Resurrection of the Dead can be mentioned all year since every day can potentially be its suitable time, but the same cannot be said regarding rain. It cannot be said that whenever it falls it is its proper time, for it was taught in a Mishnah: If the month of Nissan ended and then rain fell, it is a sign of a curse, as it is written: Is it not the wheat harvest today? (2b1 – 2b2)

### **WATER-LIBATIONS**

Rabbi Yehudah ben Beseirah maintains that we begin mentioning rain on the second day of Sukkos. What is the reason of Rabbi Yehudah ben Beseirah? It was taught in a Baraisa: Rabbi Yehudah ben Beseirah said: It is written regarding the tamid brought on the second day of Sukkos: v'nischeihem – and their libations (with an extra letter 'mem'), and on the sixth day, it is written: un'sache'ha – and its libations (with an extra letter 'yud'), and on the seventh day, it is written (regarding the karban Mussaf): k'mishpatam – according to their laws (with an extra letter 'mem'). Behold, we have a 'mem,' 'yud' and 'mem,' which



spells out 'mayim' – water. This is the Scriptural allusion indicating that there is a water-libation service on Sukkos.<sup>2</sup>

The Gemora asks: But why was the second day (of Sukkos) designated as the day (for the beginning of the mention of Powers of Rain)? The Gemora answers: Since it was alluded to in connection to the second day of Sukkos, we begin mentioning it (the Powers of Rain) on the second day.

Rabbi Akiva rules that we begin mentioning *morid hageshem* on the sixth day of Sukkos. [The Gemora cites a Scriptural verse allusion indicating that the water-libation services began on the sixth day of Sukkos and therefore that is the time designated to begin mentioning *morid hageshem*.] It is written regarding the tamid brought on the sixth day of Sukkos: un'sache'ha – and its libations (in the plural form). This connotes two libations: One, a libation of water, and the other, a libation of wine (which comes with the korbanos).

The Gemora asks: perhaps they both are referring to wine? The Gemora answers: He agrees with the exposition of Rabbi Yehudah ben Beseirah who said that water is alluded to in the verses. The Gemora asks: If he holds like Rabbi Yehudah ben Beseirah, then let him say like him (and the mentioning of the Powers of Rain should begin on the second day)? The Gemora answers: Rabbi Akiva holds that the extra libation is alluded to in the sixth day (and therefore, then is when the mentioning begins). (2b2 – 3a1)

<sup>2</sup> He cites a Scriptural allusion indicating that the water-libation services began on the second day of Sukkos and therefore that is the time designated to begin mentioning *morid hageshem*.

## INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

### HASHEM'S KEYS

Rabbi Yochanan states that there are three keys that Hashem does not delegate to the hands of an agent. They are the key to rain, the key for childbirth and the key for reviving the dead.

The commentators ask from the tefillah which we recite on Shmini Atzeres when we say that Af-Bri is the name of the Heavenly angel who is appointed over the rain clouds.

The Gemora in the third perek (25b) cites Rabbah who said that he saw an image of the angel Ridya who is the angel placed in charge of rain (Rashi).

Tosfos in Niddah (16b) answers that the angel Af-Bri can only accomplish his mission with the permission of Hashem.

One can infer from Tosfos that the other emissaries of Hashem do not require His permission before performing their task. Mishnah L'melech in his sefer Perashas Derochim (21) asks on Tosfos that is it possible to say that Yurkani, the angel appointed on hail and Gavriel, the angel placed in charge of fire can perform their mission without permission being granted from Hashem. There is nothing in this world that can function without Hashem's authorization.

The Peri Megadim in Mishbitzos Zahav (114:9) explains that all matters are given over to an intermediary and Hashem's supervision is constantly upon them. The exception is regarding rain where Hashem did not give over this responsibility to a messenger at all. When



Hashem decides to give rain, He instructs Af-Bri to carry out His will.

Sfas Emes writes that Hashem Himself opens and closes the storehouse of rain and after they are opened, permission is granted to Af-Bri to cause the rain.

The Perashas Derachim answers based on a Baraisa cited later in the perek (10a). The Baraisa states that Eretz Yisroel is watered personally by Hashem but the remainder of the world is water by Hashem's messenger. Our Gemora is referring to the rain in Eretz Yisroel which is administered solely by Hashem. The angel Ridya and Af-Bri are appointed on the rainfall of all the rest of the world.

The Chidah in his sefer Pesach Einayim answers that while Hashem gives the rain, the angels distribute it to different places. The Tosfos HaRosh in Niddah seems to say similar to this.

The Maharsha answers based on Rashi that our Gemora means that the three keys were never given together to one messenger but they could have been given one at a time. This would answer a question that Tosfos asks. Tosfos cites a Gemora in Sanhedrin (113a) where the Gemora records an incident that Eliyahu was given over the keys for rain and for reviving the dead. According to Rashi, this is not difficult since our Gemora means that all three keys were not given over to the same messenger at the same time.

The Raavad answers Tosfos' question by stating that Eliyahu was not handed the keys to bring forth rain, rather he was given the key to prevent the rain from coming.

#### **DAILY MASHAL**

#### **SALTY PRAYERS**

The Gemora refers to prayer as "the Divine Service of the heart." The laws concerning the daily prayers are often

derived from those which govern the offering of the sacrifices in the Beis HaMikdash. If so, where do we find in our prayers a parallel to the requirement that every sacrifice be accompanied by salt?

Rav Moshe Meir Weiss quotes a beautiful answer that he once heard from a Mr. Levinger. He posited that our heartfelt, salty tears are intended to correspond to the sacrifices, while noting that the Torah requires this "salt" to be brought together with every single offering!