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Taanis Daf 4

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### **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

Rava taught that a young Torah scholar can be compared to a seed underneath a lump of earth. Once a seed breaks through the ground, its growth is not impeded, so too the young student grows in status once his name is recognized.

Rava said another statement regarding young students. When a young scholar becomes angry, it is the Torah which boils within him that causes him to become angry, as it is said: Is My word not like a fire, says Hashem.

Rav Ashi states that a Torah scholar who is not as hard as iron is not considered to be a true Torah scholar, as it is stated: like a hammer that shatters a rock. Rabbi Abba said to Rav Ashi: You have learned this from that verse but we have learned it from the following verse: A land whose stones are iron. Do not read *avanaha* [its stones] but *boneha* [its builders]. Ravina says that nevertheless, he should conduct himself calmly as the Torah teaches us to avoid anger. for it is said: Therefore remove anger from your heart etc. (4a1)

Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachmeini said in the name of Rabbi Yonasan: There were three people who asked inappropriately. Two of them were answered in a proper manner and one was answered in an improper manner. They are: Eliezer, the son of Avraham, shaul, the son of Kish, and Yiftach the Gileadite.

Eliezer, the servant of Avraham – as it is written: Let it be that the maiden to whom I shall say, “Please tip over your jug etc.”<sup>1</sup> It could have happened that a lame or blind girl would have responded to his request (and if Eliezer would not notice her defect, he would bring her back to Yitzchak). He was answered appropriately since Hashem sent Rivkah to be the one.

Shaul, the son of Kish – as it is written: And it shall be that the man who slays him, the king shall enrich him with great wealth and will give him his daughter.<sup>2</sup> The possibility existed that it could have been a slave or mamzer, but Hashem responded to him properly and sent David.

Yiftach the Gileadite – as it is written: And it shall be that whatever emerges from the doors of my house etc.<sup>3</sup> It was considered improper since it could have been a non-kosher animal. Hashem responded in an improper manner and sent out his daughter. And regarding this, the prophet said to Israel: Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there?<sup>4</sup>

And it is further written (regarding the act of sacrificing one’s children): Which I have not commanded, nor spoken, neither has it entered My mind. ‘Which I have not commanded’: This refers to the sacrifice of the son of Meisha, the king of Moab, as it is said: Then he took his firstborn son that should have reigned in his stead and offered him for a burnt offering. ‘Nor

<sup>1</sup> He requested from God that the first girl who offers water to drink for him and his camels will be the one who he will bring for Yitzchak as a wife.

<sup>2</sup> Shaul made an improper guarantee when he promised wealth and his daughter to whoever would kill Goliath.

<sup>3</sup> Yiftach made an inappropriate promise before heading out to wage a war against the Ammonites. He pledged that he would bring as a korban whatever would come out of his house first.

<sup>4</sup> The prophet complained about Yiftach that he did not go to Pinchas to have his vow annulled.



spoken'; This refers to the daughter of Yiftach. 'Neither has it entered My mind': This refers to the sacrifice of Yitzchak, the son of Avraham.

Rabbi Brachyah [cites another example where an inappropriate request was answered appropriately] said: also the Congregation of Israel asked inappropriately, yet the Holy One, Blessed be He, responded to them in a proper manner, as it is said: Let us know, let us pursue the knowledge of Hashem, His going forth is sure as the morning, and He shall come to us as the rain. The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to her [Israel]: My daughter, you asked for something which at times is desirable and at other times is not desirable, but I will be to you something which is desirable at all times, as it is said: I will be as dew to Israel. The Congregation of Israel again asked inappropriately. She said before Him: Master of the Universe, Place me as a seal upon Your heart, as a seal upon Your arm. Thereupon, the Holy One, Blessed be He, replied to her: My daughter, you asked for something which at times can be seen and at other times cannot be seen. I, however, will make of you something which can be seen at all times, as it is said: Behold I have engraved you upon the palms of My hands. (4a1 – 4a2)

The Mishnah had stated that we do not ask for rain except close to the rainy season. [The scholars] were of the opinion that 'requesting' and 'mentioning' are one and the same thing. Who is the authority for this? - Rava replied: It is the viewpoint of Rabbi Yehoshua who maintains that we begin mentioning rain from the time the lulav is set down [i.e., on Shemini Atzeres]<sup>5</sup>. Abaye said to him that the Mishnah can be following the opinion of Rabbi Eliezer (who holds that we begin mentioning rain on the first day of Sukkos), for "requesting" is one thing, and "mentioning" is another thing.<sup>6</sup> Others have the reading: Shall we say it is Rabbi Yehoshua, who said: From the time when the lulav is set

down? — Rava replied: You can even say that it is Rabbi Eliezer; 'requesting', however, is one thing and 'mentioning' is another thing. (4a2 – 4b1)

The Mishnah had stated: Rabbi Yehudah said: [On the first day of Pesach, the first one (the one who is praying Shacharis) mentions the Powers of Rain, but the last one (the one who is praying Mussaf) does not.]

The Gemora asks a contradiction from the following Mishnah (which presents a dispute between Rabbi Yehudah and Rabbi Meir regarding the time during the year that we cease requesting for rain – *v'sein tal u'matar*): Until when do we request rain? Rabbi Yehudah maintains that it is recited until Pesach is over and Rabbi Meir holds that it is recited until the end of the month of Nissan.

Rav Chisda replied: The two statements [of Rabbi Yehudah] are not contradictory; the one refers to 'requesting' and the other to 'mentioning'; 'requesting' one continues [until] the end of Pesach] but 'mentioning' is discontinued on the first day [of Pesach]. Ulla said: This [solution of the contradiction] by Rav Chisda is as difficult as vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke for the eyes. If one makes mention of rain at such times when it is not permissible to request [it], how much more so should one make mention of rain when it is permissible to request it? — It must be, says Ulla: There are two Tannaim who have different versions of Rabbi Yehudah's opinion.

Rav Yosef said: What is the meaning of: Until Pesach is over? Until the first shliach tzibbur [i.e., the leader of the prayers] to go down on the first day of Pesach is over [with his Shacharis prayer]. Said Abaye to him: Is there then a place in the Festival [Tefillah] for inserting the prayer for rain?<sup>7</sup> He replied to him: Yes, the Meturgeman<sup>8</sup> makes the request. -

<sup>5</sup> This is considered close to the rainy season.

<sup>6</sup> The Mishnah is referring to the request for rain, *v'sein tal u'matar*. Rabbi Eliezer agrees that we do not begin asking for rain until the rainy season.

<sup>7</sup> That blessing is not recited on Yom Tov!?

<sup>8</sup> The function of this translator in Talmudic times was to interpret to the audience in the Synagogue the Torah reading in a popular manner and to enlarge upon the theme of the Rabbi's lecture.

Does then the Meturgeman ever request something of which the community has no need? Therefore, the better solution is that of Ulla.

Rabbah answers that when Rabbi Yehudah stated that we ask for rain until Pesach is over, he meant until the time of the slaughtering of the korban Pesach is over. [It emerges that we would stop requesting rain during the Minchah prayer on the day before Pesach.]

Rabbah explains that like the beginning [when rain is mentioned], so too is its end: Just like in the beginning (Shemini Atzeres), we mention rain even though we do not request rain until much later (during the month of Cheshvan), so too at the end, we mention rain (the first Shacharis during Pesach) even though we stopped requesting rain the day before.

Abaye disagrees with Rabbah's logic and states that there is a clear distinction between the beginning and the end. It is correct to mention rain in the beginning even though we are not yet requesting rain since we are praising Hashem that He provides rain in order that our request later will be listened to; however, there is no reason to mention rain at the end when we are not requesting rain any longer. Therefore, the better solution is that of Ulla.

Rabbi Assi said in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: The halachah is according to Rabbi Yehudah (who maintains that we begin mentioning rain in Mussaf of Shemini Atzeres).

Rabbi Zeira said to Rabbi Assi: Did Rabbi Yochanan actually say this? But we learned in a Mishnah (that presents a dispute regarding the asking for rain): One Tanna holds that we begin on the third day of Cheshvan and Rabban Gamliel maintains that we begin on the seventh day of Cheshvan.

<sup>9</sup> At the end of the rainy season we stop at the same time both the mentioning of rain and the praying for rain; but at the beginning of the rainy season we commence with the making

Rabbi Elozar said that the halachah is in accordance with Rabban Gamliel.

Rav Assi answers that the first halachic ruling was issued by Rabbi Yochanan and therefore you cannot ask a question on this from a halachic ruling issued by Rabbi Elozar.

An alternative answer is given that Rabbi Elozar's ruling is in regard to requesting rain and Rabbi Yochanan was referring to mentioning rain. – But didn't Rabbi Yochanan say: Whenever one requests one should also make mention? That [rule] applies only to the discontinuation [of 'requesting'].<sup>9</sup> But didn't Rabbi Yochanan say: When one begins to mention rain, one should also [begin] to request; when one discontinues to request, one should also cease to mention? — There is really no contradiction, as Rabbi Elozar's ruling is relevant only to us - the people residing in Bavel and Rabbi Yochanan's ruling applies to them - the people living in Eretz Yisroel.<sup>10</sup> - Why should we be different? Is it because we have produce still in the fields [during Tishrei]; they (even in Eretz Yisroel) as well - we should be concerned on behalf of the people traveling back from their pilgrimage to the Beis Hamikdash (and we should postpone the request for rain until they return home)? - Rabbi Yochanan was referring to the time that the Beis Hamikdash was not in existence and that is why the request for rain commenced on Shemini Atzeres.

Now that you have arrived at this conclusion [I can say], Both teachings apply equally to them, and there is no contradiction; the one speaks [of conditions] in Temple times and the other [of conditions] after Temple times.

And us (who live in the Diaspora), who observe two days (of Shemini Atzeres) what do we do? Rav rules that rain should be mentioned during Mussaf of the eighth day and withhold from mentioning rain during the Minchah prayer of that day,

mention of rain and at a later date we also add the formal request for rain.

<sup>10</sup> The harvest is gathered much later in Bavel and therefore the request for rain is postponed until Cheshvan.

and Maariv and Shacharis (of the ninth day), and resume mentioning it by Mussaf of the ninth day.

Shmuel said to them: Go and say to Abba [Rav]: [How can we stop mentioning rain by Minchah of the eighth day?] If the day was already considered holy, how can it now be regarded as ordinary?

Rather, Shmuel maintains that we mention rain by Mussaf (of the eighth day) and by Minchah. We withhold from mentioning rain by Maariv and Shacharis of the ninth day and resume during Mussaf of the ninth day.

Rava said that once we begin mentioning rain during Mussaf of the eighth day, we continue mentioning rain without stopping. And so said Rav Sheishes: Once we begin mentioning rain during Mussaf of the eighth day, we continue mentioning rain without stopping. Rav also retracted his statement. For Rav Chananel said in the name of Rav: One counts twenty-one days from Rosh Hashanah and begins to make mention in the same way as one counts Ten Days [of Penitence] from Rosh Hashanah until Yom Kippur; and once he has begun he should not discontinue. And the law is, once he has begun he should not discontinue. (4b1 – 5a1)

#### **DAILY MASHAL**

#### **ALL ABOUT ANGER**

Rav Ashi states that a Torah scholar who is not as hard as iron is not considered to be a true Torah scholar. Ravina says that nevertheless, he should conduct himself calmly as the Torah teaches us to avoid anger.

The Gevuros Ari asks from a Gemora in Pesachim which states regarding one who becomes angry; if he is a Torah scholar, his Torah will depart him and yet our Gemora states that a Torah scholar who is not harsh like iron is not considered a talmid chocham.

He answers that if he becomes angry for the honor of Hashem and if it would have been impossible to accomplish this without getting angry; it is not only permitted but warranted. An example for this would be to instill fear into one's students ensuring that they will not stumble into sin.

The Acharonim ask from the Gemora (20) which states that a person should always strive to be soft like a reed and not harsh like a cedar tree. It is brought in the name of Reb Yonason Eibshitz that if a person needs to get angry, he should make sure that the anger is only on the surface but inside he should remain soft. This is what Ravina meant when he said that one should conduct himself calmly as the Torah teaches us to remove anger from one's heart.

The Mishnah in Avos (5:10) states that it should be difficult for a person to get angry and easy to be appeased. Rabbeinu Gershom explains our Gemora to mean that a person should get angry and it should be difficult to appease him. This is seemingly not consistent with the Mishnah in Avos.

Harav Moshe Feinstein in Igros Moshe (O" C 54) answers that here the Gemora is referring to a talmid chocham that issues a ruling. He is required to exhibit anger in order to ensure that the listeners will adhere to the halachah. He should not be easily appeased so people will not say that his ruling was actually a mistake but he is too embarrassed to admit it. This is what Rav Ashi meant when he said that a Torah scholar who is not as hard as iron is not considered to be a true Torah scholar. If he is appeased readily, they will not rely on his rulings in the future.