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Taanis Daf 4

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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

RAIN, SEEDS AND TORAH SCHOLARS

➤ Rava states that snow is as beneficial to mountains as five rains are for the ground. He states further that heavy rain is favorable for trees and gentle rain is of assistance for produce. Drizzling rain is beneficial for the seeds underneath a lump of earth.

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.

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. (3b -4a)

IMPROPER REQUESTS

➤ Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachmeini said in the name of Rabbi Yonasan that there were three people who

asked inappropriately. Two of them were answered generously and one was not.

Eliezer, the servant of Avraham requested 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. 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 made an improper guarantee when he promised wealth and his daughter to whoever would kill Goliath. The possibility existed that it could have been a slave or mamzer, but Hashem responded to him properly and sent David.

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. It was considered improper since it could have been a non-kosher animal. Hashem responded in an improper manner and sent out his daughter. The prophet complained about Yiftach that he did not go to Pinchas to have his vow annulled.

Rabbi Brachya cites another example where an inappropriate request was answered appropriately. Klal Yisroel asked of Hashem to resemble the rain. Hashem responded to them that rain is sometimes undesirable and instead, He will be to them like dew, which is always beneficial. (4a)

MENTIONING AND REQUESTING ARE NOT THE SAME

➤ The Mishna stated that we ask for rain close to the rainy season. The Gemora inquires as to whose opinion is reflected in this ruling.

Rava says that it is the viewpoint of Rabbi Yehoshua who maintains that we begin mentioning rain on Shmini Atzeres. This is considered close to the rainy season. Abaye suggests that the Mishna can be following the opinion of Rabbi Eliezer who holds that we begin mentioning rain on the first day of Sukkos. The Mishna is referring to the request for rain, *v'sen tal u'matar*. Rabbi Eliezer agrees that we do not begin asking for rain until the rainy season. (4a – 4b)

RABBI YEHUDA'S OPINION

➤ The Gemora asks a contradiction in the opinion of Rabbi Yehudah. In our Mishna, Rabbi Yehudah stated that we stop mentioning rain on the first day of Pesach. A braisa is cited that presents a dispute between Rabbi Yehudah and Rabbi Meir regarding the time during the year that we cease requesting for rain. Rabbi Yehudah maintains that *v'sen tal u'matar* is recited until Pesach is over and Rabbi Meir holds that it is recited until the end of the month of Nissan.

The Gemora attempts to resolve this contradiction by making a distinction between the mentioning of rain and the request for rain.

This is proven to be illogical. If we stop mentioning rain on the first day of Pesach, we would certainly not continue asking for rain until the conclusion of Pesach.

The Gemora is compelled to say that there are two Tannaim who have different versions of Rabbi Yehudah's opinion.

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 just like in the beginning (Shmini 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. (4b)

MENTIONING AND REQUESTING

➤ Rabbi Yochanan ruled that the halachah is according to Rabbi Yehudah who maintains that we begin mentioning rain on Shmini Atzeres.

The Gemora questions this statement from a Mishna 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. 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.

The Gemora rejects this answer because Rabbi Yochanan explicitly rules that the mentioning and requesting for rain must coincide in the beginning and in the end.

The Gemora offers a different answer. Rabbi Elozar's ruling is relevant only to the people residing in Bavel and Rabbi Yochanan's ruling applies to the people living in Eretz Yisroel. The harvest is gathered much later in Bavel and therefore the request for rain is postponed until Cheshvan.

The Gemora asks that even in Eretz Yisroel, 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.

The Gemora answers that 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 Shmini Atzeres.

The Gemora concludes that Rabbi Elozar was referring to the time that the Beis Hamikdash was in existence and that is why the request for rain is postponed until the month of Cheshvan. (4b)

SHMINI ATZERES

➤ Rav rules that outside of Eretz Yisroel, where they observe two days of Shmini Atzeres, rain should be mentioned during Mussaf of the eighth day and withhold from mentioning rain again until Mussaf of the ninth day.

Shmuel vehemently objected to this ruling. 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?

Shmuel maintains that we mention rain by Mussaf and by Minchah of Shmini Atzeres. We withhold from mentioning rain by Maariv and Shacharis of the ninth day and resume during Mussaf of the ninth day.

Rava and Rav Sheishes rule that once we begin mentioning rain during Mussaf of the eighth day, we



continue mentioning rain without stopping. The Gemora concludes that this is indeed the halachah. (4b – 5a)

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 Mishna 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 Mishna 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.