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Taanis Daf 8

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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

UNSUCCESSFUL STUDENT

➤ [The Gemora discusses students who have a difficult time studying Torah, and what the possible remedies are.]

Rish Lakish states that if you see a student who is having difficulty in his Torah studies, it is because his knowledge of the Mishna is not arranged in an organized manner. The remedy for him is to spend more time studying in Yeshiva where all the students are learning the Mishna. Rish Lakish would review the Mishna forty times corresponding to the forty days that Moshe studied the Torah at Sinai and only then would he come before Rabbi Yochanan to learn Gemora.

Rav Adda bar Ahavah would review the Mishna twenty-four times corresponding to the twenty-four books of Scripture and only then would he come before Rava to learn Gemora.

Rava states that if you see a student whose studies are as hard to him as iron (who is having difficulty in his Torah studies), it is because his teacher is not displaying a cheerful countenance towards him (he is not treating him well). The solution would be to send friends to the teacher to intervene on his behalf. (7b – 8a)

MASTER OF SPEECH

Rabbi Ami further said: What is the meaning of the verse: *If the snake bites because it was not charmed, then the master of speech has no advantage?* If you see a generation over whom the sky is rust-colored like copper so that neither dew nor rain falls, it is because that generation is lacking in men who pray softly. What then is their remedy? They should go to one who is skilled in the art of praying softly, as it is written: *His colleague should pray on his behalf.*

Then the master of speech has no advantage: This means: As to the one who is skilled in the art of praying softly and does not do so, what benefit does he derive?

But if he has prayed softly and was not answered, what is the remedy (to bring forth rain)? Let him go to the most pious man of that generation that he may pray abundantly for him, as it is said: And He commands the rain to fall because of a petitioner (mafgia), and pegi'ah is prayer, as it is said: *Therefore, do not pray for this people, do not lift up on their behalf clamor nor prayer, do not make intercession (tifga) to Me.*

But if he did pray softly and proved successful, and on account of this he becomes haughty, he thereby brings divine anger upon the world, as it is said: *An acquisition of anger that comes up.*

Raba said: Two scholars who reside in the same city but are not agreeable to each other in matters of halachah provoke anger and bring it upon themselves, as it is said: *An acquisition of anger that comes up.*

Rish Lakish said: What is the meaning of the verse: *If the snake bites because it was not charmed, then the master of speech has no advantage?* In the Messianic age all animals will assemble and come to the snake and say to him, "The lion claws its victim and devours him, the wolf tears him and devours him, but as for you what benefit do you derive (from killing people through your bite)? His reply will be: *the master of speech has no advantage.* (8a)

INSINCERE TEFILLAH

➤ Rabbi Ami said that a person's tefillah will only be accepted if he puts his heart in his hands (he is truly sincere).

The Gemora asks from a statement from Shmuel who states that tefillah is accepted even if it is insincere.

The Gemora answers that an individual's tefillah will only be accepted if he is sincere; however a tefillah of the congregation will be accepted even if some of their tefillos are insincere. (8a)

INTEGRITY, FAITH & JUSTICE

➤ Rabbi Ami states that rain will fall in the merit of people who possess integrity in their business dealings.

Rabbi Ami said: Come and see how great are the people who trust in Hashem. Rabbi Ami points to the story of those who believe in the *chuldah u-bor* - the rodent and the pit - arguing that if you believe in the *chuldah u-bor*, certainly you can believe in Hashem.

[It is interesting that the Gemora feels no need to explain what the story of the *chuldah u-bor* entails, taking for granted that it was a story so well-known that there was no need to put it in writing. Rashi and Tosfos both tell a short version of the story, but a lengthier version, whose source is in the traditions of the *Ge'onim*, appears in the *Arukh*. As Rabbi Nassan ben Yechiel tells it in his *Arukh*, the story begins with a girl from a noble family who loses her way and, having fallen into a well while drinking, cannot manage to extract herself. A passerby hears her cries and shouts. After a lengthy conversation during which time he ascertains that she is, in fact, a woman and not a demon of some sort, he agrees to save her, on the condition that she will marry him. Upon lifting her from the well he wants to consummate the marriage immediately, but she objects, arguing that a Jewish man surely wants to marry according to the halachah and would not be interested in simply fulfilling animalistic urges. They agree to marry and



appoint the well and a passing weasel as witnesses to their pact.

Upon returning home, she scrupulously kept her agreement, refusing the entreaties of all suitors. He, on the other hand, soon forgot the agreement and married another woman, who bore children - the first of whom was bitten by a weasel, the second of whom drowned in a well. Seeing that her children died under unnatural circumstances, she demanded an explanation from her husband, who admitted that he had promised another that he would marry her. They divorced and he searched for the woman who he had saved and promised to marry. When she refused him - as she did all others - he told her of the honest witnesses, the *chuldah u-bor*, that brought him back to her. In the end they married and had many children, proving the passage in Tehillim (101:6) that God's eyes are upon the faithful who merit a close relationship with Him.

The Rama Mipano writes that this man was a reincarnation of Yehoram who had taken two sons from the wife of Ovadia the Prophet and now he was being punished for this. He had taken those two sons by a well and every Motzoei Shabbos, the well of Miriam the Prophetess passes by all the wells in the world. The weasel in the incident had the spirit of Chuldah the Prophetess and they are the ones who punish Yehoram.]

Rabbi Yochanan states that one who conducts himself righteously in this world will be judged more strictly Above. There will be a strict judging of

his deeds in order to cleanse him and thereby he can receive his total reward in the world to come.

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said that one who rejoices in his suffering brings salvation to the world. (8a)

RAIN AND DROUGHTS

➤ Rish Lakish cites a Scriptural verse proving that when the sky is filled with rain clouds but they do not produce rain is comparable to a woman who has labor pains but does not give birth. This is dangerous to the world as it is a consequence brought about from sin.

Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachmeini said that if Hashem had decreed that harsh rains shall fall as a punishment and then Klal Yisroel repented, the fierce rains will be diverted to the unpopulated mountains and hills where they will fall harmlessly and not be detrimental. If good rain is decreed then it will fall on the fields, cisterns and caves.

In the days of R' Shmuel bar Nachmeini, a plague as well as a famine raged through the land.

"How should we act?" the rabbis asked, "to pray that Hashem nullify them both is impossible. We cannot pray [effectively] for two things at once. Let us then pray that the plague should come to an end, and we will suffer through the famine."

"Not so," R' Shmuel bar Nachmani may told them, "rather, we should pray for the end of the famine, and Hashem will remove the plague as well. For, Hashem does not send His abundance to those who



will die, only to those who will live. This the Torah teaches when it says, "You open your hand, and satisfy the *living* with their desires."

In the days of R' Zeira, the government issued decrees against Jewish religious observance and among the decrees, was a prohibition against Jews fasting (e.g. to end a drought). According to *Rashi*, this decree was to prevent benefit from coming to the world through the efforts of the Jews. R' Zeira said that nevertheless, they should all accept a fast upon themselves, and when the decree will be rescinded, they will then fulfill their promise and observe the fast. When asked how he knew it was possible to do this, he replied that the *Posuk* says: (Daniel 10:12) that Daniel accepted upon himself twenty one years of fasting, and that his *Tefilos* were accepted immediately, as soon as he had made the vow.

Rabbi Yitzchak said that even during an extreme drought, rain that falls on a Friday is nothing but a curse since it will inconvenience those that are shopping for Shabbos. Ameimar had said that if it wouldn't be that rain is so necessary, we would pray to have it abolished since it prevents people from going back and forth.

Rabbi Yitzchak states that rain is so great that even businesses that do not require rain are blessed on a day of rain. (8b)

BLESSING ONLY ON HIDDEN ITEMS

➤ Rabbi Yitzchak states further that one can only find blessing in something that is hidden from

the eye. This is similar to a braisa cited in the name of Rabbi Yishmael that blessing will not be found except by something that the eye cannot gaze at.

The Rabbis taught that one who enters his silo to measure the grain should pray that Hashem should send blessing in the work of our hands. Once he has started to measure it, he blesses Hashem for bestowing blessing upon the pile of grain. If he measured it and then recited the blessing, it is in vain, as blessing cannot happen to items weighed, measured or on something that has been counted. Blessing can only be found on those things concealed from the eye. (8b)

INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

PRAYING TO ELIMINATE TWO CALAMITIES

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The Shulchan Aruch (O”C 576:15) rules based on our Gemora that if the community has two difficulties at once, they should only pray for one of them.

The Kosos L’maor asks that how can we daven Shemoneh Esrei every day when we are praying for so many different things. He answers that the halacha is only when the calamities are already upon us, but we may pray that they shouldn’t come upon us, even if we are praying for multiple things.

The Ben Yehoyada writes that we do not daven for two calamities outside Eretz Yisroel where our tefillos do not ascend to Hashem directly and there is a concern that the agents carrying our tefillos to Hashem will prosecute against us; however we are permitted to daven in Eretz Yisroel for multiple calamities since our prayers ascend directly to Hashem with no emissaries in the middle.

The Peri Megadim comments that if there are two sicknesses, we are permitted to daven for both of them since it is considered one tefillah – we are beseeching Hashem that sicknesses should not come upon us.

The Kaf Hachaim infers from the language of the Shulchan Aruch that this halacha only applies by a communal tefillah; however an individual can daven for more than one calamity.

The Iyun Yaakov writes that Moshe requested of Hashem two things and therefore he wasn’t

answered. He asked to be able to cross over into Eretz Yisroel and he requested to be able to see Eretz Yisroel. (I would have thought that this would be regarded as one request.) This seemingly is not consistent with the Kaf Hachaim since Moshe was an individual and nevertheless he could not daven for two things.

The Chasam Sofer answers that all of our requests are actually only one. Dovid Hamelech requested only to be able to dwell in Hashem’s midst his entire life. That is the underlying theme of all our tefillos. Klal Yisroel just wants to be able to bask in the presence of the Shechina.

The Satmar Rebbe in Divrei Yoel states that if the requests are for the honor of Hashem, there is no limit to how many one can ask for. This is why we recite by hoshanos “I’maancho,” we are asking for all types of salvation for the sake of Hashem. If that is our intent, we can ask for multiple things.

The Ben Yehoyada brings a proof from Eliyahu that it would be permitted to ask for two different things by tefillas Mincha. That is when Eliyahu prayed “Aneini Hashem aneini.”

There are those that say that this halacha is limited to a prayer on an ominous occasion, when an impending disaster is looming; however by Shemoneh Esrei which has its set time and has a set arrangement, there is no concern for this.

DAILY MASHAL

CLASSIFIED AS A TZADIK

➤ The *Gemara* (*Kidushin* 49b) states that if a man betroths a woman "on condition that I am a *tzadik*", even if he is totally wicked, we must assume that the betrothal might be valid, since thoughts of *Teshuva* could have entered his mind.

Thus, a *Rasha* could become a *Tzadik* based solely on thoughts of *Teshuva*, without requiring the discomfort of fasting or suffering. Yet, the *Posuk* says: after being taken to *Golus*, they atone for their sins, and *Rashi* comments that their atonement will be achieved through their suffering.

The *Shemen Rokeach* (2:10) cites the *Gemara* (*Taanis* 8b) which says that in the days of R' Zeira, the government issued decrees against Jewish religious observance and among the decrees, was a prohibition against Jews fasting (e.g. to end a drought). According to *Rashi*, this decree was to prevent benefit from coming to the world through the efforts of the Jews. R' Zeira said that nevertheless, they should all accept a fast upon themselves, and when the decree will be rescinded, they will then fulfill their promise and observe the fast. When asked how he knew it was possible to do this, he replied that the *Posuk* says: (*Daniel* 10:12) that Daniel accepted upon himself twenty one years of fasting, and that his *Tefilos* were accepted immediately, as soon as he had made the vow.

As such, here too we may conclude that when the *Rasha* tried to betroth the woman on condition that he was a *Tzadik*, he had in mind, not only to do *Teshuva*, forsaking his wicked ways, but *Kaparah* as well, by accepting upon himself to fast and be uncomfortable at a later date. In so doing, he may be classified immediately as a *Tzadik*. (Courtesy of Kehilas Prozdor)

UNOBSERVED BLESSINGS

The *Gemora* says that blessing only occurs to items that are not measured and observed.

The Meiri explains that the *Gemora* is referring to the blessing of successful returns on investments.

Rabbeinu Manoach says that the *Gemora* means that the blessing will be that the ultimate measure will be larger than the original estimate, in a miraculous fashion.

The Sfas Emes echoes this position, by explaining that Hashem does not make miracles that openly subvert nature, and therefore this blessing only occurs before the produce is measured.

The Ritva quotes the Ramban who says that one makes a *brachah* on this occurrence only when measuring produce for the purpose of separating tithes, since Hashem promised us a blessing for fulfilling this *mitzvah*. When otherwise measuring, one is not certain a blessing will occur, so he may not make a *brachah*.