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Sotah Daf 33

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Daf Notes is currently being dedicated to the neshamot of

**Moshe Raphael ben Yehoshua (Morris Stadtmauer) o”h**

**Tzvi Gershon ben Yoel (Harvey Felsen) o”h**

May the studying of the Daf Notes be a zechus for their neshamot and may their souls find peace in Gan Eden and be bound up in the Bond of life

### **Language for Shema and the Torah**

The *Mishna* had stated that the recitation of the *Shema* can be said in any language.

The *Gemora* cites the Scriptural source for this. It is written: Hear O Israel. This implies that it can be recited in any language that you understand.

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: Rebbe maintains that *shema* must be recited in Hebrew. The *Chachamim* hold that it can be recited in any language.

The *Gemora* cites Scriptural sources for their respective opinions. Rebbe learns from the verse that states: *And they shall be*. This implies that the words shall be as they are now (*in Hebrew*).

The *Chachamim* derive their opinion from the word, *Shema, hear*. This implies that it can be recited in any language that you understand.

The *Chachamim* learn from the verse, *And they shall be*, that the words of *shema* must be recited in its proper sequence.

Rebbe learns that *halacha* from the extra letter *hey* in the word *hadevarim*.

The *Chachamim*, however, do not expound the extra letter.

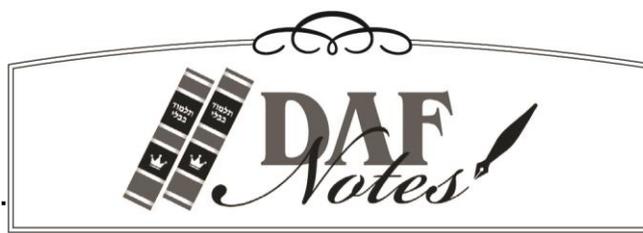
Rebbe derives from the word *Shema* that a person must recite *shema* in a loud enough voice that he can hear what he is saying.

The *Chachamim* maintain that he has fulfilled his obligation even if he doesn't hear what he is saying.

The *Gemora* asks: Shall we say that Rebbe holds that the Torah (*the Torah reading on Shabbos according to Rashi, or on special Biblically mandated occasions according to Tosfos*) may be read in any other language, for if it would enter your mind that it must be recited in the Holy Tongue, why would it be necessary for the Torah to write *And they shall be* to teach us that *shema* must be recited in Hebrew?

The *Gemora* states that this is not necessarily the case. It is necessary to teach that the *shema* must be recited in Hebrew, for since it says *Shema*, we might have thought that it could be recited in any language (*even though the Torah must be read in Hebrew*).

The *Gemora* asks: Shall we say that the *Chachamim* maintain that the Torah must be read in the Holy Tongue, for if it would enter your mind that it may be read in any language, why would it be necessary for the



Torah to write *Shema* to teach us that *shema* may be recited in any language?

The *Gemora* states that this is not necessarily the case. It is necessary to teach that the *shema* may be recited in any language, for since it says *And they shall be*, we might have thought that it must be recited in Hebrew (even though the Torah may be read in another language). (32b – 33a)

### **Language of Prayer**

The *Mishna* had stated that prayer may be recited in any language.

The *Gemora* explains that since prayer is requesting for mercy, one may pray in whatever language that he wants.

The *Gemora* asks: But Rav Yehudah said: One should not ask his needs in Aramaic, because Rabbi Yochanan said: If one asks his needs in Aramaic, the ministering angels do not assist him, for they do not understand Aramaic!?

The *Gemora* answers: Rav Yehudah was discussing a prayer of an individual (which requires the assistance of the angels), whereas the *Mishna* is discussing a congregation's prayer (which may be recited in Aramaic, for they do not require the angel's help).

The *Gemora* asks: Do the ministering angels not understand Aramaic? But we learned in the following *braisa*: Yochanan, the *Kohen Gadol* heard a heavenly voice issued from within the Holy of Holies announcing, "The young men (*Kohanim*) who went to wage war in Antioch (against the Greeks) have been victorious." It also happened with Shimon the Righteous that he

heard a heavenly voice issued from within the Holy of Holies announcing, "The army that the enemy had said that they would send out against the Sanctuary has been eradicated." And Gaskalgus (a Greek king) was slain and his decrees annulled. They noted down the time (when this heavenly voice spoke) and it coincided with the exact time that these events occurred. Now it was in Aramaic that it spoke! [Evidently, the angels do understand Aramaic!?!]

If you wish I can answer that it is different with a heavenly voice, since its purpose is to notify people (and this angel knows Aramaic), or if you wish, I can say that it was the angel Gavriel who spoke, for a Master has declared in a *braisa*: Gavriel came and taught Yosef the seventy languages. (33a)

### **Scriptural Sources**

The *Gemora* cites Scriptural sources proving that the Grace after meals, the oath of testimony and the oath of deposit must be recited in Hebrew.

The *Gemora* cites Scriptural sources proving that the recitation of *bikkurim*, *chalitzah* and the Blessings and the Curses must be recited in Hebrew. (33a – 33b)

### **Mount Gerizim and Eival**

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: It is written: *Are they (Mount Gerizim and Eival) not on the other side of the Jordan?* This means that they were considerable beyond the Jordan; these are the words of Rabbi Yehudah. *Far from the direction of the coming of the sun;* this is referring to the place where the sun rises. *In the land of the Canaanites which dwell in the plain;* this is referring to Mount Gerizim and Eival, where the Cutheans presently dwell. *Opposite Gilgal* means that

it was near Gilgal. *Near Elonei Moreh*; this means Shechem. Elsewhere it states: *And Avram passed through the land as far as the site of Shechem, as far as Elonei Moreh*. Just as Elonei Moreh mentioned in this latter verse is Shechem, so too, in the former verse, it means Shechem.

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: Rabbi Elozar the son of Rabbi Yosi said: Through this, I proved the Cuthean Scriptures to be false. I said to them, "You have falsified your Torah, but you gained nothing thereby. You said that 'Elonei Moreh means Shechem (*they added the word, Shechem*" to their Torah); we too agree that Elonei Moreh means Shechem. We derived this through a *gezeirah shavah*, but how have you derived it (*since they did not accept the Oral Law, they would not hold of a gezeirah shavah*)?!

Rabbi Elozar said: It is written: *Are they (Mount Gerizim and Eival) not on the other side of the Jordan?* This means that they were near the Jordan. For you cannot say that they were located a considerable distance beyond the Jordan, for it states: *And it shall be that when you cross the Jordan (you shall erect these stones ... on Mount Eival). [Evidently, these mountains were near the Jordan, since they erected the stones on the same day of crossing the Jordan.] Far from the direction of the coming of the sun; this is referring to the place where the sun sets (far from the west; but rather, near the Jordan, on the eastern border of Eretz Yisroel).*

Rabbi Elozar asks on Rabbi Yehudah: How can you say that these mountains are near Shechem? The verse continues: *In the land of the Canaanites which dwell in the plain*. This is referring to the land of the Hivite (*where Shechem is*), but there are no plains there! They live among mountains and hills! And the verse

continues: *Opposite Gilgal*. Gilgal cannot be seen from there!

Rabbi Eliezer ben Yaakov explains the verse: The Torah has here only the intention of pointing out to them the route for the second part of the journey (*when the Pillar of Cloud would cease to guide them, and they would need direction upon entering Canaan under Yehoshua's leadership*), as it had pointed out to them the route for the first part of the journey. *Road*; this means to proceed along the roads, and not through fields and vineyards. *Which dwell*; this means that you should travel through inhabited territory, and not through deserts. *In the plain*; this means that you should go on the plains, and not on mountains and hills. (33b)

## INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

### SHEMA IS TORAH

The *Gemora* asks: Shall we say that Rebbe holds that the Torah (*the Torah reading on Shabbos according to Rashi, or on special Biblically mandated occasions according to Tosfos*) may be read in any other language, for if it would enter your mind that it must be recited in the Holy Tongue, why would it be necessary for the Torah to write *And they shall be* to teach us that *shema* must be recited in Hebrew?

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The commentators ask: What is the connection between the reading of the Torah and the *mitzvah* of

*kerias shema*? Perhaps the Torah must be recited in Hebrew, and yet *kerias shema* can be recited in any language.

The Keren Orah answers that it is evident from our *Gemora* that the mitzva of reciting *kerias shema* every day is actually a *mitzvah* of “Talmud Torah.” The obligation is to recite portions of the Torah twice daily. Obviously there is a *mitzvah* of accepting the yoke of Heaven by reciting these portions, but the commandment of the Torah is to learn these portions once in the morning and once at night.

This is why the *Gemora* states that if one merely recited *kerias shema* in the morning and evening, he has discharged his obligation of studying Torah day and night.

### **Food for Thought**

Rav Yehudah said: One should not ask his needs in Aramaic, because Rabbi Yochanan said: If one asks his needs in Aramaic, the ministering angels do not assist him, for they do not understand Aramaic!?

The *Gemora* explains: Rav Yehudah was discussing a prayer of an individual (*which requires the assistance of the angels*), whereas the *Mishna* is discussing a congregation’s prayer (*which may be recited in Aramaic, for they do not require the angel’s help*).

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\*\*\* Does the prohibition against requesting one’s needs in Aramaic only apply to Aramaic, or to all languages? (*Meiri and Rosh Brochos 13a*)

\*\*\* Do the angels know the thoughts of a person? (*Tosfos Shabbos 12b; Maadanei Yom Tov on the Rosh in Brochos 2:6; Reb Yosef Engel in Gilyonei HaShas Shabbos 12bSfas Emes ibid*)

\*\*\* Must a private individual pray in Hebrew? (*Shulchan Aruch O”C, 101:4; Bartenura on our Mishna; Ri”f , Rabbeinu Yonah and Rosh Brochos 13a; Chachmas Shlomo O”C 101:4*)

\*\*\* Do our *tefillos* require the assistance of the angels? (*HaKoseiv in Ein Yaakov Shabbos 12b; Introduction to Siddur Otzer HaTefillos; Or HaChaim Shmos 3:9; Ra’avad in Tamim De’im 184*)