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Sotah Daf 40

Produced by Rabbi Avrohom Adler, Kollel Boker Beachwood

Daf Notes is currently being dedicated to the neshamot of

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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

Reciting Verses During the Priestly Blessing

The *Gemora* continues its discussion as to what the congregation said during the Priestly Blessing. During the concluding service (*ne'ilah*) of the Day of Atonement, they said the following: *Behold, for so the man is blessed who fears Hashem. May Hashem shall bless you out of Zion, and may you look upon the goodness of Yerushalayim, all the days of your life. And you shall see your children's children; peace upon Israel.*

The *Gemora* asks: When were these verses recited?

Rav Yosef said: They were said between each blessing.

Rav Sheishes said: They are said at the mention of the Divine Name.

Rav Mari and Rav Zevid differ regarding the following matter: One said: The congregation says one verse in response to each verse recited by the *Kohanim*. The other said: The congregation says all three of the verses in response to each verse recited by the *Kohanim*.

Rabbi Chiya bar Abba said: Whoever recites them outside of the Beis HaMikdosh simply errs (*for it was instituted in honor of the Ineffable Name that the Kohanim uttered, which was only in the Temple*).

Rabbi Chanina bar Papa said: Know that even in the Beis HaMikdosh, these verses should not be recited; for is there a servant who is receiving blessing (*from his master*) without his listening!

Rabbi Acha bar Chanina said: Know that even outside the Beis HaMikdosh, it is necessary to recite them; for is there a servant whom one blesses without him demonstrating his appreciation.

Rabbi Avahu said: Initially, I used to recite these verses, but once I saw that Rabbi Abba of Acco did not recite them, I didn't either. (40a)

Humility

Rabbi Avahu said: Initially, I used to think that I was humble; but when I saw Rabbi Abba of Acco offer one explanation and his speaker (*the one who repeated his lecture loudly to the entire crowd*) offered a different explanation, and Rabbi Abba was not particular about it, I considered that I was not humble.

The *Gemora* asks: How did Rabbi Avahu demonstrate humility? The wife of Rabbi Avahu's speaker said to Rabbi Avahu's wife, "My husband has no need to hear your husband's lecture (*he can say it loudly to the crowd even without hearing it*); and the only reason that he bends down (*towards your husband to hear his whispered lecture*) and straightens himself, he merely pays him respect. Rabbi Avahu's wife went and reported this to him, and he said to her, "Why does this concern you? Through me and him the One Above is praised."

And furthermore, the Rabbis decided that Rabbi Avahu should be appointed head of the Beis Medrash, but when he saw that Rabbi Abba of Acco had numerous creditors, he said to the Rabbis, "There is a scholar who is greater

than me.” [They then made Rabbi Abba wealthy in order that he should be respected; he was therefore able to pay off his debts.]

Rabbi Avahu and Rabbi Chiya bar Abba once came to a place. Rabbi Avahu expounded Aggadah and Rabbi Chiya bar Abba expounded *halacha*. All the people left Rabbi Chiya bar Abba and went to hear Rabbi Avahu, so that the former was disheartened. Rabbi Avahu said to him, “I will give you a parable; to what does this matter compare? To two men, one of whom was selling precious stones and the other various kinds of small ware. To whom will the people jump on? Is it not to the seller of various kinds of small ware (*since his merchandise is much more affordable*)?” [He was saying that everyone could follow an Aggadic lecture, but a halachic one is difficult to grasp.]

Every day Rabbi Chiya bar Abba used to accompany Rabbi Avahu to his house of lodging because of respect for the Caesar’s house (*who held him in high esteem*), but on that day Rabbi Avahu accompanied Rabbi Chiya bar Abba to his house of lodging, and yet, his mind was still not set at ease. (40a)

Modim

While the *chazzan* recites *Modim* (*we give thanks*), what does the congregation say?

Rav said: The congregation says: “We give thanks to You, Hashem, our God, because we are inspired to give You thanks.”

Shmuel said: The congregation adds: “God of all flesh, because we give You thanks.”

Rabbi Simai said: The congregation adds: “Our Molder and the Molder of Creation, because we give You thanks.”

The Nehardeans said in the name of Rabbi Simai: The congregation adds: “Blessings and thanksgiving to Your

great Name because You have kept us alive and sustained us, because we give You thanks.”

Rav Acha bar Yaakov would conclude as follows: “So may You continue to keep us alive and find favor in us, and gather us together and assemble our exiles to the Courtyards of Your Sanctuary to observe Your statutes and to do Your will wholeheartedly; because we give You thanks.”

Rav Papa said: Therefore, let us recite them all. (40a)

Awe of a Congregation

Rabbi Yitzchak said: The awe for the congregation should always be upon you, for behold, the *Kohanim* face towards the people and their backs are to the *Shechinah* (*the awe for the congregation overrides the fact that their backs are to the Shechinah, which would normally be regarded as disrespectful*).

Rav Nachman said: It is derived from the following verse: *Then King David stood up upon his feet and said: Hear me, my brothers and my people*. If he called them “my brothers,” why did he say, “my people,” and if he called them, “my people,” why did he say, “my brothers”? Rabbi Elozar said: David told the Jewish people, “If you listen to me, then you are my brothers; but, if not, you are my people and I will rule you with a rod. [We see that when they listen, David was in awe of the congregation.]

The Rabbis said: This principle is derived from the *halacha* that the *Kohanim* are not allowed to wear sandals when they ascend the platform to bless the congregation. This was one of the nine decrees that Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai instituted. Was this not because of respect for the congregation (*since their sandals were generally covered with mud*)!

Rav Ashi said: No! The reason there was because we were concerned that the strap from his sandal become untied

and when he proceeds to retie it (*and thus refrains from reciting the Priestly Blessing*), people will say that he is the son of a divorcee or a *chalutzah*. (40a)

One or Three Blessings

The *Mishna* had stated: In the provinces (*not in the Beis Hamikdosh*) they recited it as three blessings (*after each blessing, the congregation would answer, "Amen"*), but in the Temple, it was recited as one blessing.

The *Gemora* explains: They didn't respond with "Amen" in the Beis HaMikdosh (*and therefore there was no interruption between the verses*). (40a – 40b)

Mishna

How are the blessings of the *Kohen Gadol* recited (*on Yom Kippur*)? The synagogue attendant would take a Torah scroll (*from the synagogue that was situated on the Temple Mount*) and hand it to the Head of the synagogue (*the decision maker of the synagogue, i.e. the gabbai*), and the Head of the synagogue would give it to the Deputy *Kohen Gadol*, and the Deputy *Kohen Gadol* would give it to the *Kohen Gadol*, and the *Kohen Gadol* would stand and receive it. The *Kohen Gadol* would read the portion of *Acharei Mos* and the passage which begins with "*However, on the tenth day...*" He would then roll up the Torah and place it in his bosom, and proclaim: "More than what I have read to you is written here." The passage which begins with "*However, on the tenth day...*" which is in Bamidbar, he would recite by heart, and would then utter eight blessings: For the Torah; for the Service; for the Thanksgiving; for the forgiveness of sin; and for the Temple; and for Israel; and for the *Kohanim*; and for the rest of the prayer. (40b)

Honoring a Disciple in the Presence of his Master

The *Gemora* notes: It can be inferred from our *Mishna* that we may display respect to a student in the presence of his teacher (*for we first give the Torah to the gabbai or to the Deputy Kohen Gadol even though the Kohen Gadol*

is present; perhaps it should be regarded as an insult to the master's honor; this is a matter of disagreement in the Gemora Bava Basra!)

Abaye disagrees: The entire process is one that is done out of respect for the *Kohen Gadol* (*by demonstrating the amounts of ranks beneath him*). (40b)

The Courtyard

The *Mishna* had stated: And the *Kohen Gadol* would stand and receive it. It can be inferred from here that until that juncture, the *Kohen Gadol* was sitting.

The *Gemora* asks from the rule that one is not permitted to sit in the Temple Courtyard unless he is a king from the House of David.

The *Gemora* answers: Just as Rav Chisda explained elsewhere that "the Courtyard" is referring to the Woman's Courtyard, so too, the *Mishna* is referring to the Woman's Courtyard (*which did not have the same degree of sanctity as the Temple Courtyard*).

A *braisa* had stated: The Torah was read in the Courtyard. Rabbi Eliezer ben Yaakov said: It was read on the Temple Mount. Rav Chisda explained that when the *braisa* said "the Courtyard," it was referring to the Woman's Courtyard. (40b – 41a)

INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

Boruch Sheim

Whenever a *brocha* was recited in the Beis Hamikdosh, the people would respond with the prayer of *Boruch sheim* etc. Would this response be required to be in a quiet tone like we say it in *kerias shema* or perhaps it can be answered loudly?

There are two reasons as to why we recite *Boruch sheim* quietly. The Gemora in Pesachim relates that the Tribes said *Shema Yisroel* and Yaakov responded with *Boruch sheim*. The *Chachamim* had a dilemma as to how we should recite shema. Perhaps we should not say *Boruch sheim* for it is not in the Torah, however it is not proper to refrain from saying it for Yaakov did recite it. They resolved this by ruling that it should be recited quietly.

There is a Midrash that relates what transpired when Moshe went up to Heaven. He heard the angels praising the Holy One, Blessed be He, with *Boruch sheim*. He was greatly impressed with this and brought it down for *Klal Yisroel* to say as well. The Midrash brings a parable and concludes that it would not be proper to recite this *tefillah* out loud for it is considered stolen from the angels, however on Yom Kippur, when we are compared to the angels, it can be said out loud.

DAILY MASHAL

Amen

When we hear a blessing being made, we respond with the affirmative Amen. Why was this term not used in the Beis Hamikdash?

The Maharsha explains that the gematria or numerical value of Amen is 91 which equals the combined numerical values of the pronounced form (26) and the written form (65) of the name of Hashem. Since we are not allowed to use the pronounced form, we include the reference to Hashem with the word Amen that combines the two expressions. In the Beis Hamikdash they would pronounce the name of Hashem with its correct pronunciation and did not need to use Amen.

The Aruch Hashulchan asks on the Maharsha that after the death of Shimon Hatzadik, the full pronunciation of

the Name was forbidden in the Beis Hamikdash as well, yet they still did not respond with Amen. He therefore answers that the word Amen serves to strengthen the blessing so that the blessing should be fulfilled. In the Beis Hamikdash which is the chosen place selected for Hashem's Presence to reside in this world, the blessings do not need the power of the Amen.

Conversely, the Meiri says that Amen is insufficient for the Beis Hamikdash. He explains that Amen as a suffix denotes the end of the blessing, but in the Beis Hamikdash there is no end to the flow of blessings from Hashem.

Nowadays, we don't have the Beis Hamikdash but we still have the power of Amen, which as noted has the numerical value of 91, which is also the numerical value of Malach, an angel.

R' Chaim of Volozhin was always scrupulously careful not to make a brachah unless there was someone nearby to respond with an Amen. One night he was extremely thirsty but everyone was asleep and so he poured himself a cup of water but refrained from drinking it. As he continued learning, there was a knock at the door and one of his students entered to ask him a question about a difficulty he was having in understanding the Gemara he was learning. R' Chaim gladly helped him to understand the Gemara and also took the opportunity to make the brachah on his drink. The next day, R' Chaim thanked the student for coming over to his house. The student looked confused as he respectfully answered that he hadn't been in R' Chaim's house the previous night. R' Chaim understood that Heaven had sent him an angel to enable him to make the brachah and maintain his custom of not saying a brachah without having the response of Amen.