

Daf Notes

Insights into the Daily Daf

7 Elul 5770

Avodah Zarah Daf 3

Aug 17, 2010

Daf Notes is currently being dedicated to the neshamah of
Yonina bas Menachem Mendel o"h.

May the studying of the Daf Notes be a zechus for her neshamah and may her soul find peace in Gan Eden and be bound up in the Bond of Life.

Visit us on the web at <http://www.daf-yomi.org/>,
where we are constantly updating the archives from the entire Shas.

Produced by Rabbi Avrohom Adler

To subscribe, please send email to: aneinu@gmail.com

Daily Daf

Reward for the Gentiles

Rav Yosef had said: *Hashem stood and judged the earth; He saw and released the nations.* What did He see? Hashem saw the seven commandments which were accepted by all the descendants of Noach, but since they did not observe them, He rose up and released them from their obligation to observe these commandments.

The *Gemora* asks: It would emerge that a sinner gains from his transgression!?

Mar the son of Ravina answers: This is teaching us that even if they fulfill the *mitzvos*, they will not receive reward for it.

The *Gemora* asks: But did we not learn in a *braisa* that Rabbi Meir said: How is it known that a gentile who studies Torah is comparable to a *Kohen Gadol*? It is written (*with respect to the Torah's laws*): *that man shall perform and by which he shall live.* It does not say: *Kohanim, Leviim or Yisroelim.* Rather, it says "man." This teaches us that a gentile who studies Torah is comparable to a *Kohen Gadol*. [*It emerges that they do receive credit for observing the Torah!?*]

The *Gemora* answers: They do not receive reward as if they were commanded to do so, but they do receive reward as one who performs a *mitzvah* even though he has not been commanded. This is as Rabbi Chanina says: A person who is commanded to do *mitzvos* and does it is greater than one who is not commanded to do it and he does it anyway (*for one has to fight with his yetzer hara, and the other does not*). (2b – 3a)

The Jews Observed the Mitzvos

Rather, this is what the idolaters were saying to Hashem: Master of the Universe: The Jewish people, who accepted the Torah, have they, in fact, observed the *mitzvos*?

The Holy One, Blessed be He, responded to them: I will testify on their behalf that they fulfilled the entire Torah. The nations retorted: May a father testify for a son (*and the Jews are considered children of Hashem*), and it is written: *Israel is My son, My firstborn.* Then the Holy One, Blessed be He, will say: Heaven and Earth can bear witness that they have fulfilled the entire Torah. But they will object, saying: Master of the Universe, Heaven and Earth are partial witnesses, for it is written: *If not for My covenant of day and night, I would not have established the statutes of Heaven and Earth.* And Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish stated: What is the meaning of this verse: *And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day (why is there an extra "hey" in ha-shishi)?* It teaches us that Hashem made a condition with the works of Creation, saying: *If the Jewish people accept my Torah it will be well, but if not, I shall return you to a state of emptiness.* And this is similar to the comment of Chizkiyah on the verse: *From Heaven you made judgment heard, the earth trembled and became calm.* If the earth trembled, why was it calm, and if it was calm, why did it tremble? Rather, at first it trembled (*for perhaps the Jews would not accept the Torah*), and subsequently (*when they agreed to observe the Torah*) it became calm.

Then the Holy One, Blessed be He, will say: From among you some will come and testify that the Jews observed the entire Torah. Let Nimrod come and testify that Avraham did not worship idols; let Lavan come and testify that Yaakov was not suspected of theft; let the wife of Potiphara come and testify that Yosef was not suspect of committing an immoral sin; let Nevuchadnetzar come and testify that Chanania, Mishael and Azariah did not bow down to an idol; let Daryavesh come and testify that Daniel never neglected his prayers; let Bildad the Shuchite, and Tzophar the Naamite, and Eliphaz the Teimanite (and Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite; all friends of Iyuv) testify that the Jews have observed the entire Torah; as it is written: *Let them (the nations) bring their witnesses, that they (the Jews) will be vindicated.* (3a)

Idolaters, “Give us the Torah now”

The nations will then plead: Offer us the Torah anew and we shall observe it. The Holy One, Blessed be He, will say to them: You fools of the world; he who bothered himself to prepare before *Shabbos* can eat on *Shabbos*, but he who has not bothered himself before *Shabbos*, what shall he eat on *Shabbos*? Nevertheless, I have an easy *mitzvah*, which is called *sukkah*; go and perform it.

The *Gemora* asks: But how can you say so? Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi says: It is written: The *mitzvos* which I command you today to do them? This teaches us that today only (*the present*) is the time to perform them, but they cannot be done tomorrow; today is the time in which to do them, but not in which to be rewarded for them (*for that is reserved for the World to Come*). [*How then should they be offered this opportunity to observe the mitzvah of sukkah in the Messianic time?*]

The *Gemora* answers: It is because the Holy One, Blessed be He, does not wish to give excuses when dealing imperiously with His creatures.

The *Gemora* asks: And why does He refer to the *mitzvah* of *sukkah* as an easy command?

The *Gemora* answers: It is because it does not have a significant monetary cost.

The *Gemora* continues the narrative: Immediately, every one of them will go and build a *sukkah* on the top of his roof; and the Holy One, Blessed be He, will pierce them with the heat of the sun in the Summer season, and every one of them will kick his *sukkah* and leave, as it is written: *Let us cut their cords, and cast away their ropes from us.*

The *Gemora* asks: How can He do that? But you have just said that the Holy One, Blessed be He, does not wish to give excuses when dealing imperiously with His creatures?

The *Gemora* answers: It is because with the Jewish people too, it occasionally happens that the Summer season extends until *Sukkos*, and they also are distressed due to the heat.

The *Gemora* asks: But Rava says: He who is distressed is thereby exempt from dwelling in the *Sukkah*?

The *Gemora* answers: While it is true that they are exempt, but would they contemptuously kick it (*as they were leaving*)? (3a – 3b)

Hashem’s Laughter

Immediately, the Holy One, Blessed be He, sits and laughs at them, as it is written: *He that sits in Heaven laughs.* Rabbi Yitzchak said: Only on that day is there laughter for the Holy One, Blessed be He!

There are those who connect that comment of Rabbi Yitzchak with the following teaching: Rabbi Yosi says: In the Future to Come,

idolaters will come and convert. And it was challenged from a *braisa* which states that no converts will be accepted in the days of Mashiach (*it will be assumed that they have ulterior motives*). Similarly, no converts were accepted in the days of Dovid, nor in the days of Shlomo. Rather, they will be self-made converts, and will place *tefillin* on their foreheads and on their arms, *tzitzes* in their garments, and a *mezuzah* on their doorposts, but when the battle of Gog with his nation Magog will come about, and they will be asked: For what purpose have you come? and they will reply: We are fighting against God and His Messiah; then each of those converts will cast aside his *mitzvah* and go away, as it is written: *Let us cut their cords, and cast away their ropes from us.* And the Holy One, Blessed be He, will sit and laugh at them, as it is written: *He that sits in Heaven laughs.* Rabbi Yitzchak said: Only on that day is there laughter for the Holy One, Blessed be He!

The *Gemora* asks: But is there no other time that He laughs? Yet Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav: the day consists of twelve hours. During the first three hours, the Holy One, Blessed be He, occupies Himself with the study of Torah; during the second three, He sits in judgment on the whole world, and when He sees that the world is deserving of destruction, He transfers Himself from the seat of Justice to the seat of Mercy; during the third three, He sits and feeds the entire world, from the horned *re’eimim* (*perhaps a reindeer*) to the eggs of lice; during the fourth three, He laughs with the *Leviathan* (*a huge sea creature*), as it is written: *You created this Leviathan, in order to sport with it.*

Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak answers: He laughs *with* His creatures, but He does not laugh *about* His creatures except on that day.

Rav Acha said to Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak: From the day that the *Beis Hamikdash* was destroyed, there is no laughter for the Holy One, Blessed be He.

The *Gemora* asks: If so, what does He do in the fourth quarter (*since he does not sport with the Leviathan any longer*)?

The *Gemora* answers: He teaches Torah to schoolchildren (*who died young*).

The *Gemora* asks: Who taught them Torah before the destruction?

The *Gemora* answers: Either the angel Metatron taught them, or Hashem did both things (*sport with the Leviathan, and teach the children Torah*).

The *Gemora* asks: What does Hashem do at night?

The *Gemora* answers: Either He does the kind of thing that He does by day; or it may be said that He rides His fast cherub, and flies in eighteen thousand worlds. Some say that He sits and listens to the song of the Holy Chayos, as it is written: *By the day Hashem will command His kindness, and in the night His song shall be with me.*

Rabbi Levi said: One who interrupts his Torah study and engages in idle chatter is fed hot coals.

Rish Lakish said: One who toils in Torah study by night, Hashem will extend over him a thread of kindness by day, as it is written: *By the day Hashem will command His kindness, and in the night His song shall be with me.* What is the reason that *By the day Hashem will command His kindness*? It is because *in the night His song shall be with me.* Others say that Rish Lakish said: One who toils in Torah study in this world which is akin to night, Hashem will extend over him a thread of kindness in the World to Come which is akin to day.

Rav Yehudah said in the name of Shmuel: It is written: You have made man as the fish of the sea, like creeping things that have no ruler over them? Why are men compared to the fish of the sea? It is to teach you that just as the fish of the sea, as soon as they come on to dry land, die, so also man, as soon as he separates himself from the words of the Torah and its *mitzvos*, will die.

Another explanation: Just as the fish of the sea, as soon as the sun shines upon them, die; so also man, when the sun shines upon them, dies. This can be understood to be referring to the sun in the present world, or to the sun in the World to Come. You can, in accordance with Rabbi Chanina, apply this to the sun in the present world, for Rabbi Chanina taught: All misfortune that befalls a person is from the hand of Heaven except a sickness which was caused by exposure to the cold or the heat (*it is because of man's carelessness*)! This is as the verse states: *The cold air blows in the way of a crooked person; one who guards his soul should stay far away from them.* Or, according to Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish, it can be referring to the future life, for Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish said: Rish Lakish says: There will be no Gehinnom in the future, but rather Hashem will take the sun out of its sheath. The righteous will be healed by it, and the evildoers will be judged with it. This is referred to by the verse: *And it will shine for them those who fear me, a sun of righteousness and healing.* Not only this (*that the righteous will be healed by the sun*), but they will also enjoy it, as the verse continues: *and they will go out and be fattened by (enjoy) it like calves who are being fattened.* The evildoers will be judged by it as the verse says: *Behold the day will come when it will burn like an oven.* (3b – 4a)

INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

Sukkah – Abolishing Idolatry

The *Gemora* relates: The nations will then plead: Offer us the Torah anew and we shall observe it. The Holy One, Blessed be He, will say to them: You fools of the world; he who bothered himself to prepare before *Shabbos* can eat on *Shabbos*, but he who has not bothered himself before *Shabbos*, what shall he eat on *Shabbos*? Nevertheless, I have an easy *mitzvah*, which is called *sukkah*; go and perform it.

Immediately, every one of them will go and build a *sukkah* on the top of his roof; and the Holy One, Blessed be He, will pierce them with the heat of the sun in the Summer season, and every one of them will kick his *sukkah* and leave, as it is written: *Let us cut their cords, and cast away their ropes from us.*

Why was the *mitzvah* of *sukkah* chosen to be the defining distinction between the Jews and the idolaters?

In the sefer *Imrei Chein*, Reb Yehudah Levenberg explains as follows: The *Gemora* in *Sukkah* cites a dispute between Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Eliezer regarding the explanation of the verse that states: *so that your generations will know that I caused the Children of Israel to dwell in Sukkos when I took them from the land of Egypt.* Which *Sukkos* is the Torah referring to? Rabbi Akiva maintains that the verse refers to the booths that Hashem made for the Jewish People when they were sojourning in the Wilderness. Rabbi Eliezer, however, maintains that the verse refers to the Clouds of Glory that encompassed the Jewish People in the Wilderness.

The *Gemora* in *Taanis* (9a) states that Hashem performed three miracles for the Jewish People in the Wilderness. Hashem provided the Jewish People with a traveling well of water that was in the merit of Miriam. The Jewish People were further provided with manna that fell from heaven and sustained them and the manna was in the merit of Moshe. The Clouds of Glory that protected the Jewish People were in the merit of Aharon. The commentators wonder why there is only a festival commemorating the miracle of the Clouds of Glory while there is no festival that commemorates the miracles of the traveling well and the falling of the manna from heaven.

The Vilna Gaon and Reb Tzadok HaKohen from Lublin in *Pri Tzaddik* posit that in truth, we are not commemorating any of the above-mentioned miracles. Rather, the explanation is that following the sin of the Golden Calf, Hashem removed the Clouds of Glory that were protecting the Jewish People and only after Moshe gained atonement for the Jewish People on Yom Kippur did the Clouds of Glory return. Nonetheless, the Clouds of Glory did not actually return until the fifteenth of Tishrei when the Jewish People commenced the construction of the *Mishkan*, the edifice that reflected their atonement. Thus, the festival of *Sukkos* is not necessarily a commemoration of the Clouds of Glory. Rather, the festival of *Sukkos* commemorates the return of the Clouds of Glory and the atonement that the Jewish People received on Yom Kippur.

This demonstrates the connection between the *mitzvah* of *sukkah* and the atonement received for the sin of the Golden Calf.

The *Gemora* in *Arachin* cites a scriptural verse which states that they performed the *mitzvah* of *sukkah* that year in a manner that it had not been performed since the days of Yehoshua ben Nun. One of the explanations given to this cryptic verse is that the Men of the Great Assembly succeeded in abolishing the evil inclination for idolatry. What is the connection between the two? The answer could be like we have been explaining. The *mitzvah* of *sukkah* was the *mitzvah* which first combated the inclination to worship idols; that is why it was chosen to inform us that the desire to worship idols had been abolished, and that is why it is used as the defining distinction between the Jews, who serve Hashem, and the gentiles, who worship idols.

Adam - Unity

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa* that Rabbi Meir said: How is it known that a gentile who studies Torah is comparable to a *Kohen Gadol*? It is written (with respect to the Torah's laws): *that man shall perform and by which he shall live*. It does not say: *Kohanim, Leviim* or *Yisroelim*. Rather, it says "man." This teaches us that a gentile who studies Torah is comparable to a *Kohen Gadol*.

Tosfos asks from a *Gemora*: Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai said (*Yevamos* 61a): The graves of idolaters do not transmit *tumah* through the roof (if the *tumah* source and a person or object is under the same roof). He cites a Scriptural source to prove this point. It is written [Yechezkel 34:31]: *Now you my sheep, the sheep of my pasture; you are adam*. You, Israel, are referred to as "Adam," man, but an idolater is not regarded as "Adam." (The word "Adam" is the term used in the Torah regarding the laws of *tumah* by way of a roof; thus we see that the grave of an idolater does not transmit this *tumah*.)

Rabbeinu Tam answers that there is a distinction between the word "adam" and "ha'adam."

The Ol'los Efraim says that there are four names for man; Adam, Gever, Enosh and Ish. Each of them can be written in a singular form as well as in a plural form. However, the term "Adam" can only be written in a singular form. He explains this with our *Gemora*. Only a Jew is referred to as Adam, not an idolater. Klal Yisroel has the quality of *achdus*, uniting as one; therefore only we can be called Adam.

Using this principle, we can answer a famous question. It is written [Koheles 12:13]: *The end of the matter, all having been heard: fear God, and keep His commandments; for this is the whole man*. The Shalah comments that the verse *fear God* is referring to the negative prohibitions; the verse *and keep His commandments* is referring to the positive commandments; and the verse *for this is the whole man* is the essence of man, the two hundred and forty eight limbs and the three hundred and sixty five veins, which are corresponding to the two hundred and sixty eight positive commandments and the three hundred and sixty five negative prohibitions.

There are those that ask: If so, it is impossible for any single individual to be complete; it is impossible to fulfill all six hundred and thirteen *mitzvos*. Some *mitzvos* are only applicable to a *Kohen*; some are unique to a *Levi*; others are only to a *Yisroel*; men have *mitzvos* that are only relevant to them, and women have their special *mitzvos*. How can a person be considered complete?

Perhaps the answer is because Klal Yisroel is Adam. We are all united. One person's performance of a *mitzvah* effects everyone else. If everyone does their particular *mitzvah*, Klal Yisroel can be regarded as being complete.

The Beilis Blood Libel

The following story is printed in the Sefer Margaliyos HaShas amongst others and the text of the entire story can be found here: [shemayisrael](#).

The Beilis Affair shook the ground under those Jews who had thought that the modern world was a more rational one, a world in which outrageous accusations might be levied but would certainly not gain credence. When Mendel Beilis was brought to trial for a blood libel accusation, it seemed that the progress of a century would be completely wiped away in an instant.

Jews around the world were stirred to action. There was also an outpouring of sympathy from non Jews who recognized the injustice and absurdity of the accusations. A progressive newspaper in Germany reported that libels that echo with the style and content of the darkest medieval times are being hurled against the Jewish minority in Russia. Diplomats, statesmen and other men of prominence urged the Russian government to retreat from this bizarre enterprise. But against this flood of outrage, the anti-Semites of the world only strengthened and increased their own accusations.

The Jewish world was in turmoil. In congregations around the globe, special daily prayers were instituted for the deliverance of Beilis and all the Jewish people. Community leaders, rabbis, chassidic rebbes and influential activists became involved. The Chazon Ish was an active participant in the fight, as were Rabbi Meir Shapiro, the Lubliner Rav, the Lubavitcher Rebbe and the Chortkover Rebbe. The main thrust of their efforts was ambitious. They sought not only to clear Beilis of the unfounded charges but also to uproot the very idea of the blood libel.

The lawyer that headed the defense team was the legendary Oscar Gruzenberg. He knew that the prosecutions attack was going to be directed against the Talmud and other works of Jewish scholarship and that the expertise in devising a defense would have to be provided by the rabbis. Rabbi Mazeh, Chief Rabbi of Moscow, was chosen to head the rabbinic advisory team for the defense.

On October 8, 1913, right after Yom Kippur, the trial opened. The long-awaited spectacle was now under way. Jew and non-Jew in Russia and around the world awaited the outcome with breathless anticipation.

As the trial began, the indictment accused Menachem Mendel the son of Tuviah Beilis, 39, of having murdered together with other people, not discovered, under duress of mysterious religious obligations and rituals, one Andrei Yustchinsky.

The twelve jurors were carefully chosen; their identities and ideologies had been thoroughly prepared prior to the charade of the trial. The first witnesses testified to such blatant lies that the defense lawyer did not even feel compelled to discredit their testimonies. These preliminary stages were clearly a farce, and the audience, near and far, waited for the real trial to begin. At last, the parade of experts began. And the trial became an examination of the Talmud's view on various issues.

What does the Talmud say about the place from which the soul exits the body?

Is it correct that the Talmud states that stealing from a gentile is permissible?

The constant refrain was about the Talmud. There, in the depths of the main courthouse of Kiev, all one could hear was Talmud. The prosecutor was prepared with an avalanche of quotes from the Halachic (legal) and the Aggadic (homiletic) portions of the Talmud. Anti-Semites around the world had done their homework and had rallied to the cause of condemning the Jewish people and the Jewish religion in a court of law.

The crucial question was posed: How dare the Jewish sages claim that [the Jewish people] are called adam, man, while the idol worshippers are not called adam?

The illustrious Rabbi Meir Shapiro was then the Rabbi of Galina. (Later, he would establish and serve as the head of the famous yeshivah of Lublin, and he would also institute the Daf Yomi.) When Rabbi Shapiro heard about attacks against the Talmud, he understood that the Talmud was being accused of inciting Jew against non-Jew. Rabbi Shapiro sent off a very clear letter to Rabbi Mazeh dealing with this accusation. He told him to explain to the court that a very important insight into the nature of the Jewish people is revealed in this Talmudic quote.

The Torah states, he wrote, that kol Yisrael areivim zeh lazeh, all Jews are responsible for each other. (Shevuos 39) According to this principle, it stands to reason that the fate of Mendel Beilis, for example, which is in essence the fate of one single Jew, nevertheless touches the entire Jewish people. The Jewish people tremble for his welfare and would do everything in their power to remove the prisoner's collar from him. What would have been the reaction of the gentile world if one specific gentile had been accused of a similar crime and was standing trial in a faraway country? Clearly, no more than the people of his own town would show any interest in the libel. Perhaps, at most, people in other parts of his own country would criticize the proceedings. But people in other countries? They certainly wouldn't take a personal interest in him.

This, therefore, is the difference between the Jewish people and all other peoples. The Jews are considered adam, the singular form of the word man, an indication of the extreme solidarity of the Jewish people. For us, when one Mendel Beilis is put on trial, the entire Jewish world stands at his side like one man. Not so the other peoples of the world. They may very well be considered anashim, the plural form of the word man, but they cannot be considered adam, a nation that stands together as a single man.

There is no way of knowing which particular effort of which particular rabbis may have had some impact on the trial. All in all, however, the concerted efforts of the Jews bore out the interpretation of Rabbi Meir Shapiro that you [the Jewish people] are called adam, for the Jews did set aside their internal differences and stood together as one man until the verdict of not guilty was returned.

Teaching Torah to an Idolater

Rabbi Ami said (Chagigah 13a): One is forbidden from teaching Torah to a non-Jew. This is derived from the verse [Tehillim 147: 19 – 20]: *He declared His word unto Yaakov, His statutes and*

ordinances unto Israel. He has not done so with any nation; and as for His ordinances, they have not known them.

Tosfos asks: The *Gemora* in Sanhedrin (59a) states explicitly that a non-Jew who studies Torah is liable for death; accordingly, one should be forbidden to teach him Torah because he is transgressing the prohibition against placing a stumbling block in front of a blind man? The idolater cannot study Torah, so the Jew should not be able to teach him Torah, why is this new verse necessary?

Tosfos states: The gentile is permitted to study the seven Noahide laws as the *Gemora* in Avodah Zarah (3a) states: Rabbi Meir said: A gentile who engages in the study of Torah is like a Kohen Gadol and the *Gemora* explains that this is referring to the seven laws which are incumbent upon him to adhere to. A Jew has an obligation to teach him these *halachos*.

Tosfos answers: Our *Gemora* is referring to a case where the idolater has another idolater who is willing to teach him Torah and therefore there would be no prohibition (based on the *Gemora* in Sanhedrin) of teaching him Torah; our *Gemora* teaches us that nevertheless, a Jew is forbidden from teaching a non-Jew Torah.

The Meor Veshemesh (Parshas Chukas) writes that it is permitted to teach the Written Law to an idolater as we find that Moshe wrote the Torah in seventy languages. The prohibition of teaching Torah to a gentile applies only to the Oral Law.

The Divrei Chaim (Chanukah) rules similarly: The Torah was written on the stones and the nations of the world copied it over. The Medrash states that the Holy One, Blessed is He did not protest and allowed them to study the Written Law. It is forbidden to teach them even one word of the Oral Law.

There are many commentators who disagree with this vehemently and they maintain that it is evident from many sources that it is even forbidden to teach the Written Law to a non-Jew.

In the sefer, Beis Pinchas (I P. 169) from Rabbi Pinchas HaLevi Horowitz, he writes that all are in agreement that it is forbidden to teach even the Written Law to a non-Jew; the aforementioned commentators are merely stating that we are not obligated to protest and prevent a non-Jew from studying the Written Law. This is derived from the Medrash which stated that Hashem allowed the idolaters to copy over the Written Law. It is incumbent on us, however, to ensure that the gentiles do not study the Oral Law.

This explanation is seemingly inconsistent with a ruling issued by Reb Moshe Feinstein in Igros Moshe (Y"D II: 132): He states that it is forbidden to directly teach Torah to a gentile; however, if he happens to be in the room when one is teaching Torah to other Jews, the teacher is permitted to continue teaching Torah since it is not his intention to teach the gentile.

If there is an obligation to ensure that the gentile does not study the Oral Law, it should follow that one would be compelled to cease his discourse and wait for the non-Jew to leave before continuing with the teaching of Torah.

Teaching Torah to a Future Convert

The Rambam (Issurei Bi'ah 14:2) writes that we inform the prospective convert the essentials of the faith, which is the unity of God and the prohibition of idolatry, and they go on at great length about these matters.

The Machaneh Chaim (Y"D II, 45) asks: Why isn't this forbidden on account of a gentile studying Torah? The *Gemora* in Sanhedrin (59a) states explicitly that a non-Jew who studies Torah is liable for death.

He answers by citing a Medrash Tanchuma in Parshas Vayelech: The numerical value of Torah is six hundred and eleven. The remaining two mitzvos which complete the six hundred and thirteen are the two mitzvos which were given by Hashem directly at Har Sinai. This is the explanation of the verse: The Torah that Moshe commanded us to observe. Moshe instructed us regarding six hundred and eleven mitzvos; the other two were from Hashem.

The prohibition against teaching an idolater Torah is only applicable to the six hundred and eleven mitzvos that Moshe taught us. The other two, I am Hashem your God and the Unity of God; one would be permitted to teach to them. This is where the Rambam derived his ruling from; we can go on with great length discussing the unity of God and the prohibition of idolatry.

The Maharsha (Shabbos 31a) writes that it is permitted to teach Torah to an idolater who wishes to convert. He proves this from the incident with Hillel and the convert.

Reb Akiva Eiger (41) disagrees and maintains that it is forbidden to teach Torah to an idolater even if he is planning on converting. Hillel taught the convert Torah only after he converted.

No Converts or Repentance

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: No converts will be accepted in the days of Mashiach (*it will be assumed that they have ulterior motives*). Similarly, no converts were accepted in the days of Dovid, nor in the days of Shlomo.

The Maharil states: Similarly, repentance will not be accepted in the days of Mashiach (*it will be assumed that one has ulterior motives*). A person should hurry to repent because we are anxiously awaiting the imminent arrival of Mashiach, and if someone doesn't repent and Mashiach will arrive, he will remain with his sins.

Bundle Up

The *Gemora* states that catching a cold or heat related illness is considered a negligent illness. The *Gemora* teaches us that "everything is in the hands of heaven except for heat and cold."

Tosfos explain that all mishaps and occurrences that happen (*in contrast to misfortunes that we actively bring to ourselves, for*

example jumping into a raging ocean) in our life, is not a random act attributed to queer and meaningless fate. Rather, everything that occurs in our lives, whether big or small, is directly caused by G-d. There is one exception to this Law of Occurrences - illnesses that are caused by heat or cold. This is exclusively in man's department.

There is an interesting difference between the two. The Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim Siman 276 Seif 5) rules that in cold places, it is permitted to tell a non-Jew on Shabbos to make a fire (*or in today's vernacular - turn on the heater*) for the little children (*because for them, it's cold, even in weather where the adults are comfortable*). Once there is a fire, everyone is allowed to benefit from it. However, the Taz and others add that one may not sit close to the fire out of concern that one might momentarily forget and make the fire larger. In a place where it's extremely cold, one may tell a non-Jew to light a fire (*even for adults*). The reason for this is, as the Shulchan Aruch puts it, "Everyone is considered ill in regard to the cold." The ill here refers to the category of "an ill person that is not in danger," and therefore, we are not allowed to make a fire, but a non-Jew can, because a non-Jew may be specifically asked to perform forbidden labor when there is an ill person, without the hints that usually must accompany an "*Amirah Li'akum*" (*telling a non-Jew to do a melachah on Shabbos*).

Similarly, in a case where the air conditioner is on, and it is very cold, one may ask a non-Jew to turn it off. However, if it is very hot, there is no such concept of "Everyone is considered ill in regard to heat." Although some (Minchas Yitzchak and others) permit to ask a non-Jew to turn on an air conditioner for different reasons, Reb Moishe Feinstein forbade it (Igros Moshe Yoreh De'ah Chelek 3 Shaila 47 Ois 2).

Titus' Thoughts About a Sukkah

By: Meoros HaDaf HaYomi

Our *sugya* relates that in the future the gentiles will ask Hashem to try them with observing mitzvos. Hashem, who deals fairly with his creatures, will ask them to observe the mitzvah of the *sukkah* but will then shine the sun with such intensity that they, who did not agree to sacrifice themselves to observe mitzvos, will rebel and leave their *sukkos*. Hashem will try the gentiles with the sun and not with something else, such as a torrential downpour, because when their forefather Titus was returning home after destroying the Temple (Gitin 56b), huge waves threatened to drown him. He said that Hashem only controls the water, just as he drowned Pharaoh and warred against Sisera with the stream of Kishon. To prevent his descendents from speaking likewise, Hashem will smite them with the sun (*Toras Moshe, Vayikra 37:2*).