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Bava Basra Daf 14

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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

Torah Scroll

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: A Torah scroll should be such that its height does not exceed its circumference (*when it is rolled up*), nor should the circumference exceed its height (*and therefore, ideally, the Torah’s height and circumference should be precisely identical*).

Rebbe was asked: What should be the size of a Torah scroll (*using average size letters*)? He replied: With *g’vil* (*thick parchment*), it should be six *tefachim* (*handbreadths*). If it is being written on *k’laf* (*thin parchment*), I do not know.

Rav Huna wrote seventy Torah scrolls and succeeded in reaching the exact measurement with only one.

Rav Acha bar Yaakov wrote one on calf’s skin (*which is very thick, and cannot be rolled tightly*), and succeeded in reaching the exact measurement. The Rabbis enviously placed their eyes upon him and he died.

The Rabbis said to Rav Hamnuna: Rabbi Ami wrote four hundred Torah scrolls. He said to them: Perhaps he merely wrote the verse, “Moses commanded us the Torah” four hundred times (*for it would be impossible to write so many scrolls in a person’s lifetime*).

Rava said to Rabbi Zeira: Rabbi Yannai planted four hundred vineyards. He replied: Perhaps each consisted of two vines opposite another two vines and one coming out as a tail.

The *Gemora* asks on Rebbe (*who maintains that when using a thick parchment six tefachim high with average sized lettering, the circumference will be six tefachim*) from the following (*lengthy braisa*): The Ark which Moshe built was two and a half cubits in length (15 *tefachim*), a cubit and a half in width, and a cubit and a half in height, the cubit being six *tefachim*. The two Tablets were six *tefachim* in length, six in width, and three in thickness. They were placed lengthwise in the ark (*one next to the other*). Now how much of the length of the Ark was taken up by the tablets? Twelve *tefachim* (6 x 2). We are therefore left with three. Take away one *tefach*, a half for each side of the Ark, and we are left with two *tefachim*, and in these, the Torah scroll was deposited. We know that a scroll was in the Ark because it says: *There was nothing in the Ark except the two Tablets of stone which Moshe put there*. Now in the words ‘nothing’ and ‘except,’ we have a limitation following a limitation, and the purpose of a limitation following a limitation is to include the presence of something which is not mentioned. In this case, it is the Torah scroll which was deposited in the Ark. You have accounted for the length of the Ark, now account for its width. How much of the width of the Ark do the Tablets take up? Six *tefachim*. We are therefore

left with three. Take away one *tefach*, a half for each side of the Ark, and we are left with two *tefachim*, so as to allow the scroll to be put in and taken out without being pressed against the wall. This is the opinion of Rabbi Meir.

Rabbi Yehudah says that the cubit used to measure the Ark had only five *tefachim*. The two Tablets were six *tefachim* in length, six in width, and three in thickness. They were placed lengthwise in the ark (*one next to the other*). Now how much of the length of the Ark was taken up by the tablets? Twelve *tefachim* (6 x 2). We are therefore left with half a *tefach* (*for the length of the Ark was twelve and a half tefachim*), a fingerbreadth for each side. You have accounted for the length of the Ark, now account for its width. How much of the width of the Ark do the Tablets take up? Six *tefachim*. We are therefore left with a *tefach* and a half (*for the width of the Ark was seven and a half tefachim*). Take away half a *tefach*, a fingerbreadth for each side of the Ark, and we are left with one *tefach*. Here were deposited two silver rods (*one on each side of the Tablets*) mentioned in the verse in Melachim. At the side of the Ark was placed the chest in which the Philistines sent a present to the God of Israel, and on this was placed the Torah scroll. The verse indicates that it was placed by the side of the Ark and not in it. And what then do I make of the words, "*There was nothing in the Ark except the two Tablets of stone which Moshe put there*"? This teaches us that the fragments of the first Tablets were deposited in the Ark.

The *Gemora* presents the challenge: Now if we assume that the circumference of the scroll was six *tefachim*, let us consider the following: It is known that a circular object with a circumference of three *tefachim* has a diameter of one *tefach* (*and therefore, a Torah scroll with a circumference of six tefachim will have a width*

of two tefachim). Since a Torah scroll is rolled in the middle, the width of the scroll must have been over two *tefachim* (*due to the space between the two cylinders*). How then did this get in to the two *tefachim* space of the Ark?

Rav Acha bar Yaakov answers: The scroll read in the Temple Court was rolled around one cylinder (*and therefore was not more than two tefachim*).

The *Gemora* asks: Even so, how could two *tefachim* get into an exactly two-*tefach* space?

Rav Ashi responds: The scroll was rolled together up to a certain point and placed in the Ark, and then the remainder was rolled up on top of it.

The *Gemora* asks: According to Rabbi Yehudah, where was the scroll placed before the arrival of the chest?

The *Gemora* answers: The Torah was placed on a shelf which protruded from the Ark.

The *Gemora* asks: How does Rabbi Meir understand the words "*at the side of the Ark*"?

The *Gemora* answers: This is to indicate that the scroll is to be placed at the side of the Tablets, and not between them; but even so, it was inside the Ark, only at the side.

The *Gemora* asks: According to Rabbi Meir, where were the two silver rods placed?

The *Gemora* answers: They were placed outside the Ark.



The *Gemora* asks: And where does Rabbi Meir learn that the fragments of the first Tablets were deposited in the Ark?

The *Gemora* answers: He derives it from the same source as Rav Huna, who said: What is the meaning of the verse: *Which was called by the Name, the name of Hashem, Master of Legions, Who is sitting upon the Keruvim?* The repetition of the word 'Name' teaches us that the Tablets and the fragments of the Tablets were deposited in the Ark.

The *Gemora* asks: And, how does Rabbi Yehudah understand these words?

The *Gemora* answers: He requires them for the lesson taught by Rabbi Yochanan, who said in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai: This teaches us that Hashem's Name (*of four letters*) and all the subordinate Names of Hashem were deposited in the Ark.

The *Gemora* asks: And doesn't Rabbi Meir also require the verse for this lesson?

The *Gemora* answers: Certainly he does.

The *Gemora* asks: So where then does he learn that the fragments of the Tablets were deposited in the Ark?

The *Gemora* answers: He learns it from the *braisa* taught by Rav Yosef. For Rav Yosef taught: *Which you broke ... and you shall put them;* The juxtaposition of these words teaches us that both the Tablets and the fragments of the Tablets were deposited in the Ark.

The *Gemora* asks: And what does Rabbi Yehudah derive from this verse?

The *Gemora* answers: He requires it for the lesson taught by Rish Lakish, who said: It is written [Shmos 34:1]: *The Tablets that you broke.* Rish Lakish interpreted this: Your strength shall be true because you broke it. (14a – 14b)

INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

The Scroll of the Temple Courtyard

The *Gemora* has a dispute between Rabbi Meir and Rabbi Yehudah whether the Torah scroll that was written by Moshe was actually in the Ark with the Tablets, or whether it was in the on the side of the Ark.

The *Gemora* (14b) refers to this Torah scroll as the scroll of the Temple Courtyard. Why would the scroll that is kept inside the Holy of Holies be called the scroll of the Temple Courtyard?

Rashi is apparently bothered by this question and says that the scroll that Moshe Rabbeinu wrote was used by the king during *hakhel*, and by the *Kohen Gadol* on Yom Kippur. Apparently, Rashi held that it was permitted to go into the Holy of Holies to take out the Torah in order to read it.

Tosfos (14a) asks why the *Gemora* finds it necessary to leave some space in the Ark so that the Torah can be put in and removed easily; it was never removed anyway, since it is forbidden to enter the Holy of Holies except on Yom Kippur, and we don't find any mention in the *Mishnayos* that they would use this Torah scroll on Yom Kippur!?

Tosfos clearly assumes not like Rashi and holds that this scroll wasn't used, and is therefore troubled by why they had to leave space to get it in and out easily.



Tosfos answers that although it was never used, they would sometimes remove it in order to repair it (*and one may enter the Holy of Holies in order to fix it, so too, one may enter to fix the Torah scroll*). Also, between the destruction of the Tabernacle in Shiloh and the second Temple, they would use the Torah.

The Reshash suggests that even Rashi agrees with Tosfos that one may not enter the Holy of Holies to remove the Torah, but during the second Temple, when there wasn't any Ark, it was used (*and that is why it is called the scroll of the Temple Courtyard – for perhaps during that time, it was actually kept in the Courtyard*).

DAILY MASHAL

Lessons from the Ark

The Aron Ha'kodesh, holy Ark, the repository of the Torah, has long been viewed as a symbol of Torah learning and the talmid chacham, Torah scholar. Indeed, upon perusing the Midrashim and ensuing halachic requirements for building the Aron, one develops a sense of the character traits that should comprise the talmid chacham's personality.

Of all of the vessels that were constructed for use in the Mishkan, only the Aron was made of specifications and measurements that were not whole. The Aron measured two and a half amos, cubits, long, one and a half cubits wide, and one and a half cubits high.

Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum notes that a number of lessons may be derived from this criteria. First, we infer that the scholar's goal is never complete. Torah

knowledge is vast; it is endless. The only goal is to learn - and to continue learning. Of course, one should have definite goals. After these goals have been realized, however, one should know that he is only beginning to understand Torah.

A talmid chacham should be humble, of a lowly spirit, always acutely aware of the uncompleted, never-ending task before him. He should derive the importance of humility - not only in knowledge - but also in character. Torah does not coincide well with one who has a haughty character. Our greatest gedolim, Torah giants, who have illuminated our minds with their brilliant expositions of Torah, never perceived themselves to be any better than the students that they taught. They were a vehicle for imparting Hashem's Torah to the next generation. They were soldiers in Hashem's army, serving a mission.