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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

- **Hebrew Script**

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: Rabbi Yossi says that Ezra was fit to receive the Torah, if he wasn't preempted by Moshe. Just as Moshe went up to Mount Sinai, Ezra went up to *Eretz Yisroel*, and just as Moshe taught the Jews Torah, Ezra taught them Torah in his time. Rabbi Yossi finally notes that although Ezra was not the one who transmitted the Torah like Moshe, he was the one through which the script of the Torah was changed.

Rabbi Yossi cites the verse in Ezra that refers to the letter sent to Artachshasta to disrupt the building of the Beis Hamikdosh, saying that it was in the different script, Aramaic letters and Aramaic words. This script was introduced in the time of Daniel, when the hand appeared to Belshatzar at his party, writing four words, *menai menai tekail ufarsin*, which no one was able to read. Although there were Jews at the party, they too could not read it, because it was a new script. The Torah itself indicates that the script will change, when it refers to the king's Torah as *mishneh hatorah*. The word *mishneh* can be understood as the *changing*, referring to the script which will change. Rabbi Yossi explains that this new script was called *Ashuris* – Assyrian, since it came with the Jews from Ashur (Babylonia) with Ezra.

The *Gemora* brings another *braisa* that discusses the script of the Torah. Rebbe says that the Torah was originally given with the current *Ashuri* script. When the Jews sinned, the original script was lost, and replaced with a variant script. When they repented and returned with Ezra, the original script was restored, as Zechariah tells the Jews that

Hashem will return to them *magid mishneh* – the teller of the changed [script of the Torah]. The script is called *Ashuris*, since it is *me'usheres* – a fitting and pleasant script.

Rabbi Shimon ben Elozar quotes Rabbi Elozar ben Parta, who says in the name of Rabbi Elozar Hamodai that the script never changed at all. The Torah refers to the hooks on the pillars in the Mishkan as *vavai ha'amudim* – the vav's (hooks) of the pillars. This indicates that just as the pillars never changed, so the method of writing the letter *vav* (which looks like a hook) – and all the letters – never changed. Furthermore, Megillas Esther states that Mordechai sent letters to the Jews *kichsavam v'chilshonam* – in their script and language. The juxtaposition of these two teaches us that just as their language never changed, so their script never changed.

The reference to the king's Torah as *mishneh torah* indicates that this *sefer torah* is different than a standard one, in that it is made small for the king to have in his arm at all times. King David therefore says that Hashem is always in front of him, *ki mimini bal emot* – because I do not waver from my right arm, i.e., because of the *sefer torah* which is constantly in my right hand. The *Gemora* explains that the other opinions understand this verse to teach that one who is praying must imagine the presence of Hashem directly in front of him.

The *Gemora* asks how Rabbi Shimon ben Elozar can explain why no one was able to read the writing on the wall. The *Gemora* offers a number of possibilities:

1. The words were written in *a”t ba”sh*, a pairing of Hebrew letters, in which the first of each pair is increasing from the beginning of the alphabet, and the second is decreasing from the end. For each letter of the real word, the corresponding letter of its pair was written, and this code had to be deciphered. (Rav)
2. The words were rearranged, by dividing the letters into three groups, the first group being the first letter of each word, the second group the second letters, etc. (Shmuel)
3. Each word was written backwards. (Rabbi Yochanan)
4. The first two letters of each word were transposed. (Rav Ashi)

The *Gemora* explains the meaning of the writing: *menai menai* – Hashem has counted the time of your dynasty, and it is finished. *tekail* – Hashem has weighed (*deliberated*) whether to extend it, and decided against it. *ufarsin* – Hashem has therefore given it to Persia. (21b – 22a)

• King's Honor

The *Mishna* lists the actions that are prohibited, due to the honor that must be accorded a king:

1. Riding his horse
2. Siting on his throne
3. Using his scepter
4. Witnessing him getting his hair cut, not clothed, or in the bathhouse.

The reason for all of these is the verse that says *som tasim alecha melech* – you shall place a king on you, indicating that you must place his awe on you. (22a)

• Marriage

Rabbi Yochanan says that Avishag, who was available for King David to have relations with if necessary, was forbidden to his son Adoniyah, but permitted to his son Shlomo. Avishag was not married to David, but was equivalent to his vessel, and was therefore not forbidden

to either as their father's wife. Since Adoniyah was not a king, he was forbidden to use anything of the king, while Shlomo was a king, and was allowed to use any item of the king. [The *Maharsha* explains that therefore, when Adoniyah asked to marry her, that was tantamount to rebellion, and he was executed.]

The *Gemora* explains that when Avishag was brought to the king, she suggested that he marry her. When he protested that he was forbidden to, since he had the maximum number of wives, she was skeptical, saying that this was an excuse for the king's inability to have relations at his age. To disprove Avishag, David summoned Bas-Sheva, and repeatedly had relations with her, proving his ability to do so.

Rav Shemen bar Abba notes that from the story of Avishag, we can see how bad divorce is, since the Sages allowed David to be secluded with a woman who was not married to him, rather than counsel him to divorce one of his wives.

The *Gemora* continues with a number of statements about the importance of a marital relationship:

1. Rabbi Eliezer says that one who divorces his first wife causes even the Altar to shed tears.
2. Rabbi Elozar (or Rabbi Yochanan) says that one's wife only dies early if he does not fulfill his monetary obligations, to charity or due to robbery.
3. Rabbi Yochanan says that if one's first wife dies, it is as if the Bais Hamikdosh was destroyed in his days, since both are called *machmad ainecha* – the treasure of your eye.
4. Rabbi Alexander says that if one's wife dies, his world turns to darkness. Rabbi Yossi bar Chanina says that his steps are made smaller. Rabbi Avahu says that his plans are not fulfilled.
5. Rabbah bar bar Chanah says in the name of Rabbi Yochanan that pairing a man and woman together is as difficult as splitting of the Sea since the verse extols Hashem as the one who creates a house from

individuals, and also extracts the Jews from bondage, leading them to sing at the sea. The comparison of the two in the verse indicates the difficulty involved in both is equivalent. [Although Rabbi Yehudah says that a heavenly voice announces forty days before the forming of a fetus who will marry whom, this refers to a first pairing, while Rabbah bar bar Chanah is referring to a second match.]

6. Rav Shmuel bar Nachman says that everything is replaceable, except for the wife of one's youth.
7. Rav Yehudah taught his son Yitzchak that one only is content from his first wife. When Yitzchak asked for an example, he offered his wife (*Yitzchak's mother*) as one. Although Rav Yehudah also applied the verse that refers to a woman who is very hard to live with to his wife, the *Gemora* explains that she was a tough person, but easily mollified, making Rav Yehudah content with her.
8. Rav Shmuel bar Onia says in the name of Rav that an unmarried woman is like an unformed vessel, and she forms a bond with the one who completes her, i.e., by consummating a first marriage.
9. The *braisa* says that when one dies, the death is felt most by the spouse. When Elimelech died, the verse says Elimelech, the husband of Na'ami died, while when Rachel died, Yaakov says that she died *alai* – on me. (22a – 22b)

- ***Grooming Periods***

The *Gemora* expands on the honor of a king. The *braisa* says that a king gets his hair cut each day, a *Kohen Gadol* each week, and a regular *Kohen* once every thirty days. The *Gemora* provides the sources for these rules:

1. King: The verse says that one should see the king in his glory, so his hair must always be groomed.
2. *Kohen Gadol*: He must appear fully groomed to greet each rotation of *Kohanim*, which arrive weekly.
3. *Kohen*: The verse in Yechezkel says that the *Kohanim* should not grow their hair long. The word used for the length of their hair is *pera*, which is also used for a

nazir, who must grow his hair to *pera*. Since a *nazir* period is a minimum of thirty days, we learn that the *Kohanim* may not grow their hair longer than this. The verse first says *pera*, and then the prohibition, indicating that they may grow a *pera* (thirty days length), but no more.

Since the source for *Kohanim* is an explicit verse in Yechezkel, the *Gemora* asks why *Kohanim* nowadays are not required to cut their hair every thirty days.

The *Gemora* answers that the prohibition of long hair is tied to the prohibition of not drinking wine. Just as the prohibition on wine is only at the time of service in the Bais Hamikdosh, so long hair is only prohibited at the time of service.

The *Gemora* objects, citing a *braisa* in which Rebbe says that in principle all *Kohanim* who do not know what rotation they belong to should never drink wine, since they may be called upon to serve as soon as the Bais Hamikdash is rebuilt. Although Rebbe allows them to drink wine, since we are not concerned that it will be imminently rebuilt, the Sages prohibit drinking wine. Similarly, the Sages should prohibit them from growing long hair. The *Gemora* offers two distinctions:

1. The *Gemora* says that if their hair is long, they can cut it right away and be ready to serve. Although Rav Acha says that walking a *mil* and sleeping remove the effects of wine, that only works for a *revi'is* of wine, but if one drank more wine, these will increase the effects.
2. Rav Ashi says that the Sages only prohibit drinking, since service done while intoxicated is invalid, while service done with long hair is valid.

The *Gemora* challenges Rav Ashi's distinction with a *braisa* that states that just as an intoxicated *Kohen* who serves is punished by heavenly death, so one who serves with long hair, since the verse that prohibits long hair is adjacent to a verse that prohibits intoxication. Just as they are equated

in their punishment, they should be equated in their invalidation of the service. The *Gemora* leaves this as an unresolved difficulty.

Ravina asked Rav Ashi what the status of the prohibition on long hair was before Yechezkel wrote this verse. Rav Ashi pointed out that Yechezkel similarly wrote a verse that prohibited a *Kohen* without a circumcision from serving. In both cases, the rule was known orally, until Yechezkel came and codified it.

The verse discussing the hair of the *Kohanim* describes how they *should* cut their hair. The *Gemora* explains that they must cut it so that the top of one hair just reaches the base of the adjacent hair. Rebbe pointed to ben Elasha, who spent a lot of money to have his hair cut in this special way, and explained that the money was not wasted, but to show the special *Kohen Gadol* haircut. (22b)

WE SHALL RETURN TO YOU, KOHEN GADOL

INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

- **Matchmaker**

The *Gemora* discusses the process of matching a man and woman together for marriage, and states that for the first match, a heavenly voice proclaims who will marry whom, while for a second match, the process is as difficult as the splitting of Yam Suf. Rav says that the heavenly voice announces forty days before the forming of a fetus, "The daughter of So-and-so will marry So-and-so." The Ran explains that this at the point of conception, since an embryo is halachically considered a fetus at forty days from conception.

The Maharsha (*Sotah* 2b) says that the voice comes out at the time of the husband's conception, which is why the wife is referred to only as the daughter of someone, and not by name.

Tosfos (22a *Arbaim*) states that through prayer, one can modify the match that he gets, even in his first match.

The Chasam Sofer (7:34) writes in the name of the Arizal that the "first match" referred to is not necessarily a first marriage. When a soul is created and placed in the world, it has a matching half in someone of the opposite gender. This match is the first match. As the person grows up, they develop, sometimes positively, and sometimes negatively. When they marry, their "first match" may not still be appropriate for who they have become, necessitating a "second match," based on their actions since birth, and this match is the more difficult one.

- **Lechaim?**

The *Gemora* brought a *braisa*, in which Rebbe said that although a *Kohen* who does not know his rotation week should never drink wine, he is allowed to by dint of his problem. Rashi explains that Rebbe is not concerned with the imminent rebuilding of the Bais Hamikdash. Therefore, Rebbe is saying that destruction of the Bais Hamikdash, which led to the problem of not knowing the rotation, also is the solution which allows them to drink nowadays.

Tosfos Harosh says that Rebbe is saying that a decree that a *Kohen* can never drink wine is too onerous. Therefore, the problem of not knowing which rotation he is in, also leads to the untenable situation, which therefore allows them to drink wine.

The Rambam (*Bias Mikdash* 1:7) rules that a *Kohen* who does know which rotation he is in may not drink wine during his week, even nowadays. This seems to follow the Tosfos Harosh, who says that the license to drink is only for someone who would otherwise never drink.

The Raavad rules that all *Kohanim* may drink nowadays, which seems to follow Rashi, who says that the license to drink is due to the absence of a Bais Hamikdash, which

applies to all *Kohanim*.

The Shulchan Aruch (OH 128:38) rules that a *Kohen* who drank a *revi'is* of wine may not bless *Birchas Kohanim*, since it is a form of service. The *Gemora* (Taanis 26b) states that we therefore do not say *Birchas Kohanim* at *Minchah*, since it is after a meal, at which the *Kohen* may have ingested a *revi'is* of wine. This concern also is the rationale behind the custom in some congregations to shift the *Birkas Kohanim* on Simchas Torah to *Shacharis*, lest the *Kohanim* drink a *revi'is* of wine after the reading of the Torah, before *Musaf*.

DAILY MASHAL

Bas Sheva or BasSheva?

HaGaon Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin wondered if one should write the name Bas-Sheva in a *get* as one or two words and he asked his mentor, the Vilna Gaon. The *gaon* told him that "I have supported my foundations on 13 words" (*from the selichos prayers*). Rabbi Chaim then remembered our *Gemora* in which Rashi remarks that the above verse contains thirteen words (s.v. *Kinechah*). Counting the words, though, he found fourteen! The only solution, then, is that Bas-Sheva should be written and counted as one word (Kol Eliyahu in the name of *Emunah Vehashgachah*).

HALACHAH ON THE DAF

Mentally Preparing for Shemoneh Esreh

The *Gemora* mentions in passing that according to one explanation, the verse of "*Shivisi Hashem l'negdi samid*" teaches us that when one *davens*, he should visualize that the Divine Presence is in front of him. The Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 98) writes an entire *siman* on the topic of realizing that one is talking to Hashem and how we should approach the mighty concept of *tefillah*.

First of all when *davening*, we must concentrate on the explanation of the words that our mouths are saying. Mishnah Berurah stresses that one must understand the

simple meaning, and not delve into the esoteric depths of *tefillah*, and furthermore, all the mental preparations that are required, should be done before one starts *Shemoneh Esreh*, for during *davening*, one must solely focus on the simple translation.

One must expel all of his thoughts until his mind is clear, and he should meditate as to what amount of meticulous preparation he would put in when speaking before an earthly king, how much more so when speaking to Hashem. If a thought does enter his mind during *davening*, he should wait quietly until the thought goes away. The Mishnah Berurah cites an interesting She'lah who states that as a *segulah* not to be interrupted with other thoughts during *tefillah*, before *davening*, one should say the pasuk "Lev bara li Elokim v'ruch nachon chadash b'kirbi" three times, and each time he recites it he should pass his right hand over his forehead. If thoughts enter during *davening*, he should do as the above; just instead of reciting the verse out loud, he should think it in his mind.

The Rema adds that before *davening* one should ponder the greatness of Hashem and conversely the smallness of man.

One must *daven* as a poor person pleading for mercy, slowly enunciating each word. One must make sure not to *daven* in a way that it seems that he can't wait to finish. Mishnah Berurah points out that one must be exceedingly careful in this regard, since there are poskim which hold that if one *davened* in such a manner he must *daven* again. Although we don't rule in accord with these poskim, it shows the severity of not *davening* properly.