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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

Mishna

What is fitting for *Kohanim* is unfit for *Leviim*, and what is fit for *Leviim* is unfit for *Kohanim*. (24a)

Kohanim and Leviim’s Disqualifications

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: *Kohanim* are disqualified by blemishes, but not by reason of age; *Leviim* are disqualified by age, but not by blemishes. It emerges, therefore, that what is fit for *Kohanim* is unfit for *Leviim*, and what is fit for *Leviim* is unfit for *Kohanim*.

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa* that teaches the source for these *halachos*: It is written: *And from the age of fifty years, they (the Leviim) shall withdraw from the service of the work*. This teaches us that *Leviim* are disqualified by age. Now I might have argued through the following *kal vachomer* that they are disqualified by blemishes as well: if *Kohanim*, who are not disqualified by age, are nevertheless disqualified by blemishes, *Leviim*, who are disqualified by age should surely be disqualified by blemishes! It is therefore written: *This shall apply to the Leviim*, that is to say that this (*age*) only disqualifies *Leviim*, but nothing else disqualifies them.

Now I might also have argued through the following *kal vachomer* that *Kohanim* are disqualified by age as well: if *Leviim*, who are not disqualified by blemishes, are nevertheless disqualified by age, *Kohanim*, who are

disqualified by blemishes, should surely be disqualified by age! It is therefore written: *shall apply to the Leviim, (which implies) and not to the Kohanim*.

I might further have thought that this rule (*regarding the age of Leviim*) applies even at (*the Temple of*) Shiloh and (*in Yerushalayim*) at the Permanent Place (*where they served only as gatekeepers and singers*); the Torah therefore states: *to do the work of service and the work of bearing burdens*. The Torah is saying: I did not impose this rule except when the work was that of carrying burdens upon the shoulder (*which was only when they were in the Wilderness, and they were required to move the Mishkan and its vessels*).

The *braisa* asks: One verse says: From the age of twenty five years and upward; and another verse says: From the age of thirty. Now one cannot accept that the age of thirty is the limit because of the verse which sets it at twenty-five, and one cannot accept the age of twenty-five as the limit because of the verse which sets it at thirty! How are these verses to be reconciled? The age of twenty-five is for studying (*the service*), and at the age of thirty he performs the service. From here we learn that if a student does not see success in his studies after five years, he never will.

Rabbi Yosi says: After three years, for it is written (*regarding young Jewish boys studying the Chaldean language to become servants of Nevuchadnetzar*): That



they be nurtured for three years. And it is written: *that they be taught the script and the tongue of the Chaldeans.*

The *Gemora* notes that the other opinion would say that the Chaldean language is an exception, for it is easy to learn. And Rabbi Yosi would say that the Temple service is an exception, for its rules are difficult.

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: A *Kohen*, from the time that he has grown two pubic hairs until he grows old, is fit for service; blemishes, however, disqualifies him. A *Levi*, from when he is thirty years old until fifty years old, is fit for service, and becomes disqualified by age. These words, however, applied only at the Tent of Meeting in the Wilderness, but at Shiloh or at the Permanent House, they were only disqualified because of their voices (*if they could not sing together with the other Leviim*).

R. Ila'a explains the *braisa* (*which disqualifies a Kohen after he becomes old*) in the name of Rabbi Chanina to mean that once he begins to shake (*due to old age*).

The *Gemora* cites a *Mishna*: If a man who was a *baal keri* (*one who experiences a seminal emission; Ezra decreed that he should not daven or study Torah until he immerses in a mikvah; if he is sick, he may have nine kavim of water poured over him*), immersed himself (*in a mikvah*), but did not first urinate, when he does urinate, he becomes *tamei* again (*for there is a possibility that some drops of semen still remained in his organ and pass out together with the urine*). Rabbi Yosi says: If he was ill or elderly, he becomes *tamei*, but if he was young and healthy, he is *tahor*.

R. Ila'a explains the *Mishna* (*that he is still considered young*) in the name of Rabbi Chanina to mean as long as one is able to stand on one foot and put on or take off one's shoe.

They said regarding Rabbi Chanina that at the age of eighty years, he was able to stand on one foot and put on and take off his shoe.

Rabbi Chanina said: The hot baths and the oil with which my mother anointed me in my youth have stood me in good stead in my old age.

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: He whose beard is fully grown is qualified to act as the agent of the community (*he blows the shofar for them, performs excommunications, administers lashes and attends to the affairs of the community*), to descend before the Ark (*to lead the prayers*) and (if he is a *Kohen*) to raise his hands (*to pronounce the priestly blessings*). He becomes fit for the Temple service when he produces two pubic hairs. Rebbe says: I say that he is not fit unless he is twenty years old.

Rav Chisda explained Rebbe's reason: It is because it is written: *And they appointed Leviim from twenty years old and upward to supervise the work of the Temple of Hashem.* [*The Kohanim (who in this verse are referred to as Leviim, as the Gemora will explain below) did not serve until they were twenty.*] The other *Tanna* explains that to supervise is different (*and one needs to be older*).

The *Gemora* asks: But isn't this verse stated in connection with the *Leviim* (*and not the Kohanim*)?

The *Gemora* answers: One must accept the rule of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi, for Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: In twenty-four passages, the *Kohanim* are referred to as *Leviim*, and the following is an example: *And the Kohanim the Leviim the sons of Tzadok.*

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: It is written: *A man of your offspring throughout their generations.* Rabbi Eliezer derived from here the rule that a minor is unfit for Temple

service even though he is without blemishes. He becomes fit when he produces two pubic hairs. His brother *Kohanim*, however, do not permit him to serve until he is twenty years old.

Some say that this *braisa* agrees with the view of Rebbe, for he maintains that regarding a *Kohen* under the age of twenty years old, there is no *halachic* disqualification whatsoever, not even by Rabbinic enactment. Others say, however, that Rebbe's view is that under the age of twenty years old, one is disqualified by Rabbinic enactment, and that this *braisa* agrees with the view of the Sages; for they maintain that under the age of twenty years old, there is a restriction only in the first place, but after the fact, the service would be valid. (24a – 24b)

Mishna

That which is *tahor* by earthenware vessels is *tamei* in all other vessels, and that which is *tahor* by all other vessels is *tamei* by earthenware vessels. (24b)

Tamei Vessels

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: The air space of an earthenware vessel (*if something tamei is suspended inside of the vessel*) can render the vessel *tamei*, but the outside of it (*if something tamei comes into contact with the outside of the vessel*) cannot. The air space of all other vessels cannot render the vessel *tamei*, but the outside of them can. It emerges, therefore, that that which is *tahor* by earthenware vessels is *tamei* in all other vessels, and that which is *tahor* by all other vessels is *tamei* by earthenware vessels.

The *Gemora* cites the Scriptural source which proves that an earthenware vessel is rendered *tamei* through its airspace.

Rabbi Yonasan said: The Torah has declared that a *tamei* earthenware vessel transmits *tumah* to anything inside of it (*even if the food is merely suspended in its interior*) – even if it was full of mustard seeds (*they all become tamei – even the seeds which are not in contact with the vessel*). (24b – 25a)

INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

At what age should a shochet retire?

Our *Gemora* discusses the period of a *Kohen's* service in the Temple from adulthood “till he grows old...till he trembles” –i.e., “his hands and legs tremble due to lack of strength” (Rashi, s.v. *Sheyerates*). This *sugya* brings us to one of the complicated and sensitive *halachos* pertaining to *shechitah*.

A *halachah* from the Ten Tribes: The *Mordechai* cites a *halachah* in the name of “Rabbi Eldad ben Machli, of the Ten Tribes” (he was descended from the Ten Tribes and crossed the Sambatyon in the time of Rav Tzemach Gaon according to *Midbar Kedeimos, ma'areches* 8:18;): “Yehoshua said that Moshe said from Hashem...someone 80 years old must no longer slaughter and if he slaughters, his *shechitah* is disqualified.” The *Mordechai* mentions that this is not a *halachah* but merely a stringency not practiced. The author of *Sheivet HaSofer* (Y.D. 3) supports him from that recounted in our *sugya* about Rabbi Chanina who, when he was 80 years old, stood on one leg and took off his shoe and put it on. Therefore, he asserts, a slaughterer's age does not matter but rather the state of his health. The author of the *Agur* adds (cited in *Simlah Chadashah*, 1, S.K. 64) that though we may ignore this *halachah*, weakness has become prevalent in our generations and one should be extremely careful

“according to the assessment of the *Moreh (poseik)*” (see *Yad Efrayim, Yafeh Livedikah, os 4*).

Problems arising from slaughtering with trembling hands: If a *shochet's* hand trembles, his *shechitah* bears a few severe suspicions. He might slaughter with *shehiyah* (pausing, and pausing during *shechitah* disqualifies it). Also, his *shechitah* might be with *derasah* (slaughtering by pressure on the knife, as opposed to the required action – passing the knife over the animal's throat) (Responsa *Yehudah Ya'aleh*, I, 45). Responsa *Levushei Mordechai* asserts (Y.D. 4) that aside from that, if *shechitah* is performed with a trembling hand, a situation could arise where some of the act of *shechitah* would not be attributed to the *shochet*, as an action created by an external uncontrollable force is not considered a person's action.

A *shochet* whose hand stops trembling when he touches it: Mahari Asad zt"l was asked an interesting question (Responsa *Yehudah Ya'aleh*, *ibid*): What about a *shochet* whose hands were well trained and experienced for many years but upon old age they began to tremble but it sufficed to touch his hand slightly with some object to completely stop the trembling? May he continue to slaughter? To convince Rav Asad that there's no reason to prevent him from slaughtering, the enquirer wrote that though he can't write anything with his trembling hand, when he put his finger on it, he could write perfectly and steadily.

Mahari Asad replied that he couldn't permit his slaughtering as the trembling is evidence that his senses are not as they were and one effect of such is the trembling. Therefore, though his hand doesn't tremble when touched, who can promise us that he doesn't exert involuntary pressure on the knife or that he doesn't pause

during *shechitah* as he has lost the full senses in his hand? (See Responsa *Maharsham*, VI, 60).

How we examine if the hand trembles: Some Acharonim recommended examining the hand's stability by putting a cup of water on the hand and seeing if the water stays still (*Divrei Chayim*, II, 13). However, the author of *Chesed LeAvraham* (Teomim, cited in Responsa *Chayim Beyad*, 72) doubts the validity of this examination and according to him, even if the water shakes, we shouldn't conclude that the *shochet's* hand is not kosher for *shechitah* as “this does not resemble holding a knife as he doesn't hold it on the palm of his hand...”

The *shochetim* trembled for fear of the police: Our forefathers suffered much from different regimes and the Maharsham was asked to express his opinion about “those who slaughter in cellars...because they fear the police and look around lest one of them come”. The suspicion arose that they trembled from fear, literally... He replied that we can rely on the *shochetim* to testify if at that time their hand trembled.

DAILY MASHAL

Warm Water and Oil

Rabbi Chanina said in our *Gemora*: “The warm water and oil with which my mother treated me in my childhood stood by me in my old age.” The Munkaczer Rebbe zt"l writes that this contains an important hint: **Warm water** – the warmth and heated rapture in the service of Hashem, **oil** – the wisdom of the Torah, **with which my mother treated me in my childhood** – these influences from my childhood, **stood by me in my old age** – had a far-reaching influence (*Kuntres 'Al HaTzidikim*).