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Megillah Daf 18

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Daf Notes is currently being dedicated to the neshamah of

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

The Gemora cites a braisa (explaining the rationale for the order of the blessings of the Shemoneh Esrei): From where do we know that the blessing of the Patriarchs should be said? Because it says: Ascribe unto Hashem, you sons of the mighty. And from where do we know that we say the blessing of God's mighty deeds? Because it says: Ascribe unto Hashem honor and might. And from where do we know that we say a blessing of God's holiness? Because it says: Ascribe unto Hashem the honor due unto His name, bow to Hashem in the beauty of holiness.

The Gemora explains why the blessing of Understanding is mentioned after the blessing of Holiness. Because it says: They shall sanctify the Holy One of Jacob and they shall revere the God of Israel, and next to this it says: Those who err in spirit shall come to understanding.

The Gemora explains why the blessing of Repentance is mentioned after the blessing of Understanding. Because it is written: And with his heart he shall understand, and he will repent and be healed.

The Gemora asks: If that is the reason, the blessing of Healing should be mentioned right after the blessing of Repentance!?

The Gemora answers: Do not imagine such a thing, since it is written: And let him return to Hashem and He will have compassion upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

The Gemora asks: But why should you rely upon this verse? Rely rather on the other!

The Gemora answers: There is written another verse: Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from the pit, which implies that redemption and healing come after forgiveness.

The Gemora asks: But it is written: and he will repent and be healed?

The Gemora answers: That does not refer to the healing of sickness, but to the healing of forgiveness.

The Gemora asks: What was their reason for mentioning Redemption in the seventh blessing?

Rava replied: Because they [Israel] are destined to be redeemed in the seventh year (preceding the coming of the Messiah); therefore the mention of Redemption was placed in the seventh blessing.



The Gemora asks: But a master has said: In the sixth year will be sounds, in the seventh wars, and at the end of the seventh the son of David will come?

The Gemora answers: War is also the beginning of redemption.

The Gemora asks: What was their reason for mentioning Healing in the eighth blessing?

Rabbi Acha said: Because circumcision which requires healing is appointed for the child's eighth day; therefore it was placed in the eighth blessing.

The Gemora asks: What was their reason for placing the blessing of the Years ninth?

Rabbi Alexandri said: This was directed against those who (unfairly) raise the market price of food, as it is written: Break the strength of the wicked; and when David said this, he said it in the ninth Psalm.

The Gemora asks: What was their reason for mentioning the Gathering of the Exiles after the blessing of the Years?

The Gemora answers: Because it is written: You mountains of Israel, you shall shoot forth your branches and yield your fruit to My people Israel, for they are close to returning.

The next blessing is the Restoration of Justice, for once the exiles are assembled, judgment will be visited on the wicked, as it says: And I will turn my hand upon you and purge away your dross as with

lye, and it is written further: And I will restore your judges as at the first.

The next blessing is regarding the Heretics: And when judgment is visited on the wicked, transgressors cease, and presumptuous sinners are included with them, as it is written: But the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners shall be together, and those that forsake God shall be consumed.

The next blessing is regarding the Righteous: And when the transgressors perish, the horn of the righteous is exalted, as it is written: All the horns of the wicked I will cut off, but the horns of the righteous shall be exalted, and 'righteous converts' are included with the righteous, as it says: you shall rise up before an old person and honor the face of a Sage, and the text goes on: And if a convert dwells with you.

The blessing of Jerusalem is next. And where is the horn of the righteous exalted? In Jerusalem, as it says: Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, may those who love you be serene.

The blessing of the Reinstatement of the Davidic Kingdom is next. And when Jerusalem is built, David will come, as it says: Afterwards the children of Israel shall return and seek Hashem their God, and David their king.

The Acceptance of Prayer blessing is next, for once David comes, prayer will come, as it says: I will bring them to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer.



The blessing of the Temple Service is next, for once prayer comes, the Temple service will come, as it says: Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be acceptable upon My altar.

The Thanksgiving blessing is next, for when the Temple service comes, thanksgiving will come, as it says: Whoever offers the sacrifice of thanksgiving honors Me.

The Gemora asks: What was their reason for inserting the Priestly Blessing after the blessing of Thanksgiving?

The Gemora answers: Because it is written: And Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people and he blessed them, and he came down from offering the chatas and the olah and the shelamim offerings.

The Gemora asks: But cannot I say that he did this before the service (as that is the order mentioned in the verse)?

The Gemora answers: Do not imagine such a thing, for it is written: and he came down from having performed the chatas offering. Is it written 'to offer'? It is written, 'from offering.'

The Gemora asks: Why not then say it (the Priestly Blessing) immediately after the blessing of the Temple Service?

The Gemora answers: Do not imagine such a thing, since it is written, who offers the sacrifice of thanksgiving.

The Gemora asks: Why base yourself upon this verse? Why not upon the other?

The Gemora answers: It is logical to regard service and thanksgiving as one.

The Gemora asks: What was their reason for having the blessing of Establish Peace said after the Priestly Blessing?

The Gemora answers: Because it is written: And they (the Kohanim) shall put My name upon the Children of Israel, and then I shall bless them; and the blessing of the Holy One, Blessed be He, is peace, as it says: Hashem shall bless his people with peace.

The Gemora asks: If one hundred and twenty elders (*the Men of the Great Assembly*), and among them many prophets, have arranged the order of the Shemoneh Esrei, why was it necessary for Shimon of Pekuli to arrange them in their proper sequence? The Gemora answers: They had been forgotten, so he reintroduced the order. (18a)

The Gemora rules: It is forbidden to add to the brochos of the Shemoneh Esrei. Rabbi Elozar said: It is written [Tehillim 106:2]: "Who can utter the mighty acts of Hashem? Who can proclaim all his praise?" For whom is it fitting to utter? Only one who can publish all of His praises (*and since this is impossible to accomplish, only the blessings that have been ordained should be recited*).

Rabbah bar bar Chanah said in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: He who praises Hashem too much will be uprooted from the world. Rabbi Yehudah of the

village Geborah said: Silence is the best medicine. When Rav Dimi came from Eretz Yisroel to Bavel, he said: in Eretz Yisroel, they would say: "A word is worth a sela, and silence is worth two." (18a)

The Mishna had stated: If one reads the Megillah by heart, he does not fulfill his obligation. Rava cites a Scriptural source for this.

The Gemora rules that one is obligated to remember Amalek verbally; mentally is not sufficient. (18a)

The Gemora explains a ruling of the Mishna to mean that if a Megillah is written in Targum (Aramaic), and he read it in Targum, he has not discharged his obligation (for it was not read in Hebrew). (18a)

The Mishna had stated: One may read the Megillah in a foreign language for those who understand it. The Gemora asks that the earlier part of the Mishna states the opposite: If one reads the Megillah in a foreign language, he does not fulfill his obligation.

Rav and Shmuel both answered that what is referred to here (where he fulfills his obligation) is the Greek Language (where Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel maintains that it is valid).

The Gemora asks: How are we to understand this? Shall we say that it is written in Hebrew and he reads it in Greek? This is the same as reading it by heart?

Rabbi Acha said in the name of Rabbi Elozar: What is referred to is where it is written in the Greek language. (18a)

The Mishna had stated: If a foreigner hears the Megillah read in Ashuris (Hebrew), he has fulfilled his obligation. The Gemora rules that this is true even if he doesn't understand every word. Proof to this can be brought from the fact that nobody understands the precise meaning of the words בני הרמכים האחשתרנים, *ha'achashtranim bnei haramachim (a species of swift camels)*, and nevertheless we fulfill the mitzvah. The Gemora provides the reason for this: The obligation of reading the Megillah is to publicize the miracle and that was accomplished. (18a)

The Mishna had stated: If he read the Megillah intermittently, he has fulfilled his obligation. The Chachamim did not know what the word *serugin (intermittently)* meant, until they heard the maidservant of Rebbe say to the Rabbis who were coming to Rebbe's house at different intervals, "Until when will you be entering *serugin serugin?*" The Gemora offers other examples of words that the Chachamim did not know what they meant and they discovered the meaning after hearing the maidservant of Rebbe or from different travelers. (18a)

It was taught in a braisa: If he read the Megillah intermittently, he has fulfilled his obligation but if he read it out of sequence, he does not fulfill his obligation. Rabbi Muna said in the name of Rabbi Yehudah: If he read the Megillah intermittently, but he paused in the amount of time it would take him to read the entire Megillah, he would be required to start the Megillah again. (18a – 18b)

It was taught in a braisa: If the scribe had omitted letters or verses and the reader read them from memory, he has fulfilled his obligation. The Gemora challenges this ruling from a different braisa: If letters from the Megillah are partially effaced or torn, if they are still legible, the Megillah may be used, but otherwise it may not be used. The Gemora answers: It is only invalid if the entire Megillah is illegible, however if a Megillah is missing less than half of its letters, it is still valid. (18b)

The Mishna had ruled: If one read the Megillah while he was drowsy, he has fulfilled his obligation. Rav Ashi clarifies the case. He is asleep and not asleep, awake and not awake; if he is called he responds, but he cannot give a rational answer, though if he is reminded, he remembers. (18b)

The Mishna had stated: One who was writing it, interpreting it or correcting it, and during that time recited the entire Megillah; if he set his mind to it, he has fulfilled his obligation, but if he did not set his mind to it, he did not fulfill his obligation. The Gemora explains the case: There was another Megillah before him and he reads one verse at a time (*from the complete Megillah*) and then writes it down. The Gemora asks: Shall we say that this supports Rabbah bar bar Chanah, for Rabbah bar bar Chanah said in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: It is forbidden for a scribe to write one letter of any Scripture unless it is copied from a text? The Gemora answers: It is not a proof because the Mishna can be referring to a case where a Megillah was opened in front of the scribe, but in truth, it would not have been necessary.

The Gemora discusses whether one who knows the Torah by heart would be permitted to write a Scripture scroll without copying from a text.

Abaye allowed the members of the house of Bar Chavu to write tefillin and mezuzos without copying from a text. The Gemora states that this follows the opinion of Rabbi Yirmiyah cited in a braisa who states in the name of Rabbeinu that tefillin and mezuzos may be written without copying from a text and they do not require etched lines (*sirtut – the letters are written using these lines*) on the parchment. The Gemora concludes that while it's true that tefillin does not require etched lines; mezuzos do. They both may be written without copying from a text because their content is fluent to all. (18b)

INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

FLYING CAMELS AND MULES

The Mishna had stated: If a foreigner hears the Megillah read in Ashuris (Hebrew), he has fulfilled his obligation. The Gemora rules that this is true even if he doesn't understand every word. Proof to this can be brought from the fact that nobody understands the precise meaning of the words בני הרמכים, האחשתרנים, ha'achashtranim bnei haramachim (*a species of swift camels*), and nevertheless we fulfill the mitzvah. The Gemora provides the reason for this: The obligation of reading the Megillah is to publicize the miracle and that was accomplished.



It is noteworthy that Rashi in the Megillah understands the word *achashtranim* to be referring to a type of swift camel.

Ibn Ezra understands *ramachim* to mean horses and *achashtranim* to mean mules.

Rabbeinu Chananel might have had a different version in our Gemora since he states that women and unlearned men did not know the definition of these words, implying that learned men did know the translation.

The Reshash writes that *ha'achashtranim bnei haramachim* is referring to the riders on top of these animals.

The Rivash in his teshuvos (390) states that when he arrived in the city of Srakista, he observed that they would read the Megillah written in a foreign language on behalf of the women because they didn't understand Hebrew. He wished to abolish this practice for two reasons: The Ramban rules that if one understands Hebrew and another language, he cannot fulfill his obligation by reading the other language and if so, the man reading the Megillah for the women could not discharge their obligation. Secondly, how could they know the precise translation of the words *ha'achashtranim bnei haramachim*?

The Rivash sent his ruling to the Ran and the Ran replied as follows: Perhaps the meaning of the Gemora is that the common person did not know the meaning of those words but the sages did know. The Ran does conclude that the translation of the people

of Srakista is most definitely a mistake and therefore he agreed with the Rivash.

Reb Yaakov Emden comments that these animals are found in Persia and they are eight-legged camels who are extremely swift runners. The Gemora, at times, refers to a *gamla parcha* – a flying camel, must be without a doubt from the same family.

The Mishna Berura (690:34) rules that whenever one is fulfilling his obligation of reading the Megillah in a foreign language; he must recite the words *ha'achashtranim bnei haramachim* in Hebrew.

HOW MANY WORDS ARE IN THE MEGILLAH?

It was taught in a braisa: If the scribe had omitted letters or verses and the reader read them from memory, he has fulfilled his obligation. The Gemora challenges this ruling from a different braisa: If letters from the Megillah are partially effaced or torn, if they are still legible, the Megillah may be used, but otherwise it may not be used. The Gemora answers: It is only invalid if the entire Megillah is illegible, however if a Megillah is missing less than half of its letters, it is still valid.

Shulchan Aruch (690:3) rules that it is preferable that the Megillah should be written in its entirety, and if the scribe missed words in the middle, even close to half the Megillah, and he reads the rest by heart, it is only valid *b'dieved* (after the fact).

The Mishna Berura inquires as to what the halacha would be if the Megillah would be missing exactly half the words. In Sha'ar Hatziyon, he writes that the



inference from the Rambam would be that it is invalid and from the Rosh and the Ran, it would seem that the Megillah is valid.

Reb Yitzchak Zilberstein cites that they asked Reb Elyashiv regarding the possibility of this case since they checked and realized that the Megillah does not have an even amount of words, so how could the Megillah be missing precisely half of the required amount of words. Reb Elyashiv answered that the case can be referring to where the Megillah was written in a foreign language which can be valid for people who understand that language.

DAILY MASHAL

WHICH SURGEON SHOULD HE USE?

The Gemora discusses whether one who knows the Torah by heart would be permitted to write a Scripture scroll without copying from a text. The Gemora states that Rabbi Meir was permitted to write a Megillah from memory because he knew the words fluently by heart.

Reb Elyashiv, cited by Chishukei Chemed ruled on the following inquiry and he derived his ruling from our Gemora.

A person residing in Eretz Yisroel developed a heart issue and he was required to undergo a risky heart surgery. The local doctors said that they do not perform this type of surgery frequently, but they are ninety-five percent confident that the surgery will be a success. There is an expert surgeon outside of Eretz

Yisroel who performs this surgery daily and he said that if he would perform the surgery, he would be successful ninety-five percent of the time.

Should this individual travel outside of Eretz Yisroel to have the surgery performed by the expert surgeon? Reb Elyashiv ruled that he should go because that doctor is more accustomed in performing this type of surgery.

The Gemora in Taanis 15a states regarding a communal fast: They would send a chazzan to lead the prayer who was an elder and fluent in the prayers. Rashi explains: One who is fluent in his prayers will not make a mistake.

Our Gemora states that one who is fluent in the words of the Torah will not make a mistake when he is writing the Torah without copying from a text.

This is why it would be preferable to travel to the doctor outside of Eretz Yisroel even though the percentage of success is the same. Someone who is more accustomed to performing this type of surgery will not make a mistake.