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Sotah Daf 41

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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

Skipping in the Torah

The *Mishnah* had stated: The *Kohen Gadol* would read the portion of *Acharei Mos* and the passage which begins with “*However, on the tenth day...*” [*He would skip the verses in between these two passages.*]

The *Gemora* asks a contradiction from the following *Mishnah*: We are permitted to skip from one section to another in the Prophets but not when reading the Torah. [*How then do we allow the Kohen Gadol to skip in the Torah?*]

Abaye answers: There it refers to a case where the interpreter will be forced to pause; here it is permitted because the interpreter will not be forced to pause. (*The reader should be able to scroll to the new section while the interpreter is still translating.*)

The *Gemora* asks: It would appear from that *Mishnah* that when reading the Torah, it is prohibited to skip at all. The *Mishnah* had stated: We are permitted to skip from one section to another in the Prophets but not when reading the Torah. How far can one skip? Until the interpreter would be forced to pause. (*The reader should be able to scroll to the new section while the interpreter is still translating.*) It is evident that he is not permitted to skip in the Torah at all!

Rather, Abaye said: Here (in our *Mishnah*), it is referring to one topic (and it is permitted to skip even when reading from the Torah if both portions of the Torah are pertaining to one subject matter), and there (in *Megillah*), it is referring to two topics (and it is prohibited to skip from one section to another).

The *Gemora* cites a *Baraisa*, which supports this distinction: The reader may skip in the Torah when they both are one subject, and in the Prophets - even if he goes on to another subject; and in both cases (it is permitted) only so far that the translator will not be forced to pause (before he finds the place). The reader may not skip from one Prophet to another. In the Book of the Twelve Prophets, he may skip, provided that he does not skip from the end of the book to the beginning. (41a1 – 41a2)

The Kohen Gadols’s Reading

The *Mishnah* had stated: He would then roll up the Torah and place it in his bosom, and proclaim: “More than what I have read to you is written here.”

The *Gemora* asks: Why is all this necessary?

The *Gemora* explains the reasoning for this: We do not want to discredit the Torah scroll (*the people might think that it was a defective Scroll, and for that reason he read a portion by heart*).

The *Mishnah* had stated: The passage which begins with “*However, on the tenth day...*,” which is in *Bamidbar*, he would recite by heart.

The *Gemora* asks: Why can’t the Torah scroll be rolled to the proper place, and he could then read that passage from the Torah?

Rav Huna the son of Yehudah said in the name of Rav Sheishes: It is because we do not roll a Torah scroll in public



(out of respect for the congregation; it is not proper to keep them waiting).

The *Gemora* asks: Why couldn't they bring another Torah scroll for him?

Rav Huna the son of Yehudah answers: It will discredit the first scroll (*people will think that the first one was defective*).

Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish answers: It would then cause an unnecessary blessing to be recited (*a new blessing would be required for the new sefer Torah*).

The *Gemora* challenges the first answer: Do we concern ourselves for the discrediting of the first scroll? But Rabbi Yitzchak Nafcha said: If Rosh Chodesh Teves falls out on *Shabbos*, the following is the correct procedure for reading the Torah: Three Torah's are removed from the Ark. The portion of that day is read from one of them; the Rosh Chodesh reading is read from the second one; the reading for Chanukah is read from the third one. [*Evidently, we are not concerned that the first Torah scroll will be discredited!?*]

The *Gemora* answers: There is no concern for discrediting the scrolls when three people are reading from three different scrolls. However, we are concerned when one person (*the Kohen Gadol*) is reading from two different scrolls.

The *Mishnah* had stated: He would then utter eight blessings.

The *Gemora* cites a *Baraisa*: The *Kohen Gadol* (upon completing the reading of the Torah) would recite a blessing for the Torah in the same manner that the blessing is recited in the synagogue (*the brachah of asher nassan lanu – Who has given us the Torah of truth*). He would then recite the blessings for the Service, for the Thanksgiving and for the forgiveness of sin like usual (*the same blessings that are said in the Yom Kippur Shemoneh Esrei*). He would then recite the blessings for the Temple separately; and for the *Kohanim*

separately; and for Israel separately; and for Yerushalayim separately.

The *Mishnah* had stated: He would conclude with the blessing for the rest of the prayer.

The *Gemora* cites a *Baraisa*: The rest of the prayer consists of prayer, supplication, song and requests, for Your people Israel are in need of salvation. He concludes with: Blessed are You, Hashem Who hears prayer. Afterwards (*after the Kohen Gadol had finished the benedictions*), each individual would bring a Torah scroll from his house and reads from it. This was done in order to display its beauty (*their Torah scrolls*) in public. (41a2 – 41a3)

Mishnah

[*The following Mishnah describes the mitzvah of hakhel - the reading of the Torah by the king after the first day of Sukkos on a year following a Shemita year.*]

How was the passage of the king read? At the conclusion of the first day of *Sukkos*, in the eighth year, at the conclusion of the seventh (*Shemita*) year, they would make for the king a wooden platform in the Courtyard, and he would sit on it, as it is said [Devarim 31:10 - 11]: *At the end of seven years, at the appointed time*, etc. The synagogue attendant would take a Torah scroll and hand it to the Head of the synagogue (*the decision maker of the synagogue, i.e. the gabbai*), and the Head of the synagogue would give it to the Deputy *Kohen Gadol*, and the Deputy *Kohen Gadol* would give it to the *Kohen Gadol*, and the *Kohen Gadol* would give it to the king, and the king would stand and receive it, and he would read from it while he was seated.

King Agrippa (*a Jewish king who descended from Herod*) stood up to receive it and read it while he was standing, and the Sages praised him. And when he reached the verse, *you may not place a foreigner over you*, his eyes filled with tears (*since he descended from a slave, and was therefore not fit*

to rule). They said to him: Fear not, Agrippa, you are our brother; you are our brother (*for his mother was a Jewess*)!

And he would read from the beginning of “*These are the words*” (*beginning of Sefer Devarim*) until *Shema*. And then he would read *Shema*, *And it shall come to pass if you shall listen (v’hayah im shamo’a)*, *You shall surely tithe*, and *And when you have finished tithing*. He goes back and reads the king’s chapter, and the Blessings and the Curses, until he completes the entire section. The blessings which the *Kohen Gadol* recites, the king recites, except that he inserts the Festivals instead of the forgiveness of sin. (41a3 – 41a4)

The Gemora asks: Can it enter your mind that it is (read) on the eighth day (when the Mishnah already said that it is read after the first day)?

The Gemora answers: The Mishnah should be emended to read ‘in the eighth year.’ (41a4 – 41a5)

The Time for Hakhel

[*It is written regarding the mitzvah of hakhel: And Moshe commanded them, saying: At the end of seven years, during the appointed time of the Shemithah year, during the Sukkos festival. When all Israel comes to appear before Hashem, your God, in the place that he will choose, you shall read this Torah before all of Israel, in their ears.*]

The Gemora asks: Why are all these (redundant details in the verse) necessary?

[The Gemora explains why all these descriptions for the time of the *hakhel* reading are mentioned.] They are all necessary. If the Torah would have just written ‘at the end,’ I would have thought that we count (the seven years) from now (the time of the commandment), and even though (the end of) Shemithah did not arrive yet; that is why the Torah wrote ‘Shemithah.’ And if the Torah would have just written ‘Shemithah,’ I would have thought (it is read) at the end of Shemithah; the Torah therefore wrote ‘at the appointed time’

(which teaches us that it is read on the festival). And if the Torah would have just written ‘at the appointed time,’ I would have thought (it is read) on Rosh Hashanah; the Torah therefore wrote ‘on the Sukkos festival.’ And if the Torah would have just written on the Sukkos festival,’ I would have thought (it can be read) even on the last day of the Festival; the Torah therefore wrote ‘when all Israel comes’ – to teach us (that the reading should be done) at the beginning of the Festival. (41a5 – 41b1)

Honoring a Disciple in the Presence of his Master

The Mishnah had stated: The synagogue attendant would take a Torah scroll and hand it to the Head of the synagogue (*the decision maker of the synagogue, i.e. the gabbai*).

The Gemora notes: It can be inferred from our *Mishnah* that we may display respect to a student in the presence of his teacher (*for we first give the Torah to the gabbai or to the Deputy Kohen Gadol even though the king is present; perhaps it should be regarded as an insult to the master’s honor; this is a matter of disagreement in the Gemora Bava Basra*)!

Abaye disagrees: The entire process is one that is done out of respect for the king (*by demonstrating the amounts of ranks beneath him*). (41b1)

The Courtyard

The *Mishnah* had stated: And the king would stand and receive it, and he would read from it while he was seated. King Agrippa (*a Jewish king who descended from Herod*) stood up to receive it and read it while he was standing.

It can be inferred from here that until that juncture, the king was sitting.

The Gemora asks: But the master has stated that one is not permitted to sit in the Temple Courtyard unless he is a king from the House of David (*and Agrippa was from the*



Hasmonean dynasty, not from the House of David), as it is stated: *And king David came and sat before Hashem, and he said etc.*

The *Gemora* answers: Just as Rav Chisda explained elsewhere that “the Courtyard” is referring to the Woman’s Courtyard, so too, the *Mishnah* is referring to the Woman’s Courtyard (*which did not have the same degree of sanctity as the Temple Courtyard*). (41b1)

King Renouncing his Honor

The *Mishnah* had stated: King Agrippa (*a Jewish king who descended from Herod*) stood up to receive it and read it while he was standing, and the Sages praised him.

The *Gemora* asks: Praising him indicates that he acted properly. But didn’t Rav Ashi say that even according to the opinion that a prince may forgo his honor; a king may not forgo his honor!? This is indicated by the verse that states “put for yourself a king,” implying that his awe should (*always*) be placed upon you.

The *Gemora* answers: It is different with respect to a *mitzvah*. (*He is honoring the Torah by remaining standing.*) (41b1 – 41b2)

Flattery

The *Mishnah* had stated: And when he reached the verse, *you may not place a foreigner over you*, his eyes filled with tears (*since he descended from a slave, and was therefore not fit to rule*). They said to him: Fear not, Agrippa, you are our brother; you are our brother (*for his mother was a Jewess*)!

The *Gemora* cites a teaching in the name of Rabbi Nassan: At that moment (*when they said, “You are our brother”*), the enemies of Israel (*a euphemism referring to Israel*) made themselves liable to destruction, because they flattered Agrippa (*although he was permitted to be king because his*

mother was a Jewess (Rashi), it nevertheless was not proper since his father was a slave.

Rabbi Shimon ben Chalafta said: From the day that the power of flattery prevailed, justice became perverted (*the judges flattered the powerful people and ruled in their favor*), and conduct deteriorated (*for the leaders did not protest when they observed people committing sins*), and one could not say to his fellow, “My conduct is greater than yours” (*for everyone was sinning*).

Rabbi Yehudah the Westerner, and according to another version, it was Rabbi Shimon ben Pazi who expounded: It is permitted to flatter the wicked in this world, as it is said: *The vile person shall not be called any longer generous, nor shall a lustful person be referred to as noble*. Since the verse is referring to the times of Mashiach, it can be inferred that it is allowed in this world.

Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish said: It may be derived from the following verse: As one sees the face of an angel and you were pleased with me. (*Yaakov flattered Esav by comparing him to an angel.*)

The *Gemora* notes: On this point, he differs with Rabbi Levi; for Rabbi Levi said: A parable can explain the incident between Yaakov and Esav: To what is the matter like? To a man who invited his fellow to a meal, and the guest perceived that the host wished to kill him. So the guest said to him, “The taste of this dish of which I taste is similar to the dish I tasted in the king’s palace.” The host said to himself, “He is acquainted with the king!” So he became afraid and did not kill the guest. [*Yaakov was not flattering Esav; but rather, he was informing him that it was common for him to see angels, and Esav would be scared to kill him.*]

Rabbi Elozar said: Every man who has flattery in him brings anger upon the world, as it is said: *And those that are flatterers at heart bring up anger*. Not only that, but their prayer remains unheard, as the next verse states: *They cry not for help when He afflicts them*.

[A mnemonic: **anger** of a **fetus**, **Gehinnom** in his **hand**, a **niddah** in **exile**.] Rabbi Elozar also said: Every man who has flattery in him, even the fetuses in their mother's wombs curse him, as it is stated: *He who tells the wicked person, "You art righteous," the peoples shall curse him, the le'umim (nations) shall abhor him.* And the word 'kov' means nothing but a 'curse,' as it is said: *Whom God has not cursed;* and 'le'om' [nation] means nothing but 'fetuses,' as it is said: *And the one le'om [nation] shall be stronger than the other le'om [nation].*

Rabbi Elozar also said: Every man who has flattery in him will fall into Gehinnom, as it is said: *Woe unto those who call evil "good," and good "evil"* etc. What is written after that? *Therefore, as the tongue of fire devours the straw, and a flame will pulverize stubble* etc.

Rabbi Elozar also said: Whoever flatters his fellow will eventually fall into his hand. And if he does not fall into his hand, he will fall into the hand of his sons. And if he does not fall into the hands of his sons, he will fall into the hand of his son's son, as it is said: *And Yirmiyah the Prophet said to Chananyah, "Amen; Hashem should do so; may Hashem perform your words,"* and it is written: *And when he (Yirmiyah) was in the gate of Benjamin, an official was there, whose name was Yiriyah, the son of Shelemyah, the son of Chananyah, and he grabbed Yirmiyah the Prophet, saying, "You are deserting to the Chaldeans." Then Yirmiyah said, "It is false, I am not deserting to the Chaldeans,"* etc. And it is written: *So he (Yiriyah) grabbed onto Yirmiyah and brought him to the officers.* (41b2 – 42a1)

INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

Renouncing his Honor

Rav Ashi said that even according to the opinion that a prince may forgo his honor; a king may not forgo his honor! This is indicated by the verse that states "put for yourself a king," implying that his awe should (*always*) be placed upon you.

It is noteworthy that a Torah scholar can renounce his honor. What is the difference between the two?

Reb Chaim Brisker explains: A king has a higher status than an ordinary person because the people appointed him as a king. In truth, everyone is fit to become a king. Once he is appointed king, everyone is obligated to honor him. If the king renounces his honor, it is as if he is reverting to being an ordinary constituent, for there is no tangible difference between them except the honor accorded to him.

This is not the case with respect to a Torah scholar. Everyone is required to honor him because of his inherent status. Even if he chooses to renounce his honor, his higher level remains the same. This is why he is permitted to renounce his honor.

DAILY MASHAL

Our Father, Our King

The Midrash Tanchuma in Parshas Ha'azinu writes that teshuva only works for Jews, whereas if a non-Jew sins, their teshuva is not effective in erasing the sin. One of the reasons for this is based on our Gemora that a king is not allowed to overlook a slight to his honor.

The non-Jews relate to Hashem as the subjects of a king, and a king is not allowed to forgive an affront to his Kingship. Jews, on the other hand, have the ability to connect to Hashem as children to their father. In that context, it is understandable that their teshuva is effective.

Taking this a step further, the Rema (581:1) explains the Ashkenaz custom to always start the selichos prior to Rosh Hashanah on Sunday. The Shabbos is the reminder that Hashem created the world in six days and rested on the seventh. This designates Shabbos as the scepter of the King which declares His Kingship. This is one reason why a non-Jew is liable to the death penalty for observing the Shabbos, as he is making use of the scepter of the King. When we observe the Shabbos, it is a sign that we are the children of Hashem, which allows us to ask Hashem for forgiveness.