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Pesachim Daf 57

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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

Our Rabbis taught: At first they used to place the skins of sacrifices in the Parvah chamber of the Bais HaMikdash. In the evening they used to divide them among the men of the paternal division,¹ but strong-armed men used to seize [more than their due share] by force.² So they enacted that they should divide them every Friday afternoon, so that all the ‘wards’ came and received their portions together.³ Yet Kohanim of high ranking still seized [them] by force; thereupon the owners arose and consecrated them to Heaven.⁴

It was related: It did not take long⁵ before the entire Heichal (Sanctuary) was covered with gold plates one amah long by one amah wide, and the plates were as thick as a gold *dinar*. On the festivals they would peel off the gold plates and they would place the plates on the stairway that joined the Men’s Courtyard with the Women’s Courtyard. This was done so the festival pilgrims would see the exquisite craftsmanship of the plates that had no blemishes. (57a1 – 57a2)

¹ Members of the *Bais av*, family, of the Kohanim who performed the service that day in the Bais HaMikdash.

² Kohanim would forcibly take more than their share of the hides.

³ Moshe divided the kohanim into eight watches. Shmuel the prophet and King Dovid later instituted twenty-four watches. Each watch would serve for one week in the Bais HaMikdash on a rotation system. A watch was divided into six families, and every family would serve one day of the week. The portions that went to the Kohanim would be divided up every evening among the members of the family that had performed the service that day. The thinking here was that the larger number present would

act as a check. It was taught, Abba Shaul said: There were sycamore tree trunks in Yericho, and strong-armed men seized them by force, [whereupon] the owners arose and consecrated them to Heaven. And it was of these and of such as these that Abba Shaul ben Batnis said in the name of Abba Yosef ben Chanin: ‘Woe is me because of the house of Bysos; woe is me because of their staves!⁶ Woe is me because of the house of Chanin, woe is me because of their whisperings!⁷ Woe is me because of the house of Kasros, woe is me because of their pens!⁸ Woe is me because of the house of Yishmael the son of Piachi, woe is me because of their fists! They all t[he people mentioned above] are high priests, their sons are treasurers in the Bais HaMikdash, their sons-in-laws are *amarkalin*, in charge of all affairs in the Bais HaMikdash, and their servants would beat people with sticks.

act as a check.

⁴ For Bedek HaBayis – the Temple Treasury.

⁵ When the Kohanim consecrated the hides to the upkeep of the bais HaMikdash, the treasurer of the bais HaMikdash went and sold the hides and with the proceeds he would purchase gold plates.

⁶ They used clublike weapons to extort money from the Jewish people.

⁷ As the members of Chanin’s household were notorious for offering bad counsel.

⁸ As they were notorious for writing letters that were for people’s detriment.

Our Rabbis taught: The Courtyard of the Bais HaMikdash cried out four cries:⁹ The first cry was, “leave here, sons of Eli, who defiled the Heichal of Hashem.”¹⁰ The Courtyard also cried out “leave here, Yissachar, a man from the village of Barkai, who honors himself but desecrates the sacred offerings of Heaven.” This was because he would wrap his hand in silk and perform the sacrificial service. The Courtyard also cried out, “Raise up your heads, O gates, so that Yishmael ben Pi’achi, a student of Pinchas, can enter and perform the service as a Kohen Gadol.”¹¹ The Courtyard also cried out, “Raise up your heads, O gates, so that Yochanan ben Narbai, student of Pinkai, may enter and fill his stomach with the sacred offerings of Heaven.”

It was said of Yochanan ben Narbai that he would eat three hundred calves and drink three hundred kegs of wine for dinner, and he would eat forty *se’ah* of young birds for dessert.¹² It was said: In all the days of Yochanan ben Narbai there was never any meat leftover for the sacrifices in the Bais HaMikdash.¹³

⁹ I.e., a Heavenly voice cried out, or alternatively, it would have been fitting for the courtyard to have cried out.

¹⁰ This refers to Pinchas and Chafni, the two sons of Eli, who committed grave sins and caused that the house of Eli forfeited the priesthood.

¹¹ Although members of Yishmael’s household were strong-arm oppressors, Yishmael himself was pious, and that is why he is referred to as the disciple of Pinchas the grandson of Aharon HaKohen, who were both righteous.

¹² This is not to be taken literally. Rather, this demonstrates that he was a very generous person. Rash”i.

¹³ Since Yochanan was so generous and supported many Kohanim, the Kohanim resided in Jerusalem permanently and they were available to consume any extra meat from the sacrifices.

¹⁴ Yissachar ben Barkai was punished for disgracing the service in the Bais HaMikdash. Regarding the procedure of receiving the blood of the sacrifices, it is said: *the Kohen shall take from the*

What was the fate of Yissachar of Barkai?¹⁴ It was related: A king and queen of the Hasmonean dynasty were debating what tastes better, the meat of a kid or the meat of a lamb. The king claimed that the meat of a kid tastes better, whereas the queen claimed that the meat of a lamb tasted better. They decided that although meat of a lamb normally tastes better, the Kohen Gadol could determine for them whether a choice cut of kid’s meat would be superior to a choice cut of lamb meat. This was because the Kohen Gadol was consuming on a daily basis the fattest goats and lambs. Yissachar ben Barkai, with a dismissive wave of his hand, told the king, “If the kid’s meat is better, it should be offered for the *tamid* sacrifice.”¹⁵ The king became incensed, and said, “Since this man has no fear of the king, let us cut off his right hand.” Yissachar gave a bribe to the king’s servant, and he had his left hand cut off instead. The king heard about this and he had Yissachar’s right hand cut off also.¹⁶

Said Rav Yosef: Praised be the Merciful One Who caused Yissachar of Barkai to receive his deserts in this world. Rav Ashi said: It is evident from his opinion

blood of the offering. The extra words *the Kohen* teaches us that the Kohen must perform the service with his body, and nothing can interpose between the utensil and his skin. By wearing a silk cloth, Yissachar from the village of Barkai invalidated the service, and furthermore, Yissachar disgraced the service by not handling the flesh and blood of the offerings directly with his hand. Rav Yosef said, “Blessed is the Merciful One who punished Yissachar, a man from the village of Barkai in this world. The punishment that Yissachar received served as a warning to other Kohanim to respect the sacrificial offerings.

¹⁵ The *tamid* offering, offered twice daily, was a lamb offering. Since the *tamid* was brought every day of the year, it must be the most important of all the sacrifices.

¹⁶ Yissachar lost his right hand because most of the services that were performed in the Bais HaMikdash were performed with the right hand. He lost his left hand because he used his left hand to warp the silk around his right hand. Since his sin began with his left hand, he lost his left hand first.

stated that Yissachar, a man from the village of Barkai, was not learned, because the Mishnah states that Rabbi Shimon says, Scripture always mentions lambs before goats. One may assume that this is because lambs are superior to goats in quality. The Torah therefore teaches regarding a *chata*s offering where it is said *if he shall bring a lamb as his offering*. Prior to this verse it is said *he shall bring as his offering a she-goat*, and thus we see that the lamb and the goat are equal. Ravina said: Yissachar did not even read Scripture, as the Torah states regarding a *shelamim* offering *if he offers a sheep, if his offering is a goat*. The Torah does not state a preference, so this indicates that he can bring a lamb for his *shelamim* offering, or he can bring a goat for his *shelamim* offering. (57a2 – 57b1)

WE SHALL RETURN TO YOU, MAKOM SHENAHAGU

DAILY MASHAL

The right hand and the left hand

The Gemara states that Yissachar ben Barkai was punished for disgracing the service in the Bais HaMikdash. Regarding the procedure of receiving the blood of the sacrifices, it is said: *the Kohen shall take from the blood of the offering*. The extra words *the Kohen* teaches us that the Kohen must perform the service with his body, and nothing can interpose between the utensil and his skin. By wearing a silk cloth, Yissachar from the village of Barkai invalidated the service, and furthermore, Yissachar disgraced the service by not handling the flesh and blood of the offerings directly with his hand. Yissachar was punished by the king who said, “Since this man has no fear of the king, let us cut off his right hand.” Yissachar gave a bribe to the king’s servant, and he had his left hand cut off instead. The king heard about this and he had Yissachar’s right hand cut off also. The Maharsha writes

that Yissachar lost his right hand because most of the services that were performed in the Bais HaMikdash were performed with the right hand.

The Ben Yehoyada writes that he lost his left hand because he used his left hand to warp the silk around his right hand. Since his sin began with his left hand, he lost his left hand first. The significance of the right hand and the left hand are noted in many places in the Torah and in the Gemara. One who is right-handed will tie his Tefillin with his right hand on his left arm. One must place his right shoe on his right foot first, then place the left shoe on his left foot, and then tie the left shoe, and afterwards tie the right shoe.

Apparently the right hand always receives precedence to the left hand. The right represents *chesed*, kindness, and the left represents *din*, judgment. One should always make the effort to judge someone’s action favorably before accusing someone of committing a sin. When HaShem created the world, He thought, so to speak, of creating the world with judgment only. When HaShem foresaw that the world could not exist only on judgment, He created mercy, and this is what allows the world to continue to exist. Let us always remember the Right Hand of HaShem which is extended to all of mankind as an opportunity to repent, as we recite in the High Holidays Prayers, *ki yemincho peshutah lekabel shavim*, Your right hand is extended to accept those who repent.