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Avodah Zarah Daf 3

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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

Reward for the Gentiles

Rav Yosef had said: Hashem stood and judged the earth; He saw and released the nations. What did He see? Hashem saw the seven commandments which were accepted by all the descendants of Noach, but since they did not observe them, He rose up and released them from their obligation to observe these commandments.

The Gemora asks: It would emerge that a sinner gains from his transgression!?

Mar the son of Ravina answers: This is teaching us that even if they fulfill the mitzvos, they will not receive reward for it.

The Gemora asks: But did we not learn in a braisa that Rabbi Meir said: How is it known that a gentile who studies Torah is comparable to a Kohen Gadol? It is written (with respect to the Torah’s laws): that man shall perform and by which he shall live. It does not say: Kohanim, Leviim or Yisroelim. Rather, it says “man.” This teaches us that a gentile who studies Torah is comparable to a Kohen Gadol. [It emerges that they do receive credit for observing the Torah!?!]

The Gemora answers: They do not receive reward as if they were commanded to do so, but they do receive reward as one who performs a mitzvah even though he has not been commanded. This is as Rabbi Chanina says: A person who is commanded to do mitzvos and does it is greater than one who is not commanded to do it and he does it anyway (for one has to fight with his yetzer hara, and the other does not). (2b – 3a)

The Jews Observed the Mitzvos

Rather, this is what the idolaters were saying to Hashem: Master of the Universe: The Jewish people, who accepted the Torah, have they, in fact, observed the mitzvos?

The Holy One, Blessed be He, responded to them: I will testify on their behalf that they fulfilled the entire Torah. The nations retorted: May a father testify for a son (and the Jews are considered children of Hashem), and it is written: Israel is My son, My firstborn. Then the Holy One, Blessed be He, will say: Heaven and Earth can bear witness that they have fulfilled the entire Torah. But they will object, saying: Master of the Universe, Heaven and Earth are partial witnesses, for it is written: If not for My covenant of day and night, I would not have established the statutes of Heaven and Earth. And Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish stated: What is the meaning of this verse: And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day (why is there an extra “hey” in ha-shishi)? It teaches us that Hashem made a condition with the works of Creation, saying: If the Jewish people accept my Torah it will be well, but if not, I shall return you to a state of emptiness. And this is similar to the comment of Chizkiyah on the verse: From Heaven you made judgment heard, the earth trembled and became calm. If the earth trembled, why was it calm, and if it was calm, why did it tremble? Rather, at first it trembled (for perhaps the Jews would not accept the Torah), and subsequently (when they agreed to observe the Torah) it became calm.

Then the Holy One, Blessed be He, will say: From among you some will come and testify that the Jews observed the entire Torah. Let Nimrod come and testify that Avraham did not worship idols; let Lavan come and testify that Yaakov was not suspected of theft; let the wife of Potiphara come and testify that Yosef was not suspect of committing an immoral sin; let



Nevuchadnetzar come and testify that Chanania, Mishael and Azariah did not bow down to an idol; let Daryavesh come and testify that Daniel never neglected his prayers; let Bildad the Shuchite, and Tzophar the Naamite, and Eliphaz the Teimanite (and Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite; all friends of Iyuv) testify that the Jews have observed the entire Torah; as it is written: Let them (the nations) bring their witnesses, that they (the Jews) will be vindicated. (3a)

Idolaters, "Give us the Torah now"

The nations will then plead: Offer us the Torah anew and we shall observe it. The Holy One, Blessed be He, will say to them: You fools of the world; he who bothered himself to prepare before Shabbos can eat on Shabbos, but he who has not bothered himself before Shabbos, what shall he eat on Shabbos? Nevertheless, I have an easy mitzvah, which is called sukkah; go and perform it.

The Gemora asks: But how can you say so? Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi says: It is written: The mitzvos which I command you today to do them? This teaches us that today only (the present) is the time to perform them, but they cannot be done tomorrow; today is the time in which to do them, but not in which to be rewarded for them (for that is reserved for the World to Come). [How then should they be offered this opportunity to observe the mitzvah of sukkah in the Messianic time?]

The Gemora answers: It is because the Holy One, Blessed be He, does not wish to give excuses when dealing imperiously with His creatures.

The Gemora asks: And why does He refer to the mitzvah of sukkah as an easy command?

The Gemora answers: It is because it does not have a significant monetary cost.

The Gemora continues the narrative: Immediately, every one of them will go and build a sukkah on the top of his roof; and the Holy One, Blessed be He, will pierce them with the heat

of the sun in the Summer season, and every one of them will kick his sukkah and leave, as it is written: Let us cut their cords, and cast away their ropes from us.

The Gemora asks: How can He do that? But you have just said that the Holy One, Blessed be He, does not wish to give excuses when dealing imperiously with His creatures?

The Gemora answers: It is because with the Jewish people too, it occasionally happens that the Summer season extends until Sukkos, and they also are distressed due to the heat.

The Gemora asks: But Rava says: He who is distressed is thereby exempt from dwelling in the Sukkah?

The Gemora answers: While it is true that they are exempt, but would they contemptuously kick it (as they were leaving)? (3a – 3b)

Hashem's Laughter

Immediately, the Holy One, Blessed be He, sits and laughs at them, as it is written: He that sits in Heaven laughs. Rabbi Yitzchak said: Only on that day is there laughter for the Holy One, Blessed be He!

There are those who connect that comment of Rabbi Yitzchak with the following teaching: Rabbi Yosi says: In the Future to Come, idolaters will come and convert. And it was challenged from a braisa which states that no converts will be accepted in the days of Mashiach (it will be assumed that they have ulterior motives). Similarly, no converts were accepted in the days of Dovid, nor in the days of Shlomo. Rather, they will be self-made converts, and will place tefillin on their foreheads and on their arms, tzitzes in their garments, and a mezuzah on their doorposts, but when the battle of Gog with his nation Magog will come about, and they will be asked: For what purpose have you come? and they will reply: We are fighting against God and His Messiah; then each of those converts will cast aside his mitzvah and go away, as it is written: Let us cut their cords, and cast away their ropes from us. And the Holy One, Blessed be He, will sit and laugh at them, as it is written:



He that sits in Heaven laughs. Rabbi Yitzchak said: Only on that day is there laughter for the Holy One, Blessed be He!

The Gemora asks: But is there no other time that He laughs? Yet Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav: the day consists of twelve hours. During the first three hours, the Holy One, Blessed be He, occupies Himself with the study of Torah; during the second three, He sits in judgment on the whole world, and when He sees that the world is deserving of destruction, He transfers Himself from the seat of Justice to the seat of Mercy; during the third three, He sits and feeds the entire world, from the horned re'eimim (perhaps a reindeer) to the eggs of lice; during the fourth three, He laughs with the Leviathan (a huge sea creature), as it is written: You created this Leviathan, in order to sport with it.

Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak answers: He laughs with His creatures, but He does not laugh about His creatures except on that day.

Rav Acha said to Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak: From the day that the Beis Hamikdash was destroyed, there is no laughter for the Holy One, Blessed be He.

The Gemora asks: If so, what does He do in the fourth quarter (since he does not sport with the Leviathan any longer)?

The Gemora answers: He teaches Torah to schoolchildren (who died young).

The Gemora asks: Who taught them Torah before the destruction?

The Gemora answers: Either the angel Metatron taught them, or Hashem did both things (sport with the Leviathan, and teach the children Torah).

The Gemora asks: What does Hashem do at night?

The Gemora answers: Either He does the kind of thing that He does by day; or it may be said that He rides His fast cherub, and flies in eighteen thousand worlds. Some say that He sits and listens to the song of the Holy Chayos, as it is written: By

the day Hashem will command His kindness, and in the night His song shall be with me.

Rabbi Levi said: One who interrupts his Torah study and engages in idle chatter is fed hot coals.

Rish Lakish said: One who toils in Torah study by night, Hashem will extend over him a thread of kindness by day, as it is written: By the day Hashem will command His kindness, and in the night His song shall be with me. What is the reason that By the day Hashem will command His kindness? It is because in the night His song shall be with me. Others say that Rish Lakish said: One who toils in Torah study in this world which is akin to night, Hashem will extend over him a thread of kindness in the World to Come which is akin to day.

Rav Yehudah said in the name of Shmuel: It is written: You have made man as the fish of the sea, like creeping things that have no ruler over them? Why are men compared to the fish of the sea? It is to teach you that just as the fish of the sea, as soon as they come on to dry land, die, so also man, as soon as he separates himself from the words of the Torah and its mitzvos, will die.

Another explanation: Just as the fish of the sea, as soon as the sun shines upon them, die; so also man, when the sun shines upon them, dies. This can be understood to be referring to the sun in the present world, or to the sun in the World to Come. You can, in accordance with Rabbi Chanina, apply this to the sun in the present world, for Rabbi Chanina taught: All misfortune that befalls a person is from the hand of Heaven except a sickness which was caused by exposure to the cold or the heat (it is because of man's carelessness)! This is as the verse states: The cold air blows in the way of a crooked person; one who guards his soul should stay far away from them. Or, according to Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish, it can be referring to the future life, for Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish said: Rish Lakish says: There will be no Gehinnom in the future, but rather Hashem will take the sun out of its sheath. The righteous will be healed by it, and the evildoers will be judged with it. This is referred to by the verse: And it will shine for



them those who fear me, a sun of righteousness and healing. Not only this (that the righteous will be healed by the sun), but they will also enjoy it, as the verse continues: and they will go out and be fattened by (enjoy) it like calves who are being fattened. The evildoers will be judged by it as the verse says: Behold the day will come when it will burn like an oven. (3b – 4a)

INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

Sukkah – Abolishing Idolatry

The Gemora relates: The nations will then plead: Offer us the Torah anew and we shall observe it. The Holy One, Blessed be He, will say to them: You fools of the world; he who bothered himself to prepare before Shabbos can eat on Shabbos, but he who has not bothered himself before Shabbos, what shall he eat on Shabbos? Nevertheless, I have an easy mitzvah, which is called sukkah; go and perform it.

Immediately, every one of them will go and build a sukkah on the top of his roof; and the Holy One, Blessed be He, will pierce them with the heat of the sun in the Summer season, and every one of them will kick his sukkah and leave, as it is written: Let us cut their cords, and cast away their ropes from us.

Why was the mitzvah of sukkah chosen to be the defining distinction between the Jews and the idolaters?

In the sefer Imrei Chein, Reb Yehudah Levenberg explains as follows: The Gemora in Sukkah cites a dispute between Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Eliezer regarding the explanation of the verse that states: so that your generations will know that I caused the Children of Israel to dwell in Sukkos when I took them from the land of Egypt. Which Sukkos is the Torah referring to? Rabbi Akiva maintains that the verse refers to the booths that Hashem made for the Jewish People when they were sojourning in the Wilderness. Rabbi Eliezer, however, maintains that the verse refers to the Clouds of Glory that encompassed the Jewish People in the Wilderness.

The Gemora in Taanis (9a) states that Hashem performed three miracles for the Jewish People in the Wilderness. Hashem provided the Jewish People with a traveling well of water that was in the merit of Miriam. The Jewish People were further provided with manna that fell from heaven and sustained them and the manna was in the merit of Moshe. The Clouds of Glory that protected the Jewish People were in the merit of Aharon. The commentators wonder why there is only a festival commemorating the miracle of the Clouds of Glory while there is no festival that commemorates the miracles of the traveling well and the falling of the manna from heaven.

The Vilna Gaon and Reb Tzadok HaKohen from Lublin in Pri Tzaddik posit that in truth, we are not commemorating any of the above-mentioned miracles. Rather, the explanation is that following the sin of the Golden Calf, Hashem removed the Clouds of Glory that were protecting the Jewish People and only after Moshe gained atonement for the Jewish People on Yom Kippur did the Clouds of Glory return. Nonetheless, the Clouds of Glory did not actually return until the fifteenth of Tishrei when the Jewish People commenced the construction of the Mishkan, the edifice that reflected their atonement. Thus, the festival of Sukkos is not necessarily a commemoration of the Clouds of Glory. Rather, the festival of Sukkos commemorates the return of the Clouds of Glory and the atonement that the Jewish People received on Yom Kippur.

This demonstrates the connection between the mitzvah of sukkah and the atonement received for the sin of the Golden Calf.

The Gemora in Arachin cites a scriptural verse which states that they performed the mitzvah of sukkah that year in a manner that it had not been performed since the days of Yehoshua ben Nun. One of the explanations given to this cryptic verse is that the Men of the Great Assembly succeeded in abolishing the evil inclination for idolatry. What is the connection between the two? The answer could be like



we have been explaining. The mitzvah of sukkah was the mitzvah which first combated the inclination to worship idols; that is why it was chosen to inform us that the desire to worship idols had been abolished, and that is why it is used as the defining distinction between the Jews, who serve Hashem, and the gentiles, who worship idols.

Adam - Unity

The Gemora cites a braisa that Rabbi Meir said: How is it known that a gentile who studies Torah is comparable to a Kohen Gadol? It is written (with respect to the Torah's laws): that man shall perform and by which he shall live. It does not say: Kohanim, Leviim or Yisroelim. Rather, it says "man." This teaches us that a gentile who studies Torah is comparable to a Kohen Gadol.

Tosfos asks from a Gemora: Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai said (Yevamos 61a): The graves of idolaters do not transmit tumah through the roof (if the tumah source and a person or object is under the same roof). He cites a Scriptural source to prove this point. It is written [Yechezkel 34:31]: Now you my sheep, the sheep of my pasture; you are adam. You, Israel, are referred to as "Adam," man, but an idolater is not regarded as "Adam." (The word "Adam" is the term used in the Torah regarding the laws of tumah by way of a roof; thus we see that the grave of an idolater does not transmit this tumah.)

Rabbeinu Tam answers that there is a distinction between the word "adam" and "ha'adam."

The Ol'los Efraim says that there are four names for man; Adam, Gever, Enosh and Ish. Each of them can be written in a singular form as well as in a plural form. However, the term "Adam" can only be written in a singular form. He explains this with our Gemora. Only a Jew is referred to as Adam, not an idolater. Klal Yisroel has the quality of achdus, uniting as one; therefore only we can be called Adam.

Using this principle, we can answer a famous question. It is written [Koheles 12:13]: The end of the matter, all having

been heard: fear God, and keep His commandments; for this is the whole man. The Shalah comments that the verse fear God is referring to the negative prohibitions; the verse and keep His commandments is referring to the positive commandments; and the verse for this is the whole man is the essence of man, the two hundred and forty-eight limbs and the three hundred and sixty five veins, which are corresponding to the two hundred and forty eight positive commandments and the three hundred and sixty five negative prohibitions.

There are those that ask: If so, it is impossible for any single individual to be complete; it is impossible to fulfill all six hundred and thirteen mitzvos. Some mitzvos are only applicable to a Kohen; some are unique to a Levi; others are only to a Yisroel; men have mitzvos that are only relevant to them, and women have their special mitzvos. How can a person be considered complete?

Perhaps the answer is because Klal Yisroel is Adam. We are all united. One person's performance of a mitzvah effects everyone else. If everyone does their particular mitzvah, Klal Yisroel can be regarded as being complete.

Teaching Torah to a Future Convert

The Rambam (Issurei Bi'ah 14:2) writes that we inform the prospective convert the essentials of the faith, which is the unity of God and the prohibition of idolatry, and they go on at great length about these matters.

The Machaneh Chaim (Y"D II, 45) asks: Why isn't this forbidden on account of a gentile studying Torah? The Gemora in Sanhedrin (59a) states explicitly that a non-Jew who studies Torah is liable for death.

He answers by citing a Medrash Tanchuma in Parshas Vayelech: The numerical value of Torah is six hundred and eleven. The remaining two mitzvos which complete the six hundred and thirteen are the two mitzvos which were given by Hashem directly at Har Sinai. This is the explanation of the



verse: The Torah that Moshe commanded us to observe. Moshe instructed us regarding six hundred and eleven mitzvos; the other two were from Hashem.

The prohibition against teaching an idolater Torah is only applicable to the six hundred and eleven mitzvos that Moshe taught us. The other two, I am Hashem your God and the Unity of God; one would be permitted to teach to them. This is where the Rambam derived his ruling from; we can go on with great length discussing the unity of God and the prohibition of idolatry.

The Maharsha (Shabbos 31a) writes that it is permitted to teach Torah to an idolater who wishes to convert. He proves this from the incident with Hillel and the convert.

Reb Akiva Eiger (41) disagrees and maintains that it is forbidden to teach Torah to an idolater even if he is planning on converting. Hillel taught the convert Torah only after he converted.

Bundle Up

The Gemora states that catching a cold or heat related illness is considered a negligent illness. The Gemora teaches us that "everything is in the hands of heaven except for heat and cold." Tosfos explain that all mishaps and occurrences that happen (in contrast to misfortunes that we actively bring to ourselves, for example jumping into a raging ocean) in our life, is not a random act attributed to queer and meaningless fate. Rather, everything that occurs in our lives, whether big or small, is directly caused by G-d. There is one exception to this Law of Occurrences - illnesses that are caused by heat or cold. This is exclusively in man's department. There is an interesting difference between the two. The Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim Siman 276 Seif 5) rules that in cold places, it is permitted to tell a non-Jew on Shabbos to make a fire (or in today's vernacular - turn on the heater) for the little children (because for them, it's cold, even in weather where the adults are comfortable). Once there is a fire, everyone is allowed to benefit from it. However, the Taz and others add that one

may not sit close to the fire out of concern that one might momentarily forget and make the fire larger. In a place where it's extremely cold, one may tell a non-Jew to light a fire (even for adults). The reason for this is, as the Shulchan Aruch puts it, "Everyone is considered ill regarding the cold." The ill here refers to the category of "an ill person that is not in danger," and therefore, we are not allowed to make a fire, but a non-Jew can, because a non-Jew may be specifically asked to perform forbidden labor when there is an ill person, without the hints that usually must accompany an "Amirah Li'akum" (telling a non-Jew to do a melachah on Shabbos). Similarly, in a case where the air conditioner is on, and it is very cold, one may ask a non-Jew to turn it off. However, if it is very hot, there is no such concept of "Everyone is considered ill in regard to heat." Although some (Minchas Yitzchak and others) permit to ask a non-Jew to turn on an air conditioner for different reasons, Reb Moishe Feinstein forbade it (Igros Moshe Yoreh De'ah Chelek 3 Shaila 47 Ois 2).

DAILY MASHAL

Titus' Thoughts About a Sukkah

Our sugya relates that in the future the gentiles will ask Hashem to try them with observing mitzvos. Hashem, who deals fairly with his creatures, will ask them to observe the mitzvah of the sukkah but will then shine the sun with such intensity that they, who did not agree to sacrifice themselves to observe mitzvos, will rebel and leave their sukkos. Hashem will try the gentiles with the sun and not with something else, such as a torrential downpour, because when their forefather Titus was returning home after destroying the Temple (Gitin 56b), huge waves threatened to drown him. He said that Hashem only controls the water, just as he drowned Pharaoh and warred against Sisera with the stream of Kishon. To prevent his descendents from speaking likewise, Hashem will smite them with the sun (Toras Moshe, Vayikra 37:2).