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Moshe as a Kohen

The *Gemora* asks on Rav (who maintains that Moshe was a *Kohen*) from the following *braisa*: Elisheva had five joys more than the other daughters of Israel (on the day of the Inauguration of the *Mishkan*): her brother-in-law, Moshe, was a king; her husband, Aaron, was a *Kohen Gadol*; her son, Elozar, was deputy *Kohen Gadol*; her grandson, Pinchas, was the Anointed *Kohen* for battle; and her brother, Nachshon, was the *Nasi* of his tribe; yet she was in mourning for her two sons (*Nadav and Avihu*). At any event, the *braisa* stated that Moshe was a king; implying that he was not a *Kohen Gadol*!?

The *Gemora* answers: It should be emended to read that he was also a king (*besides a Kohen Gadol*).

The *Gemora* notes that this is actually a matter of a *Tannaic* dispute, for it was taught in a *braisa*: (Moshe was asking of Hashem that he should not be the one to lead the Jewish people out of Egypt) And the anger of Hashem burned against Moshe. Rabbi Yehoshua ben Karchah said: A mark (such as a blow or a curse) is recorded by every “burning anger” in the Torah, but no mark is recorded in this instance. Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai said: A mark is recorded in this instance too, for it is written: *Is there not Aaron your brother the Levi?* Now surely he was a *Kohen*!?

Rather, this is what Hashem was saying: I had said that you would be a *Kohen* and he a *Levi*; now, however, he will be a *Kohen* and you will be a *Levi*. The Sages maintain: Moshe was invested with *Kehunah* only for the seven days of inauguration. Some say: Only Moshe’s descendants were deprived of *Kehunah* (but he himself remained a *Kohen* his entire life).

The *Gemora* asks: Now, is then a mark recorded of every “burning anger” in the Torah? Surely it is written: *And he went*

out from Pharaoh in burning anger, and yet Moshe said nothing to him?

Rish Lakish answered: Moshe slapped him and went out.

The *Gemora* asks: But did Rish Lakish actually say this? Surely it is written: *And you shall stand opposite him (Pharaoh) by the river’s bank*, and Rish Lakish said: Hashem said to Moshe: He is a king, and you must show him respect; while Rabbi Yochanan maintained: Hashem said to him: He is a wicked man, therefore you may act defiantly toward him!?

The *Gemora* answers: Reverse the opinions. (102a)

Royalty

Rabbi Yannai said: Let the awe of royalty always be upon you, for it is written: *And all these of your servants shall come down to me (and bow down)*, but he did not say it of Pharaoh himself.

Rabbi Yochanan said: It may be inferred from the following: *And the hand of Hashem was on Eliyahu; and he girded up his loins, and ran before Achav (as a sign of respect, for it is not dignified for a king to ride without an escort)*.

Ulla said: Moshe desired kingship, but Hashem did not grant it to him, for it is written: *Do not come closer (halom)*; and “*halom*” can only mean kingship, as it is written: *Then David said, “Who am I, O Lord God ... that You have brought me “halom”?*

Rava asked from a *braisa*: Rabbi Yishmael said: Elisheva’s brother-in-law (*referring to Moshe*) was a king?

Rava answered: Moshe wanted kingship for himself and his descendants (*and that was not given to him*).

The *Gemora* asks: Does then “*halom*” wherever it is written refer to future generations? Surely it is written regarding Shaul: Has the man ever come here (“*halom*”), and yet only he was a king but not his offspring?

The *Gemora* answers: If you wish I can answer that there was Ishboshes (*his son, who also was king*). Alternatively, I can answer that Shaul was different, for his kingship did not remain even with him (*due to his sins*). This agrees with that Rabbi Elozar said in the name of Rabbi Chanina: When greatness is decreed for a man, it is decreed for him and for his descendants for all generations; but if he becomes haughty, the Holy One, Blessed be He, lowers him. (102a)

Blemished

The *Mishna* had stated: Those who have a blemish, whether a permanent blemish or a temporary one, receive a share and eat, but do not offer.

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa* which teaches us the source for these rulings: *Every male (by a minchah offering)*; this includes people with a blemish. With respect to what? If it is in respect of eating, surely it is written elsewhere: *He may eat the bread of his God, from the Holy of Holies!* Therefore it must mean in respect of receiving a share.

It was taught in another *braisa*: *Every male (by a chatas)*; this includes people with a blemish. With respect to what? If it is in respect of eating, surely it is written elsewhere! If it is in respect of receiving a share, surely that as well is already stated! Therefore it must mean in respect of a man blemished from birth. For I might have thought that only an unblemished person who developed a blemish receives a share; how do I know it of a man blemished from birth? Therefore it says: *Every male*.

It was taught in another *braisa*: *Every male (by an asham)*; this includes people with a blemish. With respect to what? If it is in respect of eating, surely it is written elsewhere! If it is in respect

of receiving a share, surely that as well is already stated! If it is in respect of a man blemished from birth, surely it is already stated! Therefore it must mean in respect of a man with a temporary blemish. For I might have thought that only a man with a permanent blemish receives a share; how do I know it of a man with a temporary blemish? Therefore it says: *Every male*.

The *Gemora* asks: Isn't that illogical?

Rav Sheishes said: It should be reversed.

Rav Ashi said: It is logical even without reversing it, for I might have thought that a *Kohen* with a temporary blemish should be like a *Kohen* who is *tamei* - who may not eat so long as he is not *tahor*; so may this person not eat so long as he is not healed; therefore, the Torah informs us otherwise.

The *Mishna* had stated: Even one who was *tamei* at the time of sprinkling the blood and was *tahor* at the time of the burning of the fats, does not receive a share in the meat.

The *Gemora* infers from here that if he would have been *tahor* when the blood was sprinkled but *tamei* when the fats were burned, he receives a share.

The *Gemora* notes that our *Mishna* does not agree with Abba Shaul, for it was taught in a *braisa*: Abba Shaul said: One does not receive a share unless he was *tahor* from the time of the sprinkling of the blood until the time of the burning of the fats.

Rav Ashi inquired: What if he became *tamei* in between? Do we require him to be *tahor* at the sprinkling and at the burning, and this condition has been fulfilled, or perhaps, he must be *tahor* from the time of the sprinkling until the time of the burning of the fats? The *Gemora* leaves this question unresolved.

Rava said: I have learned the following *halachah* from Rabbi Elozar the son of Rabbi Shimon, which he stated in a lavatory. If a *Kohen*, who was a *tevil yom*, came and demanded of a *Kohen* who was *tahor*: Give me a share of a *Yisroel's minchah* offering, that I may eat from it (*tonight after I become tahor*), the *tahor*

Kohen can answer him: If, by your *chatas*, where your power is strong (for you can offer it whenever you please, and the meat and hide belongs to you), I can push you away from a *Yisroel's chatas* (and not allow you to receive a share, for you are not eligible to perform the service); so by a *minchah* offering, where your power is weak (for the *minchah* of a *Kohen* is completely burned and not eaten at all), certainly I can push you away from receiving a share of a *Yisroel's minchah* offering!

The *tevul yom* can reply: You can push me away from a *Yisroel's chatas*, for although my power is strong, so is yours; however, can you push me away from a *minchah* offering, where just as my power is weak, so is yours!?

The *tahor Kohen* can respond: It is written: To the *Kohen* who offers it shall it belong; come, offer the *minchah*, and then you may eat from it.

He continues: If a *Kohen*, who was a *tevul yom*, came and demanded of a *Kohen* who was *tahor*: Give me a share of a *Yisroel's chatas*, that I may eat from it (tonight after I become *tahor*), the *tahor Kohen* can answer him: If by a *minchah* offering, where my power is weak (for the *minchah* of a *Kohen* is completely burned and not eaten at all), I can push you away from receiving a share of a *Yisroel's minchah* offering; so by my *chatas*, where my power is strong (for I can offer it whenever I please, and the meat and hide belongs to me), surely I can push you away from receiving a share of a *Yisroel's chatas*!

The *tevul yom* can reply: You can push me away from a *Yisroel's minchah* offering, for just as your power is weak, so is mine; however, can you push me away from a *Yisroel's chatas*, where just as your power is strong, so is mine!?

The *tahor Kohen* can respond: It is written: The *Kohen* who throws its blood shall eat it; come, throw the blood of the *chatas*, and then you may eat from it.

He continues: If a *Kohen*, who was a *tevul yom*, came and demanded of a *Kohen* who was *tahor*: Give me a share of the breast and the thigh of a *Yisroel's shelamim*, that I may eat from

it (tonight after I become *tahor*), the *tahor Kohen* can answer him: If, by your *chatas*, where your power is strong (for you can offer it whenever you please, and the meat and hide belongs to you), I can push you away from a *Yisroel's chatas* (and not allow you to receive a share, for you are not eligible to perform the service); so by a *shelamim* offering, where your power is weak, for you only receive the breast and the thigh, certainly I can push you away from receiving a share of them!

The *tevul yom* can reply: You can push me away from a *Yisroel's chatas*, for my power is weak in respect of my wives and slaves (that I cannot give them from the meat); however, can you push me away from the breast and thigh, where my power is strong in respect of my wives and my slaves?

The *tahor Kohen* can respond: It is written: To the *Kohen* who throws its blood shall it belong; come, throw the blood of the *shelamim*, and then you may eat from it.

Thus the *tevul yom* departs, with his arguments on his head; with an *onein* on his right and one who lacks atonement on his left.

Rav Achai asked that the *braisa* could have mentioned the same discussion regarding a *bechor*.

The *Gemora* answers that Rabbi Elozar the son of Rabbi Shimon would argue that the verse is not discussing a *bechor* (and therefore a *tevul yom* can receive a *bechor*).

The *Gemora* asks: Now, how could Rabbi Elozar the son of Rabbi Shimon do this? Surely Rabbah bar bar Chanah say in the name of Rabbi Yochanan that a person is allowed to think about Torah matters anywhere besides for a bathhouse and a lavatory?

The *Gemora* answers: It is different when it is done involuntarily (for he was unable to interrupt his thoughts). (102a – 102b)

INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

Do Chinese People think in Chinese?

Our *Gemora* cites Rav, who quotes a long *halachic* discussion said by Rabbi Elozar the son of Rabbi Shimon and Rav mentions that he said it in the *beis hakisei* (lavatory). The lavatory is a place where it is forbidden to learn Torah. The *Gemora* wonders how he was allowed to learn in such a place and answers “He was forced to.” Rashi comments (s.v. *Leonso*): “His learning was constantly fluent on his lips and he would think of it unwillingly.”

There’s no difference between thinking and speaking words of Torah: He who learns this *Gemora* tries to understand: Assuming that Rabbi Elozar the son of Rabbi Shimon was so involved in matters of Torah that he **thought** of them *perforce*, why did he have to **speak** words of Torah? He should have only thought them. The *Perishah* (O.C. 85, cited by *Pri Megadim*, *ibid*) proves from our *Gemora* that there is no difference between the severity of the prohibition to think words of Torah in unclean places and the severity to speak them, and as he was thinking words of Torah *perforce*, he was permitted to speak them.

There’s a difference between thinking words of Torah and speaking them: Still, this *chidush* is strongly rejected by the Chidah in his *Birkei Yosef* and by other Acharonim as it is a clear *halachah* that in the “middle room” – the room before the bathhouse – it is forbidden to speak words of Torah but allowed to think them! It is evident that the criteria of the two prohibitions are not identical (and so is it evident from other *halachos*, such as *birkas haTorah*, that we cannot compare thought to speech). Therefore, the question returns: How did Rabbi Elozar ben Rabbi Shimon speak Torah in the restroom if he could have only thought?

The author of *Tzon Kodoshim* explains that Rabbi Elozar ben Rabbi Shimon did not speak words of Torah in a place where it is forbidden but merely thought there and later spoke them in the *beis midrash* (*Mishnah Berurah*, 85, S.K. 8, and see *Sefas Emes* on our *sugya*).

We have thus descended from the severe level of speech to the more lenient level of thought. Still, this “*perforce*”, that the *Gemora* explains for Rabbi Elozar ben Rabbi Shimon’s behavior, demands understanding. How could he think? After all, it is also forbidden to think words of Torah in an unclean place!

DAILY MASHAL

What is thought? Indeed, to understand the issue, HaGaon Rav Efrayim Burdianski zt”l examines the essential nature of thought. What is thought? In what language does a person think? It seems that a Russian thinks in Russian and someone from China would think in Chinese. Certainly one **can** think in such a way. However, when we think about our thoughts, we discover that many of them are like a dream in which we imagine an event without wording it. Thus, when a person thinks about a house or another object, he contemplates all sides of it but doesn’t necessarily “talk to himself” about it.

Two types of thought: in words and by contemplation: We thus have two types of thought: thought in words and thought by means of wordless contemplation. It could be that the prohibition to think in an unclean place only applies to thought that resembles speech – i.e., thought in words – but there is no Torah prohibition to think matters of Torah without words and *Chazal* instituted this prohibition because of the honor of the Torah. Therefore, it could be that Rabbi Elozar ben Rabbi Shimon did not think in words but in concepts, which is only forbidden *midrabanan*. This is what the *Gemora* means “by *perforce* is different”: **Chazal** did not forbid a person so deeply involved that he **cannot** distract himself from Torah thoughts, their decree was not applied to such a holy person (*Mishkenos Efrayim*, §18, and see *Mishnah Berurah*, *ibid*, and *Chazon Ish*, O.C. §14, S.K. 18; concerning if thought in unclean places is forbidden *midoraysa*, see *Nishmas Adam*, *kelal 3, os 2*, that the Rishonim disagreed and see *Pri Megadim* in the general preface, end of *cheilek 5*).