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Menachos Daf 85

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Daf Notes is currently being dedicated to the neshamot of

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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

Aforayim

[The Mishna had stated: All minchah offerings must come only from the choicest flour. The most superior flour is from Machnis and Zitcha. The next best is from Aforayim in the valley.]

Yochana and Mamrei (*Egyptian sorcerers*) said to Moshe (*when he was performing the signs showing that he was sent from Hashem*): Are you bringing straw into Aforayim? [In other words, they were telling him that Egypt was a place that is steeped with magic done through the best witchcraft in the world. It is therefore foolish to do such signs from Hashem; this was compared to bringing straw into Aforayim – a place that had an abundance of straw!] Moshe answered: People say, “One should bring vegetables to a marketplace where they sell vegetables” (*for that is where the buyers can be found; so too, it is the Egyptians that will realize that his signs are from a Divine origin*). (85a)

Mishna

We do not bring grain (*for the omer and shteí halechem*) from a fertilized field (*for it will be inferior*), nor from an irrigated field, nor from a field of trees (*as they give shade which inhibits the growth of the grain*). If he does so, the offering is still valid. How should one prepare a field (*in order to produce superior grain*)? He should plow it and leave it fallow for a year, and then (*plow it again and*) plant it the second year seventy days before Pesach. This will produce an abundance of fine flour.

How does one check to see if the flour is sifted properly? The Temple treasurer puts his hand in it. If a dusty flour comes up, it is invalid until it is sifted (*until this does not happen when he puts his hand in*). If the flour is wormy, it is invalid. (85a)

Repeat the Plowing

The Mishna had stated: How should one prepare a field (*in order to produce superior grain*)? He should plow it and leave it fallow for a year, and etc.

They inquired: Does the Mishna mean that he should only plow the first year and only plant the second year (*without plowing at the beginning of the second year*)? Or does the Mishna mean that he should only plow the first year, but he should plow and plant the second year?

The Gemora attempts to answer the question from a braisa which states: Rabbi Yosi said that the barley from Chitei Karzayim and Kefar Achim would have been used for the omer if they would be close to Yerushalayim. This is because the omer is only brought from fields that are in the south (*when during the winter, the sun is shining in that part of the sky most of the day*) and that are plowed specifically for this purpose (*to ensure the production of fine barley*), for the sun shines on them (*immediately upon rising*), and sets from them (*and they therefore become totally ripened, for the sun is shining on them the entire day*). How should one prepare his field for this (*in order to produce superior grain*)? He should plow it the first year. The second year he should plow it and repeat the plowing, and then plant seventy days before Pesach in order that it should be growing when it is close to the sun (*for then it is at its most strength*). This will produce a stalk the size of a zeres (*one-half of an amah*) and the ear will be two zereses (*which is considerably larger than an ordinary growth*). He then harvests, bundles, threshes, winnows, separates, grinds, and sifts it. He then brings it to the Temple treasurer, who puts his hand in it. If a dusty flour comes into his hand, he tells the person to sift it



again. It is said in the name of Rabbi Nassan that the treasurer smears oil on his hand and then puts his hand in the flour until he removes all of its dust.

The *Gemora* concludes its question: The *braisa* states that one should plow twice (*proving that plowing is done in the second year*)!

The *Gemora* responds: However, the *braisa* clearly states the plowing should be repeated, whereas the *Mishna* does not state this! [*A proof cannot be brought from the braisa, as the Mishna and braisa seem to be arguing!*]

The *Gemora* answers: The *Mishna* is referring to a case where the field had been cultivated before being plowed in the first year (*and therefore it is unnecessary to repeat the plowing in the second year*), whereas the *braisa* is referring to a case where the field had not been cultivated beforehand.

The *Gemora* asks: What is the law? [*The Shitah Mekubetzes explains that the Gemora was not completely satisfied with this answer, and therefore asks for a ruling.*]

The *Gemora* answers from the following *braisa*: One plows his entire field the first year, plants half and leaves the other half fallow. He plows the entire field in the second year as well, plants the half that laid fallow the first year, and leaves fallow the half that was planted the first year. [*The Gemora shows from here that one does not need to plow in the beginning of the second year.*] (85a – 85b)

Sun in the South

Rabbi Yochanan states: The *omer* is only brought from fields that are in the south in *Eretz Yisroel*, for the sun shines on them (*immediately upon rising*), and sets from them (*and they therefore become totally ripened, for the sun is shining on them the entire day*).

The *braisa* supports this position. Abba Shaul states: The *omer* was brought from the valley of Beis Makleh from a field the size

of three *se'ah* (*it was large enough that three se'ah of grain could be planted there; the amount required for the omer*). It was a field that was in the south, and the sun would shine on it (*immediately upon rising*), and sets from it. He would plow his entire field the first year, plant half and leave the other half fallow. He plowed the entire field in the second year as well, planted the half that laid fallow the first year, and left fallow the half that was planted the first year.

Rav Chilkiya bar Tuvi had a corner plot of land. He would plow his entire field the first year, plant half and leave the other half fallow. He plowed the entire field in the second year as well, planted the half that laid fallow the first year, and left fallow the half that was planted the first year. It would produce twice as much grain as normal, which he would sell for the finest wheat flour (*as wheat that would be used for menachos*). (85b)

Wormy

The *Mishna* had stated that if the flour was wormy, it was invalid.

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: If most of a batch of flour became infested with worms, it is invalid. If most of the wheat kernels became infested with worms, it is invalid.

Rabbi Yirmiyah inquired: Is this law referring to the fact that most of every stalk was infested with worms, or is it referring to most of a *se'ah* having worms (*even if there are some stalks that are not infested at all*)? The *Gemora* leaves this question unresolved.

Rava inquired: If someone designated wormy wheat kernels to be used as a *minchah*, does he receive lashes (*as if he knowingly consecrated a blemished animal to be used as a sacrifice*)? Do we say that since it is invalid, it should be like a blemished animal, or perhaps we should say that the prohibition against consecrating a blemished animal only applies to an animal, not to wheat? The *Gemora* leaves this question unresolved. (85b)

Mishna



Tekoa is the best place to get quality oil. Abba Shaul says: Regev, across the Jordan, is the second best place. Oil can be brought from any land, but they would bring from here.

We do not bring from a fertilized field (*for it will be inferior*), nor from an irrigated field, or from olives that have other seeds planted in between them (*for they weaken the olives*). We do not bring oil from these places, but if one does it is valid. We do bring *anpikanon* oil (*from olives that did not ripen well*), but if one does it is valid. We do not bring oil from olives that were soaked in water, that were pickled, or that were boiled. If one does, it is invalid. (85b)

Oil

And Yoav sent to Tekoa, and he took from there a wise woman.

The *Gemora* asks: Why did Yoav want a woman from Tekoa?

Rabbi Yochanan answers: Being that they are accustomed to consume olive oil, they are generally wise.

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: *And he dips his foot in oil*. This refers to the portion of Asher, where oil flows like a stream. They related that once the people of Ludkiya required oil. They appointed an agent (*an idolater*) to go bring them a million *maneh's* worth of oil. He went to Yerushalayim (*to buy oil*). People there told him to go to Tyre. He went to Tyre. People there told him to go to Gush Chalav. He went to Gush Chalav. People there told him to go to So-and-so, to that field. He found a Jewish farmer digging underneath his olive trees. He asked him: Do you have a million *maneh's* worth of oil? He replied: Wait until I finish my work. When he finished, he tied up his tools and slung them over his shoulder, and he was clearing stones away from the field as he was going home. The messenger asked him again: Do you have a million *maneh's* worth of oil? He thought to himself that it seems like the Jews were mocking him by telling him to go to this man. Once the man reached his city, his maidservant brought for him a jug of hot water and he proceeded to wash his hands and feet. She

then brought him a golden bowl filled with olive oil which he proceeded to use to dip his hands and feet into, in order to fulfill the verse: *and he dips his foot in oil*. After they ate and drank, he measured out for him one million *maneh's* worth of oil. The man asked him: Do you need more oil? The agent said: Yes, but I have no more money. The man replied: If you want, take more and I will walk with you to get the rest of the money. He added another one hundred and eighty thousand *maneh's* of oil. They said about this order of oil that the messenger did not leave a horse, mule, camel, or donkey in *Eretz Yisroel* that he did not hire (*in order to carry all of this oil back to Ludkiya*). When he got back to Ludkiya, the people of his city came out to praise him (*for a job well done*). He told them: Do not praise me, but praise this man who came with me, as he measured out to me a million *maneh's* of oil, and I owe him another one hundred and eighty thousand *maneh's*. This fulfills the verse: *Some act like they are rich while they have nothing, while others look like they are poor while they have a fortune*. (85b)

INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

With what oil did the miracle of the pitcher occur?

"Tekoa Alfa for oil." Our *Mishna* says that oil for the Temple was brought from a place called Tekoa Alfa. This fact serves the Rishonim as a basis to explain why the oil in the Temple burned for exactly eight days, the days that were later instituted as Chanukah. The Ran (Shabbos 21b) explains that pure oil could only be obtained from a distance of four days' travel and therefore eight days were needed to go there and return with the oil. *Sefer HaEshkol (Hilchos Chanukah)* and other Rishonim (Meiri, *ibid*; Abudraham; etc.), citing the *Mishna* that the oil was brought from Tekoa, mention that Tekoa is in the portion of Asher, who was blessed with oil.

This assertion is not unanimous. Some say that Tekoa was in the portion of Yehudah or Binyamin, near Yerushalayim (based on *Divrei HaYamim II*, Ch. 11; see Abarbanel on *Shmuel II*, Ch. 14, and it seems so in Rashi in *Pesachim 53a*, s.v. *Teko'a* and s.v. *Gush Chalav*, that only Gush Chalav was in Asher's portion; see *Beis Aharon veYisrael, kovetz 4*, p. 85). According to these

opinions and as stated in *Beis Yosef* (670), they needed the miracle of the oil for eight days because those making the oil were impure from contact with the dead and had to be purified over a duration of seven days and on the eighth day they had to crush the olives.

The parallel between the type of oil for the Menorah and the oil for the Chanukah lamp: To remember and publicize the miracle, *Chazal* instituted to burn lights for eight days. The basic *halachah* is that any light is kosher but “it is a choice *mitzvah* to use olive oil, which served the miracle” (*Kolbo*, cited by *Darhei Moshe*, 673).

Lighting Chanukah lights with inedible olive oil: HaGaon Rabbi Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, asked about using inedible olive oil for lighting the Chanukah lamp, indicated this *halachah* as a source that the more the olive oil we use for Chanukah resembles the oil in the Temple, this embellishes the *mitzvah* (*Kovetz Mevakeshei Torah*, p. 32).

Congeaed olive oil: Recently, “instant” olive oil lights have been on sale, with congealed oil and a wick in a glass cup, ready to be lit. HaGaon Rav Shmuel HaLevi Vosner was asked (*Responsa Shevet HaLevi*, IX, 143) if this oil should be used for Chanukah and if the *mitzvah* of lighting the Menorah in the Temple could be observed with it. Though the *sugyos* we are now learning are full of the halachos of the oil, nothing is mentioned about congealed oil.

Rav Vosner replied that in fact congealed oil is not kosher for lighting the Menorah in the Temple. Rambam, (*Hilchos Tumas Ocholin* 1:19) explains that congealed oil loses its name as a liquid, but still it doesn’t assume the name of solid food but is neither solid nor liquid. As the utensils of the Temple meant to hold liquids sanctify only liquids (*Zevachim* 98a), there is no way to sanctify such oil for its *mitzvah*.

Congeaed oil is kosher for Chanukah: Nonetheless the *Shevet HaLevi* writes that congealed oil is fit for the Chanukah lamp as we need not draw a parallel between the oil fit for the Menorah and the oil fit for observing the *mitzvah* of lighting the Chanukah lights in all details.

The miracle of the pitcher was with congealed oil!

Interestingly, there are Rishonim who maintain that congealed oil is considered solid food (see the Raavad in the *Hasagos*, *ibid*, and Tosfos, *Pesachim* 14b, s.v. *Afilu*) and some wrote that, in their opinion, the pitcher of oil, to which the miracle occurred, contained congealed oil! The author of *Teshuvah Meiahavah* (*Responsa*, II, 285) recounts that he was asked in his childhood by “Maharal Kasvitz, *av beis din* of our community”, that there are opinions that liquids do not become impure in the Temple (see the disagreement of Rav and Shmuel in *Pesachim* 16a) and if so, how did the Greeks “defile all the oil”? He replied that it could be that the oil was stored in a congealed form and, as solid food, could become impure (see *ibid*, that he offers other solutions; see also *Kehilos Ya’akov*, V, 19, and *Piskei Teshuvos*, 673, remark 32).

Mystical intentions: We have addressed the topic of observing the *mitzvah* of the Chanukah lights with congealed oil. Some noted that Kabbalistic works cite intentions and unifications (*yichudim*) to concentrate on while pouring the oil and inserting the wick, actions prevented by using solid oil. Though we don’t concentrate on these intentions, we can nonetheless learn from there that there are exalted matters in these actions and it could be that, to adhere to customs of piety, it is fitting not to lose them by using congealed oil (*Kovetz Beis Aharaon veYisrael*, pp. 143-44). Of course, this does not disturb the above ruling that congealed oil is kosher for Chanukah.

DAILY MASHAL

Where to Move the Yeshivah

Ma’aseh Ish (V, 27) recounts that HaGaon Rabbi Hillel Vitkind asked the Chazon Ish zt”l that his yeshivah, Beis Hillel, then in Tel Aviv, was unsuccessful there. Should he move it to Bnei Berak? Why not? Because Bnei Berak has many yeshivos. “On the contrary”, replied the Chazon Ish, “to a town of vegetables take vegetables – to a town where many vegetables grow bring your vegetables to sell as everyone gathers there to buy” (Rashi).