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Pesachim Daf 111

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Daf Notes is currently being dedicated to the neshamah of

**Tzvi Gershon Ben Yoel (Harvey Felsen) o”h**

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

Rish Lakish said: There are four actions for which he who does them has his blood on his own head and forfeits his life,<sup>1</sup> viz.: easing oneself between a palm tree and the wall passing between two palm trees; drinking borrowed water, and passing over spilled water, even if his wife poured it out in his presence. ‘Easing oneself between a palm tree and the wall’: this was said only if there is not four cubits,<sup>2</sup> but if he leaves four cubits it does not matter. And even if he does not leave four cubits [space], it was said only where there is no other path; but if there is another path, it does not matter. ‘Passing between two palm-trees.’ This was said only where a public thoroughfare does not cross between them; but if a public thoroughfare crosses between them, it does not matter. ‘Drinking borrowed water.’ That was said only if a child borrowed it; but [if] an adult, it does not matter. And even if a child borrowed it, this was said only in respect to the countryside, where it is not found [in abundance]; but in the town, where it is found in abundance, it does not matter. And even in respect to the countryside, this was said only of water, but there is no objection against [borrowed] wine and beer. ‘And passing over spilled water.’ This was said only if he did not interpose dust<sup>3</sup> or spit into it; but if he interposed dust or spit into it, it does not matter. Again, this was said only if the sun had not passed over it nor did he walk sixty steps over it; but if the sun had passed over it and he walked sixty steps over it, it does not matter. Again, this was said only if he was not riding an ass and was not wearing shoes; but if he was riding a donkey and was wearing shoes, it does not matter. Yet that is only where there is nothing to fear of witchcraft; but where there is something to fear of

witchcraft, even if there are all these [safeguards], we still fear, as in the case of a certain man who rode on a donkey and was wearing his shoes; his shoes shrank, and his feet withered. (111a1)

Our Rabbis taught: There are three who must not pass between [two men], nor may [others] pass between them, viz.: a dog, a palm tree, and a woman. Some say: a pig too; some say, a snake too. And if they pass between, what is the remedy? — Said Rav Pappa: Let them commence [a verse] with “Eil” [God] and end with “Eil.” Alternatively, let them commence [a Scriptural passage] with “lo” [not] and finish with “lo.” If a niddah passes between two [men], if it is at the beginning of her menstrual period she will kill one of them and if it is at the end of her menstrual period she will cause strife between them. What is the remedy? Let them commence [a verse] with “Eil” and end with “Eil.” When two women sit at a crossroad, one on one side of the road and one on the other side of the road, facing each other, they are certainly engaged in witchcraft. What is the remedy? If there is another road [available], let one go through it. While if there is no other road, [then] if another man is with him, let them clasp hands and pass through; while if there is no other man, let him say thus: ‘Agras, Azlas, Asiya and Belusya<sup>4</sup> have been slain with a crossbow.’ (111a1 – 111a2)

When one meets a woman coming up from her required immersion, if [subsequently] he is the first to cohabit, a spirit of immortality will infect him; while if she is the first to cohabit, a spirit of immortality will infect her. What is the

<sup>1</sup> I.e., whatever happens, he has only himself to blame.

<sup>2</sup> Between them: this leaves no room for the evil spirits to pass comfortably and so they injure him.

<sup>3</sup> I.e., he did not scatter dust upon the water before passing over it.

<sup>4</sup> The demons by whose aid you seek to work witchcraft.



remedy? Let him say thus: 'He pours contempt upon nobles, and He caused them to wander in a pathless wasteland.' (111a2)

Rabbi Yitzchak said: What is meant by the verse: Though I walk through the valley overshadowed by death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me? This refers to one who sleeps in the shadow of a single palm-tree or in the shadow of the moon. Now in respect to the shadow of a single palm-tree this holds good only where the shadow of the neighboring [tree] does not fall upon it; but if the shadow of the neighboring tree falls upon it, it does not matter. Then when it was taught: He who sleeps in the shadow of a single palm-tree in a courtyard and he who sleeps in the shadow of the moon, has his blood on his own head, how is it meant? Shall we say that the shadow of the neighboring tree does not fall upon it, — then even in a field too [it is dangerous]? Hence you may surely infer from this that in a courtyard [there is danger] even if the shadow of the neighboring tree fall on it. This proves it. And in respect to the shadow of the moon too, this holds good only when [it falls] in the west,<sup>5</sup> but when it is in the east it does not matter. (111a2)

If one relieves himself on the stump of a palm-tree, the demon Palga will seize him, and if one leans one's head on the stump of a palm tree, the demon Tzerada will seize him. He who steps over a palm-tree, if it had been cut down, he will be cut down [killed]; if it had been uprooted, he will be uprooted and die. But that is only if he does not place his foot upon it; but if he places his foot upon it, it does not matter.

There are five shades:<sup>6</sup> the shade of a single palm tree, the shade of a lote tree, the shade of a fig tree, the shade of a caper bush, [and] the shade of sorb bushes. Some say: Also the shade of a ship and the shade of a willow. This is the general rule: Whatever has many branches, its shade is harmful, and whatever has hard prickles [or, wood], its shade

<sup>5</sup> I.e., at the end of the month when the moon is in the east and casts its shadow in the west.

<sup>6</sup> Involving danger on account of the demons that inhabit them.

<sup>7</sup> Charms to counteract them, in which their names are written.

is harmful, except the service tree, whose shade is not harmful although its wood is hard, because a certain female demon said to her son, 'Fly from the service tree, because it is that which killed your father'; and, it also killed him. Rav Ashi said: I saw Rav Kahana avoid all shades.

[The demons] of caper trees are [called] rucheï [spirits]: those of sorb bushes are [called] sheida [demons]: those which haunt roofs are [called] rishpei [fiery-bolts]. In respect of what does it matter? In respect of amulets.<sup>7</sup> [The demon] of caper-trees is a creature without eyes. What does it matter? In respect of fleeing from it.<sup>8</sup> A scholar was once about to relieve himself among the caper bushes, when he heard it advancing upon him so he fled from it. As it was going, it embraced a palm tree, whereupon the palm tree shriveled and it [the demon] burst.

[The demons] of sorb bushes are [called] sheida. A sorb bush which is near a town has not less than sixty sheida [demons] [haunting it]. How does this matter? In respect of writing an amulet. A certain town officer went and stood by a sorb bush near a town, whereupon he was set upon by sixty demons and his life was in danger. He then went to a scholar who did not know that it was a sorb bush haunted by sixty demons, and so he wrote a one-demon amulet for it. Then he heard how they suspended a chinga<sup>9</sup> on it [the tree] and were singing as follows: 'The man's turban is like a scholar's, [yet] we have examined the man [and find] that he does not know "Blessed are You".'<sup>10</sup> Then a certain scholar came who knew that it was a sorb bush of sixty demons and wrote a sixty-demon amulet for it. Then he heard them saying, 'Clear away your vessels from here.' (111b1 – 111b2)

Ketev Meriri: there are two Ketevs, one before noon and one after noon; the one before noon is called Ketev Meriri, and

<sup>8</sup> As it is sightless it cannot follow.

<sup>9</sup> A musical instrument.

<sup>10</sup> He does not know which blessing to recite when he puts it on ridiculed his pretensions to scholarship.



looks like a ladle turning in the jug of kamcha.<sup>11</sup> That of the afternoon is called Ketev Yashud Tzaharaim [‘Destruction that wastes at noonday’]; it looks like a goat's horn, and wings compass it about.

Abaye was walking along, with Rav Pappa on his right and Rav Huna, son of Rav Yehoshua on his left. Seeing a Ketev Meriri approaching him on the left, he transferred Rav Pappa to his left and Rav Huna son of Rav Yehoshua to his right. Said Rav Pappa to him: ‘Why am I different that you were not afraid on my behalf?’ ‘The time is in your favor,’ replied he.<sup>12</sup>

From, the first of Tammuz until the sixteenth they are certainly to be found; henceforth it is doubtful whether they are about or not, and they are found in the shadow of chatzuva<sup>13</sup> which have not grown a cubit, and in the morning and evening shadows when these are less than a cubit [in length], but mainly in the shadow of a lavatory. (111b2)

Rav Yosef said: The following three things cause defective eyesight: combing one's head [when it is] dry, drinking the drip-drop [of wine], and putting on shoes while the feet are still damp. [Eatables] suspended in a house lead to poverty, as people say, ‘He who suspends a basket [of food] puts his food in suspense.’ Yet this relates only to bread, but it does not matter about meat and fish, [since] that is the usual way [of keeping them]. Bran in a house leads to poverty. Crumbs in a house lead to poverty: the demons rest upon them on the eves of Sabbaths and on the eves of Wednesdays. The administering angel appointed over sustenance is called Neki'ah [Cleanliness]; the administering angel appointed over poverty is called Naval [Filth]. Dirt on the spout of a pitcher leads to poverty. He who drinks water out of a plate is liable to a cataract. He who eats cress without [first] washing his hands will suffer fear thirty days. He who lets blood without washing his hands will be afraid seven days. He who trims his hair and does not wash his hands will be afraid three days. He who pares his nails and does not wash

his hands will be afraid one day without knowing what affrights him. [Putting] one's hand to one's nostrils is a step to fear; [putting] one's hand to one's forehead is a step to sleep. It was taught: If food and drink [are kept] under the bed, even if they are covered in iron vessels, an evil spirit rests upon them. (111b2 – 112a1)

DAILY MASHAL

### ***Healing Oneself with Words of Torah***

It is well known that when people are sick or ill, we are supposed to daven that they get better. However, as stated by the Gemora in Shavuot (15b), it is forbidden to directly heal by using words of Torah (i.e. the words of Torah said are being said with intent that they should cure). How, then, can the Gemora suggest that these verses should be said if one is in danger because of passing in between two women and the like?

Tosfos (111a) answers that the prohibition is only to heal oneself with words of Torah, not to protect oneself with words of Torah. Being that nothing bad has happened yet to the person, he is allowed to say words of Torah to protect himself.

This is also stated by the Gemora in Shavuot (ibid.), as an explanation for Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi's habit (done by us today as well) to recite certain verses before going to sleep in order to ward off demons. Being that this is only for protection not healing, it is permitted.

<sup>11</sup> A kind of sauce made of milk and bread-crumbs.

<sup>12</sup> You have been blessed with good fortune, so the demon will not harm you.

<sup>13</sup> A species of shrub whose roots pierce deep into the ground without spreading to the side at all.