

# Daf Notes

Insights into the Daily Daf

3 Tammuz 5767

Yevamos Daf 47

June 19, 2007

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Produced by Rabbi Avrohom Adler

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## Highlights

Rabbah said: An incident occurred at the house of Rabbi Chiya Beribi, and Rav Yosef said that Rabbi Oshaya Beribi was there as well, and Rav Safra said that Rabbi Oshaya the son of Rabbi Chiya was there as well. A convert that was circumcised, but had not yet converted came before them in order to complete the conversion process. Rabbi Chiya Beribi said to him: "Wait here until tomorrow, and we will immerse you then."

The Gemora states that we can derive three halachos from this. Learn from here that a conversion must be in the presence of three men. Learn from here that a conversion is not valid unless he has been circumcised and underwent immersion. And learn from here that we do not immerse a convert at night.

The Gemora asks: Can't we learn from here that three experts are required in order for the conversion to be valid?

The Gemora answers: Perhaps, it just happened to transpire in that manner, but halachically, it would not be necessary. (46b)

The Gemora cites a braisa: One who arrives and says that he is a convert; he is not believed. If he comes with his witnesses, he is believed. Rabbi Yehudah maintains (*based on a Scriptural verse*) that in Eretz Yisroel, he would be required to bring a proof (*we are concerned that he is a circumcised idolater who wants to reap the benefits of Eretz Yisroel*); outside of Eretz Yisroel, a proof is not necessary. The Chachamim hold that he always must bring a proof.

The Gemora asks: If he has witnesses with him that he converted, why is it necessary to cite a Scriptural verse that he would be trusted?

Rav Sheishes answers: The witnesses are testifying that they heard that he converted in a certain Beis Din (*but they themselves did not see the conversion*); the *passuk* teaches us that they are believed (*since we will eventually find out anyway*).

The Gemora explains that according to the Chachamim, one might have thought that we would not accept converts in Eretz Yisroel; perhaps they are only converting because of the goodness of Eretz Yisroel, and even

nowadays that the land is not flowing with milk and honey, there is still *leket*, *shic'chah*, *pe'ah* and *ma'aser oni* (*the commandment of leaving certain portions of his land or produce for the poor*); the *passuk* teaches us that they are accepted even in Eretz Yisroel. (46b – 47a)

The Gemora cites a braisa: Rabbi Yehudah said: A conversion is effective if he converts in the presence of Beis Din. If he converts in private, it is not valid.

There was an incident where a man came before Rabbi Yehudah and said: "I converted in private." Rabbi Yehudah asked him: "Do you have any witnesses?" He replied: "No." "Do you have children?" The man answered: "Yes." Rabbi Yehudah said to him: "You are believed to disqualify yourself, but not in respect to your children."

The Gemora asks: Did Rabbi Yehudah really say that he is not believed regarding his children? But we learned in a braisa: Rabbi Yehudah said: Just as a man is believed to say that this is his firstborn son, so too, he is believed to say that his son is a son of a divorcee or a *chalutzah* (*and if he is a Kohen, this will render the son a chalal, and he will be disqualified from the Kehunah*). The Chachamim say: He is not believed.

Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak answers: Rabbi Yehudah told the man that he is not believed regarding his children because according to his words, he is an idolater, and an idolater cannot provide testimony.

Ravina answers: Rabbi Yehudah told the man that he is not believed regarding his children because he has grandchildren as well, and since he would not be believed regarding the

grandchildren, he is not believed to disqualify his children either.

The Gemora cites a braisa providing support for Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak's answer. Rabbi Yehudah said: A man will be believed regarding his minor son, but not regarding his adult son. Rabbi Chiya bar Abba explained in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: A "minor" is referring to a son who does not have children, and an "adult" is referring to a son who does have children. (47a)

The Gemora cites a braisa which describes the process of becoming a convert. The Rabbis taught: If at the present time (*when the Beis HaMikdash is not standing*) a man desires to convert, he is to be addressed as follows: "What prompted you to convert? Do you know that at the present time the Jewish people are persecuted, oppressed, despised and harassed, and hardships are constantly upon them?" If he replies, "I know, and yet I am unworthy," we accept him immediately.

We notify him regarding a few simple commandments, and a few stringent commandments. We inform him of the sin of neglecting the *leket*, *shic'chah*, *pe'ah* and *ma'aser oni*. We inform him of the punishment for violating the commandments, as follows: We say to him: Be aware that until you have come to this measure, if you would have eaten *cheilev* (*forbidden fats*), you would not have been punished with *kares*. If you would have desecrated the Shabbos, you would not have been punished with stoning. But now, if you eat *cheilev*, you will be punished with *kares*. If you desecrate the Shabbos, you will be punished with stoning.

And just as we notify him of the punishment for violating the commandments, so too, we

notify him of the reward for fulfilling the commandments, as follows: We say to him: Be aware that the World to Come is made only for the righteous, and presently, the Jewish people are not able to receive too much goodness or too much punishment.

We do not overwhelm him (*by speaking too much about punishments that might dissuade him*), and we do not specify all the details of each transgression.

If he accepts, we circumcise him immediately. If there are any shreds remaining which invalidate the circumcision, we circumcise him another time. When he heals, we immerse him immediately, and two Torah scholars stand over him, and notify him regarding a few simple commandments, and a few stringent commandments. He immerses and when he comes up, he is like a Jew regarding all matters.

If it is a woman converting, women place her in the water up to her neck, and two Torah scholars stand outside, and notify her regarding a few simple commandments, and a few stringent commandments.

This process applies to a convert and to a freed servant. And in the place where a menstruant immerses (*a kosher mikvah*), there too, a convert and freed servant immerse. And anything that causes a *chatzitzah* by *tumah*, is regarded as a *chatzitzah* by a convert, by a freed servant, and by a menstruant. (47a – 47b)

The Gemora proceeds to analyze the braisa. The braisa had stated: If a man desires to convert, he is to be addressed as follows: “What prompted you to convert? We notify him regarding a few simple commandments, and a few stringent commandments.

The Gemora asks: Why do we attempt to discourage him from converting?

The Gemora answers: If he chooses to abandon his attempt to convert, we let him do so, for Rabbi Chelbo said: Converts are as harmful to the Jewish people as *sapachas* (a type of *tzara’as*). (47b)

The braisa had stated: We inform him of the sin of neglecting the *leket*, *shic’chah*, *pe’ah* and *ma’aser oni*.

The Gemora asks: Why are these mitzvos chosen?

Rabbi Chiya bar Abba answered in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: A Noahite is executed for stealing even if the item is worth less than a *perutah*, and it does not need to be returned. (*Informing him about the obligations to provide for the poor will deter him from converting.*)(47b)

The braisa had stated: We do not overwhelm him (*by speaking too much about punishments that might dissuade him*), and we do not specify all the details of each transgression.

Rabbi Elozar provides the Scriptural source which teaches us that we shall not excessively dissuade him from converting. It is written [Rus 1:18]: *And when she (Naomi) saw that she (Rus) was steadfastly minded to go with her, she stopped speaking unto her.*

Naomi said to Rus: “It is forbidden to go beyond the *techum* boundary on Shabbos.” Rus replied: “Wherever you will go, I will go.” Naomi said: “We are not permitted to seclude ourselves with a forbidden member of the opposite gender.” Rus answered: “Wherever

you will lie, I will lie.” Naomi continued: “We are obligated to observe six hundred and thirteen mitzvos.” Rus responded: “Your nation is my nation.” Naomi persisted: “We are prohibited from practicing idolatry.” Rus replied: “Your God is my God.” Naomi argued: “There are four types of capital punishment administered by Beis Din.” Rus answered: “Wherever you die, I shall die.” Naomi said: “there are two different cemeteries given over to Beis Din.” Rus responded: “And there I will be buried.” At this point, Naomi realized that Rus truly wished to convert, and she stopped trying to discourage her. (47b)

The braisa had stated: If he accepts, we circumcise him immediately.

The Gemora explains: This is because we apply the principle that we do not delay the performance of a *mitzvah*. (47b)

The braisa had stated: When he heals, we immerse him immediately.

The Gemora asks: Why don't we immerse him before he is healed?

The Gemora answers: It is because water irritates a wound. (47b)

## **INSIGHTS TO THE DAF**

### **TEACHING TORAH TO A GENTILE PLANNING ON CONVERTING**

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.