

Daf Notes

Insights into the Daily Daf

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Sotah Daf 49

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Daily Daf

Rabbi Il'a bar Yeverechyah

Rabbi Il'a bar Yeverechyah said: If not for David's prayer, all of Israel would be rubbish sellers (*earning a precarious livelihood*), as it states: "Give them, Hashem, mastery."

Rabbi Il'a bar Yeverechyah said: If not for Chavakuk's prayer, two Torah scholars would be compelled to study Torah, covered by a single cloak (*on account of poverty*), as it states: "Hashem, I have heard the report of you and am afraid. Hashem, Your deed; in the midst of the years, revive it." Do not read it as *in the midst of the years*, but rather, *in the drawing together of two (the drawing together of two refers to two students sharing one garment as they are studying Torah)*.

Rabbi Il'a bar Yeverechyah said: If there are two Torah scholars traveling on the road and they are not discussing Torah, they deserve to be burned, as it states: *And as they (Eliyahu and Elisha) walked, walking and speaking, that behold, a chariot of fire appeared* etc. The reason why the chariot of fire passed between them and did not burn them was because there was a discussion of Torah between them; if there had not been such a discussion, they would have deserved to be burned.

Rabbi Il'a bar Yeverechyah said: If two Torah scholars reside in the same city and are not agreeable with each other in the study of *halacha (they do not argue peacefully)*, one dies and the other will be forced into exile, as it states (*referring to the city of refuge for one*

who killed accidentally): *that the killer might flee there, who killed his fellow without knowledge. And knowledge means nothing but Torah, as it states: My people are mute for lack of knowledge.*

Rabbi Yehudah the son of Rabbi Chiya said: Any Torah scholar who occupies himself with Torah in poverty will have his prayer heard, as it states: *For the people shall dwell in Zion, in Yerushalayim; You shall weep no more; He will surely be gracious to you at the sound of your cry; when He shall hear, He will answer you. And the passage continues: And Hashem will give you bread in adversity and water in affliction.*

Rabbi Avahu said: They shall also satisfy him from the splendor of the *Shechinah*, as it states: *And your eyes shall see your Teacher.*

Rabbi Acha bar Chanina said: Neither is the barrier locked before him, as it states: *And your teacher will no longer cloak himself.* (49a)

Kedushah of the Order and Kaddish

The *Mishna* had stated: From the day that the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed, there is no day without a curse.

Rava said: Each day's curse is more severe than the one preceding it, as it states: In the morning you shall say, "Would it were evening!", and in the evening you shall say, "Would it were morning!" Which morning were they longing for? If I say the morning of the

morrow, nobody knows what it will be (*why would he long for it!*)? Therefore, it must be referring to the morning which has passed (*for the curse will be worse than the day preceding it*).

The *Gemora* asks: How, in that case, can the world survive? It is through the *Kedushah of the Order* and the response of "May His great Name be blessed" which is recited after studying *Aggada*. [*The Kedushah of the Order is recited at the conclusion of the morning service which begins u'va l'tziyon and it consists of Scriptural verses from the Nevi'im and Shmos in Hebrew and Aramaic. It was designed according to Rashi to take the place of the daily study of the law which is enjoined upon every Jew. The kaddish, similarly, was recited after the public Aggadic lecture on Shabbos, when all people would be there, because it is forbidden to engage in any form of labor. Both of these prayers contain the sanctification of God's Name and the study of Torah. The world is maintained in the merit of these prayers.*] (49a)

Mishna

During the war of Vespasian (*against Yerushalayim*) they decreed a ban on the bridegrooms' wreaths and concerning the *iyrus* (*a musical instrument similar to a tambourine*). [*These decrees were enacted in order not to forget the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash.*] During the war of Titus they decreed a ban on the brides' wreaths, and that a man should not teach his son Greek. During the final war (*by Titus to destroy the Beis HaMikdash*) they decreed that a bride should not proceed into the city under a canopy (*because of modesty*). Our Rabbis, however, permitted a bride to proceed under a canopy inside the city.

When Rabbi Meir died, the composers of parables were no more. [*He would dedicate a third of his discourse to parables.*]

When ben Azzai died, there were no more diligent scholars. [*He refrained from getting married because it would prevent him somewhat from studying Torah.*]

When ben Zoma died, there were no more expounders. [*He interpreted a verse to convince the Chachamim that there is a mitzvah to remember the Exodus from Egypt even at night.*]

When Rabbi Akiva died, the glory of the Torah ceased. [*He would derive many halachos from the minute points of letters in the Torah. This demonstrates the glory of the Torah, in that it contains nothing trivial.*]

When Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa died, men of deed ceased. [*Rashi cites three incidents from the Gemora in Taanis 25a: 1) A woman neighbor of Rabbi Chanina was building a house but her beams did not reach far enough. She came before Rabbi Chanina and told him her situation. Rabbi Chanina asked her, "What is your name?" She responded, "Aiku." Rabbi Chanina blessed her that her beams should become long (Aiku can mean long). It was said that her beams protruded an amah on both sides and others say that pieces were conjoined with the beams so that they attained the required length. Plimo said that he witnessed this particular house and saw that the beams protruded an amah on each side. People told him that this is the house that Rabbi Chanina covered with beams through his tefillah. 2) One Friday night, Rabbi Chanina noticed his daughter in a despondent mood. Upon asking her what the trouble was, she replied: "I got the two vessels containing oil and vinegar mixed, and poured the latter into the Shabbos lamp and lit it." He said: "My daughter! Why should that trouble you? He who has ordained that oil should burn can also ordain that vinegar should burn." We have learned in a braisa that the vinegar in that lamp burned all night and all day, until some of it was used for the Havdalah prayer. 3) Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa had a few goats, and he was told that his goats caused damage to others. He said: "If my goats do damage, may wolves devour them; but if they do not, may they each bring a bear impaled upon their horns." That same evening, each goat brought in a bear mounted on its horns.]*

When Rabbi Yosi Katonta died, pious men ceased. And why was he called Katonta? It was because he was the least of the pious men.

When Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai died, the splendor of wisdom ceased. [*Rashi states that he does not know which what precisely the Mishna is referring to with this quality.*]

When Rabban Gamliel the Elder died, the glory of the Torah terminated and purity and abstinence perished. [*Rashi quotes the Gemora in Megillah 21a: From the days of Moshe until Rabban Gamliel, they would study*

Torah standing. Afterwards, people became weaker and they would study torah while sitting; they didn't have the strength to stand.]

When Rabbi Yishmael ben Pavi died, the splendor of the *Kehunah* ceased. [*He was wise and rich and many Kohanim ate at his table.*]

When Rebbe died, humility and fear of sin ceased.

(According to our text, the following is still part of the Mishna.) Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair said: Since the time that the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed, the *chaveirim* (*Torah scholars who observed the commandments scrupulously, carefully separated the tithes and ate their produce in ritual purity*) and noblemen were shamed and covered their heads, and men of deeds have become insignificant. But men of strength and men of the tongue (*slanderers*) prevailed, and nobody seeks and nobody intercedes, and nobody inquires. Upon whom can we rely? It is only upon our Father in Heaven!

Rabbi Eliezer the Great said: Since the day the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed, the scholars became like school teachers, and the school teachers like synagogue attendants, and the synagogue attendants like common people, and the common people grew poorer, and no one inquires and no one intercedes. Upon whom can we rely? It is only upon our Father in Heaven!

During the time preceding the coming of Mashiach, insolence will increase and prices will soar. The vine will yield its fruit but the wine will be costly (*for everyone will be partying*); and the government will turn to heresy and there will be no rebuke. The meeting house for the sages will be used immorality and Galilee will be destroyed and Gavlan will be desolate, and the people living on the border will wander about from city to city and will not be comforted. The wisdom of the scholars will degenerate, and those who fear sin will be despised, and truth will be absent. Young men will shame elders, and elders will rise before youngsters. *A son will scorn his father; a daughter will rise against her mother; a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; a man's enemies will be the members of his household.* The face of the generation will be like the face of a dog, a son will not be ashamed before his father. Upon whom

can we rely? It is only upon our Father in Heaven! (49a – 49b)

Decrees of the Mishna

Rav said: The ban against the use of a wreath applies only to one made of salt and sulfur; but, if they are made of myrtle or roses, it is permitted. Shmuel said: Also one made of myrtle or roses is prohibited; but, if it is made of reeds or rushes, it is permitted. Levi said: Also one made of reeds or rushes is prohibited. Similarly Levi taught in his *braisa*: It is also prohibited if made of reeds or rushes.

The *Mishna* had stated: They decreed a ban on the bridegrooms' wreaths and concerning the *iyrus*. Rabbi Elozar said: The *iyrus* is a drum with a single bell.

Rabbah bar Rav Huna made a tambourine for his son's wedding. His father came and broke it, saying that it might be confused for a drum with a single bell. Rather, he said, make for him an instrument by stretching the skin over the mouth of an urn or over the mouth of a pitcher.

The *Mishna* had stated: During the war of Titus they decreed a ban on the brides' wreaths. Rabbah bar Chanah in the name of Rabbi Yochanan explained this to be referring to a city of gold. A *braisa* stated similarly. The *braisa* concludes that one may make a cap for the bride made out of fine wool.

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: There was also a ban against canopies for the groom.

The canopies were crimson silk embroidered with gold. A *braisa* stated similarly. The *braisa* concludes that one may make a framework of reeds and hang on it anything one desires. (49b)

Teaching Greek

The *Mishna* had stated that a man should not teach his son Greek.

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: Two Hasmonean kings (*two brothers; Hyrkanos and Aristobolus*) fought each other. Aristobolus was inside Yerushalayim and Hyrkanos laid siege to it. Each day, the besieged

would lower *dinars* in a basket over the wall, and the besiegers would send up lambs for the daily offerings. There was, however, an elderly man there, who was well versed with Greek wisdom, who told them (*in a certain type of gesture-code*) that as long as the defenders engage in the sacrificial service, they will not be conquered. On the following day, they lowered the *dinars* once again to them in a bag, but this time, the besiegers sent up a pig, and when the pig reached halfway up the wall, it stuck its hoofs into the wall, and *Eretz Yisroel* shook over an area of four hundred *parsahs*. At that time they declared: Cursed be the man who rears pigs, and cursed be the man who teaches his son Greek wisdom.

The *braisa* concludes: Concerning that year we learned that the *omer* was supplied from Gaggos Tzerifim and the two loaves from the valley of Ein Socher.

The *Gemora* asks: Is it prohibited to teach Greek? But Rebbe said: Why use the Syrian language in the land of Israel? Either the Holy Tongue should be used, or the Greek language (*for it is a purer language*)! And Rav Yosef said: Why use the Aramaic language in Bavel? Either the Holy Tongue should be used, or Persian! [*We see that Rebbe wanted them to speak in the Greek language.*]

The *Gemora* answers: The Greek language and Greek wisdom are two different things.

The *Gemora* asks: But is Greek wisdom forbidden? But Rav Yehudah said in the name of Shmuel, who said in the name of Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel: There were a thousand young men in my father's house. Five hundred of them studied Torah and five hundred studied Greek wisdom, and of all of these, there only remained myself here and the son of my father's brother in Assia!

The *Gemora* answers: It was different with the household of Rabban Gamliel, because they had close associations with the Government. This answer is supported by a *braisa*. (49b)

Vanished Qualities

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: When Rabbi Eliezer died, the Torah scroll was hidden away (*he was able to*

recall every halachic detail as if it was written in a book).

When Rabbi Yehoshua died, counsel and thought ceased. [*He played a leading role in the fight against heathen attacks.*]

When Rabbi Akiva died, the arms of the Torah ceased and the fountains of wisdom were plugged.

When Rabbi Elozar ben Azariah died, the crowns of wisdom ceased, because the crown of the wise is their riches.

When Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa died, men of deed ceased.

When Abba Yosi the son of Katonta died, pious men ceased. And why was he called Katonta? It was because he was the least of the pious men.

When ben Azzai died, there were no more diligent scholars. [*He refrained from getting married because it would prevent him somewhat from studying Torah.*]

When ben Zoma died, there were no more expounders. [*He interpreted a verse to convince the Chachamim that there is a mitzvah to remember the Exodus from Egypt even at night.*]

When Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel died, locusts came up and troubles increased.

When Rebbe died, troubles increased dramatically.

The *Mishna* had stated: When Rebbe died, humility and fear of sin ceased.

Rav Yosef said: Do not say that humility ceased when Rebbe died, for there still is myself (*who is humble*).

Rav Nachman said: Do not say that fear of sin ceased when Rebbe died, for there still is myself. (49b)

WE SHALL RETURN TO YOU, EGLAH ARUFAH

AND TRACTATE SOTAH IS CONCLUDED

INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

PROPHECY COMPARED TO TORAH

Rabbi Il'a bar Yeverehyah said: If there are two Torah scholars traveling on the road and they are not discussing Torah, they deserve to be burned, as it states: *And as they (Eliyahu and Elisha) walked, walking and speaking, that behold, a chariot of fire appeared* etc. The reason why the chariot of fire passed between them and did not burn them was because there was a discussion of Torah between them; if there had not been such a discussion, they would have deserved to be burned.

The *Gemora* in Taanis (10b) cites a Scriptural verse where Yosef instructed his brothers not to discuss Torah on their way back from Egypt since they might become distracted and lose their way. The *Gemora* questions this from our *Gemora*. The *Gemora* answers that one should review his learning on the road since it will not require much attention; however he should not delve into Torah study since that will distract him.

Tosfos cites a Medrash that the reason the fire appeared and they deserved to be burned was because they were discussing worthless words at the time.

The Brisker Rav asks that the Metzudos explains the conversation that Elisha was having with Eliyahu at that time. Elisha asked Eliyahu that the spirit of prophecy should rest on him with a higher level than that of Eliyahu. Eliyahu answered him that under certain conditions, that will occur. It emerges that at the time that the fire appeared they were discussing matters that should be regarded as holy and not futile words. They were discussing how the Heavenly presence will rest on Elisha. For this, they deserved to be burned?

The Brisker Rav answers that that this discussion pales in comparison to a discussion regarding Torah. When traveling on the road, one must make sure that there is Torah discourse being discussed and not other matters even if those matters are dealing with the Shechina and Prophecy.

STANDING WHILE LEARNING

The *Mishna* had stated: When Rabban Gamliel the Elder died, the glory of the Torah terminated and purity and abstinence perished.

Rashi cites the *Gemora* in Megillah ((21a) which states that from the days of Moshe until Rabban Gamliel, they would study Torah standing. Afterwards, people became weaker and they would study Torah while sitting; they didn't have the strength to stand.

The *Gemora* in Brochos (28a) says that when Rabban Gamliel was the Rosh Yeshiva, his policy was that any student who was not "tocho c'baro," his inside was not like his outside, would not be allowed to enter the Beis Medrash. Not everyone who applied was automatically accepted into his Yeshiva. Rabban Gamliel only accepted students who were honest and sincere, through and through, without any hints of fakery or hypocrisy.

The *Gemora* relates that there was a subsequent change in the leadership and Rabbi Elozar ben Azariah was appointed the new Rosh Yeshiva. He implemented a new policy: Everyone was invited into the Beis Medrash even someone who was not "tocho c'baro." As a result, the *Gemora* records: Many benches were added to the Beis Medrash.

Two questions can be asked. Firstly, how were they able to ascertain who was a "tocho c'baro" and who wasn't; only Hashem is capable of peering into someone's heart? Secondly, why does the *Gemora* state that many benches were added; we are not interested in the amount of chairs there were; it should have said that there were many more students learning on the account of the new policy?

Rav Nosson Gishtetner answers based on our *Gemora*: In the days of Rabban Gamliel, the sincere students would be learning standing; that was a symbol that he was learning Torah for the sake of the mitzvah and not for any ulterior motive. When the new policy was enacted, more benches were added because the generation was weaker and they did not have the ability to stand while they were learning.