

Daf Notes

Insights into the Daily Daf

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Taanis Daf 2

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Daily Daf

TIME TO MENTION RAIN

➤ The Mishna begins by asking when is the time in the year that we begin to mention the Powers of Rain. [*This is referring to the "morid hageshem" that we recite in the second brocha of Shemoneh Esrei.*] Rabbi Eliezer maintains that we begin on the first day of Sukkos and Rabbi Yehoshua holds that we begin on the last day of Sukkos. Rabbi Yehoshua asked Rabbi Eliezer that it is not proper to mention rain during Sukkos when rain is regarded as a curse (since there is no obligation to sit in a sukkah during the rain). Rabbi Eliezer responded that this is why rain is only mentioned on Sukkos but we do not ask for rain.

Rabbi Yehuda rules that we begin mentioning the Powers of Rain on Shmini Atzeres (the last day of Sukkos). The chazzan for Shacharis does not mention it but the chazzan for Mussaf does. We cease to mention the Powers of Rain on the first day of Pesach. The chazzan for Shacharis does mention it but the chazzan for Mussaf does not. (2a)

POWER OF RAIN

➤ The Gemora elaborates on why this addition that we mention is referred to as the Powers of Rain. The Gemora cites verses that compare the Creation of the World and rain. Just like the Creation indicates Hashem's power, so too power is associated with rain. [*The Gemora states that rain descends by Hashem's power. The Perisha (114) writes that the second brocha of Shemoneh Esrei begins with the word 'gibor,' strength, so too it was instituted to mention rain in this brocha with a language of strength and power.*] (2a)

HASHEM'S KEYS

➤ Rabbi Yochanan states that there are three keys that Hashem does not delegate to the hands of an agent. They are the key to rain, the key for childbirth and the key for reviving the dead. The Gemora cites Scriptural sources which indicate that these three matters are not entrusted to a messenger but rather are administered by Hashem Himself. In Eretz Yisroel they added that Hashem does not give over the key for sustenance either. Rabbi Yochanan did not incorporate this in his listing because

it is included in the key for rain since rain provides basic sustenance. (2a – 2b)

WHEN TO BEGIN – BY NIGHT OR BY DAY?

➤ Rabbi Eliezer maintains that we begin mentioning rain on the first day of Sukkos. The Gemora inquires if we begin on the first night of Sukkos or during the daytime on the first day. This depends on where Rabbi Eliezer learned that the time to begin mentioning rain is the first day of Sukkos. If he derived it from the mitzva of lulav (which begins on the first day of Sukkos), we can say that just like the mitzva of lulav begins by day, so too the mentioning of rain begins by day. Perhaps he learns from the water-libation service (which begins on the first day of Sukkos), and just like that can be performed even at night, so too the mentioning of rain begins at night. Rav Avahu cites a braisa which explicitly states that Rabbi Eliezer derived the designated time for mentioning rain from the mitzva of lulav. This would indicate that we begin mentioning rain during the daytime and not at night.(2b)

WHICH DAY SHOULD WE BEGIN?

➤ The Gemora cites a braisa which discusses several different opinions regarding the correct date to begin mentioning rain. Rabbi Eliezer states that we begin on the first day of Sukkos and this is derived from the mitzva of taking the lulav. Rabbi Yehoshua maintains that we begin mentioning rain on Shmini Atzeres, the day after we put down the lulav. Rabbi Eliezer explained his opinion by saying that just like the lulav and the other species are taken in order to beseech from Hashem to issue a

positive judgment regarding water and just like these four species cannot grow without water, so too the entire world cannot survive without water. This would indicate that we should begin to mention rain on the first day of Sukkos corresponding to the day in which we begin to take the lulav.

Rabbi Yehoshua asked Rabbi Eliezer that it is not proper to mention rain during Sukkos when rain is regarded as a curse (since there is no obligation to sit in a sukkah during the rain). Rabbi Eliezer responded that this is why rain is only mentioned on Sukkos but we do not ask for rain. Rabbi Eliezer proves that it is fitting to mention rain even prior to its appropriate season from the fact that we constantly mention the Resurrection of the Dead even though it will only happen in its proper time. Rabbi Yehoshua countered that the Resurrection of the Dead can be mentioned all year since every day can potentially be its suitable time.

Rabbi Yehuda ben Beseira maintains that we begin mentioning rain on the second day of Sukkos. Rabbi Akiva rules that we begin on the sixth day of Sukkos. Rabbi Yehuda said in the name of Rabbi Yehoshua that we begin mentioning the Powers of Rain on Shmini Atzeres (the last day of Sukkos). (2b)

INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

HASHEM'S KEYS

➤ Rabbi Yochanan states that there are three keys that Hashem does not delegate to the hands of an agent. They are the key to rain, the key for childbirth and the key for reviving the dead.

The commentators ask from the tefillah which we recite on Shmini Atzeres when we say that Af-Bri is the name of the Heavenly angel who is appointed over the rain clouds.

The Gemora in the third perek (25b) cites Rabbah who said that he saw an image of the angel Ridya who is the angel placed in charge of rain (Rashi).

Tosfos in Niddah (16b) answers that the angel Af-Bri can only accomplish his mission with the permission of Hashem.

One can infer from Tosfos that the other emissaries of Hashem do not require His permission before performing their task. Mishna L'melech in his sefer Perashas Derochim (21) asks on Tosfos that is it possible to say that Yurkani, the angel appointed on hail and Gavriel, the angel placed in charge of fire can perform their mission without permission being granted from Hashem. There is nothing in this world that can function without Hashem's authorization.

The Peri Megadim in Mishbitzos Zahav (114:9) explains that all matters are given over to an intermediary and Hashem's supervision is constantly upon them. The exception is regarding rain where Hashem did not give over this responsibility to a messenger at all. When Hashem decides to give rain, He instructs Af-Bri to carry out His will.

Sfas Emes writes that Hashem Himself opens and closes the storeroom of rain and after they are opened, permission is granted to Af-Bri to cause the rain.

The Perashas Derachim answers based on a braisa cited later in the perek (10a). The braisa states that Eretz Yisroel is watered personally by Hashem but the remainder of the world is watered by Hashem's messenger. Our Gemora is referring to the rain in Eretz Yisroel which is administered solely by Hashem. The angel Ridya and Af-Bri are appointed on the rainfall of all the rest of the world.

The Chidah in his sefer Pesach Einayim answers that while Hashem gives the rain, the angels distribute it to different places. The Tosfos HaRosh in Niddah seems to say similar to this.

The Maharsha answers based on Rashi that our Gemora means that the three keys were never given together to one messenger but they could have been given one at a time. This would answer a question that Tosfos asks. Tosfos cites a Gemora in Sanhedrin (113a) where the Gemora records an incident that Eliyahu was given over the keys for rain and for reviving the dead. According to Rashi, this is not difficult since our Gemora means that all three keys were not given over to the same messenger at the same time.

The Raavad answers Tosfos' question by stating that Eliyahu was not handed the keys to bring forth rain, rather he was given the key to prevent the rain from coming.

The Gemora in Taanis (2a) refers to prayer as "the Divine Service of the heart." The laws concerning the daily prayers are often derived from those which govern the offering of the sacrifices in the Beis HaMikdash. If so, where do we find in our prayers a parallel to the requirement that every sacrifice be accompanied by salt?

Rav Moshe Meir Weiss quotes a beautiful answer that he once heard from a Mr. Levinger. He posited that our heartfelt, salty tears are intended to correspond to the sacrifices, while noting that the Torah requires this "salt" to be brought together with every single offering!

<http://www.shemayisrael.co.il/parsha/alport/archives/vayikra67.htm>