

Daf Notes

Insights into the Daily Daf

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Taanis Daf 31

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Daily Daf

The Mishna had stated in the name of Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel: There were no holidays for Israel as the fifteenth of Av and as Yom Kippur. The Gemora asks that it is understandable that the Day of Atonement should be a day of rejoicing, because that is a day of forgiveness, and on that day the Second Tablets of the Ten Commandments were given to Moshe. However, why should the fifteenth of Av be considered a day of rejoicing?

The Gemora offers several different explanations for this.

Rav Yehuda answers in the name of Shmuel: On that day permission was granted to the members of the different tribes to intermarry. (*There was a prohibition applicable only to the generation who entered Eretz Yisroel with Yehoshua. The reasoning for this was out of concern regarding a woman's property transferring to her husband's tribe after she dies.*)

Rav Yosef answered in the name of Rav Nachman: On that day the members of the tribe of Binyamin were permitted to intermarry with the other tribes. (*There was a prohibition applicable only to the people who took an oath not to give their daughters in marriage to a man*

from Binyomin due to the episode of the concubine of Givah.)

Rabbah bar bar Chanah answers in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: This was the day that the last of those who were destined to die in the desert died and that was when Hashem returned to speak to Moshe.

Rashi cites the words of Chazal which are found in the Yerushalmi and the Medrashim in Eichah. Rabbi Levi said: Each year on the eve of Tishah b'Av, an announcement would be sent throughout the camp, saying: "Go out and dig graves, go out and dig graves." The people would go out and dig graves and sleep in them. In the morning it would be announced to separate the dead from the living. They would arise and find their number diminished. In the last of the forty years, they did this but found themselves undiminished. They said; we must have made a mistake in counting. Could it be that the Elders had miscalculated the beginning of the month through a mistaken sighting of the new moon? They did the same thing on the tenth, eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth, but still no one died. When the moon was full, they said; it seems that the Holy One has annulled the decree from all of us, so

they made the fifteenth a holiday. They rejoiced at the realization that their entry to Eretz Yisroel was imminent. It was at that time that prophecy returned to Moshe.

Ula answers: This was the day that the sentries appointed by Yeravam to prevent the Jewish people from coming to Yerushalayim were abolished by Hoshea the son of Elah, and he said: "Let them go wherever they choose."

Rav Masneh answers: This was the day that permission was granted to bury the dead who were killed in battle at the city of Betar. Rav Masneh stated further: On that day, when it was permitted to bury those killed at Betar, the Sages in Yavneh ordained the fourth blessing in Birchas Hamazon: "Who is good and Who confers good." What is the meaning in these words? By 'good' is meant that the bodies were not left to putrefy, and by 'confers good' that burial was permitted.

Rabbah and Rav Yosef both said: This was the day they ceased to cut wood for the mizbeach, as we have learned in a braisa: Rabbi Eliezer the Great said: From the fifteenth day of Av and onward the heat of the sun was lessened and the timber was no longer dry, so they ceased to cut wood for the mizbeach.

From that day on, he who increases his hours of Torah-study as the night grows longer will add years and days to his life. One who does not will die early. (*This is because the days begin to shorten at that time and one must use the time at night to make up for the time lost during the day.*) (30b – 31a)

The Mishna had stated that on the fifteenth of Av the daughters of Yerushalayim would go forth in borrowed white garments, so as not to embarrass whoever does not have and they would go forth and dance in the vineyards. And

what would they say? "Young man, lift up your eyes and see what you choose for yourself. Do not set your eyes on beauty, set your eyes on the family.

The Gemora cites a braisa which elaborates on the Mishna. The braisa states: The king's daughter borrowed from the daughter of the Kohen Gadol; the daughter of the Kohen Gadol would borrow from the daughter of the assistant to the Kohen Gadol; the assistant to the Kohen Gadol's daughter would borrow from the daughter of the Kohen anointed for the war; and the daughter of the Kohen anointed for the war would borrow from the daughter of an ordinary Kohen. The daughters of the ordinary Israelites would borrow one from the other, in order that a poor girl without pretty clothes would not be embarrassed. (31a)

We learned in a braisa: The pretty ones among the maidens would say: "Pay attention to beauty alone, because a woman is made only for beauty." Those among them who were from a distinguished family would say: "Look to a distinguished family for women are but made to bear children." The homely ones among them would say: "Make your selections only for the glory of Heaven, but provide us with gold jewelry and pretty clothes."

Ula Bira'ah said in the name of Rabbi Elozar: In the future, Hashem will make a ring of the righteous people, and He will sit among them in the garden of Eden, and they all will point with their finger towards Him, as it is written: "And men will say on that day, Behold, this is our God; we hoped to Him and He saved us; this is Hashem for whom we have hoped; we will be glad and we will rejoice in His salvation." (31a)

**WE SHALL RETURN TO YOU,
BISHLOSHAH PERAKIM
AND TRACTATE TAANIS IS INCLUDED**

INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

CALCULATIONS OF DEATHS

➤ Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel said: There were no holidays for Israel like the 15th of Av and Yom Kippur. The Gemora offers several reasons for the celebration on the fifteenth of Av. Rabbah bar bar Chanah states in the name of Rabbi Yochanan that this was the day that the last of those who were destined to die in the desert died and that was when Hashem returned to speak to Moshe.

Rashi cites the words of Chazal which are found in the Yerushalmi and the Medrashim in Eichah. Rabbi Levi said: Each year on the eve of Tishah b'Av, Moshe would send an announcement throughout the camp, saying: "Go out and dig graves, go out and dig graves." The people would go out and dig graves and sleep in them. In the morning it would be announced to separate the dead from the living. They would arise and find their number diminished. In the last of the forty years, they did this but found themselves undiminished. They said; we must have made a mistake in counting. Could it be that the Elders had miscalculated the beginning of the month through a mistaken sighting of the new moon? They did the same thing on the tenth, eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth, but still no one died. When the moon was full, they said; it seems that the Holy One has annulled the decree from all of us, so they made the fifteenth a holiday. They rejoiced at the realization that their entry to Eretz Yisroel was imminent. It was at that time that prophecy returned to Moshe.

Tosfos in Bava Basra (121a) asks that according to this, they cease to die on the ninth

of Av preceding the last year. Why wasn't the prophecy returned to Moshe from that year? He answers that since they were still under the impression that the following year, there once again will be thousands of deaths; they were still in a state of sadness and the Shechina does not rest on one who is not happy. It wasn't until the fifteenth of Av when they came to the realization that there will be no more deaths; that brought about joy and the Shechina came down to Moshe.

Tosfos states that every year there would be a little more than twenty-one thousand deaths. The deaths over twenty-one thousand totaled fifteen thousand over the duration of the forty years.

The Maharsha and other commentators ask on Tosfos that there were 603,000 people who came out of Mitzrayim and according to Tosfos, if you make the calculation, it would emerge that over the course of forty years, there will be over eight-hundred thousand deaths.

The Chavos Yair (250) cites from Harav Dovid Oppenheim who explains that any year that Tisha b'Av occurred on Shabbos; there would be no deaths. According to the calendar, it would emerge that there were nine times that this occurred in the Wilderness. It emerges that there were only twenty-eight years that the Bnei Yisroel would die. Multiply twenty-one thousand times twenty-eight and that will total five-hundred and eighty eight thousand. The numbers more than twenty-one thousand, over the course of the forty years equaled fifteen thousand and that is how the 603,000 people died.

TZADIKIM IN A CIRCLE

➤ Ula Bira'ah said in the name of Rabbi Elozar: In the future, Hashem will make a ring of the righteous people, and He will sit among them in the garden of Eden, and they all will point with their finger towards Him, as it is written: "And men will say on that day, Behold, this is our God; we hoped to Him and He saved us; this is Hashem for whom we have hoped; we will be glad and we will rejoice in His salvation."

Reb Leibel Eiger cites his grandfather, Rabbi Akiva Eiger explaining this Gemora. Every Tzadik serves Hashem in his own distinct way. In the future, it will become revealed that each of their unique approaches in serving Hashem is actually one. This is the explanation in the Gemora when it states that they will all dance in a circle. All points on a circle are the same distance from the center of the circle. Each and every Tzadik is the same distance from Hashem. Although in this world, it might have appeared as if each Tzadik was traveling on a different road and they would all reach a different destination, this is not the case. This idea is also brought from the Maharal.

UGLY IS BEAUTIFUL

Contributed by Rabbi Carr

➤ We learned in a braisa: The pretty ones among the maidens would say: "Pay attention to beauty alone, because a woman is made only for beauty." Those among them who were from a distinguished family would say: "Look to a distinguished family for women are but made to bear children." The homely ones among them would say: "Make your selections

only for the glory of Heaven, but provide us with gold jewelry and pretty clothes."

It appears to be very strange to end the Gemora on a "bad" note. First, since when are any Jewish maidens "ugly"? Chazal tell all Jewish girls are beautiful. Second, even if you want to say this, Chazal also tell to say everything using a "clean" language (i.e. if something is not kosher you don't say its tama but instead say it isn't tahor, even if this uses more words and its a longer expression). Therefore, the Gemora should say the maidens are not beautiful. Third, why does the braisa start with the beautiful maidens? Is beauty the best attribute? Is it even better than distinguished lineage? Fourth, why does the Gemora suggest that one should adorn the "ugly girls with gold jewelry and make that a necessary condition to the marriage. Do only ugly girls get jewelry? Why is it a necessary condition?

I would like to suggest, therefore, an allegorical interpretation. The Gemora is talking about three types of people that you should look for in a shidduch. The first type is beautiful persons. Beauty refers to mitzvahs. Girls are beautiful in their mitzvos. They have no sins. These are your first choice. Next, are the distinguished ones that have some sins but have z'chus avos to help them and their family learn the proper path to follow. The third level is Balai Teshuva, who have their sins from the past. It's the sins that make them appear ugly. However they do Teshuva out of love and turn the sins into mitzvahs. These maidens remind us that they did Teshuva for the sake of heaven. Their former sins are turned into golden jewelry. Perhaps these last girls are, in fact, the best and the Gemora saved the last for best (Based on Sefer r'sisay lalah 63)