

OVERVIEW of the Daf

1) The power of teshuvah (cont.)

The Gemara notes that whether an individual's decree can be changed is a dispute between Tannaim.

The assertion that a decree against the community can be overturned is unsuccessfully challenged.

Rava and Abaye explain that although the decree against Eli HaKohen's house could not be overturned, nevertheless, it could be stalled.

This assertion is supported from the lives of Rabbah and Abaye as well as an account recorded in a Baraisa.

The Gemara teaches that the decree against a tzibbur can be ripped up even if it was sealed, as opposed to the decree of an individual.

The exception to the rule for the individual is the ten days between Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur.

A related discussion is recorded.

2) Passing before Hashem like בני מרון

Three explanations of the phrase בני מרון are presented.

Rabbah bar bar Channah in the name of R' Yochanan teaches that Hashem examines everyone in one glance.

R' Nachman bar Yitzchok expresses a similar concept.

3) **MISHNAH:** The Mishnah enumerates when messengers were sent out to inform the people when Rosh Chodesh was declared.

4) Sending out messengers

The Gemara asserts that messengers should be sent out for Tamuz and Teves since there are fast days during these months, based on the Gemara's initial understanding of the relevant pesukim.

R' Pappa reinterprets the pasuk so that the fast days that occur during those months are not obligatory.

A Baraisa cites R' Shimon's statement that he disagreed with R' Akiva about four things and one of them was the interpretation of the earlier cited pasuk.

5) Megillas Ta'anis

Rav and R' Chanina maintain that celebrations of the holidays listed in Megillas Ta'anis were nullified, whereas R' Yochanan and R' Yehoshua ben Levi disagree.

The rationale behind each position is explained.

Rav and R' Chanina's position is unsuccessfully challenged. ■

Distinctive INSIGHT

The ten days of teshuvah at the "head" of the year

דרשו ה' בהמצאו—אלו עשרה ימים שבין ראש השנה ליום הכיפורים

The "head" of the year is compared to the "head" of a person. In it we find the brain, the center of all senses, movements and feelings. The head of the year must be a time when the movements and sensitivities of the year are put into motion. This is a moment when simple gestures are met with acceptance. "Seek out Hashem when He is to be found; call to Him when He is close." (Yeshayahu 55:6) When the beginning of the year is filled with warmth, caring and concern for oneself and all of Klal Yisrael, then the rest of the year will be filled with warmth and devotion. This enthusiasm and fervor which one absorbs during these propitious days can provide a person with the needed drive to last an entire year. If, however, one spends his Rosh HaShanah in a state of distraction and confusion, then this cool mood can, unfortunately, carry over and lead to a bland and meaningless year.

The year begins with prayers and supplications, teshuvah and good deeds. If this beginning is sincere and performed in earnest, it leads to a situation where the balance of the year can be expected to be meaningful and successful. Earlier, the Gemara (16b) pointed out that the sounding of the Shofar and the teshuvah evoked through its blasts are essential in guaranteeing that a year is filled with blessing. Finally, the Midrash (Bereshis Raba 140:7) reports that if Rosh HaShanah is warm, then the entire year will be warm. If Rosh HaShanah is cold, then the entire year will be cold.

The person has a momentous responsibility to make decisions which are fundamental and proper. These decisions will guide and direct him from the outset. The head of a person is a controlling force of the body. So, too, the "head" of the year is where the spiritual destiny of the entire year is determined. ■

Today's Daf Digest is dedicated by the Okner family

In loving memory of their mother

Mrs. Anne Okner o.b.m

מרת חנה בת ר' שמשון ושרה, ע"ה

HALACHAH Highlight

Writing God's name where it may be treated with disrespect
 וכששמעו חכמים בדבר אמרו למחר זה פורע את חובו ונמצא שטר
 מוטל באשפה וביטלום ואותו היום עשאוהו יום טוב

When the Chachamim heard about this matter (of including God's name in contracts) they said: "Tomorrow this person will pay off his debt and the contract will be found lying in the garbage" so they discontinued the practice and on that day (they succeeded at discontinuing the practice) they made a Yom Tov.

There was a custom that was widely practiced for people to keep in their siddur a piece of parchment which was called Shivisi. The parchment had the design of a decorative menorah and on the menorah the pasuk, **שׁוֹיֵתִי ה' לנגדי תמיד** was inscribed with God's full name written out (י-ה-ו-ה). The purpose of the Shivisi was to have a visual reminder to deter talking during davening because of the awe the Shivisi would inspire. Shaarei Teshuvah¹ cites the righteous Rav Zalman Lukower who strongly opposed the custom and production of these Shivisi parchments. The primary opposition is the disrespect that resulted to God's name. People did not treat these parchments with the necessary respect due something with God's name on it and it was not uncommon to find them on the floor. Rav Lukower cites our Gemara, that a Yom Tov was made when they succeeded in removing God's name from contracts. Consistent with that line of reasoning the custom of Shivisi parchments should be discontinued².

STORIES Off the Daf

The power of Chessed

אמר רבא בזבח ובמנחה אינו מתכפר אבל
 מתכפר בתורה אביי אמר בזבח ומנחה אינו
 מתכפר אבל מתכפר בתורה ובגמילות חסדים

On today's daf we see that even after a heavenly decree has been sealed, it can still be ameliorated by Torah study and acts of charity. Our Gemara recounts that Rava, who was descended from Eli HaKohen's family studied Torah and lived forty years. Abaye, too, descended from that family, but he studied Torah and also practiced charity, and lived sixty years.

One of the bigger masmidim of the yeshiva of the Chofetz Chaim, zt"l, in

Radin, was known to be especially careful with every second of his time. His learning schedule was famously intense, he hardly slept, and barely took any time for his own needs. Because he was so regimented about his learning time, however, he really had no time for doing chessed in the yeshiva or the community.

"Talmud Torah kinaged kulam," he would tell himself. "How can I take time for anything else but my studies?"

One day, the Chofetz Chaim summoned him. The gadol said, "I really think that you should devote some time to run a certain gemach that needs a good administrator."

"But, Rebbi," the young man protested, "How can I possibly take time out for this? Even if you were to say that I could deal with it bein ha'sedarim or on

Fridays, this would be meaningless to me. All of my time is taken up by my learning—for me there is no such thing as bein ha'sedarim!"

He went on, "Won't I be held accountable in the next world for all that wasted time? Won't I be punished for accomplishing less in my studies than I might have?"

The Chofetz Chaim smiled and said, "You are forgetting the Gemara on Rosh HaShanah 18a. Although there was an actual heavenly decree that shortened the lives of the descendants of Eli HaKohen, Rava studied Torah and lived forty years. Even though Abaye was also from that line, we find something different about his case. He studied Torah and also practiced charity, and so he lived sixty years!" ■

REVIEW and Remember

1. Can the decree against a community be torn up?

2. What are the different meanings of the phrase **כבני מרון**?

3. How do we see that the death of tzadikim is equivalent to the burning of Hashem's house?

4. What is Megillas Ta'anis?

Shaarei Teshuvah writes that those Shivisi parchments that are affixed to the wall of shul or to the lectern where the chazan stands, beneath a glass frame for protection, are not a concern since they are protected and there is not a concern that they will be mishandled. The objection was against those that were used by individuals that would end up being mistreated. Accordingly, Rav Yitzchok Yaakov Weiss³, the Minchas Yitzchok, opposed the practice of writing Hashem's name or pesukim on tzedakah boxes, since they often remain within people's home and are not treated with proper respect when they are no longer needed. ■

1. שערי תשובה סי' א' סק"ו
2. ע"ש שמביא דעת בעל התבואות שור שכאמר במליצבתו "אם לא שוייתי ודוממת" (תהילים קלא: כב) ל שיוכל לגדור שידום ולא ישיח בעת התפילה אף בלי השוייתי
3. שו"ת מנחת יצחק ח"ח סע' פ"ז ■

