

OVERVIEW of the Daf

1) Bilaam ben Beor (cont.)

R' Shmuel bar Nachmani in the name of R' Yonason concludes contrasting the curses of Achiyah HaShiloni with the blessings of Bilaam.

The Gemara expounds on the end of Bilaam's prophecy to Balak.

The details of Bilaam's advice are explained.

Three disputes between R' Eliezer and R' Yehoshua are presented, two relate to the incident with the Moabite women and the third is related to the place named Refidim.

R' Yochanan teaches that the term **וישב** is used to introduce something that will be distressful.

The Gemara begins to discuss Bilaam's death.

Bilaam's transition from a prophet to a sorcerer is described.

R' Chanina and a heretic have a discussion regarding Bilam's age at death.

Mar the son of Ravina instructed his son that Bilaam is the only one of those listed in the Mishnah as not having a share in the World-to-Come about whom he should search in pesukim for additional negative traits.

2) Doeg

R' Yochanan explains why sometimes Doeg is spelled with an "א" and other times with a "ג".

Six expositions of R' Yitzchok are presented that relate to Doeg.

R' Ami gives an example of the extent of Doeg's Torah wisdom.

Rava questions whether this example is a true example of scholarship.

Further discussion regarding the scholarship of Doeg

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Gemara GEM

Measure for measure—for reward and for retribution

שלשה היו באותה עצה אלו הן בלעם איוב ויתרו, בלעם שיעץ נהרג איוב ששתק נידון ביסורין ויתרו שברח זכו בני בניו לישב בלשכת הגזית

The rule of reward and punishment is that a person is dealt with in the same manner in which he acts. The Gemara (Sanhedrin 100a) tells us that if a person distributes charity with an open hand, Hashem delivers more resources to him with a generous and open hand. Punishments are handled in a similar vein. A woman who acts as a sota, being disloyal to her husband, adorned herself for sin. Accordingly, part of her punishment is that she is disgraced (see Gemara Sota 8b). Shimshon followed his eyes as he pursued Delilah, so the Plishtim later blinded him (ibid. 9b). These are just a few of many examples.

Our Gemara teaches us that Pharaoh summoned three advisors to seek their counsel regarding his "Jewish problem." Bilaam advised Pharaoh to deal harshly with Bnei Yisrael, Iyov remained silent, and Yisro ran away.

The punishment of Bilaam appears to be appropriate using the guideline of measure for measure. Bilaam advised that the helpless babies of the Jews be killed, and he was ultimately killed by the sword. Yisro was rewarded according to his efforts. He was willing to forfeit his prestigious position of honor and authority, as he decided to present the unpopular advice to Pharaoh to spare the Jewish children. He was forced to flee, having lost favor as a royal confidant. As a result, our Gemara reports that he was rewarded with the honor of having his descendants sit as illustrious members of the Sanhedrin.

Let us analyze the situation of Iyov. He wanted to advise against having the children killed, but he calculated to use a strategy of silence in order to remain an effective spokesman and to be available to speak up at a later occasion to save the Jews, if necessary. Why, then, was he punished, and why with personal suffering?

Maran HaGri"z explains that as Iyov suffered the agony of his afflictions, he cried out. He must have wondered, "What is the purpose of my cries? Does it help at all when I moan and wail? The pain is the same after I call out as before!" Yet, the fact is that when one is experiencing pain, he calls out, whether or not his screams will have a noticeable effect. At the moment when one is experiencing an intolerable condition, it is not a time to calculate nor to plan strategy. Iyov must have then learned his lesson. When Pharaoh considered the decree to have the children tossed into the Nile, Iyov certainly should have cried out and not remained silent. The fact that he was able to remain silent directly led to his having to suffer personal torment and pain, for this is the way in which he learned his lesson, measure for measure. ■

REVIEW and Remember

1. Who were Pharaoh's three advisors and what was their advice?

2. What does the term **וישב** signify?

3. Why is Doeg's name spelled in different ways?

4. What was the nature of the relationship between Dovid HaMelech and Achitofel?

HALACHAH Highlight

Writing a Sefer Torah with a gold pen

ולא עוד אלא שזכה קנה ליטול ממנו קולמוס לכתוב ממנו ספרי תורה נביאים וכתובים

Moreover, the reed merited to be used as the pen for writing books of Torah, Nevi'im and Kesuvim

Rema¹ writes that there are opinions that maintain that a Sefer Torah should be written specifically with a reed pen rather than a feather. Vilna Gaon² suggests that this position is based on our Gemara that indicates that the reed merited to be the writing instrument used for Scripture. Levush³ suggests that a feather should not be used since it scratches and engraves in the parchment and a Sefer Torah requires the letters to be written rather than engraved. He adds that common custom does not follow this stringency. Aruch HaShulchan⁴ explains that the language of the Gemara does not indicate that it is obligatory to write a Sefer Torah with a reed pen just that there was a custom to do so. Furthermore, Masseches Sofrim elaborates on the halachos of writing a Sefer Torah and it does not mention a preference regarding the instrument used to write a Sefer Torah. Nowadays, Aruch HaShulchan continues, reed pens are not used since they are not good quality writing instruments and Sifrei Torah are written with a feather from a kosher bird. He adds that a metal pen should not be used for writing a Sefer Torah. One reason is that a metal pen scratches

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and Achatofel are presented.

R' Ami and R' Ashi discuss Doeg's downfall.

Four statements of R' Yochanan concerning Doeg and Achatofel are recorded.

A Beraisa is cited in support of one of these statements. ■

into the parchment. A second reason is that a Sefer Torah and metal are not compatible with one another since a Sefer Torah extends life and metal characteristically shortens life.

Sefer Bnai Yonah⁵ discusses why, in his region, reed pens were not used and then proceeds to write that the custom is to use metal pens and rejects all the opposition that other Poskim had to the use of a metal pen. He considers it to be a new decree based on farfetched concerns. He concludes that one should not protest against a scribe who uses a metal pen and that he wrote a Sefer Torah using a metal pen. Shevet Halevi⁶ writes that nowadays one could be lenient and use a gold pen if writing with a reed is difficult. Metal pens nowadays do not scratch the parchment and it is only iron that shortens life but gold and silver do not. ■

1. רמ"א יו"ד סי' רע"א סעי' ז'.
2. ביאור הגר"א שם אות כ"ג.
3. לבוש שם סעי' ז'.
4. ערוה"ש שם סעי' ל"ח.
5. ספר בני יונה סי' רע"א י"ד.
6. שו"ת שבט הלוי ח"ב סי' קל"ו. ■

STORIES Off the Daf

True empathy

"איוב ששתק נידון ביסורין..."

During one of the conventions of the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah around the year תשי"ב, the gedolim wondered what to do about the terrible decrees of Stalin against the Jewish people in the Soviet Union. Should they organize a protest outside the Russian consulate in the United States? Or would it be wiser to just try to help their unfortunate brethren as quietly as possible? After all, any protest could potentially be harmful for Jews under Soviet rule.

Rav Aharon Kotler, zt"l, and Rav

Moshe Feinstein, zt"l, the Boyaner rebbe, zt"l, and the Kopitzhnitzer Rebbe were among those who felt that vigorous protest was the proper path to take. Most delegates disagreed. Suddenly, the Bluzh-iver Rebbe, zt"l, got up and explained why they were obligated to protest despite knowing that their protest will be ignored. "In Sanhedrin 106 we find that Pharaoh consulted with three advisors about his plan to persecute the Jews: Bilaam, Yisro, and Iyov. Bilaam concurred with Pharaoh's vision and was killed for it. Yisro ran away and merited that his descendants sat in the Lishkas Hagazis. Iyov remained silent and endured suffering.

"We may well ask what the connection is between Iyov's silence and his

suffering. Are we not taught that Hashem punishes measure for measure? The answer is that Iyov—like Yisro—knew that Pharaoh should be stopped. He refrained from protesting because he was sure that any protest would be in vain. Hashem judged him with suffering to show him that if one truly suffers he cries out even though he knows that his cries are futile. He cries out because it hurts, without a thought of whether this will help. This taught Iyov that if one sees suffering and he does not cry out, this shows that it does not hurt him. If he was in pain over the other's trouble, a cry would burst out with no conscious thought at all."¹ ■

1. לעד בבני ישראל, ע"פ 92. ■