

OVERVIEW of the Daf

1) Moshe's burial (cont.)

The Gemara continues its description of Moshe's burial.

A brief comment regarding the location of Moshe's grave is recorded.

An exposition related to following Hashem's ways is presented which makes mention of Hashem's burying Moshe Rabbeinu.

Tangentially the Gemara offers two explanations of the **כתנות עור** Hashem made for Adam and Chava.

Two teachings related to Moshe Rabbeinu are cited.

הדרן עלך המקנא לאשתו

2) **MISHNAH:** The Mishnah continues to describe the sotah ritual and explains the difference between the sotah's Korban Mincha and other Korban Minchas. R' Gamliel explains why the sotah offers her Korban Mincha from barley.

3) Hashem's concern

A Baraisa elaborates on the part of the Mishnah that teaches that Hashem is concerned that the sotah should not die and makes a general comment about Hashem's concern for people.

This teaching is unsuccessfully challenged.

4) Ministering utensils

A contradiction between our Mishnah and a Baraisa concerning what type of utensil was used to transport the flour for the Minchas Sotah is presented.

R' Pappa resolves the contradiction.

It is suggested that one can infer from this discussion that ministering utensils may not be made from wood.

This inference is rejected.

The Gemara provides additional details and sources for statements made in the Baraisa that describes the procedure for offering the Minchas Sotah.

Distinctive INSIGHT

Hashem visits the sick

הקב"ה ביקר חולים דכתיב וירא אליו ה' באלוני ממרא, אף אתה בקר חולים

When a person becomes ill, it is a mitzvah for others to visit him. Indeed, we find that Hashem Himself visited the sick when He "appeared to him (Avraham) in Eilonei Mamre." (Bereshis 18:1) Our Gemara explains that He came to visit the sick.

The fundamental intent of visiting the sick is to concern oneself with the sick person's needs, to do anything that is necessary for him, and to lift up his spirits. It is also a mitzvah to appeal to Hashem for mercy on his behalf. When one requests mercy for a sick person in the presence of the one who is ill, he may phrase the request in any language he desires, for he is putting his request before the Shechina that rests upon the sick person. One should make the request on behalf of all the sick of Israel, for by including the individual together with many others, their collective merit will cause one's prayers to be more favorably accepted. One should say, "May the Omnipresent have mercy upon you among the other sick people of Israel."

On Shabbos, one should say, "It is Shabbos, when it is forbidden to plead. Healing will come soon. Hashem's mercies are abundant. May your Shabbos be peaceful."

People who visit a person who is ill should speak to him with thoughtfulness and understanding. They should not tell him things that will raise his hopes without reason or things that could lead him to despair. ■

REVIEW and Remember

1. How do we "follow Hashem"?

2. Why does the Torah want the sotah to become exhausted?

3. Is it permitted to make ministering utensils from wood?

4. What is the dispute between Tanna Kamma and R' Elazar concerning the placement of the altar?

HALACHAH Highlight

Performing the mitzvah of bikur cholim by phone

אחרי ה' אלוקיכם תלכו וכו' הקב"ה ביקר חולים

You should walk after Hashem ... Hakadosh Baruch Hu visits the sick

One of the most common inquiries related to the mitzvah of bikur cholim - visiting the sick - is whether the mitzvah can be fulfilled by calling the patient on the phone and inquiring about his or her well-being without visiting in person. Rav Ovadiah Yosef¹ notes that our Gemara derives the source of the obligation to visit the sick from the pasuk that states (Devarim 13:5): **אחרי ה' אלוקיכם תלכו** - You should walk after Hashem. The verb of the verse is **תלכו** - you should walk - to emphasize that the mitzvah is fulfilled by walking to the location of the patient so that the visitor can attend to the needs of the patient. This is also evident from an incident involving R' Akiva recorded in the Gemara Nedarim (40a). The Gemara relates that one of R' Akiva's students was ill and none of the Torah scholars went to visit. R' Akiva went to see how the patient was doing and when he realized that no one was taking care of his sick student R' Akiva himself took care of his needs and restored his health. Following this incident R' Akiva gave a drosha that one who does not visit the sick is considered as if he is a murderer.

Rav Ovadiah Yosef asserts that the obligation to personally visit the sick applies even if the patient is in the hospital being cared for by the nursing staff because Rambam² teaches that when one visits someone who is sick the visitor alleviates one-sixtieth of the patient's condition.

An additional factor that necessitates visiting the patient personally is that a second part of the mitzvah of visiting the sick is to daven for the well-being of the patient. Chazal placed great value on the prayers that the visitor will say on behalf of the patient and Ramban³ goes so far as to say that one who visits a patient and does not daven on his behalf has not fulfilled the mitzvah. Since one cannot compare merely hearing about someone's condition and actually seeing the patient in that condition the ideal fulfillment of the mitzvah will take place when one personally sees the patient's condition and will thus express a more heartfelt prayer.

Therefore, someone who desires to fulfill the mitzvah in its entirety should visit the patient personally and not rely on calling on the phone or sending a letter. When it is not possible to visit the patient personally it is appropriate to call or write a letter to give encouragement to the patient. This is also the ruling of Rav Moshe Feinstein⁴. ■

1. שו"ת יחווה דעת ח"ג סי' פ"ג
2. רמב"ם פי"ד מהל' אבל ה"ד
3. ספר תורת האדם ריש שער הסכנה
4. שו"ת אג"מ יו"ד ח"א סי' רכ"ג ■

STORIES Off the Daf

The attributes of Hashem

אלא לילך אחר מידותיו של הקב"ה

Rav Yechezkel Abramsky, zt"l, was known for his penetrating analysis of Chazal which led him to understand things on a level that others often missed. This served him in good stead in his monumental work on Tosefta as well as in his brilliant shiurim.

Once he was walking with a few students and they saw a little girl crying. Those accompanying the Rav

didn't expect the Rav to do much of anything besides perhaps shake his head and cluck his tongue in sympathy. Instead, to his students' surprise, the Rav immediately interrupted the deep thought he had been postulating, bent over and asked the bawling child why she wept.

"My friends said that my dress isn't pretty!" wailed the devastated child.

"You tell them that Rav Abramsky says your dress is very pretty!" said the Rav firmly.

The little girl wiped her tears away in wonder and rushed off.

His talmidim were extremely puz-

zled by the Rav's behavior.

One asked if it was really worthwhile to stop in the middle of learning to comfort a little child.

"Of course," the Rav immediately replied. "This is an explicit Gemara!"

"Where?" asked the student who had a pretty good knowledge of the "yeshivische mesechtos."

The Rav explained, "On Sotah 14 the Gemara says that one must emulate Hashem's attributes. The verse says in Yeshayahu (25: 8) that Hashem will wipe the tears off all faces. We see that this is one of the attributes we are commanded to emulate!" ■

