

OVERVIEW of the Daf

1) Identifying the author of the Mishnah (cont.)

The Gemara concludes citing the Baraisa that records three opinions about how long merit can delay the punishment of a sotah and none of those opinions agrees with the Mishnah that asserts it can be delayed for three years.

The Gemara explains how the Mishnah follows the view of R' Yishmael.

2) A woman's merit

A discussion begins to determine what merit has the capacity to delay a woman's punishment.

The degree of protection provided by mitzvos and Torah study is explained.

R' Yosef asserts that it is mitzvah performance that delays a sotah's punishment.

Rabbah challenges this explanation and offers an alternative explanation for what delays the sotah's punishment.

Ravina presents an alternative explanation for the merit that delays the sotah's punishment.

3) Clarifying the Baraisa

Three explanations are offered for the meaning of the phrase **פרשת דרכים** in the Baraisa.

R' Yosef cites an exposition that elaborates on the principle that a transgression can extinguish the reward for a mitzvah but not for the reward of Torah.

An additional exposition of one of the earlier-cited verses is presented.

4) Clarifying R' Eliezer's position

The Gemara clarifies that according to R' Eliezer, teaching Torah to one's daughter is only as if one is teaching her **תיפלות**.

The rationale behind R' Eliezer's position is explained as well as Rabanan's response.

5) Clarifying R' Yehoshua's position

R' Yehoshua's position is explained.

6) Foolish piety

An example of foolish piety is cited.

7) Cunning evildoer

Six of seven explanations of the cunning evildoer are recorded. ■

Distinctive INSIGHT

The defending power of mitzvos and Torah

משל לאדם שהיה מהלך וכו'

The Baraisa presents a parable to illustrate the difference between the merit of a mitzvah as opposed to the merit of Torah study. The analogy is to where a person was walking in the dark of night, in danger of thorns and thistles along his path, as well as from wild animals and bandits along the road. He did not even know along which road he was traveling. When he finally found a torch, he was able to avoid pitfalls and obstacles as he walked, but he was still in danger of being attacked by animals and robbers, and he still did not know the correct directions to follow to arrive at his destination. With the light of dawn, he was safe from attack, but he still did not know his way until he arrived at a crossroad, when he was assured that he had arrived.

The commentators interpret the various aspects of the parable. Maharsha explains that man is made up of two parts, his body and his soul. His body enables him to physically be active in performing mitzvos, most of which entail some type of action. A person's mind is his intellect and character. This is what allows a person to comprehend Torah and its concepts.

The power of a mitzvah can protect and preserve the barriers which obstruct and interfere with attaining physical perfection, such as illness, war and famine. In the parable, the thorns (**קוצים**) represent difficulties in obtaining one's sustenance, crevices (**פחתים**) allude to illnesses which cause a person to fall and stumble, and thistles (**ברנקים**) refer to wars and weapons.

Torah saves a person from falling victim to that which threatens his spiritual well-being, namely one's yetzer hara, evil company or bad influences. This is referred to in the parable by the wild animals and bandits. These dangers are not avoided by mitzvos alone, as mitzvos only assist to perfect a person's physical well-being. Torah defends one's mind and soul, and the battleground to defeat the yetzer hara must be in the Beis midrash and Beis knesses.

A mitzvah is like a candle. Just as a candle lights up the darkness, so does a mitzvah provide enlightenment in a world shrouded in darkness and confusion.

Maharal explains that thorns and thistles cause damage when a person unknowingly steps upon them. Wild animals and bandits attack a person even if he is standing still. A mitzvah provides a person guidance to walk along the correct path and to thereby avoid pitfalls. Torah has the ability to deflect evil from approaching a person. Damaging agents attack at night, but a person who is immersed in Torah lives in light his entire life. May we merit to bask in the light of Hashem's Torah!

HALACHAH Highlight

The foolishly pious

דקא טבעה איתתא בנהרא ואמר לאו אורח ארעא לאיסתכולי בה ואצולה

A woman is drowning in a river and he said, "It is improper to gaze at her to save her."

Sefar Minchah Chareivah¹ writes that the leniency to assist a woman who is drowning applies even when there are others who are available to provide assistance. This is evident from the fact that the Gemara refers to the person who refuses to help as a **חסיד שוטה**—one who is foolishly pious—and if he was the only one who could save her and did not he would be called a **שופך דמים**—a spiller of blood—rather than one who is foolishly pious. He is uncertain regarding the halacha in a circumstance where the man is certain that he will have improper thoughts while saving the woman from danger. The reason for stringency is the halacha that even saving a life does not override something that is merely **אביזרייהו דעריות**.

Teshuvos Az Nidbaru² writes that the reason it is permitted to assist a woman who fell is that it can be assumed that the man who is assisting will not be led to improper thought. Since the contact is not **דרך תאוה וחיבת ביאה**, it is permitted and the reason the person who refuses to assist is called foolishly pious is that it is not prohibited even as **אביזרייהו דעריות** since the

REVIEW and Remember

1. What protection does a mitzvah provide?
2. Can a transgression cancel a mitzvah?
3. By what type of person will words of Torah endure?
4. Give three examples of a cunning evildoer?

contact is not **דרך תאוה וחיבת ביאה**. One practical difference between a leniency based on the assumption that there will not be improper thought and a leniency based on the fact that saving a life overrides prohibitions is assisting a woman who fell whose life is not in danger. Since the woman's life is not in danger the leniency of saving a life cannot be invoked but since the assistance is not done **דרך תאוה וחיבת ביאה** it is permitted. Caution must be exercised, however, to avoid improper thoughts, therefore whenever possible one should avoid direct contact and certainly one who knows that providing assistance will generate improper thought is not permitted to assist since such improper thought is **אביזרייהו דעריות** that is prohibited even to save a life. ■

1. ספר מנחה חריבה מהר"ר פנחס אפשטיין
2. שו"ת אז נדברו ח"ד סי' נ"א ■

STORIES Off the Daf

Supporting the scholars

מאי בוז יבוז לו

Many are aware that Rav Meir Shapiro of Lublin, zt"l, first suggested publicly the concept of Daf Yomi and appreciate what he did to build Torah. Few, however, realize how close he was to despair when his dreams did not materialize.

In the year 5686 (1926), Rav Meir Shapiro was in very great debt due to the costs of building the structure that would house Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin. He was in such great debt that he felt that his only chance to raise enough to pay off what he owed was to travel to America. Perhaps in the "Goldeneh Medinah" he would find the funding he so desperately needed.

Years later, Rav Meir recalled his historic visit. "When I finally arrived in America, I knew hardly anyone and all my plans to raise money didn't work out. After many thwarted efforts I was ready to give it up. It was only due to Moshe Eisenberg's pleading that I consented to stay at all.

"I was very upset and would remain in my room the entire day. I stopped writing to anyone, even my closest friends, and I could hardly learn. With the exception of Daf HaYomi and Chumash with Rashi which I had accepted upon myself as absolute obligations I could learn nothing.

"One summer day, Mr. Eisenberg insisted that we take a walk. Towards evening, we were asked to complete a minyan at a local shul and agreed. After mincha, the shul's president asked me to give over some Torah since I was dressed like a Rav. I agreed to teach the daf of

that day, Sotah 21, which I had not yet learned. Although they had never heard of the Daf HaYomi, they agreed.

When we got to the part which discusses the scorn reserved for the wealthy who don't support Torah in the beginning when the scholar is first starting out and in the greatest need of support, I said, 'How can the wealthy fail to see the gift of supporting Torah institutions? If the gemara praises those who supported one scholar from the beginning, how much greater is the portion of those who support hundreds of students!' The president promptly wrote out a check for a thousand dollars and became one of our greatest supporters, introducing me to countless wealthy patrons and convincing them to contribute.

Rav Meir Shapiro concluded, "That Daf Yomi shiur built Chachmei Lublin!" ■

