

Daf Digest for this month is dedicated in memory of רבקה יענטא בת ר' אשר אנשיל ע"ה
By the Weiss/Gotlib Families—London, England

OVERVIEW of the Daf

1. Speaking ill of the deceased and talmidei chachamim

The deceased don't care if they are spoken about negatively.

God severely punishes one who speaks negatively about a talmid chacham.

Even if one sees a talmid chacham commit a sin they can be certain that the talmid chacham did teshuvah.

2. Declaring *cherem* to defend the honor of a talmid chacham

R' Yehoshua ben Levi maintains that there are 24 instances when a person was banned to defend the honor of a talmid chacham and R' Elazar was only able to find three such examples.

3. Details regarding the exemptions from Krias Sh'ma for those involved with a funeral

Except for that of a prominent person, a funeral should not begin near the time of Krias Sh'ma.

The procedure for sh'ma and shmone esrei for those involved in the eulogy is clarified, as well as the concept of not opening one's mouth for the Satan.

The guidelines for Krias Sh'ma and those in line to greet the mourners are spelled out; including which people in the reception line will be exempt.

4. אין חכמה ואין תבונה ואין עצה לנגד ה'

The issue of suspending a mitzvah for another's honor is discussed. ■

REVIEW and Remember

1. What period of time must elapse before one must assume that a talmid chacham did teshuvah ?

2. How did beis din "stone" a person's casket ?

3. What is the specific Torah law that can be suspended because of human dignity ?

4. Why is the exemption from returning lost objects not a precedent to teach us that in all cases one's dignity should override a Torah law ?

Today's Daf Digest is dedicated
In loving memory of
Maras Ita bas Chaim V'Chana, a"h — Mrs. Edith Levee

Distinctive INSIGHT

The judgment of the Master of the Worlds

תנו רבנן: העוסקים בהספד... והוא אומר רבון העולמים חטאתי לפניך ולא נפרעת ממני אחד מני אלפי - יט.

The Beraisa taught: Those who are involved with the eulogy...and he says, "Master of the World, I have sinned before You, and You have not paid me even one thousandth of what I deserve." - 19b

Sofer Einei Yitzchak points out a number of curious elements of this statement. How can a person declare that God has not visited upon him even a fraction of his iniquity? Does this statement seem to suggest that God is unfair, or that He is willing to overlook things? The Gemara (Bava Kamma 50a) sharply criticizes such an attitude, as a person is not allowed to say "God dismisses factors in judgment." Furthermore, the more common reference to God in prayers such as these is *עולם של עולם*—Master of the World. Yet, here the title used is an unusual one "Master of the Worlds—רבון העולמים". What is the significance of this?

Referring to God as "Master of the Worlds" is an acknowledgment that He is in control of this world and the World to-Come. Accordingly, if we notice that God has not settled one's judgment fully in this world, this does not suggest that anything is overlooked at all, for God is in no hurry, and retribution is sure to come in the next world. There is no place to hide, and we are certain that God will fulfill His promises as He wishes. He is the *צור עולמים*—the trusted one of both worlds. ■

Gemara GEM

The awesome power of words

לעולם אל יפתח אדם פיו לשטן

A person should never provide Satan with a pretense. - 19a

Rashba (תשובות הרשב"א ח"א תח) discusses those who used a philosophical approach which attributes everything that happens to natural reasons. But, it seems quite clear based upon pesukim in the Torah and throughout the wisdom of our sages that this is not the case. Things that happen around us are affected by secret and hidden causes about which we are not fully aware. The Gemara (Moed Kattan 18a) tells us: "A covenant is arranged with the lips." We also find that the Gemara says (see Kesubos 62b) that a slip of the tongue regarding portending unfortunate events make an impact, and such a statement once was "as a erroneous message which was discharged from the officer (verse borrowed from Kohelles 10:5), and Rabbi Yehuda died."

(Gemara Gem...continued on page 2)

HALACHA Highlight

To gaze upon the visage of a gentile king

תא שמע, דאמר רבי אלעזר בר צדוק: מדלגין היינו על גבי ארונות של מתיים לקראת מלכי ישראל בלבד אמרו אלא אפילו לקראת מלכי אומות העולם, שאם יזכה - יבחין בין מלכי ישראל למלכי אומות העולם.

Rav Elazar bar Tzadok said: We used to leap over the graves of the dead in order to greet the kings of Israel. And not only to greet the kings of Israel did they do this, but as well to greet kings of foreign nations. Why? So that if he merit, he will be able to see the King Mashiach and differentiate between Jewish kings and kings of other nations.

Rashi¹ explains it is important to see kings of other nations so that when King Mashiach arrives one will have the opportunity to compare how much more honor there is for those that do the will of God compared to the honor bestowed upon gentile kings now.

Shulchan Aruch² codifies this statement by stating: "It is a mitzvah to endeavor to see kings, even gentile kings." Our Rabbis³ esteemed this concept so much that they permitted even expending time from Torah study in order to see gentile kings for the first time. If a king who one has already seen will return with an even larger entourage and military accompaniment, then one may expend Torah study time to go and see him again. Reflecting on the language of this halachah "to run to encounter gentile kings", Rav Shmuel Vozner writes⁴ that it is possible that there is a mitzvah even

if one does not actually see the king, but only his honor guards etc., since he will still have witnessed enough to be able to compare to the honor of King Mashiach.

The Poskim discuss the halachic status of rulers in our times. The Mishnah Berura⁵ writes that one need not have the title of king to be suitable for this blessing. The benchmark is whether the ruler has the power to impose a death sentence at his will. Some Poskim⁶ write that rulers who have the power to prevent execution thru bestowing amnesty are within the parameters of eligibility for this blessing. However, generally our rulers are dressed very much like the rest of the citizens, and they do not wear lavish garments. As well, they are not surrounded with the same extravagance, pomp and fanfare as kings of old, therefore many Poskim⁷ rule that one does not recite the blessing upon seeing them. ■

1. לקמן נח ע"א ד"ה יבחין. ע"י גם לעיל ט ע"ב ד"ה שאם יזכה
2. סי' רכד ס"ט
3. סי' חסידים סימן תתקנ הוב"ד במג"א שם סי' ק ז ובמשנ"ב שם סי' ק ט
4. שו"ת שבט הלוי ח"א (סי' לה)
5. משנ"ב שם סי' ק יב ע"פ הרדב"ז ח"א (סי' רצו). השווה לשו"ת שבט הלוי ח"א (סי' לה)
6. ע"י שו"ת יחווה דעת ח"ב (סי' כח) בשם תורת חיים סופר (סי' רכד אות ו) ושו"ת אפרקסתא דעניא ח"א (סי' לב). ע"ש.
7. ע"י שו"ת יחווה דעת שם וראה גם בסי' פסקי תשובות (סי' רכד אות ו - ח) נקודות נוספות. ■

STORIES off the Daf

The face of a king

תא שמע, דאמר רבי אלעזר בר צדוק: מדלגין היינו על גבי ארונות של מתיים לקראת מלכי ישראל, ולא לקראת מלכי ישראל בלבד אמרו אלא אפילו לקראת מלכי אומות העולם, שאם יזכה - יבחין בין מלכי ישראל למלכי אומות העולם. - יט:

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It was the year 1898, and there was much commotion in the holy city of Yerushalayim due to the much anticipated visit of Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany. As the city prepared to greet this visiting ruler, even the Torah scholars of the city had been considering his visit. Some felt that it

was appropriate to set out to see this ruler in order to fulfill the words of our Chachamim that those who see the honor and pomp of non-Jewish kings may be worthy one day of comparing that honor to the honor of King Mashiach.

Interestingly, the great Rav of Yerushalayim, Rav Yosef Chaim Sonenfeld, did not go to see the Kaiser. His students asked him why he had not gone out to see this ruler, after all don't our Chachamim explain that there is purpose in this, so that one would be able to more appreciate the honor and glory of King Mashiach?

Rav Sonenfeld responded to them and said that he had a tradition from his Rebbi, Rav Yehoshua Laib Diskin of Brisk traced to the Vilna Gaon, that there are certain facial features that are unique to Amalekites. Rav Sonenfeld explained that Kaiser Wilhelm exhibited some of these features. Rav Sonenfeld concluded by saying that he would not go out to greet an Amalekite king, and surely not to make a blessing upon seeing him! ■

(Gem...continued from page 1)

This is also a major factor in understanding the damaging effect of a curse and the helpful and desirable nature of a blessing. The Gemara (Megillah 15a) alerts us not to underestimate the power of a blessing, even from a commoner. If everything was of a natural order only, we would not have to be concerned about curses or blessings. People could say whatever they wanted, and God would do what He pleases. Notwithstanding, words do make a difference.

There are many healing devices that are beneficial, as described in the Gemara and as used in practice, and scientists have no way of explaining how many of them work. This is further evidence of the spiritual world, and its connection to things that happen around us regularly.

This is the underlying meaning of the Gemara's caution that one should never verbalize portending disastrous situations, lest the Satan use the opportunity to follow through in some way. ■

