

OVERVIEW of the Daf

1) The final ruling regarding who counts towards a zimmun

The Gemara declares that the halachah is not like the opinions mentioned on the previous daf, but rather the halachah follows R' Nachman who states that a child who understands to Whom the brachah is directed can be included in the zimmun.

2) What food must be eaten to be part of the zimmun

If one, two or three people eat vegetables instead of bread they may still be counted in the zimmun. If four people ate vegetables there is a disagreement whether a zimmun may be formed.

The Gemara tells the story of Yannai HaMelech and R' Shimon ben Shetach with the conclusion being that even one who drinks a cup of wine may lead the zimmun.

There are those who disagree with R' Shimon ben Shetach's behavior and maintain that to lead the zimmun a k'zayis of bread must be eaten. The Gemara rules according to this opinion.

3) The origin of birkas hamazon

R' Nachman identifies the authors of the various brachos in birkas hamazon and the events that inspired them to write those brachos.

A Beraisa identifies the correct order for the brachos of birkas hamazon. There is a disagreement where Shabbos should be mentioned in birkas hamazon.

The Gemara quotes a long Beraisa that identifies the Torah source for the different brachos of birkas hamazon. Together with the disagreement between the Tannaim regarding the exact source for the brachos, the Beraisa also seeks a source for making a brachah before eating, before learning Torah, and upon hearing bad news.

4) The correct text for birkas hamazon

A Beraisa lists the different opinions regarding the necessary components of birkas hamazon, including praise of the Land of Israel in the second brachah, the reign of Dovid HaMelech in the third brachah, as well as Torah and bris milah in the second brachah. ■

REVIEW and Remember

1. How did Rabbah know that Abaye and Rava were sophisticated enough to be part of a zimmun?
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2. What was the real source of R' Shimon ben Shetach's honor?
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3. Who wrote the brachah of "HaTov V'Hameitiv" and why?
.....
4. How do we know that one should make a brachah upon hearing bad news?
.....

Gemara GEM

Making of a Gadol

אמר להו רבה למי מברכינן? - מ.ח.

As young boys, Abaye and Rava were sitting in front of Rabbah, when Rabbah asked them, "To whom do we speak when we are saying a brachah?" - 48a

Abaye and Rava both said that it is to רחמנא - the Merciful One- that we daven. When Rabbah asked them where רחמנא is found, Rava pointed toward the beams of the roof, and Abaye walked outside and pointed to the sky. Rabbah declared, "You are both destined to be great Rabbis! This is what is meant when people say that large squash plants can be detected from when they are already just blossoming."

We often find Hashem referred to as "רחמנא - The Merciful One". This is rooted in our belief that everything Hashem does is only for our benefit. Hashem is infinitely compassionate, and He is merciful and kind in all His ways. When we recite blessings before we eat, it is an expression of our belief in Hashem's precise supervision and specific care of all aspects of the world. Our proclaiming a brachah inspires an influence of holiness upon the world, and all spiritual entities associated with this food and the processes involved in its preparation are activated.

Rabbah's question "To Whom do we direct our blessings?" was meant to determine if the youths perceived the purpose of blessings. Rava and Abaye answered correctly that our objective is to arouse Hashem's great compassion upon the world. Rabbah's follow-up question was to ask them if they understood where Hashem's magnificence is evident, and in what manner is it noticeable to all creatures without exception. Rava pointed to the שמי טללא - which can be translated as "the dew of the heavens". Everyone benefits from it, and the sustenance of the world is granted to all creatures alike. Abaye went outdoors, where he pointed to the luminaries of the skies. This indicated that they testify, so to say, that Hashem's majesty is apparent upon the universe and all that is in it.

Rabbah was impressed with the developed perception of these two young boys, and he declared that they were destined to be great rabbis. He likened them to בוצין (which can be translated as "candles"). Even before a candle is lit, it is obvious to all that it has the capacity to burn. The fuel and the wick are fully ready to serve their purpose, and once the fire is placed, the light will shine forth. Rabbah detected that Abaye and Rava were full of potential, and they were soon to fill their roles of leadership for the Jewish people. ■

HALACHA Highlight

Including a child in a Minyan

ולית הלכתא ככל הני שמעתתא, אלא כי הא דאמר רב נחמן קטן היודן למי מברכין מזמנין עליו - מח.

The halachah is not in accordance with all of these teachings, but rather the halachah is like that which Rav Nachman taught: A child who knows to Whom his blessings are directed can be included in the zim-mun. - 48a

Tosafos¹ quotes the opinion of Rabbeinu Tam who learns that the statement that “the law is not in accordance with all the previous rulings” does not apply to excluding the ruling of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi. The halachah accepts his ruling that a child may be made an accessory to a Minyan. In a fuller version of Rabbeinu Tam’s comments² we find that he based this view upon the verse which states “ונקדשתי בתוך בני ישראל” – and I will be sanctified in the midst of the Jewish people.” Rabbeinu Tam explained that from this source it appears that since children are also included in “the Sons of Israel” they may be part of a quorum, as long as there are nine adults. Tosafos however adds that Rabbeinu Tam himself did not rely upon this reasoning, and he would not include a child in a quorum³. Tosafos adds that there are those who include a child in a quorum if he is holding a Chumash. Rabbeinu Tam viewed this position as fatuous. Many Rishonim⁴ opine that a child may not be included in a quorum under any conditions. However, some Rishonim⁵ do rule that a child may be included a quorum, and some⁶ even permitted including a few children in a quorum.

Practically speaking, Rav Yosef Karo⁷ rules that a child may not be included in a quorum. However, Rav Moshe Iserlas⁸ notes that the custom is to be lenient in a state of duress, and to include a child in the quorum. [However, see Mishnah Berura there⁹.]

An interesting addition: שו"ת מן השמים is a volume of dream queries, in which halachic questions were posed, and

responses were received מן השמים, “from Heaven”. The responses typically take the form of a quote or paraphrase of a verse or Talmudic statement, which generally is readily explicated. One of the dream queries¹⁰ is about our issue: can two children be included in a quorum? The response: הקטנים עם – “the children with the adults, may Hashem add upon you.” The response appears to permit the inclusion of the children in the quorum. This source is referenced by the famous Maharsham¹¹ as a basis for including a child holding a Torah scroll in a quorum when a state of difficulty exists. However, he remarks that they should not append many recitations of the Kaddish at the conclusion of services. It should be noted that one of the Rishonim¹² actually cites the dream query, but still concludes that a child may not be included in a quorum. Some later authorities¹³ disagree with the Maharsham. ■

1. ד"ה ולית הלכתא
2. ע"י אור זרוע ח"א (סי' קצו) ובתוס' רבינו יהודה שירליון (מז ע"ב ד"ה דאריב"ל, עמי תקכ).
3. וכן ראה בשבלי הלקט (סי' ט, דף ה' ע"א)
4. רמב"ם (פ"ח מהל' תפלה ה"ד) וכן בארחות חיים (הלכות תפלה סי' עג) בשם כמה כמה קדמונים, ושרבינו שמשון נידה על מי שצירף קטן לעשרה. וכן בהגהות מיימוניות (פ"ה מהל' ברכות אות ו') בשם קדמונים רבים. ועוד טובא.
5. י"ה בעל המאור (ברכות פ"ז). וכן כתב הראב"י (סי' קכח, עמ' 114) שבשעת הדחק נעשה כההוא דאין מדקדקין בקטן. ועוד.
6. הרא"ה כאן שאפשר לצרף אפילו שלשה קטנים לתפלה. וכן ראה ארחות חיים (הלכות תפלה סי' עג).
7. שו"ע או"ח סי' נה ס"ד
8. הגהת הרמ"א שם.
9. ע"י משנ"ב שם ס"יק כד.
10. סי' נג
11. שו"ת מהרש"ם ח"ג (סי' קסב). וכן בדעת תורה (או"ח סי' נה ס"ד). ע"ש.
12. שבלי הלקט (סי' ט, דף ה' ע"ב)
13. ע"י במקור חיים לבעל החות יאיר (סי' נה אות ד') שהביא דברי תשובות מן השמים, וכתב שעל זה נאמר לא בשמים היא. ע"ש. וכן ראב בשו"ת תורת יקותיאל (חאו"ח סי' לא). וע"י בשו"ת יביע אומר ח"ד (חאו"ח סי' ט' אות ה') ובספרו הליכות עולם ח"א (פר' ויחי אות ה', עמ' פז). ע"ש. ועוד. ■

Distinctive INSIGHT

Minors for Minyanim

ולית הלכתא ככל הני שמעתתא וכו'

Tosafos (תד"ה ולית) cites an opinion which states that a minor can be counted towards a minyan, as long as he carries a Chumash with him. Rabbeinu Tam, how-

ever, ruled that this custom is baseless, because there is no need to have the child carry a Chumash.

Sefer Pninei HaRav relates that there were several times when the minyan was deficient, and the Beis HaLevi, HaRav Moreinu R' Yosef Dov Soloveichik, often relied upon the opinion of Rabbeinu Tam to include a minor in the count for a minyan. Invariably, when this would happen,

those present would ask the Rav if it was worthwhile to have the child carry a Chumash. He would always reassure them, though, that the opinion of Rabbeinu Tam calls this an unnecessary maneuver. HaRav Soloveichik would then conclude, “It is better that the child hold a Siddur in his hand and daven properly, rather than to hold a Chumash and gain nothing of value from just holding it.” ■