

OVERVIEW of the Daf

1. Clarifying the opinion of Beis Shamai

The view of Beis Shamai in our Mishnah is that the brachah on the day is said before the brachah on wine. The Gemara questions this from a Beraisa where the brachah is said on the wine before the brachah of havdalah. The Gemara answers that the view of Beis Shamai is that at the beginning of Shabbos we make the brachah on the day as early as possible and at the end of Shabbos we delay havdalah until the end.

There is a contradiction in the opinion of Beis Shamai whether birkas hamazon requires a kos. The Gemara concludes that there are two versions of Beis Shamai's opinion on the matter.

2. The second disagreement in the Mishnah

The disagreement whether one should wash his hands and then dilute the wine or vice versa is explained to be a disagreement whether it is permitted to use a kos whose outside is tamei.

3. The third disagreement in the Mishnah

The disagreement where the napkin should be placed after drying one's hands is explained to revolve around the issue of whether it is permitted to use a table that has contracted second degree tum'ah.

4. The fourth disagreement in the Mishnah

The disagreement whether the room should be swept before or after washing is understood to be a disagreement whether it is permitted to have an Am HaAretz serve as the waiter at a meal. If the waiter is a talmid chacham we don't have to fear destroying a piece of food the size of a k'zayis.

The Gemara rules that although throughout the perek, halachah follows Beis Hillel, in this dispute halachah follows Beis Shamai who require sweeping the room before **מים אחרונים**.

5. The fifth disagreement in the Mishnah

Rava follows R' Yehudah's understanding of the dispute between Beis Hillel and Beis Shamai where they both agree that birkas hamazon is recited first and havdalah is recited last. The only disagreement is the order of the brachah on the candle and spices.

R' Yochanan rules like R' Yehudah's understanding of Beis Hillel and the brachah on spices should be said before the brachah on the candle.

6. The sixth disagreement in the Mishnah

R' Yosef explains that Beis Hillel and Beis Shamai disagree whether the term מאור or מאורי should be used.

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ר' שמשון בן ר' לוי, ע"ה—Mr. Samuel Matthew

Distinctive INSIGHT

Understanding the order of Havdalah

וב"ה אומר בשמים ואחר כך מאור - נב :

And Beis Hillel says spices, and then light. - 52b

Rashbat"z notes that the order in which we recite the brachos during Havdalah corresponds to our various senses in an ascending order. We first recite the blessing of HaGafen on the wine. In one regard, the sense of taste is very significant, but in another regard it is quite limited. The sensation of taste is very powerful and potent. Yet, it is only when the food is in one's mouth that the palate can benefit from the taste of the food. In this regard, the sense of taste is very limited in its scope. The second brachah we say is the one for smelling spices. One can smell an item that is far away, so we see that the sense of smell works at a much farther distance than that of taste. Nevertheless, the distance at which one can still smell a substance has its limit. The next brachah is for the benefit we receive from seeing fire. We can see fire from great distances. The sense of sight, once again, functions at a distance much farther than smell.

Finally, the last brachah is that of המבדיל itself. Here, the brachah is formulated as we acknowledge our sense of understanding, and our ability to discern and differentiate. This ability comes from our intellect, a sense of awareness which is on a level higher than all other senses.

With this pattern of brachos, advancing from step to step, the havdalah aids us as we enter into the work week when we begin to use our senses to participate in the labor of earning a living. ■

REVIEW and Remember

1. What is the rationale to delay havdalah as late as possible?
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2. Why aren't Beis Shamai concerned that the cup itself will make the person's hands tmei'os?
.....
3. Under what circumstances is it permitted to destroy food?
.....
4. What is the difference between the word "מאור" and the word "מאורי"?
.....

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חיים בן חיה
(Harvey Bresler, Washington DC)

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HALACHA Highlight

Transforming a gathering place of idolaters into a synagogue or study house

בשלמה נר משום דלא שבת, אלא בשנמים מאי טעמא לא? אמר רב יהודה אמר רב הכא במסבת עובדי כוכבים עסקינן, מפני שסתם מסבת עובדי כוכבים לעבודה זרה היא - נב:

We can understand why we do not make the blessing over a candle of a gentile, since it did not rest from prohibited activity on the Shabbos. However, why are the fragrances of the gentile not used for the blessing? Rav Yehuda answered that here we are dealing with fragrant scents from a gentile feast. The reason that they are not used for a blessing is because typically gentile feasts are for idolatry. - 52b

In his eminent Yabia Omer¹, Rav Ovadia Yosef discusses the legitimacy of utilizing non-Jewish or secular tunes for Jewish liturgy. He cites Rav Yehuda HeChasid² who forbids using for Jewish prayers any tunes that are employed in idolatrous services. Correspondingly, Rav Yoel Sirkes³ writes about the custom to make use of church melodies for Jewish services. He explains that the prohibition exists for tunes that are specific to idol worship, but tunes that are not uniquely for idol worship would be permitted. If so, posits Rav Ovadia Yosef, melodies that have a solely profane origin and usage should be prohibited to use for Jewish services. However, he immediately distinguishes between the very severe prohibition of idol worship and other less severe matters.

In this context he references a passage in Megillah⁴. There the Gemara states that the greats of Yehuda will ultimately teach Torah to the multitudes in the theaters and circuses of

Rome. Tosafos there considers the definition of these theaters and circuses. Tosafos mentions the view that this is a reference to idolatrous houses of worship that are shamefully referred to as theaters and circuses. Tosafos however rejects this view, since it is difficult to accept that such places of moral decay will serve as centers of Torah learning. Rather, Tosafos explains that the Gemara refers to places where idolaters gather for purposes other than worship. Rav Ovadia Yosef explains that from Tosafos we see that if these theaters and circuses meant actual houses of idolatrous worship, it would be forbidden to transform them into synagogues or houses of study. However, places where idolaters gather may be converted to synagogues or houses of study. This is true, although from our Gemara it is clear that when idolaters gather they gather in the name of their faith. Yet, it remains that such places of gathering are not so problematic as actual sites of idolatrous worship.

Rav Ovadia Yosef then presents a synopsis of the opinions regarding transforming churches and the like into synagogues. He concludes by stating that even the stringent opinions would agree that a place lacking any religious symbols or images may be changed to be a synagogue or house of study. He then extrapolates that all the more so should it be permitted to use a melody that does not have any material reality. He continues there to develop and analyze this matter from different angles, ultimately finding room for leniency. ■

1. שו"ת יביע אומר ח"ו (חאו"ח סי' ז אות א). וע"ע בשו"ת יחוה דעת ח"ב סי' ה'). אמנם יש לציין לשו"ת וישב הים ח"ב (סי' ז, עמ' קלא ואילך) שהאריך בחומרת הדבר. ע"ש
2. ספר חסידים (סי' רלח), וכ"ה במג"א (סי' נג ס"ק לא)
3. שו"ת הבי"ח הישנות (סי' קכז)
4. מגילה דף ע"א ■

STORIES off the Daf

Light Bulbs and Tea

על המאור - נב.

A brachah for the fire. - 52a

R' Chaim Ozer was known to recite the brachah of בורא מאורי האש while gazing upon an electric light. He chose specifically to use a light bulb, rather than to use the flame of a conventional multi-wicked candle. The reason was that electricity was just being introduced throughout Europe during the beginning of the 1900's, and many people were unaware of the nature of elec-

tricity and the way in which it was understood according to the halachah. Some were beginning to think that using electricity was not defined as fire, and that turning on an electric light was not a violation of Shabbos. Therefore, by using electricity for havdalah, and reciting the brachah which refers to "fire", he dispelled the opinion that such a bulb was allowed to be lit on Shabbos.

Similarly, as he recited havdalah, he held a cup of tea as his beverage of choice in his hand. The reason he did this was, again, to demonstrate a halachic principle. Many people were very poor, and they could not afford wine for havdalah. As a result, many people had become neglectful of making havdalah altogether, believing that if they did not have wine,

the procedure could not be done adequately. Therefore, R' Chaim made a point of using tea, in order to show that an affordable beverage such as tea was acceptable for havdalah. ■

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7. The restriction against using a candle or spices from a non-Jew is clarified

The reason the Mishnah prohibits the use of a candle or spices from a non-Jew is the assumption that it was used for idolatry.

8. The havdalah candle

A Beraisa rules that a candle that "rested" may be used for havdalah but a candle that did not "rest" may not be used for havdalah. ■