

OVERVIEW of the Daf

1. The difference between the curse of Bavel and Shomron

R' Yirmiyah ben Elazar demonstrates that when Bavel was cursed, her neighbors were also cursed, whereas when Shomron was cursed, her neighbors were blessed.

2. The brachah on crowds of 600,000 people

R' Hamnunah records the nusach one should recite on seeing a large crowd of Jews.

A Beraisah also mentions the brachah recited on seeing a large group of Jews, and how Ben Zoma recited this brachah as well as a second brachah thanking Hashem for providing for all his needs.

An additional statement from Ben Zoma is quoted related to the distinction between the attitude of a good guest and the attitude of a bad guest.

Ulah adds that this Brachah is not recited in Bavel. A Beraisah rules that a large crowd is defined as 600,000 people.

3. The brachah upon seeing scholars and kings

The Beraisah records the text for the brachah on Torah and secular scholars as well as the brachah for Jewish and non-Jewish kings.

The Gemara retells the story of R' Sheshes and his interaction with a tzeduki when going out to see the arriving king.

The story of R' Shila and how his respect for the king saved his life. As an expression of thanks, R' Shila expounded on the pasuk, לך ה' הגדולה וגוי.

4. The brachah on homes

A Beraisah records the brachos to be recited when one sees the home of a Jew, settled or destroyed, as well as the brachos to be recited when one sees the home of a non-Jew, settled or destroyed.

The Gemara relates the conversation between Ulah and R' Chisda when they came upon the destroyed house of R' Chana bar Chanilai.

5. The brachah on graves

A Beraisah records the brachos to be recited when one sees Jewish and non-Jewish graves.

6. The brachos recited when seeing a friend after a lapse of time

R' Yehoshua ben Levi records the brachos to be recited upon seeing a friend after a lapse of thirty days or one year.

The Gemara relates the story of Amoraim making these brachos when seeing one another.

7. Different Brachos

R' Yehoshua ben Levi teaches that a brachah should be recited when seeing a spotted person, and the Gemara limits this brachah to a person who was born spotted.

A Beraisah records the brachos to be recite when one sees unusual animals, beautiful creatures, and beautiful trees.

8. Zikin

Two definitions of zikin, mentioned in the Mishnah, are presented.

The Gemara discusses different aspects of the constellations Ash, Kesil and Kimah. ■

Gemara GEM

A diverse population

תנו רבנן: הרואה אוכלוסי ישראל אומר ברוך חכם הרזים שאין דעתם דומה זה לזה ואין פרצופיהן דומים זה לזה - נח.

We learn in a Beraisah: When one sees multitudes of Jews, he should say, "Blessed are You...the Sage of the secrets." the minds and the faces of the Jews are not like one another. - 58a

Ben Ish Chai notes that the Gemara highlights how people differ one from another both in their personalities (דעתם) and in their facial appearances (פרצופיהן). These two features characterize the difference between man and animal. Man possesses an intellect and the unique ability to reason and to speak, unlike any other animal. Each person also has distinctive facial features which set him apart from any other person. This, again, is unlike other creatures of other species, which basically have no special or idiosyncratic markings between one animal and another. The blessing of חכם הרזים highlights these aspects of our individuality, and how Hashem demonstrates the uniqueness of each person in terms of how we are each created. Furthermore, it is these two facets of our being that allow us to conduct ourselves in society and which enable man's existence in the world to continue. If everyone's personality and nature was the same, there would be no room for business or commerce to take place. Everyone would have the same interests and everyone would pursue similar professions. People would all eat the same foods and want to live in the same place. Obviously, this would not allow the world to continue, because society necessarily requires that all of our needs be fulfilled with many people each providing his talents and abilities in different areas.

Furthermore, if every person appeared the same as everyone else, we would not recognize our spouses, and owners of lands would not be distinctively identifiable. Therefore, upon gazing upon the multitudes of the Jewish nation, and in recognition of the fact that we comprise a thriving and vibrant community, we pronounce the brachah of חכם הרזים, thus acknowledging that Hashem has created us with differing personalities and distinct facial features. ■

REVIEW and Remember

1. What is the attitude of a good guest?
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2. Did R' Shila lie in his accusation of the man before the government?
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3. What brachah is said upon seeing a friend after a lapse of a year?
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4. What brachah is recited upon seeing a person born with a deformity?
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מרת זיסל בת ר' חיים נחמן, ע"ה

HALACHAH Highlight

Points about the blessing recited upon seeing venerated scholars

תנו רבנן: הרואה חכמי ישראל אומר ברוך שחלק מחכמתו ליראיו. חכמי עובדי כוכבים אומר: ברוך שנתן מחכמתו לבריותיו (לבשר ודם). - נח.

Our Rabbis taught that one who sees Jewish scholars should say the blessing of "who has apportioned of His wisdom to those that fear Him". If one sees a gentile scholar, he pronounces the blessing: "who has given of His wisdom to flesh and blood." - 58a

The language of the blessing as it appears before us in the Gemara is: שחלק מחכמתו ליראיו—who apportioned of His wisdom to those who fear Him. The blessing said upon seeing Jewish Torah scholars thus differs from the blessing recited upon seeing gentile scholars, which is "who has given of His wisdom to flesh and blood." However, the Poskim record various different versions of this blessing. The Rambam¹ uniformly records the blessings with שנתן - "who has given." The Meiri², on the other hand, uniformly records the blessing with the language of שחלק—"who has apportioned." Still, many Poskim³ record the version we have in the Gemara, with the distinction in language between Jew and gentile. This version is codified in the Shulchan Aruch⁴. Yet, it should be noted that some Poskim⁵ state that since there is a divergence of versions for this blessing, if one said: שנתן מחכמתו ליראיו—"who has given of his wisdom to those that fear Him", he would still have fulfilled his duty, since this version does exist amongst the earlier authorities.

Centuries ago, we find authorities⁶ who questioned whether we can any longer recite this blessing. The question being: do we have scholars who would meet the standard of חכם as the Rabbis of the Gemara intended? Therefore, we do find numerous authorities⁷ who rule that nowadays one should pronounce this blessing without reciting God's name, due to the doubt that exists whether our present day scholars qualify for this blessing. Nevertheless, numerous other authorities⁸ opine that this blessing may be recited today as well. Much anecdotal

evidence supports this position⁹.

Even according to these opinions it is clear that not every scholar would qualify as a sufficient scholar to be able to have this blessing recited upon seeing him. To qualify for this blessing, the individual would need to be a world-renowned scholar proficient in the different areas of Torah knowledge¹⁰. The person would also need to be God-fearing¹¹. There is a view¹² that the scholar would also require proficiency in the secrets of the Torah (חכמת הקבלה). ■

1 פ"י מהלכות ברכות הי"א. וגם בסמ"ג (מ"ע כז, ברכות ההודאה והבקשה) גרס "שנתן בכולם כמו הרמב"ם. ע"ש. ועוד 2 מאירי (ברכות נח ע"א ד"ה הרואה חכמי עמי 207). וכן הוא בסי' המאורות (כאן, עמי קע), וכן ברבינו ורוחם (ספר אדם, נתיב יג ח"ב, דף ק"ד סעי'א 3 בה"ג פ"ט מברכות, עמי פח במהד' מכון ירושלים תשנ"ב), הר"ף (דף מג רע"ב) והרא"ש (פ"ט ס' ח) והרא"ה בחידושו כאן, ועוד טובא ברבותינו הראשונים 4 ס' רכד ס"ו וס"ז 5 שו"ת התעוררות תשובה (ח"א ס' ס' ובמהד' החדשה ח"א ס' קב), וכ"כ ר"ב שטרן, בעל בצל החכמה, בס' אהלך באמתך (פ"ד אות א', אות קטן ב', ובהערה ג' שם, עמי קנח). ולך נא וראה בשו"ת יחיה דעת ח"ד (ס' טו בהערה, עמי פג) שכתב שאין קפידא בנוסח הברכה אם יאמר שחלק או אם יאמר שנתן. ע"ש 6 רבי יוסף זוספא האן נורלינגן ב"ס יוסף שו"מ (ס' תנ, עמי 94), ועי' לרבי אלעזר פלעקלש בשו"ת תשובה מאהבה ח"ב (ס' רלו, דף יד ע"ד). 7 עי' בפתח הדביר ח"ב (ס' רכד אות ו' שהאריך והסיק שלדעתו אין לברך ברכה זו בשם ומלכות), וכן כתב בסי' חסד לאלפים (ס' רכא אות יב) ובס' בן איש חי (ש"ר פרי עקב אות יג.) ועי' בכפה"ח ספר (ס' רכד אות יט) שכתב שלא לברך בשו"מ אבל מטעם אחר, והוא כיון שיש פלוגתא בנובח הברכה, לכן אין לברך ברכה זו כי אם בלתי שו"מ. ע"ש. וכן בשו"ת אור לציון ח"ב (פרק מו אות סא, עמי שו) מהני תרי טעמי. ע"ש. וכן ראה בערוך השלחן (ס' רכד ס"ו שמכיון שלא נתבאר שיעור גדלו בתורה, לכן נמנעים עתה מלברך ברכה זו). 8 כן מבואר מדברי הרב עולת תמיד (ד"י רכד אות ה'). וכ"כ החיי אדם (כלל סג ס"ח). ע"ש. וכן נראה בגדולות אלישע (ס' רכד אות ב'). וכן משמע במשנ"ב (ס"ס רכד). וכ"כ בשו"ת יחיה דעת ח"ד (ס' טו באורך. וראה גם בשו"ת שבט הלוי ח"י (ס' יג שאלה ג') 9 עי' רשימה בס' אהלך באמתך (פ"ד הערה א, עמי קנד) ובס' פסקי תשובות (ס' רכד הערה 10 בחי"א שם: "מי שהוא מופלג בתורה". [אמנם השווה לע"ת הנ"ל בהערה 8] והביאו בזה בגדולות אלישע שם. ובשו"ת יחיה דעת שם בסיכומי: חכם גדול מחכמי ישראל, המופלג בתורה ובחכמה, ומורה הוראות בישראל, ע"ש, ובשו"ת שבט הלוי ח"י (ס' יג שאלה ג) כתב: "וכנראה הגדר הוא, שמוקבל מבני הדור ומנוסה שחכמתו היא חכמת תו רה אמיתית, לומד בה לשמה". ע"כ. [ועיין דבריו הידועים של החזו"א בס' אמונה ובטחון (פ"ג אות כג, עמי לה) ע"פ דברי הרמ"א (יוד ס' רמג ס"ב): "דשם ת"ח היינו חכם גדול בהלכה היודע את עומק משא ומתן של הלכה ע"פ המקובן מדור דור, ולמד רות מקומות התלמוד". ע"ש] 11 עי' במהרש"א בחי"א (כאן ד"ה ברוך שחלק) וז"ל: "וקראם ליראיו ע"פ מ"ש כל שיראת חטאו קודמת לחכמתו חכמתו מתקיימת כו". ע"כ. וכן כתב ע"פ זה בשו"ת יחיה דעת ח"ד (ס"ס טו) 12 שלחן הטהור (ס' רכד ס"ג), וכן ראה בשו"ת שבט הלוי ח"י (ס' יג שאלה ג). ■

STORIES off the Daf

The Chasam Sofer visits R' Meshulam Igra

תנו רבנן: הרואה חכמי ישראל אומר ברוך שחלק מחכמתו ליראיו - נח.

One who sees a Jewish sage says, "Blessed...the One who apportioned from His wisdom to those who fear him." - 58a

While he was the head of the beis din in Dreznitz (1794-1799), the Chasam Sofer was once passing through Pressburg on his way to Mattersdorf. He stopped in Pressburg to visit with Rabbi Meshulam Igra Tismenitz, who was the chief rabbi in Pressburg. As he approached the city, the Chasam Sofer was in doubt whether he should pronounce the brachah of ברוך שחלק מחכמתו upon seeing the venerable sage, who was undoubtedly one of the leading Torah luminaries of the gener-

ation. The nature of the doubt was that this halachah of pronouncing this brachah is not cited by Rambam in his Mishne Torah. Some claim that the reason for this omission is that we no longer find men of the stature about which the Gemara speaks. On the other hand, the great Rabbi Meshulam Igra was an outstanding Torah sage, and perhaps the brachah was appropriate.

As he approached the home of R' Meshulam, Chasam Sofer decided that he would recite the passage of the Gemara verbatim. "Upon seeing a great sage in Israel, one should say, 'Blessed are You, Hashem...'", using God's name, and as he opened the door, he finished off the blessing, " 'Who has conferred His knowledge upon them'." Then, to settle the mind of R' Meshulam, who most certainly would be wondering about this pronouncement, Chasam Sofer immediately asked him why Rambam does not rule according to this Gemara.

R' Meshulam explained that Rambam includes in his Mishne Torah not only halachos that are practical in our days, but also laws which will once again be practical when Mashiach arrives. This is why Rambam includes laws of korbanos, etc. However, laws that do not apply now, and will not apply when Mashiach arrives are not included. When Mashiach arrives, we will merit to live in the **תחיית המתים**, when our patriarchs will be with us, together with Moshe and Aharon. The great Tannaim and Amoraim will live in our communities. Rambam omits the brachah said upon seeing a great sage because in our days, we have no men of this stature, and in the days to come there will be so many of them, it will not be practical to say the blessing every day. Therefore, the halachah does not apply now, and it will not apply later, either. This is why this halachah, while it is correct, no longer has any application. ■

