



## OVERVIEW of the Daf

### 1) Washing before davening

R' Yochanan begins a discussion of the importance of washing one's hands before davening.

2) **MISHNA:** Four issues are mentioned: 1) Reading Shema in an inaudible voice, 2) Reading imprecisely, 3) Reading Shema out of order and 4) One who reads Shema and makes a mistake.

### 3) Must Krias Shema be audible?

The gemara explains the rationale for the disagreement whether one must hear themselves read Shema.

The Gemara clarifies the exact opinions of R. Yosi and R. Yehudah.

The gemara's conclusion is that we pasken like R. Yehudah that one can read Shema silently and like R. Yosi that if one's reading is imprecise the mitzvah is still fulfilled.

### 4) What is written in tefillin and mezuzos?

R' Oshaya teaches that even the pesukim containing commands like "וקשרתם" and "וכתבתם" must be included in tefilin and mezuzos.

### 5) Reading Krias Shema accurately

When reading krias shema one must be careful to separate between similar letters and one who does so is rewarded. ■

## Gemara GEM

### To Read Shema With Deliberation

כל הקורא קריאת שמע ומדקדק תאותיותיה מצננין לו גיהנם

When a person pays close attention to read the words of krias shema with great precision, he must be careful to separate between the similar letters that occur among various words. For example, a ל appears as the last letter of על, and as the first letter of לבבך. If read together, it might sound as if only one ל is pronounced, which is wrong. To have such consideration, a person must be very deliberate, and he will, of course, certainly be focused on the meaning of each word as well. As he reads the words which contain the threatening conditions for lack of fulfillment of the mitzvos, he will surely take them to heart, as he reviews his deeds to rid himself of sin. The teshuva process will be complete as he regrets his iniquities of the past, and he is automatically forgiven for his sins. Such a person is deserving to avoid experiencing any role in Gehinnom to cleanse his soul of sin, for the reading of Shema was done so meticulously.

Others explain the cause and effect relationship in this Gemara differently. When a person prepares to read the

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## Distinctive INSIGHT

### Blessings Before a Mitzvah is Done

כל המצוות כולן מברך עליהן עובר לעשייתן (רש"י – עמוד א')

Rashi writes that reciting a beracha before performing a mitzvah is a rabbinic law, as we find, "The Rabbis said: All mitzvos must have a beracha recited עובר לעשייתן before they are fulfilled."

The Gemara elaborates to prove that the word "עובר" means "before". One proof is from Shmuel 2 (18:23), where we find: "And Achima'atz ran the route of the plain, and (ויעבור) he advanced before the Cushite."

The Chidushei HaRi"m point out that it is odd that the Gemara uses an unusual word (עובר), and then proceeds to define it. Why didn't the Gemara simply use a standard word—קודם לעשייתן—and not have to go through any definitions?

Logically, it would be more appropriate for a blessing to be said after one has benefited, as we do after we eat. Once a person has experienced a mitzvah and has become spiritually inspired, he would be in a better position to tell Hashem how he appreciates what the mitzvah has done for him. Nevertheless, the Jews have a special love for mitzvos, and the Rabbis detected how we cherish mitzvos, especially those that are rabbinic. Our affinity to mitzvah observance causes us to respond to every opportunity with a super-human effort, just as we find in the verse from Shmuel 2, where Achima'atz overcame the messenger who had run ahead of him. The Gemara associates that extended effort of Achima'atz with our interest and exertion to do mitzvos. This is why the Gemara chooses this word to express this willingness to over perform. ■

## REVIEW and Remember

1. How far does one have to go to obtain water to be able to wash their hands for davening?  
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2. According to the Gemara's conclusion, must one say a brocha in an audible tone?  
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3. What is the reward for reading krias Shema accurately?  
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By Mr. and Mrs. David Binter  
In loving memory of their father  
ר' משה בן ר' זלמן טובי, ע"ה

# HALACHAH Highlight

## To Enunciate and Read Shema Precisely

"יקרא ולא דקדק באותיותיה, רבי יוסי אומר: יצא, רבי יהודה אומר: לא יצא."

"If one read the Shema and was not precise in his pronunciation of the letters: Rav Yosi says that he has fulfilled his obligation, while Rav Yehuda says that he has not."

The Rishonim differ in interpretation of this Mishnah. The Sefer HaChinuch<sup>1</sup> and other Rishonim<sup>2</sup> explain that this Mishnah is referring to the necessity of properly enunciating adjacent words that share the same letter which ends one word and begins the next. The concern is that the a person may not properly differentiate between the end of one word and the beginning of the next. The result would be that the words would become commingled. For example: על לבנך—if one is not careful to complete pronunciation of the concluding Lamed before beginning the next word, the outcome may be: עלבנך. Interestingly, this opinion is echoed in the Midrash<sup>3</sup>.

Rabbeinu Yonah<sup>4</sup> takes issue with the previously presented explanation of the Mishnah since the requirement to separate words that tend to become conjoined is advanced by Rava in the Gemara<sup>5</sup>. Rabbeinu Yonah learns that the Mishnah refers to the precision necessary to not soften letter with a Dagesh (hard sound), or harden letters with a soft sound. This view is shared by other Rishonim<sup>6</sup>.

These opinions only differ in regards the explanation of the Mishnah, but in application both requirements must be met. In fact, some Rishonim<sup>7</sup>, offer both explanations in the Mishnah. Indeed, the Shulchan Aruch records both Halachos<sup>8</sup>.

The Shulchan Aruch<sup>9</sup> codifies our Mishnah. Based upon Sefer HaChinuch, the commentators<sup>10</sup> explain that this Halacha

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words of shema, he focuses his attention to accept upon himself the yoke of Heaven with his entire heart and soul. The mindset is, and should be, very overwhelming. If, however, at the same time a person is expected also to be cautious and methodical in reading every letter and every word correctly and with precise accuracy, he must take charge of the emotional intensity which he developed, and he must calm it and proceed slowly in terms of the reading. This is indeed a challenging dilemma, but everyone accepts this test and continues to succeed to the best of his ability. As a reward for this battle which is waged twice daily, we are granted the promise that Gehinnom will be chilled for us, just as we cooled down our burning emotional burst of readiness to accept Hashem's kingship in order to read the words properly. ■

does not accept mumbling, swallowing or slurring the words, and even post facto, the recitation would be invalid. Yet, it should be noted that the Meiri<sup>11</sup> does interpret the Mishnah to accept post facto the reading of the Shema that had been mumbled. However, as stated the Halacha does not follow these opinions. ■

1. מצוה תכ
2. עיי לרבי מאיר המעילי בסי המאורות (טו ע"א), רע"ב (פ"ב מ"ג). וראה ר"ח (טו ע"ב)
3. דברים רבה (פרשה ב' ס"י לא)
4. דף ח ע"ב בדפי הר"י ד"ה מתני'. ועיי בתוסי יו"ט (שם).
5. טו ע"ב
6. סמ"ק (מצוה קד)
7. עיי רמב"ם בפ"י המשניות שם, ר"א מלוניל בסי ארחות חיים (הל' ק"ש אות יז)
8. לדקדק שלא ירפה החזק וכו'. ס"י סא סכ"ג. ולתת רווח בין הדבקים. ס"י סא ס"כ. ובכלל עיין שם בסוף סימן סא כמה דקדוקי הקריאה.
9. ס"י סב ס"א
10. א"ר (ס"י סב ס"ק א) ורבי אברהם אופנהיים באשל אברהם (ס"ק א). וכן במשנ"ב (ס"ק א) ושכן מוכח בדעת רש"י. וכן בכפ"י (אות ב)
11. טו ע"א. וכן נראה דעת רבי יהונתן מלוניל (שם). ■

# STORIES Off the Daf

## The School System of R' Yehoshua ben Gamla

חסכת ושמע ישראל – ההוא בדברי תורה כתיב

The Gemara (Bava Basra 21a) tells us that originally, if a child had a father, the father would teach him Torah, but one who did not have a father would not learn Torah. Which verse did they use as a source for this? ולמדתם אותם. Because the letter ו is missing from the word אתם, it can be read "and you yourselves shall teach [Torah] to your children." Since many children were not receiving an education,

Chazal established a school system. Yehushua ben Gamla enacted that local authorities should engage teachers of children in every town, and they should bring in children ages six and seven.

It seems that before the time of Yehoshua ben Gamla only the actual biological father of a child would be commanded to teach a child Torah. Yet, on this verse, Rashi on Chumash cites the Sifrei which interprets "children" as "students". Accordingly, the verse teaches that we must instruct others beside our own sons. Why did people educate only their own children?

Once a student is brought to a teacher and they become immersed in the study of Torah together, the pupil immediately be-

comes a son to the Rebbe. Their relationship becomes one which simulates an authentic father/son association. Accordingly, the Rebbe is then obligated to teach his student as if he were his natural son. Before this arrangement is set, however, the Rebbe would not have this responsibility, for the student is not yet a "son" to him. There was also no requirement for a teacher to seek out all eligible children and educate them. This, however, was part of the innovation which Rabbi Yehoshua ben Gamla instituted, and children from the community at large were then recruited and brought into the organized classes to be taught Torah and trained together with all the other children. ■

