



OVERVIEW of the Daf

1) Learning proper conduct from observation

Three stories are related about students hiding themselves to observe their Rebbe's conduct when relieving themselves and having marital relations.

2) Wiping with the left hand

A number of different reasons are offered for why it is necessary for a person to wipe themselves with the left hand.

3) Issues regarding a bathroom

The Gemara outlines the benefits for one who practices modesty when going to the bathroom.

Different Amoraim employed different methods to protect themselves from harmful spirits while in the bathroom.

There is a dispute how far one must distance himself from others when defecating.

The Gemara clarifies the extent one is obligated to practice modesty when defecating at night.

4) Advice from the sages

A number of pieces of advice are presented from the sages regarding proper conduct when defecating, when sleeping and other pieces of general advice.

5) Speaking in the bathroom

The story is told of R' Safra and R' Abba which demonstrates the impropriety of speaking while in the bathroom.

6) Shaul and Dovid HaMelech

The Gemara notes the extreme modesty practiced by Shaul HaMelech.

A second encounter between Shaul and Dovid HaMelech is presented which leads to a discussion of the mistake of counting the people by Dovid HaMelech and the plague that followed.

7) Kapandaria

The Gemara explains the etymology of the word "קפנדריא".

Instances when a Beis HaKnesses can be used as a shortcut are noted.

8) Spitting

A parable is given that characterizes the impropriety of spitting in the Beis HaMikdash.

Rava begins a discussion about whether it is prohibited to spit in a Beis HaKnesses. ■

Gemara GEM

Cutting corners

כל המבזה את הבגדים לסוף אינו נהנה מהם, שנאמר והמלך דוד זקן כ"י

We must try to understand why Dovid HaMelech was punished for cutting off the corner of the cloak of Shaul. What could Dovid possibly have done under the circumstances less than he actually did? We should remember that Dovid was being pursued by Shaul, who wanted to kill him. Accordingly, Dovid had the legal right to kill Shaul, in order to save his own life from this threat. Instead, as explained by the Ein Yaakov, Dovid decided to cut off a corner of the cloak of Shaul, and to later show it to him, which he did. Dovid hoped that this would prove to Shaul that he, Dovid, meant no harm to him, and that Shaul would therefore cease his pursuit of Dovid. Therefore, Dovid hoped to prevent bloodshed by cutting off a small corner of the garment. Nevertheless, our sages fault Dovid for cutting not only a piece of the garment of Shaul, but an entire corner. This was enough of an insensitivity to earn him a mild condemnation, and for him later to lose the warming benefit which clothing provides.

This is a frightening lesson, in that even at a moment when his life was in mortal danger, Dovid was held accountable for his having overreacted. He was expected to have remained calm and fully in control of his faculties, and to realize that his objective could have been adequately fulfilled by merely cutting a small piece of the garment, and not an entire corner. Of course, such demands for perfection upon a person cannot be expected from everyone. But, from Dovid, who was destined to be the king of the nation, the author of Tehillim, and the progenitor of the Moshiach, this level of expectation was reasonable. ■

REVIEW and Remember

1. What are the different reasons given for wiping with the left hand?

2. How should a tzanua act when relieving himself?

3. What protected Shaul from being killed as a pursuer (רודף)?

4. When is it permitted to use a Beis Haknesses as a shortcut?

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HALACHAH Highlight

Speaking in the washroom

אמרי להו: אנו קבלה גמיריני, קבלה דבית הכסא צניעותא ושתיקותא.
 Rav Ami and Rav Assi said to them: "We have learned a tradition. The tradition for the lavatory is modesty and silence.

אמר ליה: עד השתא לא עיילת לשעיר, וגמרת לך מילי דשעיר, ... אלמא לאו אורח ארעא הוא.

Rav Abba said to Rav Safra: "You have not gone to Se'ir, yet you have learned their customs of immodesty in the lavatory. ... We must conclude that it is inappropriate to do as you did and speak. [This adaptation follows Rashi's interpretation of the passage.]

Rama¹ codifies the interdiction of speaking in the lavatory. Rav Ovadiah Yosef² has written a thorough treatment of the matter of speaking in the lavatory. We will present some points of that responsum.

Rashi's interpretation of the Gemara that speaking is prohibited in the washroom due to immodesty is endorsed by other Rishonim³. However, still other Rishonim⁴ appear to understand that Rav Abba's objection to Rav Safra was because Rav Safra invited Rav Abba into the lavatory while he was still inside. However, the Rama appears to opine like Rashi.

Rambam⁵ writes that one should not speak then even for an urgent matter. Rav Chaim Yosef David Azulai⁶, the Chid"ra, explains that Rambam surmised from our Gemara's explanation of Rav Safra's view that one may speak if one suspects danger, however, for anything else, even a great need, it would remain forbidden to speak.

Rav Yosef addresses at length the opinion of the Sefer Charedim⁷. The Charedim explains that the prohibition of speaking in the washroom is due to the danger of demons who occupy the lavatory. This concern is not one of immodesty, but rather of danger. This approach is based upon anecdotes and deliberation in our Gemara. Rav Yosef counters that sources⁸ indicate that the concern for demons in lavatories existed in the days of the Talmud

when the lavatories were in the fields, removed from inhabited areas. Conversely, today when lavatories are located in well inhabited areas, the concern for demons is mitigated. Even according to the Kabbalistic viewpoint⁹ that a negative energy (רוח רעה) exists in the lavatory, possibly our lavatories that are more hygienic and cleaner, do not have this full status of lavatory.

However, according to Rambam who forbids talking even for great necessity, the prohibition is rooted in the obligation of modesty, and not out of concern for evil forces. Still, Rav Yosef finds room for leniency if there exists the potential for financial loss¹⁰, since possibly even Rambam would agree to this. Yet, a person, even speaking in order to prevent potential financial loss, should be as quick and curt as possible.

It should be noted that the Mishnah Berura¹¹ opines that the prohibition of speaking even for great necessity applies when one is actually defecating, however, if one is not so occupied, but is simply in the washroom, one may speak for a great need. Rav Yosef¹² contests this view. ■

1. רמ"א (סי' ג' ס"ב)
2. שו"ת יביע אומר ח"ח (חאו"ח סי' א'). דברינו כאן מבוססים על סכום תשובתו זאת שהדפוס מר בריה דרבינא, רבי דוד יוסף בסי' הלכה ברורה ח"א (חלק אצרות יוסף סי' ו', עמ' כ' ואילך).
3. כ"כ האור זרוע ח"א (סי' קלו). וכן משמע בפירוש הרא"ש לתמיד (כו ע"א). וכ"כ רבי אליהו מלונדריש בפסקיו (ברכות עמ' קל).
4. ר"ח שהובא באור זרוע שם. וכן פירש הריטב"א כאן, וכן נראה שיטת המפרש שם בתמיד (כו ע"ב).
5. פ"ה מהל' דעות הי"ו. ואע"פ שהרמב"ם כתב דבריו שם על תלמידי חכמים, לאו דוקא הוא, וכאשר האריך להוכיח ביב"א שם (אות ב').
6. מחזיק ברכה (קונטרס אחרון סי' ג')
7. סי' חרדים (מצות לא תעשה מדברי סופרים התלויות בפה בקנה פ"ד סי' ז')
8. היעב"ץ במור קציעה (סי' ג') לענין אמירת התכבדו מכובדים. וכן בסי' תורת חיים סופר (סי' ג' ס"ק ד').
9. זוהר הקדוש בהקדמה (דף י' ע"ב) ושער מאמרי רשב"י (פרשת תצוה) להאר"י ז"ל
10. כ"כ בסי' טהרת המים (מע' ד' אות לו) לחד תירוצא
11. סי' ג' ס"ק ד'
12. שם אות ג' ■

STORIES off the Daf

Influenced by one gaze

תניא א"ר עקיבא פעם אחת נכנסתי אחר ר' יהושע... א"ל בן עזאי עד כאן העזת פניך... תניא בן עזאי אומר פעם אחת נכנסתי אחר רבי עקיבא

Our Gemara tells us that Rabbi Akiva and Ben Azai followed their teachers to great lengths in order to learn about their every move. Why, however, was this necessary? Why couldn't their rebbeim simply have taught these worthy students these lessons, without their having to be followed and observed under extreme circumstances?

The lesson we learn from here is that there is no better way of learning other than

to actually witness and observe how something should be done. As the students replied each time, "This is Torah, and to study is essential to us!" The Gemara (Horayos 12a) brings the wise words of R' Mesharshia who instructed his son to prepare the shiur before entering the classroom in order to be able to gaze at the rebbe's lips during the shiur itself. He told him to heed the words of Yeshayahu (30:20): "Your eyes shall see your teacher."

Rav Aharon Kotler, zt"l, once visited London. He was told that outside the city there was a Jew whose entire life was filled with holy endeavors, dedicated to Torah and gemilus chasadim. This man arranged Torah classes and institutions of tzedaka and chesed. R' Aharon asked to meet him.

When R' Aharon finally was introduced to him and saw the work this man was doing, R' Aharon was impressed, and he asked him where he received his guidance and inspiration to accomplish so much. The man told him that he had merited to have one time seen R' Yisroel Salanter. That one opportunity affected him profoundly, and just gazing upon the face of R' Yisroel provided him with a charge that lasted a lifetime.

R' Aharon could not get over hearing this man's story. That one moment of inspiration and excitement of seeing the face of R' Yisroel Salanter had impacted upon this man and had infused him with enough strength and drive to carry the yoke of Torah for many years. Such is the power of even a single personal experience! ■

