

OVERVIEW of the Daf

1) The seven heavens (cont.)

R' Acha bar Yaakov notes that there is an additional level of heaven that is above the head of the chayos.

It is noted that one is not permitted to discuss matters related to the heavens beyond what is discussed in the Gemara.

R' Yochanan ben Zakkai describes the distance the different levels of heaven are from earth.

2) Maaseh Merkavah

A Beraisa rules that chapter headings of maaseh merkavah may be transmitted.

R' Zeira adds, depending on the version, one or two qualifications to this ruling.

R' Ami points to five attributes needed to study secrets of the Torah and tangentially the restriction against teaching Torah to non-Jews.

Two incidents related to the study of Maaseh Merkavah involving R' Yochanan and R' Yosef are recorded.

R' Yosef's definition of maaseh merkavah is unsuccessfully challenged.

The issue of studying "Chashmal" is questioned.

3) Sefer Yechezkel

R' Yehudah relates how R' Chananyah ben Chizkiyah saved Sefer Yechezkel from being hidden away.

A Beraisa recounts another incident where R' Chananyah ben Chizkiyah saved Sefer Yechezkel from being hidden away.

Two definitions of the term "Chashmal" are presented.

The Gemara expounds on a number of difficult pesukim from the beginning of Sefer Yechezkel.

A contrast is made between an account found in Sefer Yechezkel and an account found in Sefer Yishayah.

The matter of the four faces on Hashem's chariot is discussed.

Issues related to the angel's wings are presented.

A discussion related to the "stream of fire" is recorded as well as a discussion of the generations that were originally supposed to be created. ■

Distinctive INSIGHT

Teaching Torah to a gentile

אין מוסרין דברי תורה לעובד כוכבים שנאמר 'לא עשה כן לכל גוי ומשפטים בל ידעום' וכו'.

Sefer חיים cites the ט"ז (O.C. 77:#1) who says that the main mitzvah of toiling in Torah is when one delves into clarifying and understanding the intricacies and the details of its laws. This explanation of ט"ז can help resolve a question posed by Tosafos on our daf (ד"ה אין מוסרין). Tosafos wonders why our Gemara brings the verse from Tehillim to inform us that we may not teach Torah to a gentile, when this would be prohibited based upon the dictum of "לפני עור." It is prohibited for a gentile to study Torah, and if he does so, he is חייב מיתה (see Sanhedrin 59a). A Jew is not allowed to teach him Torah, so as not to be the vehicle by which the gentile sins. What, then, is being added to this ruling in our Gemara from the verse in Tehillim?

According to ט"ז we can say that the study of Torah which is prohibited for a gentile is the in-depth and careful study of its profundities. This includes the intricate aspects of Torah taught by Moshe to the Jewish people. However, the study of a simple listing of guidelines of Jewish law and general halachos would not cause a gentile to be liable for death. A Jew is, therefore, not in violation of לפני עור for exposing a gentile to such information. Our Gemara teaches that this is still prohibited, nevertheless, based upon the verse in Tehillim.

שו"ת שרידי אש rules that the prohibition of teaching Torah to a gentile is when we instruct him about the way to resolve discrepancies and contrasts between different sugyos in the Gemara.

Harav Moshe Feinstein, זט"ל, explains (Igros Moshe Y.D. 4:#41) that there is no problem with instructing Torah to people whose Jewish status is uncertain. In such a case, it is necessary to teach them about Judaism to educate them about the laws that may apply to them. We must be careful, however, not to lie or mislead them by telling them that they are definitely Jewish. We should simply inform them that they might be Jewish, and that we are willing to teach them about the Torah of Hashem and its mitzvos. ■

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HALACHAH Highlight

Positioning one's feet for prayer

ורגליהם רגל ישרה

Their legs were a straight leg

The Gemara Berachos¹ rules that when reciting Shemoneh Esrei one must stand with feet together to emulate the way the angels stand. The Yerushalmi², though, cites a dispute concerning the reason one stands with feet together for Shemone Esrei. One opinion maintains that the practice is an attempt to emulate the angels, but the second opinion bases the practice on the way the kohanim walked up the ramp of the altar, i.e. feet next to one another. Rabbeinu Yonah³ writes that our Gemara follows the first opinion in the Yerushalmi; therefore, one should stand with feet together so that they resemble the one foot of the angels. Rav Yosef Karo⁴, the Bais Yosef, offers two explanations for the rationale behind this practice. The first suggestion is that when standing before the Divine Presence one must banish any thoughts of the body and stand in a ministering position like the angels. A second rationale is that standing with feet together is a symbolic statement that one is incapable of obtaining one's needs without Hashem's assistance; therefore, we stand with our feet together incapable of running to fend for ourselves.

One could suggest that there is a practical difference between these two explanations. Rabbeinu Yisroel Isserlen⁵, the Terumas Hadeshen, writes that it is appropriate to stand with one's feet together during the recitation of kedusha. The rationale is that since we declare, "We will sanctify Your name in the world just as it is sanctified in the heavens" and we know in the heavens the angels stand with their feet together, it is only logical that we should stand with our feet together to emulate the practice of the

REVIEW and Remember

1. What is the distance between earth and the beginning of Heaven?

2. How did R' Yosef "trick" the Elders of Pumpedisa?

3. Who are the four "kings" beneath Hahshem?

4. What happened to the angels when the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed?

angels. Terumas Hadeshen's application of this halacha to kedusha fits well with the first explanation cited by Bais Yosef that we stand with feet together in Shemoneh Esrei to emulate the angels. However, according to the second reason cited, when making a request of Hashem we want to stand in a position that symbolically shows submission to Hashem's strength, there is no reason to stand in this position for kedusha when we do not make any requests at that time. ■

1. גמ' ברכות י .:
2. ירושלמי ברכות פ"א הל' ה'.
3. תר"י ה. בדפי הר"י.
4. ב"י אר"ח סי' צ"ה ד"ה ועל מ"ש רבינו כאילו.
5. שו"ת תרומת הדשן סי' כ"ח. ■

STORIES Off the Daf

The Torah of the Jewish People

"...אין מוטרין תורה לעובד כוכבים..."

On today's daf, Rav Ami says that one may not transmit Torah to a non-Jew.

About 350 years ago, someone asked Rav Avraham Amigo, ז"ל, an interesting question. "A notzri who is connected to the authorities has been buying our books in an effort to complete a library of all the basic Torah texts. He has also offered to pay a certain Jew to teach him Torah. It is not clear whether this is preparatory to conversion or because he is seeking a way to undermine the Jewish community. Is it permissible to teach him or sell him se-

forim?"

The Gadol responded, "It is prohibited to teach him, as we find in the Gemara in Chagiga 13a. However, if there is a potential threat to Jewish life involved, it is definitely permitted to teach him, as we learn from the Gemara in Bava Kama 38b. If it does not appear that there is an element of danger in this case, I forbid teaching him or selling him books. Whether he truly intends to convert is difficult to ascertain because he could endanger himself by showing an interest in Judaism as the citizen of a Catholic country. In any case, the Gemara in Gittin 85a states that conversion is not likely, and we also find many references in Shas that prove that heretics often try to capitalize on whatever little learning they do have to defame the sages

and undermine the Jewish community."

The Rav continued, "In any event, we must guard against the possibility that he will travel where he is unknown and get the confidence of a Jew on the road. The Jew will trust him because he is learned. Once he wins his confidence he may very well kill him. This is the logic of the Gemara in Menachos 43a regarding the prohibition to sell a non-Jew techeiles. If he was wearing techeiles, he could easily fool a Jew on the road and kill him for his possessions!" ■

