

OVERVIEW of the Daf

1) Kamtza and Bar Kamtza (cont.)

After it finishes the account of Titus a Baraisa is cited that emphasizes the cause of the destruction of the Beis Hamildash.

2) The destruction of Tur Malka

The Gemara elaborates on how an incident involving a rooster and a hen was involved in the destruction of Tur Malka.

A disagreement is recorded regarding the size and number of residents of Tur Malka.

The Gemara describes the righteousness of the residents of Kfar Sachnaya and that the city was destroyed because people did not properly mourn the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash.

3) The destruction of Beitar

The Gemara recounts the events that led to the destruction of Beitar.

4) Nevuzraden

A detailed description of Nevuzraden's bloodthirsty record is presented.

Tangentially a Baraisa relates that wicked people and sometimes their descendants became righteous people.

5) The voice of Yaakov and the hands of Esav

A number of expositions related to the "voice of Yaakov" and the "hands of Yitzchok" are recorded.

6) The destruction of the Beis Hamikdash

R' Elazar notes how misuse of one's speech can lead to the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash.

R' Yehudan in the name of Rav relates that Hashem showed Dovid Hamelech the destruction of the first and second Beis Hamikdash.

7) "For Your sake we were killed all the time"

The incident of four hundred boys and girls, who gave up their lives rather than allow themselves to be violated, is recorded.

Another incident involving the self-sacrifice of a mother and her seven sons is recounted.

Three more interpretations of this verse are presented. ■

Distinctive INSIGHT

The blood of the prophet

אשכחיה לדמיה דזכריה דהוה קא מרתח וסליק

Our Gemara tells the tragic story of Nevuzraden, the Roman general, who found a pool of boiling blood of the prophet Zechariah, who had been killed. Not knowing the nature of the blood, Nevuzraden asked about it. He was told that it was the blood of some offerings that had spilled. Nevuzraden brought samples of blood of bulls, goats and sheep, but none of it matched the boiling blood. He then realized that it was human blood.

In Bereshis 37:31, the brothers of Yosef presented their father Yaakov the torn and blood-stained coat of Yosef which they had prepared by dipping it into blood of a goat. "And they took Yosef's tunic, and they slaughtered a male of the goats and dipped the tunic in the blood." Rashi there comments that the blood of a goat is similar to that of a human. The brothers expected to fool Yaakov into believing that the blood was that of Yosef, and that he had been killed by a wild animal.

The Chizkuni notes the contradiction between our Gemara and Rashi's comment in Bereshis, where it seems that the blood of a goat is similar to that of a human. As Rashi mentions, the strategy of the brothers was to mislead their father and have him believe that the goat's blood was that of Yosef. It must be, answers Mahara"m Shi"f, that, in fact, the blood of humans and that of goats are distinct. However, the difference is only clear and noticeable when the samples of each are placed one next to the other. This is why Nevuzraden was able to see that the boiling blood was not that of an animal. However, when only given a sample of goat's blood, for example in the case where Yaakov was given a stained shirt of Yosef, is it then difficult to ascertain whether it is from a goat or whether it is from a human. ■

REVIEW and Remember

1. What was the incident that led to the destruction of Tur Malka?

2. What was the incident that led to the destruction of Beitar?

3. What incident inspired Nevuzraden to convert to Judaism?

4. To whom does the phrase "אם הבנים שמחה" refer?

HALACHAH Highlight

Mourning the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash

משום דלא איאבול על ירושלים

Because they did not mourn the destruction of Yerushalayim

The Gemara relates that a town was destroyed despite the fact that the residents were righteous because they did not properly mourn the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash. Shulchan Aruch¹ writes that it is appropriate for every G-d-fearing person to be distressed and concerned (מיצר ודואג) about the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash. Chazal² put in place many enactments to assure that people would be regularly reminded of the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash. Mishnah Berurah³ cites the opinion of Shelah who wrote that one should say על נהרות בבל (Tehillim 137) at every meal to be reminded of the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash and on Shabbos and on days when tachanun is not recited the paragraph of שיר המעלות (Tehillim 126) should be recited. Pri Megadim⁴ writes that the one should say שיר המעלות when reciting Birkas Hamazon on the afternoon of Erev Rosh Chodesh. Similarly, Mishnah Berurah⁵ writes that one should say שיר המעלות when reciting Birkas Hamazon on the afternoon of Erev

Shabbos. He also emphasizes the importance of intent when reciting these paragraphs and that they should not be recited mindlessly.

Poskim⁶ debate which paragraph should be read when reciting Birkas Hamazon at a wedding, sheva berachos or a bris milah. Sefer Ketos Hashulchan expresses uncertainty regarding the correct practice on these days where it is a festive occasion that creates an exemption from reciting tachanun. Sefer Yosef Ometz rules that שיר המעלות is recited only on those days that have an inherent sanctity to them but on the days that tachanun is not recited because of the celebration of a festive life-cycle event one should recite על נהרות בבל. Common custom, however, does not follow the position of Yosef Ometz and people recite שיר המעלות at any seudas mitzvah. Sefer Piskei Teshuvos notes that there is a custom followed by many good people (מנהג רבים וטובים), to recite the Psalm of שיר המעלות on Shabbos, Yom Tov or at other סעודות מצוה but to not recite the Psalm of על נהרות בבל. ■

1. שרייע אוי"ח סיי אי סעי ג'.
2. עי שרייע אוי"ח סיי תקי"ס.
3. מ"ב סיי אי סייק י"א.
4. פמ"ג סיי רצ"ב סק"ד.
5. מ"ב סיי רס"ג סק"א.
6. עי בספר פסקי תשובות ח"ב סיי קפ"א העי' 60 שמביא הדעות דלקמן. ■

STORIES Off the Daf

Making Time to Learn

"אלא במי שממית עצמו עליהם..."

The Chofetz Chaim explained a statement on today's daf with the following story:

Once there was a shopkeeper who was very successful and made a fortune off of the people of his city and the surrounding environs. Virtually every waking minute was taken up with work. Not only did he lack time to learn one word of Torah, this gentleman didn't even have enough time to daven. Since he worked until late at night it was hard for him to get up on time in the morning; he invariably arrived at shul around the time of Borchu. Of course, since he always needed to rush to his business, he would leave davening early and never remained until Aleinu.

When this businessman grew older he started to notice that his hair was turning grey. The shock of his own encroaching mortality inspired him to make a rigorous cheshbon hanefesh. "One day it will be time to leave the world and I will be re-

quired to give an exact accounting for every action. All the money in the world will surely be worthless then..."

He decided that from that day on he would have a daily seder of several hours after davening no matter what. The very next day he went to bed early, got up on time, and for the first time in years arrived on time for a weekday davening. He stayed until the end and began learning with great enthusiasm.

Meanwhile, his partner wondered why this man, always so regular in the past, did not come to help the moment the store opened at 7:00 AM. When he finally arrived a little after ten, his partner was a little annoyed with him. "Where were you?" blurted the partner.

"I couldn't make it on time today," he replied vaguely.

The next day the partner in the store anxiously awaited the reformed businessman, but to no avail. After an hour he decided to search for the twice tardy man. When he finally found him in shul he was furious, but decided to wait for him to complete his seder before exploding. He returned to the store.

At 10:00 AM, when this man finally

completed his few hours of learning and arrived at the store, his partner virtually pounced on him. "Are you crazy? The store is filled with customers. I simply cannot manage alone and you sit and learn? As you know we don't really need the money but not having enough salesmen is like tossing our valuable customers out the door..."

The partner who had done teshuvah did not mince words. "Listen carefully. What would you have done if the malach hamaves had come for me? Would you also insist that I simply may not die because our store is filled with customers? So I want you to imagine that, during those first three hours of business in the morning, I have left the world. Why should it bother you if after a couple of hours I am revived from the dead and come to help out in our store?"

"This is the meaning of the Gemara in Gittin 57," the Chofetz Chaim concluded. "Words of Torah only remain with someone who kills himself for them. This means he never misses his regular times to learn because he acts as though he has already left the world— then all excuses that he has no time no longer apply!" ■

שיחות חפץ חיים, עמוד קס"ט

