

Daf Digest for the month of Av is dedicated

ל"ג ר' מנחם מנדל בן ר' יוסף יצחק אייזיק כ"ז מנחם אב תשס"ו בעל המחבר "עטרת אבי" על מסי ביצה ומו"ק מאת משפחת קאהן

OVERVIEW of the Daf

1) **MISHNAH:** The Mishnah discusses some of the procedures for reading the Torah and Nevi'im.

2) Clarifying the Mishnah

R' Assi explains why the minimal number of verses that must be read is three. An example of three verses in Navi that are three separate paragraphs is cited.

3) Skipping from one section to another in the Torah

The Mishnah's ruling against skipping in the Torah is challenged from the practice of the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur.

Abaye, on his second attempt, resolves the contradiction.

A Baraisa supports this distinction.

A Baraisa rules that although one may not skip from one Navi to another, this is permitted within Trei Asar.

4) **MISHNAH:** The Mishnah enumerates the privileges given to the one who reads haftorah. The Mishnah also lists what roles may be served in the prayer service by a minor, one whose legs are exposed and one who is blind.

5) Clarifying the Mishnah

R' Pappa and Rabbah bar Shimi disagree why the one who recites haftorah is given additional privileges.

The difference between their explanations is identified. Rabbah bar Shimi's explanation is unsuccessfully challenged.

6) A minor who is exposed

Ulla bar Rav inquired of Abaye whether a minor whose legs are exposed may read the Torah. Abaye responded that it is prohibited.

7) One who is blind

A Baraisa records the argument of the sages to challenge R' Yehudah and R' Yehudah's response to that challenge.

The rationale behind the sages' position is explained.

8) **MISHNAH:** The Mishnah presents two characteristics that disqualify a kohen from blessing the people.

9) Clarifying the Mishnah

A Baraisa clarifies that a kohen becomes disqualified only if the blemishes are on his face, hands or feet.

R' Yehoshua ben Levi cites a blemish that disqualifies a kohen from blessing the people and his opinion is supported by a Baraisa.

The Gemara cites additional blemishes that disqualify a kohen from blessing the people.

A Baraisa teaches that if the members of a community are accustomed to a particular blemish it does not disqualify the kohen.

A Baraisa teaches that if most of the people in town practice a profession that causes their hands to become colored it is not considered a blemish.

10) **MISHNAH:** The Mishnah teaches that if a person is particular about certain matters he is unfit to serve as the Shaliach Tzibbur. The Mishnah proceeds to discuss other heretical practices. ■

Distinctive INSIGHT

As a blind man in the darkness...

אמר רבי יוסי כל ימי הייתי מצטער על מקרא זה—והיית ממשש בצהרים כאשר ימשש העור באפלה וגו'

Rabbi Yosi was troubled by the verse - "And you shall grope at noonday, as the blind grope in darkness." (Devarim 28:29) He wondered, what difference is there between darkness and light to a blind man? He then witnessed an incident which illuminated the verse for him. He was walking in the darkness of nighttime, and he saw a blind person who was walking on the road, carrying a torch in his hand. When he asked him why he needed the torch, the blind man told him that as long as he carried a torch in his hand, people could see him and save him from ditches, thorns and briars. Therefore, Rabbi Yosi understood that the verse is describing "a blind who gropes in darkness" to mean that no one can see him and thus help him.

A blind person can travel along the road and not stumble when the road is clear and straight, and if the blind person is familiar with the route. If he then moves along slowly, heel to toe, he can be safe and find his way even without assistance. If he is rushing along a route which he has never traveled, and the road is not paved, it is certain that he will stumble.

HoRav Yisroel Stam MiKelem explains that there were times when the Jewish community was more insular than it is now. Our tradition was lived and experienced on a more intense level, with faith and belief ingrained within our families. Our children were not confused with the distractions and dazzles of the secular culture and the challenges of dealing with the value-starved society around them. Life was quieter and simpler, and keeping the faith was not as difficult as it is now. Today, however, life is stormy and winds of confusion reign. The path to living a Torah-true life is no longer paved before us. Many obstacles lie in wait. What can we do? Sadly, we no longer have clear vision of the correct road.

As did the blind man in the story, let us walk along carrying a lantern to alert others to assist us. There are helpers who can reach out, if we only look to them for guidance. The Yeshivos, in which Torah is taught, provide this light which disperses the darkness. Torah scholars nurture a new generation of students who prepare themselves to serve Hashem faithfully as they become the community members and leaders who blaze a trail and pave a road to traverse the challenges which the world presents.

Although our vision may not be sharp, as long as we cling to our torch, the Torah luminaries and their precious words of wisdom which they teach, we can hope that we will be guided by them to safety. ■

HALACHAH Highlight

Looking at the hands of the Kohanim when they bless the people

כהן שיש בידו מומין לא ישה את כפיו

A kohen with blemishes on his hands should not raise his hands [to bless the people.]

The reason a kohen with blemished hands should not bless the people, Rashi¹ explains, is that the blemishes will attract people's attention. The Gemara in Chagiga² states that gazing at the hands of the kohanim while their hands are raised will result in one's vision becoming weakened because of the Divine presence which resides on their hands at that moment. Tosafos³, disagrees because the concern of the Gemara applies only when the kohanim bless the people in the Beis HaMikdash with the explicit name of Hashem (שם המפורש) but under our present conditions that concern does not apply. Tosafos suggests an alternative explanation, namely, that the blemish will distract those who are gazing at the blemish thus causing an interruption of intent (היסח הדעת). Tosafos HaRosh⁴ suggests that although nowadays there is no concern for a person's vision becoming weakened since the blessings are not done with the explicit name of Hashem, nonetheless, the hands of the kohanim represent the place where Hashem gazes and as such it is prohibited, even nowadays, to gaze at that place.

Mishnah Berurah⁵ writes that the restriction against gazing for a period of time results from the fear that it will cause an interruption of intent, in accordance with Tosafos. Additionally, although the concern of one's vision becoming weakened does not apply, nevertheless, the custom is to avoid looking, even mo-

REVIEW and Remember

1. Why is the Kohen Gadol permitted to skip from one place in the Torah to another?
2. Are the privileges given to the one who reads haftorah give to one who is paid to read the haftorah?
3. Is it necessary to see light to benefit from its presence?
4. What part of tefillin must be square?

mentarily, at the hands of the kohanim when they bless the people as a commemoration of what was done in the Beis HaMikdash (זכר למקדש)

Poskim discuss whether it is appropriate for the kohanim to cover their hands with a talis in order to prevent people from gazing at their hands. Some Poskim⁶ oppose the practice because they maintain that the talis constitutes an interruption between the hands of the kohanim and the people, whereas others⁷ maintain that there is no source for such a concern. ■

1. רש"י ד"ה כהן שיש וד"ה פניו
2. גמ' חגיגה טז
3. תוס' חגיגה טז. ד"ה בכהנים
4. תוס' הרא"ש ד"ה מפני
5. מ"ב שם סי' קכ"ח ס"ק פ"ט
6. ע' מור וקציעה שם ד"ה שם ונראה לי (עמ' קנ"א במהד' מכוון ירושלים) ושו"ע הרב שם סע' ל"ו
7. כף החיים סי' קכ"ח ס"ק קמ"ג ■

STORIES Off the Daf

The message

כשאתה מגיע אצל החכיתי לה' לא נמצאת מחרף ומגדף?

Once, when Rav Zalman Efraim Margolios, zt"l, was visiting with the Ohev Yisrael of Apta, zt"l, the Ohev Yisrael asked Rav Zalman about an apparently enigmatic Yerushalmi. "When Rav Chiya came to a certain town he saw that they were not careful about the halachos of Shavuos. This concerned Rav Chiya. He said, 'Tomorrow I will make the people aware of the greatness of Shavuos by posting a public message that will proclaim a new way to read the verse that discusses Shavuos. The verse states: עצרת תהיה לכם—You shall

make a convocation and refrain from labor on Shavuos. Since the letter ח can be interchanged with the letter ה, one can also read the verse as: עצרת תחיה לכם—Proper observance of the festival of Shavuos will give you life! This message will inspire the people to observe all the halachos of this lofty festival and merit eternal life!"

The Ohev Yisroel went on. "As far as I remember, this is the only place where one of the Tanaim or Amoraim transmitted an important message to the community in writing. Why did Rav Chiya not gather everyone together and deliver a drasha as we find in other similar cases throughout Shas? Why did Rav Chiya elect to use what must have been a far less direct and effective method of communication?"

Rav Zalman Efraim responded, "In

Megillah 24b, we find that Rav Chiya told Rabbi Shimon bar Rebbi that if he were a Levi he would be disqualified from singing on the duchan since his voice is 'thick.' When Rabbi Shimon told this to his father, he was told to retort that when Rav Chiya says the verse: וחכיתי לה', it makes him sound like an apikorus! Rashi explains that Rav Chiya couldn't pronounce the letter ח as a guttural, and would instead say החכיתי.

"This is why Rav Chiya wrote a message instead of giving a drasha. It would have been counterproductive to deliver a drasha about interchanging the letters when he could not pronounce them properly. No one would have understood what he meant! Writing out his message was the only way to strengthen the people in their Yom Tov observance!"

