



OVERVIEW of the Daf

1) Moshiach (cont.)

The Gemara concludes citing a Beraisa that presents a dispute between R' Eliezer and R' Yehoshua whether Moshiach will come at a preordained time.

Amoraim suggest different signs that indicate that Moshiach is coming.

2) Teachings of R' Yehoshua ben Levi

R' Yehoshua ben Levi resolves a contradiction between two verses regarding when Moshiach will come.

Two additional teachings of R' Yehoshua ben Levi regarding Moshiach are recorded.

3) Moshiach (cont.)

Additional teachings related to the arrival of Moshiach are presented.

4) Birth pangs of Moshiach

Different Amoraim issue statements related to the birth pangs of Moshiach.

This leads the Gemara into a discussion about whether a person could lose earned reward by sinning.

R' Yochanan stated that he did not wish to see the arrival of Moshiach.

Reish Lakish searches for the rationale behind R' Yochanan's position.

Additional expositions of the cited verse are presented.

5) Moshiach (cont.)

R' Gidal in the name of Rav teaches that the Jewish People will enjoy the time of Moshiach.

The novelty of this ruling is explained.

Rav, Shmuel and R' Yochanan disagree for whom the

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Distinctive INSIGHT

The Moshiach may come "Today"

היום אם בקולו תשמעו

The Gemara tells the fascinating story of when R' Yehoshua ben Levi met the Moshiach. He greeted the Moshiach and asked him when he would be coming. The Moshiach responded and told him, "Today!" R' Yehoshua ben Levi went to Eliyahu the Navi and informed him of the great news, but that he felt that Moshiach had lied to him, as he had assured him that he would be coming that very day, but he had not come. Eliyahu immediately explained that the Moshiach simply meant that he was indeed ready to come, "Today, if you will heed His voice." (Tehillim 94:7). The Moshiach is ready to come any day as long as the Jewish people repent and perform virtuous deeds.

Sefer פתח עינים explains that we might wonder how we should expect the Moshiach to come in the merit of our deeds, when the Torah learning and mitzvos of the previous generations of the Tannaim and Amoraim, which were much greater and more pure than ours, did not earn his arrival. He explains that the exile was judged to last at least one thousand years, which is an interval which is equal to one day in the realm of God (see Tehillim 90:4). That interval of one thousand years from the date of the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash and our current exile had not yet elapsed at the time of the Amoraim. Now that it has transpired, we are still suffering due to our sins, and we strive to have our mitzvos and Torah study earn sufficient merit to make the difference. This perhaps is what Moshiach referred to when he told R' Yehoshua ben Levi that he was ready to come, except that "the day" had not elapsed.

אם יפה עינים also notes that the final letters of the words "אם בקולו תשמעו" add up numerically to the number 52, which is equal to the name of אליהו, Eliyahu the Navi. This hints at the fact that Moshiach will come only after the appearance of Eliyahu, who will come to announce the arrival of Moshiach.

ירך יעקב asks that the Gemara in Eiruvim (43b) indicates that Moshiach will only come after Eliyahu comes and announces his arrival. When R' Yehoshua ben Levi spoke to Moshiach, Eliyahu had not yet come to announce anything yet, so Moshiach could not come that day. How, then, could the words of the Moshiach who said that he was coming "Today" have been understood literally?

מהר"ש אלפסי answers that if Moshiach comes at the appointed time (בעתה), his arrival will be heralded with the announcement of Eliyahu ahead of time. However, if we merit to have Moshiach arrive earlier (אחישנה), he may very well come suddenly, and unannounced. ■

REVIEW and Remember

1. What are some of the signs of the imminent arrival of Moshiach?

2. According to Shmuel, what kind of horse would be necessary for Moshiach?

3. Why would someone not want to see the arrival of Moshiach?

4. For whom was the world created?

HALACHAH Highlight

Birkas Hamazon Issues

ציון במשפט תפדה ושביה בצדקה

Tzion will be redeemed with judgment and her returnees through charity

There are a couple of interesting issues related to Birkas Hamazon that emerge from our Gemara. The end of the third beracha concludes בונה ברחמיו ירושלים – Who builds Yerushalayim with compassion. Beis Yosef¹ in the name of some Rishonim writes that the word ברחמיו meaning “with compassion” should be deleted from the text. Our Gemara quotes the verse that states (Yeshaya 1:27), ציון במשפט תפדה – Tzion will be redeemed with judgment. This verse indicates that it will be judgment that will redeem Yerushalayim rather than compassion. Pri Megadim² suggests that the phrase should be included, and he offers the following explanation of the verse. When the Jewish People provide for fair judgment between people and perform acts of charity – ושביה בצדקה – and her returnees through charity, Tzion will be redeemed. He also cites Yam Shel Shlomo who asserts that the redemption will be the result of judgment as indicated by the verse, but what will generate the merit that the Beis Hamikdash will be greater than the previous ones will come as a result of Hashem’s compassion.

The second issue involves the order of two of the הרחמן prayers. On Shabbos we recite a special הרחמן that reads הרחמן

world was created.

Different schools offer different opinions regarding the name of Moshiach.

Amoraim offer suggestions regarding whom Moshiach would resemble.

R’ Simlai expounds a verse that contrasts the Jewish People and the nations of the world regarding their attitude towards Moshiach. ■

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The compassionate One, may He cause us to inherit the day which will be completely Shabbos etc. referring to the World-to-Come. After that we read הרחמן הוא – The compassionate One, may He make us worthy of the days of Moshiach. Seemingly the prayers are out of order since the era of Moshiach will proceed the era of the World-to-Come. One explanation for this relates to the disagreement between Ulla and R’ Yosef. Ulla yearned for Moshaiach but did not want to see him whereas R’ Yosef expressed a willingness to endure suffering in order to be present for the Era of the World-to-Come. Commentators explain that R’ Yosef maintained that it is worthwhile to endure the degradation of the era of Moshiach in order to be able to enter the World-to-Come. Therefore, we first pray to be around in the World-to-Come and then we state that in order to get there we realize that we may have to endure terrible degradation that is associated with the Era of Moshiach. ■

1. בית יוסף או"ח סי' קפ"ח.

2. משבצות זהב שם סק"ג.

3. הגדה של פסח חלוקא דרבנן פירוש מטה אהרון פ"ה. ■

STORIES Off the Daf

Entirely righteous or entirely guilty

”כולו זכאי או כולו חייב...”

Rav Yechiel Mordechai Gordon, zt”l, the Rosh Yeshivah of Lomza, was always filled with a burning desire for Moshiach. He was also very concerned at the low state of spiritual development in the average Jew, especially among the disaffected. He was always filled with love for every fellow Jew and was quick to be melamed zechus on others.

He once wrote in a letter to a student: “Our sages tell us in Sanhedrin 98 that Moshiach will come in a generation that will either be completely righteous or completely wicked. We can understand this statement in context of the

verse in Shmuel which tell us that Hashem struck down, ‘seventy men, and fifty thousand men’ after they had gazed inappropriately at the ark that had returned from the Pelishtim.¹ Our sages explain that each of those seventy was like fifty thousand. A second opinion is that each of the fifty thousand was like one of the seventy sages who sat on the Sanhedrin.

“Either way, this teaches that in heaven, numbers can sometimes work very differently than in mundane terms, especially if there is a pressing need. In this context it is quite possible that a small group of people could count like most of the generation, since quality is what will be counted. Indeed, the Zohar teaches that even one congregation that does true teshuvah can bring the ulti-

mate redemption. It is therefore possible to fulfill a generation that is completely obligated: that is, the overwhelming majority are in spiritual low places. Yet at the same time it is completely righteous since the quality of avodah of a smaller group counts like a majority.”²

The Shem MiShmuel, zt”l, learns this differently. “It means that the generation will have two polar extremes. Either people will be completely righteous or the opposite.”³

The Chiddushei HaRim, zt”l, taught that the statement is actually a goad to self-reflection. “It means that people will think they are completely righteous. This is the greatest failing possible!”⁴ ■

1. שמואל א' ו' י"ט

2. מרביצי תורה ומוסר, ח"ד, ע' מ"א

3. שם משמואל, הגדה של פסח, ע' ק'

4. ליקוטי הרי"מ, ח"ב, ע' ע"ג ■