

This month's Daf Digest is dedicated  
L'Ilu Nishmas Mr. Israel Gotlib of Antwerp and Petach Tikva, Yisrael Tzvi ben Zev  
By Mr. and Mrs. Manny Weiss

## OVERVIEW of the Daf

### 1) Old age

The Gemara continues its exposition of the pesukim in Koheles that relate to old age.

Issues that relate to the infirmities of old age and dietary advice for the elderly are recorded.

A conversation between a castrated Tzaduki and R' Yehoshua ben Korcha is recorded, as well as an additional story relating to old age.

In between its exposition of the pesukim in Koheles, the Gemara discusses Barzilei HaGiladi, the different effects of old age on Torah scholars and those who are not Torah scholars, and the diminishment of desire in old age.

### 2) Death

As the Gemara continues its exposition of the pesukim in Koheles the topic of the Gemara turns to death. The Gemara teaches that following death, each tzadik is placed in a position consistent with his righteousness, a person's soul mourns for him for seven days following his death, the soul is aware of what people say in its presence for a period of time following death, the necessity to return one's soul in the same state of taharah as it was given and the state of existence for righteous, wicked and intermediate people in the world-to-come.

The Gemara retells the incident of the body of R' Achai bar Yoshiyah that was found intact and the conversation he had with R' Nachman.

A conversation between R' Avahu and a Tzaduki regarding a person's state of being after death is recorded. ■

## HALACHAH Highlight

*Does one fulfill the Mitzvah of consoling mourners with a telephone call?*

אמר רב יהודה: מת שאין לו מנחמין — הולכין עשרה בני אדם ויושבין במקומו. ההוא דשכיב בשבבותיה דרב יהודה. לא היו לו מנחמין. כל יומא הוה דבר רב יהודה בי עשרה ויתבי בדוכתיה. לאחר שבעה ימים איתחזי ליה בחילמיה דרב יהודה, ואמר ליה: 'יתנוח דעתך שהנחת את דעתי.'

Rav Yehudah said: A deceased individual who does not have relatives to mourn for him, in such a case ten people should go and sit for the seven day period of mourning in the place where he passed away. A certain individual passed away in the neighborhood of Rav Yehudah. This par-

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Today's Daf Digest is dedicated  
As a zechus for continued hatzlacha in the  
לימוד התורה and גידול בנים  
Mr. and Mrs. Michael Rubin

## Distinctive INSIGHT

*The souls of the righteous and Gilgulim*

נשמתן של צדיקים גנוזות תחת כסא הכבוד

In his Chiddushei Aggados, Maharal explains that the righteous are on the level whereby they remain on a correct path throughout their lives, without wavering to the right or to the left. This is the *דרך הישר*—the straight path, the path of honesty and integrity. Because the soul of the tzaddik remained steadfast to its mission, it is therefore appropriate for this soul to arrive at its destination under the "Throne of Glory" of Hashem, with the Shechina, and not to be cast to the side, away from the Shechina. The angels, however, are described as fluttering *"סביב"*—around the Throne of Glory, and not as being directly under the Throne. The angels are from a higher sphere, and their spiritual role demands that they be "around" the Shechina. However, this status results in their not being able to earn to be under the Throne, where the souls of the tzaddikim merit being. A servant exists in close proximity to its master, but it cannot advance. A tzaddik, however, earns and establishes a greater relationship with Hashem, due to his achievements and accomplishments in overcoming the challenges presented in this world.

Our Gemara quotes the words of Avigail, who prophesied that the soul of Dovid HaMelech would join the souls of the tzaddikim which are under the Throne of Glory. She also announced that the souls of the enemies of Dovid would be launched from the pocket of a sling, and tossed across the world. Maharsha explains that this refers to Doeg the Adomi, or to Naval (the husband of Avigail). Maharsha also explains that this was a reference to the souls of the wicked which are returned to this world as a *גלגול*. The soul of the wicked fails to fulfill its mission in this world, and it is redeposited into another body to try to correct shortcomings of its previous attempt. This occurs up to three times, as is indicated in the verse (Iyov 33:29): "All this G-d will do for man, even two or three times." ■

## REVIEW and Remember

1. According to R' Shimon ben Chalafta, when is two better than three?
2. What affect does old age have on a person's mind?
3. What happens to the person who returns his soul soiled?
4. What trait causes a person's bones to rot?

(Highlight...Continued from page 1)

particular person had no mourners. Each day Rav Yehudah would take ten men and go and sit in the place where the person had died. After the seven days of mourning had passed, the deceased appeared to Rav Yehudah in a dream. The deceased person said to Rav Yehudah: 'Let your mind be at ease because you have set my mind at ease.'

Rav Moshe Feinstein<sup>1</sup> was asked whether it would be acceptable to console a mourner by means of a telephone conversation, and not in person. In his response, Rav Feinstein identifies two elements in the Mitzvah of consoling mourners: a) for the benefit of the mourners themselves, to encourage and support them in their grieving; b) on behalf of the deceased person. In order to explain the latter element that part of the consolation process is in order to benefit the deceased person, Rav Feinstein derives from our passage that when individuals are present in a consolatory purpose, it brings peace to the deceased. With this concept, Rav Feinstein explains the position of the Rambam<sup>2</sup> who holds that if a person has to choose between consoling mourners (ניחום אבלים) and visiting the sick (ביקור חולים), one should console the mourners, assuming of course that the ill person has sufficient care<sup>3</sup>. Being that there are two positive benefits to consoling the mourners, for the living and for the dead, while visiting the sick only has one element, namely visiting the living, therefore consoling the mourners takes precedence<sup>4</sup>.

Therefore, the element of comforting the mourner can be accomplished even through a telephone call. However, the element of the Mitzvah which is in order to benefit the deceased person cannot be accomplished unless the person physically visits the place where the mourners are gathered or the place where the person passed away. Undoubtedly, the mourner as well benefits more from a personal visit than a telephone conversation. The Gemara<sup>5</sup> relates that when Rabbi Akiva buried two sons and all the Jewish people gathered to eulogize them, he expressed how the great hon-

or that was extended to him had comforted him even in the face of such a great loss. Thus we see the sense of being honored that a visitation provides is an element of the comforting process for mourners. This feeling of honor can not be accomplished with a telephone call. As such, a visit is clearly more beneficial for the mourner also. Thus, if a person is capable of actually visiting the mourner, which would be the complete execution of the Mitzvah, he does not fulfill his obligation with a telephone call. Yet, there is an element of Mitzvah accomplished by a telephone call, and therefore if the person is incapable of visiting the mourner, due to illness or great distance, than he is obligated to fulfill whatever element of the Mitzvah that is available to him, and thus he should telephone the mourner. [Rav Feinstein<sup>6</sup> responded similarly to telephoning an ill person, instead of actually visiting them.] In reply to the related question of whether one fulfills the obligation of consoling a mourner by way of a letter, Rav Moshe Strenbuch<sup>7</sup> independently responds identically to the response of Rav Feinstein regarding consolation by means of a telephone call. He does, however, quote the reported position of Rav Yitzchak Zev Solovetchik, the Brisker Rav, that one does fully fulfill the obligation of comforting a mourner by writing a letter. ■

1. שו"ת אגרות משה (ח"ד מחאוי"ח סי' מ אות יא)

2. רמב"ם (פי"ד מהל' אבל ה"ז)

3. כך כתבו גם בס' חדרי דעה וכן המהרש"ם בדעת תורה בפירושם לוי"ד (סי' שלה סעיף י')

4. יש לציין לבי"ח (וי"ד סי' שלה) שכתב בדעת הרמב"ם שהיינו כבא"א לקיים שניהם מניח את החולה ועוסק בנחמת אבלים, אבל כבאפשר לקיים שניהם - ביקור חולים קודם כדי לבקש רחמים עליו שיחיה, או לרבץ ולכבד לפניו כחשוב כאילו מחייהו. ע"ש. והביאו הש"ך שם (סי' יא)

5. מועד קטן (דף כא ע"ב)

6. שו"ת אגרות משה (ח"א מחי"ד סי' רכג). וכן ראה בשו"ת חלקת יעקב ח"ב (סי' קכח) ובשו"ת יחזה דעת ח"ג (סי' פג) ועי' גם בשו"ת מנחת יצחק ח"ב (סי' פד) ובשו"ת ציץ אליעזר ח"ה (רמת רחל סי' ח אות ו, דף יג ע"ב)

7. תשובות והנהגות ח"ב (סי' תקפז) ■

## Gemara GEM

**Does a body after death feel the pain of decay?**

קשה רימה למת כמחט בבשר החי - קנב.

Decay for the dead is as difficult as a needle in flesh of the living. - 152a

Eitz Yosef cites Midrash Shmuel which explains that our Gemara does not mean to say that the dead sense physical pain. Rather, the intention is that while a person is still alive he should be concerned and distressed when he considers that his body will experience decay and will decompose after he dies. This will cause him discomfort and while he is still alive he will feel pain as is felt

when a needle pokes his flesh. This will result in a person diminishing the mass of his own of flesh, in order to minimize the effect of decay upon his body after death (see Avos 2:7 - "The more flesh, the more decay.")

Tosafos Yom Tov questions this explanation, because it is difficult to say that a person should feel badly about a condition which will affect his body after death, when the body itself will not feel any pain. Therefore, Tosafos Yom Tov explains that although decaying does not cause a person's body to feel pain after death, one's soul sees what happens to the body which accompanied it through this world, and this causes distress to the soul. The posuk from Iyov (14:22) is cited, "He feels only the pain of his flesh, and his soul will mourn over

him." The pain experienced by the body does not refer to physical pain as is felt by a person who is alive, but this rather refers to distress and sorrow due to the soul's noticing the sorry state of the body after death.

Nevertheless, Sfas Emes points out the Gemara earlier (13b) does seem to understand that the pain felt by the body after death due to becoming decomposed is a physical one. The Gemara stated that a dead body does not feel pain of a needle that pokes it, and the Gemara questions that statement from our Gemara which says that a body feels the pain of decay. If the understanding of Tosafos Yom Tov is correct, there would be no comparison between the two statements, because our Gemara is not referring to physical pain at all. ■