

OVERVIEW of the Daf

1) The song of the Beis HaMikdash

R' Pappa asserts that another Baraisa contains the dispute whether the essential component of the song is the instruments or the singing.

R' Pappa's suggestion is rejected, and he instead explains that the dispute in the Baraisa relates to whether we can determine a person's genealogical status based on the fact that they were on the platform on which the song was performed.

2) The flute (cont.)

R' Yirmiyah bar Abba disagrees with R' Yosef's explanation of the dispute (50b) between R' Yosi bar Yehudah and Chachamim. He asserts that the dispute relates to the Water Drawing Ceremony but all opinions agree that the flute could be played for the song of the korbon.

R' Yosef is successfully refuted on two points.

The Gemara explains the rationale behind the positions of whether the primary component of song is the instrument or the singing and records the exchange regarding the other's proof.

3) **MISHNAH:** The Mishnah presents a lengthy description of the Water Drawing Ceremony.

4) Examples of excellence

A Baraisa notes that the celebration of the Water Drawing Ceremony was the most outstanding display of joy, Yerushalayim was the most beautiful city, and the Beis HaMikdash was the most outstanding structure.

The Gemara explains what made the Beis HaMikdash so unique.

Another Baraisa offers a detailed description of a shul in Alexandria of Egypt that was also noteworthy.

Abaye reports that Alexander the Great massacred the members of that shul.

5) The arrangement of great benefit

R' Elazar explains that the arrangement was the construction of a temporary balcony so the women could sit separate from the men.

A Baraisa describes the different steps of this arrangement.

The Gemara challenges the permissibility of making a change to the structure of the Beis HaMikdash. ■

Distinctive INSIGHT

The בימה situated in the center of the shul

ובימה של עץ באמצעיתה וכו'

The description the magnificent edifice of the Beis Kenesses at Alexandria in Egypt includes a mention of the בימה at the center.

Chasam Sofer (או"ח סי' כ"ח) cites several proofs to his ruling that a בימה should always be placed in the middle of a shul, and that its location should not be moved to near the front or the back of the shul. Among the sources he quotes in supporting his view is that of Rambam (Hilchos Tefillah 11:3) who writes that the בימה should be in the center of the shul in order to ensure that everyone will be able to hear the reading of the Torah which takes place there. Also among the sources which Chasam Sofer brings is our Gemara, where the attendant in the shul in Alexandria used flags to signal when the congregants should answer to the chazzan. Apparently the chazzan could have moved closer to the back of the room, where the crowd of those assembled was concentrated, and he would have been heard more easily. Nevertheless, we see that no changes are allowed to the layout of how a shul is designed, and the בימה had to remain in the middle of the building. In addition, Chasam Sofer adds that the בימה is compared to the מזבח הפנימי in the Sanctuary in the Mikdash, which was situated in the center of the היכל chamber (from north to south). ■

REVIEW and Remember

1. How does R' Yirmiyah bar Abba explain the dispute regarding the use of the flute on Shabbos?

2. How was the Beis HaMikdash prepared for the Water Drawing Ceremony?

3. What was the seating arrangement in the shul in Alexandria?

4. What could be the problem with constructing a temporary balcony in the Beis HaMikdash?

HALACHAH Highlight

The purpose of the Mechitzah

תנו רבנן בראשונה היו נשים מבפנים ואנשים מבחוץ והיו באים לידי קלות ראש

The Rabbis taught: Originally, the women were inside, the men were outside, and it led to lightheaded behavior.

Rambam, in his commentary to the Mishnah¹, writes that the function of building the balcony in the Beis HaMikdash was to prevent men from gazing at the women. On the other hand, Rambam writes in his halachic work, Yad HaChazakah², that the function of the balcony was to prevent lightheaded behavior that often occurs when men and women mingle. The difference between these two explanations has ramifications regarding the function of a mechitzah in a Beis HaKnesses. If the goal of a mechitzah is to prevent men from seeing the women, it must be constructed in a way that the men will not be able to see the women. If, however, the goal is to prevent mingling, a mechitzah could be constructed in a way that prevents mingling, even though men can see the women.

Many Poskim³ are of the opinion that the primary thrust behind the requirement for a mechitzah is to prevent the men from being able to gaze at the women. They explain

that the reason Rambam added the reason that men should not look at the women is that he was troubled why a balcony was necessary. If the intent behind the enactment was merely to separate the men and women it would have been sufficient to build a small partition. The fact that a balcony was constructed indicates that there was a secondary reason, i.e., to prevent the men from gazing at the women. Thus, there is a dual concern, first the purpose of the mechitzah is to prevent men and women from mingling and secondly it is to assure that the men cannot see the women.

Rav Moshe Feinstein⁴, on the other hand, writes that the purpose of a mechitzah is to prevent the men and women from mingling with one another. Being that there is a contradiction between Rambam's commentary to the Mishnah and the Yad HaChazakah we give priority to the halachic work and the primary concern is to prevent mingling. Thus, he writes that as long as the mechitzah is high enough, 18 tefachim or 60 inches, it meets the minimum standards of a valid mechitzah⁵. ■

1. רמב"ם פירוש למשניות סוכה פ"ה מ"ב
2. רמב"ם פ"ח מהל' לולב ה"ב
3. ע' שו"ת מהר"ם שיק או"ח סי' ע"ז שו"ת דברי יואל או"ח סי' י' שו"ת משנה הלכות ח"ו סי' י"ב
4. שו"ת אג"מ או"ח ח"א סי' ל"ט-מ"ד
5. ע' בספר מנהג ישראל תורה או"ח סי' ע"ה מש"כ על זה ומתוך שם הסתירה בדברי הרמב"ם ע"ש ■

STORIES Off the Daf

The light in their hands

חסידים ואנשי מעשה היו רוקדים לפניהם ואבוקות של אור בידיהם

Rav Shimon Shalom, the Rebbe of Amshinov, zt"l, found refuge in Shanghai together with a large group of talmidei chachomim and yeshiva students during World War II. During the Simchas Beis HaSho'eiva they conducted in this remote corner of the world, he explained a statement from today's daf.

"The Mishnah states that the pious and worthy people would dance with torches of light in their hands. This

means that these virtuous people wanted the light, the spiritual illumination, to come through their own efforts—their hands—and not as a gift from above. As we see from the Yerushalmi, the festivities were called the Simchas Beis HaSho'eiva because the deserving would attain Ruach HaKodesh through the joy in the mitzvah. The praiseworthy people mentioned in the Mishnah wanted to earn their portion of Ruach HaKodesh through their own efforts."

We find that this was true of many great tzaddikim who didn't want gifts from heaven. They chose instead to toil for those distinctions, since this is what gives the Creator the most pleasure. The Vilna Gaon, zt"l, once explained to Rav Chaim of Volozhin, zt"l, that he had refused to receive the

angelic guidance of maggidim (as experienced by the Beis Yosef, zt"l) since they were only reward for the good one has done in this world and cannot actually spur one to rise to a higher level in Torah or avodah.

During the last year of his life, the Ksav Sofer, zt"l, was granted a remarkable clarity of insight which allowed him to grasp any Torah concept deeply with hardly any effort at all, yet the K'sav Sofer did not enjoy this gift. He would say instead, "It is not good that Hashem has removed all the toil from my learning. Everything is so easy. This is not a good sign."

The Chazon Ish, zt"l, once said: "If an angel would reveal the entire Torah to a person in his sleep, he would wake up unchanged. We only grow through effort!" ■

