

OVERVIEW of the Daf

1) Rain (cont.)

R' Avahu and R' Yosef disagree whether rain is greater than resurrection or merely equivalent to resurrection.

R' Yehudah declares that rainfall is as great as the day the Torah was given whereas Rava maintains it is greater.

2) Torah study

Rava digresses to further analyze the pasuk he cited as it relates to the effect Torah has on those who study it.

A Baraisa teaches similar lessons regarding the effect Torah study will have on different people.

A related teaching is recorded.

3) Studying Torah with others

A series of teachings that emphasize the value of studying Torah with others is presented.

Two teachings related to students are recorded.

Different reasons are given to explain why Torah is compared to water, wine and milk.

An incident is retold related to beautiful and ugly people studying Torah.

One more teaching is presented related to the analogy between Torah and water, wine and milk.

4) Rain (cont.)

Two more teachings related to the greatness of rain are recorded.

A series of teachings are presented that connect the falling of rain with the spiritual status of the people.

Different sins are identified as the cause for rain to be withheld.

The Gemara digresses momentarily to discuss the topic of brazenness.

After R' Ami teaches that theft causes rain to be withheld the Gemara cites a related teaching from R' Ami related more generally to the connection between rain and the spiritual status of the people. ■

Distinctive INSIGHT

And from my students I have learned more than from anyone

ומתלמידי יותר מכולם

A teacher gains more knowledge from his students than he does from his own instructors or peers. The obvious meaning of this is that the challenge of preparing a lesson forces a person to clearly and thoroughly research a topic more than he would if he studied for his own personal development.

HaRav Shimon Shkop, zt"l, explains that any and all physical and spiritual resources which are granted to a person are actually meant as assets of the Jewish people as a whole. An individual who possesses material goods or a particular talent is merely a caretaker or treasurer who is responsible to allocate properly that which has been provided for the welfare of the nation. When a royal officer is assigned an item to deliver on behalf of the king, and he fulfills his role properly, he has earned the trust of the king and can expect to be given greater roles with greater responsibilities. Even if he does not excel in other areas, he will nevertheless at least be promoted within the area in which he has performed. The opposite is also true. If, after having been delegated to appropriate a small sum, the officer blunders and fails, he will not be trusted again with any further financial distributions of the king.

When Hashem provides a person with money to spend and to apply with discretion, the person's own actions and decisions then determine his future eligibility for opportunity. If ma'aser is given and tzedakah afforded, then the task has been successfully fulfilled. He may then be promoted to deal with greater sums in his service of the King's subjects. Hashem has numerous openings to hire many competent treasurers to channel the blessings upon His people.

This same analogy can be used in describing the bestowing of wisdom and understanding among the members of the Jewish nation. A person who has the gift of insight and the ability to perceive and inculcate Torah knowledge must consider himself not as an individual, but rather as a contributor to his people. He must designate a portion of his time to share with and teach others, and to impart to them the fear of Heaven. If he uses his abilities for the sake of the community, he will then merit to develop and acquire even greater levels of understanding, as Hashem entrusts him with greater resources of wisdom and insight.

We can say that the fact that one shares his knowledge by teaching others is a form of tzedakah and kindness. Just as financial charity leads to Hashem's granting further wealth, this also applies in the realm of Torah study. One who appreciates that his skills are God-given can be trusted with further intellectual capacity, for he will again utilize it to service Klal Yisrael. ■

*Today's Daf Digest is dedicated
Wishing continued success and brachah to our daughter
Ilana Yocheved at work*

HALACHAH Highlight

Learning alone

אמר רבה בר בר חנה למה למשלו דברי תורה כאש שנאמר וכו' לומר לך מה אש אינו דולק יחידי אף בדברי תורה אין מתקיימין ביחידי
Rabbah bar bar Channah said: Why are words of Torah compared to fire, as the verse states, etc? [It is coming] to teach that just like fire does not ignite by itself, so too words of Torah cannot exist [with one who studies] alone.

The Gemara's emphasis on learning together with a chavrusa - a study partner - is codified in Shulchan Aruch and the commentaries¹ where it writes that if there is a Bais Midrash in town one is obligated to study Torah in the Bais Midrash rather than alone. If, however, a Beis Midrash is not available one is certainly permitted to study Torah alone and according to the Gemara Berachos one who studies alone under such conditions will merit having the Divine Presence there with him². Poskim who discuss this issue mention a number of other conditions and circumstances where it is permitted for a person to study Torah alone.

Sefer Chasidim³ seemingly maintains that this rule is not absolute when he writes that it is permitted for a person to study Torah alone if this will lead to greater success than with a chavrusa. Rabbeinu Bachya⁴, in a similar vein, writes that occasionally one who yearns for Torah will desire to meditate on Torah thoughts by himself and it is appropriate and productive for him to do so. Rav Yaakov Emden⁵ writes that this requirement to learn with a study partner applies only in the

REVIEW and Remember

1. What is the benefit from studying Torah Lishmah?

2. Why is Torah compared to water, wine and milk?

3. Which sins cause rain to be withheld?

4. What negative character trait causes rain to be withheld?

Diaspora but in Eretz Yisroel there is no concern. The reason, he explains, is that the Gemara⁶ states that the air of Eretz Yisroel increases a person's wisdom and as a result there is no concern for the harmful effects of learning alone. Others write⁷ that Chazal's warning against learning alone and their emphasis on learning with others applied only during times that people had to memorize their learning. Nowadays when people study Torah out of sefarim the concerns are minimized and the restriction no longer applies. ■

1. ע' שו"ע יו"ד סי' רמ"ו סע' כ"ב והט"ז שם סק"ח ושו"ע הרב פ"ד מהל' ת"ת סע' י'
2. עיון יעקב לברכות ו
3. ספר חסידים סי' תתקמ
4. כד הקמח לרבינו בחיי ערך תורה
5. הקדמת סידור בית יעקב סולם בית א-ל ד"ה ולכבוד
6. גמ' ב"ב קנ"ח
7. ע' ספר חיי משה ליו"ד הל' ת"ת פ"ג סע' נ"ד ■

STORIES Off the Daf

“May My teachings descend like rain, and my sayings flow down like the dew...”

כתיב יערף כמטר לקחי תיזל כטל אמרת
 On today's daf, Rava points out that the verse seems to contradict itself. First it says that the Torah descends like rain, which comes down in a downpour. Right afterward, the very same verse says that the Torah drops gently like dew. Rava explains that if one is a worthy scholar, then the Torah drops gently like dew and gives him life. However, if the student is unworthy, it destroys him like rain that falls

in an overwhelming downpour.

Rav Yitzchak Zilberstein, shlit"א, once asked his brother-in-law, Rav Chaim Kanievsky, shlit"א, "Why does the verse start with the unworthy student who is damaged by the Torah instead of beginning with the worthy student?"

Rav Chaim explained, "The Torah is teaching us a fundamental principle in chinuch. If we want our children to sprout into worthy students, our first care must be to weed out any bad friends from their associates. These friends can destroy the souls of the other children with whom they associate, and drive out any good thing that they may have learned."

Rav Chaim continued, "The moral ■

fiber of our children's friends is not an additional condition for success in chinuch. It is the primary foundation! If our children have bad friends, we will not be able to succeed in our goal of inculcating the Torah into our children even if we really want to. This can be compared to one who wishes to grow something in his field. His first job is to remove the weeds and other extraneous growth from the field. So too, one must 'weed out' the bad influences before one can bring the children into the beis medrash. And this is a constant process. We must remain ever vigilant to ensure that the bad friends do not return and insinuate themselves into our children's lives !"

