

OVERVIEW of the Daf

1) Students who experience difficulty in their learning

Reish Lakish asserts that difficulty in learning results from lessons that are not sufficiently organized.

Rava suggests that this difficulty arises because the teacher does not show a cheerful countenance.

2) Rain (cont.)

R' Ami teaches that rain is withheld on account of those people who do not daven.

The Gemara further develops this topic.

3) Aggadic teachings

Rava offers another teaching based upon the previously-cited pasuk.

Reish Lakish presents a thought related to those who speak leshon hara.

R' Ami teaches that a person's tefillah is not accepted unless it is sincere.

This teaching is challenged from a teaching of Shmuel that indicates that Hashem accepts even insincere tefillah.

The Gemara distinguishes between the tefilla of an individual and the tefillah of a community.

R' Ami asserts that rain falls for those who are trustworthy in business.

Another teaching related to trustworthy people is presented.

Teachings related to the punishment of tzaddikim and rejoicing in the face of suffering are recorded.

4) Rain (cont.)

Reish Lakish explains the use of the term ועצר in reference to withholding rain.

Additional parallels are drawn between pregnancy and rain.

R' Shmuel bar Nachmani discusses the meaning of different ways the rain falls.

An incident involving R' Shmuel bar Nachmani is presented and the Gemara clarifies some details of the story.

A similar incident involving R' Zeira is recorded.

A series of teachings from R' Yitzchok is presented, the first one related to rain.

The last teaching was that blessing is found on that which is hidden from view.

A similar teaching and Baraisa are presented.

5) Teachings of R' Yochanan

Five teachings of R' Yochanan related to rain are recorded, the first three are presented here. ■

Distinctive INSIGHT

Failing to fulfill one's pledge to tzedakah

ואמר רבי יוחנן אין הגשמים נעצרין אלא בשביל פוסקי צדקה ברבים ואין נותנין

Our Gemara (bottom of 8b) teaches that it is directly in response to the sin of pledging money in public and failing to redeem those pledges that the rains are withheld and the world experiences drought.

The כיוור / laver held the water for the rinsing of the hands and feet of the Kohanim. Its description follows that of the mitzvah of the half-shekel contributions. Ba'al HaTurim on Chumash (Shemos 30:18) explains that the reason these two topics are juxtaposed is to teach us that drought is caused when people publicly pledge to give tzedakah, and they do not fulfill their promise.

We can surely understand that to publicly offer to give tzedakah but then to neglect to pay the pledge is an improper trait. Yet, the tendency to not pledge to tzedakah at all is an even worse trait, for it is totally unacceptable to remain apathetic and unresponsive to the appeals of the community activists who call for communal input.

Rabbi Chaim Zaichik (מעייני החיים) notes that the lesson here is that everyone is held accountable for his particular level of awareness and response. There are those whose hearts are hardened, and they are not moved as they hear of the difficult conditions of others. They do not make a pledge in the first place. This is a tragic situation, and there is a heavenly claim which is registered against these people. Yet, as unfortunate as this may seem, the accountability is more demanding towards one who is sensitive and caring, and yet, after he responds by pledging his support, his resolve dwindles with the passage of time, and he neglects to follow through and actually pay his share. Due to the fact that he did display some sensitivity toward others in need, the expectations are greater for him to follow through on his offer, and his failure to act upon his resolve places him at a higher level of accountability. ■

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Aron Schnur o'h—אהרן צבי בן שאול משה—
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HALACHAH Highlight

Davening with a tzibbur even without proper concentration

לא קשיא כאן ביחיד כאן בציבור

It (the contradiction as to whether concentration is necessary for tefillah to be accepted) is not difficult, here (where concentration is required) refers to an individual and here (where concentration is not required) refers to a tzibbur.

According to the conclusion of the Gemara an individual's tefillah is not heard unless it is recited with proper concentration, but the tefillah of a tzibbur will be heard even if it is not recited with proper concentration. Poskim address many issues that relate to this principle. For example, Shulchan Aruch¹ rules that one who arrives late to shul and realizes that if he will recite the entire pesukei d'zimra he will not be able to reach shemoneh esrei with the tzibbur, he may skip parts of pesukei d'zimra to be able to recite shemoneh esrei together with the tzibbur. Rav Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch², the Tzemach Tzedek, challenges this ruling from the principle derived from the Gemara Sukkah³ that one does not forgo a minor mitzvah in order to fulfill a major mitzvah. This principle dictates that the person should not be permitted to skip parts of pesukei d'zimra in order to perform the mitzvah of davening with the tzibbur. It seems that this principle refutes the ruling of Shulchan Aruch.

Tzemach Tzedek answers this question by highlighting a comment made by Rav Schneur Zalman of Liadi⁴, the Shulchan Aruch HaRav. Shulchan Aruch HaRav writes that the reason pesukei d'zimra was enacted was to make shemoneh esrei more

REVIEW and Remember

1. What are the two primary causes for a student to find his studies difficult?

2. Under what conditions are insincere prayers accepted?

3. What is the source that teaches that one is not permitted to pray for two things at the same time?

4. Why is it necessary to daven for success before counting one's change?

pleasing and acceptable to Hashem by one arranging Hashem's praises before speaking directly to Him. Accordingly, pesukei d'zimra and davening with the tzibbur accomplish the same goal, i.e. to facilitate acceptance of the tefillah before Hashem. They are therefore considered the same mitzvah. Consequently, the ruling of Shulchan Aruch to skip parts of davening is no longer difficult. The principle cited earlier states that one may not forgo even a minor mitzvah for another mitzvah. One is permitted, as in this case, to make a lateral move, i.e. to forgo one method of performing a mitzvah for another, better way of accomplishing the same goal. ■

1. שו"ע או"ח סי' נ"ב סע' א'
2. שו"ת צמח צדק שער המילואים סי' י"א או"ח סע' קי"ג
3. גמ' סוכה כה לענין נושאי ארונו של יוסף ע"ש
4. שו"ע הרב שם סע' א' ■

STORIES Off the Daf

The gate of healing

פותח את ידיך ומשביע לכל חי רצון

A young man was once suffering for a long time with what seemed to be an incurable illness. The doctors couldn't even diagnose him; all they could say was that he needed a miracle because his cure was clearly beyond the scope of medicine as they knew it. Even the tzaddikim that he visited in search of a blessing and to whom he donated huge amounts of charity sent him away, saying that for some reason the door to healing him was tightly sealed. After visiting almost all of the tzaddikim of his generation, he finally arrived at the home of Rav Pinchas of Koritz, zt"l.

He confessed to the Rav that his prob-

lem had been getting progressively worse. His health had deteriorated to such a degree that he was very frail. His disease was life threatening and it appeared as though he only had a very short time left to live. After much prayer and supplication, Rav Pinchas told him that he had nothing to worry about. "You will certainly recover completely from your illness," he said confidently.

Shortly after this the young man began to feel better. As he grew stronger and stronger, he began to shower praise on Rav Pinchas for being the greatest tzaddik of the generation, and he shared his experience with an increasingly wider circle of people.

Rav Pinchas summoned the young man and said, "Know that you are making a mistake. I saw what everyone else saw: your case was sealed and the way to healing

was completely blocked. But I then checked the heavenly gateway to פרנסה and saw that it was clear. Once my prayers for your livelihood were accepted, I prayed again for your health—but this time, I had a very good argument to support me. The Gemara in Taanis 8 relates that there was once an epidemic and a famine. Since we can only petition about one calamity at a time, the Sages considered praying about the plague, and to suffer through the famine. Rav Shmuel bar Nachmeini told them to do the opposite. Once their prayers were accepted about the famine, the plague would certainly stop since Hashem provides only for the living."

Rav Pinchas turned to the young man. "As soon as you were granted a livelihood, you just had to be healed!" ■