

OVERVIEW of the Daf

1) Teachings of R' Yochanan (cont.)

The last two of the series of five teachings from R' Yochanan are recorded.

The last teaching is that rain can fall for the individual, but prosperity comes when it is beneficial for many.

The teaching that prosperity does not come for an individual is unsuccessfully challenged.

An incident related to one of the previously-recorded verses is retold.

A second incident involving R' Pappa is recorded.

Reish Lakish also maintains that rain could fall on behalf of an individual.

2) Signs associated with rain

An elaboration on one of the earlier-cited verses leads into a discussion related to signs that indicate that rain will fall.

The Gemara digresses with two incidents that took place when Ulla traveled to Bavel.

3) Rain

A Baraisa records a dispute between R' Eliezer and R' Yehoshua regarding the source of rain in the world.

A teaching of R' Yochanan, related to a particular verse, is seen as consistent with R' Yehoshua.

The Gemara records how R' Eliezer will interpret that verse differently.

A teaching of R' Chanina, related to a particular verse, is seen as consistent with R' Eliezer's view.

The Gemara records how R' Yehoshua will interpret that verse differently. ■

REVIEW and Remember

1. How do we know that rain is provided even for one worthy individual?

2. What three gifts were taken from the Jewish People following Moshe Rabbeinu's death?

3. How did R' Daniel bar Ketina water his field?

4. What is the dispute regarding the source of rain?

Distinctive INSIGHT

The Clouds of Glory were in the merit of Aharon

שלשה פרנסים טובים עמדו לישראל אלו הן משה ואהרן ומרים וג' מתנות טובות ניתנו על ידם ואלו הן... עמוד ענן בזכות

Our sages tell us (Sukkah 11b) that the sukkah reminds us of the Clouds of Glory that surrounded and protected the Jews in the desert. Our Gemara teaches that the Clouds of Glory were given to the Jews in the merit of Aharon. Aharon's special characteristic was that he was the man of peace who brought peace between a man and his neighbor (Avos 1:12). Thus, we refer to the sukkah as the "sukkah of peace" in the *השכיבו* prayer at night. What is the connection between a sukkah and peace?

Conflict comes when people compete with each other for wealth and property. This is particularly true at the harvest time of the year, when each farmer takes stock of what he has to hold him over the winter until the next planting season. Yet, it is exactly at this time of year, the time of the Holiday of Gathering – *חג האסיף* – that we are commanded to leave our homes and dwell in the sukkah, a temporary dwelling which reminds us that all we have in this world depends upon God's benevolence. By countering the idea that "my strength and the work of my hands have accomplished all of this" (Devarim 8:17), a person realizes that he is not in competition with his neighbor, but rather, each person receives his rightful share from God. Such a realization results in peace between neighbors, for the self-centeredness of the "I" is reduced and everyone rejoices together.

This was the special trust of Aharon. He was the master of getting people to put aside their selfishness and to consider the next person. It therefore follows that the Clouds of Glory, which reminded everyone that they all share in God's protection and provision, would be in his merit. Further, the sukkah, which reminds us of the Clouds of Glory, is connected with shalom – peace, that which binds the Jewish people together in proclaiming that "Hashem, Hu haElokim" - "Hashem, He is God." (I Melachim 18:39). ■

*Today's Daf Digest is dedicated as a zechus
 For the safe return of
 Yaakov Naftali ben Rachel Devora, Gilad Michael ben Bat Galim
 and Eyal ben Iris Teshurah*

HALACHAH Highlight

Ma'aser Kesafim

עשר תעשר. עשר בשביל שתתעשר

“Tithe, you shall tithe.” Tithe so that you will become wealthy.

Rav Yoel Sirkis¹, the Bach, writes that tithing one’s income is neither a Biblical nor a Rabbinical obligation. Many Poskim, however, challenge this position from Tosafos. Tosafos² cites a Sifrei³ that derives from the additional word “כל” that appears in the pasuk cited by the Gemara that there is an obligation to tithe all income, even if it is non-agricultural. How then could Bach seemingly ignore the exposition of the Sifrei cited by Tosafos?

Rav Yaakov Reisher⁴, the Shvus Yaakov and Rav Yair Chaim Bachrach⁵, the Chavos Yair, write in defense of the position held by the Bach that halachah does not follow a Midrash that is not cited somewhere in the Talmud. To further support his defense of the Bach, Chavos Yair writes that the practice of people is that they do not tithe their income. If tithing one’s income was a binding obligation how could we explain that fact that it is generally not practiced? An observation of the practice of the people

indicates that it is nothing more than a custom which, although praiseworthy, is not obligatory.

Rav Chaim Yosef David Azulai⁶, the Gaon Chida, disputes the proof offered by Chavos Yair from the practice of the people that they do not tithe their income. It is not because the practice is optional rather than obligatory; rather it is because most people spend more than half their income on their children and supporting children, according to Gaon Chida, is a valid use of one’s maaser kesafim. In other words, since spending money on one’s children is a valid use for maaser kesafim funds, the money that would normally go to the poor is being redirected to one’s children but it is still a fulfillment of the obligation to separate maaser. Consequently, the support for the position of Bach suggested by Chavos Yair is refuted. As a matter of practical halachah Poskim⁷ follow the position that maaser kesafim is only a custom rather than a binding obligation. ■

1. ב"ח יו"ד ס"ט של"א
2. תוס' ריש ד"ה עשר
3. ר' יעקב עמדין בשו"ת היעב"ץ ח"ב סי' קי"ט כתב שאינו בספרי שלנו אולם נמצא בתנחומא פר' ראה אות י"ח
4. שו"ת שבות יעקב ח"ב סע' פ"ה
5. שו"ת חות יאיר סע' רכ"ד
6. ברכי יוסף יו"ד סי' רמ"ט אות ג'
7. ע' ספר צדקה ומשפט פ"ה סע' ב' ■

STORIES Off the Daf

“Give Ma’aser, and you will become wealthy...”

עשר תעשר בשביל שתעשר

Someone once came to Rav Pinchas of Koretz, זט"ל, and asked a question that was obviously troubling him. “In Taanis 9, we find that Chazal cite the phrase עשר תעשר literally ‘you shall surely give a tenth of your earnings,’ and reinterpret the second word as t’asheir instead of t’aser. This alters the meaning to, ‘Give a tenth, so that you will become wealthy.’ Here we have an assurance that if we faithfully give away a tenth of our earnings, we will be successful financially. I have

given ma’aser assiduously my whole life. Why, then, have I have not merited wealth?”

Rav Pinchas answered, “Let me tell you a true story about my neighbor that sheds light on your question. My neighbor is a wagon driver. He has good horses and he cares for them with great devotion, always providing them with the best food and shelter possible. As expected, the horses have always performed well, and they run with great endurance in all types of weather. One time, the horses failed to follow orders. Although they were hitched to their wagon and primed to travel, they simply refused to move. Since their owner knew that his animals lacked nothing, their obstinacy infuriated him. He figured that they needed to be taught a lesson. He be-

gan to beat them, all the while repeating his command that they start moving. An onlooker shouted at the wagon driver, ‘You are cruel to your animals! They have done nothing wrong! How can you expect them to move if you have the brakes engaged?’”

“This is your problem too,” explained the Rav. “Giving ma’aser can propel one’s financial success forward just as the horses hitched to the wagon will propel it toward its destination. However, if the brakes are engaged at the same time, the driver won’t get anywhere at all. If you are braking by failing to observe Shabbos and kashrus properly, the horses are not to blame for your inability to reach your goal. You must release the break mechanism by doing teshuvah and changing your behavior!” ■