

OVERVIEW of the Daf

1) Clarifying the Mishnah (cont.)

R' Yitzchok identifies where on the head the ashes are placed.

R' Chiya bar Abba and Reish Lakish offer different explanation why davening is held in the street.

The practical difference between their explanations is identified.

The Gemara provides the reason for 1) taking the Aron Kodesh into the street; 2) for wearing sackcloth; 3) for putting ashes on the Aron Kodesh; 4) for putting ashes on each person's head; and 5) for going to the cemetery.

The Gemara digresses to present a dispute concerning the meaning of "Mount Moriah."

2) Addressing the people

A Baraisa presents the guidelines for choosing the one to address the people.

Abaye clarifies the meaning of the Baraisa.

The Baraisa continues to record the message the speaker would share with the people.

The Gemara presents a number of expositions from the pesukim in Yonah.

R' Ada bar Ahavah emphasizes the importance of teshuvah.

3) The sh'liach tzibbur

A Baraisa describes the desirous traits for the sh'liach tzibbur and the Gemara reports that the Rabbis looked to R' Yitzchok bar Ami who possessed these traits.

The different traits identified in the Baraisa are explained.

4) The berachos added to Shemoneh Esrei

The Gemara notes that although the Mishnah stated that six berachos are added to Shemoneh Esrei the Mishnah proceeds to enumerate seven berachos.

R' Nachman bar Yitzchok explains that the seventh berachah is really a lengthening of one of the existing berachos.

The Baraisa that supports this position is cited at length.

Another Baraisa that echoes the same idea is quoted.

A third related Baraisa is cited.

5) Clarifying R' Yehudah's opinion

R' Ada from Yafo explains the rationale behind R' Yehudah's opposition to reciting Remembrances and Shofaros in the fast day Shemoneh Esrei. ■

Distinctive INSIGHT

Har Hamoriah, from where instruction emanates

מאי הר המוריה...? הר שיצאה ממנו הוראה לישראל

On his way to Charan, Yaakov passed by Har HaMoriah. As he continued, apparently oblivious to the opportunity to offer prayers at this most holy site, he almost overstepped it totally. Yet Hashem arranged matters, albeit miraculously, so that Yaakov was forced to stop and to partake of this great spiritual resource. Even as he considered leaving, before fully appreciating the full value of what was to be gained, he again was stopped by a virtual wall, which held him back and set him on track to meet with his destiny.

This is the same pattern which Hashem uses as he deals with us, the descendants of Yaakov Avinu. There are times when Jews attempt to distance themselves from Har HaMoriah, the mountain from which Torah and instruction emanate to the world (see our Gemara, Taanis 16a). As His people drift aimlessly away from our holy institutions, from Torah, and from anything we hold to be precious, they mistakenly believe that they may achieve happiness in other domains. Their paths become twisted and confused as they abandon our holy traditions, but to no avail. What does Hashem do? It is as if He constructs an iron barrier in front of them to prevent them from proceeding. As a Jew seeks fulfillment in areas other than Torah, Hashem blocks his ways and prevents his success until he opens his eyes to "return to Har HaMoriah," as did Yaakov Avinu. The Jew ultimately begins his journey to repent and return to Hashem and to His Torah.

However, this process is not yet complete. As a person returns to Har HaMoriah, and is about to repent, he may not feel completely comfortable, and he may want to escape too soon. At this point, Hashem provides the added impetus which he needs. When Yaakov considered leaving, the sun set in the middle of the day. He had no choice other than to stay, eventually seeing his prophecy of the dream with the ladder. Similarly, Jews will suffer hardships so that they will be led to turn to the Torah and yiddishkeit for direction and solace. These events that they encounter are not incidental, for they are the means by which Hashem is reaching out to call for us to complete our teshuvah and return to the Torah and the beliefs of our ancestors. ■

HALACHAH Highlight

Fasting when a Sefer Torah falls

למה מוציאים את התיבה לרחובה של עיר אמר ר' יהושע בן לוי לומר כל צנוע היה לנו ונתבזה בעווננו

Why do we take the Aron Kodesh into the city street? R' Yehoshua ben Levi said: It is to state that we had a private utensil and it has become disgraced as a result of our sins.

Rav Chaim Halberstam¹, the Divrei Chaim, was asked what should be done in a community where the gabbai was supposed to sleep in the shul on Friday night to protect the Sifrei Torah and the gabbai became frightened and instead of sleeping there he locked the shul and went home. In the morning they discovered that hoodlums had entered the shul, ripped the mantel off of the Sifrei Torah and thrown them on the floor. Divrei Chaim begins with an analysis of the known custom to fast when a Sefer Torah falls to the floor. The first source for this custom, cited by others, is a comment of Ramban². Ramban writes, based on the Yerushalmi, that the pasuk, "Cursed is the one who does not support this Torah," refers to the gabbai who did not stand the Torah in a way that would assure that it would not fall. Since, as a result of the Torah falling, the gabbai finds himself in the category of "Cursed" it is appropriate for him to fast to remove that label.

Divrei Chaim notes, however, that this source does not explain why anyone other than the gabbai should fast. He therefore writes that the source for the custom could be found in our Gemara. The Gemara explains that the reason the Aron Kodesh is taken into the street is to make a statement that our private utensil (כלי צנוע) has become publicly disgraced as a result of our sins. This establishes a direct connection between our sins and a disgrace to the Torah. Thus, when a Sefer Torah falls, we see that

REVIEW and Remember

1. What are the two reasons to take the Aron Kodesh into the street?

2. What was the message of the drashah delivered on the fast day?

3. What are the qualities of the sh'liach tzibur for the fast day?

4. What is the source that amen is not said following a beracha in the Beis HaMikdash?

disgrace as a consequence of our sins, and all the members of the community should fast to repent for their sins.

Rav Sholom Mordechai HaKohen Schwadron³ disputes the proof the Divrei Chaim inferred from our Gemara. It is true that our Gemara makes a connection between our sins and a consequent disgrace to a Sefer Torah but the Gemara gives no indication that to reverse or atone for that disgrace there should be an obligation to repent. Consequently, we can not require people to fast but it is appropriate for people to give tzedakah according to their means and there should be a public reading of the entire Sefer Tehillim. ■

1. שו"ת דברי חיים יו"ד ח"א סי' נ"ט
2. רמב"ן דברים כ"ז: כ"ו
3. שו"ת מהרש"ם ח"ב ס"ס רס"ד ■

STORIES Off the Daf

The ashes of Yitzchak Avinu

למה נותנים אפר בראש כל אחד ואחד... וחד אמר כדי שיזכור לנו אפרו של יצחק

On today's daf we find that the order of the fast day included the placing of ashes on the head of the congregation. One reason offered for this practice is that the ashes will arouse the memory of the akeidah.

The Tolna Rebbe, shlit"a, once asked rhetorically: "What ashes? Yitzchak was not sacrificed, and he was certainly not burnt as a sacrifice!"

The Rebbe then offered an answer based on an exchange between the Imrei Emes,

zt"l, and Rav Chaim Brisker, zt"l, during a gathering of the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah in Poland. Rav Chaim was bothered by a question he had about the akeidah, and he shared it with all the Torah giants in attendance at the illustrious gathering.

"It says in the verse: When they finally came to the place designated by Hashem, Avraham built an altar there and arranged wood. He then bound his son Yitzchak and placed him on the altar on top of the wood. (Bereshis 22:9) Hashem told Avraham Avinu to bring Yitzchak as an olah, a burnt offering. But an olah is slaughtered to the north and not on the altar at all! Why did Avraham Avinu assume that Yitzchak should be placed on the altar?" The Gedolim offered various solutions but they did not come to a clear answer. In the middle of their discussion, the Imrei Emes arrived at the confer-

ence. When apprised of the question, he immediately had an answer.

"The halachah demands that one only offer a sacrifice in a holy place. In the Beis HaMikdash, a completely sanctified space, we could slaughter the olah in the north. However, at the akeidah, the only sanctified place available to Avraham Avinu was the altar itself. Har HaMoriah was not yet consecrated and had no revealed holiness."

"According to this we can now understand the Gemara in Taanis 16," concluded the Tolna Rebbe. "Since Avraham consecrated the altar, and the altar is supposed to have an eternal fire burning upon it, the first thing he did was kindle the flame. This is why the verse tells us that he arranged the wood. Yitzchak was singed slightly by the fire, perhaps some of his hair was burned, and generated the ashes of Yitzchak!" ■

