

OVERVIEW of the Daf

1) Abba the doctor (cont.)

The Gemara concludes retelling how Abaye investigated the righteous behaviors of Abba the doctor and explains why Rava was told not to be distressed that Abaye received a Heavenly greeting more often.

2) Stories of tzadikim

Eliyahu haNavi pointed out a hidden tzadik to R' Beroka of Bei Chozai. R' Beroka talked with the man to discern his righteousness and then had the man explain some of his unusual behaviors.

Eliyahu points out two other righteous people in the marketplace.

3) Tragedies

A Baraisa discusses the obligation to cry out in response to various tragedies.

The parameters for declaring a fast when wild animals appear are spelled out in a Baraisa.

The Gemara clarifies four different points from the Baraisa.

The parameters for crying out "for the sword" are explained in a Baraisa and it demonstrates at length that it is appropriate to cry out even if the sword which appears is "friendly."

The circumstances that surrounded R' YOSHIAH's death are discussed.

The Gemara inquires about the quantity of grain that must be damaged by the wind to require crying out, and the matter remains unresolved.

An incident involving two babies eaten by wolves is recorded.

A Baraisa discusses the tragedies that warrant crying out on Shabbos. A dispute is presented as to whether an individual may fast on account of these tragedies.

The Gemara clarifies that Chachamim disagree with R' Yosi and maintain that we do not cry out for a plague altogether.

4) An abundance of rain

A Baraisa teaches that we cry out for all tragedies except for too much rain.

R' Yochanan suggests a source for the reason we do not cry out when there is too much rain.

Rami bar R' Zavid asserts that in the Diaspora we cry even for too much rain. A Baraisa supports this qualification.

R' Eliezer was asked whether it is ever permitted to daven that rain should stop, and he offered a parable to illustrate that one never davens that rain should stop. The Gemara explains the parable.

A Baraisa explains the blessing of having rain in its appropriate time. ■

Distinctive INSIGHT

Who is a member of the World-to-Come ?

איכא בהאי שוקא בר עלמא דאתי? א"ל לא

The exchange between Rav Beroka and Eliyahu is fascinating from a number of different perspectives. The fact that Rav Beroka asked who in the marketplace was a member of the World-to-Come seems odd, because the Mishnah in Sanhedrin (90a) states clearly that every Jewish person has a portion in the World-to-Come. What was the question which was being asked, and how could Eliyahu say that there was no one who had earned such a distinction, when the truth seems to be that there is no one who does not have a share in the next world?

Perhaps we can say that there is a difference between having a share (יש לו חלק) in the next world and being a member (בן עולם הבא). This can be illustrated with a parable. There was a city which had among its population a few wealthy people, although some were more financially capable than others. A visitor came to the city and inquired about the wealthy men who lived there. If he were to ask where one of them resided, he would have to be more specific and say which particular person he wished to meet. If, however, there was one particular man who stood out as being world-renowned for his wealth, it would be quite clear that the visitor's intentions were to find out about that one famous person.

So it is regarding the World-to-Come. Every Jew is precious and possesses "his share" in the next world. There are differences between them, however, and the portion of one person is not the same as the portion of others. In order to discern the share each owns, it would be necessary to inquire about his name and his lot. When it comes to the wholly righteous man, however, there is no need to ask more than who is "a member" of the World-to-Come, and everyone knows about whom we are speaking.

When Rav Beroka asked Eliyahu if there was anyone in the market who was a member of עולם הבא, he was asking if anyone there was a צדיק גמור. Eliyahu was able to answer in the affirmative when he found the prison guard and the jesters. ■

HALACHAH Highlight

Davening for too much rain to stop

מאי טעמא א"ר יוחנן לפי שאין מתפללין על רוב הטובה

What is the reason [we do not daven for excessive rain to stop]? Because we do not daven about [stopping] an abundance of good

According to the Gemara's conclusion, in Eretz Yisroel they would not daven that there was too much rain because we do not ask Hashem to disrupt the flow of blessing. In Bavel, on the other hand, too much rain was damaging to property, causing houses to collapse; therefore, it is permitted to daven that the excessive rain should discontinue. Shulchan Aruch¹ rules that since excessive rain causes houses to collapse in Tzefas they would daven that it should stop. Accordingly, Rav Seraya Devlitzki² writes that since our houses are structurally sound we do not daven that rain should cease unless it is damaging to produce. For example, in Eretz Yisroel many summer vegetables are grown during the winter months. Since they are by nature summer vegetables, too much rain will be damaging. Therefore, it would be appropriate to daven that the rain should cease.

Another interesting application of this halachah relates to requesting rain in Australia. Summer in Australia occurs during our winter and their winter occurs during our summer. There were those who suggested that in Australia it should be permitted to request rain during their summer (which is our winter) because rain during their summer will not be damaging. Therefore, to maintain consistency in their prayers with the rest of the world, it was thought to be appropriate. Rav Shmuel HaLevi Vosner³, the Shevet HaLevi, disagreed with

REVIEW and Remember

1. What did the righteous jail-keeper do to protect Jewish girls?

2. Should one be concerned when a foreign nation's army wants to pass through our land peacefully?

3. How did King Yoshiyahu die?

4. What is the source that it is improper to daven that an abundance of blessing should cease?

this conclusion. The only fact we know is that the normal amount of precipitation is not damaging, but excessive rain would certainly prove to be damaging and we do not control the amount of rain that will fall once a request is made. We see, notes Shevet HaLevi, that even Choni the Circle-maker did not have control over the amount of rain that would fall once requested and certainly we can not expect that we would have any better control. Therefore, it is inappropriate for Australians to ask for rain during their summer because they will not be able to daven that it should stop unless it reaches the point that it is damaging to the houses. In the interim, much damage will have already occurred. Thus, concludes Shevet HaLevi, they should not request rain during their summer. ■

1. שו"ע או"ח סי' תקע"ו סע' י"א
2. ספר פלגי מים הל' תעניות הגשמים סע' מ"א
3. שו"ת שבט הלוי ח"ט סע' קמ"ח ■

STORIES Off the Daf

The two merry-makers

אמרי אנשי בדחני אגן מבדיחיגן עציב

On today's daf we find that Rabi Beroka Chozah was once in the market of Bei Lefet when he met Eliyahu Hanavi. He asked Eliyahu Hanavi, "Are there any bnei Olam Habah in this marketplace?"

Eliyahu Hanavi answered, "No." Just then, two people arrived, and Eliyahu Hanavi changed his answer. Indicating the newcomers, he declared, "These two are bnei Olam Habah."

Rabi Beroka Chozah asked the two men about their profession, and they responded that they were merry-makers who cheered people up. "When we see two people fighting, we make peace between them," they said.

Someone once asked the Vilna Gaon, zt"l, a question about this agadata. "What is so significant about cheering people up and making peace between people when there is conflict? They seem to be relatively minor accomplishments. Why should they earn these men the title of bnei Olam Habah, indicating that they deserve the greatest reward possible? People work hard to get to this level, toiling for years! Only the greatest bnei aliyah reach this awesome

level. What really put the two jesters of Bei Lefet in this category?"

The Vilna Gaon responded, "This is not simply a case where their joking and jesting brought them to such a lofty level. These two had already achieved a very high level of בטחון and אמונה and it was this that caused them to feel happy at all times, no matter what the circumstance might be. They were so filled with faith in Hashem Yisborach that they literally felt no worries whatsoever. It was this quality that made them so joyful that their happiness was contagious. Their בטחון was so palpable that they could even uplift the hearts of people whose worries were rooted in a lack of trust in Hashem!" ■