

OVERVIEW of the Daf

1) The grafted carob and cut sycamore (cont.)

Rabbah bar bar Chana in the name of Reish Lakish teaches that the question of whether grafted carobs and cut sycamore become consecrated with the field they stand upon is subject to a dispute between R' Menachem the son of R' Yosi and Rabanan.

The novelty of this teaching is that R' Menachem the son of R' Yosi follows the position of R' Shimon.

הדרן עלך המוכר את הבית

2) **MISHNAH:** The Mishnah discusses what is included and what is not included in the sale of a ship.

3) Clarifying the Mishnah

The Gemara clarifies a number of terms that are mentioned in the Mishnah.

A Baraisa is cited that elaborates on additional items that are included in the sale of a ship.

Rava clarifies a point in the Baraisa.

4) Amazing stories

The Gemara begins to present a number of amazing aggadatas, many of which were retold by Rabba bar bar Chana. ■

HALACHAH Highlight

Causing unintentional but inevitable pain to animals

עתידין ישראל ליתן עליהן את הדין

In the future Yisroel will have to give an account for them

Rashbam¹ explains that the Jewish People are going to be held accountable that the geese suffered from their abundance of fat due to the fact that they did not bring Moshiach sooner. Poskim discuss whether a person is responsible for the suffering of animals that results from an unintended and undesirable but inevitable outcome of his actions (פסיק רישא דלא ניחא ליה). Da'as Kedoshim² maintains that one is, in fact, responsible for the suffering of animals that results from an unintended and undesirable but inevitable outcome of his actions and proves his assertion from the Gemara in Bava Meztia (לא). The Gemara there states that proof for the Torah's concern for the suffering of animals can be derived from the mitzvah to assist

(Continued on page 2)

Distinctive INSIGHT

The wave which threatens to sink ships at sea

אשתנו לי נחותי ימא האי גלא דמטבע לספינה מיתחזי כי צוציתא דנורא חיוורתא

The nature of the narrative found at the beginning of the fifth perek of Bava Basra is fascinating and fantastic. Many commentators note that the stories here should not be understood literally, and they have midrashic (דרש) and hidden meanings (סוד). Nothing said by our sages is extraneous, but they are rather parables and secretive ways of conveying very deep and philosophic concepts. Ritva writes that some of these events may be understood literally, while others are dreams which were dreamt. Maharsha comments that, nevertheless, we should believe that these stories do not have to be dismissed as not being literal.

Rabba begins with reporting that sailors who travel to sea for great distances relate that the wave which comes to sink ships appears with white fire at its edge, and in order to be saved from its fury, it must be struck with sticks which are inscribed with a special formula of God's names. The wave then subsides.

עץ יוסף explains that the depiction of a wave which comes to sink ships is symbolic of the yetzer hara which comes to destroy a person. A person is like a ship which is tossed, as he struggles with life's daily challenges. The yetzer hara is compared to a fire, as it seeks to consume a person, but at the same time it appears white, trying to convince a person that its goal is holy and pure. The yetzer hara tries to distract and overwhelm a person so that he should not consider the consequences of his misdeeds, and that there are no consequences vis-à-vis the world-to-come.

The way to fight and defeat the yetzer hara is to strike it with a stick which has the name אשר-א-היה written

(Continued on page 2)

REVIEW and Remember

1. What is the difference between a בוצית and a דיגית?
2. How do waves that sink ships appear?
3. What happened to the frog that was as large as sixty houses?
4. How big was the largest bird recorded?

HALACHAH Highlight

(Continued from page 1)

an animal owner whose animal is suffering under the weight of the burden it carries on its back. It would be highly unlikely that a person would refuse to assist an animal that is suffering under the weight of its load intentionally so that the animal would suffer more and nevertheless the Torah obligates us to assist. This clearly indicates that the obligation to assist in the unloading of an animal is an example of an animal suffering due to unintended and undesirable but inevitable outcome of his actions.

Some authorities³ agree essentially with the position adopted by Da'as Kedoshim but add one qualification. They maintain that the prohibition against causing inevitable suffering to animals applies only when the pain experienced by the animal is great and thus constitutes a Biblical prohibition. The rationale is that פסיק רישא דלא נחא ליה is prohibited for Biblical prohibitions. If the animal will only experience minor pain or discomfort the prohibition is only Rabbinic. As such, as long as one does not intend to inflict pain on the animal it is permitted. Pri Megadim⁴ is of the opinion that one is permitted to cause pain to an animal if that is not one's intent if the outcome is to obtain food. ■

(Insight...continued from page 1)

upon it. As the Midrash (Shemos Rabba 3:6) explains, this refers to the knowledge that Hashem told Moshe, "I am the One that was, I am the One who is, and I am the One who will always be." The other names engraved upon the stick which strikes that wave also refer to the concept that there is a future world where there will be retribution for a person's actions in this world.

Chasam Sofer writes that there are three types of people who are susceptible to fall prey to the yetzer hara. Some have given up hope of the Jewish people's salvation. Others think that the only reality we face is this world, and that there is no world-to-come. Still others are at risk to succumb to the yetzer hara by believing that gentile governments have control of our destiny and that of the world. We strike back with a stick—a מקל—which is the acrostic for the verse מעולם לדברינו לך, we aspire for Hashem. א-היה אשר א-היה teaches that there is no reason for despair; י-ה indicates that there is a world-to-come; צבקות ה' indicates that the world is not given over to man, but only for Hashem. ■

1. רשבי"ם ד"ה ליתן עליהם את הדין.
2. דעת קדושים יו"ד סי' כ"ד סעי' י"ב.
3. ספר דברי שלים ומובא דבריו במתיבתא פניני הלכה לדף ע"ג:
4. פרי מגדים יו"ד שם שפתי דעת סק"ח. ■

STORIES Off the Daf

Hidden treasures

"אמר רבה בר בר חנה..."

A certain nobleman once asked a great tzaddik about the stories recounted by Rabba bar Bar Chana in the fifth chapter of Bava Basra. "How can such obvious exaggerations possibly teach anything meaningful?"

The tzaddik replied, "I will explain this with a parable. Once there was a wise king who was elderly and had only one young son. When the king saw that his days were coming to an end he worried about his child. The kingdom had vast treasures and he fretted that his child would squander this wealth before he matured enough to understand how to use it properly.

"The wise king conceived of a plan

to prevent such a disaster. He sent for artisans to make a magnificent picture of a lion in a certain part of the palace. But, strangely, the lion's foot pointed towards a certain place in a very unnatural manner. This stood out, since the rest of the lion was completely life-like in every way. He had other similar works of art spread around the area of the palace where the prince would be.

"The purpose of this oddity was for his son to eventually notice it and wonder about it. When the boy matured he would understand that these anomalies must surely have a purpose, since the rest was done to perfection. He would eventually realize that these unnatural limbs point to something and search. In that very direction the old king cleverly placed a hidden cache of priceless jewels for his son to find when he was ready. In this manner his son would not squander the bulk of the treasure of the

realm since he would only come into it when his wisdom was truly developed.

"The same is true for the deep teachings of the aggadata, of which the Rabba bar Bar Chana stories are an example," concluded the tzaddik. "One who learns Gemara sees the magnificent logic and depth of the Talmud and cannot understand how these strange sayings and stories are freely placed in the midst of the deepest sugyos. And for a while every student remains puzzled.

"But when the serious student matures, he realizes that these stories must have a deeper meaning and he begins to search for it. When he is worthy he finally recognizes that these stories hide the deepest secrets of Torah which only a truly mature person can appreciate and properly utilize."¹ ■

1. דברי תורה, ח"א, אות צ"ז. ■