

OVERVIEW of the Daf

1) Amazing stories (cont.)

The Gemara concludes presenting the twenty-one amazing stories.

2) Leviason

The Gemara discusses the creation of the leviason.

3) Behemos

The Gemara describes the creation of the behemos.

The reason Hashem treated the leviason differently than the behemos is explained.

4) Teachings of R' Yehudah in the name of Rav

R' Yehudah in the name of Rav teaches about creation.

R' Yehudah in the name of Rav teaches that the Yarden emerges from the cave of Pamyas.

A Baraisa is cited that supports this concept.

This teaching is unsuccessfully challenged.

5) Teachings of R' Dimi

R' Dimi in the name of R' Yochanan discusses the seven seas and four rivers that surround Eretz Yisroel. ■

REVIEW and Remember

1. What happened when Rabba bar bar Channa went to see Har Sinai?

2. Who declares that Moshe and his Torah are true?

3. What did Hashem do so that the male and female Leviason would not have offspring?

4. What are the seven seas and four rivers that surround Eretz Yisroel?

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In loving memory of our father
שמואל בן צבי אריה ע”ה Mr. Samuel Brickman o.b.m.
by his children Mr. and Mrs. Alan Gerber

Distinctive INSIGHT

Moshe and his Torah are true, and we (Korach and his followers) are false

ושמעית דהו אמרין משה ותורתו אמת והן בדאין

When Moshe announced that the followers of Korach were to be swallowed up by the earth, he proclaimed (Bamidbar 16:28), “With this you shall know that God has sent me to do all these things, and that they are not my doings.”

This statement of Moshe has within it a degree of redundancy. First, Moshe proclaims: “It is God who has sent me to do all of these things.” Then Moshe emphasizes that all that has happened in fact “is not from my doings” and he denies any credit for possessing any personal miraculous powers. What is the meaning of this repetition?

Among the thirteen principles of Jewish belief which Rambam lists, we find one which confirms our belief that the prophecy of Moshe Rabbeinu was authentic and that he was the “father of all prophets.” His level of prophetic vision was superior to all who preceded him and all those who followed. Another distinct tenet to which we ascribe is that the Torah which we have is that which was given to Moshe Rabbeinu from Hashem.

HaGri”z MiBrisk points out that in one single act, Korach and his group denied and scoffed at both of these doctrines. They confronted Moshe and accused him of assuming power unjustifiably when they claimed (BeMidbar 16:3), “It is too much for you...why do you act so authoritatively?” According to the Midrash, they also repudiated Torah as having divine origin by mocking the mitzvos of tzitzis and mezuzah, claiming that a garment entirely of techailes should be exempt from fringes, and a room filled with sefarim should be exempt from mezuzah. This represents a blatant denial of mitzvos as being part of Revelation. Corresponding to these two attacks, Moshe declared that on the one hand: “Hashem has sent me and I am His messenger.” Secondly, Moshe confirmed that the entire Torah “was not fabricated from my heart,” and everyone would clearly know that the Torah was transmitted to him directly from Hashem.

Directly corresponding to the controversy which Korach stirred, and to its being of a dual nature, it is specifically fitting for him now to correct the false notions that he addressed. This accounts for the Gemara (Bava Basra 74a) which reports that after Korach and his crew were swallowed up alive to the depths, they now can be heard chanting: “Moshe is true and the Torah is true, and we are liars.” They are now eternally assigned the role of affirming that Moshe was a true prophet and that the Torah is from Heaven. ■

HALACHAH Highlight

Is it permitted to sterilize aquatic creatures?

מה עשה הקב"ה סירס את הזכר

What did HaKadosh Baruch Hu do? He sterilized the male

Rav Yaakov Emden¹ writes that it is obvious that fish and other aquatic creatures are included in the prohibition against sterilizing animals since the Torah did not specify a specific animal that is subject to the prohibition. Accordingly, he finds difficulty with the Gemara that relates that Hashem sterilized leviason. Since the Midrash teaches that Hashem fulfills the mitzvos it should be prohibited for Him to have sterilized the leviason. A simple resolution is that we do not derive halacha from aggadata and thus there can be no true contradiction between the two. Malbim² disagrees with the premise that aquatic life is included in the prohibition against sterilizing animals since the verse that is the source for this prohibition states בארצכם – in your land, which limits the prohibition to land creatures rather than sea creatures.

Sefer Minchas Chinuch³ is uncertain about whether the prohibition applies to fish. On the one hand Rambam does not mention fish when he discusses the prohibition but on

the other hand Sefer Hachinuch writes that all living creatures – כל בעלי חיים – are included in the prohibition. Furthermore, since the rationale behind the prohibition is the concern of causing one of Hashem's creations to become extinct it is logical to assume that aquatic creatures are included as well.

On a related matter Rav Shmuel Halevi Vosner⁴ was asked whether the prohibition against crossbreeding animals applies to fish. He responded that technically it is permitted. The verse states בהמתך לא תרביע כלאים – and Rambam explains that included in the prohibition are domesticated animals, undomesticated animals, birds and even undomesticated aquatic creatures. The fact that Rambam mentioned undomesticated aquatic creatures and did not mention fish indicates that fish are not included in the prohibition. Nevertheless, for philosophical reasons he hesitates issuing a lenient ruling on the matter. Since the rationale behind the mitzvah relates to changing Hashem's creation, the restriction should apply to fish even if it does not violate the Torah prohibition since it violates the spirit of the law. ■

1. שו"ת שאילת יעביץ ח"א סי' קי"א.
2. מלבים לפר' אמור אות קכ"א.
3. מנחת חינוך מצוה רצ"א אות א'.
4. שו"ת שבט הלוי ח"ח סי' רל"ה. ■

STORIES Off the Daf

"We are liars!"

”והן בדאין...”

Once there was a town where a terrible government informant lived. This man literally terrorized the entire kahal, extracting “protection money” to ensure that people or organizations didn't get into serious trouble with the authorities. One irate townsman said to him, “You just wait. The day of reckoning is near at hand. Your daughters are already of marriageable age, but no normal prospect in this town would even consider them. You will have no choice but to seek a match elsewhere. Of course, the potential match's family's first move will be to consult with the roshei hakahal here regarding their

prospective in-laws. Well, what do you think they will say? The absolute truth—and let me guarantee that that will be some eye-opener!”

But when a prospective shidduch from a distant town was recommended, the informant hatched a plan. He approached the roshei hakahal and told them that he was expecting someone to shortly check him out for a shidduch. He threatened, “And let me tell you, if you don't swear right now...”

The roshei hakahal were in the middle of a trying to arrange a general discharge for their young men from the army, so they had no choice but to swear. But surely they couldn't just lie to the poor stranger who asked about this poisonous informer! Yet how could they ignore the vow? The rosh hakahal eventually came up with an

idea of his own.

When the prospective shidduch arrived to ask about the informer, the rosh hakahal began to exaggerate to a great extent. “Why he has every good attribute. He is a talmid chacham, a very wealthy man; he has yiras Shamayim and the best middos imaginable...”

After giving this glowing report he added, “But I think it's only fair to tell you that I myself am a pathological liar.”

After telling this story, Rav Aizel Charif, zt”l, applied it to our daf. “This is what Korach and his cohorts mean when they affirm, ‘Moshe and his Torah are true! But we are liars!’ Although they say it, they admit that they do not really mean it!”¹ ■

1. מפי השמועה ■