

OVERVIEW of the Daf

1) Verbal abuse (cont.)

Rabbah bar bar Chana further elaborates on the severity of embarrassing others in public.

Another statement regarding the severity of embarrassing others in public is presented.

R' Chinana the son of R' Idi teaches that the prohibition against verbally oppressing others applies only to those who are part of the nation of Torah and mitzvos.

Rav emphasizes the caution necessary to avoid verbally abusing one's wife.

R' Elazar follows up with a statement related to a tearful prayer.

Tangentially, Rav warns against listening to one's wife.

This statement is challenged and the Gemara differentiates between Heavenly matters and worldly matters.

Additional statements related to the severity of the prohibition of אונאה are presented.

2) The relationship between domestic harmony and parnassah

A number of statements that elaborate on the relationship between domestic harmony and parnassah are recorded.

3) The dispute between R' Eliezer and Chachamim

A Mishnah is cited that presents the dispute between R' Eliezer and Chachamim related to the tum'ah status of an oven cut in pieces and reattached with sand.

The term עכנאי is explained.

A Baraisa elaborates on the debate regarding this matter.

The Gemara relates that a number of unusual things occurred on the day of the debate between R' Eliezer and the other Chachamim.

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REVIEW and Remember

1. What steps should one take to avoid publically disgracing a friend?

2. What steps does the Gemara advise taking to provide good parnassah in one's home?

3. What caused God to laugh?

4. Why did R' Eliezer's wife prevent him from saying tachanun?

Gemara GEM

Relying on the advice of one's wife

לישנא אחרינא, הא במילי דשמיא והא במילי דארעא

The Gemara in Berachos (27b) brings the story of the day Rabbi Elazar ben Azarya was appointed to head the Academy in place of Rabban Gamliel, who was removed from his position. When Rabbi Eliezer ben Azarya was asked to accept the position, he told those who approached him that he had to go to his wife and his family members to consult with them. Some commentators wonder about this response. If the leaders of the generation had chosen him to lead them, and Rabbi Eliezer ben Azarya himself apparently felt he was prepared to accept the role, how could he honestly say that it was up to his wife to decide whether or not he would proceed? He could say that he wanted to inform her and to consult with her, but to leave the decision up to her seems a bit puzzling.

There was a precedent of Manoach, the father of Shimshon, and our sages criticize him for failing to be a man of conviction (Berachos 61a) and being completely subservient to his wife. Our Gemara (Bava Metzia 59a) tells us that in matters of heaven, it is the husband who has to make the final decisions, while the wife is entrusted to be the decisive one in all earthly matters. This decision to accept the position as head of the Academy was within the realm of "heavenly matters."

Rabbi Eliezer ben Azarya was young, and he did not know whether he had the ability to lead the community and the generation. He knew that the responsibilities required that he be a firm, yet determined leader, and that he raise the honor of Torah and its teachings. He realized that the best way to determine whether he had the skill necessary to lead would be if he could first serve as a leader in his own family. This is what he told the community representatives. Let me go home and first see if I can lead my own family. When he saw that he was successful in this venue, he was then willing to accept the leadership role for the community at large.

The verse at the beginning of Sefer Bamidbar (1:4) describes those who were heads of the tribes. Yet, it does so in a layered manner. It first describes them as "one man from each tribe," and it then notes that they were each "a man who is a prince of his father's house." These men were proven leaders in their tribes because they had each demonstrated their ability to be leaders in their families.

HALACHAH Highlight

Embarrassing someone as a means to inspire him to repent
 אבל המלבין פני חבריו ברבים אין לו חלק לעולם הבא
But someone who publicly disgraces his friend does not have a portion of the World-to-Come

Sefer Chassidim¹ writes that one should be careful not to call a person who is blind in one eye to read the parsha that discusses the disqualification of a kohen who is blind. Similarly, someone who has a נתק – a form of tzara’as that appears on the head – should not be called to read that section of the Torah. The reason, explains Sefer Chassidim, is that he will be embarrassed to read sections of the Torah that discuss his physical handicap or blemish. Related to this concern, he also warns against looking at a person’s deformity when speaking with him and one should not even discuss his type of blemish when he would be able to hear the topic of conversation. One last concern that he raises is that someone who is suspected of illicit relations should not read the parsha of עריות.

Knesses Hagedolah² cites this ruling and adds that the restriction against calling someone who is suspected of illicit relations to read from the parsha of עריות applies only when there is a mere suspicion, but if it is known that a person violated one of those prohibitions and has not repented he *should* be called to read that parsha to embarrass him or so that he should be aware of the consequences for his transgressions and will refrain from further violations of those prohibitions. Sha’arei Ephraim³ explains that it is only permitted to call the

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Additional consequences of that day are presented.

4) Hurting a convert

A Baraisa states that one who wrongs a convert violates three prohibitions whereas one who oppresses him violates two prohibitions.

The Gemara challenges the statement that there is a difference between wronging and oppressing and concludes that in both cases three prohibitions are violated.

Another Baraisa emphasizes the severity of offending a convert.

5) **MISHNAH:** The Mishnah begins by teaching that a seller is not permitted to mix produce from one field with another even if both are new. ■

sinner to read this parsha if the intent is to push him towards repentance, but if that is not the intent it is not permitted to embarrass him. Proof to this is found in our Gemara that relates that Dovid Hamelech informed those who disgraced him that embarrassing a person is worse than the transgression of illicit relations. From the account in the Gemara it is clear that the intent of Dovid Hamelech’s detractors was to embarrass him, not to inspire him to repent. Consequently, he expresses uncertainty whether such a transgressor should be called to the Torah to read the parsha of עריות even if the intent is to inspire him to repent if it is uncertain that he will be inspired to repent. ■

1. ספר חסידים סי' תשס"ח.

2. כנה"ג אר"ח סי' רפ"ב.

3. שערי אפרים פתחי שערים שער אי סעי' ל"ד. ■

STORIES Off the Daf

Witness to a tragedy

נח לאדם למסור עצמו בכבשן האש ולא ילבין פני חבריו ברבים

Rav Shalom Shwadron, zt"l, told the following story:

Rav Chaim Kaplan, zt"l, the son-in-law of the famous mashgiach, Rav Yeruchem Levovitz, zt"l, was a baal mussar in the full sense of the word.

One time, Rav Kaplan’s student, Rav Waxman, saw him crying his eyes out, obviously absolutely devastated. This was a very shocking sight since it was a regular day in the beis medrash and the young man had not heard of

any tragedy. The student approached Rav Kaplan and asked him what was bothering him, but the latter was so heartbroken that it was a while before he could even answer him. When the student inquired a second time, the rav tearfully asked him to bring a Gemara Bava Metzia.

When the young man brought it from the shelf, the rav opened to the sugyah in Hazahav that discusses the seriousness of embarrassing a fellow Jew in public. He concluded with the statement on daf 59 that one should throw himself into a fiery furnace rather than publicly embarrassing another, which we learn from Tamar.

“Clearly, embarrassing another is compared to murder,” Rav Kaplan com-

mented. “Imagine you were here in this beis midrash in the middle of seder when one young man pulled out a gun in front of everyone and shot his fellow student in the heart. Surely anyone with a drop of human feeling would be unable to hold back from crying bitter tears after witnessing such a tragedy. After I witness one young man approach a fellow student and publicly shame him, is it any wonder that I cry? It is a wonder how a person could fail to cry!”

Rav Shwadron concluded, “This is how the tzaddikim would relate to the words of chazal. What can we say about such sincere fulfillment of the holy Torah?”¹ ■

1. לב שלום, ח"א, ע' שנייה

