

OVERVIEW of the Daf

1) Defining מכת מדינה (cont.)

Ulla concludes his series of questions regarding the definition of מכת מדינה and the Gemara leaves its questions unresolved.

The Gemara presents three inquiries and answers each of them with what it feels is a logical response.

The conclusion of the last inquiry is unsuccessfully challenged.

The Gemara challenges the earlier understanding, that a tragedy could be defined as a מכת מדינה even if some of the fields produced grain.

R' Nachman bar Yitzchok offers a resolution to this challenge.

This resolution is unsuccessfully challenged.

Shmuel asserts that a tenant cannot reduce his rent if there was a מכת מדינה if he never planted the field.

The Gemara presents a challenge to this explanation and it is left as a challenge (קשיא).

A contradiction between two Beraisos concerning the number of times the tenant must plant the field before he may reduce the rent.

The contradiction is resolved by distinguishing between the positions of Rabbi and R' Shimon ben Gamliel regarding the number of occurrences necessary to make a chazakah.

Resh Lakish asserts that if the farmer plants, and seeds do not sprout, he must continue to keep on trying to get the seeds to sprout.

R' Pappa explains when the tenant can give up trying.

R' Pappa's suggested timing is unsuccessfully challenged.

2) The view of R' Yehudah

An incident occurred and Rava issued a ruling.

Rava's ruling was challenged on the basis of R' Yehudah's position but he responded that no one is concerned with the position of R' Yehudah.

3) **MISHNAH:** The Mishnah discusses the guidelines of the tenant's responsibility of delivering grain to the landowner.

4) Clarifying the Mishnah

The Gemara cites two incidents that at first glance seem to be relevant to the principles in our Mishnah, but were later dismissed as not related.

It is noted that although R' Ashi ruled that spoiled wine is not similar to the Mishnah, infested grapes or grain that is ruined in its sheaves is similar to the case of the Mishnah.

5) **MISHNAH:** The Mishnah discusses whether a farmer who agreed to plant one item may plant another variety of seeds instead.

6) The view of R' Shimon ben Gamliel

R' Chisda offers an explanation for the position of R' Shimon ben Gamliel.

The Gemara challenges this explanation. ■

Distinctive INSIGHT

A targeted prayer hits the mark

או דלמא מצי אמר ליה אילו זרעתא חיטי הוה מקיים בי ותגזר אמר ויקם לך

The Mishnah (105b) taught a case of a field which is leased with an arrangement of חכירות, where the receiver commits himself to supply a fixed amount per year whether the field produces more or less. If the entire valley suffers a regional calamity (מכת מדינה) and no one succeeds in growing anything, the receiver can lower the payment (or cancel it completely). The Gemara presents an inquiry. A field was assigned to a חוכר, who was to work the field and pay a fixed amount per year to the owner, but instead of planting wheat as was agreed the tenant planted barley. Then, the entire valley was wiped out with a מכת מדינה. The owner claims that the tenant violated the terms of the agreement by planting barley, while the tenant claims that he owes nothing, that in any case the entire valley suffered devastation. The owner counters by saying that nevertheless, he was praying to God that the wheat crop should succeed, and had the tenant planted wheat as agreed, perhaps his field would have been spared due to his prayers. The Gemara concludes that we accept the claim of the owner, and the halacha recognizes that the prayers of this person could have, and would have, been answered.

The underlying concept here is that God listens to prayers when they are articulated and specific. The source for this is the verse regarding Amalek (Bamidbar 21:1), who launched an attack against the Jews just after the death of Aharon, when the

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REVIEW and Remember

1. When can the landowner say to the tenant, "It is your bad luck"?
2. What was the miracle involving R' Chanina ben Dosa's goats?
3. What is the dispute between Rabbi and R' Shimon ben Gamliel concerning the establishment of a חזקה?
4. Is a tenant-farmer permitted to change the crop he agreed to plant?

This week's Daf Digest is dedicated
 By Mr. & Mrs. Dennis Ruben in memory of their parents

ר' אברהם וואלף בן ר' בערל ז"ל
 ר' חיים שלום בן ר' בנדיט מאיר ז"ל

This week's Daf Digest is dedicated
 By Mr. and Mrs. Michael Schultz in memory of their father
 ר' יונה בן ר' מנשה לייב הכהן ע"ה

HALACHAH Highlight

Expecting minor miracles

נהי דלניסא רבה לא הוה חזינא לניסא זוטא חזינא

Granted a large miracle I did not deserve but a small miracle I did deserve

There was once a man who after having one daughter became a widower. He was set up with a woman forty years old who had never been married and they decided to marry. After the engagement some people questioned his decision based on the Gemara in Bava Basra (119b) that indicates that women who have not yet given birth will not be able to do so after the age of forty. Therefore, he should break the engagement since he can still fulfill the mitzvah of פרו ורבו if he finds a wife who is still in her child bearing age.

Rav Shlomo Kluger, author of Teshuvos Ha'elef L'cha Shlomo¹, advised the man to go forward and marry the woman under discussion. One reason he offered is that there no reason to think that this circumstance is any different than the men from Shevet Menashe who married the daughters of Tzafchad even though they were at least forty years old. Ein Yaakov explains that the men married them relying on the fact that they were righteous women who were deserving of a miracle to have children beyond the age of forty. Although Chazal warn against relying on a miracle, not all miracles are the same and there are small miracles one could expect will occur as indicated by our Gemara

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Clouds of Glory momentarily disappeared. Amalek disguised themselves as Canaanites in order to deceive the Jews and trick them into praying to be victorious against what they believed to be the Canaanite attack. Meshech Chochma explains that had the Jews known they were Amalekites and prayed to defeat the Amalekites, their prayers certainly would have been accepted. Yet, the same prayer, just with being mistakenly targeted for the Canaanites, would not necessarily be accepted. We see therefore, that the owner of the field is justified in claiming that his prayers were misguided due to the negligence of the tenant. ■

that there are times a person may not be worthy of a major miracle but they could be worthy of a minor miracle. Accordingly, since having children above the age of forty is a minor miracle one could enter into marriage with a woman who is that age. Furthermore, since they are already engaged the merit that the chosson will generate by going ahead with the marriage rather than cause embarrassment by breaking the engagement will make them worthy of having children despite her age.

He also adds his interpretation of the Gemara's statement that a woman will not bear children above the age of forty. The intent of the Gemara is that women who did not think about marriage until the age of forty will not be capable of having children but a woman who thought about marriage but for whatever reason did marry until after forty will still retain the capacity to have children. ■

1. שו"ת האלף לך שלמה אהע"ז סי' ט.

STORIES Off the Daf

Wonder of wonders

נהי דלניסא רבה לא הוה חזינא

Today's daf discusses small and big miracles.

When Rav Chaim Leib Auerbach, zt"l, was forced to take a ship from Palestine to America to raise money for his yeshiva, he experienced several impressive public miracles.

As the ship was well on its way and a week away from any port, the ship listed to one side. It was clear that they were taking in seawater from a breach in the hold but since the crack was small, the crew needed to scour the boat and find the breach before the ship sunk into the sea.

When the passengers realized their predicament, they began to panic. To ensure that they do nothing foolish, the captain ordered all passengers to assemble on

deck. The passengers naturally broke up into two groups, Jews both religious and non-religious who gravitated to Rav Auerbach, and gentiles who surrounded an Egyptian Coptic priest for spiritual solace.

Rav Auerbach began a very rousing prayer session beseeching the Almighty for mercy on their ship. Conversely, the priest ordered his flock to remain silent and contemplate the divine. Eventually even the gentiles drifted over to join Rav Auerbach's vocal group.

After a long session in prayer, the Rav ordered them to show their trust that Hashem would help them by acting as if nothing had happened and going to eat lunch. Everyone took his advice in this—including the priest. The only person who remained to continue fervently praying was the Rav himself.

After lunch the Rav suggested that people donate money to his yeshiva in order to ensure that Hashem have mercy on them. The moment the basket was fin-

ished making the rounds, the leak was located and they were saved.

But shortly thereafter, a ruffian approached the Rav to rob him of the money. A moment before the ruffian struck, the Rav spun around and said a phrase in לשון הקדש which froze him. The ruffian was only released after promising to change his ways.

When Rav Auerbach returned home and told this story to his family, young Rav Shlomo Zalman piped up, "It is obvious that you hired the ruffian to ensure that no one would try to rob you. But how could you solicit donations at such a dangerous time? If the ship had not been saved wouldn't they have treated you as a fraud?"

"No my son," the Rav replied. "If that would have been the case, all and sundry including the charlatan would have been on the bottom of the sea!" ■

1. Adapted from, "And From Jerusalem His Word", pg. 50-60