

OVERVIEW of the Daf

1) Angels

A disagreement is presented concerning how angels are created.

2) Hashem

The Gemara explains why in one place Hashem is described as having white hair whereas in another place He is described as having black hair.

Another discrepancy regarding the number of thrones is discussed.

3) Eighteen curses of Yeshayah

R' Dimi notes that it was only the last of eighteen curses directed to the Jewish People that put Yeshayah's mind at ease.

The eighteen curses are enumerated.

Rav Ketina notes that honest people will not be removed from Yerushalayim.

This assertion is challenged from a teaching of Rava that Yerushalayim was destroyed after once honest people were no longer present in Yerushalayim.

The Gemara resolves the challenge by distinguishing between honesty in Torah and honesty in business.

4) Maaseh Merkavah

A Baraisa records an incident involving different sages who expounded on Maaseh Merkavah.

Part of the incident is unsuccessfully challenged.

A Baraisa recounts the incident of the four sages who entered the "orchard."

Tangentially, the Gemara records two unusual questions posed to Ben Zoma, who was one of the sages who entered the "orchard." ■

REVIEW and Remember

1. What is the dispute concerning how angels are created?

2. How did R' Ketina know that honest people could be found in Yerushalayim?

3. What happened when R' Elazar ben Arach began to expound on Ma'aseh Merkavah?

4. What happened to the four sages that entered the "orchard"?

HALACHAH Highlight

Preparing oneself to hear the lessons of Maaseh Merkavah
נתעטף וישב על אבן אחת תחת הזית

Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai was riding on a donkey, and Rabbi Elazar ben Arach was following him. Rabbi Elazar asked that Rabbi Yochanan teach him a chapter of Maaseh Merkavah. Rabbi Yochanan denied the request, reminding his student that such lessons cannot be transmitted. Rabbi Elazar then offered to review a detail Rabbi Yochanan he had once taught him about Maaseh Merkavah. To this, R' Yochanan agreed.

Maharsha notes that after Rav Yochanan refused to teach Rabbi Elazar about Maaseh Merkavah, Rabbi Elazar immediately indicated that he had, in fact, learned about the topic before, and from Rav Yochanan himself. R' Elazar asked to review the lesson, and Rav Yochanan even agreed to listen to his student. But did not Rav Yochanan first say that he felt that teaching this topic to him was inappropriate?

Furthermore, Ben Ish Chai explains that Rav Elazar ben Arach was among the most outstanding students of Rav Yochanan ben Zakkai (see Avos 2:12). Rav Yochanan certainly deemed him wise, and one who understood things on his own. Rabbi Elazar was qualified to study this sublime theme.

The answer is that Rabbi Elazar had studied with Rabbi Yochanan before, but they had only touched upon **ראשי פרקים**—*general topics*. This is the extent of what a teacher can expose to a fitting student. However, in this episode, Rabbi Elazar asked to be taught **פרק אחד**—*a full chapter* of Maaseh Merkavah. This was too extensive of an exposure for Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai to transmit, even to his star student. At that point, Rabbi Elazar requested merely to review some of the general ideas which they had previously studied, and Rabbi Yochanan agreed to hear it.

At this point, Rabbi Yochanan prepared himself in a detailed manner. He descended from his donkey, wrapped himself in a tallis, sat on a stone and found a spot under an olive tree. What is the significance of these specific details of Rav

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Distinctive INSIGHT

Wearing a white talis

לבושיה כתלג חיור

His garment was white as snow

Rashi¹ in Masseches Shabbos declares that the garment that has tzitzis should be white. The Bach² explains that this practice is based on the fact that Hashem wears a white talis. The Gemara in Rosh Hashanah³ relates that Hashem donned a talis to teach Moshe Rabbeinu the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy, and the pasuk in Daniel, cited in our Gemara, states that Hashem's garments are white. This indicates that Hashem's talis is white and in our effort to emulate Him we also wear a white talis.

The Magen Avrohom⁴ notes that this explanation of Bach is seemingly inconsistent with the explanation offered by Bach in a different place for the custom to wear a white talis. Shulchan Aruch⁵ cites an opinion who maintains that the tzitzis should be the same color as the talis. Rema⁶ writes that Ashkenazim customarily put white tzitzis even on colored garments. Bach⁷ writes that to avoid entering into the dispute it is best for a person to wear a white garment with white tzitzis, which is acceptable according to all opinions. A practical difference between these two explanations would be putting colored tzitzis onto a colored garment. According to the first explanation, an effort should be made to have a white talis in order to emulate Hashem whereas according to the second explanation there is no reason to obtain a white

(Insight. Continued from page 1)

Yochanan's preparing to hear the teaching?

Ben Ish Chai explains that wrapping oneself in a tallis with tzitzis represents one's being enveloped with an אור מקיף—a special spiritual light which encircles a person. A stone is a humble place upon which to sit, and the oil is derived from olives through crushing and pounding. These represent the fact that a person is only worthy for advancement in Torah if he possesses an exceedingly humble spirit. ■

garment as long as the talis and the tzitzis are the same color. Mishnah Berurah⁸ cites both explanations of Bach and writes that ideally one should wear a white garment since that is ideal according to all opinions.

Common custom amongst Ashkenazim is to have black stripes on one's talis and talis katan. The Pri Megadim⁹ mentions the custom to have blue stripes on garments to serve as a reminder of techeles. Sefer Minhag Yisroel Torah¹⁰ suggests, based on a comment of Rambam, that black is similar to techeles and it is intended to also serve as a reminder of the color techeles. ■

1. רש"י מסכת שבת קניג. ד"ה זה ציצית.
2. בי"ח אור"ח סי' כ"ד בסוף הסימן.
3. גמ' ראש השנה י"ז:
4. מג"א סי' ט' סק"ו.
5. שו"ע אור"ח סי' ט' סעי' ה'.
6. רמ"א שם.
7. בי"ח סי' ט' ד"ה כתב הרמב"ם.
8. מ"ב סי' ט' ס"ק ט"ז.
9. פמ"ג אי"א סי' ט' סק"ו.
10. מנהג ישראל תורה סי' ט' אות ב'. ■

STORIES Off the Daf

Six or Seven Hundred Orders of the Mishnah

חד אמר שש מאות סדרי משנה וחד אמר שבע מאות סדרי משנה

Once the Chofetz Chaim, zt"l, and Rav Chaim Soleveitchik, zt"l, were staying at the same inn. Another guest approached the two Gedolim and asked them a question, "It is well known that the Gemara in Chagiga 14a states that there were either six or seven hundred sidrei Mishnah, and only six of them remain to us. What were the contents of all those Mishnayos that were not

put in our six orders?"

The Chofetz Chaim said, "You misunderstand the meaning of the statement that there were six or seven hundred orders. It was not that there were other subjects of which we have not heard; rather, there were enough Mishnayos to fill six or seven hundred sederim. In my opinion, the many teachings that we find in the Gemara and Geonim until today, all of the teachings innovated in each generation is the living restoration of all this lost Torah. Through dedicated study, the Chachomim of every generation have merited this. And there has certainly been enough to fill six hundred sederim of Mishnah and more! In the introduction

to Shenos Eliyahu, Rav Chaim of Volozhin, zt"l, explained that through Ruach Hakodesh, Rabbeinu Hakadosh alluded to all six hundred sederim in the terse language of his six. Everything is really encoded in our Mishnayos."

Rav Chaim Brisker then added, "I would like to note that there is a fundamental difference between the words of the Gemara and the words of those who came later, even the Geonim. The general principle of 'these and those are the words of the living G-d,' only applies to the words of the Gemara itself. In reference to the rest this rule does not always apply. The words of the Talmud are in a much higher category than anything that came afterward!" ■

