

OVERVIEW of the Daf

1) חרש (cont.)

The Gemara explains why one who is deaf or mute is exempt from the mitzvah of appearing in the Beis Hamidash and why they are obligated in the mitzvah of שמחה.

The implication of the Beraisa, namely that one who is mute is exempt from the Mitzvah of Hakhel because he cannot learn, is successfully challenged.

Mar Zutra explains that the Beraisa meant that the exemption of one who is mute stems from his inability to teach.

R' Ashi supports this explanation.

2) People who are exempt from the mitzvah of appearing in the Beis Hamikdash

R' Tanchum asserts that one who is deaf in one ear is exempt from the mitzvah of appearing in the Beis Hamikdash.

The exposition is unsuccessfully challenged.

R' Tanchum asserts that one who has one lame foot is exempt from the mitzvah of appearing in the Beis Hamikdash.

The exposition is unsuccessfully challenged.

The Gemara digresses to record an exposition related to how much Hashem values the performance of the mitzvah of appearing in the Beis Hamikdash, and an unrelated exposition of R' Tanchum.

3) Hakhel

A Beraisa relates the teaching of R' Elazar ben Azaryah concerning the mitzvah of hakhel that R' Elazar shared with R' Yehoshua.

Additional expositions of R' Elazar ben Azaryah are recorded.

The Gemara presents the background to the hesitation on the part of R' Yochanan ben Berokah and R' Elazar ben Chisma to present R' Elazar ben Azaryah's teaching to R' Yehoshua.

4) An insane person

A Beraisa presents three characteristics of a person who is insane.

R' Huna maintains that a person must exhibit all three traits to be considered insane, whereas according to R' Yochanan one is considered legally insane if he exhibits one of these traits.

The Gemara begins to clarify the exact circumstance of the dispute. ■

Distinctive INSIGHT

The mitzvah of Hakhel

אנשים באים ללמוד נשים באות לשמוע טף למה באין כדי ליתן שכר למביאיהן

The mitzvah of "Hakhel" is where the Jews gather to listen as the King reads from Sefer Devarim. The Torah says that all are to gather, "the men, women, and children" (Devarim 31:12). In a parallel context (see Mechilta, Bo #16, cited by מסורת הש"ס), Rabbi Elazar ben Azarya pointed out that the men come to study the words of the king, the women come to listen, and the children are brought to provide merit for those who bring them. When Rabbi Yehoshua heard these words, he was exceedingly impressed, and he exclaimed, "How fortunate are you, Avraham Avinu, to have Rabbi Elazar ben Azarya as your descendant!" What so impressed Rabbi Yehoshua, and why did he credit Avraham Avinu for this insight?

Harav Mordechai Rogow explains that the Jewish nation throughout all generations is united and interconnected. When an insightful and brilliant Torah lesson is taught by a scholar, although it may be many years after the time of Avraham Avinu, the spiritual satisfaction and pleasure which it causes is shared by all Jews of all times. This is also the case for any merit which is generated by any Jew at any moment, no matter how distant one may be from another in place or in time. Even as individuals, we each have a great responsibility to the nation as a whole. Our merits transcend the generations, and our entire people benefit, dating as far back as those who were redeemed from Egypt, and even back to Avraham Avinu.

Furthermore, the episode of Hakhel is described as one where the fathers listen intently and study the words of Torah which are uttered by the king. The women come to hear for themselves and to bring the children to be witness to this grand event. Yet the Gemara writes that the parents earn reward for bringing the children. What is the meaning of this?

Herein is contained a powerful message. If parents exert a concerted effort to bring their children to the Beis Midrash they thereby demonstrate their goals and aspirations that these children be provided an environment of Torah and kedusha. With this infusion of training and nurturing, these youths are set on their path of commitment to Torah and Yiddishkeit. As a result, they will certainly be deserving of merit. It is critical that the parents be personally involved and that the children observe them as positive role models. There is nothing that can replace the direct involvement of parents and their partnership with Torah teachers in the education of the youth, as is demonstrated by the Hakhel event. When the adults fulfill their responsibilities, they can be assured that Hashem will assist and have their efforts meet with success. ■

HALACHAH Highlight

A woman's obligation to study Torah

"הקהל את העם האנשים והנשים והטף" אם אנשים באים ללמוד נשים באות לשמוע וכי'

"Gather the nation, the men and the women and the children." If the men come to learn and the women come to hear etc.

Shulchan Aruch¹ states that although women receive reward for studying Torah, nonetheless, the Sages decreed that one should not teach his daughter Torah, and one who teaches his daughter Torah is considered as if he is teaching her frivolity. This restriction applies to the Oral Law. Written Law should not be taught to one's daughter, but if it is, it is not considered as if one is teaching her frivolity.

Rav Dovid Halevi², the Taz, explains in the name of Rav Yosef Karo that the source that teaching a woman the Written Law is not considered as if he is teaching her frivolity is our Gemara. Our Gemara relates that during the Hakhel ceremony the king would read from Sefer Devarim to the nation— including the women, which clearly indicates that it is not prohibited for women to study that part of Torah. Taz questions whether this is, in fact, a valid source for this ruling. The Shulchan Aruch rules that ideally the Written Law should not be taught and yet concerning Hakhel we do not find a reason to restrict women from attending, even ideally. Therefore, Taz explains that the reason the women attended Hakhel is that the king did nothing more than read and provide a simple explanation of the text rather than provide in-depth expositions. The hesitancy men-

REVIEW and Remember

1. Are mute people capable of learning?

2. How do we know that the pit into which Yosef was thrown had snakes and scorpions?

3. How does one sift through multiple dissenting opinions?

4. What are the three characteristics of an insane person

tioned in Shulchan Aruch against women studying the Written Law refers to in-depth study of the text, but a superficial reading and explanation are completely permitted.

Following this approach Rav Yoel Teitelbaum³, the Satmar Rov, and Rav Shmuel Halevi Vosner⁴, the Shevet Halevi, question the practice in many schools to teach Chumash with commentators since, according to Taz, women should not engage in the in-depth study of Torah. Even Rashi contains many citations from Chazal which constitute the study of the Oral Law which is certainly prohibited. Notwithstanding their opposition, many schools continue to teach Chumash with the in-depth analysis of the commentators. ■

1. שו"ע יו"ד סי' רמ"ו סעי' ו'.
2. ט"ז שם סק"ד.
3. שו"ת דברי יואל סי' פ"ד.
4. שו"ת שבט הלוי ח"ו סי' ק"י. ■

STORIES Off the Daf

"How Lovely are Your Steps..."

"...בת נדיב בתו של אברהם אבינו..."

Every year between Rosh Chodesh Elul and Sukkos, three distinguished chassidim would stay with Rav Sinai of Zmarmrad, zt"l.

They didn't waste a second of their time and would learn with tremendous intensity the entire night and most of the day. They would fast until midday every day, and all day long on Mondays and Thursdays. The group spent much time in heartfelt prayer and each man worked to refine his character and come closer to his Creator.

Once, the eldest chassid said to the Rebbe, "If I may ask, were there greater avodos then what we are doing right here

in exile when the Beis Hamikdash stood?" (He meant could it be that anything else needs to be improved upon to bring the final redemption?)

The Rebbe replied, "Do you think that when the Beis Hamikdash stood people only excelled in their learning and davening? The main thing when the Beis Hamikdash stood was the joy of the mitzvos, and this attitude would naturally lead people to help those less fortunate than themselves. People would feed the poor and help them to rejoice. They were not only concerned with their own spiritual growth; they were concerned for those less fortunate!"

When the Rebbe's son would tell this story, he would add, "This is actually a Gemara in Chagigah 3a. Rava taught on the verse: How lovely are your footsteps in your shoes, daughter of the noble one—

How pleasant are the steps of the Jewish people as they walk to Yerushalayim for the festival! If one calculates what the Jews brought up to Yerushalayim (Maaser Sheni or Maaser Ani, as well as Maaser Beheimah, etc.), you will find that approximately half of most material goods went with them on their pilgrimage. This means that those who owned a lot of land or animals brought up a huge amount of material goods. They couldn't consume it all themselves so they searched out those who didn't have enough and shared their bounty with them. This is why the verse compares them to our father Avraham. They would seek out those who were less fortunate and make it their business to bring joy to their lives. My father was telling his chassidim that they were far indeed from bringing the ultimate redemption!" ■