



This month's Daf Digest is dedicated  
לע"נ Mr. Israel Gotlib of Antwerp and Petach Tikva, Yisrael Tzvi ben Zev ע"ה (23 Av).  
Family Weiss, London

## OVERVIEW of the Daf

### 1) The incident of R' Sheishes and the servants of the Reish Galvasa (cont.)

The Gemara concludes retelling the incidents of R' Sheishes and the servants of the Reish Galvasa.

### 2) Demons

A verse in Koheles is cited that is interpreted, according to one opinion, to refer to demons.

R' Yochanan comments that he does not know what the essence of a demon is.

The Gemara recounts how Shlomo Hamelech used demons for the construction of the Beis Hamikdash.

The demons told Shlomo Hamelech that Ashmodai the king of demons will be able to assist.

A description of the capture of Ashmedoi as well as the trip to see Shlomo Hamelech is recorded.

The Gemara proceeds to describe how Shlomo Hamelech's servants were able to capture the Shamir.

The Gemara returns to the earlier account of bringing Ashmodai to Shlomo Hamelech and Ashmodai explains some of his unusual reactions to different incidents.

Additional interactions between Shlomo Hamelech and Ashmodai are recorded.

A description of how Ashmodai deposed Shlomo Hamelech from his throne and what the rabbi did to return him to his throne are presented.

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## REVIEW and Remember

1. How many different varieties of demons did R' Yochanan recognize  
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2. How did Benayahu capture Ashmodai?  
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3. How did Shlomo HaMelech's servants capture the shamir?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Did Shlomo HaMelech regain the throne?  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Distinctive INSIGHT

### *The peculiar actions of Ashmodai*

אמר ליה בניהו מאי טעמא כי חזיתיה להווא סמיא דהוה קא טעי באורחא אסיקתיה לאורחיה

As Benayahu led Ashmodai to Yerushalayim to meet Shlomo Hamelech, the Gemara relates several peculiar things that happened along the way. We are told that Ashmodai brushed against a palm tree and knocked it down, and that he also destroyed at least one house by brushing up against it, as well. A second house was spared when the widow who lived in it pleaded with Ashmodai not to destroy it. Ashmodai then helped some individuals who were lost to find their way, and he laughed at a man buying shoes and another who was practicing sorcery. Later, after meeting Shlomo Hamelech, Benayahu asked Ashmodai to explain the events that had transpired. Yet, he only asked him about his having helped the two people who were lost along the road, but he did not inquire about his having destroyed a tree and a house. Why did Benayahu not ask Ashmodai about these strange events?

Maharsha answers that because it was not unusual for a דב to cause destruction, his brushing against a tree and a house along the way was not unexpected. עיון יעקב explains that there was no reason to ask about the tree and the house at this point. The tree had already dried up and the house was already demolished. However, it was still relevant to know why Ashmodai had assisted these other individuals along the way, whether they were righteous or wicked, or if the one buying shoes and the one practicing sorcery would live or die.

עיון שער יצחק explains that when they had passed by the tree and the house, the space was very narrow, and it was therefore understandable that Ashmodai had brushed up against them, albeit with destructive outcomes. This is why his having brushed against the tree and house was not unusual, and Benayahu did not ask about it. In fact, even when the widow appealed to Ashmodai to spare her home, the space next to her house was also very narrow, and Ashmodai had to avoid bumping into it only by twisting himself into contortions, even to the extent whereby he broke a bone by doing so. ■

# HALACHAH Highlight

*Is it permitted to ask a child to recite a verse to dictate one's behavior?*

אמר ליה פסוק לי פסוקיד

He said to him [a child], "Recite your verse for me."

The Gemara relates that R' Sheishes refrained from walking on the reed mat because a nearby child happened to be studying and cited the pasuk that instructed him to turn to the right or the left. **ספר אגרא דכלה**<sup>1</sup> explains that through the power of Torah and mitzvos it is possible to benefit from the "hidden light - אור הגנוז." This concept is expressed in the Midrash which teaches that if someone wishes to take counsel he should take it from the Torah. In other words, one should look to the verses of the Torah for guidance how to behave. Just as Adam was able to see from one end of the world to the other, so too one can know the future by tapping into the wisdom and light that is contained in the Torah.

Rambam<sup>2</sup> writes that if one has done something and then wishes to find out whether he made a correct choice, he is permitted to ask a child what verse he is studying. If the child cites a verse that indicates that the behavior was correct he may rejoice that his behavior is considered blessed. The reason it is permitted, explains Rambam, is that he is not using the verse to instruct him what to or not to do, rather he is using the verse to tell him whether the

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Rav and Shmuel disagree whether Shlomo Hamelech was ever reinstated as the king.

### 3) Talmudic remedies

The Gemara continues an earlier discussion related to remedies for different ailments. ■

action that was already performed was correct.

Kesef Mishnah<sup>3</sup> expresses astonishment at this explanation of Rambam. R' Sheishes in our Gemara refrained from walking on the reed mat because of the verse cited to him by the child. This is a classic example of a person using a child's verse to dictate how he should behave and not merely as a way of determining, after the fact, whether a behavior was correct. He then suggested as a resolution that R' Sheishes did not rely exclusively on the verse cited by the child, rather he relied, primarily, on the noise R' Chisda made to signal to him of the danger.

Kesef Mishnah notes that this discussion is only relevant for Rambam who does not permit the use of verses to dictate behavior. Semag, however, writes that many authorities permit the use of verses to dictate behavior and consider this practice to be a small form of prophecy. Rema<sup>4</sup> permits asking a child to cite his verse and Shach<sup>5</sup> explains that it is permitted even to dictate how one should behave. ■

1. ספר אגרא דכלה דף ט"ז :
2. רמב"ם פי"א מהלי עכו"ם ה"ה.
3. כסף משנה שם.
4. רמ"א יו"ד סי' קע"ט סעי' ד'.
5. ש"ך שם סק"ה. ■

# STORIES Off the Daf

## The mind of a madman

"מכדי שוטה בחדא מילתא לא סריך..."

On today's daf we find that after the throne of Shlomo HaMelech was usurped by an imposter, he appealed to the Sanhedrin of his time. Dressed as a beggar, possessed of only his staff, the sages suspected that the king was a madman — who else but a madman would claim to be the king? However, after hearing his arguments, they decided to believe him. While the insane tend to present a variety of claims and a disjoint-

ed argument, Shlomo HaMelech remained absolutely firm in his claim and never wavered. We see from this that the sages understood sanity to include the ability to maintain a focused view.

The Chofetz Chaim, zt"l, often discussed the limited nature of our sojourn in this world and the eternal loss of those who do not prepare for the next world. "People are always worried they will not have enough to live on. Why aren't they worried that they haven't got anything to sustain their souls after death?"<sup>1</sup>

He was quick to point out the foolishness of this approach. "One sign of insanity is sleeping in a grave-

yard. What is the significance of this particular symptom? A person is given the opportunity to attain eternity through learning the holy Torah. Even after dying he will return to the Torah during the resurrection of the dead. If one didn't bother to learn or support Torah, his body will remain in the grave. He will wind up 'sleeping in a graveyard.' Is there any madness more acute than voluntarily wallowing in the dirt for all eternity?"<sup>2</sup>

If one knows about the eternal nature of the Torah but fails to act on what he knows, he truly is insane! ■

1. אוצר היראה והחכמה, עמוד קי"ז
2. החפץ חיים חיינו ופעליו, חלק ג', עמוד שע"ג