

OVERVIEW of the Daf

1) Introductory words to the megilla (cont.)

The Gemara continues to record the introductory words of different Rabbis to the Megilla.

2) Exposition of the megilla (cont.)

The Gemara resumes its exposition of different words in the Megilla.

3) Kings who ruled the entire world

A Baraisa teaches that three kings ruled the entire world and Achashverosh was one of those kings.

The sources for the Baraisa are presented.

The assertion that other kings did not rule the entire world is unsuccessfully challenged.

4) Calculating the seventy years of exile

The exposition of the Megilla resumes with a discussion related to the miscalculation of the seventy years of exile by Balshatzar and Achashverosh.

After noting the correct calculation the Gemara points out that the Beis HaMikdash should have been rebuilt in the fourteenth year of Achashverosh's reign.

Rava answers that some of the years used in the calculations overlapped. ■

REVIEW and Remember

1. What does the name Achashveirosh indicate?

2. Why isn't Shlomo considered one of the kings who ruled the entire world?

3. What do Balshatzar and Achashveirosh do when they thought the seventy years of exile had passed?

4. What event marks the beginning of the seventy years of exile?

Distinctive INSIGHT

The five who were evil, and the five who were righteous

הוא אחשוורוש מתחילתו ועד סופו וכו' הוא עשו ברשעו מתחילתו ועד סופו וכו'

The Gemara lists five cases in history where we are taught that the corrupt nature of a person pervaded their entire life, from the beginning to the very end. The Midrash (Esther Rabba 1:2) notes that correspondingly, there were five righteous people whose goodness and merit lasted their entire life, from beginning to end. What is the message of this Midrash?

In his commentary to עין יעקב, the רי"ף points out that we see that Hashem has calculated and planned that for every force of evil there was always a proponent of good which countered the negative influence and maintained the balance of merit in the world.

Nimrod led the world in rebellion against Hashem, but he was balanced by Avraham Avinu, who called out in the name of Hashem and spread monotheism in the world.

Eisav, a force of evil, is introduced in the Torah as "the one who was born first, the red one" (Bereshis 25:25). The destruction he unleashed was countered by Dovid Hamelech, who was the youngest of his brothers, and is referred to as "the red one with handsome eyes" (1 Shmuel 16:12).

Dasan and Aviram were evildoers who conspired and plotted to the detriment of the nation. Their corruption was offset by the righteous Moshe and Aharon, virtuous proponents of the people.

The evil King Achaz had the houses of study emptied, but this void was filled by King Chizkiyahu, about whom it is said that he promoted Torah study to such a degree that there was no child who was unfamiliar with the intricate details of the ritual impurities.

Finally, Achashverosh interfered with the rebuilding of the Beis HaMikdash, and corresponding to this harm arose Ezra, who led the nation in successfully rebuilding the Second Beis HaMikdash. ■

HALACHAH Highlight

Taking stones from the Kosel

אפיק מאני דבי מקדשא ואשתמש בה

He [Balshatzar] took out the utensils of the Beis HaMikdash and used them.

There used to be a practice that when people would come to Eretz Yisroel and visit the Kosel they would carve out a small piece of rock to take home. Others would drive in a nail believing that this would provide spiritual protection. Poskim¹ wrote very strongly against these practices and noted numerous prohibitions that could be violated by destroying the Kosel.

One person suggested to Rav Moshe Feinstein that based on a Gemara in Avodah Zarah² the prohibition of מעילה, deriving personal benefit from sacred property, should not be violated. The Gemara there relates that when the Greeks entered the Beis HaMikdash and took stones of the altar they became defiled and lost their sanctity. Therefore, claimed this writer, the stones of the Kosel have lost their sanctity as a result of the fact that the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed.

Rav Feinstein³ disagreed and asserted that sacred

items do not lose their sanctity unless the non-Jew intends to use them for personal benefit. If, however, there is no intention to use the sacred item for mundane purposes, the object stands ready to be used once again in the Beis HaMikdash, and the item does not lose its sanctity. Thus, the Kosel which was not appropriated for personal use and stands to become part of the reconstruction of the Beis HaMikdash has not lost its sanctity and is still subject to the prohibition of מעילה.

Rav Feinstein cites our Gemara as proof to his assertion. Our Gemara relates that Balshatzar was punished for using the sacred utensils of the Beis HaMikdash. The reason Balshatzar did not use the utensils immediately was his concern for the prophecy that after seventy years the Jews would return to Eretz Yisroel and they would use these utensils in the new Beis HaMikdash. It was only when, according to his mistaken calculation, the seventy years passed did he feel comfortable using the utensils. This indicates, notes Rav Feinstein, that utensils remained sacred even when they are in the possession of non-Jews if the intention is to use them again in the Beis HaMikdash. ■

1. ע' כף החיים סי' קנ"א ס"ק ע"ו ובספר עיר הקודש והמקדש ח"ד פ"ט
2. גמ' עבודה זרה נב
3. שו"ת אג"מ יו"ד ח"ד ס"ע ס"ג ■

STORIES Off the Daf

"Because of laziness..."

בשביל עצלות שהיה להם לישראל שלא עסקו בתורה נעשה שונאו של הקב"ה ...

In today's daf we find that the Jewish people were accused of laziness and slacking from their Torah study. It was this lapse that diminished, so to speak, Hashem's ability to save them from Haman's genocidal plans.

Since most people worked during the day to make a living, the indictment of laziness really meant that they were not taking advantage of the time available to them when they were "off hours." If one learns with diligence, even a little a day goes a long way.

In Kelm, the schedule included a wake-up call in the middle of the night for a five or ten minute seder. During that time, the bochurim were permitted to learn whatever they wanted with a chavrusah. After some time, all of the bochurim noticed how much they were advancing because of those extra five or ten minutes of learning. The practice always fulfilled its purpose: that the bochurim would come to see the vast potential hiding within the short span of five minutes.

The Imrei Menachem of Alexander, zt"l, was once with a group of people and one of them said, "I became a talmid chacham from just ten minutes a day! I was very busy with my business, but before breakfast every day I would learn Shulchan Aruch

Orach Chaim for a quick ten minutes. After doing this for some time, I found that I had acquired a broad base of knowledge in this area of halachah."

The Rebbe commented, "When I was younger, there were times when I had errands to run and tasks to deal with which took up a great deal of my time. However, I was always careful that I would sit and learn right up until the moment I left and from the moment I returned. While I was on the way, I would also be thinking in learning. Every free moment is potentially of immeasurable worth! I knew people who were such great masmidim that even on their wedding day they learned right up until the chupah!" ■