

OVERVIEW of the Daf

1) Attaining long life (cont.)

The Gemara elaborates on the practices of R' Preida that earned him long life.

The practices that merited R' Nechunya ben Hakanah long life are presented.

The Gemara retells the incident of R' Akiva's inquiry of R' Nechunya the Great how he merited long life.

The practices that merited R' Yehoshua ben Korchah long life are presented.

The matter of gazing at wicked people is examined.

R' Zeira discusses the practices that merited him long life.

2) **MISHNAH:** R' Yehudah presents a number of applications of the halacha that a synagogue retains sanctity even if it fell into ruin.

3) Activities prohibited in a synagogue

A Baraisa enumerates activities that are prohibited in a synagogue.

R' Assi teaches that synagogues in Bavel are built with the condition that they should be permitted for use, but nonetheless calculations are prohibited.

R' Assi highlights the severity of making calculations in a synagogue.

The Gemara elaborates on the details of the earlier cited Baraisa.

The issue of entering a synagogue to escape the elements is discussed.

The matter of eulogizing in a synagogue is clarified.

The Gemara contrasts a eulogy for a scholar delivered by Reish Lakish and a eulogy delivered by R' Nachman.

4) Honoring scholars

The Gemara digresses to elaborate on the obligation and the parameters of honoring Torah scholars. ■

REVIEW and Remember

1. How did R' Akiva demonstrate that he was a young scholar?

2. Why didn't R' Yehoshua bless Rabbi with long life?

3. Why are scholars permitted to adorn themselves in a synagogue?

4. What is the destiny for those who study halacha?

Distinctive INSIGHT

Viewing the face of an evil person

מימי א נסתקלתי בסמות אדם רשע

The Gemara (Megilla 28a) tells us that simply viewing an evil person's face is destructive and damaging to the soul.

When Moshe was first approached by Hashem and told to go to Egypt to take the Jewish people out, he resisted accepting appointment (Shemos 3:11). In Ateres Mordechai, Rabbi Mordechai Rogow, zt"l, explains. Among other things, Moshe was concerned that as representative of the people, he would have to confront Pharaoh and deal with him, thus exposing himself to Pharaoh's cruel nature and evil character. Moshe was concerned that listening to Pharaoh's blasphemous pronouncements would adversely affect him. He thought that his personal status would possibly be lowered to a degree whereby he would no longer be qualified to take Bnei Yisrael out of Egypt.

Nevertheless, Moshe did fulfill his mission, not only to go to Pharaoh, but he also succeeded in leading the Jews out of Egypt. With the assistance and guidance of Hashem, he was able to withstand the confrontation with Pharaoh.

This ability of Moshe is highlighted at the end of the Torah, where Moshe's unique leadership qualities are noted. "And there has not risen a prophet since in Yisrael like Moshe, whom Hashem knew face to face...in all the signs and the wonders which Hashem sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land. And in all the mighty hand, and in all the great awe, which Moshe did in the sight of all Yisrael." (Devarim 34:10-12) The unique nature of Moshe was, in part, his willingness to approach Pharaoh, to deal and negotiate with him, and yet not to have Pharaoh's negative and harmful disposition influence him in any way. Even after having gone through this ordeal, Moshe was still the leader and teacher who was able to ascend Har Sinai and bring down the Luchos before the Jewish nation.

When Moshe prayed that the new leader after him should be someone who would "go out before the people and come in before the people" (Bamidbar 27:15-17), he

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HALACHAH Highlight

Taking gifts to be able to study Torah

לא קבלתי מתנות כי הא דר' אלעזר כי הווי משדרי ליה מתנות מבי נשיאה לא הוה שקיל...אמר להו לא ניחא לכו דאחיה דכתיב "שונא מתנות יחיה"

[R' Nechunyah said:] I did not accept gifts, similar to the practice of R' Elazar who, when sent gifts from the Nasi's house, did not accept it ... He said to them, "Do you not want me to live? As the pasuk states: 'One who hates gifts will live.'"

Rambam¹ writes very strongly against those who study Torah and do not earn a living. He writes that a person who collects tzedaka to be able to learn desecrates Hashem's name, disgraces the Torah and removes himself from the World-to-come. The reason is that it is prohibited for one to benefit from Torah in this world. The Kesef Mishnah² disagrees with Rambam's conclusion. He first refutes all the proofs cited by Rambam, and then proceeds to cite sources in Chazal that indicate the great value of supporting Torah. It is illogical, he points out, that Chazal would speak of the value of supporting Torah if the recipients could not take the money. Certainly, if one takes money for honor or to become wealthy it is prohibited, but it is certainly permitted to take money to be able to learn without the distractions that accompany the burden of earning a living.

This is the ruling cited in Shulchan Aruch³ and Biur Ha-

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was asking that the leader be someone who was prepared to mingle with people, yet be able to meet the adversaries of the nation face to face and realize their evil nature. This person had to possess a special personality whereby he would not be hurt as a result of these exposures. It had to be someone with the fortitude and merit to be able to overcome these encounters and to still lead and guide the people. ■

lacha⁴. Rav Moshe Feinstein⁵ also writes in favor of taking money to be able to learn Torah. He goes so far as to write that those who would refrain from taking money because of Rambam's position are under the influence of the yetzer hara. The intention of the yetzer hara is to deceive them into entering the business world so that not only will they not continue to learn but they will forget what they have already learned as well. If earlier generations felt that it was challenging to engage in business and excel at Torah, this is true all the more so in our generation. Therefore, one should not pay attention to the yetzer hara's assertion that learning in kollel involves some sort of sin or lack of piety. It is, in fact, a laudable practice. ■

1. רמב"ם פ"ג מהל' ת"ת ה"י
2. כסף משנה שם
3. שו"ע יו"ד סי' רמ"ז סע' כ"א
4. ביאור הלכה סי' רל"א ד,ה בכל
5. שו"ת אג"מ יו"ד ח"ב סי' קט"ז ■

STORIES Off the Daf

A share in the World-to-Come

כל השונה הלכות מובטח לו שהוא בן עולם הבא

On today's daf we find that one who learns halachos every day is assured of his share in the World-to-come. Why should one be assured of such a great reward for doing what seems to be a very simple thing?

The students of Rav Chaim Vital, zt"l, once asked their mentor, "When the Mishnah (Shabbos, end of perek 5) discusses the cow belonging to the neighbor of Rabbi Elazar ben Azarya that went out with a strap between its eyes on Shabbos in violation of the will

of the sages, the animal is attributed to Rabbi Elazar ben Azarya and not its actual owner. Why was it considered his? Because he could have protested the man's actions and didn't. The Yerushalmi brings that this happened only once, yet the Tanna fasted so long as part of his penitence that his teeth became blackened! If this is how one should repent for such a subtle flaw, how can we ever attain true repentance and sanctity? How can we ever fast enough to negate all of our many errors?"

Rav Chaim Vital answered, "The degree of difficulty of something teaches us about its worth. In the times of the Mishnah, the world was much closer to Sinai and there was much less spiritual darkness. Therefore, anyone

who wanted to come close to Hashem had to work quite harder. Nowadays, because of the abundant darkness of exile, even just crying out from the depths of one's heart is as precious to Hashem as the fasts of earlier times!"

When the Yismach Yisroel of Alexander, zt"l, told this story, he applied it to today's daf. "As we know, Hashem is not a tyrant; He doesn't demand that which we cannot produce. (Avodah Zarah 3) Today is much darker spiritually compared with what it was during the time of Rav Chaim Vital. This is why one who learns halachos every day is assured of his share in the World-to-come. This could be referring to learning when one finds it very difficult to do so, as it is in our time!" ■