

OVERVIEW of the Daf

1) The correct procedure for one called to read the Torah

A Baraisa records a dispute regarding the correct procedure for one who is called to read the Torah.

The rationales behind the various opinions are explained.

R' Zeira in the name of R' Masna rules in accordance with R' Yehudah, but he did not mention his name because some switch the names of the Tannaim involved in the dispute.

A second unrelated ruling from R' Zeira in the name of R' Masna is recorded.

2) Rolling the Sefer Torah closed— גלילה

Five rulings issued by R' Shefatyah in the name of R' Yochanan are recorded. The first few are related to the proper procedure for rolling the Sefer Torah closed.

The last statement is regarding the necessity to read the Torah and study Mishnayos with a pleasant tune. It is disputed by Abaye.

3) Proper decorum when handling a Sefer Torah

R' Parnach in the name of R' Yochanan warns against touching a Sefer Torah directly.

R' Yannai in the name of R' Yannai the elder in the name of R' Yannai the Great ruled that the cloth should be wrapped around the Sefer Torah rather than have the Sefer Torah rolled into the cloth.

4) Studying on Yom Tov

A Baraisa teaches that Moshe enacted that people should study the halachos of each Yom Tov on that Yom Tov itself.

הדרן עלך בני העיר
וסליקא לה מסכת מגילה

REVIEW and Remember

1. According to the Gemara's conclusion, what is the proper procedure for one called to read the Torah?

2. Which person should be chosen for the honor of rolling the Sefer Torah?

3. What is the consequence for touching a Sefer Torah directly.

4. How did Moshe's enactment differ from the last ruling in the Mishnah?

Distinctive INSIGHT

Studying about the festivals beforehand and on the day
משה תקן להם לישראל שיהו שואלין ודורשין בענינו של יום
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And Moshe declared the appointed festivals of Hashem to Bnei Yisrael.” (Vayikra 23:44) The Rabbis taught in a Baraisa that Moshe decreed for Israel that they should inquire about and expound upon the matters of the day, i.e. the current festival, the laws of Pesach on Pesach, the laws of Shavuos on Shavuos, the laws of the Festival - Sukkos - on the Festival.

Although this Gemara points out that we are to study the topics of each holiday during the festival itself, our Sages have also taught us that it is necessary to delve into the laws of each holiday a full thirty days before the holiday begins. As the Gemara states (Pesachim 6a), “We are to ask and research the laws of Pesach beginning thirty days before Pesach.” What, then, is the system which we are to use when studying about the holidays? Are we to learn about them beforehand or are we to wait until the holiday itself?

Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner explains that the study of Torah encompasses two distinct aspects. On the one hand, there is the study of Torah in terms of its being a set of laws, when we research it to be totally familiar with the laws and to know how to conduct ourselves. There is also the study of Torah which we pursue purely for the sake of study itself. We become engrossed in the study of Torah in order to bask in its holy words and to toil in its domain.

The research of the laws in order for us to be informed as to how to function is timed to begin at least thirty days prior to the commencement of the festival. In this way, we can prepare ahead of time as necessary, and we can be ready as the festival approaches. On the other hand, our in-depth involvement in the “ocean of Torah knowledge” is scheduled to coincide with the festival itself, for this is the auspicious moment when we can access the special spiritual blessings which pervade at those times. As we delve into the themes and intricacies of the season, we can allow our hearts and minds to become engraved with the holy signet of divine inspiration which is especially available during that holiday. This was the enactment of Moshe “that the Jews ask and expound upon the topics of the particular holiday on the holiday itself.” ■

HALACHAH Highlight

Rolling the Sefer Torah

ואמר ר' שפטיה א"ר יוחנן עשרה שקראו בתורה הגדול שבהם גולל ספר תורה

And R' Shefatyah in the name of R' Yochanan said: If ten people read in the Torah, the greatest of them should roll the Torah.

Although the Gemara refers to the one who "rolls" the Torah, in our times this refers to the one who is called to lift the Torah¹. The ruling of the Gemara is that the greatest of those who read the Torah should be honored with "rolling" the Torah in order for him to receive reward equal to all those who read from the Torah. Nowadays, however, we are not particular to choose specifically someone who read from the Torah; rather we choose the greatest person in the shul even if he did not read from the Torah². Furthermore, Mishnah Berurah writes that we do not specifically search for the greatest person to "roll" the Torah, and in order to maintain harmony we honor even those who are not prominent to "roll" the Torah. Additionally, he writes in the name of Sha'arei Ephraim that we also honor children who are old enough to understand the significance of

matters of kedushah to "roll" the Torah to train them in mitzvos³.

When rolling the Sefer Torah closed, one must be cautious to not touch the parchment with his hand because the Gemara states that one who touches the Sefer Torah naked, i.e. directly, will lose the mitzvah⁴. This is explained to mean that if, for example, one was called to read the Torah or to roll the Torah and in the process of performing the mitzvah he touched the Torah by hand, he loses the reward for the mitzvah of reading or rolling the Torah. It is not permitted to touch the Torah directly even to straighten the parchment. Rather, one should use a talis or a handkerchief to interpose between one's hand and the parchment. There are those who are cautious about touching the atzei chaim directly. However, since this degree of care is not necessary, Mishnah Berurah writes that it should only be done in a way that does not attract attention. Otherwise it would appear haughty⁵. ■

1. מ"ב סי' קמ"ז סק"ה
2. מ"ב שם סק"ו
3. מ"ב שם סק"ז
4. ע' שו"ע או"ח סי' קמ"ז סע' א'
5. מ"ב שם סק"ב ■

STORIES Off the Daf

The song of the Torah

כל הקורא בלא נעימה ושונה בלא זמרה

On today's daf we find that one who learns without a melody demonstrates that he finds the Torah unappealing.

The Chid"א, ז"ל, would always say the verses of Tanach with their respective melody even when in the presence of students so unaccustomed to this that it would provoke laughter. However, when teaching Gemara or poskim, he would refrain from doing so. When asked why, he responded, "I don't know the proper melody. But perhaps the cadence we use for our pilpulim also counts like a nigun!"

The truth is, however, that the Shelah Hakadosh, ז"ל, wrote that he

did see ancient manuscripts of mishnayos that included taamim! Very many gedolim would learn with a heartfelt melody such that anyone who overheard them could feel how enraptured they were with their studies. Interestingly, this was part of the test to see if one was worthy of entering the Yeshivah of the Vilna Gaon, ז"ל. One was given a piece of Gemara to learn and review for several hours, and if after all that time the prospective student was still learning with the same nigun of enthusiasm as when he started, it proved that he was worthy of joining the Gaon's Yeshivah.

Many years ago, a certain masmid in Camp Morris in the Catskills would spend the entire day learning devotedly, and his nigun was a pleasure for all to hear. One day, a member of the cleaning staff commented to someone passing by, "That guy doesn't do noth-

ing but sing the whole day!" The young man was clearly enjoying himself so thoroughly that the man was convinced that he was just "goofing off!"

Although Rav Aharon of Belz, ז"ל, was particular that all those who were called up to the Torah would say the brochos with a nigun, someone once failed to do so. Afterward, the Rebbe approached him. "Saying the brochos without a nigun is incorrect! This is like reading from Tanach without ne'imah and Torah sheba'al peh without zimra!"

When Rav Shmuel Huminer, ז"ל, went to see Rav Elyashiv, ז"ל, he was very impressed with how completely immersed the gadol was in his learning. Rav Huminer would tell everyone he met, "He sounded literally like a malach!" This is the kind of learning that produces gedolei Yisrael. ■

