

OVERVIEW of the Daf

1) Teachings of R' Yehoshua ben Levi (cont.)

Four more teachings from R' Yehoshua ben Levi that relate to Purim halachos are recorded and some of them are briefly discussed.

2) Villagers

R' Chanina explains why Chazal were lenient to allow the villagers to read the megilla on the day of assembly.

The Gemara, on its third attempt, succeeds at refuting R' Chanina's explanation and forces him to modify his explanation slightly.

3) Clarifying the Mishnah

An inconsistency in the text of the Mishnah is explained.

The Gemara notes that the Mishnah that rules that residents of walled and unwalled cities read on the fourteenth when the fourteenth of Adar falls on Friday could follow either the opinion of Rebbi or of R' Yosi.

The dispute between Rebbi and Tanna Kamma is cited and each opinion is explained.

The dispute between R' Yosi and Tanna Kamma is cited and each position is explained.

Rebbi's position is unsuccessfully challenged.

A statement of R' Chelbo in the name of R' Huna is identified as consistent with Rebbi's opinion.

4) Reading the megilla on Shabbos

Rabbah suggests one reason why it is prohibited to read megilla on Shabbos.

R' Yosef offers an alternative explanation for the prohibition.

A Baraisa is cited that supports R' Yosef's explanation and the Gemara points out that under all circumstances the festive Purim meal is celebrated on the fourteenth. ■

REVIEW and Remember

1. Why are women obligated in the mitzvah of Megilla reading?

2. What is the source that teaches that the Megilla must be read during the day and night?

3. What is the reason villagers are allowed to read the Megilla early?

4. What are the two reasons the Megilla is not read on Shabbos?

Distinctive INSIGHT

The days of gathering on Monday and Thursday

הכפרים מקדימין ליום הכניסה מפני שמספיקין מים ומזון לאחיהם שבכרכים

The conclusion of the Gemara is that the residents of the smaller towns and rural communities are "rewarded" with the privilege of being able to read the Megilla earlier than the fourteenth of Adar, when they come to the larger city on the preceding Monday or Thursday. This is considered a reward, because this convenience of hearing the Megilla when they are already in the large city now saves them the need to travel to the city again and make a special trip on the fourteenth just to hear the megilla. The reason they are owed this consideration is that they supply the city dwellers with food and water all year long.

The Talmud Yerushalmi asks about the nature of this enactment. The arrangement of the townsfolk coming to the larger cities on Mondays and Thursdays is based upon a framework which was established only later, by Ezra, who lived after the time of Esther and Mordechai. The story of Esther and Mordechai took place during the time of the Babylonian exile, whereas Ezra lived during the period when the Jews were returning to Eretz Yisroel and building the second Beis HaMikdash. This means that during the days of Esther and Mordechai there were no established "days of gathering," such that the townsfolk would regularly come on Mondays and Thursdays. How, then, are we to understand the halacha of the Megilla being read back to the eleventh of the month to accommodate the small towns, when the arrangement to come on Mondays and Thursdays was not yet in place at this time in history?

Rebbe Manna, quoted in the Yerushalmi, explains that, in fact, the original consideration to allow the Megilla to be read on days other than the fourteenth was not specific in nature at all. The guideline was simply that the people of the small towns would be allowed to read the Megilla earlier, as necessary. Nevertheless, the specific dates and leniencies were not outlined at that time. Later, with the introduction of the rule of Ezra that Mondays and Thursdays would be "official" days of gathering, the days of reading the Megilla became more structured to take place beginning from the thirteenth and to extend back to the eleventh, as required by the calendar in any year. ■

HALACHAH Highlight

Reading megilla on Shabbos

אמר רבה הכל חייבין בקריאת המגילה ואין הכל בקיאים בקריאת המגילה גזרה שמא יטלנה בידו וילך אצל בקי ללמוד ויעבירנה ארבע אמות ברשות הרבים

Rabbah said: Everyone is obligated to read the Megilla but not everyone is an expert in how to read the Megilla [therefore, Chazal] decreed [against reading the Megilla] out of fear that one will take the Megilla in his hand to bring to an expert to learn how to read and will carry it four amos in a public domain.

There is a well known dispute regarding the public reading of Shir Hashirim, Koheles and Rus. According to Rav Moshe Isserles¹, the Rema, these megillos are read without making a beracha. Rav Eliyahu of Vilna², the Vilna Gaon, however, maintains that it is correct to make a beracha when reading each of the five megillos. Haghos Peulas Sachir³ writes that a scholar challenged the Vilna Gaon's position based on our Gemara. If there is an obligation to read all five megillos with a beracha, Chazal should have made a decree against reading them on Shabbos out of fear that someone may carry the megilla four amos in a public domain, similar to the decree against reading Megillas Esther on Shabbos.

The Vilna Gaon responded that the only time Chazal deemed it necessary to issue a decree against the performance of a mitzvah out of the fear that it may lead to carrying is when the mitzvah is incumbent upon each individual to fulfill. Shofar, lulav and the reading of Megillas Esther are obligations that each individual must fulfill. Therefore Chazal forbade the fulfillment of these mitzvos to prevent people from inadvertently violating Shabbos. The obligation to read Koheles, Rus or Shir Hashirim rests on the community rather than on individuals, consequently there is no need for concern because members of the community will remind one another about the prohibition against carrying on Shabbos. Rabbeinu Nissim⁴ offers a similar approach to address the question why Chazal did not prohibit bris milah on Shabbos out of fear that someone may carry the knife or the child four amos in a public domain. He writes that it is not a concern because most people are not burdened by the performance of the mitzvah and they will remind those who are obligated in the mitzvah not to carry⁵. ■

1. רמ"א או"ח סי' ת"צ סע' ט'
2. ביאור הגר"א על הנ"ל ד"ה נוהגין
3. הגהות פעולת שכיר על מעשה הרב סי' קע"א
4. ר"ן ר"ה ח ד"ה גמ' מ"ט
5. ע"ע תוי"ט מגילה פ"א מ"ב שהקשה למה קרואין בתורה בשבת ולא גזרו שמא יעבירנה ארבע אמות ברשות הרבים ■

STORIES Off the Daf

Pure kindness

א"ר חנינא חכמים הקילו על הכפרים להיות מקדימין ליום הכניסה כדי שישפיקו מים ומזון לאחיהם שבכרכין...

The Avnei Neizer, zt"l, once asked Rav Yitzchak of Vorki, zt"l, "The Gemara in Megillah 4a states that those Jews who dwell in the rural villages are permitted to read the megillah earlier than usual to enable them to supply provisions for their brothers in the city on Purim itself. We don't find that Chazal were lenient on farmers regarding any other mitzvah—why did they make an exception in this case?"

Rav Yitzchak explained, "The Ge-

mara in Bava Basra brings Shlomo HaMelech's indictment of the 'chessed of the non-Jewish nations' as a sin (Mishlei 14:34) and explains that the idolater's charity is flawed because it is generally given for ulterior motives. If the act of kindness did not have a talismanic effect to bring him the blessing he sought, he wants a refund! Since the idolater had been trained his entire life that giving money altruistically is just wasteful, he doesn't really care what happens to the recipient as long as he, himself, experiences a benefit from the act of giving. A Jew, on the other hand, does care about the fact that his giving has helped those in need. For this reason, even if a Jew gives charity with a condition in mind, it is still considered charity. It is assumed that even if the

charity doesn't act as a segulah for him to attain the object of his desire, he will not regret the act of giving because beneath it all he has a sincere desire to help others as well."

Rav Yitzchok concluded, "What does this have to do with Purim? The root of all the character defects of the nations is Amalek, as it says in the verse: *—ראשית גוים עמלק*—'Amalek is the head of all nations.' (Bamidbar 24:20) Purim is the time when we obliterate Amalek from within and without. The ultimate expression of Amalek is selfishness. This is why we make a special decree so that the people of the city can help their brothers in the villages; self-sacrifice for the sake of one's fellow Jew is the ultimate destruction of Amalek!" ■

