

OVERVIEW of the Daf

1) Placing down a woman's coffin

The scholars of Nehardea and R' Elazar differ whether the Mishnah's ruling against placing a woman's coffin down applies to all women or just to women who died in childbirth.

Additional teachings related to Miriam's death are recorded.

2) Illness before death

A Baraisa records a discussion, interspersed with the Gemara's analysis, about the meaning of the length of a person's illness before death and the meaning of a person's age at the time of his death.

Two incidents that relate to the above topics are presented.

Rava states that a person's age, number of children and sustenance are a function of mazal rather than merit. He cites anecdotal evidence to support his assertion.

Rava reports that he asked for the wisdom and wealth of others and these requests were granted, but when he asked for another's humility it was not granted to him.

Seven incidents involving the Angel of Death are recorded.

3) MISHNAH: The Mishnah discusses which expressions of mourning are permitted on Chol Hamoed, Rosh Chodesh, Chanukah and Purim. Two of the terms used in the Mishnah are defined and the Mishnah concludes with a positive thought.

4) Elegy

Rav cites an example of what was said in an elegy.

Rava quotes seven elegies pronounced by the women of Shachnetziv.

A Baraisa cites R' Meir's teaching about the reward for those who tend to the needs of the deceased.

Another Baraisa recounts an example of someone who was treated respectfully in death as a reward for the way he treated others.

Two discussions between Rava and Rabbah bar Meri are recorded, the first of which relates to one of the pesukim cited in the previous Baraisa.

5) Speaking to the mourner

R' Yochanan teaches that one should not console the mourner until the mourner begins the conversation.

R' Avahu cites a similar teaching, and there are two versions of the source of this teaching.

R' Chama bar Chanina teaches that a chasan sits at the head of the table because he is treated like a kohen who also sits at the head of the table. ■

Distinctive INSIGHT

Mourning the loss of a Torah scholar

ואחייכם כל בית ישראל יבכו את השריפה...בניו של ר' ישמעאל על אחת כמה וכמה

The Torah teaches us that the loss of Nadav and Avihu caused grief and mourning for the entire nation. "The entire House of Israel shall bewail the conflagration that Hashem ignited." (Vayikra 10:6) Rashi, based upon our Gemara, explains that the entire community must share in the distress over the loss of Torah scholars.

Another perspective on this issue is based upon the verse (Devarim 32:4): "[Hashem is] the Rock, His work is perfect, for all His ways are justice." The commentators there explain that a mortal judge of flesh and blood passes judgment upon a criminal without being able to take into full consideration the impact his punishment will have upon the other members of the family and of the community who will be affected by the verdict. For example, if a person is sent to prison, why must his wife and children now suffer? If a person is put to death, how is this fair to his wife, his children, and his parents? Even the community is affected by the judgment. Nevertheless, a mortal judge cannot fully consider all this in his ruling. Hashem, however, "is perfect in His work, and all His ways are justice." This means that Hashem's judgment in any situation incorporates everyone who is even remotely going to be affected. Each person must be deserving of his element of the incidental outcome of the punishment meted out to the criminal. This can even work to save the offender from his fate, for he may be spared his deserved retribution if his family is not fit to suffer the second-hand outcome of his condition.

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REVIEW and Remember

1. What was the normal duration of illness before death?

2. Why did R' Ashi tell the Angel of Death to return in thirty days?

3. What was the good deed performed by Avyah the so of Yeravam?

4. What is the source that those who come to console a mourner must wait for him to begin the conversation?

HALACHAH Highlight

Celebratory dinners upon reaching age milestones

רב יוסף כי הוה בר שיתין עבד להו יומא טבא לרבנן אמר נפקי לי מכרת.

When Rav Yosef arrived at the age of sixty years, he made a festive day for the rabbis. He explained: "I have left the range of Kares (extirpation)".

It is recorded¹ that the author of the Terumas Hadeshen made a siyum upon reaching the age of sixty and invited two scholars to fulfill the "age of sixty meal."² Some authorities³ state that one should make a celebratory dinner upon reaching the age of sixty. Interestingly, more commonly, great Rabbis⁴ celebrated upon arriving at the 70 year milestone. Beyond the obvious advantage of an additional ten years, this practice is explained⁵ because upon reaching 60 one passes the period of kares, yet one who passes away after 60 may still be subject to Death in the hands of Heaven (מיתה בידי שמים). However, when one arrives at seventy, he has arrived at the measure of man's days as the verse⁶ states: "the days of our lives are seventy years". Thus, one who passes away after seventy years has passed the punishments of death at the hands of Heaven.

It is questioned whether such a celebration is considered a Meal of Mitzvah (סעודת מצוה) on its own virtue without sharing words of Torah⁷. As well, there is disagreement if one may make a blessing upon reaching such a milestone. The Chavos Yair⁸ indicates to recite the שהחינו blessing. However, many authorities⁹ disagree. Others¹⁰ advise that one should wear a new garment or eat a new fruit with the inten-

(Insight. Continued from page 1)

The verse attests that the entire nation bemoaned the loss of Nadav and Avihu. If there would have been anyone who was not deserving of the indirect loss which he suffered due to the death of these two great men, then they would not have perished at this time. However, the entire nation did feel the loss, and they reacted to it by turning to Hashem in teshuva. ■

tion of including the age milestone as well. ■

1. ס' לקט יושר (חיו"ד עמי 40).
2. עיי בשו"ת מהרא"ב ח"ב (סי"א ד"ה אגב) שכן עשה מעשה האדמו"ר מגור, האמרי אמת.
3. עיי חסד לאלפים (או"ח סי' רכא - רל אות ח) ובבן איש חי (שנה ראשונה פר' ראה אות ט).
4. מהר"ח פאלאגי בסי' גנזי חיים (מע' י' אות טז) וכן נזכר בסי' צוואה מחיים (חלק מהר"ח פאלאגי אות מ). וגדולה מזו חיבר מהר"ח פאלאגי קונטרס קול החיים שבו סדר למי שהגיע לגיל שבעים עם תפלות ולימוד. וכן נהג גם רבי חיים דוד חזן ככתוב בסי' ישרי לב (חאו"ח מע' ב' ד"ה ברכת שהחינו). וראה בקונטרס יום הולדת הנדפס בסי' זכרון שלמה (ערכו רבי דוד אברהם מנדלבוים - ירושלים תשנ"ד) במאמרו של רבי דוב מאיר אייזנשטיין (עמי' ריא) שהביא מקורות שכן עשו סימן בהגיעם לגיל השבעים החפץ חיים והשדי חמד והגר"ש מסאלאנט. ע"ש.
5. עיי תשובת רבי משה וואלף הנדפסת לו בשו"ת דברי ישראל ח"ב (ליקוטי תשובות סי' יח ד"ה אולם) למר אביו. עיי טעמים אחרים במקור חסד לס' חסידים (סי' ריג סוף אות א) ובהערות מגן האלף לס' חסד לאלפים (או"ח סי' רכא - רל אות לו, עמי רו).
6. תהלים (צ, י).
7. עיי שו"ת חות יאיר (סי' עי) והביאו בפת"ש (יו"ד סי' ריו) שמסתפק בזה.
8. שו"ת חות יאיר (סי' ע).
9. עיי ברכ"י (או"ח סי' רכג אות ב) ובהגהות חת"ס לשו"ע (סי' רכא סי"א) ובשו"ת תשובה מאהבה ח"ב (סי' רלט). וראה בפרמ"ג (או"ח סי' תמד במשב"ז ט"ק ט') שמשאיר בצי"ע. ועוד.
10. כן הוזכר בגנזי חיים (שם) וכן נראה בחסד לאלפים (שם) ובבן איש חי (שם). ועיי בסי' הלכות והליכות בר מצוה (פרק טו הערה 90) שכן עשה החפץ חיים. ע"ש. ■

STORIES Off the Daf

Comforting Mourners

"ואין דובר עליו דבר..."

Someone once shared a concept about comforting mourners with the Rosh Yeshiva of Chevron, Rav Simcha Zissel Broide, ז"ל, that surprised him. "Rav Shmuel Salant, ז"ל, said that although the Shulchan Aruch rules that visitors may not speak before the mourner does, if a mourner groans it is also considering speaking."

When Rav Shmuel Salant would visit a mourner who would not speak, he would say, "The halachah is that the mourners speak first." If the mourner as much as sighed, he would say, "A sigh is also like

speech!" and start to comfort the mourner.

The Rosh Yeshiva was perplexed at this. "Rav Shmuel Salant's statement seems confusing in light of what we find in Moed Katan 28b. There we see that the mourner speaks first, and we learn it from Iyov. The verse says that Iyov's friends didn't speak to him and also that Iyov only spoke after his seven days of mourning were completed. How can we understand the Gemara if groaning is like speaking? Could it be that they refrained from comforting him because he didn't even groan the entire seven days? That seems impossible!"

Perhaps the answer to Rav Broide's question is to be found in the opinion of the Chazon Ish, ז"ל. "If you see that the mourners want to talk but it is difficult for

them, you can take the initiative and speak first." If the visitors can sense that the mourner wishes to speak but it is too difficult for him to do more than groan, they should initiate conversation. Perhaps Iyov's companions were not able to sense from his sighs that he was ready to accept comfort."

The Chofetz Chaim, ז"ל, would say, "Although a comforter discharges his obligation by saying 'המקום ינחם,' it is better to speak to the mourner's heart and relieve his pain with soothing words. This is the main meaning of comforting mourners."

Similarly, Rav Moshe Feinstein, ז"ל, said, "The main point of comforting the mourners is not the blessing 'המקום ינחם' but the words of encouragement that relieve the mourner's inner pain!" ■