

OVERVIEW of the Daf

1) Clarifying the Mishnah

Shmuel explains that the Mishnah refers to where the patient is prohibited to benefit from the visitor and in a location where money is taken to sit with a patient but not to stand with the patient.

The novelty of the Mishnah's ruling is explained, namely, that it refers to where money is taken for sitting.

An alternative explanation of the Mishnah is presented.

Ulla offers a third explanation for the Mishnah.

Shmuel's explanation is unsuccessfully challenged.

2) Visiting the sick

Reish Lakish cites a pasuk that alludes to the mitzvah of visiting the sick.

3) Korach

Rava continues to expound on the pesukim that follow the previously-cited verse.

Rava's assertion that Moshe was uncertain whether Gehinom was yet created is successfully challenged.

The exposition is revised to take into account that Gehinom was in fact extant.

Another exposition Rava made regarding Korach is presented.

4) Visiting the sick (cont.)

R' Acha bar Chanina teaches that one who visits the sick takes away one-sixtieth of his suffering.

This teaching is unsuccessfully challenged.

The Gemara begins an incident that relates to visiting the sick. ■

REVIEW and Remember

1. Why is it permitted to accept payment for visiting the sick?

2. What is the allusion in the Torah to the mitzvah of visiting the sick?

3. What seven things were created before the world was created?

4. What does the Baraisa mean when it declares that the mitzvah of visiting the sick has no limit?

Distinctive INSIGHT

The challenge of the luminaries to defend Moshe

עלו שמש וירח... ואמרו לפניו רבש"ע אם אתה עושה דין לבן עמרם
אנו מאירים. ואם לאו אין אנו מאירין

Our Gemara reports that when Korach challenged Moshe's authority, the sun and the moon ascended...and said to G-d: "Master of the Universe, if you render justice on behalf of the son of Amram (Moshe), then we will illuminate the earth. But if not, we will not illuminate the earth any longer."

The world was created due to Torah, and it continues to exist in the merit of the study of Torah and the fulfillment of its mitzvos. From the outset, all of creation was set contingent upon this arrangement. The Gemara (Shabbos 88a) states: "If the Jewish people accept the Torah, that will be good. If they do not, the entire world will revert back to being null and void." The luminaries were placed in the heavens to illuminate the world. Accordingly, anyone who challenges the authenticity of the Torah and its prophets is actually threatening the very existence of the world. If the Torah is attacked, the justification for the world's continued survival is at risk. If this would be the case, the luminaries have no purpose in their ongoing mission to provide light and warmth for the world.

Our sages express the series of events surrounding Korach and his followers in allegorical terms. The sun and moon appealed directly to Hashem to put an end to the uprising of Korach and his attack against the legitimacy of Torah. These heavenly spheres realized that their own function was being undermined, and they fought for Moshe and his prophecy to emerge triumphant. Rashba presents a very fundamental understanding of how to interpret the exchange between Hashem and these heavenly spheres. He explains: "In many places, an aggadic text will express a well-known concept in hints and parables. It is essential for our sages to teach that Hashem is profoundly involved in every detail of our existence. Hashem is also involved in truth and correctness. This dialogue did not take place in a literal sense, for

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HALACHAH Highlight

Payment for the mitzvah of visiting the ill

ובמקום שנוטלין שכר על הישיבה

In a place where they take money for sitting [with a patient]

The Gemara rules that one is not permitted to accept payment for the mitzvah of visiting the ill - ביקור חולים. Tosafos and Rosh offer different explanations for this ruling. Tosafos¹ writes that the reason it is prohibited is that visiting the ill is a mitzvah and one should not take money for performing a mitzvah. Rosh² writes that taking money for the mitzvah degrades the mitzvah (מבזה המצוה). Shitah Mekubetzes³ maintains that the prohibition against taking money for visiting the ill is based on the Gemara's earlier exposition (37a) that teaches that just as Hashem taught Torah without charging a fee so too all are charged to do mitzvos without charging a fee. Therefore, concludes Shitta Mekubetzes, it must be that Tosafos and Rosh were offering explanations for that earlier exposition.

The Gemara does mention, however, that one is permitted to take money for sitting next to a patient. Rabbeinu Nissim explains that it is permitted since the mitzvah could be fulfilled even without sitting; therefore, the money that is paid for sitting is not considered to be money that was taken to fulfill a mitzvah. Rosh suggests that the reason it is permitted to take money for sitting with a patient is that that money represents reimbursement for the effort (שכר טרחו) and the loss of his regular income (ביטול מלאכה) rather than money taken for the mitzvah of visiting the ill.

(Insight. Continued from page 1)

the sun and moon do not have an awareness to be able to conduct a discussion. Yet, we are told that it is as if it did take place. The arguments and the conclusions are valid, for if there would be no Torah, the world would cease."

Hashem reassured the luminaries, "Although Korach is staging a threatening condition, it is no different than the fools who engage in idolatry every day. There is a constant barrage of missiles and projectiles which they cast against truth, but the world cannot come to a standstill due to their futile efforts. Rather, the cause of Torah continues, and these scoffers will ultimately pay the price for their actions." ■

Rav Eliyahu Mizrachi⁶, the Re'em, notes a contradiction between two rulings. The Gemara (39b) rules that one should visit the ill patient even a hundred times if the circumstance warrants. This seems to indicate that one is obligated to perform the mitzvah of visiting the ill even if it takes one away from his job. On the other hand our Gemara that permits taking money for sitting with the patient is based (according to Rosh) on the premise that it is permitted to take money that is reimbursement for lost wages. This implies that one is not obligated to visit the ill if it will cause the visitor to sacrifice his income. Re'em does not resolve this difficulty. ■

1. תוס' ד"ה על
2. רא"ש בפירושו ד"ה על העמידה
3. שטמ"ק ד"ה על
4. ר"ן ד"ה דאפי'
5. רא"ש הנ"ל
6. דעתו מובא בשטמ"ק ל"ט ד"ה אפי' ■

STORIES Off the Daf

A question of priorities

כל המבקר חולה

Rav Nosson Tzvi Finkel, zt"l, the Alter of Slobodka, immigrated to Eretz Yisrael when he was already at an advanced age. He was healthy for a time, but eventually got very sick and was bedridden for quite some time. Until the last moment of the Alter's full life he was always striving to draw nearer to Hashem and to continue his life work: to educate others to ever-increasing sensitivity to the needs of their fellow men.

When he was very sick he stayed in a

hotel in Yerushalayim. There were always at least two devoted students who were at his sickbed at all times, ready to attend his every need.

One Friday night, one of the students casually mentioned that there was a minyan in the very same hotel. The Alter understood that the young man wished to attend and said, "Feel free to go if you wish." He then turned to the second attendant and said, "You also have my complete permission to go."

The second attendant had a feeling that this was the wrong decision. After all, he had come to attend to the famous Alter of Slobodka in his time of great need. How could he just get up and leave him alone? The Alter merely offered be-

cause he was a tzaddik. This doesn't mean that the correct decision is to leave him even to daven with a minyan.

The second attendant said with resolve, "I will daven here." His friend left, and he remained.

When the first attendant returned, the Alter spoke sharply to him, "How could you have left? Don't you know that Rambam writes that one who visits the ill removes one sixtieth of the patient's sickness, while one who fails to do so sheds the patient's blood? Don't you think your job was to stay with me like your friend? What makes you think that davening with a minyan was more worthwhile? Surely staying here would have been a much greater zechus!" ■