



OVERVIEW of the Daf

1) Inquiries of the men of Alexandria (cont.)

The third of the inquiries that relate to wisdom is recorded.

Shmuel and R' Sheishes discuss R' Yehoshua ben Chananya's ruling related to the third question that discussed the two metzoraim.

The Baraisa presents the three questions related to aggada that the men of Alexandria presented to R' Yehoshua ben Chananya.

The Baraisa presents the three foolish questions that the men of Alexandria presented to R' Yehoshua ben Chananya.

The Baraisa presents the three questions related to proper conduct that the men of Alexandria presented to R' Yehoshua ben Chananya.

In this set of questions the men of Alexandria unsuccessfully challenged R' Yehoshua ben Chananya's answer ■

REVIEW and Remember

1. At what point do we determine a metzora's finances for determining whether he must bring the korban of someone rich or poor?

2. Why must the metzora stand at Nikanor gate during his taharah process?

3. Does God desire the death of the wicked?

4. How does one become a scholar?

HALACHAH Highlight

Cornea transplants

מת מטמא ואין חי מטמא

A corpse transmits tum'ah, a living person does not transmit corpse tum'ah

Teshuvos Toras Michael¹ addressed the permissibil-

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Distinctive INSIGHT

Favoritism for the Jewish people

כתוב אחד אומר כי לא ישא פנים ולא יקח שוחד וכתוב אחד אומר ישא ה' פניו אליך

Our Gemara continues with the list of questions the people of Alexandria asked R' Yehoshua. One verse (Devarim 10:17) says that God does not show favor, while another posuk (Bamidbar 6:26) clearly states that God will direct His face toward the Jewish nation. How can these pesukim be reconciled?

R' Yehoshua answered that God shows favor only before judgment has been rendered. However, once a ruling has been determined, God will not compromise strict justice. Tosafos notes that the Gemara in Berachos (20b) informs us that this very contradiction was advanced by the ministering angels to God. God resolved the issue and explained that He is fair and does not generally show favoritism, but the Jews have earned preferential treatment because they are careful and say birkas hamazon after eating the size of an olive, even though birkas hamazon need only be said after one consumes an amount which is satisfying.

Tosafos explains that the true resolution to these pesukim is the one given in our Gemara. The preference which God shows is for the Jews, and it is before verdict is rendered. The ministering angels wondered about this, and they asked in what merit does He show favor to the Jews before judgment is passed? God answered that it is in the merit of their care and regard for the mitzvah of appreciating His providing sustenance to the world.

Why did God answer the angels by pointing out this mitzvah in particular? What is especially significant about the fact that Jews say birkas hamazon even without having eaten a satisfying meal?

R' Zalman Sorotzkin explains that one of the primary causes of jealousy and strife in the world is the feeling that one lacks what he needs. It is very easy for one to see others with more than he has and feel that the imbalance of wealth is unfair and must be rectified. However, if he would view his needs according to the dictates of Pirkei Avos (4:1), "Who is rich? - the one

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ity of accepting a cornea transplant from a cadaver. Does such a transplant transgress the prohibition of benefitting from a corpse or not? If the use of a cornea from a cadaver violates the prohibition of benefitting from a corpse it would not be permitted to accept the transplant since Biblical prohibitions are not set aside for someone whose illness is not life-threatening (חולה שאין בו סכנה).² He responded that one could infer from our Gemara that it should be permitted. The men of Alexandria asked R' Yehoshua ben Chananya whether the son of the Shunamite woman transmitted corpse tum'ah. He responded that only dead people transmit corpse tum'ah and not living people. This indicates that corpse tum'ah is present when death is present which is a consequence of the removal of one's life. If a person comes back to life and death has been pushed aside he no longer transmits corpse tum'ah since the source of the tum'ah, i.e. death, has been removed. The same principle applies to the prohibition of benefitting from a corpse. The prohibition is in force only when death is still present. If life is restored to the corpse the prohibition against benefitting from the corpse should disappear. Since a transplanted cornea is comparable to the restoration of the life force in the cornea, the prohibition against benefitting from a corpse no longer applies and is permitted.

Teshuvos Seridei Eish³ questioned this rationale. The reason flesh from a corpse is prohibited is that one is benefitting from the corpse. What difference does it

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who is happy with his lot," the jealousy and strife would disappear. One who can make do with what he has avoids conflict. Also, on a national level, the need to make war would no longer be felt.

God rewards a person measure for measure. Though the Torah only requires a Jew to thank God for what he ate if he ate to his satisfaction, the Jew has taken it upon himself to say birkas hamazon even after eating the minimal meal of an olive's bulk of bread (k'zayis). This indicates that a person feels blessed even for a small amount rather than feeling deprived. Such a person seeks to avoid the feeling of want which leads to jealousy and conflict. Therefore, God answered the angels that such a people deserve an extra special blessing of tranquility and peace. Those who seek peace are rewarded with peace. ■

make that once the cornea is transplanted into a living person the cornea is now considered alive, the cornea recipient is still benefitting from the corpse and the corpse has not been infused with life. Teshuvos Shevet HaLevi⁴ wrote that there is room for leniency if when the cornea was taken from the corpse there was a recipient waiting to receive the transplant ■

1. שו"ת תורת מיכאל סי' נ"ז
2. שו"ע או"ח סי' שכ"ח סע' י"ז
3. שו"ת שרידי אש ח"ב סי' צ"ג
4. שו"ת שבט הלוח ח"ח סי' צ"ד ■

STORIES Off the Daf

Praying for Understanding

ביקש רחמים ממי שהחכמה שלו

Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer, zt"l, enjoyed a very close relationship with the Netziv, zt"l, the Rosh Yeshiva of Volozhin. The Netziv prepared each day's shiur meticulously, spending time carefully delving into the day's study with a gifted student. Rav Isser Zalman merited this distinction for quite some time, so it took him by surprise one day when, after the two had spent their

usual time preparing, the Netziv announced that the shiur for that day was cancelled. Rav Isser Zalman could not understand why this should be the case. As far as he knew, the shiur had the very same brilliant structure as every other shiur they had prepared together. Could it be that the Netziv had discovered a fatal weakness? He rather doubted it since the logic had been absolutely airtight. Was he then ill? But the two had just spoken and the Netziv had appeared to be in fine health.

Rav Isser Zalman decided to speak to the Netziv and find out what had caused him to cancel the shiur. The

Netziv's explanation was a real eye-opener for Rav Isser Zalman. "Every day when I get to Ahavah Rabbah, I have a special thought in mind; I tearfully beg God to grant me understanding, clarity and insight so that I should learn and delve into Torah properly. Since I became the Rosh Yeshiva here and for many years before that time, I have never had a day when I did not cry during this heartfelt prayer—until today. For some reason this morning I did not cry. I therefore decided not to deliver my lecture today." ■

1. טובך יביעו ח"ב ע' ת"ד

