

OVERVIEW of the Daf

1) Hillel and Shamai (cont.)

The story of an individual's futile attempt to anger Hillel is retold.

A Baraisa retells three stories of prospective converts and their interactions with Shamai and Hillel.

2) Fear of Hashem

Reish Lakish explains a pasuk in Koheles to be a lesson that fear of Hashem is the most important thing in the eye's of Hashem.

Rava presents an alternate drosha on the same pasuk which also emphasizes the value of fear of Hashem.

The virtues of fear of Hashem are further extolled.

R' Ulla teaches that after a person sins he should not give up and continue to sin.

The nature of the wicked is to continue sinning even though they know that it will lead to death.

3) The opinion of R' Yosi is clarified

Ulla asserts that R' Yosi follows the opinion of R' Yehudah regarding a melacha she'aina tzricha l'gufa. However, extinguishing a flame is a destructive act that does not carry liability unless it is to save the wick which is a constructive act and there fore there will be liability.

R' Yochanan asserts that R' Yosi follows the lenient position of R' Shimon, and the reason why if the intention is to save the wick there is liability is because he is making the wick usable, which is tantamount to making a utensil.

Rava proves R' Yochanan correct from the language of the Mishnah.

4) MISHNAH: Negligence in three mitzvos; Niddah, Challah and Shabbos Candles can cause a woman to die in childbirth.

5) An explanation why negligence in these mitzvos can lead to death

The Gemara presents an initial explanation why negligence in the laws of niddah can cause a woman to die but this doesn't explain the reason for the severe consequence for the other two mitzvos.

A new explanation is presented. ■

REVIEW and Remember

1. How did Hillel convince the convert that he would not serve as the Kohen Gadol?

2. What is even more important than Torah study?

3. What questions will be asked of a person after they die?

4. E.C. Does the aveira mentioned in the Mishna refer to not fulfilling the עשה or for violating a לאו?

Distinctive INSIGHT

Remembering to Mix Torah with some Mussar

מערב אדם קב חומטון בכור של תבואה ואינו חושש

The Gemara illustrates how someone who knows a lot of Torah but does not have Yiras Shamayim fails poorly in his judgement in Shamayim. The Gemara gives an example of a person who told his messenger to bring a Kur of wheat up to his attic. Afterwards, the person asked his messenger, "Did you mix in a Kav of preservatives?" The messenger responded that he did not. The person replied, "Without the preservative, it would have been better if you had not brought (the wheat) at all." The Gemara then quotes a related Halachah in monetary laws. A seller agreed to sell a kur of wheat to a buyer (this is equal to 180 kav, a total of about 540 lbs. or 250 kilo). The seller is allowed to blend in a kav of preservatives as part of the kur of wheat (this is about 1/2%), and not be concerned that he is cheating the person buying the wheat. It is understood that without a way to protect the main product, the wheat itself will be worthless.

In Nefesh Hachayim (4:7), Rav Chaim Volozhin notes that the second quote seems misplaced. It is true that it deals with preservatives and wheat. Why does the Gemara mention the financial aspect of this parable in a Halachic fashion? He answers that the Gemara is not just talking about money. The Gemara is teaching us that the study of Torah also requires a preservative, and that commodity is mussar. Our Gemara, then, is discussing when one should learn Mussar.

Primarily, Nefesh Hachayim explains, one should learn Mussar for a few minutes before starting to learn Torah. Just as one first builds a storehouse and then puts grain into it, so, too, after he completes his Mussar session he should start learning Torah. It might also occur that a person feels weak in the middle of his learning session, and that he is not really in touch with his Yiras Shamayim. He feels that he is just learning in order to do whatever his friends or doing, or to satisfy his parents, or to win the prize in his school competition for the most hours learned. Is he allowed to stop his learning and start to learn Mussar again, or is this perhaps Bitul Torah?

Nefesh Hachayim explains that this is the point of our Gemara. A person can mix some preservatives, meaning Mussar, in the middle of his learning session if necessary, and he does not have to worry that he is cheating his Master. This teaches us that he is not being Mevatel Torah. His Mussar is essential, for it preserves his learning. ■

HALACHAH Highlight

Can a prospective convert be taught Torah?

אמר ליה: "גיירני על מנת שתשימני כהן גדול" ... בא לפני הלל גייריה. אמר לו: "כלום מעמידין מלך אלא מי שידע טכסיסי מלכות? לך למוד טכסיסי מלכות." הלך וקרא.

The gentile said: "Convert me on the condition that I am appointed High Priest." ... He came before Hillel, and Hillel converted him. Hillel said to the man: Can a king be appointed without knowing the royal protocol? Go and study the royal protocol (i.e. – the laws of the Priesthood). He went and studied.

The Maharsha¹ questions how Hillel could have accepted a prospective convert not driven by idealistic interests, but rather by the ulterior motive of becoming High Priest? This seems to contradict that principle² that converts are not accepted for motives of marriage or in order to share in the general success of the Jews? He answers that Hillel did not immediately convert the man as the Gemara appears to indicate. Rather, Hillel withheld the conversion until the man had himself discovered that he could never be High Priest. Only when it became clear that his interest was genuine, did Hillel actually convert. However, continues the Maharsha, this raises the question of how Hillel could have taught the man Torah prior to his conversion. This runs contrary to the statement³ that a gentile studying Torah is liable the death penalty. He responds that here since the gentile is on the road to conversion, it is permitted to teach him Torah.

Rav Akiva Eiger⁴ discusses this matter in a responsum. He points out that Tosafos⁵ raises the same question. However, Tosafos replies that Hillel was confident that this individual would eventually have the proper motives, and as a consequence Hillel converted him. Tosafos thus learns that Hillel converted the man prior to teaching him Torah, based upon the certitude that the man would in due course have the appropriate attitude. If so, remarks Rav Eiger, by virtue of the fact that Tosafos did not employ Maharsha's response, it could be

that Tosafos rejected the permissibility of teaching Torah to a prospective convert prior to his conversion. Based upon this, Rav Eiger can not find grounds to permit teaching Torah to a potential convert preceding his conversion.

Some authorities⁶ draw support for the Maharsha's view from the Meiri, who writes⁷ that a gentile who desires to study the Torah with the intent of converting if he finds it pleasing may be taught. On the other hand, the Zohar⁸ appears to prohibit teaching even a prospective convert until after the conversion⁹.

Some authorities¹⁰ have questioned the viewpoint of Rav Eiger based upon the law that the possible convert must be informed of some of the more difficult as well as some of the lighter obligations of the Jew prior to his conversion.

In the end, many authorities¹¹ rule in accordance with the Maharsha's opinion that a prospective convert may be taught. Some¹² limit the instruction to reading Hebrew and the most basic of laws and beliefs. ■

- 1 מהרש"א בחידושי אגדות כאן (ד"ה אמר ליה מקרא)
- 2 יבמות דף כד ע"ב
- 3 סנהדרין דף נט ע"א
- 4 שו"ת רעק"א (מהד"ק סי' מא)
- 5 תוס' יבמות (כד ע"ב ד"ה לא בימי) ועוד שם (קט ע"ב ד"ה רעה)
- 6 עי' לרבי אברהם ריינהאלד בשו"ת מנחת אברהם (סי' כ אות א) וכן הגר"ע יוסף שליט"א בשו"ת יביע אומר ח"ב (חיו"ד סי' יז אות ה, דקע"א ע"א) ובסי' מאור ישראל כאן.
- 7 מאירי (סנהדרין נט ע"א, עמ' 229 בהוצאת ר"א סופר). אמנם עי' הטיב בשו"ת שבת הלוי ח"ז (סי' קסב).
- 8 זהר (פרשת אחרי מות דף עג ע"א). ועי' בשו"ת יביע אומר שם (אות ה') בשם קונטי' זכרון לראשונים אשר בסוף סי' בך משה (דף קט ע"א סי' רמו) אשר ע"פ דברי זהר זה נראה שנוטה להחמיר. ע"ש.
- 9 ויש שרצו להביא סינוע לדעת רעק"א מדברי הרמב"ם בתשובה – עי' שו"ת משנה הלכות ח"ב (סי' סב מב ד"ה וחוץ) ושו"ת ציצן אלעזר חט"ז (סי' נה אות יא ד"ה ולפענ"ד). ואכמ"ל.
- 10 עי' שו"ת מחנה חיים (ח"ב מחיו"ד סי' מה) ושו"ת אגרות משה (ח"ג מחלקי יו"ד סי' צ') ושו"ת יביע אומר שם. ועוד.
- 11 עי' שו"ת פני מבין (חיו"ד סי' כז אות א) ושו"ת אגרות משה שם ושו"ת מנחת יצחק ח"א (סי' לו אות ו) ושו"ת יביע אומר שם ובמאור ישראל כאן ושו"ת קנין תורה ח"א (סי' צה) ושו"ת שבת הלוי ח"ז (סי' קסב). ועוד. [וראיתי בסי' גירות כהלכתה (מדור בירורי הלכות, סי' ט - תשובת רבי אשר זעליג וויס שכתב (אות ב'), עמי קמו) שדעת רובם של האחרונים שדנו בזה היא כשיטת רעק"א. ע"ש. אבל לא ציין למקורותיו בזה.]
- 12 עי' שו"ת רבי אליהו גוטמאכר (חיו"ד סי' פז) ושו"ת מנחת אלעזר ח"ד (סי' סג – סד)

STORIES Off the Daf

A Sign of Gratitude

מאי דעלך סני לחברך לא תעביד היא כל התורה כולה ואידך פירושא זיל גמור

Rashi explains that "חברך" in this context refers to Hashem. Hillel was telling the convert that his actions should never disappoint Hashem.

The Chasam Sofer illustrated this with a parable. Reuven provided his friend Shimon with everything he was lacking, including a bed, a lamp, a table and chair. After furnishing his home, Reuven assured that Shimon was clothed properly. Then, Reuven supplied him with plentiful food. However, Reuven had a request. As a sign of his gratitude, he asked that Shimon not eat one par-

ticular type of food, and that he not wear one type of garment. Reuven made no limit on the business dealings that Shimon conduct other than to instruct him to avoid doing his business on one day each week. Other than these requests, Reuven allowed Shimon full control of partaking in the supplies and goods he had granted to him.

If Shimon would violate these simple terms, and refuse to acknowledge the benefits he received from Reuven, the situation would truly be a disgrace.

Hillel taught this lesson to the convert. We must realize that everything we have is from Hashem. He has provided us with clothing and shelter. Our daily sustenance is directed by Him. We would be terribly remiss if we did not actively acknowledge that He is the source of all we have, including our very

lives. One of the ways we have to show our gratitude is to hearken to Hashem's mitzvos. Hashem commanded us not to wear shaatnez, and to avoid eating non-kosher foods. One day a week, on Shabbos, we are to abstain from doing labor, as we focus on our spiritual needs. Other than these limits, we are free to partake of the multitude of pleasures that Hashem has placed before us in this world. With this in mind, how can a person consider sin? Hillel expressed this concept in graphic terms. If you were Reuven, would it not be abhorrent to have Shimon deny the benefits you gave to him? Similarly, we should not act treacherously toward Hashem and do that which we recognize as something we would not want to happen to ourselves.

This is the lesson in this Gemara according to Rashi. ■

