

Seder Kodashim | Masechet Chullin 89-95 | Shabbat VaYakhel | 19-25 Adar I (Feb. 24-March 2)

Daf 89: מַעֲלַת הָעֲנָוָה – The Virtue of Humility

Rabbi Eliezer taught: God truly loves Am Yisrael because even though He bestows greatness upon them, they remain humble. That is the meaning of the verse (Sefer Devarim 7:7) said by Moshe Rabbeinu to B'nai Yisrael before he died: "Not because you are greater in number than any other people did HaShem desire you. He chose you because you were the least [in number] of all the peoples," and you minimize yourselves with your humility.

HaShem granted greatness to Avraham and, among other blessings, He promised Avraham that his offspring would be more very numerous. Yet, Avraham still said: "I am merely dust and ashes (Breisheet 18:27). HaShem bestowed greatness upon Moshe and Aharon; Moshe as the founding leader of Am Yisrael and Aharon as its first Kohen Gadol. Yet, the two brothers both humbly said: "What are we" (Shemot 16:7), meaning, of what value are we?



Daf 90: כְּבוֹד בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ – Honor of the Beit HaMikdash

Two phenomena in the Beit HaMikdash are illustrative of the great honor the Jews accorded to the Holy Temple.

At the entrance to the *Heichel* (Sanctuary), a golden chandelier in the shape of a vine hung from poles. Everyone who donated an amount of gold to the Beit HaMikdash would come to hang their gold on the vine. Once, it was necessary to move the vine of gold from its usual location. A large number of *kohanim* were needed to carry the vine. It was incredibly heavy because of the large number of Jews who donated gold to the Beit HaMikdash.



The Talmud also recounts testimony given by deputy *Kohen Gadol* Rabbi Shimon. The *parochet* (curtain) in the Beit HaMikdash was one *tefach* (one hands-breadth) thick. Like the vine, it too was so heavy that when it required *tevilah* (ritual immersion) many *kohanim* were needed to carry out the immersion.



FROM THE TALMUD
SEDER KODASHIM
MASECHET CHULLIN
daf 89

מן התלמוד:
סדר קודשים, מסכת חולין, דף פ"ט:
"אמר רבי אילעא:
אין העולם מתקיים אלא
בשביל מי שבולם את עצמו
בשעת מריבה,
שנאמר: תולה ארץ על בלימה"

Translation

... *Mi she'bolem* ... one who
restrains [himself]
... *Sha'at Meriva* ... time of a
quarrel

Explanation

The world endures because of those who, during a quarrel, restrain themselves and do not aggressively respond to verbal abuse.

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Daf 91: שְׁתֵּים עָשָׂרָה הָאֲבָנִים – The Twelve Stones

At the age of 63, Ya'akov ran away from his parent's home and hid in Ever's academy where he diligently studied Torah for 14 consecutive years.



Later, Ya'akov travelled to Haran, where his uncle Lavan resided. Ya'akov thought to himself: "Have I passed by Mount Moriah and neglected to pray? Indeed, this is the place my forefathers prayed." Ya'akov regretted passing so close by and not praying there. HaShem performed a miracle on his behalf. Ya'akov experienced *kefitzat derech* (a miraculous shortening of his expected

long path) and he was swiftly transported to Mount Moriah. After praying, Ya'akov wanted to continue on his way to Haran because the sun was still shining. However, HaShem suddenly made the sun set because He wanted Ya'akov to sleep on Mount Moriah.

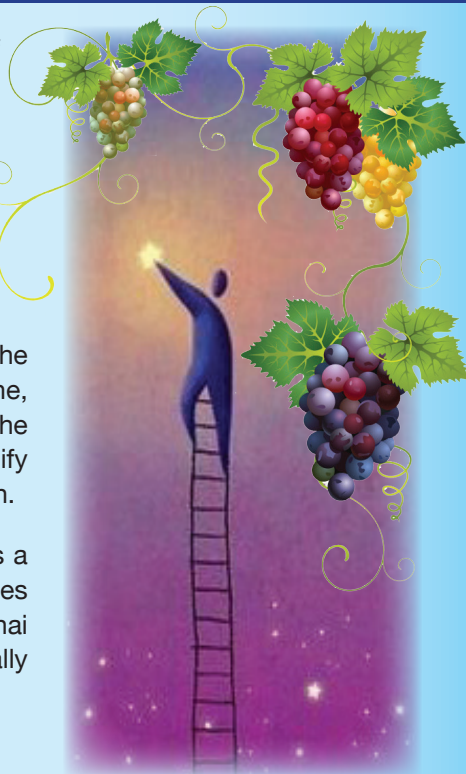
Ya'akov took twelve stones that had been used previously as the altar on which Yitzchak Avinu was bound. He placed one stone under his head as a pillow and used the remaining stones to make a fence to protect himself from the wild animals. It is said that all of the stones wanted to be the one upon which Ya'akov chose to rest his head. According to legend, HaShem connected all twelve stones together into one large stone.

Daf 92: רֵמֵזֵי הַחֲלוֹמִים – The Dream's Secondary Meaning

The Talmud teaches us that the dream of Pharoah's *Sahr HaMashkim* (Minister of Beverages) included in it hints about the future for B'nai Yisrael. *Sahr HaMashkim* told Yosef he saw "there were three branches in the vines. It was budding, and it blossomed into clusters of ripe grapes" (*Breisheet* 40:10).

Rabbi Yehoshua said: The vine represents the Torah. The three branches symbolize Moshe, Aharon and Miriam. The buds represent the *Sanhedrin* (High Court) and the grapes signify the *tzaddikim* in each and every generation.

Rabbi Yirmeah Bar Abba said: The vine is a reference to Am Yisrael. The three branches stand for the three festivals on which B'nai Yisrael make pilgrimages, ascending annually to the Beit HaMikdash.



This Week In Jewish History

NAZIS INVADED PRAGUE

On the 24th of Adar in 1939, Nazi troops occupied Prague, Czechoslovakia. At the time of the Nazis conquest, approximately 118,000 Jews were living there. The Jewish history in Prague dates back over 1,000 years, being first mentioned in 965 CE. The community has faced difficult times and glorious times, but Prague has continuously been home to Jews.

The 16th century was known as the Jewish Renaissance of Prague and since then, Jews lived in what was known as the Prague Ghetto, then the largest Jewish settlement in Europe. One of the most important Jewish rabbinical scholars of this period was Judah Leow ben Bezalel, who is known simply as The *Maharal* of Prague. Stories abound about The *Maharal*, the most famous of which concerns his creation of 'the Golem,' a creature made of clay who was made to defend the Jews of the city from anti-Semitic attacks.

In the late 19th century, Zionism became popular in Prague, with the formation of the Bar Kochba organization, which published a bi-weekly publication until 1938. But by 1939, as in much of Europe, the Jews of Prague had been stripped of their rights. After the war, Jewish life in Prague was renewed and today, there is again a Jewish community that features Jewish schools, synagogues, and kosher restaurants.



Nazis enter near Prague castle (1939).
Photo Source: Wikipedia)



Daf 93: מליחת הבשר – Salting of the Meat

The Torah prohibits the consumption of blood. For that reason, the meat is salted after performing *shechita*, so that the salt can draw out the remaining blood from the meat. On this *daf*, the Talmud says that it is prohibited to cook meat before it has been salted, because after cooking, salt is no longer able to successfully draw out the blood from the meat.



Daf 94: הלכות דרך ארץ – Laws of *Derekh Eretz*

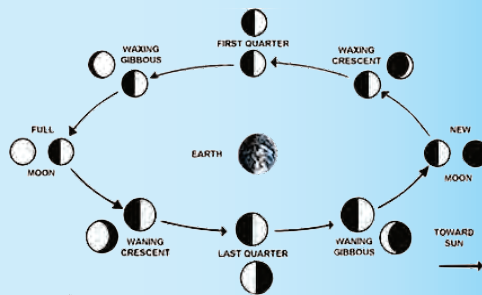
Rabbi Meir said that it is *assur* (prohibited) for a person to act and speak differently from what he or she truly thinks and feels. For example, a person should not plead with someone to come over and eat at his or her home, if the person extending the invitation already knows that other person is unable to accept the invitation. Likewise, one should not offer numerous gifts to another person, if one knows in advance that person will not accept those gifts.

It is *assur* to act “*Echad ba’peh veh’echad balev*” (say one thing, when you think another). Meaning, it is uncalled for to think: “If I knew that person would be able to accept my dinner invitation, I would not invite him. It is only because I know he is not able to accept that I’m inviting him, so he will really like me and want to do favors for me.” This is an inappropriate way to behave. Rather, one should strive to behave honestly and treat people fairly — and to always say what you mean.



Daf 95: לוח שנה לששים שנה – The Sixty-Year Calendar

The *Amora* Shmuel had several nicknames, among them was “*Yarchi’na’a*,” (“moving moon”) because of his expertise in astronomy. Shmuel was famous for his mastery in tracking the movements of celestial bodies, including the sun, the moon, and the stars.



Shmuel utilized his extensive knowledge to prepare a sixty-year calendar, which he then sent to Rabbi Yochanan in *Eretz Yisrael*. When Rabbi Yochanan received the calendar, he said: “I am still not convinced that Shmuel is a great Torah scholar.” Later on, Shmuel sent Rabbi Yochanan numerous and varied questions regarding matters of *treifah* (anatomical blemishes rendering an animal non-kosher). From the deeply complicated questions Shmuel posed, Rabbi Yochanan came to see that Shmuel was indeed a great Torah scholar.

Who's Who?

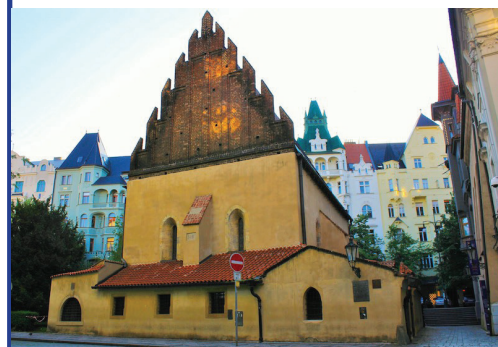
MAHARAL OF PRAGUE

(1520 – 1609)

Rabbi Yehuda ben Betzael Loew, the widely revered medieval rabbi was known as *MaHaRaL* (Moreinu HaRav Loew) of Prague. A Talmudic scholar and Kabbalist, the *Maharal's* lineage can be traced back to King David.

The *Maharal* served as spiritual leader of the *Altneuschul* (Old-New Synagogue), where his front row seat in the sanctuary remains preserved today. One of the *Maharal's* most celebrated works was the *Gur Aryeh* (“lion cub”), which is five-volume commentary on Rashi. His wife, Pearl, was also known as a great Torah scholar in her own right and served as proofreader for the *Maharal's* writings.

Esteemed by Jews and the general population alike, the *Maharal* was friendly with Emperor Rudolf II, with whom he discussed astrology and alchemy. A 19th century legend credits the *Maharal* with creation of the Golem, a mythical clay creature brought to life through Kabbalah to protect the Jews in the Prague Ghetto from anti-Semitic attacks. The *Maharal* is buried in the Old Jewish Cemetery, which still serves as an important historical monument in Prague.



The Altneuschul (Old New Synagogue) in Prague is Europe's oldest active synagogue. (Photo Source: Wikipedia)



Look closely at the illustration and answer the following questions:

1. Who is the person pictured in the window?
2. What is the large structure and where is it located?
3. Who is the person walking to the left of the synagogue?
4. What is the connection between the lion and the person near the synagogue?
5. What books were written by the gentleman in the picture?



1) The Maharal of Prague; 2) The Altmuehschul Synagogue in Prague; 3) The Golem of Prague; 4) The name of the Maharal was Yehuda Lowe, or Lavi; 5) "Netzach Yisrael"; "Tiferet Yisrael"; "Gevurot Hashem" and many others.



QUESTIONS OF THE WEEK

All answers can be found in this Daf Yomi publication

1. How did Rabbi Yehoshua and Rabbi Yirmeah Bar Abba explain Sahr HaMashkim's dream about the vine?
2. How did Rabbi Meir interpret the expression — "Echad ba'peh veh'echad balev"?
3. Why were so many kohanim needed in order to move the golden vine in the Beit HaMikdash?

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Dvar Torah PARASHAT VAYAKHEL

פֶּרֶשֶׁת וַיַּקְהֵל
[שַׁבַּת שְׁקָלִים]

This Shabbat, we read *Parashat Shekalim*, which teaches about the obligation to contribute a half-shekel to support the work of the *Mishkan* (Tabernacle).

Why was the required sum a half-shekel as opposed to a round number? The half-shekel symbolizes two important aspects of our lives:

On the one hand, each community member donated his own half-shekel, and through that contribution connected with the community and participated in the public good. It is very important for the Am Yisrael to be united and joined together. Many halves become one large whole.

On the other hand, each of us has a special character and unique traits that are different from those of other people; characteristics we want to preserve. So, we keep the other half-shekel with us, as a reminder that each of us possesses our own special traits that should not disappear when we connect to the rest of society.



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פרק ד: בני העיר CHAPTER 4: RESIDENTS OF A TOWN

מדוע זכה בנימין בקדש הקדשים?

DAF 26: THE TRIBE OF BENJAMIN AND THE HOLY OF HOLIES



After B'nai Yisrael conquered Eretz Yisrael, Yehoshua Bin Nun parceled out the land to the *shvatim* (tribes). A lottery system was employed to determine which territory would be given to which tribe.

The city of Jerusalem was assigned to *Shevet Yehudah*. However, certain sections of the Beit HaMikdash were assigned to the neighboring tribe of Binyamin.

The *Gemara* relates that the location where the *miz'be'ach* (altar) was constructed belonged to *Shevet Binyamin*, except for a small portion of the *miz'be'ach* was in a *Yehudah's* territory. Binyamin the son of Yaakov knew through Divine inspiration that one day his descendants would have most, but not all, of the altar on their territory. He agonized every day questioning why he did not merit having the entire *miz'be'ach* in his region. Hashem saw that Binyamin was extremely upset and promised that Binyamin would have the privilege of hosting the *Shechina* (Divine Presence) in his tribal portion. Indeed, the *Kodesh Kodashim* (Holy of Holies) was included in Binyamin's inheritance. The *Kodesh HaKodashim* was home to the *Aron HaBrit* (Ark of the Covenant) and the *kaporet* (ark covering), and that was where the *Shechina* resided.

מדוע זכה רבי זכאי לאריכות ימים?

DAF 27: WHY RABBI ZAKKAI MERITED A LONG LIFE

The *Gemara* tells a wonderful story about Rabbi Zakkai, who was blessed with longevity. Rabbi Zakkai's disciples approached him and asked: "Rabbeinu! By virtue of what qualities did you merit such a long life?" Rabbi Zakkai answered: "I was very meticulous about several significant things. Most importantly, I strictly observed and never neglected the *mitzvah* of sanctifying the Shabbat day by reciting the blessing over wine." This piety went beyond the letter of the law, as it is permissible for a person who lacks wine to recite *Kiddush* over bread.

Rabbi Zakkai continued and told his students that his elderly mother was also extremely conscientious about fulfilling the *mitzvah* of Shabbat *Kiddush*. One Friday, when his mother saw she didn't have enough money to purchase wine for *Kiddush*, she sold the kerchief that was on her head and used the proceeds to buy *Kiddush* wine. Thanks to his mother's meticulous observance of the *mitzvah* of *Kiddush*, she earned the privilege of wealth. When she died, she bequeathed 300 barrels of wine to her son. When Rabbi Zakkai passed away, at a ripe old age, he left behind an inheritance of 3,000 barrels of wine.





דרכי הלמוד

DAF 28: METHODS OF LEARNING

Regarding the *Korban Tamid* (twice daily perpetual offering), the Torah states in *Sefer Bamidbar* (Numbers 28:4): “The one lamb you shall offer in the morning, and the other [lamb] you will offer in the afternoon.”

One of the *chachamim* inquired: “Why did the Torah add extra words into this *pasuk* (verse)? It would have been sufficient to write “Offer the lamb in the morning.” Why did the Torah write “The **one** lamb you shall offer in the morning?” Isn’t the word “one” unnecessary, as it is implied by the use of the singular “lamb”? The *Gemara* resolved the question by explaining that the word “one” was used to teach us that it is necessary to select “the one,” very special, best lamb to be offered as a *korban*.

At the end of *Hilchot Issurei Miz’be’ach*, Rambam further explained that the inclusion of the word “one” teaches us to break away from the *yetzer hara* (evil inclination) and learn to love the *mitzvot*. When a person offers a *korban* to Hashem, it should be the highest quality item in his possession. When he builds a *Beit Knesset* (Synagogue), it should be more magnificent than his home. Likewise, one who feeds the needy should give them the highest quality foods. We can justifiably take pride in meticulously fulfilling mitzvot in the optimal fashion.

QUESTIONS OF THE WEEK

1. Regarding what was Binyamin so upset and how did HaShem console him?
2. Which mitzvah did Rabbi Zakkai never neglect?
3. Why did the Torah specify the offering of “one lamb” and not just rely on its use of the singular form “lamb”?

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