

דף יומי • חלין • דף פ"ט

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THE SUGYA

We start off this part of the sugya with a beautiful and inspiring dray in the Aggadata, looking at the incredible zechus of Avraham Avinu. The Gemara brings down how his deep humility and his refusal to take even a thread or a shoe strap from the king of Sedom earned his children the beautiful mitzvos of tzitzis and tefillin. We learn about the special koach of techeiles, which brings a Yid to think of the Kisei HaKavod, and we delve into the midda of anavah, seeing how Hashem loves Klal Yisrael because we make ourselves small even when bestowed with greatness.

After this warm and uplifting Aggadic piece, the Gemara returns to the halachos of kisuy hadam. The shakla v'tarya focuses on what kind of dust is kosher for covering the blood of a chayah or an off. Specifically, the Gemara asks a kasha about using the dust of an Ir HaNidachas, which is assur b'hana'ah, leading us into a major yeshivish yesod regarding whether mitzvos are considered to have been given for physical benefit.

All introductions, summaries, and contextual notes are the editor's commentary and are not part of the original text.

עמוד א' DAF 89A

STATEMENT

”אם מחוט ועד שרוף נעל”, וכו' פניו לשתי מצות: לחוט של תכלת, ורצועה של תפילין.

Because Avraham Avinu said to the king of Sedom, “If from a thread and even to a shoe strap” will I take from you, his children merited two mitzvos as a reward: the thread of sky-blue wool of tzitzis, and the strap of tefillin.

QUESTION

בשלמא רצועה של תפילין, פתיב: “ויראו כל עמי הארץ כי שם ה' נקרא עליך”, ותנא: רבי אליעזר הגדול אומר: אלו תפילין שבראש,

The Gemara asks: **Granted** as to the **strap of tefillin**, we can understand why this is a fitting reward, since **it is written** regarding them: “And all the peoples of the earth shall see that the name of Hashem is called upon you, and they shall be afraid of you,” **and it was taught** in a braisa that **Rabbi Eliezer the Great says: This verse refers to the tefillin of the head** which are visible to all and bring honor to Klal Yisrael,

QUESTION

אלא חוט של תכלת מאי היא?

but as for the **thread of sky-blue wool** of tzitzis, **what is it?** What special benefit or honor does it bring to a person?

ANSWER

דתנא, רבי מאיר אומר: מה נשתנה תכלת מכל הצבעונין? מפני שתכלת דומה לים, וים דומה לרקיע, ורקיע דומה לאבן ספיר, ואבן ספיר דומה לכסא הכבוד,

The Gemara answers: It is as it was taught in a braisa, Rabbi Meir says: Why is sky-blue different from all other colors that it was chosen for tzitzis? Because sky-blue is similar to the color of the sea, and the sea is similar to the sky, and the sky is similar to a sapphire stone, and a sapphire stone is similar to the Throne of Glory,

PROOF

דְּכַתִּיב: "וַיֵּרְאוּ אֶת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַתַּחַת רַגְלָיו וְגו' ", וְכַתִּיב: "כְּמֵרָאָה אֶבֶן סַפִּיר דְּמוּת כִּסֵּא".

as it is written in one pasuk: "And they saw the Elokim of Yisrael, and under His feet was like a paved work of sapphire stone, and like the very heaven for clearness," and it is written in another pasuk: "As the appearance of a sapphire stone was the likeness of a throne." Thus, looking at the techeiles brings a person to contemplate the Shechinah itself.

STATEMENT

אָמַר רַבִּי אָבָא: קִשְׁשָׁה גִזְלֵי הַנֶּאֱכָל, שְׂאֵפִילֵי צְדִיקִים גְּמוּרִים אֵינָן יְכוּלִין לְהַחֲזִירוֹ, שְׂנַאֲמַר: "בְּלַעְדֵּי
רַק אֲשֶׁר אָכְלוּ הַנְּעָרִים".

Rabbi Abba said: Difficult is the return of theft that has been consumed, for even the completely righteous are unable to return it, as it is stated by Avraham: "Far be it from me! Only that which the young men have eaten." Even Avraham Avinu could not return what was already consumed by his men.

STATEMENT

אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן מִשּׁוּם רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר בְּרַבִּי שִׁמּוֹן: כָּל מָקוֹם שֶׁאֵתָּה מוֹצֵא דְבָרֵי שֶׁל רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר בְּנוֹ
שֶׁל רַבִּי יוֹסִי הַגָּלִילִי בְּהַגְדָּה – עֲשֵׂה אָזְנֶיךָ כְּאֶפְרָכֶסֶת.

Rabbi Yochanan said in the name of Rabbi Elazar, son of Rabbi Shimon: Any place where you find the words of Rabbi Eliezer, the son of Rabbi Yosei HaGelili, in Aggadah, make your ears like a funnel to receive his deep insights.

EXPLANATION

"לֹא מִרְבָּכֶם מִכָּל הָעַמִּים חֵשֶׁק ה' בָּכֶם וְגו' " – אָמַר לָהֶם הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא לְיִשְׂרָאֵל: חוֹשְׁקֵנִי בָכֶם,
שְׂאֵפִילֵי בְּשִׁעָה שְׂאֵנִי מִשְׁפִּיעַ לָכֶם גְּדוּלָּה – אַתֶּם מִמַּעֲטִין עֲצֻמְכֶם לִפְנֵי.

He expounded on the pasuk: "Not because you are more in number than any people did Hashem desire you..." — The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to Yisrael: I desire you, because even at a time when I bestow greatness upon you, you diminish yourselves before Me in humility.

PROOF

נָתַתִּי גְדוּלָּה לְאַבְרָהָם – אָמַר לִפְנֵי: "וְאַנְכִי עֹפֵר וְאַפֵּר", לְמֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן – אָמַר: "וַיִּנְחֲנוּ מָה", לְדָוִד –
אָמַר: "וְאַנְכִי תוֹלַעַת וְלֹא אִישׁ".

For example, I gave greatness to Avraham, yet he said before Me: "And I am but dust and ashes." I gave greatness to Moshe and Aharon, yet they said: "And what are we?" I gave greatness to Dovid, yet he said: "But I am a worm and no man."

EXPLANATION

אָבָל אוֹמוֹת הָעוֹלָם אֵינָן כֵּן, נָתַתִּי גְדוּלָּה לְנִמְרוֹד – אָמַר: "הִבֵּה נִבְנָה לָנוּ עִיר", לְפָרְעָה – אָמַר: "מִי
הִי",

But the nations of the world are not so. I gave greatness to Nimrod, yet he said: “Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower... and make a name for ourselves.” To Pharaoh, yet he said: “Who is Hashem that I should listen to His voice?”

PROOF

לְסַנְחֵרִיב – אָמַר: “מִי בָּכָל אֱלֹהֵי הָאָרְצוֹת וְגו’”, לְנְבוּכַדְנֶצַּר – אָמַר: “אֶעֱלֶה עַל בְּמֹתַי עֵב”, לְחִירָם מֶלֶךְ צוּר – אָמַר: “מוֹשֵׁב אֱלֹהִים יִשְׁבְּתִי בִלְבַב יָמִים”.

I gave greatness to Sanheriv, yet he said: “Who are they among all the gods of the countries...” I gave greatness to Nevuchadnezzar, yet he said: “I will ascend above the heights of the clouds.” I gave greatness to Chiram, the king of Tzor, yet he said: “I sit in the seat of Elokim, in the heart of the seas.”

STATEMENT

אָמַר רַבָּא, וְאִיתִּימָא רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן: גְּדוּל שְׁנַאמַר בְּמֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן יוֹתֵר מִמָּה שְׁנַאמַר בְּאַבְרָהָם, דְּאִילוּ בְּאַבְרָהָם כְּתִיב: “וְאַנֹכִי עֹפֵר וְאֹפֵר”, וְאִילוּ בְּמֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן כְּתִיב: “וְנַחֲנוּ מָה”.

Rava said, and some say it was Rabbi Yochanan: Greater is that which was said regarding Moshe and Aharon than that which was said regarding Avraham. For whereas regarding Avraham it is written: “And I am but dust and ashes,” which is at least something, regarding Moshe and Aharon it is written: “And what are we?” — they made themselves completely like nothing.

STATEMENT

וְאַנֹכִי עֹפֵר וְאֹפֵר”, וְאִילוּ בְּמֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן כְּתִיב: “וְנַחֲנוּ מָה”. וְאָמַר רַבָּא, וְאִיתִּימָא רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן: אִין הָעוֹלָם מִתְקַיֵּים אֵלָא בְּשִׁבְלֵי מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן, כְּתִיב הָכָא: “וְנַחֲנוּ מָה”, וְכְתִיב הָתָם: “תּוֹלָה אֶרֶץ עַל בְּלִימָה”.

And Rava said, and some say it was Rabbi Yochanan: The world only endures in the merit of Moshe and Aharon. It is written here: “And what are we [mah],” and it is written there: “He hangs the earth upon nothingness [belimah]” — meaning, in the merit of those who make themselves like nothing.

STATEMENT

אָמַר רַבִּי אִילְעָא: אִין הָעוֹלָם מִתְקַיֵּים אֵלָא בְּשִׁבְלֵי מִי שְׁבוּלָם אֶת עֲצָמוֹ בְּשַׁעַת מְרִיבָה, שְׁנַאמַר: “תּוֹלָה אֶרֶץ עַל בְּלִימָה”.

Rabbi Ile'a said: The world only endures in the merit of one who restrains [bolem] himself during a quarrel, as it is stated: “He hangs the earth upon nothingness [belimah]” — which is read as b'limah, one who shuts his mouth.

STATEMENT

רַבִּי אֲבָהוּ אָמַר: מִי שְׁמֵשִׁים עֲצָמוֹ כְּמִי שְׂאִינוּ, שְׁנַאמַר: “וּמִתַּחַת זְרוּעוֹת עוֹלָם”.

Rabbi Abbahu said: The world endures in the merit of one who makes himself as if he does not exist, as it is stated: “And underneath are the everlasting arms” — the one who places himself underneath everyone else is the arm that supports the world.

QUESTION

אָמַר רַבִּי יִצְחָק: מַאי דְּכְתִיב “הֵאמָנָם אֵלָם צָדֵק תְּדַבְּרוּן מִיִּשְׁרָיִם תִּשְׁפֹּטוּ בְּנֵי אָדָם”?

Rabbi Yitzchak said: What is the meaning of that which is written: “Do you indeed speak righteousness in silence [elem]? Do you judge with equity, O sons of men?”

ANSWER

מה אומנותו של אדם בעולם הזה – ישים עצמו כאלם.

This means: What should be a person's occupation [umanus] in this world? He should make himself like a mute [ilem] and avoid idle chatter.

INFERENCE

יכול אף לדברי תורה? תלמוד לומר “צדק תדבירן”.

One might have thought that he should remain silent even regarding words of Torah? Therefore, the verse teaches: “Speak righteousness” — meaning, speak words of Torah.

INFERENCE

יכול יגיס דעתו? תלמוד לומר “מישרים תשפטו בני אדם”.

One might have thought that because he speaks words of Torah, he may become arrogant? Therefore, the verse teaches: “Judge with equity, O sons of men” — remain humble and straightforward like a fair judge.

RULING

אמר רבי זעירא, ואיתימא רבה בר ירמיה: מכסין בעפר עיר הנדחת.

The Gemara returns to the halachos of kisuy hadam: Rabbi Zeira said, and some say it was Rabba bar Yirmeya: One may cover the blood of a wild animal or bird with the dust of an Ir HaNidachas, a city led astray to avodah zarah.

QUESTION

ואמאי? איסורי הנאה הוא!

The Gemara asks: But why is this permitted? The dust of an Ir HaNidachas is an object from which benefit is prohibited, and using it to fulfill a mitzvah is considered deriving benefit!

ANSWER

אמר זעירי: לא נצרכה אלא לעפר עברה,

Ze'eiri said: This was only necessary to permit the dust of its ground, which was not part of the city's property that must be destroyed,

PROOF

דכתיב: “וְאֵת כָּל שְׁלָלָהּ תִּקְבְּץְ אֶל תּוֹךְ רַחֲבָהּ וְשָׂרַפְתָּ”, מִי שְׂאִינוּ מְחוּסֵר אֶלָּא קְבִיעָה וְשִׂרְפָּה, יֵצֵא זֶה שֶׁמְחוּסֵר תְּלִישָׁה, קְבִיעָה וְשִׂרְפָּה.

as it is written: “And all its spoil you shall gather into the midst of its open square, and you shall burn it.” This applies only to that which is not lacking anything other than gathering and burning; but this ground is excluded, as it is lacking uprooting, gathering, and burning, and therefore the ground itself is not forbidden.

ANSWER

ורבא אמר: מצות לאו ליהנות ניתנו.

And Rava said a different teretz: Even if the dust itself is forbidden, **mitzvos were not given for physical benefit**, and performing a mitzvah is not considered deriving benefit from a forbidden object.

OBJECTION

תַּיִב רַבִּינָא וְקָאֵמַר לֵהּ לְהָא שְׁמַעְתָּא, אִיתִיבִיהּ רַב רְחוּמִי לְרַבִּינָא: שׁוֹפָר שֶׁל עֲבוּדָה זָרָה לֹא יִתְקַע בּוֹ. מֵאִי לָאוּ, אִם תִּקַּע לֹא יֵצֵא?

Ravina sat and was saying this halachah of Rava, that mitzvos are not for benefit. Rav Rechumi challenged Ravina from a Mishnah: **A shofar of avodah zarah, one should not blow it. What, is it not that if he did blow it, he did not fulfill his obligation** because it is forbidden?

RESOLUTION

לֹא, אִם תִּקַּע יֵצֵא.

Ravina answered: **No, if he blew it, he did fulfill his obligation** bedi'avad, because mitzvos are not for benefit.

OBJECTION

לִוְלָב שֶׁל עֲבוּדָה זָרָה לֹא יִטּוֹל. מֵאִי לָאוּ, אִם נָטַל לֹא יֵצֵא?

Rav Rechumi challenged him again: The Mishnah says, **A lulav of avodah zarah, one should not take it. What, is it not that if he did take it, he did not fulfill his obligation?**

RESOLUTION

לֹא, אִם נָטַל יֵצֵא.

Ravina answered: **No, if he took it, he did fulfill his obligation** bedi'avad.

REFUTATION

וְהִתְנַיָּא: תִּקַּע לֹא יֵצֵא, נָטַל לֹא יֵצֵא!

Rav Rechumi objected: **But was it not taught** explicitly in a braisa: If he **blew** a shofar of Asherah he **did not fulfill his obligation**, and if he **took** a lulav of Asherah he **did not fulfill his obligation**!

RESOLUTION

אָמַר רַב אֲשִׁי: הֵכִי הַשְׁתָּא? הֵתֵם

Rav Ashi said: **How can you compare the two? There**, in the case of the shofar and lulav of avodah zarah, the reason he does not fulfill his obligation is different.

עמוד ב' DAF 89B

EXPLANATION

שִׁיעוּרָא בְּעִינֵנוּ, וְעֲבוּדָה זָרָה כְּתוּבָה מִכֶּתֶת שִׁיעוּרָא.

For those mitzvos, **we require a minimum measure**, and since an object of **idol worship** must be burned, its **measure is** viewed by halacha as **crushed** into powder, so it lacks the required size. But

EXPLANATION

הָכָא, כּל מָה דְּמַכְתֵּת מְעַלֵּי לְכַסּוּי.

here, regarding the ashes used for covering the blood, any amount that is crushed is actually better for the mitzvah of covering, so the status of being crushed does not disqualify it.

STATEMENT

הָדָרָן עָלֶיךָ כַּסּוּי הַדָּם.

May we return to you, "Kisuy HaDam" (the chapter of "Covering the Blood").

מִשְׁנָה MISHNAH

MISHNAH

מִתְּנִי גִיד הַנֶּשֶׁה נוֹהֵג בְּאֶרֶץ וּבְחוּצָה לָאֶרֶץ, בְּפָנֵי הַבַּיִת וְשֶׁלֹּא בְּפָנֵי הַבַּיִת, בְּחוּלִין וּבְמוֹקְדָּשִׁין,

MISHNAH: The prohibition of the sciatic nerve applies in Eretz Yisrael and outside of Eretz Yisrael, in the presence of the Temple and not in the presence of the Temple, with regard to non-sacred animals and with regard to sacrificial animals,

MISHNAH

וְנוֹהֵג בְּבִהֶמָּה וּבְחִיָּה, בְּיָרֵךְ שֶׁל יָמִין וּבְיָרֵךְ שֶׁל שְׂמָאל,

and it applies to domesticated animals and to undomesticated animals, to the thigh of the right leg and to the thigh of the left leg.

MISHNAH

וְאֵינּוּ נוֹהֵג בְּעוֹף – מִפְּנֵי שֶׁאֵין לוֹ כֶּף.

But it does not apply to a bird, due to the fact that it has no spoon-shaped thigh, as the Torah refers to the "spoon of the thigh."

MISHNAH

וְנוֹהֵג בְּשָׁלִיל.

And it applies to a late-term fetus in the womb.

MISHNAH

רַבִּי יְהוּדָה אוֹמֵר: אֵינּוּ נוֹהֵג בְּשָׁלִיל, וְחֻלְבוֹ מוּתָר.

Rabbi Yehuda says: It does not apply to a fetus, and likewise its forbidden fat is permitted to be eaten.

MISHNAH

וְאֵין הַטֹּבְחִין נֶאֱמָנִין עַל גִּיד הַנֶּשֶׁה, דְּבָרֵי רַבִּי מֵאִיר.

And butchers are not believed when they claim that the sciatic nerve was removed; this is the statement of Rabbi Meir.

MISHNAH

וְחֻכָּמִים אוֹמְרִים: נֶאֱמָנִין עָלָיו וְעַל הַחֵלֶב.

And the Sages say: They are believed about it and about the forbidden fat.

גמרא GEMARA

QUESTION

גמ' מוקדשין - פשיטא!

GEMARA: The Mishnah says that the prohibition applies to **sacrificial animals**. The Gemara asks: Is this not **obvious**?

QUESTION

משום דאקדשיה פקע ליה איסור גיד מיניה?

Just because he consecrated it, does the prohibition of the sciatic nerve leave it? Why would we think it is permitted?

OBJECTION

וכי תימא לש בגידין בנותן טעם, ואתי איסור מוקדשין וחייל אאיסור גיד, האי "מוקדשין נוהג בגיד" מיבעי ליה.

And if you say that the Mishnah is teaching us that **nerves have the ability to impart flavor**, and therefore the **prohibition of sacrificial animals comes and takes effect upon the existing prohibition of the sciatic nerve**, then it should have formulated this as: "The prohibition of sacrificial animals applies to the sciatic nerve."

EXPLANATION

אלא קסבר אין בגידין בנותן טעם, ובמוקדשין איסור גיד איכא, איסור מוקדשין ליכא.

Rather, we must say that the Tanna holds that **nerves do not have the ability to impart flavor**, and therefore with regard to **sacrificial animals**, the **prohibition of the sciatic nerve is present**, but the **prohibition of sacrificial animals is not present** on the nerve itself.

QUESTION

וקסבר תנא דידן אין בגידין בנותן טעם?

The Gemara asks: **And does our Tanna really hold that nerves do not have the ability to impart flavor?**

OBJECTION

והתנו: ירה שנתפשל בה גיד הנשה, אם יש בה בנותן טעם - הרי זו אסורה!

But didn't we learn in a Mishnah later on: In the case of a **thigh with which the sciatic nerve was cooked**, if there is enough in it to **impart flavor**, it is **forbidden**? This proves that nerves do impart flavor!

RESOLUTION

אלא, הכא בולדות קדשים עסקינן, וקסבר נוהג בשליל, וקסבר ולדות קדשים במעי אמן הן קדושים, דאיסור גיד ואיסור מוקדשין בהדי הדדי קאתי.

Rather, here we are dealing with the **offspring of sacrificial animals**, and the Tanna holds that the **prohibition applies to a fetus**, and he holds that the **offspring of sacrificial animals are holy while in their mother's womb**. Therefore, the

prohibition of the sciatic nerve and the prohibition of sacrificial animals come at the exact same time, so both take effect.

OBJECTION

ומי מציית מוקמת לה בשליל, והא מדקתני סיפא "נוהג בשליל", מפלל דרישא לאו בשליל
עסקינן!

The Gemara asks: **But how can you establish this as referring to a fetus?** Since the latter clause teaches: "It applies to a fetus," this implies that the first clause is not dealing with a fetus!

RESOLUTION

הכי קאמר: דבר זה מחלוקת דרבי יהודה ורבנן.

The Gemara answers: **This is what the Tanna is saying: This matter** of the first clause **is a dispute between Rabbi Yehuda and the Rabbis**, and the first clause represents the view of the Rabbis.

QUESTION

ומי מציית אמרת דתרוייהו בהדי הדדי קאתו?

The Gemara asks: **But how can you say that both prohibitions come at the exact same time** when the fetus is formed?

OBJECTION

והתנן: על אלו טומאות הנזיר מגלח, על המת ועל כזית מן המת.

But didn't we learn in a Mishnah: For these impurities a Nazir must shave: For a corpse, and for an olive-sized piece of a corpse.

OBJECTION

וקשיא לן: על כזית מן המת מגלח, על כולו לא כל שכן?

And we were bothered by this: If he shaves for an olive-sized piece of a corpse, is it not all the more so that he shaves for an entire corpse? Why mention both?

OBJECTION

אמר רבי יוחנן: לא נצרכה אלא לנפל שלא (נקשרו) [נתקשרו] אבריו בגידיו.

And Rabbi Yochanan said: It is only necessary for a miscarried fetus whose limbs were not yet bound by nerves. This shows that the limbs and nerves are not formed at the exact same moment, so the prohibitions would not come at the same time!

SUMMARY

The daf begins with a beautiful Aggadic discussion on the reward Avraham Avinu received for his selflessness, leading to the mitzvos of tzitzis and tefillin, and expounds on the supreme value of humility as exemplified by Avraham, Moshe, Aharon, and Dovid. The Gemara then transitions back to the halachos of kisuy hadam, discussing whether one may use the dust of an Ir HaNidachas for covering the blood. This brings a classic machlokes where Ze'eiri limits the allowance to the actual ground of the city which is not subject to burning, while Rava establishes the famous halachic rule that mitzvos were not given for physical benefit, meaning that fulfilling a mitzvah with an object is not considered deriving forbidden benefit.

The Gemara is mechadesh a beautiful sevara about how the entire world is sustained. We learn that the world only endures in the merit of those who make themselves like nothing, as the pasuk says, "He hangs the earth upon nothingness, belimah."

Rabbi Ile'a takes this further and teaches that this refers to one who restrains, bolem, himself during a quarrel. When a dispute is heating up and you have the perfect comeback ready, the natural reaction is to let it fly. But the Tanna is telling us that the ultimate avodah is to make yourself like a mute in that very second.

Think about how much koach is hidden in that moment of silence. Lichoira, we think that standing up for ourselves and having the last word is where strength lies. But the Torah teaches us the exact opposite. True strength, the kind that literally holds up the entire world, is the quiet choice to step back and say nothing. When you are b'davka in the middle of a fight and you choose to hold your tongue, you are connecting yourself directly to the middah of Moshe and Aharon who said, "And what are we?"

Today, when someone says something that gets under your skin or a small argument starts brewing at home or in the bais medrash, make yourself like a "belimah." Take one deep breath, swallow your pride, and choose to remain completely silent for just that one moment.