



לע"נ ברוך בענדיש וברכה גרוס ע"ה  
by Mr. & Mrs. Duvy Gross

# THE שבוע MATTERS

שבת קודש פרשת יתרו

מסכת חגיגה דף י"ג

לרפ"ש רב צבי ליפא בן אסתר רחל

## Insights From Our Chaburos

### A connection uniquely ours

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In this week's daf, Rav Ami states that one may not transmit (מוסרין) words of Torah to a gentile. The Gemara in Meseches Sanhedrin quotes Rav Yochanan that an idolator who delves (עוסק) into the Torah is deserving of the death penalty. In both teachings, the wording is slightly different than what would expect. The Netziv points out that Rav Yochanan's wording to "delve" as opposed to the more common term to "learn" (ללמד) means that the prohibition is limited to analytical study. The gentile is allowed to study the basic laws, but they cannot delve into the depths of the laws. Rashi, in Sanhedrin (ד"ה בשבע) similarly says that the gentile may study the 7 mitzvos that apply to a gentile to be fluent in them in contrast to the mitzvos that apply to the Jews which cannot be studied by a gentile in depth.

We can now understand why Rav Ami uses the unexpected word "transmit" and did not state that one can "teach." It is possible to suggest that Rav Ami also holds that the prohibition is to study more in depth. In depth study requires more than simply teaching, rather it requires a give and take between teacher to the student. It is the analysis and the questioning and answering that is prohibited. In fact, the Maharsha explains that our Gemara in Chagigah applies even to the seven mitzvos of the Gentiles. While they are allowed to study the laws necessary to the performance of those mitzvos they are not allowed to delve deeply into the topic. (It is important to note that the Netziv disagrees with this last point.)

The source for Rav Ami comes from the last two pesukim in Tehillim Perek 147. The Perek is about the different praises of Hashem. The nations of the world can praise Hashem for observing his interaction with the world- through nature, the stars, snow, destruction of the wicked, His kindness, but the perek ends by saying the Jewish people have the ultimate form of praise to Hashem. After studying His Torah Be'iyun, in depth, we praise Hashem for the Torah that He has given us.

## Stories of the Daf

### The Torah of the Jewish people

"...אין מוסרין תורה לעובד כוכבים..."

On today's daf, Rav Ami says that one may not transmit Torah to a non-Jew.

About 350 years ago, someone asked Rav Avraham Amigo, zt"l, an interesting question. "A notzri who is connected to the authorities has been buying our books in an effort to complete a library of all the basic Torah texts. He has also offered to pay a certain Jew to teach him Torah. It is not clear whether this is preparatory to conversion or because he is seeking a way to undermine the Jewish community. Is it permissible to teach him or sell him seforim?"

The Gadol responded, "It is prohibited to teach him, as we find in the Gemara in Chagiga 13a. However, if there is a potential threat to Jewish life involved, it is definitely permitted to teach him, as we learn from the Gemara in Bava Kama 38b. If it does not appear that there is an element of danger in this case, I forbid teaching him or selling him books. Whether he truly intends to convert is difficult to ascertain because he could endanger himself by showing an interest in Judaism as the citizen of a Catholic country. In any case, the Gemara in Gittin 85a states that conversion is not likely, and we also find many references in Shas that prove that heretics often try to capitalize on whatever little learning they do have to defame the sages and undermine the Jewish community."

The Rav continued, "In any event, we must guard against the possibility that he will travel where he is unknown and get the confidence of a Jew on the road. The Jew will trust him because he is learned. Once he wins his confidence he may very well kill him. This is the logic of the Gemara in Menachos 43a regarding the prohibition to sell a non-Jew techeiles. If he was wearing techeiles, he could easily fool a Jew on the road and kill him for his possessions!"

## Review & Remember

1. What is the distance between earth and the beginning of Heaven?
2. How did R' Yosef "trick" the Elders of Pumpedisa?
3. Who are the four "kings" beneath Hahshem?
4. What happened to the angels when the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed?

## Point To Ponder

The Gemara in Yevamos מ"א says that when a non-jew comes to potentially convert we ask him what motivated him to want to convert and we inform him of some of the lenient mitzvos and some of the more stringent mitzvos. Based on Reb Ami's teaching that we are not allowed to give over Torah teachings to a non-jew why would it be permitted to teach the non-jew about these mitzvos?

# Halacha Highlight

## Positioning one's feet for prayer

*Their legs were a straight leg.* “ורגליהם רגל ישרה”

The Gemara Berachos<sup>1</sup> rules that when reciting Shemoneh Esrei one must stand with feet together to emulate the way the angels stand. The Yerushalmi<sup>2</sup>, though, cites a dispute concerning the reason one stands with feet together for Shemone Esrei. One opinion maintains that the practice is an attempt to emulate the angels, but the second opinion bases the practice on the way the kohanim walked up the ramp of the altar, i.e. feet next to one another. Rabbeinu Yonah<sup>3</sup> writes that our Gemara follows the first opinion in the Yerushalmi; therefore, one should stand with feet together so that they resemble the one foot of the angels. Rav Yosef Karo<sup>4</sup>, the Bais Yosef, offers two explanations for the rationale behind this practice. The first suggestion is that when standing before the Divine Presence one must banish any thoughts of the body and stand in a ministering position like the angels. A second rationale is that standing with feet together is a symbolic statement that one is incapable of obtaining one's needs without Hashem's assistance; therefore, we stand with our feet together incapable of running to fend for ourselves.

One could suggest that there is a practical difference between these two explanations. Rabbeinu Yisroel Isserlen<sup>5</sup>, the Terumas Hadeshen, writes that it is appropriate to stand with one's feet together during the recitation of kedusha. The rationale is that since we declare, “We will sanctify Your name in the world just as it is sanctified in the heavens” and we know in the heavens the angels stand with their feet together, it is only logical that we should stand with our feet together to emulate the practice of the angels. Terumas Hadeshen's application of this halacha to kedusha fits well with the first explanation cited by Bais Yosef that we stand with feet together in Shemoneh Esrei to emulate the angels. However, according to the second reason cited, when making a request of Hashem we want to stand in a position that symbolically shows submission to Hashem's strength, there is no reason to stand in this position for kedusha when we do not make any requests at that time.

<sup>1</sup>גמ' ברכות ז'.  
<sup>2</sup>ירושלמי ברכות פ"א הל' ה'.  
<sup>3</sup>תרי"ה בדפי הר"ף.  
<sup>4</sup>ב"י או"ח סי' צ"ה ועל מ"ש רבינו כאילו.  
<sup>5</sup>שו"ת תרומת הדשן סי' כ"ח.

# Mussar From the Daf

## The sky's the limit

The Gemara in Chagiga records a dialogue between Nevuchadnezer and a heavenly voice (“Bas Kol”). Nevuchadnezer states his intention to climb to the highest heights in Shamayim to which the Bas Kol notes the futility of such an endeavor since the distance to even the first Rekiyah is a distance of over 500 years.

How do we understand this dialogue? How is it ever possible for a person to really reach a Rekiyah in any period of time? What is really going on?

Rav Dessler (מכתב מאליהו חלק ג דף 113) explains that the reference to Rekiyah refers to spiritual heights a person can reach. The Gemara is teaching us that if a person works on his own even for 500 years he would be unable to reach the next spiritual level since a person's ability to change is very limited when they attempt to do any Avodah without the assistance of others, and in particular from Above. However, the reality is that a person need only make a relatively small effort to change (“like the eye of a needle”) so long as it is accompanied with the recognition that he must rely on Hashem to do so. This was the response to Nevuchadnezer: You wanted to ascend on your own, as if you could do it by yourself. It is an impossible task. Not only will you not go up, but your haughtiness will result in your descent.

A possible way to make this concept practical is to daven for Siyata Dishamya in a particular area of Avodas Hashem in which one is looking to grow.

## Parsha Connection

### Heaven on earth

In this week's daf we learn that when Nevuchadnezer declared his intentions to go up to the heavens, a voice from above explained to him that his quest was unattainable because it would take thousands of years for a person to reach the upper heavens. Based on this גמרא how does one understand the fact that by משה רבינו discussed in this week's parsha the שמים went up to?

Perhaps the answer can be explained according to the Midrash (מדרש רבה בראשית יט ג). The Midrash explains that when the world was created the primary resting place of the שכינה was in this world but with the accumulation of sins from each successive generation starting from אדם הראשון the שכינה progressively rose higher and higher until it reached the seventh heaven. Starting with the Avrum Avinu, the Avos and their descendants (לוי קהת עמרם משה) through their righteousness each brought the שכינה down a level back towards earth. Moshe brought the שכינה down to earth and was, therefore, able to reach the heavenly abode on earth. In the time of Nevuchadnezer the שכינה went back up to the heavens and he was therefore told that his quest was impossible. Our mission is to bring back the שכינה through our learning and mitzvos!

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