



שבת קודש פרשת דברים | מסכת נדרים דף מ'

INSIGHTS FROM OUR CHABUROS

Collected waters of a mikveh, and flowing waters of a spring

מטרא במערבא סהדא רבה פרת

From our sugya we see that waters of a natural spring can purify even as they flow, whereas the power of rainwater to purify is only when it is contained and stationary. The Vilna Gaon (to Yoreh De'ah, 206, #1) provides an explanation for this difference. There is no volume of water prescribed for spring water to provide its purifying powers. This fact contributes to the fact that it can purify even as it flows, as water in motion cannot necessarily be measured as representing a specific volume in one place. The water in motion cannot be considered as a single grouping for its volume to be joined into one collection. Meiri (to Shabbos 65b) points out that when an object is submerged in a mikveh of collected rain water, the water displaced by the object causes the level of the water to rise and cover the object. This is why a collection of rain water must contain a standard amount of forty se'ah, enough for an average person to submerge and become covered by the displaced water. In a flowing spring, however, even as an object is submerged, the level of the flowing water does not rise. This is why it is sufficient for an object to be submerged in a natural spring, and the volume of water in the immediate area or in the vicinity is not a factor. Chazon Ish (Mikvaos Tanina, 9:#1) writes that the flowing waters of a spring are considered to be connected together more than a flow of rain water. This is because the natural state of a spring is to be in a state of flow. Rain water, on the other hand, loses its binding identity when it flows, and it is only when it joins together in a collected pool that it becomes an important entity. This is why rain water only attains its power to purify when it is collected together in one place.

PARSHA CONNECTION

In this week's daf a central theme is נהר פרת, which is connected to both this week's parsha and תשעה באב. The possuk (דברים א ז) states the Hashem spoke to the Yidden in חורב telling them to begin their travels towards E"Y which is then described as ארץ הכנעני

והלבנון עד־הנהר הגדל נהר־פרת. Rashi states that even though it would seem from the possuk (בראשית ב יד) that נהר פרת is listed as the last suggesting it was the smallest, nevertheless it is called here הגדל since it is mentioned in the context of Eretz Yisroel. Perhaps we can suggest based on the Ran on this week's daf that it was called הגדל because it is the source for all other rivers: דכיון דפרת מביר מכיפיה כולו נהרות נמי מכיפיה דפרת הם

נמשכים. מתבררים שהרי כל הנהרות מפרת הם נמשכים. We also find very important concepts that should be adopted into our עבודה based on the Daf. First, the נהר פרת played an important role in גלות בבל. The רבי יודן quotes מדרש בראשית רבה טז ג who said that נהר פרת is also called נהר כנרת. This is the same river which יחזקאל mentions in פרק א regarding his נבואה and according to the מדרש טוב תהלים פרק קל"ז this is the same river which is referenced in על נהרות בבל. Why did they cry specifically at this location? The מדרש writes that the river represents the edge of ארץ ישראל and ירמיהו who was accompanying them did not continue past that point which caused them to cry. Just like we see in this week's daf the importance of davening for the sick, when בני ישראל started crying on the river, ירמיהו said the שמים וארץ are my witness that if you would have cried once in ארץ ישראל you would still be in ארץ ישראל! Why didn't בני ישראל cry in ארץ ישראל? The מדרש on תהלים says that נבוכדנצר knew that if they cried הקב"ה will have רחמנות on them, so he rushed them out of ארץ ישראל and didn't let them cry until they got to נהר פרת. We also see the importance of not giving up. The Gemara says that one should not visit the sick the last 3 hours of the day, because they may give up and not pray for their recovery. The נבואה of יחזקאל was given for this exact reason, namely to give the Jews in בבל hope that הקב"ה is with them. Let's take these principles with us on תשעה באב and cry to הקב"ה that we want the המקדש now. We must never give up! ח"ו; never underestimate the power of our cries! Hoping that this will be our last year without the המקדש!

STORIES OF THE DAF

Building on the positive

סתירת זקנים בגיו

An assembly was convened in Baranovitz to develop strategies that would galvanize the community to avoid laxness in Torah observance. Rav Meir Karelitz and the famed Mirrer Mashgiach, Rav Yerucham Levovitz, zt"l, attended.

When Rav Karelitz spoke, he elucidated an important principle in education, in how to set other Jews back on the right path. "The main way to build up a true connection to spirituality is by developing the positive. This is the best way to destroy another's tendency and attraction to negative behaviors. This principle underlies a dictum we find in Nedarim 40a, 'The building of youth is really destruction, while the destruction of elders is really building.' He continued, "When the young and inexperienced wish to build, they think that the best way to go about new construction is by first breaking down the bad. The elderly and more experienced educators realize that this will never work. The best way to destroy the bad is by strengthening and building on the positive that is already in place!"

The Chazon Ish, zt"l, acted on this principle. One time, he worked hard to convince a certain yeshiva to accept a weaker student. The yeshiva found that this boy had not severed ties with some very inappropriate friends who hung around in the worst areas of town. When they complained to the Chazon Ish about his protégé, he requested that they summon the boy. One member of the yeshiva's staff was present at their meeting. The Chazon Ish took an obvious interest in every aspect of the boy's learning and growth during their conversation, and spoke about his feelings and assessments at great length. When the boy left, the young man was glowing with joy. The staff member was confused, "But wasn't the entire purpose of calling him here to correct his associating with such bad friends?"

The Chazon Ish responded, "Until now, he had no real pleasure in spiritual things; the only delight he took was with his old friends about town. If we deprive him of his old associations, he will have no pleasure in life. First, I must help him find pleasure in learning. Only then can he be weaned from the street."

HALACHA HIGHLIGHT

Visiting the ill at the beginning/end of the day

לא ליסעוד איניש קצירא לא בתלת שעי קדמייתא ולא בתלת שעי בתרייתא דיומא

A person should not visit the sick during the first three hours or the last three hours of the day

Shulchan Aruch¹ rules that one should not visit the ill during the first three hours of the day since a patient's ailments are lessened somewhat in the morning and the visitor will not see the necessity to daven for the well being of the patient. One should also not visit the ill during the last three hours of the day since by that time the symptoms have increased in severity and the visitor may lose hope for the patient and won't bother to daven for his well-being. Rambam² offers an alternative reason why one should not visit a patient during the first three hours of the day. He writes that the reason is that that is the time that people attend to the needs of the patient. Kesef Mishnah³ notes that it would seem that Rambam who offered a reason different from our Gemara's reason did not have the same version of the text that we have. Additionally, he explains that the concern of Rambam is that if one visits during a time that others are attending to the needs of the patient the visitor will not be able to assist the patient which is the primary component of the mitzvah.

Rav Yosef Chaim Dovid Azulai⁴, the Gaon Chida, writes that according to Rambam if there is a circumstance such that one can be certain that he will have an opportunity to attend to the needs of a patient even if one visits during the first three hours of the day it is permitted. This would seem to be the rationale of the common custom of people to visit patients even during the first three hours of day. The Aruch HaShulchan⁵ maintains that the Gemara and Shulchan Aruch do not intend to prohibit visiting patients during these times; instead it is good advice pertaining to visiting the ill. The Salmas Chaim⁶ ruled that if a hospital has visiting hours, it is a statement from the doctors that this is the best time to visit the patient and therefore it is permitted to visit during that time even if it is within the first or last three hours of the day. Chofetz Chaim⁷ ruled that if the only time one could visit the ill is during these times it is permitted. Even if the visit reduces one's drive to daven for the patient the visit will still allow the visitor to assist in some other way.

MUSSAR FROM THE DAF

Witnessing suffering

בי אתא רב דימי, אמר: כל המבקר את החולה גורם לו שיחיה, וכל שאינו מבקר את החולה גורם לו שימות. מאי גרמא? אילימא כל המבקר את החולה מבקש עליו רחמים שיחיה, וכל שאין מבקר את החולה מבקש עליו רחמים שימות. שימות סלקא דעתך! אלא: כל שאין מבקר חולה, אין מבקש עליו רחמים, לא שיחיה ולא שימות.

When Rav Dimi came from Eretz Yisrael to Babylonia he said: Anyone who visits the ill causes that he will live, and anyone who does not visit the ill causes that he will die. The Gemara asks: In what way are his actions the cause of that result? If we say that anyone who visits the ill pleads for mercy that he will live, and anyone who does not visit the ill pleads for mercy that he will die, does it enter your mind that he would pray that the sick person will die? Rather, anyone who does not visit the ill does not plead for mercy for him, neither that he will live nor that he will die.

The Gemara teaches us that one who does not visit a sick person hastens their death. How exactly does this hasten their passing? The Gemara tells us that someone who visits the sick davens for their recovery and life. So why can't a person simply daven for the sick even if they haven't visited them? The key difference lies between intellectually knowing that someone is ill and actually witnessing their suffering firsthand. When a person actually sees a loved one or another individual in pain, they feel that pain more deeply and personally. This emotional connection enables them to pray more sincerely and effectively for the sick person's recovery. Often, when there is widespread suffering in the world, people tend to avoid hearing about it or seeing it, for fear of becoming numb. While this can be a valid concern (based on the context), there is a benefit one must consider. The Gemara shows us that at certain times, there is a real benefit in witnessing suffering. It moves us deeply and compels us to daven with greater fervor and compassion for the healing and wellbeing of those who are suffering.

POINT TO PONDER

The Gemara says that רבי חלבו was sick and no one came to visit him. Why didn't anyone come? The people obviously knew that he was sick and that it's a הוצא to visit the sick?

Response to last week's Point to Ponder:

The Gemara says that seven things were created before the world was created. Why was it necessary to create these seven before the world?

The ספר תפארת ציון explains that these seven things are not bound by the constraints of nature which govern our world. Therefore they had to be created before the world so that they can have and maintain that element of not being bound by nature.

REVIEW AND REMEMBER

1. Explain איסורא.
2. What safeguard did Chazal put in place to rely on a single witness who testifies that a woman's husband died?
3. How does Beis Din deal with a kohen who refuses to separate from a prohibited wife?
4. What are examples where the testimony of one woman is reliable?

1. שו"ע יו"ד י' של"ה סע' ד'
2. רמב"ם פ"ד מהל' אבל ה"ה
3. כסף משנה שם
4. ברכ"י ל"ד שם
5. ערוה"ש שם סע' ח'
6. ספר שלמת חיים המובא בספר חיי משה ל"ד ביקור חולים אות ו'
7. ספר אהבת חסד ענין ביקור חולים פ"ג

For more points to ponder by Rabbi Yechiel Grunhaus, or insights by Rabbi Yitzchok Gutterman, please visit our website, dafaweek.org, or download the app

To share an insight from your Chabura please email info@dafaweek.org

The shavua matters is published by the Daf a week program under the rabbinical guidance of Harav Meir Stern shlita and Harav Shmuel Kamenetsky shlita

To sponsor a publication, please contact Rabbi Zacharia Adler, Executive Director at info@dafaweek.org or call 507-daf-week. Sponsorship for one week is \$100

Sections reprinted with permission from the Chicago Torah Center