

Daf 8: העוסק במצוה אינו ניזוק — ONE WHO IS OCCUPIED WITH A MITZVAH IS UNHARMED



The Talmud teaches that those occupied with the performance of a mitzvah are not susceptible to harm because the mitzvah's merit affords them protection. Even after that mitzvah is completed and the mitzvah doer returns home, the merit continues to serve as a safeguard. The *Gemarah* relates that during the time of the *Beit HaMikdash*, when Jews ascended to Jerusalem for thrice annual pilgrimages, God protected their possessions. Jews left their crops unprotected in their fields, and the produce remained untouched by predatory animals. Jews left their chickens alone, unguarded, and the *huldah* (weasel) did not consume them. This was because God protected their property while they were occupied performing mitzvot.

Daf 9: החולדה שהתרוצצה עם החמץ – A WEASEL THAT SCAMPERED AROUND WITH CHAMETZ



If a person suddenly sees a *huldah* (weasel) running through their house with *chametz* [in its mouth] — after *bedikat chametz* had been completed — then, the entire house must be searched again. You might question the necessity of repeating the search, on the assumption that the *huldah* certainly ate the *chametz* already. However, the Talmud explains that the *huldah* sometimes stores bits of bread to eat later when it gets hungry. Therefore, if a *huldah* with *chametz* is spotted, it is necessary to search the house again.

Daf 10: בדיקת חמץ אחרי פסח – SEARCHING FOR CHAMETZ AFTER PESACH BEGINS

Chazal enacted that *bedikat chametz* be conducted on the night of 14 *Nissan*, one night before the *seder*. What should a person who forgot to search for *chametz* on the night of the 14th do? The *Gemara* states that a person who neglected to search for *chametz* on the night of the 14th is required to conduct the search the following morning on *erev Pesach*. If the search was still not done, it should be conducted even during *chol ha'moed Pesach*.

However, Rabbi Yehudah disagreed and maintained that a person who forgot and neglected to search for *chametz* on *erev Pesach* may no longer do so. There was concern that while searching, a person might find *chametz*, forget it is *Pesach*, and accidentally eat it. Therefore, Rabbi Yehudah prohibited searching for *chametz* on *Pesach*.



FROM THE TALMUD
SEDER MOED
MASECHET PESACHIM
DAF 8

מן התלמוד:
סדר מועד, מסכת פסחים דף ח':
”למה צדיקים דומים בפני שכינה -
כנר בפני האבוקה, ואמר רבא: אבוקה
להבדלה מצווה מן המובח.”

Translation

L'mah tzadikim domim ... To what
are the righteous comparable
דומים ... P'nei HaShechinah ... The Divine
Presence
פני שכינה ... אבוקה ... Torch

Explanation

The Talmud asks why it isn't possible to search for *chametz* using a torch, since its light is very strong.

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Daf 11: מְתֵי מִתְחִיל אִיסוּר חֻמֶּץ? – WHEN DOES THE PROHIBITION AGAINST CHAMETZ BEGIN?



Issur chametz (the prohibition against eating or benefitting from leaven) begins at *chatzot hayom* (midday) on *erev Pesach*. The daylight period is divided into 12 hours, and *chatzot hayom* is after half that time has passed, i.e., six hours. According to Torah law, *issur chametz* goes into effect at the end of the sixth hour.

The *chachamim* were concerned that people would err regarding the time or perhaps not know precisely when the sixth hour ended. As a result, they might continue to eat *chametz* after it was already prohibited to do so. Therefore, the *chachamim* decreed it prohibited to eat *chametz* starting at the beginning of the fifth hour (i.e., two hours before the biblical prohibition).

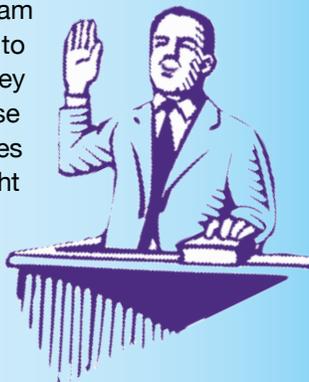
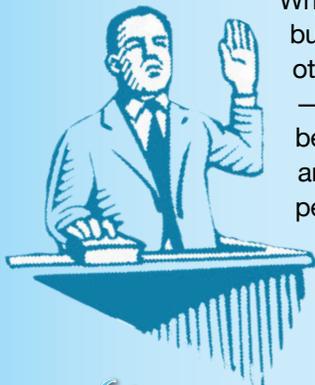
During the fifth hour, it is rabbinically prohibited to eat *chametz*. However, it is still permissible to derive benefit from it (e.g., selling it to a non-Jew and receiving payment in return). However, when the fifth hour passes and the sixth hour begins, the *chametz* must be eliminated. It needs to be burned. As such, “*sof z’man achilat chametz*” (latest time to eat leaven) begins at the start of the fifth hour; and “*z’man biur chametz*” (time for elimination of leaven) starts immediately with the beginning of the sixth hour.

Daf 12: עֵדִים בְּבֵית הַדִּין – WITNESSES AT THE COURT

Two *eidim* (witnesses) saw Reuven commit an *aveirah* (violation). The *eidim* are required to go to the *beit din* (court) and independently relate to the judges what each knows and what they saw Reuven do. The *dayanim* then begin to interrogate the *eidim*, to determine whether they are telling the truth.

The *beit din* asks — “On what day did you see Reuven commit an *aveirah*? If the first *eid* responds “Tuesday” and the second *eid* alleges it was “Wednesday,” then the *dayanim* know to reject the pair of witnesses because at least one of them is telling an untruth.

What if both *eidim* testify the incident happened on Tuesday, but one says it took place at 8 am, while the other claims it transpired at 10 am — are these witnesses deemed to be liars? Rabbi Yehudah says they are not considered liars because people often make mistakes regarding the time, and might honestly think it was a different hour. Therefore, this inconsistency should not brand the *eidim* as liars.

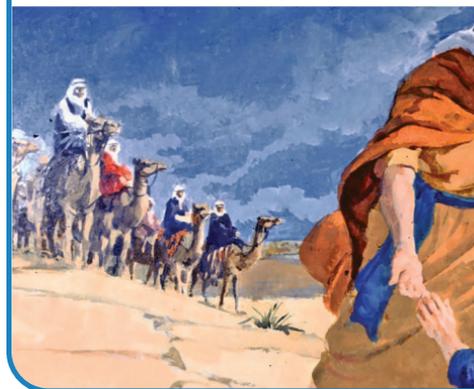


Dvar Torah VAYISHLACH



Yaakov sent Eisav a wonderful gift, filled with the choicest items, hoping to temper his anger. Although Eisav was initially somewhat hesitant, eventually, he happily accepted Yaakov’s generosity — but not before having a brief dialogue with his brother which teaches us about the profound difference between them.

At first, Eisav told Yaakov he is not interested in taking anything — “I have plenty, my brother, let what is yours remain for you.” Yaakov replied: “Please take my blessing ... because God has favored me and I have everything”. As he attested, Eisav had much property, but that was not enough for him. So, he said, “I have a plenty” — i.e., a lot, but not enough. In contrast, Yaakov was happy with his portion, whether he had much or little — “I have all I need,” Ya’akov said, since the truly wealthy individual is the person who is satisfied with what they have.



**Daf 13: למכור חמץ שלא שייך לי –
SELLING CHAMETZ THAT DOES NOT BELONG TO ME**

Once, a Jew deposited for safekeeping two sacks with Yohanan Hakuka'a. The saddlebags were perforated, and through the holes, Yochanan saw that the bags contained *chametz*. When *erev Pesach* arrived, Yochanan began to worry about what he should do, being that the Jew depositor had not yet returned to collect his sacks.



Yochanan went to Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi, editor of the Mishnah, and asked if it is permissible to sell the sacks to a non-Jew, even though the sacks do not belong to him. When the fifth hour of the day arrived, and *chametz* would soon be prohibited, Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi instructed Yochanan — “Sell the *chametz*, despite the fact it does not belong to you.” Why? Because it is permissible to sell an item that belongs to another person, so that person will not forfeit the property. If the sacks are not sold to a non-Jew, they would need to be burned on *erev Pesach*, before the sixth hour.

**Daf 14: דרגות הטומאה –
DEGREES OF RITUAL IMPURITY**

There are different types of *tum'ah* (ritual impurity). Certain items are susceptible to *tum'ah*, and later impart *tum'ah*, onto anything that comes into contact them. However, other items that are susceptible to *tum'ah* do not impart *tum'ah* to people or items with which they come into contact.

“**Avi avot ha'tum'ah**” (Supreme source of ritual impurity): A human corpse has the status of *Avi Avot Ha'Tum'ah*, because a corpse possesses the highest level, or the major primary source of ritual impurity that exists.



“**Av ha'tum'ah**” (primary sources of ritual impurity): A person or item that touches a corpse bears the status of *av ha'tum'ah*. A *sheretz* (crawling creature) that dies also holds the status of an *av ha'tum'ah*.



“**Rishon le'tum'ah**” (first-degree ritual impurity): A person or item that touches an “*av ha'tum'ah*” is rendered a “*rishon le'tum'ah*” as a result of that contact.



“**Sheini le'tum'ah**” (second-degree ritual impurity): A person who touches an item rendered a “*rishon le'tum'ah*” does not thereby become *tameh*. However, a food item that touches a “*rishon le'tum'ah*” does become *tameh* and bears the status of “*sheini le'tum'ah*”.



QUESTIONS FOR THE WEEK

1. At what point in time is it prohibited to eat *chametz* on the *erev Pesach*?
2. When is a person permitted to sell an item that does not belong to him/her?
3. What degree of *tum'ah* does a *sheretz* possess?

***NOTE**
ALL ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND
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ארץ ישראל היפה

NORTHERN ISRAEL

FROM KIBBUTZ DEGANIA TO SAFED • מקיבוץ דגניה לצפת

We resume our trip and drive to the Kinneret's southern tip to Kibbutz Degania, the first Kibbutz, and served as a blueprint for subsequent kibbutzim. During Israel's War of Independence, Degania Aleph, and its sister Kibbutz Degania Bet, played an instrumental role in stopping the Syrian advance. A small dam is located at Degania, which keeps the Kinneret's waters from flowing down into the Jordan River. It is expected that this dam will be opened in winter of 2020/21, as the Kinneret had gone from very low to nearly full — thanks to two extremely wet winters. Today, 550 people live on Degania.



Next, we stop at the cemetery of Kibbutz Kinneret, where many of the earlier Zionist pioneers from the area are buried, including the poetess Rachel, and songwriter Naomi Shemer (Jerusalem of Gold).

We continue along the shores of Kinneret until we arrive in Tiberias, founded as a Roman city in 20 CE. After the destruction of the Beit HaMikdash, Tiberias, which had not participated in the revolt against the Romans, became a center of Jewish learning. Significant parts of the Mishnah were written in Tiberias, where Rabbi Yehudah Hanssai lived. Rabbi Yochanan also lived in the city and is said to have compiled the Jerusalem Talmud there. Tiberias remained a center of Jewish learning for several generations.



While touring Tiberias, the Hamat Tiberias National Park, whose hot springs made the town popular, is a great place to visit. Tiberias is also home to the remains of a stunning mosaic from an ancient synagogue. Several



great Rabbis are buried in Tiberias — including the Rambam and Rabbi Meir Ba'al HaNes. If we have some extra time, we can swing over to one of Israel's best water parks, Aqua Kef.

We continue our trip heading further North to the town of Rosh Pina. Founded in 1882, Rosh Pina was one of the first towns established by modern Zionists. Today, 5,100 people live there.



Next, let's take the short ride up to Safed, a city that has existed since ancient times. After the Spanish expulsion, Safed became home to many of the better-known Jewish Kabbalists

— including Yosef Caro, who authored the Shulchan Arukh. Many of the old synagogues of Safed are still in use today. A stay to Safed should include visits to the Abuhav synagogue, named after Rabbi Isaac Abuhav, the Harari Synagogue, the Yosef Caro Synagogue, the Sephardic Synagogue of the Ari, and finally, the Beirav Synagogue, the oldest synagogue in Safed.



After our synagogue tours, we go to the highest place in the town, Safed's citadel, to view some ancient ruins. This week, we end our journey with a trip to Beit Hameiri, a museum dedicated to telling the history of Safed over the past two centuries.