

The Weekly Daf



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Week of 9-15 Sivan 5756 / 27 May-2 June 1996

Menachos 23-29

Rav Weinbach's insights, explanations and comments for the 7 pages of Talmud studied in the course of the worldwide Daf Yomi cycle

Showing Off the Showbreads

"You shall arrange them (the twelve show-breads)...on the pure table before Hashem." (Vayikra 24:6)

The designation "pure table," observed the sage Reish Lakish, implies that it is capable of contracting a state of impurity. But, he asks, how can any wooden vessel designed to always be stationary ever become impure?

The answer is that this table in the Sanctuary was actually moved from its place during the Festivals when Jews made their pilgrimage to the *Beis Hamikdash*. It was raised from its place and carried out to show the breads to the *olei regel* (pilgrims), who were told: "See how beloved you are before your G-d."

This love, explains Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi, was expressed in the miracle which Hashem made in regard to the showbreads by enabling them to remain as warm on the day they were removed from the table as they were when arranged on the table although it was the eighth day after being baked.

Tosefos points out that the term "warm" used here is in accordance with the opinion that the showbreads were baked on Shabbos and were still warm when arranged. According to the other opinions that they were baked on Erev Shabbos the miracle was that although they were nine days old they remained as soft when removed as when arranged.

Rashi in Chumash (Vayikra 24:10) cites the explanation of the sage Rabbi Berachia that the blasphemer used the showbread as a springboard for his irreverence. "It is the manner of a king to eat fresh bread every day, not cold bread nine days old!" The mention of cold rather than **hard** bread seems to favor the opinion that they were baked on Shabbos and became cold from staying so long on the table. But his reference to it being nine days old is an indication that he holds that they were baked before Shabbos and that the blasphemer was ridiculing the bread placed before the King as being both cold and stale.

Menachos 29a

Of Fruits and Fragrance

There are four species involved in fulfilling the mitzvah of taking the *lulav* during the Festival of Sukkos. Two of them bear fruit (the *lulav* and *esrog*) and two do not (the *hadass* and the *aravah*).

The two which bear fruit are dependent on the two which do not, and vice versa. A man cannot fulfill his obligation until he takes all four of them together.

This categorization is expanded upon in the Midrash (Vayikra Rabbah 30:12) which lists four classes of Jews corresponding to the four species:

The *esrog* has both taste and fragrance and symbolizes the Jews who have to their credit Torah learning and good deeds. The *lulav* has taste (dates grow on the palm tree) but no fragrance just like certain Jews who have Torah learning but lack good deeds. The *hadass* has fragrance but no taste like those Jews who have good deeds but lack Torah learning. Finally, the *aravah* has neither taste nor fragrance like those Jews who possess neither Torah learning nor good deeds.

What does Hashem do with such Jews? To eliminate them is unthinkable. So the Holy One, blessed be He, commands us to bind all the species together so that each of them will atone for the others.

It is interesting to note that in our Talmudic section the fragrant but fruitless *hadass* is placed in the same category as the totally barren *aravah* while in the Midrash the good deeds of the *hadass* people place them in one category with the *lulav* and *esrog*. It may be suggested that the Jew who has good deeds may sometimes have amongst him the support of Torah study which makes him a partner with the scholars whose learning he makes possible. In this manner the Jew described in our Gemara as a species which bears no fruit moves up into the company of those which do.

Menachos 27a

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