

The Weekly Daf



by Rav Mendel Weinbach - Dean, Ohr Somayach Institutions

Shabbos 135-141

Week of 17-23 Nissan 5758 / 13-19 April 1998
Rav Weinbach's insights, explanations and comments for the 7 pages of Talmud
studied in the course of the worldwide Daf Yomi cycle

A Blessing in Time

The long-awaited moment has come. The *mohel* has performed the *bris milah* and both he and the father of the circumcised child have made their blessings. Now it is time for the assembled guests to joyously burst forth with their own blessing for the child's future:

"Just as he entered the *bris*, so shall he enter into Torah, marriage and good deeds."

This is the text of the blessing as it appears in our gemara editions. It is also the form customarily used in the Ashkenazic community. In the Sephardic community the text, based on the ruling of the Beis Yosef, is directed towards the father: "Just as you brought him into the *bris* so may you bring him into Torah, marriage and good deeds."

Even though it would seem logical to thus directly bless the father rather than to offer an indirect blessing, the *Sifsei Kohen* (*Yoreh Deah* 265:3) provides an explanation for the Ashkenazic custom. Since there are situations in which the father is not alive or not present at the *bris*, thus rendering it impossible to offer him a direct blessing, it is preferable to have a standard, indirect text of a blessing which suits all occasions.

No matter if it is direct or indirect, the text of this blessing demands analysis in regard to the chronology it maps for the child's future. The common denominator of Torah, marriage and good deeds is that they, like *bris milah*, are all obligations which the father has in regard to his son (*Kiddushin* 29a). Torah study, our Sages point out, must precede marriage, and is therefore mentioned first.

But what about the good deeds of mitzvah performance?

Isn't the Bar Mitzvah age of thirteen the point where this is achieved by the father and should it therefore not come first? Rabbi David Avudraham reminds us that even though a boy becomes responsible for the fulfillment of mitzvos at the age of thirteen, he is not held accountable for Heavenly judgment until he is twenty. Since the ideal age for marriage is at age eighteen (*Avos* 5:21) — before one reaches the age of twenty (*Kiddushin* 29b) — we therefore express our wish that the little baby will reach this milestone in his life even before he reaches the age of Heavenly responsibility for good deeds.

Shabbos 137b

The Happy Heart

"Your brother Aharon, the levite, is going forth to meet you," said Hashem to Moshe when he ordered him to return to Egypt as the prophet who would initiate the process of the Exodus, "and he shall see you and rejoice in his heart." (*Shmos* 4:14)

As a reward for this nobility of heart, declares Rabbi Malai, Aharon merited to wear the *choshen mishpat* (breastplate of justice) upon his heart.

A bit of historical background will help us better understand the connection between Aharon's joy and his reward.

Aharon was a prophet long before his younger brother Moshe. This is indicated in the statement of Hashem's messenger to Aharon's descendant, the *Kohen Gadol* Eli, in which he reminds him that Hashem appeared to his ancestor Aharon back in Egypt (*Shmuel* I 2:77). (Aharon's prophecy is contained in *Yechezkel* 20:7-12). Moshe was hesitant to assume the role of prophet in place of his older brother lest he hurt his feelings, and therefore suggested that Hashem "send the one who had hitherto been sent" (*Shmos* 4:13). Hashem was angered by this hesitation and assured Moshe that Aharon would not bear the slightest grudge and would even rejoice in his younger brother's elevation.

This Divine anger found expression, says Rabbi Yossi, in Moshe losing the privilege of being a *kohen*. His brother Aharon, who is identified in the opening passage as a levite because of the status initially assigned to him, was now destined to be the *kohen* while Moshe would only be a levite. The *choshen mishpat* which is worn by the *Kohen Gadol* was the symbol of this elevated status.

Now the pieces come together. Aharon was so noble in spirit that he was capable of overcoming the natural temptation to envy a younger brother's superiority and could even wholeheartedly rejoice in seeing the prophetic role taken from him and given to Moshe. As a reward he was given the opportunity to rejoice when the exalted status of *kohen* was taken from Moshe and given to him.

This is what is meant by our Sages in the Midrash (*Shmos Rabbah* 3:17) when they state: "The heart which rejoiced in the greatness of his brother shall wear the *urim vetumim* (the *choshen mishpat*'s supernatural adornments)."

Shabbos 139a

Prepared by Ohr Somayach in Jerusalem, Israel

©1997 Ohr Somayach International - All rights reserved.

The Weekly Daf is available from several sources:

- World Wide Web: Our address is <http://www.ohr.org.il>
- Fax and Mail in Israel and US-MAIL in America. Send us a note requesting a subscription in Israel, or call 800-431-2272 in the US for details.
- E-Mail via InterNet. To subscribe, send the message "sub dafyomi {your full name}" to listproc@virtual.co.il

☎ 22 Shimon Hatzadik Street, POB 18103, Jerusalem Israel

☎ 972-2-581-0315

fax: 972-2-581-2890

✉ ohr@virtual.co.il

☎ 38 East 29th Street 8th floor, New York, NY 10016, USA

☎ 1-212-213-3100

fax: 1-212-213-8717

✉ RZCorlin@aol.com or estern@aol.com

☎ 613 Clark Avenue West, Thornhill, Ontario L4J 5V3, Canada

☎ 1-905-886-5730

fax: 1-905-886-6065

✉ Somayach@MSN.com

Dedication opportunities are available for The Weekly Daf — Please contact us for details.

Production Design: Lev Seltzer

This publication contains words of Torah. Please treat it with due respect. Do not let this land on a garbage heap.

Issue #218 - Shabbos 135-141

For the week of 17-23 Nissan 5758 / 13-19 April 1998 (Parshas Shemini in Israel)