



Volume 4. Issue 26

R' Chananya ben Akashya omer...

With the end of *masechet Makkot* we meet the *Mishnah* that is, by now, very well known to all. At the close of learning *Mishnah Yomit* each day, prior to the recital of *kadish d'rabbanan*, someone stands up and says, almost certainly by heart and at a fast pace, the following *Mishnah*:

R' Chananya ben Akashya says: *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* wished to confer merit (*le'zakot*) upon *Yisrael* and therefore gave them an abundance of *Torah* and *mitzvot* as it says: "*Hashem* desires for the sake of [*Yisrael's*] righteous, that the *Torah* be expanded and strengthened".

Why do we say this *Mishnah* and what does it teach us?

The *Rama* (54:3) writes that the recital of *kadish* must always be preceded with some praise (*tehilah*). The *Mishnah Berurah* (54:9) adds that a *kadish d'rabbanan* can also be recited after learning. He however continues, citing the *Magen Avraham*, that this is provided that it follows a subject of *Aggadah*, for this type of *kadish* was instituted to follow *Aggadah* (See *Sotah* 49a). He also explains that this is why the accepted custom is that after learning *Pirkei Avot* or *Bame Madlikin*, we recite either "*Amar R' Elazar amar R' Chanina...*" or our *Mishnah*. For this reason he cautions that our *Mishnah* must be recited after learning *Mishnayot* to enable the recitation of *kadish d'rabbanan*.

Granted that many of us can recite the *Mishnah* by heart, but what is it teaching us? A simple reading seems to suggest that in order to increase the reward, *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* gave us more *mitzvot*. The question that then stands out is, the more *mitzvot* also increase that chances of punishment in their transgression!

The *Rambam* in his commentary on the *Mishnah* explains that one of the fundamentals of faith is that if a person keeps one *mitzvah* properly with a true intent, purely *lishmah* out of love for *Hashem* then he merits

Olam HaBah. Due to the great abundance of *mitzvot*, it is quite likely that a person will fulfill at least one *mitzvah* properly

Alternatively, the *Tiferet Yisrael* explains that this *Mishnah* is understood in the context of the previous one where we learnt about reward for keeping the negative *mitzvot* that one would ordinarily be repulsed to transgress - for example, drinking blood. He explains that this *Mishnah* answers the obvious question: if we are repulsed by them anyway, why do we need a *mitzvah* to prohibit it? To this R' Chananya ben Akashya explains that *Hashem* wished to increase the reward. The *Maharsha* adds that the term "abundance" refers to precisely this idea. The *Mishnah* addresses why there are more negative commandment (365) than positive ones (248). It answers, to increase the reward for simply abstaining from transgressing them.

The *Sefer HaChinnuch* (16) however provides a different track. He first explains that a person is heavily influenced by his actions. Whatever a person preoccupies himself with during the day, irrespective of his personality, will begin to mould him into the barer of such activities. A person forced into an evil vocation will eventually become wicked himself. Similarly a person who strives with consistency in *Torah* and *mitzvot* will veer to the good. The *Sefer HaChinnuch* explains, the abundance of *Torah* and *mitzvot* was in order that we are completely preoccupied with them to become good and merit *chaye ud*. This has led some to opt for the other meaning of "*le'zakot*" – not "to confer merit", but rather "purify".

Consequently *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*, has heaped us with *mitzvot*; increasing the chance of a pure fulfillment, increasing the reward for passively keeping the negative commandment and finally, providing a positive preoccupation in which we "purify" ourselves. An apt closing to each day's learning.

David Bankier

Revision Questions

מכות ג' רי – ט"ז

- Explain the debate regarding the prohibition of tattooing? (ג' רי)
- If a *nazir* drinks wine for the entire day, when would he receive multiple sets of lashes? (ג' רז)
- What other two prohibitions that apply to a *nazir* share the same law? (ג' רח)
- When is one liable for multiple sets of lashes for wearing *shatnez*? (ג' רח)
- For which single action could one be liable for eight sets of lashes? (ג' ט)
- Describe the debate regarding the previous question. (ג' ט)
- How many lashes constitutes a “set” of lashes? (ג' י)
- According to *R' Yehuda* where was the extra blow administered? (ג' י)
- What is the limitation given when determining how many lashes a person can receive? (ג' יא)
- What is the law if it was determined that a person could receive a full amount, but once the lashes begun, it was clear the person could not bare the full amount? (ג' יא)
- If someone was to receive two sets of lashes, how was the evaluation of how much the person could bare determined? (Provide both scenarios.) (ג' יא)
- Describe how the person was prepared for lashes? (ג' יב)
- Describe the whip that was used for lashes? (ג' יב)
- How long was the whip? (ג' יג)
- Where was the offender struck? (ג' יג)
- What else occurred during lashes? (ג' יד)
- What is the law if the offender died during lashes? (ג' יד)
- When would the striker be sent to *galut*? (ג' יד)
- What is the law regarding *chayavei krittut* that receive lashes? (ג' ט"ו)
- What does *R' Shimon* learn from the *p'sukim* relating to *karet*? (ג' ט"ו)
- What does *R' Chananya ben Akashya* say and the end of the *masechet*? (ג' ט"ז)

שבועות א' : א' א'-ג'

- Which three areas of *halacha* are “*shtayim she'hein arba*”? Explain. (א' א')
- When is someone obligated to bring a *korban oleh ve'yored* for a *shevuah*? (א' ב')
- For the other cases, what is *mechaper*? (א' ב'-ג')

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Next Week's Mishnayot...

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | שבת קודש |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 25 th November ח' כסלו | 26 th November ט' כסלו | 27 th November י' כסלו | 28 th November יא' כסלו | 29 th November י"ב כסלו | 30 th November י"ג כסלו | 1 st December י"ד כסלו |
| Shevuot 1:4-5 | Shevuot 1:6-7 | Shevuot 2:1-2 | Shevuot 2:3-4 | Shevuot 2:5-3:1 | Shevuot 3:2-3 | Shevuot 3:4-5 |

