

Daf Review – Berachos 62

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- The Roman government decreed that the Jewish people were prohibited from studying Torah. Pappus ben Yehudah, upon finding R' Akiva teaching Torah publicly, asked R' Akiva if he was not afraid of the Romans. R' Akiva responded with a parable: a fox was walking alongside a river and saw fish fleeing. The fish explained that they were fleeing from nets trying to catch them. The fox suggested that the fish come to dry land and live peacefully with the fox. The fish responded that the fox was foolish – if the fish were afraid within the climate that sustains them, certainly they should be afraid to come to dry land and live in a climate that cannot sustain them. R' Akiva explained that if the Jews were afraid from the Romans when they learned Torah, which is our lifeblood, certainly they should be afraid if they stopped learning Torah!
- Within a few days, the Romans arrested R' Akiva and Pappus ben Yehudah and confined them to prison together. Pappus praised R' Akiva that he was arrested for learning Torah, whereas Pappus was arrested for “meaningless things.”
- When they took R' Akiva out to be executed, it was the time to recite *Krias Sh'ma*. They were combing R' Akiva's flesh with iron combs while R' Akiva accepted *Malchus Shamayim* upon himself while saying *Krias Sh'ma*. His students asked him, “Rebbe, even to this extent you can concentrate on *Sh'ma*?” R' Akiva responded, “All my days I was troubled whether I would have an opportunity to fulfill accepting Hashem's kingship even if He takes my soul, and now I should not fulfill it?” R' Akiva drew out the word “*Echad*” in *Sh'ma* as his soul left him. A *bas kol* emanated and said, “Fortunate are you R' Akiva that your soul left you while saying ‘*Echad*.’”
- The angels questioned Hashem, “Is this Torah and its reward?” Hashem responded, “The portion of *tzadikkim* is in *Olam Haba*.” A *bas kol* proclaimed, “Praiseworthy are you R' Akiva for you are ready for *Olam Haba*.”
- The prohibition of lightheadness opposite the *Kodesh Hakodoshim* only applies from within Mount Tzofim, if one can see the *Beis Hamikdash* (BH”M), if there is no wall separating, and when the BH”M stands.
- Varying opinions in two Braisos regarding defecating opposite the BH”M:
 - Tanna Kama: In Judea and Galil, one cannot defecate facing the BH”M.
 - R' Yosi: only prohibited if one can see the BH”M, there is no wall separating, and when the BH”M stands.
 - Chachachim: agree with Tanna Kama, but only regarding areas directly opposite the BH”M.
 - R' Akiva: one cannot face the BH”M even outside Eretz Yisroel.
- R' Akiva learned from R' Yehoshua in the bathroom that: (1) we do not defecate facing east-west; (2) we do not expose ourselves while standing; (3) we wipe with the left hand, and not the right hand. R' Akiva followed his rebbe into the bathroom to learn his Torah-based bathroom practices.
- Reasons for wiping with left hand only: (1) because Hashem gave us the Torah with His right hand; (2) because the right hand is used for eating; (3) because the right hand ties one's *tefillin*; (4) because one uses the right hand to point at the trup.
- One who is modest in the bathroom (both in not exposing himself unnecessarily and not speaking) is saved from snakes, scorpions, and demons.
- One should be modest while defecating at night just as by day, even though he cannot be seen.
- One should defecate and urinate when the urge arises so as not to become ill.