

The Weekly Daf



by Rav Mendel Weinbach - Dean, Ohr Somayach Institutions

Rosh Hashana 30 - 36

Week of 21 - 27 Av 5759 / 3 - 9 August 1999
Rav Weinbach's insights, explanations and comments for the 7 pages of Talmud studied in the course of the worldwide Daf Yomi cycle

Shoeless in the Synagogue

Why do kohanim remove their shoes before ascending the duchan platform to bless the congregation?

The obligation to remove their shoes is one of the nine decrees made by Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai listed in our gemara. The reason for this particular decree is not mentioned here, but Rashi refers us to another source, Mesechta Sotah 40a.

The initial assumption of that gemara is that kohanim were required to remove their shoes out of respect for the congregation. Since the kohen is required to raise his arms when blessing the congregation, his clothes may be pulled upwards to expose his muddy shoes to the congregation. This approach is rejected, however, in favor of one which focuses on consideration for the kohen rather than for the congregants.

Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai was concerned that the laces on a kohen's shoe may snap on his way to the platform. Fearful that the congregation will laugh at his untied shoe, he may be tempted to sit down and improvise some form of shoe-tying while his fellow kohanim are saying the blessing. The onlookers, unaware of his true reason for sitting out the blessing, may jump to the conclusion that the kohen has discovered a blemish on his lineage which disqualifies him from the role of blesser. To save kohanim from being victims of such false suspicions, it was decreed that they should remove their shoes before pronouncing their blessings.

In order to ensure that this decree would be honored without confusion, the Sages ruled that it apply even to shoes which have no laces.

Tosefot points out an interesting sidelight of this gemara. Even though it was forbidden to enter the Temple Mount while wearing shoes, this does not apply to a synagogue, as we see from the fact that the kohen may wear shoes until the time of the blessing.

The reason wearing shoes is not considered a lack of respect for the synagogue, while using the synagogue as a shortcut is forbidden for that reason, is explained by the Sage Rava (Mesechta Brachot 63a). A beit kneset (synagogue) is called bayit (home) and he must accord it the dignity he expects in his own home. No one wants to see his neighbor use his home as a shortcut; but certainly he has no objection to entering the house with his shoes on.

Rosh Hashana 31b

Prepared by Ohr Somayach in Jerusalem, Israel

©1999 Ohr Somayach International - All rights reserved.

The Weekly Daf is available from several sources:

- World Wide Web: Our address is <http://www.ohrnet.org>
- E-Mail via InterNet. To subscribe, send the message "sub dafyomi (your full name)" to listproc@vjlists.com

☎ 22 Shimon Hatzadik Street, POB 18103, Jerusalem Israel

☎ 972-2-581-0315

fax: 972-2-581-2890

☒ info@ohr.org.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: Eli Ballon

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

Issue #286 - Rosh Hashana 30 - 36

For the week of 21 - 27 Av 5759 / 3 - 9 August 1999 (Parshat Re'eh)

A Confused Satan

On Rosh Hashana we sound the shofar both before we stand for the mussaf service and again when the mussaf is repeated by the chazan. (In some communities it is also sounded during the silent mussaf prayer).

The pattern for sounding the shofar during mussaf calls for ten shofar sounds at the conclusion of each one of the three intermediate blessings — malchuyot (kingship), zichronot (remembrance) and shofarot. Each of these blessings, says the mishna, must contain at least ten passages from the Torah, Prophets and Writings which deal with that concept.

The Sage Rabbah condenses an earlier gemara (16a) which provides an explanation both for this pattern of blessings in mussaf, and for the need to sound the shofar both before and during mussaf even though the Torah requires it only once.

Rabbi Akiva points out that Hashem commanded us to bring an omer offering from barley flour on Pesach in order that Hashem may bless the grain in our fields; an offering of two loaves from wheat flour on Shavuot in order that He may bless our wheat and fruits; and a libation of water on the altar on Succot in order that He should bless the year's rainfall. And on Rosh Hashana, Hashem invites us to say before Him the passages and blessing relating to kingship in order to declare our allegiance to Him as our ruler, and the passages and blessing relating to Hashem's remembering His creatures in order that we may be remembered for good. And how do we achieve this? Through the shofar — its sound, its passages and its blessing.

If the shofar is the channel for our merits to soar upward to the throne of heavenly judgment, it also serves another purpose. Rabbi Yitzchak states that the reason for blowing the shofar both before and during mussaf is to confuse Satan. Rashi's explanation of this is that Satan's attempts to agitate against Israel are thwarted when he sees how much Jews love mitzvot such that they even sound the shofar twice. Tosefot draws on a section of the Jerusalem Talmud to explain that Satan becomes somewhat alarmed by the first sound of the shofar. When he hears it a second time, he so panics at the thought that this may be the sound of the "great shofar" (Yishayahu 27:17) of the hereafter which will signal the end of his deadly career (ibid. 25:8) that he abandons any effort to agitate.

A much simpler explanation is offered by Rabbeinu Nissim (Ran). Our Sages tell us that the "evil inclination," Satan and the Angel of Death are one and the same. Incitement breeds agitation and results in execution. Satan, in the context of Rabbi Yitzchak's statement, is the evil inclination. "If a shofar is sounded in a city," says the Prophet Amos (3:6) "shall not its inhabitants tremble with fear?" The sound of the shofar confuses Satan by instilling in the Jew who hears it a fear of Heaven which subdues the sinful passions the evil inclination tries to arouse, and thus gains for Jewry a good year.

Rosh Hashana 34b

Prepared by Ohr Somayach in Jerusalem, Israel

©1999 Ohr Somayach International - All rights reserved.

The Weekly Daf is available from several sources:

- World Wide Web: Our address is <http://www.ohrnet.org>
- E-Mail via InterNet. To subscribe, send the message "sub dafyomi {your full name}" to listproc@vjlists.com

☎ 22 Shimon Hatzadik Street, POB 18103, Jerusalem Israel

☎ 972-2-581-0315

☎ 972-2-581-2890

☎ info@ohr.org.il

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

☎ 1-212-213-3100

☎ 1-212-213-8717

☎ RZCorlin@aol.com or estern@Aol.com

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

☎ 1-905-886-5730

☎ 1-905-886-6065

☎ Somayach@MSN.com

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

Production Design: Eli Ballon

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

Issue #286 - Rosh Hashana 30 - 36

For the week of 21 - 27 Av 5759 / 3 - 9 August 1999 (Parshat Re'eh)