

Inside the Daf



"Too bad such beautiful wisdom is in such an ugly container," Caesar's daughter said to רבי יהושע בן חנניה, meaning that the sage was very wise but was also ugly. Not the nicest thing to say. But רבי יהושע בן חנניה took it in stride.

"Does your father keep wine in ugly earthenware containers?" he asked Caesar's daughter.

"What other container would he use?" she asked the sage. In

those days, everyone stored wine in earthenware vessels.

"Important people like you should use gold and silver!" רבי יהושע בן חנניה said.

Caesar's daughter told her father the sage's advice and he transferred his wine from the earthenware containers into gold and silver ones. In time, the wine soured.

"Who gave you this advice?" the king demanded of his daughter.

When she told him it was רבי יהושע בן חנניה, Caesar summoned him and asked why he had given his daughter such awful advice.

"I spoke to her," said רבי יהושע בן חנניה, "the way she spoke to me." Just as wine keeps best in earthenware containers, so too Torah wisdom keeps best in plain looking people.

"But there are also good-looking people who are Torah scholars!" Caesar's daughter insisted.

"Yes," replied רבי יהושע בן חנניה, "but if people did not admire their good looks they would be even *better* scholars. Torah knowledge is remembered by people of great humility. If someone is flattered because of their attractive appearance, it will be difficult for him to remain humble. He will come to forget his learning since he will not humble himself to review his studies."



Did You Know...

רבי תנחום בן חזקוני says that rain does not fall unless the sins of the Jewish people have been forgiven.

Humility & Torah

Torah study is not like other subjects; it requires great humility to learn. רבי חנינא notes that the Torah is compared to water. Just like water flows from higher ground to lower ground, so too anyone seeking to learn Torah must place himself on "lower ground" by being very humble.

One of the signs of a humble person is one who is willing to learn even from someone who is younger than him. A humble person does not feel it is "beneath him" to learn from someone more inexperienced than he is. רב נחמן בר יצחק says, for this reason, the Torah is similar to branches of a tree. Just like small branches can catch fire and light larger branches on fire, so too, young Torah scholars can sharpen the minds of older Torah scholars.

The value of learning from someone younger than oneself is captured in a statement of רבי חנינא: "I have learned a lot from my teachers and even more from my friends – but from my students I have learned the most of all!"



A Moment

At the end of every day, Rabbi Hoffman would say 'thank you' to his class. One day a student asked him why.

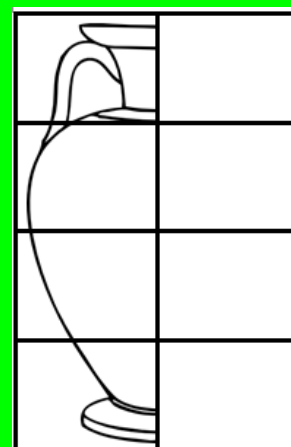
"We learn in today's גמרא that רבי חנינא says he learned more from his students than from his teachers. This can be because teaching causes one to remember his own learning more. So, I owe you all a big thank you for helping me remember my studies!"

(ספר חסידים, תתקמו)

Games

FINISH IT OFF!

Finish the other half of the wine vessel



תענית דף ז' - Review Questions

1. What did רבי יהושע בן חנינא tell Caesar's daughter to do?

2. Rain falls only once what has happened?

3. Why is Torah compared to water?
