

Tractate Brachos

R' Zerika said in the name of R' Ami, who said in the name of R' Yehoshua ben Levi: One may not say in the presence of the deceased anything except matters that pertain to the deceased. R' Abba bar Kahana said: This ruling was said only in regard to Torah matters, but worldly matters, there is no objection. [The halacha: as some may already know, is that we are not allowed to discuss mitzvot in a cemetery, and a man must hide his tzitzit... just for the record. The point in this Gamorah is based on a verse in the book of Proverbs 17:5 which states, One who mocks a pauper insults his Maker. R' Abba bar Kahana is of the opinion that one may not speak about mitzvot in front of the dead, due to the fact that they (the dead) no longer are able to perform them. However, other topics may be discussed. Rashi: about worldly matters one may discuss in front of the deceased. The fact that the dead cannot partake of such discussions is of no matter to him.] **There are those who say [that it is as this.] R' Abba bar Kahana said, This was said even with regard to words of Torah and certainly worldly matters.** [In other words, the Gamorah says that he may have been quoted wrongly. This is because they felt that the people attending the funeral should give kavod (honour) to the dead. If they were to discuss other matters it would distress the dead person. The Gamorah will now continue on the topic of King David.]

And did David arise at midnight? He was awake from evening! [Rashi: From the beginning of the night.] **As it is written; I arose at neshef (evening) and I cried out.** [Here we have a kashia. One verse says that David arose at midnight, while another states that he was awake from the beginning of the evening. At neshef. Now we must determine if neshef really means evening.] **And from where [do we learn] that neshef means evening? For it is written, At neshef, as the daylight wanes, in the blackness of night and darkness.** [Book of Proverbs. Now we will see the other verse. The one about mid night.] **Rav Oshaya said in the name of R' Acha, This is what the verse means, Midnight never passed me asleep.** [In other words, he was already awake and therefore, he would not sleep through midnight. David was awake at midnight, it does not mean that he awoke at midnight.] **R' Zeira said, Until midnight he would doze like a horse, and then he would make himself as strong as a lion.** [A horse never really falls into a deep sleep. It only takes short naps, constantly awakening. Rashi: When David studied at night, he would nap and then awake. He would do this repeatedly. There are various opinions as to how long a horse nap is. Some say 3.5 min. others say around 30 min. This is discussed in another Gamorah.]

Rav Ashi said, Until midnight he would be involved with words of Torah, then he would occupy himself with singing and praises. Or Tehillim (psalms). [Rashi: The verse which says that he arose at midnight does not mean that he slept until then. It means that he arose from his studies and began new studies (praises). This we see from the verse, At midnight I will arise to thank You.] **And does neshef mean evening? But neshef means morning, as it is written, David smote them from the neshef until the evening of the next day.** [Here the Gamorah is bringing up another verse from Tanach. And this seems to imply that neshef means morning.] **No! From the evening (neshef) until the next evening.** [But the Gamorah will have to analyse it's answer.] **If so, it should have been written, From the neshef until the neshef, or from the evening until the evening.** [Good point! The very fact that it uses two different terms, seems to allude to two different times.] **Rather, said Rava: There are two neshef, [two meanings for this word,] night departs and day arrives, this is neshef. Also, day departs and night arrives. This is neshef.** [This word, neshef, lit. means to jump away - according to Rashi. So it alludes to when darkness and light separate. Therefore, the last verse, David smote them from the neshef until the evening, which seems to use the word to explain morning, does not contradict the other verse mentioned, I arose at neshef and I cried out. Here it means evening.]