

Interview with Rabbi Zev Dickstein, Editor of Al Hadaf.

Q. What is Al Hadaf?

A bi-weekly daf yomi journal that elaborates on a topic from each day's daf adding zest to the daily daf study. The essays cover advanced topics discussed by the Meforshim and Poskim with a view towards clarity and brevity.

Q. Who is AH for?

Primarily for day yomi learners seeking additional understanding and insights on the daf. However, due to its easy readability we have many subscribers who enjoy studying from Al Hadaf as a short daily limud program. Many daf shiurim use it a source for lively discussion in the shiur, and some Rabbis use it as a source for material in their weekly lectures. Due to its relatively inexpensive cost

Q. How did it begin?

Six years ago, following the excitement generated by the last daf yomi siyum, a group of Kollel avreichim (in Monsey) hit upon this idea. They realized that many daf yomi learners lack the time or the know-how to delve into the relevant topics of the daf and thus they feel a lack of "geshmack" and satisfaction in their study. Al Hadaf was created to fill this gap.

Q. Do you feel that you succeeded?

Beyond our wildest imagination. Not only are serious day yomi learners and maggidei shiur using it, we have many subscribers with limited background who find the Gemara too difficult, but yet use AL HADAF to get acquainted with the concepts of the Gemara. Many subscribers are so hooked on Al Hadaf, that they eagerly await each issue. Many read the entire two week issue as soon as it arrives in order to get some background on the upcoming daffim.

Q. Has the Al Hadaf changed its format over the years?

Basically not, however, we have fine tuned it in response to comments received over the years. For example, those with limited background asked that more definitions be included. Yet on the other hand, talmidei chachamim requested additional sources in the footnotes. The diversity of backgrounds and scholarship in our readers is remarkable and very encouraging.

Q. Where do you send it?

All over the globe. Although most of our subscribers are from USA, we have Canadian, English, Australian and Israelis as well. We even had subscription requests from Italy, France and Mexico.

At one point we had a group of subscribers in Boca Raton FL who were not learned enough to learn the daily daf, but instead studied Al Hadaf each day in a group.

Q. Can one substitute attending a daf shiur by reading AL Hadaf?

By no means! Al Hadaf does not replace studying the daf from the Gemara and working out the p'shat to the best of one's ability. It is only meant to complement daf study. However, some do find that when they miss a few shiurim (and can not make up the Gemara) they use Al Hadaf to quickly get acquainted with the missing sugyos/material. Also, some who can not learn daf yomi, for whatever reason, feel that they are still in touch with the daf when they read Al Hadaf. We hope that reading Al Hadaf will eventually encourage its reader to study the Gemara and mefarshim from the original source.