

Al Hadaf

the ideal companion for daf yomi learners

Daf HaYomi has Boruch Hashem achieved remarkable success in recent years. The last *Siyum HaShas* held at New York's Madison Square Garden and other arenas nationwide was attended by about seventy thousand people. In addition there were many other *siyum* celebrations attended by many thousands in every corner of the globe. This event helped spark a veritable *daf yomi* fire in Jewish communities of diverse orientation and background.

Several years ago a plan was conceived for augmenting the wave of *daf yomi* excitement. It was reasoned that, given the necessary time and skills, many *daf yomi* students would be interested in delving more deeply into topics from the *daf*. Further, there was a definite need to add a sense of *geshmack* to the customarily brisk reading of the daily *daf*. The consensus was that an English language Torah journal adding *iyun hatorah* to the *daf yomi* seder was an ideal medium for enhancing *limud gemara* throughout the world.

a plan to infuse a sense of "geshmack" to the daf yomi seder

At that time Rabbi Zev Dickstein and several of his colleagues from a Kollel in Monsey met with several Torah leaders and askanim from Agudath Israel to discuss the proposed journal. Their response - a most enthusiastic one - centered on the importance of a format that would serve the needs of readers at various levels of Talmudic accomplishment.

The product of their efforts, *Al HaDaf*, is a bi-weekly English language journal providing essays which analyze one or two topics from every *daf*. Each essay is self-contained and is preceded by all necessary background information making it readily understandable even to one who did not grasp the intricacies of the *daf*. Advanced topics addressed by *Rishonim*, *Acharonim* and *Poskim* are presented with a view towards clarity and brevity. For those interested in further study, scholarly footnotes in Hebrew are included.

The uniqueness of *Al HaDaf* is that it serves several purposes. While some readers use it as an introduction and/or review for key concepts and recurring topics of each Mesechta, others use it as a springboard for discussion and deeper study. *Al Hadaf* functions as both a learning aid and outreach vehicle encouraging broader Torah study and understanding. Each issue is designed to familiarize the reader with key *halachic* issues and the intricacies of *p'shat and lomdus*, thus serving to enhance the *daf yomi* seder with an *iyun hatorah* component.

Al Hadaf reaches thousands of daf yomi participants worldwide

Al HaDaf has been extremely well received by all segments of the Torah community. The journal is distributed throughout North America and Europe, and as far away as Israel and Australia. Subscriptions are rapidly approaching the two thousand mark.

Although *Al Hadaf* was initially conceived as a supplement to *daf yomi* study, the editors have discovered that it appeals to many who are not even participating in *daf yomi* and enjoy studying *Al Hadaf* as a stimulating daily *limud* program. Rabbi Dickstein readily admits that this phenomenon was entirely unanticipated and he attributes it to the skill of the writers in selecting interesting and relevant topics, and introducing them in a remarkably clear and concise presentation.

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Rabbi Dickstein continuously expresses amazement at the diverse backgrounds of the *Al Hadaf* readers. Many prominent *maggidei shiur* and learned rabbis use *Al HaDaf* for a quick overview of the essential commentaries on the daf, and for the wide range of annotated sources that it provides. Some use it as a source for lively discussions in their *shiurim*. Laymen find it to be a helpful introduction and/or review of the daf, as well as an excellent supplement to their daf shiur, ideal for the commute to and from work. Former yeshiva students turn to *Al HaDaf* to reacquaint themselves with *sugyos* and *lomdus* studied in Yeshiva.

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There has also been subscription orders from many individuals who have been inspired to join daf yomi by the last siyum haShas but who lack the skills to actually participate in a conventional daf yomi seder. As an alternative they turn to *Al Hadaf* as a means of getting acquainted with various Gemara inyanim from the daf yomi. One reader from Boston, with a Hebrew day school background, called to say that reading *Al Hadaf* has proven to him how interesting and stimulating Talmud study can be. The strong yearning for authentic Torah study exhibited by such individuals who have never experienced a true Torah education is a phenomenon that continues to astound.

"a strong yearning for authentic Torah study is exhibited by many who have never experienced a Torah education."

Al Hadaf's goal is to encourage its readers to study the daf in depth and learn the many commentaries from their original sources. However, considering the time constraints of a typical person today, *Al Hadaf* provides a valuable service and is a useful learning tool for those

lacking the luxury of time or the ability to study the *daf* in depth.

[Editors note: Subscriptions to *Al Hadaf* are available for \$40 by regular USA mail (for approx. 24 sixteen-page issues), \$25 by e-mail. Special limited time offer: With each new Al Hadaf subscription receive Tuvia's newly published Gemara Berachos Menukad (tzuras Hadaf with Nekudos for Gemara Rashi and Tosfos, beautiful clear print). Please write to: AL HADAF, POB 791, Monsey NY 10952. E-Mail: cong_al_hadaf@yahoo.com For more information call 1-877-7 AL-HADAF or 845-356-9114, or visit them on the web at McMaven.com/alhadaf.]