

The Weekly Daf



by Rav Mendel Weinbach - Dean, Ohr Somayach Institutions

Bechoros 25-31

Week of 26 Shevat-2 Adar 1 5757 / 3-9 February 1997
Rav Weinbach's insights, explanations and comments for the 7 pages of Talmud
studied in the course of the worldwide Daf Yomi cycle

Above Suspicion

The male first born of a kosher animal is a *bechor* which must be given to the *kohen* who offers it as a sacrifice and eats its flesh. If this *bechor* has a blemish which disqualifies it from being a sacrifice, the *kohen* is relieved from the responsibility of sacrifice, and can slaughter it and eat its flesh as he would any other non-sacrificial animal.

In order to determine whether the *bechor* indeed has such a blemish, the *kohen* would have to submit it for examination to a rabbinical expert, who would rule whether the condition was just a temporary one and non-disqualifying, or a permanent, disqualifying one. This expert was not permitted to receive payment for his inspection, lest he be influenced to rule in the *kohen's* behalf, and if he did accept such payment the *kohen* could not slaughter it as a non-sacrificial animal because of this suspicion.

The only exception made was in the case of an expert who was on the same spiritual level as Eyla of Yavneh, who was considered too saintly to be suspect of such influence. The Sages permitted him to accept a fee for his inspection, but insisted that it be paid to him whether he ruled the animal to be qualified as a sacrifice or disqualified.

Although the *kohen* paying the fee only benefited from a ruling of disqualification, the Sages insisted that the fee be paid in all cases, so that people should not suspect Eyla of ruling in favor of the *kohen* in order to collect his fee. But even Eyla was not entitled to a fee if the *kohen* brought the same animal to him another time for an inspection, because it might arouse suspicion that his initial ruling that the animal was still qualified to be a sacrifice was motivated by an interest in collecting a fee on a subsequent visit. Tosefos adds that there was also no suspicion that a ruling disqualifying the animal was influenced by his desire to avoid subsequent unprofitable inspections, because no one would suspect him of permitting something forbidden for such a reason.

Bechoros 29a

The Lips that Move

When Rabbi Sheshes learned that his attendant, Rabbi Eidi, stated in the Yeshiva some words of Torah he had heard from him, without quoting them in his name, he was upset.

The reason for Rabbi Sheshes's desire to be quoted is based on an explanation offered by Rabbi Yehuda in the name of Rav of the request made by King David (*Tehillim* 61:5) "May I dwell in Your tent in the worlds."

Can a man simultaneously live in both this world and the World to Come? David's prayer was that words of Torah should be repeated in his name after his death, for when the teachings of a deceased Torah sage are repeated in his name, his lips move in the grave.

Rashi explains that this movement of the lips is considered as a virtual experience of life, and thus achieves the goal of living in both worlds at the same time. Some of the classical commentaries are reluctant to explain this movement of a bodily part in the grave in literal fashion and prefer to relate to it as a purely spiritual experience of the soul.

Maharsha, however, offers an approach allowing for literal interpretation of this statement. Human speech is soul energy generated by bodily organs. Virtuous speech, such as words of Torah, creates a spiritual energy. When those words are repeated in the name of their originator, this energy activates its creators in both worlds — the soul in the World to Come and the organs of speech in this world, even through they are in the grave.

A passage in *Shir Hashirim* (7:10) is cited, which compares the Torah scholar to a pit of ripened grapes about to be pressed for wine. Just as placing a finger on such grapes immediately causes wine to flow from them, so do the lips of the Torah scholar lying in his grave begin to move when the words of Torah quoted in his name activate them.

Bechoros 31b

Prepared by Ohr Somayach in Jerusalem, Israel

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Production Design: Lev Seltzer

Issue #156 - Bechoros 25-31

For the week of 26 Shevat-2 Adar 1 5757 / 3-9 February 1997 (Parshas Mishpatim)