

The Weekly Daf



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Makkos 23 - Shavuos 6

Week of 27 Av-3 Elul 5755 / 23-29 August 1995
Rav Weinbach's insights, explanations and comments for the 7 pages of Talmud studied in the course of the worldwide Daf Yomi cycle

Truth of the Heart

"He speaks truth in his heart" is the tribute which King David pays to the truly righteous man. Rabbi Safra is singled out by the Talmud as the personification of this virtue.

The story of Rabbi Safra's exemplary honesty is related by Rav Achai Gaon:

Rabbi Safra had an item for sale and a customer arrived while he was in the midst of reciting the Shema. The customer quoted the price he was offering but the sage made no reply since no interruption was halachically permitted. Assuming the lack of response as an indication that the price was not right the customer raised his offer. When Rabbi Safra finally completed the Shema he told the customer to take the item for the first price he quoted because in his heart he had already consented to sell at that price and he refused to exploit the error of the buyer.



Makkos 24a

Is There a Jew Who Has Never Learned?

The Torah prescribes the atonement of a *chatoss* sin offering for one who involuntarily enters the Beis Hamikdash in a state of impurity. This is limited, however, to one who was initially aware of the impurity and also realized at a later point that he entered in such a state but had forgotten about it at the time of entry. According to the Sage Rebbie (Rabbi Yehuda Hanassi) this initial awareness need not consist of more than having once learned in school that touching a contaminating object makes one impure even though he fails to make the connection at the time of contact and actually realize that he is impure.

If so, asked Rabbi Papa, **how is it possible to have the case of no initial awareness mentioned in the Mishnah?** Has not every Jew once learned in school something so elementary that he becomes impure when he touches a contaminating object?

This is possible, responded the Sage Abaye, if a Jewish child was taken captive by gentiles and never had an opportunity to learn even the basic laws of the Torah.

(We leave to the reader's imagination what sort of answer to Rabbi Papa's question could have been supplied by contemporary Jewish society - Ed.)

Shavuos 5a

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