Zevachim 16-22

The Weekly Daf

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Rav Weinbach’s insights, explanations and comments for the 7 pages of Talmud studied in the course of the worldwide Daf Yomi cycle.

The Kohen’s Tefillin

The Rule: A kohen must wear the garments prescribed by Torah Law while he is performing any service in the Beis Hamikdash. There can be nothing obstructing contact of these garments with his body and no additions garments may be worn.

The Question: What about wearing tefillin while he is wearing these garments for the purpose of the service? Tefillin can be viewed as an integral part of his body because of his obligation to wear them or they can be looked upon as a foreign element which either serves as a forbidden obstruction or addition.

The Answer: Tefillin cannot be worn on the arm beneath the shirt of the kohen but can be worn on the head. Even the Kohen Gadol who wore a tzitz headband around his forehead in addition to the headgear atop his head had a space between the two where the tefillin could be placed.

The Problem: It is easily understandable that the tefillin on the exposed part of the head do not constitute an obstruction as do the tefillin on the covered arm. But why is there not a problem of these tefillin constituting a forbidden additional garment?

The Resolution: Something can be considered a garment only if it is worn on a part of the body which it is customary to cover with a garment. This therefore applies to the arm but not to that part of the head on which the tefillin are placed.

Two Types of Orail

A kohen who is an orail - one who is uncircumcised - is ineligible for performing the service in the Beis Hamikdash.

When the Prophet Yechezkel recorded this ban he spoke of two types of orail - the uncircumcised heart of one who has estranged himself from Hashem through his sinning and the uncircumcised flesh of one who has been exempted from a bris mila because two of his brothers died as a result of circumcision.

Why was it necessary to record both types of orail - couldn’t we have deduced the ineligibility of one from the other? No, says the Talmud. Had only the orail of uncircumcised flesh been mentioned we would have assumed that it is the physical ugliness of the foreskin on a Jewish body which disqualifies the kohen - something inapplicable to the religious traitor. Had only the orail of uncircumcised heart been mentioned we would have interpreted his disqualification as the result of his heart not being loyal to Heaven - something inapplicable to the other orail.

It was therefore necessary to explicitly record that either type of orail is unfit to perform the sacred service.

Zevachim 19a-b

Zevachim 22b