

The Weekly Daf



by Rav Mendel Weinbach - Dean, Ohr Somayach Institutions

Zevachim 37-43

Week of 22-28 Shevat 5756 / 12-18 February 1996

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

This issue is dedicated to the memories of Moshe Ben Yakov Baruch (Michael Leigh) Z'L 22nd Shevat and Yetta Freida Bat Avraham Gutman (Nettie Leigh) Z'L 26th Shevat

The Subtle Differences

In Parshas Vayikra two sacrifices are mentioned, one after the other, which come for different sins but are identical in regard to the animal offered and the rituals performed. The first is the bullock brought by the Kohen Gadol as a sin offering when in ignorance he gave sanction to something which the Torah prohibits under penalty of being cut off prematurely from life and then personally following his misguided ruling. The second is the bullock brought by the community when a majority of the nation has committed a sin of such a nature as a result of a ruling made in ignorance by the Sanhedrin.

Two subtle differences, however, can be detected in the Torah account of the service prescribed for these two sacrifices. In the case of the Kohen Gadol the Torah is explicit about all the fats to be burned upon the altar, listing "appendage of the liver with the kidneys" while in regard to the communal sacrifice there is only a general statement about "all its fat." The blood sprinkled seven times in the case of the Kohen Gadol is described as being applied to "the sacred curtain" while the blood of the communal sacrifice is applied to just "the curtain."

The explanation offered by Rabbi Yishmael (as interpreted by Maharsha in dissension from Rashi's commentary) is that the Kohen is compared to the favorite of the king whom he has been chosen to serve. Just as a human king who becomes angry with his favorite subject strives to minimize his guilt so does Hashem spell out the details of the Kohen Gadol's sacrifice to stress the magnificence of his atonement to reduce his guilt. And just as a human king who has been betrayed by a majority of his army that army can no longer enjoy the status of royalty so does the sin of a majority of the nation cause it to lose its sanctity while the Kohen Gadol, the King's favorite, retains his sanctity even after sinning.

Zevachim 41b

A Word And A World

How do we know that the Tefillin we are commanded to wear on our arms and heads must contain **four** chapters from the Torah?

Rabbi Akiva analyzed the word "*totafot*" which the Torah instructs us to place "between your eyes." He explained that this unusual word is actually a combination of two words from different languages. In the Katfi tongue "*tot*" means two and in the Afrike language "*fof*" means two so that the two words add up to the number four.

How do words from foreign languages crop up in the Torah which is written in the Holy Tongue?

The answer lies in the Torah account of the Tower of Babel which begins with the passage (Bereishis 11:1) "The whole earth was of one language" which our Sages tell was the Holy Tongue of Hebrew. Even when Hashem confounded their language by introducing so many different tongues in order to disperse them some traces of Hebrew remained in the new languages. We therefore find our Sages turning to foreign languages (another example is the word "hadar" used by the Torah for the esrog because it requires so much "hydra" - Greek for water - to nourish its growth) to reveal the meaning of an unusual word. The similarity of a foreign word to the mysterious Hebrew word is an indication that it is a survivor of that nation's original use of Hebrew.

Zevachim 37b

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