

The Weekly Daf



by Rav Mendel Weinbach - Dean, Ohr Somayach Institutions

Week of 20-26 Adar 5756 / 11-17 March 1996

Zevachim 65-71

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 in memory of R' Avraham Yitzchak ben Yaakov zt'l and Rachel bas Nassen Nota z'l by their family

Fowl, Fingernail and Fire

In offering a fowl as a sacrifice the *kohen* slaughters it through the process of *melikah* - penetrating the back of the neck with a sharp thumbnail and slashing the trachea and esophagus.

How do we know that a knife is not required for slaughtering the fowl sacrifice as it is for an animal sacrifice? After all, in regard to an animal there is no requirement that a *kohen* be the slaughterer, and still the Torah insists on a knife being used. In the case of fowl, where the Torah **does** insist on a *kohen*, it would seem to make sense that a knife must certainly be used.

Rabbi Akiva points out that the Torah states (*Vayikra* 1:15): "And the *kohen* shall bring it (the fowl) to the altar and remove its head through *melikah*." It does not make any sense, says Rabbi Akiva, that a non-*kohen* should be performing any sacred service at the altar, so it is not necessary to stress that a *kohen* does it. The message communicated, concludes the sage, is that this *melikah* must be done with the body of the *kohen* (his thumbnail), and not with a knife.

A similar situation arises in *Mesechta Yoma* (45a) where Rabbi Shimon deduces that the kindling wood for making the fire on the altar must be ignited on the altar itself from the fact that the Torah commands the *kohanim* to place the fire on the altar. Since there is no reason to assume that a non-*kohen* could approach that altar, this insistence on a *kohen* placing the fire on the altar must come to eliminate kindling the wood below the altar and carrying it up to the altar while it is burning.

Rabbi Yehuda, however, disagrees with this approach in *Mesechta Yoma* and the question arises as to whether he accepts Rabbi Akiva's approach in our own Gemara. Tosefos explain that Rabbi Yehuda will go along with Rabbi Akiva's approach and disagrees with Rabbi Shimon only in Yoma because he argues that had the Torah not specified that a *kohen* must place the fire on the altar we would have concluded that a non-*kohen* would be eligible to light the fire on the altar even without being on the altar itself - by standing on the floor below and using a bellows to get the fire on the altar started.

Zevachim 65a

Seven Sounds of Music

Reference is made to a *mishnah* in *Mesechta Kinnim* (3:6) in which Rabbi Yehoshua points out the fascinating paradox that when a lamb is alive it emits only one sound but after its death it is capable of producing seven sounds of music heard in the *Beis Hamikdash*.

The *mishnah* there provides the details:

- 1-2 the two horns serve as two *shofaros*
- 3-4 two thighbones serve as pipes
- 5 skin forms the surface of a drum
- 6 large intestine forms the strings for lyres
- 7 small intestine forms the strings for harps

In that same *mishnah* Rabbi Shimon ben Akashya draws a parallel between this lamb and the aging Torah scholar whose wisdom increases with his age-induced decrease in physical strength.

Zevachim 68a

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22 Shimon Hatzadik Street, POB 18103, Jerusalem Israel

972-2-810-315

fax: 972-2-812-890

ohr@jer1.co.il

38 East 29th Street 8th floor, New York, NY 10016, USA

1-212-213-3100

fax: 1-212-213-8717

RZCorlin@aol.com or estern@Gramercy.ios.com

613 Clark Avenue West, Thornhill, Ontario L4J 5V3, Canada

1-905-886-5730

fax: 1-905-886-6065

avram.rothman@canrem.com

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