

The Weekly Daf



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Week of 4-10 Elul 5756 / 19-25 August 1996

Menachos 107 - Chullin 4

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

The Sacrifice of Learning Torah

The term "Torah" is used by the Torah in a number of passages in connection with sacrifices. This association inspires three different interpretations by our Sages.

Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish focuses on the passage (*Vayikra* 7:37) which states: "This is the Torah..." and then goes on to mention virtually every type of sacrifice, obligatory and voluntary. The message is that one who learns any part of the Torah receives credit as if he were offering those sacrifices.

The Sage Rava sees in this same passage the power of the general learning of Torah to guard man from sin, and therefore make it unnecessary for him to bring any sacrifice for atonement.

Rabbi Yitzchak, however, points to the passages (*Vayikra* 6:18 and 7:1) which specifically link Torah to the atonement sacrifices of *chatass* and *asham* in a manner which suggests that the learning is limited to the laws of those particular sacrifices. Not only is the voluntary study of the Torah laws concerning a voluntary offering considered as if you actually made that offering, but even in the case of an obligatory sin offering the voluntary study of the Torah laws concerning those sacrifices is considered as if you actually achieved this atonement.

Adapted from Maharsha, Menachos 110a

The Man from Dan

Shechita – the ritual slaughtering of animals and fowl – is the subject of the first section of our new *Mesechta*.

"Everyone is eligible to do *shechita*," declares the opening *mishnah*. Does "everyone" include women?

Yes, say the commentaries, and thus rules the *Shulchan Aruch* (*Yoreh Deah* 1:1). They point out that it is so obvious that there is no reason for disqualifying women that the *mishnah* does not even deem it necessary to mention their eligibility as our Sages do in other situations where there is a cause for assuming a different rule for women. Even the *Remah* (*ibid.*) who notes that it is not customary for women to practice *shechita* concedes that her *shechita* will be valid.

There is, however, one dissenting voice coming from a mysterious source. Rabbi Eldad ben Machli arrived from Eretz Yisrael about a thousand years ago with a claim that he was from the lost Tribe of Dan, and that he was in possession of a number of laws which his tribe followed on the basis of a tradition going back to Moshe. One of these "Laws of Eretz Yisrael" cited by the man who went down in history as "Eldad the Danite" was that women are ineligible for *shechita*.

This opinion did not gain acceptance amongst Jewish halachic authorities, just as a number of the other laws he reported failed to gain recognition. Amongst these were rulings that if one fails to make a blessing before *shechita* or performs the act bareheaded his *shechita* is invalid.

The position of the authorities was that even if there was a remote part of the Jewish people living according to these rules, they were not laws – since the indication from the Talmud is contrary to them – but only stringent customs which the Danites accepted upon themselves, but were not accepted by the rest of the nation.

Chullin 2a

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