

The Weekly Daf



by Rav Mendel Weinbach - Dean, Ohr Somayach Institutions

Bechoros 60- Erachin 6

Week of 1-7 Adar 2 5757 / 10-16 March 1997
Rav Weinbach's insights, explanations and comments for the 7 pages of Talmud
studied in the course of the worldwide Daf Yomi cycle

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Two Percent Precedent

If one delegates an agent to take *terumah* from his grain without giving explicit instructions as to how much the *terumah* should be, the agent must evaluate what his intention was. Should the agent have no clue as to what his intention was, he should separate one fiftieth of the amount of grain as *terumah*, because this is the percentage given by the average person.

The Torah commanded us to set aside a portion of our grain as *terumah*, which is presented to the kohen. Although the Torah specified no amount, and one could fulfill this command by giving one kernel of grain from an entire warehouse, our Sages set some standards. They directed the generous man to devote one fortieth of his grain to *terumah*, The average man one fiftieth and allowed the miserly one to get away with one sixtieth.

Why was one fiftieth established as the norm?

The Talmud Yerushalmi cites as the source the tax placed on the spoils of the war against the Midianites which were divided between the soldiers and the rest of the people. From their half the non-combatants were required to set aside one fiftieth of all the slaves and livestock taken from the Midianites as a gift for the "Levites who guard the Sanctuary of Hashem." (*Bamidbar* 31:30) This was viewed by our Sages as a guideline in determining one fiftieth as the normative amount for *terumah*.

Bechoros 61a

Women and the Megillah

Even though the reading of Megillas Esther on Purim is a mitzvah restricted to a defined period of time, and women are generally exempt from time-oriented commands, there is the same obligation for women to hear the reading of the Megillah as there is for men.

The reasons, explains Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi, is because they too were involved in the miracle of rescue from the genocidal plot of Haman.

There are two different approaches towards understanding the meaning of this involvement. Rashbam (*Pesachim* 108b) explains that it was a woman — Esther — who was the catalyst of the miracle. Tosefos finds difficulty with this approach, because the words "they too" indicate that the women did not have a primary role. The explanation favored by Tosefos is that they too were threatened by the genocidal decree, and are therefore equal beneficiaries of the miracle.

Rashi, in our section of the Talmud, writes that since woman have an obligation equal to that of men a woman is eligible to read the Megillah, and the man hearing her reading fulfills his obligation. This opinion, however, contested by the Baal Hilchos Gedolos, who rules that the obligation of a woman is to *hear* the Megillah but not to *read* it, while a man's duty is to read it. His hearing it read by another man is, however, considered as if he read it himself. It is for this reason that women do not read the Megillah for a man. (*Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim* 689:2)

Erachin 3a

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