

דף יומי • בכורות • דף י"ז

Daf Yomi • The Full Daf • Elucidated Talmud • Navy & Gold Edition • with Rashi

THE SUGYA

We start the daf by continuing our sugya regarding a non-Jew's partnership in an animal and how it affects the firstborn status of the offspring. The Gemara brings a kasha from a Baraisa about "iron sheep" (guaranteed investments) to challenge the shittos of Rav Yehuda and Rav Huna, analyzing the exact girsa of the Baraisa to see who is refuted and how each Amora can defend his shita.

Next, we move into a new Mishnah which teaches that if a ewe gives birth to a goat-like offspring, or vice versa, it is exempt from the din of bechor. The Gemara brings a Baraisa where Rabbi Meir and the Rabbis argue on this very point, and the Gemara goes through a beautiful shakla v'tarya to understand the exact case of their machlokes—whether it is about the firstborn obligation, the first shearing, the halacha of "it and its offspring" (oto v'es b'no), or a case where the offspring's appearance returned to its grandmother's species.

All introductions, summaries, and contextual notes are the editor's commentary and are not part of the original text.

עמוד א' DAF 17A

EXPLANATION

הִינְנוּ דָאָמַר לִיהוֹנָן בֶּן גַּמְלִיאֵל: אֲפִילוּ עַד עֶשְׂרֵה דוֹרוֹת פְּטוּרִין.

This is what Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel said to him in the Mishnah: Even until ten generations of offspring are exempt from the law of firstborn.

QUESTION

אָלָא לְרַב הוֹנָא דָאָמַר: לֹא נַחֲתִית תַּנָּא קַמָּא לְדָרִי, מֵאִי "אֲפִילוּ עַד עֶשְׂרֵה דוֹרוֹת"?

But according to Rav Huna, who says that the first tanna did not descend to any generational levels at all, but rather exempts all future generations, what is the meaning of the phrase: "Even until ten generations"?

ANSWER

אָמַר לְהוֹנָא: רַבֵּן שְׁמַעוֹן בֶּן גַּמְלִיאֵל אֶ"ה עֲמִיד קָאִי דְנַחֲתִית לְדָרִי.

Rav Huna could have said to you in response: Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel is referring to the second case of the Mishnah, where the Jew established the offspring in place of the mothers, as in that case the first tanna also descends to generational levels.

QUESTION

תָּא שְׁמַע: הַמְקַבֵּל צֵאן בְּרֶזֶל מִן הַגּוֹי — וְלָדוֹת פְּטוּרִין, וּלְדֵי וְלָדוֹת לֹא.

Come and hear a challenge from a Baraisa: With regard to one who accepts iron sheep as a guaranteed investment from a non-Jew, the direct offspring are exempt, but the offspring of the offspring are not exempt.

REFUTATION

תְּיֻבָּתָא דְּרַב יְהוּדָה!

This is indeed a **conclusive refutation** of Rav Yehuda, who said that the offspring of the offspring are also exempt!

ANSWER

אָמַר לָהּ רַב יְהוּדָה, אִימָא: הֵן וּלְדוֹתֵיהֶן.

Rav Yehuda could have said to you: I will say that the Baraisa means **they**, the direct offspring, **and their offspring** are exempt.

QUESTION

אִיכָא דְאָמְרִי: הֵן וּלְדוֹתֵיהֶן פְּטוּרִין, תְּיֻבָּתָא דְּרַב הוּנָא!

There are those who say a different version of this exchange: The Baraisa actually reads, "They and their offspring are exempt." If so, this is a **conclusive refutation** of Rav Huna, who said that only the direct offspring are exempt!

ANSWER

אָמַר לָהּ רַב הוּנָא: אִימָא הֵן וּלְדוֹת — פְּטוּר, וּלְדֵי וְלָדוֹת — חַיִּיב.

Rav Huna could have said to you: I will say that the Baraisa means **they**, the original animals, **and their direct offspring** are exempt, but the offspring of the offspring are obligated.

מִשְׁנָה MISHNAH

MISHNAH

רְחֵל שִׁילְדָה מִיֵּן עֹז כּוֹי.

We learned in the Mishnah: A ewe that gave birth to a goat of sorts, and a goat that gave birth to a ewe of sorts, are exempt from the law of the firstborn.

גְּמָרָא GEMARA

BRAISA

אָתָא רַב אוֹשְׁעִיא מִנְהַרְדְּעָא, וְאִיְתִי מִתְּנִיתָא בִּידֵיהּ: רְחֵל בֶּת עֹז, וְעֹז בֶּת רְחֵל — רַבִּי מֵאִיר מְחַיֵּיב, וְחֻכָּמִים פּוֹטְרִין.

Rav Oshaya came from Neharde'a and brought a Baraisa in his hand which taught: With regard to a ewe born to a goat, or a goat born to a ewe, Rabbi Meir deems it obligated in the law of the firstborn, and the Sages deem it exempt.

QUESTION

אָמַר לִיהּ רַב הוֹשְׁעִיא לְרַבָּה: כִּי עֲיִלְתָּ לְקַמְיָה דְּרַב הוּנָא, בְּעֵי מִיַּיְהּ: רַבִּי מֵאִיר מְחַיֵּיב לְמַאי?

Rav Hoshaya said to Rabba: When you go before Rav Huna, ask him: With regard to what does Rabbi Meir deem it obligated?

QUESTION

אֵילִימָא לְבִכּוּרָה — וְלִית לִיה לְרַבִּי מֵאִיר "אַךְ בְּכוֹר שׁוֹר" עַד שֶׁיֵּהָא הוּא שׁוֹר וּבְכוֹרוֹ שׁוֹר?

If we say it is with regard to the firstborn obligation, but doesn't Rabbi Meir agree with the derivation from the verse, "But the firstborn of an ox," which teaches that the law does not apply unless it is an ox and its firstborn is also an ox? Meaning, the offspring must resemble its mother.

QUESTION

אָלָא לְרֵאשִׁית הֶגְזוּ, וְלִית לִיה הָא דִּתְנָא דְּבִי רַבִּי יִשְׁמַעְאֵל: כְּבָשִׁים שֶׁצִּמְרוֹן קָשָׁה פְּטוּרִין מִרֵּאשִׁית הֶגְזוּ, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: "וּמִגֹּז כְּבָשִׁי יִתְחַמֵּם?"

Rather, is it with regard to the first shearing of the fleece? But doesn't he agree with that which the school of Rabbi Yishmael taught: Lambs whose fleece is tough are exempt from the first shearing, as it is stated: "And if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep"? Since this goat-like offspring has tough hair, it cannot warm anyone.

ANSWER

אָמַר לִיה: נִיחֹזִי אֲנִי, הֵכָא בְּמֵאֵי עֶסְקִינוּ? בְּרַחֲלִי שֶׁיִּלְדָּה מִיָּן עֹז, וְאָבִיו תִּיִּישׁ, וּבְחוֹשֶׁשִׁין לְזֶרַע הָאָב לְעֻנִין אוֹתוֹ וְאֵת בְּנוֹ קָמִיפִּלְגִי,

Rabba said to him: Let us see; what are we dealing with here? We are dealing with a ewe that gave birth to a goat of sorts, and its father was a male goat, and they disagree as to whether we are concerned with the seed of the father regarding the matter of "it and its offspring" which may not be slaughtered on the same day.

EXPLANATION

דְּרַבִּי מֵאִיר סָבַר: חוֹשֶׁשִׁין לְזֶרַע הָאָב, וּרְבִנָּן סָבְרִי: אֵין חוֹשֶׁשִׁין לְזֶרַע הָאָב.

As Rabbi Meir holds: We are concerned with the seed of the father, so the male goat is considered its father and one is liable for slaughtering both on the same day; and the Rabbis hold: We are not concerned with the seed of the father.

OBJECTION

אֵי הָכִי, לִיפְלִגּוּ בְּחוֹשֶׁשִׁין לְזֶרַע הָאָב בְּעֵלְמָא, בְּפִלּוּגְתָא דְּחֻנְיָה וּרְבִנָּן!

The Gemara objects: If so, let them disagree about being concerned with the seed of the father in general, in the well-known dispute of Chananya and the Rabbis, rather than formulating it in this unusual case of a ewe that gave birth to a goat!

ANSWER

אָלָא, לְעוֹלָם לְבִכּוּרָה, וְהֵכָא בְּמֵאֵי עֶסְקִינוּ — בְּרַחֲלִי בֵּת רַחֲלִי בֵּת עֹז.

Rather, actually the dispute is with regard to the firstborn, and here we are dealing with a ewe born to a ewe born to a goat.

EXPLANATION

מִרְ סָבַר: זֵיל בְּתֵר אִימִיה, וְהֵאִי לָאוּ נִדְמָה הוּא.

One Sage, Rabbi Meir, holds: Follow its mother, which is a ewe, and this offspring is not a "nidmeh" because it looks like its mother.

EXPLANATION

ומר סבר: זיל בתר אימיה דאימיה, והאי נדמה הוא.

And one Sage, the Rabbis, holds: Follow its mother's mother, which was a goat, and this offspring is therefore considered a "nidmeh".

ANSWER

ואיפצית אימא, ברחל בת עז בת רחל, מר סבר: חזרו שייות למקומן, ומר סבר: לא חזרו שייות למקומן.

And if you wish, say instead that we are dealing with a ewe born to a goat born to a ewe. One Sage, Rabbi Meir, holds: Its ovine nature has returned to its place, since it resembles its grandmother; and one Sage, the Rabbis, holds: Its ovine nature has not returned to its place, and since its mother was a goat, it is exempt.

ANSWER

רב אשי אמר: כגון שיש בו מקצת סימנין, ומאן חכמים? רבי שמעון, דאמר: עד שיהא ראשו ורובו דומה לאמו.

Rav Ashi said: The Baraisa is dealing with a case where it has some of the characteristics of its mother, and who are "the Sages" who exempt it? It is Rabbi Shimon, who says: It is not holy unless its head and the majority of its body are similar to its mother.

STATEMENT

אמר רבי יוחנן: מודה רבי מאיר בשעיר של ראש חודש דבעינו בן שעירה, מאי טעמא?

Rabbi Yochanan said: Rabbi Meir concedes with regard to the goat of the New Moon offering that we require the son of a female goat, and a goat born to a ewe is invalid. What is the reason?

EXPLANATION

אמר קרא: "אחד" המיוחד וְכָא מִשְׁשֶׁת יְמֵי בְּרֵאשִׁית.

The verse states: "One" goat, meaning the unique one whose lineage is pure and comes from the six days of Creation without any change of species.

QUESTION

וְהָא מִהֵכָא נִפְקָא? מִהֵתָם נִפְקָא — "שׁוֹר אוֹ כֶּשֶׂב" — פֶּרֶט לְכֹלָאִים, "אוֹ עִז" — פֶּרֶט לְנִדְמָה.

The Gemara asks: But is it derived from here? It is derived from there, from the verse: "An ox or a sheep" — to exclude a hybrid; "or a goat" — to exclude a "nidmeh"!

ANSWER

צָרִיכָא, דְּאִי מִהֵתָם הָוָה אֲמִינָא: הֲנִי מִלִּי הֵיכָא דְלֹא נִחַת לְדָרִי, אֲבָל הֵיכָא דְנִחַת — אֵימָא לֹא.

The Gemara answers: Both verses are needed, for if we only knew it from there, I would have said: This applies only where the change did not descend to further generations, but where it descended and returned to its original appearance, say no, it is valid.

EXPLANATION

וְאִי מִהֵכָא הָוָה אֲמִינָא: הֲנִי מִלִּי לְגַבִּי קָרְבִּין חוֹבָה, אֲבָל נִדְבָה — לֹא, צָרִיכָא.

And if we only knew it from here, I would have said: This applies only regarding an obligatory offering, but a voluntary offering — no, it is not excluded. Therefore, both are **needed**.

STATEMENT

אמר רבי אחא בר יעקב: הכל מודים דאין לוקין על צמר מושם פלאים, שנאמר: "לא תלבש שעטניז", מה פשתן שלא נשתנה — אף צמר שלא נשתנה.

Rabbi Acha bar Yaakov said: Everyone agrees that one does not receive lashes for its wool on account of kilayim, as it is stated: "You shall not wear shaatnez," and we compare wool to linen: Just as linen has not changed from its original species, so too wool must be from a sheep that has not changed.

STATEMENT

אמר רב פפא: הכל מודים שצמרו פסול לתכלת, שנאמר: "לא תלבש שעטניז... גדילים תעשה לך", מה פשתן שלא נשתנה — אף צמר שלא נשתנה.

Rav Pappa said: Everyone agrees that its wool is invalid for techeiles, as it is stated: "You shall not wear shaatnez... you shall make tassels for yourself," juxtaposing tzitzis to kilayim: Just as linen has not changed, so too wool must be from a sheep that has not changed.

STATEMENT

אמר רב נחמן בר יצחק: הכל מודים שאין צמרו מטמא בנגעים, שנאמר: "בבגד צמר או בבגד פשתים", מה פשתים שלא נשתנה — אף צמר שלא נשתנה.

Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak said: Everyone agrees that its wool does not become tamei with tzaraas-plagues, as it is stated: "In a garment of wool or in a garment of linen," juxtaposing them: Just as linen has not changed, so too wool must be from a sheep that has not changed.

STATEMENT

אמר רב אשי: אף אנו נאמר, הדלה הגפן על גבי תאינה — יינו פסול לנסכים. מאי טעמא? "זבח ונסכים" — מה זבח שלא נשתנה, אף נסכים שלא נשתנו.

Rav Ashi said: We can also say a similar rule: If one trained a grapevine over a fig tree, its wine is invalid for libations. What is the reason? The verse says, "Sacrifice and libations" — just as a sacrifice must be from an animal that has not changed, so too libations must be from grapes that have not changed.

OBJECTION

מתקיף לה רבינא: הדלה פשתן על גבי היגא — הכי נמי דלישתני? אם כן לא מצית אמרת "מה פשתן שלא נשתנה", דהא פשתן נמי משתני!

Ravina challenged this: If one trained flax over a thorn-bush, would it also change its status? If so, you cannot say "just as linen has not changed," for flax would also change in such a case!

ANSWER

אמר ליה: זה נשתנה ריחו, וזה לא נשתנה ריחו.

He said to him: This wine has its aroma changed by the fig tree, but that flax does not have its aroma changed, so its essential nature is unaffected.

MISHNAH

מִתְנִי רָחֵל שֶׁלֹּא בִּיכָרָה וְיָלְדָה שְׁנֵי זָכָרִים, וְיָצְאוּ שְׁנֵי רִאשֵׁיהֶן כְּאַחַת — רַבִּי יוֹסִי הַגְּלִילִי אוֹמֵר:
שְׁנֵיהֶן לַכֹּהֵן, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: "הַזָּכָרִים לַה'",

MISHNAH: A ewe that had not previously given birth and gave birth to two males, and their two heads emerged as one — Rabbi Yose HaGelili says: Both of them go to the Kohen, as it is stated: "The males belong to Hashem,"

MISHNAH

וְחֻכָּמִים אוֹמְרִים: אֵי אֶפְשָׁר לְצַמֵּצֵם, אֶלָּא אֶחָד לוֹ וְאֶחָד לַכֹּהֵן.

and the Sages say: It is impossible to be perfectly simultaneous, rather, one belongs to him and one belongs to the Kohen.

MISHNAH

רַבִּי טַרְפוֹן אוֹמֵר: הַכֹּהֵן בוֹרֵר לוֹ אֶת הַיֵּכָּה.

Rabbi Tarfon says: The Kohen chooses the better one for himself.

MISHNAH

רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא אוֹמֵר: מְשַׁמְנִין בֵּינֵיהֶן, וְהַשְּׁנִי יִרְעָה עַד שִׁסְתָּאב.

Rabbi Akiva says: They make an assessment between them to split the value of the better one, and the second animal shall graze until it develops a blemish.

עמוד ב' DAF 17B

MISHNAH

וְחַיִּיב בַּמִּתְנּוֹת,

And the owner of this doubtful firstborn animal is obligated in the priestly gifts of the foreleg, the cheeks, and the maw, which must be given to a Kohen when slaughtering any non-sacred animal, because we say the animal is chullin;

MISHNAH

וְרַבִּי יוֹסִי פוֹטֵר.

and Rabbi Yosei deems him exempt from giving these gifts, since the Kohen cannot prove that it is indeed chullin.

MISHNAH

מִתְּאָדָּה מֵהֶן —

If one of them died, meaning one of the two male lambs born from the mother that had never given birth before, so we do not know if the living one is the firstborn or if the dead one was,

MISHNAH

רבי טרפון אומר: יחלוקו,

Rabbi Tarfon says: The Kohen and the owner **shall divide** the value of the remaining living lamb.

MISHNAH

רבי עקיבא אומר: המוציא מחבירו עליו הראיה.

Rabbi Akiva says: We apply the rule that **the one who seeks to extract from his fellow bears the burden of proof**, and since the lamb is in the owner's possession, he keeps it all.

MISHNAH

זכר ונקבה — אין כאן לכהן כלום.

If a **male and a female** were born together, **there is nothing here for the Kohen**, because we can always say the female emerged first and exempted the male from the law of the firstborn.

גמרא GEMARA

GEMARA

גמ' אמרי דבי רבי ינאי:

GEMARA: They said in the school of Rabbi Yannai:

STATEMENT

לרבי יוסי הגלילי שמעינו ליה דאמר אפשר לצמצם בידי שמים,

According to Rabbi Yosei HaGelili, we have heard him say that it is possible to be precise in events that are by the **hands of Heaven**, and thus twins can emerge at the exact same millisecond;

STATEMENT

וכל שפן בידי אדם,

and **all the more so** it is possible to be precise **by the hands of man**, who can measure and align things intentionally.

STATEMENT

ורבנן — בידי שמים אי אפשר לצמצם,

But according to **the Rabbis** who argue on him, they hold that **by the hands of Heaven** it is impossible to be precise, and therefore one twin must have emerged first.

QUESTION

בידי אדם מאי?

However, regarding measurements made **by the hands of man**, **what** is their opinion? Is it possible to measure with absolute precision or not?

PROOF

תא שמע: חוט של סיקרא חוגרו באמצע,

Come and hear a proof from a Mishnah: A line of red paint girdled the Altar in the middle,

PROOF

להבדיל בין דמים העליונים ובין דמים התחתונים.

to separate between the upper bloods which must be sprinkled above the halfway mark, and the lower bloods which must be sprinkled below it.

PROOF

ואי אמרת אי אפשר לצמצם בידי אדם,

And if you say that it is impossible to be precise by the hands of man, then the line was not exactly in the middle,

PROOF

וימנין דקא יהיב עליונים למטה ותחתונים למעלה!

and sometimes the Kohen will place upper bloods below the true middle, or lower bloods above it, which would invalidate the service!

REFUTATION

דמרווח בה פורתא.

The Gemara rejects this: No, there is no proof, as he widens the red line a little bit so that it definitely overlaps the exact mathematical center, and the blood is placed safely away from the line.

PROOF

תא שמע ממדת כלים, ממדת מזבח.

Come and hear another proof from the measurements of the vessels of the Beis HaMikdash, and from the measurements of the Altar, which the Torah requires to be made to exact dimensions.

REFUTATION

שאני ה'תם, דרחמנא אמר עבד,

The Gemara rejects this: It is different there, as the Merciful One says "make" them,

REFUTATION

ובכל היכי דמצית למיעבד ניהא ליה,

and in whatever way you are able to make them, it is pleasing to Him, even if it is not mathematically perfect down to the atom,

REFUTATION

"הכל בכתב מיד ה' עלי השכיל".

as the pasuk says: "All this in writing, from the hand of Hashem which He made me understand."

PROOF

אמר רב קטינא, תא שמע:

Rav Ketina said: Come and hear a proof from a Baraisa regarding an oven that became tamei:

PROOF

חלקו לשנים והן שוין — שניהן טמאים,

If one divided it into two pieces and they are apparently equal, both of them are tamei,

PROOF

לפי שאי אפשר לצמצם.

because it is impossible to be precise, and we must assume one piece is slightly larger and thus retains the tumah of the original vessel, but we do not know which one.

REFUTATION

אמר רב כהנא: שאני כלי חרס הואיל ויש בו גומות.

Rav Kahana said: An earthenware vessel is different, since it has crevices and uneven breaks, making it physically impossible to measure, but other human measurements might indeed be precise.

PROOF

תא שמע:

Come and hear another proof from a Mishnah regarding the Egla Arufa:

PROOF

נמצא מכוון בין שתי עירות,

If the corpse was found exactly aligned between two cities,

PROOF

שתייהן מביאות שתי עגלות, דברי רבי אליעזר.

both of them bring two heifers, these are the words of Rabbi Eliezer.

PROOF

מאי טעמא?

What is the reason for Rabbi Eliezer's ruling?

PROOF

לאו משום דקסבר בידי אדם אפשר לצמצם,

Is it not because he holds that by the hands of man it is possible to be precise in measuring the distance,

PROOF

וקרובה — ואפילו קרובות?

and he expounds the word "nearest" in the Torah to mean **and even "nearest ones"** in the plural, allowing both cities to bring a heifer?

REFUTATION

לא, רבי אליעזר

The Gemara answers: **No, Rabbi Eliezer** actually holds it is impossible to be precise, and the case is where they brought one in partnership.

SUMMARY

In this daf, the Gemara resolves the dispute regarding the offspring of guaranteed investments ("iron sheep") held by a non-Jew, showing how Rav Yehuda and Rav Huna each interpret the Baraisa's language to fit their respective shitos. We then delve into the machlokes between Rabbi Meir and the Rabbis regarding a change of species, such as a ewe giving birth to a goat-like animal. The Gemara establishes that even Rabbi Meir agrees a goat born to a ewe is invalid for the New Moon offering because the Torah requires a pure lineage. Finally, the Gemara presents a consensus that the wool of such a changed animal is invalid for tzitzis (techeiles) and does not violate the prohibition of kilayim, deriving this from the hekesh between wool and linen.

למעשה WHAT TO TAKE HOME

The Gemara on our daf is deeply concerned with the concept of "nidmeh", an offspring that looks like a different species, or a creature whose lineage has been altered from the pure form that "comes from the six days of Creation without any change." When the Torah requires a korban or a firstborn, it demands something that is "meyuchad," something that is true to its source, without any identity crisis or mixed-up nature.

Lichoira, we have to ask ourselves: what does this mean for our own avodas Hashem? Hashem created each of us with a specific, pure neshama, a unique path in this world that is true to who we are. Yet, so often in life, we find ourselves acting like a "nidmeh." We try to copy others, dressing up in a spiritual garment that isn't ours, or letting the outside world change our inner essence until we barely recognize our own true self. We become a hybrid of conflicting desires, losing that pure, straight connection to our source.

Your real avodah is to be "meyuchad", to live with a clear, uncompromised identity as a Yid. Don't try to be someone else's neshama. Hashem wants the genuine you, the one that is true to the way He created you from the very beginning.

Today, take five minutes to step back from the noise and the social pressure of what everyone else is doing. Ask yourself: "In what area of my life am I acting like a 'nidmeh' just to fit in?" Choose one small kabolah in your davening or your learning to do with absolute, pure sincerity, purely for Hashem, reflecting your own true neshama.