

OVERVIEW of the Daf

1) First shearings

R' Chisda gives the source for the Mishnah's ruling that the obligation to give the first shearings to a kohen is limited to sheep.

This explanation is successfully challenged and another source for this ruling is suggested.

This explanation is unsuccessfully challenged.

A contradiction between two Beraisos is noted whether there is an obligation to give first shearings from goats or what comes off a sheep when they are washed.

The contradiction is reconciled by differentiating between Rabanan and R' Yosi.

The Gemara explains that a Beraisa that seemed to present two opinions in fact represents only the opinion of R' Yosi.

R' Acha the son of Rava points out a case in which R' Yosi does not define things literally.

Ravina cites another Beraisa that supports this assertion.

2) The number of sheep needed for the mitzvah of first shearings

R' Kahana provides the source for Beis Hillel's position.

This exposition is successfully challenged.

R' Ashi offers another explanation for Beis Hillel's position.

A Beraisa presents a third opinion concerning the number of sheep needed for the mitzvah of first shearings.

Rebbi, cited in another Beraisa, rules in accordance with R' Yosi's position.

Rebbi's position is unsuccessfully challenged.

3) The quantity of wool

The Gemara records a four-way debate concerning the quantity of wool one must shear in order to become obligated in the mitzvah of first shearings according to Chachamim.

Two of these opinions are unsuccessfully challenged.

4) Sixty

Rav and Shmuel cite three cases (first shearings, terumah and pe'ah) in which one is obligated to give one part in sixty.

The ruling concerning terumah is unsuccessfully challenged.

The ruling concerning pe'ah is unsuccessfully challenged.

An incident related to the Mishnah is recorded.

The Gemara presents a conversation between R' Dimi and Abaye concerning the mitzvah of first shearings. ■

Distinctive INSIGHT

Using the masculine or the feminine form of a word in the Mishnah

איסי בר היני... מתני ליה לבריה רחלים, א"ל אתנייה רחלות... אמר ליה לשון תורה לעצמה לשון חכמים לעצמן

Issi bar Hini and his son were travelling from Bavel to Eretz Yisroel. They met R' Yochanan who overheard Issi teaching his son our Mishnah, that wool of sheep is obligated in the mitzvah of the first shearings. Issi used the word "רחלים" for sheep, which is the masculine form of the plural for sheep. In our text, the precise wording appears as "רחלות," in the feminine form. R' Yochanan corrected him, and instructed him to teach the Mishnah with the text as we have it. Issi resisted and claimed that he was using the masculine form of the word, as it appears in the Torah, in Bereshis (32:15) when describing the two hundred sheep sent by Yaakov to Eisav. R' Yochanan then explained that the wording used by the Torah and that used by the sages is not necessarily the same. Although the Torah uses the masculine form of this word, the sages used the feminine form, and that is what should be used when teaching the Mishnah.

In Chidushei Aggados, Maharsha explains that the masculine form of this word (רחלים) is the accurate word when describing the sheep species of animals. This includes both male and female animals, as is illustrated in Shir HaShirim (6:6), "your teeth are like a flock of sheep," where the reference is to all types of sheep, male and female. It is also true that the word רחלים - despite the masculine plural - sometimes refers to female sheep exclusively, as we find in Bereshis (32:15) where Yaakov send two hundred female sheep (רחלים) and twenty male sheep (אילים). When referring to a combined group of sheep, the masculine form should certainly be used, as is standard when referring to combined groups. This is why Issi used the masculine form when referring to the species of sheep.

R' Yochanan agreed that the Torah uses this convention, but in the Mishnah we find (see Bava Kamma 9:1) that the feminine form of the word is used even when referring to the species as a whole. Gilyon HaShas cites the Mishnah in Pesachim (1:2) where the species of weasels is referred to in its feminine form, while the verse (Vayikra 11:29) refers to the weasel in its masculine form. This is consistent with R' Yochanan's explanation. ■

Today's Daf Digest is dedicated
By Dr. and Mrs. Samuel Saltzberg
in loving memory of their father

ר' טובי' בן ר' נחום

Dr. Ted Saltzberg o.b.m.

HALACHAH Highlight

Giving the first shearings from stiff wool

כבשים שצמרן קשה פטורים מראשית הגז

Sheep who have stiff wool are exempt from the mitzvah of the first shearings

The Gemara based on a verse teaches that one is exempt from the obligation to give the first shearings to the kohen if the sheep's wool is hard. Rambam¹ explains that the purpose of the gift of the first shearings is to provide the kohen with wool that he could use to make a garment and since hard wool does not provide warmth it is not fit for making into a garment. Sefer Geiz Tzon'cha² questioned whether one could fulfill the mitzvah of giving the first shearings to a kohen with wool taken from sheep that live in Eretz Yisroel nowadays since the wool that is obtained from sheep in Eretz Yisroel is not used for clothing since it is stiff. His conclusion is that the obligation applies even to these sheep. The wool could be used for a garment and the reason why it is not used for clothing is that people are more delicate and expect extra soft wool but it is not so stiff that it could not be used for a garment. Since it is usable to make a garment the obligation to give the first shearings to a kohen remains in force.

Teshuvos V'Hanhagos³ expresses reservations about this ruling. Even if theoretically this wool could be used to make a garment, if the shearing is not considered important since it is

REVIEW and Remember

1. What is the point of dispute between Rabanan and R' Yosi?
2. What is the rationale behind Beis Hillel's position that the minimum number of sheep to trigger the mitzvah of first shearings is five?
3. According to Chachamim, how much wool must be shorn to trigger the mitzvah of "first shearings"?
4. How did Isi ben Yehudah show disrespect for Rav?

not used for garments it should be exempt from the mitzvah of giving the first shearings to a kohen. The rationale is that since practically it will not be used to make a garment it is exempt regardless of the fact that it could theoretically be used to make a garment. He adds that even when the wool of these sheep is used to make tzitzis it is still not considered as though the wool is used for making a garment. That prerequisite mandates that the wool be used for a garment and tzitzis strings are not considered a garment for this matter. ■

1. רמב"ם פ"י מהל' ביכורים ה"ד.
2. ספר גז צאנך ביאורי השו"ע סק"ג.
3. שו"ת תשובות והנהגות ח"ג סי' שמ"ב וע"ש. ■

STORIES Off the Daf

The Language of the Torah

לשון מקרא לעצמה ולשון חכמים לעצמן

Among the issues many people find most challenging are contemporary arguments against tradition based on new scientific discoveries and theories. Some feel that if they lack a comprehensive response to every inquiry their faith is somehow poorly founded. But if one would hope to develop such an approach to every question, he would have to spend more and more time learning science, and less time immersed in Torah. It is certainly strange that—as the Leshem, zt"l, points out—most people who learn science are very far from yir'as shamayim. Despite the Rambam's words—based on the Midrash—that one

can discover God through studying the natural world, scientists who study the natural world are largely very far from kedushah.

The Leshem explains that it is mostly immersion in science or the like—not questions—which cause one to lose his yir'as shamayim. "This world is a very dangerous place. The more time one spends immersed in studying this world, the more likely he is to stumble and fall away from yir'as shamayim. Since the world was created to hide the Divine, the more steeped we are in the study of this world the more easy it is to feel distant from God.

"And the same is true to a lesser extent regarding a person who learns only Tanach. Many of these people are very distant from yir'as Shamayim; they are too busy studying dikduk to get the deep connection to God available to us from

Tanach. The reason for this is similar to studying science: since the written Torah is meant to hide the oral—the Midrash teaches that the non-Jews will gain mastery over the written Torah—it follows that learning only the written Torah is dangerous to one's yir'as Shamayim. Unless someone is incapable of learning more, learning only scripture is quite risky."¹

This helps us better understand a statement found on today's daf: "The language of the Torah unto itself and the language of the sages unto themselves." Although Tanach is supreme we will only understand its deep message when Moshiach comes. Far better to drag the yetzer hara to the beis midrash, where the oral Torah is dominant. It is only we focus on the words of our sages that the yetzer hara is neutralized.¹ ■

1. ספר הדע"ה, ח"א, דרוש ה', סי' ז', אי' ח'