

## OVERVIEW of the Daf

### 1) Parah adumah (cont.)

The challenge to Shila's explanation of R' Eliezer's position that an animal purchased from an idolater may not be used as the parah adumah is refuted.

The assumption that R' Eliezer is not concerned for sodomy in the case of the parah adumah is unsuccessfully challenged.

The Gemara analyzes the assertion of R' Eliezer in a previous Baraisa that Jews watched the cow from the moment it was born in the case of the parah adumah belonging to Dama ben Nesina.

It is explained how it was known to the Jews that the calf born in Dama ben Nesina's flock would be a parah adumah.

Two versions are presented of a discussion between R' Eliezer and Rabanan concerning the use of animals purchased from idolaters as sacrifices.

Numerous unsuccessful challenges to R' Eliezer's position are presented.

### 2) Stabling animals (cont.)

Previously (22b), Rav explained that an idolater is concerned that sodomizing his own animal will render it sterile but he would not be concerned about sterilizing a Jew's animal. R' Yochanan reports that a sodomized animal that is less than three years old becomes sterile, but not if it is older than three.

R' Yochanan's explanation is unsuccessfully challenged.

### 3) Sending the Ark back to the Jews

Two different interpretations of the word וישראל used to describe the path the cows took to return the Ark to the Jews are presented.

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## REVIEW and Remember

1. How did the sages know that the parah adumah purchased from Dama ben Nesina was not rendered unfit?  
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2. What is R' Eliezer's position regarding the acquisition of animals for korbanos?  
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3. Under what condition was it permitted to offer a female as a Korban Olah?  
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4. What song did the Plishtim's cows sing?  
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## Distinctive INSIGHT

*From where did Yisro get animals for his offerings?*

הניחא למאן דאמר יתרו קודם מתן תורה הוה

**R'** Eliezer holds that animals bought from idolaters may not be used for any offering, because we assume that the animal was used for immoral purposes. The Gemara presents a number of questions to challenge this view, and R' Eliezer responds and answers each of them.

Among the questions is that we find that Moshe addressed Pharaoh and told him (Shemos 10:25), "also you will give into our hands offerings and burnt-offerings." We see that Moshe and the Jews would have been willing to accept animals for offerings from Pharaoh. The Gemara answers that this incident took place before the giving of the Torah, when it was still permitted for the Jews to accept animals for their service from non-Jews.

The Gemara then presents another question from a different verse, this one describing Yisro. The verse (Shemos 18:12) tells us, "And Yisro brought a burnt-offering and offerings to God." The animals which Yisro brought when he arrived from Midian were apparently purchased from non-Jews, and we see that he was able to bring them as offerings. This is a challenge against the opinion of R' Eliezer who stated that animals acquired from idolaters may not be brought as offerings. The Gemara answers, once again, that Yisro's arrival in the desert was before the giving of the Torah, which we said earlier was when it was permitted.

Rashi points out that we find a disagreement in the Gemara (Zevachim 116b) between the sons of R' Chiyya and R' Yehoshua ben Levi regarding whether Yisro's arrival was before or after the giving of the Torah. Chasam Sofer notes that the Gemara in Zevachim explains that this difference of opinion is based upon three opinions of Tannaim regarding what Yisro heard that caused him to come to the desert to convert. R' Yehoshua holds that he heard about the cruel attack of Amalek and the miraculous battle waged by Yehoshua against them. R' Elazar the Modai says that Yisro came when he heard about the giving of the Torah. R' Eliezer holds that Yisro heard about the splitting of the Yam Suf. The Amora who says that Yisro came before the giving of the Torah holds according to R' Eliezer. Those who say that Yisro came after the giving of the Torah hold according to R' Yehoshua and R' Elazar the Modai.

Chasam Sofer cites his rebbe, R' Nosson Adler, who points out that our Gemara analyzes the opinion of R' Eliezer regarding purchasing animals from idolaters for offerings. When we recognize that this is reasonable accord-

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# HALACHAH Highlight

## Has nature changed since the time of Chazal?

פחותה מבת שלש שנים מי קא ילדה

[Can a cow] less than three year old give birth?

The Gemara states that cows and donkeys do not give birth until they are at least three years old. Based on this principle the Gemara teaches that if one purchased a cow or donkey before its third birthday one may assume that the first offspring that is born is a *bechor*. Tosafos<sup>1</sup> is shocked by the Gemara's assertion that cows and donkeys do not give birth until they are at least three years old when one can see on a regular basis cows and donkeys giving birth even before they are three years old. He therefore contends that the nature of these animals must have changed since the time of Chazal (נשתנו הטבעים). In another place Tosafos<sup>2</sup> writes that medical treatments mentioned in Chazal are no longer therapeutic, thus, for example, Chazal's statement that it is better to eat fish some time after it was caught rather than immediately after it was caught no longer applies.

Rav Yaakov Emden<sup>3</sup> disagrees with Tosafos' contention that nature has changed since the time of Chazal. He suggests that the cows and donkeys that we see giving birth before the age of three represent only a minority, and even in the time of Chazal there were a minority of cows and donkeys that gave birth before the age of three. What the Gema-

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ing to the one who says that Yisro came before the giving of the Torah, this actually means that R' Eliezer's opinion here is consistent with his view in Zevachim. Why, however, does the Gemara attempt to reconcile his view here with the view which says that Yisro came after the giving of the Torah, when R' Eliezer himself does not agree with this?

Among the answers Chasam Sofer offers is that the text in Zevachim should not read "R' Eliezer," but rather "R' Eliezer ben Yaakov." R' Eliezer himself is not part of the discussion in Zevachim, and this is why our Gemara tries to resolve his opinion according to both views in Zevachim. ■

ra was teaching is that when it comes to the halachos of *bechor* it is unnecessary for one to take that minority into account. Teshuvos Torah Lishma<sup>4</sup> follows the approach of Tosafos and accepts the premise that the nature of things have changed since the time of Chazal. One example he gives is that Chazal teach that Pharaoh gave the midwives a sign to discern whether a fetus emerging from its mother is male or female. He told them that if the fetus is facing down it is a male and if the fetus is facing up it is a female. Nowadays we see that the direction a fetus faces is not at all an indicator of the gender of the baby. It must be, concludes Torah Lishma, that nature has changed. ■

1. תוס' ד"ה פרה.
2. תוס' מו"ק י"א. ד"ה כוורא.
3. שו"ת שאלת יעב"ץ ח"א סי' פ"א.
4. שו"ת תורה לשמה סעי' תפ"א. ■

# STORIES Off the Daf

## A Son's Honor for His Father

"שכרו שנולדה לו פרה אדומה..."

"It is only natural for a son to honor his true father," stated the Shevus Yaakov, zt"l. He proved his statement by citing a Gemara in Bava Basra. "We see this in Bava Basra 58a. There we find that when a certain father heard that only one of his children was truly his son, he left in his will that all of his property should be for his one son.

"When the children did not understand which son he meant they went to Rav Banai for adjudication. 'What you need to do is go knock on his grave until he reveals which son he meant. Nine of

the ten sons followed this advice, but the one who was his true son was unable to defile his father's grave. Rav Banai ruled that the property belonged to the one who had desisted. He was clearly the man's only natural son, since only he felt unable to treat his father's grave disrespectfully.

"Although this is the natural order of things, the Torah commands us to honor our parents, 'כאשר צוך ה'. We must honor our parents because Hashem said to do so, not merely because this comes naturally for a child. For this reason, we find in Avodah Zarah 24 that Dama ben Nesina was granted a parah adumah in the merit of his kibbud av. This was to hint to him that although for the moment he did this mitzvah for other reasons and not because of the

Divine will, in the ultimate future every good deed will be fulfilled only because Hashem commanded us. Just as we cannot understand the mitzvah of parah adumah, we will also keep all mitzvos as if we did not understand them at all. During that time, our every act will be to fulfill Hashem's will alone."<sup>1</sup> ■

1. ליקוטי בתר ליקוטי, חט"ו, ע' רצ"א

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Numerous opinions are recorded concerning the song that was sung by the cows.

R' Ashi cites another occasion in which the last song mentioned was sung.

Tangentially, Rav identifies the origin of the Persian word **דביר**.

R' Ashi identifies the origin of the Persian word **דשנתא**. ■