

Seder Kodashim | Masechet Chullin 131-137 | Shabbat Metzora | 2-8 Nisan • 5779 (April 7-13 • 2019)



FROM THE TALMUD
SEDER KODASHIM
MASECHET CHULLIN
daf 133

מן התלמוד:

סדר קודשים, מסכת חולין, דף קל"ג:

”כָּל חֹשֶׁךְ טָמוּן לְפָנָיו תֵּאֲכָלְהוּ אֵשׁ
לֹא נֶפֶחַ יִרַע שְׂרִיד בְּאֶהְלוֹ (איוב ב'),
ואין שריד אלא תלמיד חכם שנאמר:
(ויאל ג') 'וּבְשָׂרֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר ה' קָרָא'”

Translation

טָמוּן ... Tamun ... Concealed, hidden
שְׂנֵאמַר ... She'ne'e'mar ... As it is said
[written] in the Torah

Explanation

The Talmud derives this lesson from the *pasuk* (verse) Job 20:26 — “Total darkness is concealed, hidden from what await him; fire that was not fanned will consume him, and devour what remains in his tent,” that whoever teaches Torah to a student that is not worthy, will be punished for doing so.

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Daf 131: הענבים שנקלחו – The Grapes That Were Taken

Long ago, a Jewish farmer resided in a small village in the Galil, where he grew grapes. One bright sunny day, Roman soldiers appeared. The soldiers entered the farmer's yard and by force, took dozens of containers filled with grapes.

Later, the farmer approached the local Rabbi to ask if he was obligated to donate the *terumot* and *ma'asrot* (priestly gifts) for the grapes the soldiers had taken. The Rabbi replied: The answer depends on the reason why the soldier took the grapes from you. If they took the grapes for no particular reason, then you are not required to set aside *terumot* and *ma'asrot*. However, if you owed money, and the soldiers collected the grapes in exchange for the money you owed, then you are obligated to set aside *terumot* and *ma'asrot*, since the grapes served to pay off your debt.

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Daf 132: בְּכוֹר בְּהֵמָה טְהוֹרָה – Firstborn of a Ritually-Clean Animal

An owner is exempt from setting aside priestly gifts (i.e., foreleg, cheeks, and fourth stomach) from a *bechor* (firstborn) animal — even if the *bechor* possesses a blemish and would therefore be unfit as an offering.

An individual acquired a firstborn bull from a friend who was a *kohen*. The bull swiftly jumped into its new herd, and as a result, there was no way to identify the *bechor* from the rest of the pack. Is one required to contribute priestly gifts from all of the animals in the herd, or, because one of the animals is exempt, do all the rest become exempt too?

If the owner of the herd intends to perform *shechita* on all the animals in the herd, then the owner is required to donate priestly gifts from all but one of the animals — since we know there is one exempt animal. However, if the owner's intention is to sell the animals to many people, then all of the owners are exempt from the obligation of setting aside priestly gifts — since each buyer can claim: “It is possible my animal is the *bechor*.”

Daf 133: מְנַהֵגוֹ שֶׁל אַבֵּי – Abaye's Custom

 The *Amora* Abaye was a *kohen*. On this *daf* we learn Abaye said he had been accustomed to approaching animal owners and asking them to give the required priestly gifts from their herd to him. Abaye made these requests, because he wanted to demonstrate his fondness for *mitzvot*. He thought that approaching animal owners personally was a sign of his affection for the *mitzvah* of priestly gifts.

After Abaye learned in a *braita* (tannaitic text, not included in the *Mishnah*) that it was not fitting to behave in that way, he stopped asking animal owners for gifts, and only accepted priestly gifts from those who gave to him out of their own desire to do so. Eventually, Abaye essentially stopped accepting priestly gifts on a regular basis, and left them for needier *kohanim*. However, just once a year he accepted gifts when they were offered to him, so that everyone would remember that he was a *kohen kasher* (fit *kohen*).

Daf 134: פְּטוּר מִמִּתְּנוֹת כְּהוֹנָה – Exemption From Priestly Gifts

There was a case where a Jew would be *patur* (exempt) from the obligation to donate the foreleg, cheeks, and fourth stomach of an animal after *shechita*. If a Jew performed *shechita* on the animal of a non-Jew, and later on that non-Jew chose to convert — the convert would be *patur* (exempt) from giving priestly gifts — because the obligation of giving priestly gifts only applies to the time when *shechita* is performed, and at that time, the non-Jew was not yet obligated to observe *mitzvot*.

On The Map of Israel

Agnon House, Jerusalem

The Agnon House is an Israeli National Heritage Site and serves as a museum, dedicated to the work of the writer SY Agnon. In 1931, Agnon and his wife Esther built the home and lived there until his death in 1970.

SY Agnon was a most important figure in the world of modern Hebrew literature. Born in Polish Galicia as Shmuel Yosef Halevi Czaczkes, Agnon moved to Eretz Yisrael in 1908 and lived in Jaffa. He changed his name to Agnon, a derivation of the title of his first story published in *Eretz Yisrael*, “*Agunot*”. After a short stint in Germany, where Agnon was known as “the Jews' Jew” because he was quite religious, the Agnon family returned to Eretz Yisrael in 1924, this time moving to Jerusalem.

SY Agnon was awarded many prizes for his acclaimed literary work. He received the Bialik Prize, which is an annual prize given by the Tel Aviv municipality, and was also awarded the Israel Prize. In 1966, Agnon became Israel's first Nobel laureate and remains the only Hebrew author to receive the Nobel Prize for literature.



Inside Agnon House.
Photo Source: Agnonhouse.org.il



Daf 135: ראשית הגז – The First Sheared Wool



Reisheet HaGez (wool of first shearing) is one of the 24 priestly gifts. The Torah mandates that every Jew who shears wool from their flock give a portion to the *kohen*. However, only a person who shears five or more sheep is obligated to set aside this gift.

What would the ruling be in a case where the sheep belonged to one individual, but the wool belonged to another individual? For example: If a Jew made a deal with a non-Jew to acquire the wool of the non-Jew's sheep. The deal was agreed upon when the wool was still attached to the sheep. Then, the Jew took the sheep home to shear the wool he acquired. Would the Jew be obligated to fulfill the *mitzvah* of *Reisheet HaGez*?

Answer: The Jew is exempt, because the Torah states: "The first shearing of your flock give him [the *kohen*]" — and this shearing was not from a sheep owned by the Jew.

Daf 136: מעקה לגגך – The Barrier For Your Roof



Devarim 22:8 states: "When you build a new house, you will make a railing for your roof, so that you will not cause blood [to be spilled] in your house, if any person falls from there [i.e., the roof]." One is obligated to install a *Ma'akeh* (railing, fence, or barrier of some kind), to prevent any one, Heaven forbid, falling from the roof and getting harmed or killed.

Are two partners who jointly own a house also obligated to fulfill the *Mitzvah* of *Ma'akeh*? The Torah states: "And you shall make a barrier to your (singular) roof" — addressing the case of a home owned by one person, and not a house owned by two different people. However, the Talmud says that the owners of a house in partnership are also obligated to fulfill the *Mitzvah* of *Ma'akeh* — since the *pasuk* concludes with the phrase: "If any person falls from there" — and the purpose the *ma'akeh* is to ensure no one falls, and it is equally feasible to fall from the roof of a house owned by partners.

If so, why does the Torah write "your roof" in the singular form? Answer: To teach that a Synagogue and *Beit Midrash* were exempt from *Ma'akeh*, because they do not belong solely to the people who pray and study there, but rather, to all of *Am Yisrael*, throughout the world. The Synagogue and *Beit Midrash* are exempt, also because they are not a place where people live.

Who's Who? Israeli Nobel Laureates



SHMUEL YOSEF AGNON
1966 Nobel Prize for Literature



MENACHEM BEGIN
1978 Nobel Peace Prize



YITZHAK RABIN AND SHIMON PERES
1994 Nobel Peace Prize



DANIEL KAHNEMAN
2002 Nobel Prize for Economics



AARON CIECHANOVER AND AVRAM HERSHKO
2004 Nobel Prize for Chemistry



ROBERT AUMANN
2005 Nobel Prize for Economics



ADA YONATH
2009 Nobel Prize for Chemistry



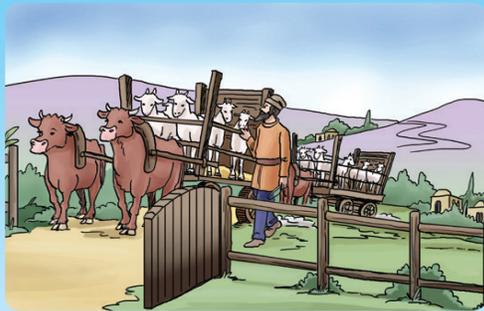
DAN SHECHTMAN
2011 Nobel Prize for Economics



ARIEH WARSHEL AND MICHAEL LEVITT
2013 Nobel Prize for Chemistry



Daf 137: צמר עדים – Goat Wool



Is it necessary to donate *Reisheet HaGez* (the first sheared wool) from goats, the same way *Reisheet HaGez* is donated from sheep? It seems like the Torah commands: “The first shearing of your flock, you should give him,” — and goats are part of a flock. However, goats are exempt from *Reisheet HaGez*.

From interpretation of the *p’sukim* in *Sefer Devarim* (the Book of Deuteronomy), we learn that the *Mitzvah* of *Reisheet HaGez* only applies to material suitable for use in making *big’dai kehunah* (priestly garments). Only sheep’s wool is suitable to make the *tekhelet* (blue-shaded) threads of the *big’dai kehunah*; goat wool is not suitable for this use. Therefore, goat owners are exempt from setting aside the *Reisheet HaGez* of their goats.

Look closely at the illustration and answer the following questions:

1. Who is the character depicted in the illustration?
2. What important prize did he win?
3. What is the paper money on the table and how does it relate to the person in the illustration?
4. What are the names that appear on the books on the shelf?



1) The author, Shmuel Yosef Agnon; 2) The Nobel Prize for Literature; 3) A fifty-shekel bill, which bears Agnon's portrait; 4) The names of some of the books Agnon wrote.

**Dvar Torah
Parashat Metzora**

פְּרִשֶׁת מִצְרָע

When a *metzora* (person afflicted *Tza'ra'at*) approached the *kohen* to become ritually clean and heal the skin affliction, the *metzora* was required to bring along “a piece of cedar wood, hyssop plant, and a scarlet strip.” Rashi explains why these things specific items were chosen as part of the healing treatment for the *metzora* — “Considering that the *metzora*’s afflictions were caused by incivility and rudeness — what would be the correct remedy to bring about healing? The *metzora* needed to humble himself, owing to his imagined importance, and become like hyssop (among the smallest, meekest plants) and a lowly worm (or dyed wool).”

If so, one might ask why the *metzora* is required to also bring a “a piece of cedar wood,” which is a tall, upright tree seemed unconnected to abject worthlessness and subordination?

One possible answer is that worthlessness and subordination do not refer that the body being physically bent over and bowed. The cedar is a reminder that a person can suffer from internal heartbreak, even when the body still stands tall. This was the approach of the Baal Shem Tov (founder of Hasidim) in his interpretation of the *tefillah* (prayer) — “And every upright body shall bow before You” — i.e., that it is possible to bow, even while standing upright, as long as one’s heart is sincerely bowed and broken.

