

The Weekly Daf



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Chullin 19-25

Week of 25 Elul 5756-2 Tishrei 5757 / 9-15 September 1996
Rav Weinbach's insights, explanations and comments for the 7 pages of Talmud studied in the course of the worldwide Daf Yomi cycle

A Trace Of Trachea

The Introduction:	In order to do a proper <i>Shechita</i> one must sever with a knife the trachea and the esophagus, or the majority of both. If half of the trachea has been severed before he begins the <i>shechita</i> , the animal is still not considered a <i>treifa</i> (terminally ill due to an organic defect), because the majority has not been severed.	
The Cases:	Case 1	Case 2
The Ruling:	<p>The front half of the trachea was severed before <i>shechita</i> and he completes <i>shechita</i> on the back half.</p> <p>The back half of the trachea was severed before <i>shechita</i> and he does <i>shechita</i> on the front half.</p> <p>Rabbi Kahana asked Rabbi Yehoshua what he ruled in regard to the validity of the <i>shechita</i> in both cases. Rabbi Yehuda ruled that in Case One the <i>shechita</i> was valid and in Case Two it was invalid. Rabbi Abba, who overheard this ruling, repeated it to Rabbi Elazar who in turn presented it to Rabbi Yochanan who challenged him to explain the difference. Rabbi Elazar made the following distinction: In Case One we view the severed trachea as if a gentile, who is not qualified for <i>shechita</i>, made <i>shechita</i> on the first half and the <i>shechita</i> was completed by a Jew, making it kosher. In Case Two we view the situation as if a Jew did the first half of the <i>shechita</i> and a gentile completed it, rendering it non-kosher. Rabbi Yochanan rejected this explanation and ruled that in both cases the <i>shechita</i> was valid. The Sage Rava later explained why Case Two was not similar to a gentile completing the <i>shechita</i>. If a Jew did <i>shechita</i> on a completely unsevered trachea, he was capable of completing the <i>shechita</i> on the remaining half. By allowing the gentile to do so in his stead he created a situation in which the life of the animal was taken by someone not qualified for <i>shechita</i>. When the back half of the trachea was already severed before he began the <i>shechita</i>, he ends up doing as much <i>shechita</i> as is possible on that organ, and is therefore considered as the one who has taken the life of the animal, rendering it a kosher <i>shechita</i>.</p>	

Chullin 19b

The Five-Year Limit

At what age did a Levite begin serving in the transporting of the Sanctuary during the years that Jews were in the Wilderness? One passage (*Bamidbar* 4:3) states that he started at 30. Another (*Bamidbar* 8:24) indicates that the starting age was 25. How do we resolve this apparent conflict?

The Levite did not actually begin to partake in the rigorous efforts of taking apart, carrying and putting together the portable Sanctuary and its sacred vessels until he was 30 years old. The reason for this, explains Rashi in Chumash, is that a man does not reach his peak of strength until he is 30, as our Sages put it in Pirkei Avos (5:24): "At thirty one achieves strength."

But a Levite could not participate in this sacred and demanding work until he trained. His training began at the age of 25.

This resolution of the seeming contradiction leads to an interesting conclusion about education. If a student fails during five years of study to absorb and retain what he has learned we may assume that he is not capable of succeeding in that field.

Rabbi Eliyahu Mizrahi, in his commentary on Chumash, thus explains this conclusion of the Talmud:

It is not logical to assume that the Torah insisted on every Levite training for five whole years before becoming eligible to work because there will certainly be some who require less time than others. The five-year figure must then be the limit on how long we must make an effort to train the slowest learner. If this is the limit then we can assume that one who is still untrained after five years of study can be considered uneducable in that field.

Chullin 24a

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