

The Weekly Daf



by Rav Mendel Weinbach - Dean, Ohr Somayach Institutions

Chullin 68-74

Week of 15-21 Cheshvan 5757 / 28 Oct. -3 Nov. 1996
Rav Weinbach's insights, explanations and comments for the 7 pages of Talmud
studied in the course of the worldwide Daf Yomi cycle

The Perils of Purity

May the pregnant wife of a *kohen* enter a hospital or any building where there is a dead person, because she is not bound by the prohibition against male kohanim coming in contact with the dead; or must she be concerned that she is causing her unborn child — who may be a male — to contract impurity?

One reason why it is permissible for her to do so is the rule stated by the Sage Rabba concerning two rings which have been swallowed by a man, one of them pure and the other impure. Even though the two touch, the state of impurity is not communicated, because an object which is absorbed inside another can neither affect nor be affected in regard to impurity. The unborn child inside his mother, even if he is a male, is therefore impervious to impurity.

Another reason is put forward by one of the early commentaries. There are two separate doubts pertaining to the unborn child contracting impurity. First of all, there is no certainty that the fetus is capable of surviving. Even if it does, there is no certainty that it is a male. In any such case of "double doubt" a lenient course may be adopted.

But why does this commentary bother to formulate such a reason when there is one so readily available from the Talmud? Many ingenious explanations have been offered. The simplest one is that the case which that commentary was discussing concerned a woman who wishes not to just enter a building where a dead person is, but to actually give birth there. The Talmud's point about an absorbed object would no longer be applicable, but the "double doubt" reason would still be relevant.

Chullin 71b

Garlic-Skin Modesty

The extraordinary modesty of the Talmudic Sages finds interesting expression in the dialogue between Rabbi Yonasan and the Sage Shimon ben Azzai concerning a Torah source for the impurity of a carcass of a kosher beast which was not slaughtered.

After Rabbi Yonasan refuted Ben Azzai's attempt to name a source, the latter, aware of his challenger's close relation to the sage Rabbi Yishmael, asked him: "What does Yishmael say about this matter?"

Upon hearing the source quoted in the name of that great sage, Ben Azzai exclaimed: "What a loss of you, Ben Azzai, that you did not study by Rabbi Yishmael!"

To appreciate the significance of this statement we must refer to another statement of this brilliant scholar who passed away so young that he had not even received his *semicha*, and is therefore not referred to as Rabbi. Ben Azzai once declared (*Mesechta Bechoros* 58a): "All the scholars of Israel, with the exception of one, are to me like the skin of garlic."

The comparison to garlic skin rather than anything else has thus been explained: The garlic pulp is much sharper than the skin, but without this outer layer it cannot survive. Ben Azzai was aware that he was sharper in his logic than almost all his contemporaries, but he also realized that it was their superior knowledge which preserved his sharpness, the same way as the garlic skin preserves the sharpness of the garlic. This may very well have been the regret that Ben Azzai expressed in not having had the opportunity to learn from Rabbi Yishmael.

Chullin 70b

Prepared by Ohr Somayach in Jerusalem, Israel

©1996 Ohr Somayach International - All rights reserved.

The Weekly Daf is available from several sources:

- World Wide Web: Our address is <http://www.ohr.org.il>
- Fax and Mail in Israel and US-MAIL in America. Send us a note requesting a subscription in Israel, or call 800-431-2272 in the US for details.
- E-Mail via InterNet. To subscribe, send the message 'sub dafyomi (your full name)' to listproc@virtual.co.il

22 Shimon Hatzadik Street, POB 18103, Jerusalem Israel ☎972-2-581-0315 fax: 972-2-581-2890 ✉ohr@virtual.co.il
38 East 29th Street 8th floor, New York, NY 10016, USA ☎1-212-213-3100 fax: 1-212-213-8717 ✉RZCorlin@aol.com or estern@Aol.com
613 Clark Avenue West, Thornhill, Ontario L4J 5V3, Canada ☎1-905-886-5730 fax: 1-905-886-6065 ✉Somayach@MSN.com

Dedication opportunities are available for The Weekly Daf — Please contact us for details.

This publication contains words of Torah. Please treat it with due respect. Do not let this land on a garbage heap.

Production Design: Lev Seltzer

Issue #142 - Chullin 68-74

For the week of 15-21 Cheshvan 5757 / 28 Oct. -3 Nov. 1996 (Parshas Vayera)