

# The Weekly Daf



by Rav Mendel Weinbach - Dean, Ohr Somayach Institutions

Shabbos 9-15

Week of 9-15 Kislev 5758 / 8-14 December 1997  
Rav Weinbach's insights, explanations and comments for the 7 pages of Talmud  
studied in the course of the worldwide Daf Yomi cycle

## Pain in the Grave

Although their father had requested to be buried near his parents, circumstances prevented his sons from immediately fulfilling his wish, and they were forced to temporarily inter him in the city where he died. When they finally were able to transfer his remains to the family plot, there was a serious complication arising out of the decomposing flesh which emitted a terrible odor and was in danger of falling apart. The only solution was to pour lime on the body to hasten the decomposing process. But they were in doubt as to whether they were permitted to do something which would cause pain to their dead father, as Rabbi Yitzchak says: "The worm is as painful to the dead as a needle to the flesh of the living."

This question came before Rabbi Shlomo ben Aderes (*Rashba*), one of the great early Talmudic commentaries. His response, in which he rules that it is permitted to do so in order to fulfill the wish of the deceased father, contains a statement which seems to run counter to the Talmud's explanation of Rabbi Yitzchak's statement.

When Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel offered an explanation for his generation's lack of sensitivity to the miracles they enjoyed he used the expression "The flesh of the dead does not feel the scalpel." This expression is quoted by *Rashba* as a reason for ignoring the consideration of pain caused by pouring lime on the dead body. But this expression seems to be in direct conflict with the statement of Rabbi Yitzchak, based on a passage in the Book of *Iyov*, about the dead body sensing the pain of worms. This conflict is resolved by the Talmud by modifying Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel's expression to read "The *dead* flesh in a *living* body does not feel the scalpel."

If the Talmud's conclusion is that the dead body does indeed sense pain how does *Rashba* cite the unmodified version of Rabbi Shimon's statement indicating the opposite?

In his "Responso *Shvut Yaakov*," Rabbi Yaakov Reisha, a later Talmudic commentator, explains that *Rashba*'s intention was not to suggest that the dead body feels no pain, but rather that the consideration of being buried together with family outweighs this factor, and it may therefore be assumed that the father's wish was to endure the pain in order to achieve burial in the family plot.

(A completely different approach is used by *Tosefos Yom Tov* in *Mesechta Avos* 2:7, who maintains that it is only the soul which feels the pain of the body being humiliated. There is greater difficulty, however, in reconciling this approach with the conclusion of the Talmud.)

Shabbos 13b

## When to Keep it a Secret

When should you keep a gift a secret and when should you let the recipient know that you are his benefactor?

"One who gives a gift to his friend should inform him that he has done so."

This statement in the name of the Sage Rav is based on Hashem's order to Moshe Rabbeinu to let His people know concerning the gift of Shabbos "that they may know that I am Hashem Who sanctifies them." (*Shemos* 31:13) Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel extends this concept to the need for one who gives a child some food, to somehow communicate this kindness to his mother.

The reason for all this, explains Rashi, is that if the recipient of the gift is aware of the identity of the giver this will promote a greater affection between the two parties. This approach, points out *Tosefos*, is therefore limited to situations in which the gift is an expression of the feelings of friendship which the giver has for the recipient. Where the gift is made, however, because of the needy situation of the beneficiary, the assumption is that the receiver will feel less embarrassment if he is not aware of the *tzedakah* giver's identity.

This idea is expressed in *Mishlei* 21:14 as "A gift in secret subdues (Divine) anger," and was personified by the Sage Mar Ukva. He used to secretly place a sum of money daily through a slit in the door of a needy Jew in his neighborhood. The Talmud (*Kesuvos* 67b) describes how this sage virtually risked his life to avoid his identity being revealed to this recipient in order to avoid embarrassing him.

Shabbos 10b

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