Bechoros 17 – Good Morning Raboisai

1️⃣ Tzon Barzel – Who Really Owns the Sheep?

The Daf continues the Mishnah's case of Tzon Barzel:

- A non-Jew gives sheep to a Yisrael.
- Their value is fixed.
- The Yisrael looks after them and shares the profits.
- Eventually he must repay the agreed value.

The Mishnah says the relevant offspring are exempt from Bechor because the non-Jew still has a financial interest in the animals. 17_transcript

👉 This shows that for Bechor, the non-Jew's continuing claim is enough that the animal is not considered completely “B'Yisrael.”

2️⃣ But What About Ribbis?

The Gemara challenges this from Tzon Barzel between two Yisraelim.

Such an arrangement can be forbidden because of:

- Ribbis.

If the original owner still completely owned the sheep, why would this be considered a loan with Ribbis?

👉 This seems to indicate that responsibility has transferred to the person receiving the sheep.

So how can our Mishnah treat the non-Jew as still having ownership?

3️⃣ Abaye – Who Accepts the Risk?

Abaye initially distinguishes between the cases based on responsibility for:

- Ones – accidental loss.
- Zol – depreciation in value.

If the original owner remains responsible for these losses:

- His ownership is stronger.

But the Gemara challenges this because:

- Both cases are described simply as Tzon Barzel,
- Without mentioning such a distinction.

4️⃣ The Non-Jew Can Collect from the Offspring

The Gemara gives a different explanation.

Suppose the Yisrael cannot repay the non-Jew.

The non-Jew can potentially:

- Collect from the animals or their offspring.

👉 That continuing financial claim gives the non-Jew enough of a connection to the flock to affect:

- Bechor.

The Torah requires Bechor to be fully:

- B'Yisrael.

How Many Generations Are Exempt?

5️⃣ Understanding “Vlados”

The Mishnah discusses:

- The offspring,
- The offspring of the offspring,
- And later generations.

The terminology becomes important because “Vlados are exempt” can refer to:

- The next generation's offspring,

rather than simply the immediate animal itself.

👉 The Gemara carefully works out how many generations remain connected to the non-Jew's original financial claim.

6️⃣ Rav Huna and Rav Yehudah

Rav Huna limits how far the exemption continues.

Rav Yehudah extends the exemption:

- For an additional generation.

The Gemara analyzes the wording of the Mishnah to determine:

- Which generations remain exempt,
- And when Bechor begins to apply again.

7️⃣ Replacing the Original Sheep with Their Offspring

The Mishnah also discusses a case where the arrangement changes.

Instead of the original Tzon Barzel being security for the debt:

- Their offspring are placed in their stead.

👉 The generations are effectively pushed forward.

The non-Jew's financial connection now continues:

- Further down the family line.

8️⃣ Even Ten Generations

The Mishnah discusses the possibility of the arrangement continuing:

- Even for ten generations.

As long as the non-Jew retains a real claim against those animals:

- His ownership interest continues to affect Bechor.

Once that financial connection ends:

- The normal law of Bechor applies.

Nidmeh

9️⃣ A Sheep That Looks Like a Goat

The Gemara returns to the Sugya of:

- Nidmeh.

This is where:

- A sheep gives birth to something resembling a goat,
- Or a goat gives birth to something resembling a sheep.

👉 The question is whether we follow:

- The actual species of the mother,
- The appearance of the offspring,
- Or its family line.

🔟 A Later Generation Returns to Normal

The Gemara discusses a case where:

- The original offspring was a Nidmeh,
- But a later generation again looks like the proper species.

For example:

- A sheep produces an offspring resembling a goat,
- And a later offspring again resembles a sheep.

The question is:

- Do we follow the immediate mother?
- Or do we trace the unusual status back through the earlier generation?

1️⃣1️⃣ Rav Ashi – Simanim of the Mother

Rav Ashi explains that the animal may be obligated in Bechor when:

- It retains recognizable characteristics of its mother's species.

👉 Appearance therefore matters.

However, the extent of the resemblance is important:

- A partial resemblance is not necessarily enough.

The Gemara connects this with the earlier requirement of:

- Roshı V'Rubo – the majority must resemble the proper species.

Nidmeh and Korbanos

1️⃣2️⃣ The Sa'ir of Rosh Chodesh

Rebbi Yochanan teaches that everyone agrees regarding:

- The Sa'ir of Rosh Chodesh,

that it cannot be a Nidmeh.

The Pasuk says:

- Echad.

👉 It must be a distinct, proper member of its species.

1️⃣3️⃣ Nidmeh Is Pasul for All Korbanos

The Gemara brings another source showing that the rule is broader:

- A Nidmeh is excluded from Korbanos generally.

Therefore:

- An animal whose species has changed in appearance cannot simply be offered on the Mizbeach.

This is not limited to:

- The Sa'ir of Rosh Chodesh.

Wool of a Nidmeh

1️⃣4️⃣ Nidmeh Wool and Shaatnez

The Gemara discusses wool taken from:

- A Nidmeh.

Since this wool is considered changed from ordinary wool:

- Combining it with linen does not create the regular prohibition of Shaatnez.

👉 The Torah's wool-and-linen prohibition requires:

- Proper wool
- And proper flax.

1️⃣5️⃣ Tzaraas of Clothing

The same idea applies to:

- Tzaraas of clothing.

The Torah speaks about:

- Wool and linen.

Wool from a Nidmeh does not have the normal status required for:

- Tzaraas Begadim.

1️⃣6️⃣ Wool and Flax Must Be Unchanged

The Gemara develops a broader principle:

Just as the flax referred to by the Torah is:

- Ordinary, unchanged flax,

the wool must also be:

- Ordinary, unchanged wool.

👉 Nidmeh wool has undergone a change in its nature or identity and therefore does not qualify.

1️⃣7️⃣ Grapes Growing on a Fig Tree

Rav Ashi tests this principle with unusual cases.

Suppose:

- Grapes somehow grow through or upon a fig tree.

Could the resulting wine be used for:

- Nesachim?

The Gemara distinguishes this because:

- The grapes may actually acquire a changed smell or character.

Similarly, it discusses:

- Flax growing among thorns.

But ordinary flax growing among other plants:

- Does not necessarily undergo a meaningful change.

Two Firstborn Males

18 A Sheep Gives Birth to Two Males

The Mishnah discusses a sheep that:

- Had never previously given birth,
- And now gives birth to two males.

Which one is the Bechor?

This introduces the famous question:

- Efshar Letzamtzem.

Can two events occur:

- At precisely the same instant?

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19 If Both Were Born Simultaneously

According to the opinion that:

- Efshar Letzamtzem,

it is possible for both animals to emerge:

- At exactly the same moment.

The Torah's wording can therefore allow for a case of:

- Two simultaneous firstborn males.

Other opinions maintain that:

- One must have emerged first,
- Even if humans cannot determine which one.

2️⃣0️⃣ One Goes to the Kohen

Where it is uncertain which male is the actual Bechor:

- One animal is given to the Kohen.
- The other remains with the Yisrael.

However, the Yisrael cannot simply treat his animal as ordinary Chullin.

👉 It remains a Safek Bechor and must:

- Graze until it develops a Mum.

Only then may it be eaten.

2️⃣1️⃣ Matanos on the Safek

When the Yisrael eventually shechts his animal after it develops a Mum:

- The Mishnah discusses whether Matanos must be given.

This reflects its unusual position:

- It might have been the true Bechor,
- But it might instead be an ordinary Chullin animal.

2️⃣2️⃣ One of the Two Dies

Suppose two males were born and:

- One dies.

Now the Kohen claims:

- “The surviving one is my Bechor.”

The Yisrael says:

- “Perhaps the Bechor was the one that died.”

Rebbi Akiva applies:

- HaMotzi MeChaveiro Alav HaRaayah.

👉 Since the Kohen wants to take the animal from the Yisrael:

- The burden of proof is on the Kohen.

2️⃣3️⃣ A Male and Female

If the animal gives birth to:

- A male and a female,

the Kohen receives nothing.

Why?

Because:

- The female may have been born first.

If so:

- The male is not a Bechor.

Without proof otherwise:

- The Kohen cannot collect.

Efshar Letzamtzem

2️⃣4️⃣ Can Two Things Really Be Exactly Equal?

The Gemara now examines the principle:

- Efshar Letzamtzem.

Can two births or measurements really occur:

- At precisely the same instant or measurement?

The discussion distinguishes between:

- Something occurring naturally,
- And something deliberately measured or made by people.

2️⃣5️⃣ The Chut HaSikra on the Mizbeach

The Gemara brings the red line around the Mizbeach:

- Chut HaSikra.

Some blood applications were:

- Above the line.

Others were:

- Below the line.

👉 How could humans place the line at the exact halfway point of the Mizbeach?

The answer discussed is that:

- The line had thickness,

allowing the required areas to be distinguished without depending upon an impossibly perfect hairline measurement.

2️⃣6️⃣ Measurements of the Keilim

The Torah gives exact measurements for:

- The Mishkan's Keilim.

How could people construct them with perfect mathematical precision?

👉 The Gemara explains that when the Torah commands people to make something:

- They make it according to the Torah's measurements to the best humanly achievable standard.

The Torah does not demand:

- An impossible degree of microscopic precision.

2️⃣7️⃣ A Vessel Split Exactly in Half

The Gemara considers a utensil affected by Tumah that is:

- Split into two pieces.

Could both pieces be:

- Exactly equal?

This becomes another test of:

- Whether exact human or natural division is possible.

The practical reality of uneven surfaces and tiny differences complicates:

- Perfect Tzimtzum.

2️⃣8️⃣ A Body Exactly Between Two Cities

Finally, the Gemara discusses:

- Eglah Arufah.

If a murdered person is found:

- Exactly between two cities,

which city brings the Eglah Arufah?

The possibility of both cities being exactly equal in distance again depends on:

- Efshar Letzamtzem.

👉 This brings the Daf back to the central question:

Can two measurements truly be:

- Exactly equal?

📌 Key Chazarah

- Tzon Barzel from a non-Jew can remain exempt from Bechor because the non-Jew retains a financial claim in the animals.
- The Gemara compares this with Tzon Barzel between Jews and the problem of Ribbis.
- The exemption from Bechor can continue through later generations while the non-Jew's financial interest remains.
- Nidmeh is an animal whose appearance differs from its mother's species.
- The Gemara discusses whether a later generation that returns to the normal appearance is considered regular again.
- A Nidmeh is Pasul for Korbanos.
- Nidmeh wool does not have the normal status of wool for Shaatnez or Tzaraas Begadim.
- The Gemara discusses whether physical change affects the identity of wool, flax and other items.
- Two male firstborns lead into the Machlokes of Efshar Letzamtzem.
- A Safek Bechor kept by the Yisrael must wait until it develops a Mum before being eaten.
- HaMotzi MeChaveiro Alav HaRaayah places the burden of proof on the Kohen when ownership is uncertain.
- If a male and female are born and it is uncertain which came first, the Kohen receives nothing.
- The Gemara tests Efshar Letzamtzem from the Chut HaSikra, measurements of the Keilim, splitting objects exactly in half, and Eglah Arufah.

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