Bechoros 24 – Good Morning Raboisai

1️⃣ Halachah Throughout the Perek

We continue with Rav's statement that throughout this Perek, when a Mishnah gives the opinion of a single Tanna without recording a Machlokes, the Halachah follows that opinion.

The Gemara asks: if so, why does Rav later specifically say:

Halachah K'Rebbi Yosi ben HaMeshulam?

Surely that is already included in Rav's general rule.

👉 The Gemara therefore examines exactly what Rav's general statement was intended to include.

2️⃣ Rebbi Yosi ben HaMeshulam – Two Halachos

The Mishnah of Rebbi Yosi ben HaMeshulam contains two related Halachos concerning the wool of a Bechor.

When preparing the animal for Shechitah:

- Hair may be moved or plucked aside to expose the place of Shechitah.

Similarly:

- Hair covering a Mum may be moved aside so the Mum can be examined.

👉 Rav's ruling establishes that the Halachah follows Rebbi Yosi ben HaMeshulam in these cases.

An Animal Nursing

3️⃣ The Machlokes in the Beraisa

We return to the Mishnah concerning an animal purchased from a non-Jew that is seen nursing a young animal.

Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says:

- We treat the nursing young as its offspring.
- The mother is therefore considered to have given birth.
- Its next offspring will not be a Bechor.

But a Beraisa records a disagreement.

The Chachamim are concerned:

👉 Perhaps an animal can show affection to and nurse a young animal that it did not give birth to.

4️⃣ Can an Animal Adopt Another Young?

This is the central question.

Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel treats the nursing as strong evidence that:

- This is the mother's own offspring.

The Chachamim allow for another possibility:

- An animal may have compassion on another animal's young,
- Adopt it,
- And nurse it.

Therefore, nursing alone may not prove with certainty who the mother is.

5️⃣ A Mother Known to Have Given Birth

The Gemara considers an important distinction.

Perhaps an animal that has never given birth:

- Will not nurse another animal's offspring.

But once an animal has previously given birth:

- It may develop maternal behaviour,
- And could possibly nurse another animal's young.

This distinction becomes important beyond the laws of Bechor.

Fifteen Sheep Give Birth

6️⃣ The Males and Females Are Found Nursing

The Gemara discusses a flock where:

- Some sheep are giving birth for the first time,

- While others have already given birth previously.

The following morning, the offspring are found nursing.

Suppose:

- The males are nursing from mothers that previously gave birth,
- While the females are nursing from the first-time mothers.

The apparent result would be:

👉 None of the males need to be treated as Bechorim.

7️⃣ We Assume Each Mother Nurses Her Own

The Mishnah teaches that we do not assume:

- The offspring became mixed up,
- Or that mothers randomly exchanged their young.

Rather:

👉 We establish the offspring according to the mother from which it is nursing.

This strengthens the idea that an animal normally nurses its own offspring.

A Nafka Mina – Oso V'Es Beno

8️⃣ Bechorah May Not Be the Only Question

For the mother's future Bechor status, there may sometimes be no practical difference.

Why?

Either:

- The nursing animal is genuinely her offspring,

or:

- She previously gave birth and has now adopted another animal's offspring.

Either way:

👉 She has already given birth and is exempt from future Bechorah.

So where is the practical difference?

9️⃣ Shechting Mother and Offspring on the Same Day

The Nafka Mina is:

- Oso V'Es Beno.

The Torah prohibits Shechting:

- A mother and its offspring on the same day.

If we know with certainty that the nursing young is hers:

- Shechting both on the same day can create a definite violation.

But if she may have adopted another animal's offspring:

- We cannot prove that they are actually mother and child.

👉 This can make a difference regarding Malkus.

🔟 Can We Give Malkus?

If the rule is:

- An animal only nurses its own offspring,

then the relationship is established with certainty.

But if animals sometimes adopt:

- We have a Safek.

Beis Din cannot give Malkus when it cannot establish that:

- This was definitely the mother's own offspring.

Does a Mother Adopt?

1️⃣1️⃣ Evidence from the Mishnah

The Gemara attempts to prove from our Mishnah that:

- Mothers do not exchange their offspring.

But this proof is rejected.

There may be a difference between:

- A mother that already has her own young to care for,

and:

- A mother that does not currently have her own young.

👉 When she already has her own offspring, she is less likely to adopt another.

1️⃣2️⃣ The Meaning of "V'Chein"

The Gemara analyzes the word:

- V'Chein – "and similarly."

Perhaps this teaches that both the individual case and the larger flock case are identical:

- The nursing offspring is definitely that mother's own.

The Gemara rejects this proof.

"V'Chein" may mean only that:

👉 In both cases the mother is exempt from future Bechorah.

It does not necessarily prove that the nursing offspring is definitely hers.

A Sheep Nursing a Pig

1️⃣3️⃣ A Strange Case

The Gemara considers a striking case:

- A sheep is seen nursing a piglet.

There are two possibilities:

1. The piglet is actually the sheep's offspring but is a Nidmeh – it was born with the appearance of another species.
2. The piglet really came from elsewhere and the sheep adopted it.

This creates important questions about:

- Bechorah,
- Its identity,
- And whether it may be eaten.

1️⃣4️⃣ Is It a Nidmeh?

If we assume that a mother only nurses its own offspring:

- The piglet must have been born from the sheep.

It would therefore be a:

- Nidmeh.

But if animals can adopt:

- The nursing proves much less.

👉 The unusual appearance makes this case especially useful for testing the limits of the rule.

1️⃣5️⃣ Waiting for Eliyahu

The Gemara discusses why the animal cannot simply be eaten.

There remains an unresolved question concerning:

- Its true status,
- And whether the nursing proves that it was actually born from the sheep.

The uncertainty cannot simply be ignored.

Same Species vs Different Species

1️⃣6️⃣ Perhaps Adoption Is Limited

The Gemara introduces another possibility.

Even if an animal sometimes adopts:

- Perhaps that only occurs with another animal of its own species.

For example:

- A sheep may nurse another sheep's lamb.

But perhaps:

- A sheep would never adopt a piglet.

👉 If so, seeing a sheep nursing a pig would be much stronger evidence that the pig-like animal is actually its own offspring.

1️⃣7️⃣ Or Perhaps It Adopts Another Species Too

The Gemara leaves open the possibility that maternal affection can extend:

- Even to another species.

Therefore, the fact that a sheep is nursing a pig-like animal may still not conclusively establish:

- That it was born from that sheep.

The Sugya therefore examines how far the Chazakah of nursing can be taken.

Rebbi Yosi ben HaMeshulam – Removing Wool

1️⃣8️⃣ Preparing a Bechor for Shechitah

The Daf returns to Rebbi Yosi ben HaMeshulam.

A Bechor may not normally be:

- Shorn.

But when preparing it for Shechitah, hair may need to be removed from:

- The neck.

This is not being done because the owner wants the wool.

Rather:

👉 It is necessary to expose the place of Shechitah.

1️⃣9️⃣ Hair Around a Mum

The same principle applies when wool is covering:

- A Mum.

The hair may need to be moved or plucked so that:

- The Mum can be properly examined.

The action is being done for:

- The examination,

not for the benefit of obtaining wool.

2️⃣0️⃣ Don't Gather the Wool

Once the hair has been removed:

- It should not be deliberately gathered and handled as though the person wanted the wool.

Doing so would make it appear that:

- The purpose was ordinary Giza – shearing,

rather than simply preparing the animal for Shechitah or examination.

What About Yom Tov?

2️⃣1️⃣ Plucking Hair on Yom Tov

Rav Huna asks whether a similar action may be done to:

- A regular Chullin animal on Yom Tov.

The question depends on how we classify the act of plucking.

Is plucking:

- A form of Giza?

Or is it permitted because:

- The person's intention is merely to clear the area needed for Shechitah?

2️⃣2️⃣ Davar She'eino Miskavein

The Gemara connects the question to:

- Davar She'eino Miskavein.

The person does not intend to harvest or shear wool.

His purpose is:

- To prepare the animal for Shechitah.

If some hair happens to come out while doing so:

👉 That is not his objective.

2️⃣ 3️⃣ The Halachah

Rav Huna is told to first establish whether:

- The Halachah follows Rebbi Yosi ben HaMeshulam.

Once it is established that:

- Halachah K'Rebbi Yosi ben HaMeshulam,

the answer follows:

👉 The action is permitted.

The removal of the hair in this manner is treated as a Davar She'eino Miskavein rather than ordinary shearing.

📌 Key Chazarah

- Rav rules like the individual Tannaim in this Perek where the Mishnah does not record a Machlokes.
- Rebbi Yosi ben HaMeshulam permits removing hair needed for Shechitah or to examine a Mum.
- Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel treats a nursing animal as the mother of the young it is nursing.
- The Chachamim are concerned that an animal may adopt and nurse another animal's offspring.
- Even where the mother is certainly exempt from future Bechorah, the identity of the offspring matters for Oso V'Es Beno.
- If the relationship is uncertain, Malkus cannot be given for Shechting them on the same day.
- A mother caring for her own offspring may be less likely to adopt another.
- “V'Chein” proves the same Bechor result, but does not necessarily prove the young is definitely hers.
- A sheep nursing a pig raises the possibility of Nidmeh versus adoption.
- The Gemara considers whether an animal might adopt only its own species or even another species.
- Hair may be removed from a Bechor when necessary for Shechitah or examination of a Mum.

- A similar action on Yom Tov is permitted as a Davar She'eino Miskavein.

📘 Catch up, review, download previous Dafim & more:
https://www.dafchazarah.co.uk
📲 Now available as an app (Apple, Google & Amazon):
https://dafchazarah.co.uk/download
🤝 Sponsor a day: https://dafchazarah.co.uk/sponsor
לעילוי נשמת אמי מורתי רות בת הרב מנחם מנדל