Bekhorot 32

Daf Yomi · Tuesday, October 20, 2026 · ט׳ חשון תשפ״ז · Covers 32a (why tithe may not be sold) through 32b (before the Mishnah on counting a non-kohen for a firstborn)

Summary

Bekhorot 32 asks how we know that animal tithe may not be sold, while a firstborn may be. Rav Chinena citing Rav, and Rav Dimi citing R. Yochanan, derive it from a *gezeirah shavah*: "it shall not be redeemed" is said of tithe, and "it shall not be sold and it shall not be redeemed" is said of devoted property (*charamim*). Just as there selling is included, so too with tithe. Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak points out that a gezeirah shavah of this kind needs a "free" word, one not needed for anything else. The Gemara tests whether "it shall not be redeemed" is free in each place, and settles on the extra verse "you shall set apart" by the firstborn. That verse teaches tithe, through a parallel word, that it cannot be redeemed, which frees tithe's own phrase for the derivation about selling.

The Gemara then asks why the firstborn does not also learn the prohibition of sale. It answers that we compare "redemption" with "redemption" rather than "ransom" with "redemption," and that the word "it" in the verse about charamim excludes the firstborn. Rava offers a different route: the phrase about charamim is not needed for charamim themselves, since in the owner's hands they are consecrated and in the kohen's hands they are ordinary property. It is therefore applied to tithe. Rashi records his own difficulties with the standard text and proposes a different reading, and Tosafot discuss both.

Rav Ashi argues that "it shall not be redeemed" in the verse about tithe simply means "it shall not be sold." Otherwise the verse, which limits the rule to while the animal is alive, would imply that slaughtered tithe can be redeemed, which is impossible both because redemption requires standing and valuation and by an a fortiori argument. The Torah used the word "redeemed" to teach that tithe can be neither sold nor redeemed. The next Mishnah, on counting a non-kohen for a firstborn, begins at the end of 32b and is covered in the summary of Bekhorot 33.

Detailed Summary

1. The source: a gezeirah shavah from charamim 32a

The first lines of 32a complete Rava's ruling on blending tithe into the hide and the question of the bones (summary of Bekhorot 31). The Gemara now returns to the baraita quoted there.

THE BARAITA. Of the firstborn it says "it shall not be ransomed," but it is sold. Of the tithe it says "it shall not be redeemed," and it is not sold, neither alive nor slaughtered, neither unblemished nor blemished. From where do we know this (Rashi: how does "redeemed" imply sale)?

RAV CHINENA AND RAV DIMI. Rav Chinena citing Rav, and Rav Dimi citing R. Yochanan: "it shall not be redeemed" is said of tithe, and "and it shall not be redeemed" is said of charamim (Rashi: "it shall not be sold and it shall not be redeemed," Vayikra 27:28). Just as there selling is included with it, so too here.

2. Which word is "free"? 32a

THE CHALLENGE. Rav Nachman b. Yitzchak said to Rav Huna b. R. Yehoshua: it must be free (Rashi: not needed for its own meaning), for otherwise one could refute it: charamim are different, since they take effect on everything (Rashi: even on sacrifices, and on the whole flock, while tithe is only the tenth).

FREE IN CHARAMIM? It is free. Let it not say "it shall not be redeemed" of charamim, and we would learn from tithe: just as tithe is holy and not redeemed, so charamim. Why did the Torah write it? To be free. But one could refute: tithe is different, since it sanctifies the animal before it and after it (Rashi: if he calls the ninth or the eleventh "tenth," all three are holy).

LEARN FROM THE FIRSTBORN? Rather, let it not say it of charamim, and learn from the firstborn. But one could refute: the firstborn is different, since its holiness is from the womb.

Tosafot – ד"ה דלא יאמר לא יגאל בחרמים וגמר ממעשר מה מעשר קדוש ואינו נגאל

QUESTION. Perhaps we would learn charamim from ordinary consecrated property, which is redeemed?

ANSWER. We learn stringently. Alternatively, since charamim have "it shall not be sold," we would understand "it shall not be redeemed" with them.

WHY THIS MATTERS. It explains why tithe or the firstborn is the natural source for charamim.

FREE IN TITHE. Rather, let it not say "it shall not be redeemed" of tithe, and learn "setting apart" and "setting apart" from the firstborn: just as the firstborn is holy and not redeemed, so tithe. Why did the Torah write it of tithe? To be free. But still, in tithe too it is not free, since one could refute as we did (Rashi: the firstborn is holy from the womb). The answer: "you shall set apart" is an extra verse.

Rashi – ד"ה והעברת קרא יתירא הוא

THE ISSUE. Why does the extra verse help?

RASHI'S EXPLANATION. It is free for the gezeirah shavah, teaching tithe through "setting apart" that it cannot be redeemed, and that cannot be refuted. So tithe's own "it shall not be redeemed" is free. The verse is extra because the Torah could have written "every first issue of the womb is the Lord's," as it does elsewhere (Shemot 13).

WHY IT MATTERS. This makes tithe's phrase available to teach the prohibition of sale.

3. Why not the firstborn? 32a–32b

QUESTION. Let the firstborn also learn "redemption" and "redemption" from charamim (Rashi: the firstborn has "ransom," which is the same)! Tithe's phrase is free; the firstborn's is not (Rashi: it is needed for itself and to teach tithe).

QUESTION. Why say the firstborn's "you shall not ransom" is for itself and tithe's is free? Say tithe's is for itself and the firstborn's is free! We learn "redemption" from "redemption," not "ransom" from "redemption."

OBJECTION. What difference does that make? The school of R. Yishmael taught: "the kohen shall return" and "the kohen shall come" (Vayikra 14:39, 44): this is returning and this is coming. The answer: that applies where there is no similar word; where there is a similar word, we learn from it.

QUESTION. Let the firstborn learn "setting apart" and "setting apart" from tithe (Rashi: that it may not be sold), since tithe learned "redemption" from charamim. The Torah excluded it regarding charamim: "it," and not the firstborn. Why not say "it," and not tithe? Tithe has "redemption" like it (Rashi: so it is more reasonable to include tithe and exclude the firstborn, which has "ransom").

Tosafot – ד"ה הוא ולא בכור

OBSERVATION. Rava too, who answers below that the phrase is not needed for charamim, holds "it, and not the firstborn," as Temurah 5b shows. Abaye, who reads "it" in Temurah as "it stays in its state," still derives "it, and not the firstborn," since "it" is next to "holy of holies," implying "it remains in its holiness."

WHY THIS MATTERS. Both Amoraim agree on excluding the firstborn.

4. Rava's route 32a–32b

RAVA. The phrase about charamim is not needed. Where are they? If with the owner, they are consecrated (Rashi: and cannot be redeemed); if with the kohen, they are ordinary (Rashi: and the kohen may sell them to anyone). A baraita teaches: charamim, while in the owner's house, are like consecrated property in every way, as it says, "every devoted thing is most holy to the Lord" (Vayikra 27:28); once given to the kohen, they are like ordinary property in every way, as it says, "every devoted thing in Israel shall be yours" (Bamidbar 18:14).

APPLIED TO TITHE. Why then did the Torah write it? If it is not relevant to charamim, apply it to tithe. Say, apply it to the firstborn! Tithe has "redemption" like it.

Tosafot – ד"ה רבא אמר לא יגאל דחרמים לא צריך

THE TEXT. So the books read. Rashi reads "it shall not be sold," because he reasons: if "they are consecrated" referred to redemption, consecrated property for Temple upkeep can be redeemed.

RABBEINU TAM. "They are consecrated" means even if they were redeemed, since "holy of holies" implies bodily holiness until they reach the kohen.

DIFFICULTY. Temurah 5b implies that the rule that redemption does not work comes, for Abaye, from "it stays in its state," and for Rava from "it shall not be redeemed" itself. If so, how can Rava say here that the phrase is not needed because they are consecrated with the owner, when he derives "even if redeemed" from that phrase? Rashi's further difficulty also stands: why does tithe need the phrase from charamim, when it is written about tithe itself? If it means sale, the Gemara should have said, "if it is not relevant to redemption, apply it to sale," or simply, "why the phrase about charamim? Learn that it is free."

WHY THIS MATTERS. The standard reading of Rava raises real problems, which is why Rashi proposed his emendation.

RASHI'S READING. Rashi reports the explanation he heard, that tithe is the reasonable place to apply the phrase since it has "redemption" like charamim, but he has much to object. Consecrated property can be redeemed, as it says, "if the one who consecrated it will redeem his house," so the phrase is needed for charamim; and why bring "it shall not be redeemed" to tithe, when it is already said of tithe? So Rashi reads: "Rava said: 'it shall not be sold' of charamim is not needed." With the owner they are consecrated, and the owner has no right to sell consecrated property, which is handed to the treasurer; with the kohen they are ordinary and may be sold. So the phrase is applied to tithe, that it may not be sold, without a gezeirah shavah. Rashi calls this the main reading.

5. Rav Ashi: "redeemed" means "sold" 32b

RAV ASHI. "It shall not be redeemed" of tithe means "it shall not be sold." From where do I say this? It says, "Then it and its substitute shall be holy; it shall not be redeemed" (Vayikra 27:33). When does one make a substitute? While it is alive. When is it not redeemed? While it is alive. Then after slaughter it may be redeemed? But that requires standing and valuation! Rather, learn from this that "it shall not be redeemed" means "it shall not be sold."

THE OTHER VIEW. This works for the view that altar sacrifices were included in standing and valuation. For the view that they were not, what can be said? We mean this: is there anything that is not redeemed alive, yet redeemed after slaughter? Why not alive, because its holiness is strong, and after slaughter, when its holiness is weaker, redeemed?

Tosafot – ד"ה הא לאחר שחיטה נגאל הא בעי העמדה והערכה

QUESTION. Why not set it where the animal is still convulsing, which is like a living animal in every respect (Chullin 30a)?

ANSWER. Perhaps it would then count as alive even for substitution. Another explanation offered: here the slaughter was completed properly, so it is not considered alive.

WHY THIS MATTERS. Redemption after slaughter is truly impossible, which supports Rav Ashi's reading.

A FORTIORI. Is it not a fortiori? If while alive, when it is strong enough for its redemption money to take on holiness, it is not redeemed, then after slaughter, when it is not strong enough, can it be redeemed? Rather, learn from this that "it shall not be redeemed" means "it shall not be sold."

WHY THE WORD "REDEEMED." Then let the Torah write "it shall not be sold." Had it written that, I would have said that it may not be sold, since that is treating it as ordinary, but it may be redeemed, since the money goes to the Temple. So the Torah wrote "it shall not be redeemed": it may be neither sold nor redeemed.

Rashi – ד"ה להכי כתב לא יגאל

THE ISSUE. How does one word teach both?

RASHI'S EXPLANATION. By expressing sale in the language of redemption, the verse teaches that it may not be sold and may not be redeemed. It cannot mean only redemption, for then we could not infer that after slaughter it is redeemed.

WHY IT MATTERS. The single phrase covers both sale and redemption.

The next Mishnah, in which Beit Shammai and Beit Hillel dispute counting a non-kohen for a firstborn, begins at the end of 32b and is covered in the summary of Bekhorot 33.

The full picture in plain language

The daf searches for the source of a simple rule: a firstborn may be sold but animal tithe may not. The first answer links tithe to devoted property, which the Torah explicitly says may be neither sold nor redeemed. Because a comparison between two different laws can be challenged, the Gemara must show that the shared word is "free," and it finds that freedom through an extra verse by the firstborn. It then explains why the firstborn is not included in the prohibition: the wording of the firstborn's verse differs, and the word "it" excludes it.

Rava reaches the same result by showing that the phrase about charamim is not needed for charamim themselves, and Rashi and Tosafot struggle with how exactly to read him. Rav Ashi takes a simpler path: the verse about tithe can only mean "it shall not be sold," because reading it as redemption would imply that slaughtered tithe can be redeemed, which is impossible. The Torah chose the word "redeemed" to forbid both selling and redemption at once.

Glossary

Hebrew	Transliteration	Meaning in this sugya
לא יגאל	*lo yiga'el*	"It shall not be redeemed": said of tithe and of charamim.
לא תפדה	*lo tifdeh*	"You shall not ransom": said of the firstborn.
חרמים	*charamim*	Devoted property, given to the kohanim.
מופנה	*mufneh*	"Free": a word not needed for its own meaning, so a comparison cannot be refuted.
העברה	*ha'avarah*	"Setting apart": the shared word linking firstborn and tithe.
קדוש לפניו ולאחריו	*kadosh lefanav ve-le'acharav*	Tithe sanctifies the ninth and eleventh if miscounted.
קדושתו מרחם	*kedushato me-rechem*	The firstborn's holiness from birth.

Sources: Gemara with relevant Rashi and Tosafot.