

Choyvoh; she should bury her son

חובה תקברינהו לבנה -

Overview

בהמה דקה חובה is watching his דקה that his wife אבה בר אבה told רב הונא. To which רב"א responded, 'חובה should bury her son'. תוספות finds the expression too harsh, and offers some alternate interpretations.

פירש רבינו חננאל בתמיה וכי דרכה לקבור בניה שאין עוסקת לגדלן¹ אלא עוסקת לגדל צאן -
רב"א explained this expression (חובה תקברינהו לבנה) as an astonishment; רב"א was astonished, is it the custom of חובה to bury her sons, so she need not be involved to raise them, but rather has time to be involved in raising sheep -
והוי כשגגה היוצאת מלפני השליט² -

However it was like a mistake that issued forth from before the ruler -

ומיהו בפרק שני נזירים (נזיר דף נז,ב ושם) גבי הקפת הראש אין שייך לפרש כן -

However in פרק שני נזירים regarding removing the פאות of the head, it is not possible to explain it in this manner -

דאמר ליה רב אדא בר אבה לרב הונא לדידך מאן מקיף להי³ אמר ליה חובה⁴ -

רב"א said to ר"ה, 'who is giving a haircut to your children', and ר"ה responded, 'חובה' cut off the פאות -

אמר ליה חובה תקברינהו לבנה ואין שייך לפרש שם⁵ אלא לשון קללה -

So רב"א said to ר"ה; 'חובה should bury her son', and it is not possible to explain it there in any other manner, only as an expression of a curse -

תוספות offers an alternate explanation:

אי נמי יש לומר אין יראה⁶ שתענש בקבורת בניה:

Or it is also possible to say that רב"א meant it as a question; is she not afraid that she will be punished by having to bury her children.

¹ רב"א was wondering, how can חובה have time to raise the sheep and guard them; is she not involved in raising her own children? Can we possibly say that she is burying her children so she has time to raise sheep; that certainly cannot be!

² קוהלת י,ה. When a king makes an incorrect statement even accidentally, it is difficult to rescind and it is necessary to follow through with it. Similarly here, even though the intention of רב"א was not to curse חובה, nevertheless since he expressed it this manner, it had the unintended consequences that חובה buried her children.

³ The children of ר"ה did not have פאות; they were cut off when taking a haircut.

⁴ ר"ה was of the opinion that woman are not מוזהר in the לאו of הראש.

⁵ We cannot say how did חובה have time to give her children haircuts; did she not need to raise her children; for giving haircuts does not occupy that much time, as opposed to raising sheep, which occupies most of one's time.

⁶ Why is she not concerned that by doing these acts (raising sheep, cutting off their פאות), she will be punished by having to bury her children. Presumably here too we will apply the מלפני השליט. See 'Thinking it over'.

Summary

חובה, he was merely wondering, either where did not mean to curse ר' אדא בר אבהו does she have the time to raise sheep, or is she not worried that her acts will cause her to bury her children.

Thinking it over

Which would be a more likely reason that the statement of ראב"א should cause חובה to bury her children (on account of השליט מפי היוצאת מפי השליט); the explanation of the תוספות אי נמי, or the ר"ח?