

## Vayikra Rabbah 33:1

*Death and life are in the power of the tongue* (Prov. 18:21).

Aqilas translated, “A spoon-knife, death on one side, life on the other.”

Bar Sira said, “[If a person] had before him a coal, if he blows on it, it burns higher. [If] he spits on it, it goes out” (Ben Sira 28:12). Bar Hiya bar Abba said, “[If] there was a basket of dates before a person, [if] he ate [of the dates by stating the required formula] before he tithed [the basket], there is ‘death in the power of the tongue,’ while [if] he tithed [the basket, also by merely stating a required formula], and then ate [of the dates], there is ‘life in the power of the tongue.’”

Said R. Yannai, “[If] before a person was a loaf of bread from which tithes and offerings had not been designated, if he ate [of the bread by stating the required formula] before he tithed [the bread], there is ‘death in the power of the tongue,’ while [if] he tithed [the bread, as above] and then ate it, there is ‘life in the power of the tongue.’”

Rabban Gamaliel said to Tabi, his slave, “Go, buy us a good piece of meat from the market.” He went and brought him tongue. After a while he said to him, “Go and buy us a poor piece of meat from the market.” He went and brought him tongue. He said to him, “When I said to you, ‘Go, buy us a good piece of meat from the market,’ you went and brought us tongue, and when I said to you, ‘Go, buy us a poor piece of meat from the market,’ you went and brought us tongue!” He said to him, “My lord, from [tongue come] good things, and from [tongue come] bad things. When it is good, there is nothing better, and when it is bad, there is nothing worse.”

Rab made a banquet for his disciples. He brought before them soft tongues and hard tongues. They began to select the soft ones and to leave the hard ones. He said to them, “My disciples, note what you are doing when you select the soft ones and leave the hard ones. So should your tongues be, soft for one another.”

Therefore Moses admonishes Israel, saying to them, *When you sell property to your neighbor, or buy any from your neighbor, you shall not wrong one another* (Lev. 25:14).