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Chagigah Daf 24

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Tzvi Gershon Ben Yoel (Harvey Felsen) o”h

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The Mishna had stated: A vessel combines all of its contents together for kodesh (*if one piece becomes tamei, they all become tamei even if they are not touching each other*), but not for terumah.

Rabbi Chanin cites the Scriptural source for this: It is written [Bamidbar 17:14]: *One gold ladle of ten shekels, filled with incense*. By the fact that the Torah said “one ladle,” and not “a ladle,” this teaches us that all the incense of kodesh was regarded as one. Since the verse is referring to kodesh, the rule is restricted to kodesh and not to terumah.

Rav Kahana asks from a Mishna in Eduyos [8:1]: Rabbi Akiva added the fine flour of kodesh, the incense, the frankincense and the coals to the rule that if a *tevul yom* (*one who has immersed in a mikvah but still has tumah on him until nightfall*) touched part of it, it renders all of it unfit.

It is evident from Rabbi Akiva that this is a merely a Rabbinic injunction and yet Rabbi Chanin derived this rule from a verse in the Torah, which would indicate that the rule is a Biblical one? The Gemora proves that this indeed is merely a Rabbinical injunction by the fact that the first part of the Mishna states as follows: Rabbi Shimon ben Beseira testified regarding the chatas ashes (the mixture of water and ash from the red heifer used to purify those who contracted corpse tumah), that if a tamei touched part of it, he has rendered it tamei in its entirety (and this is definitely Rabbinic in nature, for it is not included in the Scriptural verse, which is discussing sanctified items

offered on the Altar). And the Mishna then stated: Rabbi Akiva added (the fine flour of kodesh, the incense, the frankincense and the coals)! Evidently, R’ Akiva’s decree is also a Rabbinical one!?

Rish Lakish answers in the name of Bar Kappara: It is indeed a Biblical rule, but only when a vessel is required for that particular substance, however, when a vessel is not required, the rule that the vessel combines all of its contents is only a Rabbinic one. Rabbi Akiva is referring to the remainder of the minchah, where there is no necessity to place it in a vessel.

The Gemora asks: This explains Rabbi Akiva’s testimony regarding flour; how would we explain his testimony regarding the incense and the frankincense?

Rav Nachman answered in the name of Rabbah bar Avuha: Rabbi Akiva is referring to a case where the incense or the frankincense was placed on a leather-spread (*which is not a receptacle*). The Biblical rule that a vessel can combine all of its contents is limited to a vessel that has an inside, but one that doesn’t (*such as this leather-spread*) will only combine its contents Rabbinically.

The Gemora notes that Rabbi Chanin’s statement is in disagreement with that of Rabbi Chiya bar Abba, for Rabbi Chiya bar Abba said in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: This *Mishna* was taught as a result of Rabbi Akiva’s testimony (and since R’ Akiva’s testimony involves a Rabbinic rule, the Mishna’s stringency – that a vessel combines all

kodesh utensils contained in it – is also a Rabbinic rule). (23b – 24a)

The Mishna had stated: Tumah of kodesh extends to a fourth level (*revii*), while that of terumah extends only to a third level (*shlishi*).

Rabbi Yosi taught in a braisa: How do we know that a *revii* by kodesh is *pasul*? (The term “*tamei*” describes something that it itself is contaminated and it can transmit tumah to another item; “*pasul*” means that it itself is contaminated, but it cannot transmit tumah to another item.) He answers that this is derived through a *kal vachomer*: We find by a *mechusar kippurim* (one who is lacking atonement) that he is permitted to eat terumah, nevertheless, he is forbidden from eating kodesh (this indicates that we are stricter in respect to kodesh than we are in regards to terumah); so a *shlishi*, which is *pasul* by terumah should certainly have the ability to render a *revii* by kodesh.

The Gemora states: A *shlishi* by kodesh is derived through a Scriptural verse. The Gemora explains the exposition: It is written: *And the meat that touches anything tamei shall not be eaten*. Are we not dealing with a case where the meat touched a *sheini* (for the verse says ‘anything’)? And the Merciful One said that it *shall not be eaten* (which indicates that kodesh which became a *shlisi* – by touching a *sheini* – is disqualified from being eaten). And that which was said that a *revii* by kodesh is *pasul* is derived through a *kal vachomer* – we have already explained above. (24a)

The Mishna had stated: Regarding terumah, if one’s hand becomes *tamei*, the other hand remains *tahor*, while for kodesh, one must immerse both hands, because one hand contaminates the other for kodesh but not for terumah.

Rav Shizbi says: The Mishna’s rule only applies when the hand which is *tamei* is touching the hand which is *tahor* while the *tahor* hand is holding a consecrated item (*the*

Chachamim were concerned that his *tamei* hand might come into contact with the kodesh); however, the consecrated item will not become *pasul* if the *tamei* hand touches the hand which is *tahor* and afterwards the *tahor* hand touches a consecrated item.

Abaye asks on Rav Shizbi from a braisa which would indicate that one hand can render the other hand *tamei* even if the *tahor* hand is not in contact with the kodesh. (24a)

Rish Lakish maintains that a hand which is *tamei* can render his other hand *tamei*, but it cannot render someone else’s hand *tamei*. Rabbi Yochanan disagrees and states: The hand which is *tamei* can render his own hand *tamei* and the hand of his friend, as well. Only the original hand which was *tamei* can render his friend’s hand *tamei*. When we say that one hand can render his other hand *tamei*, the meaning is that the second hand can now render kodesh unfit, but it cannot make kodesh *tamei*. (*His second hand is regarded as a shlishi and it can only bring about a revii, which is pasul, but not tamei.*)

The Gemora states: Rish Lakish retracted from his initial opinion and follows Rabbi Yochanan’s viewpoint. (24a – 24b)

The Mishna had stated: One may eat dry terumah foods with hands that are *tamei*, but not kodesh foods.

Rabbi Chanina ben Antigonus taught in a braisa: (*The significance of the food being dry is that it is not susceptible to become tamei – only food which was wet can become tamei.*) What is the novelty in teaching that the kodesh can become *tamei* even though it is dry; kodesh can become *tamei* even without becoming wet through the principle of “the esteem for kodesh” prepares the foods to become *tamei*?

The Gemora answers that the Mishna is referring to a case where one's friend stuck kodosh foods into his mouth or he stuck them in himself using a toothpick or a stick, and he wanted to eat a radish or onion of chulin with them. The Chachamim decreed that this should not be done when his hands are tamei because his hands which are tamei might come into contact with the kodosh in his mouth; they were not concerned regarding terumah and relied on the fact that he will be careful. This was only permitted if the chulin food was dry. If the chulin was wet, it would be forbidden for him to simultaneously eat the terumah since his tamei hand (*a sheini*) might touch the liquid on the chulin, rendering it a *rishon*, which will then make the chulin food into a sheini. Subsequently, the chulin food which is a sheini will render the terumah which is in his mouth into a *shlishi*. (24b)

The Mishna had stated: An onein (*one whose close relative passed away and has not been buried yet*), a mechusar kippurim (one who is lacking atonement) require immersion for kodosh, but not for terumah.

The Gemora asks: What is the reason for this?

The Gemora answers: Since they were forbidden from eating kodosh up until now, The Chachamim required them to immerse in a mikvah before eating kodosh. (*They were concerned for the following: Just like they had diverted their attention from eating kodosh, they might also divert their attention from guarding themselves not to become tamei in a manner that would prevent them from eating kodosh.*) (24b)

INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

TOUCHING THE MEZUZAH

The Gemora (Shabbos 14a) states that people would place food of *Terumah* next to Torah scrolls. The reason they did this is they claimed that both the *Terumah* and the *Sifrei Torah* are *Kodesh*, so they should be kept together. The Chachamim realized that the *Sifrei Torah* were becoming damaged because mice would eat the food and then chew on the scrolls. They sought to put a halt to the practice of placing *Terumah* next to *Sifrei Torah*, so they enacted a decree that scrolls are considered *tamei* and render *Terumah* unfit.

To ensure that people would not touch a *Sefer Torah* with bare hands, the Chachamim decreed that one who touches a *sefer* with bare hands; his hands are rendered *tamei* and will render *Terumah pasul*.

There is a debate in the Rishonim if the decree only applies to one who touches *Sifrei Torah*, or to one who touches any *sefer*. Tosfos in Shabbos (ibid) maintains that this decree applies to all holy writings. Tosfos (Chagigah 24b) disagrees and holds that it is restricted to a *Sefer Torah*. The Rama (O"C 146) rules according to the Tosfos in Shabbos.

Rabbi Akiva Eiger (Teshuvah I, 58) questions the practice of placing one's hand on top of a mezuzah, when the mezuzah is without any covering. He comments that the concept of placing one's hand on the mezuzah is without a Talmudic source and should not take precedence over this halacha; it would be considered a mitzvah haba'ah b'aveirah. Thus, he recommends, if the mezuzah is uncovered, one should extend his sleeve over his hand.

The Rama (O"C 285) quotes the custom of placing one's hand on the mezuzah from the Maharil.