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Nazir Daf 50

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Netzel

The *Mishna* had stated: And for a *k’zayis* (olive’s volume) from a corpse and for a *k’zayis* of *netzel*.

The *Gemora* asks: What is *netzel*?

The *Gemora* answers: The flesh of a corpse that has congealed, and liquid secretion from a corpse that bubbles when it is heated.

The *Gemora* asks: What is the case? If we are uncertain if this liquid is from the decomposed flesh of a corpse (or perhaps it is saliva or mucus, which does not transmit *tumah*), what is the significance that it congealed (the *nazir* will not be required to shave if it is a matter of doubt)? And if we are certain that it is from the decomposed flesh of a corpse, why do we have to be dealing with a case that it congealed (it will transmit *tumah* regardless)?

Rabbi Yirmiyah answers: We are dealing with a case where we are uncertain if this substance is from decomposed flesh or saliva or mucus. If it congeals, we are certain that this substance is indeed from decomposed flesh (and therefore the *nazir* will be required to shave). (50a)

Netzel from an Animal

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Abaye inquired of Rabbah: Is there a concept of *netzel* by an animal or not (will the decomposed flesh of an animal transmit *tumah* just like the carcass of an animal, known as *neveilah*)? Do we derive the *halachah* from a human corpse or not?

The *Gemora* notes: This inquiry could be resolved according to the opinion who holds that a strict *tumah* (such as *neveilah* which can transmit *tumah* to people and utensils) transmits *tumah* until it is unfit to be eaten by a human; however, a lenient *tumah* (foods or liquids that are *tamei*, which can transmit *tumah* only to other foods and liquids) can still transmit *tumah* to other objects until it is unfit to be eaten by dogs (and since we are discussing *neveilah*, the *netzel* cannot be *tamei* for it is unfit for human consumption). However, the inquiry remains according to the opinion who maintains that a strict *tumah* transmits *tumah* until it is unfit to be eaten by a dog (for a dog will still eat the *netzel*). What is the *halachah*?

The *Gemora* attempts to resolve this inquiry from the following *braisa*: If one melted (the fat of a dead kosher bird) with fire, it remains *tamei* (for it is still fit for human consumption); but if he melted it in the sun, it becomes *tahor* (for it is now unfit for human consumption). Now if you assume that (with respect

to a strict *tumah*, such as *neveilah*) the animal remains *tamei* until it is unfit to be eaten by a dog, then even if the fat has been melted in the sun, it should also remain *tamei*! (*This proves that there is no halachah of netzel by an animal, and therefore, even though it is fit for a dog, it is not regarded as meat and will be tahor.*)

The *Gemora* rejects this proof: It only melts after it has decomposed in the sun, and since it has decomposed it is nothing but dust (*and it is not fit even for a dog*). (50a)

Connecting Stream

The *Gemora* cites a *Mishna*: Any liquid poured (*from a clean vessel to an unclean one*) is *tahor* (*the stream does not transmit the tumah from the lower container to the upper one*), except for Ziphite honey and *tzapichis* (*dough mixed with honey*). (*Since they are extremely thick, if one would stop the stream in mid-flight, a portion of the flow would be drawn back to the upper container; it is therefore considered as if the two containers are connected and the contents of the upper one will become tamei.*) Beis Shammai said: Also a porridge of split beans or whole beans, because it springs back (*when the flow is interrupted*).

Rami bar Chama inquired: Is a stream in the case of foodstuffs (*such as melted fat*) considered a connector for the *halachos* of *tumah*, or does it not apply to foodstuffs? Do we say that the principle applies to thick honey because it contains thick strands (*that spring back*), whereas foodstuffs

contain no thick strands, or is it perhaps because they are thick, and foodstuffs are also thick?

Rava attempts to resolve this inquiry from the following *braisa*: A whole piece of fat (*the size of an olive*) from a corpse that was melted, remains *tamei*, but if it was in pieces (*smaller than the size of an olive*) and they were melted (*into one piece, forming the size of an olive*), it remains *tahor* (*since it was formed by human intervention*) Now, if you assume that the principle of a stream being a connector does not apply to foodstuffs, then even if it was whole and then melted, it should be *tahor* (*for while it was being melted, some of it certainly separated from the rest of it, and only later was it connected*)?

Rabbi Zeira rejects the proof: I and Mar the son of Ravina interpreted it as follows: The *braisa* is discussing a case where at the time of melting, the column of fire shot up to the mouth of the vessel and the fat congealed while it was all together.

Ravina said to Rav Ashi: This inquiry can be resolved from the *Mishna* cited above: Beis Shammai said: Also a porridge of split beans or whole beans, because it springs back (*when the flow is interrupted*). (*This proves that the items are considered connected only if they can spring back to the upper container.*)

The *Gemora* rejects this proof: The *Chachamim* might hold that the reason for the Ziphite honey is because it is thick (*and other foods as well*), but Beis Shammai's reason is because it springs back. (50a – 50b)

DAILY MASHAL

Nazir's Close Relatives

The prohibition of a nazir becoming tamei from a corpse is applicable even to the corpses of close family members. As the verse says: For his father, mother, brother and sister he may not make himself tamei for them at their death..." (Bamidbar, 6:7).

Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky zt"l asks: Why doesn't the Torah list the corpses of a Nazir's son and daughter as well, for the prohibition is applicable to their corpses, too. Why does the Torah refrain from mentioning them?

Rabi Nosson Greenberg quotes Rav Yehoshua Trunk zt"l (the mid 19th century Rav of Kutna), who posits that the Torah is uncomfortable in mentioning the tragic event of one losing a child. It is just too painful for Hashem to mention. We see several examples of this in the Torah: In Parshas Pinchas where the Torah lists the order of inheritors of a dead man's estate it does not mention that a father inherits the estate of one who dies childless. In Parshas Noach, where the ten generations from Noach to Avraham are listed, the Torah does not give closure to each generation by saying the word "Vayomos" -"and he died". This is in contrast to the ten generations listed in Beraishis where the Torah does insert that word. This is because if one were to make calculations of when those people in Parshas Noach died, we will find that some of them passed away whilst their fathers were still living and Hashem is too pained to therefore overtly mention their death. Of course, there are

exceptions such as the deaths of Nadav & his brother Avihu, two of Aharon Hakohain's sons. Their deaths were a teaching moment to Bnai Yisrael of the high level of sanctity and decorum demanded of a human entering the Mishkan, and an opportunity to see the stoic and superhuman reaction of Aharon Hakohain to their deaths.

Now we can understand why by the Nazir the Torah does not explicitly mention the corpses of a son and daughter. It is too tragic an event to mention, and thus the Torah omits it and leaves it up to Chazal to understand the halachos relevant to the death of a child.