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Sotah Daf 18

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Daf Notes is currently being dedicated to the neshamot of

Moshe Raphael ben Yehoshua (Morris Stadtmauer) o”h

Tzvi Gershon ben Yoel (Harvey Felsen) o”h

May the studying of the Daf Notes be a zechus for their neshamot and may their souls find peace in Gan Eden and be bound up in the Bond of life

More Scroll Halachos

If the *sotah* scroll was written in two columns, it is invalid.

If he wrote one letter on the scroll and erased it into the water, and then he wrote another letter and erased that one in the water (*and he continued doing so until he wrote and erased the entire scroll*), it is invalid. (18a)

Inquiries

Rava inquired: If two scrolls were written for two different *sotahs*, but they were erased into one cup, what is the *halacha*?

If you would conclude that each *sotah* needs her own personal cup, what would the *halacha* be if the scrolls were erased into two separate cups, but then they were mixed together? Is it valid because the scroll was erased into her cup? Or perhaps, it is disqualified, because she is not drinking her own personal cup!

If you would conclude that each *sotah* must drink from her own personal cup, what would be if afterwards, they were divided back into two cups? Can we apply the principle of *bereirah* (*that it will be valid as long as each one is drinking from their own personal cup*) or not (*it must be “her cup” from the erasing until the drinking*)?

The *Gemora* leaves all these questions unresolved.

Rava inquired: If the *sotah* was given to drink through a bast or a tube, what is the *halacha*? Is that regarded as a normal way of drinking or not?

The *Gemora* leaves this question unresolved.

Rav Ashi inquired: If the water spilled, but some remained, what is the *halacha*?

The *Gemora* leaves this question unresolved. (18a)

Two Oaths

Rava said: The Torah mentions two oaths regarding the *sotah*. One is accompanied by a curse, and the other is not.

The *Gemora* asks: What is the meaning of an oath that is accompanied by a curse?

Rav Ashi answers: The *Kohen* makes her take an oath that she has not been defiled, but if she has been defiled, the curse should take affect in her. (18a)

Mishna

(A *sotah* must drink the bitter waters to determine if she strayed from her husband and must confirm by answering “Amen” that she did not commit adultery.) She answers “Amen” twice. Once is with respect of the oath and once is with respect to the curse. She is confirming that she did not commit adultery with this man (*the man that her*

husband warned her about), nor with any other man. She is confirming that she did not stray from her husband while she was an *arusah* or a *nesuah*, nor while she was awaiting *yibum* or after the *yavam* married her. “Amen” that she was not defiled, and if she was defiled, the curse shall happen to her. Rabbi Meir says: “Amen” that she was not defiled and “Amen” that she will not defile herself. They both agree that the husband cannot force her to swear that she did not defile herself before she was married to him, nor can he make her swear that she will not defile herself after she is divorced from him. [The *Mishna* explains this last case:] If after she is divorced, she secludes herself with that man and cohabits with him, and then, the husband remarries her, he cannot make that stipulation (for even if she would cohabit with him at that time, she would not become forbidden to her husband). The following is the rule: Any case, where even if she would cohabit with another man, she would not become forbidden to her husband, the husband cannot force her to swear about. (18a – 18b)

Awaiting Yibum

Rav Hamnuna stated: A *yevamah* who is awaiting *yibum*, who has an illicit relationship with another man is prohibited to be married to the *yavam*. (A letter of divorce will not be required.)

The *Gemora* proves that this is the correct *halacha* from our *Mishna* which stated that she is compelled to swear that she did not stray from her husband she was awaiting *yibum* or after the *yavam* married her. Now if you will say like Rav Hamnuna that a *yevamah* who is awaiting *yibum*, who has an illicit relationship with another man is prohibited to be married to the *yavam*, it is understandable why she must take this oath. However, if you will say that she is permitted to the *yavam*, why would she swear like this? The *Mishna* taught us the following rule: Any case, where even if she would cohabit with another man, she would not become forbidden to

her husband, the husband cannot force her to swear about!

They said in *Eretz Yisroel*: The *halacha* is not in accordance with Rav Hamnuna.

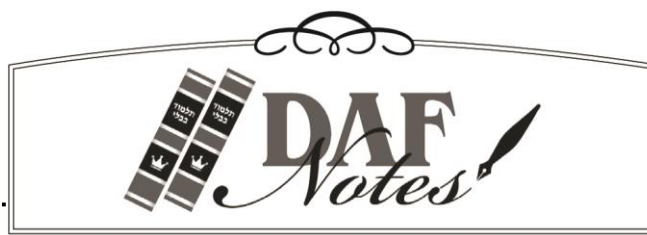
The *Gemora* asks: Why then does she swear that she did not defile herself while she was awaiting *yibum* (if she will not be forbidden to him anyway)?

The *Gemora* answers: The *Mishna* represents the opinion of Rabbi Akiva, who maintains that *kiddushin* does not take effect with women who are prohibited by a negative prohibition (like the *yevamah* marrying someone other than the *yavam*, and the child born from such a union will be a *mamzer*), and therefore she is regarded like an *ervah* (and if she would cohabit with another man, she will become forbidden to the *yavam*).

Rabbi Yirmiyah inquires: May a man stipulate regarding his first marriage with her (he was married to her and then divorced her; he remarried her, warned her not to seclude herself and she went against the warning; can he now force her to take an oath that she did not commit adultery during their first marriage)? May he stipulate regarding her (previous) marriage with his brother?

The *Gemora* resolve his inquiry from our *Mishna*: The following is the rule: Any case, where even if she would cohabit with another man, she would not become forbidden to her husband, the husband cannot force her to swear about. We can infer from the *Mishna* that in any case where she would indeed become forbidden to him, he could stipulate regarding it (and since in both cases mentioned in Rabbi Yirmiyah’s inquiry, the woman would be forbidden to him, he could in fact stipulate regarding it). (18b)

Affecting the Future



The *Mishna* had stated: Rabbi Meir says: “Amen” that she was not defiled and “Amen” that she will not defile herself.

It was taught in a *braisa*: Rabbi Meir did not mean that if she in the future defiles herself, the water affects her now; but rather, should she later defile herself, the water will gurgle up in her throat and affect her then. (18b)

Drinking Twice

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: It is written: *This is the law of jealousies*. This (*the plural form “jealousies”*) teaches us that a woman drinks and can drink again (*if after emerging innocent, she violates another warning from her husband, she drinks a second time*). Rabbi Yehudah said: “This” teaches us that she does not drink twice.

Rabbi Yehudah said: It once happened that Nechunya the well digger testified before us that a woman can drink a second time. We accepted his testimony as relating to two husbands, but not with respect to one husband.

The *Chachamim*, however, maintain that a woman does not drink twice, whether it be in respect of one husband or two husbands.

The *Gemora* concludes that in the case of one husband and one suspected adulterer, everyone agrees that a woman does not drink twice. In the case of two husbands and two suspected adulterers, everyone agrees that a woman may drink twice. They argue in the case of two husbands and one suspected adulterer. The *Gemora* explains how each *Tanna* derives his opinion from the Scriptural verses. (18b – 19a)

WE SHALL RETURN TO YOU, HAYAH MEIVI

DAILY MASHAL

Benefiting from the Sotah Waters

Rava inquired: If two scrolls were written for two different *sotahs*, but they were erased into one cup, what is the *halacha*?

If you would conclude that each *sotah* needs her own personal cup, what would the *halacha* be if the scrolls were erased into two separate cups, but then they were mixed together? Is it valid because the scroll was erased into her cup? Or perhaps, it is disqualified, because she is not drinking her own personal cup!

The Steipler Gaon asks: Even if the *halacha* would be that a *sotah* is not obligated to drink from her own personal cup, how would she be permitted to drink from a cup that was mixed together with another *sotah's* water? The water for a *sotah* comes from the *kiyor*, and that water has sanctity and carries with it a *me'ilah* transgression. One is prohibited from benefiting from something that possesses an inherent sanctity. If this woman is indeed innocent, she will give birth to male handsome children. It will emerge that she is deriving pleasure from these holy waters! How can this be allowed?

He answers based upon a *Gemora* below (20a) which states that we place something bitter into the water in order for the scroll to be properly erased. Accordingly, we can state that one who drinks water with a bitter taste will not be violating the *me'ilah* prohibition, for it would be regarded as drinking in an abnormal manner. This would be Biblically permitted.