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Sotah Daf 19

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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

Mishna

The *Kohen* would take her *minchah* offering from the palm basket and he places it in a ministering vessel, and puts it in her hand. The *Kohen* would then place his hand beneath hers and wave it. He waved it and brought it near the *mizbe'ach*, scooped out the *komeitz* and burned it on the *mizbe'ach*. The remainder would be eaten by the *Kohanim*. He would give her to drink and then offer her *minchah* offering. Rabbi Shimon says: He offered her *minchah* offering and then would give her to drink, as it is said: "And afterwards he shall give the woman to drink the water." But if he gave her to drink and afterwards offered her *minchah* offering, it is nevertheless valid. (19a)

Waving

Rabbi Elozar said to Rabbi Yoshiyah: Do not sit on your knees until you explain me this matter: Form where do we know that the *minchah* of a *sotah* requires a waving by the owner (*the sotah*)?

He replied: It is derived through a *gezeirah shavah* from *shelamim*. Just like here it is done by the *Kohen*, so too, a *shelamim* is waved by the *Kohen*. And just as by a *shelamim*, the owner waves it, so too, by the *minchah* of a *sotah*, it is waved by the owner. How is this done? The *Kohen* would place his hand beneath the hands of the owner and wave it. (19a)

Correct Procedure

The *Mishna* stated: But if he gave her to drink and afterwards offered her *minchah* offering, it is nevertheless valid.

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: It is written: *And he gives the sotah to drink*. This (*extra verse*) teaches us that once the scroll was erased into the water, we force her to drink even if she refuses. These are the words of Rabbi Akiva. Rabbi Shimon says: It is to teach us that we do not give her to drink until the *komeitz* was offered on the *mizbe'ach* and the scroll was erased into the water and she accepted the oath upon herself.

The *Gemora* asks: Isn't it obvious that she only drinks after the scroll is erased into the water? If it would not be erased, what would she drink?

Rav Ashi answers: We are referring to a case where the scroll was placed in the water, but the inscription is still recognizable (*all the ink must be erased in the water*).

The *Gemora* asks: She doesn't drink until she accepted the oath upon herself!? We can infer from here that the scroll

would be written before she accepts the oath. But didn't Rava say that if the *sotah* scroll was written before she accepted the oath, it is invalid?

The *Gemora* answers: It was unnecessary for Rabbi Shimon to mention it (*that she doesn't drink until she accepts the oath, for the scroll wasn't even written before she accepted the oath*). (19a – 19b)

Expounding the Verses

The *Gemora* cites the Scriptural sources for the respective opinions of Rabbi Shimon and the *Chachamim*. The *Chachamim* hold that one verse is needed to teach us that he gives her to drink and then offers her *minchah*. A second verse is necessary to teach us that she does not drink if the inscription is still recognizable. The third verse teaches us that once the scroll was erased into the water, we force her to drink even if she refuses.

Rabbi Shimon expounds the verses as follows: One verse is needed to teach us that he offers her *minchah* and then gives her to drink. The next verse teaches us that if he gave her to drink and afterwards offered her *minchah* offering, it is nevertheless valid. The third verse teaches us that once the scroll was erased into the water, we force her to drink even if she refuses. (19b)

Sotah Retracting

The *Gemora* asks: Does Rabbi Akiva hold that we force her to drink? But we learned in a *braisa*: Rabbi Yehudah says: They insert iron rod into her mouth, so that if the scroll has been erased and she says "I refuse to drink," they

make her drink by force. Rabbi Akiva says: Do we require anything else other than to prove if she defiled herself? And here, she has been proven (*by refusing to drink, she is indicating that she is in fact guilty*)! But as long as the *Kohen* has not offered the *komeitz*, she can retract; afterwards, she cannot retract! [*So how can we say that Rabbi Akiva holds that she is forced to drink after the scroll has been erased?*]

The *Gemora* counters: But, even on your reasoning, the teaching itself is inconsistent. It states: After the *komeitz* is brought, she cannot retract. But is she not proven (*guilty*) already?

The *Gemora* answers: There is no difficulty, as one case is where she retracts through trembling, and the other is where she retracts through soundness, and this is the meaning: Whenever she retracts through soundness, she does not drink at all (*even after the burning of the komeitz, for then it is an admission of guilt*). However, when she is retracting through trembling, it depends on the following: If the *Kohen* has not offered the *komeitz*, she is able to retract, since the scroll had not been erased yet, or even if the scroll has been erased, she may retract because the *Kohanim* acted improperly by erasing it before its proper time (*before the komeitz was brought*). However, if the *komeitz* had been offered, in which case the *Kohanim* acted properly in erasing it, she cannot retract.

The *Gemora* asks: But Rabbi Akiva nevertheless contradicts himself! For he declared above that it was the erasure of the scroll which prevents her from retracting, and here he states that it is the offering of the *komeitz* which prevents her!



The *Gemora* answers: There are two *Tannaim* who have different opinions as to the view of Rabbi Akiva. (19b – 20a)

INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

Forced to Drink

The *Gemora* states that once the scroll has been erased, we force the *sotah* to drink.

The *Mincha Chareivah* asks: Rava inquired above if we were permitted to give the woman to drink with a tube, for perhaps it should not be regarded as a “drinking,” since it is being done in an abnormal manner. If so, shouldn’t a “forced drinking” also be a concern?

The *Shaarei Sotah* answers: There, the water never entered into her mouth; it went directly into the *beis hab'liah*, and therefore it should not constitute a drinking. Here, she did drink! The fact that she was forced to drink does not negate the fact that she is drinking.

DAILY MASHAL

A Spirit of Foolishness

In his commentary on *Pirkei Avos*, the *Maharal* explains that *gilui arayos*, immorality, by its very nature, is the

antithesis of Torah. By studying Torah, one develops his mind and intellect, thereby elevating himself above his base desires. The mind distinguishes a human being from an animal. One who defers to his animalistic desires is really no different than an animal. Indeed, *Chazal* explain the reason that the *sotah's* *korban* is composed of barley, as opposed to other *kobanos* which use flour. Barley is a food animals consume. Since the unfaithful wife acted in a manner unbecoming a human being, her sacrifice should reflect her recent act of debasement. Immorality, says *Maharal*, is an act of depravement which befits an animal, not a human being.

Furthermore, as *Chazal* reiterate a number of times, one does not act immorally unless he has been captivated by a *ruach shtus*, a spirit of foolishness. He acts foolishly; he loses control of his senses and acts like an animal.

The only way that one is able to prevent a breakdown of his *seichel/senses* is through Torah. By studying Torah and applying its lessons to one's life, he nurtures his mind in order to strengthen it enough to control the passions of the heart and the weakness of the flesh. Torah elevates a person to the point that a *ruach shtus* cannot penetrate his mind and destroy his humanness.