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Sotah Daf 27

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Daf Notes is currently being dedicated to the neshamot of

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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

Women of Ill Repute

Shmuel said: A man (*when faced with no other options*) should marry a woman of ill repute (*there are rumors that she cohabited illicitly*) rather than the daughter of a woman of ill repute, since the former comes from fit seed and the latter (*possibly*) comes from unfit seed (*for perhaps her father was a mamzer or an idolater*).

However, Rabbi Yochanan says: A man should marry the daughter of a woman of ill repute rather than a woman of ill repute, since the former is presumed to be fit (*since even a promiscuous woman has relations with her husband more times than with her adulterers*) and the latter does not possess a presumption of fitness (*and she will commit adultery, thus rendering her forbidden to her husband; if he doesn't divorce her, he will be sinning every time that he has relations with her*).

The *Gemora* asks on Rabbi Yochanan from a *braisa* which states that a man may marry a woman of ill repute.

Rava answers: This version of the *braisa* is obviously mistaken, for a man should not marry such a woman in the first place. Rather, we can emend the *braisa* to say that if he married such a woman, he may keep her. We can also say that the *braisa* should be emended to be referring to the daughter of a woman of ill repute.

The *halacha* is that a man should marry the daughter of a woman of ill repute rather than a woman of ill repute, for Rav Tachlifa from *Eretz Yisroel* taught the following *braisa* in front of Rabbi Avahu: The children of an adulteress are suitable for marriage, for most of her cohabitations are with her husband.

Rav Amram inquired: If the wife was excessively promiscuous, what is the *halacha* (*are her children still eligible for marriage*)?

According to the one who maintains that a woman only conceives immediately before her period, the question is not necessary (*and her children would not be eligible for marriage*), because the husband does not know when her period will begin and thus does not watch her (*he doesn't want her becoming pregnant from another man, but it will be difficult for him to guard against this*). However, the question does arise according to the one who holds that a woman only conceives immediately after the time of her immersion. Do we say that he watches her since he knows when this occurs? Or perhaps, since she is excessively promiscuous, he cannot possibly guard her!

The *Gemora* leaves the question unresolved. (26b – 27a)

Warned by the Court

The *Mishna* had stated: And these are the women warned by the court: One whose husband has become deaf, or deranged, or is imprisoned.

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: “A man a man” comes to teach us that the wife of a deaf person, the wife of a deranged man, the wife of an insane person, and a woman whose husband went overseas, or if he was in prison, *Beis Din* warns them in order to disqualify her from her *kesuvah*. The verse “And the man shall bring his wife” teaches us that she will not drink based upon that warning (*for only the husband’s warning can accomplish that*). Rabbi Yosi says: It can even lead to her drinking the waters, as her husband will make her drink when he comes out of jail. (27a)

Comparison of a Man and a Woman

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: It is written with respect of the *sotah*: *When a woman shall go astray while under her husband’s jurisdiction*. This verse teaches us that we compare a man to a woman and a woman to a man.

Rav Sheishes explains the comparison: Just as if he was blind, he cannot cause her to drink (*derived from a different verse*), so too, if she is blind, she would not drink.

Rav Ashi explains the comparison: Just as a woman who is lame or if she is missing her hands does not drink (*derived from a different verse*), so too, if he is lame or if he is missing his hands, he cannot cause her to drink.

Mar bar Rav Ashi explains the comparison: Just as a woman who is a mute does not drink (*derived from a*

different verse), so too, if he is mute, he cannot cause her to drink. (27a – 27b)

WE SHALL RETURN TO YOU, ARUSAH

Mishna

Just as the water tests her, so too, the water tests him (*the suspected adulterer*), as it is written: *And they shall enter; And they shall enter*. [*If she was found to be guilty, he will die in the same manner as her.*]

Just as the *sotah* is forbidden to her husband, so too, she is forbidden to the adulterer, as it is written: *become defiled; and become defiled (it is derived from the extra “vav”)*; these are the words of Rabbi Akiva. Rabbi Yehoshua said: Like so did Zecharyah ben HaKatzav expound it. Rebbe expounds differently: Since it is written twice: *become defiled; and become defiled*. One teaches us that she is forbidden to the husband and the other teaches us that she is forbidden to the adulterer.

[*Throughout the Mishna, the phrase “on that same day” refers to the day on which Rabbi Elozar ben Azaryah was appointed as the Nasi of the Yeshiva in Yavneh. Beforehand, Rabban Gamliel insisted that any scholar who was not completely sincere should be kept out of the Beis Medrash. When Rabbi Elozar ben Azaryah was appointed Nasi, all students were granted permission to enter. The Torah flourished on that day and halachic issues that were previously unresolved were settled on that day. Rabbi Akiva’s exposition of the sotah passage was said on that day. Accordingly, the Mishna continues with other expositions of Rabbi Akiva that he expounded on that same day.*] On that same day, Rabbi Akiva expounded the following verse [Vayikra 11:33]: *And any earthenware vessel, where*

into any of them (a dead sheretz) falls, whatever is in it, shall be tamei. It doesn't say "it is tamei," but rather, it says "yitma," it can render other things tamei. This teaches us that a loaf of bread, which is a *sheini* (if it was inside an earthenware oven when a sheretz fell in), can make other things tamei and render them a *shlishi*. Rabbi Yehoshua said: Who will remove the dust from your eyes, Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai! For you used to say that another generation is destined to declare a loaf (of *terumah*) *tahor* even though it is a *shlishi*, since there is no verse in the Torah which states that it is *tamei*. But does not your student, Rabbi Akiva, cite a verse from the Torah that it is *tamei*, as it is said, *whatever is in it, shall be tamei*.

On that same day, Rabbi Akiva expounded the following verse (dealing with the cities and a certain amount of land surrounding it given to the Leviim) [Bamidbar 35:5]: *And you shall measure from outside the city on the eastern side two thousand amos* Another verse states [*ibid.* v.4]: *From the wall of the city and outward; one thousand amos all around it*. It is impossible to say that they were given only one thousand *amos* since it is also stated, two thousand *amos*. And it is impossible to say that they were given two thousand *amos* since it has already stated, a thousand *amos*. How can this be? The thousand *amos* are vacant land, and the two thousand *amos* are the Shabbos limit (*they cannot go beyond that point*). Rabbi Eliezer the son of Rabbi Yosei HaGlili says: The thousand *amos* are vacant land, and the two thousand *amos* are fields and vineyards. [*In total they received two thousand amos; they were only able to cultivate one thousand amos as fields and vineyards.*]

On that same day, Rabbi Akiva expounded the following verse [Shmos 15:1]: *Then Moshe and the children of Israel chose to sing this song to Hashem, and*

they spoke, saying. There was no need to state "saying." What is meant by "saying"? The Torah is teaching us that the Jews responded to Moshe after each phrase, as when they recite Hallel. Therefore, it states "saying." Rabbi Nechemia says: They sang it in the same manner as they would recite the Shema, and not as they recite the Hallel.

On that same day, Rabbi Yehoshua ben Hurkanos expounded the following: *Iyov* served the Holy One, Blessed be He, solely out of love, as it is said [*Iyov* 13:15]: *Though He might kill me, yet for Him, I will still yearn*. But the matter remains uncertain, for did he mean "I will yearn for Him," or perhaps he meant "I will not yearn"? We derive from another verse [*ibid.* 27:5]: *Until I die I will not remove my wholesomeness from myself (no matter what happens to him, he will not cast away his devotion to Hashem)*, which teaches us that he acted out of love. Rabbi Yehoshua said: Who will remove the dust from your eyes, Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai! For you expounded all your life that *Iyov* served the Omnipresent solely out of fear (*and not out of love*), as it is said [*ibid.* 1:8]: *There was a man, who was wholesome and an upright man, one who fears God, and shuns evil*. And has not Yehoshua, your disciple's disciple, taught that he acted out of love? (27b)

INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

DISCIPLE'S DISCIPLE

The *Mishna* states: Rabbi Yehoshua said: Who will remove the dust from your eyes, Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai! For you used to say that another generation is destined to declare a loaf (of *terumah*) *tahor* even though it is a *shlishi*, since there is no verse in the Torah which states that it is *tamei*. But does not your student,

Rabbi Akiva, cite a verse from the Torah that it is *tamei*, as it is said, *whatever is in it, shall be tamei*.

The Rambam in his introduction to his *Yad HaChazakah*, he writes that Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai had five outstanding students. They were: Rabbi Eliezer the Great, Rabbi Yehoshua, Rabbi Yosi HaKohen, Rabbi Shimon ben Nesanel and Rabbi Elozar ben Arach. The Rambam continues by stating that Rabbi Akiva studied under Rabbi Eliezer the Great. It would seem that Rabbi Akiva was not a disciple of Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai.

It is evident from the *Gemora* at the end of Tractate *Makkos* that Rabbi Akiva lived in the times after the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash. The Maharsha in *Yevamos* (16a) speaks this out as well. The *Gemora* there records an incident: In the times of Rabbi Dosa ben Hurkenas, the co-wife of a daughter was permitted to the *yavam*. This ruling was extremely troubling to the Sages, because Rabbi Dosa was a great Torah scholar and his eyes had stopped seeing, so that he was unable to come to the Beis Medrash to study. A discussion took place as to who should go and notify him that they disagree with him. Rabbi Yehoshua said to them, "I will go." They asked, "And who will go after him?" Rabbi Elozar ben Azaryah agreed to go. They asked, "And who will go after him?" Rabbi Akiva agreed to go.

The Maharsha explains: Rabbi Yehoshua went first because he was the oldest, for he was a student of Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai in the times when the Beis HaMikdash was in existence. Rabbi Elozar ben Azaryah was appointed to be the *Nasi* after the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash. Rabbi Akiva was in the times of Ben Kuziva in Beitar years afterwards, and that is why he went last. It emerges that Rabbi Akiva

was clearly not a student of Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai, but rather, a student of his student!

Rabbi Yaakov Marcus in his sefer *Minchas Yaakov* asks: Why did Rabbi Yehoshua refer to Rabbi Akiva as the disciple of Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai, when he was in fact his disciple's disciple? Further on in the *Mishna*, Rabbi Yehoshua (ben Chananyah) refers to Rabbi Yehoshua (ben Hurkanos) as being the student of the student of Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai! Why was he not as accurate in the first part of the *Mishna*? (*It would seem that the Rambam in his elucidation to the Mishnayos addresses this point as well.*)

DAILY MASHAL

The Special Power of the Bitter Waters

The Sotah waters would have the same effect on the suspected adulterer as it did on the suspected adulteress. When describing the ill effects of the waters, the Torah concludes: "*And the woman shall become a curse among her people*" (Bamidbar 5:27). The Meshech Chochmoh infers from here that if the suspected adulterer was not Jewish, he was not affected by the waters. He explains that the process whereby a Sotah's status was determined by the waters was supernatural, and the purpose of this miracle was to safeguard the morality and modesty of the Jews. Hashem confers a special Hashgacha on His people which demonstrates they are held to a higher standard. This is not relevant to a non-Jew and the waters did not have an effect on him, and the woman's disgrace would not be publicized amongst another nation.