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Sotah Daf 46

Produced by Rabbi Avrohom Adler, Kollel Boker Beachwood

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### **Mishna**

When the elders of Yerushalayim had departed (*after measuring which city was the closest to the corpse*) and went on their way, the elders of that city brought a female calf of the cattle which was never drawn with a yoke, and a blemish does not disqualify it. And they brought it down to an *eisan* valley. *Eisan* is meant literally: Rock hard. Even if it is not a rock hard valley, it is valid. They then break its neck with a large knife from the back of its neck. The place (*where the decapitation occurs*) is forbidden to be planted or worked, but it is permitted to comb flax or to chisel stones there (*since it does not involve the land itself*).

The elders of that city wash their hands in water at the place where the decapitation of the calf occurred and they declare: *Our hands have not spilled this blood, neither have our eyes seen it*. Could it have entered our minds that the elders of the court were shedders of blood? Rather, (*they are saying*) that he (*the murdered person*) did not come to us and we sent him away without food, nor did we see him and leave him without escort. And the *Kohanim* say: *Forgive for Your people Israel whom You have redeemed, O Hashem, and do not place innocent blood in the midst of Your people Israel*. They did not have to say: *And the blood shall be forgiven for them*, rather, the Divine Spirit is informing them: Whenever you do like this, the blood will be a forgiveness for them. (45b – 46a)

### **Blemish, Age and Work**

The *Gemora* asks: Shouldn't a blemish disqualify the calf for the *eglah arufah* based upon the following *kal vachomer*: We find that "age" does not disqualify a *parah adumah*, but yet, a blemish does disqualify it, so, an *eglah arufah*, where "age" does disqualify it (*the calf cannot be more than a year old*), certainly a blemish should disqualify it!?

The *Gemora* answers: It is written (*with respect of a parah adumah*): *which has no blemish on it*. We expound that only there will a blemish disqualify it, but not by an *eglah arufah*.

The *Gemora* asks: If so, other types of work (*the Torah only mentions "placing a yoke on it"*) should not disqualify a *parah adumah* (*since other types of work are derived from a kal vachomer and the verse mentioned above should limit the disqualifications*)!? Why did Rav Yehudah say in the name of Rav that if one placed a bundle of sacks on the cow, it cannot be used for a *parah adumah*; however, a calf for an *eglah arufah*, will not be disqualified unless it hauls the bundle!?

The *Gemora* answers that this disqualification is derived by means of a *gezeirah shavah* from the word *yoke* which is stated by *eglah arufah* and the word *yoke* which is stated by *parah adumah* as well.

The *Gemora* asks: Why can't we use the *gezeirah shavah* to rule that a blemish should disqualify a *parah adumah*?

The *Gemora* answers: The Torah excludes this from the word "it."

The *Gemora* asks: But it says "it" by an *eglah arufah* as well (and nevertheless, you expound the *gezeirah shavah* to teach that other work disqualifies a *parah adumah*)?

The *Gemora* answers: The word "it" by *eglah arufah* is needed to exclude *kodoshim* that work does not disqualify animals to be used for a *korban*. For we could have made the following *kal vachomer*: We find that a blemish does not disqualify an *eglah arufah*, but yet, work does disqualify it, so, *kodoshim*, where a blemish does disqualify it, then certainly work should disqualify it!? [The word "it" by *eglah arufah* precludes this *kal vachomer*.]

The *Gemora* challenges this *kal vachomer*: You cannot learn it from *eglah arufah*, for there, "age" disqualifies it (whereas there is no age limit by *kodoshim*; we can therefore say that work will only disqualify an *eglah arufah*, but not *kodoshim*).

The *Gemora* answers: There are *kodoshim* where "age" does disqualify, and therefore the verse will be needed for those types of *kodoshim*.

The *Gemora* asks: But is this the verse that teaches us that work does not disqualify an animal for *kodoshim*? We were taught the following *braisa*: It is written: *You shall not offer these (animals with blemishes) to Hashem*. "These" cannot be offered, but animals that were worked with may be offered!?

The *Gemora* answers: The *braisa* will only teach us that an animal, where one performed a permitted type of work with, may be used for a *korban*, but if a forbidden type of work (such as working with it on *Shabbos*) was done with it, it cannot be used for a *korban*; therefore, the word "it" is needed that even then, it may be used for a *korban*.

The *Gemora* asks: But there is another *braisa* that derives this *halacha* from a different verse (so why is the word "it" necessary)?

The *Gemora* answers: The word "it" teaches us that the animal may be used for a *korban* even if it was worked with after it was already designated for a *korban*. (46a)

### Other Types of Work

Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav: If one placed a bundle of sacks on the cow, it cannot be used for a *parah adumah*; however, a calf for an *eglah arufah*, will not be disqualified unless it hauls the bundle.

The *Gemora* asks from a *braisa*: We derive through a *kal vachomer* from *eglah arufah* that other types of work disqualify a *parah adumah*. Now, it would be logical to assume that since we are learning the disqualifications of a *parah adumah* from *eglah arufah*, they should have the same *halachos*. And just as a calf is not disqualified for an *eglah arufah* unless it hauls the bundle, so too, a cow should not be disqualified as a *parah adumah* unless it hauls the bundle!?

The *Gemora* answers that this matter is a matter of a *Tannaic* dispute. Some derive the *parah adumah* disqualifications from *eglah arufah* and others derive

the disqualification from the *parah adumah* verses itself.

For we learned in the following *braisa*: It is written: *Upon which has not come a yoke*. This teaches us that it is not only the placing of a yoke on the cow that causes disqualification, but even other types of work disqualify it. A *yoke* is written specifically to teach us that a cow will be disqualified even if a yoke was placed on it without any intent for it to work (*but rather it was placed on it to relieve the person from a burden*). Other types of work disqualify it only at a time of work.

A different *braisa* teaches us a similar *halacha* with respect to an *eglah arufah*: It is written: *With which no work has been done*. This teaches us that it is not only the pulling of a yoke on the calf that causes disqualification, but even other types of work disqualify it. A *yoke* is written specifically to teach us that a calf will be disqualified even if a yoke was placed on it without any intent for it to work (*but rather it was placed on it to relieve the person from a burden, and then it carried it*). Other types of work disqualify it only at a time of work. (46a)

### **A Yoke**

Rabbi Avahu said: I inquired of Rabbi Yochanan: How far must the calf pull the yoke for it to be disqualified? He answered me: If it went the distance equal to the size of a yoke.

The *Gemora* inquires: Did he mean the length of the yoke or its width?

Rabbi Yaakov answered in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: It is according to its width, which is a *tefach*.

The *Gemora* notes that this teaches us a *halacha* regarding buying and selling (*a seller must give a buyer a yoke where its width is at least a tefach*). (46a)

### **Cannot Produce Fruit**

Rabbi Yochanan ben Shaul said: Why does the Torah mention that he should bring the calf into an *eisan* valley? It is because the Holy One, blessed be He, said: Let something which did not produce fruit (*the calf*) be decapitated in a place that can't produce fruit (*because the soil is hard*) and atone for one who was not allowed to produce fruit.

The *Gemora* asks: What does "fruit" mean in connection to the murdered person? If you will say that it means offspring (*he cannot be fruitful any longer*), then, according to this, we should not bring an *eglah arufah* if the murdered person was old or castrated!

Rather, "fruit" means that he cannot perform *mitzvos* any longer. (46a)

### **Clarification of the Mishna**

The *Mishna* had stated: And they brought it down to an *eisan* valley. *Eisan* is meant literally: Rock hard.

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa* proving from a Scriptural source that *eisan* means hard. Another opinion states that *eisan* means old (*the soil was always here, and not brought here from elsewhere*).

The *Mishna* had stated: They then break its neck with a large knife from the back of its neck.

The *Gemora* explains the reason for this: It is derived by means of a *gezeirah shavah* from a *chatas* bird (*just*

*like the melikah is done at the back of the neck, so too, the decapitation is done at the back of the neck).*

The *Mishna* had stated: The place (where the decapitation occurs) is forbidden to be planted or worked on.

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: Rabbi Yoshiyah said: The place cannot be a location where work was done with it (in the past). Rabbi Yonasan said: The verse is referring to the future.

Rava explains that that everyone agrees that the place is forbidden to be planted or worked on in the future. The argument is only with respect to the past. (46a – 46b)

### **Reward for Escorting**

The *Mishna* had stated: The elders of that city wash their hands in water at the place where the decapitation of the calf occurred and they declare: *Our hands have not spilled this blood, neither have our eyes seen it.* Could it have entered our minds that the elders of the court were shedders of blood? Rather, (they are saying) that he (the murdered person) did not come to us and we sent him away without food, nor did we see him and leave him without escort.

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: Rabbi Meir used to say: We may force a person to escort his friend, for the reward for escorting is limitless; as it is said: *And the watchers saw a man leaving the city, and they said to him, "Show us now the entrance into the city, and we will deal kindly with you."* And it is then written: *And he showed them the entrance into the city.* What was the kindness they did to him? They killed the entire city by sword, but they let that man and his family go.

It is written: *And the man (who had showed them the way) went into the land of the Hittites and built a city, and called it Luz, which is its name until this day.* It has been taught in a *braisa*: That is the Luz in which they dye the *techeiles*; that is the Luz against which Sennacherib marched without disarranging it (like he did with the other Ten Tribes); that is the Luz against which Nebuchadnezzar marched without destroying it. And even the Angel of Death has no permission to pass through it. When the old men there become tired of life, they go outside the wall and then die.

And is this not a *kal vachomer*? If this Canaanite, who did not utter a word with his mouth, and did not walk a step (all he did was show them directions), caused salvation to come to himself and his offspring until the end of all generations, so he who performs the act of escorting with his feet, how much more so (that he deserves a limitless reward)!

The *Gemora* asks: How did he show them the way? Chizkiyah said: He just bent his mouth for them (he moved his lips without saying anything). Rabbi Yochanan said: He pointed for them with his finger.

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa* in agreement with Rabbi Yochanan: Because this Canaanite pointed the way with his finger, he caused salvation to come to himself and his offspring until the end of all generations.

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: Whoever is on the road and has no escort should occupy his mind with Torah.

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi also said: Because of the four paces with which Pharaoh escorted Avraham, as it is said: *And Pharaoh commanded men concerning him* etc., he was allowed to enslave Avraham's descendants

for four hundred years, as it is said: *And they shall serve them, and they shall afflict them, four hundred years.*

Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav: Whoever escorts his fellow four *amos* in the city, insures that no harm will come to him during his journey.

Ravina escorted Rava bar Yitzchak four *amos* in the city. Later, a danger threatened him, but he was saved.

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: A teacher should escort his pupils until the outskirts of the city. One friend should escort another friend up to the *Shabbos* boundary (*two thousand amos*). A pupil should escort his teacher a distance without a limit. Rav Sheishes explains: Up to a *parsah* (*four mil*). This only applies when the teacher is not his primary teacher, but with respect to his primary teacher, he should escort him three *parsaos*.

Rav Kahana once escorted Rav Shimi bar Ashi from Pum Nahara to Bei Tzinyasa. When they arrived there, he said to him, "Is it true what you say, that these palms of Bavel are from the time of Adam?" He answered, "You have reminded me of something which Rabbi Yosi bar Chanina said: 'What is the meaning of that which is written: *Through a land that no man passed through and where no man settled?* If no man passed through it, how could anyone have settled there? The meaning is: A land which Adam decreed that it should be settled has become inhabited, and a land which Adam did not so decree, has not been inhabited.'" [And when he had said that the palm trees were from the days of Adam, he only meant that this place would be for palm trees.]

Rav Mordechai escorted Rav Ashi from Hagronia until Bei Keifei, and according to another version, it was until to Bei Dura.

Rabbi Yochanan said in the name of Rabbi Meir: Whoever does not escort others or he who refuses to be escorted is as though he sheds blood. For had the men of Yericho escorted Elisha, he would not have stirred up the bears against the children (*who ridiculed him*), as it is said: *And he went up from there to Bethel; and as he was going up the road, little children came out of the city, and mocked him, and they said to him, "Go away, bald head; go away, bald head."* What they were saying to him was, "Go away, for you who have made this place bald for us (*now that you made the water bitter, we cannot sell it to the people living in Yericho*)."

What is the meaning of "little children"? Rabbi Elozar said: It means they were empty (*menu'arim*) of *mitzvos*. "Little" means that they were people of very little faith. A *Tanna* taught: They were youths, but they behaved like little children.

*And he (Elisha) looked behind him and saw them, and cursed them in the name of Hashem.* What did he see? Rav said: He actually looked upon them (*with the intention of punishing them*), as it has been taught: Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says: Wherever the Sages set their eyes on someone, there is either death or poverty. Shmuel said: He saw that their mothers had all become pregnant with them on *Yom Kippur* (*a day in which marital relations are forbidden*). Rabbi Yitzchak Nafcha said: He saw that they had long braids of hair, similar to the Emorites. Rabbi Yochanan said: He saw that there was no trace of *mitzvos* in them (*and therefore their punishment should not be lessened*).

The *Gemora* asks: But perhaps their descendants would perform *mitzvos*?

Rabbi Elozar said: Neither in them, nor in their descendants until the end of all generations will perform *mitzvos*. (46b)

### DAILY MASHAL

#### ***Agalah and Eglah; Yaakov and Yosef***

Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav: Whoever escorts his fellow four *amos* in the city, insures that no harm will come to him during his journey.

The Maharal uses our *Gemora* to explain the famous Medrash. It is written [Breishis 45:27]: And he (Yaakov) saw the wagons that Yosef had sent to carry him. Chazal say: The Hebrew word "*agalah*," wagon, is similar to the word "*eglah*," calf. Yosef was hinting to his father that he was alive by making a reference to the *eglah arufah*, which was the last topic of Torah that Yaakov and Yosef had studied together before Yosef was sold as a slave.

The Maharal notes: It cannot be merely coincidence that they were studying that passage, for if so, how would Yosef know that Yaakov would remember that it was this precise topic that they were studying together before he left.

Rather, this is what transpired: Yaakov was escorting Yosef to Chevron. Yosef said to him: Go back to the house and do not trouble yourself. Yaakov responded that it is a great *mitzvah* for one to escort another in the beginning of a journey. If one does not escort his friend, it is regarded as if he spilled his blood. One who does escort his fellow insures that no harm will befall him on his journey. It was through this that Yosef

realized that Yaakov will definitely remember the topic of Torah that they were studying, for he will remember escorting him out of the city. It was for this reason that Yosef sent the wagons. He was indicating to his father that he was not damaged in any manner, physically or spiritually, and that it was due to the fact that Yaakov escorted him out of the city.

Rabbi Yissochar Frand explains the Medrash differently: He states that a profound lesson is learned from Yosef and Yaakov. When Yosef wanted to give irrefutable proof to his father Yaakov that he was indeed Yosef, the incontrovertible piece of evidence he presented was the Torah portion that they were studying together. Serious Jews identify themselves by the Torah discussion that they were having at a certain time; not by any mundane activities that they were enjoying together. Yosef identified himself to Yaakov by the essence of Jewish identity - the Torah topic that they last discussed.