

Daf Notes

Insights into the Daily Daf

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Niddah Daf 7

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Daily Daf

Doubtful Impurity in Dough

The *Gemora* cites a *Mishna* which discusses dough which may have become impure. If the doubt occurred before the dough was formed, it may be made impure, but otherwise, it may not intentionally be made impure.

The *Gemora* explains that before the dough is formed, it is considered regular *chullin* food, which may be made impure. Once the dough is formed, and therefore obligated in *challah*, the *challah* which is latent in the loaf is considered present, and therefore may not be made impure.

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa* which clarifies that in both cases, the *challah* may be impure, and therefore may not be eaten, but it may be pure, and therefore may also not be burned. The *braisa* explains that the impurity the *Mishna* refers to is one that only applies to *challah*, but not *chullin*.

Abaye and Rava explain that the case is an unlikely impurity, which we would consider pure for *chullin*, but a doubt for *challah*. If the doubt was a case where one walked on one of two paths, one of which was impure, this would apply to *chullin*. Rather, the doubt in the *Mishna* is a case of a *zav* and someone pure loading or unloading a heavy weight from a donkey. For the

purposed of *chullin*, we assume the people and load are pure, but for the purpose of *terumah*, we consider them possibly impure. (6b – 7a)

Chullin containing latent challah

The *Gemora* challenges the implication of the *Mishna*, that *chullin* that contains latent *challah* has the same rules as *challah*, from a *Mishna* which discusses a woman who immersed in the *mikvah* and kneaded dough on the same day. The *Mishna* says that she must remove a piece suitable for *challah*, then place it on a flat utensil adjacent to the rest of the dough, and only then designate it as *challah*. By doing so, she avoids coming in contact with the *challah*, which would become impure as a third level impurity from her. This *Mishna* indicates that the dough which contains the latent *challah* does not become impure, implying that it does not have the status of *challah*.

Abaye answers that for any impurity which could make *chullin* impure, like the first *Mishna*, any doubt of it makes such *chullin* impure, just like *challah*. However, for any impurity which has no effect on regular *chullin*, like the second *Mishna*, we do not treat it as *challah*.

The *Gemora* challenges this answer from the retroactive impurity the day before a woman discovers that she is a

niddah. Although this is a doubt of impurity which would make *chullin* impure, Rav Nachman says that it only makes *chullin* which was treated as *kodesh* impure, but not *chullin* which was treated as *terumah*.

The *Gemora* answers that *chullin* treated as *terumah* is not as severe as *chullin* which has latent *challah* in it, as it does not have any mixture of real *terumah*, and it therefore is not impure.

The *Gemora* offers another answer, that the impurity of the day before a woman becomes a *niddah* is a purely Rabbinic impurity, and therefore is more limited in its scope. (7a)

Exceptions to Retroactive Niddah Impurity

The *Mishna* cites Rabbi Eliezer saying that four types of women do not have retroactive impurity when they discover they are a *niddah*: a virgin (in terms of menstruation), a pregnant woman, a nursing woman, and an old woman. Rabbi Yehoshua says that he only heard about the first of the list, but the *Mishna* rules like Rabbi Eliezer.

The *Mishna* defines each of the four:

1. A virgin means a woman who never menstruated, even if she is already married and therefore not physically a virgin.
2. A woman is considered pregnant when her fetus is apparent.
3. A woman is considered nursing until she weans her child. If she gave her child to a wet nurse, weaned her child, or the child died, Rabbi Meir says she is not considered nursing anymore, and therefore has the standard retroactive impurity, but the Sages say she still is considered nursing.
4. An old woman is defined as one who missed three regular periods in her old age.

Rabbi Eliezer says that any woman who missed three periods has no retroactive impurity.

Rabbi Yossi says that a nursing or pregnant woman only lose retroactive impurity when they missed three periods.

The *Mishna* explains that these exceptions apply only for the first time that these woman see after acquiring their status, but after that, they are retroactively impure. If the first time they saw was due to some extraordinary occurrence, it doesn't count, and the exception applies for the next time they see. (7a – 7b)

Ruling like Rabbi Eliezer

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa* in which Rabbi Eliezer told Rabbi Yehoshua that although Rabbi Yehoshua only heard of one case, he heard of all the cases. Just like we choose for testifying someone who saw the new moon over someone who did not see it, we follow Rabbi Eliezer's ruling, disregarding Rabbi Yehoshua's not having heard about all of them. While Rabbi Eliezer was alive, the ruling followed Rabbi Yehoshua, but once he died, Rabbi Yehoshua instituted the ruling like Rabbi Eliezer.

The *Gemora* explains that since Rabbi Eliezer was excommunicated, we didn't want people ruling like him in general. While he was alive, if we would rule like him in this case, people would mistakenly start ruling like him in general, and out of deference to him we couldn't protest. Once he died, we could protest, and therefore Rabbi Yehoshua reverted to Rabbi Eliezer's ruling in this case.

Shmuel lists four instances where we rule like Rabbi Eliezer:

1. The four women listed in our *Mishna*.
2. If a woman bleeds during labor and then the labor subsides, we consider the bleeding to be unrelated to the birth, potentially making her a *zavah*. Rabbi Eliezer says that labor must subside for 24 hours to make it unrelated.
3. A male *zav* or female *zavah* whose flow has stopped must count 7 clean days to become pure again. If they checked themselves on the first and seventh day and found themselves clean, Rabbi Eliezer says

they now have 7 clean days, Rabbi Yehoshua says they can only count those two days, and Rabbi Akiva says they can only count the seventh. The *braisa* cites Rabbi Shimon and Rabbi Yossi saying that Rabbi Eliezer's position is more logical than Rabbi Yehoshua's, and Rabbi Akiva's is the most logical, but we still rule like Rabbi Eliezer.

4. The *Mishna* discusses an earthenware vessel whose outside became impure due to contact with impure liquids. Rabbi Eliezer says the vessel makes all liquids, even *chullin*, fully impure, i.e., able to further transmit impurity, but does not even invalidate any food, even *terumah*. Rabbi Yehoshua says that it makes other liquids fully impure, and makes food invalid, but not impure.

Rabbi Yehoshua attempts to prove his position from the case of a *tevul yom* – someone who immersed in the *mikvah* today. Such a person does not make *chullin* liquids impure, yet makes *terumah* food invalid. Therefore, such a utensil which does make *chullin* liquids impure certainly should make *terumah* food invalid.

Rabbi Eliezer deflects this, as the impurity of a *tevul yom* is from the Torah, while the impurity of this vessel is Rabbinic. Impurity from a liquid or food to a vessel is purely a Rabbinic decree, to avoid confusion with the bodily fluids of a *zav* and *zavah*, which do make utensils impure from the Torah. The Rabbinic decree on such a vessel only extended impurity to liquids, which are more susceptible to impurity, but not to food. This is not an indication of how severe the impurity is, but simply the mechanics of the Rabbinic decree.

The *Gemora* explains that the *Mishna* only discusses a vessel whose outside became impure, since that is more lenient, as only the outside is impure. However, if the inside became impure, the whole vessel, in and out, is impure, and Rabbi Eliezer would agree to Rabbi Yehoshua that it invalidates food as well.

The *Gemora* asks why Shmuel had to list these cases, as in each one, the *Mishna* explicitly rules like Rabbi Eliezer. Although the last case does not have an explicit ruling,

Shmuel could have just listed that case, and omitted the others.

The *Gemora* answers that Shmuel explicitly ruled in all four cases to teach that we cannot learn the ruling from the *Mishna*, even when it explicitly rules like one opinion. (7b)