

16 Kislev 5778
Dec. 4, 2017



Shevuos Daf 6

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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

Step by Step?

The *Gemora* questions how we know that Rabbi Akiva enumerates the shades of *tzara’as* in order of brightness, and not as two categories, each with a sub-category.

The *Gemora* suggests that the source is a *braisa*, in which Rabbi Yosi records a dialogue between Rabbi Akiva and his son Yehoshua. Yehoshua asked Rabbi Akiva why the Sages listed the shades of *tzara’as* as “two that are four,” instead of simply saying that “anything white as an egg membrane or whiter is impure.” Rabbi Akiva answered that the distinct categories teaches that different shades can combine for the minimum size of *tzara’as*. Yehoshua asked him why they did not then teach that “anything white as an egg membrane or whiter is impure, and combines for the minimum size,” and Rabbi Akiva answered that the specific enumeration teaches that a *Kohen* must know how to identify the different shades in order to inspect *tzara’as*.

The *Gemora* says that Yehoshua’s suggestion of “from an egg membrane and whiter,” but not also, “from plaster and whiter,” indicates that the order of combining whites is solely by whiteness, not by groups of categories.

The *Gemora* rejects this proof, since the *braisa* may not be recording all the details of his suggestion, implying an “etc” to include the same for the second category.

The *Gemora* then suggests the source is another *braisa*, in which Rabbi Chanina says that Rabbi Akiva’s opinion is that the various appearances of *tzara’as* are like cups of milk, in

which fell an increasing number of drops of blood: 2, 4, 8, 12 (or 16). Just like these four cups, the appearances of *tzara’as* are all white, but in steadily decreasing intensities.

The *Gemora* rejects this, since this *braisa* may only be discussing appearances of *tzara’as* that differ in their mixture of red, but not differing intensity of the actual white.

Even if we assume Rabbi Akiva rules similarly in the ordering of differing brightness, the *Gemora* challenges this *braisa’s* description of Rabbi Akiva’s categories on reddish whites from another *braisa*. The *braisa* quotes Rabbi Akiva saying that the reddish form of all different levels of white are like wine diluted in water, but just differ in that *baheres* is strong as snow, while plaster is duller. If Rabbi Akiva says that the levels of white are ordered based on their brightness, he should have followed snow with wool instead of plaster.

The *Gemora* says that in fact another *braisa* quotes Rabbi Nassan as correcting this statement of Rabbi Akiva, to list wool after snow, and this *braisa* is the source for Rabbi Akiva’s position that the levels of white are enumerated by their brightness.

Abaye explains that we know that *baheres* (snow white) is whitest, since the verse says, “and if it [the *tzara’as*] is *baheres levanah* – white *baheres*,” indicating that only it is the whitest.

The *braisa* says that *baheres* is deep, i.e., white, as the verse says, “and the [*baheres’s*] appearance is deeper than the



skin," while *se'ais* (wool white) is higher (duller), since the root of the word *se'ais* is "raised up," as the verse refers to the tall mountains and the *gevaos nisaos* – raised hills. *Sapachas* is an ancillary shade, as the verse says that Eli's descendants will have to join in to existing *Kohanim*, asking them *sapchaini na* – please attach me. The verse lists *sapachas* after *se'ais*, but both categories of white (*se'ais* and *baheres*) have a subcategory. Rabbi Zeira says that this is learned from the symmetry of the two categories – if one has a subcategory, the other must as well. The *braisa* says that since *sapachas* is placed between the two categories in the verse, this indicates that there is a subcategory for both. (6a – 6b)

Untouched Wool

The *Mishna* listed white wool as a category of *tzara'as*. Rav Beibai quotes Rav Assi, who explains that the wool mentioned is from a newborn sheep, which is cleaned by its mother when it's born. The sheep's wool is then covered to retain the pure whiteness, and the wool is used for luxury wool clothing. (6b)

Parables of Whiteness

The *Gemora* offers a number of parables to explain the Sages' position on the varying degrees of whiteness of *tzara'as*.

1. Two kings, and two officers, with each king being above his officer. Defining each king in relation to the other's officer would follow Rabbi Akiva's categorization. (Rabbi Chanina)
2. The King, with his officer, and the *alfakta* (lower than the king), with his officer, the exilarch. (Rav Ada bar Ahava)
3. Shvor malka, the Persian king, and the Caesar, each with their officer (Rava). When Rav Pappa asked Rava which one was superior, Rava said he must have been in a cave, since all know that Roman currency is the world standard.

4. A woolen robe, with its duller rags, and a linen robe, with its duller rags. (Ravina) (6b)

Knowledge of Impurity

The *Mishna* stated that if one once knew that he was impure, and later remembered he was impure, but in between ate *kodesh* (sacrificial meat) or went into the *Mikdash*, he brings an *oleh v'yored* - sliding scale sacrifice.

The *braisa* discusses how we know that the sin was *kodesh* or *Mikdash*, since the verse mandating this sacrifice simply says that the person was impure. The *braisa* says that since we find that one who is impure is prohibited and punished in *kodesh* and *Mikdash*, and the verse mandates this sacrifice for one who is impure, we apply the *kodesh* and *Mikdash* parameters to the sacrifice as well.

The *Gemora* asks why we don't apply the parameter of *terumah*, which someone impure is also prohibited from eating.

The *Gemora* answers that the punishment for *terumah* is not *kares* – cutting off life, but heavenly death, which never is associated with a sacrifice.

The *Gemora* objects that we only find that a standard *chatas* sacrifice is associated with *kares*, but this is an *oleh v'yored*, which is associated with non-*kares* prohibitions, such as withholding testimony and violating an oath.

The *Gemora* answers that the verse states that the sacrifice applies to all impurities that one is impure *ba* – in it, qualifying the prohibition, and thus excluding *terumah*.

The *Gemora* asks why we do not exclude *kodesh* and *Mikdash* instead, requiring a standard *chatas* for their more severe prohibition. Rava says that Rebbe drew water in a deep pit – i.e., found a treasure of Torah after toil, as he



learned this distinction in a *braisa* from two verses that refer to one who touches an impure animal – one by the *oleh v'yored*, and one by one who eats *kodesh* when impure. The common phrase used in both cases indicates that the *oleh v'yored* is also case where the impure person ate *kodesh*. Since the verse says that a woman who has given birth may not touch *kodesh*, nor enter the *Mikdash*, the two prohibitions are equated, extending the *oleh v'yored* to one who enters the *Mikdash* while impure. (6b – 7a)

INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

Varying Degrees of White

The *Gemora* discusses Rabbi Akiva's and the Sages' positions on the four categories of whiteness of *tzara'as*. Rabbi Akiva lists them in order of whiteness, while the Sages list them as two categories, each with its own subcategory.

Rashi explains that Rabbi Akiva holds that the main categories are *baheres* (*snow*), and the duller *se'ais* (*wool*), but that *se'ais* has two subcategories, plaster and the duller egg membrane. Therefore, Rabbi Akiva says that the two main categories can combine with each other, since they are on equal footing, but the subcategories only combine with each other and with *se'ais*, their parent category, but not with *baheres*, which has no relation to them.

Tosfos (6a Af) disagrees, and says that Rabbi Akiva agrees to the general formulation of two categories, each with a subcategory, but just disagrees on the rules of combinations. Therefore, Rabbi Akiva agrees that the subcategory of *baheres* is plaster, and the subcategory of *se'ais* is egg membrane, but says that since plaster is two steps duller than its parent, it can only combine with *se'ais*.

The Raavad says that, according to the Sages, each subcategory can combine with its parent, and each category can combine with each other.

The Rambam (Tumas *Tzara'as* 1:1-3) says that all four levels of whiteness can combine with each other.

See the Kesef Mishneh (1:1) for a lengthy discussion of how the Rambam learned our *Gemora*, and his suggestion that the Rambam understands that the *Gemora* concludes that there is no dispute between Rabbi Akiva and the Sages. He notes that the *Gemora* is not clear as to whether a source was provided for Rabbi Akiva's position on the combination of the differing shades of white.

Rabbi Akiva's Son

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa* which records a dialogue between Rabbi Akiva and his son, Yehoshua. Rashi says that this son is Rabbi Yehoshua ben Karchah. Since Rabbi Akiva was bald, his son was referred to as the son of Karchah – the bald one.

Tosfos (Bechoros 58a Chutz) disagrees, noting that the chronology would not place Rabbi Yehoshua ben Karchah early enough to be Rabbi Akiva's son. Tosfos also says that Rabbi Akiva would not be constantly referred to as *karchah* – the bald one, as that is a derogatory term. Rather, Tosfos says Rabbi Yehoshua ben Karchah was a later *Tanna*, whose father was named Karchah.