

2 Sivan 5778
May 16, 2018



Zevachim Daf 33

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Semichah for a Metzora

The Gemora states: Let us support the position of Ulla (who says that even partial entrance is considered entrance) with the following Tosefta. The Tosefta states: All acts of *semichah* (leaning on an animal before bringing it as a sacrifice in the Beis Hamikdash) were done immediately before slaughtering it (without interruption between the *semichah* and slaughter), aside from the *semichah* done by a *metzora* at the gate of Nikanor. This is because the *metzora* cannot enter until he has blood from his *chatas* and *asham* sprinkled. If you will say that partial entrance is not considered entrance, let him put his hands in to the Courtyard to do *semichah*!

Rav Yosef says: This is the opinion of Rabbi Yosi the son of Rabbi Yehudah, who holds that the northern area of the Courtyard where this sacrifice had to be slaughtered was too far away from the opening of the Courtyard for it to be considered immediate (even if he would put his hands in).

The Gemora asks: Why didn't they make a small chamber (right next to the northern area in order to enable a *metzora* to do *semichah* right before the slaughtering of his sacrifice)?

Abaye and Rava answered: *Everything is in writing from the hand of Hashem, that He gave to me enlighten me regarding all of the work of the building (and its vessels).*

Some say: Rav Yosef says that anyone who does *semichah* must enter with his head and most of his body. This is because one must do *semichah* with all of his strength. Without entering with his head and most of his body, this is impossible. (Accordingly, there is no proof from the Tosefta, as it would not be acceptable for him to have his hands alone enter the Courtyard.)

The Gemora asks: What does the author of this Tosefta hold? If he holds that both the requirements of *semichah* for this sacrifice (i.e. *asham metzora*) and the need for *semichah* to be immediately before slaughter are Torah laws, the *metzora* should just go in to the Courtyard and do *semichah*, as the Torah states that this is what he should do!

Rav Ada bar Masnah answers: He does not go in due to a Rabbinical decree that he might take more steps in the Temple than necessary.

Others say: Rav Ada bar Masnah says that while the requirement for *semichah* for an *asham metzora* is a Torah requirement, the law that *semichah* must be done immediately before slaughtering is not a Torah law.



The *Gemora* asks a question on this from a *braisa*. The *braisa* states: *And he will lean (i.e. do semichah)...and he will slaughter*. This teaches us that just as *semichah* must be done by people who are pure, so too slaughtering must be done by people who are pure. If you say that the law that *semichah* must be done immediately before slaughtering is not a Torah law, why can't *semichah* be done by people who are impure?

Rather, it must be that the opposite is true. Rav Ada bar Masnah says: While the requirement for *semichah* for an *asham metzora* is not a Torah law, the law that *semichah* must be done immediately before slaughtering is a Torah requirement.

Ravina says: Ulla's statement earlier (*that if an impure person stuck his hand inside the Beis Hamikdash he would receive lashes*) was only regarding lashes (*not kares*).

When Rabin arrived he said in the name of Rabbi Avahu: (*Ulla's teaching in the name of Reish Lakish is incorrect*.) This was only said regarding an impure person who touches *kodesh*, not his sticking his hand into the Temple. It was taught. If an impure person touches *kodesh*, Rish Lakish says he receives lashes, while Rabbi Yochanan says he does not receive lashes. Rish Lakish says he receives lashes, as the verse states: *In all kodesh you (an impure person) should not touch*. Rabbi Yochanan says: He does not receive lashes, as this verse is discussing *terumah*, not *kodesh*.

The *Gemora* asks: Can Rish Lakish use this verse to teach a law regarding an impure person touching *kodesh*? Doesn't he need it to teach that an impure person

cannot eat *kodesh* meat? This is as it was taught: How do we know that an impure person cannot eat *kodesh* meat? Rish Lakish says: The verse states, *in all kodesh you should not touch*. Rabbi Yochanan says that Bardila taught: We derive a *gezeirah shavah* using the word *tumaso* from the law that an impure person cannot enter the Mikdash. Just as we see there that the Torah warned and punished, so too here there is a warning and punishment.

The *Gemora* answers: The law that an impure person cannot touch *kodesh* is derived from the fact that the Torah stated this verse regarding touching. The fact that it is a warning for an impure person not to eat *kodesh* is derived from comparing an impure person eating *kodesh* to an impure person entering the Temple. (33a – 33b)

INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

WASHING HANDS PROPERLY

By: Meoros HaDaf HaYomi

The *Gemora* in Menachos 31a and Berachos 42a explains that *semichah* (laying the hands on a sacrifice), hand-washing (*netilas yadayim*) and prayer have a common denominator: they must be done right away (*teikef*). The owner of a sacrifice must lay his hands on it just before its slaughtering, the blessing of *gaal Yisrael* must be pronounced just before *Shemoneh Esreh* and the blessing must be pronounced right after washing one's hands. Some say that this means that *netilas yadayim* must be performed just before *hamotzi*

(*Shulchan 'Aruch, O.C. 166:1*) and some say that this refers to *mayim acharonim*, which must be observed just before *birkas hamazon*.

We should clarify what maximal amount of time is considered *teikef* "right away". Tosfos (*Sotah 39a, s.v. Kol*) prove from our *sugya* that the maximal amount of time is enough to walk **up to 22 amos** but someone who waits enough time to walk 22 *amos* has not performed the required action right away. After all, our *Gemora* explains that *semichah* just before slaughtering cannot be maintained for an *asham* of a *metzora'* because the '*Ezras Yisrael* and the '*Ezras Kohanim* separated the *metzora'* from the place of slaughtering. The width of each '*Courtyard* was 11 *amos* and, together, 22 *amos*. We see, then, that the amount of time to walk 22 *amos* is not called "right away" (this is one way to understand the *Gemora*).

Walking 22 amos in a duration enough for 23 amos:

HaGaon Rav Chayim Tzevi Berlin zt"l (the rabbi of Altona and a leader of his generation, extant in the era of the *Noda' BiYehudah* and the Vilna Gaon) presents a fascinating challenge to learners in his '*Atzei Almogim* (165): Rambam rules (*Hilchos Beis HaBechirah, 6:3*) according to Rabbi Elazar ben Yaakov (*Midos 2:6*), that the '*Ezras Yisrael* and '*Ezras Kohanim* were on two levels connected by steps (the white steps in the model of the Temple distributed by *Meoros HaDaf HaYomi*). A calculation of the diagonal slope of the steps (whose flat area and height were each 2.5 *amos*) adds exactly the amount of time to walk another *amah* (according to the rule that the diagonal of a square is two fifths more than the horizontal: $5/2 \square 2/5 = 1$). It turns out, then, that the length of the two '*azaros* (including the flat area of the steps) was 22 *amos* but that the slope of the steps

added enough time to walk another *amah*! Therefore, according to Rambam the distance was 23 *amos* and since Tosfos rule that the distance is only 22 *amos*, we can apparently prove that they ruled according to the *Chachamim* (*Midos 2:3*), that there were no steps between the '*azaros*. He answers this remark with a sharp question from the *beis midrash* of the *Derishah*, who wanted to decrease the amount of time to enough time to walk only 21 *amos* as the *metzora'* stretched out his arms into the '*Courtyard* to perform *semichah* and thus decreased the distance by one *amah*!

The arms that decreased what the steps added: Rav Berlin concludes that the two questions solve each other. Indeed, according to the *Derishah*, the *metzora's* arms decreased the distance by one *amah* but the steps added an *amah* so we have the original distance of 22 *amos* (and see the remarks of the Chasam Sofer on *Shulchan 'Aruch, O.C. 166*, where he solves the *Derishah's* question otherwise).

Drying one's hands at the table: As the distance of 22 *amos* between the place of *netilas yadayim* and the place of eating is not great, '*Oneg Yom Tov* (18) and *Eishel Avraham* (166) suggest shortening the amount of time between *netilas yadayim* and *hamotzi* by drying the hands next to the table, as drying one's hands is part of the mitzvah of *netilas yadayim*. Indeed, *Mishnah Berurah* (ibid, S.K. 4) rules that the amount of time is reckoned from the moment of drying one's hands. However, HaGaon Rav Y.S. Elyashiv remarks that as drying is included in the mitzvah of *netilas yadayim* only if one washes one's hands with less than a *revi'is* of water, apparently drying next to the table does not help to be considered part of *netilas yadayim* if he washed

with a *revi'is*, as we are accustomed to do today (Remarks on Sotah 4b).

How strong must semichah be?

Shulchan 'Aruch rules (O.C. 607:3) that when saying the *viduy* (confession) of Yom Kippur, one must stand. *Magen Avraham* (ibid, S.K. 4) adds that one must bend as in *Modim* and not lean on an object, such that if the object were removed, he would fall.

Semichah with all one's might: The Gerer Rebbe zt"l, author of *Imrei Emes* (see *Pardes Yosef*, Vayikra 1:4), wondered that *Magen Avraham* apparently contradicts that stated in our *sugya*. After all, our *Gemora* explains that the owner of a sacrifice must lay his hands on its head with **all his strength**. We don't need too much imagination to think what would happen if someone would remove the animal while he is leaning on it and confessing! It seems that a confessor may completely lean on an object.

Viduy by the kohen gadol: This question becomes stronger if we consider the behavior of the *kohen gadol* on Yom Kippur, who pronounced *viduy* on the sacrifices while performing *semichah*. Is the *viduy* of an ordinary person on Yom Kippur more severe than that of the *kohen gadol* on Yom Kippur?

We must distinguish between applying pressure downwards and applying pressure forwards: The *Imrei Emes* concludes that a person would not fall if the sacrifice were removed, as he is raising his arms to the head of the animal and pushing downwards. If he pushes an object facing him, such as a heavy closet, his weight is applied to that object and he'd lose his balance

were it removed but if he is pushing downwards, the weight remains on his feet.

The large size of sheep and goats in Eretz Israel: You may wonder that the owners of the sacrifices also laid their hands on sheep and goats, which are small, and the owner would likely fall if the animal were removed. The *Imrei Emes* surprises us by asserting that "we can say, as cited in *Midrash Rabbah (Toledos, parashah 65:17)*, that sheep and goats in Eretz Israel were very tall"!

According to some Acharonim, the question in our *Gemora*, as to if a *metzora'*, for his purification, stood outside the 'Courtyard and only inserted his hands to perform *semichah* on his sacrifice or if he entered his head and most of his body, depends on the type of *semichah* required. If it only requires the strength of one's hands, he merely has to insert his hands. But if he must perform *semichah* with all his strength, he must enter his head and most of his body. Relevantly, we point out the statement of the *Ba'al HaTurim* (Vayikra 3:2), that someone who must lay his hands on a sheep or goat should do so lightly because of the animal's weakness. Though one must apply pressure with all one's strength, the matter depends on the animal's ability to withstand the pressure.