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Interruptions in a Brachah

Rabbi Chanina said: Rabbi Yehudah agrees that with regard to the *brachah* (blessing), he has only to say one *brachah*. [Although in this case the slaughtering has been interrupted by the covering of the blood, he recites a blessing over the slaughtering of the *chayah* and that is effective for the slaughtering of the bird as well.]

Ravina asked Rav Acha the son of Rava, and others say: Rav Acha the son of Rava asked Rav Ashi: In what way is this different from the incident concerning Rav’s students? For Rav Beruna and Rav Chananel, the students of Rav, were sitting at a meal and Rav Yeiva the Elder was waiting on them. They said to him: Give us some wine so that we may say the Grace after meals. They then retracted and said to him: Give us some wine that we may drink. Rav Yeiva said to them: Rav has said that as soon as one says, “Give us some wine so that we may say the Grace after meals,” it is forbidden to drink wine (without reciting another blessing on the wine, for it is as if you are beginning a new meal). Here as well, since he must first involve himself with the covering up of the blood (it is regarded as an interruption between the slaughtering of the *chayah* and that of the bird), he is obligated to say another *brachah*!?

The *Gemora* answers: There is no comparison between the two cases, for there it is impossible to drink and say the Grace simultaneously (and that is why the preparation to say the Grace is regarded as an interruption to the drinking), but here it is possible to slaughter with one hand and to cover up the blood with the other. (86b – 87a)

Mishna

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If a person slaughtered and did not cover up the blood, and another person saw it, the other must cover it up. If a person covered blood with earth and it became uncovered, he is exempt from covering it again. If the blood was covered (immediately after it was slaughtered) by wind, he must cover it. (87a)

Covering its Blood

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: It is written: *He shall spill its blood... and cover it in the earth*. Another verse states: *And I say to the Children of Israel*.

The following is derived:

- Whoever spilled it (*the slaughterer*) should cover it.
- If a person slaughtered and did not cover up the blood, and another person saw it, the other must cover it up.
- With that with which he spilled it out (*with his hand*) he shall cover it. This implies that he must not cover it with his foot, so that the *mitzvos* should not be treated with contempt by him.
- It once happened that a certain person slaughtered the animal and another preceded him and covered the blood, and Rabban Gamliel obligated the latter to pay ten gold coins (*for stealing the mitzvah*).

They inquired: Was this a compensation for being deprived of the performance of the *mitzvah*, or for being deprived of the *brachah*?

The *Gemora* notes a practical difference between these two views: In the case of the Grace after meals. [One would recite the *Birchas Hamazon* and discharge the other’s obligation. If one was designated to recite it, and another came and preempted

him.] If you say that it was the compensation for being deprived of the performance of the *mitzvah*, then here there is also but one *mitzvah*; but if you say that it was the compensation for being deprived of the *brachah*, then here the compensation should be forty gold coins (*for there are four blessings in the Grace after meals*).

The *Gemora* attempts to resolve this from the following incident. A Sadducee said to Rebbe, "He who created the mountains did not create the wind, for it is written: For behold, the Fashioner of mountains and Creator of wind." [*By the fact that there are two expressions used, it would seem that two different powers created the mountains and the wind.*] He replied: Fool what you are; turn to the end of the verse, where it is written: *Hashem, the God of legions, is His Name (which indicates that there is only one creator)*. The Sadducee responded: Give me three days time and I will respond to you. Rebbe spent those three days in fasting (*praying that he should not be bested*). Afterwards, as he was about to eat something, he was told: The Sadducee is standing at the door. Rebbe exclaimed: *But they put gall into my food. [In truth, it was a different Sadducee.]* He said: My master, I bring you good tidings; your enemy could find no response and so he threw himself down from the roof and died. Rebbe said: Would you dine with me? He replied: Yes. After they had eaten and drank, Rebbe said to him: Will you drink the cup of wine over the Grace after meals has been said, or would you rather have forty golden coins? He replied: I would rather drink the cup of wine. Thereupon, a Heavenly Voice went forth and said: The cup of blessing is worth forty golden coins.

Rabbi Yitzchak said: The family of that Sadducee is still to be found among the prominent people of Rome, and they are named: The family of Bar Luyanos.

The *Mishna* had stated: If a person covered blood with earth and it became uncovered, he is exempt from covering it again.

Rav Acha the son of Rava said to Rav Ashi: Why is this different than the obligation to return lost property, where the master has said: *You shall return*, which implies even a hundred times?

He replied: In that case there is no limiting term stated, but here, there is written a limiting term: *And he shall cover it*.

The *Mishna* had stated: If the blood was covered (*immediately after it was slaughtered*) by wind, he must cover it.

Rabbah bar bar Chanah said in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: This is only true if the earth that the wind blew over the blood was blown away. If it was still on the blood, he has no obligation to cover it.

The *Gemora* notes: Even if it became uncovered, why should it make a difference (*and why should there be a mitzvah now to cover it – if there was no mitzvah to cover it when it was already covered*)? Should we not say that because the *mitzvah* was already rejected, it is permanently rejected!

Rav Pappa concludes from here that *mitzvos* are not permanently rejected.

The *Gemora* asks: And why is it different from the following which was taught: If a person slaughtered and the blood was absorbed in the earth, he must nevertheless cover it up?

The *Gemora* answers: In that case there were stains of blood still visible. (87a)

Mishna

If the blood (*from a slaughtered chayah or bird*) was mixed with water (*which fell in*), if it retains the appearance of blood, one is obligated to cover it. If it was mixed with wine, we regard it as though it were water (*and we determine if the blood would have been recognizable in that amount of water – then one would be obligated to cover it*). If it was mixed with the blood of a domesticated animal (*whose blood is not subject to the 'covering' obligation*) or with blood from a *chayah* (*which is not subject to the 'covering' obligation – such as a wound*), we regard it as though it were water. Rabbi Yehudah says: Blood

does not nullify blood. [Accordingly, even if it would not have the appearance of blood, one is still obligated to cover its blood.]

The blood which splattered out and that which is upon the knife must also be covered up. Rabbi Yehudah says: When is this the case? When there is no other blood but that; but when there is other blood besides this, it does not need to be covered up. (87a – 87b)

Mixed Blood

The *Mishna* stated elsewhere: If the blood (which was in the service vessel – prior to its sprinkling on the altar) was mixed with water (which fell in), if it retains the appearance of blood, it is valid. If it was mixed with wine, we regard it as though it were water (and we determine if the blood would have been recognizable in that amount of water – then it would be valid). If it was mixed with the blood of a domesticated animal (an unconsecrated one) or a wild beast, we regard it as though it were water. Rabbi Yehudah says: Blood does not nullify blood. [Accordingly, if a small amount of blood from a sacrifice fell into regular blood from an animal, it can still be sprinkled on the altar.]

Rabbi Chiya bar Abba says in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: This applies only when the water fell into the blood; however, if the blood fell into water, each first drop that fell into the water became nullified (and therefore the blood ends up becoming nullified by the water).

Rav Pappa says: In this same case (blood falling into water) there would still be an obligation to cover the blood, as *mitzvos* are not pushed aside (and as long as it appears like blood, there is a *mitzvah* to cover it).

Rav Yehudah said in the name of Shmuel: As long as it has a reddish color, it effects atonement, it renders food susceptible to *tumah*, and it must be covered up.

The *Gemora* asks: What is he teaching us? We have learned in a *Mishna* with regard to its effectiveness for atonement, and we have also learned in a *Mishna* with regard to the obligation of

covering up!? It must be that the teaching that it renders food susceptible to *tumah* was necessary.

But, the *Gemora* asks, even that teaching is unnecessary, for if it is blood, it renders food susceptible to *tumah*, and if it is water, it renders food susceptible to *tumah*!?

The *Gemora* answers: It was only necessary to be stated for the case where the blood was mixed with rain water (which only renders food susceptible to *tumah* if one intends to use it for some purpose).

The *Gemora* asks: But even in the case of rain water since it was taken and poured into the vessel with the blood, it was surely intended for some purpose!?

The *Gemora* answers: It was necessary only in the case where they were mixed by itself.

Rav Assi of Neharbil says: It refers to blood serum.

Rabbi Yirmiyah of Difti said: He incurs the penalty of *kares* (when eating blood serum), but only if there was an olive's volume (of the pure blood).

In a *braisa* it was taught that it renders *tumah* through a roof, but only if there was a quarter *log*.

We have learned in a *braisa*: All liquids that issue from a corpse are *tahor* except for its blood. And if the blood serum has a reddish color, it will render *tumah* through a roof.

The *Gemora* asks: Are all the liquids that issue from a corpse *tahor*? But I can point out a contradiction from the following *Mishna*: The liquids that issue from a *tevil yom* (one who was *tamei*, but has immersed himself in a *mikvah*; he is considered a *tevil yom* until nightfall) are like the liquids which he touches, and neither the one nor the other (of these liquids) conveys *tumah*. As for all others that are *tamei*, whether they suffer a light or grave *tumah*, the liquids that issue from them are like the liquids that they touch, and both are *tamei* in the first

degree. This is except for a liquid which is an *Av hatumah*. Now, what is meant by 'light or grave *tumah*'? Presumably 'light *tumah*' means that of a *sheretz* or of a *zav*, and 'grave *tumah*' is that of a corpse! [Evidently, liquids that issue from a corpse are indeed *tamei*!?]

The *Gemora* answers: No; 'light *tumah*' means that of a *sheretz*, and 'grave *tumah*' is that of a *zav*.

The *Gemora* explains that the Rabbis decreed that the liquids that issue from a *zav* are *tamei*, for people do not keep away from him; however, regarding a corpse, which people anyway keep away from, the Rabbis did not feel a need to declare its liquids *tamei*. (87b – 88a)

INSIGHTS ON THE DAF

Can one predetermine that a brachah won't apply to certain items?

Our *Gemora* explains that someone who slaughters a few animals pronounces one *brachah* before the first *shechitah* to cover all the slaughtering and the halachah was so ruled (*Shulchan 'Aruch*, Y.D. 19:2): "If he slaughtered domesticated animals, wild animals and fowl, he pronounces one *brachah* for them all."

A *shochet* who spoke between *shechitos*: As long as the *shochet* doesn't speak between *shechitos*, then according to all opinions the *brachah* that he pronounced before the first *shechitah* applies to all his *shechitos*. However, the Rishonim disagreed if a slaughterer spoke between *shechitos* as to if he must say another *brachah* and the halachah was not decided. Thus we learn from *Shulchan 'Aruch* (ibid, *se'if* 5): "If he wants to slaughter many animals, he should take care not to speak between *shechitos* regarding something that doesn't concern the slaughtering...but if he spoke, this is an interruption and he must pronounce another *brachah*...and some say that speech between *shechitos* is not an interruption."

The advice of the *Pri Chadash*: To avoid the doubt as to if speech between *shechitos* constitutes an interruption, the *Pri Chadash* (ibid) suggested a fine idea. While pronouncing the *brachah*, the *shochet* should have in mind that it shall apply to all the *shechitos* he'll perform till he speaks but won't apply to the *shechitos* afterwards. Therefore, when the *shochet* speaks, according to all opinions he will have to say another *brachah* before the next *shechitah* because he declared in advance that his *brachah* doesn't pertain to the *shechitos* after his speech.

However, the *Tevuos Shor* (ibid, S.K. 17) strongly disagrees as, in his opinion, if a *shochet* intends to slaughter a few animals, he cannot limit his *brachah* to only some of them but all those that he intends to slaughter are included in his *brachah* perform.

A person who wants to eat an apple and a papaya: Before we explain their disagreement, we should mention that beyond its implications for *shochetim*, it applies to each of us! Someone who wants to eat a number of fruit and has in mind that his *brachah* should exempt only some of them faces the same disagreement (of course, if this concerns a case where there is some doubt and does not concern saying an unnecessary *brachah*). According to the *Pri Chadash*, he may limit his *brachah* but according to the *Tevuos Shor*, he may not. Such a case is not rare and applies, for example, to someone on a journey who has an apple and a papaya to eat. There is a doubt as to if the *brachah* on a papaya is *borei peri ha'eitz* or *borei peri haadamah* and one normally says *borei peri haadamah* which is anyway acceptable *bdi'eved* (O.C. 206:1). If he first eats the apple, he is not allowed to pronounce a *brachah* on the papaya as it could be that the *brachah* for the papaya is *borei peri ha'eitz* and it was exempted by the *brachah* on the apple. If he prefers the apple and wants to eat it first (*chaviv*), the advice is to say a *brachah* on the apple and have in mind that it shall not apply to the papaya. According to the *Tevuos Shor*, however, this cannot be done (concerning making an interruption while eating, see the halachos regarding *berachos*).

The *brachah* applies to each mitzvah: The time has now come to understand each side of the disagreement. Some explain (see

Vezos HaBerachah, Beirur Halachah, 31) that the source of the disagreement stems from understanding the obligation of saying a *brachah* on a mitzvah. The *Pri Chadash* understood that *Chazal* instituted to pronounce a *brachah* on every mitzvah. Therefore, if a *shochet* intends to slaughter ten animals, he actually has the obligation of ten *berachos* but he can exempt all the *shechitos* with one *brachah* (if there won't be an interruption between them). Therefore, in his opinion nothing prevents the slaughterer or the eater of the fruit from predetermining that his *brachah* won't apply to a certain animal or fruit as the actual halachah obligates that each article needs a *brachah* for itself.

The person who observes the mitzvah had to say a *brachah*:

However, the *Tevuos Shor* understood that *Chazal* instituted to pronounce a *brachah* before performing a mitzvah, whether one mitzvah or ten mitzvos. In other words, the *brachah* does not apply separately to each mitzvah-act but a person about to perform a mitzvah or mitzvos has the obligation to pronounce a *brachah*. Therefore, it is self-understood that he cannot eliminate one fruit or one animal from the *brachah* as his *brachah* does not relate to individual items but concerns the person observing the mitzvah.

Remove the papaya: According to the *Tevuos Shor*, there is one piece of advice for the person wanting to eat first an apple and then a papaya, and there is no vegetable available to say *borei peri haadamah*. Before pronouncing the *brachah* he should remove the papaya from the room so that the *brachah* won't apply to it (see *ibid*, p. 291).

We emphasize that the above only concerns the initial *brachah* before eating. However, according to all opinions one cannot divide the application of the final *brachah* and make a condition that it should only exempt certain foods as the after-*brachah* is for the eater's satisfaction and the satisfaction is surely only one and includes all the foods (*Vezos HaBerachah, ibid*, p. 289; we should mention that the *poskim* discussed this issue concerning many mitzvos, such as *tzitzis* – see *Beirur Halachah, 8:14* – and the *brachah* on studying Torah – see *Magen Avraham, 47, S.K.*

12; etc.; HaGaon Rav Y. Eidelstein expanded on the topic in *Shalmei Yosef, 116*).

How much is a mitzvah worth?

Someone once grabbed a mitzvah from another: A *shochet* was about to observe the mitzvah to cover the blood and another interceded and covered it instead. Our *Gemora* recounts that Rabban Gamliel obligated the latter to pay the former 10 *zehubim* (gold coins)! Concerning this obligation there are two very interesting disagreements, codependent in two possible directions, as we shall realize further on.

A fine or payment for damage? We find two utterly different definitions among the Rishonim for the obligation of payment by someone who grabs a mitzvah. Some said that the payment is a fine imposed by *Chazal* while others said that the payment is “a regulation to endear mitzvos”. In other words, *Chazal* instituted payment for grabbing a mitzvah, like the halachos of damages, and they thus sought to endear the mitzvos (see the Rif and the Rosh, Bava Kama, *Perek HaChovel, 32b* in the Rif; *Responsa Rivash, 506; Shitah Mekubetzes* in the name of Rabbi Yonasan).

What about a person who grabs a mitzvah unintentionally? A few halachic implications result from this disagreement. Someone who grabs a mitzvah unintentionally, if the obligation stems from the halachos of damages, must pay, as one who causes damage unintentionally is not exempt from payment. However, if the obligation is a fine, we cannot impose it on someone who robs another of a mitzvah unintentionally (*Rivash, ibid*).

A person who grabbed a mitzvah and confessed: Also, “someone who confesses is exempt from a fine”. In other words, someone who performed a deed for which a *beis din* imposes a fine and confessed in *beis din* before the fine was sentenced upon him is exempt. Therefore, if the payment is a fine, then someone who grabbed a mitzvah and ran to the *beis din* to confess is exempt from payment. But if his obligation to pay stems from the halachos of damages, his confession cannot

exempt him (see *Shitah Mekubetzes*, Bava Kama, *ibid*, in the name of Hari of Lunil, and see *Ketzos HaChoshen*, 388, S.K. 11, that the Rishonim disagreed as to if a person is exempted by confession as regards a fine imposed as a rabbinical decree).

A person who prevents performing a mitzvah but doesn't do it himself: The *Kesav Sofer* mentions another interesting difference (*Responsa*, C.M. 20 and s.v. *Veyesh li*) concerning a person who prevented another from observing a mitzvah but didn't do it in his stead. If Rabban Gamliel's obligation stems from the halachos of damages, then this person caused the other damage. But if it is a fine, it could be that *Chazal* fined someone who grabbed a mitzvah from another and "took" it for himself but if he merely prevented him from observing a mitzvah, he is a sinner but such a case is not included in the fine.

How much should be paid? Till now we have discussed the Rishonim's disagreement as to if the above payment stems from the halachos of damages or if it is a fine. There is another disagreement among the *poskim*: how much is the payment? Our *Gemora* recounts that Rabban Gamliel obligated the person who grabbed the mitzvah to pay ten *zehubim* but some *poskim* maintain that that case justified such but that each case must be judged separately. On the other hand, some maintain that payment of ten *zehubim* should apply to every case of grabbing a mitzvah. These two opinions are mentioned by Rambam (*Hilchos Chovel Umazik* 7:13) and in *Shulchan 'Aruch* (C.M. 382:1).

We can understand that the two disagreements are codependent. Thus indeed wrote the *Magid Mishneh* (*ibid*) and the *Shach* (*ibid*), that according to those who hold that the payment stems from damages, he must always be made to pay ten *zehubim* as Rabban Gamliel determined that this is the price of a mitzvah. However, if the obligation is a fine imposed by *Chazal*, the *beis din* should examine if the person who lost the mitzvah seeks mitzvos and then they should fine the offender harshly and vice versa.

On the other hand, HaGaon Rabbi Isser Zalman Meltzer zt"l contended the opposite (*Even HaAzel*, *ibid*). On the contrary, if

the obligation stems from damages, there is no fixed price to the payment and we must examine how much the mitzvah is worth for the person offended – how much he would like to receive to relinquish it. Only if it is a fine, we can understand that it is a fixed amount as that is the nature of a fine (as Rambam asserts, *ibid*, 3:8, that any fixed payment is a fine).

Nowadays if the offended person siezed ten zehubim, they can't be reclaimed: In our era a *beis din* does not impose fines and because of the doubt – as to if the obligation stems from damages or is a fine – a *beis din* does not obligate someone who grabbed a mitzvah to pay. But if the offended person seized the offender's property to the value equivalent of ten *zehubim*, he is not forced to pay back (*Shulchan 'Aruch*, *ibid*). Today ten *zehubim* are worth about 1,500 shekalim or \$330.

DAILY MASHAL

Ten zehubim for distress: Many ask: someone who wanted to observe a mitzvah but had to relinquish it perforce is regarded as though he observed it. If so, why must the person who grabbed a mitzvah compensate the other? The offended person receives a reward for intending to observe the mitzvah and it turns out that he lost nothing! The Chasam Sofer explains that when a person observes a mitzvah and serves Hashem joyfully, he receives a reward for serving Hashem while someone forced to relinquish a mitzvah gets a reward for his distress. Therefore, though their reward is identical, the person who grabbed the mitzvah distressed another and must compensate him.