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Niddah Daf 22

Produced by Rabbi Avrohom Adler, Kollel Boker Beachwood

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Keri through a Reed

Rabbah inquired of Rav Huna: What is the ruling where one discharged semen through a reed (*where he inserted it into his organ*)? Did the Torah say ‘*from him*’ – teaching us that one only becomes *tamei* when it is issued naturally from his body, but not when it was brought out by means of a reed, or is it possible that the expression ‘*from him*’ implies simply that he is *tamei* only when the semen comes out of his body, in which case he is *tamei* even though it was drawn out by a reed?

Rav Huna replied: You can derive the ruling from the fact that the man himself (*even when he discharges semen in a regular manner*) becomes *tamei* only when the quantity of semen discharged suffices to close up the orifice of the organ (*and since the reed used is inevitably smaller than the orifice, the quantity of semen extracted by it must obviously be less than the prescribed minimum*).

Rabbah asks: This then implies that this *tumah* is regarded as a “*tumah through contact*” (*for, only tumah which comes through contact has a minimum requirement; if, however, the person would be rendered tamei on account of the discharge from his body, there would be no minimum amount required – similar to the tumah of a niddah*). But, if so, it (*a seminal emission*) should not cause the counting (*of the seven clean days*) for a *zivah* to be cancelled! Why then was it taught in a *braisa*: *This is the law of a zav and of one from whom a seminal discharge went out*. We derive from this verse (*the comparison*) that just as *zivah* causes the counting (*of the seven clean days*) to be cancelled, so does a seminal discharge (*cancel the count*)! [*If a seminal discharge would be regarded as a tumah through contact, it would not cancel the count, just as contact from a sheretz would not cancel the count!?*]

Rav Huna replied: Regarding the cancellation, the reason why the previous counting is void is because it is impossible for semen to be discharged without some particles of *zivah* mixed in.

Rabbah asked: Now then, this (*a seminal discharge on the seventh day*) should cause the counting of all the seven days to be cancelled; why then was it taught in a *braisa* as follows: *This is the law of a zav* etc. Just as *zivah* causes the clean days to be cancelled so does a seminal discharge? Now perhaps you should (*continue the comparison and*) assume that just as *zivah* causes the counting of all the seven days to be void, so would a seminal discharge as well; it was therefore expressly stated: *Through which he becomes tamei*. You can apply to it (*a seminal emission*) only that which had been said about it (*that it cancels one day only*). [*But if it’s true that every seminal emission has particles of zivah mixed in, it should cancel all seven days – just like zivah does!?*]

Rav Huna replied: It is a decree of Scripture that an absolute *zivah*, in which no semen is mixed, causes the counting of all seven days to be cancelled, but particles of *zivah*, in which semen is mixed, cause only the counting of one day to be cancelled. (22a)

Dry Blood

Rabbi Yosi the son of Rabbi Chanina inquired of Rabbi Elozar: What is the ruling in the case of dry blood (*discharged from a woman*)? Did the Torah say: *if her blood flows*, which would indicate that it must be actually flowing; therefore, it refers only to moist blood, but not to dry blood? Or perhaps it is possible that the expression was used merely because blood usually flows (*in such a manner*), but the same law in fact applies to dry blood as well?

Rabbi Elozar replied: You have learned (*the answer to*) this in a *Mishna*: The blood of a *niddah* and the flesh of a corpse transmit *tumah* when moist or when dry.

Rabbi Yosi said to him: Where the blood was initially moist and then it dried up, I have no question to ask (*for certainly, it is tamei*); my question arises only where it was originally dry.

Rabbi Elozar replied: You have learned (*the answer to*) this also in a *Mishna*: If a woman miscarried an object that was like a rind, like a hair, like dust, like a fly; if it is red, let her put it in water and if it dissolves she is *tamei*, but if it does not she is *tahor*. [Evidently, even if it is as dry as dust, she is *tamei*.]

The *Gemora* asks: But if so, shouldn't she be *tamei*, even if the object was not dissolved?

Rabbah replied: If it is not dissolved, it is regarded as an independent creature.

The *Gemora* asks: But is there such a phenomenon?

The *Gemora* answers: Yes; and so it was taught in a *braisa*: Rabbi Elozar the son of Rabbi Tzadok said: The following two incidents were brought up by my father from Tivin to Yavneh (*before the Sages*). It once happened that a woman was miscarrying objects like pieces of red rind and the people came and asked my father (*if she was a niddah or not*), and my father asked the Sages, and the Sages asked the doctors who explained to them that that woman had an internal wound, and from it, she would cast out objects like pieces of red rind. She should put them in water, and if they dissolve she should be declared *tamei*.

And yet another incident occurred when a woman was miscarrying objects like red hairs, and she came and asked my father, and my father asked the Sages, and the Sages asked the doctors who explained to them that the woman had a mole in her internal organs, and from it, she would cast out objects like red hairs. She should put them in water, and if they dissolve she should be declared *tamei*. (22a – 22b)

Method of Examination

Rish Lakish ruled: This test must be done with lukewarm water. [*Resistance to cold water alone is no proof that it is not in fact blood, since it is possible that it would dissolve in lukewarm water and the woman, therefore, cannot be declared tahor.*] It was also taught in a *braisa* like this: Let her put it in water, and it should be in lukewarm water. Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel ruled: She should crush it with saliva on her nail.

Ravina notes that the practical difference between them is if the object dissolved when it was crushed by the exercise of pressure. [*The Tanna Kamma maintains that if it was crushed through pressure, it is not regarded as blood.*]

The *Gemora* cites a *Mishna* taught elsewhere: How long must they be soaked in the lukewarm water? [*Animal carcasses and sheratzim only convey tumah if they are somewhat moist. If they have become dry, they are soaked in water to determine if they can be restored to their original condition of moistness.*] Twenty-four hours. Now, in our case (*of blood*), what length of time is required? Do we require a period of twenty-four hours or not? Is it only in regard to animal carcasses and *sheratzim*, which are tough, that a twenty-four hours' soaking is required, but not in that of blood, which is soft, or perhaps there is no difference?

The *Gemora* leaves the question unresolved. (22b)

Shape of Fish

The *Mishna* had stated: If a woman miscarried an object in the shape of a fish [*locust, vermin or crawling creatures; if there was blood with them she is tamei, otherwise, she is tahor*].

The *Gemora* asks: But why doesn't Rabbi Yehudah disagree in this case as well (*and rule that she is tamei regardless*)?

Rish Lakish replied: This was indeed taught as an argument, and it (*the Mishna*) represents only the opinion of the Rabbis.

Rabbi Yochanan, however, replied: It may even be said to agree with Rabbi Yehudah, for Rabbi Yehudah issued his ruling only there, in the case of a shapeless object, since it is the nature of blood to congeal and to assume the form of a shapeless object, but it is never the nature of blood to assume the form of a creature.

The *Gemora* asks: According, however, to that version in which Rabbi Yochanan stated that the point at issue between them is the question whether it is possible for the uterus to open without bleeding, shouldn't Rabbi Yehudah have disagreed in this case as well?

The *Gemora* answers: The one who learned that version reads here as follows: Both Rabbi Yochanan and Rish Lakish stated: This was indeed taught as an argument, and it (*the Mishna*) represents only the opinion of the Rabbis. (22b)

Shape of an Animal



The *Mishna* had stated: If a woman miscarried a fetus that looks like a domesticated animal [*wild animal or bird, whether it is kosher or non-kosher; if it was a male she must observe the standard purity and impurity periods prescribed for a male, and if it was a female she must observe the standard purity and impurity periods prescribed for a female, but if the gender is unknown, she must observe the standard purity and impurity periods prescribed for both male and female; these are the words of Rabbi Meir*].

Rav Yehudah said in the name of Shmuel: What is the reason of Rabbi Meir? It is because the expression of *yetzirah* (*forming*) is used (*by the creation of animals and birds*) just as (*it was used*) in that of man. [*R' Meir derives from here through a *gezeirah shavah* that giving birth to a creature in the shape of an animal or birds is also regarded as a birth, and the woman is rendered *tamei*.*]

The *Gemora* asks: Now then, if she miscarried an object in the likeness of a large sea-creature, would she be rendered *tamei* on account of childbirth, since an expression of *be'riah* (*creating*) was used in its case just as it was used in that of man?

The *Gemora* answers: An expression of *yetzirah* may be deduced (*through a *gezeirah shavah**) from another expression of *yetzirah*, but one of *be'riah* may not be deduced from one of *yetzirah*.

The *Gemora* asks: But why should that make a difference? Wasn't it taught by the Academy of Rabbi Yishmael that one can derive a *gezeirah shavah* from "*v'shav ha'Kohen*" and "*u'va ha'Kohen*" as they are both terms meaning "*and he will come/return?*"

And furthermore, why shouldn't one expression of *be'riah* be deduced from another expression of *be'riah*, for *be'riah* is written by the creating of man as well?

The *Gemora* answers: The word *be'riah* (*by man*) is required for its own context, while *yetzirah* is available to be used for the *gezeirah shavah*. And the word *yetzirah* may be deduced from the similar one of *yetzirah* (*for the variation makes no difference only where there is no alternative analogy based on identical expressions, but where there is an alternative analogy based on identical expressions, we must then make the analogy from the identical expressions*).

The *Gemora* asks: On the contrary! Perhaps the word *yetzirah* is required for its own context, while *be'riah* is available for deduction, and therefore the expression of *be'riah* may be deduced from *be'riah* (*and therefore a birth to a large sea-creature would also cause *tumah**)?

The *Gemora* gives a different answer to the original question: The expression of *yetzirah* is free by man and animal (*and therefore available for the *gezeirah shavah**), but the expression of *be'riah* is free only in the case of man, but it is not available (*for the *gezeirah shavah**) by that of the large sea-creatures. The *Gemora* explains why this is correct.

The *Gemora* asks: What, however, is the practical difference between an expression that is available for deduction on one side and one that is available for deduction on two sides?

The *Gemora* answers: The practical difference is the statement Rav Yehudah made in the name of Shmuel: From any *gezeirah shavah*, where neither of the terms are available for deduction, no derivation may be made; if one of the terms is available for the purpose, then according to Rabbi Yishmael, a derivation may be made but no refutation may be raised, while according to the Rabbis, a derivation may be made but a refutation may be raised; and if both terms are available for derivation, all agree that a derivation may be made and no refutation may be raised.

The *Gemora* asks: According to Rabbi Yishmael, what is the practical difference between a *gezeirah shavah* where only one of its terms are available for derivation and one where both of its terms are available for that purpose?

The *Gemora* answers: The practical difference is that where there is a *gezeirah shavah* where only one term is available for derivation and there is another where both of its terms are available for derivation, we must leave the former and make the derivation from the latter. (22b – 23a)

INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

The Trustworthiness of Doctors & the Science of Medicine: Limits & Criteria

By: Meoros HaDaf HaYomi

Our Gemara recounts that a doubt of impurity once arose but the physician who examined the matter determined that there was no reason for impurity and that the doubt arose because of an external

wound not having anything to do with impurity. As such, the Chachamim ruled to make a certain examination and thus verify if the doctors were right.

The Gemara perplexed the Rosh, who included his question among others which he sent to the Rashba (Responsa *HaRosh*, *klal* 2:18): once the doctors testified to the presence of a wound, why is there a need for another examination?

The doctor's decision presents a doubt: We don't have the Rashba's reply. It could be that he didn't answer at all and we are left with the conclusion that one shouldn't determine a halachah according to a physician's opinion and therefore the Chachamim needed to verify the doctor's statement by means of an examination. Indeed, some *poskim* learnt from our Gemara that a doctor is not believed absolutely but his words present a doubt. Therefore, in an instance of saving a life we obey him, as a doubt of saving a life puts aside the entire Torah whereas concerning a question pertaining to prohibitions, we must check if the doctor was correct with his statement that aroused a doubt (*Darchei Teshuvah* on *Shulchan 'Aruch*, *Y.D.* 187, *S.K.* 98).

Before we cite the *poskim* on this complicated topic, we should mention that we relate to a doctor about whom there is no doubt as to his trustworthiness and who is believed in every matter concerning prohibitions and permissions and the like (see *Shulchan 'Aruch*, *ibid*, *se'if* 8).

The difference between a general diagnosis and an individual diagnosis: The Chasam Sofer *zt"l* paves a new way (Responsa *Chasam Sofer*, *Y.D.* 158, 173 and 175) concerning the trustworthiness of doctors by examining the different doubts arising in halachah. If a doctor determines that a certain nature is present in the world, he is believed. However, he is not believed in his diagnosis of an individual. In other words, when a doctor makes his diagnosis relying on estimation - in light of his medical experience, of course - then we cannot regard it as an irrefutable decision. There are two reasons: (1) After all, the doctor himself admits that he gave his opinion relying on estimation. (2) The experiments from which conclusions are drawn were done with gentiles, whose nature differs from that of Jews, as explained in several places in the Gemara (Shabbos 86a, 'Avodah Zarah 31b and Nidah 34b). Therefore, we can rely on the doctor regarding ordinary general nature which does not demand an evaluation of the individual case.

It is surprising to discover that the Rosh himself relates to his question elsewhere, where he also answers it. He writes in *Tosfos HaRosh*,

printed at the side of the Gemara: "Not that it was clear to the doctors but the doctors said maybe...there's a wound...thus the matter should be examined..." In other words, he explains our Gemara as meaning that the doctors themselves weren't sure of their statement but suggested a possibility, a doubt, which the Chachamim suggested to verify by examination.

Apparently, the Rosh contradicts the Chasam Sofer as the Rosh's solution indicates that if the doctors would issue their statements with certainty, there would be no need for an examination, as opposed to the Chasam Sofer. However, HaGaon Rav S. Vosner explains that it could be that the Rosh meant that the doctor is believed without further verification only when he makes his diagnosis on the basis of facts and not by estimation. The doctor is believed as his statement is determined according to visible reality.

Medical decisions in our era: Rav Vosner rules, therefore, that in our era, with the development of technology in general and the medical field in particular, medical decisions, which in the past were made by estimation, are based on findings and X-rays and may therefore be relied on (Responsa *Shevet Halevi*, V, 126, and *Shi'urei Shevet HaLevi*, 167:8).

DAILY MASHAL

The Difference Between a Doctor and a Pilot

HaGaon Rabbi Yechezkel Avramski *zt"l* said: If someone needs a doctor for a serious matter, why does he find out about him first whereas someone who flies in a plane doesn't find out about the pilot? Because there's no need to find out about the pilot and his responsibility: he also flies with the passengers. Say, therefore, that if the doctor would feel as really being with the patient, there would be no need to find out about him (*Toras HaYoledes*, III).

The Essence of Man

"And Hashem created man in His image" (Bereishis 1:27).

The *Alter* of Slabodka *zt"l* said that this verse demands our attention! Everything is written here: that man is not only a material body; he contains actual G-dly revelation. His purpose is to elevate his soul till the resemblance between him and his Maker will increase! Man is not a simple creature at all.