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Mishnah

If one said, “I am hereby a *nazir* from dried figs,” or “from pressed figs,” Beis Shammai says: He is a *nazir* (even though a *nazir* is not forbidden to eat figs). Beis Hillel says: He is not a *nazir* (he cannot be a *nazir* since he mentioned figs, and he is not forbidden in figs because he said *nezirus*, not a *neder*). Rabbi Yehudah said: Beis Shammai said that this is only in a case when he later explained himself to mean that figs should be forbidden to him like a sacrifice (and then he will be prohibited from eating figs, but he will not be a *nazir*). (9a1)

Explaining the Dispute

The *Mishnah* had stated: If one said, “I am hereby a *nazir* from dried figs,” or “from pressed figs,” Beis Shammai says: He is a *nazir* (even though a *nazir* is not forbidden to eat figs).

The *Gemora* asks: But why is he a *nazir*? The Torah states: *From anything made of the grapevine (not figs)!*

The *Gemora* answers: Beis Shammai holds like Rabbi Meir, who says that a man does not utter his words in vain (and therefore, we understand him to be declaring a vow of *nezirus*, and he mistakenly thought that a *nazir* is prohibited from eating figs).

The *Gemora* explains further: Beis Hillel, on the other hand, follows Rabbi Yosi’s opinion, who maintains that one is held responsible even for his final words. (An

*example of this in a Mishnah learned elsewhere that discusses one who says, “this animal is an exchange for an olah, an exchange for a shelamim.” An ‘exchange’ is what is known as temurah, literally meaning exchange. When an animal is exchanged for an offering, both animals now have sanctity. According to Rabbi Yosi, the words “an exchange for a shelamim” is binding like the first words “an exchange for an olah.” Rabbi Yosi thus maintains that one is responsible for any statement that he makes, even if his second statement contradicts his first one.) Therefore, in this case, he has pronounced a vow together with its opening (since he added “from figs,” we may ascertain that he had no intention of becoming a *nazir*, and he is thus released from his *neder*).*

The *Gemora* asks: But according to Beis Shammai also, it should be a case of pronouncing a vow together with its opening (for there is no meaningful explanation for his words)?

Rather, the *Gemora* suggests an alternative explanation to their dispute: Beis Shammai holds like Rabbi Meir, who says that a man does not utter his words in vain. Since he said, “I am hereby a *nazir*,” he is a *nazir*. When he then said, “from dried figs,” or “from pressed figs,” he is attempting to retract from his *nezirus*, and Beis Shammai is of the opinion that a sage cannot annul a vow of *hekdesh* (even if it was erroneously made), and therefore, he holds that a vow of *nezirus* cannot be annulled as well.

Beis Hillel, on the other hand, holds like Rabbi Shimon, for we learned in a *Mishnah*: Rabbi Shimon exempts him

from bringing any *korban* (in a case where a person said, “I obligate myself to bring a *korban minchah* from barley,” and all voluntary meal offerings are made from wheat flour, not barley), for he did not donate in the ordinary manner. (Here also, he is not a *nazir*, for a *nazir* is not prohibited from eating figs.) (9a1 – 9a3)

Other Versions

The *Gemora* comments: Our *Mishnah* is not like the following *Baraisa*: (If one said, “I am hereby a *nazir* from dried figs”) Rabbi Nassan said: It is either a *neder* or he is a *nazir* (if he explains himself that he wanted to prohibit himself from figs, it is ruled to be a *neder*; otherwise, he is a *nazir*). Beis Hillel said: It might be a *neder* (if he explains himself that he wanted to prohibit himself from figs), but he is not a *nazir* (no matter what his explanation is). (This is unlike both versions of the dispute mentioned in the *Mishnah*.)

According to this version, Beis Shammai would hold like Rabbi Meir (that a man does not utter his words in vain) and like Rabbi Yehudah (of the *Mishnah* that it can be a *neder*), and Beis Hillel would hold like Rabbi Yosi (that one is held responsible even for his final words).

The *Gemora* cites another version: (If one said, “I am hereby a *nazir* from dried figs”) Rabbi Nassan said: It is a *neder*, but he is not a *nazir*. Beis Hillel said: It is not a *neder* and he is not a *nazir*.

According to this version, Beis Shammai would hold like Rabbi Yehudah (of the *Mishnah* that it can be a *neder*) and Beis Hillel would hold like Rabbi Shimon (that a meaningless *neder* is null and void). (9b1)

Korban Minchah

We learned in the following *Mishnah*: If a person said, “I obligate myself to bring a *korban minchah* from barley”

(and all voluntary meal offerings are made from wheat flour, not barley), he is required to bring a *minchah* made from wheat. If he said, “from regular flour,” he is required to bring a *minchah* made from fine flour. If he said, “from flour without oil and frankincense,” he is required to bring a *minchah* with oil and frankincense. If he said, “from half an *isaron* of flour,” he is required to bring a *minchah* from a complete *isaron* (the required measurement). If he said, “from an *isaron* and a half,” he is required to bring two *isaronos*. Rabbi Shimon exempts him from bringing any *minchah*, for he did not donate in the ordinary manner.

The *Gemora* asks: Who is the *Tanna* that holds that when a person said, “I obligate myself to bring a *korban minchah* from barley” (and all voluntary meal offerings are made from wheat flour, not barley), he is required to bring a *minchah* made from wheat?

Chizkiyah said: It is a matter that involves a dispute between Beis Shammai and Beis Hillel, and the *Tanna* is following the opinion of Beis Shammai. Just like by the case where one declared, “I am hereby a *nazir* from dried figs,” or “from pressed figs,” Beis Shammai ruled that he is a *nazir* (even though there is no such a thing as *nezirus* from figs), so too, when he said that he will obligate himself to bring a *korban minchah* from barley, he is required to bring a *minchah* made from wheat.

Rabbi Yochanan disagrees: Even Beis Hillel would agree (with the *Tanna* Kamma that he is required to bring a *minchah* made from wheat), for the *Mishnah* is referring to a case where he explained himself afterwards, by saying, “If I would have known that a *minchah* does not come from barley, I would have said ‘wheat’” (but here, it is not believable that someone would make such a mistake and think that *nezirus* prohibits him from consuming figs).

Chizkiyah said: This *halachah* (that the vow is effective) was taught only if he said, “from barley,” however, if he

said, “from lentils,” he is not required to bring anything (for lentils are never used in offerings).

The *Gemora* asks: But lentils in respect of a *minchah* offering are similar to figs with respect to a *nazir*, and Beis Shammai rules that he is a *nazir*?

The *Gemora* answers: Chizkiyah retracted his opinion (that the *Mishnah* is following Beis Shammai’s opinion).

Rava explains the reason for his retraction: By the fact that the *Mishnah* mentioned a case of barley, and not lentils, this proves that in a case of “lentils,” he would not be required to bring anything (and that is inconsistent with Beis Shammai’s opinion).

Rather, Chizkiyah explains that the *Tanna* is following Beis Shammai’s opinion according to Rabbi Yehudah (that where there is a conceivable manner to interpret his words, we do; and just as here, we explain his words to mean a *neder* abstaining from figs, so too, there, we assume that he made a mistake with respect to barley, but he actually meant to bring a *minchah* from wheat).

Rabbi Yochanan said: Even if he said, “from lentils,” he is required to bring a *minchah* made from wheat.

The *Gemora* asks: But Rabbi Yochanan was the one that explained the *Mishnah* to be referring to a case where he explained himself afterwards, by saying, “If I would have known that a *minchah* does not come from barley, I would have said ‘wheat’,” (but everyone knows that a *minchah* does not come from barley)?

The *Gemora* answers: Rabbi Yochanan was saying his ruling according to the words of Chizkiyah. This is what he was saying to Chizkiyah: You retracted because the *Mishnah* did not say lentils. Perhaps the *Mishnah* was written in a “there was no question regarding this” format? There is no question (and therefore, no need to

state) in a case where he said, “lentils” that he would be required to bring a *minchah* from wheat, because it is possible to say that he is attempting to retract, but we follow his initial words. But, when he says, “barley,” where we could think it could be sanctified like the *minchah* of the *omer*, or like the *minchah* of a *sotah*, but if not, it should not be sanctified at all. The *Mishnah* teaches us that even in that case, he is required to bring a *minchah* from wheat. (9b1 – 10a1)

DAILY MASHAL

A *Minchah*: Like a Body Without a Soul

Our *Gemora* discusses some of the laws regarding a *minchah* offering. The students of HaGaon Rav Chaym of Volozhin zt”l write in the name of their mentor: Prayer resembles the *tamid*. “Prayer without concentration is like a body without a soul.” This means that prayer without concentration does not have the advantage of an animal sacrifice, which has a soul, but the advantage of a *minchah*, which is “a body without a soul” (*Tosefes Ma’aseh Rav*, 12; *Keser Rosh*, 22; *Beurei Rabeinu Chayim MiVolozhin*, 163).

A reader sent Meoros HaDaf HaYomi an interesting addition which he heard from HaGaon HaTzadik Rav Gedalyah Eiseman, *mashgiach* of Kol Torah Yeshivah. Chazal’s statement, that prayer without concentration is like a body without a soul, denigrates the value of such prayer, while Rav Chaim’s statement apparently enlivens it, as he treats such prayer as a *minchah*! However, a *minchah* was offered by a poor person who could not afford to offer an animal. From such a person, who is not able to pray with concentration, his prayer is accepted like a *minchah*. But someone who could have prayed with concentration should not expect his prayer to be regarded as a *minchah*.