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Nazir Daf 58

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Cutting off All Hair, Including the Corners

The *Gemora* asks: Let us say that whether or not cutting off all hair on one’s head including the corners is permitted is argued about by the *Tannaim*. The *Baraisa* states: “His head.” What does this teach us? Being that there is a prohibition against rounding off the corners of one’s head, one might think that even when a *metzora* shaves, he should not do this. The Torah therefore states: “his head.” A different *Baraisa* states: “his head.” What does this teach us? Being that it says regarding a *nazir*, “A razor should not pass over his head,” one might think this even applies to a *nazir* who became a *metzora* (that he should not perform the normally required shaving of a *metzora* within his time of *nezirus*). The Torah therefore says, “his head.”

It must be that this is an argument among the *Tannaim*. The *Baraisa* that says that “his head,” overrides the concerns of shaving while being a *nazir* holds that there is no problem when shaving all of the hair on his head. [This is why no verse was required to say that it is not a concern because of the basic law against shaving off the corners.] The verse was necessary only to override the negative and positive prohibition against cutting one’s hair when they are a *nazir*. However, according to the other *Baraisa*, it seems that it is normally forbidden to cut off the corners whether or not one cuts off all the hair on his head. “His head” was therefore needed to push aside the negative prohibition against doing so.

Rava answers: No! Everyone really agrees that there is no prohibition when cutting off all of one’s hair. The verse (in the first *Baraisa*) is regarding one who first cuts off the corners and then cuts off the rest of his hair. As he is not

liable for shaving off all the hair at one time, he is also not liable for shaving them one at a time.

The *Gemora* asks: Could this really be the intent of the verse? Didn’t Rish Lakish say: Whenever there is a positive and negative commandment, if possible, they should both be fulfilled. If they conflict, the positive commandment should push aside the negative commandment.

[This implies that the Torah would not tell us that it is permitted to shave in a way that is forbidden if it is possible to clearly do this in a way that is permitted. Accordingly, why would the verse also allow shaving the corners and only later shaving the hair?]

The *Gemora* therefore says: Everyone agrees that it is forbidden to cut off the corners, even when cutting off all of the hair on one’s head as well.

The *Gemora* asks: According to the *Baraisa* that used the verse “His head” to push aside the prohibitions of *nazir*, what is his source to push aside the regular prohibition of cutting off one’s corners?

The *Gemora* answers: He derived this from the *mitzvah* of *tzitzis*. The Torah states the prohibition, “Do not wear *shatnez* (mixture of linen and wool).” However, the *Baraisa* states that we derive (from the fact they are next to each other in the Torah) that one could make *tzitzis* that contain *shatnez*.

The *Gemora* asks: Why doesn’t the one who derives that the verse “his head” excludes the prohibition against cutting off the corners, learn this instead from *tzitzis*?

The *Gemora* answers: He will tell you that the teaching is needed for Rava's teaching. Rava asked: One verse states, "And you will put on the *tzitzis* of the corner of the garment," implying any garment, "a string of *techeiles*." However, when the Torah mentions *shatnez* and *tzitzis* next to each other, it says, "wool and linen." This implies that wool and linen garments have a different status regarding *tzitzis*. What do we derive? Rava explains that wool or linen *tzitzis* can be used for any garment (*made out of any material*) to fulfill its obligation of *tzitzis*, while *tzitzis* made out of other material can only be used to fulfill an obligation of *tzitzis* for a garment made out of the same material.

The *Gemora* asks: How does the *Tanna* who derives from the verse "his head" that there is no prohibition for a *metzora* to shave off the corners, derive that this is also true regarding a *nazir* who is a *metzora*?

The *Gemora* answers: He derives it from the word, "his beard." The *Baraisa* states: "his beard." What does this teach us? The Torah states, "They should not shave the corners of their heads." One would think that this is even true by a *Kohen* who is a *metzora*. The verse therefore states, "his beard." [This shows us that the prohibition is pushed aside in special situations (i.e. *nazir*) as well, just like it is pushed aside by a *Kohen* (see *Tosfos*).]

The *Gemora* asks: Why doesn't the author of the other *Baraisa* derive this from the lesson learned from "his beard?"

The *Gemora* counters: According to this question, we should ask the following: Everyone generally holds that a positive commandment does not push aside both a positive and negative commandment. Why don't we derive from this teaching that it does?

The *Gemora* answers: It is therefore apparent that we do not derive from *Kohen*, as the prohibitions here regarding *Kohen* are not equal to all (*and are therefore more easily pushed*

aside than other prohibitions). This means that we should also be unable to derive *nazir* from *Kohen*, as it is a prohibition that does not apply to all. [This is the reason why the author of the other *Baraisa* does not derive *nazir* from *Kohen*.]

The *Gemora* asks: According to the opinion that derives from "His head," that the shaving of a *metzora* even applies by a *metzora* who is a *nazir*, what does he derive from the words, "his beard?"

The *Gemora* answers: He uses it as does the following *Baraisa*. The *Baraisa* states: "His beard." What does this teach us? The Torah states, "They should not shave the corners of their head." One would think that this is even true by a *Kohen* who is a *metzora*. The verse therefore states, "his beard."

The *Gemora* asks: How do we know that he can even shave it off with a razor?

The *Gemora* answers the question from a *Baraisa*. The *Baraisa* states: "They should not shave the corners of their heads." One might think that he is even liable if he shaves with a scissors. The verse therefore states: "And you should not destroy." If the prohibition is destroying, one would think that shaving with planes would make one liable. The verse says: "And they should not shave off their corners." What is a case of shaving that entails destroying? This must mean shaving with a razor.

The *Gemora* asks: According to the opinion that derives from, "his head" that there is no prohibition against shaving with a razor when shaving a *metzora*, why doesn't he derive all of these prohibitions from the verse of "his beard?" Let him derive that this excludes both the general prohibition against shaving and any specific prohibitions including a positive and negative commandment (*such as Kohen and nazir*)? [Additionally, the *Gemora* implies, one could have derived from "His head," excluding *nazir*, and would not need "his beard."]



The *Gemora* answers: One verse permitting shaving by a *nazir* could not be used to also tell us about a *Kohen*, as a *nazir* is a lenient type of prohibition because it can be permitted (*through annulling the vow*). Similarly, one verse permitting shaving even by a *Kohen* would not tell us a *nazir* is permitted, as the prohibition regarding a *Kohen* only applies to a certain sect of people (*i.e. Kohanim, and therefore cannot be used to teach us about other prohibitions*). This is also the reason why we generally cannot derive from *Kohen* and *nazir* to other prohibitions, as we have stated previously. (57b3 – 58b2)

DAILY MASHAL

Reasons for a Mitzvah

The Tur (Y”D 181) cites the Rambam who writes that the Torah prohibits rounding the corners of one’s head and destroying one’s beard because it was the practice of idolaters.

The Tur writes that we do not need to seek out the reasons for *mitzvos*, for they are the King’s commandments, even if we do not understand the reason.

The Beis Yosef defends the Rambam, and he writes that there is no one who is concerned for the honor of the Torah and its *mitzvos* more than the Rambam. Although the laws of the Torah can be decrees from the King, nevertheless, wherever a reason for the *mitzvah* is found, it may be said. Whenever a reason cannot be found, it should be attributed to our shallow understanding. We are, nonetheless, obligated to fulfill those *mitzvos* that we do not understand its reasons in the same manner as we are obligated to fulfill those *mitzvos* that we do understand.

He concludes that the Rambam did not think up the reason for these *mitzvos* himself; rather, he saw from the juxtaposition of the verses that this is the reason for these prohibitions.

The Rama explains the Tur: Heaven forbid to think that the Tur suspected the Rambam to mean that if one does not understand the rationale for a *mitzvah*, he is not obligated to fulfill it. No sage will believe such a thing! However, those heretics who deny the truth of the Torah only believe in a *mitzvah* that they understand its reason. Rather, the following is the way that the Tur understood the Rambam: It is only if one shaves his head or destroys his beard in the same manner that the idolaters do; that is when one has transgressed this prohibition. The Tur writes that it is forbidden in any fashion whatsoever. Since the reason is not explicit in the Torah, the prohibition always applies. There is no room for leniency in a place where the reason is not applicable!