

9 Nissan 5783
March 31, 2023



Sotah Daf 2

Produced by Rabbi Avrohom Adler, Kollel Boker Beachwood

Daf Notes is currently being dedicated to the neshamot of

Moshe Raphael ben Yehoshua (Morris Stadtmauer) o”h

Tzvi Gershon ben Yoel (Harvey Felsen) o”h

May the studying of the Daf Notes be a zechus for their neshamot and may their souls find peace in Gan Eden and be bound up in the Bond of life

Mishnah

[The laws of sotah (suspected adulteress) are explained in the Torah in Parshas Naso (Num. 5:11-31). The Sages taught that a woman only becomes a sotah through warning and through seclusion. How so by means of warning? It is stated: and the spirit of jealousy passed over him, and he had warned his wife; from here we learn that if a married woman "secluded" herself with another man, she becomes a sotah only if her husband had first warned her concerning that man, saying: "Do not seclude yourself with so-and-so," i.e., he warned her not to enter a secluded place with a certain man.

How so by means of seclusion? It is stated: "She had been secluded and became defiled"; the Sages explained that this "seclusion" means she entered a secret place with the man about whom her husband had warned her, remaining with him long enough to become defiled, i.e., long enough to suspect her of having committed adultery with him. But there are no witnesses that she was defiled, as it is said (in the continuation of the same verse): "and there be none to testify against her," meaning there are no witnesses of her defilement. Such a woman, whose husband had initially warned her about a certain man, and who had then secluded herself with that same person, is considered a sotah; she is suspected of adultery and is forbidden to her husband.

This Mishnah teaches us how many witnesses are required for the husband's warnings and for the woman's seclusion, for the woman to be considered a sotah.]

Regarding one who warned his wife (not to seclude herself with another man), Rabbi Eliezer said: He warns her in front of two witnesses (otherwise, she will not be forbidden to her

husband and she will not be compelled to drink the bitter waters) and causes her to drink through one witness, or even by himself (if he or one witness testifies that she did seclude herself with that man after the warning, she is forbidden to her husband and she is required to drink the bitter waters). Rabbi Yehoshua said: He warns her in front of two witnesses and causes her to drink through two witnesses.

How does he warn her? If the husband says to his wife in front of two witnesses, "Do not speak to So-and-so," and she does speak with him, she is still permitted to her husband and she may eat *terumah* (if she is the wife of a Kohen). However, if she secludes herself with that man, and she remained with him there long enough to become defiled, she is forbidden to her husband and she may not eat *terumah* (if she is the wife of a Kohen). And if the husband died childless, she submits to *chalitzah*, but cannot be taken in *yibum*. (2a1 – 2a2)

Order of the Tractates

The *Gemora* asks: The *Tanna* has just concluded Tractate Nazir. Why did he choose to teach the laws of a *sotah* afterwards?

The *Gemora* answers: It is because of that which Rebbe taught, for we learned in a *Baraisa*: Rebbe said: Why is the portion in the Torah dealing with *nazir* juxtaposed to the portion dealing with the laws of a *sotah*? It is to teach us that whoever sees a *sotah* when she is being degraded should restrain himself from consuming wine.

If so, the *Gemora* asks: Why didn't the *Tanna* teach the laws of *sotah* before teaching the laws of *nezirus*?



The *Gemora* answers: The *Tanna* initially taught tractate Kesuvos, which has in it a chapter dealing with *nedarim*. The *Tanna* therefore followed Tractate Kesuvos with Tractate Nedarim. Once the *Tanna* taught Nedarim, he followed that with Tractate Nazir, which is similar to *nedarim*. He then taught Tractate Sotah because of Rebbe's teaching. (2a2)

The Mishnah had stated: One who has warned his wife.

The *Gemora* asks: This would seemingly indicate that this (the warning) is only after the fact, but in the first place he does not!?

The *Gemora* notes: Our *Tanna* holds that it is forbidden to warn his wife (against secluding herself with a man, for this will lead to marital discord). (2a2)

Shadchan

Rav Shmuel bar Rav Yitzchak said: When Rish Lakish would begin expounding the portion in the Torah dealing with *sotah*, he would say the following: They do not match a woman to a man only in accordance with his deeds (*a modest woman to a righteous man, and an immodest woman to an evil man*), as it is said: *For the rod of wickedness shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous.*

Rabbah bar Chanah said in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: It is as difficult for God to pair up a man and a woman for marriage as it was to split the Reed Sea (*for the laws of nature had to be suspended*), as it is said: *He releases prisoners at suitable moments.*

The *Gemora* asked on Rish Lakish: Is it really so (*that a man and a woman are matched according to his deeds*)? Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav: Forty days before the formation of a child, a Heavenly voice is issued and pronounces: "The daughter of this individual is designated for that man," and "This house is designated for So-and-so," and "This field is designated for So-and-so." (*Evidently, whom a man will marry is decided upon his conception, prior to knowing whether he will be righteous or not!?*)

The *Gemora* answers: Rish Lakish was referring to a first match, and Rav was discussing a second match. (2a2 – 2a3)

One Witness

The Mishnah had stated: Rabbi Eliezer said: He warns her in front of two witnesses.

The *Gemora* infers from the *Mishnah* that the *Tannaim* argue only with respect to the amount of witnesses required for the warning and the seclusion; however, everyone would agree that with respect to the defilement, even one witness (*who testifies that he observed them cohabiting together*) would be believed (*and she would not drink the bitter waters; she must be divorced without receiving her kesuvah; she is forbidden to her husband and to the adulterer and she cannot eat terumah*).

The *Gemora* cites a Mishnah which supports this: If one witness said (after the warning), "I saw her become defiled," she would not drink.

The *Gemora* asks: What is the Biblical source that one witness is believed?

The *Gemora* answers: For it has been taught in a Baraisa: "And there was not a witness regarding her." This must refer to two witnesses. [How do we know?] Perhaps it (the word 'witness') refers even to one witness. Another verse states, "One witness will not arise against a man etc." Being that the verse said "One witness will not arise against a man," do we not know that it is one; why does the Torah bother saying "one"? ["Witness" by definition is singular.] This is the source which teaches us, that generally, whenever the word "witness" is mentioned in the Torah, it refers to a pair of witnesses, unless specified (*as in this verse – "one witness"*).

Accordingly, the Merciful One said (*"And there was not a witness regarding her"*): This must mean that there were not two witnesses, but there was one. The verse continues, "And she was not seized (*forced*)," implying that she would then



be forbidden. [Putting these verses together, this means that if there was a witness that she was not forced to have an affair and did so willingly, she would be forbidden.]

The Gemora asks: And the reason (that the verse is referring to two witnesses) is because it is written: *One witness will not arise against a man*; otherwise (without this verse), I would have thought that (the word) “witness” of the sotah (passage) is referring to one witness. But, if there is not even one witness (regarding the adultery), with what evidence does she become forbidden?

The Gemora answers: it is necessary, for you might have thought to say that “there was no witness against her” means that he (one witness) is not believed about her.

The Gemora asks: Can it be that one witness is not believed about her? But what is then required (to establish her defilement)? If it is until there are two, let the verse remain quiet about this, and we would derive (through a gezeirah shavah) using “matter,” “matter” from monetary laws, and I would know (that two witnesses are required), just as all testimony in the Torah?

The Gemora answers: It is needed. And (a verse is required to teach that one witness is not believed regarding adultery), you might have thought to say that a Sotah is different, for there are “legs to the matter” (that she did commit adultery), for he warned her and she secluded herself; so perhaps we should believe one witness.

The Gemora asks: But could you have said (that the verse is teaching us) that one witness is not believed and therefore she is permitted (to stay with her husband)? But it is written: and she was not seized; evidently, this woman is forbidden!?

The Gemora answers: It is necessary, for you might have thought to say that one witness is not believed about her until there are two witnesses, and even when there are two, she is forbidden only when she is not forced; the Baraisa

therefore teaches us (that witness usually means two witnesses). (2a4 – 2b2)

Witnesses for the Seclusion

The *Mishnah* had stated: [Regarding one who warned his wife, Rabbi Eliezer said: He warns her in front of two witnesses and causes her to drink through one witness, or even by himself.] Rabbi Yehoshua said: He warns her in front of two witnesses and causes her to drink through two witnesses.

The *Gemora* asks: What is the reason of Rabbi Yehoshua?

The *Gemora* answers: The Torah writes: [There was no witness] *about her*. About her (one witness is believed), but (he is) not (believed) regarding a warning; about her (one witness is believed), but (he is) not (believed) regarding a seclusion.

[The *Gemora* explains R’ Eliezer’s opinion.] And Rabbi Eliezer says: About her (one witness is believed), but (he is) not (believed) regarding a warning (but regarding a seclusion, one witness is believed).

The *Gemora* asks: But perhaps we should say: about her (one witness is believed), but (he is) not (believed) regarding a seclusion?

The *Gemora* answers: Seclusion is juxtaposed to defilement (where one witness is believed), as it is written: *and she became secluded and had been defiled*.

The *Gemora* asks: But warning is also juxtaposed to defilement, as it is written: *and he had warned his wife and she had been defiled*?

The *Gemora* answers: The Torah excluded (the testimony of one witness regarding a warning) by saying: *about her*.

The *Gemora* asks: But what have you seen (to prove that the exclusion applies to the warning and not to the exclusion)?



The Gemora answers: It is logical, that seclusion is better (to be treated stringently), for it forbids her, just as defilement does.

The Gemora asks: On the contrary! Warning is better, for it is the primary cause that makes her forbidden!?

The Gemora answers: If not for the seclusion, does the warning accomplish anything?

The Gemora retorts: And if not for the warning, does the seclusion accomplish anything?

The Gemora answers: Nevertheless, seclusion is better, for it is the onset of the defilement. (2b2 – 2b3)

Warning by Himself

The Gemora cites a *Baraisa* which is not in agreement with our *Mishnah*. The *Baraisa* states: Rabbi Yosi the son of Rabbi Yehudah said in the name of Rabbi Eliezer: Regarding one who warned his wife, he warns her in front of one witness or even by himself and causes her to drink through two witnesses. The *Chachamim* asked him: According to Rabbi Yosi the son of Rabbi Yehudah, there is no end to the matter!

The Gemora asks: What is the reason of Rabbi Yosi the son of Rabbi Yehudah?

The Gemora answers: It is written: about her. About her (one witness is believed), but (he is) not (believed) regarding a seclusion.

The Gemora asks: But perhaps we should say: about her (one witness is believed), but (he is) not (believed) regarding a warning?

The Gemora answers: Warning is juxtaposed to defilement (where one witness is believed), as it is written: *and he had warned his wife and she had been defiled.*

The Gemora asks: But seclusion is also juxtaposed to defilement, as it is written: *and she became secluded and had been defiled?*

The Gemora answers: That comes for the following: How long is the duration of the seclusion? It is (i.e., the minimum) the amount (of time) it takes for defilement to occur. (2b3 – 2b4)

The *Chachamim* asked him: According to Rabbi Yosi the son of Rabbi Yehudah, there is no end to the matter!

The Gemora asks: What did the *Chachamim* mean?

The Gemora answers: Sometimes it will happen that the husband did not warn her, but (*after a witness testifies that she was secluded with that man*) he will say that he himself had warned her (*not to seclude herself to that man*).

The Gemora asks: But according to our *Mishnah*, there would be an end to the matter! Sometimes it will happen that she did not seclude herself, but the husband (*who, according to Rabbi Eliezer in our Mishnah is believed with respect to the seclusion*) will say that she in fact did seclude herself!

Rav Yitzchak bar Yosef said in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: The following is what the *Chachamim* said: Even according to Rabbi Yosi the son of Rabbi Yehudah in our *Mishnah*, there is no end to the matter!

The Gemora asks: Even according to Rabbi Yosi the son of Rabbi Yehudah, and it is not necessary to state it according to (Rabbi Eliezer in) the Mishnah? On the contrary! According to (Rabbi Eliezer in) the Mishnah, there is a basis (for the husband's testimony regarding seclusion), but there (according to Rabbi Yosi the son of Rabbi Yehudah), there is no basis (for the husband's testimony regarding a warning)?

The Gemora answers: If it was stated, it was stated as follows: Rav Yitzchak bar Yosef said in the name of Rabbi

Yochanan: According to Rabbi Yosi the son of Rabbi Yehudah, and even according to (Rabbi Eliezer in) the Mishnah, there is no end to the matter. (2b4 – 2b5)

Rabbi Chanina from Sura said: A person nowadays (*when there is no Beis Hamikdash*) should not tell his wife, “Do not seclude yourself with So-and-so,” for perhaps the *halacha* is in accordance with Rabbi Yosi bar Yehudah who maintains that the husband can issue a warning even when there are no witnesses present. If the woman will then seclude herself, she will become forbidden forever, for there are no *sotah* waters available to check her. (2b5)

INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

Heavenly Voice Regarding Marriage

The *Gemora* states: Every day, a Heavenly voice pronounces: “The daughter of this individual is designated for that man.”

Why when it is referring to the woman does it say, “The daughter of this man,” and when it is referring to the man, it says “that man”?

Tal Chaim answers: The Torah gives the right to the father to marry off his daughter and to receive the money; this right does not apply for his son.

Others answer based on Tosfos, which states that this Heavenly voice is issued forty days before the formation of the boy. At this point in time, the girl is not in existence yet and therefore it only mentions her father.

Kometz Mincha offers an alternative answer: The *Gemora* Bava Basra (109b) states that a man should investigate the woman’s father and her family. Regarding a woman, on the other hand, the *Gemora* in Kiddushin (7a) states: A woman would rather grow old together with a husband than alone; no matter whom the man might be, and therefore his family is not mentioned.

DAILY MASHAL

A Marriage and the Beis Hamikdash

Rav Yehudah says in the name of Rav: Forty days before the formation of an embryo, a Heavenly Voice announces who his spouse will be.

The Chasam Sofer explains that this is the same concept we find regarding a verse in Shir Shashirim (3:7). As the Midrash Rabbah in Breishis explains: Prior to the creation of the world, the thought arose in front of the Holy One, Blessed be He, to build a Beis Hamikdash - which would be the place of His zivug. So too, prior to the creation of a person (a world unto his own), the destiny of his marriage has already been established, as that is the place where there can be *Hashroas Ha-Shechinah* (the dwelling of the heavenly Presence) in his life.

This further explains the *Gemora* in Sanhedrin 22a that when a person’s first wife dies, it’s as if the Beis Hamikdash has been destroyed, and the *Gemora* in Gittin 90b states that if a person divorces his first wife, it causes the *Mizbeach* (the Altar) to shed tears.

Sotah during Sefirah

It is written in the sefer, *Minchas Ha’omer* that it is fitting to learn Tractate Sotah, which contains forty-nine dafim during the days of Sefirah, when we are counting forty-nine days.