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Sotah Daf 17

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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**

If one is approaching the task of writing a sotah scroll, where does he start writing from? He starts from, “And if a man did not sleep...and you, if you have turned away while under (*being married to*) your husband.” He does not write the verse, “And the Kohen will make the woman swear.” He does write the verse, “Hashem will make you legendary for use in curses and oaths (i.e. *if I do this what happened to her should befall me*), and these eradicating waters will go into your intestines, to make your stomach expand and your thighs fall.” He does not write the verse, “And the woman will say Amen, Amen.” Rabbi Yosi says: He would not make these omissions. Rabbi Yehudah says: He only writes the verse, “Hashem will make you legendary for use in curses and oaths, and these eradicating waters will go into your intestines, to make your stomach expand and your thighs fall.” He does not write the verse, “And the woman will say Amen, Amen.” (17a1)

**The Reasoning Behind the Argument**

The *Gemora* asks: What is their argument? The *Gemora* answers: They are arguing regarding the verse, “And the Kohen will write these curses in a scroll.” Rabbi Meir (*the Tanna Kamma*) understands that the word “Alos” – “curses” refers to the curses. The letter “Heh” before the word (*forming “ha’alos”*) includes any curses that are combined with blessings. The word “eileh” – “these” excludes other curses, such as those in Sefer Devarim. The Heh beforehand forming the word “ha’eileh” excludes the

pesukim saying what the kohen must do and her answering Amen.

Rabbi Yosi understands these pesukim in the same manner, but he extrapolates from the word “Es” that even the actions that the Kohen must perform and her answering Amen should be recorded.

Rabbi Yehudah understands the pesukim in the opposite fashion, that they are all coming to exclude. He understands that the word “Alos” – “curses” refers to the curses. The letter “Heh” before the word (*forming “ha’alos”*) excludes any curses that are combined with blessings. The word “eileh” – “these” excludes other curses, such as those in Sefer Devarim. The Heh beforehand forming the word “ha’eileh” excludes the pesukim saying what the kohen must do and her answering Amen.

The *Gemora* asks: Why indeed does Rabbi Meir understand that the Heh in the word “ha’alos” is inclusive, but the same letter in the word “ha’eilah” is exclusive?

The *Gemora* answers: It depends what kind of word it is part of. “Alos” is a word that is including, so the Heh before it must also be including. “Eilah” – “these” is a word that by nature is exclusive (*only these*). Therefore the Heh attached to it must also be exclusive.

The *Gemora* asks: Rabbi Meir does not hold of the principle that from a negative one understands a positive. [*If so, why would Rabbi Meir say that the verse, “If a man*

*did not sleep...you will be clean” should be included? This is blessing, not a curse!]*

Rabbi Tanchum answers: The word can also be read “Chinaki” – “be strangled” (*instead of “Hinaki” – “be clean”*). [See alternative explanation for this question and answer in *Toras Ha’Kanaos*.] (17a1 – 17a2)

### **Seriousness of Adultery**

Rabbi Akiva taught: If a man and woman merit it, the Divine Presence is with them (*in their marriage*). If they do not merit it, fire consumes them. Rava says: The fire more quickly consumes the woman. Why? The word “Ishah” – “woman” is essentially the word “Aish” – “fire” with a Heh at the end. The word “Ish” – “man” only forms the word Aish when the letter Yud is removed (*the word Aish is not already present*). (17a2 – 17a3)

### **Sotah Expositions**

Rava says: Why did the Torah say bring earth (*which is combined with the Sotah waters*) for a Sotah? The reason is because if she is innocent, she merits having a son like Avraham Avinu who said, “And I am ashes and earth.” If she does not merit, she returns to the earth.

Rava taught: In the merit that Avraham Avinu said, “And I am ashes and earth,” his descendants merited two mitzvos, namely the ashes of the red heifer and the dirt of the Sotah.

The *Gemora* asks: What about the earth used in covering the blood (*of a bird or undomesticated animal*)?

The *Gemora* answers: There the earth is merely used in a mitzvah, but there is no direct benefit from the mitzvah (*besides earning reward in the next world*).

Rava taught: In the merit of Avraham Avinu’s statement, “If a string or shoelace (*I will take*) his descendants merited to have two mitzvos, namely the string of Techeiles on their Tzitzis, and the Tefilin straps.

The *Gemora* asks: It is understandable that Tefilin straps were a reward (*for this world as well*), as the verse states, “And all of the nations of the land will see that the name of Hashem is upon you and they will fear you.” The Baraisa quotes Rabbi Elazar the Great as saying that this refers to the Tefilin that we wear on our heads. However, what (*earthly*) reward do we have from Techeiles?

The *Gemora* answers this question from a Baraisa. Rabbi Meir taught: Why was Techeiles singled out from all colors (*to be used in tzitzis*)? This is because Techeiles is a similar color to that of the ocean, which is similar to that of the sky, which is similar to that of the Throne of Glory. This is as the verse states, “And they saw the G-d of Israel, and under His feet was like something made out of a brick of sapphire, and like the purity of the sky.” The verse also states, “like the appearance of a sapphire stone is that of the Throne of Glory. [*The Gemora’s answer seems to be that this merit benefits us in this world as well.*] (17a3)

### **Mishnah**

One cannot write the Megilas Sotah on a wooden board, on paper, or on parchment that has not been fully processed. He must write it on parchment, as it says “in a sefer.” It cannot be written with diluted tree sap, kankantum, or anything that leaves an indentation (*on the parchment*). It must be written with ink, as the verse states, “And it will be erased.” This teaches that the writing must be of the type that can be erased. (17a4 - 17b)

### **Sotah Scroll**

Rava states: A Megilas Sotah that is written at night is unfit. What is the reason? We derive a gezeirah shaveh



using the word "Torah." The verse states, "And the kohen will do as per all of this "Torah" – "law." The verse also states, "According to the Torah that they rule and the judgments etc." Just as judgment is during the day, also a Megilas Sotah is written during the day.

If it was written out of sequence, it is unfit. This is as the verse states, "And he will write these curses," implying in the order they are written.

It will also be invalid if it is written before she accepts the oath upon herself. For it is stated: He shall adjure, and afterwards it says: He shall write.

If it was written as a letter (*they did not etch lines into the parchment*), is it disqualified. For the Merciful One said: in a sefer. (17b)

## DAILY MASHAL

### ***Benefit from Techeiles***

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the Throne of Glory. [*The Gemora's answer seems to be that this merit benefits us in this world as well.*]

Rashi explains that anyone who fulfills the *mitzvah* of *tzitzis* is regarded as if he received the Divine Presence. This is obviously beneficial to the person.

Rashi in Chulin (89a) explains differently. He says that when Hashem looks at His Throne of Glory, He is reminded of the *mitzvah* of Techeiles that is being performed by the Jewish people. And because of this, Hashem has compassion on *Klal Yisroel*.