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Sotah Daf 32

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Mishnah

The following may be recited in any language (*as long as one understands it*): The *sotah* passage, the confession of the tithes (*before Pesach on the fourth and seventh years of the shemithah cycle, one must make sure that all tithes from the previous years were given to their proper destination; on the final day of Pesach, one must declare that he has removed all the holy things from his house*), the recitation of the *Shema*, the *tefillah* (*Shemoneh Esrei*), the Grace after meals, the oath of testimony (*when one is confirming that he does not know any testimony in a monetary case*), and the oath of deposit (*when one denies owing money*).

The following must be recited in Holy tongue (*Hebrew*): The *bikkurim* (*the first ripe fruits of any of the seven species with which the Torah praises Eretz Yisroel, which must be brought to the Beis Hamikdosh in Yerushalayim*) recitation, *chalitzah* (*when a man dies childless, his brother has a mitzvah to perform yibum; if he declines, she submits to chalitzah, i.e. she removes his shoe, spits before him and declares that he does not want to marry her*), the Blessings and the Curses (*when they entered Eretz Yisroel, they stood on Mount Gerizim and Mount Eival and accepted the blessings that will be rewarded to those who observe the mitzvos and curses will befall those who transgress them*), the Priestly Blessing, and the Blessing of the *Kohen Gadol* (*when he reads passages from the Torah on Yom Kippur*), the Portion of the King (*which he reads every seven years to the people assembled in the Courtyard of the Beis Hamikdosh*), the

Passage of the *eglah arufah* (*the law is that upon finding a corpse, and being unable to solve the murder, the leaders of the city closest to the corpse are required to bring a calf to an untilled valley, decapitate it, wash their hands over it, and then they must recite a verse, declaring publicly that they did not kill the person*), and the Anointed (*Kohen*) for Battle when he addresses the people.

The *Mishnah* cites the Scriptural sources proving that these recitals must be said in Hebrew. Why so with the *bikkurim* recitation? It is written: *And you shall speak up and say before Hashem*, and later it says: *And the Levites shall speak up and say*. Just as speaking up there (*by the Blessings and the Curses*) it must be said in the Holy Tongue, so too, here, it must be recited in the Holy Tongue.

How is it known by *chalitzah*? The Torah says: *And she shall speak up and say*, and later it says: *And the Levites shall speak up and say*. Just as speaking up there (*by the Blessings and the Curses*) it must be said in the Holy Tongue, so too, here, it must be recited in the Holy Tongue. Rabbi Yehudah says: It is written by *chalitzah*: *And she shall speak up and say so*. The word “so” teaches us that she must utter it in this language (*Hebrew*).

How was the Blessings and the Curses performed? When the Jewish people crossed the Jordan River and came to Mount Gerizim and Mount Eival in Samaria, near Shechem which adjoins Elonei Moreh, as it is said: *They are surely across the Jordan*, etc. (*near Elon Moreh*), and

elsewhere it says: *And Avram passed through the land, into the place of Shechem, until Elon Moreh.* Just as the Elon Moreh mentioned there is Shechem, so too, Elon Moreh mentioned here is Shechem. Six tribes ascended to the top of Mount Gerizim and six tribes ascended to the top of Mount Eival, and the *Kohanim*, the Levites and the Ark stood below, in between. The *Kohanim* surrounded the Ark, the Levites surrounded the *Kohanim*, and all the Jewish people were on this side and on that, as it is said: *And all Israel, and their elders and officers, stood on this side and on that side of the Ark* etc. They (the *Kohanim* and the Levites) turned toward Mount Gerizim and began the blessing: *Blessed be the man that doesn't make a graven or molten image, and both these and those responded "Amen."* They turned toward Mount Eival and began the curse: *Cursed be the man that makes a graven or molten image, and both these and those responded "Amen,"* until they completed the Blessings and the Curses. Afterwards, they brought the stones, built the altar, plastered it with plaster and inscribed upon it all the words of the Torah in seventy languages, as it is said: *well clarified.* They then took the stones and came and spent the night in their place (in *Gilgal*). (32a – 32b)

Sotah Passage

The *Gemora* asks: How do we derive that the passage concerning the *sotah* may be recited in any language? - It is written: *And the Kohen shall say to the woman.* This extra phrase teaches us that he can adjure her in whatever language he speaks (or according to *Rashi*, in whatever language she understands).

The *Gemora* cites a *Baraisa*: They explain to her in any language that she understands for what reason she is about to drink the water, in what sort of vessel she drinks from, why she had defiled herself and how she defiled herself.

The *Gemora* elaborates: "For what reason she is about to drink the water"; is because of her husband's warning and her subsequent seclusion. "In what sort of vessel she drinks from"; is in an earthenware pot. "Why she had defiled herself"; is because she acted with levity and childishness. "How she defiled herself"; it depends if she committed adultery in error or deliberately, under compulsion or of free will. Why is this necessary? It is in order not to discredit the bitter waters. (32b)

Confession of Tithes

The *Mishnah* had stated: The confession of the tithes may be recited in any language.

The *Gemora* asks: How is this known?

The *Gemora* answers: It is written: *And you shall say before Hashem your God, "I have removed the holy things out of my house,"* and we learn from the word "say" in connection with the *sotah* that it may be in whatever language he speaks.

Rav Zevid said to Abaye: But let us derive from the word "say" in connection with the Levites (*by the Blessings and the Curses*)? Just as there it means that it must be in the Holy Tongue, so too, here, it must be in the Holy Tongue!

He answered: We deduce the meaning of an unqualified use of "say" from another occurrence of an unqualified use of "say," but we do not deduce the meaning of an unqualified use of "say" from a passage where the expression "speak up" and "say" occurs.

The *Gemora* cites a *Baraisa*: Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai said: A man should say his own praise in a low voice and what is to his shame in a loud voice. 'His own praise in a low voice' is learned out from the confession of the tithes, and 'what is to his shame in a loud voice' is derived from the declaration made by the *bikkurim*.



The *Gemora* asks: But should one recount what is to his shame in a loud voice? Surely Rabbi Yochanan has said in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai: Why was it instituted that prayer should be recited softly? It is in order that the transgressors should not be embarrassed; for behold, the Torah made no distinction as to the place of a *chatas* or an *olah* (*they are both slaughtered in the same place in the Temple Courtyard in order that people would not realize that he is a sinner*)!

The *Gemora* emends the *Baraisa*: Do not read “his discredit,” but rather, “his troubles,” as it has been taught in the following *Baraisa*: It is written [Vayikra 13:45]: *And he shall call out, “Tamei, tamei.”* We derive from this verse that the *metzora* should call out for the sake of informing people of his misfortune and this way they will pity him and plead on his behalf for compassion. (32b)

Don't Shame the Sinner

The above text states: Rabbi Yochanan has said in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai: Why was it instituted that prayer should be recited softly? It is in order that the transgressors should not be embarrassed; for behold, the Torah made no distinction as to the place of a *chatas* or an *olah*.

The *Gemora* asks: But behold there is a difference in the treatment of the blood! The blood of a *chatas* was applied above the red line of the altar, whereas the blood of an *olah* was applied below it?

The *Gemora* answers: Only the *Kohen* would know that.

The *Gemora* asks: But there is, however, the difference that for a *chatas*, a female animal was sacrificed and for an *olah*, it was a male?

The *Gemora* answers: The female organ is covered by the fat tail.

The *Gemora* asks: That is reasonable with a female sheep, but what of a female goat (*which does not have this type of tail*)?

The *Gemora* answers: In that case, the man brought the shame upon himself, because he should have offered a lamb, and instead offered a goat.

The *Gemora* asks: What, however, of the *chatas* brought for idolatry, when only a goat suffices?

The *Gemora* answers: In that case, let him experience shame (*for the severe transgression of idolatry*), so that he may receive atonement. (32b)

INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

Where to Stop and Start

The *Mishnah* lists statements that must be made in Hebrew. One of them is the *bikkurim* (*the first ripe fruits which had to be brought to the Beis Hamikdash in Yerushalayim*) recitation. When he brings the fruits to the Beis Hamikdash to be given to the *Kohanim*, he recites several verses from Devarim. Rashi writes that he says the verse beginning with *Arami oved avi, An Aramean tried to destroy my father* [Devarim 26:5], and he continues until the end of the passage.

In truth, however, he does not complete the entire passage. As a matter of fact, he stops in middle of verse 10, when he says *asher nasatah li Hashem, that You have given me, Hashem*. The Rambam in Hilchos Bikkurim states this explicitly.

The commentators ask that the last words of this recital conclude in middle of a verse and this is against the

dictum of stopping in a place that Moshe did not stop. The *Gemora Brochos* (12b) rules that any place in the Torah that Moshe Rabbeinu did not pause; we are forbidden to pause as well. How could they institute to stop the recital in middle of a verse?

Reb Yaakov Kaminetzky in his sefer *Emes L'Yaakov* in *Parshas Ki Savo* answers that this ruling does not apply by *mitzvos*, such as *bikkurim*. It is only a concern when verses are being recited because of Torah.

There are other examples where this principle may be applicable. The *Gemora* in *Rosh Hashanah* (31a) discusses the hymns that were recited by the Levites in the *Beis Hamikdash* on *Shabbos*. The *Gemora* concludes that they would divide *Parshas Haazinu* into six segments, and one segment was recited each week by the *korban mussaf*.

The *Turei Even* asks from the aforementioned *Gemora* in *Brochos*. How were the *Levi'im* permitted to stop in places that Moshe did not stop? He answers that since they intended to complete it the next week, it is not regarded as interrupting the portion (*even though there will be different Leviim the next week*). According to Reb Yaakov, we can suggest that the hymns of the *Leviim* were not being sung as Torah; but rather, as a part of the *mitzvah* of the bringing of *korbanos*. They therefore were permitted to stop and start in the Torah, even in the middle of a passage.

Magan Avrohom (O"C 282) asks this question as well, inquiring into different verses from the Torah that we recite during *tefillah* which are incomplete. He also answers that we only apply the principle that one cannot interrupt in middle of a verse when one is engaged in Torah study or reading from the Torah. If, however, one is reciting verses for the purpose of prayer or *mitzvah* observance, there is no prohibition of interrupting in middle of a verse.

Rav Nosson Grossman states that perhaps through this principle, we can answer the *Turei Even's* question. The *Leviim* are not reciting these *pesukim* as Torah, rather they are being said on account of *shirah*, song, and therefore it will not be subject to the prohibition of stopping in an incorrect place. However, it would seem evident that the *Magen Avrohom* will not concur with this, since he states that principle, and nevertheless, does not apply it to the *Levi'im's* *shirah*.

It would seem that many other *Acharonim* do not agree with this qualification of that rule. The *tefillah* which is recited when the *Sefer Torah* is raised in shul is a combination of two different verses. There are those who stop after saying, "*lifnei B'nei Yisroel*," for the next part (*al pi Hashem b'yad Moshe*) is not a complete verse. This reason is brought in the name of Reb Chaim Volozhiner. Once again, according to the qualification mentioned above, we could have explained that there is no concern during *tefillah*; it is only when we are reciting Torah for the sake of Torah where the dictum applies.

The *Chasam Sofer* in his *Teshuvos* (O"C 10) discusses why during *kiddush*, do we begin with the verse, *Va'yehi erev va'yehi boker*," when that is the middle of a verse in the Torah. He explains that the first part of the verse has a reference to "death," and we did not want that alluded to during *kiddush*. It is evident that the *Chasam Sofer* as well did not concur with this qualification.

DAILY MASHAL

A Metzora' Must Inform Others

Why is this hinted especially concerning a *metzora'*? Because a *metzora'* sits alone outside the camp and is not seen. He therefore has to inform others (*She'arim Hametzuyim Bahalachah*).

Praying for Another



The "meztora" (a person stricken with tzaraas) calls out his plight to the public. Our Gemora explains the reason why this is done as follows: So that people will be motivated to pray for his recovery. A question can be asked as follows: we know that "tzaraas" is a spiritual affliction that has physical symptoms. The Gemora in Arachin 15a states mentions 7 sins that can bring about "Tzaraas". (1. Evil gossip, 2. Murder, 3. Immorality, 4. False oath, 5. Arrogance, 6. Theft, 7. Miserliness). It is therefore logical to conclude that if "Tzaraas" is a spiritual disease then the only way the Metzora can be healed is through the changing of his ways, so we must therefore try to understand what actually are the people praying for in regard to the Metzora. If it's only for his recovery, that can only be brought about by the Metzora himself which is beyond the control of the onlookers!?

The Torah wants the people to pray for the Metzora being able to examine his deeds so that he can possibly find the root cause for his illness, namely the 7 sins. It's often exceedingly difficult for a person to find a fault in himself. This is man's nature, he's blinded by his ego. The people pray that G-d open the eyes of the Metzora so that he will be able to discover where he has gone astray. The Metzora is in desperate need of this type of Divine assistance. To be able to see one's faults is truly a gift so that change can be properly facilitated. The Torah is teaching us a tremendous lesson; not only should we pray for our friend's physical well-being, but we should also pray for his spiritual well-being as well.

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Do not Embarrass the Sinner

Our Gemora teaches us that the Torah ruled that both offerings (the olah and the chatas) should be brought in

the same place to avoid embarrassing the sinner. If a person's sin offering had to be brought in a special place, it would be obvious that that person had done something wrong. By having both offerings brought in the same place, no one would know if his offering was for a sin, or simply a burnt offering brought voluntarily.

Similarly, since we no longer have a temple, our prayers must replace the offerings. Our Gemora explains that the reason we recite the Shemoneh Esrei silently, is so that those who wish to confess sinful behavior before Hashem can do so without embarrassing themselves.

Other examples include the Mishnah's exhortation not to gaze at another person during his moment of ruin (Pirkei Avos 4:23). For example, one should stop people from crowding round and staring at someone who is being attended to by the emergency services. Similarly it is inappropriate to stare at someone who has made a mistake in public or who has become angry.

It is not only prohibited to embarrass others, but we must also go out of our way to avoid making a bad situation worse.