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Half Measures

Ilfa inquires: Can the hands become purified in half or not? [*The Rabbis decreed that a quarter-log of water must be poured on a person’s hands before eating bread.*]

The *Gemora* asks: What is the case? If you will say that two people are washing from one cup containing a quarter-log of water, did we not learn in a *Mishna* that one, and even two people may wash their hands from a cup containing one quarter-log of water? [*This is because it originally had the required amount and the remaining water is regarded as a remainder of purification.*]

Rather, he is referring to a case where he washed one hand and then the other. The *Gemora* asks: This is also obvious that it is valid, for we learned that if one washed one hand by rinsing and one hand by immersion (*in a stream of forty se’ah*), his hands are purified. [*This indicates that it is not mandated that both hands should be washed simultaneously!*]

Rather, Ilfa’s inquiry is in a case where he washed half of each hand separately (*he completely dried it in between the two washings*). The *Gemora* asks: This case is obvious that it is not valid, for we learned in the *Beis Medrash* of Rabbi Yannai that a hand cannot be purified in such a manner!?

Rather, the *Gemora* modifies the case: There was still enough liquid on his hand to be able to moisten anything

which touches it (*perhaps then, it will be regarded as one washing*).

The *Gemora* asks: What does it matter? We learned in a *Mishna* that a jet of liquid from a jug (*nitzok*), or liquid flowing down a slope (*katafreis*), or liquid enough to moisten (*mashkeh tofe’ach*) does not form a connection for *tumah* or for *taharah*. [*The explanation that they are not a connection for tumah: Nitzok – if one pours liquid from a tavor vessel into a tamei one and the flow of the liquid is uninterrupted between them, it is not regarded as a connection to make the upper vessel tamei. Katafreis – if a liquid from a pool flows down a board on a slope into a pool of liquid which is tamei, the upper pool remains tavor. Mashkeh tofei’ach – a moist trough has two pools of liquid on opposite sides; one of them tamei and one of them tavor. Although the trough is damp enough that it can moisten anything that touches it, the tamei pool does not contaminate the tavor one. The explanation that they are not a connection for taharah: A mikvah must contain forty se’ah of water in order to be valid. If there are two mikvaos and neither of them contain forty se’ah and they are connected through any one of the three ways mentioned above, they are not considered halachically connected to form one large valid mikvah.*]

The *Gemora* answers: Ilfa’s inquiry is in a case where the portion of the hand which was washed first is so damp that whatever touches it has the ability to moisten something else (*and this case is not mentioned in the Mishna*).

The *Gemora* asks that this case is taught in a *braisa* that it would be a connection between two liquids (*and therefore, Ilfa could not have been uncertain as to the halachah in this case!*)?

The *Gemora* questions the comparison from the *braisa* to Ilfa's case: Perhaps the *braisa* is referring to a specific case of *mikvah* and it is following Rabbi Yehudah's viewpoint? For we learned in a *Mishna*: If there was a *mikvah* that was precisely forty *se'ah* and two people immersed themselves one after the other, the first one is *tahor* and the second one is *tamei* (*since the first one inevitably took some of the water with him*). Rabbi Yehudah said: If the second one immersed while the first one's feet is still touching the water, the second person is *tahor* as well (*using the principle of gud achis, the water on the first person is connected to the water in the mikvah and regarded as part of the mikvah*). [*It would emerge that the braisa only rules that it is a connection because of gud achis. We would have no proof that it connects tow separate things, such as the case where a portion of the hand was washed first and afterwards, the other portion was washed!?*] (15b – 16a)

Half and Half

Rabbi Yirmiyah said: Behold, they said: One whose head and most of his body enter drawn water is rendered *tamei*. And one who was *tahor* and three *lugin* of drawn water fell on his head and most of his body is rendered *tamei*. (*The reason for these decrees is because people would err and say, it is not the waters of the mikvah that render one pure; rather, only the waters that one pours on himself render one pure.*)

Rabbi Yirmiyah inquired: If one (*after immersing in a mikvah*) washed half of his body in drawn water and the other half of his body by pouring drawn water over himself, what is the *halachah*?

The *Gemora* leaves this question unresolved. (16a)

Baal Keri

Rav Pappa said: Behold, they said: If a sick person had a seminal emission (*baal keri - one who experiences a seminal emission; Ezra decreed that he should not daven or study Torah until he immerses in a mikvah; if he is sick, he may have nine kavim of water poured over him*) and nine *kavim* of water are thrown over him, he is *tahor*.

Rav Pappa inquired: If he immerses half his body in a *mikvah* and water is thrown over the other half, is he *tahor*?

This question was also left unanswered. (16a)

Two Agents

The *Mishna* had stated: If one witness says that it was written in his presence and another said it was signed in his presence, it is invalid.

Rav Shmuel bar Yehudah said in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: This *halachah* is true only when one of them was the agent (*then, he is required to say that it was written and signed in his presence*), however, if both witnesses bring the *get* (*they were both appointed as agents*), the *get* is valid.

The *Gemora* notes: It would seem that Rabbi Yochanan holds that two agents, who bring a *get* from abroad, are not required to declare that it was written and signed in their presence.

Abaye asked: But let us consider the latter ruling of the *Mishna*: If two people said that it was written in their presence, and one person says it was signed in his presence, the *get* is invalid. Rabbi Yehudah says it is valid. It may be inferred that the reason that the *Tanna Kamma*

invalidated the *get* is because the *get* was not brought by both of them, but if both witnesses bring the *get*, the *get* would be valid.

Rav Shmuel bar Yehudah agreed to Abaye.

Abaye asked: If they both did not bring the *get*, why are they arguing (*what is Rabbi Yehudah's justification for his ruling that the get is valid*)?

The *Gemora* answers: The *Tanna Kamma* holds that they were concerned that people would confuse this *halachah* with an ordinary authentication of witnesses, and they would say that only one witness is required. Rabbi Yehudah was not concerned for this (*since two witnesses testified that it was written in their presence*).

The *Gemora* states a different version: Rav Shmuel bar Yehudah said in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: The *Mishna's halachah* is true even when both witnesses bring the *get* (*they were both appointed as agents*).

The *Gemora* notes: It would seem that Rabbi Yochanan holds that two agents, who bring a *get* from abroad, are required to declare that it was written and signed in their presence.

Abaye asked: But let us consider the latter ruling of the *Mishna*: If two people said that it was written in their presence, and one person says it was signed in his presence, the *get* is invalid. Rabbi Yehudah says it is valid. It may be inferred that even if both witnesses bring the *get*, the *Tanna Kamma* would still invalidate the *get*.

Rav Shmuel bar Yehudah agreed to Abaye.

Abaye asked: If they both did not bring the *get*, why are they arguing (*what is Rabbi Yehudah's justification for his ruling that the get is valid*)?

The *Gemora* answers: The *Tanna Kamma* holds that the reason for the declaration was (*like Rabbah said*) because the people living abroad are not familiar with the rule that a *get* must be made specifically for that woman (*referred to as the halachah of lishmah; and since the witnesses are required, we therefore were concerned that people would confuse this with an ordinary authentication of witnesses, and they would say that only one witness is required*). Rabbi Yehudah would hold that the reason for the declaration was (*like Rava said*) because witnesses are not readily available to authenticate the signatures (*and this is not necessary when two agents bring the get*).

The *Gemora* asks: According to the above explanation, it would emerge that Rabbah and Rava's dispute is actually a *Tannaic* dispute!?

The *Gemora* answers: No! Rava will hold like the first version (*that both Tannaim hold that the reason for the declaration was because witnesses are not readily available to authenticate the signatures*). Rabbah would say that everyone holds that it is because of *lishmah*, and the case we are discussing is after the people living abroad learned that a *get* must be written *lishmah* and the argument between the *Tannaim* is whether we are concerned that the situation would return to its disappointing condition or not.

The *Gemora* asks: Then why didn't Rabbi Yehudah argue in the first case of the *Mishna* (*where two witnesses brought the get and one witness says that it was written in his presence and another said it was signed in his presence*)?

The *Gemora* answers that Ula had stated: Rabbi Yehudah does in fact disagree even in the first case. (16a – 16b)

INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

Katafreis Connection

The Gemora cites a Mishna in Taharos: A jet of liquid from a jug (*nitzok*), or liquid flowing down a slope (*katafreis*), or liquid enough to moisten (*mashkeh tofe'ach*) does not form a connection for *tumah* or for *taharah*. [The explanation that they are not a connection for *tumah*: *Nitzok* – if one pours liquid from a *tahor* vessel into a *tamei* one and the flow of the liquid is uninterrupted between them, it is not regarded as a connection to make the upper vessel *tamei*. *Katafreis* – if a liquid from a pool flows down a board on a slope into a pool of liquid which is *tamei*, the upper pool remains *tahor*. *Mashkeh tofe'ach* – a moist trough has two pools of liquid on opposite sides; one of them *tamei* and one of them *tahor*. Although the trough is damp enough that it can moisten anything that touches it, the *tamei* pool does not contaminate the *tahor* one. The explanation that they are not a connection for *taharah*: A *mikvah* must contain forty *se'ah* of water in order to be valid. If there are two *mikvaos* and neither of them contain forty *se'ah* and they are connected through any one of the three ways mentioned above, they are not considered halachically connected to form one large valid *mikvah*.]

The Vilna Gaon asks: Even without the connection through *katafreis*, why don't we say that each droplet of *tamei* water should contaminate another drop, and ultimately, the water in the upper pool should be rendered *tamei*?

He answers that the *halachah* of *katafreis* would be necessary in a case where a *tevul yom* (one who was *tamei*, but has immersed himself in a *mikvah*; he is considered a *tevul yom* until nightfall) touched the liquid, for he cannot contaminate a food item with the capability of contaminating something else (and therefore, one droplet will not cause the other to become *tamei*).

Through the principle of *katafreis*, it could be regarded that the entire flow is regarded as one body of liquid, and the upper pool could become *tamei* (if it would be considered connected).

Reb Shimon Shkop asks on his answer from the Rambam, who rules that these *halachos* would apply by *tumas sheretz* as well, and a *sheretz* can contaminate one drop to render the others *tamei*!?

He answers that one drop cannot render the other drops *tamei* because of the principle of *beis hasetarim* (for the drops touching each other are not recognizable).

Rav Elyashiv answers simply that if the liquid would be rendered *tamei* because of its contact with the first droplet, it would only be Rabbinically *tamei*, for that which a liquid is ruled to be a *rishon l'tumah* is only a Rabbinic decree. Hence, *kodoshim* that contracted *tumah* in such a manner could not be burned. However, through the principle of *katafreis*, the entire liquid would be rendered *tamei* on a Biblical level, and if *kodoshim* would be involved, it would be required to be burned.

Showering after immersing in a Mikvah

Rashi explains that the *Chachamim* enacted a decree of *mayim sheuvim* (drawn water) because people would err and say that immersing in a *Mikvah* and in *mayim sheuvim* would render one pure. Rava (*Shabbos* 14a) asked Abaye, why does it make a difference if people said this? The end result was that the people had immersed themselves in a *Mikvah*?

Reb Moshe Feinstein writes in *Iggros Moshe* that perhaps Abaye's reasoning was that by pouring on themselves *mayim sheuvim*, they transgressed the prohibition of *baal tosif* (adding on to a *mitzvah*) by thinking that pouring *mayim sheuvim* was obligatory. Rava, however, maintained that for this suspicion there was no reason to

render the person *tamei*. Some wrote that Abaye held that if one would immerse in a Mikvah or in *mayim sheuvim*, others would consider him *tamei*, and they would end up burning *Terumah* and *Kodshim* in an errant manner.

Some Rishonim write that similar to matters of purity, the *Chachamim* also enacted a decree that a woman who was a *niddah* is not allowed to shower after immersing in a *Mikvah*. If she showered after immersing in a *Mikvah*, her immersion would be invalid and she would be forbidden to her husband. Most Rishonim, however, maintain that this is not the law, because this decree was only enacted regarding matters of purity.

The Shach writes that the reason that is offered in the *Gemora* that people will err in thinking that pouring *mayim sheuvim* is what purifies the person, also applies to a woman immersing in a *Mikvah*, irrespective of the woman erring in her thinking. Others write that from the words of the Rambam, it appears that the decree was enacted because people erred and thought that merely immersing in a *Mikvah* did not render them pure, and they also were required to pour on themselves *mayim sheuvim*. This reasoning only applies with regard to *mayim sheuvim* of *Taharos*, because only when one immersed for *Taharos* was one required to have the correct intentions. A *niddah* who immersed in a *Mikvah*, however, does not require the correct intention, and there was no reason to enact a decree for a *niddah*.

Rav Shmuel Vozner in *Shevet HaLevi* writes that even though the Rama rules that after immersing in a *Mikvah* a woman should not shower, once she arrives at her home she is permitted to shower.

Rav Ovadyah Yosef in *Sheilos U'Teshuvos Yabia Omer*, however, rules that a woman can shower immediately after immersing in a *Mikvah*.

DAILY MASHAL

Visiting the Sick

The Gemora relates the story that Rabbah bar bar Chana was sick and his colleagues visited him. In the course of the conversation they clarified the topic of our Gemora. The Ben Yehoyada points out a number of lessons we can learn from the apparently irrelevant details. When the Sages visited the sick, they remained immersed in Torah and their conversation was a Halachic discourse. Even the person who was sick strengthened himself to respond. Furthermore, Hashem guided them to discuss this topic that concluded with a kal v'chomer argument, as a kal v'chomer is a segulah for a complete healing. This is derived by the Bnei Yissoschar from the episode where Miriam is stricken with leprosy for speaking about Moshe, and Hashem responds to Moshe's entreaties on her behalf with a kal v'chomer (Bamidbar 12:13). Finally, from the fact that they had a lamp we see that they visited him in the night time. Although nighttime is not the preferred time for bikur cholim, they chose to visit him then, since in the daytime their first responsibility was to their students in the Beis Midrash.