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Sotah Daf 46

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Mishnah

When the elders of Yerushalayim had departed (*after measuring which city was the closest to the corpse*) and went on their way, the elders of that city brought a female calf of the cattle which was never drawn with a yoke, and a blemish does not disqualify it. And they brought it down to an *eisan* valley. *Eisan* is meant literally: Rock hard. Even if it is not a rock hard valley, it is valid. They then break its neck with a large knife from the back of its neck. The place (*where the decapitation occurs*) is forbidden to be planted or worked, but it is permitted to comb flax or to chisel stones there (*since it does not involve the land itself*).

The elders of that city wash their hands in water at the place where the decapitation of the calf occurred and they declare: *Our hands have not spilled this blood, neither have our eyes seen it*. Could it have entered our minds that the elders of the court were shedders of blood? Rather, (*they are saying*) that he (*the murdered person*) did not come to us and we sent him away without food, nor did we see him and leave him without escort. And the *Kohanim* say: *Forgive for Your people Israel whom You have redeemed, O Hashem, and do not place innocent blood in the midst of Your people Israel*. They did not have to say: *And the blood shall be forgiven for them*, rather, the Divine Spirit is informing them: Whenever you do like this, the blood will be a forgiveness for them. (45b – 46a)

Blemish, Age and Work

The *Gemora* asks: Shouldn't a blemish disqualify the calf for the *eglah arufah* based upon the following *kal vachomer*: We find that "age" does not disqualify a *parah adumah*, but

yet, a blemish does disqualify it, so, an *eglah arufah*, where "age" does disqualify it (*the calf cannot be more than a year old*), certainly a blemish should disqualify it!?

The *Gemora* answers: There it is different, for it is written (*with respect of a parah adumah*): *which has no blemish on it*. We expound that only there will a blemish disqualify it, but not by an *eglah arufah*.

The *Gemora* asks: If so, other types of work (*the Torah only mentions "placing a yoke on it"*) should not disqualify a *parah adumah* (*since other types of work are derived from a kal vachomer and the verse mentioned above should limit the disqualifications*)!? Why did Rav Yehudah say in the name of Rav that if one placed a bundle of sacks on the cow, it cannot be used for a *parah adumah*; however, a calf for an *eglah arufah*, will not be disqualified unless it hauls the bundle!?

The *Gemora* answers that this disqualification by *parah* is different, for it is derived by means of a *gezeirah shavah* from the word *yoke* which is stated by *eglah arufah* and the word *yoke* which is stated by *parah adumah* as well.

The *Gemora* asks: Why can't we use the *gezeirah shavah* to rule that a blemish should disqualify a *parah adumah*?

The *Gemora* answers: The Torah excludes this from the word "it."

The *Gemora* asks: But it says "it" by an *eglah arufah* as well (*and nevertheless, you expound the gezeirah shavah to teach that other work disqualifies a parah adumah*)?

The *Gemora* answers: The word “it” by *eglah arufah* is needed to exclude *kodoshim* that work does not disqualify animals to be used for a *korban*. For we could have made the following *kal vachomer*: We find that a blemish does not disqualify an *eglah arufah*, but yet, work does disqualify it, so, *kodoshim*, where a blemish does disqualify it, then certainly work should disqualify it!? [The word “it” by *eglah arufah* precludes this *kal vachomer*.]

The *Gemora* challenges this *kal vachomer*: You cannot learn it from *eglah arufah*, for there, “age” disqualifies it (*whereas there is no age limit by kodoshim; we can therefore say that work will only disqualify an eglah arufah, but not kodoshim*).

The *Gemora* answers: There are *kodoshim* where “age” does disqualify, and therefore the verse will be needed for those types of *kodoshim*.

The *Gemora* asks: But is this the verse that teaches us that work does not disqualify an animal for *kodoshim*? We were taught the following *Baraisa*: It is written: *You shall not offer these (animals with blemishes) to Hashem*. “These” cannot be offered, but animals that were worked with may be offered!?

The *Gemora* answers: The *Baraisa* will only teach us that an animal, where one performed a permitted type of work with, may be used for a *korban*, but if a forbidden type of work (*such as working with it on Shabbos*) was done with it, it cannot be used for a *korban*; therefore, the word “it” is needed that even then, it may be used for a *korban*.

The *Gemora* asks: But it could likewise have been derived from the following: From the hand of a stranger you shall not offer the bread of your God from any of these — these you shall not offer, but you may offer animals which have been used for work! — [This verse] is necessary, because it might have occurred to you to say: This only applies when they were worked while they were still not designated as sacrifices, but when they were worked after having been designated as sacrifices conclude that they are forbidden! So

it was necessary [to have this verse from which we infer that even then they are acceptable as offerings]. (46a)

Other Types of Work

It was stated above: Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav: If one placed a bundle of sacks on the cow, it cannot be used for a *parah adumah*; however, a calf for an *eglah arufah*, will not be disqualified unless it hauls the bundle.

The *Gemora* asks from a *Baraisa*: Yoke — I have only mention of a yoke; from where is it known that there are other [disqualifications on account of] work having been done by it? You may argue by a *kal vachomer*: if a heifer which is not disqualified by a blemish is disqualified by having been used for work, how much more must a *parah adumah*, which is disqualified by a blemish, be disqualified by having been used for various kinds of work! And if you like you may argue: It is stated here ‘yoke’ and there [with the heifer] it is stated ‘yoke’, as there the various kinds of work disqualify, so here [with the *parah adumah*] the various kinds of work disqualify. But why have this alternative argument? — Because you might reply [as mentioned above], ‘It can, however, be objected: This is right for a heifer because it is also disqualified by an age-limit’. Or it might also [be objected] that the case of animals destined as sacrifices proves [the contrary, thus:] a blemish disqualifies them but the fact that they were used for work does not disqualify them. [Therefore the alternative line of reasoning is employed:] It is stated here ‘yoke’ and there [with the heifer] it is stated ‘yoke’; as there the various kinds of work [disqualify], so here [with the *parah adumah*] the various kinds of work [disqualify]. Now from the same line of reasoning: You may conclude as there [with the heifer it is not disqualified] until it draws [a load], so here [with the *parah adumah* it is not disqualified] until it draws [a load]! — This is a matter disputed by Tannaim. Some of them deduce it from the instance of the heifer, while others deduce it from [the law of the *parah adumah* itself. For it has been taught: ‘Yoke’ — I have mention only of a yoke; from where is it known that various kinds of work [disqualify]? There is a

text to state: Upon which never came upon it a yoke, i.e., [work] of any sort. If that is so, why is 'yoke' specified? A yoke disqualifies whether during the time of work or not during the time of work, but the various kinds of work only disqualify during the time of work. But say that 'upon which never came' is general and 'yoke' is particular, and where there is a case of general and particular, only what is in the particular is in the general — viz., a yoke only [disqualifies] and nothing else! The phrase 'which' is inclusive [of various kinds of work], and there is a similar teaching in connection with the heifer as follows: Yoke — I have mention only of a yoke; from where is it known that various kinds of work [disqualify]? There is a text to state: Which has not been worked with' — i.e., [work] of any sort. If that is so, why is 'yoke' specified? A yoke disqualifies whether during the time of work or not during the time of work, but the various kinds of work only disqualify during the time of work. But say that 'which has not been worked with' is general and 'yoke' is particular, and where there is a case of general and particular, only what is in the particular is in the general — viz. a yoke [disqualifies] and nothing else! — The phrase 'which' is inclusive [of various kinds of work]. (46a)

A Yoke

Rabbi Avahu said: I inquired of Rabbi Yochanan: How far must the calf pull the yoke for it to be disqualified? He answered me: If it went the distance equal to the size of a yoke.

The *Gemora* inquires: Did he mean the length of the yoke or its width?

One of the students, and Rabbi Yaakov was his name, said: It was explained to me in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: It is according to its width, which is a *tefach*.

The *Gemora* asks: Let him just say a *tefach* (and not mention yoke)? — This teaches us that the size of a yoke is a *tefach*. — But what practical difference is there in that? — This teaches

us a *halachah* regarding buying and selling (a seller must give a buyer a yoke where its width is at least a *tefach*). (46a)

Cannot Produce Fruit

Rabbi Yochanan ben Shaul said: Why does the Torah mention that he should bring the calf into an *eisan* valley? It is because the Holy One, blessed be He, said: Let something which did not produce fruit (*the calf*) be decapitated in a place that can't produce fruit (*because the soil is hard*) and atone for one who was not allowed to produce fruit.

The *Gemora* asks: What does "fruit" mean in connection to the murdered person? If you will say that it means offspring (*he cannot be fruitful any longer*), then, according to this, we should not bring an *eglah arufah* if the murdered person was old or castrated!

Rather, "fruit" means that he cannot perform *mitzvos* any longer. (46a)

Clarification of the Mishnah

The *Mishnah* had stated: And they brought it down to an *eisan* valley. *Eisan* is meant literally: Rock hard.

The *Gemora* cites a *Baraisa*: From where is it known that 'eisan' means 'hard'? As it is said: Strong [eisan] is your dwelling-place, and your nest is set in the rock; and it states: Hear, O mountains, Hashem's controversy, and your enduring foundations [eisanim] of the earth. Others, however, say: From where is it known that 'eisan' means 'old' (*the soil was always here, and not brought here from elsewhere*)? As it is stated: It is an *eisan* nation, it is an ancient nation.

The *Mishnah* had stated: They then break its neck with a large knife from the back of its neck.

The *Gemora* explains the reason for this: It is derived by means of a *gezeirah shavah* from a *chatas* bird (*just like the*

melikah is done at the back of the neck, so too, the decapitation is done at the back of the neck).

The *Mishnah* had stated: The place (*where the decapitation occurs*) is forbidden to be planted or worked on.

The *Gemora* cites a *Baraisa*: Rabbi Yoshiyah said: *Which is neither plowed nor sown*. The place cannot be a location where work was done with it (*in the past*). Rabbi Yonasan said: The verse is referring to the future.

Rava explains: Nobody disputes as to the future since it is written: It shall not be sown; they differ as to the past. Rabbi Yoshiyah argues: Is it written: 'And it shall not be tilled'? And Rabbi Yonasan argues: Is it written: 'Which has not been tilled'? And [how does] Rabbi Yoshiyah [respond to Rabbi Yonasan's argument]? — The relative pronoun 'which' must be understood of the past. And Rabbi Yonasan? — 'Which' is employed in an inclusive sense. (46a – 46b)

The *Mishnah* had stated: [The place (*where the decapitation occurs*) is forbidden to be planted or worked] but it is permitted to comb flax or to chisel stones there (*since it does not involve the land itself*).

The *Gemora* cites a *Baraisa*: 'Which is neither plowed nor sown' — I have here only sowing; from where is it known that the other kinds of agricultural work [are prohibited]? There is a text to state, 'which is neither plowed' — i.e., [agricultural labor] in any form. If that is so, why is it stated 'nor sown'? Its purpose is to inform us that as sowing is special since it is connected with the soil itself, so everything which is connected with the soil itself [is forbidden], to the exclusion of carding flax and chiseling stones which are not connected with the soil itself. But argue that 'which is neither plowed' is general and 'nor sown' particular, and where there is a case of general and particular, only what is in the particular is in the general — viz. sowing only [is forbidden] but nothing else! — The term 'which' is employed in an inclusive sense. (46b)

Reward for Escorting

The *Mishnah* had stated: The elders of that city wash their hands.

The *Gemora* cites a *Baraisa*: The elders of that city, whom were closest to the corpse, wash their hands in water at the place where the decapitation of the calf occurred in the valley. There was no need to state, 'whose neck was broken'! Why, then, is 'whose neck was broken' added? [It signifies], Over the place of the heifer's neck where it was broken. And they declare: *Our hands have not spilled this blood, neither have our eyes seen it*. Could it have entered our minds that the elders of the court were shedders of blood? Rather, (*they are saying*) that he (*the murdered person*) did not come to us and we sent him away without food, nor did we see him and leave him without escort.

The *Gemora* cites a *Baraisa*: Rabbi Meir used to say: We may force a person to escort his friend, for the reward for escorting is limitless; as it is said: *And the watchers saw a man leaving the city, and they said to him, "Show us now the entrance into the city, and we will deal kindly with you."* And it is then written: *And he showed them the entrance into the city*. What was the kindness they did to him? They killed the entire city by sword, but they let that man and his family go.

It is written: *And the man (who had showed them the way) went into the land of the Hittites and built a city, and called it Luz, which is its name until this day*. It has been taught in a *Baraisa*: That is the Luz in which they dye the *techeiles*; that is the Luz against which Sennacherib marched without disarranging it (*like he did with the other Ten Tribes*); that is the Luz against which Nebuchadnezzar marched without destroying it. And even the Angel of Death has no permission to pass through it. When the old men there become tired of life, they go outside the wall and then die. And is this not a *kal vachomer*? If this Canaanite, who did not utter a word with his mouth, and did not walk a step (*all he did was show them directions*), caused salvation to come to himself and his offspring until the end of all generations, so he who

performs the act of escorting with his feet, how much more so (*that he deserves a limitless reward*)!

The *Gemora* asks: How did he show them the way? Chizkiyah said: He just bent his mouth for them (*he moved his lips without saying anything*). Rabbi Yochanan said: He pointed for them with his finger.

The *Gemora* cites a *Baraisa* in agreement with Rabbi Yochanan: Because this Canaanite pointed the way with his finger, he caused salvation to come to himself and his offspring until the end of all generations.

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: Whoever is on the road and has no escort should occupy his mind with Torah, as it is said: For they shall be a chaplet of grace on your head, and chains about your neck.

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi also said: Because of the four paces with which Pharaoh escorted Avraham, as it is said: *And Pharaoh commanded men concerning him* etc., he was allowed to enslave Avraham's descendants for four hundred years, as it is said: *And they shall serve them, and they shall afflict them, four hundred years.*

Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav: Whoever escorts his fellow four *amos* in the city, insures that no harm will come to him during his journey.

Ravina escorted Rava bar Yitzchak four *amos* in the city. Later, a danger threatened him, but he was saved.

The *Gemora* cites a *Baraisa*: A teacher should escort his pupils until the outskirts of the city. One friend should escort another friend up to the *Shabbos* boundary (*two thousand amos*). A pupil should escort his teacher a distance without a limit. Rav Sheishes explains: Up to a *parsah* (*four mil*). This only applies when the teacher is not his primary teacher, but with respect to his primary teacher, he should escort him three *parsaos*.

Rav Kahana once escorted Rav Shimi bar Ashi from Pumbedra to Bei Tzinyasa. When they arrived there, he said to him, "Is it true what you say, that these palms of Bavel are from the time of Adam?" He answered, "You have reminded me of something which Rabbi Yosi bar Chanina said: 'What is the meaning of that which is written: *Through a land that no man passed through and where no man settled?* If no man passed through it, how could anyone have settled there? The meaning is: A land which Adam decreed that it should be settled has become inhabited, and a land which Adam did not so decree, has not been inhabited.'" [*And when he had said that the palm trees were from the days of Adam, he only meant that this place would be for palm trees.*]

Rav Mordechai escorted Rav Ashi from Hagronia until Bei Keifei, and according to another version, it was until to Bei Dura.

Rabbi Yochanan said in the name of Rabbi Meir: Whoever does not escort others or he who refuses to be escorted is as though he sheds blood. For had the men of Yericho escorted Elisha, he would not have stirred up the bears against the children (*who ridiculed him*), as it is said: *And he went up from there to Bethel; and as he was going up the road, little children came out of the city, and mocked him, and they said to him, "Go away, bald head; go away, bald head."* What they were saying to him was, "Go away, for you who have made this place bald for us (*now that you made the water bitter, we cannot sell it to the people living in Yericho*)."

What is the meaning of "little children"? Rabbi Elozar said: It means they were empty (*menu'arim*) of *mitzvos*. "Little" means that they were people of very little faith. A *Tanna* taught: They were youths, but they behaved like little children. Rav Yosef demurred to this: But perhaps they were so called after the name of the place; for is it not written: And the Syrians had gone out in bands, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid, and the question is asked by us a maid [na'arah] and little? And Rabbi

Pedas explained: She was a little girl from a place called Ne'uran! — In this passage her place is not specified, but in the other their place is specified.

And he (Elisha) looked behind him and saw them, and cursed them in the name of Hashem. What did he see? Rav said: He actually looked upon them (*with the intention of punishing them*), as it has been taught: Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says: Wherever the Sages set their eyes on someone, there is either death or poverty. Shmuel said: He saw that their mothers had all become pregnant with them on *Yom Kippur* (*a day in which marital relations are forbidden*). Rabbi Yitzchak Nafcha said: He saw that they had long braids of hair, similar to the Emorites. Rabbi Yochanan said: He saw that there was no trace of *mitzvos* in them (*and therefore their punishment should not be lessened*).

The *Gemora* asks: But perhaps their descendants would perform *mitzvos*?

Rabbi Elozar said: Neither in them, nor in their descendants until the end of all generations will perform *mitzvos*. (46b)

DAILY MASHAL

Agalah and Eglah; Yaakov and Yosef

Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav: Whoever escorts his fellow four *amos* in the city, insures that no harm will come to him during his journey.

The Maharal uses our *Gemora* to explain the famous Medrash. It is written [Breishis 45:27]: And he (Yaakov) saw the wagons that Yosef had sent to carry him. Chazal say: The Hebrew word "*agalah*," wagon, is similar to the word "*eglah*," calf. Yosef was hinting to his father that he was alive by making a reference to the *eglah arufah*, which was the last topic of Torah that Yaakov and Yosef had studied together before Yosef was sold as a slave.

The Maharal notes: It cannot be merely coincidence that they were studying that passage, for if so, how would Yosef know that Yaakov would remember that it was this precise topic that they were studying together before he left.

Rather, this is what transpired: Yaakov was escorting Yosef to Chevron. Yosef said to him: Go back to the house and do not trouble yourself. Yaakov responded that it is a great *mitzvah* for one to escort another in the beginning of a journey. If one does not escort his friend, it is regarded as if he spilled his blood. One who does escort his fellow insures that no harm will befall him on his journey. It was through this that Yosef realized that Yaakov will definitely remember the topic of Torah that they were studying, for he will remember escorting him out of the city. It was for this reason that Yosef sent the wagons. He was indicating to his father that he was not damaged in any manner, physically or spiritually, and that it was due to the fact that Yaakov escorted him out of the city.

Rabbi Yissochar Frand explains the Medrash differently: He states that a profound lesson is learned from Yosef and Yaakov. When Yosef wanted to give irrefutable proof to his father Yaakov that he was indeed Yosef, the incontrovertible piece of evidence he presented was the Torah portion that they were studying together. Serious Jews identify themselves by the Torah discussion that they were having at a certain time; not by any mundane activities that they were enjoying together. Yosef identified himself to Yaakov by the essence of Jewish identity - the Torah topic that they last discussed.