

OVERVIEW of the Daf

1) Clarifying the Mishnah (cont.)

The Gemara concludes citing the Baraisa that maintains that the dirt was brought into the Beis Hamikdash.

2) Using ashes for the sotah ritual

An inquiry is presented whether ashes may be used for the sotah ritual.

The inquiry is clarified.

An unsuccessful attempt is made to resolve the inquiry from a Baraisa.

In response to the attempt to decide whether ashes may be used for the sotah ritual the Gemara asserted that the Tanna left out additional cases from the Baraisa that lists examples when Halacha L'Moshe M'Sinai overrides the simple meaning of a verse.

It is suggested that the case of metzora is another example of a Halacha L'Moshe M'Sinai that overrides the simple meaning of a verse.

Three explanations why metzora is not an example of this phenomenon are presented.

Another unsuccessful attempt is made to resolve the Gemara's inquiry regarding the use of ashes for the Sotah ritual.

3) Things that need to be visible

A Baraisa presents a list of three things that must be visible and R' Yishmael adds the blood of the metzora bird to that list.

The exchange between Rabanan and R' Yishmael about this matter is recorded.

4) The quantity of water

R' Zeira teaches R' Yirmiyah that a revi'is of water is used for the metzora ritual regardless of the size of the bird.

5) Putting dirt into the earthenware cup before the water

A Baraisa presents a dispute between R' Shimon and Rabanan whether placing the dirt before the water into the earthenware cup invalidates the mixture.

The Gemara records R' Shimon's exposition and Rabanan's response. ■

Distinctive INSIGHT

The visibility of tzitzis

תנו רבנן שלשה צריכין שיראו—עפר סוטה ואפר פרה ורוק יבמה

Ben Yehoyada asks why the list of three items which must be visible to the eye does not feature the mitzvah of tzitzis, about which the Torah clearly teaches (Bamidbar 15:39): "And you shall see it (the tzitzis) and remember all the mitzvos of Hashem."

Ben Yehoyada explains that the items mentioned in this list are different than tzitzis in that regarding sotah, ashes of the Parah Aduma and the spittle of the yevama, the mitzvah is not valid unless the particular aspect of the procedure in each case is visible. The mitzvah of tzitzis is actually to wrap oneself in a four-cornered garment which has tzitzis attached at its corners. Gazing upon the strings on the fringes of the garment is not an essential part of the mitzvah in order to fulfill the precept. Rather, looking at these special strings and the way they are tied is an expression of cherishing the mitzvah, but it is not critical to the mitzvah itself.

On the one hand, it is true that the Beis Yosef (O.C. 24:2) cites the opinion of (סי' כח) סמ"ק who writes that the mitzvah of tzitzis includes a requirement to look at them, as the verse states (Bamidbar 15:39) "and you shall see it," and Rabeinu Yona (in ספר היראה) also writes that there is a mitzvah to look at the tzitzis. Yet, Rivash (#486) explains that gazing upon the strings of the tzitzis should not be counted as a separate mitzvah, but rather as an elaboration of the purpose and goal of the very mitzvah of wearing the tzitzis. Our sages teach us (Menachos 43b) that when a person looks at the tzitzis, he will remember the color the ocean and that of the sky, and this will lead him to remember the heavens and the mitzvos which Hashem has commanded. Rivash concludes that because looking at the tzitzis is the first step which eventually ends in remembering and observing the mitzvos, it is certainly appropriate and praiseworthy to look at the tzitzis as one wraps himself with them. Shulchan Aruch (ibid., 24:4) also writes that a person should look at the strings when he reads the words "and you shall see it" in the third paragraph of Shema.

Accordingly, because the mitzvah of tzitzis is essentially different than the other mitzvos in this Baraisa, where the visibility of the dust for the sotah, the ashes of the Parah Aduma and the spittle of the yevama are each critical, the mitzvah of gazing upon the strings of the tzitzis is not listed here.

Ben Yehoyada also suggests that the Baraisa might hold that the requirement to look at tzitzis might also be critical, but because this aspect of the mitzvah is written explicitly in the verse, it was not necessary for the Baraisa to list this case. The mitzvos of sotah, Parah Aduma and yibum are each derived from the verses, but this requirement is not found explicitly in the respective verses. ■

HALACHAH Highlight

Using rotted vegetables for the mitzvah of כִּיסוּי הַדָּם

דאמר רב הונא בר אשי אמר רב אין שם עפר מביא רקבובית ירק ומקדש

As R' Huna bar Ashi in the name of Rav taught: If there is no earth there he should bring rotted vegetables and sanctify them there

There is a Biblical mitzvah to cover the blood of a slaughtered bird or undomesticated animal with earth (עפר). The Gemara Chullin (88b) presents a dispute whether one may use ash (אפר) for this mitzvah. The basis of the dispute is that there is a verse that states (Bamidbar 19:17) ולקחו – and they will take for the one who is tamei ashes from the burnt Parah Aduma. Although the verse refers to ashes it nevertheless uses the term עפר which is the word for earth. Beis Hillel infers from this that whenever earth is needed one is also permitted to use ash whereas Beis Shammai disagree because in this context the term עפר is used in conjunction with the word שריפת—but in general they are not similar. Shulchan Aruch¹ rules in accordance with Beis Hillel that one may use ash for the mitzvah of covering the blood. Furthermore, Shulchan Aruch writes that there are two categories of items that may be used for this mitzvah. Any substance into which one can plant seeds that will grow qualifies as earth for this halacha. The second category includes any item that is referred to by the Torah as עפר even if it does not support growth. An example of this category would be finely ground sand.

REVIEW and Remember

1. What are the three examples where Halacha L'Moshe M'Sinai overrides the simple meaning of a pasuk?
2. What is the difference between עוקבת ועוקרת and עוקבת ומוספת?
3. What procedures have a component that must be visible?
4. Which is put into the earthenware utensil first; the water or the earth?

Rav Yosef Chaim of Baghdad² asked whether it is permitted to use rotted fruits and vegetables for the mitzvah. Even though Shulchan Aruch permits the use of fertilizer that could be made from rotted vegetables, nevertheless, fertilizer contains some earth as opposed to plain rotted fruits and vegetables which perhaps is more similar to ground fruits and vegetables that can not be used for the mitzvah. He answers that rotted vegetables are considered earth and may be used for the mitzvah and cites our Gemara as proof to his assertion. Rav Huna bar Ashi in the name of Rav rules that rotted vegetables may be used as the earth needed for the bitter waters. This clearly indicates that rotted fruits and vegetables are considered synonymous with earth and thus may be used for the mitzvah of covering the blood. ■

1. שו"ע יו"ד סי' כ"ח סעי' כ"ג
2. שו"ת תורה לשמה סי' ר"ט ■

STORIES Off the Daf

Covering the blood - A mini burial

אין שם עפר מביא רקבובית ירק

On our daf, we find a discussion regarding the mitzvah to cover the blood of a non-domesticated animal or from any fowl. This mitzvah does not apply to the domesticated animals from which korbanos are taken. The Torah clearly links this mitzvah to the nature of the procurement of such flesh. It states (VaYikra 17:13) that “when you hunt a non-domesticated animal or fowl that may be eaten, and you spill its

blood, you must cover it (that blood) with dirt.”

A person once came to the Noda BiYehuda and asked him if the sport of hunting was permitted according to the Halachah.

He responded and said, “While it cannot be forbidden expressly, it is not a Jewish pursuit, but rather one that follows in the tradition of Nimrod and Eisav. Thus, in hunting and trapping a wild animal or fowl, one exercises character traits that run counter to the essential Jewish character of “Yaakov, who was a scholarly man, who sat in tents.” (Bereshis 25:27) This describes a non-violent personality that is

the Jewish ideal. In order to counteract that negative of hunting an animal for food purposes, which is most prominently manifest in a desire to expedite one’s desire to consume the flesh of the hunted prey, the Torah puts a brake on the hunter. He is forced to restrain himself, quell his desires, and reflect on the death he has just caused –albeit via shechita. The covering of the blood is a mini-burial – covering the essence of the animal’s life force with dirt. Even when the Torah allows us to “indulge”, it is concerned with the refinement of our personalities.” ■

