

NOTES

Why do I need, for his father or for his mother – לְאָבִיו – לְאִמּוֹ לְמָה לִי? If burying a *met mitzva* overrides both the prohibition against a High Priest becoming impure and the prohibition against a nazirite becoming impure in the case of a High Priest who is a nazirite, it certainly takes precedence over each of these prohibitions separately. Consequently, there is no need for “for his father or for his mother” to be stated with regard to a nazirite at all (Commentary on *Nazir*). Some commentaries maintain that this question is referring to the phrase “for his father and for his mother” stated in connection with a High Priest. Either way, all commentaries agree that the difficulty applies to both cases, as according to the opinion of Rabbi Akiva, both verses are superfluous. Some commentaries state that although the phrase “for his father” is necessary to teach the basic *halakha* that a nazirite must become impure for a *met mitzva*, the question is why the verse specifies both “for his father” and “for his mother” (*Tosafot*). Others similarly say that despite the fact that it was stated above that the term “for his mother” is required for a verbal analogy, it remains unclear why the Torah states “for his father or for his mother” (*Rosh*).

וְלִרְבִּי עֲקִיבָא, מִכְּדֵי לָא שָׁנָא כְּהֵן גְּדוּל
לְחֻזְיָה וְלָא שָׁנָא כְּהֵן גְּדוּל וְהוּא נִזִּיר,
נִפְקָא מִלְּאֲחִיו. “לְאָבִיו וְלְאִמּוֹ” לְמָה
לִי?

צְרִיכִי, דְּאֵי כְּתַב “אָבִיו” הָוּה אָמִינָא:
הֵינּוּ טַעְמָא דְּלָא מִיטְמָא לִיהּ – מְשׁוּם
דְּחֻזְקָה בְּעֵלְמָא הוּא, אָבֵל אִמּוֹ דִּידְעִין
דִּילִידְתִּיהּ – לִיטְמָא לֵיהּ.

וְאֵי כְּתַב רַחֲמֵנָא “אִמּוֹ” – הָוּה אָמִינָא:
אִמּוֹ לָא לִיטְמָא לֵיהּ – דְּלָאוּ אִזִּיל זְרַעָה
בְּתַרְהּ, אָבֵל אָבִיו, כִּינּוּן דְּאָמַר מֶר
“לְמִשְׁפַּחְתָּם לְבֵית אֲבוֹתָם” – אִימָא
לִיטְמָא לִיהּ, קָא מְשַׁמַּע לָן.

“עַל כָּל נִפְשׁוֹת מֵת לֹא יבֵּא” לְמָה לִי?

The Gemara asks: **And according to the derivation of Rabbi Akiva, now consider, it is no different whether the individual was a High Priest alone, and it is no different if he was a High Priest who was also a nazirite;** the *halakha* that he must become impure to bury a *met mitzva* is **derived from the phrase “for his brother,”** stated with regard to a nazirite (Numbers 6:7). But if so, **why do I need the expression “for his father, or for his mother”** (Numbers 6:7)?^N The general prohibition against contracting impurity from any corpse should suffice.

The Gemara answers: **Both are necessary, as had the verse written only “for his father,” I would say that this is the reason that a nazirite may not become impure for his father: Because it is merely a presumption that he is his father, as one cannot be absolutely sure of the identity of one’s father. However, with regard to his mother, whom we know gave birth to him, perhaps let him become impure to bury her.** The verse therefore states: “His mother.”

And conversely, had the Merciful One written only “for his mother,” I would say that it is solely to bury his mother that he may not become impure, as her seed does not follow her, i.e., a man’s lineage is determined by his father, not his mother. However, with regard to his father, since the Master said with regard to the verse “by their families, by their fathers’ house” (Numbers 1:2) that one’s family ancestry follows his father, you might say: Let him become impure to bury him. The verse therefore **teaches us** that a nazirite may not become impure to bury his father either.

The Gemara asks: According to the derivation of Rabbi Akiva, **why do I need the words “neither shall he go in to any dead bodies” (Leviticus 21:11),** stated with regard to a High Priest?

“עַל כָּל” – לְאִפּוּקֵי רְחוּקִים. “מֵת” –
לְאִפּוּקֵי קְרוּבִים. “נִפְשׁוֹת” – לְאִפּוּקֵי
רְבִיעִית דָּם שֶׁצָּא מִשְׁנֵי מֵתִים, שְׂמֵטָמָא
בְּאֵהָל, שְׁנַאֲמַר “עַל כָּל נִפְשׁוֹת מֵת לֹא
יבֵּא.”

“In to any” served to **exclude** contracting impurity to bury distant people, for whom a High Priest may not become impure; “dead” comes to **exclude** relatives; “bodies” comes to **exclude a quarter-log of blood that emerges from two corpses,^N for it renders people and objects impure in a tent, as it is stated: “Neither shall he go in to any dead bodies” (Leviticus 21:11).** The plural “bodies” teaches that the blood of two people combines to form the minimum quantity for ritual impurity.

NOTES

A quarter-log of blood that emerges from two corpses – רְבִיעִית דָּם שֶׁצָּא מִשְׁנֵי מֵתִים: The quarter-log measure, as the minimum measure of blood, is derived from the words “for the blood is the life” (Deuteronomy 12:23). The Sages determined that a person’s life is dependent on a quarter-log of blood. Although the adult human body contains far more than one quarter-log of blood, it is possible that an infant is unable to survive if he loses

this amount blood. Another explanation is that a quarter-log of blood is the amount contained in the heart.

This quarter-log of blood, which transmits ritual impurity, may be comprised from two corpses. The plural form “bodies,” in the verse “neither shall he go in to any dead bodies” teaches that even a total of a quarter-log of blood from two corpses imparts impurity in a tent.

על – For these following sources of ritual impurity, etc. – **על אלו טומאות וכו'**: As explained in the subsequent mishna, not every item that imparts impurity of a corpse has a degree of impurity severe enough to obligate a nazirite to shave. There are impurities for which a nazirite must purify himself but that do not obligate him to shave or negate any part of his naziriteship.

על השדרה ועל הגולגולת – For the spine and for the skull – These two body parts are listed separately, because a special *halakha* applies to them, as they impart impurity even if there is no flesh on them at all. The Gemara discusses whether this *halakha* refers to a spine and a skull together, or each on their own. Many commentaries rule that each of them imparts impurity by itself (Rambam; Meiri).

יש עליו – Upon which there is a fitting quantity of flesh – **בשר כראוי**: The Sages explain that the phrase: A fitting quantity of flesh, refers to that which would develop a scab if it was attached to a living person, i.e., the limb is properly covered with flesh (*Kelim* 1:5). This amount is certainly less than an olive-bulk, as an olive-bulk of flesh from a corpse itself imparts impurity even without a limb (see Commentary on *Nazir*).

A half-kav of bones and for a half-log of blood – **עצמות ועל חצי לוג דם**: The commentaries point out that although the *halakha* is that a quarter-kav of bones and a quarter-log of blood impart impurity in a tent, a nazirite does not shave for these amounts (*Tosafot*). *Tosafot* explain that all these measures are a *halakha* transmitted to Moses from Sinai, for which there is no known justification. Others state that any impurity for which a nazirite is not obligated to shave applies by rabbinic law (Rambam *Sefer Tahara, Hilkhot Tumat Met* 3:3).

על מגעו – By coming into contact with it and by carrying it – **ועל משאו**: This excludes the impurity imparted in a tent. Not only is a nazirite not obligated to shave if he enters a room that contains a bone whose volume is a barley-grain-bulk or greater, but this bone does not impart the impurity of a tent at all (*Tosafot*).

BACKGROUND

Fluid [*netzel*] – **נצל**: Certain liquids in the living body, whether lubricants in joints or similar liquids, including products of illness, such as pus, all undergo postmortem coagulation. This is because the processes that kept them fluid while the person was alive shut down sometime after death. Some of these fluids evaporate. Additionally, if a corpse was located in a very warm place, e.g., if the person perished in a fire, the fats of the body first liquefy and later congeal. The fluids from the corpse, both those that flow out of it and those that remain inside and congeal are called *netzel*.

Kav – **קב**: This is a basic unit of measurement from which many other small units are derived. It is equivalent to one-sixth of a *se'a*, or twenty-four egg-bulks.

Log – **לוג**: This is the basic liquid measure used by the Sages. It is equivalent to the volume of six egg-bulks, one quarter of a *kav*, or one twenty-fourth of a *se'a*. A range of modern opinions estimates this volume at 300–600 ml.

MISHNA A nazirite shaves for having become impure from these following sources of ritual impurity:^{NI} For having become impure with impurity imparted by a corpse; and for impurity imparted by an olive-bulk of a corpse; and for impurity imparted by an olive-bulk of fluid [*netzel*]^{BL} from a corpse; and for impurity imparted by a full ladle [*tarvad*]^L of dust from a corpse; and for impurity imparted by the spine; and for impurity imparted by the skull;^N and for impurity imparted by a limb from a corpse or for impurity imparted by a limb severed from a living person, upon either of which there is a fitting quantity of flesh;^N and for impurity imparted by a half-kav^B of bones from a corpse; and for impurity imparted by a half-log^B of blood.^N

And a nazirite shaves in each of these cases for becoming impure by coming into contact with them; and for becoming impure by carrying them;^H and for becoming impure by their tent, i.e., if he was positioned like a tent over them, or if he entered a tent that contains them, or if they served as a tent over him. And as for a bone that is a barley-grain-bulk,^H he shaves for becoming impure by coming into contact with it and by carrying it.^N However, he is not rendered impure with the impurity imparted in a tent, i.e., by being under the same roof as the bone.

For all of these occurrences, a nazirite shaves, and a priest sprinkles the ashes of the red heifer on him on the third and on the seventh days^H to purify him from the impurity imparted by a corpse. And he negates all the previous days he counted toward his naziriteship, and he begins counting his term of naziriteship again only after he becomes pure and brings his offerings.

ועל אלו טומאות הנזיר מגלח, ועל פזית מן המת, ועל מלא תרווד רקב, ועל פזית נצל, ועל הגולגולת, ועל אבר מן המת ועל אבר מן החי שיש עליו בשר כראוי, ועל חצי קב עצמות, ועל חצי לוג דם.

ועל מגעו ועל משאן ועל אהילן, ועל עצם בשעורה, על מגעו ועל משאו.

ועל אלו הנזיר מגלח, ומזה בשלישי ובשביעי, וסותר את הקודמין, ואינו מתחיל למנות אלא עד שיטהר ומביא את קרבנותיו.

HALAKHA

A nazirite shaves for these following sources of ritual impurity – **על אלו טומאות הנזיר מגלח** – For which sources of impurity is a nazirite obligated to shave? A stillborn, even if its limbs have not become joined to its sinews; an olive-bulk of flesh from a corpse; an olive-bulk of fluid from a corpse; the majority of the bones of a single corpse, even if they do not amount to a quarter-kav; a half-kav of bones from one corpse, even if they do not constitute the majority of the number and the majority of the structure of its bones; the spine of a corpse; the skull of a corpse; a limb from a corpse or a limb from a living person, if these limbs contain enough flesh that would develop a scab on a live person; and a half-log of blood. All these impart impurity when they come from a single corpse, as do two handfuls of dust (Rambam *Sefer Hafla'a, Hilkhot Nezirut* 7:2).

By coming into contact with them and for carrying them, etc. – **ועל מגעו ועל משאן וכו'**: A nazirite must shave for the listed sources of impurity whether he came into contact with or carried them, or whether he served as a tent over them, or they were positioned as a tent over him, or if the source of impurity and the nazirite were in the same tent. In all these cases, the

nazirite's term of naziriteship is negated, he shaves his hair, and he brings his offerings of impurity. The exception is dust from a corpse, which imparts impurity by carrying and in a tent but not by means of contact (Rambam *Sefer Hafla'a, Hilkhot Nezirut* 7:5).

For a bone that is a barley-grain-bulk, etc. – **ועל עצם בשעורה** – **וכו'**: If a nazirite came into contact with a bone from a corpse that is a barley-grain-bulk, he shaves only if he touched or carried it, but it does not impart impurity of a tent (Rambam *Sefer Hafla'a, Hilkhot Nezirut* 7:6).

And a priest sprinkles on the third and on the seventh days, etc. – **ומזה בשלישי ובשביעי וכו'**: A nazirite who became impure through one of the sources of impurity of a corpse listed in the mishna has his naziriteship negated, performs the shaving of impurity, and brings the offerings for his impurity. He is purified from his impurity through the sprinkling of the purification waters of the red heifer and by bringing his sin-offering. At this point, he begins counting the term of his naziriteship afresh (Rambam *Sefer Hafla'a, Hilkhot Nezirut* 6:11–13; 7:1, 5).

LANGUAGE

Fluid [*netzel*] – **נצל**: The root of *netzel* is likely connected to *nozel*, fluid, *neitzala* in Syriac. Accordingly, *netzel* is the fluid that flows from a corpse. By halakhic definition, this refers to a portion from the flesh of the corpse that has melted and become watery as a result of heat, illness, or decomposition.

Ladle [*tarvad*] – **תרווד**: This term is also found in Syriac, Aramaic, and Arabic, although it apparently originated from an unidentified language. A *tarvad* is a kind of large spoon that was used to serve food from a pot. Since this utensil has no specific size, it is necessary to define how much a *tarvad* holds for the purposes of this *halakha* (see sob).

GEMARA The Sages taught: After Rabbi Meir's death, Rabbi Yehuda^p said to his students: Do not let the students of Rabbi Meir enter here, into the house of study, because they are vexatious and they do not come to study Torah, but they come to overwhelm me with their *halakhot*. Nevertheless, Sumakhos,^p a student of Rabbi Meir, forced his way and entered the house of study.

גמ' תגו רבנן: אחר פטירתו של רבי מאיר אמר להן רבי יהודה לתלמידיו: אל יבנסו תלמידי רבי מאיר לכאן מפני שקנתרנין הן, ולא ללמוד תורה הן באין אלא לקפחני בהלכות הן באין. דחק סימכוס ונכנס.

When they reached the topic of the mishna, Sumakhos said to them: Rabbi Meir^p taught me like this: A nazirite shaves for becoming impure from these following sources of ritual impurity: For impurity imparted by a corpse and for impurity imparted by an olive-bulk from a corpse. Rabbi Yehuda grew angry and said to his disciples: Didn't I say to you like this: Do not let the students of Rabbi Meir enter here because they are vexatious? He explained his annoyance. The clause: For a corpse, is unnecessary, as, if a nazirite must shave for impurity imparted by an olive-bulk from a corpse, is it not all the more so that he must shave for impurity imparted by an entire corpse?

אמר להם, כך שנה לי רבי מאיר: על אלו טומאות הנזיר מגלח – על המת ועל בנות מן המת. פעם רבי יהודה ואמר להן: לא כך אמרתי לכם: אל יבנסו תלמידי רבי מאיר לכאן, מפני שקנתרנין הן? על בנות מן המת מגלח, על המת לא כל שכן?

PERSONALITIES

Rabbi Yehuda – רבי יהודה – When the Mishna refers to Rabbi Yehuda without any addition, it means Rabbi Yehuda, son of Rabbi Ilai, one of the greatest of the fourth-generation *tanna'im*. Rabbi Yehuda was one of the last five disciples of Rabbi Akiva, while his father, Rabbi Ilai, was a student of Rabbi Eliezer. Rabbi Yehuda studied Rabbi Eliezer's wisdom from his father. In his youth, he studied with Rabbi Tarfon, in whose name he cites *halakhot*, in addition to the other Sages of Yavne: Rabbi Eliezer, Rabbi Yehoshua, Rabban Gamliel, Rabbi Elazar ben Azarya, Rabbi Yishmael, and Rabbi Yosei HaGellili. Nevertheless, Rabbi Yehuda's foremost teacher was Rabbi Akiva, and it was in accordance with his opinion that he laid the foundations for the halakhic exegesis of Leviticus known as the *Sifra*, or *Torat Kohanim*. According to tradition, any unattributed statement in the *Sifra* is authored by Rabbi Yehuda. Rabbi Yehuda was ordained by Rabbi Yehuda ben Bava and is frequently quoted in aggadic statements alongside Rabbi Neḥemya. When there are differences of opinion between Rabbi Yehuda and Rabbi Meir, or between Rabbi Yehuda and Rabbi Shimon, the *halakha* is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda. His disciples included Rabbi Elazar, son of Rabbi Shimon; Rabbi Yishmael, son of Rabbi Yosei; and Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi. His son, Rabbi Yosei, was also a renowned Sage.

from a very early age, and he was a student of the two greatest scholars of the generation, Rabbi Yishmael and Rabbi Akiva. He was also the lone Sage who continued to study with Elisha ben Avuya, despite the latter's estrangement from Judaism. His primary teacher was Rabbi Akiva, who ordained him at a very young age, for which reason he was ordained a second time by Rabbi Yehuda ben Bava. In recognition of his outstanding scholarship, Rabbi Meir was officially appointed *hakham*, literally, wise man, a position third in importance after the *Nasi*, or the head of the Sanhedrin, and the president of the court. The halakhic discussions between him and his colleagues, Rabbi Yehuda, Rabbi Yosei, Rabbi Shimon, and Rabbi Elazar, form one of the most important foundations of the Mishna.

Sumakhos – סימכוס – This full name of this *tanna* is Sumakhos ben Yosef. He lived in the last generation of *tanna'im*. Sumakhos was the outstanding disciple of Rabbi Meir and transmitted much of Rabbi Meir's knowledge to the subsequent generations. As Rabbi Meir's foremost disciple, Sumakhos made great efforts to explain Rabbi Meir's statements and clarify his opinions after his death. Like his master before him, Sumakhos was known for his fierce intellect, as the Talmud relates that he would provide forty-eight proofs for every *halakha* he discussed. It can be argued that he was the greatest Sage of his generation, as he would dispute even the greatest of *tanna'im*, including Rabbi Meir, Rabbi Yosei, and Rabbi Eliezer ben Ya'akov.

Rabbi Meir's greatest undertaking was apparently a structured, oral redaction of the Oral Law, including the establishment of specific formats for the *halakha*. Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi followed in Rabbi Meir's footsteps and incorporated his work in the Mishna. Consequently, it is a well-known principle that the author of an unattributed statement in the Mishna is Rabbi Meir. Due to his involvement in the attempt to depose the *Nasi* Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel, Rabbi Meir was punished, and for a long period his statements were not cited in his name but were introduced with the words: Others say.

Rabbi Meir – רבי מאיר – Rabbi Meir was one of the greatest *tanna'im* of the generation that preceded the redaction of the Mishna. There is no clear information available concerning Rabbi Meir's parents, although it is told that he descended from a family of converts from the house of the Roman emperors.

Rabbi Meir's private life was full of suffering. His two sons passed away during his lifetime, and his extraordinary wife Berurya also died in painful circumstances. Nevertheless, it is known that one of his daughters survived. He was eventually forced into exile in Asia Minor, where he died, with the order that his coffin be transferred to Eretz Yisrael and that he be interred temporarily on the shore of the sea whose waves reach the Holy Land.

Rabbi Meir was famous in his lifetime not only for his sharp intellect, which exceeded that of all his peers, but also for his personal attributes, his efforts as a peacemaker, and his willingness to relinquish personal honor for the good of others. He was known as a magnificent public speaker. It is said that following his death, those who composed parables ceased (*Sota* 49a). Several of his animal fables were retold over the course of many generations. He was also renowned as a miracle worker, and for many years a charity fund named after him, Rabbi Meir Ba'al HaNes, literally, Rabbi Meir the miracle worker, served as the main source of funding for Jews in Eretz Yisrael.

Rabbi Meir's exceptional brilliance in Torah study was evident