

The Weekly Daf



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Zevachim 93-99

Week of 19-25 Nissan 5756 / 8-14 April 1996

Rav Weinbach's insights, explanations and comments for the 7 pages of Talmud studied in the course of the worldwide Daf Yomi cycle

What's In a Name

If some of the blood of a *korban chatass* falls upon the garment of the *kohen* while it is in the process of being applied to the altar that garment must be cleansed, and this cleansing must be carried out in the sanctuary (*Vayikra* 6:20).

A "catch-22" seems to prevail here. One of the seven ingredients required to this laundering process is *mai raglayim*. Everyone who includes in his daily prayers the sections of the Talmud dealing with the incense offered in the *Beis Hamikdash* is familiar with the rule that even though *mai raglayim* might have been a useful ingredient in the incense formula, it was not used because "one may not bring *mai raglayim* into the sanctuary out of respect for its holiness." If so, how could it be brought in to launder the *chatass* blood?

This problem is resolved by citing the rule that each of the ingredients involved in the laundering process was mixed with tasteless saliva. Since when the *mai raglayim* entered the sanctuary it was already dissolved in a saliva solution - something which was impossible in the case of the incense preparation - it was not considered disrespectful to the sanctity of the place.

But what exactly is *mai raglayim*? The literal translation is "water of the feet," a euphemism for urine. Thus it is easy for us to understand why it constitutes disrespect. The *Shita Mekubetzet* in *Mesechta Krisos* (6a), however, cites an opinion of Tosefos that *mai raglayim* was actually the name of a certain fragrant grass, but the very fact that this name is also applied to urine disqualified it for use in the incense out of respect for the sanctuary.

(There is room for speculation as to whether this opinion also defines the *mai raglayim* mentioned in our Gemara as a laundering agent in the same manner or whether it concurs with the mainstream view that it means urine, whose acidity would certainly qualify it for removing blood, and limits the offbeat definition to the case of incense where it is problematic to assume that putrid urine could enhance fragrance.)

Zevachim 95

Ecological Miracle

A clay pot in which sacrificial flesh has been cooked must be smashed because the absorbed juices of this flesh become forbidden *nosar* once the time period allowed for consuming this flesh has expired, and a clay vessel cannot be kashered like a metal one (*Vayikra* 6:21).

This created a practical problem. With so many clay pots being smashed, how did the *kohanim* avoid turning the Sanctuary into a huge garbage dump?

The answer was supplied by the sage Rabbi Shemaya of Kalanbo. The shards of the smashed clay vessels, he declares, were miraculously swallowed up by the Sanctuary floor!

Why is this miracle then not mentioned amongst the ten miracles which *Pirkei Avos* (5:7) lists as occurring in the *Beis Hamikdash*?

This question is indeed raised in *Mesechta Yoma* (21a) and the resolution offered is that only miracles which were visible even to the people standing in the *Beis Hamikdash* courtyard are listed and not this and similar miracles which were seen only by the *kohanim* inside.

Zevachim 96a

Prepared by Ohr Somayach in Jerusalem, Israel

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Issue #113 - Zevachim 93-99

Production Design: Lev Seltzer

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