



Mida Tova Meruba

Towards the end of the first *perek* of *masechet Sotah* the *Mishnah* discusses how *Hashem* deals with people measure for measure. The *Mishnah* first brings examples of people whose punishments aligned with their transgression. The final *Mishnah* (1:9) then teaches that this is also true when it comes to rewards.

The *Gemara* notes that from the cases brought in the *Mishnah*, that when it comes to reward, it is not proportional, but rather increased – *mida tova meruba*. We find that when *Moshe* was placed in the Nile as baby, *Miryam* stationed at distance to see what would happen to her brother. She was reward years later, when *Bnei Yisrael* was in the desert and *Miryam* had *tzaraat*. *Bnei Yisrael* waited the week for her to recover before continuing to travel. Her kindness was returned to her at greater scale.

The *Tosfot* however ask that we find cases where the punishment also appear to be disproportional. The first example they bring is that the spies spent forty days touring *Eretz Yisrael*, and for each day, *Bnei Yisrael* were punished with a year of wandering in the desert. It seems that the punishment was proportionally greater than the reward *Miryam* received.

The *Tosfot Yom Tov* explains that extending the punishment to a forty-year period was a kindness. He cites *Rashi* who explains that they were punished in this way so that no one died under the age of sixty.

Indeed, we will learn (3:5) that when it comes to the *Sotah*, there is a debate whether *zechut tolah la*. In other words, if she had particular merit, whether the divine

punishment would be delayed and not have an immediate effect. According to *Rebbi*, if she had a merit, then her health would gradually decline over an extended period until she would eventually die the same way as a *Sotah* who was punished immediately. The *Tosfot Yom Tov* notes that this is despite the fact that she would suffer over that period. Nonetheless it was the merit that kept her alive. Surely then the same can then be said regarding the generation the lived in the desert who lived comfortably.

The *Mishnat Chachamim* however finds this answer difficult. He cites *Rashi* (*Bamidbar* 13:25) who explains that despite the size of *Eretz Yisrael*, *Hashem* miraculously enabled the spies to complete their tour in only forty days. This was because *Hashem* knew that the punishment was going to be a year for day, so He enabled them to complete it faster. The implication is that the increased time was a bad thing.

The *Chiddushai Mahariach* however cites *R' Zalman* from *Vilna* who explains that when they were punished, the *pasuk* does not say it was a “year for a day”. Were that the case, the entirety of the year would be a punishment for one of their days. Instead, it says “a day for year”. He notes it was only on *Tisha B'Av* each year that those in the *midbar* died. In other words, we find that they were indeed punished for forty days proportional to the number of days the spies were in *Eretz Yisrael*. Had those people over the age of twenty all been killed over a forty-day period, they would not have been able to have children and they would have died young. The kindness was that these forty days of punishment were distributed across a forty-year period.¹

Yisrael Bankier

¹ Based on this we might be able to answer the question of the *Mishnat Chachamim*. The kindness of *Hashem* was that they would live till the age of sixty. Since they travelled for forty days, there was only one day each

year where they were punished over the forty-year period till they all died out. Had the journey taken longer perhaps the distribution of the punishment would have been more concentrated than just one day a year.

Revision Questions

נזיר ט' ה'

- Aside from *Shimshon* which other *navi* was a *nazir*? (ט' ה')

סוטה א' – ב' ד'

- In the first *Mishnah*, about what is the debate between *R' Eliezer* and *R' Yehoshua*? (א' א')
- What constitutes a warning for the purposes of *sotah*? (ב' א')
- What are the five cases where a *sotah* does not drink *mei sotah*? (ג' א')
- Where was a *sotah* first taken? (ד' א')
- What was the first thing they would do to a *sotah*? (ד' א')
- What would happen if a *sotah* admitted to having an affair? (ה' א')
- If a *sotah* maintained her innocence, to where was she next taken? (ה' א')
- What else was performed at that location? (ה' א')
- Was the *sotah* allowed to wear jewellery during the process? (ו' א')
- Describe how the *sotah* was prepared? (ו' א')
- Were other women allowed to watch the process? (ו' א')
- Explain the following phrase and list three ways in which it applies to a *sotah*: (ז' א')
במדה שאדם מודד, בה מודדין לו
- How does the above phrase apply to:
 - *Shimshon*?
 - *Avshalom*? (ח' א')
 - *Miriam*?
 - *Yosef*?
 - *Moshe*? (ט' א')
- What *korban* would the *sotah* bring and in what three ways does it differ from a regular *korban* of that class? (י' א')
- From what material was the cup made that was used for *mei sotah*? (י' ב')
- From where was the cup filled with water? (י' ב')
- From where was the earth taken from and for what was it used? (י' ב')
- List the three opinions regarding what was included in the *parashat sotah*. (י' ג')
- What material was the *parasha* written on and what substance was used for the writing? (י' ד')

Shiurim

ONLINE SHIURIM

Yisrael Bankier
mishnahyomit.com/shiurim

Rabbi Reuven Spolter
mishnah.co

Rabbi Chaim Brown
www.shemayisrael.com/mishna/

Rabbi E. Kornfeld
Rabbi C. Brown
<http://www.dafyomi.co.il/calendars/myomi/myomi-thisweek.htm>

APPS

Mishnah Yomit
mishnahyomit.com

All Mishnah
Orthodox Union

Mishna Yomi
Our Somayach, South Africa

Kehati

SHIUR ON KOL HALOSHON

Rabbi Moshe Meir Weiss
In US dial: 718 906 6400
Then select: 1 – 2 – 4

Next Week's Mishnayot...

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	שבת קודש
12 May ד' אייר	13 May ה' אייר	14 May ו' אייר	15 May ז' אייר	16 May ח' אייר	17 May ט' אייר	18 May י' אייר
Sotah 2:5-6	Sotah 3:1-2	Sotah 3:3-4	Sotah 3:5-6	Sotah 3:7-8	Sotah 4:1-2	Sotah 4:3-4

