

## Mishnah with a Twist [21]

### I Will Not Lie Down Tonight Until the Price of Nests Will Be in Silver Dinars

Insights into Mishna Keritot Chapter 1:7



### Background to Our Story

#### Leviticus 15:19-30

<sup>19</sup> `If a woman has a discharge, *and* the discharge from her body is blood, she shall be set apart seven days; and whoever touches her shall be unclean until evening. <sup>20</sup> Everything that she lies on during her impurity shall be unclean; also, everything that she sits on shall be unclean. <sup>21</sup> Whoever touches her bed shall wash his clothes and bathe in water and be unclean until evening. <sup>22</sup> And whoever touches anything that she sat on shall wash his clothes and bathe in water and be unclean until evening. <sup>23</sup> If *anything* is on *her* bed or on anything on which she sits, when he touches it, he shall be unclean until evening. <sup>24</sup> And if any man lies with her at all, so that her impurity is on him, he shall be unclean seven days; and every bed on which he lies shall be unclean.

<sup>25</sup> `If a woman has a discharge of blood for many days, other than at the time of her customary impurity, or if it runs beyond her *usual time of* impurity, all the days of her unclean discharge shall be as the days of her *customary* impurity. She *shall be* unclean. <sup>26</sup> Every bed on which she lies all the days of her discharge shall be to her as the bed of her impurity; and whatever she sits on shall be unclean, as the uncleanness of her impurity. <sup>27</sup> Whoever touches those things shall be unclean; he shall wash his clothes and bathe in water and be unclean until evening.

<sup>28</sup> But if she is cleansed of her discharge, then she shall count for herself seven days, and after that she shall be clean. <sup>29</sup> And on the eighth day she shall take for herself two turtledoves or two young pigeons, and bring them to the priest, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting. <sup>30</sup> Then the priest shall offer the one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering, and the priest shall make atonement for her before the Lord for the discharge of her uncleanness.

#### Niddah and Zavah



The Schottenstein Edition of the Mishnah Elucidated. ArtScroll/Mesorah Publications. Volume 15. Kereisos. Page 21.

According to Biblical law, a woman who experiences her monthly flow becomes *tamei* (impure) as a *niddah* for only seven days. Provided that the flow stops before the end of the seventh day, she may immerse in a *mikveh* that night and thereby become tahor (pure). For the next eleven days (after the seven days of *niddah*), a flow of blood does not make her a *niddah*. Rather it makes her *tamei* (impure) as a *zavah*. If the flow continues for three days or more within those eleven days, she must count seven "clean" days (i.e., days without any discharge of blood) before immersing in a *mikveh*. On the day after her immersion, she brings a *korban* of two birds (a *chatat* and an *olah*).

A *zavah* is allowed to have marital relations immediately after her immersion, but she may not eat *kodashim* or enter the Beis HaMikdash until she brings her *korban* (sacrifice).

### Leviticus 12:1-9 - The Ritual After Childbirth

<sup>1</sup>Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying,<sup>2</sup>"Speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'If a woman has conceived, and borne a male child, then she shall be unclean seven days as in the days of her customary impurity she shall be unclean. <sup>3</sup> And on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. <sup>4</sup> She shall then continue in the blood of her purification for thirty-three days. She shall not touch any hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary until the days of her purification are fulfilled. <sup>5</sup> 'But if she bears a female child, then she shall be unclean two weeks, as in her customary impurity, and she shall continue in the blood of her purification sixty-six days.

<sup>6</sup> 'When the days of her purification are fulfilled, whether for a son or a daughter, she shall bring to the priest a lamb of the first year as a burnt offering, and a young pigeon or a turtledove as a sin offering, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting. <sup>7</sup> Then he shall offer it before the Lord and make atonement for her. And she shall be clean from the flow of her blood. This is the law for her who has borne a male or a female.

<sup>8</sup> 'And if she is not able to bring a lamb, then she may bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons—one as a burnt offering and the other as a sin offering. So, the priest shall make atonement for her, and she will be clean.'"

### Kinim (pair of birds)

#### ◆ AI Overview

In Jewish tradition, Kinim (the plural of *ken*, meaning "nest") refers to pairs of birds brought as sacrificial offerings in the Holy Temple. This term is also the title of a specific tractate in the Mishnah (Tractate Kinnim) that discusses the complex laws governing these offerings.

- Species Used: Only two species of birds are acceptable: turtledoves (*torim*) and young pigeons (*bonei yonah*).
- The Pair: A standard *ken* consists of two birds. For obligatory sacrifices, one is offered as a burnt offering (*olah*) and the other as a sin offering (*hatat*).
- Who Brought Them: These were commonly brought by women after childbirth (*yolides*), people recovering from certain skin conditions (*metzora*), or individuals who had experienced specific bodily discharges (*zav* or *zavah*).

### Coin System in the Talmud (Not so simple)

- 1 Dinar (also called Zuz) 6 Me'ain = 192 Perutahs - (Your father can buy a little goat for two Zuzim)
- 1 Sela (Talmudic Shekel) = 4 Dinarim = 384 barley kernels (weight).
- 1 Dinar Zahav (Gold Dinar) = 25 dinarim



The reference here is to Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel the Elder, who followed in the footsteps of his father Rabban Gamliel the Elder and his grandfather Hillel the Elder, and served as *Nasi*. According to his testimony, he was raised among the Sages (*Avot* 1:17). Josephus relates that Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel was appointed *Nasi* eighteen years prior to the destruction of the Temple. From the little we know about him, he was a forceful yet pious individual. Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel supported the rebels in their revolt against Roman rule, and according to tradition he was one of the Ten Martyrs killed before the Temple was destroyed. His son, Rabban Gamliel of Yavne, served as *Nasi* after Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai.

### The Text: Mishna Keritot 1:7

הָאִשָּׁה שֵׁישׁ עָלֶיהָ סִפֵּק חֲמִשָּׁה זִיבוֹת וְסִפֵּק חֲמִשָּׁה לְדוֹת, מִבִּיאָה קָרְבָן אֶחָד, וְאוֹכֵלֶת בְּזָבָחִים, וְאִין הַשְּׂאֵר עָלֶיהָ חוֹבָה. חֲמִשׁ לְדוֹת וְדָאוֹת, חֲמִשׁ זִיבוֹת וְדָאוֹת, מִבִּיאָה קָרְבָן אֶחָד, וְאוֹכֵלֶת בְּזָבָחִים, וְהַשְּׂאֵר עָלֶיהָ חוֹבָה. מַעֲשֶׂה שֶׁעָמְדוּ קָנִים בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם בְּדִינְגְרֵי זָהָב. אָמַר רַבִּין שִׁמְעוֹן בֶּן גַּמְלִיאֵל, הִמְעוֹן הַזֶּה, לֹא אֶלְיִן הַלְלִילָה, עַד שִׁיְהוּ בְּדִינְגְרֵין. נִכְנַס לְבַיִת דִּין וְלִמְדָה, הָאִשָּׁה שֵׁישׁ עָלֶיהָ חֲמִשׁ לְדוֹת וְדָאוֹת, חֲמִשׁ זִיבוֹת וְדָאוֹת, מִבִּיאָה קָרְבָן אֶחָד, וְאוֹכֵלֶת בְּזָבָחִים, וְאִין הַשְּׂאֵר עָלֶיהָ חוֹבָה. וְעָמְדוּ קָנִים בּוּ בַיּוֹם בְּרַבְעָתָיִם:

With regard to a woman who has in her case uncertainty concerning five irregular discharges of blood from the uterus [*ziva*], that is, during each of five months, she had a flow that lasted three days but, because she lost track of her *niddah/zavah* cycle, she does not know whether the three days fell within her eleven days of *zivah*, which would mean that she must bring the *Korban* (*sacrifice*) of a *zavah*, or during her seven days of *niddah*, which would mean that no *Korban* is necessary, and likewise a woman with regard to whom there is uncertainty concerning five births, or miscarriages (that is, she had five miscarriages and, in each case, she does not know whether the aborted substance was a fetus, for which she must bring a *sacrifice of a woman who gave birth*, or it was something else, for which she does not bring any sacrifice) - the law in both of these situations is that she brings one offering, and then she may partake of the meat of offerings. And the remaining offerings are not an obligation for her.

If she experienced five definite discharges of a *zava* or five definite births, she brings one offering, and then she may partake of the meat of offerings. And the remaining offerings are an obligation for her.

There was an incident where the price of nests, i.e., pairs of birds, stood in Jerusalem at one gold dinar. Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel said: I swear by this abode of the Divine Presence that I will not lie down tonight until the price of nests will be in silver dinars. Ultimately, he entered the court and taught: A woman who has in her

case five definite discharges of a zava or five definite births brings one offering, and then she may partake of the meat of offerings. And the remaining offerings are not an obligation for her. And as a result, the price of the nests stood that day at one-quarter of a silver dinar, that is, one pair cost one quarter of a silver *dinar*. The price dropped to one-hundredth of the original price A pair of birds originally cost 25 silver *dinars* and now they cost a quarter of a *dinar*.



## Explaining the Text

What's going on here? (The sequence of events)

### Comprehension and Analysis Questions

**?** Why is a woman who is uncertain about the status of her five irregular discharges (zivah) or five childbirth related discharges bring only one offering?

**Bonus ?** Why is a woman who is certain about her five irregular discharges (zivah) or five childbirth related discharges brings one offering, but owes the other four?

**Bonus ?** Why did a nest (a pair of birds) stand at a gold dinar (25 silver dinars)?

**Bonus ?** How do we know that a gold dinar for a nest is an exorbitant amount of money?

Answer 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Answer 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Answer 3 \_\_\_\_\_

**Bonus ?** How do we know that Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel was really upset about the cost of the nests?

Answer 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Answer 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Answer 3 \_\_\_\_\_

**Bonus ?** What was Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel afraid would happen if the cost of the nest didn't go down?

**Bonus ?** How did Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel bring the cost of the nests down?

Answer 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Answer 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Answer 3 \_\_\_\_\_

**Bonus ?** What expresses Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel's boldness?

**Extra Bonus ?** Why didn't Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel excommunicate the merchants who sold a nest for one gold dinar?

**Extra Bonus ?** What was Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel's expectation on the price of one nest after his ruling?

**Extra Bonus ?** How were the merchants ultimately punished for their greed?

### **"The Twist" – Or the Lessons We Can Learn from This Text**

**!** By the Power Vested in Me: how Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel used his position of authority to "save the day."



When the law of supply and demand combined with the strictures of Halakhah placed so great a burden on the Jewish people that it made it less likely that they would follow the law, Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel decided that something's gotta give. Using his religious authority and the power vested in him to "save the day," Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel teaches his contemporaries and all of us what bold leadership is about.