

# The Weekly Daf



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Niddah 4-10

Week of 16-22 Tamuz 5757 / 21-27 July 1997

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

## The Mystery of Galilee

"The Torah scholars in Galilee guard the ritual purity of their wines and oils."

This historical observation of the Sage Ulla arouses wonder for two reasons. First of all, what purpose was there for guarding the ritual purity of these items in the days of Ulla, centuries after the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash* where ritually pure wine and oil were required for libations and meal offerings? This same question applies to the Sage Rebbie in our Gemara who issued a ruling in a case of ritual purity even though he too lived at a time when there was no *Beis Hamikdash*.

The answer to this question is that both in the days of Rebbie, and later in the days of Ulla, there were pious sages in Galilee who lived with the hope that Mashiach would come at any moment and the *Beis Hamikdash* would be rebuilt. They therefore wished to have immediately available the wine and oil necessary for the sacred service.

Another source of wonder is discussed in *Mesechta Chagigah* (28a). During the time of the *Beis Hamikdash* the wines and oils of Galilee were not accepted for use on the altar because a stretch of foreign land ran between Galilee and Judea in which Jerusalem was located. Since the Sages had decreed a state of impurity on any land which did not have the sanctity of *Eretz Yisrael*, any wine and oil which passed over this stretch would become contaminated and unfit for use on the altar. What then was the purpose of those pious scholars in Galilee guarding the purity of their produce?

The answer to this second question is that they guarded the purity of their wine and oil and stored them in anticipation that the Prophet Elyahu would reveal to them a passage from Galilee to Judea. This passage would indeed have the sanctity of *Eretz Yisrael* so that their precious wares could safely be brought to the rebuilt *Beis Hamikdash*.

Niddah 6b

## The Great Paradox

"Who can produce purity from impurity if not the One?"

This is the way Iyov (14:4) described the wondrous workings of the Creator which sometimes appear so paradoxical to human understanding.

The Sages interpret the paradox of Iyov in a number of different ways.

Rabbi Yochanan suggests that Iyov is referring to male's seed, which makes one impure, but produces a human who is pure.

Rabbi Elazar, however, relates Iyov's paradox to the classical paradox of the Red Heifer, of which the wisest of men, King Solomon, declared (*Koheles* 7:23): "I thought that I would understand it but it remained remote from me." A Jew who became impure because of contact with the dead could become pure again by having a solution of red heifer, ashes, and spring water sprinkled on him. If someone touched or carried this sprinkling solution not for the purpose of sprinkling it on an impure person, then he became impure. But if he sprinkled it on an impure person, he purified him and remained pure himself.

Only the One Above could, in His Divine wisdom, allow purity to emanate from impurity.

Niddah 9a

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