

חזרה¹ ואמרה טהורה אני מהו –

She retracted and stated, I am pure; what is the ruling

OVERVIEW

The גמרא discussed that in certain instances even if a person changed their testimony, nevertheless they will be believed if they offer a proper אמתלא.² The גמרא subsequently asks what is the ruling if a woman initially told her husband טמאה אני and then retracted and said טהורה אני; is she believed or not. There are two ways to understand this question, and תוספות chooses one.

פירוש מועיל אמתלא או לא -

The explanation of the question is whether an אמתלא is sufficient or not; there is a possibility that even with an אמתלא she will not be believed (and she will certainly not be believed without an אמתלא).

אבל אין לפרש מהו אם צריכה אמתלא או לא³ -

However we cannot interpret the question of מהו to mean, whether an אמתלא is necessary or not; perhaps she is believed even without an אמתלא –

מדקאמר אף בזו אם נתנה כולי –

Since the גמרא answers, 'even in this case if she gave, etc. an אמתלא she is believed'. The manner in which the answer was given, that *even* in this case an אמתלא will be accepted, indicates that the question was whether it will be accepted (not whether it is necessary).⁴

SUMMARY

The query is whether an אמתלא is sufficient when she is טהורה אני.

THINKING IT OVER

According either way of interpreting the איבעיא; what was the query?! Why is אשת איש אני ופנויה אני any different from טמאה אני וטהורה אני (which requires and accepts an אמתלא)?⁵

¹ This עמוד א' refers back to the גמרא at the end of א'.

² The word 'אמתלא' means an excuse or explanation why initially the truth was not said. According to רש"י, it stems from the word מתלא or משל. Others suggest that it is a contraction of the words לא אמת.

³ See איסור אשת איש who suggests that perhaps since the איסור נדה is not as severe as the איסור אשת איש, therefore an אמתלא may not be required (even though it is required by אני ופנויה אני).

⁴ See תוספות הרא"ש who states that if the question was whether an אמתלא is required, the answer should have been, אף היא צריכה אמתלא.

⁵ See footnote # 3. See מהר"ם שי"ף and מהרש"א (הארוך), מהר"ם שי"ף.