

Sotah – Drinking of Bitter Waters

Ref: *Sefer Nashim, Hilchot Sotah, Chapter 4*



To perform the ritual associated with the testing of *sotah* (a woman who aroused her husband's jealousy) as prescribed by Torah¹

	Valid	
Waters drank in daytime only	✓	
Originally refuses to drink and then changes her mind	✗	Because the refusal is an admission of her guilt. Note: if she first refused out of fear, she can change her mind.
Refuses to drink before scroll written for her has been rubbed out	✓	She can opt not to drink but her scroll cannot be used for anyone else
Refuses to drink after her scroll rubbed out	✗	She must be forced to drink unless she now admits that she committed adultery. Waters are poured out and meal offering thrown into ash heap.
Scroll written at night	✗	
Written in correct sequence	✓	
Wrote scroll <i>before</i> she accepted oath	✗	
Must be written on <i>one</i> sheet of <i>parchment</i>	✓	
Writing must be with ink which can wash off	✓	Must be able to wash off from parchment
Some writing remains after text washed off	✗	
Scroll must be written and erased for sake of that specific woman only	✓	
Cup of bitter water must contain the writing from only her scroll	✓	
Water kept overnight	✗	
Woman must drink whole cup	✓	But if some has spilled, and she drank the rest, it is valid.
Places dust of <i>Hechal</i> into cup <i>before</i> the water	✗	
First drinks water and then meal – offering offered	✓	But still acceptable if reversed

<p><i>Oath</i> Husband may include in oath which woman takes, any other adultery that wife may have committed. (<i>gilgul shvuah</i>)</p>	✓	<p>But not period before betrothal or after say divorce etc.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px; display: flex; align-items: center;">  <div style="flex-grow: 1;"> <p>Reminder: Pack on Oaths</p> </div>  </div>
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Before warning one's wife in front of witnesses, he should first try and speak to her privately and gently, and in a serious manner, to try and guide her along the proper way, and remove any obstacles that may be in her way.

A person should be careful regarding the conduct of his wife and children and carefully watch their behaviour to prevent them from sinning. If he does not do this, he himself is a sinner.