

**"But if the woman had not forfeited her purity and is pure.
Then she shall be cleaned and shall conceive a child." (5:28)**

The *Talmud* in *Berachos* (31b) quotes in the name of Rabbi Yishmael that if this woman was previously childless, she would now have a child. Rabbi Akiva disagrees and says that if she had difficult births she would now bear children with ease. In any event, the blameless *sotah* merited various blessings. Why is this? Should a woman who was so close to promiscuity that her husband had warned her not to be secluded with an individual man, be so rewarded? Although she did not reach the epitome of sin, she nevertheless does not represent one who rightfully deserves blessing! Her public shame and humiliation which she underwent as a *sotah* should atone for any wrongdoing. However, the concept of a reward for this woman requires further explanation. This woman was able to overcome the effect of the *yetzer horah* at the height of her desire. At one time she has been so promiscuous, that she had defied her husband's warning, and secludes herself with a man, and was driven by the fire of lust and sin. Why then did she not sin? The opportunity and occasion were evidently there. We must therefore deduce that when it came to the actual sin, she overcame the forces of desire and did not succumb. This degree of control merits the reward which she receives. Although her prior promiscuity and seclusion will not be forgiven without further repentance and contrition, she will be rewarded for not succumbing at the ultimate moment of sin.