



Turning Left

The *Mishnah* (*Midot* 2:2) teaches that everyone that entered *Har Habayit* would turn and proceed to the right. The exception however were a few unfortunate individuals who would turn to the left. They included the mourner and the *menudeh* (one who has been ostracised). The *Mishnah* explains that people would notice them, inquire what happened, and then offer words of comfort or encouragement.

Interestingly, *Masechet Semachot* (6:11) adds someone who was unwell or an individual who lost something would also progress in that direction. In summary those who experienced material or personal loss, or suffered physical or spiritual ailments would all stand out by walking against the flow.

The *Tifferet Yisrael* explains this practice based on *Gemara* (*Shabbat* 67a). When discussing one that is struck with the spiritual illness of *tzaraat*, the *Torah* writes "... and he shall cry, unclean, unclean." Based on this *pasuk* the *Gemara* explains that one who is suffering should make it known so that others will pray from them. The *Tifferet Yisrael* explains that their route was therefore to draw attention to their pain so that others pray from them.

The *Tifferet Yisrael* adds that since most people entered *Har HaBayit* from the south, anyone who turned left from that gate would head directly to the *Beit HaMikdash*. It would clear from their route that these individuals needed heavenly mercy. It is similar to a child that is upset and runs home and goes directly to his parent.

The *Tifferet Yaakov*, however explains that the right and left are associated with *rachamim* (mercy) and *din* (strict justice). By turning to the left, those individuals are demonstrating that their experience is one of *din*.

Perhaps a further reason can be found for this practice by contrasting our *Mishnah* with a teaching found in *Pirkei*

De'Rebbi Eliezer. There it explains that *Shlomo HaMelech* understood how important *gemilut chassadim* (acts of kindness) are to *Hashem*. *Shlomo* therefore built two gates in the *Beit HaMikdash*, one for grooms and one for mourners and those placed in a *nidui*. They would bless those that entered through the groom's gate the *Hashem* should make him happy with children. Those that entered through the other gate, if their face covered, it was clear that they were mourners and others would provide them with comfort. The others that went through that gate were understood to be in a *nidui* and people would pray that *Hashem* should help him listen to his friends and his friend should forgive him and bring him close. In this manner everyone could fulfill their obligation of *gemilut chassadim*.

Two points can be gleaned from the *Pirkei De'Rebbi Eliezer*. The first is that it was critical for *Shlomo HaMelech* that the holiest place on earth should be one of *gemilut chassadim*. Consequently, the building of the *Beit HaMikdash* was such that it would guarantee it. This first point is in concert with our *Mishnah*.

The *Pirkei De'Rebbi Eliezer* however differs from our *Mishnah*. According to the former, it was immediately evident the issue that the individual was suffering. The comfort provided therefore could be provided immediately. In our *Mishnah* however, is not the case. Others observing those travelling in the opposite direction would need to ask them what was wrong. One might suggest that the practice in our *Mishnah* served to heighten the *gemilut chassadim*. In *Pirkei De'Rebbi Eliezer*, there was no interaction – the victim was the passive recipient of the blessing. He could perceive he was simply an object for others to make a *beracha*. In our *Mishnah*, the observer would need to take interest and engage the individual asking what was wrong. Part of the comfort is not just that others pray for him, but that others care and are interested in his plight.

Revision Questions

מדות א' ה' – ג' ג'

- What were the names of the three gates on the northern wall? (א' ה')
- At which of those gates did both a *kohen* and *levi* stand watch? (א' ה')
- What were the three chambers inside the *Beit Ha'Moked*? (א' ר')
- Was the *Beit Ha'Moked* located in *kodesh* or *chol*? (א' ר')
- How many gates did the *Beit Ha'Moked* have? (א' ז')
- Describe the roof of the *Beit Ha'Moked*? (א' ח')
- Describe how the *kohanim* slept there? (א' ח')
- Where were the keys to the *Azarah* hidden? (א' ט')
- What would happen if a *kohen* needed to perform *tevilah* during the night? (א' ט')
- What are the dimensions of *Har Ha'Bait*? (א' ב')
- What part had the largest area of empty space? (א' ב')
- Describe how people must enter *Har Ha'Bait*? (ב' ב')
- Who would enter in a different manner? (ב' ב')
- What was the name of the small fence that was just inside the fence of *Har Ha'Bait*? (ב' ג')
- How tall was that fence? (ג' ב')
- How many breaches did the *Yavanim* make in that fence and why is it important? (ג' ב')
- How many steps were there after this small fence and what was the space till those steps? (ג' ב')
- What were the dimensions of all the steps in the *Beit Ha'Mikdash* and which steps were the exceptions? (ג' ב')
- Which was the only entrance that did not have a door? (ג' ב')
- Which was the only gate that did not have a cross-beam? (ג' ב')
- Which was the only gate not made of gold? (ג' ב')
- Which wall was smaller than all the others and why? (ב' ד')
- What were the dimensions of the *Ezrat Nashim*? (ב' ה')
- What were the four chambers at each corner of the *Ezrat Nashim* and what were they used for? (ב' ה')
- What was different about these chambers? (ב' ה')
- How many steps were there from the *Ezrat Nashim* to the *Ezrat Yisrael*? (ב' ה')
- What were the chambers underneath the *Ezrat Yisrael* used for? (ב' ה')
- What divided the *Ezrat Yisrael* and the *Ezrat Kohanim*? (ב' ה')
- What were the dimensions of the *Azarah*? (ב' ה')
- List all the gates of the *Azarah*? (ב' ה')
- Describe the outer *mizbeach*? (ג' א')
- What was the *chut ha'sikrah* and what was it used for? (ג' א')
- How many pipes were there on the bottom south-west corner of the *mizbeach* and what were they used for? (ג' ב')
- What else was near that corner? (ג' ג')
- What were the dimensions of the ramp of the *mizbeach*? (ג' ג')

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Next Week's Mishnayot...

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	שבת קודש
26 July ה' אב	27 July ו' אב	28 July ז' אב	29 July ח' אב	30 July ט' אב	31 July י' אב	1 August יא' אב
Middot 3:4-5	Middot 3:6-7	Middot 3:8-4:1	Middot 4:2-3	Middot 4:4-5	Middot 4:6-7	Middot 5:1-2

