



Washing from the Kiyor

Masechet Keilim begins by detailing the sources of *tumah* and how they differ from one another. After describing the differences in increasing grades of severity, the *Mishnah* then describes the different areas of *Eretz Yisrael* in increasing level of *kedusha*. The final *Mishnah* (1:9) records a debate regarding certain areas in the *azara* (Temple courtyard) and the region *bein ulam ve'lamizbeach* (between the entrance hall to the *heichal* and *mizbeach*) in particular. One point that is debated is whether a *kohen* who has not yet washed his hands and feet can enter that area, with *R' Yossi* maintaining he is forbidden.

Having just learn *masechet Middot* and *Tamid*, one would find the position of *R' Yossi* difficult. Recall that the *kiyor*, the basin from which the *kohen* washed his hand and feet, was located in that region. Consequently, if the *kohen* cannot enter that region without washing his hand and feet, but the basin from which to do so was located there, then how can any *kohen* every begin the *avodah*?

Note that the problem cannot be solved by moving the basin since the *Torah* is specific where the *koyor* must be placed. "You shall make a copper Laver and its base of copper, for washing; place it between the Tent of Meeting and the Alter, and put water there. From it, *Aharon* and his sons shall wash their hands together with their feet" (*Shemot* 30:18-19).¹

The *Tosfot* (*Zevachim* 58b, s.v. *ha*) suggest that according to the opinion that the one cannot enter this area without washing one's hands and feet, the *kiyor* was not located exactly the *mizbeach* and *ulam* but shifted to the south and the *mizbeach* was located on the North side of the *azara*.

The *Tifferet Yisrael* discusses this at length. Ultimately, he suggests two possible answers. The first is that, considering that this prohibition is the subject of debate, it must be that the prohibition in this region is rabbinic in nature. That being

the case, the *Chachamim* only forbade the region directly between the entrance to the *ulam* and the *mizbeach* itself. The *kiyor* was not located there, but rather between the ramp of the *mizbeach* and the *ulam*.

The *Tifferet Yisrael* also suggests a different explanation. Previously he had explained that in a situation of great need, someone who is *tameh* can even enter the *kodesh hakodashim*. Similarly, in our case, since entering that location was necessary, it would not constitute a violation of the prohibition.

The *Raavad* also suggests several resolutions. One is that in order to walk in that region one had to wash their hands and feet, but not necessarily from the *kiyor*. Consequently, this could be performed prior to approaching that region. Nevertheless, to engage in the *avodah* it was necessary to wash from the *kiyor*.

The *Ramban* (*Shemot* 30:19) however notes that while washing is a *mitzvah*, it could be done from any *kli*. The designation of the *kiyor* was to simply to facilitate this *mitzvah*. He cites the practice of *kohen gadol* that would wash his hands and feet from the golden *kiton* (jug) on *Yom Kippur* as proof. That being the case, if, according to the *Raavad*, the *kohel* would wash in order to reach the *kiyor*, it would have then made washing from *kiyor* unnecessary.

The *Meshech Chochmah* (30:18) explains that while any vessel could be used, the washing had to be performed in that location - *bein ulam ve'lamizbeach*. He cites the *Yerushalmi* (*Yoma* 4:5) in support of this position. He continues that it is for this reason that *Torah* states "and put water there." This then explains that *Raavad*. One set of washing was required prior to enter that region, yet an additional washing in that regions was still required in order to perform the *avodah*.²

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¹ The *Oznayim LeTorah* explains that it was located there since washing was required prior to "entering the *Ohel Moed*" and prior to "approaching the *mizbeach*". Consequently it was placed there to limit the break between the washing and the approach.

² The use of *Meshech* to resolve the question on the *Raavad* is found in *Yalkut Biurim, Tamid* 38a, footnote 48.

Revision Questions

קינים ג: ד' – ו'

- Explain the case of "חטאת ועולה וסתומה ומפורשת" and the ruling provided in the *Mishnah*. (ג: ד')
- What is the law regarding a *chatat* that mixed with a *ken chovah (stumah)*? (Consider both cases.) (ה: ג')
- Explain the case in the last *Mishnah*. (ו: ג')
- What case does *R' Yehoshua* bring that is similar to the ruling in the final *Mishnah*? (ג: ו')
- What is the difference between *Torah* elders and the elder *Amei Ha'Aretz*? (ו: ג')

כלים א: א' – ב: ב'

- What are the five *avot ha'tumah* and to what items do they transfer *tumah*? (א: א')
- What are the two more severe sources of *tumah* that can transfer *tumah* by virtue of being carried? How else is it more severe? (ב: ב')
- What source of *tumah* is even more severe and how so? (ג: א')
- How is *dam niddah* even more severe and what other sources are on that level? (ג: א')
- What are *merkav* and *mishkav* and how are they more severe? (ג: א')
- Which is more a more severe level source of *tumah* – a *zav* or *zava* – and why? (ד: א')
- Which person is a source of *tumah* more severe than both of them? (ד: א')
- What are the most and second most severe source of *tumah* and why? (ד: א')
- What are the ten levels of *tumah* that can apply to a person and how do they differ? (ה: א')
- (Regarding the ten levels of *kedusha*:) In what way is *Eretz Yisrael* more *kadosh* than other lands? (ו: א')
- How are walled cities more *kadosh* than the rest of *Eretz Yisrael*? (ו: א')
- How is inside *Yerushalaim* more *kadosh* than other walled cities? (ו: א')
- How is *Har Ha'bait* even more *kadosh*? (ז: א')
- Explain how the following areas increase in *kedusha*?
 - The *cheil*.
 - The *Ezrat Nashim*.
 - The *Ezrat Yisrael*.
 - The *Ezrat Kohanim*. (ח: א')
 - Between the *Ulam* and *Mizbeach*.
 - The *Heichal*.
 - The *Kodesh HaKodashim*. (ט: א')
- According to *R' Yosi* in what five ways is the area between the *Ulam* and *Mizbeach* the same as the *Heichal*? (ט: א')
- What four utensils are: "יפשטיהן טהורים ומקבליהן טמאים"? (ב: א')
- What is the law if one of these utensils that were *tameh* broke and was then reformed? (ב: א')
- How do *klei cheres* (earthenware vessels) become *tameh*? (א: ב')
- How do *klei cheres* transfer *tumah*? (א: ב')
- How can one remove the *tumah* from *klei cheres*? (א: ב')
- How small can *klei cheres* (or parts of *klei cheres*) still be defined as utensils? (Provide all three opinions.) (ב: ב')

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16 August כ"ו אב	17 August כ"ז אב	18 August כ"ח אב	19 August כ"ט אב	20 August ל' אב	21 August א' אלול	22 August ב' אלול
Keilim 2:3-4	Keilim 2:5-6	Keilim 2:7-8	Keilim 3:1-2	Keilim 3:3-4	Keilim 3:5-6	Keilim 3:7-8

