



Volume 5. Issue 37

Shmirah in the Beit Ha'Mikdash

Masechet Tamid deals with the daily activity in the *Beit Ha'Mikdash*. The first item discussed is *shmirah* - "guard duty". While we learn elsewhere that the *levi'im* also performed *shmirah* at other locations, the *Mishnah* here lists the three locations that the *kohanim* stood watch. What was the purpose of this duty? When was it performed? How do the answers to the previous two questions relate?

The *Rambam* (amongst many others) explains that this duty, a positive commandment¹, does not stem from fear of bandits or enemies, but rather out of respect to the *Beit Ha'Mikdash*. Citing the *Mechilta* he explains that a palace without guards cannot be compared to a palace with guards.

The *Sefer HaChinnuch* continues that *Hashem* clearly does not need this honour. Instead the display is meant to have an impact on those that come to the *Beit Ha'Mikdash*, instilling a sense of awe in their hearts. When they therefore enter, their hearts will be softened thereby hastening their *teshuva*.

There is a debate however regarding when *shmirah* had to be performed. The *Rambam* (*Hilchot Beit Ha'Bechirah* 8:2) explains that *shmirah* was performed only at night.² The *Mefarsh* on the other hand understands that it was performed both day and night.

The *Mishnah LeMelech* finds the *Mefarsh* difficult. The *Minchat Chinnuch* however defends the *Mefarsh* arguing that the difficulty lies with the

Rambam. He explains that the *Rambam* does maintain that *shmirah* was performed for respect, not out of fear. Consequently why should *shmirah* only be performed at night? The *Minchat Chinnuch* argues further, that if one visits those palaces that have guards stationed for their honour, they will see the guards both night and day!

The *Tifferet Yisrael* (*Boaz* 1) explains that even though the *shmirah* was for the honour of the place, it was unnecessary during the day. The simple reason being that during the day the *kohanim* were busy rushing back and forward with the regular *avodah* in the *Beit Ha'Mikdash*. That is honour enough.

Perhaps then we can take the question of the *Minchat Chinnuch* and the explanation of the *Tifferet Yisrael* to develop an important idea. One can respond to the *Minchat Chinnuch* that there is stark difference between the honour shown to a king and the honour demanded by the King of Kings. Respect shown by the guards of an earthly king is demonstrated by their inactivity. Every sinew in his body is locked to his station. *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* however demand activity, movement – the performance of *mitzvot*. It is perhaps this image, according to the *Rambam*, of non-stop action, of *kohanim* performing the will of *Hashem*, that has far more of an impact on those entering the *Beit Ha'Mikdash* than the inanimate, motionless guard.

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¹ *Bamidbar* 18:4. The *Gra* explains that the purpose of *shmirah* is clear from the *p'sukim*; it was to ensure that non-*kohanim* would not enter the *Beit Ha'Mikdash*. However the *Gemara* nonetheless questions its source. The *Gra* explains that the practical motivation alone is not reason enough. Firstly there would be no need for *shmirah* at night as the doors were locked. Secondly, why should *shmirah* be performed specifically by the *kohanim* and

levi'im? Any agency would do. Consequently the *Gemara* asks for the source of, what must be, this positive commandment on the *kohanim* and *levi'im*.

² The *Tifferet Yisrael* understands that *shmirah* was performed in three or four shifts correlating with the three or four "watches" during the night discussed in *Berachot* (3a).

Revision Questions

מעילה ו: אי - ו

- If someone inadvertently gave *hekdesh* money to a *shaliach* to purchase something, give an example when the sender has transgressed the prohibition of *meilah*. (א: ו)
- Give an example when the *shaliach* transgress the prohibition of *meilah*. (א: ו)
- Give an example where the host, waiter and guests all violate the prohibition. (א: ו)
- What is the law if the *shaliach* was a minor? (ב: ו)
- What can the sender do if he realises that the money he gave to the *shaliach* was *hekdesh* after the *shaliach* already left to purchase the goods? (ב: ו)
- In what case do both the sender and messenger not violate the prohibition of *meilah*? (ג: ו)
- What two cases are debated whether both the sender and messenger violate the prohibition of *meilah*? (ד: ו)
- In what case would a moneychanger entrusted with *hekdesh* coins not violate *meilah* if he used those coins? (ה: ו)
- Explain the debate regarding whether a storekeeper entrusted with such money has the same law. (ו: ו)
- Explain the debate regarding the point when one transgresses the prohibition of *meilah* if he begins to use money from a purse that contains one coin of *hekdesh*. (ז: ו)

תמיד א: אי - ב: ב' ד'

- In what three locations do the *kohanim* stand watch? (א: א)
- Describe the *Beit Ha'Moked* and what occurred there? (א: א)
- What was the "*Beit Kiseh shel Kavod*"? (א: א)
- How was it determined who would perform *trumat ha'deshen* and when was it decided? (ב: ב)
- From where would the *kohanim* enter the *heichal* in the beginning of the day? (א: א)
- After entering, into how many groups would they split and for what purpose? (ג: א)
- Where would they meet up again and what would they say when they met? (ג: א)
- What would they warn the person about to perform *trumat ha'deshen*? (ד: א)
- How would they know when he reached the basin to wash his hands and feet? (א: א)
- Describe how *trumat ha'deshen* was performed? (ד: א)
- What would happen after *trumat ha'deshen* was complete? (ב: א)
- What was different about this process during *Yom Tov*? (ב: א)
- What wood was not fit for use for the fire on the *mizbeach*? (ג: א)
- Which wood did they prefer to use? (ב: א)
- Describe the *ma'aracha gedolah*. (ב: א)

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11 th January ט"ו טבת	12 th January ט"ז טבת	13 th January י"ז טבת	14 th December י"ח טבת	15 th January י"ט טבת	16 th January כ' טבת	17 th January כ"א טבת
Tamid 2:5-3:1	Tamid 3:2-3	Tamid 3:4-5	Tamid 3:6-7	Tamid 3:8-9	Tamid 4:1-2	Tamid 4:3-5:1

