



Volume 6. Issue 14

Three Types of Sevachot

The twenty-fourth *perek* of *Masechet Keilim* is interesting from a stylistic point of view as each *Mishnah* begins by mentioning a particular item and its three categories of susceptibility to *tumah*. The sixteenth *Mishnah* discusses the impurity of *sevachot*, which literally refers to a netting-like material. The three types of *sevachot* and their susceptibility to *Tumah* are as follows:

1. A girl's *sevacha* is able to contract *Tumat Midras* – a form of *tumah* that is imparted through standing, sitting or lying upon, unique to items intended for these purposes.
2. An elderly woman's *sevacha* is able to contract *Tamei Met* and other forms of *tumah* transferred through direct contact.
3. A *sevacha* for outdoors is *tahor* and not susceptible to *tumah*.

The *Rishonim* provide differing explanations as to the uses of this netting like material and it is this use which impacts its capacity for contracting *Tumah*.

The *Rambam* and *Bartenura* seem to agree that the word *sevacha* refers to a lady's head covering. It follows then that the *Mishnah* is referring to head coverings that belong to different individuals. The *Rambam* states that a girl's head covering can be sat upon and therefore contracts *Tumat Midras*. On the other hand, the head covering of an elderly woman was slightly different and constructed in a manner that one would not sit on it. Interestingly, the *Bartenura* quotes the *Tosefta* which reverses the halacha – i.e. that a child's head covering has the ability to contract corpse *Tumah*, and an elderly woman's contracts *Midras Tumah*. This is because an elderly woman is not particular about her head covering, and will therefore sit upon it from time to time, while a child is particular about her clothing and will not sit upon it.

The *Mishnah Achronah* disagrees with the above interpretation. He writes that it does not seem logical

that the *Mishnah* would be referring to a head covering as it is quite rare to find a woman that would uncover her hair to sit on her head covering! Rather, the *sevachot* mentioned in the *Mishnah* is some sort of handkerchief which a woman uses to clean her mouth and hands from dirt. According to the *Mishnah Achronah*, the *Mishnah* informs us that a girl is particular about her clothes, and therefore will sometimes place this handkerchief on top of her chair in order to prevent her clothes from getting dirty, thus enabling the handkerchief to contract *Tumat Midras*. The handkerchief of an elderly lady, on the other hand, will only contract corpse *tumah* as she is not particular about her clothes and will never sit on the handkerchief.

Another explanation is provided by the *Tifferet Yisrael* who interprets the use of the *Sevacha* as a veil. He mentions that a girl's veil typically covered her head, shoulders and parts of her body. Therefore, when she sits down, she will find herself at least partially sitting on her veil (and thus allow for *Tumat Midras*). An elderly lady however, will typically have a shorter veil and never find herself sitting on the material.

Interestingly, according to all opinions, there is still the question of why a *sevacha* "for going out" is completely *Tahor*. *Tifferet Yisrael* answers that this covering does not have the appropriate *shiur* as a *begged* – and therefore remains *tahor*. *Bartenura* answers that this type of covering is not really a vessel and therefore cannot receive impurity. The *Mishnah Achronah* develops this idea further. He says that this *sevacha* was actually a type of sheet that was worn by women on top of their clothing when they went out to protect them from the rain. Since this sheet was only used as protection, it is not considered a *kli* in its own right and therefore escapes susceptibility to contracting *tumah*.

Yehuda Gottlieb

Revision Questions

כלים כ"ב: ז' – כ"ד: ו'

- What are two ways that a *Shida* can come apart and still be susceptible to *tumah*? Explain. (כ"ב: ח')
- What third way is the subject of debate. (כ"ב: ח')
- Is a chiseler's work bench susceptible to *tumat midras*? (כ"ב: ח')
- Explain the debate regarding the painted *kofet*. (כ"ב: ט')
- At what point is a basket filled with stuffing for the purpose of seating susceptible to *tumat midras*? (כ"ב: ט')
- What is the law regarding an *aslah*, where the leather separates from the frame? (כ"ב: י')
- What other case is similar to the previous one and how does it differ? (כ"ב: י')
- What is the law regarding a bench where one of the legs is made of stone? (כ"ב: י')
- When is a *kankilin* susceptible to *tumah*? (כ"ב: י')
- When does the stuffing of an item that is torn transmit and not transmit the *tumah* of the item? Provide examples from the *Mishnah* for both cases. (כ"ב: יא')
- List some items that are susceptible to *tumah* through *merkav*. (כ"ב: יב')
- What is the difference between *tumah* through *merkav* and *moshav*? (כ"ב: יג')
- When is a *tafit* of a donkey susceptible to *tumah*? (כ"ב: יג')
- Is a bed set aside for use of corpses susceptible to *tumat midras*? (כ"ב: יד')
- What is the opinion of *R' Yosi* regarding the susceptibility to *tumat midras* of a *kise she kalla*? (כ"ב: יד')
- Is a fish net susceptible to *tumah*? (כ"ב: ה')
- List some traps that are susceptible to *tumah* and some that are not? (כ"ב: ה')
- What are the three *trisin* and how do they differ from each other? (כ"ד: א')
- What are the three *agalot* and how do they differ from each other? (כ"ד: ב')
- What are the three *areivot* and how do they differ from each other? (כ"ד: ג')
- What are the three *teivot* and how do they differ from each other? (כ"ד: ד')
- What are the three *tarbusin* and how do they differ from each other? (כ"ד: ה')
- What are the three *basisayot* and how do they differ from each other? (כ"ד: ו')

Local Shiurim

Sunday -Thursday

Between mincha & ma'ariv
Mizrachi Shul

Friday & Shabbat

10 minutes before mincha
Mizrachi Shul

Next Week's Mishnayot...

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	שבת קודש
24 th May א' אייר	25 th May ב' אייר	26 th May ג' אייר	27 th May ד' אייר	28 th May ה' אייר	29 th May ו' אייר	30 th May ז' אייר
Keilim 24:7-8	Keilim 24:9-10	Keilim 24:11-12	Keilim 24:13-14	Keilim 24:15-16	Keilim 24:17-25:1	Keilim 25:2-3

