



Volume 6. Issue 19

Tumah B'Chiburin

Masechet Keilim opens with a discussion regarding *tumah* originating from a corpse. More specifically, how the level or “potency” of the *tumah* degrades as it is transferred between people and/or utensils. The case in the first *Mishnah* is as follows. If a person touches a corpse he becomes *tameh met* and must engage in the seven day purification process. During that time he is defined as an *av ha'tumah*, meaning that he has the ability to transfer *tumah* to anything that is susceptible to *tumah*, including other people. If he then touches a utensil or another person, it becomes *tameh* albeit to a lesser degree. Firstly the purification process is shorter. Furthermore, it is defined as a *rishon l'tumah* and can only transfer *tumah* to food and liquids.

The *Bartenura* explains however, that if the second person touches the first person while he is still in contact with the corpse, then he too would be required to undergo the seven day purification process. This is referred to as *tumah b'chiburin*.¹ The *Tifferet Yisrael* notes that *tumah* being transferred in this manner, such that it can cause another person to become *tameh*, is unique to *tumat met* (*tumah* originating from a corpse).

There are two ways to understand *tumah b'chiburin*. On the one hand, one could explain that while the first person is in contact with the corpse his own *tumah* is as strong as the corpse's. On the other hand, one may understand that when the second person touches the first, it is as if he is contact with corpse itself.²

The *Ramban* (*Avodah Zara* 37b) explains that “...the entire time that person is touching the corpse he is like [the corpse]” which appears to follow the first understanding. The *Tosfot Rid* however explains that “when *Reuven* is touching the corpse, and *Shimon* touches *Reuven*, it is considered as if *Shimon* touched that the *tumah* that *Reuven* is in contact with.” The

Tosfot Rid aligns therefore with the second understanding.

Is there a practical difference between these two understandings? In the *Shut Be'er Moshe* it is explained that one difference would be if two people, touching one another, each held half a *kezayit* from a corpse. According to the first understanding, neither person is holding a full *kezayit* and therefore both would be *tahor*. According to the second understanding, if it is as if the second person is in direct contact with the *tumah*, then both people would be considered holding a full *kezayit* and therefore *tameh*.³

Another practical difference brought is as follows. A *kohen* is warned against coming into direct contact with a corpse. This appears to be only when in direct contact, because a *kohen* is not warned against touching a “sword” that touched a corpse which shares the same level *tumah* as the corpse. Is the *kohen* warned against touching another person who is in contact with a corpse? The answer might once again depend on how one understands *tumah b'chiburin*. If it is as if he is touching the corpse itself then yes. If however it is only as if the *tumah* of the first person is on the same level as the corpse then perhaps no.

Another question, brought down by the *Minchat Chinnuch* as follows. A *kohen* is allowed to become *tameh* for the sake of a particular deceased relatives. Can a *kohen* however touch a person who is touching that relative? Once again the doubt may be based on the above question. If the *kohen* is only permitted to directly touch the deceased relative then the question may depend on whether *tumah b'chiburin* is considered direct contact.

Yisrael Yitzchak Bankier

¹ The *Bartenura* explains that this rule is *d'rabbanan*. This is however the subject of debate whether it is *d'oraita* or *d'rabbanan*. The *Rambam* (here) and *Tosfot Rid* (*Avodah Zara* 37b) holds it is *d'rabbanan*, while the *Tosfot* and *Ramban* (*Avodah Zara* 37b) maintain it is *d'oraita*.

² Much of the content that follows is found in the *Metivta, Yalkut Biurim, Nazir* 44b, footnote 136.

³ Where one brave enough, they might argue that the concept of *tumah b'chiburin* only begins when one person is directly in contact with *tumat met* above the minimum measure of a *kezayit* and consequently according to both understandings, both people would be *tahor*.

Revision Questions

כלים כ"ט:ו' – ל':ד'

- List some of the items mentioned for which the length of the *chibbur* is:
 - Two *tephachim*?
 - Three *tephachim*? (כ"ט:ו')
 - Four *tephachim*?
 - Five *tephachim*?
 - Six *tephachim*? (כ"ט:ז')
 - Seven *tephachim*? (כ"ט:ח')
- List the two items debated by *Beit Shammai* and *Beit Hillel* regarding the length of the *chibbur*? (כ"ט:ח')
- Which glassware is not susceptible to *tumah*? (ל':א')
- What is the law regarding *tumah* glassware that are broken and used to form new utensils? (ל':א')
- Which mirrors are susceptible to *tumah*? (ל':ב')
- Explain the debate regarding a glass ladle. (ל':ב')
- How much must a glass cup be chipped for it to become *tahor*? (ל':ג')
- Explain the debate regarding the susceptibility to *tumah* of glass cup whose hole at its base was plugged. (ל':ג')
- What is the difference whether a small or large flask (*tzulichit*) whose neck broke off? (ל':ד')
- How does *masechet keilim* start and end? (ל':ד')

סליק מסכת כלים

אהלות א' א' א' ז'

- Through what chain of event beginning with contact with a corpse can:
 - One thing becomes *tameh* for seven days and another till the evening? (א':א')
 - Two things become *tameh* for seven days and another till the evening? (א':ב')
 - Three things become *tameh* for seven days and another till the evening? (א':ג')
- In what way is the law regarding *tumah met* more strict for a person than utensils and in what way is it more lenient? (א':ד')
- In what way is the law regarding *tumah zav* more strict for a person than clothing and in what way is it more lenient? (א':ה')
- At what point does a person become a source of *tumat met*? (א':ו')
- List some other law for which this is important? (א':ו')
- If an animal is decapitated and is convulsing, is it source of *tumat neveilah*? (א':ז')
- Is there a minimum measure for a limb for it to be a source of *tumah*? (א':ז')
- In what three forms of *tumah* can a limb from a dead creature be a source of *tumah*? (א':ז')

Local Shiurim

Sunday -Thursday

New time: After maariv
Mizrachi Shul

Friday & Shabbat

10 minutes before mincha
Mizrachi Shul

Next Week's Mishnayot...

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	שבת קודש
28 th June ו' תמוז	29 th June ז' תמוז	30 th June ח' תמוז	1 st July ט' תמוז	2 nd July י' תמוז	3 rd July י"א תמוז	4 th July י"ב תמוז
Ohalot 1:8-2:1	Ohalot 2:2-3	Ohalot 2:4-5	Ohalot 2:6-7	Ohalot 3:1-2	Ohalot 3:3-4	Ohalot 3:5-6

