



Volume 6. Issue 20

The Foot Bone's Connected to the Leg Bone

The last *Mishnah* in the first *perek* of *Ohalot* lists the 248 limbs that form the human anatomy. It is stated that all these limbs, when detached, transmit *tumah* in an *Ohel*.

The *Tifferet Yisrael* asks an interesting question – although the *Mishnah* states that the body is made up of 248 limbs, and the *Gemara* in *Bechorot* (45a) states that the disciples boiled the corpse of a harlot and discovered that a man does indeed have 248 limbs, there had been anatomy studies that put forward that there was actually less than this amount! How does this scientific, observable fact, reconcile with the *Mishnah's* view?

The *Tifferet Yisrael* answers that in actual fact the number quoted in the *Mishnah*, and that put forward by anatomy experts are referring to two different things. He states that one cannot doubt the accuracy of the *Mishnah*, since it was brought by the Sage's who had *ruach Hashem* dwelt amongst them. He explains the discrepancy by stating that the Sage's definition of what constitutes a bone and a limb does not necessarily correlate with that which is defined by the 'experts'. The *Tifferet Yisrael* proves this point from the fact that the *Gemara* itself has a doubt whether those that had boiled the harlot's body had counted the limbs correctly. He says, if this is the case, then it must mean that those who studied anatomy could also have defined bones in a different way and therefore come to a different number to the *Chachamim*.

The *Encyclopedia Talmudit* explains further that the *Mishnah* and anatomy experts are not referring to the same person. He states a fundamental principle that as a person grows and develops, their bones fuse together. As a baby and a young child, a person does not have a large number of bones as they are quite soft and still forming. By the time a person reaches approximately 16-17 years old, the bones will have solidified and hardened and have separated to a degree. As a person grows toward adulthood these hardened bones will fuse and join together. Therefore, the *Mishnah* which mentions the 248 bones in a person is referring to the hard, separated bones that are found in a

teenage body. However, the anatomy experts who mention that a person has a lot less bones is actually referring to bones found in an adult, fully grown body.

It is interesting to note that the same *Gemara* in *Bechorot* states that women actually have 252 limbs. This seems to be inconsistent with our *Mishnah*. The *Gemara* there answers that although women do in fact have 252 limbs, nonetheless, only 248 of these actually transmit *tumah*.

The *Shulchan Aruch* (O.C 61:3) writes that *Kriyat Shema* has 245 words, and there is a preference to say 248 words. Therefore, when davening with a *minyan* the *Chazzan* should repeat the last three words of the third paragraph, and when davening alone the words "*Kel Melech Ne'eman*" should be said before beginning *Shema*. This brings the total words of the *Shema* to 248 and thus corresponds to the number of limbs in a person's body. The *Da'as Zekeinim M'Baalei HaTosfos* says that those who say the 248 words of *Kriyas Shema* properly will merit to having Hashem Himself guarding over his 248 limbs. *Kivyachol*, Hashem says, "You guard My possessions (the *mitzvos*), and I will guard your possessions (your 248 limbs)."

If this is the case, the rebbi of the *Ramban*, *Rabbeinu Yehuda ben Yakar*¹, asks how women (who have 252 limbs) will be able to receive this merit. The *Gemara* above mentions that the extra limbs that a woman has are described as "two doors and two door pivots". Since obviously a door pivot are always connected to the door, they do not necessarily need to be counted separately, which brings the total limbs down to 250. Additionally, if you exclude the sentence of "*Baruch Shem Kevod...*" *Kriyat Shema* contains 239 words included in which are 11 names of Hashem. Each name of Hashem could be counted twice since it represents the name "*Hashem*" and "*Elokim*" and this brings the total to 250. By using this method, women also receive the *zechut* of having Hashem guard over their limbs.

Yehuda Gottlieb

¹ *Perush Ri ben Yakar Lehasiddur Tefilot veBrachot Chelek 1*: quoted from *Daf Yomi Digest: Sotah 27*

Revision Questions

אהלות א' ח' – ג' ו'

- How many *eivarim* are there in a man? (Hard: list them.) (א' ח')
- In what three ways can they transfer *tumah*? (א' ח')
- What condition is not fulfilled if they cannot transfer *tumah* in one of these ways? (א' ח')
- What is the *shiur* (minimum measure) of the following things for them to transfer *tumah* under an *ohel*:
 - *Netzel*?
 - *Rakav*?
 - Bones? (Provide three measures.) (ב' א')
 - Blood from a corpse?
 - *Dam tevusah*?
 - *Dam katan*?
 - *Ever serufin*? (ב' ב')
- Explain the debate for the last three cases. (ב' ב')
- What is the law regarding *rakav* that is mixed with water regarding *chibur*? (ב' ב')
- Which seven things transfer *tumat met* but not via an *ohel*? (ג' א')
- When is a spine and skull considered *chaser*? (Include both opinions.) (ג' א')
- Explain the debate regarding how a *golel* and *dofek* transfer *tumah*. (ג' ב')
- Which six things from a *met* are *tahor* if they are *chaser*? (ג' ב')
- Explain the debate regarding *rova atzamot* that came from two corpses. (ג' ב')
- What else is debate in the same manner? (ג' ב')
- Explain the debate regarding an *etzem k'seora* the split in two. (ג' ב')
- Explain the debate regarding *rova atzamot* that have been ground. (ג' ב')
- What cases are debated between *R' Dusa ben Harkinas* and the *Chachamim*? (ג' א')
- In what cases do they agree? (ג' א')
- Explain the debate regarding a ladle full of *rakav* that was scattered in a house? (ג' ב')
- What is the law regarding a *revi'it* of blood that was absorbed into the floor of a house? (ג' ב')
- When would a person that leaned over part of a *revi'it* of blood (from a *met*) by *tameh* and when would he be *tahor*? (ג' א')
- What parts of a corpse are not *tameh*? (ג' א')
- Provide three examples where parts of a *met* transfer *tumah* by virtue of a being a *chibur*. (ג' ב')
- What is *dav tevusah*? (Include all opinions.) (ג' ב')
- What is the minimum size for a hole for *tumat ha'met* to “spread through”? (ג' א')
- Does the measure change for “saving the entrances”? Explain. (ג' א')

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
5 th July י"ג תמוז	6 th July י"ד תמוז	7 th July ט"ו תמוז	8 th July ט"ז תמוז	9 th July י"ז תמוז	10 th July י"ח תמוז	11 th July י"ט תמוז
Ohalot 3:7-4:1	Ohalot 4:2-3	Ohalot 5:1-2	Ohalot 5:3-4	Ohalot 5:5-6	Ohalot 5:7-6:1	Ohalot 6:2-3

