

19 Iyar 5778
May 4, 2018



Zevachim Daf 21

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Daf Notes is currently being dedicated to the neshamot of

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May the studying of the Daf Notes be a zechus for their neshamot and may their souls find peace in Gan Eden and be bound up in the Bond of life

Immersing in the Kiyor

They inquired: Can the *Kohen* sanctify his hands and feet in the *Kiyor* (through immersion)? Do we say that the Torah states: [And Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and feet] from it, but not in it; or perhaps it means even in it?

Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak said that it can be resolved from the following: [If a *Kohen's* hands and feet are unwashed, he must sanctify them at (the *Kiyor*, or with) a service vessel inside (the Courtyard). If he sanctified them in a service vessel outside, or in an unconsecrated vessel inside,] or if he immersed them in the water of a pit, and performed the service, his service is invalid. We may infer from here that if he used the water of the *Kiyor* in a similar way to the water of a pit (i.e., immersion) and performed the service, his service is valid!

The *Gemora* deflects the proof: It was necessary for the *Tanna* to teach us about the water of a pit, for otherwise, one might say: If he can immerse his entire body in it (and he becomes purified), then certainly it should be effective (to sanctify) his hands and feet! (21a)

Remaining Overnight

Rabbi Chiya bar Yosef said: The water of the *Kiyor* becomes unfit for the permitters (the sprinkling of the blood of animal sacrifices, and the burning of the scoopful of flour

from the *minchah* offerings; they are called permitters because they enable the sacrifices to be consumed by the Altar or eaten by men), just as the permitters themselves (they must be done before sunset of the day on which the sacrifices are brought), and for the burning of the sacrificial parts, just as the burning of the sacrificial parts themselves. [The *Kiyor* was submerged every day into a cistern; if it was not immersed into it before sunset, or, even if it was raised right before daybreak, its water becomes disqualified to be used the next day for sanctification – if the *Kohen* wishes to perform one of the “permitter” services, just as the blood and the *komeitz* themselves become unfit for their purpose at sunset. If, however, the *Kohen* is sanctifying his hands and feet in order to burn the sacrificial parts, a service which may be performed the entire night, the sanctification is valid. If it remained unimmersed at daybreak, it cannot be used for sanctification for the burning of the sacrificial limbs either, for the limbs themselves become invalidated at daybreak.]

Rav Chisda said: Even for the permitters, they become unfit only at daybreak, just as the sacrificial limbs (become invalidated). [Accordingly, even if the *Kiyor* was not immersed during the night, a *Kohen* could use its waters for sanctification for any type of *avodah*; if, however, it was unimmersed by daybreak, its waters become unfit for sanctification.]

Rabbi Yochanan said: Once the *Kiyor* is submerged, it may not be drawn up again (until after daybreak). [If the *Kiyor*

was not submerged into the pit at sundown, its waters will be disqualified for any avodos. In order for its waters to be fit the next day, it must remain immersed the entire night.]

The *Gemora* asks on Rabbi Yochanan: Does this mean that it is not even fit for the night service? But didn't Rabbi Assi say in the name of Rabbi Yochanan in the name of Ilfa: If the *Kiyor* was not lowered into the cistern in the evening, the *Kohen* performs his sanctifications in it for the service of the night, and he does not perform his sanctifications for the next day!?

The *Gemora* answers: When Rabbi Yochanan said that it may not be drawn up again, he meant that it is unfit for a day service; but it is indeed fit for a night service.

The *Gemora* asks: If so, this is identical with the opinion of Rabbi Chiya bar Yosef!?

The *Gemora* answers: They disagree regarding the preventive measure in respect of immersing the *Kiyor*. [When Rabbi Yochanan stated that the *Kiyor* must not be brought up during the night (for a day service), it is not because its water will become unfit, but rather, it was a preventive measure that it should not be lowered again before daybreak, which would then disqualify it. Rabbi Chiya bar Yosef, however, maintains that if it was brought up anytime during the night, its water will become unfit for a day service.]

The *Gemora* asks: But surely Rabbi Yochanan said: If a *Kohen* sanctified his hands and feet in order to perform the *avodah* of the removal of the ashes (which was done before daybreak), he is not required to sanctify them again on the morrow (after daybreak) because he has already done so at the beginning of the day's service. Now, according to Rava who explains that this is in accordance

with Rabbi Elozar son of Rabbi Shimon (but Rabbi Yochanan accepted his view only regarding the beginning of the service, and therefore, in a case where he sanctified his hands for the removal of the ashes, the beginning of the day's service, the sanctification is not nullified with the passing of the night, but not regarding the end of the service and therefore, in a case where he sanctified his hands for the burning of the limbs, the conclusion of the day's service, the sanctification not nullified with the passing of the night), it is well, for the ruling here (that the *Kiyor* must be immersed during the night) will be representing Rebbe's opinion. However, according to Abaye, who explains that is in accordance with Rebbe (and the *halachah* that the passing of the night nullifies the sanctification is merely Rabbinical, and he admits that the passing of the night does not nullify from the short amount of time between the rooster cry until morning), Rebbe is self-contradictory, for why must he lower it there (and keep it there the entire night), whereas here, he is not required to lower it immediately?

The *Gemora* answers: Rabbi Yochanan means that he raises it (for the removal of the ashes) and then lowers it again.

The *Gemora* asks: If so, why does he say (that if the *Kiyor* was not lowered into the cistern in the evening), he does not perform his sanctifications for the next day (which the *Gemora* assumes to mean that the waters are deemed unfit; why is that so, for as long as it was lowered before daybreak, the waters will not be disqualified)?

The *Gemora* answers: The meaning is that he is not required to sanctify (for the passing of the night does not nullify his sanctification).

The *Gemora* asks: This would mean that Rabbi Yochanan maintains that (if the *Kiyor* was raised during the night), its



sanctification is indeed effective even for the “permitters” (*the services performed by day with the blood and the komeitz*)! Then, his opinion is identical with the viewpoint of Rav Chisda!?

The *Gemora* answers: They differ in respect of the obligation of lowering. [*Rabbi Yochanan maintains that it must be immersed in the evening, so that when the Kohen comes to remove the ashes, he will find it submerged, and thus remember to lower it again immediately before daybreak. Rav Chisda, however, holds that this is unnecessary, and it is sufficient to lower it just before daybreak.*]

The *Gemora* challenges Rav Chisda from the following *Mishna*: They neither saw him (*the Kohen who went in the pre-dawn darkness to remove the ashes from the Altar*), nor heard him until they heard the sound of the wood of the pulley which Ben Kattin made for the *Kiyor*, and then they said, “It is time to sanctify our hands and feet at the *Kiyor*.” Surely this means that he raised it, (*and that is the noise that they heard*); which proves that it was lowered during the night!?

The *Gemora* answers: The *Mishna* means that he lowered it now (*using the pulley, and that was the noise that they heard*).

The *Gemora* asks: But there was Gevini the crier (*who would announce to the Kohanim that it was time to rise and perform the Temple service*)!?

The *Gemora* answers: They made two signals; some heard the sound of the pulley and came, while others heard the crier and came. (21a – 21b)

How Much Water?

It was stated above: Rabbi Yosi the son of Rabbi Chanina said that any *Kiyor* that does not contain enough water to wash four *Kohanim* is not valid to use for this washing. This is as the verse states: *And Moshe, Aaron, and his sons will wash from it.*

The *Gemora* asks from the following *braisa*: All vessels can sanctify (*the water to be used to wash the Kohanim*) whether they contain a *revi'is*, or whether they do not contain a *revi'is*, as long as they are service vessels!?

Rav Ada bar Acha answers: The case of the *braisa* is where one bores a small hole in the *Kiyor* and attaches a small vessel to it, allowing the water of the *Kiyor* go through the small vessel. [*Even though the vessel itself does not contain water for four, there is water for four in the Kiyor.*] (21b – 22a)

INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

Are the Hands and Feet to be Sanctified only at the Kiyor?

Our *Gemora* infers from a verse that a *Kohen* who observed the *mitzvah* of sanctifying his hands and feet not at the *Kiyor* but using another *keli shareis* has observed the *mitzvah* though the Torah mentions this *mitzvah* in relation to the *Kiyor*. According to Rambam (*Hilchos Bias HaMikdash*, 5:10), our *Gemora* does not entirely detach the *Kiyor* from the *mitzvah* of sanctifying the hands and feet but “it is a *mitzvah* to sanctify them from the water of the *Kiyor*, but if he sanctified them from another *keli shareis*, it is eligible.” Ramban (Shemos 30:19) disagrees and writes that the *Kiyor* is not preferable to another *keli shareis*, relying on the fact that on Yom Kippur the *Kohen Gadol* washed his hands and feet from a golden vessel and not from the *Kiyor* (Yoma 43b).

What would Rambam answer to such clear proof? HaGaon Rav C.M. Steinberg *shlita* (*Mishnas Chayim*, 13) settles the matter according to a principle learnt in our *sugya* about the *mitzvah* of sanctifying the hands and feet, as follows.

The *keli shareis* have two functions: It is obvious that a *Kohen* who washed his hands and feet from a vessel that has **not been sanctified** has not observed the *mitzvah*. If we examine the root of the difference between an unsanctified object and a *keli shareis*, we find two distinct essential differences both of which the Chafetz Chayim zt"l (in *Zevach Todah*) proves to be valid: (1) Water becomes sanctified in a *keli shareis* and a *Kohen* must observe the *mitzvah* of **sanctifying** his hands and feet with sanctified water. (2) A *Kohen* must wash his hands and feet **using** a *keli shareis* as the sanctification of the hands and feet is a service of the Temple, demanding a *keli shareis*. Therefore, he must wash with **sanctified water** from a **sanctified vessel**.

Therefore, our *Gemora*, which says that one may wash from any *keli shareis* and not only at the *Kiyor*, relates to the water's sanctification and determines that it may be sanctified in any *keli shareis*. Rambam adds that nonetheless "it is a *mitzvah* to sanctify **from the water** of the *Kiyor*." In other words, Rambam relates only to the first rule and writes that it is a *mitzvah* to use the water sanctified in the *Kiyor* but the washing itself need not be done from the *Kiyor*. One can therefore take water that has been sanctified in the *Kiyor*, put it into another *keli shareis* and wash with it. The golden vessel used by the *Kohen Gadol* contained water sanctified in the *Kiyor*. (We should mention an opinion cited in the Yerushalmi, that at the start of Yom Kippur the *Kohen gadol* sanctified his hands and feet at the *Kiyor*. Rambam does not mention this and it seems that he rules according to the opinion that the *Kohen Gadol* used a golden vessel also for the first time).

We conclude with an interesting probe. Rabbi Yosi bar Rabbi Chanina says in our *sugya* that the *Kiyor* should contain an amount of water sufficient to wash the hands and feet of four *kohanim*. We can interpret this as meaning that a *Kohen* must ascertain at the time he washes that the *Kiyor* contains that amount. In other words, that is a *halachah* of sanctifying the hands and feet. Still, having determined that the *mitzvah* of sanctifying includes the obligation to use water sanctified in a *keli shareis*, perhaps the amount of water is only needed to sanctify the water but does not need to be constantly contained in the *Kiyor*. Indeed, Tosfos (22b, s.v. *Kodeiach*) indicate that once the water is sanctified, a *Kohen* may use a smaller vessel to wash (still, Rashi does not explain the *Gemora* thus and it could be that in his opinion, the *Kiyor* must contain enough water for four *kohanim* at the time of sanctification; see *Zevach Todah* on our *sugya* and *Sefas Emes* on 19b, referring to Rashi and Rambam).