**Kelim, Chapter One, Mishnah One**

**Introduction**

Mishnah Kelim begins by listing five types of impurity that are called "fathers of impurity." The word "fathers of…" is also used in connection with damages and in connection with the 39 types of labor prohibited on Shabbat.

**Mishnah One**

1. The fathers of impurity are a:
   1. sheretz,
   2. semen,
   3. [an Israelite] who has contracted corpse impurity,
   4. a metzora during the days of his counting,
   5. and the waters of purification whose quantity is less than the minimum needed for sprinkling.
2. Behold, these convey impurity to people and vessels by contact and to earthenware by presence within their airspace,
3. But they do not convey impurity by being carried.

***Explanation***

**Section one**: Below in sections three and four the mishnah explains the shared characteristics of these types of impurity.

1. Sheretz—one of the eight creepy crawly things listed in Leviticus 19:29ff.
2. See Leviticus 15:16-17.
3. See Numbers 19: 11, 17.
4. Once the metzora (person with skin disease) is healed, he spends seven days outside of the camp until he is allowed back in. During these days he is still impure and he conveys impurity to other things. See Leviticus 14.
5. These are waters with the red heifer's ashes in them. See Numbers 19:21. If there is not sufficient water to be used to sprinkle on the dead, then these waters convey impurity in the ways described below. Tomorrow's mishnah will discuss how they convey impurity if there is enough to sprinkle.

**Section two**: These five "fathers of impurity" convey impurity by contact with people and vessels. When it comes to earthenware, as we explained in the introduction, the vessel is impure only if the source of impurity enters its airspace. It does not convey impurity through contact.

**Section three**: If a person carries one of these things without coming into physical contact with it, he is not thereby made impure.