והלך באחד מהם ועשה טהרות[[1]](#footnote-1) –

And he went on one of them and touched טהרות

Overview

The משנה (which the גמרא cites here) states a case where there were two roads, of which one was טמא, and two people traveled, each on one of these roads, and afterwards they touched טהרות, and discusses the status of the טהרות. Our תוספות explains why the משנה did not discuss the status of the people (whether they are טמא or טהור) instead of the status of the טהרות.

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להכי נקט ועשה טהרות דלענין האדם אנו מזקיקים שניהם לטבול ולהזות[[2]](#footnote-2) -

The reason the משנה mentions, ‘and he touched טהרות’, is because regarding the person there is a different solution, for the ב"ד requires both of them to immerse in a מקוה and be sprinkled with the מי חטאת to purify them from their ספק טומאה. The reason for this stringency is -

פן יבואו לידי טומאה ודאי אם יגעו שניהם בככר אחד -

Lest it will result in a certain טומאה, if for instance they will both touch the same loaf of bread. The loaf will be certainly טמא, for one of these two are certainly טמא -

לכך אומר להו זילו טבילו[[3]](#footnote-3) דהא נהרא קמייכו -

Therefore in order to prevent this ודאי טומאה from happening, the בי"ד says to the two of them, ‘go be טובל [and additionally since he is טמא מספק there is no reason not to be טובל] for the river is before you’; there is no need to perpetuate the ספק טומאה which can turn into a ודאי טומאה. However regarding the טהרות there is no option of טבילה; if they are טמא they need to be burnt.

תוספות offers an alternate explanation[[4]](#footnote-4) why the משנה discusses the טהרות and not the people:

ועוד דמשום דבעי למתני סיפא[[5]](#footnote-5) הזה[[6]](#footnote-6) וטבל טהור[[7]](#footnote-7) הלך בשני ועשה טהרות הרי אלו טהורות -

And furthermore because the תנא of the משנה wanted that the case in the סיפא (משנה ה', our משנה of ב' שבילין) should be like the case of the [רישא (משנה ג')], which is: ‘he was sprinkled with the מי חטאת, and immersed himself in a מקוה and became טהור (he is now טהור even if he initially took the טמא road), then he went in the second path and touched other טהרות, these second טהרות are טהורות,[[8]](#footnote-8) the משנה continues -

ואם קיימות הראשונים אלו ואלו תלויות[[9]](#footnote-9) -

And if the first טהרות that he touched, still exist (they were not eaten), both the first and second טהרות are ‘hanging’;[[10]](#footnote-10) they are טמאין מספק -

ואם לא טהר בינתים[[11]](#footnote-11) הראשונות תלויות[[12]](#footnote-12) והשניות ישרפו:[[13]](#footnote-13)

And if he did not immerse himself between the first and second touching the first טהרות are תלויות and the second טהרות need to be burnt.[[14]](#footnote-14)

Summary

The משנה discusses the טהרות instead of the person because the טהרות do not have the option of טבילה, or because the previous משנה was discussing the טהרות.

Thinking it over

Why is it that (in the first case) where נאכלו הראשנות the שניות are טהור (even though there is the possibility that the second road was טמא),[[15]](#footnote-15) and in the other two cases the ראשונות are תלויות (even though there is the possibility that the first road was טהור)?[[16]](#footnote-16)

1. טהרות or purified items may refer to either תרומה or קדשים (the meat of קרבנות). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. However there is no recourse for טהרות which become טמא; they need to be burnt. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The פורת יוסף amends this to read, טבילו ועוד דהא. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. See footnote # 14. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The מהרש"א amends this to read, סיפא כרישא הזה. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The beginning of the משנה there is: שני שבילים, אחד טמא ואחד טהור, הלך באחד מהם ועשה טהרות ונאכלו, and then הזה וכו' as תוס' continues. The case is the same as in משנה ה' (but with one person); however after he touched the first טהרות, they were eaten, so we do not discuss their status for they no longer exist. The issue is regarding the second set of טהרות. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. The רש"ש amends this to וטהר; as it is written in the משנה there. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. We assume that the first road was טמא and therefore the first טהרות (which exist no more) became טמא, and the second road (and therefore the second טהרות) is טהור. See ‘Thinking it over’. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. We are now discussing both sets of טהרות where one of them is certainly טמא (for one of the roads was certainly טמא), therefore they are both טמא מספק (since we do not know which road is טמא). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. We do not burn them immediately; we wait until they spoil first and then burn them. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Therefore after he went on both roads he is certainly טמא. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Perhaps the first road was טמא so the first טהרות are טמא מספק. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. At this point he is certainly טמא (see footnote # 11), therefore the second טהרות are ודאי טמא and need to be burnt. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. This משנה ג' (and its corollary משנה ד', עיי"ש) is discussing the טהרות specifically (for there is a difference whether the first טהרות still exist), not the person directly, therefore the following משנה ה' also chooses to discuss the טהרות instead of the person. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. See footnote # 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. See מלאכת שלמה and תפא"י (אות כו, כז) there in משניות טהרות. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)