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TALMUDIC METHODOLOGY  
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**Tevila of the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur**

The mishna in Yoma (30a) describes the five tevilot (immersions in a mikva) performed by the kohen gadol during the Yom Kippur avoda (beit ha-mikdash ceremonies). This represents a dramatic increase from the standard single immersion required for each kohen prior to the daily service in order to purify him and pave the way for his entering the mikdash. In this article, we will explore the relationship between the daily tevila and the special series of five on Yom Kippur.

Instinctively, we might suggest that the unusually large number of tevilot indicates a unique and different function for these immersions. Had Yom Kippur's tevilot been merely the standard daily ones, we could not justify the need for five - one would surely suffice! Evidently, the role of these tevilot is not merely 'preparatory' - to purify the kohen and allow him entry to the mikdash. On the contrary, these tevilot play an integral and independent role within the ceremony of the Yom Kippur avoda. The elevated level of kedusha of this day requires repeated immersions in a mikva, regardless of the present state of purity of the kohen gadol.

The gemara (Yoma 30a), however, in reference to the purpose of the daily tevila, cites at least one position which transmits a different image: Ben Zoma explains the essence of the daily tevila based upon the Yom Kippur model. On Yom Kippur, the kohen gadol immerses any time he shifts into a different stage of the avoda or relocates the scene of the avoda to a different area within the mikdash. "Certainly then," claims Ben Zoma, "a kohen who first enters the mikdash to start that day's ritual (throughout the year) must first immerse himself." By deriving the daily tevila from the Yom Kippur immersions, Ben Zoma apparently equates their conceptual essence. They both serve to prepare the kohen for the avoda which he is about to begin. Yom Kippur requires five of these tevilot simply because the day's ceremony is divided into five sections: the standard morning ceremony, the special sprinkling of the blood in the Kodsh HaKodoshim, the expanded musaf of Yom Kippur, the ceremony of the ketoret being burnt in the Kodsh HaKodoshim, and finally the standard afternoon service; see the gemara in Yoma (32a) which sets this five-part structure to the Yom Kippur avoda.

Essentially, though, the Yom Kippur tevilot are identical to the daily immersions and the numerical increase is a function of several chapters of avoda occurring on this day each preceded by a tevila. As opposed to the daily service, the Yom Kippur ceremony is segmented; each separate

segment is preceded by an immersion in the same way that an immersion precedes the daily ritual. The Yom Kippur immersions, as the daily ones, assure the purity of the kohen before he begins the avoda.

The question of whether Yom Kippur's tevila is structurally different from the daily one might influence several questions. First and foremost, among these questions might be the location of these tevilot. The mishna claims that the Yom Kippur tevilot were all performed INSIDE the beit ha-mikdash in a mikva located on the roof of one of the rooms adjacent to the azara (courtyard). However, with regard to the daily tevila of the kohen, there is no unanimous consensus that this requirement exists. Tosafot in Yoma (30a) claim that these immersions were performed outside of the beit ha-mikdash since the kohen was not yet pure before his immersion. Do Tosafot suggest that their location outside the mikdash was a technical concession but ideally the daily tevilot like the Yom Kippur variety should have occurred inside? Or do Tosafot intend to drive a fundamental wedge between the Yom Kippur tevilot and the daily one? The former tevilot are not merely preparatory, but part of the ceremony itself and, hence, as all parts of the ceremony are performed within the mikdash. The daily tevila, though, is intended to purify someone who is as yet impure, and as this tevila is purely preparatory it could and should be performed outside, prior to entry.

A second question to consider would be the source for the Yom Kippur tevilot. At first, the gemara considers that these immersions are a halakha le-Moshe mi-Sinai. Only afterwards does the gemara actually derive these tevilot from a pasuk (Vayikra 16; 23-24). This pasuk instructs the kohen to immerse every time he shifts between the special Yom Kippur service (performed in white linen vestments) and the daily service (performed in gold clothing). This pasuk, indeed, suggests that the tevilot are not an independent aspect of the Yom Kippur ceremony but merely intended to preface the different segments of the avoda.

Another fascinating question would surround the timing of these tevilot. The mishna (Yoma 28a) claims that once morning struck (and the services of the day were to begin) they descended with the kohen gadol to the mikva. The requirement for this first tevila might be questioned. After all, the kohen gadol was permitted to start the 'terumot ha-deshen,' the cleaning of the ashes from the outer mizbei'ach during the night itself (and according to the Ba'al Ha-ma'or in Yoma, the kohen gadol was required to perform this duty). If so, the kohen gadol had already performed the first purifying immersion during the night and should be excused from performing it again when morning struck. One might suggest that as these immersions are not merely preparatory but part of the ceremony marking the special kedusha of Yom Kippur, all five had to occur during daylight, the only period which is valid for Yom Kippur ceremonies.

Another issue to consider might be the pace of these tevilot. What would happen if a kohen gadol performed them consecutively rather than scattering them throughout the Yom Kippur ceremony? Tosafot actually claim that had the immersions been based solely upon a halakha le-Moshe mi-

Sinai, we might have allowed this combination. Only after the pasuk emphasizes the need for tevilot before each changing of the clothes does this possibility become invalid. Clearly, the hava amina (basing the tevilot upon a halakha le-Moshe mi-Sinai) views them as part of the day's ceremony intended to lend high kedusha to the kohen gadol. From this perspective, five consecutive tevilot are seen as a viable option.

What is not clear is why ultimately this option is rejected. Does the pasuk suggest a different (maybe additional) function for the tevilot, i.e., preparing for the upcoming segment of the avoda, and hence the tevilot must be dispersed to serve their function? Or is the original vision of tevilot maintained (they lend extra pomp and kedusha to the day) but it is still preferable to stunt them? A similar phenomenon presents itself on the night of the Seder regarding the four kosot. The gemara in Pesachim (118b) asserts "Rabanan instituted four kosot as a signal of cherut (royalty and freedom); given this requirement, we might as well spread them throughout the Seder night. There is no inherent reason that the four kosot cannot be drunk consecutively. Yet, they are scattered throughout the night in order to better integrate them within the Seder. Similarly, regarding the five tevilot: we might persist in viewing them as adding to the kedusha of the kohen gadol - a unique Yom Kippur experience. We might still maintain that essentially they could have been performed consecutively. Yet, they are ultimately spread across the entire ceremony so they might be better incorporated.

We might consider two additional questions (not discussed by the sources) which might disclose the true nature of these tevilot. What would the halakha be if a kohen gadol neglected to perform one of these tevilot prior to a specific segment of the avoda? Would he be required to subsequently 'make up' the missing tevila? If the tevilot merely purify him before each shift in the avoda we might not demand a 'makeup' tevila. In truth, he is certainly tahor from the first tevila and each section requires a new tevila only as a le-khatchila. If he forgot a tevila, the ensuing avoda-section would certainly be valid and no extra tevila would have to be performed. If, however, the day itself requires five immersions we might insist that he complete this number even if they are performed out of sequence.

A related question might arise if a kohen gadol becomes invalidated in the middle of the day's ceremony. The mishna records that a stand-in was assigned to cover this possibility. This replacement kohen gadol continued the avoda from the point at which the kohen gadol left off. Would the replacement have to repeat the immersions which the previous kohen gadol already performed? If the tevilot merely purify a kohen prior to his performing an avoda section, these tevilot would not have to be repeated. If, however, the day itself requires five immersions, we might question to what extent Yom Kippur requires a kohen gadol himself to undergo these five immersions and hence the replacement might conceivably have to repeat those tevilot.

Methodological Points:

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1. Whenever a mitzva shares qualities with another one, their parity should be inspected. The Yom Kippur tevilot seem similar to the daily ones. Are their functions similar or not?

2. The source of a halakha might reveal its essence.

May we all be zokheh to witness the avodat Yom Ha-kippurim and realize a collective teshuva ve-tahara, to complement our private experiences of teshuva.