



Reducing the Size of a Ma'or

The thirteenth *perek* discusses a *me'or* – a light-hole. In particular the *Mishnah* is focused on the minimum dimensions such that *tumah* can pass through it. The size varies on whether it was purposefully drilled or created by nature events. Furthermore, the minimum size required for a *me'or* when it is first created is larger than an existing one that begins to close or fill with foreign items. The first *Mishnah* records those dimensions.

In some situations however, a foreign object placed in the *me'or* has no impact in the transfer of *tumah*. One object discussed whose presence is significant is the *neveilat ohf tameh* – the non-kosher bird that died. The *Mishnah* (13:5) explains that it can reduce the space of the *me'or* provided it did not have both *hechsher* and *machshava*. In other words, it had not intentionally come into contact with one of the seven liquids and the owner did not intend to consume it. The *Bartenura* explains that the *naveilat ohf tameh* requires both *hechsher* and *machshava* to be susceptible to *tumah* and once this happens, it can no longer reduce the space of the *ma'or*.

The *Mishnah Achrona* notes that based on this reasoning, the *Mishnah* could have also listed any other foods without *hechsher*. Regular food with *hechsher* is equivalent to a *neveilat ohf tameh* with *machshava* but without *hechsher*. In other words, since they are not susceptible to *tumah* their presence should also be able to reduce the size of the *ma'or*. Nevertheless, he cites the *Rambam* that explains that food that did not have *hechsher*, provided it is less than a *ke'beitza* in size, it reduces the space of the *ma'or* since they are insignificant to the owner and will not be removed. This implies that if they are larger than a *ke'beitza* then they would not reduce the

size of the *ma'or* despite not having had *hechsher*. Consequently, if the *neveilat ohf tameh* was larger than a *kebeitzah* the law should be different, yet the *Mishnah* makes no mention of this distinction.

The *Mishnah Achrona* suggests that the difference between *neveilat ohf tameh* and food, is that since food is useful (*chazi*), it is fit for consumption, *bitul* (annulling it) is ineffective. He sites the *Rambam* that explicitly states: “other food that has not had *hechsher* do not separate; even though it is not susceptible to *tumah*, he intends to eventually remove it.”

Yet according to this reasoning there must be another distinction between *neveilat ohf tameh* and food. With the *ohf*, once there is *machshava* it should be considered like food in that now it is *chazi*. Given that is the case, the difference must be whether intentional *bitul* after *machshava* is effective. For food, *bitul* does not work. For *neveilat ohf tameh* however, since it required *machshava* from the outset, the subsequent *bitul* (or *machshava*) can undo the previous *machshava*.

The *Mishnah Achrona* however raises a number of issues with this approach. Firstly, there are instances where the *Rambam* rules that explicit *bitul* is effective for everything. More striking however is that the *Rambam* does not mention the law of *neveilat ohf tameh* or *tahor* in this context. Its absence can be attributed to its simplicity. Yet if however the above distinction exists, i.e. that subsequent *bitul* is only effective for *neveilat ohf tameh* but not for any other food, one would expect such a law to be mentioned. Considering the *Rambam*'s position, he leaves the question on our *Mishnah* unanswered.

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Revision Questions

תולחא ג:ב' יי-ב:ד' יי

- Explain the debate regarding a *b'tach*. ג:ב' יי(
- Explain the debate regarding a *sandel shel arisa*. יי(ב' יי(
- What is the law if regarding a case where the planks of wood on the first floor and the roof are spaced and aligned with one another, and *tumah* is found on the ground floor? The first floor? The roof? יי(ה:ב' יי(
- How would the law differ if the planks in the roof aligned with the spaces left by the planks on the first floor? יי(ה:ב' יי(
- What are the minimum dimensions of a round and square plank such that it can act as an *ohel*? יי(ב' יי(ו'
- What must the circumference of a pillar (lying on its side) be such that *tumah* is transferred if it is found underneath (but not squashed by) the pole? יי(ז:ב' יי(
- Explain the debate regarding a *kezayit* from a corpse that is found stuck to the threshold. יי(ח:ב' יי(
- What is law if it stuck to the outside of the lintel? יי(ח:ב' יי(
- What is the minimum measure (*shiur*) of the following spaces for *tumah* to be transferred through them:
 - A *Ma'or*?
 - *Sh'yarei Ma'or*? (Explain.)
 - A hole created by water? יי(ג:א'
- What other cases have the same ruling as the last case and in what situations does the size change? יי(ג:ג':א'
- What is the *shiur* of a window made for ventilation for *tumah* to pass through it and when does this change? יי(ב:ג' יי(ב'
- What is the minimum measure (*shiur*) of the following spaces for *tumah* to be transferred through them:
 - A hole in a door? (Provide two cases.) יי(ג:ג'
 - A hole for a *kaneh*?
 - A peep-hole? יי(ג:ד'
- List some items that relate to *tameh* objects that can be used to reduce space of a window preventing *tumah* from spreading through them. יי(ה:ג' יי(
- List some items that relate to *tameh* objects that cannot be used to reduce space of a window preventing *tumah* from spreading through them. יי(ו:ג' יי(
- What is the general rule regarding the previous two questions? יי(ו:ג' יי(ו)
- What is a *ziz*? What is a *gizra*? When (in terms of placement and dimensions) can the transfer *tumah* to the inside of a house? יי(ז:ד' יי(א'
- What is the difference between the required dimensions of a *ziz* above a door and a window? יי(ב:ד' יי(ב'

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Next Week's Mishnayot...

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	שדוק תבש
10 th May א"כ ר' ר'יא	11 th May ב"כ ר' ר'יא	12 th May ג"כ ר' ר'יא	13 th May ד"כ ר' ר'יא	14 th May ה"כ ר' ר'יא	15 th May ו"כ ר' ר'יא	16 th May כ"ז ר' ר'יא
Ohalot 14:3-4	Ohalot 14:4-5	Ohalot 14:6-15:1	Ohalot 15:2-3	Ohalot 15:4-5	Ohalot 15:6-7	Ohalot 15:8-9

