



The Limits of Transferring Tumah Between Planks

The *Mishnah* (15:2) discusses the case where two square planks of wood, raised off the ground a *tephach*, are in contact only by their corners as follows:



The *Mishnah* rules that if *tumat ha'met* is underneath one of the planks then the *tumah* spreads underneath that plank, but the area underneath the second one remains *tahor*. This first point should not be surprising. Since the two planks are only in contact at their corners, the requirement of a *tephach* overlap for *tumah* to spread between two *ohalot* is not satisfied.

The *Mishnah* however continues that if someone touched the second plank they would be *tameh sheva* - they would be *tameh* like one who touched a corpse. Why?

The *Bartenura* notes that we learnt in the beginning of *masechet Keilim* that a *kli* that was in contact with a *met* and a second *kli* comes into contact with the first, both *keilim* are *tameh sheva*. Someone who touches the second *kli* however is only a *rishon le'tumah* – immersing in a *mikveh* and waiting till nightfall is enough. In this case one would think that one who touches the second plank is equivalent to one who touches the second *kli* and should only be a *rishon*. The *Bartenura* however explains that since the first plank is acting as an *ohel* it is not included in the calculations (as learnt previously). Consequently touching the second *kli* is equivalent to touch a *kli* that is contact with a corpse.

The *Tosfot Yom Tov* addresses a separate issue. We learn in *Bame Madlikin* (*Shabbat* 2:3) that wood does not become *tameh* when acting as an *ohel*. Consequently, both planks should be *tahor*. He explains that the *Mishnah* in *Shabbat*

only refers to when the *tumat ha'met* has been removed. In our case, the *met* is still under the first plank.¹

For the person to be defined as *tameh sheva*, the second plank needs to be defined as an *avi avot ha'tumah* – equivalent to the *met* itself. According to the *Rambam* and *Bartenura* this is not an issue. They maintain that any *kli* that comes into contact with the corpse becomes *tameh* on the same level. Since we have explained that since the first plank is acting as an *ohel*, it is as if the second plank is in direct contact, we can understand how the second plank becomes an *avi avot ha'tumah*.

Other *Rishonim* however understand that this unique law of “*cherev ke'chala*” only applies to metalware. Consequently a wooden plank that was in contact with a *met* should be an *av ha'tumah* and one who touches it would be a *rishon le'tumah*. We therefore must understand that the person is *tameh sheva* based on *tumah be'chiburin*. In other words, since it is as if the second plank is in contact with the *met* and the person touches the plank while the *met* is still there, it is as if he touched the *met*.

The *Eliya Raba* presents a different approach. We will learn in the next *perek* that *metaltelin* (movable objects) can bring *tumah* onto themselves despite being the narrowest width. He therefore differentiates between the *shiur* (measure) required for a *kli* to draw the *tumah* onto itself as opposed to those items beneath it. In other words, since the second plank is in contact with the first, it is as if it is covering the *met* itself but only for the purposes of making itself *tameh*. Consequently, the person who touches the second plank becomes *tameh sheva* in the same way as if he touched the first. However, those items beneath the second plank remain *tahor*. This is because a *tephach's* width is required for the *tumah* to transfer beneath it.²

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¹ The *Mishnah Achrona* understands that this distinction according to the *Tosfot Yom Tov* applies to anything wooden. He argues that if a wooden *kli* in an *ohel ha'met* retains its *tumah* after the *met* is removed, one would certainly expect the plank to retain its *tumah* as well. He therefore understands different, citing the *Tosfot*. The *pasuk* (and *Mishnah*) that teaches that a wooden *ohel* is only *tameh* when it is covering a *met* refers to a wooden

ohel that is not susceptible to *tumah* (e.g. it is attached to the ground).

² See the *Tifferet Yisrael* that analyses this position in more detail.

Revision Questions

ג: ד: י"י תולהא – י"ט: ר"י

- Explain the debate regarding the difference between a *kaneh* and a *ziz*. (ג: ד: י"י)
- What is the law regarding the utensils under a *ziz*, only overlapping the doorway a width of three *etzba'ot* wide and that completely surrounds a house in which *tumah* is found? (ג: ד: י"י)
- Explain the debate regarding the previous question where the *tumah* is instead found under the *ziz*. (ג: ד: י"י)
- What is the law regarding two *zizim*, each a *tephach* wide, one on top of the other where *tumah* is found underneath them? Between them? Above them? (ג: ד: י"י)
- How does the ruling referred to in the previous question change if the upper *ziz* is wider?
- How does the ruling change if the gap between them is less than a *tephach*? (ג: ד: י"י)
- How does the ruling change if they are both less than a *tephach* wide? (ג: ד: י"י)
- Can a solid stack of wooden boards transfer *tumah* (as an *ohel*)? (י"א: ר"י)
- What other case brought has a similar ruling to the previous question? (י"א: ר"י)
- If boards, a *tephach* from the ground, are set up in the following configuration:



- What is the law if *tumah* is found beneath the first board and:
 - A person touches the second?
 - *Keilim* are found beneath the second? (י"ב: ר"י)
- What are the minimum dimensions of a *shulchan* for it to act as an *ohel* to spread *tumah*? (י"ב: ר"י)
- What is the law regarding rows of earthenware barrels where *tumah* is found under one? (ג: ר"י)
- How does the ruling in the previous question change if they were already *tameh*? What other case shares the same ruling? (ג: ר"י)
- What is the law if *tumah* is found behind a false wall in a house? (ד: ר"י)
- What is the law regarding *keilim* behind a false wall if *tumah* is found in the house? (ד: ר"י)
- When would the *keilim* behind a false wall be *tahor* even though *tumah* is also found there? (ד: ר"י)
- Regarding the previous three questions what is the law if the questions related to the space below the floorboards rather than behind a false wall? (ה: ר"י)
- Concerning a house that is filled with straw what is the law regarding the *keilim* inside the straw if *tumah* was found inside the straw? Inside the entrance of the house? (ז: ר"י)
- How does the law in the previous question change if the house was not filled to the ceiling (leaving a *tephach* space)? (ז: ר"י)
- How is the law different if the house was filled with dirt instead? (ז: ר"י)
- Explain the debate regarding one who stands in a *chatzer ha'kever*? (ח: ר"י)
- If a beam is used as a *golel* for a *kever*, when is it partially *tameh*, only four *tephachim* thick *tameh* and completely *tameh*? (ח: ר"י)
- If an earthenware, sealed barrel full of liquid is used as a *golel*, what is the law regarding one who touches it? What is the law regarding liquid? (ט: ר"י)
- Explain the debate regarding an animal that was used as a *golel*. (ט: ר"י)

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10 minutes before *Mincha*
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Efrat, Israel *Shiur in English*

Sunday -Thursday
Rabbi Mordechai Scharf
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Kollel Magen Avraham
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Rabbi Chaim Brown
www.shemayisrael.com/mishna/

Rav Meir Pogrow
613.org/mishnah.html

Rabbi E. Kornfeld
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Next Week's Mishnayot...

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	שדוק תבש
17 th May ח"כ רי"א	18 th May ט"כ רי"א	19 th May י"א וי"א	20 th May י"ב וי"א	21 st May י"ג וי"א	22 nd May י"ד וי"א	23 rd May י"ה וי"א
Ohalot 15:10-16:1	Ohalot 16:2-3	Ohalot 16:4-5	Ohalot 17:1-2	Ohalot 17:3-4	Ohalot 17:5-18:1	Ohalot 18:2-3

