



Causing *Trumah* to Become *Tameh*

The *Mishnah* (8:8) discusses the how to deal with a barrel of *terumah* wine, where there is a doubt whether it became *tameh*. The *Bartenura* explains that the case of doubt is where there were two barrels and a *sheretz* came into contact with one of them.¹ The *Mishnah* records three opinions regarding how the matter should be resolved. *R' Eliezer* maintains that one should continue to takes step to ensure that it does not become *tameh* – move it to a more secluded area and cover it. *R' Yehoshua* however argues that the opposite is true - it should be moved to an open and unprotected area and the barrel should be uncovered. *Rabban Gamliel* however argues the current status should be maintained.

We have previous looked at the opinion of *Rabban Gamliel* (Volume 7, Issue 30). In this article we shall focus on the opinion of *R' Yehoshua*.

The *Bartenura* explains that that the debate between *R' Eliezer* and *R' Yehoshua* is based on the following *pasuk* (*Vayikra* 18:8): “*Hashem* spoke to *Aharon*: And I – behold! I have given you the safeguard of My heave-offerings (*terumotai*)...”. The translation above follows how the word *terumotai* is read with it referring to many *terumot*. Accordingly, *R' Eliezer* understands that the *kohanim* were instructed to guard both *tahor* and this case of *safek tumah*, from becoming *tameh*. *R' Yehoshua* however understands that the word is written “*terumati*” – a singular term – therefore no prohibition applies in this case of doubtful *tumah*.²

Rashi (*Pesachim* 15a) understands that according to *R' Yehoshua* since this case is not covered by the *mitzvah* of guarding *terumah*, one is allowed to place the questionable

terumah in a vulnerable location. Important to note is that, according to *Rashi*'s understanding, one can choose to do so.

The *Rambam* (*Peirush Mishnahot*) however understands that *R' Yehoshua* maintains it is not optional. Instead one must do so to enable the *terumah* to be disposed of. To explain, if it is wine and left uncovered, the decree requiring such liquids to be poured away would apply (8:4). Otherwise it should be left in place so that it can definitely become *tameh*. The *Tifferet Yisrael* explains the reason why this is an obligation is because while it is in a state of doubt there is nothing that can be done with the *terumah*. It cannot be consumed in case it is *tameh* and one cannot directly cause it to become *tameh* in case it is *tahor*, e.g. even by handling it with unwashed hands. Consequently, leaving it in this state for an extended period of time would likely lead to mistakes and one consuming the *terumah* in error.

Rabbeinu Chananel (*Pesachim* 15a) however explains that *R' Yehoshua*'s motivation is so that “he can benefit from it”. As mentioned previously, while it is in a state of doubt, nothing can be done with the *terumah*. When it is (definitely) *tameh*, he can use it to fuel a fire for cooking or if it is wine it can be used for *ziluf* (sprinkling, see *Rashi Bechorot* 33b). In order for him to fulfill the *mitzvah* of benefiting from the *terumah* it is necessary for him set up the environment such that the *terumah* will become definitely *tameh*.

The *Mishnah Rishona* however notes that we have learnt if *terumah* wine is left uncovered, it must be poured away. He adds that according to this last explanation, it must be in a situation whether there is no concern for snakes so that the *gezeira* of uncovered liquids would not apply. The intention of uncovering the barrels in the *Mishnah* was simply be to make it more capable of becoming *tameh*.³

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¹ The importance of constructing the case in this way is that if it was a case where there was a doubt whether a single barrel of *terumah* came into contact with *tumah*, then since the case is in a private domain, the rule would be that it would be considered *tameh*.

² See also *Bechorot* 33b, where the *Gemara* there provides a different basis for the debate – *R' Eliezer* maintains that it must still

be guarded since *Eliyahu* may come and resolve the doubt that it is indeed *tahor*.

³ The *Mishnah Rishona* however finds this understanding of the *Mishnah* difficult and prefers the explanation we brought in the name of the *Rambam*.

Revision Questions

תרומות ז' ג' – ח' ט'

- What are the three other cases listed where the one that eats *trumah* only pay the *keren* and not the *chomesh*? (ז' ג')
- When can the *kohen* exempt one from payment after they have eaten *trumah*? (ז' ד')
- What is the law regarding two piles, one of *chulin* and one of *trumah* where:
 - *Trumah* fell into one of the two piles? (ז' ה')
 - One is not sure which pile is *trumah* and which pile is *chulin* and:
- One person ate from one pile – what is the status of the second pile? (ז' ו')
- One person ate from one pile, and another person ate from the other? (ז' ז')
- One person ate from both piles? (ז' ח')
- Part of one of the pile got mixed up with *chulin* – what is the status of all three piles? (ז' ט')
- Part of one pile got mixed with one pile of *chulin* and part of the other pile got mixed with another pile of *chulin*? (ז' י')
- Both piles got mixed with one pile of *chulin*? (ז' יא')
- Someone one planted some of the seeds from one pile – what is the status of the second pile? (ז' יב')
- Someone planted some of one pile, and another person planted some of the other pile? (ז' יג')
- One person planted seeds from both piles? (ז' יד')
- Explain the debate regarding a slave of a *kohen* who is eating *trumah* and is notified that his master has passed away. (ח' א')
- What are the two other *trumah* related cases that are treated in a similar manner to the previous question? (ח' ב')
- Explain the debate between R' Eliezer and R' Yehoshua regarding the case described in the previous questions where the *kohen* has the *trumah* in his mouth. (ח' ג')
- In what cases does R' Eliezer agree with R' Yehoshua? (ח' ד')
- This debate between R' Eliezer and R' Yehoshua carries over to other area of *halacha* – which two cases are described in the *mishnah*? (ז' ה')
- What are the three liquids that become forbidden if they are left uncovered and why? (ח' ו')
- Explain the debate regarding the amount of water that can become forbidden as a result of being uncovered? (ח' ז')
- What other foods can become forbidden for the same reason that some liquids can be become forbidden if left uncovered? (ח' ח')
- Explain the debate regarding *mashmeret ya y'in*? (ז' ט')
- What should one do with a barrel of *trumah* wine if there is a doubt as to its purity? (Include all three opinions) (ח' י')
- Explain the debate/ruling regarding a multilayer wine press where the top level contains *trumah*, the bottom level contains *tameh chulin* and the top level cracks and is beginning to leak towards the bottom level where:
 - One only has *tameh* jugs available. (ח' יא')
 - One can find *tahor* jugs at the cost of allowing most of the contents to leak into the bottom level. (ח' יב')

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Next Week's Mishnayot...

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	שבת קודש
23 October כ"א תשרי	24 October כ"ב תשרי	25 October כ"ג תשרי	26 October כ"ד תשרי	27 October כ"ה תשרי	28 October כ"ו תשרי	29 October כ"ז תשרי
Terumot 8:10-11	Terumot 8:12-9:1	Terumot 9:2-3	Terumot 9:4-5	Terumot 9:6-7	Terumot 10:1-2	Terumot 10:3-4

