



Segos and Kofet

The *Mishnah* (15:1) teaches that a thick woolen garment (*segos*) or thick block of wood (*kofet*) that is on the floor, does not act as an *ohel* unless it is raised a *tephach* above the ground. In other words, if there was *tumat hamet* and a *kli* underneath the block, the *kli* would remain *tahor*. The *Bartenura* explains that the principle behind this *Mishnah* has been taught previously where the *Mishnah* (11:3) discussed a case of porch that has a crack along its width, dividing it into two *ohalot*. The *Mishnah* addresses whether the *segos* or *kofet* that is resetting beneath that crack can act as an *ohel* to spread the *tumah* from one side to the other and provides the same criteria. In other words, despite the *segos* and *kofet* being thicker than a *tephach*, we do not subtract the space below the *tephach* and define the top as an *ohel*.

The *Tosfot Yom Tov* cites the *Maharam* that explains that this *Mishnah* is still necessary. One might have thought that the reason why the *segos* that rests on the floor could not act as an *ohel* to spread *tumah* from one side of the crack to the other is because we need two principles to make it work. The first is to view the thickness up to a *tephach* as if it were not there. The second is to apply the principle of *gud asik* to the thickness above the *tephach*, that we consider the edge as if it extends to the ceiling, such that it seals the crack. One might think that the reason that the *segos* is ineffective is because it is too much to apply both principles. However, in our case, where only one is required, one might have thought that the *segos* could act as an *ohel*. Consequently our *Mishnah* is necessary to explain that even in this case, it cannot act as an *ohel*.

The *Mishnah Achrona* however cites a question from the *Mishnat Chachamim*. It would seem that even if the *kofet* does not act as an *ohel* to spread the *tumah* the *kli* should still be *tameh*. Recall that an object that comes into contact with a corpse becomes an *avi avot ha'tumah* – the same level of *tumah* as the corpse – based on the *pasuk* “*be'chalel cherev*”. The *Bartenura* explained (11:8) that such an object would transfer *tumah be'ohel*. In other words, in our case even if the *segos* is not touching the *met* or *kli*, and there is less than a *tephach* between them, the *segos* would become an *avi avot*

ha'tumah and make everything beneath it, including the *kli*, *tameh*.

The *Mishnat Chachamim* suggests that perhaps the *Bartenura* takes the position of *Rabbeinu Tam* that *cherev ke'chalel* – that a vessel that comes into contact with a corpse is also an *avi avot ha'tumah* – only applies to metal *keilim* (see Volume 18 Issue 19). Consequently, since neither of the objects in our *Mishnah* are metal, they would only become an *av ha'tumah*, and if they did not touch the *kli*, it would remain *tahor*.

The *Mishnah Achrona* suggests that we can even understand the *Mishnah* according to the *Bartenura* and maintain *cherev ke'chalel* applies to other materials. While the *segos* would become an *avi avot ha'tumah*, the reason why the *kli* remains *tahor* is that since the *segos* is not a *tephach* above the *kli* it is not considered as if it is acting as an *ohel*, i.e. covering over the *kli*.

The issue with this suggestion is that the *Bartenura* maintains that if the space is less than a *tephach* it is considered as if they are in direct contact. Recall that we learnt (3:1) that if one is touching a half *kezayit* and his hand is over the top of another half *kezayit* the two combine to make the person *tameh*. The *Bartenura* explains this is when there is less than a *tephach* between his hand and the *tumah*. When there is less than a *tephach* the *tumah* spreads upwards – *boke'ah ve'oleh* – making everything *tameh*. Consequently, it is considered as if he is touching the *tumah* and therefore it is considered as if he is in direct contact with a full *kezayit*. Consequently, in our case, it should be considered as if the *segos* that is *tameh* is in direct contact with the *kli* and it should therefore be *tameh*. The *Mishnah Achrona* however answers that the law that if it is less than a *tephach* it is considered as if it is in direct contact is only with respect to the *tumat met*; since it would be *bokeh ve'olah*, it is viewed as if it is in direct contact. With respect to the *segos* and the *kli* after that however, this would not be the case – a gap of less than a *tephach* is not considered as if it is in direct contact.¹

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¹ The *Mishnah Achrona*'s conclusion would then appear to support the *Mishnat Chachamim* since if the *segos* would be considered an *avi avot*

ha'tumah, since it is *metameh be'ohel*, it would make the *kli* *tameh* even when the gap is less than a *tephach*, ג"כ.

Revision Questions

אהלות י"ג – ט"ו: ג'

- 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.) (י"ג: ג')
 - A hole for a *kaneh*?
 - A peep-hole? (י"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. (י"ג: ה')
- List some items that relate to *tameh* objects that cannot be used to reduce space of a window preventing *tumah* from spreading through them. (י"ג: ו')
- What is the general rule regarding the previous two questions? (י"ג: ז')
- 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? (י"א: ט')
- What is the difference between the required dimensions of a *ziz* above a door and a window? (י"ב: ט')
- Explain the debate regarding the difference between a *kaneh* and a *ziz*. (י"ב: ט')
- What is the law regarding the utensils under a *ziz*, only overlapping the doorway a width of three *eztba'ot* wide and that completely surrounds a house in which *tumah* is found? (י"ד: ט')
- Explain the debate regarding the previous question where the *tumah* is instead found under the *ziz*. (י"ד: ט')
- 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? (י"ה: ט')
- 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*? (י"ה: ט')
- How does the ruling change if they are both less than a *tephach* wide? (י"ה: ט')
- Can a solid stack of wooden boards transfer *tumah* (as an *ohel*)? (י"ו: ט')
- What other case brought has a similar ruling to the previous question? (י"ו: ט')
- 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"ו: ט')
- What are the minimum dimensions of a *shulchan* for it to act as an *ohel* to spread *tumah*? (י"ז: ט')
- What is the law regarding rows of earthenware barrels where *tumah* is found under one? (י"ז: ט')
- How does the ruling in the previous question change if they were already *tameh*? What other case shares the same ruling? (י"ז: ט')

Melbourne, Australia

Sunday -Thursday
10 minutes before *Mincha*
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Melbourne, Australia

Friday & Shabbat
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Shiur in English

Sunday -Thursday
Rabbi Mordechai Scharf
9:00am
Kollel Magen Avraham
Reemon Neighbourhood

ONLINE SHIURIM

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mishnahyomit.com/shiurim

Rabbi Chaim Brown
www.shemayisrael.com/mishna/

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Rabbi C. Brown
<http://www.dafyomi.co.il/calendars/myomi/myomi-thisweek.htm>

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Next Week's Mishnayot...

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	שבת קודש
7 February כ"ה שבט	8 February כ"ו שבט	9 February כ"ז שבט	10 February כ"ח שבט	11 February כ"ט שבט	12 February ל' שבט	13 February א' אדר
Ohalot 15:4-5	Ohalot 15:6-7	Ohalot 15:8-9	Ohalot 15:10-16:1	Ohalot 16:2-3	Ohalot 16:4-5	Ohalot 17:1-2

