



Unpolished Metal Keilim

The *Mishnah* (12:6) records four disputes between *Rabban Gamliel* and the *Chachamim* regarding *keilim*. One of these is the newly formed metal *kli* that has not yet been polished – *golmei klei matechet*. The *Chachamim* maintain that it not yet susceptible to *tumah*. The *Mishnah Achrona* notes that the position of the *Chacham* is taught in *Chulin* when contrasting metal and wooden *keilim*.

The *Gemara* (*Chulin* 25b) probes why metal *keilim* are treated differently. In other words, why is it that despite being complete enough to be useful, they are still not susceptible to *tumah*? The *Gemara* lists two opinions. *R' Yochanan* explains that since they are generally used in a respectable context, they would not be used unpolished. *Rashi* explains that it is therefore not considered a *kli* for its intended purpose until it is presentable. *R' Nachman* explains it is because metal *keilim* are more expensive. *Rashi* explains that until all the decorative elements are finished, it is not fit for purpose, as it would not be able to be sold at the expected premium.

The *Gemara* asks what the practical difference would be between these two explanations. The *Gemara* explains that *keilim* made of bone would be one such case – they are expensive yet not used in shows of respect. Consequently, if unpolished, *R' Yochanan* would maintain that they would be susceptible to *tumah* while *R' Nachman* would disagree.

Turning our focus back to metal *keilim*, one might suggest that an unpolished metal *kli* is simply not considered a *kli*. We shall find that that suggestion is not so simple. *Gemara Shabbat* (52b) differentiates between handling a needle

that does not have an eye on *Shabbat* and its susceptibility to *tumah*. *Rashi* explains that for a metal *kli* to be susceptible to *tumah* the *Torah* refers to it as “*kli maaseh*”. In other words there is a requirement that all the processes have been completed and not just for it to be useful. In other words, according to *Rashi* for a metal *kli* to be susceptible to *tumah*, form is not enough, even if for other laws it can be defined as a *kli*.

Another example of this distinction is found in the laws of a *kli tzamid patil*.¹ Recall that we found that certain *keilim* when sealed shut, would protect the contents from becoming *tameh* if found in a *ohel ha'met*. The *Rambam* (*Tumat Met* 21:1) includes *golmei klei matechet* in that list. We can understand that it is indeed defined as a *kli* and therefore can act as a *kli tzamid patil*, but not yet be susceptible to *tumah* since, being unpolished, it is not yet a *kli maaseh*.

The *Mishnah Achrona* notes that while in *Chulin*, *golmei klei matechet* are considered *tahor*, in our *Mishnah* it is the subject of debate. The *Mishnah Achrona* therefore refines our understanding of the *Mishnah*. In other words, everyone agrees that *golmei klei matechet* are *tahor*. The case in our *Mishnah* is where the individual is not bothered with using the *kli* in this state. According to *Rabban Gamliel*, this case would be like wooden *keilim* (see 16:1) where the attitude of the owner can affect its susceptibility to *tumah*. The *Chachamim* however disagree. Since metal *keilim* are different (either due to importance or expense) the owner's personal attitude not relevant.

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¹ Cited in the *Yalkut Biurim*, *Chulin* 25b, footnote 4.

Revision Questions

כלים יי"א: ה' – ל"ג: א'

- What are the two parts of the reins that are discussed? List the three opinions regarding their susceptibility to *tumah*. (י"א: ה')
- What is a *pika* and explain the debate regarding its susceptibility to *tumah*? (י"א: א')
- When is a flute containing metal not susceptible to *tumah*? (י"א: ו')
- When is an animal horn susceptible to *tumah*? (Provide both cases.) (י"א: ז')
- Which battle armour is susceptible to *tumah*? (י"א: ח')
- Are weapons susceptible to *tumah*? (י"א: ט')
- Is jewellery susceptible to *tumah*? (י"א: י')
- Describe the *nezem* that if broken two parts are still susceptible to *tumah*? (י"א: י"ט')
- Which rings are susceptible to *tumah*? (י"ב: א')
- Provide two cases when a chain is susceptible to *tumah*? (י"ב: א')
- When is a *kane moznaim* of *ba'alei batim tameh*? (י"ב: ב')
- What is the general rule provided regarding the susceptibility to *tumah* of *uklayot*? (List some of the cases.) (י"ב: ב')
- Explain the debate regarding a metal covering of a *teni*. (י"ב: ג')
- Regarding the previous question, what case is not the subject of debate? (י"ב: ג')
- What case is similar to the one in the previous question? (י"ב: ג')
- Is a picture frame hook susceptible to *tumah*? (י"ב: ג')
- Is the nail in a sundial susceptible to *tumah*? (י"ב: ד')
- What are the other five cases involving a nail and what is the law? – (י"ב: ד' – ה')
- What are the four cases where *Rabban Gamliel* rules *tameh* and the *Chachamim* rule *tahor*? (י"ב: ו')
- What are the two ways an expired coin can become susceptible to *tumah*? (י"ב: ז')
- Is there any restriction in keeping expired coins? (י"ב: ז')
- Is a ruler susceptible to *tumah*? (י"ב: ח')
- Which *golmei kli eitz* are not susceptible to *tumah*? (י"ב: ח')
- What are the two opinions regarding the susceptibility to *tumah* of knives? (י"ג: א')
- Explain the debate regarding whether scissors that come apart are susceptible to *tumah*. (י"ג: א')

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Keilim 13:2-3	Keilim 13:4-5	Keilim 13:6-7	Keilim 13:8-14:1	Keilim 14:2-3	Keilim 14:4-5	Keilim 14:6-7

