



Volume 6. Issue 17

Combining Different Materials

The twenty-seventh *perek* begins with the differences between various materials and their susceptibility to *tumah*. One difference mentioned is their minimum sizes for them to be susceptible to *tumah midras* – *tumah* that is transferred by, for example, a *zav* sitting or lying upon it. The determining factor is how large the material must be such that it becomes useful to sit on. The *Mishnah* taught that this varies with type of material in question.

What if the patch is made from a combination of materials? The *Mishnah* (27:3) explains:

If one made [a patch] two [*tephachim*] of cloth and one [*tephach*] of sacking... it is *tahor*.

The minimum measure of cloth is three-by-three *tephachim* and the minimum measure for sacking is four-by-four. The *Mishnah* teaches that if the minimum measure is completed with another material whose minimum measure is greater, then the patch is not susceptible to *tumah*.¹ If however a patch was completed in the reverse way, for example sacking of three with an extra *tephach* of cloth, then it would be susceptible to *tumah*.²

Why do the different fabrics not combine? The *Bartenura* explains that “the less significant cannot complete the *shiur* (measure) of the more significant.” In other words, that which has a larger *shiur* (in the above example sacking) is considered less significant and cannot complete the smaller *shiur*. According to this understanding the problem is the “significance” of the fabric being used to complete the *shiur*. It is as if each of the fabrics have different, for want of a better word, potencies. The *Tifferet Yisrael* understands that if one and a third *tephachim* of sacking were added to the two *tephachim* of the cloth then the *shiur* would be complete. To explain, since three *tephachim* of cloth is equal to four *tephachim* of sacking, one and third *tephachim* of sacking should be enough to complete the missing *tephach*. Once the minimum measures were fixed by the *Chachamim* this “mathematical” system came into play.

¹ The *Mishnah Achrona* explains that this is only if the patch was made unintentionally or by a minor. The reason is that we learnt (27:4) that if one intentionally crafted any fabric, then the minimum measure in all cases is one *tephach* by one *tephach*.

² Ordinarily items that have different *shiurim* cannot combine. The *Gemara* (*Sukah* 17b) explains since in some cases these materials share the same measure (see previous footnote) they can combine even in our case when they have different *shiurim*.

The *Mishnah Achrona* explains differently. He understands that since it is not the way for one to complete a garment of a higher quality fabric with an inferior one, it is as if it is not attached. Accordingly, even if one added sacking of a *tephach* and a third, the patch would not be susceptible to *tumah*. One proof comes from the *Rash* who learns that when the *Mishnah* teaches that this composite patch is *tahor* it should not be taken literally. The reason is that we find that for a cloth to be susceptible to *tumah* that is transferred by contact, the minimum size is three finger-breadths. Consequently, using the above example, the *Mishnah* means that if a source of *tumah* touched the two *tephachim* sized cloth, even though the cloth would be *tameh*, the attached sacking would not. Consequently it is as if the sacking is not attached.

A difficulty faced is that the *Tifferet Yisrael*, cited as part of the first understanding, also brings the ruling of the *Rash*. If the sacking can complete the minimum measure of cloth if it is large enough, why is not considered attached when it cannot not? Perhaps that answer is found simply by asking the following question: is the detachment in the ruling of the *Rash* a cause or effect? According to the *Mishnah Achrona* since people do not combine material in this manner, they are by definition considered detached. According to the *Tifferet Yisrael*, the sacking is not by definition detached; given the right quantity it could complete the *shiur*. However since in the case of the *Mishnah* it does not, the effect is that for the purpose of *tumah* transferred by contact, it is considered detached.

This explains another question. The *Mishnah Lemelech* is initially unsure that if, within the patch, the cloth alone was larger than the minimum *shiur* and had the sacking attached is it now considered one garment or is the sacking still considered detached? The *Mishnah Achrona* believes that it is obviously detached and does not understand the doubt. Perhaps one could explain that the doubt is based on the question above: is the detachment the cause of effect?

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Another important discussion is whether an inferior material's *shiur* can be completed with a superior one more than one level above. The way the *Mishnah* is structured leads one to believe that it cannot – this is the opinion of most of the commentaries. Even if one combines fabrics in this manner, since most people would not do so, his actions are insignificant. The *Tosfot* (*Sukah* 17b) however say that the general rule with which the *Mishnah* ends seems to imply that the hierarchy is not important. See the *Tosfot Yom Tov*, *Mishnah Lemelech Keilim* (27:4) and *Chidushei Ha'Gra*. Unfortunately the printing space limits from much desired discussion.

Revision Questions

כלים כ"ו ט' – כ"ח א'

- If one wanted to make straps from hide that was *tameh midras*, at what point would it become *tahor*? (כ"ו: ט')
- What does *R' Eliazar bar R' Tzadok* add to the debate regarding the previous question? (כ"ו: ט')
- What are the manners in which the following materials can become susceptible to *tumah*: earthenware; wood; leather; sackcloth; cloths? (כ"ו: א')
- What is minimum size of the following materials for them to be susceptible to *tumah*: cloth; sackcloth; matting? (כ"ו: ב')
- About which of the fabrics is there a difference in the minimum size between its susceptibility to *tumat midras* and *tumat met*? (כ"ו: ב')
- About which of the fabrics does *R' Meir* argue and what is his opinion? (כ"ו: ב')
- What is the law regarding the minimum size of a garment made of a combination of fabrics? (כ"ו: ג')
- When do all materials share the same minimum size at what is that size? (כ"ו: ד')
- Explain the debate regarding a worn out "sieve" that was to be used for sitting on. (כ"ו: ה')
- What is difference about the susceptibility to *tumah* of a child's chair? (כ"ו: ה')
- Explain the debate regarding children's clothing? (כ"ו: ה')
- List some items that are measured "doubled over". Explain. (כ"ו: ו')
- What is the law regarding cloth just satisfying the minimum measure that became *tameh midras*, was then made part of a larger garment, and then a thread was removed from the original patch? (כ"ו: ז')
- Is the law different if the thread was separated prior to being made part of a larger garment? (כ"ו: ז')
- Regarding the previous two questions how is the law different if the patch originally became *tameh met*? Explain. (כ"ו: ח')
- Explain the debate regarding a sheet that was *tameh midras* then used as a door-curtain. (כ"ו: ט')
- What other case is debated in the same manner? (כ"ו: י')
- What are the two conditions for cloth of the minimum measure to be susceptible to *tumah*? Explain the debate regarding one of the requirements. (כ"ו: י"א')
- When is it required for both to be fulfilled and when is it enough for only one to be fulfilled? (כ"ו: י"א')
- When is a torn cloth of the minimum measure still susceptible to *tumah*? (כ"ו: י"ב')
- Complete the following phrase: (כ"ו: י"ב')
לְעוֹלָם _____ מְטַהֲרֶתָּהּ, _____ מְטַמְּאֶתָּהּ.
- What are the three opinions regarding the scope of this statement? (כ"ו: י"ב')
- What is the difference between cloth that was three by three *etzba'ot* and three by three *tephachim* that was used to stuff a ball? That was made into a ball? (כ"ו: ח' א')

Local Shiurim

Sunday -Thursday

Between mincha & ma'ariv
Mizrachi Shul

Friday & Shabbat

10 minutes before mincha
Mizrachi Shul

Next Week's Mishnayot...

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	שבת קודש
14 th June כ"ב סיון	15 th June כ"ג סיון	16 th June כ"ד סיון	17 th June כ"ה סיון	18 th June כ"ו סיון	19 th June כ"ז סיון	20 th June כ"ח סיון
Keilim 28:2-3	Keilim 28:4-5	Keilim 28:6-7	Keilim 28:8-9	Keilim 28:1-29:1	Keilim 29:2-3	Keilim 29:4-5

