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The spread of Tumah

The ninth perek of *Ohalot* discusses various *halachot* that relates to a *kaveret* (a 'beehive') and *ohalot*. The commentators have great difficulty in explaining this *perek*, due to a number of puzzling facets and their interpretations have been strained and even challenged by other commentators.

The main problem of this chapter is its subject –the *kaveret*. Most commentators identify the *kaveret* in this chapter with a regular beehive, made of wood or reeds. However, since it is clear from the context that the hive of the first *Mishnah* is not susceptible to impurity, they refer to an 'oversized' hive – i.e. having a capacity of at least 40 *seah* of liquid. This, however, does not explain the chapter satisfactorily, and entails several contradictions toward the end of the *perek*. Accordingly, *Ravad* explains that the hive of our chapter is not 'oversized' but rather made of earthenware (which is not susceptible through its exterior). This interpretation too is challenged by the *Mishnah Achrona*.

Eliyahu Rabbah agrees with most commentators that the hive is made of wood, but rejects the idea that it has a capacity of 40 *seah*, since we have learnt that an oversized utensil screens against impurity like an *ohel* (8:1), whereas our chapter stipulates that the hive is considered a utensil that does not screen against impurity, unless it is broken. He attributes the hive's insusceptibility to the many bee holes perforating it, but *Ma'ayanei Yehoshua* notes several difficult points in the chapter that cannot be explained in this way.

Ma'ayanei Yehoshua, however, has a unique interpretation of our chapter, based on the *Tosefta*, and following well-defined rules grounded in the

Mishnah, *Tosefta*, *Talmud* and Classic Commentaries. He defines the hive as a utensil designed to keep bees and produce honey, which is hollow and cylindrical with covers at either end – a permanent fixed cover on the bottom (the 'base') and a loose removable cover on the top (the 'mouth'). A hive may be of straw or reeds, or of wood, or of mud moulded into shape and dried in the sun. Mud hives are not baked in a kiln (which would render them earthenware), as they are not designed to be exposed to fire, nor used to store items that would seep through: rather, they are what the *Mishnah* calls 'utensils made of clay' (*klei adama*) which are insusceptible to impurity.

Whenever a *Mishnah* refers to a hive made of straw or reeds, it will state this explicitly. Thus when the first *Mishnah* refers to a 'hive' without qualifying terms, it must be made of wood (if the context indicates a susceptible hive) or mud (if not susceptible), and since the hives of our chapter are all unsusceptible, they must be made of mud (or perhaps stone). Moreover, the *Mishnah* must be referring to a hive smaller than 40 *seah*, since a larger hive would be considered a tent (as per *Eliyahu Rabba* above). When we encounter a hive with a capacity of larger than 40 *seah*, it will be called out explicitly in the *Mishnah* (as in *Mishnah* 12).

Some modern commentators agree with *Ma'ayanei Yehoshua* that the hive here is made of mud, but insist that the word *kaveret* need not refer to an actual beehive, but to a large basket resembling a hive, used to store grain in the home.

From Introduction to ninth perek - Rabbi Pinchas Kehati (Trans.)

Revision Questions

אהלות ח': ה' – ט': י"ב

- List some items that can neither spread nor shield against *tumah*. (ח': ה')
- What is the law regarding to two tightly sealed earthenware jugs that each contains a half-kezayit of a *met*? (ח': ר')
- What is law if one of them were opened? (ח': ר')
- What other case is similar to the one in the previous question? (ח': ר')
- (Question A :) Regarding a *kaveret* that that is placed inside a house lying in its side with it open outside the house, what is the law regarding items above, below and inside the *kaveret* and inside the house if: (ט': א')
 - A *kezayit* from a *met* is found underneath the *kaveret* (outside the house)?
 - A *kezayit* from a *met* is found inside the house?
 - Inside the *kaveret*?
- (Question B :) Is the law different if the *kaveret* was raised a *tephach* above the ground? (ט': ב')
- (Question C :) In which two cases would the laws in the previous two cases change and what is the law in both those cases? (ט': ג-ד')
- What is meant by the term *afutza*? (ט': ג')
- If the opening of the *kaveret* was inside the house how would the law differ in the case of:
 - Question A? (ט': ה')
 - Question B? (ט': ו')
 - Question C? (ט': ז'-ח')
- What is the law regarding a case where the *kaveret* “filled the house” in the three scenarios of Question A? (ט': ט')
- Provide some examples for the previous question? (ט': ט')
- What is the law regarding a case where the *kaveret* is found in a doorway and equal to its height in the three scenarios of Question A? (ט': י')
- Regarding a *kaveret* that that is outside and lying in its side what is the law regarding items above, below and inside the *kaveret* if: (ט': י"א)
 - A *kezayit* from a *met* is found underneath the *kaveret* (outside the house)?
 - Inside the *kaveret*?
- Is the law different if the *kaveret* was raised a *tephach* above the ground? (ט': י"ב)
- In which three cases would the laws in the previous two cases change and what is the law in those cases? (ט': י"ב)

Local Shiurim

Sunday -Thursday

After maariv
Mizrachi Shul

Friday & Shabbat

10 minutes before mincha
Mizrachi Shul

Next Week's Mishnayot...

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	שבת קודש
26 th July ה' תמוז	27 th July ו' תמוז	28 th July ז' תמוז	29 th July ח' אב	30 th July ט' אב	31 st July י' אב	1 st August י"א אב
Ohalot 9:13-14	Ohalot 9:15-16	Ohalot 10:1-2	Ohalot 10:3-4	Ohalot 10:5-6	Ohalot 10:7-11:1	Ohalot 11:2-3

