



Volume 6. Issue 3

The Toy Oven

A significant portion of *Masechet Keilim* deals with the purity and impurity of an oven and stove made of *cheres* (earthenware). The *Bartenura* explains that the oven was a *kli* that was open at the bottom; the ground served as its bottom. Therefore the fact that it can receive *tumah* is a *chiddush* (novelty) because clay utensils ordinarily must have a *beit kibul* (receptacle) to be susceptible to *tumah*. The *Bartenura* explains that the oven is different as its *tumah* is due to a *gezeirat ha'katuv* (decree of the *Torah*).

The *Tifferet Yisrael* explains that there is a greater *chidush* that can be learnt from the fact that an oven receives *tumah*. There is a general rule that anything which is attached to the ground cannot receive *tumah*. Most of the ovens used at that time were attached with clay to the ground. Therefore, one would think that these *keilim* would not be susceptible to *tumah*. However, the *gezeirat ha'katuv* comes to teach us that these types of ovens, as well as portable ovens¹ can receive *tumah*.

Interestingly, the *Tosfot Yom Tov* states that there were times (*Bava Batra perek 2*) that ovens were actually placed on a base. This opinion would hold that there would be no need for the *gezeirat hakatuv* as the oven would be *tamei* by virtue of it being a regular *kli* (with a *beit kibul*).

When discussing the different sizes of an oven the *Mishnah* (5: 1) states:

An oven, its beginning (i.e. Minimum size to be *mekabel tumah*) is 4 *tefachim*, and its remnant's [minimum size] is 4, so says *R' Meir*. The *Chachamim* state "What is the case referring to? To a large oven. However, a small oven its beginning is *kol she'hu* [lit. anything – here, a *tefach*] and its remnant's [minimum size] is the majority [of its original size]...

There are a number of explanations for the opinion of the *Chachamim*. *Rashi* and the *Bartenura* explain there are two different types of ovens. One is a large oven which is used to bake bread. The method of use for this oven is to take dough, and to stick it on the inside wall of the oven leaving it to bake. This type of oven must be at least 4 *tefachim* high to receive impurity. However, there is another type of oven, the small oven, which can be any size and receive impurity. This type of oven is one which is made as a toy for children to play with. Therefore, *Rashi* says the differentiation between large and small is solely based on the function of the oven.

The *Tosfot* challenge this interpretation. They ask why a large oven which is less than four *tefachim* is deemed *tahor*, and yet a small oven of the same size can be *tamei*. How does the classification of the oven as small or large, whether it is used as an oven or a toy, make a difference to the status of its purity? They answer that it must be that the "large oven" is significantly different in its properties to the small oven, in its height, width or thickness of the walls. The physical differences between these two utensils lead to the differences in *shiurim* for *tumah*.

This argument provides further insight into the *Gemara* in *Niddah* (26b). There the *Gemara* discusses a "*Tanur Banot Tefach*". The explanation of this cryptic statement will be different depending on the views of *Rashi* and *Tosfot*. *Rashi* would hold that the oven of young girls (ie. Children) is a *tefach* in height. This follows his explanation here, that a small oven is one that is used as a children's toy. However, *Tosfot* would explain that the words '*banot*' and '*tefach*' are joined words². Therefore *banot tefach* is not referring to the fact that young girls use it as a toy, but rather solely a description of its height.

Yehuda Gottlieb

¹ The *Tifferet Yisrael* quotes the *Gemara* (*Shabbos* 125a) which mentions certain types of portable ovens that Arabs used to take in to the desert loaded on the back of camels. If these ovens were open at the bottom like the other ovens of the time they would also be covered off by the *gezeirat ha'katuv*.

² Other examples of joined words brought as examples by *Tosfot* include – '*Ben Krach*' or '*Ben Ir*'.

Revision Questions

כלים ג' – ה' – ח'

- Which of the following two substances that are used to plaster a water-heater are considered a *chibur* (attachment): *chomer* or *charsit*? (ג': ז')
- Why does *R' Yosi* declare that a kettle whose hole is plugged with *zefet* (pitch) is considered *tahor*? (ז': ז')
- What is the law regarding a barrel whose hole has been repaired with an excessive amount of *zefet*? (ח': ז')
- What are the three opinions regarding plugged funnels made of wood or of earthenware and their susceptibility to *tumah*? (ח': ז')
- What is the law regarding a broken piece of *cheres* that cannot stand due to the attached handle? (ז': ז')
- Explain the debate regarding the previous case if the handle then broke off. (ז': ז')
- Explain the debate regarding a barrel that splits down the middle. (ז': ז')
- How poor must a severely cracked barrel be in order that it is no longer susceptible to *tumah*? (ז': ז')
- What is a *gistra*? (ז': ז')
- What is the rule regarding a *gistra* that has *chidudim*? (ז': ז')
- What are the three cases of an earthenware utensil that has “three rims”? (ז': ז')
- From what point in production is an earthenware utensil susceptible to *tumah*? (ז': ז')
- What are the minimum dimensions of a *tanur* and a broken *tanur* such that it is susceptible to *tumah*? (ז': ז')
- What is the “*gemar melacha*” of a *tanur*? (ז': ז')
- Regarding the previous two questions, what is the law regarding a *kira*? (ז': ז')
- What is the law regarding an *ateret kira*? A *tirat tanur*? (ז': ז')
- Explain the debate regarding a *beit ha'pach*? (ז': ז')
- Is a *tanur* that was fired (for the first time) without the knowledge of the owner susceptible to *tumah*? (ז': ז')
- What is a *mussaf ha'tanur* and when is it *tahor*? (ז': ז')
- What is the law regarding a *tanur* that:
 - Is half filled with earth?
 - Was placed over a pit? (ז': ז')
- How does one purify a *tanur* that became *tameh*? (Include all opinions) (ז': ז')
- If a *tanur* was sliced horizontally, how thin must the rings be such that they are *tahor*? (ז': ז')
- What type of a *tanur* can be used by a *niddah* and would remain *tahor*? (ז': ז')

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
8 th March י"ב אדר	9 th March י"ג אדר	10 th March י"ד אדר	11 th March ט"ו אדר	12 th March ט"ז אדר	13 th March י"ז אדר	14 th March י"ח אדר
Kinim 5:9-10	Kinim 5:11-6:1	Kinim 6:2-3	Keilim 6:4-7:2	Keilim 7:2-3	Keilim 7:4-5	Keilim 7:6-8:1

