



## Large Wooden Keilim

The eighteen *perek* begins by once again discussing the *shida* – a large wooden chest. Recall that we learnt in the fifteenth *perek* that if the *shida* can contain forty *seah* of liquids or 2 *kor* of dry goods (three square *amot* in volume) then it is not susceptible to *tumah*. Our *Mishnah* records the debate regard how this volume is calculated. The opinions range from the considering only the contents, to including the walls and even the space beneath the *shida* if the legs are shorter than one *amah*. We shall try to understand this law, considering the debate in our *Mishnah*.

The *Torah* lists a number of different *keilim* when teaching that vessels can become *tameh*: "... whether it is a wooden utensil, a garment, leather or sackcloth – any utensil with which work is done – shall be brought into water and remain contaminated until evening and then become cleansed" (*Vayikra* 11:32). The *Chachamim* note that sackcloth is mentioned in the list. Since vessels made of sackcloth can be used and moved both empty and full, the *Chachamim* understood that for a vessel made of the other materials listed in the *pasuk*, it must be able to be moved both empty and full to be susceptible to *tumah*. Once the volume reaches forty *seah*, this requirement would not be satisfied and those *keilim* would not be susceptible to *tumah*.

The *Rambam* (*Keilim* 3:1) explains that the susceptibility to *tumah* hinges on the ability for the *kli* to be moved (empty and full). Therefore, if a wooden *kli* is designed to stay put, then it is not susceptible to *tumah* irrespective of its volume. Similarly, if it is moved when full, then it is susceptible to *tumah* even if it is exceptionally large. The *Rambam* understands that when the *Mishnah* provides a

*shiur* (a measure) of forty *seah*, it is refers to general wooden *keilim*, since it is assumed that once it gets to that volume it will not be moved.

The *Raavad*, however argues that the *shiur* is what determines the susceptibility to *tumah*. The only small wooden *keilim* that would not be susceptible to *tumah* is if it is forbidden for it to be moved (e.g. the *mizbeach ha'zahav*). The only large *keilim* that would be susceptible to *tumah* are those designed to be move when loaded (like those listed in the beginning of the fifteenth *perek*).

The *Chazon Ish* (*Keilm* 24:1) notes that if the determining factor was whether the *kli* was movable, then the debate in our *Mishnah* would not make much sense. For example, how can we understand the position of *Beit Shamai* that does not include the thickness of the walls. Considering that the walls would contribute to the weight of the *kli* and whether it can be moved, surely they should be included.

Consequently, the *Chazon Ish* understands that the forty *seah* requirement is another *shiur* of the *Chachamim*. In other words, much like all *shiurim*, the *Chachimim* were required to provide a fixed measure to define different activities. For example, how much food is considered eating? Similarly in our *Mishnah* the *Chachamim* determined that after a particular volume, even if the *kli* could physically be moved when full, it is not legally considered that the *kli* is movable due to its awkwardness, and therefore not susceptible to *tumah*. Once that *shiur* is in hand, then there is room for the *Tanaim* in our *Misnah* to debate how that *shiur* is measured.

**Revision Questions**

כלים י"ז: י"ד – י"ט: א'

- Which of the days of creation have no *tumah* associated with those thing created on that day? (י"ז: י"ד)
- Explain the following statement and to what it applies: (י"ז: ט"ו)  
ש לָהֶם מַעֲשֶׂה וְאֵין לָהֶם מַחֲשָׁבָה.
- To what laws did *Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai* explain: (י"ז: ט"ו) ◦  
אֵין לִי אֶם אִמֵּר אֵין לִי אֶם לֹא אִמֵּר.
- When are the following items susceptible to *tumah*: (י"ז: י"ז)  
◦ *Mashchezet*?  
◦ *Pinkas*?
- Explain the debate regarding a straw mat. (י"ז: י"ז)
- Explain the debate between *Beit Shammai* and *Beit Hillel* regarding how to measure the dimensions volume of a chest. (י"ח: א')
- On which point do they agree? (Include all opinions.) (י"ח: ח')
- When is the *muchni* measured as part of the chest and what other laws are affected in this case? (י"ח: ב')
- How is the volume of a dome covering of a chest measured and when is this important? (י"ח: ב')
- Explain the debate regarding a case when one of the legs of a chest breaks off. (י"ח: ג')
- Which parts of a bed are susceptible to *tumah*? (י"ח: ג')
- Explain the debate regarding the: "מלבן שנתנו על לשונות" (י"ח: ד')
- If a *tameh* bed is dismantled by removing one side, when is it still *tameh* and when is it the subject of debate? (י"ח: ה')
- How much of the legs of the bed must be cut such that it *tahor*? (י"ח: ה')
- What is the law regarding a *tameh* bed, if the beam at its length breaks and is repaired? (י"ח: ו')
- What is the law if the other beam breaks and is repaired? (י"ח: ו')
- If is the law regarding the leg of a bed that was *tameh midras* prior to being attached to a bed? (י"ח: ז')
- What is the law if it is then removed? (י"ח: ז')
- Regarding the previous two questions, what is the law if the leg had come into contact with a corpse? What if it was originally *tumat erev*? (י"ח: ז')
- When would a *tefillin shel rosh* that was *tameh met*, become *magah tameh met*? Become *tahor*? (י"ח: ח')
- What is the law regarding a *tameh* bed, of which half was stolen? (י"ח: ט')
- What is the law if the half was returned and the bed was put together again? (י"ח: ט')
- Explain the debate between *R' Eliezer* and the *Chachamim* regarding how a bed (constructed of parts) can become *tameh* and *tahor*. (י"ח: ט')
- If a *tameh* bed is dismantled, are the straps/ropes also *tameh*? (י"ט: א')
- At what point are the straps/ropes of a bed considered part of (*chibur*) the bed? (י"ט: א')

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**Next Week's Mishnayot...**

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Keilim 19:2-3	Keilim 19:4-5	Keilim 19:6-7	Keilim 19:8-9	Keilim 19:10-20:1	Keilim 20:2-3	Keilim 20:4-5

