



The Modified Bench

The *Mishnah* (22:3) discusses a bench that is built in a way that it is supported by one wide leg at either end. The *Mishnah* teaches that if one of those legs breaks off, then the bench is *tahor*. If however, the other leg is also removed, the *Mishnah* explains that if bench (without the legs) is still a *tephach* high then it is susceptible to *tumah*. In other words, if it is still high enough that it is fit for sitting upon it can still be defined as a bench.

Let us return to the earlier case where only one of the legs was removed. The *Mishnah* ruled that the bench is *tahor*. That makes sense since, with only one side having a leg, it could not function as a bench.

The *Tifferet Yisrael* however notes that the *Rambam* rules that in that case the bench is still *tameh*. The *Tosfot Yom Tov* explains that that is the version of the *Mishnah* he found in *Nuschat Eretz Yisrael*.¹ The *Tosfot Yom Tov* assumes that that is because people would still sit on it, in its slanted state.

The *Tifferet Yisrael* continues that that position makes sense. That is because the ruling would be no different from the bed we learnt about previously. Then we learnt that even if two of the legs at one end were removed along with the end horizontal piece, the bed is still *tameh*. That is because the now slanted bed is still fit for lying upon. If it was the side piece along with two of the legs at apposing ends that was removed, that case is debated. *Chachamim* maintain that it now *tahor*, however *R' Nechamya* argues that since it could still function whilst being supported against a wall, it is still *tameh*. The *Tifferet Yisrael* reasons that the bench could likewise continue to function with a side support.

The *Chazon Ish* (*Keilim* 26:12) however finds that version difficult, considered that the ruling of the bench would be the same as that of the *sherafra*

(footstool) that follows. If that were indeed true, one would expect that the *Mishnah* continue by teaching more succinctly, “so too is the law regarding the *sherafra*”.

The *Sidrei Taharot* adds another reason why our version makes sense. The *Mishnah* (22:10) teaches that a bench that had one leg made of wood and another made of stone is *tahor*. If the second leg is not necessary for the bench to be *tameh*, then way would the presence of the second leg that is made of stone make the bench now *tahor*?¹

The *Mishnah Achrona* (22:10) however takes that same *Mishnah* as a proof the *Rambam*’s version of the *Mishnah*. He cites the *Mishnah* in *Zavim* (4:7) to explain. There the *Mishnah* teaches that if a *zav* is lying on bed and there is a *tallit* under each of the legs, then they are all *tameh*. That is because since the bed relies on all the legs to stand, it is considered as if each leg is bearing most of the weight of the *zav*. Consequently, if we say that the bench would be *tahor* if one of the legs was missing, both legs are necessary. That being the case it is considered as if each leg is performing the full support. He reasons that it follows the bench should be *tameh* when one leg is wooden and the other stone. It is dependent on the wooden leg, so it should be considered a wooden *kli* and therefore *tameh*.

According to the *Rambam*’s reading, the *Mishnah* makes sense. Since the bench would still be *tameh* if it stood on one leg, that would mean that one leg is sufficient. Standing with only one stone leg would be enough to defined it as a stone *kli*. That being said, each leg is, at best, only supporting the bench. We understand therefore why it is treated like a stone *kli* and therefore *tahor*.



¹ He suggest that it is possible that since it is more substantial with two legs, we considered the presence of the stone leg as being relied upon for this state, such that it is not *tahor*.



REVISION QUESTIONS

טהרות י"ט:י" כ"ב:ג'

- What forms of *tumah* is a chest susceptible to if its opening is on its side? ('ט:ט')
- What is the law if that chest breaks at the top? ('ט:ט')
- Explain the debate if that chest breaks at the bottom. ('ט:ט')
- What other case is debated in a similar manner? ('ט:ט')
- Which of the following (leather) items if they break are still *tameh midras*: ('א:כ')
 - Mattress?
 - Pillow?
 - Klustar?
 - Turmel?
 - Sacks?
- Which trough is the subject of debate between *Beit Shammai* and *Beit Hillel*? Explain. ('ב:כ')
- How are the remnants of wooden utensils stricter than the original utensil? ('ב:כ')
- What are the two cases that are considered a: חייבור בשעת מלאכה ('ג:כ')
- What is the reason why if a chair is formed at the end of a beam of an olive press it is not susceptible to *tumat midras*? ('ג:כ')
- Explain the debate regarding a large trough with a large hole that was modified for sitting on. ('ד:כ')
- What is the law regarding the large trough that was modified to contain animal feed and was fixed to a wall? ('ד:כ')
- What are the two requirements for a *kofet* that is built into a wall such that it is no longer susceptible to *tumah*? ('ה:כ')
- What are the other two cases similar to the one in the previous question, and which of the two is slightly different? ('ה:כ')
- What is the law regarding a sheet that was modified to be used as a curtain? ('ה:כ')
- What is the debate regarding the previous question and who are the parties in the debate? ('ו:כ')
- What are some of the ways a *machtzelet* can be modified so that it is no longer susceptible to *tumat midras*? ('ז:כ')
- What is the law regarding a *machtzelet* that was cut in half along its width? Along its length? ('ז:כ')
- At what point in a *machtzelet's* production does it become susceptible to *tumah*? ('ז:כ')
- List some of the some components of a weaving machine that are and are not a *yad* for the woven fabric. ('ח:א:כ')
- When is the *ve'ira* considered a *yad* for the fabric? ('ח:א:כ')
- When is the *pika* a *yad* for the *plach*? ('ח:א:כ')
- List some part of the of the yoke-plough apparatus that are a *yad* to the plough. ('ח:א:כ')
- Which parts of a *megeira* are considered a *yad*? ('ח:א:כ')
- Is a bow ever considered a *yad* for an arrow? ('ח:א:כ')
- Explain the debate regarding a mole trap. ('ח:א:כ')
- Who much space must be left from a table whose surface gives way for it to remain *tameh*? ('ט:ב:כ')
- What other case has the same rule as in the previous question? ('ט:ב:כ')
- When can a table whose legs begin to break off once again be susceptible to *tumah*? Include both opinions. ('ט:ב:כ')
- When can a bench that loses both its legs still be susceptible to *tumah*? ('ט:ב:כ')
- What is the law regarding a footstool that loses a leg? ('ט:ב:כ')



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SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	שבת קודש
2 August · י"ט אב	3 August · כ' אב	4 August · כ"א אב	5 August · כ"ב אב	6 August · כ"ג אב	7 August · כ"ד אב	8 August · כ"ה אב
Keilim 22:4-5	Keilim 22:6-7	Keilim 22:8-9	Keilim 22:10-23:1	Keilim 23:2-3	Keilim 23:4-5	Keilim 24:1-2

Have a good Shabbos!