



Cherev Ke'Chalal Revisited

Masechet Ohalot discusses *tumah* that emanates for a corpse. A corpse itself is an *avi avot ha'tumah* – the highest form of *tumah*. The first *Mishnah* teaches that if a person becomes *tameh* from a corpse then the person becomes an *av ha'tumah*. The person requires the seven-day purification process involving the ashes from the *parah aduma*. If the person touched another person or object, they would become a *rishon le'tumah* and immersion in a *mikveh* would be sufficient to make them *tahor*.

The second *Mishnah* introduces the novelty that if a *kli* touches the corpse, then it too would stay on the same level of *tumah* as the corpse and become an *avi avot ha'tumah*. Similarly, if the *kli* touched a person that touch the corpse, it too would also be an *av ha'tumah* – the same level as the person that touched the corpse.

This exception is based on the following *pasuk* (*Bamidbar* 19:16): "On the open field: Anyone who touches one slain by the sword, or one that died or a human bone, or a grave, shall be contaminated for seven days". Since the *Torah* writes "*bechalal cherev oh bemet*" the *Chachamim* understand that the *cherev* (sword) is considered like the *cherev* (corpse) such that it also becomes an *avi avot hatumah*. Previously (vol. 18 iss. 19) we looked at the debate regarding the material of the *keilim* for which this unique law applied.

The *Tifferet Yisrael* addresses just how similar this "*cherev*" is to the *chalal*. He first cites the position that it is exactly like the corpse and transfers *tumah* in the same ways – *maga* (touch), *masa* (if carried) and *be'ohel* (this is the position of the *Tosfot*).

The *Tifferet Yisrael* however cites the *Ramban* that maintains that the *kli* cannot transfer *tumah be'ohel*

and the *Ramban* that maintains that it can only transfer through direct contact (*Tumat HaMet* 5:13).

The *Ramban* (*Bamidbar* 19:16) explains that the reason why the *kli* is not a source of *tumah* in an *ohel* is because when the *Torah* teaches *tumat ohel* it specifically states a "person who dies in a tent" (19:14). We can explain that the *Ramban* understands that the novelty of *tumat ohel* is not because of the severity of the *tumah* being an *avi avot ha'tumah*, but rather that it is a law in specifically for *tumah* emanating from a corpse itself. The *Ramban* reasons that that must be the law. Were it not the case, the *kohanim* would not be able to enter any house, because every house has items that have been under the same covering as corpse.¹

The *Otzar Iyunim* (*Metivta*, p47) explain that behind the debate is the two ways of understanding the law of *cherev ke'chalal*. One way is that the *cherev* itself becomes a source of *tumah* (like the corpse). The other way is that the source of *tumah* is still the *met*. When someone touches the *cherev* it is as if he touched the *met*. The same is not the case if he is *ma'ahil* (covers over) the *cherev*.

The second approach is used by the *Grach* to answer a question of the *Tosfot*. The *Gemara* in *Bava Kama* (3b) explains that any derivate of an *av ha'tumah* is not the same as it. The *Tosfot*, aligning with their understanding of *cherev ke'chalal*, asks that our case appears to be one where the derivative is exactly the same. The *Otzar Iyunim* cites, in the name of the *Grach*, that the *cherev* did not receive *tumah* from the *met*. Instead, it is considered like part of (yet secondary) to the *met* and contact with it passes the *tumah* directly from the *met*.



¹ The *Ramban* continues that if someone touched the *kli*, even though they would be *tameh* for seven days, they would not require the *mei chatat* (the spring water prepared with the ashes of the *para adumah*) to become *tahor*. He cites the *Gemara* in *Nazir* (54b) as the source for this understanding.



REVISION QUESTIONS

כלים כ"ט:ב' – אהלות א'ג'

- How is the law different if four are sewed together? (כ"ט:ב')
- How does the ruling regarding how much of the string of a plumb-line is considered a *chibur* to the weight when it is for a carpenter? A builder? (ג'ט:ט')
- How does the ruling regarding how much of the string of a (manual) scale is considered a *chibur* if it is for goldsmiths or regular shop keepers? (כ"ט:ד'-ה')
- What is the ruling regarding the extension of a hatchet handle beyond the hand grip? (כ"ט:ד'-ה')
- Which other handles of tools have the same measure? (ט"ה:ט')
- List some of the items mentioned for which the length of the *chibur* is:
 - Two *tephachim*?
 - Three *tephachim*? (ט"ו:ט')
 - Four *tephachim*?
 - Five *tephachim*?
 - Six *tephachim*? (ט"ז:ט')
 - Seven *tephachim*? (כ"ח:ט')
- List the two items debated by *Beit Shammai* and *Beit Hillel* regarding the length of the *chibur*? (כ"ח:ט')
- Which glassware is not susceptible to *tumah*? (א':ל')
- What is the law regarding *tumah* glassware that are broken and used to form new utensils? (א':ל')
- Which mirrors are susceptible to *tumah*? (ב':ל')
- Explain the debate regarding a glass ladle. (ב':ל')
- How much must a glass cup be chipped for it to become *tahor*? (ג':ל')
- Explain the debate regarding the susceptibility to *tumah* of glass cup whose hole at its base was plugged. (ג':ל')
- What is the difference whether a small or large flask (*tzulichit*) whose neck broke off? (ד':ל')
- How does *masechet keilim* start and end? (ד':ל')

Ohalot

- Through what chain of event beginning with contact with a corpse can:
 - One thing become *tameh* for seven days and another till the evening? (א':א')
 - Two things become *tameh* for seven days and another till the evening? (ב':א')
 - Three things become *tameh* for seven days and another till the evening? (ג':א')



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SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	שבת קודש
13 September ב' תשרי	14 September ג' תשרי	15 September ד' תשרי	16 September ה' תשרי	17 September ו' תשרי	18 September ז' תשרי	19 September ח' תשרי
Ohalot 1:4-5	Ohalot 1:6-7	Ohalot 1:8-2:1	Ohalot 2:2-3	Ohalot 2:4-5	Ohalot 2:6-7	Ohalot 3:1-2