



Tumah in the Ceiling

In the sixth *perek* we learnt about cases where a *kezayit* from a *met* was in various different cavities in a building and determined how it would spread by way of *tumat ohel*. The fifth *Mishnah* discusses a case where the *tumah* was found in the ceiling or flooring between two different floors. The specific case is where the ceiling is constructed with crossbeams and the *tumah* was found between those beams with only a very thin layer of plaster cover beneath it.¹

The *Mishnah* teaches that if in the space where the *tumah* was found, there was a space the width and height of a *tephach*, both floors would be *tameh*. That is because the location would be defined as a *kever satum*, which as we have learnt, would make any adjoining *ohalot tameh*. If however, there was less than that space, then it would be considered *atum*. We shall try to understand what that means.

The *Bartenura* explains that in that case, the *tumah* would not make the house, the bottom floor, *tameh*, it would instead make *tameh* anything above. In other words, it would spread directly upward, and then, by virtue of being in an *ohel* there, that entire floor would be *tameh*. This is also the position of the *Rash*. The *Rosh* however asks that when it comes to *tumah retzutza* it spreads both upward and downward. Why should the *tumah* be limited to the top floor?

The *Tosfot Yom Tov*, notes that indeed with *tumah retzuta*, it spreads both up and down. Nevertheless, the bottom floor in this case would remain *tahor*. He explains that since the ceiling of the bottom floor, which is below the *tumah*, is considered an *ohel* in its own right, it would prevent the *tumah* from reaching to the bottom floor. He explains that this is the *Rambam's* position.

The *Mikdash David* (*Ohalot* 2) elaborates that the roof of an *ohel* can prevent the *tumah* from spreading but not

the floor of an *ohel*. That is why in this case the *tumah* can spread upward but not down to the bottom floor.

The *Tosfot Yom Tov* also cites the *Maharam* who initially explain the *Mishnah* like this, however later explains that the *tumah* would also spread down to the bottom floor and make the entire floor *tameh*. If that is the case, what is the difference between this case and the first case where there was a *tephach* space. In both cases, both floors are *tameh*. The *Tosfot Yom Tov* explains that in the first case, where it is defined as a *kever satum*, it would also make the walls of the building – the walls of these adjoining *ohalot* – *tameh*.

The *Mikdash David* however cites the *Rambam* who maintains that in this case, anything directly above or below the *tumah* would become *tumah*, but not everything in the two floors. Why?

The *Mikdash David* makes two points. The first is regarding the status of this unique location of between the crossbeams. The *tumah* is not considered inside the house, otherwise everything in the house would be *tameh*. However, it is not considered fully outside the house, otherwise the levels in this ceiling/floor would stop the *tumah* from reaching the two floors. However back to our question, if the *tumah retzuta* can reach the two floors, why then is the entire floor not *tameh*? He suggests that this is because the source of *tumah* itself is not in those spaces. The novelty of *tumah retzutza* is that it is as if one is touching the *tumah* itself. It is indeed like there is a pillar of *tumah* above and below the source of *tumah*, but that pillar cannot spread in an *ohel*. This is much like the law of a *cherev* that we have seen previously. Even though it can also be an *avi avot ha'tumah* having come into contact with a *met*, that is only with respect to direct contact. Only the *met* itself can spread *tumah* under an *ohel*.



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¹ Normally above those crossbeams, there would be a layer of floorboards upon which a layer of plaster would be placed.



REVISION QUESTIONS

אהלות ה'ז' – ז'ר'

- Explain the following ruling including the example brought in the *Mishnah*: ('ה:ז')
כָּשֶׁם שֶׁמִצִּילִין מִבְּכָנִים כֶּה מִצִּילִין מִבְּחוּץ.
- How does a person (or *keilim*) acting as an *ohel* differ from a regular *ohel*? ('א:ז')
- In what case would a house whose door is closed, still be *tameh* if a corpse passed under its *achsadra*? ('ב:ז')
- In what circumstance does a wall made of stacked *kankanim* and covered with plaster constituted a proper *mechitza* for *tumah*? ('ב:ז')
- Explain the following rule regarding the wall of a house: ('ג:ז')
כֶּתֶל הַמְשָׁמֵשׁ אֶת הַבֵּית יְדוֹן מְחַצֵּה לְמַחְצָה.
- What is *R' Yehuda's* opinion regarding the above rule? ('ג:ז')
- What is the law regarding a person the stood on a wall where the *tumah* was inside the wall closer to the inside of the house? ('ג:ז')
- What is the law regarding *tumah* found in the wall between two houses? ('ד:ז')
- Explain the debate regarding the status of the *ma'aziva*? ('ד:ז')
- What is the law regarding *tumah* that is found *bein ha'korot*? (Provide all three cases.) ('ה:ז')
- What is the law regarding a "house that serves a wall"? ('ו:ז') (Compare with how a "wall serves a house"). ('ו:ז')
- What is the law regarding a case where *tumah* is found beneath a pillar? ('ו:ז')
- Explain the debate regarding the utensils found beneath the overhanging decorations of the pillar. ('ז:ז')
- Regarding the previous question, in what case is there no debate? ('ז:ז')
- What is the law regarding *tumah* found in cupboards built into the wall? ('ז:ז')
- When does *tumah* found in a wall cause all the floors in the building to become *tameh*? ('א:ז')
- In what case would the spread be stopped? ('א:ז')
- When would one touch the side of a *matezeiva* be *tameh* and when would he be *tahor*? ('א:ז')
- Is the space under the slanted part of an *ohel* considered part of the *ohel*? ('ב:ז')
- What is the difference if one touches the inside or outside of an *ohel* once the corpse has been removed? ('ב:ז')
- What is the law regarding a case where a half *kezayit* was on one side of the *ohel* and another on the other side? ('ב:ז')
- What is the law regarding *tumah* that is found under that excess flap of a tent? ('ב:ז')
- Explain the debate regarding a tent placed over an *arubah*. ('ב:ז')
- What is the law regarding an item in the closed doorways of a house that contains a corpse? When does this change? ('ג:ז')
- What are the two debates between *Beit Shammai* and *Beit Hillel* regarding the previous question? ('ג:ז')
- Explain the debate regarding a case where a woman miscarries after she was transferred between rooms during labour. ('ד:ז')
- In what case is the ruling different? ('ה:ז')
- Until what point is a baby aborted when it is threatening the mother's life? ('ו:ז')



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NEXT WEEK'S MISHNAYOT

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	שבת קודש
4 October · כ"ג תשרי	5 October · כ"ד תשרי	6 October · כ"ה תשרי	7 October · כ"ו תשרי	8 October · כ"ז תשרי	9 October · כ"ח תשרי	10 October · כ"ט תשרי
Ohalot 8:1-2	Ohalot 8:3-4	Ohalot 8:5-6	Ohalot 9:1-2	Ohalot 9:3-4	Ohalot 9:5-6	Ohalot 9:7-8

Have a good Shabbos!