



Tameh Liquid in a Sponge

The *Mishnah* (9:4) teaches that if a sponge that absorbed *tameh* liquid fell into an oven, then the oven would become *tameh*.

The *Bartenura* explains the necessity of this *Mishnah*. The first point is that ordinarily *keilim* can only become *tameh* from being in contact with an *av ha'tumah* – a source of *tumah*. We have however learnt previously that by way of a rabbinic *gezeira*, *tameh* liquids can make *keilim tameh*. The next point is that one might not expect the oven in this case to become *tameh*. That is because the *tameh* liquid is absorbed inside the sponge. Nevertheless, since the sponge is designed to both absorb and squeeze out the liquid, the oven is *tameh*. The *Tifferet Yisrael* explains that because of this, the liquid is considered like resting in a *kli* rather than being absorbed.

The explanation above is provided by the *Tosefta*. The *Mishnah* itself however explains that the reason why the oven is *tameh* is because “the *tumah* will come out in the end”. It would seem that the *Bartenura*, having cited the wording of the *Tosefta*, understands that the *Mishnah* reason is the same as the *Tosefta*. The *Tosfot Anshei Shem*, citing the *Chazon Nachum*, however understands that they are two different explanations.

The *Chazon Nachum*'s proof is from the *Raavad*'s comment on the *Rambam*. The *Rambam* explains that the reason why the oven is *tameh*, using the wording of our *Mishnah*, is that the liquid will eventually leave. The *Raavad* however argues that this is mistake, since the reason is like the *Tosefta*, that the sponge is designed to absorb and expel liquid. The *Kesef Mishnah* finds the attack of the *Raavad* difficult, considering that the *Rambam* was simply citing the *Mishnah*.

The *Chazon Nachum* explains that for a sponge, due to its usage, it is considered like a vessel that is containing

liquid. Contrast this with a wick that absorbed *tameh* oil, or an earthenware vessel that absorbed *tameh* liquid. These are not designed to contain the liquid in their material, even though the liquid is extracted once absorbed. In that case, it is only if the liquid will come out that the oven becomes *tameh*; it is if the liquid is already present and not absorbed. That explains the next *Mishnah* that discusses pottery that absorbed *tameh* liquid and fell into in an oven. Note there that it is only if the oven was fired up and whose heat would thereby bring out the absorbed liquid, that the oven would become *tameh*. Similarly, that *Tosefta* explains that with the wick, that it is only if the wick was lit that the oven would become *tameh*.

The *Chazon Nachum* continues that even though the *Mishnah* stated that the reason is because “the *tumah* will come out in the end”, the *Raavad* however understood that that was much that language used to explain the case of the pottery. Nevertheless, the reason behind the case of the sponge is different.

The *Grach* (cited in *Iyunim*, Ryzman) however understands that both reasons of the *Mishnah* and *Tosefta* are needed together. He explains once a *tameh* liquid is absorbed, it loses its status a “*mashke*” – as being independently considered liquid. In other words, there are two issues to be addressed to determine whether this oven is *tameh*. One is whether the *tameh* liquid is exposed and inside the space of the oven and the other is whether there is even *tameh* liquid at all. The rationale of the *Tosefta* related to the use of the sponge, is important to establish that the absorbed liquid is not *batel* (annulled) – they are considered as liquid resting in a *kli*. The rationale of the *Mishnah* that the *tumah* will leave, is necessary to make that liquid already considered exposed.

Revision Questions

טהרות ט' – א' – י':

- What are the three cases involving a *tameh* needle in the beginning for the ninth *perek*? (ט' א')
- What is the debate between *Beit Shammai* and *Beit Hillel* with respect to the *menikit*? (ט' ב')
- What is the law regarding earthenware that had absorbed *tameh* liquids and fell into a *tanur*? (ט' ה')
- What other case brought is similar to the one in the previous question? What is the exception to the rule? (ט' ו')
- What is the law regarding *gefet* that was trodden on by someone *tameh* and then expelled liquid? (ט' ו')
- What is the law regarding a metal ring completely contained in a brick that: (ט' ו')
 - Was in an *ohel ha'mef*?
 - Moved by a *zav*?
 - That was *tameh* and fell in a *tanur*?
- What are the maximum breaches regarding a *sridah* attached to a *tanur* such that it is still considered a *tzamid patil*? (Provide both measures.) (ט' ז')
- Regarding the previous question, what is the law regarding the breaches in the *ein ha'tanur*? (Provide all opinions.) (ט' ח')
- List some of the utensils to which the law of *tzamid patil* applies. (ט' ט')
- Which orientation of a *kli* is subject to debate and explain the debate. (ט' י')
- Which of the *keilim* in the list is unique? (ט' י')
- List some of the substances that can be used as a seal. (ט' יב')
- List some of the substances that cannot be used and the reason provided in the *Mishnah*. (ט' יב')
- Which substances should not ideally be used? (ט' יב')
- Is a seal that is *mechulchelet* effective? (ט' יג')
- Is a *beit etzbah* considered like the inside of the utensil? (ט' יג')
- In what case can a ball be used as a protective covering? (ט' יד')
- In what case is an internal *tzamid patil* debated and explain the debate. (ט' ה')
- When can branches be used to plug a barrel (*tzamid patil*)? (ט' י')
- How can planks of wood be used to (protectively) cover a *tanur*? (ט' י')
- What is the exception to requirements provided in the previous question? (ט' י')

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| Keilim 10:7-8 | Keilim 11:1-2 | Keilim 11:3-4 | Keilim 11:5-6 | Keilim 11:7-8 | Keilim 11:9-12:1 | Keilim 12:2-3 |

