

## Ohel (Tent) Impurity in Relation to Sealed Vessels

Ref: *Sefer Taharah, Hilchot Tumat Met, Chapters 20–23*

Protection from impurity in a tent.

Three conditions afford protection in a tent containing a corpse:

- Vessel with tightly fitting cover. – protects what is pure, but an impurity would escape.
- Other tents – protects what is pure, but an impurity would escape
- Swallowing (e.g. if an animal eats uncleanness it gets absorbed)
  - protects what is pure and does not allow impurity to escape. This applies only while the animal is alive

The earth of a house (*ohel*) are considered part of the *ohel* to any depth. Therefore, vessels in earth under a house become impure when house is impure. However, if there is a space (**1 x 1 x 1 tefach or more**) above the vessels (which are under the earth), the vessels will remain pure because it is as if they are in an *ohel* within a *ohel*.

It is the nature of impurity to go out and not to enter. Therefore:

- It will move out the front door of a house.
- It will not move in to a sealed vessel or a tent within a tent.
- It will move out of a sealed vessel or tent.
- It is not the nature of impurity to exit the house through secondary exit like a drain.

Sealed vessels

Vessel covering.

### Reminder

Pack on Impurity of Vessels



A sealed container is only referring to an earthenware vessel – *Mipi Hashmuah*. Because earthenware vessels only become impure through their opening and therefore if this is sealed, its contents will be protected.

It is inferred that other vessels, if they are made of material which is unsusceptible to impurity, are also protected by a sealed covering.

The difference between the covering of a vessel and a ‘tent’ within a tent, is that the vessel covering must be sealed, and a ‘tent’ covering does not have to be sealed.

The following vessels protect their contents if they have a sealed cover:

- Earthenware
- Dung
- Stone
- Earth
- Fish skin or bones
- Bird bones
- Large wooden containers (greater than **40 seah**)

- Flat piece of wood
- Metal vessels which are not fully fashioned

If one of the above vessels was not sealed, and it was turned upside down, and they had the dimension of a tent (**1x1x1 tefach**), then their contents are protected from impurity, including the depths of the earth below them. An exception is an earthenware vessel, which does not protect from impurity in this way.

A flat piece of wood is not regarded as a vessel, and is therefore insusceptible to impurity, and can therefore be used as a cover over a vessel making it into a 'tent'.

An "old" oven is regarded as a *keli* and conveys impurity and cannot become a 'tent', whereas a "new" oven can be a 'tent'.

Therefore, a new oven will protect its contents as a tent even if cover is not sealed, whereas an old oven can only protect its contents if it has a proper seal.

Damaged vessels.

The vessel normally must be tightly sealed to protect its contents. Damage can disqualify the vessel as follows:

- Cracks
- Holes
- Loose fitting seal

#### CRACKS AND HOLES

A crack or hole, in a vessel made for liquid, big enough to allow liquids to enter, requires a sealant. If the vessel is made for food, it requires a sealant if the hole allows olives to fall out. If the vessel is made for both, we take the stricter approach. If the hole is so big that a pomegranate can fall out, then a sealant only works for a big vessel i.e. so long as the hole is not greater than 50% of the vessel. Otherwise it cannot be considered a vessel and therefore cannot shield from the impurity, even if the hole is sealed.

A crack in an oven must be as wide as the 'opening of the rod of a plough'.

If the hole was made by human hands, even the slightest size will lose its protection until sealed.

The holes may be sealed with the following substances: – They must seal

- Lime
- Clay
- Gypsum
- Pitch
- Wax
- Mud
- Dung
- Mortar
- Any substances that can be smeared. But it must be pure. An impure substance does not intervene when there is impurity i.e. it could enter the *keli*.

## LOOSE COVER

A porous plug must be totally covered over with say clay.

Non-porous covers can be tied and minimally sealed with clay e.g. leather

Sealed vessels.

Contents of vessels.

*Deoraita*, any vessels that are sealed closed give protection to

- Foods
- Liquids
- Clothes
- *Kelim* that can be purified in a *mikveh*



*Derabanan* – earthenware vessels which are sealed, only protect

- Foods
- Liquids
- Other earthenware vessels

This is because common people are not trusted to be careful with impurity, and earthenware vessels contract impurity. And an impure container does not intervene against impurity.

However common people are trusted regarding containers used for ashes of *Parah Adumah* or sacred foods.

### **Reminder**

Pack on Misbehaviour



A person placed in a sealed cask remains pure.

A loft with a hole between house and loft, if this is sealed with a vessel, the loft is regarded as a sealed vessel. Therefore, its contents will have same rules as above i.e. if sealed with an earthenware vessel, then food, drink and other earthenware vessels of loft will be pure or impure as if they were in a sealed earthenware vessel.