



Produced by Rabbi Avrohom Adler, Kollel Boker Beachwood

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**Tzvi Gershon Ben Yoel (Harvey Felsen) o"n**

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## ***Tumah of a Ship and More***

How do we know that a ship is *tahor* (and is not susceptible to *tumah*)? It is because it is written: *the way of a ship in the heart of the sea.* [This verse teaches us that a ship is likened to the sea, and the sea is not susceptible to *tumah*.]

The *Gemora* explains: Now, it is obvious that a ship is in the heart of the sea, but the verse is informing us that just as the sea is *tahor* (for it is connected to the ground), so too, a ship is *tahor*.

It was taught in a *braisa*: Chananya said: We may derive it (that a ship is not susceptible to *tumah*) from a sack (a ship is a wooden vessel, and only those wooden vessels which are like a sack can become *tamei*, since they are likened to a sack): just as a sack is carried both full and empty, so too everything that is carried both full and empty is susceptible to *tumah*; this excludes a ship, seeing that it cannot be carried full and empty.

The *Gemora* asks: What is the difference between them?

The *Gemora* answers: They differ in respect to an earthenware ship: he who derives the law from 'a ship in the heart of the sea' holds that this too (an earthenware ship) is in the heart of the sea, but as for the one who maintains that it must be like a sack; this

applies only to those utensils that are mentioned (*in the verse*) in conjunction with a sack – then, if they can be carried both full and empty, they are susceptible to *tumah*, and if not, they are not susceptible; but an earthenware ship, even if it cannot be carried full and empty, is still susceptible to *tumah*.

Alternatively, they differ in respect to a boat of the Jordan River (*which due to its narrowness and shallowness, only small boats, which can be carried even while full, travel there*): he who derives the law from 'a ship in the heart of the sea' holds that this too (a boat in the Jordan) is a ship in the heart of the sea; but as for the one who requires that it should be carried full and empty, this too is carried full and empty (and will therefore be susceptible to *tumah*), for Rabbi Chanina the son of Akavya said: Why was it ruled that a Jordan boat is *tamei*? It is because it is loaded (*with cargo*) on dry land and then lowered into the water.

Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav: One should never abstain from attending the study hall even for a single moment, for behold there were many years that this *Mishna* was learned in the study hall without its reason being revealed, until Rabbi Chanina the son of Akavya came and elucidated it.

Rabbi Yonasan said: One should never abstain from attending the study hall and from Torah, even in the moment of death, for it is written: *This is the Torah* -

when a man dies in a tent; even in the moment of death, one should be engaged in the study of the Torah.

Rish Lakish said: The words of Torah are firmly held only by one who kills himself for it, for it is written: *This is the Torah, when a man shall die in the tent.*

Rava said: Now according to Chananya (who maintains that a ship that is carried laden is susceptible to tumah), carrying (even) by means of oxen (for otherwise, they could not be lifted) is regarded as carrying (and it will be susceptible to tumah).

Proof to this is from what we have learned in a Mishna: There are three (types of) wagons: That which is built like a chair (narrow and three sided, like an armchair) is susceptible to tumah as midras (if a zav or a niddah rest their weight on something, it contracts tumah; this applies here for the wagon is designated for sitting); that which is like a bed (long, its purpose being for transporting freight) is susceptible to corpse tumah (or any other contact - generated tumah, for it is a container; it is not, however, susceptible to tumas midras, for it was not meant to support the weight of a person); that of (transporting) stones (which had large holes between the floor boards) is completely tahor (for it is not regarded as a container). And Rabbi Yochanan said: But if it has a receptacle for pomegranates, it is susceptible to tumah through corpse tumah. [Although the same wagon cannot be moved when laden except by oxen, and although it is a wooden vessel, and therefore must be capable of being moved full or empty, the fact that it can be moved by oxen is sufficient.]

And we learned in a different Mishna: There are three (types of) chests: a chest with an opening at the side is liable to tumah as midras (because a zav can sit on its

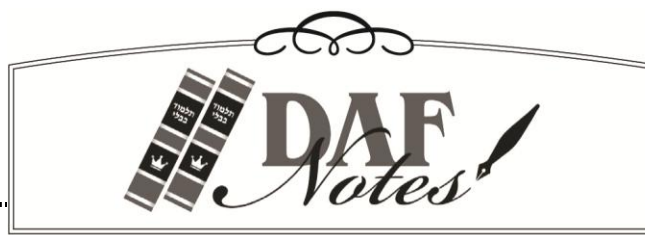
top without being told to 'get up and let us do our work,' as things can be put in or taken out from the side); an opening at the top is susceptible to tumah through corpse tumah (or any other contact - generated tumah, for it is a utensil; it is not, however, susceptible to tumas midras, for it cannot be used as 'sitting' without hindering its intended usage); an extremely large one is completely tahor. [It is unfit for lying or sitting upon on account of the opening at the top, and therefore it is not susceptible to midras, and since it cannot be moved when full due to its size (for the chest will break if it is dragged), it is free from other tumah as well.] [Now, the previous Mishna did not make a distinction about an extremely large wagon; evidently, it is susceptible to tumah, for even it was completely laden, it still can be pulled by animals.]

The Gemora cites a braisa: The midras of an earthenware vessel is tahor (and if a zav sits on it, it will remain tahor, as long as he does not infringe upon its airspace). Rabbi Yosi said: A ship as well.

The Gemora asks: What does he mean (for a ship is excluded from any type of tumah, and midras does not apply by it at all, for it is not designated for sitting)?

Rav Zevid answers: He means as follows: The midras of an earthenware vessel is tahor, but contact (with its interior) will render it tamei, while an earthenware ship is susceptible to tumah. This, the Gemora interjects, is in accordance with Chananya (who maintains that an earthenware ship is susceptible to tumah, even if it cannot be carried when full). Rabbi Yosi ruled: An earthenware ship as well is tahor. This would be in agreement with our Tanna (who disagrees with Chananya, and excludes a ship from tumah, based upon a Scriptural verse).

Rav Pappa asked: If so, why say, 'A ship as well'? [He is



*not adding anything!]*

Rather, said Rav Pappa, The following is its meaning: The *midras* of an earthenware vessel is *tahor*, but contact (*with its interior*) will render it *tamei*, whereas a wooden vessel, both its *midras* and its contact are *tamei*; while a boat of the Jordan is *tahor*. This, the *Gemora* interjects, is in accordance with our *Tanna* (*who maintains that all boats are excluded from tumah, even small ones that can be carried when full*). Rabbi Yosi said: A ship (*of the Jordan*) is *tamei* as well. This would be in agreement with Chananya (*who holds that a boat of the Jordan is susceptible to tumah*).

The *Gemora* asks: How do we know that the *midras* of an earthenware vessel is *tahor*?

Chizkiyah said: It is because it is written: *And whoever touches his couch (is tamei until evening)*. This (*the word 'his'*) compares '*his couch*' to himself: just as he (*the zav*) can be purified in a *mikvah*, so too can '*his couch*' be purified in a *mikvah*. [*This excludes an earthenware utensil, for it cannot be purified in a mikvah; when it becomes tamei, it must be broken.*]

The academy of Rabbi Yishmael taught a *braisa*, as follows: *It (a couch upon which a zavah lies) shall be to her as the couch of her niddah*: This compares '*her couch*' to herself: just as she can be purified in a *mikvah*, so too can '*her couch*' be purified in a *mikvah*; this excludes earthenware vessels, which cannot be purified in a *mikvah*.

Rabbi Ila'i asked from a *braisa*: From where do we know that (*reed*) mats can become *tamei* with corpse *tumah* (*even though it is not a receptacle*)? It can be derived through the following *kal vachomer*: If tiny earthenware jugs (*a finger cannot fit through its opening*) that remain *tahor* by a *zav*, and yet they are

susceptible to corpse *tumah*, does it not follow that mats, which even in the case of *zav* become *tamei* (*with midras tumah*), should certainly become *tamei* with corpse *tumah*! Now (*R' Ila'i asks*), why is this (*that a mat is susceptible to midras of a zav*) so, seeing that it (*a mat*) cannot be purified in a *mikvah* (*for all utensils without a receptacle cannot be purified in a mikvah*)?

Rabbi Chanina said to him: There it is different, since some of its kind (*of the same material*) are (*capable of being cleansed in a mikvah, for wooden utensils with receptacles can be purified in a mikvah*).

He said to him: May the Merciful One save us from such a thought!

Rabbi Chanina retorted: May the Merciful One save us from your thinking!

The *Gemora* asks: And what is the reason (*of R' Chanina*)?

The *Gemora* answers: Two verses are written (*regarding the tumah of a zav's couch, and they seemingly contradict each other*): [1] *and whoever touches his couch (from here we can derive that the couch will only be susceptible to midras tumah if it can be purified in a mikvah)*; and [2] *every couch that the zav will lie upon shall be tamei (and from here it would seem that the couch will be susceptible to midras tumah even if it cannot be purified in a mikvah)*. How are these to be reconciled? It is as follows: [*The verse which does not compare couch to zav teaches us the following:*] If something of its kind (*can be purified in a mikvah*), even if that itself cannot be purified in a *mikvah* (*it is susceptible to midras*). [*The verse which compares his couch to zav teaches us the following:*] However, if nothing of its kind (*can be purified in a mikvah*), his *couch* is compared to himself (*and if it cannot be purified in a mikvah, it will not be susceptible*



to *midras tumah*).

Rava said: That the *midras* (of a *zav*) of an earthenware vessel is *tahor* may be derived from the following: *and every open vessel, which has no covering fastened onto it (and is under the same roof as a corpse) [is tamei]*. The implication is that if it has a covering fastened onto it, it is *tahor*. [*The tumah must penetrate into the interior of the vessel, which it is unable to do on account of the covering which interposes a barrier. This indicates that the reference is to an earthenware vessel, where the tumah must enter its air space.*] Now, isn't the verse dealing with a case where he had designated it as a seat for his wife, who is a *niddah* (and she subsequently sat on it, which would result in it being rendered *tamei*; this would prevent the surface of the vessel to form an interposition, for the law is that only something *tahor* can prevent *tumah* from entering), yet the Torah states that it is *tahor*. [*This proves to us that an earthenware vessel cannot become tamei with midras tumah.*] (83b – 84b)

obvious to the Chasam Sofer.

“The Torah seems to flower in the mind of the Pressburg Rav!” he said.

“No, there are no miracles here,” protested the Chasam Sofer. “I will tell you my secret. For fourteen years I have not slept in a bed, so great was my dedication to Torah study.”

## DAILY MASHAL

### ***How to Achieve Success in Torah Study***

The Gemora tells us that Torah can only be mastered by a person who “kills himself” in dedication to its study. Neither natural intelligence, nor any other gift can take the place of hard work. To illustrate this point, we take for example the Chasam Sofer, the Rav of Pressburg and author of *chiddushim* and *teshuvos* that span across all of *Shas* and *Poskim*, and countless *drashos* on *Chumsash*.

Once, a Torah scholar visited the Chasam Sofer to discuss his own *chiddushim*. To his amazement, he found that every one of his insights was already