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Yad and Shomer

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: Rabbi Yehudah says: If a thighbone has an olive’s volume of meat attached to it, it brings about the *tumah* to the entire bone. [*If the olive’s volume of meat attached to this bone was with other foods so that together there was an egg’s volume of foods, and tumah matter came into contact with the bone, the food would then become tamei – either because the bone is a yad (appendage), or because it is a shomer (guard).*] Others say: Even if it has meat only the size of a bean attached to it, it is sufficient to bring about *tumah* to the entire bone. Now how does Rav interpret this *braisa*? If he regards it (*the bone*) as a *yad*, then the second opinion conflicts with his (*for Rav holds that a yad must be at least the size of an olive, and the Others maintain that it can contract tumah even with the size of a bean*); and if he regards it as a *shomer*, then the first opinion conflicts with his (*for R’ Yehudah speaks of an olive’s volume of meat which was attached to the bone – and seemingly, if it was less than that size, there would be no tumah, whereas Rav said that there cannot be a shomer less than the size of a bean, and we can infer that if it was the size of a bean (even though it is less than the size of an olive) it could serve as a shomer*).

The *Gemora* answers: If you wish, you may say the *braisa* regards it as a *yad*, and he (*Rav*) is then in agreement with Rabbi Yehudah (*that a yad must be at least the size of an olive*); or alternatively, you may say that the *braisa* regards

it as a *shomer*, and he is in agreement with the ‘Others’ (*that it can be a shomer if it is at least the size of a bean*).

Rabbi Yochanan, however, says that the *braisa* regards it as a *shomer*, and so he is in agreement with the ‘Others’ (*that it can be a shomer if it is less than the size of a bean*).

The *Gemora* asks: But do not the ‘Others’ expressly mention the size of a bean?

The *Gemora* answers: It is only because the first *Tanna* stated a fixed quantity that they also stated a fixed quantity (*but in truth, the bone can contract tumah even if the meat is less than the size of a bean*).

Rava said: There is indeed a proof that the *braisa* is referring to a *shomer*, for it states ‘a thighbone’ (*which usually contains marrow, and therefore is to be considered a protection*). This indeed is conclusive.

It was stated: Rabbi Chanina said that this (*the statement of the ‘Others’ above that even if it has meat only the size of a bean attached to it*) was the (*minimum*) size (*to be a shomer*), but Rabbi Yochanan said that that was not the (*minimum*) size.

The *Gemora* asks: But does it not expressly say: ‘the size of a bean’?

The *Gemora* answers: It was only because the first *Tanna* stated a fixed quantity that they too stated a fixed quantity.

The *Gemora* challenges Rav's viewpoint from the following *Mishna*: Rabbi Elozar ben Azaryah declares the pod of a (large) bean *tahor* (for the pod does not serve as a protector for large beans, for they are easy to clean), but that of a small bean is *tamei* (as a *shomer*), since one is pleased with it that the beans should not be handled. [Rabbi Elozar ben Azaryah maintains that the pod of large beans is not regarded as a protection to convey *tumah* to or from the beans, neither is it to be reckoned together with the beans so as to make up the requisite quantity, because the pod does not serve any useful purpose since the beans are large enough to be easily cleaned. However, the pods of small beans are regarded as protections, for they are small and the pods then serve a useful purpose in covering the beans. Now even if there was only one bean in the pod it would serve as a protection to it. Evidently, something can serve as a protection even if it less than the size of a large bean! This contradicts Rav, who said that a *shomer* must be at least the size of a large bean.]

The *Gemora* answers: This is as Rav Acha the son of Rava had suggested elsewhere that it refers to the stem which is considered a *yad*, so here too it refers to the stem and it is considered here a *yad*. [It is not the pod that is considered here but the stem to which a number of pods are attached. The stem serves as a handle to all the pods since in total, they are more than an olive's volume, and so it can deliver *tumah* to the pods. In the case of large beans, however, the stem is of no significance, for the beans are large enough to be handled by themselves, and is therefore not considered a *yad* for *tumah*.] The *Gemora* explains that the wording of the *Mishna* means that he is pleased with the service of the stems.

The *Gemora* challenges Rav's viewpoint from the following *braisa* which was taught in Rabbi Yishmael's academy: It is written: *Upon any edible seeds which are plantable*; they are subject to *tumah* if they are seeds that people would take them out for planting, namely wheat in its husk, barley in its husk, and lentils in their husks!? [The husk serves as a protection to the grain even though a lentil is considerably smaller than the size of a large bean.]

The *Gemora* answers: It is different with an entire creation (for however small it is, it may be regarded as a protection; Rav, however, insists upon the minimum size of a bean only in those cases where the substance that is protecting is only part of a whole, as a morsel of meat, or half a bean). (119a)

Two Shomers

Rabbi Oshaya inquired: Can two protections be reckoned together (with the foods within so as to make up the egg's volume in order to contract and convey *tumah*) or not?

The *Gemora* clarifies the inquiry: What is the actual case? If you say that one is on top of the other, but can it be said that a protection over a protection is regarded as a protection? Behold we have learned in a *Mishna*: Rabbi Yehudah says: An onion has three peels: the innermost one (a white one, which is edible), whether it is whole or if it has holes in it, is reckoned together (with the main part of the onion; it combines to an egg volume to become *tamei*; it is not viewed as a protector); the middle peel (a yellow one, which is not edible), if it is whole, it is reckoned together (for it is deemed a protector), but if it has holes in it, it is not reckoned together (for it cannot serve as a protector); the outermost peel, in either case is *tahor*. [Evidently, there cannot be a *shomer* on top of another *shomer*!]

The *Gemora* answers: Rabbi Oshaya really inquired as follows: What is the law if the protection of a food was divided (*so that each half only protects part of the food*)? Since this half of the protection does not protect the other half of the food, and the other half of the protection does not protect this half of the food, they cannot be reckoned together, or, perhaps, since each half of the protection protects its own half of the food, they can be reckoned together?

The *Gemora* attempts to resolve this from the following *Mishna*: Rabbi Elozar ben Azaryah declares the pod of a (large) bean *tahor* (*for the pod does not serve as a protector for large beans, for they are easy to clean*), but that of a small bean is *tamei* (*as a shomer*), since one is pleased with it that the beans should not be handled. [*Since several pods can be reckoned together with the beans within them to make up the quantity of an egg's volume, it is evident that two protections can be reckoned together.*]

Rav Acha the son of Rava rejects the proof by suggesting that it refers to the stem which is considered a *yad*.

The *Gemora* explains that the wording of the *Mishna* means that he is pleased with the service of the stems.

The *Gemora* attempts to resolve this from the following *braisa* which was taught in Rabbi Yishmael's academy: It is written: *Upon any edible seeds which are plantable*; they are subject to *tumah* if they are seeds that people would take them out for planting, namely wheat in its husk, barley in its husk, and lentils in their husks!?! [*Since several grains with their husks can be reckoned together to make up the quantity of an egg's volume, it is evident that protections can be reckoned together.*]

The *Gemora* deflects the proof as follows: This is as Rav Acha the son of Rava had suggested elsewhere that it refers to the stem which is considered a *yad*, so here too it refers to the spine (*the ear of grain*), which is considered a protection. [*If one kernel would fall out, the entire arrangement of kernels would collapse, they (the kernels, bristles and husks) are all regarded as one protection.*]

The *Gemora* asks: Granted, however, that the upper kernels need the lower ones; but do the lower kernels need the upper ones?

The *Gemora* answers: We are dealing here with one row of kernels only.

The *Gemora* asks: But is there ever as much as an egg's volume of food in one row of kernels?

The *Gemora* answers: Yes, in the wheat grains of Shimon ben Shetach (*where there was so much rainfall that the kernels grew to be as large as kidneys*).

The *Gemora* notes: And now that you have arrived at this, you may say that it refers to a single kernel of wheat, but of the wheat kernels of Shimon ben Shetach. (119a – 119b)

A Strand of Hair

The *braisa* above stated: If two bones each are attached to half a *zayis* of a corpse, and the tops of the bones entered a house, the house is impure. Yehudah ben Nekosa quotes Rabbi Yaakov saying that the two bones cannot combine, and the house is still pure.

Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish said: This was taught only with regard to a bone which is considered a *yad*, but a hair is not considered a *yad* (*and if the hair (which was attached to the corpse) alone was under the roof, the house remains*

pure). Rabbi Yochanan, however, said: Even a hair is considered a *yad*.

Rabbi Yochanan challenged Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish from the following *Mishna*: If there was an olive's volume of meat adhering to the hide, and a man touched a shred (of meat) hanging from it (which did not measure a *k'zayis*), or a hair that was (growing from) opposite it, he becomes *tamei*. It is, is it not, because it (the hair) is regarded as a *yad*?

The *Gemora* answers: No, it is because it is regarded as a *shomer*.

The *Gemora* asks: But can there be a *shomer* on top of another *shomer* (on top of the hide)?

The *Gemora* answers: The hair penetrates right through (the hide into the meat; it is therefore regarded as one *shomer*).

Rav Acha bar Yaakov asked: If so, how may we write *tefillin* (on hide)? Surely, it is necessary that the writing be perfect, and it is not so (for there are holes in the hide on account of the hair)!?

The *Gemora* answers that he must have overlooked the following statement of the Rabbis in the West (*Eretz Yisroel*): Any hole (in the hide) over which the ink can pass is not considered a hole.

Alternatively, you may answer that the hair is considered a *yad*, for as Rabbi Illa'i said elsewhere that it is referring to a bristle among many bristles, so here too, it refers to a hair among many hairs many hairs taken together can serve as a *yad* (for they are strong enough to hold the meat).

The *Gemora* asks: And where was this view of Rabbi Illa'i stated?

The *Gemora* answers: It was in connection with the following *Mishna*: The bristles of ears of grain bring in *tumah* and convey *tumah*, but are not included together (with the rest to make up the quantity necessary to convey *tumah*; this is because it is a *yad* and not a *shomer*). The *Gemora* had asked: Of what use is a bristle? Rabbi Illa'i replied: It refers to a bristle among many bristles.

The *Gemora* cites another version as follows: [*Rish Lakish stated*:] It is more reasonable to say that it (a hair) is regarded as a *shomer*, for should you say it is regarded as a *yad* (it will be asked): Of what use is one hair? [*Rabbi Yochanan replied*:] It is as Rabbi Illa'i said elsewhere that it referred to a bristle among many bristles, so here too, it refers to a hair among hairs. And where was this view of Rabbi Illa'i stated? It was in connection with the following *Mishna*: The bristles of ears of grain bring in *tumah* and convey *tumah*, but are not included together (with the rest to make up the quantity necessary to convey *tumah*; this is because it is a *yad* and not a *shomer*). The *Gemora* had asked: Of what use is a bristle? Rabbi Illa'i replied: It refers to a bristle among many bristles. (119b)