**Kelim, Chapter Two, Mishnah Two**

**Introduction**

In yesterday's mishnah we learned that vessels become pure when they are broken. Our mishnah modifies yesterday's mishnah, by teaching that the vessels are "broken" and thereby pure only when they are no longer usable. If pieces of the vessel can be used for any purpose, that piece retains its impurity, or at least its capacity to become impure.

The tannaim in our mishnah argue as to how big the piece must be in order to still be able to become impure or retain its impurity.

**Mishnah Two**

1. As regards the smallest earthen vessels, and the bottoms and sides [of the larger but broken vessels] that can stand unsupported:
   1. The prescribed size is a capacity to hold oil sufficient for the anointing of a little finger of a child [if their former capacity] was that of a log.
   2. If [their former capacity] was from one log to a se'ah [their present capacity] must be a quarter of a log.
   3. If it was from a se'ah to two se'ah it must be half a log.
   4. If from two se'ah to three se'ah or as much as five se'ah it must be a log, the words of Rabbi Ishmael.
2. Rabbi Akiva says: I do not prescribe any size for the unbroken vessels, rather: as regards the smallest earthen vessels, and the bottoms and sides [of larger but broken ones] that can stand unsupported:
   1. The prescribed size is a capacity to hold enough oil to anoint the little finger of a child.
   2. [This size is prescribed for pots] that are not bigger than the small cooking-pots.
   3. For small cooking-pots and for those between these and the jars from Lydda the prescribed capacity is a quarter of a log.
   4. For those which have a size between that of Lydda jars and Bethlehem jars the capacity must be that of half a log.
   5. For those between Bethlehem jars and large stone jars the capacity must be that of a log.
3. Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai says: [the prescribed capacity for the fragments] of large stone jars is two logs, and that for the bottoms of broken Galilean flasks and small jars is any whatsoever, but the fragments of their sides are not susceptible to impurity

***Explanation***

**Section one**: This section is Rabbi Yishmael's opinion. In each section there are two sizes—how big the vessel was before it was broken, and how big the piece left needs to be in order to still be susceptible to impurity. When it comes to broken pieces, if it is a side piece it needs to be able to stand unsupported. If it can't, the size of the piece is irrelevant, for it won't receive impurity.

If the vessel (or the broken piece thereof) was very small, and couldn't even hold a log (1/2 liter) before it was broken, then it only needs to be able to hold enough oil for a small child to soak his finger in. If it can't hold even this small amount of oil, then it cannot receive impurity.

If the original size was from a log to a seah (24 logs), then it needs to be able to hold at least a 1/4 of a log.

If the original size was from one to two seahs, it must now be able to hold 1/2 of a log, and if the original size was from two to five seahs, it must be able to hold a full log.

The assumption behind all of this seems to be that if a person has a small vessel, he may save a smaller shard of that vessel. But if the vessel was originally very large, very small shards will seem to lack any value and he will get rid of them. In this case, the vessel is not susceptible to impurity.

**Section two**: Rabbi Akiva basically agrees with Rabbi Yishmael, but he uses a different system to delineate the original sizes of the vessels. Instead of listing capacities, he lists typical types of jars or other containers used in his day. Other than that, he agrees with Rabbi Yishmael as to how big the pieces must be in order to still be susceptible to impurity. Jars and containers seem to have been typically named based on their place of manufacture.

**Section three**: Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai seems to basically agree with Rabbi Akiva. He disagrees in that he gives different measures for how big the pieces must be for large stone jars. Whereas Rabbi Akiva held that they need hold only one log, Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai holds that they must hold two logs.

He also holds that small jars and Galilean flasks can still receive impurity no matter how small a piece was left. Assumedly, people would use these shards even if they were very small. However, this only applies to the base. In his opinion, the walls of these flasks or jars were not usable at all, and therefore once broken, they cannot receive impurity.