

Seder Moed | Masechet Pesachim 15-21 | Shabbat VaYeshev | 20-26 Kislev (Dec. 6-12)

חג חנוכה סאח!



Daf 15: – מי מקבל טומאה? – WHAT CAN BECOME RITUALLY IMPURE?

Not every item can become *tameh* (ritually impure). For example, foodstuffs suitable for human consumption can become *tameh*, but animal food cannot. As such, if bread comes into contact with a corpse, that bread becomes *tameh*. However, if straw or animal feed touches a corpse, it does not become *tameh*.

Stale bread: Since bread can become *tameh* because it is human food, what is the rule regarding *tameh* bread that gets stale and moldy and is no longer fit for a person to eat, but which an animal could still eat? Does this bread remain *tameh*, or perhaps it is no longer *tameh*, since it is no longer considered human “food” — and only “food” can become *tameh*? The *Gemara* states that the bread remains *tameh*. Since it was initially fit to be eaten by people, the bread remains classified as food, even though, at present, only an animal could eat it.

Daf 16: – משקה “מוכשר” לקבלת טומאה – SUSCEPTIBILITY TO RITUAL IMPURITY

The *chachamim* interpreted from Torah verses that food must come into contact with a beverage to be susceptible to *tum'ah*. Even if the food item subsequently dries, it can still be rendered *tameh* after coming into contact with a source of impurity.

Once a food item touches a beverage, it becomes “*much'shar*” (ready and able) to be rendered *tameh*; i.e., it is “*kasher*” (susceptible) to receive *tum'ah*. Which liquids cause food to be susceptible to *tum'ah*? • Wine • Honey • Oil • Milk • Dew • Blood • Water. There is an acronym to help remember the Hebrew names of these seven liquids: **יִדְ שֶׁחַט דָּם**



FROM THE TALMUD SEDER MOED MASECHET PESACHIM DAF 17

מן התלמוד:

סדר מועד, מסכת פסחים דף י"ז:
”תא שמע: ויען חגי ויאמר כן העם
הזה וכן חגי הזה לפני נאום ה'.”

Translation

תא שמע ... Ta Sh'ma ... Come hear
ויען חגי ... Va'ya'an Hagai ... and [he] Hagai
answered

Explanation

The Talmud discusses several Bible verses from the Book of Haggai and the impurity and purity laws derived therefrom.



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Daf 17: דְּרֵגוֹת הַטֻּמְאָה – DEGREES OF RITUAL IMPURITY

There are *chullin* (secular, non-holy) and *kodashim* (sacred) foods. *Chullin* foods are non-sacred, from the word “*chol*” (secular, profane). They can be impure at as low of a level as “*sheini le’tum’ah*” (second-degree ritual impurity), but no further.

For example, a cookie that is “*sheini le’tum’ah*” is no longer capable of transmitting tumah to other *chullin* foods. Suppose that cookie comes into contact with a *kodashim* food item. In that case (e.g. an orange designated as a *terumah* gift to the *kohanim*), the *kodashim* foodstuff becomes a “*shlishi le’tumah*” (third-degree ritual impurity) — though that is the end of the chain.

There is no “*revi’i le’tumah*” (fourth-degree ritual impurity) regarding *terumah*. “*Revi’i le’tumah*” only exists for *korbanot* (sacred offerings). Absolutely no “*chamishi le’tumah*” (fifth-degree ritual impurity) exists, even in the case of *korbanot*.

Daf 18: אִיךְ מְטַהְרִים אָדָם שֶׁנִּגָּע בְּמֵת? – HOW DOES A PERSON WHO TOUCHED A CORPSE BECOME CLEANSED?

A person who touched a corpse becomes *tameh* (ritually impure) and bears the status of “*av ha’tum’ah*” (primary sources of ritual impurity). How does such a person return to being *tahor* (ritually pure)?

A *parah adumah* (red heifer) was slaughtered, burned, and its ashes were mixed with water. This water mixture consecrated with the ashes of a red heifer is called “*mei chatat*.” The *kohen* took the *mei chatat* and sprinkled it on the ritually impure.

The Torah stipulated that “*mei chatat*,” which cleanses a *tameh* person, bears the status of an “*av ha’tum’ah*.” Accordingly, and despite the purifying powers of those waters, a person who touches *mei chatat* becomes *tameh* in the degree of “*av ha’tum’ah*”.

Daf 19: אִיךְ נִזְהָגִים בְּסִפֵּק טֻמְאָה? – HOW DO WE TREAT CASES OF UNCERTAIN RITUAL IMPURITY?

Chachamim taught that when questioning if an action is *mutar min haTorah* (permissible according to Torah law) or *assur min HaTorah* (prohibited according to Torah law), *halacha* mandates: “*safek d’oraita l’chumra*” (we rule strictly in cases of doubt where the issue is a matter of Torah law). Meaning, we are obligated to stringently apply the law in circumstances of ambiguity and treat the matter as conclusively prohibited.

Suppose a person was walking and suddenly felt the touch of something. Looking around, a dead *sheretz* (creeping insect), which transmits *tumah* (ritual impurity) is spotted. The person did not know whether s/he had been touched by the ritually impure *sheretz*, or by something else. Now, since there is doubt, it would seem, from what we learned above that this person should be obligated to act according to the severity of the law — because of the halachic principle “*safek d’oraita l’chumra*.” [Cont’d on p. 3]

סִפֵּק דְּאוֹרֵיטָא לְחֻמְרָא



Dvar Torah VAYESHEV

וַיֵּשֶׁב

Sometimes, we do not ascribe enough significance to the small deeds we do. In *Parashat VaYeshev*, we are told about Yaakov’s love for his younger son Yosef and the unique, striped shirt Ya’akov made only for him and *not* for his other sons.

Chazal describe the far-reaching impact caused by the act of giving the striped shirt, and say — “Because of fine cloth worth just two *selaim* coins that Yaakov gave to Yosef, B’nei Yisrael went down to Egypt.” In other words, the giving of a simple shirt eventually led to our ancestors’ descent and enslavement in Egypt.

This matter is referred to as the “butterfly effect,” meaning that a small thing happening now can lead to huge phenomena and actions in the long run, even at the other end of the world. The story of Yaakov’s love for Yosef comes, among other things, to tell how much everyday and straightforward deeds are meaningful and powerful, far beyond what we usually attribute to them.





[Cont'd from p. 2] However, the *chachamim* derived from Torah verses that if a case where there is *safek* (uncertainty) occurs in a place where there are three people — the affected person is deemed *tahor* (ritually pure), and does not apply the stringencies of the law. This is based on the halachic guiding principle called “*safek tumah b’reshut harabim — tahor*” (a case of uncertain ritual impurity perpetrated in the public domain is ruled to be — ritually pure).

סִפְק טִמְאָה בְּרִשּׁוֹת הָרַבִּים = טָהוֹר

Daf 20: דִּינֵי טִמְאָה – LAWS OF RITUAL IMPURITY

A person who touches a corpse or finds themselves in a house containing a corpse becomes *tameh* (ritually impure) even without touching the corpse. Other impure items, by contrast, only transmit *tumah* if they are indeed touched. For example, a person who becomes *tameh* due to being within proximity of a corpse becomes an “*av ha’tumah*” (primary source of ritual impurity) and transmits impurity only to those who touch him/her.

On this *daf*, we learn that there is a unique ruling regarding ceramic vessels. Suppose a person who became *tameh*, with an “*av ha’tumah*” status, holds the outside of a ceramic vessel. That vessel does not become *tameh*. Only if *tumah* is found inside the ceramic vessel does the vessel contract impurity.

There is an additional halacha unique to ceramic vessels. Suppose a person holds a lizard’s carcass by its tail and inserts its head into the airspace of a ceramic vessel. That vessel would become *tameh* even if the dead lizard did not touch the vessel walls at all!



Daf 21: מַאיֶזָה חֵמֶץ אֶסוּר לְהִנּוּת? – FROM WHICH TYPES OF LEAVEN IS IT PROHIBITED TO DERIVE BENEFIT?



It is not only the consumption of *chametz* (leaven) that is prohibited during Pesach; rather, it is also prohibited to derive benefit from *chametz*. It is forbidden to sell *chametz* during Pesach in exchange for money because that is also considered a kind of benefit derived from *chametz*.

From which types of *chametz* is it prohibited to derive benefit? It is prohibited to derive benefit from *chametz*

that it is possible to eat. Therefore, if all the *chametz* was burned on *erev Pesach* (before noon), it is not considered “food,” because it was burned and is no longer suitable to be eaten.

The *ba’alei hatosafot* (medieval Talmudic commentators) said it was necessary to burn *chametz* so thoroughly that even a dog would no longer want to eat it. But, if the *chametz* was not burned enough that a dog would refuse to eat it, then the *issur chametz* (prohibition on leaven) still applies, and it is forbidden to derive benefit from the remnants of that *chametz*.



QUESTIONS FOR THE WEEK

1. What change in the halachic status of food occurs when touched by water for the first time?
2. How can a *sheretz* transmit *tum’ah* to a vessel, without ever touching it?
3. On *Pesach*, is it permissible to sell *chametz* that had been previously burned?

*NOTE

ALL ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND IN THIS DAF YOMI PUBLICATION

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מִן הַתְּלִמּוּד (מסכת שבת, דף כ"א) FROM THE TALMUD (Masechet Shabbat, Daf 21)



“**What is Chanukah?** ... When the Greeks entered the Beit HaMikdash, they contaminated all of the oil. The Chashmona'i dynasty overcame and defeated the Greeks. To their dismay, they found only one jug of oil with the seal of the Kohen HaGadol, the High Priest, still in place. This was only enough oil to light the Menorah for a single day. A miracle took place and it burned for eight days. The following year the Sages designated those days as a perpetual holiday to remember this miracle with praise and thanksgiving.”

“**מאי חנוכה?** ... דתנו רבנן: בכ"ה בכסליו יומי דחנוכה תמניא אינון דלא למספר בהון ודלא להתענות בהון. ששנכנסו יוונים להיכל טמאו כל השמים שביהיכל. וכשגברה מלכות בית חשמונאי ונצחום, בדקו ולא מצאו אלא פך אחד של שמן שהיה מונח בחותמו של כהן גדול, ולא היה בו אלא להדליק יום אחד. נעשה בו גס והדליקו ממנו שמונה ימים. לשנה אחרת קבעום וקראום ימים טובים בהלל והודאה.”

Maccabee Sites: Here's Where It All Happened...

WHERE DO ALL OF THE EVENTS AND BATTLES OF CHANUKAH TAKE PLACE? HERE ON THE MAP YOU CAN SEE IN DETAIL WHERE THE BATTLES WERE CONDUCTED:

How many Maccabean battles were there and when did they take place? Over the course of five years, there were eight major battles between Jewish rebels and the Greek army.

Battles of the Maccabean Revolt

BATTLE SITE	YEAR (BCE)
Ma'aleh Levona	166
Beit Horon	166
Emmaus	165
Beit Tzur	164
Beit Zecharia	162
Kfar Shalma	162
Chadasha	161
Elasha	161

Map Callouts:

- 1 Ma'aleh Levona:** Yehudah defeated Apolonius, Shomron Governor here.
- 2 Harel Beit El:** The Hashmonaim fled here from Modiin. Maccabee central command was here.
- 3 Har Baal HaTzor:** Yehudah was defeated a second time here and he fell in battle.
- 4 Har HaBayit:** Yehudah won against Nicanor at this site.
- 5 Beit Zechariah:** Yehudah was first defeated here and Elazar fell in the battle with the Elephants.
- 6 Beit Tzur:** From here, the Army of Lysias escaped back to Syria.
- 7 Beit Zecharia:** Yehudah HaMaccabee defeated the large camp of Gorgias.
- 8 Kfar Shalma:** Yehudah HaMaccabee defeated the large camp of Gorgias.
- 9 Chadasha:** Yehudah HaMaccabee defeated the large camp of Gorgias.
- 10 Elasha:** Yehudah HaMaccabee defeated the large camp of Gorgias.
- 11 Yavneh:** Here Shimon's sons — Yochanan and Yehudah destroyed Seleucid army for the last time at this site. Freedom for the Kingdom of Judah.

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