

What is הכשרה לטומאה (=preparation for tumah through contact with liquids) all about?

In most cases, contact with a liquid is required in order to make food susceptible to tumah (even if the food has since dried off). This is called הכשר, preparation for becoming tameh. In this shiur, we'll examine why this is the case, as well as how this fits into subtleties of where we seem to care about tumah of food today, such as urchatz at the seder.

1. ויקרא יא:כט-לא, לז-לח

כט וְזֶה לָכֶם הַטֹּמֵא בַשָּׂרֹץ הַשֹּׁרֵץ עַל-הָאָרֶץ הַחֲלָד וְהַעֲכָבֵר וְהַצֵּב לְמִינֵהוּ:

The following shall be impure for you from among the things that swarm on the earth: the mole, the mouse, and great lizards of every variety;

ל וְהַאֲנָקָה וְהַכֹּחַ וְהַלְטָאָה וְהַחֲמָט וְהַתְנַשְׁמֶת:

the gecko, the land crocodile, the lizard, the sand lizard, and the chameleon.

לא אֵלֶּה הַטֹּמְאִים לָכֶם בְּכָל-הַשָּׂרֹץ כָּל-הַנִּגָּע בָּהֶם בְּמָוֶתָם יִטְמָא עַד-הָעֶרֶב:

Those are for you the impure among all the swarming things; whoever touches them when they are dead shall be impure until evening.

...

לז וְכִי יִפֹּל מִנִּבְלָתָם עַל-כָּל-זֶרַע זֶרֹעַ אֲשֶׁר יִזְרַע טָהוֹר הוּא:

If such a carcass falls upon seed grain that is to be sown, it is pure;

לח וְכִי יִתֵּן מַיִם עַל-זֶרַע וְנָפַל מִנִּבְלָתָם עָלָיו טֹמֵא הוּא לָכֶם: {ס}

but if water is put on the seed and any part of a carcass falls upon it, it shall be impure for you.

2. רבינו בחיי ויקרא יא:לח R. Bachya ben Asher, 13-14th c. Spain

וכי יותן מים על זרע וגו'. מכאן דרשו רז"ל שהמים מכשירים לקבל טומאה, וכיון שנפל על הפירות מים לעולם הרי הם מוכשרים לקבל טומאה אע"פ שהפירות יבשין. וטעם הדבר שהליחות הוא מדביק לכלוך הטומאה ואם אנו גוזרים טומאה על הלחים ולא על היבשים נתת דברך לשעורין, ואין ראוי שנגזור טומאה לחצאין, לפיכך גזרה תורה טומאה על הפירות אע"פ שהם יבשים עכשיו כיון שהיו לחים.

"But if water is put on a seed, etc." - From here the Rabbis expounded that water prepares for the conduction of tumah, and once it has fallen onto produce, they will always be prepared to conduct tumah even if they are currently dry. And the reason is that the moisture makes the dirt of the tumah stick, and if we only decree (preparedness for) tumah on what's wet and not on what's dry, it is inconsistent. And it is not right that we should decree impurity only partially. Therefore, the Torah decreed (preparedness for) tumah on produce even though they are currently dry because at some point they were wet.

3. חולין קיח.

אמר רב הונא בריה דרב יהושע פירות שלא הוכשרו כתנור שלא נגמרה מלאכתו דמי
Rav Huna son of Rabbi Yehoshua said: produce that have not been prepared (by contact with liquids) are like an oven that has not been completed.

4. במדבר לא:נא

וַיִּקַּח מֹשֶׁה וְאֶלְעָזָר הַכֹּהֵן אֶת־הַזָּהָב מֵאֵתָם כָּל כֵּלֵי מַעֲשֵׂה:

And Moseh and Elazar the priest took the gold from them, all vessels of labor.

5. Mipninei Harav, p395m, Birkas Yitzchak p167 חומש מסורת הרב - based on the teachings of Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik

Water renders the seeds susceptible to impurity. Conceptually, contact with water is not a prerequisite for allowing food to be *mekabel tumah* - it is actually a prerequisite for attaining the identity of food, which is in turn capable of being *mekabel tumah*. These foods are, *halachically* speaking, not food at all prior to being washed, and are therefore not susceptible to *tumah* until they come into contact with water. This is evidenced by the *halachah* of *chibas hakodesh*, which states that items used in the Temple service do not require water in order to be *mekabel tumah*, because, in the words of the Gemara, *the high regards for consecrated items itself renders these items as food* (Chullin 36b). *Chibas hakodesh* renders the item as food, and therefore contact with water is not needed to achieve this purpose. Similarly, in explaining the view that slaughtering an animal renders it susceptible to being *mekabel tumah* even without coming into contact with liquid, Rashi (Chullin 33a) writes that since the slaughter renders the animal permissible to eat, it also renders it "food" with regard to being *mekabel tumah*. Here again, we see that the requirement of contact with liquid is in order to give an item the status of food, and not an independent requirement.

6. רמב"ם משנה תורה הל' טומאת אוכלין ג:ג

יֵשׁ אֲכָלִין שְׂצָרִיכִין הַכֹּשֶׁר וְאֵינָן צָרִיכִין מִחֻשְׁבָּה וְיֵשׁ שְׂצָרִיכִין מִחֻשְׁבָּה וְאֵינָן צָרִיכִין הַכֹּשֶׁר וְיֵשׁ שְׂצָרִיכִין מִחֻשְׁבָּה וְהַכֹּשֶׁר וְיֵשׁ שְׂאִין צָרִיכִין לֹא מִחֻשְׁבָּה וְלֹא הַכֹּשֶׁר.

There are foods that require exposure to liquids, but do not require a special intent. There are foods that require a special intent, but do not require exposure to liquids, foods that require special intent and exposure to liquids, and foods that require neither special intent, nor exposure to liquids.

כִּיצַד. כָּל הָאֲכָלִין הַמֵּיחֲדִין לָאָדָם בְּכָל מְקוֹם צָרִיכִין הַכֹּשֶׁר וְאֵין צָרִיכִין מִחֻשְׁבָּה. דְּגִים טְהוֹרִים וְחֻגְבִּים טְהוֹרִים בְּכָל מְקוֹם וְחֻגְבִּים טְמֵאִים וְדְגִים טְמֵאִים בְּכָפְרִים הֵרִי הֵן מֵיחֲדִין לָאָדָם וְצָרִיכִין הַכֹּשֶׁר וְלֹא מִחֻשְׁבָּה. וְכֵן חֵלֶב בְּהֵמָה טְהוֹרָה שְׂמִתָּה צָרִיךְ הַכֹּשֶׁר וְלֹא מִחֻשְׁבָּה בְּכָל מְקוֹם.

How so? All foods that are designated for human consumption in any place require exposure to liquids, but do not require special intent. Kosher fish and kosher locusts in all places and non-kosher locusts and fish in rural areas are considered as designated for human consumption and require exposure to liquids, but do not require a special intent. Similarly, in all places, the fat of a kosher animal that died requires exposure to liquids, but does not require special intent. *(The innovation here is that the fat of a kosher animal does not conduct tum'at nevelah even though the rest of the animal's meat does! See Vayikra 7:24 and the Sifra there.)*

ואלו צריכין מחשבה והכשר. בשר הפורש מן החי בין מן האדם בין מן הבהמה בין מן העוף ונבלת העוף הטמא וחלב בהמה טהורה שחוטטה בכפרים אף על פי שהכשר בשחיטה צריך הכשר שני אחר המחשבה. ושאר כל ירקות השדה כגון הבצלים הקשים ביותר והפטריות וכן חגבים ודגים קטנים צריכין מחשבה בכפרים. עלשין שזרען לבהמה ונמלך עליהן לאדם אינן מקבלין טמאה עד שיחשב עליהן אחר שיתלשו שמחשבת חבור אינה מחשבה. עלשין שלקטן לבהמתו והדיחן ונמלך עליהן לאדם צריכין הכשר שני אחר המחשבה. וכן כל כיוצא בזה. האלל אם חשב עליו לאכילה מקבל טמאת אכלין. ואם לאו הרי הוא כעץ ואינו מקבל טמאה. וכן העצמות המחרין בבשר והגידים והמקומות הרפים מן הקרניים ומן הטלפים והכנפים והנוצה והמקומות הרפים מן הצפרניים ומן החרטום המבלעין בבשר צריכין הכשר ומחשבה.

The following require special intent (because it is not considered food by default, even for gentiles) and exposure to liquids (once it is considered food because foods require exposure to liquids to conduct *tum'ah*): Meat that was separated from a living being, whether a human, animal, or fowl, the carcass of a non-kosher fowl (which does not conduct *tum'at nevelah*) in rural areas (where non-Jews don't usually eat it, and Jews are forbidden to eat it everywhere), the fat of a kosher domesticated animal that was ritually slaughtered - even though it was exposed to liquids when slaughtered, it requires a second exposure after one had the intent to partake of it (because non-Jews don't usually eat it, and Jews are not permitted to eat it), and all wild vegetables, e.g., very pungent onions and mushrooms (because people don't generally eat them). Similarly, in rural areas, small locusts and fish require a special intent (because people don't usually eat them). When endives were sown for animal fodder and then the owner changed his mind and thought of using them for human consumption, they are not subject to ritual impurity unless he had such intent after they were picked. For an intent that one had while produce is connected to the earth is not significant. When one collected endives for an animal, washed them, and then thought to serve them to a human being, they must be exposed to liquids again after the change of mind. Similar laws apply in all analogous situations. If one thought of partaking of the *allal*, it can contract the impurity associated with foods. If not, it is considered as wood and it is not susceptible to ritual impurity. Similarly, bones that are joined to meat, the *giddim*, the soft portions of the horns and the hoofs, the thin feathers and the wooly hairs of a fowl, the soft portion of its nails and its beak that are embedded in its flesh require special intent and exposure to liquids.

ואלו שאין צריכין לא מחשבה ולא הכשר. נבלת בהמה טהורה בכל מקום ונבלת העוף הטהור וחלב בהמה טהורה בכפרים לפי שהן מיוחדין למאכל אדם אין אחד מאלו צריך מחשבה ואין צריכין הכשר מפני שסופן לטמא אדם וכלים בכזית וכל המטמא טמאה חמורה אינו צריך הכשר.

The following require neither special intent, nor exposure to liquids (because they are already considered default food, even if only some such as non-Jews may eat them, and because they

come from times that would otherwise carry *tum'at nevelah*, and thus are not similar to the seeds mentioned in Vayikra 11:38 that require exposure to liquids to become *tameh*): the carcass of an animal from a kosher species, the carcass of a fowl from a kosher species (because it can give off *tum'at nevelah* if it is eaten), and the fat of a domesticated animal in large cities (because people consider it food already, but it comes from a carcass that carries *tum'at nevelah*). None of these require either special intent, or exposure to liquids. The rationale is that since they are designated for human consumption, there is no need for special intent. They do not require exposure to liquids for ultimately, an olive-sized portion of them can impart impurity to a person or to a *k'li* and any substance that imparts impurity of a more severe type does not require exposure to liquids.

ואלו צריכים מחשבה ואינן צריכין הקשר. נבלת העוף הטהור בכפרים ונבלת בהמה טמאה בכל מקום והוא שחשב על פחות מכזית אבל כזית אב טמאה הוא:

The following require special intent, but not exposure to liquids: The carcass of a fowl from a kosher species in rural areas (because they do not consider it food by default, but it does come from a carcass that emits *tum'at nevelah*) and the carcass of an animal from a non-kosher species in all places (because they do not consider it food by default, but it does conduct *tum'at nevelah*). The above applies when one has in mind to partake of less than an olive-sized portion. An olive-sized portion, by contrast, is a primary source of impurity.

7. רמב"ם משנה תורה הל' טומאת אוכלים טז:יב

אף על פי שמותר לאכל אכלין טמאין ולשתות משקין טמאים חסידים הראשונים היו אוכלין חלין בטהרה ונזהרין מן הטמאות כלן כל ימיהם והן הנקראים פרושים ודבר זה קדשה יתרה היא ודרך חסידות שיהיה נבדל אדם ופורש משאר העם ולא יגע בהם ולא יאכל וישתה עמם. שהפרישות מביאה לידי טהרת הגוף ממעשים הרעים. וטהרת הגוף מביאה לידי קדשת הנפש מן הדעות הרעות. וקדשת הנפש גורמת להדמות בשכינה. שנאמר (ויקרא יא מד, ויקרא כ, ו-ז) "והתקדשתם והייתם קדשים כי קדוש אני ה' מקדשכם": ברירה רחמנא דסינן

Even though it is permitted to eat impure foods and drink impure beverages, the pious men of the early generations would partake of their ordinary food in a state of ritual purity and would avoid all of the sources of impurity throughout their lives. They are called *perushim*.

This is an extra measure of holiness and a path to piety: to be separate from people at large, to hold oneself apart from them, not to touch them, nor eat and drink with them. For setting oneself apart leads to the purification of the body from wicked actions. Purifying one's body leads to sanctifying one's soul from wicked character traits. And the holiness of the soul causes one to resemble the Divine presence, as Leviticus 11:44 states: "And you shall make yourselves holy; and you shall be holy, because I, God, Who makes you holy, am holy."

8. תוספתא עבודה זרה ג:י

איזהו עם הארץ? כל שאינו אוכל חוליו בטהרה, דברי ר' מאיר. וחכמים אומרים כל שאינו מעשר פירותיו כראוי. Who is an *am ha-aretz*? All who do not eat their mundane meat only in purity, per R. Meir. And the sages say: All who do not tithe their produce properly.

Urchatz!

9. פסחים קטו.

אמר רבי אלעזר אמר רב אושעיא: כל שטיבולו במשקה — צריך נטילת ידים.

Rabbi Elazar said that Rav Oshaya said: Anything that is dipped in a liquid before it is eaten requires the ritual of washing of the hands. The obligation to wash one's hands was instituted to preserve ritual purity and to prevent people from causing *teruma* food to contract ritual impurity. Hands are generally considered impure to the second degree of ritual impurity, and they confer impurity upon any liquid with which they come in contact. Liquids that become ritually impure are automatically impure to the first degree and will therefore transfer ritual impurity to any food that is dipped in them.

10. תוספות פסחים קטו. ד"ה כל שטיבולו

...ונראה דנטילה דהכא לא משום קדושה ונקיות כמו בנהמא אלא משום שלא יטמא המשקין להיות תחלה ויהא אסור לשתות ולפסול את גופו כדתנן בפ"ב דחולין (דף לג.) השוחט ולא יצא מהן דם כו' הא יצא מהן דם אין נאכלין בידיהם מסואבות ואמר נמי בסדר הסיבה (ברכות דף מג.) הביאו להן יין כל אחד נוטל ידו אחת פי' שלא יטמא היין ויפסול גופו... ולפי זה נראה דאין לברך על אותה נטילה כיון דליכא הכא מצוה לשמוע דברי ר"א בן ערך (חולין דף קו.) וכ"ש אנן שאין אנו נזהרין מלטמאות עצמנו ומלאכול אוכלין טמאין ואין אנו צריכין לאותה נטילה והמברך הרי זה מברך ברכה לבטלה ובכל סדרים כתיב שצריך על הנטילה לברך ואין נראה כדפרישית:

...And it seems that this washing is not because of holiness and cleanliness as in the case of bread (see Berakhot 53b), but so that one won't make the liquids impure to become a *rishon* of tumah (per mishnah Parah 8:7) and then it would be prohibited to drink them to one invalidate one's body as is taught in the mishnah in chapter 2 of Chullin (33a): "If one slaughtered a domesticated animal, a wild animal, or a bird, and no blood emerged [they are valid and one may eat them with impure hands]" - indicating that if blood did emerge, they should not be eaten with impure hands. And it says the same regarding reclining (Berakhot 43a): "they brought they wine - each one washed one hand" - meaning so that he would not make the wine impure and invalidate his own body (by drinking it)...

and therefore it seems one should not bless over that washing because there is no mitzvah to listen to R. Elazar ben Arach (Chullin 106a - where he explains the pasuk in the Torah on which the rabbis bases the requirement to wash before bread). And how much more so do we who do are not careful not to make ourselves ritually impure or to eat ritually impure foods, and we do not need that washing. And one who recites a blessing over it is reciting a needless blessing, and in all the guidebooks is written that one needs to recite a blessing over this washing, but that seems wrong, as I have explained.

11. רמב"ם משנה תורה הל' ברכות ו:א

כל האוכל הפת שמברכין עליו המוציא צריך נטילת ידים תחלה וסוף. ואף על פי שהיא פת חלין ואף על פי שאין ידיו מלכלכות ואינו יודע להן טמאה לא יאכל עד שיטל שתי ידיו. וכן כל דבר שטיבולו במשקין צריך נטילת ידים תחלה:
Anyone who eats bread over which the blessing *hamotzi* is recited must wash his hands before and after partaking of it. This applies even when the bread one eats is not sacred food.

Although a person's hands are not dirty, nor is he aware that they have contracted any type of ritual impurity, he should not eat until he washes both his hands. Similarly, before [partaking of] any food dipped in liquid, one must wash one's hands.

For background on why we wash for bread, see:

<https://hadran.org.il/beyond-the-daf/human-fallibility-why-we-wash-for-bread/>

Tum'ah comes from the meat

Tum'at ochel and tum'at nevelah are two different sources of tum'ah, potentially from the same object.

Tum'at ochel requires hechsher. Tum'at nevelah does not.

Tum'at nevelah means Biblically causing humans and vessels who touch the carcass to become rishon le-tum'ah.

There are exceptions to the rule of tum'ah nevelah - e.g., non-kosher bird nevelah has no tum'at nevelah; kosher bird nevelah has tum'at nevelah only for eating, not for touching; chelev from a kosher animal nevelah does not have tum'at nevelah

Biblically, ochel/mashkeh cannot make other ochel/mashkeh tameh. Rabbinically, however, they can.

Biblically, ochel cannot make human beings or vessels tameh.

However, rabbinically speaking, they make people into שני לטומאה if a person eats them. Why? Because they were worried that people would eat terumah and non-terumah together...

Even rabbinically, ochel cannot make vessels tameh. However, rabbinically, mashkeh CAN make vessels tameh (bc of similarity to zav).

Tum'ah comes from humans:

The rabbis decrees that hands are (see din and daf shiur on chullin 33) שניות לטומאה. Therefore, those who wanted to eat their chullin b'taharah would have to wash beforehand.

