

אמר רבי יוסי: יאמרו, מאיר שׁכב, יהודה כעס, יוסי שתק, תורה מה תהא עליה? אמר רבי יוסי: לא נצרכה אלא למת שאין עליו בית בשר. ועדיין יאמר: על אבר ממנו מגלח, על כולו לא כל שׁכון?

אלא כדאמר רבי יוחנן: לא נצרכה אלא לנפל שלא נתקשרו אבריו בגידיו, דכא נמי – בנפל שלא נתקשרו אבריו בגידיו.

רבא אמר: לא נצרכה אלא לרוב בנינו ולרוב בנינו שאין בהן רובע עצמות.

“על ביות מת ועל ביות נצל”. ואיזהו נצל – בשר המת שקרש, ומוהל שהרתיח.

Rabbi Yosei^p said: Now they will say: Meir is dead, Yehuda is angry, and Yosei remained silent and did not respond. If so, what will become of the Torah? Rabbi Yosei therefore said: It is not necessary to teach that a nazirite must shave for impurity imparted by a corpse, but only that he must shave even for impurity imparted by a corpse upon which there is not an olive-bulk of flesh. The Gemara asks: But one could still say: If he must shave for impurity imparted by a limb from a corpse, even if it is less than an olive-bulk, as stated in the mishna, is it not all the more so that he must shave for impurity imparted by all of a corpse, even if it does not contain an olive-bulk of flesh?

Rather, the mishna should be explained as Rabbi Yohanan said, with regard to a different issue: It is necessary only for a miscarried fetus whose limbs had not yet become joined to its sinews.⁸ Here too, one can say that the mishna’s statement that a nazirite must shave for impurity imparted by a corpse is referring to a miscarried fetus whose limbs had not yet become joined^h to its sinews. Although it does not impart impurity through one of its limbs, as the limbs lack sinews and bones, this corpse itself does impart impurity.

Rava said a different explanation: This ruling is necessary only for the majority of the structure or the majority of the number^{BHN} of bones of a very small corpse, despite the fact that together they do not contain a quarter-kav of bones. Since these bones comprise the majority of the structure or the majority of the number of bones of a corpse, they have the status of a whole body. This halakha could not have been derived from the measure of impurity of part of the body, as this corpse is very small.

§ The mishna taught: A nazirite shaves for impurity imparted by an olive-bulk of a corpse and for impurity imparted by an olive-bulk of fluid. The Gemara explains: And what is fluid?^h This is referring to flesh of the corpse that liquefied and subsequently congealed, and liquid [mohal]^{bl} from the corpse that began to boil and then hardened.

PERSONALITIES

Rabbi Yosei – רבי יוסי: This is Rabbi Yosei ben Halafta, one of the greatest of the *tanna'im*. He lived in the generation prior to the redaction of the Mishna, and his influence is evident throughout tannaitic literature. His father, known as Abba Halafta, was also considered one of the great Sages of his generation, while his family, according to one tradition, was descended from Jehonadab, the son of Rechab (see II Kings 10:15).

In addition to studying with his father, Rabbi Yosei was an outstanding student of Rabbi Akiva. Rabbi Yosei and his contemporaries, namely, Rabbi Meir, Rabbi Yehuda, and Rabbi Shimon bar Yoḥai, were students of Rabbi Akiva, and they formed the center of talmudic creativity of that entire generation. In his halakhic approach, as in his way of life, Rabbi Yosei was moderate. He refrained from taking extreme positions on halakhic issues. A well-known principle is that Rabbi Yosei’s opinions are based on sound reasoning, and because of his moderation and the logic of his teachings, the *halakha* is in

accordance with his opinion in every instance of disagreement with his colleagues.

In addition to being a great master of *halakha*, Rabbi Yosei was also famous for his piety. The Talmud relates many stories about his modesty, humility, and sanctity. It is told that Elijah the prophet would reveal himself to him every day, and several conversations between him and Elijah are related in the Talmud. Rabbi Yosei was apparently the primary redactor of a series on the history of the Jewish people known as *Seder Olam Rabba*. For many years, he lived in Tzippori in the Galilee and earned his living as a tanner.

Many of the prominent Sages of the following generation, including Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi, the redactor of the Mishna, were his students. However, his main students were his five sons, all of whom were Sages in their generation. The most famous of them were Rabbi Eliezer, one of the great masters of *halakha*, and Rabbi Yishmael.

BACKGROUND

A miscarried fetus whose bones had not formed – נפל – שׁלא נתקשרו עצמותיו: The process of bone formation, by which cartilage turns into bone, begins during pregnancy and continues through childhood and adolescence until full adulthood. At certain periods during pregnancy, the fetus already has several bones, mostly in the skull, despite the fact that its muscles and sinews have not yet developed. These bones experience rapid decay upon the death of the fetus.

For the majority of the structure or the majority of the number – לרוב בנינו ולרוב בנינו: A simple majority of 125 bones in the body might be a collection of especially small bones. The majority of the structure, i.e., large bones that comprise the majority of the skeleton, would be greater than a quarter-kav in volume in a full-grown person. Apparently the Gemara here is referring to the remains of a baby or a fetus, in which case the majority of bones in number or size would be less than a quarter-kav in volume.

Liquid – מוהל: This might be referring to a corpse that lost a lot of blood, and it drained into one place. In that case, the red and white blood cells sink to the bottom and congeal relatively quickly, whereas the plasma remains in a liquid state for longer. Given enough time, the water in the plasma evaporates, while the remaining plasma congeals as well.

HALAKHA

A miscarried fetus whose limbs had not become joined – נפל שׁלא נתקשרו אבריו – A miscarried fetus imparts ritual impurity through contact, through carrying, and in a tent, like the corpse of an adult, even if its limbs are not joined to its sinews. If a nazirite became impure in this manner, he is obligated to shave (Rambam *Sefer Hafla’a, Hilkhot Nezirut* 7:2 and *Sefer Tahara, Hilkhot Tumat Met* 2:1; 3:1).

For the majority of the structure or the majority of the number, etc. – לרוב בנינו ולרוב בנינו וכ’ – If a nazirite came into contact with bones that constitute the majority of the number of bones in a body or the majority of the structure of a corpse, he becomes impure and must shave on their account, even if they amount to less than a quarter-kav (Rambam *Sefer Hafla’a, Hilkhot Nezirut* 7:2 and *Sefer Tahara, Hilkhot Tumat Met* 2: 8–9).

What is fluid [netzel] – איזהו נצל – *Netzel* is flesh that has softened into a putrefied liquid. For a liquid to be considered *netzel*, it must eventually congeal; otherwise one cannot be sure it comes from the flesh and is not spittle or phlegm (Rambam *Sefer Hafla’a, Hilkhot Nezirut* 7:2 and *Sefer Tahara, Hilkhot Tumat Met* 2:1).

NOTES

For the majority of the structure or the majority of the number – לרוב בנינו ולרוב בנינו: The phrase: The majority of the structure, means the majority of the five supports for the frame, i.e., the two shins, the two thighs, and the spine. The phrase: The majority of the number, means at least 125 bones, more than half of the 248 limbs in the human body. Some commentaries maintain that these bones need not be whole. If there are parts of bones that come from the majority of the structure or the majority of the number of limbs, this is enough to impart impurity (*Tosafot* on the mishna). Other commentaries disagree.

LANGUAGE

Liquid [mohal] – מוהל: The term *mohal*, or *mohal*, refers to a liquid that flows or seeps out of a solid and that is not the liquid that normally flows from it. The term is used in the case of olives to refer to fluid other than oil that flows from them. Likewise here, the *mohal* of a corpse is a liquid other than blood that seeps out of a corpse.

BACKGROUND

His phlegm and his spittle – כִּיחַו וְנִיעוּ: These are discharges principally from the fluids in the lungs that result from the common cold and the like, which people expectorate by coughing or spitting. Since the halakha does not regard these fluids as a part of the corpse, they do not impart ritual impurity like flesh. They impart impurity only in the manner of substances that come into contact with a corpse.

HALAKHA

Is there fluid with regard to animals – יֵשׁ נִצֵּל לְבִהְמָה: If the flesh on a carcass liquefied and congealed, it is uncertain whether it imparts impurity from the size of an olive-bulk, like a carcass, as Abaye's dilemma was left unresolved (Rambam Sefer Tahara, Hilkhot She'ar Avot HaTumot 1:13).

A severe impurity until it becomes inedible for a dog – לְבִהְמָה אִם אֵין נִצֵּל לְבִהְמָה? מִי אֲמָרִינָן: גְּמִירֵי נִצֵּל דְּאֲתֵי מֵאֲדָם, אָבֵל דְּאֲתֵי מִבְּהֵמָה – לֹא. אוּ דְלִמָּא לֹא שְׁנָא? If the flesh of a carcass putrefied to the extent that it is no longer fit to be eaten by a dog, it is ritually pure. The same applies to the carcass of a pure bird or that of a creeping animal. If it is fit for a dog, it is impure even if it is inedible for humans (Rambam Sefer Tahara, Hilkhot She'ar Avot HaTumot 3:11; 4:12 and Sefer Tahara, Hilkhot Tumat Okhalin 2:18).

הֵיכִי דְמִי? אֵילִימָא דְלֹא יָדְעִינָן דְּדִידִיָּהּ הוּא, כִּי קָרַשׁ מֵאֵי הָיִי? אֲלֵא דְיָדְעִינָן דְּדִידִיָּהּ הוּא – אַף עַל גַּב דְּלֹא קָרַשׁ!

אָמַר רַבִּי יִרְמְיָהּ: בְּסֵתָם, אֵי קָרַשׁ – מוֹהֵל הוּא, לֹא קָרַשׁ – דְּלִמָּא כִּיחַו וְנִיעוּ הוּא.

בְּעָא מִינֵיהּ אַבְיֵי מִרְבָּה: יֵשׁ נִצֵּל לְבִהְמָה אוּ אֵין נִצֵּל לְבִהְמָה? מִי אֲמָרִינָן: גְּמִירֵי נִצֵּל דְּאֲתֵי מֵאֲדָם, אָבֵל דְּאֲתֵי מִבְּהֵמָה – לֹא. אוּ דְלִמָּא לֹא שְׁנָא?

הֲנִיחָא לְמָאן דְּאָמַר טוּמְאָה חֲמוּרָה עַד לְגַר, וְטוּמְאָה קְלָה עַד לְכֶלֶב – שְׁפִיר.

אֲלֵא לְמָאן דְּאָמַר טוּמְאָה חֲמוּרָה עַד לְכֶלֶב – מֵאֵי אֵיבָא לְמִימְרֵי?

The Gemara asks: **What are the circumstances** in which the congealment is a determinative factor in the imparting of impurity? **If we say that we do not knowⁿ** that the substance with which the nazirite came into contact is from the corpse, even if it **congealed, what of it?** Rather, you will say **that we know that it came from the corpse.** But then the nazirite should be impure **even though it has not congealed.**

Rabbi Yirmeya said that this is referring to an **unspecified** substance that is definitely from the corpse but is not necessarily a substance that imparts impurity. One therefore examines the substance: **If the substance eventually congeals, it is liquid** from the corpse, which imparts impurity; if it does **not congeal, perhaps it is his phlegm and his spittle,^{BN}** which do not impart impurity.

S With regard to the impurity of fluids from a corpse, **Abaye raised a dilemma before Rabba: Is there the category of fluid with regard to animals,^H or is there no category of fluid with regard to animals?** In other words, does fluid from an animal carcass impart impurity like the animal carcass itself or not? The Gemara explains the two sides of the dilemma: **Do we say that it is learned** as a tradition that **fluid that comes from a person is impure but fluid that comes from an animal is not impure? Or perhaps it is no different,** as fluid from a corpse is always considered like the flesh itself?

The Gemara comments: **This works out well according to the one who says** that a carcass imparts impurity by a **severe impurity,** through contact and carrying, only **until** the carcass becomes **inedible for a stranger,^N** i.e., in order impart impurity it must be fit for human consumption. **And** the carcass imparts impurity by a **light impurity** that imparts impurity on food through contact **until** the carcass become **inedible for a dog.** According to this opinion, **it is well,** as the *halakha* of fluid certainly does not apply to an animal, since meat that has liquefied is no longer fit for human consumption.

However, according to the one who says that a carcass imparts impurity by a **severe impurity until** it becomes **inedible for a dog,^H what is there to say?** Since fluids from an animal carcass are presumably fit to be eaten by a dog, the above dilemma as to whether it is impure remains pertinent.

NOTES

If we say that we do not know – אֵילִימָא דְלֹא יָדְעִינָן: The early commentaries are puzzled by this passage. The situation in which we do not know where the liquid comes from is apparently the same as that involving an unspecified substance. How, then, does Rabbi Yirmeya's answer resolve the problem? It is probably for this reason that some commentaries explain that the phrase: We do not know, means: We know that it is not, i.e., if it is clear that the substance is not from the corpse, it certainly does not impart impurity (Commentary on *Nazir*). Rabbi Yirmeya answers that the substance is unspecified and this is an uncertain case. Many commentaries explain that the Gemara's suggestion that we do not know means that it is unknown whether the liquid came from the corpse itself or was merely found there by chance. In that case, it certainly does not impart impurity merely due to the possibility that it was from the body. According to this opinion, Rabbi Yirmeya answers that the substance definitely came from a corpse. However, we are unaware of its nature, whether it is a substance that imparts impurity or whether it is spittle (*Tosafot*).

His phlegm and his spittle – כִּיחַו וְנִיעוּ: The commentaries explain that spittle is moisture emitted from the mouth by

coughing, while phlegm refers to a substance that comes from the body itself, which accumulates in the mouth and throat (Rabbeinu Todros).

Until for a stranger, etc. – עַד לְגַר וכו': These classifications are derived from two relevant verses. The first states: "You shall not eat any animal carcass; you may give to the stranger who is within your gates, that he may eat it, or sell it to a foreigner" (Deuteronomy 14:21), which indicates that in order to impart impurity a carcass must be edible for a stranger (see Leviticus 11:39–40). The other verse states: "You shall not eat any flesh that is torn [*tereifa*] of beasts in the field; you shall cast it to the dogs" (Exodus 22:30), which teaches that meat that has deteriorated to the extent that it can no longer be eaten by a dog does not impart impurity at all. A *tereifa* animal, i.e., one that will die within twelve months, is considered a *neveila*, an animal carcass, once it is dead. The dispute concerns the impurity of a carcass: Does it lapse when the meat is no longer fit for humans, as the "stranger" mentioned in the verse is a *ger toshav*, a resident alien who has accepted some of the *halakhot* of the Torah but for whom it is not prohibited to eat carcasses? Or, does it retain its status of impurity as long as it is fit to be eaten by dogs?

הַמְחֻוּהוּ – That someone liquefied in fire is impure, etc. – **בְּאוֹר טָמֵא וְכוּ'**: If the fat of the carcass of a pure bird was liquefied by fire and someone swallowed it, he is ritually impure. The Meiri writes that the same *halakha* applies in the case of the fat from the carcass of an impure animal. If it melted in the sun he is pure, as it was putrefied by the sun, as stated in the *baraita* (Rambam *Sefer Tahara, Hilkhot She'ar Avot HaTumot* 3:10).

כֹּל הַנִּצְוֶק – Anything that is poured remains ritually pure – **טְהוֹר**: A stream of liquid does not connect two items for the purposes of ritual impurity. Consequently, if pure liquid was poured into an impure vessel, the stream remains pure. However, if the lower vessel is hot and the upper one is cold, the hot fumes rise and mingle with the stream and the contents of the upper vessel, thereby imparting impurity (Rambam *Sefer Tahara, Hilkhot Tumat Okhalin* 7:1).

חוּץ מִדְבַּשׁ הַזִּיפִים וְכוּ' – Except for *zifim* honey, etc. – A stream of *zifim* honey or honey batter connects two items with regard to impurity, even if they are cold and are poured into a cold dish. This is because they stretch out like glue (Rambam *Sefer Tahara, Hilkhot Tumat Okhalin* 7:4).

NOTES

וְהַצְפִּיחִית – And batter – According to most commentaries, this refers to a dough of honey and various types of flour. Alternatively, it is honey extracted directly from the hive, which contains a mixture of wax and is therefore very thick (*Tosafot*).

תָּא שְׁמַע: הַמְחֻוּהוּ בְּאוֹר – טָמֵא, בַּחֲמָה – טְהוֹר. וְאִי סִלְקָא דְעֵתְךָ עַד לְכַלְבֵּי – אִפְּלוּ בַּחֲמָה נְמוּ!

The Gemara answers: **Come and hear** a resolution from the *Tosefta* (*Zavim* 5:9): The fat of an animal carcass **that someone liquefied in fire is still impure.**^h However, if it melted **in the sun**, which impairs its taste, it is **pure.** **And if it enters your mind** that according to the opinion that a carcass imparts impurity **until it becomes inedible for a dog** the impurity of fluids does apply to an animal carcass, if so, **even fat that dissolved in the sun should also be impure.** Even if its taste is spoiled, it remains edible for a dog.

אֵימַת מִמַּחֵי לִיָּה – בְּתַר דְּאֶסְרוּחַ בַּחֲמָה, כִּיּוֹן דְּאֶסְרַח – הָוָה לִיָּה עֶפְר.

The Gemara answers: **When does this fat liquefy? After it has putrefied**, which is why it was thrown out, at which point it melted **in the sun.** However, **once it putrefied, it had already become like dust** and lost any status of ritual impurity it once had. Once it has melted, it is no longer edible for a dog. Consequently, this source provides no proof.

תַּנּוּ: כֹּל הַנִּצְוֶק טְהוֹר,

S The Gemara discusses a related issue. **We learned** in a mishna (*Makhshirin* 5:9): **Anything that is poured remains ritually pure.**^h In other words, if one pours liquid from one vessel into another, the stream of liquid is not considered to connect the two vessels. Consequently, if the upper vessel and its contents are pure, they do not become impure even if the lower vessel into which the liquid is poured is impure. The stream of liquid does not link them in this manner.

חוּץ מִדְבַּשׁ הַזִּיפִים וְהַצְפִּיחִית.

The mishna adds: This is the case for all liquids **except for *zifim* honey,**^{hb} a very thick type of honey, **and batter,**ⁿ e.g., flour mixed with honey. Since these substances are highly viscous, they are not considered liquids. Rather, they are a kind of soft solid food, which means that they are a single unit that links the two vessels with regard to impurity.

BACKGROUND

Zifim honey – דְּבַשׁ הַזִּיפִים: *Zifim* honey is a certain variety of honey produced in the town of Zif, a biblical settlement identified today as Tel Zif in the area of Hebron. According to Rav Hai Gaon, there are several species of insects that produce honey, including the wild bee and the wasp. The honey they produce is kosher. Apparently, *zifim* honey was thicker than standard bee honey and did not pour as easily.



Tel Zif



Location of Zif

HALAKHA

Is there not a stream for food – אין נצוק לאוכלין – The stream of *zifim* honey and batter connects two items, as these have drippings that stretch out like glue. Consequently, a stream of food does not connect in this manner, even if it is viscous, e.g., beans or melted fat, because it is not held together with a flow of this kind. This ruling is in accordance with the unattributed opinion in the mishna (Rambam *Sefer Tahara, Hilkhot Tumat Okhalin* 7:4).

Fat of a corpse that was whole, etc. – חלב המת שהוא – שֶׁלֶם וְכוּ: An olive-bulk of fat from a corpse that was melted down is ritually impure. If the fat separated into small pieces that were melted together, it is pure (Rambam *Sefer Tahara, Hilkhot Tumat Met* 4:6).

בית שמאי אומרים: אף המקפה של גריסין ושל פול, מפני שהיא סולדת לאחוריה.

בעי רמי בר חמא: יש נצוק לאוכלין או אין נצוק לאוכלין? מי אמרינן משום דאית בהו רירי – והני לית בהו רירי, או דלמא משום דסמיכין הוא – והכא הא סמיכין?

אמר רבא, תא שמע: חלב המת שהוא שֶׁלֶם והתיכו – טמא, הנה מפורד והתיכו – טהור. ואי סלקא דעתך אין נצוק לאוכלין, שֶׁלֶם והתיכו נמי ליטרה!

אמר רבי זירא: אָנָּא וּמַר בְּרִיָּה דְרַבִּינָא תְּרִיגְמָנָא: הָכָא בְּמַאי עֲסָקִינָן – כְּגוֹן דְּבִהְדִּי דְּמִרְתַּח לִיהָ סְלִיק עֲמוּדָא דְנוּרָא לְפִומֵיהָ דְמִנָּא וְקָרַשׁ, דְּאִיתִיהָ בּוּלָא גְבִי הֲדָדִי.

אמר ליה רבינא לרב אשי, תא שמע: בית שמאי אומרים: אף המקפה של גריסין ושל פול, מפני שהן סולדין לאחוריהן. מידי איריא? הָתָם – מִשּׁוּם דְסָמִיכִין, הָכָא – מִשּׁוּם רִירִי.

Beit Shammai say: Even the stream of a stew made of crushed and broken beans or of whole beans also connects two items because it returns backward. When one stops pouring this stew, part of the dish reverts to its place of origin, and therefore the stream is considered a single unit.

Rami bar Hama raises a dilemma: According to the opinion of the Rabbis that in general, poured liquid does not serve to connect, is there a stream for food, or is there not a stream for food? If one pours melted food into an impure vessel, does the food which one is pouring become impure? The Gemara explains the two sides of the dilemma: **Do we say that *zifim* honey and batter connect different items because they have a flow that returns backward, and these regular foods do not have a flowⁿ that returns backward? Or, perhaps the reason why *zifim* honey and batter connect is because they are viscous, and here the melted foodstuffs are also viscous.**

Rava said: Come and hear a resolution from the *Tosefta* (*Oholot* 4:3): If there was fat of a corpse that was whole^h and contained an olive-bulk, and one melted it, it is ritually impure. If from the outset the fat was separated into pieces smaller than an olive-bulk, which do not impart impurity, and one melted it,ⁿ so that it combined into an olive-bulk in its melted state, it is pure. **And if it enters your mind that there is no stream for food, even if it was whole and one melted it, it should also be pure,ⁿ** as it became liquid and spread throughout the pan. Consequently, each part should be considered separate, which means the food is not the size of an olive-bulk.

Rabbi Zeira said: I and Mar, son of Ravina, explained it: With what are we dealing here? With a case where as he was heating it, the column of fire rose from under the pan to the mouth of the vessel, and the fat congealed there, so that it was all present together, i.e., there was no stream at all.

Ravina said to Rav Ashi: Come and hear a resolution from the mishna to the question of whether food is considered a stream. **Beit Shammai say: Even the stream of a stew made of crushed and broken beans or of whole beans also connects two items because it returns backward.** This indicates that the dispute in the mishna is whether or not stew meets the criteria of returning backward, and the Rabbis hold that honey and anything like it, which return backward, are considered a stream. Rav Ashi replied: **Are the cases comparable? There, in the case of honey, one might suggest it is a stream because it is viscous.ⁿ Here, with regard to the stew, the reason Beit Shammai rule stringently is due to the flow, which returns backward. The Rabbis do not agree that this is a factor at all.**

NOTES

Because they have a flow, and these do not have a flow, etc. – דְּאִית בְּהו רִירִי וְהֵנִי לִית בְּהו רִירִי וְכוּ: There are conflicting opinions as to whether this question is referring to the unattributed mishna, in which case this means that the *zifim* honey has a flow, or whether the difficulty refers to the opinion of Beit Shammai, and the reference is to the bean stew (see Commentary on *Nazir*). Either way, the issue is whether the stream is considered connected due to its flow or because it is a thick liquid.

If the fat was separated and one melted it – הֵיָּה מְפֹרֵד וְהִתִּיכוּ: Since it was separated from the outset, its pieces, which were less than an olive-bulk, do not impart impurity. Admittedly, the parts that were joined together when they were melted in the fire now form a piece larger than an olive-bulk, but an artificial combination is not relevant for ritual impurity. See *Tosafot* for a comparison between this *halakha* and other cases of half-measures that combine with regard to ritual impurity.

If it was whole and one melted it, it should also be pure – שֶׁלֶם וְהִתִּיכוּ נְמִי לִיטְרָה: According to *Tosafot* and one explanation in the Commentary on *Nazir*, this is referring to one who melts the fat in a pan, in which case the liquid flows from one side of the vessel to the other, thereby becoming separated into pieces less than an olive-bulk in size, unless the pieces are considered to be combined by means of the stream. Alternatively, according to the Meiri and a second explanation in the Commentary on *Nazir*, after melting the fat, one poured it into a different vessel. If a stream is not considered connected, the act of pouring should cause its parts to detach from each other, and it should be considered pure, as the parts cannot be artificially combined at this point.

Here it is because it is viscous – הָתָם מִשּׁוּם דְסָמִיכִין: Two interpretations are cited by the Commentary on *Nazir*. According to the first interpretation, Ravina is saying that the dilemma of Rami bar Hama as to whether foods have a stream is referring to viscous fluids, whereas Beit Shammai are speaking of lentils that have a flow that returns backward. According to the second interpretation, Ravina is speaking of the unattributed opinion in the mishna, i.e., that honey as opposed to other foodstuffs contains a flow. Other commentaries maintain that Ravina thought that the main reason a stream connects is due to its flow, and that the dispute between Beit Shammai and the unattributed mishna concerns the relevant amount, whether a substantial flow is required, as with honey, or whether the lesser flow of bean stew suffices. The subsequent answer is that this case offers no proof at all, as the ruling of the unattributed mishna might be based on the viscous quality of honey, whereas Beit Shammai maintain that even something less viscous also connects by means of a stream, if it has a lesser flow (*Tosafot*).

His handfuls – מְלֵא הַפְּנִי: Some commentaries maintain that this means the entire amount that can be held in one hand, including the palm and fingers (Commentary on *Nazir*). The Jerusalem Talmud apparently understands this term similarly. Others rule that it is referring to the amount that can be contained in two hands held together (Rambam).

HALAKHA

His handfuls – מְלֵא הַפְּנִי: If the bones of a corpse have decayed into dust in the grave, a handful of that dust, which is the amount of a full ladle, imparts impurity through carrying and as a tent, and a nazirite must shave on its account. However, it does not impart impurity through touch. The *halakha* is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yohanan with regard to the amount of a full ladle (Rambam *Sefer Tahara, Hilkhot Tumat Met* 2:11 and *Sefer Hafla'a, Hilkhot Nezirut* 7:2, 5).

BACKGROUND

His handfuls [melo hofnav] – מְלֵא הַפְּנִי: The expression *melo hofnav*, the amount that fits into two hands when cupped together, is mentioned in the Torah in reference to the burning of the incense in the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur (Leviticus 16:12). No precise measurement is stated. Rather, this is the amount that fits into the hands of the High Priest serving on that day. Other measurements are based on parts of the body, e.g., a fingerbreadth and a handbreadth. They were used frequently and became standardized according to the size of an average hand. By contrast, the handfuls mentioned here are a measurement that was not standardized with any precision. In any event, the amount that fits into the cupped hands of an average-sized individual is twice the amount that fits into one open hand.

“ועל מלא תרווד רקב” וכמה שיעורו? חזקיה אמר: מלא פיסת היד, רבי יוחנן אמר: מלא חפניו. תנן: מלא תרווד רקב שאמרו ישנן מעיקר אצבעות ולמעלה, דברי רבי מאיר. וחכמים אומרים: מלא חפניו.

בשלמא רבי יוחנן – הוא דאמר ברבנן. אלא חזקיה כמאן? לא רבי מאיר ולא ברבנן! אמרי: מלא פיסת היד ומלא קשרי אצבעותיו למעלה – חד שיעורא הוא.

אמר ליה רב שימי בר אדא לרב פפא: ממאי דהאי מקשרי אצבעותיו ולמעלה לראש? דלמא למטה מדידיה, דההו ליה מלא פיסת היד! תיקו.

§ The mishna taught: **And for impurity imparted by a full ladle of dust.** The Gemara inquires: **And how much is this measure of a full ladle of dust?** **Hizkiyya said: A full palm of the hand.** **Rabbi Yohanan said: His handfuls,**^{NHB} i.e., the amount that can be held in the whole hand, including the fingers. The Gemara cites a relevant source. **We learned in the Tosefta (Oholot 2:2): The full ladle of dust that the Sages spoke of includes all that can be contained from the base of the fingers and above; this is the statement of Rabbi Meir. And the Rabbis say: His handfuls.**

Granted, Rabbi Yohanan spoke in accordance with the opinion of the Rabbis. But in accordance with whose opinion did Hizkiyya state his opinion? His ruling is neither in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Meir nor in accordance with that of the Rabbis. The Rabbis require his handfuls, Rabbi Meir refers only to the amount contained in the fingers themselves, while Hizkiyya rules that it is the amount that can rest on the palm of a hand. The Sages say in response that Hizkiyya’s amount of a full palm of his hand and Rabbi Meir’s measurement of a full amount of his finger joints from the palm of the hand and above are one and the same measure.

The Gemara raises a difficulty with regard to the basis of the question directed toward the opinion of Hizkiyya. **Rav Shimi bar Adda said to Rav Pappa: From where do we know that this amount specified by Rabbi Meir: From his finger joints and above, means toward the ends of the fingers? Perhaps it is referring to below it, toward the arm, in which case it is exactly the same as Hizkiyya’s amount: A full palm of the hand.** If so, this *baraita* presents no difficulty to Hizkiyya at all. No answer was found, and the Gemara says that the question shall stand unresolved.

Perek VII
Daf 51 Amud a

תנו רבנן: איזהו מת שיש לו רקב – מת שנקבר ערום בארון של שיש, או על גבי רצפה של אבנים, זהו מת שיש לו רקב. נקבר בכסותו, בארון של עץ, או על גבי רצפה של לבנים – זהו מת שאין לו רקב.

§ The mishna taught that one of the sources of ritual impurity for which a nazirite must shave is a full ladle of dust from a corpse. **The Sages taught (Tosefta, Oholot 2:3): Which is a corpse that has the halakha of dust,^H i.e., whose dust imparts impurity? A corpse that was buried naked in a marble coffin or on a stone floor; this is a corpse that has the halakha of dust that imparts impurity.** Any dust found there must have come from the corpse. However, if it was buried in its cloak, or in a wooden coffin, or on a brick floor, this is a corpse that does not have the halakha of dust that imparts impurity. In the latter cases it is assumed that the dust from the corpse includes particles from the clothes, wood, or bricks that disintegrated, and there is a tradition that the impurity of dust applies only to dust that comes solely from the corpse, not to a mixture from different sources.

אמר עולא: אין רקב אלא הבא מן הבשר ומן הגידים ומן העצמות. איתביה רבא לעולא: רקב הבא מן הבשר – טהור. הא מן העצם – טמא, ואף על גב דליכא בשר! אימא הכי: רקב הבא מן הבשר – טהור, עד שיש עצם בבשר.

With regard to the same issue, **Ulla said: Dust is only that which comes from the flesh and from the sinews and from the bones of the corpse together, but not if it came from one of these alone.** **Rava raised an objection to Ulla from the following baraita: Dust that comes from the flesh is pure.** It can be inferred from here that if it comes from the bone it is impure, even though there is no dust of flesh mixed with it. Ulla replied: **You should say and infer like this: Dust that comes from the flesh is pure, unless there is bone in the flesh.**

HALAKHA

A corpse that has dust – מֵת שֵׁשׁ לוֹ רֶקֶב: The dust of a corpse imparts impurity only if the deceased was buried without clothes in a marble or glass coffin, or one of similar material, and the corpse was not lacking a limb. However, if the corpse was buried in a robe or in a wooden or metal coffin, or if was lacking a limb, its dust does not impart impurity (Rambam *Sefer Hafla'a, Hilkhot Nezirut* 7:3 and *Sefer Tahara, Hilkhot Tumat Met* 3:4).