

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 Yoḥanan 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.

וְעַל מְלֵא תַרְוּד רֶקֶב. וְכַמָּה שִׁיעוּרוֹ?
חֻקְיָהּ אָמַר: מְלֵא פִיסַת הַיָּד, רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן
אָמַר: מְלֵא חֲפִנּוֹ. תַנּוּ: מְלֵא תַרְוּד רֶקֶב
שֶׁאִמְרוּ יוֹשֵׁן מַעִיקָר אֲצַבְעוֹת וְלַמַּעֲלָה,
דְּבַרֵי רַבִּי מֵאִיר. וְחֻקִּים אֲמַרִים: מְלֵא
חֲפִנּוֹ.

§ 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?** **Ḥizkiyya said: A full palm of the hand.** **Rabbi Yoḥanan 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.**

בְּשִׁלְמָא רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן – הוּא דְאָמַר כְּרַבְּנֵי.
אֲלֵא חֻקְיָהּ כְּמֵאן? לֹא כְּרַבִּי מֵאִיר
וְלֹא כְּרַבְּנֵי! אָמַרִי: מְלֵא פִיסַת הַיָּד
וּמְלֵא קִשְׁרֵי אֲצַבְעוֹתָיו לַמַּעֲלָה – חֲדָ
שִׁיעוּרָא הוּא.

Granted, Rabbi Yoḥanan spoke in accordance with the opinion of the Rabbis. **But in accordance with whose opinion did Ḥizkiyya 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 Ḥizkiyya rules that it is the amount that can rest on the palm of a hand. The Sages say in response that Ḥizkiyya'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.**

אָמַר לִיָּה רַב שִׁימֵי בַר אֲדָא לְרַב
פַּפְּא: מֵמַאי דְהָאֵי מִקְשְׁרֵי אֲצַבְעוֹתָיו
וְלַמַּעֲלָה לֹא שֶׁ? דְלִמָּא לְמַטָּה מִדִּידֵיהּ,
דְהוּא לִיָּה מְלֵא פִיסַת הַיָּד! תִּיקוּ.

The Gemara raises a difficulty with regard to the basis of the question directed toward the opinion of Ḥizkiyya. **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 Ḥizkiyya's amount: **A full palm of the hand.** If so, this *baraita* presents no difficulty to Ḥizkiyya at all. No answer was found, and the Gemara says that the question shall stand unresolved.

Perek VII

Daf 51 Amud a

תַּנּוּ רַבְּנֵי: אִיזְדוּ מֵת שֵׁישׁ לוֹ רֶקֶב – מֵת
שֶׁנִּקְבַּר עֲרוּם בְּאֶרֶז שֶׁל שֵׁישׁ, אוֹ עַל
גִּבֵּי רֶצֶפָה שֶׁל אֲבָנִים, זֶהוּ מֵת שֵׁישׁ לוֹ
רֶקֶב. נִקְבַּר בְּכִסּוּתוֹ, בְּאֶרֶז שֶׁל עֵץ,
אוֹ עַל גִּבֵּי רֶצֶפָה שֶׁל לִבְנִים – זֶהוּ מֵת
שֵׁישׁ לוֹ רֶקֶב.

§ 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.**

אָמַר עוּלָא: אִין רֶקֶב אֲלֵא הִבָּא מִן
הַבֶּשֶׂר וּמִן הַגִּידִים וּמִן הָעֵצִים.
אִיתְיָבִיָּה רַבָּא לְעוּלָא: רֶקֶב הִבָּא מִן
הַבֶּשֶׂר – טְהוּר. הָא מִן הָעֵצִים – טְמֵא,
וְאִין עַל גִּבֵּי דְלִיכָא בֶּשֶׂר! אִימָא הָכִי:
רֶקֶב הִבָּא מִן הַבֶּשֶׂר – טְהוּר, עַד שֵׁישׁ
עֵצִים בְּבֶשֶׂר.

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 שֵׁישׁ 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).

BACKGROUND

It is impossible for there to be flesh and bones without sinews [gidim] – אי אפשר לְבָשָׁר וְלַעֲצָמוֹת בְּלֹא גִידִים: The word gidim is used by the Sages as a general term for all tube-shaped tissues that connect or serve as channels between different parts of the body. Larger parts of various systems that serve very different functions in the body, e.g., veins and arteries in the pulmonary system, visible nerves such as the sciatic nerve in the nervous system, and tissues connecting the bones, are all included in the category of gidim. For this reason, it is inconceivable that a bone that is covered with some flesh would not contain at least part of one of these systems. It would often contain a significant amount of them, which is why the Sages said that it is impossible for there to be flesh and bones without sinews.

HALAKHA

Two corpses, etc. – שְׁנֵי מֵתִים וְכוּ': The dust of two corpses buried together does not impart impurity, in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yoḥanan (Rambam Sefer Hafla'a, Hilkhot Nezirut 7:4 and Sefer Tahara, Hilkhot Tumat Met 3:5).

Dust that comes from two corpses – רֶקֶב הַבָּא מִשְׁנֵי מֵתִים: A double handful of dust from two corpses combine, if the halakha of the dust of a corpse applies to both corpses (Rambam Sefer Tahara, Hilkhot Tumat Met 4:3).

If one cut the hair of a corpse, etc. – גָּזַז שְׂעָרוֹ וְכוּ': If the hair or nails of a corpse is cut and buried with the body, its dust does not impart impurity (Rambam Sefer Tahara, Hilkhot Tumat Met 3:5 and Sefer Hafla'a, Hilkhot Nezirut 7:4).

Everything that is in a corpse is impure, etc. – כָּל שֶׁבִמַּת טָמֵא: All parts of a corpse impart ritual impurity, apart from the teeth, hair, and nails, as they are replaced as one grows. This ruling applies only if they were detached from the corpse. However, they do impart impurity when joined to the body. For example, if, at the time of death, the corpse was outside a house but its hair trailed inside, the contents of the house are rendered impure with the impurity of a tent (Rambam Sefer Tahara, Hilkhot Tumat Met 3:13).

If he did not cut it, he raises this case as a dilemma – לֹא גָזַז: It is uncertain whether or not hair of a corpse ready to be cut, and nails ready for removal, are considered part of the body. Consequently, it is uncertain whether one who touches them is impure, as Hizkiyya's dilemma remains unresolved (Rambam Sefer Tahara, Hilkhot Tumat Met 3:13).

NOTES

Mixture [galgallin] – גַּלְגָּלִין: It is clear from the context that galgallin nullifies the halakha of the dust of a corpse. However, the early commentaries dispute the meaning and significance of this term. Some explain that galgallin means something that rolls [mitgalgel], i.e., a foreign substance mingled with the dead matter (Commentary on Nazir). Others claim that it refers to a kind of shroud rolled around a corpse (Arukh). Yet others state that it means dust [gal] mixed with substances from the corpse. Alternatively, is related to gilgul, a cause; in other words, galgallin is a substance that causes the halakha of dust of a corpse to be negated (Tosafot, citing Arukh; Meiri; Shita Mekubbetzet).

Hair is ready to be shaved – שְׂעָרוֹ הָעוֹמֵד לְלֶחֶט: The commentaries are unsure as to the meaning of Hizkiyya's question. Is he asking about impurity itself, whether hair of this kind imparts impurity like that of a corpse, or is he referring to the halakha of a mixture, i.e., if the hair is not considered part of the body, is the rest of the dust of the corpse pure, as it has another substance mixed with it (Tosafot)? The early commentaries dispute whether the discussion in the Gemara lends support to one or the other of these interpretations.

הָא לֵיכָא גִידִים! אִי אִפְשָׁר לְבָשָׁר וְלַעֲצָמוֹת בְּלֹא גִידִים.

אָמַר רַב שְׁמוּאֵל בְּרַב אָבָא אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן: שְׁנֵי מֵתִים שֶׁקָּבְרוּ זֶה עִם זֶה – נִעְשָׂו גַלְגָּלִין זֶה לְזֶה. מֵתִיב רַב נָתָן: רֶקֶב הַבָּא מִשְׁנֵי מֵתִים טָמֵא!

אָמַר רַבָּא: שֶׁקָּבְרוּ זֶה בְּפָנָי עֲצָמוֹ וְזֶה בְּפָנָי עֲצָמוֹ, וְהִרְקִיבוּ וְעָמְדוּ עַל מְלֵא תַרְווד רֶקֶב.

אָמַר רַבָּה בְּרַב חֲנִנָּה אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן: גָּזַז שְׂעָרוֹ וְקָבְרוֹ עִמוֹ – נִעְשָׂה לוֹ גַּלְגָּלִין. תַּנֵּן הַתָּם: כָּל שֶׁבִמַּת – טָמֵא. חוּץ מִן הַשֵּׁינִים וְהַשְּׂעָרִים וְהַצְּפוּרָן, וְבִשְׂעֵת חִיבוּרָן כּוֹלֵן טָמֵאִין.

בְּעֵי חִזְקִיָּה: שְׂעָרוֹ הָעוֹמֵד לְלֶחֶט, צְפוּרָן הָעוֹמֵד לְיָגוּז, מֵאִי־מִי אֶמְרִינָן: כָּל הָעוֹמֵד לְיָגוּז כְּגוּזוֹ דְּמִי, אוֹ דְּלִמָּא הַשְּׂעֵתָא מִיָּהָא הָא מְחוּבְרִין?

וְנִפְשׁוּט לֵיהּ מִדְּרַבָּה בְּרַב חֲנִנָּה; טַעְמָא – מִשּׁוּם דְּגָזַז, הָא לֹא גָזַז – לֹא! הֲכִי קָאָמַר: גָּזַז – הֲרִי זֶה גַּלְגָּלִים, לֹא גָזַז – מִיָּבֵעֵי לֵיהּ.

Rava continued to question Ulla's opinion: Even if one interprets the baraita in this manner, there is no mention of sinews here at all, and Ulla maintains that sinews must also contribute to the makeup of part of the dust. Ulla replied that there is no need to mention sinews explicitly, as it is impossible for there to be flesh and bones without sinews.⁸ Once it is established that the dust is from bones and flesh, it necessarily includes sinews as well.

The Gemara continues to discuss the dust of a corpse. Rav Shmuel bar Abba said that Rabbi Yoḥanan said: Two corpses^h that were buried with one another become a mixture [galgallin]^{nl} with one another. Their dust is considered mixed together and does not impart the impurity of the dust from a single corpse. Rav Natan raises an objection to this opinion: But it is taught that dust that comes from two corpses^h is impure.

Rava said: That baraita is referring to a case where they buried this corpse by itself and that corpse by itself, and they decayed separately, and they both stood at, i.e., yielded the amount of, a full ladle of dust. In this situation, the dust imparts impurity despite the fact that it is not from a single corpse, as the status of dust from a corpse initially applied to each corpse. However, if the corpses decayed together they are considered to be mixed together, which means that their dust does not impart impurity.

The Gemara cites a further statement with regard to dust of a corpse. Rabba bar bar Ḥana said that Rabbi Yoḥanan said: If one cut the hair of a corpse^h and buried the hair with it, the hair becomes part of the mixture for the dust, and it does not impart impurity. In relation to the above, the Gemara states: We learned in a mishna there (Oholot 3:3): Everything that is in a corpse is impure,^h except for the teeth, the hair, and the nails, which do not impart impurity as part of the body. But when they are attached to the corpse, they are all impure.

With regard to this halakha, Hizkiyya raised a dilemma: If hair of a corpse is ready to be shaved,ⁿ or its nail is ready to be cut, what is the halakha? Do we say that anything that is ready to be cut is considered cut, and therefore these are considered detached from the body and do not impart impurity? Or, perhaps now, in any event, they are attached, and therefore they should impart impurity?

The Gemara asks: And let Hizkiyya resolve this dilemma from the aforementioned statement of Rabba bar bar Ḥana, that hair buried with a corpse forms a mixture with the corpse. The inference is as follows: The reason that it forms a mixture is because he cut the hair, from which it may be inferred if he did not cut the hair it would not form a mixture, even if it was ready to be cut. The Gemara rejects this argument: One can respond that this is what Rabba bar bar Ḥana is saying: If he cut it, it definitely forms a mixture; if he did not cut it, Rabba bar bar Ḥana is unsure as to the halakha and he raises this case as a dilemma.^h

LANGUAGE

Mixture [galgallin] – גַּלְגָּלִין: The commentaries are divided with regard to the correct version and the meaning of this term. Some accept the versions that appear in several manuscripts, of either gangillin or ganginon. The meaning and derivation of these words is not at all straightforward. It can be argued that they are derived from the Greek γαγγλίον,

ganglion, which generally means either a small cystic or nerve growth. Others suggest that they come from γάγγραινα, gangraina, decayed or gangrenous flesh. Some say they are from the Greek γάγγαμον, gangamon, meaning both net and navel, while yet others suggest the Latin cingulum, a belt or sash.

Dust that comes from the heel – רִקְבַּת הַבֵּיא מִן הָעֵקֶב: Flesh from the heel and the skin that covers it are different in many ways from other tissues in the body. The quality of the blood vessels and nerves in heels renders them less vulnerable to pain and wounds. This has led some contemporary medical experts to assert that these tissues are fundamentally different from others in the body and have their own form of development. Since they consider the heel a kind of dead zone in their classification of the parts of the body, the Sages ask whether or not the *halakhot* that apply to flesh from other parts of a corpse should apply to the heel as well.

HALAKHA

A fetus will ultimately emerge – עוֹבֵר דְּסוּפוֹ לִיצֵאתָ: If a pregnant woman died and was buried with the fetus in her womb, the dust from both of them does not impart impurity. The Rambam follows his usual principle that the *halakha* is in accordance with the option that forms the basis of the Gemara's ensuing dilemma that opens with: And if you say (Rambam *Sefer Tahara*, *Hilkhot Tumat Met* 3:5, and *Kesef Mishne* there, and *Sefer Hafla'a*, *Hilkhot Nezirut* 7:4).

בְּעֵי רַבִּי יִרְמְיָהּ: רִקְבַת הַבֵּיא מִן הָעֵקֶב, מִהוּ? כִּי גְמָרִינֵן – רִקְבַת הַבֵּיא מִכּוּלֵּיהּ מֵת, אֲבָל דְּאֵתִי מִן עֵקֶב – לָא, אִם דְּלִמָּא לֹא שְׁנָא?

§ Rabbi Yirmeya raised another dilemma concerning the dust of a corpse: With regard to dust that comes from the heel,^{BN} what is the *halakha*? The Gemara explains the two sides of the dilemma: Do we say that when we learn this *halakha* through tradition, is it only in reference to dust that comes from all of a corpse, but with regard to dust that comes from its heel, no, this *halakha* does not apply; or perhaps it is no different?

תָּא שְׁמַע, דְּתַנִּי רַבִּי נַתָּן בְּרַבִּי אוֹשְׁיָא: רִקְבַת הַבֵּיא מִשְׁנֵי מֵתִים – טַמָּא. וְאִי סְלִיקָא דְעֵתְךָ הַבֵּיא מִן הָעֵקֶב לָא, זִיל הֲכָא – דְלִמָּא דְרַךְ עֵקֶב קָאֵתִי, וְהֲכָא – דְלִמָּא דְרַךְ עֵקֶב קָאֵתִי!

The Gemara suggests a resolution of this dilemma: Come and hear, as Rabbi Natan, son of Rabbi Oshaya, taught: Dust that comes from two corpses is impure. And if it enters your mind that dust that comes from the heel does not impart impurity, go here and consider that perhaps the dust came from the heel,^N and go here too and consider that perhaps it came from the heel. The fact that the dust is considered definitely impure shows that dust from the heel imparts impurity as well.

אִי דְאִירְקִיב פּוּלְיָהּ מֵת וְקָאֵתִי דְרַךְ עֵקֶב – הֲכִי נִמְי. אֲלֵא הֲכָא כְּגוֹן דְאִירְקִיב חַד אֲבָר, וְקָאֵתִי דְרַךְ עֵקֶב, מֵאִי? תִּיקוּ.

The Gemara rejects this argument: If the entire corpse decayed and the dust came from the heel, so too, it is all impure, as the dust of the heel is not considered to be a foreign substance. Rather, here Rabbi Natan is referring to a case where one limb decayed^N and the dust came from the heel. It was with regard to this situation that Rabbi Yirmeya asked: What is its *halakha*? Does this dust impart impurity or not? No answer was found, and therefore the Gemara states that the dilemma shall stand unresolved.

בְּעֵי רַבִּי יִרְמְיָהּ: עוֹבֵר בְּמַעֵי אִשָּׁה הוּי גְלִגְלִים אוֹ לֹא? בֵּינֵן דְאָמַר מִן עוֹבֵר יִרְךָ אָמו – הֲלִכְךָ גּוֹפָה הוּא, וְלֹא הוּי גְלִגְלִין. אוֹ דְלִמָּא בֵּינֵן דְסוּפוֹ לִיצֵאתָ – מִפְּרִשׁ פְּרִישׁ מִינָהּ. וְאִם תִּמְצִי לִומר עוֹבֵר דְסוּפוֹ לִיצֵאתָ מִפְּרִשׁ פְּרִישׁ מִינָהּ,

§ Rabbi Yirmeya raised yet another dilemma: Does a dead fetus in its dead mother's womb form a mixture with regard to her, so that the bodies are considered like two corpses buried together, or not? The Gemara explains the two sides of the dilemma: Do we say that since the Master said that a fetus is considered as the thigh of its mother, it is therefore like her body and it does not form a mixture with it? Or perhaps one should maintain: Since in most cases a fetus will ultimately emerge^H from the womb at birth, it is already considered separated from her, and it is like any other corpse buried with the woman. And if you say that a fetus, which will ultimately emerge, is considered separated from her and is not part of her body, one must still ask this question

NOTES

Dust that comes from the heel – רִקְבַת הַבֵּיא מִן הָעֵקֶב: Many commentaries find this entire discussion problematic, to the extent that the Rid concedes that he does not comprehend the passage and is unable to explain it. There are two broad explanations here. Most early commentaries understand the word heel literally, and the heel is singled out because its flesh is callous and dulled even during a person's lifetime (*Tosafot*; Rosh; Rabbeinu Peretz). Consequently, one might think that it should not be considered part of the impure dust of a corpse. Others, based on a different version of the text, maintain that the reference is not to a heel in particular, but to any part of the body that is not vital for existence (Meiri). According to this opinion, the question is referring to a case where that part of the body is removed and buried on its own. The comments in the Jerusalem Talmud indicate that the discussion is understood in a similar manner there, although that Gemara is also problematic (see Meiri). A similar interpretation is that the term heel refers to the lower part of the body, which might not impart impurity as dust because it is not the central part of the corpse (Commentary on *Nazir*). All these explanations have their difficulties, both with regard to the arguments themselves and in terms of how their claims fit in with the text of the Gemara.

From the heel – דְרַךְ עֵקֶב: Some commentaries maintain that the phrase from the heel simply means that the dust contains part of the heel (*Tosafot*). According to this opinion, if dust from the heel does not impart impurity, the combined dust of the two corpses would amount to less than the required amount of a full ladle of dust. Other commentaries explain that: From the heel, means that it is possible that the dust from the two corpses is merely from the heel (Commentary on *Nazir*), or that it is considered a mixture with the dust from the rest of the body (Meiri).

Where one limb decayed, etc. – דְאִירְקִיב חַד אֲבָר וכו': Some commentaries explain that this is referring to a case where the foot decayed, and it is assumed that the heel rotted before the rest of the body did, as a heel decomposes quickly. The *halakha* of dust that imparts impurity does not apply to decomposition of this kind (*Tosafot*). Others maintain, in accordance with their interpretations of the entire passage, that the Gemara is speaking only of the heel, which decayed by itself (Commentary on *Nazir*; Meiri).

HALAKHA

Semen...excrement, etc. – פִּירְשָׁה וְכוּ׃: The Rambam omits these cases in his rulings of *halakhot*. The later authorities claim that the answer to Rav Shmuel bar Aḥa's difficulty is a mere refutation, and that all these combinations are in fact considered a mixture (Rambam *Sefer Hafla'a*, *Hilkhot Nezirut* 7:4, and *Leḥem Mishna* there; *Arukh HaShulḥan HeAtid*, *Hilkhot Tumat Met* 8:19).

A corpse that was ground – מֵת שֻׁטְחָנוּ: A corpse that was ground into dust does not impart ritual impurity, as it did not become dust of its own accord (Rambam *Sefer Hafla'a*, *Hilkhot Nezirut* 7:4 and *Sefer Tahara*, *Hilkhot Tumat Met* 3:6).

If a corpse was ground and it later decayed – טָחְנוּ וְחָזַר: If someone ground a corpse and left it until it fully decayed, it is uncertain whether its dust imparts impurity. Consequently, it is uncertain whether one who comes into contact with its dust is impure, as this question was not resolved by the Gemara (Rambam *Sefer Hafla'a*, *Hilkhot Nezirut* 7:4 and *Sefer Tahara*, *Hilkhot Tumat Met* 3:7).

LANGUAGE

Palm water [*mei dekalim*] – מֵי דְקָלִים: Based on the context of the Gemara, this apparently is referring to water from the spring at Har HaBarzel, northeast of the Sea of Galilee. This was possibly one of the springs in the area that was used for medicinal purposes. The water of these springs contains many minerals. The high sulfur content in these waters transforms the stomach fluids into a hydrogen sulfide solution, H₂S, which has a purgative effect. Palm water became famous for this quality.

BACKGROUND

Waters of Tiberias – מֵי טְבְּרִיָּא: This refers to the hot springs near the city of Tiberias, which can reach temperatures of 60° Celsius and even higher.



Hot springs of Tiberias

שִׁכְבַּת זֶרַע בְּמַעֵי אִשָּׁה מֵהוּ? מִי אֲמַרְיָנוּ: בֵּינוֹן דְּלָא אֵיתְצֵר – כִּי גִוְפָה דְּמִי, אִו דְּלָמָא בֵּינוֹן דְּמַעְלָמָא קָאֲתִי – לָא?

בְּעֵי רַב פַּפָּא: פִּירְשָׁה מֵהוּ? בֵּינוֹן דְּלָא מְקַיָּמָא בְּדָלָא אֲכָלָה – חֵיוֹתָא הוּא, אִו דְּלָמָא הָא נְמִי מַעְלָמָא אֲתִי? בְּעֵי רַב אַחָא בְּרִיָּה דְּרַב אִיקָא: עוּרוּ מֵהוּ? בְּעֵי רַב הוֹנָא בְּרַ מְנוּת: כִּיחֻ וְנִיעוּ מֵהוּ?

אָמַר לִיהָ רַב שְׁמוּאֵל בְּרַ אַחָא לְרַב פַּפָּא: וְאִי סְלָקָא דְּעֵתְךָ כָּל הָיָה דְּקָאֲמַר הוּי גְּלִילִין, רָקַב דְּמִטְמָא הֵיכִי מִשְׁבַּחַת לָהּ? דָּא שְׁקִיָּיָה מִי דְקָלִים, וְסָכְנָא נֶשְׂאָ, וְשֻׁלְקוֹ בְּמֵי טְבְּרִיָּא.

אָמַר אַבְיֵי נְקֻטִין, מֵת שֻׁטְחָנוּ – אֵין לֹו רָקַב. אֵיבְעִיָּא לָהּ: טָחְנוּ וְחָזַר וְהִרְקַב, מֵהוּ? מִיָּדִי הוּא טַעְמָא אֶלָּא דְּאִיבָא בְּשָׂר וְגִידִים וְעֲצָמוֹת – וְהָאִיבָא, אִו דְּלָמָא כְּבָרְיָתוֹ בְּעֵינֵן, וְלִיבָא תִיקוּ.

with regard to semen in a dead woman's womb. What is the *halakha* in this case? Does it form a mixture with respect to the woman's body? The Gemara explains the two sides of this dilemma: **Do we say that since no fetus was formed from the semen, it is considered like her body? Or, perhaps one should argue that since it comes from outside, it is not considered part of her body.**

Rav Pappa raised a similar dilemma: With regard to her excrement,¹ the food waste that remains in a woman's intestines, what is the *halakha*? Once again, the Gemara explains the two sides of this dilemma: Do we say that since she cannot subsist without food it is considered her life, which means that the food left inside her body is part of her and does not form a mixture with the corpse? Or perhaps this too comes from outside and is therefore not part of her body, and does form a mixture with her corpse. Similarly, Rav Aḥa, son of Rav Ika, raised a dilemma concerning a corpse: With regard to its skin,^N what is the *halakha*? Rav Huna bar Manoah likewise raised a dilemma: With regard to its phlegm and its spittle, what is the *halakha*?

Rav Shmuel bar Aḥa said to Rav Pappa: But if it enters your mind that all these cases of which they spoke form a mixture, under what circumstances do you find this case of dust that imparts impurity? Dust from a corpse will always include some components of the aforementioned elements. The Gemara answers: It is possible. For example, if someone was given palm water [*mei dekalim*],^L a powerful laxative, to drink^N before he died, and was rubbed with a depilatory agent to remove his hair, and was boiled after death in the hot waters of Tiberias^{NB} until the skin came off, this would remove all matter that is not part of the corpse itself.

Abaye said: We have a tradition that a corpse that was ground^H into small pieces has no *halakha* of dust. A dilemma was raised before the Sages: If a corpse was ground after death and the remains later decayed,^H what is the *halakha*? The Gemara clarifies the two sides of the dilemma: Is the *halakha* of dust of a corpse only due to the fact that there is flesh and sinews and bones, and all these are present in this case, so it is impure? Or perhaps, we require the corpse to have decayed from its initial state, before it was ground, and this is not the situation here. As was the case with regard to the previous inquiries, no answer was found, and the Gemara says that the dilemma shall stand unresolved.

NOTES

Its skin [*oro*] – עוּרוּ: The notion that a corpse's skin should not be considered part of the body is puzzling, especially in light of the *halakha* that the skin of a corpse imparts ritual impurity. The commentaries disprove the suggestion that the Gemara is referring to skin stripped from a corpse and buried with it (Rabbeinu Peretz). The early commentaries explain that the dilemma concerning the skin is applicable according to the opinion that the impurity of the skin of a corpse applies by rabbinic law. Since, according to this opinion, skin is not considered part of the body by Torah law, it is possible that it might be classified as forming a mixture with the corpse (Rabbeinu Peretz). Some suggest that the word *oro* in this context does not mean its skin. Rather, it is related to the word *me'arer*, meaning to pour, and is referring to saliva found in the mouth, which is not released by coughing like phlegm or through force of effort like spittle but flows out on its own (Commentary on *Nazir*).

Was given palm water to drink – דָּאֲשְׁקִיָּיָה מִי דְקָלִים: This water is a strong laxative that releases all excrement from the bowels (Commentary on *Nazir*). Others add that it also serves to drain out any moisture, e.g., phlegm or spittle (*Tosafot*).

Boiled in the waters of Tiberias – שֻׁלְקוֹ בְּמֵי טְבְּרִיָּא: The point of this procedure is to remove the skin and phlegm (Commentary on *Nazir*). The commentaries explain that boiling and removing the skin are insufficient, as the roots of the hair remain attached at the subcutaneous level of the skin. It is therefore necessary to rub a depilatory agent on it afterward to eradicate the roots of the hair as well (*Tosafot*; Meiri). Alternatively, if the head is boiled in hot springs, part of the soft flesh might fall apart as well, which would render the corpse deficient. Consequently, the rest of the body must be boiled, while the head is rubbed with a depilatory agent (see Meiri). Others contend that the Gemara is not referring to successive actions on a single corpse. Rather, each action in this list, i.e., applying palm water, boiling, and rubbing a depilatory agent, is a separate response to the various dilemmas raised by *amora'im* above.

A corpse that lacks a part, etc. – **מת שחסר וכו'**: The dust of a corpse that is missing a limb does not impart ritual impurity (Rambam *Sefer Hafla'a, Hilkhot Nezirut* 7:3 and *Sefer Tahara, Hilkhot Tumat Met* 3:4).

Nor the *halakha* of earth that is caught, nor a graveyard – **ולא תפוסה ולא שכונת קברות**: If a dead person is missing a limb that would have caused his death had it been removed when he was alive, the *halakhot* of caught earth and a graveyard do not apply to this corpse (Rambam *Sefer Tahara, Hilkhot Tumat Met* 9:5).

Decayed when he was alive, etc. – **הרקוב בשהוא חי וכו'**: If part of a dead person rotted during his lifetime, it is uncertain whether one who comes into contact with the rest of his dust after his death is impure, as this dilemma was not resolved in the Gemara (Rambam *Sefer Hafla'a, Hilkhot Nezirut* 7:4 and *Sefer Tahara, Hilkhot Tumat Met* 3:7).

NOTES

Nor the *halakha* of a graveyard – **ולא שכונת קברות**: The commentaries point out that this case is apparently not related to the *halakhot* of ritual impurity. Rather, the issue is factual: Does the discovery of three corpses indicate the presence of an ancient cemetery on the site? If so, what difference does it make if one of the bodies is missing a limb (*Tosafot*)? They suggest that perhaps it is a *halakha* transmitted to Moses from Sinai that this *halakha* of a cemetery applies only to intact corpses (see Rosh). Others propose a logical explanation: If one of the corpses is incomplete, this might indicate that a fight occurred, and the victims were buried at the site. If so, one need not be concerned that more bodies might be found there, as there is no reason to suppose that the area was ever used as a cemetery (Meiri).

תני עולא בר חנינא: מת שחסר – אין לו רקב, ולא תפוסה, ולא שכונת קברות.

§ Ulla bar Hanina teaches: A corpse that lacks a part^H does not have the *halakha* of dust, which imparts ritual impurity in the amount of a full ladle, nor the *halakha* of earth that is caught [*tefusa*] and considered part of a corpse. If a deficient corpse is moved, the surrounding earth is not considered part of it and need not be moved together with the body, as must be performed for a whole corpse. Nor does the *halakha* of a graveyard^{HM} apply. If three corpses are discovered in close proximity and one of them is deficient in some way, one need not search for more bodies out of concern that the location might have been a cemetery, as must be done if three intact corpses are found. Rather, the bodies are considered isolated corpses.

מיתבי: לא, אם אמרת במת שיש לו רוב ורובע, או מלא תרווד רקב, תאמר בחי שאין לו לא רוב ולא רובע, ולא מלא תרווד רקב.

The Gemara raises an objection from a mishna (*Eduyyot* 6:3) that addresses the question of whether an olive-bulk of flesh that came from a living person imparts ritual impurity as it would were it to come from a corpse: No, if you say that an olive-bulk of flesh imparts impurity with regard to a corpse, whose *halakhot* of impurity are stringent, as the majority of its structure or the majority of the number of its bones, or a quarter-*kav* of its bones, or even a full ladle of its dust impart impurity, shall you also say that it imparts impurity with regard to a living person, who does not have the *halakha* of the majority of structure or the majority of the number of its bones, nor a quarter-*kav*, nor a full ladle of dust?

היכי דמי? דארקוב חד אבר – דכותיה גבי מת אפילו חד אבר איכא רקב! מי קתני הא מת? הא קא משמע לן: שום מת יש לו רקב, שום חי אין לו רקב.

The Gemara analyzes this passage: What are the circumstances of that mishna that deals with a limb from a living person? If you say that one limb of a living person decayed, and the mishna is indicating that in the corresponding situation with regard to a corpse, there is dust even from one limb. This shows that the *halakha* of dust applies to a corpse that is missing a limb and not just to a complete corpse. The Gemara rejects this argument: Did the mishna teach that this corpse in that particular case of an isolated limb has the *halakha* of dust? That is merely an inference, as it is not stated explicitly in the mishna itself. Rather, the mishna teaches us this: The name, i.e., the category, of a corpse has dust. However, the name of a living person does not have dust.

בעי רבא: הרקוב בשהוא חי, וחרו ומת, מהו? כי גמירי רקב – דארקוב בשהוא מת, או דלמא השתא מיהא הא מניית?

Rava raised a dilemma: If a limb of a body decayed when he was alive,^H and that individual subsequently died, what is the *halakha*? Do we say that when this is learned as a tradition that dust imparts ritual impurity, this applies only if the body decayed when he was dead, but not when he was alive, and therefore this corpse is considered deficient and its dust does not impart impurity? Or perhaps, now in any event he is dead, and his whole body has decomposed, and consequently its dust does impart impurity.

תא שמע: לא, אם אמרת במת שיש לו רוב ורובע ומלא תרווד רקב, תאמר בחי כו'.

The Gemara suggests: Come and hear the aforementioned mishna: No, if you say that an olive-bulk of flesh imparts impurity with regard to a corpse, whose *halakhot* of impurity are stringent, as the majority of its structure or the majority of the number of its bones, or a quarter-*kav* of its bones, or even a full ladle of its dust imparts impurity, shall you also say that this it imparts impurity with regard to a living person, who does not have the *halakha* of the majority of structure or the majority of the number of its bones, nor a quarter-*kav*, nor a full ladle of dust.

טעמא – משום חי, הא מת – יש לו רקב! מי קתני הא מת? הא קא משמע לן: דשום מת יש לו רקב, שום חי אין לו רקב.

The Gemara infers from this passage: The reason the olive-bulk of flesh does not impart impurity is due to the fact that it is from a living person, from which it may be inferred that in a corresponding situation involving a corpse, the corpse has the *halakha* of dust, even if the limb had decomposed during the deceased's lifetime. The Gemara rejects this contention as above: Did the mishna teach that this corpse in that particular case of an isolated limb has the *halakha* of dust? That is merely an inference, as it is not stated explicitly in the mishna itself. Rather, the mishna teaches us this: The name, i.e., the category, of a corpse has dust. However, the name of a living person does not have dust.

בְּעֵי רְבָא: נְמִלָּה שְׁחִסְרָה מְהוּ? שִׁיעוּרָא גְמִירִין לָהּ – וְהָא חָסֵר, אוּ בְרִיָּה גְמִירִי לָהּ, וְהָאִיכָּא?

S In relation to the above discussion concerning a body without a limb, **Rava raised a dilemma**: If someone eats an entire ant, even if it is less than an olive-bulk in volume, he is liable for eating a creeping animal because it is a whole creature. Rava's dilemma was as follows: If one eats **an ant that lacks a part**, e.g., a leg, **what is the halakha**? Is this individual liable to receive lashes? The two possibilities are as follows: **Is it learned** as tradition that **the amount** for which one is liable is a whole ant, **and this one is lacking**? **Or did we learn** that he is punished for a viable entity, **and there is a viable entity here**, despite the missing limb?

Perek VII
Daf 52 Amud a

HALAKHA

And the Sages calculated that this is the volume of a lentil-bulk – וְשִׁיעוּרֵי חֲכָמִים בְּכַעֲדָ שָׁהּ. The carcass of a creeping animal imparts ritual impurity if it has the volume of a lentil-bulk. All creeping animals combine to form this amount (Rambam *Sefer Tahara, Hilkhot She'ar Avot HaTumot* 4:2).

Does have a soul, etc. – נְמִלָּה בְּהָ נִשְׁמָה וְכוּ'. If someone eats a forbidden creature in its entirety, e.g., if he eats an ant, he is liable to receive lashes regardless of its size. However, if it is missing even a leg, he is liable only if he ate the amount of an olive-bulk. This is because the Gemara's dilemma is left unresolved, and the court does not administer lashes in a case of uncertainty (Rambam *Sefer Kedusha, Hilkhot Ma'akhalot Assurot* 2:22, and *Mishne LaMelekh* there).

BACKGROUND

Skink [*homet*] – חוֹמֵט: The *homet* is one of the eight creeping or swarming animals mentioned in the Torah (Leviticus 11:30). Precise identification of each of these creatures is by no means a simple matter. Throughout the generations, there were two traditions with regard to identification of the *homet*. Some say it is one of the subspecies of snails that lack a shell. This interpretation is supported by the claim that it is as large as a lentil-bulk, which is the size of a small snail. Others identify the *homet* as a species of reptile similar to the chameleon (Rav Se'adya Gaon). Nowadays the *homet* is widely regarded as a species of skink. Dwelling primarily in the sand, narrow and thin skinned, some varieties of the skink have only two working limbs along with two atrophied limbs, while others have no limbs at all.



Legless skink

אָמַר רַב יְהוּדָה מְדִיסקְרְתָא, תָּא שְׁמַע: "בְּהֵם". יָכוֹל בְּכוֹלָן – תְּלִמוּד לֹמַר "מֵהֵם". אִי "מֵהֵם" יָכוֹל מִקְצָתָן – תְּלִמוּד לֹמַר "בְּהֵם".

Rav Yehuda from Diskarta said: Come and hear the following halakhic midrash concerning the ritual impurity of creeping animals. The verse states: "Whoever touches **them** when they are dead shall be impure" (Leviticus 11:31). One **might** have thought this *halakha* applies only **to all of them**, i.e., to complete creatures. Therefore, **the verse states**: "And upon whatever any **of them**, when they are dead, fall, it shall be impure" (Leviticus 11:32), which indicates that part of these creatures also imparts impurity. **If the halakha** were derived solely from the phrase "of them," one **might** have thought that it applies even to a **small part** of them. **The verse therefore states**: "**Them**," which means all of them.

הָא בִּיצֵד? עַד שִׁיגַע בְּמִקְצָתָן שְׁהוּא בְּכוֹלָן, וְשִׁיעוּרֵי חֲכָמִים בְּכַעֲדָ שָׁהּ, שְׁבִין הַחוֹמֵט תְּחִלַּת בְּרִייתוֹ בְּכַעֲדָ שָׁהּ. שְׁמַע מִינָּה: שִׁיעוּרָא גְמִירִי לָהּ.

How so? How can one reconcile the two verses? He does not become ritually impure **unless he touches** at least **part of them** that is equal in measure **to all of them**, i.e., a large part. **And the Sages calculated** that this is the volume of a **lentil-bulk**.^h Why is this? **As the start of the formation of a skink**,^b one of the eight impure creeping animals, is the size of a **lentil-bulk**. This concludes the halakhic midrash. With regard to the issue at hand, one can **learn from here** that it is **learned** as a tradition that **the amount**ⁿ for a creature to be considered whole is a lentil-bulk. If so, an ant missing a limb should likewise not have the status of a creature.

אָמַר רַב שְׁמַעְיָה: כִּי בְּעֵינָן שִׁיעוּרָא, דְּבִדְלָא הוּא בְּכַעֲדָ שָׁהּ לֹא מְטִמָּא – דְּלֹא נְמִלָּה בְּהָ נִשְׁמָה, אֲבָל נְמִלָּה בְּהָ נִשְׁמָה – לֹא. תִּיבְעֵי לָךְ.

Rav Shemaya said, in refutation of this argument: **When we require** the above amount, **that if it is not** the volume of a **lentil-bulk it does not impart impurity**, the requirement applies only in a case **where the creature does not have a living soul** before it grows to the size of a lentil. **However, if it does have a soul**,^h this volume is **not** required. If the creature can survive, perhaps it does impart impurity even if it is lacking a limb. Consequently, with regard to an ant that is missing a limb, **the dilemma remains unresolved for you**.

NOTES

Learn from here that it is learned as a tradition that the amount, etc. – שְׁמַע מִינָּה שִׁיעוּרָא גְמִירִי וְכוּ'. Some commentaries explain that once it is derived from the verse that the size of a whole creature is required, it is evident that an animal that is missing a limb no longer imparts ritual impurity, and therefore it is not prohibited to consume it either (Commentary on *Nazi*). Others state that a skink in its entirety is the volume of a lentil-bulk, including its legs and other limbs. If part of it is

removed, the creature no longer imparts impurity even if the skink can survive without this part, because the remainder is less than the minimum size. This shows that the amount of a whole creature is required (*Tosafot*). Others formulate the argument as follows: If an ant from which a limb has been removed is nevertheless considered a creature, a skink should impart impurity even if it is less than the volume of a lentil (Rosh; Rabbeinu Azriel).