Bekhorot 22

Daf Yomi · Saturday, October 10, 2026 · כ״ט תשרי תשפ״ז · Covers 22a (brine bought from an am ha-aretz) through 23b (water mixed into brine)

Summary

Bekhorot 22 leaves the firstborn for a sugya on nullified impurity. Reish Lakish rules in the name of R. Yehuda Nesia that brine bought from an *am ha-aretz* may be purified by joining it to a ritual bath. Either the water in it is the majority and is purified by the contact, or the brine is the majority, and brine does not receive impurity, so the small amount of water is nullified. R. Yirmeya limits this to dipping bread, not to cooking, since in a pot "a kind finds its kind and is awakened." Abaye objects that purity cannot awaken impurity, and Rav Dimi cites the Mishnah on impure *terumah* that fell into ordinary produce, where Ulla explains a decree based on the same idea.

Abaye then challenges the principle from the ashes of the red heifer mixed with ordinary ashes, from carcass meat mixed with slaughtered meat, and from R. Eliezer ben Ya'akov's clot of blood, which would at least convey impurity by carrying if nullified impurity still counts. The Gemara considers whether the clot is different because it has rotted, citing the dispute of Bar Padda and R. Yochanan over when a carcass loses its impurity, and leaves the challenge unresolved. It then explains the verse each of them uses. Finally, a Mishnah of R. Eliezer ben Ya'akov declares pure brine impure when any water falls in. Rav Nachman infers that *amei ha-aretz* were suspected of mixing water into brine, and the Gemara explains why only about half was suspected.

Detailed Summary

1. Brine from an *am ha-aretz* 22a

The preceding lines of 22a complete the measures of the *pikka* (summary of Bekhorot 21).

REISH LAKISH. Reish Lakish said in the name of R. Yehuda Nesia: one who buys brine from an *am ha-aretz* joins it to water in a ritual bath, and it is pure (Rashi: since it may have become impure through the *am ha-aretz*'s touch).

EITHER WAY. Whichever way you look at it: if the water is the majority, once he joins it to the bath, it is purified. If the brine is the majority, brine cannot receive impurity. What about the small amount of water? It is nullified in the majority.

Rashi – ד"ה וטהור

THE ISSUE. How can a liquid be purified in a ritual bath?

RASHI'S EXPLANATION. If water is the majority, the brine is nullified in it and the whole receives impurity as water. Water can be purified by joining: one places the vessel in the bath until the bath's water passes over its rim and touches the water inside. Although food and drink are not purified in a ritual bath, water is purified by joining, which is like sowing seeds and picking them up again, and sowing purifies from impurity.

WHY IT MATTERS. The ruling works whichever liquid is the majority.

Rashi – ד"ה ציר לאו בר קבולי טומאה

THE ISSUE. Why can brine not become impure?

RASHI'S EXPLANATION. It is merely the sweat that comes out of fish when they are salted.

WHY IT MATTERS. Brine is not one of the liquids that receive impurity.

Tosafot – ד"ה הנך מיעוטא דמיא בטילן להו ברובא

CLARIFICATION. This is not like other prohibitions, where taste counts; the principle that taste counts as the substance was not said regarding impurity. Likewise carcass meat is nullified in slaughtered meat for impurity, even if everything is later cooked together.

WHY THIS MATTERS. Impurity is nullified by simple majority, not by the absence of taste.

2. A kind finds its kind 22a

R. YIRMEYA. R. Yirmeya said: this was taught only for dipping his bread, but not for a pot, since a kind finds its kind and is awakened (Rashi: the water in the brine joins the water in the pot and they become the majority over the brine).

Tosafot – ד"ה וניעור

QUESTION. Rashi explains that the water again becomes the majority over the brine and makes it impure. But brine cannot receive impurity.

ANSWER. Rather, "awakened" means that before this, the impurity of the water was nullified by the majority of brine; now the water is awakened to its original state from before it was mixed.

WHY THIS MATTERS. The water's own impurity returns, not the brine's.

ABAYE'S OBJECTION. Rav Dimi sat and stated this teaching. Abaye said to him: does impurity that was nullified return and awaken? He said: do you not hold so? We learned: a *se'ah* of impure *terumah* that fell into a hundred *se'ah* of pure ordinary produce: R. Eliezer says it must be separated and left to rot, for I say the *se'ah* that fell is the *se'ah* that came up. The Sages say it is nullified and eaten dry, or roasted, or kneaded with fruit juice, or divided into doughs, provided there is not an egg's volume in one place.

Tosafot – ד"ה תירום ותירקב

QUESTION. The Yerushalmi reads "burned." Are we dealing with fools, who could benefit from burning it but leave it to rot?

ANSWER. Rabbeinu Tam explains that rotting and burning are the same: our Mishnah means burning without benefit, like rotting. If benefit were allowed, one might come to eat it, since there was reason to permit it through nullification.

WHY THIS MATTERS. R. Eliezer forbids even indirect benefit from the separated *se'ah*.

THE BARAITA. It was taught on this: those ordinary foods, according to R. Eliezer, what is done with them? They are eaten dry, or roasted, or kneaded with fruit juice, or divided into doughs, provided there is not an egg's volume in one place. Ulla said: what is the reason? A decree, lest he bring a *kav* of impure ordinary produce from elsewhere, and a *kav* and a bit of this kind, thinking he nullified them in the majority. Since there is a tiny bit of the impure *terumah*, a kind finds its kind and is awakened.

Rashi – ד"ה מה טעם

THE ISSUE. Why are these foods not treated as fully ordinary?

RASHI'S EXPLANATION. According to the Sages, they are not considered fully ordinary for R. Eliezer, even though it was nullified, since R. Eliezer holds "I say the *se'ah* that fell is the one that came up."

WHY IT MATTERS. Ulla's explanation shows the Mishnah fears that nullified impurity can be reawakened.

ABAYE. Abaye said to him: if impurity awakens impurity, does purity awaken impurity (Rashi: how could the pure water in the pot awaken the water in the brine to make it impure)?

3. Abaye's challenges 23a

THE RED HEIFER ASHES. He challenged him: kosher ash of the red heifer mixed with ordinary ash: we follow the majority to make impure. If most is ordinary ash, it does not make impure. If you say nullified impurity is as though present, granted it does not convey impurity by touch, but let it convey impurity by carrying! That was answered: R. Yose son of R. Chanina said: it does not convey impurity by touch, but it does by carrying.

CARCASS IN SLAUGHTERED MEAT. But Rav Chisda said: a carcass is nullified in slaughtered meat, since a carcass cannot become slaughtered meat. Granted it does not convey impurity by touch, let it convey impurity by carrying! He answered: you teach it in the name of Rav Chisda; we teach it in the name of R. Chiya. R. Chiya taught: a carcass and slaughtered meat are nullified in each other, and it was said on this: R. Yose son of R. Chanina said, it does not convey impurity by touch, but it does by carrying.

Rashi – ד"ה בטילה בשחוטה

THE ISSUE. Why is carcass meat nullified in slaughtered meat?

RASHI'S EXPLANATION. A piece of carcass mixed with two pieces of slaughtered meat is nullified in the majority regarding impurity, since a kind mixed with another kind is nullified, and these count as different kinds.

WHY IT MATTERS. Different status makes them different "kinds" for nullification.

THE CLOT OF BLOOD. And what we learned: R. Eliezer ben Ya'akov says a large animal that expelled a clot of blood must be buried and is exempt from the firstborn law, and R. Chiya taught that it conveys impurity neither by touch nor by carrying. Granted it does not convey impurity by touch, let it convey impurity by carrying! He was silent.

ROTTED IMPURITY. Perhaps it is certainly different here, since it is rotted impurity. That works for Bar Padda, who says severe impurity lasts until it is unfit for a resident alien, and light impurity until it is unfit for a dog; this is not fit for a resident alien. But according to R. Yochanan, who says both last until it is unfit for a dog, this is fit for a dog. It is difficult.

Rashi – ד"ה טומאה חמורה

THE ISSUE. What are "severe" and "light" impurity?

RASHI'S EXPLANATION. Severe impurity is impurity by carrying; it lasts until the carcass is unfit for a resident alien to eat. Light impurity, by touch, lasts until it is unfit even for a dog.

WHY IT MATTERS. On Bar Padda's view, the clot is too rotted to convey impurity by carrying.

4. Bar Padda and R. Yochanan 23b

THE DISPUTE. The matter itself: Bar Padda says severe impurity lasts until it is unfit for a resident alien and light impurity until it is unfit for a dog. R. Yochanan says both last until it is unfit for a dog. What is Bar Padda's reason? It is written: "you shall not eat any carcass; to the resident alien... you may give it" (Devarim 14:21). What is fit for a resident alien is called a carcass; what is not fit for a resident alien is not called a carcass.

R. YOCHANAN'S USE OF THE VERSE. And the other? It excludes where it rotted from the start. And the other? Where it rotted from the start, no verse is needed to exclude it; it is mere dust.

Rashi – ד"ה הסריחה מעיקרא

THE ISSUE. What is "rotted from the start"?

RASHI'S EXPLANATION. Its limbs broke while alive and it became infested. Although it is fit for a dog, it does not convey impurity by carrying, since it never entered that impurity. But if at first it was fit for a resident alien and gained the impurity of carrying, it does not lose it until it is unfit for a dog.

WHY IT MATTERS. For R. Yochanan, the verse limits only a carcass that was never fit for eating.

BACK TO THE CLOT. We learned: R. Eliezer ben Ya'akov says a large animal that expelled a clot of blood must be buried and is exempt from the firstborn law; R. Chiya taught it conveys no impurity by touch or carrying; and R. Yochanan said it was nullified in the majority before they touched it. Why mention nullification? Derive it from the fact that it was never fit at all! It too was fit from the start, by way of its mother.

5. Water in brine 23b

THE MISHNAH. We learned there: R. Eliezer ben Ya'akov says, pure brine into which any amount of water fell is impure. Rav Nachman said in the name of Rabbah bar Avuha: this shows that *amei ha-aretz* were suspected of mixing half water into brine.

Rashi – ד"ה ציר טהור

THE ISSUE. Why would a little water make pure brine impure?

RASHI'S EXPLANATION. The brine was purified by joining it to a bath. The *amei ha-aretz* were suspected of mixing half water into their brine, so when any water falls in, a kind finds its kind and the water becomes the majority over the brine.

WHY IT MATTERS. The Mishnah supports the view that nullified impurity can reawaken.

WHY HALF? Why say half? Even less than half; with this tiny amount it becomes half and half, which is not nullified. Say "up to half" (Rashi: close to half). Alternatively, the impurity of an *am ha-aretz* is rabbinic, and the impurity of liquids is rabbinic: the Sages decreed for a majority, but not for half and half.

The next Mishnah, Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel's ruling on a nursing animal bought from a gentile, begins on 23b and is covered in the summary of Bekhorot 23.

The full picture in plain language

This daf asks what happens to impurity that has been nullified in a majority. Brine from an *am ha-aretz* may contain water that became impure, but since brine itself cannot become impure, a small amount of water is lost in it. R. Yirmeya warns that if the brine goes into a pot of water, the impure water "finds its kind" and reawakens. Abaye objects that pure water should not be able to restore impurity, and Rav Dimi points to a decree about impure *terumah* mixed into ordinary food, which assumes exactly that.

Abaye presses the point with cases where nullified impurity seems fully gone, even for carrying. Some cases are answered by distinguishing touch from carrying, but the clot of blood from the previous daf remains a difficulty for R. Yochanan. Along the way, the Gemara explains how long a carcass remains impure as it rots: until it is unfit for a resident alien or until it is unfit even for a dog.

Glossary

Hebrew	Transliteration	Meaning in this sugya
ציר	*tzir*	Fish brine, which does not receive impurity.
עם הארץ	*am ha-aretz*	One not trusted in matters of purity.
השקה	*hashakah*	Joining water to a ritual bath to purify it.
מצא מין את מינו וניעור	*matza min et mino ve-ni'or*	A kind found its kind and reawakened.
אפר מקלה	*efer miklah*	Ordinary hearth ash.
טומאת משא	*tum'at masa*	Impurity conveyed by carrying.
ראויה לגר	*re'uyah le-ger*	Fit for a resident alien to eat.

Sources: Gemara with relevant Rashi and Tosafot.