

## **Chaver (Torah Scholars) and Am Haaretz (Unlearned Jews)**

**Ref: Sefer Taharah, Hilchot Metamei Mishkav Umoshav, Chapters 10–11**

The term *chaver* refers to Torah scholars who understand the intricacies of purity and impurity.

- Careful about sources of impurity
- Careful not to contract this impurity
- Careful not to impart impurity to pure articles
- Careful with washing of hands
- Careful with maintaining their purity
- Doesn't take moist foods from an unlearned person
- Doesn't accept their hospitality
- Does not give hospitality to *am haaretz* while he is wearing his own garments .

An unlearned person however is considered to be impure and his clothes are considered a *midras* (i.e. as an article upon which a *zav* etc had sat).

An unlearned person can take upon himself the above restrictions of a *chaver*. He is trained and observed for **30** days. Thereafter he is considered pure. His status must be formalized by **3 chaverim**.

The wife of a *chaver* and the member of his household are also trusted regarding purity.

If a *chaver* becomes suspected of being negligent with Scriptural Law (large matters), he also becomes suspect of negligence in smaller matters.

Circumstances when common people are trusted regarding their purity: (i.e. they state their status of purity).

- *Parah Adumah* (Red Heifer)
- *Nesachim* (wine and oil libations) i.e. consecrated wine and oil
- *Trumah* (Heave Offering) of winepresses and oil vats only while in season

Their word is not accepted regarding empty vessels. However interestingly, their word is accepted within *Yerushalayim* up to *Modiin*. (15km outside *Yerushalayim*)

New earthenware containers straight from a kiln are considered pure no matter where they are located.

During the *Shalosh Regalim* (Pilgrimage Festivals), *amei haaretz* are given the status of pure temporarily. This relates to all their vessels, food and drinks. However, the Priests would immerse all the *kelim* (vessels) of the *Bet Hamikdash*, in the *mikveh* after the festivals.

All their food etc which had been considered as pure on *Yom Tov*, is considered as impure as soon as *Yom Tov* ends.