

Overview (Personal) of Tumah (Impurity)

Ref: *Sefer Taharah, Hilchot Shear Avot Hatumah, Chapter 1*

OVERVIEW OF TUMAH (IMPURITY)

(This is a personal summary and not from the text of the *Rambam*.)

A source of impurity is called *av hatumah* (father of impurity).

It will transmit impurity to

- Other people
- Vessels
- Clothes (are considered as vessels)

Reminder

Table Impurity Transmitted to clothes *Sefer Taharah, Hilchot Parah Adumah, Chapter 5*
Pack on Impurity of Clothes



The person who touches an *av hatumah* now becomes a *vlad hatumah* (child of *tumah*) which again will reduce in level i.e. *rishon* (first), *sheni* (second) etc. i.e. A *rishon letumah* cannot transmit impurity to other people or vessels but they could transmit impurity to foods.

However, the highest level of impurity is a human corpse and this is called *avi avot hatumah* (father of the father). This impurity makes the person and vessels in touch with it, an *av* (whereas *avot hatumah* only make them a *rishon*).

The following are *avot hatumah*:

- *Avi avot hatumah* Human corpse
- *Mei Nidah* Waters of *Parah Adumah*
- *Tumat Tzaraat* ‘Leper’
 - Person
 - Garments
 - House
- *Zav* Includes male *zav*, female *zavah*, *nidah* (menstruant), *yoledet* (woman who has given birth)
 - Person
 - Their fluids
 - Chair and bed on which lain (*mishkav moshav*)
 - Saddle on which sat (*merkav*)
 - Madaf other articles above and below *zav*
- *Nevelah* Animal carcass
- *Dead sheretz* Crawling animals e.g. mice
- *Shichvat zera* Semen
- *Avot Derabanan*



Besides there being various levels of impurity, there are also various levels of food.

- Ordinary food
- *Maaser sheni*
- *Trumah*
- *Kadashim* (sacrificial food)

And various levels of person purity:

- Impure
- *Tevul Yom* – Immersed in *mikveh* but not yet sunset (i.e. person must wait until sunset).
- *Mechusar kaparah* – Immersed in *mikveh*, sunset has arrived but not yet brought offering.
- Pure – After offering sacrifice.

Examples of how some levels of impurity transmit

	<i>Av Tumah</i>	<i>Rishon</i> (Primary derivative)	<i>Sheni</i> (Secondary derivative)	<i>Tevul Yom</i> (Immersed in <i>mikveh</i> but not yet sunset)	<i>Mechusar Kaparah</i> (Immersed in <i>mikveh</i> , sunset has arrived, but not yet brought offering)
Transmit impurity to people and objects	✓				
Transmits impurity to ordinary food including <i>Maaser sheni</i>	✓	✓			x
Transmits impurity to <i>trumah</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Transmits impurity to <i>kadashim</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

There is a great General Principle – any entity that is susceptible to impurity from midras i.e. a zav etc, would also be susceptible to other types of impurity.

(This would not necessarily work the other way around and only applies to items which a zav uses as a support e.g. a mat.)

 **Reminder**

Pack on Impurity – Essential Overviews

