

Process whereby Foods and Liquids become Impure

Ref: *Sefer Taharah, Hilchot Tumat Ochalin, Chapter 1*

Hechsher (wetting of foods by liquids, to make them susceptible to impurity)



Laws about impurity of liquids and foodstuffs and the way they are made susceptible to impurity.¹



All the Laws of making foods susceptible to impurity originate by *Divrei Kabalah*.

Only foods which are designated for human consumption are susceptible to impurity.

To be susceptible, the foods must first be dampened (*yibalel*) with one of the 7 liquids.

The process of dampening is called *hechsher*.

The 7 liquids are

- *Mayim* (water)
- *Tal* (dew)
- *Shemen* (olive oil)
- *Yayin* (wine)
- *Chalav* (milk)
- *Dam* (blood – that flows at time of slaughter)
- *Devash* (honey – bees honey)

For liquids to be a conduit for impurity, they must have been placed there with intent by the owner. If they just fell there by accident, they are not yet susceptible to impurity. Also, if liquid is 'rotten' or foul, they are not yet susceptible to impurity.

FACTORS

- Other fruit juices do not make food susceptible, and they themselves also do not contract impurity.
- Grapes and olives must have reached $\frac{1}{3}$ of their maturity for their liquid to transmit impurity
- Generally, spices do not contract impurity. They are not eaten for themselves, but to add flavour, aroma or appearance to food.
- Definition of what is food and what is liquid. These can change with circumstance e.g. honey in a hive is regarded as food, but honey dripping from the hive is regarded as liquid, unless he thought to use it as food. But if one crushes a comb and it is dripping, it is always regarded as liquid.
- Leaves from a tree are not susceptible unless they are sweetened to be eaten.
- Spoiled food does not contract impurity.