

## Pouring water onto sand or dirt

It is prohibited to  
pour water in a  
sandbox

As we have seen (above, pp. 618–619), children may play in a sandbox on Shabbat, provided that they take care not to violate a prohibition of Plowing or Building by creating a hole. However, they may not play in sand that has not been designated for playing, such as on a beach or sand that has been designated for use in construction, because such sand is *muktze*. Additionally, just as it is prohibited, whether by Torah law or by rabbinic law, to pour water onto flour, it is similarly prohibited to pour water onto sand. Therefore, although children may play in a sandbox, **they may not pour water onto the sand**, even if they do not knead or shape it.

Washing hands  
or urinating onto  
sand or dirt

A very common application of this *halakha* occurs when a person is out on a walk and wants to **wash their hands over sand or dirt**.

As we have seen above (pp. 585–586), this action is sometimes prohibited due to **Plowing** or **Planting**, but these prohibitions do not apply when the land has not been planted and is not intended to be used for planting. Nevertheless, it must be ascertained whether this is prohibited due to **Kneading**, as according to Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi it is prohibited by Torah



Pouring water onto sand in order to make it wet is prohibited.

law to pour water onto dirt, and according to Rabbi Yossi bar Yehuda it is prohibited by rabbinic law, as we have seen above.

A similar question arises when one is outdoors and needs to urinate. The *Sefer Yere'im* (274) implies that one may not urinate in a location where the prohibition of Kneading would be relevant. There is a dispute among the *Aḥaronim* about this issue, as cited in the *Mishna Berura* (321:57):

The *Magen Avraham* writes: It appears to me that it is prohibited to urinate onto mud due to Kneading... and the same is true with regard to [urinating onto] loose dirt and sand. Even though one does not intend to knead, it is an inevitable consequence of the action. With regard to a receptacle into which one spits on Shabbat and underneath it there is fine or coarse dirt, it must be analyzed whether this is prohibited or permitted, as perhaps this is an undesired inevitable consequence. And I found in the *Beit Meir* that he permits for this reason, in a situation of need, even urinating onto mud. It appears that one may rely on this if one does not own the mud, as then one is certainly not satisfied with the Kneading.

Thus, the *Magen Avraham* prohibited urinating onto **mud** due to Kneading, and the *Mishna Berura* added that it is similarly prohibited to urinate onto **loose dirt** (that is detached from the ground) or onto

**sand.** By contrast, the *Beit Meir* holds that since the individual has no intention to knead and the basic *halakha* is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yossi bar Yehuda that pouring water onto mud is a prohibition by rabbinic law, this is a case of a prohibition by rabbinic law produced as an undesired inevitable consequence, and in a situation of need there is room to allow this.

Practical *halakha*

With regard to the practical *halakha*, the *Mishna Berura* rules that one may rely on the *Beit Meir* in a situation of need with regard to **mud that one does not own**, where one does not desire the kneading. Consequently, one should try **not to urinate onto sand or loose dirt, but when there is a need**, such as when there is no other suitable location, **one may be lenient**. It is always permitted to urinate onto hard ground.<sup>6</sup>

It is permissible to  
moisten sand or  
dirt indirectly

With regard to washing one's hands, it is preferable to find a place where the water will not spill directly onto sand or loose dirt, but in a situation of need one may be lenient. Yet, in this case there is a simple solution. As we have seen above (p. 588), **Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach** permitted the use of a sink from which the water drains onto plants if the water drains through a pipe rather than spilling directly onto the plants. This is because the watering occurs via **indirect causation**, and in such a case, if the individual does not intend to water the plants, there is room for leniency. Similarly, it is permitted to wash one's hands over **a rock or a piece of metal**, even if the water drains from there onto sand or loose dirt.



Washing hands onto sand or dirt, without intention to knead – in a situation of need there is room to be lenient.

6. One should refrain from urinating onto materials formed from small particles that do not bind together when mixed with water, such as ashes, as some *Rishonim* hold that pouring water onto such substances is prohibited by Torah law even according to Rabbi Yossi bar Yehuda, as will be explained below (pp. 1037–1040).

This would be classified as indirect causation, which is permitted if there is no intent to moisten the dirt (if one does intend to do so, it is prohibited).



Washing one's hands over a rock is permitted, even if the water will flow from the rock onto sand or dirt.

Therefore, it is permitted to wash one's hands over a rock even if the water will then flow onto sand or onto plants that are ownerless or belong to someone else. This is permitted even if there is a small amount of sand on the rock, as the combination of water and sand will be so runny that it will not even be considered a mixture. Similarly, it is permitted to wash one's hands into a sink that drains through a pipe onto sand or plants, as long as there is no benefit from the fact that the water reaches the sand or the plants.

It is prohibited to pour water onto sand, and therefore children who are playing in a sandbox may not pour water there.

Summary

One who needs to wash their hands or to urinate should search for a place where there is no sand or loose dirt. In a situation of need there is room to be lenient (especially in the case of one who needs to urinate). Additionally, one may be lenient if the water will fall onto a stone or a piece of metal and only then flow onto the ground.

## KNEADING

