

Selected Halachos from Kitzur Shulchan Aruch

Session 2 - Washing the Hands

סימן ב

When he arises from his bed in the morning a person is considered as a newly created being, to serve the Creator, Blessed be His Name. He, therefore, must sanctify himself and wash his hands from a vessel, [just] as a Kohein washed his hands each day from the special basin [located in the Temple] prior to his service. This washing is indicated in the Scripture as it is said: "I will wash my hands in purity and I will encircle Your altar, Hashem, to proclaim a sound of thanks, etc." Psalms 26:6,7. There is also another reason for this washing. When man is asleep, his holy soul departs from him, and an unclean spirit comes and dwells upon his body. When he awakens from his sleep, the unclean spirit departs from his entire body except from his fingers, from which it does not depart until he pours water upon them three times alternately. It is forbidden to walk a distance of four amohs without washing the hands except in cases of extreme necessity.

The first garment you should don is the small tallis in order not to walk four amohs without fulfilling the mitzva of tzitzis. However, since your hands are still unclean, you should not [yet] recite the brachah.

The procedure for washing hands in the morning is as follows: take the vessel in your right hand and then place it in your left hand, and then first pour on the right hand; and then take the vessel in your right hand and pour upon the left hand. This procedure is repeated three times. It is

א. לְפִי שֶׁהָאָדֶם כַּאֲשֶׁר קָם מִמְּשֶׁתוֹ שַׁחֲרִית הוּא כְּמוֹ בְּרִיָּה חֲדָשָׁה לַעֲבוֹדַת הַבּוֹרֵא יִתְבָּרַךְּ שְׁמוֹ, לָכֵן צְּרִיךְ לְהִתְקַדֵּשׁ וְלִּטֹּל יָדָיו מִן הַכְּלִי, שְׁמוֹ, לָכֵן צְרִיךְ לְהִתְקַדֵּשׁ וְלִטֹּל יָדִיו מִן הַכְּיּוֹרְ כְּמִוֹ כְּמִוֹ כְּמִן שָׁהָיָה מְקַדֵּשׁ יָדָיו בְּכָל יוֹם מִן הַמִּקְרָא, קְדֶם עֲבוֹדְתוֹ. וְסֶמֶךְ לִנְטִילָה זוֹ מִן הַמִּקְרָא, שָׁנֶּאֱמַר, אֶרְחַץ בְּנָּקִיוֹן כַּפְּי וַאֲסוֹבְבָה אֶת מִיְבַּחֲךְ ה' לַשְׁמִיעַ בְּקוֹל תּוֹדָה וְגוֹי. וְעוֹד יֵשׁ מַעִם לִנְטִילָה זֹאת, לְפִי שֶׁבִּשְׁעַת שֵׁנָה טֵעם לִנְטִילָה זֹאת, לְפִי שֶׁבִּשְׁעַת שֵׁנָה שָׁנְּסְתּלְקָה מִמֶּנוּ נִשְׁמְתוֹ הַקְּדוֹשְׁה בָּא רוּחַ הַשְּׁבְּתוֹן הַבְּיִ בְּעוֹרָי מִשְׁנָתוֹ מִשְׁבָּתוֹ מִים בְּטִרּוֹלְ מִדְּשָׁה בְּעוֹתִין שָׁצִינוֹ עוֹבֵר מֵעֲלֵיהֶן עַד שְׁשׁוֹבֵּךְ אֵבְבְעוֹתִין שָׁצִיים מִיִם בְּסֵרוּגִים וְבִּי שְׁבִּיוֹ מְטִבּר מִעְלֵיהָן עַד שָׁשׁוֹבֵּךְ אַבְבַע אַמּוֹת בְּלִי נְטִילַת יָדִים אִם לֹא לֵצֹרְךְ גִּדְוֹל מִאֹד.

ב. יִלְבַּשׁ מַלְבּוּשׁ הָרָאשׁוֹן אֶת הַפַּלִּית קָטָן, שָׁלֹא יֵלֵךְ אַרְבַּע אַמּוֹת בְּלִי צִיצִית. וּלְפִי שֶׁעֲדַיִן אֵין יַדִיו נִקִיּוֹת, לֹא יִבָּרֵךְ עַלַיו.

ג. נְטִילַת יָדַיִם שַּׁחֲרִית הִיא בְּדֶרֶךְ זֶה. נוֹטֵל אֶת הַפְּלִי בְּיַד יְמִינוֹ וְנוֹתְנוֹ לִשְׂמֹאלוֹ, וְשׁוֹפֵּךְ תְּחִלָּה עַל יַד יָמִין, וְאַחַר כָּךְ נוֹטֵל אֶת הַכְּלִי בִימִינוֹ וְשׁוֹפֵךְ עַל יַד שְׂמֹאל. וְכֵן יַעֲשֶׂה שָׁלֹשׁ פְּעָמִים. preferable to wash your hands until the wrist. However, in extreme circumstances it is sufficient to wash them until the knuckles. You should also wash your face in deference to the Creator, as it is said: "For in the image of God He created Man." Genesis 9:6. You should also rinse your mouth because of the spittle in it, for you must pronounce the great Name [of God] in holiness and purity. After this dry your hands and be careful to dry your face well.

The hands must be washed only into a vessel. It is forbidden to derive benefit from the water used for washing because of the foul spirit that rests upon it, and [therefore] you should pour it in a place where people do not walk.

Before washing you should not touch your mouth or nose, your eyes or ears or anus, or food, or the place where blood was let; because the foul spirit that rests upon the hands before washing is damaging to these things.

It is preferable to be careful to wash your hands in the morning with water poured from a vessel with human effort, similar to the washing of hands before a meal. However, in extreme circumstances, where you do not have suitable water and you wish to pray, you may wash your hands from any [vessel], with any kind of water, even if the water is not poured with human effort, and you may still recite the brachah: al netilas yadayim. I.e., "Upon washing the hands." If there is a river close by it is preferable to dip your hands in it three times, or even [to dip them] in snow. However, if there is no water at all you may wipe your hands on anything and recite the brachah, al nekiyas yadayim, I.e., "Upon cleaning the hands," and this is sufficient [preparation] for prayer. Afterwards, upon finding water and proper vessels you should wash your hands again

וְטוֹב לִּשְּׁלֶן עַד פֶּרֶק הַזְּרוֹעַ. אַךְ בִּשְׁעַת הַדְּחָק,
דַּי עַד קִשְׁרֵי אֶצְבְּעוֹתָיו. וְרוֹחֵץ פָּנָיו לִכְבוֹד
יוֹצְרוֹ, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר, כִּי בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים עָשָׂה אֶת
הָאָדָם. וְגַם יִרְחַץ פִּיו מִפְּנֵי הָרִירִים שֶׁבְּתוֹכוֹ,
שָׁצְרִיךְ לְהַזְכִּיר אֶת הַשֵּׁם הַנְּדוֹל בִּקְדֻשָׁה
וּבְטָהֵרָה. וְאַחַר כָּךְ מְנַגֵּב יָדָיו. וְיִזָּהֵר לְנַגֵּב פְּנָיו
יָפֶה.

ד. צָרִיךְ לִּטֹּל יָדִיו דַּוְקָא לְתוֹךְ כֶּלִי. וְאָסוּר לֵהָנוֹת מִמֵּי הַנְּטִילָה, מִפְּנֵי שֶׁרוּחַ רָעָה שׁוֹרָה עֵלֵיהֶם, וְיִשְׁפְּכֵם בְּמָקוֹם שֶׁאֵין בְּנֵי אָדָם הוֹלְכִים.

ה. לֹא יִגַּע קֹדֶם נְטִילָה לֹא בַבֶּה, וְלֹא בַחֹטֶם, וְלֹא בָעֵינַיִם, וְלֹא בָאָזְנַיִם, וְלֹא בְפִי הַטַּבַּעַת, וְלֹא בָאֱכָלִים, וְלֹא בִמְקוֹם הַקָּזָה, מִפְּנֵי שֶׁרוּחַ רָעָה הַשׁוֹּרָה עַל הַיָּדִיִם קֹדֶם נְטִילָה, מַזֶּקֶת לִדבַרִים אֵלוּ.

ו. טוֹב לְהַקְפִּיד בִּנְטִילַת יָדִיִם שַׁחֲרִית בִּכְלִי וּבְמַיִם וּבְכֹחַ גַּבְּרָא כְּמוֹ בִנְטִילַת יָדִיִם לִסְעוּדָה. אַךְ בִּשְׁעַת הַדְּחָק שָׁאֵין לוֹ מַיִם כָּרָאוּי וְהוּא רוֹצֶה לְהִתְפַּלֵל, יָכוֹל לִטֹל יָדָיו מִתּוֹךְ כָּל דָּבָר וּבְכָל מִינֵי מֵיִם וּבְלֹא כֹחַ גַּבְרָא, וְיָכוֹל לְבָרֵךְ עַל נְטִילַת יָדַיִם. וְאִם יֵשׁ לְפָנָיו נָהָר, טוֹב יוֹתֵר שָׁיִּטְבּל בּוֹ יָדִיו שָׁלשׁ בְּעָמִים אוֹ יָבָר, עוֹב יוֹתֵר שָׁיִּסְבּל בּוֹ יָדִיו שָׁלשׁ בְּעָמִים אוֹ יָדָיו בְּאֵיזֶה דָּבָר וִיבְרֵךְ עַל נְקִיּוּת יָדִים, וְדִי לוֹ לְתְפִלָּה. וְלִכְשֶׁיּזְדַבֵּן לוֹ אַחַר כָּךְ מֵיִם וְכֵלִים הָרְאוּיִם, יִטֹּל יָדָיו עוֹד הַפַּעַם כְּרָאוּי. אֲבָל לֹא יַבַרֵךְ עוֹד. properly, but without pronouncing an additional brachah.

It is written: "My soul, bless Hashem and all that is within me [bless] His holy Name." Psalms 103:1. It follows that since a person needs to bless God with all his innards, he is forbidden to recite the brachah until he cleans his intestines from excrement and urine. In the morning when a person awakens he probably has a need to relieve himself or at least to urinate; therefore he should not recite the brachah over the washing of the hands at the time of washing, but rather after he relieves himself. He then washes his hands again and then recites the brachah al netilas yadayim, and then the brachah of asher yatzar, followed by the brachos on the Torah and then the brachah of Elokai neshamah.

If you awakened and washed your hands while it is still night, as required, and remained awake until daybreak, or if you slept a second time while it was still night, or if you slept during the day [long enough] for sixty breaths (which is about one half hour), or if you are awake all night [without sleeping long enough for sixty breaths,] in all of these cases it is doubtful if there is a requirement to wash the hands or not. You should, therefore, wash three times in the alternate manner (as mentioned in paragraph 3) but without reciting the brachah.

These following situations require the washing of hands with water: upon rising from bed [after sleeping], when leaving the lavatory or bathhouse, after cutting nails or hair, after removing shoes, after sexual intercourse, after touching vermin, or delousing a garment even without touching vermin, after a head shampoo, or touching parts of the body that are usually covered [out of modesty], after leaving a cemetery, or walking after a funeral procession, or leaving a room in which there was a corpse, or after blood-letting.

ז. כְּתִיב, בָּרְכִי נַפְשִׁי אֶת ה' וְכָל קְרָבַי אֶת שֵׁם קְדְשׁוֹ. וְכֵיוָן שֶׁצְּרִיךְ הָאָדָם לְבָרֵךְ אֶת הַשֵּׁם בְּכְל קְרָבִיו, אָסוּר לְבָרֵךְ עַד שֶׁיְיַנֵקֶּה אֶת הַקְּרְבַיִם מִצּוֹאָה וּמֵי רַגְלָיִם. וּבַבּׂקֶר בְּקוּמוֹ מְקְרָבַיִם מִצּוֹאָה וּמֵי רַגְלָיִם. וּבַבּּׂקֶר בְּקוּמוֹ מְקְרָבַיִם מִצּוֹאָה וּמֵי רַגְלָיִם. וּבַבּּׂקֶר בְּקוּמוֹ מְפְּחָמָא הוּא צְרִיךְ לַעֲשׂוֹת צְרָכִיו אוֹ לְכָל הַפְּחוֹת לְהַשְׁתִּין, עַל כֵּן לֹא יְבָרֵךְ בִּרְכַּת עַל נְטִילַה עַד לְאַחַר שֶׁיְנַקֶּה נְטִילַה עַד לְאַחַר שֶׁיְנַקֶּה אֶת עַצְמוֹ, וְיִרְחַץ יְדֵיו עוֹד פַּעם אַחַת וְאָז יְבָרֵךְ עַל עָל נְטִילַת יָדִיִם וַאֲשֶׁר יְצֵר וּבְרְכַּת הַתּוֹרָה אֱלֹהִי נְשָׁמָה וְכוּ.'

ח. אָם הִשְׁפִּים וְנָטַל יָדָיו בְּעוֹד לַיְלָה פְּדִינוֹ וְהָיָה עֵר עַד אוֹר הַיּוֹם, אוֹ שֶׁהָיָה יָשֵׁן אַחַר כְּךְ שֵׁנִית עֵר עַד אוֹר הַיּוֹם, אוֹ שֶׁהָיָה יָשֵׁן אַחַר כְּךְ שֵׁנִית בְּעוֹד לַיְלָה, וְכֵן הַיָּשׁׁן בַּיּוֹם שִׁתִּין נִשְׁמִין (שֶׁהוּא לְעֵרֶךְ חֲצִי שָׁעָה), וְכֵן הַנֵּעוֹר כָּל הַלַּיְלָה [וְלֹא לְעֵרֶךְ חֲצִי שָׁעָה), וְכֵן הַנֵּעוֹר כָּל הַלַּיְלָה [וְלֹא יָשׁן שִׁתִּין נִשְׁמִין], בְּכָל אֵלוּ יֵשׁ סְפֵּק אִם צְרִיכִים נְטִילַת יָדַיִם אוֹ לֹא. לָכֵן יִפּלֹ יָדְיו שָׁלֹשׁ בְּעָמִים בְּסֵרוּגִים כְּדְלְעֵיל סְעִיף ג', אֲבָל לֹא יָבַרַךְ עֵלֵיהֶם.

ט. אֵלּוּ דְבָרִים צְרִיכִין נְטִילַת יֻדִים בַּמַּיִם, הַקָּם מָן הַמִּטָּה, וְהַיּוֹצֵא מִבֵּית הַכְּסֵּא, וּמִבֵּית הַמְּלְחָץ, וְהַנּוֹטֵל צִפְּרְנָיו, וְהַמְנַלֵּחַ שַׂצְרוֹתִיו, וְהַמְנַלֵּחַ שַׂצְרוֹתִיו, וְהַמְּלַלִּיו, וְהַמְשַׁמֵשׁ מִטְּתוֹ, וְהַנּוֹגֵעַ בְּכָנָה, וְהַמַּבְּלָה אֶת בְּנָדִיו אֲפְלּוּ לֹא נָגַע בְּכָנָה, וְהַחוֹפֵף רֹאשׁוֹ, וְהַנּוֹגֵעַ בְּגוּפוֹ בִּמְקוֹמוֹת הַמְּכָסִים, וְהַיּוֹצֵא מִבֵּית הַקְּבָרוֹת, וְהַמְלַנֶּה אֶת הַמָּתְלַנָּה אֶת הַמְּבָרוֹת, וְהַמְלַנֶּה אֶת הַמָּתְלַנִּח בָּחֹ

Halachic Debates

Halacha 8: "If you are awake all night... it is doubtful if there is a requirement to wash the hands or not. You should, therefore, wash three times in the alternate manner but without reciting the brachah."

To explain the doubt:

Kitzur Shulchan Aruch explained (based on Teshuvat HaRashba 1:191) that the reason for washing one's hands in the morning is because when a person arises from his bed in the morning he is considered as a newly created being to serve the Creator. He, therefore, must sanctify himself and wash his hands from a vessel, just as a Kohein washed his hands each day from the special basin located in the Temple prior to his service.

According to this reason, it should not make a difference if someone slept at night, because also someone who was did not sleep needs to prepare to serve his creator. Once the sages instituted that we should start our day by washing our hands, this applies to everyone, even to someone who did not sleep.

There is however another reason brought for washing the hands in the morning. The Rosh (Brachot 9:23) says that the reason for washing the hands in the morning is because one's hands may have touched an unclean part of the body during his sleep; therefore, he should wash his hands before prayer.

According to this reason, there would be no reason for someone who did not sleep to wash his hands.

The Shulchan Aruch is in doubt which reason to follow. therefore, the halacha is that we wash our hands without making a Bracha.