כב. מותר לחנך תינוקות לברך ולומר פסוקים ודברי תורה, אפילו אם ידוע שאינם יודעים לקנח עצמם יפה, שמשום מצות חינוך התירו. ומותר גם כן לשבת אצלם ולקרוא קריאת שמע ולהתפלל ולברך, ובלבד שלא יהיה שם ריח רע. [מרן הראש"ל בילקו"י מהדו"ק עמ' קל]

ומכל מקום לכתחילה ודאי שיש להקפיד על הקטנים שהגיעו לחינוך שיהיה גופם נקי אחר עשיית צרכיו, ועל האשה לזרז את בניה על כך. [עי' חסד לאלפים סי' פא ס"א, ילקו"י עמ' רפה]

כג. לא יקנח ביד ימין. [ש"ע ס"ק]. וכשמקנח ביד שמאל, יזהר שלא יקנח באצבע שכורך עליה שלש הכריכות והיא נקראת אמה, אלא ישמיט אצבע זו ויקנח בשתים האחרונות. ואם אי אפשר לו בכך

To teach children

22) It is permissible to train little children to recite blessings and verses of the Torah even though they are not yet mature enough to cleanse their bodies thoroughly after using a restroom. The mitzvah of educating the children in Torah and to fulfill mitzvot overrides this concern. Likewise, it is permissible to sit next to the children and recite the prayers with them, as long no odor of excrement emanates from them.

Despite this, it is important to train children to maintain good hygiene and clean themselves thoroughly after defecating. In most cases, it is mainly the responsibility of the child's mother to teach this to him.

Wiping with the left hand

23) It is forbidden to wipe oneself clean with one's right hand.[136] Even when using the left hand, one must take care not to use the middle finger, since the tefillin strap is wrapped around that finger. One must extend that finger upward and use the other fingers to wipe. If this is difficult because the skin is soiled extensively, one may use all the fingers of the left hand.[137]

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136. The Talmud (*Berakhot* 62a) offers several reasons for this halakha: a) Ribbi Eliezer taught that it is because one eats with the right hand, inserting the fingers holding the food directly into one's mouth; b) Ribbi Yehoshua taught that it is because one writes Torah with the right hand; c) Ribbi Akiva taught that it is because one uses the right hand to signal the liturgical notes to prompt the person chanting the Torah reading; d) Rava taught that it is because the Torah was given from God's right Hand, as the verse states (*Devarim* 33:2), "מִימִינוֹ אֵשׁ דָּת לָמוֹ – A fiery law from His right Hand to them;" e) Ribbi Shim'on ben Lakish taught that it is because one uses the right hand to wrap the tefillin straps around the left arm.

137. The source for this detail of the halakha is the *Shene Luḥot Haberit*, cited by the *Magen Avraham* and other *Aḥaronim*.

The Maharsh"a asked that if this halakha is based on the mitzvah of tefillin, as Ribbi Shim'on ben Lakish taught, it should be quite the opposite. It should be forbidden to use the left hand since we wrap tefillin around the left arm. It must be because the right hand plays an active part in the mitzvah of tefillin whereas the left arm and hand play only a passive role in the mitzvah. Wiping the skin clean is an action, and we compare it to the action of wrapping the tefillin, which is performed with the right hand.

According to this explanation, however, there should be nothing wrong with wiping using the middle finger of the left hand. After all, it plays only a passive role in the mitzvah of tefillin.

The *Shene Luḥot Haberit* understood the issue differently – it is forbidden to wipe using the fingers of the right hand because they play a part in the mitzvah of tefillin. It is with the fingers of the right hand that one wraps the tefillin around the left arm. The fingers of the left hand play no part in the mitzvah of tefillin and therefore one may wipe the skin clean with them. Of course, the middle finger plays an important part in the mitzvah of tefillin, and therefore it is forbidden to use that finger for this purpose. Harav Yosef

מחמת רוב הלכלוך שאינו מתקנח בשתים לבדם היטב, אז יקנח גם בכל אצבעותיו גם בזו. [באו"ח ויצא הי"ד, כה"ח ס"ק כד]

וגם נשים שאין להם תפילין, ירגילו עצמן לקנח בשמאל ולא בימין. [באו"ח ויצא הי"ד]

ואיטר יד מקנח ביד ימין. [מקבציאל ויצא הי"ח, משנ"ב ס"ק יז, כה"ח ס"ק כ]

ויש אומרים שכל זה במקנח ביד, אבל אם מקנח באמצעות נייר, אין להקפיד בזה. והסומך על דבריהם יש לו על מה שיסמוך. [עי' ילקו"י עמ' רפו, הלכה ברורה עמ' מו]

Although women do not wear tefillin, they should nevertheless learn to wipe themselves with the left hand, not the right hand.[138] A left-handed person, however, should wipe himself with his right hand.[139]

According to some *Poskim*, these rules apply only when wiping the skin with one's bare hand. When using toilet paper, however, one may use either hand. There is a basis to rely on this opinion.[140]

Hayim wrote this explanation in his *Sefer Mikabtze'el* (*parashat Vayetze* halakha 18).

138. The *Mor Uktzi'a* states that women, just like men, may not wipe themselves clean with the right hand, but Harav HIDA (*Mahazik Berakha* 3:9) countered that there is no proof for this stringency. The *Ben Ish Hai* (*parashat Vayetze* halakhic 14, cited in the *Kaf Hahayim* Sofer 3:24) stated that although women do not wear tefillin, they should nevertheless refrain from using their right hands based on the other reasons offered in the Talmud. See more about this in the *Birkat Yehuda* Berakha (Vol. I, #1). The *Minhat Aharon* (4:10) wrote that the rule to refrain from wiping with the middle finger of the left hand applies to men only. Women, who do not wear tefillin, may use any and all fingers of the left hand.

139. According to most of the reasons stated in the Talmud for this halakha, it is reversed for a left-handed person since he uses his left hand in the manner that the majority of people use their right hands. He eats with his left hand, writes with it, points with it and ties his tefillin onto his right arm with his left hand. Accordingly, he should use his right hand to wipe his body clean. According to the fourth reason offered in the Talmud – that the Torah was given with God's right Hand – a left-handed person should have to use his left hand like everyone else.

Chronologically, this reason was the last one offered since Rava lived in a later generation than that of the *Tanna'im* or of Ribbi Shim'on ben Lakish. The *Magen Avraham* (3:8) debated whether this should be reason to determine the halakha for left-handed people. Logically, however, his opinion should not override those of the great *Tanna'im*. The *Aharonim* ruled that Rava's opinion cannot override that of four other Talmudic Sages and therefore a left-handed person must use his right hand to wipe himself. See the *Mishna Berura* (3:17) and the *Kaf Hahayim* Sofer (3:20).

Harav Yosef Hayim (*Mikabtze'el parashat Vayetze* halakha 18) cited this ruling but he then challenged it. According to his own ruling (*Ben Ish Hai parashat Haye Sara* halakha 7) a left-handed person should wear tefillin on both arms [but not at the same time]. This is because most *Poskim* ruled that left-handed people should wear tefillin on the right arm but Mahar"i Tzemah ruled that all people must wear tefillin on their left arms. Since this person does use his right hand to wrap the tefillin on his left arm, it is best that he wipe himself with his left hand like everyone else.

Maran the Rishon Letziyon (*Halikhot Olam* Vol. I, page 28) disagreed with the *Ben Ish Hai's* ruling that a left-handed person should wear tefillin on both arms. He demonstrated that the plain meaning of the Talmud, and the straightforward ruling of all the *Poskim*, is that a left-handed person wears tefillin on his right arm. Mahar"i Tzemah stands alone with his ruling to wear tefillin on his left arm and there is no need to take his opinion into account. The Arizal likewise made no such suggestion. A left-handed person should wear tefillin on his right arm only. This being the case, it follows that he should definitely wipe himself with his right hand, unlike the ruling in *Mikabtze'el*. If someone insists on following the stringency to wear tefillin on both arms, then he should follow the instructiong given in *Mikabtze'el* and wipe himself with his left hand.

140. Harav Zalman (*Mahadura Tinyana* 3:9) ruled that those people who clean themselves with their bare fingers [moistened with water] must use their left hands since the fingers of the right hand wrap the tefillin on the left

כד. מותר להרוג כינה באצבעות ימין, וכן מותר לשפשף בהם ניצוצות של מי רגלים. [באו"ח ויצא הי"ד]

Using the right hand

24) It is permissible to kill a louse with the fingers of one's right hand. Likewise, it is permissible to use one's right hand to wipe one's legs clean of urine if it splatters onto them.[141]

arm. It appears from this that the issue of using one hand or the other applies only when the person uses his bare fingers. If someone uses toilet paper, however, it makes no difference with which hand he wipes. This is likewise the ruling of Harav Yaakov of Emden (*Siddur Ya'abetz*) and the *Eshel Avraham* of Butchatch. See more about this in responsa *Be'er Moshe* (Vol. IV, #2:3).

Harav Shelomo Ganzfried (*Pe'at Hashulhan* glosses on the *Kitzur Shulhan Arukh* 4, cited in the *Kaf Hahayim* Sofer 3:22) took issue with this, declaring that he is certain that the Tanna'im did not clean themselves with their bare fingers. Therefore, he insisted that the halakha forbidding using the right hand applies even when using toilet paper.

The *Be'er Yaakov* (3:6) and the *Nimuke Orah Hayim* agreed with Harav Zalman, however. They explained that, on the contrary, in all likelihood our Sages did clean themselves with their bare fingers. The responsa *Tzitz Eliezer* (Vol. VII, #2) concurred with this and ruled in practice that one may use the right hand to wipe if one uses toilet paper.

The *Yalkut Yosef* (page 284) did not make a clear ruling on this issue. The *Halakha Berura* (page 46) ruled that if someone finds it difficult to use his left hand he may rely on Harav Zalman's opinion and use his right hand with toilet paper.

The responsa *Birkat Yehuda* (#1) challenged this, claiming that the Talmud and *Poskim* give no hint of such a distinction. Even though the *Hesed La'alafim* and the *Ben Ish Hai* knew of the concept of using toilet paper and mentioned it in their works, they did not mention that one may use the right hand with paper.

This is a weak argument. The Talmud did not make any such distinction since, practically speaking, even if someone used a stone or leaf to wipe himself he was bound to soil his hand as well. Therefore, the general rule was to use only the left hand. Now that we have toilet paper, however, it is entirely possible to wipe the skin clean without soiling the hand at all. Therefore, the basis for leniency remains valid. Furthermore, the responsa *Tzitz Eliezer* argued that since most people are more nimble with the right hand than with the left hand, it is better to clean the skin thoroughly with the right hand than to use the left hand and leave the skin soiled.

Harav Zalman's ruling can be supported by the comment of Harav Shimshon bar Tzemah (comment to *Berakhot* 62b). The *Ginze Hayim* Hutner (glosses on *Shulhan Arukh* 3) cited support from the Ramban in his *Milhamot Hashem* to *Berakhot*. Therefore, there is certainly a strong basis for leniency.

Changing diapers

The *Piske Teshuvot* (footnote on page 31) mentions the issue of changing an infant's dirty diaper, asking whether the adult must wipe the baby clean with his or her left hand. He did not issue any ruling about this, but logic dictates that the halakha applies in this case as well. The responsa *Sha'are Yosher* (Vol. IV, #1) ruled that it makes no difference whether one wipes one's own body or that of someone else.

During the first months of an infant's life, when he is too young to be able to eat bread or cereal, his excrement is not considered a dirty substance, following the ruling of the *Shulhan Arukh* (81). If so, it probably does not matter which hand one uses to change the infant's diaper until the age when he begins to eat bread or cereal. Even though there are *Poskim* who ruled that even a newborn's excrement is a dirty substance, it is not necessary to take that opinion into account.

Once the infant is older, however, one should refrain from wiping him clean with the right hand. It is best that women observe this stringency as well. Nevertheless, since the common practice nowadays is to clean the infant using moist wipes and not with one's bare hand, one may use the right hand unless one chooses to clean the baby with water in the sink.

141. The *Nimuke Yosef*, cited by Maran in the *Bet Yosef* (43:4), ruled that it is permissible to wipe splatters of urine from one's skin with the right hand. The *Eliya Rabba* (3:8) added that according to this it should be permissible to kill a louse with one's right hand. The *Ben Ish Hai* (*parashat Vayetze* halakha 14) concurred with this. These *Poskim* interpreted the halakha demanding that the left hand be used as applying only when handling human ex-

כה. יזהר לנקות המקום, בפרט בבית כסא המשמש גם לאחרים, וכמו שאמרו (חגיגה ה ע"א) על הפסוק (קהלת יב, יד) כי את כל מעשה האלהים יביא במשפט על כל נעלם. מאי על כל נעלם ? אמר רב זה ההורג כינה בפני חבירו ונמאס. ושמואל אמר, זה הרק בפני חבירו ונמאס. (פירש רש"י, ונמאס, קצה דעת חבירו בדבר). [ילקו"י עמ' רסא בהערה]

דיבור בבית הכסא

כו. לא ידבר שום דיבור בבית הכסא, אפילו דברי חול ואפילו תיבה אחת. [באו"ח הלכה י, וע"ע רמ"א ס"ב], ואפילו כשאין בבית, אלא בני ביתו בלבד אסור לדבר. [יבי"א ח"ח סו"ס א]. אך מותר לנחור ולהשמיע קול, כיון שאינו מוציא אותיות מפיו. [באו"ח שם]

Day 42

Leaving the restroom clean

25) After using the restroom, one must clean it before exiting. Our Sages taught (*Hagiga* 5a) that if someone kills a louse or spits in the presence of someone else who becomes nauseous from the sight, he will be punished for it. This is derived from the verse (*Kohelet* 12:14), "כִּי אֶת כָּל מַעֲשֶׂה הָאֱלֹהִים יָבִיא בְמִשְׁפָּט עַל כָּל נֶעְלָם – God will judge each of man's deeds, for every hidden act."[142] If the toilet bowl if left soiled, it might be nauseating to the next person who uses it.

Speaking in a Restroom

No speaking in a restroom

26) It is forbidden to speak even one word, even about mundane matters, in a restroom. Even if no one but one's family members are home, it is forbidden to speak while in the restroom.[143] It is permissible to snort or to vocalize a sound, but not a full syllable.[144]

crement and not other unclean substances. As mentioned above in the footnote to halakha 7, the *Mekor Hayim* (3) ridiculed those who took care not to wipe their noses with the right hand.

Carrying out refuse

The *Afike Meginim* (*Bi'urim* #18) states that although it is forbidden to wipe one's body with the right hand, one may carry out the garbage or a container of excrement with one's right hand. The *Piske Teshuvot* (page 31) cited this ruling as proof that a plumber may open pipes containing raw sewage with his right hand. Of course, when he is done he must wash his hands thoroughly.

142. The *Sefer Hassidim* (#44, cited in the *Yafe Lalev* 3:5) cited this passage and added: "Therefore, all those who fear God, the tzaddikim whom God protects from sin, must immediately forgive others who perform an unseemly act in their presence, such as killing a louse or spitting. There was one such pious person who would go and cover the spittle whenever he saw someone spit in his presence. He personally forgave the person who spat, but he covered the spittle so that no one else should come and be disgusted by it and become angry and unforgiving to the one who spat."

143. Speaking in a restroom

The Talmud teaches (*Berakhot* 62a): Ribbi Ami and Ribbi Asi were each able to enter the restroom alone without being injured [by demons]. The rabbis asked them, "Aren't you afraid [since this restroom was notorious for the vicious demons residing there]?" They replied, "We have a tradition from our teachers that by remaining silent and behaving modestly in a restroom [one is assured that no evil will befall him]."

The Talmud also teaches (ibid. 62b): Rav Safra entered a restroom. [While he was there] Ribbi Abba came to the entrance and coughed [to see if there was anyone inside]. Rav Safra said, "Please come in." After Ribbi Abba exited the restroom, he said to Rav Safra, "You have never even