לח. הישן ביום שינת קבע, לכתחלה לא יגע באוכלים ומשקים קודם שיטול ידיו, אבל אם עבר ונגע במאכלים ומשקים, יש להתירם, ואין צריך להחמיר בזה. [ילקו"י עמ' שפ עפמ"ש ביבי"א ח"ד סי' א סוף אות ו, שכ"פ בבא"ח תולדות הט"ו, ובכה"ח ס"ק יח]

לט. לא יגע בידו קודם נטילה, בפה, ולא בחוטם, ולא באזנים, ולא בעינים. [ש"ע סעיף ג], מפני שהרוח רעה השורה על הידים, תוכל להזיק לאלו האיברים. [משנ"ב ס"ק יא] ודוקא באצבעותיו. אבל ע"י כך היד מותר. [יפ"ל ח"א אות ח]

After a daytime nap

38) If someone takes a nap during the day, he should avoid touching food upon awakening until he performs *netillat yadayim*. If he touched food or beverages before doing so, however, they remain permissible. It is not necessary to be stringent about consuming it.[186]

Day 57

Touching body openings

39) Before performing the morning *netillat yadayim*, it is forbidden to touch one's mouth, nostrils, ears or eyes. This is because the harmful forces contaminating one's hands might injure [or bring illness to] the person through those apertures.[187] This applies to touching those body parts with one's fingers. It is

186. Harav HIDA (*Birke Yosef* 4:6) stated that his great grandfather, Harav Avraham Azulai, cited Harav Hayim Vital teaching that harmful forces infect one's hands after a daytime nap as well. On the other hand, the *Tefilla leDavid* (page 4b) cited the Arizal teaching that a daytime nap does not instigate any harmful forces, and the responsa *Lev Hayim* (#69, page 88c) and the *Ben Ish Hai* (*parashat Toledot* halakha 15) concurred with this ruling. Based on these *Poskim*, Maran the Rishon Letziyon ruled that if someone touched food after taking a daytime nap but before he performed *netillat yadayim*, the food remains permissible. This is likewise the ruling of the *Yalkut Yosef* (page 380).

187. The Talmud teaches (*Shabbat* 108b): "If someone wishes to touch his eye with his hand, his hand should be cut off. If someone wishes to touch his nose with his hand, his hand should be cut off. If someone wishes to touch his mouth with his hand, his hand should be cut off. If someone wishes to touch his ear with his hand, his hand should be cut off." Rashi explained that all this refers to someone who has not yet performed *netillat yadayim* in the morning. He is better off having his hand severed rather than be blinded by the harmful forces infecting his eyes through his hand. This halakha appears in the *Shulhan Arukh* 4:3 and it is discussed at length in responsa *Yabia Omer* (Vol. IV, #1).

What is the harm?

The *Solet Belula* (4:3) explained that the danger in touching the body's apertures is not that the person might become blind or deaf physically. It applies, rather, to one's connection to Torah wisdom. The Talmud warns us that if someone is careless and touches these body parts before performing *netillat yadayim*, he will be "blind and deaf" in his Torah learning that day. He will not be able to understand what he reads or what he hears. The *Yafe Lalev* (Vol. I, 4:9) suggested that this punishment applies if the person is learned in Torah. If he is not, then his punishment will be physical blindness or deafness.

The *Minhat Aharon* (1:13) cited the *Solet Belula* and challenged the thesis. Why should a Torah scholar be more susceptible to spiritual blindness than an unlearned person? Furthermore, how would the author of *Solet Belula* explain the Talmud's statement that if a person touches his mouth before *netillat yadayim* he will develop bad breath, or that when someone touches his nose he develops an evil smell that emanates from it? These punishments do not seem to have anything to do with Torah wisdom. Therefore, the *Minhat Aharon* concluded that the Talmud is referring to physical ailments, as it seems from the plain reading of the text.

Furthermore, if the *Solet Belula's* interpretation is correct that the punishment is administered that very day, people would then argue that our Sages' warnings are unwarranted since these things do not happen to people. Instead, it is preferable to interpret the Talmud literally, and if someone sees that people are not punished as the Talmud warns, he can attribute it to God's patience and mercy. The blindness or deafness might not become a reality until the person's old age.

ולגעת באיברים אלו מבחוץ, יש מחמירים (מחזיק ברכה), ויש מקילים (מור וקציעה). ולכן לא יגע באברים אלו אלא על ידי בגד [באו"ח תולדות הט"ז, כה"ח ס"ק יח]. ואם אי אפשר לו על ידי בגד, במקום צורך יוכל לסמוך על המקילים ליגע באברים אלו מבחוץ. [הלכה ברורה עמ' עא]

ואם הלך לישון לאחר חצות לילה, אף על גב שצריך ליטול ג' פעמים, מכל מקום רשאי לגעת באבריו קודם נטילה. [ראה באו"ח וכה"ח שם]

מ. אין צורך להזהר מלנגוע בעין ואוזן וחוטם ופיו, לאחר צאתו מבית הכסא. [יביע"א ח"ג סי' א אות יא, ובמפתחות]

permissible to touch them with one's palms even before performing *netillat yadayim*. Some *Poskim* ruled that it is forbidden to touch even the outside of one's ears or nose or one's eyelids, while others ruled that this is permitted. If someone wishes to touch or scratch them, he should do so through a cloth. If this is not possible, he may rely on the lenient opinion and touch the outside of these organs.[188]

If someone remained awake until after the halakhic midnight and only then went to sleep, he still must perform *netillat yadayim* upon awakening in the morning. In this case, however, he may touch any part of his body even before *netillat yadayim*.

In a restroom

40) Although harmful spiritual forces pervade a restroom and infect the hands of people who enter the restroom, it is nevertheless permissible for them to touch their eyes, nose, ears or mouth even [while in the restroom or] before

Other body apertures

The *Shulhan Arukh* and the *Mishna Berura* (4:13) state that it is likewise forbidden to touch one's anal opening or the mouth of one's urethra. Actually, it is forbidden for a man to touch these body parts even after performing *netillat yadayim*. Handling the anus too often is likely to bring on hemorrhoids and touching the penis might cause an unmarried man to ejaculate. Before performing the morning *netillat yadayim*, however, it is forbidden to touch the anus even for a moment, and it is forbidden for even a married man to touch the mouth of the glans.

An open wound

The *Mishna Berura* (ibid.) added that one must not touch a wound inflicted by bloodletting, since the harmful forces might invade the body through any body aperture and cause injury. The *Shulhan Arukh* (4:4) states that touching an open wound might cause infection, meaning that one should not touch it even after performing *netillat yadayim*. Even when it is necessary to touch it, however, one must make sure to perform the morning *netillat yadayim* first. See more about this in the responsa *Yabia Omer* listed above.

188. The *Od Yosef Hai* (*parashat Toledot* halakha 11), the *Mishna Berura* (4:12) and the *Kaf Hahayim* (4:18) all ruled that it is forbidden to touch even the outer sides of these organs, unless one touches them indirectly with a cloth. Even so, the *Halakha Berura* (page 71) ruled that when it is necessary one may be lenient and touch the outsides of these organs directly. This is because the *Lehem Mishne* (*Hilkhot Shevitat Asor* 3:2) and Harav Moshe ben Haviv (*Tosefet Yom Hakippurim*, comment to *Yoma* 77b) contended that in our times the harmful forces described by the Talmud are no longer existent. Therefore, although we should always try to follow the ruling of the *Shulhan Arukh* and avoid touching even the outer sides of these organs, there is a basis for leniency when it is necessary.

When suffering an eye infection

The *Yalkut Yosef* (page 432) states that if someone suffers from an eye infection and he cannot manage without rubbing his eyes immediately upon waking up, he may do so, relying on those *Poskim* who ruled that the harmful spiritual forces no longer exist in our times. This ruling, however, seems to be implausible. As explained in the preface to this *Siman*, we do not rely on those *Poskim* unless there is another basis for leniency in the case in question. Although this appears to be a case where the person is in distress and needs the relief of rubbing his eyes, it is unlikely that he cannot wait until he performs *netillat yadayim*.

אולם נכון להחמיר לכתחילה שלא יגע באוכלים ומשקים בצאתו מבית הכסא, קודם שנטל את ידיו. ובדיעבד שנגע בהם, אין להחמיר, ולא נאסר המאכל. ויותר טוב לרחוץ האוכלים ההם ג׳ פעמים, אם הדבר אפשרי. [יביע״א ח״ג סי׳ א אות י. ועי״ע כה״ח ס״ק כ]

מא. מותר לעשן סיגריות קודם נטילת ידים שחרית. ולהריח טבאק הרחה, אין להקל אלא במקום צורך, ובלבד שלא יכניס ידו לחוטם.

ומותר לשאוף טבק הרחה בבית הכסא, או לאחר צאתו משם קודם נטילת ידים. [יביע״א שם, ובמפתחות]

washing hands after exiting the restroom. Upon exiting the restroom, they should avoid touching foods or beverages until they wash hands. If someone touched food before he washed his hands, the food may still be eaten. If it the type of food that can be rinsed, however, it is recommended to rinse it three times before eating it.

Cigarettes and snuff

41) It is permissible to smoke a cigarette upon waking up in the morning even before performing the mitzvah of *netillat yadayim*. One should avoid taking snuff, however. If someone feels a great need for it he may be lenient, but he must take great care not to touch his nose.[189] It is permissible to take snuff while in a restroom or upon exiting it before washing one's hands.

Alternatively, he may rub his eyes using a cloth or tissue so that he will not need to touch his eyes with his fingers. Even if he has nothing available, he can still rub his eyes with the back of his hand while avoiding contact with his fingers. If any of these methods can be employed, they are preferable to following the lenient ruling of the *Yalkut Yosef*. Additionally, if the person had remained awake until after the halakhic midnight, he may rub his eyes with his fingers upon waking up even before *netillat yadayim*, even if he does not suffer from any illness.

189. The *Minḥat Aharon* (1:3) ruled that it is forbidden to take snuff in the morning before *netillat yadayim*, for two reasons. One is that it is forbidden to touch one's nostrils, and the other is that one contaminates the contents of the snuffbox by touching them. The responsa *Lev Ḥayim* (#66) concurred with this ruling.

The *Kaf Haḥayim* Palachi (8:8) cites *Poskim* who ruled that it is forbidden to take snuff while in a cemetery. Maran the Rishon Letziyon (responsa *Yabia Omer* Vol. III, #1:11) challenged this ruling, since the Talmud forbids touching one's nose only upon waking up in the morning, but it does not seem to be concerned with other, less harmful spiritual forces. As far as the snuffbox is concerned, the Talmud infers clearly (*Yevamot* 86b) that the harmful forces present in a cemetery do not infect foods and that it is permissible to eat foods that are in a cemetery. Besides, there is good reason to argue that snuff does not have the status of foodstuffs.

The *Kaf Haḥayim* ruled as well that it is forbidden to take snuff while in a public bathhouse, or after exiting a restroom, after a haircut or after trimming one's nails until washing one's hands. The responsa *Vaya'an Avraham* (*O.Ḥ.* #3) challenged this ruling as well, since the stringency of the *Minḥat Aharon* applies only to the harmful forces that contaminate one's hands upon waking up in the morning before *netillat yadayim*, but not to any of these cases. The *Eshel Avraham* of Butchatch (*Siman* 4) likewise argued that all these are permitted.

The *Artzot Haḥayim* (4:30) deduced from the *Minḥat Aharon* that it is forbidden to smoke cigarettes before *netillat yadayim*, just as it is forbidden to take snuff. Maran the Rishon Letziyon challenged this ruling, explaining that the problem with taking snuff is that the person touches his nostrils, but when smoking a cigarette he can easily avoid touching his skin altogether. Summing up his responsum, he wrote that it is forbidden to take snuff before *netillat yadayim* but it is permissible to smoke cigarettes as long as one does not touch one's mouth.

The *Yalkut Yosef* (first edition, page 10), however, states that it is likewise permissible to take snuff before *netillat yadayim*. In the later edition (page 382), he cited the responsa *Yitzḥak Yeranen* and the *Netivot Haḥayim* claiming that there is a printing error in the first edition, and that it should state that it is forbidden. He dismissed this conclusion, and explained that it is permissible to take snuff as long as one is careful not to touch one's nostrils. Although he is likely to err and touch them, we can rely on

מב. אין לגעת בספרי קודש קודם נטילת ידים שחרית. [ילקו"י עמ' שסג, עפמ"ש באחרו' ובמשנ"ב סי' קמז סק"ג]

להתלבש ולילך ד' אמות קודם נטילה

מג. הקם ממטתו בבוקר, מותר לו לגעת במלבושיו קודם נטילת ידים שחרית. ולכן מותר ללבוש בגדיו קודם נטילת ידים שחרית. והמחמיר בזה תבוא עליו ברכה. ואם הולך לישון אחר חצות הלילה, יש להקל בזה בפשיטות, ללבוש בגדיו קודם נטילת ידים שחרית. [הליכו"ע ח"א עמ' לב, וע"ע יבי"א ח"ה סי' א]

Touching Torah books

42) One should not touch books of Torah content before performing the mitzvah of the morning *netillat yadayim*.

Getting Dressed and Walking About

Touching clothes

43) It is permissible to touch one's clothes before performing the morning *netillat yadayim*. Therefore, one may get dressed before performing this mitzvah, but anyone who refrains from doing so will receive a special blessing from Heaven. If someone goes to bed later than the halakhic midnight, however, there is no need for stringency in this matter. He may get dressed before *netillat yadayim*.[190]

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the *Poskim* who ruled that in modern times there are no harmful spiritual forces at all.

190. The *Ben Ish Hai* (*parashat Toledot* halakha 6) cited the Arizal teaching that one must perform *netillat yadayim* before touching one's garments. Based on this, he complained about those people who put on socks in the cold winter before performing *netillat yadayim*.

Maran the Rishon Letziyon (responsa *Yabia Omer* Vol. V, #1; *Halikhot Olam* Vol. I, page 32) challenged this ruling. He noted that the *Magen Avraham* (4:1) cited the *Seder Hayom* ruling that a person must not touch his garments until after performing *netillat yadayim*, and he commented that this seems to contradict a passage in the Talmud. It states (*Berakhot* 60b): "When someone puts on his garments, he must recite the blessing of *malbish arumim*.... When he performs *netillat yadayim*, he must recite the blessing of *al netillat yadayim*." Apparently, the common practice was to get dressed before performing *netillat yadayim*. Maran the Rishon Letziyon noted that this is not a conclusive proof since some *Rishonim* (Rabbenu Aharon Halevi, the *Shita Mekubetzet*) asserted that a person's morning activities do not necessarily appear in this passage in the order that they take place, and the blessings may be recited in a different order than they appear in this passage.

It appears that Harav Yosef Hayim later retracted this stringent ruling. In his *Od Yosef Hai* (*parashat Toledot* halakha 10) he cited the *Minhat Aharon* who ruled that it is forbidden to touch one's garments before *netillat yadayim*, and then he commented that very few people, if any, follow this ruling in practice. After admitting that it is difficult to observe this stringency, he asserted that the harmful forces do not contaminate garments at all, nor do they contaminate wooden or metal utensils. They have the power to contaminate foods and beverages only. If this would not be so, then how would it be possible to perform the mitzvah of *netillat yadayim*? As soon as someone would pick up the container of water, he would contaminate the container and its contents. Furthermore, it is not possible to avoid touching one's pillow and bedsheets. According to the *Minhat Aharon*, it should be necessary to launder one's bedding every day. It must be, therefore, that the harmful forces do not contaminate utensils or garments, and this is why we need not observe this stringency.

In the *Od Yosef Hai*, Rav Yosef ignored the fact that the Arizal himself instructed us to perform *netillat yadayim* before touching our garments. In fact, it appears from the *Zohar* (*Bereshit* page 53b) that the harmful forces can contaminate utensils and garments. It must be, therefore, that we rely on the argument of the *Lehem Mishne* (*Hilkhot Shevitat Asor* 3:2) that according to Rambam these harmful spiritual forces no longer exist. This concept follows the precedent of the Tosafot (*Yoma* 77b and *Hullin* 107b) that various forms of evil spirits and harmful forces have become