רחיצת הפנים ושטיפה הפה

נו. אמרו חכמים (שבת נ ע"ב): רוחץ אדם פניו ידיו ורגליו בכל יום בשביל קונו, שנאמר (משלי טז, ד), כי פעל ה' למענהו. ולדעת הרמב"ם היינו שבשחרית קודם שיתפלל צריך לרחוץ פניו ידיו ורגליו. ומכל מקום להלכה נראה שאין צריך לרחוץ רגליו בבוקר. [הלכה ברורה עמ' נז]. וראה בהקדמה.

נז. יזהר לרחוץ פניו בכל יום. וגם ידיח פיו להעביר הרירין שבפיו, דמלבד דדבר זה הוא טוב בשביל רפואת הגוף, יש בזה מצוה לכבוד קונו. [באו"ח תולדות הי"א, ועי' ש"ע סי"ז]. ולענין רחיצת הפה בתענית צבור ראה ילקוט יוסף תעניות עמוד ע"ז.

Day 62

Washing One's Face and Mouth

Face, hands and feet

56) Our Sages taught (*Shabbat* 50b) that everyone must wash his face, hands and feet each day in honor of one's Creator, basing this rule on the verse (*Mishle* 16:4), "כֹּל פָּעַל ה' לְמַעֲנֵהוּ – God made everything to praise Him." Rambam deduced from this that a person must cleanse his face, hands and feet every day before beginning his prayers. In practice, however, it is not necessary to wash one's feet every morning.[200] See the preface to this *Siman*.

Rinsing face and mouth

57) Everyone should wash his face every day. Likewise, he should rinse his mouth to clean it of mucus and saliva that has collected there while he slept. This is good for one's health, and it is also a virtuous act that displays honor to one's Creator.[201] See the *Yalkut Yosef Ta'aniyot English Edition* (page 77) for the rule on fast days.

---

200. Rabbenu Avraham ben David (*Hilkhot Tefilla* 4:3) challenged Rambam, asserting that it is not necessary to wash one's feet each morning before praying. Even though the Talmud (*Shabbat* 50b) seems to support Rambam, the *Kesef Mishne* pointed out that Rashi explained that this passage comes to tell us only that it is permissible for men to wash their feet in the morning and it is not considered a feminine practice, which would be forbidden. This is likewise the explanation offered by Rashi.

In the *Bet Yosef* (92), Maran testified that nowadays people do not follow Rambam's instructions, explaining that we apparently rely on Rashi's explanation. The *Peri Megadim* and other *Aharonim* suggested that even Rambam would agree that it is not necessary in our society since we do not go about barefoot. Actually, this resolution was already offered by the *Eshkol* and Rabbenu Menahem Hame'iri. See more about this in the *Halakha Berura* (page 57). The *Ben Ish Hai*, cited in the preface to this *Siman*, explained why it is not necessary to rinse the feet in order to cleanse them from harmful forces that contaminate them.

In contrast to the halakha regarding one's feet, the *Sha'ar Hakavanot* (cited in the *Kaf Hahayim* Sofer 4:5 and the *Ben Ish Hai*, *parashat Toledot* halakhot 1 and 11) instructs us to wash our faces each morning.

201. This is the ruling of the *Ben Ish Hai* (*parashat Toledot* halakha 11). Rabbenu David Abudarham and the *Kol Bo*, cited in the *Bet Yosef* (4:17), explained that everyone must wash out the mucus that collects in his mouth while he sleeps so that he can then pronounce God's sacred Name using a clean mouth. This is mentioned in the *Shulhan Arukh* as well. The *Levush* added that if someone does not have perfectly clean water and it revolts him to think of placing dirty water in his mouth, he may forgo rinsing his mouth and he may recite the prayers without it. His proof is that on fast days no one rinses his mouth before prayers, as explained in the *Yalkut Yosef Ta'aniyot English Edition* (page 77).

החייבים בנטילה

נח. נשים חייבות בנטילת ידים שלש פעמים בסירוגין, ויקיימו הנטילה ככל פרטי הדינים שחייבים בהם האנשים. [ראה משנ"ב ס"ק י, כה"ח ס"ק כ]

נט. יש לחנך את בניו הקטנים ליטול ידיהם שחרית, ויחנכם גם לברך על הנטילה כדת. וגם את הבנות יש לחנך ליטול את ידיהם שחרית. ומצוה ליטול אף את ידי הקטנים ביותר, אף על פי שלא הגיעו לחינוך, מפני שנוגעים באוכלים, וגם משום שהוא סגולה טובה לקטנים כדי שיגדלו בטהרה ויהיו גדולי הקדש. [ראה בא"ח תולדות ה'י, ילקו"י עמ' שלד]

Who Must Perform *Netillat Yadayim*?

Women

58) Women are also obligated to perform the mitzvah of the morning *netillat yadayim*. All the details of this mitzvah apply equally to men and women.[202]

Children

59) Children, both boys and girls, must be trained to perform the mitzvah of the morning *netillat yadayim* and to recite the blessing of *al netillat yadayim*. It is commendable to wash the hands of little children as well, even if they are too young to be trained to perform the mitzvah. This is in order to remove the harmful forces from their hands before they touch the food that they or others will eat. Furthermore, there is a spiritual advantage to this practice, for it enhances the child's chances of growing up with a pure and holy mind.[203]

---

202. In the preface to this *Siman*, four reasons were given for the mitzvah of the morning *netillat yadayim*. All of them apply to men and women equally. Even if some women do not have the practice of praying or reciting the *Shema* daily, they still must perform this mitzvah and recite the blessing, as the *Bayit Hadash* testified.

The *Ateret Zekenim* wrote that women must be very careful to perform this mitzvah properly since they are usually the ones who prepare the food for the household. If they do not successfully rid the harmful forces from their hands, all the food they handle will become defiled. Harav Zalman (*mahadura tinyana* #2; cited by the *Kaf Hahayim* Sofer 4:20) and the *Mishna Berura* (4:20) both concurred with this.

203. The *Ben Ish Hai* (*parashat Toledot* halakha 10) states that every mother must make sure to perform *netillat yadayim* on her little children's hands, even those of nursing infants. If she would allow the harmful forces to remain on their little hands, the children might touch the family's food and contaminate it. Besides, this practice will enhance the child's chances of growing up with a pure and holy mind, as the *Hesed La'alafim* promised. The source for the first reason is the *Peri Megadim* (*Mishbetzot Zahav* 4:7, cited in the *Mishna Berura* 4:10) and Harav HIDA (*More Ba'etzba* 2:60).

Harav Zalman, however, stated (at the end of *Siman* 4) that the harmful forces infect only people who are capable of performing mitzvot. Those people are consecrated by the mitzvot they perform and thereby they attract impure spiritual forces when they sleep and while their souls leave their bodies. When they wake up, the impure or harmful force is expelled automatically from their bodies, but it remains on their hands until they perform *netillat yadayim*. Children, who are not obligated to perform the mitzvot, do not attract any of these impure influences while they sleep.

This being the case, there is a solid basis to be lenient regarding little children who are too young to be trained to fulfill mitzvot. In fact, until a child becomes a bar mitzvah or bat mitzvah, he or she does not possess the full measure of holy soul that is meant to come to him or her. It begins to rest to some degree upon the child when he or she begins to be trained to fulfill mitzvot, however. At any rate, this is the basis for leniency to permit foods that a child has touched even if he has not performed *netillat yadayim* that day.

Harav Zalman added that the holiness of the child's soul begins, in small measure, immediately after he is circum-

זמני קימה המחייבים נטילת ידים

ס. מי שהלך לישון אחר חצות הלילה, וישן שינת קבע על מטתו, כשקם משנתו צריך ליטול ידיו נטילת ידים שחרית, ומברך "על נטילת ידים". [הליכו"ע ח"א עמ' לד]

Day 63

Sleeping Habits Regarding *Netillat Yadayim*

Went to sleep after midnight

60) If someone remains awake until after the halakhic midnight [which means halfway between dusk and dawn] and then goes to sleep in bed, he must nevertheless perform *netillat yadayim* upon waking up in the morning and recite the blessing of *al netillat yadayim*.[204]

cised. Therefore, it is the way of holy people to avoid things that an infant has touched without *netillat yadayim*.

Maran the Rishon Letziyon (responsa *Yabia Omer* Vol. IV, #1:11) explained that Harav Zalman and the *Peri Megadim* debated the halakha regarding foods that a child touched without performing *netillat yadayim*, and he concluded that although this should be avoided, the food remains permissible once it has happened. See above in halakhot 34 and 35.

This discussion shows that there is technically no obligation to perform *netillat yadayim* on the hands of little children younger than the age of *hinukh*, but it is a recommended practice to enhance the child's chances of growing up with a holy and pure soul.

The responsa *Tzitz Eliezer* (Vol. VII, #2:4-5) testified that the common custom is not to pay any attention whether or not little children touch foods even though they have not performed *netillat yadayim*. Nevertheless, it is best to avoid foods that he has touched in that state. In our times of indoor plumbing, when we need only to turn on the faucet to get fresh water, it is certainly proper to train our little children to perform *netillat yadayim* every morning, following the instructions of the *Ben Ish Hai*. See the comment of the *Halakha Berura* (page 69).

Under a Running Faucet

Anyone who has a container available for the morning *netillat yadayim* should use the container instead of simply placing one's hands under a running faucet. This applies to both adults and children. As explained above in halakha 12, an adult may not recite the blessing of *al netillat yadayim* if he performed the mitzvah by placing his hands under a running faucet, based on the principle of *safek berakhot lehakel*. The *Yalkut Yosef* (footnote on page 335) ruled that this applies to adults only. If someone has no container with which to perform *netillat yadayim*, he can instruct his children to place their hands under a running faucet, and the children may then recite the blessing of *al netillat yadayim*, unlike adults. This is because Maran ruled clearly in the *Shulhan Arukh* (4:7) that it is possible to fulfill the mitzvah of the morning *netillat yadayim* without pouring the water from a container. Although some *Poskim* disagreed with this ruling and adults may not recite the blessing, we may nevertheless instruct children to recite the blessing in this case. This is because the *Arba'a Turim* (*Siman* 269) taught a rule that whenever the *Poskim* debated a halakha and we follow the stringent opinion, children may still follow the lenient opinion.

204. The *Ben Ish Hai* (*parashat Toledot* halakha 13) ruled that if someone remained awake until after the halakhic midnight, whether he was partying or working, and then went to sleep until the morning, he must perform the mitzvah of *netillat yadayim* as usual and recite the blessing. He pointed out that Harav Shalom Mizrahi Sharabi wrote (*Nehar Shalom*) that in such a case no harmful forces contaminate one's hands and it is not necessary to perform *netillat yadayim*, but he explained that this applies only if the person energized his soul before retiring by reciting all the morning blessings and spending some time studying Torah. Likewise, his grandson, Harav Avraham Sharabi, agreed that if the person remained awake until after midnight but he did not recite all the morning blessings and spend time in Torah study before going to sleep, he must perform *netillat yadayim* in the morning. He must not, however, recite the blessing of *al netillat yadayim* in this case.

The *Ben Ish Hai* added that he is not sure what the rule should be for someone who studied Torah for some time after midnight but did not recite the morning blessings before going to sleep. He testified, however, that the common custom is to perform the mitzvah and recite the blessing in this case. Maran the Rishon Letziyon (*Halikhot Olam* Vol. I, page 34) added that this seems to be the opinion of the *Kaf Hahayim* Palachi (8:10) as well. If someone recited the morning blessings and spent some time after midnight studying Torah before going to sleep, he does not recite the blessing of *al netillat yadayim* in the morning. If he studied Torah but did not recite the morning blessings,

ומי שדעתו ללכת לישון אחר חצות הלילה, אינו מברך ברכות השחר אחר חצות הלילה, אלא מברך בבוקר בקומו משנתו. וכן המנהג. [הליכו"ע ח"א עמ' לה]

If someone remained awake until after the halakhic midnight and he plans to sleep until morning, he should not recite the morning blessings until he wakes up in the morning. This is the common custom.[205]

then he must recite the blessing of *al netillat yadayim* in the morning, unlike the ruling of Harav Avraham Sharabi.

Explaining the basis for the *Ben Ish Hai's* uncertainty, Maran the Rishon Letziyon pointed out that the Rashba taught that the reason for *netillat yadayim* in the morning is that we are considered newly created when we wake up each morning. If so, this should apply just as well to someone who studied Torah after midnight. Rabbenu Asher explained that the purpose of *netillat yadayim* in the morning is to cleanse one's hands in preparation for prayer since in all likelihood the person dirtied his hands by touching his body while he was sleeping. According to this reason as well, anyone who sleeps during the night should be obligated to perform *netillat yadayim* in the morning and to recite the blessing for that mitzvah, even though he remained awake until after midnight studying Torah. Indeed, the responsa *Mikhtav leHizkiyahu* (#1, page 9c) ruled that anyone who goes to sleep [in bed] must perform *netillat yadayim* in the morning and recite the blessing even though he had remained awake until after midnight. He warned that if anyone does not follow this ruling he will be liable to be punished for failing to recite the blessing for the mitzvah. Maran the Rishon Letziyon concluded that this is the correct ruling, and that it agrees with the common custom as the *Ben Ish Hai* testified.

The *Halakha Berura* (*Birur Halakha* page 85) explained that according to this, we do not follow the instructions given by Rav Avraham Sharabi. Therefore, even if someone remained awake until after the halakhic midnight, recited all the morning blessings and spent some time studying Torah and only then went to bed, he must perform *netillat yadayim* in the morning and recite the blessing. In fact, Maran the Rishon Letziyon wrote simply that if someone remained awake until after midnight he must perform *netillat yadayim* and recite the blessing in the morning, and he did not explain that this would not be the case if the person had recited the morning blessings and studied Torah before retiring. Apparently, this is the halakha in every case, unlike the ruling of the *Ben Ish Hai*.

It is possible, however, that Maran the Rishon Letziyon agreed with the ruling of the *Ben Ish Hai*. His ruling might be referring only to a case where the person did not recite the morning blessings before retiring, which is the recommended procedure anyway. The *Or Letziyon* (Vol. II, page 22, #7) concurred with the *Ben Ish Hai* that if someone stayed awake until after the halakhic midnight, recited all the morning blessings, studied Torah and then went to sleep, he must not recite the blessing when he performs *netillat yadayim* upon waking up in the morning.

205. This is the ruling of the *Ben Ish Hai* (*parashat Toledot* halakha 14). He explained that when people remain awake through the entire night, such as the nights of *Hoshana Rabba* and Shavuot, they should recite all the morning blessings immediately after the halakhic midnight, except that the blessings over Torah study must be recited only after dawn. Maran the Rishon Letziyon (*Halikhot Olam* Vol. I, page 35) cited the responsa *Rav Pe'alim* (Vol. IV, #1) explaining that according to Harav Shalom Mizrahi Sharabi (*Nehar Shalom*) it is very important to recite the morning blessings immediately after midnight in order to energize one's soul, even if one plans to go to sleep soon afterward. Once he has recited the morning blessings, going to sleep during the night is no different than taking a daytime nap. The *Rav Pe'alim* concluded in the name of the *Ot Emet* (page 106a) that it is possible that this was Rav Sharabi's personal practice and he did not prescribe these instructions for everyone else. Nevertheless, we must emulate him since he emphasized the importance of this matter.

Maran the Rishon Letziyon testified that our custom is as the *Ben Ish Hai* stated, and we wait until waking in the morning to recite the morning blessings. Furthermore, the *sefer Mikabtze'el* reconciled the apparent contradiction between the *Ben Ish Hai* and the *Rav Pe'alim*. The *Rav Pe'alim* tells us the ideal practice, and that is to recite the blessings after midnight before going to sleep. For genuine Torah scholars, this is the formula to follow since there is no fear that they will forget to recite the blessings for Torah study when they wake up in the morning, or that they will mistakenly recite the morning blessings a second time. The *Ben Ish Hai*, which is a manual of halakha for the layman, tells us to postpone reciting the blessings until the morning. Otherwise, people might make the mistake of forgetting to recite the blessings for Torah study in the morning or they might repeat the morning blessings a second time.