עפמ"ש ביבי"א ח"ג סי' א אות ח). **וכן יפסיק לברך ברכת הברקים או הרעמים.** [הלכה ברורה עמ' צה]

צח. יזהר לגזוז צפורניו, העודפים על הבשר, לא רק משום שיש בו חשש חציצה לטבילה ולנטילת ידים (ראה ילקו"י ברכות סימן קס הלכה ד-ה), אלא גם משום שכתבו המקובלים שהחלק העודף מן הצפורן ויוצא לחוץ מכנגד הבשר של האצבע, שם נתלים החיצונים ויונקים בתכלית, לכן ענשו של המגדל צפרניו קשה מאד. [ראה ס' עץ חיים שער לא פ"ב]

החולץ והנועל מנעליו

צט. החולץ או נועל מנעליו בידיו יש לו ליטול ידיו מאחר שנגע בהם בידיו, ואפילו הם נקיים לגמרי. ואם חלץ נעליו מבלי שנגע בהם בידיו, אין צריך ליטול ידיו. [משנ"ב ס"ק מא, כה"ח ס"ק סט-ע, יבי"א ח"ה סי' א אות ח]

Likewise, if he hears thunder or sees a flash of lightning while trimming his nails, he must recite the appropriate blessing.

Keeping one's nails short

98) It is important to always make sure to trim one's nails regularly and not to allow them to grow longer than one's fingertips. Besides the fact that overgrown fingertips might create an issue of *hatzitza* affecting the mitzvot of *netillat yadayim* and *tevila* in a mikveh, the kabbalists teach that when someone has overgrown nails it enables the harmful forces to become attached to him and to leech his soul of its sanctity. They warn that someone who grows long fingernails might be punished severely by Heaven.[238] [This applies equally to men and women.]

Taking Off Shoes

Touching shoes

99) After putting on or taking off shoes, a person must wash hands since he touched the shoes. This is the halakha even if the shoes are perfectly clean. The same applies to anyone who touches shoes, whether or not he is wearing them at the time. It is recommended to wash both hands three times alternately,[239] but it is not

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author of *Heshiv Moshe* used to continue discussing Torah topics while trimming his nails. Maran the Rishon Letziyon (responsa *Yabia Omer* Vol. III, #1:8) explained, citing the *Ben Ish Hai*, that although powerful harmful forces contaminate a person's hands after sleeping at night, the spiritual force that contaminates his hands after he trims his nails is comparatively weak. Therefore, there is no doubt that one may respond Amen before one washes hands after trimming nails. Harav HIDA likewise (*Mahazik Berakha* 4) ruled that after exiting a public bathhouse or after trimming one's nails, it is sufficient to rinse each hand one time. It is not necessary to rinse them three times since the spirit contaminating one's hands in those situations is not powerful.

238. The responsa *Rav Pe'alim* (Vol. II, #4) cites the *Sha'ar Hakavanot* teaching that if God had not provided man with protective fingernails, our hands would remain impure at all times, including the day. The harmful forces would contaminate them even if the person did not go to sleep. Now that we have fingernails, we have a hard shield that successfully deflects the harmful forces until we go to sleep at night or until we enter a restroom. It is only the section of the fingernail attached to the skin that provides this protection. If the nails grow longer than the fingertips, they become secure latches for the harmful forces to grasp and hold tight. Therefore, it is imperative that everyone cut his nails regularly and never allow them to grow longer than the fingertips. This applies to the toenails as well.

239. The *Ben Ish Hai* (*parashat Toledot* halakha 17) ruled that after removing one's shoes it is sufficient to rinse hands one time since this is only a matter of hygiene and not

והוא הדין אם נגע במנעלים, אחר שלבשם או אחר שחלץ אותם, שיש לו ליטול ידיו (ועי' רמ"א סי' קכח סי"ז). אולם אם נגע במנעלים חדשים שעדיין לא לבשם אדם מעולם אפילו פעם אחת, לית לן בה, ואין צריך רחיצה כלל. [באו"ח תולדות הי"ז, כה"ח ס"ק עא, יבי"א ח"ה סי' א אות ה]

ונכון להחמיר ליטול נטילה זו ג' פעמים לסירוגין. [עי' הלכה ברורה עמ' צז בשם מרן הראש"ל]. ואין צריך שיטול ידיו בכלי [ראה כה"ח ס"ק סא, ובילקו"י עמ' שצג בהערה ועוד]

ק. המודד מנעלים חדשים ונוגע בהם, וכשהסיר את המנעלים שעל רגליו לא נגע במנעליו הישנים, אינו צריך ליטול ידיו. [ילקו"י עמ' תא]. ואף אם מדד ונגע בנעלים חדשים שידוע שמדד אותם אדם אחר והלך בהם על הארץ, יש להקל, והמחמיר תבוא עליו ברכה. [ראה בילקו"י עמ' תג בהערה]

necessary to pour water from a container on one's hands. If someone kicks off his shoes without touching them, he does not have to wash hands.[240]

Brand-new shoes

100) If someone tries on new shoes in a shoe store, and he did not touch his own shoes when taking them off, it is unnecessary to wash hands. Even if he knows that other people had previously tried on these new shoes and had walked around with them, there is still a solid basis for leniency. If someone bothers to wash his hands in such a case, however, he will receive a special blessing from Heaven.[241]

of dispelling any spiritual forces. The source for this ruling is Harav HIDA (*Maḥazik Berakha*) citing Harav Ḥayim Hakohen. The *Halakha Berura* (page 97) added that even if it was necessary to dispel some harmful spiritual force it would not be necessary to wash hands more than once. This is because the *Poskim* ruled that even when someone goes into a restroom he needs only to wash his hands one time afterward, although there is definitely an issue of spiritual harmful forces in such a case. Nevertheless, the *Halakha Berura* concluded that if a person touched his feet while removing his shoes he must wash hands three times. He testified that this was told to him by his father, Maran the Rishon Letziyon.

240. The *Olat Tamid* deduced from the wording of the *Shulḥan Arukh* (4:18) that a person must wash hands after taking off his shoes even if he did not touch them. The *Magen Avraham* refuted this assumption and ruled that it is necessary to wash hands only if he touched his shoes. The responsa *Salmat Ḥayim* (#26) explained that the *Shulḥan Arukh* states, "one who takes off one's shoes," because a person usually touches his shoes when taking them off. The *Shulḥan Arukh* did not state, "one who touches shoes," since when someone puts on his shoes in the morning he must anyway perform *netillat yadayim* simply because it is morning.

Maran the Rishon Letziyon (responsa *Yabia Omer* Vol. V, #1:5) discussed at length the issue of taking off shoes without touching them, and especially in regards to the mitzvah of *ḥalitza*, where the widow of a childless husband removes the shoe of the deceased's brother to enable her to marry anyone of her choice. He cited the *Kappe Aharon* who testified that it is unheard of for any rabbinical court to instruct the brother to wash his hands after the widow takes off his shoe, and in fact they do not instruct the widow to wash her hands, either. See more about this in responsa *Yabia Omer* (Vol. IX, #95:3).

241. The *Mor Uktzi'a* explained that one must wash hands after touching shoes only if someone had once worn them and walked with them. If someone had only tried them on for size and not walked with them on, it is not necessary to wash hands after touching those shoes.

According to this, it would seem that if it is known that someone had tried on the shoes and walked around with them it is necessary to wash hands after touching them. This is the ruling of the responsa *Shevet Hakehati* (Vol. IV, #2). He added that although the *Shulḥan Arukh* states, "his shoes," the halakha is the same when someone touches another person's shoes. The *Ru'aḥ Ḥayim* Palachi concurred with this.

On the other hand, the *Kappe Aharon* Ezriel (Vol. I, *E.H.* #21) ruled that when someone touches the special shoe used for the mitzvah of *ḥalitza*, he does not have to wash his hands. The reason for the halakha necessitating one to wash hands is that shoes absorb the sweat of the feet while one

קא. אף על פי שהנוגע במנעלים או בסנדלים צריך נטילת ידים, מכל מקום הנוגע בגרביים נקיות אינו צריך נטילת ידים. שרק בנעלים שדורך בהם על גבי קרקע, שבדרך כלל יש טינוף וזיהום על פני הארץ, וגם שורה רוח רעה על הקרקע, שנאמר ארורה האדמה בעבורך (בראשית ג, יז), לכן צריך נטילה כשנוגע בהם. אבל בגרבים אין דרך ללכת בהם אלא על רצפה נקיה, שאין שם רוח רעה, לכן הגורב גרבים או חולצן, כל שאין בהן זיעה וזוהמה, אינו צריך נטילת ידים. [ילקו"י מהדו"ק עמ' יז, יבי"א ח"ה סי' א אות ד]

קב. הנוגע בשרוכי הנעלים בלבד, אינו צריך נטילת ידים. [ילקו"י מהדו"ק עמ' יז, יבי"א ח"ה סי' א אות ה]

Touching socks

101) Although it is necessary to wash hands after touching shoes or sandals, it is not necessary to wash hands after touching clean socks. The halakha applies to shoes because they get dirty from the ground and because harmful forces from the ground attach themselves to the shoes, based on the verse (*Bereshit* 3:17), "אֲרוּרָה הָאֲדָמָה בַּעֲבוּרֶךָ – The earth is cursed because of you." In contrast, people do not walk on the ground in socks; they walk about indoors on a relatively clean floor where there are no harmful forces. Therefore, when someone puts on socks or takes them off, he is not obligated to wash hands unless they are dirty with grime or sweat.[242]

Shoelaces

102) It is not necessary to wash hands after touching shoe laces.[243]

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walks and they come into contact with all the dirt on the ground. These things do not apply to the special *halitza* shoe, since the person using it wears it for only a few minutes and he walks about only indoors on a clean floor or carpet. Therefore, it maintains the status of a brand-new shoe that does not necessitate hand-washing.

According to this reasoning, the same should apply to new shoes in a store. Even if other people had tried them on, they wore them for only a few minutes and remained indoors. Therefore, there is a strong argument to say that it is not necessary to wash hands after touching them.

This position is valid, however, only if the halakha necessitating one to wash hands is because used shoes are tangibly dirty. If it is because used shoes harbor some harmful forces, then the ruling of the *Kappe Aharon* is incorrect. Indeed, his contemporaries countered his ruling based on this assumption. Maran the Rishon Letziyon (responsa *Yabia Omer* Vol. V, 1:5) wrote that the author of *Kappe Aharon* defended his ruling, citing Harav Hayim Cohen (*Mekor Hayim*), found in the *Mahazik Berakha*, who asserted that the reason for washing one's hands after touching shoes is an issue of hygiene only, and not because the shoes are infected by harmful spiritual forces. Harav HIDA added that Rav Hayim's opinion outweighs that of other kabbalists.

In truth, there is still some basis for leniency even if there are harmful forces with which to contend. Perhaps the harmful forces do not infect shoes that were used only indoors on a floor. The *She'arim Hametzuyanim Bahalakha* (appendix #2:9) added that there is a basis to say that trying on shoes is not considered wearing them, since the person does not put them with the intention of going about in them. He compared this to someone trying on a garment for size while it contains *sha'atnez*. The combination of these arguments form a solid basis for leniency even if each argument alone is weak, especially if one does not know for sure that someone else had already tried on the shoes. Nevertheless, anyone who is stringent in this matter will receive a special blessing from Heaven.

242. This is the ruling of the *Yalkut Yosef* (first edition, page 17), based on the responsa *Yabia Omer* (Vol. V, #1:4). The author of the *Kaf Hahayim* Sofer testified (4:72) that Harav Yosef Hayim told him that the halakha does not necessitate washing hands after touching socks. The *Halakha Berura* (*Otzerot Yosef* #14) clarifies that this applies even while someone is wearing the socks. However, if someone touches grimy socks he must wash his hands.

243. This is the ruling of the *Yafe Lalev* (Vol. V, 4:3), proving it from the Talmud (*Bava Batra* 21a). Maran the Rishon Letziyon (responsa *Yabia Omer* Vol. V, #1:5) refuted this proof, but he agreed with the ruling that it is not necessary to wash hands. He cited the *Bet Barukh* ruling likewise in the name of the *Hazon Ish*. Harav Shelomo

קג. הנוגע בנעלי בית, צריך ליטול ידיו כמו בנוגע במנעלים. ויש אומרים שאם אינם מקיפות את העקב אלא פתוחות מאחריהן, אין צריך ליטול ידיו כשחולצן ונוגע בהם, כי באופן כזה לא נחשב חליצה. אך לדינא יש ליטול ידיו גם בנוגע בנעלי בית. [ילקו"י עמ' תג]

קד. הנוגע במגפיים, אף שהן גבוהות ומגיעות עם הברכים, ועשויות מגומי, צריך נטילת ידים כדין הנוגע במנעלים. [ילקו"י עמ' תד]

House slippers

103) It is necessary to wash hands after touching house slippers. Some *Poskim* ruled that if the heels of the slippers are open and one simply slips them off to remove them, this is not called "taking off shoes" and it is not necessary to wash hands even if one touched the slippers. In practice, however, this is not the halakha. One must wash hands after touching any house slippers.[244]

Rubber boots

104) If someone touches rubber boots he must wash hands just like one who touches shoes. It does not matter that the boots cover the legs up to one's knees.[245]

Zalman Auerbach (*Halikhot Shelomo Tefilla* 20:18) also ruled that it is not necessary to wash hands after touching shoelaces.

On the other hand, the responsa *Shevet Hakehati* (Vol. II, #4) cited the *She'arim Hametzuyanim Bahalakha* who proved from several places that shoelaces are considered part of the shoes, and if so it should be necessary to wash hands after touching the laces. The *Penine Hatefilla* (page 64) and the *Vezot Haberakha* (page 197) cited Harav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv issuing the same ruling. The *Shevet Hakehati*, apparently, was unaware of the *Poskim* cited above who ruled leniently in this matter. Although he argued that shoelaces are considered part of the shoes, that might be true regarding other halakhot but not regarding the dirt or harmful forces that contaminate shoes.

244. The *Eshel Avraham* of Butchatch (4:18) described sandals that are open above and behind the heel, and he ruled that it is unnecessary to wash hands after taking them off since this is not considered the act of "taking off shoes." The *Nimuke Orah Hayim* disagreed, claiming that these slippers are not different from other shoes. They are just as susceptible to filth and to contamination by harmful forces.

There is a basis for leniency regarding house slippers since they are worn only indoors on the floor or carpet, which unlike the ground outside is not a carrier of harmful forces. Nevertheless, since many *Poskim* explained that the reason one must wash hands after touching shoes is because the shoes absorb the sweat of one's feet, the same would apply to house slippers as well. In fact, the *Kaf Hahayim* Palachi (8:28) ruled unequivocally that one must wash hands after putting on or taking off house slippers. The *Hesed La'alafim*, however, only recommended washing hands but did not rule that the halakha demands it. See more about this in the *Yalkut Yosef* (page 404).

245. This is the ruling of the responsa *Shevet Hakehati* (Vol. II, #4), explaining that although the top of the boots is not exposed to the grime of the ground, the harmful forces contaminate the entire boot all the way to its rim. The *Piske Teshuvot* (page 55) cited *Poskim* who ruled leniently that one does not have to wash hands after touching the portion of the boot high above the foot, but he suggests that this leniency might apply only if the top section of the boot is a separate piece of leather sewn onto the bottom section. In practice, he ruled stringently in this matter.

The *Me'asef Lekhol Hamahanot* (4:102) cited the *Erekh Shai* and the *Tahorat Hashulhan* ruling that these halakhot apply to leather shoes only and not to shoes made of cloth fibers or rubber. However, an article published in the journal *Ohel Torah* disagreed and ruled that it applies to all shoes regardless of the material used to make them. The *Yalkut Yosef* (page 404) ruled stringently in this matter, and added that one must wash hands after touching rubber overshoes as well.