וכן האשה גם כן חשיב הפרק ההוא בשתי ידיה בכלל המכוסים, ואם נגעה צריכה רחיצה. ובמקום שדרך הנשים לכסות פרקי זרועותיהם הסמוכים לכף, שדרכם להניח לולאות סמוך לכף בראש הכתונת שתהיה הכתונת מכסה כל הזרוע, אז גם אם נגעה בזרוע צריכה רחיצה משום נקיות. [בא"ח תולדות הי"ז]

Day 74

Woman's left arm

A woman's arms are considered places usually covered above the elbows and it is necessary to wash hands after touching either arm. In those places where women have the custom of wearing long sleeves down to their wrists all the time, it is necessary to wash hands even after touching a woman's forearm.[259]

Harav Yaakov of Emden, however, wrote (*Mor Uktzi'a Siman* 92) that when someone touches the part of his upper arm where he places his tefillin it is not necessary to wash his hands. The *Ben Ish Hai* as well ruled (*parashat Toledot* halakha 17, cited in the *Kaf Hahayim* Sofer 4:99) that the upper left arm where one places one's tefillin is considered an exposed part of the body. It is clear from the *Ben Ish Hai* that the upper left arm is considered an exposed part of the body all day long and not only while a person wears his tefillin.

The *Yalkut Yosef* (page 428) challenged this ruling, since people expose their upper arm to put on their tefillin for only a few minutes, but throughout the day it is covered as much as the right upper arm. Besides, on all those days when we do not don tefillin we do not expose the left upper arm at all. It is difficult to understand, therefore, why the left upper arm should have a different status from the right arm just because it is exposed momentarily. Nevertheless, he testified that the common custom is not to wash hands after putting on tefillin, relying of the ruling of Harav Yaakov of Emden, the *Ben Ish Hai* and the *Kaf Hahayim*. The responsa *Salmat Hayim* (#39) likewise ruled that it is never necessary to wash hands after touching a part of the body that is used for a mitzvah. The *Yalkut Yosef* added that his father, Maran the Rishon Letziyon, told him that there is a basis to be stringent in this matter but anyone who wishes to follow the lenient opinion of the *Poskim* listed here may do so. Anyone who follows the stringent opinion, however, will receive a special blessing from Heaven.

The *Yalkut Yosef* added that although he ruled in his *She'erit Yosef* that one may definitely follow the lenient opinion, it is best to try to avoid touching one's upper arm while tightening one's tefillin straps. The fact is that many people do not bother to wash their hands after putting on their tefillin, and therefore it is important to find some solid basis for this leniency.

The *Mor Uktzi"a* explained his lenient ruling as follows: "Although our shirtsleeves are form-fitting and we wear them throughout the day, our arms do not retain perspiration as much as the neck area, which is enclosed tightly by our collars. This is something that anyone can see for himself. For this reason, our arms are fit to place the tefillin on them."

According to this, we should be lenient regarding the right upper arm as well even though we do not place tefillin on it. Nevertheless, the *Ben Ish Hai* and the *Kaf Hahayim* explained that the left upper arm is considered an exposed place only because we place our tefillin on it. Combining both reasons, we have a sound basis for leniency regarding the left upper arm, even on Shabbat and *Yom Tov* when we do not wear tefillin.

The *Halakha Berura* (page 98) cited the opinion of the *Ben Ish Hai* as the halakha in practice. This makes sense, especially nowadays when most people bathe regularly and their arms are clean and sweat-free.

Left-handed people

The *Halakha Berura* (ibid.) clarified that if someone is left-handed, his right upper arm is considered an exposed area whereas his left upper arm is considered an area normally covered.

259. Men who always wear long-sleeved shirts

The *Kaf Hahayim* Sofer (4:99) deduced from the *Ben Ish Hai* that if men are accustomed to always wear long-sleeved shirts covering their forearms, they must wash their hands if they touch any part of the right arm, but not the left arm since they wrap their tefillin and thus give it the status of an exposed part of the body.

Nursing women

The *Ben Ish Hai* (*parashat Toledot* halakha 17) ruled that if a woman touches her breast while nursing her infant, she does not have to wash her hands since she regularly exposes her breasts. If she is not nursing a baby, however, her breasts are considered a covered area and she must wash hands after touching them. See the comment of Maran the Rishon Letziyon in his *Halikhot Olam* (footnote on page 121).

קטו. צריך להזהר בשעת התפלה, או בשעת הלימוד תורה, או באמצע הסעודה, שלא לגעת בשוק או בירך, ובמקומות המכוסים שבגופו, וכן שלא לחכך בשער ראשו, לפי שיש שם מלמולי זיעה. אבל הנוגע במקומות המגולים בראשו ובפניו ובגופו, אין להקפיד. [ש"ע סכ"א, רמ"א סי' צב ס"ז ועוד]
ודין הנוגע במקומות המכוסים באמצע הסעודה, נתבאר בילקוט יוסף הלכות ברכות סימן קס"ד הלכה ד'.

קטז. אפילו נגע במקומות המכוסים שבגופו, רק בראשי אצבעותיו, יש לו ליטול את כל ידיו, פנים **ואחור.** [שו"ת תורה לשמה סי' יד, ילקו"י עמ' שצט]
ואם נגע בידו אחת, אינו צריך ליטול שתי ידיו, אלא רק אותה היד שנגעה במקום המכוסה. ואין צריך כל כך להחמיר בדברים אלו. [יבי"א ח"ט סי' קח אות טו. וע"ע כה"ח ס"ק פו, אול"צ עמ' כד]

Be aware of what you touch

115) While praying, while studying Torah or during a meal, one must take care not to absent-mindedly touch the skin of one's legs or any other part of one's body, or to scratch one's scalp where it is normally covered. The skin retains residual perspiration in these places. It is always permissible to touch one's face or the part of one's head that is normally exposed to the air. See the *Yalkut Yosef Berakhot* (Vol. I, 164:4) for the rules regarding someone who touches a covered part of his body during a meal.

Touched with one hand

116) Even if someone touches one of these parts of the body with his fingertips, he is obligated to wash his entire hand on both sides.[260] If he touches it with only one hand, he needs only to rinse that hand. It is not necessary to be fastidiously stringent in these matters.[261]

260. The *Mekor Hayim* Bachrach (*Siman* 164) ruled that it is sufficient to rinse only the part of the fingers that touched the skin, but the responsa *Torah Lishmah* (#14) ruled that it is necessary to wash the entire hand on both sides, citing proof from a Mishnah in *Kelim*. The *Derekh Hahayim*, cited by the *Mishna Berura* (613:6), concurred with this, ruling that even if only one finger touched the sweat, the person must rinse the entire length of all five fingers. This is likewise the ruling of Harav Zalman in his prayer book (*Halakhos of Netillat Yadayim* for meals #17, cited by the *Kaf Hahayim* Sofer 4:86). The *Tehilla leDavid* (#24) agreed that this is the halakha technically, but he testified that people do not follow it in practice. The *Yalkut Yosef* (page 399) ruled like the *Torah Lishmah*.

Touching with one's palm

The *Dinim Vehanhagot Mehagaon HaHazon Ish* (1:2) states that if someone touches a covered part of his body with his palm but not with his fingers he may continue to pray or study Torah without washing his hands. The *Piske Teshuvot* (page 56) commented that this is so unless his palm came into contact with genuine dirt.

261. This is the ruling of several *Aharonim* (*Haye Adam* 40:18, responsa *Lev Hayim* Palachi Vol. II #7, *Torah Lishmah* #23, the *Kaf Hahayim* Sofer 4:85).

The *Or Letziyon's* approach

The *Or Letziyon* (Vol. II, page 24) explained that when someone stretches his arm into a restroom, his hand is not necessarily contaminated by physical filth but it is contaminated by the harmful forces that make their home in places designated for expelling waste products from the body. According to this, even if someone inserted one finger into a restroom it should be necessary to wash both hands to dispel these harmful forces. Likewise, the parts of the body that exude perspiration are considered places that expel the body's wastes, and therefore harmful forces repose on those parts of the body. Therefore, even if someone touched these parts of the body with one hand, he must rinse both hands. Although there is room to argue that the harmful forces contaminate only the hand that was exposed to them and not the other hand, it is best not to rely on that supposition. Therefore, one should rinse both hands.

אמנם אם נגע בידו האחת במקום מטונף כשהיה באמצע הסעודה, נכון להחמיר ליטול שתי ידיו. [הליכו"ע ח"א עמ' שמב]

קיז. הרגילים לילך בשרוולים קצרים, מותר להם לגעת בזרועותיהם במקום הגלוי, דלא הוי בכלל מקומות המכוסים שבגופו. [ילקו"י עמ' תכט]

אבל מקומות שהולכים במכנסים קצרים, יזהרו שלא יגעו ברגליהם בשעת התפלה. וכן ראוי למורי בתי הספר להשגיח ולחנך את תלמידיהם שהולכים בימי הקיץ במכנסים קצרות, לבל יגעו ברגליהם

When eating a meal, however, if someone dirties one hand it is recommended that he wash both hands before continuing his meal.[262]

Short-sleeved shirts

117) Those people who are accustomed to wear short-sleeved shirts may touch the part of their upper arms that remains exposed all the time, since it cannot be considered a covered part of the body. In contrast, even those people who often go about in short pants must take care not to touch their legs while praying or while studying Torah. Likewise, in schools where the students come dressed in short pants during the summer, the teachers must train them not to touch their legs during their Torah classes. One's legs always have the status of "covered parts of the body" even if the person wears short pants.[263] Likewise, people who are accustomed to walk about barefoot

Maran the Rishon Letziyon's approach

In responsa *Yabia Omer* (Vol. IX, #108:15), Maran the Rishon Letziyon refuted the ruling of the *Or Letziyon*, showing that the author was unaware of the responsa of the *Torah Lishmah* explaining that we do not say that one automatically must wash both hands just because they are both parts of one person. The hand that was not exposed to the harmful forces remains uncontaminated. The halakha, therefore, follows the opinion of the *Aharonim* who ruled leniently regarding this. Maran the Rishon Letziyon concluded by remarking that it is unnecessary to be overly stringent in these matters.

Furthermore, it is apparent from the *Ben Ish Hai* (*parashat Toledot* halakha 17) that there is no issue of harmful spiritual forces through touching one's skin, only an issue of hygiene. He did not list this case among those things that contaminate the hands with any harmful force. For this reason, Maran the Rishon Letziyon (ibid. Vol. V, #1:5) ruled that if someone touches skin that has been freshly bathed, he does not have to wash his hands at all. The harmful forces repose only on one's feet, and on one's hands after waking up or exiting a restroom.

If someone would touch human stool, which is the ultimate human waste product, he would need only to wash his hand because of hygiene, not because of any harmful forces. Certainly there is no harmful force in a person's perspiration or his perspiring skin.

262. This is the ruling of Maran the Rishon Letziyon (*Halikhot Olam* Vol. I, page 342), following the ruling of the *Lev Hayim* Palachi necessitating one to wash both hands before continuing the meal. At times other than during a meal, or when someone wishes to have a snack without bread, it is incorrect to wash both hands if only one was dirtied. Our Sages taught that it is haughty behavior to perform *netillat yadayim* to snack on fruit.

263. The difference between arms and legs

Maran the Rishon Letziyon (responsa *Yehave Da'at* Vol. IV, #5) ruled that those people who are accustomed to wearing short pants must not touch their bare legs while praying. This needs some explanation since this is not the halakha regarding other body parts. For example, the *Ben Ish Hai* ruled that one's left upper arm is not considered a covered part of the body since one exposes it when putting on one's tefillin. If someone wears short-sleeved shirts, the exposed part of his arms is not considered a covered area. It cannot be worse than a woman's breasts, which are not considered a covered area of the body if she is nursing a baby. Why should the legs of someone who wears short pants regularly be any different?

The *Halakha Berura* (page 108) suggested a resolution for this, claiming that the legs perspire more profusely than other body parts and they maintain a status equal to covered parts of the body even if they are frequently exposed to the air.

בעת שלומדים תורה, ובעת התפלה, כדי שילמדו ויתפללו בטהרה ובנקיות. [יחו"ד ח"ד סו"ס ה]. והטעם, מפני שאף על פי שדרכם לגלות רגליהם, לא יצא הדבר מכלל מקומות המכוסים. [הלכה ברורה עמ' קח] וכן במקום שרגילים ללכת יחפים, צריכים להזהר שלא יגעו ברגליהם בשעת התפלה ולימוד התורה, או בשעת הסעודה. [שם]

קיח. נגע במקומות המכוסים שבגופו לאחר שיצא מבית המרחץ, אינו צריך ליטול את ידיו. [כה"ח ס"ק פה, יבי"א ח"ה סי' א אות ה, ילקו"י עמ' תיט]

must nevertheless take care to avoid touching their feet when praying, studying Torah or during a meal.[264]

Right after bathing

118) If someone touches a covered part of his body right after bathing, he does not have to wash his hands.[265]

Day 75

Above, in the footnote to halakha 114, the *Hazon Ish* is cited ruling that a person's upper arms are considered covered parts of the body even for people who are accustomed to wear short sleeves. The responsa *Minhat Yitzhak* (Vol. III, #26; Vol. IV, #114) wrote that this ruling is founded on conjecture and that those people who are lenient to wear short-sleeved shirts have a solid basis in halakha for their practice. The *Halakha Berura* (page 109) suggested that the *Hazon Ish* might admit that in societies where it is quite common for men to wear short-sleeved shirts, the exposed upper arms are not considered a covered part of the body.

264. The *Peri Megadim* (*Mishbetzot Zahav* #92:2) ruled that in societies where it is common to walk around barefoot, the feet are considered an exposed part of the body. This seems to be contradicted by the *Shulhan Arukh*, which states (4:18): "someone who touches his feet ... someone who touches the parts of the body normally covered." This implies that even if feet are not considered a covered part of the body, a person must wash his hands after touching feet. The *Shulhan Arukh* might be teaching us that even if the feet have just been bathed, anyone who touches them must wash his hands since feet are contaminated by an evil spirit, as discussed in halakha 105, whereas if someone touches other body parts just after a bath he does not have to wash his hands, as explained below in halakha 118.

According to this, it does not matter whether or not feet are considered a covered part of the body – it is always necessary to wash hands after touching feet because of the harmful forces on them. Furthermore, it is possible that feet perspire more than other parts of the body and have the status of covered areas even for those who always go barefoot. In the previous footnote the *Halakha Berura* (page 109) is cited suggesting that legs perspire more than other parts of the body and have the status of covered parts of the body even if someone goes about in short pants all the time.

265. This is the ruling of Harav Yosef Palachi (responsum cited by the *Kaf Hahayim* Sofer 4:85). Maran the Rishon Letziyon (responsa *Yabia Omer* Vol. V, #1:5) ruled that if someone touches his body just after bathing it is not necessary to wash hands, explaining that the rest of one's body, other than one's hands and feet, is never contaminated by any harmful forces. This is based on the teaching of the *Ben Ish Hai* (introduction to *parashat Toledot*) and the responsa *Rav Pe'alim* (Vol. II, #4). This disagrees with the ruling of the *Bet Barukh* (page 49b) that even if someone touches his body immediately after bathing he must wash his hands since they have been contaminated by harmful forces. His argument is that the harmful forces cannot be washed away since these parts of the body are always considered dirty. Maran the Rishon Letziyon insisted that this is incorrect, and this is the conclusion of the *Halakha Berura* (*Otzerot Yosef* page 55).

Harav Shelomo Zalman Auerbach (*Halikhot Shelomo Tefilla* page 245) ruled that one must wash hands even after touching freshly washed skin. He claimed that our Sages made this a blanket rule with no exceptions except for someone who touches the skin of someone who is immersed in water, where it is not possible to become dirtied by sweat. This concept was forwarded by the *Eshel Avraham* of Butchatch (4:21). Apparently, the other *Aharonim* did not agree that our Sages made such a rule.

Touching skin immersed in water

The responsa *Torah Lishmah* (#13) ruled that if someone touches the skin of a person immersed in water, he may recite a blessing without washing his hands since no