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]

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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

קיט. נגע בתינוק במקום שדרך הגדולים לכסותו, אצל התינוק הוא מגולה, כגון שהתינוק לובש בגד קצר, ונגע ברגל התינוק, אין צריך ליטול ידיו. אבל נגע במקום שהיה מכוסה אצל התינוק צריך ליטול ידיו. [אור לציון ח"ב פמ"ד ה"י, וכ"פ הגרשז"א בהליכות שלמה עמ' רמה, והגרישי"א בקובץ תשובות ח"ג סי' יב]

קכ. הנוגע בגופו, צריך ליטול ידיו, ואינו מטעם רוח רעה, אלא משום זיעה, ולכן אם אין לו מים, או שיצטרך לבטל מלימודו לחפש אחר מים, די בניקיון במידי דמנקי. [ילקו"י עמ' תיט, עפ"ד משנ"ב סי' צב ס"ק כט]

קכא. הנוגע בזיעה היוצאת מידיו ומזרועותיו במקומות המגולים, וכן הנוגע בכתונת או בבגד הנתון לקבל הזיעה, אף שהוא לח טופח על מנת להטפיח, אינו צריך ליטול ידיו, כל שאינו יוצא מהזיעה שום ממשות זוהמא. אבל אם נוגע במקום המרובים בזיעה שיש שם ממשות מזוהמא, צריך ליטול ידיו. [כה"ח ס"ק צה]

Infants' bodies

119) The custom is to dress infants less completely than older children or adults. If someone touches part of an infant's body that is normally left exposed but will become a covered part when he becomes older, that person does not have to wash his hands. If he touches part of an infant's body that is normally covered at that age, it is necessary to wash his hands afterward.[266]

Without water

120) The reason for washing one's hands after touching the covered parts of one's body is that they retain residual perspiration, but not because they are contaminated by any harmful forces. Therefore, if no water is available or if it would cause undue loss of Torah study time to search for water, one may clean one's hands by rubbing them on anything that makes them clean.

Perspiration on forearms

121) If someone touches the perspiration on his hands or forearms he does not have to wash his hands. Likewise, if someone touches an undershirt he does not have to wash his hands even if it is substantially wet with perspiration. If the perspiration is mixed with tangible grime, however, he must wash his hands.[267]

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perspiration dirties his hands in these circumstances. This is likewise the ruling of Harav Shelomo Zalman Auerbach (*Halikhot Shelomo Tefilla* page 245, footnote 27). The *Shi'ure Shevet Halevi* (comment on the *Ture Zahav Y.D.* 200:3), however, ruled that even when someone is immersed in water and he wishes to recite a blessing, he must make sure not to touch those parts of his body that are normally covered.

Maran the Rishon Letziyon (*Tahorat Habayit* Vol. III, page 202) ruled that it is always forbidden to recite a blessing while in a mikveh of hot water, since the water vapors give it the status of a bathhouse. A woman must recite the blessing outside the room of the mikveh pool and then go in to immerse. The discussion here is about someone in a pool or at a beach.

266. This the ruling of the *Or Letziyon*, Harav Shelomo Zalman Auerbach and Harav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, except that Rav Elyashiv ruled (*Kovetz Teshuvot* Vol. III, #12) that if someone touches an infant's upper arm he must wash his hands.

Infant's feet

When touching an infant's feet, however, one should have to wash hands since harmful forces contaminate all people's feet, and it has nothing to do with dirt or perspiration. On the other hand, it might be that no harmful forces contaminate the infant's feet until he learns to walk. This matter needs more research.

267. It is not the perspiration that necessitates hand washing, but the grime and oil that collects on the skin that

קכב. הנוגע בליחת האף או האוזן, יש אומרים שאין צריך נטילה, ויש חולקים. ולהלכה לכתחילה יש לו ליטול ידיו במים. ואפילו נגע בליחת האף שצלולה כמים. אולם אם הוא באמצע הלימוד, יקנח במידי דמנקי. ועל כל פנים לכתחלה יש ליזהר בזה, ובפרט באמצע התפלה והלימוד. [ראה כה"ח ס"ק צז, אור לציון ח"ב פ"א הי"א, ילקו"י עמ' תכג]

והמכנים אצבעו לאוזן, אם הכניס במקום פנימי שמצוי שם לכלוך, צריך נטילה, אבל אם הכניס ידו במקום חיצוני שאין מצוי שם לכלוך, אין צריך נטילת ידים. [אוליי"צ עמ' קעח]

Mucus and earwax

122) The *Poskim* debated whether or not it is necessary to wash hands after touching mucus discharged from one's nose or earwax. In practice, one should rinse one's hands in these cases, even if the mucus is clear and watery. If someone is busy studying Torah and his hands touched one of these substances, he may simply wipe his hands clean and continue his studies. Nevertheless, one should avoid touching these substances, especially while praying or studying Torah.[268]

is normally covered with garments through the day. This is the ruling of the *Kaf Hahayim* Sofer (4:95) and the *Mishna Berura* (*Bi'ur Halakha* 164:2). The *Halakha Berura* (page 109) likewise made this distinction, and gave an example of someone who touches a sweaty hatband. That person does not have to wash his hands.

A well-worn yarmulke

Harav Shelomo Zalman Auerbach (*Halikhot Shelomo Tefilla* page 245) ruled that even if someone touches the sweaty inner side of a yarmulke, he does not have to wash his hands. Although it might feel grimy, this is not the type of grime that necessitates hand washing according to our Sages' wisdom.

Material soaked with perspiration

The *Bi'ur Halakha* (164:4) recommended that people avoid touching a garment that is heavily soiled with perspiration, such as the inside of a hat. The hat's constant contact with the person's hair causes a buildup of grime along the edges. The responsa *Shevet Halevi* (Vol. VIII, #2:1) added that one should avoid touching the inside of one's garment where it comes into contact with one's armpits, since people perspire more profusely from their armpits.

Socks

The *Or Letziyon* (Vol. II, page 24) ruled that if someone touches the bottom of his stockinged feet he must wash his hands since the feet perspire more profusely than other parts of the body, and the socks often become grimy. This does not contradict Harav Shelomo Zalman Auerbach's ruling (*Halikhot Shelomo Tefilla* page 245) that if someone touches sweaty socks he does not have to wash his hands. Rav Auerbach was referring to the section of the socks over the foot, where the perspiration is not considered grimy.

268. The Rama (gloss to 92:7) stated that "one must not touch the mucus from his nose or earwax while praying or studying Torah, but he may use a cloth to clean his nose or ears." Apparently, his position is that someone who touches these substances must wash his hands. Harav Eliyahu of Vilna, cited by the *Mishna Berura* (92:30), ruled leniently in this matter, concurring with the *Mor Uktzi"a* cited in the *Sha'are Teshuva*. Most *Aharonim*, however, ruled stringently (as enumerated in the *Kaf Hahayim* Sofer 4:97), agreeing with Rama.

Harav Hayim Vital wrote (*Sha'ar Hakavanot* page 1c): "My master [the Arizal] warned me sternly not to insert my fingers into my ears to clean them of their wax at any time during the prayers, from the beginning of the morning blessings until I complete *Alenu leshabe'ah* at the end of *shaharit*. If I do insert my fingers, I must then wash my hands [before continuing the prayers]."

The *Yafe Lalev* commented that this is the halakha only when the mucus or wax has some moisture, but if it is totally dry it is alright. The *Ru'ah Hayim* Palachi (4:103) cited the *Sefer Hassidim* (#252) ruling that it is sufficient to wipe one's hands clean after wiping one's nose, but it is not necessary to wash them with water. The *Kaf Hahayim* Sofer concluded that one may rely on this lenient opinion when one has no other choice. Likewise, the Maharsha"m (responsa Vol. III, #241) suggested that people generally rely on the opinion of Harav Eliyahu of Vilna. He testified that he found a note from Harav Avraham David of Butchatch to the same effect. The *Yalkut Yosef* (page 423) ruled that it is best to wash hands after touching these

קכג. הנוגע ברוק, אינו צריך ליטול ידיו. [הלכה ברורה עמ' קד]

קכד. הנוגע במוגלה שהיא דבר מאוס, צריך נטילה כמו נוגע בזיעה מכוסה, אבל נוגע בדם אינו מאוס, ואין צריך נטילה. [אור לציון ח"ב הלכה יא]

קכה. הנוגע בצואה או במי רגלים, חייב בנטילת ידים. וגם יש לו להסיר הריח אם נודף מידיו. [פסקי תשובות עמ' נט]

אבל הנוגע בכלי המיוחד שהקטנים עושים בו את צרכיהם, אם הוא נקי, אין צריך נטילת ידים. [ילקו"י עמ' תלד ע"פ כה"ח ס"ק פח]. וכל שכן שאם נגע בניירות קינוח וחיתולים נקיים שאין צריך נטילה. [פסקי תשובות עמ' נט]

Saliva

123) It is not necessary to wash hands after touching saliva.

Blood and pus

124) It is not necessary to wash hands after touching blood, but it is necessary after touching pus.[269]

Stool and urine

125) After touching human stool or urine, one must wash hands and make sure to remove any odor that remains from that contact. It is not necessary to wash hands after touching a child's potty as long as it is clean at that time. It is certainly not necessary to wash hands after touching clean toilet paper or diapers.

substances, but if someone is in the middle of his Torah studies he may wipe his hands clean without water.

Nasal mucus

Harav Aharon Leib Steinman (cited in *Si'ah Tefilla* 2:5) testified that the *Hazon Ish* ruled that the *Poskim* who ruled leniently regarding nasal mucus or ear wax were not referring to mucus inside one's nostrils. If someone inserts a finger into his nostril or deep into his ear, it is no different than touching parts of one's body that are normally covered. He must wash his hands, as explained in halakha 112. Although there are no sweat glands inside one's nostrils or ears, they still have the status of body surfaces that exude waste products.

The *Piske Teshuvot* (page 59) suggested that according to this there is no debate among the *Poskim* regarding mucus and ear wax. Those who ruled stringently were referring to touching these substances inside the nostrils or ears, while those who ruled leniently were referring to touching them outside the body. The simple understanding of the *Poskim's* language, however, suggests that they ruled stringently even when touching the substances outside the body.

269. This is the ruling of the *Or Letziyon* (Vol. II, 1:11). He cited Rama (gloss to *Y.D.* 265:1) stating that if a *mohel* is invited to recite the blessings after a circumcision, he must first wash his hands and mouth. In that case, there is substantial blood on his hands and therefore he must wash them in honor of the blessings he is about to recite. Besides, the *mohel* must wash hands since he had handled the body of the infant. When someone touches a bit of blood, however, it is not necessary for him to wash his hands.

Discharge from the eyes

The *Piske Teshuvot* (page 59) ruled that it is not necessary to wash hands after touching a discharge from one's eyes. Citing the *Or Letziyon* (Vol. II, 1:11), he explained that this is because this is an outer, uncovered part of one's body. Actually, the citation is in error; the passage he cited is found in the *Or Letziyon* on page 277. Although the discharge is genuine mucus, it is clean and pure, unlike the mucus that comes from one's nostrils.

בית קברות ולוית המת

קכו. כשחוזרים מן ההלויה שבבית הקברות, צריכים לרחוץ הידים ג' פעמים [לסירוגין]. [באו"ח תולדות הט"ז, חזו"ע אבלות ח"א עמ' שלא]

קכז. הנוגע במת צריך ליטול ידיו. [ש"ע ס"ט] ואפילו המלווה את המת, ולא נכנס לבית הקברות, צריך ליטול את ידיו, אם נכנס לתוך ארבע אמותיו של המת. [עי' מג"א ס"ק כא ופמ"ג שם וכה"ח ס"ק עז]

Cemeteries and Funerals

After visiting a cemetery

126) After attending a funeral [or visiting] a cemetery, one must wash hands alternately three times.[270]

Touching a human corpse

127) After touching a human corpse, one must wash hands. In fact, even people who escort the deceased to the cemetery and walk within four cubits of the body [or those who were in the funeral home while the body was present] must wash hands. This is so even if they do not enter the cemetery. Some *Poskim* ruled more stringently that all those who escort the deceased for a distance of four cubits must wash

270. The *Shulhan Arukh* (4:19) ruled that if someone walks through a cemetery or touches a dead human body, he must wash hands. His source for this is the *Mordekhi* to *Berakhot* (chapter 8, #194). The Mahari"l (responsa #23) commended the custom of people to wash hands after attending a prayer session in a cemetery, explaining that an aura of impurity reposes in every cemetery. Our Sages taught (*Sanhedrin* 65b) that it is forbidden to remain overnight in a cemetery hoping to become endowed with this impure spirit [harnessing it to practice black magic]. By washing hands upon exiting the cemetery, we remove this harmful force from our hands.

The Ramban (*Torat Ha'adam* Unit *He'avel* page 156) offered a different explanation for washing hands upon returning from a cemetery. The *Orhot Hayim* and Rabbenu David Abudarham explained that it is a matter of hygiene. According to them, one rinsing of the hands would be sufficient, but according to the *Mordekhi* it is necessary to wash each hand three times.

Rabbenu Eliezer bar Natan (responsa #11) explained that the reason for washing hands after leaving a cemetery is to demonstrate that the death of a righteous person brings atonement to his survivors just as the mitzvah of *egla arufa* brings atonement to the community who performs that mitzvah. The Torah instructs the elders of that community to wash their hands over the calf's carcass to complete the mitzvah, and therefore we always wash hands after attending the funeral of a righteous person. This practice is mentioned in the Talmud Yerushalmi (*Mo'ed Katan* 3:5).

Rabbenu Bahye (*parashat Hukat*) explained that the water mixed with ashes of a *para aduma* purifies people from the *tum'a* of contact with a human corpse, and therefore the custom is to wash our hands after returning from a funeral to allude to the process of purification using the water and ashes. The act of washing hands also alludes to the prophecy (*Yehezkel* 36:25), "I will throw upon you waters of purity and you will become pure."

According to the last two reasons explained here, we do not wash hands upon exiting a cemetery because of any harmful spiritual force, or even because of hygiene. According to those who give these reasons, it is likely not necessary to wash hands more than once.

The *Halakha Berura* (page 100) cited a number of *Aharonim* (including Harav Hayim Vital, Harav Eliyahu of Vilna and Harav Hayim Hakohen) who agreed with Mahari"l that the purpose of washing hands is to dispel the harmful force that has contaminated one's hands. The *Petah Hadevir* (4:10), the *Ben Ish Hai* (*parashat Toledot* halakha 16) and the *Kaf Hahayim* Sofer (4:61) ruled based on this that one must wash each hand alternately three times, unlike the responsa *Yitzhak Yeranen* who ruled that one time is sufficient. Maran the Rishon Letziyon (*Hazon Ovadya Avelut* Vol. I, page 331) ruled as well that one must wash each hand three times. As the *Kaf Hahayim* Sofer (4:62) explained, whenever it is necessary to wash three times, the hands must be washed alternately.