על עצמו וליטול ידיו קודם שהולך לשירותים, תבא עליו ברכה, ורשאי להחמיר בזה. אבל מעיקר הדין מותר לו לילך לבית הכסא לעשיית צרכיו, רק אחר כך ליטול ידיו שחרית.
וכבר נתבאר לעיל בסימן ד׳ הלכה מ״ג, שמעיקר הדין מותר גם ללבוש את הבגדים קודם הנטילה.
[ילקו״י עמ׳ תקיג]

כד. כבר נתבאר לעיל (סימן ג׳ הלכה ה) שכשניעור בלילה לעשות צרכיו, ודעתו לישון מיד אחר כך, אם בדעתו להמשיך לישון מיד, יטול ידיו לאחר שיצא מהשירותים, ויברך ״אשר יצר״, אך לא יברך ״על נטילת ידים״, שהרי דעתו לחזור ולישון. ובקומו בבוקר יטול ידיו, ויברך ״על נטילת ידים״.

כה. הנפנה לצרכיו ויצא מבית הכסא, וקודם שנטל ידיו שמע קדיש או קדושה, ישפשף ידיו במידי דמנקי, או בבגדו, ויענה אמן וקדושה עם הצבור. וכן היוצא מבית הכסא וטרם שנטל ידיו ראה ברקים או שמע רעמים, יברך הגם שעדיין לא נטל ידיו. וישפשף ידיו במידי דמנקי. [ילקו״י עמ׳ תקיד]

כו. העושה צרכיו ורוצה לאכול, יטול ידיו שתי פעמים, על הראשונה יברך ״אשר יצר״, ועל השניה יברך ״על נטילת ידים״. ובנטילתו הראשונה יטול מהברז בלא כלי (וכמו שנתבאר לעיל שהיוצא מבית

If the urge to urinate is not so great and he would not be guilty of *bal teshaketzu* by postponing for another minute, he may perform *netillat yadayim* first. If he does this, he will receive a special blessing from Heaven. Technically, however, it is permissible for him to urinate before *netillat yadayim* even in this case. As explained above in *Siman* 4:43, it is technically permissible to get dressed before performing *netillat yadayim*.

In the middle of the night

24) As explained above in *Siman* 3:5, if someone wakes up in the middle of the night to relieve himself and he intends to go right back to sleep, he must wash his hands after exiting the restroom and recite the blessing of *asher yatzar*. He should not recite the blessing of *al netillat yadayim* since he intends to go back to sleep immediately. When he gets up in the morning, he must perform *netillat yadayim* and recite the blessing for that mitzvah.

Day 29

Responding to kaddish

25) If someone relieved himself and heard people reciting kaddish or *Kedusha* as he exited the restroom before he had a chance to wash his hands, he should wipe his hands clean on a cloth or some other clean surface and then he may respond to the kaddish or *Kedusha* along with the congregation. Likewise, if someone heard thunder or saw lightning just after exiting the restroom, he should wipe his hands clean and recite the appropriate blessing even though he has not yet washed his hands with water.

Just before a meal

26) If someone relieves himself just before beginning a meal, he should rinse his hands under the faucet without pouring water from a cup on his hands, and recite the blessing of *asher yatzar*. Then, he should perform *netillat yadayim*

הכסא אינו צריך נטילה בכלי אלא רק ג׳ פעמים לסירוגין), ושוב יטול ידיו בכלי כדין נטילת ידים לסעודה. ונתבאר בילקוט יוסף ברכות בסימן קס״ה הלכה א׳.

כז. אם עשה צרכיו באמצע הסעודה, ונגע במקומות המכוסים, צריך ליטול ידיו שנית. והמברך על נטילת ידים יש לו על מה שיסמוך. וכשנוטל ידיו, יטול בתחילה מהברז ג׳ פעמים לסירוגין ויברך ״אשר יצר״, ושוב יטול ידיו מהכלי לסעודה. ונתבאר בילקוט יוסף ברכות סימן קס״ד הלכה ד׳.

with a cup and recite the blessing of *al netillat yadayim* to begin his meal. As explained above, it is not necessary to wash one's hands with a cup after exiting a restroom. It is necessary only to rinse each hand three times – right, left, right, left, right and left. This halakha was explained in the *Yalkut Yosef Berakhot English Edition* (Vol. I, 165:1).

Relieved himself during a meal

27) If someone was eating a meal and interrupted to relieve himself, and he [entered a restroom or] touched parts of his body that are normally clothed, he must perform *netillat yadayim* again before resuming his meal. In this case, there is a halakhic basis to repeat the blessing of *al netillat yadayim* also. If someone chooses to follow that practice, he should first recite the blessing of *al netillat yadayim* and then the blessing of *asher yatzar*. This was explained in the *Yalkut Yosef Berakhot English Edition* (Vol. I, 164:4).

Preface *Elohay Neshama*

The blessing of *Elohay neshama* is one of the first blessings we recite each morning. Although it has the status of a blessing, it does not begin with the standard introductory words בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם; it only ends with בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה'. This will be explained below in this *Siman*. The basic purpose of this blessing is to thank God for creating our souls and for returning them to our bodies after the night's sleep.

This blessing reminds us that, just before we were born, each of us swore to guard his soul's pristine condition and not stain it through sinning. The Talmud teaches (*Nidda* 30b) that while an infant develops in the womb he is taught the entire Torah. At the moment of each person's birth, an angel taps him on his mouth, causing him to forget all the Torah that he learned. The angel then makes him swear that he will become a tzaddik and not act with wickedness. The angel explains, "Be aware that the Blessed Holy One is spiritually pristine and His ministering angels are spiritually pure. The soul that He implanted within you is likewise pure. If you maintain it in that state, things will be good, but if you do not He will take your soul away."

The *Etz Yosef* pointed out that this blessing enumerates seven important facts about a Jew's soul:

טְהוֹרָה – It is pure as the Heavens. It is a spiritual entity emanating from the Source of Life. Our Sages taught (*Berakhot* 5b): Just as the Blessed Holy One is pure, the Jewish soul is likewise pure.

אַתָּה בְרָאתָהּ – Each Jewish soul was created during the original Six Days of Creation.

אַתָּה יְצַרְתָּהּ – God granted each soul the spiritual likeness of Himself. This is what the Torah calls *tzelem*.

אַתָּה נָפַחְתָּהּ בִּי – The Blessed Holy One "breathed" the soul into each person while he was in his mother's womb. This expression is taken from the Torah's account of the Creation (*Bereshit* 2:7), "He breathed the soul of life into his nostrils." The soul is a totally spiritual entity, and yet the Blessed Holy One made a bond between the soul and the inanimate body, making it a living being. The soul, therefore, is a godly entity inserted into the body

only after the latter was created out of earthly materials. With all other living beings, the life-force in them was created together with their physical bodies.

אַתָּה מְשַׁמְּרָהּ בְּקִרְבִּי – Once a person is born, he needs God's constant supervision and protection to keep his soul within his body.

וְאַתָּה עָתִיד לִיטְלָהּ מִמֶּנִּי – The soul is immortal; it remains in existence after the body dies. That is why we say that God "takes" the soul, not that He destroys it.

וּלְהַחֲזִירָהּ בִּי לֶעָתִיד לָבוֹא – At some time in the future, God will resurrect the dead, as our prophets have taught.

Rabbenu Yosef Hayim

Man's soul consists potentially of four parts: the *nefesh*, the *ru'ah*, the *neshama* and the *neshama* of the *neshama*, which is also called *haya*. Not everyone is privileged to have all these spiritual aspects, however. Some people have only a *nefesh*, while others manage to gain a *ru'ah* as well. When Ribbi Shim'on bar Yohai said (*Sukka* 45b), "I see that there are very few people who have risen to a high level," he was referring to those people who have earned a *neshama* of the *neshama*.

The Arizal taught that even those people who never rise to the level where they gain the higher aspects of the soul still have a connection to them through their connection with Adam, the first man. His great soul encompassed those of all the people who would ever live on earth. As long as a person strives to serve God properly, he is connected with his original source and it is as if he has all the four aspects of soul. This can be likened to a thick cable that reaches from the highest point in Heaven down to earth. If anyone attaches himself to that cable, even with a thin cord, he is attached to Heaven as well.

When we recite the blessing of *Elohay neshama*, we thank God for granting us these four aspects of the soul, for each of us has these four aspects, either within one's own soul or through one's connection with Adam. That is why we use four expressions – "נְתַתָּ בִּי, בְּרָאתָהּ, יְצַרְתָּהּ, נָפַחְתָּהּ בִּי, You gave it, You created it, You formed it and You breathed it into me."

The term טְהוֹרָה (pure) in this blessing refers to the highest of the four dimensions, that of *Atzilut*, which is the realm of the *neshama* of the *neshama*. The term בְּרָאתָהּ refers to the dimension of *Beri'a*, which is the realm of the *neshama*. The term יְצַרְתָּהּ refers to the dimension of *Yetzira*, which is the realm of the *ru'ah*. The term נָפַחְתָּהּ בִּי refers to the dimension of *Asi'a*, where the aspect of *nefesh* is connected. Nevertheless, the term *neshama* is also a collective name for all the aspects of the soul.