דיני ניגוב הידים

ל. ינגב ידיו היטב קודם שיבצע, שהאוכל בלי ניגוב ידים כאילו אוכל לחם טמא. [ש"ע סי' קנח סי"ב]

לא. נכון להחמיר שינגב ידיו, אף כששפך על כל יד רביעית מים או הטבילם בנהר או במקוה. [ראה ש"ע סי' קנח סי"ג ואחרון]. וכן הוא מנהג העולם להחמיר שאפילו אם שפכו על הידים רביעית אין אוכלים בלא ניגוב ידים. [כה"ח סופר ס"ק פח]

Day 30

Drying the Hands

Necessity of drying hands

30) Everyone must dry his hands thoroughly before beginning to eat his bread. The act of eating bread without drying the hands is tantamount to eating bread that is *tame*.[26]

As above

31) Even if someone pours *revi'it* or more of water on each hand when performing *netillat yadayim*, or even if he immerses his hands into a river or a mikveh, he should still dry his hands before eating the bread. The common custom has become to dry the hands in all cases.[27]

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26. The Talmud (*Sota* 4b) states that Ribbi Avhu taught this halakha, basing it on the verse (*Yehezkel* 4:13), "God said, 'This is how the people of Yisrael will eat their impure bread.'" See the Maharsh"a's explanation for the connection between this verse and this halakha. Rabbenu Yaakov, author of *Arba'a Turim*, pointed out that the Hebrew words *lahmam tame* (their impure bread) have the same numerical value (168) as the words *bela niguv yadayim* – without drying the hands.

Why our Sages insisted that we dry our hands

Rashi, explaining Ribbi Avhu's halakha, wrote that if someone eats with wet fingers, it makes the bread unappetizing to many people as if it was defiled with *tum'a*. Rabbenu Menahem Hame'iri (*Kuntras Bet Yad* Unit 11) wrote likewise. Rabbenu Yona's disciples (comment to *Berakhot* 42b) and Rabbenu Hanan'el (cited in *Bi'ur Halakha*) explained that when someone eats bread with wet fingers, the water defiles the bread, making it susceptible to become *tame*. Harav Moshe Feinstein (responsa *Igrot Moshe* Vol. II, #53) explained the practical difference between these two explanations.

27. Maran in the *Shulhan Arukh* (158:13) ruled that if someone poured *revi'it* of water on each hand or if someone poured *revi'it* of water on both hands at once, it is unnecessary to dry the hands before eating bread. He added that the same applies if someone immersed his hands in a river or a mikveh. In the *Bet Yosef*, he cited the *Mordekhi* and the *sefer Mitzvot Gadol* ruling that someone who immerses his hands in a mikveh does not have to dry them afterward, and he explained that this is because the water on his hands never became *teme'im* at all. When pouring *revi'it* of water on the hands at once, the water likewise does not become *teme'im*, and therefore it is unnecessary to dry them.

The *Yam Shel Shelomo* Luria and the *Bayit Hadash*, however, ruled that although this is true for someone who immerses his hands in a mikveh, someone who poured *revi'it* of water on each hand must dry them afterward. The *Bi'ur Halakha* pointed out that this is definitely so according to Rabbenu Hanan'el's explanation of the halakha.

The *Levush* ruled even more stringently, requiring drying the hands even when immersing them in a mikveh or river. He argued that regardless of how one performed *netillat yadayim*, it still appears unappetizing to eat bread with wet fingers, and therefore in all cases one must dry the hands before eating.

The *Kaf Hahayim* Sofer testified that the common custom is to dry the hands in all cases. As explained above in the footnote to halakha 25, since our custom is to recite the blessing after washing and before drying them even though we pour *revi'it* of water on each hand, it must be that we rely on the opinion that even in such a case it is necessary to dry the hands. To justify this practice, it is important that we observe this stringency.

לב. מותר לנגב הידים במכשיר לייבוש ידים הפועל על ידי הזרמת אויר חם על גבי הידים, והוא הדין בניגוב הידים על ידי השמש וכדו'. [ילקו"י עמ' כן]

לג. לא ינגב הידים בחלוקו, דקשה לשכחה. [מג"א סקי"ז ואחרון]. ואף בשאר בגדים יש ליזהר בזה. [יפה ללב אות י', הובא בכה"ח ס"ק פז]

Hot-air drying machine

32) It is permissible to dry one's hands with a hand-drying device that blows hot, dry air on them. One may likewise dry the hands in the sun or in any other manner.[28]

Drying hands on one's clothes

33) One must not dry the hands on one's garment, since our Sages taught that such an act is liable to have an adverse effect on one's memory. In preparation for performing *netillat yadayim*, however, it is permissible to wipe one's hands dry on one's clothes. This will not affect one's memory.[29]

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28. Whether the reason for the rule forbidding one to eat until drying the hands is as Rashi explained it or as Rabbenu Yona and Rabbenu Hanan'el explained it, it does not matter how one fulfills this requirement. As long as the result is that the hands are dry, one may now eat bread.

There is room for debate on this according to the ruling of the *Levush*. It might be that allowing the hands to dry by themselves is not effective since the water that we considered to be *teme'im* was not wiped away. Nevertheless, there is a basis to say that when someone uses a hand-drying machine it is better than simply allowing the hands to dry in the sun since he does perform an act to dry his hands. This reasoning is offered by responsa *Az Nidberu* (Vol. IX, page 163). Most *Aharonim*, however, agreed that even according to the *Levush* it makes no difference how one's hands become dry. See the *Hazon Ish* (25:10), responsa *Betzel Hahokhma* (Vol. IV, #141), responsa *Be'er Moshe* (Vol. VII, page 129) and the responsum of the *Hazon Ish* cited in responsa *Az Nidberu* (Vol.VIII, #52). Both the *Yalkut Yosef* (page 26) and the *Halakha Berura* (page 86) cited Maran the Rishon Letziyon ruling that it is permissible to dry the hands with a hot-air machine.

29. Wiping hands dry before performing *netillat yadayim*

The *Yalkut Yosef* (Vol. III, page 26) states that the practice of many people to wipe their hands on their clothes to make them completely dry before performing *netillat yadayim* is acceptable; it does not affect the memory adversely. He based this ruling on several arguments. First, it might be that that the problem of this behavior harming one's memory applies only when wiping the hands on one's jacket and not on other garments. The *Peri Megadim* wrote that he remained undecided on that issue. Furthermore, the *Nefesh Haya* Margaliyot (#2:3) suggested that this applies only to someone who dries his hands after performing *netillat yadayim* since the water on his hands might be *teme'im*. There might be nothing wrong with wiping wet hands on one's garments at other times, and especially in this case where we are dealing with only a few drops of water. The *Yalkut Yosef* supported this argument, explaining that since this rule appears only in the rules of *netillat yadayim* and not elsewhere it probably applies only to drying the hands after performing *netillat yadayim*.

The *Petah Hadevir* (260:2), however, ruled that a person must take care not to dry his hands on any of his garments no matter why his hands are wet at this time. Therefore, it seems that it is proper to refrain from any leniency in this matter.

Someone else's garment

The *sefer Shemirat Haguf Vehaneshama* (page 192) pondered whether this rule applies to someone wiping his hands on anyone's garment or if it applies only to his own garment. He did not come to any conclusion.

A garment that no one is wearing

The responsa *Rivevot Efrayim* (Vol. I, #126) pondered whether it is alright to wipe the hands on a garment that is not being worn at this time. It might be that this rule applies only to garments that are being worn at this time. He did not come to any definite conclusion. In light of this, it is certainly recommended to refrain from any activity that might cause one to forget the Torah one has studied.