כה. קוץ התחוב בבשר, אם נראה מבחוץ חוצץ, ואם אינו נראה אינו חוצץ. [ש"ע יו"ד סי' קצח סי"א, טה"ב ח"ג עמ' סג]

תחבושת וגבס

כו. מי שיש לו פצע בידו, וחבש אותו בתחבושת לרפואה, אם התחבושת נמצאת רק על כף היד או על גב היד, יטול את מקום האצבעות, שהרי עיקר הדין שחיוב נטילה הוא על מקום האצבעות (ראה לעיל סימן קנ"ח סט"ז). ואם יכול בנקל להסיר התחבושת וליטול מים על כל היד, נכון שיעשה כן. **ואם** התחבושת נמצאת על מקום האצבעות, אם הדרך להסיר התחבושת מידי פעם (וכגון שאין לו שם מכה ופצע, אלא מחוש בעלמא), הרי שזה חוצץ לנטילת ידים, ויש לו להסיר התחבושת קודם הנטילה. אבל אם התחבושת קבועה על מקום המכה, ואינו מסירה משם, אין זה חציצה, ויטול על שאר היד שאינה

Splinters

25) If a splinter has pierced one's skin but it is visible (i.e., part of it protrudes), it is a *hatzitza*. If it cannot be seen (i.e., it is buried in the skin) it is not a *hatzitza*.

Casts and Bandages

Bandages

26) If someone's hand is injured and he has a bandage on his palm or the back of his hand, he should perform *netillat yadayim* by pouring the water onto his fingers. As stated above in *Siman* 158:16, to technically fulfill this mitzvah it is necessary to pour the water on the fingers only. If he can easily remove the bandage and put it back afterward, that would be the best thing to do.[131]

If the bandage is on a finger, however, the halakha is determined by the type of injury he has sustained. If he has sprained his finger and has wrapped it for comfort, the bandage is considered a *hatzitza* since he occasionally removes the bandage for other purposes. If his finger is cut or broken, however, the bandage must remain in place until the injury has healed. In that case, the bandage is not considered a *hatzitza* whatsoever. He may pour the water on the rest of his hand and fulfill the mitzvah. He should make sure, however, to pour *revi'it* of water at once. If he would pour less than *revi'it*, some of that water might drip onto the bandage and then drip back onto the hand, rendering the hand impure once more. As long as he pours *revi'it* at once, the water itself remains pure and it cannot contaminate the hand afterward.

If this is not possible, one may rely on the lenient *Poskim*. Following the ruling of Maran the Rishon Letziyon, however, one may be lenient in every case.

Stitches remaining after they are no longer needed

If the doctor who stitched the wound instructed the patient to come back in one week to have the stitches removed and he failed to come, those stitches are definitely a *hatzitza* after that time has passed. Most people care to have the stitches removed when it is time to do so. If an individual claims that he does not mind having the stitches remain in his skin, his opinion is not taken into account. See above in halakha 3.

131. This halakha is based on the ruling that technically, the mitzvah of *netillat yadayim* is to pour water over the fingers up to where they are connected to the palm, as explained above in *Siman* 158:16.

חבושה, ויזהר לשפוך רביעית בבת אחת על היד, לצאת מידי חשש שיגעו המים בתחבושת ויחזרו לטמאות את היד, שכיון שנוטל שיעור רביעית אפילו יגעו המים בתחבושת ויחזרו אל היד לא יטמאו אותה. ואחר הנטילה, נכון שיכסה את התחבושת בבד נקי, או בניילון, לכסות על הזוהמא.

וכל זה דוקא ב"רטיה" שהיא התחבושת ששמים על המכה שבה מניחים התרופה, והתחבושת היא צורך לריפוי המכה. אבל תחבושת שנותנים על הרטיה, שהיא בד הנכרך סביב, ומתפשטת אף שלא במקום המכה, כיון שהיא באה כדי להחזיק הרטיה שלא תפול, אם יכול להוציאה בשעת נטילת ידים, יוציאנה ויטול ידיו בברכה, ואם אינו יכול להוציאה, יטול ידיו בלא ברכה. [ראה הליכו"ע ח"א עמ' שכב]

If the bandage itself is dirty, then after completing the mitzvah of *netillat yadayim* he should wrap a clean cloth or plastic over the bandage. In this way, he will be eating in a hygienic manner.

The above rules apply to a bandage placed directly on the wound to keep it clean and to hold antiseptic ointment in place or to allow the skin to heal where it has been stitched. If another bandage is wrapped around that one and over a larger area for extra protection, however, the rule is somewhat different. If it is easy to remove the second bandage and to replace it after performing *netillat yadayim*, that is the best thing to do, for then one will be able to recite the blessing of *al netillat yadayim* as well. If it is difficult to remove the outer bandage, one may still perform *netillat yadayim* on the exposed portion of the fingers, but one must not recite the blessing in this case.[132]

132. The *Shulhan Arukh* (161:1) states that if there is a bandage on one's hand it is a *hatzitza*. Later, in *Siman* 162:10, it states that if someone has a bandage on his hand he may fulfill the mitzvah of *netillat yadayim* by pouring water over the unbandaged portion of his hand. The bandaged portion can be ignored as if it is not part of his hand at this time. These two rulings seem to contradict one another.

The *Mishna Berura* (161:4) cited *Aharonim* reconciling this, explaining that the first halakha is about a person whose hand or finger is sprained and he wears the bandage for comfort. He can remove the bandage whenever he chooses. If he would perform *netillat yadayim* on only the portion of his hand that is not bandaged, he might decide to remove the bandage while he is eating and then he would be eating with a hand that has not been properly purified through *netillat yadayim*. Therefore, the halakha requires him to remove the bandage before the meal and perform *netillat yadayim* on his entire hand.

The second halakha is about a person who has a laceration on his hand or a broken bone. This person will definitely leave his bandage on through the meal. Therefore, he needs only to pour the water on the unbandaged portion of his hands. This is the basis of the halakha as presented above.

The *Shulhan Arukh* (162:10) added that when performing *netillat yadayim* on a bandaged hand, one must take care that the water does not drip onto the bandage and then drip back onto the hand. Alternatively, if one pours *revi'it* of water all at once on the hand, the water does not become *teme'im* and it does not matter where it drips. The *Aharonim* wrote that the second option is far more preferable since it is next to impossible to control where the water drips. See the *Mishna Berura* (162:71).

Harav Shelomo Luria (cited in the *Mishna Berura*, ibid.) added that while eating one should cover the bandage with a clean cloth to hide the filth on the bandage. If the bandage is fresh and clean, this is probably unnecessary.

Surgical tape used to fasten a bandage on a wound in light of the ruling in *Halikhot Olam*

Maran the Rishon Letziyon (*Halikhot Olam* Vol. I, page 322) cited the *Tahorat Hamayim* explaining that a bandage is not a *hatzitza* if it covers only the injured section of the hand. If the bandage covers a larger area than the injured part of the hand and the extra bandage cannot be removed, one must perform *netillat yadayim* but without reciting the blessing. If one does remove the bandage from the extra part of the hand, one can perform the mitzvah and recite the blessing. This is the ruling appearing in the *Yalkut Yosef*

כז. תחבושת המכסה את כל אצבעותיו, ואי אפשר להסירה כלל בשעת הנטילת ידים, וכגון שיש לו שבר, וידו ואצבעותיו מכוסים בגבס, או שידו מלאה פצעים וחבורות, ואינו יכול ליטול אותה היד כלל, נוטל רק את ידו השניה לבד, ויברך "על נטילת ידים", ולא "על נטילת יד". [ראה יחו"ד ח"ב סי' יט, הליכו"ע ח"א עמ' שכד]

One hand covered completely

27) If someone's hand and fingers are covered completely with a bandage or a cast that cannot be removed, he must perform *netillat yadayim* on the second hand alone.[133] In this case, he still recites the blessing of *al netillat yadayim* and not *al netillat yad*.[134] The same applies to someone who has injuries all over his hand and is not allowed to wet it.

(Vol. III) as well. He added proof for this ruling from the *Mishna Berura* (*Sha'ar Hatziyun* 162:57).

This ruling runs counter to almost all the *Aharonim*, who explained the halakha in the manner of the *Mishna Berura*, that regardless of the area covered by the bandage, as long as it is certain that the person will not remove it during the meal it is not a *hatzitza* and he may perform the mitzvah and recite the blessing of *al netillat yadayim*. Indeed, the *Halakha Berura* (page 232) takes issue with the *Halikhot Olam*.

The responsa *Elyashiv Hakohen* (Vol. II, #15) also wrote that the ruling found in the *Halikhot Olam* is untenable. Afterward, he discovered that the halakha appearing on top of the page (in *Halikhot Olam*) does not match the discussion of Maran the Rishon Letziyon appearing below it. He pointed out that the halakhot appearing on the tops of each page in the first volume of *Halikhot Olam* were composed by someone else and they are not the fruit of the pen of Maran the Rishon Letziyon. Apparently, this writer misunderstood Maran's intentions, thinking that he meant that as long as the bandage covers more of an area than the wound itself one may not recite the blessing when performing *netillat yadayim*. This printing error apparently misled Rav Yitzhak as well, and therefore he printed the same incorrect ruling in his *Yalkut Yosef*. In truth, however, Maran the Rishon Letziyon never suggested that this is the halakha.

The real meaning of the *Halikhot Olam* is that the bandage placed directly on the wound is not at all a *hatzitza* even if it covers an area wider or longer than the wound. If, however, someone wraps an additional bandage on top of the first one and covers a wider area of the fingers, this poses a problem of *hatzitza*. Therefore, if the person can easily do so, he should remove the larger bandage from his fingers and perform *netillat yadayim*, reciting the blessing. If he cannot remove it, he can still perform *netillat yadayim* but he must not recite the blessing.

According to this, the bandage placed on the wound itself is not a *hatzitza* even if it covers an area larger than the wound itself. A second bandage wrapped on top of the first bandage is not a *hatzitza* so long as it covers the same area as the bandage underneath. If the second bandage covers a larger area, it is a *hatzitza* and prevents the person from reciting the blessing of *al netillat yadayim*.

The *Halakha Berura* (page 232) ruled even more leniently, that as long as the purpose of the second bandage is to protect and strengthen the first bandage then it is not a *hatzitza* even if it covers a larger area than the first bandage.

133. In these cases it is not necessary to wrap the unwashed hand in a cloth. That hand is exempt from the mitzvah of *netillat yadayim*. If one or two fingers are not covered by the cast, however, the person must perform *netillat yadayim* on the exposed fingers, pouring *revi'it* of water at one time. If this is too difficult, he must cover the exposed fingers with a cloth during the meal.

134. Maran the Rishon Letziyon (responsa *Yehave Da'at* Vol. II, #19) compared this to the halakha concerning immersing new kitchen utensils in a mikveh. Maran ruled in the *Shulhan Arukh* (*Y.D.* 120:3) that if someone immerses only one utensil, he must recite the blessing of *al tevillat keli* in the singular form. If he is immersing two or more utensils, he must recite the blessing of *al tevillat kelim* in the plural form. According to this principle, since in the case described here the person performs *netillat yadayim* on one hand only, he should recite the blessing of *al netillat yad*.

There is a fundamental difference between the two cases, however. Regarding the mitzvah of immersing kitchen utensils in a mikveh, it is quite common for someone to have acquired a single utensil and perform the mitzvah with a single utensil. Therefore, it makes sense that our Sages would institute the text of the blessing in the singular form. Regarding the mitzvah of *netillat yadayim*, however, it is