The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
Shabbos, Jul 12, 2025 ■ ט"ז תמוז, תשפ"ה
סימן ד' סעיף ב'-ד'

Overview

Siman 4 Seif 2:

One should be careful to pour water three times in order to remove the *ruach ra'ah*.

- One should preferably wash until the wrist, and his palms should be outstretched as though he is going to receive something. (M.B. 9)
- One should pour on the right hand and then the left hand and continue to pour alternatively in this manner until he has poured three times on each hand. (M.B. 10)

Siman 4 Seif 3:

Before washing one should not touch orifices of his body.

Siman 4 Seif 4:

Even one who washed his hands should be careful not to touch the פי טבעת or a scab since it could prove harmful.

Siman 4 Seif 5:

One should not touch a barrel of beer since touching it ruins the beer.

- Food does not become prohibited if one touches it before washing but one should be careful to avoid touching food before washing. In the event that food was touched it should be washed three times. (M.B. 14)

Siman 4 Seif 6:

A *revi'is* of water is not necessary for washing for davening.

- One should preferably use a *revi'is* of water for this washing. (M.B. 15)

Siman 4 Seif 7:

It is appropriate to be careful regarding the requirements which are essential for washing for a meal. However, using a utensil and having the water poured through a person's force and other issues that invalidate washing for a meal are not essential for washing in the morning.

- Rema means that *b'dieved* one could make the beracha, even without meeting the requirements for washing for a meal but *l'chatchila* one should be particular regarding these requirements. (M.B. 16)

Stories to Share

"It Is No Small Matter..."

מ"ב ד', י': "גם יש לזהר שהקטנים יטלו ידיהם בשחרית..."

When someone asked the Brisker Rav, zt"l, when chinuch of a child begins, he explained that it begins with netilas yadayim. "Education of one's sons and daughters begins with washing their hands to remove their defilement. Know that it is no small matter to be careful in this regard…"

The Chidah, zt"l, too, held that one should wash his very young children. "It is certainly fitting to wash one's children's hands since when they touch their mouth or other orifices they are defiled by the impurity which rests on their hands. Since this is a spiritual danger, the rule that danger is more stringent than a prohibition should take effect.

"Most people are not careful in this regard, but I do not know why…"

After bringing this Chidah, the Kaf Hachaim concludes, "One who is careful to always wash his child's hands from the day of his bris will be called holy…"

When Rav Yaakov Kaminetsky, zt"l, was asked about this, he answered differently. "The precise age from which one is halachically obligated to wash his child's hands does not seem clear at first glance. It is obvious that one is not obligated to wash his baby's hands even though they touch their nose, mouth, and the like, which is a sakanah. We must say that in this regard they are likened to non-Jews who do not impart defilement. Although Jews are born holy unlike non-Jews, this has no relevance to the impurity which rests on Jewish hands. This impurity only rests on hands of a child who has a connection to actual holiness. For example, if a child says תורה צוה משה, learns alef beis, or even says Amen, he is required to wash his hands."

Halacha Highlights

Eating food touched by someone who did not wash *negel vasser*

Mishnah Berurah Siman 4 Seif Katan 14

ואם נגע במאכל קודם שנטל ידיו אין לאסור המאכל על ידי זה

And if someone touched food before washing the food does not become prohibited as a result

Shelah (מובא בפסקי תשובות סי' ד' אות י') writes that consuming food and drinks that were touched by someone who did not wash *negel vasser* causes one's heart and mind to become corrupt and has the potential to lead one to sin. Mishnah Berurah (סי' ד' ס"ק י"ד), however, rules in the name of Chaye Adam that in the event that food was touched by someone who did not wash *negel vasser* the food is not *b'dieved* prohibited and it should be rinsed three times before eating. Rav Ovadia Yosef (שו"ת יביע אומק ח"ד או"ח סי' א' אות י"ב) writes that there is no reason for one to act stringently and avoid those foods that are rinsed. Regarding those foods that cannot be rinsed, e.g. bread or liquids, there is enough basis in halacha to permit one to eat those foods but one who chooses to be cautious and avoids these foods will be blessed.

A common question that arises from this discussion is that it is very common for restaurants, caterers and food manufacturers to have non-religious Jews preparing food who do not wash *negel vasser* in the morning. What is the status of the foods that are prepared under such conditions? Numerous Poskim address this question (ע' פסקי תשובות הנ"ל ובהע' 113 שם) and the consensus is that the food is permitted. One rationale for leniency is the assumption that they washed their face and hands in the sink in the morning and it may be that even a single washing dulls the *ruach ra'ah* to such a degree that it will no longer produce harmful results (ע' שו"ת יבי"א הנ"ל אות י'). Nevertheless, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (הליכות שלמה הל' תפילה פי"ב אות כ"ה וע"ש בהע' 49 מש"כ בשם זקני ירושלים) advised those families who have non-religious caregivers to train them to wash *negel vasser* before preparing food if this instruction can be delivered in a respectful manner.