The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
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סימן ד' סעיף ח'-י"ג

Overview

Siman 4 Seif 8:

One should not wash onto the ground; rather it should go into a utensil.

- It is appropriate to place two utensils by one's head when going to sleep, one full and the other empty. (M.B. 19)

Siman 4 Seif 9:

It is prohibited to benefit from the water used for washing in the morning and it should not be poured where people pass.

Siman 4 Seif 10:

The utensil should be lifted with one's right hand and then passed to the left hand so that he could pour on his right hand first.

- Even a lefty follows this procedure. (M.B. 22)

Siman 4 Seif 11:

One should not be washed by someone who has not yet washed.

- A person who did not wash may bring the water. (M.B. 23)
- When eating a meal one could be washed by someone who hasn't yet washed. (M.B. 24)

Siman 4 Seif 12:

Dipping one's hands in a utensil is effective for davening but does not remove *ruach ra'ah*. If one dipped his hand in three different utensils of water it may be effective to remove *ruach ra'ah*.

- One could recite the beracha after dipping his hands three times. (M.B. 25)
- There is a dispute whether dipping one's hands in a river, or in three different places in the snow or in a mikvah removes *ruach ra'ah*. (M.B. 25)

Siman 4 Seif 13:

It is uncertain whether a person who was awake all night is required to wash for davening or for the purpose of removing *ruach ra'ah*. [In such a circumstance] a person should wash without reciting the beracha.

- If one settled in bed he is obligated to wash even if he slept for only a short period of time and there is a dispute if he only napped. (M.B. 27)
- Some authorities disagree with Rema and maintain that a beracha should be recited. This disagreement is limited to where one did not relieve himself but if one relieved himself all agree that he should wash and make the beracha and that is the appropriate course of action to take on Shavuos, for example. (M.B. 30)

Stories to Share

"The Strength of Defilement Was Weakened"

מ"ב ד',י"ט : "וטוב שיניח שני כלים מראשותיו..."

Although the Mishnah Berurah is very stringent regarding washing immediately after one wakes up, many people are not careful in this regard.

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, zt"l, would recount an astounding chidush regarding the defilement of negel vaser. "I heard from the elders of Yerushalayim an oral tradition that was handed down from the Vilna Gaon, zt"l, himself. When the famous ger tzeddek was burned at the stake for refusing to renounce his connection to the Jewish people, the strength of defilement was weakened in the world. This diluted the impurity of Jewish hands each morning after sleep."

But when people asked Rav Shlomo Zalman the exact extent they could be lenient based on this they were often disappointed with his response. "It is forbidden to veer from the words of the Shulchan Aruch or the Mishnah Berurah one iota, despite this amazing pronouncement of the Vilna Gaon…"

When Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, zt"l, was asked about whether it was permitted to spill the water down the kitchen sink when there were vessels there he permitted this. "These will be washed off, so this is not a problem."

However, Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld, zt"l, was melamed zechus on those who are not careful to wash immediately after waking up. Possibly, this novel opinion of the Vilna Gaon was a part of his limud zechus.

Halacha Highlights

Is one who was awake all night obligated to wash *negel vasser* and recite the beracha?

Shulchan Aruch Siman 4 Seif 13

אם היה נעור כל הלילה יש להסתפק אם צריך ליטול ידיו וכו'

One who was awake all night-there is an uncertainty whether he is obligated to wash his hands etc.

There are two uncertainties that arise regarding the obligation to wash *negel vasser* when a person was awake all night (ע' מ"ב ס"ק כ"ח). According to Rosh there is no special enactment that one should wash *negel vasser* in the morning. The only reason to wash is out of concern that one's hands touched a part of one's body that is normally covered. Consequently, if one was awake all night and there is no such concern, there is no necessity to wash. According to Rashba, on the other hand, the reason we wash is based on our appreciation of being recreated and we wash in preparation of another day's service of Hashem. Since washing and the related beracha are part of the series of berachos that we recite in the morning, it is possible that the beracha should be recited even if one did not sleep. The second uncertainty is related to the issue of *ruach ra'ah*. It is not clear from the Poskim whether it is sleep that generates the issue of *ruach ra'ah* or whether night, in and of itself, generates an issue of *ruach ra'ah*. Due to these two uncertainties Rema rules that one who was awake all night should wash but should not recite the beracha.

In order to generate an obligation to recite the beracha, Mishnah Berurah (סק"ל) recommends that one should relieve himself or urinate and use his hands to wipe off remaining drops. By doing so one's hands are certainly unclean for davening and then even Rosh would agree that he is obligated to wash for davening and could thus recite the beracha. Although the uncertainty regarding *ruach ra'ah* is not resolved by following this method, the beracha is still recited since the beracha was not enacted for the purpose of removing *ruach ra'ah* (ע' מ"ב סק"ח). An interesting consequence of this uncertainty is that one who is awake all night learning, for example on Shavuos, is not obligated to interrupt his learning to wash when morning arrives (וכן איתא במאיר עוז בשם גדולי פוסקי זמנינו).