The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
Sun, February 27, 2022 ■ כ"ו אדר א', תשפ"ב
סימן קס"א סעיף ב'-ד'

Halacha Highlight

Washing while wearing a ring

Shulchan Aruch Siman 161 Seif 3

צריך להסיר הטבעת מעל ידו בשעת נטילת ידים

One must remove his ring from his hand when he washes

Shulchan Aruch (סעי' ג') rules that one must remove his ring before washing. Rema adds that even if the ring is loose it must be removed. Although one does not mind if his ring is on his hand while he washes, since he is careful to take it off when he does work that could make the ring dirty, it is considered an interposition. He then notes that many people adopt a lenient approach to washing while wearing a ring that is loose, but it is preferable for one to adopt a stringent approach since we are not experts in gauging what is considered loose. However, if one washed his hands already and the ring was loose the washing was effective as long as he poured a full *revi'is* on his hand (מ"ב ס"ק י"ח). Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק י"ט) writes in the name of later authorities that this ruling is limited to women who commonly remove their ring before doing work such as kneading dough. Men, in contrast, usually do not remove their ring when working; therefore they are not required to remove their ring for washing even if the ring is not so loose.

Teshuvas Or L'Tzion (ח"ב פי"א תשובה י') rules regarding women who do not take off their ring when they knead dough, even though the ring contains a precious stone, that their ring is not an interposition since it is categorized as a substance that covers a minority of the hand in a manner about which people do not mind (מיעוט שאינו מקפיד) even if the ring rests tightly around their finger. However, those women who do remove their ring when kneading dough are required to remove their ring when they wash. He also adds that a ring on a woman's finger who does not knead dough is not an interposition since its presence is something that people do not mind.

Stories to Share

A Barrier

ש"ע קס"א, ב': "גלדי מכה שעל ידיו אם אינו מקפיד עליהם אינו חוצץ..."

It was always the practice of Rav Aharon of Belz to spend a great deal of time immersed in his spiritual preparation for davening. In general, that involved learning a large amount with a great deal of fervor, and he generally stood the entire time. But the rebbe was very careful to wash his hands often, keeping all possible stringencies before eating and to ensure cleanliness before davening or learning. At a certain point the rebbe developed fissures on his hands and a doctor was called in.

The doctor examined him and prescribed a special salve to help cure him. "By putting this salve on you erect a barrier which the water cannot penetrate. This will protect your hand from the negative effect of the water and you will heal."

But the chassidim knew that the rebbe did not always listen to his doctors. They well remembered the rebbe's response to a doctor who asked that he gaze at the sky to enable him to examine the rebbe's eyes. "My whole life I have never looked out of my dalet amos, and I don't plan on changing for the worse at this late date! I am afraid that you will have to forgo this."

And it was not as though the rebbe was likely to bring the subject up himself. He never wasted time on mundane matters since he was always busy either learning, davening, or helping people by offering his blessing or advice. When one of the chassidim asked whether he should procure the cream prescribed by the doctor, he was disappointed when the rebbe refused to think of it. "The doctor said that putting on this cream acts as a barrier—basically a chatzizah—which likely invalidates the washing according to some authorities. How can I possibly use this?"

אדמורי בעלזא, ח"ד, ע' קי"ג

Overview

Siman 161 Seif 2:

Any material that one is not particular about is not an interposition. Something that some people are particular about and others are not particular about, for the one who is particular it constitutes an interposition but for those who are not particular it is not an interposition. If someone works with dye and his hands have dye on them the dye is not an interposition even if his hand has actual substance on them. If one is not a dyer and his hands are colored with actual dye substance it is an interposition since dry dye is an interposition but moist is not an interposition. Similarly, women who color their hands to beautify them or something similar, the coloring is not an interposition (a scab on one's hands and one is not particular about it is not an interposition).

- This applies only if a minority of the hand is covered. (M.B. 11)
- Regarding women who color their hands even if their entire hand is covered they may wash since they want the color to be there and it is like their body. (M.B. 12)
- If there is no substance, just discoloration there is no interposition. (M.B. 14)

Siman 161 Seif 3:

One must remove a ring from his hand when washing even if it is loose, and even if one is not particular about its presence while washing since one is particular about it when one does work so that it should not become soiled. Some have the custom to be lenient if the ring is loose but one should be stringent since we are not experts in what constitutes loose.

- Even if water gets under the ring it should be removed since we are not experts in what is considered loose but *b'dieved* if one poured a *revi'is* and the ring was loose the washing was effective. (M.B. 18)
- Later authorities write that this ruling applies to women who take off their ring when working, e.g. kneading dough, but men who do not may wear a ring while they wash unless the ring has a precious stone that he removes so that it should not get dirty. (M.B. 19)

Siman 161 Seif 4:

The part of one's hand that must be washed is to the wrist. According to some it is sufficient to wash until the place that one's fingers attach to one's palm and it is appropriate to follow the first opinion.

- He refers to the end of the palm which attaches to the forearm. (M.B. 20)
- Technically, if one who wants to follow the lenient opinion one should not protest, however, it is correct to follow the first opinion and this is the common custom. Sefer Atzei Almogim, in fact proves that many Rishonim subscribe to the strict position. (M.B. 21)
- Later authorities write that if a person's hand is filthy with sweat all opinions would agree that he must wash to the end of his palm. (M.B. 22)