The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
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סימן קפ"א סעיף ג'-ו'

Overview

Siman 181 Seif 3:

One may not wash with hot water that would burn one's hands since it inflates the hands (the meaning is מבעבעין related to the term שחין אבעבועות) **and does not remove the filth.**

- Lukewarm water that is not yad soledes bo may be used. Maharshal requires cold water. (M.B. 7)
- The restriction applies when the water is yad soledes bo which is the heat at which a baby's stomach would be scorched. (M.B. 8)
- It softens the hands and causes the filth to become absorbed. (M.B. 9)

Siman 181 Seif 4:

One need not wash any further than the second knuckle.

- Food does not reach beyond the second knuckle. For the thumb it is only necessary to wash to the first knuckle. Those who only pour some drops on their fingertips do not fulfill the obligation. (M.B. 10)

Siman 181 Seif 5:

One should slant his finger's down so that the filth would fall off.

Siman 181 Seif 6:

If there are up to five people at the table the one who will recite birkas hamazon should wash first. If there are more than five people the washing begins with the one of least stature and then they wash according to the way they are seated without honoring someone to wash first until they reach the last five people. Once only five people remain the one who will recite birkas hamazon should wash.

- It gives him the opportunity to review birkas hamazon while the other four people are washing. (M.B. 12)
- This is the one who sits at the end of the table. The reason is so that the one who will lead birkas hamazon does not have to wait for the others to wash since it would constitute an interruption. (M.B. 13)

Halacha Highlight

Washing mayim acharonim

Shulchan Aruch Siman 181 Seif 4

אין צריך לטל אלא עד פרק שני של אתבעות

It is unnecessary to wash beyond the second knuckle of one's fingers

Shulchan Aruch (סעי' ד') rules that regarding mayim acharonim one need not wash more than to the second knuckle (measured from the top of the finger). The reason that it is unnecessary to wash beyond the second knuckle is that food does not come in contact with that part of the finger. He adds that one need not wash the thumb beyond the first knuckle. In the event that food does get on one's fingers below the second knuckle, it is necessary to wash even that part of the hand. Mishnah Berurah notes that there are people who are careful to wash mayim acharonim but they only wash the tips of their fingers and this is not considered washing. Birchas HaBayis (שער יי"ז אות ב') suggests that since nowadays we do not have Sedom salt and the primary reason we wash mayim acharonim is due to ruach ra'ah and washing the ends of one's fingers is sufficient for ruach ra'ah.

Bais Yosef references authorities who maintain a more stringent position and rule that one is obligated to wash his fingers to where they connect with his palm. Biur Halacha (ד"ה עד פרק שני) cites Vilna Gaon who also maintains that it is necessary to wash one's fingers until the point where they reach the palm. Kaf HaChaim (אות י"ז) also writes that according to Arizal it is necessary for one to wash the full length of one's fingers and he rules in accordance with that position.

Rashi in Yoma (83b) writes that it is common for people to wipe their mouths after washing. Mikor Chaim also writes that it is correct for one to wipe his lips after washing mayim acharonim. Kaf HaChaim (אות א'), however, writes that one should not wipe his mouth with the water on one's hands from mayim acharonim since that water is associated with the sitra achra (חיי משה).

Stories to Share

Unfamiliar Customs

ש"ע ס' קפ"א, ג': "אין נוטלין..."

Today's amud continues to discuss the halachos of mayim achronim.

There are varying customes whether women should wash mayim achronim. In many families who are very careful about washing mayim achronim, the women are not careful about this.

But someone asked Rav Yosef Shalom Eliyashiv, zt"l, whether women should wash mayim achronim, he was surprised when the gadol ruled stringently. "We should protest those who are lenient regarding mayim achronim. As we find in Berachos 53 that the words 'והייתם קדושים' refers to mayim achronim. The Vilna Gaon explains that just like the gemara teaches that the beginning of that verse, 'והתקדשתם' refers to mayim rishonim, definitely an obligation, the end of the verse is also an obligation. Therefore women should also wash mayim achronim, since this is an absolute obligation!"

וזאת הברכה, ע' 137