

# HALACHOS HATZRICHOS

PACKET #4



# BIRCHOS HASHACHAR

Every morning, we say a list of *brachos* in *Birchos Hashachar*, in the morning *brachos*. We thank Hashem for opening the eyes of the blind, freeing those who are tied up, and straightening those who are bent over.

But what do you do if one of those *brachos* isn't true for you? For example, one of the *brachos* is *Malbish Arumim*, that Hashem dresses those who are naked. Can you make this *bracha* if you didn't get dressed yet?

The *halacha* is that since you are praising Hashem for making the world run this way, you say the *bracha* whether or not it is talking about you. We thank Hashem for setting up the world so that people get clothing, even if we didn't enjoy the *bracha* yet for ourselves.

Still, *lechat'chila*, it is good to try to also be *yotzei* the second opinion. If we can, we should try to be dressed before we say *Birchos Hashachar* so that the *bracha* of *Malbish Arumim* IS also talking about us!

*See the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch, siman mem-vov*



## NEGEL VASSER

At night, a part of the *neshama* is able to go up to *Shomayim* and get new *kochos* from Hashem for the day ahead.

When this part of the *neshama* leaves the body, a *ruach* of *tumah* comes into the body, hoping to get *chayus* from *kedusha*. (Everything in the world, even *tumah*, gets *chayus* from *kedusha*.) This *tumah* remains on the hands of a person after he wakes up, and stays there until he makes his hands *tahor* by washing them three times, switching from right to left (“*beseirugin*”).

The *Ruach Hatumah* spreads until the wrist, which is why it is important to wash our ENTIRE hand, until the wrist, when we wash *Negel Vasser*.

When we wash our hands properly, the *Ruach Hatumah* is washed off, and we can start our day in a way of *kedusha*.

*See the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch, siman Daled and Piskei Hasidur*



# NETILAS YODAYIM

When we wash *Negel Vasser*, we are careful to wash the entire hand until the wrist. We do this since the *Ruach Hatumah* that stays on us after we wake up spreads until the wrist.

Someone once asked the Rebbe, if this is the reason, how come on *Tisha B'Av* and *Yom Kippur* we only wash our fingers and not our whole hand?

Really, we aren't allowed to wash our hands at all on these days. The only reason we do is because of the *halacha* that we need to wash off this *Ruach Hatumah*. But if the *tumah* goes until the wrist, by washing just our fingers we didn't take off the *Ruach Hatumah* anyway, and we may as well not wash at all!

The Rebbe explained that this is because of the way the *Ruach Hatumah* works. It wants to go to places that are holy, to get *chayus* from *kedusha*. That's why it comes into the *guf kadosh*, the holy body of a Yid. But on *Tisha B'Av*, the *kedusha* is on a lower level because we are sad. The *Ruach Hatumah* doesn't have as much of a *taava* for that *kedusha*, so it only spreads until the fingers.

On *Yom Kippur*, it is just the opposite! We are like *malochim* on *Yom Kippur*, on a much higher level of *kedusha*. Even if the *Ruach Hatumah* WANTS to spread past the fingers, it can't! That's why we only need to wash until our fingers.

Once the regular level of *kedusha* comes back, after *Tisha B'Av* and *Yom Kippur*, we need to wash our hands completely right away.



# NEGEL VASSER

Before we wash *Negel Vasser*, we have a *Ruach Hatumah* on our hands. This *tumah* can be passed on to anything we touch!

Because of this, we are very careful not to touch things before washing *Negel Vasser*. We are especially careful not to touch the openings of our body (like our eyes, nostrils, or mouth), food, the water inside of our *Negel Vasser*, and clothing.

That's why it is very important to wash *Negel Vasser* RIGHT AWAY!

*See the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch, siman daled, and Piskei Hasiddur*



# NEGEL VASSER

When we wake up in the morning, before we do anything (or even touch anything), we wash our hands *Negel Vasser*. Washing three times on each hand, in the pattern of *Negel Vasser*, makes us *tahor* from the *Ruach Hatumah* that came into our hands during the night.

In *halacha*, there are two opinions about this *Ruach Hatumah*.

Some *Chachomim* say that this is a nighttime *tumah*, and it comes every night, even if we didn't sleep. According to this opinion, we should wash *Negel Vasser* right away in the morning even if we stayed up all night.

Other *Chachomim* say that this *Ruach Hatumah* comes from sleep, whether it is during the night or during the day. According to this opinion, we should wash *Negel Vasser* every time we sleep during the day.

The Alter Rebbe says that the *Ruach Hatumah* comes especially from sleeping at night. When a person sleeps at night, he has to be sure to wash *Negel Vasser* right away when he wakes up.

If a person sleeps during the day, there is a doubt (*sofek*) if the *Ruach Hatumah* comes into a person. Because of this, the *halacha* is not as strict about needing to wash RIGHT AWAY and before touching anything. So we do wash *Negel Vasser* three times on each hand if we took a nap during the day, but we don't need to wash by our bed like we do after sleeping at night.

*See the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch, siman Daled, se'if Tes-Vov; according to the shiurim of Rabbi Yekusiel Farkash*



## NEGEL VASSER

Every time we wash our hands, we wash our right hand first. In Torah, the right side is more important, and we show *kavod* to our right side by washing it first.

In the Zohar, it says that everything we do should START with the right.

To wash our right hand, we need to hold the *kvort* in our LEFT hand, though!

To fulfill what it says in the Zohar, we start washing by picking up the *kvort* in our RIGHT hand. Then we pass it to the left hand, so we can wash our right hand first.

*See the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch, siman Daled, se'if yud*



# NEGEL VASSER FOR CHILDREN

Before we wash *Negel Vasser*, we are very careful not to touch things, like the openings of our body, or objects or food. Before washing *Negel Vasser*, our hands still have the *Ruach Hatumah* that came into them at night. We don't want to touch things with this *tumah*.

According to *halacha*, it would seem that this is not as important with children. The *Ruach Hatumah* comes into a place because it wants to get the *kedusha* of a person's *neshama*. Since the *neshama* doesn't completely come into a person before *Bar* or *Bas Mitzvah*, the *Ruach Hatumah* isn't something to be as worried about for a child.

But, the Alter Rebbe adds, the *neshama* begins to enter a person when he reaches the age of *Chinuch*, when he is able to understand about doing *mitzvos*. Because of this, it is necessary to be careful with making sure that a child this age doesn't touch anything before washing *Negel Vasser*.

But really, the *neshama* starts to come into a baby at his *bris* (or for a baby girl, as soon as she is born, since she is born on the *Ruchnius* level of already having had a *bris*). That's why it says about a child who is helped not to touch anything before *Negel Vasser* starting from when he is born, "*Kadosh Yomar Lo*" — he is called holy, *kadosh*.

See the Alter Rebbe's *Shulchan Aruch*, *siman daled* (*Mahadura Basra*)

