

HALACHOS HATZRICHOS

PACKET #14



MODEH ANI

When children are very young, we start teaching them to say *Modeh Ani* as soon as they wake up. And even for children that are too young to talk, it is a *minhag* that mothers say *Modeh Ani* FOR them!

See sicha of Parshas Vayeishev, 5749



MODEH ANI

When we wake up, before we wash *Negel Vasser*, we say *Modeh Ani*.

How soon do we have to say *Modeh Ani* after we wake up?

In *Shulchan Aruch*, the Alter Rebbe tells us that we need to say *Modeh Ani* “*miyad*,” right away! We shouldn’t wait at all. Right away when we wake up, we say *Modeh Ani*.

In other places in *halacha*, we use a different word, “*teikef*.” If we do something “*teikef*,” we can’t wait very long either! But “*teikef*” is still an amount of time, even though it is a short amount of time. “*Miyad*” means right away, without waiting at all!

See Shulchan Menachem vol. 1, p. 2



PREPARING FOR BIRCHOS HASHACHAR

We say *Modeh Ani* right away when we wake up, to remind ourselves that Hashem is watching us. When we remember that, we will wake up with *zerizus* to serve Him!

We still need to prepare ourselves before we continue with saying the *Birchos Hashachar*.

First, we wash *Negel Vasser* by our bed, using the water we prepared the night before. This washing is mainly to take away the *Ruach Ra* which comes onto a person at night. The Zohar is very strict about this, and we don't touch the openings of our body or walk four *amos* before we take off this *Ruach Ra*.

We also need to make sure that we have a clean body (*Guf Naki*) and a clean mouth (*Pe' Naki*). We use the bathroom and wash out our mouths before we continue.

It is best to get dressed also before saying *Birchos Hashachar*. In some of the *brachos*, we will be praising Hashem for things that have to do with being dressed. *Lechatchila*, it is best to say these *brachos* when we already did those things.

Then, we wash our hands again. This hand washing is for a different reason than the *Negel Vasser* by our bed. We are washing our hands like a *kohen*, who washes his hands and feet from the *kiyor* before starting his *Avodah* in the *Beis Hamikdash*. Just as the *kohen* washes his hands to do his *avodah* with *kedusha* and *tahara*, we wash our hands to start our day's *avodah* with *kedusha* as well.

(Going to the *mikvah* also brings *kedusha* and *tahara* to a person. This is why many men go to the *mikvah* in the morning before *davening*. Because it isn't always easy to get to a *mikvah*, the *Chachomim* didn't make it a *chiyuv*. Still, it is an important *minhag* of *Chassidim*!)



WASHING OUR HANDS BEFORE BIRCHOS HASHACHAR

When we wash our hands as a preparation for serving Hashem on a new day, it is our *minhag* to do it with the *chumros* that are used when washing for bread.

- 1) Fill up the kvort while holding it with your right hand, because *kedusha* is supposed to come through the right side.
- 2) Pass the kvort to your left hand, so you can pour over your right hand first, because the right side goes first in Torah.
- 3) Pour water over your entire right hand with the kvort.
- 4) Now pass the kvort to your right hand. It is our *minhag* to only hold the kvort with a towel after washing it for the first time, to keep the kvort from touching the *tomei* water on our hand (the water is *tomei* since that hand has only been washed once). Pour water over your entire left hand.
- 5) Pass the kvort back to your left hand, and do the same thing, until each hand has been washed three times.
- 6) Now dry your hands, and lift them up on each side, near the place of the *peyos*, and say the *bracha* of *Al Netilas Yodayim*.

When we wash for bread, we say the *bracha* before we dry our hands, but here we *davka* say it AFTER drying our hands.



ASHER YATZAR

Every time we use the bathroom during the day, we say the *bracha* of *Asher Yatzar*.

After coming out of the bathroom, we wash our hands (and dry them), and say this *bracha*, thanking Hashem that our body is working well.

When we say *Asher Yatzar*, we shouldn't be doing anything else, not even drying our hands. We should be paying attention to what we are saying, and appreciating that our body is working properly.

It is written in *seforim* that paying attention to the words that we say in this *bracha*, to thank Hashem for His kindness that our body is working properly, is a *segulah* for good health.

