

# Laws of Blessings, Chapter 6 (Auto Translated)

English

Auto Translated

## Shiur Overview

### Summary of Shiur — Rambam Hilchos Berachos Chapter 6 (Laws of Washing Hands)

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#### Halacha 1 — Anyone Who Eats Bread Over Which Hamotzi Is Recited Requires Washing Hands Before and After

The Rambam's Language:

"Anyone who eats bread over which Hamotzi is recited, this requires washing hands before and after, even though it is ordinary bread (chullin), and even though his hands are not dirty and he knows of no impurity."

Simple Meaning:

Anyone who eats bread over which Hamotzi is recited needs to wash hands before eating (techilah) and after eating (sof/mayim acharonim), even if it's chullin, even if the hands aren't dirty, and even if there's no known tumah.

Novel Points and Explanations:

#### 1) Why is washing hands in Hilchos Berachos and not elsewhere:

The Rambam placed the laws of washing hands in Hilchos Berachos (Sefer Ahavah), because washing hands is connected to eating — before eating and after eating. Also, by eating there are two types of washing (techilah and sof), which makes it more fitting here. The Rambam already mentioned washing hands in Hilchos Tefillah (as one of the ten things for prayer — taharat yadayim), but here he elaborates on all the details of the laws.

#### 2) Whether pas haba'ah bekisnin over which one establishes a meal also requires washing hands:

The Rambam says "bread over which Hamotzi is recited" — does this include pas haba'ah bekisnin when one establishes a meal over it? The Rambam already ruled earlier (Chapter 3) that if one establishes a meal on pas haba'ah bekisnin, one recites Hamotzi. Therefore, according to the language "bread over which Hamotzi is recited," one could include pas haba'ah bekisnin when establishing a meal, because then one does recite Hamotzi. But it's not entirely clear whether the Rambam means this specifically or not.

#### 3) The foundation of washing hands — tumah or cleanliness:

A fundamental dispute about the reason for washing hands:

- **Opinion A — Safeguard for Terumah:** The enactment was made so that one wouldn't forget to wash when eating terumah/kodashim. Shlomo Hamelech enacted washing hands for kodesh, and later "the zealots" (Chachamim) expanded it to chullin as well, so there wouldn't be a distinction.

- **Opinion B — Cleanliness:** It's a matter of cleanliness — it's not proper for a person to eat with dirty hands. The foundation is that "stam yadayim" (ordinary hands) are dirty

(shniyos letumah), because hands are always busy — one touches all kinds of things.

#### 4) Question on the cleanliness opinion:

If the reason is only cleanliness for eating, washing hands would belong in Hilchos Ma'achalos Asuros, not in Hilchos Berachos. Also, one needs washing hands also for prayer and Krias Shema — this shows it's not just a matter of eating-cleanliness, but a broader concept of tahara for dvarim shebikdusha.

**Answer-direction:** By eating, the specific reason is that one eats with the hands, and the dirt transfers to the food. By prayer it's a different law. But both are built on the same foundation — Shlomo Hamelech's chazakah that stam yadayim are dirty.

#### 5) What does "stam yadayim dirty" mean:

"Dirty" doesn't mean smeared, but that the hands aren't clean — people touch all kinds of things, and bread (for example) very easily absorbs bacteria/dirt. For people who work physically this is even more understandable.

#### 6) Chazakas tumas yadayim — Shlomo Hamelech's enactment:

Shlomo Hamelech enacted that stam yadayim have the status of shniyos letumah. From the Torah there's no such thing as tumas yadayim specifically — a person is tamei or tahor, but not just the hands. This is a novelty from Shlomo Hamelech. Shlomo Hamelech made the decree, and the Chachamim added the "solutions" (as also with eruv). There's a dispute whether Shlomo Hamelech also gave the solution of washing or only the decree.

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### Halacha 1 (Continued) — Something Dipped in Liquid

The Rambam's Language:

"And similarly, anything whose dipping is in liquid requires washing hands first."

Simple Meaning:

Besides bread, also something that one eats dipped in liquid requires washing hands before eating.

Novel Points:

#### 1) Why specifically by dipping in liquid — two explanations:

- **According to the cleanliness opinion:** When food is wet/moist, the dirt from the hands sticks more easily.

- **According to the tumah opinion:** Liquids are more susceptible to tumah, and when the food is moistened with liquid it becomes prepared to receive tumah.

#### 2) Ashkenazic custom vs. the Rambam's custom:

Our custom (Ashkenaz) is not to wash on davar shetibbulo bemashkeh all year, only on karpas at the Seder — and that without a berachah. The Tosafos explains that since the law is only because of tumah (and not because of cleanliness), and

it's still a decree, we don't follow it. **But according to the Rambam**, who learns that washing hands is (also) because of cleanliness, the custom is to wash on all davar shetibbulo bemashkeh, **and therefore one also makes a berachah "al netilas yadayim" on urchatz at the Seder** — unlike the Ashkenazic custom without a berachah.

### 3) "So that the children will ask":

By Rambam followers, who wash all year on davar shetibbulo bemashkeh, this isn't a novelty for the children at the Seder. But one can teach the children that this is a takanas Chachamim — a part of Torah.

**4) Practical examples:** A piece of radish placed in soup, vegetables with dips — all this is davar shetibbulo bemashkeh.

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## Halacha 1 (Continued) — Berachah on Washing Hands: "Asher Kidshanu Bemitzvosav Vetzivanu Al Netilas Yadayim"

The Rambam's Language:

**"Anyone who washes hands recites 'asher kidshanu bemitzvosav vetzivanu al netilas yadayim' — for this is a mitzvah of the Chachamim, and He commanded us in the Torah to listen to them, as it says 'lo tasur min hadavar asher yagidu lecha', and according to the Torah we listen to them."**

Simple Meaning:

On washing hands one makes a berachah. Although it's a mitzvah derabbanan, one can say "vetzivanu" because the Torah commanded us to listen to the Chachamim through "lo tasur."

Novel Points:

### 1) Question — how does one say "vetzivanu" on a mitzvah derabbanan:

The Rambam clearly said that washing hands is a mitzvah derabbanan (he doesn't bring any verse that it's from the Torah). There are opinions that it's from the Torah from "vehiskadishtem," but the Rambam holds that these are only hints, and fundamentally it's derabbanan.

### 2) The Rambam's answer:

When one performs a mitzvah derabbanan, the "tzivanu" is indirect — Hashem commanded us to listen to the Chachamim ("lo tasur"), and the Chachamim enacted washing hands. The Rambam in Chapter 14 explains: when one says "vetzivanu al netilas yadayim," one must think "all that He commanded us in His mitzvos to listen to the words of the Chachamim, who commanded us on washing hands."

### 3) A deeper understanding of "asher kidshanu":

"Asher kidshanu" means that we become sanctified through mitzvos. **But according to the Rambam's approach**, the mitzvah that one performs is not "the mitzvah of washing hands" itself — **it's the mitzvah to listen to the words of the Chachamim**, which includes in their enactments washing hands. This is a novelty in how one understands the essence of berachos on mitzvos derabbanan.

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## Halacha 1 (Continued) — Mayim Acharonim: No Berachah Is Made on Them

The Rambam's Language:

**"Mayim acharonim — no berachah is made on them, for it is only because of danger."**

Simple Meaning:

On mayim acharonim one doesn't make a berachah, because the reason is danger (Sodomite salt that can harm the eyes), not a takanas Chachamim as a mitzvah.

Novel Points:

### 1) Danger doesn't require a berachah:

When something is because of danger, one shouldn't do it because "so it says in the Torah," but because it's a danger. Danger doesn't need further questions — "quickly wash yourself, quickly save yourself from the danger." Hashem wants "vechai bahem" — danger itself is the word of Hashem. It's not fitting to make a berachah on something one does from a danger-reason.

**[Digression: Epidemic example:]** If there's an epidemic, one doesn't need to start analyzing whether it's halachically an "epidemic" (forty people etc.) — danger is danger, and "one who is asked is disgraceful" regarding danger.

### 2) Two languages agree:

One must be more careful with danger than with a takanas Chachamim — because danger is a more direct matter.

### 3) Mayim acharonim today — whether it's relevant:

Today we don't know of Sodomite salt. One who washes mayim acharonim today doesn't do it because of danger, but because he thinks that's how the Chachamim enacted. If so, he's not fulfilling it "because of danger" — he's doing it as a human practice, not as a specific mitzvah for a Jew.

### 4) Cleanliness vs. danger — the difference:

Before eating, the dirt is "really dirty" (one was outside etc.), but after eating the "dirt" is only food — it's not really dirty, it's a higher, more refined level of cleanliness. Therefore it makes sense that one uses less water (one doesn't pour a revi'is).

### 5) "Vehiskadishtem" — why a berachah on mayim rishonim but not on mayim acharonim?

By mayim rishonim the dirt is really dirt; by mayim acharonim it's only food — it's not the same level.

**6) According to Kabbalah:** According to Kabbalah there's a concept that mayim acharonim should be less water. But even in the simple sense it makes sense — the difference is in the water (how much one uses), not in the dirt.

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## Halacha 1 (Continued) — Mayim Emtza'im

The Rambam's Language:

**Mayim emtza'im — optional.** The Chachamim only enacted beforehand (mayim rishonim) and afterward (mayim acharonim), but not in the middle.

Novel Point:

The Ra'avad brings that **earlier Geonim did make a berachah "al harechitzah"** (not "al netilas yadayim") on mayim emtza'im — a dispute with the Rambam's opinion that it's only optional. Practically we don't follow the Ra'avad.

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## Halacha — Washing Hands on Fruits

The Rambam's Language:

**"Fruits of chullin don't require washing hands neither before nor after. And anyone who washes**

## hands for fruits is among the arrogant."

### Simple Meaning:

On fruits (that aren't *davar shetibbulo bemashkeh*) one doesn't need to wash hands — not before and not after. Whoever washes hands on fruits is characterized as "arrogant."

### Novel Points:

#### 1) Why "arrogant" and not simply ignorant:

It's not about pettiness, but that he thinks he's performing a *mitzvah* that doesn't exist — this is presumptuousness (pride through piety).

**[Digression:]** Historically this was perhaps a context of a group who made themselves more pious than the Rosh Yeshiva — a "group of arrogant ones" — and the Rambam speaks against such a phenomenon.

#### 2) Fruits that have liquid:

A fruit like an orange that drips juice — is this *davar shetibbulo bemashkeh*? The conclusion is that "*davar shetibbulo bemashkeh*" means something that one dips in an external liquid, not the fruit's own juice.

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## Halacha — Mayim Acharonim: The Reason and What It Applies To

### The Rambam's Language:

"All bread that has salt in it" (or in other versions: "all food with salt") — one needs *mayim acharonim* because of concern for Sodomite salt, "**lest there be Sodomite salt in it... and it pass over his eyes and blind him.**" — "A person is obligated to wash his hands at the end of every meal because of the salt."

### Simple Meaning:

Sodomite salt can harm the eyes, therefore one must wash hands after every meal.

### Novel Points:

#### 1) Great dispute in versions:

"All bread that has salt in it" means only bread, but "all food with salt" means any food that has salt — a great practical difference. The Ra'avad held "all food with salt" — on everything, and therefore the Ra'avad holds that *mayim acharonim* also applies for *Borei Nefashos* (not only after a bread-meal).

**2) The Rambam's explanation:** Instead of saying that every time one eats with salt one must wash, he says that every meal (which usually has salt) one must wash afterward.

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## Halacha — In a Military Camp Exempt from Washing Hands

### The Rambam's Language:

"In a military camp exempt from washing hands" — in war one is exempt from washing hands (*techilah*), because one is occupied with war and isn't particular about cleanliness.

### Novel Point:

But *mayim acharonim* — which is because of danger (Sodomite salt) — one needs even in a military camp. Danger doesn't change. As it's formulated: "The Chachamim can accept that one doesn't follow their enactments, but please, don't die."

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## Halacha — How Far to Wash Hands: "Until the Joint"

### The Rambam's Language:

"How far does washing hands extend? Until the joint."

### Novel Points:

#### 1) Dispute between Rashi and Rif:

The Rif holds "until the joint" means until the bone opposite the palm (the entire palm), and Rashi holds it means until the end of his fingers (only until the end of the fingers).

**2) Practically:** We're stringent like the Rif, but it's indicated that the main law is perhaps like Rashi.

**3) Practical difference for Yom Kippur / Tisha B'Av:** We're lenient on washing hands (only until the end of the fingers) because of concern for washing, which is supported by Rashi's opinion.

**4) The measure of a *revi'is*:** Seemingly a *revi'is* for both hands makes more sense according to Rashi's opinion (smaller area), but one can manage with both opinions.

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## Halacha — The Measure of Water: A *Revi'is*

### The Rambam's Language:

"And what is the measure of water? A *revi'is* for both hands."

### Simple Meaning:

A *revi'is* (about 3 ounces) is enough for both hands. This is the minimum; more is better but not obligatory. Less doesn't fulfill the obligation.

### Novel Point — Method of Washing:

"The washer may pour on his hands little by little until the measure accumulates... and one who pours a *revi'is* on each hand is valid."

One can wash in two ways — either pour the entire *revi'is* at once, or pour little by little until a *revi'is* accumulates on both hands. One can also pour a *revi'is* for each hand separately. The measure of a *revi'is* is a measure in the water, not in the pouring — one can divide it into smaller pourings.

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## Halacha — Washing for Several People at Once

### The Rambam's Language:

"Four or five wash side by side, hand upon hand in one pouring, provided they loosen their hands so that the water can reach them... and there should be in that pouring a *revi'is* for each one."

### Simple Meaning:

Four or five people can place their hands next to each other (or even one on top of the other) and one person pours on everyone. But one must leave space between the hands so the water can get through, and there must be a *revi'is* for each person.

### Novel Point — The Normal Order of Washing Hands:

From the entire *sugya* we see that the normal order of washing hands was that **one person pours for another both hands at once** — not that each person washes himself. This is the main method, and washing oneself is bedieved. This also explains why one can manage with a *revi'is* — when one person pours for another, a *revi'is* is enough for both hands.

When a person washes himself, he needs more water because it's harder.

**[Digression:]** In the past water was expensive — one had to carry water every day to the house. All these laws about measures say that even when one saves, one mustn't save too much.

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### Halacha — Chatzitzah by Washing Hands

**The Rambam's Language:**

The Rambam refers to Hilchos Tevilah/Mikvaos for the laws of chatzitzah — **everything that is a chatzitzah there is a chatzitzah by washing hands.**

**Novel Point:**

The principle of chatzitzah: rubo umakpid is from the Torah; the Rabbanan decreed on mi'uto umakpid or rubo ve'eino makpid. By washing hands it applies to the entire hands, but mi'uto ve'eino makpid is not a problem.

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### Halacha — Anything That Reaches the Measure of a Mikveh Reaches the Measure of a Revi'is

**The Rambam's Language:**

**"And anything that reaches the measure of a mikveh reaches the measure of a revi'is."**

**Simple Meaning:**

Everything that can be combined for forty se'ah for a mikveh (like snow, etc.) can also be used for the revi'is of washing hands.

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### Halacha — Immersing Hands Instead of Washing Hands

**The Rambam's Language:**

**"Anyone who immerses his hands in a mikveh doesn't need anything else." But "Immersion in drawn water the measure of a mikveh, or in drawn water in the ground — doesn't count for him, for drawn water doesn't purify the hands except through pouring."**

**Simple Meaning:**

If one doesn't have a vessel to wash (for example on a ship), one can dip the hands in a valid mikveh. But drawn water in the ground (which is invalid for a mikveh) doesn't help for immersing hands, because drawn water only works through washing (pouring with a vessel).

**Novel Points:**

#### 1) The Ra'avad's question:

The Ra'avad wonders: What does it mean that drawn water doesn't work in the ground? Even a ba'al keri — if there are forty se'ah, even drawn water, it counts for immersion of a ba'al keri (immersion of Ezra). If such a mikveh helps for Torah-level impurities, why shouldn't it be enough for washing hands? According to the Ra'avad, immersing hands can be even in drawn water, as long as there are forty se'ah. The Beis Yosef brings this dispute between the Rambam and Ra'avad.

#### 2) Two systems with their own laws:

Immersing hands and washing hands are two separate frameworks with their own laws. Immersing hands requires forty se'ah (according to the Ra'avad even drawn). Washing hands works with drawn water, but one must be particular

about: a vessel, washing (pouring), human power — one can't just dip.

**3) A spring:** A flowing spring — according to all opinions one can put in the hands, even without forty se'ah.

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### Halacha 12 — Four Conditions in Washing Hands

**The Rambam's Language:**

**"Anyone who washes hands must be careful about four things: the water itself, and the measure, and the vessel — that the water he washes from should be in a vessel, and the washer — that the water should come from the power of the washer."**

**Simple Meaning:**

Four categories: (1) the quality of the water, (2) the measure (a revi'is for two hands), (3) a vessel, (4) human power — someone should pour, not by itself.

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### Four Invalidations in Water (Bamayim Atzman)

**The Rambam's Language:**

**"In water, four things invalidate the water: change of appearance, exposure, work done with them, and deterioration that prevents an animal from drinking."**

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#### 1) Change of Appearance

**"Water whose appearance has changed, whether it changed in a vessel or in the ground, whether from something that fell into it or from its place — this is invalid."**

**Simple Meaning:** Water that has changed its color is invalid — whether in a vessel or in the ground, whether because something fell in, or because the place itself (for example a red stone underneath) changes the color.

**Novel Point — "from its place":** Means not that something fell in, but that the place itself (a mineral in the earth) causes the change. It's also a type of change of appearance.

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#### 2) Exposure

**"Exposure — if they were exposed, exposure prohibits because of drinking."**

**Simple Meaning:** Water that was left uncovered (meguleh) — in ancient times there was fear that a snake injected poison. It's a danger, not dirtiness. Because one can't drink it, it's not important enough for washing.

**Novel Point:** The Rambam speaks of the laws of exposure in Hilchos Rotze'ach Ushemiras Hanefesh. In modern times, when we don't have concern for snakes, we're not particular about exposure.

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#### 3) Work Done

**"All water with which work was done — is invalid."**

**Simple Meaning:** Water that was already used for work (washed dishes, dipped dough, etc.) is invalid for washing hands.

**Novel Point — Why:** In ancient times water was expensive, one had to carry it. People wanted to recycle water. But such water is no longer clean/important enough for washing.

**Novel Point — Water in which the baker dips the cookies:** The baker's water in which he dips the bagels/cookies before baking — is invalid, because work was done with it. **But** water that one holds while taking a handful from it (melo chofnav) to pour on dough — **the remaining water in the bowl remains valid.** Because only the water he took out was used for work, but the taking out itself doesn't invalidate the entire bowl.

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#### 4) Unfit for a Dog to Drink

**"All water that became unfit for a dog to drink — such as that became bitter, or salty, or murky, or has a bad smell — in vessels is invalid for washing hands, but in the ground one may immerse the hands in them."**

**Simple Meaning:** Water that is so bad that a dog wouldn't drink it (bitter, salty, dirty, bad smell) — in vessels is invalid for washing, but in the ground one can immerse the hands.

**Novel Point — Why the difference between vessels and ground:** Immersion (in the ground) always helps, even when it's less important water. By immersion one is surrounded by water (like a swimming pool), this is a stronger purification. By washing (pouring from a vessel) one needs a higher level of importance.

**Novel Point — Hot springs of Tiberias:** The Rambam brings the hot springs of Tiberias (hot springs with sulfur and salt). **In its place** — in the ground — one may immerse the hands in it. But if one takes it out into a vessel — **"one doesn't wash with it neither first nor last."** Not mayim rishonim and not mayim acharonim.

**Novel Point — First time mayim acharonim:** This is the first place where the Rambam brings in mayim acharonim regarding invalidations of water. He's precise that all other invalidations (change of appearance, exposure, work done) are valid for mayim acharonim — only hot springs of Tiberias in a vessel is invalid even for mayim acharonim. This isn't entirely clear why.

**Novel Point — Exposure by mayim acharonim:** Exposure is a concern for danger (not a matter of importance), therefore it's perhaps a separate category. Change of appearance is perhaps not invalid for mayim acharonim, because mayim acharonim don't need so much importance.

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#### Halacha — Laws of Vessels for Washing Hands

**The Rambam's Language:**

**"One doesn't wash hands from the walls of vessels, nor from the edges of the bathhouse, nor from potsherds, nor from the stopper of a barrel."**

**Simple Meaning:**

One can't wash hands from: (1) the walls of a vessel where water collects; (2) the holders ("edges of the bathhouse") of a large earthenware vessel where a revi'is can collect — but this isn't called a vessel; (3) broken shards; (4) the lid of a barrel — even if it holds a revi'is, it's not a vessel.

**Novel Point:**

If one specifically took the lid (stopper of the barrel) and fixed it so it would stand alone and function like a vessel — then **one may wash from it.**

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#### Halacha — Water Skin, Sack and Basket

**The Rambam's Language:**

**"A water skin that was fixed to be a vessel, one may wash from it. But a sack and basket, even though it was fixed, one doesn't wash from it."**

**Simple Meaning:**

A skin (a bag of leather/hide) that one fixed to use like a vessel — yes. But a sack or basket — even if one fixed it so water wouldn't leak out — it's not the type of vessel that's valid for washing.

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#### Halacha — Hands Are Not a Vessel

**The Rambam's Language:**

**"And one shouldn't wash his hand with his cupped hands — cupped hands are not a vessel."**

**Simple Meaning:**

A person can't fill his hands with water and pour on someone else's hands — hands are not a vessel.

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#### Halacha — A Broken Vessel / A Vessel That Doesn't Hold a Revi'is

**The Rambam's Language:**

**"A broken vessel is not a vessel... All vessels one may wash from them even vessels of dung and earthenware vessels, provided they are whole and not broken."**

**"A vessel that doesn't hold a revi'is, one doesn't wash from it — even if he pours twice."**

**Simple Meaning:**

A broken vessel is not a vessel. All types of vessels are valid — even vessels of dung and earthenware vessels — but they must be whole.

**Novel Point:**

This is a special novelty — we already learned that the measure of a revi'is in water can go "little by little." But **the vessel itself must hold a revi'is.** This means: the revi'is is not only a measure in the water, but also **a measure in the vessel.** It must be an important vessel that holds a revi'is.

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#### Halacha — The Giver: Who Pours

**The Rambam's Language:**

**"Everyone is valid to pour for hands, even a deaf-mute, imbecile and minor."** The Rambam also says that even a monkey can pour — because it doesn't need to be someone with understanding.

**Novel Point — The Ra'avad Disagrees:**

In the Gemara it says it must be human power. A monkey is not "included in the category of human." His language: **"I would say that a monkey is not included in the category of human and the Holy One Blessed Be He didn't want a person to wash his hands from a monkey."** A deaf-mute, imbecile and minor is not a problem because they are human — "they have action but don't have thought." The Ra'avad didn't want to learn a proof that a monkey is a person.

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#### Halacha — When One Doesn't Have Another to Pour

**The Rambam's Language:**

**"And if there's no one else, he places the vessel on his elbow and pours on his hand... or he washes one hand and pours with it on the other."**

**Simple Meaning:**

If one doesn't have another person, one places the vessel between the knees (or elbow) and moves it with the foot so it will pour. Or one washes one hand and then pours with that one on the second.

**Novel Point:**

This is bedieved — ideally the normal way is that one person pours for another.

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**Halacha — Trough (for Animals) and Human Power****The Rambam's Language:**

**"If he placed his hand in a trough and water passed and washed over his hand, it doesn't count as washing, for there's no giving on his hand" — but "if his hand was close to the pouring of the bucket so that the water reaches his hand equally from the power of the person's giving" — it's valid.**

**Simple Meaning:**

A trough is a long water channel where one pours in water (as Rivkah did — "and she drew and gave drink to the camels") and the water flows through. If someone puts in his hand in the middle of the trough and the water streams through — it's not valid because it lacks "giving on his hand" (human power). But close to the beginning where the person pours in — it's valid because the water still comes from the power of the person's giving.

**Novel Point:**

A practical question about automatic sinks (touchless sinks): When a person puts in his hand and that activates the water, this is perhaps similar to the "wheel" — the person causes the water to flow through his action. This needs to be thought through whether it's enough "human power."

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**[Digression: Washing Hands from a Sink/Faucet]**

A longer discussion about whether one can wash hands from a sink (faucet):

**Question 1 — Human power:** Does the one who turns on the faucet mean he's pouring with human power? The argument is yes — just like regarding Shabbos, opening a switch means an action of the person (one lights a fire). If so, why shouldn't opening a faucet be called human power?

**Question 2 — Vessel:** This is the main problem — **a sink is not a vessel.** One needs a vessel for washing hands. Where is the vessel by a sink? Somewhere in the system there's a vessel (a container, a tank), but whether that counts — is a question.

**Comparison to the kiyor in the Beis Hamikdash:** The kiyor in the Temple was also such that the kohen opened a faucet and water poured. But the kiyor was a large vessel. This is different from a modern sink.

**Question 3 — Direct:** If several people are standing in line and the faucet is already open — does it mean one is pouring for them, or it's going by itself?

**Conclusion:** People strongly follow that one needs a cup by the sink. This is the sign of a Jewish kitchen — a non-Jew also

washes hands but doesn't have a cup, because he doesn't understand that one needs a vessel.

**[Digression — Cup vs. sink and "disconnect" from common sense:]** People are so accustomed to the cup that it becomes a "decree of Scripture" separated from common sense. An example from COVID —

**[Digression — Cup vs. sink and "disconnect" from common sense:]** People are so accustomed to the cup that it becomes a "decree of Scripture" separated from common sense. An example from COVID — people gathered and washed mayim acharonim (because of concern for danger from Sodomite salt) at a time when the real danger was gathering with people. This shows how people have "disconnected" halacha from reality. One must see whether the cup is really a law or a stringency.

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**Halacha — Doubt in Washing Hands****The Rambam's Language:**

**A doubt whether one did work with the water, a doubt about a revi'is, a doubt whether the water is pure or impure — "the doubt is pure, for every doubt in purity of hands is pure."**

**Simple Meaning:**

All doubts in washing hands are ruled leniently — pure.

**Novel Points:****1) Not just a rabbinic doubt ruled leniently:**

Seemingly this is simply a rabbinic doubt ruled leniently. But it appears that the Rambam means a special law — an extra leniency in purity of hands, not just the principle of rabbinic doubt.

**2) The Ra'avad disagrees:**

**"Avraham said, and in all this, if he has other water he should wash his hands... and if he doesn't have other water he should wash his hands with this water, to remove himself from the doubt."** The Ra'avad means: yes, halachically you're pure, but practically — if you have other water, wash with that, "to remove yourself from the doubt."

**3) The difference between Rambam and Ra'avad:**

The Rambam holds that when Chazal ruled "every doubt in purity of hands is pure," this is a complete ruling — you're already not in any doubt, the law has removed you. The Ra'avad looks more practically: yes, the law has removed you, but you're still in a doubt reality — if it's easy to get out of doubt, one should. The Kesef Mishneh brings a proof from the Gemara that the Ra'avad has an error.

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**Halacha — Differences Between Mayim Rishonim and Mayim Acharonim****1) Direction of the Hands**

**Mayim rishonim — "must raise his hands upward" —** the hands should be up, so that **"the water won't go outside the joint and return and become impure"** — the water shouldn't flow into an unwashed part of the hand, become dirty there, and flow back onto the clean part.

**Mayim acharonim — "should lower his hands downward" —** downward, **"so that all the power of the**

**salt on his hands will exit**" — the salt should flow down and not return to the hands.

**Novel Point:** Today, when one pours a lot of water, the law of outside the joint is practically less relevant. But the law remains because "knowledge of the conclusion" — what one knows that it can become dirty — is also not a certainty, but a concern.

### 2) Over a Vessel or Ground

**Mayim rishonim — "are washed either over a vessel or over the ground."** Mayim acharonim — **"are only washed over a vessel"** — so that one can afterward pour it in a specific place, because one doesn't want the salt (or ruach ra'ah, as the Gemara says) to roll around on the ground.

### 3) Temperature

**Mayim rishonim — "either with hot or cold."** Mayim acharonim — **not with hot.**

**Novel Point (Rema):** The prohibition of hot by mayim acharonim is not about temperature per se, but about convenience — if the water is so hot that one can't rub the hands (one burns oneself), it's not good. But a little warm — yes.

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### Halacha — Guarding Hands in the Morning: One Washing for the Entire Day

**The Rambam's Language:**

**"One washes his hands in the morning and guards them for the entire day, and they are for the purpose of eating, to wash his hands for each and every eating"** — if a person washes in the morning and guards his hands, he can rely on this for the entire day. But **if he is inattentive**, he must wash before each eating.

**Simple Meaning:**

In the morning the hands become dirty from sleeping (one touched places at night). Once one washes, one can make a "condition" that today one remains clean — both for eating and for prayer.

**Novel Point:**

The Rambam means that the permission is only for one who is truly careful — he doesn't forget. But if he is inattentive, he must wash before each eating separately.

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### Halacha — Wrapping His Hands (Covering the Hands)

**The Rambam's Language:**

**"Wrapped his hands in a cloth, eats and drinks... even though he didn't wash his hands"** — one can eat with a napkin/cloth without washing hands.

**Simple Meaning:**

Because the reason for washing is that dirty hands shouldn't touch the food — if a cloth separates, it's enough.

**Novel Point:**

The Rambam holds that the permission of wrapping hands is only for those who eat terumah (who are careful). For a normal person we don't trust — he'll forget somewhere and eat with his dirty hands.

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### Halacha — Feeding Others

**The Rambam's Language:**

**"One who feeds others doesn't need washing hands"** — the one who gives food doesn't need to wash. **"But the eater needs washing hands, even if he doesn't touch the food but another puts it in his mouth"** — the eater must wash even if he doesn't touch the food.

**Novel Point — A Difficult Question:**

If the reason for washing hands is cleanliness — that dirty hands shouldn't make the food bad — why must the eater wash when he doesn't touch the food? The mouth is the main thing, not the eater! It's brought up that we don't have an answer to this.

A practical reasoning is added: A person who eats with a fork, when he has difficulty, throws away the fork and eats with his hands — therefore we don't trust.

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### Halacha — Forbidden to Feed One Who Didn't Wash Hands

**The Rambam's Language:**

**"It's forbidden to feed one who didn't wash hands, even if he puts it in his mouth."**

**Simple Meaning:**

One may not feed someone who didn't wash, even if one puts the food in his mouth — because washing hands is a law on the eater, not only on the food.

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### Halacha — Forbidden to Treat Washing Hands Lightly / The Story of Rabbi Akiva

**The Rambam's Language:**

**"It's forbidden to treat washing hands lightly. And many Chachamim commanded about washing hands and emphasized the matter. To such an extent that even if he only has water for drinking"** — he should take a little from it to wash, **"and afterward eat and drink what remains."**

**Simple Meaning:**

Even when one only has water to drink, one must take a little for washing hands.

**Novel Points:**

#### 1) Source — The Story of Rabbi Akiva:

Rabbi Akiva was in prison, his student Rabbi Yehoshua Hagarsi brought him a little water. Rabbi Akiva wanted to wash his hands from it. He was told: you don't have enough to drink! He answered: **"Better I should die my own death than transgress the words of my colleagues."**

#### 2) Novel point in the meaning of "words of my colleagues":

The language "the words of my colleagues" (not "the words of the Chachamim" or "the halacha") shows that Rabbi Akiva was perhaps not obligated in washing hands (he didn't have to eat). He did it because "my colleagues" — the leading Chachamim, Shlomo Hamelech — so commanded. This is a measure of piety, not an obligation. The "colleagues" are the Chachamim who enacted washing hands for chullin, which was approximately in the period of Rabbi Akiva.

#### 3) The Rambam clearly understands it wasn't life-threatening:

The person wouldn't have died — he would have been hungry that day, and as an old person this is difficult, but it's not life-

threatening. Therefore one can see from here how important washing hands is — that Rabbi Akiva was self-sacrificing for it even without a strict obligation.

#### 4) Question from the Beis Yosef — why doesn't the Shulchan Aruch rule like the Rambam:

The Beis Yosef holds that this is only a stringency of Rabbi Akiva, not a law for everyone. One can even say that this was the entire novelty of washing hands for chullin — one must strengthen the new decree, but a regular Jew doesn't need to go so far.

#### 5) The Rambam holds that every Jew can be in the category of Rabbi Akiva:

Therefore he rules this as law for everyone, not only as a story of an individual. The Rambam is a "student of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai" (student of Rabbi Akiva), and many things in the Rambam agree with the Zohar — there are books that show the strong connection between the Rambam's Torah and the Torah of Rashbi.

#### 6) The Rambam's method — stories as halacha:

The Rambam often took stories from the Gemara and understood that they are practical law. One can argue the opposite — that if so, one can say that many of the Rambam's rulings are "only stories." But the Rambam didn't write a law that one must actually suffer — he doesn't say how much one must endure. He uses the story only to show the importance of washing hands. Also the Rambam understands that "my own death" (in the story) is an exaggeration. Even for a mitzvah one only needs to give up a third of one's property — so it's not simple that it's a complete obligation, but a demonstration of importance.

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#### Halacha — Drying Hands After Washing Hands

**The Rambam's Language:**

**"A person must wash his hands" — after washing one must dry the hands. "And anyone who eats without drying his hands is as if he eats impure bread."**

**Simple Meaning:**

One can't remain with wet hands after washing — one must dry them. Whoever eats without drying is as if he eats impure bread.

**Novel Points:**

##### 1) Connection to the law of water flowing back:

The law of drying fits well with the previous law that water shouldn't drip back onto the hands — because if one dries immediately, this is automatically not a problem.

##### 2) "Impure" here means disgusting:

The word "impure" doesn't always mean tumah in the technical sense — here it means disgusting, because eating with wet hands makes the food wet and unpleasant. "As if impure."

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#### Halacha — Drying by Mayim Acharonim

**The Rambam's Language:**

**"Anyone who washes hands at the end" — also by mayim acharonim one must dry.**

**Novel Point:**

Also by mayim acharonim, where one doesn't need a vessel, one must however dry the hands — one mustn't bentch with dirty or wet hands.

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#### Halacha — Immediately After Washing the Berachah (Mayim Acharonim Right Before Bentching)

**The Rambam's Language:**

**"And immediately after washing hands one begins Birkas Hamazon, so as not to interrupt between the washing and the berachah."**

**Simple Meaning:**

Right after mayim acharonim one should begin bentching, without any interruption between them.

**Novel Points:**

##### 1) No "Al Naharos" or "Shir Hama'alos" after mayim acharonim:

The Rambam means that one shouldn't say any verses (like "Al Naharos Bavel" or "Shir Hama'alos") between mayim acharonim and bentching. If one wants to say them, one should say them before mayim acharonim. Only afterward do mayim acharonim, and immediately bentch.

##### 2) The reason:

The entire purpose of mayim acharonim is to bentch with clean hands — therefore it should be immediately one after the other, without any interruption. This is the simple meaning in the Rambam.

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**Until here Chapter 6 of Hilchos Berachos.**

## | Full Transcript

### Rambam Hilchos Berachos Chapter 6 – Laws of Washing Hands

#### Opening and Announcements

One, two, three. Rabbosai (gentlemen), we are learning Rambam Hilchos Berachos Chapter 6. We are going to learn the laws of netilas yadayim (washing hands) in Sefer Ahavah.

Before we learn further, we must mention with praise the distinguished sponsor of our shiur, the great supporter of Torah, HaRav Rabbi Yoel Wertzberger.

And now especially in honor of the days of the campaign that is coming now, we want to remind ourselves and ask all

listeners that they should call in warmly. We will be partners in the campaign for the benefit of the beis medrash (study hall) Ohel LeMachshava, the beis medrash of my dear friend HaRav HaGaon Rabbi Yitzchak, and the beis medrash where we learn the shiur.

Also, if anyone wants to confirm to help, to help out making a team, or to help out in general, he can turn to us, to me, to one of the gabbaim (administrators). Not to me, they go to one of Rabbi Yitzchak's other gabbaim. Rabbi Yoel is the gabbai, he is the rabbi.

Also, the shiur is being disseminated. If you know of a friend who would derive pleasure from such a unique shiur, baruch

Hashem (thank God) that people have great pleasure, and one shouldn't speak of what I haven't heard until today.

Rabbi Yitzchak says, for every Jew there is an obligation to learn Torah. It's a... when people don't have time to learn, or to learn on their own, one certainly fulfills the obligation by forwarding the shiur that he heard. Rabbi Yitzchak says, for me everything is an obligation, I know that all these things are such a mitzvah. How? I make everything into an obligation. I am obligated to send the shiur forward, to offer that it should have. One can find a heter (permission). If one makes halachos, if one has placed on the table, it is so. If four people have started watching it, and they have started learning, and if they have stopped. One cannot be that way with Jews. One must understand in a general way, one should disseminate our shiur. It will make us learn better, and it will give merit to other Jews.

### **Introduction: Why Do the Laws of Netilas Yadayim Appear in Hilchos Berachos**

Very good. We are now learning the laws of netilas yadayim, which the Rambam has placed in the laws of berachos (blessings) on hands and birchas hamazon (grace after meals), because for eating, it's already not connected to Jews regarding birchas hamazon, it's related to achilah (eating), but we have more than an asmachta (support). Here Jews are as if hilchos berachos. Perhaps it could be hilchos berachos from other berachos, new?

An interesting thing occurred to me, because we already had better laws and tehillas yadayim (praise of hands)... and even already mentioned the blessing asher mitzvos aseh min haTorah (who commanded us with mitzvos from the Torah), netilas yadayim earlier in hilchos krias Shema I think, yes, when it stood regarding getting up that one should wash hands before reading krias Shema and so forth, or before davening? Ah, before davening it stood that one of the ten things that one must have during tefillah (prayer) is tahara yadayim (purity of hands).

But from here the Rambam elaborates, it could be that by eating it is more important, and it could be that by eating there are two netilas yadayim, there is netilas yadayim before eating, and there is an extra type of netilas yadayim after eating, therefore one has placed here all the details of the laws of netilas yadayim.

### **Halacha 1: Anyone Who Eats Bread Over Which We Recite HaMotzi Requires Netilas Yadayim Before and After**

#### **The Language of the Rambam**

The Rambam says, "**Kol ha'ochel pas shemevarchain alav HaMotzi**" (Anyone who eats bread over which we recite HaMotzi), everyone who eats the bread that we already learned in Chapter 4 I think, what does pas mean? Pas is something that one makes in the form of bread from the five species of grain, when one makes HaMotzi, "**davar zeh tzarich netilas yadayim techilah v'sof**" (this thing requires netilas yadayim at the beginning and end), one needs netilas yadayim before eating, and at the end after eating before bentching (reciting grace after meals).

#### **Discussion: Does Pas Haba'ah B'Kisnin Over Which One Establishes a Meal Also Require Netilas Yadayim**

**Speaker 1:** I have a question for you, if someone eats pas haba'ah b'kisnin (bread that comes in a snack form) and he

establishes a meal on it, does he also need netilas yadayim? The Rambam only says if one makes HaMotzi.

**Speaker 2:** No, I ask you, what does pas mean? Does he also mean that? It could be that one makes birchas hamazon on it, but certainly not HaMotzi.

**Speaker 1:** No, certainly one makes... what did we learn two chapters ago? Again, what did we learn about pas? Pas haba'ah b'kisnin, if one establishes a meal...

**Speaker 2:** Yes, that we learned three chapters ago, sorry, right? One makes mezonos, "**v'im kava seudas alav mevarech HaMotzi**" (and if he establishes his meal on it he recites HaMotzi), if one makes kevius seudah (establishes a meal) one makes HaMotzi.

**Speaker 1:** Nu, that means pas, I ask, is it still called pas? The Rambam, when he writes pas, does he mean that too? He doesn't just say pas, he says "the pas over which we recite HaMotzi," so it could be that he actually means your law.

**Speaker 2:** I ask you whether it's implied that one can include it both ways. I don't know what the meaning is. It could be that once it's not called pas, also not kevius seudah, and therefore it's not called something that one needs to have a great tumult about it. It's good from that which is indeed kevius seudah.

That means, in other words, there is such a "funny" type of pas, which is a pas that one doesn't establish a meal on, one recites HaMotzi on it. Okay, later one will see a bit more clearly what one needs. He's going to bring here fruits and other things.

**Speaker 2:** Yes, but that's not written there. I looked a bit before. Let's see if he says something "pas shemevarchain alav HaMotzi." I'm curious if it's written here. I don't see it, not clearly. You understand? One must be precise.

#### **Even Though It Is Ordinary Bread**

Yes, the Rambam says, "**af al pi she'hu pas chulin**" (even though it is ordinary bread). The "original," the main mitzvah of netilas yadayim was when one mainly had to pay attention to tumah v'taharah (ritual impurity and purity) and to cleanliness, when there was concern about terumah (priestly portion) and kodashim (holy things). The Rambam says, even if it's pas chulin (ordinary bread), there is also a mitzvah of netilas yadayim, an obligation of netilas yadayim.

#### **Even Though His Hands Are Not Dirty**

The Rambam says, "**af al pi she'ein yadav meluchlachos**" (even though his hands are not dirty). The main law, the Rambam explains in other places that the law of netilas yadayim is a concept of taharah (purity). Since the hands are something that is always busy, people always do things with their hands, and cleanliness is such an important thing, it's so important and significant for a person, "especially" for davening, for doing any davat sh'bikdushah (matter of holiness), therefore there is a mitzvah of netilas yadayim.

Now the Rambam says, "**af al pi she'ein yadav meluchlachos v'eino yodea lahen tumah**" (even though his hands are not dirty and he doesn't know of any impurity on them). The main mitzvah is in order to be clean, but once one made the mitzvah, one made it in a manner of lo plug (no distinction). Everyone must wash their hands, even if he doesn't know that his hands are tamei (ritually impure).

#### **The Foundation of the Presumption of Stam Yadayim**

The way to say this is that there is a chazakah (presumption) on hands that they are stam yadayim (ordinary hands). Stam yadayim doesn't mean that you know it's dirty. If you know it's dirty it's a certainty regarding terumah one needs, and we'll soon see that perhaps also regarding chulin as well.

Because the gezeirah (decree), this means that Shlomo HaMelech (King Solomon) made a gezeirah on hands, that all hands, stam yadayim, are called shniyos l'tumah (second degree of impurity). This is a chiddush (novel concept), according to halachah, fundamentally from the Torah there is no such thing as tumas yadayim (impurity of hands). There is a person who is tamei, there is a person who is not tamei. There is a verse that is somewhat implied, but in life there is no such thing. Ordinary hands, because they touch other things, have the status of sheni l'tumah (second degree of impurity). But this is simply only the Chachamim (Sages) wanted to honor this, only on Yom Tov (festival).

#### **The Decree of Shlomo HaMelech and the Decree of the Kanna'im**

And netilas yadayim, this is Shlomo HaMelech's takanah (enactment). And netilas yadayim is actually, because Shlomo HaMelech didn't bring the solutions. Also by eruv Shlomo HaMelech made the gezeirah, and the Chachamim added the solutions. One can say both. Because it's also netilas yadayim, we'll soon see that there is netilas yadayim. I think that Shlomo HaMelech actually also had the advice. I don't know if he actually gave the advice.

But in any case, this is certain that Shlomo HaMelech only made it for kodesh (holy things). Later the kanna'im (zealots) said that even when one eats chulin one should have the same law. By kodesh there was the law that even if you don't know it's dirty, you don't know it's tamei, one washes the hands. One made a takanah, because the gezeirah was that one shouldn't distinguish, that when the same kohen (priest) eats sometimes, or not specifically a kohen, a Yisrael (Israelite) eats sometimes chulin sometimes kodesh, in a permitted manner, therefore one says that even when he eats chulin he should wash so that he should have protection for kodesh. Even when the kodesh is already mechulah (desanctified), he must wash, because once a gezeirah was made on chulin.

#### **Discussion: What Is the Reason for Netilas Yadayim – Serach Terumah or Cleanliness**

This is still a question. There is a position in the Gemara that says why is there the takanah that the Chachamim later made that even when one eats chulin one should do netilas yadayim? There are those who said it's because of serach terumah (extension of terumah), that perhaps he will eat terumah. Although we don't understand, a Yisrael never eats terumah, it's very difficult to understand this. A Yisrael has ma'aser sheni (second tithe), something that requires taharah. Nu, and one doesn't eat kodesh. I mean, you need to know a bit of the halachah.

And the Rambam brings in other places also, and in the Gemara it's implied that there is another position that says it's not as you said earlier, that it's not about serach terumah, but simply a matter of nekiyus (cleanliness). It's not a nice thing that a person should eat dirty food, he should eat dirt.

In any case, because we have a chazakah – this was Shlomo HaMelech's takanah – because one made a chazakah that the hands are dirty, even if you don't know, it could be that you touched and you didn't catch it, therefore one must clean the

hands before one washes, before one eats, so that one shouldn't eat dirt.

This is the simple thing. I wouldn't have said so. According to what you say, it would have been more that it belongs in the laws of forbidden foods, ma'achalos asuros (forbidden foods). One makes such a boundary that one shouldn't eat any dirty things. Things or any not good things with your hands. But I wouldn't have said so, because one is also obligated for krias Shema and for tefillah. It's such a matter that a person should have clean hands by every davar shebikdushah.

**Speaker 2:** The davar shebikdushah things... because you're going to eat a meal... because it's disgusting to eat dirt. Look in the Rambam, he says this in the language of the Rambam.

**Speaker 1:** But if so, the laws of netilas yadayim would belong entirely in the laws of ma'achalos asuros. It belongs, it doesn't belong to any law in the laws of foods, not any forbidden things. It's not dirt.

**Speaker 2:** But it's a boundary in ma'achalos asuros. It's something that one doesn't want you to eat.

**Speaker 1:** Very good, certainly you don't want to dirty yourself with the food. Because you also eat with your hands. If one would take food not with the hands, one doesn't have the problem. The fork is yes, but with the hands, if one covers the hands, one doesn't need netilas yadayim. You eat food with the hands, the dirt from the hands will go onto the food. Tefillah is other things. When one eats one needs to be clean. But it's all built on the same chazakah that hands in general, we trust that stam yadayim are dirty.

What does it mean? I don't know. I don't see that stam yadayim are dirty. So one must ask. These are other questions, there will be another halachah coming to this.

#### **What Does "Stam Yadayim Dirty" Mean**

What does stam yadayim dirty mean? Dirty doesn't mean it's smeared. But our people have also become more sensitive. Dirty means that your hands are not clean. That you wouldn't have touched bread, because bread catches very easily any bacteria, any thing that you have on your hands. It doesn't say bacteria, it says dirt.

Again, if one has really clean in the way that you say that one is not motzi daas (doesn't consider), you're right. But a person who works, he turns around clean in the house, baruch Hashem, the Ribbono Shel Olam (Master of the Universe) makes you a ben Yissachar (scholar). By the Zevulun, or the people who work physically, or the people who work in the house, it happens, one often becomes dirty, and netilas yadayim makes sense.

Okay, this is the conclusion of the halachah that one must wash the hands. Only I was told that the takanah of Shlomo HaMelech is the main thing that one should think that usually hands are dirty. The question is only regarding what one must be concerned about this. The Rabbis, later Rabbis, said that one must be concerned simply about eating also.

Here it says for example that for tefillah it's even more basic. The law of tefillah must have netilas yadayim. It's also built on the same law of tumas yadayim, but I don't know if it wasn't earlier. I don't know, it's another halachah.

#### **Halacha 1 (Continued): And Similarly Any Thing Whose Dipping Is in Liquid**

Let's go further. **"V'chen kol davar shetibbulo b'mashkeh"** (And similarly any thing whose dipping is in liquid), a thing that one eats dipped in liquids, **"tzarich netilas yadayim techilah"** (requires netilas yadayim at the beginning). Besides bread, also something that one eats in a manner that is food and liquid together, require netilas yadayim techilah. I think because then it sticks more easily or what? It's such a type of thing.

You can say this if one thinks of the matter of... yes, if one thinks of the matter of cleanliness. Or if one thinks of the matter of tumah, because it's mekabel tumah (receives impurity) then.

### **Chapter 6: Netilas Yadayim — Davar Shetibbulo B'Mashkeh, Blessing on Netilas Yadayim, Mayim Acharonim, and Mayim Emtza'im**

#### **Halacha 1 (Continued) — Davar Shetibbulo B'Mashkeh: The Custom of the Rambam Versus the Ashkenazic Custom**

##### **Speaker 1:**

But I say, if it's the matter of cleanliness, it could be a fruit remains – you eat it, you put the fruit in the mouth, you eat it. After the immersion in liquid, your hand gets wet in wetness, and it can be a greater dirt.

In practice, our custom is not to do, not to wash the hands on davar shetibbulo b'mashkeh, except for karpas (vegetable) at the Seder without a blessing. Why does one do without a blessing? Because we already conduct ourselves all year not to make a blessing. Actually one should make a blessing also.

And the Tosafos said that the reason is, because the law is only because of tumah – that means they didn't agree with those who could also learn it because of nekiyus. Perhaps the netilas yadayim itself also has... yes, but that's already another gezeirah. Tosafos said that one doesn't conduct oneself to do it.

But according to the law of the Rambam, you know what the custom of the Rambam is? The custom of the Rambam is to wash on every davar shetibbulo b'mashkeh, and therefore the custom of the Rambam is also to make al netilas yadayim (on washing hands) by urchatz (washing) at the Seder. It's not to say that netilas yadayim is only a position of Tosafos that most Ashkenazic Jews conduct themselves.

And so that the children shouldn't ask, perhaps one doesn't need to say. The Rambam followers, their children are Rambam followers, they don't need to ask anything. Perhaps once a year one should tell the children this is a takanas Chachamim (enactment of the Sages) of davar shetibbulo b'mashkeh. Simply a good thing, simply a part of the Torah.

Or can one learn other halachos? What does other halachos mean? You do this anyway, it's learned for the children. One can say to the children that there is indeed a position of davar shetibbulo b'mashkeh. It's not a position, it's a law, it's a takanas Chachamim. There are those who learn that today it's not relevant, today one doesn't conduct oneself with it. According to all opinions there is such a takanah.

I've seen many ehrliche (upright) Jews who are careful about this already. Immersion in liquid? Yes, certainly.

#### **Discussion: What Does Immersion in Liquid Mean in Practice?**

##### **Speaker 2:**

What does this immersion in liquid mean? For example, someone eats a... I don't know, one eats a... if one dips it in, yes. We're talking about ehrliche Jews. Or one dips a vegetable in soup, so that one eats such a thing, yes.

##### **Speaker 1:**

No, but what does that have to do with netilas yadayim?

##### **Speaker 2:**

No, if someone eats... one puts in a piece of challah in the...

##### **Speaker 1:**

Okay, challah he washed anyway.

##### **Speaker 2:**

One puts in a piece of roll in the soup, does he eat that, is it a davar shetibbulo b'mashkeh. Or anything, or people make such a platter and one puts in dips with vegetables, I know.

#### **Halacha 2 — Blessing on Netilas Yadayim: "Asher Kideshanu B'Mitzvosav V'Tzivanu Al Netilas Yadayim"**

##### **Speaker 1:**

The Rambam says further, **"Kol hanotel yadav"** (Anyone who washes his hands), someone who washes, **"bein"** (whether) – the Rambam says, why do we wash? We're speaking here in the middle of hilchos berachos, we're speaking for eating, but earlier we learned krias Shema and tefillah. On all of these there is a blessing at the beginning, **"asher kideshanu b'mitzvosav v'tzivanu al netilas yadayim"** (who sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us concerning washing hands).

One already calculated earlier the... so how does he make the blessing? He said earlier that it's a reshus (optional). **"Mitzvas Chachamim hi"** (It's a commandment of the Sages) – it immediately becomes difficult on the Rambam. The Rambam didn't bring here a verse that it's from the Torah to wash.

There are positions that it's from the Torah, and one learns it from...

##### **Speaker 2:**

No, we just learned now, that according to all opinions it's rabbinic.

##### **Speaker 1:**

Yes, the Rambam says clearly, but the Gemara has here a position that **"v'hiskadishem"** (and you shall sanctify yourselves) or other things, but they're more hints. But the mitzvah is mainly a rabbinic mitzvah.

#### **Question: How can one say "asher kidshanu b'mitzvosav" on a rabbinic commandment?**

And if so, how can one say "asher kidshanu b'mitzvosav"? He says, **"For this is a commandment of the Sages, and He commanded us in the Torah to listen to them, as it says 'lo tasur min hadavar asher yagidu lach' (do not turn from the word they tell you), and according to the Torah we listen to them"**.

The simple meaning is, when someone does a rabbinic mitzvah, he gives honor to the Torah. Why does he do the rabbinic mitzvos? Because he does the Almighty's mitzvos, he wants to become sanctified with the Almighty's mitzvos.

Yes, the Rambam later, I remembered, explains it in other words. Yes, in chapter 14 the Rambam explains that when one says "asher kidshanu b'mitzvosav v'tzivanu al netilas

yadayim," one must think **"everything that He commanded us in His mitzvos to listen to the words of the Sages, who commanded us about washing hands"**. Not that "tzivanu" directly isn't correct, "tzivanu" indirectly. The Almighty's command truly goes on the mitzvah of "lo tasur," according to the Torah, says the Rambam here.

**Innovation: The mitzvah is to listen to the words of the Sages, not hand-washing itself**

And I also say the effect, "asher kidshanu" means that we are different and we are... According to the Rambam, that's what the mitzvah means here. I say, but the hand-washing, even though it's rabbinic, also takes on holiness, because washing is about... as you say, here we take a line of cleanliness.

But according to how the Rambam learns, one can actually learn differently, that according to how the Rambam learns, the mitzvah that is here is not the mitzvah of washing hands, it's the mitzvah to listen to the words of the Sages, which among their enactments is the mitzvah of washing hands.

**Law 2 (continued) — Mayim acharonim: One does not make a blessing on them because it is only due to danger**

**Speaker 1:**

Mayim acharonim, he said beginning and end, one washes before eating and after eating. The mayim acharonim, he said end, the final water, **one does not make a blessing on them, because it is only due to danger**. Because mayim acharonim was instituted due to danger, as the Gemara says that there is a certain Sodomite salt that circulates with food, and it's a danger if one puts it on the eyes.

The Rambam goes to say, fine, one must wash, but we don't make a blessing, because what is the mitzvah? It's about danger.

**Innovation: Why one doesn't make a blessing on mayim acharonim — one shouldn't ask about danger**

Ah, I have a very good explanation. Because this way, when a person is careful about danger, he shouldn't do it because it says so in the Torah, but because it's a danger.

**Speaker 2:**

I hear.

**Speaker 1:**

Because if not, it starts like this, I know, let's say there's a great plague in the world, people are dying from some plague that causes the lungs to burst, and they say one should be very careful, one starts to be pilpul, should it be a law of plague, does a plague need forty people, and so on. Because for them danger is a preparation to do the word of Hashem, but here danger itself is the word of Hashem.

The Almighty wants "v'chai bahem" (and you shall live by them). Someone who disregards danger, because he doesn't make a blessing now. He doesn't say he's washing because the Almighty commanded, he washes because it's a danger. One doesn't need to ask anymore about danger. And about this it says "hanishal harei zeh meguneh" (one who asks is disgraceful) regarding danger. One must be about danger... It's enough that it's danger and nothing more. Danger is the worst thing, and should you now think about a blessing? Quickly wash yourself, quickly save yourself from the danger.

**Discussion: One must be more careful about danger than a rabbinic enactment**

**Speaker 2:**

And according to this, I'll lead you, what is your explanation?

**Speaker 1:**

No, no, according to what I said, obviously one must be even more careful, not less careful because it's a danger. According to this explanation, the two expressions fit very well, that one must be more careful about danger than about a rabbinic enactment.

**Speaker 2:**

One must think, because according to how you said, the whole thing is danger, and this is just a much greater danger.

**Speaker 1:**

The whole thing is a danger because you're going to eat dirt that isn't healthy for you, it's not good for you. It's actually more of a direct danger. But it's the same category.

**Speaker 2:**

Cleanliness with danger isn't the same thing. Cleanliness is a refinement, but this is a much greater danger.

**Speaker 1:**

Yes, dirt, you don't die. I mean, that King David, peace be upon him, the Sages understood that it's actually a danger.

**Mayim acharonim today — whether it's relevant**

One must know today, one who washes mayim acharonim today, theoretically one doesn't need to anymore, because we don't know of Sodomite salt. But you know what makes it so? It doesn't just say so, it's not that I say so, it doesn't just say that one doesn't need to.

One who does wash, he doesn't do it because of danger, he does it simply because he thinks that's how the Sages enacted. And actually even though the danger is gone, it remains an enactment, but one should make a blessing.

**Speaker 2:**

Ah, theoretically not make a blessing.

**Speaker 1:**

I say even he should make a blessing, I wouldn't say he should make a blessing, but I'll bring this into mayim acharonim.

One can also say, I understand, because you don't know about the danger, so one is lenient with the danger, you don't do it because of "asher kidshanu b'mitzvosav v'tzivanu" about danger. You don't do it because it's a danger, it's like good advice. You do it as a human being, not as a Jew. You're not special in that you wash mayim acharonim.

**Speaker 2:**

Indeed, indeed.

**Speaker 1:**

In mayim acharonim, even if it's correct, even if he says it's cleanliness, but someone who isn't a Jew, he isn't so holy, doesn't conduct himself that way. We are particular about cleanliness, but the world isn't so particular about cleanliness. It's a higher level of cleanliness. But the cleanliness that you do is essentially a cleanliness of the Sages.

**Speaker 2:**

I hear.

**Speaker 1:**

It's not so far that one who does it today doesn't do it, it's no longer a danger.

**Speaker 2:**

No, I agree with you.

**Discussion: Why does one wash mayim acharonim today — cleanliness or danger?**

**Speaker 1:**

But the truth is, again, why does one who washes mayim acharonim today, why does he wash mayim acharonim? Is it because of cleanliness, that's the distinction. That actually makes sense, because when eating one does get the hands a bit dirty. Although this isn't dirt, it's food, it's not like before eating which is dirty.

**Speaker 2:**

Therefore I say the distinction. If I've become really dirty, the little bit of mayim acharonim that we do doesn't help. One doesn't pour a revi'is.

**Speaker 1:**

No, but one must do it. Hello, if I'm dirty, one must go wash. We do something halfway.

**Speaker 2:**

I know it's difficult for us.

**Speaker 1:**

I'm saying what the halacha is. Because we're talking about what people do at home.

**Speaker 2:**

What the point is, that if mayim acharonim, why is mayim acharonim?

**Speaker 1:**

I'm just explaining. Even if we say that mayim acharonim is because of cleanliness, there's also "v'hiskadishtem v'heyisem kedoshim" (sanctify yourselves and be holy), two days of maror is like mayim acharonim. From this the Gemara says, if so there's no advantage to washing halfway. "V'hiskadishtem" is a certain cleanliness, you can bentch with clean hands.

I ask you, if so, why does one make a blessing? It's the same thing as mayim acharonim.

**Speaker 2:**

The distinction is that it's not dirt, it's food. It's not simple that it's dirty. It's not like one went outside, I don't know where.

**Speaker 1:**

It's a distinction, it's not a contradiction. It's an even more refined level of... that it's completely clean. It's not a contradiction. What one does today makes sense, because one does less, because it's not such actual dirt, but it's a wash-up. It's not such a problem, understand?

According to Kabbalah there's a concept that it should be less. Simply, even simple explanation, it's a pnei Torah thing, because that means the distinction is the dirt. Do you understand what I'm saying? The distinction is the water, not the distinction is the dirt. The distinction is the water, not the distinction how much water one uses. But according to Chassidus there's a concept in this. It's not a contradiction.

In practice, usually one who is particular about mayim acharonim has clean hands when they bentch. It's not a questioned thing.

**Law 3 — Mayim emtza'im (washing between dish and dish)**

**Speaker 1:**

Good. The Rema says further, what about washing hands? Not before one begins the whole meal, but if a person wants to be stringent, he wants to do what's called mayim emtza'im, washing hands means between courses, between two parts of the meal. It's optional. There's no mitzvah on this. Because the Sages only enacted before and after, but they didn't enact in the middle.

So goes the holy Ra'avad, he actually says that the earlier Geonim did make a blessing "al harechitzah."

**Laws of Washing Hands: Mayim emtza'im, washing for fruits, mayim acharonim, and measures of washing**

**Law: Mayim emtza'im — washing hands between dish and dish**

But if a person wants to be stringent, he wants to do what's called mayim emtza'im, washing hands between dish and dish, between two parts of the meal, it's optional. There's no mitzvah on this, because the Sages only enacted before and after, they didn't enact in the middle.

But the holy Ra'avad actually says, no, about the community that were... this was the Gemara's dispute, says the Ra'avad that one can make a blessing "al rechitzas yadayim." The earlier Geonim did make a blessing "al rechitzas yadayim"? But they didn't wash netilas yadayim, they said rechitzas yadayim. One must make a blessing. Mayim acharonim one doesn't need to, because then it's only because of danger.

So if someone eats cholent, I don't know why he doesn't eat with a spoon, and he gets dirty, according to the Ra'avad's position one must make a blessing. If someone eats fish with his hands, yes, very good, before the Chassidim eat fish with their hands, then he's obligated, but he doesn't make a blessing. So he must make a blessing between dish and dish. Also there's another thing, there's a type... what is one of cleanliness, yes. Ratza notel, ratza einotel (if he wants he washes, if he wants he doesn't wash). And so says the holy Ra'avad. Why doesn't anyone conduct themselves like the Ra'avad? Because he doesn't know so, the Ra'avad says one should make "al rechitzas yadayim."

**Law 3: Washing hands for fruits — "harei zeh migasei haru'ach"**

Good, says the Rambam, fruits, all that we've talked about was regarding bread. Says the Rambam, **fruits of chulin (non-sacred), one doesn't need washing hands neither at the beginning nor at the end. And anyone who washes hands for fruits, harei zeh migasei haru'ach (behold this is haughtiness).**

But he's talking about fruits that aren't fruits that are davar shetibbulo b'mashkeh (something dipped in liquid). But if one eats fruits that are also like "yadav seruyos b'mashkeh" (his hands are soaked in liquid), a person cuts an orange, the juice pours, he has liquid here, and one must know what davar shetibbulo b'mashkeh is. If he has the simple meaning that he's eating food and liquid at once, theoretically there's a concept of liquid. An external liquid? When something that one dips in a liquid, okay.

**Discussion: Why is washing hands for fruits "gas ru'ach"?**

Says the Rambam, **fruits of chulin one doesn't need washing hands neither at the beginning nor at the end. And anyone who washes hands for fruits, the simple meaning is he's making a stringency, he's showing he's**

more pious than he needs to be, **harei zeh migasei haru'ach**. A ba'al ga'avah (arrogant person)? Ah, good. Pay very close attention. One may not be a ba'al ga'avah. Which is very important, not to be more pious than any other Jew. Which first of all is mentioned many times not according to all the distinctions of opinions in the Rambam, one may not be a gas ru'ach. Rabbosai, pay strong attention, not to be washing hands for fruits. Yes, I don't accept that he doesn't need to be a gas ru'ach. I don't know. Okay. There's someone who says that person is a gas ru'ach. Also one may not be a gas ru'ach.

So now we're going to learn the laws of mayim acharonim. You don't agree that you'll conduct yourself not as a gas ru'ach? So you'll conduct yourself yes? No, you're a distinguished Jew. What is the simple meaning? Why is washing hands for fruits... It certainly doesn't mean because he's a cleaner person. It means when he washes hands for fruits because he thinks he's doing a mitzvah, he doesn't make a blessing, but he thinks he's doing a mitzvah here. And why is he a gas ru'ach? One can say he's an am ha'aretz, one can say he's... Okay, I don't know. It's a matter of yuhara (presumptuousness), it seems.

One must know, with such a law, it could be that there was someone who had such a custom, and in practice they said such a sitting, one doesn't need to. It's perhaps the context of the thing that is yuhara. Usually the thing was that there was some cult, some group, who made themselves a group of gasei ru'ach there. It was some code name for the pious who conducted the rabbinate there, some righteous rabbi, some group. But many times one doesn't even need to think, because the Tannaim were also heads of yeshivos, and there were groups there who wanted to be more pious than the rosh yeshiva. So it could be he's from the gasei ru'ach of such and such table, who they know whom I mean there. One must know, about this the picture fits exactly that he's a gas ru'ach.

#### **Law 4: Mayim acharonim — "kol pas shemelach bo" / "kol es hamelach"**

Says the Rambam, where does one do mayim acharonim? Says the Rambam, **"kol es hamelach"**, everything that one eats with salt. Ah, your version is a better version, **"kol pas shemelach bo"**. Here, but "es hamelach" is the language of a... No, you mean the version. That's food. **"Kol pas shemelach bo"**, every bread that has salt involved in it. That's the language of the Rambam. Yes, but in other versions it's **"kol es hamelach"**, all foods that can have salt in them. No, there's a big distinction. **"Kol pas"** means only bread. And **"kol es hamelach"** means on anything. Understood? Anything. On that the Ra'avad holds mayim acharonim before making borei nefashos. The Ra'avad actually disputes this point. The Ra'avad held that **"kol es hamelach"** comes out... Ah, the Ra'avad had a greater kol pas and he protests about this? No, the opposite. Look, you can see, yes. What is he against the deed in the Gemara that one must wash for everything?

Again, the Rambam says first. Read, how to read the Rambam more. We start talking about the Rambam before we read the Rambam. I can't go between the lines.

**"Kol es hamelach"**, everything one eats that has salt, theoretically, because of mayim acharonim, one must also wash mayim acharonim, **"shema yesh bah melach Sedomis"**. Perhaps there is Sodomite salt. Sodom, you know, Sodom were wicked, they didn't let people give hospitality,

they disrupted Jewish customs, or Jewish customs, they disrupted Jewish customs. One must wash mayim acharonim. They were salted. **"O melach"** — or one must... **"Kesavah kesavah melach Sedomis"**, yes, or... It can make problems for the eyes. **"V'ya'avor al einav v'yisamem"**, it will hurt his eyes, it will blind him. I'm telling you the Hebrew translation. It makes crying, it's a substance that makes crying. The salt on the eyes makes crying. **"Lefikach chayav adam litol yadav b'sof kol seudah mipnei hamelach."**

So the Rambam says as if, essentially everything one eats with salt, or where salt comes, one would have to wash the hands because of the concern of the dangerous salt. Therefore he says, instead of saying that every time one washes the hands one should wash with salt, he says, every time one eats a meal, which usually in a meal comes salt, one should wash the hands. That's the explanation of the Rambam.

So the Ra'avad argues, what does he want to learn? So the Ra'avad says, I don't know what the Ra'avad says, that he must learn the Gemara and he sees a distinction in the... I don't know. I don't know what the Ra'avad says. In the graise I understand, one must learn the Gemara. And I don't know practically if a practical difference comes out. I don't see that a practical difference comes out. It says so, right? Yes. Very good.

I already know at least who the rabbi to the woman here is.

#### **Mayim acharonim in camp — even in war mayim acharonim is obligatory**

**Further, the Rambam says, "Until where is netilat yadayim (handwashing)?" and "A nazir is obligated to guard himself from the king." The Rambam says, "In the camp," when one goes out to war and finds oneself in the... what do you call "in the camp"? In camp, yes, "they are exempt from netilat yadayim," initially one is exempt from netilat yadayim, "because they are not troubled in war, and they are not particular about cleanliness." Interesting. A whole war is indeed as it says there "and your camp shall be holy." But everything is indeed such that one must be careful. One is lenient, one is lenient. But "from this you learn" that one must. But "in the obligation from danger," the salt of Sodom one must certainly be even more particular. I mean even more, but exactly the same, from danger. Danger doesn't change.**

He says further, "Until where is netilat yadayim?" Yes. So until here, this is... ah, my camp doesn't help, because even in the camp you don't have any trouble, that there's no matter to die from the salt of Sodom. So this one must do even in the camp, which the Sages say, "We can tolerate that you don't do our enactments, but please, don't die."

#### **Halacha 5: Until Where is Netilat Yadayim — "Until the Joint"**

**"Until where is netilat yadayim? Until the joint."** Okay, this means how much of the hand, until where on the hand? Until the joint means the bone that is opposite the palm with the larger hand, yes. Apparently, we already learned earlier that there is a dispute about this. There are those who say that "until the joint" means until here, until the end of the fingers, and there are those who say that it means until here. We conduct ourselves stringently, but it's a dispute among the Rishonim. Regarding this, on Yom Kippur or Tisha B'Av, one

is stringent about netilat yadayim, and one is lenient, so to speak, about netilat yadayim, because we have fear of the concern of washing. Yes, it's not clear. It appears that the essential halacha, perhaps, is that it means until the end of his fingers, but he brings that the Rif said, the dispute between Rashi and the Rif stands here, the Rif said that it means until the end of the arm, until the palm, and Rashi said that it means until the end of his fingers.

Apparently, all these halachot that we will learn later that a revi'it (quarter-log) is enough, makes much more sense that we're talking about Rashi's opinion, which is much smaller. But okay, it doesn't cost any money, one can do both.

#### The Measure of Water — A Revi'it for Both Hands

Yes. **And what is the measure of water? A revi'it for both hands**, a revi'it for both hands together. A revi'it is approximately three ounces, and three ounces is enough for two whole hands. Right? This is the minimum measure. If one does more, it's more clean, but this is the measure. Less than this doesn't fulfill the obligation.

If one uses so little water, but wipes oneself immediately afterward, does it help? Certainly. Soon we will see that one is not obligated.

#### Laws of Chatzitza (Interposition) in Netilat Yadayim

He says, what happens if you have some chatzitza (interposition) on the hands? The Rambam says, for the law of chatzitza, look in the laws of immersion and the laws of mikvaot or in other places in the Rambam, and there it is explained at length, which he doesn't go over here. Everything that is a chatzitza there is a chatzitza in netilat yadayim, for example, something that doesn't belong there, and so on.

Very good. The principle of the laws of chatzitza is what it says in the Gemara: rubo u'makpid (majority and particular) is from the Torah, and the Rabbis decreed on mi'uto u'makpid (minority and particular), or rubo v'eino makpid (majority and not particular). Apparently, by netilat yadayim it applies to the whole hands, but mi'uto v'eino makpid (minority and not particular) is not a problem. This is the principle.

#### What Counts Toward the Measure of a Mikveh Counts Toward the Measure of a Revi'it

The Rambam says further, **and everything that counts toward the measure of a mikveh**, everything that one can combine with to reach the measure of a mikveh, for example, one means forty se'ah, to reach the measure of forty se'ah, **counts toward the measure of a revi'it**. If you want to know how one can combine, you have too little water, you can add a bit of snow, such sorts of things, there are patents in the laws of mikveh. Now we can learn, we have now learned that one has netilat yadayim. Now there is, there is also such a thing called tevilat yadayim (immersion of hands). Tevilat yadayim means that one immerses one's hands in a mikveh. Instead of washing one's hands with the measure that we have now learned, a measure of a revi'it, one can immerse one's hands in a mikveh.

What is the difference? One can already see the difference. Someone who is in a mikveh, he has already purified his hands through immersion. He doesn't need to have a vessel, he doesn't need to have a kosher vessel. If someone goes in the mikveh, he doesn't need to have a kosher vessel. If someone goes in the mikveh, he doesn't need to have a kosher vessel.

## Tevilat Yadayim and Netilat Yadayim — The Four Conditions and Invalidations in Water

### Tevilat Yadayim vs. Netilat Yadayim

Now, the Raavad says further, now we will learn, we have now learned that there is netilat yadayim. Now there is, there is another such thing called tevilat yadayim. Tevilat yadayim means that one immerses one's hands in a mikveh. Instead of washing one's hands with the measure that we have now learned, a measure of how, one can immerse one's hands in a mikveh.

What is the difference? One can already see the difference. **Anyone who immerses his hands in mikveh waters doesn't need anything else**, he has already purified his hands through immersion. Very good. If someone doesn't have kosher, if someone goes on a ship, I don't know what, he doesn't find a cup, I don't know what, he should go in a mikveh and dunk the hands.

But then he must be particular that it should be a kosher mikveh. Ah, it's only indeed if it's a kosher mikveh. **But immersion in drawn water the measure of a mikveh, or in drawn water on the ground**, which is not kosher, which is drawn water, **didn't accomplish for him**, he didn't accomplish anything. **For drawn water only purifies the hands through netila**. There is a law that netilat yadayim usually is with netila. Netila means taking with a vessel. And here, a law of mikveh it doesn't have, and you dunk it in not in the manner that the Sages enacted netilat yadayim, it must be poured on the hands. He says, you can say two.

### The Raavad's Question

And here comes the Raavad and he wonders, and he says, what does it mean that drawn water doesn't work on the ground? He says, even a ba'al keri (one who had a seminal emission), if there are forty se'ah, even if it's drawn water, it accomplishes for him the immersion of a ba'al keri. So what does it mean that it should be a mikveh that helps for Torah laws, which shouldn't be enough such a mikveh that is enough for the immersion of Ezra?

### Two Separate Systems

But it is certainly clear that there are two things, tevilat yadayim and netilat yadayim, and they have their own halachot. Tevilat yadayim must be forty se'ah, according to the Raavad it can even be drawn. And netilat yadayim must be, it indeed works with drawn, and it indeed works with things that are invalid for a mikveh, but one must be particular about the halachot from now, that it should be a vessel, it should be netila, it should be with force, you can't dunk the measure, it must be poured on the hands.

### A Spring

The Raavad says further, **anyone who washes his hands**, netilat yadayim has four conditions, **must be careful about four things**, one must be particular about four things. **In the water itself**, that there are things that the quality of the water, and water if someone falls in a drop, one must know that in practice there is a dispute, the Beit Yosef brings the dispute between the Rambam and the Raavad whether one needs forty se'ah on the ground. Drawn water, it must not be drawn, but a spring where the water flows, according to all opinions one can stick in the hands. Even if there aren't forty se'ah, even if there aren't forty se'ah, even... it's lying in a place, if it runs one can stick in the hands and it's kosher.

### Halacha 7 — The Four Conditions in Netilat Yadayim

Very good. The Rambam says further, the four things one must pay attention to in netilat yadayim. **In the water itself**, one must look at the water, that the water should not be the type of water **that invalidates netilat yadayim**, which he will enumerate. And all these things he will enumerate in more detail. **And in the measure**, the measure of how much water he already said, that it should be a revi'it for two hands together. This is not a lot of water. **And in a vessel, that the water from which one washes should be in a vessel**, one should pour the water through a vessel specifically. **And in the washer, that the water should come from the power of the washer**, that someone should pour it, it shouldn't be poured by itself.

### Halacha 8 — Four Invalidations in Water

The Rambam says, **in water four things invalidate the water**, four things. He started with four things, he says in water there are four conditions now.

#### Change of Appearance

**Change of appearance**, something that changes the color of the water invalidates.

#### Exposure

**Exposure**, if the water was exposed. In ancient times one was more particular about exposure, that it was lying open, and therefore a snake could have spit in or such things, it becomes dirty. Not dirty, it becomes forbidden to drink, it becomes a danger, it doesn't become dirty. Since one can't drink it, it's not honorable, it's not good water.

#### Performance of Work

**Performance of work with them**, or water with which one did work invalidates it.

#### Invalidated from Animal Drinking

**And invalidation that prevents the animal from drinking**, water that became so repulsive that an animal wouldn't drink it, one also can't use for the hands. He will enumerate all these things.

#### Details in Change of Appearance

**How so? Water whose appearance changed**, water that changed its color, **whether it changed in a vessel**, or it's on the ground, there's a small lake or a small collection of water that changed the color, it doesn't look the right color. It makes no difference why it changed, **whether from something that fell into it, or from its place**. From its place is an interesting thing. There is indeed a lake that is on a type of mineral, will one say that it's changed appearance from water, **these are invalid**. Yes, there are indeed things on the ground, that it doesn't look the regular color, because underneath is a red stone or a stone that was red... No, this is a red stone, he doesn't mean underneath. He means things actually, that it's not simply that something fell in, but in the place the water is something from the beginning. **These are invalid**. It's a type of changed appearance. There aren't very many such things. Certainly, the water must have the color, if you put it in a glass and it's invalid it's the water.

#### Details in Exposure

Yes. **And likewise regarding exposure**, he says, **if they were exposed, exposure forbids because of drinking**. We will learn as the Rambam said in the laws of exposure. What? Hasn't the Rambam already taught the laws of exposure? No, he hasn't taught. Everything that he is... he

doesn't go into it, which I the wealth. He says that laws of murder the Rambam speaks about regarding my exposure. He will drink my exposure. Murder guarding of life, apparently yes. I don't carry it. But it has everything that invalidates makes it repulsive, which the Rambam enumerates in other places, how a person must guard water from the snake. Ah, it's not regular halachot. In our times, one doesn't need to have concern that the snake will go in and spit with its poison in the water, it's not dependent on that in our times. And in today's times it turns out that we don't have fear from this our snakes do, and it's not above because, we're also not particular about the laws for this. Understand, I'm still not particular about the danger.

### Halacha 9 — Performance of Work

The Rambam says further, **All water with which work was done**. The third of the four things was water with which one worked. It became without importance, its value becomes water, comes from water, sewage water, which one pours out as invalid in our times.

#### Why Does Performance of Work Invalidate?

How so. Water stands is simply the simple meaning, that it becomes dirty. And it's not any decree of the crown, that it works more. One will see later... Yes. A bit dirty. Something dirty. If it's a bit dirty, yes. It's not not completely out. Earlier is no one out, or water is what we with it green. It hasn't become dirty. It's as it is already the way it's not raised at any time.

All these halachot are very strongly relevant. We have the sinks, in ancient times water was an expensive thing, one had to carry water. Therefore people seek to save. So there are halachot that you can't use any water. For example, first of all drawn water. A person, regarding this I thought of the word drawn water. A person brings in water, and he wants to use the water as much as possible, he wants to recycle it. So he washes dishes, he uses it to do his work on that day exempt, or he moistened his bread, and the like. But it's already used, but it's apparently still good water. It's not good, for a mikveh it's not good. Even if it's not in a vessel, it's placed in something that receives impurity, could be what, I don't know what. It's because of netilat yadayim, because the water has already become used, and one must use fresh water. It's already not clean, it's already dirty.

#### Water with Which One Rinsed Dishes

Likewise, the same thing is indeed by dishes, one washed off dishes, one must have dishes that were already clean, or that are new, regarding this they are clean. If it's invalid, the water is generally not water is clean.

#### Water in Which the Baker Dips the Dough

**But water in which the baker dips the dough**, water that the baker dips in her dough, her, let's say, the cookies that become wet, there is such a type of thing, one sees it in the towns, the water that he dips in the cookie before he puts it in the oven, the bagel, a bagel one puts in the... **is invalid**, because the water became dipped in, it became used, work was done with them.

**But** water from which one takes a handful, one takes a full handful, one fills the hands with water to pour on the dough, **is kosher**. Why? Because he indeed took a bit of water, but only the water that he took, with that water he does work, he pours it out on the dough or what. But **the water from**

**which he took**, this doesn't make the whole bowl of water that it should be called work was done with them because one took from it. **They are kosher.**

#### Halacha 10 — Invalidated from Dog Drinking

The next thing was invalidated, that it became repulsive. The Rambam says, **All water that became invalidated from dog drinking**, it became so repulsive that even a dog wouldn't drink. **Such as** what became bitter, or became salty, **or** it became murky, dirty. Ah, it's a bitter interpretation, it's not changed the color, it's changed the taste. Therefore even a dog won't want it. **Or its smell is bad**, or it got a bad smell, so far that a dog wouldn't drink, is so, there is a halacha. If the water lies **in vessels it's invalid for netilat yadayim. But on the ground it's kosher** even when one can dip in the hands.

#### Discussion: Why the Difference Between Vessels and Ground?

One won't do netila, one will do tevila, right? This is the novelty.

What is indeed the explanation? Why? What is the explanation that here the halacha is so and here the halacha is so? It's not so, it's based on the importance of the water. It's less, everything is levels, each thing is a spectrum. Okay, regarding this comes out such a halacha. Remember, immersion always helps, even when it's less. It's more water, so it's more less, not dangerous.

Just as you jump into a swimming pool, you're surrounded, you were less one with the water, or in a shower, or if there isn't around any head of that water, right?

#### Hot Springs of Tiberias

And he goes in further. He brings indeed a good thing from the hot springs of Tiberias. The hot springs of Tiberias is so, the hot springs of Tiberias has a great, it's water of sulfur, sulfur and salt, **in its place one immerses the hands in it**, which is like the halacha of on the ground. Very interesting. No one will say that the hot springs of Tiberias is disgusting, because it's interesting, it's a unique water that one goes in there. **But if someone takes it in a bottle**, he takes it in a bottle, **then indeed one washes from the vessel or draws from it to another place**, he takes it somewhere else, he takes a pipe from there and he drew water, **one doesn't wash with it neither first nor last**. Not first water, not netilat yadayim, and even last water, all the halachot of last water that he says about last water.

#### Discussion: First Time Last Water

No, it looked out the... Interesting. First time, is this exposure also forbids. Which not, all concern. Changed its appearance, perhaps not, because it's not a mitzvah, it's importance. Something that must be importance.

Here is the first time that he brings that last water is, he is indeed precise that all other things are indeed kosher for last water, only this not. Not clear.

#### Halacha 14 — Measure of Water and Manner of Pouring

#### Laws of Washing Hands: The Measure of Water, Vessels, and the One Who Pours

Halacha 14, the measure of water. Very good. This was indeed another one of the things. The Rambam said it must be mayim atzman (water itself), we already learned that, and now we're going to learn the measure. No, he already said the measure

earlier. Something isn't clear. No, the last thing isn't exactly the measure, it's the manner in which one pours the water. Let's see. Yes, and now he speaks about the measure. But yes, I don't know.

No, he says there is measure A, but it's not so simple. The measure is only if one is very stingy, but it's obvious that it's a revi'it (quarter-log) for two hands. Now is the manner in which one pours it. He already said earlier that there is a measure of a revi'it, twice, I don't know exactly what, actually in the vessel there is twice. And now he says also a general rule, details in the measure. He says how one pours it.

#### The Measure of a Revi'it and the Manner of Washing

**Speaker 1:** Let's see. No, the last one he speaks about the measure. No, he says there is the measure, but the measure has a manner. It's very simple, you know it's a revi'it for two hands. Now there is the manner of how he pours it.

There are the details of the measure. Details, you asked me that there is a measure of a revi'it, twice, why does it say twice? Ah, now he says altogether details of the measure, how one calculates the measure. Yes.

**One may wash his hands little by little until the measure accumulates.** One can do it in two ways, one can pour in one pouring the whole thing, or one can pour it little by little and a revi'it should be poured out on both hands. **And if one pours a revi'it on each hand, it is valid.** It appears that ideally it's better to do little by little until the measure accumulates.

#### Washing for Several People at Once

Now we want to know what happens when someone has a large vessel and wants to wash several people with the same pouring. There are four or five people standing one next to the other and placing their hands, and one person pours. So **four or five people can wash next to each other**, four or five people can wash one next to the other, **one hand on top of the other hand**. One can even place one hand on top of the other **in one pouring, as long as they loosen their hands so that the water can reach them**. One cannot hold one hand tight on the other, there must be space between them. So, as long as there is enough water, **and there should be in that pouring a revi'it for each and every one.**

#### Laws of Vessels for Washing Hands

##### Invalid Vessels

Now we're going to see a bit more about the vessel, laws regarding the vessel. The Rambam says, **one does not wash hands from the walls of vessels**, one doesn't wash hands with water that lies in the walls of a vessel, **nor from the edges of a bathhouse**. What is a bathhouse? A large earthenware vessel that has handles on the side. The handles, there can accumulate by itself a revi'it of water. But in this vessel it's not called a vessel. It's a strange way of... You can actually hold water that way, but it's not an honorable way of pouring with it.

**Nor with broken pottery**, just broken shards. **Nor with the lid of a barrel**, the lid of the barrel. Someone has a large lid that fits a revi'it, and still it's not a vessel. That's not called a vessel.

If he specifically took the lid and made it "into" a vessel that can be used properly. He says he means that he made it so it can stand on its own, not hold, when it's round, I don't know

what, one can't properly... then **one may wash hands from it**, one can indeed wash with it.

#### Water Skin, Sack and Basket

The Rama says, "**And similarly a water skin that was prepared to be a vessel, one may wash hands from it**". A flask, water skin, just a skin... by... by... well, what is this? By the Hagaha. Yes, he says that water skin means a sack, not a... a sack of leather, **that was prepared**, that was fixed so that one could use it as a vessel, **one may wash hands from it**.

**But a sack or basket**, but a sack or a basket, **even though it was prepared, one does not wash hands from it**. That is, it's not the type of vessel that one washes with. Even if he made it so the water won't run out, and it's something he made for water essentially, as this brings from the Hagaha. The sack and basket is just a bag, there it isn't.

#### Cupped Hands Are Not a Vessel

The Rama says, "**And one should not wash his hand with his cupped hands**", because a person cannot fill his hands with water and pour it on someone else's hands. "**Cupped hands are not a vessel**". Your cupped hands, your hands, are not a vessel.

#### A Broken Vessel

"**And a vessel that broke, what is its law?**" What happens with a vessel that broke? A breakage with length regarding tumah (ritual impurity), such a breakage that makes it no longer a vessel.

"**A vessel that broke is not a vessel**". If it's broken, it's no longer a vessel. If it's still called a vessel, one uses it. If it's not called a vessel, one doesn't use it for washing hands.

He says, which type of vessel? The Rama says, "**All vessels may be used for washing hands, even dung vessels and earthenware vessels, as long as they are whole**". They must be whole, "**and not broken**".

#### A Vessel That Doesn't Hold a Revi'it

"**A vessel that doesn't hold a revi'it, not that it doesn't hold a revi'it**". "**One does not wash hands from it**", even if he does it in two times. Apparently, this is the novelty. It's not a vessel. It's a deficiency in the vessel, just as there is a deficiency in the revi'it. The revi'it itself can go slowly, but the vessel must be... the measure of a revi'it is a measure in the water. Now one says that the revi'it is also a measure in the vessel. It must be an important vessel that holds a revi'it.

#### Laws of the Pourer - Who Pours

Now we're going to learn about the one who washes, who is the one who pours on the hands of the one who washes. The Rama says, "**Everyone is valid to pour for washing hands, even a deaf-mute, imbecile, and minor**" can be the pourer.

#### When One Doesn't Have Another Person to Pour

What happens when a person doesn't have another person to pour for him. **And if there is no one else, he places the vessel between his knees**, he places the vessel between his knees, **and pours on his hand**. He pours this way, with his foot he pushes the vessel so it should run out, it should pour on his hand. Or, he has an object **on his hand and wants to rinse**, he should push the object, **or he washes one hand and pours with it on the other**, that he can with one hand

wash the other hand, **and so he pours first on the second**. Why do we want to bring this Rambam?

#### The Normal Order of Washing

It appears from the whole thing, this is all a Mishna, it appears from the whole thing that the normal order in the laws of hands is that one person washes for the other both hands at once. So it appears here, I didn't know about this until today. So it appears, the normal order is that one person washes for the other both hands at once.

One means with the order that was done, there was a board. Now if someone has a great abundance of water, and someone wants to pour so that one revi'it should come on both hands, he pours exactly a revi'it and pours it on the other person's hands. When a person pours himself, he needs to have more so there should be enough to wet each hand. It's harder. It makes sense.

**Speaker 2:** No, once water was expensive.

**Speaker 1:** The mindset of what one uses a day, imagine one had to schlep such a mass of water to a house every day. One saved. All these laws are to tell you that even if you save, you shouldn't save too much in such primitive ways.

**Speaker 2:** No, good, I hear.

#### Dispute Between Rambam and Raavad: A Monkey as Pourer

**Speaker 1:** The Rambam says, and the power can be. He says that post facto one can pour with one hand afterwards on the second hand, but it's not ideal. Ideally, basically, the normal way is that one person pours for the other, but another way.

The Rambam says further, that which is said that there must be a giver, someone gives, doesn't mean that there must be a person of understanding who pours. **And even a deaf-mute, imbecile, and minor**, even a monkey, which certainly has no law of agency, no law at all, **washes his hands**, it's a machine that can pour.

On this the holy Rambam... the holy Raavad disagrees. The Raavad says that it's actually a Mishna, which outweighs the Rambam, but in the Gemara it says that there must be human power, and in one of the Mishnayot he says, or the Gemara understood that it's a dispute and goes with the other opinion, etc.

The Rambam says, the language of the Raavad, "**I would say that a monkey is not included in the category of human, and the Holy One Blessed Be He did not want that a person should wash his hands from a monkey**." He didn't want to learn a proof that a monkey is a person. He didn't want a proof that a monkey is a person. He didn't learn any Darwin.

Therefore, a deaf-mute, imbecile, and minor is not a problem, because they are a person. In the Gemara it says "**they have action but they don't have thought**". This is an action, this is not water from nature. One must have new water.

#### Discussion: Washing from a Sink/Faucet

##### Question of Human Power

**Speaker 2:** Because in modern times people have built in such faucets in people's kitchens, such a faucet that pours out water, which is called a sink. A faucet. And a sink, yes. One must be precise.

**Speaker 1:** No, it's not a decree. It's even better.

**Speaker 2:** No, it's even better.

**Speaker 1:** I argue, I don't know.

**Speaker 2:** No, I argue because the person is the one who opens it.

**Speaker 1:** But I say that the vessel must be a proper vessel, which means not an action, but he pours.

**Speaker 2:** Yes, but no. Open the sink, you see he pours.

**Speaker 1:** The Rebbe argued that a sink should perhaps mean that the one who turns the faucet means that he does it. I think he can be right, because regarding Shabbat what you said that this means an action of... I had every thing come. Opening a switch means human power, because you light a fire. So why shouldn't it be? Why shouldn't it be when you open the sink?

#### Question of Vessel

But what one must understand, and what I wanted to speak longer about is that a sink is not good because it's not a vessel. The sink must be a vessel. But what I said that I understood, and what I was told about the sink is not good. I was told that the vessel comes out water every time in the faucet. Somewhere you have a small container.

**Speaker 2:** I mean, if it's not a vessel, can one take from this a mikveh?

**Speaker 1:** Apparently it's a vessel. Is the vessel broken? Everyone agrees. Where is the vessel exactly? Somewhere there is a vessel. It's something one must understand. I don't know. The world conducts itself very strongly.

**Speaker 2:** No, see, how does one see such a house is a Jewish house? Something there is a cup by the sink, by the washbasin. A normal gentile also washes hands today, but he doesn't have a cup, because he doesn't understand that one needs a cup.

So, in all these laws, if one thinks plainly about cleanliness, it may be that it's cleaner when one washes without a cup. The cup is smeared...

**Speaker 1:** Yes, okay, perhaps let's not make ourselves. One lets the water run by itself and so...

**Speaker 2:** No, your hands don't touch anything.

**Speaker 1:** Because according to halacha one is indeed particular that there should be human power that pours. And according to the Raavad it makes a lot of sense.

**Speaker 2:** No, but power is a different problem. I don't see that power, the person opens the sink, is his power. The question is perhaps more what is a vessel or such a thing is the question.

#### Comparison to the Laver in the Temple

**Speaker 1:** I agree, that the laver one also, the Kohen opened the faucet and it poured. It's not simple that it stood the whole time and poured.

**Speaker 2:** With a cup. Not poured into a cup. Yes, the laver wasn't cups.

**Speaker 1:** What makes it run down? Gravity. But the laver was a large vessel.

**Speaker 2:** I'm going into this city, say this is a law by a laver that the Kohen must open the faucet for the other?

**Speaker 1:** Yes that is water, but the question point you'll come from a vessel, someone said there was a distinction is... if someone stands in line and the faucet is open... is not a problem, that is clearly someone pours, or does it go by itself?

**Speaker 2:** The Rambam says so, the trough, the trough...

**Speaker 1:** No, one must think through all these laws teach us...

#### Digression: Cup, Sink, and Disconnect from Common Sense

I want to bring this out, because we are accustomed that a Jew has some model way when washing with a cup, a gentile washes plainly from the sink, and it has some decree of Scripture, all these laws of vessels, whoever looks learns until simple things, otherwise it's dirty, otherwise it's not a way. Here it became that something is literally a decree of Scripture in the life of the person, the Torah became such an external thing separated from the common sense of life.

An example of this I have, I was once during Covid, literally in the days when the world was very, when all doctors said one should be careful from very many people together, people gathered and they washed from the same water. From the same water, with the concern of danger, concern of danger, which was once, and you wash it honestly, is the same time, the folk is not a danger which is now. From the state that we have become very disconnected.

So, a cup became very strongly so accepted. One must see if it's actually a stringency, if it's actually a law literally. I say, I don't agree with myself that it's dirty. Generally, a cup is small, I mean very. I mean very dirty. One opens the sink and one washes off, and everything is clean, it has nothing. And in today's modern places, in a faucet.

#### Laws of Washing Hands – Part 6

##### Law: Trough – Law of Washing from Flowing Water

##### The Rambam's Words:

**"A trough that a person draws into by hand or with a wheel and pours into it, and the water flows from it in a channel and goes and waters the vegetables or the animals, and he placed his hands in the trough and the water passed and flowed over his hands - the washing did not count for him, for there is no one pouring on his hands."**

Whoever knows what a trough means, there by Miriam... Rebecca, yes. When one pours water into a trough from which animals eat, it's something that water runs. It begins that the beginning of the long... a trough can be a long stream where the water runs, but at the beginning someone must do an action to pour water there, or connect it to a stream. "And she drew and gave drink to the camels", she drew with a wheel, with a wheel, and she poured in through the wheel, she made that the water should begin to run into the trough. "And the water flows from it in a channel", the water runs in the channel, means the long stream, "channel of water", "and goes and waters the vegetables and the animals".

And what happens? A person went, **"he placed his hand in the trough"**, he put his hand in the trough, and the water washed his hand. **"And the water passed"**, the water passed through, **"and flowed over his hand"**, and washed his hand, **"the washing did not count"**. Why? **"For there is no pouring on his hand"**. Here there wasn't we had a law, one of the four laws, that one was washing over a vessel. There there is no person, rather it runs by itself.

This is the Rambam judging on when it stands in the middle of the trough. But if it stands above there where the person pours

in the water at the beginning of the trough, or where the wheel pours in at the beginning of the trough, **"if his hand was close to the pouring of the bucket until the water reaches, placed on his hand from the power of the person's pouring, the washing counted for him"**.

#### Discussion: Question on Automatic Sinks

I want to understand, the Rambam would apparently say by a wheel also, by the end, "if his hand was close to the wheel" is also enough. No, I think from here, if for example... a wheel is something that a person does, the person turns it. No, but I think about our sinks, for example let's actually say an automatic sink, but he causes it by placing his hand there, is already like the wheel. One must think already.

#### Law: Water About Which There is Doubt – Doubt in Washing Hands

### Chapter 6 of Hilchos Berachos – Continued: Rabbi Akiva and Netilas Yadayim, Drying the Hands, and Mayim Acharonim

Okay. **Mayim shenistapek lo**, he has a doubt regarding netilas yadayim. We learned earlier that water with which work was done is invalid for netilas yadayim. If one has a doubt whether work was done with it or not, it's like this. Or a second doubt, a doubt regarding a revi'is. Or a doubt regarding mayim tehorim and nitma'im, whether the water is tahor or tamei. **Sefeika tahor**. Why? All these things, **safek natal yadav safek lo natal**, a doubt whether he washed his hands, he has a doubt whether he washed his hands, all these things are **sefeika tahor**, **"she'kol safek shebe'tahoras yadayim tahor"**. Seemingly it's simply a sefeika d'rabbanan. But it appears that there's an additional law that in matters of tahoras yadayim one doesn't need to be stringent.

#### Dispute Between Rambam and Ra'avad

Very good. Says the holy Ra'avad, **"Amar Avraham, u'vechol zeh, im yesh lo mayim acherim yitol yadav"**. Ah, this is exactly our question, about finding water. **"Ve'im ein lo mayim acherim, yitol yadav be'mayim eilu"**. He says, if you have other water, go wash yourself. **"Lehotzi atzmo min hasafek"**. Very good.

Now we're going to learn a few halachos that are different between mayim rishonim and mayim acharonim. This is the connection of the halacha, I don't know. The Rambam didn't say that if he has other water he must. The Rambam held that it's tahor, one doesn't say "hotzi atzm'cha min hasafek". The halacha has already removed you from doubt. The Ra'avad says, "True, the halacha has removed you, but you're still in a doubt, so it's not lenient enough for you."

Right, there's a lomdishe chakira, that the Ra'avad looks at it more practically. Yes, you're in a doubt, but you have an easy way out of the doubt. The Rambam said, Chazal have ruled for us that every doubt is tahor.

Right, there is, he brings that the Kesef Mishneh doesn't agree, he brings a proof from the Gemara that the Ra'avad is mistaken. If one must think about the sugya. It's generally a sugya of doubts, that one must think, or perhaps there's a doubt among the Rabbis, if it's easy to get out, perhaps one must?

It could be that the doubt, after all the knowledge of the conclusion is also not certain, it's a concern. The doubt within the doubt, yes, that could be the reasoning.

### Halacha: Differences Between Mayim Rishonim and Mayim Acharonim

#### Difference 1: Direction of the Hands

**Mayim rishonim**, says the Rema now, with this one washes mayim rishonim and with this one washes mayim acharonim, the manner of washing. Says the Rema, mayim rishonim, after one washes, not only during the washing, **tzarich sheyagbi'ah yadav lemala**, the hands should be upward. Why? So that the water shouldn't run in, **shelo yetz'u mayim chutz laferek veyachzeru veyitam'u**, because if one washes downward, we're afraid that the water at the back of the hand, at the part of the hand that wasn't washed well, but water ran in there, the water there becomes dirty, because not enough was poured to wash it. The water there becomes dirty, and it falls back into the clean place, **veyachzor veyitamei es hayadayim**.

This is interesting. Between us, the hand that one washes has so much water, it's not relevant. No, but I'm saying, because the law of chutz laferek is also only because knowledge of the conclusion is a... There's no great reason the hands should become dirty. A little bit it's dirty.

But that's for rishonim. For acharonim one must do exactly the opposite, **sheyashpil yadav lemata**, that when he pours it should pour downward, **kedei sheyetzei kol koach hamelach she'al yadav**, if there's salt on his hands, it should run out, it shouldn't go back up higher on his hands.

#### Difference 2: On a Vessel or on the Ground

The second difference is, **mayim rishonim netulin bein al gabei keli bein al gabei karka**. One can also pour on a vessel, because it's nothing, the vessel can be wiped off afterward, it's not so dirty. But acharonim, **ein notlin al gabei karka**, one does only on a vessel, ah, only on a vessel, which should then be poured out in a specific place, because you don't want the salt to roll around, it should harden the ground under your... something like that. Yes, in the Gemara it says that there's a ruach ra'ah when one puts it on the ground.

#### Difference 3: Temperature

Further, **mayim rishonim, bein bechamim bein betzonein**, one can wash with warm water or with cold water. Mayim acharonim one cannot wash with warm water, it must be cold water. Says the Rema, what does it mean one cannot with hot water? If it's so hot that the hand burns, it's not good to wash. Not that one doesn't get so hot, one wants to stop because he's not comfortable with the water, and he gives himself a burn. It must be water that he can rub himself with, but if it's only a little warm one can indeed wash with this water. There's no law regarding the temperature, it's a law regarding comfort.

### Halacha: Notel Yadav Shacharis U'meshomran Lechol Hayom

Now the Rambam says a new innovative halacha, the last halacha. The law that one must wash the hands is because we think that there one touched disgusting things. But if a person is careful and doesn't touch disgusting things, it's like this: **Notel yadav shacharis**. In the morning a person must wash his hands, because at night... he's not accustomed to sleeping in pajamas usually, and at night one touches places and it becomes dirty. But once you've washed in the morning, in the morning a person still has the strength to be careful with his hands. Very good. **Meshomran lechol hayom**, he can make

like a condition that today he's going to be clean. **Vehin letzoreich achila, litol yadav lechol achila ve'achila.** This is the innovation that the Rambam says, that one needs netilas yadayim. The Rambam doesn't agree with this. He doesn't forget about the thing that he'll dirty his hands. But if he's mesi'ach da'as, if he'll be mesi'ach da'as, he must **litol yadav lechol achila ve'achila**, and this is an additional thing. Otherwise he'll for eating and for prayer. That's the thing. Very good.

#### **Halacha: Lot Yadav — Eating with a Cloth**

Further, another way out of being able to wash, that the washing is an issue for eating, so that the dirty hands shouldn't make the food disgusting. But if a person wraps his hands with a cloth, **lot yadav**, a person can eat with a handkerchief. Lot is like a... let's say a cloth. To cover. One can cover his hands with a cloth with a napkin, with a handkerchief, whatever, one may also simply eat bread. **Ochel veshoteh vetovel umashkeh, afilu shelo natal yadav**, even if he didn't wash his hands, because here the clean cloth touches the hands, not the hands.

The Rambam says like this: **Ma'achil la'acherim**, one who feeds other people. The Rambam doesn't agree with this leniency. The Rambam says that it only helps for ochlei terumah. Ah, because he says, an ochel terumah is careful. A normal person we don't trust, he'll go somewhere forget and eat with his dirty hands.

#### **Halacha: Ma'achil La'acherim — The Eater Must Wash**

But if one feeds other people, **eino tzarich netilas yadayim**. But the ochel, if he's careful that he shouldn't touch the food, he doesn't need to wash his hands.

But the ochel, the one who eats, **tzricha netilas yadayim, afilu eino nogei'a bema'achal ela acher yom achila**. The law of netilas yadayim is a law on the eaters. It's very interesting. One must know how it fits with the reason of the Rambam that it's simply cleanliness.

#### **Discussion: Question on This Law**

What's seemingly wrong? The food is the main thing, you don't want the food to become dirty from something. What do you want from the eater so strongly? I hear. I don't know. You're asking a good question, I don't know the answer.

**Veha'ochel**, but the one who eats, even if he doesn't touch, like a law of **ochel bemegareifa**, he eats with a fork, and the person eats with a fork, why do you want him to wash his hands?

Yes, that makes sense I understand. The opposite, the one who is a fine Jew with his meat, but if he sees he's going to have difficulty with the fork, he'll throw away the fork and quickly fix with his hands. Yes, that's what people do many times. It's the custom. Yes.

#### **Halacha: Assur Leha'achil Mi Shelo Natal Yadav**

So further, **assur leha'achil**, one may not feed **for mi shelo natal yadav, afilu hu notein letoch piv**. Why? What's the difference? Even if you put it in for him, you feed him, you put the food in his mouth, and he didn't wash his hands, it doesn't help. It's a law on the ochel. Ah good.

#### **Halacha: Assur Lezalzel Binetilas Yadayim — The Story of Rabbi Akiva**

So now the Rambam says that he's going to finish with the general law of netilas yadayim. He says, **assur lezalzel binetilas yadayim. Vetzivu harbeh**, various commands

**tzivu chachamim, the sages commanded al netilas yadayim vehechziru al hadavar. Ad kedei kach, that even im ein lo mayim ela kedei shtiya**, that even if a person has only a little water, he should take a little from the limited water, he should take down a little to wash his hands, **ve'achar kach ochel veshoteh mah shenish'ar**, and he drinks what's left. One must wash a little.

This comes from the story of Rabbi Akiva who was in prison, and his student Rabbi Yehoshua HaGarsi came to him, and he smuggled in that he should buy him a little water, and it came to Rabbi Akiva, he said he's going to wash, he said, "Ah, I don't have what to drink." He said, "**Mutav amus misas atzmi ve'al e'vor al divrei chaveirai**." This is the language of the Gemara, that he was moser nefesh.

#### **Discussion: Explanation of "Divrei Chaveirai"**

He indeed needed to drink to wash his hands, he didn't need to eat. No, no, the word was "**al divrei chaveirai**". It seems that even if he wasn't obligated in netilas yadayim, he didn't need to eat. He wasn't obligated, why was he obligated? He wasn't obligated. He said "**al divrei chaveirai**". What did he do regarding netilas yadayim? The chaverim, the leaders of the sages. Shlomo HaMelech. No, Rabbi Akiva, because the netilas yadayim the distinction was in the time of Rabbi Akiva, perhaps around that time.

It's very interesting, the Rambam ruled from this Gemara. So from here we learn, it's clear that the Rambam understood clearly that it's not pikuach nefesh. We didn't mean to say that he would have died. He would have been hungry that day, he was an old man, it's hard for him to be hungry, but the Rambam understood that he would have survived that day.

### **Chapter 6 of Hilchos Berachos — Continued: Rabbi Akiva and Netilas Yadayim, Drying the Hands, and Mayim Acharonim**

#### **Halacha 2 (Continued) — Rabbi Akiva in Prison: The Importance of Netilas Yadayim**

This means that even if he wasn't obligated in netilas yadayim, he wanted to be obligated. Why shouldn't he be obligated? He wanted to be obligated.

And this is "**al divrei chaveira**". Who are the chaverim? The chaverim are the sages. Shlomo HaMelech. No, Rabbi Akiva, because netilas yadayim for chulin was in the time of Rabbi Akiva, perhaps around that time.

#### **The Rambam's Ruling and the Question of the Beis Yosef**

It's very interesting, the Rambam ruled from this Gemara. So at least we learn from here that the Rambam understood clearly that it's not pikuach nefesh, the person wouldn't have died. He would have been hungry that day, an old man, it's hard for him to be hungry. But the Rambam understands clearly, and therefore the Rambam understands that from here we see how important netilas yadayim is, even if one doesn't have exactly enough.

This is actually the holy question of the holy Beis Yosef, and the Pesichei Yosef whose Shulchan Aruch doesn't rule like the Rambam. Because he says it's a stringency of Rabbi Akiva. And not only that, one can even say that this was the entire innovation of netilas yadayim for chulin, which was then enacted. One must strengthen the decree, but another Jew doesn't need to. It's not a regular thing in Judea.

#### **The Rambam as a Student of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai**

In yeshiva they even learned on Lag BaOmer, that we see from here that the Rambam held that every Jew can be at the level of Rabbi Akiva. Therefore the Rambam was a student of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, and as is known the Torah of the Rambam is strongly closely connected with the Torah of Rabbi Shimon. Therefore there are books that show that many things that are in the Rambam agree with the Zohar, or many things that are in the Zohar agree with the Rambam. So he thinks here that the Rambam is a student of Rabbi Akiva.

#### **The Rambam's Method: Stories as Halacha**

Very good. Yes, the Rambam did such things many times in his life. He took stories from the Gemara and understood that this is a halacha. One can say the opposite, one can say that if so one can say that many Rambams are only stories. But the Rambam... ah, what I want to say, the Rambam didn't write a halacha that one must suffer very greatly. He doesn't say how much. He only says in a general way... yes, he doesn't go into the... The Rambam also understood that story, that what it says "misa atzmi" is an exaggeration. Even for a mitzvah one must give up a third of one's property. A person has only a little water, and it's very important to him, I don't know if it's a complete obligation. But he says it to show the importance of netilas yadayim.

#### **Halacha 20 — Drying the Hands After Washing**

The Rambam further, "**Tzarich adam litol yadav**". After washing the hands one should dry the hands, one cannot remain with wet hands. "**Tzarich adam**" is very important, especially with what we learned that no water should drip back down, because one wipes it off. Yes, again, previous netilas

yadayim, the cleanliness becomes wet wiped off by me. "**Vechol ha'ochel belo niguv yadav harei zeh ke'ochel lechem tamei**", like one who ate tamei bread. It's not pleasant, it's disgusting. It's disgusting to eat with wet hands, that things become wet. Tamei means disgusting many times, tamei doesn't always mean... as if eating tamei. Tamei, tamei, this is as if tamei.

#### **Drying by Mayim Acharonim**

Says the Rambam, the same thing also by mayim acharonim. "**Kol hanotel yadav acharonos**", the same thing, one must dry. The non-Jew must also wipe his hands. He doesn't need a vessel, but he must also wipe his hands. He also shouldn't bentch with dirty hands.

#### **Halacha 20 (Continued) — Teichef Lintila Beracha: No Interruption Between Mayim Acharonim and Bentching**

Says the Rambam further, "**Uteichef lintila yadayim**", immediately after mayim acharonim, "**maschilin bebirkas hamazon, shelo yafsik bein hanetila vehaberacha**". One shouldn't interrupt with anything else. It's the language of the Rambam, he says that one shouldn't say "Al Naharos" or "Shir HaMa'alos". One should say it before mayim acharonim. You want mayim, make the mayim acharonim water already, and immediately bentch. The part of mayim acharonim is to bentch with clean hands, so therefore it should be immediately. That's what he means, that's the simple explanation.

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Until here the laws of chapter 6, sorry, until here chapter 6.