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# PARSHA ENCOUNTERS

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Parshas Yisro  Rabbi Shlomo Francis

## A Taste of the World to Come

“Zochor es yom Hashabbos l'kodsho”- remember the day of Shabbos to sanctify it. Chazal explain this posuk as a requirement for us to think about Shabbos throughout the week. What is the tremendous significance of Shabbos that one must be mindful of it during the entire week? The posuk continues, “Sheshes yomim toavod”- six days you shall work. It seems odd to have a command to work for six days a week, as part of the aseres hadibros. The posuk then continues further, “Veasisa kol melachtecha”- and you shall do all your work. Rashi explains “it shall be in your eyes as if all your work is done.” When Shabbos arrives, one should not feel as if there is anything lacking from his physical needs. This seems like quite a lofty feat! How are we to accomplish it?

When Hashem offered Bnei Yisroel the Torah, He told them they would receive a gift along with it. When the Bnei Yisroel asked what this great gift was, Hashem answered, “the gift is olam habo.” Bnei Yisroel then requested to be shown an example of Olam Habo. Hashem responded by telling them about Shabbos which is one sixtieth of Olam Habo.

The purpose of the mitzvos in the Torah are to connect us to kedusha and bring us closer to Hashem. Being that we are physical beings, and we live in a physical world there is a constant battle between our physical desires and our spiritual needs. Hence, when giving us the Torah, Hashem gave us along with it, Shabbos- a day of pure ruchnius. Shabbos is called “Me'ain olam haboh”- a day similar to the world to come. In Olam Habah, the physical aspects of the world cease to exist, and our existence is completely spiritual. Shabbos is also called “Yom Menucha”, a day of rest. This does not mean one should

take it easy on Shabbos. Rather, this is referring to the rest- to the break in our constant struggle to balance the spiritual and physical aspects of our beings. On Shabbos, we can be free to explicitly immerse ourselves in kedusha. We can tap in to the spiritual aspects of ourselves, thus experiencing a taste of Olam Habah. With this insight, we can better understand the requirement to remember Shabbos every day of the week. We should not be satisfied with a temporary connection to kedusha every Shabbos. We must allow the kedusha of Shabbos to elevate our entire week. How so? The Reishis Chochma understands this to mean that even during the week when we must be involved in earthly matters we should nevertheless keep our focus on Olam Habah, which is a “yom shekulo Shabbos.”

All of ones' actions should be channeled towards the purpose of readying himself for Olam Habah. With this we can understand the continuation of the posuk. “Six days you shall work”. In the aseres hadibros, Hashem is not merely giving us permission to work during the week, but rather he is instructing us to only work with an outlook that will lead to kedusha. The posuk then continues, “and you shall accomplish all your work”. As mentioned above, Rashi explains that when Shabbos comes, one should feel as if all his work is completed and nothing physical is lacking. If one follows the directions outlined in the Torah while working the entire week, and he works only with spiritual goals in mind, then when Shabbos comes and he merits a temporary reprieve from the physical world, he will indeed feel that nothing is lacking.

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# HALACHA ENCOUNTERS

## Netil as Yedayim

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### Historical Background

The concept of Netilas Yedayim (washing one's hands prior to eating) originated from the times of Shlomo Hamelech, who instituted netilas yedayim prior to eating Kodshim. Years later, Beis Shamai and Beis Hillel instituted netilas yedayim for kohanim prior to their eating of terumah. If the terumah were to be touched by non-washed hands, it would be rendered posul, unfit to eat. Chazal extended this takana (enactment) of netilas yedayim to all Jewish people prior to eating bread (since most terumah is from bread). Even in golus (exile) Chazal insisted on adherence to the mitzvah of netilas yedayim so that we should remain accustomed to doing so when the Beis Hamikdash is rebuilt. An additional reason that Chazal instituted netilas yedayim, is to add cleanliness and kedusha to ourselves prior to eating. (M.B. 158:s.k. 1)

### Importance of Netil as Yedayim

One should take great care to always perform the mitzvah of netilas yedayim in the proper fashion. The Shulchan Aruch warns us that one who is not careful to wash properly deserves to be placed in cherem (excommunicated), will become poor, and will be uprooted from this world (O.C. 158:9). One who is careful not only to wash properly but to use an abundance of water when washing (more than the required amount), will become very wealthy (158:10). (Note: If one is careful to use an abundance of water and doesn't become wealthy, it's because of improper deeds that he has committed that are getting in the way (M.B. 158 s.k. 38). In light of the severity of this mitzvah, let us acquaint ourselves with some of its halachos.

### When is one obligated in Netil as Yedayim?

Everyone agrees that before beginning a "bread meal", one must wash his hands and recite the bracha of "al netilas yedayim". According to some rishonim, one must also do netilas yedayim prior to eating **any** food dipped into a liquid, (just as we wash our hands at the pesach seder prior to eating karpas- a vegetable dipped into saltwater). Although the minhag haolam is to be lenient, the Mishna Berura is strict like these rishonim and requires one to do netilas yedayim, however, **without** reciting a bracha, before eating foods dipped into a liquid (158 s.k.20). This is only true of finger foods. However, for foods that are typically eaten with silver ware, such as a bowl of cereal and milk, one does not need to wash his hands. A common situation of where one should do netilas yedayim **without** reciting a bracha is when eating a wet fruit. One could avoid his obligation of netilas yedayim by drying off the fruit before eating it. Another situation in which one should do netilas yedayim without reciting a bracha is if one dips his pastry or cookie into milk (M.B. 158:s.k. 26, see also Kaf Hachaim 158 s.k. 39).

### How is the Mitzvah performed?

The mitzvah of netilas yedayim is performed by pouring water from a vessel that contains at least one reviis (approximately 3.3 fl oz) of water onto one's hands. It doesn't make a difference if one pours the water onto his own hands, or if someone else (even a child) pours it. (There is a dispute if it can be poured by a non-human such as a monkey.) If the vessel has a hole in it, it can be disqualified from being used.

When one is performing the mitzvah of netilas yedayim on his own, he should pick up the cup filled with water with his right hand. He should then pass the cup over to his left hand and pour at least a reviis of water onto his right hand. The water must come into contact with his **entire hand** (including the sides of his hands and in-between his fingers) up until the wrist. Practically, one may find it necessary to use more than a reviis to fulfill his obligation. Lechatchilah, one should pour a second time onto his right hand in order to

remove the tamei water from the first pouring. B'dieved, as long as a reviis of water was used in the first pouring, he need not pour a second time. The reason for this is, that we rely on the poskim that rule that a reviis of water used in one pour doesn't become tamei (M.B. 162 s.k. 21). Then, one transfers the cup from the left hand to the right hand (taking care that the washed hand doesn't touch the unwashed hand), and washes his left hand in the same manner mentioned above. After washing both hands, (lechatchilah) one should rub them both together (O.C.162:2). Some have the minhag, based on the teachings of Kabbalah, to raise their hands opposite their face while reciting the bracha of "al netilas yedayim". Some also recite the verse "Se'u yedaychem kodosh etc." prior to the recital of the bracha. **After** one finishes making the bracha of "al netilas yedayim" upon washing his hands, he should dry his hands well. However, he should not dry them on his clothing as this can cause forgetfulness (in Torah).

### Doing Netil as Yedayim on Wet Hands

According to the Mishnah Berura, if one uses a reviis of water to wash his hand for netilas yedayim, he does not need to ascertain that his hands be dry prior to washing them. However, some are stringent in accordance with the opinion of the Chazon Ish who does require one's hands to be completely dry in all situations prior to the netillah.

### When Does One Dry His Hands?

Lechatchilah, one should not begin to dry his hands until after he finishes reciting the bracha of "al netilas yedayim". B'dieved, if one dried his hands, he may still recite the bracha of "al netilas yedayim" as long as he did not recite the bracha of Hamotzi yet.

### Talking During Netil as Yedayim

Many of us are aware that one should not talk after making the bracha of netilas yedayim, until one has eaten a bite of bread. (O.C. siman 166). However, many of us are not aware that it is prohibited to talk, **before** the bracha- after one washed his hands (Shulchan Aruch Harav 165:1), as this a hefsek between the netillah and the bracha. The Tzlach (drashos 4:22) comments that he has seen many Talmedai Chachamim who are careful not to talk after reciting the bracha but not prior to the bracha. This, the Tzlach says is a big mistake on their part as refraining from talk after the bracha is a mere chumrah (see O.C. 166), while talking prior to the bracha after washing one's hands is strictly forbidden. According to the Tzlach, one would even be required to rewash his hands if he spoke before the bracha. (Note: In situations where one has to rewash his hands, he should first touch something that will make his hands tamei, i.e. touch one's shoes or a part of his body normally covered, and then rewash.) The Poskim say that lechatchilah, one should not talk after washing even one hand (Levushai Mordechai 3<sup>rd</sup> edition siman 19, see also Shiurei Bracha Ch. 1 note 124).

### Small Cups

There are times that a person may find himself in a situation where he needs to do netilas yedayim. However, with the cup that he is given (although it contains a reviis of water), it may be too difficult to wash one's entire hand until the wrist with (ex. At weddings or on airplanes). The question arises: May one wash part of his hand, refill the cup, and then wash the other half of the hand that didn't get wet from the first pour? The Shulchan Aruch rules that as long as one's hand is still wet from the first pour (wet enough to make something else wet- Tofeiach al mnas lhatfiach), he may pour a second time on the dry part of his hand, thereby combining the two pourings. However, if one's hand isn't sufficiently wet from the first pour, then the second pour cannot combine with the first one. (O.C. 162:3) Thus, in such a situation, one should ensure that half his hand is sufficiently wet from the first pour, in order to enable the second one to be considered a proper netila.

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