

# SHE'AILOS U'TESHUVOS

*by Rabbi Doniel Neustadt*

**QUESTION:** Are men or women required to remove their rings before washing their hands for the morning netilas yadayim (negel vasser)?

**DISCUSSION:** L'chatchilah, all the rules that govern netilas yadayim for a meal apply to the morning netilas yadayim as well.(1) Just as a chatzitzah (halachic obstruction) invalidates netilas yadayim for a meal, so, too, it invalidates negel vasser, l'chatchilah. Generally, a ring is considered a chatzitzah since the water cannot easily touch all parts of the finger when a ring is on the finger. Even though a loose-fitting ring does allow the water to reach all parts of the finger, the poskim maintain that it is difficult to assess what, exactly, is considered loose and what is considered tight. All rings, therefore, should be removed before washing negel vasser.(2) But b'diavad, a chatzitzah does not invalidate the morning netilas yadayim and a woman who forgot or failed to remove her rings need not repeat the washing.(3) Moreover, if a woman has a hard time removing the ring from her finger, she may leave it on when washing netilas yadayim in the morning. A ring is considered a chatzitzah only for men or women who sometimes, even on rare occasions, remove it from their finger. The occasional removal signifies that the person is sometimes particular about having the ring on his finger, rendering it a chatzitzah. But men or women who never take their rings off, even when kneading dough, swimming or performing manual labor, may l'chatchilah wash their hands while wearing a ring.(4)

**QUESTION:** If one began eating or drinking in a car, does he need to recite another berachah if he wants to continue eating or drinking once he gets to his home or office?

**DISCUSSION:** If he began eating or drinking while the car was in motion or stuck in traffic, he may continue eating or drinking once he gets to his destination and no additional berachah rishonah is recited. This is because eating or drinking in a moving car is not considered a kevius makom, and continuing to eat or drink in another location is not considered a shinui makom. The halachah remains the same even if he initially had no intention of continuing to eat or drink once he arrives at his destination.

If, however, he began to eat or drink in a parked vehicle with the intention of finishing his food or drink before resuming the drive, and then he changes his mind and wants to continue eating or drinking, the halachah is as follows:

\* As long as he remains in the car he may continue eating or drinking without reciting an additional

berachah.

\* When he reaches his destination, he must recite a berachah acharonah, and recite a new berachah rishonah if he wants to continue eating or drinking.(5)

**QUESTION:** If, mistakenly, a household member or a guest washes his hands for mayim acharonim thinking that the meal is over and then realizes that another course is going to be served(6)- what should he do?

**DISCUSSION:** If at all possible, he should not eat any of this course before Birkas ha-Mazon. He should bench immediately, and then partake of it after benching.

If, however, he cannot decline the food being served, e.g., for the sake of shalom bayis, then he may eat whatever is being served but he must first recite a proper berachah rishonah. The ha-motzi that he made at the beginning of the meal, or any other berachah he may have recited during the meal, is no longer valid for food that will be eaten after the hands were washed for mayim acharonim.(7)

If the food that was served was not "meal type food", e.g., a fruit dessert, ice cream, chocolate, etc., then he must also recite a borei nefashos before reciting Birkas ha-Mazon. If he forgot to do so and benched, then he must recite borei nefashos after Birkas ha-Mazon.(8)

The above halachos apply also to one who did not wash mayim acharonim, but was already at the point of raising his cup of wine in preparation for Birkas ha-Mazon and then decided to continue eating.(9)

**QUESTION:** Is it permitted to leave a car with a non-Jewish mechanic on Friday afternoon even though the mechanic may repair the car on Shabbos?

**DISCUSSION:** It is clearly forbidden to expressly ask a non-Jewish mechanic to repair a car on Shabbos.(10) Moreover, even if there was no express request to repair the car on Shabbos, but the mechanic would have no time other than Shabbos to repair the car, that is considered as if he is being asked expressly to repair the car on Shabbos and it is strictly forbidden to do so. It is prohibited, therefore, to bring a car in for repair late on Friday and ask to pick it up on Saturday night immediately after Shabbos.(11)

If, however, the car was brought in with enough time to repair it before or after Shabbos, but the mechanic chooses to do the job on Shabbos, that is of no concern to us, since the work being done on Shabbos is not a result of the car owner's instructions but rather by choice of the non-Jewish mechanic, which is permitted. This is permitted even if the mechanic clearly states in advance that he will do the work on Shabbos.(12)

It is, therefore, permitted to bring a car in for repairs on Friday afternoon right before Shabbos and ask the mechanic if it can be picked up first thing Monday morning, even if this particular mechanic is always closed on Saturday nights and on Sundays and the work will surely be done on Shabbos.

This is permitted because in fact there is enough time for the mechanic to repair the car after Shabbos. The fact that the car will be repaired on Shabbos is due to the decision of the mechanic, not to the instruction of the Jew.(13)

**QUESTION:** What is the proper method for applying ointment on Shabbos?

**DISCUSSION:** Several poskim are of the opinion that spreading ointment on the skin is a violation of Smoothing.(14) While other poskim are not too concerned about this issue,(15) most contemporary poskim follow the more stringent view and advise to avoid spreading ointment on the skin on Shabbos.

The recommended method when using ointment on Shabbos, therefore, is to squeeze the ointment from the tube directly onto the skin.(16) [When the ointment is in a jar, the ointment may be removed with one's finger and dabbed on the skin.] A bandage may then be placed over the ointment, even though this may result in some spreading of the ointment over the skin.(17)

If, for some reason, the above option cannot be used, several poskim permit to spread ointment on the skin provided that all of the ointment is absorbed into the skin and nothing remains on the surface.(18)

**QUESTION:** How mandatory is Chazal's advisory that a guest should not change his customary lodging place?

**DISCUSSION:** Rashi(19) explains that there are two reason behind this advisory:

- \* Switching lodgings discredits the guest, since he will be considered hard to please or disreputable in some way.
- \* Switching lodgings harms the host's reputation, since it gives the impression that his lodgings were unsatisfactory.(20)

It follows, therefore, that if a guest has a bona fide reason to change his lodging place, the halachah will not restrict him from doing so. For example, if a guest customarily lodged at a certain home, but came to town for a simchah and wants to stay at the home of the ba'al simchah, that would be permitted. If a guest customarily lodged at a certain home, but upon his return visit the original host was out-of-town, indisposed, or no longer had the space for guests, the halachic advisory would not apply and the guest could stay elsewhere.(21)

*FOOTNOTES:*

1 O.C. 4:7.

2 Igros Chazon Ish 1:4.

3 See Eishel Avraham O.C. 4.

4 Based on Mishnah Berurah 161:19 and Aruch ha-Shulchan 161:6. [A woman who removes her ring only when immersing in a mikveh may still wash with a ring on her finger.]

5 Entire Discussion based on Mishnah Berurah 178:42, as explained in B'tzeil ha-Chachmah 6:73-74 and Vesain Berachah, pg. 148, quoting Harav Y.S. Elyashiv.

6 Or he thought that he must leave and then realized that he could stay longer.

7 Chayei Adam 59:8; Mishnah Berurah 179:2 and 10, and Beirur Halachah s.v. ad.

8 Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 174:32 and Beirur Halachah 177:2 s.v. limshoch. See also Shulchan Aruch ha-Rav 177:6 and 9.

9 Mishnah Berurah 179:12-13.

10 O.C. 252:2.

11 Mishnah Berurah 247:4; 252:16; 307:15.

12 Harav S.Z. Auerbach (Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 30, note 83).

13 Igros Moshe O.C. 4:53; 4:54. Other poskim disagree and maintain that since this mechanic never works overtime or Sundays, giving the car for repair right before Shabbos is tantamount to instructing him to do so on Shabbos; see The Sanctity of Shabbos pgs. 66-68, quoting Harav Y.S. Elyashiv.

14 Da'as Torah 328:26; Chazon Ish 52:16.

15 Mateh Levi and other poskim quoted in Tzitz Eliezer 7:30-2 and Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 33, note 58.

16 Chazon Ish 52:16. One should avoid squeezing the ointment directly onto the bandage; Shevet ha-Levi 4:33.

17 Harav S.Z. Auerbach (Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 33, note 63 and Tikunim u'Miluim).

18 Da'as Torah 328:26; Tzitz Eliezer 7:30-2; Harav S.Z. Auerbach (Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 33, note 58). See also Igros Moshe O.C. 2:79 and Minchas Yitzchak 7:20 who sanction this method.

19 Erchin 16b.

20 Accordingly, one should not change even from one Jewish-owned hotel to the next as it discredits the hotel where he stayed, unless he has a bona fide reason for doing so.

21 See Piskei Teshuvos 170:6 quoting Ahalecha B'amitecha.

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