



Halachos of
DAVENING
FOR WOMEN

Halachos of DAVENING

Please note that the material presented is not meant to be a comprehensive guide to the halachos of Davening. In any case of question or doubt a Rabbi should be consulted.

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Halachos of DAVENING

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Day 1

Introduction: This month we will learn the Halachos pertaining to washing netilas yadayim upon awakening and davening. At the beginning of the month (days 1 - 8) we will learn halachos relevant to washing netilas yadayim upon awakening.

Subsequently, for the bulk of the month we will discuss halachos relevant to davening (days 9 - 26). Finally, we will round out the month with halachos relevant to davening in shul (days 27 - 29).

Tefillah forms one of the core elements of a Jew's connection to Hashem. Women in particular have a unique relationship in the service of the heart which is tefillah. In fact, many of the halachos that inform the correct way to daven are derived from a woman - Chana! Every woman should take seriously the opportunity and privilege of davening and not underestimate the awesome value and power of a woman's tefillah.

Oftentimes in halacha there are different opinions and various minhagim. One who finds that halachos presented are at variance with what they believe they were taught should consult with a Rov.



Day 2

Upon awakening in the morning, it is proper to say מודה אני לפניך מלך חי וקים, שהחזרת בי נשמתתי say *I gratefully thank You, living and eternal King, for You have returned my soul with compassion. Your faithfulness is great. One may say Modeh Ani prior to performing netilas yadayim.*

מ"ב ס' א סק"ח



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Day 3

Women are obligated to wash *netilas yadayim* upon arising in the morning. *Netilas yadayim* has the effect of removing רוח רעה, *a certain impurity*, which descends upon a person asleep at night. Upon awakening, one should endeavor to wash *netilas yadayim* as soon as possible in order to remove this impurity. Additionally, prior to washing *netilas yadayim* one may not touch the mouth, nose, eyes, or ears with their hands (to be continued).

מ"ב ס' א סק"ב, סי' ד סק"י, שו"ע ס' ד ס"ג



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Day 4

It was previously mentioned that upon awakening in the morning one should endeavor to wash *netilas yadayim* as soon as possible. At the very least, care should be taken not to touch food prior to washing *netilas yadayim*. If one did indeed touch food before washing, the food is permitted to be eaten.

מ"ב סי' ד סק"י, שו"ע סי' ד ס"ג



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Day 5

When washing one's hands for **bread**, the water of *netilas yadayim* is meant to come into direct contact with one's hands. If *netilas yadayim* was performed while a substance was on one's hand, depending on the case, the washing may be invalid. A problematic substance is referred to as a *chatzitzah*. For a woman who is particular to remove her ring while doing certain activities (i.e. kneading dough), her ring is considered a *chatzitzah* and **must** be removed prior to washing *netilas yadayim* **on bread**. This applies even if the ring is loose on her finger. Ideally, *netilas yadayim* in the **morning** should be performed in the same manner as *netilas yadayim* on bread.

Accordingly, such a woman should **ideally** remove her ring from her finger prior to washing *netilas yadayim* **in the morning**. A woman who finds it difficult to remove her rings may rely on the opinions that maintain that there is no concern of *chatzitzah* for *netilas yadayim* in the morning.

מ"ב ס' קסא סקי"ד,
הליכות בת ישראל פ"א ס"א



Day 6

The correct procedure for washing *netilas yadayim* in the morning is as follows. One picks up the cup in one's right hand, transfers the cup to the left hand. The right hand is washed first, followed by the left hand. This is repeated two more times. Thus, each hand is washed a total of three times.

מ"ב ס' ד סק"י



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Day 7

There is considerable question among the poskim as to when the beracha of *netilas yadayim* should be recited. Some maintain that the beracha is recited immediately after washing, while others delay its recital until they begin davening.

בה"ל ס' ד ד"ה ואפילו,
סקי תשובות ס' ד סק"ב



Day 8

One who wakes up in the middle of the night is not required to wash *netilas yadayim*. Thus, a woman who gets up in the night to take care of a baby, etc. does not need to wash *netilas yadayim*. If one anticipates that it is likely that they will touch the child's mouth/nose/ears/eyes, *netilas yadayim* should be performed.

הליכות בת ישראל פ"א ס"ו



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Day 9

Strictly speaking, there is no obligation for a parent to wash the hands of a child under the age of *chinuch*. Nonetheless, it is written that doing so is a praiseworthy practice and effects purity and holiness in the child.

הליכות בת ישראל פ"א ס"ח



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Day 10

We will now turn our attention to halachos pertaining to women davening. When it comes to the obligation of men to daven, the halacha mandates that all men fulfill their obligation of davening in the same manner as one another. However, regarding women the halacha distinguishes between two types of women (broadly speaking):

- a) Women who are preoccupied with taking care of their family and home.
- b) Women who are not preoccupied with taking care of their family and home.

The details of this distinction will be elaborated upon below.

אשי ישראל פ"ז סק"ז



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Day 11

Women who are preoccupied with taking care of their family and home may discharge their obligation to daven by reciting something that has the status of a תפלה קצרה *lit. a short tefilla*. A תפלה קצרה is **any davening** that includes a) an expression of praise of Hashem, b) a request and c) an expression of thanks to Hashem.

Examples of this include a) ברכת התורה b) the order of ברכות השחר. Additionally, one who said *Modeh Ani* upon awakening has already recited praise and thanks of Hashem, and may complete their obligation by saying a phrase/*pasuk* of request.

It is critical to note that a woman who discharges her obligation to daven in the aforementioned manner should not feel “inadequate”. On the contrary, the fact that the obligation to daven may be fulfilled so succinctly is due to the recognition of the paramount value of rearing the family and caring for the home that a woman fulfills. Indeed, it is recorded that the Chofetz Chaim instructed his wife to fulfill her obligation to daven with the תפלה קצרה throughout the years she was preoccupied with raising the children (to be continued).

הליכות שלמה פ"ב דבר הלכה ס"ה,
הליכות בת ישראל פ"ב ס"ב



Day 12

We have learned that women who are preoccupied with taking care of their family and home may discharge their obligation to daven by reciting a תפלה קצרה *lit. a short tefilla* (see above). Regarding women who are not preoccupied with taking care of their family and home, there is dispute among the authorities regarding what they are obligated to daven. Some maintain that they too may discharge their obligation to daven by reciting the aforementioned תפלה קצרה, while others say that such a woman is obligated to daven *Shemoneh Esrei* of both *shacharis* and *minchah*. (See below Day 23 and onwards.) It is said that the general minhag is in accordance with the first opinion, and that strictly speaking women are not obligated to daven *shacharis* and *minchah*.

Nonetheless, if a woman has both the time and wherewithal to daven more than a תפלה קצרה, it is certainly appropriate that she do so. Sincere, heartfelt davening is one of our greatest ways of connecting to and serving Hashem and its great importance should not be underrated. Additionally, in many sources we find that women have a unique relationship with the power of tefillah.

A woman may find herself unsure whether the format of תפלה קצרה is appropriate for her or perhaps she should be davening more. As always, a Rov should be consulted. Later in the month we will discuss the order of precedence of tefillos for a woman who is davening more than a תפלה קצרה.

הליכות שלמה פ"ב דבר הלכה ס"ה



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Day 13

Upon arising in the morning it is prohibited to eat until fulfilling one's obligation to daven. Thus, prior to eating, a woman must recite minimally a *תפלה קצרה* (see above). Even one who plans on davening a longer tefillah later may initially recite a *תפלה קצרה* to permit them to eat, and later on daven a longer davening.

To illustrate: Mrs. Jacobs plans on davening a full *Shemoneh Esrei* after everyone leaves the house. While getting the children dressed and fed, Mrs. Jacobs wants to eat a little bit of breakfast herself. Mrs. Jacobs may recite *Birchas haTorah* and eat, and later when she has more time, recite *Shemoneh Esrei* (to be continued).

אשי ישראל פי"ג סק"ל



Day 14

It was previously mentioned that upon arising in the morning, one may not eat until they have fulfilled their obligation to daven. This prohibition does **not** apply to one who feels unwell. Such a person is permitted to eat even prior to davening.

To illustrate: Shira is expecting, and often experiences morning sickness. She may eat first thing in the morning before davening (even before reciting a תפלה קצרה).

בה"ל ס' פט ד"ה וכן



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Day 15

Prior to davening a תפילה קצרה, a woman may not busy herself with personal activities. Minor activities that can be performed quickly may be performed prior to davening. Examples of this include making a bed, starting the laundry machine/dishwasher, and taking out the garbage. One is permitted to busy themselves with activities that are a mitzvah prior to davening (i.e. taking care of one's children, etc.).

שו"ע סי' פט ס"ג,
תפילה כהלכתה פ"ו הערה ל"ו



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Day 16

One should not daven while dressed in pajamas. However, one may wear respectable clothing over their pajamas and daven so attired. Additionally, one should not daven barefoot.

מ"ב ס' צא סקי"א-י"ב,
הליכות בת ישראל פ"ב ס"ד, אשי ישראל פ"י ס"ג



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Day 17

One who touched a part of the body that is usually covered **must** wash their hands prior to davening/reciting a beracha. This applies both to touching a part of one's own body or a body part of another (i.e. a baby etc.). No beracha is recited (to be continued).

הליכות בת ישראל פ"א ס"ט



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Day 18

Ideally, one should wash their hands prior to davening even if they do not know that their hands became soiled/touched an unclean place. No beracha is recited.

שו"ע ס' צב ס"ה



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Day 19

One may not daven/recite a beracha within close proximity of a soiled diaper. One who knows that their child has soiled their diaper should change the diaper and remove it from their presence before davening/making a beracha. One is not required to check the baby's diaper prior to commencing davening in order to determine that it is not soiled. If there is a strong likelihood that the baby has soiled the diaper (i.e. it has been a long time since the baby's last bowel movement), ideally one should check before commencing davening.

אשי ישראל פנ"ב סי"ח



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Day 20

It is appropriate for one to establish a set place in their home for davening. Indeed, Chazal tell us that no less than Avraham Avinu himself was careful to have a set place for his davening (to be continued).

מ"ב ס' צ סקנ"ט



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Day 21

When selecting a set place for one's davening, there are a couple of considerations to keep in mind. First, one should not daven in front of a mirror. This applies even if one davens with their eyes closed. Additionally, one should not daven in front of a picture or a painting, as such items are liable to distract a person while davening. One who finds themselves forced to daven in such a spot should ideally close their eyes while davening.

ח"ב ס' צ סקע"א, רמ"א סכ"ג



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Day 22

Women are exempt from reciting Shema because it is a time-bound mitzvah. Nonetheless, the Shulchan Aruch writes that it is proper for every woman to recite Shema daily, at the very least the first *pasuk* of Shema, in order to declare one's acceptance of the kingship of Hashem. Thus, even a woman who fulfills her obligation to daven through the method of קצרה תפלה should be careful to say Shema (to be continued).

שו"ע ס' ע ס"א



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Day 23

We have previously discussed that some authorities maintain that a woman who is not preoccupied with taking care of her family is obligated to recite more than a תפלה קצרה (see above). According to this opinion, ideally a woman should daven as follows: 1. Birchot HaTorah 2. Birchot Hashachar (some say *parshas haTamid*) 3. Boruch She'amar, Ashrei, Yishtabach 4. The first pasuk of Shema. 5. The beracha of Emes V'Yatziv following Shema until Shemoneh Esrei 6. Shemoneh Esrei.

Oftentimes, a woman may have time to daven **more** than a תפלה קצרה but does not have time to daven all of the tefillos mentioned. In such an instance, one should try to daven: 1. Birchot Hashachar 2. Birchot HaTorah 3. The first pasuk of Shema 4. 5. Shemoneh Esrei.

שירת הלב ע' 172



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Day 24

Let us discuss the appropriate timeframe for davening the tefillos we have mentioned. Birchos Hashachar, Birchos HaTorah and the first pasuk of Shema may be recited the entire day. Ideally, shemoneh esrei of shacharis should be recited prior to the fourth (halachic) hour of the day. A woman who was unable to do so due to her preoccupation with her family may daven shacharis* until chatzos, midday.

* It is questionable if one may recite the berachos of shema after the fourth hour. If one is not reciting the berachos of shema, the final paragraph of Shema (beginning with the word ויאמר) should ideally be recited, so that one mentions yetzias mitzrayim prior to reciting shemoneh esrei

מ"ב ס' נב סק"י, שו"ע ס' פט ס"א, הליכות בת ישראל פ"ב
סי"א והערה ל', רגשי לב ע' 159



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Day 25

It is prohibited to hold a child while davening
Shemoneh Esrei (to be continued).

מ"ב ס' צו סק"ד



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Day 26

One who is in the middle of davening *Shemoneh Esrei* and hears a child crying is permitted to pause and motion to the child in need. If this is not feasible and it is difficult for the woman to concentrate, she may walk over to calm the child **without speaking** and then resume davening. Similarly, if one is unable to concentrate in their present spot, if necessary, one may walk to a different room and continue davening in a new location.

הליכות בת ישראל פ"ב סק"ד



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Day 27

There are a number of insertions in *Shemoneh Esrei* that if forgotten, *Shemoneh Esrei* must be repeated (i.e. יעלה ויבוא/ותן טל ומטר/משיב הרוח etc.). This halacha applies to a woman as well and she too must repeat *Shemoneh Esrei* if she erred in one of these insertions.

אשי ישראל פכ"ג סמ"ז



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Day 28

We will now turn our attention to halachos pertaining to women davening in shul. At times a woman may arrive at shul and find that the minyan is approaching *Shemoneh Esrei*. Most authorities maintain that a woman does not skip from her usual routine of davening in order to daven together with the congregation. Some say that a woman should skip in order to daven *Shemoneh Esrei* together with the congregation.

אשי ישראל פי"ב הערה מח



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Day 29

It is prohibited to walk within four amos (approx. 6 – 8 feet) in front of someone who is davening *Shemoneh Esrei*. One should wait in their place until the other person has finished reciting *Shemoneh Esrei* and then pass in front of them. One who needs to leave shul in order to relieve themselves is permitted to pass in front of one who is davening *Shemoneh Esrei*.

שו"ע ס' קב ס"ד, אשי ישראל פכ"ט סט"ו



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Day 30

As mentioned previously, the power of a woman's tefillah is immense. A mother should constantly daven that her children/future children (of all ages) should be dedicated to Torah-study, be righteous and possess good middos. . It is important to remember that davening is not limited to the formal Shemoneh Esrei and other standardized tefillos; one can and should take the opportunity to turn to Hashem in personal prayer at all times.

ח"ב ס' מז סק"י



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Halachos of DAVENING

Mazel Tov on
completing a month
of Halacha Yomi!