HANDWASHING FOR TUM'A: GENERAL CONCEPTS

Tum'a and Drying Hands before Handwashing

To wash hands from *tum'a* or all other purposes, you do not need to dry your hands first--except before washing for bread, and then ONLY if the person who washed hands before you:

- Did not use a *revi'it* of water (per hand) to wash his/her hands, AND
- Only poured once on each hand.

In sum, you almost never need to dry your hands before washing them!

However, if the person before you had *tum'a* on his or her hands and poured only once, the *tum'a* will be transferred from his/her hands to the cup.

Tum'a and From What To Pour

When washing your hands using the *One-Time Method*, in all cases except when washing for bread, here is what to use:

- Best: Cup that holds at least a *revi'it* of water.
- Next Best: Wash hands from a spigot within 12” of the ground, turning the spigot off and on between hands.
- Third Choice: If the spigot is more than 12” above the ground, simply hold your hands under a regular faucet in the flow of water so that your hands get wet all over. No need to turn the water on and off.

  NOTE This is a *b'di'avad* case.

- Fourth Choice: If there is no water, say whatever blessings you need to say anyway (for example, *asher yatzar*) rather than not saying the blessing at all. You will still have the tum'a on your hands (but you should rub your hands on cloth of clothing first).

NOTE This does NOT apply to washing before eating bread or to any cases where you must wash using the *Three-Times Method*. Removing *tum'a* in these cases requires a cup.

NOTE If you need to wash your hands after using the toilet, there is no need to go 18 minutes to find the water, (unlike the requirement for washing for bread).

Minimum Amount of Hand Coverage

When washing to remove tum'a, the ideal is to pour water over your hand up to your wrist; the minimum is to pour up to the knuckles adjacent to the palms of your hands.

EXCEPTIONS On *Yom Kippur* and Tish'a B'*Av*, wash only up to your knuckles (but if you accidentally pour water further up on your hand, it is not a problem).

Tum'a and Which Hand To Wash First

To remove *tum'a* from hands, it is preferable to wash the right hand first.

NOTE If you washed the left first, it is OK and you do not need to rewash the left hand.

Tum'a and Pouring Backhanded

To wash hands from *tum'a*, there is no problem with pouring water backhanded.

Tum'a and Hot Water

You may wash your hands with hot water for any ritual purpose except for *mayim achronim*.

Tum'a and Where To Wash

You may wash your hands inside a bathroom for any purpose, even before eating bread.

NOTE You may not say any blessings while inside the bathroom.

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