**YESHIVAT HAR ETZION**

**ISRAEL KOSCHITZKY VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH (VBM)**

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\***

**Deracheha: Women and Mitzvot**

**Prayer III: Upon Arising**

What prayers should women recite in the morning Upon Arising And Why? Must women recite *birchot ha-torah*?

**By Deracheha Staff; Laurie Novick, Director**

[Click here](http://www.deracheha.org/prayer-3-upon-arising) to view this shiur with additional features   
on the Deracheha website.

Please share feedback with us [here](https://goo.gl/forms/JMoMGSSxr68hnsLB2)!

# A New Creation

We begin our morning with prayers and rituals that express our gratitude at having awakened alive with the opportunity to begin another day, using our refreshed body in service of God.

**Moda Ani** Upon awakening, we recite *Modeh* or *Moda* *Ani*, literally "I give thanks," in which we express gratitude to our King for returning our souls to our bodies. Women and men alike have much to be grateful for here.

We usually pray in first person plural, “we,” as part of the Jewish people. Following the rules of Hebrew grammar, we use masculine plural word forms to refer to ourselves as part of a mixed-gender group. This first expression of gratitude, however, is in the first person singular, “I.” For this reason, some women recite *moda ani*, the feminine form. Rav Yitzchak Yosef follows this approach:

*Yalkut Yosef*, OC I *Hashkamat Ha-boker*

The woman recites *moda ani* (the *dalet* with a *kamatz* [feminine vocalization]).

In practice, a woman can recite whatever form she is most accustomed to.

***Netilat Yadayim*** We wash our hands – *netilat yadayim* – as preparation for prayer[[1]](#footnote-1) and as a lead-in to *birchot ha-shachar*, the morning blessings.[[2]](#footnote-2) There are two main reasons:

I. **Cleanliness** Physically, the hands must be clean for prayer. Rosh explains why this is a particular concern at *shacharit*:

Rosh *Berachot* 9:23

Because a person's hands are busy, and it is impossible not to touch one’s dirty flesh at night, they enacted a blessing [on hand-washing] before one recites Shema and prays.

Since our hands are likely to move around overnight and touch body parts that may not be clean, we need to wash them before we begin to pray.

II. **Spiritual Preparation** Each morning we awaken as if newly created, and wash our hands to prepare for a new day of *avodat Hashem*. Rashba compares this to a *kohen* preparing for service in the Temple by washing his hands.

Responsa Rashba I:191

One can say that because at dawn we are made like a new creation, as it is written, "New each morning, great is your faithfulness" (*Eicha* 3:23) …. We need to give thanks to Him, may He be blessed, for creating us to honor Him, to serve Him, and to bless in His name. For this reason, they established at dawn all the *berachot* we recite every morning. And therefore, we need to sanctify ourselves in His holiness and wash our hands from a vessel, like a *kohen* who sanctifies his hands from the *kiyor* (ritual basin) prior to his Temple service.

For Rosh, hand-washing is a practical preparation for prayer. Rashba adds that it is a spiritual act of gratitude, like the morning *berachot*. These approaches give rise to differing opinions on when to wash hands with a *beracha*. Those authorities who emphasize hand-washing as practical preparation and cleansing for prayer write that we should wait to recite a *beracha* over hand-washing until right before praying in the morning. Those who emphasize spiritual renewal advocate reciting the *beracha* when washing shortly after awakening.[[3]](#footnote-3)

Women are obligated to pray every day. (See [here](https://www.deracheha.org/prayer).) Both men and women serve God each day and begin every day with gratitude for spiritual renewal. For both reasons, women should wash hands with a *beracha* every morning, ideally reciting all of *birchot ha-shachar* shortly thereafter.[[4]](#footnote-4)

We wash each hand three times, alternating hands, for an additional reason. The Talmud mentions that a *ru'ach ra'a,* an evil spirit, does not leave the hands until we have washed each hand three times.[[5]](#footnote-5)

**Asher Yatzar** The blessing *Asher Yatzar* expresses marvel at the human body, reminding us how our most basic body functions enable us to live and to stand before God.

We typically recite *Asher Yatzar* after relieving ourselves, but Rema writes that common practice is to say it in the morning even if we haven't used the bathroom. Why? Mishna Berura explains that, beyond thanking God for a specific bodily function, *Asher Yatzar* provides another opportunity to show our gratitude for being created anew each day.

Rema OC 4

There are those who say also [to recite first thing in the morning] *Asher Yatzar*, even if he did not relieve himself, and this practice has been adopted.

Mishna Berura 4:3

Also *Asher Yatzar* - The reason is that in the morning one becomes like a new creation and we need to thank Him, so the *berachot* *Elokai Neshama* and *Asher Yatzar* were enacted upon the creation of the body.

Once again, this rationale applies fully to women. It is too easy to take the health and functioning of our body for granted.[[6]](#footnote-6)

**Elokai Neshama** The Talmud establishes that one should recite the *Elokai Neshama* blessing upon awakening. With this *beracha*, we recognize God as the ongoing source of the soul within the body.

*Berachot* 60b

When he awakens, he says, "My God, the soul You have given me is pure…Blessed are You Who returns souls to dead carcasses."

In this *beracha,* too, a woman may say *"moda ani lefanecha,"* "I am grateful before you," in the feminine rather than "*modeh ani"* in the masculine.

*Sefer Ha-Kuzari* makes special mention of *Elokai Neshama* as a prayer familiar to women.

*Sefer Ha-Kuzari* I

And the opening of our prayer, which the women know, and how much more so the sages, is "*Elokai Neshama."*

Even in an era in which women lacked the education to allow for reciting all of the prayers, women knew, and gave thanks with, *Elokai Neshama*.

# Birchot Ha-Torah

*Birchot ha-Torah,* the *berachot* over the Torah, serve three primary purposes, each reflected in a Talmudic passage. Let's begin our discussion of *birchot ha-Torah* by looking at each passage and its meaning.

**I. Permission to Begin Study** The Talmud teaches us that a *beracha* is required prior to learning Torah.

*Berachot* 11b

Rav Yehuda said in the name of Shemuel: [One who has] awakened early to review [Torah], as long as he has not recited *Keri'at Shema*, he must bless [*birchot ha-Torah*].

A person cannot simply wake up in the morning and immediately begin studying Torah; rather, one must recite *birchot ha-Torah* prior to learning Torah each day. If a person omitted *birchot ha-Torah* at the proper time, the second *beracha* before *Keri'at Shema* (which begins with the words “*ahavat olam”* in *Nusach Sefarad* or “*ahava rabba”* in *Nusach Ashkenaz*) can suffice after the fact as a substitute for *birchot ha-Torah*, since their content substantially overlaps.[[7]](#footnote-7)

This may be akin to reciting a *beracha* over a mitzva. One way to understand *berachot* over *mitzvot* is as a way of obtaining permission to partake in the mitzva, much as we must recite a *beracha* prior to eating or benefitting from any other pleasure. (See our discussion of this [here](http://www.deracheha.org/beracha-on-voluntary-performance).) In that case, *birchot ha-Torah* grant us permission to learn Torah.

**II. Framing Study** A second talmudic passage ascribes the exile from Eretz Yisrael to a failure to recite the *berachot* over the Torah.

*Nedarim* 81a

For Rav Yehuda said in the name of Rav: What is written, "Who is the man who is wise and will understand this? [And that the mouth of God spoke to him that he may relate for what the land was lost, burnt up like a wilderness without passerby]" (*Yirmiyahu* 9:11)? This matter was asked of the sages and the prophets and they did not explain it until God Himself explained it, as is written, "And God said, 'for their deserting my Torah that I set before them and they did not obey my voice and did not follow it [the Torah]' (ad loc., 12)." 'They did not obey my voice' is the same as 'they did not follow it'! Rav Yehuda in the name of Rav: [They did not follow it means] that they do not make a *beracha* on the Torah at the beginning [of study].

Recognizing God's dominion over Torah and orienting our attitudes toward Torah and its study are essential precursors to study, without which we incur punishment.[[8]](#footnote-8) Why should this be the case? *Birchot ha-Torah* define our Torah learning as an essential act of serving God, of obeying God's voice and following the Torah, and not just as an intellectual pursuit.

**III. Daily Praise** A third Talmudic passage teaches that each individual makes a *beracha* over the Torah in praise of God and the gift of Torah to us.

*Berachot* 21a

Whence [do we learn] that the *beracha* recited before [learning] Torah is from the Torah? As it is written, "When I call out the Lord's name, give greatness to our God" (*Devarim* 32:3).

The Talmud cites a verse from the beginning of *Shirat Ha'azinu,* sung by Moshe Rabbeinu to the people of Israel*.* Rashi explains that Moshe calls out to God in a *beracha* and we answer 'amen.' Moshe then continues with the words of the song – words of Torah.[[9]](#footnote-9) This passage emphasizes our obligation to praise God, Who gave us the Torah.

**Torah or Rabbinic Level obligation?** Rambam does not list *birchot ha-Torah* as a Torah-level commandment in his *Sefer Ha-mitzvot*. This makes sense because nearly all *berachot* are rabbinic-level obligations. Rambam presumably reads the Biblical citation in the passage above as an *asmachta,* an interpretive or mnemonic mention of a verse, not as a halachically definitive derivation.

Rambam includes *birchot ha-Torah* in his laws of prayer, viewing them as part of the daily order of prayers. This may reflect the position that *birchot ha-Torah* are primarily a daily act of praise to God.

*Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Prayer 7:1

Every day a person must recite these three *berachot* and afterwards read a little from words of Torah.

Ramban, on the other hand, lists *birchot ha-Torah* among the positive Torah-level *mitzvot* that he thinks Rambam erroneously omitted.

Ramban's Comments on *Sefer Ha-mitzvot*, Forgotten Positive Commandments, Mitzva 15

For we are commanded to praise His name, may He be blessed, whenever we read the Torah, for the great good that He did for us in giving us His Torah and telling us of desirable deeds before Him, through which we may merit life of the world to come…In the third chapter of *Berachot* (21a), they said: "Whence [do we learn] that the *beracha* recited before [learning] Torah is from the Torah? As it is written, 'When I call out the Lord's name, give greatness to our God' (*Devarim* 32:3)."…What arises from this is that *birchat ha-Torah* before [reading from] Torah is a positive Torah-level mitzva.

Ramban emphasizes the importance of the *berachot* as a precursor to study. He cites the passage in *Berachot* 21a to show that making a *beracha* over the Torah is obligatory on a Torah level, and many halachic authorities adopt this position.

**Multiple Blessings** The multiple *berachot* we recite reflect the multiple purposes of *birchot ha-Torah* that we find in the Talmud.

The *berachot* begin with a formula typical of *berachot* on a mitzva and then proceed to a request for connecting with God through study, followed by praise and thanks for how the Torah shapes us as a people.

Prayerbook, *Birchot ha-Torah*

Blessed are you Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us about/to occupy [ourselves] with words of Torah.

And please sweeten for us, Lord our God, the words of Torah in our mouths and in the mouths of your people the house of Israel, and may we and our descendants (and the descendants of our descendants) all be knowers of Your name and learners of Your Torah for its own sake.

Blessed are You Lord, Who teaches Torah to His people Israel.

Blessed are you Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who has chosen us from all the nations and given us His Torah. Blessed are You Lord Who gives the Torah.

We ideally follow *birchot ha-Torah* with an act of learning (see Rambam above), traditionally reciting the blessings of the *Kohanim*, which symbolize all of the blessings God can bestow upon us, and additional passages from the Mishna and Talmud.

The learning of Torah is meant to frame our day as a Jew. When we recite *birchot ha-Torah* we are defining the day as an exercise in learning about God and the Divine will. For this reason, the *berachot* are only said once each morning and do not need to be repeated prior to each individual act of learning. We have a connection to Torah throughout our day, even when we are not actively engaged in formal study.[[10]](#footnote-10)

# WOMEN AND BIRCHOT HA-TORAH

Women are exempt from the formal mitzva of *talmud Torah*. (See more [here](file:///C:\Users\LNovick\Documents\Deracheha\deracheha.org\learning-torah).) For this reason, we might expect *Shulchan Aruch* to prohibit women from reciting *birchot ha-Torah*, just as it prohibits women from reciting *berachot* on other *mitzvot* in which women are not obligated. (See [here](http://www.deracheha.org/beracha-on-voluntary-performance).) Instead, *Shulchan Aruch* rules that women do recite these *berachot*.

*Shulchan Aruch* OC 4714

Women bless *birkat ha-Torah*.

There are three main explanations for why this should be the case.

**I. Voluntary mitzva performance** If *birchot ha-Torah* are recited specifically over the formal mitzva of *talmud Torah*, then although a woman is exempt from that formal mitzva, she may still recite the *berachot* on this mitzva, just as she may recite the *beracha* on voluntary performance of any mitzva. Indeed, this seems to be Gra's position.[[11]](#footnote-11)

*Bei'ur HaGra* OC 47:14, s.v. *nashim*

Rather the fundamental [law of women in *birchot ha-Torah*] is according to what Tosafot wrote and there they explained that women recite a *beracha* over every positive time-bound commandment.

Gra maintains that a man cannot discharge his obligation in *birchot ha-Torah* by hearing them from a woman, an indication that women's recitation of these *berachot* is indeed voluntary.

It is difficult, though, for Gra to explain why *Shulchan Aruch* rules that women recite these *berachot*, given *Shulchan Aruch*'s objection to women's recitation of *berachot* over *mitzvot* performed voluntarily.

**II. Practical Torah Knowledge** It seems that *Shulchan Aruch* maintains that women are fully obligated in these *berachot*, and that they are more than just preparatory *berachot* to the formal mitzva of learning Torah (from which women are exempt). His argument is based on an earlier halachic decisor, Maharil.

Maharil himself prefers for women to learn halacha through informal cultural transmission, and not through formal study. (See more [here](http://www.deracheha.org/learning-torah-2-obligation).) Nonetheless, he rules that women must recite *birchot ha-Torah*.

New Responsa Maharil, 45

Are women not obligated in [reciting the verses describing] the *tamid* offering and sacrifices like men? For they are obligated in prayer…How much more so as I explained…that according to the words of Semak that they are obligated to learn the commandments that apply to them and to occupy [themselves with them] and to review them in order to perform them [properly]. Behold, this is considered Torah [for the purposes of *birchot ha-Torah*].

Maharil offers two explanations for women’s recitation of *birchot ha-Torah*. First, women are obligated in prayer, which includes scriptural passages whose recitation requires *birchot ha-Torah*. Maharil also cites the argument that women must learn practical halacha through formal study and that the pursuit of practical halachic knowledge is considered Torah for the purposes of these blessings.

According to this view, women's recital of *birchot ha-Torah* does stem from an obligation to recite or learn Torah, albeit not the formal obligation of *talmud Torah* to which men are subject. Magen Avraham, a major commentator on *Shulchan Aruch*, follows this view.[[12]](#footnote-12)

**III. Torah Itself** A third position asserts that *birchot ha-Torah* are not recited over the act of learning Torah, but over the Torah itself and our involvement with it. The Brisker Rav relates this idea in the name of his father, Rav Chayim:

*Chidushei Maran Riz Ha-levi al Ha-Rambam*, Laws of *Berachot*, 11:16

And I heard from my father, my master and rabbi, the righteous one, of blessed memory, that in *birchot ha-Torah* the *beracha* is not on fulfilling the mitzva of *talmud Torah*. Rather it is an independent law that Torah requires a *beracha*. As we learn in *Berachot* 21 from the verse "When I call the name of God" etc. If so, this is not a law that applies to the mitzva at all. Rather, Torah itself requires a *beracha*. Women are exempt only from the mitzva of *talmud Torah*, but they are not released from the reality of *talmud Torah* itself. Their study is considered in the category of *talmud Torah* and they certainly should recite a *beracha* on their study…

According to Rav Chayim, *birchot ha-Torah* are not in the category of *berachot* recited over performance of a mitzva, like the *berachot* on eating matza or taking *lulav*. "Rather, Torah itself requires a *beracha*." They are *berachot* of praise and thanks over the essence of Torah itself. We must recognize the gift of Torah before we engage with it daily, whether or not we are obligated in the formal mitzva of Torah study*.*

Women recite *birchot ha-Torah* because of a deep connection to Torah, a "reality of *talmud Torah* itself" independent of the formal mitzva to learn it that transcends gender.

Women's exemption from the formal mitzva of Talmud Torah affects what women study and how. But it does not lessen the importance of Torah to women. The obligation in *birchot ha-Torah* provides all Jews with a daily opportunity to reaffirm the centrality of Torah in our lives.[[13]](#footnote-13)

We begin each day by acknowledging and reciting *berachot* over God's essential gifts to us—our existence and the Torah.

## ● Practically, when is someone supposed to fit in these prayers and *berachot*?

*Sometimes it can seem daunting to find time for any prayer whatsoever. When is a woman, especially if she is busy with children, supposed to fit in* moda ani*, handwashing,* Asher Yatzar, Elokai Neshama*, and* birchot ha-Torah*?*

Moda ani*, because it doesn't include the name of God, really can—and should—be recited as soon as we first wake up.* Netilat yadayim *and* Asher Yatzar *can wait until a woman first makes it to the bathroom, but are easily said right afterwards. Washing hands before feeding children is especially desirable, because the Talmud suggests that a* ru'ach ra'a *on the hands is of particular concern prior to feeding children.[[14]](#footnote-14) (Though some say this* ru'ach ra'a *does not apply nowadays.[[15]](#footnote-15))*

*Finding time for* Elokai Neshama *and* birchot ha-Torah *can be trickier, especially if a woman has a limited amount of time for prayer.*

*The best idea is to learn them by heart (or to print* [*both*](https://www.sefaria.org.il/Siddur_Ashkenaz%2C_Weekday%2C_Shacharit%2C_Preparatory_Prayers%2C_Elokai_Neshama?lang=he) *of* [*them*](https://www.sefaria.org.il/Siddur_Ashkenaz%2C_Weekday%2C_Shacharit%2C_Preparatory_Prayers%2C_Torah_Blessings_(**All_3_blessings)?lang=he) *on a small card and keep it close to hand). Neither takes that long to say, and a woman can recite them in the middle of her morning routine whenever she has a few moments to spare. This is usually more practical than holding them off until she has time to really daven. For these purposes, she does not need to recite all three passages that normally follow* birchot ha-Torah*. She can just say* birkat kohanim*, or, if there's no time and she's not sure when exactly she'll have the chance to pray, just the first verse of* Shema*.*

*If there are young children around, she can recite the* berachot *aloud. This way, the children can understand she is praying and also learn the prayers from her, and eventually they may start to recite them with her rather than interrupt.*

# Further Reading

Bick, Rav Ezra, "Asher Yatzar," "Elokai Neshama," and "Birkat Ha-Torah," from The Structure and Meaning of Daily Prayer (VBM Series). Available here: <https://www.etzion.org.il/en/topics/structure-and-meaning-daily-prayer>

Prager, Kenneth M.D., "For everything a Blessing." Available here:

<http://www.daat.ac.il/daat/kitveyet/assia_english/prager.htm>

1. *Berachot* 15a

   Rabbi Chiya Bar Abba said in the name of Rabbi Yochanan: Whoever relieves himself and washes his hands and puts on tefillin and recites Shema and prays – Scripture considers it as if he built an altar and offered a sacrifice upon it, as it is written: “I will wash my hands clean and circle around your altar, O God” (*Tehillim* 26:6). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *Berachot* 60b

   When he awakens, he should say: *Elokai Neshama*; when he washes his hands he should say: “Blessed …. Who sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us upon washing the hands.” When he washes his face, he should say: “Blessed…Who removes the bonds of sleep from my eyes and slumber from my eyelids.” [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *Shulchan Aruch* OC 6

   Some have the custom to wait to make the *beracha al netilat yadayim* until they come to the synagogue, and recite it in order with the other *berachot*. And the Sefaradim do not have this custom. In any case, one should not recite the *berachot* twice, so one who recites them at home should not recite them in synagogue. And similarly, one who recites them in synagogue should not recite them at home. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Rav David Auerbach, *Halichot Beitah* 1:2

   A woman is obligated to wash her hands after awakening from sleep.

   Rav Eliezer Melamed, *Peninei Halacha*, Women’s Prayer, 5:4

   And a woman who does not pray in the morning because of her household tasks should at least make an effort to recite *birchot ha-shachar* soon after getting up and washing hands, and thus the handwashing will be in preparation for *birchot ha-shachar*. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. *Shabbat* 109a

   Rabbi Natan says: This [evil spirit] is free [to do as she pleases] and is particular [to rest on the hands] until he washes his hands three times.

   It is unclear, though, whether concern for *ru'ach ra'a* still applies in full force today.

   *Lechem Mishneh, Shevitat Asor 3:2*

   From [the fact] that our Rabbi [Rambam] didn't mention it in the laws of tefilla, it sounds like he was not concerned for *ru'ach ra'a*, for this *ru'ach ra'a* is not found amongst us. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. In a moving article, Dr. Kenneth Prager captures the power of the *beracha* of *Asher Yatzar* and the miracle of day to day life: <http://www.daat.ac.il/daat/kitveyet/assia_english/prager.htm>. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. *Berachot* 11b. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Ran Nedarim 81a

   I found in *Megilat Setarim* of Rabbeinu Yona… that the Torah was not so important enough in their eyes to that it would be fitting to recite a *beracha* over it. For they were not occupied with it for its own sake and within this [context] they took its *beracha* lightly*.* [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Rashi *Berachot* 21a, s.v. ki

   When Moshe came to open with words of song, he said to Israel: I will recite a *beracha* first and you will answer after me "amen." "When I call out the Lord's name," is with a *beracha.* You "give greatness to our God," with "amen." [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Tosafot, *Berachot* 11b

    One can say that Torah is different, for a person does not give up thinking of it, for a person is obligated to learn always, as it is written "Contemplate it day and night," and it is as though he sits [with it] all day without a break.

    Tzelach suggests women should recite *birchot ha-Torah* anew before each act of learning, since exemption from the mitzva "day and night" suggests that women are not aware of Torah when not learning.

    Tzelach *Berachot* 11b

    I say a new thing, that since the essence of the rationale is that there is no mental distraction [from Torah] that creates a break for the matter of *birchot ha-Torah* [such that one would have to recite it again], because it is written "Contemplate it day and night." According to this, with women, even though they recite *birchot ha-Torah,* as explained in 47:14, for the reason that they can learn written Torah and also their laws, as explained in Beit Yosef, in any event "Contemplate it day and night" is not relevant for them. If so, if they recited the *berachot*  in the morning as is customary and in the middle of the day, after they have interrupted [study] with other matters, they sit to learn some matter of Scripture and the like that they are permitted to learn, they must recite *birchot ha-Torah* again. However, I did not find a mention of this matter in the words of any early or late halachic authority.

    Tzelach himself admits that no one else mentions this idea, and it is not practiced, perhaps because women in fact do maintain an awareness of Torah throughout the day, even though not obligated to study at all times. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Since women are exempt from the formal mitzva of learning Torah, Gra saw recitation of *birchot ha-Torah* as optional for women. Thus a woman could not discharge a man's obligation in saying *birchot ha-Torah* and a woman in doubt whether she had made the blessings would not then say them.

    *Bei'ur Halacha* 47 s.v., *Ve-ha-Gra*

    Gra in his commentary disagrees with this rationale (see there). Rather, the reason [women] bless is that, even though they are exempt from [the mitzva of learning Torah], in any case they can recite a *beracha* and say *"ve-tzivanu,"* for it is no worse than any positive time-bound commandment, for which we maintain that women can recite a *beracha*. According to this [rationale], [women] cannot discharge men's obligation [in *birchot ha-Torah].* [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. *Magen Avraham* OC 47:14

    For [women] are obligated to learn their laws. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. On both these last views, a woman could discharge a man's obligation in these blessings, reciting them for him.

    *Bei'ur Halacha* 47. S.v. Women

    The reason is that they are obligated to learn their laws.

    According to Beiur Halacha, this is because we have an obligation to learn practical halacha. If a woman knew all halacha, he might maintain that the *beracha* would no longer be obligatory. [I am not convinced there is such a thing as knowing even just all the practical applicable halacha. There is always more to learn.] [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. *Yoma* 87b

    It was taught in the Beit Midrash of Menashe: Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says a woman should wash a hand in water and [only then] give bread to her child and should not be concerned [about washing for this purpose even on Yom Kippur]….What is the reason? Because of a *ru’ach ra’a*. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. *Tosafot Yoma* 77b, s.v. *Mishum*

    That the world is not careful about this now is because this *ru'ach ra'a* does not reside in these kingdoms. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)