

Defining Makpid in Netilas Yadayim

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The *Gemara Eiruvim 106a* says that anything that is considered to be a *Chatzitzah* for *Tevillah* is also considered to be a *Chatzitzah* for *Netilas Yadayim*. Therefore, we can compare the *Halachos* of *Tevillah* for a *Niddah* with those of *Netilas Yadayim*.

The *Gemara Chulin 4b* quoting *Rebbi Yitzchak* says that the *Issur D'Oriisa* of *Chatzitzah* is a foreign substance that covers the majority of the body and one does not want it to be there (known as *Makpid*). *Chazal* decreed that anything that covers the minority of the body and one wants to remove it, or it covers the majority of the body and one does not want to remove it, is also considered to be a *Chatzitzah* on a rabbinic level. Therefore, something that covers a minority of the body and one does not care to remove it is totally acceptable.

The *Mishnah Berurah 161:1* says in terms of *Netilas Yadayim*, the same applies to one's hand. It is only a problem if it covers most of the hand or if a person wants to remove it. The *Shaar Ha'Tzion 161:2* adds a stringency that according to those who say one is only required to wash the fingers, a substance that covers just the majority of the fingers is a problem.

How exactly do we define *Makpid*? The *Shulchan Aruch Y.D. 198:1*, as well as the *Mishnah Berurah 161:1* say that *Makpid* is something that a person will eventually want to remove, even if currently they do not want to remove it. The *Pischei Teshuva 198:1* quotes the *Shu"t Zichron Yosef Y.D. 10* who says this means something that is periodically removed. The example he gives is that of the *Rosh Hilchos Mikvaos 26* who quotes the *Ra'avid* that a ring is a problem since a woman would want to take it off to knead dough. However, something that will stay on for an extended period of time is not a problem of *Makpid*.

Rabbi Moshe Feinstein in *Igros Moshe Y.D. 1:97* was asked whether a temporary crown is a problem of a *Chatzitzah* for a woman going to the *Mikvah*. Rav Moshe quotes the *Pischei Teshuva* and he explains that the *Shu"t Zichron Yosef* is saying that an item that will remain until a certain time is not a *Chatzitzah*, but an item that could need to be removed at any moment is a *Chatzitzah*. Therefore, a ring is a *Chatzitzah* because the need to remove it could arise at any time, while a temporary crown is not since it will not be removed before a certain time. What comes out is that *Makpid* is only a problem with something that could be an impediment at any time, not something that will remain fixed for an amount of time.

With this definition, we can understand the *Piskei Teshuvos* understanding of when a bandage is considered to be a *Chatzitzah* and when it is not. The *Shulchan Aruch O.C. 162:10* speaks about a case where a bandage is covering a wound and says that one is able to wash the rest of the hand. The *Mishnah Berurah 68* explains that since it would be very painful to remove the bandage, it is as if the part underneath the bandage is not there and so one only has to wash the exposed part. The *Piskei Teshuvos 162:16* speaks about a case where a bandage is covering a non-painful wound. He says if the bandage is on tightly and securely, then one need not remove it. Rather, they are allowed to wash *Netilas Yadayim* with the bandage on but must make sure to also wash over the bandage. However, if the adhesive of the bandage is loosening and one could easily remove it, then one is required to remove it before washing *Netilas Yadayim*. Presumably, the reason the bandage with the strong adhesive is not a problem of *Makpid* is because one will leave it on until it is no longer serving to protect the wound (i.e., for a certain time). Then, once the bandage loses its strength and becomes susceptible to being taken off at any moment, it becomes a problem of *Makpid* and must be removed.

Some want to argue that in modern times rings are not a *Chatzitzah* for a woman who is not careful about taking them off. The *Or L'Tzion 2:11* says that a woman can leave her rings on for *Netilas Yadayim* if she is not careful about taking them off to knead dough. However, if she is careful, then she must still take them off to wash.

Based on all of this we can define *Makpid* in terms of *Netilas Yadayim* as an item that a person would remove unpredictably. However, an item whose removal is predictable is not a problem of *Makpid*. This applies to all foreign substances that one might find on their hands. The *Shulchan Aruch O.C. 161:2* says paint is not a *Chatzitzah* on the hand of a painter, but it is on the hand of an average person¹. For the average person, paint on their hands is something they would want to remove at any moment. For a painter, removal of paint will not happen until they are finished and ready to totally clean up.

¹ The *Mishnah Berurah 161:14* adds that if there no substance to the paint, such as ink or a stamp, then *Bedieved* it is not a *Chatzitzah* for anyone.