The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
Wed, Jul 9, 2025 ■ י"ג תמוז, תשפ"ה
סימן ג' סעיף ח'-י"ב

Overview

Siman 3 Seif 8:

When defecating in a field, if there is a wall he may defecate there but if the area is open he must position himself so that no one will see him exposed.

- The problem is for one to be seen exposed but if the rest of one's body can be seen, there is no prohibition. (M.B. 16)

Siman 3 Seif 9:

A person should not sit too quickly or vigorously and should not push too hard so that he does not injure himself.

Siman 3 Seif 10:

One should not wipe using his right hand.

- An effort should be made to avoid using one's middle finger of his left hand to wipe himself. (M.B. 17)
- A lefty should use his right hand and Biur Halacha (ד"ה לא יקנח) discusses what one should do if he uses different hands for different activities.

Siman 3 Seif 11:

A number of items that one should not use to wipe himself are listed. Some of the items that are listed we are no longer particular to avoid.

- When leaving the bathroom one should make to sure to leave it clean so that the next person does not become soiled. (M.B. 21)

Siman 3 Seif 12:

One should defecate at night using the same standards of modesty that are used during the day.

Stories to Share

Without Force

ש"ע סי' ג' :טי : "לא ישב במהרה ובחזק ולא יאנס לדחוק עצמו..."

The Vilna Gaon, zt"l, explains that going to the bathroom symbolizes making a cheshbon hanefesh and eliminating negative behavior. Perhaps that is why the Alter of Kelm, zt"l, had special garments which he wore only when he went to the bathroom. He wished to remember that just like he must remove physical filth, he must also eradicate any spiritual blemish.

The Mekor Chaim, zt"l, learns a similar lesson from seif 9 on today's amud. "Seif nine alludes to how one should let go of negative behaviors and do teshuvah. Just as we must not rush or be too forceful in the bathroom, the same is true regarding teshuvah. Although one should return to Hashem as early as possible, since the younger he is the more effective his teshuvah, nevertheless doing complete teshuvah is a process that takes time. As our sages say, 'The fruit of rushing is regret.' One must therefore do teshuvah with yishuv hadaas.

He added, "But one must also avoid being too forceful. Doing teshuvah with too much force alludes to trying to fast or doing any action that is too much for him to according to his level. Even if he maintains such superhuman efforts, this will ultimately weaken him and most likely he will not manage to do genuine teshuvah at all. He must also not push himself to adopt too many chumros, such as never eating meat during weekdays or the like, if doing this pains him greatly. If he takes on too much, he will be overextended and burn out and will likely fail to complete his teshuvah."

The Vilna Gaon explains why one who overextends himself will not succeed. "One must move from level to level. If he tries to jump levels, he will lack heavenly assistance and almost certainly fall."

Halacha Highlights

Wiping with the right hand when using toilet paper

Shulchan Aruch Siman 3 Seif 10

לא יקנח ביד ימין

One should not wipe with his right hand

The Gemara (62a) and Shulchan Aruch state without qualification that when wiping, one should not use his right hand. Shulchan Aruch HaRav (מהדו"ת סי' ג' סע' ט'), presents the halacha as follows: One who is not delicate and wipes using his hands should not use his right hand; rather he should use his left hand since the fingers of his right hand are used to tie his tefillin on his left arm. The obvious implication is that if one is wiping with toilet paper it is unnecessary to avoid using one's left hand. Kitzur Shulchan Aruch with the commentary of Lechem HaPanim (מובא דבריו בנמוקי אורח חיים סי' ג' אות ב') relates that he does not know the source of this distinction and maintains that according to the straightforward understanding of this halacha there should be no distinction whether one is using paper or not.

Nimukei Orach Chaim (הנ"ל) doesn't understand why Shulchan Aruch HaRav's distinction is so difficult to understand. The Gemara explains that the concern is that a person may not wipe well or at least his hand may still smell when he eats and will become disgusted. If one wipes with paper that concern is alleviated. Tzitz Eliezer (שו"ת צי"א ח"ז סי' ב' שאלה ב') also accepts this leniency and explains why the Gemara did not draw a distinction between using one's hand or using some other material with which to wipe since it is known that rocks or pebbles were used for that purpose. He explains that even when one would use a rock or pebble it was not fully effective at cleaning that area so people anyway had to finish wiping themselves with their hands. Using paper does not have that shortcoming. Therefore, he concludes that if a person will be able to wipe more effectively using his right hand with toilet paper he could be lenient.