The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
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סימן ו' סעיף ב'

Overview

Siman 6 Seif 2:

Some people delay reciting על נטילת ידים until they come to shul and they group it with the other berachos but people from Spain do not follow this custom. One should certainly not recite the beracha both at home and in shul. Someone who studies Torah or davens beforehand should recite the berachos at home. However, even in these circumstances there are people who arrange the beracha in shul rather than recite it at home.

- There is a tradition to say the pasuk שמע ישראל when one leaves his house for shul but one should have in mind to not fulfill the mitzvah of Krias Shema. (M.B. 7)
- The custom to wash one's hands at home and recite נטילת ידים in shul is limited to where one does not interrupt between the time that he washes and comes to shul. (M.B. 8)
- Levush writes that it is preferable for those who recite Tehillim to do so before davening. (M.B. 8)
- Authorities agree with the practice of reciting the beracha immediately after washing. If, however, one feels the urge to relieve himself he should wait to recite the beracha until after he relieves himself and then he should recite נטילת ידים and אשר יצר. For more details see M.B. 4:4 with related Biur Halacha. (M.B. 9)
- When one rises early to recite Selichos one could justify the practice of reciting Birkas HaTorah after Selichos but נטילת ידים should be recited at home before coming to shul. Alternatively, one could relieve himself after Selichos and then he could recite נטילת ידים and אשר יצר before davening. (M.B. 11)

Stories to Share

The Power of Tehillim

מ"ב ו', ח': "אותם שאומרים תהלים..."

The Sichos HaRan, zt"l, explains how we should daven and say Tehillim. "One must apply the words of Tehilim to his own life and what he is going through. Although Tehillim also discusses what Dovid Hamelech was going through in the physical world, it was composed with ruach hakodesh and primarily discusses every person's spiritual challenges fighting his yetzer hara. Tehilim is composed of such heartfelt cries and petitions, that even the biggest sinner and most wicked person can find himself in its holy words.

"One who wishes to do teshuvah should say Tehillim regularly, since davening and petitioning Hashem is the main way to do teshuvah. This is especially true regarding Tehillim which will definitely help one who recites them regularly to return to Hashem. Every person has a particular gate through which he merits to do teshuvah. This is the path towards arousing his heart to take things seriously and change his ways. But it is very difficult to find this path. Tehillim will help him locate his conduit.

"But at times, this pathway is locked. This may be because of something he has done, or because of some other internal obstacle. Tehillim will open the gate and enable him to truly do teshuvah."

The Chazon Ish, zt"l, pointed out another important way that Tehillim helps. Whenever he had a question in his learning that he could not answer, he would spend time, tearfully reciting Tehillim. Usually, a new pathway was opened for him and he eventually found a satisfying answer."

Halacha Highlights

Is the reading of Tehillim on par with Torah study?

Mishnah Berurah Siman 6 Seif Katan 8

אותם שאומרים תהילים טוב יותר שיאמרו קדם התפלה

It is better for those who recite Tehillim to do so before davening

The author of Meir Oz (ע' בכל זה בספר מאיר עוז סי' ו' אות ג') relates that Rav Yitchak Zilberstein asked Rav Chaim Kanievski for a ruling on the following situation. There was a place where a Gemara *shiur* was held and children wanted to be able to recite Tehillim in the same location; does their recitation trump the Gemara shiur? Rav Kanievski answered that even if the children were using the room first the Gemara shiur is more important and thus trumps their reading of Tehillim. Rav Zilberstein explained that Rav Kanievski was following the approach of Nefesh HaChaim who contended that although Dovid HaMelech asked Hashem that Tehillim should be considered on par with Torah study there is no indication that his request was granted and thus the Gemara shiur takes priority over the recitation of Tehillim since Gemara is certainly considered Torah study whereas reading Tehillim may not be considered Torah study.

The author of Meir Oz proceeds to demonstrate from numerous sources that Tehillim is considered "Divrei Torah." One proof is found in Kitzur Shulchan Aruch (סי' א' סע' ה') where he writes that one should study Torah or Mishnayos before davening and if he cannot he should at least say Tehillim. This indicates that the recitation of Tehillim can serve as a replacement for the study of Mishnayos. Another proof is Mishnah Berurah's ruling that the reading of מזמור לדוד fulfills the obligation to study Torah during a meal. Similarly, Mishnah Berurah relates that there are those who have the custom to read שיר המעלות before davening Maariv so that they daven following Torah study. It must be, concludes the Meir Oz that Nefesh HaChaim's uncertainty whether Tehillim is considered on par with Torah study refers to one who merely reads Tehillim. Someone who reads Tehillim with the intent to study Torah is certainly credited with having studied Torah.