The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
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סימן מ"ז סעיף א'-ד'

Overview

Siman 47 Seif 1:

One must be careful to recite *Birkas HaTorah*.

- Sha'agas Aryeh maintains that *Birkas HaTorah* is a Biblical obligation. Therefore, if someone is uncertain whether he recited *Birkas HaTorah* he must recite the *beracha* of אשר בחר בנו. Others are uncertain whether one should recite *Birkas HaTorah* if he is uncertain whether he recited it. There is room for leniency to not repeat the *beracha* if one realizes after reading אהבה רבה. If one could listen to someone else recite the *beracha* or have in mind to discharge his obligation with the *beracha* of אהבה רבה that is preferable. (M.B. 1)
- *Birkas HaTorah* should be recited with great joy. (M.B. 2)
- *Chazal* warn that lack of care with regard to *Birkas HaTorah* could lead one to not merit sons who are Torah scholars. (M.B. 2)

Siman 47 Seif 2:

One must recite the *beracha* for the study of *Tanach*, *Mishnah*, *Gemara* or even *Midrash*.

Siman 47 Seif 3:

One who writes *divrei Torah* is required to recite *Birkas HaTorah* even though he does not read the words out loud.

- This ruling is limited to where one is writing in the course of his learning and does not include someone who is merely copying words of Torah or cites *pesukim* as an aphorism in a letter. (M.B. 4)
- Later authorities agree that one should not rely upon Shulchan Aruch's ruling to recite *Birkas HaTorah* for writing *divrei Torah*; rather one should verbalize the words as he writes them if he did not already read *Birkas Kohanim* or the *Beraisa* of אלו דברים after reciting *Birkas HaTorah*. (M.B. 4)

Siman 47 Seif 4:

One is not required to recite the *beracha* if he will merely think about Torah. One may also issue a halachic ruling without giving the reason for the ruling.

- One who reads a *halacha* in a *sefer* must recite *Birkas HaTorah*. (M.B. 6)
- Vilna Gaon required one to recite *Birkas HaTorah* when issuing a *halachic* ruling or when thinking about Torah. (M.B. 7)
- All opinions agree that one may perform a *mitzvah* without first reciting *Birkas HaTorah*. (M.B. 7)

Halacha Highlight

Birkas HaTorah for thinking or writing *Torah* related matters

Shulchan Aruch Siman 47 Seif 3

הכותב בדברי תורה אע"פ שאינו קורא צריך לברך

One who writes words of *Torah* is obligated to recite the *beracha* even though he does not read them

Shulchan Aruch (סע' ד') writes that one who merely thinks about *Torah* is not required to recite *Birkas HaTorah* beforehand. Keren L'Dovid (סי' י"א ומובא בספר חיי משה) questions why thinking *Torah* does not mandate *Birkas HaTorah*. One of the *pesukim* that address the obligation to study *Torah* uses the word והגית which means to meditate about something in one's mind. If meditating about *Torah* is part of the *mitzvah,* why is *Birkas HaTorah* not recited beforehand? He answers that although it is true that thinking about *Torah* is a fulfillment of the obligation to study *Torah*, nevertheless, the primary fulfillment of the *mitzvah* is to speak words of *Torah*. Consequently, the *beracha* was instituted only when one will speak words of Torah (ע"ע ערוה"ש סע' י'). Sha'arei Teshuvah (סק"ג) writes that one who listens to another person's words of *Torah* is obligated to recite *Birkas HaTorah*. This is important for those people who normally recite *Birkas HaTorah* in *shul* but may listen to a *Torah* lecture in their car on their way to *shul*. In such a circumstance one should recite *Birkas HaTorah* before entering the car.

Since the *beracha* was not instituted for one who merely thinks about *Torah,* why does Shulchan Aruch (סע' ג') rule that one who writes words of *Torah* is obligated to recite *Birkas HaTorah*? Seemingly writing and thinking are comparable to one another. Mishnah Berura (סק"ד) offers two explanations why writing warrants a *beracha* as opposed to mere contemplation. One explanation is that when writing one is at least performing an action as opposed to merely thinking. Secondly, it is common for one who is writing to verbalize the words he is writing as opposed to one who is merely thinking about *Torah*. Aruch HaShulchan (סע' י') explains that writing words of *Torah* is the primary fulfillment of the obligation to study *Torah*. Furthermore, he considers writing words of *Torah* to be a form of teaching *Torah* to others (ע"ע בשו"ת רעק"א סי' כ"ט בשם שו"ת שב יעקב).

Stories to Share

Contemplating Torah

מ"ב ס' מ"ז,ס"ק ז': "ואפילו בהרהור לבד מחמיר שלא להרהר כ"ז שלא בירך בה"ת ..."

There are six perpetual mitzvos which are dependent on consciousness alone, and which can be fulfilled at all times. When one focuses on his love or fear of Hashem for even an instant, he fulfills a Torah mitzvah.

A certain man worked very hard to train himself to focus on these six mitzvos at all times. All day, he would contemplate them. Eventually he thought about these mitzvos during every available waking moment. Once, he woke up in the middle of the night and began thinking about these mitzvos as usual. But he immediately wondered if this is permitted. After all, he followed the opinion of the Vilna Gaon that even thinking in learning is prohibited before reciting birkas HaTorah. Perhaps the six perpetual mitzvos are also Torah in this sense?

When this question reached Rav Chaim Kanievsky, zt"l, he ruled that thinking about the six perpetual mitzvos is permitted even before reciting birkas haTorah.

The person asking couldn't help ask a compelling question. "It is well known that you think about the names of tanaim and amoraim before making birkas haTorah. Is there some reason why this is better than thinking about the six perpetual mitzvos?

Rav Chaim replied, "What one thinks is a matter of personal preference…but neither requires birkas haTorah."

דולה ומשקה, ע' מ"ט

A certain person wondered if he could learn mussar before making birkas haTorah. "The Bartenura writes about Meseches Avos that it was received from Sinai. But perhaps a regular mussar work may be learned before making the blessings?"

Rav Chaim rejected this reasoning. "One must make birkas haTorah before learning mussar."

מעשה רב, ע' קנ"ח