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Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
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סימן ס"א סעיף ג'-ו'

Halacha Highlight

The 248 words of *krias shema*

Shulchan Aruch Siman 61 Seif 3

בקריאת שמע יש רמ"ח תבות וכדי להשלים רמ"ח וכו'

***Krias shema* has 245 words and in order to reach 248 etc.**

Shulchan Aruch (סע' ג) writes that *krias shema* has 245 words and in order to bring the total number to 248 to correspond to the limbs of the body the *shaliach tzibbur* should read the words ה' א-לוקיכם אמת and then repeat them out loud. Mishnah Berurah (סק"ח) cites Sefer Asarah Ma'amaros who writes that when finishing *shema* silently the *shaliach tzibbur* should not say the word אמת. When he then repeats the phrase he should say ה' א-לוקיכם אמת.Following this procedure one will read 248 words as part of *shema*. In contrast, according to Shulchan Aruch's approach there will be 249 words since אמת is not part of *shema* and if it is said twice with the repetition of the words ה' א-לוקיכם one is adding four words to the 245. He then writes that the custom is in accordance with the procedure described by Shulchan Aruch and Pri Megadim explains that the repetition of the word אמת is not included in the calculation so it brings the total back to 248. Sefer Piskei Teshuvos (אות ג' הע' 16) notes that this disagreement is limited to the procedure to be followed by the *shaliach tzibbur* but all opinions agree that the *tzibbur* should conclude *shema* with the words ה' א-לוקיכם אמת even though they will listen to the *shaliach tzibbur* repeat these words.

Sha'arei Teshuvah (סק"ב) quoting Seder HaYom explains that in a case where a person is still reading *shema* and the *shaliach tzibbur* is finished and will repeat the last three words one should pause and listen to the *shaliach tzibbur* read those words in order to be able to reach 248 words. This is preferred he writes than to use the method of adding the 15 ו"ו of אמת ויציב mentioned by Shulchan Aruch. Other Poskim, however, maintain that it is better that one not pause during *shema* and that he use the method of the ו"ו of אמת ויציב to supplement the three missing words (ספר פסקי תשובות אות ג').

Stories to Share

The Long Road to the Truth

ש"ע ס' ס"א, ג': "ה' אלהיכם אמת..."

Rav Chaim Brisker explains in the Rambam that one who does not feel as though he is standing in the presence of the King while praying shemonah esrei does not discharge his obligation and must daven again. Although if he only focused on the meaning of the words in avos this is enough, that is only if he feels as though he is standing before the King since this requirement is an essential element of shemoneh esrei. Rav Chaim did not daven a long shemoneh esrei. Although he davened with great intensity, his shemoneh esrei was recited at a quick pace. Conversely, he said shema very slowly and with great deliberation.

He explained "Shema ends with emes which can only be reached with great deliberation. Shemoneh esrei is standing before the King, but it does not require as much slow deliberation."

כן שמעתי

After the first World War the Skulener Rebbe lived in the city of Tchernovitz. One of the most memorable avodos of the rebbe was how he said Shema. His intonation was exceedingly slow since he said every word with immense concentration. But the minyan he davened with at the time was composed of exceedingly simple folk and they could not fathom why he should recite shema at such a pace.

One of the people in the minyan asked him why he was so slow. "After all, it is not as though you cannot have kavanah and daven a bit quicker. Why draw it out so much?"

The rebbe's answer was similar to that of Rav Chaim Brisker. "It is a very long road to finally reach the truth."

קונטרס אמרי קודש, ע' נ"ט

Overview

Siman 61 Seif 3:

***Krias shema* has 245 word and in order to reach 248 words to correspond to the limbs of the body the *shaliach tzibbbur* should finish *shema* with the words ה' א-לוקיכם אמת and then he should repeat those words out loud.** By doing so each person fulfills his obligation since they hear the *shaliach tzibbur* read these three words. If an individual wants to repeat these words with the *shaliach tzibbur* there is no prohibition in doing so. **If someone is reading *shema* by himself he should have in mind that the 15 ו"ו of אמת ויציב which equal 90 correspond to the name of Hashem three times - each name equals 26 plus the four letters of each word [(26+4)*3=90].** Another explanation is that the 15 "ו" is 90 plus one reading is 91. 91 equals that the name of Hashem as it is read and as it written and it becomes as if one says ה' אדנ"י אמת. Some say that when reading *shema* by one's self he should say א-ל מלך נאמן שמע וכו' since these three additional words bring the total number of words in *shema* to 248 and they also replace the אמן that one should answer to the *beracha* of הבוחר בעמו ישראל באהבה and this is our custom. It appears to me that when reading *shema* with the *tzibbur* one should not say א-ל מלך נאמן; rather one should say אמן after the *shaliach tzibbur* finishes the *beracha* and that is the custom and it is correct.

- ❖ When *shema* is read correctly each limb takes a letter and is healed by it. (M.B. 6)
- ❖ The individual also concludes with the word אמת but he does not repeat it. Instead he begins the next paragraph with the words ויציב ונכון. (M.B. 7)
- ❖ Sefer Asarah Ma'amaros asserts that the *shaliach tzibbur* should not say the word אמת when he concludes *shema* quietly since that would bring the total number of words to 249. The custom, however, is as written in Shulchan Aruch although Vilna Gaon follows the position of Asarah Ma'amaros. (M.B. 8)
- ❖ One should not assume from this halacha that if one finished a beracha on a fruit and before eating he heard his friend finish a *beracha* that he should answer אמן before eating some of his fruit. (M.B. 15)
- ❖ It is preferable to complete the *beracha* of הבוחר בעמו ישראל באהבה together with the *shaliach tzibbur* so that one should not have to answer אמן. (M.B. 16)

Siman 61 Seif 4:

The custom is to read the first *pasuk* out loud in order to inspire concentration.

Siman 61 Seif 5:

The custom is to place one's hands over his face while reading the first *pasuk* so that he should not gaze at something that would detract from having proper concentration.

- ❖ Shulchan Aruch means that one should place his right hand over his face while reading the *pasuk* שמע ישראל. (M.B. 17)

Siman 61 Seif 6:

One must extend the ח" of אחד so that one declares Hashem's reign over the Heavens and earth which is alluded to by the roof of the ח". One should extend the ד" of אחד for the amount of time necessary to consider that Hashem is One in this world and his dominion extends to the four corners of the universe but one should not extend the ד" more than this. Some have the custom to turn their head in sync with their thoughts that Hashem is up, down and in the four directions.

- ❖ Magen Avrohom quotes Migdal Oz that the ח" should be 1/3 and the ד" should be 2/3. Some maintain that the ח" should not be extended at all and one should think about all of these matters while extending the ד". (M.B. 18)
- ❖ One should lean his head east, north, west and south rather than east, west, north and south. (M.B. 20)