The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
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סימן ס"ח סעיף א'

Overview

Siman 68 Seif 1:

There are places that interrupt *birchos krias shema* to read *piyutim* and it is correct to refrain from saying them since they are an interruption. According to some there is no prohibition and the custom in all places is to read them but one who is lenient and does not read them loses nothing. Nevertheless, one should not engage in other activities. One may not even interrupt with *divrei Torah* while the *tzibbur* is reading *piyutim* and it is certainly prohibited to engage in idle chatter. However, if someone studies by thinking about Torah, meaning he just looks inside of a *sefer*, it is permitted since thought is not the same as speech. There is, however, a concern that his thinking about Torah will lead to talking, therefore, one should not behave differently from the *tzibbur* if they have the custom to read *piyutim* and he should read them together the *tzibbur*. See below 90:10.

- Chazal did not establish the exact wording of long *berachos*, therefore, one who changes the wording has not changed the essential character of the *beracha*. (M.B. 1)
- Even between paragraphs one is not permitted to interrupt with *divrei torah*. (M.B. 2)
- When people see one looking in a *sefer* it could lead them to talk but it is possible that merely thinking about Torah matters is permitted. One may not even think about Torah while the *chazzan* is saying *kaddish* since it requires a lot of concentration. (M.B. 3)
- Rav Chaim Vital writes that Arizal only said *piyutim* composed by Rishonim and would not even read יגדל. However, R' Chaim Vital's son testified that when his father was *shaliach tzibbur* he would read whatever the *tzibbur* was accustomed to read. (M.B. 4)
- Customs that relate to the core of *davening*, for example the *nussach* that one *davens* may not be switched. *Davening* related matters that are mentioned in the Gemara are universal and are not subject to customs. (M.B. 4)

Halacha Highlight

Changing one's *nusach* when *davening* in a *shul* with a different *nusach*

Mishnah Berurah Siman 68 Seif Koton 4

אמנם המנהגים שנהגו בשרשי התפלה לכו"ע אין לשנות כל אחד ממנהג מקומו

However, when it comes to customs related to the root of *tefila* all opinions agree that one should not deviate from the custom of his place

Mishnah Berurah (סק"ד) writes that although there are different customs with regards to the reading of *piyutim*, nevertheless, when it comes to matters at the very root of *tefila* one should not deviate from the custom of his place. For example, one who *davens nusach Ashkenaz* should not switch to *nusach Sefard* or vice versa. The reason he explains is that there are twelve gates in Heaven for prayer that correspond to the twelve tribes and each tribe has its own gate and custom. He then adds that if an *Ashkenazi davens* with *Sefardim* or the opposite he has fulfilled his obligation. Based on this comment, Rav Chaim Pinchas Sheinberg ruled that if one arrives at a shul that *davens* a different *nusach* and one cannot find a *siddur* with his *nusach* he should *daven* with them. Since the *mitzvah* is fulfilled even in the other *nusach,* it is not worth forgoing *davening* with the *tzibbur* to obtain a *siddur* with one's *nusach* (קובץ הערות ותשובות מהגרח"פ שיינברג המובא בסוף תפילה כהלכתה).

When an *Ashkenazi davens* with *Sefardim* (or vice versa), Sefer Pe'as HaShulchan (סי' ג' אות י"ד) writes that it is prohibited for one to *daven* their own *nusach* due to the prohibition of לא תתגודדו. Teshuvas Meishiv Davar (ח"א סי' י"ז) disagrees and rules that when *davening* the silent *amidah* one is not permitted to deviate from his customary *nusach* and one does not violate the prohibition of לא תתגודדו since either *nusach* is acceptable. Rav Moshe Feinstein (או"ח ח"ב סי' כ"ג) also maintains the same position when he writes that one should *daven* with his regular *nusach* and he is not obligated to change out of concern that it could lead to a dispute. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (יו"ט שני כהלכתו פרק האחרון ס"ק י"ז) commented that the custom does not follow Pe'as HaShulchan's position. Meishiv Davar agrees, however, that one should say *kedusha* according to the *nusach* of the *Bais HaKnesses* since it is recited out loud.

Stories to Share

The Community's Prayer

ש"ע סי' ס"ח, א': "יש מקומות שמפסיקים בברכות קריאת שמע לומר פיוטים..."

There are many customs regarding saying piyutim. Some are very careful to say them, feeling that skipping them represents a great loss. When the Pri Megadim was asked why some piyutim are called קרובץ his answer reveals just how precious these tefillos are. "This is how they are named since the root of the word shows that they are mekarev, they draw those who say them closer to Hashem."

משבצות זהב, סי' מ"ג, ס"ק י'

What is one to do when his custom is not to say piyutim while the shul he davens with does say them? He cannot separate from the community by learning, as we find on today's amud. He could say them but this is also not simple. Since he is not accustomed to saying them, it is virtually impossible to understand the difficult language.

A certain man had an idea. Although the Rema writes that one should not even learn in his thoughts since he might come to speak, perhaps there is an exception. Wasn't it possible that the problem with thinking is only when an open sefer is in front of him? In such an instance it is surely likely that those who see him with an open sefer will speak during this recital. But perhaps it is permitted to think about Torah without an open sefer in front of him.

When this question was brought to the Kaf Hachaim he ruled decisively. "The only problem with thinking in learning while the community says piyutim is because others will see that he is learning and will come to speak. If one thinks in learning without an open sefer in front of him there is no problem."

The Kaf Hachaim concluded with a warning. "But one should not apply this practice to the recitation of kaddish. During the recitation of kaddish one must focus carefully on every word intoned. Learning during kaddish is definitely forbidden."

כף החיים, סי' ס"ח, ס"ק ח'