The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
Thurs, Apr 30, 2026 ■ י"ג אייר, תשפ"ו
סימן ע' סעיף ד'-ה'

Overview

Siman 70 Seif 4:

One who is engaged in communal needs and the time for *shema* arrives should not interrupt that activity. Rather he should finish that task and then read *shema* if there is still time to read it.

- Shulchan Aruch refers to where there is no one else available to address the communal need and that is why he does not interrupt for *shema* even if he is merely trying to save money. (M.B. 16)
- There is a disagreement whether one should interrupt to read *shema* if he began his involvement in the communal need after the time for *shema* had arrived. (M.B. 17)
- If he is able to quickly interrupt his communal activity to read *shema* he should do so. (M.B. 18)
- One should make an effort to at least read *shema* and ברוך שם during the correct time. (M.B. 19)
- Even if the time for *shema* passed one must recall the exodus since that *mitzvah* applies the entire day. Therefore, he should read a *parsha* that mentions the exodus since he may not read אמת ויציב. (M.B. 20)
- According to all opinion it is prohibited to eat before fulfilling the *mitzvah* of *tefillin*. (M.B. 20)

Siman 70 Seif 5:

If one was eating, bathing, getting his hair cut, turning over hides or adjudicating a civil matter, according to Rambam he should finish his activity and then read *shema,* but if out of concern that the correct time will pass he interrupted his activity to read *shema* he did a praiseworthy act. According to Ra'avad he must interrupt his activity to read *shema* even though time remains to read *shema* later (see below *siman* 235).

- This halacha applies when there is time left to read *shema* and Shulchan Aruch's reference to fearing that the time for *shema* will pass is based on his concern that he miscalculated. (M.B. 22)
- Most later authorities agree that when it comes to Biblical matters the issue of whether one must interrupt his activity will depend upon whether he was permitted to start the activity or not. Therefore, if he began before *amud hashachar* he may continue but if he began afterwards he must interrupt to read *shema*. Regarding eating Shulchan Aruch below implies that one must always interrupt to read *shema*. (M.B. 23)
- At night if one began one of these activities within half an hour of nightfall he must interrupt his activity, read *shema* after nightfall and then resume his activity. Sometime later he should read *shema* with the *berachos* and *daven shemone esrei*. (M.B. 24)

Stories to Share

The Needs of the Community

ש"ע סי' ע', ד': "היה עוסק בצרכי רבים והגיע זמן קריאת שמע לא יפסיק..."

A certain kollel was in dire need of funds. They had no choice but to send the avrechim out to collect money to pay the kollel's many debts. Of course, the Rosh Kollel wished to find creative ways for them to collect the needed sum in the least amount of time. After much careful research he heard about what sounded like an excellent halachic loophole. As we find on today's amud, one who is involved in one mitzvah is discharged from doing another. Presumably, the same holds true regarding collecting needed funds for the struggling kollel. Apparently, any avrechim who were collecting were not obligated to spend time davening.

But then he found that the Ksav Sofer ruled that this psak is not always applicable. "One is only discharged from doing a mitzvah due to his involvement in a prior mitzvah if his motive is pure. If he has a vested interest in doing the mitzvah it does not override a different obligation. Thus, if someone is a shaliach mitzvah who makes a percentage from what he collects, he is not discharged from eating in a sukkah on Sukkos or any other obligatory mitzvah."

This put a damper on the Rosh Kollel's plan—although this point is not mentioned in the Mishnah Berurah. In any event, he could never decide such a serious question without consulting with a great halachic authority since it was possible that he had missed something.

When this question reached Rav Yosef Shalom Eliyashev, zt"l, he ruled that indeed the Kesav Sofer is not the halachah. "One who is raising money is theoretically not obligated to daven if he is occupied with this mitzvah during this time."

But the gadol warned them against acting on this. "But it is not worth relying on this heter. Many people have tried this and invariably fail abysmally in raising the money they needed!"

ישיב משה, ע' י"ג-י"ד

Halacha Highlight

Exempting those involved in communal needs

Shulchan Aruch Siman 70 Seif 4

היה עוסק בצרכי רבים וכו'

One who was engaged in communal needs etc.

Shulchan Aruch (סע' ד') teaches that one who is engaged in the needs of the community is exempt from *krias shema* if there is no one else who could address that communal need. Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק י"ז) writes that even one who is attempting to save his friend's money qualifies for this exemption and Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (הליכות שלמה פי"א סק"י) notes that even one who is paid for his effort qualifies for this exemption. Rav Moshe Sternbuch (מועדים וזמנים ח"א סי' צ"ג) asserts that one qualifies for the exemption from *shema* only if one is engaged in the communal need to the degree that he does nothing else during that time. If, however, he takes time to eat, drink or rest, he must read *shema* during that time he uses for himself. A difficulty with this position is that Mishnah Berurah (סי' ע"א ס"ק י"ג) does not seem to agree. Shulchan Aruch there writes that one who is digging a grave is exempt from *shema*. Mishnah Berurah adds that even while he rests as he is digging the grave he remains exempt from *krias shema*. Sefer Piskei Teshuvos (סי' ע' הע' 23) suggests that perhaps there are different categories of rest. Mishnah Berurah was referring to a quick break needed for one to catch his breath and allow his muscles to rest. Rav Sternbuch was referring to longer rests that extend beyond the minimum needed for one to catch his breath and recharge his battery to continue his communal work.

Based on this someone, who is involved in serving the *tzibbur*, whether he collects *tzedaka*, provides medical care or protects the *tzibbur* in some fashion, he may not invoke this exemption unless he does not take a break for his needs and there is no one who could replace him for a short period. If one does receive breaks or there is someone who could replace him for the time necessary to read at least the first *pasuk* of *shema* with ברוך שם he should use some of that time to *daven* what he can (פסקי תשובות שם).