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

Overview

Siman 71 Seif 1:

When a relative for whom one is obligated to mourn dies even if it is not incumbent upon him to bury that relative he is exempt from *krias shema* and *tefila*. Even if one wants to be stringent and read *shema* he is not permitted to do so. If there is someone to take care of the burial arrangements and the mourner wishes to be stringent and read *shema* we do not protest. (See Yoreh Deah *siman* 341).

- If an *onen* reads *shema* he does not fulfill the *mitzvah* and must repeat *shema* after the burial. (M.B. 3)
- He is also exempt from reciting *berachos,* even *berachos* on food as well as the other *mitzvos* of the Torah. If he wants to eat bread he must wash his hands but he does not recite the *beracha* on that washing. (M.B. 4)
- As soon as they begin to put dirt on the deceased the mourner can read *shema* and *daven*. (M.B. 4)
- There is a disagreement whether the mourner should recite *birchos hashachar* after the fourth hour of the day and due to this doubt they should not be recited except for ברכות התורה, as well as שלא עשני גוי, עבד ואשה. *Shemone esrei* is recited as well as *birchos krias shema* even though Shulchan Aruch disagrees. All opinions agree that one could read *pesukei d'zimra*. (M.B. 4)
- *Shemone esrei* may only be recited until *chatzos* and one need not supplement a missing *shemone esrei* unless the death occurred after the time for that *tefila* already arrived. (M.B. 4)
- An *onen* may not be stringent when there is no one else to arrange the burial and perhaps in all cases out of honor for the deceased. (M.B. 5)
- Maharshal writes that we do not follow Ra'avyah's ruling that an *onen* under certain conditions may be stringent. (M.B. 6)
- In Yoreh Deah the halacha is that one may not be stringent and halacha follows that opinion. However, a son may go to *shul* to say *kaddish* for his father if there are others to make arrangements for the burial and certainly on Shabbos and Yom Tov this is permitted. (M.B. 7)

Stories to Share

Words of Comfort

ש"ע סי' ע"א, א': "מי שמת לו מת שהוא חייב להתאבל עליו..."

Today's amud discusses the halachos of one who loses a close relative, ר"ל.

Rav Shach once made a shivah call to a man who had lost his wife. The bereaved man was completely crushed.

"You must remember that a Jew is never alone!" Rav Shach exclaimed. To encourage him, Rav Shach told him the following Midrash:

A certain Jew was traveling on a ship filled with non-Jews. When the ship reached a strange port, the other passengers asked the Jew to go down and make purchases for the rest.

"But I know no one here," the Jew protested.

"But a Jew is surely never alone, since wherever he is his G-d is always with him," they replied.

לולא תורתך, דברים, י"ג:ט"ו

When Rav Boruch Ber Lebovitz's father took ill, he sat by his sickbed day and night, until the family feared for his health as well. After much pleading, they convinced the Rosh Yeshiva to allow one of his students to sit up with his ailing father while he grabbed some much needed rest.

That night, his father died. Rav Boruch Ber felt terrible guilt: if only he had been there to comfort and care for his father, perhaps he would still be alive. He was so pained by this thought that he could no longer teach.

The Chofetz Chayim heard about the problem and summoned Rav Boruch Ber. When he arrived, the Chofetz Chayim held Rav Boruch Ber's hands for half an hour and gently repeated, "Teshuvah is a gift from our Creator. It doesn't only atone for a person's sins, it transforms him into a completely new person. Why should you feel so pained about the past? You are a completely different person now."

Later, whenever Rav Boruch Ber felt the sadness and guilt come over him, he would echo the gentle words of the Chofetz Chayim. "I am a new person! I am a new person!"

Halacha Highlight

An *onen's* exemption from *mitzvos*

Mishnah Berurah Siman 71 Seif 1

מי שמת לו מת שהוא חייב להתאבל עליו וכו'

Someone whose relative died for whom he must mourn etc.

Shulchan Aruch writes that an *onen* is exempt from *krias shema* and *tefila* even if the obligation to bury the deceased does not rest on the *onen*. Mishnah Berurah (סק"ד) adds that the *onen* is also exempt from reciting *berachos* including *berachos* recited before eating and other *mitzvos*. Different reasons are given for the exemption of the *onen* from *mitzvos*. Mishnah Berurah (סק"ה) explains that the exemption is an expression of honor to the deceased and applies even if one is in a different city than the deceased. Rashba (שו"ת הרשב"א ח"ג סי' ש) writes that the exemption is based on the fact that the *onen* is engaged in a *mitzvah* and that exempts him from other *mitzvos*. Sefer Chaye Moshe presents a number of practical differences between these two explanations.

Mishnah Berurah (סק"ד) writes that an *onen* should wash his hands before eating bread but should not recite the associated *beracha*. Kaf HaChaim (אות י') adds that the *onen* should also wash his hands in the morning without reciting the associated *berachos* and he must wash *mayim acharonim* after eating. Aruch HaShulchan (יו"ד סי' שמ"א סע' י') explains that the reason the *onen* should wash is for cleanliness. Accordingly, he writes that the *onen* should wash without reciting the *beracha* after going to the bathroom as well.

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (שו"ת מנחת שלמה ח"א סי' צ"א אות כ"ה סק"ג) writes that an *onen* may put on his *talis koton* in the morning. He explains that since one's *talis koton* is put on together with the rest of one's clothing in the morning it is comparable to a *mitzvah* that is performed by intent alone and is not considered an affront to the honor due to the deceased. Regarding *sefiras ha'omer,* Biur Halacha (סי' תפ"ט סע' ח' ד"ה בלא ברכה) writes that Noda B'Yehudah was uncertain whether an *onen* should count since it takes just a moment and will not get in the way of attending to the needs of the deceased. His conclusion is that the *onen* should count without a *beracha* and on the remaining nights after the burial he may count with a *beracha*.