The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
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סימן פ"ט סעיף ג'-ד'

Overview

Siman 89 Seif 3:

It is prohibited for one to engage in his personal needs or to travel until he has recited *shemone esrei*. (Some authorities are lenient once a person has recited some of the *berachos* before ברוך שאמר but it is better to be stringent about this matter.) **It is also prohibited to eat or drink but it is permitted to drink water before *davening* whether during the week or whether on Shabbos and Yom Tov. Eating and drinking for medicinal purposes is also permitted.**

- Elya Rabba writes that one should not engage in any activity until he recites *birchos hashachar* and it is clear that he refers to the half hour before the light of the morning. (M.B. 17)
- Regarding *mincha* and *maariv* once the time to *daven* arrives the same restrictions apply. (M.B. 19)
- Even if one will be able to *daven* on time at one's destination it is prohibited to travel before *davening* but if one is in a pressing circumstance it is permitted to travel before *davening*. (M.B. 20)
- Water is permitted only if it does not have sugar. Tea and coffee are permitted without sugar and milk. According to some one must place the sugar cube in his mouth and drink the tea in that manner rather than put the sugar into the tea. The only allowance to put sugar in one's tea or to eat something before *davening* is if one is ill and needs it for medicinal purposes. Even in a case when it is permissible it is preferable if one first reads *shema*. (M.B. 22)
- One should not drink tea before *davening* with a group of friends. (M.B. 21)
- The obligation to recite *kiddush* does not begin until one has *davened*. (M.B. 23)
- Even if one is not completely ill he may eat or drink before *davening* if needed. (M.B. 24)

Siman 89 Seif 4:

Someone hungry or thirsty is categorized as ill. If he can focus his attention he should *daven* but if not if he wants he could wait to *daven* until he eats.

- Shulchan Aruch's wording implies that one is not obligated to drink if he is thirsty and will struggle to concentrate but if he wants to eat or drink to concentrate better he is permitted to do so. (M.B. 26)

Stories to Share

The Morning Dose

מ"ב סי' פ"ט, ס"ק כ"ב: "אבל אם לוקח מעט צוקע"ר בפיו אין זה בכלל גאוה

A certain man enjoyed a nice cup of coffee before davening. This helped him clear his brain so he could focus on his prayers. When he learned today's amud, he was very discouraged. Apparently, it was forbidden to drink coffee before davening unless it was black and contained no sugar. Although he could forgo milk, sugar was not negotiable. Although it appeared counterintuitive, the Mishhah Berurah writes that if one cannot drink the tea without it, he can place a sugar cube in his mouth while drinking. But when he tried this it felt extremely awkward. Yet without the coffee he could hardly function. Any chance of kavanah would surely evaporate if he did not get his morning dose. He wondered if there was a halachic way to have a decent cup of coffee in the morning.

When this question reached Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, zt"l, he ruled leniently. "Nowadays it is permitted to drink a coffee with sugar and milk if this improves his davening. There is no issue of it being prideful behavior nowadays. On the contrary, putting a sugar cube in one's mouth is forbidden in our times. Since this is never done, it appears to be conceit."

דולה ומשקה, ע' ס"ה, הערה 182

When someone asked about drinking soft drinks before davening, Rav Elyashiv, was again lenient. "It is even permitted to drink soft drinks before davening if necessary."

But Rav Eliyashiv, added a marked exception. "Drinking wine or beer is forbidden, however. Wine, because it is an important drink, and beer since it is chamar medinah."

פניני תפילה, ע' נ"ו-נ"ז

Halacha Highlight

Permitted activities before *davening*

Shulchan Aruch Siman 89 Seif 3

אסור לו להתעסק בצרכיו ... עד שיתפלל תפלת שמונה עשרה

It is prohibited to engage in one's activities ... until one *davens shemone esrei*

Shulchan Aruch (סע' ג') rules that one is not permitted to engage is personal activities or travel before *davening shemone esrei*. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (תפלה כהלכתה פ"ו הע' ל"ו) maintains that it is permitted for one to perform very simple activities that do not involve thought or time. Therefore, it is permitted to put clothes in the washing machine or bring out the garbage before *davening*. Eshel Avrohom suggests that any activity that is permitted during *Chol Hamoed* may be done before *davening*. Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק י"ח) writes that one should instruct his servants or others who may attend to his needs that when they wake up in the morning they should at least wash their hands, recite *birchos hashachar* and the first paragraph of *shema* before they begin work. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (תיקונים ומילואים לשש"כ פס"ו הע' מ"ג), however wrote that it is possible that it is permitted to order a taxi or hire a worker to one's home even though one knows that he does not *daven*. The rationale is that since they will not *daven* anyways it is not considered לפני עור to hire them to come early in the morning.

Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק ל"ו) writes that it is permitted for one to shop for Shabbos needs on *erev* Shabbos before *davening* since that is considered a *mitzvah* activity that is not encompassed by this restriction since it involves Hashem's needs. Rav Auerbach (תפלה כהלהתה שם ס"ק ל"ט) adds that it is permitted to purchase something to assist one's wife or takes care of the kids before *davening* since this is also considered a *mitzvah* activity.

Although Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק כ"ב) writes that it is prohibited to drink tea or coffee with milk and/or sugar, *Poskim* have concluded that nowadays since this is the common manner in which people drink these beverages it is permitted (ע' ארחות רבינו ח"א עמ' נ"ז, ערוה"ש סע' כ"ג והליכות שלמה תפלה פ"ב הלכה ב').