The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
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סימן צ"ו סעיף א'-ב'

Overview

Siman 96 Seif 1:

While *davening* one should not hold *tefillin*, a *sefer* of *Tanach*, a full plate, a knife, money or bread since he will be distracted that they may fall and he will not have proper concentration. One may hold a *lulav* on *Sukkos* since holding it is a *mitzvah* and will not distract him.

- The same halacha applies for krias shema and pesukei d'zimra. (M.B. 1)
- B'dieved one who held something is not required to daven again unless he did not have proper intent for the first berachah. (M.B. 2)
- Birkei Yosef writes that one is not permitted to have a child in front of him while he davens. (M.B. 4)
- There is a disagreement whether the restriction is limited to items that would result in a loss if they broke or whether it applies to any item and Taz agrees with the latter opinion. (M.B. 5)
- If a sefer fell and one can no longer concentrate one may pick it up when he finishes the beracha that he is reading but if he will not be distracted he should not interrupt. One should certainly not motion with one's fingers during davening. If one began davening and lost his place he may walk to a place where he knows a siddur is located. (M.B. 7)

Siman 96 Seif 2:

It is permitted to hold a *machzor* with the prayers while *davening*. The reason is that since it is needed for *davening* it will not be distracting similar to the *lulav* whose taking is a *mitzvah* and thus does not distract. If one was not holding his *siddur* when he started *davening* he should not search for it while *davening* unless it was in a designated place in which case it is permitted to take it while *davening* so that one can *daven* from the *siddur*.

- Later authorities write that even during *chazaras hashatz* it is appropriate for one to have a *siddur* open in front of him so that he will be able to pay attention to the *shaliach tzibbur*. (M.B. 9)

Halacha Highlight

Holding objects while *davening*

Shulchan Aruch Siman 96 Seif 1

כשהוא מתפלל לא יאחז בידו וכו'

While *davening* one should not hold etc.

Shulchan Aruch (סע' א') presents a list of items that one should not hold while he is *davening*. Mishnah Berurah (סק"ה) notes that there is a disagreement concerning the intent of Shulchan Aruch. According to one opinion, the restriction applies only to those objects that would fall, become damaged and cause a loss. The second opinion maintains that Shulchan Aruch was merely presenting common examples of items that a person may hold while *davening* and the restriction extends to any object. Pri Megadim (משב"ז סק"ב) explains that it is not proper etiquette to stand before distinguished people holding objects and certainly it is lacking respect if one holds objects while standing in conversation with Hashem. For this reason Sefer Piskei Teshuvos (אות א') writes that one should not stand with items hanging around one's neck or over one's shoulders while *davening* since one would not stand that way while talking to a distinguished person in such a manner. Therefore, one should remove his backpack, camera or other similar item before *davening*. If, however, one fears that while *davening* it may get stolen it is permitted to *daven* with them in place.

Teshuvas L'Horos Nosson (י"א סי' ט') applies these restrictions to cell phones. He writes that having a cell phone that could ring while *davening* and distract others is worse than the other restrictions that Chazal instituted so that one should distract others during *davening*, e.g. walking within four *amos* of someone *davening*. One who does this mocks the sanctity of the *Bais HaKnesses* of *Bais HaMidrash*. Even if one sets his phone on vibrate, if it being on could cause a person to interrupt his *davening* to look at it or, even worse, answer a call it is still prohibited based on this *halacha* that one may not hold something that one would not hold when visiting with a distinguished person.

Stories to Share

A Common Problem

מ"ב ס' צ"ו, ס"ק ז': "מתר לילך למקום הידוע לו לקח משם סדור..."

One common challenge involves the question of when to bring a child to shul. After all, if a small child disturbs the tefillah this can ruin everyone's davening. The Shelah Hakadosh—brought in the Mishnah Berurah several times—actually writes that one should not bring small children who are certain to disturb. He points out that this is not positive chinuch at all. Since the child cannot sit still, bringing him to shul is actually training the child to run around and cause a disturbance there! But what is one to do when a child who usually does not disturb has a sudden outburst?

Once, a small child fell and began to howl right after the community began shemonah esrei. His father was unsure of what to do. On the one hand, on today's amud we find that if one got confused during davening one can even move from his place and get a siddur. But that may only be permitted if he cannot daven. In this case, the father felt that he could daven, but he—and the entire minyan—would likely have a hard time concentrating. He wondered whether this was also a reason to permit him to interrupt his shemonah esrei to remove his child from shul. At the time, being unsure of what to do, he continued. But later on, he referred his question to a higher authority.

When his question reached Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, zt" he ruled that he should definitely interrupt his shemonah esrei to remove the child. Rav Eliyashiv answered, "When a child cries in shul and this disturbs the congregation, it is permitted for one to stop davening and go out of the shul with the child. He must not allow the child to disturb the minyan!"