The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
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סימן צ"ט סעיף א'-ג'

Halacha Highlight

Davening while drunk

Shulchan Aruch Siman 99 Seif 3

אם התפלל תפלתו תועבה וכו'

And if he *davened* his *tefila* is an abomination etc.

Shulchan Aruch (סע' א') rules that if someone davened after drinking more than a *revi'is* of wine and it affected him to the degree that he would not stand before a king, his *tefila* is an abomination and he must repeat the *tefila* when he sobers up. Chaye Moshe cites a disagreement whether the *halacha* that requires someone who *davened* while drunk to repeat *davening* is Rabbinic or Biblical. The reasoning behind the classification of a *tefila* by someone who is drunk as an abomination is also subject to dispute. Rashba explains that a person who is drunk becomes so confused that he could easily think that heresy is true. Therefore, one who *davens* while drunk could easily think about heretical ideas while *davening* and for this reason it is comparable to idolatry (ע' מ"ב סק"ה). Aruch HaShulchan (סע' א' – ד') writes that one who knowingly *davens* while drunk shows a tremendous audacity (עזות פנים) to Hashem and that is the reason he is categorized as an idolater because he demonstrates that service of Hashem is not important (חיי משה לסע' א').

Rema writes that *krias shema* follows the same *halachos* as *shemone esrei* but one may recite other *berachos* while drunk. Mishnah Berurah (סק"ט) notes that since Rema did not differentiate between different *berachos* it seems that one may even recite *birkas hamazon* while drunk. Nimukei Orech Chaim (אות א') expresses surprise at why Rema equated other *berachos* with *birkas hamazon*. The source of Rema's ruling is the Yerushalmi that indicates that one is obligated to recite *birkas hamazon* even when he is full and being full includes even drinking. The Torah itself mandates that a person recite *birkas hamazon* after drinking but what is that source that we would apply that leniency to other *berachos* when we see that *halacha* does not allow a person to say *shemone esrei* while drunk. He leaves this matter unresolved (ע"ע במ"ב ס"ק י"א בשם הגר"א).

Stories to Share

The Kohanim and Wine

ש"ע ס' צ"ט, ב': "דרך מיל ושינה כל שהוא מפיגין את היין..."

The Ponevezher Rav, recalled how he became the youngest member of the kodshim kollel of the Chofetz Chaim in Radin.

"A short while after I had joined the yeshiva in Radin, when I left the beis medrash after shachris, I noticed the Chofetz Chaim standing by the door. He looked at me in a marked manner as baalei mussar generally do when they want to speak with someone. I immediately approached him.

He took me by the arm and said, "You are a kohein, so let me ask you a question: We find that since the Beis HaMikdash can be rebuilt on any weekday, it is proper nowadays for kohanim to refrain from drinking wine. Kohanim must be ready to do the avodah at all times, and since it is prohibited to do the avodah while drunk, we really shouldn't drink at all. Yet the gemara then says that our 'kalkalah,' that which might otherwise be our ruin, is also our rectification. Since kohanim don't know to which mishmar they belong, there will be a big wait until each kohein will be told this vital information by Eliyahu HaNavi."

"The Shulchan Aruch rules that drinking wine wears off by sleeping or walking. Any negative effects of the wine will wear off by the time each kohein gets to his turn. Now, that's fine regarding to wine. But what will a kohein do who is not familiar with the seder avodah? Is he not much worse off than a drunk? Traveling or sleeping will correct inebriation, not ignorance! You are a kohein. We are waiting for Moshiach every instant. How will you do the avodah ? It is incumbent upon you to learn seder kodshim right away!"

"I joined the Chofetz Chaim's kodshim kollel that very day!"

מאיר עיני ישראל, ח"ה, ע' 336

Overview

Siman 99 Seif 1:

One who drank a *revi'is* of wine may not *daven* until the effects of the wine subside. If one drank a greater quantity but can still speak before a king and *davened* he is credited for *davening*. If he is not able to speak before a king his *tefila* is an abomination and he must *daven* again when the effects of the wine subside. Even if the time for *tefila* passed he should make it up in the *tefila* that follows in accordance with the law of one who is a *shogeg* and missed a *tefila*. The law for *krias shema* is the same as the law of *tefila* but one is permitted to recite other *berachos* while drunk.

- The same halacha applies to other alcoholic beverages. (M.B. 1)
- This applies if one drinks the wine at one time but if one drank that quantity in two drinks or if it was watered down it is permitted to daven. Magen Avrohom asserts that wine drunk during the meal doesn't make one drunk and Pri Megadim writes that it depends upon the person. (M.B. 2)
- One may not daven even if the time for davening will pass. Yam Shel Shlomo contends that since anyway we do not have such good concentration one should not allow the time for davening to pass. (M.B. 3)
- Even one who is accustomed to drinking should not daven l'chatchila if he drank a revi'is of wine. (M.B. 4)
- Davening while drunk is comparable to idolatry and one who refrains from davening while drunk will be saved from calamity. (M.B. 5)
- Even if one began drinking after the time for davening arrived he is a shogeg as long as he had reason to think that he would be sober again to daven. (M.B. 6)
- Birchos krias shema is treated the same as shema. (M.B. 7)
- Levush disagrees and contends that it is permitted to recite shema while drunk but it seems from the Gra's understanding of the Yerushalmi that it is prohibited and one should be stringent about this matter. (M.B. 8)
- One may even be lenient regarding *birkas hamazon* even though it is Biblical. (M.B. 9)
- One who is drunk is not included in the minyan and it is unclear about his status for a zimun. (M.B. 10)
- According to the Gra one should not even recite other berachos while drunk. This discussion applies up until one who is as drunk as Lot but once one crosses that line he is exempt from *mitzvos* and whatever he did during that time in the form of *tefila* must be repeated. (M.B. 11)

Siman 99 Seif 2:

Travelling a *mil* and sleeping even the slightest amount dulls the effect of the wine. This is true if one drank only a *revi'is* but if he drank more than a *revi'is* sleep and traveling will strengthen the effect of the wine. This applies when one walks by foot but riding will certainly dull the effects of the wine.

- According to some opinions that riding requires three mil for the effects of the wine to dissipate. (M.B. 12)
- A long sleep certainly dulls the effect of the wine. (M.B. 13)
- Everything depends upon the quantity of wine and if one drinks a large quantity of wine, even three mil would not be enough to nullify the effects of the wine. (M.B. 15)

Siman 99 Seif 3:

Anyone who drank can gauge for himself whether he feels that the effects of the wine have subsided. For this reason we are not particular regarding this *halacha* since our wines are not strong and we *daven* even after drinking a *revi'is* of wine. Certainly, if one is *davening* with a *siddur* we are not concerned about slight drunkenness.

- Rema's statement applies to one who drank only a little but one who is drunk to the degree that his *tefila* is an abomination may not *daven* and if he does he must repeat his *tefila*. (M.B. 16)
- Rema's comment is to justify the common practice but one should certainly avoid *davening* while drunk. (M.B. 17)