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

Overview

Siman 101 Seif 3:

According to some, it is permitted for one to *daven* in an audible tone on Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur even when one is with a *tzibbur*. And this is our custom; nevertheless, one should be cautious not to raise his voice too much.

- Magen Avrohom writes that it is better to *daven* quietly if one can concentrate in that manner. (M.B. 11)
- It is appropriate for *chazzanim* to raise their voices as they *daven* since the tefila of the *shaliach tzibbur* was enacted to be said out loud. (M.B. 12)

Siman 101 Seif 4:

One may *daven* in any language he wants. This ruling is limited to the *tzibbur* but an individual may only *daven* in *Lashon Kodesh*. Some say that that this restriction applies to one's personal requests, e.g. *davening* for someone who is ill or other distressful circumstance in one's home but established prayers recited by the *tzibbur* may be recited in any language even by an individual. Some say that even personal requests may be said in any language except for Aramaic.

It is preferable to daven in Lashon Kodesh. (M.B. 13)

- Chasam Sofer clarifies that the allowance to daven in another language is limited to occasionally davening in another language but it is may not be done on a regular basis. (M.B. 13)
- When davening in another language one must understand that language but it is not necessary to understand Lashon Kodesh to daven in Lashon Kodesh. (M.B. 14)
- The tzibbur does not require an advocate since Hashem will accept their tefilos. (M.B. 15)
- The restriction against davening in a foreign language for someone ill applies when not in the patient's presence but when in his presence one may *daven* in any language since Hashem is there. (M.B. 16)
- One may *daven* an established prayer in another language even when it is not the time that the *tzibbur* is *davening* since Hashem pays attention to established prayers. (M.B. 17)
- A *tzibbur* may *daven* even in Aramaic and for that reason we say יקום פרקן and בריך שמיה. Accordingly, one *davening* by himself should not say these prayers. (M.B. 19)

Halacha Highlight

Davening in foreign languages

Shulchan Aruch Siman 101 Seif 4
יכול להתפלל בכל לשון שירצה
One is permitted to *daven* in any language that he chooses

Shulchan Aruch (סע' ד') writes that one may *daven* in any language that he chooses. He then limits this allowance to the *tzibbur,* but an individual must *daven* specifically in *Lashon Kodesh*. Biur Halacha (ד"ה יכול להתפלל) references Magen Avrohom citing Sefer Chassidim who asserts that it is better to *daven* in a language one understands if one does not understand *Lashon Kodesh*. It is evident, however, that this ruling is limited to someone who is G-d-fearing and wishes to *daven* in another language so that he will be able to concentrate on his *davening*. One who is not so G-d-fearing should *daven* in *Lashon Kodesh* even though he does not understand it. The reason is that *Lashon Kodesh* has special qualities and it is the language used by Hashem to communicate with the prophets. Chazal also teach that it is the language used by Hashem to create the world. Another reason it is important to *daven* in *Lashon Kodesh* even if one does not understand the words is that when the *Anshei K'nesses HaGedolah* composed *shemone esrei* they were comprised of 120 elders including some prophets. They chose each word with great care and precision to assure that it would have the proper spiritual effects. Their composition is so potent that it can have the desired effect even if one does not understand the words.

Shulchan Aruch concludes with the opinion that maintains that individuals may ask for their needs in any language that they choose except for Aramaic. The reason is that the Angels do not understand Aramaic (ע' מ"ב ס"ק ט"ו וע"ע בא"ר ס"ס ס"ב שהקשה דהלא תפלתינו להקב"ה ואין אנו צריכים למלאכים וע"ש מה שתירץ). Accordingly, Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק י"ט) writes that one may not read יקום פרקן or בריך שמיה when *davening* without a *tzibbur*. Rav Chaim Kanievski (אשי ישראל שאלה קי"ט ו-שנ"ח) rules that if one is *davening* with the *tzibbur* but is behind he may read the Aramaic paragraphs even if the *tzibbur* already finished them.

Stories to Share

Hebrew or English?

ש"ע, ס' ק"א, ד': "יכול להתפלל בכל לשון..."

The baal teshuvah movement has brought to light many issues that were hardly addressed by earlier poskim. One such issue is regarding prayer. Is it better for ba'alei teshuvah to daven the daily services in English or in Hebrew? They are surely more comfortable in English since they can keep up and they understand the whole prayer.

One rabbi was asked just such a question by a relatively new ba'al teshuvah. "Rabbi, I am not sure what I should do. On the one hand, I struggle to daven but still can only recite the minimum brochos, boruch sheamar, ashrei and from yotzer ohr until shemonah esrei with any fluency. And even so, I am not sure what it all means. Should I just daven in English, or should I continue to say what I have been saying?"

The rabbi replied, "Even though one should not skip regularly, it is better for you to do so than to regularly say all of the prayers in English."

The young man asked the rabbi, "But why?"

He answered, "Although the Shulchan Aruch rules that one discharges his obligation if he prays in any language, the Chasam Sofer, writes that one should not make a regular habit of this practice. (שו"ת חתם סופר, או"ח, פ"ג) The Nefesh Hachaim, zt"l, writes that one who prays in Hebrew accesses the highest realms even if he doesn't know what he is saying. The prayers in Hebrew are very powerful and were composed through ruach hakodesh. (נפש החיים, שער ב') Saying them in English simply does not have the same effect. Also, I don't believe you will remain ignorant of the meaning of the prayers. In time, I am sure you will learn and know the meaning of the prayers."

The rabbi concluded, "Nevertheless, you should make strong efforts to increase what you say, until you are saying the entire davening.