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

Overview

Siman 159 Seif 1:

One must wash his hands with a utensil. Any utensil is acceptable even one made from excrement, stone or earth. The utensil must have a capacity of at least a *revi'is*. If there is hole that allows liquid into the utensil, meaning if one were to place the hole on a liquid the liquid would seep into the utensil and this is larger than a hole that allows a liquid to drip out of the utensil, it is no longer considered a utensil and may not be used for washing even if it could retain a *revi'is* below the hole.

- A leather utensil made to hold liquid may also be used. (M.B. 2)
- If one pours liquid into the utensil and it seeps out drop after drop it is clear that the hole is large enough to allow a liquid to seep in. (M.B. 7)
- If the hole is small enough that liquids could escape but do not enter that hole the utensil is considered intact and could be used for washing. (M.B. 8)
- Bais Yosef indicates that even a small hole in the bottom of the utensil does not nullify the status of the utensil but one should be stringent unless he has no another utensil. (M.B. 8)

Stories to Share

The Measure of Yiras Shomayim

ש"ע ס' קנ"ט, א': "אין נוטלים לידים אלא בכלי..."

Today's amud begins to discuss the halachos of washing the hands for bread.

Rav Leibele Eiger's father-in-law wondered how his son-in-law, the son of Rav Shlomo Eiger and the grandson of the illustrious Rav Akiva Eiger, could have joined the chassidim. The moment he had the chance he confronted Rav Leibele about this. "I simply cannot fathom how you became a chassid. I spent quite a lot of time checking out chassidim and I did not find either Torah or avodah there. All I saw was mockery and lightheadedness. I find both Torah and avodah, it seems unfathomable that someone of your stature joined the chassidim."

"But that explains in a nutshell why I became a chassid," Rav Leibele replied.

While his father-in-law looked astounded, Rav Leibele explained his meaning. "I became a chassid because of how misnagdim view the chassidim and vice versa. It should be obvious that one sees what he looks for. I noticed that the misnagdim look for blemishes in others and merits in their own camp, and that is what they find. Conversely, the chassidim search for the bad in themselves and the good in others, and that is exactly what they perceive."

חסידים מספרים, ח"ג, ע' 60

When Rav Leibele became a chassid his father, Rav Shlomo, asked Rabbi Akiva Eiger how he could tell if his son was going off the derech. Rav Akiva Eiger told him a surprising way to measure his son's yiras shomayim. "Have someone observe him when he washes for bread."

The observer quickly noticed that Rav Leibele washed his hands with many stringencies. When Rav Akiva Eiger heard about this, he was very gratified. "If so, there is no reason to worry—clearly he still has yiras shomayim!"

הגדה של פסח מפי סופרים וספרים, ע' תס"ח

Halacha Highlight

Using a disposable cup for washing

Shulchan Aruch Siman 159 Seif 1

וכל הכלים כשרים

Any utensil is acceptable

Shulchan Aruch writes that when washing before eating bread it is necessary to wash from a *kli* – a utensil. He then explains that the utensil may be made from any material, even excrement, stone or earth as long as its capacity is at least a *revi'is* and the *kli* is intact. Teshuvas Tzitz Eliezer (חי"ב סי' כ"ג) ruled that it is permitted for one to wash with a disposable cup. Since the cup is made for drinking it is considered a utensil. The fact that people throw it away after a single use does not detract from its status as a *kli* since the reason people throw it away is that it is so cheap it is not worth it to keep it for another use. He based his opinion on Rambams' ruling (פ"ב מהל' כלים ה"א) who wrote that even a utensil made of paper is categorized as a utensil and subject to the tumah that *keilim* could contract. Disposable cups are also not similar to utensils made from turnip or squash that are not considered *keilim*. The difference between them is that utensils made from turnip or squash are not able to be used as *keilim* for extended periods of time since they would rot over time. A disposable cup could in theory be used as a utensil for an extended period of time so it is categorized as a utensil.

Sefer Chaye Moshe contends that even Rav Moshe Feinstein, who does not permit the recitation of *kiddush* on a paper cup, would agree that a paper cup may be used for washing one's hands. Rav Feinstein (אג"מ ח"ג סי' ל"ט) explains that for *kiddush* it is necessary for one to use a utensil that is beautiful and whole, and paper cups are not considered beautiful. Since there is no requirement for the utensil one uses for washing to be beautiful, it follows that one may use anything that qualifies as a *kli* for washing one's hands.