The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
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סימן ק"ס סעיף י"ג-ט"ו

Overview

Siman 160 Seif 13:

It is necessary to have a revi'is of water. This requirement is for one person but when two people will wash together the last person does not require a revi'is even if they wash successively as long as the stream does not break. How does this work? If there was a revi'is in a utensil and one stretched out his hands and someone poured water over his hands and then a second person came along and stretched out his hands beneath the first person's hands but close by and the stream pours on the first person's hands and on the second person's hands that are beneath them, both of their hands are tahor even though a revi'is of water does not reach the second person's hands since the water that reaches his hands is leftover from tahor water. Some authorities permit this even if they wash consecutively since when the first person began to wash there was a revi'is of water it is effective even for the second person since the water is leftover from tahor water. Three or four people could wash from half a log and a full log could be used to wash numerous people's hands as long as there is enough water to pour on their hands three times. (Similarly,) **four or five people could align their hands horizontally or vertically and wash them all at once as long as there is some space between their hands so that the water will reach all of their hands.**

- The water is poured two times, once to make one's hands tahor and the second to make the water on his hands tahor. If the water was poured at once on both of his hands his hands will be tahor. When water is readily available it is preferred for one to use more water to wash one's hands. (M.B. 66)
- One revi'is is sufficient whether one washes hands together or whether one washes each hand at a time. If one is washing one hand he must also use a revi'is of water. (M.B. 67)
- The utensil must contain a revi'is since less than that cannot make one's hands tahor but it is not necessary to pour that quantity on a single hand. Below the opinion of later authorities are recorded and they write that one should have at least a revi'is for each hand. (M.B. 67)
- Later authorities explain that it was planned that both of them would wash their hands. If, however, the intent was to wash the first person's hands and the second person put his hands under the stream that was not interrupted his washing was ineffective and he must dry his hands and wash again. (M.B. 68)
- When the stream does not break it is considered as though the second person is washing with a full revi'is. (M.B. 71)
- If their hands are far apart it is as though the second person is washing with the water used by the first person to wash his hands which is invalid. (M.B. 72)
- Even according to this opinion they must wash together, it is just that the second person waits until the first person washed but if the second person comes after a delay it is ineffective if the water is less than a revi'is. (M.B. 73)
- According to this opinion one must pour two times and retain enough water to pour on the second person as opposed to the first opinon that maintains that the first person one must pour a full revi'is. In a pressing circumstance one may be lenient in accordance with the second opinion. (M.B. 74)
- Tur wrote that one need only wash two times and it is only when one's hands are dirty is it necessary to wash an additional time to remove the dirt. (M.B. 77)

Siman 160 Seif 14:

The revi'is has to be gathered in a single utensil for if one washed from an eighth of a log and then from another eighth of a log his hands remain tamei.

- Even if both eighths were poured at the same time the washing is ineffective since it is necessary to have a revi'is gathered in a single utensil. (M.B. 81)

Siman 160 Seif 15:

The revi'is requirement applies whether one's hands are large or small. If two people washed, the first person one hand and the second person one hand and then the second person washed his second hand it is comparable to three people washing their hands and a utensil that contains half a log is required for their hands to become tahor. If the utensil does not contain half a log his second hand is not tahor since more than two people cannot wash with less than half a log.

- The leniency to wash two people's hands from a revi'is applies when the first person washes both hands and then the second person washes both of his hands. (M.B. 84)

Halacha Highlight

Washing with a revi'is

Shulchan Aruch Siman 160 Seif 13

צריך שיהא במים רביעית

It is necessary to have a revi'is of water.

Shulchan Aruch (סע' י"ג) states that the minimum quantity of water that one must have to wash his hands is a revi'is. The reason this quantity is the minimum amount of water that is needed is that Biblically a revi'is of water is considered a mikvah in which one may immerse small utensils (See Pesachim 14b). Although Chazal enacted that utensils must be immersed in a mikvah that contains forty seah, nevertheless, once they decreed that a person's hands would be considered tamei they only required the smallest size mikvah that has the capacity to affect taharah. For this reason it is essential that the revi'is of water be held in a single container so that the water has the ability to make one's hands tahor. Merely pouring a revi'is of water is insufficient if the water does not come from a container that held the entire revi'is at once. For this reason Shulchan Aruch (סע' י"ד) rules that if one pours a revi'is of water from two smaller utensils, each one holding only an eighth of a log his hands remain tamei.

Once one has a utensil that can hold at least a revi'is and one has a revi'is of water in that utensil it is unnecessary for one to actually pour the full revi'is on one's hands. As long as one poured enough water to cover one's hands his hands are tahor even if he only poured some of the water onto his hands. L'chatchila, however, one should pour at least a revi'is on each hand preferably pouring a full revi'is on each hand two times (פסקי תשובות אות כ"ב).

Stories to Share

Double-Duty

ש"ע ק"ס, י"ג: "סמוך ליד הראשון..."

In the early part of the twentieth century there was a terrible drought in Israel. It was essential for people to conserve water in any way possible since the little water which was available was rationed mercilessly by the Turkish authorities. It was essential to wash with the smallest amount of water possible. As we find on today's amud, two people can wash with the same water if one puts his hand near his friend's hand. The question precisely how close one's hand must be.

Among people who were all washing with two hands, one could find various replies. "It seems clear that this is the same halachah as lavud. Just as we hold that if there is less than three tefachim between sechach or a wall the space is considered halachically closed, the same holds true for netilas yadayim."But other people claimed that the maximum distance should be less than that.

When this question reached Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld he ruled with characteristic clarity. "This halachah has nothing to do with lavud or any other absolute amount. It all depends on whether it appears to all observers that the second man also wishes to wash his hands with the water used by the first. As long as it appears that both wish to wash with the same water, they may do so."

שלמת חיים, ח"ג, ס' ב'