The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
Sun, Mar 6, 2022 ■ ג' אדר ב', תשפ"ב
סימן קס"ג סעיף א'-ב'

Overview

Siman 163 Seif 1:

If water is not available within four mil of the direction that one is travelling or one mil in the opposite direction he should wrap his hands in a cloth and eat the bread or the food that is dipped in liquid (or eat with a spoon).

- When water is available it is prohibited to eat without washing out of concern that one may touch the food. (M.B. 2)
- When one is travelling and he estimates that he will not find water in the next four mil and he wants to eat now he may eat by wrapping his hands in a cloth. If, however, he estimates that he would find water he must wait. If he estimates that behind him within the distance of a mil he will find water he must go back to obtain that water but further than that he may wrap his hands. (M.B. 3)
- Someone standing guard is not required to travel more than a mil in any direction. Chaye Adam and others contend that in one's home he is not required to travel more than a mil. (M.B. 3)
- The correct word is לוטand it means to wrap. (M.B. 4)
- Biur Halacha writes that according to Shulchan Aruch it seems logical that one should have to wrap both hands even if he will only eat with one hand but according to Rema one could be lenient about this. (M.B. 5)
- Later authorities wonder the source for Rema's ruling and conclude that if one has a cloth he should wrap his hands in a cloth. (M.B. 7)

Siman 163 Seif 2:

Someone who feeds others is not required to wash but the one eating is required to wash even though someone else is putting food in his mouth and he does not touch the food. The same is true for someone who eats with a מגרפה (a utensil with teeth) **that he must wash his hands.** (It is prohibited to feed someone who does not wash his hands due to the prohibition of לפני עור וכו').

- The enactment to wash is limited to one who is eating. (M.B. 8)
- This applies only if one is certain that the other person did not wash but if one is uncertain he may be fed. It is appropriate when giving food to a poor person one does not know to encourage him to wash before eating. (M.B. 11)
- לפני עור applies only if the food belongs to the one who is feeding his friend, otherwise it is only מסייע. (M.B. 12)

Halacha Highlight

Giving food to someone who will not wash

Rema Siman 163 Seif 2

ואסור להאכיל למי שלא נטל ידיו

It is prohibited to feed someone who did not wash his hands

Rema (סע' ב') writes that it is prohibited to feed someone bread who will not wash his hands due to the prohibition of לפני עור לא תתן מכשול—you may not place a stumbling block before the blind. Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק י"א) explains that Rema's ruling is limited to a case where one is certain that he will not wash, but if one is uncertain whether someone will wash it is permitted to give them food. Certainly when the person in question is poor one may be lenient and provide him with food even though one is uncertain whether he will wash before eating bread. However, it is preferred for one to remind a poor person whom he does not know that he should wash before he eats bread.

Rav Moshe Feinstein (או"ח ח"ה סי' י"ג אות ה') writes that if one is concerned that not offering a guest food will cause a desecration of Hashem's Name, leading the guest to assume that religious people do not have proper manners or demonstrate basic etiquette it is permitted to place food before him and inform him that he should wash and recite a beracha before eating. This allowance may be utilized only until one has demonstrated to that person that religious Jews do have proper manners and exercise basic etiquette. Once that has been established it is prohibited to offer food to someone who will not wash or recite a beracha. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (שו"ת מנחת שלמה ח"א סי' ל"ה) asserts that it is always permitted to provide such a person food and it is not comparable to placing a stumbling block before the blind since it saves the guest from becoming hateful towards religious Jews. Rav Shmuel HaLevi Wosner (שו"ת שבט הלוי ח"ד סי' י"ז) also ruled that whenever there is a concern that the guest will otherwise eat non-kosher food it is permitted to serve him food even though he will not wash or recite the appropriate beracha.

Stories to Share

Water, Water Everywhere

ש"ע ס' קס"ג, א': "ואם אין מים מצויים לפניו..."

Once, a man travelling on an bus fell asleep and continued sleeping when the bus pulled over at a rest stop for a short break. When he woke up he found that he had a very long time to go before arriving at his destination and he was quite hungry. Of course he could get off the bus at one of the many bus stops on the way, but then he would have to wait for the next bus and he would miss an important meeting which was the entire purpose of his trip to begin with. As we find on today's amud, one may cover his hands and eat without washing only if water is unavailable. In this case, plenty of water was available, but it would cause him a loss to go and procure it. Was he required to bear a monetary loss for this mitzvah?

When this question reached Rav Yosef Shalom Eliyashiv, zt"l, he ruled that one is not required to sustain a monetary loss to obtain water with which to wash his hands. "Even if one is poor and if he gets off the bus, the loss of the money for the ticket is difficult for him, he may eat without washing on the bus."

שו"ת אבני ישפה, ח"ב, ס' י"א