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

Overview

Siman 164 Seif 1:

A person may wash his hands in the morning and stipulate that it should be effective for the entire day even if it is not a pressing circumstance as long as he is able to not become distracted from his hands (or make them dirty)**. If water is readily available it is preferred that he wash again but he should not repeat the beracha.** The stipulation is effective only if the washing was not for eating but if one will be eating he may not make this stipulation.

- One should stipulate verbally or at least mentally that the washing should be effective for all the eating he will do that day. When washing one must be careful regarding all of the details involved in washing for bread since the washing will be effective for eating. (M.B. 1)
- There are Poskim who are lenient only in a pressing circumstance. (M.B. 2)
- One must watch his hands that he should not touch a dirty part of the body. The reason a stipulation is necessary in this case is that people would otherwise forget and would not be careful with their hands. (M.B. 3)
- Dirt that mandates washing is excrement or sweat, even if one merely touched a covered part of the body but regular dirt does not mandate washing again. Authorities write that nowadays we do not make this stipulation since people are not capable of keeping their minds on their hands. However, in a pressing circumstance one may rely upon this stipulation but one must be very careful to watch his hands that they should not touch something that would mandate another washing. (M.B. 4)
- If water is readily available one should wash a second time. (M.B. 5)
- The same applies to any washing that occurs over the course of a day that is not directly related to eating. (M.B. 6)
- In other words if someone washes for a meal and stipulates that he should be able to engage in other activities before eating the washing is ineffective. If one washed for a meal and stipulated that it should be effective for another meal it is effective assuming that he watched his hands and did not touch something that is dirty. (M.B. 7)

Halacha Highlight

Adding a stipulation to a washing

Shulchan Aruch Siman 164 Seif 1
ומתנה עליהם כל היום
And he may stipulate about them for the entire day

Shulchan Aruch writes that l'chatchila a person could wash his hands and stipulate that that washing should be effective for the bread that he will eat later that day. As long as he does not lose focus on his hands over the course of the day he may eat bread without having to wash again. Being that he was washing for another reason anyway it is acceptable to stipulate that the washing should also be for a later meal. Rema adds that this stipulation is not effective if one wants to engage in another activity between washing and eating. The reason is that the washing must be followed immediately by eating. One may, however, wash before one meal and have in mind that that washing should also be effective for a meal that one will eat later that day (מ"ב סק"ז).

Mishnah Berurah (סק"ב) cites authorities who disagree with Shulchan Aruch and contend that one should not utilize this stipulation unless he is in a pressing circumstance. There are different reasons given to explain this stringent position. Shulchan Aruch HaRav (סע' א') expresses concern that when others see him eat bread without washing they will assume that he is not Jewish and may feed him non-kosher food. Chazon Ish (או"ח סי' כ,ה סק"ט) writes that one should not utilize the option presented by Shulchan Aruch since it causes one to lose out on reciting the beracha of על נטילת ידים. This approach follows Sha'ar Hatzion's assertion that when one follows Shulchan Aruch's suggestion he does not recite the beracha of על נטילת ידים for that washing. The reason one does not recite על נטילת ידים even though one's intent is that the washing should be effective so that one could eat bread later is that since the washing does not immediately proceed the eating a beracha was not mandated (חזו"א שם סק"ח).

Stories to Share

Roughing It

ש"ע קס"ד, א': "אם נוטל לצורך אכילה..."

Today's amud continues discussing the halachos of washing for bread.

Living on a yishuv in Eretz Yisrael can be something of a challenge. Many of the amenities of modern life are either lacking or at best are not always available. One who wishes to live this kind of life must be willing to rough it; even the basics like running water are not always guaranteed.

One man living on a yishuv was surprised to encounter intriguing halachic questions he had never heard of before. For example, what was he to do if there was suddenly no water available? When this happened the first time, he drove his car to the nearest store—quite a distance—and purchased several bottles of water. The water was not costly but the gas to the distant store was a considerable expense. This man wondered if he had been allowed to wrap his hands and eat without washing. And if he was permitted to cover his hands in this instance, perhaps he could cover his sandwich instead of his hands?

When these questions reached Rav Yosef Shalom Eliyashiv, zt"l, he ruled that it really depends on how hard it was for him to pay for gas. "As I have already explained, one is not obligated to lose money to find water to wash with for bread. But determining what is a loss is only possible on an individual basis. If one only drives when he must because of financial constraints he is not required to ride in his car and purchase water; if he never goes anywhere in the car without it being crucial, is not absolutely required. But if when he needs to go somewhere he will not walk even if it is possible but uses his car as a convenience, we see that he is not a person who is that particular and he must drive to get water as well.

"As far as covering the bread, this does not help at all. In this case, it is no different than one who eats with a fork, which we find is the same as eating with one's hands."

שו"ת אבני ישפה, ח"ב, סי' י"א