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

Overview

Siman 165 Seif 1:

One who relieved himself and will then eat a meal must wash twice. After the first washing he should recite אשר יצר and after the second washing he should recite על נטילת ידים. If he wants to wash only once he should recite אשר יצר after he poured the water once and rubbed his hands and על נטילת ידים while he is drying his hands.

- Shelah writes that a person should see if he needs to relieve himself before beginning a meal. (M.B. 1)
- Later authorities write that when washing the first time it should not constitute a "full washing" rather it should just be to clean one's hands. (M.B. 2)
- Many Poskim maintain that אשר יצר is not an interruption between al netilas yadayim and hamotzi; therefore, if one washed fully with the intent to eat he should say al netilas yadayim followed by asher yatzar. Similarly, if it would be difficult to wash twice one may wash once and say al netilas yadayim followed by asher yatzar. Magen Avrohom writes that one who relieves himself during the meal washes once and recited al netilas yadayim followed by asher yatzar since he will not recite hamotzi. (M.B. 2)
- In other words, after pouring less than a revi'is of water on his hands and rubbing them together he should recite אשר יצר and then he should pour a second time to make the water on his hands tahor and then recite על נטילת ידים and dry his hands. (M.B. 3)
- Later authorities write that since we wash with a full revi'is one's hands are fit for eating after the first washing and אשר יצר would constitute an interruption between washing and the beracha, therefore it is preferable to follow Shulchan Aruch's first approach. (M.B. 3)

Halacha Highlight

Relieving oneself before a meal

Shulchan Aruch Siman 165 Seif 1

העושה צרכיו ורוצה לאכל

One who relieved himself and wants to eat

Shulchan Aruch discusses one who relieved himself and wants to eat a meal. The difficulty he faces if he were to wash once is how to manage the berachos. If he first recites אשר יצר and then recites על נטילת ידים he would have interrupted between washing and the beracha of על נטילת ידים. If he first recites the beracha of על נטילת ידים and then אשר יצר he would have interrupted between the beracha of על נטילת ידים and המוציא. It is also not proper to hold off the beracha of אשר יצר until after one recites המוציא since one should recite אשר יצר immediately after one relieves himself (מ"ב סק"ב). Therefore, the ideal approach is for a person to pour water on his hands once, recite אשר יצר and then he should pour water on his hands a second time and recite על נטילת ידים. Mishnah Berurah (שם) in the name of the Acharonim writes that one should be cautious when he pours water the first time on his hand that it should not be a washing that is valid for eating bread. For example, he should pour only a small amount of water on his hands to cleanse them and then he should rub his hands together before reciting אשר יצר. The rationale is that if he were to wash his hands in a manner that makes his hands tahor for eating he runs into the problem of managing the different berachos.

Despite Mishnah Berurah's position about this matter, many Gedolim follow Mishnah Berurah's alternative practice to wash only once following the procedure for washing for a meal. After washing he should recite על נטילת ידים, dry his hands and then recite אשר יצר. Following אשר יצר he should recite המוציא and eat his bread. This approach maintains that the recitation of אשר יצר does not constitute an interruption between על נטילת ידים and המוציא. (פסקי תשובות אות א' הע' 3)

Stories to Share

Honest Appreciation

ש"ע קס"ה, א': "מברך אשר יצר..."

Today's amud mentions asher yatzar.

A student fondly recalled an educational experience that made an indelible impression on him long ago, when he was a boy. "The menahel of the elementary division of Rabbi Jacob Josef Yeshiva on the Lower East Side was Rabbi Hillel Weiss. He was about six feet tall and wore a top hat and cutaway suit and was very correct and beloved by the boys. As boys tend to do, during any break, we played in the hallways, either 'milk carton' hockey or 'paper towel' basketball. One day, the boys were playing and, when necessary, running to the bathroom and returning without washing or saying asher yatzar.

When Rabbi Weiss saw this, he lifted his long coat, sat on the dirty steps and called the boys over. He rolled up his sleeve and showed them the camp number tattooed on his forearm and told them that number was how the Nazis, yemach shemam, knew who they were torturing. He told them how, in the lager, they had all been forced to stand at attention everyday for hours and could not move or blink, upon pain of being hit with a rifle butt. They were tortured like that and all they prayed for was to be able to go to the bathroom, which was denied to them.

"He looked at the boys and said, 'It is clear that you do not properly appreciate what it meant to be able to use the bathroom as you do, and to thank G-d for that fact.'

The long-ago RJJ boy says, "Since that day, I've never failed to wash and say asher yatzar. I suspect that this lesson was not lost on any of the other boys!"

כן שמעתי