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

Overview

Siman 165 Seif 2:

If many people are eating together at a meal the greatest amongst them washes his hands first. The Rosh was accustomed to wash last in order not to interrupt or speak.

- It is an expression of honor to have the greatest person wash first. (M.B. 4)
- In the time of Chazal every person had their own table so it was greater honor to wash first but now that everyone eats a single table it is preferable to wash last to minimize the interruption. (M.B. 5)
- Since Shulchan Aruch maintains that even an extended pause should be avoided when there is a meal with many attendees it is preferable for the greatest to wash and recite the beracha for himself. Similarly, everyone else should wash and recite המוציא for themselves in order to minimize the pause between washing and המוציא. (M.B. 5)

Siman 166 Seif 1:

Some maintain that one is not required to avoid interruptions between washing and המוציא. Others maintain that he should be cautious and it is appropriate to be cautious. If one paused the amount of time it takes to walk 22 amos it is considered an interruption.

- When the Gemara declares that immediately after washing one should begin the meal the intent is that one should not interrupt by becoming involved in another activity but if one sits quietly and does nothing it is not an interruption. (M.B. 1)
- Zohar is cited as teaching that one should daven for sustenance before eating. According to some one may even recite this prayer between washing and eating but it is preferable to recite it after המוציא. Some recite מזמור ה' רועי. (M.B. 3)
- The delay is from the time that he dries his hand until he recites המוציא. (M.B. 4)
- Later authorities write that if there is no need one should not interrupt at all and he should recite המוציא immediately after he dries his hands. (M.B. 5)
- The requirement to say המוציא after washing is a requirement l'chatchila but b'dieved even if he pauses for a long period of time he is not required to wash again if he did not become distracted. (M.B. 6)

Halacha Highlight

Interrupting between washing and hamotzi

Shulchan Aruch Siman 166 Seif 1

יש אומרים שאין צריך לזהר מלהפסיק בין נטילה להמוציא

There is an opinion that maintains that one need not be cautious from interrupting between washing and hamotzi

Shulchan Aruch (סי' קס"ו סע' א') cites two opinions concerning interruptions between washing and hamotzi. According to the first opinion there is no issue with sitting silently for an extended period of time in between washing and hamotzi. When the Gemara Berachos (52b) states that one should have his meal immediately after washing the intent was that one should not become involved in another activity or speak at length since these activities easily lead one to become distracted. As long as one does not become distracted there is no requirement to recite hamotzi as quickly as possible. The second opinion maintains that one should avoid interruptions and Shulchan Aruch writes that one should be stringent about the matter. Rema explains that a delay the amount of time it takes to walk twenty-two amos is considered an interruption. Mishnah Berurah (סק"ד) explains further that the timing is measured from the time that one dries his hands until he recites hamotzi.

There is a disagreement amongst the Poskim whether one who is between washing and eating bread is permitted to answer אמן to someone else's beracha of על נטילת ידים. Sefer Tehila L'Dovid writes that the matter parallels the disagreement between Shulchan Aruch and Rema whether one should answer אמן to the beracha of גאל ישראל. According to Shulchan Aruch, it is prohibited to answer אמן to the beracha of גאל ישראל whereas according to Rema it is permitted to answer אמן to the beracha of גאל ישראל recited by the shaliach tzibbur. Similarly, Shulchan Aruch maintains that it is prohibited for one to answer אמן to someone else's beracha of על נטילת ידים, but according to Rema it is permitted. Teshuvas Meishiv Halacha (ח"ב סי' ת"ז) cites Kitzur Shulchan Aruch who maintains that it is permitted for one to answer אמן to another person's beracha of על נטילת ידים and Meishiv Halacha proves this position to be correct (חיי משה).

Stories to Share

Crossing the Distance

ש"ע, ס' קס"ו, א': "ואם שהה כדי הלוך כ"ב אמה מקרי הפסק..."

Simchos can present their own special halachic challenges, especially in the large halls that are so common nowadays. One man was learned enough to be concerned about one matter regarding seating arrangements; he nearly always found that his seat was quite far from the washing station. Of course, as we find on today's amud, that is not acceptable. It is not proper to wait longer than the time it takes to traverse the relatively short distance of twenty-two amos—hardly a significant distance in a large hall.

But what choice did he have? He tried to take a seat as close to the washing station as possible, but often even the closest seat was too far away. He considered bringing a chair and placing it with a roll close enough to where one washes but quickly rejected the concept. How could he act so strangely, certainly detracting from the joy of the wedding? He knew that he could just refrain from eating bread, but he wished to partake of the seudas mitzvah.

When this question reached Rav Yosef Shalom Eliyashiv, zt"l, he offered a practical way around the problem. "It is true that one should not interrupt even in silence between washing and the brocha for the time it takes to walk twenty-two amos. But that is only from when his hands are dry. If one needs to traverse a longer distance, he should not dry his hands until he is near his seat. In this way he has actually paused less that the prescribed time!"

אבני ישפה ח"ד סי' כ'