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

Overview

Siman 167 Seif 6:

One should eat immediately and may not speak between the beracha and eating. If one does speak he must repeat the beracha unless the conversation related to the meal. For example, if one recited the beracha on bread and before eating he asked for salt or relish to be brought or if he instructed someone to give food to Ploni or to feed the animal or anything similar he is not required to repeat the beracha. Nevertheless, l'chatchila he should not interrupt at all. The requirement to repeat the beracha if one spoke applies only when one spoke before the one who broke the bread ate but if one spoke after that it does not constitute an interruption. Even though the others did not yet eat, their obligation is already fulfilled when the one who broke the bread ate since they are not required to eat from the bread that was broken and it is done only to make the mitzvah more precious.

- L'chatchila one should not even pause in silence the amount of time it takes to "speak." (M.B. 34)
- One should not speak until he has swallowed some of the bread. When many people eat together one should not answer אמן to another's beracha before eating some bread. If one spoke while chewing but before swallowing it is not clear whether he is required to repeat the beracha. One is not required to eat an olive's volume before speaking but if it is not a pressing circumstance it is best to eat the volume of an olive. (M.B. 35)
- Anything related to the meal is not an interruption, e.g. asking someone to bring plates to the table. (M.B. 37)
- Since it is prohibited to eat before feeding one's animal instructing one to feed the animal is meal-related talk and not an interruption. Magen Avrohom cited Sefer Chassidim that one may drink before his animal. (M.B. 40)
- It should say, "The one who broke the bread spoke before he ate." (M.B. 42)
- If the listeners spoke before eating it is not an interruption since the beracha already took effect once the one who broke the bread ate but l'chatchila it is prohibited to interrupt before eating. Almost all later authorities disagree with Rema and maintain that even the listeners may not interrupt before eating. Poskim maintain that if the one who recited the beracha interrupted before eating no one fulfills their obligation. (M.B. 43)

Halacha Highlight

Interrupting between hamotzi and eating

Shulchan Aruch Siman 167 Seif 6

יאכל מיד

One should eat immediately

Shulchan Aruch emphasizes the importance of eating immediately after reciting the beracha of המוציא. The form of interruption mentioned by Shulchan Aruch is speaking. If one speaks, even a single word (מ"ב ס"ק ל"ו), about matters that are not related to the meal one is required to repeat the beracha. Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק ל"ד) writes that l'chatchila it is prohibited to pause in silence more than the time it takes to greet one's rebbi. The only permitted interruption is one which relates directly to the meal. For example, is after reciting the beracha of hamotzi one realizes that there is no salt on the table or that the animal had not yet been fed he may instruct someone to bring the salt or feed the animal. Rema adds that even though these interruptions are permitted, l'chatchila, one should not interrupt at all. Even if one has bread that requires salt, one should not ask for the salt until after tasting some of the bread.

Poskim write that included in the restriction against interrupting between hamotzi and eating is signaling to someone with one's fingers or hand. Certainly it is not permitted for one to make sounds with his mouth in order to communicate with others since those sounds may actually constitute speech. Some Poskim even warn against humming or whistling a tune between the beracha and eating. For the same reason, one should make sure that the bread that he intends to eat is not too hot so that he would have to delay between the beracha and eating. Although one must be cautious with regards to all these minor interruptions they do not constitute full interruptions that would require someone to have to repeat the beracha a second time (פסקי תשובות אות ח').

Stories to Share

Simple Communication

מ"ב, ס' קס"ז, ס"ק ל"ד: "דלכתחלה אסור לשהות בשתיקה יותר מכדי דיבור..."

There are some ingrained habits that might not be halachically acceptable. For example, some people circumvent the prohibition against speaking between washing for bread and making the berachah by gesturing with their hands. Others grunt, "nu" or "sha!". But when one man learned on that one should not even pause in silence between the blessing and eating, he wondered if it was permitted to make these expressions.

When he broached his question with a friend, the man claimed that these expressions must be permitted, basing his opinion on a fairly common practice. "How is this different than the custom among many prominent people, who sing a niggun as they wait for everyone to finish washing and assemble for hamotzi?"

But when these questions reached Rav Yosef Shalom Eliyashev, zt"l, he ruled that this is not permitted after all. "It is also forbidden to interrupt when one may not speak with 'nu' or sha,' unless one uses these words for the sake of the hamotzi. It is permitted for one to hum a tune while waiting, however. The difference is that 'nu' or 'sha' are used as actual words to communicate a message and are forbidden like any other word. A niggun is not considered a verbal communication and is therefore permitted."

שו"ת אבני ישפה, ח"ד, ס' כ"א