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

# Overview

**Siman 169 Seif 1:**

**Any food that is brought before people that has a smell and that people desire must be given to the waiter immediately. It is pious to give the waiter some of every food right away but he should not be given food if the cup is in his hand or in the hand of the ba'al habayis.** (This restriction is limited to a waiter but someone else at the meal may be given food in this circumstance.) **It is prohibited to give him a piece of bread unless one knows that he washed.**

- The same is true of the food is pungent meaning a vinegary taste. (M.B. 1)
- Foods that do not have an aroma may be eaten first and then shared with the waiter. (M.B. 2)
- Giving a small amount is sufficient since this will settle his craving. If he is reclining at a table with them it is unnecessary to give the waiter first. (M.B. 3)
- Even foods that do not have an aroma or are pungent can cause him distress when he sees everyone else eating but not himself. (M.B. 4)
- Shulchan Aruch refers to one of the people who is reclining. (M.B. 5)
- Some explain that the reference is to the waiter holding a cup and others explain that the reference is to the guest. (M.B. 6)
- The concern is that the ba'al habayis will become angry. According to others the ba'al habayis should not give a cup to the waiter. (M.B. 7)
- Other people at the meal may hand one another food while the ba'al habayis is holding a cup but to give to someone who was not invited would be problematic. (M.B. 8)
- Some are stringent about this but if it is given as tzedaka one may certainly be lenient. (M.B. 9)

**Siman 169 Seif 2:**

**One may not give food to someone unless he will recite a beracha.** Some authorities are lenient if the food is given to a poor person as tzedaka.

- We do not revoke the mitzvah of tzedaka out of concern that one may not recite a beracha but if one is certain that he will not recite a beracha it is prohibited to give it to him even as tzedaka. This restriction applies when he does not recite a beracha out of wickedness but if he is unable to recite a beracha the mitzvah of tzedaka is not revoked. (M.B. 11)

# Halacha Highlight

## Offering food to guests

Shulchan Aruch Siman 169 Seif 1
**שיש לו ריח והאדם תאב לו**
**That has a smell and a person desires**

Shulchan Aruch (סעי' א') teaches that when one has food that produces an aroma or pungent smell one must give some of that food to the waiter right away. The rationale behind this ruling is that when a person smells a food with an aroma or pungent smell and does not eat some of that food it can be damaging to him (מ"ב סק"ב). Biur Halacha (ד"ה לשמש) adds that the same halacha applies to someone who is cooking the food rather than serving it, even if the ba'al habayis is not responsible to provide food for that worker.

Biur Halacha then mentions that it is evident from Shas that even if there is a stranger present when the food with an aroma or pungent smell is served he should be given some of that food so that he will not be in danger. The reason the Gemara discusses the case of a waiter is that the most common application of this halacha will occur with a waiter but it applies to everyone. He then suggests that perhaps this is the source for the custom that when someone arrives while the family is eating to invite that person to join them. Poskim write that this custom applies even if the food that is being eaten does not have an aroma or pungent smell. Even if one does not have enough food for his family and the guest, derech eretz dictates that one should offer the guest food. For his part the guest should decline the offer knowing that the family does not have enough food for him as well. Even when one is certain that the guest will decline the offer one should offer the guest food since it is proper derech eretz to make the offer. It is also considered an ancient tradition to offer a guest food or drink when one is not in the middle of a meal (פסקי תשובות אות ב').

# Stories to Share

## A Significant Meeting

ש"ע, ס' קס"ט, ב': "לא יתן אוכל אלא למי שיודע בו שיברך..."

When the government of Israel wished to pass a law requiring all girls to serve in the army, the Chazon Ish and many other gedolim were steadfast in their ruling that the girls should literally die rather than allow themselves to be conscripted for any reason. Ben Gurion met the Chazon Ish in an effort to convince him to withdraw his psak.

When Ben Gurion's secretary expressed his employer's desire to visit, the Chazon Ish answered , "My door is always open..."

The gadol had two problems with this visit. Firstly, he did not want a picture taken of him with Ben Gurion. When the Chazon Ish came to meet the premier at the door, the press agreed not to take pictures. Everyone was intrigued how the famous statesman would outmaneuver the rabbi. The journalists figured they would get a picture when they left the apartment. To their chagrin, the Chazon Ish chose not to escort Ben Gurion out his door, so they didn't capture the two together on film.

Another problem the Chazon Ish had to overcome was the prohibition to give a Jew food or drink if he will not make a blessing, as is brought on today's amud. Of course, the Chazon Ish could not avoid putting out some kind of refreshments for such a distinguished guest. He was also sure that Ben Gurion would certainly refuse to make a blessing.

The gadol put out refreshments, but when the prime minister joined him, he did not eat anything. Since etiquette forbids a guest to take anything to eat or drink before his host partakes, Ben Gurion also did not partake of anything.

When he later described their meeting to Rabbi Shlomo Laurence, Ben Gurion said, "Not only is he the wisest person I have ever met; before we met I had no idea that such a wise person could exist!"

במחיצתם של גדולי התורה, ח"א עמ' 73-71