The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
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סימן קס"ט סעיף ג'-סימן ק"ע סעיף א'

Overview

Siman 169 Seif 3:

The waiter recites בורא פרי הגפן for each cup of wine that he is given since it is as if he changed his mind after each cup but he does not recite a beracha acharona until he is finished drinking. He is not required to recite a beracha on each piece of bread if there is an important person present since he knows that he will be given what he needs. If there aren't any important people at the meal he must recite a beracha before each piece that he is given similar to wine. If two people were eating together the waiter may eat with them without obtaining permission so that he could be part of the zimun. See below siman 170 seif 21.

- He doesn't know whether they will give him more but if he has in mind for whatever they will give him he does not have to recite another beracha. (M.B. 12)
- Since Shulchan Aruch mentioned bread the implication is that the Torah scholar will assure that the waiter will be given bread and foods with an aroma or a pungent taste but regarding other foods it is merely pious to give him, therefore he must recite a beracha each time he is given food. (M.B. 13)
- It seems logical that he may only eat the minimal amount necessary to be obligated to join the zimun. (M.B. 14)

Siman 170 Seif 1:

One may not talk during a meal out of concern that the windpipe will precede the esophagus. Even if someone sneezes during the meal one may not say to him אסותא. If many people were eating together and one of them walked out to relieve himself he should wash the hand he used to wipe the droplets and he should wash in front of them so that they should not suspect that he did not wash. If he did not get droplets on his hand there is no need to wash unless he touched a "dirty" part of the body. If he relieved his bowels he must wash his hands. **This applies if he is only going to drink but if he is going to eat he may even wash his hands outside since it is known that people are delicate and would not eat without washing. If one spoke with a friend and left the room he must wash both hands since he became distracted.** The requirement to wash before drinking applies in the midst of the meal out of concern that he may eat food but outside of the context of a meal one is not required to wash for drinking.

- One may not even discuss divrei Torah. The limitation applies only while one is eating but between foods it is permitted. (M.B. 1)
- There is a mitzvah for one to study Torah at the meal. It is appropriate to read מזמור ה' רועי לא אחסר after hamotzi which is Torah study and a prayer for sustenance. (M.B. 1)
- He must recite על נטילת ידים if he will eat. (M.B. 3)
- If he wiped with both hands he must wash both hands. (M.B. 4)
- Above in siman 164 we concluded in the name of Chaye Adam that one is obligated to wash. (M.B. 6)
- Once he left the meal for an hour or two he lost focus from the meal and was not careful with his hands. Birkei Yosef cites others who maintain that if he took bread with him he does not have to wash again since he was not distracted. (M.B. 9)

Halacha Highlight

Discussing Torah at one's meal

Shulchan Aruch Siman 170 Seif 1

אין משיחין בסעודה

One does not speak during the meal

Shulchan Aruch (סי' קע"ט ס"א) warns against speaking while one is eating out of concern that the windpipe will precede the esophagus. This restriction applies even if one wishes to speak words of Torah. However, Mishnah Berurah (סק"א) clarifies that the restriction applies only while one is eating but between courses there is no restriction against speaking. Mishnah Berurah (סק"א) in the name of Magen Avrohom writes that it is a mitzvah for a person to study Torah at the table where he is eating since any table at which Torah was not discussed is comparable to eating dead sacrifices. Shelah writes that one should study a Mishnah, halacha or agada and should not rely upon birkas hamazon that he will say. At the very least he should read a chapter of Tehillim and then recommends reading ה' רועי לא אחסר since it is simultaneously words of Torah and a prayer for sustenance.

Bartenura (אבות ג:ג) maintains that birkas hamazon does qualify as divrei Torah. (Teshuvas Shevet HaKehasi (ח"ג סי' פ') asserts that Bartenura's intent is that if a person has in mind that birkas hamazon should be considered Torah study to fulfill this obligation but if a person simply recites birkas hamazon without this intent he has not fulfilled his obligation.) Tosafos Yom Tov (שם) challenges this explanation. Why do Chazal need to emphasize that a person should recite birkas hamazon as a fulfillment of studying Torah during the meal when a person is obligated to recite birkas hamazon to fulfill the obligation to recite birkas hamazon. Igra D'Pirka (סי' רט"ו וריי"ז) answers that in the time of the Gemara every person ate from his own tray which would be removed after eating. If they recited birkas hamazon after the tray was removed they would not fulfill their obligation. Nowadays that we eat at a table and it is not removed at the end of the meal birkas hamazon is a form of Torah study at the meal. Sefas Emes (על אבות הנ"ל) asserts that when one recites birkas hamazon it is no longer a meal of dead sacrifices but it does not become elevated to sitting at Hashem's table unless one discusses other Torah related matters (חיי משה).