



Halacha Highlight

Giving food to the host’s children

Shulchan Aruch Siman 170 Seif 19
אורחים הנכנסין אצל בעל הבית

Guests who have entered their host’s home

Shulchan Aruch (סיי י”ט) writes that a guest may not take the food that he was served and give it to the child or slave of his host unless he first asks permission from his host. Mishnah Berurah (סק”מ) provides the background for this ruling. The Gemara Chullin (94a) relates that a person once invited three guests to his home during a period of famine and had nothing to serve them other than three eggs. The son of the host came and one of the guests gave the child his egg. The other two guests also gave the child their eggs and when the host saw his son with an egg in his mouth and in each of his hands he struck and killed him. When the child’s mother saw what happened she went to roof and jumped off and then host climbed onto the roof and jumped off.

Magen Avrohom and Elya Rabba assert that this restriction applies only when there is a limited amount of food and there is a concern that the host will be embarrassed that he does not have a sufficient quantity of food. When there is plenty of food on the table it is permitted to share some of that food with the host’s children. In the event that the meal is over and there is leftover food, Mishnah Berurah indicates that he would think that it is permitted but sefer Ma’aseh Rokeach is inclined to prohibit giving away food in this instance. Another leniency is mentioned by Kaf HaChaim (ארת ס”ט). He contends that the restriction applies only when one is interested in giving away a food that is important to the meal. If one wants to give away something minor, for example, a piece of fruit, there is no concern that the host would be embarrassed and it is even proper to do so since this increases love and good will.

Overview

Siman 170 Seif 18:

When someone participates in a meal he should not take his portion and give it to the waiter out of concern that something will happen during the meal; rather he should take it and place it aside and then give it to him.

- ❖ Bach explains that the concern is that it will appear as though the food is unappealing so he gave it to the waiter. Levush explains that the concern is that something will go wrong during the meal and this portion would be needed for others. (M.B. 39)
- ❖ Magen Avrohom writes that when hosting a meal it is proper etiquette to personally pour for one’s guests. (M.B. 39)

Siman 170 Seif 19:

Guests who are sitting with their host are not permitted to take the food in front of them and give it to the host’s child or slave unless he first secures permission to do so.

- ❖ Later authorities write that this applies only when there is a limited amount of food on the table but when there is an abundance of food the restriction doesn’t apply. Accordingly, if one finished eating it is certainly permitted to share some of the leftovers with the host’s children but Sefer Ma’aseh Rokeach is inclined to be stringent. (M.B. 40)
- ❖ There is a disagreement whether this applies only to one’s slave or even one’s waiter. (M.B. 41)

Siman 170 Seif 20:

The pure-minded people of Yerushalayim would not recline at a meal unless they knew who was reclining with them since it humiliating for a Torah scholar to sit with an am ha’aretz at a meal.

- ❖ This applies even for a seudas mitzvah. (M.B. 42)

Siman 170 Seif 21:

A waiter who was attending for two people may eat with them even though they did not authorize him to do so. If he was attending three people he may not eat with them unless they give him permission.

- ❖ If the two people are not eating foods that require a zimun he is not permitted to join them without permission. Elya Rabba suggests that the same ruling applies if nine people were eating together since it may be assumed that they want to add Hashem’s Name to the zimun. (M.B. 43)

Siman 170 Seif 22:

If one drank and some wine remains in the cup for a friend one should wipe the place his mouth touched the cup because it is unpleasant rather than spill some out which would involve a waste of wine. After drinking water one may pour out some water over that spot. After eating, one should have salt and after drinking, one should drink water as will be explained in siman 179. It appears to me that this applies if the bread or one of the other foods does not contain salt. Similarly drinking water is necessary if one did not drink something that contained water but otherwise there is no concern. The custom is not to be particular to eat salt or drink water after a meal for the reasons explained.

- ❖ One should not eat the heart of a bird or animal. One should eat food that is healthy rather than what is appealing at that moment. One should not sleep immediately after eating. One should eat and drink to strengthen one’s body to serve Hashem and thereby all of one’s meals will be a seudas mitzvah. (M.B. 45)

Stories to Share

Degrees of Ignorance

”מפני שגנאי הוא לתלמיד חכם לישב אם עם הארץ בסעודה...”

On today’s amud we find that it is disgraceful for a Talmid Chacham to eat at a meal with an ignoramus. What many do not appreciate is that being a talmid chacham is not as simple as many think.

The Chazon Ish said, “The term am ha’aretz also applies to people who have a degree of Torah knowledge that is broad but superficial, but lack a true understanding since they have not invested energy into learning in depth. Because these people do have some understanding, they think they already possess full knowledge and arrogantly reject those who really know Torah. They don’t listen to them and place themselves above them.”

מעשה איש, ח”ב, עי 69

Rav Shach, zt”l, was always warned against a different form of am ha’aretz. “There are many yeshivos where they learn perhaps ten daf a zman. These people believe that the less material one covers, the more depth one gains. This is untrue. One of the main reasons is because yeshivah bochurim lack a broad base of knowledge. In earlier times, students would complete mesechtos and grow great. Today, they do not have a real arsenal of basic facts at hand and don’t understand anything. A bochur who learns a few daf per tractate remains an ignoramus!”

One time, a certain great Talmudic scholar argued in public with the Chazon Ish. When the Brisker Rav heard about this he said, “He is an am ha’aretz.”

When the person present looked surprised, the Brisker Rav said,

”Since he doesn’t know how to treat someone much greater in Torah, this is a sign that, for all his learning, he is still an am ha’aretz!”