The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
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סימן קע"ג סעיף א'-סימן קע"ד סעיף א'

Overview

Siman 173 Seif 1:

"Middle waters" are optional. This is true between courses but between cooked meat and cheese it is obligatory (See Yoreh Deah 89).

- Rema explains there that according to our custom one should wash between cooked dairy and cooked meat if one touches the food by hand and it is optional between two foods in the same category. (M.B. 2)

Siman 173 Seif 2:

Between meat and fish it is obligatory to wash since it can lead to "other things" and danger is treated more stringently than prohibitions (See Yoreh Deah 116).

- The "other thing" is tzara'as. Magen Avrohom entertains the possibility that it is no longer so dangerous since in many regards nature has changed. (M.B. 3)
- Rema explains there that our custom is not to be careful to wash but nevertheless, it is correct to eat and drink something between them. (M.B. 4)

Siman 173 Seif 3:

Everything that applies to "last waters" applies to "middle waters" as far as the leniencies and stringencies except for distractions which invalidate "middle waters" since one intends to continue to eat and one must watch his hands. Another exception is that "middle waters" require one to dry his hands similar to "first waters." Some assert that "middle waters" require specifically water as opposed to "last waters" as will be recorded below in siman 181.

- Lenient means that a vessel is not necessary, the water need not go past the second joint and an interposition will not invalidate the washing. (M.B. 6)
- It is not as though the "middle wasters" are invalidated it is that the "first waters" become invalidated and the main point was to contrast with "last waters" for which there is no concern for a distraction since he is no longer eating. (M.B. 7)
- Other liquids will not remove the food and fat from one's hands. Maharshal is lenient concerning other liquids but later authorities agree with Rema. (M.B. 9)

Siman 174 Seif 1:

One must recite the beracha on wine during the meal since the beracha on bread does not exempt one from that beracha.

- Since wine is important it is not subordinate to the bread to be exempted by it even if one has that intent. (M.B. 1)

Halacha Highlight

Fish and meat

Shulchan Aruch Siman 173 Seif 2

בין בשר לדגים חונה לטל

Between fish and meat one must wash his hands

Shulchan Aruch (סי' קע"ג סע' ב') rules that one is obligated to wash between fish and meat since the mixture of the two can cause tzara'as and issues related to danger are treated more stringently than matters of prohibition. Rema instructs the reader to look in Yoreh Deah siman 116. Mishnah Berurah (סק"ד) explains that in Yoreh Deah Rema relates that our custom is not to be concerned about such matters and we do not wash our hands between fish and meat. However, it is appropriate to eat and drink something between them. In the event that one touched meat after touching fish, Kaf HaChaim (יו"ד סי' קט"ז אות כ"ח) rules that b'dieved the food is permitted. In such a case it may be assumed that the meat nullifies whatever amount of fish residue remains on the meat.

Kaf HaChaim (שם אות ו') writes that it is permitted to have meat and fish on the table at the same time. In this regard the prohibition of meat and fish is not as severe as meat and milk. He limits this ruling to two people eating together, but if a person is sitting by himself it is appropriate for him to be stringent and not have meat and fish on the table at the same time. Teshuvas Shevet HaLevi (ח"ו סי' ק"א אות ד') rules that it is permitted for one to use the same pot even if it is ben yomo as long as it is clean. Shevet HaLevi also permits using the same grinder for meat and fish as long as it is cleaned between one use and the next. In the event that one ground onions with one of the foods, one may also adopt a lenient position if there is a need.

Stories to Share

Mystery Meat?

ש"ע, סי' ק"ח, י"א: "בין בשר לדגים...חמירא סכנתא מאיסורא"

At a well-regarded hall in Yerushalayim, the set-up for the bris was resplendent. Most of the food was Chinese-style; not so easy for the average guest to exactly identify what was in each dish, but everything appeared delicious and was indeed delectable. The guests took their pick from the large and varied buffet and sat down to their repast.

As the conversation flowed freely, people in different corners of the hall began to look at their plates with some concern. It suddenly dawned on these guests that some of the dishes had fish, while others had chicken or even meat. While the preparation was very pleasing, it was also impossible to discern without tasting the food whether it was fish or chicken. Of course, as we find on today's amud, it is forbidden for one to eat meat with fish, since the gemara states that doing so is dangerous. Of course, the moment that the baalas simchah heard about this, she immediately let the kitchen know about the problem and they added the signs before each dish delineating whether it is fish or meat which are usually used, but had been forgotten this time.

One of the guests only noticed his error after eating quite a lot of fish, chicken and meat mixed together in the same plate. He wondered whether he was obligated to do teshuvah. After all, this is a din in Shulchan Aruch. Since he was careful to repent even sins that he had committed b'shogeg, he figured he was obligated to do teshuvah. But when he asked a rav this question, he disagreed. "Although it is a sakanah, it is not the same as something which is prohibited. Therefore one need not do teshuvah for this oversight, even if one had done it on purpose."

But Rav Chaim Kanievsky, zt"l, disagreed. In his customary terse style, he merely wrote: "חמירא סכנתא מאיסורא"—Sakanah is more stringent than mere prohibition!"

שאילת רב, ח"ב, ע' ל"ד