The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
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סימן קפ"ג סעיף ה'-ז'

Overview

Siman 183 Seif 5:

There is an opinion that maintains that if the one reciting the beracha is a lefty he should hold the cup in his right hand which is everyone else's left.

- If one is ambidextrous he should hold the cup in his right hand. What is written in seif 4 until this point the Vilna Gaon writes that it is just l'chatchila. (M.B. 20)

Siman 183 Seif 6:

Once one is handed the cup for the beracha the one reciting the beracha may not speak. Those sitting there should not speak once the one reciting the beracha begins. One must be silent not only when he is reciting the beracha one must listen and understand what is being recited; rather even between berachos one may not speak. If they violated this halacha and spoke between berachos when the one reciting the beracha paused they still discharge their obligation. (this is true even if the one reciting the beracha spoke). **If one spoke while he was reciting the beracha one does not discharge his obligation.**

- He may not speak until after birkas hamazon. (M.B. 21)
- Some Poskim are stringent and maintain that those sitting should not speak once the one reciting the beracha takes the kos and one should be concerned about their opinion. (M.B. 22)
- Speaking in between does not cause one to lose the berachos. Magen Avrohom asserts that these rules apply when one speaks inadvertently but if one spoke intentionally, even between two berachos, he must return to the beginning of birkas hamazon. Elya Rabba leaves the matter unresolved and b'dieved one need not go back to the beginning even if he spoke intentionally. L'chatchila one should avoid speaking. (M.B. 25)
- If one paused between berachos a pause long enough to finish birkas hamazon from beginning to end, even if one did not speak at all there are those who maintain that one must return to the beginning of birkas hamazon. This applies only if the pause was due to circumstances beyond one's control, e.g. one went to the bathroom or the room was not clean. In Biur Halacha he writes that the one would not be required to start again for a lengthy pause between berachos but if there was such a lengthy pause between berachos one should start that beracha again. (M.B. 25)
- If the one reciting the beracha did not finish the beracha those who are there should go back to where they stopped listening to the one reciting the beracha. If the one reciting the beracha finished the beracha and they paid attention to what he recited they must go back to the beginning of the beracha and recite it for themselves since it is considered as though they did not recite the beracha since they skipped part of the beracha. If they only skipped parts that are not essential to the beracha, b'dieved they discharged their obligation and are not required to go back. (M.B. 26)

Stories to Share

Giving a Blessing

ש"ע, ס' ק"ח, י"א: "בימין שלו..."

Today's amud discusses which hand one should use to hold the "cup of blessing."

Rav Shmuel Aharon Yudelevitz would bless his children every Friday night with only his right hand on their heads. When one of his sons read about this custom in the siddur of Rav Yaakov Emden he questioned his father's unusual practice. The siddur states that it is the custom of the Jewish people to bless their children on Friday night after the evening prayers. Rav Yaakov Emden added that his father, the Chacham Tzvi, would place both hands on his children and bless them. The son asked his father to explain why he deviated from the custom of the Chacham Tzvi.

Rav Shmuel Aharon responded, "The Torah Temimah recounts in his commentary on Bamidbar 6:23 that he heard from a reliable source that when the Vilna Gaon blessed the Noda B'Yehudah at his chuppah, he did it with only one hand on the chosson's head. When the Gaon was asked to explain this he said, 'We don't find a blessing delivered with two hands anywhere except in the Mikdash itself.'

Rav Shmuel Aharon continued, "The Gaon was referring to the Gemara in Kesuvos 24b which states that a yisrael who gives a blessing with raised hands violates a positive commandment. The Pachad Yitzchak and Rav Chaim Palagi both write that they saw those who are careful would not place both hands on their student's heads when giving them a blessing, since this would be considered raising one's hand to bless in the manner of the kohanim in the Mikdash. Nowadays, of course, there is no actual halachic prohibition against blessing with both hands. However, it is still better to bless in a low voice, since the kohanim had to recite their blessing out loud. Furthermore, to do so with one hand only would be following in the footsteps of the Gaon to avoid all doubt!"

תפילה כהלכתה, פ"א, סי"ג

Halacha Highlight

Interruptions during birkas hamazon

Shulchan Aruch Siman 183 Seif 6

והמסובין אין להם להשיח

And those reclining may not speak

Shulchan Aruch (סע' ו') writes that those who are discharging their obligation with the recitation of the one leading birkas hamazon may not speak once the leader begins his recitation. The reason is very simply that they must pay attention to what he is reciting and it is impossible for them to do so if they are talking. Even between berachos they should not speak. Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק כ"ד) explains that since the principle of שומע כעונה indicates that their listening is treated as though they are reciting the berachos themselves, just like the leader may not speak between berachos so too they may not speak between the berachos. In the event that those assembled speak between the berachos, their obligation is nevertheless discharged. Rema adds that even if the one reciting the beracha speaks between the berachos, he fulfills his obligation. Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק כ"ה) in the name of Magen Avrohom asserts that this ruling applies only if one interrupted due to circumstances beyond one's control. If, however, one intentionally spoke between the berachos one is obligated to start birkas hamazon again from the beginning. Other authorities express uncertainty regarding this stringent ruling.

Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק כ"ה) raises the question of one who pauses, even without speaking, for the amount of time it takes to recite birkas hamazon from the beginning until the end. In the event that the pause was due to circumstances beyond one's control, for example, he had to relieve himself, when he returns he must restart birkas hamazon from the beginning. He then notes that in Biur Halacha (ד"ה אפילו אם שח) he wrote that it is not so clear that an extended pause obligates one to restart birkas hamazon from the beginning. Shulchan Aruch HaRav (סע' ה') ruled explicitly that since the matter is subject to doubt one should not start birkas hamazon from the beginning due to the principle of ספק ברכות להקל—one should adopt a lenient approach regarding uncertainties related to berachos.