The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
Sun, Jul 3 2022 ■ ד' תמוז, תשפ"ב
סימן קפ"ה סעיף א'-ד'

Overview

Siman 185 Seif 1:

Birkas hamazon may be recited in any lanuguage.

- One may only recite birkas hamazon in a language that one understands. Bach writes that it is preferable to recite birkas hamazon in lashon kodesh. (M.B. 1)
- Sefer HaChinuch writes that one who is careful to recite birkas hamazon will have food available in an honorable manner his entire life. Those who are meticulous recite birkas hamazon from a sefer rather than recite it by heart. (M.B. 1)

Siman 185 Seif 2:

One must hear what he is reciting but if he does not hear he has fulfilled his obligation as long as he articulated the words.

- If one merely thinks the words of birkas hamaaon he does not fulfill his obligation. If due to illness or some other circumstance beyond one's control one merely thought the words of birkas hamazon Hashem will reward him for his efforts but he did not fulfill his obligation. Therefore, if the ones passes he should recite birkas hamazon. (M.B. 2)

Siman 185 Seif 3:

There is an opinion that maintains that when a ba'al habayis is with his children and wife he must recite birkas hamazon out loud so that they could discharge their obligation with his recitation.

- This refers to where they cannot recite birkas hamazon for themselves and are discharging their obligation with his recitation. Some write that one should always recite birkas hamazon out loud since it increases concentration and especially on Shabbos and Yom Tov so that one does not forget to add the appropriate paragraph for that day. (M.B. 3)

Siman 185 Seif 4:

Even if one is so drunk that he cannot talk properly he may recite birkas hamazon.

Halacha Highlight

Concentration during birkas hamazon

Shulchan Aruch Siman 185 Seif 1
ברכת המזון נאמרה בכל לשון
Birkas hamazon may be said in any language

Shulchan Aruch (סע' א') rules that birkas hamazon may be recited in any language. Mishnah Berurah (סק"א) explains that when the pasuk says וברכת it means that one should bless Hashem in any language that he could express that blessing. However, one may only recite birkas hamazon in a language that he understands and may not recite birkas hamazon in a language that he does not understand. Bach maintains that although technically this is true, it is preferred for one to recite birkas hamazon in lashon kodesh.

Mishnah Berurah (שם) also writes that one who is meticulous in his performance of mitzvos will be careful to recite birkas hamazon from a text rather than to recite it by heart. He then references Sefer Chassidim who relates that there was once a person who died who came back in the dream of one of his relatives and informed him that he is judged every day for not having proper concentration during his recitation of berachos. Shulchan Aruch HaRav (סע' א – ב) writes at length about the obligation to have proper concentration during the recitation of birkas hamazon. In his conclusion he writes that l'chatchila one must be very careful to concentrate during the recitation of birkas hamazon and one must understand what he is saying since there are authorities who maintain that one who does not understand what he recites or if his mind was to become distracted by other things he does not fulfill his obligation even b'dieved. Aruch HaShulchan (סע' ז') disagrees and contends that b'dieved one does fulfill his obligation of birkas hamazon if he became distracted as long as he articulated the words of birkas hamazon. The fact that he did not concentrate properly does not take away his fulfillment of the mitzvah for if that were so it would mean that thousands of people would not be fulfilling the obligation to recite birkas hamazon and he rejects drawing such a conclusion.

Stories to Share

The Voice Awakens Kavanah

מ"ב ס' קפ"ה, ס"ק ג': "כי הקול מעורר הכונה..."

On today's amud we find that one should recite bircas hamazon in a loud voice since this helps him focus.

The Beis Aharon of Karlin would have his evening meal each night with his chassidim. When he reached ובנה ירושלים in bentching, it was already after chatzos. He would take then off his shoes. When asked why he did so, he explained. "Since it is now after chatzos, we should really say tikkun chatzos, during which one should remove his shoes. I therefore say this segment of bentching without shoes."

Once, during the meal, he began describing all the many kingdoms and the greatness of their rulers and lands. As he pointed out the advantages of each kingdom, the chassidim looked at each other in astonishment. At every other tisch the rebbe spoke only Torah. Why was he speaking about the greatness of non-Jewish kings and kingdoms that night?

When they bentched he said ובנה ירושלים with special kavanah. He then immediately left the room and began to hum the kinah we say on Tisha B'Av with powerful dveikus and longing: אזכרה אלוקים ואהמיה בראותי כל עיר על תילה בנויה ועיר האלוקים מושפלת עד שאול תחתיה...— I will recall and moan when I see cities in their full glory and the city of Hashem is absolutely defaced."

The chassidim understood that he had spoken about the various cities because of his great feelings of empathy for the razed city of Yerushalayim.

פרי ישע אהרן, ע' קס"ט