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

Overview

Siman 195 Seif 1:

Two groups that are eating in the same house or in two houses, and some members of one group can see members of the other group, they may combine for a zimun but if not, they may not combine. If a waiter is serving both groups he combines them. These halachos imply that they gathered with the intent to combine. There is an opinion that maintains that if a public domain separates the two houses they may not combine in any circumstance.

- When they cannot see one another they do not combine even if they are in the same house and gathered together with the intent to combine. (M.B. 3)
- The waiter combines them together even if he doesn't eat. (M.B. 4)
- The waiter combines them even if they are in separate houses and cannot see one another. (M.B. 5)
- Shulchan Aruch implies that even when they are in the same house and can see one another they do not combine if they did not intend to combine. Other authorities contend that when they are in the same house they do not require intent and as long as they can see one another or there is a waiter serving the two groups they may combine. (M.B. 6)
- Taz writes that the public domain does not have to be 16 amos across and even a small path is enough to divide them. (M.B. 7)

Siman 195 Seif 2:

If some people ate in the house and others ate outside of the house but the one leading birkas hamazon sits at the threshold of the house, he combines them.

Siman 195 Seif 3:

Whenever two groups combine the members of both groups must be able to hear the one leading birkas hamazon say birkas hazimun. Each person should say the rest of birkas hamazon for himself. If they want the leader to discharge their entire obligation they must be able to hear him recite all of birkas hamazon since without that they do not fulfill their obligation.

- In siman 200:2 Shulchan Aruch rules that zimun includes only נברך and שאכלנו ברוך whereas Rema maintains that it includes the beracha of hazan. This applies when there is a pressing need but it is more preferred if one hears all of birkas hamazon from the leader so that he discharges their obligation. (M.B. 10)
- B'dieved if one did not hear the leader but only heard שאכלנו ברוך from the others he may respond together with him. (M.B. 11)
- They must not only listen but they must also have in mind to discharge their obligation. (M.B. 12)

Halacha Highlight

Combining two groups for a zimun

Shulchan Aruch Siman 195 Seif 1
אם מקצתן רואים אלו את אלו
If some see one another

Shulchan Aruch (סע' א') elaborates on the topic of two groups combining for the purpose of forming a zimun. Regardless of whether they are in the same house or whether they are in different houses, the halacha is that if some of the members of each group can see one another they may combine. If they cannot see one another they may not combine to form a zimun. If they cannot see each they may not combine even though they are in the same house and their intent was to form a single group. In the event that the two groups can see one another through glass they may combine for a zimun. If, however, they can only see one another through a mirror they do not combine to form a zimun (פתח דביר). Kaf HaChaim (אות א') expresses uncertainty whether two groups may combine if they can see each other through a mirror, so he rules that for a regular zimun of three people they may combine but for a zimun of ten they may not combine.

Eshel Avrohom writes that if the two groups see one another through a thin screen or through holes in a partition, the halacha depends upon the permanency of the partition. If the partition is permanent they may not combine to form a zimun but if the partition is not permanent they may combine. He also writes that it is not necessary for members of the two groups to actually see one another. As long as it is possible for the two groups to see one another they may combine. For example, if the way they are seated they cannot see one another without bending their heads they may combine. Similarly, if the members of the groups are blind they may combine as long as there is a theoretical possibility for the two groups to see one another (אשל אברהם בוטשאטש מהדו"ב).