The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
Tues, Aug 16 2022 ■ י"ט אב, תשפ"ב
סימן קצ"ט סעיף י'-י"א

Overview

Siman 199 Seif 10:

A child who has reached the age of understanding and knows to whom he recites the beracha may be included in a zimun and join to make a group of three or ten. Some maintain that a child cannot be included in a zimun until he reaches the age of thirteen and then he is assumed to be an adult who has produced two hairs. This is the custom and one should not deviate from it. Someone deaf or insane may be included in a zimun if he can concentrate and focus even though the deaf person cannot hear the beracha.

- This occurs at the age of nine or ten. According to others this may occur as early as six or older if the child is bright and knows to whom he recites the beracha. (M.B. 24)
- Only one child may be included, whether for a group of three or ten. (M.B. 25)
- If the child was examined and does not have physical signs of maturity he may not be included in a zimun. In order to lead a zimun all opinions agree that he must thirteen years old and show signs of physical maturity. However, if all he does is declare נברך וכו' and each person recites the beracha for himself we may assume that once he is thirteen he is mature and may lead that zimun. (M.B. 27)
- Rema refers to one who speaks but cannot hear. See Pri Megadim regarding one who cannot speak or hear. (M.B. 28)
- He is not completely insane, it is just that he is not so smart and is treated as though he is insane. (M.B. 29)

Siman 199 Seif 11:

Someone excommunicated for a transgression is not included in a zimun.

Halacha Highlight

Children participating in a zimun

Shulchan Aruch Siman 199 Seif 10
קטן שהגיע לעונת הפעוטות
Once a child reaches the age of understanding

Shulchan Aruch (סע' י) rules that once a child reaches the age of understanding and he knows to whom he recites the beracha he may be included in a zimun of three or ten people. Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק כ"ה) maintains that the allowance to use a child is limited to one child, but one may not use two or more children to form a zimun. Magen Avrohom writes that the age of understanding is nine or ten years old. Others contend that if the child is bright and understands the concept of reciting a beracha he may be included in a zimun even at the age of six. Rema disagrees with Shulchan Aruch and cites authorities who maintain that one may not include a child until he has reached the age of thirteen and we assume that he is physically mature as well. Rema confirms that common custom is in accordance with this opinion and writes that one should not deviate from this position.

In the event that an Ashkenazi ate together with Sephardim and they have ten people if they include a child, Poskim rule that it is acceptable for the Ashkenazi to join their zimun but he should not add Hashem's Name in his response to the zimun. Additionally, in order to not draw attention to the fact that he is not including Hashem's Name he should respond quietly so that no one will hear what he says. If there are three people eating together, a Sephardi, a child and an Ashkenazi, they may combine to form a zimun. It is assumed that the Ashkenazi would want to assist them in doing the mitzvah of forming a zimun. Obviously, in such a case the Sephardi should be the one who leads the zimun (ספר וזאת הברכה פי"ד ימי מצטרף לזימון אות ב' עמ' 132).