The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
Wed, Oct 19 2022 ■ כ"ד תשרי, תשפ"ג
סימן ר"ו סעיף ד'-ה'

Overview

Siman 206 Seif 4:

When reciting a beracha before eating or smelling something, one must hold it in his right hand.

- Holding the item assists one's concentration. This requirement is l'chatchila but b'dieved one fulfills the mitzvah even if it is merely in front of him. (M.B. 17)
- The right hand is more important. Poskim write that a lefty should hold the item in his left hand. Similarly, when reciting a beracha on a mitzvah one should hold it in his right hand. When one asks a friend to hand him a sefer he should receive it in his right hand. (M.B. 18)

Siman 206 Seif 5:

One may not recite a beracha on a food or drink until it is in front of him. If one recited the beracha and then the food was brought out one must repeat the beracha but if one recited the beracha when a food was in front of him and then more of that variety of food was brought out or another variety that shares the same beracha as the first food he does not have to recite a second beracha. It is proper for one to l'chatchila have in mind whatever food will be served.

- Even if one had these foods in mind when he recited the beracha it is ineffective since they were not present and the beracha can not take effect upon them. If the food was in a box when one recited the beracha and then he removed it from the box he is not required to recite a second beracha. Pri Megadim asserts that this is true in all such cases where it is certain that the food will be brought to him, e.g. if the food is in the next room. L'chatchila, one should avoid this because it is an interruption and one should hold the food in his right hand when reciting the beracha. (M.B. 19)
- The wording implies that this is true even if one ate the original food. Rema indicates that Shulchan Aruch's ruling applies even if one did not explicitly have in mind whatever fruit will be served unless one's intent was to eat only the food in front of him. (M.B. 20)
- Assuming that the other food is a fruit. If one recited the beracha on fish and was then served beer one is required to recite another beracha unless one had in mind that the beracha would cover that food or if the other food was on the table when he recited the beracha. (M.B. 21)
- Many authorities dispute this halacha and maintain that the beracha only covers the same fruit if more was served after the beracha was recited but does not cover different fruit. However, if another fruit was served while the first fruit is still present one is not required to recite another beracha on that fruit. (M.B. 22)
- There are Poskim who maintain that the beracha does not cover other foods unless they were on the table when one recited the beracha. (M.B. 23)

Halacha Highlight

Holding a food while reciting a beracha

Shulchan Aruch Siman 206 Seif 4

צריך לאחזו בימינו

One must hold it in his right hand

Shulchan Aruch (סע' ד') writes that while reciting a beracha on food or a spice that one smells he should hold the item in his right hand. Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק י"ז) explains that holding the item in one's hand facilitates concentration on the beracha. Elsewhere (סי' קס"ז ס"ק כ"ב) Mishnah Berurah wrote that one should hold the bread while reciting the beracha to minimize the delay between the beracha and eating. Levush (שם) explains that holding the food demonstrates to everyone that one is reciting the beracha on that food. This requirement is only l'chatchila, but in the event that one recited the beracha with the food in front of him rather than holding it he has fulfilled his obligation. The obligation to hold the item upon which one is reciting the beracha is not limited to foods and spices. Even when reciting a beracha on the performance of a mitzvah one should hold the mitzvah object in his hand while he recites the beracha (מ"ב ס"ק י"ח).

The reason the food should be held in one's right hand is to assign importance by using one's dominate hand. For that reason, Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק י"ח) writes that a lefty should hold the food in his left hand. Kaf HaChaim (אות ל') asserts based on Kabbalistic sources that a lefty should also hold the food in his right hand. The rationale is that the right hand represents the strength of chessed. He further reports that this is the common practice. Poskim also write that if one is wearing gloves it is appropriate to remove them so that he can grasp the food with his hand directly (פסקי תשובות אות ט"ו). Additionally, Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק י"ח) writes that one should not insert a knife into a fruit and recite the beracha while holding the knife. Shulchan Aruch HaRav (סע' ח') explains that the right hand is the source of life and a knife is a cause of death and it is not proper to combine two opposites in this manner (פסקי תשובות אות ט"ז).