The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
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סימן רט"ז סעיף י'-י"א

Overview

Siman 216 Seif 10:

If one has fragrant wood, fragrant herbs and other varieties of fragrances one should recite the appropriate beracha for each one. If one recited on all of them בורא מיני בשמים he discharged his obligation. Regarding the question of whether it is necessary to give precedent to the wood ahead of the herbs, see above siman 210.

- L'chatchila one should recite a separate beracha on each fragrant item and the order is: fragrant wood, fragrant herbs and then other fragrances. If many items became mixed together or if many items are bundled together so that one cannot smell one without the other he should recite בורא מיני בשמים. Some authorities contend that one should cut off a small piece from each item in the bundle so that he could recite the appropriate beracha on each one. (M.B. 39 (א))
- This is true when one explicitly has in mind the other varieties but otherwise the beracha does not cover them. Later authorities note that just like the beracha on the wood does not cover the herbs so too the beracha on the herbs does not cover the wood. (M.B. 39 (ב))
- A dispute is mentioned there whether one must prioritize fruit of a tree ahead of fruit of the ground. In our case if both are equally preferred one should give precedence to the wood since the beracha is more specific. (M.B. 40)

Siman 216 Seif 11:

If one was given myrtle and fragrant oil to smell and the berachos are the same one should recite the beracha on the myrtle which covers the oil. If they do not share the same beracha one should recite the beracha on the myrtle first.

- The myrtle itself smells nice as opposed to the oil which merely absorbed smell from something else. For that reason the myrtle takes precedence. When reciting the beracha one should hold the myrtle in his right hand and the oil in his left hand. (M.B. 43)
- Even though balsam oil has a natural smell and the oil was not infused by another ingredient and the beracha is specific, nevertheless, since the myrtle is still intact it is considered more important. (M.B. 45)

Halacha Highlight

Reciting one beracha on many spices

Shulchan Aruch Siman 216 Seif 10
מברך על כל אחד ברכה הראויה לו
One recites the appropriate beracha on each one

Shulchan Aruch (סעי' י) addresses the circumstance in which one has different varieties of spices before him that he intends to smell. He rules that one should recite the appropriate beracha for each one of the spices separately rather than recite one beracha that would encompass all the different varieties. Rema adds, however, that if one recited בורא מיני בשמים on all of them he has discharged his obligation. Mishnah Berurah (סק"ח ל"ח (ב)) notes that Rema's ruling is similar to Shulchan Aruch's ruling in seif 2 but there is one important difference between them. In seif 2 one holds many varieties of spices in his hand at once and recites בורא מיני בשמים on the entire collection. In this seif Rema refers to where one takes one of the spices upon which one recites בורא מיני בשמים and has in mind to discharge the requirement to recite the berachos on the other varieties of spices. Mishnah Berurah (סק"ק ל"ט (ב)) also notes that the beracha בורא מיני בשמים is effective for the other spices only if one had them specifically in mind but if he did not have them specifically in mind they are not covered by the beracha.

Aruch HaShulchan (סעי' י"א) writes that when one has many spices bundled together one may recite בורא מיני בשמים even l'chatchila on the bunch. This is different from the case of one who has many foods in front of him and wishes to recite שהכל and discharge his obligation to recite a beracha on the other foods. The reason that should not be done is that when it comes to the different foods one is eating each one separately; therefore, the correct beracha should be recited on each food. In the case of the spices that are bundled together one smells them all at the same time and it is acceptable to recite one beracha that will include them all. However, Mishnah Berurah in the name of Elya Rabba advocates taking a piece of the different spices and reciting a separate beracha on each, indicating that he does not accept Aruch HaShulchan's position (פסקי תשובות אות י"ב).