The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
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סימן רצ"ז סעיף ד'-ה'

Halacha Highlight

Reciting the beracha on besamim or ner for oneself

Mishnah Berurah Siman 297 Seif Koton 13

שאין רוצים לצאת בברכת הנר וכו'

They do not wish to fulfill their obligation with the beracha on the ner etc.

Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק י"ג) observes that there are people who do not wish to fulfill their obligation for besamim and ner with the recitation of the person reciting havdala and recite the berachos for themselves. The problem is that they often end up reciting the beracha while the beracha of hamavdil is being recited. This is improper because if they intend to discharge their obligation with the leader's recitation of the beracha of hamavdil they must listen to his recitation rather than recite another beracha at the same time. Additionally, it is preferred for everyone to discharge their obligation with the leader's recitation since this enhances the mitzvah due to the principle of ברב עם הדרת מלך -in the multitudes of the nation is the glory of King, rather than have each person recite the beracha for himself. The only allowance for one to recite the beracha for himself is if he is far away from the light so that he cannot derive useful benefit from the light. In such a circumstance he should have in mind that he does not wish to fulfill his obligation with the recitation of the leader and should fulfill that obligation after havdala when he is closer to the candle.

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (שמירת שבת כהלכתה פ"ס הע' צ"ד) expresses uncertainty what to do when one wishes to smell the besamim or benefit from the light of the candle but before he can do so the leader continues with the beracha of hamavdil. One could argue that just like the berachos on besamim and ner are not an interruption between the beracha on the wine and drinking the wine, so too, the beracha of hamavdil is not an interruption between the berachos on the besamim and ner and the benefit one derives from these items. Alternatively, one could argue that since the besamim and ner are part of the order of havdala they do not constitute an interruption but since havdala is not designed to be an interruption between the berachos on the besamim and ner they do constitute an interruption. Teshuvas Salmas Chaim (סי' רע"ט) writes that it is logical that the beracha of havdala would indeed constitute an interruption and another beracha would be required.

Overview

Siman 297 Seif 4:

The custom is to recite the beracha on myrtle whenever possible. Some maintain that one should not recite the beracha on myrtle that is dry and is no longer aromatic and should instead use other besamim and this is the custom in these countries. It appears to me that if one uses myrtle with other besamim one satisfies all opinions.

- Shulchan Aruch refers to the hadas taken from one's lulav. When Shulchan Aruch refers to using a hadas when possible he means when it retains some smell and the dissenting opinion maintains that once it lost its primary smell it should not be used. (M.B. 8)
- Although one may even use spices that one has for cooking, nevertheless, Rabbeinu Ephraim had a glass container filled with different varieties of spices for the mitzvah and this is the common custom. (M.B. 10)

Siman 297 Seif 5:

Someone who cannot smell does not recite the beracha on besamim unless he intends to discharge the obligation of the members of his household who are minors but reached the age of chinuch or on behalf of someone who cannot recite the beracha for himself.

- They must smell the besamim immediately after his beracha. (M.B. 12)
- Later authorities disagree and maintain that he may recite the beracha only for his children but not for someone who does not know how to recite the beracha for himself. (M.B. 13)
- Those people who wish to recite the berachos on the besamim and ner for themselves and end up doing so while the beracha of havdala is recited are not conducting themselves properly. Since they wish to discharge their obligation with the leader's recitation they must pay attention to his recitation. If one is far from the fire and cannot benefit from its light, he should have in mind to satisfy his obligation when he is closer to the fire. (M.B. 13)