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

Overview

Siman 298 Seif 7:

If one was walking outside of a city and saw light, if the majority of citizens are idolaters, one may not recite the beracha but if the majority of citizens are Jews, or even 50/50 the beracha may be recited.

Siman 298 Seif 8:

One may recite the beracha on fire generated from wood or stones but on motzai Yom HaKippurim one may not recite the beracha on them.

- The beracha is to demonstrate that one was not permitted to use fire on Yom Kippur but now it is permitted and for that reason one may only recite the beracha on a fire that rested, meaning that was lit before Yom Kippur and was not used for all of Yom Kippur. (M.B. 26)

Siman 298 Seif 9:

One may recite the beracha on coals that are burning so strongly that if one were to place a toothpick between them it would ignite and only if they were kindled to provide light.

- If they were kindled to generate warmth one may not recite the beracha on them. (M.B. 27)

Siman 298 Seif 10:

One may not recite the beracha on a furnace that is first heating bricks since its purpose is not to provide illumination but after the bricks were heated it is used for illumination and one may recite the beracha on it.

Siman 298 Seif 11:

Regarding the lamp in a bais haknesses, if there is a prominent person there, one may recite the beracha on that lamp but if not, one may not recite the beracha. Some authorities maintain the opposite is true. If there is an attendant who eats there one may recite the beracha as long as the moon does not shine its light there.

- In a bais midrash, if people study there and lamps are kindled for that purpose one may recite the beracha. (M.B. 28)
- The disagreement relates to when the lamp is kindled to provide illumination. All opinions agree that if one extinguished the flame and then rekindled it for havdala it may certainly be used. (M.B. 29)
- It was kindled to provide illumination so that he could eat. Rosh writes that nowadays we do not recite the beracha on a candle from a bais haknesses since it was not intended to provide illumination and he refers to the candle that rests by the amud. One may not recite the beracha on a yahrtzeit candle. (M.B. 30)
- If the moon provides illumination the function of the candle is to provide honor to the Shechinah. (M.B. 31)

Siman 298 Seif 12:

The beracha is not recited on the candle kindled for the deceased since its function is not to provide illumination. Therefore, if a candle was carried ahead of a corpse and would have been kindled even if they were transporting the corpse during the day but it happened to be that they transported the corpse at night, the beracha may not be recited on that candle.

- It was kindled to honor the deceased. (M.B. 32)
- Magen Avrohom writes that one may not recite the beracha on a candle kindled for a chosson for the same reason. (M.B. 33)

Siman 298 Seif 13:

A blind person does not recite the beracha.

- Pri Megadim remains uncertain whether a blind person may recite the beracha for others but he may recite the rest of havdala. (M.B. 34)

Siman 298 Seif 14:

If people were sitting in a bais midrash and someone brought them a flame, one person recites the beracha for the others.

- Shulchan Aruch refers to where they already recited havdala but did not have a candle at that time. (M.B. 35)
- Although this causes more bitul Torah since it interrupts everyone's Torah study, nevertheless, it is preferred due to the principle of ברב עם הדרת מלך. Authorities write that one who already recited בורא מאורי האש may repeat it for the members of his household. (M.B. 36)

Halacha Highlight

A blind person reciting the beracha on the candle

Shulchan Aruch Siman 298 Seif 13

סומא אינו מברך

A blind person does not recite the beracha

Shulchan Aruch (סע' י"ג) rules that a blind person does not recite the beracha of בורא מאורי האש. Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק ל"ד) explains that a prerequisite to the recitation of the beracha is the ability to benefit from the light to the degree that one could distinguish between coins from different countries and a blind person is incapable of benefiting from the light to this degree. Poskim note that this ruling is not limited to one who is blind, but even a person with weak vision who cannot benefit from the light to the degree that he could distinguish between coins may not recite the beracha and should listen to its recitation by someone who is capable of benefiting from the light. If someone blind wishes to recite the beracha on the candle for his children for chinuch, according to Kaf HaChaim (אות ס"ט) he may do so. He bases his ruling on Shulchan Aruch's earlier ruling (סי' רצ"ז סע' ה) regarding the recitation of the beracha on besamim by someone who cannot smell. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (שמירת שבת כהלכתה פס"א הע' נ"ו) adds that the recitation of the beracha on the candle in this case does not constitute an interruption between בורא פרי הגפן and drinking the wine.

Although Shulchan Aruch here rules that a blind person does not recite the beracha on the candle he does rule (סי' תכ"ו סק"א) that a blind person recites the beracha on the new moon – kiddush levana. The reason is that the beracha on the new moon is recited over the event of the appearance of the new moon and additionally blind people benefit from the light of the moon in the sense that others who benefit from the light can assist blind people to walk at night. Biur Halacha (שם ד"ה ונהנין) further explains that although the beracha on the candle for havdala is also recited on the existence of fire, there is a difference between a beracha recited following seeing and benefiting from light (havdala) and a beracha recited for just benefiting from the light (kiddush levana).