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"תקני תוספת"
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Please do not
read during
davening or
Krias HaTorah

A Clean Body for Tefilah – 2

Behar-Bechukosai 5783

296

Passing Gas during Shemoneh Esrei

Source of the Issur

- In the last issue (295), we discussed halachos relating to a person who needs to relieve himself during davening. The source of the issur is from two pesukim: the first is "הכון לקראת אלקיך ישראל" (עמוס ד'), and the second, "שמור רגלך כאשר תלך אל בית האלקים" (קהלת ד'), on which Chazal comment: *Hashem says, "Guard your openings when you stand before Me in tefilah"* (גמ' ברכות דף כ"ג ע"א).
- Some Rishonim say the source for the issur to pass gas in the middle of davening is also from the posuk of "שמור רגלך וכו'" (שם, מגורת המאור) (רש"י שם, מגורת המאור). Some poskim hold it is also from the posuk of "הכון לקראת אלקיך" (פרי"ח סי' פ').
- Disgrace to the tefilah.** Some write that the reason is because during tefilah, one is standing before the King, and it is very disrespectful to pass gas then (מ"ב סי' פ' סק"ג).

Bad Sign

- If one is "מתעטש" during tefilah, i.e., he passes gas, it is a bad sign for him (ברכות כ"ד, שו"ע ק"ב סי"ג). Presumably, this is only for someone who is not used to doing this; if someone has an intestinal issue or is older and passes gas easily, it would not be a bad sign (אש').
- Only if audible?** Some say it is only a bad sign if it is out loud; otherwise, it is not a bad sign, and one would not need to move away from where he is standing (see below, 12) (מעדני מלך פ' מי שמתו אות א'). However, some hold even if one passed gas without noise, it is a bad sign and he needs to move away (מג"א סק"ו, הובא במ"ב סק"ו). The consensus of the Acharonim is that if one passes gas without a noise, it is better not to interrupt his tefilah to move, and he should not say the "רבון העולמים" text (see below, 13) (כף החיים סק"ו).

Shemoneh Esrei

- We will now discuss halachos pertaining to Shemoneh Esrei. However, it should be noted that when one is wearing tefillin, there are additional halachos and one must be more careful (see below, 25). Hence, the following halachos apply when one is davening Shemoneh Esrei without tefillin.
- Women.** It should also be noted that all the halachos of a clean body apply equally to women davening. Obviously, they do not have the extra halachos of tefillin, as they do not wear tefillin, and we protest against those who do (רמ"א א"ח סי' ל"ח סי"ג). [As for Reform or rebellious women who wear tefillin, their tefilah is repulsive in any event..]

L'chatchilah

- L'chatchilah, one should be careful not to pass gas during Shemoneh Esrei. If he feels the need, he should restrain himself to whatever extent possible (ב"י). He should not worry about the issur of בל (מ"ב סק"ג) that only applies to holding in gedolim or ketanim (תשקצו).
- No bad odor.** The issur to pass gas is only when it has a bad odor. There is no issur whatsoever if it just has a noise but no odor. That is just called "עיטוש" and it is not disgrace for a mitzvah (מור וקציעה). (סי' ק"ג, בן איש חי, עוד יוסף חי פ' חיי שרה אות ד', משנת יעקב ח"ב סי' ע"ט). Sometimes, one can know in advance if there will be an odor based on the particular circumstances or a physical feeling, or if he ate foods that cause increased gas.

Accidental

- If one was davening Shemoneh Esrei and accidentally passed gas with a bad odor, he should stop davening until the odor is gone and then continue from where he left off (שו"ע ומ"ב סי' ק"ג ס"א). Similarly, when there is a bad odor from someone else, one should wait until the odor passes.
- Duration of the pause.** If, because of the odor, one paused long enough to say the entire Shemoneh Esrei, he must start again from the beginning (מ"ב סק"ח). However, it usually should not take so long for the odor to pass. If one passed gas multiple times throughout Shemoneh Esrei, the pauses do not add together if he was able to continue davening, even a little bit, between them (מ"ב סס"ה סק"ד).

Intentional

- Can't restrain himself.** If one feels the need to pass gas in the middle of Shemoneh Esrei and is in discomfort and cannot restrain himself, he should walk backward four amos while still facing "mizrach," let out the gas, wait until the odor passes, and say the special רבון העולמים text, even though he is in the middle of Shemoneh Esrei. After that, he should go back to where he was originally standing in order to return to the place he designated for the Shechinah (ב"י) and continue from where he left off in Shemoneh Esrei (מ"ב סי' ס"ב) (מ"ב סי' ס"ב), i.e., from the beginning of the brachah he was in (ומ"ב סי' ס"ב).
- Text of the העולמים.** The text one should say is, רבון העולמים יצרתני נקבים נקבים חלולים חלולים, גלוי וידוע לפניך חרפתנו וכלימתנו, חרפה יצרתני נקבים נקבים בחיינו רימה ותולעה במותינו (שו"ע שם). Saying this is not an interruption in Shemoneh Esrei as he anyway interrupted Shemoneh Esrei to walk backward (מ"ב סק"ה).
- In a tzibbur or alone?** The Mechaber holds that one should move four amos whether he is davening alone or in a tzibbur (שו"ע סי' ט"ב); the Sephardi poskim who follow the Mechaber hold the same (פרי"ח סק"ב).
- However, the Rama holds this only applies when davening at home, where it is not embarrassing to move to pass gas and then return to one's place. When davening in shul with a tzibbur, where it is very embarrassing to move in the middle of Shemoneh Esrei, there is no need to move at all, and one should also not say the רבון העולמים text. He should just wait in place until the odor is gone. This is what Ashkenazim who follow the Rama do (שם). However, it is proper for one to at least think the text in his heart (שלחן הטהור סי' ב) (מ"ב סק"ט) to rectify the bad siman (above, 4).

Davened with a Bad Odor Present

- One may not daven in the presence of a bad odor "without a source" [שו"ע לו עיקר], i.e., when the source of the odor is not here, e.g., when one passes gas (שו"ע סי' ע"ט סי' ט"ט ומ"ב סק"ל). Thus, one must wait until the odor goes away. This issur is d'rabanana (מ"ב הקדמה לסי' ע"ט אות ז').
- If one went ahead and davened Shemoneh Esrei in the presence of a bad odor from gas, whether from him or someone else, and did not wait until it went away, he must daven Shemoneh Esrei again (הגר"ח קנייבסקי, אשי ישראל פנ"א אות י"ז ובהע' ס"ד*), as one must repeat Shemoneh Esrei even for an issur d'rabanana (מ"ב ע"ו סק"ג).

Starting to Daven When Feeling the Need to Pass Gas

- Pesukei D'Zimrah.** If it is clear to a person before davening that he will not be able to keep himself from passing gas until after the zman for Krias Shema and tefilah, he should say Pesukei D'Zimrah

as usual. However, he should not say Boruch She'Amar and Yishtabach, as those brachos were instituted to arrange Hashem's praises before davening, and he will not be davening (ש"ע הרב סי' פ) (סק"ב), as we will discuss (21). He may say Birchos HaShachar (ערוך השלחן סי' פ סק"ד).

19. **Krias Shema and its brachos.** In the above case, one should say Krias Shema since it is a mitzvas aseil d'oraissa, while the issur to say it in the presence of gas is only d'rabanan and does not override a mitzvah d'oraissa (מ"ב סי' פ סק"ג). After saying Krias Shema, he can also say Birchos Krias Shema, even though they are only d'rabanan.
20. Even though he will say Krias Shema without tefillin – as one may not put on tefillin if he feels he will need to pass gas (see below, 25) – and saying Krias Shema without tefillin is like giving false testimony, he should not wait and miss zman Krias Shema in order to say it wearing tefillin. Since it is beyond his control, it is not like false testimony (מגן הגיבורים בשלה"ג סי' פ סק"א, מ"ב סי' מ"ו סק"ג).
21. **Shemoneh Esrei.** When it is clear to a person that he will not be able to keep himself from passing gas, he should not say Shemoneh Esrei even if he will miss zman tefilah (פ"י ש"ע), whether at Shacharis, Minchah, or Maariv. This is true whether tefilah is a mitzvah d'oraissa or a mitzvah d'rabanan.
22. **Standing before the King.** The reason for this is because tefilah is like standing before the King, and it is disrespectful for one to stand and daven knowing he will need to pause in the middle to wait until the odor passes. Also, it is very disrespectful to pass gas while standing before the King (מ"ב סי' פ סק"ג).
23. **Can make it up.** Another reason given is that Shemoneh Esrei can be made up (תשלומין). However, Krias Shema, which cannot be made up, should be said even if it is likely one will need to pass gas in the middle (א"ר סי' פ בשם שו"ת הרמ"א).
24. **Patient who always needs to pass gas.** If one has an illness wherein he always needs to pass gas and if he will not daven Shemoneh Esrei when he feels the need to pass gas, he will never daven, the poskim allow him to daven. Otherwise, he will never daven Shemoneh Esrei. Even if the chiyuv of tefilah is d'rabanan, it is a "public mitzvah" [מצוה דרבים] (מ"ב סי' פ סק"ד). Still, when he passes gas, he should wait until the odor goes away and then continue davening (פ"ח).

Passing Gas While Wearing Tefillin

25. One may not wear tefillin if he knows he will not be able to keep himself from passing gas with his tefillin on (ש"ע סי' ל"ח ס"ב). Some say this is an issur d'oraissa of disgrace for a mitzvah (שאתג אריה סי' מ), at least if one does so intentionally because he has contempt for mitzvos (תורת היים סק"א) and it is out loud (ש"ע סי' ל"ח). However, most poskim hold the whole issur is only d'rabanan (פ"מ ס"ג סי' פ סק"א).

Will Likely Pass Gas

26. **Intestinal issue.** If one has an intestinal issue and he has diarrhea or cannot stop himself from passing gas, he is patur from tefillin (ש"ע סי' ל"ח ס"א). He may not put on tefillin if he cannot restrain himself from passing gas, since tefillin requires a clean body.
27. **Can restrain himself for a short time.** If one feels he can restrain himself from passing gas for a short time, he should at least wear tefillin for Krias Shema and Shemoneh Esrei. He should put them on between Ahavah Rabah and Krias Shema with a brachah (ש"ע ל"ח ס"ב) and take them off immediately after Shemoneh Esrei (מ"ב סק"ט).

Moving Them Out of Place When Passing Gas

28. If one feels the need to pass gas while wearing tefillin and does not have time to take them off, he can move both the shel yad and shel rosh out of place; then, it is not considered passing gas while wearing tefillin (מ"ב סי' ק"ג סק"ג).
29. **At least move shel rosh.** If one does not have time to move them both, he should at least move his tefillin shel rosh or lift it up and place his hand between the tefillin and his head (מ"ב סי' ל"ח סק"ט). This is because the main concern is with the shel rosh, which has the letter shin on the bayis itself. The daled and yud of the shel yad are on the retzuos, not the bayis. Also, the shel yad is covered (מחצית השקל שם סק"ב).

Patient Who Always Needs to Pass Gas

30. Some say that if it is hard for someone to refrain from passing gas due to a chronic issue; and he cannot daven without passing some gas without a bad odor, so the issur is only for him [if there is a bad

odor, those nearby cannot daven]; and it would be very embarrassing to daven without tefillin; he may wear tefillin out of their place. He should not make a brachah on them or tighten them. During Krias Shema and tefilah, he should wear them properly and make a brachah on them. The reason for this is because it is an issue of dignity [כבוד הבריות] and the issur is d'rabanan (שו"ת מנח"י ח"ו סי' י"ג). However, if he will cause a bad odor, he certainly may not daven if others are present. Also, if he is not very embarrassed to be without tefillin, he should always daven without tefillin. Still, he should make sure to put on tefillin for a few moments every day so that he does not completely miss the mitzvah d'oraissa of tefillin (פ"מ ס"ג סי' פ סק"ד).

Cleaning Up after Using the Bathroom

Urine

32. **Undergarment.** If the garments touching one's body became damp with urine, he may daven as usual – even if they are damp enough that something that touches them will become wet – since they are covered by his outer garments (ע"ח שו"ע סי' ע"ח).
33. **Outer garment too.** However, if one's outer garment is also damp with urine, he must change his clothing or cover it with an additional outer garment to say Krias Shema and other words of kedushah. Regarding Shemoneh Esrei, though, where one cannot stop and change his clothing, he should continue davening as usual once the flow stops. This is because the issur to daven with urine is only d'rabanan, and Chazal did not apply their issur to someone already in the middle of davening (מ"ב שם סק"ג).

Tzoah [Solid Waste]

34. **On clothing.** Some poskim allow one to daven with tzoah on his body [somewhere other than the pi hatabaas/back opening] that is covered with a garment (ד"ע ראשונה בש"ע סי' ע"ו ס"ד); others forbid it. It is proper to follow the machmir opinion (ד"ע שניה בש"ע שם). However, in a pressing situation, one can rely on the meikel opinion for reasons of dignity (מ"ב סק"ד).
35. However, all poskim agree that one may daven if the tzoah is on an inner garment, e.g., the garment touching his skin, and it is covered by an outer garment. Still, everyone should always be careful to have clean clothing, especially during davening (מ"ב סי' ע"ו סק"ב).
36. **Appearance.** Only actual tzoah matter is considered "tzoah." A mere appearance of tzoah is not a problem; there is no need at all to be cautious about this (מ"ב סק"ד, שו"ת שרגא המאי ח"א סי' כ"ט).

On the Back opening

37. All poskim agree that if one has tzoah on his pi hatabaas/back opening, he may not daven or say Krias Shema even if it is covered (ש"ע סי' ע"ו ס"ה), as that area is very dirty. Thus, one should be aware and always see to it that the pi hatabaas is clean (מ"ב סק"י). It is proper to wash the pi hatabaas with water (מ"ב סי' ג סק"א).
38. Strictly speaking, wiping three times is enough. In the Gemara's times, they used pointed stones (גמ' שבת דף פ"א ע"א, שו"ת דברי חיים ח"ב סי' ט); one can imagine how much was left after wiping. Nowadays that we use soft toilet paper, it is obvious that this is enough and one does not need to use water. One should not feel tense and nervous that he might not have wiped well and engage in excessive wiping; in fact, one who does so harms and injures himself (קריינא דאגרתא סי' ע"ג).
39. **Water.** Some are careful to wipe with water. This is not for particularly; it is an extra level of scrupulousness that is meant for particularly pious individuals (אריז"ל, שו"ע הרב סי' ג' ס"ח, שלחן הטהור ס"א, כף החיים). Some people install a bidet in the bathroom to keep water available for wiping. But this is just a chumra, as one can fully clean himself using modern-day toilet paper.
40. **Moist wipes.** Some use moist wipes; this also achieves the advantage of washing with water. However, one who lives in a multifamily building should be careful not to flush wipes down the toilet; doing so creates sewage blockages and causes damage to others. Also, one may not use them on Shabbos due to the issur of sechitah. It is impossible to limit their use to wiping without pressing, as they do not achieve their function until the area is clean, which usually requires pressing on the cloth. A meticulous person must also show caution for the issurim of Shabbos.



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