

HALOCHOSCOPE TOI

In the last issue we discussed *Hesech Hadaas*, interrupting the continuity of one's eating, and the need for a fresh *Brocha* when continuing. Here we discuss a related question: Someone is eating breakfast and has not yet finished drinking his coffee. He wishes to recite *Birchas Hamazon* and finish his coffee afterwards. Must he consider this *Hesech Hadaas*, or since he is in the middle of his drink, may he consider it a conscious exclusion from his *Hesech Hadaas*?

The issues:

(A) Reciting one *Brocha* to discharge the obligation on foods eaten at one meal

(B) *Hesech Hadaas* at the close of a meal

(C) Provisions made to prevent *Hesech Hadaas*

(A) *A Brocha discharging the foods eaten in one meal*

Generally, there are two ways to discharge many foods with one *Brocha*: When all the foods have the same *Brocha*, and when there is one *Ikar*, primary food and the other food or foods are *Tafeil*, secondary to it. When the foods are eaten as part of a meal based on bread, the *Brocha* on the bread is sufficient for all the foods eaten in the meal. There are two ways to interpret this rule. One is to consider the bread the *Ikar* and the other foods *Tafeil*. The other is to consider the meal a bread meal, which automatically exempts all the other foods. A third possibility is to consider all these foods in a middle category.

To better explain the issue, let us define *Ikar* and *Tafeil*. Normally one pictures them as mixture. One need not separate them to recite individual *Brochos*, but may recite the *Brocha* appropriate for the dominant component. For example, one might eat vegetables with a sauce. One could also picture them as separate foods, eaten together, such as ice cream with a wafer. In both of these situations one of the foods is dominant, based simply on the reason for eating the foods. One does not eat the vegetables because of the sauce, nor the ice cream for the wafer, but rather vice-versa. What about a situation where there is more than one primary food? For example, one might eat a main course with more than one food type. Obviously, one would recite independent *Brochos* for each one.

In a bread based meal two of the above situations often arise. Some food is

eaten with the bread, but other food is eaten in its own right. The question is whether the bread is *Ikar* to the foods eaten together with it, but that any food eaten as a separate entity does require a *Brocha* of its own. Or, that the bread is so overpowering that no other food is primary. Or, that the bread is the staple of a "meal" and that it is therefore the only food requiring a *Brocha*. This issue is discussed by the *Poskim*. According to all opinions the terminology used is that the *Brocha* on the bread "exempts" the other foods. This implies that the foods do require a *Brocha* but are exempted by the *Brocha* on the bread in some way.

The basis for the discussion is a Talmudic debate, relevant to our entire discussion. The Talmud discusses different foods eaten at a meal, some of which require their own *Brochos*. The Talmud's conclusion follows the view that foods eaten as part of the meal itself require no *Brocha* of their own. The *Brochos* on the bread exempt them. Foods eaten in their own right might be served during the meal, or after the meal has finished. When these are served during the meal they require a *Brocha Rishona*, but no *Brocha Acharona*. *Birchas Hamazon* on the rest of the meal includes these foods as well. If they are served after the meal they require both *Brochos*. As the commentaries point out, this can not refer to foods eaten at a later time. In one view the Talmud refers to two different types of food. The first type is food that is not eaten with bread, but independently. It is also filling food eaten for the meal. Therefore *Birchas Hamazon*, on filling food, exempts it from *Brocha Acharona*. The other food is snacking food. It is normally served after the close of the meal, but might be served during the meal. It requires both *Brochos*, since it can not be termed *Mazon*. The other views maintain that the first type of food is always exempted by the *Brocha* on bread. The second type requires its own *Brocha Rishona*. If it is served after the rest of the food is removed, indicating that it was never meant to be a part of the meal, it requires its own *Brocha Acharona* as well.

The *Poskim* maintain that according to the latter interpretation, the Talmud refers to different type of meal than those we are used to. The food was served on separate little tables. Once the table was removed the meal was "over." Nowadays, we do not consider the meal over until *Birchas Hamazon*, or an appropriate *Hesech Da'as*. However, we have equivalents of the second type of food, like fruit, served both during and after the main courses have been removed, that is not part of the meal itself. Such foods would require their own *Brocha Rishona*. Coffee is considered this type of food by the *Poskim*. However, it appears that this refers to coffee taken as a dessert after eating dinner. One would not serve it together with the main course. The argument may certainly be made that for breakfast the coffee is taken

as a secondary food to the bread. This is anyway true of fruit eaten with bread. Accordingly, coffee at breakfast should be included in the meal. It would require no *Brocha Rishona*, and even in Talmudic times would be included in *Birchas Hamazon*. Accordingly, in our case, the coffee drunk after *Birchas Hamazon* is a different cup of coffee, being drunk after the meal. It certainly requires a fresh *Brocha*. The question would still remain on a cup of coffee served after the food, which the person wishes to finish after *Birchas Hamazon*.

(B) Hesech Hada'as at the close of a meal

As discussed in last issue, as long as one still has the initial *Brocha* in mind, he may continue eating the food he recited the original *Brocha* on. Once he decides to stop eating, when and if he decides to eat more of it he must recite a fresh *Brocha*. Various activities are a clear *Hesech Hadaas* at the end of a meal. If one did one of these activities, he may not continue eating without a fresh *Brocha*. The *Poskim* debate whether he must recite *Birchas Hamazon* first on the earlier part of the meal, then begin a new meal with the additional food he wishes to eat. We follow the view that requires only a *Brocha Rishona*.

Activities that signal the end of a meal include washing *Mayim Acharonim*, to clean one's fingers before *Birchas Hamazon*, removing the "table," declaring the intent to recite *Birchas Hamazon*, (the *Poskim* debate whether only drinking more afterwards is forbidden but eating is permitted) and pouring the cup of wine over which *Birchas Hamazon* should be recited. [Though we practice this on *Shabbos* and with a *Zimun* of three or more, it actually also applies to regular *Birchas Hamazon*.] It follows that actually reciting *Birchas Hamazon* is certainly considered ending the meal, requiring a fresh *Brocha* on any more food eaten.

(C) Provisions to negate Hesech Hada'as

The above discussion presumes that the person eating decides not to continue. He then changes his mind, and wishes to eat some more. He is beginning a fresh burst of eating and must recite a fresh *Brocha*. He has been *Masiach Da'as*. It is possible to finish eating one food, yet not be *Masiach Da'as* from other foods. As we have seen, there is a view that declaring intent to recite *Birchas Hamazon* only forbids one from drinking on the basis of his initial *Brocha*, but that eating is permitted with no fresh *Brocha*. Similarly, if one was eating various foods with different *Brochos Acharonos*, such as cake and drink, reciting one *Brocha Acharona* should not automatically signal the end of the eating of the second food. Accordingly, in our case, where the person clearly wishes to finish the coffee after *Birchas Hamazon*, could he be considered providing for negating *Hesech Da'as*?

The Talmud debates a closely related scenario. Having poured the wine for Birchas Hamazon, the question was raised whether it may be drunk before Birchas Hamazon, and another cup poured for that purpose. The argument was that this could not be considered Hesech Da'as since it was there in front of them, and they intended to drink it, albeit after Birchas Hamazon. By this argument, the regular wine of Birchas Hamazon, drunk afterwards, should not require a fresh Brocha. The dissenting opinion maintains that the reasoning to require a fresh Brocha is based on the interruption of Birchas Hamazon. The Talmud explains why this is considered an interruption, despite the clear intention to continue. Since it is not possible to drink at the same time as reciting the Brocha, reciting the Brocha creates a definite break, regardless of intent. We rule that other Brochos before drinking the wine at, for example *Kiddush*, even on a day when Havdalah etc. must also be recited, do not constitute an interruption. If so, Birchas Hamazon is no interruption either. The Talmud refutes this argument. At Kiddush one is preparing to drink the initial cup of wine. At Birchas Hamazon he is involved in ending his meal. In one view, this distinction means that certain activities or Brochos automatically constitute an interruption. To negate this status one must be able to continue during this activity. Other activities do not automatically constitute an interruption. Therefore, one need not be able to do both at the same time. The other view is that any activity that one is obligated to do constitutes a break if it mutually excludes continuing. Activities done out of choice do not interrupt even if mutually exclusive of continuing. Accordingly, the Poskim conclude that one must recite a fresh Brocha on the wine after Birchas Hamazon. [See Brochos 41b-42a Psachim 103a-b Chulin 86b-87a, Poskim. Tur Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 174, 178, 179, commentaries.]

According to all these interpretations, our case of reciting Birchas Hamazon itself certainly constitutes a break. Even though our questioner has already drunk half the coffee, unlike the Birchas Hamazon wine, he has made a clear interruption. Therefore, he must recite a fresh Brocha after he finishes.

Incidentally, in one view he should anyhow drink the coffee before Birchas Hamazon. Scripturally, Birchas Hamazon is required after one has eaten his fill. Rabbinically it is required even after eating the basic amount. Since this person shows that he has not had enough to drink, some say that he is not Scripturally required to say Birchas Hamazon. If he drinks all the coffee first he will fulfill a