

HALOCHOSCOPE

This week's question:

If one purchased a few suits at the same time, does he recite *shehecheyanu* for each, or once for all of them?

The issues:

- A) The *Brocha Shehecheyanu* on new purchases
 - B) When is this *Brocha* recited?
 - C) May different causes be combined in one *brocha*
- A) *Shehecheyanu*

Shehecheyanu is known as '*zman*', *brocha* on joy at reaching a particular time. It is required on occasion of a joyous event and the first time a particular mitzvah is fulfilled. The *mitzvos* included in this category occur in a cycle, such as *shofar* on *Rosh Hashanah*. *Mitzvos* that occur rarely, though not cyclically, such as redemption of the first-born, are also included. The *brocha* commemorates joy due to a time or date, and the time that personal joy is experienced. Some add *mitzvos* that combine ownership with a *mitzvah*, such as *mezuzah*. Cyclical joy includes fruit coming into season. While eating the fruit is voluntary, one who does so must recite the *brocha*. Some say the occasion is the first time the fruit is seen. Our practice follows those who recite it when eating the fruit.

Another joyous event warranting the *brocha* is a new acquisition. Two examples are provided by the Talmud: one who builds a new house, or acquires a new utensil. Some maintain that this shows that the joy over the new utensil must be comparable to the joy over a new house. Most *poskim* maintain that it depends on the joy experienced by the one acquiring it. For a wealthy person it must be more substantial than for a poor person.

If the acquired item is new to both himself and his company, the *brocha* is *hatov ve-hameitiv*, Who is good and Who does good to others. This *brocha* is recited on good tidings that affect more than one person. When they affect one person the *brocha* is *shehecheyanu*. Thus, *shehecheyanu* is really on good tidings. Logically this is the acquisition. If it was not recited then, it may still be recited as long as the joy is still felt. For an article used for *mitzvos*, some say that the *brocha* may be recited at the time of acquisition or preparation or at the time it is first used for the *mitzvah*. When building a *sukah* one could recite *shehecheyanu*, or on the first night when one sits there. Our practice is to consider the *shehecheyanu* on the *mitzvah* to be partially on the joy of preparing it.

Even new items must be substantial enough to bring uplifting joy. Determining this is debated. Some maintain that it always depends on the purchaser. For ordinary people, a coat or suit is sufficiently special, but not for a rich man. For a poor man a new shirt is special, but not for most people. Socks are considered very insignificant, even for the poor, but one who is penniless might feel thankful joy for these too. Another view maintains that it always depends on the significance of the item. Items that are purchased new

at regular intervals do not qualify. Items bought at rare intervals qualify. In general, hats are not considered so special, though expensive hats could qualify. Items that are fancy but small, such as an expensive neck-tie, also depend on the subject. [Scripturally, there is only one day of *Yomtov*. Rabbinically, we observe two days. Ordinarily, there is no problem reciting *shehecheyanu* on the second day in *galus*. It is observed as a result of the doubt, due to the distance of these communities from the *Sanhedrin*, and their doubt about the date. Thus, it is treated as a possible first day. On *Rosh Hashanah*, the second day is considered quasi, part first part second. The poskim debate whether one recites *shehecheyanu*. When kindling the candles, reciting *kidush*, or blowing *shofar* we have in mind a new fruit in season. It is common for the *tokaia* to wear a new item of clothing, such as a neck-tie. Presumably, if it is significant to the wearer, and he does not purchase them often, it qualifies.]

What about a new addition to an existing garment? If the addition is a repair, it could not be considered the same as a new garment. If the addition is an independent piece that happens to be attached to an existing garment, it is possible to consider it as a separate item. Is this worthy of a *brocha*? For example, one might add an *atara*, decorative silver collar-piece, to an old *talit*. The *atara* could even be worth many times the value of the rest of the *talit*. This is worthy of its own discussion.

Other items, such as new furniture, vehicles, appliances and household items also require the *brocha*. Some have the custom to recite it only on fruit and clothing. However, when they purchase other utensils, they recite the words of the *brocha* omitting Hashem's Name. Alternatively, they combine it with other reasons for the *brocha*. [See below.]

Other reasons for this *brocha* include meeting a long lost friend, and, according to some, the birth of a girl. According to some, if the rains only come at certain times, or if a river floods to provide irrigation at a certain time, this is cause for joy and a *brocha*. Some people take the liberty of reciting it whenever they feel overwhelmed by joy on good news or on a joyous occasion. However, it is not advisable to recite this *brocha* of one's own accord, unless there are qualifying circumstances. Some point out that though the Talmud details this *brocha* on new items and the like, some poskim omit any reference to it. This indicates that they consider the *brocha* voluntary, except on a *Yomtov*. Accordingly, it is best to limit it to situations that are authorized by the poskim. [See Brochos 59b-60a, Yerushalmi 9:3, Eruvin 40b, Sukah 46a, Poskim. Tur Sh. Ar. OC 223 225:1-7, commentaries. Halochoscope III:25 V:34 VIII:7 XI:2.]

B) When is the *brocha* recited?

The *brocha* is recited as a praise based on the *simcha* of the time. For a new fruit the *brocha* is for the general *simcha* felt by the world. The ideal time would be when the fruit appears. It's newness is visible to everyone. Thus, when one first sees it he should recite the *brocha*. Even if one does not own it, but sees it on a tree or in his fellow's hands, he may say the *brocha*. This timing is still followed on the second day of *Rosh Hashana*. We have a new fruit in front of us, though we will not be eating it until later.

[Some link this to the *mitzvah* of *bikurim*, offering the first fruits as a *korban* and given as a gift to the *kohain* in *Eretz Yisroel*. Nowadays, this *mitzvah* is fulfilled by giving gifts to Torah scholars. One should try to bring a new fruit to the scholar, that he will recite *shehecheyanu* over.]

The prevailing custom is to recite it when it is first eaten. This adds a personal touch to the joy, despite the main reason for the *brocha* being the general joy in the world at large. It is still considered 'new' until one eats it. Thus, it is possible to recite this *brocha* long after seeing it for the first time, and even after purchasing it. The joy is not necessarily felt in the purchase, but in either seeing it or on the prospect of consuming it. One could purchase a new fruit, and then wait until an opportune moment for the *brocha*. It would be recited before eating it. If one is also reciting its *bircas hanehenin*, the order of the two *brochos* is debated. Either way is acceptable. If one has already tasted a piece of the fruit, it is too late to recite the *brocha*. It is no longer 'new'.

For new clothing the ideal time for the *brocha* would be the acquisition. Until then, it is not 'new' for the purchaser. If alterations are made, the next joyous event, the first time it is worn, is the best time to recite it. It has become standard practice to always recite it when first wearing it. Indeed, it is common for people to wait and savor the excitement to wear it first on a special occasion. [Perhaps this is to avoid confusion between cases with or without alterations. Perhaps, one might not actually end up wearing it, especially if one buys it well ahead of the time he needs it. In earlier times they probably did not have as many clothes, and only purchased when they actually needed new clothes immediately.] The *brocha* is recited after donning the garment, rather than before, unlike fruit. It is recited on the time that the personal joy is felt. If one did not recite it right away, he may recite it later, even after a few days, as long as he still experiences the original joy. (Some say this is for thirty days.) After this period has passed, one may recite the part of the *brocha* omitting Hashem's name. [See Brochos *ibid.*, Eruvin 40b, Poskim. Tur Sh. Ar. OC 223:4 225:5, commentaries.]

C) Combining different reasons

We have already made mention of combining two reasons for the *brocha*. The Talmud discusses including the joy of the *mitzvah* of building the *sukah* with the joy of the *Yomtov* itself. Whether it is only recited when building or only at *kidush*, one *brocha* serves both reasons. However, this could be considered two parts of one *simcha*. We also mentioned the common practice to wear something new or to have a new fruit on the second day of *Rosh Hashanah*. This avoids taking sides in the debate whether it counts as a new *Yomtov* or as a continuation of the first day. This is also combining the two different reasons for one *shehecheyanu*. It is also common practice for those wishing to recite it on an occasion of personal joy that does not qualify for its own *brocha*. For example, if one finishes a *sefer*, purchases a *Sefer Torah*, or even becomes *bar* or *bas mitzvah*. Some people will even recite it on being awarded a major honor, such as at a fund-raising dinner. If they keep in mind a new garment or fruit, they may combine the *brocha* for both.

The issue at hand is whether one is obliged to combine reasons to avoid unnecessary *brochos*. The poskim discuss various such situations. The most common is having various different new fruits present. Other situations include wearing various new garments at one time, or meeting two or more new acquaintances after a long break. Regarding new fruits, the consensus is that once one has recited the *brocha* on one of them, he should not recite it again on the others. Part of the rationale is that the main reason for the *brocha* is seeing it. Since all were present – in sight – at the time the *brocha* was recited on the first, he already fulfilled his obligation. However, this is only true when all were

present at the time of the *brocha*. If a fresh new fruit was brought in after one already recited *shehechayanu* on the first, there is a major debate. With regard to the *bircas hanehenin*, one does not need a new *brocha* on fruit that was brought in, if it has the same *brocha* as the first. The one reciting the *brocha* has in mind the second fruit as well. Thus, some say that if the fresh new fruit is of the same *brocha*-type, it does not require its own *shehecheyanu* either. One could even have in mind a second new fruit of another *brocha* type for its *shehecheyanu*. Others maintain that whereas benefit lingers after the first *brocha*, joy on a new fruit is fresh each time.

With regard to meeting acquaintances each acquaintance counts as a separate joy. Some maintain that even if the second was present when the *brocha* was recited on the first, a second *brocha* is in order for the second. Certainly, if the second only arrived later, and even if one knew that he would be coming, many poskim say that one should be obliged to recite a separate *brocha* when he appears. Some say that all friends are considered one species, whereas fruits are all different.

When wearing many new clothes at once, no new *brocha* is recited when putting on each one. However, if there was a time space between the two during which the original joy could have dissipated somewhat, one should be able to recite the *brocha* again. This should apply even if one knew about the second one all along. Certainly, if one has already removed the first garment before donning the second, he should be able to recite the *brocha* again. On the other hand, since the main reason for the *brocha* is the purchase. For the fruit we mentioned the idea that the true reason is seeing them. The purchase happened at the same time for all of them. Maybe one *brocha* should be sufficient. However, in the fruit case, all the fruits are actually seen at the time one recites the *brocha* on the one. In this case, one is anyhow only reciting the *brocha* on wearing them.

The best suggestion is to make sure that one does not have the others in mind when wearing each for the first time. He could even have specific intent not to exempt them with this *brocha*. He could then recite a fresh *brocha* for each, when and if he wears it. However, it would appear that if one purchased a few identical suits, there is no special added joy in wearing the others later, unless the time lag is long enough for the first joy to have worn off totally. [See Sukah 46a, Poskim. Rosh, Rosh Hashanah 4:14 (Teshuvos Rashi etc.). Tur Sh. Ar. OC 225:3, Kaf Hachayim 18, 600:2, 641:1, commentaries. Igros Moshe OC I:87. Yabia Omer IV OC:19.]

On the Parsha ... *Yisroel loved Yosef more than all of his sons, for he was the son of his old age, and he made for him a keseness pasim ...* [37:3] Many ask, while *Yaakov* favored *Yosef* in his heart, how could he show so favoritism openly? There are various interpretations on the *keseness pasim*. In one view all *Yaakov* did was to add some extra pure wool trimming to the sleeves of *Yosef's* regular coat. Perhaps *Yaakov* thought this would be seen as a minor gesture of love. It was not a major change in the existing garment. However, the Torah considers it as though *Yaakov* made him an entire special coat, triggering the jealousy of his brothers. Apparently, adding an expensive part to a garment can be considered making an entire item. Perhaps this would also be true when adding it to an existing old garment!



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