

HALOCHOSCOPE

Someone recited a *Brocha Rishona* on bread, then swallowed some bread and promptly threw it up. Should he recite *Birchas Hamazon*? Must he eat bread and keep it down in order to recite *Birchas Hamazon*? Should he eat more anyhow, so that his original *Brocha* is not in vain — is the first *Brocha* good enough, since he did not retain the food it was recited for?

The issues:

- (A) *Brocha Levatala*, *She'aina Tzricha*, in vain and unnecessary
- (B) The requirement to recite *Birchas Hanehenin* on specific food
- (C) What is considered eating for *Birchas Hanehenin*, Brochos on benefit from food, and *Birchas Hamazon*?

(A) *Brocha Levatala*

When reciting a Brocha one utters the Name of Hashem. When not obliged to do so, this involves violating *Lo Sisa*, taking the Name of Hashem in vain. Some Poskim consider any Brocha recited for no purpose an outright violation of this Mitzvah. Other Poskim maintain that this does not apply to a Brocha. It is, instead, a violation of the positive Mitzvah *Es Hashem Elokecha Tira*, to revere Hashem. Using His Name unnecessarily is irreverent. Others maintain that since any Brocha also praises Hashem, albeit unwarranted, it is not Scripturally, but Rabbinically forbidden, linked to *Lo Sisa*.

Most Brochos are Rabbinically instituted obligations. There are two Scripturally required Brochos, *Birchas Hamazon* on a satisfying bread-based meal, and *Birchas Hatorah*, according to many Poskim, before Torah study. Though the Brocha includes Hashem's Name, the Rabbis deemed it proper to institute such Brochos for a necessary purpose. They based themselves, in part, on the existing Scriptural Brochos.

Accordingly, if one is in doubt about his obligation to recite a Brocha he should refrain from doing so. Rather than possibly invoking Hashem's Name in vain, a Scriptural violation, he should risk the possibility of violating a Rabbinical requirement. However, this does not always help. In situations where the requirement is to recite a Brocha before doing a Mitzvah, he may refrain from it. The Mitzvah obligation remains, and he fulfills it just the same with or without the Brocha. If, however, it is a question of a Scriptural Brocha

after a meal, he is also required to err on the strict side with regard to the obligation. Furthermore, Rabbinically ordained *Birchos Hanehenin* are based on the precept that one may never benefit from food before 'asking permission', or he runs the risk of being a thief from Hashem. Thus, one may not partake of the food without an appropriate Brocha. It would seem better to refrain from eating the food. This, however, does not necessarily help. In our case, the eater will be eating more. He will thus have to make a new Brocha. Yet, his first Brocha might be considered sufficient. Usually, in cases of such doubt, one would be required to listen to the Brocha being recited by another person, with intent to fulfill his requirement by *Shomei'a Keone*, listening is like saying. [See Brochos 33a 39a 45a (Rosh) Rosh Hashana 33a (Tosafos) Baba Kama 94a Sanhedrin 6b 66a Temura 4a, Poskim. Rambam Brochos 1:15 19 Shevuos 12:9-11. Minchas Chinuch 30. Teshuvos R.A.E. 1:25. Tur Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 196:1 206:6 215:Mishneh Berurah 20.]

(B) Reciting the Brocha Rishona on specific food

There is a requirement to recite the Brocha in the presence of the food one is about to eat. One may not then substitute a new item for the original food. If the original food is not available, and one wishes to eat anyhow, he must recite a new Brocha on the new food. This is true even if the new item is exactly the same as the original. If the item meant initially is not available, the original Brocha has lost its connection to any food. A new item will automatically require a new Brocha. The Poskim discuss a case where one recited his Brocha on a specific item, then lost it. Similarly, if the item he recited his Brocha over was found to be rotten or disgusting, should he eat some anyhow? The Talmud discusses a similar case where one recited a Brocha on a cup of what he thought was wine and discovered it was beer or water. He may not get a fresh cup, this time of wine, and rely on his original Brocha.

In our case, the original food was swallowed. This should mean that it was connected to its Brocha. However, upon being vomited it might lose this status. Since it is no longer in the stomach of the person who ate it, it should be considered as though it was lost or spoiled. [Some say that if one found the original item to be spoiled he should still eat some to connect with the Brocha.] He may not eat the original food in its present state. This involves the Mitzvah *Bal Teshaktzu Ess Nafshosaichem*, do not do anything revolting. Even if it is perfectly intact, since the person eating it knows that he vomited it, he may not eat it. Only if he did not remove it from his mouth may he swallow it again.

Based in part on the discussion in the next section, we may presume that

according to some, the food is as good as digested. If one recited a *Brocha Rishona* on food and then wishes to eat more he need not recite a second Brocha. If he has already digested the first food long ago, he must repeat the Brocha before eating any new food. By this reasoning one would be required to recite new Brocha in our case as well. However, as we shall see, this logic might only apply to circumstances governing a *Brocha Acharona*.

In the aforementioned case of wine and water, if the Brocha was to exempt others present, and they had wine before them, the original Brocha is good enough for the reciter as well. In addition, some Poskim maintain that the Brocha may be applied to any food one has in mind at the time he recites it. Accordingly, in our case, if there is more bread at the meal that this bread came from there is no need to repeat the Brocha. The original Brocha applied to all the food at the table. However, in that case there would be no interruption between the original Brocha and the eating. In our case, though he did not peak, it is possible that vomiting constitutes an interruption. [See Brochos 12a Yerushalmi Perek 6 Poskim. Tur Sh. Ar. O.C. 206:6, commentaries.]

(C) What kind of eating is considered benefit?

Birchos Hanehenin are recited on benefit gained from Hashem's creations. Immediately after eating one must thank Hashem, Scripturally, is it not logical to require us to thank Him before as well, Rabbinically? Furthermore, one may not take anything belonging to Hashem. This is like *Hekdesh*, an item dedicated to the temple. Taking it is benefiting from something forbidden, and comparable to stealing. By reciting the Brocha, we 'ask permission' to benefit from anything in this world.

The Brocha was only instituted on food benefit, and on smell. The benefit must be ingested, and on taste alone no Brocha was instituted. The Talmud debates one who has food in his mouth and is informed that it is forbidden. We follow the view that he must spit it out. He may not swallow even a small amount, even if spitting it out causes his Brocha to be Levatala. When actually eating, at which point does one have the benefit of the act of eating or of the food? This issue is also discussed with regard to violating a Mitzvah with food. For example, if one eats *Chailev*, forbidden fats, when does the actual violation take place? Is it when he swallows it, or even when he places it in his mouth?

For most forbidden foods or acts of eating the minimum to be held liable for is a *Kezayis*, the size of an olive. Thus, one is not punished with lashes for intentionally eating less than the entire amount, and there is no sin-offering for eating it unintentionally. The Talmud debates one who ate a half-Kezayis, vomited it, then ate a second half. In one view he is liable since he benefitted by

swallowing a whole Kezayis. In the other view, he is exempt because his stomach never benefited from a complete Kezayis at one time. We follow the strict opinion. The lenient opinion would agree that if he ate a complete Kezayis before vomiting he would be liable. The Poskim apply this ruling to all forbidden acts of eating. The throat is the vehicle of benefit. Some ponder whether Yom Kippur is included, since the point is to suffer. To avoid such suffering one must retain the food in his stomach.

The Poskim debate whether the same ruling should apply to Birchas Hamazon. Some maintain that the Mitzvah only applies Scripturally if one eats enough to be satisfied, i.e., he is no longer hungry for more. Rabbinically one is obliged even if he only ate a Kezayis. If he vomited it he is certainly not full, and even the Rabbinical extension should not apply. Others maintain that this is insufficient reason to exempt one from Birchas Hamazon, but offer a second reason. One should recite Birchas Hamazon right after eating. If he forgot to, he may only recite it if he remembers to do so before it is digested. Vomited food is no better than digested food, and he is therefore exempt of his obligation to recite it. Others reject this, claiming that it is unlikely that some did not remain in one's stomach. However, this presumes that one ate a lot, and the small part remaining can be considered enough for the Brocha. If one actually ate exactly a Kezayis and vomited it, or even a Kezayis and a half, and vomited one Kezayis, he would indeed be exempt.

A Brocha Rishona might follow the guidelines of a Brocha Acharona. It is recited on an amount less than a Kezayis, but it might be necessary for the stomach to benefit, rather than the throat. What mandates the Brocha is not an act of eating, but bodily benefit. However, unlike the person who lost his food before eating it, our questioner ate it. Before his Brocha he was forbidden to eat it. Therefore, his Brocha was indeed necessary, and not in vain.

In conclusion, if there was more bread before him when he recited *Hamotzie* originally, or if he had in mind to eat more, he may eat it without reciting *Hamotzie* again. If he wishes to recite Birchas Hamazon, he must eat more, at least a Kezayis. However, he is not obliged to eat more to save his Brocha from being Levatalah. [See Brochos 14a 21a 35a-b 53b, Chulin 103b, Poskim. Tur Sh. Ar. O.C. 208 Shaarei Teshuva (1). Minchas Chinuch 313, 430. Sdei Chemed Maareches Achilah 10. Mikraei Kodesh, Pesach 34.]