

HALOCHOSCOPE



This week's question:

Someone had three food items, two of which had the *brocha ha'adama* and the third had the *brocha shehakol*. By mistake, she recited *shehakol* on one of the *ha'adama* foods, although she had in mind to say *ha'adama*. Does this *brocha* count for: a) the food on which it was recited; b) the *shehakol* food; c) the other *ha'adama* food?

The issues:

- A) *Birchos hanehenin*, *brochos* on foodstuffs
 - B) *Kedima*, the order of reciting *brochos*
 - C) *Ta'us*, a mistake when reciting a *brocha*
- A) *Birchos hanehenin* [Sections A and B excerpted from *Halochoscope* XVI:16]

Every food requires the reciting of a *brocha* before it is eaten. The Talmud debates whether the source for this Rabbinical *mitzvah* can be traced to the Torah. The logic for this institution is that partaking of Hashem's bounty without "asking" or thanking Him first is tantamount to stealing from Him. Thus, the *brocha* is called *birchas hanehenin*, the blessing of those who benefit. It is linked to the Scriptural requirement of *bircas hamazon*, the *mitzvah* to thank Hashem after eating a meal. The text of the *brocha* is a blessing of praise for Hashem for creating this type of food. The *brocha* reflects the purpose of Creation of a particular food as a benefit to mankind. While one could theoretically fulfill this with a single general *brocha*, this would not truly reflect full thanksgiving. Therefore, each food is analyzed according to the way it was created. Two foods rise to the level of an individual *brocha*, due to their unusual sustaining powers: bread and wine. Other foods are categorized into semi-general groups. Tree fruits are more sophisticated creations than ground products, so they get a *brocha* of their own, *ha'eitz*.

There are various ways that one can recite one *brocha* before eating many different species of foods. The simple case is where the foods share the same *brocha*, such as the case in part of our question. The more complex case is where the foods are being eaten as a group. There would usually be one food that is considered the primary food, with all others being auxiliary to it. The primary food is the *ikar*, and the secondary food is *tafel*. The *brocha* is recited only on the *ikar*. Some ponder whether this means that the secondary food becomes part of the primary food and requires no *brocha* of its own. Does it lose all identity? Or perhaps it requires a *brocha*, but due the way it is consumed, the *brocha* on the primary food exempts it. It loses independence. The latter idea would be to equate the *tafel* to a second fruit eaten with a first fruit of the same *brocha*.

The other ways one *brocha* works for many foods are: when they are eaten as part of a bread-based meal; the *brocha* recited when drinking wine that covers other drinks; and when one does not know the *brochos* of the foods, in which case he would recite a gener-

ic *brocha*, *shehakol*. This is known as a *brocha hakoleles*, all-inclusive *brocha*. It should not be relied on if one is able to determine the true *brochos* of the foods. However, in the event that he does not know them, this one *brocha* happens to cover each individual food. Therefore, it works in the same way that a single *brocha* works on many foods that share the same *brocha*. This is relevant to our situation.

If one does not have in mind to exempt other foods, his *brocha* might not work for them. The poskim debate this, taking into account whether the other food was present when he said the *brocha*, but he did not want to eat it then, or whether it was brought in later. Furthermore, if even the original food was absent, the *brocha* does not count. If the original food was present, and the new additional food was the same species, the original *brocha* counts. The debate is on other foods with the same *brocha*.

In a meal, the single *brocha* on the bread works for the entire meal. Some consider this an enhanced type of *ikar* and *tafel*. In fact, when eating a small amount of bread to 'dilute' the saltiness of another food, it becomes *tafel* to the other food. When drinking wine, the poskim debate how much must be drunk to consider the wine the only item that has its own *brocha*. Therefore, one should preferably drink a cup of wine when relying on this. [See Brochos 35a 40a-42b 44a, Poskim, Tur Sh Ar OC 177 178 187 202-206:6 212, commentaries. References to Halochoscope IV:33.]

B) *Kedimah*

When eating a number of different foods, one usually eats them in the order that he desires. However, especially when a *brocha* must be recited, there is a *halachic* order of preference. Two factors are taken into account: the *brocha* and the food. If the foods are of different *brocha* categories, there is an order of *brocha* levels. The more specialized the food the more specialized the *brocha*. The *brochos* begin with those on foods on a lower level in Creation. Non-vegetable foods are on the lowest level. These include meat, milk, eggs, fungi and minerals such as water and salt. Their *brocha* is *shehakol*. The same is true of extracts of other foods that are not considered as significant, such as fruit juice. Some other foods also have this *brocha*, due to doubt. For example, sugar, coffee, tea and cocoa are all plant products. Some of them should have the *brochos* of *ha'eitz* (coffee and cocoa beans) or *ha'adama* (tea leaves and sugar cane juice). Though they are extracts, they happen to be the main benefit of their plants. The plants are actually planted with this use in mind, and indeed, all appearances are that Hashem created them for this purpose. A minority holds that their *brocha* should reflect their origins. The prevailing practice is to recite *shehakol*, though this is quite controversial. Due to their more specialized origins, coupled with the minority views, their true nature is taken into account in terms of *kedimah*, according to some poskim.

The next level up is food of vegetable origin. Those that do not grow on trees have the *brocha ha'adama*. Those growing on trees get their own *brocha*, *ha'eitz*. This is due to the elevated status of trees over vegetables that die at the end of their season. Accordingly, one eating tree fruits with ground vegetables recites the *brocha* and eats the tree fruit first. The next level up is the special *brocha* recited on wine and the special *brocha* recited on bread. There is a slight difference between these, as bread always forms the staple of a meal. It is automatically eaten at the beginning, and its *brocha* happens to ex-

empt any other *brocha* anyhow, with the exception of *hagafen*, recited on wine. This *brocha* is recited whenever one drinks the wine, whether before during or after a meal, or when drunk separately. If one drinks wine and other beverages, he recites only *hagafen*, assuming that he plans to drink the amount that the respective poskim require.

When the foods are all on the same *brocha* level, other considerations are taken into account. Examples discussed by the Talmud are: *shalem*, a whole food item versus a piece of food; a Talmudic debate on *shivas haminim*, the species with which *Eretz Yisroel* is praised, versus other fruits, and the order within *shivas haminim*; and *chaviv*, personal preference. In a sense, one could say that these factors distinguish the singled out food as an *ikar* of sorts, with the others becoming *tafel* to it. Or one could say it is the *ikar* focus of the one eating it. In any event, the *brocha* required for each of the other foods is being exempted by that recited on this food. Since one food represents all the others, it is proper that it should be the most prominent of them.

The reason for a preference is based on *hidur mitzvah*. The *brocha* is a way of preparing to eat with a *mitzvah*. Since one needs an item for the performance of this *mitzvah*, the food, one should use the best item available. Thus, though this is not *hidur mitzvah* in the traditional sense of beautifying a *mitzvah* article, it shows appreciation for the *mitzvah*. We use something that either is valued specially by the Torah, or one that the person eating has a special reason to value.

Chaviv is a major value for *kedimah*. The Talmud debates whether it trumps other values, such as *shivas haminim*. We follow the view that *chaviv* is superior, but that one may show preference for the *shivas haminim*. The poskim debate whether one may recite *ha'adama* before *ha'eitz* out of choice. Does *chaviv* trump the superiority of the *brocha*? The consensus is that if they are equally *chaviv*, one should recite the *ha'eitz* first. If the *ha'adama* is more *chaviv*, that should be eaten first. If the *chaviv* is *shehakol*, all agree that one should still recite the *ha'eitz* or *ha'adama* before it. If he intends to eat or drink the *shehakol* food first, and only later eat the fruit, the poskim debate whether he may recite *shehakol* first. This has some relevance to our case. If one could say *shehakol* on the lesser food due to *chaviv*, there could be two follow-up issues. On the simple level, he would have no intent to exempt a *ha'adama* food. He simply wants to eat the *shehakol* food first. He would then recite *ha'adama* later. However, since *shehakol* works for a *ha'adama* food, could he have in mind that this *brocha* will work for the other foods? If he could not, what if, as in our case, he knowingly recited *shehakol* on a food that required *ha'adama*? Could that exempt another *shehakol*, and even another *ha'adama*?

Shalem is even more preferred than is *chaviv*. Thus *shalem* is the most preferred value for *kedimah*. There is actually some discussion among the poskim about fruits of a different *brocha*. It is possible that *shalem* is so prominent that even a lower level fruit would take precedence over a higher level that is broken. For example, one might have a whole banana, *ha'adama*, and a piece of apple, *ha'eitz*, before him. One would have in mind when saying *ha'adama* that he does not mean to include the apple (which could be exempted by *ha'adama* since it grew from the ground). This is because of all the factors for *kedimah*, *shalem* is considered the most prominent. [See Brochos 39b 40b-41a, Poskim Tur Sh Ar OC 210:1 211:1 (Shaar Hatziyun 5, Kaf Hachaim 3) 3 (MB18 BHL),

C) *Ta'us*

There can be various types of *ta'us* in reciting a *brocha*. The basic case is where one recited the wrong *brocha* by mistake. This could be due to ignorance about the correct *brocha*, or to a mistake about the food. As a rule, *ha'adama* works for tree fruit. *Shehakol* works for everything. There is a possibility that even the right *brocha* is considered a mistake. This would happen when one began a *brocha* with one ending in mind, but switched in the middle to a different ending. The beginning was a mistake. Does the ending correct it? The Talmud discusses some of this and the poskim debate the conclusions.

In our case, the person had in mind to recite the right *brocha*. Because the foodstuff was a liquid, (but would still be *ha'adamah*, which is beyond the scope of our discussion) she automatically recited *shehakol*. Some call this "tripped up by his tongue." Is this equated with the one who began with the intent for one *brocha* and switched in the middle? If so, which views do we follow? If she definitely fulfilled her *brocha*, does this help for the other foods? While she had in mind the other *ha'adamah* food, she recited the wrong *brocha* for it. On the other hand, *shehakol* would work for it anyhow. Since she had the other food in mind, it would not be the same as the cases where new food was introduced. Would it also work for the *shehakol* food. She never intended to exempt that food with this *brocha*. It just so happens that this *brocha* could exempt it. In this case, it would appear that she must recite a separate *shehakol* for the other food. The only issue is whether the first *shehakol* works for the second *ha'adamah* food.

It would appear that she does not need to recite *ha'adamah* for the second vegetable. *Shehakol* works for the first vegetable. By the same reasoning it should work for the second vegetable. However, it does not work for the third food. Based on the concept that if one did not have a food in mind when he recited the *brocha*, it is not automatically included, she must recite a separate *shehakol*. Even those who would include it automatically, only do so for foods that are of the same species. [See refs to Sections A and B. Brochos 12a, Poskim. Tur Sh Ar OC 206:1-2 5-6 (MB Dirshu 31), commentaries.]

In conclusion, she does not need to recite *ha'adamah* on the vegetable, but she must recite a second *shehakol* on the third food.

On the parsha ... *You shall eat your bread to satiation ... [26:5] a small amount eaten will become blessed in the stomach [Rashi].* Why not explain it: you will have plenty to eat [see Sifsei Chachamim]? Perhaps it is the mention of bread. The Torah could simply say "You will eat and be sated". By mentioning bread, the implication would seem that there will be plenty of bread specifically. The preceding *passuk* says that everything will be plentiful. It must mean that the bread will have a special satisfying quality, which is the way things should be.

Sponsored by Robin Knee in memory of her husband, Allan Goodkind, Avraham ben Kalman Leib zt"l,

whose *yahrzeit* is the 29th of Iyyar. ה

Sponsored by Frank Lieberman and Beverly Barkon in memory of Frank's mother, Sheva bas Baruch a"h,

whose *yahrzeit* is the 26th of Iyyar. ה

© Rabbi Shimon Silver, May 2021. **חזק ונתחזק**

Subscriptions and Sponsorships available. (412) 421-0508. halochoscope@hotmail.com