

THE SHABBOS WEEKLY

HALACHA SERIES ON HILCHOS SHABBOS



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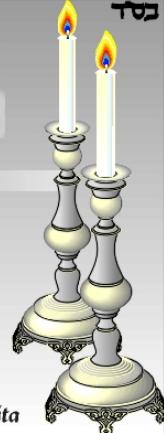


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OSTROFF shlita

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Hilchos B'rachos part XXX

Hilchos Zimun, Part II

In the previous shiur we discussed the major criteria needed to make a *zimun*. The issues mentioned were 1- eating together, 2- type of food, 3 – eating in one place, 4 – who joins the *zimun*.

Briefly, **eating together** – at least three people dined together, which required them either to begin their meal together or conclude it together.

Type of food - optimally all three would have needed to consume bread, but custom is if the third person will not wash for bread, suffice if he consumed any type of food or beverage (except water).

Eating in one place – They either dine at the same table, or separate tables for lack of space. Please see the previous sheet for more details, such as eating at separate tables in a Yeshiva or restaurant.

Who joins the *zimun*?

According to the *Rama* (Ashkenazim), three males above Bar Mitzvah age can form a *zimun*.¹

According to the *Mechaber*, one child younger than Bar Mitzvah age can join two adults to form a *zimun*. We find various opinions to the age of this child, some say above the age of six and others say above the age of nine.²

Women – three women are permitted to form their own *zimun*³ and women may answer men's *zimun*, but women may not join men to form a *zimun*, even if they are related.

Are women who dined with men obligated to answer the *zimun*?

The *Shulchan Aruch* writes⁴ that women who dined with men are *חייב* – obligated. Based on this, Rav Moshe Feinstein *ztz"l* writes⁵ that women who are busy tending to a household's needs, do not intend dining together with other diners, are not obligated to *zimun*, but on Shabbos, or when they intend dining with everyone else, they are obligated to answer *zimun*. It is incumbent to begin *zimun* with all participants present.

If one of the three is in a rush, may he bentsch without waiting for *zimun*?

Once one is obligated to *zimun* (by commencing eating or concluding together), one may not bentsch without *zimun*.⁶ Consequently, if one of the three would like to bentsch and leave, a person may not do so without *zimun*. In this case, because they are the majority, the other two diners are not obligated to stop and allow the third to bentsch, but it is correct for them to do so.

Where two of the three would like to bentsch and the third person is still dining, the third must cease dining and answer *zimun* to the other two and then continue.

¹ *Siman* 199:10.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ag"m* ח"ה ט י'

⁴ *Siman* 193:1.

In other words, a single person must stop for the other two but two need not halt for the third, although it is correct to do so.

What does 'stop eating' mean?

When two people want to bentsch, the third must stop eating for the duration of the *zimun*.⁷ This means that he answers to the *zimun* and listens to the *mezamein* until *הוֹן אֶת הַכְּלָי*, answers amen and may continue dining.⁸ According to the *Mechaber*, it suffices to reply to the *zimun* and then continue.

When dining at a wedding or other function, it is all too common that one wants to leave before everyone else bentsches, but since one began eating together with everyone one is obligated to bentsch with a *zimun* and one may not leave before that.

Is there a solution to this problem?

Rav Moshe Feinstein ruled that, when necessary, if when one recites the *hamotzi* on the bread one's intention is not to join everyone else, one may bentsch without *zimun*.⁹

In this particular case it is more complicated, because when a quorum of males dine together they are obligated with *Hashem's* name – *ברוך לאלוקינו שאכלנו משלו*, in which case they may not break up into groups of three, because *Hashem's* name will be omitted.¹⁰ Twenty people may break into two groups (although according to some *poskim*, there is merit in this case when more people do a mitzvah together on account of *ברוב עם הדרת מלך* – the more people performing a mitzvah together, the more glorious the king).¹¹

So ideally, when some people would like to leave early before the communal bentsching, ten people should bentsch together and recite *Hashem's* name in *zimun*. However, since such a *zimun* would most probably reach the ears of the

⁷ *Siman* 200:1.

⁸ *Siman* 200:2.

⁹ *א"ג* מ' א"ח א' ס' נ' *וזאת הברכה פ"ד הערכה* פ"ד *העראה*. Apparently not everyone agrees to this ruling, see 3 *Siman* 193:1.

¹⁰ *Siman* 193:1.

¹¹ See *M"B* 193:11.

host and upset him, they may break up into three and bentsch the regular *zimun*, omitting *Hashem's* name.¹² Yet this should only be done when they have very important issues to attend to or to perform a *mitzvah*.¹³ If they know beforehand that they want to leave early solely for convenience, they should have it in mind that they are not joining the diners.

Rav Sternbuch *shlita* added that people should try bentsch with a *zimun* of three even when one had in mind not to join.

Vort on the Parsha

Rav Boruch Ber Leibovitz's son in law saw his father in law in great distress. Upon being questioned, he replied that he was afraid that he caused a *get* (divorce document) to be *posul*. The reason was that he found a *sefer* belonging to a shul in Karmenchuk in his possession (he must have borrowed the *sefer* and forgot to return it when leaving the town), in which case he is a thief. When travelling through Pinsk, the Head of the Beis Din asked him to be one of the *dayanim* for a *get*. There is an opinion that a *dayan* has to be kosher for a *get*, in which case he was not, because of the thievery.

The son in law tried to argue, but Rav Boruch Ber would not calm down. He then recalled that on his way from Karmenchuk to Minsk he was attacked by murderers and being close to being murdered he had performed a complete *vidui* and repented. Since now it was merely a technicality to return the *sefer* and he was no longer a thief, he could relax, knowing that the *get* was kosher.

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לזכר נשמת חנה בת ברוך

¹² *Siman* 193:1,

¹³ See *M"B* *siman* 193:16.

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Note: The purpose of this series is intended solely for the clarification of the topics discussed and not to render halachic decisions. It is intended to heighten everyone's awareness of important practical questions which do arise on this topic. One must consult with a proper halachic authority in order to receive *p'sak*.