

THE SHABBOS WEEKLY

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RABBI DOVID
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Parshas Bamidbar 5769

Please note: Rav Sternbuch shlita was not shown this shiur.

Hilchos B'rachos Part XXXIII

The B'rachos of Gratitude

Birkas Hagomel

Who is required to recite Birkas Hagomel?

A person who was in a dangerous predicament and escaped, is obligated to thank HKB" H, and *chazal* instituted *Birkas Hagomel* for this purpose.¹

A person who was dangerously ill should recite *Hagomel* upon recovery, even though several *poskim*² write that one should recite *Hagomel* even if one was bedridden for more than three days. Nowadays the custom is to only recite *Hagomel* when one was dangerously ill (for even less than three days).³

One who had surgery on internal organs such as fissures, hernias and eyes, will usually recite *Hagomel*. As usual a Rav should be asked.⁴ It is the accepted custom to recite *Hagomel* if a general anesthetic has been administered, regardless of the procedure it was administered for.



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If bitten by a poisonous insect, snake or scorpion, one will recite *Hagomel*.

A person who had hepatitis and was bed ridden for many days, or suffered a heart attack or stroke, will recite *Hagomel*.

When does one recite this b'racha?

One recites the *b'racha* when one has fully recuperated. If one has overcome the danger entirely even though one must still administer medication and physical therapy, one will recite the *b'racha*.⁵

What if *chas v'shalom* there might be remission?

It seems that one will not recite the *b'racha* until one is completely healed.⁶

If a car narrowly misses hitting a person, or if someone is nearly involved in an accident, does one recite *Hagomel*?

One only recites *Hagomel* when one was in a dangerous situation and was saved. When a car narrowly misses, it is indeed something to thank *Hashem* profusely, but it is not cause for *Hagomel*, because after all, one was not in danger – the car missed. If two cars narrowly miss each other, or if one swerves out of the way of another car, one will not recite *Hagomel*.

¹ *Siman* 219:1.

² See *M" B siman* 219:28 and *Bi'ur Halacha* 7. ³ *ה כגון*.

³ See *She'uri haBracha* *פ"כ*"ב *הערה ז'*.

⁴ *שו"ת צ"ץ אליעזר ח"ב י"ח*.

⁵ *שו"ת שבת הלוי ח"ד ק"נ"ב ס"ק ג'*.

⁶ See *She'uri haBracha* *פ"כ*"ב *הערה ט'*.

If however a car spun out of control, or if a car was hit by another car and one's life was saved, even if the person did not suffer any injury, that person was in danger and must recite *Hagomel*.

One who travels through a dangerous place, such as the desert, a plane trip or over the seas, must recite *Hagomel*⁷ upon reaching dry land and at the culmination of the trip. If one makes a short stop-over (even lasting several days) between flights, one does not recite *Hagomel*⁸ until the entire journey is over.

*Is it accepted by all to recite *Hagomel* after a plane trip?*

Indeed there are various opinions on the matter. There are those that require one to recite the *b'racha*, and others differentiate between whether the plane flew over water or land, while others say that one does not recite the *b'racha*. In all cases one should ask one's Rav, although the prevalent custom is that one does recite *Hagomel*.⁹

*How long after the trip does one have to recite *Hagomel*?*

Preferably one should recite *Hagomel* within three days of emerging from danger,¹⁰ and this is even if one will forgo reciting the *b'racha* before a sefer Torah, as is the custom.¹¹ One may recite the *b'racha* long after three days, but if an extended time has elapsed and one has basically forgotten the danger, one does not recite the *b'racha*.¹²

*Where must this *b'racha* be recited?*

⁷ *Siman* 219:1.

⁸ See *M"B siman* 219:1 and *Sha'ar Ha'tsiun* 1.

⁹ See הברכה פ"ב הערכה י"ה.

¹⁰ *Siman* 219:6.

¹¹ *M"B siman* 219:20.

¹² Based on *Oruch Hashulchan siman* 219:7.

One recites the *b'racha* before ten males, based on the *posuk* – וַיַּרְא מֹהוּ בְּקֶהָל עַם וּבְמֹשֵׁב זָקְנִים יְהִלְלוּהוּ, where the first part of the *posuk* refers to 10 people and the second part refers to *talmidei chachamim*, so *l'chatchila* there should be two *talmidei chachamim* in the *minyan* (including the person reciting the *b'racha*).

Custom is to recite after reading the Torah, because a quorum is always present, but if one is not able to recite after reading the Torah, one should recite the *bracha* before a quorum wherever.

The *Mishna Berura*¹³ cites a source saying that if one has to wait thirty days to gather a quorum; one should not wait and recite it with even less than a quorum.

Vort on the Parsha

The *Midrash* says that *Am Yisrael* saw that the angels had flags and they also wanted them, so *Hashem* told Moshe to give them flags. The flags symbolize belonging; one belongs somewhere and has a *tafkid*. Each soldier has a post and by leaving his post he does two wrongdoings, firstly he vacates his position and second, he tries to occupy someone else's.

It is vital to know that we each have a position and post to occupy and must fulfill it to the maximum. If we would live like that, we would be extremely content with our lives.

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לזכר נשמת חנה בת ברוך

¹³ *Siman* 219:8.

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If you would like to send a question to Rav Ostroff, you can write to him at shabbosweekly@shemayisrael.com.

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*.