



Parshas Vayeitzei 5769

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Rav Sternbuch shlita was not able to review this sheet.

Hilchos B'rachos part XVII

Uncertainties and Errors with B'rachos

When in doubt, recite shehakol, is that true?

The *Shulchan Aruch* writes,¹ when in doubt, i.e. one does not know what the item is, one recites *shehakol*, and this is reiterated by the *Rama*.²

It thus seems pretty straightforward that one may recite *shehakol* when in doubt, without having to 'bother' and learn *hilchos b'rachos*. However, the *Magen Avraham* writes³ that when possible, one should eat the item as part of a meal, thereby avoiding the need to recite a *b'racha* inaccurately. This proves that it is not glatt to recite *shehakol* at whim.

Furthermore, the *Rambam* writes⁴ that if one recited *shehakol* on all items - יצא, which means that one's *b'racha* is valid, but it does not mean that one may *l'chatchila* recite *shehakol*.

So when does this rule apply?

The *gemora* B'rachos 35a writes "one may not benefit from this world without first reciting a *b'racha*." *Rashi* explains that because the entire world belongs to *Hashem*, one who benefits from this world without a *b'racha* – מעל, is similar to stealing from the *Beis HaMikdash*. The *gemora* concludes that the solution is to go to a learned

man and learn *hilchos b'rachos* so as not to come to מעילה.

*Rabeinu Yona*⁵ explains that *shehakol* is always a valid *b'racha* and one will not be stealing from *Hashem*. Nevertheless one must learn *hilchos b'rachos* in order to be able to recite the **correct** *b'racha*.

The *Magen Avraham*⁶ points out that when the *Shulchan Aruch* wrote that when in doubt one may recite *shehakol*, it means that after one has learned *hilchos b'rachos* and doubt exists as to a specific food, one may recite *shehakol*, but prior to learning, one may not eat until one has learned *hilchos b'rachos* from a learned man.

This *p'sak* is cited by the *Shulchan Aruch HaRav*⁷ and the *Mishna Berura*.⁸

This means that one must first learn *hilchos b'rachos* and if subsequent to learning one does not know which *b'racha* to recite over a certain item, one may recite *shehakol*.

I don't recall whether I recited a b'racha or not, may I eat or continue eating?

The *Shulchan Aruch* writes⁹ that one who does not recall whether he recited *hamotzi* or not, does not repeat the *b'racha*.

The *poskim* write¹⁰ that one may continue eating, and although one is entitled to

¹ *Siman* 204:13.

² End of *siman* 202:18.

³ *Siman* 204:26.

⁴ *Hilchos B'rachos* 8:10.

⁵ B'rachos 35a ד"ה מאי תקנתיה.

⁶ *Siman* 202:36.

⁷ *Siman* 202:24.

⁸ *Siman* 202:84.

⁹ *Siman* 167:9.

¹⁰ See *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* 167:12 and M"B 127:49.

be stringent and not continue eating,¹¹ one may not be 'stringent' and recite a *b'racha*, because on the contrary, it is pronouncing *Hashem's* name in vain.

On what grounds may one continue eating?

The requirement to recite a *b'racha* prior to eating is of Rabbinic origin, and when in doubt, one is not required to recite one.¹²

Is it perfectly in order to continue eating or are there methods to create a new *b'racha*?

The *Mishna Berura* writes¹³ that one may continue eating. However, if someone happens to be there and is about to recite *hamotzi* (or any relevant *b'racha*), it is correct to have the person *moitzi* the person in doubt.

We therefore see that if possible, it is correct to find a method not to eat without a *b'racha*.

What other methods are valid?

- One can recite a *b'racha* on a different item, with a similar *b'racha*, that one did not have in mind to eat.
- Another possibility would be to create a *hefsek*. For example, if one is eating an apple inside an enclosed area, such as an apartment, and doubt arises as to whether one recited a *b'racha*, one should exit the apartment and go into the street and return, thus enforcing a new *b'racha*.

But are you not creating a new *b'racha* for no reason?

The *Sha'arei T'shuva* writes¹⁴ that it is preferable to create a *ספק ברכה שאינה צריכה* rather than eating with the possibility of benefitting from this world without a *b'racha*.

- Another solution is to recite the *b'racha* in one's mind, being that several *Rishonim* hold that *מחשבה כדבור*¹⁵ with regards to *b'rachos*, and nevertheless it is not called 'saying' *Hashem's* name in vain.

Vort on the Parsha

Ya'akov Avinu's face is depicted on the *kisei hakavod*, so the *malochim* descended to get a glimpse of this holy man. Ya'akov awoke from his dream and asked them to explain the commotion, upon which the answer was that they had come to see what he looked like in real life.

To that Ya'akov replied, *אכן יש ד' במקום הזה*, where *אכן* is the acronym of *אריה, כלב, נשר* the three other forms on the *kisei hakavod*, but *אנכי* (אכן) is also depicted on *kisei hakavod*, is a *chidush*. Of that I was unaware.

This sheet is dedicated in memory of Rabbi Gabi and Rivky Holtzberg, the chabad couple murdered in india...h'kd

And also I'lui nishmas Rav Mordechai Eliezer ben R' Ya'akov.

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¹¹ See *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* ibid and *Sha'ar Hatsium* 48.

¹² *M"B* ibid.

¹³ *Siman* 167:49.

¹⁴ *Siman* 8:12. Although the *שע"ת* is referring to a *b'racha* recited over a mitzvah, *קל וחומר* it should apply here. See also *וואת הברכה פרק י'*.

¹⁵ Thinking the *b'racha* is equal to reciting it.

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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.