



Overview

Halacha Highlight

סברי

Shulchan Aruch Siman 174 Seif 8
ויאמר סברי רבותי

And he should say סברי רבותי

Kol Bo (כל בו סי' כ"ה) writes that when a number of people are drinking wine together and one person is going to make the beracha for the others, he should say סברי מרי—With your permission my masters or סברי מורי—with your permission my teachers. He offers a number of explanations for this practice. One explanation is based on the fact that there is a disagreement whether Birkas Hamazon is to be recited over a cup of wine. Accordingly, he asks permission from those present to recite Birkas Hamazon with a cup of wine despite the fact that the practice is subject to dispute. The other participants respond with the word לחיים—To life, to express their allowance for Birkas Hamazon to be recited over a cup of wine. The reason their permission is expressed with the word לחיים is based on the Gemara Sanhedrin (43). The Gemara teaches that a person who is being taken to be executed is given wine to drink in order to dull his senses. Therefore, the participants would say לחיים as if to say that this drinking should be for life rather than death. Another explanation is based on the fact that wine was the cause of Noach cursing his grandson Canaan. Therefore, the one who will lead Birkas Hamazon asks permission to drink the wine without concern for the curse that wine generated. The participants respond with the word לחיים to say that the drinking should be for life without curse.

Orchos Chaim (אורחות חיים מלוניל ברכת המזון סי' כ"ו) cites the explanations given by Kol Bo and adds an explanation of his own. The reason people say לחיים before drinking wine is that Adam Harishon drank wine when he made נשואין and became drunk from that wine. It was while he was drunk that he violated the command of Hashem and thereby introduced death to the world, therefore we declare לחיים to someone who will drink wine to express our desire that this drinking should not be the cause of death.

from the words of the Rema, he wondered what was behind the difference. "Why do we say ברשות on hamotzi and סברי on wine?"

But although he was told that it was to indicate to people during a meal to stop eating and listen, this didn't seem relevant to kiddush during which we say a blessing before anyone eats anything. Why not say ברשות?

The Bach answered as follows. "We find that they would give those sentenced to death wine to drink and, even today, a mourner is given wine, as we find in the verse, ויין שכן לאבד ויין למרי נפש. According to the opinion that the fruit of the Eitz Hadas was grapes, it was the alcohol that ruined Adam and Chava. And it certainly was through alcohol that Noach fell. In addition, we find that being inebriated brought about terrible destruction, as we find in Megillah. For all of these reasons, we say סברי before making a blessing. The person means, 'I hold this wine will be for good and not damage.'"

כף החיים, סי' קס"ז, אות ק"ח

Siman 174 Seif 8:

During the meal each person should recite בורא פרי הגפן for himself, even if they all reclined together since they cannot answer out of concern that the windpipe will precede the esophagus. According to some if one declares סברי רבותי and the others will listen, concentrate on the beracha, refrain from eating and will answer אמן one person can recite the beracha on behalf of others and this is the custom. He should say סברי רבותי to call to their attention that they will be discharged with his beracha and he should not say ברשות. Similarly, anytime one will recite the beracha on wine during the meal one does not say ברשות rather he says סברי as explained.

- ❖ Although generally it is preferred for one person to recite the beracha on behalf of others, during the meal that is not the case. (M.B. 40)
- ❖ The concern is that people will answer אמן even though it is unnecessary. (M.B. 41)
- ❖ According to this opinion even if they put down their food and prepare themselves to listen to the beracha and answer אמן the halacha remains in force out of concern that they will not actually stop eating and will be in danger. (M.B. 42)
- ❖ This opinion maintains that the reason one does not recite a beracha on behalf of others during a meal is out of concern that the people will not pay attention, therefore if he declares סברי מורי and they put down their food to pay attention it is acceptable. (M.B. 43)
- ❖ When reciting a beracha for others during a meal he should not say ברשות רבותי which implies that he is asking permission; rather he should say סברי רבותי which instructs them to put down their food and pay attention to the beracha so they can discharge their obligation. (M.B. 45)
- ❖ The reason סברי is not said at a chuppah or bris milah is that סברי is said as a replacement for ברשות which itself is said only when it is necessary to ask permission and there is no such need in at a chuppah or bris milah. (M.B. 46)

Stories to Share

"If He is Worthy, He is Uplifted..."

שיע סי' קע"ד, ח': "אלא סברי מטעם שנתבאר..."

Drinking wine has potential hazards attendant to it. Our sages explain that it is due to its potential for both positive and negative that wine is called יתירשי. If a person merits to drink wine in measure and for the right reasons, תהיה ראש—he will be uplifted by imbibing the alcohol. If one drinks inappropriately, תהיה רש—he will be impoverished, or brought to spiritual destitution due to his drink.

One intriguing custom is the proper formula said before one makes a blessing on wine. One person would say ברשות before saying the blessing on wine. He said this instead of סברי, the proper word to say, as we find on today's amud.

When someone pointed out that he had erred and deviated