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Digest
Mishna Berura
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סימן קפ"ג סעיף א'-ד'

# Halacha Highlight

## One who is uncertain whether he recited birkas hamazon

Shulchan Aruch Siman 184 Seif 4

**אכל ואינו יודע אם בירך ברכת המזון**

**One who ate and does not know whether he recited birkas hamazon**

Shulchan Aruch (סע' ד') discusses one who is uncertain whether he recited birkas hamazon. His ruling is that one who is uncertain whether he recited birkas hamazon is obligated to recite birkas hamazon. The reason is that the obligation to recite birkas hamazon is a Biblical obligation, and when one is in doubt whether he fulfilled a Biblical obligation he must repeat the mitzvah to assure that it was fulfilled. This overrides and is an exception to the general principle of ספק ברכות להקל—one who is uncertain whether he recited a beracha should adopt a lenient approach and not repeat the beracha. Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק ט"ו) notes that since the obligation to repeat birkas hamazon is to fulfill the Biblical obligation to recite birkas hamazon, it follows that this ruling applies only if one ate enough that he is sated. If one is not sated, his obligation to recite birkas hamazon is only Rabbinic. Therefore, if one was is doubt he should not repeat birkas hamazon in accordance with the principle ספק ברכות להקל

Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק י"ד) writes that in a circumstance in which one is repeating birkas hamazon he is obligated to repeat even the fourth beracha that was instituted by Chazal and is not necessary to fulfill the Biblical obligation of birkas hamazon. The rationale to repeat the beracha is so that people do not disparage this beracha. The consensus of Sephardi Poskim is that when one is repeating birkas hamazon he does not repeat the fourth beracha since it is Rabbinic in origin rather than Biblical. If one is certain that he recited the first three berachos and is uncertain whether he recited the fourth beracha as well, all opinions would agree that he should not repeat the fourth beracha (פסקי תשובות אות ד').

# Stories to Share

## Seeing it for Yourself

ש"ע, סי' קפ"ד, ד': "מפני שהיא מן התורה..."

A certain man ate a full meal that obligated him to bentch mid'oraisa, but could not remember whether or not he had bentched. His ten-year-old son said with conviction, "I saw you bentch." Could the father rely on his underage son's testimony?

Rav Yitzchak Zilberstein, shlit"a, presented this question to Rav Eliashiv zt"l who answered, "If the father feels sure that his son is telling the truth, he may rely on him."

Rav Zilberstein explained this. "Gittin 2 explains why we believe one witness: The Torah believed each and every Jew when it came to shechitah. The Ritvah brings the Yerushalmi. 'If not for this halachah one would never be able to eat at the home of his fellow Jew.' In Kesuvos 85a we find that Rava believed his wife regarding the honesty of someone who would have been required to swear. Because of his wife's testimony, he made the claimant swear—which is the halachah when we have clear testimony that the plaintiff is not trusted. But when Rav Papa told Rava that a certain document someone wished to collect with was already paid, Rava merely asked him if he had another witness. Rav Papa asked, 'What's the difference between me and your wife who you believed alone?' Rava replied, 'I know her, not you.'

"Rav Moshe Feinstein, zt"l, explains that Rava was not saying that his wife was more important than Rav Papa. We may not believe any witness alone even if we are sure he is telling the truth. If not, then every person will claim that so-and-so's word is impeccable and his testimony must be trusted. But if the judge knows the witness very well and that he never, ever lies, this is like seeing what the witness sees himself. The dayan may rule based on what he himself sees.

Rav Zilberstein concluded, "If the father knows that his son is telling the truth, he may rely on his testimony since this is as if he sees it himself."

חשוקי חמד, גיטין

# Overview

**Siman 184 Seif 1:**

**Someone who ate must recite birkas hamazon before le leaves that location** (See above siman 178). **If one left his place intentionally without reciting birkas hamazon he must go back to where he ate but if he recited birkas hamazon where he realized he has fulfilled his obligation.** This is true according to Rambam but according to Rosh who maintains that even one who left unintentionally must return to where he ate, one who left intentionally does not fulfill his obligation in the second location even b'dieved. **If one left unintentionally according to Rambam he should recite birkas hamazon where he realized and according to Rabbeinu Yonah and Rosh he should return to where he ate.**

- It is permitted to move from one corner to another even if one cannot see the first location. If one is unable to recite birkas hamazon in the place where he first ate but can see the first location from the second location it is acceptable to recite birkas hamazon there. If one had in mind to eat in the second location when he recited hamotzi one may be lenient in a pressing circumstance even if he cannot see the first location. (M.B. 1)
- One is required to return even if he has travelled a great distance unless he is so far that he would digest his food before he could return to the original location. (M.B. 3)
- Even if one left intentionally and knows that he is reciting birkas hamazon in the wrong location, b'dieved, he has fulfilled his obligation. (M.B. 4)
- According to Rambam since in a shogeg circumstance one may recite birkas hamazon in the second location it is sufficient if we require the person who left intentionally to return l'chatchila to the first location. According to Rosh who maintains that even one who left b'shogeg is required to l'chatchila return to his place it follows that one who left intentionally does not fulfill his obligation if he recites birkas hamazon in the second location. (M.B. 5)
- If one returns he is praiseworthy but it is not mandated. (M.B. 6)
- Later authorities write that this is the correct way to conduct one's self unless time is pressing and then he may rely upon the first position. (M.B. 7)

**Siman 184 Seif 2:**

**This halacha is true if one does not have any more bread but if one has additional bread he should eat some in the second location and then recite birkas hamazon there. This should be followed assuming one is not hungry from his original eating.**

- Even if one left intentionally it is effective to eat some bread in the second location. (M.B. 8)
- Even less than an olive's volume is sufficient. This is effective only if one ate bread in the second location but if one ate other foods even mezonos foods is not effective even if one eats an olive's volume of that food. (M.B. 9)
- If one is hungry it is not effective to eat in the second location and one is required to repeat the beracha of hamotzi. (M.B. 10)

**Siman 184 Seif 3:**

**Some opinions maintain that one must recite the beracha acharona where one ate for all of the seven species. Some authorities contend that this halacha is limited to one who eats grains. (See above siman 178:5).**

- Gra maintains that the second opinion is the one that should be followed that applies this halacha to foods made from the five grains. (M.B. 12)

**Siman 184 Seif 4:**

**If one ate and does not recall whether he recited birkas hamazon or not he must recite birkas hamazon since it is a matter of doubt that relates to a Biblical command.**

- One recites birkas hamazon including the fourth beracha which is only Rabbinic. (M.B. 13)
- One may even recite birkas hamazon on behalf of others. (M.B. 14)
- This is true only if he is sated. One who is G-d fearing who is uncertain whether he recited birkas hamazon should wash, eat an olive's volume of bread and then recite birkas hamazon. (M.B. 15)