



Overview

Siman 186 Seif 1:

Women are obligated to recite birkas hamazon but it is uncertain whether they are Biblically obligated and may recite birkas hamazon for men or whether they are Rabbinically obligated and may only discharge the obligation of others that are Rabbinically obligated. (See below siman 199 regarding a women's zimun)

- ❖ An example would be someone who did not eat until he was full and his obligation to recite birkas hamazon is Rabbinic. (M.B. 3)
- ❖ There is a disagreement whether a woman who was full and is uncertain whether she recited birkas hamazon is obligated to recite birkas hamazon. One should not protest against one who wants to rely upon the lenient opinion. (M.B. 3)

Siman 186 Seif 2:

Children are Rabbinically obligated to recite birkas hamazon for chinuch. The case of a son reciting birkas hamazon refers to a case father who was not full so that his obligation is only Rabbinic.

- ❖ Even if the child ate only an olive's volume one is Rabbinically obligated to teach him to recite birkas hamazon. (M.B. 4)
- ❖ Later authorities write that a child should not recite birkas hamazon for a woman since her obligation may be Biblical. (M.B. 6)
- ❖ There is a disagreement whether a child who is not full may recite birkas hamazon for an adult that is not full and one should adopt a stringent approach. (M.B. 7)

Stories to Share

Sleepytime

ש"ע קפ"ו, ב': "קטן חייב מדרבנן..."

It is common for children to fall asleep at a long meal, like a Shabbos table. One parent was confronted by this situation regularly. His children would hear kiddush and wash. After partaking of some challah and salads, they would invariably drop off one by one. Every week was a struggle to catch them before they fell asleep and remind them to bentch. But this was often impractical. How is one to keep track of when his kids are about to drift off while trying to have a proper Shabbos seudah?

When he would finally notice a sleeping child or two he wondered whether he should wake them. After all, as we find on today's amud, a child is obligated to bentch to educate him in mitzvos. On the other hand, was one really obligated to

Halacha Highlight

Women's obligation to recite birkas hamazon

Shulchan Aruch Siman 186 Seif 1

וספק הוא אם הן חייבות מדאורייתא

It is uncertain whether they are Biblically obligated

Shulchan Aruch (סעי' א') presents the Gemara's uncertainty whether women are Biblically obligated to recite birkas hamazon or whether women are only Rabbinically obligated to recite birkas hamazon. Mishnah Berurah (סק"ב) gives two reasons why women would be Biblically exempt from birkas hamazon. The first reason taken from Magen Avrohom is that the obligation to recite birkas hamazon is derived from a pasuk that mentions the "good land" that we were given, and since women were not given a portion in Eretz Yisroel they were not obligated to recite birkas hamazon. Although kohanim and levi'im were also not given a portion of Eretz Yisroel, nevertheless, since they were given the Levite cities it is as if they were given a portion in the land. The second reason is the Taz's explanation that since we mention bris milah and Torah and women are not obligated in those mitzvos they are exempt from birkas hamazon. Pri Megadim (א"א סק"א) questions why these reasons should exempt women from birkas hamazon. The wording of birkas hamazon is Rabbinic so how is it possible that the Rabbinic wording of birkas hamazon should exempt a woman from her Biblical obligation to recite birkas hamazon? Sefer Toras Chaim (סק"ב ד"ה ונהג) answers that the fact that Chazal would choose language that does not apply to women proves that women are exempt. If women were Biblically obligated to recite birkas hamazon Chazal would not have included such language.

Aruch HaShulchan (סעי' א') notes that these reasons only explain why women would not be obligated to recite the second beracha of birkas hamazon but why shouldn't they be obligated to recite the first beracha that addresses the theme of Hashem providing food? He answers that since one pasuk is the source for all three berachos of birkas hamazon it follows that only one who is obligated in all three berachos is Biblically obligated but one who is exempt from one of the berachos will be exempt from all of them (חיי משה).

wake him to fulfill this mitzvah? He had seen that the Divrei Yechezkel of Shinova refrained from waking his fellow Jews even if they were going to miss davening on time. (כן מובא בדברי יחזקאל, ע' שעי"ג) But of course one cannot learn the halachah from a story.

When this question reached Rav Avigdor Neventzal, shlit"a, he ruled that one is not required to wake the child to do this mitzvah. When asked why, Rav Neventzal explained. "When he is asleep he is discharged from all mitzvos. Therefore one need not wake him to fulfill the mitzvah!"

תשובות אביגדר הלוי, ע' רט"ז