The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
THE DAILY RESOURCE FOR MISHNA BERURA YOMI
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סימן קצ"א סעיף א'ב'

Overview

Siman 192 Seif 1:

When three people eat together they are obligated to form a zimun. One of them says: נברך שאכלנו משלו. The others respond: ברוך שאכלנו משלו ובטובו חיינו and then the leader says: ברוך שאכלנו משלו ובטובו חיינו ברוך אתה ה' א-לוקינו מלך העולם הזן את העולם וכו'. If there are four people the leader may say: ברכו שאכלנו משלו but it is preferred to say: נברך so that one does not exclude himself from the group. If there are ten people participating Hashem's Name should be mentioned and he should say: נברך א-לוקינו וכו' and they should respond ברוך א-לוקינו וכו'. One should not say נברך לא-לוקינו with a ל"י. This formula is used whether there are 10, 100, 1000 or 10,000. Anyone who deviates from this nusach, e.g. one says נברך על המזון שאכלנו or מטובו or in place of ובטובו one says למי שאכלנו משלו or in place of חיינו one says חיים he is an ignoramus. When there are ten people, since they will mention the name of Hashem they may say: נברך א-לוקינו על המזון שאכלנו משלו.

- In other words they are obligated to join together so that their beracha could be recited in the plural. (M.B. 1)
- Zohar writes about the importance of asking for a cup of wine for birkas hamazon since matters of sanctity require a verbal preparation. For this reason in Ashkenaz they say רבותי מיר וועלן בענטשן and the other respond יהי שם ה' מברך מעתה ועד עולם. (M.B. 2)
- The custom is not to answer אמן to the leader. (M.B. 3)
- There is a dispute whether the leader answers ברוך הוא וברוך שמו and the custom is that the leader does recite it. Even when there are three people only the leader says it but not the others. (M.B. 4)
- Once there are three people besides the leader who could use plural language without him, the leader says ברכו but if there are only two others he can not say ברכו only נברך. (M.B. 5)

Siman 192 Seif 2:

When there are ten people and the one leading birkas hamazon as well as the others did not add Hashem's Name they may not go back but if the others did not yet respond the leader may go back and mention Hashem's Name.

- There is a debate whether the leader may mention Hashem's Name if it was not mentioned initially but according to all opinions if the others mentioned Hashem's Name he may repeat it after them. (M.B. 10)

Halacha Highlight

The origin of the obligation to make a zimun

Shulchan Aruch Siman 192 Seif 1
חיבים בזמון
They are obligated to make a zimun

Shulchan Aruch (סע' א') writes that when three people eat together they are obligated to form a zimun. In other words they must join together for the purpose of "blessing Hashem" in plural. This is accomplished when one person calls the other two to join him in "blessing Hashem – נברך א-לוקינו." Chazal found support for this in the pasuk "גדלו לה' אתי וכו'"—Declare Hashem's Greateness with me (מ"ב סק"א). This wording implies that the obligation to form a zimun is Rabbinic. Sha'ar HaTzion (סי' קצ"ז ס"ק ט"ז וסי' קצ"ט ס"ק י"ט) also writes that according to the majority of Poskim the obligation to form a zimun is only Rabbinic. Chazon Ish (או"ח סי' ל"א סק"א), however, cites proof from the Gemara that the obligation to form a zimun is Biblical. Sdei Chemed (מערכת ז' כלל ט') also cites many authorities who contend that the obligation to form a zimun is Biblical.

One practical difference whether the obligation to form a zimun is Biblical or not relates to a group where some are full while others ate only an olive's volume and are not full. If the obligation to make a zimun is Biblical then one of the people who are full should lead the zimun since they are Biblically obligated to recite birkas hamazon. If, however, the obligation to form a zimun is only Rabbinic, then even the ones who ate only a kezayis may lead the zimun since everyone is equal regarding this Rabbinic obligation. Another practical difference relates to a thirteen year old boy leading the zimun. If the obligation to make a zimun is Biblical it would be necessary to confirm that the young man is physically mature the same as when a thirteen year old boy will perform a Biblical mitzvah on behalf of others. On the other hand, if the obligation is only Rabbinic one may rely on the presumption that once a boy passed his thirteenth birthday he already physically matured.