



Overview

Halacha Highlight

Siman 200 Seif 1:

When three people eat together one must stop eating, even against his will for the other two to answer their zimun. Even though he does not want to interrupt they can include him in their zimun regardless of whether he responds or not as long as he is present. Two people do not have to interrupt for the sake of one person. Therefore, the obligation to form a zimun does not begin until they agree to stop and recite the berachos. If they do not want to stop and he made a zimun with them he accomplished nothing. If they do not wish to stop he is not permitted to recite birkas hamazon and leave until the other two finish eating and form a zimun together since they are already obligated to form a zimun so how could one recite birkas hamazon without a zimun.

- ❖ He is obligated to stop since they represent the majority of the group and they do not have to wait for him. (M.B. 2)
- ❖ In other words, they fulfill their obligation to form a zimun because he is there and is close enough that he could hear them. However, he certainly does not fulfill his obligation unless he pauses to answer the zimun. (M.B. 3)
- ❖ The intent is that they are not obligated to participate in the zimun with him. (M.B. 4)
- ❖ Bach disagrees and maintains that there is no obligation to form a zimun until all three finish eating; therefore, if one finishes eating before the others he may recite birkas hamazon by himself. Although Magen Avrohom cites this opinion, the majority of authorities disagree and follow Shulchan Aruch's position. If one has a pressing matter that must be addressed which could result in a financial loss it is possible to be lenient and allow him to recite birkas hamazon before the other two finish eating. In such a case it is preferable if the two go beyond the letter of the law and pause eating to form a zimun with him. (M.B. 5)

Forcing members of the group to answer to the zimun

Shulchan Aruch Siman 200 Seif 1
שלושה שאכלו כאחד

If three people ate together

Shulchan Aruch discusses what happens when a group of people eat together and some finish eating and want to recite birkas hamazon before the others are finished eating. Shulchan Aruch rules that when two people are ready to recite birkas hamazon and the third person is not ready, he is obligated to pause his eating to answer to their zimun. Even if he does not want to stop they may include him in their zimun if he is together with them even though he does not respond to their zimun. In contrast, if one person finishes the other two are not obligated to pause for the individual. In other words, the obligation to form a zimun does not take effect until the two are ready to recite birkas hamazon. In the event that they do not wish to interrupt, the one who is finished must wait for them to be able to form a zimun and he may not recite birkas hamazon to himself ahead of them.

The reason for the distinction between one who can be forced to pause and two who cannot be forced to pause is that the majority may impose their will on the minority but not vice versa. Accordingly, if there is a group of ten people who ate together, six of them could force four of them to pause and answer to the zimun but five or less people cannot impose their will on the others (מ"ב סק"ב). In the event that four people eat together and two of them are ready to recite birkas hamazon those two cannot force the other two to stop to answer to their zimun. When four people eat together and two of them are ready to recite birkas hamazon and one of the other two is willing to pause so that the two could form a zimun the fourth person must now also respond since the majority of the group is ready to form a zimun (פסקי תשובות אות ב').