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Halacha Highlight

The correct beracha on grape juice

Shulchan Aruch Siman 202 Seif 1
חוץ מהיין שמברך עליו בורא פרי הגפן
Except for wine that one recites בורא פרי הגפן

Shulchan Aruch writes that the correct beracha on wine is בורא פרי הגפן regardless of whether it is fresh or cooked. Even if one added additional ingredients, e.g. honey and pepper, the beracha remains בורא פרי הגפן. The reason wine is unique is that it satisfies the heart and makes a person joyous (מ"ב סי' ערב סע' ב) (ס"קב). Mishnah Berurah explains that when wine is cooked it does not lose its essential quality of being wine. Elsewhere, Shulchan Aruch rules that the correct beracha to recite on grape juice is בורא פרי הגפן even though it does not possess the characteristics of satisfying one's heart and making a person joyous. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (שו"ת מנחת שלמה ח"א סי' ד') explains that as long as it could potentially become wine it is considered wine. Furthermore, even grape juice that was pasteurized or cooked so that it could no longer become wine the beracha remains בורא פרי הגפן since it had the potential to become wine when it was initially squeezed out of the grape and it remains in that status as long as it remains fit for drinking.

Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv disagrees and contends that grape juice that was processed in a way that prevents it from becoming wine loses its status of wine and the correct beracha is shehakol. The only exception is if one were to mix the grape juice with wine at a ratio of three parts grape juice to one part wine. In such a case the mixture could be considered diluted wine rather than grape juice and the ratio is sufficient to allow one to recite the beracha of בורא פרי הגפן. The common custom, however, is to recite בורא פרי נגפן on grape juice even if it cannot be made into wine and those who wish to be stringent and recite the beracha on wine before drinking the grape juice may choose to be stringent for themselves (פסקי תשובות אות ב' הע' 18).

Overview

Siman 202 Seif 1:

The beracha for fruit that grows on trees is בורא פרי העץ, except for wine for which the beracha is בורא פרי הגפן, whether fresh or cooked, and even if it is made into קונדיטון which is wine mixed with honey and pepper. If one mixed wine and beer the beracha is determined by the majority ingredient, if the majority is wine the beracha is בורא פרי הגפן and if the majority is beer the beracha is שהכל.

- Since wine satisfies one's heart and brings a person joy it was assigned a unique beracha. (M.B. 2)
- Cooked wine is not inferior and it doesn't matter whether one cooked the wine or the grapes and raisins before making the wine. (M.B. 4)
- Even though the taste and smell changes from the additional ingredients it does not negatively impact the wine and the wine remains the primary ingredient so the beracha remains בורא פרי הגפן. (M.B. 5)
- Even if the honey is 1/3 the mixture and the peppers are 1/3 the mixture or even more the beracha remains בורא פרי הגפן since the other ingredients are added to enhance the wine. (M.B. 6)
- If the beer ruins the taste of the wine when it is added the beracha is שהכל. (M.B. 7)
- The majority ingredient is the primary ingredient when determining the proper beracha. (M.B. 8)
- This assumes that the taste of the wine was not nullified by the additional ingredients. (M.B. 9)