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Digest
Mishna Berura
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סימן ר"י סעיף ב'

Halacha Highlight

Tasting food

Shulchan Aruch Siman 210 Seif 2
הטועם את התבשיל
One who tastes a food

Shulchan Aruch discusses the obligation to recite a beracha if one tastes a food without the intention to eat it. According to the first opinion one is not required to recite a beracha unless one tastes a revi'is. This is true even though one is swallowing the food that he tastes. Although it is prohibited for one to benefit from this world without first reciting a beracha, that principle is limited to where one intends to eat the food or drink the beverage. When one's intent is merely to determine whether the food requires more spices a beracha is not required. The reason one who tastes more than a revi'is is obligated to recite a beracha is because the benefit that he has is significant and it is considered as though he had intention to eat. The second opinion maintains that if one swallows the food he must recite a beracha. The exemption from reciting a beracha applies when one tastes that food and then spits it out. The rationale to obligate one who tastes food and swallows it to recite a beracha is that by swallowing the food his stomach benefits from the food and that benefit is enough to obligate him to recite a beracha.

Rema rules that since the issue is subject to debate the correct approach is leniency and a beracha is not recited. Although Magen Avrohom disagrees with Shulchan Aruch and Rema, Mishnah Berurah in the name of later authorities write that one who tastes a food does not recite a beracha even if he swallows the food. L'chatchila, one who will swallow the food that he tastes should have in mind that he intends to benefit from the food in order to generate an obligation to recite a beracha. Thus one who tastes food for a baby to determine whether it is the proper temperature should preferably spit out the food after tasting it. If he will swallow the food he should have in mind that he will benefit from eating it so that he will be obligated to recite a beracha (פסקי תשובות אות ט').

Overview

Siman 210 Seif 2:

One who tastes a food is not required to recite a beracha unless he consumes a revi'is even if he swallows the food. Some maintain that if one swallows the food he must recite a beracha and is not exempt when tasting a food unless he spits it out and in such a case even if he tastes a large quantity of food he does not recite a beracha. The principle ספק ברכות להקל applies to this dispute.

- Although it is prohibited to benefit from this world without reciting a beracha, that principle is limited to when one intends to eat, but when all one intends to do is taste the food to determine whether it requires additional spices, one is not required to recite a beracha before or after eating. Even tasting to determine whether a food is edible is considered mere tasting and a beracha is not required. (M.B. 13)
- If one tastes more than a revi'is, his benefit is significant and he must recite a beracha. When Shulchan Aruch writes that one is not required to recite a beracha, the result is that it is prohibited to recite a beracha. (M.B. 14)
- If one spits out the food, he may taste even more than a revi'is without reciting a beracha according to this opinion. (M.B. 15)
- Since his stomach benefits, he is required to recite a beracha according to this opinion. (M.B. 16)
- Magen Avrohom is uncertain whether smoking is similar to one who eats and spits out the food but later authorities agree that one does not recite a beracha before smoking. (M.B. 17)
- Magen Avrohom asserts that one who swallows is obligated to recite a beracha but other authorities follow Rema's position based on the principle ספק ברכות להקל. L'chatchila one who will swallow the food should have in mind to eat it so that he is certainly obligated to recite a beracha. (M.B. 19)