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

Overview

Siman 213 Seif 1:

Regarding fruit and other foods except for bread and wine, when two or more people are eating together one person recites the beracha for the other/s. Although it is not necessary for them to be reclining they must be sitting and only when eating bread and wine is it necessary for the people to be reclining. Nowadays, sitting is comparable to their reclining. Accordingly, for us there is no difference between bread and wine and all other foods since even when people sit to eat bread one person recites the beracha on behalf of the other/s. When the people are not sitting each person recites the beracha for himself even for other foods. The earlier ruling that one person recites the beracha for others when eating foods other than bread is limited to the beracha rishona but regarding the beracha acharona they must divide and each person recites the beracha for himself since there is no zimun for those who ate fruit. Some authorities maintain that for all foods other than bread and wine reclining is ineffective and the same would be true for us in regards to sitting. Therefore, the custom nowadays is for each person to recite the beracha for himself.

- Since they are important foods it is common for a person to establish himself by reclining. (M.B. 2)
- One recites a beracha for the other even if the other knows how to recite the beracha for himself. This is based on the principle ברב עם הדרת מלך. (M.B. 3)
- One cannot recite a beracha for another unless they sit to eat or drink but not if they are standing. B'dieved, however, it is effective as long as they both had in mind the correct intent. (M.B. 5)
- Since we no longer recline, regular sitting is what is necessary to establish the group as eating together. (M.B. 6)
- Even if they establish themselves as a group it is not effective. B'dieved, however, it is effective if everyone had the correct intent in mind. If someone does not know how to recite the beracha for himself he may even l'chatchila discharge his obligation by listening to others. Taz and others write that nowadays since people do not say the beracha acharona with proper respect one should l'chatchila recite the beracha acharona for the others but it is best if they say the beracha word by word with him. (M.B. 9)
- If fruit is served in the middle of a meal one person recites the beracha on behalf of the others because once reclining was effective for the bread it is effective for other foods as well. (M.B. 11)

Halacha Highlight

Sitting when reciting a beracha for others

Shulchan Aruch Siman 213 Seif 1
ומיהו ישיבה מיהא בעי
But sitting is required

Shulchan Aruch relates that when eating all foods except for bread and wine if many people are eating together and one person will recite the beracha on behalf of the others they must be sitting. Although Shulchan Aruch initially writes that when it comes to bread and wine even sitting is insufficient and the members of the group must recline, nowadays that people no longer recline, sitting is the position necessary for all foods. Mishnah Berurah (סק"ה) notes that the requirement that everyone should be sitting is only l'chatchila. B'dieved if they were standing the recitation of the beracha would be effective for the others if they all had the proper intent in mind. The reason the members of the group should not be standing is that it is necessary for there to be some degree of permanence (קביעות) to the group to allow one person to recite the beracha on behalf of the others.

This same concept is expressed in the halachos of kiddush as well as the halachos of havdala. Rema (סי' רע"א סע' י) rules that when one person recites kiddush on behalf of others it is appropriate for them to be sitting. Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק מ"ו) in the name of the Vilna Gaon explains that since one person is reciting the beracha on behalf of others they must form a cohesive group and this is achieved by having them sit together. The rationale for the custom to stand during kiddush is that when people gather together for the purpose of a mitzvah that in and of itself has permanence. Regarding havdala as well, Shulchan Aruch (סי' רצ"ו) rules that it should be recited while sitting. Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק כ"ז) explains that since one person recites the beracha on behalf of others they must form a cohesive group and that occurs when they sit together. The rationale behind Rema's ruling that havdala should be recited while standing is that gathering for havdala gives it permanence (מ"ב שם).

- There is a disagreement whether one person recites the beracha on behalf of others when they are drinking wine. It seems that common custom is for each person to recite the beracha for himself and although it seems to violate halacha perhaps it is based on the assumption that people do not have proper intent when reciting or listening to the beracha. (M.B. 12)
- This is true l'chatchila but b'dieved if they had the proper intent it is effective even if they weren't even sitting. (M.B. 13)