



Overview

Halacha Highlight

Hagomel following elective surgery

Shulchan Aruch Siman 219 Seif 8

בכל חלי צריך לברך

One recites the beracha for any illness

Shulchan Aruch (סעי' ח') rules that one recites the beracha of hagomel following any illness, even if it was not life-threatening and even if it was not an internal injury. Once one was confined to bed he is obligated to recite hagomel because it is comparable to one who was brought before a panel of judges for judgment in that one never knows the outcome of their decision. Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק כ"ה) explains that once a person becomes confined to bed, we have no idea what the outcome will be since there are times that initially it does not seem that the illness is so severe but as time progresses it becomes more severe and his life may be in danger. Furthermore, there is no difference whether the condition that confined him to bed is a recurring illness or not. Mishnah Berurah (ס"ק כ"ו) explains that when one suffers from a regularly recurring illness one may think that since in the past he always recovered it should not be considered dangerous and would not recite be obligated to recite hagomel. To dispel this notion Shulchan Aruch emphasizes that one recites hagomel even on recurring illnesses and the reason is that each time the illness returns there is a fear that this time it will be more severe than the previous times.

Poskim write that one who requires any type of internal surgery must recite hagomel even for routine surgeries. However, if the patient was given only local anesthesia it is not clear that the beracha should be recited. Additionally, one who has simple cosmetic surgery does not recite the beracha of hagomel. Even if the patient was confined to bed as a result of the surgery the beracha is not recited. The reason is that the beracha was instituted for people who, as a result of weakness from a medical condition, became confined to bed but someone who voluntarily has elective surgery does not recite the beracha (פסקי תשובות אורח כ"י).

and it is appropriate to recite the beracha without mentioning Hashem's Name or mention of His Kingdom.

- ❖ When they visit the place the miracle occurred they must also recite שעשה לי נס במקום הזה (M.B. 30)
- ❖ Since these other occurrences are not common Chazal did not institute the recitation of hagomel, only the beracha for having experienced a miracle. (M.B. 31)
- ❖ Later authorities write that the custom is in accordance with the first opinion and that is the one that is more logical. (M.B. 32)

Siman 219 Seif 7:

In Germany and France the beracha is not recited when one travels from one city to another since the obligation was instituted for those who travel in the desert where wild animals and thieves are commonly found. In Spain they recite the beracha since all roads are assumed dangerous. However, one who travels less than a parsah does not recite the beracha but if the area is known to be dangerous one recites the beracha even if he travels less than a parsah.

- ❖ This opinion maintains that the beracha runs parallel to the halachos related to tefilas haderech. (M.B. 22)

Siman 219 Seif 8:

One recites the beracha for any illness even if it is not a dangerous illness or an internal injury; rather as long as one is confined to bed and got out he recites the beracha. It is similar to one brought before a scaffold (the place where judges would sit to adjudicate) for judgment. There is no difference between a recurring illness that comes periodically or whether it is not a recurring illness. According to some opinions one does not recite the beracha unless it was a dangerous illness, e.g. an internal injury and that is the custom in Germany.

- ❖ When someone ill is confined to bed it is unknown what his outcome will be since sometimes illnesses become more severe with time. (M.B. 25)
- ❖ One should not assume a recurring illness is not dangerous since there are times that it can become more serious. (M.B. 26)
- ❖ Or any other illness that is dangerous, e.g. a fever in the whole body. (M.B. 28(a))
- ❖ Magen Avrohom and Elya Rabba report that some people follow Shulchan Aruch's ruling. Magen Giborim also writes that whenever a person was ill enough that a gentile may do melacha for him on Shabbos he should recite hagomel but he adds that one should not recite the beracha unless he was ill in bed for three days. Biur Halacha writes that if the illness was dangerous he recites the beracha even if he was in bed for less than three days. (M.B. 28 (b))

Siman 219 Seif 9:

These four categories are not specific and the obligation applies for anyone who experienced a miraculous recovery, e.g. a wall fell on him, one was saved from being trampled or gored by a bull, a lion was going to tear him apart in the city, if thieves or night robbers attacked and he was saved and anything similar. In all such cases one must recite hagomel. According to some authorities one recites the beracha only if one is one of the four mentioned categories