The Chicago Center
Digest
Mishna Berura
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סימן רכ"א סעיף א'-ב'

Overview

Siman 221 Seif 1:

If one was distressed by the lack of rain and then the rain fell one recites a beracha even though the rain was not sufficient to fructify, as long as there was sufficient rain to produce bubbles from the rain that go out to greet one another. The reason the practice of reciting this beracha is no longer followed is that in these countries rain falls regularly and does not stop for extended periods of time.

- It is possible that in Eretz Yisroel where it is common for there to be an extended dry season when the first rain falls and everyone is joyous it is possible that as a matter of course one should recite the beracha the first time that it rains. Pri Megadim implies that one does not recite the beracha the first time it rains if the weather patterns followed their normal pattern. (M.B. 1)
- People are not so joyous when it rains but even in these countries if there is an extended period without rain causing the world distress and then rain fell, the beracha is recited. (M.B. 2)

Siman 221 Seif 2:

What is the beracha? If one does not own a field one recites: מודים אנחנו לך ה' א-לוקינו על כל טפה וטפה שהורדת לנו ואלו פינו מלא שירה כים וכו' הן הם יודו ויברכו את שמך מלכנו and one concludes: ברוך אתה ה' ק-ל רב ההודאות. If one owns a field with a partner he recites: הטוב והמטיב and if he does not have a partner he recites שהחינו. Some maintain that one who hears that rain fell recites הטוב והמטיב.

- In other words Hashem is good to him and others with him, i.e. his partner. Many later authorities imply that even one's wife and children constitute partners for this matter. (M.B. 4)
- A gentile partner is not considered a partner for this matter. (M.B. 6)
- This means that one did not personally hear that rain fell but merely heard it from others. If one does not own a field one does not recite any beracha. Shitah Mikubetzes concludes that there is no difference between one who sees the rain or hears that it rained but one should not recite the beracha as is the case whenever there is a dispute whether a beracha should be recited. (M.B. 7)

Halacha Highlight

The beracha on rainfall

Shulchan Aruch Siman 221 Seif 1
אם היו בצער מחמת עצירת גשמים
If one was distressed by the lack of rain

Shulchan Aruch (סע' א') teaches that when rain falls following a period of time that rain did not fall causing distress, one recites a beracha. In seif 2 Shulchan Aruch presents three different options regarding the wording of the beracha when rain falls after a period of drought depending upon one's circumstances. There is one wording to recite if one is not a land owner. In the event that one owns land in partnership with someone else, he recites the beracha of הטוב והמטיב, meaning that Hashem is good to him as well as his partner. Mishnah Berurah (סק"ד) notes that according to many later authorities even one's wife or children are considered partners for this matter and one would recite the beracha of הטוב והמטיב. In the event that he owns a field by himself he recites the beracha of שהחיינו. Biur Halacha (ד"ה מברך שהחינו) suggests that even one who owns a field by himself should recite the beracha of הטוב והמטיב since the rain provides benefits to other field owners and it would be accurate to express appreciation for the benefit that Hashem provided him and others. He answers that in order to recite הטוב והמטיב for benefit that Hashem provides to others it is necessary to share the benefit with another. The fact that others also benefit is not sufficient to upgrade the beracha to הטוב והמטיב.

Ritva (תענית ו:) rules that one who owns one field by himself and another field in partnership with another person should recite the beracha of שהחיינו as well as הטוב והמטיב. Bnei Zion (סי' רכ"א) explains that Ritva's ruling that one who falls in two categories recites two berachos is consistent with Ritva's other ruling that someone who owns a field by himself recites שהחיינו for his field and מודים אנחנו לך וכו' for the benefit that others have from the rain. Accordingly, since all other Poskim maintain that one who owns a field by himself recites only שהחיינו, one who owns one field by himself and another in partnership only recites הטוב והמטיב.