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Digest
Mishna Berura
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סימן רכ"ג סעיף א'

Halacha Highlight

Reciting a beracha upon the birth of a grandchild

Shulchan Aruch Siman 223 Seif 1
ילדה אשתו זכר
If one's wife gives birth to a male

Shulchan Aruch rules that when one's wife gives birth to a male one recites the beracha of הטוב והמטיב and the mother also recites the beracha. Mishnah Berurah (סק"ג) writes that since it is beneficial to both the mother and the father it is appropriate for them to recite הטוב והמטיב. This is true even if they already have many children. Since Shulchan Aruch does not mention anything about reciting this beracha upon the birth of a girl, one does not recite the beracha when she is born. Furthermore, even if this couple already has many sons and they wanted a daughter so that he could fulfill the mitzvah of pru u'rvu, he does not recite the beracha upon the birth of a daughter (מ"ב סק"ב). Mishnah Berurah (שם) does assert, however, that one should recite שהחינו upon the birth of a daughter since it is no worse than seeing a friend that one has not seen in thirty days which warrants the recitation of שהחינו. Rav Moshe Feinstein (או"ח ח"ה סי' מ"ג אות ה') writes that one should not be surprised that this ruling is not found in earlier sources because due to the evident nature of the ruling, it was unnecessary for them to address it explicitly.

Biur Halacha (ד"ה ילדה אשתו וכו') references Elya Rabba who cites Sefer Chassidim who writes that if one's son or daughter has a son or if a close friend who is righteous and pious has a son one recites שהחינו upon hearing the good news. Biur Halacha disagrees with this ruling based on a teshuva of Rashba. Rashba explains that one does not recite the beracha when one derives pleasure from something; rather the beracha is recited when one derives tangible benefit, e.g. when rain falls or one inherits property. Accordingly, one would not recite הטוב והמטיב or שהחינו upon the birth of a grandchild since the grandchild does not provide his grandparent with tangible benefit.

Overview

Siman 223 Seif 1:

If one's wife gives birth to a son he recites הטוב והמטיב and she also recites that beracha. If one's wife died during childbirth he recites שהחינו since the good is not shared with others. Similarly, if the father died before his son was born his wife recites שהחינו. Some write that the custom is to be lenient with regards to this beracha being that it is optional rather than obligatory and consequently the custom developed to be lenient with these berachos.

- The beracha is recited even if one merely heard that his wife gave birth to a son. (M.B. 1)
- The implication of the Poskim is that even if one has numerous sons and wanted a girl he does not recite the beracha upon the birth of a girl. However, it is obvious that one should recite שהחינו since it is no worse than seeing a friend that one hasn't seen in more than thirty days. (M.B. 2)
- Pri Megadim implies that one may recite the beracha even if it was not recited immediately. (M.B. 3)
- According to Taz one recites הטוב והמטיב even if one's wife died in childbirth and his rationale is that she had the benefit that she left behind a son. Mor U'Ketzia disagrees because the beracha was enacted for physical benefit rather than spiritual benefit. (M.B. 4)
- The wording implies that had she died hours after childbirth he would recite הטוב והמטיב since she had benefit from her son before she died. (M.B. 5)
- One first recites דין האמת since that beracha is obligatory rather than שהחינו since according to some opinions it is optional. (M.B. 6)
- Being that some authorities maintain that the beracha is optional the practice has developed that people are lenient regarding this beracha but the practice is incorrect. (M.B. 7)