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Digest
Mishna Berura
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סימן רכ"ו סעיף א'-סימן רכ"ז סעיף א'

Overview

Siman 226 Seif 1:

One who goes out during the days of Nissan and sees tree that are flowering recites: ברות אתה ה' וכו' שלא חסר בעולמו כלום וברא בו בריות טובות ואילנות טובות להנות בהם בני אדם. The beracha is recited only once a year and if one did not recite the beracha by the time the fruit developed one no longer recites the beracha.

- Nissan is the common time for trees to blossom but the obligation applies any time one sees a blossoming tree. (M.B. 1)
- One must see specifically the blossom as opposed to the leaves. Furthermore, one recites the beracha only on fruit trees where the blossom will grow into a fruit. (M.B. 2)
- Even if one did not see the blossom beforehand the beracha is lost but Elya Rabba contends that if one did not yet see the blossom he did not lose the beracha. If the fruit developed and ripened to the point that one would recite שהחיינו on the fruit Pri Megadim and Chaye Adam imply that one would no longer recite the beracha on the blossoming tree. (M.B. 4)
- If the fruit did not yet grow one may recite the beracha even if one already saw blossoms. (M.B. 5)

Siman 227 Seif 1:

On meteors, which is a star that shoots across the length of the sky from one place to another and produces light that stretches like a rod, earthquakes, lightening, thunder and winds that blow angrily one recites ברוך אתה ה' וכו' עושה מעשה בראשית. If one wants he may recite: ברוך אתה ה' וכו' שכחו וגבורתו מלא עולם.

- Some maintain that זיקים are stars that have a tail and a rod of light and both opinions are cited by later authorities. If one saw the same star a second time on another night one does not repeat the beracha unless thirty days passed since the first sighting. (M.B. 1)
- One does not repeat the beracha a second time the same night even if one sees another such star. (M.B. 2)
- Chaye Adam concludes that one does not recite a beracha on lightening that is generated by heat without thunder. (M.B. 3)
- If the wind is strong but does not blow angrily one recites עושה מעשה בראשית but not שכחו וגבורתו וכו'. One should always recite on a strong wind עושה מעשה בראשית since this will certainly discharge one's obligation and we are not certain what is considered wind that blows angrily. (M.B. 4)
- The custom is to recite עושה מעשה בראשית on lightening and שכחו וגבורתו מלא עולם on thunder. The truth is that both berachos can apply to both occurrences; therefore if one sees lightening and hears thunder at the same time one should recite only עושה מעשה בראשית. If he recites שכחו וגבורתו וכו' he also discharges his obligation. If one first hears thunder and recites שכחו וגבורתו וכו' or עושה מעשה בראשית and then see lightening he may recite עושה מעשה בראשית. Sha'arei Teshuvah in the name of Birkei Yosef writes that one who recites the beracha on lightening and has in mind to discharge his obligation to recite the beracha on thunder, b'dieved fulfills his obligation. (M.B. 5)

Halacha Highlight

The beracha on blossoming fruit trees

Shulchan Aruch Siman 226 Seif 1
היוצא בימי ניסן
One who goes out during the days of Nissan

Shulchan Aruch (סי' רכ"ו סע' א') writes that during the days of Nissan when one sees a blossoming tree one recites the beracha ברוך אתה ה' שלא חסר בעולמו כלום וברא בו בריות טובות וכו'. Mishnah Berurah (סק"א) explains that when Shulchan Aruch mentions Nissan he was referring to countries with a warm climate whose fruit trees begin to blossom in Nissan. However, the beracha is recited in whatever month one sees the trees blossoming and it need not be recited specifically in Nissan. Other authorities disagree and contend that the beracha should be recited specifically in the month of Nissan (ברכי יוסף סק"ב). Sefer Pesach HaDevir cites the Zohar that explains that during the month of Nissan souls from the upper world are present in gardens and orchards and through the recitation of the beracha they merit an elevation of their soul and daven for those alive in this world. According to some Poskim, if one did not recite the beracha in the month of Nissan it should be recited in the month of Iyar without mentioning Hashem's Name or His Kingdom. Most Poskim, however, disagree and maintain that it is perfectly acceptable to recite the beracha in the month of the Iyar mentioning Hashem's Name and His Kingdom (פסקי תשובות אות ב').

Poskim discuss when the beracha should be recited for those living in the Southern Hemisphere. The issue is that when it is summer for us they are in the midst of their winter and when it is winter for us it is the midst of their summer. Accordingly, the trees are not blossoming during Nissan, Iyar or Sivan. Poskim write that since their trees generally blossom during the month of Tishrei the beracha should be recited at that time. Additionally, the beracha is recited only once a year and once one recited the beracha, even if he travels to a country where the trees are beginning to blossom he does not repeat the beracha (פסקי תשובות שם).