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לעילוי נשמת ר' יצחק מאיר בן אליהו ובריינא בת אברהם ע"ה ור' גדליה בן אברהם מנחם הכהן ומרים בת ישראל ע"ה

The Requirement to Make a New Blessing When Changing Locations

by Rabbi Chaim Yeshaya Freeman

When must a new *bracha* be recited when one changes locations?

Must one who is travelling keep reciting new *brachos*?

It is very common for people to move around while they are eating. This can potentially lead to halachic conundrums regarding a potential need for a new blessing which, if not applied correctly, can result in a *bracha levatala*, a blessing made in vain, which is a serious transgression. To properly understand these halachos, an examination of the sources and the logic behind these halachos is in order.

Source of the halacha: The Gemara (Pesachim 101a) cites the opinion of Rabi Yochanan that *shinui makom* (changing locations) does not mandate reciting a new *bracha* if one wishes to continue eating. The Rashbam (ibid. s.v. *vi'echad*) comments that this is only true so long as there was no actual *hesech hada'as* (distraction of the mind) from eating. However, the Gemara (ibid. 101b) cites a *beraisa* disproving this opinion. Thus, the conclusion of the Gemara is that changing locations requires a new *bracha*. The basic understanding of this halacha is that a *bracha* can only exempt food eaten during the same eating session. *Shinui makom* requires a new *bracha* because the change of location creates a new eating session. The Rashbam (Pesachim 101b s.v. *kashya*) states that a new *bracha* is required even upon returning to the original location.

The Gemara (Pesachim 101b) continues by elaborating on the parameters of *shinui makom*. Rav Chisda said in the name of Rav Huna that *shinui makom* only mandates a *bracha* if one moves from one house to a different house, but if one only switched places, no new *bracha* is required. The Rashbam (ibid. 102a s.v. *tanya*) and Rif (ibid. *dapei haRif* 20a) explain that switching places refers to relocating within one room.

Regarding relocating to a different room within one house, the Rema (Orach Chaim 178:1) rules that this would mandate a new *bracha* unless one had specific intent to switch rooms while he recited the *bracha*. The Magen Avraham (178:2) adds that if the other room is visible from the original location, that would also suffice to avoid the requirement to recite a new *bracha*. The Bi'ur Halacha (178:1 s.v. *babayis*) is even more lenient, saying that *bidi'eved* (after it is done), one is not required to recite a new *bracha*, even if neither of these two conditions are present.

The Gemara (Pesachim 101b) cites another statement from Rav Chisda that the halacha of *shinui makom* does not apply to foods whose *bracha acharona* (after blessing) must be recited in the place where the person ate. The reason for this is that one is still

considered connected to the original place of eating, as one must return to recite the *bracha acharona*. Switching locations, even to a different house, is therefore not considered a new eating session. However, Rav Sheishes argues that the halacha of *shinui makom* applies equally to all foods.

The halacha: The Rashbam (ibid. 102a s.v. *tanya*) and the Rosh (ibid. 10:6) rule in accordance with Rav Chisda. However, the Rif (*dapei haRif* 20b) rules in accordance with Rav Sheishes. The Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 178:1) follows the ruling of the Rif, but the Rema (ibid.:2) follows the ruling of the Rashbam and Rosh. The Rema adds that this is only true so long as there was no actual *hesech hada'as* (i.e., one did not actually become mentally removed from the eating session). Ashkenazim, who generally follow the opinion of the Rema, would thus not need to recite a new *bracha* for food that requires a *bracha acharona* in the original place of eating, while Sefardim, who generally follow the ruling of the Shulchan Aruch, would need to recite a new blessing. However, the Kaf Hachaim (178:14) points out that even some Sefardim follow the Rema in this case. This is based on the general rule of *safek brachos lihakel*, that whenever there is a doubt whether a *bracha* should be recited or not, halacha mandates that one be lenient and not recite a *bracha*.

There are three opinions regarding which *bracha acharona* requires recitation in its original place and thus does not require a new *bracha* due to *shinui makom* according to Rav Chisda. The Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 178:5) cites one opinion that *Birkas Hamazon* (recited on bread), *Al Hamichya* (recited on non-bread items made from the five grains [wheat, barley, spelt, rye and oats]), and *Al Ha'eitz* (recited on the five special fruits of Eretz Yisrael [grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives, and dates]) all have this requirement. The Shulchan Aruch (ibid.) cites a second opinion that only *Birkas Hamazon* and *Al Hamichya* have this requirement. The third opinion, cited in the Rema (ibid.), is that only *Birkas Hamazon* is included in this requirement.

The Mishna Berura (178:45) cites the Magen Avraham who rules in accordance with the first (most inclusive) opinion, but the Mishna Berura continues that the Gra rules in accordance with the second opinion. The Mishna Berura does not provide a clear conclusion on this matter.

The Mishna Berura (178:28) cites the Magen Avraham that the ruling of Rav Chisda is only true when one ate a *kezayis* (olive's

volume) of the food before changing locations.

The Bi'ur Halacha (178:2 s.v. *vi'achal*) cites the Magen Avraham that food eaten during a bread meal is not subject to the halacha of *shinui makom*. Thus, it is not merely the bread itself, but all the foods that are part of that meal that are included in this exemption. This is true only for a bread meal; if one is eating a meal with *mezonos* foods and he changes location, only *mezonos* foods would be exempt from a new *bracha*, not other foods requiring a *bracha acharona* of *borei nefashos* (Halachos of Brachos by Rabbi Pinchos Bodner pg. 151).

Additional factors: The Gemara (Pesachim 101b) continues by citing a *beraisa* that seems to disagree with Rav Chisda's position. The Gemara answers that this particular *beraisa* is in accordance with the opinion of Rabi Yehudah, but Rav Chisda's ruling follows the opinion of the Tanna Kamma. This *beraisa*, while at odds with Rav Chisda, adds a different leniency, stating that if one relocated in the middle of a meal but there are others still seated at the table, no new *bracha* is required upon returning to the table. This is codified in the Shulchan Aruch (ibid. 178:2). The Mishna Berura (178:14) writes that this halacha is true even when only one person is left behind. It thus emerges that even according to the Shulchan Aruch, who rules that relocating mid-eating necessitates a new *bracha* for all foods, if one relocated during a meal and others are still at the meal, no new *bracha* is required.

Shu"t Bitzeil Hachachma (6:71) points out that the implication of the *beraisa* is that only upon returning to the table one is not required to recite a new *bracha*; however, if one wishes to eat in his new location, he must make a new *bracha*. This differs from the exception of Rav Chisda (followed by the Rema) that no new *bracha* is required for foods which have a requirement that the *bracha achrona* be recited in the place where one ate, as this is the case even if eating in the new location. The reason for this distinction is that leaving people behind does not indicate that one is still in middle of the meal; rather, it is a special exemption that as long as the original meal is still in session, one can rejoin that original meal without being required to recite a new *bracha*. However, the person himself, while in the new location, is regarded as having left the original meal, and would thus need to make a new *bracha* if eating in the new location. Accordingly, the Bitzeil Hachachma rules that if, upon returning to the table, one finds that those who remained have left or *bentched*, thus ending the meal, a new *bracha* would be required.

There is a dispute in the *poskim* whether the exception of leaving people at the table only applies to foods which require a *bracha acharona* in the place where one ate or if it applies to all foods. The Bais Yosef (Orach Chaim 178:1) and Taz (Orach Chaim

178:5) rule that this halacha does not apply to foods that don't require a *bracha acharona* in the original place of eating, since the eating session cannot be regarded as an established "meal" for the purpose of "returning to the meal." However, the Magen Avraham (178:3) says that this halacha applies to all foods; the simple reading of the Rema (ibid.:2) indicates this position, as well. The Mishna Berura (178:18) rules in accordance with the Magen Avraham.

Which bracha is required?: There is a disagreement between the Rashbam (Pesachim 101b s.v. *bidvarim*) and Tosafos (Pesachim 101b s.v. *keshehein*) regarding what *brachos* are required when the halacha of *shinui makom* necessitates a new *bracha*. The Rashbam says that only a new *bracha rishona* should be recited, while Tosafos require that a *bracha acharona* upon the previous eating session first be recited, as well. The Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 178:1) rules that a *bracha acharona* is also required, but the Rema (Orach Chaim 178:2) argues that only a new *bracha rishona* is required. Ashkenazim would therefore not recite a *bracha acharona*, but Sefardim would.

Additional exceptions: There are three exceptions to the aforementioned requirement of a new *bracha*. The first exception is when one changes his location with the food still in his mouth. Since there is no interruption to his eating, it is not regarded as a new eating session and no new *bracha* is required (Shu"t Igros Moshe Orach Chaim 2:57).

The second exception is when one left a location for a few moments to perform a task which will not cause him to become distracted from the meal. Resumption of eating is not considered a new eating session and no new *bracha* is required (Mor Uktziya Orach Chaim 178 s.v. *bain*). The Mishna Berura (178:4) disagrees with this distinction. However, the Aruch Hashulchan (Orach Chaim 178:10) and Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (Igros Moshe Orach Chaim 5:17) rule in accordance with the Mor Uktziya.

The third exception is someone who is traveling and intended to continue eating during his travels (Shulchan Aruch 178:4). For example, one who is traveling in a car and drinking a coffee is not required to make a new *bracha*. Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (Igros Moshe Orach Chaim 2:57) adds that this leniency applies even to one who is about to leave his house and travel. In the aforementioned example, if one begins drinking a coffee as he is about to leave the house, intending to finish it in the car, a new *bracha* would not be recited.

The laws of *brachos* can be complex, and this subject of *shinui makom* is no exception. However, knowing the rules and their application will enable a person to fulfill these important halachos properly.

Points to Ponder

Is going from a house to a backyard considered a change of location?

If one is continuously taking new bites from a food, is that the same as still having the food in one's mouth?

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