**YESHIVAT HAR ETZION**

**ISRAEL KOSCHITZKY VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH (VBM)**

**THE LAWS OF THE BERAKHOT**

**Rav David Brofsky**

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**Please pray for the safe return of**

**Yaakov Naphtali ben Rachel Devorah**

**Gilad Michael ben Bat Galim**

**Ayal Ben Iris Teshurah**

**Shiur #38: Blessings Recited On Drinks During the Meal (2)**

**Reciting the Blessing Over Wine During the Meal**

We mentioned last week that the *Rishonim* differ as to whether one must recite a blessing over water that one drinks during the meal. We noted that this debate stems from different understandings of R. Pappa’s ruling (*Berakhot* 41b), which states: The law is (*hilkhata*) that things that form an integral part of the meal (*devarim ha-ba’im machamat ha-se’uda*), when taken in the course of the meal, require no blessing either before or after.

We noted that Tosafot (*Berakhot* 41b, *i hakhi*) and others write that drinking is an integral part of the meal, and therefore no additional blessing is recited. The Hagahot Maimoniot (*Hilkhot Berakhot* 4:9) attests that the custom in France was in accordance with this view. The Behag (see Rosh, *Berakhot* 6:29) and Machzor Vitri (see Tosafot, ibid.), however, disagree and insist that one should say a blessing before drinking even during the meal.

These *Rishonim* are challenged by another statement, which discusses reciting a blessing before drinking wine during the meal. The Talmud (*Berakhot* 41b) teaches:

Ben Zoma was asked: Why was it established that things that form an integral part of the meal, when taken in the course of a meal, require no blessing either before or after? He replied: Because the [blessing over] bread suffices for them. If so, [they said,] let the blessing over bread suffice for wine also? Wine is different, he replied, because it is itself a motive for benediction.

The *gemara* rules explicitly that one must recite a blessing over wine that one drinks during the meal, as “wine is different… because it is itself a motive for benediction.”

The *Rishonim* differ as to why “wine is different.” Rashi (*Berakhot* 42a, s.v. *de-gorem*; see Tosafot 41b, s.v. *i hakhi*) explains that since wine is at times used for *mitzvot*, such as *Kiddush* and the *Birkat Ha-Eirusin*, even though a person does not necessarily wish to drink the wine, it is unique and deserves its own blessing. Some (Tosafot, ibid.; see also Talmidei Rabbeinu Yona citing Rabbeinu Shmuel) suggest that a special blessing was established over wine, one which even refers specially to its tree. It is therefore clearly a special blessing that is recited even during a meal. Furthermore, Rabbeinu Chananel points to a unique aspect of the blessing of *Borei Peri Ha-Gafen*; just as bread exempts food eaten within a meal, wine exempts other beverages as well. This too clearly indicates the unique status of this *berakha*. All of these *Rishonim* assume that one does not say a blessing before drinking other beverages during a meal and therefore explain why wine is different and unique.

However, as mentioned above, some *Rishonim* disagree and rule that one must in fact recite a blessing before drinking other beverages during the meal as well. If so, what is unique about wine, and why did that *gemara* raise the possibility that the blessing of *Ha-Motzi* might exempt the blessing of *Borei Peri Ha-Gafen*?

Some *Rishonim* (see Machzor Vitri and Behag cited above) suggest that while water does not add any sustenance (*lo zeini*), it is clearly not included in the blessing of *Ha-Motzi*, which is recited over the meal. Wine, however, which is somewhat satiating, should theoretically be covered by the blessing of *Ha-Motzi*, but it is not, as “wine is different.” The Mordekhai (*Berakhot* 136) cites Rabbeinu Yosef, who offers a slightly different reason. He explains that one must say a blessing before drinking water during a meal, “but not other beverages, because they are considered to be an integral part of the meal, like wine.” He acknowledges that the practice is not in accordance with his view.

The Shulchan Arukh (174:1) rules that one must say *Borei Peri Ha-Gafen* before drinking wine during the meal, as bread does not exempt it. As for water and other beverages, although the Shulchan Arukh cites both opinions and suggests drinking a bit before the meal with the intention that the blessing should exempt drinks served during the meal, the Rema (174:7) records that it is customary not to say a blessing before drinking before or during the meal.

Some *Acharonim* (see Taz 174:10; Eliya Rabba 173:11) claim that although water and other drinks are considered to be an integral part of the meal (*bi-khlal devarim ha-ba’im machmat ha-se’uda*), alcoholic beverages are not, and therefore one must recite a blessing before drinking them during a meal. The Magen Avraham (174:11) also cites those who maintain that one should say a blessing before drinking alcoholic beverages during a meal, even one who is accustomed to doing so. They maintain that regardless of whether one drinks before, after, or even during the meal, these drinks are not considered to be an integral part of the meal (*machmat ha-se’uda*).

The Magen Avraham, however, notes that some *Acharonim* disagree and do not require one to say a blessing before eating foods that “arouse one’s appetite.” He therefore suggests that we must distinguish between different cases. One must say a blessing upon drinking alcoholic beverages before or after eating, but one who drinks during the meat does not need to say a blessing. He concludes by noting that on Shabbat, one who recited *Kiddush* over wine is exempt from saying a blessing before drinking other beverages.

As these questions are subject to cultural norms, and eating practices are often perceived differently by different authorities, there is a broad range of opinions among the *Poskim*.

In summary, many *Acharonim* rule that one should NOT say a blessing upon drinking BEFORE eating, as people often drink before eating in order to arouse their appetites.

Regarding drinking alcoholic beverages DURING the meal, although this seems to be subject to a debate between the Taz and the Magen Avraham, some *Acharonim* maintain that the custom is not to recite a blessing before drinking alcoholic beverages during a meal. At times, one may drink in order to separate between fish and meat or after eating certain foods, in which case one should not say a blessing, as the drinking becomes an integral part of the meal. Furthermore, some perceive drinking during a meal an “appetite stimulant” (see Chayei Adam 43:6 and Nishmat Adam 41:1; see also Mishna Berura). Therefore, one who drinks in order to arouse his appetite should NOT say a blessing before drinking. Some even view a “toast” (*le-chaim*) as part of the meal (see, for example, *Sefer Ve-Zot Ha-Berakha*, chapter 8). Since the guiding principle in the laws of *berakhot* is “*safek berakhot le-hakel*,” one does not say a blessing in cases of doubt, the blessing should not recited (see Arukh Ha-Shulchan 174:12, who writes that it is customary NOT to say a blessing over alcoholic beverages during the meal; see also Yalkut Yosef 174:8). Others view drinking during the meal, especially “toasts,” as extraneous to the meal, and one should therefore say a blessing. It seems that most often, drinking alcoholic beverages is not related to the meal, and therefore one should recite the proper blessing.

It appears that one who drinks AFTER eating must certainly say the blessing (Mishna Berura 174:39), as drinking to help one’s digestion is NOT considered to be an integral part of the meal.

Interestingly, the Chayei Adam (43:11) writes that one should say a blessing before drinking tea or coffee served at the end of a meal. The Mishna Berura (174:39) challenges this ruling and suggests that one should say the blessing of *She-Hakol* over a bit of sugar, thus exempting the beverage. (It should be noted that the Mishna Berura most likely refers to sugar cubes, which are eaten but not considered to be part of the meal.) The Arukh Ha-Shulchan (174:14) even suggests that one should distinguish between tea, which deserves it own blessing, and coffee, which does not. In this case as well, many Acharonim apply the principle “*safek berachot le-hakel*,” although one who is certain that he is drinking a hot beverage in order to aid digestion should say the blessing of *She-Hakol*.

We noted above that all agree that one who already said the blessing of *Borei Peri Ha-Gafen* before drinking wine does not need to say another blessing before drinking other beverages. New week, we will discuss the blessing of *Borei Peri Ha-Gafen* and how it, similar to the *Ha-Motzi* blessing, exempts that which one drinks afterwards.