



OVERVIEW of the Daf

1) The correct bracha on water

The common custom which determines the halacha is that *שהכל* is recited before drinking water.

הדרן עלך כיצד מברכין

2) **MISHNAH:** When three people eat together they must make a zimun, but only when they eat permitted foods. Women, slaves and children do not count towards the zimun. There is a disagreement whether a person must eat a kazayis or a kabeitza to be part of the zimun.

3) The source for making a zimun:

Two different pesukim are cited as the source to make a zimun.

As a side note, based on one of the cited pesukim, the Gemara mentions circumstances where one should not raise his voice higher than the one he is responding to.

4) A zimun of two

Rav and R' Yochanan disagree whether two people who ate together have the option of making a zimun.

After unsuccessfully trying to disprove each opinion, the Gemara demonstrates that R' Yochanan is the one who holds that two may not make a zimun.

5) If one of the participants left the meal early

Abaye states that the previously quoted ruling that when one of the participants leaves the remaining two should call out to him when they are ready to make a zimun only applies if the person who left is close enough that he can answer to the zimun.

There is a disagreement whether this halacha applies to a zimun of three or a zimun of ten and the Gemara concludes that it only applies for a zimun of three but for a zimun of ten they must all be present.

6) Two people eating together

Abaye rules that when two people eat together they should each make their own bracha. A Baraisa echoes the same ruling with the qualification that if one is an Am HaAretz and the other a Talmid Chacham, the Talmid Chacham should make the bracha for the Am HaAretz.

7) Three people eating together

If three people are eating together and two are ready to make a zimun, the one has to stop for the two but two do not have to stop for the one.

A group of Amoraim ate together and when they couldn't figure out who would lead the zimun they each recited Birkas HaMazon to themselves. Mereimar informed them that they did not fulfill the obligation of zimun and it could not be made up after the fact.

8) Responding to the zimun as a non-participant

The Gemara explains how a person who did not participate in the meal should respond to a zimun.

9) Answering Amen

Answering Amen to one's own brachah of *בונה ירושלים* is praiseworthy but to other brachos it is inappropriate.

Different Amoraim had different approaches regarding answering Amen aloud to their own brachah of *בונה ירושלים*. ■

Distinctive INSIGHT

The Customs of the Holy Jewish People

פוק חזי מאי עמא דבר

Rabbi Tarfon ruled that the bracha to be said before drinking water is *בורא נפשות רבות*. When Rava bar Rav Chanan asked Abaye what the final ruling is, Abaye told him to "go out to the people, and to see how they conduct themselves." Rashi explains that this meant that the bracha before drinking water is *שהכל*, and after drinking water we say *בורא נפשות*.

Abaye does not mean to say that we can determine halacha by observing the conduct of the man in the street. Rather, the reference to "עמא" is to be understood in terms of the designated leaders and select few who are well-informed Torah scholars among the people. The term *עם* is used in this context in Yoel 3:5 and Micha 6:5, both in terms of the cherished ones among the nation.

The Mishna (Avos 2:1) tells us that the path which a person should choose is that which reflects gloriously upon the person, and one where the people around him and who observe him are favorably impressed. Does this mean that it should be our goal to try to impress people, and as long as we do so Hashem is happy that we are fulfilling the Torah's guidelines? This is certainly not correct. Rather, it means that we must follow the Torah without yielding to public opinion, if it is in opposition to what is right. However, if we are ever in doubt as to what the Torah wants from us, then we can determine the truth by going out and observing the holy Jewish nation, and see "what people are doing." If the Torah observant community has accepted a certain position, this can be used as an indication that it is legitimate. The idea is that our tradition is that the Jewish nation are blessed with divine supervision as we march through history, and we can rest assured that Hashem would not allow the community as a whole to mistakenly adopt a ruling and mode of conduct which is false or sinful. It is in this context that we can use the rule (Shemos 23:20) to follow the majority, and that "the customs of the Jewish people is Torah" (Menachos 20b, Tosafos נפסל). ■

Gemara GEM

Understanding "Amen"

תני חדא העונה אמן אחר ברכותיו הרי זה משובח

One who answers "Amen" after his own bracha is considered in a negative light. Aruch HaShulchan (O.C. 215:4) writes that the reason for this is based upon the fact that pronouncing a brachah is declaring that the flow of Hashem's bounty and abundance should shower upon the world. The response of "Amen" is said to strengthen and reaffirm this statement. It is therefore improper for a person himself to announce and confirm that his particular blessing is definitely worthy of being answered and that it will be the source of salvation for the world. It is certainly appropriate for others who hear his declaration to answer and assert that they agree to the blessing, and that they hope and pray that his words be truthful and come to fruition. But for the person himself to do so is looked upon with disdain.

Yet, even with this explanation, we must understand why saying "Amen" is allowed after the blessings of *בונה ירושלים*. Perhaps the difference would be that usually, a standard blessing is followed by

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HALACHAH Highlight

Answering Amen after one's own bracha

תני חדא העונה אמן אחר ברכותיו הרי זה משובח ותניא אידך הרי זה מגונה לא קשיא הא בבונה ירושלים הא בשאר ברכות.

It was taught in one Baraisa that answering Amen after one's own blessing is praiseworthy, while in another Baraisa it was taught that answering Amen after one's own blessing is repugnant. The Gemara responds that it is praiseworthy to answer Amen after the blessing of **ירושלים**, while it is repugnant to answer Amen after one's other blessings.

The authorities present different reasons why one should not answer Amen after one's own blessings.

The Behag¹ explains that it is the manner of boors to speak after making a blessing, and then eat. It seems² that according to the Behag, interruption between the blessing and the eating is the root of the matter.

Rabeinu Yonah³ explains that answering Amen on one's own blessing indicates the conclusion of the blessings, such as Boneh Yerushalayim which is the end of the a series of blessings. If one answers Amen on his own blessing, and then continues to make another blessing immediately afterward, this reflects poorly on the person. The reason for this is that each time he says Amen, he signals that he is concluding, thus to start another blessing immediately afterward is unpolished. However, according to this, it is proper to answer Amen at the conclusion of a string of blessings.

The Vilna Gaon⁴ explains that Amen asserts the acceptance of that which was stated. Accordingly, being that it is inappropriate for one to assert the truth of his own words, one should not answer Amen to his own blessing. The Aruch HaShulchan⁵ presents a similar reasoning. Amen is intended to draw down the spiritual influence from above by proclaiming that the statement was true. It is unseemly for one to answer Amen after his own blessing, because by doing so he implies that he is worthy to draw the spiritual flux of his own blessing.

These reasons have numerous practical Halachic ramifications and differences which are beyond the scope of this article. See Beis Yosef⁶ for some of this.

Some Halachic applications

One does answer Amen after **בונה ירושלים**.⁷ However, one should

REVIEW and Remember

1. What ultimately decided the halachah regarding the correct brachah when drinking water?
2. What should be done if the translator can't raise his voice as loud as the reader?
3. If many women only count as two men for zimun, what allows a group of woman to make a zimun amongst themselves?
4. Why did Abaye answer Amen to the bracha of Boneh Yerushalayim out loud?

pause slightly before saying Amen, so that it does not appear that Amen is part of the blessing⁸. According to the Sephardic custom, one does say Amen after concluding a sequence of blessings⁹. Examples: after **שומר המברך את עמו** (**עמו ישראל לעד**), and when concluding the Shmoneh Esrei (**ישראל בשלום**). According to the Ashkenazic tradition, saying Amen constitutes an interruption. If one says Amen to his own blessing of Mitzvah or prior to eating, he must repeat the blessing¹⁰.

If one concluded his blessing in unison with someone else, he should not respond Amen to the other's blessing, since it would seem that he is answering Amen to his own blessing¹¹. There are additional rules in regard to this, see the Mishnah Berura for details¹². ■

1. הובא ברא"ש ברכות פ"ז ס"י י'
2. עיי מעדני יו"ט שם אות ו'
3. ברכות מה ע"ב, דף לג ע"ב בדפי הרי"ף ד"ה הא דעני
4. ביאור הגר"א ס"י נא ס"א. וכזה ראה גם בלבוש (ס"י רטו ס"ב). ע"ש.
5. ס"י רטו ס"ד
6. ס"י נא וס"י רטו
7. ס"י רטו ס"א וברמ"א שם. ועיי הטעם במשנ"ב ס"ק ד
8. משנ"ב ס"י קפח ס"ק ב'
9. ס"י רטו ס"א
10. משנ"ב ס"י רטו ס"ק א
11. משנ"ב ס"י נא ס"ק ג'
12. וכן ראה בשו"ת אגרות משה ח"ה מחאו"ח ס"י ט' אות א, ובס' הליכות שלמה – תפלה פכ"ב אות יז, עמי רסה בעניינים אלו. ואכמ"ל. ■

STORIES off the Daf

Honoring One's Hosts

אורח מברך כדי שיברך לבעל הבית

HaRav Moshe Feinstein, zt"l was once at a wedding banquet, where he was honored with leading the assembly in the bentching. As he recited the birkas hamazon, he was overheard reading the blessing which a guest says in honor of his host, although the wedding took place at a simcha hall. The reason for this is that this paragraph is designed to acknowledge the host of the meal, even if it is not held at his private home. Reb Moshe demonstrated a sensitivity for the efforts of the ba'al hasimcha

and the expense he incurred to invite the guests to the affair, and he offered his words of blessing as a sign of tribute to them.

The Gri"z notes that the words of Rambam on this topic are of special interest. Rambam (Hilchos Berachos 2:7) writes: "The fourth bracha of bentching features three references to Hashem's kingship. When a guest recites the bentching in the presence of his host, he must add a blessing on his behalf." This seems to indicate, explains the Gri"z, that the comments of the guest are actually part of the forth blessing itself. Accordingly, it should be said immediately after "לעולם אל יחסרנו", and not later, as it is printed in the siddurim and bentcher booklets we have. This is reportedly precisely

where R' Yaakov Kamenetsky included this paragraph, and many communities conduct themselves in this manner. ■

(Gem...continued from page 1)

Amen in order for those who are listening to be able to declare their belief that the blessing is true and that it should speedily be realized. However, in the case of **בונה ירושלים**, where the speaker himself can answer his own blessing, the purpose of the Amen is said at the conclusion of an entire series of blessings. There, the Amen is said to strengthen all that was said before it. Here, it is appropriate even for the one reciting the blessing to announce that all that has been said is valid, and that the topic has come to a close. ■