

Mishnah Berurah Digest

Based on the Sunday morning shiur
by Dayan Y. Abraham, שליט"א

NUMBER 10

דיני הברכות ליתר מאכלים
ש"ע סעיף ר"ד, סימן א ומ"ב

The ש"ע lists different categories of food on which we say ש"ע. This list is based on a משנה and a ברייתא in א. Echoing the משנה, the מחבר opens with reference to foods that do not grow in the ground. These are listed as meat, both from domesticated and wild animals, meat from fowl, fish, eggs, milk and cheese. Dayan Abraham noted here that although these staple foods are supported in their growth from the ground, nevertheless they do not grow directly from the earth. He added that, for certain הלכות, for example, מַעֲשֵׂר שְׁנִי, it is true that even these are described as "גִּידוּלָן מִן הָאֶרֶץ", but that this means they are 'raised through the ground' rather than actually grown in the earth.

The מחבר continues, listing the following:
bread which has become spoilt and difficult to eat (but only slightly spoilt, because if it were unfit to be eaten it would not take any ברכה at all [מ"ב]);
cooked food which has completely lost its essential form and become spoilt (again, only a little spoilt, for the same reason [מ"ב]);
dates that have been burnt and dried up by the heat;
locusts (of the kosher kind, contrary to the opinion of רבי יהודה in the משנה, who opines that no locusts take a ברכה by dint of their constituting a type of curse [מ"ב]);
salt (a ברכה is made on salt because there is a little pleasure to be gained from putting it in one's mouth [מ"ב]), salt water;
soup (meat soup, since soup made from fruit or vegetables is the subject of מחלוקת [מ"ב]);
truffles (fungi beneath the ground that develop from the fat of the earth [מ"ב]), and mushrooms (of the kind that sometimes grow on trees [מ"ב]);
the soft, edible growth on a palm tree (that later becomes hard wood) [מ"ב],
... and the list continues.

We see from all of these, noted Dayan Abraham, that ברכת ש"ע is the 'default ברכה' for all those things that do not qualify for the significant status of האדמה, העץ, הגפן, מזונות and הניב.

The Dayan then wanted to analyse the ברכה of ש"ע. He asked what is the difference between the wording "שהכל נהיה בדברו" and "שבע ברכות" (found in the ברכות).

Parenthetically, the Dayan first mentioned a thought relating to the שבע ברכות. He recalled an idea expressed some years ago by the late Dayan Fisher, זצ"ל. Dayan Fisher asked the question, how, under the חופה, can we make the ברכה that ends with the words "יוצר האדם"?

In this ברכה we are thanking Hashem for creating us, but is there not a מחלוקת in the גמרא, in ערובין י"ג ב, in which בית הלל and שמאי disputed for two and a half years on whether it would have been better for man not to have been created at all? We are born into a struggle - the נשמה and the גוף, the יצר הרע versus the יצר הטוב. How, then, can we say a ברכה in which we thank ה' for creating us?

The answer Dayan Fisher gave was that we make "שהכל ברא" first in order for a person to place everything else in its proper context. Once we understand that "שהכל ברא לכבודו" - Hashem created everything for His glory, then we are able to say "יוצר האדם" with the right focus, and the conviction that it was indeed a good thing for man to have been created.

Now, Dayan Abraham asked why this ברכה ends "שהכל נהיה" "בורא...". He gave an answer that he had seen in the name of the Abudraham, as follows. "ברא", "created," refers to when something comes into being out of nothing, ex nihilo, and by dint of that happening there is an indication of some form of intention. However, when something grows as part of a process and I can not recognise any element of new בריאה, I do not notice the specific intent and am not inspired with an appreciation of new creation springing forth from purposeful design, then this is not "ברא" in the sense of "יוצר מאין", at least from my point of view, albeit that it may be so in reality, from ה' s privileged perspective.

Therefore, when there is an identifiable, or perceptible point at which something comes into being, for example, a vegetable emerging from the ground, my ברכה reflects that perception and begins "ברא...". "Who creates...". However, something that is 'ongoing,' 'just there,' so to speak, like water, does not take "ברא," because that moment of coming into being is not apparent. The Dayan noted that if one studies the whole list of items that take ש"ע it can be seen that the above theory works for many of the examples.

The Dayan then addressed the question of whether it is more correct or appropriate to say ש"ע or ש"ע נהיה. "נהיה" essentially denotes the past, whereas "שהכל נהיה" (employed in different ways) can imply past, present or future, and therefore has a sense of 'ongoing.' This would seem more accurate in terms of how it contrasts with "ברא," as explained above. Some indeed prefer the participle, "נהיה," because of its neutral connotation. Others feel, however, that since "נהיה" can indicate the future it is better to use "נהיה," which certainly refers to the past. These varying views are represented in different סדורים.

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