



NUMBER 14

Mishnah Berurah Digest

Based on the Sunday morning shiur
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see number 13

ברכות ירקות

ש"ע סימן ר"ה, סעיף אומ"ב

The מחבר rules that on vegetables one should say ב"פ האדמה, even if they have been cooked. The מ"ב clarifies this, pointing out that this ruling is in relation to vegetables that are good to eat either raw or cooked. The מ"ב notes that the מחבר himself makes this same point in his next comments, when he adds that this also applies to any fruit or pulse vegetables (קטניות): if they are good to eat both fresh and cooked then after they are cooked they take the same ברכה as they do when fresh. The מ"ב is quick to point out that one would only make ב"פ האדמה on pulse vegetables, such as beans, peas and chick peas, when they are moist, but it would be correct to say שהכל on dried קטניות because this is not the normal way to eat them.

The ביאור הלכה cites the עמק ברכה who lists a variety of ways that pulses are cooked and rules that all of them still take בפ"א, since, in every case, the cooking and processing has improved the vegetables, not downgraded them. The ביאור הלכה states that the אחרונים accepted this approach.

On pumpkin, turnip and cabbage, continues the מחבר, and other such vegetables that are better [eaten] cooked than fresh, one should say שהכל when they are raw and ב"פ האדמה after they have been cooked. Explaining the מ"ב on this ruling, Dayan Abraham noted that the language of the ש"ע is understood by the מ"ב as having a relative sense:

”שטובים מבושלים יותר מחיים...”

“that are *better* cooked *than* raw...”

That is, even though these vegetables can indeed be eaten raw, one should nevertheless make שהכל when they are raw if cooking them would bring about a pronounced improvement. However, the מ"ב adds that if it is the general custom to eat such vegetables raw, then it would be correct to say ב"פ האדמה also when they are raw.

Now the מ"ב examines the wider implications of the מחבר's classification of vegetables that are better after they have been cooked. It is explained that this applies not only vis a vis the cooking process, but also to pickling and salting, if this is the method by which the particular vegetable is prepared to be eaten. If it is people's custom to eat these vegetables raw once they have been pickled or salted, then ב"פ האדמה should be said on raw vegetables that have been thus prepared, but not while still fresh.

Therefore, the מ"ב continues, one should make ב"פ האדמה on kroyt (cabbage - Yiddish) once it has been pickled and has turned sour, even though it is still raw. If it has not been pickled, however, one should say שהכל when eating it raw and האדמה when it is cooked.

With regard to lettuce, the מ"ב writes that ב"פ האדמה is said on it if it has been mixed with oil and vinegar (i.e. it has a dressing) even though it is fresh, intimating that one would not say ב"פ האדמה when eating raw, fresh lettuce that has no dressing. He adds, following the אחרונים, that this all applies if the lettuce is being eaten outside of a meal, then cites the view of the פרי מגדים that, eaten with meat, the lettuce would be secondary and would be covered by the ברכה on the meat.

Dayan Abraham noted that some of the vegetables we have today, such as cabbage and lettuce, would seem to be somewhat different, in terms of their potency and strength of flavour, from what they were like when they were being discussed by halachic authorities in earlier times. It is not true today that cabbage and lettuce can not be eaten before being cooked or mixed with a dressing. Cabbage is often eaten fresh in a salad, and lettuce is predominantly eaten raw.

Citing the כף החיים, the Dayan made particular reference to the difficulty that lettuce is recommended for מרור (the cos, or romaine variety is preferred for this), on the basis that it begins sweet but becomes bitter if left too long in the ground, simulating our experience in מצרים. In recent times the lettuce has not been commonly known for developing such a strong flavour.

Furthermore, the Dayan added that the reason the מרור (i.e. the lettuce) had to be dipped into חרוסת (aside from reminding us of the mortar) was to justify the saying of ב"פ האדמה, since the lettuce was too strong on its own and needed the חרוסת to make it more palatable. Without the חרוסת one would have needed to say שהכל on the lettuce, because it was too strong to eat by itself.

Dayan Abraham mentioned, incidentally, that while the nature of such vegetables as cabbage and lettuce may have changed, there are others that we would still not eat before they are cooked, such as brussels sprouts. This would also be true of potatoes. Can you think of any other examples?

The ש"ע now rules that garlic and leek require ב"פ האדמה raw and שהכל once they have been cooked, since cooking spoils them such that they are downgraded in respect of their ברכה. The מ"ב qualifies the מחבר, stating in the name of the אחרונים that this applies only to soft, or young garlics that can normally be eaten fresh. Older, more pungent garlics that can not be eaten alone, without bread, take a שהכל when raw. The same would apply to onions: on small, soft onions say ב"פ האדמה (when eaten raw) but say שהכל on more mature, stronger onions.

The מ"ב then cites the שערי תשובה, who is of the opinion that since it is never the general custom in our countries to eat fresh garlic and onions, one should always say שהכל on these vegetables when they are raw. The נשמת אדם also rules that these take שהכל. Finally, the שערי תשובה is of the opinion that שהכל should even be said on cooked garlic and onions, and even when cooked with meat.

