

Mishnah Berurah Digest

Based on the Sunday morning shiur
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NUMBER 4

ש"ע סימן ר"ב, סעיף י"ז - י"ח ומשנה ברורה שם

In these difficult times we need to work hard at making our 'purposeful and meaningful'. We need motivation and inspiration to help us direct our hearts to the **עולם** in a way that will motivate Him to grant us a merciful audience. Towards that end, let us begin this issue with a few thoughts that might help to replace some of the routine and habit in our **ברכות** with a little extra **כונה**.

The following is a translated excerpt from the **הקדמה** (intro.) to **הרב בנימין פארסט** by **"פתחי הלכה - הלכות ברכות"**:

"Our Sages ז"ל, in their holiness and wisdom, set out the **ברכות** in exalted language that contains wondrous and profound ideas, in carefully measured and weighed words, and expressions that elevate the soul and awaken in the heart of the **מברך** (the person blessing) love and fear of ה'.

Now, **הקב"ה** examines hearts and knows what is in our thoughts, so why does man need to ask for his needs with his mouth? Is it not enough for him to direct his heart and **הקב"ה** will 'hear' him in **שמים**?

The answer to this is that since the apex of man's perfection is the power of speech that he received when **הקב"ה** blew into him the spirit of life, there is in this speech a special power, and even more so when it is combined with **כוונת הלב** (intention, direction of the heart), to awaken the mercy of Heaven to bestow abundant blessing from above upon His chosen People below."¹

Let us try to make **ברכות** that will indeed awaken **שמים** at this time when it is so needed.

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The **ש"ע** rules that the muscat nut (or nutmeg, see top right) is **בפה"ע** and cinamon is **בפה"א**. The **מ"ב** adds that if the muscat nut is mixed into beer and the mixture is then drunk **purely for its medicinal properties** but not because one is at all thirsty for the drink, then the correct **ברכה** will still be **בפה"ע**. The **מ"ב** clarifies that, in such an instance, the muscat nut ingredient will be **עיקר** (primary) and the **שכר** (beer) will be **טפל** (secondary).

A close comparison is made with the ruling regarding drinking olive oil in beer (called **'מי אניגרון'**) : **ש"ע** סימן ר"ב, סעיף ד) : although the olive oil does not take a **ברכה** at all when drunk by itself, because it is actually harmful, if drunk in a mixture, *and the mixture is drunk solely for the medicinal properties of the olive oil*, then one should say **בפה"ע**.

However, in both cases, if one also has an appetite for the beer,

¹ (הקדמה לפתחי הלכה אות ה' ועיין בהקדמת הבשמים ראש פ"ח מובא בסידור אוצר התפילות)

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N.B. This sheet is only a general guide. **הלכה** must be decided on the basis of proper study and / or consultation with a Rav.

In many European countries, the name of nutmeg derives from Latin *nux muscatus* "musky nut; moschate nut";, often with omission or adaptation of the "nut" part: Danish *muskatnød*, Yiddish *mushkat* [מישקאט], Finnish *muskottipähkinä*, French *muscade*, Latvian *muskatrieksts*, Slovak *muškátový orech*, Russian *muskatnyy orekh*, Greek *moschokarido*, Armenian *meshgengous* and Hebrew *egoz muskat* [אגוז מוסקט]. The direct progenitor of English nutmeg is Middle English *notemugge*.



Ripe nutmeg split open
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quite apart from the fact that the medicinal properties of the nutmeg or the olive oil are still required, one should make a **שְהכל** on the beer and this will cover also the admixture. In reference to the olive oil mixture ('*enigron*') the **מ"ב** adds the qualification, **"אם הם הרוב"** - i.e. a **שְהכל** is made on the beer (if one is thirsty for it) when it constitutes the majority of the mixture.

Dayan Abraham put these **הלכות** into today's context. He noted that when a medicine is taken purely for **רפואה** (healing) one does not make a **ברכה** at all. However, when a medicine has a sweet flavour, which is particularly true of children's medicines, then there is some enjoyment from the medicine as a sweet drink and a **שְהכל** should be made. This applies also to cough sweets and the like: although they are being taken for **רפואה**, they are nevertheless enjoyed as pleasant sweets and therefore take a **שְהכל**.

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The **ש"ע** rules that one should make **בפה"א** over peppercorns or ginger that are still moist. Now, there is a difficulty in the **גמרא** in **ב** relating to two opinions regarding peppercorns that appear to contradict each other. On the one hand, **רבא** rules that if one eats peppercorns on Yom Kippur he is **פטור**, not liable, for eating on Yom Kippur. This is brought as a support for his opinion that a **ברכה** is not said on peppercorns: since consuming these does not constitute eating per se then a **ברכה** should not be recited on them. However, **רבי מאיר** (in a Baraisa) shows that peppercorns are subject to the laws of **ערלה**, which indicates that they are indeed edible.

The **גמרא** reconciles this difficulty by explaining that Rava's ruling refers to dry peppercorns, used as spices and not edible alone, and Rabbi Meir in the Baraisa is dealing with fresh, or moist peppercorns, which are edible and so subject to **ערלה**.

Now, the opinion of the **ש"ע** that one should make **בפה"א** over peppercorns was also the opinion of the **רי"ף**, upon whom the **רא"ש** asks why we should say **בפה"א** on fresh peppercorns rather than **בפה"ע**. The **רשב"א** (in a **תשובה**) explains that, indeed, since peppers are overwhelmingly planted with the intention of making dried, ground pepper they come close to a **שְהכל**, but that **בפה"א** is justified on the grounds that a few people eat them fresh and that some are planted with this intention. (ב"י) The **מ"ב** follows this line.