

HALACHOS HATZRICHOS

PACKET #18



BIRCHOS HANEHENIN

We learn in *Parshas Eikev* that it's a *mitzvah* to *bentch* after we eat and are satisfied, as the *posuk* says, "Ve'achalta Vesavata Uveirachta Es Hashem."

The *Chachomim* added that not only should we make a *bracha* AFTER we eat, we should make a *bracha* before, too! They said that before enjoying even a tiny drop of Hashem's food or drink, we need to make a *bracha*. (For example, even if we're eating just one chocolate chip, or just a small piece of a cookie.)

The *Gemara* says that anyone who enjoys things without making a *bracha* first is like taking from the parts of *korbanos* that belong to Hashem and should be burned on the *Mizbeiach*! The whole world belongs to Hashem, and we need to get permission before we enjoy it. By saying a *bracha*, we are getting permission from Hashem to enjoy the food or drink!

Seder Birchas Hanehenin, Perek Alef, Halacha Alef



BIRCHOS HANEHENIN

“*LaHashem Ha’aretz Um’loah*,” the whole world belongs to Hashem. The *Gemara* tells us that since the whole world is Hashem’s, you are not allowed to enjoy anything in the world without making a *bracha* first, our way of asking Hashem for permission.

But EVERYTHING in the world is a pleasure! We enjoy being alive, listening to the birds singing, feeling the wind blow through our hair, playing, reading, talking and laughing! The *Medrash* even says that we should really thank Hashem for every breath we take! Why don’t we need to say a *bracha* for all of these things?

We find something similar with the *mitzvah* of sukkah. The *mitzvah* is to do EVERYTHING in the sukkah during the week of Sukkos. We should sleep, eat, learn, talk, and relax in the Sukkah. But we only make a *bracha* on one of these things — eating. Why?

The *Chachomim* told us to make a *bracha* on eating, which we do regularly and purposely. When we say this *bracha*, we have in mind all of the other times we keep the *mitzvah* of living in the sukkah.

The same is with *Birchos Hanehenin*: We only make a *bracha* on formal, established pleasures like eating and drinking, and we have in mind everything else we enjoy!

See Yud-Beis Tamuz 5720 sicha 1



BIRCHOS HANEHENIN

Since the whole world belongs to Hashem, we say a *bracha* before we eat or drink, to ask Hashem's permission before enjoying part of His world.

Chassidus teaches us a deeper meaning of a *bracha*:

The word "*bracha*" is connected to the word "*mavrich*," which means to bring down. When we say a *bracha*, we are bringing down the ability to see Hashem in a clearer way!

When we say a *bracha*, we are saying that we realize that we are not in charge of the world, Hashem is. Now that our connection to Hashem isn't hiding, we are able to show that everything else is also connected to Hashem! Through the words of the *bracha*, we bring down the *koach* to SEE the *kedusha* in the *Gashmius* thing we are about to enjoy!



GENERAL BRACHOS ON FOODS

There are three “general” *brachos*, that we use for most foods. (Later *IY”H* we will see that there are exceptions for specific kinds of foods.)

All food fits into three main groups: Food that grows from the ground (like carrots), food that grows on trees (like apples), and food that we get any other way (like chicken or eggs). Depending on where our food comes from, that is the *bracha* we make!

For juicy peaches, which grow on trees, we make a *bracha* of *Ha’eitz*, thanking Hashem for letting us enjoy the food that grows on trees. On crunchy celery, which grows from the ground, we make a *bracha* of *Ha’adama*, thanking Hashem for letting us enjoy the food that grows from the ground. For fish, which we don’t get from the ground or from trees, we make a *bracha Shehakol*, thanking Hashem for letting us enjoy His world, which was all created through Hashem’s words.

See Birchos Hanehenin, perek Alef se’if Beis



BIRCHOS HANEHENIN - SPECIFIC BRACHOS

There are three main types of foods, with three general *brachos*: *Ha'eitz*, *Ho'adamah*, and *Shehakol*.

But there are some foods that the *Chachomim* taught us are IMPORTANT foods. These foods get their own specific *bracha*! Even though wine is a kind of drink, which should be *Shehakol*, it is a very important drink. For wine or grape juice, we say the *bracha* **Hagafen**.

Cooked grain, like wheat and barley, is also an important kind of food. Really, it grows from the ground, so it should be *Ha'adama*. But when grain is cooked, it gets a *bracha* of **Mezonos**, thanking Hashem for making satisfying food. If we make the grain into bread, it becomes **Hamotzi**, thanking Hashem for making bread!

Knowing that these are important foods will help us when we learn more *halachos* about saying *brachos*!

(See *Birchos Hanehenin*, *perek Alef se'if Beis*)



SOFEIK BRACHOS LEKOKEL

There is an important rule about *brachos*: “*Sofeik Brachos Lehokel*.” That means that if there is a *sofeik*, a doubt about a *bracha*, we are not strict to say another *bracha*.

What does that mean?

The *halachos* about *brachos* can sometimes be complicated. In *halacha*, sometimes it is not clear if a person needs to say a certain *bracha* or not. This is called a *sofeik*, a doubt. In these cases, the *Chachomim* say, “*Sofeik Brachos Lehokel!*” Since by saying a *bracha* that maybe we don’t need to say, we are possibly saying Hashem’s name for no reason, we DON’T say the *bracha* that we are not sure about.

But this is only where there is a *sofeik* in the *halacha*. It doesn’t mean when WE are not sure about a *bracha*! If we aren’t sure what *bracha* to make, we need to go learn the *halachos* or ask someone who did! Only where the *Chachomim* weren’t sure about a *bracha* do we follow this rule.

See *Birchos Hanehenin*, *perek Alef*, *se’if Gimmel* and *Daled*

