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Brachos Daf 45

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Zimun

The *Mishna* says that if three ate together, they must make a *zimun* – invitation to say the blessings after a meal.

The *Mishna* lists people who count to obligate a *zimun*:

1. One who ate *demai* – produce from an *am ha'aretz*, who we suspect of not tithing.
2. One who ate *ma'aser rishon* (given to the Levi), whose *terumah* was taken
3. One who ate from *ma'aser sheini* or consecrated produce that was redeemed
4. A waiter who ate a *k'zayis* (size of an olive)
5. A Cuthean (converts to Judaism after an outbreak of wild animals in Eretz Yisroel and their conversion was debated as to its validity; they observed some commandments, but not others)

The *Mishna* then lists people who do not count for a *zimun*:

1. One who ate *tevel* – untithed produce
2. One who ate *ma'aser rishon*, whose *terumah* was not taken
3. One who ate *ma'aser sheini* or consecrated produce that was not redeemed
4. A waiter who ate less than a *k'zayis*
5. A non-Jew

Women, slaves, and children do not make a *zimun*.

The *Mishna* states that the minimum amount of bread one must eat to make a *zimun* is a *k'zayis* – the size of an olive, while Rabbi Yehudah says it is a *k'beitzah* – the size of an egg. (45a)

Source for Zimun

The *Gemora* asks what the source for a *zimun* is, and offers the following verses, which refer to one inviting a plural group (i.e., at least two) to join him in praising Hashem:

1. The verse states *gadlu lashem iti - state [plural form] with me the greatness of Hashem, and we will praise His name together.* (Rav Assi)
2. Moshe says, "When I call in the name of Hashem, you should attribute [plural form] greatness to our God." (Rabbi Avahu)

Rav Chanan bar Abba says that one may not answer amen louder than the one blessing, as the first verse cited invites others to state the greatness of Hashem *with me*, i.e., on equal footing, but not louder.

Rabbi Shimon ben Pazi says that the one translating the Torah may not speak louder than the reader, as the verse about the giving of the Torah states the Moshe was speaking, and Hashem answered him *with voice*. The extra phrase *with voice* teaches that Hashem spoke with the same level voice as Moshe.

The *Gemora* supports this with a *braisa* which states that the translator may not speak louder than the reader, and if the translator has a quieter voice, the reader should lower his voice when reading. (45a)

Two Making a Zimun

The *Gemora* cites a dispute between Rav and Rabbi Yochanan about whether two who ate together may make a *zimun*.



The *Gemora* tries to resolve this from the *Mishna*, which states that three who ate together must make a *zimun*, implying that two do not.

The *Gemora* deflects this by saying that the *Mishna* is only referring to the obligation, but perhaps two may optionally make a *zimun*.

The *Gemora* tries to resolve this from a later *Mishna*, which states the three who ate together must make a *zimun*, and they may not split up, implying that the remaining two cannot make a *zimun*.

The *Gemora* deflects this by saying that once the three of them are obligated in a *zimun*, they must fulfill the obligation, which cannot be replaced with an optional *zimun*.

The *Gemora* tries to resolve this from a *braisa* which says that if a waiter was serving two people, he may eat with them without explicit permission, as they definitely would want to create a *zimun* group. However, if he was serving three, he may not eat without permission, since they already have a *zimun*. The first case of the *braisa* implies that two may not make a *zimun*.

The *Gemora* deflects this by saying that we assume that the ones eating prefer to make a bona fide obligatory *zimun*.

The *Gemora* tries to resolve this from a *braisa* which says that women can make their own *zimun*, and slaves can make their own *zimun*, but a group of women, slaves, and children may not make a *zimun*. Since women aren't obligated in *zimun*, even a group of 100 women is equivalent to 2 men, yet the *braisa* says they can make a *zimun*.

The *Gemora* deflects this, as a group of 3 women, while not obligated, still has three individuals, which is better than two men.

The *Gemora* challenges this from the case of women, slaves, and children, who may not make a *zimun*, even though they are many individuals.

The *Gemora* deflects this, as we prohibit *zimun* in this case due to concerns of licentiousness.

The *Gemora* tries to prove that Rav is the one who says that 2 may not make a *zimun*, as Rav Dimi bar Yosef quotes him saying that if 3 ate together, and one left, they call him and make a *zimun* relying on him. Since they may only make a *zimun* if they call him, this implies that 2 may not make a *zimun*.

The *Gemora* deflects this, as perhaps a group that was already obligated must fulfill their obligation, but an initial group of 2 may still make a *zimun*.

The *Gemora* instead proves that Rabbi Yochanan is the one who says that 2 may not make a *zimun*, as Rabbah bar Chanah quotes him saying that if two ate together, one may fulfill his obligation in the blessing after the meal by listening to the other one bless.

The *Gemora* says that this seems obvious, as the *Mishna* says that if one heard someone else recite *Hallel*, he fulfills his obligation even if he didn't answer.

Rabbi Zeira explains that Rabbi Yochanan is teaching that one just listens to the other, but they have no *zimun*.

Rava bar Rav Huna asked Rav Huna how this could be, as the Sages from *Eretz Yisroel* say that two who ate together may optionally make a *zimun*.

Rav bar Rav Huna assumed that they heard this from Rabbi Yochanan, who lived in *Eretz Yisroel*, but Rav Huna answered him that they heard this from Rav, before he left *Eretz Yisroel* and came to Bavel.

The *Gemora* returns to Rav Dimi bar Yosef's statement in the name of Rav that if three people who ate together, and one left, they call him, and make a *zimun* relying on him.

Abaye says that this only works if he can hear them doing the *zimun*.

Mar Zutra says that this only applies to a group of 3, but not a group of 10.

Rav Ashi challenges this, as one missing from 3 is more noticeable than one missing from 10.



The *Gemora* still rules like Mar Zutra, since it is not proper to mention Hashem's name (as 10 would do) without a full 10.

Abaye says that we rule that if 2 ate together, each one should bless individually.

The *Gemora* supports this with a *braisa* which states that if 2 ate together, each should bless individually, as long as both know how to. If one is ignorant, the one who is knowledgeable blesses and the other fulfills his obligation with his blessing. (45a – 45b)

Interrupting for Zimun

Rava says that he said something, which he later heard in the name of Rabbi Zeira. He said that if three ate together, one interrupts his meal to answer the *zimun* of the other two who finished, but two need not interrupt their meal to answer the *zimun* of the one who finished.

The *Gemora* challenges this from Rav Pappa, who interrupted his meal along with someone else to answer the *zimun* of his son Abba Mar.

The *Gemora* answers that Rav Pappa went beyond his obligation and answered the *zimun* of one. (45b)

Zimun among Equals

Yehudah bar Meraimar, Mar the son of Rav Ashi, and Rav Acha from Difti ate a meal together. No one of them was greater than the others, and they were unsure if *zimun* only applied in a case when one was greatest, but otherwise perhaps it is better for each to bless individually. They all blessed individually, and then asked Meraimar what they should have done. He told them that they fulfilled their obligation to bless, but not to make a *zimun*. However, since they blessed already, they couldn't make a *zimun*, as *zimun* cannot be made retroactively on a past blessing. (45a)

Answering a Zimun of Others

The *Gemora* asks what one should answer if he finds a group making a *zimun*.

Rav Zevid says he should bless along with them, saying [Hashem is] blessed and should be blessed, while Rav Pappa says that he answers 'Amen'.

The *Gemora* says that they don't disagree. Rav Zevid is referring to a case where he entered when the leader just invited everyone to bless, so he can answer, while Rav Pappa is referring to a case where he entered after they already responded, and therefore he may only answer 'Amen'. (45b)

'Amen' After Brachos

The *Gemora* cites one *braisa* that says that it is praiseworthy if one answers 'Amen' to all his blessings, and another one that says that it is disgraceful.

The *Gemora* resolves the contradiction by explaining that the first one refers to the third blessing in *Birchas Hamazon*, on the building of Yerushalayim, which is the end of a sequence, while the second one refers to all other blessings. Abaye used to answer 'Amen' to the blessing of Yerushalayim loudly, so the workers would hear and return to their work, as they need not say the next blessing of *hatov v'hamaitiv*, which is Rabbinic. Rav Ashi would answer it quietly, to prevent people from denigrating the blessing of *hatov v'hamaitiv*. (45b)

INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

'Amen' After Brachos

The *Gemora* says that one should answer 'Amen' after the *brachah* of *boneh yerushalayim*, but not after other *brachos*.

The *Rishonim* differ on the details of the *Gemora's* distinction.

The *Gaonim* say that at the end of any multiple *brachos*, like *boneh yerushalayim*, one should answer 'Amen'. This would apply even to the *brachah* after food, which has nothing to follow it.



Rabbeinu Yonah explains that if one answers 'Amen' when he has nothing left to add, that is appropriate, but it is silly to answer 'Amen' and then immediately start another *brachah*.

Tosfos says that the *Gemora* means that one should answer 'Amen' only after *boneh yerushalayim*, to highlight the fact that it is the end of the Torah mandated portion of *Birchas Hamazon*.

The Rambam (*Brachos* 1:18) says that after the end of a group of *brachos* like *Birchas Hamazon*. This would include *Shemoneh Esrei*, but not after the *brachah* after food.

The Rosh (10) rules like the Rambam.

The Bais Yosef (51) notes that the Rambam only refers to a group of more than one *brachah*, which would exclude *yishtabach* and the *brachah* after *hallel*, which are each just one *brachah*. Yet, the Sefardic custom, based on the Rosh, is to answer 'Amen' on these *brachos*.

The Bais Yosef (OH 51) suggests that these are considered the end of one group (*starting with the brachah before pesukai d'zimra and hallel*), since the material in between is on the same theme of praising Hashem. He quotes R' Levi ben Chaviv who explains that since one may not interrupt during these sections, the two *brachos* are considered one group.

The Gr"a (51) explains that according to the Rambam and the Rosh, the *Gemora's* example of *boneh yerushalayim* is teaching that even that *brachah*, which is not the end of all the *brachos* of *Birchas Hamazon*, is considered the end of a unit, since the next *brachah* is Rabbinic.

The Shulchan Aruch (215:1) rules like the Rosh, saying that one may answer 'Amen' after *yishtabach*.

The Rama says that the prevalent custom is not to answer after any *brachah* aside from *boneh yerushalayim*.

The *Gemora* says that Abaye would answer 'Amen' on *boneh yerushalayim* loudly, to alert the workers to return to their work, while Rav Ashi would answer it quietly, lest people treat the fourth *brachah* lightly.

Tosfos (45b Rav Ashi) cites the Behag, who rules like Rav Ashi.

Tosfos adds that nowadays that we have no workers returning to work, we need not say it loudly.

The Shulchan Aruch (188:2) rules like Rav Ashi. The Rama says that the custom is not to say it quietly. He explains that only when one is saying *Birchas Hamazon* himself must he say it quietly, but if he is saying it with others, who themselves will answer, he may answer, without taking away from the importance of the next *brachah*.

The Rama in *Darkei Moshe* (188:2) and the Bach also say that we are only concerned with people taking the next *brachah* lightly when workers are returning to work after *boneh yerushalayim*. Since that doesn't occur nowadays, we may answer it normally.

The Custom to Whisper the Berachah, "Ga'al Yisrael."

By: Meoros HaDaf HaYomi

The *Gemora* states that one should generally not answer 'Amen' after his own *berachah*. The one exception cited is the *berachah* of *Boneh Yerushalayim* in *Birchas Hamazon*. Since this is the last of the three *berachos* of *Birchas Hamazon* that are *midoraysa*, we say 'Amen' to mark their conclusion. Rashi adds that one should also answer 'Amen' to his own *berachah* at the end of any series of *berachos*, such as *hashkiveinu* in *ma'ariv*, which concludes the *berachos* of the evening *Shema*. This is the accepted custom among many Sephardic communities (Ruling of Rif, Rambam and Shulchan Aruch, O.C. 215:1).

Other *Rishonim* explained that one should only answer 'Amen' to his own *berachah* in *Birchas Hamazon*, in order to separate between the first three *berachos* that are *midoraysa*, and the fourth *berachah* which is *midrabanan*. This is the custom among Ashkenazim (See Remo, *ibid*). Based on this introduction, we can properly examine the issue of answering 'Amen' to the *berachah* of *Ga'al Yisrael*.

Does 'Amen' interrupt between Geulah and Tefillah? It is forbidden to interrupt between the *berachah* of *ga'al Yisrael*

and the beginning of *Shemoneh Esrei* (Berachos, 9b; Shulchan Aruch O.C. 66:8; 111:1). The issue therefore arises whether one may answer 'Amen' to *ga'al Yisrael*.

Some *Rishonim* hold that not only should one answer 'Amen' after the *chazan's berachah* of *ga'al Yisrael*, a person should answer 'Amen' after his own *berachah* as well, as it closes the series of *birchos kerias shema* of *shacharis*. This is not considered an interruption, because it is a part of the tefillah (Rashi; Rosh 10 citing the Rach; Tur O.C. 66).

Others hold that one should not answer 'Amen' after his own *berachah* of *ga'al Yisrael* (Beis Yosef, *ibid.*, citing Rambam). Since it is the only *berachah* after the morning *shema*, it is not considered the conclusion of a series of *berachos* [Although there are two *berachos* before *kerias shema*, this opinion does not consider the *berachos* before and after *Shema* to be part of the same series]. Nevertheless, one should answer 'Amen' to the *chazan's ga'al Yisrael* (Remo, *ibid.*, *seif* 7) and this is not considered an interruption, for the reason stated above.

A third opinion holds that answering 'Amen' to *ga'al Yisrael* is an interruption between *Geulah* and *Tefillah*. Therefore one should neither answer 'Amen' to his own *berachah* nor to the *chazan's* (Beis Yosef citing the Zohar; Shulchan Aruch, *ibid.*).

Whispering *ga'al Yisrael*: Many communities have the custom to conclude the *berachah* of *ga'al Yisrael* by whispering the final two words. Others whisper the entire conclusion of the *berachah* from *Tzur Yisrael*. (See Chasan Sofer, *Avodas HaYom: Sha'ar HaTefillah* §10; Darkei Chaim v'Shalom, *Seder HaTefillah* os 44; Eishel Avraham Butchach, 66) This custom arose in order to circumvent the issue of answering 'Amen' to *ga'al Yisrael*. Since the *chazan* does not say *ga'al Yisrael* aloud, there is no need to answer 'Amen' to his *berachah* (See *Mishna Berurah*, *ibid.* 35, two further suggestions).

Concern for the honor of the *berachah*: Contemporary poskim question the appropriateness of this custom. Rav Vosner *shlita* writes that when a person begins a *berachah* aloud and concludes it in a whisper, he blemishes the honor of the *berachah*. It could even sound as if he said Hashem's Name in vain, if the *chazan* concludes *baruch atah Hashem...* (Kovetz M'Beis HaLevi, v. 6, p. 24). Rav Chaim Kanievsky *shlita* rejects this complaint; he says the accepted custom is to end the

berachah quietly, therefore it is obvious to anyone listening that this is what the *chazan* has done (Iyunei Halachos, p. 283). In *Teshuvos VeHanhagos*, (I, 105) Rav Moshe Shternbuch *shlita* points out that there may be congregants present in the *shul* who are not praying with the *chazzan*, and quietly saying *ga'al Yisrael* deprives them of the opportunity to answer 'Amen'.

Why should 'Amen' not be answered to a whispered *berachah*? Rav Binyamin Zilber *shlita* writes (Beis Baruch, 20:56) that reciting *ga'al Yisrael* quietly does not circumvent the problem of answering 'Amen'. A person who knows that another is reciting a *berachah* must answer 'Amen', whether he hears the *berachah* or not. Since the *tzibur* knows that the *chazan* is now concluding *ga'al Yisrael*, they must answer 'Amen' (if not for the issue of interrupting between *Geulah* and *Tefillah*). Rav Chaim Kanievsky counters this argument: maybe the *chazan* whispered the conclusion of the *berachah* slowly, with great *kavanah*... After all, the purpose of his saying it quietly is so they need not answer 'Amen'.

The custom of Lithuanian Jewry: Rav Michel Feinstein *zt"l* testified that the custom in the shuls of Lithuania, and of many yeshivos, among the Litvishe and Chassidishe alike, was to whisper the conclusion of *ga'al Yisrael*. (Iyunei Halachos, p. 281)