**YESHIVAT HAR ETZION**

**ISRAEL KOSCHITZKY VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH (VBM)**

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**LIFECYCLES – HILKHOT ISHUT**

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**Shiur #26: Laws of the Wedding**

**The *Sheva Berakhot* (3)**

**Introduction**

In the [previous shiur](http://etzion.org.il/en/shiur-25-laws-wedding-sheva-berakhot-2), we discussed numerous aspects of the *sheva berakhot* recited at the festive meals held for seven days after the wedding.

We noted that a number of Talmudic sources (*Ketubot* 7a; *Sukka* 25b; see Tosafot, ad loc., s.v. *ein*) imply that even during the *shivat yemei mishteh*, the *birkat chatanim* should only be recited at the place of the *chuppa*. The custom of Ashkenzic communities is to follow the authorities who maintain that wherever the couple celebrates is considered to be the *beit chatanim*, and the *sheva berakhot* may be recited there (Rosh ibid. according to Taz 62:7, see also *Beit Shmuel* 62:13; *Kenesset Gedola* 62:27).

We also noted that the Rosh writes that it is clear that the seven days of *sheva berakhot* should not begin from the time of the *kiddushin*, but rather from the time that the first *sheva berakhot* are first recited (*Teshuvot* 26:2; *Chelkat Mechokek* 62:7 explains that this refers to when the *sheva berakhot* recited under the *chuppa* are recited). The position is cited by the Rema (EH 62:6). Although some *Acharonim* cite a view that maintains that the *sheva berakhot* may be recited for seven complete days (i.e. *mei-et le-et*) from the time of the *chuppa*, the *halakha* is in accordance with those who maintain that seven calendaric days are counted.

The *Acharonim* (see *Pitchei Teshuva*, EH 62:8) also question a how many members of the *minyan* must actually eat in order to be able to recite the *sheva berakhot*. The Ben Ish Chai (*Parashat Shoftim*) writes that the *sheva berkahot* are only recited if the *zimun* is said “*be-Shem*” (i.e. with the name of God), which is only done when at least seven participants, the majority of the *minyan*, ate bread. Some *Acharonim* (including R. Shlomo Kluger, *Ha-Elef* *Lekha Shelomo*, OC 93, and the *Minchat Pitim*, EH 62) suggest that the *sheva berakhot* may be recited even if only three or four of the participants ate bread, as long as a majority of the quorum ate other foods. A number of *Acharonim* suggest that due to the principle of *safek berakhot* *le-hakel*, it is best if the *sheva berakhot* are recited only if at least seven members of the quorum ate bread and at least three others ate other foods. This seems to be the common practice (see *Nisuin* *Ke-Hilkhata* 14:41).

Some *Acharonim* (see *Tzitz Eliezer* 13:99, citing *Ha-Elef* *Lekha* *Shelomo* 93; R. Ovadia Yosef, *Yabi’a Omer*, EH 6:9, etc.) write that if the *chatan* and *kalla* do not eat bread, the *sheva berakhot* should not be recited at all. The *Sova Semachot* (1:100) disagrees and rules that even if the *chatan* did not eat, the *sheva berakhot* are recited.

May one who has not eaten bread say the *sheva berakhot*? Some *Acharonim* (see *Zekhor* *Le-Avraham* 2:2; *Yaskil Avdi* 8:20:28; see also *Rivevot* *Ephraim* 4:267) rule that even one who did not eat can say the *sheva berakhot*. This was apparently the custom of Brisk. Some maintain, however, that only one who ate bread should say the *sheva berakhot* (*China Ve-Chisda*, *Ketubot* 1:112; *Cheshev Ha-Efod* 1:9; *Yabi’a Omer*, EH 3:11:7). Others maintain that even one who ate foods other than bread at the meal may say the *sheva berakhot*.

Finally, we discussed whetherevery person who participates in the festive wedding meal must stay until the end of the meal and hear the *sheva berakhot*. R. Yonatan Shteif (1877-1958) (*She’elot U-Teshuvot Mahari Shteif* 7) explains that while there is an obligation to say the *sheva berakhot* in each place that a festive meal is held in honor of the *chatan* and *kalla*, there is no individual obligation upon each and every guest to stay and to hear the *sheva berakhot*. R. Eliezer Waldenberg (*Tzitz Eliezer* 11:84) disagrees with R. Shteif and maintains that each and every participant of the *se’uda* much hear the *sheva berakhot*. Therefore, *Acharonim* search for other reasons to exempt the guests at a festive wedding meal from hearing the *sheva berakhot*. R. Shlomo Kluger (*Ha-Elef Lekha Shlomo*, EH 107), for example, insists that the obligation of *sheva berakhot* is only created when *birkat ha-mazon* is recited, at the end of the meal. Therefore, one who leaves a festive meal early never became obligated in the communal recitation of the *sheva berakhot*. R. Moshe Feinstein (OC 1:56) suggests that if a person refrains from eating bread or has in mind when he begins the meal not to become obligated in a *zimun,* he would not be obligated in the *sheva berakhot*.

This week we will discuss the relationship between the *sheva berakhot*, the festive meal, and the *zimun* in greater depth.

**The Relationship Between *Sheva Berakhot* and *Birkat Ha-Mazon***

Although it is customary to recite the *sheva berakhot* after the *Birkat Ha-Mazon* at the festive meals during the seven festive days following a wedding, the *Rishonim* debate whether the *sheva berakhot* are inherently connected to the meal.

On the one hand, the *mishna* in *Masekhet Soferim* (19:11) relates that “it was customary to recite the *Birkat Chatanim* and *Birkat Aveilim* upon a cup [of wine] in the morning, and with *panim chadashot* all seven days, and in the evening before the meal.” This *mishna* implies that the *Birkat Chatanim* are said before the meal – that is, that they are not inherently connected to the meal. The Vilna Gaon, in his comments to *Masekhet Soferim*, amends the text to read “after the meal.” The Rosh (*Ketubot* 1:13) relates that “there are some places where on Shabbat, after the conclusion of the prayers, the community escorts the *chatan* to his house and they recite the *sheva berakhot*.” He records that R. Hai Gaon disapproved of this practice but did not prohibit it.

On the other hand, the Talmud (*Ketubot* 8a) implies that the *Sheva berakhot* are only recited at the meal. Rabbeinu Nissim accepts this view, which is cited by the Rosh (above) as well. Some interpret the Rambam (*Hilkhot Berakhot* 2:10) in this manner.

This question may have a number of ramifications.

**How Many Cups of Wine?**

The Talmud (*Pesachim* 102b-103a) teaches that one may not perform two *mitzvot* with the same object, the principle of “*ein* *osin mitzvot chavilot chavilot*” (one does not perform *mitzvot* in bundles). Accordingly, the *gemara* rules that one should not use to same cup of wine for *Birkat Ha-Mazon* and *Kiddush*:

R. Huna said that R. Sheshet said: One does not recite two sanctifications [i.e., for two *mitzvot* such as *Birkat Ha-Mazon* and *Kiddush*] over one cup. What is the reason for this? R. Nachman bar Yitzchak said: Because one does not perform *mitzvot* in bundles.

The *gemara* questions why a *beraita* teaches that one may use the same cup of wine for *Kiddush* and *Havdala* when Yom Tov falls out on Saturday night.

And does one not perform multiple *mitzvot* together? But there is the case of a Festival that occurs after Shabbat, when presumably one has enough wine. And nevertheless, Rav said that the proper order of the blessings is according to the acronym *yod*, *kuf*, *nun*, *heh* [the blessing over the wine [*yayin*], *Kiddush*, the blessing over the candle [*ner*], and *Havdala*.] This ruling shows that one recites *Kiddush* and *Havdala* over the same cup of wine.

The Talmud explains:

*Havdala* and *Kiddush* are one matter, as they both mark and draw attention to the sanctity of certain days. By contrast, *Birkat Ha-Mazon* and *Kiddush* are two entirely different matters. Therefore, one who recites both of them over the same cup of wine is combining two unrelated *mitzvot*, apparently so that he can be done with them as quickly as possible. Consequently, this practice is prohibited.

In other words, since *Kiddush* and *Havdala* are expressions of the same *mitzva*, they may be recited over the same cup of wine.

The *Rishonim* discuss whether the *sheva berakhot* should be recited on a different cup of wine than the *Birkat Ha-Mazon*. Tosafot (*Pesachim* 102b, s.v. *she-ein*) cites two opinions regarding this matter and relates that some are accustomed to say *Birkat Ha-Mazon* and *Sheva Berakhot* over different cups of wine. Similarly, the Ran (above) notes that *Masekhet Sofrim* states that one should use two separate cups, implying that the *sheva berakhot* are not necessarily related to the meal. Alternatively, Tosafot relates that Rabbeinu Meshulam would same them both over one cup, as “*Birkat* *Ha-Mazon* causes [i.e. generates the obligation of] *sheva berakhot*.” The Abudraham cites both customs and, similar to Rabbeinu Meshulam, he writes that “*Birkat Ha-Mazon* and the s*heva berakhot* come due to the meal.” A similar formulation is found in the Ritva (*Ketubot* 8a): “*Birkat Chatanim* comes after the meal, which causes it, and they are considered to be one matter (*ke-chada milta chashivei*).”

The Shulchan Arukh (EH 62:9) cites both practices, but relates that common practice is to use one cup of wine. The Rema (ibid.) also writes that it is customary to follow the opinion that requires two cups.

The *Minchat Yitzchak* (2:43) delineates the two approaches described above and asserts that common practice is to be concerned with both views. On the one hand, the *sheva berakhot* are only said after a meal, implying that they are part of the meal. On the other hand, it is customary to use two cups for *Birkat Ha-Mazon* and the *sheva berakhot*.

This may also relate to questions we discussed in previous *shiurim*. For example, discussed whether one may say the *sheva berakhot* on the seventh day after the wedding when the meal continues until the eighth day. Some suggest that one may say the *sheva berakhot* before dark, in the middle of the meal, as it is not at all clear that the *sheva berakhot* relate specifically to *Birkat Ha-mazon*. (We noted the custom is not to say the *sheva berakhot* in this case.)

In addition, this question may relate to whether it is necessary that at least ten participants of the meal eat bread, even though it is not necessary in order to say the *zimun* with *shem Hashem*. Similarly, this may also relate to another question we discussed last week – whether one may leave a festive meal before hearing the *sheva berakhot*.