**YESHIVAT HAR ETZION**

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

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**THE LAWS OF THE BERAKHOT**

**Rav David Brofsky**

**Shiur #76: Introduction to the *Shehechiyanu* Blessing (2)**

***Shehechiyanu* on a New Fruit**

**Introduction**

[Last week](http://etzion.org.il/en/shiur-75-introduction-shehechiyanu-blessing-shehechiyanu-upon-seeing-friend-1), we began our study of the laws of the blessing of *Shehechiyanu*. The rabbis instituted the blessing of *Shehechiyanu*, “Blessed are You… who has granted us life, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this occasion,” to be said on numerous occasions, such as on Festive days, upon fulfilling a *mitzva* that is only performed at fixed times (*shofar*, *lulav*, *matza*, and *ner Chanuka*), upon building (or purchasing) a new house or new *keilim* (clothing and utensils), upon seeing a friend, upon seeing a new fruit (*Eiruvin* 40b), and upon hearing good news (*Berakhot* 54a and 59b).

We noted that the *gemara* (*Eiruvin* 40b) distinguishes between different types of *Shehechiyanu*. The *Shehechiyanu* over new fruits is a *reshut*, optional, as opposed to when the blessing is said on Festivals, which is obligatory. While some *Rishonim* (Eshkol, *Birkot Hoda’ah*, p. 32b; see also Ritva, *Eiruvin* 40b) explain that the *gemara* does not mean that saying the blessing is optional, but rather that it is up to the person whether or not he will see a new fruit, others (Teshuvot Ha-Rashba 1:245; see also Magen Avraham 225:6, Mishna Berura 225:9, and Arukh Ha-Shulchan 225:5) explain that it is not obligatory to say the blessing at all.

Despite the fact that most *Posekim* conclude that the blessing is only a *reshut*, they clearly maintain that one should say the blessing (Mishna Berura, ibid.; see also Iggerot Moshe, OC 5;43:5). In fact, the Yerushalmi (*Kiddushin* 4), as explains by the Korban Ha-Edah, relates that R. Elazar would collect coins in order to purchase different types of new fruits in order to say the *Shehechiyanu* blessing.

This week, we will discuss saying *Shehechiyanu* upon seeing a new fruit.

***Shehechiyanu* Upon Seeing a New Fruit**

The *gemara* (Eiruvin 40b) teaches one may say the *Shehechiyanu* blessing on a new fruit, although it is only a “*reshut*” (optional):

When I later arrived at R. Yehuda, he stated: I recite the benediction of Shehechiyanu even over a new pumpkin. I told him: I do not ask whether it is permitted [to recite this benediction]. What I ask is whether its recitation is obligatory.

The *Rishonim* discuss a number of issues, including when the blessing is said and which fruits receive this blessing.

When should one say the *Shehechiyanu* blessing over a new fruit? Rashi (s.v. *akara*) explains that R. Yehuda declared that he would recite the blessing “when I SEE a new pumpkin, from year to year.” The Rambam (*Hilkhot* *Berakhot* 10:2) also writes that “a person who sees a fruit that grows only in a specific season each year should recite the blessing *Shehecheyanu* when he sees it for the first time.” Tosafot (s.v. *hatam*), however, writes that one says the blessing “when he eats it.” The Rosh (*Eiruvin* 3:10; see also Tur OC 225) writes that “it is customary to say the blessing upon eating the new fruit.”

The Shulchan Arukh (225:3) cites the Rambam and adds that one should say the blessing “even if he saw [the new fruit] in the hands of a friend or on the tree.” However, he concludes, “it is customary not to say the blessing until the moment of eating (*she’at akhila*).” The Rema adds that one who says the blessing when he sees the fruit “has not lost anything.” The Mishna Berura (11) explains that since one is usually only happy upon eating the fruit, the blessing should always be said “*be-she’at akhila*.”

Should one say the *Shehechiyanu* blessing before or after the *birkat ha-nehenin* associated with it? The Mishna Berura (11) cites the Peri Megadim, who rules that the *Shehecheyanu* blessing should be recited first. Since it is an “optional” blessing, if it is said between the *birkat ha-nehenin* and eating the fruit, it may be considered to be an interruption (*hefsek*). The Arukh Ha-Shulchan(225:5) concurs, and attests that he says the *Shehechiyanu* blessing first. The Radbaz (1:297), however, relates that “many times, I see a new fruit outside and I am unwilling to say the blessing, and furthermore, there is greater joy at the moment that one enjoys it.” He then concludes, “And therefore I include [the blessing] after the *birkat hana’ah*, as we see by [the blessing said before sitting in] the *sukka*.” This seems to be the custom (see Yechaveh Da’at 3:15).

What if one forgot to say *Shehechiyanu*? The Rema (225:3) rules in accordance with the Maharil (143) that one can say the blessing even “upon seeing [it] a second time.” The Radbaz (1:319), however, rules that one may only say the blessing the first time he sees or eats the fruit. The Magen Avraham (225:9), Mishna Berura (225:13), Arukh Ha-Shulchan (225:7), and others rule that in this case, one should not say the blessing. If one is still eating the fruit, he may still say the blessing.

**Over Which Fruits Does One Say *Shehechiyanu*?**

The Rambam (ibid.) writes that one says the *Shehechiyanu* blessing upon seeing “a fruit that grows only in a specific season each year.” The Shulchan Arukh (225:3) rules accordingly, implying that if a fruit grows during more than one season per year, the *Shehechiyanu* blessing is not said. The Rema, however, adds that one says *Shehechiyanu* over a “fruit which grows twice each year… and therefore one does not say *Shehechiyanu* over a new vegetable, which is in the field the entire year.”

The Mishna Berura (18) questions whether the Rema refers to vegetables which grow all year round – in which case it must be that we do not say the blessing over other vegetable in order not to become confused – or whether the Rema means that since vegetables (such as potatoes) are often stored and are therefore available all year, *Shehechiyanu* is not said. He concludes that over vegetables that are clearly fresh *Shehechiyanu* is said.

Nowadays, one does not say *Shehechiyanu* over vegetables which are available year round, such as lettuce, cucumbers, tomatoes, bananas, lemons, peppers, potatoes, carrots, apples, nuts and seeds, olives, mushrooms, etc. However, one should say the blessing before eating “important” fruits and vegetables that are not available all year, such as watermelon, avocado, summer fruits (peaches, plums, apricots, and mangos), grapes, berries, cherries, strawberries, and citrus fruits. In some countries, such as the United States, where more fruits are available all year round, it may be uncommon to say *Shehechiyanu* over a new fruit or vegetable.