**YESHIVAT HAR ETZION**

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

**THE LAWS OF THE BERAKHOT**

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***Shiur* #30:   
The Blessing Before Fruits and Vegetables (2)**

***Borei Peri Ha-Etz and Borei Peri Ha-Adama***

**Introduction**

Last week, we discussed the definition of “fruit” and “vegetables” regarding the blessings *Borei Peri Ha-Etz* and *Borei Peri Ha-Adama*. Regarding seeds, we noted that the *Rishonim* (Tosafot, *Berakhot* 36b, s.v. *kelipi*; Rashba, *Berakhot* 36b, s.v. *kelipi*) debate whether the principle expressed in the *mishna* that the laws of *orla* apply to the entire fruit, including the nuts and peels, applies to the laws of *berakhot* as well. The Shulchan Arukh (202:3) rules that one says the blessing *Borei Peri Ha-Etz* before eating sweet fruit seeds and *She-Hakol* before eating seeds improved by heat. Some (see Magen Avraham 202:7) suggest that one should say *Borei Peri Ha-Etz* before eating all seeds, whether or not they were improved by heat. The Mishna Berura (202:25) cites this debate, yet insists that we should adhere to the ruling of the Shulchan Arukh.

We concluded that one should say *Borei Peri Ha-Adama* before eating sunflower seeds, as the seeds are considered to be the “fruit.” In addition, one should say *Borei Peri Ha-Adama* before eating pumpkin and watermelon seeds, as they are grown for this purpose and the seeds are certainly considered to be the “fruit.”

Regarding peels, we noted three opinions concerning which blessing should be recited before eating sweetened orange peels (see Taz 204:15; Magen Avraham 202:17; and Peri Megadim, Eshel Avraham 202:17). The Mishna Berura (202:39) cites these views, and concludes that one should say *She-Hakol*.

We also briefly discusses the definition of a “fruit which grows from a tree,” and explained why is customary to say *Borei Peri Ha-Adama* before eating bananas, pineapples, papayas, and eggplants.

We also noted that some *Poskim* (see Mishna Berura 203:3) question whether one says *Borei Peri Ha-Etz* before eating the fruits of trees that are lower than three *tefachim* (about ten inches) from the ground. Cranberries, for example, grow very close to the ground, and it is therefore customary to say *Borei Peri Ha-Adama*.

Finally, we recalled that some *Acharonim* (Shevet Ha-Levi 1:205; Teshuvot Ve-Hanhagot 2:149) maintain that one should say *Borei Peri Ha-Adama* before eating vegetables grown above ground in water, while others (Yechave Da’at 6:12, Sefer Ve-Zot Ha-Berakha, Berurim 24) insist that one cannot say *Borei Peri Ha-Adama* or *Ha-Etz* on fruits that were grown in water.

This week, we will begin our discussion of fruits and vegetables which changed in form and shape.

**Crushed and Ground Fruits**

One of this most interesting and complicated questions regarding the blessings recited over fruits and vegetables relates to the form of the fruit. What *berakha* should one recite over fruit whose form has changed?

The Talmud (*Berakhot* 38a) teaches:

The law is that over dates which have been used to make into *trimma*, we say the blessing *Borei Peri Ha-Etz*. What is the reason? They are still in their natural state.

The *gemara* asserts that one recites *Borei Peri Ha-Etz*, the usual blessing recited before eating dates, even when “they have been used to make into *trimma*,” because they “are still in their natural state” (*be-miltayhu kaymei ke-deme’ikarra*).

The Beit Yosef (202) notes that the *Rishonim* offer different interpretations of the term “*trimma*.” Rashi (s.v. *trimma*) explains that “anything which is crushed a bit and not completely ground.” Rashi implies that if the fruit was completely ground, the proper blessing would not be *Borei Peri Ha-Etz*, but rather *She-Hakol*. Similarly, the Ra’ah (s.v. *mai*) writes that “if the [dates] have been completely crushed until they have lost their original form, one recites over them *She-Hakol*.”

Based upon the view of Rashi, R. Yisrael Isserlein (1390–1460) rules in his Terumat Ha-Deshen (1:29) that before eating jam made from cherries, one should say the blessing *She-Hakol*. Furthermore, he add that one who eats ground spices still says the blessing *Borei Peri Ha-Etz*, as that is the normal manner in which they are prepared (*orchayhu be-hakhi*). We will return to this point next week.

The Beit Yosef writes that the Rambam (Hilkhot Berakhot 8:4) disagrees, writing: “Nevertheless, when one crushes dates by hand, removes their pits, and makes them into a substance resembling a dough, one should recite the blessing *Borei Peri Ha-Etz*.” The Rambam implies that even if the date has completely lost its form, one still says *Borei Peri Ha-Etz*.

The Shulchan Arukh (202:7) rules in accordance with the Rambam. The Rema, however, writes:

According to this [position of the Rambam], so is true regarding *baltvern*, known as [*podvila*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Powidl) (a type of prune jam), that one says before [eating] it *Borei Peri Ha-Etz*. And some say that one should say *She-Hakol*. It is good to say the blessing of *She-Hakol*; however, if he said *Borei Peri Ha-Etz* he has fulfilled his obligation. And this seems to be true.

The *Acharonim* debate whether the Rema rejects the Rambam’s position completely or only regarding jam, which has been cooked and crushed until it is no longer recognizable. The Magen Avraham (202:18) writes that the Rema agrees with that even if the fruit is significantly crushed, one still says *Borei Peri* *Ha-Etz*. The Gra (Be’ur Ha-Gra 202:7) assumes that the Rema rules in accordance with Rashi.

The Mishna Berura (Be’ur Halakha, s.v. *temarim*, Mishna Berura 202:42) writes that the conclusion of the *Acharonim* is that whenever the original fruit is still noticeable, one says *Borei Peri Ha-Etz*. If the food is so completely changed that the original product is not recognizable, only then does one say *She-Hakol*.

Interestingly, R. Yoel Sirkis (1561-1640), in his commentary to the Tur, the Bayit Chadash (Bach 202), disagrees with the Shulchan Arukh and the Rema. He explains that while on date honey one says *She-Hakol*, as it is to be considered “*zei’ah be-alma*,” fruit that has been crushed and is not recognizable is still similar enough to the original fruit that one should say the more general blessing, *Borei Peri Ha-Adama*. When a vegetable is crushed in a similar matter, it also loses its status and is lowered to the blessing of *She-Hakol*. R. Soloveitchik (see Torat Imecha, v. 2 pg. 79; see also [here](http://www.etzion.org.il/vbm/update_views.php?num=9166&file=/vbm/archive/17-nehenin/20nehenin.doc)) explained, slightly differently than the Bach, that when fruit has been crushed, it loses its status as a “fruit” but is still deserving of the blessing *Borei Peri Ha-Adama*. However, even after being crushed, one still says *Borei Peri Ha-Adama* before eating a crushed vegetable.

Incidentally, R. Ovadia Yosef (Yabi’a Omer 7:29) rules like the Rambam. Accordingly, no matter how crushed a fruit may be, the proper blessing is *Borei* *Peri Ha-Etz*. Other Sephardic authorities (Kaf Ha-Chaim 202:57; Rav Po’alim 2:28) rule in accordance with the Rema.

Based on these sources, the proper blessing recited over mashed avocado or eggplants which are baked and then mixed with mayonnaise, as well as potato latkes and kugel in which the pieces of potato are noticeable, is *Borei Peri Ha-Adama*. However, before eating potato kugel prepared from finely ground potatoes, as well as smooth apple sauce, baby food, tomato paste, halva and techina, one should recite the blessing of *She-Hakol*.

The *Acharonim* discuss the appropriate blessing to be said before eating potato flour that is reconstituted and made into mashed potatoes or potato chips (Pringles). They ask whether the vegetable’s change in form removes it from the category of vegetables and is therefore sufficient in order to change its *berakha* or whether the change in form is not significant enough to indicate that the fruit has lost its identity.

On the one hand, since the potato flour is no longer similar in appearance to a real potato, the blessing should be *She-Hakol*. This is indeed the ruling of many *Poskim*. Some, however, suggest that since the similarity to potatoes is eventually restored, one should say *Borei Peri Ha-Adama* (see R. Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, as cites in Ve-Ten Berakha, p. 402).

Next week we will discuss fruits that are cooked, as well as fruit juice and fruit soup.