**YESHIVAT HAR ETZION**

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

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**THE LAWS OF THE BERAKHOT**

**Rav David Brofsky**

**Shiur #80: The *Shehechiyanu* and *Ha-Tov Ve-Hameitiv* Blessings (4)**

**New House and Vessels (2)**

**Introduction**

In previous *shiurim*, we noted that 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 Festivals, 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).

In the last *shiur*, we discussed the nature of the *Shehechiyanu* and *Ha-Tov Ve-Hameitiv* blessings said upon building a new house and purchasing new vessels. This week, we will discuss when these blessings are said, and we will discuss numerous practical scenarios.

**When is *Shehechiyanu* Said?**

The *mishna* (*Berakhot* 54a) teaches that “when one built a new house or purchased new vessels, he recites: Blessed…Who has given us life, sustained us, and brought us to this time.” In accordance with the language of the *mishna*, the Shulchan Arukh (223:3) rules that one should say the blessing when one purchases these items, as one “rejoices” upon purchasing these items. In fact, as mentioned last week, the Shulchan Arukh rules that upon purchasing clothing, one says *Shehechiyanu*, and then upon wearing them, he says the *Malbish Arumim* blessing.

The *Acharonim* (see, for example, Ma’amer Mordekhai 223:5) note that just as it is customary to say the *Shehechiyanu* blessing upon eating a new fruit, and not upon seeing it (225:3), it is customary to say the blessing upon wearing the clothing for the first time or using the vessel or appliance for the first time, and not upon purchasing them. That is the time at which one is happiest. R. Akiva Eiger (223:3) points out that this is certainly true regarding vessels that require *tevilat keilim*, as they may not be used until they are immersed.

Many *Acharonim* maintain that although one can say the *Birkat Ha-Ilanot* even after already seeing the new blossoms (225:3) and some rule that one can say the *Shehechiyanu* blessing even the second or third time one eats the fruit (Maharil 143; see Mishna Berura 225:13 who disagrees), some rule that one who did not say *Shehechiyanu* upon wearing the new clothing the first time should not say *Shehechiyanu* afterwards (see Piskei Teshuvot 223:7). Others suggest that as long as one still feels happy that he is wearing a new article of clothing, he may say the blessing. The Mishna Berura (223:15), for example, writes that “one should be careful to say the blessing immediately, before one is always used to it and the sense of joy is no longer present.” (See also Halikhot Shlomo 23:21.)

***Ha-Tov Ve-Hameitiv* for Appliances and Clothes**

In the previous *shiur*, we noted that although the *Rishonim* disagree as to whether one says the *Shehechiaynu* blessing over “unimportant” items, the Shulchan Arukh rules that one should say the blessing if the purchase makes him happy. In addition, the Talmud (*Berakhot* 59b) teaches:

The gist of the matter is: For that which is exclusively his, he recites: Blessed…Who has given us life and sustained us; for that which belongs to him and to another in partnership, he recites: Who is good and does good.

The *gemara* teaches that at times, if the purchase is enjoyed by more than one person, the appropriate blessing is *Ha-Tov Ve-Hameitiv*.

What if one purchases appliances that belong to the entire family? For example, one purchases furniture, kitchen appliances, or a heater or air conditioner for the entire family to use. In that case, both the husband and his wife say *Ha-Tov Ve-Hameitiv*. If one spouse is the primary owner and the other may at times use the object, such as a car, then the primary owner says *Ha-Tov Ve-Hameitiv*.

Interestingly, the Mishna Berura (223:19) cites the Bach, who rules that parents say the blessing *Ha-Tov Ve-Hameitiv* when purchasing clothing for their children, as the parents are also honored by their children’s attire. The child should also say the *Shehechiyanu* blessing.

***Shehechiyanu* over Shoes**

Last week, we noted that the *Rishonim* disagree as to whether the *Shehechiyanu* blessing is only recited over “important” purchases. In that context, Tosafot (Tosafot 59b, s.v. *ve-rebbe*) cites the Ri, who explains that “over garments which are not important, such as shoes and socks and a “*chaluk*” (undergarments), and other such garments, one does not say the blessing.” The Shulchan Arukh (223:6) records this view. The Arukh Ha-Shulchan (223:8) adds that since people buy shoes often, there is no sense of “*chiddush*” when purchasing them. The Rema (ibid.) cites R. Yaakov Weil (Mahari Veil 37), who adds that although it is customary to “bless others” when they wear a new article of clothing with the words “*tibaleh ve-titchadesh*” (it should be used well and you should receive a new one), this “blessing” it not said for shoes, because it is inappropriate to wish that one should speedily receive new shoes, which entails killing another animal, and the verse tells us that “[God] is merciful unto all of his creations.” He notes that his is a somewhat “weak” reason, although it is still customary not to say “*tibaleh* *ve-titchadesh*” upon wearing new shoes.

Some *Acharonim* note that although this reasoning may apply to saying “*tibaleh ve-titchadesh*,” there seems to be no inherent objection to saying *Shehechiyanu* over leather. Therefore, it seems that nowadays, when shoes, especially dress shoes, are a purchase that brings much happiness, one should say *Shehechiyanu* (see Ve-Zot Ha-Berakha, p. 168, in the name of “*echad mi-gedolei ha-dor*,” and see Harchavot L’Peninei Halakha, p. 280). Many authorities still maintain that it is customary not to say *Shehechiyanu* over shoes (see Halikhot Shlomo 23:15).

**A New House and Renovations**

The *mishna* cited above teaches that upon building a new house, one says the *Shehechiyanu* blessing. Furthermore, as we discussed last week, while a person living alone says *Shehechiyanu*, one who shares the house with others says *Ha-Tov Ve-Hameitiv*. The *Shehechiyanu* blessing is not said when renting a house.

It is customary to say the blessing upon moving into the house. Some say the blessing upon affixing a *mezuzah* (see R. Akiva Eiger 223:3, who notes that one is not permitted to live in the house until he affixes a *mezuza*). One may say the blessing as long as one is still happy over moving into the new house (Halikhot Shlomo 23:13). Although some suggest that one who borrowed money in order to purchase the buy does not say *Shehechiyanu*, as one’s happiness is reduced (see Kaf Ha-Chaim 223:18), others insist that since the house is legally his, it is appropriate to say the blessing (Tzitz Eliezer 12:19).

Does one say *Shehechiyanu* or *Ha-Tov Ve-Hameitiv* over house renovations? The Mishna Berura (223:12) writes that if one’s house burns down and is rebuilt he should say the blessing, but there is a debate regarding whether one should say the blessing if he destroyed part of the house and rebuilt it. He adds that if one adds an entire new floor, then certainly he should say the blessing.

R. Avraham Einhorn (Birkat Ha-Bayit 23:33) writes that one should say the blessing over a house meant for living (*beit dirah*), but if one builds a barn, a threshing floor, or a storage room for wood, the blessing is not said. It would seem, according to the Birkat Ha-Bayit, that one would not say *Shehechiyanu* over a storage facility. However, if one uses the storage room for recreation, one may say *Shehechiyanu* (Harchavot L’Peninei Halakha, p. 286).

The Birkat Ha-Bayit (24:34) also rules that when a community jointly builds a building, a representative of the community should publicly recite *Ha-Tov Ve-Hameitiv*.

***Sifrei Kodesh***

The Magen Avraham (223:5; see Machazik Berakha 223:3) writes that one says the *Shehechiyanu* blessing “only over vessels, as they are not an inherent *mitzva*, but [one should not say the blessing] over new *sefarim*, as ‘one is not intended to benefit from the *mtizvot.’*” Other authorities disagree and rule that one should say *Shehechiyanu* upon receiving or purchasing *sifrei kodesh* (see Radbaz 3:412; see also R. Kook, Orach Mishpat 47; Chazon Ovadia, p. 398; Halikhot Shlomo 23:17).

**Gifts and Inheritances**

The Talmud (*Berakhot* 59b) teaches that when one receives an inheritance, one says the *Shehechiyanu* blessing, and if it is shared with others, one says *Ha-Tov Ve-Hameitiv*.

Come and hear a contradiction from what was taught in a *baraita*: One whose father died and he is his heir, he initially recites: Blessed…the true Judge, upon hearing of his father’s death, and ultimately, upon receiving his inheritance, he recites: Blessed…Who is good and does good. Despite the fact that the son alone benefits, he nevertheless recites: Who is good and does good. The *gemara* responds: There, too, it refers to a case where he has brothers who inherit along with him.

This blessing is in addition to the blessing of *Dayan Ha-Emet*, which is said upon hearing of the death of a relative.

The Gesher Ha-Chaim (18:2:3) insists that this blessing is said after the burial, when the mourner is no longer an *onen*, who is exempt from *mitzvot*. Some *Acharonim* (see Halikhot Shlomo 23, ftnt. 33) disagree and note that the blessing of *Dayan Ha-Emet* is also said while the mourner is observing *aninut*.

Some *Acharonim* relate that is it not customary to say this blessing, as it is viewed as disrespectful to say a blessing over the inheritance that one will receive while still mourning for the death of the relative. Others suggest that the blessing should only be said if the parent died at an old age (see Piskei Teshuvot 223:2). Others note that since the inheritance is often received months after the death, it would no longer be viewed as insensitive to say the blessing upon receiving the inheritance.

In addition to receiving an inheritance, if one receives or wins a significant amount of money, one should say *Shehechiyanu*. This, of course, would depend upon the age and financial situation of the recipient.

Next week we will discuss one who says the *Shehchiyanu* blessing upon hearing good tidings and other joyful occasions.