



לע"נ ברוך בענדיט וברכה גרוס ע"ה
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The Hakuk Edition English Topics on the Daf

Dedicated l'refuah sheleima for Yaakov ben Victoria

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Yevamos Daf 101

Blessings on Yibum and Chalitza

Let's begin the new Perek with a basic exploration of mitzvas chalitza: Is a beracha made when doing chalitza?

The Rashba penned a teshuva outlining guidelines as to when a blessing is made over certain mitzvos and events (Siman 18). Regarding yibum and chalitza, he says that no beracha is made, since their basis is the mitzvah of peru urevu, which does not apply to women.

This explanation leaves us wanting, because the man does have this mitzvah. So at least he should make a beracha? Shu"t Shoel Umeishiv (III Volume 2:150) asks this question and adds several more problems. Even though the yevama may not technically have the mitzvah, by collaborating with the yavam, she is also part of it. Anyway, who says that the only reason for yibum is peru urevu? The very fact that chalitza is a solution seems to show that procreation is not the only goal – no peru urevu is accomplished there! And there may be many more aspects to it which might be relevant to her; we can't pasken based on our understanding of taamei hamitzvos?

Another Rishon, R"i ben Palat, offers that one doesn't make a beracha on chalitza since the main mitzvah is supposed to be yibum. Chalitza is the secondary option to deal with her zikah, so is considered like a mitzvah haboh b'aveira!

We learnt about this idea on daf 39b, that originally and essentially, yibum takes precedence over chalitza. As the Sefer Hachinuch elaborates, when the yevama bears a child with her yavam, it evokes great benefit for the deceased, so much so that the merits accrued by the child are attributed also to him. To be sure, chalitza is not actually an aveira, but in the context of berachos, this is sufficient reasoning to preclude it.

Linking this to periah v'riviah implies that the yovom would make a beracha on yibum, though. It does not have the drawback of chalitza, and the man is commanded in peru urevu. The Tur indeed rules this way, and the Rema cites it (E.H. 166).

Returning to chalitza, one more reason to not bless is that it's a mitzvah dependent on others. The Rashba

mentions this idea to explain certain other mitzvos like giving tzedaka, and the Raavad (Tamim Dea'im 179) applies it to chalitza as well.

So, all agree that no beracha is made when performing chalitza, even though it is a mitzvah from the Torah.

However, there's a fascinating beracha that the dayanim say when facilitating a chalitza. The Shulchan Aruch writes that he found the nusach of a beracha, "Who sanctified us with His mitzvos and commanded us with mitzvos and statutes of Avraham Avinu." What does chalitza have to do with Avraham? He explains that in the merit of Avraham's insistence to the king of Sedom that he would not accept "even a shoestring from him," we were given mitzvas chalitza. We merited a mitzvah done with shoestrings. Nonetheless, he cautions to say it without Hashem's Name (Seder Chalitza B'ketzara 57).

The Gr"a (ibid) points out the Chazal that that one blesses when doing a mitzvah, and comments that this beracha is analogous to the one uttered by the mesader kiddushin at a wedding. Still, since it's not sourced in the Gemara, we refrain from saying Hashem's Name.

When is this beracha made? In L'horos Nosson (E.H. 119) he notes that in Seder Chalitza printed in the Shulchan Aruch, it is listed after the chalitza. (So too, when the Tur cites the beracha on yibum, he says that any mitzvah which involves other people is not made before doing it, since maybe the other party will

not cooperate and the beracha will be l'vatoloh. Similarly, a beracha made on chalitza ought to be made afterwards.)

He asks, however, that the Gr"a classifies this with all other birchos hamitzvos. Usually the beracha over a mitzvah is made beforehand? Additionally, the Gr"a compares this to birchas eirusin, which we hold is made prior to the chosson giving the kallah the ring. We are not concerned that she might back out at the last second. (And the Beis Shmuel assumes that according to psak halacha, the beracha on yibum should be the same.) Why isn't the beracha on chalitza not beforehand as well?

He strengthens his position with a clear difference between chalitza and kiddushin, which is subject to a machlokes Rishonim if the beracha is made before or after. The beracha at a wedding is the chosson's, as is evident in the text ("Who forbade to us arusus and permitted nesuos through chupah and kiddushin"). Therefore, some authorities rule that it should be made afterwards, for fear that she might refuse, since anyway it would not be her beracha l'vatoloh. But by chalitza, both of them perform the mitzvah together and thus the beracha would be is relevant equally to both yavam and yevama. The Rav makes the beracha in their place, and we are not concerned someone would back out after making a beracha on a mitzvah!

The L'horos Nosson concludes that the nature of this blessing is not a birchas hamitzvah as the Gr"a says, but a birchas hashevach, a blessing of praise to

Hashem who sanctifies us with His mitzvos. He notes that usually a beracha over a mitzvah is formulated with an active verb describing the mitzvah at hand. "Who sanctified us with His mitzvos and commanded us to put on tefillin." Here it reads, "Who commanded us with the mitzvos." It is an expression of praise to Hashem, and birchos hashevach are recited after the event! This explains why the beracha for chalitzah is made afterwards.