

Max and Yetty Monderer A"H

**עָלִית ALIT**

**Virtual Summer Beit Midrash**

- *Tanach* • *Halacha*
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## “PHENOMENAL” BERACHOT

### *Part III Birkat Shehechyanu*

**Introduction: The Uniqueness of *Shehechyanu* and the *Birkot Ha-Shevach***

**תלמוד בבלי עירובין דף מ ע"ב**

מאי הוי עלה? שדרויה רבנן לרב יימר סבא קמיה דרב חסדא במעלי יומא דריש שתא, אמרו ליה: זיל חזי היכי עביד עובדא, תא אימא לן. כי חזייה אמר ליה: דליוה לרטיבה רפסא ליה בדוכתיה. אייתו ליה פסא דחמרא, קדיש ואמר זמן.

The Gemara asks: What conclusion was reached about this matter? Must one recite the blessing: Who has given us life, on Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur? The Sages sent Rav Yeimar the Elder before Rav Hisda on the eve of Rosh HaShana. They said to him: Go, see how he acts in this regard and then come and tell us. When Rav Hisda saw Rav Yeimar, he said to him in the words of a folk saying: One who picks up a moist log, which is not fit for firewood, must want to do something on the spot. In other words, you certainly have come to me with some purpose in mind, and not just for a visit. They brought him a cup of wine, and he recited kiddush and the blessing for time.

והלכתא: אומר זמן בראש השנה ויום הכפורים. והלכתא: זמן — אומר אפילו בשוק.

The Gemara concludes: The halakha is that one recites the blessing for time on Rosh HaShana and on Yom Kippur, and the halakha is that one may recite the blessing for time even in the market, as it does not require a cup of wine.

**Berachot 54a, 59b:**

The blessing should be said on Festive days and upon fulfilling a *mitzva* that is only performed at fixed times (*shofar, lulav, matza, and ner Chanuka*). The Talmud further teaches that one should say the blessing of *Shehechyanu* upon building (or purchasing) a new house or new *keilim* (clothing and utensils), upon seeing a friend, seeing a new fruit and upon hearing good news

**Eiruvין 40b** - distinguishes between different types of *Shehechyanu*:

Rabba further stated: When we were at R. Huna, we raised the question whether the blessing of *Shehechyanu* is to be recited on Rosh Ha-Shana and Yom Kippur. Must it be recited [we argued] because [these solemn days] occur only periodically,

or is it possible that it is not to be said since they are not described in Scripture as festivals? He was unable to give an answer. When I later arrived at R. Yehuda, he stated: I recite the benediction of *Shehechyanu* 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.

This passage teaches that *Shehechyanu* over new fruits is a *reshut*, optional, as opposed to when the blessing is said on Festivals, which is obligatory.

**Eshkol** (*Birkot Hoda'ah*, p. 32b; see also Ritva, *Eiruvim* 40b):

The *gemara* does not mean that saying the blessing is optional. Rather, it is up to the person whether or not he will see a new fruit. Others explain that it is not obligatory to say the blessing at all (Teshuvot Ha-Rashba 1:245; see also Magen Avraham 225:6, Mishna Berura 225:9 and Arukh Ha-Shulchan 225:5). Despite the fact that most *Posekim* understand 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). For example, there is a custom to refrain from eating new fruits between Shiva Asar Be-Tamuz and Tisha Be-Av (Shulchan Arukh 551:17) due to the concern that one will say the *Shehechyanu* blessing, despite the fact that it is a *reshut* to do so.

Furthermore, while the Rashba (*ibid.*) rules that all of the applications of *Shehechyanu* mentioned in the ninth chapter of *Berakhot* (except for recitation on a Festival and over *mitzvoth*) are optional, the Darkhei Moshe (OC 223:4) writes the one should act in accordance which the other authorities, who treat the other cases as obligations (with the exception of the blessing for a new fruit).

Assuming that the *Shehechyanu* blessing is fundamentally a *reshut* (except for on Festivals and over certain *mitzvoth*), does that teach us anything else about the blessing? The **Rivash** (505) asserts that since the *Shehechyanu* blessing is a *reshut*, the halakhic policy of being strict regarding saying unnecessary blessings (*berakha she-eina tzerikha*) does not apply.

#### **R. Yoel Sirkis, Bayit Chadash 29:**

In my humble opinion, it seems that we should distinguish between *Shehechyanu* and other blessings, as *Shehechyanu* [was established] upon the happiness of a person's heart. [Therefore,] one may say the blessing even if he is not definitively obligated to say the blessing, and he does not violate the prohibitions of taking God's name in vain.

Some *Acharonim* (Eliya Rabba 22:2, Peri Chadash 432; see also Tzitz Eliezer 13:20:5) concur. Other *Posekim*, however, imply that we are indeed concerned about saying the *Shehechyanu* blessing in vain (Rashba, *ibid.*; Mishna Berura 224:12 and Arukh Ha-Shulchan 225:7).

Finally, the *Acharonim* offer another distinction between the different scenarios at which one says *Shehechyanu*. Saying *Shehechyanu* on a Festival, upon fulfilling certain *mitzvoth*, or even upon seeing a new fruit is not necessarily related to one's personal sense of excitement or joy. However, the *Shehechyanu* said upon seeing a friend or purchasing new *keilim* appears to be an expression of one's inner feelings. Thus, not only are the blessings a *reshut*, in many cases, as we shall see, they are not said at all.

## *I Shehechyanu Upon Seeing a Friend*

### Brachot 58b:

R. Yehoshua ben Levi said: One who sees his friend after thirty days have passed since last seeing him recites, “Blessed...Who has given us life, sustained us and brought us to this time.” One who sees his friend after twelve months recites: “Blessed...Who revives the dead.” As Rav said: A dead person is only forgotten from the heart after twelve months have elapsed, as it is stated: “I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind; I am like a lost vessel” (*Tehillim* 31: 13).

Upon seeing a friend after thirty days, one says *Shehechyanu*, and after twelve months, one says *Barukh ... Mechaye Ha-Metim*.

*Is the blessing upon the idea of “renewal” or the simcha that results?*

Interestingly, a number *Rishonim* limit this blessing to a friend who he is genuinely happy to see (see Tosafot 58b, s.v. *ha-ro'eh*; Rabbeinu Yona 43b, s.v. *ha-ro'eh*, etc.).

**Rambam**, however, never mentions this condition (*Hilkhos Berakhot* 10:2), and simply quotes the *gemara*.

How is a “friend” defined for the purposes of this blessing?

Rashba (Teshuvot 4:76) was asked regarding a case in which one never actually met the other person, but rather corresponded with him. He asserts that the blessing was not instituted for “everyone that one benefits from seeing,” but rather upon seeing a person whom he was accustomed to spend time with (“*chavero ha-ragil etzlo*”). This view is cited by the Shulchan Arukh (225: 2).

Despite this explicit ruling, the *Acharonim* discuss other scenarios in which one may say the *Shehechyanu* blessing even without having met the person. For example, the Mishna Berura (225: 5) cites the Peri Megadim, who rules that if one was abroad and his wife gave birth in the interim, he should say *Shehechyanu* upon seeing his child for the first time. It is not clear whether *Shehechyanu* is appropriate in this case because he is truly happy to see his new child or because the case of a child who was just born is not comparable to that of a person who existed but who one had simply never met. Interestingly, the Mishna Berura (223: 2) also rules that upon the birth of a daughter, it is obvious (*pashut*) that one should say the *Shehechyanu* blessing, as this case is not worse than one who has not seen a friend for over thirty days. We will address this scenario on a different occasion.

**R. Tzvi Pesach Frank** (1874-1960) , Har Tzvi (1: 116):

When the Munkatcher Rebbe, R. Haim Elazar Spira (1868 –1937), first met R. Solomon Eliezer Alfandari (1820–1930), a few years before he passed away, he said the *Shehechyanu* blessing. R. Frank suggests that just as it is clear to us that a father who has never seen his child says the *Shehechyanu* blessing, R. Spira felt such joy when he met R. Alfandrari that even the Rashba would agree that a blessing is appropriate.

The *Acharonim* also discuss whether it is still fitting nowadays to recite a blessing upon seeing a friend whom he has not seen in thirty days, given that one may be in touch with friends through writing letters, email, and even social media. The Be'er Hetiv (225) cites R. Yirzchak Algiz (Halakhot Ketanot 1:220), who distinguished between the two

blessings for this case. If someone heard from his friend, he should not say *Mechaye Ha-Metim*, as the person “was not forgotten from the heart,” but he may say *Shehechyanu*, which was established upon “seeing his face.” As a result, nowadays it is indeed extremely uncommon to say the *Mechaye Ha-Metim* blessing. However, if a person is happy to see a friend, even one whom he had heard from, he may say the *Shehechyanu* blessing.

The Mishna Berura (225:2), however, cites a debate among the *Acharonim* regarding whether one should say the *Shehechyanu* blessing if one has received letters or has been informed about his friend’s welfare. He concludes that due to the principle of “*safeik berakhot le-hakel*,” one should refrain from saying the blessing. Some *Acharonim* disagree (see, for example, Yechaveh Da’at 4:17) and note that while being in touch with the person may affect one’s ability to say *Mechaye Ha-Metim* after twelve months, one certainly says *Shehechyanu* upon seeing a friend.

Some *Acharonim* report that it is no longer common to say the blessing upon seeing a friend. Some base this upon the Mishna Berura cited above, who questions whether one may say the blessing upon seeing a person with whom he has been in contact or about whom he has received news. R. Yosef Hahn (Frankfurt am Main, 1570-1637) writes in his Yosef Ometz (451) that nowadays, since people rarely have friendships that would lead to such an outburst of joy after not seeing someone for thirty days, the blessing is generally not recited. R. Eliezer Papo (1785–1828) writes in his Chesed La-Alafim (*Hilkhos Birkat Ha-Hoda’ot* 16) that while one should say the blessing upon seeing a really good friend that one has not seen in thirty days, one should refrain from saying the blessing when seeing others, as people often inappropriately used the blessing as a form of flattery.

R. Shlomo Auerbach (*Hilkhos Shlomo, Birkot Ha-Shevach Ve-HaRe’iyah* 12) records that it is not customary to say this blessing, as there is concern that the blessing is said only out of politeness or insincerity. However, upon seeing a very close friend or relative who has returned from a dangerous illness or situation, one should say the blessing. Others (Yechaveh Da’at, *ibid.*; see also Peninei Halakha, *Hilkhos Berakhot* 17:10) insist that one should not refrain from saying this blessing; rather, when one feels great joy upon seeing a friend or relative, he should say the blessing.

**R. Ovadia Yosef (Yechaveh Da’at, *ibid.*)** - discusses whether one should say the *Shehechyanu* blessing even when seeing someone on live television or upon speaking with a friend on the telephone after thirty days. He concludes that one should not say the blessing in these cases.

## **II Shehechyanu Upon Seeing a New Fruit**

*Eiruvim* 40b - one may say the *Shehechyanu* 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 Shehechyanu 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 *Shehechyanu* blessing over a new fruit?

**Rashi (s.v. *akara*)** - R. Yehuda declared that he would recite the blessing “when I SEE a new pumpkin, from year to year.”

**Rambam (*Hilkhot Berakhot* 10: 2)** : “a person who sees a fruit that *grows only in a specific season each year should recite the blessing Shehechyanu* when he sees it for the first time.”

**Tosafot (s.v. *hatam*)**, - one says the blessing “when he eats it.”

**Rosh (*Eiruv* 3:10; see also Tur OC 225)** - “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 *Shehechyanu* blessing before or after the *birkat ha-nehenin* associated with it?**

The **Mishna Berura (11)** cites the Peri Megadim, who rules that the *Shehechyanu* 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 *Shehechyanu* 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 *Shehechyanu*?

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 *Shehechyanu*?**

The Rambam (ibid.) writes that one says the *Shehechyanu* 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 *Shehechyanu* blessing is not said.

The Rema, however, adds that one says *Shehechyanu* over a “fruit which grows twice each year... and therefore one does not say *Shehechyanu* 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, *Shehechianu* is not said. He concludes that over vegetables that are clearly fresh *Shehechianu* is said.

Nowadays, one does not say *Shehechianu* 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 *Shehechianu* over a new fruit or vegetable.

### III The Nature of the *Shehechianu* Blessing on a New House and Vessels

The *mishna* (*Berakhot* 54a) teaches that “when one built a new house or purchases new vessels, he recites: Blessed...Who has given us life, sustained us, and brought us to this time.” The Talmud (59b–60a) cites three opinions on this matter. Is the *berakha* recited only by one who never owned these items, even by one who owned but never purchased them (i.e. he received them through an inheritance), or by any person each and every time he purchases these items. The majority of *Rishonim* rule that one says the blessing upon any purchase of a new vessel, regardless of whether one already owns a similar vessel or if one purchased a similar vessel in the past (see Rif 44a; Rambam, *Hilkhos Berakhot* 10: 1; *Rosh* 9: 16; see Rashba 50a, s.v. *lishna*, who disagrees).

#### תלמוד בבלי ברכות דף נט ע"ב-ס ע"א

תא שמע: שינוי יין אינו צריך לברך, שינוי מקום צריך לברך. ואמר רבי יוסף בר אבא אמר רבי יוחנן אף על פי שאמרו שינוי יין אינו צריך לברך, אבל אמר: "ברוך... הטוב והמטיב!" הנה נמי, דאיכא בני חבורה דשתו בהדיה.

The Gemara cites an additional challenge: Come and hear a contradiction based on what was taught in a baraita: In the case of a change in the type of wine during a meal, one need not recite the blessing: Who creates fruit of the vine, a second time. However, in the case of a change in place, one must recite a second blessing over the wine. And Rabbi Yosef bar Abba said that Rabbi Yoḥanan said: Although the Sages said that in the case of a change in the type of wine one need not recite a second blessing over the wine, he does recite: Blessed...Who is good and does good. The Gemara responds: There, too, it refers to a case where he is not alone, but where members of the group are drinking with him.

17

בנה בית חדש וקנה כלים חדשים וכו'. אמר רב הונא: לא שנו אלא שאין לו פיוצא ביה, אבל יש לו פיוצא ביה — אינו צריך לברך. ורבי יוחנן אמר: אפילו יש לו פיוצא ביה, צריך לברך.

We learned in the *mishna*: One who built a new house or purchased new vessels recites: Blessed...Who has given us life, sustained us and brought us to this time. With regard to this blessing, Rav Huna said: They only taught that one recites: Who has given us life, upon purchasing a new vessel when he does not already have something similar, i.e., something he inherited. However, if he already has something similar he need not recite a blessing, as it is not new to him. Rabbi Yoḥanan said: Even if one already has something similar that he inherited, he must recite a blessing because he never before purchased a vessel of that kind.

60a

1

מִכְּלָל דְּכִי קָנָה וְחִזַּר וְקָנָה, דְּבָרֵי הַכֹּל אֵין צָרִיךְ לְבָרֵךְ.

The Gemara deduces: This proves by inference that if he purchases a new object and then purchases a similar object, everyone agrees that he is not required to recite a blessing, as he has already recited a blessing over the purchase of that type of item.

2

וְאִיכָא דְאָמְרֵי: אָמַר רַב הוּנָא: לֹא שָׁנוּ אֶלָּא שְׁלֹא קָנָה וְחִזַּר וְקָנָה, אֲבָל קָנָה וְחִזַּר וְקָנָה — אֵין צָרִיךְ לְבָרֵךְ. וְרַבֵּי יוֹחָנָן אָמַר: אֲפִילוּ קָנָה חִזַּר וְקָנָה — צָרִיךְ לְבָרֵךְ. מִכְּלָל דְּכִי יֵשׁ לוֹ וְקָנָה — דְּבָרֵי הַכֹּל צָרִיךְ לְבָרֵךְ.

Some say a different version of this dispute: Rav Huna said: They only taught that one recites the blessing: Who has given us life, on a new vessel if he did not purchase that item in the past and purchased the item now, for the first time. However, if he purchased that item in the past and purchased the item again, he need not recite a blessing. And Rabbi Yohanan said: Even if one purchased that item in the past and purchased a similar item again, he must recite a blessing. This proves by inference that if one already has a vessel and then purchased similar vessels, everyone agrees that he must recite a blessing.

3

מֵיתִיבֵי: בְּנֵה בַּיִת חֲדָשׁ וְאֵין לוֹ פִּיּוּצָא בּוֹ, קָנָה כְּלִים חֲדָשִׁים וְאֵין לוֹ פִּיּוּצָא בָהֶם — צָרִיךְ לְבָרֵךְ. יֵשׁ לוֹ פִּיּוּצָא בָהֶם — אֵין צָרִיךְ לְבָרֵךְ, דְּבָרֵי רַבֵּי מֵאִיר. רַבֵּי יְהוּדָה אָמַר: בֵּין כֶּף וּבֵין כֶּף צָרִיךְ לְבָרֵךְ.

The Gemara raises an objection based on what was taught in a baraita: One who built a new house and does not already own a similar house, or purchased new vessels and does not already own similar vessels, must recite a blessing. However, if he already owns a similar one, he need not recite a blessing, this is the statement of Rabbi Meir. Rabbi Yehuda, on the other hand, says: In either case, he must recite a blessing.

4

בְּשִׁלְמָא לְלִישְׁנָא קָמָא — רַב הוּנָא כְּרַבֵּי מֵאִיר, וְרַבֵּי יוֹחָנָן כְּרַבֵּי יְהוּדָה. אֶלָּא לְלִישְׁנָא בְּתַרְא, בְּשִׁלְמָא רַב הוּנָא כְּרַבֵּי יְהוּדָה, אֶלָּא רַבֵּי יוֹחָנָן דְּאָמַר כְּמָאן? לֹא כְּרַבֵּי מֵאִיר וְלֹא כְּרַבֵּי יְהוּדָה!

The Gemara asks: Granted, according to the first version of the dispute between Rav Huna and Rabbi Yohanan, one could say that Rav Huna holds in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Meir, and that Rabbi Yohanan holds in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda. However, according to the latter version of the dispute, granted, Rav Huna holds in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda, but in accordance with whose opinion did Rabbi Yohanan state his opinion? His statement is neither in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Meir nor in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda.

5

אָמַר לָךְ רַבֵּי יוֹחָנָן: הוּא הֵדִין דְּלְרַבֵּי יְהוּדָה קָנָה וְחִזַּר וְקָנָה — נְמִי צָרִיךְ לְבָרֵךְ. וְהָא דְקָמָא מִפְּלִגֵּי בְּיֵשׁ לוֹ וְקָנָה, לְהוֹדִיעָךְ כְּחוֹ דְּרַבֵּי מֵאִיר דְּאֲפִילוּ קָנָה וְיֵשׁ לוֹ — אֵין צָרִיךְ לְבָרֵךְ, וְכָל שְׂכֹן קָנָה וְחִזַּר וְקָנָה דְּאֵין צָרִיךְ לְבָרֵךְ.

The Gemara responds: Rabbi Yohanan could have said to you: The same is true according to Rabbi Yehuda's opinion; in a case where one has purchased an item in the past and purchased a similar item again, he must recite a blessing. The fact that they only disagreed with regard to a case where he already owned similar vessels and he purchased new ones does not indicate that this is their only disagreement. The dispute was presented in this way to convey the far-reaching nature of Rabbi Meir's opinion; even in a case where one purchased an item while owning a similar item, he need not recite a blessing; all the more so in a case where he purchased an item and then purchased a similar item again, he need not recite a blessing.

וְלִפְלִגּוֹ בְּקָנָה וְחִזַּר וְקָנָה דְּאֵין צָרִיךְ לְבָרֵךְ, לְהוֹדִיעָךְ כְּחוֹ דְּרַבֵּי יְהוּדָה! כִּחַ דְּהִתִּירָא עֲדִיף לִיה.

The Gemara asks: And if that is the reason for presenting the dispute in this manner, let them disagree with regard to a case where one purchased an item in the past

and then purchased a similar item again, where according to Rabbi Meir one need not recite a blessing, in order to convey the far-reaching nature of Rabbi Yehuda's opinion; as Rabbi Yehuda requires a blessing in that case. The Gemara responds: The Gemara preferred the version before us in order to demonstrate the extent to which Rabbi Meir was lenient in not requiring a blessing because the strength of leniency is preferable.

The debate may revolve around a question we have raised before. Did the Rabbis establish an objective criterion for saying the *Shehechyanu* blessing – apparently, applying it to events that entail a “*chiddush*” (something new) – or did they apply to any purchase that brings about the emotional response of happiness? These opinions may disagree as to the degree of “*chiddush*” that warrants a blessing, the level of happiness, or whether happiness or *chiddush* is the determining factor.

Another important debate among the *Rishonim* relates to the importance of the acquired object. The *Rishonim* debate whether the “*keli*” upon which one says the *Shehechyanu* blessing must “important” (*chashuv*), or whether one may say the blessing whenever he feels “happy” making the purchase or receiving the gift.

The Ri (*Tosafot* 59b, s.v. *ve-rebbe*) rules that one only says the *Shehechyanu* blessing upon purchasing a “significant” vessel:

The Ri said that [the blessing is only said] over important garments, similar to a new house... But over garments that are not important, such as shoes and slippers and a “*chaluk*” (undergarments), and other such garments, one does not say the blessing.

The Rosh (*Berakhot* 9: 16) cites the Ri, but disagrees. He explains that whether or not one says the blessings “is dependent upon the person, as there may be a poor person who is happier with a [simple] garment than with ten important vessels.” Similarly, the Rambam (*Hilkhot Berakhot* 10: 1) simply writes that “a person who builds a new house or buys new articles should recite the blessing,” implying that there is no minimum value or importance.

Once again, it seems that the *Rishonim* disagree as to whether the blessing is said upon a “*chiddush*,” something new and important, or upon any purchase that brings the person happiness, even a simple acquisition.

While most authorities seem to concur with the Rosh, the *Rishonim* observe that the practice did not develop accordingly. Tosafot (*Sukka* 46a, s.v. *ha-oseh*), for example, cites R. Sherira Gaon, who rules that the *halakha* is not in accordance with this passage, as the Talmud elsewhere (*Eiruv* 40b) implies that the *Shehechyanu* blessing is said only over *mitzvot* that come from time to time (*mi-zeman le-zeman*). Furthermore, although the Beit Yosef (OC 223) writes that the majority of *Rishonim*, including the Rif, Rambam and Rosh, disagree with R. Sherira Gaon, he cites the Rashba (*Teshuvot* 1: 245), who observes that it is not common to recite the *Shehechyanu* blessing and that the blessing should be viewed as a “*reshut*,” and not an obligation. The Darkhei Moshe (223) mentions the Rashba, but concludes that one should consider the *Shehechyanu* blessing to be an obligation, and not a “*reshut*.”

In the Shulchan Arukh (223: 6), R. Yosef Karo cites the view of the Ri, according to which *Shehechyanu* is only said over an important garment. He then cites the Rosh and rules that “if he is poor and is happy because of them, he should say the blessing.” R.



Moshe Isserlis adds that “some say that even a poor person does not say the [*Shehechyanu*] blessing over a garment and shoes, and that is the custom.”

The *Acharonim* debate whether in practice one says the *Shehechyanu* blessing. Some record that while the blessing should be said upon purchasing important articles of clothing, it is customary not to say the blessing over vessels and household appliances (see *Piskei Teshuvot* 223:6). Others insist that when purchasing important household items, such as a car, air-conditioner, important electric appliances, furniture and jewelry, the blessing should be said (see. R. Eliezer Melamed, *Peninei Halakha, Hilkhos Berakhot*, ch. 17, and his *harchavot*).

In addition to the *Shehechyanu* blessing, the Talmud Yerushalmi (*Berakhot* 9:3; see also Tosafot *ibid.*) teaches that before wearing new clothing, one should say the blessing “*Malbish Arumim*” (He Who clothes the naked) and then *Shehechyanu*. This practice is cited by the Shulchan Arukh (223:4). The *Acharonim* note that it is not customary to say this blessing. Some wear the clothing in the morning and have the clothing in mind when saying the morning blessing of “*Malbish Arumim*.”

## **IV Birkat Ha-Tov Ve-Hameitiv**

The Talmud (*ibid.* 59b) teaches that at times, the blessing of *Ha-Tov Ve-Hameitiv* is said in place of *Shehechyanu*:

The Gemara asks: One who owns land recites: “Who is good and does good”? Didn’t we learn in the *mishna*: One who built a new house or purchased new vessels recites: “Blessed...Who has given us life...and brought us to this time.” However, if the land belonged to him and others in partnership, he recites: “Who is good and does good.” For rain falling onto land that one owns exclusively, he recites: “Who has given us life,” and not: “Who is good and does good.”

The Gemara answers: This is not difficult. The *mishna* where we learned that one recites “Who is good and does good” refers to a case in which one owns his land in partnership with another; R. Abbahu’s statement that one recites “Who has given us life” refers to a case in which one owns the land exclusively and does not have a partnership.

And indeed, this *halakha* was taught in a *baraita*: 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 when other people derive pleasure from the new object, the proper blessing is *Ha-Tov Ve-Hameitiv*.

Although the Talmud implies that these two blessings, *Shehechyanu* and *Ha-Tov Ve-Hameitiv* are similar and differ in terms of the number of people who benefit from the object, others disagree. The Rashba (*Teshuvot* 4:77), for example, explains that while all who derive pleasure say the *Shehechyanu* blessing, *Ha-Tov Ve-Hameitiv* is only said when the other person derives actual benefit. Therefore, the *gemara* lists specific examples, including inheritance, building a house, and purchasing new utensils, from which others generally derive benefit. Tosafot (59b, s.v. *hatam*) implies the opposite approach: *Shehechyanu* is only said over something new (“*chadta*”), while *Ha-Tov Ve-Hameitiv* is said whenever a group derives pleasure.

The Yerushalmi (*Berakhot* 9: 3; see Tosafot, *ibid.*) teaches that if one purchases a vessel, he says the *Shehechyanu* blessing, but if one is given a gift, he says *Ha-Tov Ve-Hameitiv*. The Rosh (*ibid.*) explains that both the recipient and the person who gave the gift benefit, and therefore *Ha-Tov Ve-Hameitiv* is appropriate. The Beit Yosef (223) notes that this halakha is not cited by other *Rishonim*, although he assumes they would agree to its rationale. In the Shulchan Arukh (223: 5), he rules that “one who buys vessels which he and his family uses says the *Ha-Tov Ve-Hameitiv* blessing, as it is good for him and for the giver.”

The Be’ur Halakha (s.v. *she-hi*) cites *Acharonim* who disagree with this ruling and insist that the Talmud Bavli does not maintain that one says *Ha-Tov Ve-Hameitiv* upon receiving a gift. He concludes that the proper blessing to recite is *Shehechyanu*.

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

*Berakhot* 59b:

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 *Shehechyanu* blessing.

## **VII Shehechyanu over Shoes**

*Rishonim* disagree as to whether the *Shehechyanu* 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 “*chaluq*” (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” is 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 *Shehechyanu* over leather. Therefore, it seems that nowadays, when shoes, especially dress shoes, are a purchase that brings much happiness, one should say *Shehechyanu* (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 *Shehechyanu* over shoes (see *Halikhot Shlomo* 23: 15).

## **VIII A New House and Renovations**

The *mishna* cited above teaches that upon building a new house, one says the *Shehechyanu* blessing. Furthermore, as we discussed last week, while a person living alone says *Shehechyanu*, one who shares the house with others says *Ha-Tov Ve-Hameitiv*. The *Shehechyanu* 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 *mezuzah*). 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 *Shehechyanu*, 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 *Shehechyanu* 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 *Shehechyanu* over a storage facility. However, if one uses the storage room for recreation, one may say *Shehechyanu* (*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*.

## **IX Sifrei Kodesh**

The *Magen Avraham* (223: 5; see *Machazik Berakha* 223: 3) writes that one says the *Shehechyanu* 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 *mitzvot*.’” Other authorities disagree and rule that one should say *Shehechyanu* 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).

## **X Gifts and Inheritances**

The Talmud (*Berakhot* 59b) teaches that when one receives an inheritance, one says the *Shehechyanu* 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 Geshar 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, fnt. 33) disagree and note that the blessing of *Dayan Ha-Emet* is also said while the mourner is observing *aninut*.

Some *Acharonim* relate that it is 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 *Shehechyanu*. This, of course, would depend upon the age and financial situation of the recipient.

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רבנות תפוצות עם רב רימון2

Avigail, Avigail, Avy, Binyamin, Ch...



שלום הרב אבינר,  
יש לי רצון להאריך הרבה בתשובה זו,  
אבל לא אעשה זאת כעת.  
יש סיבה טובה לברך שהחיינו כשעולה  
לארץ (ניתן לצרף כמה שיטות: א. השיטות  
הסבורות שמברכים על מצווה שעושה  
פעם ראשונה בחייו. ב. שיטת הב"ח  
שמברכים שהחיינו על שמחת הלב, וכאן  
בוודאי שמחת הלב גדולה מאוד. ועוד).  
ואמנם, יש שסברו שאין לברך (עיין למשל  
שו"ת לב חיים ח"ג סימן ל"ג), אבל  
מסתבר שכיוון שרבו הפוסקים כדעת  
הב"ח הנ"ל, יש סיבה טובה לברך. אולם,  
כדי לצאת דעת החוששים, כדאי לבוא עם  
חולצה חדשה או לברך ברגע שרואים את  
המשפחה או חברים שלא ראינו שלושים  
יום, וממילא יצרף לכך את הדין של רואה  
פני חבירו (גם אם ראה אותו בזום).  
בע"ה שיזכו להתרוממות הנפש בעלייתם  
לארץ הקודש (למרות שכתבתי כעת  
תשובה קצרה ומהירה, התרגשתי מאוד  
לכותבה וחשתי במעט את ההתרגשות  
שיש למי שעולה ארצה. ומו"ר הרב  
ליכטנשטיין זצ"ל אמר פעם, שבכך יש  
יתרון למי שנולד בחו"ל ועלה לארץ,  
שזוכה לחוש את השמחה הגדולה בעלייה  
ארצה).

