

**.YARCHEI KALLAH**

The countdown is on to this year's Summer Learning Program.

Monday December 25 - January 1

Teves 7 - Teves 14

Our guest scholar this year is Rabbi Reuven Wolf, director of Maayan Yisroel Los Angeles.

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Formally known as Avos Ubonim, Dor Ledor will continue this week as usual. 6:30pm in the Mezzanine.

Join us for learning, snacks and prizes.

On behalf of Kolel Menachem Lubavitch we wish you and your family a Freilichen Chanukah. May your Yomtov be filled with the light of Ner Mitzvah V'Torah

Or.

A collection of Torah thoughts produced by Kolel Menachem

אין בית המדרש בלא **חידוש** Chiddush

**In this Edition**

Why don't we mention Chanukah in the blessing of *Al Hamichya*? **P.1**

Why don't we mention Chanukah in *Al Hamichya*?

Rabbi Yonason Johnson

The Gemora¹ records that one year after the victory of the Chashmonaim and the miracle of Chanukah, the Chachamim established the festival of Chanukah to be celebrated as days of Hallel and Hodaah – praise and thanksgiving.

Rashi explains that this refers to the obligation to recite Hallel and to say *Al Hanisim* in the blessing of *Hodaah*. We recite *Al Hanisim* in the blessing of *Hodaah* in both Shemoneh Esrei (after Modim) and in bentching (after Nodeh Lecha).

***Al Hanissim* in Bentching**

On Shabbos, Yomtov and Rosh Chodesh there is a requirement to mention the day in bentching. The Gemara² raises the question whether one is required to mention Chanukah and Purim in bentching;

Do we say that because they are only Rabbinic festivals they need not be mentioned (as opposed to Shabbos, Yomtov and Rosh Chodesh which are Biblical) or do we say that because it entails *Pirsumei Nissa* (publicising the miracle) they should be mentioned in bentching?

Rava rules that one is not required to mention Chanukah in bentching, but if one wishes to, they should mention it during the blessing of *Hodaah* just as it is done in the Shemoneh Esrei.

Tosfos³ notes that the requirement to recite *Al Hanissim* in davening is taken as an obvious requirement and therefore the Gemara's question only pertains to bentching. Tosfos explains that since davening is *Betzibbur* there is clearly an element of *Pirsumei Nissa*. Bentching is done at home and therefore has less *Pirsumei Nissa*.

The Gemara's conclusion is that reciting *Al Hanissim* in bentching is optional. Nonetheless it has subsequently been accepted as an obligation and has become binding Halacha⁴.

The Shulchan Aruch rules that if one forgot *Al Hanissim* in either davening or bentching, one need not repeat the Shemoneh Esrei or bentching⁵. The Ram"o adds that if one forgot *Al Hanissim* in bentching after Nodeh, they can add it as a *Harchaman* at the point where we recite the *Harchaman* for other festivals. In Shemoneh Esrei one can add it before the final *Yihyu Leratzon*⁶.

Mentioning Yomtov in *Al Hamichya*

The Yerushalmi⁷ teaches that one should mention מעין המאורע (the specialness of the day) in the ברכה מעין שלוש (aka *Al Hamichya*)⁸. This is codified as Halacha by the Rambam⁹ who writes that on Shabbos and Yomtov one must mention the sanctity of the day. The Shulchan Aruch rules like the Rambam that we should mention Shabbos and Yomtov in *Al Hamichya*. The Shulchan Aruch also adds Rosh Chodesh¹⁰.

And so, on Shabbos we add ורצה והחליצנו ביום השבת and on Yomtov and Rosh Chodesh we add ...וזכרנו לטובה ביום... mentioning the name of the specific Yomtov¹¹.

The Rambam does not mention Chanukah or Purim and the Shulchan Aruch explicitly writes that we do not mention Chanukah and Purim in *Al Hamichya*.

Why are Chanukah and Purim different?

The Acharonim question why Chanukah and Purim are not mentioned in *Al Hamichya* and why do they differ from the other Yomim Tovim?

Mahara"m & Levush: The earliest source which discusses this distinction is a Teshuvah of the Mahara"m Rottenberg¹². He explains that Shabbos and the other Yomim Tovim need only be mentioned and this can be done before the concluding line ...כי אתה. The mention of Chanukah and Purim must specifically be in the Bracha of *Hodaah*. Since the *Al Hamichya* does not contain a *Hodaah*, *Al Hanissim* cannot be said¹³. This answer

is also found in the Levush¹⁴, although it seems that it is presented as his own teaching and that he had not seen the Maharam.

Lechem Chamudos¹⁵ based on the Ram"o writes that just as (*bedieved*) one may recite *Al Hanissim* in the Harachamans at the end of bentching, one could mention Chanukah and Purim at the conclusion of *Al Hamichya*. Instead, he explains that the distinction is that Chanukah and Purim are only Rabbinic. This is also the answer of Hagahos Maimonios¹⁶.

Mishna Berura¹⁷, quoting the Gr"a, writes that unlike Shabbos and Yomtov where one is obligated to mention the day in bentching, mentioning Chanukah and Purim in bentching itself is only a min-hag. The min-hag was only adopted for bentching and was not adopted for *Al Hamichya*.

Aruch Hashulchan writes that since even for Shemoneh Esrei and bentching one is *Yotzai* even if they did not mention *Al Hanissim*, one need not mention it in *Al Hamichya*. Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef¹⁸ questions this logic. On Rosh Chodesh one is also *Yotzai bedieved* if one forgot Yaaleh Veyavo in bentching and yet we do mention Rosh Chodesh in *Al Hamichya*¹⁹.

Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef²⁰ was asked whether one may not mention Chanukah in *Al Hamichya* or whether it is not required but one may do so if they choose. In his Teshuvah he notes that not everyone agrees that even Shabbos and Yomtov need to be mentioned in *Al Hamichya* (despite the Yerushalmi and ruling of the Rambam quoted above).

Tosfos²¹ and Rashba²² write that the popular practise is not to do so. They suggest that perhaps in former times Shabbos and Yomtov had to be mentioned because people would be *Koveia* to drink wine and eat fruit. The Kesef Mishna writes that this argument is not sufficient to push away the Yerushalmi and notes that the Shulchan Aruch rules that we do mention the day in *Al Hamichya*. Nonetheless we need not add a requirement for Purim and Chanukah (which are only Rabbinic) to a matter which is already in dispute²³.

The Minchas Elozor of Munkatch²⁴ presents a couple of approaches. His second approach is based on the Tosfos (quoted above) who

explains that in Shmeoneh Esrei it is a given that one must say *Al Hanissim* because davening is (usually) *Betzibbur* and there is *Pirsumei Nissa*. Bentching is usually done at home and so there is less *Pirsumei Nissa*. Nonetheless the conclusion is that we do say *Al Hanissim* in bentching because there is still *Pirsumei Nissa*.

We see from this that reciting *Al Hanissim* is dependent on the element of *Pirsumei Nissa*. The Munkatcher writes that perhaps this is only in bentching because a meal (with bread) is usually eaten in the company of family members or others. Since Mezonos, wine and fruits are usually eaten on one's own, there is no *Pirsumei Nissa* and this is why *Al Hanissim* is not said.

The Poskim²⁵ conclude that one should not mention Chanukah or Purim in *Al Hamichya*. If however one did mention Chanukah or Purim, either in the beginning or end of *Al Hamichya*, one is nonetheless *Yotzai* and it does not constitute a *Hefsek* or an invalidating change to the text of the Brachos.

The dissenters

There is a minority view that one should mention Chanukah and Purim in *Al Hamichya*. Kaf Hachaim²⁶ quotes Yad Neeman and Yefeh Lev who rule that Chanukah and Purim should be mentioned in *Al Hamichya*. It should be recited at the same point where one would mention Shabbos or Yomtov. The formula would be **כי אתה... ועל** **הנסים ונפלאות שעשית לנו בימים אלו**. Even though the Shulchan Aruch does not mention this requirement²⁷, it is best practise to do mention Hashem's kindnesses.

Rabbi Avraham Palagi²⁸ writes that he himself wrote into his Machzor that on Chanukah and Purim one adds **בזמן שעשית... על הנסים** in *Al Hamichya*. He writes that one who wishes to be act as a Chassid should mention Chanukah or Purim or should be careful not to make *Al Hamichya* during Chanukah and Purim by only eating bread and obligating themselves in full bentching.

1. Shabbos 21b

2. 24a

3. ד"ה מהו להזכיר א

4. See Raviah quoted in the Bach OC 682. Another example is Maariv, which is only a reshut but has been accepted as a binding obligation.

5. Shulchan Aruch OC 682. See Bach ibid who quotes the Mordechai who rules that because one is obligated to eat a meal (with bread) on Chanukah and Purim, one is obligated to repeat bentching if *Al Hanissim* was omitted. Maharsha"l writes that this is only so for the Purim Seudah but does not apply to Chanukah. Their argument revolves around whether there is a *chiyuv* to have a Seudah on Chanukah. Bach rules like the Mordechai and Raviah.

6. Mishna Berura 682:4 quoting Elya Rabbah

7. Brachos 6:1

8. Note that the Yerushalmi does not mention which days this is required for.

9. Hilchos Brachos 3:13

10. Shulchan Aruch OC 208:12

11. In other Nuschaos for Yomtov one says **ושמחנו ביום** and only for Rosh Chodesh and Rosh Hashona do they use the formula **וזכרנו**.

12. Siman 70

13. Even though the blessing concludes **כי אתה... ונודה** **מעין** this is only in order to conclude the Bracha **החתימה**.

14. OC 208:12

15. Quoted in Elya Rabba 208:21

16. On Rambam ibid

17. 208:59

18. Yabia Omer 3:236

19. He does suggest that perhaps the Aruch Hashulchan is referring to the requirement to mention the day in Shemoneh Esrei (as opposed to bentching) where Yaaleh Veyavo on Rosh Chodesh is Meakev unlike Cha-

nukah and Purim.

20. Yabia Omer ibid

21. Brachos 44a על העץ ד"ה

22. Chiddushim Brachos 44a

23. He adds that this is especially so since even in bentching which is Biblically mandated, *Al Hanissim* is only a reshut. If so, *Al Hamichya* which is only Rabbinic, one need not be concerned.

24. Nimukei Orach Chaim 682

25. Yabia Omer ibid and Tzitz Eliezer 14:63

26. OC 282:3

27. Other point out that the Shulchan Aruch explicitly writes that we do not mention Chanukah and Purim in *Al Hamichya*.

28. Yavaan Avraham. See also Yefeh Lev written by his brother quoted above.

29. See Yabia Omer ibid who writes that this is not an act of Chassidus and is not required.