

(מעיקרא) – because they are pleased to become subject to reciting an obligatory *zimun* blessing.^[1] Thus, although the two may join in an optional *zimun* even if the waiter does not eat with them, we assume that they are amenable to his joining them so that they will be able to join in an obligatory *zimun* of three.

The Gemara now attempts to prove that two men may join in *zimun*:

Come, learn a proof from the following Baraisa: נשים מזמנות לעצמן – WOMEN JOIN IN *ZIMUN* BY THEMSELVES. וְעֶבְדִּים מְזַמְּנִים לעצמן – AND SLAVES JOIN IN *ZIMUN* BY THEMSELVES. However, if WOMEN, SLAVES AND MINORS eat together, אִם רָצוּ לְזַמֵּן אֵין מְזַמְּנִין (וְהָאֵין אֵפִילוּ מֵאָה) – even IF THEY WANT TO, THEY MAY NOT JOIN IN *ZIMUN*.^[2] (וְהָאֵין אֵפִילוּ מֵאָה) – Now, regarding *zimun*, one hundred women are similar to two men, for they are never obligated to join in *zimun*, וְקָתְנִי נָשִׁים מְזַמְּנִין לעצמן – yet the Baraisa states: WOMEN JOIN IN *ZIMUN* BY THEMSELVES AND SLAVES JOIN IN *ZIMUN* BY THEMSELVES. Evidently, even where *zimun* is not obligatory, it is optional. It follows that although two men are not required to join in *zimun*, they have the option of doing so. – ? –

The Gemara rejects the proof:

There, where three or more women eat together, it is different than where two men eat together, דַּאיכָא דְעוֹת – for when three women eat together there is a sufficient number of minds to form a quorum for the collective praise of God, whereas in the case of two men who eat together the necessary quorum is lacking.^[3]

The Gemara asks:

If so, אֵימָא סִיפָא – consider the latter clause of the Baraisa, which states: נָשִׁים וְעֶבְדִּים אִם רָצוּ לְזַמֵּן אֵין מְזַמְּנִין – However, if WOMEN AND SLAVES and minors eat together, even IF THEY WANT TO, THEY MAY NOT JOIN IN *ZIMUN*. אֵמָאי לָא – Now, why may they not join in *zimun*? וְהָאֵין אֵיכָא דְעוֹת – Why, there is a sufficient number of minds to form a quorum.^[4] – ? –

The Gemara answers:

There, in the case of women joining with slaves, it is different than the case of women and slaves eating separately, מִשּׁוּם פְּרִיזוּתָא – because there is the possibility that the joint meal will lead to promiscuity, and such a meal is unfit for the recitation of a collective blessing.

The Gemara originally stated that Rav and R' Yochanan are in

dispute whether two men have the option of joining in *zimun*. It now seeks to identify which Amora holds which opinion:

תְּסַתִּיב דְרַב דְאָמַר אִם רָצוּ לְזַמֵּן אֵין מְזַמְּנִין – Let it be determined that Rav is the one who said that if [two men] want to they may not join in *zimun*. דְאָמַר רַב דִּימֵי בַר יוֹסֵף אָמַר רַב – For Rav Dimi bar Yosef said in the name of Rav: שְׁלֹשָׁה שָׂאֲבְלוּ בְּאַחַת – Concerning three people who ate together וְיָצָא אֶחָד מֵהֶם לְשׁוּק – and one of them went out to the marketplace, לוֹ – [the remaining two] call out to him that they are about to recite the *zimun* blessing, וּמְזַמְּנִין עָלָיו – and they then join in *zimun* on account of him.^[5] טַעְמָא דְקוֹרְאִין לוֹ – This statement implies that the reason the remaining two may join in *zimun* is because they call out to him for his attention and thus complete the quorum; הָא לָא קוֹרְאִין לוֹ – but should they not call out to him, לָא – they may not join in *zimun*. Evidently, it is Rav who holds that two may not join in *zimun*.

The Gemara rejects the proof:

There, where the group originally consisted of three people, it is different than a situation where only two people ate together in the first place, דַּאיכָא דְעוֹת – because they were originally subject to reciting an obligatory *zimun* blessing. Thus, they must call out for the third person's attention in order to be able to join in a compulsory *zimun* of three. However, when only two people eat together in the first place, Rav may hold that they are allowed to join in *zimun*.

The Gemara brings conclusive evidence to the identity of the author of each opinion:

רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן הוּא – Rather, let it be determined אֵלֶּא תְּסַתִּיב – that R' Yochanan is the one who said that if [two men] want to they may not join in *zimun*. דְאָמַר אִם רָצוּ לְזַמֵּן אֵין מְזַמְּנִין – For Rabbah bar bar Chanah said in the name of R' Yochanan: שְׁנַיִם שָׂאֲבְלוּ בְּאַחַת – Concerning two people who ate together, אֶחָד מֵהֶם יוֹצֵא בְּבִרְכַת – one of them can discharge [his obligation] to recite *Bircas HaMazon* by listening to his fellow's recitation of the blessing. וְהִינֵן כֵּן – And we analyzed this statement as follows: מַאי קָא מְשַׁמַּע לָן – What does [R' Yochanan] teach us with it? הִנֵּינָא – We have already learned this in a Baraisa, which states: שְׁמַע וְלֹא עָנָה יָצָא – ONE WHO HEARD AND DID NOT ANSWER HAS DISCHARGED [HIS OBLIGATION].^[6] וְאָמַר רַבִּי זֵירָא – And R' Zeira said: לּוֹמַר שְׂאֵין בְּרַכַּת (הַזְּמוּן) בִּינֵיהֶם – R' Yochanan means to say that there is no *zimun* blessing between them.^[7]

NOTES

1. Since performing a compulsory mitzvah is greater than performing a voluntary mitzvah (*Rashi*).

2. The Gemara will explain below that it is inappropriate for slaves and women to eat together, as this can lead to promiscuous behavior. It is similarly inappropriate for slaves to eat together with minors, as this could lead to homosexual activity. Since the collective meal is an inappropriate one, the joining of the participants in *zimun* is improper (*Rashi*; see *Mishnah Berurah* 199:12).

3. When three women join in a common blessing, they fulfill the verse *Declare (plural) the greatness of Hashem with me and let us exalt His Name together*. However, if two men would join in a common blessing, they would not fulfill that verse. Thus, although three women are not obligated to join in *zimun* (see *Mishnah Berurah* 199:16 and *Shaar HaTziyun* §6), they are more eligible to join in *zimun* on an optional basis than are two men (*Rashi*; see also *Tosafos* שַׁנִּי הַחֵם; cf. *Rabbeinu Yonah, Rosh*).

4. This question seems unrelated to the Gemara's previous answer that three women are more fit than two men for optional *zimun*. Regardless of whether two men are equal to three women, the Baraisa does rule that women and slaves are each eligible to join in *zimun*, and this leads to the question of why women and slaves may not join in *zimun* together. *Tosafos* therefore maintain that the phrase *אֵין מְזַמְּנִין*, if so, predicating the

Gemara's question, should be omitted from the text. See *Pnei Yehoshua* and *Tzalach* for suggested approaches to validate our text.

5. He need not return to the room and rejoin them, but must merely pay attention to their recital from his position [and respond to the leader's call for *zimun*. He later recites *Bircas HaMazon* on his own] (*Rashi*; see Gemara below and *Rosh Yosef*). See *Mishnah Berurah* 194:8.

6. I.e. one who hears the recitation of a blessing, the reading of *Hallel*, etc. from his fellow, and listens attentively, thereby discharges his own obligation to recite that which he heard although he did not respond to the blessing (see *Succah* 38b).

7. By stating that one of the two can discharge his *Bircas HaMazon* obligation by listening to his fellow's blessing, R' Yochanan implies that they do not join in *zimun*. If they could join in *zimun*, the subsequent *Bircas HaMazon* said by the leader on behalf of the other (see Chapter Introduction) would be considered their *joint* blessing, since he would say in the introductory *zimun*, "Let us bless etc.," and the other would respond, "Blessed is [He] of Whose we have eaten etc." Thus, R' Yochanan's statement teaches that two people who ate together may not join in *zimun* (*Rashi*; see *Tzalach*).

[Vilna ed. has the reading *לּוֹמַר שְׂאֵין בְּרַכַּת הַזְּמוּן בִּינֵיהֶם*. We have followed *Rashi's* reading, *בְּרַכַּת הַזְּמוּן*. See also *Dikdukei Soferim*.]

for he went beyond the letter of the law.^[16]

An incident related to the law of *zimun* is cited: יהודה בר מרימר ומר בר רב אשי ורב אחא מדפתי ברכי ריפתא בהדי הדדי – Yehudah bar Mereimar, Mar bar Rav Ashi and Rav Acha of Difti once ate bread together,^[17] לא הנהו בהו חר דהנהו – and there was none among them who was more distinguished than his fellows – and who therefore deserved to recite the blessing for them.^[18] (יהביקא) – Concerning that which was taught in the Mishnah: They said:^[19] (אמרין) (מיבעיא להו) שלשה שאכלו באחת הויבין – THREE people WHO ATE TOGETHER ARE REQUIRED TO JOIN IN ZIMUN – הגני מילי היכא דאיכא אדם גדול – this pertains only where there is among them a person who is “great” in relation to the others and who thus deserves to lead the *zimun*, אבל היכא – but where they are all equal to each other, – דכי הדדי נינהו – the recitation of separate blessings is preferable to the recitation of a collective blessing.^[20] בריך – Accordingly, each person recited *Bircas HaMazon* for himself. – אתו לקמיה דמרימר – They later came before Mereimar and told him what they had done. – אמר להו – [Mereimar] said to them: ידי ברכה וצאתם – The *Bircas HaMazon* requirement you have fulfilled, ידי זימון לא וצאתם – but the *zimun* requirement you have not fulfilled.^[21] וכי – And if you shall say, “Let us go back and recite the *zimun* blessing now,” – אין זימון למפרע – there is no *zimun* retroactively.^[22]

The Gemara continues with other rulings pertaining to *zimun*: If [someone] who did not eat came along and encountered [a group of three] as they were reciting the *zimun* blessing, מהו אומר אחריהם – what does he say after them to participate in their exaltation of Hashem?^[23] – אמר – He says: רב זביד – Rav Zevid said: ברוך ומבורך – “Blessed is He and blessed is His Name always, forever.”^[24] רב

Rav Pappa said: עונה אמן – He answers “Amen.”

The Gemara comments:

– And [Rav Zevid and Rav Pappa] are not in disagreement. – This ruling of Rav Zevid applies to a case where [the person] encountered them at the onset of the *zimun*, as they were saying, “Let us bless [He] of Whose we have eaten,” והא דאשכחיהו דקא אמרי – whereas this ruling of Rav Pappa applies to a case where he encountered them later, as they were saying “Blessed is [He] of Whose we have eaten and through Whose goodness we live.” – If he encountered them as they were saying, “Let us bless etc.,” – אומר ברוך ומבורך – he says: “Blessed is [He] and blessed is His Name always, forever,” as stated by Rav Zevid. – אשכחיהו דקא אמרי ברוך – However, if he encountered them as they were saying, “Blessed is [He] of Whose we have eaten and through Whose goodness we live,” עונה – he answers “Amen.”^[25]

The Gemara cites conflicting Baraisos regarding the answering of “Amen” after one’s own blessing:

– It was taught in one Baraisa: [כל] – תני חדא – ONE WHO ANSWERS “AMEN” AFTER [ALL OF]^[26] HIS OWN BLESSINGS IS PRAISEWORTHY. – And it was taught in another Baraisa: הרי זה מגונה – HE IS DESPICABLE. – ? –

The Gemara resolves the contradiction:

– There is no difficulty. – The Baraisa, which states that it is praiseworthy for one to answer “Amen” after all of his blessings, is dealing with the blessing of *Boneh Yerushalayim*,^[27] – הוא בשאר ברכות – whereas this Baraisa, which states that it is despicable to answer “Amen” after all of one’s blessings, is dealing with the other blessings.^[28]

The Gemara relates how different Amoraim acted with regard to the “Amen” of the *Boneh Yerushalayim* blessing:

– Abaye would answer [“Amen”] aloud after

NOTES

16. Rav Pappa interrupted his meal in order to honor his son (*Rashi*).

17. Literally: wrapped bread together. [This idiom is perhaps derived from the fact that they would wrap the bread around other foods and eat them as a meal.]

18. The Gemara below, 47a, rules that the honor of leading the *zimun* and then reciting *Bircas HaMazon* on behalf of the assembled is bestowed upon the greatest member of the group. However, at this meal there was nobody who was distinguished in Torah scholarship or in age compared to the other two (*Rashi*; see 47a note 23).

19. Our emendation of the text follows *Rif* and *Rosh*; see *Mesoras HaShas*.

20. The Gemara above (45a) cited two verses (*Psalms* 34:3 and *Deuteronomy* 32:3) as a source for the rule that three people should join in a collective blessing. Both of those verses deal with a distinguished person (either King David or Moses) calling out to others to join him in the praise of God. The Rabbis therefore reasoned that it is only where a man of greater stature is doing the calling that a joint blessing is appropriate (*Tos. R' Yehudah HeChasid*, *Tos. HaRosh* and *Ritva*).

21. [You were incorrect in assuming that the joint blessing is recited only where there is a distinguished person in the group. Consequently, you did have an obligation to join in *zimun*, which you did not fulfill.]

22. One cannot fulfill the mitzvah of *zimun* after reciting *Bircas HaMazon* (*Rashi* below, 50a למפרע ר"ה).

23. Obviously, he cannot say “Blessed is [He] of Whose we have eaten,” for he did not partake of the meal (*Rashi*). Yet it is certainly not fitting that he stand by silently while they praise God (*Taz*, *Orach Chaim* 198:1).

24. The full text of the recitation, which we have quoted, is recorded by *Halachos Gedolos*, and cited by *Tosafos* and other Rishonim.

25. If he did not hear the leader say, “Let us bless etc.,” he cannot participate in the blessing, but must merely answer “Amen” to the blessing recited by the assembled (*Mishnah Berurah* 198:3).

26. The word כל, *all of*, is inserted in the text by *Bach* and follows *Rashi*'s reading; see following notes.

27. I.e. the third blessing of *Bircas HaMazon*. Since this is the last of the three [Biblically required] blessings of *Bircas HaMazon* (see Chapter Introduction), it is appropriate that one conclude with “Amen.” The “Amen” then applies to all of the blessings he recited (*Rashi*; see following note).

28. The latter Baraisa means that it is despicable to answer “Amen” after every single blessing that one recites, for it is proper to say “Amen” only at the conclusion of all of one’s own blessings, and not when one still intends to recite other blessings. Thus the term “all” has a different meaning in each Baraisa. The first Baraisa means that it is praiseworthy to say “Amen” at the conclusion of an entire series of blessings. The second Baraisa means that it is despicable to say “Amen” after each individual blessing in a series (see *Rashi*).

Rashi adds that it is similarly praiseworthy to say “Amen” at the conclusion of the blessings that follow the *Shema* in the morning and evening (cf. *Rambam*, *Hil. Berachos* 1:16, who distinguishes between the morning and evening blessings). *Tosafos*, however, disagree and maintain that the rule stated here pertains specifically to the blessing of *Boneh Yerushalayim*. [It is proper to answer “Amen” after one’s own blessing only in this one case, in order to separate between the first three blessings of *Bircas HaMazon*, which are of Biblical origin, and the fourth blessing (הטוב והמטיב), which is of Rabbinic origin [as stated below, 48b] (*Mishnah Berurah* 215:4). For yet other opinions, see *Tosafos*; see also *Beis Yosef*, *Orach Chaim* 51 ודעה ודעה ודעה and *Shulchan Aruch*, *Orach Chaim* 215:1.]

reciting the blessing of *Boneh Yerushalayim*, כִּי הֵיכֵי דְלִשְׁמַעוּ פּוֹעֲלִים וְלִיקוּמוּ – so that laborers who were listening to his recitation should hear and get up to return to their work.^[29] And although they would miss the recitation of the blessing of *HaTov VeHaMeitiv*,^[30] this was of no concern, דְּהַטוֹב וְהַמְטִיב – לֹא דְאוּרִיחָא – for the *HaTov VeHaMeitiv* blessing is not of Biblical origin, and the Rabbis who instituted it exempted hired

laborers from its recitation.^[31] רַב אֲשִׁי עָנִי לִיה בְּלִחִישָׁא – Rav Ashi, however, would answer “Amen” in a whisper after reciting the blessing of *Boneh Yerushalayim*, כִּי הֵיכֵי דְלֹא נִזְלָלוּ בְּהַטוֹב וְהַמְטִיב – so that [the masses] should not realize that the Biblically required blessings are concluded at that point and be lax with the blessing of *HaTov VeHaMeitiv*.^[32]

NOTES

29. When laborers ate with Abaye he would recite *Bircas HaMazon* on their behalf. Abaye would say “Amen” loudly after the third blessing so that the laborers would realize that [the essential portion] of *Bircas HaMazon* was concluded and they would leave at that juncture (see *Rashi* and *Melo HaRo'im*).

30. I.e. the fourth blessing of *Bircas HaMazon*.

31. The blessing of *HaTov VeHaMeitiv* was instituted by the Sages in Yavneh, when those massacred in Bethar were brought to burial (*Rashi*; see below, 48b, and note 4 there). However, the Sages exempted hired workers from reciting it, so as not to encroach on the time in which they were hired to work (see above, 16a, and below, 46a). [Nowadays, it is customary for hired workers – even those who are not

allotted official time off for their meal – to recite the *HaTov VeHaMeitiv* blessing. This is because employers generally do not mind the slight delay involved, and they presumably hire workers with the understanding that they will recite *Bircas HaMazon* in the manner that they are accustomed to at home (*Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim* 191:2).]

32. However, since *Boneh Yerushalayim* is the last of the Biblical blessings, he had to answer “Amen,” in accordance with the Baraisa’s ruling that it is praiseworthy to do so. He therefore said the “Amen” in a whisper to fulfill his personal obligation, while still keeping from the masses the fact that the *HaTov VeHaMeitiv* blessing is merely of Rabbinic origin (*Rashi*).