



# Rabbi Yisroel Moshe Guttentag

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Parshah

## A CHANGE OF SCENERY [PART 2 OF 2]

### THE PRINCIPLE OF 'SHINUY MOKOM' - MOVING LOCATION WHEN EATING

*Shinuy mokom* – the principle which demands a new *brochah rishonah* when moving location, is as relevant when away from home, as when going about one's daily life. In this section, we examine aspects of the laws of *brochos* which are equally relevant when at home.

#### NOT GOING ANYWHERE

As discussed in the previous section, the validity of one's *brochah rishonah* is terminated by a change of location – termed in *halochoh* as '*bayis*' - house. The exact definition of the word is debated for these purposes – does it mean house or room?

Highlighting how a stringent ruling on this matter would impose great limitations on one's daily eating, *Biur Halocho* ruled one need not view a move from one room to the other as '*shinuy mokom*'. *Biur Halocho* did, however, add a stipulation that one rely on his lenient approach only if they intended to move from room to room whilst eating. This too does not pose a serious obstacle as contemporary *poskim* rule that since we tend to move from our place during eating, it can be assumed that we always intend to do so. Practically speaking, only on leaving the building need one make a new *brochah*.

But even if one were to step out of the building, a new *brochah rishonah* is not necessarily mandated. *Rav Shmuel Vosner zt"l* is quoted as having ruled that this would only be necessary for one who moves from their house to the street; one's own garden, although beyond the roof coverage, would be viewed as being a natural extension of one's house. And, even if we are *not* to accept *Rav Vosner's psak*, if one can still see their original location, a new *brochah* is certainly not mandated.

The rules of *shinuy mokom* would however certainly apply when moving from one building to another or from a building to the street. In these cases, it is insufficient that one intended initially to make the move, nor would visibility of the original location be of any significance. Instead, a new *brochah* must certainly be made.

Similarly, when outdoors and not located within the confines of a walled-in location, one's *brochah rishonah* remains valid only if their original location remains in view. In these cases, intent to eat elsewhere would be insufficient.

**One may rely on opinions who do not view a move from one room to the other or from the house to the garden as being subject to *shinuy mokom*.**

**A move out of the building to the street necessitates a new *brochah*.**

#### QUICK AS A FLASH

Having read the previous sections, the reader should be able to reach his own conclusion with regards many cases of *shinuy mokom*. Consider the case of a man who is enjoying an apple and on hearing the doorbell ring steps out to welcome a guest. Remembering that fruit is a food which is subject to *shinuy mokom*, our friend is concerned that on leaving the house he will need to make a new *brochah*.

What could save him from the need for a new *brochah* if he indeed were to leave the house? Would the momentary departure be viewed as '*shinuy mokom*'?

A simple reading of the *halochos* indicates that this is indeed the case – and from the *Mishna Berurah* it would seem clear that even this brief lapse is sufficient to demand a new *brochah*. Some point to the *Oruch Hashulchan* who took a more lenient view and ruled that momentary *shinuy mokom* does not require a new *brochah*.

**To sidestep halachic doubt, momentary *shinuy mokom* should be avoided. If this is not possible make a *brochah acharonah* before stepping outside.**

#### WHERE DO I BENCH?

Ideally one should always make a *brochah* before leaving the place in which they eat. In the case of *birkas hamazon* and *al hamichya* it is especially necessary – for these *brochos*, a return to the location is necessary if they inadvertently left. According to some, even *al hagefen* and *al hapeiros* enjoy this strict status. And although in practice one need make a return for *al ho'eitz* fruits, we would do well to be even more careful with regards leaving one's location before *bentsching*.

Where required to *bentsch* in their original location, one should ideally be in the same room as they ate or when outdoors within four *amos* cubits of the original location. However, where this is not possible, benching in a neighbouring room within the same room is also acceptable.

When out on the go it is inevitable that at times one forgets to bench for moving on to with their journey. Is one expected to return to their location in these cases? A combination of factors can determine whether this is necessary or not.

If by the time one manages to return to their original location, they will be hungry again, they should certainly *bentsch* in their new location. Let's turn to a similar situation.

#### DON'T FORGET TO BENCH

**"On a picnic and it's raining – can I go inside to continue the meal?"**

**"I'm in rushing for a fight, can I leave the lounge and bentsch on the fight?"**

The reader will by now be familiar with the fact that whereas for some foods a change in location will demand a new *brochah*, in the case of other foods their *brochah* can be transported to the new location. Nevertheless, *halochoh* instructs us to avoid a change of location wherever possible.

Even in the case of an *al hamichya* food where one's *brochah* is still valid in the new location, one should not move from their original location without first *bentsching*. The primary concern in this matter is that one may get carried away and eventually forget to *bentsch*. But what should one do when they know that they will need to leave during their meal?

If when commencing the meal it is clear that they will need to move elsewhere, one should intend to eat in both locations. By intending this, one has *halachically* extended the area where their meal is happening; when he later leaves in accordance with his plans, he is viewed as moving within the same *halachic* area. Incidentally, this only works for *al hamichya* foods where the *brochah rishonah* is not lost due to the move.

If due to unforeseen circumstances, the need to move arises only once the meal has begun, one may leave where the intention is to perform a *mitzvah*. An example would be an impromptu invitation to join a *sheva brochos*, or where needed to join a *minyán* for davening. Similarly, if during the meal the need arose to source new foods for the meal - one would be permitted to make a quick visit to a local shop.

**One who needs to leave a bread or *al hamichya* meal should *bentsch* before doing so.**

**One may leave a meal if:**

- a. they intended to do so at the time when they washed OR
- b. a *mitzvah* need arose during the meal OR
- c. for a brief moment.

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