



Volume 7. Issue 4

## Forgetting to Bench

The *Mishnah* (8:7) teaches:

If one ate [bread] and forgot to bless [*birkat ha'mazon* (a.k.a. *bench*): *Beit Shammai* rule that he must return [to where he ate] and *bench*. *Beit Hillel* say he can *bench* at the location that he remembers...

The *Gemara* (*Berachot* 53b) explains that the debate is only regarding one that forgot. If one deliberately did not *bench* and set off on their journey, then everyone agrees that he must return to *bench*.

The *Gemara* elaborates on this debate. *Beit Hillel* questioned *Beit Shammai* that if someone ate at the top of a building, would we require him to return to *bench*? *Beit Shammai* responded that if he left his wallet there he would return, which is for his own needs. For the sake of Heaven how should certainly return.

The *Gemara* continues with the incident involving two students. One of them forgot to *bench* and returned to his original place in accordance with the opinion of *Beit Shammai* and found a gold purse. The other deliberately did not *bench* and did not return like *Beit Hillel* and was eaten by a lion.

The above incident (as well as the one that follows in the *Gemara*) has led some *Rishonim* (*Rosh*, *Rif*) to understand that the *Gemara* ruled in accordance with *Beit Shammai* (see also *Tur*). In other words one would be required to return to *bench* even if they had only forgot.<sup>1</sup> The difficulty with this understanding is that the *Gemara* earlier (52b) explained that the *Halacha* is like *Beit Hillel* in all the *Mishnayot* of this *perek* except for forth one, implying that in our *Mishnah* the *Halacha* is like *Beit Hillel*. The *Tosfot* (52b) however answer that our *Mishnah* was not considered in that general rule, since *Beit Hillel* in essence agrees with *Beit Shammai* that one should return, yet does not enforce one to do so.

Other *Rishonim* understand that the ruling is like *Beit Hillel* (*Rambam*, *R' Yona*, *Ritva*). If so how do we understand the

story involving the students cited above? Furthermore, we recently learnt the *Mishnah* (1:4) that recorded the debate between *Beit Shammai* and *Beit Hillel* regarding whether must lie down to recite the evening *Shema*. There the *Mishnah* treated one that behaved in accordance with the position of *Beit Shammai* very harshly – *keday hayita lachov be'atzmecha!*

*Rabbeinu Yonah* explains that the difference between this case and the earlier one is that earlier, while *Beit Hillel* understood that one can recite the even *Shema* while reclining, one should not intentionally do so. In this case however, *Beit Hillel* agrees that one can act stringently and return to their location. *R' Yonah* continues that it is for this reason that the story involving the students was included. It was not to reject the position of *Beit Hillel* but to teach that one may act stringently like *Beit Shammai*.

The *Ritva* answers that in the earlier case, if one was standing and then reclined to recite the *Shema* it is evident that he is acting like *Beit Shammai's* ruling. In our case however, if one returns to the location of his original meal, it is not immediately obvious why he is doing so. One could assume, for example, that he had forgotten something.

Let us however return to the incident. If the *Halacha* is like *Beit Hillel* then why was the one that acted like *Beit Shammai* rewarded while the other who acted like *Beit Hillel* punished so severely. The *Iyun Yaakov* explains that the first student took a position that both *Beit Shammai* and *Beit Hillel* in essence agreed upon (as explained above).<sup>2</sup> Consequently he acted in a manner that brought peace between the *Rabbanim*. The second student deliberately placed him in the situation of dispute. However he also made a mistake. He left intentionally and benched their intentionally; if one left intentionally, even *Beit Hillel* agrees that one must return. Consequently since he placed himself in the dispute between great "lions" he was consumed by one.

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<sup>1</sup> It would appear that according to the opinion of *Beit Shammai* there is no difference between whether the person left deliberately or by mistake – the ruling is the same in both cases. In both case one would need to return. *Bedi'eved* if one did *bench* at the distant location he would have satisfied his obligation. This is indeed the understanding of the *Aruch HaShulchan*. The *Tur* however understands that if he left deliberately and *benched*

elsewhere he would need to return and *bench* again. See the *Bach* (OC 184) for his explanation of the source of the *Tur's* position. See also the *Taz* (OC 184) and *Pri Megadim*.

<sup>2</sup> The *Maharsha* explains that he was rewarded with a gold wallet for this was the item referred to in the debate – "if one left a wallet on top of the building would he not return and go up for it!"

**Revision Questions**

ברכות ז' ד: – ט: ט' ד'

- Which of the following group sizes can divide into two groups to bench separately: 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 15 and 20? (ז': ד')
- When can two separate groups eating in the same house join together in a *zimun*? (ז': ד')
- Explain the debate between *Beit Shammai* and *Beit Hillel* regarding:
  - *Kiddush* on *leil Shabbat*. (ח': א')
  - Washing hands and drinking wine. (ח': ב')
  - The placement of a hand-towel. (ח': ג')
  - Washing *mayim achronim* and sweeping up bread crumbs. (ח': ד')
- Explain the debate between *Beit Shammai* and *Beit Hillel* regarding *havdalah*. (ח': ה')
- What three things are forbidden to use as *besamim* or *ner* for *havdalah*? (ח': ו')
- Explain the debate between *Beit Shammai* and *Beit Hillel* regarding one who has forgotten to say *birkat ha'mazon* and finds themselves in a different location from where they ate. (ח': ז')
- What is the maximum time that someone can wait before *benching*? (ח': ח')
- Explain the debate between *Beit Shammai* and *Beit Hillel* regarding drinking wine and *benching*. (ח': ט')
- Can someone answer *amen* to a *bracha* if they only heard the end of the *bracha*? Is there a difference who said the *bracha*? (ח': י')
- List all the debates between *Beit Shammai* and *Beit Hillel* listed in the eighth *perek*.
- What *bracha* does one make on:
  - Seeing a place where miracle occurred for the benefit of *Israel*? (ט': א')
  - Seeing a place (in Israel) where idol worship was removed? (ט': א')
  - Comets, earthquake, lightning, thunder and storms? (ט': ב')
  - Mountains, hills, seas, rivers and deserts? Explain the debate regarding the "great ocean". (ט': ב')
  - Rain and good news? (ט': ב')
  - Bad news? (ט': ב')
  - Building a new house and buying new utensils? (ט': ג')
- Give some examples of a *t'fillat shav*. (ט': ג')
- Explain the debate about the number of *brachot* one recites when entering and exiting a walled city. (ט': ד')

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**Next Week's Mishnayot...**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	שבת קודש
1 <sup>st</sup> August כ"א אב	2 <sup>nd</sup> August כ"ב אב	3 <sup>rd</sup> August כ"ג אב	4 <sup>th</sup> August כ"ד אב	5 <sup>th</sup> August כ"ה אב	6 <sup>th</sup> August כ"ו אב	7 <sup>th</sup> August כ"ז אב
Berachot 9:5 – Peah 1:1	Peah 1:2-3	Peah 1:4-5	Peah 1:6-2:1	Peah 2:2-3	Peah 2:4-5	Peah 2:6-7

