



Ikar and Tafel

The sixth *perek* of *Berachot* discusses the *berachot* made on food. The *Mishnah* (6:7) teaches that if one is going to eat two foods, they make one *beracha* on the main food (*ikar*) while the secondary food (*tafel*) does not require a *beracha*. The case brought in the *Mishnah* is where one is eating very salty food and follows it with bread to calm their palate. The *Mishnah* teaches that one only needs to make a *beracha* on the salty food. We shall try to understand this law.

There are two ways to understand why the *tafel* does not require a *beracha*. One is that that which is secondary simply does not require a *beracha*. Since it is not the focus, the requirement of the *beracha* was removed. Alternatively, the *tafel* does still require a *beracha*. It is simply that now the *beracha* for the *tafel* is the *beracha* of the *ikar*. It is now considered like two foods that have the same *beracha*.

The *Chazon Ish* (27:9) cites the *Tosfot* to resolve this question. The *Tosfot* (*Berachot* 44a, s.v. *BeOchlei*) understand that if the *tafel* was not present at the time one ate the *ikar*, then one would need to make a *beracha* on the *tafel*. For example, if one ate the salty food and only after wanted to eat bread to remove the fiery taste from their mouth, they would then need to make a *beracha*. The *Chazon Ish* reasons that this sounds like the second understanding of *ikar* and *tafel*. The reason why ordinarily the *tafel* does not need a *beracha* is because it is covered by the *beracha* on the *ikar*. If however it was not present at the time one consumed the *ikar* then one can understand why a *beracha* is required. According to the first understanding however, that the *tafel* is exempt for a *beracha* entirely, it is not clear why if the *tafel* came after it would require a *beracha*.

The *Chiddushei R' Aryeh Leib* (1:1) agrees with *Chazon Ish*'s conclusion but brings a different proof. He cites the *Terumat HaDeshen* that rules that if one ate the *tafel* prior to the *ikar*, the *tafel* would require a *beracha*. We find therefore that the *tafel* is not completely exempted from the *beracha* –

it still requires one. This ruling would seem to follow the second understanding, that the *beracha* on the *tafel* is not required since its *beracha* becomes the *beracha* recited on the *ikar*. If however the *tafel* was consumed first, since no *beracha* has been recited to exempt it, a *beracha* is required.

The *Chiddushei R' Aryeh Leib* continues that the proof is not solid. One could say that according to the understanding that the *tafel* does not require a *beracha* at all, that is only after the *beracha* on the *ikar* is recited. The reason why the *tafel* requires a *beracha* if consumed first, is that that exemption has not yet been activated.

There may be another reason why the second proof is not sufficient. In that case where the *tafel* preceded the *ikar*, there is a debate regarding the *beracha* that should be recited. According to the *Beit Yosef* (OC 212) the *beracha* should be the appropriate *beracha* that would be recited if that food was eaten on its own (see *Tur* 210 in the name of the *Rosh*).

The *Darkei Moshe* however agrees with the position of the *Ohr Zaruah* that the *beracha* would be *she'hakol*. He explains that the obligation in this context to make a refined *beracha* on the *tafel* is not required, because that is not where he is deriving his prime enjoyment from. Instead a *beracha* is needed because one is not allowed to derive benefit from this world without a *beracha*, consequently the *beracha* of *shehakol* is sufficient.

Perhaps according to the *Darkei Moshe*, one could still understand that in the context of *ikar* and *tafel*, the *beracha* is only required on the *ikar* and not on the *tafel* since that is the prime source of enjoyment. Once the *beracha* is made then both foods can be consumed. If however the *tafel* preceded the *ikar*, one has a different problem. One is not allowed to derive benefit without the recitation of a (basic) *beracha*, consequently a *shehakol* is required.¹

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¹ Note that while this explanation might be able to be used to reject the proof brought by the *Chiddushei R' Aryeh Leib*, the proof of the *Chazon Ish* still stands. In other words, it does not explain why a

beracha is required on the *tafel* if it is brought after the *ikar* is consumed.

