

Review Sheet #16:

Unauthorized Brachos:

1. A *bracha levatala* is a bracha said in vain -- i.e. it is said for no reason, or its purpose is not fulfilled. This violates the prescribed conditions that the Sages set for brachot. For example, You hold up an apple, and say "*borei pri ha'aitz*," and then realize that the apple you are holding is completely rotten and inedible. Or if you make a totally incorrect brocha, such as "*borei pri ha'aitz*," on a piece of chicken.
2. A *bracha she'ayna tzricha* is an unnecessary bracha -- i.e. it was said on a food that was already covered by a previous bracha. Although the bracha is in one sense "fulfilled" (i.e. the food is eaten), nevertheless the bracha is unnecessary and hence improper. For example, you begin your meal with bread, saying the bracha Hamotzee. You then take a piece of chicken and say the bracha Shehakol.
3. One is not even allowed to cause a *bracha she'ayna tzricha* to be said. This means that you may not say a bracha when it could have been avoided, as in the following case: You sit down to a meal and first say the bracha Shehakol on the chicken. You then proceed to say a bracha on the bread.
4. This last rule, however, only applies only when you are planning to eat the second food right away. If, however, the second food is not going to be eaten right now, the first food may be eaten with its own bracha. For example, you come home, while waiting for dinner to be ready, and grab a drink to quench your thirst, saying the bracha Shehakol. Since the meal was not ready yet, and you were thirsty right now, you were not obligated to wait to take a drink.
5. One may say a bracha on an appetizer that precedes bread, e.g. a grapefruit, since this is the normal sequence of a meal.
6. How can you rectify a situation of potential *bracha levatala*? For example, you say the bracha Shehakol on a glass of apple juice, and lift the glass to your mouth when suddenly... it slips from your hand and spills all over the floor. What can you do in order to "save" this from being a *bracha levatala*? 1) The simplest advice is to pick the cup off the floor, and drink the few drops of apple juice remaining in the cup. 2) If this is not possible (e.g. it was made of glass and shattered), then you should quickly pour some more juice from the container and drink that (assuming that when reciting the blessing, you had the intention to drink more from the container, or the container was on the table even without specific intention). 3) If this is not possible, you could take another food that was "covered" (as in #2 above) by the first bracha. 4) Finally, if none of these options exist, you should recite the following phrase, "*Baruch Sheim Kevod Malchuso Le'olam Va'ed*." As a praise of God, *Baruch Sheim* compensates, so to speak, for the previous dishonor to God.
7. What do you do in a case where you've begun a bracha, and in the middle realize that it's unnecessary? 1) If you have only said the words, "*Baruch Ata*," then simply stop. Since you haven't said God's name, there's no harm done. 2) If you realize your mistake after saying "*Baruch Ata Adonoy*," then you should quickly continue with the words "*lam'dayni chu'kecha*." By doing so, you have recited a full verse from Psalms 119:12: "*Baruch Ata Adonoy, lam'dayni chu'kecha*" -- and thus cleverly avoided saying God's name in vain! 3) If, however, you are already further into the bracha (i.e. you already said "Eloheinu"), the only corrective measure is to recite "*Baruch sheim k'vod malchuto l'olam va'ed*," as described above.
8. What happens if you are in doubt about whether you've already recited a bracha? 1) Ask someone else who is starting to eat to "have you in mind" when saying his bracha. You should answer "Amen," and by doing so, his bracha is effective for you as well. 2) Say a new bracha on a food that was **not** included in your original bracha. 3) Change your location in a way that requires a new bracha. 4) By the strict letter of the law, you could

continue to eat without saying a bracha. In practice, however, the above options should be used first. And even if none of these options are available, it is better to recite the bracha **without** saying God's names aloud -- i.e. while concentrating on God's names mentally.

9. When teaching children to say brachot, one is permitted to say the name of God in order to show the child the correct pronunciation.
10. Similarly, when teaching an adult, the name of God may be uttered when necessary. For example, you could say a bracha word-for-word along with someone who doesn't know how to do so on his own.