

המקורבים למשפחה, והאשה נצבת לפנייהם ומברכת ברכת הגומל. לפיכך במקום צורך, יש להקל לברך ברכת הגומל אף בלילה.

Women are also obligated to recite the *“Ha’Gomel”* blessing, for surely there is no distinction between men and women regarding one’s obligation to thank Hashem for the goodness He has bestowed upon him/her. Hagaon Harav Moshe Feinstein, among others, rules accordingly.

The author of the Keneset Ha’Gedola (Hagaon Rabbeinu Chaim Benbinishti, student of Rabbeinu Yosef of Tarani, one of the greatest Acharonim who lived approximately 400 years ago) writes that he is astounded about the custom that women do not recite the *“Ha’Gomel”* blessing. He writes that in his opinion, this is a mistaken custom, for since this a blessing of thanksgiving, who has exempted women from reciting it? Although this blessing must be recited in the presence of ten men (as we have explained in a previous Halacha) and it is not respectful for a woman to stand in front of ten men for “the glory of a king’s daughter is within,” nevertheless, this is not enough of a reason to exempt women from a blessing that they are obligated to recite. This is especially true since a woman can recite the *“Ha’Gomel”* blessing while standing in the women’s section of the synagogue and the men praying in the main sanctuary will be able to hear her.

Based on this, several Poskim write that it is customary for the woman to go to the synagogue and she should ask her husband or someone else to notify the Gabbai that she would like to recite the *“Ha’Gomel”* blessing during the reading of the weekly Torah portion at which point the congregation will answer “Amen” to her blessing. However, if ten men are not present, Maran Rabbeinu Ovadia Yosef zt”l writes that since according to Maran Ha’Shulchan Aruch who rules that one must only recite this blessing in front of ten men, the woman should not recite the *“Ha’Gomel”* blessing. Seven days after a woman gives birth, she is

considered to like any other ill person who has recovered and she must recite the “*Ha’Gomel*” blessing in front of ten Jewish men. A woman who has given birth may recite this blessing in her home when there are ten men present. Similarly, if she has given birth to a baby boy, she may recite the “*Ha’Gomel*” blessing during the festive meal following the *Berit Milah* or during the festive meal following the birth of a baby girl; all those in attendance should answer “Amen” to her blessing. (A woman should not abstain from reciting blessings, praying, and performing Mitzvot just because she is still impure).

The Poskim discuss whether the “*Ha’Gomel*” blessing should be recited at night as there are those that say that this blessing is customarily recited after the reading of the Torah; therefore, even women should only recite this blessing during the day and not during the night. Maran Rabbeinu Ovadia Yosef *zt”l* writes that the accepted custom is that women do in fact recite the “*Ha’Gomel*” blessing on the eve of the *Berit Yitzchak* (the night preceding the *Berit Milah*) when a small gathering is held in the home of the woman who has given birth for ten (male) friends and relatives of the family, at which point the woman stands in front of them and recites the “*Ha’Gomel*” blessing. Thus, when necessary, the “*Ha’Gomel*” blessing can be recited at night as well.

Other ideas: Although some have claimed that Birkat Ha'gomel may be recited in the presence of ten women, and does not require specifically a Minyan, Halacha follows the view that the recitation of this Beracha indeed requires the presence of ten men.

The Beit Yosef (commentary to the Tur by Rabbi Yosef Karo, author of the Shulchan Aruch) cites a view that a husband can recite Birkat Ha'gomel in his wife's stead after childbirth. This opinion, however, is not accepted as the final Halacha, and therefore the wife must personally come to the synagogue to recite Birkat Ha'gomel. It has also been claimed by some that the process of pregnancy and childbirth, unlike other illnesses, is a natural condition that occurs very frequently, and hence does not require the recitation of Birkat Ha'gomel. This opinion, too, was rejected by the Halachic authorities. The

Chesed La'alafim (work of Halacha by Rabbi Eliezer Papo, Bulgaria, 1785-1828) and Kaf Ha'chayim (by Rabbi Chayim Palachi, Turkey, 1788-1868), among others, explicitly rule that a woman must recite Birkat Ha'gomel after recovering from childbirth to express her gratitude to the Almighty for helping her recover. The Kaf Ha'chayim held that this Beracha should be recited no earlier than seven days after the birth, at which point the woman generally has recovered from labor. Chacham Ovadia Yosef, in his work Yechaveh Da'at, follows this ruling and requires that a woman recite Birkat Ha'gomel seven days after childbirth if she feels healthy.

Can someone say the beracha for someone else?

מִרְן סַעִיף ד

**אם ברך אחר ואמר ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם אשר גמלך כל טוב וענה אמן יצא וכן
אם אמר בריך רחמנה מלכא דעלמא דיהבא לן וענה אמן יצא**

**ואין זה ברכה לבטלה מן המברך אף על פי שלא נתחייב בברכה בו הואיל ואינו מברך רק
דרך שבח והודאה על טובת חבירו ששמח בה**

מִרְן סַעִיף ה

**אם ברך אחד הגומל לעצמו ונתכוין להוציא את חבירו ושמע חבירו וכוון לצאת יצא אפילו
בלא עניית אמן כיון שמברך גם כן חייב יצא אחר בלא עניית אמן**

The Shulhan Aruch (Orah Haim 219:4) rules that if a person is obligated to recite Birkat Ha'gomel, but instead of reciting it himself, he hears somebody else recite the Beracha for him, and he then answers "Amen," he fulfills his obligation. In such a case, the Shulhan Aruch writes, the one reciting the Beracha should modify the text of the Beracha, and recite "She'gemalcha" instead of "She'gemalani," since he recites the Beracha for somebody else, and not for himself. The Rama (Rabbi Moshe Isserles of Cracow, 1525-1572), in his glosses to the Shulhan Aruch, explains that this recitation is not considered a "Beracha Le'batala" (Beracha recited in vain), because the one reciting the Beracha rejoices over the fact that his fellow was saved. He expresses joy and praise to God for rescuing his fellow from a dangerous situation, and thus this Beracha is perfectly valid.

The Mishna Berura (commentary by Rav Yisrael Meir Kagan of Radin, 1839-1933) notes that a common application of this rule is a husband's recitation of the Beracha on his wife's behalf. If a woman must recite Birkat Ha'gomel, but she cannot attend the synagogue or she does not know how to recite the Beracha, then her husband can recite the Beracha on her behalf. If she is present when he recites the Beracha, then he recites the text of "She'gamalech"; if she is not present, such as if the husband recites the

Beracha in the synagogue and she is home, then he recites "She'gamal Le'ishti."

The Mishna Berura then proceeds to qualify this ruling of the Shulhan Aruch, asserting that it allows reciting the Beracha only on behalf of one's family member or close friend. In such cases, one indeed feels genuine joy over the person's safe emergence from danger, and he may therefore recite the Beracha on that person's behalf. When other people are rescued from danger, one does not necessarily experience feelings of joy and gratitude, and he therefore cannot recite the Beracha on their behalf. The Mishna Berura concludes that because of this significant restriction, one should not recite Birkat Ha'gomel for another person, except for one's father or Rabbi, as in such cases he indeed experiences immense joy. For others, however, one should not recite Birkat Ha'gomel.

Notwithstanding this discussion, Rav Shemuel Pinhasi, in his work Ve'chol Ha'haim (p. 23) observes the common practice not to allow reciting Birkat Ha'gomel on someone else's behalf under any circumstances. Even if the person who must recite the Beracha is one's family member, and even if that person is unable to personally recite the Beracha, he should not recite the Beracha on that person's behalf. Of course, if one is himself obligated to recite the Beracha, then he may have the other individual in mind so he can fulfill the obligation through his recitation. For example, if two people traveled together, after the trip one can recite the Beracha on behalf of both of them. However, if a person had already recited the Beracha, or is not obligated at all in Birkat Ha'gomel, he may not recite it on someone else's behalf. Birkat Ha'gomel differs in this respect from other Misvot, where Halacha allows one to recite the required text on behalf of another even if he had already fulfilled his obligation. Since Birkat Ha'gomel is a personal expression of gratitude to the Almighty, only the person who was rescued from danger may recite the Beracha. This is also the ruling of Hacham Ovadia Yosef, in his work Hazon Ovadia – Berachot (p. 355).

Summary: If a person emerged from a dangerous situation and is therefore obligated to recite Birkat Ha'gomel, he must recite the Beracha personally; he may not ask somebody else to recite the Beracha on his behalf. However, if two people are obligated to recite Birkat Ha'gomel, one may recite the Beracha on behalf of both of them.

Sick person:

ובענין מה שכתבנו שחולה שנתרפא צריך לברך הגומל, כתב הרמב"ן בספר תורת האדם, "לענין ברכת הגומל לחולה שנתרפא, לאו דוקא בחולה שיש בו סכנה, אלא כל שעלה למיטה, צריך להודות בברכת הגומל, שכל שעלה למיטה דומה למי שהעלוהו לגרדום לידון, שצריך פרקליטים (סנגורים)

גדולים להנצל, וברחמי הקדוש ברוך הוא הזמין לו פרקליטים טובים על ידי מצות ומעשים טובים שעשה". עד כאן.

וכיוצא בזה כתב הרשב"א בתשובה, ועוד מרבותינו הראשונים. ורבינו המאירי הביא את דעת האומרים שאין צריך לברך הגומל אלא חולה שיש בו סכנה, וכתב, ואין אני מודה בכך, אלא כל שעלה למיטה וירד מברך הגומל, שהרי הוא כמי שהעלוהו לגרדום לידון.

ולענין מעשה פסק מרן השלחן ערוך (סימן ריט סעיף ח): על כל חולי צריך לברך הגומל, אפילו אינו חולי של סכנה, אלא כל שעלה למיטה וירד, מפני שדומה כמי שהעלוהו לגרדום. והרמ"א בהגה כתב, ויש אומרים שאינו מברך אלא על חולי שיש בו סכנה כגון מכה של חלל, וכן נוהגים באשכנז. עד כאן. ובאמת שאף למנהג האשכנזים, יש אומרים שעל כל חולי שנאלץ לשכב במטה, צריך לברך הגומל.

והמנהג פשוט אצל הספרדים ובני עדות המזרח לברך הגומל על כל חולי אף על פי שאין בו סכנה, ובלבד שהיה מרותק למטה בחוליו.

Regarding the obligation of one who was sick and then healed to recite the "Ha'Gomel" blessing, the Ramban writes in his Sefer Torat Ha'Adam: "Regarding the "Ha'Gomel" blessing for a sick person who has recovered, this does not apply specifically to a person with a life-threatening illness; rather, as long as one was bedridden, one must praise Hashem with the "Ha'Gomel" blessing, for anyone who has been bedridden is considered to have been seated on the prosecutor's bench awaiting judgment and needs a great defense in order to be saved. Hashem in His great mercy provided this person with the necessary defense through the Mitzvot and good deeds that he has performed."

The Rashba and other Rishonim write similarly. The Meiri quotes the opinions that write that only one who recovers from a life-threatening illness recites the "Ha'Gomel" blessing and then writes, "I do not agree with this; rather anyone who was bedridden and then arose [from his illness] must recite the "Ha'Gomel" blessing for he is considered to have been judged on the prosecutor's bench."

Halachically speaking, Maran Ha'Shulchan Aruch (Chapter 219, Section 8) rules, as follows: "For any illness, even one which is not life-threatening, one must recite the "Ha'Gomel" blessing, for as long as one was bedridden and since recovered, one is considered to have been seated on the prosecutor's bench awaiting judgment." The Rama there notes, however, "Some say that one only recites the "Ha'Gomel" blessing for a life-threatening illness, such as an internal injury, and this is the Ashkenazi custom." Nevertheless, some say that even according to the Ashkenazi custom, if one's illness caused one to be confined to bed, one must recite the "Ha'Gomel" blessing. The Taz (siman 219, S"K 5) says that one must be bedridden for at least 3 days to recite HaGomel.

The practice among Sephardim follows the ruling of the Shulchan Aruch, requiring the recitation of Birkat Ha'gamel even upon recovering from a non-life-threatening illness that causes the person to be bedridden for any amount of time. This practice is in accordance with the principle that where there is an established Minhag (custom) concerning the recitation of a Beracha, we follow the accepted custom even if it is subject to some controversy. This is, indeed, the position of many leading authorities, including Rabbi David Abudarham (Spain, 14th century), the Chid"א (Rabbi Chayim Yosef David Azulai, Israel, 1724-1806) in L'David Emet, siman 23 Ot 7, Chacham Bentzion Abba Shaul (Jerusalem, 1924-1998) in Or L'Tzion helek 2:44 page 141, and Chacham Ovadia Yosef in Halichot Olam, Helek 2 Parashat Ekeb.

Therefore, a person who, Heaven forbid, suffered a bad flu, fever, or even a debilitating cold, which kept him bedridden for even a single day, should recite Birkat Ha'gamel upon recovering from his illness.

Question: If one was sick with the Coronavirus but was not in any life-threatening danger and the illness merely caused one to be bedridden, must one recite the "*Ha'Gomel*" blessing?

לכן לענין השאלה, מי שחלה בקורונה בצורה רצינית, עד כדי כך שהיה שוכב במיטה, כאשר יבריא בחוליו, עליו לברך ברכת הגומל בפני עשרה בני אדם מישראל. אבל אם חלה באופן שלא הרגיש כלל בתסמיני המחלה, אינו רשאי לברך ברכת הגומל, כי על ענין כמו זה לא תיקנו רבותינו ברכה. אולם, "טוב להודות לה", ויודה בפיו בפרקי תהלים וכדומה. אך לא בברכה ממש.

Thus, halachically speaking, if one fell ill as a result of COVID-19 to the extent that one became bedridden, when one recovers, one must recite the "*Ha'Gomel*" blessing when one recovers. Nevertheless, even if one tests positive for COVID-19 antibodies but one did not suffer from any of the common symptoms, one may not recite the blessing, for our Sages did not enact the blessing to be recited under such circumstances. Nevertheless, it is appropriate for one to offer thanks to Hashem by reciting several chapters of Tehillim and the like.

חולה קורונה שלא נזהר

שאלה: מי שחלה בקורונה ונפל למשכב, באופן שהוא גרם לעצמו את החולי על ידי חוסר זהירותו, האם כשיבריא צריך לברך ברכת הגומל?

תשובה: בהלכה הקודמת ביארנו, שמי שנחלה בחולי כזה שנאלץ לשכב במיטה, כגון שחלה בשפעת רצינית, או קורונה, כאשר יבריא, עליו לברך ברכת הגומל בפני עשרה אנשים מישראל, וכפי שנתבאר.

ועתה נדון, במי שנחלה מחמת פשיעתו, כגון שהצטופף עם הרבה בני אדם, ובלי מסיכה וכדומה. או שהלך במקום קר מאד בלא מעיל כראוי, ולכן נחלה כל גופו, האם יוכל לברך אחרי שיבריא "ברכת הגומל" או לא.

"הכל בידי שמים חוץ מצנים ופחים"

והנה בגמרא במסכת כתובות (דף ל.) אמרו, "הכל בידי שמים, חוץ מצנים ופחים, שנאמר, צנים ופחים בדרך עקש שומר נפשו ירחק מהם". ופירש רש"י, שכל מיני פורענות הבאים על האדם, גזירה מן השמים הם, חוץ מצנים ופחים, כלומר, קור וחום, שפעמים באים עליו בפשיעתו.

ואם כן, מכיון שהאיש הזה פשע ומחוסר זהירותו לקה בשפעת או בקורונה, לכאורה אין מן הראוי שיברך הגומל, שהרי הברכה תהיה לו למזכרת עון על מה שחטא בכל שלא נזהר כראוי לשמור על בריאותו.

Question: If one becomes ill with the Coronavirus due to one's own negligence to the extent that one becomes bedridden, must this individual recite the "*Ha'Gomel*" blessing upon recovering?

Answer: In the [previous Halacha](#) we have explained that one who becomes ill to the point where he becomes confined to bed, as is the case with a serious flu and the like, when one recovers, one must recite the "*Ha'Gomel*" blessing in front of ten Jewish men.

We will now discuss a situation where one became sick due to one's own negligence, such as walking around in a very cold place without proper outerwear, and as a result, one's entire body becomes unwell. Will such an individual indeed recite the "*Ha'Gomel*" blessing upon recovering or not?

"Everything is in the Hands of Heaven Besides for Cold and Heat"

The Gemara in Masechet Ketubot (30a) tells us, "Everything is in the hands of Heaven besides for [illnesses related to] cold and heat as the verse says, 'Cold and heat are in the path of the stubborn one, one who guards his soul will distance himself from them.'" Rashi there explains that all illnesses are decreed in Heaven besides for illnesses related to cold and heat which can sometimes befall a person due to his own negligence.

Thus, since this person was careless and as a result, contracted the flu, it would seem that he should not recite the "*Ha'Gomel*" blessing upon recovering, for this will serve as a reminder of his sin of not adequately guarding his health.

הרפואה תמיד באה מאת ה'

אמנם, בשאלתינו ממש דן הגאון רבי אברהם מיוחס בשו"ת שדה הארץ, האם צריך לברך הגומל על מי שחלה בצנים פחים, ובתוך דבריו כתב, "ואף על פי ששמעתי בשם הרב המובהק רבי יהודה הכהן ז"ל, שאמר, שבחולי כזה שבא על ידי האדם עצמו אינו צריך לברך הגומל, מכל מקום מכיון שאין ספק שהסרת החולי אינה אלא על ידי הקדוש ברוך הוא, שאין רפואת החולי על ידי בשר ודם, אלא השי"ת שולח דברו הטוב וירפאהו, בודאי שצריך לברך הגומל, ולהודות לה' אשר גזר אומר לרפאותו מחוליו, ומה איכפת לנו שהחולי בא על ידי פשיעתו. וסיים, וכן מנהג העולם לברך ברכת הגומל על מחלת הקדחת של צנים ופחים, לאחר שעבר החולי מכל וכל ונתרפא לגמרי. הרי מבואר בפירוש שגם אם נפל למשכב באשמתו על ידי חוסר זהירות מהקור והחום, כשיתרפא צריך לברך הגומל.

מי שניסה להתאבד

וגדולה מזו כתב הגאון רבי חיים פלאג'י בשו"ת לב חיים, אודות מי שניסה לאבד עצמו לדעת, על ידי שתיית רעל מסוכן, ועל ידי טיפול רפואי נמרץ שב לאיתנו ועמד על בוריו, האם יברך הגומל, והשיב, שנראה פשוט שחייב לברך הגומל, שאף על פי שסתם חולה שנתרפא שמברך, היינו כשהחולי בא לו בעל כרחו, שלא היה רצונו בכך, ומן השמים גזרו עליו, וכשקם מחוליו צריך להודות לה' בברכת הגומל, אבל בנדון זה הוא עצמו הביא את עצמו לחולי מסוכן זה, מכל מקום נראה שאין חילוק בזה, שעיקר תקנת הברכה אינה אלא על הרפואה, שמן השמים חסו עליו וריפאוהו, ולכן אין כל הבדל בין סתם חולה שנתרפא לזה שניסה לאבד עצמו לדעת, כולם צריכים לברך הגומל.

ולכן לסיכום: מי שחלה מחמת חוסר זהירותו, והבריא, צריך לברך הגומל, כי הרפואה היא ביד ה', ללא קשר לסיבת המחלה. וכמבואר בשו"ת יחווה דעת (ח"ד סימן יד).

Healing Always Comes Directly from Hashem

Nevertheless, our question is addressed directly by Hagaon Harav Avraham Meyuchas in his Responsa Sedeh Ha'aretz, whether or not one who fell ill due to heat or cold needs to recite the "Ha'Gomel" blessing. Within his response he writes, "Even though I have heard in the name of the great scholar Harav Yehuda HaKohen zt"l that for a sickness that befalls a person due to his own carelessness one does not recite the "Ha'Gomel" blessing, since the cure for this ailment surely only comes from Hashem, for only Hashem can heal one's illnesses and not men of flesh and blood, surely one must recite the "Ha'Gomel" blessing to thank Hashem who decreed that his sickness should be healed, for what does it matter that this illness came as a result of his own negligence?" He concludes by saying, "This is the prevalent custom that one recites the "Ha'Gomel" blessing upon recovering completely from a fever due to heat or cold." We see clearly that even a person who is confined to bed because of a sickness that befell him due to his own negligence regarding heat and cold must recite the "Ha'Gomel" blessing.

Attempted Suicide

Hagaon Harav Chaim Palagi probes in his Responsa Lev Chaim regarding someone who tried to commit suicide by drinking a poisonous substance and with the help of emergency medical attention, his life was saved and he recovered, whether or not this person should recite the "Ha'Gomel" blessing. He answers that it is quite simple that he must recite the "Ha'Gomel" blessing, for even though the usual case of a sick person who recovers involves a sickness that befell one against his will as decreed by Heaven and when one recovers, one must offer thanks to Hashem by reciting the "Ha'Gomel" blessing, here, although this individual brought this danger upon himself, nevertheless, it makes no difference, for the main enactment (to recite the "Ha'Gomel" blessing) is because of the fact that Hashem had mercy on him and sent him a full recovery. Therefore, there is no distinction between a regular person who was ill and then recovered and someone who recovers from attempted suicide in that they must both recite the "Ha'Gomel" blessing.

Summary: One who falls ill as a result of one's own negligence and later recovers must recite the "Ha'Gomel" blessing, for the power of healing is solely in the hands of Hashem, regardless of the cause of the illness. Maran zt"l rules accordingly in his Responsa Yechave Da'at (Volume 4, Chapter 14).

Imprisoned

בן איש חי

כל חבוש חייב לברך ביציאתו הן חבוש על עסקי נפשות הן על עסקי ממון ואפילו היה חבוש על פרעון המס וכן אפילו חבוש בעבור ממון שהוא לאל ידו לפרוע ורק מורד באלמות או חושב בעבור חבישתו יתפשרו עמו כל אלה בכלל חבוש הן ולא פלוג רבנן

גר"ח פלאג"י חילק בין מכניס בבית הסוהר של כבוד עבור חוב אין לברך אבל כשמכניסים אותו למקום בזוי ורע אפילו על עסקי ממון חייב לברך מצד סכנת הגוף במקום ההוא

אמנם כ' כף החיים דחייב לברך כיון כשהיה בבית הסוהר לא היה מושל בנפשו ועתה יצא מאותו מצב נראה שאין לחלק ואפילו של כבוד חייב לברך

חזון עובדיה

מי שנדון במשפט לעובדות שירות שעליו להתייצב בכל יום במשטרה כדי לשגרר לעבודה אינו מברך הגומל בשחרורו

מי שהוגש נגדו כתב אישום על ידי הפרקליטות ושחרר בערבות אינו מברך הגומל שראינו פעמים רבות שאחר שהוגש כתב אישום יצא זכאי בבית המשפט