



Mistake in *Beracha* on Delayed Laying of *Tefillin* – part II

Question: I was at home with a weak stomach and decided it would be halachically prudent to put on my *tefillin* for a shortened period (from after *Yishtabach* through *Shemoneh Esrei*). After I fastened the *tefillin shel yad*, I realized that the *beracha* I had recited was not the one for *tefillin* but that I had instinctively said *Yotzer Ohr*. I continued *davening* with just the *shel yad* until the next semi-break, *Yotzer Hame'orot*, at which point I put on the *shel rosh*. Was that correct?

Answer: [Last time we saw that in the midst of *Birkat Yotzer Ohr*, there were two reasonable ways to time putting on the *shel rosh* and making the *berachot*.]

Had you switched the *beracha* to *L'hani'ach Tefillin* within *toch k'dei dibur* (app. two seconds), you probably could have combined the *beracha* opening with the intended, preferable wording and ignored *Yotzer Ohr* (see Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 209:2). Having not done so,

were you truly in the midst of the *beracha* of *Yotzer Ohr* and were correct in continuing with it or was the unintended *beracha* of *Yotzer Ohr* worthless?

It might seem to depend on the question (see Berachot 13a; Megilla 17a) of *mitzvot tzrichot kavana* (are *mitzvot* valid *b'di'eved* if the right action was done without intention to fulfill the *mitzva*?). While the ruling is not fully clear, especially concerning a Rabbinic *mitzva*, including almost all *berachot*, the main current is that one does not fulfill the *mitzva* (Shulchan Aruch, OC 60:4 and Mishna Berura 60:10). Also, it is possible that a *beracha* made with a different *beracha* in mind is worse (see Tosafot, Berachot 12a). Furthermore, arguably a “slip of the tongue” (you apparently went from *Yishtabach* to *Yotzer Ohr* on “auto pilot”) might be considered *mitasek*, which is worse than lack of intent (see Rosh Hashana 32b). On the other hand, this case might be better than classic *mitasek*, as you intended to praise Hashem with a *beracha*, albeit a different one.

Whether your *Yotzer Ohr* was valid might depend on how one learns a Magen Avraham (209:5). Writing about one who

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recites *Malbish Arumim* with *Poke'ach Ivrim* in mind and then immediately inserts *Pokeiach Ivrim*, the Magen Avraham is unsure which *beracha* he fulfills. If he had intended for *Malbish Arumim* and then tried to "erase" it in favor of *Pokeiach Ivrim*, he fulfilled *Malbish Arumim*. The Panim Meiros (I:58) changes the text in the Magen Avraham because one can correct a mistaken recitation immediately (Shulchan Aruch, OC 209:2 about one who recited *Borei Pri Hagafen* on water), and the Magen Avraham says that one who mistakenly recited, at *Havdala*, *Borei Me'orei Ha'eish* before *Borei Minei Besamim* can correct to *Borei Minei Besamim*. The Dagul Meirevava keeps our text and distinguishes as follows. In the case of water and of *besamim*, the object he held during the *beracha* proved he made a mistake, which enables him to switch to the correct *beracha*. In contrast, regarding *Pokeiach Ivrim*/*Malbish Arumim*, there is no physical indication the *beracha* was mistaken and therefore, it is unclear

if he can change it. The *Yad Ephrayim* (ad loc.) makes a different distinction. Because *Borei Pri Hagafen* on water is nonsensical, moving on from *Borei Pri Hagafen* is natural, whereas regarding *Malbish Arumim* and *Pokeiach Ivrim*, which are both appropriate *berachot*, it might not be possible to switch, as the originally recitation takes effect. Our case contains a split between the distinctions. On the one hand, *Yotzer Ohr* and *L'hani'ach Tefillin* were both appropriate at that point, but being about to fasten the *tefillin* made it clear you did not intend then for *Yotzer Ohr*.

The above, though, is moot. Since *Yotzer Ohr* is a long *beracha*, even if lack of intention invalidates its beginning, the continuation of the *beracha* validated it. If you would have stopped for *L'hani'ach Tefillin*, you would have given up on the *beracha* you began, making it *l'vatala*, so it was good you continued. It might have been better to repeat "yotzer ohr..." (without "Baruch ata..."), with *kavana*, but the *beracha*, as you did it, was valid *b'di'eved*. ■

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