

Al Hanissim on Chanuka

1. On Chanuka, the passage of al hanissim is added to Birkat HaMazon between ועל הכל and נודה לך and the Shemoneh Esrei following the passage of Modim.¹ Nothing is added to the beracha of me'ayn shalosh (al hamichya, al hagefen, or al haetz).²
2. If one forgot Al Hanissim in Birkat HaMazon or the Shemoneh Esrei and has recited the name of Hashem in the next beracha, he shouldn't go back, but as long as he has not recited Hashem's name he should go back.³ If he forgot in Birkat Hamazon, then, in the section of Harachamans, he should add הרחמן הוא הזה יעשה לנו נסים ונפלאות כשם שעשה לאבותינו בימים ההם בזמן הזה and then the addition for Chanuka.⁴ If he forgot in the Shemoneh Esrei, he can still recite it before the second לרצונך at the end.⁵
3. If someone is saying Shemoneh Esrei and realizes that if he is going to say Al Hanissim he won't be able to catch Kedusha with the congregation he still should not skip Al Hanissim.⁶

¹ The Gemara (Shabbat 24a) discusses whether one is required to mention Chanuka in Birkat Hamazon: Do we say that since it is only Rabbinic, it doesn't need to be mentioned, or perhaps because it entails Pirsumei Nissa (publicizing the miracle), it should be? Rava rules that one is not required to mention Chanuka, but, if one wishes to, he should mention it during the blessing of Hodaah, just as in the Shemoneh Esrei.

Tosafot (s.v. Mahu Lehazkir) note that the Gemara assumes that one is required to recite Al Hanissim in tefilla since tefilla is said with a tzibbur, there is clearly an element of Pirsumei Nissa. Birkat Hamazon is questionable because it is said in private and has less Pirsumei Nissa. Rambam Berachot 2:6 and Shulchan Aruch 682:1 write that we add Al Hanissim to Birkat Hamazon and the Shemoneh Esrei. The Bach 682 cites the Raavya, who says that, although the Gemara's conclusion seems to be that Al Hanissim in Birkat Hamazon is optional, we have accepted upon ourselves to recite it.

² Mishna Brurah 682:2 and [Yalkut Yosef Chanuka pg. 602](#). Yabia Omer OC 3:36 deals with whether one is permitted to add it in if he wants. He concludes that ideally one should not add anything, but, if one did so by mistake, it is not considered a hefsek. Rivevot Ephraim 8:272:1 and Tzitz Eliezer 14:63 agree.

Why isn't it mentioned? The Maharam Rutenberg (Teshuva 70) explains that Al Hanissim is a prayer of thanks and is therefore inserted in the appropriate Berachot in Shemoneh Esrei and Birkat Hamazon. Al Hamichya does not have such a component and thus there is no mention. The Levush OC 208:12 says the same idea without mentioning the Maharam.

Mishna Berura 208:59 quoting the Gra, writes that mentioning Shabbat and Yom Tov in Birkat Hamazon is an obligation, whereas mentioning Chanukah and Purim is only a minhag. The minhag was only adopted for Birkat Hamazon and not Al Hamichya.

Rav Soloveitchik (Igrot Hagrid Berachot 3:13 and Harerei Kedem vol. 1: pg. 302) explains that regarding Shabbat and Rosh Chodesh, the inherent kedusha of the day obligates us to mention them even in Me'ayn Shalosh. On the other hand, for Purim and Chanuka there is no kedusha of the day (melacha is permitted). We mention Al Hanissim simply as an expansion of the Hodaah. As part of our thanks, it is fitting to mention the specific miracle of the day. The Me'ayn Shalosh is designed to incorporate all the key elements of Birkat Hamazon in a condensed version. The additions for Shabbat, Yom Tov, and Rosh Chodesh are independent portions of Birkat Hamazon and are therefore included in abridged Me'ayn Shalosh. However, Al Hanissim is not an independent portion of Birkat Hamazon, so it is left out of the abridged version.

See also Rav Chaim Soloveitchik (cited in Haggadah Shel Pesach MiBeit Levi pg. 233) and Tzitz Eliezer 9:13 for other approaches.

³ Shulchan Aruch 682:1. See Yechave Daat 5:49 that you should not say למדני חוקיך once you say Hashem's name or simply insert the al hanissim between the beracha and the beginning of the next one because that would be considered a hefsek, unlike the Eshel Avraham 695 who makes those suggestions.

Mishna Brurah 682:3 adds that even if it is Shabbat and there is an obligation to eat, he should still not go back.

⁴ Rama 682:1 based on Kol Bo 25, [Yalkut Yosef Chanuka pg. 600](#). See Rav Schachter on [Praying for a Miracle on Torahweb.org](#)

⁵ Mishna Brurah 682:4, Aruch Hashulchan 682:3. [Yalkut Yosef Chanuka pg. 593](#) says that you should say there מודים אנחנו לך על הניסים..., based on the Eliya Rabba 682:2 and Maamar Mordechai 682:3.

⁶ Chacham Ovadia Yosef (Chazon Ovadia Chanuka pg. 194 and Yabia Omer OC 2:34, 9:66) against the Yaskil Avdi 8:10. Rav Schachter Shlit"a agrees.