בְּרָכוֹת פֶּרֶק ו׳ מִשְׁנָה ו׳

The Halacha is that שומע כעונה. One can listen to someone making a ברכה and have in mind to be יוצא. In certain cases it is actually preferable to do so, as it says: בְּרֹב עָם הַדְרַת מֶלֶךְ.

There is, however, a big difference between ברכות המצוות and ברכות הנהנין:

- With a mitzvah (like Kiddush, Havdalah, or shofar), the mitzvah itself is the whole focus, so listeners naturally concentrate.
- Food is voluntary. Chachamim realized that if casual listening were enough, people wouldn't give the blessing their full attention — and over time it would undermine ברכות altogether.

Therefore, Chachamim ruled that on ברכות הנהנין, one person only covers everyone else when they eat together as a set group (קביעות), which unites them and focuses everyone on one shared blessing. If unrelated people just happen to eat at the same time, each must bless for himself.

1 הָיוּ יוֹשְׁבִין לֶאֱכֹל — כָּל אֶחָד וְאֶחָד מְבָרֵךְ לְעַצְמוֹ



If a group of people are eating a bread meal sitting upright rather than reclining, each person must recite his own Hamotzi beforehand and his own Birchas HaMazon afterward.

Why? In Mishnaic times, a real, fixed group meal was eaten reclining on couches (הסיבה).

Merely sitting was the way people ate a casual, temporary snack. Since sitting showed they hadn't settled in as one united meal (קביעות), they are viewed as separate individuals who just happen to be eating at the same time — so each person makes his own ברכות.

2 הֶסַבּוּ — אֶחָד מְבָרֵךְ לְכֻלָּן



If they reclined together, one person can make the ברכה for everyone.

Reclining signals a meal that is a קביעות and צירוף. This ensures that all participants concentrate on the ברכה.

קביעות is a Halacha מדרבנן. Therefore, in a case where one has to hear a ברכה from another — for example, if one does not know how to say ברכות correctly — or בדיעבד when one did have proper concentration and כוונה, they are יוצא.

3 בָּא לָהֶם יַיִן בְּתוֹךְ הַמָּזוֹן — כָּל אֶחָד וְאֶחָד מְבָרֵךְ לְעַצְמוֹ; לְאַחַר הַמָּזוֹן — אֶחָד מְבָרֵךְ לְכֻלָּן



Even when the group reclined together, if wine is brought during the meal (when no wine was blessed beforehand), each person makes his own בורא פרי הגפן.

Why? The Gemara explains: אֵין בֵּית הַבְּלִיעָה פָּנוּי — "the throat is not clear" of food. Two reasons:

- People are busy chewing and swallowing, so they won't give the leader's ברכה full attention.
- Someone with food in his mouth might choke trying to answer "Amen."

Instead, each person waits until he finishes swallowing and blesses for himself.

After the meal (once they finish eating bread, before Birchas HaMazon), their mouths and throats are clear, so once again, one person blesses on the wine for everyone.

4 וְהוּא אוֹמֵר עַל הַמְּגֻמָּר, אַף עַל פִּי שֶׁאֵין מְבִיאִין אֶת הַמְּגֻמָּר אֶלָּא לְאַחַר הַסְּעוּדָה



In Mishnaic times, after Birchas HaMazon, fragrant spices were burned over hot coals (מְגֻמָּר) to leave a pleasant scent (requiring a fragrance ברכה, מיני בשמים / בורא עצי בשמים).

The same person who led Birchas HaMazon (Rav; Rambam) — or who led the after-meal wine ברכה (Rashi; Tosafos) — is the one who recites the ברכה on the incense for everyone, even if a more prominent person is at the table.

Why? Since incense only arrives after the meal is completely over (after Birchas HaMazon), you might think it has nothing to do with the meal and the honor should go to someone greater. The Mishnah teaches: once he started leading the closing blessings for the group, he gets the honor of finishing them (כיון שהתחיל — גומר).

- Two diners reclining together unite for המוציא, since they are gathering to eat. Afterward, people's minds naturally turn to dispersing — so ברכת המזון requires three (a זימון) to reunite them, and on other after-blessings everyone blesses alone.
- Today, since we don't recline at meals, sitting together around one table counts as הסבה — though in practice, outside of Shabbos Kiddush and Hamotzi, each person makes his own food ברכה so no one loses proper כוונה.

רַבֵּינוּ עוֹבַדְיָה מִבַּרְטְנוּרָא

הָיוּ יוֹשְׁבִים. בְּלֹא הֶסֵבָה, וְסִימָן הוּא שֶׁלֹּא נִתְוַעֲדוּ לֶאֱכֹל יַחַד. שֶׁרְגִילִים הָיוּ בְּשָׁמְתָּעֲדִים חֲבוּרוֹת אֲנָשִׁים לֶאֱכֹל שֶׁהָיוּ מְסֻבִּים עַל הַמִּטּוֹת וְאוֹכְלִים וְשׁוֹתִים בְּהֶסֵבַת שְׂמֹאל: **כָּל אֶחָד מְבָרֵךְ לְעַצְמוֹ**. שֶׁלֹּא הָיְתָה לָהֶם קְבִיעַ סְעוּדָה בְּלֹא הֶסֵבָה. וּמֵיהוּ אִם אָמְרוּ נִיזִיל נִיכּוֹל נַהֲמָא בְּדוּכְתָּא פְּלָן, אַף עַל פִּי שֶׁלֹּא הֵסַבּוּ כְּהֶסֵבוּ דְּמֵי, וְאֶחָד מְבָרֵךְ לְכֻלָּם, וּמִטַּעֲרְפִין נַמֵּי לְזִמּוּן: **בָּא לָהֶם יַיִן בְּתוֹךְ הַמָּזוֹן כָּל אֶחָד מְבָרֵךְ לְעַצְמוֹ**. הוֹאִיל וְאֵין בֵּית הַבְּלִיעָה פָּנוּי וְאֵין לֵב הַמְסֻבִּים פּוֹנֶה אֶל הַמְבָרֵךְ אֶלָּא לִבְלֹעַ מַה שֶּׁבְּפִיהֶם. אִי נַמֵּי חִישִׁינַן שֶׁמָּא יֵחָנֵק כְּשֶׁבָּא לַעֲנוֹת אָמֵן: **וְהוּא אוֹמֵר עַל הַמְּגֻמָּר**. הַמְבָרֵךְ בִּרְכַּת הַמָּזוֹן הוּא מְבָרֵךְ עַל הַמְּגֻמָּר בּוֹרֵא עֲצֵי בְּשָׂמִים. וְאַף עַל גַּב דְּאִיכָּא דְּעָדִיף מִנֵּיהּ אֲפִלּוּ הָכִי כְּיוָן דְּאַתְחִיל עֲבִיד לְאִידָךְ: **לְאַחַר הַסְּעוּדָה**. לְאַחַר בִּרְכַּת הַמָּזוֹן, דְּהַשְׁתָּא לְאוּ מִצְּרֵכֵי הַסְּעוּדָה הוּא, אֲפִלּוּ הָכִי כֵּיוָן שֶׁהִתְחִיל בִּבְרָכוֹת אַחֲרוֹנוֹת גּוֹמְרָן: **מְגֻמָּר**. רְגִילִין הָיוּ לְהָבִיא אַחַר הַסְּעוּדָה עֲצֵי בְּשָׂמִים בְּמַחְתָּה עַל הָאֵשׁ לְרֵיחַ טוֹב: