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The Timing of Shehecheyanu on New Clothes on the Second Night of Rosh Hashana

Question: If I want to solve the problem of Shehecheyanu on the second night of Rosh HaShana by wearing a new suit,¹ when should I put it on? If I put it on before Ma'ariv, it seems to be hachana (preparation) for the second day of Rosh HaShana. And in any case, shouldn't the b'racha be made right after putting on the new garment? Should I instead put it on right before Kiddush or even put on the jacket during Kiddush right before Shehecheyanu?

Answer: Let us first dismiss the question of HACHANA. Although it is prohibited to prepare on one day of Yom Tov for another, there is no prohibition of HACHANA if there is a purpose to the action on the first holy

day itself, even if the main benefit is for afterward.² Putting on a new article of clothing has an immediate benefit; it makes no difference how long one will wear it now or how important it is for him to wear it on the next day.

The question of whether it is too early to put on the clothes a couple hours before reciting Shehecheyanu has two parts: First, is the b'racha still valid? Second, is one permitted to wait so long before reciting the b'racha?

Let us review the reasoning for having new clothes (or fruit) on the second night of Rosh HaShana. In deference to the minority opinion that Shehecheyanu should not be said at Kiddush on this evening, the accepted practice is to try to have an additional reason to recite it anyway.³ That way, the beracha will certainly not be l'vatala.⁴ This goal is fully attained even if the b'racha should have ideally been recited earlier, as long as it is still definitely appropriate at the time of Kiddush. Indeed, the halacha is that if one did not recite Shehecheyanu on an article of clothing as soon as he put it on, he can still recite it until he takes it off,⁵ at least if he still feels happiness from

¹. See Rama, *Orach Chayim* 600:2.

2. *Shemirat Shabbat K'Hilchata* 28:70.

³. *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim* 600:2; see *Beit Yosef* ad loc.

4. In vain.

5. *V'Zot HaBeracha*, p. 167.

its being new.⁶ One who was happy to put on a new suit before Ma'ariv still feels good when he thinks about it at Kiddush of the first meal at which he wears it. Thus, the effectiveness of the Shehecheyanu is not an issue (not to mention that the need for the new clothes is itself only a chumra, as many authorities maintain that the Shehecheyanu may be recited simply because of Yom Tov).

The next question is whether one may purposely delay reciting Shehecheyanu on the garment, and the answer is that it is permissible. The accepted opinion is that there is no actual obligation to make a b'racha of Shehecheyanu upon happy occasions.⁷ If the b'racha is not obligatory, waiting cannot be forbidden, and it indeed is proper when there is a valid reason for the delay. There are indeed other halachic contexts in which we delay b'rachot to solve problems, such as waiting to say the b'racha on tzitzit to subsume it under the b'racha on the tallit.⁸

Keep in mind that the practice of using new fruit/clothing probably entails a halachic compromise, as we see from the following question that many poskim raise. The entire reason

for using new fruit/clothing is the concern that otherwise the Shehecheyanu is uncalled for, in which case its recitation will relate to the fruit/clothing. But if the Shehecheyanu relates to clothes, isn't the b'racha a hefsek⁹ between the Kiddush and drinking the wine? There are many nuances of answers to this question,¹⁰ but according to most of them, the situation of having the beracha relate to the fruit/clothing is not optimal, but only acceptable – considering the gain. Essentially, a halachic compromise is called for due to necessity in any case, and waiting with Shehecheyanu is not a bigger compromise than the matter of possible hefsek. We do the best we can.

Let us consider alternatives. Putting the jacket on in the middle of Kiddush is not only strange, but also inappropriate for a number of reasons. Might it be better to put on the clothes right before Kiddush? Maybe. But the combination of the fact that it is not natural to do so with the fact that we found no authoritative source that mentions this suggestion¹¹ strengthens our impression that the standard practice is to put the new clothes on before

⁶. *Kaf HaChayim, Orach Chayim* 223:31.

⁷. *Magen Avraham* 225:6; see also *Yechaveh Da'at* III:15.

⁸. *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim* 8:10.

⁹. Improper interruption.

¹⁰. See, for example, *Minchat Shlomo* I:20.

¹¹. See response G-1.

going to shul. Although we understand the tendency toward stringency on Rosh HaShana, we do not consider it worthwhile to be innovative and “holier” than the very reasonable practice of putting on the clothes before Ma’ariv.

