

Halachos of Daily living

Halachos of Tefillas Haderech

I had just started out on a business trip and recited *Tefilas Haderech*, and then my boss called to cancel the trip. Am I obligated to travel

a *parsah* out

of the city so that the *bracha* should

not be a *bracha l'vatala*?

Teshuvos Zichron

Yehuda (OC 42) requires continuing the journey, so that the *bracha* should not be a *bracha l'vatala*. However, Rav Betzalel

Stern, *zt"l* (B'tzeil Hachochma

5:66-67) disagrees. He writes that only regarding *berachos* recited on food and on *mitzvos* do we say that once the *bracha* is said, one may not change their mind. For

example, after reciting a *bracha* on food one must

take a bite, even if one realizes that they are no longer hungry.

However, *Tefilas Haderech* is not

a *birkas hamitzvah* but rather

a prayer for success. The rules for *tefilos* are

different than for *berachos*. For example, we

recite the *tefilah* of *Aneinu* on a fast day even though there is no guarantee that we will be able to complete the fast. Moreover, if a public fast is declared during a time of drought and then before midday it begins to rain, the

fast is not completed even though the *tefilah* of *Aneinu* was already said.

Likewise, we are not concerned

that the *Tefilas Haderech* will have been

said in vain—since at the time when the *tefilah* was recited

the traveler had already left the city and began the trip, it was a valid

prayer. He concludes that though one is not required to continue the trip, it is proper to recite "*Baruch sheim kevod malchuso l'olam va'ed*," just in case.

However, if *Tefilas Haderech* had been

recited prematurely, before having left the city, one would be required to exit

the city and travel a *parsah*, because otherwise it

would be a *bracha l'vatala*, since the *bracha* did not apply at the time it was said.