

The Weekly *Farbrengens*



לחמן ישמעו • ראה תשע"ח • 474
EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

SINGING PRAISE (I)

THE VALUE OF A BRACHA

Chazal teach us that if a person eats or drinks without making a *bracha*, it is as if he had wrongly benefited from something holy that belongs to *HaShem*, for every single thing in this world belongs to Him, so only after acknowledging this by saying the *bracha* can one use it.

How did Avraham Avinu motivate the people around him to call to *HaShem*? Chazal relate that after he had generously served his guests food and drink, they would stand up to thank and bless him, but he would point out, "Did you eat *my* food?! You ate *HaShem's* food, so praise and *bensch Him!*"

(ברכות לה ע"א, סוטה י' ע"א)

The *Zohar* writes that only by saying a *bracha* does one receive *brachos*. Rabbeinu Bechaye explains that when one does not say a *bracha*, he places himself under the control of nature, not allowing for any additional *brachos*, whose Source is above nature.

The author of *Sefer HaChinuch* quotes the assurance that he received from his Rebbeim – that whoever is scrupulous about *bensching* will have a good and easy livelihood throughout all his days.

(זהר ח"א ע' רנ ע"א, רבינו בחיי פ' עקב)

The *Ritva* writes that a person should first and foremost learn and teach his children and his students the *halachos* of *brachos*. Otherwise one might transgress by deriving benefit from something that had been "consecrated to *HaShem*," for everything in the world is His.

According to the teachings of our Rebbeim, children from age three should become accustomed to saying *Birchos HaShachar* and *Birkas HaMazon*. Before that age, once a child can speak, it is commendable to be *mehader* in this.

(הלכות ברכות להריטב"א פ"א ס"א, תו"מ תשמ"ב ח"ב עמ' 708)

At the end of every *farbrengen*, the Rebbe would announce, "All those who need to make a *bracha acharona* will no doubt make a *bracha acharona*," thus reminding his listeners of this obligation. The Rebbe once remarked that unfortunately the *bracha acharona* 'doesn't have much *mazal*,' meaning that it is often forgotten even by people who are very careful with regard to the *bracha rishona*.

(שיח"ק תשל"ז ח"א ע' 354, ושם ע' 450)

ALWAYS PRAISING

In the days of Dovid HaMelech, a plague came upon the Yidden and a hundred people died every day. Inspired by *Ruach HaKodesh*, Dovid HaMelech instructed everyone to recite a hundred *brachos* every day, and the plague came to an end. The goal of this *takana* was to strengthen our love and fear of *HaShem*, and to aid us to remember Him constantly.

On *Shabbos*, when we do not have as many *brachos* to recite in davening as we have during the weekdays, we complete the 100 *brachos* by eating fruit and smelling *besamim*. On fast days, one should listen with particular *kavana* to all the *brachos* of *chazoras hashatz*, so that they too will be included in the sum of 100 *brachos*.

(מנחות מג ע"ב, שו"ע ר' אור"ח סי' מו ס"א)

CONSIDER

How does a *bracha* allow us to benefit from the world?
What is the benefit in reciting a *bracha* loudly? Can't *HaShem* hear us regardless?

The Rebbe Rashab would constantly make *brachos*, at least once an hour, or once in two hours, at the very minimum. When he did not have a *bracha* to recite, he would say the *possuk*, "*Boruch Ata HaShem, lamdeini chukecha*."

(סה"ש תש"ד ע' 117)

The Rebbe taught that not only should we make sure that a child never eats without making a *bracha*, but we should also give him snacks to increase his opportunities for making *brachos*.

(שיח"ק תשל"ז ח"א עמ' 460)

LOUD AND CLEAR

A person should accustom himself and his family not to forget to say *brachos*, and to say them audibly and carefully, because *voicing* words arouses one's devout concentration.

(של"ה הובא במשנ"ב סימן תרמ"ג סק"ה)

Bunim was an elderly *shammes* in the city of Worms, and also served on the local *Chevra Kaddisha*. One day he came to *shul* earlier than usual and right in front of him he saw a man with a crown of grass on his head. At first he was alarmed, thinking that this was a *sheid*, but then he recognized the man and asked him, "Aren't you so-and-so whom we buried yesterday?"

"Yes," the man replied.

"How is it in *Shamayim* for you?" the *shammes* inquired.

"Good," the man replied.

Not knowing him to have been particularly righteous, the *shammes* wanted to know, "What special merit do you have for yourself?"

The man told him, "Only in the *zechus* of my having said my *brachos* loudly and sweetly, was I ushered into *Gan Eden* with great honor."

(ס' הגן יום שני בשם אור זרוע)

In the days when the great student of the *Mezritcher Maggid*, R. Zev Volf of Zhitomir, supported himself as a liquor merchant, a simple *Yid* once came to buy a cup of strong spirits. He made a hasty *bracha*, gulped it down, and turned to leave.

The *tzaddik* called him back and said: "You believe, of course, in the concept of *gilgulim*, reincarnation. Sometimes it is decreed that a person should be reincarnated in a growing object (rather than in a person), and this causes the *neshama* intense pain. As the plant grows, the *neshama* cries out and *davens* to *HaShem* that its seed should remain on its stem and not get lost. Later, during harvest and transport, many seeds fall and are lost, so again the *neshama davens* to *HaShem*, begging that it should remain together with the other seeds, which will later be used for food. Finally, the *neshama* implores *HaShem* that it should end up as part of a beverage that will one day be consumed by a *Yid* who will make *bracha* over it with *kavana*, so that that *neshama* will be elevated.

The *tzaddik* concluded, "And perhaps what you drank just now was the *neshama* of your departed father..."

The *Yid* suddenly realized that that very day was his father's *yahrzeit*. Gripped by fright, he fell in a faint, and in due course he became a whole-hearted *baal teshuva*.

(שלחן הטהור מאמר פתח עינים פ"ח)

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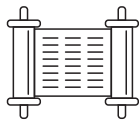
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DRINKING AFTER HAMAPIL

I recited the bracha of Hamapil, but couldn't fall asleep and got thirsty. Can I go drink something?

Chazal instituted that one recite *Krias Shema She'al Hamita* before going to sleep, and the simple reason is for protection from the harmful spirits.¹ Though some *poskim* exempt women since it is a time-bound *mitzva*, others point out that women also need protection. In addition, the Arizal ruled that they too should recite the *krias shema* for it is beneficial for the soul, and so is our custom.²

Krias shema should be recited adjacent to one's sleep and not earlier, unless one is worried that they may fall asleep before saying it.³ One should not eat or talk between *krias shema* and sleeping, but, if needed, one may do so and then repeat the first paragraph of *shema* (and the *posuk* of *b'yadcha*).⁴

Right before sleeping, one recites the *bracha* of *Hamapil*, which concerns sleep.⁵ *Poskim* debate the nature of the *bracha*:

Some view it as a *birchas hanehenin* recited prior to deriving pleasure from sleeping (similar to the *brachos* prior to eating). Accordingly, one may not interrupt at all after reciting *Hamapil* just as after reciting a *bracha* on food before taking a bite.⁶ Based on this opinion, some hold that one who suspects that he won't fall asleep shouldn't recite it, or should at least omit Hashem's name.⁷

Others hold that the *bracha* is said on the fact that one is *preparing himself* to go to sleep,⁸ (or based on the norm (*minhag haolam*) to go to sleep at night⁹). Thus, there is more leniency for making interruptions before going to sleep. Still, one should only say it when he plans to go to sleep that night (before *alos hashachar*).

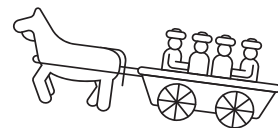
The accepted *psak* is that one may rely on the more lenient opinion in cases of need. Thus, one who uses the restroom after *Hamapil* may recite *asher yatzar*, one who remembered that he didn't yet count *sefirah* may count, and one who really needs a drink may do so. However, since it is still a matter of dispute, one shouldn't make an interruption unless it is a great need.¹⁰

The *bracha* of *Hamapil* is recited specifically for a substantial sleep which is longer than half an hour. Yet, if one fell asleep even briefly and then woke up, they needn't be concerned with making interruptions.¹¹

In all these cases, one needn't repeat *Hamapil*, though in order to fulfill the opinion that considers it a *birchas hanehenin*, one should say it again without Hashem's name and the concluding *bracha*.¹²

1. ברכות ס"ג, ד, סעי' ב, ותוספות שם ב ע"א ד"ה מאימתי. שו"ע או"ח סי' רל"ט ס"א.
 2. ראה מג"א סק"ב שפטורות ושעה"צ סי' תרל"ט סקט"ז ע"פ א"ר סי' רל"ט שהם חייבות. כף החיים סי' רל"ט סק"ג. ולמעשה ראה אג"ק ח"ט עמ' שפ"ט שנשים צריכות לקרוא.
 3. משנ"ב סי' רל"ט סק"ג.
 4. משנ"ב סי' רל"ט סק"ד.
 5. שו"ע ורמ"א או"ח סי' רל"ט ס"א.
 6. ראה סדה"י (סדר קשעה"מ) המובא במ"א ס"ק ג.
 7. ביה"ל סי' רל"ט ד"ה סמוך למיטתו.
 8. א"א בוטשאטש מהדו"ת או"ח סי' רל"ט.
 9. חיי אדם כלל ל"ה ס"ד.
 10. ס' הליכות שלמה תפילה פ"ג סט"ו (ע"פ הא"ד), פסק"ת סי' רל"ט סק"ג.
 11. ספר תפילה כהלכתה פ"ב אות י"ח, פסק"ת שם.
 12. קצוה"ש סי' כ"ז ס"ט.

לע"נ מרת ציפא אסתר בת ר' שלום דובער ע"ה



R. ZALMAN ZEZMER

R. Zalman Zezmer was of the greatest *chassidim* of the Alter Rebbe. He was an incredible *maskil*, used by the Rabbeim as a prime example for in-depth understanding of *Chassidus*. He travelled to many places to teach *Chassidus*, and served as Rov in the town of Zezmer and later in Denenburg and Krislava, where he is buried. One of his *talmidim* was the esteemed *chossid* R. Hillel Paritcher.

A number of factors brought R. Zalman to *Chassidus*. One of them was as follows: R. Binyamin Kletzker, a great *chossid* of the Alter Rebbe, once visited R. Zalman's town for Shabbos *Zachor*. As the *parsha* of *Amalek* was read from the Torah, Reb Zalman noticed strong emotions of hate and disgust on R. Binyamin's face, something that he had never witnessed before. R. Binyamin's *davening* also made a deep impression on him. After *davening*, he approached him and asked, "Could you tell me what evil *Amalek* caused you that you hate him so much?" R. Binyamin said, "Our Rebbe explained what *Amalek* is all about." "Could I meet your Rebbe?" R. Zalman inquired. R. Binyamin sent

a letter with Reb Zalman to R. Meir Refael's asking him to accept the young man and send him to Liozna.

(רשימ"ד החדש עמ' 235)

The Alter Rebbe would recite *Chassidus* for the older and newer *Chassidim* separately, and was very particular that neither group should attend the other's *Chassidus*. R. Zalman, already a seasoned *chossid*, wanted very much to attend the "yungeh *Chassidus*." He asked his roommate in Liozna—a newer *chossid*—to notify him when he is called to a *maamar* so he could sneak in. That afternoon R. Zalman was napping, and when heard about the *maamar*, he rushed out without washing *neggel vasser*. When the Alter Rebbe entered the room he fervently exclaimed, "What's this? Without *neggel vasser*!?" R. Zalman quickly escaped.

(רמ"ח אותיות אות פ"א)

Before his passing, R. Zalman said that he could account for every second of his life for the past seven years.

(רמ"ח אותיות אות כ"ו)

A Moment with The Rebbe



THE PAIN OF A CHOSSID

One week after the legendary *mashpia* Reb Shmuel Levitin passed away, the Rebbe spoke about him at the *farbrengen*:

"Reb Shmuel once related to me in private that while imprisoned in Siberia, with no *siddurim* available, he became confused as to the correct reading of the morning *bracha*, if its 'Hanosen la'oyefkoach,' or 'La'yoefkoach.'

"Consider this! What does this *Yid* remember from all his suffering in jail? What didn't leave his memory? The confusion of the *birkas hashachar* wording...

"Indeed, here we see the affect that

the *Rabbeim* had, and have, on their *mekushorim* [dedicated followers]. They aren't bothered by physical pain, only by troubles in *avodas Hashem*..." (Sichos Kodesh 5734 vol. 2 page 415)

Reb Menachem Wolf relates: I heard from the RaShAG that when Reb Shmuel was ordered to travel to his exile it was a Shabbos, yet he carried his *tefilin* and the *sefer Torah Or*, since he felt it was *pikuach nefesh* for him. Years later, the Rebbe gave him a *tikkun* for his wrongdoing, to learn a *mishnah* of *Maseches Shabbos* every day and to recite *Krias Shema* in *tefilin* before *davening*.

(Otzar Hachassidim NY, page 237)



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