



PRAISING HaSHEM (2)

The Way to Praise

When one makes a *bracha*, he should contemplate what he is doing: he is thanking *HaShem* for the food or the *mitzvos* that He has given us. A *bracha* should not be recited out of habit. In fact *HaShem* sent Yeshayahu HaNavi to reprimand the Yidden who were making *brachos* for washing their hands or before eating, without thinking of *HaShem*. *HaShem* even withheld wisdom from them.

There was once a man who appeared in a dream to one of his relatives, several years after his passing. The relative asked him, "How are you doing in the other world?" The deceased replied, "Every day I am judged for not having been careful to think about *HaShem* when making *brachos*," and he added that though many years had passed, he was still being cleansed of this fault.

(ס' חסידים אות מ"ו)

When a person says *brachos* properly, with *kavana* and *simcha*, he draws upon himself *HaShem's* kindness. Also, *brachos* should be recited audibly and carefully, because *hakol meorer es hakavana* – voicing words arouses one's devout concentration.

(ראשית חכמה, של"ה, ס' החינוך מצוה תל)

Reb Chaim Vital writes: "My Rebbe, the AriZal, warned me to be very careful about having *kavana* when reciting *brachos*, for doing so refines a person, enabling him to become a vessel for *kedusha*, and it is a major step towards for *Ruach HaKodesh*."

(כף החיים סי' קצ"א סק"ו)

Praising with Feeling

Throughout his entire lifetime, whenever the esteemed chossid Reb Dovid Tzvi Chein (better known as the Radatz) would make a *bracha* over food or drink, he would first place his right hand over his forehead, as people do when they are deep in thought, and only then recite the *bracha*.

The Friediker Rebbe related, "When I was a little boy, I asked him the reason for this, and he told me that when he was twelve years old, his father Reb Peretz brought him to Lubavitch to see the *Tzemach Tzedek*. When he went

into the Rebbe's room, the Rebbe showed him closeness and affection, and amongst other things told him, "Listen to me. It's time to stop behaving like a child. When you're about to make a *bracha* over food or drink, and have to say '*Boruch Ata*', remember to Whom you are going to say '*Boruch Ata*'."

(סה"ש תש"ג ע' 143)

In days gone by, people regarded the very letters of the Torah with respect. This stemmed from their *yiras Shamayim*, which was clearly apparent even among ordinary, unlettered Yidden. When a *bracha* had to be said, they would first wash their hands, or at least clean them with grass or whatever.

Regarding this the Friediker Rebbe related: "One day, when I was playing outdoors as a little boy and making a toy ship, I overheard a gardener reciting a *bracha* – *Shehakol*, and from the way he said it, I began to tremble. Today, however, people don't hear the *brachos* they are saying, and the *brachos* don't hear them."

(סה"ש תש"ג ע' 119)

The Rebbe once explained that when one recites the one hundred daily *brachos*, the emphasis should be on their essence – bringing one to fear, love and remember *HaShem*. When the hundred *brachos* are recited properly, these feelings permeate the entire day.

(סה"ש תנשא"א ע' 134)

Understanding the Bracha

One should be most meticulous about having the proper *kavana* when saying *brachos* and recognizing their basic idea – that he is *bensching HaShem*. One should also keep in mind the subject of his present *bracha*, and not think about anything else.

When one says the Name of *HaShem*, he must concentrate on the meaning of the four letters ה-י-ה-ו – that He is the Master of everything and that He always existed, exists in the present, and will always exist. So, too, the Name אלקים reminds him that that *HaShem* is all-powerful, above and below.

It is forbidden to do anything while saying a *bracha*, for it would then appear that one is careless and is not regarding it as important.

It follows that even an activity which does not require concentration is also prohibited.

(סדר ברכת הנהנין פ"ט ה"ג, שוע"ר סי' ה, סי' קפ"ג סי"ד)

Many *brachos* begin with the words, *Baruch Ata HaShem Elokeinu Melech haolam*. As is explained in *Chassidus*, the very word *beracha* signifies that something is being drawn down from above. The next word, *Ata*, means that that spiritual energy is being drawn down from the essence of *HaShem*, through the successive levels of *Seder Hishtalshelus*. The term *Elokeinu* refers to the sustenance that comes down to the Yidden, and *Melech haolam* refers to the sustenance that then comes down to the rest of the world.

(תו"א בראשית ו, א, ד"ה בלילה ההוא ת"ש)

The Alter Rebbe held a number of debates with the *geonim* of Lithuania over the validity of *Chassidus*. On these occasions he would discuss concepts in *halacha* (generally the halachos of *Birkas HaNehenin*), and would conclude with a *ruchniyusdike* lesson.

At the second debate, which took place in Minsk, everyone recognized his outstanding *geonus*, and it deeply impacted the Lithuanian *talmidei chachomim*. At the conclusion of that debate, he taught a lesson from the *Mishna*: "Whoever who drinks water out of thirst should say *shehakol nihyah bidevaro*." He explained that water symbolizes Torah, and the test of whether one is truly learning Torah properly is whether he recognizes that everything (*shehakol*) is being created by the word of *HaShem* (*nihyah bidevaro*). Among those present were many diligent students, *masmidim* who would learn for eighteen to twenty-one hours every day. When they heard this explanation, scores of them were attracted to becoming disciples of the Alter Rebbe.

(סה"ש תש"ד ע' 139)

CONSIDER THIS!

■ What is the significance of the general *kavana* of all *brachos* and the unique *kavana* in each *bracha* type?

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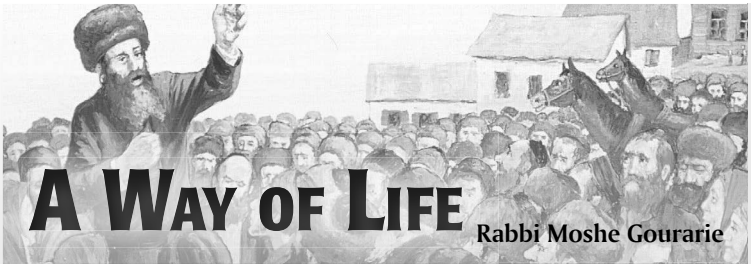


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A WAY OF LIFE

Rabbi Moshe Gourarie

OUR HEROES

Reb Eliyahu Yosef Rivlin of Drivin

Reb Eliyahu Yosef of Drivin was a great *gaon* and *chossid* of the Mitteler Rebbe and Tzemach Tzedek. He was a *Rov* and *mashpia* in Drivin and later in Polotzk. Later he moved to *Eretz Yisroel* and founded the *Tzemach Tzedek Shul* in *Yerusalayim*. He is buried on Har Hazeisim.



Hair Dying

Is a man permitted to dye white hairs in his beard?

- The Torah states (Devorim 22:5) “*lo yilbash gever simlas isho*”, a man may not wear clothes of a woman. Included in this *issur* is beautifying the body in ways commonly employed by women. Therefore, *halacha*¹ rules that a man may not pull out or dye even one white hairs in his head or beard.
- Poskim² add that this prohibition includes taking a medication that would cause white hairs to become colored, even if women don't beautify themselves in this manner, since the prohibition includes everything intended to beautify the physical body, irrespective of how it is brought about.
- Bleaching colored hairs to be uniform with the white hair is permitted, since the issue is making oneself look beautiful and not dying *per-se*.³
- Some Poskim⁴ suggest that if not dying the hair will cause great embarrassment (e.g. half of one's beard turns white) it would be permitted to dye one's hair. They base this ruling on the notion that the prohibition of dying hair is only *midrabanan* (while the Torah prohibition only includes clothing), and therefore in a case of extreme embarrassment (“*kovod habriyos*”) dying is allowed. However, the majority of Poskim⁵ disagree with this notion and maintain that dying hair is prohibited *min hatorah* and cannot be allowed to spare humiliation.
- Some later Poskim suggest that if the purpose of dying is for some other reason and not for the sake of just looking younger to gain beauty it is allowed. Acceptable reasons to dye the hair would include: (a) having a better chance at being hired for a job⁶; (b) dying white hairs on somebody of unusually young age, (this is an act of removing a blemish, not of beautifying)⁷. Some Poskim add that one who wishes to rely on these *heterim* should have a non-Jew perform the act of dying the hair⁸.
- It is important to note that many Poskim⁹ disagree with all the above *heterim* and rule in all cases that it is forbidden to dye one's hair.

Due to the complexity of this issue it is imperative that one does not rely on the above, and should consult his *Rov* for *halacha lema'ase*.

1. שו"ע י"ד סי' קפב ס"ו.
2. ראה שו"ת אגרות משה י"ד ח"א סי' פב.
3. ט"ז שם סק"ז.
4. ראה שו"ת שואל ומשיב קמא ח"א סי' רי.
5. ראה שואל ומשיב שם. שו"ת דברי חיים ח"ב י"ד סי' סב. שו"ת מוהר"מ שיק י"ד סי' קעב-ג. שו"ת מהרש"ם ח"ב סי' רמג. ועוד.
6. שו"ת אגרות משה י"ד ח"ב סי' סא.
7. שו"ת מנחת שלמה ח"ב סי' פב אות ז.
8. ראה שו"ת מנחת יצחק ח"ו סוף סי' פא.
9. ראה לדוגמא שו"ת שבט הלוי ח"ג סי' קיא אות ג.

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

לזכות החתן הרה"ת בעלאל והכלה מרת אסתר לאה שי ווילשאנסקי - לרגל נישואיהם ה' מרחשון תשע"ד

לזכות הילד ישראל הלוי שי
שיגדלוהו הוריו לתורה לחופה ולמע"ט
נדבת ר' אפרים הלל ורעייתו שיחיו העלער

לזכות הילד מנחם מנדל שי
שיגדלוהו הוריו לתורה לחופה ולמע"ט
נדבת ר' יואל יהודה ארי לייב ורעייתו רבקה שיחיו שפאלטר

Reb Eliyahu Yosef of Drivin once participated in a *din Torah* with two other *rabbonim*. One day, while they were discussing the case, food was brought to the table and the senior *Rov* took some food, made a *bracha*, and ate. Immediately, Reb Yosef said that the Alter Rebbe *paskens* that the *brocha* on the food is different than the one he had recited. The *Rov* contemplated for a moment and said, “Hashem should forgive him (the Alter Rebbe), as the correct *bracha* is the one that I said.” Later, when Reb Yosef checked in *Poskim*, he found proof for the Alter Rebbe's ruling.

The following day, Reb Yosef brought his proof to the other *Rov*, and shortly after, the *Rov* went outside into the freezing cold. After a while, the others went to find the old *Rov*, but they could not locate his whereabouts. After a long search, they finally spotted him quite a distance from the *Beis Din*. When they asked him why he had gone so far, he replied, “Yesterday, I spoke disrespectfully about a great *tzaddik* and *talmid chacham*, so I am now going to his *kever* to ask forgiveness.”

“Do you know where the Alter Rebbe is buried?” they asked, and informed him that the *kever* was faraway. With difficulty and much persuasion, they finally convinced him not to travel the long distance, but instead, to gather ten people and ask *mechilla*.

The story behind Reb Eliyahu's move to *Eretz Yisroel* is as follows:

Reb Eliyahu was seriously ill. The Tzemach Tzedek told him he should move to *Eretz Yisroel* and indeed he lived another twenty years. Afterwards, the Tzemach Tzedek explained that his illness, if found in a kosher animal, was subject to a *machlokes* between the Beis Yosef and the Ramo as to whether the animal in considered a “*treifa*” (not going to live). The Beis Yosef holds that it is not a “*treifa*”, and in *Eretz Yisroel* the ruling is like the Beis Yosef. By living in *Eretz Yisroel*, Reb Eliyahu could stay alive.

לזכות הת' שלום דובער כהן וב"ג מושקא דרוק שיחיו לרגל חתונתם

A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

A Chassidisher Yid Walks

The elder *chossid* Reb Sa'adya Liberow, known as the *Mashpia* of Antwerp, was visiting 770 for his first time.

Reb Sa'adya was on his way from 770 to his hosts. Emerging from 770, the Rebbe noticed Reb Sa'adya walking on Eastern Parkway towards Brooklyn Avenue, and stood to watch. As the Rebbe watched, the nearby *bochurim* began watching too.

Reb Sa'adya's steps were purposeful, focused, and he walked with his eyes cast down to the ground, so as to avoid seeing any inappropriate sights.

The Rebbe said to the *bochurim*, “*Kukt zich tzu vi a chassidisher yid geit* (take note of how a *chassidische yid* walks)...”

לזכות השליח שלום דובער בן לובה

מזל טוב!

ברכתינו שלוחה למנחם מרכו אנ"ש
הרה"ת מנחם מענדל וזוגתו שי שטראקס
בהולדת הבן יוסף יצחק שי
ה"ר שיגדלוהו לתורה לחופה ולמעשים טובים