

The Weekly *Farbrengens*


MERKAZ ANASH
 מרכז אנאש
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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"א"ח ס' 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 a fright, he fell in a faint, and in due course he became a whole-hearted *baal teshuva*.

(שלחן הטהור מאמר פתח עינים פ"ח)



FRESHLY SQUEEZED
 FRUIT INFUSED SELTZER

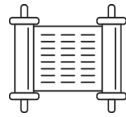


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PICKLING ON SHABBOS

Can I make pickled cucumbers on Shabbos?

Chazal tell us that "pickling (kavush) is like cooking," and just as one may not cook on Shabbos, one may not either pickle a vegetable on Shabbos. Alternatively, pickling resembles the melacha of tanning (which also uses salt). While some hold it is a prohibition min haTorah, the accepted halacha is that it is miderabanan.

Halacha considers "pickling" to occur when a vegetable is either soaked in any liquid for 24 hours, or in vinegar or strong acidic liquids for merely 18 minutes. Some acharonim hold that these times apply specifically to the transfer of taste in the halachos of kashrus, while the Shabbos prohibition applies only to the amount of time it takes for the vegetable to become pickled.

Is pickling for a shorter amount of time permissible?

On Shabbos, there is concern of activity that "appears like pickling," which applies to the act of putting vegetables in vinegar for any amount of time. Yet, when the intention is just to flavor, or when flavoring food to be eaten in that same meal, one is allowed to put a small amount of vinegar.

Once the vegetable is adequately pickled, there is no prohibition to pickle it further by returning it into the jar, as there is no "pickling after pickling" (just as there is no "bishul achar bishul," cooking after cooking). Yet, a partially pickled vegetable may not be returned into the pickling jar for it to continue pickling.

If it was already pickled in vinegar, and one wants to pickle it now in salt water, some poskim permit it since it is already pickled, while others argue that since it introduces a new flavor, it is prohibited at least on account of "appearing like pickling."

The concern of "appearing like pickling" only applies to foods that are normally pickled (i.e. their natural state is changed through pickling), but does not apply to foods like cooked eggs and meat. These foods may be soaked in brine for a short amount of time.

1. ע"פ הרמב"ם שבת פכ"ב ה"י... 2. פרמ"ג א"ח ס' שכ"א משב"ז... 3. עירוה"ש יו"ד סי' ק"ב סט"ו, שו"ת מהר"ם שי"ק א"ח סי' קל"ה... 4. קצה"ש סי' קכ"ח הע"ח... 5. עירוה"ש סי' שכ"א סל"ד, מקו"ח ריש סי' שכ"א... 6. ראה שו"ת רב פעלים ח"א סי' ט"ו, שו"ת חלקת יעקב ח"א סי' קל"ז... 7. מנחת שבת סי' פ' סקל"ה מיקל לשרות הערינג בחומץ. שו"ת מג"ד נות אליהו אוסר דומה לבישל אחר צליה, שש"כ פ"א הע"י י"ב מחזי ככובש... 8. ראה פרמ"ג שם סק"ז, וראה קצה"ש שם, וצ"ע.

R. MORDECHAI HORODOKER

R. Mordechai of Horodok was the son of R. Simcha Zisel, a talmid of the Mezeritcher Maggid and the Maggid's talmidim. R. Mordechai was a chossid of the Alter Rebbe, Mittlerer Rebbe, and Tzemach Tzedek. He was appointed by the Mittlerer Rebbe to serve as a mashpia in Tshashnik, and the famous chossid R. Shmuel Ber Borisover was his talmid.

A businessman, but an oved Hashem, R. Mordechai's father, R. Simcha Zissel, had traveled to the Maggid and been a chossid of his student, R. Avrohom Kalisker. When R. Mendel Vitepsker moved to his hometown of Horodok, R. Simcha Zissel became his chossid, though he didn't fully understand his Chassidus. For many years, R. Simcha Zissel and his wife were childless, although they consistently asked for brachos from all these three tzaddikim.

Once, the Alter Rebbe visited Horodok, and R. Simcha Zissel was delighted that he was able to grasp his teachings. He saw this as a sign that he belonged to the Alter Rebbe, but was in a quandary about leaving his current Rebbe, R. Mendel Vitepsker. When he asked, R. Mendel encouraged him to ask the Alter Rebbe for a bracha for children.

The Alter Rebbe told him, "I can only give you advice: Soon an old Yid will enter town with a bundle on his shoulders. Invite him to your home, and he will promise you children."

That old man was R. Mordechai "Hatzaddik" Bayever, student of the Baal Shem Tov. He

promised them a child on two conditions: that the boy be given his name (even though he will still be alive), and that he become a student of the "Liozna Maggid" (the Alter Rebbe). That boy was R. Mordechai Horodoker.

(ס"ה"ש תרצ"ו-תרצ"ט חדש ע' 124, 299)

As a bochur, R. Mordechai learned Chassidus and received a solid chassidishe chinuch from the chassidim in Horodok. Yet, his Chassidus was a mix, since his father was a "Kalisker." R. Avrohom of Kalisk served Hashem with emotional expression and humbling activities, but his students turned those practices into the avoda, resulting in some wild behavior.

After his marriage at age eighteen, R. Mordechai came to the Alter Rebbe during his final years in Liozna. He later told his student R. Shmuel Ber Borisover, "The first statement that we heard from the Alter Rebbe was, 'What is forbidden is forbidden, and what is allowed is unnecessary.' For some three or four years we labored with this until we integrated it into our lives. Only then did we enter into yechidus, to ask for a path in avoda."

Years later, the Mittlerer Rebbe sent R. Mordechai to serve as mashpia in Tshashnik and instructed the chassidim there to support him with two silver rubles a month. In Tshashnik, there were also Strasheler and Chernobyl chassidim which was the cause of some tension, but they were all in awe of R. Mordechai the mashpia.

(אג"ק אדהר"י צ"ח ע' קנז, ח"ד ע' עד. היום יום כ"ה אד"ש)

A Moment with The Rebbe



SHARE PRIDE OF YIDDISHKEIT

At the age of nine, Zalman Lipsker fell into a coma and was diagnosed with polio disease. Despite the doctors' grave prognosis that he may never recover, the Rebbe assured the family that they will hear good news. Indeed, within a week he awoke, leaving only his left arm paralyzed.

At the age of sixteen, when Zalman underwent a procedure on his arm, the medical staff instructed him to remove his yarmulke, but he insisted on wearing it. Seeing his resilience, the head nurse gave him a surgeon's cap with a piece of surgical tape attached, on which was written, "Do not remove cap from patients

head due to religious belief." After Zalman was released from hospital, his brother Berel sent the cap with the attached note to the Rebbe. The Rebbe returned it with an expression of pleasure.

Sometime later, once he had fully recovered, Zalman merited a yechidus. As soon as he came in, the Rebbe asked him, "Do you still have the yarmulke?"

When Zalman responded in the affirmative, the Rebbe said to him, "Show it to your children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren!"

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