



פרשת עקב
שבת מברכים אלול
מנחם אב תשפ"ב

CHOF AV ROUND-UP

Close to 100 men and Bochorim joined together in the Werdiger Hall this week to learn the teachings of the Rebbe's father in honour of his Yartzzeit on Chof Av.

A selection of Reb Levik's teachings, in Hebrew and English were studied in Chavrusas, together with the Rebbe's explanations.

On Thursday night Rabbi Johnson gave a shiur on Zoom in one of the explanation of the Rebbe's father on the Zohar of Parshas Vaeshanan. With a visual presentation we explored the Kabbalistic concepts and profound analysis of this passage.

SHABBOS SHIUR

All men and women are invited to join us for this week's feature shiur between Mincha and Maariv on Shabbos afternoon in the Yeshivah Shule.

This week's shiur will be given by guest Rabbi from the Chief Rabbinate of Israel Rabbi Avi Kosman, addressing practical cases on Birur Yahadus and marriage.

TISHREI SHIURIM

Starting this Monday, join us each morning Monday-Thursday for a 25-minute shiur in the Halachos and customs of the Yomim Noraim.

Lead by Rabbi Johnson.

10:50-11:15am

Participate live in Kollel or join in from home or work on Zoom.

A collection of Torah thoughts produced by Kollel Menachem

אין בית המדרש בלא
חידוש Chiddush



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Living with Bentching

The Mitzvah of Bentching is sourced in this week's Parsha. As discussed in the Halacha Analysis on the reverse side, Bentching is made up of 3 Biblically required blessings and a 4th Rabbinic blessing.

The first blessing is the Bracha of הַזֶּן—for the sustenance that Hashem has given us. We conclude this blessing הַזֶּן אֶת הַכֹּל, that Hashem sustains all. The second blessing is for the land of Israel. We conclude this blessing עַל הָאָרֶץ וְעַל הַמְּזוֹן, for the land and for the sustenance.

Why do we need to mention sustenance in the conclusion of the second blessing if we have just recited the first blessing which is for our sustenance?

The Gemara also asks how we can conclude a blessing "for the land and for the sustenance" against the principle that we do not combine two (unrelated) things in one Bracha. The Gemara answers that they are not meant as two separate things. The intention is a blessing for "the land that gives forth food".

But our first question still remains. Why mention food again in the blessing for the land at all?

To understand this, we need to look at when these blessing were composed and by whom.

The Gemara teaches that the first blessing was composed by Moshe when the Manna fell for the Jewish people in the desert. The second blessing was composed by Yehoshua when the Jewish people entered Eretz Yisroel.

Now it starts to make sense. The sustenance that we describe in the first Bracha of Bentching is a text that relates to Manna - "Bread from Heaven". Our reference to food in the second blessing refers to "Bread from the earth" - that is brought forth from the land.

But why do we still say Moshe's formula when we do not eat the "Bread from Heaven"?

One possible explanation can be found in a cryptic saying of the Rebbe Maharash that Parnassa today is the secret of the Manna.

When the Jewish people received the Manna from Heaven each day, it was clear that their Parnassa came from Hashem. They did not need to worry. They would receive exactly what they needed. Nothing they could do could get them any more or cause them to end up with any less.

Now we need to work for our Parnassa. It is easy to come to the mistaken feeling that we are in control of

our Parnassa and that we need to worry about it. Reciting the blessing composed for the Manna in our Bentching serves as a perpetual reminder that our Parnassa is just like the Manna; guaranteed from Heaven in just the right measure.

We can also explain it with a slightly different approach. The Manna, which fell from Heaven, represents transcendent G-dly experience. It is beyond the world and beyond our actions and efforts. "Bread from the earth" needs the toil and work of man; to plough, sow, harvest, grind, sift, knead and bake.

The Manna represents our spiritual experiences of Davening, learning, Shabbos and Yomtov, when we escape the world and unite with Hashem.

"Bread of the earth" represents our involvements in the mundane, physical side of our lives. This too is supposed to be in the service of Hashem. We engage with the world for the purpose of transforming it to be a dwelling place for Hashem. We do this by having proper Kavanah Lshem Shamaim in what we do and by ensuring that our business dealings and the like are done in accordance with Halacha.

But it is very easy to get lost in the mundane, pursuing wealth and physicality as an ends to itself, devoid of G-dly purpose. Instead of lifting the world up, the world can Shlepp us down. Before we engage with the Avodah of "Bread of the earth" we need to connect with the "Bread from Heaven".

In the macro-sense this was reflected in the sojourn of the Jewish people for 40 years in the desert when they ate the Manna. In the desert, they were completely detached from the world and immersed in Torah study. But this was only the necessary preparation and fortification for the next phase of entering Eretz Yisroel. The Manna would cease and they would need to start to work in the world where the true purpose of Creation would be actualised.

Each day we replicate this progression. At the start of the day we connect ourselves upwards through Davening. After Davening we should spend some time in Torah study. Only then, having eaten our fill of "Manna", can we enter the world of "Bread of the earth" and be successful in our efforts.

Each time we Bentch, reciting the blessing composed for the Manna followed by the blessing for earthly bread, we remind ourselves of this important message. With this in mind, we will be successful in both our spiritual Parnassa and our physical one.

The weekly Halacha analysis

A Collection on Bentching

Rabbi Yonason Johnson

The Mitzvah of Bentching after we eat a meal with bread, is derived from the Posuk in Parshas Eikev ואכלת ושבעת וברכת את ה' אלקיך - *"You will eat and be satisfied and bless Hashem Your G-d for the good land that He has given to you."*

Biblically the Mitzvah of Bentching only applies if one ate to the point that they were full, as indicated in the words *"and you will be satisfied"*. However, Rabbinically we are obligated to Bentch after eating a Kzayis (olive) volume.

The four blessings

The Bentching is made up of 4 Brachos. The first three blessings are Biblically required. The fourth is Rabbinic in nature.

The Biblically required blessings are derived from the verse quoted above. From the words *"and you will eat and be satisfied and bless"* we derive the obligation to recite the blessing of הַזֶּן, for the sustenance that Hashem has given us. This is the Bracha that concludes with the words הַזֶּן אֶת הַכֹּל בְּרוּךְ... הַזֶּן אֶת הַכֹּל

From the words *"for the land"* we derive the obligation to recite the blessing of הָאָרֶץ, the Land that Hashem gave to us. This Bracha begins with הָאָרֶץ נָתַן לָנוּ and concludes עַל הָאָרֶץ הַזֶּה וְעַל הַמְּזוֹן

From the word הַטוֹב "the good (land)", we derive the obligation to recite a blessing for Yerushalaim, which is alluded to in the Torah as "this good mountain". This is the Bracha that begins with רַחֵם and concludes בְּרוּךְ... יְרוּשָׁלַיִם

The Gemara teaches that the first blessing – for sustenance – was composed by Moshe when the Manna fell for the Jewish people in the desert. The second blessing – for the Land – was composed by Yehoshua when the Jewish people entered Eretz Yisroel. The third blessing was composed by king David and his son Shlomo.

King David composed the blessing for Yerushalaim which includes the words *"for Yisroel Your people and for Yerushalaim Your city"*. When the Beis Hamikdash was built, king Shlomo added the words *"for the great and holy house on which Your name is called."*

The fourth blessing – Hatov Vhameitiv - was composed by the sages in Yavneh when they were finally allowed to bury the dead of Beitar who were massacred in the rebellion against Rome. The Romans did not allow the dead to be buried for many years. Miraculously the

bodies did not decay. To thank Hashem for this miracle, they added this blessing.

In his commentary on the Gemara, the Rashba addresses the following question; If the first 3 Brachos are Biblically required, how can we say that some of them were only composed generations after the Giving of the Torah?

To fulfil the Biblical obligation, one could say the blessings in any Nusach (formula). Each person would say them in their own words according to their ability. Moshe, Yehoshua, David and Shlomo respectively, composed a set and standard formula for the Brachos, each in their own generation.

Before David conquered Yerushalaim, the Jewish people did not know which city would become the resting place of the Shechina. The Torah only refers to "the place Hashem will choose to rest His name there". Prior to David, this is what they would say in the third blessing.

The sages further adapted some of these blessings. For example, when the Temple stood, the third blessing would have been a request for the wellbeing and tranquility of the Holy Land and the Beis Hamikdash. Now, after the destruction of Yerushalaim and the Beis Hamikdash, we make a blessing requesting the rebuilding of Yerushalaim. We also mention the Kingship of the David who sanctified Yerushalaim.

Nowadays one only fulfils the Mitzvah of Bentching when said with their essential formula.

Mentioning Bris and Torah

The sages teach that in the second blessing we have to mention the Bris Milah and Torah. We do this with the words *"and for Your bris that you have sealed in our flesh and for Your Torah that You have taught us."* This is because we inherited the Land of Israel in the merit of these Mitzvos.

Some authorities say that women should not say these words, because they are not commanded in either Mitzvah. However, it is customary practise that women do recite these words. This is justified because women do have to study Torah that relates to the Mitzvos that they are obligated in. Further, man and woman (husband and wife) are considered as one body and so they can mention Torah and Bris in relation to the men.

The Ariza"l uses this idea to explain why women do not need to fulfil time-bound positive Mitzvos. He further explains that the idea that man and woman are to halves of one body, does not only relate to a married couple. A man and woman comprise one soul which is divided between them and comes together on marriage. Spiritually they

are connected even before marriage and the Mitzvos of one affect the other.

Answering Amen to our own blessing

The Gemara brings 2 seemingly contradictory statements. One says that it is improper to answer Amein to their own Bracha. The other says that it is praiseworthy to do so.

The Gemara reconciles these contradictory statements by explaining that they refer to different blessings. When is it praiseworthy? At the end of the Bracha Boneh Yerushalayim in Bentching. When is it improper? For all other Brachos.

Rashi, the Rif and the Rosh do not limit this ruling specifically to the Bracha of Boneh Yerushalayim. Boneh Yerushalayim is brought by the Talmud as an example of a blessing that marks the end of a series of linked Brachos and would apply in other cases. This is the ruling of the Shulchan Aruch and the practise of Sefardim.

The alternate view (held by Tosfos, Rabbeinu Chananel and others) is that Boneh Yerushalayim is a unique case.

The reason Boneh Yerushalayim is unique is that it marks the end of the 3 Biblically required blessings. Since the fourth blessing is only Rabbinic, we are required to distinguish between them.

The Ram"o rules that this is the custom for Ashkenazim and that one should not deviate from it. This ruling is brought by the Alter Rebbe as the accepted minhag.

One should actually pause between the words אָמֵן and יְרוּשָׁלַיִם since the Bracha ends with the word Yerushalayim. The Amein is only an affirmation and not part of the Bracha. However one should not pause too long otherwise this would be an Amein Yesoma (literally an orphaned Amein).

The Shulchan Aruch rules that the אָמֵן at the end of Boneh Yerushalayim should be said quietly. Since it highlights the fact that the 4th blessing is only Rabbinic, people may come to treat it lightly.

Nonetheless popular practise is to say the אָמֵן out loud. The Poskim offer various justifications for this. Nonetheless, some advise that the Amein should still be recited silently. The Bach recommends that at least it should not be said louder than the rest of Bentching for emphasis.