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from: Shabbat Shalom <shabbatshalom@ounetwork.org>
date: Aug 18, 2022, 8:50 PM

Rabbi Sacks on Parsha

The Power of Gratitude

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks ztz"l

In the early 1990s, one of the great medical research exercises of modern times took place. It became known as the Nun Study. Some seven hundred American nuns, all members of the School Sisters of Notre Dame in the United States, agreed to allow their records to be accessed by a research team investigating the process of ageing and Alzheimer's Disease. At the start of the study the participants were aged between 75 and 102.[1]

What gave this study its unusual longitudinal scope is that sixty years early the very same nuns had been asked by their Mother Superior to write a brief autobiographical account of their life and their reasons for entering the convent. These documents were now analysed by the researchers using a specially devised coding system to register, among other things, positive and negative emotions. By annually assessing the nuns' current state of health, the researchers were able to test whether their emotional state in 1930 had affected their health some sixty years later. Because they had all lived a very similar lifestyle during these six decades, they formed an ideal group for testing hypotheses about the relationship between emotional attitudes and health.

The results, published in 2001, were startling.[2] The more positive emotions – such as contentment, gratitude, happiness, love and hope – the nuns expressed in their autobiographical notes, the more likely they were to be alive and well sixty years later. The difference was as much as seven years in life expectancy. So remarkable was this finding that it has led, since then, to a new field of gratitude research, as well as a deepening understanding of the impact of emotions on physical health.

What medicine now knows about individuals, Moses knew hundreds of years ago about nations. Gratitude – hakarat ha-tov – is at the heart of what he has to say about the Israelites and their future in the Promised Land. Gratitude had not been their strong point in the desert. They complained about lack of food and water, about the manna and the lack of meat and vegetables, about the dangers they faced from the Egyptians as they were leaving and about the inhabitants of the land they were about to enter. They lacked thankfulness during the difficult times. A greater danger still, said Moses, would

be a lack of gratitude during the good times. This is what he warned:

When you have eaten and been satisfied, and have built fine houses and lived in them, when your herds and flocks have grown abundant, and your silver and gold is multiplied, and all that you have has multiplied, your heart may become proud, forgetting the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery... You might be tempted to say to yourself, 'My power, the strength of my own hand, have brought me this great wealth.' But remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you the power to do great things, upholding the covenant that He swore to your ancestors... Deut. 8:12-18

The worst thing that could happen to them, warned Moses, would be that they forgot how they came to the land, how God had promised it to their ancestors, and had taken them from slavery to freedom, sustaining them during the forty years in the wilderness. This was a revolutionary idea: that the nation's history be engraved on people's souls, that it was to be re-enacted in the annual cycle of festivals, and that the nation, as a nation, should never attribute its achievements to itself – "my power and the might of my own hand" – but should always ascribe its victories, indeed its very existence, to something higher than itself: to God. This is a dominant theme of Deuteronomy, and it echoes throughout the book time and again.

Since the publication of the Nun Study and the flurry of further research it inspired, we now know of the multiple effects of developing an attitude of gratitude. It improves physical health and immunity against disease. Grateful people are more likely to take regular exercise and go for regular medical check-ups. Thankfulness reduces toxic emotions such as resentment, frustration and regret and makes depression less likely. It helps people avoid over-reacting to negative experiences by seeking revenge. It even tends to make people sleep better. It enhances self-respect, making it less likely that you will envy others for their achievements or success. Grateful people tend to have better relationships. Saying "thank you" enhances friendships and elicits better performance from employees. It is also a major factor in strengthening resilience. One study of Vietnam War Veterans found that those with higher levels of gratitude suffered lower incidence of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Remembering the many things we have to be thankful for helps us survive painful experiences, from losing a job to bereavement.[3]

Jewish prayer is an ongoing seminar in gratitude. Birkat ha-Shachar, 'the Dawn Blessings' said at the start of morning prayers each day, form a litany of thanksgiving for life itself: for the human body, the physical world, land to stand on and eyes to see with. The first words we say each morning – Modeh Ani, "I thank you" – mean that we begin each day by giving thanks.

Gratitude also lies behind a fascinating feature of the Amidah. When the leader of prayer repeats the Amidah aloud, we are silent other than for the responses of Kedushah, and saying Amen after each blessing, with one exception. When the leader says the words Modim anachnu lach, "We give thanks to You," the congregation says a parallel passage known as Modim de-Rabbanan. For every other blessing of the Amidah, it is sufficient to assent to the words of the leader by saying Amen. The one exception is Modim, "We give thanks." Rabbi Elijah Spira (1660–1712) in his work Eliyahu Rabbah,[4] explains that when it comes to saying thank you, we cannot delegate this away to someone else to do it on our behalf. Thanks must come directly from us.

Part of the essence of gratitude is that it recognises that we are not the sole authors of what is good in our lives. The egoist, says Andre Comte-Sponville, "is ungrateful because he doesn't like to acknowledge his debt to others and gratitude is this acknowledgement." [5] La Rochefoucauld put it more bluntly: "Pride refuses to owe, self-love to pay." [6] Thankfulness has an inner connection with humility. It recognises that what we are and what we have is due to others, and above all to God. Comte-Sponville adds: "Those who are incapable of gratitude live in vain; they can never be satisfied, fulfilled or happy: they do not live, they get ready to live, as Seneca puts it." [7]

Though you don't have to be religious to be grateful, there is something about belief in God as creator of the universe, shaper of history and author of the laws of life that directs and facilitates our gratitude. It is hard to feel grateful to a universe that came into existence for no reason and is blind to us and our fate. It is precisely our faith in a personal God that gives force and focus to our thanks.

It is no coincidence that the United States, founded by Puritans – Calvinists steeped in the Hebrew Bible – should have a day known as Thanksgiving, recognising the presence of God in American history. On 3rd October 1863, at the height of the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln issued a Thanksgiving proclamation, thanking God that though the nation was at war with itself, there were still blessings for which both sides could express gratitude: a fruitful harvest, no foreign invasion, and so on. He continued:

No human counsel hath devised nor hath any mortal hand worked out these great things. They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy... I do therefore invite my fellow citizens in every part of the United States... to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next, as a day of Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the Heavens. And I recommend to them that while offering up the ascriptions justly due to Him for such singular deliverances and blessings, they do also, with humble penitence for our national perverseness and disobedience, commend to His tender care all those who have become widows, orphans, mourners or sufferers in the lamentable civil strife in which we are unavoidably engaged, and fervently implore the interposition of the Almighty Hand to heal the wounds of the nation and to restore it as soon as may be consistent with the Divine purposes to the full enjoyment of peace, harmony, tranquillity and Union.

What might such a declaration made today – in Israel, or the United States, or indeed anywhere – do to heal the wounds that so divide nations today? Thanksgiving is as important to societies as it is to individuals. It protects us from resentments and the arrogance of power. It reminds us of how dependent we are on others and on a Force greater than ourselves. As with individuals so with nations: thanksgiving is essential to happiness and health.

[1] See Robert Emmons, Thanks!: How the New Science of Gratitude Can Make You Happier, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2007. [2] Deborah D. Danner, David A. Snowdon, and Wallace V. Friesen, “Positive Emotions in Early Life and Longevity: Findings from the Nun Study”, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 80.5 (2001), pp. 804-13. [3] Much of the material in this paragraph is to be found in articles published in Greater Good: The

Science of a Meaningful Life @

<http://greatergood.berkeley.edu>.

[4] Eliyahu Rabbah, Orach Chayyim 127:1. [5] André Comte-Sponville, A Small Treatise on the Great Virtues: The Uses of Philosophy in Everyday Life, New York: Holt, 2001, p. 133. [6] Ibid., p. 135. [7] Ibid., p. 137.

Previous Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks ztz"l Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks ztz"l was a global religious leader, philosopher, the author of more than 25 books, and the moral voice for our time. Until 1st September 2013 he served as Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth, having held the position for 22 years. To read more from Rabbi Sacks, please visit www.rabbisacks.org

from: **Rav Immanuel Bernstein**

<ravbernstein@journeysintorah.com> date: Aug 18, 2022, 6:59 AM subject: Dimensions in Ekev

DIMENSIONS IN CHUMASH

Ekev

To Go in Hashem's Ways וְשָׁמַרְתָּ אֶת מִצְוֹת ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ לֵלְכֹת בְּדַרְכָּיו וּלְיִרְאָה אֹתוֹ. You shall observe the commandments of Hashem, your God, to go in His ways and to fear Him.[1] The idea of “going in Hashem's ways” appears twice more in our parsha. In Chapter 10, it states:[2] וְעַתָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל מָה ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ שְׂאֵל מֵעַמֶּיךָ כִּי אִם לְיִרְאָה אֹת ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְעַתָּה לְלַכֵּת בְּכָל דְרָכָיו וּלְאַהֲבָה אֹתוֹ. And now, Israel, what does Hashem, your God, ask of you? Only to fear Hashem, your God, to go in all His ways and to love Him. And in Chapter 11, we find:[3] כִּי אִם שָׁמַר תִּשְׁמְרוּן אֶת כָּל הַמִּצְוָה הַזֹּאת... לְאַהֲבָה אֹת ה' אֱלֹהֶיכֶם לֵלְכֹת בְּכָל דְרָכָיו וּלְדַבְּקָה בּוֹ. For if you will observe this entire commandment... to love Hashem, your God, to walk in all His ways and to cleave to Him. It is interesting to note that in all three of these verses, this concept is presented differently in terms of other Torah ideals: In the first verse, it is mentioned before fear of Hashem. In the second verse, it is mentioned after fear of Hashem and before love of Hashem. In the third verse, it is mentioned after love of Hashem and before cleaving to Him. What are we to make of these shifts? The Chafetz Chaim explains.[4] Fear of Hashem, love of Him, and cleaving to Him are three increasingly higher levels of one's relationship with Hashem. On the other hand, the idea of “going in His ways” represents emulating Hashem's attributes of kindness and compassion, things that are generally

expressed in one's relationships with other people. There is a notion that prevails among many whereby development in one's relationship with Hashem involves disassociating oneself from other people and their needs — things which might serve only as a distraction from one's spiritual pursuits. Our parsha teaches just the opposite. The three verses that mention emulating Hashem represent a progression, with each time that the concept appears seeing the person at a more developed stage in his relationship with Hashem. By emulating Hashem in his dealings with others, the person attains an affinity with — and a closeness to — the Divine. Hence, initially it can lead him toward fear of Hashem, from there to love of Hashem, and from there the cleaving to Him. This sweeping view of the concept of “going in Hashem's ways” as it appears in our parsha is a compelling reminder of the synergy that exists between all categories of mitzvos. From Blessings to Awe **וְעַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ שְׂאֵל מֵעַמּוֹ כִּי אִם לִירְאָה אֵת ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ... And now, Israel, what does Hashem, your God, ask of you, except to fear Hashem, your God...[5]** The Talmud sees an allusion in the words of our verse for the idea of reciting one hundred blessings every day, expounding, “Read not **מה** — what' but **מאה** — a hundred.”[6] What is the connection between these two things? R' Shlomo Zalman Auerbach explains that the Gemara is addressing the fact that in asking, “What does Hashem ask of you, except to fear Him?” the verse appears to see fear of Hashem as something that is simple and straightforward. As we know, this is often not the case. How, then, are we to understand the verse's message? In truth, however, the reason people find fear of Hashem difficult is because they are not conscious of Hashem and all He does for them on an ongoing basis. Reciting blessings every day helps instill that consciousness, as it maintains an awareness of Hashem's control of and benevolence toward the world. When a person has this, fear of Hashem can actually be seen as something that is natural and straightforward. As such, the Gemara informs us that it is through **“מאה”** that one is able to access the **“7”**.מה. [1] Devarim 8:6. [2] Verse 12. [3] Verse 22. [4] Introduction to Ahavas Chessed. [5] Devarim 10:12. [6] Menachos 43b. [7] Heard from Rav Auerbach by my cousin, R' Elimelech Cooperman, shlita. Copyright © 2022 Journeys in Torah, All rights reserved. You're receiving this email

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The Reward Will Be In the End

Parshas Eikev

Posted on August 18, 2022 (5782)

By Rabbi Yisroel Ciner

This week we read the parsha of Eikev. “V’ha’yah aikev tishm’une ais hamishpatim... {And it will be ‘eikev’ you will accept the judgments...}.[7:12]” The word ‘eikev’ has many different meanings which the different commentators incorporate into their explanation of the passuk {verse}.

The Targum explains ‘eikev’ to mean ‘in exchange.’ In exchange for your accepting the laws, the passuk continues and says that Hashem will maintain the covenant and kindness of which He swore to the Patriarchs.

Rashi explains the word ‘eikev’ to mean ‘heel.’ If you will accept those ‘light’ mitzvos which a person (often) tramples on with his heel...

Eikev can also mean the end, as the heel is the ‘end’ of the body. The Baal HaTurim often explains the connection between the last words of one parsha and the first words of the following parsha. Here he points out that the previous parsha, after commanding us to keep the commandments, concluded with the words: “Today to do them [7:11].” Our parsha begins: “V’hayah eikev—And it will be in the end.” Today, this world, is the place to fulfill the commandments but the reward will only be in the end, in the world to come.

Last night my wife and I visited an old neighbor of ours who had lost her husband while we were away in the States. I had mentioned them in parsha-insights a while ago but I feel it deserves to be repeated.

They were both survivors of the Holocaust. He had been married with children when the atrocities began. By the end of the war he was alone in a way that I don't think any of us could even imagine. She was single when she was sent to Auschwitz.

My wife and I learned to be sensitive to her sensitivities. My wife once ‘snapped’ the gum she was chewing while

our neighbor was visiting. She jumped and suddenly had a look of terror on her face. She, blushing, explained that the sound reminded her of the whips she had been subjected to. Another young couple in the building once brought home a dog. She took refuge in our apartment which was the closest door available. She explained that 'Dr.' Mengele Y"SH had wanted to know what happens when a human is bit by a dog and nothing is done to treat the wound. She was chosen as the 'patient' and since then had a tremendous fear of dogs.

They met after the war and married. Wanting to start a more hopeful life than Europe could offer, they were part of the 'illegal immigration' to Palestine. When the State was declared, life didn't become all that much easier for them. She would often laugh, hearing about the aliyah {immigration to Israel} rights that the government granted immigrants and comparing it to what they had been faced with on their 'aliyah' about thirty five years earlier. We received rent subsidies on our apartment—they lived in tents. We had three years during which we could buy a car and all major appliances tax-free—they were draining swamps. The list went on and on.

Two children were born to them, a son and a daughter. The son fought in the Six Day War but died as a very young man. I never got clear if he died in the war or from an illness afterwards.

When my wife and I moved to Israel they were already older people. He worked hard in the kitchen of one of the local institutions. She would deliver the mail. Until they became too old and feeble, they were there daily, earning their honest living.

They were people who had borne so much pain and suffering and yet carried on with their lives with happiness and a sincere devotion to Hashem. I often thought that any one of the things which they had endured probably would have knocked me right out of the batter's box. But they endured.

As we were sitting and talking last night, reminiscing about her husband, a"h, my gaze fell onto the numbers still etched on her arm. I thought to myself that we really don't have too many people like this left. People who suffered so much only because they were Jews—and yet didn't budge.

We are accustomed to such comforts and luxuries. One of my Rabbeim once said that when we want to describe to our children how hard it was when we were kids, we'll

have to tell them that when we wanted to change the channel of the television, we had to actually get out of our chair, walk to the television and turn the dial...

I also thought about the Rashi that I quoted above. Rashi spoke about the commandments which get trampled on—I was thinking about the people who get trampled on.

She said to us a number of times that this world doesn't seem to have any room for her. Money, money, money. That's all that seems to matter. That is the idolatry of today. That's all people want—that's all people respect. Everyone wants it but don't want to work for it. (And that was her assessment without her ever having heard about IPO's and internet stocks...)

Her husband of blessed memory worked hard and simply in order to earn his living. He never expected anything from anyone else and never wanted anything from anyone else. Amongst the Sages of the Talmud we find Rabi Yochanan the sandal-maker. That is how he is referred to throughout the Talmud. Productive, honest, proud. My neighbor was a potato peeler—those were the only 'chips' he worked with. Productive, honest, proud. Very often, those are the people who get trampled on.

Our parsha warns: "Be careful not to forget Hashem your G-d... You'll build beautiful houses, have much livestock, amass large amounts of silver and gold... and forget Hashem.[8:11-14]"

Every person is created in the 'form' of Hashem. Last night I was thinking that perhaps forgetting the poor, 'insignificant' people is included in this warning not to forget Hashem. The truth is that we are the ones who stand to lose the most by not getting to know and learn from such incredibly stalwart people. As I was looking at the numbers on her arm I was thinking that the window of opportunity is slowly closing. May Hashem grant us the wisdom to open our eyes and our hearts.

Good Shabbos,
Yisroel Ciner

This is dedicated in the memory of my neighbor,R'
Binyamin Zev ben R' Yosef Shaul, z"l. TNZB"H

from: **TorahWeb** <torahweb@torahweb.org> date:
Aug 18, 2022, 11:02 AM subject: Rabbi Ahron
Lopiansky - Kabbolas Ol Mitzvos
Rabbi Ahron Lopiansky
Kabbolas Ol Mitzvos

In Parshah Eikev, we have the second half - or second third, if you will - of the daily kerias Shema. The last paragraph is really a distinct point, i.e. remembering the redemption from Mitzrayim, but the first two paragraphs have many striking similarities and distinctions. First of all, they seem to us to be somewhat repetitious. The Mishna (Berachos 2:2) explains the content and order of these two paragraphs as follows:

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korcha said: why, in the mitzva of the recitation of Shema, did the portion of Shema precede that of Vehaya im shamoa? This is so that one will first accept upon himself the yoke of the kingdom of Heaven, the awareness of G-d and G-d's unity, and only then accept upon himself the yoke of the mitzvot, which appears in the paragraph of Vehaya im shamoa. If the point is to do the mitzvos, and a person is ready to do them, should that not suffice? If a person accepts upon himself the yoke of heaven, does that not automatically mean that he will accept the yoke of mitzvos? After all, aren't they almost synonymous? If a person is willing to do what Hashem commands us to do because he is the ultimate King, then isn't he perforce going to perform the mitzvos?

Additionally, the reward and punishment aspect which is included in this second paragraph is markedly different than the first paragraph. In the first paragraph we speak of total faith and commitment to Hashem even at the price of giving up one's life or possessions. There does not seem to be any indication of reward, and even possibly the contrary: one may end up losing everything because of one's faith in Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Why does this change so drastically in the second paragraph? We also are puzzled by the offering of these rewards and punishments. We know that the Mishna (Avos 1:3) exhorts us to obey Hashem the way a servant would, regardless of reward. There are places where the Torah indicates rewards and punishments, but those are seen primarily as indicators of when we are performing well as opposed to when we are straying. They are a type of positive and negative reinforcement; they are symptoms and signs, but not the purpose. In this paragraph, where we express our core commitment to observing mitzvos, why is the aspect of reward and punishment included?

Let us understand the distinction between these two commitments. The difference between the "yoke of heaven" versus the "yoke of mitzvos" is as follows: The

yoke of heaven implies that Hashem's will is the dominant will in the universe, and a command of His must be accepted as such. It means that we don't need to feel or think that the mitzvos are in any way of use, help, or benefit in any way to anyone, neither physically nor even spiritually. The yoke of heaven simply implies that His orders ought to be obeyed as such, period.

But the yoke of mitzvos is a very different type of obligation. True, if one does not accept the yoke of heaven then one really cannot accept the yoke of mitzvos. We need to realize, however, that just as the mitzvos are obligatory because Hashem gave them to us, it is equally true that they also are there to perfect the world. Hashem put us in this world with a mandate, and that mandate is "lovdo olshamra" - to work the garden and to guard against harm. Adam was put into this world in order to develop the world. Hashem has chosen to make us the ones who either bring out the best in the world, or destroy it. The reward and punishment mentioned in this parshah are not merely a feedback mechanism or a reinforcement to spur us to do what's right, rather they are our core understanding of what we're accomplishing. We are the messenger of the Divine to accomplish this.

This is most strongly expressed by Rabbeinu Bchaya (Devarim 27, 26):

"Cursed be he who will not uphold the words of this Torah." This includes all the commandments in the Torah. The meaning of the verse is: a person must acknowledge all the commandments of the Torah as true and emanating from God; he may not exclude a single one of them from his acceptance as such by denying that it is of value to body and soul. He must not view a single commandment as superfluous and meaningless. This is the meaning of אשר לא יקים לעשות אותם. He must be convinced in his heart that all the commandments are worthwhile observing seeing they are all full of meaning to people engaged in studying them. Thus, our reading of kerias Shema twice a day affirms the following two core aspects of our belief. One is that the world of mitzvos is mandated by Hashem. We do not have the discretion to choose our own mitzvos or deny them. We are obligated to do them whether we understand their meaning or not. The second core belief, expressed in the second part of kerias Shema, is that all of those mitzvos that are mandated by Hashem, and done as such, are activities that bring out the good in the world. They are not whims, chas

veshalom, nor are they meaningless commandments; rather they are the core of what nourishes the world. And we must believe that when we do what is good and right, the world blossoms, while refraining from doing so, or do things that are bad or evil, destroys the world. This is complete emuna: both ohl malchus shamaim and ol mitzvos.

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from: **Rabbi Berel Wein** / The Destiny Foundation
<info@jewishdestiny.com> date: Aug 18, 2022
EKEV 5782

Moshe's discourse to the children of Israel at the end of his life continues in this week's parsha. I think that it has to be said that Moshe presents a "fair and balanced" review of the events that have befallen Israel during its desert sojourn. The good and the bad, the exalted and the petty are all recorded for us in his words. And his view of the future of his beloved people is also a balanced mixture of woeful warnings and of great reward, of unlimited opportunity and of crushing defeats. As always, he is forced to leave the choice of behavior and direction to the people of Israel themselves but he attempts surely to guide their choices in the right direction through his words and predictions. This is perhaps the greatest quality of a leader – the ability to clearly outline significant choices in life and society and give guidance to one's people to make wise and beneficial decisions. Leaders who portray only one side of the coin, the bright one– who promise only utopian lower taxes and yet increased welfare programs, peace without sacrifice and social systems of equality and blind justice that do not take into account the realities of human nature – only encourage inevitable disappointment, cynicism and apathy in their people and constituents. On the other hand, leaders who govern by dire threats, terrible predictions, emphasizing all society's ills and generating only drabness and a bleak view of the future, destroy human initiative in a fog of pessimism. Moshe, the paradigm of the great and wise leader presents, throughout his discourse here in the book of Dvarim, both sides of the coin. Unfortunately, over the ages, the Jews have not always chosen wisely. People hear what they wish to hear no matter what the speaker really says. We are prone to misquote, misunderstand, repeat phrases out of context and generally ignore what we do not wish to

hear and understand. Moshe's attempt to portray the great achievements of the desert - and especially of Sinai - and balance them with the reminders of the tragedies and wars that also mark Israel's journey through the desert, had only limited influence on the people. Our sages teach us that the Jewish people simply did not believe Moshe's dire predictions would ever really occur.

God simply had too much invested in the Jewish people. It was a forerunner of our modern "too big to fail" philosophy regarding otherwise corrupt financial institutions. So Moshe's darker side of the coin was never really believed by the Jewish people. They heard only the good – what they wanted to hear – and ignored the rest. There are many Jews today that unfortunately listen to the opposite strains of Jewish life. They despair of our future and our wonderful state. They also only hear what they wish to hear, fueled by a biased and ignorant media and narrow-minded intellectuals. They see no grand future for Israel, the people, the state and the land. A well considered study of Moshe's words and his realistic and balanced message would certainly be in order. Shabat shalom. Rabbi Berel Wein

from: **Rabbi Eliezer Parkoff**

<rabbiparkoff@gmail.com> date: Aug 18, 2022, 9:01 AM
subject: Rabbi Parkoff's Chizuk Letter - Eikev – Segula for Parnossah: Birkas Hamazon With Kavana Parshas Eikev

Blessings and More Blessings And you will eat and be sated, and you shall bless the Lord, your God, for the good land He has given you. (Devorim 8:10) You Bring Forth Bread from the Ground (Rabbi Bentzion Shafier, "The Shmuz")

One of the berachos (blessings) that we make on a regular basis is hamotzi lechem min ha'aretz, Hashem, I acknowledge that You are the One Who brings forth bread from the ground.

Now, if you think about that berachah, you should ask an obvious question: G-d does not bring forth bread from the ground. A farmer plants a seed and then he harvests it. He then ships that wheat over to the silo, it's then sent to the mill, it's then ground into flour, that flour is then sold to the bakery, the bakery then puts it in trucks, the trucks deliver it to the supermarket. If anything, I should say hamotzi lechem min hasupermarket. But that's not the

nusach (wording) of the berachah. And the question is what did chazal (our sages) mean?

And I believe the answer is a fundamental lesson in emunah (belief). Understanding that Hashem created the world is very important, but understanding that Hashem still runs the world is far more important. Meaning to say that as Hashem makes the rain fall in its time and as Hashem decrees that there should be blight or pestilence or not, Hashem decrees that there should be market economies, Hashem decrees that there should be various things put into operation so that humanity should continue. Meaning to say that there are industries, that there are factories, that there is law and order is Hashem running the world. But the entire world is run by Hashem. And I have to recognize that from the mill to the trucker to the supermarket to everything that happens, Hashem is involved in all of it.

And when I pick up that slice of bread and I say hamotzi lechem min ha'aretz, I acknowledge the fact that Hashem, You are the Creator of the world, You made this wondrous thing called a seed that could bring forth wheat. But I also recognize the second stage, that You're involved in the running of the world. Everything that happens, all of the economies, all of the industries, all of the inventions, all of the facts that there is in fact a method and a way for human beings to earn their living and bring it forth. When I eat that slice of bread I acknowledge Hashem as its Creator and that Hashem runs the world to bring this bread to me. * * *

Segula for Parnossah: Birkas Hamazon With Kavana
It is well known that reciting Parshas HaMann is a segula for parnossah. Perhaps what is less well known is that reciting Birkas Hamazon with kavana is also a very powerful segula for parnossah.

A Jewish survivor of the Holocaust related how he was saved from the clutches of the Nazis during World War II:

When I was a young boy of 12, Rabbi Meir Shapira of Lublin came to our Talmud Torah and tested us in our knowledge of Gemara. The custom in those years was that after a great rabbi examined the young children, he would give a gift to all the students. But Rabbi Meir Shapira had not brought any presents.

So, when he finished examining us, he said to us: "I will give you as a gift a wonderful piece of advice and virtue,

with which you will be able to live your entire life in peace and tranquility." Rabbi Meir quoted the awesome words of the Sefer HaChinuch: "I have received a tradition from my teachers, that all who are careful in the blessing of food (Birkas Hamazon) that his food will be given to him with honor all his life." Rabbi Meir further related that this idea is also found in the Bach: "Whomever is careful to say Birkas Hamzaon with kavana is spared from terrible decrees." When I heard the pure words of Rabbi Shapira, I took it upon myself to recite the Birkas Hamazon with proper intent and with the utmost self-sacrifice, said the old Jew.

A few years later, the cursed Nazi villains arrived, conquered the land of Europe, and led the Jews to the camps, and I was among them. As usual, the men were sent to work, and the women and children separated to be sent to the crematoriums to die in the sanctification of Hashem's name.

I was a young bochur, but I tried to stand as tall as I could to look older. I kept whispering with my lips: "My Father in Heaven, I have fulfilled the words of the Bach and blessed Birkas Hamazon with full kavana. You also fulfill the promise that I will be spared and these cursed devils should have no control over me."

When my turn came, I was sent to the right side – to work and not to death. We were then put into another line to determine what work we were fit for. I knew that I couldn't withstand any type of hard labor, so I cried again before the Rock of Israel and begged him that by conscientiously observing Birkas Hamazon, He would save me once again.

Suddenly he heard a whisper. He tilted his head toward the voice and saw that the whisper came from the Jew standing next to him. "Listen," said the man. "When your turn comes, declare that you are a cook and an expert in cooking and baking, and then I will say the same, and that I want you to be my assistant. It seems to me that this will make it easier for us to survive in the camp."

Shimon liked the idea. He did the advice of the Jew, and both were happy to find out that their request had been approved and they were sent to work in the camp kitchen. Working in the kitchen was relatively easy, and the closeness to food made it easier for them to endure the agony of hunger, which was the fate of the camp prisoners.

One day a Nazi officer entered the kitchen. He cast a furious look at young Shimon. "Come here, Yid," he called to him. He gave him a small hammer, took him outside, and ordered, "You have three hours to dig a deep ditch here. If you succeed, you can go back to your work, or else it will be your end."

The hammer was so small it was incapable of even shattering a small stone, much less dig a hole. Shimon knew that he had no chance of digging a pit with only the small hammer, in the absence of suitable tools. He again turned to the Ribono Shel Olam, "Tatte in Himmel, it says in Your Torah that my food will be prepared for me with bounty. Please save me!"

As he stood there davening, a truck stopped to bring supplies to the kitchen. The soldiers who were sitting in the truck decided to abuse the Jewish young man and began to pelt him with apples and vegetables that were in the truck. Shimon was not hurt, and when the soldiers left, fruit and vegetables were scattered all around him.

Suddenly a group of Polish prisoners passed by. They, too, were suffering from starvation from the Germans. When they saw the fruit and vegetables, they asked Shimon to allow them to have some to revive themselves.

At that moment an idea came into Simon's mind. "Let's make a deal," he told the prisoners. "If you can dig a deep hole here, take as many fruits and vegetables as you want." The prisoners responded to the challenge with joy. They were equipped with digging tools, and within minutes, all of them together had managed to dig a deep enough hole. They took their wages and continued on their way.

After three hours the Nazi officer returned to examine the work of the young Jew. Much to his astonishment he saw the deep pit ready as he demanded. "I knew your G-d was protecting you, but I did not know how much," muttered the wicked German, and sent Simon back to the kitchen.

Have a Great Shabbos!

from: Torah Musings <newsletter@torahmusings.com>
date: Aug 18, 2022, 11:02 AM subject: Torah Musings
Daily Digest

<https://www.torahmusings.com/category/magazine/rav-gidon/meshech-chochmah/>

Meshech Chochmah

Overcoming Ourselves, With God's Help

by R. Gidon Rothstein

Torah Awakens Us To Higher Truths

Meshech Hochmah points out an oddity in the first verse of the parsha (originally addressed by Akedat Yitzhak, he says). Moshe Rabbenu says Hashem will reward us in return for following the mishpatim, laws we understand, without mention of the hukkim, laws we do not (or not immediately and intuitively). While he applauds (but does not share) Akedat Yitzhak's answer, he suggests his own: the forty years in the desert converted the hukkim to mishpatim.

Souls sullied by prohibited foods and/or physical intimacy cannot grasp what the purified soul can, he says, and keeping mitzvot sweeps away those barriers.

In his view, hukkim are not beyond human understanding, they are beyond those enmeshed in base pleasures.

The Blessing After Food and Before Torah

Our parsha, 8;10, has the source verse for the only universally agreed beracha de-oraita, blessing ordained by the Torah itself, Birkat Ha-Mazon, the Grace After Meals. In two places in Massechet Berachot, however, the Gemara sources a Biblical obligation to recite a blessing before studying Torah. To explain why we recite a blessing before Torah study and after eating, Meshech Hochmah delves into reasons for the blessings beyond the simple idea of thanking God for bounty.

The feeling of satiation, being full, can make us self-satisfied, a time when people are prone to forget God, as the Torah stresses two verses later, 8;12. To inoculate us, the Torah has us bless God right then, to remind ourselves what verse eighteen does, God is the One Who gives the strength to achieve whatever we accomplish.

With Torah study, the danger comes at the beginning. Most of us bring selfish goals to our study, as Pesachim 68b says, to become wiser or to win renown. Without a kickoff reminder the real and best focus of Torah study is to sustain the Jewish soul (he writes ha-nefesh ha-Yisraeli, the Israelite soul) and give it long life, the student might become arrogant, use Torah knowledge for selfish purposes—as Avot sees the need to warn, do not make it a spade with which to dig. Torah could become, God forbid, a danger rather than a sam mavet, a (spiritually) deadly poison, in the words of Shabbat 88b.

The obligation of birchot ha-Torah therefore comes before the study, to put us in the right frame of mind (he

is assuming the blessing is Biblically obligated, based on the verse in Ha'azinu, ki shem Hashem ekra, havu godel le-Elokenu, when I call out in the Name of God, give greatness to our Lord). For Meshech Hochmah, it explains Nedarim 81a, where the Gemara questions why the children of Torah scholars are often not themselves Torah scholars.

One answer there attributes it to their failure to recite birchot ha-Torah. There are many interpretations, Meshech Hochmah's seems to be that they did not remember to direct their Torah study to proper motives, so it did not pass to their children.

Once having studied, there is no need for a blessing, because Torah itself imbues the needed lessons.

Pleasure Leads Us Astray

The idea Birkat Ha-Mazon puts eating into the proper context explains a passage in Arachin 4a, where the Gemara includes kohanim among those obligated in zimmun, coming together for a joint Birkat Ha-Mazon when three Jews have eaten together. The Gemara puzzles over the need to lay out something obvious—why shouldn't they be obligated in zimmun?-- and answers that kohanim eat kodashim, sacrifices, and we might have thought the atoning quality of the sacrifices would cover the Grace need. For Meshech Hochmah, the Gemara means we might have thought the sanctified nature of the eating would prevent any bad outcomes. It therefore made a point of their need to join the zimmun, because all eating, even sanctified eating, has a physical element that can lead down the wrong path.

The challenge of channeling the physical for the right purposes comes up in Rosh Ha-Shanah 28a, regarding a person who vowed to refrain from receiving any benefit from a certain spring. S/he can nonetheless immerse in the spring for the sake of taharah, becoming ritually purified, in the winter, because the water is cold, the air is cold, the person immersing has no physical pleasure; in the summer, despite the mitzvah element, the person will also enjoy the fact of the cold water, and the vow says s/he cannot.

Although the fact of directing an action to a religious purpose is not enough to remove the physical element, for food, a berachah afterwards can help do the trick.

In a Loving Relationship, Only the Big Stuff Gets Sweated

In the middle of chapter ten of Devarim, Moshe tells the Jewish people “all” Hashem wants of them is to fear God, walk in all God's ways, love God, serve God with all their hearts and souls. It sounds like a lot, where Moshe makes it sound not so daunting. Meshech Hochmah builds his reading off Tanhuma Noah 19, a Midrash intent on how a child and servant experience the same task differently.

A child fulfills duties towards a parent with joy, confident parental love will paper over any flaws in what s/he did; the child can relax into the task, because success—in the form of parental praise-- is almost guaranteed. A servant feels no such security and therefore serves the master with some fear and trepidation.

Verses suggest the contrast characterizes the Jewish people and the nations of the world. Tehillim 2;1 wonders why the nations of the world are concerned, and at the end of the Psalm, verses 11-12, calls for them to serve God with fear, rejoice with trembling. David was warning them, the Midrash says, to be careful in all they do, because they do not have the cushion the Jewish people enjoy. For whom a later verse, 100;2, says “serve God with happiness, come before him with joy.”

Meshech Hochmah understands our verse to call for the Jew to have both, to fear God and walk in all God's ways on the one hand, the manner of an oved mi-yir'ah, one who serves out of fear of missing some detail, as well as to love God with all one's heart.

Torah guides us away from the attractions that mislead our morality, such as by supplying a beracha to focus our Torah study and eating in the right ways, all in a framework where we should try to do it all, knowing God loves Jews for whatever they do accomplish.

from: lammheritage@yu.edu reply-to:
yeshivauniversity@yu.edu date: Aug 18, 2022, 5:01 PM
subject: Making Hay out of Religion

www.yu.edu/drlamm

Rabbi Norman Lamm

Suggested Title: **Making Hay out of Religion Ekev, 8/25/1951**

One of the great paradoxes of human nature is the meeting of opposites, the fact that two conditions which are contrary to each other in the extreme can produce the same effects. How frequently are we amused to find the

Vatican and the Kremlin towing, with characteristic dogmatism, the same lines; occasionally we are astonished at the coincidence of views of the Wall Street Journal and the Daily Worker. Both extreme Right and extreme Left are alike in condemning the liberal centre, and in demanding blind obedience of their followers. Both were equally hostile, for instance, to the Marshall Plan.

In the same vein, we find that affluence and plenty often produce the same results as do adversity and poverty. It is no secret that indigence breeds immorality and corruption. In the Middle Ages, the Black Plague and the universal poverty combined to cause the greatest crime wave in the recorded history of Europe. Murder, violence and theft were the immediate results of pestilence and destitution. Starvation and privation are bound to unleash the tidal waves of immorality and degeneracy whether in Nablus of Arab Palestine or in Harlem of enlightened New York. Sociologists usually blame low standards of morality on low standards of living. But the astounding fact is that there are people who would behave immorally and irreligiously and unethically when they earn \$200 a week, whereas they did not do so when they barely eked out a living at \$25 a week. Somehow prosperity will sometimes produce worse effects than will poverty. The recent basketball scandals have shown that boys from wealthy

homes are not necessarily immune from the temptation of the fixer. Today, when America is enjoying comparatively high prosperity, the record for narcotics, sports scandals and government bribery is as black as ever. It is a well-established phenomenon that the nouveau riche, the man who has suddenly become wealthy, leaves his House of Worship and forgets his religion. Even political immorality is practiced by the extremely wealthy. There are some millionaires who are known sympathizers of American Communism, as an "ism" which usually preys on the poor and dejected only. This principle or paradox was already formulated in the Torah and explained by our Sages. In today's Sidra we read, "ושבעת ואכלת," "And you shall eat and be satisfied," פן "לכם השמרו אחרים אלהים ועבדתם וסרתם לבבכם יפתה", take heed and beware lest your heart be deceived and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them." And the Rabbis of the Midrash infer from the sequence of the texts that there is a definite relationship between satiety,

eating till you're full, to said Moses. "אמר להם: הזהרו שלא .idolatry and the Jews, 'Beware of rebelling against G-d - that is, worshipping idols - because it is only out of satisfaction and satiety that one takes to idolatry.'" Was not the Tower of Babel, the symbol of rebellion against G-d, built during a period of affluence? Did not the wickedness of Sodom flourish among a wealthy people? And had the Rabbis of the Midrash lived today, they would add: And was not Berlin, the city which admitted only wealthy "schutz-juden," the center of assimilation? And is not the Jew who moves from Rivington St. to Forest Hills the first to dispense with his Tallis and Tefillin, and ultimately with Shabbos and Kashruth and then all of Judaism? Only when people are satisfied and content with themselves do they go a hunting for other gods, whether the money god or the entertainment god or the god whose first commandment is "thou shalt keep up with the Joneses."

Well, we can understand that שביעה, satiety and contentment, should result in laxity of morals and religion. After a heavy gluttonous meal, one's metabolism rate drops, his pulse and respiration go down and energy is sparse. One feels lazy, and if he forgets his המזון ברכת ,if he skips a מצוה or two or commits a sin or so, it is a result of negligence and indolence rather than במקום מרידה ,rebellion against G-d, idolatry. Why then do the Rabbis, why does the Torah insist that שביעה leads to זרה עבודה ,that eating the satisfaction is the precursor of the worst of all sins, idolatry?

My friends, idolatry, no matter what kind, ancient or modern, is easier than true religion. And because it is easier to practice, success is more readily attainable in idolatry than in monotheism. First of all, it requires less mental exertion. True religion is more abstract, more difficult conceptually than belief in a tangible idol. The invisible is harder on the intellect than the visible. Then, idolatry is less taxing emotionally than Judaism. It is easier to offer your overt devotions to or embrace a slab of concrete or a totem pole or a Rembrandt or a moneybag or a rabbit's foot than it is to fall in love with an unknown G-d whom your senses cannot even detect. And, lastly, idolatry places less restrictions upon your behavior than does our religion. The creed of the Moloch or Baal never demanded strict Sabbath observance. The religion of the money-bag certainly places no restrictions

on corrupt business practices. And the faith in the sacred cow of science requires ethical conduct of no one. All sources indicate that idolatry has frequently sanctioned murder, immorality and downright degeneracy.

Why do normal people fall prey to the curse of idolatry? Why do they succumb to this opiate of easy living? Let us read the verse preceding the one we have previously quoted: ונתתי עשב for fields you in grass give will I And “עשב בשדך לבהמתך ואכלת ושבעת, השמרו לכם פן יפתה לבבכם your animals and you shall eat and be satisfied,” and then, “beware of worshipping other gods.”

Certainly: If a man is satisfied with eating the grass reserved for his cattle, if he is satisfied to thrive on straw and hay, then certainly his goals are so low that he will be satisfied with the easily attainable idolatry. If his noblest goals are not as high as the stars in heaven, but as low as hay in the field, and if he is satisfied with this grass, then his loftiest aims and ambitions in his entire religious life will be not the dedication to One G-d in heaven but the worship of a dozen cheap clay and wooden statues. ושבעת, the danger of idolatry rears its ugly head when people’s aims are level with the ground, when they strive for straw and are content with their success in obtaining it.

The great American ideal is “success.” But “success” can apply as well to a well-executed murder as to the amassing of a fortune. I have two friends who intended to accelerate their reading this summer. One decided to read ten important novels published during the past year. The other friend was less ambitious and selected three best-sellers for his summer reading list. By today, I hear, the second fellow has well completed his list of three books. He is by all American standards a success. The first fellow finished only eight of the ten books he had set out to read. Again by American standards, he is a dismal failure. Yet who has accomplished more? Is success really a measure of achievement? Is it really necessary for a meaningful life? In this same vein, idolatry is easier to succeed in than Judaism. It all depends on what your original goal is. ושבעת ואכלת לבהמתך בשדך עשב ונתתי .People who are satisfied with straw are rife for idol worship.

Look about you in your places of business and in the streets, and you will meet the typical American Jew of 1951. How high are his goals? Doesn’t he seem to think that an insignificant check to charity is the summum

bonum of Jewish life? Isn’t he satisfied with a Sunday School education for his children? His highest religious ideal is to visit the synagogue on the High Holy Days. And sometimes he is even satisfied with a temple which differs from a cathedral only in minor architectural details. His standard for Kashrus is two sets of dishes in the home and one set all over the rest of the world. In short, our typical American Jew is often satisfied with straw. A bellyful of hay is sufficient to pacify his spiritual hunger, and a thimbleful of ersatz-religion satisfies his cultural requirements. ושבעת ואכלת לבהמתך בשדך עשב ונתתי .He is unfortunately satisfied with the grass for his cattle, and that means that he is prepared to bow and kneel to the next idol. What the American Jew needs is not a face-lifting but a lifting of his level of vision. He must learn to aim higher.

One of the reasons that the Talmud gives for the destruction of the Temple is עבדו שלא הדין משורת לפנים ,that the people acted only as was legally expected of them, and no more. They followed the letter of the Law, but failed to rise to the spirit of the Law. This view of the Talmud was given a modern slant in plain English when Sen. Fulbright, commenting on the sad state of American political morals, said that it was “setting a low level” for our national development if “our only goal for official conduct is that it be legal instead of illegal.” Indeed, he was expressing the popular fear that our country, the Sanctuary of Democracy, is endangered because its sights are as high as the דין, the strict Constitutional law, and not the spirit of the law, the unwritten moral code. A diet of hay & straw is bad for the spiritual health of our nation. We must raise our sights.

Peretz, the famous Yiddish and Hebrew writer, has immortalized the type of Jew whose goals were no higher than עשב, the animal’s straw, in his story “Bontsche Shweig.” When Bontsche died, he was tried by the Divine Tribunal, and the Heavenly Court decided that he merited any reward he would chose. Bontsche could not believe it. “Taki? Really?” he asked in wonder. He was reassured. When Bontsche announced his decision, the court and angels looked down, a little ashamed, and the prosecutor laughed. For Bontsche had answered, “Well, if it is so, I would like to have every day, for breakfast, a hot roll and fresh butter.”

In the same way, a leader who prods his people on to higher goals and loftier ambition is a leader who loves his

people. And, conversely, the leader who lulls his people into complacency and self-satisfaction is a traitor. Some of the laudatory and flattering of epithets were bestowed upon Israel by Balaam, the gentile prophet. Oh, how he praised us! Just compare what he told the Jews to the sermons that Isaiah preached at them. Balaam told them that G-d saw no sin or evil in them; Isaiah said that they were repulsive to G-d and rebellious sons. Balaam told them that glory would be theirs without a struggle; Isaiah warned of impending doom if they would not mend their ways. But who would you say loved Israel more? Certainly, the strict and critical Isaiah! For he set higher and finer goals for his people, goals more difficult to achieve, if success was at all humanly possible. He demanded of them exertion and initiative, while Balaam told them that they could rest on their laurels, that they were successful and nothing else was worth striving for. Balaam was not a friend- he was a bitter enemy. The leader who loved his people will give them not a pat on the back, but a shot in the arm. He will teach them that if *ושבעת ואכלת*, if they can digest and be satisfied with *עשב*, with hay and straw, then they are bound to wind up prostrating themselves before *אחרים אלהים*, pagan idols.

Our good friend, ex-Ambassador James G. McDonald, warns us in his recent book that “the spiritual future of Israel is not without danger.” We can keep our aims low and become a banana republic on the shores of the blue Mediterranean, or we can press forward towards the mark, the prize of our high calling. Success is assured us if we will be content with hay; but the rewards will be greater if our ideals will be loftier.

Today we welcome the month of Elul. During this month, reserved for penitence and introspection, we will reevaluate and possibly reset our present standards and ideals. We can make them as low as the grass upon the fields for the cattle, or as high as the stars in the infinite heavens above. Which shall it be?

from: **Joshua Kruger** <genesis@torah.org> to: parsha-halacha@torah.org date: Aug 18, 2022, 9:25 AM

Parsha Halacha for the Shabbos Table

By Joshua Kruger

Parshas Eikev

Birkas Hamazon - Grace After Meals

The silly person in the following story makes four halachic mistakes.

Can you find them?

Can you think of how the story is connected with the parsha?

The Story

In the city of Balagan, on a street named Gevalt, lived a boy named Barney Mevulbal. He was nice and funny and very very very mixed up.

One day Barney Mevulbal entered his favorite restaurant to order some dinner. He sat down at his favorite table, and was pleased to see his favorite waiter.

“I’d like to order a super cheese pizza with extra cheese, please”

The waiter frowned. “Umm... this is still a meat restaurant, so there won’t be any pizza today...again”.

“Oh. In that case, I’ll take two hamburgers with everything on them. But please hold the tomatoes, ketchup, mustard, onions, lettuce, pickles and burgers”.

The waiter shortly returned with two hamburger buns.

Barney devoured the first hamburger bun, and then decided to eat the second at a slower pace. “These are great! I want to savor every bite,” he thought.

Soon the waiter came to check on Barney. “Can I bring you something else?” he asked. “My work shift finishes at 6 o’clock so I’ll be leaving soon”.

“It’s almost 6 o’clock!?” asked Barney. “Oh no! It’s getting late. I need to get home and start my homework.”

“I’ll bring you a birkon” said the waiter.

“Thanks but I’m in a rush” said Barney. “I’ll say birkas hamazon later when I’m back at home”. He asked the waiter to place the remaining half of his hamburger bun in a take away bag, paid a very discounted price, and left.

Along the way he bumped into his friend Yehuda at the neighborhood park.

“Hi Yehuda. Sorry, I can’t talk. I’m in a rush to get home and start my homework.”

Yehuda smiled. “I think you can relax, Barney. The school year finished last week and you won’t have to worry about homework for two months. Would you like to play some basketball with me?”

“Absolutely” said Barney.

Forty minutes later, the boys decided to take a break.

“I win again” exclaimed Barney proudly, “I missed the net twenty-five more times that you did, Yehuda!”.

“Congratulations” smiled Yehuda, “By the way, what’s in that bag?”

“Oh my goodness!” said Barney. “It’s the leftovers from my meal. I can’t remember if I said birkas hamazon. I’m going to go home and call the restaurant to check. Maybe they’ll remember. Would you like the rest of my hamburger bun, Yehuda? I guess it’s too late to eat it now.”

“Thanks for the offer” said Yehuda, “but we’re about to start dinner soon at my home. See you tomorrow!”

Barney quickly made his way home, though he accidentally entered four other homes along the way. By the time he had arrived in the right home, he had completely forgot about birkas hamazon.

“Better get started on my homework. Now where did I leave my pencil?”

An hour later, after searching every drawer and shelf in the fridge, Barney forgot about doing his homework and started thinking about food.

“I sure could go for a hamburger. Wait a minute – I still haven’t said birkas hamazon!”. He closed the fridge and went to find a birkon... in the laundry machine.

Discussion

Q: What are four halachik mistakes that Barney makes?

1) You should say birkas hamazon in the place that you eat your meal (Shulchan Aruch 184:1). If you forgot, then you should try to go back, though it’s not absolutely necessary (Mishna Berura 184:5).

2) If you’re not sure whether you said birkas hamazon, then you should say it, provided you ate your fill (Shulchan Aruch 184:4).

3) If you are unsure whether you said birkas hamazon and you happen to have some bread leftover, then it’s best to eat the bread and then say birkas hamazon (Shulchan Aruch 184:2). This ensures that you will not say a beracha levatala.

4) You can only say birkas hamazon while you are still full from the meal that you ate. This is learned from the words in our parsha *וְאָכַלְתָּ וּשְׂבַעְתָּ וּבֵרַכְתָּ*. It is a requirement that we be full, *וּשְׂבַעְתָּ*, in order to say birkas hamazon. For this reason, most poskim rule that birkas hamazon should be said within 72 minutes of finishing the meal (Mishna Berura 184:20). If you forgot, and more than 72 minutes has passed, then you can still say birkas hamazon bedieved, as long as you did not become hungry since the meal and as long as you did not eat anything else in the

meantime (Shulchan Aruch 184:5). Once six hours has gone by, it has become too late to say birkas hamazon even if you still do not feel hungry (Magen Avraham 184:9).

Q: How is our story connected to the parsha?

A: Parshas Eikev discusses the mitzva to say birkas hamazon (Devarim 8:10).

(Written by Josh and Tammy Kruger, in collaboration with Rabbi Yehoshua Pfeffer of the Institute for Dayanim)

Parsha Halacha for the Shabbos Table © 2022 by Torah.org.

from: Torah Musings <newsletter@torahmusings.com>

date: Aug 17, 2022, 11:03 AM subject: Torah Musings Daily Digest

A Shul Kiddush as the “Third” Meal by R. Daniel Mann

Question: Can I count the cake and other foods I eat at a “shul Kiddush,” followed by a regular Shabbat meal at home, as the second and third meals of Shabbat?

Answer: The question arises only if one is lenient on what constitutes seuda shlishit. The gemara (Shabbat 117b) derives from the pasuk about the manna to be eaten on Shabbat (Shemot 16:25), which uses the word “hayom” (today) three times, that one should have three meals on Shabbat. The straightforward reading of the gemara is that the three meals are primarily equivalent. Since the first two Shabbat meals must include (two loaves of) bread (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 274:1; ibid. 289:1), we should expect the same for seuda shlishit. Indeed, this is the principle opinion of the Shulchan Aruch (OC 291:4-5), except when it is quite difficult (ibid.).

On the other hand, the Shulchan Aruch (ibid.) cites as a minority opinion the possibility to fulfill seuda shlishit with foods other than bread. The Talmudic source for possible leniency is a gemara (Sukka 27a) about a rejected opinion about Sukkot. R. Eliezer says that one must eat fourteen meals on Sukkot and that if he missed one, he should eat an extra meal on the night of Shemini Atzeret. The gemara asks that the bread meal he has on Shemini Atzeret is for that day and answers that the hashlama (make-up meal) is by eating minei targima (there is a machloket exactly what that is – see Tosafot ad loc.) in addition to the regular meal. Tosafot (Berachot

49b) cites Rabbeinu Tam as learning from here that one does not need bread to be considered a modest halachic meal, for example, for seuda shlishit. Most Rishonim (see Beit Yosef, OC 291) say that at least seuda shlishit requires specifically bread because of the derivation from the manna. There are, though, those who do not have seuda shlishit with bread, and they have whom to rely upon.

As mentioned, all agree that bread is required for the second Shabbat meal, even though cake is enough of a meal to give Kiddush its halachic status (Shulchan Aruch, OC 273:5). So, your regular meal is needed to count for the second meal. According to some, that meal must start before chatzot (Aruch Hashulchan, OC 288:2). If this meal started before the earliest time for Mincha (half an hour after chatzot), it is too early for seuda shlishit (Shulchan Aruch, OC 291:2), and even if it extends from morning to afternoon it cannot serve as both the second and third meals (see Levushei Srad ad loc.). Stopping the meal with Birkat Hamazon and then starting a new meal again, could be a potential possibility (see Shulchan Aruch, OC 291:3 and Mishna Berura ad loc. 14). However, this is presumably not a more attractive practical option than making a small seuda shlishit some time later.

It is plausible to make the following halachic claim. Perhaps after having a proper daytime bread meal, we can say that the shul Kiddush constituted retroactively a third meal. While there is an expectation that there will be three meals at three different times of Shabbat (Rambam, Shabbat 30:9), perhaps the important thing is that at the end, fulfilling all of the requirements (two full meals, having eaten after the time of Mincha) in whatever order is enough. Rav Shimon Sofer (Hitorerut Teshuva I:74) left this as an open question and a possible limud z'chut for those who have a pre-meal Kiddush and do not eat seuda shlishit. The Shevet Halevi (I:57) does not view this a viable approach. He cites the Bach (OC 291) who says that the logic of Rabbeinu Tam to treat a non-bread meal as a meal applies only when it follows a full daytime meal, as another full meal might not be expected. However, a small meal before the big meal is not considered a halachic meal toward the three required meals.

In summary, while it is plausible that the setup you describe could remove the need for seuda shlishit, it relies

on unlikely assumptions. Therefore, it is significantly better to either have bread at the small meal (i.e., Kiddush) or to have at least a small seuda shlishit sometime in the afternoon.

from: **Rabbi YY Jacobson** <rabiyy@theyeshiva.net>
reply-to: info@theyeshiva.net date: Aug 18, 2022, 4:51 PM
subject: Never Broken - Essay by Rabbi YY

Never Broken

How a Rebbe Helped a Survivor Embrace His Fragments
The Jewish Perspective

Ammunition had run out for a unit in the Russian army, but it was still under fierce attack. "Take out your bayonets," said the corporal, "we are going to engage the enemy in hand-to-hand combat."

"Please sir," said Pvt. Finkelstein. "Show me my man. Maybe he and I can reach some kind of agreement."

The Survivor

Let me share a story[1]:

After the war, a Holocaust survivor came to visit his one-time spiritual master, the famed Rebbe of the Chassidic dynasty of Ger, Rabbi Avraham Mordechai Alter[2]. This broken Jew had been deported to the death camps together with his wife, children, relatives, and the entire community. The man's wife and children were gassed, his relatives exterminated and his entire community wiped out. He emerged from the ashes a lonely man in a vast world that had silently swallowed the blood of six million Jews. This Jew lost one more thing in the camps: his G-d. After what he experienced in the Nazi death camps, he could not continue believing in a G-d who allowed Auschwitz.

Although after the war he made aliyah to Eretz Israel (then known as Palestine), he completely abandoned Jewish practice and observance. Yet he missed his old Rebbe and went to visit him in Tel Aviv. The Gerer Rebbe himself lost many grandchildren and relatives in the Holocaust. In addition, nearly all of his 200,000 followers were wiped out by the Germans. The Rebbe of Ger and his immediate children managed to escape Warsaw in 1940 and arrived in Eretz Israel soon after.

Upon hearing the story of his disciple, the Rebbe of Ger broke into tears. The man and his Rebbe sat together mourning what they had lost. After a long period of weeping, the Gerer Rebbe wiped his tears and communicated—in Yiddish—the following idea.

"Before Your Eyes"

In his farewell address to his people, in the Torah portion of Eikev, Moses recounts the moment when he descended from Mount Sinai with the two Divine tablets to present to the Jewish people[3]:

"I descended from the mountain," Moses recalls, "the mountain was still burning with fire and the two tablets of the covenant were in my two hands. I immediately saw that you had sinned to G-d, making a calf. You were so quick to turn from the path that G-d had prescribed. "I grasped the two tablets, and threw them down from my two hands, and I smashed them before your eyes."

Moses proceeds to relate how after much toil he succeeded in "convincing" G-d to forgive the Jewish people for their sin. He then, as mentioned above, carved out a second pair of tablets to replace the first ones.

Though the two sets were identical in content, containing the Ten Commandments, the second pair did not possess the same Divine quality as the first tablets, which were "G-d's handiwork and G-d's script[4]." The second tablets were Moses' creation, endorsed by G-d, but not G-d's own creation.

Now, considering the well-known meticulousness of each word in the Bible, Moses' words "I smashed them before your eyes" seem superfluous. Suppose Moses had turned around and broken the tablets out of view; would that in any way have lessened the tragedy? Why did Moses find it important to emphasize that the breaking of the tablets occurred "before your eyes"[5]?

Two Worlds

What Moses was saying, explained the Rebbe of Ger, was that "I smashed the tablets only before your eyes." The shattering of the tablets occurred only before your eyes and from your perception. In reality, though, there exists a world in which the tablets have never been broken.

What Moses was attempting to communicate, the Rebbe of Ger explained is that what may seem to us as utter destruction and chaos, does not always capture the complete story. "I smashed them before your eyes." Before your eyes, there is nothing but devastation. Yet, what in our world bespeaks total disaster may, in a different world, be wholesome.

"As difficult as it is to digest, the Gerer Rebbe went on to say, "there is meaning in the absurdness of history; there is dignity in the valley of tears. G-d—the G-d who

transcends all human logic, understanding, and imagination—was present in our broken pieces."

"As difficult as it is for you and me to believe," the Rebbe concluded, "I want you to know that the extermination of our families, our communities, and our people occurred only 'before our eyes.' There remains a world in which the Jewish people are wholesome. Beneath the surface of our perception, there exists a reality in which every single Jew from Abraham till our present day is alive, his or her soul absolutely intact."

"The day will come," said the Rebbe of Ger, "when that world will be exposed. G-d will transform our perceptions and paradigms. He will mend our broken tablets and our broken nation. We will discover how the tablets were really never broken and the Jewish people were always complete."

These are words that could be effective only when communicated by a man who experienced the suffering of the war on his own flesh. Pain is not an intellectual subject; it is raw, personal, and real. When the Rebbe of Ger spoke these words, he spoke them with tears, with grief. He was not an objective preacher of religion; together with the Holocaust survivor, he walked through his tunnel of darkness. Thus, his words gave back to this broken Jew his soul, his faith, and his courage.

Shattered Dreams

Notwithstanding the grand distinctions, the above message applies to our lives as well. Many of us once owned a set of sacred tablets that at some point in our lives were destroyed. It may have been the death of a mother or father at a young age, bringing to an abrupt end the nurturing and security a child so desperately needs from parents. It may have been any other form of pain, abuse, or loss that you experienced during your life that denied you the love, confidence, joy, and optimism you once called your own. It may be profound fear, shame, insecurity, guilt, disappointment, mistrust, or other forms of emotional trauma that afflict you, shattering your inner sacred and Divine "tablets."

Many of us create for ourselves a second pair of "tablets" in order to substitute for the first ones that were lost. But they are not quite the same. The second set of "tablets" lacks the magic and the innocence of the original "tablets" that no longer exist. In the depth of our hearts, we crave to reclaim something of the wonder of the old tablets.

But it is to no avail: The clock of life never turns back. Here lay the empowering message of Moses to his beloved people before his own demise: There is a secret world in which your first tablets were never broken. Notwithstanding the abuse and pain you experienced, each of you possesses a core self that forever remains invincible, pure, and sacred.

What is more, when your perception expands, you might discover how your shattered dreams may be part of your individual path to wholesomeness. Wholesomeness does not come in one shape; for some, it comes in the form of a broken heart. What is broken in one level of perception may be wholesome in another.

The Final Month

In a few days, we will commence the last month of the Hebrew calendar, known as the month of Elul, when we bid farewell to a year gone by, and prepare to embrace a new one in its stead, beginning on Rosh Hashanah.

The great sage and mystic Rabbi Nathan Shapiro (d. 1640 in Krakow, Poland) writes[6] that the four Hebrew letters of the name Elul (spelled Aleph, Lamed, Vuv, Lamed) is the acronym of the four Hebrew words “Aron, Luchos, V’shevrei, Luchos” (which also begin with the Hebrew letters Aleph, Lamed, Vuv, Lamed). These words, quoted from the Talmud[7], mean this: “The Ark containing the whole tablets and the broken tablets.”

What does this mean? In the book of Exodus, the Torah captures the dramatic tale of how, following the Revelation at Sinai, G-d carved out two tablets, engraved the Ten Commandments on them, and presented them to Moses on Mount Sinai. When Moses descended the mountain, however, he observed that the Israelites had created a golden calf as an idol. Seeing this, Moses threw the tablets from his hands and smashed them on the ground. After a powerful confrontation with G-d, Moses persuades Him, as it were, to forgive the Jewish people for their betrayal. Moses then, acting on G-d’s instructions, carves out a second pair of tablets, to replace the smashed first ones. When the Ark was built to be located inside the holiest chamber in the Tabernacle the Jews erected in the desert, both sets of tablets were placed therein: the second whole pair of tablets, as well as the fragmented pieces of the first smashed tablets[8].

But what is the connection to the month of Elul? Why does the name of this month symbolize this idea of the

Ark containing both sets of Tablets, the complete ones, and the broken ones?

The above story can provide insight. The unique power of the final month of the year, the name of which spells out the words “The Ark containing the whole Tablets and the broken Tablets” is this: This is the month that allows you to build in your personal life an “ark” which will contain not only your second complete tablets but will also embrace the broken pieces of your first tablets. This is the time when you are empowered and can pick up the broken pieces of your life and discover that there is a part of yourself that was never really broken.

What is more, during this month you may lift up with tender love every broken component of your life, learning how each of them constituted another hue of wholesomeness.

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[1] I read the story in a sermon by Rabbi Moshe Weinberger shlita, spiritual leader of Aish Kodesh Institute in Woodmere, N.Y. Afterward I heard it from an elder Gerer Chassid who visited the Imrei Emes as a young man in Poland before the war. Another Gerer Chassid told me that this insight was presented by the Gerer Rebbe at a prayer gathering in the middle of the Holocaust, on 20 Kislev, 5703, in the “Churvah.”

[2] Rabbi Avraham Mordechai (born in 1866), known as the Imrei Emes, was the third Rebbe of Ger and passed away in 1948 in Jerusalem. The city was under siege at the time, so he was buried in the courtyard of his yeshiva.

[3] Deuteronomy 9:15-17.

[4] Exodus 32:16.

[5] Cf. Abarbanel to Deuteronomy 9:17. Likkutei Sichos vol. 9 p. 241; vol. 26 p. 252. My gratitude to Shmuel Levin, a writer and editor in Pittsburgh, for his editorial assistance.

[6] Sefer Megaleh Amukos.

[7] Bava Basra 14b.

[8] On a literal level the connection is this: On the 29th of Av, at the end of Moses’ second 40-day period on Mount Sinai, G-d agreed to give the second set of tablets to Israel. The following day Moses ascended again, and remained on the mountain throughout the month of Elul. On Yom Kippur he descended with the new set of tablets (Rashi to Exodus).

<https://www.theyeshivaworld.com/news/headlines-breaking-stories/417438/rav-elyashiv-on-weddings-2.html>

Rav Elyashiv zt"l on Weddings and Rav Yaakov Yishayahu Blau zt"l on Correcting a Kesuvah at a Wedding

August 14, 2022 1:35 pm3

By **Rabbi Yair Hoffman** for the Five Towns Jewish Times
In honor of the wedding of the author's daughter this evening, please find below some Psakim from Rav Elyashiv zt"l regarding weddings. Unless otherwise noted, these p'sakim were heard from Rav Elyashiv zt"l by either Rav Lipa Israelson or one of his brothers.

THE WEDDING CHUPAH

MESADER KIDDUSHIN

1. One should only conduct a wedding under the auspices of a Rav or Talmid Chochoh that is knowledgeable in matters of Kiddushin. He is called the Mesader Kiddushin.

2. Someone who married a woman through a Mesader Kiddushin who is a Reform Rabbi r"l, should ask a shailah if there is validity to his Kiddushin and marriage. It is possible that he must perform a Chuppah anew.

3. There are those who have the custom that the bride's father comes to greet the groom at his home in order to accompany him to the Chuppah. Similarly, the mother of the groom comes to greet the bride. However, with the agreement of both sides it is permitted to forego this custom.

THE CUSTOM OF SHOSHVINIM

4. The custom is for two people to bring the groom to the Chuppah, one on the right and one on the left. They are called "Shoshvinim." The wives of the Shoshvinim bring the bride to the Chuppah. The father of the groom accompanies him on the right, and his mechutan accompanies the groom on the left. The mother of the bride is to her right and the mother-in-law is to her left. The Shoshvinim also accompany the groom to the bedekin which is called the "Hinoma."

WHO ARE THE SHOSHVINIM

5. The common custom is for the parents of the bride and groom to be the Shoshvinim. When this is not possible, some have the custom for the Shoshvinim to be the father and a sister of the groom or bride, or a mother and a brother of the groom or bride. Similarly, the Shoshvinim could be any husband and wife, even if they are not the groom or the bride's parents.

6. There is no problem if the Shoshvinim are from a second marriage, such as if the groom's mother is married to a second husband, who is not the groom's father. She can be on the left of the bride and her husband can be on the right of the groom, and vice versa. There is no problem with either way. Some, however, are careful about this. However, if there is a need to do it in this manner, there is no need to be concerned.

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THE BEDEKIN

7. Before the Chuppah, the groom is escorted by the Shoshvinim and the two witnesses to the women's section, to the place where the bride is sitting. The groom covers the head of the bride with a veil or some other designated garment. This is called the Hinoma. According to many authorities, the covering of the bride with a Hinoma is called the Chuppah.

8. The bride and groom should have in mind that the covering of the veil on her head is a Kinyan of marriage just like Chuppah. It is the custom for the Mesader Kiddushin to tell the father of the bride that he should go to his daughter and tell her that the covering is a form of Kinyan and is not just a mere procedure alone.

9. On account of this, the witnesses as well need to see the groom actually covering the bride. They should be aware that this is a Kinyan, as mentioned above.

10. There is no need to have the groom acquire the veil.

11. It is perfectly acceptable to make the Chuppah in the evening, there is no need to make it specifically in the daytime.

12. Chuppah is a Kinyan of marriage. Therefore, the bride and groom must know and have the intention that the Chuppah is creating the marriage.

13. However, in regard to all matters discussed above where the bride and groom must have these things in mind, if they did not have such an intention at the actual time itself, but they did know beforehand that they had to have that in mind, there is nothing to be concerned about and it is perfectly fine.

14. The groom does not have to acquire possession of the place of the Chuppah.

15. It is the custom to make the Chuppah under the sky as a good sign that their descendants should be likened to the stars in the sky. One should be very stringent in the matter and not change the custom.

16. It is the custom to throw upon the groom wheat kernels during the time that he comes to cover the bride. Nowadays the custom is to throw colored paper. There is no concern of following the ways of the gentiles in this.

CUSTOMS OF THE CHUPPAH

17. Some have the custom for the groom to wear a Kittel during the Chuppah. Others have the custom to wear the Kittel in such a manner that it cannot be seen from outside. However our (Rav Elyashiv's) custom is not to wear a Kittel at all during the Chuppah.

18. One must place ashes on the forehead of the groom in the spot where he wears Tefillin to commemorate the mourning of Jerusalem. This is placed before one goes to the Chuppah.

19. Some have the custom of placing the ashes when he wrapped in paper so as not to soil the clothing of the groom.

20. One places the ashes on the head and not on the Kippah.

CANDLES

21. The Shoshvinim hold lit candles in their hands when they escort the groom and bride, and during the Chuppah.

22. There is no need for the bride to remove all her jewelry before the Chuppah.

23. There is also not need to undo the knots in one's clothing. Nor is there a need to empty all the items in one's pockets.

24. The Kallah and the female Shoshvinos surround the groom seven times, before they bless the blessings of Airusin.

25. After the circling, the bride stands to the right of the groom and they face east. In Jerusalem they face toward the Temple mount. The Mesader Kiddushin faces the bride and groom.

26. After the blessings of Kiddushin, the groom breaks a whole cup made of glass with his right foot [so that it not cause damage it is the custom to wrap the glass in paper].

27. If they forgot to bring a glass, it is permitted to take a glass from the hall on the condition that one pays for it afterward.

28. A left-footed person breaks the glass with his left foot which is considered like his right foot.

THE WEDDING RING

29. The custom is to marry with a ring. There are reasons for this cited in the Tikkunei Zohar. It is possible to marry with either a gold or silver ring.

30. The wedding ring must not have a precious stone. However, there is no problem if designs are etched onto the ring, nor is there a problem of how many karats of gold are in the ring.

31. It is our custom that the ring be round and not rectangular.

32. The Mesader Kiddushin shows the ring to the witnesses at the time of the Chuppah and asks: "Is the ring worth a shaveh prutah?" They answer, "Yes." It must be said in a language that the bride understands.

33. If the ring was purchased from the funds of the groom's father, the groom should ask the father to give him permission to take ownership of the ring. The groom should acquire it – that is he should hold it in his hand and intend to acquire it as his own.

34. The Mesader Kiddushin should ask the groom before the Kiddushin if the ring belongs to him.

THE WITNESSES

35. One must designate two kosher witnesses that are kosher for testifying – that is the Mesader Kiddushin or the groom should designate the witnesses. It is emphasized that only they are the witnesses to the exclusion of others.

36. The Mesader Kiddushin tells the groom to say: "I am designating you as witnesses for the bedekin, the kiddushin, the Chupah, and the Yichud room."

37. The witnesses should be checked and investigated that they are not related to either the groom or the bride, or to each other. Witnesses that are related are pasul – invalid.

38. One may not take the Shadchan as a witness to the Kiddushin. Even though technically he is kosher, because he has a bias to the matter.

39. A mechutan (one's other child's in-law) is technically permitted to be a witness. However, ideally it is preferable to take another witness so that it will not appear that they are related.

THE BIRCHAS AIRUSIN

40. Before the groom gives the ring to the bride, the Mesader Kiddushin recites two blessings: Borei Pri HaGafen and v'tzivanu al haArayos.

41. Ideally, there should be ten men present who have reached the age of Bar Mitzvah at the time that the blessing is recited.

42. The groom should not recite this blessing himself, rather the Rabbi who is arranging the wedding recites it.

43. It is forbidden for the bride and groom to interrupt with speech between when the blessing is recited and the giving of the ring.

44. The person reciting the blessing must have in mind to be Motzi the groom and bride their obligations in the blessings. The bride and groom must have in mind to have their obligation fulfilled. They answer Amain to the brachos. The Kallah should also answer Amain to the blessings of Airusin. There is no hefsek interruption in doing so between the Hagafen blessing and her drinking the wine. This is because the blessing is on her account, and that she is a participant in the blessing.

45. The bride and groom and at least nine others who are present must hear the blessings from the person reciting them.

46. Any blessing that must be recited in front of ten people, one must be careful to ensure that at least ten [Torah and Mitzvah observing] people should hear it from the mouth of the person reciting the blessing and not through a microphone. For if they hear the blessing on through a microphone – they have not fulfilled their obligation. It is as if they have recited the blessings of the Choson alone. One must be very careful in this for at times even those who are standing next to the person reciting the blessing do not hear his voice itself but only the microphone.

47. After the blessing the bride and groom drink from the Kos Airusin – just a sip and nothing further. The Mesader Kiddushin does not have to drink from the cup.

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GIVING THE RING

48. Before giving the ring, the veil is lifted from before the bride for a brief moment so that the witnesses will see her face

[When they lift the veil so that the bride can drink, one may also lift it a bit higher so that the witnesses will see her.] The Mesader Kiddushin asks the witnesses whether the wedding band has the value of a shaveh prutah. The witnesses respond, “Yes.” Similarly, he should ask the groom if the ring belongs to him.

The face of the bride should be covered when he gives the ring.

Before giving the ring the grooms says to the bride aloud, so that the bride and the witnesses can hear: Harei at mekudeshes li b'tabaas zu kedas Moshe v' yisroel.

The groom places the ring with his right hand upon the right hand of the bride.

He places the ring on the finger next to her thumb.

The witnesses should try to see the groom placing the ring on her finger.

If one of them is left handed, he should place it with his stronger hand (or on her stronger hand if she is left-handed).

The groom gives the Kallah the Kesuvah before witnesses. The custom is that the Kallah gives the Kesuvah to her mother.

THE KINYAN

49. How is the Kinyan made? One of the witnesses takes a handkerchief that belongs to him, and give it to the groom. The groom lifts it up in front of the witnesses for the purpose of Kinyan. He has in mind to obligate himself in all of the obligations set forth in the Ksuvah. The custom is for the groom to return the handkerchief to the witness.

50. The witnesses must sign onto the Kesuvah after the Kabalas Kinyan.

THE TIME OF KABALAS KINYAN

51. There are those who have the custom to make the Kinyan after the writing of the Kesuvah prior to going to the Chupah, and then the witnesses sign on the Kesuvah. However, it is worthy to do the Kinyan under the Chuppah, after the Kiddushin, and after the reading of the Kesuvah until the word, “V'kanina.” Then the kinyan is performed and the two witnesses sign. After the witnesses sign the reading of the Kesuvah is continued until the end of the names of the witnesses. This is how it is worthy to proceed.

DATE

52. They should be careful to ensure that the date written in the Kesuvah be on the same day as the Chuppah and the Kiddushin.

A CHUPPAH THAT WAS DELAYED

53. If they see that the Chuppah is going to be delayed until after sundown, and the date on the Kesuvah is before sundown, the Kinyan should be made in front of the witnesses before sundown. This is even if it is still before the Chuppah and the Kiddushin. However, this is not so ideal, therefore it is preferable under such circumstances when the Chuppah is

delayed until after sundown to write the next day's date on the Kesuvah.

54. It is proper to indicate in the Kesuvah the last name of the bride and the groom, such as Reuvain Ben Yaakov l'mishpachas [to the family]_____. Likewise, the witnesses should also include their last name. For example, Shimon Ben Yaakov Weiss, aid [witness].

55. One should not write after the bride's name “Sh'tichye” [she should live – a common term], so that it not appear as another name of the bride.

56. If the groom is a Levi, one should write, “HaLevi” each time one writes his name. When they write his name the first time and the last time where his father's name is included [or her name if her father is a Levi], one should also write, “HaLevi” there as well.

57. Someone who is called by his nickname, such as if his name is “Yoseph” and they call him “Yossi,” there is no need to write anything in the Kesuva other than “Yoseph.”

58. Foreign [or Yiddish] names such as Fayga or Fruma should be spelled with an Aleph at the end. However, if they normally spell it with a “Hay” at the end, then it should be written with a “Hay.”

59. After the Kesuvah is read, the cup of wine is filled and the blessings are recited again, the Borei Pri HaGafen and six additional blessings – these are known as the Sheva Brachos.

60. The groom does not recite these blessings. Rather, others are honored with reciting them.

61. One may honor a number of people with these blessings and there is no obligation that one person recite them all or a portion of them. However, the first blessing of Hagafen should not be separated from the blessing of “Shehakol Bara lichvodo.”

62. These blessings are not an obligation of the bride and groom. Rather, they are an obligation upon the gathered congregation at the Chuppah. Therefore, there is no need for the bride and groom to have in mind to fulfill their Mitzvah with these blessings.

63. It is the custom of Ashkenazim after the Chuppah to have the bride and groom seclude themselves in the Yichud room (See Ramah EH 55:1).

64. It is proper for the groom to acquire use of the Yichud room from the owners of the wedding hall. That is, he should give a prutah's worth of coinage to the owner of the hall or its director with whom one transacts with in regard to weddings.

65. After the Chuppah before the bride and groom enter the Yichud room, the witnesses should examine the Yichud room to ensure that it is empty of people, and is closed from all sides, and that there be no windows even ones that are very high, where it would be possible to glance into the room.

66. Afterward, the bride and groom should enter the Yichud room, and they lock the door from the inside. The witnesses stand outside for five minutes.

67. This yichud is called “Nissuim” according to many Rishonim. Therefore, the bride and groom should have in mind that they are making a Kinyan Nissuim.

68. It is the custom for the bride and groom to eat in the Yichud room.

SUMMARY OF THE PROTOCOLS AT THE CHUPPAH •

The writing of the Kesuvah with all its details • Kinyan of the Yichud Room from the administrators of the wedding hall • Kinyan of the ring to the groom • Preparing the glass and the wine for the wedding blessing and Sheva Brachos • Preparing the glass to be broken and the candles for the Shoshvinim • Checking to ensure that the witnesses are kosher and are not related to the wedding parties • The groom designates the witnesses and says, “I am designating you as witnesses for the Henoma, the Kiddushin, the Chuppah, and the Yichud room.” • The placing of the ashes on the head of the groom. • Lighting the candles for those who accompany the groom. • Covering the bride with the veil (the Hinuma) by the groom. • It is on the witnesses to see the covering of the bride with the veil. They should know that this is also part of the wedding process. • The bride and groom should have in mind that the covering of the veil is for the wedding process. • The bride encircles the groom seven times. • The bride and groom have in mind to be yotzeh with the blessings being recited. • The Mesader Kiddushin recites the HaGafen and the blessings of marriage. • The groom and bride taste from the cup. • The cup is lifted in front of the bride in a manner that the witnesses will see her. • The Mesader Kiddushin asks if the ring belongs to him. • The Mesader Kiddushin asks the witnesses if it has the value of a prutah. • He should warn the groom that he should complete the saying of “Harei aht” before he gives her the ring. • It is upon the witnesses to make sure that they hear the harei aht from the mouth of the groom. • It is upon the witnesses to see the giving of the ring from the hand of the groom to the hand of the bride. • The breaking of the glass. • Reading the Kesuvah. • Performing the Kinyan and the witnesses signing on the Kesuvah • The giving of the Kesuvah from the groom to the bride in front of witnesses. • The bride gives the Kesuvah to her mother. • Sheva Brachos. • The groom and bride taste from the cup. • The witnesses check the Yichud room to ensure that it is empty and locked. • The bride and groom enter the Yichud room and lock the door from inside. • The witnesses wait for five minutes outside of the Yichud room.

CORRECTING A KESUVAH

It may be worthwhile to print this next part out and save it for emergencies at a wedding, because it happens more often than we think. In statistics that this author has kept, it happens on average between 1% and 2% of the time. However, it can also

happen almost ten percent of the time as well depending upon the experience of the Mesader Kiddushin.

A mistake is made in the Kesuvah itself at the wedding. A frantic call is made to a Posaik: “We have no other Kesuvah – what should we do?” [The reader may wish to print this in case of emergencies].

At times, the Posaik cannot be reached, in which case calls are made to Posaik after Posaik. Sometimes, when the Posaik can be reached, he may suggest that the Kesuvah be re-written by hand. All this is often done behind closed doors and can often lead to delays at the wedding.

There is, however, another possibility, of which many Rabbonim are unaware. It is possible to repair the mistake, as long as the following three conditions are fulfilled:

One notes on the bottom of the Kesuvah that the correction was, in fact, made. The notation references the line where the correction was made. The witnesses attest to the correction. This is called a Kiyum of the correction. This concept is found in chapter 44 of the Choshain Mishpat section of Shulchan Aruch subparagraph 5.

HOW TO NOTE THE CORRECTION

The mistakes generally fall into four categories:

A missing letter
A missing name or missing word
A misspelled letter or word
An extra letter or word. We will go through the correction of each of the above cases.

If a letter was left out of the original, one may add that missing letter in its place— even above the area, and one adds the following notation at the bottom of the Kesuvah: Letter X on line Y was added. Vehakol sharir vekayam, and then the witnesses sign.

The Hebrew for this is:

אות ____ בשורה שלישית תלויה והכל שריר וקיים.

If an entire word or name was left out, the word is added in place – above the area and one adds on the bottom of the Kesuvah: Word X on line Y was added. Vehakol sharir vekayam, and then the witnesses sign.

The Hebrew for this is:

תיבת ____ בשורה שלישית תלויה והכל שריר וקיים.

If just one letter was incorrect, it can be crossed out, erased, scratched off, or written over [called ha-avaras kulmus] in its place and one adds on the bottom of the Kesuvah: Letter X on line Y was erased [or written over] Vehakol sharir vekayam and then the witnesses sign.

The Hebrew for this is:

אות ____ בשורה רביעית מחוקה והכל שריר וקיים

If it was written over, then the Hebrew notation that is to be added is as follows:

אות ____ בשורה ____ בהעברת קולמוס והכל שריר וקיים

If it was a word and not just a letter that was corrected, use the above formulation but replace אות with תיבת.

If there was an entire extra word that was crossed out, erased, or scratched off, then one adds on the bottom תיבת _____ בשורה _____ מהחוקה והכל שריר וקיים _____.

TWO SITUATIONS IN WHICH CORRECTIONS CAN BE MADE

The Kesuvah can be corrected in either of two situations:

1] when the witnesses did not yet sign the document – in which case the notation is to be made above where the witnesses sign.

2] After the witnesses have already signed – in which case the same witnesses must sign again below the notation of the correction.

In the second case, the correction can even be made several days later.

Please note that one cannot make a correction on top of a correction on a Kesuvah. You get one chance. [See Nachalas Shiva 3:23]

The above is based upon the psakim of Rav Yaakov Yishayahu Blau zt"l, author of the Pischei Choshain (and one of this author's first Poskim – dating back some 40 years ago). See Kovaitz Tevunos Aryeh Vol. II.

The author can be reached at yairhoffman2@gmail.com

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