

*Daf Digest for this month is dedicated in memory of רבקה יענטא (Baby Weiss) בת ר' אשר אנטשיל ע"ה*

*By the Weiss brothers –London, Staten Island, Yerushalayim*

## OVERVIEW of the Daf

1) **MISHNAH:** General guidelines are provided for determining which brochah to make on different categories of food.

### 2) Source for making a brochah before eating

The Gemara questions the source for making a brochah before eating and the conclusion of the Gemara is that logic dictates that it is prohibited to benefit from this world without first making a brochah.

A person who eats without making a brochah is compared to a person who benefits from sanctified property and to one who steals from Hashem and the Jewish People.

A contradiction between pesukim leads the Gemara to the conclusion that when we do the will of Hashem the food becomes ours but if we do not the food is His.

### 3) Balancing learning and work

R' Yishmael posits that one should work his field the way people normally do and that is how one obtains food. R' Shimon ben Yochai expresses concern that working will leave no time for learning and therefore instructs a person to learn and rely on Hashem. Abaye informs us that most people do not succeed following R' Shimon ben Yochai, and Rava would send his students home in Nissan and Tishrei to work.

### 4) Two statements from R' Yehudah bar Ilai

Earlier generations considered their work secondary to their learning and succeeded at both. Earlier generations also went out of their way to become obligated in ma'aser.

### 5) The reason wine has a special brochah

The Gemara questions the uniqueness of wine that it has a special brochah and the Gemara's conclusion is that wine has two significant traits: 1) It satisfies hunger and 2) It brings joy.

### 6) Making "Borai Pri HaEtz" on olive oil

The Gemara questions an earlier statement that one recites "Borai Pri HaEtz" on olive oil since it is difficult to find a case where it would be applicable. ■

## Gemara GEM

*Why is there no brochah before Birkas HaMazon?*

"אשכחן לאחריו" (פרש"י) – כדאשכחן בברכת המזון דכתיב ואכלת (ושבעת) - לה.

We find that a brochah is said after eating - As we find in the verse regarding Birkas HaMazon (Rashi) - 35a

**W**hy do we not say a brochah **אשר** before reciting the Birkas HaMazon, which is a fulfillment of a mitzvah from the Torah? We do, in fact, say such a bracha before we recite Hallel, and there the obligation of its recital is only rabbinic, so here it should certainly be appropriate to say a brochah.

Sfas Emes explains that we are only to recite a brochah of **אשר** when we perform a mitzvah which is given to us specifically due to the holiness which has been bestowed upon us as the chosen nation. The mitzvah of Birkas HaMazon, however, is a mitzvah which stems from our need to recognize the kindness and favor which Hashem grants us. It is a logical imperative, for once we have benefited, we must express our gratitude. The trait of **הכרת הטוב** recognizing the goodness which is afforded to us, is actually a universal response, which is expected not only from a Jew, but gentiles as well. Amon and Moav are held accountable for not having assisted the Jewish nation as it wandered in the desert, at least as a sign of appreciation for what Avraham had done for their ancestors (see Ramban, Devarim 23:4). Also, Pharaoh in Egypt is considered to be an ingrate due to his mistreatment of the Jews, despite all the favor which Yosef had provided for Egypt. Because, as we have seen, **הכרת הטוב** is such a basic expectation, our saying Birkas HaMazon is therefore not the type of mitzvah for which the brochah of **אשר** is said. ■

## REVIEW and Remember

1. What is the source for making a brochah before eating?  
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2. What is the similarity between one who doesn't make a brochah before eating and Yeravam ben Nevat?  
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3. When does food belong to Hashem and when does it become ours?  
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4. How did Rava prepare for the Seder?  
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# HALACHA Highlight

## Scholarship or Business?

תנו רבנן ואספת דגנך. מה תלמוד לומר? לפי שנאמר לא ימוש ספר התורה הזה מפיך, יכול דברים ככתבן? תלמוד לומר ואספת דגנך. הנהג בהן מנהג דרך ארץ דברי רבי ישמעאל. רבי שמעון בן יוחי אומר אפשר אדם חורש בשעת חרישה, וזורע בשעת זריעה, וקוצר בשעת קצירה, ודש בשעת דישה, וזורע בשעת הרוח, תורה מה תהא עליה? אלא בזמן שישראל עושין רצונו של מקום מלאכתן נעשית על ידי אחרים, שנאמר ועמדו זרים ורעו צאנכם וגו'... אמר אביי הרבי עשו כרבי ישמעאל – ועלתה בידן, כרבי שמעון בן יוחי – ולא עלתה בידן. - לה:

*Our Rabbis taught: And you will gather the grain. What are we being taught with this? The Torah records "The Torah shall never depart your mouth", could this be literal? Thus the Torah teaches that we must gather in the grain. We must act in the way of the world, and couple Torah with labor. This is the opinion of Rabbi Yishmael. Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai states that it is possible that a person will do all of the many labors necessary to produce grain, and then what will be of the Torah? Rather when the Jews do the will of Hashem, their labor is done by others. Abaye said: Many have done like Rabbi Yishmael and succeeded, and like Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai and not succeeded. - 35b*

In a previous issue (Berachos §28), we discussed briefly the parameters of financial reliance in order to permit a scholar to dedicate himself fully to his studies and the advancement of his scholarship. Shulchan Aruch<sup>1</sup> writes: "Afterward a person should attend to his business. Torah unaccompanied by work will ultimately be forfeited and will draw sin in its wake, since poverty has the tendency to cause a person to rebel against his Maker." It seems that Shulchan Aruch determined the halachah to follow Rabbi Yishmael. However,

in this issue we will explore the ramifications of the singular opinion of Rabbi Shimon.

Beur Halacha<sup>2</sup> asserts that the previously-cited Shulchan Aruch is intended for the majority of people, since it isn't possible for the majority to reach the levels required to be able to devote oneself entirely to Torah. However, individuals can always step forward to assume this mantle of responsibility. Doubtlessly, Hashem will provide their material needs. This is alluded to by Abaye's statement that many have done like Rabbi Shimon and not succeeded, many haven't succeeded, but the unique individuals can.<sup>3</sup> Rambam<sup>4</sup> records a similar concept.

The authorities proffer different criteria necessary in order to enroll in this extraordinary assembly of בני עליה. Clearly, there needs to be an overriding desire to surrender one's life to the intense and passionate study of Torah.<sup>5</sup> These individuals are described as purely righteous.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, they must have profound and unwavering faith in Hashem, because as Rav Pinchas Horowitz<sup>7</sup> explains the reason why those many who tried Rabbi Shimon's approach failed was for a lack of sufficient faith. ■

1 אורח חיים סימן קנו ס"א 2 קנו ד"ה סופה בטלה. עיי גם בסי עינים למשפט כאן (ד"ה רשביי אומר) באריכות. 3 דיוק זה נמצא בסי נפש החיים (שער א פי"ח). עייש. עיי בסי מגדים חדשים ובסי שערים מצויינים בהלכה כאן שהביא שזכה הביאור הלכה לכוון בזה לדברי הבעש"ט המובאים בשמו בסי תולדות יעקב יוסף (פרשת מקץ) ובסי כתונת פסים (פרשת שמיני). עייש. 4 פי"ג מהלי שמיטין ויובלות הי"ג 5 עיי ספר חסידים (סי תתקנב) ובמקור חסד שם (אות ו), והגרי"ח מוואליזין בסי נפש החיים (שער א פי"ח) והמשני"ב בביאור הלכה (שם) 6 עיי מהרש"א בח"א כאן (ד"ה שנאמר ואספת), ובפני יהושע בסוף קידושין. עיי דבריו המיוחדים של המשך חכמה (פרשת נצבים עה"פ והותירך ה') שלצדיק גמור נאה כרשב"י, אבל לבעל תשובה – לו נאה כרבי ישמעאל "משום דעלול הוא לחזר לסורוי". עייש. 7 ספר המקנה בסוף קדושין (ד"ה רב נהוראי). וכן ראה להגרי"א בסי אבן שלמה (פי"ג אות ד) ■

# Gemara GEM

## To be thankful and to bless

אשכחן לאחריו, לפניו מנין? אתיא מק"ו כשהוא שבע מברך כשהוא רעב לא כל שכן - לה.

*We learn that a brochah is to be said after partaking of food, but how do we know that it is to be said before eating? We learn this from a kal vachomer. If one is required to recite a brochah after eating when he is full, then certainly he must say a bracha before eating, when he is hungry. - 35a*

The simple reading of this Gemara may seem perplexing. Logic would generally lead us to think that offering thanks and praise is more deserving and appropriate after one eats and is satisfied. Why does the Gemara believe that a satisfied person is less likely to have to bless?

There are two distinct concepts which should be differentiated. "Hoda'ah" is acknowledging and expressing thanks. This

is fitting in reference to a gift or favor already bestowed. Giving thanks after having received one's needs is a very basic gesture, and it is a level which even the gentile world recognizes. "Blessing" is telling of praise and lauding Hashem's ability to continually provide. It is only the Jews, ingrained through and through with appreciation and trust in Hashem's continuing benevolence, who boldly and lovingly bless, and even thank and praise Hashem, not only for what they have already received, but also for that which He will grant to us in the future. As the verse states (Tehillim 145:10): "All that You have made will praise You" - for all mankind understands the concept of thanks. "But your pious ones - they will bless you." It is the chosen few who are prepared to bless and comprehend God's great gifts even before they are distributed. This is the level of the Jewish people.

Rav Dov Ber Yaffe notes that in intro-

ducing the mitzvah of Birkas HaMazon, it would seem to be more fitting for the verse to have said, "And you shall eat and be satisfied, and you will give thanks to Hashem." Why does it state "and you will bless"? It is this superior level to which the verse alludes. After eating and enjoying that which Hashem has granted us, we are not moved merely to thank Him for it. Rather, we are inspired to go beyond this and to relate Hashem's overwhelming abundance which He will continue to shower upon us, as we clearly proclaim: "He has not let us want, and He will not withhold from us sustenance forever."

When the Gemara derives its lesson, it hinges upon this insight. If when we are satiated, we are prepared to bless Hashem regarding the future, and we speak about meals which are yet to be prepared, we certainly should recite a blessing upon food which is before us as we are about to partake of it and we are hungry. ■