



OD YOSEF HAI NEWSLETTER

ROSH YESHIVAH AND COMMUNITY RABBI
DAYAN ABRAHAM DAVID SHLI"TA

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Thoughts on Parashat EKEV Year 23 by Dayan Abraham David

After Moshe Rabenu reminds the Bnei Yisrael about all the kindness and caring Hashem has done for them in the 40 years they journeyed in the desert; how He gave them the 'manna' and how their clothes did not wear out and their feet did not swell. He then warns them, '*Ve shamarta et mitzvot Hashem, lalechet bedrachav vulyirah oto*', guard and keep the mitzvot Hashem, to go in His ways and to fear Him. Here Moshe warns them to keep the mitzvot and follow the ways of Hashem then he tells them to fear G-d. But later on (in chapter 10-12) he tells them '*Mah Hashem Elokecha Shoel Meimach Ki im leyirah et Hashem Lalechet bidrachav vul'Ahavah oto vu la abod et Hashem bechol levavcha lishmor et mitzvot Hashem;*' What does G-d ask of you, only to fear Him and go in His ways, to love Him with all your heart and to keep His mitzvot etc. The '*Yirat Hashem*' is put first, the fear of G-d and then to go in His ways and to keep His mitzvot etc. It would seem that '*Yirat Shamayim*', fear of Heaven, comes first and the others follow, as opposed to what He said before that follow His ways, keep His mitzvot and then fear Him. Why the change? The Talmud queries the language Moshe uses '*Ma' Hashem shoel meimach*', what does G-d ask of you? The use of '*Ma*' seems to make the request an easy one, and in fact He is requesting the fear of G-d which is most difficult for us. The Talmud, (in Berachot

xi) answers; for Moshe '*Yirat Shamayim*' was not a great thing for he was on such a high level. But for us it is difficult. What is difficult to understand in this answer is, Moshe is speaking to the Bnei Yisrael not to himself so surely for them, as for us, '*Yirat Shamayim*' was not easy, so why use the word '*Mah*' for something so difficult? For surely Moshe understood it would be difficult for the people. We could answer the beginning of our Service to G-d is fear of Hashem '*Raesheet Chochma Yirat Hashem*', the beginning of wisdom is the fear of G-d. Rebi Meir in Menachot (מנחות) used to say '*chayav adam le barech meah berachot bechol yom shene'emar 'Mah' Hashem shoel memecha*' Rebi Meir said: "a person is obliged to make 100 berachot everyday as it says in the pasuk mentioned above, what does G-d want for you to fear Him". Do not read it as '*Mah*' but as '*Meah*' a hundred, and there are indications in Gamatria which work out '*Mah*' numerically to 100. This maybe was the indication by Moshe to advise the Bnei Yisrael to become G-d fearing through the saying of the 100 berachot everyday. A Beracha is an acknowledgement to G-d, The Creator and what he has given us. When a person thinks of what G-d has given him 100 times a day. It will help him to appreciate and fear G-d. When we make a beracha even on a simple apple, we can appreciate the greatness of G-d, the delicious fruit inside with a thin cover to protect it, green at the beginning, like the colour of the leaves to camouflage it from the birds and insects, turning red to let us know it is ripe for consumption. This is what Moshe meant when he used the

word 'Mah', yes, the fear of Heaven can be easy if we begin to think about the greatness of G-d who gives us what we need, with material benefit or in the fulfilling of mitzvot. In this pasuk Moshe is referring to the physical fear of Heaven which we begin our Service of G-d with, and then we advance going in His ways and keeping His mitzvot. But earlier, after the pasukim of the 'Manna' and other miracles, speaking to the generation that saw those, they already had that fear through their lives in the desert and G-d's salvation, to them he said now keep His mitzvot and follow His ways so that you should come to fear His greatness not just physical fear but awe, the type of fear we have of an Holy object or Holy person. We come to that fear and awe of the greatness and Holiness of Hashem, through keeping mitzvot following His ways to appreciate His Holiness and compassion this is called 'Yirat Haromimot.'

TORAH GEMS

In the Parasha, we are commanded about the Mitzvah of the Berchat Hamazon as it says '*Veachaltah Ve Sabatah Vuberachta et Hashem Al Haaretz Hatovah*' and you should eat and be satisfied and Bless G-d for the good land. This is the only Beracha we are commanded to make from the Torah (except for Berchat Hatorah). The Torah stresses the necessity for showing appreciation and recognition of G-d after we have become satisfied with food and sustenance, for it is the nature of humans to become arrogant and proud, and to forget G-d as Creator and Benefactor on a full stomach. As the Pasuk warns us '*Pane Tochal Vesabatah – Ve Ram Levavecha Veshachata Et Hashem Elohecha*' lest you eat and become satisfied and become secure with wealth and you become proud and forget G-d who has brought you out of bondage. Rabbi Yehezkel Levinstein, Mashgiach of Ponevez, brings a proof

to this. Just see the difference between the way we say the Amida and how we say Birkat Hamazon. The Amida is a Mitzvah of the Rabbis and yet we say the Amida with concentration and with seriousness whereas Birkat Hamazon which is a Mitzvah of the Torah, we are not so careful and we say it with less concentration and more flippancy. This is because we have eaten and are satisfied, we become arrogant and flippant. There are three Berachot indicated in the Torah; the first '*Hazan et Hakol*' instituted by Moshe Rabenu when the Bnei Yisrael received the Manna from Heaven, a recognition that our sustenance comes from G-d and not the strength of our physical endeavours. '*Koach Ve Otzem Yadi*', for there are many who make great and clever efforts and have nothing. The second '*Al Haaretz Ve Al Hamazon*' instituted by Yehoshuah when he conquered the land, to impress upon us that Eretz Yisrael is not a conquered land because of the strength of our armies but a gift from G-d for our spiritual elevation. The produce of the land has a special Blessing, flourishing only when we dwell in it, its fruit according to some Midrashim have the spiritual qualities (*segulot*) of the Manna. The third Beracha '*Boneh Yerushalayim*' instituted by King David for the Holy City of Jerusalem and King Solomon for the Temple. To remind us of our special mission in this world as a nation of priests with our eternal message to the world that the *Shechina* manifests itself among us in the Holy City and Temple. The material blessings of our Holy Land are for a spiritual purpose which is for the manifestation of the *Shechina*, in Jerusalem and the Holy Temple. All Beracha comes through the Temple in Jerusalem to the Land and the whole world that is why Boneh Yerusalem was placed in *Berchat Hamazon* to show that connection. The message of

these three concepts were received in the Torah from Moshe, but only put in the format of our text by Moshe, Yehoshuah David and Shlomo. The fourth was instituted by the Rabbis of Yavneh in remembrance of the miracle concerning the *'Haruge Beitar'*, the martyrs of Beitar who were butchered by the Romans and the bodies piled up high around the city to rot. Eventually after some time the Jews obtained permission for burial, and found the bodies had not decayed at all. They then added the Beracha *'Hatov Ve Hametiv'*, *'Hatov'* good for the dead who were preserved and not shamed through smell and decay and *'Hametiv'* good for others who came to bury and did not have to suffer from the smell and decay. There is also a deeper explanation, the good was for the *Kavod* of the physical body that had not been shamed, but the *metiv* was for the soul which was now being released by burial, for as long as the burial has not taken place the soul cannot ascend to the Treasure House of Souls and to connect up with the other *neshamot*. Even though we are divided by our bodies the *neshamot* are enjoined so this was the *metiv* the good, not only to the soul but to all the others it joined with. This concept of G-d's *chesed* (mercy with the dead) is placed in the *Berchat Hamazon* to remind us of *'Yom Hamita'* our day of reckoning when we leave this world so that we should not become arrogant and forget G-d after filling ourselves up with the physical and the material. There is an indication for this in the Pasukim which follow *'Ve achalta Vesavata Vu Berachata'*, *'Pane Tochal Ve Savata'* etc *'Ve Ram Le vavecha Veshachata'*, lest you fill yourself and become proud and forget G-d. This beracha reminds us of humility. The *Berchat Hamazon* has the power to elevate us and bring us closer to G-d turning the physical and material into the spiritual.

STORIES OF TZADDIKIM

Rabbi Mordecai Eliyahu z"l was invited to Brazil. A dinner was held in his honour in the home of a wealthy donor, some twenty very wealthy people were invited there. As soon as they settled down, one of the guests turned to the Rabbi: "I have a question for the Rabbi!" There was complete silence in the room, everyone turned to hear the question. "What is the Rabbi's opinion, our Host gives donations to the Reform Rabbi for his Synagogue?" It seems this guest had some disagreement with the Host and was intent on embarrassing him, he knew the strong view of the Rabbi against the Reform. He had put the Rabbi in a very difficult situation. The Rabbi took it in his stride. He answered with a story as Sephardi Rabbis usually do. He said: "I will tell you a story which happened to me once on one of my journeys *'to chutz la aretz'*. It was getting late and we were afraid to miss Mincha so we asked the non-Jewish chauffer to take us to the nearest Synagogue, he did not quite understand and took the Rabbi and his entourage to a Reform Synagogue. Of course the Rabbi would not enter and stood by the side of the Synagogue to pray but they were only 8 Jews altogether, no Minyan. Just then the caretaker and the Rabbi of the Reform Synagogue came out and offered to make up the Minyan. Rabbi Eliyahu said there were only 9 and one still missing. The Reform Rabbi turned to him and said: "I don't understand if you don't count us there are only eight not nine?" The Rabbi replied: "I am counting the Jewish caretaker because even though he is from the Reform Synagogue he is only there for his job, *'Parnassah'*, and not out of conviction but the Rabbi of the Synagogue cannot count". The Reform Rabbi then turned and whispered in his ear: "Don't worry

about me, I am also only in this for the money, 'Pamassah'". Everyone present at the dinner began to laugh, the tension was broken and the Rabbi with his story was able to give over his strong opinion against the Reform that they cannot be counted in a Minyan and at the same time he was able not to embarrass the Host.

Shabbat Shalom

HALACHOT

Some relevant Halachot for the Holiday Period

1) Even though there are circumstances when bread baked in a non-Jewish bakery 'pat akum' could be permitted where Jewish bread is not available, one must be absolutely sure the ingredients do not contain any animal fat or derivatives. 'Vegetarian' is not a sign for Kashrut; investigations show that vegetarian fats etc. comes out of the same machines used for animal fats. With traces of such animal fats they could still be labelled 'vegetarian'. There are now some brands of Pat Akum which have been checked out for Kashrut.

2) One may not even eat a boiled egg in a non-Jewish hotel even if there would be no doubt concerning the ingredients because of the issur of 'bishul akum', food cooked by a non-Jew. Fried fish and potatoes, cooked by a non-Jew, which in addition to the issur of 'bishul akum' could also be 'taref' because of the oil or forbidden fish or meats being fried in the same oil.

3) Salads in a non-supervised restaurant even if owned by a Jew would be forbidden because of insects and bugs in the greens and because of suspect dressings.

4) Non-Kosher cheeses, without supervision, even if made with vegetarian rennet or chemicals are

forbidden by decree of the Chachamim.

5) On Shabbat when staying in a hotel where electronic cards are used to open room doors, one must ask the clerk to send a non-Jewish porter to open the room.

6) Even when the doors open with keys one must check that the lights do not come on automatically when the door opens on Shabbat.

**We have a regular Youth
Minyan organised by Jason
Ibrahim and Jordan Moses
followed by a kiddush**

*If you wish to sponsor a Kiddush
Please contact
Nathaniel Bendayan 07825 871749
For Seuda Shlishit
or to rent the
Nancy Reuben Hall
for a Simcha
Please contact
Yanky David 07725 408724*

SHABBAT TIMES

Shabbat commences	8:30 pm
Shabbat terminates	9:45 pm
Mincha Erev Shabbat	
for the summer	7:15 pm
Followed by Kabbalat Shabbat	
Shacharit	8:30 pm
Shiur Pirke Avot	7:05 pm
Mincha on Shabbat followed by Seuda Shlishit & Arbit	8:05 pm
Shacharit Sundays	7:00 am
Shacharit Weekdays	6:50 am
Mincha followed by Arbit for the summer	7:30 pm

**DO NOT LIGHT YOUR SHABBAT
CANDLES BEFORE PLAG HAMINCHA
WHICH IS 7:09 PM**