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בית הוראה

Shaare Ezra

שערי עזרא

Parshat Tazrea-Metzora

Zmanim for New York:

Candle Lighting: 7:23pm

Shabbat ends: 8:26pm

R"T 8:55pm

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BIRKAT HAILANOT

RABBI SHAY TAHAN

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אמר רב יהודה: האי מאן דנפיק ביומי ניסן וחזי אילני דקא מלבלבי אומר ברוך שלא חיסר בעולמו כלום וברא בו בריות טובות ואילנות טובות להתנאות בהן בני אדם. (ברכות מג,ב)

היוצא בימי ניסן וראה אילנות שמוציאין פרח אומר בא"י אמ"ה שלא חיסר בעולמו כלום וברא בו בריות טובות ואילנות טובות ליהנות בהם בני אדם (שלחן ערוך סימן רכו)



The Gemara (ברכות מג,ב) says: "one who comes out on the days of Nissan and sees trees that are blossoming should recite the Bracha: Blessed is Hashem who has withheld nothing from His world, and has created in it beautiful creatures and trees for human beings to enjoy".

There are many things that the Poskim learn from the above words of the Gemara.

It says: 'one who goes out'. The Poskim argued on the meaning of where one needs to go out to. According to Rav Chaim Palagi (מועד לכל חי ס"א אות י') one goes out of the city to the fields in the outskirts of the city to recite the Bracha. However, many argued on this interpretation. Chacham Ovadia wrote that it only means that one who goes out of his house and sees the trees. Le'maase if one can go out of his city, he should but it's not a requirement. (אורל"צ ח"ג עמוד סד) (וחזו"ע פסח עמוד יב)

It says: 'on the days of Nissan'. The poskim argued whether the time of the Bracha is limited to the month of Nissan or Chazal just mentioned Nissan because in that time it is common for the trees to blossom. According to Kabala the words of the gemara are precise and one shouldn't say the bracha before Nissan and not after. But many

allowed saying the Bracha after Nissan if one missed saying it in the month of Nissan (משנ"ב) (סימן רכו סק"א).

The last day of the month of Nissan is Rosh Chodesh. Since the month of Iyar has two days of Rosh Chodesh, therefore the first day of Rosh Chodesh is still considered from the month of Nissan and counted as the 30th day of Nissan.

It says: 'sees trees'. One may not say the Bracha on vegetable bushes or on a detached tree branch which is not planted in the earth.

One may say the Bracha on a tree that grows in a flowerpot (ילקוט יוסף פסח עמוד קנז בשם הגר"ח) (קנייבסקי).

It says: 'sees trees'. In order to be able to say the Bracha one must see the blossoming trees first. One can't say this if he doesn't see the trees. For example, if it's dark at night one must illuminate the area and see the trees before reciting the Bracha. If the trees are covered by a wall, he can't say the bracha. Also, a blind person may not say the Bracha since he can't see the trees.

It says 'trees'. plural, which some poskim learn that the requirement is to have at least two fruit trees (שו"ת הלק"ט ח"ב סכ"ח והחיד"א במורה באצבע) (אות קצח), but many argue that one tree is sufficient and therefore if it's hard to find more than one

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BIRKAT HAILANOT

fruit tree, one may recite the Bracha over one tree.

One should try not to look at the tree which is blossoming if he doesn't want to say the Bracha at that moment, but if he did look at it he did not lose the opportunity to say the bracha and may still say it later on. (משנה ברורה סי' רכו ס"ה).

It says: **'trees that are blossoming'**. Which teach us that in order to say the Bracha one must see a **fruit** tree.

It says: **'trees that are blossoming'**. Which means that the trees are budding with flowers. If the flowers didn't yet bud or the flowers fell off the tree for the fruit to appear, the Bracha may not be said.

If there are fruits on the tree, but still have some flowers which didn't fall out yet, one may say the Bracha.

Finally, it should be noted that although one isn't obligated to

search for blossoming fruit trees in order to say the blessing on it, it is very important to do so. The Zohar and the Mekubalim explain that there are many souls which are stuck in the trees as punishment for their sins.

The students of the great Arizal say over that he once went out to the field and saw that it was filled with souls which didn't get to their level in the next world. The students saw that the Ari was speaking to invisible creatures which they couldn't see. When the students asked the Ari about this, he explained that when the souls saw the holy and great sage, the Arizal, they came to plead with him for help. The Ari told the students that if they could have seen the souls, they would see that the place had many lost souls. He explained that when we say the Bracha on the trees those souls are elevated to their destinations in the world to come, therefore one should make an effort not to lose out on this precious and important Bracha.

THE INNER CAUSE OF RABBI AKIVA'S STUDENTS' DEATH.

The period of Sefirat HaOmer coincides with a time of mourning over the death of the 24,000 students of Rabbi Akiva. The Gemara explains that the students died because they did not afford one another proper respect and honor. An obvious question arises: why were they unable to respect each other correctly? Aren't Talmidei Chachamim supposed to have exemplary middot and give everyone the proper respect that they deserve?

Moreover, the Chazon Ish explained that if one does not have proper middot, he cannot grow and excel in their Torah learning as well. How then were Rabbi Akiva's students able to reach such high learning levels without respecting each other properly?

Furthermore, why does the Gemara specify that these scholars were Rabbi Akiva's students, instead of simply calling them Talmidei Chachamim? It's unlikely that the reason is due to a fault Rabbi Akiva in any way or that he taught them the wrong way.

To answer these questions, we first need to know that Rabbi Akiva had extremely high standards in every field of the Torah and the Mitzvot.

For example, Rabbi Akiva famously taught: 've'ahavta lere'acha kamocho': you love your fellow as you love yourself. Although this is a verse in the Torah, Rabbi Akiva added to it that it's the 'klal gadol batorah'- this is a big principle of the Torah. Rabbi Akiva viewed this concept as the main fundamental principle that the entire Torah stands on. If one doesn't love the other as much as he loves himself, he is defaulting on the entire Torah.

It is very difficult to live up to the standard of loving others the way we love ourselves! These students, as high as they were, could not succeed in attaining as much respect and love for their fellows as they had for themselves.

Now, since Rabbi Akiva was the mentor of those 24,000 students, he also set the tone, and they had to live up to his standards. The fact that they couldn't live up to it cost them their lives.



This idea that whenever one sets standards, he and his surroundings are affected by it and must therefore live up to it, is found in various places in our Torah:

For example, when the angels came to remove Lot (Avraham's brother-in-law), from the city of Sedom, he told them that while he was living in Sedom, he was considered a Tzaddik amongst the wicked which merited him being saved from the same fate met by Sedom. But now that he was returning to be around Avraham, he would be considered wicked amongst Tzaddikim, and will no longer be worthy of being saved.

Another example of this idea is when the Isha HaTzorfit asks Eliyahu Hanavi, "Did you come tonight to remind me of my sins"? Rashi explains that before Eliyahu Hanavi arrived, she was considered righteous amongst the people and was worthy of receiving lots of good from Hashem. Now that Eliyahu was in her home, she was not considered anything special anymore, thus her sins were being recalled, and she would be unworthy of Hashem sending her any goodness.

We learn from here that the standards that an individual upholds affects all those around them as well.

This is what happened with Rabbi Akiva's students—they were held to his standards and judged accordingly.

We also learn that disrespect for Talmidei Chachamim is judged much more harshly than disrespect for the general public. The Gemara tells us of a big Rabbi called Nechemia who had a novel theory that every time it says "et" (את) in the Torah, it comes to add/teach something.

For example, in the commandment "כבד את אביך ואת אמך"—honor your father and your mother" the word "et" is placed in front of both father, and mother. R'Nechemia deduced from this that the "et" comes to include your father's wife: she must be honored as well, even if she is not your mother. However, R'Nechemia got stuck when he reached the verse saying: "et Hashem Elokecha tira—you should fear Hashem". There is an 'et' added in front of Hashem's name, but who can possibly be included in the commandment to fear as

THE INNER CAUSE OF RABBI AKIVA'S STUDENTS' DEATH.

much as one should fear Hashem? He wondered if he was wrong about his "et" theory, thus R'Nechemia retracted his theory in all other verses which says this word.

This was until Rabbi Akiva taught that the "et" in this pasuk includes Talmidei Chachamim. The Pasuk commands us, according to Rabbi Akiva, to fear Talmidei Chachamim to the

level we fear Hashem.

Rabbi Akiva taught this lesson to his students and held them to that high standard as well, but that was an extremely high level to achieve which his students, as much as they tried, couldn't reach.

WHAT IS THE CORRECT BRACHA FOR MATZA DURING THE YEAR?

What is the proper Bracha for Matzah during the year?

We all know that on Pesach we say Hamotzi on the Matzah, but does that apply after Pesach as well, or perhaps a different Bracha is recited?

The Gemara (ברכות מבא) explains that one should say Hamotzi and Birkat Hamazon on bread, unless its "Pat Haba'a Bekisnin" בייסנין in which case one should say Mezonot prior to eating, followed by Al Hamichya when finished. But the Gemara doesn't delineate for us what constitutes this bread called Pat Haba'a Bekisnin.

The Shulchan Aruch (סימן קנח ס"ז) brings three opinions of what is Pat Haba'a Bekisnin based on the meaning of the definition of the word בייסנין:

- Kisanin means pockets (כיס) which refers to dough that has a filling, like Bourekas, Haman Tashen (ר"ח והערך).
- Dough mixed with sweet things as honey, oil, milk etc. (רמב"ם).
- Kisanin means dry and crunchy (בוסס) such as crackers or Melba toast. (רב האי בשם ערוך)

The Shulchan Aruch concludes that since there are various opinions on the matter, we should follow all three opinions and say Mezonot on all the above. Accordingly, we need to understand why the Bracha on the Matzah, which is dry and crunchy, is Hamotzi on the holiday of Pesach and whether that should be the proper Bracha on Matzah year-round?

There are several reasons given in the poskim why we say Hamotzi on the crispy Matza:

The Kneset Haggdola (הגהות ב'י סימן קנח) writes that the Matzah isn't hard and crunchy enough, as was required by Chazal's requirement, as the brittleness/crunchiness referred to by Chazal was much harder than even our Matzot. The Ginat Vradim (גן המלך סימן סד) writes that we say Hamotzi on Pesach since Matzah is the only bread of Pesach.

- Bet David (סימן ע וסימן פג) writes that the crispy bread that the Halacha required to say Mezonot on is bread which was baked purposely to become dry, either by first baking it

regularly and then drying it in the oven or by initially baking it long enough to make it very dry; but our Matzah isn't made purposely crunchy, rather it is made very thin and dry and therefore it becomes crunchy.

- The Ohr Letsion (ח"ב עמוד צו) writes that one should say Mezonot on things that are meant to snack on such as a cake, cookie or Danish; but Matzah is usually eaten for a meal and not as a snack and therefore the correct Bracha for it is Hamotzi.

There are differences between those opinions as regards to what to say on Matzah after Pesach.

According to the first opinion which holds our Matsa isn't that crunchy, and the fourth opinion which holds that people eat the Matzah for a meal, one should therefore recite Hamotzi on it throughout the Year. But according to the second opinion that Matzah is the bread for Pesach, then when it's not Pe-

sach one should say Mezonot on it.

The Chida (מחזיק ברכה סימן קנח ס"ה) dealt with the ruling of the Bet David and concluded that one may say Hamotzi on Matzah, but it's more correct to first say Hamotzi on regular bread and then eat the Matzah in the meal.

There is also much discussion in the Poskim over Matzah that was made for Pesach and was left over for after the holiday, where some say that even according to those who feel Matzah should be Mezonot, the Matzot made for Pesach stay Hamotsie.

While the prevailing Ashkenazi Minhag is to always say Hamotzi on Matzah, the Sepharadi Minhag isn't that clear. Some Sepharadi Poskim (Chacham Ovadia יחזקאל דעת ח"ג סימן צו) and Ohr Letsion (ח"ב עמוד צו) write that the Minhag is to say Mezonot, still they say that one should avoid the doubt and try to wash on regular bread first and then eat the Matzah only when in a meal.

While the Kaf Hachayim (סימן קנח סעיף מג) directs to not say Mezonot but always wash on regular bread first.

We should also mention the Bracha for the mini tea Matzah. Since those are normally eaten as a Snack, unlike the regular Matzot, the Bracha on them should be Mezonot (הר צבי או"ח סימן צא).



גלוח ראש חודש אייר- ערב שבת.

פתח תקוה הרב משה מלכה בספרו שו"ת מקוה המים (או"ח סימן י"ב) בתשובה העוסקת בחול המועד ודבריו ק"ו לימי העומר) שבכל מקום בש"ס שמדובר על תספורת הוא רק על תספורת ראשו, וכן חילוק המחצית השקל (סי' תקלא ס"ק יב) בין תספורת הראש וגילוח הזקן. ועוד שמוכח כן מדיוק לשון השולחן ערוך שבאו"ח (סימן תקנא) וביו"ד (סימן שץ) שפירט וכתב שנאסר אחד שיער ראשו, ואחד שיער זקנו ואחד כל שיער שבו, אולם בדין כתב שנאסר רק להסתפר ולא פירט דבר על גילוח הזקן, וזאת מכיון שבאבילות שחיובו מן התורה נאמר "ראשיכם על תפרעו", ובתשעה באב נאסר גילוח כל שיער שבו משום שהשווה לאבילות, אולם במנהג שנהגו בזמן ימי העומר לא החמירו עד כדי כך. וכן כתב להוכיח במישור הגר"ע יוסף בחזון עובדיה (הל' יום טוב עמוד רסב), שלא דיברו הפוסקים בגילוח הזקן כלל בזמנם.

ואף שישנם פוסקים שהשוו בין מה שנפסק בדין אבילות ותשעה באב למנהג ימי העומר (ראה בשו"ת משפטי עוזיאל או"ח ס' סח ובשו"ת ישכיל עבדי ח"ו או"ח ס"ה ובאול"צ ח"ג עמוד קפה), אולם לא יהא הדבר אלא מחלוקת וידוע שמחלוקת בדבר לקולא, וכל שכן במנהג הנ"ל שכתבו עליו רבים מהפוסקים שלא היו נוהגים בו אלא יחידי סגולה.

ולכן בהצטרף ראש חודש עם יום השבת שיש כאן תוספת שמחה ודאי גם בני עדות המזרח רשאים להקל לגלח בו את זקנם, (ובילקוט יוסף הל' ספירת העומר עמוד תסג כתב להחמיר, אך מי שמיקל בדבר אין למחות בו שיש לו על מי לסמוך).

וידוע שרבים נזהרים שלא לגלח בשום ראש חודש שהרי כך ציוה הרב יהודה חסיד בצוואתו, אולם בחיד"א (שהבאנו לעיל) הוכיח שבמקומותיו לא היו נזהרים ומקפידים בזה.

וכן כתב הגר"מ פינשטיין שאף המקפידים על צוואת רבי יהודה החסיד מקילים בראש חודש זה כיון שאי אפשר להסתפר לפני. ויתירה מזו כתב ביד אפרים (קו"א אות נז) שחודשים שיש בהם שני ימים ראש חודש אפשר להסתפר ביום ראשון כיון שהוא נחשב יום ל' מחודש שעבר.

שלום לרב. רציתי לשאול אם מותר להתגלח בערב שבת שחל בראש חודש אייר?

שלום לכם.

נהגו שלא להסתפר מפסח עד ל"ד בעומר בבוקר לספרדים, ול"ג בעומר בבוקר לאשכנזים כדי לנהוג אבילות על עשרים וארבע אלף תלמידי רבי עקיבא שמתו בזמן הזה, וכך כתב השולחן ערוך (סימן תצג ס"ב): "נוהגים שלא להסתפר עד ל"ג בעומר שאומרים שאז פסקו מלמות. ואין להסתפר עד יום ל"ד בבוקר", וברמ"א שם היקל להסתפר בל"ג בעומר.

אלא שהשנה שראש חודש אייר נופל בערב שבת ניתן להקל לגלח את הזקן כיון שיש תוספת שמחה כדברי המשנה ברורה (סימן תצג סק"ה) וכן נהגו האשכנזים, אולם גם בני עדות המזרח המצטערים שלא להתגלח רשאים להקל מחמת כמה קולות שמצטרפות יחדיו:

ראש חודש.

ערב שבת.

גילוח הזקן ללא תספורת הראש.

ונסביר, הנה הרדב"ז שהיה גדול הדור בזמנו ואחד מראשי הפוסקים של כל הזמנים כתב (ח"ב סי' תרפז) להתיר להסתפר בראש חודש אייר, כיון שבראש חודש אסור להספיד ולהתענות ולכן אין בהם מנהגי אבילות, ויתירה מזאת כתב שהוא עצמו נוהג להסתפר בהם. והוסיף שכיון שכל ענין איסור התספורת הוא רק מנהג, לכן ניתן לבטלו במנהג כל שהוא. גם כתב שבהרבה קהילות לא נהגו כלל במנהג זה ובמיוחד שיש צער בגידול השיער לזמן כל כך ארוך.

וכיון שדברי הרדב"ז חולקים על דעת מרן השולחן ערוך דלעיל שאסר תספורת עד ל"ד בעומר, לכן רבו המימינים והמשמאלים בפסקו זה. והנה מרן הש"ע שהחמיר שלא להסתפר עד ל"ד בעומר, לא דיבר אלא מתספורת הראש ולא מגילוח הזקן, כמו שהעיר רבינו החיד"א בשו"ת יוסף אומץ (סימן מ' אות ב'), וכן כתב להוכיח באריכות רבה הראשי של



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