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Brachos Daf 54

Produced by Rabbi Avrohom Adler, Kollel Boker Beachwood

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**Moshe Raphael ben Yehoshua (Morris Stadtmauer) o”h**  
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May the studying of the Daf Notes be a zechus for their neshamot and may their souls find peace in Gan Eden and be bound up in the Bond of life

If one sees a place where miracles have been performed for the Jewish people, he should say: Blessed (are You, Hashem, etc.) Who performed miracles for our ancestors in this place.

On seeing a place from which idolatry has been uprooted, he should say: Blessed (are You, Hashem, etc.) Who uprooted idolatry from Our land.

On witnessing zikin, earthquakes, thunder, wind and lightnings, one should say, Blessed (are You, Hashem, etc.) Whose strength and might fill the world.

On seeing mountains, hills, seas, rivers and deserts, he should say: Blessed (are You, Hashem, etc.) Who makes the work of Creation.

Rabbi Yehudah says: if one sees the Great Sea, one should say: Blessed (are You, Hashem, etc.) Who made the Great Sea. This is, however, only if he sees it at (considerable) intervals.

For rain and for good tidings one says: Blessed (are You, Hashem, etc.) Who is good and does good. For bad tidings, one says: Blessed (are You, Hashem, etc.) the true judge.

One who has built a new house or bought new clothes says: Blessed (are You, Hashem, etc.) Who has kept us alive and preserved us and brought us to this season.

Over a calamity that might result in a favorable occurrence, one should recite a blessing (the true judge), and over a favorable occurrence that might result in a calamity, one should recite a blessing (Who is good and does good).

One who cries over the past is like uttering a vain prayer. If, for example, a man’s wife is pregnant and he says, “May it be the will of God that my wife bear a male child,” this a vain prayer. If he is coming home from a journey and he hears cries of distress in the city, and he says, “May it be the will of God that this is not in my house,” this is a vain prayer.

One who (while traveling) enters a (dangerous) city should say two prayers, one upon entering and one upon leaving. Ben Azzai says: four - two upon entering and two on leaving. He gives thanks for the past (that he was protected) and supplicates for the future (dangers).

It is incumbent on a man to bless God for the bad in the same way as for the good, as it is written: and you shall love Hashem, your God, with all your heart etc. ‘With all your heart’ means with your two inclinations - the evil inclination as well as the good inclination; ‘with all your soul’ means, even though he takes your life; ‘with all your resources’ means, with all your money. Another explanation of ‘with all your resources’ is, whatever treatment he metes out to you, you shall thank Him (even if it is bad).

One should avoid showing disrespect in front of the eastern gate (of the Temple Mount) because it is in a direct line with the (gateway of the) Holy of Holies. One should not enter the Temple Mount with his stick, shoe, and money belt or with the dust upon his feet. One should not use it as a shortcut and spitting is forbidden based on a *kal vachomer*.

At the conclusion of the blessings said in the (first) Temple, they used to say: ‘until the World.’ [They would say as follows: Blessed is Hashem, God of Israel, until the World, Blessed is etc.] When the Sadducees perverted the faith and



asserted that there was only one world, it was ordained (by Ezra and others) that the conclusion should be: 'from the World until the World. [They would say as follows: Blessed is Hashem, God of Israel, from the World until the World, Blessed is etc.]

It was also laid down that greeting (a fellow) should be given in God's Name, as it is written: and behold Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said to the harvesters, "Hashem is with you," and they answered him, "May Hashem bless you." And it also written: Hashem is with you, mighty man of valor. And it also written: and do not shame your mother when she is old (alluding to the elders of Israel; one should listen to their decrees). And it is also written: It is time to act for Hashem; they have made your law void. Rabbi Nassan says: This means that they have made void Your law, because it is time to act for Hashem. [Even though it might be disrespectful to greet someone using god's Name, they held that it is permitted, for god wants that goodwill should be spread amongst His people.]

The *Gemora* asks: From where is this rule (that one recites a blessing when he is at a place where a miracle occurred) derived?

Rabbi Yochanan said: It is because it is written: And Yisro said: Blessed is Hashem Who has delivered you, etc.

The *Gemora* infers from the *Mishna* that a blessing is recited only for a miracle performed for a large group of people, but not for one brought for an individual.

The *Gemora* asks: What of the case of the man who was once travelling through Avar Yemina when a lion attacked him, but he was miraculously saved, and when he came before Rava, he said to him: Whenever you come to that place you should say: Blessed (are You, Hashem, etc.) Who performed for me a miracle in this place.?

There was the case, too, of Mar the son of Ravina, who was once going through the valley of Aravos, and was suffering from thirst for water, and a well of water was miraculously created for him and he drank from it. And another time he

was going through the marketplace of Mechoza when a wild camel attacked him and at that moment the wall of a house nearby collapsed and he escaped inside; and whenever afterwards he came to Aravos he used to say: Blessed (are You, Hashem, etc.) Who performed for me miracles in Aravos and with the camel, and when he would come to the marketplace of Mechoza, he used to say: Blessed (are You, Hashem, etc.) Who performed for me miracles with the camel, and in Aravos.?

The *Gemora* answers that for a miracle done to a large body it is the obligation of everyone to recite a blessing; for a miracle done to an individual, he alone is required to recite a blessing.

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: If one sees the place of the crossing of the Red Sea, or the crossing of the Jordan, or the crossing of the canyons of Arnon, or the stones of Elgavish in the descent of Beis Choron, or the stone which Og king of Bashan wanted to throw at Israel, or the stone on which Moshe sat when Yehoshua fought with Amalek, or (the pillar of salt of) Lot's wife, or the wall of Yericho which sank into the ground -for all of these he should give thanks and praise to the Omnipresent.

The *Gemora* asks: I grant you the crossing of the Red Sea, because it is written: And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon dry land; also the crossing of the Jordan, because it is written: And the *Kohanim* that bore the Ark of the Covenant of Hashem stood firm on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan, while all Israel passed over on dry ground, until all the nation crossed over the Jordan; but from where is it derived that a miracle was performed at the canyons of Arnon?

The *Gemora* answers: It is because it is written: Therefore it is said in the book of the Wars of Hashem, *Es vaheiv besufah*, an explanation of which it was taught in a *braisa*: *Es vaheiv besufah* were two *metzora'im* who walked in the rear of the camp of Israel, and when the Israelites were about to pass through (the valley of Arnon), the Amorites came and made caves (in the rocks) and hid in them, saying, "When the Jews pass by here we will kill them." They did not know, however,



that the Ark was advancing in front of Israel and leveling the mountains before them. When the Ark arrived there, the mountains closed together and killed them, and their blood flowed down to the streams of Arnon. When Es and Vaheiv came, they saw the blood issuing from between the rocks, they went and told the Jews, who thereupon broke out into song of praise. And so it is written: And an outpouring of the canyons (from the mountain) which inclined toward the seat of Ar and leaned upon the border of Moav.

'Stones of Elgavish'. What are 'Stones of Elgavish'? A Tanna taught: Stones which remained suspended for the sake of a man ['al gav ish] and came down for the sake of a man. 'They remained suspended for the sake of a man': this was Moshe, of whom it is written, Now the man Moshe was very humble, and it is also written, And the soldiers and hail ceased, and the rain poured not upon the earth. 'They came down for the sake of a man': this was Yehoshua, of whom it is written, Take Yehoshua the son of Nun, a man in whom there is spirit, and it is written, And it came to pass as they fled from before Israel, while they were at the descent of Beis-Choron, that Hashem cast down great stones.

'The stone which Og, king of Bashan wanted to throw at Israel'. This has been handed down by tradition. He said: How large is the camp of Israel? Three parsahs. I will go and uproot a mountain of the size of three parsahs and cast it upon them and kill them. He went and uprooted a mountain of the size of three parsahs and carried it on his head. But the Holy One, Blessed be He, sent ants which bored a hole in it, so that it sank around his neck. He tried to pull it off, but his teeth projected on each side, and he could not pull it off. This is referred to in the text, You have broken the teeth of the wicked, as explained by Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish. For Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish said: What is the meaning of the text, You have broken the teeth of the wicked? Do not read, shibbarta [You have broken], but shirbabta [You have lengthened]. The height of Moshe was ten cubits. He took an axe ten cubits long, leapt ten cubits into the air, and struck him on his ankle and killed him.

'The stone on which Moshe sat'. As it is written, But Moshe's hands were heavy; and they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it.

'Lot's wife'. As it says, But his wife looked back from behind him and she became a pillar of salt.

'And the wall of Yericho which sank into the ground'. As it is written, And the wall fell down flat.

We understand [why this blessing should be said over] all the others, because they are miracles, but the transformation of Lot's wife was a punishment. One should say on seeing it, Blessed be the true Judge, yet [the Baraisa] says: 'Thanksgiving and praise'? — Read: 'For Lot and his wife two blessings are said. For his wife we say, "Blessed be the true Judge", and for Lot we say, "Blessed be He who remembers the righteous"'. Rabbi Yochanan said: Even in the hour of His anger the Holy One, Blessed be He, remembers the righteous, as it says, And it came to pass when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham and sent Lot out of the midst of the upheaval.

'And the wall of Yericho which sank [into the ground]'. But did the wall of Yericho sink [into the ground]? Surely it fell, as it says, And it came to pass when the people heard the sound of the horn, that the people shouted with a great shout and the wall fell down flat? — Since its breadth and its height were equal, it must have sunk [into the ground].

Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav: There are four [classes of people] who have to offer thanksgiving: those who have crossed the sea, those who have traversed the wilderness, one who has recovered from an illness, and a prisoner who has been set free. From where do we know this of those who cross the sea? — Because it is written, They that go down to the sea in ships . . . these saw the works of Hashem . . . He raised the stormy wind . . . they mounted up to the heaven, they went down to the deeps . . . they reeled to and fro and staggered like a drunken man . . . they cried to Hashem in their trouble, and He brought them out of their distresses. He made the storm a calm . . . then were they glad because they were quiet . . . Let them give thanks to Hashem for His



mercy, and for His wonderful works to the children of men. From where for those who traverse the desert? — Because it is written: They wandered in the wilderness in a desert way; they found no city of habitation . . . . Then they cried to Hashem . . . . and He led them by a straight way . . . . Let them give thanks to Hashem for His mercy. From where for one who recovers from an illness? — Because it is written: Crazy because of the way of their transgressions and afflicted because of their iniquities, their soul abhorred all manner of food . . . . They cried to Hashem in their trouble. He sent His word to them . . . . Let them give thanks to Hashem for His mercy. Whence for a prisoner who was set free? — Because it is written: Such as sat in darkness and in the shadow of death . . . . Because they rebelled against the words of God . . . . Therefore He humbled their heart with travail . . . . They cried to Hashem in their trouble . . . . He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death . . . . Let them give thanks to Hashem for His mercy.

What blessing should he say? Rav Yehudah said: ‘Blessed is He who bestows lovingkindnesses’. Abaye said: And he must utter his thanksgiving in the presence of ten, as it is written: Let them exalt Him in the assembly of the people. Mar Zutra said: And two of them must be rabbis, as it says, And praise Him in the seat of the elders. Rav Ashi demurred to this: You might as well say [he remarked], that all should be rabbis! — Is it written, ‘In the assembly of elders’? It is written, ‘In the assembly of the people’! — Let us say then, in the presence of ten ordinary people and two rabbis [in addition]? — This is a difficulty.

Rav Yehudah was ill and recovered. Rav Chana of Baghdad and other rabbis went to visit him. They said to him: ‘Blessed be the Merciful One who has given you back to us and has not given you to the dust’. He said to them: ‘You have absolved me from the obligation of giving thanks’. But hasn’t Abaye said that he must utter his thanksgiving in the presence of ten! — There were ten present. But he did not utter the thanksgiving? — There was no need, as he answered after them, Amen.

Rav Yehudah said: Three persons require guarding, namely, a sick person, a bridegroom, and a bride. In a Baraisa it was

taught: A sick person, a midwife, a bridegroom and a bride; some add, a mourner, and some add further, scholars at night-time.

## DAILY MASHAL

### The Forty Loaves: To Praise for Fullness

Four categories of people must bring a *todah* – thanking sacrifice, with 40 loaves. Why? Because a great part of their tribulations were associated with a lack of food. Concerning those who cross deserts and the ill who were cured, the verses cited in the *sugya* explain: “The hungry and the thirsty, their soul envelops them” (Tehilim 107:5); “...their soul despises all food” (ibid, 18). Seafarers were surely far from sources of food, and prisoners eat as stated in Melachim II (22:27): “sparse bread and meager water”. Therefore the Torah said, measure for measure, that when they are saved they should bring a *todah* with an abundance of food and thus their thankfulness will be complete (*Shemen Lamaor, Tzav*).

### To Thank Also for Misfortune

“Blessed is He who rewards the culpable with good, who gave me **all** good.” What is “all good”? We must give praise also for the bad, which brought about the redemption at its end, because it was also for the good. Therefore a *todah* is eaten during a day and a night. Night indicates troubles, as is well known. We must give praise for the day and the night (*Kesav Sofer Hechadash, 145*).