

דרכים
בפרשה
נשא

R' Mordechai Appel,
an alumnus of
Yeshivas Mir
Yerushalayim, is the
author of
DERACHIM
BEPARSHA.



ישא ה' פניו אליך וישם לך שלום (ו:כז)

*May Hashem turn His countenance to you and
establish peace for you (6:27)*

In this *parshah*, we read about the *birchas kohanim*. The Torah tells us that Hakadosh Boruch Hu will lift up His face and present us with peace. The Gemara in Brachos (20a) tells us: דרש רב עוריא, זמנין אמר לה משמיה דרבי אסי: אמרו מלאכי השרת לפני הקדוש ברוך הוא: רבונו של עולם, כתוב בתורתך "אשר לא ישא פנים ולא יקח שחד", והלא אתה נושא פנים לישראל, דכתביב: "ישא ה' פניו אליך"? אמר להם: וכי לא ישא פנים לישראל, שכתבתי להם בתורה "ואכלת ושבעת וברכת את ה' – אלקיך", והם מדקדקים [על] עצמם עד כזית ועד כביצה – the *Malachim* came to Hashem and proclaim that this is wrong. The Torah states that Hashem does not treat anyone with favoritism; people get exactly what they deserve. And yet, Hashem is clearly favoring the Bnei Yisroel over the rest of the world. To this charge, Hashem responds, "Look at my children. How can I not favor them? I say – ואכלת ושבעת וברכת – eat, have a meal, become satiated, and only after that (are you obligated to) bless Hashem. But Klal Yisroel – after just a small amount like a *k'zayis* or a *k'baytza*, they are already *bentching*. They are doing something special for my sake. Should I not do something for them as well?"

The commonly asked question is that if they are stringent to *bentch* even for a small amount such as a *k'zayis* (olive volume), then they would surely also *bentch* for a larger size of a *k'baytza* (egg volume) which is just a little more than three times larger? The Vilna Gaon calculated that according to the Rambam, a normal meal consists of three *baytzim* which is equivalent to ten *zaysim*. Accordingly, – עד כזית – they were stringent on themselves until a *k'zayis* – means that they would divide their full meal of ten amongst ten people so that they can *bentch* with a full *minyan* in the most *mehudar* fashion. – ועד כביצה – if all they have is a *k'baytza*, then they would divide it amongst three people to at least have a *mezuman*. Even when it comes to our food, with minimal amounts, we are still thinking about how best to thank Hashem.

We find in the Mishnah (Brachos 45a) a dispute regarding the minimum amount one needs to eat in order to *bentch*. עד כמה מזמנין? עד כזית. רבי יהודה אומר: עד כביצה – the Tanna of the Mishnah holds one *k'zayis* and Rebbe Yehudah holds a *k'baytza*. R' Yehoshua of

Kutno (Yeshuos Malko) suggests that whenever the students of each Tanna would join together for a meal, they would be careful to honor the other opinion. Either they would eat less than a *k'zayis* so that according to all, there is no obligation to *bentch*, or they would eat at least a *k'baytza* to be obligated according to all opinions. When Hashem sees the way we are considerate to others, never discounting someone else's opinion, His response is to go above and beyond for us as well.

The Rebbe R' Bunim of Pashis'cha asked: why would one make a *bracha* for something so small and insignificant like a *k'zayis*? He explains that by doing so, we are demonstrating that everything we have, even the smallest things, come from Hashem, and we appreciate it on the highest level. If upon a visit to the king, one receives a gift, even the smallest item, it will be cherished and treasured, shown to the children and grandchildren as a family heirloom for generations. Similarly, a Yid knows that his food does not come from his hard work, but rather from Hashem. "Hashem gave me a gift – should I not thank Him, bless Him and be grateful?" So Hashem says, "They recognize Me to that extent, shouldn't I show My appreciation and recognize them to that extent as well?"

Rav Chaim Volozhener adds another detail to our Gemara. Chazal say: והם מדקדקים [על] עצמם – they are stringent on themselves. What does "on themselves" add? A poor person knocks on the door; he is hungry. We sit him down, make him comfortable and offer him a meal. We give him *tzedakah* and make sure he has what he needs. That is how we treat others. But for ourselves? We can even be satisfied with only a little bit. We pamper others but not ourselves. The Torah tells us that when the angels came to visit Avraham Avinu, he went to feed them with fine flour bread, butter and the most tender, choicest cuts of meat and mustard. Now, Avraham was certainly not a foodie; but when it came to others, he went all out. For himself, the smallest amount would suffice; as the saying goes, *yenem's gashmiyus is main ruchniyus*. A famous rule about the way that Yidden behave is that when things are tough, we remind ourselves to have *emunah* – but that is for ourselves! If someone else is asking for help, we don't respond by saying, "Don't worry, just have *emunah* that your little bit will suffice."

When Hashem "sees" His *kinderlach* going above and beyond for Him and for each other, He has no choice but to respond with extra kindness and even favoritism.

מרדכי אפפּעל, Good Shabbos,