

Rabbi Reisman – Parshas Eikev 5784

I am calling from the center of the world.....

Firstly, I would like to wish a hearty Mazel Tov to Yehudah Kaufold on the Chasunah that he made this week. He is the one who writes up these Shiurim every week. Thank you!

In this week's Parshah Moshe Rabbeinu tells Klal Yisrael how good the land of Eretz Yisrael is: כִּי ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ מְבִיאֲךָ אֶל אֶרֶץ טוֹבָה אֶרֶץ נַחֲלֵי מַיִם עֵינַת וְתְהוֹמוֹת יוֹצְאִים בְּבִקְעָה וּבְהָר (דברים ח, ז). There is a very important message here. To be *matzliach* in Eretz Yisrael you have to believe the Torah that it is אֶרֶץ טוֹבָה. You must come in with the attitude that it is understood without need for discussion that it is good.

Wisdom and happiness go hand in hand. True happiness comes from a certain wisdom and thought process in life, as Chazal express *אין שמחה כהתרת הספיקות* — the greatest joy is clarity. Let's say someone marries a woman he dated and has an affection for, if his *chochmah* gives him the message that this is the one destined for him since *יום קודם יצירת הולד*, then he will go through life happily. Although there will certainly be frustrating moments in their relationship, it won't attack the core of the bond because there is clarity of understanding that this is the right one.

The same is true if one understands that the challenges that come his way in life are a fulfillment of his *tafkid*. People who face disappointments in life tend to beat themselves up over it. But when one has the clarity to see that these things are part of a job he must do, he will find joy in place of frustration.

When someone comes to Eretz Yisrael with the serenity of knowledge, understanding that this is the place we belong, even during *galus*, that brings him to *simchah*. A person who understands that wisdom and faith can give you inner peace.

One of Rav Shloime Zalman Aurbach's *talmidim* write that R' Shlom Zalman would say that just as for Moshe Rabbeinu to get to Eretz Yisrael he had to kill Sichon King of Cheshbon, so too anyone who wants to come to Eretz Yisrael needs to kill all his *cheshbonos*. Now. Of course, that isn't to be taken literally, because that would be a disaster waiting to happen. There is a deeper meaning. That once one has committed and has come to Eretz Yisrael, he can no longer live based on his *cheshbonos* of what he wanted and expected to have in Eretz Yisrael. He must live with the reality.

Just as one who is dating makes all kinds of *cheshbonos* about what he wants in a spouse, once he gets married, he needs to kill the *cheshbonos* and cannot constantly measure his spouse according to his old *cheshbonos*. It is in this way that wisdom brings happiness. With the acceptance that this is the way it is supposed to be and to be happy with it. Just like if you go out

and it's raining. You don't like the fact that it's raining but it doesn't make you miserable; you deal with it. Because your *chochmah* tells you that this is the way it is — sometimes it rains. It's different than someone dumping a bucket of water on you which makes you upset.

This was Moshe Rabbeinu's message which he repeated many times in these *parshiyos*. Believe that you are going to a good land in Eretz Yisrael and let your *chochmah* bring you happiness. These are some thoughts of mine as I sit here in Eretz Yisrael.

This week's parshah also contains the mitzvah of *Birchas Hamazon*. Let me share with you a thought about *bentching* which I hope to also incorporate myself. *Birchas Hamazon* is only *mid'Oraisa* if one eats *k'dei seviah*, enough to be satisfied, but we *bentch* even on a *k'zayis* or *k'beitzah*. Chazal say the *malachim* complained to Hashem that He shows favoritism to Klal Yisrael, as the *pasuk* says *ישא ה' פניו אליך*. And Hashem answered that it is in response to Klal Yisrael showing favoritism to Him by *bentching* on even a *k'zayis* or *k'beitzah*. Rav Pam asked, why is Hashem's answer the *d'Rabanan* of *bentching*? Aren't there so many other *mitzvos d'Rabbanan* that are much more difficult? So many *issurim* of *shemiras Shabbos*?

The *Mishnah* says in *Maseches Succah* that one who sits in a succah when he is *patur*, such as when it is raining, is called a *hedyet*. The Rema writes that one receives no reward for sitting in a succah when it is raining; it's not a mitzvah. Why is this different than any other mitzvah we do even though we are not commanded to? Don't we *bentch* even on a *k'zayis* although we don't have to? The Yerushalmi says *לא דיך במה שאסרה תורה* — Aren't the Torah's prohibitions enough. The *Be'er Sheva* asks on this, if so, how do we live? We have thousands of *issurim mid'Rabbanan*?

We can answer as follows. Tefillin doesn't need *sirtut* besides the top line and the Magen Avraham wonders if doing *sirtut* on the whole thing deems one to be called a *hedyet*. Yet, we do *sirtut*. The Gra there explains that to take upon a stringency that is something logical and beneficial, to protect from doing an *issur d'Oraisa*, or it's a *hiddur*, or it brings *kirvas Elokim*, that is fine and even recommended. Only when it is a technical thing that one is just imagining to be a mitzvah, such as sitting in the succah in the rain which is not a mitzvah at all, that is when one is called a *hedyet* for doing so. The *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* (32:8) writes similarly. We see from this that the *mitzvos mid'Rabbanan* we do are supposed to be an enhancement of our *avodas Hashem*.

Coming back to *bentching*. Rav Pam explains that *Birchas Hamazon* is an expression of gratitude for all we have. *Mid'Oraisa*, we are obligated to express this only when we are satiated, but we express our gratitude on even a *k'zayis* or *k'beitzah*. It's not just magical incantations, imagining it's a mitzvah. It's a real enhancement of expressing our thankfulness to Hashem. That is why Hashem answers the *malachim* specifically with this mitzvah. "Klal Yisrael appreciates everything I give them, should I not appreciate them too?"

We tend to *bentch* out of habit without thinking too much, because we're commanded to. We should take the time out to what we are saying, thanking Hashem for food. Isn't it amazing that every single day of our lives Hashem prepared food for us? Even the construction workers sitting

around the manhole on Ocean Parkway open their lunch boxes and paper bags and everyone has something they like!

Therefore, we should take a moment when we *bentch*, especially on a *k'zayis* or *k'beitzah*, to feel the appreciation and gratitude for food, because that is really what *bentching* is all about. If it will motivate you more, the *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* writes *bentching* properly is a *segulah* for *parnassah*. Let us all try as best as we can to have this in mind when we *bentch*.

Wishing you all a wonderful Shabbos from *Yerushalayim Ir Hakodesh*, the place of utmost *kedushah* and closeness to Hashem. May we all be *zocheh* to come together here *b'vias Goel Tzedek*.