



# דרכים בפרשה

נשא



## ישא ה' פניו אליך וישם לך שלום

In this parsha, we read about the birchas kohanim. The Torah tells us that Hakadosh Boruch Hu, kivayachol will lift up His face and present us with peace. The gemara in Berachos (20a) tells us: **דרש רב עזריא, זמנין אמר לה משמיה דרבי אמי וזמנין 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, דכתיב: "ישא ה' פניו אליך"?! אמר להם: וכי לא אשא פנים לישראל, שכתבתי להם בתורה "ואכלת ושבעת וברכת את ה' אלקיך", והם מזקדקים [על] עצמם** the malachim would come to HaShem and proclaim that this is wrong. The Torah states that HaShem does not treat anyone with favouritism; people get exactly what they deserve. And yet, HaShem is clearly favouring Bnei Yisroel over the rest of the world. To this charge, HaShem responds, "Look at my children. How can I not favour them? I say **ואכלת ושבעת וברכת** - eat, have a meal, be satisfied and 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, a small amount of bread and 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) an argument regarding the minimum amount one needs to bentch. **עד כמה מזמנין? — עד** the Tanna of the Mishna holds one k'zayis and Rebbe Yehudah holds a k'baytza. R'Yehoshua of Kutno (Yeshuas Malko) suggests that whenever the students of each Tanna would join together for a meal, they would be careful to honour 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 in order to be obligated according to all opinions. When HaShem sees the manner in which we are considerate to others, never discounting someone else's opinion, HaShem's response is to go above and beyond for us as well.

The Rebbe R'Bunim wonders why one would even give a bracha for something so small and insignificant like a k'zayis. What is the point? 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 legacy and heirloom in the family, because after all, it comes from the king. 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 Volozhiner z"l adds another detail to our gemara. The gemara says **והם**

**עצמם [על] מדקדקים**-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 tzeddaka 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 Avrohom Avinu (Parshas Vayeira), 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 everyone else, 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, 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,**



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