

Kinder Torah

בס"ד

Parashas Bamidbar

Borchu

“Avi, we are now standing at a focal point in our morning prayers.”

“What are we focused on, Abba?”

“That is a good question, Avi. To answer it, let us review what we have accomplished until now with our *tefillos*. We have to keep in mind that we are on our way to an audience with the King.”

“It is hard for me to imagine what that is like, Abba.”

“That is a common problem, Avi. In our day and age, we have almost no concept of a king and his royal court. In the days of monarchy, the king sat in his royal palace, surrounded by ministers and servants. One had to request an audience with His Royal Highness. It was a long and involved process. If one was fortunate enough to receive a summons, he had to appear at the gates of the royal grounds at the proper time. There, he met the gate keeper and the servant who led him through the royal gardens. He then reached the palace, where he waited until he was summoned to enter. He met another group of ministers and servants, who escorted him to the king’s outer chambers. When the time came, he was called upon to enter the king’s throne room, stand in front of the monarch, and speak directly to His Royal Majesty.”

“Wow! What a privilege, Abba!”

“Indeed, Avi. Our morning prayers take us to an audience with the Almighty, King of kings. They are divided into four sections, each one corresponding to a different world. Each world is parallel to a section of the Creator’s Royal Palace. As we pray, we approach progressively closer to the Holy Throne, where we stand before the King of kings, the Holy One, Blessed be He. The morning blessings and *korbonos* correspond to our physical world. We then proceed to the *Pisukei Di’Zimra*, which takes us to the world of the heavenly bodies, a step closer to Hashem. We are now standing at the threshold of the *Kriyas Shema* and its blessings, which admits us into the world of the heavenly angels. After that we will, b’ezras Hashem, recite the *amida* before the Almighty Himself. However, before we begin the blessings of *Kriyas Shema* and enter the world of the angels, we are called upon to bless Hashem.”

“Who calls us, Abba?”

“Rav Shimshon Refael Hirsch, in his commentary on the Siddur relates that the congregation calls upon itself through its *shliach tsibbur* (one who leads the prayers) to make a public declaration: ‘*Borchu es Hashem Hamevorach!*’ – ‘Bless Hashem, the blessed One!’¹ The congregation then responds, ‘*Boruch Hashem Hamevorach li’olam vo’ed!*’ – ‘Blessed is Hashem, the blessed One, for all eternity!’ The *shliach tsibbur* repeats the declaration in order to not exclude himself from the congregation.² The sefer *Yesod Vishoresh Ho’avodah* adds a passage from the Zohar which states that a *min-*

yan of then men is not permitted to pray together until they first bless the Holy One. ‘*Borchu*’ is that blessing.”

“Abba, how can we bless Hashem? What can we possibly accomplish? He is perfect, and gains nothing from our blessing.”

“True, Avi. We discussed this concept in the beginning of our learning about the morning *Berachos*.³ He is the source of all blessing, and the abundance of His blessings upon us should always increase in quantity and quality.⁴ We should become a veritable ‘*breicha*’ (pool) of ‘*bracha*’ (blessing)! We add that Hashem is ‘*hamevorach*’ – the blessed One. He is blessed by the myriads of creatures, both physical and spiritual, that He created. Each and every one blesses, praises, glorifies, and sanctifies His Holy Name.”⁵

“I see that our ‘*Borchu*’ accomplishes a lot, Abba.”

“Yes, Avi. there is even more. They mystical sources relate that although a person may awake in the morning and learn Torah, his *neshama* (soul) that was taken from his *guf* (body) while he was sleeping, is not returned until he answers,



‘*Boruch Hashem Hamevorach li’olam vo’ed!*’ Therefore, this response contains five words, which correspond to the five names of the soul (*nefesh, ruach, neshama, chaya, and yechida*),⁶ which are returned to him when he says these five words.”

“‘*Borchu*’ is a very important part of our morning *tefillos*, Abba.”

“Indeed, Avi. This is even reflected in the *halacha*. The Rema (Orach Chaim 54) rules that interruptions are not permitted between ‘*Borchu*’ and the beginning of the bracha ‘*Yotzer Ohr*’. The Mishna Breura explains that the main intention of the *shliach tsibbur* when he declares, ‘*Borchu...*’ is to call the congregation to bless Hashem with the blessings which precede *Kriyas Shema*. It is considered the beginning of the blessings. We have a *minhag* (custom) to bow when we say ‘*Borchu*’ and its response. The *Biur Halacha*⁷ traces the source to a verse in *Divrei HaYomim* 1 (29:20). ‘And all of the congregation blessed Hashem, the G-d of their forefathers, and they bowed down and prostrated themselves to Hashem and to the king.’ Now you have a complete picture of ‘*Borchu*’ Avi. May we always say it with *kavannah* (proper intention) and merit all of its benefits!”

“Amen!”

Kinderlach . . .

We stand at the verge of entering Hashem’s royal palace, the world of the angels and heavenly beings. It is the last stop in our journey before standing before the Holy One Himself. At this point we are called upon to bless Hashem, Who is blessed by all of His creations. We request that He continue to shower us with His brachos. We humbly bow before Him, as the nation did in the days of Dovid HaMelech. Hashem returns our holy souls to our bodies. This ‘Borchu’ is the beginning of the blessings before Kriyas Shema. We are now ready to begin the process of accepting the yoke of Heaven. Kinderlach, say ‘Borchu’ with great kavannah and simcha! Launch yourself into the heavenly world on your way to your audience with your Creator.

Neat and Orderly

In this week’s parasha, we find the description of the encampment of the Jewish people in the desert. Throughout the next few parshios the Torah uses quite a few words to describe in detail how the camp was arranged, how the *Mishkan* (Tabernacle) was taken apart and packed up to travel, and how the entire camp traveled. We know that the Torah does not waste words. What is the purpose of the detailed descriptions of these arrangements? Rav Aharon Kotler zt”l explains that the Torah teaches us the importance of *seder* (organization). All matters of holiness and service to Hashem require *seder*. The Torah is replete with examples. Our prayers are all arranged in a precise and specific order. In fact, our prayer book is called the *siddur*, which literally means order. Rav Kotler stresses that we should also be very concerned about the *seder* in our lives. We find that our *Gedolim* (Torah giants) were very careful about maintaining order. We should follow their example.

Kinderlach . . .

We should not leave our clothes, shoes, books, or toys lying around the house. Instead, we should put them away. Why not also organize our storage closets? What a waste of time it is to look for something that was misplaced. In addition to our possessions, our time should also be orderly. Why be late to school when, with a little more effort, we can be on time? Seder enriches our lives, so let us all do our best in this area.

¹ עיני תוספות מס' ברכות דף מט : ד"ה תנן

² טור או"ח סימן נ"ז

³ "Kinder Torah" parashas Korach 2010

⁴ Siddur Kavannas HaLev

⁵ כד הקמה הובא ע"י עץ יוסף הובא בסידור אוצר התפלות

⁶ Siddur Kavannas HaLev, Siddur Vilna, Siddur Shaar HaRachamim

⁷ סימן קי"ג ד"ה הכרע