

# KRIAT SHEMA 1:08

*by Rabbi Yitzchak Etshalom*

**8.** If he said the second B'rakha before the first B'rakha, whether during the day or at night, whether before [K'riat Sh'ma] or afterwards, \*Yatza\*, since there is no order to these blessings.

In the morning, if he began with "Yotzer Or" (...Who forms light...) and concluded "Ma'ariv 'Aravim" (...Who causes evening to fall), \*Lo Yatza\*. If he began with "Ma'ariv 'Aravim" and concluded with "Yotzer Or", \*Yatza\*. In the evening, if he began with "Ma'ariv 'Aravim" and concluded with "Yotzer Or", \*Lo Yatza\*. If he began with "Yotzer Or" and concluded with "Ma'ariv 'Aravim", \*Yatza\* - because [the status of] all B'rakhot follow their conclusions.

Birkot K'riat Sh'ma (3)  
Yitzchak Etshalom

In memory of our Prime Minister,  
Mr. Yitzhak Rabin, z"l,  
Yitzhak ben Nehemiah  
at the conclusion of Shiv'a.

I.

The Mishna in Tamid (5:1) states that, in the Beit HaMikdash, the Kohanim would recite one of the B'rakhot of K'riat Sh'ma (along with reading the Decalogue, K'riat Sh'ma, Emet veYatviz and parts of the Tefilla) every morning. R. Shim'on b. Lakish commented: "This indicates that B'rakhot are not mutually interdependent (one can be recited without the other)". From this inference of R. Shim'on b. Lakish, the Gemara (Berakhot 11b-12a) reasons that the one B'rakha said was "Yotzer Or" - since, if Ahavah Rabbah was the one recited, that may have been because it was too early to say Yotzer Or (it was still dark outside) and they would say it later - and this would prove nothing about the mutual interdependence of B'rakhot. The Gemara rejects this reasoning, offering an alternative explanation to R. Shimon b. Lakish's words: "This indicates that \*The Order Of\* B'rakhot is not interdependent" (i.e. they may be said out of order). Following this argument, the Kohanim really should have recited both pre-K'riat Sh'ma B'rakhot, since one without the other is invalid - but, since the order is not inherent to the various themes of the B'rakhot and it was too early to say Yotzer Or, they said Ahavah Rabbah and, later, completed this Mitzva by reciting Yotzer Or. It is worthwhile noting that Yotzer Or, according to this understanding, was said not only after Ahavah Rabbah, but after the entire K'riat

Sh'ma and Tefilla "service". Thus, as long as the B'rakhot are said at some point during the day, in any order, this Rabbinic Mitzva (which is possibly the Rabbinic extension of K'riat Sh'ma) may be fulfilled.

## II.

One difficulty raised by this Halakha is the formulation of the B'rakhot in question. As explained in the previous shiur (1:7), every B'rakha requires the six-word introductory formula - "Barukh Atah YHVH, Eloheinu Melekh ha'Olam" (You are Blessed, YHVH, our God, King of the World), known as a "Petiha". The general exception to this rule is a series of B'rakhot (such as the 18/19 B'rakhot of the Tefilla), in which only the first one needs a Petiha, and the rest of the B'rakhot "rely" on that Petiha. This would have explained why "Ahavah Rabbah" / "Ahavat Olam" and "Emet veYatziv" / "Emet ve'Emunah" do not begin with a Petiha - until faced with our Halakha, that the B'rakhot of K'riat Sh'ma may be said in any order.

To answer this question - how can "Ahavah Rabbah", for example, be said without immediately following "Yotzer Or" with its Petiha, we turn to RASHBA. In his Hiddushim (Novellae) (Berakhot 11a, s.v. Ahat Arukha) and in his Responsa (1:317 & 318), RASHBA posits that the B'rakhot around K'riat Sh'ma (Ahava/Emet) were originally composed without a Petiha, regardless of the context of their recital. He proves that the non-Petiha of these B'rakhot is not caused by their "adherence" to "Yotzer" - from the Tosefta in Berakhot (1:9):

"The following are B'rakhot which open with Barukh: All B'rakhot open with Barukh except for a B'rakha which is next to K'riat Sh'ma and a B'rakha which is next to another B'rakha, which do not open with Barukh...".

RASHBA is not alone in this appraisal of this Tosefta; R. Aharon haKohen (Orhot Hayyim, Berakhot 71), presents the same explanation about how Ahavah Rabbah could be said sans Petiha and sans Yotzer Or immediately before.

## III.

The second half of Halakha 8 is based upon an intricate and hotly debated sugya at the end of the first chapter of Berakhot (12a). The nature and medium of this shiur precludes a proper treatment of the sugya, but a thumbnail sketch is in order.

Introductory note: Before drinking wine, the B'rakha: "Barukh Atah YHVH, Eloheinu Melekh Ha'Olam, Bore P'ri HaGafen" (or "HaGefen") is recited. (Translation: You are Blessed, YHVH, our God, King of the World, Who creates the fruit of the vine.) Before drinking (nearly) any other liquid (including beer), the B'rakha recited is the "catch-all" B'rakha of "Barukh Atah YHVH, Eloheinu Melekh Ha'Olam, ShehaKol Nih'yeh Bidvaro" (Translation: You are Blessed, YHVH, our God, King of the World, by Whose Word everything comes into being.)

The Halakha is that if you say "ShehaKol" over wine, it is valid, since that B'rakha "includes", by

implication, any sort of food; however, if you said "Bore P'ri haGafen" over beer, that is invalid, since beer is not a fruit of the vine.

Now, to the Gemara [presented according to the version found in the standard Gemara; many Rishonim had variant readings, which further complicate the issue beyond the scope of this shiur]:

" It is obvious that if he held a glass of wine thinking it was beer, and began to say the B'rakha intending it for beer and concluded it for wine, Yatza - since, even if he had said "ShehaKol Nih'yeh bid'varo" - "Yatza". However, if he held a glass of beer in his hand and thought it to be wine, and began began the B'rakha intending it over wine and concluded it over beer what is the law? Do we follow the main part of the B'rakha (the Petiha) - or do we follow the "Hatima" - signature? "

The Gemara tries to settle the question by quoting a statement which is verbatim the second half of Halakha 8, above. The Gemara rejects this proof, because, in the case of Yotzer and Ma'ariv, he says "Barukh" at the end...unlike the case with the wine and beer blessings. The Gemara ultimately reaches no conclusion.

Now, Rashi and Rambam (along with other Rishonim) understand the case as follows: When he said the opening formula (which is standard for all B'rakhot), he thought it was wine - and he thought that he would conclude "Bore P'ri haGafen". When he finished the word "...ha'Olam", he realized it was beer and concluded properly -i.e. "ShehaKol...". The reason the Gemara is unsure of the status is because, on one hand, when he said the "main part" of the B'rakha, he was intending it to be concluded one (incorrect) way; but, when he actually verbalized the conclusion, it was correct.

RABD (in his critique of Ma'or, found on RIF pages, 6b), widely (and favorably) quoted by other Rishonim, challenges this notion as follows: "...we never find that a B'rakha is invalidated due to wrong intent...". RABD repeats this critique, in another formulation, in MT Berakhot 8:11.

RABD, therefore, favors another explanation of the case in the Gemara: He began the B'rakha, thinking it was wine - and said a full "...Bore P'ri haGafen" - and then realized it was beer, and added "ShehaKol Nih'yeh Bid'varo." The Gemara's quandry is, therefore, whether his final words can "correct" the errant B'rakha - or whether the first few words, attached properly to an introduction and comprising a complete B'rakha on their own, define the B'rakha.

One way of explaining their dispute is to cut directly to RABD's words - when someone says the introductory formula, is the intent a general praise of God, to be followed by the specific event/pleasure/Mitzva which generated the praise? Or should we understand the entire B'rakha as focussed on the specific generator for the B'rakha? It seems likely that because Rashi and Rambam consider the introductory formula to have a "direction" of their own, based on the anticipated conclusion in the mind of the one making the blessing, that they accept the latter alternative. RABD clearly and explicitly rejects this idea and favors the former idea - general words have general intent and specific words have specific intent.

now, to the questions...

**Q1:** In the first clause, why does Rambam identify the B'rakhot by their number (first/second) instead of by name?

**A:** Since this Halakha applies equally to daytime and nighttime, as well as pre-K'riat Sh'ma B'rakhot and post-K'riat Sh'ma B'rakhot, the "numbering" system is more economical.

**Q2:** What does Rambam mean "there is no order to the B'rakhot"? If that is the case, why does he present them (Halakha 6, above) in an order?

**A:** This statement is best understood against the backdrop of Rambam's formulation of Tefilla: "Once Ezra and his court saw this [difficulty people had when trying to compose their own Tefillot in Hebrew], they established eighteen B'rakhot in order..." (Tefilla 1:4) The B'rakhot of Tefilla are built one upon the other, as the sugya in Megilla and Berakhot demonstrates (e.g., once the Land is blessed, the Exiles will be gathered in, then God will restore righteous judges, etc.). The order there is a necessary order and these B'rakhot were not independent units which were later organized into a Tefilla structure - they were originally composed to be said in this order. On the other hand, the B'rakhot of K'riat Sh'ma were originally created as independent units (see the RASHBA's formulation in the shiur) and were later affixed into the K'riat Sh'ma structure. In other words, every day, a person is obligated to thank and praise God for light (Yotzer Or) and for darkness (Ma'ariv Aravim) at night; he is obligated to expand upon the Exodus theme (Emet ve'Emunah at night, Emet veYatziv during the day) and he is obligated to thank God for the gift of Torah (Ahavah) twice a day.

**Q3:** Would this rule of "no order" apply even if the B'rakhot were said on the "wrong" side of K'riat Sh'ma? For instance, saying "Emet veYatziv" before K'riat Sh'ma or "Yotzer Or" afterwards. Would this be valid?

**A:** See above, Q1.

**Q4:** If the general rule is that all B'rakhot are determined by their conclusions/signatures ("Hatimot"); why does Rambam have to preface that with all of these possible examples? Why not just state the rule?

**A:** There are two forms of Hatima - the ending of a short B'rakha (e.g. "Bore Peri haEtz") and the conclusion formula at the end of a "long" B'rakha, which includes God's Name (e.g. "Barukh atah YHVH, Yotzer haM'orot"). By providing these examples, Rambam clarifies that a B'rakha is only defined by its Hatima (when that definition is at odds with that provided at the beginning of the B'rakha) when the Hatima includes the formula with God's Name. However, when discussing "short" B'rakhot, the status of the B'rakha is defined at the Petiha, when God's Name is mentioned. (This is, of course, the theory of Rambam and Rashi - there are many Rishonim, following RABD, who disagree, as noted in the shiur).

**Q5:** Why is it the case that all B'rakhot follow their Hatima?

**A:** As explained above, this is only true when the Hatima includes the formula with God's Name. The reason that this sort of Hatima "defines" the B'rakha is that it contains both components necessary - God's Name and the basic theme of the B'rakha. Although it is missing the "Malkhut" dimension ("...Eloheinu Melekh ha'Olam) which is also necessary in every B'rakha, since that Malkhut was said at the beginning of the B'rakha, it is reckoned as "including" the Hatima portion.

**Q6:** What defines the Hatima for this - is it the last line of a B'rakha or does it need to include God's Name?

**A:** See above, Q4.

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