

KRIAT SHEMA 2:3-4

by Rabbi Yitzchak Etshalom

3. Someone who was walking on foot, stands for the first verse - as for the rest, he may read while walking. If he was asleep, we bother him and wake him until he reads the first verse - from there on, if sleep overtakes him, we do not bother him.

4. If someone was engaged in work, he must stop until he reads the entire first Parasha. Similarly, artisans must desist from their work during the [reading of the] first Parasha so that their reading not be *Arai* - regarding the rest, he may read it in his own way, while engaged in his work. Even if he was standing atop a tree or atop a wall, he may read in his place and recite the B'rakhot beforehand and afterwards.

Levels of "Kavvana" during K'riat Sh'ma
Yitzchak Etshalom

I.

HOW MUCH OF K'RIAT SH'MA REQUIRES KAVVANA?

The Gemara in Berakhot (13a-b) presents several opinions regarding how much of K'riat Sh'ma requires Kavvana. Parenthetically, it should be noted that Kavvana here is not necessarily the same as "Kavvanat haLev", meaning "paying attention to the words", which was discussed in last week's shiur. As we will see in this shiur, there may be a different sort of Kavvana/intent/focus at issue here.

The opinions include:

- * R. Aha (in the name of R. Yehuda): only the first verse;
- * R. Eliezer: until "And these words" (i.e. the first two verses);
- * R. Zutra: until "on your heart" (i.e. the first three verses);
- * R. Akiva: the entire first Parasha;
- * R. Yoshia: the first two Parashiot.

One thing is clear: There are parts of K'riat Sh'ma which require Kavvana and parts which do not.

There are two possible explanations for this disparity within the various "divisions" of K'riat Sh'ma:

INCIDENTAL REQUIREMENT

(a) In order to fulfill K'riat Sh'ma, a certain amount of verses/Parashiot must be read with intent; (i.e. the demand for Kavvana is incidental to the text)

This approach may be further "divided" into two possible understandings:

(a') There is a need for some segment of K'riat Sh'ma to be said with Kavvana, regardless of its text or placement within the general scheme of K'riat Sh'ma;

(a'') There is a need for the first 1, 2 or 3 verses (or 1st or 2nd Parasha) to be read with proper focus/intent. In other words, although the content doesn't matter, the placement of the text within the scope of K'riat Sh'ma is significant.

The second possibility relates to the meaning of the specific text which requires Kavvana:

INHERENT REQUIREMENT

(b) Certain words/themes/ideas must be read with intent, as those components of K'riat Sh'ma are not fulfilled without deliberation and focus (i.e. the demand for Kavvana is inherent in the text).

In order to investigate these possibilities, we'll need to clarify two things:

*What type of intent is needed here? (i.e. what does Kavvana mean in this context)? and

*Why is it needed for only a specific part of the K'riat Sh'ma?

II.

FIRST AND SECOND PARASHIOT

The distinction between different parts of K'riat Sh'ma is mentioned in a (possibly) different context later on in the Gemara (Berakhot 16a). The Gemara, commenting on the Mishna's ruling that workers may read K'riat Sh'ma while up in a tree or on a wall, adds that they must desist from work while they read. The Gemara challenges this from Beit Hillel's statement, that among other activities/body postures allowable during K'riat Sh'ma "engaged in their work while reading" is explicitly mentioned. The Gemara resolves this by assigning the "desist" statement to the first Parasha and Beit Hillel's statement to the second (and, presumably, third) Parasha. In other words, while reading the first Parasha, we must refrain from work; whereas the rest of K'riat Sh'ma may be read while working.

RIF'S EXPLANATION

The Rif explains that the need for desisting from work during the reading of the first Parasha is not due to the requirement of Kavvana, rather in order that the reading should not be considered "'Arai". He quotes the Gemara in Yoma (19b) "VeDibarta Bam" (Speak them [these words]) - make them "Keva" and do not make them "'Arai".

As to why we would distinguish between the first and second Parashiot regarding "Keva", Ramban (Milhamot Hashem, ga) cites the Yerushalmi: (Berakhot 2:1):

"R. Ahai said in the name of R. Yehuda: If he had Kavvanat haLev in the first Parasha, even if he didn't have Kavvanat haLev in the second Parasha, Yatza. What is the difference between the first and second Parashiot? R. Hanina said: Everything which is written in this one is written in the other one. Perhaps he should only read one of them? R. Ila said: The first one is for the individual and the second one is for the community; the first one is for study and the second one is for action. Bar Kappara said: You only need Kavvana for the first three verses. We similarly learned: 'You shall teach'; (which is at the beginning of the fourth verse) - until this point requires Kavvana, from here on is teaching."

TOSAFOT'S EXPLANATION

Tosafot (Berakhot 16a, s.v. Ha) approaches the "Parasha-split" differently; they maintain that this division is only valid for those who hold that the entire first Parasha requires Kavvanat haLev; since we rule like R. Me'ir, that only the first verse requires Kavvanat haLev, it follows that only the first verse requires abstention from work. In other words, Tosafot equates the requirement of abstention from work with that of Kavvanat haLev.

In summary, it is possible that there is only one type of Kavvana associated with K'riat Sh'ma - it includes paying attention to the words and, in order to accomplish that, other activities are not to be engaged in at that time. (Tosafot). It is alternatively possible that there are two different types of "focus" operating in the world of K'riat Sh'ma - paying attention to the words ("Kavvanat haLev") and "Keva". Keva may be a requirement which theoretically operates through the entire K'riat Sh'ma, however, since the second Parasha may either be considered a "repetition", a "community-oriented" or an "action-oriented" Parasha, this requirement is not maintained after the first Parasha.

III.

KAVVANA OR KEVA'?

It is possible to divide the five opinions (mentioned in the Gemara) into two groups:

- (a) Those who hold that the first, first & second or first three verses require Kavvana; and
- (b) Those who hold that the first or first & second Parashiot require Kavvana.

The first group seem to hold that Kavvana is needed due to the significance of the text. Either the declaration of God's Unity (first verse) or, in addition, the affirmation of our love for God (the second verse) or, added on to that, the demand that these words be "on our heart" (third verse) must be said with Kavvanat haLev. It may be that they disagree about the key word "Ha'eleh" (These [words]) - is it referring to the topic sentence, everything up until that point (the first two) or does it include that verse (#3)?

If the second group requires Kavvanat haLev (as Tosafot implies), it may be for one of two reasons:

- (1) In order to fulfill a minimal Kiyyum of Talmud Torah every day and night, at least one section

(Parasha) from the Torah must be read - and that, with Kavvana. The core of Talmud Torah is reading with comprehension, attention and depth. The dispute may be about the "amount" of minimal Talmud Torah - 1 or two Parashiot.

(2) These Parashiot are self-defined by "Al Levav'kh/Al L'vav'khem" ("on your hearts"...which appears in both Parashiot) - and reading these sections without them being "on your hearts" is tantamount to not reading them at all.

It may be (following Rif's approach) that the second group does not require Kavvanat haLev, rather they require a "Keva"-type reading. If so, they would agree that Kavvanat haLev is limited to the first verse (or 2 or 3), but that the first Parasha (or first and second) need to be read in a fashion of total involvement.

In addition to all of these considerations, there is one more feature which is unique to the first verse - Kabbalat Ol Malkhut Shamayim (acceptance of God's rule). The Yerushalmi (Berakhot 2:1) states: "

"R. Huna...said in the name of Shmuel: One must accept Ol Malkhut Shamayim standing up. Does this mean that if he was sitting, he must stand? No - if he was walking, he must stand."

In sum, we have three considerations regarding "intent/focus" in K'riat Sh'ma:

(a) Kabbalat Ol Malkhut Shamayim (standing still) - certainly only the first verse.

(b) Kavvanat haLev (paying attention to the words) - either the first few verses (1,2 or 3) - or, possibly, the first one or two Parashiot.

(c) Keva' (not being involved in anything else) - The first one or two Parashiot.

now, to the questions:

Q1: Why does he need to stand still for the first verse?

A: The first verse (and Barukh Shem... - see Q2) is not only part of the "reading" of K'riat Sh'ma, it is also the expression of Kabbalat 'Ol Malkhut Shamayim. Such an affirmation of servitude and allegiance to God requires an appropriate body stance, one which reflects that relationship.

Q2: Does this rule apply [equally] to "Barukh Shem..."?

A: From the Poskim it appears that the rule applies equally to Barukh Shem... The Arukh haShulhan (OC 61:6) maintains that although if someone totally skips Barukh Shem..., he doesn't need to "go back" and reread K'riat Sh'ma, nevertheless, if he does read it without paying attention to the meaning of the words, he has to go back and reread it. The Mishnah Berurah (OC 63:11) also rules (based on the Magen Avraham and Levush) that Barukh Shem... must be said with Kavvana and, if not, must be repeated properly.

Q3: Why do we allow someone to go back to sleep as long as he has read the first verse?

A: The Gemara (Berakhot 13b) states:

"R. Ila...said in the name of Rav: 'If he said "Sh'ma Yisra'eL...Echad" and was overtaken by sleep, Yatza.' " Some Rishonim (see below) interpret this literally - that the first verse alone may comprise a minimalistic kiyyum of the Mitzva. Others maintain that this Gemara means that if someone said the first verse with proper attention and said the rest "half-asleep", Yatza.

According to those Rishonim who maintain that the first verse alone is the entire Torahic obligation, we only disturb someone else to complete that level of the Mitzva (R'ah). Alternatively, we insist upon their completing the full K'riat Sh'ma, but only that they be fully awake for the first verse. (Ritba) In that case, the meaning of the Gemara is not that they can go back to sleep, but that they can return to a "half-awake" state to read the rest. Rabbenu Yonah, who holds that the whole two Parashiot are "D'orayta" (obligated by the Torah), interprets the Gemara the same way - the whole thing must be read, but we only fully rouse the sleeper for full concentration when reading the first verse.

Rambam's position seems internally inconsistent; he holds that all three Parashiot are "D'orayta", yet interprets the Gemara in the simpler way - that we really let the sleeper return to his slumber after reading the first verse. We might posit that since he has accepted Malkhut Shamayim and fulfilled a minimal level of Talmud Torah, we don't disturb him further. Some interpret the Rambam in the same way as they interpret the Gemara - that he read the rest of K'riat Sh'ma but without full focus. (See Kessef Mishneh).

Q4: Why the difference between walking/standing (first verse only) and working/desisting (entire first Parasha)?

A: The "Kavvana" required during the first verse is of two types: Meaning and Approach. Along with paying attention to the meaning of the words while we are saying them - which is called "Kavvanat haLev" - we must also accept God's rule ("Kabbalat 'Ol Malkhut Shamayim") with a sense of seriousness and propriety. This requires standing still (as opposed to walking) and certainly avoiding involvement in other activities. All of those other involvements (walking, working) place "Kabbalat 'Ol Malkhut Shamayim" in a back-seat relative to that activity.

The first Parasha, on the other hand, is the essential "Kiyyum" of Talmud Torah. Ideally, Talmud Torah should have a character of "Keva" - not "Arai". As Kira Sirote, one of our Haverim suggested: "It's a frame of mind. Keva' might be translated as 'vocation' and 'Arai as 'avocation'. Qeva is what you ARE and Arai is what you DO." Involvement with work stands in direct conflict with the ideally "Keva" nature of reading; since the first Parasha comprises the basic (and very minimalistic) Talmud Torah of the day/night, that much must be read without other-involvement. On the other hand, walking is not a directed activity away from reading; the only conflict inherent in walking is Kabbalat 'Ol Malkhut Shamayim - but that has already been accomplished with the first verse.

Q5: What is the meaning of *Arai*?

A: See Kira's definition at Q4 above; see also an extended discussion in our archives at Talmud Torah, 3:7.

Q6: If he was standing atop a tree or wall, does he need to come down for the first verse or the whole first Parasha?

A: No. He may read up there (which is not the rule for Tefilla), since the amount of time/text during which total concentraion (intent, approach and meaning) is required is relatively minimal.

- **Q7:** Why does Rambam add the B'rakhot to what may be said atop the tree or wall?

A: Lechem Mishneh suggests that Rambam is "commenting" on the Gemara (Berakhot 16a) which rules that workers (who are working for pay, not for food) have an abbreviated Birkat HaMazon (blessings after the meal) and make no B'rakha before the meal. The conventional understanding is that because the B'rakha before the meal is Rabbinically mandated, the Rabbis exempted the workers from reciting it. I might have thought that the same would hold true for the B'rakhot before and after K'riat Sh'ma, which are also Rabbinically mandated. Therefore, Rambam (true to his approach - see our posting at K'riat Sh'ma 1:4) rules that Birkot K'riat Sh'ma are also recited by workers.

Q8: Which details of this Halakha apply exclusively to artisans - and which hold for everyone?

A: Although most Rishonim maintain that this rule is universal, Rabbenu Manoach (Sefer haMenucha) holds that this "leniency" only applies to artisans - on two accounts: since they are accustomed to working up there, the height doesn't frighten them as much -so they can maintain a minimal level of concentration. In addition, the reason for the leniency is to allow the worker to continue their work without interruption; that reasoning does not hold for anyone else. (The last reason is the one offered by Rabbenu Manoach). The Gra (in Sh'not Eliyyahu) supports this opinion - but, again, the vast majority of Rishonim suggest no difference between artisans and anyone else here.

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