

DOUBLE BLESSING

by Rabbi Daniel Travis

The first blessing on the Torah is, "Who commanded us on words of Torah" (Shulchan Aruch 47,5). Why don't we mention studying Torah learning in the blessing? By saying a more general wording we also thank Hashem for the opportunity to perform His mitzvos (Abudraham).

The custom amongst Ashkenazim is to say "to involve ourselves in the words of Torah". According to this understanding since we make a separate blessing before doing each mitzva, there is no need to mention performing mitzvos in the blessing for Torah learning (Beis Yosef). We focus specifically on the mitzva to learn Torah, and to completely involve ourselves in it.

After the first blessing we say another blessing, "v'haerev nah" ("please make the Torah sweet"), asking Hashem to insure that our Torah learning is enjoyable. Most halachic authorities say that the blessing begins with word "and" for it is a continuation of the first one. Since it is a single blessing, someone who hears the first one should not answer amen until after the completion of them both (Mishna Berura 47,12).

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