

THE PIRCHEI SHOSHANIM ROADMAP TO PRAYER PROJECT

# **The Roadmap to Prayer**

## **Lesson 13**

---

© Pirchei Shoshanim 2005

This shiur may not be reproduced in any form without permission of the copyright holder

**Rehov Kahanamin 54, Bnei Brac 03.616.6340**  
**164 Village Path, Lakewood NJ 08701 732.370.3344 fax 1.877.Pirchei (732.367.8168)**

Lesson  
**13**

## Yotzeir Ohr U'vorei Choshech – The Creator of Light and of Darkness

Before the Shema Reading (*Krias She'ma*), we first recite the blessing of *Yotzeir Ohr etc.* This blessing gives praise to G-d, the Creator of both Light and of Darkness.

*Chazal* (our Sages of blessed memory) teach us that it is necessary to praise G-d for both Light and Darkness, both in the daytime as well as in the nighttime. We enjoy the benefit of light even at night when we kindle a light to illuminate the darkness to see what we are doing. Likewise, even in the daytime we sometimes find it necessary to withdraw to a dark room to take a break from our daytime activities. There is benefit in darkness to define time and help us schedule events etc. Nighttime forces us to take time to replenish our ebbing strength with sleep and relaxation. In fact, if we contemplate everything that G-d created in the world, we will find some form of good even in what seems to us to be mostly bad.

Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch ז"ל writes that this blessing in a sense is very noteworthy as it refutes the age-old philosophy that the G-d of Light is separate from the G-d of Darkness; for from “good” no “evil” comes forth. Therefore, this blessing is tremendously significant in stating our belief in the One and Only Creator, creator of both Light and Darkness. This is a very strong reason in having this as a prefatory blessing to the proclamation of the Shema Reading (*Krias She'ma*). We proclaim that, *Hashem* our G-d (in Hebrew – *Elokeinu*) is the One and Only G-d. *Hashem* connotes the attribute of Mercy while *Elokeinu* (our G-d) connotes strict judgment which both emanate from the One and Only G-d.

## The Good Good and the Good Bad

We may indeed say that “G-d created everything and far be it from Him to create something bad.” Indeed G-d is “all” good and “all” benevolent. Everything G-d created is ultimately for the good. All that G-d does is for the good (*Kol mah de’avid Rachmana, letav avid*). We oftentimes look at the suffering and destruction that goes on in our world and wonder, “How can G-d allow all this to happen?” In fact, this is an age-old question that the Gemora<sup>2</sup> relates that *Moshe Rabbeinu* (Moses our teacher) asked *Hashem*:

“Why do the righteous experience bad fortune while evil people experience good fortune?”

The Gemora answers:

The fundamental principle is that in truth the bad fortune that is experienced by good people is ultimately for their good while the good fortune of the wicked ultimately proves to be their misfortune. G-d is just in all His ways and justice is always served even though we do not perceive it with our limited minds.

## The Ben Ish Chai<sup>3</sup>

Another reason for mentioning both the attribute of Day as well as the attribute of Night both in the morning and in the evening is given by the **Ben Ish Chai**. He says that since the world is round, it is always day and night at the same time. When it is day on one side of the world, it is night on the other side of the world. **Rav Chaim Volizhener zt”l** writes that because of this, there will constantly be people learning Torah around the clock which gives merit for the world to continue its existence without interruption.

יוצר אור ובורא חשך עושה שלום ובורא את הכל

*Who forms Light and creates Darkness, He makes peace and creates everything.*

G-d has shown us in creation of the world how He can take two opposites and harmoniously join them together in “peace”. This feat is unequalled by man for whenever there is conflict, a barrier must be erected before attempting to find a

---

<sup>1</sup> Berachos Daf 60b

<sup>2</sup> Berachos Daf 7a

<sup>3</sup> Parshas Shemos (*Shana Rishona*)

harmonious use of the two opposites. For example, fire and water are natural opposites which cannot combine together. Either the water will extinguish the fire, or the fire will overpower the water and make it evaporate. The only way we can benefit from them peacefully together is by first separating them from each other as we do when we cook water in a pot. The pot makes peace between them and then they even complement each other. The Gemora in Berachos<sup>4</sup> says that if one dreams about a pot, it means he will enjoy peace.

G-d created all opposing forces together peacefully without the need for any extraneous matter. He then proceeded to place them separately in their proper positions in Creation. Hence, *He makes peace and creates everything*<sup>5</sup>.

## **U'vorei Choshech – Creator of Darkness**

### **Darkness: A lack of Light, or a Creation in itself?**

There is a common understanding that darkness is just the lack of light, and nothing else. In the text of this blessing we ascribe the verb “create” to Darkness. Apparently, darkness is not just that there is no Light; rather it is a substance by itself. We say at night by Ma'ariv, *He moves Light from before darkness and Darkness from before light*. The idea is that both Light and Darkness exist as separate entities, which is how they co-existed at the time of their creation on the first day. Only that G-d saw fit to separate them and have them serve separately as we recite, *He moves Light from before darkness and etc.* G-d created an entity called Darkness; just that He made it in a way that by nature, even when Darkness reigns, a candle can still push away some of that darkness and illuminate the night.

From an ethical perspective, we can explain the *bracha* as follows. The *Mesilas Yesharim* explains that darkness has two attributes. One kind of Darkness is where a person can hardly see where he's going. Another kind of Darkness is where one perceives things to exist which don't. One can either plainly not see a post in the dark or one can mistake it for a person. The darkness of the mind is not always just the lack of information. It can be that a force of evil and deception affects one's ability to assess a situation accurately. A Jew's charge in this world is to make the right choices between the good and the evil through clarity of Torah and conviction and trust in G-d. Ultimately, a time will come when G-d will reveal Himself to all and everyone will see how the Good and the Bad, the Light

---

<sup>4</sup> *Daf* 56b

<sup>5</sup> Based on the commentary *Maggid Tzedek*

and the Darkness were all part of G-d's master plan in Creation. They will see then how each of them contributed to one central goal of accomplishing what is best for mankind. Thus, *Yotz'ei Ohr* makes us focus upon the different opportunities and challenges that we face in our world and to the extent that we can utilize them to help us advance in our *Avodas Hashem* (Service of G-d).

**Intimation רמז**

א \* ל (קל) ברוך גדול דעה הכין ... תמיד מספרים כבוד א \* ל  
(קל)

*G-d Who is blessed, Who possesses Supreme Great Knowledge, Prepared ...  
Constantly They speak of G-d's glory*

א-ל (קל) ברוך גדול דעה הכין...

**Keil B'aruch G'edole D'ei'ah H'ieichin etc.**

This portion of prayer follows the order of the Hebrew alphabet. Its author, Rabbi Eliezer *Hakalir*<sup>6</sup> experienced a spiritual encounter with the Heavenly angels and inquired from them how they sing praise to G-d. The angel *Micho'el* told him that they use verses according to the Hebrew *Alef bet* (alphabet). He then proceeded to compose the prayer of *Keil Baruch gedole dei'ah heichin etc.* and at its end we have the words *T<sup>12</sup>amid mesaprim kevode Keil. Mesaprim K<sup>13</sup>evode (E)K<sup>14</sup>eiL* spells *Micho'el* - מיכאל, the angel that taught him to compose such praise.

<sup>6</sup> In Hebrew there is the letter *Alef* but it is pronounced with the letter *Kuf* when one is not reciting the prayer, so not to say *Hashem's Name* in vain.

<sup>7</sup> The letter *Beis*

<sup>8</sup> The letter *Gimmel*

<sup>9</sup> The letter *Daled*

<sup>10</sup> The letter *Hey*

<sup>11</sup> According to Tosefos in Chagiga 13a and the Rosh in Berachos 5:21 he was the Tanna Rebbe Eliezer ben Rebbe Shimon bar Yochai

<sup>12</sup> The last letter, *Tav*

<sup>13</sup> This represents the letter *CHuf*

<sup>14</sup> See footnote 2 above

טוב יצר כבוד לשמו מאורות נתן סביבות עוזו

*He created Good<sup>15</sup>, Glory to His Name, He placed luminaries surrounding His Might<sup>16</sup>*

**The purpose of the sun is to give light to the world but it is also to give spiritual light for Tzaddikim (The Righteous) in the World to Come. Just like the sun's true spiritual quality is put away for the World to Come, so too G-d's true glory is not visible to all in this world, but in the World to Come. This experience is actually embodied by the Holy Torah which consists of combinations of G-d's Holy Names. This is hinted by the words of this prayer. Tov Yotzar<sup>17</sup>, Kavode Lishmo<sup>18</sup> Me'oros nossan sevivos uzo<sup>19</sup>.**

Accordingly, one can attain this spiritual light through Torah study.

In the stanza of **Keil Adone** of the Shabbos prayers (davening<sup>20</sup>) we say *Pe'er ve'chavode nosnim lishmo פאר וכבוד נותנין לשמו* (splendor and honor they give to His Name). This refers to the testimony that the sun bears to G-d's omnipotence and supremacy. This point is brought out by a story of a heretic who challenged *Rabbon Gamliel*.

The Heretic said:

“You say that wherever there is a *minyan* (quorum of ten) of Jews that join together in prayer, G-d's *Divine Presence* graces them. If so, how many *Divine Presences* can there be at one time?”

*Rabbon Gamliel* answered him:

If the sun which is just one of the many thousands of ten thousands of servants of G-d enters everyone's home, even into the homes of heretics; how much more so can be said for the *Divine Presence* itself?”<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> Alternatively, “The Beneficent One created” (Artscroll Siddur)

<sup>16</sup> The following commentary is taken from the Siddur Sha'ar Harachamim with commentary of Maggid Tzedek

<sup>17</sup> He created good (*Kavode* alludes to the Torah.)

<sup>18</sup> Glory to His Name (*Lishmo* alludes to the combination of G-d's many Holy Names)

<sup>19</sup> He placed luminaries surrounding His Might. (*Uzo* (Might) refers to the Holy Torah)

<sup>20</sup> It is part of the *Birchos Krias She'ma*

<sup>21</sup> Sanhedrin 39a

### **The Sun teaches the Caesar a Lesson**

A Roman Caesar asked *Rebbe Yehoshua* the son of Chanania to arrange an audience for him with G-d. He answered that it's impossible to fulfill his request. The Caesar insisted. *Rebbe Yehoshua* decided to take him outside one bright summer day. He then told him to stare up to the sun to see G-d. The Caesar obviously couldn't stare at the bright shining sun. So *Rebbe Yehoshua* told him to draw a lesson from this that if he couldn't even stare at the sun directly, how does he expect to see G-d Himself?

### **Another lesson from the Sun**

Furthermore, the sun is a single type of force yet it has the unique ability to cause many opposite effects on the world it shines on. Some things melt and drip with moisture while others wither and dry out. Some things are bleached white by the rays of the sun while others are blackened. It all depends on the nature of the recipients of the sun's rays. So too this teaches us that the "all-powerful G-d" and the "all-merciful G-d" and the "G-d that sits in strict judgment" are all one and the same. It just depends on the recipient.

### **Yet another lesson from the Sun**

One more lesson we can derive from the sun is how it shines on the world every single day. Even when the sun appears to be blocked out by thick clouds, the Gemora<sup>22</sup> relates that the sun shines through even more on cloudy days than on sunny days.

This follows the commentary of the *Akeidah* who explains the Gemora (Baba Basra 16b) that says that *Avraham Avinu* (Abraham our forefather) used to wear a special healing stone around his neck. When he passed away, G-d took it and hung it on the sun. He explains that this gem was *Avraham Avinu's* ability to cure the spiritually sick who were taught by *Avraham Avinu* that there is a G-d Who created and controls the world. After his passing G-d hung this "stone" on the sun, i.e. from the way the sun functions we can learn many lessons as to how G-d is the **One** and **Only** that is an omnipotent and all-powerful G-d.

Thus we see we can learn much from the sun about G-d's true glory. How appropriate it is to say טוב יצר כבוד לשמו מאורות נתן סביבות עוזו.

---

<sup>22</sup> *Yoma Daf* 28b

## Permissible Interruptions during She'ma

The Mechaber<sup>23</sup> writes:

**In order to respond to Kaddish, Kedusha or Borchu, one may make an interruption even in the middle of a verse. One may do likewise to say Modim de'rabbanan but one may not say more than the word "Modim", alone<sup>24</sup>.**

The Rama adds:

*Similarly, when responding to Borchu, one may not say, "yisborach ve'yishtabach etc." There are authorities who say that responding, 7) "Amen", (4) after the blessing Hakeil Hakadosh and after the blessing Shome'ah Tefilla has the same ruling as responding to Kedusha and one may therefore respond "Amen" to these blessings during Krias She'ma. This is the prevailing opinion. One should certainly make an interruption for all these purposes when one is saying tachanunim<sup>25</sup>.*

### Permissible Interruptions

Magen Avraham

The **Magen Avraham**<sup>26</sup> writes that since one is allowed to interrupt *Krias She'ma* for the honor of a mortal, surely one is allowed to interrupt *lich'vod Shamayim* (for the sake of *Hashem's* honor)<sup>27</sup>. Therefore, one is permitted to interrupt *Krias She'ma* to say the blessing over thunder or lightning<sup>28</sup> (as well as to any other event that requires a *bracha* immediately).

---

<sup>23</sup> *Simon* 66: 3

<sup>24</sup> The commentaries explain that one should say *Modim anachnu lach* (the Mechaber just means to exclude the rest of *Modim de'rabbanan*).

<sup>25</sup> Mishna Berura ס"ק 22 that this refers to *Elokaye netzor*

<sup>26</sup> ס"ק 5

<sup>27</sup> The Mechaber 66: 1 that between the intervals of *Krias She'ma* one may interrupt to greet someone that he is required to honor. He may reply to a greeting to any person. (Note: Nowadays we do not interrupt *Krias She'ma* for this reason since people in general are aware that we do not speak during davening)

<sup>28</sup> Aruch Hashulchan 66: 6

Levushei Serad  
Bechor Shor

The **Levushei Serad** in his glosses to Shulchan Aruch<sup>29</sup> cites that the **Bechor Shor** to Berachos<sup>30</sup> argues on this comparison. He writes that there is a great difference between responding to a greeting during *Krias She'ma* and reciting a blessing (*bracha*) for thunder during the Shema Reading (*Krias She'ma*). When one needs to greet someone in the middle of *Krias She'ma*, it is because, not doing so will be an affront to that person who is being ignored. However, when one is involved in the *mitzvah* of reading the Shema (*Krias She'ma*) one doesn't need to respond to the thunder by making a blessing (*bracha*) since his involvement in a different commandment (*mitzvah*) isn't any better than his present involvement in the commandment (*mitzvah*) of reading the Shema (*Krias She'ma*). Therefore, it's quite possible that responding to the thunder is not allowed during the Shema Reading (*Krias She'ma*).

Nodah Be'Yehudah

The **Nodah Be'Yehudah**<sup>31</sup> says that even the **Magen Avraham** who allows one to interrupt *Krias She'ma* to recite a *bracha* over thunder, would not necessarily allow an interruption for *Kiddush Levana* (blessing for the new moon) during *Krias She'ma* or *Mikrah Megillah* (reading the Megillah) since there is another difference between the two. By the blessing (*bracha*) over thunder, the commandment (*mitzvah*) must be performed immediately. The blessings (*bracha*) for this thunder is either now or never. That which he can make a blessing (*bracha*) for another peal of thunder even during the same storm, doesn't make up for the one that was missed. Although the present blessing (*bracha*) now will cover the rest of the thunders for the remainder of the same storm, however, the blessing (*bracha*) for the first thunder is lost. Therefore, he may even interrupt the Shema Reading (*Krias She'ma*) to recite the blessing (*bracha*) for thunder. This however, has no bearing on interrupting to say *Kiddush Levana* in the middle of reciting *Krias She'ma*, since he still has the entire night to recite *Kiddush Levana*. Thus, one may interrupt his *Krias She'ma* only for a passing *mitzvah*, and not for one which can still be fulfilled later.

The **Mishna Berura**<sup>32</sup> mentions both the opinion of the **Bechor Shor** as well as the opinion of the **Nodah Be'Yehudah**. He then concludes that one may say

---

<sup>29</sup> 66: 3

<sup>30</sup> *Daf* 13a

<sup>31</sup> Volume 1:41 R' Yechezkel Ben Yehudah Landau - **Born:** Opataw, Poland, 1713. **Died:** Prague, Czechoslovakia, 1793. **Notes:** A scion of distinguished scholars he was a descendent of Rashi. A saintly man, he spurned the comforts of life and is said never to have slept in a bed until growing quite old.

<sup>32</sup> 66:19

the *bracha* for thunder only *bein haperakim* (intervals between the sections) the way the **Chayei Adam** *paskens* (rules)<sup>33</sup>. The Chayei Adam adds that this only applies to a *bracha* which is necessary immediately, like thunder, but not for the *bracha* of *Asher Yotzer* (*which is said after relieving oneself in a washroom*) which is similar to the example of *Kiddush Levana*.

The **Magen Avraham** lists the following permissible interruptions:

☞ For *Modim* one says the words *Modim anachnu lach* (We thank You).

The *Mishna Berura*<sup>34</sup> writes that although the **Mechaber** says to say just the word *Modim*, it includes the three words *Modim anachnu lach*. The Mechaber only means to exclude the rest of *Modim*, which is lengthy. This applies even between the sections (*bein haperakim*) since it is similar to the prayer (*tefilla*) of *Yisborach ve'yishtabach* by *Borchu* which the **Rama** says not to say.

☞ For *Borchu* one says *Baruch Hashem hamevorach le'olam va'ed*. (Blessed is Hashem the Blessed One, forever and ever).

☞ One who hears *Borchu* being recited before a Torah reading (*Krias HaTorah*) may respond *Baruch Hashem hamevorach le'olam va'ed* and also *Amen* at the end of the *bracha*<sup>35</sup> of *Asher bochar bonu etc.* Other Legal authorities (*Poskim*) don't allow responding here; therefore the *Mishna Berura* only allows it at the intervals between the sections (*bein haperakim*) but not in the middle of the section (*be'emtz'a haperak*).

☞ For the prayer of *Kedusha* one only says *Kadosh, Kadosh, and Kadosh* and *Baruch kevode Hashem mimkomo* (Blessed is the majesty of Hashem from his place). The **Machatzis Hashekel** explains that these two verses are from the *Nevi'im* (prophets) *Yeshaya*<sup>36</sup> who heard the angels (*Malachim*) reciting *Kadosh, Kadosh, Kadosh etc.* and *Yechezkeel*<sup>37</sup> who heard them saying *Baruch Kevode Hashem Mimkomo*. He mentions that in the book (*sefer*) called *Hagabos Yesh Nochalin* it says that one answers the last stanza of *Yimloch* as

---

<sup>33</sup> Klal 20: 4

<sup>34</sup> *Mishna Berura* s"t 20

<sup>35</sup> According to *Mishna Berura* S"t 18, not like the *Levushai Serad* who interprets this to mean the *AMEN* one responds after hearing *Baruch Hashem hamevorach le'olam va'ed* from the one who received the *aliya*.

<sup>36</sup> 6: 3

<sup>37</sup> 3:12

well. The Aruch Hashulchan notes that there is no clear ruling on this matter. However the *Mishna Berura*<sup>38</sup> concludes not to say *Yimloch* even at the intervals between the sections (*bein haperakim*) of *Krias She'ma* and its *brochos*.

☞ On *Shabbos* and *Yom Tov* there are other additions to *Kedusha* that may not be said either. The **Aruch Hashulchan** notes that one should say the verse *She'ma Yisrael* by the *Mussaf She'moneh Esrei* along with the congregation (*tzibbur*). However, according to the **Beis Yosef** who was strict not to interrupt between *Baruch She'omar* and *Yishtabach* not to say *She'ma Yisrael* with the congregation here too he should not respond. However, the **Mishna Berura**<sup>39</sup> writes that **one should definitely not say** the first stanza of *Kedusha* that begins *Nekadeish* (Let us sanctify) or any of the additions to *Kedusha* of *Shabbos* or *Yom Tov*. Apparently this includes the stanza starting with the verse *She'ma Yisrael* **not like the ruling** of the **Aruch Hashulchan**.

☞ For *Amen Yehei Shemei Rabba* one says it until *Yisborach*. The **Magen Avraham** suggests that this includes the word *Yisborach* as well, since the *Beis Yosef* strongly opposes interrupting between *Olmaya*<sup>40</sup> and *Yisborach*. However the **Biur HaGra** says not to say the word *Yisborach* and the *Mishna Berura*<sup>41</sup> follows his opinion, which is also the conclusion of the **Chayei Adam**.

☞ For *Amen* of *Hakeil Hakadosh* or for *Sho'meah Tefila* of *She'moneh Esrei* one is allowed to interrupt and answer *Amen*<sup>42</sup>.

The reason is because they conclude the first set of three *brochos* and the middle set of *brochos* respectively. However, for the last three *brochos* we do not have to answer *Amen*, because one may answer *Amen* to his own *bracha* when he will say it if he wishes. The **Levush** contends since our custom is not to answer *Amen* to our own *brochos* at the end of *She'moneh Esrei*, we should interrupt to answer *Amen* to this one as well. The **Lechem Chamudos** argues that one doesn't interrupt

Levush

Lechem Chamudos

<sup>38</sup> S"K 17

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> This is the last word of *AMEN yehey shemey rabba* before *yisborach*

<sup>41</sup> S"K 17

<sup>42</sup> *Yerushalmi* 4: 6

*She'ma* for this *Amen* since he will anyway end his own *She'moneh Esrei* with *Osseh shalom bimromav ... ve'imru Amen*.

The **Magen Avraham** concludes not to answer *Amen* to this *bracha* since anyway the **Beis Yosef** is strict and doesn't even allow *Amen* to *Hakeil Hakadosh* or for *Shome'ah Tefila*, how can we then allow an interruption to *Sim Shalom* - the final *bracha* of *She'moneh Esrei*.

### **Interruptions during Tachanunim - Elokaye Netzor**

The **Rama** who allows interrupting for these particular *Amen*s when saying the *tachanunim* (supplications) is referring to<sup>43</sup> the *tachanunim* of *Elokaye Netzor* (My G-d, guard my tongue) at the end of *She'moneh Esrei* where the laws of interrupting are strict.

The *Mishna Berura* writes that with regard to answering to any *Amen* during the *bein haparakim* (between the section) of *Krias She'ma* there is a dispute (*machlokes*) whether one is allowed to or not. Some say<sup>44</sup> one may only answer to the *Amen* of the *bracha* itself<sup>45</sup>, whether he hears it from the *shaliach tzibbur* or anyone else. Others<sup>46</sup> say one may answer to any *Amen* as well.

### **The Shulchan Aruch Horav**

- ☞ One may answer *Amen Yebei Shemei Rabba* until and including the word *Yisborach*.
  
- ☞ When responding to *Kedusha* some hold one shouldn't say the last stanza of *Yimloch*. Others hold that he should, and the law (*Halacha*) is like the first opinion. In his *Siddur*, the *Ba'al HaTanya*<sup>47</sup> rules like the opinion that holds that he should also say the last stanza of *Yimloch*.

---

<sup>43</sup> *Mishna Berura* 63:22

<sup>44</sup> *Chayei Adam* Klal 20: 4

<sup>45</sup> As well as the other specific examples given earlier by the *Mechaber* and the *Rama*

<sup>46</sup> *Pri Megadim* and *Rebbe Akiva Eiger*

<sup>47</sup> R' Shneur Zalman of Liadi – Gaon Rabbeinu Zalman/ Graz -Born: Liazna, Russia, 1745. **Died:** Kursk, Russia, 1813. Founder of Chabad, also known as the Alter Rebbe of Lubavitch and as the Ba'al HaTanya. Author among other works of **Shulchan Aruch HaRav**, a major code of law following the framework of the *Shulchan Aruch* and incorporating later authorities, of **Tanya**, a major treatise of Kabbalah and Chassidic philosophy.

- ☞ One may say the blessing (*bracha*) for thunder during the *birchos Krias She'ma*. He doesn't differentiate whether he's *bein haperakim* between the sections or in the middle of the section (*be'emtza haperak*).
- ☞ During the *bein haperakim* (between the sections) one may only answer *Amen* to *Hakeil Hakadosh* and *Shome'ah Tefilla* as well as to that *bracha* which he has just finished saying.

## Zechiras Yetzias Mitzrayim

זכירת יציאת מצרים

### The Mitzvah: Remember your Departure from the Land of Egypt

Aside from the Torah Commandment of the Shema Reading (*mitzvah de'oraissa* of *Krias She'ma*), there's another Torah Commandment (*mitzvah de'oraissa*) involved when reciting the third section (*parsha*) of the *She'ma* (*Krias She'ma*) and the section of True and Firm (*Emmes ve'yatziv*) which follows the 3 sections of the *She'ma*. That is the commandment of remembering your departure from the land of Egypt (*mitzvah* of *Zechiras Yetzias Mitzrayim*).

The Gemora in Berachos<sup>48</sup> brings the following *Drasha* (dissertation) on the verse (*pasuk*) *Lema'an tizkor es yome tzeischa me'eretz Mitzrayim kol yemei chayecha* (In order that you remember the day of your departure from the land of Egypt all the days of your life):

**Ben Zoma** says – *yemei chayecha* refers to the days, *kol yemei chayecha* includes the nights

The **Sages (Chachamim)** say – *yemei chayecha* refers to the days, *kol yemei chayecha* includes the days of the Era of *Mashi'ach*

We mention in the *Haggadah* on Passover (*Pesach*) that when **Ben Zoma** explained this dissertation, the Law (*Halacha*) was accepted by all, and the custom of mentioning *Zechiras Yetzias Mitzrayim* at night, began.

---

<sup>48</sup> Daf 12b

The commentaries have different opinions how to interpret this Law (*Halacha*). Some say that the commandment is from the Torah (*mitzvah* is *de'oraissa*), both during the day and at night. Others interpret this dissertation (*drasha*) as an *asmachta* (point of reference where the Torah hints to a Law of Rabbinic origination - *Halacha de'rabbanan*). Both by day and by night the commandment (*mitzvah*) of *Zechiras Yetzias Mitzrayim* is *de'rabbanan*. Yet another interpretation is that by day the commandment is a Torah one (*mitzvah de'oraissa*) and by night it is of Rabbinic origination (*mitzvah de'rabbanan*).

- ☞ If one is sure that he said the final section (*parsha*) of *Krias She'ma*, then the *bracha* of *Emmes ve'yatziv* is no longer a Torah commandment (*mitzvah de'oraissa*) since the obligation is fulfilled with the verse **“I am Hashem your G-d Who took you out of Egypt”** (*Ani Hashem Elokeichem asher hotzeisi esschem me'eret Mitzrayim*).
- ☞ The **Pri Megadim** questions whether one can fulfill the *mitzvah* of *Zechiras Yetzias Mitzrayim* by thinking it in one's mind. Perhaps since the Torah only uses the language **“remember”** (*zechirah*) it can mean thinking it in one's mind<sup>49</sup>. On the other hand, by the commandment to erase the memory of Amalek (*mitzvah* of *zechiras mechiyas Amalek*) we learn that it is not sufficient to think it in one's mind, since it says **“Do not forget”** (*Lo tishkach*). Perhaps we should learn the law for the *mitzvah* of *Zechiras Yetzias Mitzrayim* from the *mitzvah* of *Zechiras Mechiyas Amalek*.

However, the *Sha'agas Aryeh* concludes that one cannot exempt and fulfill (*be yotzei*) the *mitzvah* of *Zechiras Yetzias Mitzrayim* by merely thinking about it<sup>50</sup>.

- ☞ The *Pri Megadim's* opinion is that the *mitzvah* of *Zechiras Yetzias Mitzrayim* by night is likely not a Torah commandment (*mitzvah de'oraissa*). However, the **Sha'agas Aryeh**<sup>51</sup> proves that it is a Torah commandment (*mitzvah de'oraissa*).
- ☞ If one is not sure whether one said the last section (*parsha*) of *She'ma* and *Emmes ve'yatziv*, one must repeat that section (*parsha*) along with the *bracha*

---

<sup>49</sup> However, the *mitzvah* of the night of the *Sefer* of *Pesach* is based in the *pasuk* *Ve'higadeta le'vinch* (and you shall tell your son) which obviously requires speaking

<sup>50</sup> If one is *yotzei* (fulfills) the *mitzvah* by thinking it, it shouldn't require a *bracha* since we do not make a *bracha* for a *mitzvah* one is *yotzei belev* (lit. in the heart, i.e. the mind)

<sup>51</sup> R' Aryeh Leib Ginzburg. Born: Weisum, Russia, b. 1695. Died: Metz, France, 1785. Talmudist. Teacher of R' Chaim Volozhin.

of *Emmes ve'yatziv*. Other *poskim*<sup>52</sup> hold that one should just repeat the last section (*parsha*) of *She'ma*.

☞ If one is not sure if he concentrated by the verse (*pasuk*) *Ani Hashem Elokeichem Asher hotzeisi esschem me'ereetz Mitzrayim* (I am Hashem your G-d who has taken you out from the land of Egypt) ..., one should repeat the verse (*pasuk*) itself but not the blessing (*bracha*).

The **Mishna Berura**<sup>53</sup> comments, that during the fourth hour, the *bracha* of *Emmes ve'yatziv* would still be recited when reciting the last *parsha* of *She'ma*, since the *mitzvah* of *Zechiras Yetzias Mitzrayim* is independent of the *mitzvah* of *Krias She'ma*. Therefore, he will still have to say *Emmes ve'yatziv*, which is the blessing (*bracha*) that accompanies the *mitzvah* of *Zechiras Yetzias Mitzrayim*. After the fourth hour, one should just recite any verse (*pasuk*) or Jewish Law (*Halacha*) pertaining to the departure from Egypt (*Yetzias Mitzrayim*), and he no longer can recite the blessing (*bracha*) of *Emmes ve'yatziv* beyond the proper time for davening (*zman tefila*).

The **Magen Avraham's** opinion is that one can fulfill the *mitzvah de'oraissa* of *Zechiras Yetzias Mitzrayim* with the mention of the *Shiras hayam* (the song that the Jews sang when crossing the Red Sea) in the *bracha* of *Emmes ve'yatziv*. The **Chasam Sofer** disagrees with this *psak* (ruling). He argues that the *mitzvah* is to mention “the day” that *Hashem* took us out of *Mitzrayim*, as the verse (*pasuk*) states “... *es yome tzeischa me'ereetz Mitzrayim*” (... the day that you left the land of Egypt). This is not fulfilled with the song of the Sea (*Shiras Hayam*) which took place seven days after leaving Egypt *Mitzrayim*.

---

<sup>52</sup> *Sha'agas Aryeh*

<sup>53</sup> S"K 3

## Questions:

1. What belief do we express in the *bracha* of *Yotzeir Ohr*?
2. Does G-d do bad things to good people?
3. What does the shape of the world have to do with the *bracha* of *Yotzeir Ohr*? Why is this significant?
4. What idea is demonstrated by cooking a pot in water that relates to the *bracha* of *Yotzeir Ohr*?
5. What lesson do we learn from the sun regarding a *Minyan*?
6. What is the **Magen Avraham**'s basis for allowing certain interruptions such as for the *bracha* on a passing thunder?
7. What is the argument of the **Bechor Shor** on the **Magen Avraham**'s line of reasoning?
8. What is the point of the **Nodah Be'Yehudah** with regard to the *mitzvah* of *Kiddush Levana*?
9. What may one say when one hears the *Chazzan* reciting *Modim* during the Shema Reading and its *brochos*? Why not any more than that?
10. What parts of *Kedusha* may one say during Shema Reading and its *brochos*?
11. On Shabbos by *Mussaf*, is one allowed to interrupt to recite the verse *She'ma Yisrael*, according to the Mechaber? According to the Rama?
12. What other *mitzvah* is associated with the Shema Reading and when does it apply?

## Answers:

1. When we recite the *bracha* of *Yotz'ei Ohr*, we express the belief that G-d controls all events that transpire whether they appear to be good or they appear to be bad.
2. Yes, but the good people most likely did something that will cause him to suffer. However, ultimately the bad is for a person's good.
3. The Ben Ish Chai notes that the fact that the world is round means that when it is nighttime on one side it is daytime on the other. This makes the probability of having people studying Torah round the clock much more likely. As Rav Chaim Volozhiner explained, the world's existence depends on people learning at all times.
4. The concept of making *Hashem* making peace between two opposites. Fire and water are opposites, yet the pot in between buffers them so that we can benefit from their combination.
5. Hashem rests His Divine Presence in a *Minyan* and His Divine graces the many *Minyanim* all at once much like the sun's rays that enter multiple households all at once.
6. The **Magen Avraham** reasons that if one may interrupt to greet a mortal, surely one may interrupt for a *mitzvah*.
7. The **Bechor Shor** argues that perhaps one may only interrupt to greet someone since otherwise he is insulting him. However, one who is involved in the *Mitzvah* of davening does not have to concern himself at the moment with another *mitzvah*.
8. A blessing for this thunder is a *mitzvah* that will pass and not be fulfilled by reciting it later on another one. However, *Kiddush Levana* can be fulfilled later as well, therefore he has no urgency in interrupting for that *mitzvah* now.
9. The words *Modim anachnu lach*. More than that is too lengthy of an interruption and is not permitted<sup>54</sup>.
10. The verses *Kadosh, Kadosh, and Kadosh* and *Baruch kevode Hashem mimkomo*.
11. According to the Mechaber, one may not interrupt for that, since he does not allow even while reciting *Pesukei De'zimra*. According to the Rama, one may interrupt for this verse according to the Aruch Hashulchan. However, the Mishna Berura does not.
12. The *Mitzvah* of remembering our departure from the land of Egypt (*mitzvah* of *Zechiras Yetzias Mitzrayim*). The *Mitzvah* is once in the daytime and again in the nighttime.

---

<sup>54</sup> Similar to the *Yisborach* prayer that used to be recited by *Borchu*.