

Third Meeting – The Blessings over the Torah

ברוך אתה ה', אלוהינו מלך העולם, אשר קדשנו במצוותיו וצונו על דבריו תורה:
והעבָּרָה נָא ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֶת דְּבָרֵי תּוֹרַתְךָ בְּפִינוּ וּבְפִיּוֹתְךָ עַמְךָ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל. וְגַהְיָה אַנְחָנוּ וְאַצְאָנוּ
וְאַצְאָאָנוּ צָאָצָאָנוּ כָּלָנוּ יְדָעָ שְׁמָךְ וּלְוָדֵי תּוֹרַתְךָ לְשָׁמָה. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', הַמְלָמָד תּוֹרַתְךָ לְעַמְךָ
יִשְׂרָאֵל:

ברוך אתה ה', אלוהינו מלך העולם, אשר בחר בנו מכל העמים וננתן לנו את תורתו. ברוך אתה
ה', נתן הַתּוֹרָה:
וַיֹּאמֶר.

במדבר פרק ו, פסוקים כב – כז.
וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה לְאמֹר:
דְּבָרָ אֶל אַהֲרֹן וְאֶל בְּנֵי לְאמֹר כִּי תִבְרְכֵו אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל. אָמָר לְהָם:
בָּרָכָה ה' וַיַּשְׁמַרְךָ:
בָּאָר ה' פָּנָיו אֲלֵיכָ וַיַּחֲנָה:
שָׁא ה' פָּנָיו אֲלֵיכָ וַיַּשְׁמַע לְךָ שָׁלוֹם:
וַשְּׁמַע אֶת שְׁמֵי עַל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאַנְתָּא אָבָרְכָם:

אלו דברים.

משנה פאה, א, א. אלו דברים שאין להם שעור. הפה והבכורים והראין אומילות בסדדים
וتعلמוד תורה:
גמר שבת קכז. אלו דברים שאדם יוכל פורטיהם בעולם זהה ובקהן קיימת לו לעולם הבא.
אליהם. כבוד אב ואם. אומילות בסדדים. והשכמת בית המקדש. שחרית וערבית. והקנסת
אורהים. ובכור חולמים. והקנסת כליה. ולעית המה. ועין תפילה. והבאת שלום בין אדם לחברו
ובין איש לאשתו. וتعلמוד תורה בוגד כלם:

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has made us holy through
His commandments, and has commanded us to engage in study of the words of
Torah.

Wa Please, Lord our God, make the words of Your Torah sweet in our mouths and in
the mouths of Your people, the house of Israel, so that we, our descendants and
their descendants and the descendants of Your people, the house of Israel, may all

know Your name and study Your Torah for its own sake. Blessed are You, Lord, who teaches Torah to His people Israel.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has chosen us from all the peoples and given us His Torah. Blessed are You, Lord. Giver of the Torah.

Vaydaber

Numbers 6:22-27

The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Speak to Aaron and his sons, and tell them, You shall bless the Israelites like this; say to them: May the Lord bless you and protect you. May the Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you. May the Lord turn His face toward you and grant you peace. And so they shall place My name over the Israelites, and I will bless them.

Elo devarim

Mishnah Pe'ea A,a

These are the things for which there is no fixed measure: the corner of the field, first-fruits, appearances before the Lord (on festivals, with offerings) acts of kindness and the study of Torah.

Talmud Bavli Shabbat p. 127.

These are the things whose fruits we eat in this world but whose full reward awaits us in the World to Come: honoring parents; acts of kindness; arriving early at the house of study morning and evening; pitying to strangers; visiting the sick; helping the needy; brides attending to the dead; devotion in prayer; and bringing Peace between neighbors, and between husband and wife but the study of Torah is equal to them all.

Excerpts below from the (soon to be published) commentary on the Siddur by Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz:

Before a person begins his day and turns to his various occupations, and even before he prays, it is correct and proper for him to start with the study of Torah. By reciting the two passages that follow immediately after the blessings over the Torah: "And He spoke"; and "These are the things," one fulfills in practice the basic halakhic obligation of Torah study. In other words, all people who say these sections, even those who are unable to study any more Torah during the rest of the day, manage to learn at least something at the beginning of the day and thereby fulfill the minimum requirement of the mitzva. The "blessings over the Torah" are recited in preparation for this short Torah study and also for one's learning of Torah throughout the rest of the day, because just as the blessing before eating permits a person to eat, one is not allowed to utter words of the Torah before reciting the blessings over the Torah.

"To engage in the words of the Torah"

The first blessing refers to the commandment to study Torah. The Torah creates a bond between man and the Holy One, blessed be He; when a person speaks about matters of the Torah he is in effect speaking to God. Nevertheless, it may happen that one's involvement with Torah can become merely like any other occupation, and even worse, it can cause one to be distracted from his attachment to God. The blessings over the Torah are designed to counteract this possibility – to direct and remind the person that the Torah that he is studying is the Torah of God.

"Please make the words of Your Torah sweet"

This is a request regarding the manner in which the Torah will be bequeathed to us and from us to our children. Not only did the Holy One, blessed be He, give us the Torah – in accordance with the conclusion of the blessing: "who teaches Torah to His people Israel" – but He also made it taste sweet in our mouths. Here we address Him as a teacher, that He will teach us in a pleasant and agreeable way, and in addition, that we will uphold the Torah so that our descendants after us will also be privileged to be Torah scholars.

"Who has chosen us"

A blessing of thanksgiving for God's love for us, due to which He chose us from all the nations and gave us this great and special gift, the Torah. The concluding formula of the blessing: "Giver of the Torah," in the present tense, emphasizes that the giving of the Torah was not a one-off event that happened in the distant past; rather, the Holy One, blessed be He, gives the Torah at all times. The Sages have said that the voice of God never ceased from Mount Sinai, and may still be heard today, even if we do not merit to hear it.