

# עמוד השבועי AMUD WEEKLY

## BERACHOT 2A

When you get up from the sefer, look for something you have learned that you can live by (Igeret Ramban)

WEEK 1 - JAN 12-18, 2020



### SUMMARY

- The Mishnah discusses the beginning time (nightfall, when the stars come out) and the ending time (the first “watch”; or midnight (hasot); or dawn (amud hashahar) for keriat shema of the evening. It goes on to discuss other cases in which the time for a mitzvah is the entire night, but the Rabbis decreed that it be performed before hasot --- to keep a person far from sin (see Mussar).
- The Gemara cites the Biblical source for the beginning time cited in the Mishnah and explains why the Mishnah discusses the laws of the evening keriat shema first, before the laws of the morning keriat shema (see 9b).
- The Gemara goes on to explain that, besides teaching when Shema is recited, the Mishnah uses this opportunity to teach another law “along the way” (אגב אורחיה), i.e. that Kohanim become permitted to eat terumah the night after their immersion from tumah; they need not wait for the morning, when they bring their offering for purification (see Tos. ליתני ד).



### INSPIRATION

Why does Masechet Berachot begin with a discussion regarding the mitzvah of keriat shema in the evening? What is its connection to Berachot?

R' Tzadok explains: The very first mitzvah a bar mitzvah boy performs is the recitation of keriat shema in the evening. This indicates that his entire service to HaKadosh Baruch Hu, starting now, and for the rest of his life, is founded upon the concept of accepting Hashem as the Creator and Ruler of the world. This is also the concept behind reciting Berachot before eating or performing a mitzvah. Keriat shema helps a person focus on Hashem and performing His will in a general way; whereas the recitation of Berachot helps a person focus on Hashem each and every time that one performs some act in this world.

The fact that the first mitzvah comes at night also teaches that although in the beginning one may feel that one's service to Hashem seems dark and difficult, ultimately it will become easier and as bright as the day (צדקת הצדיק ד).



### HALACHOT

- Preferably (לכתחילה), all Tannaim of our Mishnah agree that one should recite the evening Shema immediately when the stars come out (set hako'avim).
- If one did not recite Shema then, Shulhan Aruch rules (O.C. 235:3) the preferred time is until hasot (midnight; like the view of the Sages).
- If one did not recite Shema before hasot, he may still fulfill the mitzvah (בדיעבד) until dawn.
- Once dawn has arrived, however, one may recite the evening Shema only if his delay was caused by an unavoidable mishap (אינס; for example, he was sick). If he was negligent (פושע), he can no longer fulfill the mitzvah for that night.
- Once the sun rises the time for reading the evening Shema is over for everyone (ibid. 4).



### STORY

#### “Begin With Berachot.”

Reb Moshe Feinstein זצ"ל was once approached by educators who suggested teaching Berachot to children starting Gemara, instead of Bava Metzia. They claimed that the concepts of Bava Metzia might be too difficult for such young boys to grasp. Reb Moshe answered that they should not change their minhag. He explained that the most important concept that a child must learn is that each person has his own possessions, and what belongs to one person cannot be taken by another. This is the message that is taught in Bava Metzia, and most of Seder Nezikin.

Interestingly, the Gemara in Bava Kama teaches (30a) that one who wishes to become pious should learn Nezikin, or Avot, or Berachot. All three subjects actually teach the lesson mentioned above. Nezikin teaches that each person has his own possessions (as mentioned above); Berachot teaches that everything in this world belongs to Hashem, until a blessing is made; and Avot teaches how to internalize these ideas and live our lives accordingly.

### ⚖️ MUSSAR

#### “Respecting the Rabbis.”

The Rabbis decreed that one should recite Shema before hasot, even though the mitzvah applies the entire night, in order to distance a person from sin. The Gemara explains (4b) that the Rabbis were concerned one might eat his evening meal, lie down to rest, and sleep through the night, missing the mitzvah completely. The Gemara there concludes: וכל העובר על דברי חכמים חייב מיתה, and whoever transgresses the words of the Rabbis deserves death.

Rabbenu Yonah gives various reasons for the severity of transgressing the words of the Rabbis. The first reason he gives is that one who does so lacks an appreciation of the Rabbis' authority, and thinks that he can overrule them with his own ideas. He is thus like a Zaken Mamre (a dissenting Judge, who illegally overrules the court's decision), whose punishment is by death. Likewise, anyone who transgresses the words of the Rabbis is deserving of death (Shaare Teshuvah 3:4,5).

See Mussar to 4b for Rabbenu Yonah's other explanations of the severity of transgressing the words of the Rabbis.

# BERACHOT 2A

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## “TAKE AWAY” MESSAGE

There is a mitzvah to recite the keriat shema once in the morning and once at night. By reminding ourselves of Hashem’s presence and ruler-ship of the world in the morning, everything we do during the day will be guided by that thought and realization. Likewise, by reminding ourselves of Hashem’s presence and ruler-ship in the evening, our night activities, and even our sleep, will be performed for the sake of Heaven (Hinuch 420).

## PESUKIM

דברים ו, ז - וְשִׁנְגַתֶם לְבִנְיָד וְדַבַּרְתֶּם בָּם בְּשִׁבְתְּכֶם בְּבֵיתְכֶם וּבְלִקְחֶתֶם בְּדַרְגָּהּ וּבְשֹׁכְבְּכֶם וּבְקוּמְכֶם:

*And you shall teach [the words of Shema] to your children and recite them when you sit in your house, when you walk on the way, when you lie down, and when you arise.*

The Gemara derives from here that you recite Shema “when you lie down” at night and “when you rise” in the morning.

בראשית א, ה - הַיְהִי עֶרְבַּי וְהָיָה בֹקֶר יוֹם אֶחָד:

*And Hashem called the light “day,” and the dark He called “night;” and there was evening and there was morning, one day.*

The Gemara learns from here that evening comes before morning; the Mishnah therefore teaches the laws of the evening Shema before those of the morning.



## RABBI'S

### RABBAN GAMLIEL

There are actually three Rabban Gamliels quoted throughout Shas. The first, (a) known as Rabban Gamliel HaZaken (the elderly), who lived before the destruction of the Second Temple; his grandson, (b) Rabban Gamliel of Yavneh (cited in our Mishnah), who lived at the time of the destruction, and who was the grandfather of Rabbenu HaKadosh (Rebbi); and (c) Rabban Gamliel the son of Rabbenu HaKadosh.

Rabban Gamliel of Yavneh, who is mentioned in our Mishnah, was thirty years old at the time of the destruction of the Temple. Ten years after the destruction, when R' Yohanan ben Zakai died, Rabban Gamliel took over the Nesiut and led the Bet Din in Yavneh. This lasted about thirty years, until he died at the age of seventy. (See the intriguing story of his death in Bava Metzia 59b.)

Rabban Gamliel was humble and extremely sensitive of other people’s feelings (Yevamot 121a; Sanhedrin 104b). At the same time, he was also a strong leader and, when necessary, asserted his authority (Bava Metzia ibid.; Rosh Hashanah 25a). He was fabulously rich, and extremely fastidious (Succah 41b; Berachot ch. 2 Mishnah 6).

During his relatively long life, he married three times (see Berachot ch. 2, Mishnahs 5 and 8; and Yevamot 15a). He had two sons (mentioned in our Mishnah) and two daughters (Yevamot 15a; Bereshit Rabbah 26:4).

One of his younger colleagues was the Tanna R' Akiva, among others such as R' Eliezer (also mentioned in our Mishnah), and R' Tarfon. Not long after he died, his son, Rabban Shimon, took over the Nesiut (Toldot HaTannaim VehAmoraim p. 310-318).



## COMMON WORDS

תנא היכא קאי - *Where did the Tanna stand...*

The Gemara asks for a frame of reference within which the Tanna taught the law of the Mishnah; why did the Tanna choose to teach this halachah here?

אי בעית אימא (ואב"א) - *And if you wish (alternatively), say...*

This phrase introduces another answer to a question that was asked. Typically, when the first answer had a difficulty, which calls for another possible explanation the Gemara brings an אב"א. (So too the second answer is often not sufficient on its own.)

ככדי - *Now [let us see]...*

This word introduces a clarification of the Mishnah or Baraita, which ultimately leads to a question.



## REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What is the latest time for Shema according to the Hachamim?
2. If the latest time for Shema is really amud hashahar why did the Rabbis say to say Shema by midnight?
3. What is the source in the Torah for the mitzvah of keriat shema?
4. What are the two reason why the Mishnah begins with the nighttime obligation of Shema instead of the morning obligation?
5. What time do the Kohanim enter to eat their terumah?
6. Why did the Mishnah not state explicitly the start time for Shema?
7. What is the time I might have thought that Kohanim eat their terumah?
8. What is the underlying logic for the end-time of Shema in the evening?