



Shiur from Maran HaRishon LeTzion HaGaon Rabbi David Yosef shlita, Motzaei Shabbat – Simchat Torah 5785, Shiur #370

English

Parashat Bereshit

Mentioning Tal and Matar

Topics of the Shiur:

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Words of the Introducing Rabbi, HaGaon Rabbi Yaakov Tangi shlita, Rosh Kollel of Birkat Avraham – Bayit VeGan, Yerushalayim:

"...With the permission of Maran, the Rishon LeTzion shlita: We mentioned that we are approaching the *hilula* (anniversary of passing) of Maran zt"l. It is truly difficult to fathom how a person could, on the one hand, invest himself so deeply in others—simple folk—telling them stories of the weekly *parashah* like a schoolteacher, while on the other hand accomplishing what human intellect can scarcely grasp.

We cited the straightforward words of the *Panim Yafot*: "If the Rav is like an angel of the Lord of Hosts, they should seek Torah from his mouth; and if not, they should not seek it." What is an angel? The *Panim Yafot* explains that an angel is considered 'standing' (*omed*); an angel does not advance for himself, as he has his assigned mission, unlike a human being, as the verse says, 'And I will give you pathways among those who stand here.' A person who halts his own personal advancement to invest in others—from him you should seek Torah, not from someone who thinks solely of his own progress." Therefore, the *Chatam Sofer* explains that regarding Avraham Avinu, who gave up his own ascent and assumed the status of 'standing'—"And Avraham was still standing" (*Bereshit* 18:22)—he merited the revelation of, "Shall I conceal from Avraham what I am doing?" (*ibid.* 18:17). He lost nothing; *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* bestowed everything upon him. I say that this is the explanation behind that great giant, Maran a"h. When he invested in others, *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* bestowed upon him a wealth of wisdom beyond human comprehension. *Baruch Hashem*, we have merited that Maran the Rishon LeTzion shlita exemplifies, "The strength of the son surpasses the strength of the father"—drawing from that very power of the father, continuing in the exact same path. To tell the truth, when Maran shlita was elected to serve as Rishon LeTzion, the feeling I and many others had—I am certain thousands of *avrechim* felt this way—was: perhaps now we will lose another volume or two of *Halachah Berurah*? After all, I personally know several *kollelim* that structure their daily study around *Halachah Berurah*, building their entire curriculum upon the books the Rav publishes. There was a concern: now that Maran shlita will engage in communal affairs with the people in the fields, will we, G-d forbid, lose out? Yet we witnessed a wonder: *Baruch Hashem*, volume after volume of *Halachah Berurah* continues to be published! Likewise, the *Bet Midrash "Yechaveh Daat"* continues to expand with more *avrechim* and more branches, and the network of evening *kollelim* "Birkat Avraham" has grown to an unbelievable extent! This very week, *b'ezrat Hashem*, we have the "Metivta d'Rabbenu Ovadia," a full week where thousands of *avrechim* sit and delve into the Torah of Maran zt"l, all under the leadership of Maran the Rishon LeTzion shlita. These endeavors continue

to flourish. In his bureau as well, questions arrive from every corner of the globe—community rabbis, *roshei kollel*, and simple laymen, all seeking to know the true word of Hashem in *halachah*: "And David was successful in all his ways, and Hashem was with him"—which teaches that the *halachah* follows his opinion.

I mentioned that I am currently within the *sheloshim* (thirty-day mourning period) for my father a"h, who was deeply attached to Maran shlita. Three weeks before he passed away, when he was told that Maran might come to visit him, he was extremely weak from medications and drifting in and out of sleep. Every few moments he would wake up in a panic: "Was Maran Rav David here?!" He was startled, worried he might have missed him! He loved Maran shlita so dearly; he felt that this is the very path Maran a"h instilled—to continue that same strength, to care for the people in the fields, and not remain solely within our own circle. We offer a simple blessing that *b'ezrat Hashem*, "May You add days onto the days of the king," and that his radiance and honor never depart from us, until the coming of the righteous redeemer, speedily and in our days, *amen ken yehi ratzon*."

Shiur of Maran HaRishon LeTzion shlita:

Yashar koach to my dear friend, HaGaon Rabbi Yaakov Tangi shlita, son of my beloved friend, HaGaon Rabbi Meir Shalom ben Rachel Tangi, may the spirit of Hashem grant him rest in *Gan Eden*, who passed away several weeks ago. He was a great admirer and loyal friend of my father, Maran zt"l, as well as a close friend of mine—we were neighbors and friends for many years. To our deep sorrow, he departed from us after enduring bitter and difficult suffering over many years.

Yet *Baruch Hashem*, he merited to leave behind a wonderful family—sons who are all *talmidei chachamim*, continuing in the path of Torah and fear of Heaven. His son, HaGaon Rabbi Yaakov, is among our most distinguished scholars. We pray that his soul be bound in the bond of life, and that Rabbi Yaakov and the entire family be comforted from Heaven and know no further sorrow, *amen*.

Metivta d'Rabbenu Ovadia

In about ten days, the *yahrzeit* of my father and teacher, the crown of our head, Maran Rabbenu Ovadia Yosef ben Gorgia zt"l, will occur. We wish to perpetuate his memory. However, we are not looking for ceremonial memorials; we want to do something substantive and genuine, which is the greatest possible elevation for his soul.

It is written regarding Chizkiyahu HaMelech (*Divrei HaYamim II* 32:33): "And they accorded him honor at his death." *Chazal* taught (*Bava Kamma* 16b): "This teaches that they established a yeshiva near his grave." Where in the verse does it say that they established a yeshiva near his grave? The verse simply states that they accorded him honor! Rather, it was self-evident to *Chazal* that when according honor to a person at his death, there is no greater honor than establishing a yeshiva near his grave. Naturally, as *Tosafot* (s.v. *Shehoshevu*) explain, this does not mean directly on top of the grave, but rather nearby.

When we engage in the Torah of my father and teacher, Maran Rabbenu Ovadia Yosef zt"l, we perpetuate his name and continue his path. We accord him immense honor in his passing, which fulfills the concept of establishing a yeshiva near his

grave. Throughout his entire life, he studied with extraordinary diligence and left behind an enormous library of works in *halachah*, *aggadata*, and on the *Shas*. When we sit and toil in his Torah, we cause the lips of the righteous to speak in the grave (*sefatav dovevot bakever*).

Accordingly, we decided that we do not want mere ceremonies or social gatherings; we want people to learn his Torah. I have been blessed that my dear sons—Rabbi Ovadia, Rabbi Avichai, and Rabbi Elchanan—have together established the grand enterprise of “Metivta d’Rabbenu Ovadia.”

We have before us a week that is ostensibly *ben hazmanim* (intersession). The yeshivot and *kollelim* resume their regular studies only in a week’s time. Yet we all know that there is no pause in Torah study; there is no exempt period when a person can say, “It is *ben hazmanim*, so I do not need to learn.” Therefore, *Baruch Hashem*, we organized study days dedicated to the Torah of my father, Maran zt”l, across numerous locations throughout the country and worldwide, calling it “Metivta d’Rabbenu Ovadia.” This year, over 1,000 *avrechim* and *bachurim* will immerse themselves in his Torah during this week. During this week, everyone will study a single topic from the Torah of my father, Maran zt”l. The topic chosen this year is one that is widely discussed: releasing terrorists in exchange for hostages—is it permitted according to *halachah*? In recent years, we have seen various public opinions regarding whether releases should take place. Yet one must realize that already in 5736 (1976), my father, Maran zt”l, convened the *gedolei hador* to deliberate on this matter. Present at that historic meeting were Maran HaGaon Rabbi Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, HaGaon Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, HaGaon Rabbi Betzalel Zolty (Chief Rabbi of Yerushalayim), HaGaon Rabbi Eliezer Goldschmidt, HaGaon Rabbi Shaul Yisraeli, and HaGaon Rabbi Ben Tzion Abba Shaul zt”l. They sat together for hours analyzing the precise *halachah* governing this dilemma.

In matters like these, we do not look at public sentiment or casual opinions, nor at individuals who happen to find an isolated rabbinic passage, think they have made a novel discovery, and proceed to issue rulings. This is an exceptionally intricate halachic topic. It contains several core principles that have direct ramifications on many other areas of *halachah*. For instance, the question of a living person donating a kidney to save another, the broader issue of placing oneself in possible danger (*safek sakanah*) to rescue a fellow Jew from certain danger (*vadai sakanah*)—which is an extensive, weighty halachic topic—as well as the principle of “one does not redeem captives for more than their value” (*ein podin et hashevuyim yoter al kedei dmeihen*), balancing uncertain mortal danger against certain mortal danger. Many formidable questions arise in this realm.

At that time in 5736, my father, Maran zt”l, authored a comprehensive halachic responsum on this topic, published in *Yabia Omer*, vol. 10 (C.M. *Siman* 6). For this study week, we organized an initiative across the country providing generous stipends to all *avrechim* and *bachurim* who dedicate themselves to Maran’s Torah. My father loved yeshiva students and *avrechim* intensely; throughout his life, he did everything possible to support them and ensure their livelihood. Thus, for the elevation of his soul, we ensure they receive a proper stipend while delving into his Torah. To facilitate high-level study, we produced a booklet offering a comprehensive curriculum: an overview of all the halachic questions involved, citations from the *Gemara*, the *Rambam*, the *Rishonim*, and the *poskim*, followed by the full responsum of my father. We will distribute this booklet everywhere, enabling over 1,000 *avrechim* to pair up in *chavrutot* and study his Torah.

I express my gratitude to my dear sons and to all the dedicated *avrechim* who joined in this great mitzvah, gathering and organizing this extensive material so it can be thoroughly studied for several hours each day throughout the week. When I look at those 1,000 *avrechim*, I consider them the true “continuers of Maran’s path.” People often search for impressive titles, but any *avrech* who sits and engages in my father’s Torah according to his methodology of study is truly a “continuer of Maran’s path.” I believe there is no greater endeavor for the elevation of his soul. Ceremonies and gatherings are fine, but “you have surpassed them all”—delving into his Torah. With Hashem’s help, may we act and succeed.

Arranging the Praise of Hashem First

Today we began reciting “*Mashiv HaRu’ach U’Morid HaGesheim*.” In the past, we delivered many detailed shiurim on these halachot, but I wish to highlight several essential points that every person must know.

When we examine the *Shemoneh Esrei*, the first three blessings are blessings of praise to *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*. *Chazal* state (*Avodah Zarah* 7b): “A person should always arrange the praise of Hashem first, and then pray.” We first praise, laud, and exalt Hashem, and only afterward do we present our requests.

Immediately following are the middle blessings, from “*Atah Chonen*” through “*She-ma Kolenu*,” which concludes with the blessing of “*Shome’a Tefillah*.” All of these middle blessings are personal and communal requests that we present before *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*. The very first blessing of requests is “*Atah Chonen L’Adam Da’at*”—praying for intellect. If a person lacks intellect, of what value is he in this world? What is true *da’at*? It is Torah—knowing Hashem and studying His holy Torah; this is the meaning of “graciously bestow upon us from Your wisdom, understanding, and knowledge.” We begin with this, and subsequently ask for all our per-

sonal and communal needs.

Therefore, from a halachic perspective, there is a fundamental difference between “*Mashiv HaRu’ach U’Morid HaGesheim*” and “*Veten Tal U’Matar Livrachah*,” which we recite in the blessing of “*Barech Alenu*.” When we say “*Mashiv HaRu’ach U’Morid HaGesheim*,” we are not actually petitioning for rain to fall; we are merely praising *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* for the gift of rain. The actual request for rain occurs in the blessing of the years, “*Barech Alenu*,” where we say “*Veten Tal U’Matar Livrachah*,” which constitutes an explicit petition for rainfall.

Rain on the Festival is a Sign of a Curse

The natural season for rainfall begins when the festival of Sukkot arrives. However, during Sukkot itself, there is a dispute among the Tannaim (*Ta’anit* 2a) as to whether we begin reciting “*Mashiv HaRu’ach U’Morid HaGesheim*.” The *halachah* is established that we do not begin until the conclusion of the festival. The *Gemara* explains that rainfall during the festival of Sukkot is considered a sign of a curse (*siman kelalah*). Since *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* commanded us to dwell in the sukkah, rain forces us to leave it. *Chazal* provide a parable: a servant comes to pour a cup of water for his master, and the master takes the pitcher and splashes it in the servant’s face. Similarly, when *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* brings us out to the sukkah and pours rain upon us from the heavens, it indicates that He does not desire our performance of the mitzvah. This is an unfavorable sign, which is why *Chazal* state that rain on the festival is a sign of a curse.

There is an opinion in the Mishnah that one should mention “*Mashiv HaRu’ach U’Morid HaGesheim*” during Sukkot as well, reasoning that we are merely praising Hashem for the season rather than requesting rain, which is delayed until the 7th of MarCheshvan. The prevailing opinion, however, maintains that even offering praise for rain when its presence is a sign of a curse is inappropriate. Just as we do not say “*Mashiv HaRu’ach U’Morid HaGesheim*” in the summer because summer rain is a curse, the same logic applies during Sukkot.

All Festivals Passing with Dew

The *Talmud Yerushalmi* states that there is significance in having all the festivals pass with the mention of dew (*tal*). Dew brings life to the world and is essential; the *Gemara* (*Ta’anit* 3a) states that without dew, the world could not exist. Because dew is so vital, we begin reciting “*Morid HaTal*” on the first day of Pesach. Consequently, Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkot—the three pilgrimage festivals—are all observed while reciting “*Morid HaTal*.” We cease reciting it during Musaf of Shemini Atzeret. In this manner, all the festivals pass accompanied by the mention of dew.

The Sages Did Not Obligate Mentioning Dew and Wind

The *Gemara* (*Berachot* 26b) states that if one failed to say “*Mashiv HaRu’ach U’Morid HaGesheim*,” he must repeat the prayer. However, the *Rishonim* cite the *Talmud Yerushalmi* that this requirement to repeat applies only if he also failed to mention dew; if he mentioned dew, he is not required to repeat the prayer, because the world can sustain itself, albeit with difficulty, through dew alone.

Today, in most communities worldwide—among Sepharadim and the majority of Ashkenazim—it is customary to recite “*Morid HaTal*” during the summer months. Yet the *Gemara* explains that this is not an absolute obligation: “Regarding dew and winds, the Sages did not obligate mentioning them, but if one wishes to mention them, he may do so” (*Ta’anit* 3a). That is, in the blessing of “*Atah Gibor*,” the Sages did not make mentioning “*Morid HaTal*” or “*Mashiv HaRu’ach*” obligatory. Since the world cannot survive without wind and dew, they exist continuously by divine decree and do not depend on our daily prayers.

Here we see the profound impact of our prayers upon rainfall. During the winter, we are obligated to mention rain—both as praise in “*Atah Gibor*” and as a request in “*Barech Alenu*.” Rainfall is vital to the world, and its descent depends directly on our prayers. In contrast, wind and dew do not depend on our prayers, which is why the Sages did not mandate their mention.

Forgetting to Say Mashiv HaRu’ach U’Morid HaGesheim

When a person is accustomed to saying “*Morid HaTal*,” and Shemini Atzeret arrives when the congregation begins reciting “*Mashiv HaRu’ach U’Morid HaGesheim*,” if he errs out of habit, he does not repeat the prayer. It takes time to adjust; as the *Yerushalmi* states (cited in *Tosafot*, *Ta’anit* 3b, s.v. *Bimot*), it takes thirty days for a person’s tongue to become accustomed to a new liturgical phrase. Therefore, if he failed to say “*Mashiv HaRu’ach U’Morid HaGesheim*,” he certainly recited “*Morid Ha-Tal*” by habit, and thus he is not required to repeat the prayer.

The language of the *Bet Yosef* (O.C. 114) implies that even if he remembered before concluding the blessing, he does not need to return. However, the *Pri Megadim* (M.Z. 114:8) notes from the phrasing of the *Shulchan Aruch* (114:3)—“he is not made to repeat”—that this applies once he has already concluded the blessing; if he has not yet concluded it, he must rectify it. Therefore, if a person mistakenly said “*Morid HaTal*” and has not yet concluded the blessing, he should say “*Mashiv HaRu’ach U’Morid HaGesheim*” without returning to the beginning of “*Atah Gibor*.” He simply inserts the words “*Mashiv HaRu’ach U’Morid HaGesheim*” before conclud-

ing the blessing, prior to reciting “*Vene’eman Atah Lehachayot Metim*,” since that concluding phrase must immediately precede the final signature (*chatimah*) of the blessing.

Concluded the Blessing and Forgot Mashiv HaRu’ach

If a person forgot and already recited the words “*Baruch Atah Hashem*,” can he fix it? There are two fundamental disputes among the *Rishonim* regarding an error at the conclusion of a blessing. The first appears in the *Chiddushei HaRitva* (*Ta’anit* 3b), who cites a dispute among the *Rishonim* regarding one who said “*Baruch Atah Hashem*” and then remembered that he omitted an obligatory phrase. Some poskim hold that he should immediately say “*Lamedeni chukecha*,” completing the verse in *Tehillim* (119:12): “*Baruch Atah Hashem lamedeni chukecha*.” In doing so, he has not recited a blessing in vain (*berachah levatalah*), but merely recited a verse, creating only an interruption (*hefsek*) within the blessing, which is far less severe than a blessing in vain. He may then return and insert the omitted phrase. For example, if he forgot *Ya’aleh Ve’Yavo* and caught himself after saying “*Baruch Atah Hashem*,” he can complete the verse and return to rectify his omission.

Conversely, the *Ritva* cites the *Rabboteinu HaTzarfatim* that the remedy of saying “*Lamedeni chukecha*” applies exclusively to omissions that invalidate the prayer (*davar shemehazrin oto*). In such a case, since he would have to repeat the prayer anyway, he says “*Lamedeni chukecha*” and returns. But for an omission that does not invalidate the prayer, he is not permitted to say “*Lamedeni chukecha*”; rather, he must conclude the blessing normally and proceed.

The practical halachic ruling accepted by many *Acharonim* follows the second opinion: it depends on whether the omission is something that invalidates the prayer. Wherever the omission requires repeating the prayer, one should say “*Lamedeni chukecha*” and correct the mistake.

Ya’aleh Ve’Yavo on Rosh Chodesh and Chol HaMoed

For example: We must recite *Ya’aleh Ve’Yavo* in all prayers of Chol HaMoed; if one forgets it, the prayer is invalid and he must repeat it. Similarly, in the Shacharit and Minchah prayers of Rosh Chodesh, omitting *Ya’aleh Ve’Yavo* invalidates the prayer and requires repetition. On the night of Rosh Chodesh (*Arvit*), however, omitting *Ya’aleh Ve’Yavo* does not invalidate the prayer, because the *Bet Din* did not sanctify the new month at night (*Berachot* 30b).

Based on this principle, if one forgot *Ya’aleh Ve’Yavo* and said “*Baruch Atah Hashem*” in the *Arvit* of Rosh Chodesh, he does not return. Rather, he concludes “*HaMachazir Shechinato Le’Tzion*” and continues his prayer, because omitting *Ya’aleh Ve’Yavo* on the night of Rosh Chodesh does not invalidate the prayer. Consequently, the remedy of reciting “*Lamedeni chukecha*” does not apply on the night of Rosh Chodesh. In contrast, during the Shacharit or Minchah of Rosh Chodesh, as well as in all prayers of Chol HaMoed, if he forgot *Ya’aleh Ve’Yavo* and said “*Baruch Attah Hashem*,” he should immediately say “*Lamedeni chukecha*,” return to “*Retzei*,” and insert *Ya’aleh Ve’Yavo*.

Inserting Me’ein HaMe’ora Between Blessings

There is an additional dispute among the *Rishonim*: If one forgot to mention the special occasion (*me’ein hame’ora*) and finished the blessing, but has not yet begun the subsequent blessing—standing between two blessings—does the fact that he has not begun the next blessing mean he is still considered part of the previous blessing, or does concluding the blessing prevent any correction? There are three opinions:

1. One can always rectify the omission after concluding the blessing, provided he has not begun the next blessing.
2. He can no longer rectify the omission at that point.
3. The ruling depends on whether the omission is something that invalidates the prayer. If it invalidates the prayer, he may insert it between the blessings; if it does not invalidate the prayer, he cannot rectify it between blessings and must continue as usual. This third view is the ruling codified in the *Shulchan Aruch*.

Here too, *Ya’aleh Ve’Yavo* serves as the classic example. In the Shacharit and Minchah of Rosh Chodesh, where its omission invalidates the prayer, if one concluded “*HaMachazir Shechinato Le’Tzion*” and has not yet said the word “*Modim*,” he may insert *Ya’aleh Ve’Yavo* right there and then proceed with “*Modim Anachnu Lach*.” On the night of Rosh Chodesh, however, since its omission does not invalidate the prayer, if he concluded “*HaMachazir Shechinato Le’Tzion*,” he does not insert *Ya’aleh Ve’Yavo* between the blessings, but continues his prayer as usual.

Forgetting to Say Al HaNissim on Chanukah and Purim

From the principles outlined above, we can determine the law for other additions, such as *Al HaNissim* on Chanukah and Purim. If one forgot to recite *Al HaNissim*, reached the conclusion of the blessing, and said “*Baruch Atah Hashem*,” he must conclude the blessing and continue normally, because one is not made to repeat the prayer for omitting *Al HaNissim*.

Saying Mashiv HaRu’ach U’Morid HaGesheim in the Summer

Accordingly, if one forgot to say “*Mashiv HaRu’ach U’Morid HaGesheim*” during the

winter, since our custom is to recite “*Morid HaTal*” during the summer—as practiced by all Sepharadim and most Ashkenazim—if he mistakenly followed his habit and said “*Morid HaTal*,” reaching the conclusion and saying “*Baruch Atah Hashem*,” he continues his prayer as usual. Neither of the two remedies applies to this omission of “*Mashiv HaRu’ach U’Morid HaGesheim*.” Conversely, beginning on the first day of Pesach, we switch from “*Mashiv HaRu’ach U’Morid HaGesheim*” to “*Morid HaTal*.” If one mistakenly recites “*Mashiv HaRu’ach U’Morid HaGesheim*” from the first day of Pesach onward, he must repeat the prayer, because rain in the summer is a sign of a curse. Just several weeks ago, a heavy downpour occurred across large parts of Eretz Yisrael; while some rejoiced, this was incorrect, as it is halachically considered a sign of a curse. Unseasonal rain is not a favorable sign for Am Yisrael, as *Chazal* derive from the verse: “Is it not wheat harvest today?” (*Shmuel I* 12:17). Therefore, if one mistakenly said “*Mashiv HaRu’ach U’Morid HaGesheim*” from the first day of Pesach onward, if he has not yet concluded the blessing, he may correct it and return to the beginning of “*Atah Gibor*.” If he already said “*Baruch Atah Hashem*,” he must say “*Lamedeni chukecha*” and return.

If he already concluded “*Mechayeh HaMetim*,” reciting “*Morid HaTal*” between the blessings is of no avail. In this case, he committed a severe error by inserting a negative mention into the blessing itself, thereby ruining it. Therefore, once he concludes “*Mechayeh HaMetim*,” saying “*Morid HaTal*” between blessings is ineffective, and he must return to the beginning of the *Shemoneh Esrei*. The law in the summer is entirely different from the winter, but regarding the summer—we will discuss it when summer arrives.

Personal Requests in the Shemoneh Esrei

Regarding “*Veten Tal U’Matar*,” the law is very different and contains many details that we will, *b’ezerat Hashem*, explain on another occasion. In brief: if one omitted “*Veten Tal U’Matar*” in the blessing of the years (*Barech Alenu*), concluded the blessing, and began the next blessing, *Chazal* provided an opportunity to rectify it in the blessing of “*Shema Kolenu*.”

The reason is that the middle blessings—from “*Atah Chonen*” through “*Shome’a Tefillah*”—are all petitions before *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*. Each blessing focuses on a specific need. If a person has a personal need relating to that specific theme, he may insert his own personal prayer, provided he frames it respectfully. For example, if one wishes to pray for the sick, or is ill himself, he may add any personal supplication in the blessing of “*Refa’enu Hashem*” before concluding “*Ki E-l Rofe Rachman V’Ne’eman Atah*.”

The final blessing among the middle blessings is “*Shema Kolenu*,” where one may insert any personal request whatsoever. It is an all-inclusive blessing for all human needs. Many *siddurim* print a prayer for livelihood (*parnassah*) there; while it may also be recited in the middle of “*Barech Alenu*,” printing it in “*Shema Kolenu*” allows one to include it there. Similarly, one may pray for the sick within “*Shema Kolenu*,” as well as for any other personal need. Likewise, an unmarried individual seeking a proper spouse—a suitable match with whom to build a faithful Jewish home in love, brotherhood, peace, and companionship—should recite a dedicated prayer. The Chida authored a work titled *Kaf Achat* containing special prayers for this, and the Shelah *HaKadosh* also composed special prayers on this topic. These may be recited in “*Shema Kolenu*” right before “*Ki Atah Shome’a Tefillat Kol Peh*.”

Today, many unmarried men and women approach rabbis asking for prayers. It is commendable for rabbis to pray for Am Yisrael, as rabbis love the Jewish people and pray for them wholeheartedly. Yet when a person prays for himself, *Chazal* emphasize—as they state regarding the sick—that the prayer of the individual for himself is paramount: “The heart knows its own bitterness.” Therefore, single men and women seeking to marry should make sure to recite the prayers of the Shelah *HaKadosh* or the Chida in the blessing of “*Shema Kolenu*” with proper intent, concluding: “*Ki Atah Shome’a Tefillat Kol Peh, Baruch Atah Hashem Shome’a Tefillah*.”

Forgetting Veten Tal U’Matar in the Winter

Accordingly, *Chazal* established that if a person forgot to say “*Veten Tal U’Matar*” in the blessing of “*Barech Alenu*,” he is not immediately made to repeat the prayer, because he can rectify it in “*Shema Kolenu*.” He may insert the words “*Veten Tal U’Matar Livrachah*” right before “*Ki Atah Shome’a Tefillat Kol Peh*.” For this reason, while omitting *Tal U’Matar* ultimately invalidates the prayer, the opportunity exists to rectify it in “*Shema Kolenu*.” If he failed to rectify it in “*Shema Kolenu*,” there is a dispute among the *Rishonim* whether he returns to “*Shema Kolenu*” or to “*Barech Alenu*”; Maran the *Shulchan Aruch* ruled (O.C. 117:5) that he must return to “*Barech Alenu*.”

B’ezerat Hashem, we will elaborate on the laws of *Tal U’Matar* on another occasion. In Eretz Yisrael, we begin reciting “*Veten Tal U’Matar*” on the 7th of Marcheshvan, as codified in the *Shulchan Aruch* (117:1), whereas in the Diaspora, it begins on the sixtieth day of the solar season (*Tekufah*). The *Tekufot* follow the solar calendar rather than the standard Hebrew lunar calendar. The civil calendar is based entirely on the solar cycle, which is why the sixtieth day of the *Tekufah* always falls on December 4th (or December 5th in a year preceding a secular leap year). From that date, communities throughout the Diaspora begin requesting rain in “*Barech Alenu*.”

"Your Parting is Difficult for Me"

Today we celebrated the festival of Simchat Torah, which is Shemini Atzeret. The Torah states (*Bamidbar* 29:35): "On the eighth day, an *Atzeret* shall be for you; you shall do no servile work." We have seven days of the festival of Sukkot, followed by an additional day—"an *Atzeret* shall be for you." *Chazal* (*Sukkah* 48a) establish that Shemini Atzeret is an independent festival (*Regel bifnei atzmo*), separate from the festival of Sukkot. Therefore, we recite the blessing of *Shehecheyanu* in the Kiddush on the night of Shemini Atzeret. The fact that we already recited *Shehecheyanu* on the first night of Sukkot is irrelevant, because that was for Sukkot, whereas now we have entered a distinct festival.

On Pesach, by contrast, which also lasts seven days with the seventh day being a Yom Tov—as stated in the Torah (*Vayikra* 23:39): "On the first day shall be a solemn rest, and on the seventh day shall be a solemn rest"—the seventh day is not an independent festival; it is an integral part of Pesach, commemorating the splitting of the Red Sea (*Keri'at Yam Suf*). Consequently, we do not recite *Shehecheyanu* on the seventh day of Pesach. Shemini Atzeret, however, stands completely independent of Sukkot. *Chazal* (*Sukkah* 55b) explain why *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* instituted Shemini Atzeret. Hashem says to Israel: "*Kasheh alai peridatchem*" (Your parting is difficult for Me). Am Yisrael ascended on pilgrimage, demonstrating profound love for *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* during Sukkot, with the *Shechinah* resting among us and the joy of the water drawing (*Simchat Bet HaSho'evah*) inspiring divine inspiration (*Ru'ach HaKodesh*). Hashem says: "It is difficult for Me to part from you! Stay with Me one more day!" This raises a question: Why did *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* not also establish an eighth day on Pesach due to "*Kasheh alai peridatchem*"? Does He wish to part from us on Pesach, but not on Sukkot? Furthermore, what is the meaning of "*Kasheh alai peridatchem*"? If Hashem says, "I do not want to part from you," why not make a festival every day of the year? Adding a single day only postpones the departure—at the conclusion of this day, the parting still occurs!

Hashem Desires a Bond with Us

My teacher and master, HaGaon Rabbi Yaakov Neiman zt"l, who was a disciple of the Chafetz Chaim, was a giant in Torah and *mussar* and served as Rosh Yeshiva of "Ohr Yisrael." I studied under him for three years in *yeshiva ketanah*. He was a true friend of my father, Maran zt"l; my father visited him frequently at his home across from the yeshiva. He authored a work titled *Darkei Mussar*, containing brief discourses filled with profound insights. In that work, he presents a beautiful parable: A very distinguished individual informed a simple man that he would be coming to stay as a guest in his home for a few days. The host was overjoyed that such an eminent person was visiting his home. During the stay, the distinguished guest said to his host: "I have enjoyed your company immensely; I have such affection for you and find you so pleasant that I wish to extend my stay by one more day." For the host, the meaning of this gesture is profound: "He loves me so much that he wants to stay an extra day! He is signaling that he wishes to maintain our connection! If he is reluctant to leave, it proves he desires an ongoing bond! Now the continuation of this relationship depends on me; I must demonstrate that I, too, cherish this bond."

This is precisely the meaning of "*Kasheh alai peridatchem*," which *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* expresses to us. What is the fundamental difference between Pesach and Sukkot? Pesach is the foundational festival through which we became a nation, emerging from slavery to freedom. Through the Exodus from Egypt, we were brought to receive the Torah: "When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God upon this mountain." Therefore, we celebrate for seven days. Sukkot, however, is different. On Sukkot, *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* wants us to remember His enduring love: "So that your generations may know that I caused the children of Israel to dwell in booths." Sukkot is the ultimate symbol of love. *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* surrounded us with the Clouds of Glory (*Ananei Kavod*). In the vast, perilous wilderness, Am Yisrael traveled with divine climate control and pure air. The nations of the world could not approach them, as the clouds formed an impenetrable barrier. The verse states: "And the Canaanite, the king of Arad, who dwelt in the South, heard that Israel was coming by way of the spies, and he fought against Israel." *Chazal* ask: What did he hear? He heard that Aharon had passed away and the Clouds of Glory departed, prompting him to attack Israel; this was Amalek. *Chazal* state that the clouds subsequently returned in the merit of Moshe Rabbenu. We see that the Clouds of Glory protected Am Yisrael from all their enemies; no one could harm them. The Clouds of Glory were an unprompted gift of divine love bestowed upon Israel without our having to plead for relief from the heat or cold of the desert. Furthermore, the Clouds of Glory enveloped only the authentic children of Israel; even the mixed multitude (*erev rav*) could not dwell within them. The entire essence of Sukkot is that *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* loves us. That is why extraordinary joy filled the *Bet HaMikdash* during Sukkot. It is a festival of affection, where *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* says: "My precious children, I love you," granting us the festival of Sukkot. At the conclusion of the festival, Hashem says to Am Yisrael: "I want to add an extra day! *Kasheh alai peridatchem*." He shows us the depth of His love, demonstrating that it is difficult for Him to depart from us. The message is clear: "I love you, and I want to see that you love Me in return!"

From Strength to Strength

How can we demonstrate our love for *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*? Is it sufficient merely to sing, "Hashem, we love You"? That is not enough! Nor is it enough merely to recite the words, "And you shall love Hashem your God," as we do daily in the *Shema*. We must prove our love through tangible action. What value do empty words have? *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* says: "Show Me that love through your actions!" It is expressed through Torah study and the fulfillment of mitzvot: "And we will rejoice and exult in the words of the study of Your Torah and Your commandments forever." We delight in the Torah: "The statutes of Hashem are upright, gladdening the heart." When we find our joy and fulfillment in Hashem's Torah, we prove that we truly love Him. This is our sacred mission during these days: to demonstrate our love for *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*. We must not view *ben hazmanim* as a vacation exempting us from study. On the contrary! If we rejoiced, ate, and drank during Sukkot—as *Chazal* say, "There is no joy without meat and wine"—dancing in *Simchat Bet HaSho'evah* and dancing on Simchat Torah in honor of the Torah, we must now demonstrate that our celebration was genuine.

There was an incident in a synagogue filled with simple folk where people were dancing vigorously on Simchat Torah. Rabbi Eizel Charif was present, laughing to himself: "Look at these people—they haven't even begun learning the Torah, and already they celebrate its completion!" The *Rambam* writes at the end of *Hilchot Lulav* (8:15) that the joy in the *Bet HaMikdash* during *Simchat Bet HaSho'evah* was led by the greatest scholars of Israel; those who toil in Torah are truly worthy of rejoicing. When we dedicate ourselves to Torah study, our celebration on Simchat Torah becomes authentic.

It is vital that we maintain this connection, going "from strength to strength." We emerged from Yom Kippur, entered Sukkot, concluded Simchat Torah, and now we begin anew from *Bereshit*. What does it mean to begin from *Bereshit*? We begin once again with the acceptance of the yoke of Heaven and the yoke of Torah, resolving to study according to our capacity—"make your Torah study permanent and your work secondary"—making Torah the central purpose of our lives. When a person learns, he knows how to observe the mitzvot properly, understanding what is permitted and what is forbidden. Through diligent Torah study, may we merit to hear good tidings, and may the holy Torah protect us.

Simchat Torah – Despite Everything!

Today was a difficult day for many of us. On this day, so many of our brethren were brutally murdered. We witnessed how the murderers spared no one: in Sderot, dozens of elderly and frail individuals were massacred in cold blood. They entered Ofakim early in the morning as Jews were walking to the synagogue on Simchat Torah, murdering dozens who were killed *al kiddush Hashem*. In the kibbutzim, the communities surrounding Gaza, and at the festival party, they slaughtered everyone solely because they were Jews!

Some people questioned how one could rejoice under such circumstances: How could we celebrate Simchat Torah today? Yet this very question has been addressed throughout history whenever pogroms struck Israel. Tragedies occurred, but we persevered! If we wish to survive as a nation, sinking into perpetual mourning is impossible. Our survival is rooted in the fact that we do not grieve beyond the halachic boundaries. We have Tisha B'Av and the four fasts dedicated to mourning, but on the festivals, we are commanded to rejoice!

Am Yisrael endured one catastrophe after another, enduring decrees and persecutions. We will never forget how the Christian world slaughtered and massacred our people for centuries through the Crusades and the Inquisition. Today, the descendants of those very murderers dare to preach morality to us, while their ancestors burned Jews alive for no other reason than being Jewish! Yet we continued!

During the era of the *Rishonim*, in the year 4856 (1096)—nearly 950 years ago—pogroms erupted in Europe and France, with entire communities slaughtered and burned *al kiddush Hashem*. The Sages of that generation established that we must commemorate their souls in our Shabbat prayers, instituting the recitation of "*Av HaRachamim*" before Musaf. Ashkenazic communities recite this with profound sorrow, yet they immediately proceed to pray and celebrate *Oneg Shabbat*, the joy of Shabbat, and the joy of the festivals. Human existence requires joy; without joy, a person cannot endure. Therefore, we must rejoice specifically for the elevation of the souls of all those who were murdered, while praying fervently on their behalf. From here onward, may everything be counted for good, and may we hear good tidings, salvations, and consolations.

I wish to bless this holy congregation who came on this holy evening to learn Torah. Many will proceed to *Hakafot Sheniyot*, which the *Mekubalim* explain holds great spiritual significance, to rejoice in the joy of the Torah and continue advancing in Torah and fear of Heaven. We bless all the listeners on Radio "Kol Berama," who broadcast the voice of the holy Torah far and wide and assist us greatly in perpetuating the memory of my father, Maran zt"l, through Torah study—may their strength in Torah be reinforced. May everyone be blessed with all the blessings of the Torah, and may we merit the complete redemption speedily, *amen ken yehi ratzon*.