

THE KEREN TALELEI BERACHAH EDITION

MILTA CHADTA

מילתא חדתא

על התורה ומועדים

BEREISHIT

Divrei Torah and insights on the
weekly *parashah* and *chagim*,
with a wide range of *divrei chizuk*,
emunah, *mussar* and *hashkafah*

Compiled from the discourses
and teachings of the
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SHLITA



MILTA CHADTA

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to Yeshivat ABIR YAAKOV
OHR MEIR SIMCHAH, Nahariya
Rechov Abir Yaakov 27
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Parashat Bereishit

The Beginning of the Torah Alludes to *Kabalat Ol Malchut Shamayim*

בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ (א א)

"In the beginning Hashem created the heaven and earth."

The beginning of the Torah alludes to *kabalat ol Malchut Shamayim*, which precedes all, as the **Chida** writes in **Pnei David** (*Bereishit* 1:1) what he heard from an elderly Jew and a *yerei Shamayim*, and **my grandfather the Abir Yaakov** writes the same in his **Machsof Halavan** (*Bereishit* s.v. *od bereishit*), the numerical value of בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא with the two *kollels* is 1118, and אחד ה' אלהינו is also *gematria* 1118, teaching that the main purpose of creation was for the Jews to recognize that Hashem is our God, He is One, and we must love and fear Him with complete oneness.

The **Chida** cites the *sefer Tzvi Kodesh* (introduction to *Berachot*) that for this reason Rabeinu Hakadosh began the first *mishnah* with the mitzvah of *Keriat Shema*, מאמתי קורין את שמע בערבין, – "from when is *Keriat Shema* recited in the evening?" because the first fundamental, even before the Written or Oral Torahs, is accepting *ol Malchut Shamayim*.

***Keriat Shema* Must Precede Torah**

Let us elaborate on this issue, explaining why *Keriat Shema* must precede Torah. The Tzadikim have taught that we must do *teshuvah* before learning Torah, because if he does not repent and he studies Torah when still filthy with sin, the *pasuk* states (Yirmiyahu 4:3) נִירוּ לָכֶם נִיר וְאֵל תּוֹרַעוּ אֶל קוֹצִים – "plow for yourself a furrow, and do not sow upon thorns," alluding to a person who studies Torah when still filthy with sin. First, he must plow and weed out his sins, otherwise he will be sowing thorns and wasting his time. And moreover, by learning Torah when soiled in sin, he provides the forces of the *Sitra Achra*, helping them multiply and grow, *chas veshalom*.

The **Bnei Yisachar** writes in his introduction to his **Maggid Ta'alumah** (*Berachot* 2b), repeating this idea several times in his other precious works: the Oral Torah begins with the mitzvah of *Keriat Shema*, because all the Torah study and good deeds of a *rasha* before he does *teshuvah*, are not accepted willingly in Heaven, as derived from the *pasuk* נִירוּ לָכֶם נִיר וְאֵל תּוֹרַעוּ אֶל קוֹצִים. But what is the solution? Not to study Torah, not to put on *tefillin* or wear *tzitzit* until he has corrected the sins he has committed?!

The answer is that *teshuvah* helps at every given time, and the basic *teshuvah* is regret, forsaking the sin, acceptance not to sin again, and confession. Therefore, before performing a mitzvah or studying Torah, one must have thoughts of *teshuvah*, and then he will no longer be considered a *rasha*, and his Torah and good deeds will be accepted in Heaven.

***Keriat Shema* with *Mesirut Nefesh* Atones Even for Serious Sins**

But one can still ask: the Gemara writes (*Yoma* 86a) that there are four different types of atonement, and regarding some sins mere *teshuvah* does not atone. So, what can a *rasha* do if he sinned with such sins, and especially the sin of *chillul Hashem* of which the Gemara states a person is only atoned after his death? The *pasuk* states (Yeshayah 22:14) אִם יִכּוּפֵּר הָעוֹן הַזֶּה לָכֶם עַד – "this sin will not be atoned for you until you die," and many people have this sin of *chillul Hashem*. What is their solution?

The answer is given in Zohar (Balak 195b): "When any person recites *Keriat Shema* with the thought that he is willing to sacrifice his life for Hashem, it is reckoned as if actually sacrificed his life on *Kiddush Hashem*," and then all those sins that cannot be atoned in one's lifetime are atoned by this mitzvah which is performed with thoughts of *mesirut nefesh*.

The Oral Torah Begins with the Laws of *Keriat Shema*, as *Keriat Shema* Brings Torah Study

That being the case, Hashem has given us a definite cure, by commanding us to recite the *Keriat Shema* with *mesirut nefesh* day and night, which is how one should recite it. Thus, even if he transgressed the most severe sins, even *chilul Hashem*, this mitzvah of *Keriat Shema* with *mesirut nefesh* atones for all his sins, he is no longer defined as being a *rasha*, and his Torah and *mitzvot* will be accepted in Heaven. We now understand why the Oral Torah begins with the laws *Keriat Shema* and when it should be recited, since this is the way our Torah study will be accepted in Heaven despite serious sins. This is the **Bnei Yisachar's** explanation.

With this we can explain the *remez* at the beginning of the Torah, that בראשית has the same *gematria* as אחד, שמע ישראל ה' אלהינו ה' אחד, which connects the mitzvah of *Keriat Shema* with the Torah's first words, since *Keriat Shema* with *mesirut nefesh* enables him to study the holy Torah.

So, in these dark days, the solution is to fulfill the words of the Mishnah (*Berachot* 2a) קורין את שמע בערבין, when in ערבין, dark times, קורין את שמע, the formula is to accept *ol Malchut Shamayim* with *mesirut nefesh*, which is the only way a person can hold strong, until we merit to see light with the coming of Mashiach.

By Sanctifying Oneself at the Start of the Day, the Whole Day is Holy

We can suggest another reason why the mitzvah of *Keriat Shema* is hinted at the beginning of the Torah: The **Dubno Maggid** writes in his **Ohel Yaakov** (*Tazria* s.v. *vehinei Razal*), the Torah orders every Jew to read the *Keriat Shema*

in the morning and evening, so that right at the start of the day, when the *neshamah* returns from up High and is still under the influence of the holiness, a person continues this *kedushah* and sanctifies the beginning of the day.

This way he will be able to continue his whole day with the same *kedushah*. If a person wakes up in the morning and the first thing he does is to think of *Yirat Hashem*, and he spends the following hour or two in *avodat Hashem*, it will be much easier to continue his whole day with *kedushah*. But if he rises from bed and immediately engages in worldly affairs, he will be engrossed in these matters for the rest of the day.

This is hinted in the words of the *navi* Yeshayah (44:6) צבאות ה' אמר כה אני ראשון ואני אחרון ומבלעדי אין אלהים, if אני ראשון, a person begins his day by thinking about Hashem, and אני אחרון, at the end of the day he will also remember Hashem, ומבלעדי אין אלהים, all his actions throughout the day will be for Hashem, בלתי לה' לבדו.

Therefore, the Torah commands us to recite *Keriat Shema* at the beginning and end of the day, so that the whole day will be *leshem Shamayim*. Indeed, we say in our *Keriat Shema* ובקומך ובשכבך ובדרך ובליכתך בביתך – "when sitting at home, when on your journey, when going to sleep and when waking up," since the power of *Keriat Shema* in the morning and evening is *mashpia* on everything one does at day and night.

This explains why the Torah hints to *Keriat Shema* at the beginning of the Written Torah, בראשית ברא (with the two *kollels*) is *gematria* שמע ישראל ה' אחד, that the *Keriat Shema* in the morning is the basis of the whole Written Torah. The Oral Torah also begins with the recital of *Keriat Shema* at night, מאימתי קורין את שמע בערבין, the *Keriat Shema* at night gives the power to conclude the day with *kedushah*, and also gives power to the whole night,¹ which is an aspect of Oral Torah.

ובלילה עת שכיבה ומנוחה צריך גם כן קבלת עול מלכות שמים, שגם בשכבו על מיטתו ידע לפני מי הוא שוכב כמו שכתב. בהג"ה דריש אורח חיים (צדקת הצדיק אות ג).

This could explain why *Chazal* juxtaposed the mitzvah of *Keriat Shema* to *terumah*, מאימתי קורין את שמע בערבין משעה שהכהנים נכנסין לאכול בתרומתן, "From when is the evening *Keriat Shema* recited? From when the *kohanim* enter to eat their *terumah*." The evening *Keriat Shema* sanctifies the night, which is *tamei* like the *kohen* who was impure, and the *Keriat Shema* purifies the night so that it is with *taharah* and *leshem Shamayim*, as the *pasuk* states, ומבלעדי אין אלהים.



The *Avot* Rectified the Sin of Adam Harishon



וַיֵּצֵא ה' אֱלֹהִים עַל הָאָדָם לְאֹמֶר מִכָּל עֵץ הָעֵן אָכַל תֹּאכַל. וּמֵעֵץ הַדַּעַת
טוֹב וְרָע לֹא תֹאכַל מִמֶּנּוּ כִּי בְיוֹם אֲכָלְךָ מִמֶּנּוּ מוֹת תָּמוּת (ב טז-יז)

"Hashem *Elokim* commanded Adam, you can eat from every tree. But from the Tree of Knowledge Good and Bad you may not eat, because the day you eat from it you will die."

The Holy **Zohar** (Ra'aya Mehemna *Behar* 111) writes, the sin of Adam Harishon included the three cardinal sins, שפיכות דמים וגילוי עריות, עבודה זרה.

This can be explained as follows: Since Adam disobeyed Hashem's command it is an aspect of עבודה זרה; it was also an aspect of שפיכות דמים since it caused death for all people; and because his sin caused the holy *neshamot* to fall into the *kelipah*, it is an aspect of גילוי עריות.

The Holy *Avot* Rectified the Three Sins

After Adam Harishon transgressed these cardinal sins, the holy *Avot* rectified these sins.

The holy **Zohar** writes (ibid), Avraham, with *mesirut nefesh*, smashed the idols of his father Terach and publicly denounced idol worship. Thus he rectified Adam Harishon's sin of עבודה זרה. Yitzchak Avinu was willing to be slaughtered on the *Mizbeach*, thereby rectifying the sin of שפיכות דמים. And Yaakov Avinu rectified the sin of גילוי עריות by marrying Rachel and Leah, thus rectifying the *neshamot* that fell into the *kelipah* of Lavan due to Adam Harishon's sin.

The *Avot* Accepted Upon Themselves the Four Modes of *Mitot Beit Din*

The **Chida** writes in his **Pnei David** (*Vayetze* 14), the holy *Avot* accepted on themselves the ארבע מיתות בית דין, the four methods used by *Beit Din* to