

The Weekly Daf



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Berachos 37-43

Week of 3-9 Cheshvan 5758 / 3-9 November 1997
Rav Weinbach's insights, explanations and comments for the 7 pages of Talmud
studied in the course of the worldwide Daf Yomi cycle

The Right Word

What blessing does one make on bread?

Surely everyone knows the answer to that question is "*Hamotzi lechem min ha'aretz*" (He Who has brought bread forth from the earth).

But not all the Sages agreed on the first word of this phrase. One opinion is that "*Motzi*" should be said because it is past tense while "*Hamotzi*" is future tense. Since the bread you are about to eat has already been brought forth from the earth the past tense is more appropriate. There is a consensus that "*Motzi*" is past tense and a difference of opinion as to whether "*Hamotzi*" is as well.

It would therefore seem that the safe thing to do would be to say "*Motzi*," which is acceptable to all. Nevertheless, the ruling of the Gemara is that we say "*Hamotzi*," which is proper according to only one school of thought.

The reason for this, explains Tosefos on the basis of the Jerusalem Talmud, is that the preceding word in this blessing is "*Haolam*." If we were to follow it with "*Motzi*" we would have a word ending with an "m" sound coming before one which begins with an "m" sound, and face the risk of running the two words together as a single word.

But don't we face the same problem in regard to the two words "*lechem*" and "*min*"? True, adds Tosefos, but our Sages did not wish to tamper with the phrase "*lechem min ha'aretz*" which is taken from a passage in *Tehillim* (104:4). That passage, incidentally, contains ten words, notes Tosefos, and thus provides a hint to place the ten fingers of both our hands on the bread when we make our "*Hamotzi*" blessing on it.

Berachos 38b

The Fifth Sense

Where is the source in Scripture for the concept of making a blessing on the enjoyment of the pleasant fragrance we derive from a pleasant fragrance?

"Let every soul give praise to Hashem" says King David (*Tehillim* 150:6). What pleasure is there that only the soul enjoys and not the body? Surely it is the pleasure which comes from the sense of smell.

Maharsha notes that animals, like men, have fine senses, including the sense of smell, despite the fact that they have no souls. He suggests, however, that animals, which have only a life force and not a soul, do not have the capacity to enjoy the fragrances they smell (as an instinct to aid their survival), an enjoyment reserved for the soul within men.

An interesting observation about smell has been made by the great Chassidic thinkers. In the sin committed by Adam and Chava when they ate from the forbidden fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, virtually all of the senses were involved. They heard the incitement of the serpent, saw the beauty of the fruit, touched and tasted it. All of these senses therefore became affected with materialism. Only the sense of smell was not involved in this sin and it therefore remains pristine enough to still be enjoyed by the pure soul.

Berachos 43b

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