



PhiloTorah D'var Torah

Look what I found!

Let me lead you into this. On Leil Shavuot, mine was the fourth of four shiurim in our minyan's Learning program. My topic was Birchot HaMitzva - the brachot said (or not said) before doing a mitzva.

My choice of topic was motivated by the Eiruv Tavshilin that we were to make on Erev Yom Tov (a rarer occurrence in Israel than in Chutz LaAretz) and the choice of a topic that deals with one (or more) of Rabbinic mitzvot (the making of b'rachot, in general) in order to include Mitzvot d'Rabbanan within the picture of Matan Torah. Even though it was the Aseret HaDibrot which we heard on that first Shavuot 3338 years ago, our concept of Matan Torah is a package deal including the Written Word, the Oral Law, and Rabbinic law as authorized by the Torah (D'varim 17:11).

The shiur consisted of the distinction between the mitzva-brachot using the infinitive verb form - AL (as with AL ACHILAT MATZA, AL MIKRA MEGILA, and many others) and those mitzva-brachot that use a gerund noun form - L' (as with L'HADLIK NER, LEISHEIV BASUKA, and others). Also presented were some mitzvot

that do not have specific b'rachot.

Aside from that shiur and the three that preceded mine, I also learned with my wife, with a daughter and grandson, and then spent a number of hours learning through that sefer BIRCHOT HAMITZVA K'TIKUNAN by R' Menachem Mendel Shoimer of Ashdod (5752/1992).

I guess that's enough introduction. I can also tie what I'm going to share with you to Shavuot - but it is not necessary.

Among many mitzvot that don't have a specific b'racha, the author of the Sefer discusses the mitzva of YISHUV ERETZ YISRAEL (YEY), the mitzva to live in Israel. He explains a technicality that applies to other mitzvot as well as YEY. But then he writes the following (my rendering into English from the Hebrew of the book):

Even though we find no regular b'racha for the mitzva, there is actually a 'sort of' b'racha. Namely, the second b'racha of Birkat HaMazon.

NODEH L'CHA HASHEM ELOKEINU... We acknowledge and thank you, HaShem our G-d, "for having given a beautiful, good, and spacious land to our fathers as a heritage..." BARUCH ATA HASHEM AL HAARETZ V'AL HAMAZON. And with this, included in this second b'racha of the Benching, is a b'racha for living in Eretz Yisrael.

He adds, and it is therefore appropriate for those of us who live in Eretz Yisrael, to have the additional kavana for the fulfillment of the mitzva to live in Eretz Yisrael.

Think about it. A Jew outside of Israel still has to bench after a bread-meal. But the second bracha attributed to Yehoshua, echoes the Torah's wording in D'varim (Eikev) 8:10, the pasuk quoted in the second bracha of Birkat HaMazon - AL HAARETZ HATOVA ASHER NATAN LACH. True, there are other mitzvot - and all of Torah, mentioned in the bracha we are discussing.

However, for Jews who live in Eretz Yisrael, the idea of the additional kavana every time we bench, is truly amazing and exciting. **PTDT**