



Volume 7. Issue 1.

## In Order to Distance One from Sin

In the first *Mishnah* we learn about the time period in which the evening *Shema* is recited. While everyone agrees that the starting time is nightfall, a debate ensues regarding that latest time one can recite *Shema*. *R' Eliezer* maintains that it must be recited within the first third of the night, the *Chachamim* argue that the limit is midnight while *Rabban Gamliel* maintains that one has until dawn. We learn however, that the *Chachamim* really agree with *Rabban Gamliel* and one could recite the *Shema* the entire night. Nevertheless, the *Chachamim* ruled that *lechatchila* (ideally) one should recite the *Shema* before midnight “in order to distance one from sin.” How do we understand this concern and what else is encompassed by their decree?

The *Gemara* (*Berachot* 4b) citing a *Beraita* elaborates:

The *Chachamim* made a *seyag* (fence) for their words, in order that a person should not return from the field in the evening and say: I will go to my house and eat a little, drink a little and sleep a little and afterwards I will recite *Shema* and pray; a deep sleep will then take hold of him, and the result will be that he will sleep the entire night. Rather when a person comes from the field in the evening, he should enter *shul*, and if he can read *pesukim* he should read *pesukim*, if he can learn *Mishnah* he should learn *Mishnah*, and he recites *Shema* and prays and eats his bread and *benches*...

At first the *Beraita* appears to be elaborating on the *Chachamim's* concern that one will miss reciting the evening *Shema*. The *Tosfot* however explain that we also learn from this *Beraita* that once the time for reciting the evening *Shema* has arrived, it is forbidden for one to eat a meal prior to reciting *Shema* and praying *ma'ariv*. The *Rashba* extends this prohibition further to other activities that are prohibited close to *mincha gedolah* prior to praying *mincha*, e.g. having a hair cut (see *Shabbat* 1:2). The *Rambam* (*Tefillah* 6:7) however explicitly restricts this prohibition to eating and drinking, while the prohibition regarding the other activities as only applying to *mincha* time. The *Aruch HaShulchan* explains that since the time to recite the evening *Shema* is longer than the time to pray *mincha* there was no concern that one would become preoccupied and miss *davening*. Instead here their concern was that one might fall asleep. Consequently eating and drinking that can draw one into slumber were prohibited until one recited *Shema* and *davened*.

How much eating is prohibited? A quick review of the *Beraita* seems to suggest that the even eating “a little” is prohibited. Nevertheless the *Tosfot* explicated stated that a meal is prohibited?

The *Tosfot R' Akiva Eiger* understands the even a small amount of food is prohibited and believe the *Tosfot* agree (while not being particular with their choice of words). He explains that if the *Tosfot* wanted to derive that having a meal was prohibited, they could have learnt it from an explicit *Mishnah* (*Shabbat* 1:2) where we learn that one must stop his meal to recite *Shema*. The fact that they opt for this *Beraita* means it is teaching us something else, i.e. even a small amount is prohibited. (See inside for further proofs.)

The *Tifferet Yisrael* (*Boaz* 1) argues that the *Tosfot* should be understood as it is written – only a meal is prohibited. He explains the *Tosfot* chose the *Beraita* to learn this law instead of the *Mishnah* in *Shabbat* because it teaches us something new. The *Tifferet Yisrael* notes that at first the *Tosfot* seems to be restating *Beraita* – a meal prior to *Shema* is forbidden. The *Tifferet Yisrael* suggests that a more careful reading reveals that the *Tosfot* understand that it is forbidden to eat a meal a half an hour prior to the time one must read *Shema* - “from the time that the time to read *Shema* approaches”. Furthermore the directive of the *Beraita* that one should return from work, learn and then recite *Shema* implies that prohibition applies even prior to the time to recite *Shema*. (See inside for further proofs.)

If only a meal is prohibited then how do we understand the plain meaning of the *Beraita* that appears to be concerned with eating “a little”? The *Aruch HaShulchan* explains that one cannot derive anything from the first part of the *Beraita* as it illustrates the way people speak. People have a tendency to say they only eat and drink a bit and have a little nap – all three together. Nevertheless the *Chachamim* were concerned that when people returned they would eat more. Furthermore the end of the *Beraita* provides further proof that only a meal is prohibited. The instruction that one should “recite *Shema*, pray and eat bread (*pat*)” implies that the concern is only really with a full meal and not a snack, because that is to what the language of *pat* generally refers.

\* As always no practical *Halacha* should be derived from these articles. Consult your local rabbinic authority should any questions arise.

*Yisrael Yitzchak Bankier*

### Revision Questions

ברכות א' א' – ג' א'

- When is the starting time for *kriyat sh'ma* at night? (א' א')
- What are the three opinions regarding the latest time that one can recite *sh'ma* at night? (א' א')
- For what *mitzvah*, other than *kriyat sh'ma*, did the *Chachamim* bring forward the latest time that one can perform the *mitzvah* "to prevent one from transgressing"? (א' א')
- What are the two opinions regarding the starting time for *kriyat sh'ma* in the morning? (ב' א')
- What are the two opinions regarding the latest time that one can recite *sh'ma* in the morning? (ב' א')
- If the time for reading *sh'ma* in the morning has passed (but the *zman t'fillah* has not been completed) can one read *sh'ma* with the *brachot kriyat sh'ma*? (ב' א')
- Explain the debate surrounding the significance of "ובשכבך ובקומך". (א' ג')
- Which *Tana* put himself in danger to recite *sh'ma* in the manner held by *Beit Shammai*? (א' ג')
- How many *brachot* does one recite before and after *kriyat sh'ma* in the morning and at night? (א' ד')
- Is there a *mitzvah* of remembering *yetziyat mitzrayim* at night? If so, how is it fulfilled? (א' ה')
- Explain the debate between *Ben Zoma* and the *Chachamim* about the *pasuk*: "למען תזכר את יום צאתך ממצרים כל ימי חייך" (דברים ט"ז: ג'). (א' ה')
- If someone happens to be reading the chapter of *sh'ma* from the *Torah* during *zman kriyat sh'ma* do they fulfill the *mitzvah* of *kriyat sh'ma*? (א' ב')
- Explain the debate between *R' Meir* and *R' Yehuda* about when it is permissible to interrupt during and in between the chapters of *sh'ma*. (א' ב')
- To what does *בין הפרקים* refer? (ב' ב')
- Explain the ordering of the chapters of *kriyat sh'ma*. (ב' ב')
- Explain the debate or ruling in the following cases: (ב' ג')
  - Reading *sh'ma* without hearing the words.
  - Not being precise with the pronunciation of the words.
  - Reading the *p'sukim* out of order.
  - If someone made a mistake.
- What is ruling regarding an employee working in a tree with regards to reading *sh'ma* and *t'fillah*? (ב' ד')
- Until when is a groom exempt from reciting *sh'ma*? (ב' ה')
- What are the three cases where *Rabban Gamliel* acted against the ruling of the *Mishnah*? What was his justification in each of these cases? (ב' ה'-ו')
- What was the name of *Rabban Gamliel's* slave? (ב' ו')
- Can a groom be *machmir* and recite *sh'ma* on his wedding night? (ב' ח')
- What three *mitzvot* are close relatives of the deceased exempt from prior to the burial? What is the law regarding those carrying the coffin and others attending the funeral? (ג' א')

### Local Shiurim

#### Sunday -Thursday

After *ma'ariv*  
Mizrachi Shul

#### Friday & Shabbat

10 minutes before *mincha*  
Beit Ha'Roeh

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	שבת קודש
11 <sup>th</sup> July כ"ט תמוז	12 <sup>th</sup> July א' אב	13 <sup>th</sup> July ב' אב	14 <sup>th</sup> July ג' אב	15 <sup>th</sup> July ד' אב	16 <sup>th</sup> July ה' אב	17 <sup>th</sup> July ו' אב
Berachot 3:2-3	Berachot 3:4-5	Berachot 3:6 - 4:1	Berachot 4:2-3	Berachot 4:4-5	Berachot 4:6-7	Berachot 5:1-2

