

This issue is dedicated L'iluy Nishmas the mother of Rabbi Shaya Jaffe
Freida Reizel bas Yitzchak Moshe z"l (Eighth Yahrzeit – Shabbos, 29 Tishrei – Erev Rosh Chodesh Mar Cheshvan)

Parshas Bereishis

by **Rabbi Baruch Bodenheim-**
Rosh Yeshiva

Breath of Life

Our family uses inflatable mattresses to sleep inside the Sukkah. One year, I woke up on the floor – the mattress had deflated completely overnight! Over time, we purchased better quality ones that don't go flat overnight. Still, even the good ones leak a little bit.

When Hashem created Adam, the pasuk says, "He blew into his nostrils *nishmas chaim* - the soul of life."¹

There are four base elements from which the world was created: water, fire, earth, and wind. The Ramban² notes that the life force of man was not created from any of them, as the life force of man derives from the breath of Hashem Himself. Rav Shlomo Wolbe³ says that this is comparable to a person performing CPR: the rescuer takes a deep breath and exhales that breath into the other person's mouth. Here, Hashem blew His breath into man.

The Hebrew word for breath is *neshimah*. It has the same root as the Hebrew word *neshamah*, soul. The pasuk at the end of Tehillim says, "*Kol haneshamah tehallei Kah* - Every soul praises Hashem." ⁴The Midrash⁵ says that this pasuk has an additional interpretation, reading it as "*Kol haneshimah...* - I praise Hashem for every breath I take."

The physical body of man was formed from the earth, as the pasuk says, "*Afar min ha'adamah* - soil from the ground."⁶ Though the name for man, Adam, comes from *adamah*, ground/earth, Rashi there explains that Hashem fused man from both earth and heaven. Man's body comes from the earth, whereas his *neshamah* comes from heaven.

The combination of the body and soul is nothing short of miraculous. In the bracha of Asher Yatzar we thank Hashem for creating man with the ability to filter toxins and expel them from our body. The bracha begins with, "Hashem created man with wisdom." The Shulchan Aruch⁷ explains this great wisdom with my inflatable mattress analogy. If there is even one small hole in an inflated item, the air escapes. Yet, although the human body has many orifices and holes, the spirit of life remains contained inside.

The Rema there adds another explanation: that the great wisdom of the creation of man is the fusion and coexistence of body and soul. Rav Shimon Schwab⁸ adds that this is what is unique to man over all other creatures.

The coexistence of body and soul is a daily struggle for man. We are presented with choices to make throughout the day, based on our *neshamah's* yearning and the mission we were given to do the will of Hashem. This often goes against our body's desires and interests.

Each morning, we thank Hashem for renewing our spirit and giving us another day to live and perform mitzvos. The last bracha of the morning's Bircos HaShachar is, "*Hamaavir sheinah* - Hashem removes sleep from our eyes." Why do we recite this blessing at the end of our brachos? Shouldn't it be recited first?

Rav Schwab⁹ explains that there are two types of sleeping: slumber that's physical and slumber that's spiritual. The pasuk¹⁰ says that when Hashem was forming Chava, He put Adam into a deep sleep – yet it never says that Adam woke up from that slumber! Rav Schwab explains that man was cast into a *spiritual* slumber, one which we are still partially experiencing.

In the morning bracha of Elokai Neshamah, we thank Hashem for awakening us physically. In HaMaavir Sheinah, we thank Hashem for awakening us spiritually. This explains why this bracha continues with *yehi ratzon*, where we ask Hashem to accustom us to do mitzvos and learn Torah. This gives true purpose to our *neshamah* and helps to set our body's expectations.

Rabbi Singer zt"l would commonly ask, "Are you a *guf* or a *neshamah* – a body or a soul?" And then he would scream out, "A *neshamah*!" Rabbi Singer lived through his *neshamah*; he felt it and lived with its purpose. Rabbi Singer also saw the *neshamah* of each person he encountered. He didn't get blinded by a person's outward bodily appearance. He didn't see the *guf* of the person; all he saw was their *neshamah*.

Each time we recite Asher Yatzar, we can regain focus on our *neshamah*, making all our decisions and guiding all our actions accordingly. May Hashem give us the *siyata d'shmaya* to live with a full awareness of our *neshamah* and its purpose to guide us in Hashem's ways!

1 Bereishis 2:7

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 Tehillim 150:6

5 Bereishis Rabbah 14:9

6 Bereishis 2:7

7 Orach Chaim 6:1

8 Maayan Beis HaShoeivah, Bereishis 2:7

9 Ibid., Bereishis 2:21

10 Bereishis 2:21

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For chavrusa or to join please contact Rabbi Bodenheim
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Shalosh Seudos on Erev Rosh Chodesh

This week, Parshas Bereishis 5787, is Erev Rosh Chodesh. Besides the custom of reading the Haftorah of “Machar Chodesh,” this occurrence raises another Halachic consideration. When eating Shalosh Seudos, one usually begins to eat before sunset, and finishes and bentches sometime later. If one wants to bentch at night, he may have the following dilemma: should he say Ritzei in bentching, as he ate on Shabbos, Ya’aleh Viyavo, since now it is Rosh Chodesh, both, or neither? Is there a preferable approach to avoid this question? Let us review some of the recommendations of the Poskim and see how they suggest one should act.

Firstly, a more basic question: if one bentches on Motzei Shabbos after a meal eaten on Shabbos, does he say Ritzei at all? Although this is the common practice, the Beis Yosef (Orach Chaim, end of Siman 188) brings a machlokes Rishonim. The Rosh (Teshuvos HaRosh 22:6) holds that he does not, since we always bentch according to the time we are bentching, and he proves this from two sources. First, one who forgot to daven Mincha on Shabbos makes it up on Motzei Shabbos with two weekday Maarivs. Even though the obligation stems from Shabbos, he does not mention Shabbos in the makeup tefillah. Second, the Gemara in Pesachim (102a) and the Tosefta (Brachos 5:4) teach that one who ate on Friday and bentches after Shabbos begins says Ritzei, even though the meal was on Friday. We see that the time of tefillah or bentching decides, so one who bentches on Motzei Shabbos would not mention Shabbos.

Against the Rosh, the Beis Yosef brings the Maharam (cited in Hagahos Maimoniyos, Megillah 2:14:1), who holds that one says Al Hanisim when bentching on Motzei Purim, because the meal was eaten on Purim. So too, one says Ritzei on Motzei Shabbos for a Shabbos meal. The two views thus differ on whether bentching follows the time of the meal or the time of bentching. The Beis Yosef also brings the Maharil, who answers the Rosh’s first proof by distinguishing a makeup tefillah from bentching. When one davens a makeup tefillah, the time of Mincha has already passed, and the first weekday Maariv includes Havdalah, so he can no longer mention Shabbos. Bentching is different: one who has not yet davened Maariv can still mention Shabbos. The Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 188:10) rules like the Maharam, that one who eats near the end of Shabbos, Rosh Chodesh, Purim or Chanukah adds the appropriate insertion even when he bentches at night. The Mishnah Berurah (188:32) adds that once he davens Maariv, he no longer adds them.

With this machlokes in mind, we can turn to our main discussion: what should one do if Motzei Shabbos is Rosh Chodesh? The Mishnah Berurah (188:33) points out that the question arises only if one ate both on Shabbos and on Motzei Shabbos. If one ate only on Shabbos, then we follow the Shulchan Aruch’s rule that we base our additions on the time of the meal, which was Shabbos and not Rosh Chodesh, so one says only Ritzei. However, if he ate after nightfall as well, then our question arises. Since one would need to mention both Shabbos and Rosh Chodesh, it seems that he is contradicting himself, for if it is Shabbos, it is not Rosh Chodesh.

The Mishnah Berurah quotes the Magen Avraham (188:18) that, in order to avoid the contradiction, one says only Ya’aleh Viyavo. The Magen Avraham chooses Ya’aleh Viyavo over Ritzei because one is certainly obligated in Ya’aleh Viyavo, since he ate part of his meal and is bentching on Rosh Chodesh. The Mishnah Berurah adds that since the Rosh rules that one does not say Ritzei on any Motzei Shabbos, and the Gemara in Pesachim implies that we mention the current kedushah, it is better to mention Ya’aleh Viyavo over Ritzei.

The Mishnah Berurah brings another opinion. The Taz (188:7) rules that one should say both Ritzei and Ya’aleh Viyavo. He writes that there is no issue of an apparent contradiction in these additions, as each is just additional kedushah that one adds onto himself. He compares this to Yaknehaz, the combined Kiddush and Havdalah we make between Shabbos and Yom Tov. In Yaknehaz, we first make Kiddush for Yom Tov before we make Havdalah for Shabbos, although in truth we should first make Havdalah to separate from Shabbos before accepting kedushas Yom Tov. We see from here that there is no contradiction in adding additional kedushah. So too, one could say both Ritzei and Ya’aleh Viyavo. The Kitzur Shulchan Aruch (44:17) and the Shulchan Aruch Harav (188:17) rule like the Taz, that one who ate after nightfall says both.

There is an additional opinion not mentioned in the Mishnah Berurah. Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (Halichos Shlomo, Rosh Chodesh 1:21 and footnotes there) brings the opinion of the Bach (188:12) and the Aruch Hashulchan (188:23) that one always follows the beginning of the meal. This means that since one ate a kezayis of bread on Shabbos, one says only Ritzei, even if he also ate bread on Motzei Shabbos.

This seems to conflict with the Gemara in Pesachim and the Tosefta in Brachos that we saw, which say that one who ate on Friday says Ritzei when he bentches on Shabbos, implying that the time of bentching matters. The Aruch Hashulchan answers that Ritzei in that case is not because of the time of bentching, but because of Kiddush. One who ate on Friday and bentches after Shabbos begins has an immediate obligation to make Kiddush, and since the Gemara teaches that one may not bundle mitzvos together (Ein osin mitzvos chavilos chavilos), he cannot use one cup for both. He must use two, one for bentching and one for Kiddush. With Kiddush waiting, it would be improper to bentch as if Shabbos were not present, so he adds Ritzei. On Motzei Shabbos, however, if one did not daven Maariv, nothing compels him to mention Ya’aleh Viyavo in bentching. We therefore revert to the rule of following the beginning of the meal, and one would only mention Ritzei.

The Kaf Hachaim (188:43) takes a different approach, holding that one says neither addition, as Shev Ve’al Ta’aseh Adif (it is better to do nothing, and so omit both).

Practically, Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach quotes the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch (44:17) that when Shabbos falls on Erev Rosh Chodesh, one should avoid the question entirely by making sure not to eat bread once night begins. Then one says only Ritzei, since the dispute only begins with bread eaten after nightfall, and he did not eat during Rosh Chodesh. Rabbi Auerbach adds that the concern is with eating a kezayis in k’dai achilas pras (9 minutes, lihachmir). One may still eat small bits of bread even after nightfall, as long as they are spread out over more than k’dai achilas pras. It is reported there that to be safe, Rabbi Auerbach would stop eating bread even earlier, at shekiyah. It is also recorded that in his Beis Medrash, they would daven Mincha early so the tzibbur would have the opportunity to eat Shalosh Seudos before shekiyah. If one mistakenly ate bread after nightfall, Rabbi Auerbach rules like the Aruch Hashulchan and the Bach, and one would only say Ritzei. As we mentioned, the Mishnah Berurah rules like the Magen Avraham, who says that one would only say Ya’aleh Viyavo. The best approach is to avoid the question by not eating bread after shekiyah, and then one would only say Ritzei.

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