

# Kinder Torah

בס"ד

Parashas Vayikra

## Hatov Vi'hameitiv

"Abba, you look a little sad today."  
 "Yes, I am Avi. I just came from a *levaya* (funeral)."  
 "Oh, I am sorry."  
 "That's okay, Avi. A few years ago, I went to two *levayas* in one day. That was doubly sad. Can you imagine if someone had to go to five *levayas* in one day? Or ten? Or one hundred?"  
 "My heart breaks just thinking about it, Abba."  
 "I agree. Just imagine this, Avi. There was a day – the fifteenth of Av – almost 1900 years ago, when Klal Yisrael buried the millions of dead that were slaughtered by the Romans in Beitar."  
 "That must have been the most miserable day in history, Abba."  
 "You might think so Avi. However, it was quite the opposite. The Gemora<sup>1</sup> states, 'There were no days as festive to Yisrael as Yom Kippur and the fifteenth of Av.'"  
 "Really? How could such a day be considered festive?"  
 "The Emperor Hadrian had obstructed the burial of these dead for many years. When his reign ended, the evil decree was lifted. Miraculously, the bodies had not decayed. The people were overjoyed. They could now lay their slain brothers to rest. To commemorate these miracles, the Sages in Yavneh instituted the fourth *bracha* of *Bircas HaMazone* – '*hatov vi'hameitiv*' (Who is good and does good). The first phrase, '(Hashem) Who is good', commemorates the miracle of the preservation of the dead bodies. The second phrase, 'Who does good', recalls that He ultimately ordained that they could be buried."  
 "Now I understand how a day with so many *leviachs* can be festive. Abba, can you please explain the rest of the *bracha* '*hatov vi'hameitiv*' to me?"

"With pleasure, Avi. We begin the *bracha* with a long list of Hashem's praises. 'Hashem, You are the source of all blessing, our G-d (Who takes care of us with Divine Providence), King of the universe, the Almighty, our Father (Whose mercy is like a Father to a son), our King (Whom we fear), our Mighty One (Who will allow no one to destroy us), our Creator (of our souls), our Redeemer (now and in the future), our Maker (of our bodies), our Holy One (Who made us holy), the Holy One of Yaakov. (You are) our Shepherd (Who feeds and takes care of us), the Shepherd of Yisrael.'"  
 "Who can comprehend Hashem's greatness, Abba?"

"We can try our best by contemplating these words, saying them, and hoping they penetrate our minds, hearts, and souls. The *bracha* continues proclaiming Hashem's goodness, 'The King Who is good (as shown by His preventing the bodies of the slain of Beitar from decaying), and Who does good for all (especially by bringing the victims of Beitar to burial). Every single day He has done good (for us in the past), He does good (for us now), He will do good for us (in the future).' Let me point out Avi, that every day we benefit from the good things that Hashem has done for us in the past. For example, when a sick person receives a *refuah* (cure) from Hashem, he benefits from his return to health every day thereafter. Were it not for the *refuah*, his sickness would continue indefinitely. We also benefit every day from the knowledge that the Almighty will do good for us in the future. We are relaxed today, knowing that we are in His good hands tomorrow, the next day, and forever."

"His goodness is everlasting! Abba, I notice that the word '*Hu*' (He) appears six times in this part of the *bracha*."  
 "What an astute observation Avi! Rav Hirsch points out that the repetition is to show that He is the only One Who provides for us. We should look to no one else to fulfill our needs. 'He has rewarded us, He rewards us, and He will reward us forever – with favor (that we may find in His eyes and the eyes of all who see us), kindness, and compassion (by not punishing strictly according to our wrongdoings). (May He grant us) relief, salvation, success, blessing, deliverance (from this *golus*), consolation, sustenance, support, mercy, (long) life, peace, and everything good. And may He never deprive us of all good things.'"  
 "We have the privilege of asking for so much from Hashem, Abba."  
 "Yes we do, Avi. He wants us to ask, and by doing so, realize that all the good comes from Him. This enables Him (so to speak) to grant all of our requests. I give you a big blessing Avi, that you say this *bracha* with intense *kavannah* (intention); thereby merit receiving all good things from the Almighty."  
 "Amen!"

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### Kinderlach . . .

*Hashem's goodness is everywhere. Who would think that massive leviachs are a good thing? However, the miracles of the fifteenth of Av were so great, that our Sages fixed a bracha commemorating them. We say this bracha at a time of simcha (happiness) – after the seudah (meal).<sup>2</sup> We take the opportunity to praise and thank the Almighty for almost every aspect of our lives in this blessing. Kinderlach, study it, know it, and say it with great kavannah and simcha! You will be rewarded with a greater appreciation of the Boray Olam. May He always grant all of your requests and shower you with blessings!*

<sup>1</sup> Taanis 30b

<sup>2</sup> Abudarham

Other sources: Blessing of Blessings, Iyun HaTefillah

## The Haggadah in Hebrew from the author of "Kinder Torah."

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