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# PARSHA ENCOUNTERS

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Parshas Shemos ✍️ Rabbi Eliezer Irons

## Stepping into the Future

There are nine different places where we find a mention of shoes. Below we will discuss the integral role shoes play in Yiddishkeit.

1. Moshe was standing by the burning bush and Hashem told him, "Remove your shoes" (Shmos 3:5). The place Moshe was standing on was a holy place. Apparently, shoes are the antithesis of holiness, and therefore they had to be removed. Why?

2. The Kohanim serving in the Bais Hamikdash worked without shoes. Why?

3. We make a bracha every morning, "sheoso li kol tzorki", You have provided me with every need. The Gemora explains that this bracha is thanking Hashem for our shoes. Why are shoes so important that every need is considered fulfilled with them?

4. In Devarim ch. 25 when a man decides not to marry his brother's wife, the wife of the deceased removes his shoe to proclaim, "Bais chaluf na'al", your house is one of the removal of shoe. Why does the shoe have such an integral role in this, and what is the meaning of "a house of removal of shoe"?

5. The Medrash Tanchuma in Parshas Vayeshev says Yosef was sold for 20 pieces of silver, and each brother received two silver coins. With this money, each brother bought shoes. Why shoes? Had they all worn out their shoes at the same time?

The Medrash that discusses the asora harugei malchus says how the king filled his palace with shoes and took ten sages as a kaporah for the sin of the ten brothers who sold their brother for shoes. In the Haftorah of Parshas Vayeshev, Amos 2:25 Hashem says, "Al shloshe pishei yisroel v'al arbah lo ashivenu al mecharam bakesef tzaddik v'evyon ba'avur na'alayim". This possuk is referring to Yosef. What is so significant about shoes that it upset Hashem and the king?

6. A mourner sits for seven days and removes his shoes. Why?

7. The gemora Shabbos 129. says, "L'olam yimkor adam afilu koros baiso v'yikach na'alayim l'raglov—A person should sell even the beams of his own house in order to buy shoes". Rashi explains, there is nothing more shameful than walking around barefoot. Is there any other explanation of these words?

8. The Gemora Yuma 78: says, a person who sleeps with his shoes on is tasting a taste of death. Why?

9. The Kaf Hachaim explains from the sefer Chasidim that one shouldn't wear the shoes of a dead person. Why?

The answers to all these questions can be explained with a yesod of R' Shamshon Refael Hirsch. He writes in Devarim 25 that the reason Chalitzah is done is because "A brother who was not ready, provided the law and circumstance allowed it, to build up the house of his brother, would deserve

to become shoeless, to lose all firm standing and means of going forward on earth. His house itself should be called the house from which the shoe had been taken- the house which had lost standing and **progress**".

R' Hirsch explains why Moshe had to remove his shoes by the burning bush. He was standing on a "holy place", meaning- this was ground with a holy "destination". This place was being chosen by Hashem to give Moshe the mission of saving Bnei Yisroel. He was told to remove his shoes to symbolize that he should not feel it necessary to change himself and "move beyond" his mission. Rather Moshe was simply supposed to give up of himself for the mission that he is being given. Likewise the Kohanim in the Beis Hamikdash stood barefoot on the ground as to symbolize that they must identify themselves and absorb themselves with the kedusha of that place rather than try to **progress further**. In summary, shoes symbolize progress. When a person arrives at a holy place, there is no room for progress, as he has reached his goal.

A person in this world is called a "mehalaich". His purpose is to move forward and constantly progress. The mishna in Avos p.1 mishna 3 says "One who doesn't add decreases." It is impossible for a person to stay in one place. If he isn't actively moving upward spiritually, he automatically descends. A tzaddik has no menucha (rest) in this world as he has to keep on progressing. Throughout the day man wears shoes as he moves from place to place. The Kaf Hachayim siman 46 explains the bracha of "sheoso li kol tzorki". When a person has shoes he feels prepared to go and do whatever he wants. A person's needs can all be fulfilled because of his shoes. Shoes symbolize progression. When a person dies and his shoes are removed, he has stopped progressing. The level he has attained by the day he dies will remain forever. We can understand now why his shoes should not be worn by others. These shoes have stopped progressing, and one who wants to progress in his life will not and cannot do so with shoes belonging to someone who has stopped moving forward. The gemora says that when one sleeps, he is experiencing a sixtieth of death. Were he to wear shoes which represent progression, at a time when he is compared to one who progresses no more, the shoes won't have the same capacity of "forward movement" when he awakens. The idea of mourning is to reflect on the niftar. At this time, the mourners must stop all other activities, for example, one can't progress in Torah etc. "Take of your shoes", we tell the mourner, "You are not going to progress in these seven days."

Yosef's brothers were constantly scared of Yosef saying Loshon Hora. Additionally, they were scared that Yaakov might curse them because they were ovrai aveira. Yosef was stopping their progression. When they sold Yosef, they all bought shoes as if to say, now we can progress. (Hashem was upset because a person who progresses in life by stepping on others is wrong. It is incorrect to sell one's brother, even if he's stopping others progress.) This is why chazal say one should sell all his possessions to purchase shoes. One can't progress in life without shoes. In the Bais Hamikdash, the epitome of kedusha, where there's nowhere else to go, one has reached the ultimate in spirituality. Thus, when serving there, one removes his shoes.

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# HALACHA ENCOUNTERS

## The Brocha of HaTov V'HaMaitiv

Rabbi Yisroel Langer

**Q**: When is the brocha of "*HaTov V'HaMaitiv*" recited on wine?

**A**: The Gemorah in Berachos (59b) says that if one is drinking wine at the table and he is presented with another kind of wine, he is to recite the brocha of "*HaTov V'HaMaitiv*."

This brocha is made to thank *Hashem Yisborach* for the abundance of wine that He gave to us. Many conditions have to be met for the reciting of this *brocha* to be warranted. For this reason, recital of this *brocha* is somewhat uncommon. In the following paragraphs we will try to clarify the rules and determine under what circumstances it should be said.

The Rishonim<sup>1</sup> say that this brocha is only said on wine, since wine has the unique ability to satiate and gladden a person. Therefore, if one is drinking wine and another wine is brought to the table, a "*HaTov V'HaMaitiv*" is recited on the second wine. The Shulchan Aruch<sup>2</sup> follows the ruling of Rashi<sup>3</sup> and the Rashbam<sup>4</sup> that the brocha is only recited if the second wine is superior<sup>5</sup> in quality to the first one, or at least not inferior in quality to the first one. Even if one is unsure if the second wine is superior to the first, the brocha is recited.<sup>6</sup>

The brocha of "*HaTov V'HaMaitiv*" implies that Hashem is "*tov*" – good to me, and "*haMaitiv*" – good to others. Therefore the brocha is only recited if the wines are to be drunk **freely** by others at the table. If there is nobody else at the table partaking of **both** wines, no brocha is recited.

So far we have mentioned two conditions. 1) The second wine cannot be of inferior quality to the first wine. 2) Both bottles of wine are being shared with another person. According to the Magen Avraham, there is a third condition to be met as well. He says that when the second bottle is brought to the table there has to be wine left in the first bottle. Only when there are multiple wines at the table at once is that a sign of an abundance of wine. The Mishna Berurah<sup>7</sup> quotes this as halacha.

The Rishonim argue as to what to do if one has two bottles of wine at the table. Rabbeinu Manoach<sup>8</sup> holds that one should make his brocha of *Borei Pri HaGofen* on the inferior wine, thereby enabling himself to make a *HaTov V'HaMaitiv* on the superior wine. Other Rishonim hold that the brocha of *Borei Pri HaGofen* must always be said on the most superior wine available. This is the ruling of the Shulchan Aruch.<sup>9</sup> The Mishna Berurah<sup>10</sup> says that even if the superior wine is not on the table, if you know that you will be drinking from it during the meal, one should bring it to the table immediately and make the *Borei Pri HaGofen* on it.<sup>11</sup> However, if one accidentally made the *Borei Pri HaGofen* on the inferior wine, he should then make a *HaTov V'HaMaitiv* on the superior wine.<sup>12</sup>

There is a dispute amongst the Poskim about how much wine one has to drink to require the brocha of *HaTov V'HaMaitiv*. Some<sup>13</sup> say that a *reviis* (at least 3.3 fluid oz.) of wine has to be drunk of both wines (by both people). Others do not hold of this requirement, as we do not find it mentioned by the Mishna Berurah or other Acharonim.<sup>14</sup>

The Poskim also argue whether grape juice can be classified as a wine regarding the brocha of *HaTov V'HaMaitiv*. Do we say that since it has no alcohol content and does not bring a person to happiness no *brocha* is recited?<sup>15</sup> Or perhaps just as grape juice is considered as wine in other areas of halacha, here too it is to be treated as wine.<sup>16</sup>

Some<sup>17</sup> say that all these halachos only apply to someone who is a connoisseur, or one who appreciates the different tastes of wine. However, someone who does not have an appreciation for all the different types of wine never recites the brocha of *HaTov V'HaMaitiv*.

In summary, the following conditions must be met to require the brocha of *HaTov V'HaMaitiv*.

1. The second wine cannot be inferior in quality to the first wine.
2. Both wines must be drunk by at least one other person.
3. While the second bottle of wine is drunk, there is still wine remaining in the first bottle.
4. According to some Poskim, both people must drink a *reviis* of each wine.
5. According to some Poskim, only a wine connoisseur makes this brocha.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tosfos and Rosh, Berachos 59b

<sup>2</sup> 175:2

<sup>3</sup> Berachos 59b

<sup>4</sup> Pesachim 101

<sup>5</sup> Some say that the condition of being superior is dependent upon the individual drinking it. Whichever wine the individual appreciates more is considered superior (Talmidei HaGaon Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l in his name). The Avnei Yashphe (Volume I, 36) argues and holds that "superiority" is not dependent on the individual taste but rather whichever wine is considered by the world to be of greater quality. See also Shulchan Aruch 175:2, that if one drinks white wine that is slightly inferior to the red wine, the brocha is recited. The reason cited is that white wine is considered healthier than red wine.

<sup>6</sup> M.B. 175:14, the M.B. adds that in this situation it is better if the second wine is not on the table when the *Borei Pri HaGofen* is being recited on the first wine.

<sup>7</sup> 175:3

<sup>8</sup> Quoted by Beis Yosef 175

<sup>9</sup> 175:3

<sup>10</sup> Citing the Lechem Chamudos – as explained by Harav Chaim Kanievsky in Shoneh Halachos see footnote 18.

<sup>11</sup> Unless one has a special reason for saving the superior wine for later (i.e. he wants to have the dry wine with his meat, not for *Kiddush*).

<sup>12</sup> Mishna Berurah 175:5

<sup>13</sup> MaHarsham in the name of Da'as Kedoshim, Eshel Avraham [Mebutchatch] and others

<sup>14</sup> Avnei Yashphe Volume I 38, see V'Zos Habrocha p. 171

<sup>15</sup> Avnei Yashphe quoting HaGaon R' Elyashiv, Minchas Yitzchok

<sup>16</sup> Avnei Yashphe I 36-38, Beis Yehuda, Daas Yorah 175, HaGaon Rav Chaim Scheinberg, HaGaon Rav Y.Y. Fisher, see V'Zos Habrocha p. 172

<sup>17</sup> Talmidim of HaGaon Rav Moshe Feinstein ZT"l in his name

<sup>18</sup> According to the Levush quoted by the Mishna Berurah (175:4) [as explained by HaRav Yitzchok Ruben in Sefer Mizmor L'Soda p. 71-76 and quoted in Sefer V'Zos Habrocha p. 302] if one has two wines of **equal quality**, and they are both at the table at the time when the *Borei Pri HaGofen* is recited, a *HaTov V' Hameitiv* is not recited on the second wine. According to the Lechem Chamudos, even if the second bottle (of equal quality) is not at the table, but it's in the house and you know that it will be brought to the table no *HaTov V'HaMaitiv* is recited. But if the second bottle is of greater quality then a *HaTov V'HaMaitiv* is recited.

Rabbi Langer learns full time in the Kollel.