

BILVAVI

BUILDING A SANCTUARY IN THE HEART

לחיות את הפרשה

BEREISHIS #470

בְּרֵאשִׁית בְּרֵאשִׁית אֱלֹקִים (בראשית א,א)

LIVE THE BEGINNINGS

Rashi writes, “*Chazal* (Bereishis Rabba 1:1) teach that Hashem created the world for the Torah, which is called רֵאשִׁית דְּרָכָו, ‘the beginning of His way’ (Mishlei 8:22) and for Yisrael who are called רֵאשִׁית תְּבוּאָתָהּ, ‘the first of His grain’ (Yirmiyahu 2:3).”

A Yid, for every topic, should serve Hashem with רֵאשִׁית, the beginning.

There is a category of mitzvos that are on the topic of רֵאשִׁית, new beginnings, such as bechor (to redeem a firstborn child), terumah (to give the first of the crops to a kohen) and challah (to give the first of the dough to a kohen).

IN PRACTICE

One should sanctify the beginning of the day, to use it to serve Hashem. For example, he can say the brachah אלקי נשמה with kavanah. When a person has a set time to study Torah, he can sanctify its beginning by not speaking idle words for the first few minutes. When saying birkas hamazon, he can make sure to have kavanah at the first few words.

The wise will understand how to use this counsel for all aspects of his life, according to his madreigah.

EXPANDED BASED ON EDITORS UNDERSTANDING

BEGINNINGS

There is a Torah principle to sanctify the beginning of everything one does. This applies to all holy deeds one performs (such as Torah and tefillah) and it also applies to all gashmiyus actions. The beginning of each deed should be l'shem Shamayim, and should be pure.

Rashi (1:1) writes, “*Chazal* (Bereishis Rabba 1:1) teach that Hashem created the world for the Torah, which is called רֵאשִׁית דְּרָכָו, ‘the beginning of His way’ (Mishlei 8:22) and for Yisrael who are called רֵאשִׁית תְּבוּאָתָהּ, ‘the first of His grain’ (Yirmiyahu 2:3).” When one sanctifies the “first” he is on the level of Yisrael, which is called first.

There are mitzvos that are specifically on the topic of רֵאשִׁית, beginnings, such as the mitzvos of bechor (to redeem a firstborn child), terumah (to give the first of the crops to a kohen) and challah (to give the first of the dough to a kohen). These mitzvos represent the great ideal of sanctifying all “firsts” for Hashem.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

The beginning of each day should also be sanctified for Hashem. One way to do this is to say the brachah אלקי נשמה שנתת בי with kavanah. When studying Torah, sanctify its beginning by not speaking idle words for the first few minutes. When saying birkas hamazon, have kavanah at the first few words. With everything you do, sanctify its beginning, according to your madreigah and ability. This will elevate you to the level of רֵאשִׁית, first, about which it states רֵאשִׁית תְּבוּאָתָהּ, “Yisrael is holy to Hashem, the first of His grain” (Yirmiyahu 2:3).

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