

Zera Shimshon

Profound Divrei Torah culled from the writings of the Gaon and Mekubal Rav Shimshon Chaim ben Rav Nachman Michael Nachmeni zy"l, author of Sefer Zera Shimshon on Chumash and Toldos Shimshon on Pirkei Avos, who promised that all who study his words will be blessed with an abundance of good, wealth and honor, and will merit to see children and grandchildren thriving around their table.



אמרות שמשון

The Precautions the Sages Took in Order to Protect One from Danger in Middle of a Meal

וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבַעְתָּ וּבֵרַכְתָּ אֶת ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ עַל הָאָרֶץ הַטֶּבֶה אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָךְ: (דברים ח י)

You will eat and you will be satisfied and you will bless Hashem for the good land that He gave you.

The Gemara in Taanis (ה ע"ב) relates the following narrative. רב נחמן ורבי יצחק הוו. יתבי בסעודתא. אמר ליה רב נחמן לר' יצחק לימא מר מילתא. אמר ליה הכי אמר רבי יוחנן אין מסיחין - בסעודה שמא יקדים קנה לושט ויבא לידי סכנה. Rav Nachman and R' Yitzchak were sitting at a meal. Rav Nachman said to R' Yitzchak: Let the master say some words of Torah. R' Yitzchak answered him: R' Yochanan said that one should not talk during a meal, lest one's windpipe precede the esophagus in receiving the food, and he will thereby come to danger. [i.e. When one talks, the covering of the windpipe opens; thus, if talking in middle of a meal, the food could enter the windpipe rather than the esophagus and this could cause one to choke.] Therefore R' Yitzchak concluded that he will not talk during the meal.

There is much that needs to be understood regarding this story. Firstly, why did Rav Nachman request of R' Yitzchak to say words of Torah instead of doing so himself? Secondly, didn't Rav Nachman know that which R' Yitzchak stated, that 'one should not talk during a meal, lest one's windpipe precede the esophagus in receiving the food, and he will thereby come to danger'; doesn't common sense dictate that directive? And lastly, because R' Yitzchak was of the opinion

that one may not talk during a meal, and only spoke during that meal in order to teach Rav Nachman this directive which Rav Nachman seemingly didn't know, why didn't it suffice for him to just say, 'one should not talk during a meal'; why was it also important to tell him the reason for it?



The Gemara in Brachos (מג ע"א) says, שאלו את בן זומא מפני מה, אמרו בא להם יין בתוך המזון כל אחד ואחד מברך לעצמו לאחר המזון אחד אחד - They asked Zoma: For what reason did they say, 'If wine is brought to them during the meal, each one recites the blessings for himself; but if the wine is brought to them after the meal, one recites the blessing for all of them'? He said to them: Because the throat is not clear of food during the meal. [i.e. The reason why each one must recite the blessing by himself when the wine comes during the meal, is because during the meal all the assembled are preoccupied with swallowing their food, and if one were to recite the blessing aloud for all of them, it might cause one of the listeners to choke on his food while answering 'Amen'.]

Tosfos initially quotes the opinion of those who say that, although the Mishna teaches us that when wine is brought in middle of a meal each one recites the blessing for himself out of concern that the assembled might answer 'Amen' in middle of eating, nevertheless, if the assembled want, they may stop eating in

order to enable one of them to recite the blessing for all of them. Tosfos also quotes the opinion of Rabainu Elchonon who disagrees with the first opinion, and says that because the Mishnah says that 'if wine is brought to them during the meal, each one recites the blessings for himself', it is prohibited in every manner for one to make a blessing for others in middle of a meal.



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We can explain that Rav Nachman's opinion was like the first opinion quoted by Tosfos, that if the assembled want, they may stop eating, and then one may recite the blessing for all even in middle of the meal. The same would go for saying words of Torah; if the assembled would stop eating, one would be allowed to say words of Torah in middle of the meal. Accordingly, although Rav Nachman himself couldn't say words of Torah, for he was unsure if R' Yitzchak would stop eating, nevertheless he told R' Yitzchak that *he* should say words of Torah, for he - Rav Nachman - would indeed stop eating.

But R' Yitzchak was of the opinion that because the sages clearly did not allow one to recite the blessing for all in middle of the meal because

of its associated danger, therefore, nothing - even the other assembled stopping to eat - can permit one to recite the blessing for all in middle of the meal. Accordingly, R' Yitzchak replied to Rav Nachman's request, *R' Yochanan said that one should not talk during a meal*; alluding to his opinion that one may never talk in middle of a meal. And in order to emphasize that it's a matter of danger about which we're concerned, R' Yitzchak added the reason, *'lest one's windpipe precede the esophagus in receiving the food, and he will thereby come to danger'*; to allude that out of the concern of danger, the sages *never* permitted one to talk in middle of a meal, even if the others would agree to stop eating.

זרע שמשון פרשתנו אות ח

נכורת שמשון סיפורי יסוצה

The tycoon declared: "Salvation came with certainty through the merit of Zera Shimshon."

Rav Tzvi Mordechai Bristowsky, Shlita, director of the institutions of Ohr Hashem, tells us:

*A short time ago, late at night in Israel, a close friend called me from the United States. This good man, with whom I have been in contact for a long time, supports the Torah and helps my institutions in many ways, with donations and acts of kindness. In his call he informed me that in the next few hours, **b'ezras Hashem**, his daughter would be engaged to marry an ideal young man. The emotion that my friend had in those moments was such that I could feel it on my side of the phone, and I also let myself be carried away by his special joy.*

*I knew that he had recently done a great act of kindness, so I told him that it must be the merit of that act of kindness that gave him the privilege of reaching a happy and successful moment like this. But his response to my assertion left me very surprised. My friend did not agree one hundred percent with what I said; Although he did not reject my words, he told me the following: "I am very happy that I was able to do this act of kindness that you mentioned, and it is certainly something important and great. But I will tell you for sure that today we are closing the engagement thanks to the **Zera Shimshon!**"*

I was really amazed and asked him, "How did you come to that conclusion? Are you a prophet?!" However, undisturbed, my friend proceeded to share with me how he experienced his salvation. He told me:

"As you know, my daughter had a hard time finding her

partner. Once, after searching for a long time, she had met a young man to whom she became engaged, but it did not last. Soon after, she called off the engagement, causing her – and us, as her parents – great distress. We know that our daughter has a true stock of virtues, so we never stop hoping and praying that she would find her partner very soon.

*"One day, we saw an advertisement for the book **Zera Shimshon** about Eshet Chail (the poem 'A Woman of Valor' at the end of The Book of Mishleh) in English, written by Rabbi Nachman Seltzer, Shlita, and published by Artscroll Publishing House in cooperation with the World Organization for the Dissemination of the Torah of **Zera Shimshon**. My wife really loved the book and saw in it a true angel of salvation from Heaven. She rushed to buy it immediately, and every day when I came home from work, we read in this book the words of the teachings of **Zera Shimshon**. After the study, together we would pray and supplicate to G-d that, through the merit of Rabbi Shimshon Chaim ben Rabbi Nachman Michael, Zatzal, we would see our personal salvation very soon. And tonight, the day when we are to finish the study of the whole book from beginning to end, we will merit, with Heaven's help, to 'break the plate' with joy and good luck. And because of this, I feel that it has been the merit of the **Zera Shimshon** that has allowed us to reach this moment."*

Published and distributed by The International Organization to Disseminate the Works of The Zera Shimshon
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