



5776/2015-2016: HILCHOT BRACHOT

**Note: All פסקי הלכה taught in this course follow the rulings of the (סימן קי) משנה ברורה and ספר אשי ישראל by R' Avraham Yeshaya Pfoifer (2000, מכון נשמת אהרן ויעקב).*

תפילת הדרך - Lesson 3, WEEK 4

This unit will cover the following:

- The specific parameters of when one is **obligated** to say תפילת הדרך
- The **text** and simple **definition** of the תפילה, with specific Halachic nuances

Introduction

1. The גמרא in אגב-ל, אגב-ל, אגב-ל obligates one to pray before setting out on a journey. It is important to recall the historical context in which this was stated:
 - a. Imagine a world without roads, streetlights, cell phones or Waze. Within the confines of the city or village you were more or less safe. When setting out of the boundaries of civilization, however, you were suddenly exposed to serious and potentially life threatening dangers such as hazardous weather conditions and humans and animals who may take advantage of your vulnerability. Additionally, if something were to happen, who would even help you? How would you receive medical care in time? Remember that you couldn't exactly ask Siri to call 9-1-1 for you.
 - b. If you traveled by boat, you risked the additionally possibility of capsizing and drowning, חס ושלום.
2. Today we may not face the same dangers as those so relevant in the past as the nature of travel has profoundly changed. However as we will soon see, travel today still poses potentially serious risks and we certainly still need the protection from Hashem that we hope to merit when reciting תפילת הדרך. (Think: car accidents, plane crashes, terrorists throwing rocks at cars and busses).

Obligation

3. The ברכה is said when traveling on foot as well as by car, bus, train, boat, airplane, horseback, covered wagon, hot air balloon, spaceship, flying carpet, broomstick, etc.
4. **Q: How far must you travel in order to necessitate the recitation of this ברכה?**
A: The ברכה is also only said if you will be traveling at least a פרסה, or three miles (12,000 feet) past the city in total. If you travel less than this, you may still recite the ברכה if you wish, but you should leave out Hashem's name in the ברכה at the end.
 - a. This is because within a פרסה of a city you are still considered to be safe and the ברכה is not deemed necessary.
 - b. If, however, you are entering dangerous territory immediately outside your city (as is common in Israel and elsewhere), you may say the ברכה with שם ה' even within a פרסה.
5. **Q: Once you will be traveling 3 or more miles, when should you recite the ברכה?**
A: The גמרא instructs us to say this prayer "when going out on the way." This is explained to be referring to after you have officially "left" the city environs. This is determined by Halacha to be the case only once you have traveled 105 feet (70 אמות) past the final house of the city. The ברכה *may not* be said before you have traveled this distance.
 - a. Therefore, when driving, make sure you have driven a few minutes past the city before saying the ברכה.
 - b. Additionally, the ברכה should be recited as soon as possible from when you embark on your journey (once you are 105 feet past the last house of the city as mentioned above) and preferably within the first פרסה/three miles of the trip.
 - c. If you forget or are unable to say the ברכה until many miles or several hours into your trip, you should recite it as soon as possible, as long as you are still a distance of one פרסה or more from your destination city. (Nowadays cities and inhabitation surrounding them cover quite a bit and you can still have a long while to travel to your destination even once you are within the destination city). Again, the logic is that you are considered to be safe once you are within a פרסה of a city.
 - d. When on an airplane, you should recite the ברכה immediately after takeoff, since at such speed you have already covered the initial one פרסה.
6. Preferably, the ברכה should be made standing upright and still. If this is difficult (such as in a car or plane), it is fine to say it while sitting down.
7. The תפילה is only supposed to be said once per day and covers all trips made that day, even though the journey will be interrupted by rest, work, sightseeing, etc.
 - a. Therefore, if you drive from D.C. to Philadelphia for the afternoon and then continue to New York to spend the night there, only one ברכה is made (at the outset of the first drive).

- b. Similarly, if one is driving cross-country, each day begins a new obligation to say the ברכה.
 - i. If there are multiple drivers and you drive straight without stopping to sleep, the ברכה should be said the next day but without Hashem's name.
 - ii. Similarly, when traveling on a cruise, the ברכה should be said each day, but should only be complete on the first day with Hashem's name omitted on each subsequent day.
 - c. Exception: If you said תפילת הדרך at the outset of a planned trip to one or more destinations, but then decided last minute to continue on to an additional destination, תפילת הדרך must be recited on this new travel. The reasoning for this is the same as with ברכות said over food which we have already studied. Once you *decide* that you are finished it is considered היסח הדעת, a diversion from your original intent, and your ברכה is no longer valid.
8. It is common for one member of the traveling party to say תפילת הדרך out loud on behalf of everyone traveling in the same car, bus, plane, etc. Provided that they listened and said "אמן," the other travelers will have fulfilled their obligation this way. However, it is still considered preferable for every member of the traveling party to recite the ברכה for himself or herself.
 9. It is also customary (although in no way required) to recite a ברכה before beginning תפילת הדרך so that it will be proceeded as well as concluded by blessings. The easiest way to accomplish this is by eating something prior to saying the prayer. (A great excuse to have a snack).

Text and Definition

10. The following is the common text used for the תפילה with a simple translation:

- יהי רצון מלפניך - May it be Your will
- ה' א-להינו וא-להי אבותינו - Hashem, our G-d and the G-d of our forefathers
- שתוליכנו לשלום - that you lead us toward שלום*
- ותצעידנו לשלום - and position our footsteps toward שלום
- ותדריכנו לשלום - and guide us toward שלום
- ותגיעינו למחוז חפצינו - and make us reach our desired destination
- לחיים ולשמחה ולשלום - for life, gladness and שלום.**
- ותצילנו מכף כל
 - אויב - enemy
 - ואורב - and ambush
 - ולסטים - and bandits
 - וחיות רעות - and wild animals
- בדרך - along the way
- ומכל מיני פורעניות המתרגשות לבוא לעולם - and from all manner of punishments*** that assemble to come to earth.

- **ותשלח ברכה בכל מעשי ידינו** - And may You send blessing in our every handiwork
- **ותתננו** - and grant us
 - **לחן** - for grace
 - **ולחסד** - and for kindness
 - **ולרחמים** - and for mercy
- **בעיניך ובעיני כל רואינו** - in Your eyes and in the eyes of all who see us.
- **ותשמע קול תחנונינו** - And may You hear the sound of our supplication (prayer)
- **כי א-ל שומע תפילה ותחנון אתה** - because You are G-d who hears prayer and supplication.
- **ברוך אתה ה' שומע תפילה** - You, Hashem, are the Source of Blessing, Who hears prayer.

* More accurately defined as *harmony*, as opposed to the more standard “peace” which simply represents the absence of conflict.

** If you plan to go somewhere far and return home that same *day* (defined not by sunset but by when you go to sleep for the night), you should add the phrase “**ותחזירנו לביתנו לשלום**” - and *return* us to our homes in **שלום**.

*** R' Chaim Kanievsky says that these words include all potential dangers and it is not necessary to amend the text given to us by חז"ל by adding words or phrases to specify dangers like car accidents or terror attacks.

11. The **גמרא** writes that the text of the **ברכה** is recited in the plural form so as to benefit all of **כלל ישראל** by including them in the requests to Hashem and subsequent **ברכות** bestowed upon us by Hashem. Moreover, whenever we unite ourselves with the needs and merits of others we increase the chance that our prayers will be heard.