



Talmud Tractate Berachos

Session 1

דף ב עמוד א

The beginning of tractate Berachot, the first tractate in the first of the six orders of Mishna, opens with a discussion of the recitation of Shema, as the recitation of Shema encompasses an acceptance of the yoke of Heaven and of the mitzvot, and as such, forms the basis for all subsequent teachings. The Mishna opens with the laws regarding the appropriate time to recite Shema.

MISHNA 1

The Time to Recite the Evening Shema

The Torah tells us that we should recite Shema “when you lie down, and when you arise.” Now we must understand what time is considered “when you lie down”?

The Mishna brings three opinions:

רש"י

מאימתי קורין את שמע בערבין. משעה שהכהנים נכנסים לאכול בתרומתן –
כהנים שנטמאו וטבלו והעריב שמשן והגיע עתם לאכול בתרומה : **עד סוף האשמורה הראשונה –**
שליש הלילה כדמפרש בגמרא (דף ג.) ומשם ואילך עבר זמן דלא מקרי תו זמן שכיבה ולא קרינן ביה בשכבך ומקמי הכי נמי לאו זמן שכיבה לפיכך הקורא קודם לכן לא יצא ידי חובתו. אם כן למה קורין אותה בבית הכנסת

מאימתי קורין את שמע בערבין? משיעה שהכהנים נכנסים לאכול בתרומתן. עד סוף האשמורה הראשונה. דברי רבי אליעזר.

ונחמיהם אומרים: עד תצות.

רבן גמליאל אומר עד שיעלה עמוד השחר.

מעשה ובאו בניו מבית המלשטה, אמרו לו: לא קרינו את שמע, אמר להם: אם לא עלה עמוד השחר חייבין אתם לקרות. ולא זו בלבד אמרו, אלא כל מה שאמרו חכמים “עד תצות”, מצותן עד שיעלה עמוד השחר.

הקטר חלבים ואברים, מצותן עד שיעלה עמוד השחר וכל הנאכלים ליום אחד, מצותן עד שיעלה עמוד השחר. אם כן, למה אמרו חכמים “עד תצות” — כדי להרחיק אדם מן העבירה :

כדי לעמוד בתפלה מתוך דברי תורה והכי תניא בברי' בברכות ירושלמי. ולפיכך חובה עלינו לקרותה משתחשך. ובקריאת פרשה ראשונה שאדם קורא על מטתו יצא: **עד שיעלה עמוד השחר** – שכל הלילה קרוי זמן שכילה: **הקטר חלבים ואברים** – של קרבנות שנזרק דמן ביום: **מצותן** – להעלות כל הלילה ואינן נפסלים בלינה עד שיעלה עמוד השחר והן למטה מן המזבח דכתיב ולא ילין לבקר (שמות ל"ד:כ"ה): **חלבים** – של כל קרבנות: **אברים** – של עולה: **וכל הנאכלים ליום אחד** – כגון חטאת ואשם וכבשי עצרת ומנחות ותודה: **מצותן** – זמן אכילתן: **עד שיעלה עמוד השחר** – והוא מביאן להיות נותר דכתיב בתודה לא יניח ממנו עד בקר (ויקרא ז'ט"ו) וכלם מתודה ילמדו: **אם כן למה אמרו חכמים עד חצות** – בקריאת שמע ובאכילת קדשים: **כדי להרחיק אדם מן העבירה** – ואסרום באכילה קודם זמנן כדי שלא יבא לאוכלן לאחר עמוד השחר ויתחייב כרת וכן בקריאת שמע לזרז את האדם שלא יאמר יש לי עוד שהות ובתוך כך יעלה עמוד השחר ועבר לו הזמן. והקטר חלבים דקתני הכא לא אמרו בו חכמים עד חצות כלל ולא נקט להו הכא אלא להודיע שכל דבר הנוהג בלילה כשר כל הלילה. והכי נמי תנן בפרק שני דמגילה (דף כ:): כל הלילה כשר לקצירת העומר ולהקטר חלבים ואברים:

MISHNA: **קורין את שמע בערבין** From when, that is, from what time, does one recite *Shema* in the evening? **משיעה שהכהנים נכנסים לאכול בתרומתן** From the time when the priests enter to partake of their *teruma*. Until when does the time for the recitation of the evening *Shema* extend? **עד סוף האשמורה הראשונה** Until the end of the first watch. The term used in the Torah (Deuteronomy 6:7) to indicate the time for the recitation of the evening *Shema* is *beshokhbekha*, when you lie down, which refers to the time in which individuals go to sleep. Therefore, the time for the recitation of *Shema* is the first portion of the night, when individuals typically prepare for sleep. **דברי רבי אליעזר** That is the statement of Rabbi Eliezer.

The Rabbis say: The time for the recitation of the evening *Shema* is **עד חצות** until midnight.

Rabban Gamliel says: One may recite *Shema* **עד שיעלה עמוד השחר** until dawn, indicating that *beshokhbekha* is to be understood as a reference to the entire time people sleep in their beds, the whole night.

The mishna relates that Rabban Gamliel practiced in accordance with his ruling. **מעשה ובאו בניו** There was an incident where Rabban Gamliel's sons returned very late from a wedding hall. **אמרו לו** They said to him, as they had been preoccupied with celebrating with the groom and bride: **לא קרינו את שמע** We did not recite *Shema*. **אמר להם** He said to them: **לא** אם לא **עלה עמוד השחר** If the dawn has not yet arrived, **אתם לקרות** you are obligated to recite *Shema*. Since Rabban Gamliel's opinion disagreed with that of the Rabbis, he explained to his sons that the Rabbis actually agree with him, **אמרו** and that it is **לא זו בלבד אמרו** not only with regard to the *halakha* of the recitation of *Shema*, **עד חצות** "עד חצות", **אלא כל מה שאמרו חכמים** but rather, wherever the Sages say until midnight, **עד שיעלה עמוד השחר** the mitzva may be performed until dawn.

Rabban Gamliel cites several cases in support of his claim, such as **הַקֵּטֶר הַלְבָבִים וְאַבְרִים מִצֹּתָן עַד** **הַשְּׁחָר שִׁיעֲלָה עִמּוֹד הַשְּׁחָר** the burning of fats and limbs on the altar. Due to the quantity of offerings each day, the priests were often unable to complete the burning of all of the fats and limbs, so they continued to be burned into the night, as it is written: “This is the law of the burnt offering: The burnt offering shall remain upon the pyre on the altar all night until morning, while the fire on the altar burns it” (Leviticus 6:2). **וְכָל הַנֶּאֱכָלִים לְיוֹם אֶחָד** And, with regard to all sacrifices, such as the sin-offerings and the guilt-offerings **that are eaten for one day** and night; although the Sages state that they may be eaten only until midnight, **עַד שִׁיעֲלָה עִמּוֹד הַשְּׁחָר** by Torah law they may be eaten **until dawn**. This is in accordance with the verse: “On the day on which it is offered must you eat. Do not leave it until the morning” (Leviticus 7:15). **אִם כֵּן לָמָּה אָמְרוּ חֲכָמִים ”עַד”** **כְּדִי לְהַרְחִיק אֶדָּם מִן הַעֲבִירָה** If so, why did the Sages say that they may be eaten only until midnight? **כְּדִי לְהַרְחִיק אֶדָּם מִן הַעֲבִירָה** This is in order to distance a person from transgression, as if one believes that he has until dawn to perform the mitzva, he might be negligent and postpone it until the opportunity to perform the mitzva has passed.

To summarize:

There are three opinions when is the time to recite the evening Shema:

- 1) Rabbi Eliezer – The first third of the night
- 2) The Rabbis – Until midnight
- 3) Rabban Gamliel – Until dawn

Rabban Gamliel explains that The Rabbis truly agree with him.

GEMARA

The Mishna Seems Start in Middle of a Subject

Before the we discuss all the details of the mishna, the gemara wants to understand the general structure of the mishna:

רש"י

היכא קאי – מהיכא קא סליק דתנא ביה חובת קריאת שמע שהתחיל לשאול כאן זמן הקריאה :

אקרא קאי – ושם למד חובת הקריאה :

ואי בעית אימא – הא דתנא ערבין ברישא יליף מברייתו של עולם :

והדר תנא בשחרית – מאימתי קורין את שמע בשחרית :

גמ' תנא היכא קאי דקתני "מאימתי" ?

ותו: מאי שנא דתני בערבית ברישא? לתני דשחרית ברישא !

תנא אקרא קאי, דכתיב: "בשכבך ובקומך". והכי קתני: זמן קריאת שמע דשכיבה אימת? — משעה שפנהגים נכנסין לאכול בתרומתן .

ואי בעית אימא: יליף מברייתו של עולם, דכתיב: "ויהי ערב ויהי בקר יום אחד" .

אי הכי, סיפא דקתני "בשחר מברך שמים לפניך ואחת לאחריה, בערב מברך שמים לפניך ושמים לאחריה", לתני דערבית ברישא !

תנא פתח בערבית, והדר תני בשחרית, עד דקאי בשחרית, פריש מילי דשחרית, והדר פריש מילי דערבית .

Question 1 – The Mishna seems to start in middle of a subject

GEMARA: The Mishna opens with the laws concerning the appropriate time to recite *Shema* with the question: From when does one recite *Shema* in the evening? With regard to this question, the Gemara asks: **תנא היכא קאי דקתני "מאימתי"** On the basis of what prior knowledge does the *tanna* of our mishna ask: **From when?** It would seem from his question that the obligation to recite *Shema* in the evening was already established, and that the *tanna* seeks only to clarify details that relate to it. But our mishna is the very first mishna in the Talmud.

Question 2 – why is the mishna starting with the evening Shema?

The Gemara asks: **ותו: מאי שנא דתני בערבית ברישא** what distinguishes the evening *Shema*, that it was taught first? **לתני דשחרית ברישא** Let the *tanna* teach regarding the recitation of **the morning Shema first**. Since most mitzvot apply during the day, the *tanna* should

discuss the morning *Shema* before discussing the evening *Shema*, just as the daily morning offering is discussed before the evening offering (*Tosefot HaRosh*).

Answer to both questions – The Mishna is a continuation to the verse

The Gemara offers a single response to both questions: תִּנָּא אֶקְרָא קְאִי The *tanna* bases himself on the verse "בְּשֹׁכְבְּךָ וּבְקוּמְךָ" as it is written: "You will talk of them when you sit in your home, and when you walk along the way, when you lie down, and when you arise" (Deuteronomy 6:7). By teaching the laws of the evening *Shema* first, the *tanna* has established that the teachings of the Oral Torah correspond to that which is taught in the Written Torah. וְהָכִי קֵתְנִי And based on the Written Torah, the *tanna* teaches the oral law: זְמַן קְרִיאַת שְׁמַע דְּשֹׁכְבָה אֵימַת When is the time for the recitation of *Shema* of lying down as commanded in the Torah? מְשַׁעָה שְׁהַכְהֵנִים מִשְׁעָה שְׁהַכְהֵנִים From when the priests enter to partake of their *teruma*. Just as the Written Torah begins with the evening *Shema*, so too must the Oral Torah.

Alternative answer to the second question

However, there is another possible explanation for why the mishna opens with the evening *Shema* rather than with the morning *Shema*. וְאִי בְּעֵית אֵימַא If you wish, you could say instead יְלִיף that the *tanna* derives the precedence of the evening *Shema* from the order of the creation of the world. "וַיְהִי עֶרֶב וַיְהִי בֹקֶר יוֹם אֶחָד" As it is written in the story of creation: "And there was evening, and there was morning, one day" (Genesis 1:5). According to this verse, day begins with the evening and not the morning. For both of these reasons it was appropriate to open the discussion of the laws of the recitation of *Shema* with the evening *Shema*.

Explaining the difference between the order of this Mishna and the order of a later Mishna

The Gemara asks: הָכִי אִי הָכִי If so, סִיפָא דְקֵתְנִי why does the latter clause of the mishna, which appears later in the chapter, teach: "בְּשַׁחַר מְבָרַךְ שְׁתֵּי לְפָנֶיהָ וְאַחַת לְאַחֶיהָ" In the morning one recites two blessings before *Shema* and one blessing afterward, "בְּעֶרֶב מְבָרַךְ שְׁתֵּי לְפָנֶיהָ וְשְׁתֵּי לְאַחֶיהָ" and in the evening one recites two blessings before *Shema* and two afterward? Based upon the above reasoning, לְתַנֵּי דְעֶרְבִית בְּרִישָׁא the mishna should have taught the blessing recited before and after the evening *Shema* first.

The Gemara answers: תִּנָּא פְּתַח בְּעֶרְבִית Indeed, the *tanna* began by discussing the laws regarding the recitation of the evening *Shema*, וְהֵדַר תְּנִי בְּשַׁחֲרִית and then taught the laws regarding the recitation of the morning *Shema*. עַד דְּקָאִי בְּשַׁחֲרִית Once he was already dealing with the morning *Shema*, פְּרִישׁ מִלֵּי דְשַׁחֲרִית he explained the matters of the morning *Shema*, וְהֵדַר פְּרִישׁ מִלֵּי דְעֶרְבִית and then explained the matters of the evening *Shema*.

Halachic Debates

In the beginning of the Mishna we learned that the time to recite the evening *Shema* starts "From the time when the priests enter to partake of their *teruma*." The Gemara will explain that this is the time when the stars come out.

The custom in many communities is to pray the evening prayer before nightfall, and to say *Shema* as well together with the rest of the evening prayer.

Rashi points out, that this custom (which seems to have also been the custom in Rashi's community) seems to contradict the first law which we learned in our Mishna?

Rashi therefore says that one does not fulfill his obligation of reciting *Shema* when it is said together with the evening prayers before nightfall. According to this, the reason why we say *Shema* before the evening prayer even when it does not fulfill the obligation of saying *Shema* is to say words of Torah before we start to pray.

Rashi is therefore of the opinion that those who pray before nightfall fulfill their obligation of saying *Shema* by saying the first paragraph of *Shema* before going to sleep.

Tosfos however, does not agree with this explanation. One of Tosfos' arguments is that the biblical obligation to say *Shema* includes all three paragraphs and the custom is to say only the first paragraph before going to sleep.

Tosfos brings two alternative explanations, which both explain that although our Mishna is of the opinion that *Shema* may be recited only from nightfall, the halachic ruling is not like the opinion of our Mishna and *Shema* may be recited already toward the end of the day.

Practical halacha:

The Shulchan Aruch rules like Rashi that one can only fulfill his obligation of saying *Shema* after nightfall. However, in a place where the Minyan prays before nightfall, one should say *Shema* with its blessings together with the minyan, and repeat *Shema* after nightfall without its blessings.

The Magen Avraham however notes that the widespread custom is to say *Shema* before nightfall and it is not repeated after nightfall, like the opinion of Tosfos.

The Magen Avraham adds that nevertheless every person should personally be stringent and say the entire *Shema* before going to sleep, or at least the first two paragraphs. In other words, one should be stringent like Rashi to say *Shema* after nightfall and one should also be stringent like Tosfos to say all three paragraphs of *Shema*.

