



Project: Sermon Resource for Shluchim
Distribution Date: August 9, 2006 / ט"ו אב תשס"ו
Parsha: Eikev / עקב

בי"ה

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1) When you ask the typical Jewish kid to "bench," he probably looks at you a little bewildered and thinks that either you're talking about the all-star baseball player, Johnny Bench, or the long thing you sit on in the park.



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2) But, if the same Jewish kid has gone to a Jewish camp, he is likely to think of "bensh" in terms of Birchas Ha-Mozon," one of the most well-know berochos.

- Parsha is origin of Birchas Ha-Mozon, only berocho made obligatory by the Torah Birchas Ha-Mozon is chain of four berochos
- Moshe Rabbenu as the manna fell to sustain the People of Israel
- Yehoshua to teach eternal gratitude to HaShem to the Jewish nation upon their entry to Eretz Yisroel.
- Kings Dovid and Sh'lomo offering praise to HaShem for the building of Yerushalayim and the Bais Ha-Mikdosh.



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3) First three berochos are commanded by the Torah



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4) Fourth composed by Rabban Gamliel and his Court in Yavneh, 52 years after the destruction of the Bais Ha-Mikdosh (ha-tov vi-ha-metiv)

- Time of the revolt of Bar Kochba, disciple of Rabbi Akiva.
- Rabbi Akiva argued that Bar Kochba was Moshiach
- Bar Kochba went off on his own path
- Rabbi's withdrew their support from him.
- Emperor Hadrian stamped out the revolt and murdered hundreds of thousands of Betar
- Hadrian, too, refused to allow the corpses to be buried
- Years later, Rabban Gamliel and his Court in Yavneh prayed and fasted until he was able to bribe the Romans to bury. On the 15th of Av, finds their bodies had not decomposed and composed "Ha-Tov Vi-Ha-Metiv.



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5) What kind of a simcha or berocho is it for tens of thousands of martyred Jews to be brought to burial?

- Each berocho of Birchas Ha-Mozon relates to a specific era in the G-d-given evolution of Jewish peoplehood.
- Ha-tov vi-ha-metiv symbolizes an era of enormous pain and destruction.
- We need find goodness and blessing even in the tragedies that befall us.



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6) The Rebbe, in the name of the Freierdiker Rebbe, observes that the 15th of Av marks the moon's ascent to its ultimate fullness, as though it were turning its back on the devastation of Tisha B'Av and replacing it with complete radiance. Even in the natural world, tzorros are being supplanted by ha-tov vi-ha-metiv at the hands of HaShem!



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7) And so it is also in our own generation. We have every right to look upon the horrendous tragedies of the Sho'ah, the Holocaust. But, we have even more of an obligation to look at the miracles of those men and women who survived and refused to surrender to the pain that they had suffered. They who watched their own families perish now can celebrate their own miracles at the hands of HaShem – families, children and grandchildren alike.



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8) Even in the midst of the most horrible of times, the gift of HaShem's people is to pray the words of Ha-Tov Vi-Ha-Metiv and to praise HaShem for the goodness that is, and is yet to come.





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