

Kehillah #57



THE PERTINENT PARASHA

The Eternal Inspiration of Sinai

Rabbi Yeshoshua Pfeffer | Rav of Kehillat Ohr Chadash, Ramot, Jerusalem

One of the highlights of the Torah is the great revelation of Hashem upon Sinai at the giving of the Torah. Yet, this miraculous revelation, replete with light, voices, and smoke, raises a simple question: Why was it necessary?

Certainly, the Torah could have been given without the special event of Sinai. Moreover, at the end of *Parashas Mishpatim* the Torah records a covenant that was with the Torah, called the "Book of the Covenant," between Hashem and the Jewish people. Why is this not sufficient? Why was this great revelation needed?

The Torah presents us with three answers to this question. The first, noted before the giving of the Torah, is that Hashem's revelation was required so the nation would hear Hashem's speech to Moshe, and would therefore believe eternally in Moshe's prophecy

Moshe thus became the authorized transmitter of the divine word.

The second, mentioned after the giving of the Torah, is that the event was required to elevate the people, thus ensuring "that His fear shall be upon your countenances so you shall not sin." The magnitude of the event instilled in us a knowledge of Hashem, a connection that bequeathed us the capacity to transcend sin.

At Sinai, we internalized the remarkable insight of divine communication with humanity.

The third, which is stated in *Devarim*, is that "this day we have seen G-d speak to humankind, yet he lives." In the event of Sinai we internalized the remarkable insight of divine communication with humanity. Even as we live an earthly life, we are receptacles for the divine word.





THE PERTINENT PARASHA



To sum up, the revelation of Sinai provided us with three fundamental concepts. The first is the truth of the Torah, transmitted faithfully by Moshe. The second is our connection with Hashem, defined by the *yiras Elokim* that was first ascribed to Avraham Avinu at the *Akeida*. The third is our human greatness. Even as we live, the word of Hashem is within us.

As we continue to engage in war against an evil enemy, these three seminal ideas spur us on to fight with courage and conviction.

First, we take this courage from the Torah, the story of the Jewish nation and its connection with Hashem. When we appreciate that we are part of a great story, writing the next chapter in the annals of our nation, this gives us the strength to fight even when it entails great danger and sacrifice.

Second, we draw valor from our connection with Hashem, which is primarily a connection of trust – as Avraham trusted Hashem at the *Akeida*. The verse in *Tehillim* tells us to “trust Hashem and perform goodness.” Hashem is not just a “great G-d,” but rather the source of all goodness.

His trust inspires us to always seek the good.

Third, we are brave because we know our own greatness. We know that a divine spark resides within us, and this self-awareness drives us to great deeds.

By encompassing these three matters, which can be summed up by the *Zohar's* triple unity of *Kudsha Berich Hu* (trust in Hashem), *Yisrael* (the human elevation latent within us), and *Oraisa* (our part in the great story of the Jewish people), the event of Sinai ensured we have the fortitude to realize the Torah even in the harshest of times.

Being present at the funerals of remarkable Jewish soldiers – we should know no more losses – of whom many fought for the right to participate in the war effort, we see the result of these three foundations. The courage, resilience, and determination of our soldiers draw from the fact of their awareness of the great Jewish collective, of their own personal elevation, and of ultimate trust in Hashem's goodness.

Their memory is an inspiration to all of us.



Do the Right Thing

Rabbi Yaacov Haber – Rav of Kehillas Shivtei Yeshurun, Ramat Beit Shemesh

There is an interesting story told in *sefer Shoftim* 17. Someone by the name of Michayahu founded an idolatrous cult. He had an idol and built a temple for this purpose, and he sought someone with leadership qualities, charisma, and spirituality to lead his group. After a long search he met Yehonasan ben Gershom ben Menashe of the House of Levi. Michayahu offered him the job of high priest of his new religion. Yehonasan agreed.

Who was Yehonasan ben Gershom ben Menashe of the House of Levi? His grandfather could not have been Menashe, the well-known villain, for he had not been born yet. According to the Gemara (*Bava Basra* 109), “Menashe” is really a disguised form of “Moshe” Yehonasan was the grandson of Moshe Rabbeinu!

What did Moshe do to deserve such a grandson? The Midrash explains that after working as a shepherd for Yisro, Moshe sought his permission to marry his daughter Tzippora. Yisro consented, provided that their firstborn serve as high priest in the Midianite religion.

high priest in the Midianite religion. Yisro wanted to make sure he would have a successor. He told Moshe that the rest of his children Moshe could bring up as he saw fit, but the firstborn he wanted for himself.

Moshe justified his actions by realizing that Tzippora was his *bashert* and he didn't have the right to push her away.

Moshe agreed! He calculated that by the time his firstborn son was old enough to serve as a priest, he would have converted Yisro to Judaism, and Yisro wouldn't hold him to his word. He rationalized that if Tzippora marries someone else, then not just Gershom but all of Tzippora's children would be pagans. He justified his actions by realizing that Tzippora was his *bashert* and he didn't have the right to push her away.





Hashkafically Speaking

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Moshe's promise haunted him for years. He named his firstborn Gershom because, as he put it, "I was a stranger in a strange land." I wasn't my own man. I couldn't make my own decisions; I was a guest – a stranger. He didn't circumcise Gershom because that would have been a violation of his agreement with Yisro. Even when an angel almost killed Moshe, his wife Tzipora, who had never promised anything, was the one who actually circumcised Gershom.

As it turned out, Moshe's calculations proved correct, so that his eldest son Gershom was indeed saved from idol worship. But somehow in heaven the story had not ended. Moshe made a promise, and promises have their effect. Moshe's son was spared but his grandson became a priest.

What exactly was Moshe's sin here? William Shakespeare wrote, "Even the devil can cite Scripture for his purpose." From our midrash we learn that even the greatest prophet of all times, a tzaddik, the humblest of all men, can agree to idolatry for his own purpose!

The end does not justify the means. G-d is more concerned with what we do than what will eventually come out of our deeds. Our world is limited to the decisions we make

and the actions we take. What will happen in the end – that's G-d's business. The first step in corruption is when the end justifies the means. When one rationalizes one's decisions for the sake of a greater good, truth becomes unimportant and integrity wanes.

When Yisro made his counterproposal to Moshe, insisting that his firstborn be groomed as a pagan priest, there was only one answer that would have been correct: No. It's unthinkable. When Jews in the Inquisition, or in the Crusades, or in the Soviet Union, or in the Holocaust were asked to give up their religion, there was only one correct answer – no. When Jews are asked to be unethical, unscrupulous, dishonest, or deceiving, the answer must be no. If we start thinking about the greater good, the *chesed*, the pleasure, and the fulfillment of personal goals – we are looking for serious trouble.

Rabbi Moshe Feinstein is quoted as saying (in Yiddish) "*A mentsch darf velen ton nisht vellen oofton.*" Our job is to do, not to accomplish. It is basic to Judaism that we must take a leap of faith in G-d, and always do the right thing. Let the chips fall where they may.

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Liability for Enforced Idleness

Rabbi Asher Meir | Torah and Policy Researcher

The eighth of the Ten Commandments is "Don't steal." Rashi, based on the Gemara (*Sanhedrin* 86a), explains that this commandment refers specifically to stealing a person. This is deduced from the fact that the previous commandments, murder and adultery, are capital crimes; we can infer that this commandment also refers to a kind of stealing which is subject to the death penalty, meaning kidnapping, as the Torah states: "One who is found stealing his fellow Israelite and putting him to work or selling him, put that thief to death" (*Devarim* 24 7-8).

The Chizkuni and some other *Rishonim* understand that this inference is not meant to exclude other kinds of theft; rather, theft of property is included in the prohibition in addition to theft of persons. In other words, the eighth commandment is meant as a general, encompassing prohibition on all kinds of theft.

Illegal detention is a crime quite similar to stealing people; this situation merited considerable conceptual discussion in Shas and

poskim. One example appeared recently in the *Daf Yomi* (*Bava Kamma* 85b): locking someone in a room makes the wrongdoer liable for the loss due to enforced idleness (*sheves*) of the victim.

The prohibition of *lo signov* should remind us of the less severe but related obligation to avoid unnecessarily keeping others from use and enjoyment of their property.

This ruling stimulated much comparison with similar scenarios. The Rosh observes that in two seemingly similar cases the wrongdoer is exempt: causing the loss of an animal by releasing it (*Bava Kamma* 55b), or causing its death by confining it until death overcomes it by starvation or exposure (*Sanhedrin* 77a). Both of these are considered indirect causes of damage, *gramma*, and not direct damage which entails liability.



The Rosh concludes that there must be a difference in circumstances: one who causes loss to the animals is exempt because the animals are never handled by the wrongdoers; likewise, if the one who imprisons merely locks the door on the confined victim, he is exempt. He is liable only when he forces the victim into confinement and then locks him up – a more direct causation of damage. This distinction is adopted by the *Shulchan Aruch (Choshen Mishpat 420:11)*.

The *Ketzos Hachoshen (363:3; see also 333:2)* suggests a much simpler resolution: the liability for *sheves* – enforced idleness – is one of the categories of damages that are due only when both the offender and the victim are people. So even corralling someone's animal into a pen and locking it up would not create liability for the animal's idleness.

It seems that both kidnapping and locking people into houses were blessedly rare occurrences in Jewish history.

Let us turn now to practical halacha. It seems that both kidnapping and locking people into houses were blessedly rare

occurrences in Jewish history and recorded cases are lacking. What is discussed in practice is the opposite case: locking someone out. What happens if A locks up B's apartment, so that B can no longer live there or no longer collect rent from the tenant? Or if A causes forced idleness of some productive asset of B in some other way?

The Gemara tells us only that A has to pay if he benefits from the apartment. It doesn't say if the payment is for what A benefits from or for what B loses. The Rosh thinks that passively locking up someone's house is like passively locking up his animal; hence the perpetrator is exempt. The Yad Rama, however, thinks that this is the same as occupying the apartment and holds the perpetrator liable (*Tur, Choshen Mishpat 363*).

The Yad Rama's ruling seems surprising. According to both the Rosh's approach (liability only for active exclusion) and the *Ketzos Hachoshen's* approach (liability only for human idleness), there should be no liability. Furthermore, there is an explicit *Yerushalmi (Bava Metzia 5:3, 9:3)* denying liability for *mevatel kiso* – forced idleness of someone's asset. Indeed the *Shulchan Aruch* and the Rema (363:6) rule there is no liability for a lock-out.



But matters are not so simple. The Rema (292:7) rules that someone who delays returning a deposit can be held liable for the lost earnings. And there are many rulings in the *Rishonim* and *Acharonim* which impose liability for lost earnings (there is a long list in *Pischei Choshen, Nezikin*, ch. 3, notes 71, 72). *The Ketzos Hachoshen* (*Choshen Mishpat* 310:1) suggests that liability is augmented when the idle asset is improperly seized (as opposed to the *Yerushalmi*, which refers to an authorized agent who is merely negligent), and when the lost earnings are nearly certain. This latter consideration is mentioned by many authorities.

The Torah applies the term “stealing” to appropriating a fellow human being, and the Rambam mentions this law in the laws of theft (*Hilchos Geneiva*, ch. 9). But in fact this crime is not the same as theft; the “stolen” victim never becomes an *eved* (who is true property in many ways) or even an *eved Ivri* (who has a superficial resemblance to property).

The crime emphasized in the Ten Commandments is in fact detaining and exploiting someone else. And just as the prohibition against stealing a person can be seen as one aspect of a broader category of stealing anything, so we can view it conceptually (though not halachically) as part of an even broader category of improperly detaining something belonging to others.

Hopefully few of us will ever end up physically detaining our fellow man. But many of us may find ourselves in situations where we risk tying up some productive asset belonging to someone else, perhaps inadvertently. There is wide agreement that any loss thus engendered is at least *gramma* – an indirect loss which is liable in *dinei Shamayim* (in order to do thorough *teshuva*). And not infrequently, a *beis din* actually imposes liability in these cases. The severe prohibition of *lo signov* should remind us of the less severe, but still related, obligation to avoid unnecessarily keeping others from use and enjoyment of their property.



More on Foreign Currency Loans

Rabbi Shloimy Muller

Talmid of Rav Pinchas Vind *shlita*, founder of the Beis Horaah L'Inyanei Ribbis

Last week, we explained that in order to permit a foreign currency loan, the borrower needs to own a bit of the currency that he's borrowing.

A Yid suffering from financial difficulties once approached the late Rabbi Chaim Greineman (the nephew of the Chazon Ish) and begged him for help. He told Rav Chaim that he has no rest, and spends his time rolling over loans from one *gemach* to another trying to cover his debt.

Rav Chaim took out a 20-dollar bill and wrote a *beracha* for the man on the bill. "Keep this in your wallet," he told him, "and this will be a *beracha* for your *parnassa*."

The others present were surprised at the uncharacteristic type of *beracha* emanating from one of the generation's pillars of logic and reason. With a smile, Rav Chaim explained. This fellow, who spends his day borrowing, surely borrows lots of dollars, he said, and he probably does not have a dollar to his name. That means he is constantly repaying *ribbis*. Can there be a greater financial danger? By giving him a 20-dollar bill inscribed with a *beracha*, Rav Chaim said, he can guarantee that his future dollar loans are halachically safe. This

can solve a lot of his *ribbis* issues and therefore pave the way to material success.

Here are the main points to remember:

- The borrower's foreign currency money must be available to be used to repay the loan. If one has a dollar in a place that he doesn't have regular access to, he may not borrow the money. Additionally, most *poskim* posit that a coin such as a quarter or dime will not work for this purpose, because it's not an accepted form of payment in a foreign country.
- If one lives in Eretz Yisrael but owns a dollar in America, that suffices, because it would be relatively easy to access the money.
- The *poskim* debate the status of money in a bank account. The reason is that the money has technically been lent to the bank, and therefore the borrower does not presently own the money.
- The lender may give the borrower a dollar as a gift, thereby enabling him to borrow in dollars. However, to loan him a dollar in order to permit the loan does not work. (For those who follow the traditions of the *Edot Hamizrach* this does suffice.)



The Satmar Rebbe

Rabbi Dov Loketch – Rabbi of Agudas Yisrael Mogen Avraham, Detroit

Last week we took a look at the early years of the Satmar Rebbe's leadership. This week we'll describe his activities in Europe during World War II and his eventual move to the United States.

The War Years

Although World War II broke out in 1939, Hungary – which was allied with Germany – was not impacted until 1944. Until that time, many Jews from war-torn regions of Europe who were able to flee found refuge in Hungary. The Satmar Rebbe expended great efforts to care for these refugees and help them get settled in their new country. He was very involved in the vast network that was established to help Polish Jews escape – mainly through the issuance of forged documents – and then resettling them in Hungary.

In 1943, the Rebbe wrote what later would become a famous letter to the Vaad Hatzalah and other organizations across Europe and the United States, begging for funds and for political influence on behalf of European Jewry. The original, handwritten letter is kept in the Agudah's archives.

The Rebbe wrote the following:

"Many lives have been saved in our country (praised be G-d), but we are powerless to do more than a tiny

powerless to do more than a fraction of what we must do. Therefore you, who can write to all our Jewish brethren wherever they live, who live in tranquility and enjoy great abundance, have a sacred obligation to try every possible means.... Act with great alacrity.... You are fortunate to have a share in this great Mitzvah."

This letter found its way to the desk of US Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau and was one of the impetuses for US President Franklin D. Roosevelt's forming the War Refugee Board in early 1944.

This body allowed the smuggling of funds to neutral and enemy countries for the sake of rescuing European Jews through bribery and other means. Unfortunately, President Roosevelt acted much later than he should have on behalf of Europe's Jews. But this body indeed contributed to the rescue of thousands of Jews in the later stages of the war, and the Satmar Rebbe's heartfelt plea played an important role in this undertaking.



BIOGRAPHY & LEGACY

At the same time, he understood that the situation was volatile, and that he needed to escape. At one point, he nearly obtained a visa to Palestine, but the Jewish Agency insisted it would not issue the visa unless the Rebbe publicly retracted his fierce rejection of Zionism, which had already become widely known. The Rebbe refused, and so he remained in Hungary.

By the beginning of 1944, it had become quite clear that the Nazis would invade Hungary, despite their alliance, and sure enough, the Germans invaded in March. The Rebbe tried escaping in an ambulance, but he was caught and promptly deported to the Klausenberger Ghetto.

At this later stage of the war, Germany realized it was losing, and it agreed to trade Jews in exchange for hard cash, trucks, and other equipment. Rabbi Michael Dov Weissmandl was active in negotiating with Adolph Eichmann, and succeeded in bribing him to release large numbers of Jews. These efforts resulted in what became known as the "Kastner train," a convoy arranged by the Zionist leader Rudolf Kastner to bring over 1,600 Jews – including the Satmar Rebbe – out of that part of Hungary and Romania to safety in Switzerland. Unexpectedly, the

train ended up being diverted to the Bergen-Belsen labor camp, and the Rebbe spent several months in the camp.

Stories abound of how the Rebbe worked to encourage his fellow inmates and lift their spirits. A shofar was smuggled into the camp, and the Rebbe sounded the shofar on Rosh Hashana. He delivered a *Kol Nidrei derasha* on Yom Kippur, and the Jews danced *hakafos* on Simchas Torah.

Generally, the group from the Kastner train were given better conditions than other inmates in Nazi labor camps. Eventually, they boarded the trains again and were brought to safety in Geneva. Upon disembarking on 21 Kislev 5705 (December 6, 1944), the Rebbe met and thanked George Mantello, a Jewish diplomat who worked in the Salvadoran consulate in Geneva and who saved thousands of Hungarian Jews by forging papers and issuing visas.

That date, 21 Kislev, is celebrated each year by Satmar Chassidim as a *yom tov* of sorts, marking the day their revered Rebbe arrived safely in Switzerland.

Unfortunately, everything the Rebbe left behind in Hungary was destroyed, and very few Chassidim survived.





Rebuilding

After spending some time recuperating, the Rebbe decided to travel to Eretz Yisrael and attempt to rebuild his Chassidus. But he quickly ran out of funds, and so he went to the United States to raise money for his institutions. In 1946, he arrived in Williamsburg, which had become somewhat of a center for observant Jews in New York City. The European refugees in New York begged the Rebbe to stay and to help build Yiddishkeit in the city, and he agreed. He began with a group of some 100 families or so, mostly of Romanian-Hungarian origin, and together they slowly began rebuilding.

Already in 1952, the Rebbe became the leader of the Romanian-Hungarian rabbanim in New York, and in 1955, he established the CRC, a major kashrus agency, under the auspices of the Hisachdus Harabonim of the United States and Canada.

In the early 1960s, the Rebbe began the process of moving the Satmar headquarters out of Williamsburg. He had always placed great emphasis on hygiene and cleanliness, and he felt that the crowded conditions in Williamsburg were unsanitary. He also believed that the Chassidus would benefit from distancing itself from the distractions of city life. The leaders of Satmar explored various possibilities in Upstate New York, and in 1974, the Chassidus established itself in Monroe. Several years later, a subsection of Monroe was developed under the name of Kiryas Yoel, and this area became the Satmar headquarters.

In 1968, when the Rebbe was 81 years old, he suffered a debilitating stroke. For the next eleven years, until his death in 1979, the Chassidus was, to a large extent, run by his rebbetzin, Alta Feige.



Making a Positive Contribution

Rebbetzin Ilana Cowland

Relationships coach and author of *The Moderately Anxious Everybody*

The world is an organism, and we are each a crucial player in that organism. When we contribute, we move out of a sense of living alone or in a vacuum and connect ourselves to the world. Some people run countries; others run marathons for charity; and others may once have helped a sight-impaired person cross the road.

Contribution is not judged by its size or impact. It is self-judged by how alive and connected you feel when something you have done has impacted somebody or perhaps many people or perhaps your environment in a positive way. Some people seek recognition. Others prefer anonymity. The more frequently you contribute, the more connected you will feel.

When we all contribute positively, we feel a sense of belonging. Our world benefits from each contribution. When we pull back from contributing, we find ourselves alone. You will find that when contributing, you are naturally in a state of connection because contribution expresses itself in what you can do for somebody else.

The state of connection is in itself meaningful and can be such an all-encompassing emotion that it fills the vacuum that otherwise may have been filled with anxiety.

According to the Cleveland Clinic, selfless acts for others can lower blood pressure, increase self-esteem, reduce depression, and lower stress levels. And even if the nature of the contribution is stressful, let's say when a firefighter is putting out a fire or when taking a risk by contributing, the stress you may feel will come with a thrill. You will feel neither a lack of meaning nor emptiness when experiencing this type of stress. But you may feel a heightened sense of being alive.

The state of connection is such an all-encompassing emotion that it fills the vacuum that may otherwise have been filled with anxiety.

Action Steps

*Ask yourself what contributions you have made already.



*Acknowledge any contributions of which you are proud and ask yourself what you felt at the time and why you think you felt it.

*Ask yourself in what area of strengths do your contributions lie?

*If you had unlimited time and availability, what would your contribution be? Allow the answer to this question to inform the contributions you would like to make going forward.

*Which aspects of the world really bother you? What changes would you like to see? What role can you play in those changes?

*When you contribute, on whatever level, instead of feeling like a hero or unappreciated or worn out, express gratitude for the opportunity to contribute.

*If contributing wears you down, consider that you may feel forced (by yourself or others) to make this contribution and reassess whether you should reduce your contribution.

*Acknowledge to yourself the meaningful contributions of those around you.

*List your ideal contributions for the coming year.

When we play a role in the lives of others and give back to the world we live in, we experience the pleasure of feeling wanted, needed, and appreciated.

Reducing Anxiety/Increasing Meaning

Without contributing, we question our right to belong to our social group. We feel we are a burden, unwanted, an extra weight tolerated but not needed. These feelings make us question our right to existence, increasing our anxiety tremendously. When we contribute, we feel at ease in the world.

When we play a role in the lives of others and give back to the world we live in, we experience the pleasure of feeling wanted, needed, and appreciated, And genuinely recognizing the value of our contribution feels meaningful because it has made the world better. Knowing we have bettered the world is a basic experience of meaning.

*This article is an excerpt from Rebbetzin Cowland's book, **The Moderately Anxious Everybody.***



Berachos: Lightning and Thunder

Josh and Tammy Kruger

The Story

"Come into the house quickly!"

"It's raining like crazy!"

"It's going to be worse than that storm last week!"

The three girls stamped their wet boots on the front rug and took off their dripping coats to be hung up in the coat closet. Suddenly, a flash of light filled the room. The girls gasped. A moment later, they heard a loud clap of thunder.

"Omigoodness! What's the *beracha*? What's the *beracha*?"

"I never remember which one is for which..."

"I have my siddur here. Hold on. I'll check!"

"Don't bother. It'll take too long. I don't think you can say the *beracha* so long after you see the lightning and hear the thunder anyway."

"I just said the *beracha* last week, but I really can't remember which one to say."

"I'm not even sure if I really saw the lightning. I think I just saw the reflection in the closet mirror. Does that even count?"

Discussion

Q: What is the connection between our story and the *parasha*?

A: During the experience of *maamad Har Sinai*, the Jewish people experienced thunder and flames (*Shemos* 20:15).

Q: What *beracha* is said on thunder? What *beracha* is said on lightning?

A: According to the *Mishna Berura*, the *beracha* for lightning is "*Baruch Ata Hashem Elokeinu Melech ha'olam oseh maaseh bereishis.*" The *beracha* for thunder is "*Baruch...shekocho u'gvurato maleh olam.*" Importantly, the *Mishna Berura* notes that while this is the custom, it is acceptable to say either *beracha* for thunder or lightning but not both (*Mishna Berura* 227:5).

Usually, we see the lightning first and then hear the thunder. In that case, we make a *beracha* for each experience. If, however, we hear the thunder at the same moment that we see the lightning, then we make only one *beracha* for both. When making one *beracha*, it's better to say "*oseh maaseh bereishis.*" But if you say "*shekocho u'gvurato maleh olam*" instead, that's also fine (*Mishna Berura* 227:5).



PARASHA HALACHA FOR THE SHABBOS TABLE

Q: If one of the girls saw the lightning only as a reflection in a mirror, can she still say the *beracha*?

A: This happens quite often during lightning storms. One may not see the actual sky light up but may notice the room light up. The girl can still say the *beracha* since she noticed that lightning recently occurred even if she didn't directly see the lightning in the sky (*Shu"t Tzitz Eliezer*, vol. 12, no. 21; *Sefer Vezos Haberacha*, p.153, in the name of Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, z"l).

Q: If the girl with the siddur takes a few minutes to locate the *beracha*,

is it too late for her to say the *beracha*?

A: Yes. The *beracha* can be said only a few seconds after noticing the lightning or thunder. If she misses it, she will have to wait until the next bout of thunder or lightning and say the *beracha* within a few seconds (*Mishna Berura* 227:5).

Q: Do the *berachos* have to be repeated each time there is lightning or thunder?

A: No. They are repeated only if the sky clears and another storm begins (*Mishna Berura* 227:8), or if the person goes to sleep, awakens, and notices lightning and thunder from the same storm (*Maamar Mordechai*, quoted in *Kaf Hachaim* 227:14).

Written in collaboration with Rabbi Yehoshua Pfeffer. Based on the article "Praising Hashem for All That We See" by Harav Avraham Rosenthal.

Le'ilui nishmas Frumit bat Yosef, Edith Nusbaum, a"h.



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