

Bais HaVaad on the Parshas Ha'azinu: BirchasHaTorah: A Scriptural  
Benediction or Oral Tradition

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Highlights of a *shiur* by Rav Yehoshua Grunwald

כי שם ה' אקרא הבו גדל לאלקנו

*When I call the name of Hashem, ascribe greatness to our G-d.*

(Devarim 32:3)

According to the Ramban, this *pasuk* is the source of the mitzva of *birkas haTorah*.

The Rambam, though, doesn't reckon *birkas haTorah* among the *taryag mitzvos*. Why not?

One approach is that of the Aruch Hashulchan, that the Rambam's view is that *birkas haTorah* is a component of the mitzva of *talmud Torah*.

The Ramban, for his part, specifically rejects this possibility. He argues that just as bringing *bikurim* and reading *mikra bikurim* are separately counted among the *taryag*, so are *talmud Torah* and *birkas haTorah*.

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Moshe Rabbeinu has been teaching Torah to *Klal Yisrael* for forty years. Why is *birkas haTorah* mentioned now for the first time?

The Netziv offers a fascinating answer.

Chazal tell us that Moshe's *nevua* was delivered in real time: *Shechina medaberes mitoch grono shel Moshe*. Other *nevi'im* first received their *nevua* and later, asynchronously, delivered it to the people. But in the unique case of Moshe's *nevua*, receipt and delivery were simultaneous, because Hashem spoke directly to the people through Moshe's throat.

Moshe's Torah teaching, says the Netziv, was never subject to *birkas haTorah*, because it was miraculous, and no *bracha* is recited upon the product of a miracle. (He maintains that for this reason, no *bracha* was made when eating the *man*.)

But this time was different. Moshe wrote down *Shiras Ha'azinu* and read it aloud to the people. All natural, no *neis*. For the first time in all the years of Moshe's public *talmud Torah*, *birkas haTorah* was required.