

Introduction

The Steipler Gaon pointed out that one of the blessings recited prior to the study of Torah is unusual.

The first blessing on Torah study is standard. It thanks the Almighty who has sanctified us with His commandments and ordered us to be involved in the Torah. However, the language of the second blessing is surprising. *V'ha'arev na* is a plea that Hashem make Torah sweet in our mouths. It is a request that we enjoy learning. Why do we pray to enjoy Torah study? Why do we not pray to feel the sweetness of Shabbos or the delights of Yom Tov? Why have a blessing about the sweetness of the words of Torah?

The Steipler answered that the blessings on Torah study differ from the blessings before other *mitzvos*. We usually consider two types of blessings, *birchos ha-mitzvos* and *birchos ha-nehenin*. We recite a blessing prior to performing a commandment and we recite a blessing before experiencing a pleasure, such as eating delicious food or smelling a sweet aroma. For most commandments, the blessing merely thanks Hashem for the mitzvah. Torah study is unique. The blessings on the mitzvah are also *birchos ha-nehenin*. The blessings are an expression of thanksgiving for the pleasure of Torah. To remind us that we are thanking God for the pleasure of Torah, as one of the blessings, we appeal to experience the sweetness of Torah (Introduction to *Chashukei Chemed, Kiddushin*). The sweetness of