

A Blessing For Bad News?

- The earliest rabbinic voice in the conversation concerning a blessing for bad news:

וְעַל הַבְּשׂוּרוֹת הַטּוֹבוֹת אוֹמֵר : בְּרוּךְ הַטּוֹב וְהַמְטִיב. וְעַל שְׂמוּעוֹת רָעוֹת אוֹמֵר : בְּרוּךְ דִּין הָאֱמֶת.

Concerning good news, one says: *Baruch ha-tov v'ha-metiv*/ Blessed is the one who is good and who makes for good. Concerning bad news, one says: *Baruch dayan ha-emet*/ Blessed is the judge of truth. (Mishnah Berachot 9:2)

- Here are the blessings in their full forms:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם הַטּוֹב וְהַמְטִיב.

Baruch ata Adonai eloheinu melech ha-olam ha-tov v'ha-metiv.

Blessed are you, Adonai, our God, sovereign of the world who is good and who makes for good.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם דִּין הָאֱמֶת.

Baruch ata Adonai eloheinu melech ha-olam dayan ha-emet.

Blessed are you, Adonai, our God, sovereign of the world who is the judge of truth.

- Two voices from the Babylonian Talmud join the conversation:

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: one who sees “spotted” people says: *Baruch m'shaneh ha-b'riot*/ Blessed is the one who diversifies creation. But another teaching says: One who sees “spotted” people should say: *Baruch dayan ha-emet*/ Blessed is the judge of truth. There is no real difference of opinion here. One should say: Blessed is the one who diversifies creation, if that person's condition existed from birth. One should say: Blessed is the judge of truth, if the condition comes about later in life. (Babylonian Talmud Berachot 58b)

Until what day of the month can one recite the blessing over the new moon? Until its concave surface is filled. Rabbi Aha of Difti said to his colleague Ravina: In addition to the blessing over the new moon, one should also say: *Baruch ha-tov v'ha-metiv*/ Blessed is the one who is good and who makes for good. Ravina replied: If that is so, then when the moon begins to wane do we say: *Baruch dayan ha-emet*/ Blessed is the judge of truth? Why should not both blessings be recited on their respective occasions? Since the waxing and waning of the moon is a regular phenomenon, neither of these blessings is required. (Babylonian Talmud Sanhedrin 42a)

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