

Discourse 39

*“v’Achalta v’Savata u’Beirachta et HaShem... -
You will eat and be satisfied and bless HaShem...”*

Delivered on Shabbat Parshat Eikev,
20th of Menachem-Av, 5726²⁴⁶³
By the grace of *HaShem*, blessed is He,

1.

The verse states,²⁴⁶⁴ “You will eat, and you will be satisfied, and you will bless *HaShem*-יהו' your God etc.” About this it states in *Zohar*,²⁴⁶⁵ “The *mitzvah* is to bless the Holy One, blessed is He, for all that one eats, drinks, and derives benefit from in this world.” In other words, the view of the *Zohar* (in the name of the Faithful Shepherd (*Ra'aya Mehemna*), our teacher Moshe), is that we learn from this verse, “You will eat, and you will be satisfied, and you will bless etc.,” that there is a Biblical obligation to make a blessing over all food and drink, and over all that one benefits from in the world.

Now, this is unlike the Halachic ruling in *Shulchan Aruch*,²⁴⁶⁶ and [unlike] the *Shulchan Aruch* of the Alter Rebbe,²⁴⁶⁷ and [unlike] his *Seder Birkhat HaNehenin*,²⁴⁶⁸ [which is related to the *Siddur* and is the aspect of the final teaching, such that the Halachah is in accordance with it, in that it takes precedence over

²⁴⁶³ This is the first of two discourses said at this gathering.

²⁴⁶⁴ Deuteronomy 8:10

²⁴⁶⁵ *Zohar* III 270b; Also see the letter of Erev Shabbat Kodesh, Eikev 5726 (*Igrot Kodesh*, Vol. 24 p. 191) in the note entitled “*v’Achalta*.”

²⁴⁶⁶ *Shulchan Aruch*, Orach Chayim 209:3

²⁴⁶⁷ *Shulchan Aruch* of the Alter Rebbe 167:1

²⁴⁶⁸ *Seder Birkhat HaNehenin* 1:1

the ruling in Shulchan Aruch,²⁴⁶⁹ and is more aligned to the teachings of Chassidus],²⁴⁷⁰ that only Grace after Meals (*Birkhat HaMazon*) is a Biblical commandment, whereas the blessings before eating, and all blessings over that which one derives pleasure from (*Birkhat HaNehenin*) are Rabbinically instituted.

Now, the view of the Zohar is also found in Talmud, in Tractate Brachot,²⁴⁷¹ [where it states], “The sages taught: From where is it derived that Grace after Meals (*Birkhat HaMazon*) is from the Torah? As it states, ‘You will eat, and you will be satisfied, and you will bless’ etc. However, this only provides a source for the after-blessing. From where is it derived [that one is also obligated to bless] before [eating]? It is derived *a fortiori* (*Kal VaChomer*). That is, if when one is satisfied he [is obligated to] recite a blessing [and thank the Creator for being satisfied], then when he is hungry, should he not all the more so [recite a blessing for the food that the Creator provides him with, by which his hunger will be satisfied]? Rabbi said: This (*a fortiori* – *Kal VaChomer*) is unnecessary (being that the verse states), ‘You will eat, and you will be satisfied, and you will bless.’”

Even though Tosefot²⁴⁷² and Shita Mekubetzet²⁴⁷³ state that the verse [used in regard to blessing before deriving benefit] is only an allusion [in **support** of the Rabbinic obligation, but is not a Biblical obligation], nonetheless, the Rashba²⁴⁷⁴ wrote that Rabbi (and other Tana'im there) indeed maintain the view that it **is** a Biblical obligation, except that we do not rule that way etc. We do indeed find that in various places in Zohar, in which the

²⁴⁶⁹ See Shaalot uTeshuvot Tzemach Tzedek, Orach Chayim 18:4; Shaalot uTeshuvot Divrei Nechemiah, Orach Chayim 21.

²⁴⁷⁰ Also see Shaar HaKollel (of Rabbi Avraham David Lavut), 1:1; Introduction to Sefer Piskei HaSiddur (of Rabbi Chayim Avraham Na'eh).

²⁴⁷¹ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 48b

²⁴⁷² Tosefot entitled “*Ela Svara*” to Talmud Bavli, Brachot 35a

²⁴⁷³ Shita Mekubetzet entitled “*Kal VaChomer*” to Brachot 48b *ibid*.

²⁴⁷⁴ Chiddushei HaRashba to Brachot there, section entitled “*Ha d'Aflegoo*”

ruling is in accordance with a single view in Talmud, even though the Halachah is not like that opinion, nonetheless,²⁴⁷⁵ “both these and those are the words of the Living God.”²⁴⁷⁶

2.

Now, we should explain why according to the view of the Zohar there is an obligation from the Torah to also make a blessing before eating, even though the Halachah is that the blessing made before eating is only Rabbinical. However, we should first preface with an explanation of the teaching of our sages, of blessed memory,²⁴⁷⁷ that the arguments between Beit Hillel and Beit Shammai are [an example of an argument that is for the sake of Heaven, and is] destined to endure.

The question on this is well known.²⁴⁷⁸ That is, how could they say that it is “destined to endure” when they also said,²⁴⁷⁹ “When Beit Shammai [express an opinion] about which Beit Hillel [disagrees], their opinion is [considered as though it is] not a Mishnah [and is completely disregarded].”

In regard to what they answered,²⁴⁸⁰ that this is because “both these and those are the words of the Living God,” in that the words of Beit Shammai are also rooted above in the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*), this does not adequately answer their words, “destined to endure.” This is because the simple meaning of “destined to endure” is that it means endurance in **this** world, being that “the Torah is not in the heavens.”²⁴⁸¹ It therefore is not

²⁴⁷⁵ Talmud Bavli, Eruvin 13b

²⁴⁷⁶ Also see Likkutei Sichot, Vol. 32 p. 135 and note 18 there, and elsewhere.

²⁴⁷⁷ Mishnah Avot 5:17

²⁴⁷⁸ See Midrash Shmuel to Avot 5:17 *ibid.*, cited in Likkutei Torah, Korach 54b and on.

²⁴⁷⁹ Talmud Bavli, Brachot 36b

²⁴⁸⁰ Midrash Shmuel *ibid.*, cited in Likkutei Torah *ibid.*

²⁴⁸¹ Deuteronomy 30:12; See Talmud Bavli, Bava Metziya 59b

adequate to [answer this by saying] that it has an [enduring] root above etc.

However, the explanation²⁴⁸² is as the Arizal explained,²⁴⁸³ that in the coming future, in the times of Moshiach, the Halachah will be according to Beit Shammai. (This is because the Halachic Court (*Beit Din*) of the coming future, will be greater in wisdom and in number, and will thus be capable of nullify the previous ruling that, “When Beit Shammai [express an opinion] in which Beit Hillel [disagrees], their opinion is [considered as though it is] not a Mishnah [and is completely disregarded],” and they can change the Halachic ruling to be according Beit Shammai.)²⁴⁸⁴ In this case it actually is “destined to endure.”

The same may be said about our subject here, that the reason that the Halachic ruling that the obligation to make the blessing over food and drink and all that one derives benefit from in this world is only Rabbinic and not from the Torah, is because in our times, after the destruction of the Temple etc., we do not merit that the Halachic ruling should be in accordance to Rebbe and the other Tana'im who maintain the view that it is a Biblical obligation.

However, from the perspective of the inner aspect (*Pnimiyut*) of Torah, it indeed can be said that it is a Biblical obligation from the Torah [itself] “to bless the Holy One, blessed is He, for all that one eats, drinks, and derives benefit from in this world.” Therefore, when a Jew is on a level such as this, in that his conduct accords to the inner aspects (*Pnimiyut*) of Torah, then **all** blessings recited over benefitting from this world (*Birkhat HaNehenin*) are as important and stringent for him as Grace after Meals (*Birkhat HaMazon*), which is a Biblical obligation.

²⁴⁸² Likkutei Torah *ibid*.

²⁴⁸³ Mikdash Melech (Bereishit 17b), cited in Likkutei Torah *ibid*.

²⁴⁸⁴ See Hitva'aduyot 5751 Vol. 3 p. 283 and on; 5752 Vol. 1, p. 179; Torat Menachem, Hadranim Al HaRambam v'Shas p. 231.

This can be understood based on the explanation in Likkutei Torah²⁴⁸⁵ about the Biblical obligation to recite Grace after Meals (*Birkhat HaMazon*). That is, by eating the bread, the sparks of holiness in the bread, which are rooted in the world of Chaos-*Tohu* and transcend the world of Repair-*Tikkun*, are caused to be refined, and through this, it is in his power to bless the Holy One, blessed is He etc.

Based on this, it can be said that when a Jew is on a lofty level, in which his service of *HaShem*-יהו"ה, blessed is He, is in a way of “with all your more” (*Bechol Me’odecha*-בְּכֹל מְאֹדְךָ),²⁴⁸⁶ this being the aspect of Chaos-*Tohu* as it is in Repair-*Tikkun*,²⁴⁸⁷ then even before eating, he already has the power to bless with all the strength (and full power [of the world of Chaos-*Tohu*]) as it is with Grace after Meals (*Birkhat HaMazon*) that follows eating, after which the sparks of the world of Chaos-*Tohu* have been refined. Then, after having made the blessing and after eating for the sake of Heaven and refining the sparks of the world of Chaos-*Tohu* in the food, there then is added to him additional strength and empowerment to bless in an even higher way.

3.

Now, in the continuation of its teaching, the Zohar²⁴⁸⁸ adds an explanation of the wording of the blessing, stating, “‘Blessed-*Baruch*-בָּרוּךְ’ – This refers to the secret of the Source that is above all, to pour, and to draw down, and to illuminate all the flames.” In the notes of my father, master, teacher and rabbi (whose Hilulah

²⁴⁸⁵ See Likkutei Torah, Eikev 14b; Naso 26a and on; Also see Siddur Im Da”Ch, Shaar Birkhat HaMazon 102a and on, and elsewhere.

²⁴⁸⁶ Deuteronomy 6:5

²⁴⁸⁷ See Sefer HaMitzvot of the Tzemach Tzedek 160b and on, and elsewhere.

²⁴⁸⁸ Zohar III 271a *ibid.*; Also see the aforementioned letter in regards to the remainder of this discourse.

we are celebrating) on the margins of the Zohar,²⁴⁸⁹ he explains the three words “to pour, to draw down, and to illuminate.”²⁴⁹⁰

He begins by explaining that when it states, “‘Blessed-*Baruch*-ברוך’ – This refers to the secret of the Source that is above all,” this refers to [the aspect of] the Foundation-*Yesod* of the Father-*Abba* (Wisdom-*Chochmah*). To preface, we find that there are two explanations about this. In Biurei HaZohar²⁴⁹¹ it is explained that this refers to the aspect of the Foundation-*Yesod* of the Father-*Abba* (Wisdom-*Chochmah*). However, in Ohr HaChamah²⁴⁹² (written not long after the time of the Arizal),²⁴⁹³ he explains that this refers to the aspect of Understanding-*Binah*.

However, in the notes of my father, master, teacher and rabbi, he tips the scales and rules that it refers to the aspect of the Foundation-*Yesod* of the Father-*Abba* (Wisdom-*Chochmah*) in accordance to the explanation of Biurei HaZohar, and not like the view of Ohr HaChamah. Proof for this is from the fact that the Zohar states, “‘Blessed-*Baruch*-ברוך’ – This refers to the secret of the Source that is **above all**,” and it cannot be said about Understanding-*Binah* that it is “the Source that is above all,” being that Wisdom-*Chochmah* is higher than it. This is so much so, that the level of Wisdom-*Chochmah* is incomparably greater than Understanding-*Binah*.

This is because Understanding-*Binah* is the matter of grasp and comprehension, whereas about Wisdom-*Chochmah*, Tanya explains²⁴⁹⁴ that it transcends understanding and comprehension etc., which is why the limitless light of the Unlimited One,

²⁴⁸⁹ Subsequently printed in Likkutei Levi Yitzchak to Zohar III, p. 458.

²⁴⁹⁰ Also see the Sichah talk of Shabbat Parshat Eikev, 20th of Menachem-Av 5720, Ch. 9 and on (Torat Menachem, Vol. 28 p. 276 and on); Discourse entitled “*V’Achalta v’Savata*” of Shabbat Parshat Eikev, 20th of Menachem-Av 5733 (Sefer HaMaamarim 5733 p. 460 and on).

²⁴⁹¹ Biurei HaZohar of the Mittler Rebbe, Eikev 120a and on.

²⁴⁹² Of Rabbi Avraham Azulai (1570-1643)

²⁴⁹³ Who lived from c. 1534-1572

²⁴⁹⁴ Tanya, Likkutei Amarim, Ch. 18-19

HaShem יהו"ה, blessed is He, that "no thought at all can grasp,"²⁴⁹⁵ manifests in it. This refers to the essential point of Jewishness present in every Jew, about which the verse states,²⁴⁹⁶ "And the Lord אדני" awoke like one who was sleeping, [like a warrior rousing from wine"] to stand against the test steadfastly, with faith in *HaShem* יהו"ה beyond any intellectual grasp or reason etc., to give his life over for the sanctification of *HaShem* 's יהו"ה Name.

The distance in comparison between [*Chochmah* and *Binah*] is also understood by their relation to the worlds. For, as known, "the Supernal Mother (*Imma Ila'ah*) (Understanding-*Binah*) dwells in the Throne,"²⁴⁹⁷ this being the world of Creation (*Briyah*). In contrast, "the Supernal Father (*Abba Ila'ah*) (Wisdom-*Chochmah*), dwells in the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*),"²⁴⁹⁸ and the world of Emanation (*Atzilut*) is the World of Oneness (*Olam HaAchdut*),²⁴⁹⁹ in which "He and His life force are One and He and His organs are One."²⁵⁰⁰ In contrast, this is not so of the world of Creation (*Briyah*), [about which the verse states],²⁵⁰¹ "From there it divided."

It thus must be said that the words, "Blessed-*Baruch*-ברוך – This refers to the secret of the Source that is above all," (does not refer to Understanding-*Binah*, but) refers to the Foundation-*Yesod* of the Father-*Abba* (Wisdom-*Chochmah*).

Now, in the notes of my father, master, teacher and rabbi, he continues that Wisdom-*Chochmah* (which is "Blessed-*Baruch*-ברוך," this being the Foundation-*Yesod* of the Father-*Abba*) is the *Yod*-י of the Name *HaShem* יהו"ה. In this, there are three aspects,

²⁴⁹⁵ Introduction to Tikkunei Zohar 17b

²⁴⁹⁶ Psalms 78:65

²⁴⁹⁷ Tikkunei Zohar, Tikkun 6 (23a)

²⁴⁹⁸ Ramaz to Zohar II 220b; Torah Ohr, Mishpatim 75a; See Sefer HaMaamarim 5696 p. 119.

²⁴⁹⁹ See Avodat HaKodesh of Rabbi Meir Ibn Gabbai, Vol. 1, Ch. 2; Likkutei HaShas of the Arizal, Mesechet Shabbat; Torah Ohr, Va'era 57a, and elsewhere.

²⁵⁰⁰ Introduction to Tikkunei Zohar 3b; Tanya, Iggeret HaKodesh, Epistle 20.

²⁵⁰¹ Genesis 2:10; See Torah Ohr, Bereishit 3a; Va'era 57a, and elsewhere.

these being the three letters of the word *Yod-ד-י*, [except that when written, it only is written with the *Yod-י*, whereas the *Vav-Dalet-ו-ד-א* are hidden].

Now, the *Yod-י* is a point (*Nekudah*), the *Vav-ו* is a [vertical length of] line (*Kav*) (indicating a drawing down from above to below)²⁵⁰² and the *Dalet-ד* is a plane (*Shetach*) (in that it has both length and breadth).²⁵⁰³

He adds that these three also hint at [the *Sefirot* of] Wisdom-*Chochmah*, Understanding-*Binah*, and Knowledge-*Da'at*. That is Wisdom-*Chochmah* [the *Yod-ד-י*] includes Understanding-*Binah* and Knowledge-*Da'at* as well. That is its *Yod-י* is Wisdom-*Chochmah*, its *Vav-ו* is Knowledge-*Da'at*, and its *Dalet-ד* is Understanding-*Binah*.

My father, master, teacher and rabbi concluded by explaining the three words “to pour, to draw down, and to illuminate,” and stated: “To pour from the *Yod-י*, to draw down from the *Vav-ו*, and to illuminate from the *Dalet-ד*.”

In general, this may be understood based on the explanation of the matter of point (*Nekudah*), line (*Kav*), and plane (*Shetach*) [in the discourse entitled “*Mi Manah*” 5672,²⁵⁰⁴ and in the discourse entitled “*L'Marbeh HaMisrah*” 5700,²⁵⁰⁵ (where he adds that this also is the matter of [the three levels] point-*Nekudah*, emanation-*Sefirah*, stature-*Partzuf*),²⁵⁰⁶ and before this, in the discourse entitled “*Efes Biltecha*” 5694 (in *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5711)].²⁵⁰⁷

²⁵⁰² See *Hemshech* 5672 and *Sefer Maamarim* 57112 cited later in the discourse; Tanya, Iggeret HaTeshuvah, Ch. 4 (94b); Also see Shaar HaYichud of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as *The Gate of Unity*, Ch. 14-15.

²⁵⁰³ See the citations in the prior note.

²⁵⁰⁴ *Hemshech* 5672 Vol. 1, p. 50 and on.

²⁵⁰⁵ Ch. 4 – printed in *Sefer HaMaamarim*, *Kuntreisim* Vol. 2, p. 436a and on.

²⁵⁰⁶ See *Shaar HaYichud* of the Mittler Rebbe, translated as *The Gate of Unity*, Ch. 20.

²⁵⁰⁷ *Sefer HaMaamarim* 5711, p. 164 and on.

That is, the drawing down of the blessing (*Brachah*) is from the highest source of the blessing, which is the essence (*Etzem*) of the blessing (and not a radiance of it). This is hinted in the word “to pour out-*l’Arka*-לאֲרִקָּא,” which is like the verse,²⁵⁰⁸ “[Your Name is] like poured oil-*Shemen Turak*-שֶׁמֶן תּוֹרֵק,”²⁵⁰⁹ [about which it states],²⁵¹⁰ “Like one who pours out (*Meireek*-מֵרִיק) from one vessel to another vessel.” That is, the oil itself, indicating the aspect of Wisdom-*Chochmah*,²⁵¹¹ as it was in the first vessel, is poured into the second vessel, and it thus is drawn all the way down below, meaning that it manifests and illuminates in the vessels, “to illuminate all the flames (*Botzinin* [*Neirot*]),” in that “flames” are vessels (*Keilim*) [that carry] light.²⁵¹²

²⁵⁰⁸ Song of Songs 1:3

²⁵⁰⁹ See Ohr HaTorah, Eikev p. 549 and on.

²⁵¹⁰ Midrash Shir HaShirim Rabba 1:3

²⁵¹¹ See Biurei HaZohar of the Mittler Rebbe, Eikev 118b

²⁵¹² The end of this discourse is missing.