

Laws of Blessings, Chapter 1 (Auto Translated)

English

Auto Translated

Shiur Overview

Laws of Blessings Chapter 1 – Rambam – Complete Summary

Introduction to the Laws of Blessings

The Laws of Blessings is the last section of Sefer Ahava. After having already learned Kriat Shema, prayer, tefillin, mezuzah, Sefer Torah, Torah reading, and Birkat Kohanim, we now proceed to learn about blessings.

Count of Mitzvot – One Positive Commandment

The Rambam writes: One positive commandment, which is to bless the Holy Name, Blessed be He, after eating, as it says "and you shall eat and be satisfied and bless Hashem your God."

Explanation:

The only Torah-level positive commandment in the Laws of Blessings is Birkat HaMazon – bentsching after eating.

Insights and Explanations:

1. **The Laws of Blessings has 12 chapters, but from the Torah only Birkat HaMazon.** All other blessings – on small foods, before eating, on fragrances, on mitzvot, on miracles – are all rabbinic. This is an important principle: the entire system of blessings stems from one Torah commandment.

2. **Even within Birkat HaMazon** – the fact that we thank for the Land of Israel and for Torah in the text of bentsching, some commentators on the Rambam hold that this is rabbinic. Only the essential thanking for the food is from the Torah.

3. **Plain meaning of the verse vs. halachic exposition:** The verse "and you shall eat and be satisfied and bless" appears in Parshat Eikev in a context describing how good it will be in the Land of Israel – you will eat, you will be satisfied, you will thank. The simple meaning is not a formal commandment, but rather a description of a natural reaction. However, the Sages expounded it as a formal commandment. This itself is already an exposition.

4. **"And be satisfied" – also an innovation of the Sages?** If the simple meaning of the verse is a general description (you eat, you are satisfied, you thank), then the fact that the Sages say that from the Torah one is only obligated when "satisfied" – this itself is already an innovation, because they extracted the verse from its general context and formalized it as law with specific conditions.

Law 1 – Positive Torah Commandment to Bless After Eating Food

The Rambam writes: It is a positive Torah commandment to bless after eating food, as it says "and you shall eat and be satisfied and bless Hashem

your God." And one is not obligated from the Torah except when satisfied.

Explanation:

Two Torah-level conditions: (1) after eating, (2) only when satisfied.

Insights and Explanations:

1. **From the Torah the blessing is on the person's state, not on the food.** The person bentsches when he is in a satisfied state – he has eaten, he is satisfied, he is "happy". This is a blessing that comes from the person's inner feeling of satisfaction.

2. **Another perspective on "and you shall eat and be satisfied and bless":** One can understand the verse in reverse: when a person is hungry, it's obvious that he prays to the Almighty. But when he is satisfied – "you grew fat, thick, covered" – then he forgets the Almighty ("and you forgot Hashem your God"). The innovation of the Torah is that even when you are satisfied, you should not forget, but rather bentsch.

Law 1 (continued) – Rabbinic Enactment: Kezayit, First Blessing, Fragrance

The Rambam writes: From rabbinic enactment... even if one ate a kezayit one blesses after it. And similarly from rabbinic enactment to bless on all food initially... and even if one benefits from a pleasant fragrance one blesses on it initially... and anyone who benefits without a blessing has committed me'ilah.

Explanation:

The Sages enacted: (a) a final blessing on a kezayit (without satisfaction), (b) an initial blessing before eating, (c) a blessing on every benefit even fragrance.

Insights and Explanations:

1. **The Sages did two things:** First, they lowered the measure from satisfaction to a kezayit (a measure of eating instead of a measure of satisfaction). Second, they added an initial blessing – an entirely new category.

2. **Why did the Sages add a kezayit?** Several explanations: (a) People began eating differently – small meals, diets – and the Sages wanted everyone to have a chance to bentsch. (b) When people became poorer, they rejoiced even with less. (c) The Torah didn't want to burden the person, but the Sages held it was appropriate.

3. **A difficult question:** Blessings have a rule that one may not make an unnecessary blessing – it's not like a voluntary prayer that one can add. How could the Sages enact new blessings? This remains as a question.

4. **The fundamental difference between an initial blessing and a final blessing (Torah vs. rabbinic):** From the Torah a person thanks when he is already satisfied – after eating, when he is satisfied. This is a natural reaction.

The Sages innovated that one must thank **before** eating – when one is not yet satisfied, when one is still hungry. This is a fundamental change: from a blessing on the person's state to a blessing on the object of food.

5. **Initial blessing – taking permission, not gratitude:**

The Gemara's reasoning is not that one thanks for benefit (like a final blessing), but that one must acknowledge that the entire world belongs to the Almighty – "the heavens are Hashem's and the earth He gave to mankind." An initial blessing is an acknowledgment of ownership, not thanks for benefit. The person takes permission from the Almighty to eat His food – "I take permission from the Almighty to eat His food."

6. **The kal vachomer of the Gemara:** The Gemara in Berachot (the first page of "How do we bless") brings a kal vachomer: if when one is satisfied one must bentsh, kal vachomer when one is about to eat. But the Gemara doesn't ultimately agree with this kal vachomer (it's a "doubtful kal vachomer" in Tractate Pesachim). This shows that the basis of a blessing beforehand is not merely an extension of a blessing afterward, but rather a separate enactment with its own reason.

7. **The Sages fundamentally changed the nature of blessings:** From the Torah – the person who lives in nature, he eats, he becomes satisfied, then he thanks. He doesn't think of thanking beforehand. The Sages said: a person must constantly remember that everything he takes belongs to the Almighty. He should not be like a thief. This is a change from "thanking when satisfied" to "living with the yoke of Heaven's kingdom constantly."

8. **"Me'ilah" – the Rambam's language:** The Rambam writes "anyone who benefits without a blessing has committed me'ilah" – he has committed me'ilah. Me'ilah is a concept from the laws of sanctified items – benefiting from something that belongs to the Most High. The Rambam doesn't mean me'ilah according to law (principal and fifth), but rather "like me'ilah" – it's like me'ilah. **But interestingly: the Rambam writes simply "me'ilah", not "like me'ilah".**

9. **The Rambam brings the language of "me'ilah" but not "theft":** In the Gemara it also says "steals from the Holy One Blessed be He and steals from the Congregation of Israel", but the Rambam leaves this out. This is a conscious choice. Me'ilah is not a matter of theft – me'ilah is a matter of **permission**. With me'ilah regarding sanctified items, the kohen may indeed eat the meat, but he must be on the "list" – he must have permission. So too with benefit from the world: one must put oneself on the list through a blessing.

10. **The Rambam doesn't explain the reason:** Interestingly, the Rambam doesn't explain the basis for why one needs a blessing – he doesn't say explicitly that "the world belongs to the Almighty and you take from Him." The Gemara says it more clearly ("it is forbidden for a person to benefit from this world without a blessing" – "as if he benefited from sanctified items of Heaven"), but the Rambam leaves out the essential reasoning. Perhaps the Rambam understands that it's obvious, or perhaps he brings it later at the end of the Laws of Blessings where he discusses philosophical matters.

11. **Two reasonings in the Gemara that the Rambam doesn't bring:** (a) "A person will in the future give an accounting for everything his eye saw and he didn't eat" – a

person will give an accounting for everything he saw and didn't eat. (b) The reasoning of "as if he steals from the Holy One Blessed be He and the Congregation of Israel". The Rambam doesn't bring the reasonings, but simply writes "me'ilah".

12. **Whether blessing is a reasoning that also applies to gentiles:** If the basis of blessing is a reasoning that "the world belongs to the Almighty," one can think that this obligates even a gentile – it's not only a Jewish enactment, but a principle that relates to the seven Noahide commandments. Just as theft is a Noahide commandment, so the principle of blessing can also be a general reasoning.

Law 1 (continued) – What is "Benefit" – Which Benefits are Included

Insights and Explanations:

1. **What is "benefit":** The Rambam lists smelling (fragrance) as a benefit that requires a blessing. What other benefits are there? Marital relations (the Nefesh HaChaim asks about this), the bathroom (Asher Yatzar – but this is a blessing of praise, not a blessing of benefit), seeing beautiful things (beautiful creatures and beautiful trees – but this is perhaps not "benefit" in this sense). Primarily there are: blessings on fruits/foods, blessings on fragrance, and blessings on beautiful things – and that's basically everything.

2. **The order of Torah and rabbinic:** From the Torah Birkat HaMazon is only on "food" (bread, or perhaps more). Rabbinically they added: (a) even a kezayit of bread – Birkat HaMazon; (b) on every eating (any amount, or a reviit/kezayit) – a blessing before and a blessing after.

Law 1 (continued) – Law of "Tasting" (Tasting Without Eating)

The Rambam writes: "And one who tastes" – someone who tastes (samples) without eating, doesn't need to make a blessing.

Explanation:

Someone who tastes food (e.g., a cook who samples his food) without actually eating, doesn't need to make a blessing. If he would make a blessing, it would be an unnecessary blessing.

Insights and Explanations:

1. **The Riva's position – tasting without swallowing:** The Riva says that "tasting" means he doesn't swallow (he spits it out). But if he does eat it (swallows), he must make a blessing. Other Rishonim have two positions regarding tasting.

2. **The Rambam doesn't make this distinction:** The Rambam doesn't mention the distinction between tasting and swallowing versus tasting without swallowing. Apparently the Rambam understands that regarding blessings, when someone tastes as part of work (like a cook who samples on Friday), this is not a "benefit" that requires a blessing – it's part of the work, not a fixed meal.

3. **Two conditions for tasting:** In order to be exempt from a blessing when tasting, one needs two conditions: (a) he is engaged in work – i.e., he's not eating for benefit but for tasting, (b) it's less than a reviit. Both conditions are necessary.

4. **A reviit at once, not throughout the day:** If a cook eats many small pieces over time, and together it amounts to a

reviit – we don't combine them. A reviit means at once – because the entire concept of being engaged in work is that each tasting separately is not eating.

5. Innovation: a reviit makes a difference also regarding an initial blessing: Usually the measure of a reviit is only relevant for a final blessing. But here with tasting it's innovated that if one tastes a reviit, one also needs an initial blessing. The reasoning is: when a person eats simply less than a reviit (not engaged in work), he does need an initial blessing. But with tasting, where the entire exemption is because it's not a "name of eating", the exemption is only up to a reviit – because a reviit makes it into eating even when one didn't intend to eat.

6. Practical question – who determines if it's tasting or eating: A person who stands in a restaurant all day and "tastes" – he calls it tasting for his consciousness, but in truth he's eating. One cannot rely on the person's own declaration; a halachic authority must determine if this is truly tasting or eating. The measure of a reviit gives an objective boundary.

7. Connection to the laws of terumah: The matter of tasting is compared to what we learned two chapters ago in the laws of terumah – that tasting terumah is not "dyeing" (coloring/using), it's not a category of eating at all, but tasting.

Law 2 (beginning) – Blessings on Mitzvot

The Rambam says: "So one blesses on each and every mitzvah and afterward performs it" – just as one makes a blessing on benefit, so one makes a blessing on every mitzvah, and afterward performs the mitzvah.

Explanation:

Blessings on mitzvot are made before the mitzvah, prior to performing it.

Insights and Explanations:

1. Language of "on" and not "before": The Rambam says "on each and every mitzvah and afterward performs it" – he doesn't say "before each mitzvah". The language "on" with the addition "and afterward performs" hints that the Rambam is setting forth a law: the blessing belongs "on" the mitzvah (as part of it), and afterward one performs it.

2. Whether blessing is indispensable: With mitzvot the reasoning is different than with blessings of benefit: one doesn't "steal", but there is a "benefit" from performing a mitzvah – the privilege to fulfill the Almighty's command. The conclusion is however that the Rambam most likely doesn't hold that it's indispensable, because there are mitzvot where one makes the blessing afterward (for example prayer).

3. "Taking permission" – blessing as permission to perform holiness: A reasoning is proposed that blessings on mitzvot are similar to the concept of "taking permission" – who gave you the right to say something holy (a blessing)? The Almighty commanded, therefore you have the right. But this is not accepted as definitive, because it's not stated explicitly.

Law 2 (continued) – Blessings of Praise, Thanks and Request

The Rambam says: "And furthermore the Sages enacted many blessings by way of praise and thanks or by way of request in order to remember the

Creator constantly even though one didn't benefit and didn't perform a mitzvah."

Explanation:

Besides blessings of benefit and blessings on mitzvot, the Sages enacted additional blessings – blessings of praise/thanks and blessings of request – so that one should constantly remember the Creator, even when one has no benefit and isn't performing a mitzvah.

Insights and Explanations:

1. Distinction between "praise" and "thanks": "Praise" means one speaks the praise of the Almighty in general (His attributes, greatness), and "thanks" means one thanks for what He specifically did for me.

2. Two ways to understand "to remember the Creator constantly":

(a) First interpretation: All blessings – benefit, mitzvot, praise/thanks/request – have the same purpose: to remember the Creator constantly. Only the manner in which one remembers Him is different: through benefit, through mitzvot, or through simple praise. This means that blessings of benefit are also "to remember the Creator" – not because one may not "steal", but because one must remember the Creator at every opportunity.

(b) Second interpretation: Blessings of benefit and blessings on mitzvot are separate categories (thanking for benefit, thanking for mitzvot), and "to remember the Creator constantly" is a third, new category – for the times when one has no benefit and no mitzvah.

The Rambam leans toward the first interpretation – that all blessings, including blessings of benefit, are fundamentally "to remember the Creator constantly."

3. Why are additional blessings needed besides benefit/mitzvot: A person eats several times a day and performs mitzvot – isn't that enough to remember the Almighty? The answer: one must remember the Almighty every moment, not only when eating or performing mitzvot. But this itself would mean that one should simply say Tehillim all day – why specifically blessings? The Rambam has a source from "but to fear Him" – blessings are a fulfillment of fear of Hashem.

4. One shouldn't understand "stealing" like an evil eye: The matter of "one may not benefit from this world without a blessing" is not because the Almighty is, Heaven forbid, an "evil eye person" – rather it's a matter of remembering the Creator constantly.

5. Mitzvot don't always directly remind of the Almighty: A person who performs a mitzvah (for example "you shall not move your neighbor's boundary") doesn't automatically think of the Almighty. He believes in faith in general, but he doesn't say clearly "I thank the Almighty." Blessings give "meaning" to the mitzvot – they explicitly remind that this is a command from the Almighty.

6. [Digression: Blessing on Torah – Torah or rabbinic:] The Rambam apparently holds that the blessing on Torah is rabbinic, but many other Rishonim hold that it's from the Torah (there is a specific verse). From that verse one already sees the concept of thanking the Almighty for giving the Torah – it's similar to blessings of benefit.

7. Source for blessings of praise/thanks: The Yafeh LaLev (Koret HaBrit on Berachot) and Rabbi Yaakov Kaminetzky bring that the source is "but to fear Hashem your God" – blessings are a fulfillment of fear of Heaven.

Text of Blessings – Ezra and His Court Enacted Them

The Rambam says: "And the text of all blessings Ezra and his court enacted them."

Explanation:

Just as the Rambam said in the laws of prayer, because Jews had "crooked" blessings (inappropriate languages), Ezra and his court enacted a proper, appropriate language. The Rambam mentions the same principle by Kriat Shema, prayer, and blessings – three times.

Three Types of Blessings

The Rambam says: "It turns out that all blessings are three types: blessings of benefit, blessings on mitzvot, and blessings of thanks which are by way of praise and thanks and request."

Explanation:

All blessings fall into three categories: (1) blessings of benefit, (2) blessings on mitzvot, (3) blessings of thanks which are by way of praise, thanks, and request.

Insights and Explanations:

1. Whether "by way of praise and thanks and request" applies only to blessings of thanks or to all three types? An argument is proposed that the list "by way of praise and thanks and request" applies to all three types of blessings, not only to blessings of thanks. This means, all blessings – also blessings of benefit and blessings on mitzvot – have within them an element of praise, thanks, and request.

2. Blessing of benefit – on which benefits? The Rambam has until now only mentioned eating, drinking, and smelling. Seeing beautiful trees or stars – that's a blessing of praise, not a blessing of benefit. Hearing beautiful music – is also not clear if that's a blessing of benefit. The Rambam hasn't said as clearly as other Rishonim.

3. "Mitzvot were not given for benefit" and blessings on mitzvot: Were it not for the rule "mitzvot were not given for benefit", one could say that a mitzvah is the greatest benefit, and just as every benefit requires a blessing, a mitzvah also requires a blessing. But because the Sages said that mitzvot are not "benefit" in this sense, one had to create a new category – blessings on mitzvot. A proposal is made "mitzvot were given to thank" – one can consider them as spiritual benefits, not physical benefits – but this is rejected because one needs a source that on spiritual benefits one should also make a blessing.

4. "To remember the Creator constantly" – question: A person prays three times a day, says Kriat Shema, says blessings before eating, after eating, when smelling, when performing mitzvot – this is already several times a day. What does the enactment of one hundred blessings add? What is the innovation of "to remember the Creator constantly" if one already remembers the Almighty many more than one hundred times a day through prayer, Kriat Shema, and other blessings? The question remains open.

5. Prayer as "to remember the Creator constantly": Also prayer – which is a mitzvah of asking the Almighty for needs – has as a principle "to remember the Creator constantly". In the introduction to Sefer Ahava it says that all mitzvot are "to remember the Creator constantly."

6. "To fear Him in His world" by blessings: Why does the Rambam say "to fear Him in His world" by blessings – what does fear have to do with blessings? When one remembers that one's food comes from the Almighty, this makes it so that in the future you should fear Him. But thanking is more direct – one submits before the Almighty, one says praise. Thanking is a "mechanism" to remember the Almighty, because simply the Almighty doesn't need us to thank Him for such a thing.

It is Not Proper to Change from the Coin the Sages Minted

The Rambam says: "And it is not proper to change them nor to add to them nor to subtract from them. Anyone who changes from the coin that the Sages minted in blessings is nothing but mistaken."

Explanation:

One may not change the text of blessings, not add and not subtract. Whoever changes from the coin that the Sages minted, is mistaken.

Insights:

1. "Is nothing but mistaken" – but is he fulfilled? The Rambam doesn't say clearly that he is not fulfilled and must repeat the blessing with the correct language. He only says "is nothing but mistaken" – he makes a mistake. This leaves open whether after the fact he is fulfilled.

After the Fact – In Any Language, With Name and Kingship and Subject of the Blessing

The Rambam says: Blessings can be said in any language, but one must say as the Sages enacted – Name, Kingship, and subject of the blessing. "If he mentioned the Name and Kingship and subject of the blessing... he is fulfilled."

Explanation:

Initially one should say the text as it appears in the siddur. After the fact, even if one says in another language (even French), as long as one mentions (1) Hashem's Name, (2) Kingship, and (3) the subject of the blessing (for example "who brings forth bread") – one is fulfilled.

Insights:

1. Two laws in one halacha: The Rambam puts here two things: (a) initially – "it is not proper to change", one must say the text of the Men of the Great Assembly, and whoever changes is mistaken; (b) after the fact – if one changed, even said in another language, one is fulfilled with Name, Kingship, and subject of the blessing.

2. Distinction from Kriat Shema: By Kriat Shema the Rambam said that one must be precise "in its language" – also in the other language. The Raavad asked there what "precision in its language" means in a translation. By blessings there is no law of "precision in its language", therefore that law (of half Hebrew half another language) is not relevant here.

3. Name and Kingship as indispensable – innovation of Rambam: This is an innovation – that Name and Kingship are truly indispensable in every blessing. The source is a dispute in the Gemara: Rav says "any blessing that doesn't have mention of the Name is not a blessing", and Rabbi Yochanan says "that doesn't have Kingship" (and we understand that Name also). The Rambam rules like Rabbi Yochanan – one needs both, Name and Kingship. It's not entirely clear who told the Rambam that this is truly indispensable (perhaps the Rif).

4. The innovation of "not fulfilled" by Name and Kingship: "Not fulfilled" means truly not fulfilled – he must repeat the blessing. This doesn't mean he's wicked, and apparently he hasn't even committed me'ilah (not lost the concept of remembering the Almighty), but to remove the concept of me'ilah doesn't need to be with all enactments – it's enough that he recognizes the Almighty at the time of the act.

5. Reason for Name and Kingship: The concept of Name and Kingship is that when one thanks the Almighty for food, one must remember that it doesn't come simply as a favor, but it comes from His kingship – from His Name, from His kingship.

6. Blessings that are "adjacent" to a previous blessing: There are blessings that don't say Name and Kingship because they are a continuation of a previous blessing (like the second blessing of Birkat HaMazon), and this is not a contradiction to the rule.

7. Example of "Blessed is the Merciful One": The Gemara brings an example of "Blessed is the Merciful One, King, Master of this bread" – where one mentions Name and Kingship in colloquial language. The Rambam holds that this is only after the fact. The Gemara speaks there of a situation where that person didn't know the holy tongue.

Law: That He Should Hear with His Ear

"All blessings require that he should hear with his ear... and if he didn't make audible he is fulfilled, provided that he uttered with his lips"

Explanation:

A blessing is not merely a reading/thought – one must say it loud enough that one's own ear should hear. Not loud enough for others, but for oneself. After the fact, if he didn't hear but he uttered with the lips (even without sound), he is fulfilled.

Law: Interruption Between Blessing and Action

"All blessings one should not interrupt... and if he interrupted he must return and bless again"

Explanation:

One may not interrupt between a blessing and the thing one makes the blessing on. If one interrupted, one must make the blessing again.

Insights:

1. Interruption regarding the subject of the blessing: The Rambam says that if the interruption was **"with words that are regarding the matter that one blesses on"** – like "bring salt", "bring a dish", "give so-and-so to eat", "give food to the animal" – one doesn't need to make a blessing again.

2. Animal: "Give food to the animal" is an innovation, because it's not your food. But since there is a law that one may not eat before giving the animal to eat, it becomes part of the meal.

3. After the fact according to Rambam: From the Rambam's language it appears that this entire law of interruption regarding the subject of the blessing is only **after the fact**. Initially one should not interrupt at all – even for necessity. One should bring the salt **before** the blessing. **The Rema** also understands this way and rules that initially one should not interrupt even for the need of the blessing.

4. Question: By "give food to the animal" – it's a mitzvah to give the animal before eating, shouldn't one do it initially? Answer: Initially one should do it **before** the blessing.

Law: An Impure Person May Make Blessings

"All blessings it is permitted for an impure person to bless them"

Explanation:

Also an impure person may make blessings, just as the Rambam said regarding Kriat Shema, Torah study, and prayer.

Law: Naked – Forbidden to Bless

"It is forbidden to bless when he is naked until he covers his nakedness"

Explanation:

One doesn't make any blessing when naked – one must cover the nakedness.

Insights:

1. Distinction between blessings and prayer: By blessings one only needs to cover the actual nakedness, but there aren't all the laws of prayer like "his heart sees the nakedness" or needing a belt.

2. Blessing on washing hands: The Rambam puts in the morning blessings that the blessing on washing hands comes before washing the hands. Can one say this not fully dressed? No, not completely naked. But it doesn't need to be with washing hands first – by prayer there is a special law of washing hands, but by blessings not.

3. Distinction between man and woman: "Speaking of appearances and of a man" – by a woman sitting she doesn't need to actually cover, because "her face is a tefach and her height is two tefachim" – her nakedness is naturally more covered when she sits. By a man this is not so.

Law: Fulfilling Others with Blessings

"All blessings even though one blessed and fulfilled his obligation... one blesses for others who didn't fulfill their obligation in order to fulfill them"

Explanation:

Even if he already fulfilled his obligation, he may make the blessing again in order to fulfill others.

Insights:

1. Reason of mutual responsibility: The Ramban brings the reason of "all Israel are responsible for one another" – a person is obligated not only in his own mitzvot, but that all

Jews should fulfill. The Rambam however doesn't bring the reason.

2. Except blessings of benefit that don't have a mitzvah: The Rambam makes a distinction: by **blessings of benefit that don't have a mitzvah** (like simply eating a sandwich) one cannot fulfill that person if one doesn't eat oneself. But by **blessings of benefit that have a mitzvah** (like eating matzah on Pesach night, kiddush with wine) one can indeed fulfill others.

3. Borei Pri HaGafen by kiddush: By kiddush, even the blessing of "Borei Pri HaGafen" (which is a blessing of benefit) becomes part of the mitzvah. The Rambam holds that kiddush with words is from the Torah, and when one makes kiddush with wine, the Borei Pri HaGafen becomes a bit of mitzvah — not only a benefit-blessing. Therefore one can fulfill others also with the Borei Pri HaGafen.

4. Fulfilling is not a "copy-paste" of words: A blessing is a greater thing than just words — it must be that both have the same obligation, that one does it for both. But when one answers amen, then it is indeed a "copy" — and therefore it helps even when the one blessing has a lesser obligation.

5. Torah obligation vs. rabbinic obligation: If the one blessing is only obligated rabbinically (for example he ate only a kezayit of bread, which is a rabbinic obligation for Birkat HaMazon), he cannot fulfill someone who is obligated from the Torah (who ate a measure of satisfaction). The listener can however be fulfilled through answering amen, because "one who answers is like one who blesses" — this is as if he said it himself.

6. [Digression: Current custom regarding fulfilling:] Today the world almost never practices fulfilling from another's blessings. Even by kiddush many people make their own Borei Pri HaGafen "so that his palate not wait." But in a Lithuanian home in Lakewood, for example, the father makes HaMotzi for the whole family — not everyone makes for themselves.

Law: Hearing is Like Answering

"Anyone who hears a blessing from the blessings from its beginning to its end and intended to fulfill with it his obligation — he is fulfilled, even though he didn't answer amen"

Explanation:

Through hearing the entire blessing with intention to be fulfilled, one is fulfilled — hearing is like answering. Even without answering amen.

Insights:

1. Blessing of benefit that doesn't have a mitzvah: What was said earlier that by a blessing of benefit without a mitzvah one cannot fulfill — this only means when that person doesn't eat. If two Jews eat together, one can indeed make a blessing for both.

Law: Answering Amen

"Anyone who answers amen after the one blessing is like one who blesses"

Explanation:

Answering amen after a blessing is like one made the blessing oneself.

Insights:

1. What does amen add beyond hearing is like answering? If one is already fulfilled through merely hearing (hearing is like answering), what is the additional concept of amen? Several possibilities: (1) Perhaps if he didn't hear the entire blessing. (2) "Is like one who blesses" means more than simply being fulfilled — it gives the initial virtue of saying it oneself. If it's initially proper to say it oneself, then with amen one has the initial virtue.

2. Provided that the one blessing is obligated in that blessing: The Rambam sets a condition — the one blessing must be obligated in that blessing. "Obligated" doesn't mean that he is already obligated today specifically, but that he is the type of person who is obligated in such a blessing — one who bears the obligation in this matter.

Law: The Law of Hesibah — Eating Together for Blessings
The Rambam says: Birkat HaMazon is only on bread and wine alone... but other foods and drinks don't require hesibah.

Explanation:

The law that one must sit together (hesibah) so that one can fulfill others, only applies by bread and wine. By other foods hesibah is not relevant, and therefore one can make a blessing and all answer amen even without togetherness.

Insights:

1. The Rambam's position vs. the Raavad: The Rambam learns that "don't require hesibah" is a *leniency* — by other foods one doesn't need hesibah, and one can be fulfilled from another even without togetherness. The Raavad learns exactly the opposite — "they don't have hesibah" is a *stringency*, that by other foods hesibah doesn't help, and each must make their own. In reasoning the Rambam's explanation makes more sense. The Shulchan Aruch HaRav rules like the Rambam.

2. What does "hesibah" mean: The Rambam says clearly that hesibah means "to sit together to eat together" — sitting together to eat, not reclining. Even in Tractate Pesachim, hesibah means togetherness, not physically reclining.

3. Practical difference — yearzeit meal: When people come together for a meal (bread or wine), one can bench for everyone. But if each comes from his home and takes out his own sandwich — "each and every one blesses for himself", because it's not a meal together.

4. Fixed meal by other foods: Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach ruled that on Pesach, when one doesn't eat mezonot, potato kugel or chremslach can count as a fixed meal regarding kiddush. The principle is that the law is not in bread and wine specifically, but in fixedness — bread and wine are only a manner of fixedness.

5. The Rema's position: The Rema (and Maharil Weil) doesn't rule like the Shulchan Aruch, and says that one does indeed need to eat together (at one table) instead of hesibah.

Law: Answering Amen on Every Blessing

"Anyone who hears one from Israel bless a blessing from all the blessings, even though he is not obligated

in that blessing that he heard and is not obligated in that blessing, he is obligated to answer amen."

Explanation:

Everyone who hears a Jew make a blessing must answer amen, even if he is not obligated in that blessing.

Insights:

1. **On whose blessing one doesn't answer amen:** If a gentile, a heretic, a Samaritan, a child who is learning (a child who only learns), or someone who is "practicing" (only practicing the words, like a prayer leader who is preparing), or someone who is not an adult, or someone who changed the coin of the blessing – on all these one doesn't answer amen.

2. **What amen means:** Amen means agreement – "I agree to this." It is the language of omen/truth. One gives "agreement" to the blessing.

3. **The Rema's position regarding a gentile's blessing:** The Rema argues that what it says that one doesn't answer amen on a gentile's blessing, is only because one didn't hear the entire blessing – perhaps he meant an idolatry. But if one hears clearly that he says the entire blessing to the Almighty, one may indeed answer amen. The same reasoning also applies to a child who is learning – if one hears that he says a proper blessing, it's a blessing. The main concern is by a Samaritan who perhaps doesn't mean the Almighty.

Law: How One Says Amen

"One should not answer a snatched amen, nor a cut-off amen, nor a short amen, nor a long one."

Explanation:

Snatched = grabbed at the beginning (the alef is missing). Cut-off = grabbed at the end (the nun is missing). Short = too short. Long = too long (one doesn't know how to "land").

Insights:

1. **For such a short word one needs so much attention:** This is a source in Torah for the rule that everything must be "normal" – the middle measure. But "middle" means according to the matter: amen after counting the Omer by a Rebbe is not the same as amen after a Shehakol in a restaurant – "according to the situation", just as the middle measure means "according to what is proper".

Law: One Should Not Raise His Voice More Than the One Blessing

The one who answers amen should not answer louder than the one blessing said the blessing.

Explanation:

People think that shouting amen is a great thing, but it must match the voice of the one blessing.

Insights:

1. **If you're seen in shul as "the amen person"** – you shout amen – according to the Rambam this is not the proper amen person, because he shouts more than normal.

2. **Practical question:** When one Jew makes a blessing and the entire congregation answers amen, surely the collective voice of all who answer is louder than the one blessing. Answer: Each individual alone doesn't say louder than the one blessing – we don't demand from the one blessing that he be

as loud as all who answer together, but each one separately should not be louder than the one blessing.

Law: One Who Didn't Hear the Blessing That He is Obligated In

One who is obligated in a blessing but didn't hear it, and he hears only others answering amen – he should not answer amen among those answering.

Explanation:

He cannot catch himself with the congregation's amen, because he didn't hear the blessing itself. He will need to make the blessing himself.

Insights:

1. **The principle:** Amen is only said by people who actually heard the blessing. It's not something like simply joining with everyone.

2. **Question on the language "that he is obligated in":** Why does the Rambam need to write "that he is obligated in"? Simply so one should also not answer amen on a blessing that one didn't hear! Two approaches:

- (1) Because he is obligated in the blessing, if he says amen it will be as if he already said (as we learned earlier that amen is as if one said the blessing), and then he won't be able to make it himself – but he didn't properly hear.

- (2) He shouldn't answer amen because it will seem to him that he already fulfilled, but in truth he didn't.

3. **By one who is not obligated:** On the contrary, he should indeed say amen – everyone says amen. The distinction is only by one obligated, where it can create a problem.

Law: A Blessing That is Not Needed – An Unnecessary Blessing

"Anyone who blesses a blessing that is not needed, behold this is one who takes the Name of Heaven in vain, and behold he is like one who swears in vain."

Explanation:

A blessing that is not called for is like saying the Almighty's Name for nothing – from the same category as a vain oath.

Insights:

1. **Even praise for the Almighty:** Even if one says praise for the Almighty, if the specific praise doesn't fit for you now, it's a problem.

Law: A Child Whom They Teach Blessings

"A child whom they teach blessings in their proper form, even though not for his own benefit – behold this is praiseworthy."

Explanation:

When one teaches a child blessings, even if he makes them not for his own need, it's praiseworthy because this is how he learns.

Law: Answering Amen After Oneself

"One who answers after himself amen – behold this is praiseworthy, in order to energize himself. But one who answers amen after his blessings – behold this is reprehensible."

Explanation:

Simply answering amen after oneself (in an appropriate context) is good. But after one says a blessing, immediately grabbing also the amen — this is reprehensible.

Insights:

1. **The parable:** It's like a person who laughs at his own jokes. You are the one blessing — that's your important place. Leave the amen for the other. "You want to be also the rabbi and also the gabbai? One can't be that way."
2. **What "reprehensible" means:** The act is reprehensible, not the person.
3. **[Digression:]** This is compared to a custom in shuls where the congregation also grabs the part of the prayer leader — for example the prayer leader says "Gadlu" and the congregation also says "Gadlu" instead of only their part. "One can't grab both sides of the puzzle."

Law: End of Final Blessings — Where One Does Say Amen After Oneself

"All blessings that are the end of final blessings — one answers in them amen after oneself."

Explanation:

At the end of a set of blessings (final blessings) one does indeed say amen after oneself.

Insights:

1. **The main example:** "Who builds in His mercy Jerusalem, amen" in bentching. The Rambam holds that "Who builds Jerusalem" is the end of the essential Birkat HaMazon, because "HaTov VeHaMeitiv" was only enacted later "in the days of the Sages of the Mishnah" — "as if it is an addition." Therefore "Who builds Jerusalem" is the true end, and there amen fits.
2. **Question: Why not amen after "Ahavat Olam" before Kriat Shema?** This is also an end of blessings? Answer: "Ahavat Olam" is the end of initial blessings (before Kriat Shema), not the end of final blessings. After Kriat Shema there are still blessings (Emet VeEmunah/Emet VeYatziv), so one is still in the middle.
3. **Another reason why not after "Ahavat Olam":** Because one is about to perform a mitzvah (Kriat Shema), and one may not make any interruption between the blessing and the mitzvah — just as by megillah or Chanukah candles, where one doesn't make amen between the blessing and the mitzvah.
4. **The Rema's distinction between Shacharit and Maariv:** By Maariv one says "Guardian of His people Israel forever, amen" because it's the end of final blessings. By Shacharit there is a question of interrupting between redemption and prayer. It's noted that this is difficult — interrupting between redemption and prayer means the entire Kriat Shema with all blessings, not only the specific word "redeemed Israel."
5. **Other examples of "sets" where one says amen after oneself at the end:** Blessings of the King (when the king

reads in the Torah at the assembly of Hakhel), blessings of the High Priest (eight blessings after Torah reading). By such sets it fits very well to say "and let us say amen" at the end — so one knows that one has finished the matter.

Law: Eating a Forbidden Thing — Whether One Makes a Blessing

"Anyone who eats a forbidden thing, whether intentionally or unintentionally, doesn't bless on it neither initially nor finally."

Explanation:

The Rambam sets forth a rule that on every forbidden thing — even only rabbinically — one doesn't make a blessing, not before eating and not after eating. The principle is the verse "the robber blesses, he angers Hashem" — like a thief who thanks the Almighty for the burglary.

Insights:

1. **Even rabbinic tevel:** Like first tithe from which its terumah wasn't taken, second tithe and sanctified items that weren't redeemed according to law — one doesn't make a blessing. "And needless to say carcasses and torn animals that are severe from the Torah and other prohibitions that one doesn't bless on them."
2. **Exceptions — demai:** Since the Sages permitted it for the poor — "behold it is like tevel that was fixed and one blesses on it." Also first tithe from which its terumah was taken (in the specific case where one took tithe before completion of work), and second tithe and fourth-year plantings where one didn't add the fifth — on all these "one blesses initially and finally", because they are not truly forbidden things.
3. **The Raavad's dispute:** The Raavad sharply disputes this Rambam. He argues that in the Gemara it only says "**we don't make a zimun**" — one doesn't make a zimun on tevel and forbidden things — but not that one doesn't make a blessing at all. The Raavad's reasoning: zimun is a **fixedness** on the eating, and to make a fixedness on forbidden things is a **disgrace** and chutzpah. But a simple blessing — where one thanks the Almighty for the benefit — why shouldn't one do this? Even a gentile is obligated to thank the Almighty for benefit — what does this have to do with the prohibition?
4. **The Raavad's argument on a deeper level:** The Raavad's question is fundamental — a blessing is an obligation that comes from **benefit**, not from the act of eating. If the body had benefit, surely there is an obligation of thanks, even when the act is forbidden. The Rambam however holds that the entire concept of blessing doesn't fit when one transgresses a sin — "the robber blesses, he angers Hashem."
5. **Ruling in practice:** The ruling is like the Rambam — one doesn't make a blessing on forbidden things. **But** — if someone already after the fact ate forbidden things (like the example of a "party with libation wine"), then **after the fact we rule like the Raavad** that one should indeed make a blessing. But initially one should certainly not eat forbidden things — "one shouldn't make the party."

Full Transcript**Laws of Blessings Chapter 1 — One Positive Commandment: To Bless the Name After Eating****Introduction: Blessings as the Last Topic in Sefer Ahavah**

Rabbosai, we are learning a chapter of Rambam, Hilchos Berachos Chapter 1. The last topic in Sefer Ahavah is Hilchos Berachos. Baruch Hashem, we have already learned Sefer Ahavah, we have already learned Krias Shema, Tefillah, Tefillin, Mezuzah, Sefer Torah, Krias HaTorah, Birkas Kohanim, and so on. And here we are going to learn the tremendous mitzvah of berachos.

First we are going to give a blessing for Harav Rabbi Yoel Wertzberger, the head of the supporters of our beis medrash. B'ezras Hashem, there will be a campaign in the coming days in honor of our entire beis medrash, and the community will participate in all the mitzvos and good deeds that we do, especially the mitzvah of Torah study. And so, we are going to make a blessing.

The mitzvah of berachos is a demonstration of hakaras hatov. It's a life, we are going to show hakaras hatov to Rabbi Yitzchak, and to his beis medrash, and to all the Torah that we learn here.

Count of the Mitzvos: One Positive Commandment

So, says the holy Rambam, Hilchos Berachos. Says the Rambam, the Rambam means here, which mitzvah is it? **One positive commandment, one mitzvas aseh, and it is to bless the Holy Name, Blessed is He, after eating, to bless the Almighty, His Name is blessed, as it says "and you shall eat and be satisfied and bless Hashem your God".**

It doesn't say that it's something physical, yes, it says the Almighty. Interesting, and later it says "to bless Him, may He be exalted", to bless Him. How does it say? So it says in other words? Ah, in Sefer HaMitzvos.

The Only Torah Commandment in Hilchos Berachos

It's interesting, because Hilchos Berachos we are going to learn twelve chapters, very many laws, but from the Torah the main mitzvah of blessing that is from the Torah is Birkas HaMazon, the blessing that one must make after eating. And that alone, according to some of the commentators on the Rambam, how it is to say, that one should also thank there for Eretz Yisrael and for Torah, and such things are rabbinic. But the essential mitzvah to thank for the food, that is the mitzvah of blessing from the Torah.

From this comes out many many blessings rabbinically, even on a small amount of food, and not only after eating, but also before eating, and not only eating, and other pleasure, and afterwards come also blessings of thanking the Almighty for miracles and for good things that happened, and blessings on mitzvos. Just as one must thank the Almighty for the pleasure of eating, one must thank for the pleasure of the mitzvah, or for the gift of the mitzvah.

The Verse "And You Shall Eat and Be Satisfied and Bless" – Plain Meaning and Exposition

So how does one understand it? It could be that as if like they learned for example the blessing of prayer, or something is a bit different, because it's not like a general rule, Birkas HaMazon is not a general rule, it's something the idea of making a blessing was taken from there, and afterwards... The Rambam discusses it at the beginning, he doesn't say a reasoning for it, but he says apparently simply what happened, so there one doesn't need to try to understand.

Halacha 1: Positive Commandment from the Torah to Bless After Eating Food

Okay. Says the Rambam thus: Positive commandment from the Torah, first thing, he says the Rambam thus: **Positive commandment from the Torah to bless after eating food**, after eating food, that means after eating a kezayis measure, one should make a blessing. **As it says**, there's a verse, **"and you shall eat and be satisfied and bless Hashem your God"**. So Chazal learned.

That means, one could have learned those verses that it's a part of the description of the blessing, how good it's going to be, one will go to Eretz Yisrael, you will eat the fruit, and one thanks the Almighty. Not such a formal blessing, but Chazal learned it so that it's a mitzvah.

Discussion: The Verse as Description or as Commandment

Speaker 1: One can say that it's like a part of the blessing. But one can actually learn, as you said earlier, that actually so one must make the blessing. The verse stands as if, once you will be satisfied, you will bless the Almighty. Not to say that you will be satisfied, you will bless the Almighty. "And you shall bless Hashem your God" is not on the satisfaction specifically. It's describing that a person is going to have a good life. When a person has a good life, he thanks the Almighty. But once Chazal took it out from the "and you shall eat and be satisfied and bless", it's like one mitzvah, one matter.

Speaker 2: Very good, but on the contrary, in Birkas HaMazon one actually thanks for Eretz Yisrael, for more things than...

Speaker 1: No, Chazal took it out from the context. No one will say that Birkas HaMazon is a mitzvah that is dependent on the Land. They took it out from the connection around it. They said that it's a mitzvah when you eat and you are satisfied, thank the Almighty. But the thanking, one sees from the text apparently, the thanking is not only on the actual satisfaction, one has a land, and perhaps on many other things afterwards.

So it could be... I'm thinking now, you're saying I should wait for soon, but I'm thinking now that perhaps because of this it could be that this is a source for all blessings in a certain sense. On the contrary, from the fact that the simple plain meaning is one thing clear, it's understood that one agrees that the other stands. It's difficult to say on this, because one has already seen.

From the Torah – Only When One is Satisfied

So, says the Rambam, **"and one is not obligated from the Torah except if he is satisfied"**. From the Torah one is only obligated to make the blessing when one is satisfied, **as it says "and you shall eat and be satisfied and bless"**. When you will be satisfied, then bless. And this is from the Torah. From the Torah is only afterwards and only when one is satisfied. These two conditions one must have: it must be after eating, and after when one is satisfied.

Enactment of the Sages – A Kezayis Without Satisfaction

And the Rabbanan, the Sages, added that **even if one ate a kezayis he blesses after it**. First they added one thing: they removed the satisfaction. Good, that satisfaction is relative. If you have eaten a kezayis, which is also a measure, it's not just licked something, you have eaten a kezayis, you also make a blessing. Right, but it's not a measure of satisfaction, it's a measure of eating, one can say. A measure of eating, minimum eating is a kezayis. Satisfaction would have been something more, according to the person, or perhaps there is another measure which is called a measure of satisfaction.

Discussion: Why Did the Sages Add a Kezayis?

Speaker 1: What is the thing? How does such a thing work? The Torah said that only then should one bless. I mean, perhaps because then a person is happy from what he has eaten and he is satisfied. Why did the Sages add? I don't understand what... Especially later we will see that berachos is not like prayer, where one can also pray a voluntary prayer. Berachos was indeed a whole concern that one may not make an unnecessary blessing. But in any case, so it is, that Chazal added that also a kezayis.

Speaker 2: No, I think for example, that people began to eat differently. It could be let's say that there's a person who has a sort of diet that he never becomes fully satisfied, they eat small meals, they eat continuously kezaysim. Chazal wanted that also a person who lives only on kezaysim should also have a chance to bless. Or when people became poorer one was happy even with less. Or Chazal didn't hold at all that it means being happy, but the Torah didn't want to burden a person. The Sages...

Speaker 1: Right, I would have thought so. This comes from the Gemara, right, thus far it's understood. I would have thought perhaps so: We have indeed learned that the simple plain meaning is as you say, that a blessing is connected to Parshas Eikev, because one will be content and good, and then "and you shall bless Hashem". And if so, what the Gemara says that from the Torah one is only obligated and "and be satisfied" is also a bit of midrash. That means, if one puts it according to halacha, one says when, but if one doesn't take it out as a formal halacha, it indeed says "and be satisfied", the plain meaning that one must eat until satisfaction. But one can also broaden the same idea of the Torah, that when one eats, "and you shall eat and be satisfied", that you have eaten, you are not satisfied, okay, you are not satisfied, so what?

Speaker 2: I don't understand what you're saying. The very thing that they are innovating that one is only obligated with satisfaction is also an innovation of the Rabbanan.

Speaker 1: If one wants to go back to the simple meaning of Scripture that discusses, it makes sense to say that "and be satisfied" is such, that everything is a description. One doesn't say you should bless the Almighty. But one is describing indeed, when is a time when a person is happy and blesses the Almighty? When he is in a good place, he has eaten, he is satisfied. But from here one also sees that then is when a person blesses the Almighty, from the Torah.

Innovation: From the Torah – Blessing on the Person's State, Rabbinically – Blessing on the Pleasure

I interpreted it as that from the Torah the person makes the blessing on his contentment, that he is satisfied, that he is calm, as if when the person is happy. The Sages placed it on things, every time that he has a benefit of pleasure from the world. You will see, let's learn the next piece, he will say it there. It's interesting, but from the Torah it's like when a person is in a certain state, he should thank.

Chazal said, the person doesn't thank for being satisfied, for being happy, but for every pleasure that he has, more on the food, on the eating. They removed the blessing from the person, that it's a certain state of the person, and placed it that it's a state on all kinds of creations, on all kinds of foods. But they still made a distinction, that this is from the Torah, they still remember the distinction.

Halacha 2: First Blessing – Enactment of the Sages

From the words of the Scribes they also said an oath. And another interesting thing, from the words of Torah we bless only after we are satisfied, when we are content. From the words of the Scribes they made a completely different thing: that when one begins to eat, when one is still not at all content, one should make the blessing. One makes the blessing that one will be content, that one will eat. "To bless on the food".

The Reasoning of "It is Forbidden to Benefit from This World Without a Blessing"

On this the Gemara says that there's a reasoning, "it is forbidden for a person to benefit from this world without a blessing". It appears that the first blessing is not on the pleasure. It's not like one thanks the Almighty for the pleasure. By the way, what we are saying, it's more like what the Gemara says, yes, the world knows indeed the Gemara, everyone knows the Gemara of "The heavens are Hashem's". It's more like you are a recognition that the entire world belongs to the Almighty. It's a bit a different...

Innovation: The Fundamental Distinction Between First Blessing and Last Blessing

Let's think, the person that the verse conveys, it doesn't occur to him to thank beforehand. He is a person who lives with nature, he is in a bad mood, he seeks food, and he doesn't think of people. After he has eaten and he is satisfied, then he thanks the Almighty, thank you for the food.

Say Chazal, indeed the person doesn't live entirely with any yoke of Heaven beforehand. When he is happy, then he thanks. Say Chazal, a person must remember the whole time, the thing that I am now going to eat, the Almighty gave me this, I must still beforehand make a blessing, that I should not be like a thief. It's very interesting what they did here, yes?

Blessing on Smell and on Every Pleasure

Says the Rambam further, and Chazal added more, not only on food, but even on a smell, even if you had pleasure. It's not specifically, one doesn't speak not specifically satisfaction and not specifically bread, but every thing that one eats, and not only that, but every thing that one has pleasure, a person smells a good smell, he should first make a blessing on the pleasure of the smell that the Almighty gave him, **and afterwards he should benefit from it**, and afterwards he should have that pleasure from it. **And even if he had nothing to eat and drink at all**, even he didn't have a drop like a kezayis, even a person has in mind to eat a little bit, also **he blesses and afterwards benefits**, he should first make a blessing and afterwards have pleasure.

"And Anyone Who Benefits Without a Blessing Has Committed Meilah"

Says the Rambam further, **and anyone who benefits without a blessing has committed meilah**. One who had pleasure without a blessing, he didn't follow the enactment of the Sages, he had pleasure before eating, I mean, he had pleasure before making a blessing, he committed meilah. What does this meilah mean? Meilah is usually a concept in the laws of kodashim, that if one has benefit from something that belongs to the Most High, to the Almighty. It apparently doesn't mean that he committed meilah according to halacha, that he must pay principal and a fifth, but it's as if like meilah.

It's interesting, it doesn't say as if he committed meilah. It says he is... that the Sages added a new thing, that you cannot take... It's not the plain meaning that only when you are happy

should you thank the Almighty, but you should remember the whole time that everything that you take, or everything that you eat, you take from what belongs to the Almighty.

The Rambam's Language "Meilah" – Without a Reasoning

The Rambam doesn't say it very clearly, interesting. The Rambam doesn't say because it's the Almighty's and you take it from Him, as Chazal say. The Rambam doesn't say it, he doesn't place... he doesn't explain the reasoning, right? He doesn't say that it belongs to the Almighty and you take it. As the Gemara says, as if you stole. Because meilah goes to another thing. But these are details, but what the Gemara says it yes more clearly, and this is not there one can hear from verses...

No, it's two different things. There is one reasoning in the Gemara, "a person will in the future give an accounting for everything his eye saw and he didn't eat", and the Rambam doesn't explain the reasoning for it. Afterwards there is, it apparently shows a hint.

Halacha 1 (Continuation): Meilah in Heavenly Sanctities, Rabbinic Blessings, and the Law of Tasting

Halacha 1 (Continuation) – The Foundation of Blessing Before Eating: Meilah in Heavenly Sanctities

Speaker 1:

Meilah is usually a concept in the laws of kodashim, that if one has benefit from something that belongs to the Most High, to the Almighty... It apparently doesn't mean that he committed meilah according to halacha, that he must pay principal and a fifth. But it's as if like meilah. Interesting, it doesn't say as if he committed meilah.

It says here, that you cannot take, it's not the plain meaning that only when you are happy should you thank the Almighty, but that you should remember the whole time that everything that you take, everything that you eat, you take from what belongs to the Almighty, and consequently you must... The Rambam doesn't say it very clearly, interesting. The Rambam doesn't say because it's the Almighty's and you take it from Him, as Chazal say. The Rambam doesn't say that. He doesn't place, he doesn't explain the reasoning, right? He doesn't say that it belongs to the Almighty and you take it. As the Gemara says as if one stole, because meilah, he's going to place it in because he wants to fulfill a blessing. But the Gemara says it yes more clearly, or not?

Speaker 2:

No, it's two different things. There is one reasoning in the Gemara, "it is forbidden for a person to benefit from this world without a blessing", and the Rambam doesn't explain the reasoning for it. Afterwards there is apparently a continuation of the same idea, it says as if meilah. The language of the Gemara is "as if he benefited from heavenly sanctities". He brings actually that the Rambam brought actually the end, not the end, he brings the second Gemara. He doesn't bring the essential thing that as if... that it's a possession that belongs to the Almighty and we take it. He doesn't say it at all.

Speaker 1:

So. Right. Interesting. Perhaps the Rambam understands that it's simple? Perhaps later... Ah, I think so: At the end of Hilchos Berachos there is indeed a hashkafic idea that he understands at the end of Hilchos Berachos. Here already? No, the end of Hilchos Berachos. Here he will often speak about

berachos more, but the end of the laws more. It could be that the Rambam didn't understand that the world... One must think the theology in it. One must think, it's very interesting, because the person of the Torah one lives in his nature. When he feels content, he thanks the Almighty. Chazal made here completely a different form entirely. The person is poor, is hungry, he is still not at all content. He must make a blessing, but for a different reason. He should make a blessing because he is going to eat, for a completely different reason. He has a pleasure in the eating, it's a tremendous acceptance of the yoke. The Torah here, but it's a kind of natural, food lies on the ground, you can eat, when you are happy thank the Almighty. This is hakaras hatov, it's a beautiful thing. Here he says no, the food doesn't belong to you.

Continuation of Lecture on Blessings

It's not hakarat hatov (gratitude), it's a completely different thing. It's more like... no, the first one, the stringency, on the contrary, I said that he makes it like a prohibition. It doesn't belong to you, you're not allowed to take from the Torah itself. Yes, yes. But I'm saying that the Gemara... they don't say it's theft, they don't say one transgresses rabbinic theft. The Sages only wanted us to have the idea that it's as if stolen. Therefore for you, it doesn't have any laws of theft. It's clear, that's the novelty of it. I'm saying me'ilah (misappropriation of sacred property), I'm not saying gezel (theft).

Speaker 2:

No, no, I want to bring out with this... yes, the Gemara also says gozel (steals). No, it says gozel Hakadosh Baruch Hu (steals from God) and gozel Knesset Yisrael (steals from the Jewish people). It says. But the Gemara only brings mo'el b'kodshei shamayim (misappropriates sacred property). It's very interesting. Because mo'el b'kodshei shamayim is indeed something that's not theft. When the Gemara brings on the Rambam, it brings that you may eat it. The meat the kohen may eat. The theft from a poor person, there it's not according to the halachah. He means something else, he means something else. It's a milta d'atya miklal (something that comes from a general principle)...

Speaker 1:

No, I think, I just want to bring out that me'ilah is not a matter of theft, it's a matter of permission. I hear, I hear, I hear. Perhaps that's why the Rambam brings this language and not the language of theft. Yes, yes, not theft, that's it. But theft too, you understand, everyone understands, both are lenient opinions. I want to bring out that it's a completely different reason. It's not the matter of hakarat hatov. You can call it hakarat hatov in a broader sense, but it's more a thing that the world doesn't belong to you. Not like you say, he's hungry. The Gemara says even such a kal vachomer (logical inference), and one holds from the Gemara, "when he goes out hungry he should bless, when he goes out satisfied he should bless kal vachomer." Because the Gemara understands that the blessing is more like a netilat reshut (taking permission). I'm taking permission from the Almighty to eat His food. Not that the Almighty gave me, I thank Him for it. It's the Almighty's food, I ask Him permission.

It's clear that we're not talking here about actual theft, because one could ask such a question, eight billion people eat the supposedly stolen merchandise, and it appears that the owner is seemingly agreeing to it. The owner who keeps giving to

someone is no longer a thief. The owner is mafkir (renouncing ownership), or the owner even allows it. So therefore I say, "kli neheneh v'lo mikdashei shamayim" (one who benefits but not from sacred property) is the simple meaning, you're something not on the list. It's like someone distributes to everyone, but he has a certain order. You need to make sure you're on the list. Someone comes, he takes from the kimcha d'pische (Passover flour fund) when there wasn't a card with his name. He's not a thief.

Originally the courtyard is full of meat for all the kohanim. I hear, I hear. But he grabs something that doesn't belong to him. It's yours, because in essence the Torah doesn't see that it should belong to you anyway. You thank the Almighty that you ate this. It's there. You have a right. The blessing gives you the right. It could be that it comes from the other verse. One must look, one must be precise about the verses that stand next to it. I don't see the order of "v'zacharta et Hashem" (and you shall remember God), and then you shouldn't think that "kochi v'otzem yadi" (my power and the might of my hand), these sorts of expressions.

Speaker 2:

It could be that the answer to what you say about eight billion people, it could actually be that if the Gemara says that blessing is logical reasoning, it could be that a non-Jew is also obligated. It's not a Jewish thing, not something the Sages instituted. It's logical reasoning that the world belongs to the Almighty, because there are seven Noahide commandments, for example. It also certainly includes all logical reasoning, all things. It could be like every theft that a Noahide is commanded about. I didn't say to that extent. But I'm saying it's logical reasoning that the world belongs to the Almighty. One can think about this as a different sort of perspective. The world belongs to the Almighty, ask permission. As you say, put yourself on the list, or at least acknowledge and recognize that you're taking from Him.

Speaker 1:

It's interesting, one can think another way about what the Torah says "v'achalta v'savata u'veirachta" (and you shall eat and be satisfied and bless). One can say exactly the opposite. When a person is hungry, he needs to ask the Almighty for food. It's simple. Usually after eating, when one is satisfied, it's usually the opposite: "shamanta, avita, kasita" (you grew fat, thick, covered), "ein ari nohem ela mitoch kupah shel basar" (a lion only roars from a basket full of meat). On the contrary, when a person is satisfied, usually then you forget "v'shachachta et Hashem Elokecha" (and you forget God your Lord). The blessing here is that even when you're satisfied, you shouldn't turn around and be busy only with your desires, but you should bless the Almighty.

Speaker 2:

Okay, both are true. No, no, if so it's correct that the Sages didn't add. The Sages said according to the Torah, and the simple meaning is that when a person is not yet satisfied... Then he remembers for another whole half hour.

Speaker 1:

One must learn there the first page in Keitzad Mevarkhim. This is apparently the reasoning of a doubtful kal vachomer that the Gemara in Tractate Pesachim says, that one cannot make a kal vachomer. I don't remember what the end is. But

anyway, we'll find it later. The Gemara doesn't agree in the end with the kal vachomer. Okay.

Law 1 (Continued) – Rabbinic Laws: First Blessing, Final Blessing, Blessing on Fragrance

Speaker 1:

Let's say the Rambam further. Besides this, okay, and so. **The Sages added to make a blessing. One, that even not satiation but a kezayit (olive-sized portion) is obligated in Birkat HaMazon (Grace After Meals), a rabbinic law. And a rabbinic law that on every food or on every pleasure, like smelling – it's interesting, he doesn't say which pleasure it has, he lists smelling – one should make a blessing.**

Speaker 2:

Am I the only one, what else is there that's the worst pleasure? I don't know, a pleasure from hearing a good joke. I don't know, meanwhile. The Nefesh HaChaim asks about the mitzvah of onah (marital relations) and the like. Okay, but actually there's no rabbinic enactment. Even going to the bathroom, that's a pleasure, there's a blessing of Asher Yatzar, which is something else, it's a blessing of praise. But apparently that's actually the only one I think. What's the novelty? All these blessings, blessings on fruits, what else is there? Immediately there's a blessing on fragrance, there's nothing else. Or "good creatures and good trees to benefit from them for people," when one sees beautiful things. It's not a pleasure, perhaps a Pesach. What other pleasures are there? That's basically what there is. Except for what you say, the connection of onah etc.

Speaker 1:

Okay, another thing, and so. **And so in rabbinic law, to bless after every food and drink.** That means, just as he said that one makes a blessing on everything one eats, also after everything one eats and drinks. The Sages added even a kezayit of food, one must learn Birkat HaMazon. But a new blessing of a different type, they added on everything one eats, kol shehu (any amount), a revi'it (quarter-log) or a kezayit. No, that means, yes, you agree. Kol shehu, the emphasis is on kol (all). From the Torah it's on mazon (food), and they haven't yet said what mazon is, then. We assume it means bread, perhaps it means more. And from the Torah it's mazon, and rabbinically it's on any eating. So this goes together with the kezayit, a piece. Everything that's called eating has a blessing before it, and also a blessing after it. Goes very well.

Law 1 (Continued) – Law of "Matameis" (Tasting Without Eating)

Speaker 1:

The Rambam says further, "**u'matameis**", whatever a person tastes, he doesn't eat because he wants to eat breakfast now, but he's cooking, he's tasting. Yes, Friday, we're learning now Friday. I asked my children last week, which is the longest mitzvah? I said the mitzvah of tasting. Starting Thursday night, the children rub it in, making, we snack, we eat a bit here, and this is until Saturday night. Now, not matameis, we're going to eat now, because we're hungry. That's a different type, we eat simply because we're working for Shabbat, it's a different type.

But matameis, one who is tasting, is a blessing in vain, and he's an oved ner v'lo cherev (works needle and not sword).

Because that's not called the pleasure of eating, or it's not official eating.

Speaker 2:

There are those who say that after a certain minute when one grabs, one is satisfied with what. And they ask in the Chochmat Shlomo, if the person finishes his work in the restaurant, and he's now there, because he was tasting so much, why shouldn't he then bentsch (recite Grace After Meals)?

Speaker 1:

No, it's not that he brings there. He brings there the opinion that the Riva said, and one must look at the measure, it's not enough what's written there. No, the Riva said that matameis means he's not swallowing, he takes a taste and spits it out. But if he eats it yes, there's actually work with the rabbis.

But the Rambam doesn't make this distinction. The Rambam doesn't say this distinction. Others have two things about matameis. The law of matameis begins in Ta'anit, where the Gemara says that one is tasting on a fast day, there's no problem with the fast. There one understands better why the Rishonim can say, what does it mean, he eats whole kezetim? They say it must be that he doesn't become satisfied, or it must be less than a measure, or because...

But the Rambam doesn't mention all these things. Apparently, the Rambam speaks that regarding blessing, there's nothing here of keviyut seudah (establishing a meal). The tasting is part of the work, it's part of the cooking.

Speaker 2:

Right, but keviyut seudah you certainly don't need, because you said earlier that one needs "any" revi'it, that's rabbinic law. It could be that this is less. Even others who... But yes, you need to have a revi'it, a revi'it at once. Not everything together is a revi'it, right? Each measure is a revi'it. You eat a revi'it, is... What the cook is, he eats Friday... I mean, he eats a revi'it. Even according to most opinions one doesn't need to begin. It's a great novelty, true? Yes. But one must understand Rabbi Yoel, what does he say? A revi'it at once, or that over time he ate a revi'it?

Law of Tasting and the Measure of Revi'it; Blessings on Mitzvot and Remembering the Creator Always

Continuation of Law of Tasting – Measure of Revi'it for First Blessing and Final Blessing

Speaker 1:

What's the small leniency here? A person stands in a restaurant today and he keeps tasting a little from every pot. Do we check if during the day he ate a revi'it?

Speaker 2:

I mean so much is simple, now are you talking about the after-blessing or the before-blessing? Mitameis is not even a before-blessing, not just the after-blessing. Even the before-blessing one doesn't need to have. It's a greater novelty, true. But one must combine a revi'it. What does he say? A revi'it at once, or that over time he ate a revi'it? We haven't learned this yet. Apparently the simple meaning in the matter of achilat keva (established eating), and so on, we haven't learned for a revi'it. Apparently at once. Because the whole word of mitameis is that he eats, that he tastes.

But mitameis is also not a matter of achilat keva. He doesn't say a revi'it that over the hour he ate a revi'it. A revi'it means that as long as one eats less than a revi'it.

Explanation of the Matter of Mitameis and the Measure of Revi'it

I would interpret it this way, this is how I would interpret from the Rambam's language I would say this: a mitameis is what is a different sort of eating, it's not achilat hana'ah (eating for pleasure), but achilat tasting, like, you know, it reminds me of the previous chapter that we learned two chapters ago in the Laws of Terumot, that one is tasting the terumot, that's not any coloring, it's not a definition of coloring. Yes, there there's a halachic ruling from the Shema, but it's not a definition of coloring, it's a tasting. It's not at all a definition of eating, it's only tasting. But if one is tasting a whole revi'it, then it becomes yes an eating. A Gemara is only for the sake of tasting, one needs two conditions, one must be less than a revi'it, and mitameis.

Novelty: Revi'it Makes a Difference Also Regarding First Blessing

Regarding the first blessing however, there are interesting things here. Regarding the first blessing there's no measure of revi'it. Because when you say that mitameis is because it's not official eating, there's no official name of eating. Official, when one eats less than a revi'it, but one eats simply, one eats into the world a candy, one needs yes a blessing.

All this revi'it is however a matter, because one cannot now say that it depends on what the person thinks. One cannot make eating have a da'at (awareness) of here. So we also put it in a certain manner, because a person... Yes, but think about it. What I'm saying is, that the person who stands in the restaurant a whole day and he tastes, he calls it tasting because it's easier to have a bit at his guilty conscience. But the truth is that he's eating! He's turning around with eating, he's holding actual eating. He calls it tasting for his conscience. If someone tastes, does he mean a revi'it? With whom it means not that! He's already eating, it's already eating! It's not with tasting! I don't think so. One minute covers... Who knows, the halachic decisor, if what he tastes is called tasting or eating. So as long as can one put it down with his revi'it? Because the person can always say, ah, I'm tasting. Each piece is actually only one hundred percent only to know the taste of this food. You have pleasure from this eating also. I think revi'it, but remember usually here, usually revi'it is only one of final blessing, yes? Final blessing even invented... Matameis there's a novelty that revi'it apparently also on the first blessing. But the final blessing goes apparently on the revi'it? Because beforehand he didn't know it would be a revi'it. He tastes, it tastes good to him he eats a bit more. He eats a matameis, perhaps it's a matameis and it tastes good to him he takes a bit more. So if he's going to take a revi'it he needs to now make a final blessing. Before it he's engaged in tasting. I thought that the matameis is also on the first blessing. If he tastes a whole revi'it he knows yes, he makes a blessing even a first blessing. Because here would have been something just, I know I don't have proof for my reasoning. It's interesting that it depends on the situation, but I look at it that the matameis is not someone when he takes a vessel and he's now going to eat a measure because he wants to taste it, he takes a spoon and he tastes. Very good, but if you take a big spoon... If you take a big spoon then he does yes make a blessing both before it and after it.

You're saying a novelty that *revi'it* makes a difference regarding first blessing. Because this, the permission so to speak of *matameis* is only if it's included also that it's not a *revi'it*. Because in this principle, because the Sages told you that you eat... Even incidentally you don't eat for the sake of eating, but you're in practice eating yes. When you eat less than a *revi'it* you can say you're not eating. But in practice after this it's simple that it must be a *revi'it*. Because even by eating it must... True, true. That it goes mainly on the before it. I believe that today's rabbis will never permit the law of *matameis*, I know you, I know how it works. Every time one will say like you say. I don't trust you, you're a glutton. But it could be that someone is actually a cook, and presumably he'll be crude.

Practical Ruling Regarding Matameis

A simple way, if the person comes to ask, there, one can trust him. If he's very crude because he works in a restaurant... It's not a question, he's crude because he's doing something with it, what should he do? But he's not eating, he's only a taster.

Law 3 – Blessings on Mitzvot

Speaker 2:

I've already seen for weeks, the Rambam says this, besides making a blessing on pleasure, we said, from the Torah one blesses on satiation, rabbinically one blesses on pleasure. And here comes a new thing, **"so one blesses on each and every mitzvah and afterwards performs it"**. The same thing, also one should make a blessing for every mitzvah, or on every mitzvah, and afterwards he says, one should do it before the mitzvah. An interesting language, why doesn't he say "before each and every mitzvah"? He says **"on each and every mitzvah and afterwards performs it"**.

Whether Blessing is Indispensable

Translation

Because it's possible, the Rambam does hold that it's *me'akev* (invalidating). It's similar to *birkos hanehenin* (blessings on enjoyment) in that just as you can't steal it, therefore the blessing is also *me'akev*. By a mitzvah, you're not stealing, if it were a stolen thing it truly wouldn't be valid. Why wouldn't it be? He took benefit from a mitzvah. It's a tremendous benefit to be able to perform a mitzvah. What is the benefit? Without permission, without thanking. I don't want to say the word benefit.

One must think, because there is a halacha by mitzvos that one makes over *la'asiyasan* (before their performance), and I don't remember what the Rambam holds about this. Here I think it's not *me'akev*, yes? The Rambam, there are things that one makes afterwards, for example *tefillah* (prayer), yes? One does make the blessing afterwards. Here I think whether it's *me'akev*. Or perhaps the Rambam, according to how the Rambam sets it up, he doesn't say it's a blessing, rather he says there's a *din* (law) that the blessing is made beforehand. It's one of the Rambam's ways that it's literally, he sets up the same thing.

The Concept of "Notel Reshus" (Taking Permission)

Perhaps one can think, I thought that perhaps it's like with *notel reshus* (taking permission) he says, yes? "Lo yehane adam min ha'olam hazeh b'lo bracha" (A person should not benefit from this world without a blessing). A blessing is already a certain honor for a person. Benefit is a simple thing, it's a mitzvah, *lav leihanos nitnu* (they were not given for

enjoyment). But it's a *davar shebikdusha* (matter of holiness), you make a blessing to the Almighty. Who gave you the right to give a blessing? Ah, the Almighty commanded, therefore I have the right, "*notel ani reshus*" (I take permission), as if I was obligated to make the blessing with performing the mitzvah. One can think, but it doesn't say so. Besides that, many blessings, yes? But it looks a bit like the mitzvah has with it benefit. You would have had to say "*keshem shemevarkhim al hahana'ah*" (just as we bless on benefit), no, "*keshem shemevarkhim al hamitzvah, kakh ya'aseh al zeh*" (just as we bless on the mitzvah, so shall one do on this). But it can't be.

The blessing is very good. The Rambam doesn't explain to us, he doesn't tell us the matter, he states here the halacha, he doesn't give here teachings.

Birkas HaTorah – D'Oraisa or D'Rabbanan

Actually there is a reasoning that the Torah gave us the mitzvah of *birkas haTorah* (blessing on Torah), which the Rambam calculated from the Torah. I don't remember. The Rambam already said *birkas haTorah* after *tefillah* we already learned about that. The Rambam apparently holds that *birkas haTorah* is not *d'Oraisa* (biblical), but many other Rishonim hold that it's *d'Oraisa*. There is a specific verse on this.

Okay. He says, from that verse itself you already see the matter of... It's not so far from *birkas hamitzvos*, rather it's more like a praise, just as I thank the Almighty for food, so I thank the Almighty for giving me Torah, or "*ma'aleh rachamim vada'as*" (who raises mercy and knowledge), or for giving me *talmud Torah*, or for giving me *mitzvos*. Okay.

Blessings of Praise, Thanksgiving and Request – In Order to Remember the Creator Always

Speaker 2:

The Rambam says further, **"and many more blessings the Sages instituted,"** many more blessings the Sages were metaken (instituted), **"derech shevach v'hoda'ah o derech bakasha"** (by way of praise and thanksgiving or by way of request). Two more types of blessings. Either blessings where one thanks the Almighty and praises, praises and thanks. And also "*derech shevach*" always means one speaks the praise of the Almighty in general, and "*hoda'ah*" means for what He did for me. "*V'derech bakasha,*" and blessings that are by way of request.

All these things are **"kedei lizkor es haBoreh tamid"** (in order to remember the Creator always), one should always remember the Almighty, **"af al pi shelo nehene v'lo asah mitzvah"** (even though he didn't benefit and didn't do a mitzvah). When a person has benefit or a person does a mitzvah, he remembers the Almighty, he makes the blessing. It's true, when doing the mitzvah he remembers the Almighty with the mitzvah itself. But anyway, but when not, he needs to have more reminders. By the way, one can very well make a... This is not a question. A person can do a mitzvah and forget that it's a mitzvah. One can also make a blessing and forget about the Almighty.

If only, everything has a measure. He already says "*Baruch Atah Hashem,*" yes, but in any case, why does he need "*lizkor es haBoreh tamid*" if he's not doing any mitzvos? No, it's like this, I gave you two ways of understanding. That is, either we'll say that certain mitzvos don't directly remind of the Almighty, one doesn't mention the Almighty's name in the mitzvah.

When a person puts a marker in his field, does the person think he's fulfilling "lo tasig ge'vul re'akha" (do not move your neighbor's boundary)? He doesn't think. He believes that the Almighty runs the world, and he follows mitzvos, and he believes in derech hateva (the natural way), which he moves over a whole bunch of beliefs and such. But it's hidden, he doesn't say clearly that I thank the Almighty or something. When he says birkas Hashem (blessing of God's name), he gives meaning to the mitzvos, he remembers that this is a mitzvah from the Almighty. Very good. So, I have two... Even when one doesn't have benefit, and doesn't have any mitzvah, one must thank the Almighty, this is an extra thing.

Two Ways to Understand "Lizkor es HaBoreh Tamid"

I have two... I don't know how you understand here. Either one can understand two ways. One can understand that all mitzvos are lizkor es haBoreh tamid, but here sometimes one must think what one needs to do. Benefit – you remember the Almighty for benefit, you remember the Almighty for mitzvah, and sometimes you just say a simple "Baruch Atah" because it doesn't have that. Or one can understand differently, as you apparently learned now, that simply that nehene and asiya mitzvah is not lizkor es haBoreh, it's a different category, one thanks the Almighty, and besides that one also needs to stand. It could be, I'll need to think more, I saw that the Rambam holds I think in Sefer HaMitzvos later at the end he speaks about this. It could be that the Rambam understands, and from this I think that the Rambam brought it all together. That actually birkos hanehenin is also just lizkor es haBoreh tamid. It's a different way that one remembers Him. As you say, a person eats a bit, does a bit of mitzvos, does a bit of this.

And the proof that one takes from the Almighty is also lizkor es haBoreh tamid, he says that you should look at creation as the Almighty gives. Right. So, I say it's more the question of lizkor, one shouldn't accept the thing literally that the Almighty is an ayin hara'nik (evil eye giver), it's nothing at all. The Almighty is not an ayin hara'nik. It's a matter of lizkor es haBoreh tamid. One can say that this is it. Or lizkor es haBoreh is itself such a particular thing, one can still think so.

Why Does One Need Blessings Even When Not Doing Mitzvos

Okay, it comes out, one accepts all blessings. There are interesting things, we still need to better understand why Chazal took this upon themselves. A person eats several times a day, a person eats several times a day, isn't it enough? One must remember the Almighty every moment. But that itself I could still say that you need to pray all day, you should learn Tehillim well all day and all night, when you're awake you should sing. It's the good old thing that it says, it says lizkor es haBoreh tamid u'lehodos lo (to remember the Creator always and thank Him). Now, why did they take in hand in the... I understand that the Rambam has a source, Shema Hashem Eloekha, ki im leyir'ah oso (Hear Hashem your God, but to fear Him), on this he says one must make the blessings. Leyir'ah oso. I think that presumably the Rambam had some source, a language from the Gemara he understood. The Yafeh LaLev writes Kores HaBris on Berachos. I don't know what his source is, but so it apparently is. Ah, so indeed says Rav Yaakov Kaminetzky here in understanding on kiyum leyira. But he brought out the Yafeh LaLev, I don't know.

Okay, let's go learn further.

Hilchos Berachos Chapter 1 – The Text of Blessings and Conditions for Fulfilling the Obligation

The Source of the Text of Blessings – Ezra and His Court

Speaker 1: Aye, from where does it originate? The source? He asks, presumably the Rambam had some source, some language from the Gemara, or something where it says the language "lizkor es haBoreh" on blessings. One doesn't know what the source is, but so it apparently is. Ah, so indeed says Rav Yaakov Kaminetzky, your understanding of "kum li yira." But he took out the interpretations, so I don't know.

Okay, let's go learn further. So until here are the halachos, the mitzvah, yes?

Speaker 2: No, no, but my question is still a question. A person prays three times a day, plus one says Krias Shema with that, plus every time one eats, I counted it all, before eating, after eating, every time one smells, and every time one does mitzvos. So what comes out several times a day? What more is the "lizkor es haBoreh tamid"? How much more did they add? What was their view? A hundred times a day? Okay, it says so, meah berachos is a hundred times a day. But meah berachos, one remembers the Almighty many more times than that, because one prays, one says Krias Shema, one says all these blessings. Berachos is a part of it.

Speaker 1: When the Rambam says "birkos shevach," what is the long text of tefillah? That's more than... When the Rambam says here "tiknu derech bakasha," he perhaps speaks of hidden things, yes? "Derech bakasha," which tefillos are bakasha? I mean that he also speaks of... He goes on the language that Anshei Knesses HaGedolah instituted the tefillos and berachos.

What's going on, Yossel? You are not feeling good? Stop it for a minute and go take care of him.

"Mitzvos Lav Leihanos Nitnu" and Birkas HaMitzvos

Speaker 1: Okay, an interesting thing, there is a principle in Chazal "mitzvos lav leihanos nitnu" (mitzvos were not given for enjoyment). So if not for this principle, one would have said that the greatest benefit is a mitzvah, therefore just like every benefit needs a blessing, a mitzvah also needs a blessing. But Chazal said "mitzvos lav leihanos nitnu," one must create a new type of blessing. And therefore the Rambam says... But right after he says that one makes a blessing, he says, there are more blessings, the shevach v'hoda'ah, "lizkor es haBoreh tamid." And if it were only the concept of blessings on benefit, there's no place for birkas hamitzvos. But there is birkas hahoda'ah, there are more types of mitzvos, so...

Speaker 2: But mitzvos lehodos nitnu (mitzvos were given to thank), means simply, apparently the Rambam would say that he doesn't mean hana'os haguf (physical pleasures), but hana'os hanefesh (spiritual pleasures), which we don't call benefit.

Speaker 1: No, but... Okay, but you could have said, from where do you even know such a thing that something that's not hana'os haguf one should make on it a blessing? But what do you think? What do you think? Not what the source is. There's a greater broader thing of blessings. It's lizkor es haBoreh tamid. Yes, could be.

Speaker 2: Tefillah is more, is being mispallel on all these things. What is there a mitzvah of asking the Almighty for needs? And why is the mitzvah? The mitzvah is also lizkor es haBoreh tamid. Could be. So in the introduction of Sefer

Ahava it says this, that all mitzvos are lizkor es haBoreh tamid, right? Or remember the... Oh, yes, so there was some such language. But I remember, let's not look for it because it wasn't there.

Speaker 1: Let's learn, it wasn't there. I mean it was in the introduction of the entire sefer that it was written. I won't find it so quickly. Okay, wait. Come let's learn. Further, yes. Say the Mishnah, say the Rambam.

Speaker 2: "V'ahavta es Hashem Elokekha" (And you shall love Hashem your God), all day long they shall... Yes, we spoke about that then. But there is, it was, I mean at the beginning of the entire sefer it was written so.

Halacha 4 – Three Types of Blessings

Speaker 1: The Rambam says, **nimtza, what are the types of blessings?** Ah, we didn't read. Ah, didn't read, but didn't we read it. Benefit, mitzvos, and thanksgiving. Ah, here it's written one by one. Birkos hoda'ah that are derech... **Nimtza shekhol haberachos kelulos bisheloshah minim** (It turns out that all blessings are included in three types), three categories. **Birkos hana'ah** (blessings of benefit), all types of benefit, as the Rambam said, also smelling. And I see that basically all five senses have benefit because... have blessings. For example, one sees a star, I mean, or when one sees various stars, that is birkas hashevach, that is birkas hashevach. But seeing beautiful trees, ah, is also birkas hashevach. Hearing beautiful music? No, because when does he bring? He brings from... Look in the Yad Peshutah, he brings benefit, he brings very beautiful languages from... I don't know. Let's, let's... How do you look? Let's... I'm in the middle of a sentence of the Rambam. Let me finish his sentence.

Birkas hana'ah, birkas hamitzvos, u'virkos hoda'ah shehen derech shevach v'hoda'ah u'vakasha. The list goes on the last, but I think it goes on all three, and we'll see.

Speaker 2: No, I say that the other Rishonim say that birkas hana'ah is on all types of benefit: eating, um... But again, the Rambam said clearly not so. I mean, he'll tell you... He says birkas hana'ah, but the Rambam told us so far on smelling. There isn't yet. On which other things is there birkas hana'ah? We'll see in all of Hilchos Berachos, we'll see. That the Rambam until now only meant this. Okay.

Speaker 1: So, the Rambam says further. No, and this is the question. Does the list only go on the last thing? I said it goes on all three. So it seems to me. One can argue if he wants.

Halacha 5 – The Text of All Blessings Ezra and His Court Instituted Them

Speaker 1: The Rambam says, "**v'nusach kol haberachos**" (and the text of all blessings) – It's a bit interesting that he says "leyir'uhu b'minav" when he says on blessings. Why didn't they speak about this? The Rambam doesn't hold that... The Rambam holds that "leyir'uhu b'minav" – because all mitzvos are "leyir'uhu b'minav." No, because "leyir'uhu b'minav" is an interesting thing, because this is that you'll remember that your food comes from the Almighty, will this cause that in the future you should have fear of Him.

Speaker 2: No, no, no, no. "Leyir'uhu b'minav" is not as direct as the thanking. The essence of thanking is more, you're submitting yourself before the Almighty, you say thank you. No, I thought that... Okay, I already said once. I thought that thanking is just an arrangement to remember, because it's

simple that the Almighty needs one to thank Him for such a thing.

Speaker 1: So, the Rambam says further, from where comes the text of all these blessings? The Rambam says, "**v'nusach kol haberachos Ezra u'veis dino tiknum**" (and the text of all blessings Ezra and his court instituted them). Just as the Rambam said in Hilchos Tefillah also, because Jews had crooked blessings. That is, the essence of thanking the Almighty is more basic, no difference, it's with the Rabbis up and them. But the Rambam, yes, or also the text of all birkas hamazon, yes, the Rambam says so, people said crooked ways, Ezra and his court were metaken a beautiful language. According to the Rambam, he already mentioned three times the thing, there is birkas Krias Shema and there is birkas tefillah and there is.

V'ein ra'ui leshanosam (and it's not proper to change them), it's not fitting to change the language, **v'lo lehosif aleihem v'lo ligro'a mehem** (and not to add to them and not to subtract from them), not to add to any of the language of blessings and not to take away. The Rambam says further, **kol hameshaneh mimatbe'a shetav'u chachamim baberachos** (anyone who changes from the coin that the Sages minted in blessings), every one who changes from the language of the Sages' blessings, **eino ela to'eh** (is nothing but mistaken). He thinks he's making better things, he thinks of a better language, you should know you're mistaken.

Speaker 2: Right, but he doesn't say clearly that he's not yotzei, he needs to repeat the blessing with the correct language. Not clear. But the Rambam says it a language – **eino ela to'eh**. One must think, because when he says b'chol lashon (in any language), one says that there are birkos hasfarim (blessings of the books), requiring Shem u'Malchus (God's name and sovereignty), and here blessings I'm not requiring Shem u'Malchus, which are they the ones that came after one like the second blessing of birkas hamazon. And one also doesn't say mashiach melech, rather one says there only a blessing that has all the elements for food? One doesn't say, melech ha'olam. The mistake is that the melech ha'olam alone is as if... It's a reliance on that as if it's a continuation of that. Right. Yes. Say to me further.

Halacha 6 – In Any Language, With Shem and Malchus and the Matter of the Blessing

Speaker 1: **Kol haberachos kulam omrim b'chol lashon** (All blessings, all of them, one says in any language), one can say in all languages, **u'vehu she'yomar k'nyan shetiknuhu chachamim** (provided that he says like the matter that the Sages instituted). The meaning is he should say Shem and Malchus, he should say the same way. Because the meaning is a creator probably he should thank for the specific things he should thank for in the other language. Say as was instituted by the Sages, so one doesn't change. If he did change from the language of the Sages, so, when is he yotzei? **If he mentioned azkara** (mention of God's name), azkara means Shem, he mentioned the Almighty's name. "**Hu yazkir azkara**" (he mentioned azkara), he mentioned Shem and Malchus, "**v'inyan habrachah**" (and the matter of the blessing), he mentioned the matter on which one thanks, for example that the Almighty gave bread, "hamotzi lechem." Even if he said it in another language, **lashon chol** (secular language), **yatza** (he fulfilled his obligation).

Laws of Blessings: Shem U'Malchus, Audibility, Interruption, Purity, and Exempting Others

That is, the Rambam included two things here, and here he answered my question. The Rambam says that l'chatchila (initially), "it is not proper to change," one must do what is written in the siddur, what the Anshei Knesses HaGedolah (Men of the Great Assembly) established. This is the nusach (version) that one must say, and one who does otherwise is mistaken. But b'dieved (after the fact), meaning in practice, if someone writes, not only if he says a different expression, even if he says it entirely in French, as long as he fulfills the two conditions of Shem u'Malchus (God's Name and Kingship) and the subject of the blessing, he has fulfilled his obligation. That is, b'dieved, because one should not do so. Seemingly one should also not do it in another language, one should l'chatchila use the language that is written.

Speaker 2: The Rambam here doesn't have a problem if it's not maintained in that language, in that translation, that it's half Hebrew and half...

Speaker 1: Just as by Krias Shema he said so, yes.

Speaker 2: Interesting.

Speaker 1: But we're talking here about l'chatchila and b'dieved. A blessing is a short thing, it's seemingly much easier to simply say it. Prayer is a longer thing...

Speaker 2: No, no, no, the answer is simpler. That law only stood regarding the laws of Krias Shema, not regarding the laws of prayer, and it stood with the law of dikduk b'firush (precise articulation) explicitly. Because the Rambam said that by Krias Shema one must be precise in its articulation, one must be precise also in that language in which he reads. And to this the Ra'avad said that he doesn't understand what dikduk b'firush means, it's a translation. But by blessings there is no law of dikduk b'firush, so that law is not relevant.

Innovation – Shem U'Malchus as Indispensable

Speaker 1: It's very interesting that every blessing must say Shem u'Malchus. Meaning, you thank the Almighty that He gave you the food, but you must remember that He gives it to you as His Kingship. That is, it's not just a favor, it comes from His Kingship, from His Name, from His Kingship.

Speaker 2: If you want to know, it says in the Gemara, there's a dispute between Rav and Rabbi Yochanan. Rav said, "Any blessing that doesn't have mention of the Name is not a blessing," and Rabbi Yochanan said "that doesn't have Kingship." And one understands the Name also. And the Rambam rules like Rabbi Yochanan. I don't know who told you about the Rambam, but these things are truly indispensable. It could be that this was the proper nusach that they held. It's indispensable when it's one blessing, meaning to say, there's no way. But fine, it's "Asher Melech HaOlam, Asher Nasan Lanu Melech HaOlam." But it's truly to say that this is a law, this is an innovation from the Rambam seemingly, or from the Rif. I'm not... yes, one of them.

We haven't learned this, we've already learned several times, that when it says "lo yatza" (he hasn't fulfilled) or "lo mitzva" (it's not a mitzvah), the Rambam didn't say that he did very well, he mentioned the Almighty, but he didn't do it in the manner that the Sages said. The Rambam says yes, "**lo yatza**". He means "lo yatza," he should say it again, because he should do better from the start. "Lo yatza," he doesn't say he's a wicked person so to speak. No, seemingly he also didn't

commit me'ila (misappropriation) seemingly. But to remove the matter of me'ila doesn't have to be with all enactments. It's enough that he recognizes the Almighty at the time of the act itself.

Example: "Brich Rachmana Malka"

The Gemara brings an example of a good blessing, a non-Jew blessed or someone blessed in colloquial language, "Brich Rachmana Malka," he mentions Rachmana, the Almighty, Malka, he mentions Shem u'Malchus, "Mara D'Hai Pita." He also said with this the subject, the bread, the pat, and he said Shem u'Malchus.

Speaker 2: Yes, it doesn't count, as you say.

Speaker 1: The Rambam says this is only b'dieved, not good. It doesn't have to be...

Speaker 2: No, the Gemara speaks there of a situation when that person only knew... didn't know Lashon HaKodesh (Hebrew).

Speaker 1: It could be that the Rambam held in general that now these are the actual halachic rulings that we're learning here, and one must be careful with the details to maintain the cholam. Not so simple.

Law 7: Audibility

Speaker 1: Okay, the Rambam says further, "**All blessings require that one make them audible to his ear.**" A blessing is not something one reads, it's not a matter of reading, but it's something one says. He must say it loud enough that his own ear can hear it. He doesn't need to say it loud enough for other people to hear, but at least his own ear.

"**And if he didn't make it audible,**" if he didn't say it loud enough, "**yatza,**" he has fulfilled his obligation. "**As long as he articulated with his lips.**" The simple meaning is, l'chatchila one must say it out loud, and if not, even if he only thought the words, or said them with his lips even without sound.

Law 8: Interruption Between Blessing and Object

Speaker 1: The Rambam says further, and this is the next law, "**All blessings, one should not interrupt**" between the blessing and the thing upon which one makes the blessing. It says one makes "Borei Pri HaEtz," one must eat immediately. "**And if he interrupted,**" if one made an interruption, "**he must return and bless again,**" one must make the blessing again. Which must go to show that the blessing is upon the thing.

Innovation: Interruption Related to the Matter

The Rambam says, "**But one who interrupts,**" but he made an interruption, but the interruption is not because he became distracted with something else, rather the interruption was "**with words that are related to the matter being blessed.**" For example, the Rambam will now give the example, "**he doesn't need to bless,**" he doesn't need to make a new blessing.

"**How so? For example, if he blessed over bread,**" he makes a blessing on bread, "**and spread,**" he eats, "**and between the blessing and eating he interrupted,**" between the blessing and the eating he interrupted by saying something. But what did he say? He said, "**Bring salt,**" bring salt, to begin eating the bread with salt, "**or bring a cooked dish, or give so-and-so to eat,**" give that person to eat, "**or give food to the animal,**" as it says that before eating one

must give food to the animal. **"In short, since all these matters"** are not considered an interruption, he spoke about matters of the meal, **"he doesn't need to bless,"** one doesn't need to.

Innovation: Give Food to the Animal

The animal is an innovation, because incidentally, it's not food for you, but since there's a law that one may not eat before giving the animal food, it's part of the meal, part of the table.

Innovation: B'dieved According to Rambam

It appears a bit from the Rambam, I didn't know about this, it appears from the Rambam that this is b'dieved. L'chatchila one should not interrupt at all, and b'dieved, if he said one of the matters of the meal, **"he doesn't need to,"** he doesn't need to repeat the blessing. It appears that it's b'dieved. That's how it appears here, which is asked, that's how it appears from the language.

Discussion: L'chatchila or B'dieved?

Speaker 2: I don't know, one must think, for example "give food to the animal," there's a virtue of completely fulfilling the mitzvah of... would he have had to do it l'chatchila?

Speaker 1: That's actually what the Rema says, that l'chatchila one should not interrupt even for a need. Certainly one needs to bring salt, but let's bring it before the blessing.

"And so all similar cases," as long as it's not an interruption, if it's related to the eating, related to the blessing, it's not indispensable. But it appears from the language of the Rambam that this is only b'dieved, that's how it appears to me here, and that's how the Rema understood it.

And the Rema says this further, that l'chatchila one should not interrupt even for the need of the blessing. He brings this here on the side.

Law 9: Purity of Blessing

Speaker 1: Okay. The Rema says further. **"All blessings, it's permitted for a ritually impure person to bless them."** Even a person who is tamei (ritually impure) may also make the blessings, as the Rambam said it regarding Krias Shema, regarding Talmud Torah, regarding prayer.

Further, a baal kerai (one who had a seminal emission) is always permitted, he can always join a minyan during the day, for example a niddah who has already counted seven clean days, or a baal kerai can join a minyan during the day. Therefore because of this distinction, one may make all blessings even in impurity.

Naked – Forbidden to Bless

The Rambam says, but it doesn't mean that there's no law of respect for blessings at all. One doesn't make a blessing when he is naked, **"it's forbidden to bless when he is naked, until he covers his nakedness."**

Discussion: Hand Washing Before Blessings

Speaker 2: Not naked, but we learned in the laws of prayer that for hand washing yes. Because there are blessings that the Rambam places an explanation on the order, in Birchos HaShachar, before the blessing of hand washing, before one washes the hands. Can one say them naked?

Speaker 1: Not naked. Not naked. Not completely naked. But it doesn't say that one must wash the hands. By prayer there's a mitzvah in the law of hand washing, but this is already blessings. Did you understand it that way? Because one

occupies oneself during the day with being involved with things.

Distinction Between Man and Woman

"In what case are these words said, regarding a man," what does it have to do with the structure of the architecture of the man and the woman? Because **"a woman sitting"** doesn't really need to cover, only **"her face a tefach and her height two tefachim,"** because her nakedness is naturally a bit more... if she sits on the ground and she sits like that... I mean perhaps on a hard floor it's good, but on such a sort of floor that's a bit soft, and one sinks into the ground, then it means covered. By a man it doesn't mean covered, because he needs to...

Discussion: Naked by Blessings Versus Prayer

Speaker 2: Now, but let's say like this, in the laws of blessings, for example a Lithuanian Jew who doesn't have a head covering, he goes without a hat, he's naked, Krias Shema one cannot say like that, because one must cover the nakedness. But there is a law, the nakedness of blessings is a different matter. You must actually be covered the nakedness, but there aren't all the laws of his heart seeing the nakedness, of not having a gartel, and so forth.

Law 10: To Exempt One's Fellow

Speaker 1: The Rambam says, **"All blessings, even though he blessed and fulfilled his obligation,"** even if he already made a blessing and he already did it, he already fulfilled his obligation of blessing, **"he may make the blessing again for others who haven't fulfilled their obligation in order to exempt them."** He does a complete mitzvah seemingly not for his own need, because the person already made a blessing, but because he wants to be mezakeh (grant merit), to be motzi (exempt) another, one may. Incidentally, he says the blessing for that person, that person hasn't yet made a blessing on his tallis, since I make the blessing for him, I already made the thing.

Reason: All Israel Are Responsible for One Another

"Except"... he says the matter, that since you already fulfilled, but a person is connected with other Jews, all Israel are responsible for one another, therefore you make the blessing because you're still obligated that the other person should fulfill. A person is obligated on Sukkos in the morning, obligated to bless his esrog, and he's obligated that all other millions of Jews should bless their esrog. This is a reason that appears in the Rambam, the Rambam doesn't bring it though. I don't know how we came to this.

Except for Blessings of Enjoyment Without a Mitzvah

The Rambam says, **"except for blessings of enjoyment that don't have a mitzvah."** A blessing of enjoyment that doesn't have a mitzvah, on that one cannot. But a blessing of enjoyment that does have a mitzvah, then one can. But a blessing of enjoyment that doesn't have a mitzvah, one cannot make Borei Pri HaGafen for another person. But on someone else's sandwich I cannot make a blessing.

Innovation: Blessing of Enjoyment That Has a Mitzvah

But **"a blessing of enjoyment that has a mitzvah, such as eating matzah on Pesach night,"** he eats matzah on Pesach night, he makes the blessing of HaMotzi, not only the blessing of Al Achilas Matzah, a blessing of the mitzvah. Even the blessing that he makes HaMotzi, or he makes Borei Pri HaGafen, he makes Borei Pri HaGafen actually for the others,

he makes for them the Borei Pri HaGafen and they drink it, even though he doesn't drink.

Discussion: Borei Pri HaGafen by Kiddush

Speaker 2: What's the simple meaning? In practice on the Borei Pri HaGafen he doesn't have... at least on the Borei Pri HaGafen there's a problem?

Speaker 1: No problem, he makes a Gafen for the other person. It's part of the entire order of blessings, one lets him also make the Borei Pri HaGafen. Something like that, it becomes a mitzvah to make the Borei Pri HaGafen, it becomes a bit of a mitzvah, it's not just enjoyment. He doesn't make just a blessing because he wants to drink wine, he makes a blessing because the Sages actually wanted one to make a d'oraisa (Torah law), which the Rambam says that Kiddush with words is d'oraisa, and when one says d'oraisa, it's a mitzvah that one should make Kiddush with wine. He exempts him with the mitzvah of making Kiddush with wine, which includes the blessing of HaGafen.

Law 11: The Listener is Like the Speaker

Speaker 1: One must learn here in practice the blessing, the Rambam says further, here you can make a chapter of 'Amen'. There's something called Amen. The Rambam already begins with the introduction, that you can acquire through hearing.

Speaker 2: No, it's not Amen, not Amen. About this, the listener is like the speaker.

Speaker 1: The Rambam says, he now said that one can exempt another through saying for the other person. The Rambam says, the essence of exempting another is fulfilling his obligation. Now he explains how. Earlier he said that you can exempt another even though you already fulfilled yourself. Yes, he says that one can fulfill, there's such a way. I mean he already told us a bit in the laws of prayer when he spoke about the prayer leader exempting, which he has a different type of thing, he has laws of prayer, he needs laws of blessings.

Fulfillment Through Hearing

The Rambam says, "**Anyone who hears a blessing from the blessings, but he hears the entire blessing from its beginning to its end, and intended to fulfill his obligation with it,**" and with this his Borei Pri HaGafen or his Tekias Shofar, "**he has fulfilled even though he didn't answer Amen.**" Through the very hearing. The very hearing, the listener is like the speaker, hearing means like saying oneself.

Innovation: Blessings of Enjoyment Without a Mitzvah

What we learned earlier that for blessings of enjoyment where there's no mitzvah one cannot fulfill from another, means only when the other person didn't eat. If two Jews eat together, one can make a blessing for both. We'll see it, the Rambam will say it clearly, we'll learn it.

Anyone Who Answers Amen

The Rambam says, "**even though he didn't answer Amen,**" even if he didn't answer Amen. There's another way to fulfill with another's blessing, through answering Amen. "**Anyone who answers Amen after the one blessing is like one who blesses.**"

Discussion: What is the Matter of Amen?

Speaker 2: Ah, you're learning that anyone... then he doesn't need to intend to fulfill, that's what you mean?

Speaker 1: No, then he doesn't need to... not hear the entire blessing? I'm missing something, right?

"**Even though he didn't answer Amen**" one fulfills. So what's the matter of Amen? Perhaps even if he didn't hear the entire blessing? I don't know. Not clear. What's the matter of saying Amen then? Just a nice thing to say Amen, or... let's say he didn't hear so well, or I don't know. Or it's clear, "**he is like one who blesses**" appears more, not just that he fulfilled with the other person, but it's more... you have the l'chatchila of saying it yourself. If it's a l'chatchila enough of saying it yourself, one fulfills with the Amen. "**He is like one who blesses.**"

Condition: The One Blessing Must Be Obligated in That Blessing

The Rambam says, "**provided that the one blessing is obligated in that blessing.**" This is only if the one blessing is also obligated in the same blessing, and you also need to fulfill, and you make an Amen on him. But if the one blessing is not obligated, one cannot exempt. Only in the general rule said earlier, only if in the same measure he is obligated. Not if obligated. Obligated means to say that such a thing that a person who is obligated, not that he was an agent today.

Laws of Blessings – Laws of Exempting Others with a Blessing (Continued)

The One Blessing Must Be Obligated in That Blessing

Speaker 1: If you have the l'chatchila matter of saying it yourself, you fulfill with the matter. This is perhaps a better simple meaning.

If the one blessing comes, the Rema says, "**since the one blessing is obligated in that blessing.**" This is only if the one blessing is also obligated in the same blessing, and you also need to fulfill, and you make a matter on him. But if the one blessing is not obligated, one cannot exempt. Very good. Only in the general rule that we said earlier, only if it's the same type, then there is an obligation.

Laws of Blessings – Amen, Unnecessary Blessings, and Eating Forbidden Items

Chiyuv (obligation) doesn't mean to say that there is a person who is obligated, not that he was obligated. Chiyuv here means to say that there is a bar chiyuva (one subject to obligation) in this. Very good.

Chiyuv D'Oraita vs. Chiyuv D'Rabbanan

Says the Rema, "**Since the one making the blessing is obligated by rabbinic decree**". What happens if the one making the blessing is obligated by rabbinic decree? For example, he's going to eat only a small piece of bread, because he ate a whole kezayis, a whole shiur, he ate birkas hamazon. Aha, yes. "**He cannot fulfill the obligation of one who is obligated until he answers**". Then, since the one answering has a greater obligation, he cannot be yotzei with the other person's saying. Without answering, with answering, or with hearing. Very good. Because with answering, when "**the one answering is like the one blessing**", this brings you that it's as if he said it himself.

Chiddush: Being Motzi Is Not a "Copy-Paste" of Words

It's interesting, because that person is obligated by rabbinic decree and you are obligated from the Torah, you cannot be yotzei with that person. The same blessing was said. The blessing has meaning. He is also obligated, indeed not from

the Torah, but he also has an obligation in himself. He has no meaning. The blessing is on the bread that was eaten. He makes a blessing on a non-bread. What is he doing?

Being motzi doesn't mean that one takes a copy-paste of the words that he said, and you said them. The blessing is a greater thing than the words. When they are both the same obligation, when one does it for both. They should both have the same obligation. True. When one is already answering when one says amen, then yes it's a copy. Then even so one is yotzei, that's how it comes out. If one says amen it's completely good.

The Law of Heseba — Eating Together for Blessings

From this come out questions, how should people conduct themselves when they come together for a yahrzeit meal, "**or there are among them those who don't know how to bless as required**". Here we're going to talk about when people come together to eat, which blessing should one make oneself, and which one can be yotzei with another person.

Says the Rema, "**But if they gathered to eat bread or to drink wine**", they came together for a table of bread or wine, one will bentsch, we all answered, "with my permission". "**Then they are permitted to eat and drink**", they may eat in this manner.

But "**if they did not join together to eat as one**", if it's not a place where we came together to eat, "**rather this one came from his house and this one came from his house**", I go to a place to hold myself on the announcement, and each one takes out a sandwich. "**Even though they don't eat from one dish**", even if each one takes out his sandwich, "**each and every one blesses for himself**", each one bentsches for himself alone. Why? Because there's no togetherness, there's no meal.

The Rambam's Position: Heseba Is Only By Bread and Wine
Says the Rambam, "**From the words of our Rabbis we learn that the blessing of the meal is only with bread and wine alone**", when one comes together for these things. "**But other foods and drinks, they don't require heseba**". "Heseba" means here a meal where one is reclined together. This doesn't have the law of a meal, this doesn't have the law of zimun. A bunch of people eating potato chips together doesn't mean they had a potato chip table.

And therefore, says the Rambam, "**Therefore if one of them blesses and all answer amen, they may eat and drink, even though they didn't join together to eat as one**". When is it a meal where everyone eats together? The Rambam explains it this way, the Rambam learned — the Raavad, as you'll immediately see, learned exactly the opposite — the Rambam explains that what we just said that one can only be yotzei another person's blessing if one intends to eat together, this is only a law on bread and wine, because bread and wine is something where heseba is relevant.

Potato chips isn't relevant at all to eat together. Even when one does intend, one really can't be yotzei from another person, because one doesn't need to drag oneself to a potato chip party. It's not relevant, it's not relevant the expansion of the party to be counted on the group, or like on a large portion of meat there is a group, one is counted on the group. There's no such thing as a potato chip party. Therefore one is yotzei from reading the Torah from another person.

The Raavad's Position: Exactly the Opposite

The Raavad learns actually exactly the opposite. The Raavad says, what are you thinking? It means a stringency. The Raavad says, what it says in the Gemara "**they don't have heseba**" means to say that it doesn't help, that each one needs to make a blessing themselves. In logic the Rambam's explanation makes sense.

Discussion: What Does the Shulchan Aruch Rule?

Speaker 2:

So what? Even the Shulchan Aruch HaRav rules this way.

Speaker 1:

So what? The Shulchan Aruch rules that one doesn't make heseba at all.

Speaker 2:

Even though he's told what does it mean one doesn't make heseba? One makes heseba. One sits together at a Shabbos meal, isn't that heseba?

Speaker 1:

No, with other things, not with bread and wine. With bread and wine, yes.

The Rambam says "**that they didn't recline, rather each one blesses for himself**". The Rambam says that heseba isn't missing, and one can answer amen and eat with another person. Others say no, that "not with bread and wine" one cannot be yotzei from another person. This is the Rambam's position. Yes. And you don't rule like the Shulchan Aruch. The Rema doesn't rule this way like the Shulchan Aruch. The Rema, yes. The Rema says... The Rema, and the Maharil Weil says that one must indeed eat together.

Speaker 2:

Okay. And instead of heseba one should eat at one table.

Speaker 1:

Okay, it's simple. Heseba never meant to recline. I don't understand what comes in here. The Rambam says clearly, heseba means "**to sit reclined to eat together**". Heseba has nothing to do with reclining. Heseba means to say, even in Maseches Pesachim we learned an explanation that it means that, no difference. Heseba means to sit together.

The Rambam goes on to explain more laws of amen, he said that amen makes one yotzei the blessing from another person, and now he's going to say more laws of amen.

Discussion: Practical Application Today

Speaker 2:

It could also be that today when it's not customary for example at an eleven o'clock to eat bread and wine, it's okay. That means, he eats an apple, he makes a... he eats supper with his family, that means this is heseba to eat together, and he can indeed make a blessing for everyone, and the people should make the blessing and the people should be yotzei. That's what I think. Don't ask me what I think, I'm just saying a point.

Speaker 1:

I saw that on Pesach Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach ruled that one can eat potato kugel or fritters, and it will be considered kevius seuda regarding kiddush. Instead of making kiddush, instead of drinking two large cups.

Speaker 2:

Ah, because one doesn't eat mezonos on Pesach.

Speaker 1:

On Pesach one doesn't eat mezonos, so what is now the kevius seuda? He says, rely on potato kugel, and that's now kevius seuda. But he goes with the sefarim. He goes with the sefarim. Just as you ruled here that this is called a meal. The family eats a meal doesn't mean one reclines. A meal means, you understand yourself, it's not the law in the "bread and he ate," it's a law in the kevius. "Bread and he ate" is a manner of kevius.

Speaker 2:

The kevius is correct. Two things, two people, as I say, two people sit plain next to each other and eat.

Speaker 1:

But "bread and he ate" apparently is always something where one eats next to one food. Because bread, the simple meaning is one goes to eat, besides the bread itself one goes to eat other things with the bread. Like wine, wine is also something one swallows.

Speaker 2:

No, I say "bread and he ate" is like a meal, because it's always a longer meal.

L'chatchila and B'dieved — Custom Today

Speaker 1:

And one must also know what is l'chatchila and what is b'dieved. The world conducts itself today almost never to make, to be yotzei from another person's blessings. Even kiddush, in many homes people make their own borei pri hagafen, they say "so that his palate won't be waiting." Because one is yotzei from another person's kiddush with the translation, and one is yotzei with the borei pri hagafen from kiddush, which we learned earlier in this law.

Speaker 2:

What does it mean I heard a kiddush but not a borei pri hagafen? What does that mean?

Speaker 1:

It's customary that the head of household makes it for the whole group. I don't agree. Says the Rambam, "**Anyone who hears**", no problem. I don't agree. And also by most Jews, which isn't such a Chassidic custom, most of the world, even the hamotzi for example that one makes on Shabbos, in the whole world except by the Chassidic Jews that we know, the people are yotzei from the head of household, you know? You go into a proper Lithuanian home here in Lakewood, the father makes hamotzi and the people eat. Not each one makes hamotzi for themselves.

Speaker 2:

Yes, I'm sure you're meorer for your children. I told my children to be yotzei from me. I don't know if they follow me, but I told them.

Law 13: Answering Amen to Every Blessing

Speaker 1:

Says the Rambam, "**Anyone who hears one Jew blessing a blessing**", right. It's not being yotzei. "**Anyone who hears one Jew blessing a blessing from all the blessings, even though he is not obligated in that blessing that he heard and he is not obligated in that blessing, he is obligated to answer amen**".

Says the Rambam, this is only if a Jew makes a blessing and it has holiness. But if a non-Jew says a blessing, or a heretic, or a

Kusi, one who is half non-Jewish, or a child who is teaching, not only that, but one who says indeed a blessing but it's not a blessing, why? Because he's only repeating the words, like practicing, like practicing is by a... let's say a prayer leader prepares to pray. Or like we had by a chazzan who is to learn, or what is there such a thing, yes, writing a megillah to learn, yes, then, or he's not an adult, or he changed the formula of the blessing, one doesn't answer amen after him.

The last one is a great chiddush, a person made a blessing but he's not in a manner that one should agree with him, he's yotzei, he doesn't need to say amen.

What Does Amen Mean?

And what does amen mean? The Rambam doesn't say what it means. Amen means I also agree to this, like a like, like giving a like to the one who makes a blessing. Thumbs up? That's the concept? I can't take more? Amen is translated apparently as truth, or something like that, an agreement. Taking on amen. It's the language of oman, agreement like that.

Discussion: The Rema's Position Regarding a Non-Jew's Blessing

He brings that the Rema says that a non-Jew, it's interesting, why did we say earlier that a blessing is logic? For example, let's say a non-Jew makes a borei pri hagafen, why shouldn't I answer amen? I may also bless the Almighty on his eating.

He brings indeed that the Rema argues that what it says that one doesn't answer amen to a non-Jew, this is only because one didn't hear the whole blessing, because perhaps he said a blessing to an idol or something. If he hears clearly that he's saying the whole blessing, he says so even on a child who is teaching also, he has no intention, it's a blessing.

But a non-Jew, a non-Jew may make a blessing, what's the issue? A non-Jew may make a blessing. Apparently the argument is only a Kusi and all that group, that he doesn't mean the Almighty, he's saying an idol then it's a possibility. But if you know that he indeed means the Almighty, you can indeed actually make a non-Jew's blessing.

Law 14: How to Say Amen

Now the Rambam is going to say how one says the amen. Says the Rambam, **Anyone who answers amen, should not answer a snatched amen**. We're going, there are a few explanations that explain chatufah and ketufah. But apparently it means chatufah means snatched, like chotef is snatched, that he doesn't say out properly the letter, or the alef is missing, or the nun is missing.

But **and not a ketufah amen**, one should also not say an amen that is snatched at the end, at the other edge. Amay. Is writing them. Amay. An, an, an, nen. And not a chatufah amen.

Indeed interesting that it's such a short letter and one needs to take so much distance. **And not a short amen**. Not an. **And not a long one**. Also not a long amen. Amen. Amen. At the reader he needs to say, at the end he arrives how to land.

Laws of Blessings — Amen, Unnecessary Blessings, and Eating Forbidden Items

Law 14: Amen Chatufah, Ketufah, Yesomah, and Arukah
Rambam: Anyone who answers amen should not answer neither a chatufah amen, nor a ketufah amen, nor a short amen, nor a long amen, rather moderate.

That he doesn't say out properly the letter. Or the alef is missing, or the nun is missing. Only two letters come the whole amen. One can mean the amen, what can he... yes, a wonder. But "and not yesomah," one should also not say an amen that is snatched at the end, at the other edge. "Amay." That is "yesomah." An without a nun. "And not yesomah." Indeed interesting, because it's such a short letter, and Jews take so much distance. "And not yesomah." Not "amay."

Also not a long amen, "Aaaaamayn." At the reader he needs to say, because there he finds where to read. But generic and loyal, okay, I don't know, okay. It needs to be normal, all moderate, normal.

Moderate Measure — According to the Situation

Here it says, if someone asks where in all the Torah does it say that it needs to be normal, it says here. This is also the way of the mitzvah, yes? Not too long and not too short. But the way of the mitzvah indeed is each thing according to its matter. It's not the same the amen after counting the omer by a rebbe, as after a shehakol in a restaurant. Yes, according to the situation. As we always learn, moderate measure, moderate measure, yes. It means according to what's proper.

Law 14 (Continued): And He Should Not Raise His Voice More Than the One Blessing

Rambam: And he should not raise his voice more than the one blessing.

Says the Rema further, the one who says amen should not answer amen higher than the one blessing said the blessing. An interesting law, yes. People think it's a great thing to shout amen, but it needs to fit. It should be together. One also doesn't need to understand what is moderate. Precisely by amen people have such a choking, he thinks he needs to shout in shul amen. But if you're someone who is seen in shul, one knows that you're the amen person, apparently according to the Rema this isn't the amen person, because if he shouts, perhaps that's not normal. He shouldn't be loud, he shouldn't shout. It can't be higher than him, it can't be longer than him.

Question: When the Whole Group Answers Amen

If when one Jew says amen and the whole group answers, and there's a collective amen, that's further more than the one blessing. But each real one says alone, you get it? That's funny. The amen is indeed greater than the blessing. Good, but one needs to throw this all together. Perhaps indeed if one says a blessing in a large shul, one needs to shout the blessing so it should be a bit more fitting. No, it certainly doesn't mean that you should be as loud as all the people together. One doesn't demand from the kohen for example who lifts his hands, that he should be as loud in birkas kohanim as everyone answers amen. But each one should not be higher than the one blessing. Okay.

Law 14 (Continued): One Who Didn't Hear the Blessing That He Is Obligated In

Rambam: And anyone who didn't hear the blessing that he is obligated in — should not answer amen among those answering.

And all, another law, and anyone who didn't hear the blessing that he is obligated in, someone is now obligated in this blessing, but he didn't hear it. He hears however other people answering amen, he should not answer amen among those answering, he can't now catch a ride. No, the reason is because all the other amens is because he is indeed obligated, he's

going to need to make the blessing himself. Again, get it, he didn't hear. If he heard a blessing, he didn't hear it, he's going to need to make a blessing himself, we already know this. But also, he shouldn't answer amen among those answering, because he didn't hear this. Basically the law here is that amen is said only by the people who indeed heard. It's not such a thing that he should just join with everyone and say amen.

Question: Why Does the Rambam Write "That He Is Obligated In"?

And what does he put in the words "that he is obligated in"? Just so one shouldn't do this. Even if he's not obligated in it, what does it mean? I don't know. Perhaps because he wants to make it himself later, he's going to make it himself. When he would have heard himself, perhaps he says, when he would have heard he can indeed now be yotzei, but he's going to need to make it himself. If he's going to say amen, it will be as if he already said it. We learned earlier that when one says amen, even if one didn't hear the whole blessing, it's as if one said it. Therefore he won't be able to make it himself now. So one should say that he didn't hear the blessing, so perhaps because of this. Not certain. Do you understand what I'm saying? He's a bit stuck, because the person will need to say it himself.

But I'm not sure, something doesn't seem right to me. It could be that the reason is that he's not allowed to answer amen because he'll think that he already made the blessing, and he wasn't yotzei (fulfilled his obligation). Perhaps so. No, but actually there's a side to be able to say, someone who is not obligated, on the contrary, he should indeed say amen. Everyone says amen. He shouldn't think that he already said amen on the blessing, and he was already yotzei. Right. Or he's actually going to have a problem, because he'll be somewhat yotzei. I don't know.

Halacha 15: A Blessing That Is Not Needed

Rambam: Anyone who makes a blessing that is not needed - behold he takes the Name of Heaven in vain, and behold he is like one who swears in vain.

The Rambam says, now the Rambam is going to learn about the prohibition of beracha levatala (a blessing in vain), if one says a blessing that is not in its proper place and one doesn't need a blessing. The Rambam says, anyone who makes a blessing that is not needed, a blessing that is not called for, behold he takes the Name of Heaven in vain, he says the Almighty's Name in vain, when it's not important. And behold he is like one who swears in vain, it's a category, it's from the same category as swearing in vain, because one doesn't say the Almighty's Name just randomly in the world. What is the matter of answering amen? It's one thing, because he does say praise to the Almighty, but the specific praise is not something that fits for you now.

A Child Whom We Teach Blessings

Rambam: Children, we teach them the blessings in their proper form, and even though they make blessings in vain during the time of learning - this is permitted.

The Rambam says, a child whom we teach blessings properly, we teach him the blessings, even if he makes the blessings not for their actual purpose, he doesn't make the blessings not for their actual purpose, he doesn't answer amen on the blessing, this is praiseworthy, because that's how one learns.

Halacha 16: One Who Answers Amen After Himself

Rambam: And so one who answers after himself amen, behold this is praiseworthy, in order to encourage himself.

The Rambam says, "And so one who answers after himself amen, simply one who answers after himself amen, behold this is praiseworthy, in order to encourage himself."

But One Who Answers Amen After His Blessings - This Is Repugnant

Rambam: But one who answers amen after his blessings - this is repugnant.

He says, "But one who answers amen after his blessings, someone who after he says the blessing wants to also grab the amen too, this is repugnant." Why? Like a person who laughs at his own jokes. Leave it for the other person. You're a grabber. You have your very important place, you're the one making the blessing. You also want to grab the job of the one answering amen? You want to be both the rabbi and also the gabbai? One can't be that way.

And that's the simple meaning of why the matter is repugnant. Because what does "repugnant" mean? He says it's not nice. Is the amen not nice or is the person not nice? Both, I don't know. Repugnant, the action is repugnant. The person is a person. But the action that he says praise to the Almighty, it seems it's a disgrace. It doesn't fit. You don't get it.

Digression: "Gadlu" in Shul

One could say, you know, today in the shuls the congregation also grabs the part of the prayer leader. The prayer leader says "Gadlu," and the congregation says "Gadlu." It's repugnant. "Gadlu," and you say what comes next. One can't grab both sides of the puzzle. You want to be both the prayer leader and also the congregation, and also the cantor? Come on.

Another Explanation: Anyone Who Answers Amen After His Blessings

But I see he explains differently, "Anyone who answers amen after his blessings" - I mean when a person has several blessings, for example he says the morning blessings, *noten lasechvi vina*, I don't know, one of the things, and he says a blessing on each one, each time when he says amen it sounds like he's already finished his *mitzvah*. Ah, because there's a custom, for example, one makes a series of blessings and says amen once. For example, in *bentching* it says in the *Rema*, one says "boneh berachamav Yerushalayim, amen." That's a breach one answers on that, if what follows has ended. So you're saying that if one answers earlier, he hasn't finished.

Halacha 16 (Continued): End of Final Blessings

Rambam: And one who answers after a blessing that is the end of final blessings - this is praiseworthy, such as after boneh Yerushalayim in Birkat HaMazon, and after the final blessing of Kriat Shema in the evening. And so at the end of every blessing that is the end of final blessings - one answers amen after himself.

The Rambam says, "And one should not answer amen after blessings that are the end of final blessings." But if one answers amen at the end of all blessings, for example one says "shomer amo Yisrael la'ad," when does one say amen? If *shomer amo* is the last one, what does one say after "Baruch Atah Hashem Elokeinu Melech ha'olam." Or the Rambam says we can answer amen after "boneh Yerushalayim" with students, what does one say all amen, where after final

blessings, not the blessings of Kriat Shema of evening. Ah, so that's good, yes good, because then he says amen in the right place, when he has already finished saying, to fulfill the obligation of the blessings. "And so all blessings that are the end of final blessings, one answers amen after himself." Sometimes one does. The congregation doesn't conduct itself that way with the blessings of Kriat Shema.

But what you're saying that amen means that one has finished, I think yes, one says amen. Yes, "shomer amo Yisrael la'ad, amen." One says amen oneself. "The end of all blessings that are the end of final blessings, one answers amen after himself." Each time, apparently. "Boneh berachamav Yerushalayim, amen." Yes, but I'm telling you, perhaps in another place, perhaps "hagomel chasadim tovim le'amo Yisrael, amen," because it's the end of the morning blessings. I mean that the Rambam doesn't hold that it's a set. I think that the Rambam doesn't hold that the blessings of Birkat HaMazon... But we already know.

Halacha 17: Why Does One Say Amen After "Boneh Yerushalayim"?

Rambam: And why does one answer amen at boneh Yerushalayim? And after it is the blessing of hatov vehameitiv? Because this blessing was instituted in the days of the Sages of the Mishna, and it's as if it's an addition, but the end of the essential blessings of the meal is boneh Yerushalayim.

The answer is, no. He says, because it's indeed like the last blessing. Why? Because the blessing of "hatov vehameitiv" is "in the days of the Sages of the Mishna they instituted it," it was instituted later in the days of the Sages of the Mishna, it was added. And it's as if it's an addition, it's an added thing. Therefore, that's why it doesn't mean like one is still in the middle, one has already finished, it's just coming against. Therefore one says the amen, because the end of the essential Birkat HaMazon is "boneh Yerushalayim." Ah, we know this.

Why Not After "Ahavat Olam"?

Rambam: And why does one not answer amen after ahavat olam? Because it is the end of the first blessings.

The Rambam says, if so, "And why does one not answer amen after ahavat olam"? If so, why shouldn't one answer amen after "ahavat olam" before Kriat Shema? The answer is, because it's the end of the first blessings, and not the end of the final blessings. True, true. We learned "emet ve'emuna" or "emet veyatziv" begins with "Baruch," because it's also a blessing adjacent to its fellow, Kriat Shema follows, period. Yisrael, so there is the matter of *geula ltefila* (redemption to prayer), one should only say "Melech." The *Rema* says that at evening one should only say "Melech," "shomer amo Yisrael la'ad," but at morning he holds that perhaps there's a question of interruption between *geula* and *tefila*. I don't know, it's hard to say so. Interruption between *geula* and *tefila* means the entire Kriat Shema with all the blessings, not on the specific word "ga'al."

Interruption Between a Blessing and What One Blessed On

Rambam: And so all similar blessings that one makes first for something, such as blessings that one makes before reading the Megilla and lighting the Chanuka candle - one should not interrupt with amen between the blessing and the thing one blessed on.

The Gemara says yes, the Gemara says yes. The Rema says, "One is obligated for every blessing that one makes first for something." Every blessing that one makes before one does something, like blessings that one makes before reading the Megilla and lighting the Chanuka candle, there's also the same thing, "to interrupt with amen between the blessing and the thing one blessed on," because one makes an interruption. As we spoke earlier, one may not speak between the blessing and the thing one is going to do.

He means to say, even if one makes for example two blessings with "she'asa nisim" and "shehecheyanu," I could have thought to make amen after one's own blessing, the congregation needs to say amen because they are yotzei. But he himself, he says no, since he needs to now read the Megilla, that doesn't make an interruption. That's the reason why one doesn't make amen after "ahavat olam," but that's another thing, a new law. That if one is going to do a mitzvah afterwards, one shouldn't make an interruption, yes.

Halacha 18: Blessings That Are Sets

Rambam: And why does one not answer after the blessing on fruits and similar ones? Because it is a single blessing, and one only answers amen after a final blessing that was preceded by another blessing or blessings, such as the blessings of a king, and the blessings of the High Priest, and similar ones, to make known that he has already completed all his blessings and therefore answered amen.

If it's a set of blessings, it makes sense that at the end one should say amen. Such as, he brings there, what is a set? Such as the blessings of a king. When the king reads in the Torah at the assembly of Hakhel, it says in the Rambam, he makes blessings afterwards. It's presumably similar to our blessings of the Haftara, yes, such a thing. The same thing the blessings of the High Priest. The High Priest also makes after his Torah reading also eight blessings. Yotzei in this, these are like sets. There are sugyot in the Gemara from where the Rambam brings this. Then we don't answer. To make known that he already has the power in his protection, etc. and says. It fits very well afterwards to say "and we say amen," so one knows that one has finished the matter.

Halacha 19: Eating a Forbidden Thing - Does One Make a Blessing?

Rambam: Anyone who eats a forbidden thing, whether intentionally or unintentionally - does not make a blessing on it neither at the beginning nor at the end.

Nu, good. Now the Rambam is going to learn a sugya of what happens if someone eats a forbidden thing, whether one should make a blessing. A strong dilemma, a person could have thought that it's inappropriate to make a blessing. Let's learn. So the Rambam says, "Anyone who eats a forbidden thing, whether intentionally or unintentionally, does not make a blessing on it neither at the beginning

Blessings on Forbidden Things: The Dispute Between the Rambam and the Ra'avad

Halacha 19-20: The Law of Blessings on Forbidden Things

The Words of the Rambam: One Does Not Make Blessings on Forbidden Things

Yes, but at the end, he remembers in the middle. Or unintentionally could mean that he doesn't know that it's impure or what, or he doesn't know that he's already not... Okay.

Even tevel derabanan, even only tevel rabbinically, which only lacked one of the conditions, descended to soak before the household, which I don't know what, or first tithe from which not all its terumot were taken, or he ate from first tithe... second tithe. Yes, yes, simply first tithe. It's a Levite, he ate from the first tithe, but he hasn't yet removed the terumat ma'aser for the Kohen. Or second tithe and hekdesch that were not redeemed according to halacha, a person has second tithe or something that he consecrated, and he hasn't yet made the redemption, the halacha is that one must redeem it, and as long as one hasn't done it it's a forbidden thing. One does not make a blessing, one doesn't make a blessing on it.

The Rambam says, **"And needless to say on neveilot and treifot, which are severe from the Torah, and other prohibitions, that one does not make blessings on them."**

The Law of Demai and First Tithe From Which Its Teruma Was Taken

But the Rambam says, **"But one who eats demai, even though it is only fit for the poor, since the Sages permitted it, behold it is like tevel that was fixed, and one makes a blessing on it."** He ate demai, which is only prohibited rabbinically, and on demai it says that the Sages permitted it, it's a doubtful tithe, doubtful tevel, on this the poor may indeed eat it.

Or first tithe from which its teruma was taken, a first tithe from which one already took teruma, but one hasn't yet taken the great teruma from it. As we speak of the manner that he went before the completion of the work and he took the tithe before teruma. Teruma one makes after completion of the work, he made the wrong order essentially, apparently normally one doesn't do so. Therefore in such a case one no longer needs to give from this grain any great teruma. Yes. These are not such severe forbidden things.

The same thing **second tithe and neta revai**, which the Torah commanded one should do the mitzvah in order to benefit from adding a fifth to the redemption, to buy for this another fifth of food to eat in Jerusalem. These are not really forbidden things, even if it's not ideal, **one does make a blessing at the beginning and end. Even fruits. Even fruits, and all similar things.** On all these things we don't make a blessing.

I mean the Gemara says because it doesn't fit to make a blessing. A blessing you make on something, here you're like "the poor in their transgression he blesses," like someone who steals something and he thanks the Almighty afterwards too.

The Dispute of the Ra'avad: A Question on the Rambam

The Claim of the Ra'avad: A Distinction Between Zimun and Blessing

The holy Ra'avad disagrees, and this is important to know. The Ra'avad says that he doesn't understand, the Rambam says that it says in the Gemara on all these things, it doesn't say that one bentsches, it doesn't say that one doesn't make a blessing, it says **"one does not make zimun."**

The Ra'avad says, that makes sense, zimun is a fixing, fixing on eating tevel that's already a fixing, that's a disgrace, but why does the Rambam say that on pleasure I shouldn't make a blessing? Why shouldn't I thank the Almighty? That's the Ra'avad's position.

The Practical Ruling: According to the Rambam, But Post Facto According to the Ra'avad

I rule like the Rambam, but one needs to know the practical difference, if someone makes a big party of yayin nesech (wine used for idolatry), he needs to know that according to the Ra'avad he needs to make a blessing, and I rule on a matter post facto like the Ra'avad. But one shouldn't make the party, understand? The idea that conducts itself according to "a thief and his father calls out 'Merciful One' calls."

The Depth of the Ra'avad's Claim: A Blessing on Pleasure

No, the Ra'avad says it's not pleasure, it's a good claim, even a non-Jew needs to make a blessing on pleasure, what does this have to do with it being a prohibition? Because between man and God one doesn't make a blessing? The Ra'avad makes a lot of sense.

He says, you make a fixing, you go establish a zimun, that's already chutzpah. But he makes a true claim, he says, I'm just coming simply at the root of roots, one should eat forbidden things, and afterwards one should remember the Almighty too?

No, that's what you're saying, that's what you're saying, that's what it says, but a blessing that I shouldn't thank the Almighty for the pleasure? The Ra'avad makes a lot of sense.

Okay, the Ra'avad always makes sense, he's sharp, so already.

Thank you to everyone for listening, it was a tremendous experience.