



# The Community

Boruch Hashem

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## From The Rebbe's Teachings

### *Different Study Formats and Knowing When to Use Which*

The verse in our Torah-portion (-Deuteronomy 8:10), "And you will eat and be sated, and you shall bless the L-rd, your G-d, for the good land He has given you," teaches us of the biblical ordinance of the blessing of Grace after Meals. --While all other blessings: (a) upon anything we have pleasure from, (b) upon doing a commandment, and (c) of praise, are of Rabbinical ordinance.

However, we shall see from the precise wording of this mitzvah in, (i) Maimonides, (ii) Alter Rebbe: *Shulchan Oruch* (Code of Jewish Law), and (iii) Alter Rebbe: Siddur -*Seder Birchas Hanehnin*, that there are three different approaches, meaning different dimensions, not different opinions, to the mitzva of, "And you shall bless G-d."

Rambam:

*"Introduction to Hilchos Berachos*

*"It contains one positive mitzvah: To bless the great and holy name after eating [a meal]. This mitzva is explained in the following chapters.*

*"It is a positive mitzvah from the Torah to bless [G-d] after eating satisfying food, as states, 'When you have eaten and are satiated, you shall bless G-d, your L-rd.'*

*"The Torah itself requires a person to recite grace only when he eats to the point of satiation, as implied by the above verse, 'When you have eaten and are satiated, you shall bless.' The Sages, however, ordained that one should recite grace after eating [an amount of bread equal] to the size of an olive."*

Alter Rebbe; *Shulchan Oruch*:

*"It is a positive commandment of Scriptural origin to bless G-d after eating sustaining food, as it is written, 'When you have eaten and are satiated, you shall bless G-d, your L-rd, etc.' According to Rabbinic Law, one should also recite a blessing before eating or drinking anything. Our Sages declared, 'If one recites a blessing when he is satisfied, how much more so should he do so when he is hungry! One who benefits from this world without reciting a blessing is like one who benefits from consecrated articles, as it is written (-Psalms 24:1), 'The earth and all that it contains are G-d's.'"*

Alter Rebbe; Siddur -*Seder Birchas Hanehnin*:

*"CHAPTER 1 [The Laws Governing Blessings Before and After All Types of Food] (1-21)*

*"It is a positive Scriptural commandment to bless after eating sustaining food, as it is written, 'When you have eaten and are satiated, you shall bless G-d.' According to Rabbinic Law, one should always recite a blessing before he eats or drinks. Anyone who benefits from this world without reciting a blessing is like one who benefits from consecrated articles, as it is written, 'The earth and all that it contains are G-d's etc.'"*

Let us highlight the differences in the wording of each of these three laws:

(a) (i & iii) Rambam & *Seder Birchas Hanehnin*: "It is a positive mitzvah... to bless after..." (ii) *Shulchan Oruch*: "It is a positive mitzvah... to bless **G-d** after..."

Note: We could say that Rambam, who just before the law writes in the introduction: "It contains one positive mitzvah: To bless the great and holy name after eating," doesn't have to now repeat, "to bless G-d after." However, the *Shulchan Oruch* who doesn't have this introduction, has to write it in the law itself.

However, this in itself needs understanding: Why at all does there need to be any mention of, "to bless G-d after," when the verse they are quoting explicitly states, "You shall bless G-d." On the other hand, is there is anyway such a need, why didn't the *Alter Rebbe* do it in his, *Seder Birchas Hanehnin*?

(b) Rambam: When quoting the verse, "When you have eaten and are satiated, you shall bless G-d, **your L-rd**." (ii) *Shulchan Oruch*: "When you have eaten and are satiated, you shall bless G-d, **etc**." --Hints to the "Your L-rd," with, "etc.," but does not quote them. (iii) *Seder Birchas Hanehnin*: "When you have eaten and are satiated, you shall bless G-d." --No mention at all of, "your L-rd."

Note: More astonishing concerning the two books of the *Alter Rebbe*, in the next law, of both, *Shulchan Oruch* & *Seder Birchas Hanehnin*, of "Anyone who benefits from this world without reciting a blessing is like one who benefits from consecrated articles, as it is written, 'The earth and all that it contains are G-d's,'" in quoting the verse the *Alter Rebbe* does the exact opposite, in *Seder Birchas Hanehnin*, he does write, "etc.," while in the *Shulchan Oruch* he doesn't?!

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FRIDAY, AUGUST 4, 2023 ★ יו' מנחם אב תשפ"ג

[Shabbat Candle Lighting](#): 7:47 PM · [Kabbalat Shabbat](#): 7:45 PM

SATURDAY, AUGUST 5, 2023 ★ יח' מנחם אב תשפ"ג

TORAH READING: [Eikev](#) (Deuteronomy 7:12-11:25) · HAFTORAH: [Isaiah](#) (49:14-51:3)

[Shacharit](#): 9:30 AM · [Mincha](#): 7:45 PM · [Shabbat Ends](#): North Miami: 8:41 PM

MONDAY, AUGUST 7, 2023 ★ כ' מנחם אב תשפ"ג

[Yahrtzeit](#): [Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Schneerson](#) (1878-1944), father of the Rebbe, of righteous memory.

**This Week...**

*Different Study Formats and Knowing When to Use Which* -Cont. from Page 1

*Introduction to the Explanation:* The Rambam's *Mishneh Torah* and the *Shulchan Oruch* both are both *Books of Laws*, in which to learn and to know the laws --Only that the Rambam took upon himself to write all the laws, even those that are not applicable until Moshiach comes, while the *Alter Rebbe* only wrote the laws of that are applicable to us today. While, the *Alter Rebbe's* intentions in putting the *Birchas Hanehnin* in the *Siddur*, was not for the sake of learning, but for the sake of knowing what to do in the very moment. Especially so, with the *Table of Birchas Hanehnin*, which was called so for the sake of hanging it on the wall of the synagogue!

*Explanation:* Hence, in *Birchas Hanehnin* the precision of his wording is focused on the *immediate action* of this law, without the concern of wrongful extrapolation concerning other laws. While, in his *Shulchan Oruch*, which is all about the study and knowledge of laws, the precise wording is focused on not having any erroneous extrapolation from this law unto other laws.

The issue with stating in the law the words, "to bless G-d after," is one of extrapolation. The word in Hebrew is, "et G-d - הַ אֱלֹהִים." And the rule is the word et in a verse is always to hint us to an "addition" in the law or mitzva. In our case, it comes to teach us that beside blessing G-d, we must also bless the host, the master of the house --"May the Merciful One bless... the master of this house, and... the mistress of this house; them, their household, their children, and all that is theirs". Therefore, in the *Shulchan Oruch*, the *Alter Rebbe* (and so too, in the Rambam's introduction to these laws) is specifically writing in his law, that the biblical mitzva is only to, "bless G-d," and not also the, "master/mistress of the house," which is only rabbinical. While in *Birchas Hanehnin* there is no concern of purposely pointing out in the law that the biblical mitzva is to bless only G-d. Especially since (a) the verse he quotes states, "bless G-d," and (b) the *Alter Rebbe* makes no mention here in *Birchas Hanehnin* of the law concerning blessing the master/mistress of the house.

*Another Introduction to the Explanation:* The difference between the *Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Oruch* and his *Birchas Hanehnin* is that in the *Shulchan Oruch* he brings the reasons --with this the *Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Oruch* differs from the Bet Yoseph's (-Rabbi Yoseph Caro -[Link](#)) *Shulchan Oruch*, because of (-Sotah 22a), "Individuals who erode the world... Those who issue legal rulings based on their knowledge of mishnayot --Meaning they only know the Mishna's law, but not the Talmud's reasons to the law, hence, they will not understand the law correctly, for the sake of knowing the law. While, the few times that he brings the reason to a law in *Birkas Hanehnin*, is only for the sake of clarifying how to do the law correctly, including doing it with the correct intentions necessary, and with more passion.

*Explanation:* Hence, (i) in the *Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Oruch*, which is all about the study and knowledge of laws, the reason for quoting the verse, "When you have eaten and are satiated, you shall bless G-d, etc.," is for the sake of knowing more laws. Therefore, he adds on the word, "etc.," alluding to the words, "for the good land that He gave you," which teaches (-Chapter 168:8) a further biblical law he states, "one must bless for food, for the land, (of Israel), and for the Holy Temple." (ii) Rambam, who doesn't bring down the reason of blessing the land and the Holy Temple, doesn't have the, "etc." (iii) in *Birchas Hanehnin* in which the *Alter Rebbe* isn't bringing reasons, the only reason he is bringing here the verse altogether is in order to bring greater understanding for the sake of greater intentions and passion, quotes only the words necessary --to this biblical law of blessings (Grace after Meals), and all further rabbinical blessings upon all foods and enjoyments, "And you will eat and be satiated and you will bless G-d," with no, "etc.," and not even the word, "Your L-rd" --The name G-d (Ado-nai; YHVH) refers to G-d's attribute of Kindness, while the name L-rd (Elo-him) refers to G-d's attribute of Strictness; Justice. Hence, from the word, "Your L-rd," we learn the law that we have bless G-d even for sad events ("Bless be the True Judge"), which this law is contrary to what the *Seder Birchas Hanehnin* is teaching us, to bless G-d for the good that we are presently enjoying.

We can also understand the difference between the *Shulchan Oruch* and *Birchas Hanehnin* concerning the quote of the verse, "The earth and all that it contains are G-d's," in the rabbinical law of making a blessing before you have any and ever enjoyment from G-d's world. In *Birkas Hanehnin*, written for every Jew (not just those who are also studying *Shulchan Oruch* and have knowledge within the laws), albeit, there is no concern of erroneous extrapolation to different laws, however, concerning a mistake in this very law, here in *Birkas Hanehnin* is the precise place to make sure that this does not happen --Not so, in the Shulchan Oruch, in which the Alter Rebbe relies on an extremely simple and logical mistake will not happen. *Birkas Hanehnin* in this law is focusing on one's having to bless G-d before every and any pleasure from anywhere in G-d's world. The words of the verse, "The earth (הָאָרֶץ, lit. the land) and all that it contains are G-d's," can lead to a mistake, since the word the land refers to the Land of Israel! It is only in the second phrase of the verse, "the world and those who dwell therein," that we see the law for anywhere in the world. Therefore, in *Birkas Hanehnin*, by this verse, the *Alter Rebbe* adds on the word, "etc."

*The Lesson:* The Rebbe does spell out the *Lesson* in this *Talk*, however, having heard from the Rebbe in all my years of standing at the Rebbe's *Talks* (-Ethics 1:17), "The essential thing is [not the study, but] the deed," and, "From every teaching must come forth a lesson in serving G-d," I will allow myself to point out a clear lesson from all of the above. In the mitzva of Torah-study there are two different mitzvot: (a) "So that they know what you will do and what you will not do." (b) "you shall meditate therein day and night," "For it is your life and the length of your days," and, "This is a wonderful union (between the G-d and the one studying His Torah), like which there is none other, and which has no parallel anywhere in the material world, whereby complete oneness and unity, from every side and angle, could be attained."

We must engage in both mitzvot of Torah-studying, and with this knowing, that each of these mitzvot of Torah-study, having a different goal and intention, likewise have a different format, in which the first demands a focus and study that leads to a call of action, and with it a clarity in what to do at this very moment.