**YESHIVAT HAR ETZION**

**ISRAEL KOSCHITZKY VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH (VBM)**

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**THE LAWS OF THE BERAKHOT**

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**Shiur #61: *Birkat Ha-Mazon***

**Introduction**

The Torah commands: “And you shall eat and be satisfied and bless the Lord your God for the good land which He has given you (*Devarim* 8:10). The Talmud (*Berakhot* 48b) derives from this verse that there is a Biblical obligation to recite *Birkat Ha-Mazon* after eating. The *Rishonim* (Rambam, Sefer Ha-Mitzvot, positive commandment 19; Sefer Ha-Chinukh 430) count *Birkat Ha-Mazon* as one of the 613 *mitzvot*. This is the only blessing of Biblical origin. (See, however, the Ramban’s comments to the Sefer Ha-Mitzvot, mitzva 15, regarding *Birkot Ha-Torah*).

In our study of *Birkat Ha-Mazon*, we will discuss which foods (and what quantity of them) generate an obligation to say *Birkat Ha-Mazon*, what the characteristics of the Biblical *mitzva* are, and how one fulfilled this *mitzva* before the Rabbis formulated the text of *Birkat Ha-Mazon*.

**Over Which Foods Is *Birkat Ha-Mazon* Recited?**

The Talmud cites a difference of opinion regarding whether *Birkat Ha-Mazon*, referred to by the *mishna* as the “three blessings” (see below), is said after eating bread or other foods. The *mishna* teaches:

If one has eaten grapes, figs, or pomegranates, he says a grace of three blessings (*Birkat Ha-Mazon*) after them; so says Rabban Gamliel. The *Chakhamim*, however, say: One blessing which includes three (*Al Ha-Michya*). R. Akiva says: If one ate only boiled vegetables, and that is his meal, he says after it *Birkat Ha-Mazon*.

While Rabban Gamliel maintains that *Birkat Ha-Mazon* should be said after eating any of the seven species (see *Berakhot* 37b) and R. Akiva believes that it should be said after any “meal,” regardless of its content, the *Chakhamim* rule that *Birkat Ha-Mazon* should only be said after eating bread.

This debate may highlight the nature of *Birkat Ha-Mazon*. According to Rabban Gamliel, *Birkat Ha-Mazon* is said after eating “the seven species with which the land of Israel is praised.” The *gemara* (ibid.) explains:

What is the reason of Rabban Gamliel? Because it is written, “A land of wheat and barley…” (*Devarim* 8:8), and it is also written, “A land wherein you shall eat bread without scarceness” (ibid. 8:9), and it is written, “And you shall eat and be satisfied and bless the Lord your God” (ibid. 8:10).

Rabban Gamliel apparently maintains that the blessing referred to in verse 10 modifies the previous two verses, which speak of the seven species with which the Land of Israel was blessed. Indeed, the verse continues that the blessing is recited “for the good land which He has given you.” Although one might suggest that R. Akiva and the *Chakhamim* view *Birkat Ha-Mazon* as a blessing said upon eating a meal (of bread or other foods), this verse, the text of the second and third blessings, as well as certain *halakhot* related to *Birkat Ha-Mazon* (see *Berakhot* 48b regarding mentioning the land of Israel and Yerushalayim; see also Rashi, *Berakhot* 20b, s.v. *o derabannan*) indicate that *Birkat Ha-Mazon* is fundamentally a blessing over the Land of Israel..

The *halakha* is in accordance with the view of the *Chakhamim*. As the Rambam writes (*Hilkhot Berakhot* 3:11; see also Yerushalmi, *Berakhot* 6:1): “Upon whatever one says the blessing of *Ha-Motzi* before [eating], one says afterwards *Birkat Ha-Mazon*.”

**The Quantity of Bread for *Birkat Ha-Mazon***

Although the Talmud assumes, based upon the verse cited above (*Devarim* 8:10), that *Birkat Ha-Mazon* is of Biblical origin, the *gemara* teaches that one becomes obligated only under certain conditions.

The *mishna* (*Berakhot* 45a) cites a debate regarding the amount that one must each in order to incur an obligation to recite *Birkat Ha-Mazon*:

How much [must one have eaten] to count? As much as an olive (*ke-zayit*). R. Yehuda says: As much as an egg (*ke-beitza*).

The Talmud explains:

This would seem to show that R. Meir's standard is an olive and R. Yehuda's an egg … R. Meir holds that “you shall eat” refers to eating and “you shall be satisfied” to drinking, and the standard of eating is an olive. R. Yehuda holds that “and you shall eat and be satisfied” signifies an eating that gives satisfaction, and this must be as much as an egg.

R. Meir maintains that if one has “eaten,” which is defined as having eaten the equivalent of the size of an olive, one must say *Birkat Ha-Mazon*, whereas according to R. Yehuda, one must also be “satisfied,” which we can assume occurs after eating an egg-size quantity of bread.

The *Rishonim* point out that the Talmud implies elsewhere (*Berakhot* 20b) that the *shiurim* of *ke-beitza* and *ke-zayit* are Rabbinic:

R. Avira discoursed – sometimes in the name of R. Ammi, and sometimes in the name of R. Assi – as follows: The ministering angels said before the Holy One, blessed be He: Sovereign of the Universe, it is written in your law, “Who does not regard persons and does not take bribes” (*Devarim* 10:17). But do you not regard the people of Israel? As it says, “The Lord lift up His countenance upon you” (*Bamidbar* 6:26). He replied to them: Should I not lift up My countenance for Israel? For I wrote for them in the Torah, “And you shall eat and be satisfied and bless the Lord your God” (*Devarim* 8:10), and they are particular [to say the grace] if the quantity is but an olive or an egg!

This source implies that one becomes obligation to say *Birkat Ha-Mazon* only after eating a large quantity, which “satisfies.” The Jewish People, however, choose to say *Birkat Ha-Mazon* after eating even smaller quantities of a *ke-zayit* or a *ke-beitza*.

How, then, are we to understand the debate in the *mishna*?

Some *Rishonim* (Tosafot 49b, s.v. *rabbi*; Rosh 7:24; see also Rambam 1:1) explain that all agree that one incurs a Biblical obligation to say *Birkat Ha-Mazon* only after eating enough food to be fully satiated. The debate cited above refers to the Rabbinic obligation, which one incurs after eating either a *ke-zayit* or a *ke-beitza*. In contrast, others, including the Ra’avad (Hasagot to Rif 12a; see also comments to Rambam, *Hilkhot Berakhot* 5:15) and Ramban (Milchamot Hashem 12a), explain that R. Yehuda and R. Meir debate the Biblical obligation of *Birkat Ha-Mazon*, while the other *gemara* (*Berakhot* 20b) is not accepted by these opinions.

Interestingly, this debate may affect how these *Rishonim* understand the relationship between two other Talmudic passages.

In one place (*Berakhot* 48a), the *gemara* cites R. Yochanan, who rules that one who eats even a *ke-zayit* of bread can say the *Birkat Ha-Mazon* for others. This is somewhat perplexing in light of another passage (*Berakhot* 20b) that states that one who is obligated in a *mitzva mi-derabannan* may not fulfill the obligation of one who is obligated *mi-de’oraita*.

Tosafot, the Rosh, and the Behag (cited by Rabbeinu Yona *Berakhot* 35b, s.v. *u-veha*), who maintain that all agree that only one who is satiated is obligated *mi-de’oraita*, explain that as long as a person may theoretically incur a Biblical obligation, he may fulfill the obligation of another person even if technically his obligation is only *mi-derabannan*, such as the man who ate only a *ke-zayit* of bread. However, one who can only be obligated *mi-derabannan*, such as a child and possibly a woman (see below), may not fulfill the obligation of another who is obligated *mi-de’oraita*.

The Ra’avad and Ramban, who maintain that R. Meir and R. Yehuda differ regarding when one incurs a Biblical obligation to say *Birkat Ha-Mazon*, disagree and explain that this passage is in accordance with the view of R. Meir, who believes that one who eats a *ke-zayit* of bread is Biblically obligated to say *Birkat Ha-Mazon*.

The Shulchan Arukh (186:2), following the view of Tosafot, rules that one who eats only a *ke-zayit* of bread is Rabbinically obligated to say *Birkat Ha-Mazon*. Elsewhere, the Shulchan Arukh (184:4) adds that if one is in doubt if he said *Birkat Ha-Mazon*, he should say it, as this constitutes a *safek de-oraita*, a doubt regarding a Biblical commandment. The Mishna Berura (15) notes that this is true only if one is “satiated,” as if one ate a smaller amount, the obligation is only Rabbinic, and *safek de-rabannan le-kula* (i.e. the doubt concerns a Rabbinic manner and one should therefore not say *Birkat Ha-Mazon*).

Incidentally, the Rema also cites the Mordekhai (*Berakhot* 177), who maintains that one who did not drink is also only obligated *mi-derabannan*. Therefore, one who says *Birkat Ha-Mazon* for other should drink as well.

**The Time in Which One Must Eat**

The Talmud teaches in numerous contexts that in order to violate certain prohibitions or in order to fulfill certain *mitzvot* that require “*akhila*” (eating), one must eat a specific amount (*shi’ur*), most often a *ke-zayit* (the size of an olive), in a certain amount of time. This amount of time is generally referred to “*kedei akhilat peras*,” the amount of time it takes to eat half a loaf of bread. This amount of time is relevant in the context of eating prohibited foods (see *Keritut* 12b), as well as when fulfilling *mitzvot*, such as *matza* (*Berakhot* 37b) and *marror* (*Pesachim* 114b). This amount of time is also relevant in the context of eating of Yom Kippur (see Tosefta, *Yoma* 4:3), although the *shi’ur* of eating on Yom Kippur is a *ka-kotevet* (the size of a date).

The *Acharonim* (see, for example, Magen Avraham 210:1; Panim Me’irot 2:27) question whether this *shi’ur* applies to *Birkat Ha-Mazon*. Some suggest that since *Birkat Ha-Mazon* is dependent upon “satisfaction” (*sevi’a*), as the verse states, “When you have eaten and are satisfied, you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land which He has given you” (*Devarim* 8:10), and not “eating,” even one who eats the minimum amount over a longer period than *kedei akhilat peras* should be required to say *Birkat Ha-Mazon*. This is not the accepted view.

[Elsewhere](http://etzion.org.il/en/summary-halakhot-berakha-acharona), we discussed the measurements of a *ke-zayit* and *ke-baitza*, as well as the time period known as *bi-kidei akhilat peras*.

**Women and *Birkat Ha-Mazon***

The Talmud (*Berakhot* 20b) discusses a women’s obligation to say *Birkat Ha-Mazon*. First, the *gemara* asserts that *Birkat Ha-Mazon* is not a time-bound commandment, from which women are generally exempt.

Women … are subject to the obligation …of *Birkat Ha-Mazon*… Is this not self-evident? You might think that because it is written, “When the Lord shall give you in the evening flesh to eat and in the morning bread to the full” (*Shemot* 16:8), therefore it is like a time-bound commandment (*mitzvat aseh she-hazeman gerama*). Therefore, it tells us [that this is not so].

Second, the gemara questions whether a women’s obligation to say *Birkat Ha-Mazon* is *mi-de’oraita* or *mi-derabannan*. The halakhic ramification, according to the *gemara*, would be whether a woman may fulfill a man’s obligation, as “[only] one who is bound by the Torah can come and perform the duty on behalf of another who is bound by the Torah.” The *Rishonim* discuss this question and the conclusion of the *gemara*.

Why might one believe that women would not be obligated *mi-de’oraita* in *Birkat Ha-Mazon*? Rashi (s.v. *de-rabannan*) explains, based upon the verse’s command that one bless God “for the good land which He has given you,” that since the land is not divided among women, they are exempt from *Birkat Ha-Mazon*. Tosafot (s.v. *nashim*) disagrees and notes that the Land of Israel is also not distributed to *kohanim*! Rather, since one must mention “*berit ve-Torah*” in *Birkat Ha-Mazon*, and women are technically exempt from both, they are not Biblically obligated.

Regarding the conclusion of the *gemara*, the Rif (see Rambam 12a), as well as the Ra’avad and Rashba (s.v. *ela*), rule that women are equally obligated in *Birkat Ha-Mazon*. The Rambam (*Hilkhot Berakhot* 5:1) writes that the *gemara*’s question was left unresolved.

The Shulchan Arukh (186:1) rules:

Women are obligated in *Birkat Ha-Mazon.* There is a doubt as to whether they are obligated Biblically and therefore exempt men, or if they are only obligated Rabinically and only exempt others who are only obligated Rabinically.

Based on our discussion above, what should a woman do if she ate enough to be satiated, but is unsure whether she said *Birkat Ha-Mazon*? The *Acharonim* discuss this question at length (see, for example, Sha’arei Teshuva 186:6 and Mishna Berura 199:3), as it touches upon broader legal principle as well, including the definition of “*sefeik sefeika*” (a “double doubt,” in this context whether the woman is obligated in *Birkat Ha-Mazon* from the Torah and whether or not she said *Birkat Ha-Mazon*). This question remains unresolved, as some authorities (see, for example, Kitzur Shulchan Arukh 44:11) rule that she should not repeat the *Birkat Ha-Mazon*, while others (see Sha’ar Efraim 11, Chayyei Adam 47:2) insist that she should say *Birkat Ha-Mazon*. The Mishna Berura (ibid.) concludes that one who wishes to rely upon the Sha’ar Efraim may do so.

We mentioned [previously](http://etzion.org.il./en/shiur-54-zimun-3-women-and-zimun) that the Sefer Ha-Michtam (*Berakhot* 45a) and R. Yehonatan of Luneil (Hilkhot He-Rif, *Berakhot* 45a) claim that this is why men and women cannot join together to form a *zimun*, as they may bear different levels of obligation. Other *Rishonim* offer different explanations.

**The Text of the Blessings**

The Talmud (*Berakhot* 48b) brings two seemingly contradictory passages regarding the origins of the text of *Birkat Ha-Mazon*. On the one hand, the *gemara* relates:

R. Nachman said: Moshe instituted for Israel the blessing *Ha-Zan* [the first blessing] at the time when manna descended for them. Yehoshua instituted for them the benediction of the *Ha-Aretz* [the second blessing] when they entered the land [of Israel]. David and Shlomo instituted the blessing which closes *Boneh Yerushalayim* [the third blessing]. David instituted the words, “For Israel Your people and for Jerusalem Your city” (*al Yisrael amekha ve-al Yerushalayim irekha*) and Shlomo instituted the words, “For the great and holy house” (*ha-bayit ha-gadol ve-ka-kadosh*). The blessing *Ha-Tov Ve-Hameitiv* was instituted [by the Sages] in Yavneh with reference to those who were slain in Betar [the final battle of the Bar Kochba revolt]. For R. Mattena said: On the day on which permission was granted to bury those slain in Betar, they ordained in Yavneh that “Who is good and bestows good” should be said. “Who is good,” because they [the bodies] did not putrefy, and “Who bestows good,” because they were allowed to be buried.

This passage clearly states that although *Birkat Ha-Mazon* may be a Biblical obligation, the text of its blessings was composed later, by Moshe, Yehoshua, David, Shlomo, and in the great academy of Yavneh.

On the other hand, another passage states:

Our Rabbis taught: Where is *Birkat Ha-Mazon* intimated in the Torah? In the verse, “And you shall eat and be satisfied and bless” (*Devarim* 8:10) – this signifies the blessing of *Ha-Zan*. “The Lord Your God” – this signifies the benediction of *zimun*. “For the land” – this signifies the blessing of *Ha-Aretz*. “The good” – this signifies *Boneh Yerushalayim*. And similarly it says, “This good mountain and Lebanon” (*Devarim* 3:25). “Which He has given you” – this signifies the blessing of *Hu Heitiv Hu Meitiv*.

This passage implies that the blessings themselves are alluded to by the Biblical verses.

The *Rishonim* disagree as to if, and how, to reconcile this apparent contradiction. The Rif (35b) and Rambam (*Hilkhot Berakhot* 2:1) cite only the first passage, which describes how the blessings were authored by Moshe, Yehoshua, David, and Shlomo. In fact, the Rambam (Sefer Ha-Mitzvot, *shoresh* 1) writes that before the specific blessings were instituted, “We were commanded to bless after eating, each person according to his ability (*kol echad lefi da’ato*).”

Other *Rishonim* disagree. For example, the Ritva (*Berakhot* 48b, s.v. *ha-tov*; see also Ra’ah, s.v. *ha-tov*) argues that if the text of the blessings were completely authored by later figures, *Birkat Ha-Mazon* would be considered a Rabbinic commandment, like prayer. Rather, he explains:

Part of the formula of *Birkat Ha-Mazon* is of Biblical origin, as one is obligated to mention and bless [God] for his food and to mention the land and Yerushalayim… Therefore, the entire *Birkat Ha-Mazon* is considered to be *mi-de’oraita*, as its text and formula are as mentioned. However, if he were to say it in a different manner, he would have fulfilled his obligation.

Other *Rishonim* (see Tosafot 16a, s.v *ve-chotam*; Rosh 6:22) also imply that aspects of the text of *Birkat Ha-Mazon* may be *mi-de’oraita*. Some *Rishonim* even imply that the number of blessings may also be a Biblical obligation (see Tosafot ibid.; see Bach 188).

The Mishna Berura (194:13) cites a debate whether the three Biblical blessings “*me’akvin zeh et zeh*,” that is, whether they are three parts of one *mitzva* or if there is value in saying even one blessing. If one finds himself without a *siddur* and only knows one or two of the blessings by heart, can and should he say the *Birkat Ha-Mazon*? The Mishna Berura suggests that if one ate enough to incur a biblical obligation to say *Birkat Ha-Mazon* (*kedei sevi’a*) and he only knows one or two of the blessings, he should say those blessings. If, however, he ate less than this amount, he should not say the blessings.

Alternatively, some suggest that in such a case, one should say *Al Ha-Michya* if possible (see Piskei Teshuvot 187:2). Moreover, as we discussed previously, although most *Acharonim* (see, for example, Shulchan Arukh 202:11 and Mishna Berura 202:55) maintain that *Borei Nefashot* is not a “general” blessing and cannot be said after eating foods that require a different blessing, such as *Birkat Ha-Mazon* or *Al Ha-Michya,* some (see Kaf Ha-Chaim 202:79) maintain that *be-di’avad*, one who says *Borei Nefashot* after even a food that requires *Al Ha-Michya* fulfills his obligation. Accordingly, R. Moshe Feinstein (Iggerot Moshe, OC 1:74) suggests that if one does not have a *siddur* and does not know *Al Ha-Michya* or even the first blessing of *Birkat Ha-Mazon* by heart, he should say *Borei Nefashot* instead.

**Other Themes of *Birkat Ha-Mazon***

The Talmud (49a) mentions additional themes that should be mentioned in *Birkat Ha-Mazon*:

It has been taught: If one does not say the words “a desirable, good, and extensive land” (*eretz chemda tova u-rechava*) in the blessing of *Ha-Aretz* and does not mention the kingdom of the house of David (*malkhut Beit David*) in the blessing *Boneh Yerushalayim*, he has not performed his obligation. Nachum the Elder says: He must mention the covenant (*berit*)in it [the second blessing]. R. Yose says: He must mention in it the Torah.

The *gemara* seemingly describes two categories of themes that must be mentioned. Regarding those which relate to the land and the Kingdom of David, if one does not mention them one has not fulfilled his obligation. However, regarding “*berit*” (*ve-al beritkha*) and Torah (*ve-al Toratkha*), the *gemara* only says that one “must” mention them. Indeed, the Rambam (*Hilkhot Berakhot* 2:3) cites the passage from Nachum the Elder.

However, elsewhere (*Berakhot* 49a) the *gemara* teaches:

And whoever does not mention the covenant (*berit*) and the Torah in the blessing of *Ha-Aretz* and the kingdom of the house of David (*malkhut beit David*) in *Boneh Yerushalayim* has not performed his obligation.

This passage implies that we do not distinguish between the themes; they are all an integral part of *Birkat Ha-Mazon*. This appears to be the view of Tosafot (20b, s.v. *nashim*), who explain that women are Biblically exempt from *Birkat Ha-Mazon* because they are not obligated in *berit* and Torah. The Rashba (20b, s.v. *rav*) disagrees and insists that the themes of *berit* and Torah are only *mi-derabannan*.

Finally, the *Rishonim* also disagree as to whether one must repeat the *Birkat Ha-Mazon* if one accidentally omits these themes. The Tur (187) cites his brother, R. Yechiel, who is inclined to rule that one has fulfilled his obligation, while the Tur disagrees and rules that one must repeat *Birkat Ha-Mazon*.

The Shulchan Arukh (187:3-4) rules that one who omits *berit*, Torah, or *malkhut Beit David* must repeat *Birkat Ha-Mazon*. The Bi’ur Halakha (s.v. *machzirin*) rules that since there is a debate, if one is unsure if he omitted these passages, he should not go back and repeat the blessing. He adds that since nowadays *Birkat Ha-Mazon* is well known by all, it is highly unlikely that someone would omit these specific phrases.

Interestingly, the Magen Avraham (182) cites an abridged version of *Birkat Ha-Mazon*, which includes the themes mentioned above. Some *Acharonim* (see Mishna Berura 187:4) suggest that at times, one may educate a child to say this abridged version.

All agree that the fourth blessing, *Ha-Tov Ve-HaMeitiv*, is only *mi-derabannan*, and it is therefore customary to answer “*amen”* after one’s own blessing after the third blessing, *Boneh Yerushalayim* (Shulchan Arukh 188:1).

**Singing *Tzur MiShelo* During the Shabbat Meal**

According to the *Rishonim* cited above, it appears that if one were to thank God for the food that he ate, and certainly if he were to include the themes mentioned above, he might fulfill his biblical obligation of *Birkat Ha-Mazon*, derived from and “you should bless the Lord your God for the good land which He has given you” (*Devarim* 8:10).

Indeed, the *Acharonim* discussion a similar idea in the context of *Kiddush*, in which one may fulfill the Biblical commandment of “*zakhor et yom ha-Shabbat le-kadsho*” through the Friday night *Shemoneh Esrei* (see, for example, Rashba, Responsa 4:95, Magen Avraham 271, and Hagahot R. Akiva Eiger ibid.), or the Biblical *mitzva* of *tefilla* by saying blessings and supplications.

This concern apparently lead R. Chaim of Volozhin – as recorded by his student R. Asher Ha-Kohen in his Keter Rosh (94), a collection of R. Chaim of Volozhin’s halakhic and spiritual practices – to refrain from singing *Tzur Mi-Shelo* on Shabbat. *Tzur Mi-Shelo* is a *zemer* modeled after the blessings of *Birkat Ha-Mazon*. Some *Acharonim* explain that according to the view that maintains that *mitzvot einan tzerikhot kavanna* (one can fulfill a *mitzva* without intention), regarding which the Shulchan Arukh (OC 60:4) does not rule definitively, one who sings *Tzur Mi-Shelo* is in essence fulfilling the Biblical obligation of *Birkat Ha-Mazon*.

Seemingly, this question may depend upon a number of halakhic debates.

First, even according to those who maintain that *mitzvot einan tzerikhot kavanna*, some maintain that if one clearly has in mind NOT to fulfill the *mitzva*, then the *mitzva* is not fulfilled (see Ritva, *Rosh Ha-Shana* 28a; see also Rabbeinu Shmuel as cited by the Talmidei Rabbeinu Yona, *Berakhot* 6a, who disagrees).

Second, as mentioned above, one who omits certain themes, such as *berit* and Torah (OC 187:3), *malkhut Beit David* (ibid. 4), and the *Retzei* addition added on Shabbat (188:6), may not fulfill the obligation of *Birkat Ha-Mazon*. These themes are not mentioned in *Tzur Mi-Shelo*.

Finally, it is worth noting that the *Acharonim* discuss whether when the Rabbis defined how a *mitzva* should be fulfilled, they undermined and uprooted the Biblical fulfillment of the commandment. This discussion arises regarding the statement of Beit Shammai (*Sukka* 28a) regarding one who sits in a *sukka* that is invalid according to a Rabbinic *gezeira*: “You did not fulfill the *mitzva* in your lifetime” (see Tosafot, *Sukka* 3a, s.v. *de-amar*). Similarly, the *Acharonim* discuss the scope of the Talmudic dictum that “the Rabbis have the authority to uproot a *mitzva* from the Torah” (*Yevamot* 90b). For example, does one who blows the shofar on Shabbat, despite the Rabbinic prohibition to do so, fulfill the Biblical *mitzva*? In our context, we might suggest that once the Rabbis established the set text of *Birkat Ha-Mazon*, it may not be fulfilled in any other manner.

It is customary to sing *Tzur Mi-Shelo* and not to be concerned with the opinion of R. Chaim of Volozhin.

Next week, we will continue our discussion of the text of *Birkat Ha-Mazon*, and discuss the numerous passages inserted on special occasions.