

“It shall be that when you eat of the bread of the land, you shall set aside a portion for Hashem”

The Purpose of Eating According to the Teachings of Rabbi Zusha and Rabbi Zvi Hirsch of Zidichov, zy”a

In this week’s parsha, parshas Shelach, we learn about the mitzvah of separating “challah” (Bamidbar 15, 17): **וידבר ה' אל משה לאמר, דבר אל בני ישראל ואמרת אליהם כבואכם אל הארץ אשר אני מביא אתכם שמה, והיה באכלכם מלחם הארץ תרימו תרומה לה', ראשית עריסותיכם חלה תרימו תרומה כתרומת גרן כן תרימו אותה, מראשית עריסותיכם תתנו לה'—Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying, “Speak to Bnei Yisrael and say to them: Upon your coming to the land to which I bring you, it shall be that when you will eat of the bread of the land, you shall set aside a portion for Hashem. The beginning of your kneading you shall set aside a loaf as a portion, like the threshing-floor portion, so shall you set it aside. From the beginning of your kneading you shall give a portion to Hashem, for your generations.”**

In Avodas Yisrael, the holy Maggid, Rabbi Yisrael of Kozhnitz, zy”a, presents an explanation of these pesukim in the name of Rabbi Zusha, zy”a. They concern the subject of eating as it pertains to each and every individual. In Sha’ar HaMitzvos (Eikev), the Arizal explains at length that the purpose of eating is to clarify the “nitzotzei kedushah”—the “holy sparks”—contained within the food we ingest. The Torah here alludes to us how even simple folk like us are capable of having proper intent while eating in order to elevate these nitzotzei kedushah. Here are his inspiring words:

“הנה הצדיק הקדוש מהו”ר משולם זיסל מאניפאלי אמר, כשהאדם אוכל בתאוותו לפי דמיונו, שאי אפשר לחיות בלא אכילה ושתיה, בוודאי מן הנמנע שירים ניצוצי הקדושה שבתוך המאכל למעלה, רק אם האדם חכם ומשכיל על דבר ואומר בלבו, הלא בוודאי אם הבורא ברוך הוא רצה שנחיה בלי אכילה, בוודאי היה אפשר להתקיים כמו עתה, אלא שהבורא ברוך הוא רצונו להחיות נפש כל חי על ידי אכילה, ועל ידי זה אני מוכרח לאכול בקדושה וטהרה שאני עושה רצוני בזה, ואז יש בכח אדם להרים ניצוצין קדישין לשורשם.

וזה פירוש הפסוק, כבואכם אל הארץ, דהיינו אל הארצות, ותדעו נאמנה, אשר אני מביא אתכם שמה, כי אני הבאתי אותך לזה, שהרעבון והצימאון מאת השי”ת והשביעה גם כן מאתו, אז יהיה באכלכם מלחם הארץ תרימו תרומה לה', ותגביהו הניצוצין קדישין למעלה.”

It is inevitable that when a person satisfies his urge to eat that he will elevate the holy sparks contained within the food. For, it is impossible to survive without food and drink. Now, HKB”H could have certainly created us in such a manner that we could survive without nourishment. Hence, it should be obvious to every intelligent being that the Almighty wants us to eat and drink. Therefore, I am obligated to eat with kedushah and taharah to fulfill His wishes. In this manner, a person is able to elevate the sparks of kedushah back to their holy origins.

This is the message inherent in the passuk. **“Upon your coming to the land”**—when you deal with your earthly needs to survive; know with certainty, that I brought you to this reality; hunger and thirst come from the Almighty and so does the sense of satiety. So, **“it shall be that when you will eat of the bread of the land, you shall set aside a portion for Hashem”**—you shall elevate the sparks of kedushah heavenward.

The Avodas Yisrael adds that we should not think erroneously that this only applies to the elite among us who strive to elevate the nitzotzei kedushah on a regular basis in all aspects of their existence. In truth, this task applies to every individual, young and old alike. Here are his exact words:

“ומעתה נבאר שאר הפסוקים שכתוב, ראשית עריסותיכם חלה תרימו תרומה, פירוש, שלא יאמר האדם, הנה אנכי עדיין רך בשנים ויש עת לכל חפץ, כשאזקין אשוב לעבוד אותו יתברך בהגבהת הניצוצין קדישין, אבל עתה כתיב (קהלת יא-ט) שמוח בחור בילדותך. ולזה אמר הכתוב לא כן, רק ראשית עריסותיכם תרימו תרומה, כי עיקר העבודה בימי הילדות והבחורות כשהאדם שלם בכוחו, והוא הראשית לקדש מנעוריו.”

“The beginning of your kneading you shall set aside a loaf as a portion.” A person should not think to himself: “I am still quite young and there is plenty of time to do all of these things. When I grow old, I will return to serve the Almighty by elevating the sparks of kedushah. For the time being, it is written

(Koheles 11, 9): **‘Rejoice young man in your childhood.’** The Torah teaches us here that this is not the proper attitude. Rather: **“The beginning of your kneading you shall set aside a loaf as a portion”**—the essence of one’s service to Hashem is in one’s youth and early years, when a person is still full of energy. This early energy should be dedicated to the realm of kedushah.

The Way to Elevate the Nitzotzei Kedushah

Before delving into and delighting in the sacred teachings of Rabbi Zusha, it is worthwhile spending a moment and discussing the concept of elevating the nitzotzei kedushah. This is a holy endeavor that most people ignore and shirk from. They are under the false impression that this task belongs exclusively to the spiritual elite. Yet, from the teachings of the Avodas Yisrael, we learn that this service applies to every individual, regardless of spiritual status. This is the message of the passuk according to the Avodas Yisrael: **“The beginning of your kneading you shall set aside a loaf as a portion”**—your main service to the Almighty should be while you are young and are full of energy.

So, let us examine what the sefer Baal Shem Tov (Vayechi) writes in the name of the Baal Shem Tov on this subject. Occasionally, HKB”H arranges for a particular object to fall into a person’s possession for him to use it l’shem shamayim—for the sake of Torah-study and the service of Hashem. This allows him to clarify nitzotzei kedushah that belong to his neshamah and were buried within that object. After clarifying his portion of said object, HKB”H arranges for him to sell the object or give the object to another person, who requires it to elevate nitzotzei kedushah belonging to his neshamah. Here are the words of the Baal Shem Tov:

“זה כלל גדול, שכל דבר שאדם לובש או אוכל או משתמש בכלי, הוא נהנה מהחיות שיש באותו הדבר, כי לולא אותו הרוחניות לא היה שום קיום לאותו דבר, ויש שם ניצוצות קדושות השייכים לשורש נשמתו, וזה טעם שיש אדם שהוא אוהב דבר זה, ויש אדם ששונא דבר זה ואוהב דבר אחר.

וכשהוא משתמש באותו כלי, או אוכל מאכלים אפילו לצורך גופו, הוא מתקן הניצוצות, כי אחר כך הוא עובד באותו כח הבא לגופו מאותו מאכל או מלבוש או שאר דברים, בזה הכח עובד להשיג, נמצא שעל ידי זה הם מתוקנים. לכך פעמים יארע שכשכלה כבר לתקן כל הניצוצות שהיו באותו דבר השייכים לשורש נשמתו, אז לוקח ממנו השיגות אותו הכלי, ונותן לאחר ששייכים הניצוצות שיש באותו הכלי לשורש אחר.”

This is a fundamental principle. Every object that a person wears or eats or uses, he benefits from the life-force in that object. For, without that spiritual aspect, that

particular object could not exist. Furthermore, there are holy sparks in the object that belong to the root of this person’s neshamah. For this reason, one person loves a particular object, while another person hates it, but loves another object.

So, when this person uses this utensil or eats food, even for the sake of his bodily needs, he rectifies the nitzotzos; because afterwards, he utilizes the energy that accrues to his body from that food or garment or any other object. With that energy, he serves the Almighty; in this manner, they are rectified. Therefore, often, after a person has finished rectifying all of the nitzotzos in a particular object belonging to his neshamah, the Almighty takes that utensil from him, and gives it to another person; for the utensil contains nitzotzos belonging to another.

This teaches us a valuable lesson regarding the service of Hashem. When a person establishes his home in a particular locale, he should know with certainty that it was arranged by Hashem, as it is written (Tehillim 37, 23): **“מה’ מצעדי גבר כוננו”**—**by Hashem are the footsteps of a man established.** HKB”H orchestrates matters and directs a person so that his footsteps lead him to a particular destination. **“ודרכו יחפץ”**—**and his way, He shall favor.** A person believes that he chose to go to that destination; he does not realize that the matter was orchestrated by Hashem, so that he would rectify and clarify the nitzotzei kedushah relevant to his neshamah concealed in that location.

Every morning when a person goes to the Beis-Knesses to pray, or to learn in the Kollel, or even when he goes to transact a business transaction to support himself, if his intent is l’shem shamayim—to support his family so that they may study Torah and fulfill Hashem’s mitzvot—he clarifies and elevates nitzotzei kedushah every step of the way. There are nitzotzei kedushah concealed along the path that have been waiting, sometimes thousands of years, for a Jew to come along and elevate them back to their origins—from their nadir to their peak.

**“Hungry and also thirsty,
their soul became faint within them”**

Now, let us return to the idea of Rabbi Zusha, zy”a, with an addition from the Avodas Yisrael. The purpose of eating, which applies to everyone, young and old alike, is to remember while eating that HKB”H could have created us so that we could exist without food and drink. Instead, it is His will that we require

food and drink for our existence, so that we will rectify the nitzotzei kedushah concealed within the food.

Regarding this fact, it says: **“והיה באכלכם מלחם הארץ”-- it shall be that when you will eat of the bread of the land**—that we remember while eating that HKB”H is responsible for our need to eat. Thus, by eating, we are fulfilling Hashem’s will. By having in mind that we are eating in order to satisfy HKB”H’s will: **“תרימו תרומה לה”**—we will merit rectifying and elevating the nitzotzei kedushah within the food.

Based on his sacred words, we obtain a novel interpretation of that which is written (Mishlei 3, 6): **“בכל דרכיך דעהו והוא יישר”**—**in all your ways, know Him, and He will smooth your paths**. From this passuk, our blessed sages derive that it is essential to devote all of our actions l’shem shamayim. This is how the author of the Shulchan Aruch recorded the halachah (O.C. 231):

“בכל מה שיהנה בעולם הזה, לא יכוין להנאתו אלא לעבודת הבורא יתברך כדכתיב בכל דרכיך דעהו, ואמרו חכמים (אבות שם) כל מעשיך יהיו לשם שמים, שאפילו דברים של רשות כגון האכילה והשתיה וההליכה והשיבה והקימה... וכל צרכי גופך יהיו כולם לעבודת בוראך או לדבר הגורם עבודתו.”

All pleasure and benefit a person enjoys in this world should not be intended for one’s own personal pleasure but rather should be for the purpose of serving the Almighty. This applies to all mundane and optional activities such as eating, drinking, walking, sitting, rising and satisfying all of a person’s bodily needs.

In light of Rabbi Zusha’s idea, the message of the passuk: **“בכל דרכיך”**—is that no matter what earthly endeavors you are engaged in; **“דעהו”**—know that HKB”H created you in such a manner that you would need to engage in them. By recognizing this fact and keeping it in mind, you are guaranteed: **“והוא יישר אורחותיך”**—that HKB”H will assist you in fulfilling your every mission in this world—seeing as your intent is to fulfill Hashem’s will, Who created you to engage in these activities.

Support for this noble idea of Rabbi Zusha’s can be found in the sefer Baal Shem Tov (Yisro 26). There he presents the following interpretation in the name of the Baal Shem Tov of the passuk (Tehillim 107, 5):

“רעבים גם צמאים נפשם בהם תתעטף. פירש בכאן סוד גדול ונורא, והוא למה ברא הקב”ה עניני מאכל ומשתה, שאדם תאב להם לאכול ולשתות, והטעם שהם ממש ניצוצי אדם הראשון שהם מתלבשים בדומם ובצומח ובחי ובמדבר, ויש להם חשק לדבק בקדושה... וכל אכילה ושתיה שאדם אוכל ושותה, הוא ממש חלק ניצוצות שלו שהוא צריך לתקן.”

“Hungry and also thirsty, their soul became faint within them.” Here he explains an awesome and tremendous principle. Why did HKB”H create matters of food and drink that man would crave to eat and drink? The reason is because they are the actual sparks of Adam HaRishon that are disguised within the inanimate, plant, animal and human realms. They yearn to attach themselves to kedushah . . . Every food and drink that a person consumes actually contains his own sparks that he is obligated to bring to tikun.

This teaches us that when David HaMelech says: **“Hungry and also thirsty, their soul became faint within them”**—he intended to teach us an important lesson. We must always remember that the reason HKB”H created human beings in this manner--**“רעבים גם צמאים”**, **“hungry and also thirsty”**—is because--**“נפשם בהם תתעטף”**—the sparks related to their lives and souls are contained within the food they consume. This coincides beautifully with Rabbi Zusha’s idea. For, the very awareness that hunger and thirst come from Hashem--Who created man with these needs so that he would rectify the nitzotzos in the food—is already a proven “segulah.” In the merit of this awareness, the nitzotzei kedushah in the food will be rectified and elevated.

The Connection between the Service of Eating and the Mitzvah of Separating Challah

Like a loyal servant in the presence of his master, I would like to add a juicy idea to that of Rabbi Zusha’s. Why did the Torah allude to this subject specifically here, regarding the mitzvah of separating challah for the kohen? As explained, we learn from the passuk: **“אשר אני מביא אתכם שמה”**-- the importance of elevating the nitzotzei kedushah by having the emunah while eating that HKB”H created us in such a manner that we must depend on food and drink. Let us present an incredible principle found in the writings of the Yismach Moshe (Terumah); he explains why HKB”H instructed us to give terumah to the kohen and ma’aser to the levi. Here is what he writes:

“והענין הוא כי בכל יש ניצוצי קדושה, וצריכים תיקון להעלותם ממדרגת דומם, צומח, חי, למדרגת מדבר. והנה לא כל אדם יוכל לעמוד בסוד ה' לתקן בכונת אכילה, ואלו הכהנים נתייחדו לשרתו, והלויים למטה מהם, כמו שנאמר (דברים יז-ט) ובאת אל הכהנים ואל הלויים וגו'. על כן צוה השי"ת להפריש התרומה לכהן, ומשגיח בחסדו יתברך שמו שמבחר הניצוץ יתעטף בזה, על כן נקרא ראשית כמו (עמוס ו-ז) וראשית שמנים ימשחו, ועל כן נחרץ עונש גדול לזר האוכלו שלא יתחלל קדושתו, ועל כן שם קדושה עליה, והניצוצות הקלים במעשר, ומהבהמה המנות לכהנים.”

The point is that all things possess nitzotzei kedushah; they require tikun to elevate them from the levels of inanimate objects, plants and vegetation, and animal life to the level of speaking creatures (namely human beings). Now, not every person is capable of fulfilling this divine task, to rectify (the nitzotzos) by means of proper consumption. Hence, these kohanim were designated to serve him, and also the leviim to a lesser degree, as it states (Devarim 17, 9): “You shall come to the kohanim and to the leviim, etc.” Therefore, HKB”H commanded to separate terumah for the kohen; through His divine kindness, He makes sure that the essence of the spark will take this form (terumah or ma’aser). Therefore, it is referred to as “reishit,” as we find (Amos 6, 6): “And with the choicest (“reishit”) oils they anoint themselves.” Therefore, a severe punishment is reserved for the outsider (non-kohen) who eats it, so as to prevent the desecration of its kedushah. Therefore, it is referred to as being holy. The lower-level sparks become ma’aser . . .

The Yismach Moshe points out that this is the significance of the name “תרומה”—which comes from the word “to elevate.” By having the kohanim consume this portion with kedushah and taharah, they succeed in elevating these sparks of kedushah to Hashem. His grandson, the Yitav Lev (Shelach), adds the following thought:

“ואני אוסיף תבלין, כי על ידי שהכהנים ירימו המובחר והראשית שבו למעלה, כולא בתר רישא גרירא, ונקל להבעלים להעלות גם הנשאר בדבר ההוא לשורשו באכילתו, ובשגם כי על ידי מצות הפרשה ונתינה לכהנים בעשותו מצות ה', שורה רוח קדושה על הדבר ההוא, והוא מסייע ותומך ביד הבעלים לאכלו לשם שמים ולהעלות הנשאר והנותר בו למעלה.”

I would like to add a juicy thought. By having the kohanim elevate the choicest and primary portions of the produce toward Heaven, the entire produce follows its lead (it is pulled along and elevated). This makes it easier for the owners to elevate the rest of that particular produce, as well, to its source, through their consumption. Also, seeing as the separation of the portion and the giving of it to the kohen is performed as one of Hashem’s mitzvot, a spirit of kedushah rests on that object. This assists and supports the owners’ efforts to consume it l’shem shamayim and to elevate the remaining and leftover portions to Heaven.

This then is the interpretation of the passuk: “והיה באכלכם”—it shall be that when you eat of the bread of the land. When you consume the nourishment of the land—i.e. the nitzotzei kedushah that sustain the earth; “תרימו תרומה לה”—

you will succeed in elevating the sparks of kedushah by giving the portion of challah to the kohanim; for, they will elevate the sparks of kedushah by their consumption with proper intent. In this manner, you, too, will be able to elevate the sparks of kedushah from the remainder of the dough that you consume. The Yitav Lev is perplexed, however:

“ואמנם יש להבין, הא ניחא בזמן שישראל שרויים על אדמתו, אבל בזמן הגלות מה עלינו לעשות להעלות הניצוצות הקדושים, כי בעוונותינו הרבים אין דיני תרומה ומעשרות נוהג בחוץ לארץ. וצריך לומר על דרך שאמרו (מנחות קי.) העוסק בתורת עולה כאלו הקריב עולה, כמו כן כאן על ידי שרצוננו לקיים מצות תרומות ומעשרות, ובחלה מפרישין ושורפין אותו, (קידושין מ.) מחשבה טובה הקב”ה מצרפה למעשה, ויש להניצוצות הקדושים עליה כמאז מימי קדם על ידי המעשה, הגם שאין המעשה ממש אלא דוגמת המעשה, עם כל זה עושה פעולה כגוף המעשה, מחמת שכבר נעשה מעשה כזה בהיותנו על אדמתנו.”

This is all fine and well when Yisrael dwell in their lands; however, during periods of galut, how are we to elevate the sparks of kedushah? For, due to our countless transgressions, the laws pertaining to terumah and ma’aser are not in effect outside of Israel. Therefore, we must rely on the method suggested in the Gemara (Menachos 110a); by studying the passage and the laws of the korban olah, it is considered as if the person offered a korban olah. The same applies here. By desiring to fulfill the mitzvot of terumah and ma’aser, by separating a portion of the challah and burning it, HKB”H associates the good intent with an actual deed. Thus, the holy sparks are elevated just as they were in earlier times by means of actual deeds. Nevertheless, one performs a symbolic act similar to the actual act, seeing as the actual act was already performed in the past, when we dwelled on our land.

We can now better appreciate the depth of Rabbi Zusha’s remarks. While the Beis HaMikdash still stood, the challah was given to the kohen. All of the nitzotzei kedushah were concentrated within that portion of challah. Therefore, the kohen was able to elevate them through the sanctity of his eating. Yet, currently, when we burn the challah, since the kohen is not permitted to eat it, how are we to elevate the nitzotzei kedushah buried within the food?

Therefore, HKB”H provides us with an allusion in these pesukim pertaining to the mitzvah of challah. In truth, every individual has the ability to elevate nitzotzei kedushah. To do so, it is recommended: “והיה כבואכם אל הארץ”—that when you engage in earthly pursuits, know with certainty: “אשר אני מביא אתכם”—that it is HKB”H Who made us with the need to eat and drink; with this knowledge and emunah: “והיה באכלכם מלחם הארץ”—you will succeed in elevating the holy sparks.

We should add that our ability to eat and drink and elevate the nitzotzei kedushah even now in galut is as explained by the Yitav Lev. It is in the merit of separating challah and yearning: If we could only give it to a kohen to eat in kedushah and taharah—sanctity and purity. This, however, is impossible in galut, because in order for the kohen to eat it in a state of taharah, the ashes of the “parah” are required. Nevertheless, in the merit of separating the challah, HKB”H provides us with the ability to elevate the nitzotzei kedushah even in galut—by having in mind the honorable intent suggested by Rabbi Zusha: “אשר אני מביא אתכם שמה”—recognizing that Hashem created us in this manner and for this purpose.

The Purpose of Eating Is So that He Can Show Us Chesed

I would like to elaborate further on Rabbi Zusha’s profound idea. Why does a person’s recollection while he eats that this is HKB”H’s grand design--“אשר אני מביא אתכם שמה”—is he assured that he will merit clarifying the nitzotzei kedushah within the food--“וזהו באכלכם מלחם הארץ תרימו תרומה לה”? Now, we have learned of another important intent to focus on while eating from the wonderful teachings of the divine kabbalist Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch of Zidichov, zy”a, presented in the name of his son-in-law, the great Rabbi Yehuda Tzvi of Razla, zy”a, in his sefer Amud HaTorah. He writes: “קיבלתי ממוורי חותני הקדוש, אשר שורש כוונת האכילה היא, להכין עצמו לקבל חסד מהחפץ חסד, אשר זה רצון בעל החסד—the proper intent while eating is to prepare oneself to receive chesed from the One Who wants to bestow chesed.

Let us explain. It is well-known from our sacred literature that HKB”H created the world in order to be benevolent to his creations. For, HKB”H is the source of all that is good. The source for this idea comes from the writings of the Arizal (Eitz Chaim): “כשעלה ברצונו יתברך שמו לברוא את העולם, כדי להיטיב לברואיו ויכירו גדולתו—it is His initial will to be benevolent and for his creations to recognize His benevolence and greatness.

In Da’as Tevunos (Part 1, 16-18), Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzatto, ztz”l, adds an important point. It is for this reason that HKB”H provides us with good only on the condition that we engage in Torah-study and the fulfillment of mitzvot. It states in the Talmud Yerushalmi (Orlah 6a) that a person who eats from something that does not belong to him is embarrassed to look the giver in the face. In similar fashion, if a person enjoys the bounty provided by HKB”H without laboring for it and earning it, it is considered: “נהמא דכסופא”—bread of shame. Seeing as he did not labor and did not earn it, he is ashamed to look the Giver in the face.

The Foundation of Tefilah Is that HKB”H Desires Chesed

In fact, this is a fundamental principle in the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov regarding the proper “kavanah” during tefilah. This is explained by the great Rabbi Gedaliah of Luntz, zy”a, in Teshuos Chen (Vayeishev):

“שמעתי בשם הבעל שם טוב זצוק”ל, על אמרו ז”ל שענין התפלה נוגע כביכול להקב”ה, כי אפילו כשרשעי ישראל בצער, שכינה מה אומרת קלני מראשי, כי כוונתו בבריות עולמו היתה להיטיב לגבירים כי חפץ חסד הוא, נמצא שענין התפלה הוא צורך גבוה להיות מתקיים רצונו יתברך שמו להיטיב לגבירים.”

This is what I heard from the blessed Baal Shem Tov. The sages state that the concept of tefilah is related, as it were, to HKB”H. For even when the wicked of Yisrael are in agony and suffer, it weighs heavily on the Shechinah. For, it was His intent in creating His world to be benevolent to his creations, because He desires chesed. Hence, it turns out that the concept of tefilah is for the sake of Heaven—to fulfill His will to be benevolent to his creations.

In other words, when a person prays with regards to his troubles and suffering, he must pray not only for his physical and material suffering down below, but more importantly for the suffering and distress of the Shechinah. As stated, HKB”H created the world in order to be benevolent toward His creations—because He desires chesed. Therefore, when a person suffers, HKB”H also suffers; for, He is unable to be benevolent. Therefore, the main purpose and focus of tefilah is to extend abundant good, in order to fulfill His desire to be benevolent to his creations.

In Yismach Moshe (Behaloscha), he utilizes this concept to explain the message of the Mishnah (Berachos 30b): “חסידים הראשונים היו שוהין שעה אחת ומתפללין, כדי שיכוונו לבם לאביהם שבשמים—the early Chassidim would wait one hour and then pray, in order to direct their hearts to their Father in Heaven. In other words, during that one hour prior to their tefilah, they prayed: “שיכוונו לבם לאביהם שבשמים”—that they would be able to pray not only for themselves but for their Father in Heaven, to fulfill His will and need to be benevolent to His creations.

The Purpose of Eating Is to Fulfill His Will to Be Benevolent toward His Creations

We can now rejoice at having gained a better understanding of the incredible words of the great Rabbi Zvi Hirsch of Zidichov, zy”a.

He taught us that the purpose of eating is: **להכין עצמו לקבל חסד מהחפץ**—**to prepare oneself to receive chesed from the One Who desires chesed** . . . In other words, a person should eat and delight in his eating for the sake of Heaven, in order to fulfill HKB”H’s will to be benevolent to His creations. After all, it is precisely for this reason that He created all of the various good and delicious foods—to bring pleasure to His creations.

This explains very nicely what we have learned in the Talmud Yerushalmi (Kiddushin 48b): **עתידי אדם ליתן דין וחשבון על כל שראת עינו**—**in the future, a person will be held accountable for what his eye saw and he did not eat**. The Pnei Moshe explains: **משום שאינו נותן לבו לחזור אחריהן לברך ולהודות השם ברוך הוא, שברא מינים—אלו להחיות בהן בני אדם, וכמו שאינו נחשב בעיניו טובתו יתעלה ברוך הוא**—because he does not try to acquire them and recite a berachah and express his gratitude to Hashem for creating these species to sustain mankind; it is as if he does not value and appreciate the Almighty’s benevolence. The Yerushalmi concludes: **רבי לעזר**—**חשש להרא שמועתא, ומצמיח ליה פריטין ואכיל בהון מכל מילה חדא בשתא**—Rabbi Leizer heeded this lesson; he would accumulate small sums of money in order to purchase many different types of fruit; he would eat of each type of fruit once a year.

Let us explain based on what we have discussed. It was HKB”H’s original will to create the world in order to be benevolent to His creations. Therefore, all of the types of food and fruits HKB”H created were meant solely for the benefit and pleasure of His creations. Thus, if a person sees a type of food and does not want to eat it, he is preventing HKB”H, so to speak, from benefitting His creations. Consequently, he will ultimately be held accountable for this neglect. This explains why the Gemara states (Taanis 11a): **כל—היושב בתענית נקרא חוטא**—**anyone who fasts is called a sinner**.

If we consider the great Rabbi of Zidichov’s message, we arrive at a novel interpretation of the halachah (cited above) as stated in Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 231). We are instructed to have in mind while engaging in earthly matters that we intend to fulfill that which is written: **בכל דרכיך דעה**—**in all your ways, know Him**. Based on what we have discussed, the passuk is stating: **בכל—דרכיך**—in everything you plan to do and enjoy in Olam HaZeh; **דעה**—know HKB”H. Have in mind that all of your pleasures are solely for the sake of fulfilling the will of the Master and source of all chesed, Who wants to favor others with His kindness.

We can find an allusion to this notion in the words of David HaMelech (Tehillim 34, 9): **טעמו וראו כי טוב ה'**—**taste and see that**

Hashem is good. When you taste various foods and experience other delights of Olam HaZeh: **וראו כי טוב ה'**—have in mind to see and remember that Hashem is good, that He desires chesed, wishing to influence others with His benevolence. By eating, you are fulfilling His will. This is the significance of the formula we recite in Birkat HaZimun: **ברוך אלקינו שאכלנו משלו ובטובו חיינו**—**Blessed is our G-d, for we have eaten of His bounty and through His goodness we live**. The essence of our existence comes from His goodness and His desire to benefit us. It is with this intent that we should eat to make His will a reality.

Notwithstanding, we must add a warning in this regard. We should not draw the mistaken conclusion that HKB”H wants a person to pursue all of the temptations and cravings of Olam HaZeh, and then justify his actions by claiming that his intent was solely to fulfill the will of HKB”H—to be benevolent to His creations. For, we have learned in the Gemara (Shabbas 55a): **חזרתו של הקב"ה אמת**—**HKB”H’s trademark is “emes.”** He knows whether or not a person’s intent is truly to use everything in Olam HaZeh solely for the honor of Hashem and His Torah.

Furthermore, the true test to determine whether or not a person eats and derives pleasure from Olam HaZeh is to fulfill HKB”H’s will is to examine all of his actions. If that is his true intent then even in pleasures not related to Olam HaZeh, he will serve Hashem and strive to satisfy His will. Nevertheless, even if he is not yet on that high a spiritual level, if he has this thought in mind while eating—that HKB”H created all of the varieties of food to benefit His creations—and he longs to achieve this level—to eat solely for the sake of fulfilling Hashem’s will—HKB”H will associate his good intent with an actual deed, as if he has already achieved that level.

At this point, we can enjoy the fact that we have achieved a deeper understanding of Rabbi Zusha’s idea. He interpreted the passukas follows: **והיה בבואכם אל הארץ**—when you engage in earthly matters; recall that: **אשר אני מביא אתכם שמה**—this was by HKB”H’s design. As a result: **והיה באכלכם מלחם הארץ תרימו תרומה לה'**—you will succeed in elevating the holy sparks to Hashem. According to the interpretation of the great Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch of Zidichov, one should have in mind that HKB”H arranged for us to eat, because it is His will to provide His creations with goodness. By having this intent in mind, we will merit clarifying the nitzotzei kedushah. Thus, both the intent recommended by Rabbi Zusha and the intent recommended by the great Rabbi of Zidichov complement each other and achieve the same magnificent purpose.

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