

Mishnah והביאו לפניו מליח תחלה – If they brought before him a salted food to be eaten first,^[1] ומי איבא מידי דהוי מליח עיקר ופת טפלה – But is there such a thing that the salted food is the primary food and the bread is the subordinate one?^[4] ומי איבא מידי דהוי מליח עיקר ופת טפלה – he recites a blessing on the salted food and this discharges his blessing obligation for the bread as well, ומה עיקר ופת טפלה לו – for the bread is subordinate to [the salted food]. זה הכלל – This is the rule: כל שהוא עיקר ועמו טפלה – In whatever case you have a food that is primary and a subordinate food is eaten with it, ומי איבא מידי דהוי מליח עיקר ופת טפלה – one recites the blessing on the primary food and this discharges his blessing obligation for the subordinate food as well.^[3]

Gemara The Gemara asks:

– But is there such a thing that the salted food is the primary food and the bread is the subordinate one?^[4]

The Gemara answers:

– Rav Acha the son of Rav Avira said in the name of Rav Ashi: באוכלי פירות גנוסר – The Mishnah refers to those who are eating the fruits of Genosar, which are exceptionally sweet.^[5]

The Gemara discusses the excellence of the fruits of Genosar:

– Rabbah bar bar Chanah said: כי הוה – אמר רבה בר בר חנה – When we would follow R' Yochanan to eat the fruits of Genosar, כי הוינן בי – when we were a hundred people accompanying R' Yochanan, מנא קטנין ליה לכל חר וחד עשרה עשרה – we would take for him, each one of us, ten fruits, for a total of a thousand fruits; וכי הוינן בי עשרה – and when we were ten people accompanying him, מנא קטנין ליה כל חר וחד מאה מאה – we would take for him, each one of us, one hundred fruits, so that the total amount would remain one thousand. וכל מאה מינייהו הוה – And the fruits were so large that every hundred of them were contained in a basket of three se'ah.^[6] – And [R' Yochanan] would eat them all and swear that he had not eaten food.^[7]

The Gemara asks:

– Can it enter your mind to say that he swore that he had not eaten any “food”?^[8]

The Gemara answers:

– Rather, say that R' Yochanan swore that he

had not eaten “sustenance.”^[9]

The Gemara relates further:

– R' Abahu ate the fruits of Genosar until a fly would slip off his forehead.^[10] – And Rav Ami and Rav Assi would eat them until their hair would fall out. רבי שמעון – רבי אמי ורב אסי הוו אכלי עד דנתור מנייהו – R' Shimon ben Lakish would eat them until he became delirious, בן לקיש הוה אכיל עד דמריד – whereupon R' Yochanan would notify the house of the Nasi, והוה משדר ליה רבי יהודה נשיאה באלושי אבתריה – and the Nasi R' Yehudah Nesiah would send a troop of men after [R' Shimon ben Lakish], ומייתי ליה לביתיה – and they would bring him to his house.

The Gemara speaks of the fruits of Eretz Yisrael:

– When Rav Dimi came to Babylonia from Eretz Yisrael, he said: עיר אחת היתה לו לינאי המלך בהר המלך – There was this one city that King Yannai had in Har HaMelech^[11] – from which they would take out six hundred thousand bowls of sliced tuna לקוצצי תאנים – to feed the fig pickers מערב שבת – from one Friday to the next. I.e. there were so many workers picking figs that this extraordinary amount of food was necessary to feed them each week.

The Gemara relates more about the abundance in Har HaMelech:

– When Ravin came to Babylonia from Eretz Yisrael, he said: אילן אחד הוה לו לינאי המלך בהר המלך – There was this one tree that King Yannai had in Har HaMelech – from which they would bring down forty se'ah of young pigeons משלוש בריכות בחדש

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1. The Mishnah is making a point of saying that the salted food is being eaten first; see below, note 3.

2. To be eaten after the salted food.

3. As noted above (see note 1), the Mishnah makes a point of saying that the salted food is eaten before the bread. Apparently, the Mishnah thereby teaches that the rule that the blessing on the primary food exempts the subordinate applies only to cases in which the subordinate food is eaten after [or together with] the primary food. If, however, one eats the subordinate food first, it requires a blessing [see Rama, Orach Chaim 212:1]. Alternatively, the Mishnah might be teaching only that the blessing on the primary food discharges the blessing obligation for the subordinate even where the subordinate is not actually eaten together with it (see Tos. Yom Tov).

[See Tos. R' Akiva §43, who suggests what the Mishnah's rule (This is the rule . . .) comes to add, but see Rashash to Rashi.]

4. How can the salted food be considered the primary food and the bread the subordinate one [when it is bread that satisfies one's hunger and provides sustenance]? (see Tzlach and Yad David [Basra]).

5. Genosar is the region around the Kinneret Sea (Rashi). [As the Gemara in Megillah (6a) states: “Kinneret is Genosar. And why is it called Kinneret? Because its fruits are sweet, like the sound of a kinor (harp).”]

The Gemara answers that the salted food mentioned in the Mishnah refers to the fruits of Genosar, which due to their exceptional sweetness had to be eaten with salt (Rabbeinu Yonah; Ritva; see Tzlach and Rashash; cf. Tosafos ברכות ד"ה באוכלי גנוסר). These fruits are so exceptional that they are considered to be even more significant than bread (Rashi).

[Thus, only in relation to Genosar fruits can bread be considered “subordinate.”]

Alternatively, when eating bread together with other foods in order to satisfy one's hunger, bread is always considered the primary food [even if one wishes primarily to eat the other food and not the bread – see Mishnah Berurah 212:3 with Shaar HaTziyun §9]. Our Mishnah, however, is referring to where one is eating the Genosar fruits [or other foods] to satisfy his craving for their taste, rather than to satisfy his hunger, and the bread is being eaten so that the excessive salt not cause him harm (see Rabbeinu Yonah and Ritva).

6. [See reading of Maharshah, and Erwin 30a.] A se'ah is a measure of volume equal to six *habin*; a *habin* measures four *lugin*; and a *log* measures 6 eggs. Thus the one hundred fruits contained in a three-se'ah basket were equal in volume to 432 eggs, with each fruit the volume of 4.32 eggs. The total volume of the 1,000 fruits was 4,320 eggs.

7. [For there is always room for more delicious food (see Erwin 82b and Megillah 7b).]

8. How could one think that the fruits of Genosar are not considered food? Why, every edible is considered “food” except for water and salt, as stated above on 35b! (Tos. R' Yehudah HeChasid; see Erwin 30a).

9. I.e. something that satisfied his hunger (Rashi). [These fruits were so delicious that one would retain his appetite for them even after eating them in large quantities (see, however, Maharsha).]

10. He ate of these exceptionally sweet and fatty fruits until [his pores oozed the oils of the fruits and] the skin of his face glowed, and his skin became so smooth that a fly would slip off his forehead (Rashi).

11. A heavily populated province in Judea (Chullin 57a).

- from three different broods per month.^[12]

The Gemara relates further praises of Eretz Yisrael:

עיר אחת הייתה בארץ ישראל - When R' Yitzchak came to Babylonia from Eretz Yisrael, he said: **There was this one city in Eretz Yisrael and Gufnis was its name, in which there were eighty pairs of brothers who were Kohanim - married to eighty pairs of sisters who were Kohanos** (i.e. the daughters of Kohanim).^[13] **And the Rabbis searched from Sura until Nehardea, and did not find a single similar case - other than the daughters of Rav Chisda,**

who were married to the brothers Rami the son of Chama and Mar Ukva the son of Chama. **And even that case was not completely similar, for although [the sisters] were Kohanos, [the brothers] were not Kohanim.**

The Gemara cites a statement regarding eating with salt:

כל סעודה שאין בה מלח אינה סעודה - Rav said: **Any meal without salt is not a meal.**^[16]

The Gemara cites a related statement:

אמר רבי חייא בר אבא אמר רבי יוחנן - R' Chiya bar Abba said in the name of R' Yochanan: **כל סעודה שאין בה שריף אינה סעודה - Any meal without a soup is not a meal.**

Mishnah **מברך אחריהם שלש** - If one ate grapes or figs or pomegranates,^[17] **הוא יברך אותם שלש ברכות - he recites after them the three blessings of Bircas HaMazon.**

These are the words of Rabban Gamliel.^[18] **אך רבי אקיבא אומר - But the Sages say: ברכה אחת מעין שלש - He recites only the one-blessing abridgment of three.**^[19] **אמרו רבי עקיבא ואמרו - R' Akiva says: אפילו אכל שלק והוא - R' Akiva says: אפילו אכל שלק והוא - Even if one ate only a cooked vegetable, but it is his sustenance,**^[20] **הוא יברך עליו שלש ברכות - he recites upon it the three blessings of Bircas HaMazon.**^[21]

The Mishnah cites a dispute regarding the blessing on water:

כל מי שישתה מים לצמא - If one drinks water to quench his thirst,^[22] **הוא יברך שהכל נהיה בדברו - he recites the blessing: that everything came into being through His word.** **אמר רבי תרפון אומר - R' Tarfon says: בורא נפשות - He recites the blessing: the One Who creates numerous living things and their deficiencies . . .**^[23]

Gemara The Gemara explains the view of Rabban Gamliel: **מאי טעמא דרבן גמליאל - What is the reason for the ruling of Rabban Gamliel that the three blessings of Bircas HaMazon are recited after eating any of the seven species? "ארץ חטה ושערה וגו' - For it is written:^[24] A land of wheat, barley, etc. grape, fig and pomegranate; a land of oil-olives and [date] honey, וקתיב - and it is written in the next verse:^[25] A land in which you will eat bread without poverty, etc.,**

והוא יברך אחריהם שלש ברכות - and it is written in the verse after that: **And you will eat and you will be satisfied and you shall bless Hashem your God.**^[26]

The Sages' response:

ואמר רבי תרפון - And what do the Sages say in response? Why do they maintain that the three blessings are required only for bread and not for the other species? **אמרו רבי תרפון - The Sages maintain that the expression a land interrupts the subject.**^[27]

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12. I.e. three times a month they would remove forty *se'ah* of newly hatched pigeons from the tree (*Rashi*; cf. *Rashash*).

13. This highlights the great emphasis that the Jews in Eretz Yisrael placed on preserving the untarnished purity of Kohanite lineage (see *Maharsha*).

14. The vicinities of Sura and Nehardea were the main centers of Jewish population in Babylonia.

15. Of brothers that were Kohanim, marrying sisters that were Kohanos.

16. [I.e. a significant meal.] Some texts read: כל סעודה שאין בה מלח אינה סעודה, *Any meal without a salted food is not a meal.* According to this reading, this statement is more closely related to our Mishnah (see *Dikdukei Soferim*).

17. Which are fruits of the seven species for which Eretz Yisrael is praised in the verse (*Deuteronomy* 8:8): *A land of wheat, barley, grape, fig, and pomegranate, a land of oil olives and [date] honey* (*Deuteronomy* 8:8).

18. Rabban Gamliel follows his opinion, recorded in the Baraisa above (37a), that one recites *Bircas HaMazon* after partaking of any of the seven species (*Rashi*).

The "three blessings" are: (a) the blessing for the provision of sustenance; (b) the blessing for the Land of Israel; and (c) the blessing for Jerusalem. These three blessings are alluded to in the verse (*Deuteronomy* 8:10): *And you will eat and you will be satisfied and you shall bless Hashem, your God, for the good land that He has given you*, as expounded by the Gemara below, 48b. [According to *Chazon Ish*, *Orach Chaim* 34:1, the formula one uses, according to Rabban Gamliel, when reciting the three blessings after eating one of the seven species (other than bread) differs somewhat from the formula used after eating bread.]

19. Detailed in the Gemara below.

20. I.e. he is eating it for sustenance [as his meal] (*Rashi*).

21. For the Torah states (*Deuteronomy* 8:10): *And you will eat and you will be satisfied and you shall bless Hashem . . .* According to R' Akiva, the verse refers to any food (*Rav*). [The Gemara will explain why Rabban Gamliel and the Sages disagree and maintain that the verse does not refer to all foods.]

22. The Gemara below (end of 44b) will explain why the Mishnah specifies "to [quench] his thirst."

23. *חסרונו*, *their deficiencies*, refers to those things created to satisfy the needs of the creatures (*Rashi*).

According to R' Tarfon, *Borei Nefashos* is the blessing recited before drinking water (*Rashi* to *Eruvin* 14b; *Tosafos* below, 45a ד"ה רבי תרפון).

24. *Deuteronomy* 8:8.

25. *Ibid.* v. 9.

26. *Ibid.* v. 10. Rabban Gamliel maintains that this latter verse refers to all the foods mentioned in the preceding two verses - the bread mentioned in verse 9 and the fruits of the other seven species mentioned in verse 8. The Torah commands that when eating any of these foods, one is to recite the three blessings alluded to in verse 10 [see above, note 18] (*Rashi*).

27. Verse 9 begins: "A land" in which you will eat bread without poverty . . . The Torah's insertion of the expression "a land" at this point [seemingly unnecessary, as the preceding verse already mentions "a land"] indicates the beginning of a new thought, in effect separating this verse from the preceding one. Hence, verse 10, which commands that one bless Hashem after eating, refers only to the bread mentioned in verse 9, and not to the other species mentioned in verse 8 (see *Rashi*). [And the one-blessing abridgment of three that the Sages mandate is required only Rabbinically (*Rabbeinu Yonah*). Alternatively, it is

The Gemara must therefore consider how Rabban Gamliel, then, accounts for the Torah's repetition of "a land":

But Rabban Gamliel, too, must surely agree that "אֶרֶץ" – the repetition of *a land* interrupts the subject, as the Rabbis maintain. How, then, can he explain that the verse requiring *Bircas HaMazon* refers even to those species mentioned before the interruption?

The Gemara answers:

According to Rabban Gamliel, that repetition of *a land*, which interrupts the subject, is needed to exclude from the requirement of *Bircas HaMazon* one who chews and swallows kernels of wheat.^[28]

The Gemara cites Amoraic rulings regarding this dispute:

R' Yaakov bar Idi said in the name of R' Chanina: In the case of any food that is of the five species of grain,^[29] at the beginning, before eating, one recites on it the blessing the One Who creates species of sustenance,^[30] and at the end, after eating, one recites the one-blessing abridgment of the three.^[31] Rabbah bar Mari said in the name of R' Yehoshua ben Levi: In the case of any food that is of the seven species,^[32] at the beginning, before eating, one recites the blessing the One Who creates the fruit of the tree, and at the end, after eating, one recites the one-blessing abridgment of three.^[33]

The Gemara discusses the one-blessing abridgment of three: Abaye said to Rav Dimi: What is the text of the one-blessing abridgment of three? [Rav Dimi] said to him: The one recited on those of the seven species that are the fruits of trees is as follows:^[34] Blessed are You, Hashem, our God, King of the universe,

and for the tree and the fruit of the tree, and for the produce of the field,^[35] and for the desirable, good and spacious land that You gave our forefathers as a heritage, to eat from its fruit and to be satisfied from its goodness.^[36] Have mercy, Hashem, our God, on Israel, your people; and on Jerusalem, Your city; and on your Temple; and on Your Altar. And may You rebuild Jerusalem, Your holy city, speedily in our days, and bring us into it and gladden us with it.^[37] For You, Hashem, are good and You do good to all.^[38]

Rav Dimi continues:

The text of the one-blessing abridgment of three recited after the eating of the five grain species is as follows: Blessed are You, Hashem . . . for the nourishment and the sustenance and for the produce of the field, etc.^[39] And he concludes the one-blessing abridgment for grains with: Blessed are You, Hashem, for the land and for the nourishment.^[40]

The Gemara inquires:

And how does one conclude the one-blessing abridgment for tree fruits?

The Gemara explains the uncertainty behind the inquiry:

For when Rav Dimi came to Babylonia he said: For when Rav Dimi came to Babylonia he said: Rav would conclude the middle blessing for Mussaf on Rosh Chodesh with: Blessed are You, Hashem, Who sanctifies Israel and the New Moons. Rav's practice teaches us that although it is inappropriate to conclude a blessing with two praises,^[41] the conclusion "Who sanctifies Israel and the New Moons" is considered but a single praise, and is therefore appropriate.^[42]

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required Biblically. For these other species are, in fact, mentioned in the preceding verses. Thus, "and you shall bless" does refer to them to some degree; but not entirely, since "a land" interrupts (see *Ritva*.)

28. [See above, 36b note 38.] The Torah's interpolation of verse 9 between verses 8 and 10 is not meant to sever the connection completely, but rather to qualify that the "wheat" mentioned in verse 8, which is subject to the blessing requirement in verse 10, does not refer to wheat in all its forms, but only to wheat that was processed [and eaten] in the usual manner – namely, in the bread form mentioned in verse 9 (see *Rashi*). [I.e. although the *Bircas HaMazon* requirement mentioned in verse 10 applies to all the seven items mentioned in verse 8, it applies to them only when they are eaten in the generally accepted manner. Thus, it applies to the fruits even when eaten raw, and to the grains when processed and eaten as bread or as porridge or the like (see Baraisa cited on 37a-b), since these are the generally accepted manners for eating these foods. Unprocessed wheat, however, which differs from bread in that it is not being eaten in the generally accepted manner, does not require *Bircas HaMazon* (see *Rashba*.)]

29. Which are: wheat, barley, spelt, oats and rye. These are all types of true "grain," as spelt is a type of wheat, while oats and rye are types of barley (*Rashi*; see *Challah* 4:2 and *Pesachim* 35a).

30. This refers only to where the grain has been processed into a cooked dish (*Rashi*). [But if eaten raw, *haadamah* is recited, and if eaten as bread, *hamotzi* is recited – see above, 37a.]

31. Although the grains are included in the seven species (see above, note 29), for which Rabban Gamliel would require *Bircas HaMazon*, R' Yaakov bar Idi rules in accordance with the Sages, who hold that one recites afterwards the one-blessing abridgment of three.

32. Other than the grains (*Rashi*).

33. This ruling, too, accords with the view of the Sages. See *Rabbeinu Yonah* and *Rosh Yosef*, who discuss why these Amoraim had to issue these rulings, in light of the general principle that the halachah follows the Sages, who represent the majority opinion.

34. The standard text recited today and printed in our *siddurim* differs slightly from the text cited here, and is based on other texts of the Talmud – see *Shaar HaTziyun* 208:50.

35. This part of the abridgment synthesizes the first of the "three blessings" (see above, note 18) – the blessing for the provision of sustenance.

36. This part synthesizes the second of the "three blessings" – the blessing for the Land of Israel.

37. This synthesizes the third blessing – the blessing for Jerusalem.

38. This synthesizes the fourth blessing of *Bircas HaMazon* – *הטוב והימיטיב, the One Who is good and Who does good* – which the Sages later appended to the three blessings of *Bircas HaMazon*. Still, this blessing is called the "abridgment of three" rather than "of four," since only the three blessings are alluded to in the Torah [see below, 48b] (*Ritva*).

39. The blessing then continues as does the one for tree fruits cited above (see *Rashi*).

40. The lengthier blessings generally open with *Blessed are You, Hashem* . . . and conclude with *Blessed are You, Hashem* . . . (see below, 46a).

41. See Gemara below, 49a, with *Rashi* there חותמין בשתיים.

42. For the intent of this conclusion is: *Blessed are You, Hashem, Who sanctifies Israel who sanctify the New Moons* (see below, 49a). Thus, it is but a single praise of God.

הָאָמַר – Here, regarding the conclusion of the one-blessing abridgement for the tree fruits of the seven species, **what** is the law? Does one similarly conclude: *Blessed are You, Hashem, for the land and for the fruit?*^[43]

The Gemara replies:

עַל הָאָרֶץ – Rav Chisda says that one concludes: *Blessed are You, Hashem, for the land and for its fruits.* וְרַבִּי יוֹחָנָן אָמַר – And R' Yochanan says that one concludes: *Blessed are You, Hashem, for the land and for "the" fruits.*^[44]

The Gemara explains:

וְלֹא פְּלִיגִי – And they [Rav Chisda and R' Yochanan] do not disagree with one another. הָאָמַר – This ruling of the Babylonian Amora Rav Chisda (that one concludes: *for the land and for "its" fruits*) applies to us, i.e. the community in Babylonia, וְהָאָמַר לְהוּ – whereas this ruling of the Amora of Eretz Yisrael, R' Yochanan, (that one concludes: *for the*

land and for "the" fruit) applies to them, i.e. the community in Eretz Yisrael.^[45]

The Gemara objects:

מִתְקִיף לָהּ רַב נַחְמָן בַּר יִצְחָק – Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak objected to this: אינהו אכלי ואנן מברכין – Is it reasonable to say that they (in Eretz Yisrael) eat the fruits that grow there and we, who live in Babylonia, are the ones who recite a blessing for those fruits?^[46]

We must therefore say:

אֵלָּא אִיפּוּךְ – Rather, reverse the attributions of the aforementioned opinions, as follows: רַב חֲסִידָא אָמַר – Rav Chisda, who issued his ruling for the community of Babylonia, says that one concludes: *עַל הָאָרֶץ וְעַל הַפְּרִיטוֹת* – *For the land and for "the" fruits.* רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן אָמַר – And R' Yochanan, who issued his ruling for the community of Eretz Yisrael, says that one concludes: *עַל הָאָרֶץ וְעַל פְּרִיטוֹתֶיהָ* – *For the land and for "its" fruits.*^[47]

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43. Is it considered but a single praise that means: *Blessed are You, Hashem, for the land that produces the fruit?* (see below, 49a; cf. *Hagahos R' Elazar Moshe Horowitz*).

The Acharonim find difficulty with the Gemara's inquiry. For Rav Dimi has already stated above that the one-blessing abridgement for grains concludes with: *Blessed are You, Hashem, for the land and for the nourishment.* Evidently, such a conclusion is considered a single praise (meaning: for the land that produces the nourishment). Why, then, should there be any question concerning the analogous conclusion of the blessing for the fruits? *Rosh Yosef* suggests that the Gemara considered that perhaps it is only regarding grain, which grows directly from the ground, that the conclusion can be construed to mean: for the land that produces the nourishment. But in the case of fruits, where land produces the fruit only through the medium of a tree, the conclusion "for the land and for the fruits" might not be construed to mean: for the land that produces the fruits. See also *Meromei Sadeh*.

[See, however, *Hagahos HaGra*, who deletes the entire sentence: בִּי אָתָּא רַב דִּימִי אָמַר רַב חֲסִידָא בְּרֹדֶךְ מִקְדָּשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל וְרֵאשִׁי הַדְּרָשִׁים הֵבֵא מֵאִי מִיחָתָם בְּמַאי חֲתִים רַב חֲסִידָא אָמַר... אָמַר, *How does one conclude the blessing [for fruits]? Rav Chisda said* ... Accordingly, the Gemara was simply inquiring about the precise formulation of the blessing's conclusion (see the Gemara below). See also the way this Gemara is cited in *Rif* and *Rosh*.]

44. Thus, both Rav Chisda and R' Yochanan agree that one concludes by praising Hashem for the land and the fruit, and that we indeed construe this conclusion – even in the case of fruit – to mean: for the land that

produces the fruits (see *Ritva*). The only difference is that Rav Chisda concludes with "its" fruits, whereas R' Yochanan concludes with "the" fruits, a distinction that the Gemara will now explain.

45. At this point, the Gemara assumes that the blessing made the world over refers specifically to the fruits of Eretz Yisrael. Thus, those in Eretz Yisrael would recite simply "for the land and the fruits," whereas those outside Eretz Yisrael would have to recite "for the land and its fruits," so that their words not be misconstrued as a reference to the fruits of their own land (see *Sheleimah Mishnaso*). [The "land" mentioned in the blessing certainly refers to the Land of Israel.]

46. Certainly, the expression פְּרִיטוֹתֶיהָ, *its fruits*, which refers specifically to the fruits of Eretz Yisrael, is not an appropriate conclusion for us in Babylonia, who do not eat those fruits! (*Rashi*). [Rather, we in Babylonia should conclude וְעַל הַפְּרִיטוֹת, *the fruits*, an expression that can encompass all fruits regardless of where they grow.]

47. "Its" fruits refers to the fruits of Eretz Yisrael, and is therefore appropriate for the community there, which eats those fruits. "The" fruits refers to all fruits, and is thus appropriate for those who eat fruits that do not grow in Eretz Yisrael (see *Ritva*). [See *Maadanei Yom Tov* here (§90), who explains why the Babylonian conclusion "on the land (Eretz Yisrael) and the fruits (throughout the world)" does not constitute an inappropriate "conclusion with two praises."]

[With respect to the blessing made after drinking wine, see *Tosafos* and *Rishonim*; regarding wheat and barley products that are from produce of the Land of Israel, see *Ritva* and *Meromei Sadeh*.]