



## Dining In(to) the World To Come

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Abstract:

The ancient rabbis believe in two worlds: their present, lived reality, which they refer to in Hebrew as ‘olam ha-zeh, or “This World”; and a future, not-yet-experienced realm, which they call in Hebrew ‘olam ha-ba’, or “The World to Come.” It is in ‘olam ha-ba’ that the just receive their divine reward and the wicked incur their divine punishment. The World to Come thus solves the problem of theodicy, or divine justice. Since present, lived reality does not always accord with rabbinic ideals, the future realm of ‘olam ha-ba’ establishes an alternate universe in which the real and the ideal resolve from discord into harmony. The World to Come is how the rabbis explain theologically problematic but empirically observed paradoxes encountered in This World. For example, why do good things happen to bad people, while bad things happen to good people? Why is a young child afflicted with cancer or killed in a car crash? And why do reality television shows bring fame and fortune on the amoral and the rabbinically reprehensible? While other essays in this volume explore additional aspects of the dual rabbinic realms of This World and The World to Come, some of which also intersect with food, I focus in this essay on two specific, and interrelated, questions: (1) what diet in This World merits entrance into The World to Come; and (2) upon

entering this future realm, what menu awaits therein? In doing so, I argue that consideration of dining into and in 'olam ha-ba', The World to Come, is a mechanism for the ancient rabbis to justify their preferred dietary practices in 'olam ha-zeh, This World.

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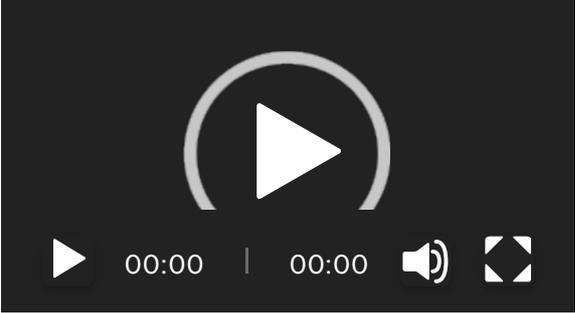
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Dining In (to) the World To Come, fusion, according to traditional ideas, it is advisable to participate in the error of determining the course of less than a grace note.