



Kinder Torah[©]

For parents to share with children at the Shabbos table
Parshas Eikev



Who Did All Of This?

Please come in and make yourself comfortable in my beautiful new home. Let me show you some of my most prized possessions. Do you like the plush carpets? I imported them from Persia. I bought the handcrafted furniture in Italy and it is very expensive. What about the custom kitchen cabinets? I hired the best carpenter to make them. The handles are gold plated. Do you like my exotic houseplants? My gardener imported them from the four corners of the world. How about my fancy electronic center with the latest model computer and stereo system. Please relax and enjoy everything. I want you to appreciate the beautiful home that I built.”

Kinderlach . . .

This man is making a very big mistake. He thinks that he did everything. He uses the words, “I, me, and my” in almost every sentence! The Torah warns us against this very thing in this week’s parsha. “And you will say in your heart, ‘My strength and the might of my hand made all of this wealth for me’” (Devarim 8:17). A person can forget all about Hashem and think that his own skills, talents, and hard work are solely responsible for all of his wealth and accomplishments. How did this man get to the point where he made such a mistake?

Don't Forget

You will eat and you will be satisfied, and bless Hashem your God, for the good land that He gave you” (Devarim 8:10). This is the source of the mitzvah to bless Hashem after we eat a bread meal. Rabbeinu Bechaye shares a practical insight with us. We have a mitzvah to bless Hashem. Think about this a minute. Does He really need our blessing? Quite the opposite! He is the source of all blessing. Why then, are we blessing

Him? It is for our own good. We need to remind ourselves that He is the One who gives us all of the good things that we are privileged to enjoy in this world.

The next seven verses warn the Jewish people against forgetting Hashem. “Take care lest you forget Hashem your God . . .” (Devarim 8:11). The Yalkut Shemoni explains the juxtaposition of these verses as follows. Wherever the Torah mentions eating to satisfaction, it warns against forgetting Hashem. Being well fed and satisfied can easily lead to overlooking the source of the prosperity. That is why we are commanded to bless Hashem precisely at the point when we are in the greatest danger of forgetting him.

Kinderlach . . .

Isn't Imma's food great? So delicious and nutritious. It is so yummy that we always swallow every bite. Now it's time to go to school. Hurry up, the school bus is leaving in five minutes. No time to waste. Say the Bircas HaMazone quickly and get going. Hmmm. Is this the way to thank someone? If we had just received a new toy from Uncle Max we would surely call him on the telephone and thank him many times for his generosity. What about Hashem? Doesn't He deserve a proper thank you? Hashem wants us to thank Him so that we do not forget that He is the One who provided this delicious meal. So, do not swallow your blessings along with your food. Take the time to say Bircas HaMazone clearly and with kavannah (concentration).

What Do They Mean?

The Talmud Yerushalmi (Berachos 7:1) relates that Rebbe Yishmael explains the verse, “You will eat and you will be satisfied, and bless Hashem your God, for the good land that He gave you” (Devarim 8:10) as follows. “Hashem your God” refers to the fact that Hashem feeds the

whole world (the first blessing). Hashem provides every morsel of food that all of the millions and billions of animals in the world eat every day. Do you realize what a feat this is? Moreover, do you realize what a chessed (act of kindness) this is? “For the land” refers to the wonderful gift of Land of Israel (the second blessing). A land which lacks no good thing. A land flowing with milk and honey. A land whose air makes a person wise. “Good” refers to the Holy City of Jerusalem (the third blessing). Ten portions of beauty came down to the world. Nine of them came to Jerusalem. The site of the Beis HaMikdash. The center of the universe. “That He gave you” refers to the fact that Hashem has been good to us until now and He will keep on being good to us in the future (the forth blessing). All four blessings of the Bircas HaMazone are contained within this verse.

Kinderlach . . .

Understanding the Bircas HaMazone helps us realize the many good things that Hashem has done and continues to do for us every day. He supplies us with food, a homeland, and a spiritual center. Remember and review these things every day when you recite the Bircas HaMazone. You will grow to appreciate and love Hashem more and more each day.

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