

Kinder Torah

Parashas Mishpatim

ד'ס"ב

Food 24/7

"Abba, we have so many things to thank Hashem for."

"We certainly do Avi, and many of them are included in the second blessing of *Bircas HaMazone*. Firstly, we thank Him for Eretz Yisrael and its many attributes. We then proceed to express our gratitude to Him for taking us out of Mitzrayim, and redeeming us from the house of slavery."

"What is the difference between the two, Abba?"

"That is an astute question, Avi. The land of Mitzrayim was a terrible place – full of idolatry and immorality – where our ancestors sank to a very low spiritual level. Taking us out of there was a tremendous act of kindness. Indeed, we fulfill the verse, "so that you will remember the day you left Mitzrayim all the days of your life"¹ when we remember this every day. Our Sages do not consider this an obligation, however, when Yehoshua fixed and composed this *bracha*, he included the mention of Yetzias Mitzrayim because of this verse.² Additionally, we were enslaved in a bondage that was crueler than any other, in a land that no slave had ever escaped from.³ Therefore we thank Hashem, "You redeemed us from the house of slavery."

"Abba, Hashem took our fathers out of Mitzrayim, not us."

"Excellent observation, Avi! The Gemora⁴ tells us, 'In each and every generation, a person is obligated to see himself as if he went out of Mitzrayim.' Therefore, in this blessing, we express our thanks in the first person.⁵

"We now proceed to thank the Almighty for two wonderful gifts – *bris milah* and Torah. Were it not for *bris* and Torah, heaven and earth would not stand. If there were no earth, there would be no Eretz Yisrael to give to Klal Yisrael. Some say that in the merit of *bris* and Torah we inherited the Land. In this *bracha*, we mention *bris* before Torah because Torah was only given with three covenants, while *bris* was given with thirteen covenants.² The Torah is full of mitzvos, and so we next thank the Creator for the statutes (mitzvos) that He made known to us. This is ultimately a praise of the Land, for it was given to us for the purpose of fulfilling the mitzvos, as the verse states, 'And He gave them the lands of nations (Canaan) . . . so that they may safeguard His statutes, and observe His teachings.'⁶ The Holy Land is much more than just a place to keep the mitzvos. It brings out the best in us, for within its borders we can fulfill Hashem's mitzvos in their full strength and intensity."⁷

"May we merit an appreciation of all of its *kedusha* (holiness)."

"Amen. Now we focus on appreciating the basics – life, grace, and loving kindness. If Hashem had just given us life – even a life filled with disgrace and humiliation – *dayeinu* (it would have been sufficient). How much more so do we value the great magnanimous goodness that the Merciful One has done by favoring us with a life of grace and loving kindness. Additionally, by giving us the Torah, He planted eternal life within us (and the path to get there is through this life).⁸ How does He sustain this life? With food. He feeds us all the time. Hashem's

kitchen is always open – every day, every part of the day, even every hour. For **everything**, Hashem our G-d, we thank You and bless You. 'May Your Name be blessed by the mouth of every living thing, always and forever!' This is what the verse states, 'And you shall eat and be satisfied and bless Hashem your G-d for the good Land which He gave you.'⁹ When our stomachs are full, it is easy to forget the One Who provides for us, therefore, after eating bread to satisfaction, we are commanded to bless Him, 'Blessed are You Hashem, for the Land and the food.'"

"Amen!"

Kinderlach . . .

Hashem gives us so many gifts. In the second blessing of Bircas HaMazone, we express our appreciation for life, grace, food, bris, Torah, and a Land filled with holiness where we can fulfill His mitzvos to the maximum. He gave us our freedom by redeeming us from Mitzrayim, the house of bondage. He sustains our life with food, 24/7. Just at the time when we have eaten bread and are satisfied, when it is easy to forget Him, we thank the Merciful One for His loving kindness. May we all appreciate the Creator, and all of the goodness He does for us.

¹ Devarim 16:3

² Etz Yosef

³ Avodas HaTefillah

⁴ Pesachim 116b

⁵ Iyun Tefillah cites sefer Matte Yehuda

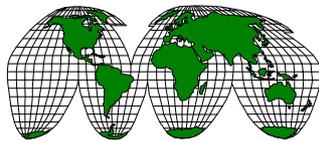
⁶ Tehillim 105:44,45

⁷ Avodas HaTefillah cites Yerushalmi Brochos 1:6

⁸ Iyun HaTefillah

⁹ Devarim 8:10

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