

MITZVAH 13: BLESSINGS AFTER A MEAL

by Rabbi Moshe Goldberger

You shall eat and be satisfied, and you shall bless Hashem, your God, for the good land that He gave you. (Devarim 8:10)

One is obligated to recite Birkas HaMazon (Grace after Meals) after every meal eaten with bread. Although the blessings are a Torah obligation, the Talmud explains that the text we have was formulated at different points in our history:

â€¢ The first blessing was formulated by Moshe Rabbeinu in gratitude for the manna, the miracle food which the Jews ate for forty years.

â€¢ The second blessing was formulated by Yehoshua when the Jews entered Eretz Yisrael.

â€¢ The third blessing was formulated by David HaMelech, who focused his prayers on the Jewish nation and on Yerushalayim, and by Shlomo who added the prayer for the Beis HaMikdash.

â€¢ The fourth blessing was added by the Sages of Yavneh, when they were granted the right to bury the deceased of Beitar and they saw the great miracle that the bodies had not decomposed.

Rav Shimshon Refael Hirsch explains that when the Jews were exiled the other nations claimed that the Jews had been rejected by Hashem. To demonstrate that Hashem never forsakes us, the Sages added a blessing to bentching upon the first major miracle in exile.

Before eating, one is required to recite a blessing for each type of food, unless he eats it as part of a meal, in which case it is covered by the HaMotzi blessing. This is a Rabbinical ordinance.

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