



Bountiful Blessings

Brachot and *segulot* are sought after and promoted by many to access their desired solutions to issues and problems. Yet there are a number of *segulot* that indeed have their source in the holy *sefarim* and hold tremendous power. One such *segulah* for a secure livelihood is based on a mitzvah in *Parashat Eikev*. “*Veachalta, vesavata, u’beirachta es Hashem* – when you eat and are satisfied, you must therefore bless your G-d” (*Devarim 8:10*). We are enjoined to thank Hashem for the food we have eaten and enjoyed. When a person recites *Birkat Hamazon* with *kavanah* - mindfulness, it brings tremendous bounty and abundant prosperity.

The *Be’er Hetiv* [?] also points out that “*peh sofit*,” the “final *peh*,” is the only letter in the Hebrew alphabet that we don’t find in *Birkat Hamazon*. We find this letter in words such as “*af*” and “*ketsef*,” meaning “anger” and “fury”. This suggests that one who recites *Birkat Hamazon* with focus and

intention will be saved from Divine wrath and enmity.

The “*Harachaman*” section after the fourth *brachah* is a curious element of *Birkat Hamazon*. Why was this section added? Why do we have such exalted requests such as *kibbutz galuyot* and *Eliyahu Hanavi* at this time? Further, unlike the *Shemoneh Esrei*, here we first daven for Hashem’s glory before asking for our own personal needs. (Interestingly, the *nusach of Edot Hamizrach* has 18 “*Harachaman*” entreaties to parallel those in *Shemoneh Esrei*.) Why is this?

In the *Viduy Ma’asrot*, the declaration for removing tithes, we say, “*Hashkifah meme’on kadshecha* – look down from your holy habitation” (*Devarim 26:15*). The Chafetz Chayim comments that this tells us that the moments after one performs a mitzvah becomes a special time to daven, an “*et ratzon*.” We ask Hashem, ‘may You look down upon us with favor.’ Since *Birkat Hamazon* is a mitzvah *deorayta*, a Biblical commandment, (for women it is a Rabbinic ordinance), it is a particularly significant opportunity to storm the Heavens with all our requests. It is of similar import to the powerful force present at the time that women fulfill their special mitzvot such as candle lighting and *hafrashat challah*. Thus, we can entreat Hashem for lofty and grand requests.

The Kotzker Rebbe expounds on the

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power of *Birkat Hamazon* from a midrash that features Avraham Avinu. The Midrash explains how Avraham inspired so many people to recognize monotheism by serving them a satisfying meal. When his guests offered their thanks, Avraham told them, “Don’t thank me, thank the One who has provided everything!” He would then teach them about Hashem’s great kindness and glory. Imagine, says the Kotzker Rebbe, if these people embraced a relationship with Hashem as a result of thanking Him for their food, how much more can we Jews reach higher levels of closeness to Hashem every time we thank Him for everything we have! Hence, notes Rav Schorr in *Halekach Vehalebuv*, after we recite *Birkat Hamazon* we become so elevated, that we first think about *Kevod Shamayim* before we think about our own needs.

Rabbi Tzadok HaKohen, in *Pri Tzadik*, notes another powerful effect of reciting *Birkat Hamazon*. The very first sin of mankind came through food. Each time we eat a meal and thank Hashem, it allows us to realize the source of all we have. Thanking Hashem keeps us from feeling haughty, arrogant and conceited. Each *Birkat Hamazon* that we say creates another opportunity to be *metaken* that sin and enables us to daven for Eliyahu Hanavi to come redeem us and bring us all back to our Land with wholeness and ultimate goodness. ■



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