

Three Pillars of Jewish Eating

Compiled by Rabbi Adam Allenberg

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Deuteronomy 8:10

When you have eaten, and been satisfied, give thanks to YHVH your God for the good land which God has given you.

דברים ח'י'

וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבַעְתָּ וּבֵרַכְתָּ אֶת־ה'
אֱלֹהֶיךָ עַל־הָאָרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר
נָתַן־לָךְ:

Berakhot 21a:3

Rav Yehuda said: From where do we derive in Torah the need to recite Grace after Meals? As it is stated: "And you shall eat and be satisfied and bless [YHVH your God]" (Deuteronomy 8:10).

ברכות כ"א א"ג'

אָמַר רַב יְהוּדָה: מִיַּיִן לְבִרְכַת
הַמָּזוֹן לְאַחֲרֵיהּ מִן הַתּוֹרָה —
שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: "וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבַעְתָּ
וּבֵרַכְתָּ".

Mishneh Torah, Blessings 1:1

It is an affirmative precept of the Torah to say Grace after a meal, as it is said, "And thou shalt eat and be satisfied and shalt bless YHVH, thy God" (Deuteronomy 8:10). The Torah only imposes the obligation on a person when he is satisfied; for it is said, "When thou hast eaten and art satisfied, thou shalt bless etc."

משנה תורה, הלכות ברכות

א'א'

מִצְוַת עֲשֵׂה מִן הַתּוֹרָה לְבָרֵךְ
אַחַר אֲכִילַת מָזוֹן שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר
(דברים ח'י) "וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבַעְתָּ
וּבֵרַכְתָּ אֶת יי' אֱלֹהֶיךָ". וְאִינוּ
חִיֵּב מִן הַתּוֹרָה אֶלָּא אִם כֵּן
שָׁבַע שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבַעְתָּ
וּבֵרַכְתָּ. וּמִדְּבָרֵי סוּפְרִים אֲכַל

According to the ordinances of the sages, however, even if one has eaten only as much food as the size of an olive, he recites Grace after the meal.

אָפּלוּ כְּזֵית מְבַרַךְ אַחֲרָיו:

Seven Principles of Food Sovereignty

Adapted from *La Via Campesina* / viacampesina.org

Food is a Basic Human Right. Everyone must have access to safe, nutritious and culturally appropriate food in sufficient quantity and quality to sustain a healthy life with full human dignity.

Land and Farming Reform so that those who work the land are free to own it regardless of gender, religion, race, social class or ideology.

Protecting Natural Resources must include the biodiversity of our food system and its intersection with the wild and uncultivated resources, including healthy soil and waterways, regionally domesticated seeds, and livestock breeds.

Reorganizing Food Trade so that domestic production and consumption, guided by good health outcomes, should trump trade. Food is for nutrition first, and business second.

Ending the Globalization of Hunger means strengthening local, state and national food systems while increasing the regulation and taxation of large, multi-nationals who have shifted global trade policy towards profits. *There are 1 billion hungry and food insecure people on Earth.*

Social Peace cannot allow that food be used as a weapon or tool of political action through sanctions, budget cuts to safety net programs. Further, the ongoing displacement, forced urbanization, increasing incidence of racism and repression of smallholder farmers cannot be tolerated.

Democratic Control of land and the policies governing land and agricultural trade must include small farmers, especially those who are women and represent native peoples.

"The Pleasures of Eating" by Wendell Berry (1989)

Eaters, that is, must understand that eating takes place inescapably in the world, that it is inescapably an agricultural act, and how we eat determines, to a considerable extent, **how the world is used** (emphasis added). This is a simple way of describing a relationship that is inexpressibly complex. To eat responsibly is to understand and enact, so far as we can, this complex relationship. What can one do? Here is a list, probably not definitive:

Participate in food production to the extent that you can. If you have a yard or even just a porch box or a pot in a sunny window, grow something to eat in it. Make a little compost of your kitchen scraps and use it for fertilizer.

Only by growing some food for yourself can you become acquainted with the beautiful energy cycle that revolves from soil to seed to flower to fruit to food to offal to decay, and around again. You will be fully responsible for any food that you grow for yourself, and you will know all about it.

You will appreciate it fully, having known it all its life.

Prepare your own food. This means reviving in your own mind and life the arts of kitchen and household. This should enable you to eat more cheaply, and it will give you a measure of "quality control": you will have some reliable knowledge of what has been added to the food you eat.

Learn the origins of the food you buy, and buy the food that is produced closest to your home. The idea that every locality should be, as much as possible, the source of its own food makes several kinds of sense. The locally produced food supply is the most secure, freshest, and the easiest for local consumers to know about and to influence.

Whenever possible, deal directly with a local farmer, gardener, or orchardist. All the reasons listed for the previous suggestion apply here. In addition, by such dealing you eliminate the whole pack of merchants, transporters, processors, packagers, and advertisers who thrive at the expense of both producers and consumers.

Learn, in self-defense, as much as you can of the economy and technology of industrial food production. What is added to the food that is not food, and what do you pay for those additions?

Learn what is involved in the best farming and gardening.

Learn as much as you can, by direct observation and experience if possible, of the life histories of the food species.

The last suggestion seems particularly important to me. Many people are now as much estranged from the lives of domestic plants and animals (except for flowers and dogs and cats) as they are from the lives of the wild ones. This is regrettable, for these domestic creatures are in diverse ways attractive; there is such pleasure in knowing them. And farming, animal husbandry, horticulture, and gardening, at their best, are complex and comely arts; there is much pleasure in knowing them, too.

Chagigah 27a

Rabbi Yoḥanan and Reish Lakish would both say: When the Temple is standing the altar atones for a person; now [that the Temple no longer stands] a person's table atones for him.

חגיגה כ"ז א

רבי יוחנן וריש לקיש דאמרי
תרוייהו בזמן שבית המקדש
קיים מזבח מכפר על אדם
עכשיו שלחנו של אדם מכפר
עליו:

Pirkei Avot 3:3

(3) Rabbi Shimon said: if three have eaten at one table and have not spoken there words of Torah, [it is] as if they had eaten sacrifices [offered] to the dead, as it is said, “for all tables are full of filthy vomit, when the All-Present is absent” (Isaiah 28:8). But, if three have eaten at one table, and have spoken there words of Torah, [it is] as if they had eaten at the table of the All-Present, blessed be, as it is said, “And He said unto me, ‘this is the table before YHVH’” (Ezekiel 41:2).

Berakhot 40b

ברכות מ' ב

Binyamin the Shepherd ate bread and recited Blessed is the Master of this bread. Rav said, he fulfilled [his obligation to recite a blessing].

But didn't Rav [also] say: Any blessing that does not contain mention of God's name is not a blessing? [But he did,] He said: Blessed is the All-Merciful, Master of this bread.

בְּנִימִין רָעִיא כָּרֶךְ רִיפְתָּא,
וְאָמַר: "בְּרִיךְ מְרִיבָה דְהָא
פִּיתָא". אָמַר רַב: יֵצֵא. וְהָאָמַר
רַב: כָּל בְּרָכָה שְׂאִין בָּהּ הַזְכָּרַת
הַשֵּׁם אֵינָהּ בְּרָכָה! דָּאָמַר:
"בְּרִיךְ רַחֲמָנָא מְרִיבָה דְהָא
פִּיתָא".

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