

The Sacred Table: A Tasting Menu for Nourishing Camp Community

You Are What You Eat

[Specialty Track 3]

AUTHOR(S):	Adam Allenberg
SUMMARY:	<p>Through the lens of the tripartite command in Deuteronomy/<i>Devarim</i> 8:10—</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>When you have eaten, been satisfied, and given thanks to YHVH, your God, for the good land which They have given you.</p> </div> <div style="font-family: serif; text-align: center;"> <p>וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבַעְתָּ וּבֵרַכְתָּ אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ עַל־הָאָרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָךְ:</p> </div> </div> <p>--we will establish a three-pillared approach to making food, meal times and the dining hall the second sacred place at camp. <i>Submitted by Adam Allenberg</i></p>
TOPIC(S):	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is a Jewish meal? 2. What is Jewish food? 3. What is Jewish eating?
LEARNING OBJECTIVE:	<p>At the end of the session, participants will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe what makes a Jewish meal different from a secular meal. • Name three parts of their camp's menu, mealtime and/or dining hall culture that concerns them and identify under which of the three pillars of Jewish eating it may be addressed.
AUDIENCE:	<p>Can be adapted for any age group in an overnight setting and can be broken into three individual programs. Best designed for cabin groups no larger than 20.</p>
TIMING:	90 minutes (individual units can be broken down into 25-45 minute individual programs)
APPENDICES:	<p>Songs and Blessings for Food.pdf The Three Pillars of Jewish Food.pdf</p>

CORNERSTONE 2020 RESOURCE

<p>MATERIALS NEEDED:</p>	<p>Copies of <i>birkat ha-mazon</i> (whatever version your camp uses) and/or copies of “Songs and Blessings for Food” --- Button maker (something like this) Button blanks and backs White paper (2pp) Scissors Fine-tipped pens of all colors Pens (1pp)</p>
<p>SET-UP DETAILS:</p>	<p>Ideally these programs should take place in the dining hall. If not, we should have a room where we can sit around a two-3 rectangular tables (pushed together to form one large, but not long, table) so that we can see one another and simulate dining together.</p>

SESSION TIMELINE

0:00-0:10 PREPARATORY WRITTEN REFLECTION

0:10-0:25 EARTH TO TABLE – EATING

0:25-0:55 BIRKAT HA-MAZON: GRATITUDE FOR MORE THAN FOOD

0:55-1:00 BREAK

1:05-1:25 INTENTION SETTING: SLOGANS FOR A BETTER DINING HALL

1:25-1:30 CLOSING WRITTEN REFLECTION – 5 MINUTES

SESSION OUTLINE:

0:00-0:10 PREPARATORY WRITTEN REFLECTION

Heading into our final day together, consider:

- What have you noticed or thought about since we first started learning together with regard to the subject of food? Mealtime? Dining with other people? The importance of gratitude?
- If you were to consider making something Jewish about your eating going forward, what might you decide to do, refrain from, or add to your meals? Why is this something you would consider? What meaning(s) do(es) this gesture hold for you?

0:10-0:25 EARTH TO TABLE – EATING

OPTIONAL STUDY 1: THE PLEASURE OF EATING

As Wendell Berry—farmer, activist, poet and philosopher – famously teaches,

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. (*The Pleasures of Eating*, 1989)

Jews, too, see our eating as a reflection of our relationship to the Earth, of which we are Her principal stewards. Consider some of these ideas and we will generate our own list of responses and solutions to ensure that our eating reflects our deepest values.

A selection of “The Pleasures of Eating” and Berry’s eight principles of good, healthy and ethical eating can be done from the sources provided in the handout entitled “The Three Pillars of Jewish Eating”.

OPTIONAL STUDY 2: HA-MOTZI – THE ONE-WHO-BRINGS-FORTH

Learning once with [Rabbi Steven Greenberg](#), when he was traveling as a Scholar-in-Residence for [Hazon](#), he taught that blessings are an acknowledgement of that for which we have no real control.

We can plant the seed, water it, tend to it, and still only hope that we reap its nutrient-rich rewards. This is a humbling arrangement, for which only immense gratitude is a fitting response. When we say blessings before we eat something, we take our place in a lucky chain of connections that rendered this miracle possible. Our Creator, therefore, is a the One-Who-brings-forth.

First, look at the English songs we often learn to offer before Ha-Motzi (page one, Songs and Blessings for Food), the blessing we recite over bread. Are either of these versions familiar to you? Do you know it with different words? What do you think of these lyrics? What else could they say?

Take 5 Activity! Take time now – 5 minutes – to write your own introduction to Ha-Motzi

0:25-0:55 BIRKAT HA-MAZON: GRATITUDE FOR MORE THAN FOOD

Many of us know of or know intimately the classical end of meals Birkat Ha-mazon, lit. “The Blessing of Sustenance”. Let’s get into its incredible messages and what it has to teach us. See – Songs and Blessings for Food, starting on page 2.

The melody that is best known and sung all over the Jewish map was composed in the 20th century by Cantor Moshe Nathanson (1899-1981), while working with Rabbi Mordechai Kaplan at the Society for the Advancement of Judaism (Kaplan’s synagogue in New York City, the founding site of Reconstructionist Judaism).

Fun note: Moshe Nathanson supposedly selected the words and rhythm to Hava Nagilah, based on a niggun attributed to the Sadigurer Chasidim, for his musicology professor Abraham Zevi Idelsohn (1882–1938) at Hebrew University.

But first –

- Why offer a blessing/collection of blessings after the meal too?
- What is gained from a blessing after that cannot be captured before eating?

Let’s collect answers and ideas from the group.

There are some MAJOR themes covered here.

1. Food (Creation)
2. Land (Revelation)
3. Israel (Redemption)
4. Abundance of Goodness
5. Justice

Talmud Bavli, Brachot 48b

On the topic of the blessings of Grace after Meals, the Gemara adds that **the Sages taught in a baraita that the order of Grace after Meals is as follows: The first blessing is the blessing of: Who feeds all; the second is the blessing of the land; the third is: Who builds Jerusalem; and the fourth is: Who is good and does good. On Shabbat one begins the third blessing with consolation and ends with consolation and mentions the sanctity of the day with mention of Shabbat in the middle. Rabbi Eliezer says: If one wishes to recite the supplement for the sanctity of Shabbat in the blessing of consolation: Who builds Jerusalem, he recites it there; in the blessing of the land, he recites it there; in the blessing**

תנו רבנן, סדר ברכת המזון כך היא: ברכה ראשונה — ברכת “הזן”, שניה — ברכת הארץ, שלישית — “בונה ירושלים”, רביעית — “הטוב והמטיב”, ובשבת — מתחיל בנחמה ומסיים בנחמה, ואומר קדושת היום באמצע. רבי אליעזר אומר: רצה לאומרה בנחמה — אומרה, בברכת הארץ — אומרה, בברכה שתקנו חכמים ביבנה — אומרה. וחסמים אומרים: אינו אומרה אלא בנחמה בלבד.

instituted by the Sages at Yavne, Who is good and does good, he recites it there. And the Rabbis say: He may only recite the mention of the sanctity of Shabbat **in** the context of **the blessing of consolation.**

0:55-1:00 BREAK

1:05-1:25 INTENTION SETTING: SLOGANS FOR A BETTER DINING HALL

You've spent the last few hours/days thinking about the change that is possible when we approach our food with humility, our farmers, cook and food servers with respect, and our bodies as if they could redeem the entire world in every bite.

Let's take the positive messages forward, not with #hashtags, but with slogans we will defend to others face to face. Make change in the conversations with the people we care most about, with those in our community and with perfect strangers who simply admire your button.

We will spend our remaining time making mementos of our time together and crafting our learning into an engaging food-positive button. (see sample slogans below).

Create buttons that express your concerns, feelings, questions, and ideas about food in a catchy, pithy way. Here are some examples. Feel free to use these too!

FOOD, NOT FUEL.	NOURISH TO FLOURISH.	<i>BAL TASHCHIT!</i> WASTE NOT!
THE CABIN THAT DINES TOGETHER, SHINES TOGETHER.	BREAK BREAD TOGETHER.	IT'S NOT A RACE!
GIVE THANKS.	BREAK BREAD, NOT WIND.	CHEW. IT TASTES BETTER!
EAT FOOD. MOSTLY PLANTS. NOT TOO MUCH.	REAL FOOD FOR REAL PEOPLE.	KITCHENS ARE HOT.

1:25-1:30 CLOSING WRITTEN REFLECTION – 5 MINUTES

With whatever time remains, or perhaps later after you've gone, consider these last few questions:

- In what ways would you like to positively influence the dining culture of your camp? Your home?
- What might you consider doing differently in what or how or where or when you eat?
- What questions do you still have about Jewish eating? Healthy eating? Ethical eating?