

Parshat Eikev – Food and Spiritual Nutrition

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“...and then [He] fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your forefathers know, so that He would make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but rather by, whatever comes forth from the mouth of the Lord does man live.”
Deuteronomy 8:3

In Parsha Eikev, the Torah tells us that Hashem gave us manna from the mouth of Hashem. What does this mean?

Reb Nosson tells us that a person doesn't stay alive, doesn't draw true life force from food per se, but from the spiritual energy that Hashem imbues their food with. There is a spiritual energy, a spiritual force within the food. When a Jew eats kosher food and makes the relevant blessings over the

food, only then is he is able to access the spiritual nutrition.

We not only make a blessing on the food before we eat it, but also afterwards. If we have a complete meal, after we eat we say *birkat hamazon*, or we say one or two smaller blessings depending on what we have eaten. Reb Nosson tells us that after we eat we should remember to bless Hashem and acknowledge that He is the source of the food. We should remember to thank Him for feeling satisfied. When we do, then the blessing will actually be sent into the food that's already inside us which will bring us satisfaction and help us derive the spiritual nutrition we need from the food.

We know that there are complex physical actions within systems when we eat. The same is true spiritually. In Eikev it says that we will know that the life force we receive will emanate from God's mouth, implying that this is not just within the food itself. How can we understand this? When we listen to and become aware of the word of God, when we think about it and live it—*this is what gives us our life force*. The Torah, the word of God, is life.

May you have a day brimming with spiritual and physical health and a strong life force.