

# The Altar at the Table

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## **Rebbe Nachman of Breslov taught...**

*"Through proper eating, foolishness is brought to heel, and the mind is uplifted.*

(Likutei Moharan I:17)

## **What does this mean to me?**

The Talmud teaches that our tables now substitute for the altar that used to stand in the holy Temple. Obviously, this is not meant to teach us that we can still bring sacrifices, but that the spiritual work that was once accomplished on the altar can now be accomplished, in a smaller and more personal way, over our dinner plates. On the altar, the animal nature was consumed and transformed; the Temple was a place of both atonement and a focal point for the contemplation of G-dliness. Part of the work is subduing the negative; once that is accomplished, we are free to uplift our minds and grasp the positive.

## **A prayer:**

*Dear G-d, help me break  
My desire to eat too much.  
Instead, let me eat and drink just enough  
To be strong and fulfill Your will.  
May I be worthy of sharing my food with guests,  
Particularly those who are in need.  
Protect me always from forbidden foods  
Since they bring impurity to my soul.  
Help me fulfill, dear G-d, the mitzvah  
Of washing my hands for meals,  
Which purifies my hands  
And draws down Your holiness upon me.  
May I please say the blessings before and after eating  
With concentration and devotion.  
Grant me the ability  
To eat in holiness,  
As this calms my mind  
And allows me to be in charge of what I do.  
Please G-d, when I eat,  
Let me have You in my thoughts.  
And then, through eating,  
I can reach true understanding  
([Between me and You](#), p. 40-42)*

We encourage hearing your feedback and may anonymously  
publish your remarks. Please send email to:  
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**Your Feedback**

Such a perfect prayer. There is symmetry, balance,  
emunah.

thank you,

CF

Wow! I think someone has been listening in on my life!  
...I just want to express how much this has helped me. I  
intend to print out the prayer and put it with my  
daily meditation. Thank you.

AL

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