

# Torah Talk—מאמרי תורה



*The Parasha Letter of The Jewish Primary Day School of the Nation's Capital*

Parashat Eikev  
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פרשת עקב  
כ"ג באב תשע"ו

Torah Reading: *Devarim* (Deuteronomy) 7:12-11:25

In this *parasha*, Moshe continues his speech to the Bnei Yisrael, reminding them to keep Hashem's commandments when they enter the land of Israel.

Chapter 8, verses 3-10 describe a literal or metaphorical partnership between Hashem and the Jewish people and the dichotomy between our physical and spiritual existences:

ג וַיַּעַנְךָ, וַיַּרְעֵבְךָ, וַיִּיאָכְלֶךָ אֶת-הַמָּן אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יָדַעְתָּ, וְלֹא יָדְעוּן אֲבוֹתֶיךָ:  
לְמַעַן הוֹדִיעְךָ, כִּי לֹא עַל-הַלֶּחֶם לִבְדּוֹ יַחֲיֶה הָאָדָם--כִּי עַל-כָּל-מוֹצֵא פִי-  
ה', יַחֲיֶה הָאָדָם. ד שִׁמְלַתְךָ לֹא בְלִתָּה, מַעֲלִיךָ, וְרִגְלְךָ, לֹא בְצָקָה--זֶה,  
אֲרָבַעִים שָׁנָה. ה וַיִּדְעַתָּ, עִם-לִבְבְּךָ: כִּי, כַּאֲשֶׁר יִיָּסֵר אִישׁ אֶת-בְּנוֹ ה' אֶ-  
לֵהִידָּ, מִיִּסְרֶךָ. ו וְשִׁמְרַתָּ, אֶת-מִצְוֹת ה' אֶ-לֵהִידָּ, לְלַקֵּת בְּדַרְכָּיו, וְלִירְאָה  
אֹתוֹ. ז כִּי ה' אֶ-לֵהִידָּ, מִבִּיאָדְךָ אֶל-אֶרֶץ טוֹבָה: ח אֶרֶץ, נַחֲלֵי מַיִם--עֵינֹת  
וְתַהֲמֹת, יִצְאִים בְּבִקְעָה וּבְהָר. ח אֶרֶץ חֹטָה וְשֹׁעֲרָה, וְגִפְנֹ וְתַאֲנָה וְרִמּוֹן;  
אֶרֶץ-זֵית שֶׁמֶן, וְדָבָשׁ. ט אֶרֶץ, אֲשֶׁר לֹא בְמַסְפֵּנֹת תֹּאכַל-בָּהּ לֶחֶם--לֹא-  
תַחֲסֹר כָּל, בָּהּ; אֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֲבֹנֶיהָ בְּרוֹזַל, וּמְהַרְרִיהָ תַחֲצַב נְחֹשֶׁת. י וְאֶכְלַתָּ,  
וְשִׁבַעְתָּ--וּבִרְכַתְּ אֶת-ה' אֶ-לֵהִידָּ, עַל-הָאֶרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַן-לָךְ.

3 And Hashem afflicted you, and made you hungry, and fed you with manna, which you did not know, neither did your ancestors know; that Hashem might make you know that the human does not live by bread only, but by every thing that proceeds out of the mouth of Hashem

does the human live. **4** Your clothes did not become old upon you; neither did your foot swell, these forty years. **5** And you shall consider in your heart, that as a person disciplines his child, so Hashem your God disciplines you. **6** And you shall keep the commandments of Hashem your God, to walk in Hashem's ways, and to fear Hashem. **7** For Hashem your God brings you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths, springing forth in valleys and hills; **8** a land of wheat and barley, and vines and fig-trees and pomegranates; a land of olive-trees and honey; **9** a land wherein you shall eat bread without scarceness, you shall not lack any thing in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you may dig brass. **10** And you shall eat and be satisfied, and bless Hashem your God for the good land which Hashem has given you.

These verses open with the principle, "The human does not live by bread only," or as the aphorism is most commonly known, "Man does not live by bread alone." There is more to existence than sustenance of our physical selves; there is the care and sustenance of our spiritual sides, our souls. How do we sustain these? By communing with God, with God's world, with God's creatures, and with other humans.

God made a covenant with the Jewish people. Hashem would take care of us in partnership with our own efforts to take care of ourselves, and we would take care of following Hashem's commandments and living according to the Torah.

This is essentially what this section of the Torah is saying. When the Jews needed Hashem's help in the wilderness with food and clothing, Hashem took care of us. But now as they are on the verge of entering the Land—a land flowing with milk and honey, replete with water, edible vegetation, and minerals—they must provide for their own food and clothing needs.

And after we eat, the verse reminds us, **וַיְבָרַךְ אֶת-ה' אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ, עַל-הָאָרֶץ הַטֹּבָה**, "אֲשֶׁר נָתַן-לָנוּ." — it is proper to "bless Hashem your God for the good land which Hashem has given you." (This is the biblical source for *Birkat Hamazon* [Grace After Meals].) Aside from keeping our end of the covenant, this practice will bring sustenance to our souls by helping us realize that we eat not only for satiation, but for fuel to keep us going so that we can do good work on this earth during the time that we inhabit it.

I wish everyone a Shabbat Shalom replete with physical and spiritual sustenance, and I look forward to seeing everyone back at school on Monday.

Shabbat Shalom

For Discussion:

- What is a soul? How do we care for it?
- Hashem provided food and clothing for the Bnei Yisrael in the wilderness. Your parents provide you with food and clothing. What else do they provide you with that you need? Do you think Hashem helped Bnei Yisrael with these needs in the wilderness? If so, how?
- How can you, at whatever age you are, help make the world a better place?