



# Spiritual Sustenance or Physical Food

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Man is comprised of both a spiritual and a physical side. Consequently, the word אדם is composed of א, ד, מ. The א is symbolic of spirituality because it has a gematria of one, which represents אה' אה. On the other hand, דם, blood, symbolises the physical. Food is also comprised of a spiritual part in addition to a physical part.

The soul is sustained from the spirituality in the food while the body is sustained from its physicality. As a result, we are told (Devarim 8:3) כי לא על הלחם לבדו יחיה האדם כי על כל מוצא פי ה' יחיה האדם, by bread alone man does not live, but rather by that which emanates from the mouth of Hashem. The existence of all is from the word of Hashem. Without that, existence would cease. For example, when Hashem said תוצא הארץ דשא, let the earth sprout vegetation (Breishis 1:11), as well as the rest of the ma'amaros, the words created existence for the particular object referred to (see Breishis Rabba 10:6).

The Siduro Shel Shabbos (Volume 1, 5:1:4) explains that the words צדיק אכל לשבע נפשו, a tzadik eats to satisfy his soul (Mishlei 13:25), mean that he satiates his soul from the life forces and sparks of kedusha within the food. The Pele Yoetz (entry achilah ushtiyah) says that this is the intent one should have that intent when

eating. (He writes further [s.v. v'chein] some of the evils caused by overeating: it is a waste of food בל תשחית, since it is a waste of time is caused by this excess eating as well as the time he spends in the bathroom because of it. This doesn't include one who becomes ill due to overeating.) In this way, we can explain why one who gets benefit from this world without reciting a bracha is regarded as if he stole... since he takes the kedusha and destroys it by not elevating it (Brachos 35b).

R' Chaim Volozhiner (Ruach Chaim 3:3) explains that food is what connects the body and soul, since it contains both spiritual and physical components. On the other hand, one cannot live only on Torah and tefila, which is exclusively spiritual, without physicality.

Prior to the sin of Adam food was purely spiritual, as the Gemara illustrates (Sanhedrin 59b). However, after the sin, food became a mixture of good and bad. The food itself, not just the peels which are not part of the actual food. While we are sustained from the good in the food (The good sustains the soul while the physical part turns into blood.), the bad is excreted. For this reason, excrement is called רעי, from the term רע, bad.

The מן, on the other hand, was

completely absorbed in our body and no eliminating waste was necessary (Yoma 75b, Bamidbar 21:5, Rashi). In fact, the word מחספס (Shemos 16:14), which is said in regard to the מן, has a gematria of 248, since the מן was absorbed in the 248 limbs of our body.

What bracha was recited on the מן? The Bnei Yissaschar writes that he discussed with R' Tzvi Hirsch Zidichover the correct bracha for the מן. He found a Rema Mipano which stated that the bracha was לחם מן המוציא. There was then a debate among those present. The kabbalist R' Yisrael Dov responded that it appeared to him that they didn't say any bracha on the מן, since it was absorbed in the limbs. Through a bracha, the sparks of kedusha contained in the food are elevated from the פסולת, which doesn't apply to the מן. Another opinion suggested was that during the weekday they didn't say a bracha on the מן for the aforementioned reason. But on Shabbos, when the eating is like Kodshim, they would recite the bracha אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו לאכול סעודה שבת, Who has sanctified us with His commandments and has commanded us to eat the Shabbos meal. Another opinion is that according to whichever food one envisioned the מן to be, he would make its corresponding bracha (Taamai Haminhagim, p. 144).