


**CHABAD**  
  
**RESEARCH UNIT**

שבת..... *for Friday night* ..... קדש

Friday 15 August 2014 - 19 Menachem Av 5774  
 Sedra Ekev

**GRATITUDE FOR ISRAEL, JERUSALEM AND LIFE**

**G**RATITUDE IS A BASIC ASPECT OF JUDAISM. TO FEEL and express gratitude to the people around us. And also, to feel and express gratitude to G-d. To thank G-d for looking after us in our daily lives, and to thank G-d for the Land of Israel and for Jerusalem. An opportunity to express this gratitude is in saying Grace after Meals after eating bread. This could be at a large banquet, at a family meal on Shabbat or simply when one person eats a sandwich for lunch.

The saying of Grace after Meals expresses the idea that we depend on G-d for every detail of our lives, and we are grateful to Him for caring for us at every step. We need G-d for every detail of our existence, for the air we breathe and for the food we eat.

The idea that we should recite this prayer comes from a verse in our Sedra<sup>1</sup>. “You should eat and be satisfied and bless G-d for the good land He has given you” (Deut.8:10). This connects the idea of thanking G-d for food, with thanking G-d for giving us the Land of Israel. The word ‘good’, in the phrase “the good Land”, is explained by the Sages as meaning also Jerusalem and the Temple<sup>2</sup>.



In Memory of Rabbi Levi Yitzhak Schneerson זצ"ל  
 20 Menachem Av 5704 (1944)  
 Father of the Lubavitcher Rebbe זי"ע

This prayer has four paragraphs. The first concerns the fact that G-d provides food for the whole world: this was composed by Moses. The Jewish people wandering in the desert recited it after eating the Manna which fell from Heaven.

After they entered the Promised Land, Joshua wrote the second paragraph, which starts by thanking G-d for the sacred Land of Israel. This paragraph also thanks G-d for the Covenant of Circumcision, for the Exodus from Egypt and for the Torah.

The third paragraph, composed initially by David and Solomon, concerns the sacred city of Jerusalem, and of the Davidic line of kings and of the Temple. This paragraph ends with a plea to G-d to rebuild the holy city of Jerusalem with the coming of the Messiah.

The final paragraph of Grace after Meals was composed by the Sages as a special expression of gratitude to G-d, “the King who is good and who does good to all”. In 135 CE the Bar Kochba revolt against the Romans began, but this was soon crushed, with a terrible massacre at Bethar. When at last the dead were buried, this blessing was composed. It can be seen as gratitude that we survive to bring living Judaism to the next generation. We also thank our hosts and our parents, and ask G-d to send Elijah to announce the Messiah.

Additional paragraphs and sentences, or slight changes of wording, provide recognition of special days such as Shabbat, the New Moon and the festivals.

Grace after Meals not only thanks G-d for supplying our basic needs; it is an integral part of our own lives as Jews, expressing the entire course of Jewish history, with its joys, tragedies and hopes. A central theme is the Land of Israel, and Jerusalem. Reciting it or singing it bonds us to thousands of years of the life of the Jewish people, and provides a precious opportunity to speak directly to G-d. It concludes with a wonderful prayer for peace.

Grace after Meals is always relevant, but especially now, when we face extra challenges in Israel, which G-d miraculously protects, and all over the world. It is a prayer to be said with special feeling!

1. Deuteronomy 7:12-11:25. 2. See Talmud Berachot 48b, and the Lubavitcher Rebbe's *Likkutei Sichot* vol.24 p.71.

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53

*SEDRA EKEV*

***HE KNEW ALL ALONG...***

The sign on the ticket booth proclaimed in large letters:  
Big Wheel: "Adults £5, Children under 12 - £2.50p".

"Hey Sammy, wait! I have an idea," Isaac whispered to his friend, as the two stood in line waiting to buy the tickets. "Let's tell the man we're eleven and we'll be able to go on the ride twice or we could go on that ghost train again. He should believe us; you only just turned twelve a few months ago, and everyone always thinks I'm ten."

Sammy looked doubtful. "Isn't that sort of stealing?"

"Of course not! Do you think it costs the ride owner any more to have someone who's twelve rather than someone who's eleven on the ride? It's not wrong at all."

They were now the first people in the line and Isaac nudged Sammy who said: "Two child tickets please." The girl in the booth hardly looked at them as she tore off two pink tickets and gave them to Sammy in exchange for a five pound note. Sammy gave Isaac one of the tickets, and the two went through the barrier and were shown to their seats. Soon they were ascending up, up, up into the sky. They could see the whole fairground below them, surrounded by the green of the park, in turn surrounded by the city, stretching for as far as the eye could see.

Sammy tried to enjoy himself, but he was wondering if what they had done was right. It was only a little thing though, he thought. It wasn't a really bad thing, like robbing someone of their lifesavings, or eating on Yom Kippur.

Then he remembered what he had been learning just a few days ago in a Sedra lesson at Day Camp.

The Sedra was Ekev, which meant “consequence” but could also mean “heel,” the Camp counsellor told them. He explained that Rashi, a famous commentator on the Torah, said that this referred to the lighter commandments in the Torah which people trod on with their heels. That means, they weren’t so careful to keep those small Mitzvot as they were the “big” ones.

What the verse in the Torah was saying that we should be careful even with these ‘small’ Mitzvot, which could get overlooked, and then we would be rewarded with a very great and beautiful reward....

So he had been wrong to listen to Isaac. Even though it was only a small thing, it was still important to keep it. Then he began thinking: it’s not such a small thing. it’s *stealing!*

Sammy made up his mind what he would do, even if Isaac would laugh at him.

When the two got off the ride Sammy told Isaac that he was going to pay the extra money to the ride owner, and explained why. But Isaac didn’t laugh.

In fact, Isaac looked ashamed. “I’ll come with you. It was my idea. I never really thought it was so wrong before but I see your point now. I’ll also pay the extra. We’ll say we didn’t realise adult tickets begin at twelve years old...”

‘Wouldn’t that be *lying?*’ thought Sammy. However, fortunately, the man did not ask anything. When they offered him the extra five pound note, which was the last of their money, he just smiled, and accepted it. As if he knew all along...

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