

You will eat and you will be satisfied, and bless Hashem, your G-d. (8:10)

When a person eats or drinks, he prefaces his eating with a blessing and, upon completion, he once again offers his blessing. What if a person has no desire to eat, he is just not hungry, or he does not particularly care for the food that is being served? One would think that he has no obligation to eat. One does not eat just to avail himself the opportunity to recite a blessing – or should he eat just for the blessing? The following episode should enlighten us. The *Bobover Rebbe, Horav Shlomo, zl*, related that, when he was a young lad of about eight years old, his mother put a dish of cabbage in front of him. He had no desire to eat cabbage, and he refused to eat it. All of his mother's pleas and incentives did not change his mind. He was not eating cabbage.

When his father, the saintly *Kedushas Tzion, Horav Ben Tzion, zl*, heard of the incident, he spoke to his son in a very caring, but firm, manner, "My son, let us attempt to calculate the amount of grain, vegetable and fruit that grows throughout the world. How much is left for human consumption? Most is either in parts of the world where man rarely treads, or has been destroyed prematurely as a result of climate change. Heavy rain, snowstorms, strong winds, all tend to have an adverse effect on growing vegetation. Thus, many do not reach full maturity. Most that do achieve this "milestone" are sold to gentiles who will not recite a blessing over them. Additionally, sadly, not all Jews recite a blessing when partaking of Hashem's gift. Thus, if a fruit or vegetable finally makes it to the table of an observant Jew – how can such a Jew refuse to recite a blessing over it? Excuses will not support him when he stands before the Heavenly Tribunal to explain why – after Hashem availed him of His gift –he refused to do his part by blessing and eating."

This is a powerful lesson concerning the attitude one should manifest regarding the gifts we receive from Hashem, which we often take for granted. Furthermore, it offers some practical advice concerning how a parent should reprove a child: no putdown; no voice raising; simple logic and explaining. When parents make a child feel mature, he has already won half the battle.