



Dear Community,

Scarcity is described in Parashat Eikev as a divine response to wrongdoing, but it's not a simple reward-and-punishment model. Abundance is also a problem. This parashah promises a land of abundance with an overt anxiety that we might take it for granted. Our abundance may lead to our haughtiness, which may lead to our scarcity.

I cannot help but read these texts in light of climate change. Human greed can indeed lead to suffering and scarcity.

But the Torah offers a medicine to our tendency to take abundance for granted: practicing gratitude.

Deuteronomy 8:10 says: "When you have eaten and been satisfied, bless the Lord your God for the good land given to you." The rabbis (in B'rakhot 21a) understand this to be the basis for Birkat HaMazon (grace after meals). Gratitude for what we have helps us to sustain and protect it.

Rabbi Meir links the command to say one hundred blessings a day to this week's portion, too (Menachot 43b), from Deuteronomy 10:12: "And now, Israel, what [*mah*] does the Lord your God require of you?" He creatively interprets this verse by rereading *mah* ("what") as *me'ah* ("one hundred").

The practice of reciting blessings over food gets us very far toward our hundred daily blessings. It encourages us to carve out time around food to reflect on the things that really matter. Furthermore, the blessings before food require us to contemplate how this food grew - and that it didn't spring into being on a shelf in a supermarket.

For a guide to blessings before food, see your daily siddur, or click [here](#).

May we all cultivate gratitude for this incredible world, and may that gratitude help us to protect it.

Shabbat shalom,  
Rabbi Natasha