

## TORAH THOUGHTS - EAT, BE SATISFIED, AND BLESS!

Wow, summer is almost over – sorry! Whether you ate at the beach or enjoyed a cruise buffet, many of us returned from vacations feeling guilty due to overeating. What guidance does our tradition offer vis-à-vis food?

The purpose and significance of Jewish eating is depicted in this week's parasha, *Eikev*. "You shall eat, be satisfied, and praise the Lord your God for the good land He has given you." (Deuteronomy 8:10) The first three Hebrew words, "*V'achalta, v'savata, u'vayrachta ...*," are deeply meaningful.

First, *v'achalta* or "You shall eat." Our tradition encourages us to enjoy food, but the next word, *v'savata* is a reminder to eat *only* until we're satisfied. Most of us have plenty of food, and too often we simply overeat. Can we muster the will to stop, especially when presented with seemingly unlimited amounts of delicious food?

The third word, "*u'vayrachta*" reminds us to thank God for sustenance. This is the basis for *birkat hamazon*, the blessings after a meal.

"*V'achalta, v'savata, u'vayrachta ...*" is the Torah's advice on eating. May we follow it, and may it help us to live fulfilling lives.

Shabbat shalom,

Rabbi Pont