

# Brich Rachmana

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Source:

Birchat hamazon – blessing after the meal–by Alexander Massey

*Brich rachamana malka d'alma marei d'hai pita.* (Talmud, Brachot 40b)

A Fountain of Blessings is the Compassionate One, Ruler of Eternity and the concealed and revealed Universe, Master of this Bread. (Translation-interpretation)

The origin of this blessing is recorded in the Talmud with the following story:

“Benjamin the shepherd made a sandwich [literally, a ‘doubled (wrapped) loaf’] and said, Blessed be the Master of this bread [*brich marei d'hai pita*], and Rab [the rabbi] said that he had performed his obligation. But Rab has laid down that any benediction in which God’s name is not mentioned is no benediction. We must suppose he said, Blessed be the All-Merciful [*rachamana*], the Master of this bread.”

Benjamin spoke the blessing in Aramaic, which means that it belongs with a handful of prayers and blessings that the 2nd century Rabbis of the Talmud said did not have to be said in Hebrew, but could be said in any language. The other prayers include the *Shema*, and the *Amidah* (the main daily prayer). The Rabbis taught that *Brich rachamana* was the shortest version one could do of a blessing after a meal. This was for those who may be in a hurry (originally because they might be in danger, for example), but it also meant that children who did not yet know the full version could learn to give thanks after a meal.