



Jews traditionally say a lengthy prayer called the Birkat Hamazon after each meal. The prayer praises God for providing us with food and for past favors, and prays for the continuation of God's blessings. In the prayer below, *italicized phrases* come directly from the original text. (For a full-text version of the prayer, see www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/birkat_hamazon.pdf)

Birkat Hamazon (Grace After Meals):

A Thanksgiving Adaptation

*You shall eat and be satisfied, and bless the Eternal your God for the rich land that God has given you.
(Deuteronomy 8:10)*

Today as we gather in the American tradition of Thanksgiving, we give thanks to our family and friends, our community, our nation, and our God for our many blessings. Now as we say the Birkat Hamazon, we especially consider the immigrants in our family who brought us to this land, and the labor of the many whose hands brought food to our table for this celebration.

We begin with a blessing: *Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, hazan et ha-olam kulo b'tuvo b'chein b'chesed uv-rachamim. Blessed is Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe, who sustains the entire world with goodness, kindness and mercy.*

Adonai, as you allowed the first immigrants to this country to survive their first harsh winter, we pray that new immigrants experiencing their first Thanksgiving today have the opportunity to celebrate in peace and joy. May immigrants be welcomed with respect and hospitality.

Let us also acknowledge the tragic losses of the native people. May Adonai help us to honor those who mourn the loss of their ancestors even as we give thanks today, and help us to remember and guard against the harmful effects of colonization.

Blessed is Adonai, who provides food for all. Each of us was created in God's image, making it our responsibility to provide food to our neighbor. May Adonai help us to show mercy and lovingkindness to each other as God does for us, and help us find the ingenuity and determination to care for all of our brothers and sisters across the globe.



Blessed is Adonai for the land and its produce. Blessed are the workers who plant and harvest our food, and who process and package it. May Adonai help us to treat workers with dignity and respect, by advocating for their rights to a living wage and benefits that protect their families.

May Adonai help us to remember today, and every day, the labor of all workers who allow us to eat and be satisfied.

May our God tend and nourish us, sustain and maintain us, and speedily grant us relief from all our troubles. May Adonai make us dependent not on the alms or loans of others, but rather on God's full, open and generous hand, so that we may never be humiliated or put to shame. May Adonai help us to never humiliate or put to shame those in need, and help us to give aid with respect and dignity.

May the Merciful One grant us an honorable livelihood. May the Merciful One grant us the strength to speak out when someone in our community does not treat workers honorably.

May the Merciful One break the yoke of our oppression. May the Merciful One break the yokes of all who are oppressed around the globe, and speedily grant relief to those who are hungry and oppressed.

May the Merciful One send abundant blessing upon this dwelling and the table at which we have eaten.

May the Merciful One bless all who are now oppressed and bring them from darkness into light.

May the One who makes peace in the heavens let peace descend on us all, and let us say: Amen.

May Adonai give strength to our people; may Adonai bless our people with peace; may Adonai bless all people with peace. And let us say: Amen.

During this holiday which is focused on the gathering of family and friends to give thanks, please take time as a group to share in the joy of doing *mitzvot* together.

For those who wish to support workers, including those whose labor allowed us to share in this Thanksgiving meal, Interfaith Worker Justice invites you to communicate with your elected leaders about moving quickly to raise the federal minimum wage. An increase in the minimum wage would raise wages for many who process, sell, and serve our food, and would enable thousands of families to put daily food on their tables. Consider setting aside time today to write letters to your Congressional Representative and two Senators. Write letters by hand or send letters from IWJ's website. For more information, sample letters, or to send letters online, visit www.iwj.org.