



Shabbat Haggadah שבת הגדה

Westchester Reform Temple • Scarsdale, New York

HOW AND WHY Tzedakah

Tzedakah comes from the Hebrew word *Tzedek* which is translated as justice. In Deuteronomy (16:20) we are commanded: "Justice, justice shall you pursue, that you may thrive and occupy the land the Eternal your God is giving you. Judaism considers giving of Tzedakah as the performance of one of the most important commandments and as an act of "justice". Jewish giving extends beyond writing a check or cash contributions to giving of oneself.

Because Jews whose Shabbat observance does not permit them to handle money on Shabbat, many make their donations to the Tzedakah box prior to lighting the Shabbat candles.

Modern Traditions

Some of the ways Westchester Reform Temple fulfills the commandment to give Tzedakah are:

- Feeding the hungry and homeless
- Thanksgiving dinner for the blind
- Visiting nursing homes
- Mitzvah Day
- Collecting and bringing clothing to the homeless
- The Youth Group participates in a program called "The Midnight Run" which brings food and clothing to the homeless in Manhattan

- The Women of Reform Judaism donate the proceeds from the annual Purim carnival to the Jewish poor.
- On Christian holidays members of the Men's Club have substituted for Christian volunteers at local soup kitchens.

Temple Members fulfill their obligations by:

- On Chanukah, instead of receiving a gift one night, the children decide which organization should receive the Tzedakah money which has been collected on Friday nights throughout the year.
- On Purim, preparing Shelach Manot packages and delivering them to shut-ins or shelters.
- Taking the money from the family Tzedakah Box to a toy store, buying toys or clothing and bringing them to a shelter.
- Visiting hospitals and nursing homes.

Tzedakah Blessings

ברוך אתה יהוה אלהינו
מלך העולם אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו לרדוף צדק.

*Barukh Atah Adonai Elohenu Melekh ha'olam asher
kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu lirdof tzedek.*

Praised are You, Eternal God, Sovereign of the universe:
You hallow us with Your *mitzvot*, and command
us to pursue *tzedek*.

ברוך אתה יהוה אלהינו מלך העולם זוקף כפופים.

*Barukh Atah Adonai Elohenu
Melekh ha'olam zokaf k'fufim.*

Praised are You, Eternal God, Sovereign of the universe,
who lifts up the fallen.

ברוך אתה יהוה אלהינו מלך העולם פוקח עורים.

*Barukh Atah Adonai Elohenu
Melekh ha'olam pokeach ivrim.*

Praised are You, Eternal God; Sovereign of the universe,
who opens the eyes of the blind.

ברוך אתה יהוה אלהינו מלך העולם מתיר אסורים.

*Barukh Atah Adonai Elohenu
Melekh ha'olam matir asurim.*

Praised are You, Eternal God, Sovereign of the universe,
who frees captives.

ברוך אתה יהוה אלהינו מלך העולם עושה השלום.

*Barukh Atah Adonai Elohenu
Melekh ha'olam oseh ha'shalom.*

Praised are You, Eternal God, Sovereign of the universe,
who makes peace.

- Recording books for the blind.
- At the end of the day, placing their loose change in the Tzedakah Box
- Sending cards purchased at the Mitzvah Mall instead of store bought cards
- Asking guests to bring donations of food to Bar \Bat Mitzvah celebrations
- Contributing 3% of the cost of celebrations to Mazon
- Participating in activities sponsored by the Temple's Social Action committee.
- Volunteering at local soup kitchens
- Bringing a "Passover basket" to the Temple for distribution to the elderly
- Collecting all requests for donations received in the mail and reviewing them when distributing the money collected in the family Tzedakah Box
- Inviting a person with special needs to the family Seder
- Contributing to the Tzedakah boxes at the Temple

Some of the organizations WRT has helped to support are:

- AIDS related Community Services
- Boys Town of Jerusalem
- Grace Church
- Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion
- Hole in the Wall Gang
- Camp Fund
- Mazon
- Met Council
- My Sister's Place

- Scarsdale Family Counseling Service
- UJA-Federation
- Westchester Jewish Community Services
- Westhab

Questions for Family Discussions:

Should our family contribute only to charities that help only Jewish people?

("If I am not for myself, who will be for me?")

Should our family contribute to a worthy charity regardless of its religious affiliations?

("If I am only for myself, who am I?")

Should each person give or should we give as a family?

Do we help more by giving to several organizations or giving to one?

Does our obligation extend beyond a financial contribution and if it does, how do we fulfill it?

Texts for Study and Discussion

"You shall not reap all the way to the edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest. You shall not pick your vineyard bare, or gather the fallen fruit of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger..."

—Leviticus 19:9-10

"Set aside in full the tenth part of your yield — in the third year."

—Deuteronomy 26:12

"The merit of charity is so great that I am happy to give to 100 beggars even if only one might actually be needy. Some people, however, act as if they are exempt from giving to 100 beggars in the event that one might be a fraud."

—Rabbi Chaim of Sanz

*"The Good People
everywhere
will teach anyone
who wants to know
how to fix all things
breaking and broken
in this world—
including hearts and
dreams—
and along the way we
will learn such things
as why we are here
and what we are
supposed to be
doing with our
hands and minds and
souls and our time,
That way, we can
hope to find out why
we were given
a human heart,
and that way,
we can hope to know
the hearts of
other human beings
and the heart
of the world."*

—Danny Siegel

Eight Degrees of Charity

There are eight degrees of giving charity. They are as follows, from the least to the most desirable:

One who gives reluctantly, or with regret.

One who gives less than one should, but gives graciously.

One who gives what one should, but only after being asked.

One who gives before being asked.

One who gives without knowing to whom one gives, although the recipient may know the identity of the donor.

One who gives without making one's identity known.

One who gives without knowing to whom one gives, and the recipient not know the donor.

One who helps others to support themselves by a gift or a loan, or by finding employment, thus helping them become self-supporting.

—Adapted from Moses Maimonides

"If a man pretends to have a blind eye, a swollen belly or a shrunken leg, he will not leave this world before actually coming into such a condition. One who accepts charity and is not in need of it, his end will be that he will not leave this world before he comes to such a condition."

—Babylonian Talmud,
Ketubot 68a

The world endures because of three activities: Torah study, worship of God and acts of loving-kindness.

—Ethics of the Fathers 1:2

"You are how you act, how you act toward the people you meet. You extend no farther than the outer perimeter of your responsibility."

—Rabbi Lawrence Kushner

"The center of religious obligation for us lies in the realm of *beyn adam le-havero*, the realization of divinity through deeds within the human community."

—Rabbi Arthur Green

HOW AND WHY Kindling the Shabbat Candles:

Lighting the Candles ushers in Shabbat. The beauty of our tradition is that this can take place at any time on Friday evening.

In many homes it is customary for those who light the candles to encircle the candles with arms and hands three times as if to draw in the light.

One of the following may be said before lighting the Shabbat Candles

O hear my prayer,
I sing to You.
Be gracious to the ones I love,
And bless them with goodness, and mercy and peace,
O hear my prayer to you.
Let us light these lights,
And see the way to You,
And let us say: Amen.

—Debbie Friedman

Getting Ready for Shabbat:

I grew up in a very large extended family all of whom lived within a circle no more than 20 miles in diameter. Now, even my own family has spread apart: Florida, Wyoming, Ann Arbor, London, Israel. On any given Shabbat, who knows where anyone of us will be! So over the years a tradition has evolved among my mother, my sisters-in-law and our children: before we light the Shabbat candles, we phone each other. Even though we are in constant touch on the telephone during the week, these phone calls are different because we are aware that we are calling simply because Shabbat is approaching and we feel the need to say to each other “I love you” and “Good Shabbos.” Now, my Mother says, lighting the Shabbat candles has become even more important than when we were young, because she knows that, just as she lights them, so too her daughter, daughters-in-law and her grandchildren are also lighting their Shabbat candles, saying the same prayers and thinking that this simple act binds us together through time and space. And once again, Mom is right!

—Phyllis Perkins

*Light the candles and then recite
the blessing:*

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי
אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו,
וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק
נֵר שֶׁל שַׁבָּת.

*Ba-ruch a-ta, A-do-nai
E-lo-hei-nu, me-lech ha-o-llam,
a-sheer ki-de-sha-nu be-mits-vo-tav,
ve-tsi-va-nu le-had-lik
neir shel Shab-bat*

We praise You, Adonai our God,
Ruler of the universe,
who has made us holy with
commandments,
and commanded us to kindle the
lights of Shabbat.

And God said, Let there be light, and there was light. This is the original light which God created. It is the light of the eye. It is the light which God showed to Adam, and through which he was able to see from one end of creation to the other.

—Zohar

יִתְרוּמֵי לִבֵּנוּ,
תְּשׁוּבַת נַפְשֵׁינוּ,
בְּהַדְלַקַת נֵר שֶׁל שַׁבָּת.

*Yitromeym libeynu,
t'shovav nafsheyenu,
b'hadlakar neyr shel shabbat.*

May our hearts be lifted,
our spirits refreshed,
as we light the Sabbath Candles.

—Marcia Falk

More thoughts:

The obligation to have candles lit on the Shabbat rests on both men and women.

(Kitsur Shulchan Aruch 75:5)

A person who is away from home is required to light the candles and say a blessing for the sake of family harmony — by establishing a unity with family back home.

(Shulchan Aruch 263)

The candles should be big enough that they burn until at least after the meal. The light of the candles symbolizes the light of the Torah, for it is written: “for candles is the precept, and light is the Torah.”

(Kitsur Shulchan Aruch 75:2)

To enhance the spirituality of the Shabbat, one should give charity before lighting the candles.

(Kitsur Shulchan Aruch 75:2)

*Quoted and Adapted from “Do it Yourself
Shabbat” UAHC*

HOW AND WHY Family Blessing

The Torah presents several instances of children being blessed. For example, Isaac blesses his sons, Jacob and Esau, and Jacob blesses his twelve sons (Genesis 27:49). Jacob also blesses his grandsons Ephraim and Manasseh, and the words he uses in Genesis 48:20 provide the customary wording of the blessing used for sons at the Shabbat table. The blessing for girls incorporates the names of the matriarchs whose actions in the Book of Genesis helped shape the earliest experiences of our people.

Many parents place their hands on the children's head or shoulders, or they all hold hands and recite the following blessings. If you wish, instead of saying this blessing you can say words of your own. Even a loving kiss is a blessing.

Reading for Children and Grandchildren not Physically present:

Tell me, my love,
where you feed your
sheep

And where you rest in
the afternoon,

For why should I go
searching blindly

Among the flocks of
your friends?

If you don't know,

O lovely woman,

Follow the tracks that the sheep have made

And feed your own little goats and lambs

In the fields where the shepherds lie.

—From *The Song of Songs*,
A New Translation by Marcia Falk

As an alternative or an addition to the blessing for boys and girls, any of the following may be said:

As we light these Shabbat candles, we feel the frenzied momentum of the week slowly draining from our bodies. We thank You, Creator, for the peace and relaxation of Shabbat, for moments to redirect our energies toward those treasures in our lives which we hold most dear. Had You not in Your infinite wisdom created this Shabbat day, we may not have stopped in time.

*Place your hands on your child's head or shoulders
or hold your child's hands and recite the following blessings.*

*(You can also supplement the prayers written here
with your own words or a silent prayer.)*

For a boy:

Ye-sim-cha E-lo-him ke-ef-ra-yim
ve-chi-me-na-sheh.

יְשִׁמְךָ אֱלֹהִים כְּאַפְרַיִם
וְכִמְנָשָׁה.

May God inspire you to live in the tradition of Ephraim and
Manasseh, who carried forward the life of our people.

For a girl:

Ye-si-meich E-lo-him
ke-sa-ra, riv-ka, ra-cheil, ve-lei-a.

יְשִׁמְךָ אֱלֹהִים
בְּסָרָה, רִבְקָה, רָחֵל, וְלֵאָה.

May God inspire you to live in the tradition of Sarah and
Rebekah, Rachel and Leah, who carried forward the life of our
people.

After the separate prayers for boys or girls, continue for both:

Ye-va-re-che-cha A-do-nai
ve-yish-me-re-cha.

יְבָרְכֶךָ יי
וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ.

Ya-eir A-do-nai pa-nav
ei-le-cha vi-chu-ne-ka.

יָאֵר יי פָּנָיו
אֵלֶיךָ וִיחַיֶּנְךָ.

Yi-sa A-do-nai pa-nav ei-le-cha
ve-ya-seim le-cha sha-lom.

יִשָּׂא יי פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ
וְיִשֵּׂם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם.

May God bless you and guard you. May the light of God shine
upon you, and may God be gracious to you. May the presence of
God be with you and give you peace.

May the peace of Shabbat
fill our hearts, fill our home,
fill the world. Amen

As we light the candles this
Shabbat Eve we thank You
for the week that has passed.
We thank You for protecting
our family and helping us to
better understand each other,
to share our joys, to share
our triumphs and disap-
pointments and to give
strength to one another. We
pray that the coming week
will be a week of good
health and of continued
mutual pride and love in our
family. Please, Adonai,
watch over our fellow Jews
who are oppressed or threat-
ened anywhere. Amen

Adapted from
Siddur Sim Shalom

We thank You, O God, for
our family and for what we
mean and bring to one
another. We are grateful
for the bonds of loyalty
and affection which sustain
us and for the capacity to
love and to care.

Help us to be modest in our
demands of one another,
but generous in our giving
to each other. May we
never measure how much
love or encouragement we
offer; may we never count
the times we forgive.

Rather, may we always be grateful that we have one another and that we are
able to express our love in acts of kindness.

Keep us gentle in our speech. When we offer words of criticism, may they
be chosen with care and spoken softly. May we waste no opportunity to
speak words of sympathy, of appreciation, of praise.

Bless our family with health, happiness, and contentment. Above all, grant
us the wisdom to build a joyous and peaceful home in which Your spirit will
always abide. Amen.

—Gates of Shabbat (CCAR)

HOW AND WHY Blessings for Husband and Wife

It is also customary for the husband to bless his wife and traditionally the portion read was from the proverbs that asks: A good wife, who can find? She is precious far beyond rubies. In the modern era of equality of the sexes, we must ask a question: if it is a good thing for the husband to openly show his respect and love for his wife and for her life's work, shouldn't we expect her to do likewise? Hence we include a blessing for the husband.

These blessings — or others of your own choosing — are not dependant upon the blessing of children. Thus, whether there are children or not, the husband and wife who bless each other openly and with warmth and affection will achieve an important part of the well-being that we strive for as we welcome Shabbat.

My Sister, My Bride

Your lips, sweet with
nectar, invite me
To honey and milk on
your tongue,
O my sister, my bride.

And even your clothing
is fragrant
As wind from the Lebanon
mountains,
My sister, my bride.

The king has a
vineyard—
Its fruit is my own.

Have your wealth,
Solomon!
Keep all your vineyards,
Whose yield you must
share
with your watchmen and
guards.

From *The Song of Songs*
A New Translation by
Marcia Falk

Alternate Reading to One's Husband

How fine
you are, my love
your eyes
like doves'.

How fine
are you, my lover,
what joy
we have together.

How green
our bed of leaves,
our rafters of cedars,
our juniper eaves.

—*Song of Songs*
A new translation, by
Marcia Falk

Alternate Reading to One's Wife

Come with me
my love,
come away

For the long wet months are past,
the rains have fed the earth
and lift it bright with blossoms

Birds wing in the low sky,
dove and songbird singing
in the open air above

Earth nourishing tree and vine,
green fig and tender grape,
green and tender fragrance

Come with me, my love,
come away

With one flash of your eyes, you
excite me,
One jewel on your neck stirs my
heart,
O my sister, my bride.

Your love, more than wine, is
enticing,
Your fragrance is finer than spices,
My sister, my bride.

Your lips, sweet with nectar, invite me
To honey and milk on your tongue,
O my sister, my bride.

And even your clothing is fragrant
As wind from the Lebanon mountains,
My sister, my bride.

The king has a vineyard
Whose fruit is worth silver.
I have a vineyard —
Its fruit is my own.

Have your wealth, Solomon!
Keep all your vineyards,
Whose yield you must share
With your watchmen and guards.

—From *The Song of Songs*
A New Translation by
Marcia Falk

Blessing for a Wife:

A good wife, who can find? She is precious far beyond rubies. Her husband trusts in her, and he shall lack nothing thereby. She renders him good and not evil all the days of her life. She opens her hand to the needy and extends her hand to the poor. She is robed in strength and dignity and cheerfully faces the future. She opens her mouth with wisdom; her tongue is guided by kindness. She tends to the affairs of her household and eats not the bread of idleness. Her children come forward and bless her; her husband, too, and praises her: "Many women have done superbly, but you surpass them all." Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a God-revering woman is much to be praised. Give her honor for the fruit of her hands; wherever people gather, her deeds speak her praise.

—Adapted from Proverbs 31
As in Siddur Sim Shalom

Blessing for a Husband:

Blessed is the man who reveres Adonai,
who greatly delights in God's commandments.
His descendants will be honored in the land:
the generation of the upright will be blessed.
His household prospers,
and his righteousness endures for ever.
Light shines in the darkness for the upright;
for the one who is gracious, compassionate, and just.
He is not afraid of evil tidings;
his mind is firm, trusting in Adonai.
His heart is steady, he will not be afraid.
He gives freely to the poor;
his righteousness endures for ever; his life is exalted
in honor.

From Psalm 112
Siddur Sim Shalom

HOW AND WHY Blessing the Wine

Wine is a symbol of the joy of the Torah and by extension, the joy present for us in the universe. Thus, we say the blessing over the wine, thanking God for the creation of wine and remembering the six days of creation and the seventh day of rest.

Raise the wine goblet and say or sing the Kiddush with a sense of joy and celebration.

NEW TRADITIONS

*Manischewitz vs.
Cabernet:
The great debate*

Growing up, heavy sweet wine always seemed to reinforce the specialness of the Sabbath. But gradually our tastes began to change and concord grape wine just didn't cut it anymore. Could we say a proper Kiddush over a full rich Cabernet? A Chianti Classico? Then we realized that we also no longer eat boiled chicken followed by beef brisket on Friday night either. So now we don't worry about it, we sing the Kiddush and then, just as we are supposed to, we enjoy the wine—symbol of joy in creation and sanctification of the Sabbath—and we enjoy the Sabbath too!

Raise the Kiddush cup and sing....

*Ba-ruch a-ta A-do-nai,
Eh-lo-hei-nu meh-lech ha-o-lam,
bo-rei p'ri ha-ga-fen.*

*Ba-ruch a-ta A-do-nai,
Eh-lo-hei-nu meh-lech ha-o-lam,
a-sheer ki-d'sha-nu b'mitz-vo-tav
v'ra-tza va-nu, v'shabbat ko-d'sho
b'a-ha-va u-v'ra-tzon hin-chi-la-nu,
zi-ka-ron l'ma-a-sei v'rei-shit.*

*Ki hu yom t'chi-la
l'mik-ra-ei ko-desh,
zei-cher li-tzi-at Mitz-ra-yim.*

*Ki va-nu va-char-ta
v'o-ta-nu ki-dash-ta
mi-kol ha-a-mim,
v'sha-bat kod-sh'cha
b'a-ha-va u-v'ra-tzon
hin-chal-ta-nu.*

*Ba-ruch a-ta A-do-nai,
m'ka-deish ha-sha-bat.*

ברוך אתה יי,
אלהינו מלך העולם,
בורא פרי הגפן.

ברוך אתה יי,
אלהינו מלך העולם,
אשר קדשנו במצותיו
ורצה בנו, ושבט קדשו
באהבה וברצון הנחילנו,
זכרון למעשה בראשית.

כי הוא יום תחלה
למקראי קדש,
זכר ליציאת מצרים.

כי בנו בחרת
ואתנו קדשת
מכל העמים,
ושבת קדשך
באהבה וברצון
הנחלתנו.

ברוך אתה יי,
מקדש השבת.

Kavanah

Kiddish means sanctification and comes from the same Hebrew root as the word Kadosh, meaning holy, set apart. On Friday night we say two parts to the Kiddush. First we say the blessing over the wine itself and then we say the blessing sanctifying the Shabbat. We are reminded that we observe the Shabbat because of both the act of creation of the world and also so that we will remember the Exodus from our bondage in Egypt.

We are supposed to celebrate the Sabbath with joy and because the Psalms tell us that "Wine makes glad the heart..." (104:15) we sanctify the Sabbath with wine.

"If you would argue that as water grows stagnant in a flask, so do the words of Torah stagnate, let them be compared to wine. As wine improves with keeping, so do words of Torah improve as they be-

come older in the body. If you would argue that as water does not gladden the heart, similarly words of Torah do not, let them be compared to wine; as wine gladdens the heart, so do words of Torah gladden the heart."

—Cant. R.I. 2

"As with food, so also with drink. Total abstinence was not considered a virtue. We have such utterances as 'There is no gladness without wine'

—Pes. 109a.

For all that, the Rabbis fully appreciated the evils of excess and uttered a warning against them...' When wine enters, sense goes out; when wine enters, the secret comes out'

—Num. Rx8

Quoted from:
Everyman's Talmud

We praise You, Eternal One, Sovereign God of the universe: You create the fruit of the vine.

We praise You, Eternal One, Sovereign God of the universe: You call us to holiness with the Mitzvah of Shabbat: the sign of Your love, a reminder of Your creative work, and of our liberation from Egyptian bondage, our day of days. On Shabbat especially, we harken to Your call to serve You as a holy people.

We praise You, Eternal One, for the holiness of Shabbat.

HOW AND WHY Blessing over the Bread

After the candles have been lit and blessed, the family blessed, and the Kiddush recited, the Motzi—the blessing over the challah—is recited. It is a mitzvah to say the Motzi before every meal. On Shabbat, the Motsi is recited over the challah. The blessing allows us to thank God not only for the bread, but also for creating a world of natural beauty.

The challah can be round, square or oblong. It may have raisins and/or seeds. Jews from European backgrounds use a braided loaf, but Sephardic families and families from Middle Eastern countries usually use a type of bread common to their cuisine. What makes it "challah" is that a small piece of the bread dough was tossed into the fire and burned in memory of the sacrificial portions offered to the priests during the days when the Temple stood in Jerusalem.

In many homes, the challah is covered with a simple napkin or an ornate cloth cover. The cover might be home made or school-made. There are many explanations as to why the challah is covered.

A popular explanation for children is that the challah is covered in order not to embarrass the bread when the candles and wine are dealt with first. Another is so that the wine and candles won't be embarrassed by the beauty of the challah. Or the challah may be covered to keep it out of sight so that it won't be eaten before it should be—or perhaps it may be to highlight the fact that this is something special under wraps for a special day. In addition to the folklore, it may be a simple culinary trick of keeping the challah fresh and warm. Before the blessing is said, the challah is uncovered.

Those gathered at the table may all join hands or put their arms onto each others' shoulders. If it's a small group, all may place their hands on the challah. Nonetheless, the one leading the Motzi or someone should have a hand on the challah when saying the blessing. After the blessing has been said by one or all of the participants, the challah can be either torn or cut or pulled and

MODERN TRADITIONS:

Well, maybe this one won't become a tradition:

"One Shabbat we went to my in-law's, and when we were passing the challah around, my father-in-law said to my mother-in-law, 'It's a little cold in the middle,' and she says, 'I had it in the freezer and it just didn't get defrosted in time.' Then he says, 'But you went to the store and bought a fresh one today.' She says, 'Yes, but I put the fresh one in the freezer because I didn't want this one to get too old.'"

—Anonymous

The Challah

While traditionally the challot were baked by women, it certainly does not have to be so now. The baking can be a family activity. The dough can be kneaded on Thursday night or Friday morning by any or all of the family. And of course, challah may also be purchased at many bakeries and grocery stores.

Background

"...in ancient times Jews baked bread on Friday for the entire week, thus insuring fresh bread for the Sabbath. These loaves of white bread are called, by Jews in Slavic countries, challah. Challah means a loaf of bread and also refers to the priest's share of the kneaded dough. Since the destruction of the second Temple the piece of dough is thrown into the fire."

Motsi

The leader places hands on the challah as everyone says the blessing.

Ba-ruch a-ta, A-do-nai

E-lo-hei-nu, me-lech ha-o-lam,

ha-mo-tsi le-chem min ha-a-rets.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי
אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
הַמוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן־הָאָרֶץ.

We praise You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who
brings forth bread from the earth.

*Slice or tear the challah and distribute it around the table to be eaten.
Dinner is served.*

"It is the usually accepted view that the custom of throwing a piece of dough into the burning oven arose after the destruction of the second Temple as a substitute for the first of the dough which was to be given to the priest.

"Speak to the Israelite people and say to them: When you enter the land to which I am taking you and you eat of the bread of the land, you shall set some aside as a

gift to the Lord: as the first yield of your baking, you shall set aside a loaf as a gift; you shall set it aside as a gift like the gift from the threshing floor. You shall make a gift to the Lord from the first yield of your baking, throughout the ages."

—Numbers 15:18-21

However, from the Mishnah (Challah IV, 8) it may be inferred that it was customary to throw a piece of dough into the fire even in the days when the first of the dough was still being given to the priest....(Perhaps) the practice of giving the first of the dough to the priest superceded an older custom of throwing it into the fire as an offering to the evil spirits. It seems, however, that the older custom was in vogue here and there along with the new one, but after the destruction of the second Temple its practice became general and it assumed a new meaning; that of being a substitute for giving it to the priest.

"The word challah, which originally designated this piece of dough, was thus transferred to the entire Sabbath loaf.

"(In modern times—1930's—in Eastern Europe) when the oven is ready the housewife forms plain or braided loaves from the dough which she kneaded the night before. First however, she performs the ceremony of 'taking challah,' taking off a piece of dough, reciting a benediction, and throwing it into the burning stove, as a remembrance of the precept of setting apart the first of the dough as a gift to the priest. While the dough burns she recites a 't'chinah,' a meditative prayer, in which she prays to God that He accept the piece of dough as a sacrifice on the altar; that He give her the means to feed her beloved children; and, that in His great mercy, He protect her from worry and hardship.

The Jewish Festivals
by Hayyim Schauss, 1938
Translated by Samuel Jaffe, c. UAHC

HOW AND WHY

Blessing After the Meal

The Rabbis believed that to eat without making a blessing was akin to theft, since the blessing is the only "payment" which God demands for the food which is given to us. But it is easy to remember to say a prayer when you are hungry, see food and want to "dig in"; it is harder to remember to feel thankful and to say words of thankfulness when your appetite has been sated.

By saying the Birkat, we reinforce that sense of well being and the feelings of thankfulness for the bounty which we have enjoyed. Just as a motzi can and should be said at the start of every meal — not just on Shabbat, the Birkat ha-mazon can and should be said at the end of every meal. However, the Birkat said on Shabbat opens with Psalm 126. Some people sing the Birkat, some say it in Hebrew, some read it responsively and some say a shortened form. But whatever form of Birkat we say, it ends the Shabbat meal on a note of meaningfulness and heightened awareness. Isn't that what Shabbat is all about?

The following may be said in addition to the Birkat:

For the Eternal your God is bringing you into a good land, a land with streams and springs and fountains issuing from plain and hill; a land of wheat and barley, of vines, figs and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey; a land where you may eat food without stint, where you will lack nothing; a land whose rocks are iron and from whose hills you can mine copper. When you have eaten your fill, give thanks to the Eternal your God for the good land which God has given you.

Blessing After the Meal

This is an English translation of Birkat Ha Mazon

When God brought Israel back to Zion
We were as a dream
Our mouths were filled with laughter,
Our tongues with joyous song.

Then it was said among the nations
"God has done great things for them."
God had truly done great things for us,
and we were filled with joy.

O God, bring back Your
scattered children
like streams in the desert.
They who sow in tears shall
reap in joy.
Though we weep when
planting we shall sing with
joy as we return home
at harvest time.

Let the name of God be
praised from now to eternity.
Let us praise God of whose
bounty we have partaken
Let us praise our God of
whose bounty we have par-
taken and by whose good-
ness we live.

Through God's kindness,
mercy and compassion all
existence is eternally sus-
tained. God is forever faith-
ful. God's surpassing good-
ness fills all time and space.
Sustenance there is for all.
None need ever lack, no
being ever want for food.
We praise You, O God, the
One sustaining all.

As it is written: "When you
have eaten and are satisfied,
give praise to your God who
has given you this good
earth."

And build Jerusalem, O
God, speedily in our day.
We praise You, O God,
whose compassion builds
Jerusalem.

All Merciful, may we inherit
a Sabbath of eternal peace.

May God who causes peace
to reign in the high heavens,
bring peace for us and all
Israel.

May God give strength to
our people. May God bless
all people with peace.

Birkat Ha Mazon

Psalm 126:

שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת בְּשׁוּב יי
אֶת שִׁיבַת צִיּוֹן הֵינּוּ בְּחֻלְמִים
אִזּוּ וַיִּמָּלֵא שְׂחוֹק פִּינוּ וַיִּשְׁוֹנְנוּ רִנָּה
אִזּוּ יִאמְרוּ בְּגוֹיִם הִגְדִּיל
יְיָ לַעֲשׂוֹת עִם אֱלֹהֵי
הַגְּדִיל יְיָ לַעֲשׂוֹת עִמָּנוּ הֵינּוּ שְׂמֵחִים
שׁוֹבָה יְיָ אֶת שְׁבִיתֵנוּ בְּאַפִּיקִים בְּנֶגֶב
הָאֲרָצִים בְּדִמְעָה בְּרִנָּה יִקְצְרוּ
הַלֹּחַד יִלְכּוּ וּבִכָּה נִשְׂא מִשָּׁךְ הָאָרֶץ
בָּא יָבֵא בְּרִנָּה נִשְׂא אֶלְמָתֵינוּ

Shir ha-ma-a-lot b'-shuv A-do-nai
Et shi-vat Tzi-yon ha-yi-nu k'-chol-mim
Az y'-ma-lei s'-chok pi-nu ul-sho-nei-nu ri-na
Az yom-ru va-go-yim hig-dil
A-do-nai la-a-sot im ei-leh
Hig-dil A-do-nai la-a-sot i-ma-nu ha-yi-nu s'-mei-chim
Shu-vah A-do-nai et sh'-vi-tei-nu ka-a-fi-kim ba-ne-gev
Ha-zo-rim b'-dim-ah b'-ri-nah yik-tzo-ru
Ha-loch yei-leich u-va-cho no-sei me-shech ha-za-ra
Bo ya-vo v'-ri-na no-sei a-lu-mo-tav

blessing continued on next page...

-Deuteronomy 8:7-10

Birkat Ha Mazon

continued....

(Leader)

Cha-vei-rai n'-va-reich

חברי נברך

(Community followed by the Leader)

Y'-hi sheim A-do-nai m'-vo-rach

יהי שם יי מברך

Mei-a-tah v'-ad o-lam

מעתה ועד עולם

(Leader)

Bir-shut cha-vei-rai n'-va-reich E-lo-hei-nu

ברשות חברי נברך אלהינו

She-a-chal-nu mi-she-lo

שאכלנו משלו

(Community followed by the Leader)

Ba-ruch E-lo-hei-nu she-a-chal-nu mi-she-lo

ברוך אלהינו שאכלנו משלו

Uv-tu-vo cha-yi-nu

ובטובו חיינו

(Community)

Ba-ruch hu u-va-ruch sh'-mo

ברוך הוא וברוך שמו

Friends, let us praise God. Let the name of God be praised from now to eternity. Let us praise our God of whose bounty we have partaken. Let us praise our God of whose bounty we have partaken and by whose goodness we live. May God and God's name be praised

Ba-ruch A-tah A-do-nai

ברוך אתה יי

E-lo-hei-nu me-lech ha-o-lam

אלהינו מלך העולם

Ha-zan et ha-o-lam ku-lo b'-tu-vo

הזן את העולם כולו בטובו

B'-chein b'-che-sed uv-ra-cha-mim

בחנו בחסד וברחמים

Hu no-tein le-chem l'-chol ba-sar

הוא נותן לחם לכל בשר

Ki l'-o-lam chas-do

כי לעולם חסדו

Uv-tu-vo ha-ga-dol ta-mid lo cha-sar la-nu

ובטובו הגדול תמיד לא חסר לנו

V'-al yech-sar la-nu ma-zon l'-o-lam va-ed

ואל יחסר לנו מזון לעולם ועד

Ba-a-vur sh-mo ha-ga-dol

בעבור שמו הגדול

Ki hu Eil zan um-far-neis la-kol

כי הוא אל זן ומפרנס לכל

U-mei-tiv la-kol u-mei-chin ma-zon

ומטיב לכל ומכין מזון

L'-chol b'-ri-o-tav a-sheer ba-ra

לכל בריותיו אשר ברא

Ba-ruch A-tah A-do-nai ha-zan et ha-kol

ברוך אתה יי הזן את הכל