



Appreciate

THE RITUAL

Many faiths and cultures have a grace before meals, not quite as many have a grace after meals. The blessing after the meal, or *Birkat ha'Mazon* in Hebrew, like all Shabbat dinner rituals, evolved over time. We do however have a source text for this practice in the Torah, from Deuteronomy 8:10: "When you have eaten and are satisfied, bless."

It's actually pretty radical that in Judaism, the ritual of grace after meals isn't about expressing gratitude for food itself, but for food and a full feeling. To say grace therefore requires a sense of intention around the act of consumption, nourishment, and feeling good as a result.

The traditional grace after meals is long. So long it makes the long version of kiddush seem short. It's long because the sages kept finding more and more things to be grateful for. Food, the earth, God, dinner hosts, parents, Shabbat, Torah, the exodus from Egypt, the list goes on.

At OneTable, we are grateful that there is also a succinct grace after meals recorded in the Babylonian Talmud (Brachot 40b) that serves precisely the same purpose in seven words of beautiful second century Aramaic. Way to show up, sages.

The Goods

All you need is the intention to end your Shabbat dinner with gratitude.

BLESS

בְּרִיד רַחֲמָנָא מַלְכָּא דְעֵלְמָא מְרִיָּה דְהַאי פִּיְתָא.

Brich rachamana malka d'alma marei d'hai pita.

We are blessed with compassion by the Oneness that sustains us with bread.

or

Blessed are You, Merciful One, Ruler of the universe,
Who sustains life with bread.

or

You are the Source of life for all that is, and Your blessing flows through me.

Reflection

What shifts in your experience of gratitude at the Shabbat dinner table?

What else nourishes you, besides food itself?



THE BREAKDOWN

Shabbat dinner doesn't end with the food runs out or the drinks stop flowing. Shabbat dinner doesn't even end with grace after meals. Shabbat dinner ends when you walk your guests to the door. It's a last act of ritual hospitality, and one that makes hosting on Shabbat so deeply rooted in Jewish practice.

As Maimonides wrote: "The reward you receive for accompanying guests on their way is greater than for all other *mitzvot*. Our sages teach that showing hospitality for guests is the greatest expression of gratitude, greater even than study or prayer. Accompanying guests on their way is greater still."

Shabbat shalom.

CONVERSATION STARTERS

What foods remind you of home?

If you weren't afraid, what would you do?

What is the most important lesson you've been taught by a family member?

You have been tasked to redesign society. What's your first move?

How would you spend a million dollars if you only had 24 hours to do it?

You have to live the rest of your life in a TV show. Which do you choose and why?

What happened on your most memorable birthday?

When/where do you most feel like you "belong"?

What accomplishment are you most proud of in your life?

Do you believe in some kind of Power greater than yourself?

Is who you are now who you wanted to be when you were growing up?

What's the most important thing you've learned about yourself from a past relationship?

What was your most recent adrenaline rush?

What is your biggest pet peeve?