

Jewish Table Prayers

Observant Jews are constantly reminded of God's presence and of our relationship with God, because we are continually praying to Him. Our first thought in the morning, even before we get out of bed, is a prayer thanking God for returning our souls to us. There are prayers to be recited before enjoying any material pleasure, such as eating or wearing new clothes; prayers to recite before performing any mitzvah (command of God), such as washing hands or lighting candles; prayers to recite upon seeing anything unusual, such as a king, a rainbow, or the site of a great tragedy; prayers to recite whenever some good or bad thing happens; and prayers to recite before going to bed at night. All of these prayers are in addition to formal prayer services, which are performed three times a day every weekday and additional times on the Sabbath and religious festival. One purpose of prayer is to increase your awareness of God in your life and the role that God plays in your life. If you only pray when you feel inspired (that is, when you are already aware of God), then you will not increase your awareness of God at other times.

In addition, if you want to do something well, you have to practice it continually, even when you don't feel like doing it. This is as true of prayer as it is of playing a sport, playing a musical instrument, or writing. The sense of humility and awe of G-d that is essential to proper prayer does not come easily to modern man, and will not simply come to you when you feel the need to pray. If you wait until inspiration strikes, you will not have the skills you need to pray effectively. Before I started praying regularly, I found that when I wanted to pray, I didn't know how. I didn't know what to say, or how to say it, or how to establish the proper frame of mind. If you pray regularly, you will learn how to express yourself in prayer. Most prayers and blessings said by Orthodox Jews can be found in the Siddur, or prayer book.

When it comes to the Jewish Table prayers, the patriarch of the family washes his hands and before partaking of any food six different blessings are said:

1. On bread, bagels, challah, matzah, pita and rolls made from any of these five grains: wheat, barley, rye, oat or spelt:

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who brings forth bread from the earth.

2. On cakes, cereals, cookies, cupcakes, doughnuts, and pasta - if made of one or more of the five grains listed under the first blessing:

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who creates various kinds of sustenance.

3. On wine and grape juice:

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who creates the fruit of the vine.

4. For all fruits from permanent trees, such as apples, oranges, and peaches, even if these fruits are dried; also grapes, raisins, and all nuts (except peanuts, which are a legume):

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the

Jewish Table Prayers

Universe, Who creates the fruit of the tree.

5. For all vegetables and greens from the ground, peanuts, legumes, and some fruits such as bananas, melons, and pineapples:

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, Who creates the fruit of the earth.

6. For candy, dairy, eggs, fish, liquids, meat, mushrooms and everything else not included in the first five blessings above:

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, by Whose word all things came to be.

NOTE: The above blessings apply to foods in their basic form; however, the blessings may vary when the form is changed through processing, or when foods are combined

Taken from online sites: Judaism 101 and Chadah.org