Birkat Hamazon - Grace After Meals

The commandment to thank God after a meal is of Scriptural origin: “And you shall eat and you shall be satisfied and you shall bless...” (Deut. 8:10). As the verse indicates, the Scriptural requirement applies only when one has eaten his/her fill. From earliest times, however, the Jewish people has undertaken to express its gratitude even after a modest meal, provided one had eaten at least as much bread as the volume of an olive. On Shabbat, Birkat Hamazon begins with Psalm 126, an ancient prophetic poem of yearning for return from the Babylonian exile. The blessing continues with an invitation, said only when three or more people are present, wherein the group “comes together” to praise God. After the invitation, the group is traditionally four sections: the first thanks God for nourishment, the second for the land of Israel, the third is for Jerusalem, and the fourth section is for God’s goodness. The prayer concludes with several additions. This version is accepted by most within the Reform Movement.

A song of ascents. When Adonai brought the exiles back to Zion it was like a dream. Then our mouths were filled with laughter and our tongues with song. Then was it said among the nations: “Adonai has done great things for them.” Truly, Adonai has done great things for us. Bring us from exile, Adonai, as the streams return to the Negev; those who sow in tears shall reap in joy. Those who go out weeping, shall return rejoicing, bearing sacks of seeds, shall return with joy, bearing their sheaves.

ON SHABBAT:

Shir Hama-a-lot, b’shuv Adonai et shivat Tzion hayinu k’cholmim.
Az y’malei s’chok pinu ul-shoneinu rina,
az yomru vagoyim: Higdi Adonai la-a-sot im eileh.
Higdi Adonai la-a-sot imanu, hayinu s’meichim. Shuva Adonai et sh’viteinu ka-afikim banegev.
Hazor’im b’dimna b’rina yik-tzoru. Haloch yeileich uvacho, nosei meshech hazara.
Bo yavo v’rina nosei alumotav.

Leader: Chaveirai n’vareich.

Group (Leader Repeats): Y’hi sheim Adonai m’vorach mei-atah v’ad olam.

Leader: Birshut chaveirai n’vareich Eloheinu she-achalnu mishelo.

Group (Leader Repeats): Baruch Eloheinu she-achalnu mishelo uv-tuvo chayinu.

All: Baruch hu u-varuch sh’mo.

Let us thank God. Blessed is the name of God now and forever. With your permission, let us thank God whose food we have eaten. Blessed is God whose food we have eaten and through whose goodness we live. Blessed is God and Blessed is God’s name.

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu melech ha-olam,
ahaz et ha-olam kulo b’tuvo
b’chein b’chesed uv-rachhamim,
hu notein lechem l’chol-basar, ki l’olam chasdo,
Uv-tuvo hagadol tamid lo chasar lanu
v’al yechsar lanu mazon l’olam va-ed.
Ba-avur sh’mo hagadol, ki hu Eil zan um-faneis lakol,
u-meitiv lakol u-meichin mazon l’chol-b’riyotav asher bara.
Baruch atah Adonai, hazan et hakol.
Blessed is Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe, who sustains the entire world with goodness, kindness and mercy. God gives food to all creatures, for God’s mercy is everlasting. With abundant goodness we have never lacked, and may we never lack sustenance forever in God’s great name. God sustains all, does good to all, and provides food for all the creatures created. Blessed is Adonai, who provides food for all.

V’al hakol Adonai Eloheinu anachnu modim lach um-varchim otach yitbarach shimcha b’fi chol chai tamid l’olam va-ed.
kakatu: V’achalta v’savata uveirachta et Adonai Elohecha al ha-aretz hatovaasher natan lach.
Baruch Atah Adonai, al ha-aretz v’al hamazon.

Uv-nei Y’rushalayim ir hakodesh bimheira v’yameinu.

Harachaman, hu yimloch aleinu l’olam va’ed
Harachaman, hu yitbarach bashamayim uva’aretz

Harachaman, hu yishlach b’racha m’ruba babayit hazeh v’al shulchan zeh she-achalnu alav.
Harachaman, hu y’variech et koltcheinu beit Yisrael han’tunim betzarah, v’yonzi-im mei-afeilah l’orah.

May the Merciful One Rule over us forever and ever. May the Merciful One be blessed in heaven and on earth.
May the Merciful One send abundant blessing upon this dwelling and the table at which we have eaten.
May the Merciful One bless all of our brothers and sisters of the house of Israel who are now oppressed and bring them from darkness into light.

ON SHABBAT:
Harachaman, hu yan-chileinu yom shekulo Shabbat um-nucha l’chayei ha-olamim.

Oseh shalom bimromav hu ya-aseh shalom aleinu v’al kol Yisrael, v’imru amein.
Adonai oz l’amo yitein Adonai y’variech et-amot hashalom.

May the One who makes peace in the heavens let peace descend on all us, and let us say Amen.
May Adonai give strength to our people; may Adonai bless our people with peace.

BIRKAT HAMAZON, P.2