



A Jewish Response To Hunger

## Prayer for the Millions Facing A SNAP Hunger Crisis

By Rabbi Michael Rothbaum

On erev Shabbat before millions of families will wake up to a sudden, cruel reality of empty plates and worried hearts, the MAZON team asked our incredible partner Rabbi Mike Rothbaum for a prayer to mark this moment.

Read this with your families around your Shabbat table before you say the ha'motzi, read it from the bimah at Shabbat services in front of your community, read it to yourself and your grieving heart. And then together, we'll act.

*Ribono shel Olam*, Master of Time and Space

We come before You in gratitude. Gratitude for the beauty and bounty of a land of grain and seed and fruit, the power of labor in harvesters and homemakers, the diversity of food wisdom that lives in the cultures that make this nation what it is.

But, at this moment of withdrawn food assistance, we also come before You in grief. Grief for lives at risk, souls endangered, insufficient wages, grief over broken promises — the broken promise of working a full day without a full day's pay, the broken promise of a wage that still requires food assistance for basic sustenance, the broken promise of a nation with not one economy but two — one economy for the well-connected and another law for the disenfranchised and dejected.

We come before you in not just grief but fear of what tomorrow may bring. Empty cabinets, growls of hunger, howls of children, undernourishment of families, the indignity and degradation of millions of Americans who've had the bread snatched out of their bellies in the midst of a nation of unmatched plenty.



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Your light and law require:

Openly open your hand to your needy neighbor (Deuteronomy 15:8)

Provide a portion of every field for the poor, whether native born or migrant (Leviticus 19:9-10)

Open your mouth for justice, and plead for the poor and vulnerable (Proverbs 31:9)

In this moment of threatened starvation and degradation, give us the courage to fulfill that vision, to face down the Pharaohs who exploit the suffering of our neighbors, to persist until every one of your precious souls is fed and housed and clothed.

Eloheinu velohei Avoteinu v'Imoteinu. Our God and God of our ancestors. God of employers and employees. God of lawgivers and laborers. God of homeowners and home-health workers, package handlers and pastors and presidents, God of minimum wage and maximum love and infinite justice — please hear our words and help us heal our land, that we may march forward together out of hunger and scarcity and into sustenance and sacred dignity, into a liberated nation, a nation of well-fed children and full hearts, and of holy laws of love and justice.

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