

~Blessing Our Food Waste~



Through the practice of a **food waste ritual**, we can find deep lessons in how we gather, cook, and scrap food. We visually express those lessons into a “visual blessing” using actual food scraps and stones or other found natural objects. Then, we craft and recite a spoken blessing. Together, this helps us rethink food waste in our homes and communities.

Enjoy a brief video of Jodi Balis creating her own visual and spoken blessing food waste ritual [here](#).

Visual Blessing

1. Save the food scraps leftover from your meal and meal preparation. You can save them from a full day of meals or just one meal.
2. Pick a plate, cutting board, platter, or other surface where you can artfully arrange your leftovers. There's no “right” way to do this, just position items in a way that appeals to you. Take the time to appreciate the different textures, colors, and scents.
3. Optional: Take a brief walk outdoors and collect some natural objects and/or gather other items of beauty in your home to add to the plate, such as feathers, leaves, stones, or candles.
4. Take a moment to simply gaze at your creation.
5. What feelings and thoughts arise? Reflect on the role this “waste” had in relation to the food that nourished you: appreciate the rinds and shells that protected the fruit inside; acknowledge the roots and stems that grew the plants you ate; admire the cores that held everything together. Consider all the people involved in getting this food from the earth to your hands (such as farmers, truck drivers, storekeepers). Consider all the ways in which the earth and its non-human creatures made this fruit possible (like rainwater, pollinators, sunshine). Think of the value this “waste” still has to offer (is it a cutting that could regrow if planted? Can it be composted to nourish the soil? Is it edible and could be used as an ingredient for another meal?)

Spoken Blessing

Blessings mark moments throughout the day, weeks, months and seasons.

Blessings mark transitions.

Blessings mark our engagement with the senses: seeing, smelling, hearing, tasting and feeling.

Blessings connect us as unique individuals to a larger whole.

Food blessings cultivate body awareness and sensory awareness.

Blessings nurture an attitude of gratitude.

In Jewish tradition, there is a 6 word formula that tees up a blessing; *Baruch ata Adonai, elohenu melech haolam*... A literal, traditional translation of this blessing opening is "Praised are You, Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe..." Each Hebrew word fulfills a special function to form a channel the blessing can be carried through. Collectively, these words form a bridge into the moment or experience that we are marking.

Consider the framework below (inspired by Rabbi Marcia Prager and Jodi Balis) in which each word offers a clear function within the blessing. Reflecting on the meaning of the six word formula, you can explore your relationship between the lifecycle of food--from ground, to market, to kitchen--and your responsibility as a guardian of the land and beneficiary of all that it gives you. Then, compose your own unique blessing: Follow your contemplation and recitation of the six words with your own exclamation of what you are grateful for and what blessings you wish for. Watch [Jodi's video](#) for inspiration.

Baruch

Overflowing abundance.

The container or house. What structures do our food systems live?
What is creating scarcity and/or abundance?

Ata

Relationship.

How does the relationship to the food system and food in my community affect what I eat?
What relationships are required for a healthy food system?
What relationships do I have with my food providers?

Adonai

The face of the unknown.

We are at a pivotal point in climate history.
Where are we going that feels scary? Hopeful?

Eloheinu

Organization.

Creating efficient structures.
What systems (school, synagogue, local community, etc.) am I a part of that can support a healthy food system?

Melech

Common Vision and Goals.

What do we all want for our planet? For our food? For animals?

Haolam

Potential.

What can I do today? What can we do this year?