

Thanksgiving

BY RABBI DAVID WOLPE

When the Cantor repeats the *Amidah*, there is one prayer the congregation must say for itself — the *Modim*, the prayer of thanksgiving. One statement in the Talmud teaches that in the time of the Messiah, all the sacrifices will be abolished save one — the sacrifice of Thanksgiving. Even in the perfect age, there will be a need to offer thanks.

Gratitude is the essential religious emotion. When we first wake in the morning, we say "*modim anachnu Lah*" — we are grateful to You, God. Throughout the day, blessings awaken in us the sense of wonder and awe and gratitude for all we have been given. The Psalms, the prayers, the rituals we observe — all form a grand symphony of appreciation to the One whose creation is so filled with wonder.

The American holiday that speaks most directly to the Jewish spirit is Thanksgiving. To take goodness for granted is unJewish: This Thanksgiving be sure to include blessings of acknowledgment and appreciation for our many gifts. We are thankful for the bounty we have been given, for the family and friends who warm our celebrations, for the very ability, as Rav states in the Talmud, to give thanks.