יְיָ מִלֶּךְ גֵּאוּת לָבֵשׁ לָבֵשׁ יְיָ עֹז הִתְאַזָּר אַף תִּכּוֹן תֵּבֵל בַּל תִּמּוֹט׃
:(ספרדי) יְיָ מָלָךְ גֵּאוּת לָבֵשׁ לָבֵשׁ יְיָ עֹז הִתְאַזָּר אַף תִּכּוֹן תֵּבֵל בַּל תִּמּוֹט׃

Blessing for the Earth: We thank you, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ for the lovely, good and expansive world you gave to our ancestors; and for our liberation, יְיָ from a land of confinement, redeeming us from a house of slavery; and for the promise we made with each other – a promise we made part of our very being; and for your Torah that you teach us, and for your mysteries which you reveal to us, and for the life, grace and lovingkindness that you bestow on us, and for the food with which you constantly nourish and sustain us — every day, in every season, and in every moment...

For all this, יְיָ we thank and bless you. May your name be blessed by all life, by each creature in its own way, continually and for all time. As it is written, "and eat and be satisfied and bless יְיָ for the good land given you" (Devarim 8:10). Bless you, יְיָ for the earth and for its food.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ עַל הָאָרֶץ וְעַל מִחְיַת הָשָׂדֶה׃
:(דברים ח:ט) בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ עַל הָאָרֶץ וְעַל מִחְיַת הָשָׂדֶה׃

Blessing for All Earth's Creatures: Bless you, יְיָ our protector of the World, who nourishes the whole world with goodness, with grace, with lovingkindness, and with compassion. You feed all creatures because your lovingkindness is everywhere (Tehillim 136:25). Through your great goodness we have never been starved for food: May we never go starved for food, יְיָ for the sake of your great name – because you are the god that nourishes and sustains all beings. You are good to everything and you provide food for all your creatures. As it is written, "You open your hand, and satisfy the desires of all living creatures" (Tehillim 145:10). Bless you יְיָ, the nourisher of everything.

הָבִיאֵנוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֶל אַרְצֶךָ וְשַׂמְּחֵנוּ בְּבִנְיַן עִירֶךָ וְשָׁם נָבִיא לְךָ מִן הַזְّבָחִים וּמִן הַצֵּלָחוֹת בְּרָצוֹן עַל מִזְבַּחֲךָ כִּי אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וַאֲנַחְנוּ עֲבָדֶיךָ כַּכָּתוּב וְזָבַחְתָּ זְבָחִים וְשָׁמַחְתָּ לְפָנֶיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְהָיִיתָ אַךְ שָׂמֵחַ׃
:(דברים טז:יד-טו) הָבִיאֵנוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֶל אַרְצֶךָ וְשַׂמְּחֵנוּ בְּבִנְיַן עִירֶךָ וְשָׁם נָבִיא לְךָ מִן הַזְّבָחִים וּמִן הַצֵּלָחוֹת בְּרָצוֹן עַל מִזְבַּחֲךָ כִּי אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וַאֲנַחְנוּ עֲבָדֶיךָ כַּכָּתוּב וְזָבַחְתָּ זְבָחִים וְשָׁמַחְתָּ לְפָנֶיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְהָיִיתָ אַךְ שָׂמֵחַ׃

Blessing for Friends, Let us Bless! May the name יְיָ be blessed from here to the ends of the world!

May the name יְיָ be blessed from here unto the ends of the world! With the permission of my friends (teachers, parents), let us bless (וְנָבָרֵךְ) whose food we have eaten.

Bless (בָּרוּךְ) whose food we have eaten and through whose goodness our life depends!

:וּבְטוּבוֹ חָיִינוּ בָּרוּךְ הוּא וּמְבֹרָךְ׃ Bless him and bless his Name.

A Song of Terraces: When יְיָ restores us to Her dwelling place, Tzion, we will be like dreamers: our mouths filled with laughter, our tongues with ululations! All the other peoples of the world will say: יְיָ does amazing things for Her people. יְיָ does awesome things for us – we are so happy! Restore our lost tribes, יְיָ like (water in) desert streams. Those who plant with tears shall reap with joy. Though one may go to their field weeping, carrying a pail full of seeds, they shall return home with joy, bearing a mighty harvest. (Tehillim 126)

שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת בְּשׁוּב יְיָ אֶת שִׁיבַת צִיּוֹן הָיִינוּ כְּחֹלְמִים׃ אָז יִמָּלֵא שְׂחוֹק פִּינוּ וּלְשׁוֹנֵנוּ רִנָּה אָז יֹאמְרוּ בַגּוֹיִם הִגְדִּיל יְיָ לַעֲשׂוֹת עִם אֵלֶּה׃ הִגְדִּיל יְיָ לַעֲשׂוֹת עִמָּנוּ הָיִינוּ שְׂמֵחִים׃ שׁוּבָה יְיָ אֶת שְׁבִיתֵנוּ כַּאֲפִיקִים בַּנֶּגֶב׃ הַזֹּרְעִים בְּדִמְעָה בְּרִנָּה יִקְצֹרוּ׃ הָלוֹךְ יֵלֵךְ וּבָכֹה נֹשֵׂא מֶשֶׁךְ הַזָّרַע בֹּא יָבוֹא בְרִנָּה נֹשֵׂא אֲלֻמֹּתָיו׃

Blessing for Friends: May the name יְיָ be blessed from here unto the ends of the world! With the permission of my friends (teachers, parents), let us bless (וְנָבָרֵךְ) whose food we have eaten.

Bless (בָּרוּךְ) whose food we have eaten and through whose goodness our life depends!

:וּבְטוּבוֹ חָיִינוּ בָּרוּךְ הוּא וּמְבֹרָךְ׃ Bless him and bless his Name.

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Blessing for the Land: Bless you, יְיָ our Protector of the World, who nourishes the whole world with goodness, with grace, with lovingkindness, and with compassion. You feed all creatures because your lovingkindness is everywhere (Tehillim 136:25). Through your great goodness we have never been starved for food: May we never go starved for food, יְיָ for the sake of your great name – because you are the god that nourishes and sustains all beings. You are good to everything and you provide food for all your creatures. As it is written, "You open your hand, and satisfy the desires of all living creatures" (Tehillim 145:10). Bless you יְיָ, the nourisher of everything.

Blessing for the Land: We thank you, יְיָ for the lovely, good and expansive world you gave to our ancestors; and for our liberation, יְיָ from a land of confinement, redeeming us from a house of slavery; and for the promise we made with each other – a promise we made part of our very being; and for your Torah that you teach us, and for your mysteries which you reveal to us, and for the life, grace and lovingkindness that you bestow on us, and for the food with which you constantly nourish and sustain us — every day, in every season, and in every moment...

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Blessing for the People: Have compassion, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ upon Yisrael your people, upon the City of Peace – Yerushalayim, upon Tzion the place upon which your Kavod – your Glory – dwells, upon the kingdom of the house of David your chosen servant, and upon the great and holy house wherein your Ineffable Name was pronounced. • Eloheinu, our Protector, feed us, nourish us, sustain, support and relieve us. Speedily, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ relieve us from all our troubles. We beg you, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ let our bodies never be indebted to others. Rather, may we only ever rely on your helping hand that is full, open, holy and ample, so that we may never be ashamed nor ever be put to shame.

On Shabbat: Take pleasure, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ to nurture us through your mitzvot, and especially through the mitzvah of the seventh day, this great and holy Shabbat, since this day is great and holy before you, that we may relax and nap thereon in love in accordance with the command of your will. In your favor, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ grant us such relief that there be no trouble, grief or lamenting on the day of our rest. Let us, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ behold the consolation of Tzion your city, and the rebuilding of Yerushalayim your holy city, for you are the Master of rescue and of comfort.

רַחֵם יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ עָלֵינוּ וְעַל יִשְׂרָאֵל עַמֶּךָ וְעַל יְרוּשָׁלַיִם עִירֶךָ וְעַל צִיּוֹן מִשְׁכַּן כְּבוֹדֶךָ וְעַל מַלְכוּת בֵּית דָּוִד מְשִׁיחֶךָ וְעַל הַבַּיִת הַגָّדוֹל וְהַקָּדוֹשׁ שֶׁנִּקְרָא שִׁמְךָ עָלָיו: • אֱלֹהֵינוּ אָבִינוּ רְעֵנוּ זוּנֵנוּ פַּרְנְסֵנוּ וְכַלְכְּלֵנוּ וְהַרְוִיחֵנוּ וְהַרְוַח לָנוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְהֵרָה מִכָּל צָרוֹתֵינוּ וְנָא אַל תַּצְרִיכֵנוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ לֹא לִידֵי מַתְּנַת בָּשָׂר וָדָם וְלֹא לִידֵי הַלְוָאָתָם אֶלָּא [נוסח מאוחר: כִּי אִם] לְיָדְךָ הַמְّלֵאָה הַפְּתוּחָה הַקָּדוֹשָׁה וְהָרְחָבָה שֶׁלֹּא נֵבוֹשׁ וְלֹא נִכָּלֵם לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:

בשבת: רְצֵה וְהַחֲלִיצֵנוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּמִצְוֹתֶיךָ וּבְמִצְוַת יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי הַשַּׁבָּת הַגָּדוֹל וְהַקָּדוֹשׁ הַזֶּה. כִּי יוֹם זֶה גָּדוֹל וְקָדוֹשׁ הוּא לְפָנֶיךָ לִשְׁבֹּת בּוֹ וְלָנוּחַ בּוֹ בְּאַהֲבָה כְּמִצְוַת רְצוֹנֶךָ. בִּרְצוֹנְךָ הָנִיחַ לָנוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ שֶׁלֹּא תְהֵא צָרָה וְיָגוֹן וַאֲנָחָה בְּיוֹם מְנוּחָתֵנוּ וְהַרְאֵנוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּנֶחָמוֹת צִיּוֹן עִירֶךָ וּבְבִנְיַן יְרוּשָׁלַיִם עִיר קָדְשֶׁךָ כִּי אַתָּה הוּא בַּעַל הַיְשׁוּעוֹת וּבַעַל הַנֶּחָמוֹת:

On Yontov: אֱלֹהֵינוּ and אֱלֹהֵי of our Ancestors! May we rise and come before you and be accepted with the memory of our holy ancestors, with the memory of the moshiaḥ - the son of David your servant, of the your holy City of Peace, Yerushalayim, and of all your people - the community called Yisrael. (Please) save us with goodness, with grace and lovingkindness, with compassion, with life, and with peace, on this day of: (*Rosh Ḥodesh* | *Rememberance* [Rosh Hashanah] | *Festival of Matzah* | *Festival of the Sukkot* | *Festival of the First Harvest* | *Coming Together on the 8th* [to pray for rain!]). Remember us, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ for our well-being, and (please) keep us in mind for a blessing. Save our lives as you promised to save us with compassion. Spare us and be gracious to us; have mercy on us and save us; for our eyes look to you, because you are a loving and compassionate protector (cf. Neḥemiah 9:31).

וּבְנֵה יְרוּשָׁלַיִם עִיר הַקֹּדֶשׁ בִּמְהֵרָה בְיָמֵינוּ. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ בֹּנֶה בְרַחֲמָיו (וּבְשָׁלוֹם) יְרוּשָׁלָיִם. אָמֵן:

And rebuild the City of Peace, Yerushalayim, the holy city speedily in our days. Bless you יְיָ who with compassion (and peace) builds the City of Peace. Amen.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם הָאֵל אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵּנוּ אַדִּירֵנוּ בּוֹרְאֵנוּ גֹּאֲלֵנוּ יוֹצְרֵנוּ קְדוֹשֵׁנוּ קְדוֹשׁ יַעֲקֹב רוֹעֵנוּ רוֹעֵה יִשְׂרָאֵל הַמֶּלֶךְ הַטּוֹב וְהַמֵּטִיב לַכֹּל (אל) שֶׁבְּכָל יוֹם וָיוֹם הוּא הֵטִיב הוּא מֵטִיב הוּא יֵיטִיב לָנוּ: הוּא גְמָלָנוּ הוּא גּוֹמְלֵנוּ הוּא יִגְמְלֵנוּ (נ"א יִגְמוֹל בַּעֲדֵינוּ) לְעַד לְחֵן לְחֶסֶד וּלְרַחֲמִים וּלְרֶוַח הַצָּלָה וְהַצְלָחָה בְּרָכָה וּישׁוּעָה נֶחָמָה פַּרְנָסָה וְכַלְכָּלָה וְרַחֲמִים וְחַיִּים וְשָׁלוֹם וְכָל טוֹב וּמִכָּל טוֹב אַל יְחַסְּרֵנוּ:

הָרַחֲמָן. הוּא יִמְלֹךְ עָלֵינוּ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד: הָרַחֲמָן. הוּא יִתְבָּרַךְ בַּשָּׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ: הָרַחֲמָן. הוּא יִשְׁתַּבַּח לְדוֹר דּוֹרִים וְיִתְפָּאַר בָּנוּ לָנֶצַח נְצָחִים וְיִתְהַדַּר בָּנוּ לָעַד וּלְעוֹלְמֵי עוֹלָמִים: הָרַחֲמָן. הוּא יְפַרְנְסֵנוּ בְּכָבוֹד: הָרַחֲמָן. הוּא יִשְׁבּוֹר עֹל גּוֹיִם מֵעַל צַוָּארֵנוּ וְהוּא יוֹלִיכֵנוּ קוֹמְמִיּוּת לְאַרְצֵנוּ: הָרַחֲמָן. הוּא יִשְׁלַח בְּרָכָה מְרֻבָּה בַּבַּיִת זֶה וְעַל שֻׁלְחָן זֶה שֶׁאָכַלְנוּ עָלָיו: הָרַחֲמָן. הוּא יִשְׁלַח לָנוּ אֶת אֵלִיָּה הַנָּבִיא זָכוּר לַטּוֹב, וִיבַשֶּׂר לָנוּ [בְּמִהֵרָה] בְּשׂוֹרוֹת טוֹבוֹת יְשׁוּעוֹת וְנֶחָמוֹת: הָרַחֲמָן. הוּא יְבָרֵךְ אֶת [אָבִי מוֹרִי] בַּעַל הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה, וְאֶת [אִמִּי מוֹרָתִי] בַּעֲלַת הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה, אוֹתָם וְאֶת בֵּיתָם וְאֶת זַרְעָם וְאֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר לָהֶם • אוֹתָנוּ וְאֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר לָנוּ, כְּמוֹ שֶׁנִּתְבָּרְכוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אַבְרָהָם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב, בַּכֹּל מִכֹּל כֹּל, כֵּן יְבָרֵךְ אוֹתָנוּ כֻּלָּנוּ יַחַד בִּבְרָכָה שְׁלֵמָה. וְנֹאמַר אָמֵן:

מִמָּרוֹם [נוסח מאוחר: בַּמָּרוֹם] יִלְמְדוּ עֲלֵיהֶם וְעָלֵינוּ זְכוּת, שֶׁתְּהֵא לְמִשְׁמֶרֶת שָׁלוֹם, וְנִשָּׂא בְרָכָה מֵאֵת יְיָ וּצְדָקָה מֵאֱלֹהֵי יִשְׁעֵנוּ. וְנִמְצָא חֵן וְשֵׂכֶל טוֹב בְּעֵינֵי אֱלֹהִים וְאָדָם: [בשבת: הָרַחֲמָן. הוּא יַנְחִילֵנוּ לְיוֹם שֶׁכֻּלּוֹ שַׁבָּת וּמְנוּחָה לְחַיֵּי הָעוֹלָמִים:] הָרַחֲמָן. הוּא יְזַכֵּנוּ לִימוֹת הַמָּשִׁיחַ וּלְחַיֵּי עוֹלָם הַבָּא: [בשבת: מִגְדּוֹל יְשׁוּעוֹת מַלְכּוֹ וְעֹשֶׂה־חֶסֶד לִמְשִׁיחוֹ לְדָוִד וּלְזַרְעוֹ עַד־עוֹלָם (שמואל ב׳ כב:נא):] מַגְדִּיל יְשׁוּעוֹת מַלְכּוֹ וְעֹשֶׂה חֶסֶד ׀ לִמְשִׁיחוֹ לְדָוִד וּלְזַרְעוֹ עַד־עוֹלָם (תהלים יח:נא): עֹשֶׂה שָׁלוֹם בִּמְרוֹמָיו הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שָׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל (וְעַל כָּל יִשְׁמָאֵל וְעַל כָּל יוֹשְׁבֵי תֵבֵל). וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן:

Compassionate One bless each and every one of those here, their families, the seeds they carry, and all that is theirs. (Also bless) us and all that is ours: just as our ancestors Avraham, Yitzḥak and Yaakov were each blessed in every way throughout their lives, (cf. Bereishit 24:1; 27:33; 33:11) so may the Compassionate One bless all of us together with a perfect blessing – and let us say, Amen!

May the merit of our blessed ancestors advocate in Heaven on our behalf and bring us a lasting peace on Earth. May we receive a blessing from יְיָ and justice from the אֱלֹהֵי that intervenes at times of danger. May we be considered graceful and thoughtful in the vision of אֱלֹהִים and in the perception of our fellow earthlings (cf. Mishlei 3:4). (*On Shabbat*: May the Compassionate One give us a complete Shabbat, a gift to life everlasting.) May the Compassionate One make us worthy of the days of the moshiaḥ and of a life in the next Age. She intervenes (*on shabbat:* is a tower) for Her king, bringing lovingkindness to Her chosen servant, to David and to his descendants, throughout the world (Tehillim 18:51, II Shmuel 22:41). The One who makes peace in lofty places, may He make peace here below for us and for all Yisrael (for all Yishmael and for everyone in the world) – and let us say. Amen!

Be in awe of ye יְיָ you holy ones; for those in awe suffer on want. Young lions will suffer the pangs of hunger; but those who seek יְיָ shall not lack anything good (Tehillim 34:10-11). Give thanks unto יְיָ for goodness is His unconditional ceaseless lovingkindness (Tehillim 136:1). You open your hand, and satisfy the desire of every living thing (Tehillim 145:10). Blessed is the one that trusts in יְיָ and whose trust יְיָ is (Yirmiyahu 17:7). I have been young and now I am old; yet have I not seen a righteous person forsaken, nor their children begging for bread (Tehillim 37:25). יְיָ will give strength to people; יְיָ will bless his people with peace (Tehillim 29:11).

Binyamin the Shepherd made a sandwich and said, "Blessed is the Compassionate One (Cosmic Majesty) Source of this Food." Ray says that he had performed his obligation. (Bavli Berachot 40b).

Rabbi Yosi ben Rabbi Bun: "It is forbidden to live in a town in which there is no vegetable garden" (Yerushalmi Kiddushin 4:12).

Ray Yehudah said: Where do we find that the Birkat HaMazon is ordained in the Torah? Because it says (in Devarim 8:10:) "When you will eat and feel satisfied, you will bless יְיָ, for the good land G-d has given you" (Bavli Berachot 21a)

The essential idea is this: in feeling satisfied (*sava*), we become forgetful (*shakhekhan*). Through blessing (*brakha*), we cultivate mindful awareness so that we never forget all of that which our lives depend, the Earth and the interconnected Oneness of all life. As it says in Tehillim 16:8,

'וְנ׳ תמיד ה׳ לנגדי׳ כי מימיני בל אמוט׳

and in Devarim 4:35,

:הוא הראת לדעת כי יי׳ הוא האלהים אין עוד מלבדו׳

Unto you it was shown that you might know that יְיָ is הָאֱלֹהִים; there is nothing else besides.

שכשבן־אדם פגוע, צעקותיו נשמעים ברחבי התבל, כך שכשעץ נגדע, צעקותיו נשמעים ברחבי תבל.

human is hurt, cries of pain are heard throughout the world, so when a tree is chopped down, its cries are heard throughout the world." (Rabbi Yaakov ben Yitzḥak Ashkenazi, *Tsena Ur'ena* (258b), translated from Yiddish)

Rebbe Naḥman of Bratzlav was once traveling with his ḥasidim by carriage, and as it grew dark they came to an inn, where they spent the night. During the night Rebbe Naḥman began to cry out loudly in his sleep, waking everyone up in the inn. Everyone came running to see what happened. When he awoke, the first thing Rebbe Naḥman did was to take out a book he had brought with him. Then he closed his eyes and opened the book and pointed to a passage. And there it was written "Cutting down a tree before its time is like killing a soul."

Then Rebbe Naḥman asked the innkeeper if the walls of that inn had been built out of saplings cut down before their time. The innkeeper admitted that this was true, but how did the rabbi know?

Rebbe Naḥman said: "All night I dreamed I was surrounded by the bodies of those who had been murdered. I was very frightened. Now I know that it was the souls of the trees that cried out to me." (Rebbe Naḥman, retold by Howard Schwartz in *Trees, Earth, and Torah: A Tu B'Shvat Anthology* (1998).)

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, פּוֹקֵחַ עִוְרִים:

Awareness: Bless You YHVH Eloheinu, Cosmic Majesty, who gives sight to the blind. (cf. Tehillim 146:8 (יְיָ | פֹּקֵחַ עִוְרִים יְיָ זֹקֵף כְּפוּפִים יְיָ אֹהֵב צַדִּיקִים:)

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהַכֹּל נִהְיָה בִּדְבָרוֹ:

All Foods: Bless You YHVH Eloheinu, Cosmic Majesty, through whose word all things came into being.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, זוֹכֵר הַבְּרִית וְנֶאֱמָן בִּבְרִיתוֹ וְקַיָּם בְּמַאֲמָרוֹ:

Rainbows: Bless You YHVH Eloheinu, Cosmic Majesty, Who remembers the covenant and keeps its promise faithfully with all creation.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַטּוֹב וְהַמֵּטִיב:

Rain & Good News: Bless You YHVH Eloheinu, Cosmic Majesty, who is good and does good.

יִרְעַם הַיָּם וּמְלוֹאוֹ יַעֲלֹץ הַשָּׂדֶה וְכָל־אֲשֶׁר־בּוֹ: אָז יְרַנְּנוּ עֲצֵי הַיָּעַר מִלִּפְנֵי יְיָ כִּי־בָא לִשְׁפּוֹט אֶת־הָאָרֶץ:

Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof; Let the field exult, and all that is therein; Then shall the trees of the wood sing for joy, Before יְיָ for G!d is come to judge the earth.... (א Divrei Hayamim 16:32-33)

[כי האדם עץ השדה]. שחייו של אדם (אינו אלא) מן האילן. ר' ישמעאל אומר, מכאן חס המקום על פירות האילן, ק"ו מאילן. ומה אילן שעושה פירות, הזהירך הכתוב עליו; פירות עצמם, על אחת כמה וכמה. [ד"א,] [הא אם מעכבך] לבא מפניך במצור - קצצהו.

If not for the trees, human life could not exist. (Midrash Sifre on Devarim 20:19)

חֶסְרוֹנָן

All of life lives by virtue of every creature satisfying one another's need to live. We rely on each other and we depend on one another. Not one of us was created so self-sufficient that we could live independently of other life. Only the plants (including the trees) and some bacteria can make their own food out of the combination of soil minerals, water, sunlight, and oxygen available on our planet. All of life on Earth (including human beings) depends on plants and bacteria for their life. We were all created lacking, *ḥesronan* -- and through fulfilling each other's needs, all the diverse multiplicity of living creatures on Earth becomes interconnected in a living Oneness. • When we feel satisfied (*savata*) after eating (*akhalta*) we are obligated to bless (*berakhta*) G!d for the good Earth provided for us (*Devarim* 8:10). Additionally we are obligated to observe the mitzvah of *Bal Tashḥit* -- not to unnecessarily waste or needlessly destroy (*Devarim* 20:19). What do you think is the relationship between your feeling *savata* and being created with *ḥesronan*? And what is the connection between not wasting and being mindful about what we are lacking? In the first blessing of the *Birkat haMazon, in Borei Nefashot,* and in the blessing on flowering fruit trees, the idea of *ḥesronan* is explicit. Why do these blessings all speak of our lacking?

Borei Nefashot (after eating all foods except bread and baked goods):

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא נְפָשׁוֹת רַבּוֹת וְחֶסְרוֹנָן, עַל כֹּל מַה שֶׁבָּרָאתָ לְהַחֲיוֹת בָּהֶם נֶפֶשׁ כָּל חָי. בָּרוּךְ חֵי הָעוֹלָמִים:

Blessed be you יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ Cosmic Majesty, the One who created so many different living beings, all needing each other, to make one Life interwoven through them all, as one soul. Blessed be the Life of all worlds. (translation adapted from David Seidenberg, neohasid.org)

The Blessing on Flowering Fruit Trees (said only in the spring in the northern and southern hemispheres, on two or more flowering fruit trees)

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁלּוֹ חִסֵּר בָּעוֹלָמוֹ דָּבָר, וּבָרָא בוֹ בְּרִיּוֹת טוֹבוֹת וְאִילָנוֹת טוֹבִים, לְהַנּוֹת בָּהֶם בְּנֵי אָדָם:

Bless You יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ Cosmic Majesty, for in your cosmos there lacks nothing, and you have fashioned goodly creatures and trees that give people pleasure.

R' Yeshayahu Horowitz (d. 1630) taught, "While you are eating, think of how you are eating before G!d, and how there is no veil between you and the Holy One." We remind ourselves that we too are responsible to provide for others, and that we have some will over how to direct our desires when we say, פּוֹתֵחַ אֶת יָדֶךָ וּמַשְׂבִּיעַ לְכֹל חַי רָצוֹן, "Open your hand and satisfy all that Life desires!" When we open our hand, we are expressing lovingkindness and walking in the ways of G!d, as expressed in this midrash aggadah from *Bavli Ta'anit* 20b:

כי הוה כרך ריפתא הוה פתח לבביה ואמר כל מאן דצריך ליתי וליכול אמר רבא כולהו מצינא מקיימנא

When Rav Huna began to eat bread, he would open the doors of his house and and proclaim, "Whoever is in need of food may come in and eat at my table." (Bavli Ta'anit 20b)

Not only through satisfying each other's needs with *tzedakah*, but also in satisfying your own needs with consideration and thoughtfulness can you better yourself and the world. Eat food grown without harmful pesticides and fertilizers. Become a farmer. When you buy fuits, grains and vegetables tended with care by farmers who love the Earth, and conscious to minimize the harm and suffering of all living creatures, you are helping to heal this world. By fulfilling each other's needs with lovingkindness we help to express a more loving Nature. This is an important lesson. Rambam (d. 1204), R' Avraham Abulafia (d. after 1291), and R' Yosef Gikatalia (d. 1310) all taught that the hidden underlying meaning of the divine name *Elohim* is *ha-teva* – Nature. The nature (*ha-teva*) of this world can seem cruel and disturbing, but by cultivating the earth with love and with consideration for all of its creatures, we can bring about a more peaceful world.

וְגָר זְאֵב עִם־כֶּבֶשׂ וְנָמֵר עִם־גְּדִי יִרְבָּץ וְעֵגֶל וּכְפִיר וּמְרִיא יַחְדָּו וְנַעַר קָטֹן נֹהֵג בָּם: וּפָרָה וָדֹב תִּרְעֶינָה יַחְדָּו יִרְבְּצוּ יְלָדֵיהֶן וְאַרְיֵה כַּבָּקָר יֹאכַל תֶּבֶן: וְשָׁעַשַׁע יוֹנֵק עַל־חֻר פָּתֶן וְעַל מְאוּרַת צִפְעוֹנִי גָּמוּל יָדוֹ הָדָה: לֹא־יָרֵעוּ וְלֹא־יַשְׁחִיתוּ בְּכָל־הַר קָדְשִׁי כִּי־מָלְאָה הָאָרֶץ דֵּעָה אֶת־יְיָ כַּמַּיִם לַיָּם מְכַסִּים:

And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the nursing child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the basilisk's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of יְיָ, as the waters cover the sea. (Yeshayahu 11:6-9)

וְאוּלָם שְׁאַל־נָא בְהֵמוֹת וְתֹרֶךָּ וְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וַיַּגֵּד לָךָ: אוֹ שִׂיחַ לָאָרֶץ וְתֹרֶךָּ וְיִסַּפְּרוּ לְךָ דְּגֵי הַיָּם:

You need only ask the beasts and they will teach you; The birds of the sky and they will tell you; Or speak with the Earth and it will teach you; And the fish of the sea, they will tell you. (Iyov 12:7-8)

The root reason for this mitzvah (*bal tashchit*) is known (evident): it is in order to train our spirits to love what is good and beneficial and to cling to it; and as a result, good fortune will cling to us, and we will move well away from every evil thing and from every matter of destructiveness. This is the way of kindly pious people and the conscientiously observant; they love peace and are happy at the good fortune of people, and bring them near the Torah. They will not destroy even a mustard seed in the world and they are distressed at every ruination and spoilage they see; and if they are able to do any rescuing, they will save anything from destruction, with all their power. (*Sefer Hachinuch: D'varim* 20:19 number 529)

When you besiege a city for many days to wage war against it to capture it, do not destroy its trees, for from them will you eat, do not cut them down; for is the tree of the field an earthling that can run away from you? (*Devarim* 20:19)

[The Torah compares humans to trees] because, like humans, trees have the power to grow. And as humans have children, so trees bear fruit. And when a

In the following story retold by Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, Rabbi Yosef Yitzḥok Schneerson (1880-1950) recalled when he was a teenager walking in the fields near Bolivke with his father, Rabbi Sholom Dovber Schneersohn (1860-1920):

One day in the summer of 1896, I was strolling with my father in the field in the country resort of Bolivke, near Lubavitch. The crops were almost ripe; the grain and the grasses rippled in a gentle breeze.

"Behold Oldiness", my father declared. "Every movement of each single ear of grain and blade of grass was included in the Primeval Thought of Adam Kadmon. He who watches and gazes until the end of all generations. Divine Providence causes this thought to be realized for the sake of a specific Oldly intent." As we walked on, we found ourselves in a forest. I continued, proceeding deep in contemplation of what I had just been told concerning Divine Providence, overwhelmed by the gentleness and earnestness of my father's explanation.

As people often do, I plucked the leaf from a tree that I passed by without taking particular notice, and held it for a while in my hand. As I walked on, engrossed in thought, ever so often I tore off small pieces from the leaf and tossed them to the ground.

My father then said: "The ARI z"l teaches that...every leaf is a created being with Divine vitality which Old created with a specific intent and role in the ultimate purpose of creation...

"We were just discussing the subject of Divine Providence and without any thought at all you plucked the leaf, held it in your hand, played with it...tore it up into little pieces, and scattered it in various places.

"How can a person act so light-mindedly in relation to one of Old's creations? This leaf is something created by the Almighty for a particular reason. It has a Old-given vitality, it has a body and it has a life. In what way is the leaf's 'I' smaller than your 'I'?"...

(*Likkutei Dibburim*, Vol. I, page 177 in English (1957-1958))

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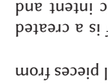

Even though you may think them superfluous in this world, creatures such as flies, bugs and gnats, have their allotted task in the scheme of creation, as it says 'And Old saw everything that Old had made, and behold, it was very good'. (*Berershit Rabbah* 10:7)

אלוהים - הוא הטבע. אם נתייחס אל הבריות בחמלה ובדאגה, אם נאכל מזון גדל בלי חומרי הדברה ודשנים, אם נהיה חקלאים, אם נקנה פרי, דגן וירק שגדלו בידי חקלאים אוהבי האדמה ומודעים לצורך לצמצם ככל האפשר את הנזק והסבל לכל בעלי החיים, אנו תורמים לרפואת העולם. בקיום חסרונות אחרים אנו מביעים אהבה יותר לטבע. זו חשיבות גדולה. הרמב"ם (1204), ר' אברהם אבולעפיה (אחרי 1291), ר' יוסף גיקטיליה (1310) כולם לימדו שהמשמעות הנסתרת בשם אלוהים היא הטבע. הטבע (הטבע) בעולם הזה יכול להיראות אכזרי ומטריד, אבל בטיפוח האדמה בחמלה ובמודעות לכל בעלי החיים אנו יכולים לגרום לעולם שלום יותר. אם אנו אוכלים מזון בלי חומרי הדברה ודשנים, אם אנו מגדלים פרי, דגן וירק, אם אנו מתחשבים בכל בעלי החיים, אנו תורמים לרפואת העולם. אם אנו מקיימים חסרונות אחרים אנו מביעים אהבה יותר לטבע. זו חשיבות גדולה