

Seder Birkat Hamazon

Appended with a sourcesheet on Jewish Ecology
born from the concepts of Bal Tashhit and Heshronan

prepared by Aharon N. Varady from existing sources

Nusah Ashkenaz (with noted variations)

Version 0.2.5 (July 2013)

The Open Siddur Project



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This translation relies heavily on the translation of Rabbi Simeon Singer from his [Authorised Daily Prayer Book of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Empire](#) (1890).

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The base of the liturgy for the Birkat Hamazon is indebted to the work of the Open Siddur Project and its contributing transcribers: Rabbi Rallis Wiesenthal and Shmueli Gonzales.

Preparing to Bless after Eating

The rabbinic source for the obligation to make the Birkat Hamazon:

אָמַר רַב יְהוּדָה מִנֵּינן לְבִרְכַת הַמָּזוֹן
לְאַחֲרֶיהָ מִן הַתּוֹרָה

Rav Yehudah said: Where do we find that blessing the food afterward is obligated from the Torah? Where it says (in

Devarim 8:10): “**When you will eat and feel satisfied you will bless**

שְׂנַעֲמַר וְאָכַלְתָּ
וְשָׂבַעְתָּ וּבֵרַכְתָּ.

[וְאַלֵּהֶיךָ] for the good Earth G!d has given you” (Talmud Bavli Berakhot 21a).

*A short kavvanah for the spiritual practice of making blessings after eating:*¹

The essential reason for blessing after eating is this: when we feel **שִׂבַע** (satiation) we experience **שִׁכְחָה** (forgetfulness) of that which sustains us.

By meditating, imagining, and articulating the Source of all **בְּרָכָה** (blessing, bountifulness), we can recover an expansive awareness of the interconnected ecology within which the lives of all living creatures on earth are sustained as One through a vast web of mutual **הִסְרוּנָן** (dependencies), made one as “a Oneness parallel to a Oneness” (Zohar, Terumah §163). This Oneness is revealed in the **שֵׁם כְּבוֹד** (the Name of his Glorious Kingdom) which struggles to signify the Unnameable, through the **מְלִכּוּתוֹ** (the Name of his Glorious Kingdom) which struggles to signify the Unnameable, through the **סוּד** of **פ'י** (gematria of 86) whereby the divine name **אֱלֹהִים** is writ in **הַטִּבַע** (the Nature).

May all our fellow creatures be liberated from each of their captivities through awareness of that which suffuses each and every thing in its nature, all behaving with compassion and consideration of each others needs, and living together in **צְדָקָה**.

Now *make your blessing*, because:

אַתָּה הָרַאָתָּ לְדַעַת כִּי יי הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים
אֵין עוֹד מִלְּבָדוֹ: (דברים ד:זלה)
לְפִיכֶךָ

“Unto you it was shown so that you might know that יי is
הָאֱלֹהִים; there is nothing else besides” (Devarim 4:35).

Therefore,

שׁוֹיֵתִי יי לְנֶגְדִי תָמִיד וְכוּ' (תהלים טז:ח)

“I will set יי before me always...” (Tehilim 16:8).

1 This kavvanah is very important to me. I have tried with difficulty to concisely state the sources supporting my understanding of Torah and of Tefillah. I only came to comprehend the *birkat hamazon* to this extent after learning the secret of the Afikoman while in chevrotah with Gabriel Botnick at the Conservative Yeshiva in the spring of 5772 (2012).

Borei Nefashot

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
בוֹרֵא נִפְשוֹת רַבּוֹת וְחִסְרוֹנֵן עַל כָּל מָה
שֶׁבְּרָא (תְּ) לְהַחְיֹת (בָּהֶם) נִפְּשׁ כָּל חַי:
בְּרוּךְ חַי הָעוֹלָמִים:

Bountiful are you, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ Cosmic Majesty, who creates a diverse multitude of creatures, and deficiencies² in all of them through which their beings are animated with the Spirit of Life. Bountiful is the Life of the Worlds.³

2 *Hesronan*, literally, absence or lacking. More on the importance of this concept for a particularly Jewish ecological philosophy appears in the appended sourcesheet.

3 *Siddur Sefos Yisroel*: Among the ראשונים in ראשון אשכנז we find the following; the אור זרוע and ראביה both have the text שֶׁבְּרָא. The הגהות מיימונית, תשב"ץ, and רא"ש write שֶׁבְּרָא. In the ראשונים we likewise find texts containing and omitting the word בָּהֶם.

Shir Hama'alot

בשבת וביום טוב:

שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת:

בְּשׁוּבַי יי אֶת-שִׁיבַת צִיּוֹן הֲיִינוּ
כְּזוֹלְמִים: אֲזַי יִמְלֵא שְׂזוֹק פִּינוּ
וְלִשְׁנֵנוּ רִנָּה אֲזַי יֵאמְרוּ בְּגוֹיִם
הַגְּדִיל יי לַעֲשׂוֹת עִם-אֱלֹהִים:
הַגְּדִיל יי לַעֲשׂוֹת עִמָּנוּ הֲיִינוּ
שְׂמֵחִים:

שׁוּבָה יי אֶת-שְׁבִיתֵנוּ פֶּאֶפְיָקִים
בְּנִיב: הַזֶּרְעִים בְּדַמְעָה בְּרִנָּה
יִקְצְרוּ: הֶלֶוֶף יִלְחֵד וּבִכָּה נִשְׂא
מִשְׁךְ-הַזֶּרַע בְּאֵי-יָבֵא בְּרִנָּה
נִשְׂא אֶל-מִתְיוֹ: (תהלים קכו)

On Shabbat and Yontov:

A Song of Terraces.⁴

When יי 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: “יי does amazing things for Her people.” יי does awesome things for us – we are ecstatic!

Restore our lost tribes, יי like (water in) desert wadis. 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. (Tehilim 126)⁵

Four traditional verses of Torah are sung to satisfy the obligation of learning Torah over a meal:

תְּהַלֵּל יי יְדָבָר פִּי, וַיְבָרֵךְ כָּל בְּשָׂר שֵׁם
קְדֹשׁוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעַד: (תהלים קמה:כא)

וְאֲנִינֵנוּ נְבָרֵךְ יְהוָה מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם,
הַלְלוּיָהּ: (תהלים קטו:יח)

הֲדוּ לִי כִּי טוֹב כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ:
(תהלים קלו:א)

מִי יִמְלֵל גְּבוּרוֹת יי וַיִּשְׁמִיעַ כָּל תְּהַלָּתוֹ:
(תהלים קו:ב)

My mouth shall speak the praise of יי and all creatures shall bless His holy name forever (Tehilim 145:21).

We will bless יהוָה now and forever, Halleluyah! (Tehilim 115:18)

Thank יי for יי is good, and always kind and loving (Tehilim 136:1).

Who can tell of the mighty acts of יי and make all divine praise be heard? (Tehilim 106:2)

4 Normally translated as “ascents,” by translating *ma'alot* as *terraces*, we refer to the landscape architecture familiar to Eretz Yisroel, in order to reference the permaculture value of pooling energy through passive design features. This idea was suggested by Julie Berger for sharing this insight which bridges the valence of sacred stairs and ascents with that of the lifegiving waters, and connect the beginning of the Psalm to its ending.

5 *Siddur Sefat Yisroel*: The source for reciting Psalms 126 is in the ספר סדר היום by רבי משה אבן מכיר, the author of the prayer מודעה אני. Psalms 126 is said in order to include דברי תורה at the table. The מנהג is to add two to four פסוקים afterward, as listed below. According to the ארי ז"ל, these פסוקים are said for kabbalistic reasons. It is unnecessary to say שיר המעלות at the סדר פסח. The old הגדות did not include it. Perhaps that is also because שיר המעלות was originally not included before the bensching on יום טוב. At the סדר since the whole הגדה is said - there is no need to add שיר המעלות.

An Additional verse:

וְעַבַדְתֶּם אֶת יְיָ אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וַיְבָרֶךְ אֶת-לֶחְמֵךָ וְאֶת-מִימֵיךָ וְהִסְרֵתִי מִזִּלְהָ מִקַּרְבְּךָ: (שמות כג:כה)

You shall worship יְיָ אֱלֹהֵיכֶם and G!d shall bless your bread and your water, and remove illness from your midst (Shemot 23:25).

Ettiquette for Initiating the Birkat Hamazon with Guests

When three or more people with understanding eat together, initiate the blessing with the following invitation. If there are more than ten present, add the divine name Eloheinu in parentheses.

חֲבֵרֵי נְבָרְךָ! Friends, let us Bless!

יְהִי שֵׁם יְהוָה מְבָרָךְ מֵעַתָּה וְעַד-עוֹלָם: (תהלים קיג:ב)
Everyone then says and you repeat after them:
May the name יְיָ be blessed from here to the ends of the world! (Tehilim 113:2)

**בְּרִשׁוֹת...
אָבִי מוֹרֵי \ אִמִּי מוֹרְתִי
כֹּהֲנִים
מוֹרְנֵי הָרַב
בְּעֵלֵת הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה
בְּעַל הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה
מְרֻנָּן וְרַבָּנָן וְרַבּוֹתֵי
חֲבֵרֵי נְבָרְךָ (אֱלֹהֵינוּ) שְׂאֲכַלְנוּ מִשְׁלוֹ:**
You then give respect to all of those in attendance:
With the permission of...
my mother, my teacher \ my father, my teacher,
the Kohanim present
our teacher the rabbi
the master (f.) of this house,
the master (m.) of this house,
all of our distinguished guests,
My friends, let us bless (אֱלֹהֵינוּ) from whose bounty we have eaten.

**בְּרוּךְ (אֱלֹהֵינוּ) שְׂאֲכַלְנוּ מִשְׁלוֹ וּבְטוּבוֹ
חַיֵּינוּ:**
Everyone then says and you repeat after them:
Bountiful is (אֱלֹהֵינוּ) the One whose food we have eaten, and through whose goodness our life depends!

בְּרוּךְ הוּא וּבְרוּךְ שְׁמוֹ:
Everyone then says together:
Blessed is G!d and bountiful G!d's Name.

Blessing for the Sustenance of All Earth's Creatures

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם הַזֶּה
אֵת הָעוֹלָם כֻּלּוֹ בְּטוֹבוֹ בְּחֵן בְּחֶסֶד
וּבְרַחֲמִים הוּא נֹתֵן לְכֹל לֶחֶם לְכָל־בְּשָׂר פִּי
לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶדוֹ (תהלים קלו:כה): וּבְטוֹבוֹ
הַגָּדוֹל תִּמְיד לֹא חָסַר לָנוּ וְאֵל יַחֲסֵר
לָנוּ מְזוֹן לְעוֹלָם וְעַד בְּעֵבוֹר שְׁמוֹ הַגָּדוֹל:
כִּי הוּא זֶן וּמַפְרִיֵס לְכָל וּמַטִּיב לְכָל
וּמַכִּין מְזוֹן לְכָל בְּרִיּוֹתָיו אֲשֶׁר בָּרָא.
כְּאֲמוֹר: פּוֹתַח אֶת־יָדְךָ וּמַשְׂבִּיעַ לְכָל־נִפְי
רְצוֹן (תהלים קמח:טז): בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי הַזֶּה
אֵת הַכֹּל:

Bountiful are you, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ 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 and always (Tehilim 136:25). Through your great goodness we have never been lacking for food: May we never ever be lacking – for the sake of your great name – because you nourish and sustain all beings, you are so good to everything, and you provide food for all your creatures. As it is written, “You open your Yud,⁶ and satisfy the desires of all living creatures” (Tehilim 145:16).⁷ Bountiful are you יי the nourisher of all.

6 From a meditation of Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan on Tehilim 145:16: don't read *yadekha* (your hand), read *yodekha* (your yud) – the *yud* of the Tetragrammaton corresponding to *Keter Elyon*, the root of the Tree of Life.

7 *Siddur Sefas Yisroel*: According to the רמב"ם and the גוסס הספרדים, the verse פותח את ירך is said. In the מחזור נוסח אשכנז which primarily follows נוסח צרפת the פסוק appears; in נוסח אשכנז it does not.

Blessing for the Earth and our Freedom

נוֹדָה לָךְ יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ עַל שֶׁהִנְחַלְתָּ
לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ אֶרֶץ חֲמֻדָּה טוֹבָה וּרְחֻבָּה וְעַל
שֶׁהוֹצַאתָנוּ יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם
וּפְדִיתָנוּ מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים וְעַל בְּרִיתְךָ
שֶׁחֲתַמְתָּ בְּבִשְׁרָנוּ וְעַל תּוֹרַתְךָ שֶׁלַּמְדָתָנוּ
וְעַל חֻקֶיךָ שֶׁהוֹרְעָתָנוּ וְעַל חַיִּים חַן וְחֶסֶד
שֶׁחֻנְנָתָנוּ וְעַל אֲכִילַת מַזוֹן שְׂאֵתָה זֶן
וּמִפְרֻס אֹתָנוּ תָּמִיד בְּכֹל יוֹם וּבְכֹל עֵת
וּבְכֹל שָׁעָה.

We thank you, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ for the lovely, good and expansive world you gave to our ancestors; and for our liberation, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ from a land of confinement, redeeming us from a house of slavery; and for the promise we made with each other — a promise you 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...

On Hanukkah and Purim, or a civic holiday of Thanksgiving and Freedom, one adds the following:

We thank you also for the miracles, for the redemption, for your mighty deeds, rescuing acts, and wonders, you made for our ancestors in days of old, in this season.

On Hanukkah:

In the days of the Hashmonean, Mattityahu son of Yohanan, the High Priest, and his sons, when the iniquitous power of the Syrian-Greeks rose against your people Yisroel to make them forgetful of your Torah, and to force them to transgress the statutes you commanded them. Then, in your abundant mercy, you rose up for them in their time of trouble; you plead their cause, you judged their complaint, you avenged their wrong; you delivered the strong into the hands of the weak, the many into the hands of the few, the impure into the hands of the pure, the wicked into the hands of the righteous, and the arrogant into the hands of those who occupied themselves in your Torah. For yourself you made a great and holy name in your world, and for your people Yisroel you didst work a great deliverance and redemption as at this day. And thereupon your children came into the innermost of your house, cleansed your temple, purified your sanctuary, kindled lights in your holy courts, and appointed these eight days of Hanukkah (house warming⁸) in order to give thanks and praises unto your great name.

וְעַל הַנְּסִים וְעַל הַפְּרָקָן וְעַל הַגְּבוּרוֹת
וְעַל הַתְּשׁוּעוֹת וְעַל הַנִּפְלְאוֹת שֶׁעָשִׂיתָ
לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ בַּיָּמִים הַהֵם בְּזִמְנֵי הַזֶּה:

בַּיָּמִי מִתְתַּיְהוּ בֶן יוֹחָנָן כֹּהֵן גָּדוֹל,
חֲשֵׁמוֹנָאִי וּבָנָיו, כְּשֶׁעָמְדָה מַלְכוּת יוֹן
הַרְשָׁעָה, עַל עַמּוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל, לְהַשְׁכִּיחַם
תּוֹרַתְךָ וּלְהַעֲבִירָם מִחֻקֵי רְצוֹנְךָ, וְאֵתָה
בְּרַחֲמֶיךָ הַרְבִּיּוֹם, עָמַדְתָּ לָהֶם בְּעֵת
צָרָתָם, רִבַּתְּ אֶת רִיבָם, דָּנַתְּ אֶת דִּינָם,
נִקְמַתְּ אֶת נִקְמָתָם, מְסַרְתָּ גְבוּרִים בְּיַד
חֲלָשִׁים, וְרַבִּים בְּיַד מְעֻטִים, וּטְמֵאִים בְּיַד
טְהוּרִים, וְרָשָׁעִים בְּיַד צַדִּיקִים, וְזָרִים
בְּיַד עוֹסְקֵי תּוֹרַתְךָ, וְלָךְ עָשִׂיתָ שֵׁם גָּדוֹל
וְקָדוֹשׁ בְּעוֹלָמְךָ, וּלְעַמּוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל עָשִׂיתָ
תְּשׁוּעָה גְדוֹלָה וּפְרָקָן כְּתִיוֹם הַזֶּה: וְאַחֲרַי
כָּךְ בָּאוּ בָנֶיךָ לְדַבֵּר בֵּיתְךָ, וּפָנּוּ אֶת
הַיְכָלְךָ, וְטַהְרוּ אֶת מִקְדָּשְׁךָ, וְהִדְלִיקוּ
נֵרוֹת בְּחֻצְרוֹת קִדְשֶׁךָ, וְקָבְעוּ שְׁמוֹנֵת יָמֵי
חֲנֻכָּה אֵלֶינוּ, לְהוֹדוֹת וּלְהַלֵּל לְשִׁמְךָ
הַגָּדוֹל:

8 The translation of Hanukkah as housewarming is from Reb Zalman Schachter-Shalomi's *Siddur Tehillat Hashem Yideaber Pi* available at the Open Siddur Project.

On Purim:

In the days of Mordehai and Esther, in Shushan the capital, when the wicked Haman rose up against them, and sought to destroy, to slay, and to cause all the Jews to perish, both young and old, little children and women, on one day, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar, and to prey upon their belongings (Esther 3:13). Then in your abundant mercy you brought his counsel to nought, frustrated his design, and returned his evil upon his own head; and they hung him and his sons upon the tree.

On the event of a civic holiday celebrating freedom, independence, or thanksgiving:⁹

We worried that we would be grasshoppers in the midst of Giants;¹⁰ but Yours is the Land, and the fulness thereof,¹¹ and we were born forth from the Earth¹² with the responsibility to cultivate and preserve her.¹³ The Land screams silently from the blood of our brothers it has soaked up,¹⁴ while we cry with thanks for the bounty and sanctuary we have found in her. Bountiful is the one who preserves the Earth for those who share in its bounty.

בִּימֵי מֶרְדֵּכַי וְאֶסְתֵּר בְּשׁוּשַׁן הַבְּיֵרָה, כְּשֶׁעָמַד עֲלֵיהֶם הַמֶּן הָרָשָׁע. בְּקֶשׁ לְהַשְׁמִיד לְהַרְגוֹ וּלְאַבֵּד אֶת כָּל הַיְּהוּדִים, מִזֶּעֶר וְעַד זָקֵן, טַף וְנָשִׁים, בַּיּוֹם אֶחָד, בְּשָׁלְשָׁה עָשָׂר לְחֹדֶשׁ שְׁנַיִם עָשָׂר, הוּא זֹדֶשׁ אֶדְר וּשְׁלָלָם לְבוּז (אֶסְתֵּר ג:יג). וְאַתָּה בְּרַחֲמֶיךָ הַרְבִּים הַפְּרַתְּ אֶת עֲצָתוֹ, וְקִלְקַלְתָּ אֶת מַחְשַׁבְתּוֹ. וְהִשְׁבוֹתָ לוֹ גְּמוּלוֹ בְּרֹאשׁוֹ. וְתָלוּ אוֹתוֹ וְאֶת בָּנָיו עַל הָעֵץ.

אנו דואנים שנהיה חגבים בעיצומו של ענקים. אבל שלך הארץ ומלוואה תבל וישיבי בה. ושנולדנו מהארץ עם האחריות לעבדה ולשמרה אותה. הארץ צורחת בשקט מהדם של אחינו שהוא ספג. בזמן שאנחנו בוכים עם תודה על השפע והמקלט שמצאנו בה. השופע הוא זה שמשמר את הארץ למי שחולקים בשפע שלה.

For all this, יי אלהינו 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 יי for the good Earth given you” (Devarim 8:10). Bountiful are you יי for the Earth and for its sustenance.

ועל הכל יי אלהינו אנחנו מודים לך ומברכים אותך ותברך שמה בפי [נ"א]: בפה] כל חי תמיד לעולם ועד: פכתוב: וְאָכַלְתָּ וְשָׂבַעְתָּ וּבֵרַכְתָּ אֶת־יְיָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ עַל־הָאָרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַן־לְךָ (דברים ח:י): ברוך אתה יי על הארץ ועל המזון:

9 This prayer was originally self-published at the [Open Siddur Project](#) for Thanksgiving Day 2012. I prefer this prayer over other prayers for Yom Ha'atzmaut.
10 Numbers 13:33
11 Psalms 24:1, cf. Psalm 50:11, and Deuteronomy 10:14
12 Psalms 139:13
13 Genesis 2:15
14 Genesis 4:10

Blessing for a Just, Peaceful, and Open Society

רחם יי אלהינו עלינו ועל ישראל עמך ועל ירושלים עירך ועל ציון משכן כבודך ועל מלכות בית דוד משיחך ועל הבית הגדול והקדוש שנקרא שמך עליו:

אלהינו אבינו רענו [בשבת: רוענו] זוננו פרוסנו וכלכלנו והרויחנו והרנח לנו יי אלהינו מהרה מכל צרותינו ונא אל תצריכנו יי אלהינו לא לידי מתנת בשר ודם ולא לידי הלואתם אלא [נ"א: פי אם] לידך המלאה הפתוחה הקדושה והרחבה שלא נבוש ולא נכלם לעולם ועד:

Have compassion, יי אלהינו on us and upon Yisrael your people, on the City of Peace (Yerushalayim) and upon Tzion the place upon which your Kavod – your Glory – dwells, on the kingdom of the house of David your chosen servant and upon the great and holy house wherein your Ineffable Name was pronounced.

אלהינו – our Protector, feed us, nourish us, sustain, support and relieve us. Speedily, יי אלהינו relieve us from all our troubles. We beg you, יי אלהינו 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.

בשבת: רצה ותחליצנו יי אלהינו במצותיך ובמצות יום השביעי השבת הגדול והקדוש הזה. כי יום זה גדול וקדוש הוא לפניך לשבת בו ולנוח בו באהבה כמצות רצונך. ברצונך הגיח לנו יי אלהינו שלא תהא צרה ויגון ואנחה ביום מנוחתנו ותרענו יי אלהינו בנחמות ציון עירך ובבנין ירושלים עיר קדשך כי אתה הוא בעל הישועות ובעל הנחמות:

On Shabbat: Take pleasure, יי אלהינו 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, יי אלהינו grant us such relief that there be no trouble, grief or lamenting on the day of our rest. Let us, יי אלהינו 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.

ביום טוב: אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו. יעלה ויבא ויגיע ויראה וירצה וישמע ויפקד ויזכר זכרוננו ופקדוננו וזכרון אבותינו. וזכרון משיח בן דוד עבדך. וזכרון ירושלים עיר קדשך. וזכרון כל עמך בית ישראל לפניך.

On Yontov: אלהי and אלהינו 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 Moshiah – the son of David your servant, of the your holy City of Peace, Yerushalayim, and of all your people – the community called Yisrael.

לפליטה ולטובה ולחן ולחסד ולרחמים ולחיים ולשלום...

(Please) save us with goodness, with grace and lovingkindness, with compassion, with life, and with peace, on this day of:

ביום ראש החדש הזה:

the New Moon [*Rosh Hodesh*].

ביום הזכרון הזה:

Remembrance [*Rosh Hashanah*].

ביום חג המצות הזה:

the Festival of *Matzah*.

בְּיוֹם חַג הַסֻּכּוֹת הַזֶּה:

the Festival of the *Sukkot*.

בְּיוֹם חַג הַשְּׂבֻעוֹת הַזֶּה:

the Festival of the First Harvest.

בְּיוֹם שְׁמִינֵי עֶצְרַת הַחַג הַזֶּה:

the Gathering on the Eighth.

זְכֹרֵנוּ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ בּוֹ לְטוֹבָה (אָמֵן)
וּפְקֹדֵנוּ בּוֹ לְבִרְכָה (אָמֵן) וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ בּוֹ
לְחַיִּים טוֹבִים (אָמֵן) וּבְדַבַּר יְשׁוּעָה
וְרַחֲמִים חוֹס וְחַנּוּן וְרַחֵם עָלֵינוּ וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ.
כִּי אֱלֹהֶיךָ עֵינֵינוּ, כִּי אֵל מֶלֶךְ חַנּוּן וְרַחוּם
אַתָּה:

Remember us, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ for our well-being, (Amen) and (please) keep us in mind for a blessing. (Amen.) Save our lives as you promised to save us with compassion. (Amen.) 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.¹⁵

וּבְנֵה יְרוּשָׁלַם עִיר הַקִּדְשׁ בְּמַהֲרָה
בְּיָמֵינוּ. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ בְּנֵה בְּרַחֲמֶיךָ
[וּבְשָׁלוֹם] יְרוּשָׁלַם. אָמֵן:

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

Blessing for Goodness Sake

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם הָאֵל
אָבִינוּ מֶלְכֵנו אֲדִירֵנוּ בּוֹרְאֵנוּ גֹאֲלֵנוּ
יוֹצֵרֵנוּ קְדוֹשֵׁנוּ קְדוֹשׁ יַעֲקֹב רוֹעֵנוּ רוֹעֵה
יִשְׂרָאֵל הַמֶּלֶךְ הַטּוֹב וְהַמְּטִיב לְכָל
שֶׂבֶבְלֵ יוֹם וַיּוֹם הוּא הַטֵּיב הוּא מְטִיב
הוּא יֵטִיב לָנוּ: הוּא גִמְלָנוּ הוּא גּוֹמְלָנוּ
הוּא יְגַמְלָנוּ [נִיֵּא יְגַמּוֹל בְּעַדֵינוּ] לְעַד לְחַן
לְחֶסֶד וּלְרַחֲמִים וּלְרַחֲנוּת הַצֶּלֶה וְהַצִּלָּה
בְּרַכָּה וַיְשׁוּעָה נַחֲמָה פְּרִיָסָה וְכַלְפָּלָה
וְרַחֲמִים וְחַיִּים וְשָׁלוֹם וְכָל טוֹב וּמְכַל
טוֹב אֵל יַחֲסֵרֵנוּ:

Bountiful are you אֱלֹהֵינוּ Protector of the World, the
god that is our Guide, our Majesty, our Mighty One, our
Creator, our Redeemer, our Maker, our Holy One, the
Holy One of Yaakov, our Shepherd, the Shepherd of
Yisrael. O King who is kind and acts kindly with all
creation, day by day you act kindly, are kind, and will be
kind with us. You brought, you bring, and you will always
bring goodness to us – with grace, lovingkindness,
compassion and relief, deliverance and prosperity, blessing
and salvation, with comfort and food, compassion, life,
and peace – you bring everything that is really really
good. For everything good that we need let us never be
needy.¹⁶

16 From Talmud Bavli Gittin 57a:

אשקא קא דריספק חריב ביתר דהוו נהיגי כי הוה מתיליד ינוקא שתלי ארזא ינוקתא שתלי תורניתא וכי הוו מינסבי
קייצי להו ועבדו גננא יומא חד הוה קא חלפא ברתיא דקיסר אתבר שקא דריספק קצו ארזא ועיילו לה אתו
נפול עלייהו מחונהו אתו אמרו ליה לקיסר מרדו בכ יהודאי אתא עלייהו:

Through the axle of a carriage Betar was destroyed. It was the custom when a boy was born to plant a cedar tree and when a
girl was born to plant a pine tree, and when they married, the tree was cut down and a wedding canopy made of the
branches. One day the daughter of the Emperor was passing when the axle of her carriage broke, so they lopped some
branches off a cedar tree and brought it to her [to repair her carriage]. The Jews thereupon fell upon them and beat them.
They reported to the Emperor that the Jews were rebelling, and he marched against them.

From *Eikha Rabba* 4:

הורגים בהם עד ששקע הסוס בדם עד חושמו והיה הדם מנגלגל אבנים של ארבעים סאה והולך בים ארבעה מילין
ואם תאמר שקרובה לים והלא רחוקה מן הים ארבעה מילין וכרם גדול היה לו לאדריאנוס שמונה עשר מיל
על שמונה עשר מיל כמן טבריא לציפורי והקיפו גדר מהרוגי ביתר ולא גזר עליהם שיקברו עד שעמד מלך
אחד וגזר עליהם וקברום ר' הונא אמר יום שניתנו הרוגי ביתר לקבורה נקבעה הטוב והמטיב הטוב שלא
הסריחו והמטיב שנתנו לקבורה

They slew the inhabitants until the horses waded in blood up to their nostrils, and the blood rolled along stones of the size of
forty *se'ah*^[18] and flowed into the sea, staining it for a distance of four *mil*. Should you say that Betar is close to the sea;
was it not in fact four miles distant from it? Now Hadrian possessed a large vineyard eighteen *mil* square, as far as from
Tiberias to Tzipori, and they surrounded it with a fence consisting of the slain of Betar. Nor was it decreed that they should
be buried until a certain king arose and ordered their burial. Rabbi Huna said: On the day when the slain of Betar were
allowed burial, the blessing, “*hatov v’hameitiv* | Who is kind and deals kindly” was instituted – “*hatov* — *Who is kind*”
because the bodies did not rot, and “*v’hameitiv* — *Who deals kindly*” because they were allowed burial.

May the Compassionate One...¹⁷

- הַרְחֵמֵן. הוּא יִמְלֹךְ עָלֵינוּ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.
May the Compassionate One's majesty watch over us for ever and ever.
- הַרְחֵמֵן. הוּא יִתְבָּרַךְ בְּשָׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ.
May the Compassionate One be blessed throughout the cosmos and on this Earth.
- הַרְחֵמֵן. הוּא יִשְׁתַּבַּח לְדוֹר וָדוֹר וְיִתְפָּאֵר בְּנוֹ לְעַד לְנֶצַח נְצָחִים וְיִתְהַדָּר בְּנוֹ לְעַד וּלְעוֹלָמֵי עוֹלָמִים.
May the Compassionate One be praised throughout all generations, glorified among us at all times, and honored among us in every age and in every world.
- הַרְחֵמֵן. הוּא יַפְרִינְסֵנוּ בְּכָבוֹד.
May the Compassionate One grant us an honorable livelihood.
- הַרְחֵמֵן. הוּא יִשְׁבּוֹר עַל גְּלוּת מַעַל צְוָאֲרָנוּ וְהוּא יוֹלִיכֵנוּ קוֹמְמִיּוֹת לְאָרֶצְנוּ.
May the Compassionate One remove the yoke of alienation from our necks, reconnecting us with the Earth we rely upon.¹⁸
- הַרְחֵמֵן. הוּא יִשְׁלַח בְּרָכָה מְרֻבָּה בְּבֵית הַזֶּה וְעַל שְׁלֹחַן זֶה שֶׁאֲכַלְנוּ עָלָיו.
May the Compassionate One send a plentiful blessing upon this dwelling place, and upon this table at which we have eaten.
- הַרְחֵמֵן. הוּא יִשְׁלַח לָנוּ אֶת אֱלִיָּה הַנְּבִיא זְכוּר לְטוֹב, וַיְבַשֵּׁר לָנוּ [בְּמַהְרָה] בְּשׂוֹרוֹת טוֹבוֹת יְשׁוּעוֹת וְנַחֲמוֹת.
May the Compassionate One send us Eliyahu the prophet – may he be remembered for good – who will bring us good news, salvation, and comfort.
- הַרְחֵמֵן. הוּא יְבָרֵךְ אֶת [אָבִי מוֹרִי] בְּעַל הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה, וְאֶת [אִמִּי מוֹרִתִי] בְּעַלֵּת הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה, אוֹתָם וְאֶת בֵּיתָם וְאֶת זְרַעָם וְאֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר לָהֶם...
May the Compassionate One bless each and every one of those here, their families, the seeds they carry, and all that is theirs.
- אוֹתָנוּ וְאֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר לָנוּ, כְּמוֹ שֶׁנִּתְבָּרַכוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אַבְרָהָם וְשָׂרָה, יִצְחָק וְרַבְּקָה, יַעֲקֹב וְלֵיאָה רַחֵל בְּלֵהָה וְזִלְפָּה, בְּכָל מְכַל כָּל, בֶּן יְבָרֵךְ אוֹתָנוּ כְּלָנוּ יַחַד בְּבָרָכָה שְׁלֵמָה. וְנֹאמֵר אָמֵן!
(Also bless) us and all that is ours: just as our ancestors Avraham and Sarah, Yitshak and Rivka, Yaakov and Raḥel, Leah, Bilhah, and Zilpah, were each blessed in every way throughout their lives,¹⁹ so may the Compassionate One bless all of us together with a perfect blessing – and let us say, Amen!
- מְמָרוֹם [נ"א: בְּמָרוֹם] יִלְמְדוּ עָלֵיהֶם וְעָלֵינוּ זְכוּת, שֶׁתְּהֵא לְמִשְׁמֶרֶת שְׁלוֹם.
May the merit of our blessed ancestors advocate in Heaven on our behalf and bring us a lasting peace on Earth. May

17 *Siddur Sefas Yisroel*: Until three hundred years ago, **ברכת המזון** was said only by the leader and all present fulfilled their obligation through him. Later, when copies of **ברכת המזון** became more prevalent, each person began reciting **ברכת המזון** on their own. As a result, two different **מנהגים** evolved - 1) everyone said (sang) **ברכת המזון** together (no **אמן** is therefore required), or 2) one recites **ברכת המזון** aloud and everyone follows along silently (although people are particular to finish the **ברכה** before the leader to answer **אמן** to his **ברכה**, no such insistence for the **הרחמן** exists). One is required to say all the **הרחמים** which are printed, (both on **שבת** and on weekdays). The **רוקח** says that one may add to the **הרחמים** if one wishes, not that one may disregard them entirely.

18 Here, I translate **גלות** as a psychological state of “alienation” which will certainly remain for us in every land, including Eretz Yisroel, until take responsibility for the first mitzvoh, *l'ovdah u'l'shomrah*– to cultivate and to preserve the Earth, as the compassionate Earthling gardeners G'd born us from.

19 cf. Bereishit 24:1; 27:33; 33:11

וְנִשָּׂא בְרָכָה מֵאֵת יי וְצָדָקָה מֵאֵלֵהי
יִשְׁעֵנוּ. וְנִמְצָא חַן וְשִׂכָּל טוֹב בְּעֵינֵי
אֱלֹהִים וְאָדָם.

we receive a blessing from יי 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.²⁰

בשבת:
הַרְחֵמֵן. הוּא יִנְחִילֵנוּ לְיוֹם שְׁפָלוֹ שַׁבָּת
וּמְנוּחָה לְחַיֵּי הָעוֹלָמִים.

On Shabbat:
May the Compassionate One grant us a complete Shabbat, a gift to life everlasting.²¹

ביום טוב:
הַרְחֵמֵן הוּא יִנְחִילֵנוּ לְיוֹם שְׁפָלוֹ טוֹב:

On Yontov:
May the Compassionate One grant to us the day that is completely excellent!²²

בראש חודש:
הַרְחֵמֵן. הוּא יִתְדַשׁ עָלֵינוּ אֶת הַחֹדֶשׁ
הַזֶּה לְטוֹבָה וְלִבְרָכָה:

On Rosh Hodesh:
May the Compassionate One renew upon us this month for goodness and bounty.²³

הַרְחֵמֵן. הוּא יוֹצֵנוּ לְיָמֵי הַמָּשִׁיחַ וְלְחַיֵּי
עוֹלָם הַבָּא:

May the Compassionate One make us worthy of the days of the moshiah and of a life in the next Age.

בשבת וביום טוב:
מִגְדֹּל יִשׁוּעוֹת מֶלְכּוֹ וְעֵשָׂה זָסֵד
לְמִשִּׁיחוֹ לְדָוִד וְלְצִדְעוֹ עַד-עוֹלָם: (שמואל
ב' כב:נא)

On Shabbat, Rosh Hodesh, and Yontov:
She is a tower for Her king, bringing lovingkindness to Her chosen servant, to David and to his descendants, throughout the world (II Shmuel 22:41).

בחול: מִגְדֹּל יִשׁוּעוֹת מֶלְכּוֹ וְעֵשָׂה זָסֵד
לְמִשִּׁיחוֹ לְדָוִד וְלְצִדְעוֹ עַד-עוֹלָם: (תהלים
יח:נא)

On weekdays: She intervenes for Her king, bringing lovingkindness to Her chosen servant, to David and to his descendants, throughout the world (Tehilim 18:51).

עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמַרְוֵמֵי הוּא יַעֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם
עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל (וְעַל כָּל יוֹשְׁבֵי
הַכֵּל). וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

The One who makes peace in lofty places, may He make peace here below for us and for all Yisrael (and for everyone in the world) – and let us say. Amen!

20 cf. Mishlei 3:4

21 *Siddur Sefos Yisroel*: In general, all of the special הַרְחֵמֵן are not very ancient, (unlike the standard הַרְחֵמֵן which date from the time of the גְּאוּנִים), therefore the רִיקָה says, there is no reason to be stringent about their recitation.

22 *Ibid*: הַרְחֵמֵן הוּא יִנְחִילֵנוּ לְיוֹם שְׁפָלוֹ טוֹב is said only on יָמִים טוֹב and not on חוֹל הַמוֹעֵד, which is not considered טוב in this regard (חַוֹת יֵאִיר) (רב יוספה שמש).

23 *Ibid*: The לקט יושר cites that the תְּרוּמַת הַדָּשֵׁן composed the הַרְחֵמֵן for ראש חודש that we say today.

Concluding Verses from the Torah:²⁴

יִרְאוּ אֶת־יְיָ קְדוֹשֵׁי כִּי אֵין מוֹזְסוֹר לִירְאָיו: כְּפִירִים רָשׁוּ וְרַעְבוּ וְדֹרְשֵׁי יְיָ לֹא־יִחְסְרוּ כֹל־טוֹב: (תהלים לד:י-יא)	Be in awe of יְיָ you holy ones; for those in awe suffer no want. Young lions will suffer the pangs of hunger: but those who seek יְיָ shall not lack anything good (Tehilim 34:10–11).
הוֹדוּ לַיְיָ כִּי־טוֹב כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶדּוֹ: (תהלים קמה:טז)	Give thanks unto יְיָ for goodness is His unconditional ceaseless lovingkindness (Tehilim 136:1).
פּוֹתַח אֶת־יָדָךְ וּמְשַׁבֵּעַ לְכָל־חַי רָצוֹן: (תהלים קמה:טז)	You open your hand, and satisfy the desire of every living thing (Tehilim 145:16).
בָּרוּךְ הַגֹּבֵר אֲשֶׁר יִבְטַח בְּיְיָ וְהָיָה יְיָ מִבְטָחוֹ: (ירמיהו יז:ז)	Blessed is the one that trusts in יְיָ and whose trust יְיָ is (Yirmiyahu 17:7).
נָעַר הָיִיתִי גַם־זָקֵנְתִי וְלֹא־רָאִיתִי צָדִיק נִשְׁכָּח וְזָרְעוֹ מִבְּקֶשׁ־לֶחֶם: (תהלים לז:כה)	I have been young and now I am old; yet have I not seen a righteous person forsaken, nor their children begging for bread (Tehilim 37:25).
יְיָ עֹז וְיְיָ לְעִמּוֹ יִתֵּן יְיָ וְיִבְרַךְ אֶת־עַמּוֹ בְּשָׁלוֹם: (תהלים כט:יא)	יְיָ will give strength to people; יְיָ will bless his people with peace (Tehilim 29:11).

Some Additional Torah I learn for after the Birkat Hamazon:

בנימין רעיא כרך ריפתא, ואמר: בְּרִיךְ רַחֲמָנָא (מְלֻכָא דְעֻלְמָא) מְרִיבָה דְהָאֵי פִיתָא. אמר רב: יצא. (בבלי ברכות מ:ב)	Binyamin the Shepherd made a sandwich and said, “Blessed is the Compassionate One (Cosmic Majesty) Source of this Food.” Rav says that he had performed his obligation. (<i>Talmud Bavli Berachot 40b</i>)
אמר רבי יוסי בן רבי בון: אף אסור לדור בעיר שאין בה גינוניתא של ירק. (ירושלמי ד:יא)	Rebbi Yosi ben Rebbi Bun said, “It is forbidden to live in a town in which there is no vegetable garden.” (<i>Talmud Yerushalmi Kiddushin 4:12</i>)

24 In the past only יִרְאוּ and כְּפִירִים were said, however in the past 200-300 years נָעַר הָיִיתִי, פּוֹתַח, הוֹדוּ, and עֹז were also added. Today it is considered a מנהג טוב that they are said.

A Sourcesheet on Understanding Jewish Ecology through the Concepts of Heshronan and Bal Tashhit

יָרַעַם הַיָּם וּמְלוֹאוֹ יִעֲלֶץ הַשָּׂדֶה
וְכָל-אֲשֶׁר-בּוֹ: אֲזַיְרָנֶנּוּ עֲצֵי הַיַּעַר מִלְּפָנֶי
יְיָ כִּי-בָא לְשִׁפּוֹט 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)

כִּי הָאָדָם עֵץ הַשָּׂדֶה – שְׁחִייוֹ שֶׁל אָדָם
(אינו אלא) מִן הָאֵילָן. ר' ישמעאל אומר,
מכאן חס המקום על פירות האילן, ק"ו מאילן.
ומה אילן שעושה פירות, הוהירך הכתוב
עליו; פירות עצמם, על אחת כמה וכמה.
[ד"א,] [הא אם מעכבך] לבא מפניך במצור –
קצצהו.

“Are trees of the field human [to withdraw before you into the besieged city?]”: This teaches that human life depends solely on fruit-producing trees. Rabbi Yishmael says: On this basis, if the Maqom has shown compassion for the fruit of one tree, all the more so for the tree. And if Scripture cautions you concerning the tree that produces the fruit, all the more so the fruit itself! (Midrash Sifre on Devarim 20:19, trans: Jacob Neusner)

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, heshronan -- 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 Tashhit -- 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 heshronan? 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 heshronan 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.
בוֹרֵא נִפְשוֹת רַבּוֹת וְחֶסְרוֹנָן. עַל כָּל מַה
שֶׁבָרְאָתָּ לְהַחְיֹת בָּהֶם נִפְשׁ כָּל חַי. בָּרוּךְ
חַי 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.²⁵

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

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם. שְׁלוֹ
חֶסֶר בְּעוֹלָמוֹ דְּבָר, וּבְרָא בּוֹ בְּרִיּוֹת
טוֹבוֹת וְאֵילָנוֹת טוֹבִים, לְהַנּוֹת בָּהֶם בְּנֵי
אָדָם:

Bless You 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 אֵת** **וְנִפְתָּח יָדֵינוּ וְנִשְׂבַּע לְכָל חַי רְצוֹן**, “Open your hand and satisfy all that Life desires!” (Tehillim 145:16). 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:

כִּי הוּא כְרִךְ רִיפְתָא הוּא פִתַח לְבַבִּיהּ וְאָמַר
כָּל מֵאֵן דְּצָרִיךְ לִיתִי וְלִיכּוֹל אָמַר רַבָּא כּוֹלוּהּ
מִצִּינָא מְקַיִמְנָא

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.” (Talmud 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 fruits, 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.

וְגַר זֵאֵב עִם-כֶּבֶשׂ וְנֹמֵר עִם-גְּדִי יִרְבֹּץ
וְעֹגֵל וְכִפִּיר וּמְרִיא יִזְדָּו וְנֹעַר קִטָּן נִהַג
בָּם: וּפְרָה וְדָב תִּרְעִינָה יִזְדָּו יִרְבְּצוּ
יְלָדֵיהֶן וְאַרְיֵה פִבְקָר יֹאכְל־תְּבָן:
וְשֹׁשֶׁעַ יִזְנֵק עַל-זֶזַר פִּתָּן וְעַל מְאוּרַת
צִפְעוֹנֵי גְמוּל יָדוּ הַדָּה: לֹא-יִרְעוּ
וְלֹא-יִשְׁחָדוּ בְּכָל-הָאָרֶץ קָדְשִׁי כִּי-מְלֵאָה
הָאָרֶץ דְּעָה 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 יי, as the waters cover the sea. (Yeshayahu 11:6-9)

וְאֵלֶּם שְׂאֵל-נָא בְּהֵמֹת וְתִרְךָ וְעוֹף
הַשָּׁמַיִם וְיִגְדְּלֶךָ: אֹז שְׂיִיז לְאֶרֶץ וְתִרְךָ
וְיִסְפְּרוּ לְךָ דְּגַי הֵיִם:

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)

רבנן אמרי: אפי' דברים שאתה רואה אותן
שהן יתירה בעולם כגון זבובין ופרעושין
ויתושין אף הן בכלל ברייתו של עולם הן,
ובכל הקדוש ברוך הוא עושה שליחותו:

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 G!
d saw everything that G!d had made, and behold, it was
very good'. (Bereshit Rabbah 10:7)

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
מְשַׁנֵּה הַבְּרִיּוֹת:

Bless you יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ who diversified the creatures.
(Blessing upon seeing strange or unusual creatures)

כשהוא חוזר ומסתכל בכל מעשה ידיו שברא
בעולמו אמר. לאילו חיים ולאילו חיים לאילו
נשמות ולאילו נשמות לאילו אכילה ושתייה
ולאילו אכילה ושתייה. הרי הן חשובין
כבהמה ובחייה וכשאר שקצים ורמשים
שברא הקב"ה על פני האדמה. מיד נתקררה
דעתו ואין מכלה אותם. הא למדת שלא
נבראו שקצים ורמשים בעולם אלא רפואה
לבני אדם על הארץ:

Upon considering all the work of creation, G!d said:
These human beings have life, and those other creatures
have life. These have breath and those have breath;
these have desire for food and drink, and those have
desire for food and drink. Human beings ought to be
deemed as important as cattle, as beasts, at least as
important as the variety of lizards, amphibians, and
other creeping things which I created upon the Earth. At
once the Holy Blessed One felt some measure of
contentment and resolved not to annihilate humanity.
And so you see that reptiles, creeping things, and all of
life was created in the world dependent on one another,
and so too sustains humanity on Earth. (adapted from
Tanna d'ebei Eliyahu, end of Chapter 1)

The Maggid of Mezeritch was a great Rabbi and an even greater storyteller. People would come from far and wide to sit and hear his stories. But every morning at dawn, before any of his students were awake, the Maggid would begin his day by going alone to a pond on the edge of town. The Maggid's students often wondered about the Rabbi's strange habits, but no one dared to ask him and he never mentioned it. One day a new student asked the Maggid about his daily trips. The Master replied, "I go there daily to learn the song that frogs use to praise the Holy One. Even as a Rabbi and a storyteller, it takes a very long time to learn that song." (The Alter Rebbe, Shneur Zalman of Liadi)

אמר רבי יוחנן: אילמלא לא ניתנה תורה -
היינו למידין צניעות מחתול, וגזל מנמלה,
ועריות מיונה, דרך ארץ מתרנגול שמפיים
ואחר כך בועל.

Rebbi Yoḥanan said: If we had not received the Torah,
we would have learned modesty from watching a cat,
honesty from the ant, and loyalty from the dove. (Bavli
Eruvin 100b)

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
שְׂכָכָה לוֹ בְּעוֹלָמוֹ:

Blessed are you יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ who has such things in the
cosmos. (Blessing upon seeing beautiful creatures)

לא-תשחית

לני הארץ ומלואה תכל ונשבי בה:

For לני's is the Earth and the fullness thereof (Tehillim 24:1)

א"ר סימון אין לך כל עשב ועשב, שאין לו מזל ברקיע שמכה אותו, ואומר לו גדל, הה"ד הידעת זקות שמים אם תשים משטרו בארץ וגו' (איוב לח), לשון שוטר.

Rav Simon said: Every single blade of grass has a *Mazal* [constellation] in the *rakia* (heavenly firmament) which strikes it and says, 'Grow!' This is the meaning of the verse, "Do you know the laws of the heavens, and can you place their control [*mishtar*] over the earth?" (Job 38:33). *Mishtar* is an expression of *shoteir* [an enforcing officer]. (Bereishit Rabbah 10:6, translation by Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner)

ויקח יי אלהים את האדם וינחהו בגן עדן לעבדה ולשמרה:

And יי placed the Earthling in the Garden of Eden to cultivate and to protect it - *lovdah ul'shomrah*. (Bereishit 2:15)

In the following story, Rabbi Yosef Yitzhok Schneerson (1880-1950) recalls 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 grass rippled in a gentle breeze.

"Behold G!dliness", 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 G!dly 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 G!d 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 G!d's creations? This leaf is something created by the Almighty for a particular reason. It has a G!d-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))

שורש המצוה ידוע, שהוא כדי ללמד נפשנו לאהוב הטוב והתועלת ולהדבק בו, ומתוך כך תדבק בנו הטובה ונרחיק מכל דבר רע ומכל דבר השחתה, וזהו דרך החסידים ואנשי מעשה אוהבים שלום ושמחים בטוב הבריות ומקרבים אותן לתורה, ולא יאבדו אפילו גרגר של חרדל בעולם, ויצר עליהם בכל אבדון והשחתה שיראו, ואם יוכלו להציל יצילו כל דבר מהשחית בכל כחם.

ולא כן הרשעים אחיהם של מזיקין שמחים בהשחתת עולם והמה משחיתים, במדה שאדם מודד בה מודדין לו, כלומר בה הוא נדבק לעולם, וכענין שכתוב: "שמח לאד לא ינקה רע" (משלי י"ז:ה), והחפץ בטוב ושמח בו "נפשו בטוב תלין לעולם" (תהילים כח:יג), זה ידוע ומפורסם.

כִּי־תָצוּר אֶל־עִיר יָמִים רַבִּים לְהִלָּחֵם עָלֶיהָ לְתַפְּסָהּ לֹא־תִשְׁחִית אֶת־עֵצֶיהָ לְנֹדֶחַ עָלָיו גֵּרֹחַן כִּי מִמֶּנּוּ תֹאכַל וְאֵתוּ לֹא תִכְרֹת כִּי הָאָדָם עֵץ הַשָּׂדֶה לֵבָא מִפְּנֵיהָ בַמָּצוֹר:

The root reason for this mitzvah (bal tashhit) 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.

Not so, however, are the wicked (Psalms 1:4), the brethren of destructive demons. They rejoice at the destruction of the world and they become destroyed. By the measure with which a man measures, by that he is measured; in other words, to that he is adhered forever – in keeping with the verse, [he who is glad at calamity shall not go free of evil](#) (Proverbs 17:5). He who desires good, though, and rejoices at it, [his spirit shall abide in good fortune](#) (Psalms 25:13) forever. This is well and widely known.

(Sefer HaHinnuch: D'varim 20:19 number 529, translation based on Charles Wengrov)

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)

פי האדם עץ השדה – די תורה זאגט:

“Are trees of the field human [to withdraw before you into the besieged city?” (Deuteronomy 20:19). The Torah says:

דוא זאלסט נישט אפ האקן איין בוים וואש וואקסט אויף אים פירות דען דו קאנסט פון אים עסן. ובפרט ווען דו קומשט פאר איין שטאט צו מלחמה האלטן אונ עש שטיען בויער פער דער שטאט זאלסטו זיי בוודאי נישט אפ האקן כדי דו זאלסט פון זיי קענען עסן, אונ דוא טארשט נישט אפ האקן פון אים קיין צווייג.

You shall not chop down a tree which bears fruit, for you can eat from it. Particularly when you come to do battle with a city, and there are trees in front of the city, those you shall most certainly not chop down, so that you can eat from them. You may not cut off even a twig.

אונ דרום גלייכט דר פסוק דעם בוים צו איין מענטש? דען אזו וויא דער מענטש האט אין זיך איין כח צווא וואקסן אזו הט אויך דר בוים כח צו וואקסן אונ אזו וויא דער מענטש האט קינדער אזו האט דר בוים פירות.

Why does the verse liken a tree to a person? Just as the person has within him the power to grow, so the tree has the power to grow. Just as the person has children, so the tree bears fruits.

די חכמים זאגן ווען מען האקט אפ איין בוים וואש וואקסט אויף אים פירות שרייט דר בוים אונ מען הערט זיין קול פון איין עק וועלט צו דר אנדערער אונ די תורה האט אן גישריבן.

The Sages say that when one chops down a fruit-bearing tree, the tree cries out and its voice is heard from one end of the world to the other.

Rebbe Nahman 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 Nahman 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 Nahman 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 Nahman 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 Nahman 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 Nahman, retold by Howard Schwartz in *Trees, Earth, and Torah: A Tu B'Shvat Anthology* (1998).)

Awareness:

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, בountiful are You יי אלהינו Cosmic Majesty, who gives פוקח עורים: sight to the blind.²⁶

All Foods:

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם, בountiful are You יי אלהינו Cosmic Majesty, through שהכל נהיה בדברו: whose word all things came into being.²⁷

²⁶ cf. Tehillim 146:8: יי אלהינו מלך העולם, בountiful are You יי אלהינו Cosmic Majesty, who gives פוקח עורים: sight to the blind.

²⁷ *Siddur Sefas Yisroel*: The סידור רודלהיים's text is נהיה, however acc. to the חתם סופר, the correct term is נהיה.

Rainbows:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, זוֹכֵר
הַבְּרִית וְנֹאמֵן בְּבְרִיתוֹ וְקִיָּם בְּמֵאֲמָרוֹ:
Bountiful are You אֱלֹהֵינוּ יי Cosmic Majesty, Who
remembers the covenant and keeps its promise faithfully
with all creation.

Rain & Good News:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
הַטוֹב וְהַמְּטִיב:
Bountiful are You אֱלֹהֵינוּ יי Cosmic Majesty, who is
good and does good.