



GRATITUDE AND BLESSINGS

I. The Torah commandment to bless and thank G-d after eating

1. Deuteronomy 8:10

And you will eat, and you will be satisfied and you will bless the L-rd your G-d for the good land that He has given you.	ואכלתם ושבעתם וברכתם את ד' אלהיך על הארץ הטובה אשר נתן לך:
---	--

II. It is logical to thank G-d for the benefits of this world

2. TB Tractate Berachot 35a

Simple logic: it is forbidden to enjoy the benefits of this world without making a blessing.	סברא הוא: אסור לו לאדם שיהנה מן העולם הזה בלא ברכה
--	--

3. Rashi, loc. cit.

The logic is, if one derives benefit from the world, he or she must thank the One who created that benefit.	סברא הוא דכיון דנהנה צריך להודות למי שבראם
---	--

III. No specific formula for blessings or expressions of gratitude

4. Rambam, Laws of Prayer 1:1

The number of prayers is not prescribed in the Torah, nor does it prescribe a specific formula for prayer.	ואין מנין התפלות מן התורה. ואין משנה התפלה הזאת מן התורה.
--	---

5. Kesef Mishnah, loc. cit.

...nor does it prescribe a specific formula for prayer: That is to say, the format of prayer itself...rather, [from the standpoint of the Written Torah], one would pray in a spontaneous and free manner.	ואין משנה התפלה הזאת מן התורה. כלומר מטבע התפלה הזאת כו' אלא באי זה נוסח שיודמן לאדם בו.
---	--

IV. The word *baruch* (blessed)—G-d is the Source of all blessings

Teshuvot HaRashba 5:51



GRATITUDE AND BLESSINGS

To the wise, complete person: You asked, "What are blessings? The term '*berachah* [blessing]' refers to increased good, but what can a servant add to his Master?" In truth, the word "*berachah*" is an expression of increase and multiplication, like the expression, "springs [*berichot*] of water". There is a deep secret regarding *berachot*, and one to whom G-d has granted knowledge of the secrets of the Torah will understand it. Blessings, and the increase of blessings, multiply in two ways, sometimes from the recipient and sometimes from the giver and conveyor of blessing. This may be compared to a king who gives and showers of his good upon his servants. The blessing appears to his servants in their multiplication and increase, for they were lacking and now they have been made full. However, for the king, it is well known that possesses as much as he has given and used to benefit others, and so the increase and multiplication is not seen in him. Still, if the king were to constantly give, supplying large gifts to his many forces without interruption, it would truly appears that he is blessed [i.e. increased and multiplied], such that he never stops providing for his forces, even for an instant ... It's not that the king is made greater by an external source, receiving blessing and abundance from someone greater than he is, who supplied him. Rather, everyone "blesses" the king, meaning that they give blessing and thanks that he is the master of these blessings, and his storehouses will never fail. When he adds more good, more people recognize and know him, for his blessing has neither limit nor end ... This is the matter of blessings, that we give thanks before Him for the food that He provides, and for the good that He gives to us. We pray that He constantly give blessing, so that everyone will know that He is blessed. As we say: Blessed, and blessed in the mouths of every soul ... Also, G-d wants his righteous ones to pray before Him, in order to increase His good for His creations, and in order that their sins not cause G-d to withhold His good from them. Thus the Sages taught (Berachot 7a), "G-d said to [Rabbi] Yishmael: My son, bless Me. He answered, 'May it be your will that Your mercy should conquer Your anger, and Your mercy should overtake Your [other] attributes, and You should deal with Your children beyond the line of the law.'"

V. The format of *birkat hane'henin* (blessings for enjoyment) instituted by the Sages

6. Mishnah Berakhot, Chapter 6

<p>What blessing does one make on fruits? On fruit that grows on trees, one says, "Blessed are you, L-rd our G-d, King of the Universe, Creator of the fruit of trees"—but not on wine.</p>	<p>כִּיצַד מְבָרְכִין עַל הַפְּרוֹת. עַל פְּרוֹת הָאֵילָן אוֹמְרִים, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָעֵץ, חוּץ מִן הַיַּיִן, שְׁעַל הַיַּיִן אוֹמְרִים בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן.</p>
<p>On wine, one says, "Blessed, etc., Creator of the fruit of the vine".</p>	<p>וְעַל פְּרוֹת הָאֵרֶז אוֹמְרִים בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָאֲדָמָה, חוּץ מִן הַפֶּתַח, שְׁעַל הַפֶּתַח הוּא אוֹמְרֵם הַמוֹצִיא לָהֶם מִן הָאֵרֶז.</p>
<p>On fruit that grows from the ground, one says, "Blessed, etc., Creator of the fruit of the ground"—but not on bread.</p>	<p>וְעַל הַיִּרְקוֹת אוֹמְרִים בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָאֲדָמָה.</p>



GRATITUDE AND BLESSINGS

<p>On bread, one says, “Blessed, etc., Who brings forth bread from the earth”.</p> <p>On greens (vegetables and legumes), one says, “Blessed, etc., Creator of the fruit of the ground”.</p>	
--	--

7. Mishnah, ibid.

<p>On an item that does not grow from the ground (or a tree), one says, “Blessed, etc., by Whose Word all things came to be”...on milk, cheese and eggs, one says, “Blessed, etc., by Whose Word all things came to be”.</p>	<p>על דבר שאין גדולו מן הארץ אומר שהפל כו' על החלב ועל הגבינה ועל הביצים אומר שהפל.</p>
--	---

8. Rabbi Yisrael Lipschitz, Tiferet Yisrael, Yachin, loc.cit.

<p>On an item that does not grow from the ground: such as meat and fish, or mushrooms.</p>	<p>על דבר שאין גדולו מן הארץ – כגון בשר ודגים ואפילו כמהין ופטריאות רק מאוירא קרבו. וכדומה:</p>
---	---