



Texts on Gratitude for Thanksgiving 2020

Rabbi Debra Cantor

LEVITICUS 7:13

וּבֶשֶׁר זֶבַח תְּוֹדָתוֹ שְׁלָמֵיו בְּיוֹם קָרְבָּנוֹ יֵאָכַל לֹא יִנָּיִחַ מִמֶּנּוּ עַד-בֹּקֶר :

And the flesh of his thanksgiving sacrifice of well-being shall be eaten on the day that it is offered; none of it shall be set aside until morning.

HAAMEK DAVAR on Leviticus 7:13

The purpose for bringing the thanksgiving sacrifice upon experiencing a miracle is in order to relate the kindness of God. It is for this reason that **the Torah required great amounts of bread but then reduced the amount of time with which to eat it**, in comparison to the other *Shelamim* sacrifices. This, in order to bring many friends together at one meal on the day of the sacrifice, at which the host will relate the miracle before them.

BERACHOT 54b:12

אמר רב יהודה אמר רב ארבעה צריכין **להודות** יורדי הים הולכי מדברות ומי שהיה חולה ונתרפא ומי שהיה חבוש בבית האסורים ויצא

Rav Yehuda said that Rav said: Four must offer thanks to God with a thanks-offering and a special blessing. They are: Seafarers, those who walk in the desert, and one who was ill and recovered, and one who was incarcerated in prison and went out.

RAMBAM/MAIMONIDES (1138-1204, Spain/Egypt), MISHNEH TORAH, Blessings 1:4

(ד) נִמְצְאוּ כָּל הַבְּרָכוֹת כִּלְכֹן שְׁלֹשָׁה מִיָּנִים. בְּרָכוֹת הַנִּיָּה. וּבְרָכוֹת מַצּוֹת. וּבְרָכוֹת הַוִּדּוּאָה
שֶׁהֵן דֶּרֶךְ שֶׁבַח וְהוֹדָאָה וּבִקְשָׁה כְּדִי לְזַכֵּר אֶת הַבּוֹרֵא תָמִיד וּלְיִרְאָה מִמֶּנּוּ

(4) All blessings accordingly fall into three kinds; blessings recited when partaking of material enjoyments, blessings recited when fulfilling religious duties, and blessings of thanksgiving, which have the character of praise, thanksgiving and supplication, and the purpose of which is that we should always have the Creator in mind and revere Him.

SIDDUR ASHKENAZ, Weekday, Shacharit, Preparatory Prayers, *Modeh Ani*

מוֹדָה [מוֹדָה] אֲנִי לְפָנֶיךָ מֶלֶךְ חַי וְקַיִם, שֶׁהַחַיְזָרְתָּ בִּי נִשְׁמַתִּי בְּחֶמְלָה, רַבָּה אֲמוּנָתְךָ

I offer thanks to You, living and eternal Sovereign, for You have mercifully restored my soul within me; Your faithfulness is great.

SIDDUR ASHKENAZ, Weekday, Shacharit, Amidah, *Modim*/Thanksgiving



מוֹדִים אֲנַחֲנוּ לָךְ. שְׂאֵתָהּ הוּא ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ
לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד. צוּר חַיֵּינוּ. מִגֵּן יִשְׁעֵנוּ אֵתָהּ הוּא לְדוֹר וָדוֹר
נוֹדָה לָךְ וְנִסְפָּר תְּהִלָּתְךָ עַל חַיֵּינוּ הַמְּסוּרִים בְּיָדְךָ. וְעַל
נִשְׁמוֹתֵינוּ הַפְּקוּדוֹת לָךְ. וְעַל נִסִּיךָ שֶׁבְּכָל יוֹם עִמָּנוּ
וְעַל נִפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ וְטוֹבוֹתֶיךָ שֶׁבְּכָל עֵת. עֶרֶב וּבֹקֶר
וְצַהֲרָיִם: הַטּוֹב כִּי לֹא כָלוּ רַחֲמֶיךָ. וְהַמְּרִחִם כִּי לֹא
תִּמּוּ חֲסָדֶיךָ. מֵעוֹלָם קוִינֵנוּ לָךְ

We gratefully thank You, for You, O Lord our God, are our ancestors' God for all eternity, our Rock, our Shield of salvation, from generation to generation. We thank You and recount Your praise for our lives. We trust our lives into Your loving hand. Our souls are in Your custody and **Your miracles are with us every day and Your wonders and goodness are with us at all times: evening, morning and noon.** You are good, for Your mercies never fail us, Compassionate One, for Your loving-kindness never ceases; forever we have placed our hope in You.

ABUDARHAM (mid-14th c. Spanish rabbi; expert on liturgy) **Weekday, Amidah Repetition 8**

When the Prayer Leader reaches the *Modim* Prayer [during the repetition of the Amidah] and bows, the congregation must also bow and say their own prayer of thanks that also begins with "*Modim*". The reason being that it is not customary for a servant to give thanks to his master by way of an agent. Rather, every person must accept the yoke of Heaven with his own utterance. And, if he tries to do so by way of an agent, this is not a complete acceptance, for he could always contradict the agent, saying he never sent him.



By contrast, other prayers are requests, and one can make a claim to his needs by way of an agent, for one would not contradict someone who is doing something beneficial for him.

LEVITICUS RABBAH 9:7

(7) Rabbi Pinchas, Rabbi Levi and Rabbi Yochanan [said] in the name of Rabbi Menachem from Gallia: In the time to come, all sacrifices will be annulled - but the sacrifice of thanksgiving will not be annulled. All prayers will be annulled, but the prayer of gratitude will not be annulled. This accords with what is written [Jeremiah 33:11]: "The voice of joy and the voice of gladness, the voice of the groom and the voice of the bride, the voice of those who say 'Give thanks to the LORD of hosts' etc." - this is the prayer of gratitude. "Those who bring [the sacrifice of] thanksgiving to the House of the LORD": this is the sacrifice of thanksgiving. Thus David said: **עָלַי אֱלֹהִים נְדָרֶיךָ אֲשַׁלֵּם תּוֹדַת לָךְ** "I owe You vows and will offer you thanksgivings" [Psalms 56:13] - not "thanksgiving," but "thanksgivings," [indicating both] the thanksgiving prayer *and* the prayer of gratitude.

BABYLONIAN TALMUD MENAḤOT 43b

תניא היה רבי מאיר אומר חייב אדם לברך מאה ברכות בכל יום שנאמר (דברים י, יב)
ועתה ישראל מה ה' אלהיך שואל מעמך רב חייא בריה דרב אויא בשבתא וביומי טבי
טרח וממלי להו באיספרמקי ומגדי

It was taught, "Rabbi Meir used to say, 'A person must make one hundred (*meah*) blessings each day, as it is stated (Deuteronomy 10:12), "And now Israel, what (*mah*) does the Lord, your God, ask of you." Rav Ḥiyya, son of Rav Avya, would endeavor to make up this number by the use of spices and delicacies [for which blessings are required.]



RABBI MARCIA PRAGER, from **"The Path of Blessing: Experiencing the Energy and Abundance of the Divine"**

A simple Hebrew blessing is a powerful thing - a one-minute deeply meditative exercise exploring the nature of the Creative Force we call God and the dynamic relationship between God, human consciousness, and the unfolding universe. Far from a mindless mumble, each word of a Hebrew blessing is crafted to touch deep centers of awareness and receptivity within us. Each word is a stepping-stone inviting us to explore a rich treasury of images and associations.

Blessing offers us a personal consciousness-raising practice, a spiritual adventure bringing sensitivity and gratitude into the foreground of our lives. While we have moments when a blessing rises spontaneously to our lips, the path of blessing can become a way of life.

Through the practice of blessing we develop an ever-deepening receptivity to the abundant love and joy flowing through Creation. We learn to accept that love, absorb it into our souls, and offer it back to the source with joy. In this way we come to feel the Presence of God move within us and through us. The result is bliss.



ME'AH BERACHOT

An 18th-century miniature book of blessings and prayers

