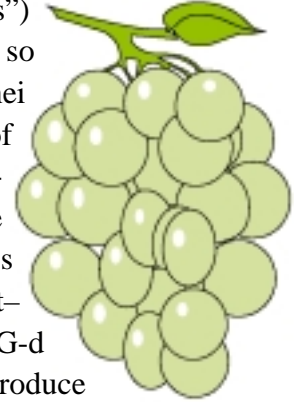


# בְּרַכַּת הַשָּׁנִים

*“Blessing of the Years”*

The ninth prayer of the Shemonei Esrei (“the Eighteen Benedictions”) is a prayer that G-d, once again, might cause the farmer’s crops to grow so that we can have good food to eat. Like all of the prayers of the Shemonei Esrei, this one, called “Birchat haShanim,” reminds us that every part of our lives is in the hand of HaShem. Sometimes we may think that everything just happens on its own: when the farmer plants the seed, then the rains come, and the seeds grow, and we have food. But the Bible tells us a different story. Every year when the grapes grow, or the grains sprout—when the apples appear, or the peaches, or whatever food—it’s because G-d has once again shown us His mercy and favor, and caused the earth to produce food to sustain His creation. In fact, this blessing goes hand in hand with the HaMotzi blessing we do before we eat: in the ninth prayer we ask G-d to show His kindness in producing the food, and in the HaMotzi we thank Him for the food He has produced so that we can eat.



In our times, when we need food, most of us go to the store and buy it. But in the ancient times, a lot of people grew their own food by planting seeds or by carefully pruning trees and vines. If the rain did not come, or if the clouds kept the sun from shining to warm the ground and cause the seeds to grow, there just was not enough food. We know, for instance, that often famines (that’s when the crops do not grow, and there is not enough food for everyone) caused hardships for the people of Israel. Ruth, for instance, came back to the Land from Moab because of a famine where she was living. And maybe the most famous story about not having enough food was when Joseph was in Egypt, and he helped store food away because G-d had told him there were years coming that would not produce food. Sometimes, because we can usually just go to the store and buy food, we forget to remember that G-d is the One who always causes the farmer’s crops to grow so that we can all have food. If G-d did not do this, every year, we would all be very, very hungry!

In fact, in this prayer, during the time of the year when we most need rain to make the crops grow, we add a special line which says “and bestow dew and rain for a blessing,” because we know that if it does not rain at the proper time, nothing will grow! So we trust G-d for everything, including the food we buy at the store, and the rain that makes it grow! Here is how this prayer goes:

Bless for us, Adonai our God, this year  
and all the varieties of its produce for good;  
Bestow [dew and rain for] a blessing upon the face of the earth,  
and satisfy us from Your bounty  
and bless our year like the good years.  
Blessed are You, Adonai  
Blessor of the years.

# The Borei Peri

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
בוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן.

Baruch ata Adonai  
Eloheinu melech  
ha-olam  
Borei peri  
ha-gafen.

Blessed are You, Lord our God  
King of the universe,  
Creator of the fruit of the vine.

# The HaMotzi

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
הַמוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ.

Baruch ata Adonai

Eloheinu melech

ha-olam

Ha-motzi lechem

min ha-aretz.

Blessed are You, Lord our God,  
King of the universe,  
Who brings forth bread from the earth.