

שְׁמַחְתֶּם

וְשִׂמְחֵתֶם
וְשִׂמְחֵתֶם
וְשִׂמְחֵתֶם



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Siddur Mastery & Meaning Volume 1

We wish to thank
Melanie Berman, Micha'el Akiba,
Debi Rowe and Lifsa Schachter,
who worked with us and offered
invaluable insights on this project.

ISBN #1-891662-10-4

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MANUFACTURED IN HONG KONG

Open My Lips

אֲדַנִּי שִׁפְתַי תִּפְתָּח וּפִי יִגִּיד תְּהִלָּתְךָ

(Psalms 51.15)



The Work of the Heart

Once, Jews offered sacrifices in the Temple. These sacrifices were called **עֲבוּדָה**, work. When prayers replaced sacrifice, they were called **עֲבוּדַת הַלֵּב**, the work of the heart. **פְּנוּנָה** means aiming or pointing. By adding **פְּנוּנָה**, our prayers become more than just words we say—they bring us closer to God. One needs to learn how to read and understand Hebrew prayers and where to point one's heart while one is praying. That is how we do **עֲבוּדַת הַלֵּב**.

This is a story from the Baal Shem Tov, the first Hasidic teacher, about **פְּנוּנָה**, heart pointing.

There was a king who loved music. The king had a court musician who played beautifully. But after a time, the musician got tired of playing the same thing over and over. Every time the king asked for his favorite song it had less and less life in it. The musician told the king, “I am having a hard time being excited about this song. I have played it too many times.”

The king had an idea. He brought in a guest and asked the musician to play his favorite song especially for this guest. The guest made the difference. The music was again filled with feeling and meaning.

Every day the king brought in a different guest, and the musician played the song with new excitement. But, eventually, the king ran out of new people to be guests. With no one new to hear it, the music became old and tired again.

The king thought and thought and came up with a new idea. He blindfolded the musician and told him a new guest was there to hear his music. The musician imagined the guest, and his playing was again filled with spirit. The king did this every day, and every day the musician found the **כַּוְנָה** with which to play the king's favorite song.



Questions

1. Why is it hard to do the same thing over and over?
2. How do you trick yourself into finding something new about things you do over and over?
3. How does this story help you understand where to point your heart when you start to pray?



In this book you will learn to

- recite a number of Hebrew prayers
- understand some of the vocabulary and root words
- know the stories and meaning behind those prayers.

Unit
1

What is a בְּרָכָה?

There are two kinds of Jewish prayers. One kind just pours out of our hearts. These are personal words that are made up on the spot. The other kind you find in the סְדוּר or other books.

At the heart of most of these book prayers is the word בְּרוּךְ.

A בְּרָכָה is a prayer that either begins or ends with a sentence that starts with the word בְּרוּךְ. The word בְּרָכָה actually means three different things:

- A בְּרָכָה is a gift from God. A person can say, “I have been *blessed* with good health,” or “I have been *blessed* with a wonderful family.”
- A בְּרָכָה is also a “thank you” to God for a gift that we have received. That is why we say prayers like “*Praised* are You Who gives strength to those who are tired.”
- A בְּרָכָה is also a request for a gift from God. In every morning service Jews say, “Grant us peace... the One Who *blesses* Israel with peace.”

In order to really mean a בְּרָכָה in our hearts we need to

- notice the gifts that we have been given,
- believe that God is the source of those gifts.

A בְּרָכָה is not just words. It is a connection to God.



In this unit you will learn:

- the formula for blessings
- seven בְּרָכוֹת we say over food
- two stories about the meaning of saying בְּרָכוֹת.

Some Basic בְּרָכוֹת

Do you know these Hebrew words? They will help you understand the בְּרָכוֹת below.



Your teacher will help you review or learn these Hebrew words. They will help you understand the blessings at the bottom of the page.

Your teacher will also explain that ״ is pronounced אֲדֹנָי



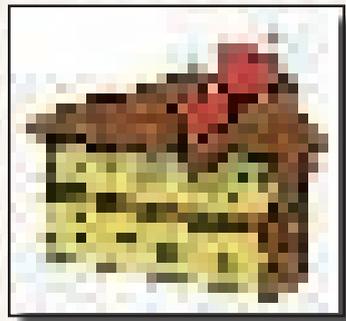
פִּירוֹת



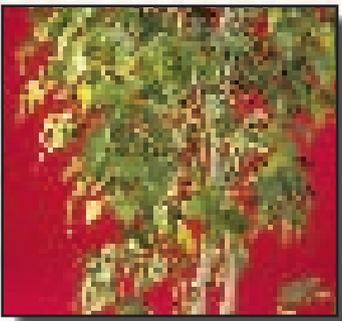
פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן



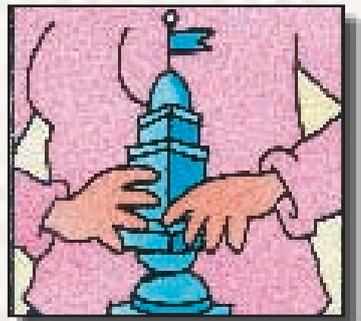
לֶחֶם



מִזְוָנוֹת



עֵץ



בְּשָׂמִים

Can you figure out over what each בְּרָכָה is said? (Guessing is good.)

1. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם הַמוֹצֵיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ.
2. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן.
3. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָעֵץ.
4. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא מִיַּי בְּשָׂמִים.
5. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא מִיַּי מִזְוָנוֹת.

Every בְּרָכָה begins with these words:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם

Sound out these בְּרָכָה words.

1. בְּרוּךְ פְּרֵי מְלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם מִיְּנֵי בּוֹרֵא לֶחֶם

2. הַנֶּפֶן אֱלֹהֵינוּ לֶחֶם הָאָרֶץ הָעֵץ אֶתָּה פְּרֵי

3. בְּשָׂמִים הַמוֹצֵיא הָאָרֶץ מִיְּנֵי אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּרוּךְ

Recite some phrases with these בְּרָכָה words.

4. בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָעֵץ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא מִיְּנֵי

5. בְּרוּךְ אֶתָּה הַמוֹצֵיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ בּוֹרֵא מִיְּנֵי בְּשָׂמִים

6. בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַנֶּפֶן בְּרוּךְ אֶתָּה יי מִן הָאָרֶץ מְלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם



Now that you've practiced, why don't you take a second try at reciting the blessings on page 6.

A בְּרָכָה Word Search

Find the בְּרָכָה words in this word search:

ה	מ	ו	צ	י	א	ב
א	ד	מ	ה	ע	ס	ר
ט	ה	א	ר	ץ	ח	ו
ט	ו	ר	א	מ	ל	ד
ע	ו	ל	ס	ל	ה	ט
ט	ר	א	פ	ה	ס	ר
ל	א	פ	מ	י	י	י

- בּוֹרֵא
- הַמוֹצֵיא
- מְלֶךְ
- פְּרֵי
- אֶדְמָה
- עוֹלָם
- אָרֶץ
- אֶתָּה
- מִיְּנֵי
- עֵץ
- לֶחֶם
- בְּרוּךְ



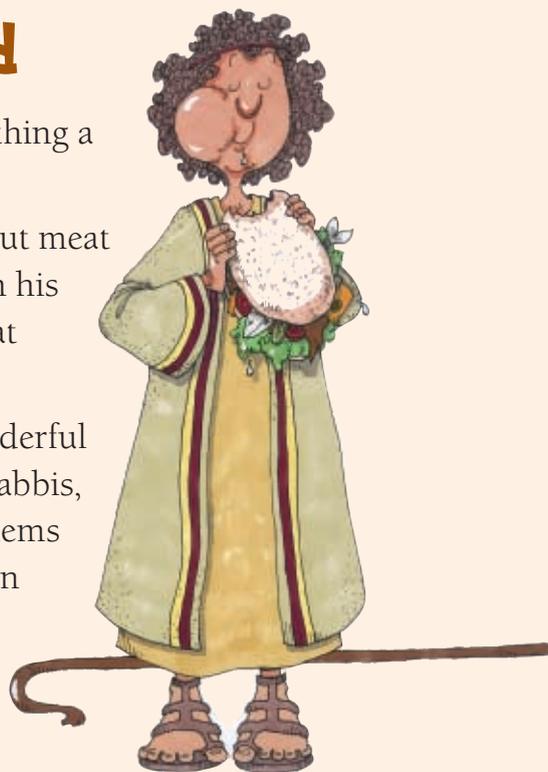
Benjamin the Shepherd

The rabbis of the Talmud got into a big debate over something a shepherd named Benjamin did.

Benjamin took a loaf of bread and cut it in half. He then put meat in the middle and began to eat and enjoy the sandwich. In his joy at eating his lunch, Benjamin called out, "This is a great sandwich. Praised be the God Who created it!"

Some of the rabbis thought that Benjamin had said a wonderful prayer, because it was based on true feelings. Two of the rabbis, Rabbi Yosi and Rav, thought that the prayer had big problems because Benjamin didn't use the same six words that begin most **בְּרָכוֹת**.

What do you think about Benjamin the shepherd's **בְּרָכָה**? Was it a good **בְּרָכָה**, or did it have problems?



The **בְּרָכָה** Formula

Here are a few more Hebrew words that you may already know that will help you translate the **בְּרָכָה** formula.



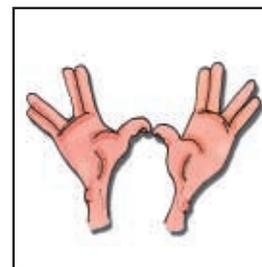
הָעוֹלָם



מֶלֶךְ



אֶתָּה



בְּרוּךְ

The Eternal (God's Name) = יי

our God = אֱלֹהֵינוּ

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם

My own translation of the **בְּרָכָה** formula is:

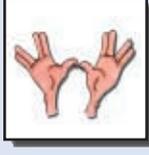
God's Name

God has many different names. Each name teaches a different lesson about God. When we study prayers and blessings two names show up all the time. They are יי and אֱלֹהִים.

אֱלֹהִים is the Hebrew name for God. It is a job. We most often see the word אֱלֹהֵינוּ, which means “our God”.

יי stands for God's actual name. That name is a secret. In ancient times only the High Priest in the Temple knew God's name. God's name was written יהוה but no one knew how to pronounce it correctly. So everyone else just said, אֲדֹנָי, “My Master” in its place. When we want to call God by name, we still use אֲדֹנָי. Most often it is written יי. This reminds us that we can never know everything about God.

Match the word to its picture.

זְמַן		בְּרוּךְ		אֶתָּה	
אֶרֶץ		מְלֶכֶךְ		עֵץ	
עוֹלָם		פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן		לֶחֶם	
בְּשָׁמַיִם		אֲדָמָה		פְּרֵי	

The Answer to Benjamin the Shepherd

A בְּרָכָה is said both for the person speaking it and for others who may be listening. A בְּרָכָה is both a way of thanking God and a way of teaching others about the things that God does. The problem with Benjamin's prayer is that when he said, “Praised be the God Who created it,” he didn't name the God. People hearing it could fill in the name of their own pagan god. Or worse, they could think that Benjamin was praising himself for making the sandwich. After Benjamin, the Rabbis made it a rule that all בְּרָכוֹת should use these six words: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְלֶכֶךְ הָעוֹלָם. This formula names our God as the One God of the cosmos.



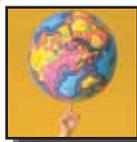
This exercise is a little tricky, but with your teacher's help, you should have fun guessing.

A Rebus בְּרָכָה

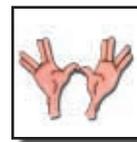
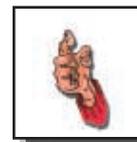
Say and name these בְּרָכוֹת.



הַמוֹצֵיא



יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ



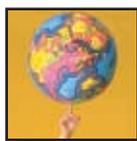
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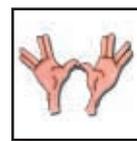
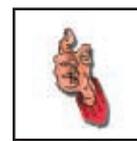
מִן



בוֹרֵא



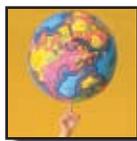
יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ



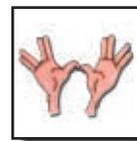
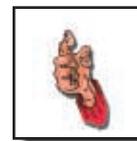
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בוֹרֵא מִיְיָ



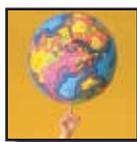
יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ



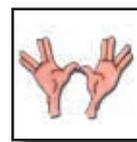
.3



בוֹרֵא



יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ



.4

Match the blessing at the top with the actual words down below. Read them carefully.

הַמוֹצֵיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ _____

בוֹרֵא מִיְיָ מְזֻנָּנוֹת 3

בוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָעֵץ _____

בוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן _____



ברכות Over Foods and Aromas

ברכות? Can you guess the purpose of each of these

1. ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם המוציא לחם מן הארץ.

2. ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם בורא פרי הנפון.

3. ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם בורא פרי העץ.

4. ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם בורא פרי האדמה.

5. ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם שתפל נהיה בדברו.

6. ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם בורא מיני מזונות.

7. ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם בורא מיני בשמים.



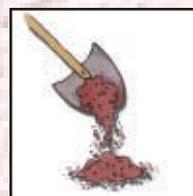
לחם



פרי הנפון



העץ



האדמה

כל

all



מזונות



בשמים

The "The"

In English "pre" is a prefix. A prefix is something that comes at the beginning of a word and adds to its meaning. "Pre" means before.

ה (or ה) is a Hebrew prefix that means "the". When you add ה to the word מוציא it becomes המוציא, "the one who brings out", and when you add ה to עץ, it becomes העץ, "the tree".

Underline the words below that have the "the"

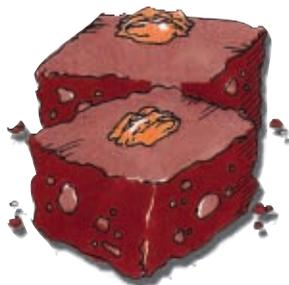
8. מברך המברך הארץ קדוש העץ כל עץ

9. האל הכל ארץ העולם אדמה האדמה

Prayers Tell the Truth



_____ Hamburger, Coke
and Fries



_____ Brownies



_____ Sparkling Grape
Juice



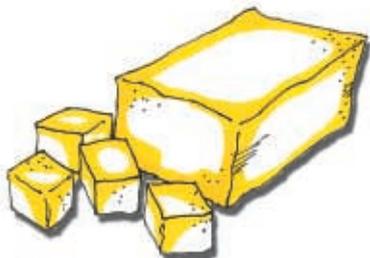
_____ Two Eggs Over Easy,
Hashbrowns and Toast



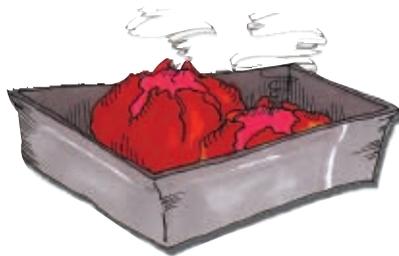
_____ Fresh Raspberries



_____ Pizza with Black
Olives and Anchovies



_____ Tofu



_____ A Baked Tomato



The rabbis of the Talmud, the ones who shaped the prayers we now say, believed that it was really important for every prayer to tell the absolute truth. Here is the example they gave.

There is one בְּרָכָה we say over “fruit that grows from trees.” There is another בְּרָכָה we say over “fruit that grows in the ground.” In the Talmud they teach that it is okay if you say “the fruit from the ground” blessing over fruit that grows on a tree, because that בְּרָכָה is still a true statement. It is not okay to say “the fruit of the tree” blessing over things that grow on the ground. That is not a true statement. Fruit that grows on trees also grows in the ground, but fruit that grows in the ground does not grow on trees. Every time we say a בְּרָכָה it is our job to be a “witness” and “testify” to the things that God does.

To be a good witness, we must observe all the different things that God creates, and our testimony must always be true and accurate. Maimonides, a famous Jewish teacher, wrote, “Anyone who eats any food or enjoys anything without saying a בְּרָכָה is a thief.” What do you think he meant?

1. If a meal includes bread, you must say
 בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
 הַמוֹצֵיא לָחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ.

This blessing covers everything you will eat at that meal.

2. If there is no bread, but there is food made from flour, you say

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
 בּוֹרֵא מִיַּי מִזֹּנוֹת.

This blessing covers everything you will eat at that meal.

3. If there is wine (or grape juice), it gets its own blessing.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
 בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַנֶּפֶשׁ.

4. If you are eating fruit that grows on trees, the blessing is

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
 בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָעֵץ.

5. If you are eating fruits or vegetables that grow in the ground, the blessing is

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
 בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָאֲדָמָה.

6. If you are eating many things, or if you are not sure what the food is made of, the “catch all” blessing is

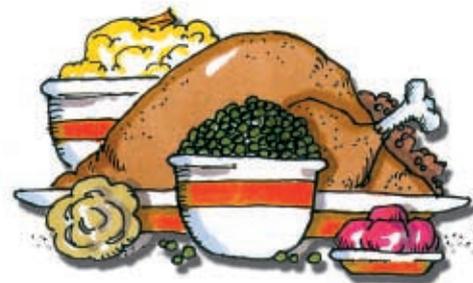
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
 שֶׁהַכֹּל נִתְּנָה בְּדַבְּרוֹ.

It thanks God for making everything.

Write the number of the blessing that you would say over these meals.



____ Minestrone Soup with Crackers



____ Turkey with Dressing, Peas, Mashed Potatoes and a Roll



____ Orange Juice

The Answer to Maimonides

Maimonides began his book the Mishneh Torah by writing, “The basic principle of all principles, the foundation of all science, is knowing that One God created everything.” Maimonides explains that our job is to examine the world and come to know and love the Creator through the creation. Our job is to appreciate everything that God created and thank God for it. When we fail to notice and learn, when we do not say thank you, we are “stealing” and not paying “the rent” on the things that God gave us.





בְּרָכוֹת Squares

Use this page to do a variety of tasks. Have students read across the rows. Call on a student to sound out the text in a particular box (for example, "Yosi, please read the text in ג-ג-ג-ג"). Or play a game by asking students to assemble בְּרָכוֹת, pulling text from various boxes.

	ד	ג	ב	א
1 אחת	הָאֲדָמָה	אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם	הַזֶּן אֶת הַכֹּל	לָחֵם
2 שְׁתַּיִם	בְּשָׂמִים	בּוֹרָא פְּרִי הַגֶּפֶן	בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם	נְהִיָּה בְּדַבְּרוֹ
3 שְׁלֹשׁ	בּוֹרָא פְּרִי	בּוֹרָא	הָאָרֶץ	בּוֹרָא מִיָּנִי
4 אַרְבַּע	מִן	הָעֵץ	שֶׁהַכֹּל	הַמוֹצֵיא
5 חֲמִשׁ	פְּרִי	מְזוֹנוֹת	בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ	הַגֶּפֶן

Moses Sees the “Afterward” of God



The Torah tells us stories of times when people felt close to God. Jacob left home to escape his brother, who was really angry with him, and to find a wife. He camped at a place called Beth El and used a rock for a pillow. Jacob had an amazing dream in which a ladder rose from earth up into the heavens. Angels were going up the ladder and angels were coming down the ladder. Different people explain the meaning of this dream in different ways. When Jacob woke up he explained his dream by saying, “God was in this place, and I didn’t realize it.”

Moses also left home to escape being killed. On his journey he met his wife, Tziporah, and went to work as a shepherd for her father, Yitro. One day he led his flock far into the wilderness, to a mountain that would be known in the future as Sinai. There he had an experience of being close to God. Moses was awake when he saw a bush that burned and burned but did not burn up. God spoke to him out of this amazing bush, but Moses was afraid to look.

Years passed. Moses led the Jewish people back to that same mountain, Sinai. They heard God speak the Ten Commandments and then they ignored the commandments by making a golden calf. Moses had to go up the mountain for a second time to get a new Ten Commandments. While he was up there, he asked to be able to look at God. God told him, “No one can see

My face and live.” Still, Moses asked again. So God told Moses to put his face into a crack in the rock. God put a hand over Moses to keep him from looking. God passed before Moses and then let him see the “afterward”. Some people think that Moses saw God’s back, but what the Hebrew really says is that Moses saw how things changed after God had been there. Moses saw the wake of God. A wake is the wave that appears after a boat goes by.

We are like Jacob and Moses. We want to get close to God, but that is not easy. We have to learn to realize that God is where we are—because we often forget that. And we have to learn that while we cannot see God, we can see God’s “afterward”.

We can see the things God did. A

בְּרָכָה is a way of saying that God is in this place. A **בְּרָכָה** is also a way of saying, “I noticed what God did, and I am thankful.”



Questions

1. In what ways were Jacob and Moses alike?
2. How could Jacob not know that God was in a certain place if God was everywhere? Do you ever forget that God is where you are?
3. What things do you think Moses saw as part of God’s “afterward”?
4. How can the stories of Jacob and Moses help you learn where to point your heart when you say a **בְּרָכָה**?

Understanding **בְּיִנְיָה**

Saying a prayer with meaning is like trying to shoot an arrow into a target. The most important part of shooting an arrow is knowing how to aim. The same is true of praying. The Hebrew word we use for aiming is **בְּיִנְיָה**. The rabbis teach that the secret to praying is to imagine God actually listening to your words. Prayers are like a ladder that goes from where you are to God. We “point our hearts” and climb up to God on our prayers. Each prayer has a story. Each story is a path we follow in our heart that leads us to God.



Here is an extra review page if you have time.

Practice these בְּרָכוֹת.

1. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן.

2. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָעֵץ.

3. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא מִיַּי בְּשָׁמַיִם.

4. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו
וְצִוָּנוּ לְשִׁמוֹעַ קוֹל שׁוֹפָר.

5. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא מִיַּי מְזוֹנוֹת.

6. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו
וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְּלִיק נֵר שֶׁל שַׁבָּת.

7. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם הַמוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ.

8. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו
וְצִוָּנוּ עַל אֲכִילַת מַצָּה.

Circle the words with the "the" at the beginning.

9. עוֹלָם הָעוֹלָם הַגֶּפֶן עֵץ הָעֵץ כֹּל הָאָרֶץ שְׁמַע

10. הַמְּבָרֵךְ גֶּפֶן הַמְּלָכִים הַקְּדוֹשׁ אָדָמָה כֹּל הָאֵלֶּה

11. מוֹצִיא הַמוֹצִיא אָרֶץ הָאָדָמָה הַכֹּל הַשַּׁבָּת אָרֶץ

A Review

Some things to know about בְּרָכוֹת

- A בְּרָכָה is a prayer that starts or ends with a formula that uses the word בְּרוּךְ.
- בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם use a formula, usually: בְּרָכוֹת
- בְּרָכוֹת are said at many different times. Some בְּרָכוֹת are said over eating.
- Different foods take different בְּרָכוֹת because בְּרָכוֹת must tell the truth. We cannot use the same בְּרָכָה over something that grows in the ground as we use over something that grows on a tree.
- בְּרָכוֹת are ways of thanking God. They are also tools for learning how to be like God. But most importantly, בְּרָכוֹת are ways of getting close to God because they help us to notice the things that God does.

Words בְּרָכוֹת

Some of the words we learned or reviewed in this lesson are:



בְּשָׂמִים



עֵץ



הָעוֹלָם



מֶלֶךְ



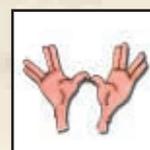
אֱלֹהֵינוּ



יי



אַתָּה



בְּרוּךְ



לֶחֶם



פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן



פִּירוֹת

בְּרָכוֹת we have learned:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם הַמוֹצֵיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָעֵץ.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָאֲדָמָה.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שֶׁהַכֹּל נִהְיָה בְּדַבְּרוֹ.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא מֵינֵי מְזוֹנוֹת.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא מֵינֵי בְּשָׂמִים.



Unit
2

בְּרָכוֹת מִצְוָה



Being a Jew means trying to:

- learn about and love God,
- become the best person we can be,
- make the world into the best possible place for everyone.

The Torah is the guidebook that God gave the Jewish people. When you study the Torah, you learn that it tells us 613 rules for living that bring us close to God and help us to live the way God wants us to live.

Some of these rules are about holiday celebrations like Passover, Sukkot, and Shabbat. Some of them are good things to do like loving your neighbor, giving tzedakah, and helping people to get well. And some of the rules are about things we should not to do. These include not murdering or embarrassing another person, and not hating another person in our heart.

We call these ways of living, **מִצְוֹת**. They are things that God told us to do and things that God told us not to do.

Some (but not all) **מִצְוֹת** have **בְּרָכוֹת**. These **בְּרָכוֹת** help us to remember that the reason we are doing these things is to get closer to God. There is a **בְּרָכָה** for putting on a tallit, lighting candles, studying Torah, and sitting in a sukkah.

A **מִצְוָה** blessing is different from an ordinary **בְּרָכָה**. We add a few more words to the beginning. We add

אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ

This blessing formula says that when we do a **מִצְוָה** we make a connection to the holy. This **בְּרָכָה** with extra words reminds us that the thing we are doing is a chance to experience holiness.



In this unit you will learn

- about **מִצְוֹת**
- seven **בְּרָכוֹת** we say when we do **מִצְוֹת**
- three Hebrew roots
- one story about **מִצְוֹת**.

בְּרָכוֹת מִצְוָה

Use these words to guess the purpose of each בְּרָכָה.

1. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ
בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל מִקְרָא מִגִּלָּה.

2. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ
בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל שַׁבָּת.

3. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ
בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל אֲכִילַת מִצָּה.

4. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ
בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְשִׁמוֹעַ קוֹל שׁוֹפָר.

5. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ
בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל חֲנֻכָּה.

6. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ
בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְקַבֵּעַ מְזוּזָה.

7. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ
בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַתְעַטֵּף בְּצִיצִית.

8. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ
בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל נְטִילַת לֹאֲבָב.

שׁוֹפָר



לֹאֲבָב



מְזוּזָה



טְלִית



שַׁבָּת



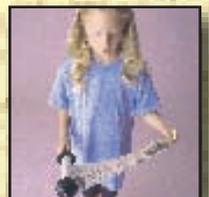
חֲנֻכָּה



מִצָּה



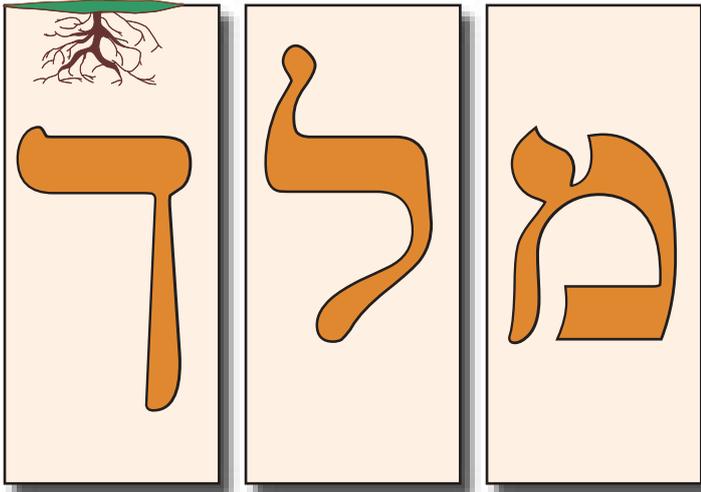
מִגְלָה



What can be learned from the last word or two of a בְּרָכָה?



Roots are the secret to understanding what Hebrew means. מלך is a root.



CLUE: ק = כ = פ

Can you see the three letters מלך in these words?

מְלִכְנוּ יִמְלֹךְ מַלְכוּתוֹ

Hebrew builds words out of three-letter roots.

our king = מְלִכְנוּ

He will rule = יִמְלֹךְ

His kingdom = מַלְכוּתוֹ



Hebrew often uses male words to talk about God, but that does not mean that God is male.

Sound out these words and circle those that contain the root מלך.

1. אֶחָד מַלְכוּתוֹ כְּבוֹד בָּרְכוּ מְלֹךְ מַלְכֵי

2. הַמְּלָכִים וְעַד שָׁמַע הַמְּבָרָךְ מַלְכֵנוּ בִּירָךְ

3. אֵת יִי שֵׁם כְּבוֹד אֵין בְּאֱלֹהֵנוּ אֵין מַלְכֵנוּ

4. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה מְלֹךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ

5. בְּמַלְכֵנוּ אֵין בְּמוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ מַלְכוּתְךָ בְּמִצּוֹתֶיךָ

Write in the missing letters of the root word מלך.

8. ___ לְכֵי

7. מְל___ וְתוֹ

6. בְּמ___ כֵנוּ

11. ה___ לְכֵים

10. מ___ כוֹתֶךָ

9. מְל___



Practice these בְּרָכָה words.

1. בְּרוּךְ שֵׁשֶׁת יָרַע אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ לֹאֵל

2. מִגְּלָה מִצָּה אֶתָּה יי שֶׁל חֲנֻכָּה וְצִוָּנוּ

3. עַל אֲכִילַת צִיצִית לְשִׁמוּעַ קוֹל מְזִוְזָה

4. מִקְרָא בְּמִצְוֹתָיו לְהַדְּלִיק לְקַבֵּעַ נְטִילַת

5. לְהַתְעַטֵּף אֱלֹהֵינוּ קִדְּשָׁנוּ הַמוֹצֵיא לָחֶם פָּרִי

Recite these בְּרָכָה phrases.

6. בְּרוּךְ אֶתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו

7. וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְּלִיק יָרַע שֵׁשֶׁת וְצִוָּנוּ לְשִׁמוּעַ קוֹל שׁוֹפָר

8. וְצִוָּנוּ עַל אֲכִילַת מִצָּה וְצִוָּנוּ עַל נְטִילַת לֹאֵל

9. וְצִוָּנוּ עַל מִקְרָא מִגְּלָה וְצִוָּנוּ לְקַבֵּעַ מְזִוְזָה

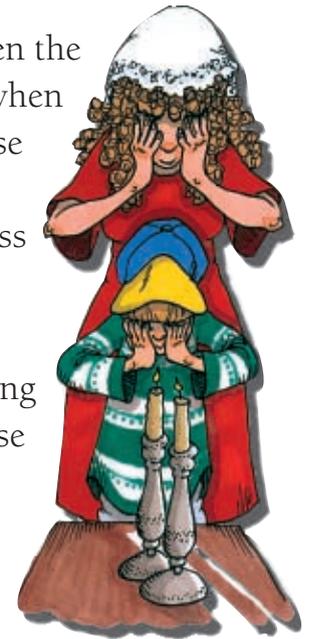
Recite this בְּרָכָה.

10. בְּרוּךְ אֶתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו
וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְּלִיק יָרַע שֵׁשֶׁת חֲנֻכָּה.

The מצוה of Lighting

Most Jewish holidays begin twice, once when the candles are lit and blessed and then again when the קדוש is said over the wine. Both of these ברכות help us recognize the holiness of Shabbat or the festival and make the holiness part of our experience.

Kindling (lighting) candles to mark the beginning of Shabbat or a festival and lighting the Hanukkah lights are מצוות. Each of these acts of lighting a flame is an opportunity—a chance to kindle a feeling of holiness inside ourselves.



להדליק



נר



של

of

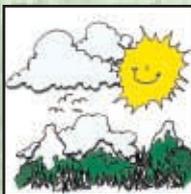
שבת



חנכה



יום



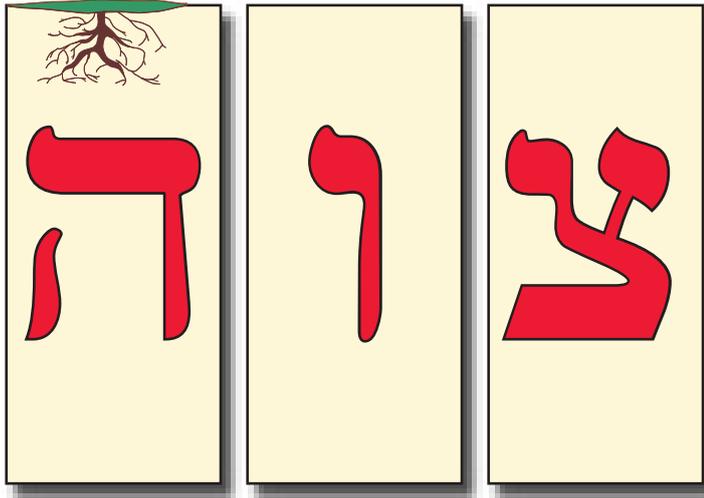
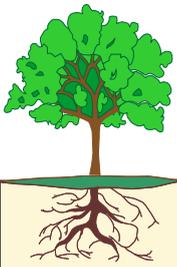
טוב



1. ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם
2. אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו
3. להדליק נר של שבת.
4. ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם
5. אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו
6. להדליק נר של חנכה.
7. ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם
8. אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו
9. להדליק נר של יום טוב.

ברכה: My own translation of this part of the

להדליק נר של שבת



Can you see these letters **צוה** in these words?

מְצוּה **וְצִוְנוּ** **בְּמִצְוֹתָיו**

Sometimes the letter **ה** drops out in words.

The root **צוה** means “command”.

commandment = **מְצוּה**

and commanded us = **וְצִוְנוּ**

with God’s commandments = **בְּמִצְוֹתָיו**

Practice these words and circle all that contain the root **צוה**.

1. מְצוּת מְלֶךְ מוֹשִׁיעֵנו קְדוֹשׁ צוּה לָנוּ

2. בְּרוּכִים הַבָּאִים מְצוּה תוֹרָה אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ

3. שָׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל שְׁלוֹם קְדוּשָׁה מְצוּה מְלִכְנוּ

4. וְצִוְנוּ הָעֵץ הַנֶּפֶן מְלָכוֹתוֹ מְזוֹנוֹת צוּ

5. לְהַדְלִיק צוּה מְצוּת שׁוֹמֵעַ מְגִלָּה קְדוֹשׁ

Write in the missing letters for these words built from the roots **צוה** and **מלך**.

8. וְ. . . וְנוּ

7. מֶלְ. . . ותו

6. מְצַ. . . ה

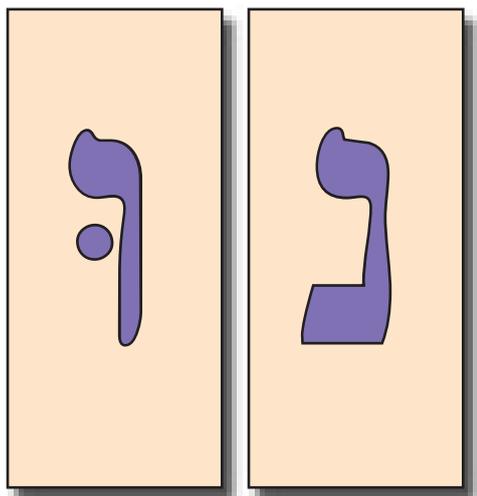


11. הַ. . . לְכִים

10. צוּ. . .

9. מֶלְ. . .

Endings also give us a lot of information. נו is the first ending we are going to learn.



Can you see the two letters נו in these words?

מַלְכֵנוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ

נו means “our” or “us”.

our Ruler = מַלְכֵנוּ

our God = אֱלֹהֵינוּ

our ancestors = אֲבוֹתֵינוּ

Sound and circle the words that end in נו.

1. מַלְכֵנוּ אָבִינוּ אֲבוֹת אֲדָמָה עֵינֵינוּ בָּרְכוּ

2. שָׁמַע הַמְּבָרָךְ כְּמוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ בָּרְכֵנוּ עָלֵינוּ

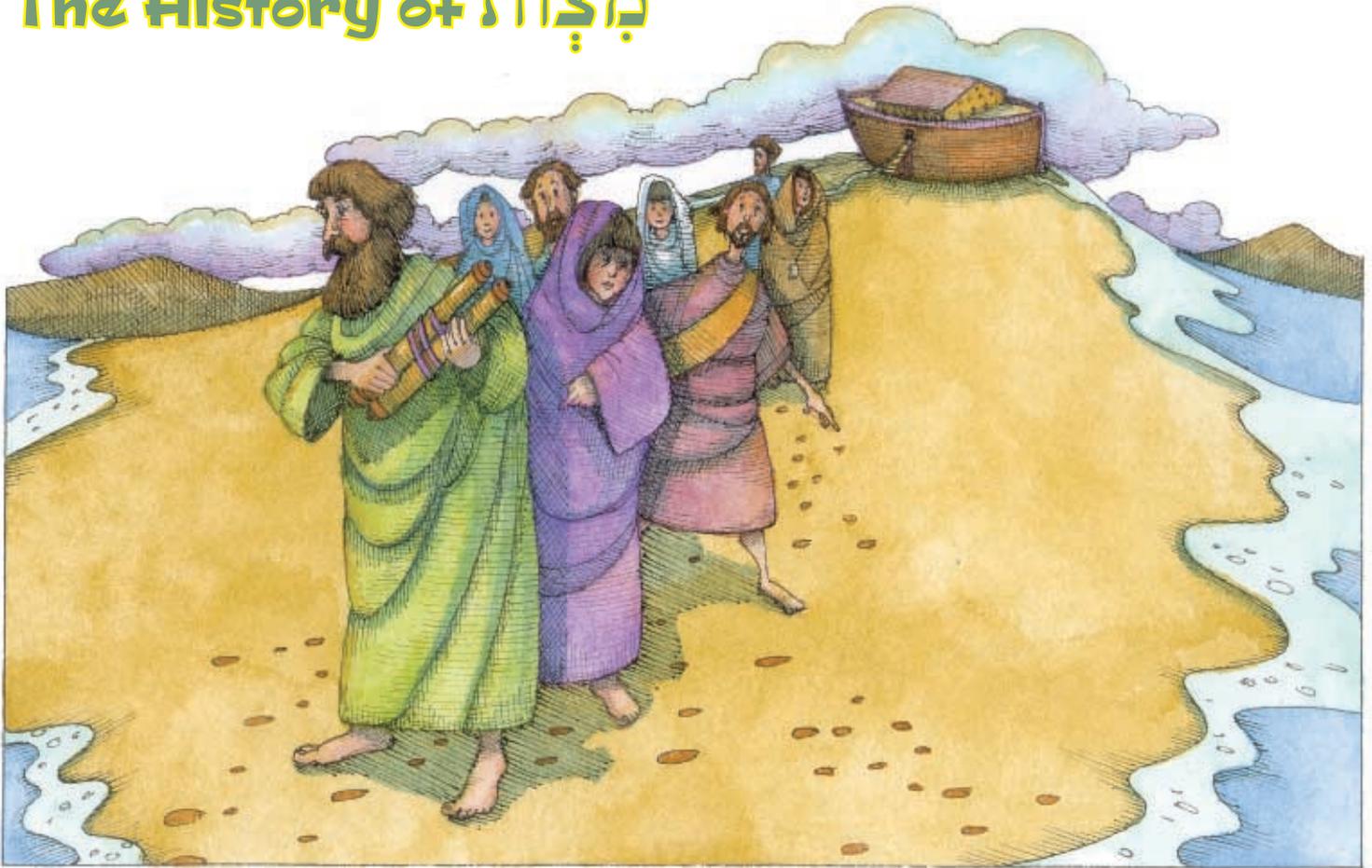
3. פָּנִיךְ בְּלָנוּ אֲנַחְנוּ וְאֲמוֹתֵינוּ בְּתֵבֵנוּ

אין פֿאלהינו

These words come from an ancient hymn of praise to God. For more than 1500 years it has been sung at the end of morning services on Shabbat and holidays.

מֹשִׁיעַ	מְלֶךְ	אֲדוֹן	אֱלֹהִים
אין כְּמוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ	אין כְּמַלְכֵנוּ	אין כְּאֲדוֹנֵינוּ	אין כְּאֱלֹהֵינוּ
מי כְּמוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ	מי כְּמַלְכֵנוּ	מי כְּאֲדוֹנֵינוּ	מי כְּאֱלֹהֵינוּ
נוֹדָה לְמוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ	נוֹדָה לְמַלְכֵנוּ	נוֹדָה לְאֲדוֹנֵינוּ	נוֹדָה לְאֱלֹהֵינוּ
בָּרוּךְ מֹשִׁיעֵנוּ	בָּרוּךְ מַלְכֵנוּ	בָּרוּךְ אֲדוֹנֵנוּ	בָּרוּךְ אֱלֹהֵינוּ
אֲתָה הוּא מֹשִׁיעֵנוּ	אֲתָה הוּא מַלְכֵנוּ	אֲתָה הוּא אֲדוֹנֵנוּ	אֲתָה הוּא אֱלֹהֵינוּ

The History of מצוות



מצוות are things that God wants us to do and things that God wants us not to do. When Adam and Eve left the Garden of Eden, God gave them one rule.* This **מצוה** was “No Idols.” That didn’t really mean Adam and Eve shouldn’t carve figures out of wood and stone. It really meant, “Remember that there is only one God.” Never think that you can be God, and never think that you can make up a god who will give you permission to do things you want to do (when you know they are wrong).

The “No Idols” rule didn’t work. People’s feelings won out over the things they knew were right. People stole. People hit and even killed. People made fun of each other. They did what they felt like doing and forgot that one God created everyone.

After the flood, God made a new start. God taught Noah and his family six more **מצוות**. God kept the (1) “No Idols” **מצוה** and added these **מצוות**: (2) be good to your family, (3) no murder, (4) no stealing, (5) no cursing out God, (6) no being cruel to animals, and (7) set up courts to fix things when you are angry at each other. God hoped that if the rules were more specific people would act better. It didn’t work. Even with seven **מצוות** people still hurt, killed, stole, and more or less did what they wanted. The world wasn’t much better.

*There were actually two other rules, but “be fruitful and multiply” doesn’t count because it was given to all life, and not just to people. And “don’t eat the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden” doesn’t count because it was particular to the people living in the garden. God only gave Adam and Eve one **מצוה** that is still on the list.

The next time, God went for an experiment. God picked one family, Abram's family, and said, "We are going to make a deal. I will work with you, and when we figure out the rules, you will teach everyone else." So God gave the Families-of-Israel lots of rules, 613 **מצוות**. Israel got the Torah with holidays and stories, things to do every day, and a large collections of "Do This" or "Don't Do This" rules. God gave Abram's family the gift of not just a couple of rules but a whole way of living. God hoped that the Torah would help them to make themselves into better people—and help them teach others how to be better people, too.

It is hard to be a Jew. Torah comes with a lot of rules about things to do and not to do. But being a Jew also offers a path to happiness by letting the best "you" emerge and join with others to make a much better world.

From the Midrash

Question

What is the point of the **מצוות**? Why did God give them to us?



Answer to **מצוות**

The Torah is a gift from God. It contains 613 **מצוות**. 248 of them are positive **מצוות**. These are things that God wants us to "do." 365 of them are negative. These are things that God wants us to "not do."

There are 248 bones in a human body. That means that **מצוות** are supposed to shape the things we do and not do.

There are 365 days in the year. We are supposed to let the **מצוות** guide what we do and what we do not do every day.

The big idea is this:

everything we do, every day, comes with a chance to know God better. We always have the chance to become better people and to work together to make the world better, too.



Here are a few more Hebrew words that you may already know.



Please make your best guess. Your teacher will help you twist roots into words.

מִצְוָה

mitzvah
commandment

קָדוֹשׁ

holy

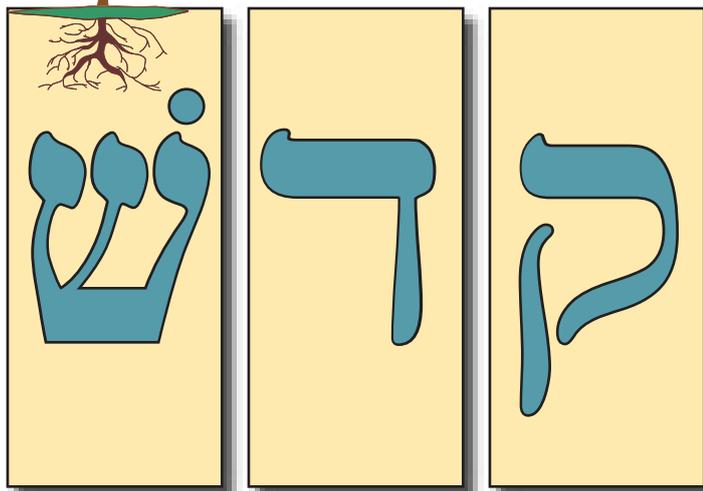
אֲשֶׁר

who/that/
which

My own translation of this בְּרַכָּה formula is:

אֲשֶׁר קָדְשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ





Can you see the three letters קדש in these words?

קדוש מקדש קדשנו

קדש means "holy".

holy = קדוש

makes holy = מקדש

makes us holy = קדשנו



Practice these words and circle each one that contains the root קדש.

1. אשר וצונו וקדשנו הקדוש ברוך הוא

2. להתעטף מצוה מקדש מקרא לקבע פרי

3. על אכילת ציצית לשמוע קול מזוזה

4. מקרא במצותיו להדליק לקבע נטילת

5. אלהינו קדשנו פרי המוציא לחם להתעטף

Write in the missing letters for these words that are built from the root קדש.

8. מקד_____

7. קדש_____

6. קדש_____

11. קדש_____

10. בקדו_____תו

9. קדשנו_____

Practice these בְּרָכָה words. Circle words made from צוּה, underline those from קֹדֶשׁ, and draw a box around מְלֶכֶךְ words.

1. הַגָּפֶן שׁוֹפָר קֹדֶשׁנוּ אֲדָמָה מַלְכוּתוֹ נְטִילַת צוּה

2. בּוֹרָא פִירוֹת קוֹל לֶחֶם אֲכִילַת וְצִנּוּנוּ לְמַלְכֵנוּ

3. מְזוּזָה חֲנֻכָּה מִן שַׁבַּת לְקַבֵּעַ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ

4. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה מֶלֶךְ נוֹדָה קְדוֹשׁ קְדוּשָׁה בְּמִצּוֹתָיו

Practice these בְּרָכוֹת phrases.

5. לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל שַׁבַּת נֵר שֶׁל חֲנֻכָּה נֵר שֶׁל יוֹם טוֹב

6. בּוֹרָא מֵינִי מְזוֹנוֹת בּוֹרָא פְּרֵי הָעֵץ בּוֹרָא פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן

7. שֶׁהַכֹּל נִהְיָה בְּדַבְּרוֹ בּוֹרָא מֵינִי מְזוֹנוֹת אֲשֶׁר קֹדֶשׁנוּ

Recite these בְּרָכוֹת (begin each with line 8).



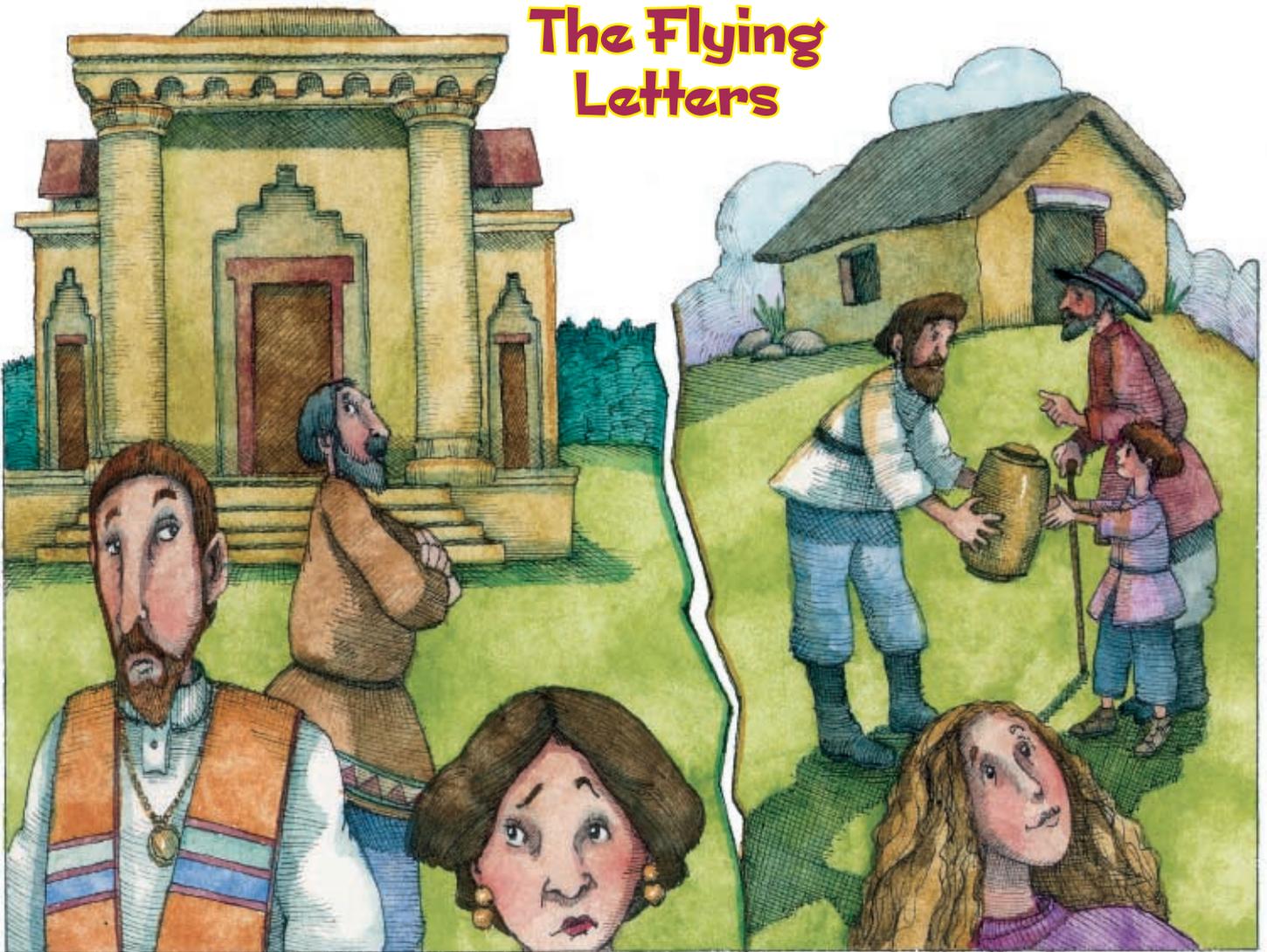
8. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם...

9. אֲשֶׁר קֹדֶשׁנוּ בְּמִצּוֹתָיו וְצִנּוּנוּ עַל אֲכִילַת מִצָּה

10. אֲשֶׁר קֹדֶשׁנוּ בְּמִצּוֹתָיו וְצִנּוּנוּ לְשִׁמוּעַ קוֹל שׁוֹפָר

11. אֲשֶׁר קֹדֶשׁנוּ בְּמִצּוֹתָיו וְצִנּוּנוּ עַל מְקָרָא מְגִלָּה

The Flying Letters



This is a story of two towns. One was rich and one was poor. The rich town had a large, beautiful synagogue that was almost always closed. The small town had a room in the back of a store that they used for their synagogue. But people came every day and the place was always full. The rich synagogue had a *Sefer Torah* that was opened only a few times a year. The poor synagogue had an empty scroll of parchment stretched between two wooden rollers that they kept in the ark. They hoped someday to have the money to pay a scribe to fill it with Hebrew letters and words—to write down the Torah on it. Meanwhile, whenever they had to read Torah they took out their empty scroll and read the holy words from a book.

People in the two towns were very different. In the poor town, everyone thought of their neighbors as their family. In the rich town, people took care of themselves. In the one town, sick people had to fend for themselves. In the other town, if you were sick, lots of people brought you chicken soup. In one town, mourners were left alone to be sad. In the other town, if someone died, lots of people stopped by to comfort those who mourned. In the one town, people lived their lives pretty much alone. In the other town people shared one another's joy and sadness.

One night, just before Rosh ha-Shanah, the Torah reader of the rich synagogue opened the building to make sure that the Torah was rolled to the right place. The synagogue was dark and quiet. When he opened the ark door, hundreds of Hebrew letters flew out of the ark and surrounded him. It was like being attacked by a swarm of bees. He brushed them away and shut the ark door. He ran home and forgot to lock the synagogue door. He didn't tell anyone what had happened. He was sure he had dreamt it.

That same night some men from the poor town were walking home from evening prayers. They looked at the sliver of the moon and were sure that they saw a swarm of Hebrew letters fly across its face looking like a swarm of bats. But they told each other, "It must have been bats, because Hebrew letters don't fly."

On Rosh ha-Shanah, the congregation of the rich town took out their *Sefer Torah* and opened it to begin to read. They had a big shock. Their scroll was empty. No words. No letters. All of the Torah was now missing from their scroll.

At the same moment, the families of the poor town had a shock. When they opened their empty scroll to pretend to read, they found it filled with words and letters. It had become a complete Torah.



From a story by David Einhorn

Questions

1. Why did the rich community lose the words in its Torah?
2. Why did the poor community get words in its Torah?
3. What is the meaning of this story?
4. How can this story of the flying letters help you learn where to point your heart when you say a בְּרָכָה?



Your teacher
may want you
to try this at
home.

The words to these בְּרָכוֹת are flying from one synagogue to another. Connect them to make as many בְּרָכוֹת as possible. (Parts can be used as many times as you want.)

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי

אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם

אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ

לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל שַׁבָּת

בוֹרָא מִיְיָ מְזוֹנוֹת

הַמוֹצֵיא לָחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ

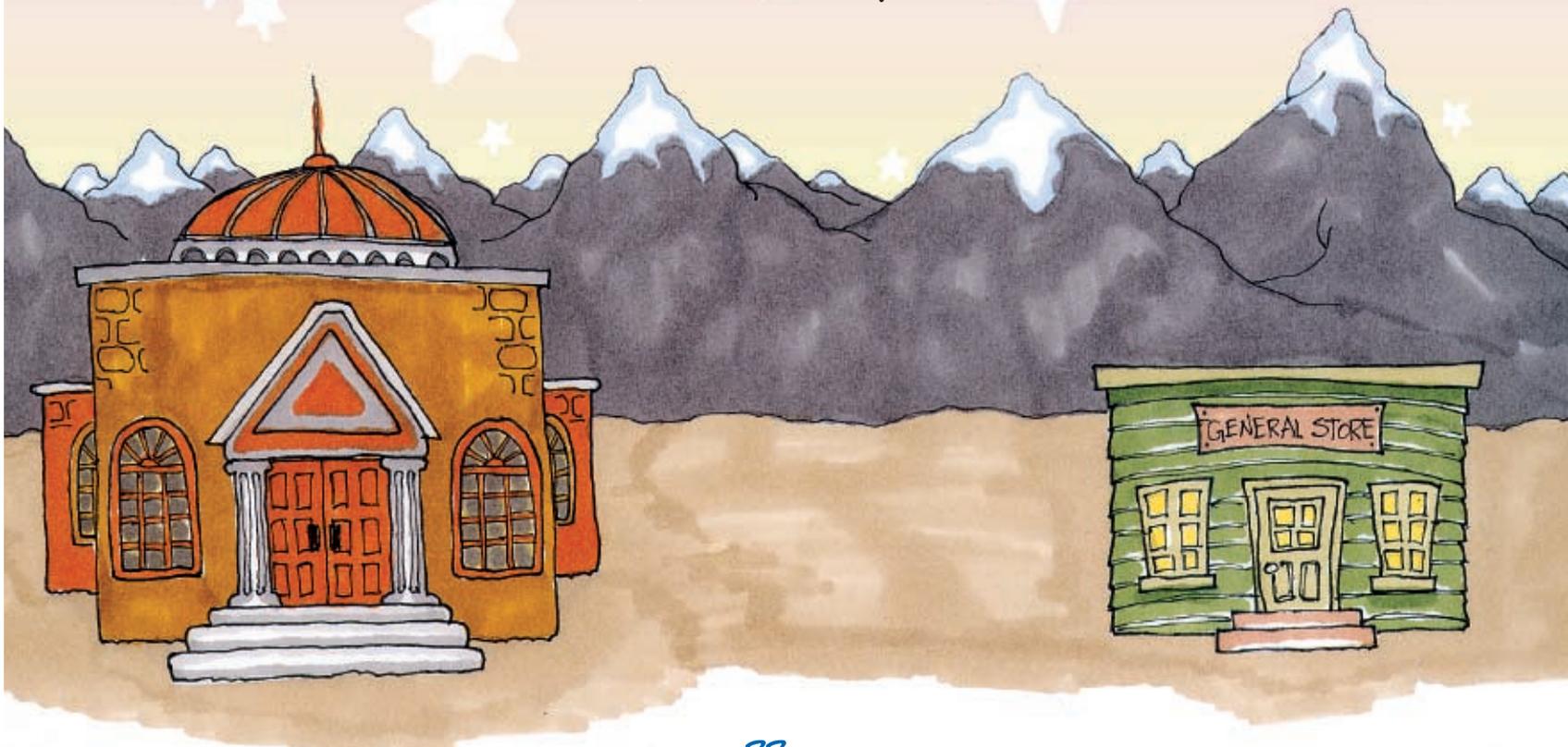
לְקַבֵּעַ מְזוּזָה

עַל נְטִילַת לֹאֵב

בוֹרָא פְּרִי הָעֵץ

בוֹרָא פְּרִי הַגֶּפֶן

לְשִׁמוֹעַ קוֹל שׁוֹפָר



A Review

Some things to know about בְּרָכוֹת מִצְוָה

- מִצְוֹת are found in the Torah. They are things to do and things not to do, and they give us the chance to learn about and love God, become the best person we can be, and make the world the best possible place.
- There are בְּרָכוֹת to say when doing some מִצְוֹת. Not all מִצְוֹת have בְּרָכוֹת.
- When we say a בְּרָכָה over a מִצְוָה we add these words to the בְּרָכָה formula: **אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ**

Language Learning

We learned or reviewed the following words:



מִגִּלָּה



מִצְוָה



חֲנֻכָּה



שַׁבָּת



טְלִית



מְזוּזָה



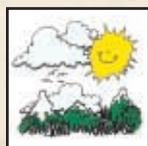
לוּלָב



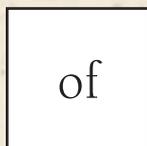
שׁוֹפָר



טוֹב



יוֹם



שֶׁל



נֵר



לְהַדְלִיק

We looked at the following roots:

שִׁבְּחָה, מְלָךְ, צוּה

and the suffix

וּ

We learned the following בְּרָכוֹת

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ...

...עַל מִקְרָא מִגִּלָּה. ...לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל יוֹם טוֹב. ...לְהַתְעַטֵּף בְּצִיצִית.

...עַל נְטִילַת לוּלָב. ...עַל אֲכִילַת מִצְוָה. ...עַל מִקְרָא מִגִּלָּה.

...לְקַבֵּעַ מְזוּזָה. ...לְשִׁמוּעַ קוֹל שׁוֹפָר. ...לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל חֲנֻכָּה.

