



Birkot HaNehenin*

ברכות הנטין

<i>On seeing wonders in nature, including lightning, shooting stars, vast deserts, mountains and a sunrise:</i> Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe, Source of Creation.	ברוך אתה ייְ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, עוֹשֶׂה מַעֲשָׂה בִּרְאָשָׁית
<i>On seeing the ocean:</i> Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe who has made the great sea.	ברוך אתה ייְ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֹׁעֲשֶׂה אֶת הַיּוֹם הַגָּדוֹל.
<i>On seeing a rainbow:</i> Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe who remembers, is faithful to, and fulfills Your covenant with all that You created.	ברוך אתה ייְ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, זָכֵר הַבְּרִית וּנְאָמֵן בְּרִיתוֹ וּקְיָם בְּמְאָמָרָו.
<i>On hearing thunder, or seeing a storm:</i> Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe whose power and might fill the whole world.	ברוך אתה ייְ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שְׁכַחּוּ וְגִבּוּרָתוֹ מְלָא עַולָם.
<i>On smelling fragrant spices:</i> Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe, who creates various spices.	ברוך אתה ייְ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בוֹרָא מִינִי בְשָׁמִים.
<i>On smelling the fragrance of herbs or plants:</i> Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe who creates fragrant plants.	ברוך אתה ייְ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בוֹרָא עַשְׂבִי בְשָׁמִים.
<i>On smelling fragrant fruit:</i> Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe who gives a pleasant fragrance to fruits.	ברוך אתה ייְ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַנוֹתֵן רִיחַ טֹוב בְפְרוֹת.
<i>On seeing trees blossoming for the first time in a year:</i> Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe whose works are lacking nothing, and who has created beautiful creatures and beautiful trees for the children of Adam.	ברוך אתה ייְ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁלֹא חָסֵר בְעוֹלָמוֹ ذָבֵר, וּבְרָא בְּכָרִיות טֻובות וְאִילָנוֹת טֻובִים לְהַנּוֹת בָּהֶם בְּנֵי אָדָם.
<i>On seeing an ugly creature:</i> Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe who has fashioned different creatures.	ברוך אתה ייְ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, מְשֻׁנָה הַבְּרִיות.
<i>On seeing trees or creatures of striking beauty:</i> Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe in whose world exists such beauty.	ברוך אתה ייְ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שְׁפָכָה לוּ בְעוֹלָמוֹ.
<i>On seeing a person distinguished in Torah studies:</i> Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe who has shared wisdom with those who show awe.	ברוך אתה ייְ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שְׁחַלְקָה מִחְכָמָתוֹ לִירָאֵיו.

*This is a list of selected blessings from this category



Total Eclipse of the Sun

<p>Tractate Sukkah 29a</p> <p>The Rabbis taught, “In a time when the sun is eclipsed, it is a bad omen for the entire world. A parable: To what can this be compared? To a king of flesh and blood who made a meal for his subjects and placed a lantern before them. [When] he became angry at them, he said to his servant, ‘Take away the lantern from before them and leave them in darkness.’”</p>	<p>סוכה כט.</p> <p>ת"ר בזמן שהחמה לוקה סימן רע לכל העולם כולו משל למה הדבר דומה למלך בשר ודם שעשה סעודת לעבדיו והניהם פנס לפניהם כעס עליהם ואמר לעבדו טול פנס מפנים והושיבם בחושך</p>
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According to the Rabbis, what does a solar eclipse mean for the world? How does the parable explain what it means?

<p>Aseh Lecha Rav of Rabbi Chaim Dovid HaLevi (1949) 5:7</p> <p>[Our Rabbis] instituted blessings over acts of creation and powerful natural events, like lightning and thunder and so on. However, they did not do so for a lunar or solar eclipse. And if only today we could institute a blessing when we are aware that an eclipse is indeed an incredible natural event. But we cannot, for a person is forbidden to make up a blessing. If a person still wants to make some form of a blessing, he should recite the verses, “And David blessed... blessed are you, Hashem [sic], God of our father Israel... who performs acts of creation.”</p>	<p>שואת עשה לך רב (ר' חיים דוד הלווי) ה:ז</p> <p>...וכן תקנו ברכה זו על תופעות טבע רבות עצמה צזיקים ברקים ורעמים זועמות... ...יתכן וכיcoliים היינו לקבוע ברכה, אלא שלא כל אדם רשאי על דעת עצמו לקבוע ברכה חדשה לעצמו. ומי שחש צורך לברך על תופעת טבע זאת, יוכל לברך ע"י קריית פסוק כדלהלן: ויברך דוד את ה' לעיני כל הקהיל ויאמר דוד ברוך אתה ה' אלקי ישראל אבינו מעולם ועד עולם לך ה' הממלכה עושה מעשה בראשית...</p>
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Total Eclipse of the Sun

What would be your argument in favor of saying a *berachah* (blessing) for an eclipse? What would be your argument against saying a *berachah* for an eclipse? How does saying a *berachah* or not saying a *berachah* affect how you experience major events?



Light and Darkness

From <i>Birkot Hashachar</i> (the blessings to begin the day)	ברכות השחר
Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe, who gave the heart wisdom to distinguish between light and darkness.	ברוך אתה ייִהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אָשֶׁר בָּתַנוּ לְשֻׁכּוֹן בֵּין הַבְּחִזּוֹן בֵּין יוֹם וּבֵין לְילָה.

From <i>Shacharit</i> (the morning service)	שחרית
Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe, who forms light and creates darkness, makes peace and creates everything.	ברוך אתה ייִהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, יוצר אור ובוֹרָא חַשָּׁךְ, עֲשָׂה שָׁלוֹם ובוֹרָא אֶת הַכָּל.

From <i>Ma'ariv</i> (the evening service)	מעריב
Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe, who through words brings on evenings, through wisdom opens gates, and through understanding changes times, and exchanges the seasons, and orders the stars in their places in the sky. Creator of day and night, rolling away light for darkness and darkness for light, making the day pass and bringing on night and distinguishing between day and night, Adonai Tz'vaot is your name. May the living and enduring God rule over us always and forever. Blessed are You, Adonai, who brings on evenings.	ברוך אתה ייִהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אָשֶׁר בָּזְבָּרוּ מַעֲרִיב עֲרָבִים, בְּחַכְמָה פּוֹתָח שְׁעָרִים, וּבְתַבּוֹנָה מְשֻׁנָּה עַתִּים, וּמְחַלֵּף אֶת הַזָּמָנִים, וּמְסִידֶר אֶת הַכּוֹכָבִים בְּמַשְׁמָרוֹתֵיכֶם בְּرַקְיעֵיכֶן. בָּזְבָּרוּ יוֹם וּלְילָה, גּוֹלֵל אֹור מִפְנֵי חַשָּׁךְ, וְחַשָּׁךְ מִפְנֵי אֹור. וּמְעַבֵּר יוֹם וּמְבִיא לְלִילָה, וּמְבָדֵל בֵּין יוֹם וּבֵין לְלִילָה, ייִהּ אֱצֹבּוֹת שְׁמוֹ. אֶל חַי וְקַיִם, תִּמְדַּי יְמֹלֹךְ עָלֵינוּ לְעוֹלָם וְעַד. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ייִהּ, הַמַּעֲרִיב עֲרָבִים.

<i>Shehechiyanu</i> (often said to mark a special moment)	שְׁהַחַיָּנוּ
Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe, who gave us life, sustained us, and brought us to this time.	ברוך אתה ייִהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שְׁהַחַיָּנוּ וְקִיְמָנוּ וְהִגִּיאָנוּ לְזֹמָן הַזֶּה.



Light and Darkness

Rosh Chodesh Prayer

By Rabbi Sheila Peltz Weinberg

Dear God, God of our mothers and fathers,
Renew us this month and this year
Direct us
Toward goodness and blessing
Toward the joyful
Toward liberation and challenge, as well as
Toward patience and consolation
Toward becoming ever more human beings.
Let us become capable of supporting ourselves,
Our families and friends,
Let us serve our community in dignity.
Direct us
Toward life and peace
Toward observing our blindness
Toward struggling with our goals
Toward forgiving ourselves and each other.
You brought us near with an intention
You gave us the awareness of the cycles of the moon.
May we use this gift as an opportunity
To understand what you intend for us.
Thank you for inviting us to share your holiness and
This holy moment of the New Moon.

My prayer:
