

Bless the One whom we are called to bless

בְּרַכּוּ אֶת ה' הַמְּבָרָךְ

Blessed is the Living God whom we are
called to bless forever and ever

בְּרוּךְ ה' הַמְּבָרָךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- ? What and whom does God bless?
- ? What does 'blessedness' look and feel like?
- ? Can a person really "bless" God? If not, what do we mean by using that language?

GOD BLESSES....

Genesis 1:22

God created the great sea monsters, and all the living creatures of every kind that creep, which the waters brought forth in swarms, and all the winged birds of every kind. And God saw that this was good.

God **blessed** them, saying, "Be **fertile and increase**, fill the waters in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth."

וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הַתַּיִמָּנוֹת הַגְּדֹלִים וְאֶת
כָּל־נֶפֶשׁ הַחַיָּה | הַרְמִשֵּׁת אֲשֶׁר שָׂרְצוּ
הַמַּיִם לְמִינֵהֶם וְאֶת כָּל־עוֹף כָּנָף לְמִינֵהוּ
וַיִּבְרָךְ אֹתָם וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים כִּי־טוֹב:
אֱלֹהִים לֵאמֹר פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמְלֵאוּ
אֶת־הַמַּיִם בַּיַּמִּים וְהָעוֹף יִרְבַּע בָּאָרֶץ:

Genesis 1:28

And God created humankind in God's image, creating it in the image of God; male and female God created them.
God **blessed** them and God said to them, "Be **fertile and increase**, fill the earth and master it; and rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and all the living things that creep on earth."

וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים | אֶת־הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמוֹ בְּצֶלֶם
אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אֹתוֹ זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה בָּרָא
אֹתָם: וַיִּבְרָךְ אֹתָם אֱלֹהִים וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם
אֱלֹהִים פְּרוּ וּרְבוּ וּמְלֵאוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ
וְכִבְשֶׁהָ וּרְדּוּ בְּדִגַּת הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם
וּבְכָל־חַיָּה הַרְמִשֵּׁת עַל־הָאָרֶץ:

Genesis 2:3

And God **blessed** the seventh day and declared it holy, because on it God ceased from all the work of creation that God had done.

וַיִּבְרָךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת־יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדְּשֵׁהוּ
אֹתוֹ כִּי בּוֹ שָׁבַת מִכָּל־מְלָאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר־בָּרָא
אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת:

And PROMISES BLESSING...

Genesis 17:20

As for Ishmael, I have heeded you. I hereby **bless** him. I will make him **fertile and exceedingly numerous**. He shall be the father of twelve chieftains, and I will make of him a great nation.

וְלִישְׁמָעֵאל שָׁמַעְתִּיךָ הִנֵּה | בְּרַכְתִּי
אֹתוֹ וְהַפְּרִיתִי אֹתוֹ וְהִרְבִּיתִי אֹתוֹ
בְּמֵאדָּ מְאֹד שְׁנַיִם־עָשָׂר נָשִׂאִם יוֹלִיד
וְנִתְּתִיו לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל:

Genesis 22:17 (to Abraham)

I will bestow My **blessing** upon you and make your descendants as **numerous** as the stars of heaven and the sands on the seashore; and your descendants shall seize the gates of their foes.

כִּי־בְרַךְ אֲבִרְכְּךָ וְהִרְבֵּה אֲרִבֶּה
אֶת־זַרְעֲךָ כְּכֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם וְכַחֹל
אֲשֶׁר עַל־שֹׁפֶת הַיָּם וְיִרְשׁ זַרְעֲךָ אֶת
שַׁעַר אֹיְבָיו:

PEOPLE INVOKE DIVINE BLESSING ON EACH OTHER

Genesis 14:19

And King Melchizedek of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was a priest of God Most High.

He **blessed** him, saying, "Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth....

וּמֶלֶכִּי צִדְקָל מֶלֶךְ שָׁלֵם הוֹצִיא לֶחֶם
וַיִּזֶן וְהוּא כֹהֵן לֵאלֹהֵי עֲלִיוֹן:
וַיְבָרְכֵהוּ וַיֹּאמֶר בְּרוּךְ אַבְרָם לֵאלֹהֵי
עֲלִיוֹן קֹנֵה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ:

Numbers 6: 24-26

The Eternal spoke to Moses: Speak to Aaron and his sons and tell them: This is how you are to bless the people of Israel. Say to them:

May God bless you and keep you

May God's face shine upon you and be gracious to you

May God's face turn towards you and give you peace.

וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: דַּבֵּר
אֶל־אַהֲרֹן וְאֶל־בָּנָיו לֵאמֹר כֹּה תְבַרְכוּ
אֶת־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אָמֹר לָהֶם:
יְבָרְכֵךְ יְהוָה וַיִּשְׁמְרֵךְ:
יְאָר יְהוָה | פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיַּחֲנוּךְ:
יִשָּׂא יְהוָה | פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיִּשֶׁם לָךְ
שָׁלוֹם

CAN PEOPLE BLESS GOD? AND WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

Genesis 9:26

And he [Noah] said, "**Blessed be the Eternal**, The God of Shem; Let Canaan be a slave to them.

וַיֹּאמֶר בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי שָׁם וַיְהִי
כִנְעָן עֶבֶד לָמוֹ:

Genesis 14:20 (Melchizedek again)

...And **blessed be God Most High**, who has delivered your foes into your hand."

וּבְרוּךְ אֵל עֲלִיוֹן אֲשֶׁר־מָגֵן צָרֶיךָ
בְּיָדֶךָ

Genesis 24: 27

The man [Abraham's servant] bowed low in homage to the Eternal and said, "**Blessed be the Eternal God of my master Abraham**, who has not withheld steadfast faithfulness from my master. For I have been guided on my errand by the Eternal, to the house of my master's kinsmen."

וַיִּקְדַּד הָאִישׁ וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ לַיהוָה: וַיֹּאמֶר
בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲדֹנָי אַבְרָהָם
אֲשֶׁר לֹא־עָזַב חֲסִדּוֹ וְאֱמֻתּוֹ מִעַם
אֲדֹנָי אֲנֹכִי בְּדֶרֶךְ נְתַנִּי יְהוָה בֵּית
אֲחֵי אֲדֹנָי:

Deuteronomy 8:10

When you have eaten your fill, **bless** your Eternal God for the good land which God has given you.

...and at least **100 times every day**

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, who has ...
(sanctified us with Your commandments, and commanded us ...)

וְאָכַלְתָּ וּשְׂבַעְתָּ וּבֵרַכְתָּ אֶת־יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֶיךָ עַל־הָאָרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר
נָתַן־לָךְ:
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ

Hebrew:

Knee בָּרָךְ

Pool בְּרִיכָה

Firstborn בְּכֹר

Conclusions?

- ? Is 'HaMevorach' a name or an attribute?
- ? Do we believe we can have an effect on God?
- ? Does God NEED our blessing?

From 'mi yodea' website – an 'Orthodox' response:

I think we are responding to the chazzan telling us to bless Hashem by telling him that **we can't bless** Him; He is already blessed beyond anything we could ever imagine.

A Multi-Faith Conversation:

<https://exodusconversations.org/questions/what-does-it-mean-for-humans-to-bless-god/>

Jewish response (David Arnow): Jewish blessings affirm that God is *blessed*. Our benedictions address God directly—"Blessed are *You* . . ." Who are we to so address God? Maybe the psalmist was right: "To You silence is praise . . ." (65:2). But sometimes when we behold the truly wondrous we can't remain silent. We utter a word, maybe just an exclamation. Blessings highlight the extraordinary within the ordinary. At rare moments we feel overwhelmed by the bounty bestowed upon us. More often we take our good fortune for granted or assume that we deserve it. Blessings instruct us in gratitude; they point to the ultimate Source of All.

Christian response (Mary Boys): Blessing is a form of mindfulness, an acknowledgment of God's presence in all of creation. It is a response to the holy "hiding" in the ordinary. Someone sneezes. "God bless you," another responds. The desire to bless and be blessed lies deep within us. It is at once a response to the precariousness of our existence, and recognition of the Divine elusively present in our midst.

Muslim response (Muhammad Shafiq): God is blessed. *Al Quddus* (Holy and Blessed) is one of His names. We invoke His blessed name to be blessed ourselves. Muslims worship and supplications begin and end by invoking different names of God.

<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/prayers-and-blessings> (extract Sep2020 – author not named)

Many people today do not see the need for regular, formal prayer. "I pray when I feel inspired to, when it is meaningful to me," they say. This attitude overlooks two important things: the purpose of prayer, and the need for practice.

One purpose of prayer is to increase your awareness of God in your life and the role that God plays in your life. If you only pray when you feel inspired (that is, when you are already aware of God), then you will not increase your awareness of God.

In addition, if you want to do something well, you have to practise it continually, even when you don't feel like doing it. This is as true of prayer as it is of playing a sport, playing a musical instrument, or writing. The sense of humility and awe of God that is essential to proper prayer does not come easily to modern man, and will not simply come to you when you feel the need to pray. If you wait until inspiration strikes, you will not have the skills you need to pray effectively.