



### The language of "berachah"

#### 1. Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, Horeb 623

From men to Gd, it means nothing but to bless – i.e. either to further by deed the purpose set by Gd for free development, which is the good that He wishes – namely, to fulfill His will; or to declare to Him the furtherance in word – namely, to resolve to fulfill His will.

#### 2. Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra, Commentary to Genesis 2:3

"Berachah [Blessing]" refers to an increase of good.

#### 3. Rabbi Yechiel Michel Epstein, Aruch haShulchan Orach Chaim 46:1

Each blessing has both the direct 'Blessed are You' and the hidden 'Who sanctified us' because Gd is both revealed and hidden.

### A closing thought

#### 4. Talmud, Berachot 20b

The serving angels asked Gd: Master of the Universe, It is written in your Torah, 'He will neither show favour nor take a bribe,' but You show favour to the Jews, as it is written, 'Gd will turn His face to you!'

Gd replied: How can I not show favour to the Jews? I wrote in my Torah, 'You shall eat, and you shall be satisfied, and you shall bless Hashem your Gd,' and they are careful with themselves even to the point of an olive-sized or egg-sized amount!'

### Chicken soup!

#### 5. Rabbi Shimshon ben Tzemach Duran (14<sup>th</sup> century Algiers), Tashbetz 3:37

For most dangerously ill people, doctors instruct that they should be given small amounts of chicken soup. They say to give less than four ounces at a time, with long gaps between each sip, to enable the ill person to tolerate the soup.

#### 6. "Chicken Soup Inhibits Neutrophil Chemotaxis In Vitro" [www.medscape.com/viewarticle/405961\\_2](http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/405961_2)

Chicken soup may have a number of beneficial effects for an individual with a cold. These could include actions as diverse as improving hydration and nutritional status and accelerating mucosal clearance. The nature of the direct cytotoxic actions on microorganisms are controversial. Another potential mechanism for beneficial effects could be an attenuation of the inflammatory response...

#### 7. Lenore Fleisher, "The Chicken Soup Cookbook," pg. 12

"How do you make chicken soup, grandma?"

"Voos?" asked my grandmother. What?

"How do you make your great chicken soup?"

"Nemt a chicken, nemt vasser, nemt zalts ..." You take a chicken, you take water, you take salt ...

"What else?"

"Zuppengtins ..."

"Well, okay, how much water?"

"A tupfull." A potful.

"How much salt?"

"A bissel." A little.

"How big a chicken?"

"A chicken! Du vaist, a chicken." You know, a chicken!

It was hopeless. Nobody had ever asked my grandmother for a recipe before and she hadn't the slightest idea that what she did every Friday night of her adult life was a recipe. Who has need for such a thing? Recipes, America!

## The purpose of Shabbat and Holidays

### 8. Exodus 20:10-11

And the seventh day, Shabbat for your Gd; you shall not perform any tasks... for in six days Gd created the heavens and the earth, the sea and all in it, and He rested on the seventh. Therefore Gd blessed the Shabbat and sanctified it.

### 9. Exodus 31:17

Between Me and the Children of Israel, it is a sign forever, for in six days Gd created the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He halted and rested.

### 10. Deuteronomy 5:15

And you shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and Hashem your Gd took you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore, Hashem your Gd has instructed you to practice the day of Shabbat.

### 11. Nachmanides, Commentary to Deuteronomy 5:15

For due to the exodus from Egypt they knew that He spoke and the world came into existence, and He halted from [creating].

### 12. Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, Horeb 141

How, above all, does man show his domination over the earth? In that he can fashion all things in his environment to his own purpose... He can transform everything into an instrument of human service. He is allowed to rule over the world for six days with Gd's will. On the seventh day, however, he is forbidden by Divine behest to fashion anything for his own purpose. In this way he acknowledges that he has no rights of ownership or authority over the world... On each Sabbath day, the world, so to speak, is restored to Gd.

### 13. Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook, The Shabbat of the Land, Introduction

With the full force of her life, the soul recognizes that life achieves its potential value only to the extent that it is godly.

### 14. Isaiah 58:13

And you shall call Shabbat "enjoyment" [*oneg*]

### 15. Zohar, Parshat Yitro pp. 88a-b

When Rabbi Abba sat at his Shabbat meal, he rejoiced at each one. He would say, "This is the sacred meal of the ancient holy One who is hidden from all." At the next meal he would say, "This is the meal of the Holy Blessed One." And so at each meal, and he rejoiced at each one. When he completed his meals, he said, "The meals of faith are complete."

When Rabbi Shimon came to his meal, he would say, "Prepare the meal of higher faith, prepare the meal of the King," and he would sit and rejoice. When he completed the third meal, they would declare about him, "Then you will gain pleasure from Gd, and I will place you atop the heights of the land, and I will feed you the portion of your father Jacob."

### 16. Deuteronomy 16:14

You shall rejoice on your festivals – you, your son and daughter, your male and female servant, the stranger, the orphan and the widow who live in your gates.

### 17. Rabbi Moses Maimonides, Laws of Festivals 6:18

One who eats and drinks must also feed "the stranger, the orphan and the widow," with all other paupers and needy people. For one who closes his yard's gates and eats and drinks with his children and spouse and does not feed the needy and people of bitter spirit, this is not joy of a mitzvah; it is joy of his belly. Regarding such people it says, "Their offerings are as bread of sadness; all who eat it will be contaminated, for their bread is for their lives."...

## Particular foods

18. Numbers 15:20

The first of your dough, *challah* you shall elevate, an elevation. Like elevation from the granary, so you shall elevate it.

19. Exodus 16:22

And it was on the sixth day, they gathered a double portion, two measures per person...

20. Leviticus 24:5, 8

And you shall take fine flour, and you shall bake it, twelve loaves... On the Shabbat day, on the Shabbat day, he shall arrange it before Gd, always. It shall be an eternal covenant from the children of Israel.

21. Psalms 104:15

And wine which gladdens the heart of man, brightening the face more than oil, and bread sates the heart of man.

22. Isaiah 28:7-8

These people, too, have erred in wine and wandered in intoxicating drink; the priest and prophet have erred in intoxicating drink, have been swallowed up in wine, have strayed due to intoxicating drink, have erred in the seer's words, have stumbled in judgment. For all of the tables are filled with vomit and filth, without empty space.

23. Talmud, Berachot 57a

Some drink it and it's good for them, as in, "And wine which gladdens the heart of man." And some drink it and it's bad for them, as in Proverbs 31:6, "Give intoxicating drink to the doomed, and wine to those of bitter spirit."

24. Likutei haPardes of Rashi's school, Inyan haBerachot (in greater detail in Shibbolei haLeKet, Berachot 140)

Alternatively: Because wine causes shame, bringing a person to intoxication, foolishness and destruction. The text says, "And wine which *yisamach* the heart of man", and the Sages said (Yoma 76b), "If one merits, it gladdens him; if one does not merit, it destroys him." Therefore, one says, "Pay attention, my masters," meaning, "Set your minds to drink wine," and he says this out of fear, lest they come to corruption. Thus he says, "To life," meaning, "Our desire and thought is to drink for life," so that they not come to corruption. And they reply, "Amen, L'Chaim."

25. Rabbi Moses Maimonides (12<sup>th</sup> century Egypt), Guide for the Perplexed 3:8

Gathering for intoxicating drink should be an even greater shame to you than a gathering of people without clothing, with their privacy exposed, excreting and urinating in daylight in a room together. Meaning: excretion is a necessity, and there is no means of delaying, but intoxication is the choice of an evil person...

26. Psalms 104:15, and commentary of Rabbi David Kimchi (Radak)

*And wine which gladdens the heart of man, making faces shine more than oil does...*

Drinking it in measure it will improve his intellect, for a joyous heart improves the intellect, as seen in the prophets.

27. Talmud, Shabbat 118b

Rav Chiya bar Ashi said, citing Rav: Even a small dish prepared for Shabbat fulfills the mitzvah of creating Shabbat enjoyment. What dish? Rav Pappa said: A cup of small fish, fried with their own oil and with flour.

28. Talmud, Shabbat 119a

Yosef, who honored Shabbat, lived in a neighborhood along with a wealthy non-Jew. Astrologers told the wealthy man that Yosef was going to end up with all of his assets. The man sold off his assets and bought a gem with them, and placed it in his turban.

When the man was crossing a bridge, a wind blew his turban into the sea, where it was swallowed by a fish.

The fish was caught and brought to market on a Friday afternoon. The fishermen asked, "Who will buy fish now [at this late hour]?" People told them, "Go bring it to Yosef who honors Shabbat, for he regularly purchases."

They brought it to Yosef, and he purchased it. He cut it open and found the gem inside, and sold it for thirteen roomfuls of gold.

An elder met Yosef and declared, "One who lends to Shabbat will be re-paid by Shabbat."

29. Rabbi Yechiel Michel Epstein (early 20<sup>th</sup> century Lithuania), Aruch haShulchan, Orach Chaim 242:43

Today there are also those who are careful to have fish in every Shabbat meal; this has a hidden reason.

30. Rabbi Avraham Gombiner (17<sup>th</sup> century Poland) Magen Avraham 242:1

If the non-Jews elevate the price of fish, it is appropriate to enact that people should not purchase fish.

31. Rabbi Zerachyah haLevi, Baal haMaor to Shabbat, 16b

Some say the sages required that one enjoy Shabbat with hot food, and one who does not eat hot food should be investigated for heresy...