

Shema & It's Blessing Blessing #1B (Creation) and 2 (Revelation)

Blesing of Creation

1. Ongoing creation and partnership
2. Rejection of alternative primary commitments
3. Angelic Kedushah

Blessing of Revelation

1. Divine Love = Torah; What does Biblical and Rabbinic "love" mean?
2. Transcendence and Immanence
3. D'veikut
4. From the Four Corners
5. Choosing to be Chosen

Reading #1

A simple man came to the synagogue once. During most of the service, he just sat and listened, for he did not know very much. He could not even read the Hebrew from the prayer book.

All around him the members of the congregation were standing in prayer, each man speaking with god in a whisper. And the simple man wished to speak with God too. He wished to tell God what a magnificent world He had made. He wished to thank the Lord for the blessings of health and life. But he could not find the right words to say.

When he thought his heart would break form shame and sadness, he said, "O God, I cannot speak a beautiful prayer for You because I am a simple man I have forgotten what I studied. I am not good with words. But You, O Lord, You know how to do everything. So, I will give You the Alef Bet and You can make a beautiful prayer for Yourself." Then he recited "Alef, Bet, Gimel, Dalet..."

וּבְטוֹבוֹ מְחַדָּשׁ בְּכָל יוֹם תְּמִיד מְעֵשֶׂה בְּרֵאשִׁית.

In your goodness, day after day, You renew creation

אֵל אֲדוֹן עַל כָּל הַמַּעֲשִׂים, בְּרוּךְ וּמְבָרָךְ בְּפִי כָּל נְשָׁמָה,
גָּדְלוֹ וְטוֹבוֹ מְלֵא עוֹלָם, דַּעַת וְתְבוּנָה סְבִיבִים אוֹתוֹ.

Creation reflects the rule of God, who is praised by the breath of all life.

*God's greatness and goodness fill the universe,
Knowledge and wisdom encircle God's presence.*

הַמִּתְגַּאֵה עַל חֵיוֹת הַקִּדָּשׁ, וְנִהְדָּר בְּכָבוֹד עַל הַמְרֻכָּבָה,
זְכוֹת וּמִישׁוֹר לְפָנָי כְּסָאוֹ, חֶסֶד וְרַחֲמִים לְפָנָי כְּבוֹדוֹ.

*Exalted is God by creatures celestial,
enhanced and adorned by the mysteries of heaven.*

*God's throne is guarded by truth and purity;
God is surrounded by mercy and love.*

טוֹבִים מְאֹד שְׂבָרָא אֱלֹהֵינוּ, יִצְרָם בְּדַעַת בְּבִינָה וּבַהֲשֵׁכַל,
כֹּחַ וּגְבוּרָה נָתַן בָּהֶם, לְהִיּוֹת מוֹשְׁלִים בְּקֶרֶב תִּבְל.

*Good are the lights our God has created,
Fashioning them with insight and wisdom.*

*Endowed by God with power and vigor,
They maintain dominion amidst the world.*

מְלֵאִים זֵיו וּמְפִיקִים נִגְהָ, נֹאֵה זֵיוֹם בְּכָל הָעוֹלָם,
שִׂמְחִים בְּצִאתָם וְשׁוֹשִׁים בְּבוֹאָם, עֹשִׂים בְּאִימָה רְצוֹן קוֹנָם.

*Abounding in splendor, emanating brilliance,
their radiant light adorns the universe.*

Rejoicing in rising, gladly setting, they rush to obey their Creator's will.

פֶּאֶר וְכָבוֹד נוֹתְנִים לְשִׁמּוֹ, צִהְלָה וְרִנָּה לְזָכַר מַלְכוּתוֹ,
קָרָא לְשִׁמְשׁ וַיִּזְרַח אוֹר, רָאָה וְהִתְקִין צוּרֵת הַלְבָנָה.

*God is acclaimed by beauty and glory,
God's sovereignty sung by celebration and song.
God summoned the sun, whose light shone forth,
Then gave to the moon its cyclical glow*

**שִׁבַּח נוֹתְנִים לוֹ כָּל צְבָא מְרוֹם,
תְּפִאֲרַת וּגְדֻלָּה, שְׂרָפִים וְאוֹפְנִים וְחַיּוֹת הַקֹּדֶשׁ.**

*The stars and planets, all bodies of the heavens
Acclaim God with praise; celestial creatures give glory and greatness.*

**בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה הִי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר בְּדַבְּרוֹ מְעַרֵּב עַרְבִים,
בְּחָכְמָה פּוֹתַח שְׁעָרִים, וּבִתְבוּנָה מְשַׁנֶּה עֵתִים, וּמַחְלִיף אֶת
הַזְּמַנִּים, וּמַסְדֵּר אֶת הַכּוֹכָבִים בְּמִשְׁמְרוֹתֵיהֶם בְּרָקִיעַ פְּרָצוֹנוֹ. בּוֹרֵא
יוֹם וְלַיְלָה, גּוֹלֵל אוֹר מִפְּנֵי חֹשֶׁךְ, וְחֹשֶׁךְ מִפְּנֵי אוֹר. וּמְעַבֵּיר יוֹם
וּמְבִיא לַיְלָה, וּמְבַדֵּיל בֵּין יוֹם וּבֵין לַיְלָה, יְיָ צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ. אֵל חַי
וְקַיִם, תָּמִיד יְמַלּוֹךְ עָלֵינוּ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה הִי, הַמְעַרֵּב עַרְבִים.**

Praised are You Adonai our God, who rules the universe, Your word bringing the evening dusk. You open with wisdom the gates of dawn, design the day with wondrous skill, set the succession of seasons, and arrange the stars in the sky according to Your will. Adonai Tz'va'ot, You create day and night, rolling light away from darkness and darkness away from light. Eternal God, Your sovereignty shall forever embrace us. Praised are You Adonai, for each evening's dusk.

Reading #2

Me'orot— luminaries.

Or— light.

Shemesh— sun.

Halevanah— the moon.

Ziv (twice) – radiance, light

Nogah— brightness.

VaYizrah— and shined.

Tseitam— their rising.

V'vo'am— their setting.

Kol tseva marom— all the supernal host (= the constellations or the stars).

כָּלֵם אֱהוּבִים, כָּלֵם בְּרוּרִים, כָּלֵם גְּבוּרִים, וְכָלֵם עֹשִׂים בְּאֵימָה
וּבִירָאָה רְצוֹן קוֹנֵם. וְכָלֵם פּוֹתְחִים אֶת פִּיהֶם בְּקִדְשָׁה וּבְטָהָרָה,
בְּשִׁירָה וּבְזִמְרָה, וּמְבָרְכִים וּמְשַׁבְּחִים, וּמְפָאֲרִים וּמְעֲרִיצִים,
וּמְקַדִּישִׁים וּמְמַלְיָכִים:

In chorus they (the angels) reverently chant words of the living God, the eternal Sovereign. Adoring, beloved, and choice are they all, in awe fulfilling their Creator's will. In purity and sanctity they raise their voices in song and psalm, praising, extolling and exalting, declaring the power, holiness and majesty:

אֶת שֵׁם הָאֵל, הַמְּלֶךְ הַגָּדוֹל, הַגְּבוּר וְהַנּוֹרָא, קְדוֹשׁ הוּא.
וְכָלֵם מְקַבְּלִים עֲלֵיהֶם עַל מַלְכוּת שְׁמַיִם זֶה מְזֶה, וְנוֹתְנִים רְשׁוֹת זֶה
לְזֶה, לְהַקְדִּישׁ לְיוֹצְרָם בְּנִחַת רוּחַ, בְּשִׁפְהַ בְּרוּרָה וּבְנִעִימָה, קְדִישָׁה
כָּלֵם כְּאֶחָד עוֹנִים וְאוֹמְרִים בִּירָאָה:

Of God, the great, mighty, awesome Sovereign, the Holy One, one to another they vow loyalty to God's sovereignty; one with another they join to hallow their Creator with serenity, pure speech, and sacred song, in in unison chanting with reverence.

קְדוֹשׁ, קְדוֹשׁ, קְדוֹשׁ, הִי צְבָאוֹת, מְלֵא כָּל הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדוֹ.

Holy, holy, holy, Adonai Tz'vaot, the grandeur of the world is God's glory.

וְהָאוֹפְנִים וְחֵיּוֹת הַקִּדְשׁ בְּרַעַשׁ גָּדוֹל מִתְנַשְּׂאִים לְעֵמֶת שְׂרָפִים,
לְעֵמֶתָם מְשַׁבְּחִים וְאוֹמְרִים:

*As the prophet's vision, soaring celestial creatures exclaim,
Responding with a chorus of adoration:*

בְּרוּךְ כְּבוֹד הַיְמִמָּקוֹמוֹ.

Praised is the glory of Adonai throughout the universe.

אֱהָבָה רַבָּה אֶהְבְּתֵנוּ, הִי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, חֲמֵלָה גְדוֹלָה וַיִּתְּרָה חֲמִלַת עַלֵינוּ.
אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ, בְּעִבּוֹר אֲבוֹתֵינוּ שֶׁבִטְחוּ בְךָ, וַתִּלְמַדְם חֻקֵי חַיִּים,
כִּן תַּחֲנֵנוּ וַתִּלְמַדְנוּ. אָבִינוּ, הָאֵב הַרְחֵמוּ, הַמְרַחֵם, רַחֵם עָלֵינוּ,
וַתֵּן בְּלַבְנוּ לְהַבִּין וְלֵה שְׂכִיל, לְשִׁמְעַ, לְלַמֵּד וּלְלַמֵּד, לְשִׁמּוֹר וְלַעֲשׂוֹת
וּלְקַיֵּם אֶת כָּל דְּבָרֵי תִלְמוּד תּוֹרַתְךָ בְּאֱהָבָה.

*Deep is Your love for us, Adonai our God, boundless Your tender compassion.
Avinu Malkeinu, You taught our ancestors life-giving laws, they trusted in You;
For their sake graciously teach us.
Our Maker, merciful Provider, show us mercy;
grant us discernment and understanding.
Then will we study Your Torah, heed its words, teach its precepts,
and follow its instruction, lovingly fulfilling all its teachings.*

וְהָאֵר עֵינֵינוּ בְּתוֹרַתְךָ, וְדַבֵּק לִבֵּנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתֶיךָ, וַיַּחַד לְבַבְנוּ לְאֱהָבָה
וּלְיִרְאָה אֶת שְׁמֶךָ, וְלֹא נִבּוֹשׁ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד. כִּי בְשֵׁם קִדְשְׁךָ הַגָּדוֹל
וְהַנּוֹרָא בְּטַחְנוּ, נִגִּילָה וְנִשְׂמַחָה בִּישׁוּעַתְךָ.

*Open our eyes to Your Torah; help our hearts cleave to Your mitzvot.
Unite all our thought to love and revere You.
Then we will never be brought to shame for we trust in Your awesome holiness,
and will delight in Your deliverance.*

וְהִבִּיאֵנוּ לְשָׁלוֹם מֵאַרְבַּע כַּנְפוֹת הָאָרֶץ, וַתּוֹלִיכֵנוּ קוֹמְמִיּוֹת לְאַרְצֵנוּ,
כִּי אֵל פּוֹעֵל יִשׁוּעוֹת אַתָּה, וּבָנוּ בְּחַרְתָּ מִכָּל עַם וּלְשׁוֹן. וְקִרְבַּתְנוּ
לְשִׁמְךָ הַגָּדוֹל סֵלָה בְּאַמֶּת, לְהוֹדוֹת לְךָ וּלְיַחַדְךָ בְּאֱהָבָה.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה הִי, הַבּוֹחֵר בְּעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּאֱהָבָה.
*Bring us safely from the four corners of the earth,
And lead us in dignity to our holy land, for You are the Source of deliverance.
You have called us from all peoples and tongues,
constantly drawing us nearer to You, that we may lovingly offer You praise,
proclaiming Your Oneness.
Praised are You, Adonai, who loves the people Israel.*

Reading #3

“And Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain saying: This is what you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell to the Children of Israel: ‘You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I carried you on the wings of eagles and brought you to Me. And now, IF you listen to My voice and keep My commandments, you will be for me a TREASURED PEOPLE among all the people for all the earth is Mine. And you will be for Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words which you must speak to the children of Israel.”

(Exodus 19:3-6)

Reading #4

*“We have not chosen God, He has chosen us. We do not say that we are a superior people. The “chosen people” means a people approached and chosen by God. The significance of the this term is genuine in relation to God rather than in relation to other peoples. **It signifies not a quality inherent in the people but a relationship between the people and God.**”*

Abraham Joshua Heschel