

Shema & It's Blessing
Blessing #1 - Creation

- I. God's Justice - Theodicy
 - a. Intellectual vs. Existential Responses
 - b. Human Freedom
 - c. Biblical View – Suffering as Retribution
 - d. Job – Dayan Ha'emet – We cannot know
 - e. Universal vs. Individual punishment (V'haya Im Shemoa)
 - f. Rabbinic Doctrine – Eschatology
 - g. Kushner – Limited Theology
 - h. Rubenstein – “The Death of God”
 - i. Buber – Eclipse of God

Reading #1

“Who are you to try to package Me, to try to fit Me into your human and moral categories? What kind of a God would I be if you could understand Me? I am God and you are a simple human being. What seems to you to be good or evil, just or unjust, purposive or non-purposive, rational or irrational are simply your own, puny human conceptualizations. My reality totally transcends them all. Don't try to account for My behavior.”

Reading #2

“May His great name be magnified and sanctified in the world that is to be created anew, where he will revive the dead, and raise them to eternal life; and will rebuild the city of Jerusalem, and establish His Temple in its midst; and will uproot all alien worship from the earth, and restore the worship of Heaven to its place.”

Reading #3

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 from 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 מַעֲשֵׂה בְּרֵאשִׁית.

In your goodness, day after day, You renew creation

אל 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 חַיּוֹת הַקִּדָּשׁ, וְנִהְדָּר בְּכְבוֹד 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 שֶׁבְּרָא אֱלֹהֵינוּ, יְצָרָם בְּדַעַת בְּבִינָה וּבְהַשְׁפֵּל,
כַּח וּגְבוּרָה נָתַן בָּהֶם, לְהִיּוֹת מוֹשְׁלִים בְּקֶרֶב תֵּבֵל.
*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.*

מִלְּאִים זֵיו וּמְפִיקִים נִגְהָ, נִאֶה זֵיוֹם בְּכָל הָעוֹלָם,
שִׂמְחִים בְּצִאתָם וְשָׂשִׂים בְּבוֹאָם, עֲשִׂים בְּאִמָּה 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.*

פָּאֵר וְכְבוֹד נֹתְנִים לְשִׁמּוֹ, צִהְלָה וְרִנָּה לְזָכַר מְלֻכוֹתָו,
קָרָא לְשִׁמְשׁ וַיִּזְרַח אוֹר, רָאָה וְהִתְקִין צוּרַת הַלְּבָנָה.
*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 נֹתְנִים לוֹ כָּל צְבָא מְרוֹם,
תְּפִאֶרֶת וּגְדֻלָּה, שְׂרָפִים וְאוֹפַנִּים וְחַיּוֹת הַקִּדָּשׁ.
*The stars and planets, all bodies of the heavens
Acclaim God with praise; celestial creatures give glory and greatness.*

כָּלֶם אֱהוּבִים, כָּלֶם בְּרוּרִים, כָּלֶם גְּבוּרִים, וְכָלֶם עֹשִׂים בְּאִימָה
וּבִירָאָה רְצוֹן קוֹנֵם. וְכָלֶם פּוֹתְחִים אֶת פִּיהֶם בְּקִדְשָׁה וּבִטְהָרָה,
בְּשִׁירָה וּבְזִמְרָה, וּמְבָרְכִים וּמְשַׁבְּחִים, וּמְפָאֲרִים וּמְעֲרִיצִים,
וּמְקַדִּישִׁים וּמְמַלְכִים:

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, הַמֶּלֶךְ הַגָּדוֹל, הַגְּבוּר וְהַנּוֹרָא, קְדוֹשׁ הוּא.
וְכָלֶם מְקַבְּלִים עֲלֵיהֶם עַל מַלְכוּת שָׁמַיִם זֶה מְזֶה, וְנוֹתְנִים רְשׁוֹת זֶה
לְזֶה, לְהַקְדִּישׁ לְיוֹצְרָם בְּנִחַת רוּחַ, בְּשִׁפְהַ בְּרוּרָה וּבְנִעִימָה, קְדֻשָּׁה
כָּלֶם 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 וְחַיּוֹת 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.