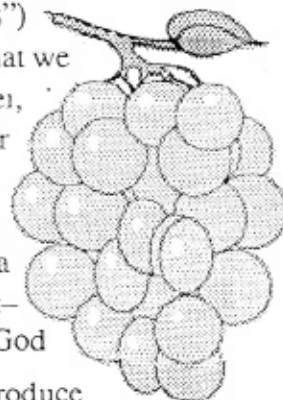


בְּרַכַּת הַשָּׁנִים

"Blessing of the Years"

The ninth prayer of the Shemonei Esrei ("the Eighteen Benedictions") is a prayer that God, would again, cause the farmer's crops to grow so that we can have good food to eat. Like all of the prayers of the Shemonei Esrei, this one, called "Birchat haShanim," reminds us that every part of our lives is in the hand of HaShem. Sometimes we may think that everything just happens on its own: when the farmer plants the seed, then the rains come, and the seeds grow, and have food. But the Bible tells us a different story. Every year when the grapes grow, or the grains sprout—when the apples appear, or the peaches, or whatever food—it's because God



has once again shown us His mercy and favor, and caused the earth to produce food to sustain His creation. In fact, this blessing goes hand in hand with the HaMotzi blessing we do before we eat, because in this prayer we ask God to show His kindness in producing the food, and the HaMotzi thanks Him for the food He has produced so that we can eat.

In our times, when we need food, most of us go to the store and buy it. But in the ancient times, a lot of people grew their own food by planting seeds or by carefully pruning trees and vines. If the rain did not come, or if the clouds kept the sun from shining to warm the ground and cause the seeds to grow, there just was not enough food. We know, for instance, that often famines (that's when the crops do not grow, and there is not enough food for everyone) caused hardships for the people of Israel. Ruth, for instance, came back to the Land from Moab because of a famine where she was living. And maybe the most famous story about not having enough food was when Joseph was in Egypt, and he helped store food away because God had told him there were years coming that would not produce food. Sometimes, because we can usually just go to the store and buy food, we forget to remember that God is the One who always causes the farmer's crops to grow so that we can all have food. If God did not do this, every year, we would all be very, very hungry!

In fact, in this prayer, during the time of the year when we most need rain to make the crops grow, we add a special line which says "and bestow dew and rain for a blessing," because we know that if it does not rain at the proper time, nothing will grow! So we trust God for everything, including the food we buy at the store, and the rain that makes it grow! Here's how this prayer goes:

Bless for us, Adonai our God, this year
and all the varieties of its produce for good;
Bestow [dew and rain for] a blessing upon the face of the earth,
and satisfy us from Your bounty
and bless our year like the good years.
Blessed are You, Adonai
Blessor of the years.

In the Beginning God Created Everything

T T X Y V O Z L M Q C X W L F N I Z Z X X U T R Z
 J B T N U S S W M D E E Z W I G J S N F T S V R L
 N O J I B M A Z I B N N Q Z G C D T T M L O I E Y
 R E O V U T K S C I T O Z A K D I C O A J Q X S O
 T M I G Y L O V R I L L U U U I U H I Y R B O T D
 W D B A W L I A W M N Z N N O Y S J J I I S F E S
 S R S I A I M G S D R I B D N N K O C F F Z N D T
 H G J N U G U S H O W S J A O W E Y I J S R G D M
 D I N D I R J G F T P S U Y O V R W W A T E R S T
 M M I O H G K R V L G D L W M R M N D S N C M M T
 T A P N L O H P V W H U I A P U C Z C D L D E A A
 D K M B H E N T L K I J C S M L M R I E K L R N I
 Z W W K E I B Y F F U W Y S T I F Y H K S E I K M
 K Y J H A Z W J Y C X W N T J B N K K W I G R I N
 A E H O E B B C K L J C R Z H C D A X T X N D N E
 T R K A S H W E R G S R E W Q T E K K C I W G D H
 D R Y I V B L Z P B A V N P W N O I T A T E G E V

LIGHT

DAY

NIGHT

WATERS

DRY

VEGETATION

SUN

MOON

STARS

MARINE

BIRDS

ANIMALS

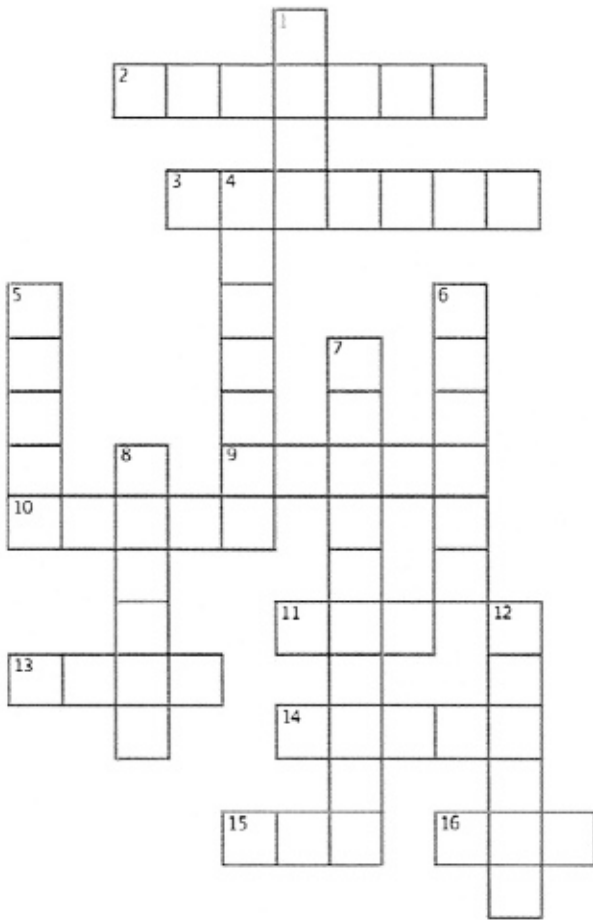
MANKIND

BELONGS

RESTED

KING

In the Beginning God Created Everything



Across

2. The fact that God created everything means that everything _____ to Him.
3. On the sixth day God also created _____, male and female He created them.
9. The first thing God created
10. God also created the _____ on the fourth day
11. What God called the light
13. Because God created everything, He is the _____ of the universe.
14. What God called the darkness
15. On the fourth day God created the _____ to give light during the day
16. On the third day God separated the _____ land from the waters.

Down

1. On the fourth day God created the _____ to give light at night
4. On the sixth day God created the _____ that live on the land.
5. God also created _____ on the fifth day.
6. On the seventh day God _____ from His work of creation.
7. On the third day God also created the _____ on the dry land.
8. On the fifth day, God created _____ life
12. On the 2nd day, God separated the _____ above from the _____ below



The Borei Peri

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
בוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגָּפֶן.

Baruch ata Adonai
Eloheinu melech
ha-olam
Borei peri
ha-gafen.

Blessed are You, Lord our God
King of the universe,
Creator of the fruit of the vine.