

Blessing over flowering fruit trees / *Birkat Ha'ilanot*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שְׁלֹא חָסַר בְּעוֹלָמוֹ כְּלוּם
וּבְרָא בּוֹ בְּרִיּוֹת טוֹבוֹת וְאֵילָנוֹת טוֹבִים לְהַנּוֹת בָּהֶם כְּגַי אֲדָם

Blessed be You, Yah/Adonai our God ruler of all space-and-time,
who left nothing lacking in this world, and created in it good creatures
and good trees, giving pleasure through them to the children of Adam.

*Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melekh ha'olam shelo chisar ba'olamo klum
uvara' vo briyot tovot v'ilnot tovim l'hanot bahem b'nei Adam*

Halakhah

1) The time for blessing is during the month of *Nisan*,
and some say until the end of *Iyar*. If fruit trees have
not yet flowered where one lives, or one hasn't seen
them, one can say the blessing any time until the fruit
starts to grow. The blessing is said only one time each year.



2) One should have in view two fruit trees in flower. Two trees together remind
that trees fertilize each other, and are interdependent upon each other.

3) The trees should not be grafted one species onto another. They should be
trees able to bear edible fruit, not trees bred strictly to be ornamental.

4) There is debate about whether to bless over flowering trees that are less than
three years old, because their fruit is *orlah* and so not permitted to be eaten. But
if one is giving thanks for the *capacity* of trees to create beauty and fragrance
and fruit, then such trees are appropriate for blessing.

Some rabbinic teachings about fruit trees

Each and every tree is destined that they should put forth fruit... as it is said:
“And the land will give her produce and the tree of the field will give his fruit.”
(Lev. 26:4) *Midrash Alpha Beta, Batey Midrashot*, 430

“When you besiege a city many days...you shall not destroy her tree...for from
him (the tree) you may eat...For is the tree of the field human to withdraw
before you?” (Deut. 20:19) R' Yishma'el said: The compassion of the
Place/*Makom* (God) is on the fruit of the tree....For if scripture cautions you
about the tree that makes fruit, all the more so the fruits themselves. *Sifrey
D'varim, Pisqa* 203

Some verses on flowering trees

Come my beloved, let us go out to the field, we will awake early, to the
vineyards, we will see if the vine flowered, the blossom opened, whether the
pomegranates are sparkling with flowers – there will I give my caresses to you.
(*Song of Songs* 7:12-13)

Drash – is anything lacking in God's world?

In the prayer after eating that can be used for any type of food called *Borei
N'fashot*, we say, “Blessed be You...who creates many souls and everything
that they lack, for everything that You created” *borei n'fashot rabot
v'chesronan* – implying that it is part of the essence of each creature that it
lacks something. The blessing continues, “to bring to life through them”
l'hachayot bahem – through all those things that are lacking – “the soul of all
Life” *nefesh kol chai*. One blessing says that the world lacked nothing, the
other, that everything in the world is lacking something. It is only because what
one creature lacks another provides that we can say that the world “lacks
nothing”. Together all the creatures weave the web of Life.

Sod – a tree is a symbol of God

The letters of *Ilan* or tree add up to 91. This is equivalent to *YHVH* (26) +
Adonai (65).

A Prayer – based on the original Tu Bishvat seder

O God, who makes, forms, creates, and emanates the highest worlds! You
made the trees and grasses grow from the ground in the pattern of these highest
worlds. May it be Your will that our blessing over these trees and enjoyment of
their flowers and meditating on their fruits to come will strengthen the flow of
love and blessing over the trees, to make them grow and bloom, for good life,
for blessing and for peace, for us and for the bees and birds and all the creatures
that depend upon them. May all Creation return to its original strength, and may
we see the rainbow rejoicing in its colors. And may all the sparks of divine
energy, whether scattered by our hands or by the hands of our ancestors or by
the sin of the first human against the fruit of the tree, be returned and included
in the majestic might of the Tree of Life.

One more blessing – for the sweet smell of flowers on the trees

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Barukh Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melekh ha'olam borei `atsei b'samim

תפילת הארץ

Hebrew translation: Rabbi David Seidenberg

אל עליון, האל הגדול והגבור,
אתה מלא כל הארץ, וכבודך מלא עולם
וכל הבריות עד הקטן שבהן.
אתה מחזיק ומחסה
כל הנמצאים בהמלה.

שפוך עלינו כח אהבתך
למען נשמר על החיים ונועם תפארתם.
מלאנו בשלום, ושים שלום עלינו
שנשב כאחים ואחיות יחד
שלא ירע אף אחד.

אלהי הדלים והיתום והאלמנה
תן כח בדינו להציל
העזובים והפליטים בארץ תבל,
שהם אהובים בעיניך.

שלח רפואה לנפשנו בחיים
ואז נגן העולם
ולא נדלק בעולם
ואז נזרע תפארת החיים
ולא השחתה והשמדה.

פתח ללב כל בוצע
לחטוף העני והאדמה.
למדנו לגלות
מעלת הבורא בכל הנבראים
להיות מלא יראה והתבוננות
להכיר שנעשו אגדה אחת
עם כל הבריות,
בדרךנו להגיע אל אור האין סוף.

נודה לך השוכן בתוכנו
שאתה עמנו תמיד בכל יום.
אנא תומכנו
לעשות רצונך בלב שלם
לרדוף צדק בריבנו
להביא משפט אהבה ושלום.

A Prayer for Our Earth

Pope Francis, *Laudato Si*

All-powerful God, great and mighty,
you are present in the whole universe
and in the smallest of your creatures.
You embrace
with your tenderness all that exists.

Pour out upon us the power of your love,
that we may protect life and its beauty.
Fill us with peace, and bring peace upon us
that we may live as brothers and sisters
harming no one.

O God of the poor, orphan, and widow,
help us to rescue
the abandoned and forgotten of this earth,
so precious in your eyes.

Bring healing to our lives,
that we may protect the world
and not prey on it,
that we may sow life's beauty,
not pollution and destruction.

Touch the hearts of those who look for gain
at the expense of the poor and the earth.
Teach us to discover
the divine worth of each thing,
to be filled with awe and contemplation,
to recognize that we are profoundly united
with every creature,
as we journey towards your infinite light.

We thank you who dwells within us
for being with us each day.
Encourage us, we pray,
to do Your will with a whole heart
to pursue righteousness in our struggle
for justice, love and peace.