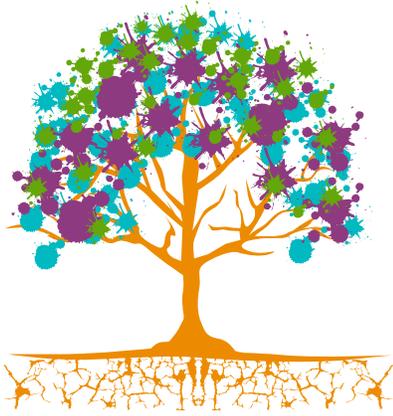




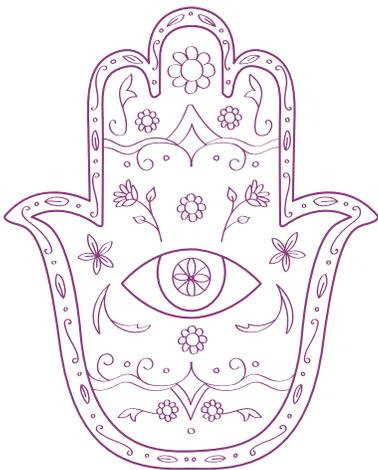
What's the deal with Jewish blessings,  
why they are awesome,  
& how to become a blessing master.



## What's the deal with Jews & blessings?

On the surface, a blessing is a divine interaction. It could be between two people, or it could be between one person and a group of other people. A blessing could also be between a person and the meal they are about to eat, or the sunrise they are taking in, or the feeling of love or worry they have for their partner. The *Shulchan Aruch*, one of our most important codes of Jewish law, explains that one is required to make 100 blessings a day! If you go a little deeper, the novelist Daniella Levy says that **blessings are "one of the main themes of Judaism: channeling the Divine into the mundane and revealing the spiritual through the physical."**

Giving a blessing reveals the hidden power you carry around inside all the time. We all have the ability to connect to the Divine (whatever that means to you) and to offer support, comfort, reassurance, and hope to other people. It feels awesome. And it feels even more awesome to draw on Jewish choreography to make it happen, because it connects us to our roots. Receiving a blessing is also awesome, for obvious reasons. Who doesn't want to hear someone else tell you that they want goodness for you?



Embrace the  
mystery, embrace  
your power

Many of us (if not most of us) who were born Jewish didn't grow up with a clear custom around giving and receiving blessings. If anything, we might think of giving blessings as something a Rabbi does or maybe something parents might do during their child's bar/bat mitzvah.

Somewhere along the way (maybe because of assimilation or maybe because of some other reason) many Westernized and secular Jews became unfamiliar with the concept of giving and receiving blessings. It feels esoteric and mystical in a way that can make us feel uncomfortable at best and alienated at worst.

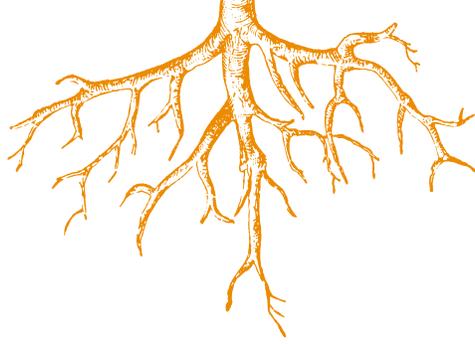
But the fact is that **giving and receiving blessings is 100% a Jewish thing to do**, and we have a long, beautiful history of this practice to be proud of!



What IS a blessing  
&  
Why should I care?

There's no real prescription for making a blessing, and we cannot foresee the eventual consequences of a blessing. But guess what? **This vagueness doesn't really matter, and worrying about it is beside the point.** The outcome of a blessing is also beside the point. The point is the interaction between the blesser and the blessed. Even more importantly is the underlying idea that **people (not just Rabbis and not God) have the power to manifest intention and power.** There's a Chassidic teaching that explains that the word *brachah* (blessing) literally means "drawing down." Everything in life — health, prosperity, joy, wisdom, peace of mind — needs to be drawn down from its potential, spiritual state into the actuality of our physical existence. Judaism teaches us that it is our role, as human beings, to draw down into our physical existence all the goodness of metaphysical existence. **Literally, we have the power to channel goodness to ourselves, to each other, and to the planet, with our words and with our actions.**

Of course you can enjoy a sunset, or a grape, or the company of a friend without making a blessing. You can comfort someone in pain, help a child reach their potential, or engage in social justice without making a blessing. But offering a blessing over these acts brings our spiritual consciousness into the fold, and confirms our partnership with the Divine in being agents of healing, love, mercy, joy, and all the rest. **Offering a blessing provides a container for the spiritual power we all have within ourselves to draw down goodness from its source, and to turn a regular moment into a more profound connection with ourselves, with others, and with the universe.**



## How to give a really good blessing in 6 easy steps:

1

**Ask if the other person wants a blessing.** *"May I give you/offer you a blessing?"* is a perfect place to start.

2

**Ask them what they want a blessing for.** Trust the blessee to tell you what they need. Not what you think or intuit they need. Literally, you can say *"Is there anything in particular you feel depleted or in need of? Is there anything you are hoping for?"* If they don't provide any specifics, that's ok! Just trust whatever comes into your heart. But be sure it is kind and not invasive. Remember, it's important they receive your blessing! This is not the moment to reveal deep truths to them, even if you can see truths about them that they are denying. If in doubt, go general and big: *"May you be blessed with well-being."* Or: *"May everything you yearn for be fulfilled for the good."*

3

**Take 5 seconds to connect your energy force to the person you are about to bless.** Notice your own breath cycle once, in and out. Feel your feet on the ground. Imagine your heart growing soft and open toward them. You may also imagine your skin, eyes, hands, etc growing soft. Look in the other person's eyes. If you are in-person, you can even place your hands on top of their shoulders. Even over Zoom, look into their eyes.

4

**Bless them.** You can begin your blessing with the words *"May you..."* or *"May there..."* or *"I want to bless you with..."* and then fill in the gaps! (Pro tip: Blessings don't need to be super long and involved in order to make an impact. Short and to the point can be powerful too.) Do not worry about getting all the words right. In the end, the exact words do not matter. The intention and the connection matter more.

5

**Encourage them to say "AMEN" to really seal the deal.** Best to introduce this before you bless: *"All you have to do is say amen afterwards."*

6

**Don't worry if the verdict is still out for you about the existence of God. It doesn't matter.** For the moment you are blessing, bless as if your blessings have power!