



A Shehecheyanu Experience

While Jewish tradition is full of blessings and prayers of gratitude, there is one that perfectly sums up the mindset of appreciation: The *Shehecheyanu* blessing. *Shehecheyanu* means "that we are alive", and it is a statement of recognizing time, and appreciating that we are alive in this moment. It is designed to enable us to offer thanks for new and unusual experiences- such as the birth of a child, seeing a friend after a long time, tasting a fruit for the first time this season or wearing a new piece of clothing. It is also recited at the beginning of the celebration of many holidays- while lighting the holiday candles or reciting the blessing over the wine. Tonight, as we usher in the holiday of Shavuot, many Jews will recite *Shehecheyanu*.

The Shehecheyanu Blessing:

Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu,
Melech haolam, shehecheyanu,
v'kiy'manu, v'higiyahu laz'man
hazeh.

ברוך אתה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ
הָעוֹלָם, שְׁהִכְחִיןָנוּ וְקִימָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ
לַזְמָן הַזֶּה.

Translated as:

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of all, who has kept us alive, sustained us, and brought us to this moment.

For what are you grateful to be alive, in this moment?

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Contemporary liturgist Alden Solovy, wrote the following series of prayers, celebrating the gifts of creativity.

Inspired by his writing, let's explore opportunities to recognize ourselves:

For the Gift of Song

G-d, we give thanks for the gift of song,
For the gift of melody and harmony,
For the gift of voices quilted together in chorus,
Lifting praises toward the holy realms.
Hear this prayer for those who chant in Your Name,
Who chant for healing,
Who chant to witness Your love,
Your power,
Your grace.

Make their voices Your vessel.
Let heaven pour joy through them
So that they overflow with Your light,
Drawing others to Your glory.
So that when we hear their song
Our hearts turn back to You in peace.
Together, we offer our prayer back to heaven
And rejoice.



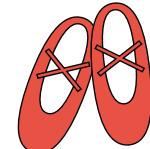
For the Gift of Art

G-d, we give thanks for the gift of art,
For pencil and paint,
For glass and fabric,
For metal and stone,
For the gift that sees wisdom and beauty hidden in Your works,
For the skill and love that creates and crafts
Releasing divine radiance for others to see.
Hear this prayer for those who fashion art to reveal the secret glories of Your creation.
Make their works Your vessel.
Let heaven pour its vision through them
So that they overflow with Your light
Drawing others to Your glory.
So that when we see their works,
Our souls turn back to You in appreciation.
Together, we offer our gratitude back to heaven,
And rejoice.



For the Gift of Dance

G-d, we give thanks for the gift of dance,
For the gift of rhythm and movement,
For the gift of power, awe, wonder and thanksgiving
Expressed through our bodies
In celebration of Your Divine creation.
Hear this prayer for those who dance for love and healing,
For prayer and repentance,
Seeking wholeness and light.
Make their bodies your vessel.
Let heaven pour grace and beauty through them
So that they overflow with Your spirit,
Drawing others to Your mysteries.
So that when we see this dance
Our souls turn back to You in celebration.
Together, we offer our spirits back to heaven,
And rejoice.



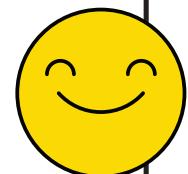
For the Gift of Music

G-d, we give thanks for the gift of music,
For horn and flute,
For strings and drums,
For crescendo and staccato,
For the gift that gives our spirits a divine voice.
Hear this prayer for those who write music, arranging sound, seeking beauty.
Hear this prayer for those who play music, creating sound, releasing beauty.
Make their music Your vessel.
Let heaven pour joy and sorrow, love and loss through them
So that they overflow with Your most secret prayers for Your people,
Drawing others to Your blessings.
So that when we hear their music
Our souls turn back to You for shelter.
Together, we offer our voices back to heaven,
And rejoice.



For the Gift of Laughter

G-d, we give thanks for the gift of laughter
For chuckles and guffaws,
For giggles and grins,
For silliness, goofiness
And roll on the floor hysterics.
Hear this prayer for those whose
Wit and wisdom enliven and enlighten our lives.
Let heaven pour enthusiasm and inspiration through them,
So that our lives overflow with celebration.
So that when we laugh our souls turn back to You
In wholeness and thanksgiving.
Together, we offer our renewal back to heaven,
And rejoice.



For the Gift of Words

G-d, we give thanks for the gift of words,
The gift of language,
The gift of insight and emotion,
The gift of sacred communion through communication.
For it was You who spoke and the world came into being.
It was You who carved tablets on the holy mountain.
Hear this prayer for those who write to explore the mysteries of creation.
Hear this prayer for those who speak to unlock Your divine secrets.

Make their words Your vessel.
Let heaven pour wisdom and love through them
So that they overflow with Your glory,
Drawing others to Your truths.
So that when we hear these words
Our souls turn back to You in love.
Together, we offer our insights back to heaven,
And rejoice.



- 1) What are the gifts of creativity that are inside you?
 - 2) What are those that others possess which raise you up and give you meaning?

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