

A pool of water, a spring. In ancient Israel where water was scarce there was nothing better. To find a spring in the midst of wilderness was lifesaving and throughout the Bible, being planted near water was the sign of God's favor.

That is why we should not be surprised that the word for spring, or pool, berichah is a considered by some to be the root of the Hebrew word for blessing, berachah.

God is considered like an ever flowing fountain and the words Baruch Atah Adonai, rather than being translated "Blessed are You", are translated in one medieval commentary, "You O God are the Source of Blessing".

In the very last Torah reading of the year, Moses, identified here for the only time as ish ha-elohim, the man of God, blesses the tribes of Israel. A somewhat obscure section, its most famous verse is at the beginning- "Torah Tzivah lanu Mosheh, Morashah Kehilat Yaakov, Moses commanded us the Torah, an inheritance of the congregation of Jacob", which we sing often on Simchat Torah and throughout the year.

Moses' blessing is a parallel to the blessing that Jacob gives his twelve sons at the end of Genesis, though without some of the harshness of Jacob's words. It is noteworthy that Moses, who throughout his life, was critical of the Israelites and rebuked them, as his death approaches, speaks to them words of hope.

We are urged to follow Moses's example and depart this earth leaving behind a legacy of blessing. But of course, like the advice, to repent the day before you die, this has implications that extend beyond the closing portion of our lives.

When someone passes away we say- *zecher tzadikim livrachah*, the memory of the righteous lives on for blessing, or we say, *zichronam livrachah*, may their memory be blessing. The rabbis urge us to consider this as we go about our everyday lives, for we cannot always know how much time we will have. If we live everyday so that our legacy will be one of hope and joy, comfort and uplift, then indeed what we bestow on the world, will be like an ever flowing spring.

Thus, the praise of the good person, from the very first of the Psalms.

Oh, the joys of those who do not  
follow the advice of the wicked,  
or stand around with sinners,  
or join in with mockers.

<sup>2</sup>But they delight in the Torah of the ETERNAL,  
meditating on it day and night.

<sup>3</sup>They are like trees planted along the riverbank,  
bearing fruit each season.

Their leaves never wither,  
and they prosper in all they do.

On this holiday when we pray for rain, blessing upon the earth, may we appreciate the blessing that those we have loved have left to us, and consider too the ways that we might be blessing to others.