

## The Source of Our Food: Blessings before Meals

Many of our best times are spent eating. Jewish liturgy, however, is very stingy on blessings before eating (focusing much of its energy on blessings after eating). The blessings before food are generic, and except for very specific foods and drinks (such as wine, bread, and matzah), lump all foods into three or four categories (fruits, vegetable, grains, and everything else). As a foody I'd like to celebrate each and every distinct taste through the prism of Jewish experience, and thus have tried to compose as many ditties as possible in their honor, this section is dedicated to Pablo Neruda, and his Ode to the Tomato:

Sweat	זיעה
The sweat off a farmer's brow trickling watering	זיעת איכרים
the earth making seedlings grow, rising to my	תרים מעפר מאכל
plate. If I forget thee o laborer, may I forget my	ברוך/ה אני
right hand. Truly I am blessed.	אך מבורך מפל הסבל

Thistles	קוצ ודרדר
We have dined on their bread	אכלנו את לחמם
All they got were the dregs	והם שותו קבעת יינם
With the sweat of their brow	בזעת אפם קוצ ודרדר
I am as fat as a sow	והם כצפועוני? לעסו עפר
Our tables filled with excrata and blood	שולחנינו מלאי קיא ודם
And when the flood comes	ובעת ידרשו שכרם
We shall hide	נחבא בבורות ושיחים
Lest the angels of God take a bite of our pride	מפני מלאכי אלהים