

Siddur Tzur Yisrael

Weekday Prayers

**Edited and Translated by
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Women say: מוֹדָה Men say: מוֹדָה

אָנִי לְפָנֶיךָ, מֶלֶךְ חַי וְקַיִם, שֶׁחֲזַרְתָּ בִּי נִשְׁמָתִי
בְּחֶמְלָה רַבָּה אֲמוּנָתְךָ. רֵאשִׁית חֲכָמָה יִרְאֵת יְהוָה, שֶׁכָּל
טוֹב לְכָל עֲשִׂיהֶם, תִּהְלָתוּ עוֹמְדֵת לְעַד. בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם
כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

After washing one's hands using water poured from a vessel, say this blessing:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ
בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל גִּטְלַת יָדָיִם.

One who wears a tallit katan says this blessing before donning it:


בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ
בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל מִצְוַת צִיצִית.

After visiting the washroom, recite this blessing:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר
יָצַר אֶת הָאָדָם בְּחֶכְמָה, וּבָרָא בּוֹ נִקְבִּים
נִקְבִּים, חֲלוּלִים חֲלוּלִים. גְּלוּי וַיְדוּעַ לְפָנֶי
כֶּסֶף כְּבוֹדְךָ שָׂאָם יִפְתַּח אֶחָד מֵהֶם אוֹ
יִסְתֵּם אֶחָד מֵהֶם, אִי אֶפְשֵׁר לְהִתְקַיֵּם
וְלַעֲמוּד לְפָנֶיךָ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, רוֹפֵא כָּל
בָּשָׂר וּמִפְּלִיא לַעֲשׂוֹת.

We begin our day by bringing to mind the example of Abraham, whose devotion to God's service was wholehearted, unyielding and absolute.

And so it came to pass after these events that God tested Abraham, calling out to him, "Abraham," whereupon Abraham answered, "Here I am." God spoke further to him, saying, "Take your son, your unique and beloved Isaac, and travel to the Land of Moriah. There, you shall offer him up as an olah sacrifice on one of the hills that I shall point out to you." Abraham awoke early the next morning, saddled up his donkey, took two servant lads along with himself and his son Isaac, split some wood for the sacrificial flames and set off for the place about which God had spoken to him. On the third day, Abraham looked up and saw the place from afar. He said to his servant lads, "You wait here with the donkey, while the boy and I travel the rest of the way. We will complete our worship there, then return." And so Abraham took the wood for the sacrifice and put it on Isaac's back, but the fire and the knife he himself carried. The two then went forward together. Isaac called to his father Abraham, "Father!" And he answered, "I am here, my son." Isaac then continued, "Here are the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the olah sacrifice?" Abraham answered him, "God will see to the lamb for the olah, my son." And the two continued on their way together. They came to the place which God had indicated to Abraham and there Abraham built an altar. He laid out the wood and bound his son Isaac, then put him atop the altar on the pile of wood. Abraham extended his arm to reach for the knife to slaughter his son and was just lifting it up, when an angel of A called out to him from heaven by name, saying, "Abraham, Abraham!" Abraham answered, "I am here." And now God spoke, saying, "Do not lay a hand on the boy or cause him any harm, for now

that I see that you were prepared not to hold back from Me your uniquely beloved son, I know that you truly fear God." Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw that, while they had been speaking, a ram had become entangled by its horns in the brambles. He went over to where it was, extricated the ram and offered it up as an *olah* sacrifice in his son's stead. Abraham called the place "Adonai-Yireh," which means "God will provide," and so is it still said of that place that it is the hill on which God provided. And now the angel of A called out to Abraham a second time from heaven, but once he got Abraham's attention, it was God Who spoke. "By Myself, I swear," God said, thus making explicit that this was a *bona fide* oracle of A, "Because you have done this thing and not attempted to spare the life of your uniquely beloved son, I shall bless you profoundly and make your descendants as many as the stars of the heavens or the grains of sand on the seashore. Furthermore, your descendants shall inherit the gates of their enemies so impressively that the citizens of the world's nations will be moved to make reference to your many descendants when they offer the blessing of fertility to each other. And all this shall happen because you obeyed Me." Abraham then returned to the servant lads, whereupon they struck camp and traveled together back to Beersheva, and Abraham settled in Beersheva (Genesis 22:1–19, with some amplification by the translator). 

Prayers Upon Waking

O ever-living and fully real Sovereign God, I believe with perfect faith that it is You Who graciously returns my soul to me each morning when I wake. And I know this as well: that all true wisdom grows out of reverence for A, that the source of all intelligence is the performance of God's commandments and that the praise due God has no logical end. May the name of the glorious sovereignty of God forever be blessed.

After washing one's hands using water poured from a vessel, say this blessing:
Blessed are You, A, our God, Sovereign of the universe, Who, sanctifying us with divine commandments, has commanded us regarding *netilat yadaim*, the ritual washing of our hands.

One who wears a tallit katan says this blessing before donning it:
Blessed are You, A, our God, Sovereign of the universe, Who, sanctifying us with divine commandments, has commanded us regarding the *mitzvah* of *tzitzit*.

After visiting the washroom, recite this blessing:
Blessed are You, A, our God, Sovereign of the universe, Who used divine wisdom to fashion human beings, furnishing them with all sorts of cavities and internal conduits. As You sit on Your divine throne in heaven and contemplate our situation, it must surely be part of Your plan for humanity that none can survive if one of those conduits that are supposed to be shut should suddenly open or, conversely, if one that is supposed to be open becomes unexpectedly blocked. Blessed are You, A, Healer of all flesh and Doer of great wonders.

Upon arriving in synagogue for morning prayers, recite this prayer:

מה טְבוּ אֱהֲלֶיךָ יַעֲקֹב, מִשְׁכְּנֶיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל. וְאֲנִי בְּרַב חֲסִדֶיךָ אָבוֹא בֵיתְךָ,
אֲשֶׁתַּחֲוֶה אֶל הַיְכָל קֹדֶשְׁךָ בִּירְאָתְךָ. יְהוּה, אֶהְבְּתִי מֵעוֹן בֵּיתְךָ, וּמְקוֹם
מִשְׁכַּן כְּבוֹדְךָ. וְאֲנִי אֲשֶׁתַּחֲוֶה וְאֶכְרַעָה, אֶבְרַכָּה לְפָנַי יְהוּה עֲשֵׂי. וְאֲנִי
תַּפְלְתִי לָךְ יְהוּה, עֵת רְצוֹן. אֱלֹהִים, בְּרַב חֲסִדֶיךָ, עֲנֵנִי בְּאַמַּת יִשְׁעֶךָ.

Before donning the tallit, say these words:

בְּרַכֵּי נַפְשִׁי אֵת יְהוּה, יְהוּה אֱלֹהֵי גְדֻלַּת מְאֹד, הוֹד וְהַדָּר לְבִשְׁתָּ. עֲטָה
אוֹר פְּשִׁלְמָה, נוֹטָה שְׁמַיִם פִּירִיעָה.

הֲנִנִי מִתְעַטֵּף בְּטִלְיַת שָׁל צִיָּאת פְּדֵי לְקוּם מִצְנַת בּוֹרְאִי, כְּפָתוּב
בַּתּוֹרָה: וְעָשׂוּ לָהֶם צִיָּאת עַל כְּנָפַי בַּגְּדֵיהֶם לְדַרְתָּם. וְכִשֵּׁם שְׂאֲנִי
מִתְכַּפֶּסֶה בְּטִלְיַת בְּעוֹלָם הָזֶה, כֵּן תִּזְכֶּה נִשְׁמָתִי לְהַתְלַבֵּשׁ בְּטִלְיַת נָאֵה
לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא בְּגוֹן עֵדוֹ, אָמֵן.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוּה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו
וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַתְעַטֵּף בְּצִיָּאת.

Wrap yourself in the shawl, contemplate the tzitzit and say:

מֵה יִקָּר חֲסִדֶיךָ, אֱלֹהִים, וּבְנֵי אָדָם בְּצֶל כְּנָפֶיךָ יַחֲסִיוּ. יְרוּנוּ מִדְּשׁוֹן
בֵּיתְךָ, וְנַחַל עֲדֻנְיָה תִשְׁקָם. כִּי עָמְדָה מְקוֹר חַיִּים, בְּאוֹרְךָ נִרְאָה אוֹר.
מִשֶּׁךְ חֲסִדֶיךָ לִידְעִיָה, וְצִדְקָתְךָ לִישְׂרֵי לֵב.

Place the tefillah shel yad on your arm and recite this blessing:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוּה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו
וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַנִּיחַ תַּפְלִין.

Place the tefillah shel rosh on your head and recite this blessing:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוּה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו
וְצִוָּנוּ עַל מִצְוֹת תַּפְלִין.
בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מְלַכּוֹתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֵד.

As you wind the strap around your finger, recite these verses:


וְאִרְשָׁתִּיךָ לִי לְעוֹלָם, וְאִרְשָׁתִּיךָ לִי בְצִדְקָה וּבְמִשְׁפָּט וּבְחֶסֶד וּבְרַחֲמִים,
וְאִרְשָׁתִּיךָ לִי בְּאַמוּנָה, וְיִדְעֵתָ אֵת יְהוּה.



A poem by Solomon ibn Gabirol (c. 1020–c. 1057), one of the greatest Jewish poet-philosophers of all time, in the translation of Israel Zangwill.

O Soul, with Storms Beset

O soul, with storms beset!
Thy griefs and cares forget.
Why dread earth's transient woe,
When soon thy body in the grave unseen
Shall be laid low,
And all will be forgotten then, as though
It had not been?
Wherefore, my soul, be still!
Adore God's holy will,
Fear death's supreme decree.
Thus mayest thou save thyself, and win high aid
To profit thee,
When thou, returning to thy lord, shall see
Thy deeds repaid.
Why muse, O troubled soul,
O'er life's poor earthly goal?
When thou hast fled, the clay
Lies mute, nor bear'st thou aught of wealth, or
might
With thee that day,
But, like a bird, unto thy nest away,
Thou wilt take flight.
Why for a land lament
In which a lifetime spent
Is as a hurried breath?
Where splendor turns to gloom, and honors show
A faded wreath,
Where health and healing soon must sink beneath
The fatal bow?
What seemeth good and fair
Is often falsehood there.
Gold melts like shifting sands,
Thy hoarded riches pass to other men
And strangers' hands,
And what will all thy treasured wealth and lands
Avail thee then?

Life is a vine, whose crown
The reaper Death cuts down.
His ever-watchful eyes mark every step until night's
 shadows fall,
And swiftly flies
The passing day, and ah! how distant lies
The goal of all.
Therefore, rebellious soul,
Thy base desires control;
With scantily given bread
Content thyself, nor let thy memory stray
To splendors fled,
But call to mind affliction's weight, and dread
The judgment day.
Prostrate and humbled go,
Like to the dove laid low,
Remember evermore
The peace of heaven,
God's eternal rest.
When burdened sore
With sorrow's load, at every step implore
God's succor blest.
Before God's mercy-seat
God's pardoning love entreat.
Make pure thy thoughts from sin,
And bring a contrite heart as sacrifice
God's grace to win
Then will his angels come and lead thee in
To Paradise. 

Upon arriving in synagogue for morning prayers, recite this prayer:

How attractive are your tents, O Jacob; your dwellings, O Israel. Imbued with a sense of Your great mercy, I approach Your sacred house; I bow down humbly before Your holy sanctuary. A , I love Your sacred Temple, this place in which the earthly traces of divine splendor can be perceived. And I shall ever bow down and kneel before You as I bless You, my Maker. I pray that this be an auspicious time for prayer, A ; O God, in Your great mercy, answer me in truth with intimations of imminent salvation.

Before donning the tallit, say these words:

O my soul, bless A . A , my God, You are very great; You wear splendor and magnificence as Your garments. You are the One Who wears light as though it were a robe, Who hangs the heavens as though they were curtains. And now I shall wrap myself in a *tallit* adorned with *tzitzit* in order to fulfill the commandment of my Creator, as it is written in the Torah, "And you shall affix *tzitzit* to the corners of their garments throughout the generations." And just as I cover myself in this *tallit* in this world, so may I merit wearing a splendid *tallit* in paradise in the World to Come, Amen.

Blessed are You, A , our God, Sovereign of the universe, Who, sanctifying us with divine commandments, has commanded us to wrap ourselves in garments adorned with *tzitzit*.

Wrap yourself in the shawl, contemplate the tzitzit and say:

How precious is Your mercy, O God, that enables human beings to seek refuge in the shadow of Your wings. They luxuriate in the richest delicacies of Your house; You grant them to drink from Your rivers of delight. For the source of life is with You; indeed, it is only in Your light that we may see light at all. Draw Your mercy over those who know You and Your righteousness over the upright of heart.

Place the tefillah shel yad on your arm and recite this blessing:

Blessed are You, A , our God, Sovereign of the universe, Who, sanctifying us with divine commandments, has commanded us to tie *tefillin* on our arms.

Place the tefillah shel rosh on your head and recite this blessing:

Blessed are You, A , our God, Sovereign of the universe, Who, sanctifying us with divine commandments, has commanded us regarding the *mitzvah* of *tefillin*.

May the name of the glorious sovereignty of God forever be blessed.

As you wind the strap around your finger, recite these verses:

And I will betroth you unto Me forever; yea, I will betroth you unto Me in righteousness, and in justice, and in loving-kindness, and in compassion.

And I will betroth you unto Me in faithfulness as well—and then you will know A .

y

Before the formal chanting of the morning service begins, individual worshipers bless God for the great gift of the Torah and study some brief passages from the Bible, the Mishnah and the Talmud.



בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר
קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְעִסוּק בְּדַבְרֵי תוֹרָתְךָ.

וְהַעֲרַבְנָא, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, אֶת דְּבָרֵי תוֹרָתְךָ בְּפִינוּ וּבְפִי עַמְּךָ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל,
וְנִהְיָה אֲנַחְנוּ וְצִאֲצָאֵינוּ, וְצִאֲצָאֵי עַמְּךָ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל, כְּלָנוּ יוֹדְעֵי שְׁמֶךָ
וְלוֹמְדֵי תוֹרָתְךָ לְשִׁמְחָה. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, הַמְלַמֵּד תוֹרָה לְעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר
בָּנוּ מִכָּל הָעַמִּים וְנָתַן לָנוּ אֶת תּוֹרָתוֹ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה
יְהוָה, נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה.

יְבָרְכֶךָ יְהוָה וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ. יָאֵר יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיְחַנֵּךְ. יִשָּׂא יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ
וְיִשֶּׂם לְךָ שָׁלוֹם.

אלו דברים שאין להם שעור: הפאה והפפורים והראיון וגמילות
חסדים ותלמוד תורה. אלו דברים שאדם אוכל פרותיהם בעולם הזה
והקרו קצמות לו לעולם הבא, ואלו הן: כבוד אב ואם, וגמילות חסדים,
והשפמת בית המדרש שחרית וערבית, והכנסת אורחים, ובקור
חולים, והכנסת פלה, ולגית המת, ועיון תפלה, והבאת שלום בין אדם
לחברו, ותלמוד תורה כנגד פלם.

אֱלֹהֵי, גִּשְׁמָה שְׁנֵתָת בִּי טְהוֹרָה הִיא. אַתָּה בְּרָאָתָהּ, אַתָּה יִצְרָתָהּ,
אַתָּה גִּבְחָתָהּ בִּי, וְאַתָּה מִשְׁמְרָהּ בְּקִרְבִּי, וְאַתָּה עֲתִיד לְטָלָהּ
מִמֶּנִּי וּלְהַחְזִירָהּ בִּי לְעֲתִיד לָבוֹא. כָּל זְמַן שֶׁהִנְשָׂמָה בְּקִרְבִּי,

Women say:

Men say:

מוֹדָה

מוֹדָה

אֲנִי לְפָנֶיךָ, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתַי,
רְבוֹן כָּל הַמַּעֲשִׂים, אֲדוֹן כָּל הַנְּשָׂמוֹת.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, הַמְּחַזֵּר נְשָׂמוֹת לְפָגְרִים מֵתִים.

The sages of ancient times taught that saying our prayers in synagogue is the latter-day equivalent of offering up the sacrifices that Scripture ordains be offered daily in the Temple in Jerusalem. When the Mishnah, the oldest surviving compendium of rabbinic law and lore, was edited around the year 200 C.E., a full description of the Temple and its chambers and appurtenances was included. This text, Tractate Middot, is presented here for devotional reading and contemplative study in Alfred Edersheim's translation fully revisited, revised and updated by the editor.

Mishnah Middot

Chapter One

The kohanim kept watch in the Temple in three places: in Beth Avtinas, in the Chamber of the Spark and in the House of the Hearth; and the Levites in twenty-one places: five at the five gates leading into the Temple Mount, four in the four inside corners, five at the five gates of the courtyard, four outside the four corners of the courtyard, one in the Chamber of Offering, one in the Chamber of the Parochet, and one behind the Holy of Holies, the place of ultimate atonement.

When the Captain of the Temple Mount visited each guard, burning torches were carried before him. If a guard did not stand up, the Captain of the Temple Mount said to him: "Peace unto you!" If he observed that the guard was asleep, he struck him with his staff, and he had the authority, even, to burn his clothing. On such occasions, people would ask, "What is that sound in the courtyard?" And the answer would be: "It is the noise of a Levite being beaten and his clothes set on fire, because he slept upon his watch." Rabbi Eliezer ben Jacob, said: "On one occasion they

found the brother of my mother sleeping, and they burned his garment.”

There were five gates to the Temple Mount: the two gates of Huldah from the south (which served as entrances and exits), Coponius from the west, Tadi from the north (which did not serve any purpose at all), and the Eastern Gate (upon which was a representation of the city of Shushan and through which the High Priest who burned the Red Heifer, and all who assisted him, went out to the Mount of Olives).

There were seven gates in the Temple courtyard: three on the north, three on the south, and one in the east. In the south was first the Gate of Kindling, then the Gate of the Firstborn, and third was the Gate of Water. The one in the east was the Gate of Nicanor, and two chambers belonged to it, one on the right hand, and one on the left, the one the chamber of Phineas, the wardrobe keeper, and the other the chamber of those who made the *chavitin* pancakes offered up as meal offerings daily by the High Priest.

On the north was the Gate of the Spark, and it was built in the form of an portico with an upper chamber built atop it. The *kohanim* kept guard above and the Levites below, and it had a door to the *cheil*—a ten-cubit wide rampart that separated the walls of the Temple courtyards from the stone fence called the *soreg* that delineated the boundaries of the Temple Mount proper. Second to it was the Gate of Sacrifice; third to it was the House of the Hearth.

And four rooms were in the House of the Hearth, each like a small alcove opening up onto a central salon; two were built on holy ground, but two were built intentionally on ground outside the Temple walls that was not holy. (And the dividing line was clear: heads of protruding beams separated the holy space within the building from the space that was not holy.) And for what did the chambers serve? The one on the southwest was the Chamber of the Lambs, the one on the southeast was the Chamber of the Showbread Makers, the chamber on the northeast was where the Hasmonians deposited the stones of the altar which the Seleucid kings had defiled, and the one

Before the formal chanting of the morning service begins, individual worshipers bless God for the great gift of the Torah and study some brief passages from the Bible, the Mishnah and the Talmud.

Blessed are You, A , our God, Sovereign of the universe, Who, sanctifying us with divine commandments, has commanded us to study the words of the Torah.

A , our God, make the study of Torah a delight not for us alone, but also for Your entire people, the House of Israel, thus ensuring that not solely we ourselves, but also our descendants and the descendants of Your entire people, the House of Israel, will all be among those who know Your name and whose study of Your holy Torah is stimulated by the purest of motives.

Blessed are You, A , Who teaches Torah to Israel, the people of God.

Blessed are You, A , our God, Sovereign of the universe Who chose us from all the nations and granted us the divine Torah. Blessed are You, A , source of the Torah.

May A bless you and watch over you. May A shine the light of the divine face on you and be ever gracious unto you. May A lift up the divine countenance toward you and grant you peace.

These are those things for which the *halachah* offers no specific minimum measure: the size of the corners of one’s field that must be left for the poor to harvest, the amount of first fruits one must offer up to God at Shavuot, the number of sacrifices one must offer up when coming to Jerusalem for one of the pilgrimage festivals, the length to which one must go to be kind and generous with the needy and the amount of time one must devote to the study of the Torah. And these are those things that benefit an individual in this world, yet the consequences of which retain their beneficent effects in the World to Come as well: honoring one’s parents, being kind and generous with the needy, maximizing one’s hours of daily Torah study, being hospitable and welcoming toward guests, visiting the sick, attending to the needs of indigent brides, accompanying the dead to their final resting places, concentrating on one’s prayers and making peace between disgruntled friends. But Torah study is the greatest of all those things and outweighs them all.

O God, the soul You granted me was perfectly pure. You created it. You fashioned it. You granted it to me and You guard it while I possess it within me. One day, though, I know You will take it from me, only to return it to me some day in the future. All that being the case, I will proclaim my gratitude to You, A , my God and the God of my ancestors, Author of deeds and source of souls, for as long as that soul is within me. Blessed are you, A , Who will yet again ensoul the corpses of the dead.

*The formal chanting of the Preliminary Service
begins with these introductory benedictions:*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לַשָּׁכֵנִי
בֵּינָה לְהַבְחִין בֵּין יוֹם וּבֵין לַיְלָה.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שְׁעֲשֵׁנִי בְּצַלְמוֹ.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שְׁעֲשֵׁנִי יִשְׂרָאֵל.

Women Say:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שְׁעֲשֵׁנִי בְּתַרְחוּרֵינוּ.

Men Say:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, פּוֹקֵחַ עֹרִים.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, מְלַבֵּישׁ עֲרָמִים.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, מוֹתִיר אֲסוּרִים.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, זוֹקֵף כְּפוּפִים.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
רוֹקֵעַ הָאָרֶץ עַל הַמַּיִם.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
שְׁעֲשֵׂה לִּי כָּל צָרָתִי.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר הִכִּין מִצְעָדֵי גִבּוֹר.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אוֹזֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּגִבּוֹרָה.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
עוֹטֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּתַפְאָרָה.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַגּוֹתֵן לַיַּעֲקֹב כָּח.

in the northwest was merely the way down to an underground *mikveh*.

There were two gates to the House of the Hearth, one which opened upon the *cheil* and one which opened onto the courtyard. Rabbi Judah says: "That which opened upon the court had a small wicket by which they went in to reconnoiter the courtyard (and make sure things there were in order)."

The House of the Hearth was a large domed building surrounded on the inside by stone bleachers and it was there that the priestly elders slept at night with the keys to the courtyard in their hands. The young *kohanim*, on the other hand, slept on the floor stretched out on their own garments.

And there was a marble slab there, a cubit by a cubit, with a ring fastened to it, and the chain with the keys were hung thereon. When the time came to lock the courtyard, one of the *kohanim* would lift the slab by its ring and take the keys from the chain. (The *kohen* closed the gates from the inside and left a Levite to sleep outside each gate.) When he finished closing up, he returned the keys to the chain and the slab to its place. He would then place his own garment upon it and sleep there. If an accident requiring immersion in a *mikveh* befell one of the *kohanim* during the night, he would go out by the winding staircase which led under the House of the Hearth—where there were lamps burning on either side of the walkway—until he would come to the *mikveh*. Rabbi Eliezer ben Jacob, said: "The winding staircase took him right under the *cheil*, whereupon he would go out and leave through the Tadi Gate."

Chapter Two

The Temple Mount was 500 cubits by 500 cubits. The southern section was the largest, then the eastern section, then the northern; its smallest section was towards the west. The larger the part of the Temple Mount a specific section occupied, the more activity took place there.

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All who entered the Temple enclosure turned to the right when they came inside and turned to the left when they wished to leave, except for people in various sorts of dire straits, who turned to the left when they came inside. This was done to stimulate others to ask formally: "Why are you entering towards the left?" If the answer was, "Because I am a mourner", this, in turn, would stimulate the following response: "May the One that dwells in this House comfort you!" If the answer came: "Because I have been excommunicated", then the response would be "May the One that dwells in this House put it in their hearts to restore you to society!" This was the opinion of Rabbi Meir, but Rabbi Yossi once said to him, "You make it sound as though they had transgressed against him in judgment. A better response, therefore, would be: 'May the One that dwells in this House move you to hearken to the words of your brethren so that they might restore you to society.'"

Further in was the *soreg*, a stone barrier ten handbreadths high that once had thirteen breaches made in it by the Syrian Greek kings. The Jews restored and strengthened it after that, then decreed thirteen acts of prostration as one entered as a way of remembering the whole incident. Further in from the *soreg* was the *cheil*, a rampart ten cubits high. Twelve steps were there too, each half a cubit in height and half a cubit in width. (All the steps in the Temple were half a cubit high and half a cubit wide, except those leading up into the outermost porch, called the *ulam*, in the building that housed the Holy of Holies. All the doorways and gates in the Temple were twenty cubits high and ten cubits wide, except that one opening up onto the *ulam*. All the doorways in the Temple had doors, for that matter, except the one leading into the *ulam*. All the gates in the Temple had lintels over them, except for the Tadi Gate, which had two stones over it one atop the other. All the gates which were there were eventually covered in gold, except for the Gate of Nicanor, because of a great miracle that once involved it. Some say, however, that the Gate of Nicanor was not gold-plated simply because its brass sparkled so impressively as it was.)

*The formal chanting of the Preliminary Service
begins with these introductory benedictions:*

Blessed are You, A , our God, Sovereign of the universe,
Who grants roosters the ability to distinguish between day and night.

Blessed are You, A , our God, Sovereign of the universe,
Who created me in the divine image.

Blessed are You, A , our God, Sovereign of the universe,
Who made me a Jew.

Blessed are You, A , our God, Sovereign of the universe,
Who made me a free individual.

Blessed are You, A , our God, Sovereign of the universe,
Who grants eyesight to those who otherwise could not see.

Blessed are You, A , our God, Sovereign of the universe,
Who clothes those who would otherwise be naked.

Blessed are You, A , our God, Sovereign of the universe,
Who grants freedom to those who would otherwise be imprisoned.

Blessed are You, A , our God, Sovereign of the universe,
Who grants the ability to stand up straight to those
who would otherwise be bent over.

Blessed are You, A , our God, Sovereign of the universe,
Who created the dry land atop the primeval waters.

Blessed are You, A , our God, Sovereign of the universe,
Who attends to my every need.


Blessed are You, A , our God, Sovereign of the universe,
Who makes ambulatory those who could otherwise not walk.

Blessed are You, A , our God, Sovereign of the universe,
Who girds Israel with might.

Blessed are You, A , our God, Sovereign of the universe,
Who crowns Israel with glory.

Blessed are You, A , our God, Sovereign of the universe,
Who grants strength to the exhausted.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַמַּעֲבִיר שָׁנָה
מֵעֵינֵי וְתַנּוּמָה מֵעַפְעָפִי.

וַיְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאַלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ,
שְׁתַּרְגִּילֵנוּ בְּתוֹרַתְךָ וּדְבַרְךָנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתֶיךָ, וְאַל
תְּבִיאֵנוּ לֹא לַיַּדֵּי חֲטָא, וְלֹא לַיַּדֵּי עֲבִירָה וְעוֹן,
וְלֹא לַיַּדֵּי גְסִיוֹן, וְלֹא לַיַּדֵּי בְזִיוֹן, וְאַל תִּשְׁלַט בָּנוּ
יֵצֵר הָרָע, וְהִרְחִיקֵנוּ מֵאָדָם רָע וּמַחְבֵּר רָע.
וּדְבַרְךָנוּ בְּיֵצֵר הַטּוֹב וּבְמַעֲשֵׂים טוֹבִים, וְכוּף אֶת
יֵצֵרְנוּ לְהִשְׁתַּעֲבֹד לָךְ.  וְתַנְנוּ הַיּוֹם, וּבְכָל
יוֹם, לַחֵן וּלְחֶסֶד וּלְרַחֲמִים בְּעֵינֶיךָ וּבְעֵינֵי כָל
רוּאֵנוּ, וְתַגְמְלֵנוּ חֲסָדִים טוֹבִים. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה,
גּוֹמֵל חֲסָדִים טוֹבִים לְעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל.

יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי וְאַלֹהֵי
אֲבוֹתַי, שְׁתַּצִּילֵנִי הַיּוֹם וּבְכָל יוֹם מֵעַיִי
בָּנִים וּמֵעַזֹּזֹת פָּנִים, מֵאָדָם רָע, וּמַחְבֵּר רָע,
וּמִשָּׂכֵן רָע, וּמִפְּגַע רָע, וּמִשִּׁטָּן הַמְּשַׁחֵת,
מִדִּין קָשָׁה וּמִבְּעַל דִּין קָשָׁה, בֵּין שֶׁהוּא בּוֹן
בְּרִית וּבֵין שְׂאֵינוּ בּוֹן בְּרִית.

All the walls which were there were high, except for the wall in the east, which was intentionally built so that the *kohen* who burned the red heifer could stand on top of the Mount of Olives and look directly through the gateway of the sanctuary at the time when he sprinkled the blood.


The Court of Women was 135 cubits long and 135 cubits wide, and four chambers were built into its four corners, each of which was forty cubits square. These chambers were left unroofed, and so were they intended to be for all time, as it is said at Ezekiel 46:21–22: “And he brought me forth into the outer courtyard, and caused me to pass by the four corners of the courtyard, and behold, in every corner of the courtyard was a kind of lesser courtyard. In the four corners of the courtyard were these lesser courtyards, where smoke could rise unimpeded.” (This reference to smoke being allowed to ascend unimpeded implies that they were not roofed.) And what purpose did these corner chambers serve? The one in the southeast was the Chamber of the Nazirites, where the nazirites washed their peace-offerings, shaved their hair, and threw their hair under the pot. The one in the northeast was the Chamber of Wood, where the *kohanim* who were sufficiently physically disfigured to disqualify them from service at the altar picked through the wood looking for worms. (Every piece of wood in which a worm was found was deemed unfit to be used on the altar.) The one in the northwest was the Chamber of Lepers. The use to which the chamber on southwest was put constituted a point of dispute. Rabbi Eliezer ben Jacob, said: “I have forgotten for what its use was.” Abba Shaul said: “It was there they stored the wine and the oil and it was called the chamber of the House of Shemaniah.” The Court of Women had originally been built on one level, but later it was provided with a gallery so that the women could look on from above and the men from beneath without the two sexes having to mix. And fifteen steps went up from The Court of the Women to the Court of Israel, these fifteen steps being intended to be reminiscent of the fifteen Songs of the Steps

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in the Psalms. It was upon these the Levites stood while they sung during the service. The steps were not rectangular but rounded, like half of a round threshing floor.

And there were chambers beneath the Court of Israel that opened upon the Court of the Women, where the Levites placed their harps, their psalteries, their cymbals and, indeed, all their musical instruments. The Court of Israel was 135 cubits long and eleven cubits wide. Similarly, the Court of the Priests was 135 cubits long and eleven cubits wide, and the boundary between the two was marked off with the tops of wooden beams. Rabbi Eliezer ben Jacob, said: There was a step a cubit high on which the *duchan* was placed, and on it were three steps, each half a cubit in height. The result was that the Court of the Priests was two and a half cubits higher than the Court of Israel. The entire courtyard, encompassing the Court of Women, the Court of Israel and the Court of the Priests was 187 cubits long and 135 cubits wide. Thirteen acts of prostration took place there. Abba Yossi ben Chanan, said: "Each one of these was directed towards one of the thirteen gates." The southern gates, starting from the west, were: the Upper Gate, the Gate of Kindling, the Gate of the Firstborn, and the Gate of Water. And why was the Gate of Water so called? Because it was through that gate that they brought the pitcher of water for pouring out as a special libation offering on Sukkot. In this regard, Rabbi Eliezer ben Jacob, relying on the rabbinic interpretation of a verse from the Book of Ezekiel, said, "Through it the waters will flow and eventually flow out of the Temple across its threshold." Facing the southern gates were the gates in the northern wall. Starting from the westernmost gate, these were the Gate of Jeconiah, the Gate of Sacrifice, the Gate of Women, and the Gate of Song. And why was it called the Gate of Jeconiah? Because it was through that very gate that King Jeconiah went out into captivity when the Babylonians sacked Jerusalem. On the east was the Gate of Nicanor; it had two wickets, one on its right and the other on its left. And there

Blessed are You, A , our God, Sovereign of the universe, who grants me the daily strength to rise from my slumber.


And, furthermore, may it be Your will, A , our God and God of our ancestors, that You stir us to the study of Torah and make us willing and eager to perform Your commandments, thus helping us avoid not only sin, wrongdoing and iniquity, but even temptation, and may we not suffer scorn because of our allegiance to You. May our own wicked desires not take hold of us and may You grant us distance from wicked people, even if they come to us in the guise of friends. Instead, let us be ever guided by our most noble impulses and by the pleasure of acting kindly and generously. Help us quash our own perverse inclinations so that we might be Your true servants.  Grant that we find favor, grace and compassion in Your eyes and in the eyes of all who gaze upon us this and every day, and ever deal with us kindly and generously. Blessed are You, A , Who ever acts kindly and generously with Israel, the people of God.

May it be Your will, A , our God and God of our ancestors, that we be safe this and every day from the arrogant and from arrogance itself, and also from wicked people, even those who come to us in the guise of friend and neighbor. Furthermore, make us safe from unforeseen and unwanted happenstance, from heartless adversaries, from harsh laws promulgated against us, and from all perversion of justice, regardless of whether the complainant is Jew or Gentile.

Let us all be God-fearing people both in public and in private, and people who speak the truth in public and in private, people who rise up daily to say this prayer:

לְעוֹלָם יִהְיֶה אָדָם יֵרָא שָׁמַיִם בְּסִתְרָ וּבְגָלוּי, וּמוֹדָה עַל הָאֱמֶת,
וְדוֹבֵר אֱמֶת בְּלִבּוֹ, וַיִּשְׁפֹּם וַיֹּאמֶר:

רַבּוֹן כָּל הָעוֹלָמִים, לֹא עַל צְדָקוֹתֵינוּ אֲנַחְנוּ
מִפְּיֻלִים תַּחְנוּגְנוּנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ, כִּי עַל רַחֲמֶיךָ הֶרְפִּים.
מָה אֲנַחְנוּ? מָה חַיֵּינוּ? מָה חֲסִדָּנוּ? מָה צְדָקֵינוּ?
מָה יְשׁוּעָתֵנוּ? מָה פָחוּנוּ? מָה גְבוּרָתֵנוּ? מָה נֹאמֶר
לְפָנֶיךָ, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ? הֲלֹא כָּל
הַגְּבוּרִים כָּאֵין לְפָנֶיךָ, וְאֲנָשֵׁי הַשָּׁם כֹּלֵי הַיּוֹם,
וְחַכְמַיִם כְּבָלֵי מַדְעָ, וְנִבְוֹנִים כְּבָלֵי הַשֶּׁפֶל? כִּי רוֹב
מַעֲשֵׂיהֶם תָּהוּ, וַיַּיְמִי חַיֵּיהֶם הָבֵל לְפָנֶיךָ, וּמוֹתָר
הָאָדָם מִן הַבְּהֵמָה אֵין, כִּי הַכֹּל הָבֵל. אֲבָל אֲנַחְנוּ
עִמָּךְ, בְּגִי בְרִיתְךָ, בְּגִי אֲבָרָהֶם אֲהַבָּה שְׂנֹשְׁפֶעֶת לֹו
בְּהַר הַמּוֹרִיָּה, זָרַע יִצְחָק יַחֲידוֹ שְׂנַעֲקָד עַל גֵּב
הַמִּזְבֵּחַ, עֲדַת יַעֲקֹב בְּנֵי בְכוֹרָה, שְׂמֵאֵהֶבֶתְךָ
שְׂאֵהֶבֶת אֹתוֹ וּמִשְׁמַחֲתְךָ שְׂשִׁמְחֶת בּוֹ קָרָאתָ אֶת
שֵׁמוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּשְׂרוֹן.

לְפִיכָךְ אֲנַחְנוּ חַיִּבִּים לַהֲוֹדוֹת לָךְ, וְלִשְׂבַּחְךָ וְלִפְאָרְךָ וְלִבְרָךְ
וְלִקְדָּשׁ וְלִתְתֵּן שֶׁבַח וְהוֹדִיָּה לְשִׁמְךָ.  אֲשֶׁרֵינוּ, מָה
טוֹב חֲלָקֵנוּ, וּמָה נְעִים גּוֹרְלָנוּ, וּמָה יָפָה יְרֻשָׁתֵנוּ. אֲשֶׁרֵינוּ,
שְׂאֲנַחְנוּ מִשְׁפִּימִים וּמַעֲרִיבִים, עָרֵב וּבָקָר, וְאוֹמְרִים
פַּעֲמִים בְּכָל יוֹם:

were two gates on the western side, but these had no names attached to them.

Chapter Three

The altar was thirty-two cubits by thirty-two cubits. The base was one cubit in height and protruded from the rest of the altar by a distance too of one cubit. That left a space of thirty cubits by thirty. Five cubits up, there was a second ledge called the Sovev that also protruded from the remainder of the altar by a cubit, thus leaving a space twenty-eight cubits wide and twenty-eight long. The horns of the altar were cubit-long protrusions at all four corners, thus leaving a surface space of twenty-six cubits by twenty-six. There was also a walkway for the kohanim serving atop the altar that was a full cubit wide on all sides, thus leaving a surface area of twenty-four cubits by twenty-four and this was the place where the sacrifices were laid out. Rabbi Yossi said: "Originally, the altar was only twenty-eight cubits by twenty-eight; with all the above-mentioned deletions from the potential surface space, the place for laying the sacrifices came out to be twenty cubits by twenty. But when the returnees from the Babylonian Exile returned, they added four cubits on the south and four on the west in a configuration similar to the Greek letter gamma, because it is said in the Book of Ezekiel (43:16), "And Ariel," for so the prophet referred to the altar, "shall be twelve cubits long and twelve wide thus forming a perfect square in all four quadrants." One might take this to mean that the altar itself should only be twelve cubits on each side, but the words "in all four quadrants" indicate clearly that he was measuring twelve cubits in every direction starting from the center of the altar." And a scarlet line girdled the altar in the middle to separate between the upper and the lower blood-sprinklings. The base ran round all the north and all the west side, but was shortened a cubit on the southern side and on the eastern one as well.

In the southwestern corner were two small holes, like two tiny nostrils, and the blood that

was poured on the base in the west and in the south descended through them, and co-mingled in a canal before flowing out into the Wadi Kidron.

Below, in the pavement in that corner, there was a tablet of marble measuring a cubit by a cubit set in the ground. A ring was fastened to it and here, by lifting it, they were able to go down into the sewer to clean it. And there was a ramp on the southern side of the altar, thirty-two cubits long and sixteen wide. The ramp had a enclosure scooped out of its western side, and it was into this enclosure that they put dead birds that had been intended to be sin-offerings, but which had become defiled before they could be offered up.


Both the stones of the ramp and those of the altar were from the valley of Beth Kerem, where they were dug out from beneath the virgin soil as whole stones upon which iron tools did not need to be used. This was necessary because, although a scratch from any source disqualifies a stone for use in the Temple, iron defiles merely by contact alone. (If just one stone was disqualified by being scratched, however, the rest remained acceptable for use.) And they whitened these stones twice in the year, once at Passover and once at Sukkot. (The building that housed the Holy of Holies and its anteroom, however, was whitewashed only once a year, at Passover.) Rabbi (that is, Rabbi Judah the Patriarch) says: "On the eve of every Sabbath, they whitewashed it with a cloth on account of the blood-sprinklings." They did not plaster it with an iron trowel, however, lest the iron touch a stone and defile it, for iron was created to shorten the days of man, while the altar was created to lengthen the days of man, and it would be not fitting for that which exists to shorten life to come into contact with that which is destined to lengthen life.

And there were rings to the north of the altar arranged in six rows of four each (although some say that there were four rows of six rings each) and in these they slaughtered the holy sacrifices. The place of slaughtering was to the north of the altar. In that place, there were eight short pillars

Ribono shel Olam, we offer You our prayers not out of the arrogant assertion that our righteousness should guarantee Your interest in answering them, but imbued instead with a sense of Your endlessly indulgent kindness toward Your creatures. What are we, after all? What is the worth of our human lives? What kindnesses have we ever really wrought? What righteous deeds can we claim as our own? When have we ever served as the agents of another's salvation? What strength do we possess? What courage can we claim as being truly ours? What should we say before You, A , our God and God of our ancestors? Are not even the heroes among us worth nothing at all in Your exacting estimation? Are not historical personalities of renown in Your estimation as though they never even lived? Do You not consider even the wisest among us to be fools, the greatest of our sages to be little more than simpletons? You barely take note of their so-called great deeds, no matter how numerous they might be. Indeed, You look upon the great days of their long lives as nothing more substantial or important than a wisp of smoke. And as for the much-discussed superiority of human beings over animals—that is just another fantasy, because, in the end, all that *any* of us comes to is a puff of smoke that exists for a moment, then dissipates and is gone.

Still, we are not totally without real existence. We are members of Your people, a people linked to You by covenant, the descendants of Your devoted Abraham, to whom You swore endless fidelity at Mount Moriah. We are the descendants too of Abraham's most-loved son, Isaac, the very one who was bound to the altar by his endlessly obedient father. And we are the congregation of Jacob, whose descendants were collectively called Your first-born, that one in whom You took such great delight and to whom You showed such boundless love that You actually changed his name to Israel (also sometimes called Jeshurun) as a token of Your devotion to him.


Therefore are we obliged to thank You, to praise You, to declare You splendid, to bless You, to make holy Your name and to declare to Your name our boundless admiration and our deepest expressions of thanksgiving.

 Happy are we, whose lot is so good, whose destiny so delightful, whose inheritance so lovely. Happy are we who rise up early each morning and remain awake into each evening for the purpose of declaring your unity twice daily with these ancient words:

שִׁמֶע יִשְׂרָאֵל,

יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד.

בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

אַתָּה הוּא עַד שְׁלֹא גִבְרָא הָעוֹלָם, אַתָּה הוּא מִשְׁגַּבְרָא הָעוֹלָם. אַתָּה הוּא בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה, וְאַתָּה הוּא לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא.  קִדַּשׁ אֶת שְׁמִךָ עַל מִקְדְּשֵׁי שְׁמִךָ, וְקִדַּשׁ אֶת שְׁמִךָ בְּעוֹלָמְךָ, וּבִישׁוּעַתְךָ תַּרְוִם וְתִגְבַּה קְרַגְיִנּוּ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, מְקַדֵּשׁ אֶת שְׁמִךָ בְּרַבִּים.

אַתָּה הוּא יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּשָׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ וּבְשָׁמַיִם הַשָּׁמַיִם הָעֲלִיּוֹנִים. אָמֵת, אַתָּה הוּא רִאשׁוֹן, וְאַתָּה הוּא אַחֲרוֹן, וּמִבְּלַעֲדֶיךָ אֵין אֱלֹהִים. קִבֵּץ קִנְיֶיךָ מֵאַרְבַּע פְּנֻפּוֹת הָאָרֶץ. יִכְיֶירוּ וְיִדְעוּ כָּל בְּאֵי עוֹלָם, כִּי אַתָּה הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים לְבִדּוֹךְ לְכֹל מִמְלָכוֹת הָאָרֶץ. אַתָּה עֲשִׂיתָ אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ, אֶת הַיָּם וְאֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר בָּם. וּמִי בְּכֹל מַעֲשֵׂה יְדִידְךָ בְּעֲלִיּוֹנִים אוֹ בַּתְּחִתּוֹנִים שְׁיֹאמַר לְךָ מַה תַּעֲשֶׂה? אָבִינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמַיִם, עֲשֵׂה עִמָּנוּ חֶסֶד בְּעִבּוֹר שְׁמִךָ הַגָּדוֹל שֶׁנִּקְרָא עֲלֵינוּ, וְקִיָּם לָנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מַה שְׁפָתוֹב: בְּעֵת הַהִיא אָבִיא אֶתְכֶם, וּבְעֵת קִבְצֵי אֶתְכֶם, כִּי אֶתֶּן אֶתְכֶם לְשֵׁם וְלַתְּהִלָּה בְּכֹל עַמֵּי הָאָרֶץ, בְּשׁוֹבֵי אֶת שְׁבוּתֵיכֶם לְעִינֵיכֶם, אָמֵר יְהוָה.

with blocks of cedar fastened on top of them; onto these wooden blocks were fastened hooks of iron in rows of three, and it was there that they suspended the animals while skinning them on the marble tables which were between the pillars.

And the laver was between the *ulam*, that outermost porch of the building that housed the Holy of Holies, and the altar, just slightly closer to the south. Between the *ulam* and the altar were twenty-two cubits, and twelve steps were there, each step half a cubit high, and a cubit wide . . . but there was a space of three cubits after the second cubit (thus making five), then again after the seventh (thus making ten), then a space of four cubits after the twelfth (thus making sixteen). Thus the first six steps managed to take up sixteen cubits and the other six brought the total to twenty-two. Rabbi Judah, on the other hand, says that there were five cubits, not four, after the twelfth step.

The doorway to the *ulam* was forty cubits high and twenty cubits wide, and five beams of ash were upon the top of it; the lowest protruded out over the doorway proper by a cubit on either side and the beam above it protruded a cubit further on either side. Thus, the topmost beam was thirty cubits long and there were layers of stone between each one of the beams.

And supports of cedar were fixed from the wall of the sanctuary to the wall of the *ulam*, lest they buckle, and chains of gold were fixed in the roof of the *ulam*. By them the young *kohanim* ascended to look at the crowns (that were used to adorn the *ulam* porch), as it is written in the Book of Zachariah (6:14): "And the crowns in the Temple of A shall serve as a memorial to Helem, and to Tobiah, and to Jedaiah, and to Hen ben Zephaniah." A vine of gold hung over the entrance to the sanctuary atop the beams. Every one who vowed a leaf or a berry or a cluster of berries brought it and hung it up there. Rabbi Eliezer, the son of Rabbi Zadok, said: "It happened once (that it had to be taken down) and it took three hundred *kohanim* to carry it."

Chapter Four


The entrance to the sanctuary was twenty cubits high and ten cubits wide; it had four doors, two inside and two on the outside, as it is written in the Book of Ezekiel (41:23): “And the sanctuary and the inner sanctum had two doors.” The outer doors opened into the doorway, thus covering the thickness of the doorway, but the inner doors opened into the building and covered the space behind the door—for the whole house was covered in gold, except for the space behind the doors. Rabbi Judah said: “The pairs of doors stood within the entranceway and were actually folding doors that folded backwards over themselves—thus covering two and a half cubits each. This made a total of five cubits, which left over half a cubit of the doorway on either side, as it was said in the Book of Ezekiel (41:24), ‘And each door had two parts, two leaves that turned in on each other, two for each door.’”

And the great gate had two wickets, one to the north and one to the south. No one ever passed through the one to the south, and this was clearly what Ezekiel meant, as it is written (at Ezekiel 44:2): “Then A said unto me, ‘This gate shall be shut; it shall not be opened, and no one shall enter in by it; because A, the God of Israel, shall enter in by it, therefore it shall be shut.’” A *kohen* would take the key and open the wicket, then enter first into the little chamber, then into the sanctuary proper. Rabbi Judah said: “He would walk along the thickness of the wall until he found himself standing between the two gates, whereupon he would open the outer one from the inside and the inner one from the outside.”

There were thirty-eight of these little chambers—fifteen on the north, fifteen on the south, and eight on the west. On the north and on the south, these chambers were arranged five on the top of another five, and five on top of them. On the west, they were arranged three on the top of another three, and two on the top of them. And each one of these chambers had three entrances, one to the chamber on the right, and one to the chamber on the left, and one to the chamber on the top. At the northwestern corner, however,

Hear, O Israel, A, our God, A is one.

May the name of the glorious sovereignty of God
forever be blessed.

You existed before the universe came into being. You existed as the universe came into being and You will exist when this world passes away and the World to Come is upon us.  May You sanctify Your name amidst those who devote themselves endlessly to its sanctification, thus making holy Your great name in this world You created. Grant us prestige and power in this world, for therein lies our salvation. Blessed are You, A, Who sanctifies the divine name among the multitudes.

You, A, our God, exist on earth and also in heaven, even in its furthest celestial reaches. It is true that You were first and You shall be last, and that there is no God but You. Gather Your faithful from the four corners of the earth, so that all the citizens of every land and kingdom on this earth will come to acknowledge that You alone are God. You made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them.

Your sovereignty being so self-evident, which among Your creatures great or small would dare tell You what to do?

Celestial source of succor and divine parental love, deal kindly with us for the sake of Your great name, that divine name used to qualify us as the people of God, and bring to fruition, A, our God, that which was once written at the end of the Book of Zephaniah, Your prophet, “At that time, I will bring you back and gather you back to Zion, for I shall make you famous among the nations of the world when I end your exile in your own time, says A.”

אָנָא, בְּכַח גְּדֻלַת יְמִינְךָ תִּתִּיר צְרוּרָה.
 קִבַּל רֵגַת עַמּוּךְ, שִׁגְבְּנוּ, טַהֲרֵנוּ, נוֹרָא.
 נָא גְבוּר, דּוֹרְשֵׁי יְחוּדְךָ, כְּבַבַת שְׁמֵרִם.
 בְּרַכֶּם, טַהֲרֵם, רַחֲמֵם, צְדָקָתְךָ תָּמִיד גָּמְלִים.
 חֲסִין קְדוּשׁ, בְּרוּב טוֹבְךָ גַּחַל עֲדָתְךָ.
 יַחֲדֵי גְאָה, לְעַמּוּךָ פִּינָה, זֹכְרֵי קִדְשָׁתְךָ.
 שׁוֹעֲתֵנוּ קִבַּל וּשְׁמַע צַעֲקוֹתֵנוּ, יוֹדַע תַּעֲלָמוֹת.
 בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

*We mourn the loss of our holy Temple and pray that our prayers
 might take the place of the ancient sacrificial cult.*

רְבוֹן הָעוֹלָמִים, אַתָּה צְוִיִּתְנוּ לְהַקְרִיב קָרְבַן הַתָּמִיד בְּמוֹעֵדוֹ,
 וְלִהְיוֹת פְּהַגִּים בְּעִבּוֹדְתֶם, וְלוֹיִם בְּדוֹכְנֵם, וְיִשְׂרָאֵל בְּמַעֲמָדֶם.
 וְעַתָּה בְּעוֹגוֹתֵינוּ, חָרַב בַּיִת הַמִּקְדָּשׁ וּבִטַּל הַתָּמִיד, וְאִין לָנוּ
 לֹא כֹהֵן בְּעִבּוֹדְתוֹ, וְלֹא לוֹי בְּדוֹכְנוֹ, וְלֹא יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּמַעֲמָדוֹ.
 וְאַתָּה אִמְרָתְךָ: וּנְשַׁלְּמָה פָּרִים שְׁפָתֵינוּ. לָכֵן יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ,
 יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאַלְהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, שְׁיֵיחָא שְׁיַח שְׁפָתוֹתֵינוּ חֲשׁוּב
 וּמְקַבֵּל וּמְרַצָּה לְפָנֶיךָ, כְּפָאֵלוּ הַקְרָבָנוּ קָרְבַן הַתָּמִיד בְּמוֹעֵדוֹ,
 וְעַמְדָנוּ עַל מַעֲמָדוֹ.

On Rosh Chodesh, add these words:

וּבְרָאשֵׁי חֲדָשֵׁיכֶם תִּקְרִיבוּ עֹלָה לַיהוָה, פָּרִים בְּנֵי בָקָר שְׁנַיִם,
 וְאַיִל אֶחָד, כְּבָשִׂים בְּנֵי שָׁנָה שִׁבְעָה, תְּמִימִם. וּשְׁלֹשָׁה עֶשְׂרִים
 סֹלֶת מִנְחָה בְּלוּלָה בְּשֶׁמֶן לַפָּר הָאֶחָד, וּשְׁנַיִם עֶשְׂרִים סֹלֶת
 מִנְחָה בְּלוּלָה בְּשֶׁמֶן לְאַיִל הָאֶחָד. וְעֶשְׂרוֹן עֶשְׂרוֹן, סֹלֶת מִנְחָה
 בְּלוּלָה בְּשֶׁמֶן, לְכַבֵּשׁ הָאֶחָד, עֹלָה רֵיחַ גִּיחָח, אֲשֶׁה לַיהוָה.
 וְנִסְפִיחָם חֲצִי הַהֵין יִהְיֶה לַפָּר, וּשְׁלִישִׁת הַהֵין לְאַיִל, וּרְבִיעֵת
 הַהֵין לְכַבֵּשׁ יַיִן, זֹאת עֹלֶת חֹדֶשׁ בְּחֹדְשׁוֹ לְחֹדְשֵׁי הַשָּׁנָה. וּשְׁעִיר
 עֲזִים אֶחָד לְחִטָּאת לַיהוָה, עַל עֹלֶת הַתָּמִיד יַעֲשֶׂה, וְנִסְכּוֹ.

were five entrances: one to the chamber at the right, another to the chamber on the top, another to the winding staircase, another to the wicket, and another to the sanctuary.

The lowest chamber was five cubits wide with roofing six cubits overhead, the middle was six cubits wide with roofing seven cubits overhead, and the uppermost chamber was also seven cubits wide, as it is said (in 1 Kings 6:6): "The nethermost chamber was five cubits broad and the middle one was six cubits wide, and the third was seven cubits wide."

A winding staircase went up from the north-eastern corner to the northwestern corner, and it was thus that one could go up to the roofs of these chambers. Such a person would go up the winding staircase facing towards the west, and go all along the north side until coming to the west. Once at the west side, he would turn his face to the south and go all along the western side until he got to the south. He would go towards the south, then turn his face eastwards when he could go no further south and walk along the southern side until he came to the entrance of the upper chamber (which opened to the south). At the entrance to the upper chamber were two beams of cedar and it was by means of these that one could go up to the roof of the upper chamber. (There was a row of stones showing the boundary in the upper chamber between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies below.) And there were trapdoors in the upper chamber that let down into the Holy of Holies, and it was by means of these trapdoors that workmen were lowered into the Holy of Holies on closed scaffolds, lest they harm themselves by gazing unnecessarily on the interior of the Holy of Holies.

The sanctuary itself was one hundred cubits wide, one hundred cubits long and one hundred cubits tall. The height was accounted for as follows: the foundation took up six cubits, the height of the actual room was forty cubits; one cubit for ornamentation, two cubits for the ceiling gutters, one cubit for the ceiling, one cubit for the roof gutters, three cubits for the parapet, then another forty cubits for the upper chamber, a cubit for its

ornamentation, two cubits for its ceiling gutters, a cubit for the roof, a cubit for its roof gutters and a cubit for the spikes used to discourage ravens from sitting atop the Holy of Holies. Rabbi Judah said: "The raven spikes were not part of the count, but the parapet was four cubits."

From the east to the west, the building that housed the **ulam** (the porch), the **heichal** (the sanctuary) and the Holy of Holies was one hundred cubits wide and these cubits were calculated as follows: the wall of the **ulam** was five cubits thick, the **ulam** itself was eleven cubits wide; the wall of the sanctuary was six cubits thick, its interior space was forty cubits across, the intermediate wall between the outer sanctuary and the Holy of Holies was one cubit thick, the Holy of Holies was twenty cubits wide, the far wall of the sanctuary was six cubits thick, and the small outer chamber was six cubits wide, and its wall was five cubits thick. From the north to the south, the distance was seventy cubits, calculated as follows: the wall of the winding staircase was five cubits, the staircase itself was three cubits wide, the wall of the little chamber was five cubits thick, the little chamber was six cubits wide, the wall of the sanctuary was six cubits thick, its interior space was twenty cubits, the other wall of the sanctuary was also six cubits thick, and its little chamber was six cubits wide, the wall of the little chamber was five cubits thick, and a water conduit was three cubits in diameter, and the farthest wall took up five cubits. The **ulam** protruded beyond it, fifteen cubits from the north and another fifteen cubits from the south, and it was (also) called the House of the Blades, because it was there that they deposited the knives. The sanctuary was narrow behind and wide in front, thus being somewhat in the shape of a lion, as it is said in the Book of Isaiah (29:1): "O Ariel, lion of God, the city where David dwelt." As the lion is narrow behind and wide in front, so was the sanctuary narrow behind and wide in front.

O God, unleash the power of Your right hand to release those in bondage, and, as You accept the prayers of Your people, O awesome God, exalt us and purify us. Protect those who work to proclaim Your unity, O mighty God, as one might the pupil of one's eye. Bless them, purify them, deal kindly with them; may You deal with them always in accordance with Your righteous nature. O divine source of strength, O holy One, lead Your congregation forward in accordance with Your boundless beneficence. O unique and resplendent God, turn to Your people in kindness, for they are the ones in this world who remain mindful of Your holiness. Accept our supplication and listen to our prayers, O God Who knows the secrets of humankind. May the name of the glorious sovereignty of God forever be blessed.

We mourn the loss of our holy Temple and pray that our prayers might take the place of the ancient sacrificial cult.

Ribono shel Olam, You commanded us to offer up a daily offering called the *tamid* sacrifice every day at the correct hour, and for the priests to serve at the altar and the Levites on their platform and for representatives of the entire people to be in attendance. But now, as a result of our sins, the Temple has been destroyed and the *tamid* is no longer offered up, and neither are there priests serving at the altar nor Levites on their platform nor Israelites in attendance. You did once say, however, through your prophet Hosea that "we may use the utterances of our lips in place of the bulls of ancient sacrifice."

Therefore, may it be Your will, A , our God and God of our ancestors, that the words of our lips be as meaningful and significant and acceptable before You as it would have been in ancient times for us to have been in attendance when the *tamid* sacrifice was offered up at the correct hour.

On Rosh Chodesh, add these words:

On Rosh Chodesh days, you shall offer up an *olah* sacrifice to A consisting of two bulls, one ram and seven unblemished yearling lambs. In addition, you must bring a grain offering consisting of three *isaron*-measures of flour mixed with oil for each bull, two *isaron*-measures of flour mixed with oil for the lone ram and a single *isaron* of flour mixed with oil for each lamb, all of it designed for the fire to create a sweet savor before A . The wine libations to be offered with them all are as follows: half a *hin* for each bull, a third of a *hin* for the ram and a quarter *hin* for each lamb. These *olah* offerings are to be brought every Rosh Chodesh of every month of the year.

And a single goat offering is to be brought as a sin-offering in addition to the daily *tamid* sacrifice, an *olah*, and its libation.

Chapter Five

The whole courtyard was 187 cubits long and 135 cubits wide. From the east to the west, it was 187 cubits: the space for all Israelites was eleven cubits, the space solely for kohanim was also eleven cubits, the altar took up thirty-two cubits; the space between the ulam and the altar was another twenty-two cubits; the sanctuary itself was one hundred cubits; and there were eleven cubits behind the Holy of Holies, the place of atonement.


From the north to the south was a distance of 135 cubits: the altar and the ramp were sixty-two cubits; from the altar to the slaughter rings was eight cubits; the space allotted to the slaughter rings was twenty-four cubits; from the rings to the dismemberment tables was a space of four cubits; from the tables to the pillars was four cubits; from the pillars to the wall of the courtyard was a distance of eight cubits and the rest of the space was taken up by the distance between the ramp and the wall, and by the place of the pillars.


There were six rooms in the court—three to the north, and three to the south. Those on the north were the Salt Chamber, the Parvah Chamber and the Rinsers' Chamber. The Salt Chamber was where the kohanim salted the sacrificial meat. The Parvah Chamber was where the kohanim salted the skins of the holy sacrifices and on its roof was the mikveh the High Priest used on the Day of Atonement. The Rinsers' Chamber was where they washed the innards of the holy sacrifices, and it was from that chamber that a winding staircase went up to the roof of the Parvah Chamber.

Those on the south were the Chamber of Wood, the Chamber of the Exile and the Chamber of Hewn Stone. Regarding the Chamber of Wood, Rabbi Eliezer ben Jacob said: "I have forgotten what purpose it served." Abba Shaul said: It was the chamber of the High Priest, and it lay behind the other two, a single roof extending over all three. In the Chamber of the Exile was a well with a round stone placed upon it that provided water for the whole courtyard. In the

רַבִּי יִשְׁמַעֵאל אוֹמֵר, בְּשֵׁלֶשׁ עָשָׂר מֵדוֹת הַתּוֹרָה
נִדְרָשֶׁת בֵּהֶן. (א) מִקּוֹל וְחֹמֶר. (ב) וּמִגְזָרָה שְׁוֵה.
(ג) מִבְּנִין אָב מִפְּתוּב אַחַד, וּמִבְּנִין אָב מִשְׁנֵי
כְּתוּבִים. (ד) מִפְּלֵל וּפְרָט. (ה) וּמִפְּרָט וּכְלָל. (ו) כָּל
וּפְרָט וּכְלָל, אֵי אַתָּה דָן אֶלָּא כְּעֵין הַפְּרָט. (ז) מִפְּלֵל
שֶׁהוּא צְרִיךְ לְפָרֵט, וּמִפְּרָט שֶׁהוּא צְרִיךְ לְכָלֵל.
(ח) כָּל דְּבַר שֶׁהֵיָה בְּכָלֵל וַיֵּצֵא מִן הַפְּלֵל לְלַמֵּד, לֹא
לְלַמֵּד עַל עֲצָמוֹ יֵצֵא, אֶלָּא לְלַמֵּד עַל הַפְּלֵל פּוֹלֵן
יֵצֵא. (ט) כָּל דְּבַר שֶׁהֵיָה בְּכָלֵל, וַיֵּצֵא לְטַעוֹן טוֹעֵן
אַחַד שֶׁהוּא כְּעַנְיָנוּ, יֵצֵא לְהַקֵּל וְלֹא לְהַחֲמִיר. (י) כָּל
דְּבַר שֶׁהֵיָה בְּכָלֵל וַיֵּצֵא לְטַעוֹן טוֹעֵן אַחַר שְׁלֹא
כְּעַנְיָנוּ, יֵצֵא לְהַקֵּל וְלְהַחֲמִיר. (יא) כָּל דְּבַר שֶׁהֵיָה
בְּכָלֵל וַיֵּצֵא לְדוֹן בְּדָבָר הַחֲדָשׁ, אֵי אַתָּה יָכוֹל
לְהַחֲזִירוֹ לְכָלֵל, עַד שֶׁיַּחֲזִירוּ הַפְּתוּב לְכָלֵל
בְּפִירוּשׁ. (יב) דְּבַר הַלְּמִיד מִעַנְיָנוּ וְדָבָר הַלְּמִיד מִסּוּפּוֹ.
🕊️ (יג) וְכֵן שְׁנֵי כְּתוּבִים הַמְּכַחֲשִׁים זֶה אֶת זֶה,
עַד שֶׁיָּבֵא הַפְּתוּב הַשְּׁלִישִׁי וַיַּכְרִיעַ בֵּינֵיהֶם.

יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאַלֵּהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ
שֶׁיִּבְנֶה בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ בְּמַהֲרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ, וְתֵן חֶלְקֵינוּ
בְּתוֹרָתֶיךָ, וְשֵׁם גַּעֲבֹדֶךָ בִּירְאָה פִּימִי עוֹלָם וְכִשְׁנַיִם
קְדָמוֹנִיּוֹת.

Chamber of Hewn Stone sat the great Sanhedrin of Israel to judge the priesthood. (The **kohen** found to be unqualified for service would dress himself in black and put on a black cloak, and go out on his way. If, however, no reason was found to disqualify him, the **kohen** would dress in white and put on a cloak of white, then go right in and serve with his brother **kohanim**. And they would make such an occurrence into a feast-day, because no disqualification had been found in the seed of Aaron the Priest, and they would say: "Blessed be God, for no disqualifying feature has been found in the seed of Aaron. And blessed be the One Who chose Aaron and his sons to stand to serve before A in the Holy of Holies." 

Rabbi Ishmael used to explain that there are thirteen instances in which the Torah may be interpreted according to certain specific principles: (1) instances of reasoning in which one learns a stricter law from a more lenient one, (2) instances of interpretation based on the use of similar words in two different contexts, (3) instances in which the same topic is broached twice within a single text, and in which the same topic is broached twice within two different texts, (4) instances in which a general principle is deduced from a specific law, (5) instances in which a specific law is deduced from a general principle, (6) instances in which the application of a general principle is limited because the general principle and its specific application have already been given in Scripture, (7) instances in which a general principle can be shown to be dependent on a specific application of that same principle, and in which a specific law must be limited because of the way its general principle is worded, (8) instances in which an exception to a general principle can be shown to apply to every application of that same principle, (9) instances in which it can be shown that an application of a law taught specifically when it could just as simply have been deduced from the general principle signals a leniency rather than a stringency in the law, (10) instances in which it can be shown that a wholly different matter that is deduced from a general principle signals either a leniency in the law or a stringency, (11) instances in which it can be shown that a detail elicited from its general context to teach something unexpected cannot be applied to the general principle from which it was deduced in the first place until Scripture applies it that way in so many words, (12) instances in which something is learned from context and in which something is learned from a summary statement at the end of the passage in which it was taught,  and (13) instances in which a third passage may be adduced to resolve a difficulty between two contradictory passages.

May it be Your will, A , our God and God of our ancestors, that the holy Temple be rebuilt speedily and within our days. Grant us a portion in Your Torah, that we may serve You there in awe just as in ancient times.

y



יִתְגַּדֵּל וְיִתְקַדֵּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא בְּעַלְמָא דִּי בְּרָא כְּרַעוּתִיהּ,
וְיִמְלִיךָ מַלְכוּתִיהּ בְּחַיִּיכוּן וּבְיוֹמֵיכוּן וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל בֵּית
יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּעִגְלָא וּבְזִמְן קָרִיב, וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן.

The congregation joins in reciting this line.

יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעַלְמֵי וְלְעַלְמֵי עַלְמֵי.

Those reciting the Kaddish continue:

יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח, וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרוֹמַם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא וְיִתְהַדָּר
וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלָּל שְׁמֵהּ דְּקֻדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא

Except between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, say: לְעַלְמָא מִן כָּל

Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, say: לְעַלְמָא מִכָּל

בְּרַכְתָּא וְשִׁירְתָּא, תְּשַׁבַּחְתָּא וְנַחֲמַתָּא, דְּאִמְרִין בְּעַלְמָא,
וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן.

עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְעַל רַבָּנָן, וְעַל תְּלַמְיַדְהוֹן וְעַל כָּל תְּלַמְיַדֵּי
תְּלַמְיַדְהוֹן, וְעַל כָּל מָאן דְּעָסְקִין בְּאוּרֵיתָא דִּי
בְּאַתְרָא הִדִּין וְדִי בְּכָל אַתְרֵי וְאַתְרֵי, יְהֵא לְהוֹן וּלְכוּן
שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא, חֲנָא וְחֲסִידָא וְרַחֲמִין, וְחַיִּין אַרְיִכִין, וּמְזוּגֵי
רוּיְחֵי, וּפְרַקְנָא, מִן קָדָם אַבוּהוֹן דִּי בְּשִׁמְיָא וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן.

יְהֵא שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שְׁמֵיָא, וְחַיִּים טוֹבִים, עָלֵינוּ וְעַל
כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן.

עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמְרוֹמָיו, הוּא בְּרַחֲמָיו יַעֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם
עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן.

Moderns hoping to live lives of spiritual and intellectual integrity cannot afford to think of religion merely as an elaborate set of rules to be followed, or as a game to be played (or even, ideally, won). Instead, moderns imbued with intelligence, candor and humility—the three pillars upon which the world of the spirit stands—will seek to explain the rituals, rites and customs of religion in terms of what they actually do know of the world . . . and they will decline, no matter how strong the temptation, to confuse what they know of the world with what they wish they knew, or what they feel drawn to believe or to wish were true. Pilgrims who hope to arrive in the Holy City know, or ought to know, that the road they must travel can only be cut through the underbrush with the sharp blade of the unfettered intellect and can only be traveled by those possessed of unyielding spiritual integrity. To that end, we present here a series of lessons about different aspects of religion suffused with integrity . . . and recommend that they be considered, contemplated and reflected upon as part of a daily regimen of devotional worship.



Like all roads that lead to spiritual wholeness, the path to the knowledge of God is paved with puzzles and paradoxes that reason dictates ought to be unsolvable. But the very fact that a paradox that cannot be resolved can nevertheless be embraced is no less crucial here than in the sphere of romantic love . . . as is the fact that the pilgrim willing to devote sufficient energy to knowing the unknowable can, in the end, at least come to know something. In turn, that something can stand in for whatever hides behind the shield of irresolvable paradox and un-unravelable riddle and become—in its own slightly unsatisfying, but highly utilitarian, way—a useful marker on the pil-

grim's journey towards the palace of God, towards Jerusalem.

Scripture stresses over and over that God may not be known. That much seems simple to accept . . . and yet the same Bible that harps endlessly on the fact that the ineffable nature of God can never be seized by mortals also commands the faithful to love God with all their hearts, with all their souls and with all their might. That too seems reasonable, except for one crucial flaw: the same human beings commanded to love God are generally incapable of conceiving of love without knowledge, of loving with knowing, or of what it would mean to give themselves totally and absolutely to lovers they have not actually encountered in the context of their actual, real, day-to-day lives.

And so we come to the great paradox that looms large at the very outset of the pilgrim's journey: that the heart that yearns for God must come to transcend its own nature in a way that ought logically and wholly reasonably to be impossible. And totally so. Yet, as noted, paradox that cannot be resolved can nonetheless be embraced . . . and the first step any would-be pilgrim must take towards God must, therefore, involve his or her willingness to embrace the possible-impossible notion of knowing the unknowable God . . . without hiding behind a shield of pious slogans and glib platitudes. The wall, almost by definition, is unscalable. But, of course, a wall with a gate set in it does not need to be scaled at all. . . .



The first step on the journey—the hardest and most distressing, but also the most liberating and inspiring step a human being can take towards redemption—is to accept, and to accept wholeheartedly and without any inner reservation whatsoever, that every single word ever written—or spoken aloud or even conceived of in thought—that every single idea any human being has ever formulated about God or about any aspect of God's existence is, by definition, a *midrash*—a kind of commentary—on divine reality as it exists

Kaddish Derabbanan

Magnified and sanctified be the great name of God in this world created according to divine plan, and may God's sovereignty be established speedily and soon during the days of our lives and the lives of all members of the House of Israel, and let us say, Amen.

The congregation joins in reciting this line.

May God's great name be blessed forever and throughout all eternity.

Those reciting the Kaddish continue:

May the name of the Holy One, source of all blessing, be blessed, adored, lauded, praised, extolled, glorified and venerated in language . . .

Except between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, say:

more exalted

Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, say:

entirely more exalted

. . . than any blessing, hymn, ode or prayer recited by the faithful in this world, and let us say, Amen.

We call to mind all Israel and our rabbis and their students and all their students' students and all those who devote themselves to the study of Torah in this land and in every land and pray that they might enjoy lives of great peace, grace, kindness and compassion. May they have long lives and untroubled sustenance and may they be delivered from peril by their heavenly Parent, and let us say, Amen.

May we, and all Israel, be blessed with great peace that comes to us directly from heaven, and with a good life, and let us say, Amen.

May God Who brings peace to the heavens mercifully grant peace to us and to all Israel, and let us say, Amen.

מזמור,

שִׁיר חֲנֻכַּת הַבַּיִת לְדָוִד.

אֲרוּמָמָהּ יִהְיֶה כִּי דָלִיתָנִי, וְלֹא שִׁמְחָתָ אֵיבֵי לִי.

יִהְיֶה אֱלֹהֵי, שְׂוֹעֵתִי אֵלֶיךָ וַתִּרְפְּאֵנִי.

יִהְיֶה הָעֲלִיתָ מִן שָׂאוֹל גַּבְשִׁי, חֵייתָנִי מִיַּרְדֵּי בֹר.

זָמְרוּ לַיהוָה חֲסִידָיו, וְהוֹדוּ לְזִכְרֵךְ קֹדֶשׁוֹ. כִּי רָגַע

בְּאִפּוֹ חַיִּים בְּרִצּוֹנוֹ, בְּעָרֵב יִלִּין בְּכִי וְלִבְקָר רָצָה.

וַאֲנִי אָמַרְתִּי בְשָׁלוֹי בַל־אֲמוּט לְעוֹלָם.

יִהְיֶה בְּרִצּוֹנְךָ הַעֲמִדְתָּה לְהַרְרֵי עֵז,

הַסִּתְרָתָּ פָנֶיךָ הֵייתִי גִבְהָל.

אֵלֶיךָ יִהְיֶה אֶקְרָא, וְאֵל אֲדַנִּי אֶתְחַנֵּן.

מִה בָּצַע בְּדַמִּי בְּרִדְתִּי אֵל שַׁחַת,

הַיִּזְדֶּךָ עֶפְרָ? הַיִּגִּיד אֲמַתְּךָ?

שָׁמַעַ, יִהְיֶה, וְחַנּוּנִי. יִהְיֶה, הִיָּה עֵזֶר לִי.

הַפְּכָתָּ מִסִּפְדֵּי לְמַחֹל לִי, 

בַּתְּחִלָּתָּ שִׁקִּי וַתִּאֲזַרְנִי שִׁמְחָה.

לְמַעַן יִזְמְרְךָ כְּבוֹד וְלֹא יָדָם,

יִהְיֶה אֱלֹהֵי, לְעוֹלָם אֲוֹדְךָ.

unencumbered by the strictures of language, image and symbol . . . and that there are no exceptions to this principle of any sort whatsoever nor is it conceivable that there ever could be any. Accepting this idea—and accepting its various implications and ramifications—is disorienting and upsetting for most people who hold religion in esteem. Nonetheless, any who reject this idea and insist that they actually can seize the nature of God merely by insisting repeatedly and forcefully that they somehow possess the ability intellectually and spiritually to transcend the metaphoric and symbolic language of Scripture and to fathom the unfathomable reality behind even the least obscure God talk—such people cannot be said to know God, or even really to know of God, in any but the most formal, and least meaningful, way possible. This, in a nutshell, is the whole Torah and the rest, mere *midrash*.



The journey to God is not for the timid. For most people, in fact, it will be an almost insurmountable challenge even to imagine what it would be like to approach God in an atmosphere of absolute honesty and with total candor and integrity, let alone actually to do so. What is easy, on the other hand, is to be crippled by the absurdity inherent in the notion of entering into any kind of relationship at all, let alone one characterized by caring and love, with a God Who cannot logically be known in the normal way human beings know each other . . . or, for that matter, perceived at all in the way people generally know each other and of each other. In a sense, this is the bedrock issue with which every individual possessed of even the vaguest interest in religion has to grapple, to struggle and, eventually, to come to terms. Yet, in this, like in so many things, the bottom line is that reality trumps paradox . . . and the fact that there are individuals who do manage to transcend the limits of their own human intellects precisely by acknowledging those limits and then by refusing to lie about them is far more significant than might seem at first.

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Because there is something of the way human lovers come to know how to love by loving (which ought to be impossible, yet somehow is not) in the way the faithful are called to know of God by knowing God (which ought to be impossible, yet somehow also is not), Scripture uses the language of love to describe the kind of relationship that may exist between a human being and the unknowable God . . . and also subtly to suggest that the commandment to love God is fulfilled, either profoundly or casually, by all honest spiritual endeavor unspoiled by egotism, narcissism or arrogance.

For Jews, the paving stones that lie along the path to God will always be the commandments of the Torah. But here too, it is essential to remember that the Lover is not so much unknown as unknowable . . . and that the quest for love will therefore always be carried out within the realm of myth and metaphor. Adopting a kind of literary convention derived from the framework of mutual desire and acquiescence that characterizes the intimate love of earthly lovers, those who embrace the commandments of the Torah as their path to God often refer to them as though their fulfillment were the satisfaction of some one or another of God's needs or desires. This is not at all unreasonable, but, in the end, true love cannot flourish any more successfully in an atmosphere of unacknowledged metaphor between God and humanity than it can between human lovers. Therefore, any who perform the commandments, even the simplest and least arduous among them, out of the conviction that God "wants" them to do this or that thing, such people end up disabling their ability to move forward on the path towards redemption in God because they have attributed desire and want—and hence imperfection—to God.

The basic principle to bear in mind always is that the attribution of desire to God is at best a symbolic gesture designed gently to allude to a truth that would sound absurd if stated aloud frankly or stridently. To insist on the literal truth of those Scriptural passages that speak about God wanting this or that, therefore, is to miss the point almost entirely and this, I suspect, is the true

A psalm-song of David composed upon the dedication of the House of God.


I exalt you, A , for You have drawn me up and have not given my enemies cause to rejoice over my downfall.

A , my God, I called out to You and You healed me; A , You have brought my soul up from Sheol and granted me life when I was already practically in the grave.

May the faithful chant hymns to A and give thanks to God's holy name, for divine anger lasts but a moment, yet life is extended in accordance with God's will; one can lie down for the night weeping, yet rise up singing hymns of joy.

I declare with tranquil certainty that I shall never again falter.

A , You had previously granted me the strength to stand up like a mighty mountain, so I was duly terrified when You hid Your face; I cried out to You, A , and made supplication before Adonai, saying, "What would be the profit in me being silenced, in me descending into the pit? Will dust give You thanks? Can it tell of Your truth? Hear me, A , and be gracious unto me. A , be my help!"

And, indeed, You did turn my mourning into dancing; You pulled off my sackcloth and girded me instead with happiness,  that my soul might sing out to You and not be silent. A , my God, I shall declare my gratitude to You forever.

*The Mourner's Kaddish**

יִתְגַּדֵּל וְיִתְקַדֵּשׁ שְׁמֵיהּ רַבָּא בְּעֻלְמָא דִּי
בְּרָא כְרַעוּתֵיהּ, וְיִמְלִיךָ מַלְכוּתֵיהּ בְּחַיֵּיכוֹן
וּבְיוֹמֵיכוֹן וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּעַגְלָא
וּבְזִמְן קָרִיב, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

The congregation joins the mourners in reciting this line.

יְהֵא שְׁמֵיהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעַלְמֵי וְלְעַלְמֵי עֻלְמָיָא.

The mourners continue:

יִתְפָּרֵךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח, וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרוֹמֵם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא
וְיִתְהַדָּר וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלָּל שְׁמֵיהּ דְּקֻדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ
הוּא

Except between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, say: לְעֻלְמָא מִן כָּל

Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, say: לְעֻלְמָא לְעֻלְמָא מִכָּל

בְּרַכְתָּא וְשִׁירְתָּא, תְּשַׁבַּחְתָּא וְנַחֲמַתָּא, דְּאִמְרִין
בְּעֻלְמָא, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

יְהֵא שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שְׁמַיָּא, וְחַיִּים, עָלֵינוּ וְעַל
כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמְרוֹמָיו, הוּא יַעֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם
עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

*The text of the Mourner's Kaddish may be found in transliteration on page 277.

meaning of the words passionately—and neither sarcastically nor cynically—spoken by King Jehoshaphat to the prophet Michaiah, “How many times must I adjure you to speak to me only truth in the name of A (1 Kings 22:16 and 2 Chronicles 18:15)?” Like the search for love, the spiritual quest cannot be carried out successfully, even occasionally, in the context of willful self-delusion.



In earliest times, the ancestors of the Jewish people took to using the name “God” to refer to the moral core of absolute existence that rests beneath, beyond and behind the perceptible universe. This way of speaking eventually became widespread, but it still cannot be deemed to state an absolute truth. Indeed, any effort to delimit the power and majesty of the divine by encasing any of its various aspects within words and mental images, or within the realm of symbol and myth, is by definition flawed and false, and this is what the prophet meant when he asked, simply and rhetorically: “To whom would you compare God (Isaiah 40:18)?”

It follows, therefore, that anyone in this world who reads a book and then, as a result, feels competent to make pronouncements about God's will unambiguously and simply to the world is behaving at least slightly fraudulently . . . and this is true no matter how much simpler such people's lives would be if otherwise were to be the case. The bottom line is this: although no human being may know God plainly, only those courageous enough to admit as much in their hearts can claim to be counted among those who even indirectly know of God. Contemplating the reality of God from the vantage point of false, self-serving certainty about things regarding which certainty of any sort is impossible is unjustifiable. Still, in this world of mud and dust, knowing of God is a way of knowing God. And seeking God humbly by acknowledging the iron bars of myth and metaphor that imprison the would-be worshiper in the prison of human perception is the first step towards salvation. In the context of an arduous journey, accepting this principle as undeniable and incontestable is probably the most difficult of first steps.



There is another paradox to consider as well, one that lives at the heart of the matter: knowing of God is only knowing God when it is not confused, consciously or unintentionally, with actually knowing God. It is natural enough, after all, that anyone who observes the goings-on in our violent, unjust world for long enough will eventually come to yearn to believe that there is some invisible, yet wholly responsive, force of governance ruling over the physical things of the world . . . and that this yearned-for force, however it is named or described, grants order and meaning to the lives people live. Then, learning (as the potentially faithful eventually do) that this force of order and governance rooted in morality and ethics is described in the Bible as God, it is all too natural to take that hopeful identification as a simple fact rather than as an expression of the same yearning for God on the part of the ancients that stimulates spiritual endeavor on the part of moderns as well, or that should stimulate it.

Yet, for all that the longing for God may be real—and is real—in the hearts of the faithful, it is still the case that religion can never thrive in an atmosphere of pious self-delusion. To hope, to yearn, to theorize, to dream . . . these are all the tools of people who wish for goodness in the world and none of them is inherently sinful at all. To allow oneself, however, to give voice to those dreams and hopes for justice in the world by asserting things about God that, in the absence of convincing evidence, could just as easily be false as true is to flee, like Jonah in his day, from the very God one is so ardently seeking. Saying one knows God without actually knowing God is to behave like children who brag to their classmates that they know a movie star or a sports hero they've never actually met because it is impossible for them to imagine that individual not being as imagined by a fan as loyal and devoted as he or she is him or herself. Making similar claims about God, however, is no more congruent with the path of spiritual integrity than any lover's well-intentioned

*The Mourner's Kaddish**

Magnified and sanctified be the great name of God in this world created according to divine plan, and may God's sovereignty be established speedily and soon during the days of our lives and the lives of all members of the House of Israel, and let us say, Amen.

The congregation joins the mourners in reciting this line.

May God's great name be blessed forever and throughout all eternity.

The mourners continue:

May the name of the Holy One, source of all blessing, be blessed, adored, lauded, praised, extolled, glorified and venerated in language . . .

Except between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, say:

more exalted

Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, say:

entirely more exalted

. . . than any blessing, hymn, ode or prayer recited by the faithful in this world, and let us say, Amen.

May we, and all Israel, be blessed with great peace that comes to us directly from heaven, and with life, and let us say, Amen.

May God Who brings peace to the heavens grant peace to us and to all Israel, and let us say, Amen.

**The text of the Mourner's Kaddish may be found in transliteration on page 277.*

בְּרוּךְ

שְׁאֵמַר וְהָיָה הָעוֹלָם, בְּרוּךְ הוּא.

בְּרוּךְ עֹשֶׂה בְּרֵאשִׁית.

בְּרוּךְ אוֹמֵר וְעוֹשֶׂה.

בְּרוּךְ גּוֹזֵר וּמְקַיֵּם.

בְּרוּךְ מְרַחֵם עַל הָאָרֶץ.

בְּרוּךְ מְרַחֵם עַל הַבְּרִיּוֹת.

בְּרוּךְ מְשַׁלֵּם שְׂכָר טוֹב לִירְאָיו.

בְּרוּךְ חַי לְעַד וְקוֹיָם לְנֶצְח.

בְּרוּךְ פּוֹדֶה וּמַצִּיל.

בְּרוּךְ שְׁמוֹ.

בְּרוּךְ אֲתָה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְלֶכֶּךָ הָעוֹלָם, הָאֵל הָאֵב הָאֵב

הַרְחֵמוּ, הַמְהַלֵּל בְּפִי עַמּוֹ, מְשַׁבַּח וּמְפָאֵר בְּלִשׁוֹן

חֲסִידָיו וְעַבְדָּיו, וּבְשִׁירֵי דָוִד עַבְדְּךָ. נְהַלְלֶךָ, יְהוָה

אֱלֹהֵינוּ, בְּשִׁבְחוֹת וּבְזַמִּירוֹת, נְגִידֶךָ וּנְשִׁבְחֶךָ

וּנְבַאֲרֶךָ וְנִזְכִּיר שְׁמֶךָ, וְנִמְלִיכֶךָ, מְלַכְנוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ,

יְחִיד, חַי הָעוֹלָמִים, מְלֶכֶךָ מְשַׁבַּח וּמְפָאֵר 

עַדֵּי עַד שְׁמוֹ הַגָּדוֹל. בְּרוּךְ אֲתָה יְהוָה, מְלֶכֶךָ מְהַלֵּל

בְּתִשְׁבָּחוֹת.

The congregation is seated.

lie, no matter how flattering, would ultimately be with the path of true love.



Religion properly pursued by individuals possessed of absolute spiritual and intellectual integrity is frustrating to the point of being maddening. Progress along the dusty road to Jerusalem is measurable—to the extent it can be measured at all—in millimeters, not in miles. The possibility of swerving off into craziness is not only real, but so real as to be a genuine risk for most of the people most of the time.

A good jumping-off point is to accept from the onset that the possibility of failure always exists. To make matters worse, the reasons people fail in the pursuit of their own spiritual goals are almost invariably by-products of their own inability to harness their native intelligence in the pursuit of the faith they so ardently seek. And, indeed, although there are stumbling blocks on the spiritual path so numerous that nobody moves forward without tripping over at least some of them, the single biggest stumbling block of all is the kind of malign arrogance capable of seizing control of the human soul and forcing a person to believe that there is certainty where only uncertainty actually exists, or that there exists absolute truth where it is inconceivable that any unassailable truth even could ever exist, let alone that it actually does exist.

There are no such things as pious, hence justifiable, lies about God. When the Bible says at Proverbs 10:28, that “the yearning of the pious is a delight,” it means that it is a delight for God to experience the heartfelt desire of the would-be faithful to come to know the truth about the world—but this refers to the kind of yearning on the part of a human being rooted in an unwavering commitment to honesty and absolute intellectual integrity. Indeed, it is a cardinal principle of Judaism that any and every effort to know God through the medium of half-truths is doomed to failure . . . and this surely is what the psalmist meant when he wrote, “The fraudulent shall not

sit in the midst of My house / nor shall liars be established before Me (Psalm 101:7)."



Of all the unpalatable truths the pilgrim possessed of unwavering integrity must somehow find the fortitude to accept, the toughest of them all to digest is that people invariably conceive of God according to the givens of the world in which they live . . . and that, as a result, there can be no absolute truth in anything spoken, or even thought, about God in any human language that is a by-product of the cultural milieu in which it developed. (This includes all human languages.) Therefore, anyone who blithely conveys the "word of God" in any language at all must be considered, at best, as presenting a report on his or her personal experience of the communicative presence of the divine. No less than that (assuming the integrity of the speaker), to be sure . . . but also no more. The implications of this thought alone for someone attempting to seek God along the path of ritual and rite should be staggering. Indeed, this is so much the case that the worth of the spiritual journey undertaken by anyone at all can effectively be evaluated in terms of the degree to which the pilgrim in question accepts this notion as cogent.


To the extent that it is reasonable to interpret the experience of God's communicative presence by describing it in words, it is legitimate to speak of God as speaking in a specific language . . . but logic dictates that God must always be presumed to have spoken to the individual in question in a private, totally idiosyncratic language that pertains to that specific person, not to that person's nation or ethnic group . . . and which only that person, therefore, is capable of interpreting even cursorily.

This phenomenon—the use of the words of a known language to speak in a private, idiosyncratic code to another—will be familiar to most from the realm of romantic love. And the notion that words may form the path towards spiritual communion with God is like the use of language between human lovers in another way as well: in

Pesukei Dezimra

The congregation rises.

Blessed be God,
Who created the universe with a word.
Blessed be God,
Who made the world.
Blessed be God,
Who creates solely by divine fiat.
Blessed be God,
Whose decrees always come to fruition.
Blessed be God,
Who deals compassionately with the world.
Blessed be God,
Who deals compassionately with all creatures.
Blessed be God,
Who rewards reverence.
Blessed be God,
Alive forever and for always.
Blessed be God,
Source of redemption and rescue.
Blessed be the name of God.


Blessed are You, A , our God, Sovereign of the universe, source of divine love and parental compassion wholly worthy of praise by the people of God, lauded and celebrated in the hymns of the faithful servants of God and in the psalms of David, servant of the Almighty. We shall praise You, A , our God, with hymns of acclaim and rapture. Indeed, we shall declare Your greatness, Your sublimity and Your splendor, and we shall ever recall Your holy name, as we declare Your sovereignty, O Sovereign God,  unique and eternal Sovereign ever worthy of praise and glorification, God Whose name shall endure forever.

Blessed are You, A , Sovereign ever worthy of praise.

The congregation is seated.

that intimacy is not expressed by the invention of a new language per se, but by the use of language to create a private lovers' universe of intimate discourse, a world in which language becomes a private code invested with deep, personal meaning only the two who reside there share or may share or could ever share. In that sense, it may be considered reasonable to speak of God speaking . . . but the word of God is neither speech nor language and has, therefore, neither grammar nor syntax. It cannot be analyzed or searched for in secret codes or ciphers. To the extent it exists at all, it is a kiss, not a word . . . melody, not lyric . . . substance, not form.

Every effort to find traces of God's existence in this world through the use of language must be considered, therefore, a kind of noble experiment that can only succeed when it is accepted—and accepted totally—that it cannot possibly succeed. Indeed, the notion that God—or anyone—even could speak without speaking in any particular language is an impossibility for humans to seize. Perhaps the closest humans can come to seizing the concept is through the contemplation of instrumental music, a kind of language capable of inducing intense emotion and of eliciting profound response without the use of words at all. Yet, for all its profundity, music is basically content-neutral and even the greatest composer could not co-opt a composition of even the most sublime beauty effectively to convey real, detailed information to, say, a plumber or an electrician. In the end, the faithful must simply accept that the language of God, like the discourse of lovers, is no language and all languages, speech outside of talking, words outside of sound. The word of God can indeed be expressed in the languages of the world, but the relationship between the word of God and the words of God found in the Bible is the same as the relationship between an apple and a photograph of an apple . . . or perhaps between that apple and the most exquisite painting of an apple imaginable, one that, despite the degree to which the intelligence, passion, skill and deep emotion of the artist are totally invested in its brush strokes, still cannot actually be eaten.

הודו ליהוה קראו בשמו, הודיעו בעמים עלילתינו. שירו לו, זמרו לו, שיחו בכל גבלאתינו. התהללו בשם קדשו, ישמח לב מבקשי יהוה. דרשו יהוה ועזו, בקשו פניו תמיד. זכרו גבלאתינו אשר עשה, מפתיו ומשפטי פיהו. זרע ישראל עבדו, בני יעקב בחיריו. הוא יהוה אלהינו, בכל הארץ משפטינו. זכרו לעולם בריתו, דבר צוה לאלה דור אשר פרת את אברהם, ושבועתו ליצחק. ויעמידה ליעקב לחק, לישראל ברית עולם. לאמר לה אתן ארץ פנעו, חבל גחלתכם. בהיותכם מתי מספר, פמעט וגרים בה. ויתהלכו מגוי אל גוי, ומממלכה אל עם אחר. לא הניח לאיש לעשקם, ויוכח עליהם מלכים. אל תגעו במשיחי, ובבניאי אל תרעו. שירו ליהוה כל הארץ, בשרו מיום אל יום ישועתו. ספרו בגוים את פבודו, בכל העמים גבלאתינו.  פי גדול יהוה ומהלל מאד, וגורא הוא על כל אלהים. פי כל אלהי העמים אלילים, ויהוה שמים עשה.

הוד והדר לפניו, עז וחדוה במקומו. הבו ליהוה משפחות עמים, הבו ליהוה פבוד ועזו. הבו ליהוה פבוד שמו, שאו מנחה ובאו לפניו, השתחוו ליהוה בהדרת קדש. חילו מלפניו כל הארץ, אף תפון תבל כל תמוט. ישמחו השמים ותגל הארץ, ויאמרו בגוים יהוה מלך. ירעם הים ומלואו, יעלץ השדה וכל אשר בו. אז ירננו עצי היער, מלפני יהוה, פי בא לשפוט את הארץ. הודו ליהוה פי טוב, פי לעולם חסדו. ואמרו הושיענו אלהי ישענו, וקבצנו והצילנו מן הגוים, להדות לשם קדשו, להשתבח




Lying is inimical to the search for the knowledge of God even when the lie takes the form of pious platitudes or soothing slogans. People, therefore, who begin sentences with the words “I believe” and then finish those sentences with ideas that can neither be proven with certainty nor even demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt to be true cannot be supposed to be speaking wholly honestly. (What such people mean to say, or ought to mean to say, is that they wish to believe—or wish they could believe—in the truth of whatever it is they are saying.) If such speakers are giving forth on the nature of God, however, then they are guilty of ignoring the ancient lesson of Rabbi Chanina to the effect that the signet seal of the blessed Holy One is Truth itself . . . and that is not at all a good lesson for people in search of God to ignore.

There are those who speak falsely about God out of frustration and naiveté . . . but there are also those who do so by building elaborate spiritual lives on foundations fashioned of impossible beliefs and unlikely, unprovable (and hence unproven) theories. Of these, the most widespread by far is the peculiar notion that the details of divine existence change and develop from generation to generation in accordance with the will of specific individuals that God be this or that thing or that God behave in this or that way . . . and that worshipers of God somehow acquire the power to govern God and to force God to dispense blessings or boons according to their personal needs and wants. The Bible calls people in this category “the stubborn of heart” because they simply cannot abide the fact that God does not depend on them or their activities for sustenance or existence. Made stubborn by their inability to make reality conform to their own wishes, they conduct themselves as though such were the case anyway. In our society, we tend to indulge spoiled children, but the Bible teaches that “the stubborn of heart are an abomination before A (Proverbs 11:20)” and that, surely, is as self-evident as it is succinctly put.

Give thanks unto A and call upon God’s name; make known the doings of the Almighty among the peoples. Sing unto God, sing praises unto the Almighty; speak of all God’s marvelous works.

Glory in the holy name of God; let rejoice the hearts of them that seek A . Seek A and, thus, a sense of God’s strength; seek God’s presence continually. Remember the marvelous works that God has done, the wonders wrought by the divine, and the judgments of God’s mouth, O seed of Israel, earthly servant of God, you children of Jacob, God’s chosen ones. The Almighty is A , our God; the judgments of God affect all the earth. Remember God’s covenant forever, the word commanded to a thousand generations, the covenant made with Abraham, and God’s subsequent oath unto Isaac, for God established it unto Jacob for a statute, unto Israel for an everlasting covenant, saying: “Unto you will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance.” When they were but few in number, yea, very few, and sojourners in the world, and when they went about from nation to nation, and from one kingdom to another people, God suffered none to do them wrong, yea, for their sake God even reprov’d kings, saying: “Touch not My anointed ones and do My prophets no harm.” Sing unto A , all the earth; proclaim the salvation of God from day to day.

Declare God’s glory among the nations, the marvelous works of the Almighty among all the peoples.  For great is A , and highly to be praised; the Almighty also is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the peoples are things of naught; but A made the heavens.

Honor and majesty are before God; strength and gladness are in God’s place. Ascribe unto A , O family of nations, ascribe unto A glory and strength. Ascribe unto A the glory due unto the divine name. Bring an offering, and come before God; worship A in the beauty of holiness. Tremble before God, all the earth; may the world also be established so that it cannot be moved. Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let them say among the nations: “A reigns.” Let the sea roar, and the fullness thereof; let the field exult, and all that is therein, for then shall the trees of the forest sing for joy before A , for God shall have come to judge the earth. O give thanks unto A ; for God is good; for the mercy of the divine shall endure forever.

And say this as well: “Save us, O God of our salvation, and gather us together and deliver us from the nations, that we may give thanks



Faith is the great suit of self-serving armor worn by the vast majority of those who conduct their religious lives without acknowledging even the possibility of pursuing their spiritual efforts in an atmosphere of total intellectual and emotional integrity. Indeed, any who claim that they believe with all their soul and with all their heart and with all their might in notions and ideas about God that cannot possibly be verified—and which, therefore, as far as they know, could also be totally false—are using the concept of faith to distance themselves from God . . . and, especially, from the love of God.

It is true that the world—our world—tends to admire anyone who speaks openly about faith, but the Bible itself is less indulgent of wishful thinking translated into the language of religion. When, for example, the Book of Proverbs warns sternly against “selling the truth,” it means to warn against what we would call selling out the truth by insisting that some sort of meaningful distinction between scientific and spiritual truth exists in a real enough way to make reasonable the claim that one can actually know things about God that one has neither experienced personally nor tested scientifically. And it also means that it is never even slightly reasonable to embrace spiritual truths wholeheartedly without knowing if they correspond to actual reality. And it also means accepting that honest worship cannot take place in the absence of an unfettered intellect and a spirit permitted to flourish in an atmosphere of total intellectual and spiritual integrity.

This is just as the prophet said almost three millennia ago, “My people is being destroyed through a lack of intellect, for you have been revolted by intellectuality. Therefore shall I too be revolted—too revolted to let you to serve Me.” (Hosea 4:6).” For people trained from childhood to expect God to respond to any attempt at worship at all with unrestrained divine delight, this should be a very sobering oracle.

However, faith itself is not the enemy of all religion, only of the self-righteous variety. And, indeed,

בְּתִהְיֶה לְךָ. בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִן הָעוֹלָם וְעַד הָעוֹלָם, וַיֹּאמְרוּ כָּל הָעָם, אֲמִן וְהִלֵּל לַיהוָה. רוֹמְמוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ לְהַדּוּם רַגְלֵינוּ קְדוֹשׁ הוּא. רוֹמְמוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ לְהַר קְדוֹשׁוֹ, פִּי קְדוֹשׁ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ.

וְהוּא רַחוּם, יִכַּפֵּר עֲוֹן, וְלֹא יִשְׁחִית, וְהִרְבֵּה לְהַשִּׁיב אַפּוֹ, וְלֹא יַעִיר כָּל חַמְתּוֹ. אַתָּה יְהוָה, לֹא תִכְלָא רַחֲמֶיךָ מִמְּנִי, חֲסִדֶךָ וְאַמֻּתֶךָ תִּמְיֵד יִצְרוּנִי. זְכוֹר רַחֲמֶיךָ יְהוָה וְחֲסִדֶיךָ, פִּי יַעֲוֹלֵם הִמָּה. תִּנּוּ עַז לְאֱלֹהִים, עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל גְּאוֹתוֹ, וְעַז בְּשַׁחֲקִים. נוֹרָא אֱלֹהִים מִמְּקַדְשֶׁיךָ, אֵל יִשְׂרָאֵל, הוּא נוֹתֵן עַז וְתַעֲצֻמוֹת לָעָם בְּרוּךְ אֱלֹהִים. אֵל נִקְמוֹת יְהוָה, אֵל נִקְמוֹת הוֹפִיעַ. הַנְּשֵׂא שִׁפְט הָאָרֶץ, הָשִׁב גְּמוּל עַל גְּאִים. לַיהוָה הִישׁוּעָה, עַל עַמּוֹךְ בְּרַכְתֶּיךָ סֵלָה. יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת עִמָּנוּ, מִשְׁגֵּב לָנוּ אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב סֵלָה.

יְהוָה הוֹשִׁיעָה, הַמְּלֹךְ יַעֲנֵנוּ בַיּוֹם קְרָאֵנוּ. יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת, אֲשֶׁרֵי אָדָם בֵּיטַח בְּךָ.


הוֹשִׁיעָה אֶת עַמּוֹךְ, וּבְרַךְ אֶת נַחְלָתְךָ, וְרַעַם וּנְשֵׂאִים עַד הָעוֹלָם. בְּפִשְׁנוּ חִפְתָּה לַיהוָה, עֲזָרְנוּ וּמִגִּנְנוּ הוּא. פִּי בּוֹ יִשְׂמַח לִבְנוֹ, פִּי בְשֵׁם קְדוֹשׁוֹ בְּטַחְנוּ. יְהִי חֲסִדֶךָ יְהוָה עֲלֵינוּ, כַּאֲשֶׁר יַחֲלֵנוּ לָךְ. הֲרֵאֵנוּ יְהוָה חֲסִדֶךָ, וַיִּשְׁעֶךָ תִּתֵּן לָנוּ. קוֹמָה עֲזָרְתָה לָנוּ, וּפְדָנוּ לְמַעַן חֲסִדֶךָ. אֲנַכִּי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ, הַפּוֹעֵלֶךָ מֵאָרֶץ מִצְרַיִם, הִרְחַב פִּיךָ וְאִמְלֵאֲהוּ. אֲשֶׁרֵי הָעָם שִׁפְכָה לּוֹ, אֲשֶׁרֵי הָעָם שִׁיְהוּהוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ.


וְאֲנִי בְּחֲסִדֶךָ בְּטַחְתִּי, יִגַּל לִבִּי בִישׁוּעָתְךָ, אֲשִׁירָה לַיהוָה, פִּי גִמַּל עָלַי.

there is also another kind of faith in the world, the kind that grants life to those who possess it and makes those who embrace it alive without causing them any harm at all. It is the kind of faith of which Scripture says, “the righteous individual lives by his faith (Habakkuk 2:4)” and embracing it is the first step towards the knowledge of God. This is the kind of faith people maintain in things that they know to be true and which they can verify as true when the processes of sensory perception and intellectual deduction join together to form a kind of bridge between the inner soul of an individual and the outer world in which that individual lives and functions. In a world that has elevated self-delusion to an art form, this kind of faith is nevertheless totally devoid of fraud and fantasy and is wholly and utterly honest. In ancient times, this was the faith of Abraham, whom Scripture (at Genesis 15:6) says possessed a kind of faith that was considered the summum of righteousness precisely because it was not built on a foundation of pious lies or self-serving fantasies, but on the patriarch’s empirically verifiable experience of the reality of the living God. In the end, all perception is *midrash* . . . but the faith of Abraham remains, generation after generation, not so much as a prize to be claimed, but a challenge to be embraced . . . by those possessed of sufficient courage actually to run the race, rather than sitting proudly in the bleachers and declaring the race won.




Among the greatest stumbling blocks on the path to the knowledge of God is the pedant’s need to intellectualize things that can only be understood experientially. Yet the same world that refuses to grant much credence to “scientists” who never enter the laboratory grants nothing but credence to people in the religious world who never enter the presence of the living God. This is merely another way that society, for all it pays lip service to the worth of religion, actually marginalizes the concept of faith: by allowing the would-be pious to trumpet untested, unverified, unverifiable truths as though they were self-evident axioms,

unto Your holy name, that we may triumph in Your praise.” Blessed be A , the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. And all the people said Amen, and praised A . Exalt A , our God, and bow down to the divine footstool, for God is holy.  Exalt A , our God, and bow down to the holy mountain of God, for A , our God, is holy.

God is compassionate, forgiving of iniquity, forbearing to destroy, preferring to hold back divine rage and never doing anything to stir up divine wrath. You are A ; do not hold back Your compassion from me now. May Your mercy and truth continue to protect me. A , remember Your compassion and Your mercy, for they are everlasting. Ascribe strength to God, Whose pride is in Israel and Whose strength is manifest in the heavens. God, You are awe-inspiring when You come forth from Your sanctuaries; it is the God of Israel Who grants strength and power to the people. Blessed be God. A is a God of vengeance; O God of Vengeance, appear! Rouse Yourself, O Judge of the earth, and pay back the arrogant in kind! For as salvation comes from A , so may Your blessing come to Your people, *selah*. A , God, is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge, *selah*.  A , God of all heavens, happy is the individual who trusts in You. A , save us! May sovereign God answer us on the day we call out.


Save Your people and bless Your inheritance; shepherd them and sustain them forever. Our soul waits for A , our source of help and protection. In God do our hearts rejoice, for in God’s holy name do we place our trust. May Your mercy, A , be upon us just as we have put our hope in You. Show us Your mercy, A , and grant us Your salvation. Rise up to aid us and redeem us in accordance with Your mercy. I am A , your God, Who took you out of the land of Egypt, saying “Open wide your mouth and I shall fill it up.” Happy is the nation whose lot is thus; happy is the nation whose God is A .

 As for me, I trust in Your mercy. My heart rejoices at the prospect of Your salvation. I sing to A , to the God Who has already done so much for me.

The 100th Psalm is omitted on Erev Yom Kippur and Erev Pesach,
and also during Chol Hamoed Pesach.

מְזִמּוֹר לְתוֹדָה, הָרִיעוּ לַיהוָה כָּל הָאָרֶץ. עֲבְדוּ אֶת
יְהוָה בְּשִׂמְחָה, בָּאוּ לְפָנָיו בְּרִנָּה. דַּעוּ כִּי יְהוָה
הוּא אֱלֹהִים הוּא עֲשֵׂנוּ, וְלוֹ אֲנַחְנוּ, עִמּוֹ וְצֹאן
מִרְעִיתוֹ. בָּאוּ שְׁעָרָיו בְּתוֹדָה, חֲצֵרְתָיו בְּתִהְלָה,
הוֹדוּ לוֹ בְּרִכּוֹ שְׁמוֹ.  כִּי טוֹב יְהוָה לְעוֹלָם
חֶסֶדּוֹ, וְעַד דָּר וָדָר אֲמוֹנָתוֹ.

On Hoshana Rabba, continue on page 341.

יְהִי כְבוֹד יְהוָה לְעוֹלָם, יִשְׂמַח יְהוָה בְּמַעֲשָׂיו. יְהִי שֵׁם
יְהוָה מְבֹרָךְ, מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם. מִמְזִרְחַ שְׁמֶשׁ עַד
מִבּוֹאוֹ, מִהֶלֶל שֵׁם יְהוָה. רָם עַל כָּל גּוֹיִם יְהוָה, עַל
הַשָּׁמַיִם כְּבוֹדוֹ. יְהוָה שִׁמְךָ לְעוֹלָם, יְהוָה זְכָרְךָ לְדוֹר
וָדָר. יְהוָה בְּשָׁמַיִם הֵכִין כִּסְאוֹ, וּמִלְכוּתוֹ בְּכָל מְשָׁלָה.
יִשְׂמַחוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְתִגַּל הָאָרֶץ, וַיֵּאמְרוּ בְּגוֹיִם יְהוָה מָלְךְ.
יְהוָה מָלְךְ, יְהוָה מָלְךְ, יְהוָה יִמְלֹךְ לְעֹלָם וָעַד. יְהוָה
מָלְךְ עוֹלָם וָעַד, אָבְדוּ גוֹיִם מֵאֲרָצוֹ. יְהוָה הַפִּיר עֲצַת
גּוֹיִם, הִנְיָא מַחְשְׁבוֹת עַמִּים. רַבּוֹת מַחְשְׁבוֹת בְּלֵב אִישׁ,
וְעֲצַת יְהוָה הִיא תִקּוּם. עֲצַת יְהוָה לְעוֹלָם תִּעֲמוּד,
מַחְשְׁבוֹת לְבוֹ לְדוֹר וָדָר. כִּי הוּא אָמַר וַיְהִי, הוּא צָוָה
וַיַּעֲמֵד. כִּי בָחַר יְהוָה בְּצִיּוֹן, אֹהֶל לְמוֹשֵׁב לוֹ. כִּי יַעֲקֹב
בָּחַר לוֹ יְהוָה, יִשְׂרָאֵל לְסִגְלָתוֹ. כִּי לֹא יִטַּשׁ יְהוָה עַמּוֹ,
וְנִחַלְתּוֹ לֹא יַעֲזֹב.  וְהוּא רַחוּם יַכְפִּיר עוֹן וְלֹא
יִשְׁחִית, וְהִרְבָּה לְהַשִּׁיב אָפּוֹ, וְלֹא יַעִיר כָּל חַמְתּוֹ. יְהוָה
הוֹשִׁיעָה, הַמְּלֹךְ יַעֲנֵנוּ בְּיוֹם קְרָאֵנוּ.

and to suffer such people parading around as paradigms of religiosity without ever scrupling to inquire how, precisely, they know what they declare to be the truth actually to be true.

An infant suckles at its mother's breast and enjoys the succor, warmth, and nourishment totally without thinking to ask where the breast came from and without pausing to worry if it might vanish some day. As far as we can manage it, we should scruple to relate to God in more or less the same way that baby relates to its mother: as the source of our spiritual and physical nourishment and succor in the world—and as our sole, permanent, unshakable source of ultimate support in a world of danger and uncertainty—without ruining the experience by drenching it in worries about where, precisely, our faith comes from and what will happen some day if it vanishes. This is not the negation of the axiom that religion without spiritual integrity is worthless, only its slightly upsetting corollary. In the end, the honest experience of emotion is not by its nature dishonest. What is dishonest, however, is insisting that an emotion honestly experienced is something other than all it ever can be: the perception of feeling within the human heart.

Human beings should never weaken their ability to experience the love of God by asking a never-ending series of questions that have no answers and that will never have answers. Embracing the unanswerability of specific questions does not constitute an abandonment of spiritual integrity, only a willingness on the part of an individual to accept that the human intellect has limits . . . and that it is inevitable that, when trying to contemplate the reality of a God Who logically must exist beyond the limits of human intelligence, even the most ardently religious individual is going to come up short in terms of at least some answers to at least some questions. Spiritual integrity is honesty, not arrogance.



People who seek to know God through the medium of worship and obedience to the laws of Scripture certainly do not hope for God to

respond to their efforts by sending them illness or weakness of body, spirit or soul. Still, there are people in the world who become aware of God's presence in their lives, and in the world, precisely when they feel ill or weak . . . and for such people, infirmity is a kind of blessing from God. Indeed, it is one of the foundation stones of religion pursued with spiritual integrity that everything—everything, with no exceptions whatsoever—that brings people to know God, or even to know of God, is a blessing.

Therefore, there is no logic at all to the loathing and fear of sickness which so many people experience . . . and use as some sort of proof positive that God does not, or even cannot, exist—or that God exists, but clearly has no interest whatsoever in the welfare of humanity. No one sane wishes for illness . . . but how can anything that inspires reliance on God be a sign, let alone proof, of divine apathy?



There are those who come to know God through the medium, not so much of worship or obedience, but of gratitude. Indeed, there are those who bless God for all the good things in their lives in accordance with the psalmist's injunction to "give thanks to A for divine mercy and the wondrous way God acts in people's lives, for God grants satisfaction to the longing spirit and grants only good to the soul that hungers for divine succor (Psalm 107:8–9)" and there is certainly nothing at all wrong with coming to God through the medium of the gratitude one feels for all the good things and blessings in one's life. Nor is there any lack of spiritual integrity in the cultivation of the kind of deep, abiding gratitude that leads to a deep, productive sense of God's reality as focused through the prism of beholdenness.




Logic is the bedrock on which the knowledge of God must rest . . . and this is so in every context and at all times. Logic, for example, requires that

The 100th Psalm is omitted on Erev Yom Kippur and Erev Pesach, and also during Chol Hamoed Pesach.

A psalm for the thanksgiving sacrifice.


Make joyous noise before A , all the earth. Worship A in joy; come before God in gladness. Know that A is God, the God Who made us, and that we ourselves are the sheep of the divine flock. Come to God's gates with a thanksgiving sacrifice, to the Temple courtyards with songs of praise.

Give thanks to God by blessing the divine name.

 **For A is good and God's mercy, everlasting; God's faithfulness will endure through every generation.**

On Hoshana Rabba, continue on page 341.

May the glory of A be forever. May A forever rejoice in the work of divine creation. May the name of A be blessed from now on and forever. From the place where the sun rises to the place where it sets, may the name of A be praised. A is exalted over all the nations; the glory of God is over the heavens. A , Your name will forever exist; A , Your appellation shall endure throughout every generation. A set up the divine throne in heaven, but God's dominion extends to every earthly precinct. Let the heavens rejoice and the earth exult; let it be said among the nations that A is sovereign God. For A is indeed sovereign God; A has always reigned over us and always shall reign over us. A is sovereign forever and always; the heathen nations are vanished from God's land. A annuls the advice of nations and overrides the plans of alien peoples. Many are the intentions in the heart of a human being, but the plans of A alone will endure. The plans of A will always stand, as will those thoughts that derive directly from the divine heart, for God said that the world should be and it was, for God commanded that it endure and it did, for A chose Zion and desired it as an earthly residence, for B has chosen Jacob as God's own, Israel as God's treasure.

Indeed, A will neither abandon the people of God nor forsake the very people who constitute the divine inheritance.  God is compassionate, forgiving of iniquity, forbearing to destroy, preferring to hold back divine rage and never doing anything to stir up divine wrath. A , save us! May sovereign God answer us on the day we call out.

אֲשֶׁרֵי יוֹשְׁבֵי בֵיתָךְ, עוֹד יִהְלְלוּךָ סֵלָה.
 אֲשֶׁרֵי הָעַם שִׁכְכָה לוֹ, אֲשֶׁרֵי הָעַם שְׁיִהוּהוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ.
 תְּהִלָּה לְדָוִד,
 אֲרוֹמְמָךְ אֱלֹהֵי הַמְּלָכָה, וְאַבְרָכָה שְׁמֶךָ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.
 בְּכָל יוֹם אֲבָרְכֶךָ, וְאַהֲלֵלָה שְׁמֶךָ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.
 גְּדוֹל יְהוָה וּמְהֻלָּל מְאֹד, וְלִגְדֻלְתּוֹ אֵין חֶקֶר.
 דוֹר לְדוֹר יִשְׁבַח מֵעַשְׂיָךְ, וּגְבוּרָתֶיךָ יִגְדֹּה.
 הַדָּר כְּבוֹד הַוָּדָה, וְדַבְּרֵי גִבּוֹלְאֲתֶיךָ אֲשִׁיחָה.
 וְעִזּוֹז נוֹרְאוֹתֶיךָ יֹאמְרוּ, וּגְדֻלְתֶּךָ אֲסַפְּרָנָה.
 זָכַר רַב טוֹבָה יִפְיֵעוּ, וְצִדְקָתֶךָ יִרְגַּנוּ.
 חֲנוּן וְרַחוּם יְהוָה, אֲרָךְ אַפַּיִם וּגְדֻלַּחֲסֵד.
 טוֹב יְהוָה לְכָל, וְרַחֲמָיו עַל כָּל מַעֲשָׂיו.
 יוֹדֶה יְהוָה כָּל מַעֲשָׂיָה, וְחִסְדֶּיךָ יִבְרַכּוּכָה.
 כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתֶךָ יֹאמְרוּ, וּגְבוּרָתֶךָ יִדְבְּרוּ.
 לְהוֹדִיעַ לְבַנְיֵי הָאָדָם גְּבוּרָתוֹ, וְכְבוֹד הַדָּר מַלְכוּתוֹ.
 מַלְכוּתֶךָ מַלְכוּת כָּל עוֹלָמִים, וּמְמַשְׁלֶתֶךָ בְּכָל דוֹר וָדוֹר.
 סוֹמֵךְ יְהוָה לְכָל הַנִּפְלְאִים, וְזוֹקֵף לְכָל הַכְּפוּפִים.
 עֵינֵי כָל אֱלֹהִים יִשְׁפְּרוּ, וְאַתָּה גוֹתֵן לָהֶם אֶת אֲכָלָם בְּעֵתוֹ.
 פּוֹתֵחַ אֶת יַדְּךָ, וּמִשְׁפִּיעַ לְכָל חַי רְצוֹן.
 צְדִיק יְהוָה בְּכָל דְּרָכָיו, וְחִסִּיד בְּכָל מַעֲשָׂיו.
 קְרוֹב יְהוָה לְכָל קִרְאוֹ, לְכָל אֲשֶׁר יִקְרָאָהוּ בְּאַמֶּת.
 רְצוֹן יִרְאוּ יַעֲשֶׂה, וְאֶת שׁוֹעֲתָם יִשְׁמַע וְיִוְשִׁיעֵם.
 שׁוֹמֵר יְהוָה אֶת כָּל אֲהַבָּיו, וְאֶת כָּל הָרָשָׁעִים יִשְׁמִיד.
 תְּהִלָּת יְהוָה יִדְבַּר פִּי, וּיְבָרֵךְ כָּל בֶּשָׂר שִׁם קִדְשׁוֹ
 לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד. וְאַנְחֵנוּ גְבִירָה יְהוָה, מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם, הִלְלוּיָהּ.

we imagine God as existing beyond the boundaries of time and space . . . and this is the meaning of the famous questions Zophar the Naamathite put to Job, “Can you find the boundary of God? Can you locate the outermost edge of the Almighty? (Job 11:7).” But for all the Naamathite’s questions are rhetorical and their answer obvious, his point is still terrifying: if God exists without reference to the spatial or temporal physics of the created universe, then God cannot be said to exist in terms of width or height or length—or time—at all, let alone be measurable by humans incapable even of conceiving of non-spatial space outside the framework of inexorably ongoing time. However, it must also be acknowledged that the very same human logic that requires us to think of God as existing outside of time and space also prevents us from attributing any real meaning to the notion of existence outside of time or outside of space. Nonetheless, for all it may well be impossible to seize the concept, to insist that God exists within the boundaries of spatial, time-bound reality is to lie about God and this, perhaps, was the real point of Zophar’s questions: that the puniness of the human intellect cannot be used to justify lying about God no matter how disorienting—or upsetting—the resultant truth, or lack of truth, may be.

Spiritual integrity is truth, not arrogance. On the one hand, to assert this notion of divine existence outside of time and space as though it were a concept plainly put, thus easily seized, is to imprison the reality of God’s presence on earth in a steel mesh of slogans and empty platitudes. But this is also true: to seek God in the context of total spiritual integrity means to search for traces of the divine in the innermost chambers of a human heart that trembles precisely with the creative tension that results from any effort to contemplate the exquisite riddle of divine existence in the created world. And, just as in the realm of romantic love, impossibility yields its own possibilities. Indeed, when Scripture reports that God said to Moses, “I am what I am (Exodus 3:14.)” the point can only be for readers to imagine God revealing a truth no less absolutely simple than impossibly inscrutable: “The nature of My being is

peculiar to Me alone, for I exist in a way totally different from the way you do. Yet, somehow the very fact that the same can be said of Me and you—that we both exist—creates at least the possibility of interaction, even if it is impossible that the word “exist” itself could possibly mean the same thing when applied to us both.”



Part of the secret of living a life of spiritual integrity involves losing the natural fear of unresolved—and irresolvable—paradox most people bring to their quests for God. Indeed, when properly and openly acknowledged, the tension inherent in even the most maddening paradox can propel the pilgrim forward along the path towards knowing God within the finite-infinite landscape of the human perceptive consciousness that can and cannot possibly grapple with concepts that cannot be reconciled with each other, yet both of which must necessarily be absolutely true.

To step into this almost impenetrable thicket of disorienting, slightly worrisome ideas, it is necessary first to resolve to precede every act of worship—every commandment performed, every prayer spoken or whispered, every ritual undertaken, even every act of kindness done as an expression of personal piety—with a few words from the Psalms: *Elohim lanu machaseh va'oz / ezrah betzarot nimitza me'od*. The words mean this: “God is our haven and our strength / a source of help, fully present, in times of trouble (Psalm 46:4).” The words *nimitza me'od* (“fully present”) are key, in that they imply that God is neither vaguely existent nor theoretically real, but fully present—just as worshipers themselves must try to be when lifting up their hearts in prayer and addressing God either in word or deed.

It is both totally reasonable and totally impossible to assert that existence and non-existence meet and become identical in the same God Whose existence in the world can only be asserted by denying the term any meaning at all and which can be only described—and then only within the realm of poetry and metaphor—as an endlessly

Ashrei

Happy are those who dwell in Your house,
for they shall praise You endlessly, *selah*.

Happy is the nation whose lot is thus.

Happy is the nation whose God is A .

A psalm of praise of David.

I shall exalt You, O my God and Sovereign, and I shall bless Your name forever and always.

Each day shall I bless You; I shall praise Your name forever and always.

Great is A and very worthy of praise; there is no limit to God's greatness.

One generation lauds Your works to the next, telling of Your mighty acts.

Glorious is the splendor of Your majesty; I shall speak of Your wondrous acts.

Some will talk about the might of Your awesome deeds, but I shall tell of Your greatness.

Others will attempt to express the essence of Your great goodness, singing joyously of Your righteousness: “A is gracious and compassionate, long-suffering and greatly merciful. A is good to all and compassionate to all humanity.”

Indeed, all your creatures will give thanks to You, A , and the pious will bless You as well; they will talk of the glory of Your majesty and speak of Your might, so as to tell humanity about Your might and the glorious splendor of Your sovereignty.

Your sovereignty is sovereignty everlasting; Your governance endures throughout every generation.

A supports all who fall and raises up all those who are bent over.

Indeed, the eyes of all are fixed on You, for it is You Who give them food when it is most needed, You Who open Your hand and Who willingly satisfy the needs of all living creatures.

A is righteous in all ways and merciful in all deeds.


A is close to all those supplicants who call out to God in truth; God does that which those who fear God wish, listens to their prayers and grants them deliverance.

A guards those who love God, but destroys all the wicked.



For all these reasons shall my mouth sing the praise of A , and all flesh shall bless God's holy name forever and always.

And so shall we ever praise B from this time forth and forever. Hallelujah!

הַלְלוּנָהּ, הַלְלֵי גַּפְשֵׁי אֶת יְהוָה.
 אֶהְלֵלָה יְהוָה בְּחַיִּי, אֲזַמְרָה לֵאלֹהֵי
 בְּעוֹדֵי. אֵל תִּבְטְחוּ בְּגֵדֵיבַיִם, בְּבֶן
 אָדָם שָׂאִין לוֹ תְּשׁוּעָה. תִּצַּא רוּחוֹ
 יֵשֶׁב לְאֲדָמָתוֹ, בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא אָבְדוּ
 עֲשֵׂתֵנוֹתָיו. אֲשָׁרֵי שָׂאֵל יַעֲקֹב בְּעֶזְרוֹ,
 שִׁבְרוּ עַל יְהוָה אֱלֹהָיו. עֲשֵׂה שְׂמִימִם
 וְאָרֶץ, אֶת הַיָּם וְאֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר בָּם,
 הַשִּׁמֶר אֲמֹת לְעוֹלָם. עֲשֵׂה מִשְׁפָּט
 לְעַשְׂוִיקִים, נָתַן לָחֶם לָרַעֲבִים, יְהוָה
 מִתִּיר אֲסוּרִים. יְהוָה פִּקַּח עוֹרִים,
 יְהוָה זִקָּה כְּפֹפִיִּים, יְהוָה אֱהָב
 צְדִיקִים.  יְהוָה שִׁמַּר אֶת גְּרִים,
 יְתוֹם וְאַלְמָנָה יַעֲזֹדָה, וְדַרְךְ רְשָׁעִים
 יַעֲזֹת. יִמְלֹךְ יְהוָה לְעוֹלָם, אֱלֹהֵינוּ
 צִיּוֹן לְדֹר וָדֹר, הַלְלוּנָהּ.

swirling vortex of illusion and reality mixed together in an electrified whirlwind of absolute being and unqualified nothingness. From the impossibility of resolving the riddle of divine existence, however, can come something highly believable that can be both known and accepted as reasonable: that, in the end, God can neither be known nor comprehended, only sensed—occasionally—for the length of the briefest of moments by solitary travelers making their slow, painful progress forward on secret roads that lead, each of them, through the inmost chambers of that individual's heart to a private Jerusalem, to the World beyond the world, to the Life beyond life, to God.



The notion that the path towards God begins with the willingness of an individual to obey the commandments of Scripture is the heart of Judaism. This does not mean, however, that God becomes accessible in some magical way to people who do this or that thing at some pre-appointed time or who say some specific prayer in some pre-ordained way. That much may seem obvious, but trying actually to define the specific way God becomes even conditionally knowable through the medium of obedience to divine law is dramatically less simple a task that the pious generally allow themselves to think.

The commandments of the Torah are the rituals that define the spiritual quest, the building blocks of spirituality, the specific things people do to progress along their private spiritual paths towards faith in God. They may best be visualized as elaborate planets of ritual rotating endlessly around the central ideas that simmer deep inside their generative cores. But, for all it is the rituals themselves that are evocative and intriguing, it is specifically the ideas that generate them which grant meaning to their performance and which, therefore, transform them all from gratuitous efforts magically to subdue the world into sacred gestures of worship. Moreover, it is specifically in this way that the commandments of Scripture function effectively in the spiritual lives of the truly

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faithful: even though it is impossible to imagine even the most scrupulously observant human being coming to know God through the normal processes of sensory perception people use to perceive, decode and decipher the physical world, the Torah nevertheless returns over and over to the idea that an individual may learn to know God—or at least come to know of God—by internalizing the ideas that rest at the core of each commandment. And it is through the performance of these commandments according to all the detailed minutiae of the system of law Jews call *halakhah* that those ideas may be accessed the most profoundly, thus granting them the deepest meaning possible in the actual lives of real people.

Although it is ultimately true that there are—that there must be—as many of these ideas as there are commandments, it is also the case that many of these commandments are interrelated precisely by having similar ideas at their respective cores. There are not, therefore, an unlimited number of ideas that Scripture wishes to propose to the faithful as notions about God capable of serving as the framework for a life-long quest to perceive God within the textured folds of human life as it is actually lived. Indeed, some of these ideas come so regularly to the fore so as to suggest themselves as the principal principles of faith. In turn, these specific ideas are able to transcend their original Scriptural role as the ideational cores of specific commandments and become the principles of faith the pious will seek to embrace more generally through the larger, more general concept of religious observance itself. Of course, different readers will number different ideas among these central pillars of faith, but it seems possible to say that there are basically seven principles that serve as the foundation stones upon which stands the elaborate edifice of worship in which the Bible invites the faithful to live their lives in God, just as Scripture says of Wisdom itself at Proverbs 9:1 that she builds her palace on seven pillars.

Yet, for all their depth and complexity, these seven pillars of faith can be listed almost simply. God is the creator of the world and of all humanity. God is the cosmic, all-powerful source of free-

Psalm 146

Hallelujah!

Praise A , O my soul.

I shall praise A during my lifetime; I shall sing to my God for as long as I exist.

Trust not in nobles, in human beings who have no capacity to effect deliverance, who begin to turn back to dust on the day their breathing stops; on that day their thoughts, even their memories, are lost.


Happy are those aided by the God of Jacob, those whose hopes rest in A , their God, Maker of heaven and earth and sea and all that is in them, eternal Guardian of truth.

Purveyor of justice to the oppressed and Giver of bread to the hungry, A grants the release of those who are imprisoned.

A grants sight to the blind.

A enables those who are bent over to stand erect.

A loves the righteous.

 A guards the strangers among us, supports the orphan and the widow, and makes crooked the path of the wicked.

A will reign forever; your God, O Zion, shall reign in every generation.

Hallelujah!

הַלְלוּנִיהָ, כִּי טוֹב זְמַרְתָּה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, כִּי גַעִים גָּאוּהָ
תְּהַלֵּתָ. בּוֹנֵה יְרוּשָׁלַיִם יְהוָה, גִּדְחֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל יִכְנָס.
הַרֹפֵא לְשִׁבְרֵי לֵב, וּמַחְפֵּשׁ לְעַצְבוֹתָם. מוֹנֵה
מִסְפָּר לְפוֹכְבִּים, לְכֻלָּם שִׁמוֹת יִקְרָא. גְּדוֹל
אֲדוֹנֵינוּ וְרַב כֹּחַ, לְתַבּוּנָתוֹ אֵין מִסְפָּר. מְעוֹדֵד
עֲנוּיִם יְהוָה, מִשְׁפִּיל רְשָׁעִים עֲדֵי אָרֶץ. עֲנוּ
לַיהוָה בְּתוֹדָה, זְמִירוֹ לְאֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּכִנּוֹר. הַמְכַסֶּה
שָׁמַיִם בְּעָבָיִם, הַמּוֹכִין לָאָרֶץ מָטֶר, הַמּוֹצֵמִיחַ
הַרִים חֲצִיר. נוֹתֵן לְבַהֲמָה לַחֲמָה, לְבַגְנֵי עֵרֶב
אֲשֶׁר יִקְרָאוּ. לֹא בַגְבוּרַת הַסּוּס יִחְפֹּץ, לֹא
בְשׁוֹקֵי הָאִישׁ יִרְצֶה. רוֹצֵה יְהוָה אֶת יִרְאָיו, אֶת
הַמִּיַּחֲלִים לְחַסְדּוֹ. שֹׁבְחֵי יְרוּשָׁלַיִם אֶת יְהוָה,
הַלְלוּ אֱלֹהֵיךָ צִיּוֹן. כִּי חֲזַק פְּרִיחֵי שְׁעָרֶיךָ, בְּרֹךְ
בְּנֵיךָ בְּקִרְבֶּךָ. הַשֵּׁם גְּבוּלֶךָ שָׁלוֹם, חֵלֶב חֲטִיִּם
יִשְׁבִּיעֶךָ. הַשֵּׁלַח אֲמֹרָתוֹ אָרֶץ, עַד מְהֵרָה יְרוּץ
דְּבָרוֹ. הַנֹּתֵן שֶׁלֶג פֶּצְמָה, כְּפֹזַר פֶּאֶפֶר יַפְזֵר.
מִשְׁלֵיךְ קֶרְחוֹ כְּבַתִּים, לְפַגְי קֶרְתוֹ מִי יַעֲמוּד.
יִשְׁלַח דְּבָרוֹ וַיִּמָּסֶם, יֵשֵׁב רוּחוֹ וַיִּזְלַח מָיִם.
מִגִּיד דְּבָרָיו לִיעֶקֶב, חֲקִיו וּמִשְׁפָּטָיו
לְיִשְׂרָאֵל. לֹא עָשָׂה כֵן לְכָל גּוֹי, וּמִשְׁפָּטִים בַּל
יִדְעוּם, הַלְלוּנִיהָ.



dom and liberation in the world. God is the Holy One of Israel and the source of holiness in the world. God is the Owner of the cosmic house that is the universe and thus the divine Host of all the men and women who live in the world as guests at somebody else's inn. God is a just Judge who judges the world with scrupulous fairness and honesty. God is the heart of the world and the source of love in it. God is the source of morality and goodness. There are other things one could say of God, of course . . . but these are the central tenets of faith, the seven pillars upon which wisdom rests, the seven ideas that the commandments of Scripture taken as a whole exist to inculcate into the consciousnesses of the would-be faithful.

The chances that an individual's spiritual journey will lead to God vary directly with that individual's ability to embrace the core values of candor and humility. The cornerstone of every honest attempt to live a life in and of God must be, almost by definition, the profound conviction that it is beyond the ability of human beings to understand the concept of divinity fully or to seize precisely how God functions effectively in a world that cannot possibly contain even some small fraction of the reality of the divine. Therefore, the complaint that some specific commandment has failed to provide one with the super-human ability to know God is by definition without merit.

The commandments are not magic keys to the kingdom of God. Indeed, they are nothing more than opportunities for human beings to identify some specific avenue to faith they might otherwise have left unidentified, hence untraveled, and then, through the observance of that particular commandment, to travel it. The commandments cannot change the nature of the universe. They cannot make the elusive God of Israel pop up into the lives of people the way switching on a television set brings newscasters and talk show hosts into the living rooms of people in whose homes those television sets are located. In the end, the commandments cannot do anything at all except

make slightly wider and deeper the human hearts of those who embrace them in the hope of finding God through the medium of devotional prayer and worship. Nothing more. But also nothing less.

To put it slightly differently, the commandments cannot magically usher people into the presence of God, but they do possess the uncanny ability to train those people who embrace them to find traces of God's reality in the details of their everyday lives. And this too is key: through obedience to the commandments, the lives of the faithful become so given over to the quest for divine comfort that it becomes reasonable to imagine that they might, eventually, just succeed at opening their eyes at precisely the right moment to gaze for the briefest of seconds at the splendor of the divine that hides behind and beyond the landscape of the world. Indeed, it is precisely this experience of being fully present and totally aware when the portals of heaven open and the potential to know God presents itself for a passing second or two that the ancients called the redemption of the individual. But the fact that the race is run in a matter of seconds does not make it less necessary for those who would win to train for years.

It is also possible, of course, not to win at all, even after long years of training, for any race that may be won may also be lost. Every athlete knows that perfectly well, but when it comes to religion, the lesson seems dramatically harder to learn. And that is truly unfortunate, because coming to terms with that part of spiritual reality is the first really useful step on the journey to God most of us can take.



Accepting even conditionally, let alone wholeheartedly and without reservation, that God cannot be sought outside the realm of symbol, myth and metaphor is difficult. But that truth can also serve as the single plank of a very narrow bridge across an abyss so wide and so deep that even looking into it is beyond the emotional where-withal of most people.

Psalm 147


Hallelujah!

It is good to sing to our God and pleasant to sing songs of lovely praise. The true Builder of Jerusalem is A , Gatherer of the dispersed ones of Israel, Healer of the brokenhearted and the Bandager of their wounds; God counts the stars and assigns names to them all.


Great is our Ruler and mighty of strength; there is no limit to God's understanding.

A encourages the humble, but casts the wicked down to the ground. Sing to A with thanksgiving, accompany hymns to our God on a lyre, for it is God Who covers the skies with clouds, Who prepares rain for the earth, Who makes the mountains green with grass, Who gives animals their food, Who even feeds the raven's young when they call out for nourishment.

A neither esteems the might of horses nor delights in the strong legs of human beings, but rather delights in those God-fearers who hope continually for divine mercy.

O Jerusalem, praise A ; O Zion, laud your God, that God Who has fortified the bars on your gates and blessed your children in your midst, Who has made peaceful your borders and satisfied you with the choicest wheat, Who sends divine speech to earth, the word of God that so quickly races along, Who covers the earth with snow as though it were a blanket of wool, Who scatters frost on the ground as though it were ash, Who hurls chunks of ice to earth as though they were breadcrumbs—and who can withstand the cold God sends to earth? But it is also God Who sends a word to melt all the ice, Who sends a warm wind that makes the ice into flowing water;  it is God Who tells such divine words to Jacob and the divine statutes and laws to Israel, something God does not do for other nations, peoples that do not know those laws.

Hallelujah!

הַלְלוּיָהּ, הַלְלוּ אֶת יְהוָה מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם
הַלְלוּהוּ בַּמְרוֹמִים. הַלְלוּהוּ כָּל מַלְאָכָיו,
הַלְלוּהוּ כָּל צְבָאָיו. הַלְלוּהוּ שֶׁמֶשׁ וַיְרַח,
הַלְלוּהוּ כָּל כּוֹכְבֵי אֹר. הַלְלוּהוּ שָׁמַי
הַשָּׁמַיִם, וְהַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר מֵעַל הַשָּׁמַיִם. יְהַלְלוּ
אֶת שֵׁם יְהוָה, כִּי הוּא צִוָּה וְנִבְרָאוּ.
וַיַּעֲמִידֵם לְעֵד לְעוֹלָם, חָק גִּתָּן וְלֹא יַעֲבוֹר.
הַלְלוּ אֶת יְהוָה מִן הָאָרֶץ, תַּנְיִינִים וְכָל
תְּהוֹמוֹת. אֵשׁ וּבָרָד שֶׁלֵּג וְקִיטּוֹר, רוּחַ
סְעָרָה עֹשֶׂה דְבָרוֹ. הַתְּהוֹרִים וְכָל גְּבְעוֹת, עַץ
פְּרִי וְכָל אֲרָזִים. הַחֲיָה וְכָל בְּהֵמָה, רֶמֶשׁ
וְצִפּוֹר כָּנָף. מַלְכֵי אֶרֶץ וְכָל לְאֻמִּים, שָׂרִים
וְכָל שִׁפְטֵי אֶרֶץ. בַּחוּרִים וְגַם בְּתוֹלוֹת,
זְקֵנִים עִם גְּעָרִים.  יְהַלְלוּ אֶת שֵׁם
יְהוָה, כִּי נִשְׁגָּב שְׁמוֹ לְבַדּוֹ, הוֹדוּ עַל אֶרֶץ
וְשָׁמַיִם. וַיִּרְם קֶרֶן לְעַמּוֹ תְּהַלֵּךְ לְכָל
חֲסִידָיו, לְבַנֵּי יִשְׂרָאֵל עִם קָרְבוֹ, הַלְלוּיָהּ.

Depending on the emotional make-up of the individual attempting to accept it as part of his or her spiritual reality, this idea is going to be either highly invigorating or intensely distressing even to attempt to fathom. But such a basic principle cannot be dispensed with or side-stepped forever. And for all dealing with it can be deferred briefly, grappling with its implications and ramifications cannot be put off indefinitely if one is even to come close to the knowledge of God in the context of real life as real people actually live it in the real world.

It is, for example, a basic principle of faith that God exists in a state of such total ubiquity that no place is, or could be, totally devoid of divine and this is the reason the ancients took to calling God “The Place”—because, as Rav Huna taught in the name of Rav Ami, “although the world is not the place of God, God is nevertheless the Place of the world (Bereshit Rabbah 68:9).” Still, most human beings find it impossible to conceive of existence in the absence of some sort of physical reality and so Jewish authors, even in Biblical times, developed the custom of writing and speaking about God as though the Almighty were a great, celestial king who rules over the world from a magnificent palace in heaven just as earthly monarchs rule their kingdoms from splendid earthly ones. And, indeed, countless passages in Scripture are developed along this metaphoric range. For example, there is a verse in the Torah in which the pious supplicant calls upon God with these words, “Look down from Your holy palace, from heaven, and bless Your people Israel (Deuteronomy 26:15).”

Eventually, this kind of language took root so totally that people began to imagine that God actually does dwell in heaven in the manner of an earthly king maintaining his palatial residence in his capital city. As a result, this notion—that God rules the world in the manner of a king ruling his kingdom—became the context in which the faithful found it possible to discuss God without becoming so tangled up in the metaphysics of existence so as to make the conversation unintelligible to ordinary people. Now, although the concept has no real meaning outside of the sphere of poetic mythology, it is not wrong per se for people

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to think of themselves as capable of ascending to God's heavenly throne through the performance of the commandments. Nor is it wrong to imagine that each commandment actually does possess the ability to make the individuals performing it feel that they have elevated their souls slightly closer towards God's celestial palace than they previously were. Sane individuals, however, must always recall in their hearts that the existence of God can never be explicated along the lines of the physical laws of space and time that govern the world below and that, therefore, there cannot be any real meaning to the notion that God exists more potently or really in one place than in another. The bottom line: there is nothing wrong with thinking about God mythologically or poetically . . . only in denying one is doing so.

Accepting this truth is tantamount to passing through one of the great gates that lead to the divine palace. But, of course, accepting also that there is no gate—and no palace—is the point of undertaking the journey in the first place. Like all truly worthwhile journeys, it begins with the proverbial single step . . . but that thought itself is only reasonable when considered in terms of the fact that that single step itself only bears worth when it leads to another . . . and that the trajectory of the journey to God that single step begins is actually incalculable in terms of the number of footsteps it takes to accomplish.



The written text of Scripture is the experience of God's presence focused through the triple alembic of human perceptive consciousness, human literary creativity and the incredible hubris of human beings who imagine that the ineffable can be expressed at all in one of their made-up, artificially conceived languages.



The high road that leads to communion with God begins where the intellect and the heart meet in the context of guileless divine worship and continues on

Psalm 148

Hallelujah!

Praise A from the heavens.
Praise God from the celestial heights.

Praise God, all angels.

Praise God, all celestial minions.

Praise God, O sun and moon.

Praise God, all stars of light.

Praise God, O highest heavens
and the waters that are above the heavens.

Let them all praise the name of A , for they were all created when God commanded it; God set them up permanently with a decree that cannot be undone.

Praise A from the earth, creatures of the sea and all depths, fire and hail, snow and mist, winds of storm that obey God's command, the mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars, animals and all beasts, reptiles and winged birds, kings of the earth and all nations, princes and all judges of the earth, young men and maiden girls, the elderly together with the young.



Let them praise the name of A , for God's name alone is truly exalted; the splendor of God is all over the earth and the heavens.

The Almighty will raise up the horn of the people of God, thereby garnering praise for all the pious, for the children of Israel, for the nation closest to God.

Hallelujah!

הַלְלוּ־יְהוָה, שִׁירֵי לַיהוָה שִׁיר חֲדָשׁ,
 תְּהַלְּלוּ בְּקֹהֶל חֲסִידִים. יִשְׁמַח
 יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעֲשָׂיו, בְּגִי צִיּוֹן יִגִּילוּ
 בְּמִלְכָּם. יְהַלְלוּ שְׁמוֹ בְּמַחֲוֹל, בְּתֶף
 וּכְנֹר יִזְמְרוּ לוֹ. כִּי רוּצָה יְהוָה
 בְּעַמּוֹ, יִפְאֵר עַבְדָּיו בִּישׁוּעָה.
 יַעֲלִזוּ חֲסִידִים בְּכָבוֹד, יִרְנְנוּ עַל
 מִשְׁכְּבוֹתָם. רוֹמְמוֹת אֵל בְּגִרוֹנָם,
 וְחָרַב פִּיפִיּוֹת בְּיָדָם. לַעֲשׂוֹת
 נִקְמָה בַּגּוֹיִם, תּוֹכַחֹת בַּלְּאֲמִים.
 לְאַסֹּר מַלְכֵיהֶם בְּזָקִים, וְנִכְבְּדֵיהֶם
 בְּכַבְּלֵי בְרָזֶל. לַעֲשׂוֹת בָּהֶם
 מִשְׁפָּט פָּתוּב, הִדָּר הוּא לְכָל
 חֲסִידָיו, הַלְלוּ־יְהוָה.



towards the place in which God has chosen for the divine name to dwell on earth, towards Jerusalem. But only those whom the poet calls “those who call out to God in truth (Psalm 145:18)” may wander this path and this, in turn, is the inner meaning of the famous verse from the 119th psalm: “I have sought You with all my heart / do not, therefore, allow me to err in the performance of Your commandments (Psalm 119:10).” To know the God of truth, one must submit totally, absolutely and unreservedly to the yoke of truth . . . and that precludes insisting on the truth of unproven and unprovable assertions about the nature of revelation.

The notion that Bible study must inevitably lead to faith in God—and then, either inevitably or at least ideally, to a state of ongoing communion with the divine realm—is a fantasy that derives directly from the peculiar notion that the Bible is a kind of screen that separates heaven and earth . . . and that studying its text is a way—not speaking metaphorically or symbolically, but plainly and simply—that studying its text is a way of piercing through this barrier for the sake of undertaking a journey to the heavenly palace in which Sovereign God sits and waits patiently—endlessly patiently—for the faithful few finally to arrive. But forgetting, even briefly, that all human images of God are necessarily metaphors and symbols is the ultimate act of blasphemy. In the end, the text of Scripture is not some incredibly long magic spell that, if properly spoken, will automatically cause its speaker to be ushered into the heavenly throne room, but rather a lit torch that has the special ability to illumine the lonely road that leads those willing to endure long years of study and rumination to the saving presence of God. No more than that . . . but also no less!



Spiritual integrity is not wisely confused with cynicism. The prophets, for example, appear to have been the real thing: men and women possessed of

the uncanny, in some cases even perhaps the unexpected, ability to focus an indelible impression of God's perceptible presence through the prism of their own eloquence. We can assert that not because we know it to be the case—which would be impossible to state categorically and with absolute certainty so many centuries after the fact—but because it strikes us that way . . . and therefore we may certainly say just that: that the prophets appear to us to have felt themselves to be genuine messengers of God, not charlatans playing out a role for the sake of personal gain or self-aggrandizement. However, at the same time we say that, we must also accept—and accept wholeheartedly and without any inner reservation—that, in the absence of clear, unequivocal scientific evidence, it is impossible to state with certainty if a specific prophetic oracle has its origins within God or within the inner spiritual consciousness of the prophet in whose name or in whose book it is recorded in Scripture. Either is possible. The issue of spiritual integrity does not come into play in terms of knowing which is the correct interpretation, but rather in terms of knowing that knowing which interpretation is correct is impossible to know.

The difference between one who senses deeply and really the ongoing presence of God in his or her life, yet does not speak words of prophecy, and one who has that same sense of divine reality and who somehow is able to speak in the name of God (as the prophets did in ancient times) has to do with there naturally being different levels of creative talent, linguistic expressiveness and spiritual openness in different people—and with the unwillingness, or even the inability, of certain people to subjugate perceptible, interpretable experience to pre-conceived dogma. What it most definitely does not, and cannot, reflect is the spurious assertion that there are different levels of human ability to hear the voice of God, an ability that reason dictates all human beings created by the same God must share in equally.

This is the truth to which the prophet Amos alluded when he asked aloud “When Adonai-A speaks, who will not prophesy? (Amos 3:8)”, which

Psalm 149


Hallelujah!

Sing a new song to A ; sing out the praise due to God in the congregation of the pious.

Let the people of Israel rejoice in their Maker; let the children of Zion be glad in their Sovereign.

Let them praise God's name in dance; let them sing to God with drum and lyre.

For A takes delight in the people of God and will make splendid the humble with divine salvation.

Let the pious exult in glory; let them sing hymns even on their beds with the high praises of God in their throats and a double-bladed sword in their hands, a weapon with which to take revenge upon the nations, to chastise alien peoples, to order their kings bound with shackles and their nobles with iron fetters,  to impose upon them the sentence decreed against them.

God is the splendor of the pious.

Hallelujah!

הַלְלוּ יְהוָה,
הַלְלוּ אֱלֹהֵי בְּקִדְשׁוֹ.
הַלְלוּהוּ בְּרִקְיעַ עֲזוֹ.
הַלְלוּהוּ בְּגִבּוֹרֹתָיו.
הַלְלוּהוּ בְּרַב גְּדֻלוֹ.
הַלְלוּהוּ בְּתַקְעַ שׁוֹפָר.
הַלְלוּהוּ בְּנֶבֶל וְכִנּוֹר.
הַלְלוּהוּ בְּתֹף וּמְחֹל.
הַלְלוּהוּ בְּמִנִּים וְעֶגְב.
הַלְלוּהוּ בְּצִלְצְלֵי שִׁמְע.
הַלְלוּהוּ בְּצִלְצְלֵי תְרוּעָה.
כָּל הַנְּשָׁמָה תְהַלֵּל יְהוָה, הַלְלוּ יְהוָה.
כָּל הַנְּשָׁמָה תְהַלֵּל יְהוָה, הַלְלוּ יְהוָה.

only means that the prophet found it impossible to imagine that the gift of prophecy could be granted solely to some of God's children and not to others . . . and it is also the truth hiding behind the wishful outburst of Moses recorded in the Book of Numbers: "Would that all of the people of A were prophets! Would that A were to grant them all the divine spirit of prophecy (Numbers 11:29)!"



The word of God is a hammer with which people may build or destroy. Indeed, the fact that Scripture can be a tool or a weapon is what the prophet intended us to understand when he spoke in the name of God and proclaimed that the word of God is "like fire . . . or like a hammer capable of smashing rock (Jeremiah 23:29)"—that is to say, divine speech is like a tool in a worker's hand that that worker may use as he or she is able or sees fit. But, for all the inherent insecurity in seeking God along a path someone else has trod, there is nevertheless no straighter path towards communion with God than the study of Scripture. Indeed, in the hands of the humble of spirit and the modest of temperament, the Bible is a permanently flowing fountain of religious strength and creative tension, because, indeed, "wisdom abides with the humble (Proverbs 11:2)." On the other hand, in the hands of the arrogant and the presumptuous who insist that the Bible is whatever they proclaim it to be, and also in the hands of the falsely pious, there is no more impenetrable barrier between the world and its Creator than a page of the Bible.



There is the Torah that rests in the Holy Ark of any synagogue—and "this is the Torah that Moses set before the children of Israel"—but there is also another Torah and this is the one that is written neither on parchment nor with ink—and with neither words nor letters of any sort—yet in which is nevertheless written all that human beings know or may ever know of God. Written without writing, this Torah consists solely of

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desire and longing for God . . . and it is the book written in what Scripture calls a language of truth so potent that even “the deaf hear the words of this book (Isaiah 29:18)” when it is read aloud.

In turn, the commandments of the Torah reflect the dual nature of their parent text: there are outer, physical aspects to each commandment, but also inner, deeply interior aspects as well . . . and these latter aspects are the ones that affect not the way the faithful eat or conduct their affairs, but rather the way they live in the shadow of God’s abiding presence on earth. In the end, the ultimate worth of the commandments rests in their uncanny ability to bring an individual to a single moment of preternatural longing and pure desire for God. In this way, they are reasonably—and rationally—acclaimed as sacred and holy acts that will bring those who cleave unto them to the source of holiness in the world, the God acclaimed in Scripture as the Holy One of Israel. In the hands of those who merely see them as bargaining chips in a lifelong effort to get God to do this or that thing, however, the commandments become rituals devoid of true spiritual power . . . except for the power to distance those who cling to them from the very God they claim so ardently to love. Just as true friendship requires an individual to embrace both the public and private aspects of a friend’s existence, so does true piety require the acceptance of both aspects of the Torah and its laws, exteriority and interiority, activity and emotion, obedience and redemption.



Religion pursued with spiritual integrity is not for the fainthearted. Indeed, the words of the prophet Haggai regarding one who “earns a living and then stores his wages in a torn purse (Haggai 1:6)” can be applied precisely to those who are prepared to devote years upon years of their lives to the study of Torah, but solely on the condition that they never actually learn anything that might possibly confuse or upset them . . . or force them to re-evaluate—and perhaps even slightly to change, let alone radically to alter—their religious beliefs and opinions.

Psalm 150

Hallelujah!

Praise God in the divine sanctuary.

**Praise God in the firmament
of divine might.**

Praise God for acts of divine heroism.

Praise God as divine greatness requires.

Praise God with a blast of the *shofar*.

Praise God with the *nevel* and the lyre.

Praise God with drums and dance.

**Praise God with the *minim*
and the *ugav*.**

Praise God with *shama*-cymbals.

Praise God with *teruah*-cymbals.

 **Let every breath praise B.
Hallelujah!**

**Let every breath praise B.
Hallelujah!**

We rise to recite the following passages and remain standing until after Barchu.

בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה לְעוֹלָם, אָמֵן וְאָמֵן. בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה מִצִּיּוֹן, שִׁכּוֹן יְרוּשָׁלַיִם, הַלְלוּיָהּ.  בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, עֲשֵׂה גִפְלָאוֹת לְבַדּוֹ. וּבְרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹדוֹ לְעוֹלָם, וַיִּמְלֵא כְבוֹדוֹ אֶת כָּל הָאָרֶץ, אָמֵן וְאָמֵן.

1 Chronicles 29:10-13

וַיְבָרֶךְ דָּוִד אֶת יְהוָה לְעֵינָיו כָּל הַקְּהָל, וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד, בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲבִינּוּ, מֵעוֹלָם וְעַד עוֹלָם. לָךְ יְהוָה הַגְּדֹלָה וְהַגְּבוּרָה וְהַתְּפָאֶרֶת וְהַנִּצְחָן וְהַהוֹד, כִּי כָל בְּשָׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ, לָךְ יְהוָה הַמְּמֹלָכָה וְהַמְּתַנַּשֵּׂא לְכָל לְרֹאשׁ. וְהַעֲשֵׂה וְהַכְּבוֹד מִלְּפָנֶיךָ וְאַתָּה מוֹשֵׁל בְּכָל, וּבִידֶךָ כָּח וְגְבוּרָה וּבִידֶךָ לְגִידֹל וּלְחִזְקָה לְכָל. וְעַתָּה, אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מוֹדִים אֲנִיחֵנוּ לָךְ וּמְהַלְלִים לְשֵׁם תְּפָאֶרְתֶּךָ.

Nehemiah 9:6-11

אַתָּה הוּא יְהוָה לְבַדְּךָ, אַתָּה עָשִׂיתָ אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם, שָׁמַיִם הַשָּׁמַיִם, וְכָל צְבָאָם, הָאָרֶץ וְכָל אֲשֶׁר עָלֶיהָ, הַיַּיִם וְכָל אֲשֶׁר בָּהֶם, וְאַתָּה מְחַיֶּה אֶת כָּל־ם, וְצָבָא הַשָּׁמַיִם לָךְ מִשְׁתַּחֲוִים.

אַתָּה הוּא יְהוָה הָאֱלֹהִים, אֲשֶׁר בְּחַרְתָּ  בְּאַבְרָם, וְהוֹצֵאתוֹ מֵאוּר כַּשְׂדִים, וְשִׁמְתָּ שְׁמוֹ אַבְרָהָם. וּמִצָּאתָ אֶת לָבָבוֹ נֹאמָן לְפָנֶיךָ.

The commandment to study Torah can only be fulfilled by one who knows that religious study is only meaningful when the act of learning serves as a way of seeking God's presence between the lines of a given text . . . and that the whole point of study in the first place is not so much to inform as to instill humility in the heart of the student." Moreover, study characterized by intellectual, emotional and spiritual integrity is an act of divine worship specifically because it creates a context for students to seek God through the medium of the discerning consciousness. In the end, the study of Scripture can be an act of almost pure worship because the act of self-immersion in a text can create a path that leads to the great goal of ongoing, physically and empirically perceptible communion with the Holy One of Israel, the God Who reveals the nature of divinity to a holy people through the study of holy texts.



The famous—and well beloved—distinction between traditional exegesis and the scientific study of the Biblical text does and doesn't exist. In what sense does it exist? It exists in the sense that the scientific scholar is generally interested in the history of the text and so attempts to uncover the precise set of literary and historical processes that brought the text from its earliest form into the precise version that has come down into our hands as part of Scripture. The traditional exegete, on the other hand, is generally far more interested in the text as it actually exists in our day and is more focused, therefore, on attempting to discover the various layers of subcutaneous meaning that rest just beneath its literary surface.

In what sense does it not exist? It does not exist in the sense that the traditional exegete and the modern text scholar share a common end-goal: to encounter the author of a written word through the contemplation of that word. Among the various chapters of Scripture are chapters that were written as simple literary units by single authors for distinct, and easily recognizable, literary ends. There are, however, also Biblical chap-

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ters the literary histories of which are so complex that it is more or less impossible to imagine what they may have been like when they were first composed by whomever it was who wrote their original versions. Still, when even the world's most sophisticated botanist eats a peach, it's from the flavor and texture of the fruit that derive the satisfaction and pleasure that accrue from the experience, not from even the deepest, most impressive, knowledge of science. And pathetic indeed would be the scientist rendered incapable truly of enjoying a cold, juicy peach on a hot summer's day by his or her knowledge of botany.



From the religious point of view, a successful student of Scripture is someone who devotes time and energy to the study of the Biblical text and, in so doing, comes closer than other students of that same text to the original intent of the author. Dramatically less praiseworthy, however, are those who devote time and energy to the study of Biblical texts merely in order to justify some previously held opinion or to buttress one or another conviction they consider essential or indispensable to their world view. Least praiseworthy of all, however, are those who purport to be students of Scripture, but who approach ancient texts without displaying even the slightest interest in communing with their authors through the medium of their written words . . . or even, perhaps, without being willing to admit that a given text even had a human author. Their efforts will always come to naught not in the sense that they will inevitably fail to think up some interesting interpretation of the text in question, but rather in the sense that textual study undertaken in the context of foregone conclusion cannot be considered study at all.



The fact that the Bible is not written in "language" itself or, possibly, in every language, but in a specific language is obvious. But is the fact that the

We rise to recite the following passages and remain standing until after Barchu.

Blessed be A forever, amen and amen.

Blessed from Zion be A , Who dwells in Jerusalem, hallelujah!



Blessed be A -Elohim, God of Israel, unique Doer of wonders, and blessed be the glorious name of God forever.

May the glory of God fill all the earth, amen and amen.

1 Chronicles 29:10-13

Wherefore David blessed A before all the congregation and said: "Blessed be You, A , God of Israel our divine Progenitor, forever and ever. Yours, A , is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is Yours; Yours is absolute sovereignty, A , and You are exalted as Ruler over all. Riches and honor come from You, and You rule over all; in Your hand is power and might and You have the ability to make all great and to give strength to all. Therefore, our God, we thank You, and praise Your glorious name.


Nehemiah 9:6-11

You are A , even You alone; You made the heavens and the heavens of the heavens with all their host, the earth and all things that are thereon, the seas and all that is in them, and You preserve them all; the host of heaven worships You.




You are A , the God who chose Abram, and brought him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees and gave him the name of Abraham and found his heart faithful before You. . .

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וְכָרוֹת עֲמוֹ הַפְּרִיִת לְתֵת אֶת אֶרֶץ הַכְּנַעֲנִי,
 הַחֲתִי, הָאֱמֹרִי, וְהַפְּרִזִי, וְהַיְבוּסִי, וְהַגְּרָגָשִׁי,
 לְתֵת לְזָרְעוֹ, וַתִּקַּם אֶת דְּבָרֶיךָ, כִּי צִדִּיק
 אָתָּה. וַתֵּרָא אֶת עֲנִי אֲבֹתֵינוּ בְּמִצְרַיִם,
 וְאֵת זַעֲקָתָם שָׁמַעְתָּ עַל יַם סוּף. וַתִּתֵּן
 אֹתָת וּמִפְתֵּיִם בְּפָרְעֹה, וּבְכָל עֲבָדָיו, וּבְכָל
 עַם אֶרֶצוֹ, כִּי יִדְעָתָּ כִּי הִזִּידוּ עֲלֵיהֶם,
 וַתַּעַשׂ לָךְ שֵׁם כְּהַיּוֹם הַזֶּה.  וְתֵימָה
 בְּקִעְתָּ לְפָנֵיהֶם, וַיַּעֲבֹרוּ בְּתוֹךְ הַיָּם בַּיַּפְּשָׁה,
 וְאֵת רֹדְפֵיהֶם הִשְׁלַכְתָּ בַּמִּצּוֹלֹת כְּמוֹ אֲבֹן
 בְּמַיִם עֲזִיִּים.

Exodus 14:30-31

וַיּוֹשַׁע יְהוָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל מִיַּד
 מִצְרַיִם, וַיֵּרָא יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת מִצְרַיִם מֵת
 עַל שַׁפַּת הַיָּם.  וַיֵּרָא יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת
 הַיָּד הַגְּדֹלָה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה יְהוָה בְּמִצְרַיִם,
 וַיֵּירָאוּ הָעָם אֶת יְהוָה וַיֹּאמְרֵינוּ בַּיהוָה
 וּבַמֹּשֶׁה עֲבָדָיו.

Bible comes down to us in Hebrew merely a function of cultural happenstance?

The question sounds a bit unanswerable, but perhaps a kind of an answer lies in the realization that the holiness of the holy tongue derives at least in part from its endless chains of words linked to each other by virtue of common three-letter roots. In turn, these roots, unspeakable on their own, yet fully present in every word, make of each word in the language something suggestive of the nature of God . . . in that every Hebrew word exists with and without boundaries, is understandable (but ineffable) in theory and can thus only actually be perceived by a listener through the derivative medium of echo and reverberation, cannot be seen . . . and can only be heard when the word, so to speak, is dressed in its physical garb of sound and syllable. Therefore, although the meaning of Hebrew words can be given in other languages, the holiness of the Hebrew tongue cannot be translated . . . and the best success for which translators of the Bible may hope is the accomplishment of giving out the information contained in a given Hebrew sentence in some other tongue. Or perhaps that is mere after-the-fact justification and the text of the Bible was bequeathed to the world in Hebrew simply because that was the language its framers spoke. Either theory seems possible. . . .




Seeking God through the medium of the study of Scripture requires knowing the difference between gullibility and humility. Being gullible means believing anything anyone tells you regardless of how unlikely it might sound. Being humble, at least in terms of reading Scripture, means accepting—and accepting wholeheartedly and not begrudgingly—that there is no such thing—that there cannot be such a thing—as a literary composition that deals totally honestly with the nature of God from the vantage point of a human author. And it means this as well: that there is no real meaning to the conclusion that a specific passage in Scripture about the nature of God is right or


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wrong . . . and that this is true to the extent that discrepancies between two contradictory passages can never be resolved merely by “finding” a third text, historically unrelated to either, that “proves” which text is “correct.” For example, the correct way to interpret the distinction between the passage in Exodus that decrees that the paschal offering must be chosen from “unblemished male yearlings among the lambs and goats (Exodus 12:5)” and the passage in the sixteenth chapter of Deuteronomy that specifically allows calves to be offered up as well is not to find some other passage that “proves” which law is correct, or even to spend time attempting to determine which of these two passages is the “right” one, but rather to accept that we have before us two slightly different ancient attempts to translate the idea of God as the source of redemption and liberation in the world from the realm of philosophical idea and poetry into the world of symbolic action and ritual.

The reasons (or reasons) that two attempts to develop the same idea may have developed along slightly different lines is interesting to ponder, but ultimately unimportant for moderns seeking to know God as the source of liberation in their personal worlds through the medium of Scriptural study . . . or through the medium of Passover observance. Still, one may legitimately wonder what options the ancients actually did have when it came time each year to choose an animal for the paschal sacrifice. Regretfully, however, the answer has to be that we moderns have no proof one way or the other. Possibly the different texts reflect different historical periods. Possibly, they reflect a kind of zoological symbolism that, having no precise latter-day equivalent, escapes moderns. Possibly, one of the texts was intended as a puzzle text and thus actually does mean something other than what it appears to mean. Still, even if we did have a way of finding a definitive way to resolve the discrepancy, it would be interesting solely from a historical point. For men and women of faith seeking to know in God the source of redemptive liberation from the chains that bind them, however, it would not be all that important at all.

. . . and made a covenant with him to give the land of the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Amorite, and the Perizite, and the Jebusite, and the Girgashite, even to give it unto his seed, and You have kept Your word, for You are righteous. You saw the affliction of our ancestors in Egypt and heard their cry by the Sea of Reeds; You showed signs and wonders to Pharaoh and all his servants and all the people of his land, for You knew that they were scheming against Israel, but You established Your own reputation by acting against them, a reputation You maintain even to this day.  You divided the sea before them, so that they went through the midst of the sea on the dry land, but their pursuers, You cast into the depths as a stone into mighty waters.

Exodus 14:30–31

Thus **A** saved Israel that day from the hands of the Egyptians and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore.  Israel saw the great hand which **A** wielded against Egypt, and so the people came to fear **A**; thus did they come to believe in **A** and in Moses, the servant of God.



אִז יִשְׁייר מִשֶּׁה וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת לִיהוּה, וַיֹּאמְרוּ
 לֵאמֹר. אֲשִׁירָה לַיהוּה כִּי גָאָה גָאָה, סוּס וְרֹכְבוֹ רָמָה בָּיָם.
 עָזִי וְזִמְרַת יְהוָה, וַיְהִי לִי לִישׁוּעָה. זֶה אֱלֹהֵי וְאַנְוָהוּ, אֱלֹהֵי אָבִי
 וַאֲרַמְּנֶנּוּהוּ. יְהוּה אִישׁ מִלְחָמָה, יְהוּה שָׁמוֹ. מִרְפַּבַּת פָּרְעֹה
 וַחִילוֹ יָרָה בָּיָם, וּמִבְּחַר שְׁלֹשֵׁי טַבְּעוֹ בָּיָם סוּף. תְּהַמֹּת
 יִכְסִּימוּ, יָרְדוּ בְּמִצּוֹלוֹת כְּמוֹ אָבֶן. יִמְיִנְךָ יְהוּה נְאֻדְרֵי בַכַּח,
 יִמְיִנְךָ יְהוּה תִרְעֵץ אוֹיֵב. וּבְרַב גְּאוּנְךָ תִּהְרַס קִמְיֶךָ, תִּשְׁלַח
 חֲרֹנְךָ לֵאכְלָמוּ פִקְשׁ. וּבְרוּחַ אַפִּיךָ נְעַרְמוּ מַיִם, נִצְבוּ כְמוֹ גֵּד
 גְּזָלִים, קָפְאוּ תְהַמֹּת בְּלֵב יָם. אָמַר אוֹיֵב אֲרֹדְךָ אֲשִׁיג אַחֲלֶק
 שְׁלָל, תִּמְלֶאמֶנּוּ גַבְשֵׁי, אֲרִיק חֲרָבִי, תִּזְרִישְׁמוּ יָדַי. גִּשְׁפַּת
 בְּרוּחְךָ פָּסְמוּ יָם, צָלְלוּ פְּעוּפֶרֶת בְּמַיִם אֲדִירִים. מִי כַמְכָה
 בְּאֵלִם יְהוּה, מִי כַמְכָה נְאֻדָּר בְּקֹדֶשׁ, נִזְרָא תְהַלֹּת, עִשָּׂה פִלָּא.
 גְּטִיַת יִמְיִנְךָ, תִּבְלַעְמוּ אֶרֶץ. גְּחִיַת בְּחִסְדְּךָ עִם זֹ גְּאֹלֶת,
 גְּהַלֹּת בְּעִזָּךָ אֵל גְּוָה קֹדֶשׁךָ. שְׁמַעוּ עַמִּים יִרְגְּזוּן, חִיל אַחַז
 יִשְׁבִּי פִלְשֶׁת. אִז נִבְהָלוּ אֱלֹפֵי אָדָם, אֵילֵי מוֹאָב יִאֲחַזְמוּ
 רַעַד, נִמְגּוּ כָל יִשְׁבֵי כְנָעַן. תִּפַּל עֲלֵיהֶם אֵימָתָה וּפְחַד בְּגֹדֶל
 זְרוּעֶךָ יִדְמוּ כְּאָבֶן. עַד יַעֲבֹר עִמָּךָ יְהוּה, עַד יַעֲבֹר עִם זֹ
 קִנִּיַת. תִּבְאִמוּ וְתִטְעִמוּ בְּהַר גְּחֻלְתְּךָ, מִכּוֹן לְשִׁבְתְּךָ פְּעֻלַּת
 יְהוּה, מִקֹּדֶשׁ אֲדָנִי כּוֹנֵן יָדֶיךָ. יְהוּה יִמְלֹךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד. יְהוּה
 יִמְלֹךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד. יְהוּה מַלְכוּתָהּ קָאָם לְעוֹלָם וְלְעוֹלָמֵי עֹלָמֵיָא.
 כִּי בָּא סוּס פָּרְעֹה בְּרֹכְבוֹ וּבִפְרָשָׁיו בָּיָם, וַיִּשָּׁב יְהוּה עֲלֵהֶם
 אֶת מֵי הַיָּם, וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הִלְכוּ בַיַּבֶּשֶׁה בְּתוֹךְ הַיָּם.

Our prayers continue with a miscellany of verses.

כִּי לִיהוּה הַמְּלוֹכָה וּמִשְׁלַל בְּגוֹיִם, וְעָלוּ מוֹשְׁעִים בְּהַר צִיּוֹן
 לְשִׁפְט אֶת הַר עֵשָׂו, וְהִיָּתָה לִיהוּה הַמְּלוֹכָה. וְהָיָה יְהוּה לְמִלְכָּךָ עַל
 כָּל הָאָרֶץ, בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יְהִיָּה יְהוּה אֶחָד וְשְׁמוֹ אֶחָד.



Since every effort to explicate a Scriptural story is, in effect, a kind of conversation between living commentators and dead story tellers, it is inevitable that the prejudices and prior beliefs of the commentators about their dead partners in dialogue—beliefs including, but not limited to, the genders of those authors, the centuries in which they lived, their opinions and the specifics of their statuses in the world in which they lived, worked and flourished—will inevitably affect the quality and nature of their exegetical work.

One general principle that needs to underlie any attempt to seek a palpable sense of the presence of God in the world through the study of Scripture is the notion that only the words in a given Biblical story may be deemed to represent the opinions and beliefs of the author of that story. But those opinions and beliefs, frozen as they are within the Biblical text, are unable to respond to questions put to them about their authors or even about their own subject matter . . . and this truth is unaffected by the fact that the words of a given Biblical text were composed at a specific moment in history by an actual human being who undoubtedly did have a specific identity and hold specific opinions. It follows from this that commentators may speak only on their own behalf and in their own names . . . and never on behalf of the authors of the Biblical texts they explicate and certainly never in the names of those authors. Readers more than capable of saying what the text means to them, must nevertheless hold back from declaring what a text meant to its author in any but the most tentative, equivocal way imaginable.



Words, even sacred words, are not people. Therefore, any who immerse themselves in the stories of Scripture are forbidden by reason to deny the historical existence of the authors of the texts they are studying and to attempt to relate solely to the literary personalities who appear in those stories as though they themselves were the flesh-and-blood

The Song at the Sea

people with whom communion is possible through the medium of words written about them.

The first hurdle to clear is never to speak of the books of the Bible as though they were people. Thoughtful readers do not ask what “Judges is trying to teach us” in a given passage or why Proverbs “says” whatever it says in a given verse. Being a book, Judges cannot try to do anything at all, nor can the Book of Proverbs “say” a word. Instead, thoughtful readers recall that every book of the Bible, regardless of its editorial pre-history, exists as a work that was either written from scratch by an author at a given time in history or else was redacted into its present shape and format by a subsequent editor from some anterior work or works.

Biblical authors are almost never the subjects of the stories they tell. The personalities who appear in the stories that appear in the Bible are almost never the authors of the stories through which they have been granted eternal fame and renown. As a result, it is possible to say that the text of the Bible serves its earthly readers as a kind of barrier made of darkened—but not entirely opaque—glass that separates the authors of those stories from modern readers, readers who may attempt to stand on the shoulders of the great authors of Biblical antiquity as they seek God in their own lives, but who can only do so by standing upon the shoulders of the literary characters that appear in those authors’ stories . . . characters who exist in our world solely as literary figures in told tales . . . even if men and women with the same names actually did live as flesh-and-blood human beings in the day of the authors of those tales, or not in their day.




The historicity of any particular story that appears among the stories of the Bible (that is to say, the truth of the historical details presented within the story) neither adds to nor takes away from the spiritual worth of that story. Indeed, for people intent on seeking God through the contemplation of Scripture, the fact that a given story itself exists is far

Then sang Moses and the Children of Israel this song unto A , singing these words aloud: I shall sing out to A for God is highly exalted; horse and rider, God pitched into the sea. B is my strength and my song, and has become my salvation. This is my God, Whom I shall glorify; my father’s God, Whom I will exalt. A is a warrior; A is the name of God. Pharaoh’s chariots and his army did God cast into the sea, whereupon his chosen captains sunk in the Sea of Reeds. The deeps cover them; they went down into the depths like a stone. Your right hand, A , is glorious in power. Your right hand, A , dashed the enemy to pieces. Indeed, in Your excellent greatness, You overthrew them that rose up against You; You sent forth Your wrath and it consumed them as though they were mere stubble. With a blast of Your nostrils, the waters were piled up. The waters were piled up as though in a heap; the deeps were congealed in the heart of the sea. The enemy said, “I will pursue them. I will overtake them. I will divide the spoil. My lust for their blood shall be satisfied. I will draw my sword, then my hand shall destroy them.” You blew with Your wind, whereupon the sea covered them; they sank like lead in mighty waters. Who is like unto You, A , among the mighty? Who is like You, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? You stretched out Your hand and the earth swallowed them up. In Your love, You led the people that You redeemed, guiding them mightily to Your holy habitation. The peoples heard and they trembled. Pangs took hold of the inhabitants of Philistia. Then were the chiefs of Edom affrighted. Trembling seized the mighty men of Moab; all the inhabitants of Canaan melted away. Terror and dread fell upon them; by the greatness of Your arm, they were as still as stones as Your people passed over, A , as the people You acquired as Your own passed over. You are bringing them in to settle them on the mountain that shall be their inheritance from You, in the place, A , which You have made for Yourself to dwell in, the sanctuary, Adonai, which Your hands have established. A shall reign forever and ever. A shall reign forever and ever. (The sovereignty of A will endure forever and for all time.) For the horses of Pharaoh went with his chariots and his horsemen into the sea, whereupon A brought back the waters of the sea over them, while the children of Israel walked on dry land in the midst of the sea.

Our prayers continue with a miscellany of verses.



For sovereignty belongs to A , the God Who rules over nations. And when saviors come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau, sovereignty shall belong to A . And it shall come to pass that A will be Sovereign over the world. Indeed, on that day the unique nature of A will be acknowledged on earth so totally that even the divine name itself will be ‘One.’”

The Pesukei Dezimra section of the morning service concludes with Yishtabach:
 יִשְׁתַּבַּח שְׁמוֹ לְעַד מְלַפְנֵנוּ, הָאֵל הַמֶּלֶךְ הַגָּדוֹל וְהַקְדוֹשׁ
 בְּשָׁמַיִם וּבְאָרֶץ. כִּי לֵךְ נָא, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ,
 שִׁיר וּשְׁבַחַת, הַלֵּל וְזִמְרָה, עֵז וּמְשִׁלָּה, נִצַּחַת, גְּדֻלָּה וּגְבוּרָה,
 תְּהִלָּה וְתִפְאַרֶת, קִדְשָׁה וּמְלֻכוֹת,  בְּרָכוֹת וְהוֹדָאוֹת
 מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, אֵל מֶלֶךְ גָּדוֹל בְּתִשְׁבָּחוֹת,
 אֵל הַהוֹדָאוֹת, אֲדוֹן הַנִּפְלְאוֹת, הַבוֹחֵר בְּשִׁירֵי זִמְרָה, מֶלֶךְ, אֵל,
 חַי הַעוֹלָמִים.

*Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur,
 the Ark is opened and Psalm 130 is recited responsively.*

שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת, מִמַּעַמְקוֹם קְרֵאתִיךָ יְהוָה. אֲדַנִּי שְׁמַעַת בְּקוֹלִי, תִּהְיֶינָה
 אֲזִנֶּיךָ קְשֻׁבוֹת לְקוֹל תַּחֲנוּנָי. אִם עֲוֹנוֹת תִּשְׁמֹר יְהוָה, אֲדַנִּי מִי יַעֲמֹד. כִּי
 עִמָּךְ הִסְלִיחָה, לְמַעַן תִּגְדַּל. קוֹיֵתִי יְהוָה, קוֹיֵתִי גִפְשִׁי, וְלֹדְבָרוֹ הוֹחֵלֵתִי.
 גִּפְשִׁי לְאֲדֹנָי מִשְׁמָרִים לְבַקֶּרֶת, שְׁמָרִים לְבַקֶּרֶת. יַחַל יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵל יְהוָה, כִּי עִם
 יְהוָה הַחֲסֵד, וְהִרְבָּה עִמּוֹ פְדוּתוֹ. וְהוּא יַפְדֶּה אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל מִכָּל עֲוֹנוֹתָיו.

The Half Kaddish

יִתְגַּדַּל וְיִתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא בְּעֻלְמָא דִּי בְּרָא כְרַעוּתָהּ, וְיִמְלִיךְ
 מְלְכוּתָהּ בְּחַיִּיכוֹן וּבְיוֹמֵיכוֹן וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּעַגְלָא וּבְזִמּוֹן
 קָרִיב, וְאִמְרוּ אָמוֹן.

The congregation joins the cantor or baal tefillah in reciting this line.

יְהוָה שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעֵלְמָא וְלְעֻלְמֵי עֻלְמֵינָא.

The cantor or baal tefillah continues:

יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח, וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרוֹמַם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא וְיִתְחַדַּר וְיִתְעַלֶּה
 וְיִתְהַלָּל שְׁמֵהּ דְּקֻדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא

Except between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, say:

לְעֻלְמָא מִן כָּל

Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, say:

לְעֻלְמָא לְעֻלְמָא מִכָּל

בְּרַכְתָּא וְשִׁירָתָא, תִּשְׁבַּחְתָּא וְנִחַמְתָּא, דְּאִמְרוּן בְּעֻלְמָא, וְאִמְרוּ אָמוֹן.

more significant than the question of whether this or that detail within the story is historically accurate.


There is, however, no particular reason to consider a Biblical tale to be worthless merely because the scientific study of the text has yielded the conclusion that this or that aspect of the story it tells—or all of that story—does not correspond to historical reality. Unless a reader is prepared to argue that the author of a Biblical story wrote specifically to mislead its readers, it is far more logical to consider Biblical stories as attempts by their authors to create a set of literary compositions that would convey a correspondent set of beliefs and principles to its readers. As a result, the question of the historicity of a specific Biblical tale—the set of issues that surround the question of whether the events detailed in that story really happened precisely as told in Scripture—should only be of primary, decisive interest to people who feel that believing that the stories of Scripture were preserved for future generations because of their great spiritual lessons must also, necessarily, entail believing that the historical events mentioned in them are described with total accuracy. And that, therefore, eroding popular faith in the historicity of Bible stories will inevitably lead to a parallel erosion in the degree to which the contemplation of those stories might be a useful spiritual exercise for people seeking to know God through the medium of Bible study.

That kind of focusing on the historical accuracy of the text is as illogical as it is counterproductive . . . and as little rooted in a reasonable sense of what the text is as it is destined to lead people away from, not towards, a useful appraisal of the devotional worth of study. This is implied in the verse from Jeremiah in which the prophet is depicted as hearing God speaking to him and telling him to “write down all the words I shall say to you in a book (Jeremiah 30:2).” The prophet is not bidden to write down what he perceives of the world around him—and neither is he commanded to undertake serious research into the nature of the geopolitics of his day or to write a poem or compose a sermon—but rather to write down “in ink and in a book” whatever he is able to translate of


God's communicative presence into the language of human beings . . . and nothing else. To evaluate his efforts centuries later not in terms of the degree to which he succeeded in doing just that—in creating a literary text that would focus his experience of God through the prism of language—but rather in terms of whether the details preserved in his text “really” happened is to miss the point entirely.



Embracing paradox does not require living in a delusional world. For example, it is logically impossible to conceive of a situation in which two absolutely true statements contradict each other to the extent that the acceptance of one absolutely must preclude acceptance of the other. It is also impossible to imagine a situation in which one must deny truth to accept truth—all true statements, by definition, being necessarily congruent with all other true statements—and surely the burden of proof would rest, and weigh heavy, on the shoulders of any who would deny any of these assertions. Indeed, the claim so often made that spiritual or religious truth is somehow different in quality and kind from scientific truth and that, therefore, it is somehow not impossible to conceive of a situation in which an honest individual affirms as true a dogmatic remark that seems impossible to square with scientific reality—such a claim will not be taken very seriously by anyone who takes the concept of “truth” at all seriously. As a result, commentators who approach the Biblical text in the context of assumptions and beliefs that they do not actually consider to be true are guilty of blasphemy because they are saying (or writing or preaching) things about God that even they themselves do not necessarily consider to be wholly accurate or true.

It is one of the greatest, and most challenging, principles of honest spiritual enterprise that no one—ever—may know God except in the context of absolute and totally unprejudiced intellectual and spiritual integrity. 

The Pesukei Dezimra section of the morning service concludes with Yishtabach: May Your name be praised forever, O our Sovereign, O sovereign God great and holy in heaven and on earth, for it is fitting to praise You, A , our God and God of our ancestors, with laudatory song and ode, with hymns of praise and heartfelt song, with poetry that ascribes power and governance, eternity, magnificence, bravery, gloriousness and splendor, holiness and majesty to God.

 May these blessings and songs of thanksgiving be sung forever and for all time. Blessed are You, A , sovereign God wholly worthy of all praise, God Whose greatness is ever worthy of human affirmation, supreme Doer of wonders Who deigns to be praised by mere flesh, sovereign God wholly and permanently existent.

*Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur,
the Ark is opened and Psalm 130 is recited responsively.*

A song for the Levites to sing on the steps of the Temple. From the depths, I call to You, A . Adonai, hear my voice; may Your ears be open to the sound of my supplications. If B were to keep track of all sins, Adonai, who could withstand the scrutiny? For forgiveness resides with You so that, in dispensing it, You may come to be properly feared. I hope, A —my soul hopes—I truly long for God's word. My soul awaits Adonai more ardently than those who wait for morning await the morning. May Israel come to put its hope in A , for with A resides mercy, for the great power to redeem resides with God. God will surely redeem Israel from all its sins.

The Half Kaddish

Magnified and sanctified be the great name of God in this world created according to divine plan, and may God's sovereignty be established speedily and soon during the days of our lives and the lives of all members of the House of Israel, and let us say, Amen.

The congregation joins the cantor or baal tefillah in reciting this line.

May God's great name be blessed forever and throughout all eternity.

The cantor or baal tefillah continues:

May the name of the Holy One, source of all blessing, be blessed, adored, lauded, praised, extolled, glorified and venerated in language

Except between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, say:
more exalted

Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, say:
entirely more exalted

than any blessing, hymn, ode or prayer recited by the faithful in this world, and let us say, Amen.

בְּרַכּוּ אֶת

יְהוָה

הַמְּבַרְךְ.

The congregation responds and the cantor or baal tefillah repeats:

בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה הַמְּבַרְךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.



The eighth book of Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah*, called *Sefer Ha'avodah* (*The Book of Temple Worship*), begins with the author's *Hilkhot Beit Habechirah* ("Laws Relating to the Temple"), a magisterial restatement of the full range of traditions preserved from antiquity regarding the Temple as it stood in Jerusalem in ancient days.

Chapter One

It is a positive commandment of the Torah to create a Temple to A in which to offer up the sacrifices (i.e., those ordained by Scripture) and in which the three annual pilgrimage festivals can be celebrated, as it is written, "And you shall make a temple for Me (Exodus 25.8)." Already in Scripture, we find described the Tabernacle Moses our Teacher created in the desert, but it was clearly a temporary structure, as it is written, "For you have not yet come to the rest and to the inheritance, which A your God is giving to you, but when you do go over the Jordan and live in the land which A your God is giving you to inherit, and when God grants you rest from all your enemies so that you live in safety, then there shall be a place which A your God will choose to cause the divine name to dwell and there you will bring all that I command you: your olah sacrifices and your other offerings, your tithes and your gifts, and whatever animal sacrifices you owe as a result of vows you make to A (Deuteronomy 12:9–11).

As soon as the Israelites entered the Land of Israel, they set up the Tabernacle first at Gilgal, where it stood for the fourteen years of the conquest and division of the land, and then at Shiloh, where the a real stone building was built. (The drapes of the Tabernacle were spread over the building, however, because it lacked a real roof.) The shrine at Shiloh stood for 369 years, until it was destroyed in the time of Eli, whereupon a new shrine was constructed at Nob. When Samuel died,

t

however, this shrine too was destroyed and a new one was built at Gibeon. After that, they constructed the Temple (in Jerusalem). The Nob and Gibeon shrines together existed for fifty-seven years.

Once the Temple in Jerusalem was built, it became formally forbidden to build a temple to א in any other place or to offer up sacrifices in other places. Indeed, the only temple ever constructed as a permanent shrine designed to last throughout all the generations was on Mount Moriah in Jerusalem, as it is written, "And David said, 'This is the Temple of א -Elohim and this is the altar for the olah sacrifices of Israel (2 Chronicles 22:1)'" and it is also written, "This is My resting place for all time (Psalm 132:14)."

The building that King Solomon erected is described in detail in the Book of Kings. The future Temple, however, although it is described in the Book of Ezekiel, is not described in the fullest or clearest detail. Therefore, the Jews of the time of Ezra who built the Second Temple constructed it along the lines of Solomon's Temple and roughly in accordance with the details set forth in Ezekiel.

These are the things that are essential in the building of the Temple: the sanctum (called the *kodesh* in Hebrew), the inmost sanctum called the Holy of Holies and a space before the sanctum called the *ulam*. Together, these three spaces are called the *heichal* (or, "the shrine.") A barrier was built around the *heichal* at a distance roughly equivalent to the distance the curtains were kept from the desert Tabernacle and the space within this barrier, roughly the same as the courtyard of the Tent of Meeting, was called the *azarah* (or "the court" or "the courtyard.") Together, all these aforementioned places are called the Temple.

Seven appurtenances are necessary as well: an altar for the olah and other sacrifices, a ramp leading up to the altar built along the southern part of the side of the altar facing the *ulam*, a laver for the *kohanim* to wash their hands and feet before participating in the worship service that was constructed between the *ulam* and the altar slightly towards the south (which is to say: towards the left of someone entering the Tem-

Blessed be א , source of all blessing.

The congregation responds and the cantor or baal tefillah repeats:
Blessed forever and for all time be א ,
source of all blessing.

The First Blessing before the Shema

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, יוֹצֵר אוֹר
וּבוֹרֵא חַשְׁפֵּי, עֹשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם וּבוֹרֵא אֶת הַכֹּל. הַמְאִיר
לְאָרֶץ וְלַדְרִים עָלֶיהָ בְּרַחֲמִים, וּבְטוֹבוֹ מְחַדֵּשׁ
בְּכָל יוֹם תְּמִיד מַעֲשֵׂה בְּרֵאשִׁית. מָה רַבּוֹ מַעֲשֵׂיךָ
יְהוָה, כָּלֵם בְּחֻכְמָה עֲשִׂיתָ, מְלֵאָה הָאָרֶץ קִנְיָנָה.
הַמְּלֹךְ הַמְרוֹמָם לְבִדּוֹ מֵאֵז, הַמְּשַׁבֵּחַ וְהַמְּפָאֵר
וְהַמְתַּנְשֵׂא מִימֹת עוֹלָם, אֱלֹהֵי עוֹלָם, בְּרַחֲמֶיךָ
הַרְבִּים רַחֵם עָלֵינוּ, אֲדוֹן עֲזָנוּ, צוֹר מְשַׁגְּפָנוּ, מִגֵּן
יִשְׁעָנוּ, מְשַׁגֵּב בְּעַדְנוּ. אֵל בְּרוּךְ גְּדוֹל דַּעַה, הַכֵּין
וּפְעַל זְהָרֵי חֲמָה. טוֹב יֵצֵר כְּבוֹד לְשִׁמוֹ, מְאֹרֹת
נִתַּן סְבִיבוֹת עֲזוֹ. פְּנוֹת צְבָאוֹ קְדוּשִׁים, רוֹמְמֵי
שִׁדְי תְּמִיד מִסְפָּרִים כְּבוֹד אֵל וְקֹדְשָׁתוֹ. תִּתְּבַרְךָ
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ עַל שִׁבְחַ מַעֲשֵׂה יְדִיךָ, וְעַל מְאֹרֵי
אוֹר שְׁעֲשִׂיתָ יַפְאֲרוֹךְ, סִלָּה.

תִּתְּבַרְךָ, צוֹרְנוּ, מְלַכְנוּ, וְגֹאֲלֵנוּ, בּוֹרֵא קְדוּשִׁים. יִשְׁתַּבַּח
שְׁמֶךָ לְעַד מְלַכְנוּ, יוֹצֵר מְשֻׁרְתִים, וְאֲשֶׁר מְשֻׁרְתֵינוּ כָּלֵם
עוֹמְדִים בְּרוּם עוֹלָם וּמְשֻׁמֵיעִים בְּיִרְאָה יַחַד בְּקוֹל דְּבָרֵי
אֱלֹהִים חַיִּים וּמְלֹךְ עוֹלָם. כָּלֵם אֶהוּבִים, כָּלֵם בְּרוּרִים,
כָּלֵם גְּבוּרִים, וְכָלֵם עֲשִׂים בְּאִמָּה וּבְיִרְאָה רְצוֹן קוֹנֵם.
וְכָלֵם פּוֹתְחִים אֶת פִּיָּהֶם בְּקֹדֶשׁה וּבְטִהְרָה, בְּשִׁירָה
וּבְזִמְרָה, וּמְבָרְכִים, וּמְשַׁבְּחִים, וּמְפָאֲרִים, וּמְעֲרִיצִים,
וּמְקַדִּישִׁים, וּמְמַלְכִים אֶת שֵׁם הָאֵל, הַמְּלֹךְ

ple), a base for the laver, an altar specifically for incense, a candelabrum and a table. (These last three were positioned within the sanctum just before the Holy of Holies.)

The candelabrum is to be set up on the southern side (of the sanctum) on the left side of someone entering the room. The table for the showbread, however, goes on the right-hand side. (Both these, the candelabrum and the table belong on the side of the sanctum closest to the Holy of Holies, but the incense altar is to be placed on the other side of the room, positioned at the same distance from them both.) In the azarah, certain boundaries are to be marked so that it is clear that regular Israelites may only penetrate the Temple to a certain point and that a certain part of the azarah is strictly for kohanim. In addition, a number of structures need also to be constructed to house various necessary tools or appurtenances that were necessary for the Temple. Each of these structures is called a *lishkah*, that is to say: a chamber.

The heichal and the azarah are to be constructed using large stones. If there are no stones available, bricks may be used. However, no stones may be hewn on the Temple Mount. Instead, they must be hewn and shaped outside the Temple Mount and then brought there for use in one of the Temple structures, as it is written, "And when the king commanded it, they brought huge and precious stones to lay the foundation of the Temple with hewn stones (I Kings 5:31)." And it also says, "When the Temple was being built, neither the sounds of hammers nor axes nor any metal tool could be heard anywhere (I Kings 6:7)."

No wood could be allowed to protrude from the Temple building at all. Instead, only stones, bricks and lime could be visible. Nor were wooden balustrades permitted to line the azarah, only ones of stone or brick.

The entire azarah is to be paved with fine stones. If one stone becomes detached, even though it might still be in its proper spot, it is considered unfit because its setting is damaged and, therefore, a kohen involved in sacred worship cannot stand on it when he is participating in the

worship service until such time as it is reattached to the earth.

It is among the choicest of *mitzvot* for the community to make the Temple sturdy and exalted, as it is written, “(We were called upon) to exalt the House of our God (Ezra 9:9).” Furthermore, it is a *mitzvah* to beautify and decorate the Temple as much as possible, even to the extent of plating it with gold or beautifying its appurtenances.

The Temple may not be built at night, as it is written, “On the day the Tabernacle was erected . . . (Numbers 9:15)” —which means that it is to be erected during the day, not during the night. One may work at constructing the Temple, however, from the moment the first rays of sun appear over the horizon in the mornings until the stars come out at night. And all men and women are obliged to build the Temple, or to assist in building it personally or by extending financial assistance, just as was the case when the desert Tabernacle was being built. However, school children cannot be dismissed from their lessons in order to assist in the building, nor does the construction of the Temple override the obligation to desist from work on the festivals of the Jewish year.



The altar must be a structure made of stones. Indeed, when the Torah says, “You shall make for Me an earthen altar (Exodus 20:24,)” Scripture merely means to be specifying that the altar has to be connected directly to the earth and may not, therefore, be built over hollow structures or subterranean tunnels. Furthermore, we have a firm tradition to the effect that the way the Torah expresses itself with the words “And if you make an altar of stones . . . (Exodus 20:25)” does not mean to imply choice and that, just to the contrary, the altar must be made of stones.

Just as would be the case with a damaged slaughterer’s knife, any stone that has been chipped to the extent that a fingernail would become caught by the nick cannot be used in the construction of the ramp or the altar itself, as it is written, “You shall build the altar of א with whole stones (Deuteronomy 27:6).” These stones

The First Blessing before the Shema

Blessed be א , our God, Sovereign of the universe, Maker of light and Creator of darkness, Author of peace and Creator of all that exists.

God, Who, acting with compassion and caring, brings light to the world and to its inhabitants and Who, acting out of divine goodness, continues the never ending process of creation on a daily basis, how manifold are Your deeds, א ! You have accomplished all this wisely; the whole world is filled with Your creation. O Sovereign uniquely exalted from primeval times, praiseworthy, splendid and illustrious from time immemorial, O God of the universe, act compassionately with us in accordance with Your characteristic compassion. O God, source of power, our rock and fortress, our ever-protective shield, our constant refuge, O God worthy of blessing and source of intelligence, You who devised the sun’s daily course and the strength of its rays, O source of goodness Whose creative efforts add luster and glory to the divine name, Who set the heavenly luminaries in place around the divine palace on high, Whose heavenly legions of holy angels devoted to the exaltation of the Almighty continually tell of the glory of God and the indescribable holiness of the divine—be blessed, א , our God, on account of the splendor of Your creation, the work of Your divine hands, and the heavenly sources of light that You made to Your own glory, *selah*.

Be blessed, our Rock, our Sovereign, our Redeemer, Creator of the holy angels. May Your name be praised forever, our Sovereign Who created those very angels who, from their positions in highest heaven, give voice as one in awe to the words of the living God, Sovereign of the universe. All beloved, chosen and mighty, and all following the behest of their Creator out of respect and awe,  together they open their mouths in song suffused with holiness and purity as they bless, praise, exalt, laud, sanctify and acknowledge the majesty of the name of sovereign God great, mighty and awesome, the ultimate source of holiness. And all take upon themselves the yoke of divine sovereignty, formally accepting it from each other and granting permission to each other  to sanctify their Maker with voices of tranquil piety, using the clearest language and the most sacred melodies. As one, they thus respond and declare with respectful awe:

הַגָּדוֹל, הַגָּבוֹר, וְהַנּוֹרָא, קָדוֹשׁ הוּא. וְכֻלָּם מִקְבְּלִים עֲלֵיהֶם
 עַל מַלְכוּת שָׁמַיִם זֶה מְזֵה, וְנוֹתְנִים רְשׁוּת זֶה לָזֶה,
 לְהַקְדִּישׁ לְיוֹצְרָם בְּנִחַת רוּחַ, בְּשִׁפְהַ בְּרוּרָה
 וּבִגְעֵימָה, קָדְשָׁה פֶלֶם פְּאָחַד עוֹנִים וְאוֹמְרִים בִּירְאָה:

קָדוֹשׁ, קָדוֹשׁ, קָדוֹשׁ, יְהוּה צְבָאוֹת,

מִלֵּא כָּל הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדוֹ.

וְהַאֹפְנִים וְחֵיּוֹת הַקֹּדֶשׁ, בְּרַעַשׁ גָּדוֹל מִתְנַשְּׂאִים
 לְעַמֹּת שְׂרָפִים, לְעַמְתָּם מִשִּׁבְחִים וְאוֹמְרִים:

בְּרוּךְ כְּבוֹד יְהוּה מִמִּקְוָמוֹ.

לְאֵל בְּרוּךְ גְּעִימוֹת יִתְנוּ, לְמַלְךְ אֵל חַי
 וְקַיִם זְמֵרוֹת יֹאמְרוּ וְתִשְׁבְּחוּת יִשְׁמִיעֵנוּ.

כִּי הוּא לְבַדּוֹ פּוֹעֵל גְּבוּרוֹת, עֹשֶׂה

חֲדָשׁוֹת, בַּעַל מַלְחָמוֹת, זוֹרַע צְדָקוֹת,

מִצְמִיחַ יְשׁוּעוֹת, בּוֹרֵא רַבּוּאוֹת, נוֹרָא

תְּהַלּוֹת, אֲדוֹן הַגְּבֻלָּאוֹת. הַמְּחַדֵּשׁ בְּטוֹבוֹ

בְּכָל יוֹם תָּמִיד מַעֲשֵׂה בְּרֵאשִׁית, כְּאָמוֹר:

לַעֲשֵׂה אוֹרִים גְּדֹלִים, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדּוֹ.

אוֹר חֲדָשׁ עַל צִיּוֹן תִּתְאִיר וְנִזְכָּה

כְּלָנוּ מִהֶרָה לְאוּרוֹ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוּה,

יוֹצֵר הַמְּאוֹרוֹת.

have to come solely from virgin soil. There, they dig until they come to a level that clearly has never been used as a quarry or as source of building stones and they take the stones from there. Alternately, they may take them from the sea bed of the Mediterranean Sea and build the altar that way. Similarly, the stones for the heichal and the azarah courts too have to be whole.

The stones used to build the heichal or pave the azarot that become damaged or chipped are considered unfit for use and such stones cannot be decommissioned by being sold, but have to be hidden away. Indeed, any stone that has come in contact with iron, even if it was not actually damaged by the contact, is unfit to be used in building the altar or the ramp, as it is written, "If you pass your sword over it (i.e., the stone), then you shall have rendered it profane (Exodus 20:25)." One who uses such a stone to build the altar or the ramp anyway is given the lash, since it is specifically written in Scripture, "You shall not build it with hewn stones (ibid.)." One who uses a damaged stone for either has transgressed against a negative commandment.

A stone that becomes damaged or which iron touches after it has already been used becomes unfit to remain part of the altar or the ramp, but the other stones remain fit. The altar is to be whitewashed twice a year, for Pesach and for Sukkot. The whitewashing was accomplished with a rag rather than an iron trowel, lest it touch a stone and render it unfit.

The builders may not provide the altar with steps, for it is written, "And you shall not ascend to My altar on steps (Exodus 20:26)." Instead, they should construct a kind of slope on the southern side of the altar that descends from the top of the altar to the ground and it is this slope that is called the ramp. Therefore, one who ascends on steps to the altar receives the lash as punishment. And, similarly, so do any who maliciously chip a stone from the altar or from any part of the heichal, or from the area between the ulam and the altar, as it is written, "And you shall

destroy their altars . . . but so you shall not do to A your God (Deuteronomy 12:3-4)."

The candelabrum and its appurtenances, and the table and its appurtenances, and the altar of incense and its ancillary appurtenances—these all may solely be fashioned of metal. If one makes any of the above mentioned items out of wood, bone, stone or glass, they are considered unfit for use.

Should the community be bereft of funds, these items may be made even of tin. Then, when the community becomes more wealthy, they may be replaced with gold items. Even the basins, the skewers and the shovels that were used for offerings on the sacrificial altar, and its measuring cups, were to be made of gold if the community could afford that luxury. Indeed, even the doors of the azarah should be covered in gold plate if the community can find the means to do so.

The appurtenances in use in the Temple have to be made from the first stages for the sake of use in the Temple. If they were made, even at first, for profane purposes, they cannot be re-assigned to use in the Temple. However, the inverse is not true and appurtenances that were made for Temple use, but not actually put into use at all, can be re-assigned to profane use. (This does not apply, however, once they have actually been put into use.) Stones and beams that were prepared from the beginning for use in a synagogue cannot be re-assigned for use on the Temple Mount.

Chapter Two


The specific place the altar is to stand has been very specifically determined and may never be changed, as it is written, "Then David said, This is the house of A -Elohim, and this is the altar of the olah-offerings of Israel (1 Chronicles 22:1)." It was on the site of the Temple that our father Isaac was bound up for sacrifice, for it is written in the Torah, "Take your son, your unique and beloved Isaac, and travel to the Land of Moriah (Genesis 22:2)." And it is stated in the Book of Chronicles, "And so Solomon began to build the Temple of

Holy, holy, holy is A of the heavenly hosts;
the world is filled with the glory of God.




Next, the divine creatures called *ofanim* and those called holy *chayyot* come forward with a great noise toward the angelic *serafim* to chant their chorus of praise:

Blessed be the glory of A
from the furthest reaches of divine existence.

They sing sweet songs to God, the source of all blessing. They chant hymns and anthems of praise to the living, ever-existent God, Who alone is the Doer of great and new things, the supreme Warrior, the Sower of righteous deeds, the Author of redemption, the Creator of healing, the awesome One ever worthy of acclaim, the Inventor of marvels Who, acting in accordance always with the basic principle of divine goodness, renews creation on an ongoing, daily basis, as it is written, "Give thanks to the Maker of the great lights of the heavens, for divine mercy is everlasting."  Shine a new light on Zion, O God, and may we all merit quickly to bask in that light.

Blessed are You, A ,
Maker of the great lights
of the heavens.

The Second Blessing before the Shema

אֶהְבֶּה רַבָּה אֶהֱבֹתֶנּוּ, יְהוּה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, חֻמְלָה
גְּדוּלָה וַיִּתְּרָה חֻמְלַת עָלֵינוּ. אָבִינוּ מִלְכָּנוּ,
בַּעֲבוּר אֲבוֹתֵינוּ שֶׁבִטְחוּ בָּךְ, וַתִּלְמַדְם חֻקֵי
חַיִּים, כֵּן תִּחַנְּנוּ וַתִּלְמַדְנוּ. אָבִינוּ, הָאֵב
תֶּרַחְמוֹ, הַמֵּרְחֵם, רַחֵם עָלֵינוּ, וַתֵּן בְּלִבֵּנוּ
לְהַבִּין וּלְהַשְׁכִּיל, לְשִׁמְעַי, לְלַמֵּד וּלְלַמֵּד,
לְשִׁמּוֹר וּלְעִשׂוֹת וּלְקַיֵּם אֶת כָּל דְּבָרֵי תִלְמוּד
תּוֹרַתְךָ בְּאַהֲבָה. וְהָאֵר עֵינֵינוּ בְּתוֹרַתְךָ,
וְדַבֵּק לִבֵּנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתֶיךָ, וַיִּיחַד לְבַבְנוּ לְאַהֲבָה
וּלְיִרְאָה אֶת שְׁמֶךָ, וְלֹא גִבוּשׁ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.
כִּי בְשֵׁם קֹדֶשְׁךָ הַגָּדוֹל וְהַנּוֹרָא בְּטוֹחֵנוּ,
נִגְיִלָה וְנִשְׁמַחָה בִּישׁוּעָתְךָ. וְהִבִּיאֵנוּ לְשָׁלוֹם
מֵאַרְבַּע כְּנַפּוֹת הָאָרֶץ, וַתּוֹלַכְנוּ קוֹמְמִיּוֹת
לְאַרְצֵנוּ, כִּי אֵל פּוֹעֵל יִשׁוּעוֹת אִתָּהּ, וּבְנֵי
בְּחֵרֶת מִכָּל עַם וְלִשׁוֹן.  וְקִרְבַּתֵּנוּ
לְשִׁמְךָ הַגָּדוֹל סָלָה בְּאַמֶּת לְהוֹדוֹת לְךָ
וּלְיִחְדָּךְ בְּאַהֲבָה. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוּה, הַבּוֹחֵר
בַּעֲמוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּאַהֲבָה.

A in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where God had appeared to David his father, in the place that David himself had prepared at the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite (2 Chronicles 3:1).”

There is a universally accepted tradition that the place on which David and Solomon built the altar in the threshing-floor of Aravna (as he is called in 2 Samuel 24) is also the place in which Abraham built the altar on which he bound Isaac, and it is also the place in which Noah built his altar when he exited from the ark and the place of the altar on which Cain and Abel made their offerings and the place Adam offered up his sacrifice after he was created, for it was in that precise spot that he was created. (Our sages noted that Adam was created in the very place he later sought atonement.)

The dimensions of the altar are extremely precise and its exact shape has been passed along from generation to generation. The altar that the returnees from exile in Babylon built, therefore, was made in such a way that mirrors the altar that will be built in the future and we may neither add nor subtract to or from it.

Three prophets came back with the returnees from exile: one who testified to them about the place of the altar, one who testified to them about its exact dimensions and one who testified that they were permitted to offer up all the sacrifices on this altar they were about to construct even in the absence of a Temple building.

The altar that Moses built and which Solomon built and which the returnees from exile built and that will yet again one day be built—each of them was ten cubits high. (When the Torah says “its height shall be three cubits [Exodus 27:1],” it is referring solely to the place in which the animals to be sacrificed were actually laid out atop the altar.) The altar that the returnees from exile fashioned and which will one day again be made was precisely thirty-two cubits long and thirty-two cubits wide. (There were two kinds of cubits in use in the Temple. When we say that the altar was ten cubits high, for example, some of them were five-handbreadth cubits and others were six-handbreadth cubits. All other measurements in the Temple, however, were given only in six-

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handbreadth cubits.) The entire altar was fifty-eight handbreadths tall.


These were the dimensions and the shape of the altar. The base rose from the ground five handbreadths and moved in towards the center another five handbreadths. (This left a space of thirty cubits and two handbreadths by thirty cubits and two handbreadths.) The *sovev* (a kind of ledge) rose another thirty handbreadths and moved in towards the center five handbreadths. (This left a space of twenty-eight cubits and four handbreadths by twenty-eight cubits and four handbreadths.) The actual place for the sacrificial animals to be arrayed was eighteen handbreadths over this. The horns of the altar protruded a cubit on each side, and similarly the path atop the altar for the *kohanim* to walk was another cubit wide. As a result, the place atop the altar for the animals to be arrayed was twenty-four cubits and four handbreadths by twenty-four cubits and four handbreadths.

Each horn was five handbreadths tall and their bases were one square cubit. (The horns were hollow on the inside.) The place in which the sacrificial animals were arrayed was eighteen handbreadths over the *sovev* ledge. As a result, the altar's halfway mark in terms of height was precisely twenty-nine handbreadths beneath the *sovev* ledge.

A crimson line surrounded the altar at half its height (which is to say: six handbreadths beneath the *sovev*) and the purpose of this line was to set off the part of the altar on which Scripture ordains that blood be sprinkled in those instances requiring sprinkling on the upper half of the altar from the part on which blood should be sprinkled in those instances in which Scripture ordains that the blood of a sacrifice be sprinkled on the lower half. The height of the entire altar, it thus turns out, from the ground up to the place on which the animal carcasses were arrayed was nine cubits less a handbreadth.

The base of the altar did not surround it on all four sides like the *sovev* did, but only ran along the northern and western sides and continued to overlap for one sole cubit on the southern and

The Second Blessing before the Shema

A , You have shown us great love and acted toward us with the greatest and most generous kindness. Celestial Parent and divine Sovereign, *Avinu Malkeinu*, continue to act kindly toward us and instruct us, just as You taught the laws of life to our ancestors who trusted completely in You. Divine and compassionate Parent, *Av Harachaman*, be compassionate with us and grant that we understand the fullness of Your Torah in our hearts, that we comprehend it sufficiently to learn its intricacies correctly, that we obey its precepts, that we study it well enough to teach it without error, and that we be moved through our learning to obey its commandments and to do its behests, thus upholding the Torah itself out of love. Furthermore, O God, make our eyes shine with light out of love for Your Torah and make our souls cleave to Your commandments so that our hearts prompt us without the slightest internal conflict to proclaim the love and awe due Your holy name, and so that we never know shame because of our abiding allegiance to You. In that we have placed our trust in Your holy, great and awesome name, may we be privileged to rejoice in Your salvation. And this too: bring us in peace from the four corners of the world to Your holy land, leading us in pride and dignity to our ancient homeland, for You are the God Who effects redemption, just as You have chosen us from among the nations  to bring us close to Your great name, *selah*, to give thanks to You and to declare Your unity with love.

Blessed are You, A ,
Who lovingly chooses Israel
to be the people of God.

The Shema

When praying without a minyan, recite these words before the Shema:

אל מִלְּךָ נֶאֱמַר

שִׁמְעֵה יִשְׂרָאֵל

יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ

יְהוָה אֶחָד:

Add these words in an undertone before continuing:

בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מְלֻכּוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

eastern sides. As a result, the southeast corner had no base at all.

At the southwestern corner of the altar, there were two small holes like two narrow spouts and these were its drains. Through them, the blood would flow down into a water canal beneath that corner of the altar and the blood would thus go out from the Temple into the Wadi Kidron.

At that corner too there was a tablet of marble one cubit square in the floor with a ring attached to it, and it was to the space beneath this tablet that the workmen would go to clean out the drains.

The ramp built to the south of the altar was thirty-two cubits long and sixteen cubits wide. It only covered thirty cubits of ground adjacent to the altar, however, because one cubit was over the base and another was over the sovev. There was just a small space between the ramp and the altar, so as to allow the limbs placed on the altar to be “thrown” there, in accordance with Scriptural decree, (i.e., since the ramp and the altar were not technically in contact). The ramp was nine cubits less a sixth tall and ended precisely at the level of the top of the altar where the sacrifices were arrayed.

Two smaller ramps went off the larger ramp, one leading to the base of the altar and the other to the sovev. These two were separated from the altar itself by a hairsbreadth. On the western side of the ramp, there was a kind of a indentation called the revubah that was one cubit by one cubit. It was used for fowl offered as sin offerings that had become unfit for use that had to be kept apart until their forms became unrecognizable, at which time they could be incinerated.

There were two tables on the western side of the ramp, one of marble on which the limbs of the sacrificial animals could be arrayed and another of silver on which the sacred appurtenances of Temple worship could be arrayed.

When the altar is built, it must be built wholly solid, like a building column, with no interior cavities at all. The precise way it was constructed was this: large and small unhewn stones were gathered, along with lime, pitch and molten lead, then all these were mixed together and poured into a

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frame the size of the part of the altar being constructed, after which the next level up would be constructed. As the altar was being constructed, blocks of wood or stone were used to stand in at the southeastern corner for the missing base (and similarly at each upper corner of the altar), until the whole altar was completed, at which time the blocks were removed, thus leaving the southeastern corner without a base and the horns of the altar wholly hollow.

The altar is not considered fit for use if any of its four horns or its base is absent, or if it is not perfectly square in its dimensions. Indeed, any altar that lacks a horn, its base or its ramp, or which is not perfectly square, is considered unfit for use, because all four of these features are deemed indispensable. The same is not true, however, for the length, width or height of the altar, with the proviso that the altar not be smaller than one cubit wide, one cubit long and three cubits high, because this minimal size corresponds to the dimensions of the altar built in the desert Tabernacle on which the offerings were arrayed.

If more than a single handbreadth of the altar was missing through damage, it was considered unfit for use. If the damage was less than that, however, the altar was considered fit, providing that there were no blemished stones in the part that remained.

Chapter Three

The candelabrum is described in detail in the Torah. The central column, for example, was provided with four ornamental “cups”, two ornamental “buds” and two ornamental “flowers”, as it is written, “And the candelabrum shall have four “cups” similar to almond blossoms, each with its buds and flowers (Exodus 25:34).” And there was also a fourth “flower” towards the base of the column, as it is written, “Towards the flower at its base . . . (Numbers 8:9).”

This base stood on three legs. Six branches extended from the central column, three on each side, and these branches had three ornamental “buds.” Each of these branches had three ornamen-

The Shema

When praying without a minyan, recite these words before the Shema:

God is our faithful Sovereign.

Hear,
O Israel,
A ,
our God,
A is one.

Add these words in an undertone before continuing:

May the name of the glorious sovereignty of God
forever be blessed.

וְאֶהְבֵּת אֶת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל-
לִבְבְּךָ וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל-
מְאֹדְךָ: וְהָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה
אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מִצְוֶיךָ הַיּוֹם עַל-
לִבְבְּךָ: וְשִׁנַּנְתָּם לְבִנְיָהּ וְדַפְרֹת
בָּם בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבְלִכְתֹּךָ
בְּדָרְךָ וּבְשֹׁכְבְּךָ וּבְקוּמְךָ:
וְקִשְׂרָתָם לְאוֹת עַל-יָדְךָ וְהָיוּ
לְטֹטְפוֹת בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ: וְכִתַּבְתָּם
עַל-מְזוֹזוֹת בֵּיתְךָ וּבְשַׁעְרֶיךָ:

tal “cups”, plus a “bud” and a “flower”, all of these fashioned to look like almond blossoms in bloom.

There were thus, all together, twenty-two “cups”, nine “flowers” and eleven “buds.” All are deemed indispensable, to the extent that the absence of even one of these forty-two ornaments renders the whole candelabrum unusable.

This law only applies, however, when the candelabrum is fashioned of gold. Should other metal be used, however, we dispense with the “cups”, “buds” and “flowers.” If it is made of gold, though, it must weigh a full talent (including the lamps) and must be made of one single block of gold. If it is made of other metals, we do not insist on any specific weight, nor is it problematic if the candelabrum is hollow.

The candelabrum may not be fashioned under any circumstances of metal chips, whether they are gold or any other metal.

The various appurtenances used in connection with the candelabrum—the tongs and the pans and the oil pots—do not count in the weight requirement of one talent, because Scripture speaks of them separately at Exodus 25:38, indicating in different clauses that the candelabrum must be of pure gold and that its tongs and pans too must be of pure gold. It specifically does not mention the lamps in this context, because they are part of the candelabrum and, thus, are included in the one-talent weight requirement.

The seven branches of the candelabrum are indispensable, as are the lamps. This law applies whether they are made of gold or any other metal. The lamps must be attached to the branches.

The six lamps attached to the six branches that protrude from the central pillar are all built to incline slightly towards the lamp that is atop the central shaft. This lamp atop the central shaft, however, was inclined westward towards the Holy of Holies, and was thus called the “Western Lamp.”

The ornamental “cups” referred to above resembled the kind of Alexandrian goblets that had wide “mouths” and narrow bases. The ornamental “buds” resembled so-called Cretan apples, which have the ovoid shape of eggs with two slightly elongated ends. The ornamental “flowers” were like

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the flowers atop pillars, something like a flat dish with its lip folded over towards the outside.

The candelabrum was eighteen handbreadths high, according to the following calculations. The base and its "flower" were three handbreadths, then there were two smooth handbreadths above that, then another handbreadth for the next "bud" and the two branches that protruded from the central shaft at that point, one in each direction, where they continued up to the full height of the central shaft, then another smooth handbreadth. Then there was another handbreadth for the next "bud" and the next two branches, which protruded out from it. (These too went out in opposite directions and reached the full height of the central shaft.) Then there was another smooth handbreadth, then another handbreadth for the next "bud" and the final two branches that protruded out from it, again going out in opposite directions and reaching the full height of the central shaft. Then there were two smooth handbreadths. There were thus three handbreadths left, and these were for the three ornamental "cups", plus the ornamental "bud" and the ornamental "flower" that adorned the central shaft.

There was a stone in front of the candelabrum that had three steps built into it, and it was on this stone that the *kohen* would stand to prepare the lamps for use. He would place the oil pot, the tongs and the pans on the stone when he was preparing the lamps.

The table in the sanctum was twelve handbreadths long and six handbreadths wide. It was placed with its long side parallel to the length of the Temple and its short side parallel to the short side of the Temple. This was the practice with all the other appurtenances of the Temple as well: if they had a long side, it was aligned with the long side of the Temple and the short side was aligned with the short side of the Temple. The sole exception to this rule, in fact, was the Ark itself that was placed with its long side aligned with the short side of the Temple. The lamps of the candelabrum, however, were aligned with the short side of the Temple, that is to say: from north to south . . . There were also two tables in the *ulam*,

And you shall love A , your God, with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. And these words, which I command you this day, shall be upon your heart, and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. And you shall bind them for a sign upon your hand, and they shall be a fourfold symbol between your eyes. And you shall write them upon the doorposts of your house, and upon your gates.

וְהָיָה אִם־שָׁמַעַ תִּשְׁמְעוּ אֶל־מִצְוֹתַי אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי
מִצְוֶה אֶתְכֶם הַיּוֹם לְאַהֲבָה אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם
וּלְעֲבֹדוֹ בְּכֹל־לִבְבְּכֶם וּבְכֹל־נַפְשְׁכֶם: וְנָתַתִּי
מִטֶּר־אֶרְצְכֶם בְּעֵתוֹ יוֹרֵה וּמִלְקוֹשׁ וְאֶסְפַּת
דָּגָנְךָ וְתִירְשֶׁךָ וְיִצְהַרְךָ: וְנָתַתִּי עֵשֶׂב בְּשִׂדְךָ
לְבַהֲמֹתֶךָ וְאֶכְלַת וְשִׁבְעַתָּ: הַשְּׁמֵרׁוּ לָכֶם פֶּן־
יִפְתָּה לְבַבְכֶם וְסִרְתֶּם וְעַבַּדְתֶּם אֱלֹהִים
אֲחֵרִים וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתֶם לָהֶם: וְחָרָה אַרְיֵיהוּהָ
בְּכֶם וְעָצַר אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְלֹא־יִהְיֶה מָטָר
וְהָאֲדָמָה לֹא תִתֵּן אֶת־יְבוּלָהּ וְאֶבְדַּתֶּם מִהָרָה
מִעַל הָאָרֶץ הַטֵּבָה אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה נָתַן לָכֶם:
וְשִׁמְתֶם אֶת־דְּבָרֵי אֱלֹהַ עַל־לִבְבְּכֶם וְעַל־
נַפְשְׁכֶם וּקְשִׁרְתֶּם אֹתָם לְאוֹת עַל־יַדְכֶם וְהָיִי
לְטוֹטְפֹת בֵּין עֵינֵיכֶם: וּלְמִדַּתֶּם אֹתָם אֶת־
בְּנֵיכֶם לְדַבֵּר בָּם בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבְלִכְתְּךָ
בְּדֶרֶךְ וּבְשֹׁכְבְךָ וּבְקוּמְךָ: וְכִתְבֹתֶם עַל־מְזוּזוֹת
בֵּיתְךָ וּבְשַׁעְרֶיךָ: לְמַעַן יִרְבּוּ יְמֵיכֶם וְיַמֵּי
בְּנֵיכֶם עַל הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה לְאַבְתֵּיכֶם
לֵאמֹר לָהֶם פְּנִימֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם עַל־הָאָרֶץ:

just inside the entrance to the Temple building: one was made of marble and it was upon it that the *kohen* placed the showbread when entering the *heichal*, and one made of gold on which he placed the bread upon exiting. (This was because all shifts of status in the Temple had to produce a more, not less, luxurious setting for the item in question.)

The incense altar was a square cubit and was placed inside the *heichal* exactly halfway between the northern and southern walls on the eastern side of the table and the candelabrum. All three of these appurtenances, however, were placed in the third of the *heichal* that was closest to the *parochet* that served as the barrier between the sanctum and the Holy of Holies.

The laver has twelve spigots so that all the *kohanim* involved in offering up the daily *tamid* offering could sanctify themselves (i.e., by washing their hands and feet) at the same time. Also, a kind of mechanical device existed that pumped water up into the laver at all times, but it was not deemed a sacred Temple vessel so that the water that was in it overnight would not be considered unfit for use on the subsequent day. The laver itself, however, was deemed a sacred vessel capable of rendering its contents sacred as well—and all substances made holy by a sacred vessel are deemed unfit for use if they remain in that vessel overnight.

Chapter Four

There was a stone in the western part of the Holy of Holies on which the Ark itself rested and before which were arrayed a container of manna and the staff of Aaron. When King Solomon built the Temple, however, and was prophetically granted the knowledge that it would one day be destroyed, he created a place beneath the Temple in very deep and circuitous caverns in which to hide away the Ark. In time, it was King Josiah who gave the order to hide the Ark in the place prepared by Solomon, as it is written, "And he (i.e., King Josiah) said to the Levites, intercessors of all Israel and holy to A , 'Put the holy Ark in the house that Solomon, son of

David, king of Israel, built for it. It shall no longer be a burden on your shoulders; serve instead A , your God (2 Chronicles 35:3).” With it were hidden away as well the staff of Aaron, the container (of manna) and the anointing oil (used to anoint kohanim and kings in ancient times). None of these things returned when the Second Temple was built. Even the Urim and Tumim, which did exist in the Second Temple, did not actually respond to questions by means of the holy spirit of prophecy and, so, were not actually used, as it is written, “until there arise a kohen with Urim and Tumim (Ezra 2:62).” The Urim and Tumim in use in the Second Temple, therefore, were merely there to complete the requirement that the High Priest wear all eight sacred garments designated by Scripture and so not be considered as one “deficient in garb.”

There was a wall that divided the sanctum and the Holy of Holies in the First Temple that was a cubit thick. When they built the Second Temple, however, they were unsure whether the cubit of the wall had belonged to the measurement of the sanctum or of the Holy of Holies, and so they built the Temple in such a way that the Holy of Holies was a full twenty cubits long and the sanctum, a full forty cubits, with an extra cubit between the sanctum and the Holy of Holies. Also, in the Second Temple, they did not build a wall between the sanctum and the Holy of Holies, but instead they created two curtains, one on the side of the Holy of Holies and one on the side of the sanctum with a cubit between them that corresponded to the thickness of the wall that had been in that spot in the First Temple. In the First Temple, by contrast, there was only one curtain, as it is written, “And the curtain shall provide you with a separation between the sanctum and the Holy of Holies (Exodus 26:33).”

The Temple building that the returnees from exile built was one hundred cubits square and one hundred cubits tall. The measurement of its height was as follows. There was a solid foundation on which the whole structure rested that was six cubits high. The walls of the Temple themselves were forty cubits tall. Atop them was a cubit of ornamental engraving and on top of that

And it shall come to pass, if you hearken diligently unto My commandments which I command you this day, to love A , your God, and to serve God with all your heart with all your soul, that I will give the rain of your land in its season, the former rain and the latter rain, that you may gather in your grain, and your wine, and your oil. And I will put grass in your fields for your cattle, and you shall eat and be satisfied. Take heed, lest your heart be deceived, and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them, and the anger of A be kindled against you, and God shut up the heavens so that there is no rain and the ground no longer yields its fruit and you vanish from the good land which A is giving to you. Therefore shall you take these of My words into your heart and your soul, and you shall bind them for a sign upon your hand and they shall be a fourfold symbol between your eyes. And you shall teach them to your children, talking of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way, when you lie down and when you rise up. And you shall write them upon the doorposts of your house and upon your gates, so that your days, and the days of your children, may be multiplied upon the land which A swore unto your ancestors to give them for as long as the heavens are above the earth.

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: דַּבֵּר
אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם וְעָשׂוּ
לָהֶם צִיצִית עַל־פְּנֵי בְגָדֵיהֶם לְדֹרֹתָם
וְנָתַנּוּ עַל־צִיצִית הַפָּנֶה פְּתִיל תְּכֵלֶת:
וְהָיָה לָכֶם לְצִיצִית וּרְאִיתֶם אֹתוֹ
וְזָכַרְתֶּם אֶת־כָּל־מִצְוֹת יְהוָה וְעִשִּׂיתֶם
אֹתָם וְלֹא תִתְּוּרוּ אַחֲרַי לַבְּבֹקֶם וְאַחֲרַי
עֵינֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר־אַתֶּם זֹנִים אַחֲרֵיהֶם:
לְמַעַן תִּזְכְּרוּ וְעִשִּׂיתֶם אֶת־כָּל־מִצְוֹתַי
וְהָיִיתֶם קְדוֹשִׁים לֵאלֹהֵיכֶם: אֲנִי יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם מִמִּצְרָיִם
מִצְרַיִם לֵהֵיוֹת לָכֶם לֵאלֹהִים אֲנִי יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:

The cantor or baal tefillah links the Shema to the blessing that follows by intoning these words aloud:

יהוה אלהיכם אמת 

were two cubits that were unadorned, but which served to catch rain water. These two cubits were together called the Beth Dilpa and the thickness of the ceiling over the Beth Dilpa was another cubit. Above that was another cubit of plaster. On top of that was a second story built on top of the first, the walls of which were another forty cubits in height. At its top were another cubit of ornamental engraving, two cubits for a second Beth Dilpa, a cubit for the thickness of the ceiling itself and another cubit of plaster. On the roof was a railing that was three cubits tall. On top of the railing was a sheet of iron as sharp as a sword that was a full cubit in height; its function was to keep birds away and it was called the Klei-Orev (literally: “the crow annihilator.”) The whole structure was this a full hundred cubits tall.

From the west to the east was one hundred cubits according to the following calculation. There were four concentric walls with three empty spaces between them. From the westernmost wall and the next closest wall was a space of five cubits. Between the second and third walls, and between the third and fourth walls, however, was a space of six cubits. (These dimensions include both the thickness of the walls and the space between them.) The Holy of Holies was twenty cubits long and there was an extra cubit between the two curtains that divided the Holy of Holies from the sanctum. The length of the sanctum was forty cubits and the thickness of the western wall in which the gate was set was six cubits. The *ulam* (i.e., the easternmost chamber) was eleven cubits and the thickness of the wall of the *ulam* was five cubits. Thus the whole length from west to east was one hundred cubits.

From north to south was also one hundred cubits. The thickness of the wall of the *ulam* was five cubits. From the wall of the *ulam* to the wall of the sanctum was ten cubits. The sanctum was surrounded by six concentric walls with five empty spaces between them. Between the outermost wall and the one next to it was a space of five cubits. Between the second and third walls was a space of three cubits. Between the third and fourth walls was a space of five cubits.

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Between the fourth and fifth walls was a space of six cubits. Between the fifth and innermost wall was a space of six cubits, thus yielding a total of forty cubits on each side. The width of the interior space of the building itself was twenty cubits. Thus the width of the whole was exactly one hundred cubits as well.

The small gates in the Temple were called by the Hebrew word **pishpash** and there were two of them in the **heichal**, one on either side of the great gate between them: one to the north and one to the south. No one ever used the one to the south, as was made explicit by Ezekiel, who wrote of it, "This gate shall be shut and never opened (Ezekiel 44:2)." The one to the north was in use, however. To enter the sanctum, then, one would enter the northern **pishpash**, walk between the two walls until reaching the opening to the sanctum on one's left, then enter the **heichal** and walk to the great gate and open it.

The great gate was ten cubits wide and twenty cubits tall. It had four doors, two inside ones and two outer ones. The outer ones opened into the doorway in such a way so as to cover the thickness of the wall, but the inner ones opened into the Temple itself and merely covered the space behind the doors.


The entrance to the **ulam** was forty cubits high and twenty cubits wide. It had, however, no gates. Instead, there were five oak beams decorated with ornamental carving overhead. The lowest one extended over the doorway a cubit on each side and each of the five extended a cubit in each direction over the one beneath it. The result was that the uppermost beam was thirty cubits long and there was a layer of stones between each of the beams.

The Temple building was wide in front and narrower in the back in a way that was suggestive of the shape of a lion's body. There were balconies that surrounded the entire Temple on the outside of the outermost wall. The lowest balcony was five cubits wide with an overhead ledge of six cubits. The middle balcony was six cubits wide and its overhead ledge was seven cubits. The upper balcony was seven cubits wide, as described in the


And **A** spoke unto Moses, saying: "Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them make fringes on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put a thread of blue with the fringe of each corner. And the point of the fringe shall be so that you look upon it and remember all the commandments of **A** and do them, and so that you not wander off after your own heart and your own eyes, after which you used to go astray, and so that you may remember and do all My commandments and be holy unto your God. I am **A**, your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God: I am **A**, your God."

The cantor or baal tefillah links the Shema to the blessing that follows by intoning these words aloud:

 **A**, your God, is truth.

אִמֶת וַיֵּצִיב וַנְכוּן וְקִיָּם וַיִּשָּׂר וַנֶּאֱמַן וְאֱהוֹב וְחָבִיב
וַנְּחַמֵּד וְנַעֲמִים וְנוֹרָא וְאֲדִיר וּמִתְקָן וּמְקַבֵּל וְטוֹב
וַיִּפֶּה הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה עָלֵינוּ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד. אִמֶת, אֱלֹהֵי
עוֹלָם, מִלְּפָנָיו, צוּר יַעֲקֹב, מִגֵּן יִשְׁעָנוּ,  לְדֹר
וְדֹר הוּא קָיָם, וְשָׁמוֹ קָיָם, וְכִסְאוֹ נְכוּן, וּמַלְכוּתוֹ
וְאַמוּנָתוֹ לְעֵד קַיָּמֶת.

וּדְבָרָיו חַיִּים וְקַיָּמִים, נְאֻמָּנִים וְנַחֲמָדִים לְעֵד
וְלְעוֹלָמֵי עוֹלָמִים. עַל אֲבוֹתֵינוּ וְעָלֵינוּ, עַל בְּנֵינוּ
וְעַל דוֹרוֹתֵינוּ, וְעַל כָּל דוֹרוֹת זָרַע יִשְׂרָאֵל עַבְדֶּיךָ.

עַל הָרֵאשׁוֹנִים וְעַל הָאַחֲרוֹנִים, דָּבָר טוֹב
וְקָיָם לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד, אִמֶת וְאַמוּנָה, חֵק וְלֹא
יַעֲבֹר.  אִמֶת שְׂאֵפָה הוּא יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ
וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, מִלְּפָנָיו מִלְּפָנֶיךָ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ,
גֵּאֻלָּנוּ גֵּאֻל אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, יוֹצְרֵנוּ צוּר יִשׁוּעַתֵינוּ,
פּוֹדֵנוּ וּמַצִּילָנוּ מֵעוֹלָם שְׂמֵךְ, אֵין אֱלֹהִים
זוֹלָתֶךָ.

עֲזַרְת אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אֵפָה הוּא מֵעוֹלָם, מִגֵּן וּמוֹשִׁיעַ לְבַנְיָהֶם
אֲחֵרֵיהֶם בְּכָל דֹּר וְדוֹר. בְּרוּם עוֹלָם מוֹשְׁבֶךָ וּמִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ
וְצִדְקָתֶךָ עַד אֲפֹסֵי אֶרֶץ. אֲשֶׁרֵי אִישׁ שִׁשְׁמַע לְמִצְוֹתֶיךָ,

Book of Kings: "The lowest balcony was five cubits wide, and the middle was six cubits wide, and the third was seven cubits wide . . . (1 Kings 6:6)". Thus did three balconies surround the Temple building on three sides. There were also kinds of extensions built on the walls of the ulam and this is how they were constructed: from the bottom to the top, one exposed cubit of wall space, then a three-cubit high extension, then another exposed cubit of wall space, then another three-cubit tall extension, and so on to the top, so that the walls of the entire ulam had these extensions. The width of each extension was three cubits, with one cubit of free wall space between them, except that the uppermost extension was four cubits wide.

Each of these empty spaces between the walls was called a ta (plural: tai'm), that is, a cell. It was thus so that the entire Temple building was surrounded by these cells: five on the north, five on the south and three on the west. Furthermore, each cell featured three sub-cells within it, one atop the next. Thus there were fifteen cells (that is, taking each sub-cell as a cell in its own right) on the south, five atop five and five atop those. Similarly, there were fifteen in the north. In the west, there were eight all together: three atop three and two atop those. The final tally, thus, was thirty-eight.

Each of these cells had three entrances: one opening onto the cell to the right, one opening onto the cell to the left and one opening onto the cell above it. The middle cell, however, that was in the extreme northeastern corner had five entrances: one to the cell to its right, one to the cell above it, one to the walkway, one to the cell that formed the pishpash referred to above and one that led into the Temple proper.

The walkway just referred to extended from the northeastern corner to the northwestern corner and it was along this walkway that one could ascend to the roofs of the tai'm. One could, for example, walk westward along the walkway along the entire northern side of the heichal building until reaching the western wall, then turn to the south and walk along the entire western wall until reaching the southern wall. One could then turn

to the east and walk in that direction along the southern wall until arriving at the entrance to the upper chamber, because that entry way was facing to the south.

At the entrance to the upper chamber were two posts made of cedar wood by means of which one could ascend to the roof of the upper story of the *heichal* building. There were low wooden blocks there that served to delineate the boundaries of the chambers in the building below, specifically between the roof covering the *kodesh* (that is, the sanctum) and the roof covering the part of the building housing the Holy of Holies. There were small doorways in the upper chamber that opened onto the Holy of Holies from above and it was through these doorways that workmen would be lowered in large baskets so that they not be overwhelmed by the experience of seeing the holiness of the Holy of Holies directly in its fullest splendor. The walls of the *heichal* were whitewashed every year for Passover.


Chapter Five

The Temple Mount—that is, Mount Moriah—was five hundred cubits by five hundred cubits in size and it was surrounded entirely by a wall. Beneath it were constructed arched subterranean chambers atop others so that there could be no possibility of the Temple itself being contaminated by a deeply buried source of impurity. The Temple Mount was surrounded by concentric, roofed balustrades as well.


The Temple Mount had five gates: one to the west, one to the east, one to the north and two to the south. The width of each gate was ten cubits. They were all twenty cubits tall and each had doors.

Closer in was a latticed fence only ten hand-breadths tall called the *soreg*. Closer in than the *soreg*, however, was the *cheil*—a rampart ten cubits tall, regarding which Jeremiah wrote in the Book of Lamentations, “(God) made to mourn the *cheil* and the wall (Lamentations 2:8,)” in which verse the reference to “wall” denotes the wall of the courtyard.

The Blessing after the Shema

This set of eternal truths, we ever accept as true, certain, real, existent, honest, reliable, beloved, cherished, delightful, lovely, awesome, mighty, perfect, acceptable, good and lovely. And true it is as well that the Eternal God is our Sovereign, the rock of Jacob, the shield of salvation.  Throughout every generation, God and the divine name are both ever existent, just as the divine throne is forever fixed in its celestial place and the sovereignty of God, and the reliability of God, are ever real.

And so too do the words of God ever exist as vibrant, living revelation, always inspiring faith, forever and for always a source of delight not only for our ancestors and for us ourselves, but also for our children and our more distant descendants and, indeed, for all future descendants of Jacob, Your faithful servant.

This set of truths was as good and permanently real to the ancients as it will be to future generations; it is true and absolutely certain, a law that cannot be transgressed.  True it is that our Sovereign is the same God Who was the Sovereign of our ancestors, and that our Redeemer is the same God Who was their ancient Redeemer. Your name too is ever existent, O Creator, the Rock of our salvation, our Redeemer and our Savior. There is no God but You.

Just as You always came to the aid of our ancestors, so are You the Protector and Savior of their descendants in every generation. Your divine palace may exist on high, but Your justice and Your righteousness extend to the furthest reaches of the earth.

Further in from the cheil was the courtyard itself. The courtyard—called the azarah in Hebrew—was 187 cubits long and 135 cubits wide, and it had seven gates: three on the western end of the northern side, three on the western end of the southern side, one in the center of the eastern wall directly across from the Holy of Holies.

Each of these gates was ten cubits wide and twenty cubits tall and, with the exception of the eastern gate, they all had doors that were covered in gold. The doors of the eastern gate were covered in bronze that looked like gold and this gate was called the Upper Gate or the Gate of Nicanor.


The courtyard was not built in the precise center of the Temple Mount, but was rather built further from the southern extremity of the Temple Mount than it was from any other of its extremities and it was built closer to the west than to any other of the extremities. It was, however, closer to the western end of the Temple Mount than it was to the northern end, and closer to the northern end than to the eastern one.

The easternmost part of the courtyard was designated The Court of Women. It was 135 cubits long and 135 cubits wide. In each of its interior corners were four forty-cubit square chambers that were left unroofed and which must always remain that way.


What was the purpose of these chambers? The southeastern one was the Chamber of the Nazirites and it was there that nazirites would cook their shlamim sacrifices and shave their hair. The northeastern one was the Chamber of the Wood Stores and it was there that the kohanim who were unfit for service at the altar due to physical blemishes of various sorts would occupy themselves by checking the wood to be used on the altar for worms—for any wood that was found to harbor worms was unfit for use in the Temple. The northwestern chamber was the Chamber of the Lepers. The southwestern chamber was used to store wine and oil and was called the Chamber of Oil Supplies.

The Court of Women was surrounded by a balcony, so that women could look on from above at the men below without having to mix together.

וּתְוֹרֶתָהּ וּדְבַרְךָ יְשִׁים עַל לְבוֹ. אַמֶּת, אֶתָּה הוּא אָדוֹן
 לְעַמּוֹךָ, וּמִלְּךָ גְבוּר לָרִיב רִיבָם. אַמֶּת, אֶתָּה הוּא רֵאשִׁוֹן
 וְאַתָּה הוּא אַחֲרוֹן, וּמִבְּלַעֲדֶיךָ אֵין לָנוּ מִלְּךָ גּוֹאֵל וּמוֹשִׁיעַ.
 מִמִּצְרַיִם גְּאֻלְתָּנוּ, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, וּמִפִּיט עֲבָדִים פְּדִיתָנוּ.
 כָּל בְּכוֹרֵיהֶם הִרְגָתָ, וּבְכוֹרְךָ גְאֻלְתָּ, וַיִּם סוּף בְּקַעֲתָ, וְזֵדִים
 טִבְעָתָ, וַיִּדְיִדִים הֶעֱבַרְתָּ, וַיִּכְסּוּ מַיִם צְרִיָהֶם, אֶחָד מֵהֶם
 לֹא נוֹתֵר. עַל זֹאת שִׁבְחוּ אֱהוֹבִים וְרוֹמְמוֹ אֵל, וְנִתְּנוּ
 יְדִידִים זְמֵרוֹת שִׁירוֹת וְתִשְׁבְּחוֹת, בְּרִכוֹת וְהוֹדָאוֹת, לְמִלְּךָ
 אֵל חַי וְקַיִם, רָם וְנֹשֵׂא, גָּדוֹל וְנוֹרָא, מְשֻׁפָּיל גְּאִים,
 וּמַגְבִּיֵה שְׁפָלִים, מוֹצִיא אֲסִירִים, וּפּוֹדֵה עֲנוּיִם, וְעוֹזֵר
 דְּלִים, וְעוֹנֵה לְעַמּוֹ בְּעֵת שׁוֹעֵם אֱלֹנוּ.

 תְּהַלּוֹת לְאֵל עֲלִיוֹן, בְּרוּךְ הוּא וּמְבוֹרָךְ. מוֹשֶׁה וּבְנֵי
 יִשְׂרָאֵל לָךְ עָנוּ שִׁירָה בְּשִׂמְחָה רַבָּה וְאָמְרוּ כָּלֵם: מִי
 כְּמוֹכָה בְּאֵלֶם יְהוָה, מִי כְּמוֹכָה נֶאֱדָר בְּקֹדֶשׁ, נוֹרָא תְּהַלּוֹת
 עֲשֵׂה פֶלֶא.

 שִׁירָה חֲדָשָׁה שִׁבְחוּ גְאוּלִים לְשִׁמְךָ עַל שִׁפְתַי הַיִּם,
 יַחַד כָּלֵם הוֹדוּ וְהִמְלִיכוּ וְאָמְרוּ: יְהוָה יִמְלֹךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

 צִוֵּר יִשְׂרָאֵל, קוֹיְמָה בְּעֶזְרַת יִשְׂרָאֵל,
 וּפְדֵה כְּנַאֲמֶךָ יְהוּדָה וַיִּשְׂרָאֵל. גְּאֻלְנוּ,
 יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ, קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל. בְּרוּךְ
 אֶתָּה יְהוָה, גְּאֻל יִשְׂרָאֵל.


There was a large structure with a dome built outside the northern wall of the courtyard between the **azarah** and the **cheil**. This building was surrounded by layers of stone and was called the House of the Hearth. It had two entrances: one to the **azarah** and one to the **cheil**. And it too had four interior chambers, two of which were in sacred space and two of which were in profane space. (A row of low wooden posts divided between the sacred and profane space within the chamber.) What was the purpose of these chambers? The southwestern one was the Chamber of the Lambs. The southeastern one was the Chamber of the Showbread Makers. The northeastern chamber was the one in which the Hasmoneans buried the stones of the altar that had been desecrated by the Seleucid kings. The northwestern chamber was merely the entrance to the **mikveh**.


One who wished to descend to the **mikveh** from this chamber would walk along a corridor lighted on either side by burning lamps that went under the entire Temple and led to the **mikveh**. There was also an open hearth there and a special toilet called the Privy of Dignity. And why was it considered a place of special dignity? Because it had a door and, if one found it locked, one could tell that someone was inside.


The length of the courtyard from east to west was 187 cubits, as follows. From the western wall of the courtyard to the wall of the **heichal** was eleven cubits. The **heichal** itself was one hundred cubits long. From the **ulam** to the altar was twenty-two cubits and the altar itself was thirty-two cubits long. The space for the **kohanim** to walk about during the worship service was called the Court of the Priests was eleven cubits long. The place that the regular Israelites stood, called the Court of Israel, was also eleven cubits long . . . There were eight chambers in the Court of Israel: three in the north and three in the south. (Regarding the other two, see just below.) The ones in the south were the Chamber of Salt, the Chamber of Parvah and the Chamber of the Rinsers. The Chamber of Salt was where they salted the sacrificial meat. The Chamber of Parvah was where they treated the hides of the sacrifices and

Happy are they who adhere to your commandments, and who place Your Torah and Your revealed word upon their hearts. It is true that You are the Ruler of Your people, a mighty Sovereign ever willing to defend them against their foes. And true it is that You are the first and the last, and that, other than You, we have no sovereign, redeemer or savior.

You redeemed us from Egypt, **A**, our God, rescuing us from the house of bondage. You killed their firstborn sons, but You redeemed Your own firstborn. You split the Sea of Reeds and drowned the wicked, while bringing Your beloved people across the seabed on dry land as the waters closed in on their foes. Not a single one of the enemy survived!

For all this, the beloved of God sang songs of praise and exaltation to God, those whom God so loved sang songs and hymns, praises and odes and elegies of blessing to their living and ever-existent Sovereign God. And so did they acclaim as illustrious, glorious, great and awesome, the God who ever casts down the arrogant and raises up the humble, Who releases the imprisoned and rescues the meek and helps the needy, Who answers the people of God whenever they cry out for deliverance.  All praise is due to God Most High, source of blessing wholly worthy of the blessing of humanity.

And so did Moses and the Israelites sing out to You in joyous song, saying: Who is like You, **A**? Who is like You, almighty God of the sanctuary, awesome subject of the praises of humanity, Doer of wonders?  Those who were redeemed sang a new song to Your name; on the shores of the sea, they paused to sing together in one voice of their gratitude, to acclaim You as their sovereign, saying: **A** will reign forever and always.

 Rock of Israel, rise to the defense of Israel and rescue Judah and Israel, as promised in Scripture. Redeem us, O God Whose name is **A**, God of all heavens, the Holy One of Israel.
Blessed are You, **A**, Redeemer of Israel.

The Morning Amidah

(A version of the first blessing of the Amidah that includes the names of the matriarchs of Israel may be found on page 99.)

אֲדֹנָי שְׁפָתַי תִּפְתָּח וּפִי יַגִּיד תְּהִלָּתְךָ.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם, אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק, וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב, הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל, הַגִּבּוֹר, וְהַנּוֹרָא, אֵל עֲלִיּוֹן, גּוֹמֵל חַסְדִּים טוֹבִים, וְקוֹנֵה הַכֹּל, וְזוֹכֵר חַסְדֵי אֲבוֹת, וּמְבִיא גּוֹאֵל לְבָנֵי בְנֵיהֶם לְמַעַן שְׁמוֹ בְּאַהֲבָה...

Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, add these words:

זְכַרְנוּ לְחַיִּים, מִלֶּךְ חַפֵּץ בַּחַיִּים,

וְכַתְּבֵנוּ בְּסֵפֶר הַחַיִּים, לְמַעַן אֱלֹהִים חַיִּים

...מִלֶּךְ עוֹזֵר וּמוֹשִׁיעַ וּמִגֹּן. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, מִגֹּן אַבְרָהָם. אַתָּה גִבּוֹר לְעוֹלָם אֲדֹנָי, מַחֲיֵה מֵתִים אַתָּה, רַב לְהוֹשִׁיעַ...

Between Shemini Atzeret and Passover, add these words:

מְשִׁיב הַרוּחַ וּמוֹרִיד הַגֶּשֶׁם

...מְכַלְכֵל חַיִּים בְּחֶסֶד, מַחֲיֵה מֵתִים בְּרַחֲמִים רַבִּים, סוֹמֵךְ נוֹפְלִים, וְרוֹפֵא חוֹלִים, וּמְתִיר אֲסוּרִים, וּמְקַיֵם אֲמוּנָתוֹ לְיִשְׂרָאֵל עַד. מִי כְמוֹךָ, בַּעַל גְּבוּרֹת, וּמִי דוֹמֵה לָךְ, מִלֶּךְ מְמִית וּמַחֲיֵה וּמַצְמִיחַ יְשׁוּעָה...

Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, add these words:

מִי כְמוֹךָ, אֵב הַרְחָמִים, זוֹכֵר יְצוּרֵינוּ לְחַיִּים בְּרַחֲמִים

...וּנְאָמֵן אַתָּה לְהַחְיֹת מֵתִים. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, מַחֲיֵה הַמֵּתִים.

Except for the cantor or baal tefillah when repeating the Amidah, continue with the words אַתָּה קְדוֹשׁ beneath the solid line on the next page.

on its roof was the special mikveh that the High Priest used on Yom Kippur. The Chamber of the Rinsers was the place in which they would rinse the innards of the sacrifices and the ramp leading up to the roof of the Chamber of Parvah began there. The three in the north were the Chamber of Hewn Stone, the Chamber of the Pail and the Chamber of Wood. The Chamber of Hewn Stone was where the Great Sanhedrin met; half of its space was holy and the other half was profane. It too had two doorways, one leading into sacred space and the other leading off into the profane area of the Temple Mount. (It was in the profane half of the space that the members of the Sanhedrin were permitted to be seated during their deliberations.) The Chamber of the Pail housed the well from which water for the entire courtyard was drawn with a special pail called a *gulah*. The Chamber of Wood was behind the other two and was also called the Chamber of the High Priest or the Chamber of the Parhedrin (i.e., the Counselors). The roofs of all three were on the same level. There were also two other chambers in the Court of Israel: one to the right of the eastern gate called the Chamber of Pinchas the Outfitter and one to the left called the Chamber of the Pancake Makers.

Chapter Six

The Temple was not built on level ground, but on the slope of the (Temple) Mount. One who entered the Temple Mount through the Eastern Gate could walk as far as the end of cheil on flat ground, but would then have to ascend twelve steps to enter from the cheil into the Court of Women. The height of each of these steps was half a cubit, and they were also half a cubit deep.

The entire Court of Women was on level ground as well, but one had to ascend fifteen steps to arrive at the Court of the Israelites. The height of each of these steps was half a cubit, and they were also half a cubit deep.

The entire Courtyard of the Israelites was also on level ground, but one had to climb up a step that was a full cubit high to enter into the Court-

yard of the Priests. On that step was a platform that had three steps (leading up to its top). The height of each of these steps was half a cubit and they were each half a cubit deep. It was thus the case that the Court of the Priests was two and a half cubits more elevated than the Court of the Israelites.

The entire surface of the Court of the Priests, the (area of the) altar and the space between the altar and the **ulam** was level ground, but one had to ascend twelve steps to enter into the **ulam**. Each of these steps was half a cubit high and half a cubit deep. The **ulam** and the **heikhal** were on level ground.

From all this, it follows that the floor of the **heikhal** was twenty-two cubits more elevated than the ground on which the Eastern Gate of the Temple Mount stood. However, the height of the gate leading into the Temple Mount itself was only twenty cubits. Therefore, an individual standing outside the Eastern Gate looking in could not see the entrance to the **heikhal**. For that reason, the wall that was atop this gate was made low so that a **kohen** standing on the Mount of Olives to sprinkle the blood of the red heifer towards the **heikhal** could actually see the entrance to the **heikhal** during the ritual.

There were rooms beneath the Court of the Israelites that opened into the Court of Women, and it was there that the Levites stored their lyres, harps, cymbals and all musical instruments. It was upon the platform that led up from the Court of the Israelites to the Court of the Priests that the Levites would stand when they sang their hymns during the sacrificial service.

The rooms that were specifically built so that they would occupy sacred ground, yet be open to unconsecrated territory followed the following rule: if their roofs were level with the floor of the courtyard, then their interiors were profane and their roofs were deemed consecrated. If, however, they were not level, then even their roofs were deemed unconsecrated, for the roofs and the attic chambers were not consecrated (i.e., when the Temple was dedicated). Therefore, it was forbidden to eat meat of sacrifices of greater sanctity on

The Morning Amidah

(A version of the first blessing of the Amidah that includes the names of the matriarchs of Israel may be found on page 99.)

Adonai, part my lips so that my mouth might praise You.

Blessed are You, A , our God and God of our ancestors, God of Abraham, God of Isaac and God of Jacob, great and mighty God Most High, source of endless mercy, Creator of all, God ever willing to remember the good deeds of ancestors, God Who will lovingly send a redeemer to their children's children for the sake of the divine name . . .

Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, add these words:

Remember us for life, O sovereign God Who desires that we merit life, and inscribe us in the Book of Life for Your own sake, O living God.

. . . O sovereign God, our divine Helper,
Savior and Protector.

Blessed are You, A , Protector of Abraham.

You are forever mighty, Adonai, O God capable of bestowing life anew upon the dead, our never-ending source of salvation . . .

Between Shemini Atzeret and Passover, add these words:

God, Who makes the wind to blow and the rain to fall

. . . God, Who mercifully sustains the living and Who compassionately grants life anew to the dead, Who supports the fallen and Who heals the sick, Who frees the imprisoned and Who will never break faith with those who lie in the dust. Who is like You, Author of mighty deeds? And who can be compared to You, O Sovereign Who decrees death, then grants life anew, and Who will surely bring about our salvation?

Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, add these words:

Who is like You, O Author of compassion,

Who remembers Your creations and mercifully judges them worthy of life?

Indeed, You are certain to grant life anew to the dead.

Blessed are You, A , Who grants life anew
to the dead.

Except for the cantor or baal tefillah when repeating the Amidah, continue with the words "You are holy" beneath the solid line on the next page.

The Kedushah

When the cantor or the baal tefillah repeats the Amidah,
the Kedushah is recited here.

The cantor or baal tefillah begins with these words:
נְקַדֵּשׁ אֶת שְׁמֶךָ בְּעוֹלָם, כְּשֵׁם שְׁמִקְדֵּי־שָׁמַיִם אוֹתוֹ בְּשָׁמַיִם מְרוֹם,
כְּפָתוּב עַל יַד גְּבִיּאָה, וְקָרָא זֶה אֶל זֶה וְאָמַר:

The congregation responds:
קְדוֹשׁ קְדוֹשׁ קְדוֹשׁ יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת, מְלֵא כֹל הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדוֹ.

The cantor or baal tefillah repeats the response and continues:
לְעַמְתָּם בְּרוּךְ יְאֻמְרוּ:

The congregation responds:
בְּרוּךְ כְּבוֹד יְהוָה מִמְקוֹמוֹ.

The cantor or baal tefillah repeats the response and continues:
וּבְדַבְרֵי קִדְשֶׁךָ פְּתוּב לְאֹמַר:

The congregation responds:
יְמִלְכֶךָ יְהוָה לְעוֹלָם, אֱלֹהֵיךָ צִיּוֹן לְדֹר וָדֹר, הַלְלוּיָהּ.

The cantor or baal tefillah repeats the response and continues:
לְדֹר וָדֹר בְּגִיד גְּדִלְךָ, וּלְבַצֵּחַ נִצְחִים קִדְשֶׁתְּךָ נְקַדִּישׁ, וְשִׁבְחֶךָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִפְּנֵינוּ
לֹא יִמוּשׁ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד, כִּי אֵל מְלִיכָה גְדוֹל וְקְדוֹשׁ אַתָּה.

Except between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, say:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, הָאֵל הַקְּדוֹשׁ.

Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, say:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, הַמְּלִיכָה הַקְּדוֹשׁ.

The cantor or baal tefillah continues on the bottom of this page
with the words אַתָּה חוֹבֵן לְאָדָם דְּעַת

When praying silently, continue here:

אַתָּה קְדוֹשׁ וְשִׁמְךָ קְדוֹשׁ וְקְדוּשֵׁיִם בְּכֹל יוֹם יְהַלְלוּךָ, סְלָתָה.

Except between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, say:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, הָאֵל הַקְּדוֹשׁ.

Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, say:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, הַמְּלִיכָה הַקְּדוֹשׁ.

אַתָּה חוֹבֵן לְאָדָם דְּעַת, וּמְלַמֵּד לְאֹנוֹשׁ בִּינָה. חֲנֻנוּ מֵאַתָּה
דְּעָה, בִּינָה וְהַשְׁפִּיל. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, חוֹבֵן הַדְּעַת.

those roofs and it was forbidden to slaughter sacrifices of lesser sanctity there as well.

If the rooms in question were built within unconsecrated ground, but opened onto consecrated territory, then the interiors were deemed sufficiently consecrated to permit the eating of sacrificial meat there that came from sacrifices of greater sanctity. However, it was still deemed unacceptable to slaughter sacrifices of lesser sanctity there. Nonetheless, if someone contaminated with tumah impurity were to enter into that space, such a one would be exempt from punishment. The roofs of such rooms are deemed unconsecrated in any sense.

The tunnels that opened up into the Temple courtyard were deemed consecrated territory, but those that opened onto the Temple Mount were deemed unconsecrated. Window space and the thickness of the courtyard walls themselves were deemed to possess the same status as the ground just inside them, and this was so both with respect to the consumption of sacrificial meat that came from sacrifices of greater sanctity and also with respect to the laws that govern the introduction of impure persons or substances into the Temple.

Should a Beth Din wish to add to the areas of Jerusalem or to the area of the Temple courtyards, it was permitted to do so. Indeed, it was deemed permissible to extend the courtyard for as long as they wished as long as the added area was part of the Temple Mount. Furthermore, they were permitted to extend the walls of Jerusalem as far as they wished.

However, it is only permitted to add to the city or to the Temple courtyards at the behest of a king and a prophet and the Urim and Tumim, and at the behest of a sitting Sanhedrin of seventy-one elders, as it is written, "According to all that I show you . . . so shall you make it (Exodus 25:9)" and this rule applied for all generations. (In this context, Moses is considered to have been a king.)

How could they extend the limits of the city? The Beth Din would prepare two oxen for thanksgiving offerings, then take the leavened

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loaves offered as part of the sacrifice. The Beth Din would then walk behind the two oxen—the oxen themselves would walk single-file, one behind the other—and they would stop at each corner of the city (that is, at each corner of the city's newly expanded limits), stopping to include every newly included stone or pebble and they would play on their lyres and psalteries and clash their cymbals and sing "I shall extol You, O A , for You have drawn me up and not given my enemies cause to rejoice over my downfall (Psalm 30:2)." They would then continue until they reached the end of the newly sanctified space and there they would stop to consume the leavened bread that was designated for one of the thanksgiving sacrifices and burn up the other. A prophet would be consulted to determine which loaf was to be burnt and which eaten.

Similarly, if they wished to add to the Temple courtyards, the new ground was sanctified by consuming the remains of a grain offering. Just as Jerusalem itself could be extended by formally consuming the loaf of bread connected with a thanksgiving offering in the newly consecrated space (since such could only be consumed within Jerusalem), so was the Temple courtyard extended by consuming the remains of a grain sacrifice that could only be consumed within the Temple courtyard in the newly consecrated space. It was thus eaten at the furthest reach of the newly consecrated area.

Any space not consecrated in precisely the way just set forth is not wholly sacred territory. As a result, the work that Ezra performed with the two thanksgiving offerings (as described in the Book of Nehemiah) was only a kind of commemorative ceremony, but the newly consecrated area was not truly consecrated by his actions, since he did not have a king or the Urim and Tumim with him (to validate his actions). That being the case, in what sense was the city newly consecrated in Ezra's day? In no sense, but there was no need that it be consecrated at all, because the original sanctification undertaken by King Solomon was both effective in his day and remained effective for all time.

The Kedushah

When the cantor or the baal tefillah repeats the Amidah, the Kedushah is recited here.

The cantor or baal tefillah begins with these words:

Let us ascribe holiness to Your name in this world, just as the angels do in highest heaven, as it is written in Scripture, And they call out to each other:

The congregation responds:

Holy, holy, holy is A of the celestial hosts;
the fullness of the world attests to the glory of God.

The cantor or baal tefillah repeats the response and continues:

Whereupon other angels respond:

The congregation responds:

Blessed be the glory of A from its celestial source.

The cantor or baal tefillah repeats the response and continues:

And among Your sacred words preserved in Scripture it is written:

The congregation responds:

A will reign forever, your God, O Zion, in every generation.
Hallelujah!

The cantor or baal tefillah repeats the response and continues:

In every generation, we shall tell of Your greatness and never cease speaking of Your holiness. Indeed, the praises due You will never cease from our mouths, for You are our great and holy Sovereign.

Except between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, say:

Blessed are You, A , holy God.

Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, say:

Blessed are You, A , holy Sovereign.

*The cantor or baal tefillah continues at the bottom of this page with the words
"It is You Who grants intelligence."*

When praying silently, continue here:

You are holy and Your name is holy and the holy ones on high sing Your praises every day, *selah*.

Except between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, say:

Blessed are You, A , holy God.

Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur:

Blessed are You, A , holy Sovereign.

It is You Who grants intelligence and understanding to human beings. Graciously grant each of us, therefore, intelligence, understanding and wisdom.

Blessed are You, A , Who grants intelligence to humanity.

הַשִּׁיבֵנוּ אֲבִינוּ לְתוֹרָתְךָ, וְקִרְבָּנוּ מִלִּפְנֵי לַעֲבוֹדָתְךָ,
וְהַחְזִירֵנוּ בְּתְשׁוּבָה שְׁלֵמָה לְפָנֶיךָ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה,
הַרוֹצֵה בְּתְשׁוּבָה.

סֵלַח לָנוּ, אֲבִינוּ, כִּי חָטָאנוּ, מִחַל לָנוּ, מִלִּפְנֵינוּ, כִּי
בְּשִׁעָנוּ, כִּי מוֹחֵל וְסוֹלֵחַ אַתָּה. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, חַנוּן
הַמְּרַבֵּה לְסֵלַח.

רֵאֵה בְּעֵינֵינוּ, וְרִיבָה רִיבָנוּ, וּגְאֹלָנוּ מִהֲרָה לְמַעַן שְׂמֹךְ,
כִּי גוֹאֵל חֲזָק אַתָּה. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, גּוֹאֵל יִשְׂרָאֵל.

On fast days, the cantor or the baal tefillah adds this paragraph:

עֲנֵנוּ, יְהוָה, עֲנֵנוּ, בְּיוֹם צוֹם תַּעֲנִיתָנוּ, כִּי בָצַרָה גְדוֹלָה
אֲנַחְנוּ. אֵל תִּפְּן אֶל רְשָׁעֵנוּ, וְאֵל תִּסְתֵּר פְּנֵיךָ מִמּוֹנֵנוּ, וְאֵל
תִּתְעַלֵּם מִתְחַבְּתָנוּ. הֲיִיה נָא קְרוֹב לְשׁוֹעֲתָנוּ, יְהִי נָא חֲסִדֶּךָ
לְבַחַמֵּנוּ. טָרֵם נִקְרָא אֵלֶיךָ, עֲנֵנוּ, כַּדָּבָר שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וְהָיָה
טָרֵם יִקְרָאוּ וְאֲנִי אֶעֱנֶה, עוֹד הֵם מִדְּבָרִים וְאֲנִי אֶשְׁמָע. כִּי
אַתָּה, יְהוָה, הָעוֹנֶה בְּעֵת צָרָה, פּוֹדֶה וּמַצִּיל בְּכָל עֵת צָרָה
וּצְרוּקָה. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, הָעוֹנֶה בְּעֵת צָרָה.

רַפְּאֵנוּ, יְהוָה, וְנִרְפָּא, הוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ וְנִוְשָׁעָה, כִּי תִהְלָתָנוּ
אַתָּה, וְהֵעִלָּה רְפוּאָה שְׁלֵמָה לְכָל מַפּוֹתֵינוּ, כִּי אֵל
מִלֶּךְ רוֹפֵא נֶאֱמָן וְרַחֲמָן אַתָּה. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה,
רוֹפֵא חוֹלֵי עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל.

Therefore, it is permissible to offer up all the sacrifices even in the absence of a standing Temple building. It is also permissible to eat all kinds of sacrificial meats, even the most sacred kinds, in any part of the Temple courtyards, even though the Temple itself be in ruins and there be no wall surrounding the enclosure. Furthermore, one may eat sacrificial meat of lesser sanctity and second tithe produce in all of Jerusalem even though the city lacks walls, because the original act of sanctification was effective in its own day and remains effective for all time.

Why do I say with respect to the Temple and Jerusalem itself that the original act of sanctification remains in effect for all time, but regarding the sanctity of the Land of Israel (i.e., as regards the consumption of sabbatical year produce and tithe produce and similar such things) that the original sanctification of the land does not remain in full effect? Because the sanctification of the Temple and of Jerusalem was accomplished through the presence of the divine Shechinah, and the Shechinah can never be considered nullified, just as the rabbis responded to what is written in Scripture, "And I shall destroy your sanctuaries (Leviticus 26:31)," by noting that they are called sanctuaries in that verse to signal that, destroyed though they might be, they nevertheless retain their sanctity. The obligations of the Land of Israel with respect to sabbatical year produce and tithes, however, derive from its conquest by human beings. Once the land was wrested from their hands, therefore, the conquest was no longer in effect and so the Torah-based obligations regarding sabbatical year produce and tithed produce too were no longer in effect, since the land was no longer the Land of Israel (that is, in the sense that it was no longer in the hands of Israelites). Once Ezra came from the diaspora and resanctified the land, he was not doing so through conquest, but merely through the act of taking possession of it. Therefore, all the territory that the returnees from Babylon seized and which was sanctified for a second time by Ezra is considered sanctified today, and this is so even though the land was subsequently taken from us again.

Therefore, the obligations connected with the sabbatical year and with tithes remain in effect, as we have set forth in *Hilchot Terumah*.

Chapter Seven

It is a positive commandment of Scripture to show reverence to the Temple, as it is written, "And you shall revere my Temple (Leviticus 19:30)." The point, of course, is not merely to revere the Temple, though, but to revere the God Who ordained that reverence be shown it.

What constitutes reverence with respect to the Temple? One may not enter the Temple Mount carrying a walking stick or with shoes on one's feet or scantily clad or with dust on one's feet or carrying a bundle of coins wrapped up in a cloth. Furthermore, and this really goes without saying, it is forbidden to spit anywhere on the Temple Mount (if one really must expectorate, one may do so into one's garment) nor may one take a shortcut from one place to another across the Temple Mount, entering one gate and leaving by another merely to shorten one's journey. Instead, one should encircle the Temple Mount on the outside and only enter the Temple Mount for the sake of performing a commandment.

Furthermore, all who come to the Temple Mount enter on their right, circle around inside and leave on the left, except for people afflicted in particular ways who move in the opposite direction. Therefore, when one would see someone walking from left to right, it was customary to inquire, "Why are you walking in that direction?" If the answer was "Because I am in mourning," the response would be, "May the One Who dwells in this Temple grant you comfort." If the answer was, "Because I have been placed under a ban," the response would be, "May the One Who dwells in this Temple inspire you to obey the words of your colleagues so that they lift your ban."

When one finished one's worship and was ready to leave, it was not considered correct to leave with one's back to the *heichal*. Instead, one would walk slowly backwards, then turn delicately to one's side until one had left the courtyard. This was

Bring us back to Your Torah, O divine Parent, and bring us to Your service, O holy Sovereign, and help us fully to repent all our misdeeds before You.

Blessed are You, A Who desires the repentance of sinners.

Forgive us, O divine Parent, for we have sinned. Pardon us, O holy Sovereign, for we have transgressed. Do this, for You are by nature ever willing to pardon, ever ready to forgive.

Blessed are You, A , our gracious God
ever ready to grant forgiveness.

Take note of our suffering, defend us and redeem us speedily for the sake of Your holy name, for You are a powerful Redeemer.

Blessed are You, A , Redeemer of Israel.

On fast days, the cantor or baal tefillah adds this paragraph:

Answer us, A , answer us on this day on which we fast, for we are in great trouble. Do not take note of our wickedness, and neither turn Your face from us nor refuse to listen to our supplications. Be close when we call out to You and may it be Your merciful will to comfort us. Answer us even before we call out to You in misery, as it is written in Scripture, "Before they call out, I shall answer them. Even as they are speaking, I shall already have heard." For You are A , a God fully able to answer us in times of trouble, a God able to rescue and save us whenever disaster or calamity threatens.

Blessed are You, A , Who answers us in times of trouble.

Heal us, A , and we shall be healed. Save us and we shall be saved, for You are the object of our never-ending hymns of praise. Send a full and utter healing for all our afflictions, for You are sovereign God, our faithful and compassionate source of healing.

Blessed are You, A , Who sends healing to the ill
of Israel, the holy people of God.

בִּרְךָ עָלֵינוּ, יהוה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, אֶת הַשָּׁנָה הַזֹּאת וְאֶת כָּל מִינֵי
תְּבוּאַתָּה לְטוֹבָה

וְתוֹן בְּרָכָה: *Between the first intermediate day of Passover and December 4, say:*

וְתוֹן טַל וּמָטָר לְבִרְכָה: *Between December 5 and Passover, say:*
עַל פְּנֵי הָאָדָמָה, וְשַׁבְּעֵנוּ מִטוֹבָהּ, וּבִרְךָ שְׁנֵתָנוּ בְּשָׁנִים
הַטּוֹבוֹת. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יהוה, מְבַרְךָ הַשָּׁנִים.

תִּקַּע בְּשׁוּפָר גָּדוֹל לְחֵרוּתָנוּ, וְשֵׂא גִס לְקַבֵּץ גְּלוּתֵינוּ,
וְקַבְּצֵנוּ יַחַד מֵאַרְבַּע כְּנָפוֹת הָאָרֶץ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יהוה,
מְקַבֵּץ גְּדוּחֵי עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל.

הַשִּׁיבָה שׁוֹפְטֵינוּ כְּבָרָאשׁוּנָה וְיִוָּעֲצֵנוּ כְּבַתְחִלָּה,
וְהִסֵּר מִמֶּנּוּ יְגוֹן וְאַנְחָה, וּמְלוֹךְ עָלֵינוּ אַתָּה, יהוה,
לְבִדְךָ בְּחֶסֶד וּבְרַחֲמִים, וְצַדִּיקָנוּ בְּמִשְׁפָּט.

Except between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, say:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יהוה, מְלֹךְ אוֹהֵב צְדָקָה וּמִשְׁפָּט.

Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur say:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יהוה, הַמְּלֹךְ הַמְּשַׁפֵּט.

וְלַמְּלָשִׁינִים אַל תְּהִי תִקְוָה, וְכָל הָרָשָׁעָה כְּרָגַע תֵּאבֵד, וְכָל
אוֹיְבֶיךָ מְהֵרָה יִפְרָתוּ, וְהַזֵּדִים מְהֵרָה תַעֲקֹר וְתִשְׁפֹּר
וְתִמְאָר וְתִכְנִיעַ בְּמֵהֵרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יהוה, שִׁבֵּר
אוֹיְבִים וּמְכַנְיַע זֵדִים.

also the way of the duty kohanim and the people's representatives leaving the Temple, and also of the Levites leaving their choral platform, just as people step backwards at the end of their prayers. All this is intended to show reverence to the Temple.

It is forbidden to act with undue levity while facing the eastern gate of the Temple courtyard, called the Gate of Nicanor, because it aligned directly with the Holy of Holies. Indeed, all who enter the courtyard should walk in a dignified manner only in the space that it is permissible for people such as themselves to be and they should see themselves as though they were truly standing before א, as it is written, "I have hallowed this house that you have built and put My name there forever, for My eyes and My heart are there for all time (1 Kings 9:3)." And so should one comport oneself there solely with reverence and awe, as it is written, "We shall go to the House of God with the deepest emotion (Psalm 55:15)."

It is forbidden for anyone to sit down in the entire Temple courtyard, except for a king of the House of David alone, as it is written, "And King David came and sat down before א (2 Samuel 7:18)." Even the members of the Sanhedrin only sat in the half of the Chamber of Hewn Stone that was on the profane side of the building.

Even though the Temple is in ruins today because of our sins, we are all still commanded to show it the same kind of reverence that was incumbent upon us when it stood. Therefore, one may only penetrate those precincts which one might licitly have entered when the Temple stood and one may not be seated (on the former site of the) Temple courtyard. Furthermore, one may not behave in an irreverent manner (even while outside the site of the Temple if one is standing in front of the place on which stood the) Eastern Gate. All this is justified with reference to the verse from the Torah that states, "You shall keep My Sabbaths and show reverence to My Temple (Leviticus 19:30)," thus setting up a clear parallel between Sabbath observance and the obligation to show reverence to the Temple and teaching that, just as the obligation to observe the Sabbath is permanent, so is the obligation to show reverence

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to the Temple permanent because the holiness of the Temple, even when in ruins, is ongoing.

When the Temple stood, it was forbidden to behave in an irreverent fashion any closer to the site than Mount Scopus, which was technically speaking outside the city of Jerusalem. This law only applied, however, in places from which it was possible actually to see the Temple and if there was no fence that obstructed the view of the Temple from that site. . . .

It is forbidden to build a building that looks like the *heikhal*, a porch that resembles the *ulam*, a courtyard that looks like the Temple courtyard, a table that looks like the table that stood in the sanctuary, or a candelabrum that looks like the *menorah* that stood in the Temple. However, one may make a candelabrum that has five or eight branches, or one that actually does have seven branches, but which is made of some substance other than metal.

The Israelites lived in three camps in the desert: the Camp of the Israelites (which had four sections), the Camp of the Levites, concerning which Scripture says “. . . and they shall camp around the Tabernacle (Numbers 1:3,)” and the Camp of the Shechinah, which began at the gate of the courtyard leading into the Tent of Meeting and continued into the sanctuary area. In later generations, these camps were understood to represent parts of Jerusalem. From the entrance to Jerusalem until the Temple Mount was the latter-day equivalent of the Camp of the Israelites, from the entrance to the Temple Mount to the entrance to the Temple courtyard (that is, the Gate of Nicanor) was the latter-day equivalent of the Camp of the Levites and from the entrance to the courtyard inward was the latter-day equivalent of the Camp of the Shechinah. The *cheil* and the Court of Women were additions in the Temple that had no specific equivalents in the desert camp.

The Land of Israel is more holy than any other land and its holiness lay specifically in the fact that the *omer* offering on the day following Pesach and the two loaves and first fruits that were offered on Shavuot came from it and could not be brought from the produce of any other land.

There are ten levels of holiness that pertain in the Land of Israel, one more intense than the previ-

Bless this year and all its crops for us, A , our God . . .

Between the first intermediate day of Passover and December 4, say:

and grant blessed prosperity

Between December 5 and Passover, say:

and grant blessed rain and dew

. . . on the face of the earth. Make us fully satisfied with Your goodness and make this year as blessed for us as the best of years.

Blessed are You, A , Who blesses the years.

Sound a blast for our freedom on a great *shofar*, raise a banner to gather together our far-flung exiles and gather us together from the four corners of the earth.

**Blessed are You, A ,
Who will surely gather
the dispersed remnants of Israel.**

Establish our judges as in olden times and grant us able counselors like those from whose sage advice we once profited. Remove sadness and misery from our midst and rule over us with mercy and compassion as our sole Sovereign, A , and grant that we live under the rule of righteous justice.

Except between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, say:

**Blessed are You, A , O Sovereign Who loves
righteousness and justice.**

Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur say:

Blessed are You, A , O just Sovereign.

May there be no hope for those who slander us, may all evil immediately vanish from our midst and may all Your enemies be destroyed. Indeed, may You uproot, vanquish, annihilate and defeat all the wicked of the earth, and may You do so quickly and within our own day.

**Blessed are You, A , Destroyer of our enemies
and Vanquisher of the wicked.**

עַל הַצְּדִיקִים וְעַל הַחֲסִידִים וְעַל זְקֵנֵי עַמּוֹת בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל,
וְעַל פְּלִיטֵי סוֹפְרֵיהֶם, וְעַל גְּרֵי הַצֶּדֶק וְעַלֵינוּ, יְהִמוּ נָא
רַחֲמֶיךָ, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, וְיִתֵּן שָׂכָר טוֹב לְכָל הַבוֹטְחִים
בְּשִׁמְךָ בְּאַמֶּת, וְשִׁים חֲלֻקְנוּ עִמָּהֶם לְעוֹלָם, וְלֹא גִבוּשׁ פִּי
בְךָ בְּטַחְנוּ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, מוֹשֵׁעַן וּמְבַטֵּחַ לַצְּדִיקִים.

וְלִירוּשָׁלַיִם עִירְךָ בְּרַחֲמִים תָּשׁוּב, וְתִשְׁפּוֹן בְּתוֹכָהּ כַּאֲשֶׁר
דִּבַּרְתָּ, וּבִנְיָה אוֹתָהּ בְּקָרוֹב בְּיָמֵינוּ בְּנֵי עוֹלָם, וְכִסֵּא דָוִד
מִהֲרָה לְתוֹכָהּ תָּכִין. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, בּוֹנֵה יְרוּשָׁלַיִם.

אֵת צֶמַח דָּוִד עֲבַדְךָ מִהֲרָה תִצְמַיֵחַ, וְקִרְנוֹ תִרּוֹם
בִּישׁוּעָתְךָ, פִּי לִישׁוּעָתְךָ קוֹיְנוּ כָּל הַיּוֹם. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה,
מוֹצְמֵיחַ קֶרֶן יִשׁוּעָה.

שְׁמַע קוֹלְנוּ, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, חוּס וְרַחֵם עָלֵינוּ, וְקַבֵּל
בְּרַחֲמִים וּבְרָצוֹן אֶת תְּפִלָּתֵנוּ, כִּי אֵל שׁוֹמֵעַ תְּפִלוֹת
וְתַחֲנוּנִים אַתָּה, וּמְלַפְּנֶיךָ, מְלַפְּנֵנוּ, רִיקָם אֵל תְּשִׁיבֵנוּ. כִּי
אַתָּה שׁוֹמֵעַ תְּפִלַּת עַמּוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּרַחֲמִים. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה
יְהוָה, שׁוֹמֵעַ תְּפִלָּה.

On all days other than Rosh Chodesh and Chol Hamoed, continue here:

רְצֵה, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, בְּעַמּוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל וּבְתַפְלָתָם, וְהִשָּׁב אֶת
הָעֲבוּדָה לְדָבִיר בֵּיתְךָ, וְאֲשֵׁי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְתַפְלָתָם בְּאַהֲבָה
תְּקַבֵּל בְּרָצוֹן, וְתִהְיֶה לְרָצוֹן תָּמִיד עֲבוּדַת יִשְׂרָאֵל עִמָּךְ.
וְתַחֲזִינָה עֵינֵינוּ בְּשׁוֹבְךָ לְצִיּוֹן בְּרַחֲמִים. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה,
הַמְּחַזֵּר שְׂכִינָתוֹ לְצִיּוֹן.

Continue with the words מוֹדִים אֲנַחְנוּ לָךְ in the middle of the next page.

ous one. Walled cities are more holy than the rest of the land, because individuals suffering from the disease known as tzara'at must be sent out of them and no one may be buried within them unless seven prominent citizens or the entire populace wish it. Furthermore, if a person dies within a walled city and the body is then removed, it cannot be returned even if it is the universal desire of all the residents that it be brought back. Furthermore, if it is the universal will of the citizenry to move a grave out of the city, the (buried individual is exhumed and the) grave is moved. Indeed, this rule permitting exhumation by universal consent applies to all deceased individuals other than prophets and kings. In the event that the city grows to encircle a grave, the following rule applies, regardless of whether the city encircles it on all four sides or only flanks it on two sides: if there are more than fifty cubits between the grave and the city on both sides, then it may only be removed by common consent of the entire citizenry. If there are fewer cubits on either side, then it may be moved even without the total consent of all residents.

Jerusalem is more holy than the other walled cities, because sacrificial meat of lesser sanctity and second tithe produce can only be eaten within its walls. And there are some other regulations that affect life in Jerusalem as well. It is forbidden, for example, to allow the body of a deceased individual to remain in Jerusalem overnight. It is forbidden to transport human remains through the city. Houses may not be leased in Jerusalem. Individuals belonging to the *geir toshav* category of resident alien may not reside in Jerusalem. No graves are maintained within the city limits of Jerusalem other than the graves of the House of David and the grave of Huldah the Prophetess that were already present in the city in the days of the former prophets. No gardens or orchards may be planted within the city limits of Jerusalem, nor may land in Jerusalem be sown or (its produce) harvested, lest (the manure used in their fertilization create) a noxious odor. Trees (and bushes) are not to be maintained within the city limits of Jerusalem other than in rose gardens that were already present in the city in the days of the former prophets. There may not be established a garbage

dump in the city for fear that it will attract rodents. Buildings in Jerusalem may not be provided with beams or balconies that protrude over the public street, lest that kind of construction lead to contamination with **tumah** impurity that results from being under the same overhead covering as a corpse. No one may maintain a (public) kiln in Jerusalem because of the smoke such kilns produce. One may not raise poultry in Jerusalem (for fear that the chickens will contaminate the sacrificial meat consumed there. And, indeed, **kohanim** are barred from poultry farming anywhere in the Land of Israel because of their need to maintain the strictest standard of purity). No house may be sold in perpetuity in Jerusalem (that is, according to terms that preclude its redemption by the jubilee year). No house in Jerusalem was deemed susceptible to the kind of impurity associated with buildings. Jerusalem could never be condemned as an **ir nidachat** (that is, as the kind of apostate city described in the Torah at Deuteronomy 13:13–19). Finally, in the event that the cadaver of a murder victim is found closer to Jerusalem than to any other city, the law requiring expiation through the ritual involving the calf whose neck must be broken does not apply, because Jerusalem was not considered to belong to any specific one of the tribes of Israel.

The Temple Mount is more holy than the rest of the city, because **zavin** and **zavot** (that is, men and women afflicted with the disease known as **zivah**), menstruants and women who have just given birth (and who have not brought the appropriate sacrifices that are ordained to be brought following childbirth) may not enter there. It is, however, permitted to bring a dead body onto the Temple Mount, and, needless to say, one who has become impure by virtue of contact with the dead may also enter.

The **cheil** is more sacred than the rest of the Temple Mount, for no Gentiles or people impure by virtue of contact with the dead can enter there, nor can men who have violated the prohibition of intercourse with menstruant women.

The Court of Women was more holy than the **cheil**, for no **tevil yom** (that is, one who had undergone immersion in a **mikveh** but who was not fully purified until the sun set that same day) could go

May the fullness of Your compassionate judgment be applied, A , our God, to the righteous and the pious, to the elders of Your people Israel and to their surviving sages, to righteous converts to our faith and, not least of all, to the rest of us. May You grant a just reward to all who faithfully trust in Your name and may You set a place for us among them so that we never come to shame because of our confident trust in You.

Blessed are You, A , Who is our protective support and a secure haven for the righteous.

May You return with compassion to Jerusalem, Your holy city, and may You come to dwell there as You once promised You would. May You build it up quickly and permanently within our day and may You quickly establish the throne of a scion of the House of David within its walls.

Blessed are You, A , Restorer of Jerusalem.

May You quickly bring forth a descendant of David, Your servant, into our midst and may his horn be raised up as a sign of his salvation in You, for it is precisely that sign of Your imminent salvation that we await daily.

Blessed are You, A , Who will surely bring forth a descendant of David to lead us to salvation.

Hear our prayers, A , our God and take pity and have mercy upon us. Accept our prayers willingly and with compassion, for You are a God fully able and willing to listen carefully to prayer and supplication. May You not turn us away empty-handed, O Sovereign God, for You are a God ever able and willing to listen compassionately to the prayers of Your people Israel.

Blessed are You, A , Who will ever listen to heartfelt prayer.

On all days other than Rosh Chodesh and Chol Hamoed, continue here:
Take pleasure, A , our God, in Your people Israel and in their prayers. And restore the ancient worship service to the sanctuary of Your great Temple and accept the offerings and the prayers of Israel willingly and lovingly, so that the worship of Your people Israel ever find favor before You. May our eyes see Your compassionate return to Zion!

Blessed are You, A , Who surely will return the Shechinah, the divine presence, to Zion.

*Continue with the words “We affirm our faith in You.”
in the middle of the next page.*

On Rosh Chodesh and during Chol Hamoed recite this paragraph:

רֵצָה, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, בְּעַמּוּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל וּבִתְפִלָּתָם, וְהָשִׁב אֶת הָעֲבוּדָה לְדַבֵּיר
בֵּיתְךָ, וְאֲשִׁי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְתַפְלָתָם בְּאַהֲבָה תִקְבַּל בְּרִצּוֹן, וְתַהֲי לְרִצּוֹן תָּמִיד
עֲבוּדַת יִשְׂרָאֵל עִמָּךְ. אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, יַעֲלֵה וַיְבֵא, וַיְגַיַע, וַיִּרְאֶה,
וַיִּרְצֶה, וַיִּשְׁמַע, וַיִּפְקֵד, וַיִּזְכֹּר זְכוּרֵנוּ וּפְקוּדֵינוּ, וְזַכְרוֹן אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, וְזַכְרוֹן
מִשְׁיַח בֶּן דָּוִד עֲבָדְךָ, וְזַכְרוֹן יְרוּשָׁלַיִם עִיר קֹדְשְׁךָ, וְזַכְרוֹן כָּל עַמּוּךָ בֵּית
יִשְׂרָאֵל לְפָנֶיךָ, לְפַלְיָתָה, לְטוֹבָה, לַחַן וּלְחַסֵּד וּלְרַחֲמִים, לְחַיִּים וּלְשָׁלוֹם.

בְּיוֹם רֵאשִׁי הַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה. On Rosh Chodesh, say:

בְּיוֹם חַג הַמִּצּוֹת הַזֶּה. During Chol Hamoed Pesach, say:

בְּיוֹם חַג הַסֻּכּוֹת הַזֶּה. During Chol Hamoed Sukkot, say:

זְכַרְנוּ, יְהוָה, אֱלֹהֵינוּ, בּוֹ לְטוֹבָה, וּפְקוּדָנוּ בּוֹ לְבִרְכָה, וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ בּוֹ לְחַיִּים,
וּבְדַבַּר יְשׁוּעָה וְרַחֲמִים, חוּס וְחַנּוּן, וְרַחֵם עָלֵינוּ וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ, כִּי אֱלֹהֶיךָ
עֵינֵינוּ, כִּי אֵל מְלֶכֶךְ חַנּוּן וְרַחוּם אַתָּה. וְתַחֲזִינָה עֵינֵינוּ בְּשׁוֹבְךָ לְצִיּוֹן
בְּרַחֲמִים. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, הַמּוֹחֲזִיר שְׂכִינָתוֹ לְצִיּוֹן.

Continue with the words מוֹדִים אֲנַחְנוּ לָךְ beneath the solid line.

When praying silently, include the following paragraph, then omit the paragraph that follows and, except during Chanukah or on Purim or Yom Ha'atzma'ut, continue with the words וְעַל כָּלֵם on page 88. During Chanukah and on Purim, continue on page 86. On Yom Ha'atzma'ut, continue on page 88 at the top of the page.

מוֹדִים אֲנַחְנוּ לָךְ, שְׂאֵתָה הוּא יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ לְעוֹלָם
וָעֵד. צוּר חַיִּינוּ, מִגֵּן יִשְׁעֵנוּ, אַתָּה הוּא לְדוֹר וָדוֹר. גּוֹדֵה לָךְ וְנִסְפָּר
תְּהַלְתָּךְ עַל חַיֵּינוּ הַמְּסוּרִים בְּיָדְךָ, וְעַל נִשְׁמוֹתֵינוּ הַפְּקוּדוֹת לָךְ,
וְעַל נַשְׂיָךְ שֶׁבְכָל יוֹם עִמָּנוּ, וְעַל גְּבֻלְאוֹתֶיךָ וְטוֹבוֹתֶיךָ שֶׁבְכָל עֵת,
עֵרֵב וּבָקֹר וְצָהָרִים. הַטּוֹב, כִּי לֹא כָּלוּ רַחֲמֶיךָ, וְהִמְרַחֵם, כִּי לֹא
תָמוּ חֲסָדֶיךָ, מִעוֹלָם קוֹיָנוּ לָךְ.

When the cantor or the baal tefillah, repeating the Amidah, intones the paragraph just above, the congregation recites this paragraph quietly at the same time.

מוֹדִים אֲנַחְנוּ לָךְ, שְׂאֵתָה הוּא יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, אֱלֹהֵי כָל
בְּשָׂר, יוֹצֵרֵנוּ, יוֹצֵר בְּרֵאשִׁית. בְּרִכּוֹת וְהוֹדָאוֹת לְשִׁמְךָ הַגָּדוֹל וְהַקְּדוֹשׁ,
עַל שֶׁחַיֵּיתָנוּ וְקִיַּמְתָּנוּ. כִּן תַּחֲזִינוּ וְתִקְיַמְנוּ, וְתַאֲסוּךְ גְּלוּתֵינוּ לְחַצְרוֹת
קֹדְשְׁךָ, לְשִׁמּוֹר חֻקֶיךָ וְלַעֲשׂוֹת רִצּוֹנְךָ, וְלַעֲבֹדְךָ בְּלִבָּב שָׁלֵם, עַל שֶׁאֲנַחְנוּ
מוֹדִים לָךְ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, הַמּוֹחֲזִיר שְׂכִינָתוֹ לְצִיּוֹן.

there. This, however, was a rabbinic restriction; according to Torah law itself, neither a tevul yom who entered the Camp of the Levites nor one impure by virtue of contact with the dead who entered the Court of Women was obliged to bring a sin offering as means of atonement.

The Court of Israel was more sacred than the Court of Women, because those people in the category of mechusrei kippurim (people such as a zav, a zavah, a woman who given birth and a leper, who completed all aspects of the purification ritual except the sacrifice itself ordained by Scripture) could not enter there. Indeed, an impure person who entered the Court of Israel was punished by excision.

The Court of the Priests was more holy than the Court of Israel, for no Israelite could enter there except if their presence was required to lean down on a sacrificial animal they were sponsoring, to recite the formal confession of sin that accompanied sin offerings, to slaughter a sacrificial animal (which was not necessarily done only by kohanim) or to participate in the tenufah ceremony that involved waving the inner parts of the peace offering.

The space between the altar and the ulam was more sacred than the Court of the Priests because people afflicted with physical blemishes, people with wild, unkempt hair and torn clothing could not enter there.

The heichal building is more sacred than the space between the altar and the ulam, for none could enter there other than a kohen who had formally washed his hands and feet.

The Holy of Holies was more sacred than the rest of the heichal building, for none could ever enter there except for the High Priest himself, and then only on Yom Kippur during the formal worship service.

There was a place in the upper chamber directly over the Holy of Holies that was only entered once every seven years so as to ascertain what kind of upkeep was necessary for that part of the Temple building. When builders or workers must enter to effect some repair or to remove some source of impurity, the ideal is for them to be unblemished kohanim. If no unblemished kohanim are available,

blemished ones may enter. If there are no **kohanim** available at all, then Levites may enter. If there are no Levites available, then Israelites may enter. The ideal is for any of the above to be in a state of ritual purity, but if no such people can be found, then impure people may enter. If a choice has to be made between one who is in a state of impurity and a workman who is physically blemished, then the one who is in a state of impurity should be preferred because there is ample halachic precedent for disregarding issues of impurity in matters of public effort relating to the Temple and its worship service. All who enter the heichal building to undertake repairs should do so by being lowered in baskets from the upper levels. If there are no such baskets available, however, or if the necessary repair is such that it cannot be undertaken by people confined to baskets, then the workmen may enter through the regular doorways.

Chapter Eight

It is a positive commandment to guard the Temple and this commandment is in effect even if there is no real fear of enemy forces or criminal elements, because the point of guarding the Temple is to show it honor. Indeed, no one regards a palace that is left unguarded in the same way as a palace that is well guarded.

This guarding was carried out throughout the night. The guards were the **kohanim** and the Levites, as it is written, "And you and your sons with you before the Tent of Testimony (Numbers 18:2,)" which is to say that you shall stand guard before it. And it is also stated, "And you shall guard the Tent of Meeting (Numbers 18:4)" . . .

The specific way in which the Temple was guarded was this: the **kohanim** guarded it from the inside and the Levites on the outside. And twenty-four patrols guarded the Temple in the course of every night at twenty-four specific duty stations, three of them manned by **kohanim** and twenty-one by Levites.

And how exactly was the guarding of the Temple accomplished? The **kohanim** stood guard in Beth Avtinan, in the Chamber of the Spark and in

On Rosh Chodesh and during Chol Hamoed recite this paragraph:

Take pleasure, A , our God, in Your people Israel and in their prayers. And restore the ancient worship service to the sanctuary of Your great Temple and accept the offerings and the prayers of Israel willingly and lovingly so that the worship of Your people Israel will ever find favor before You. Our God and God of our ancestors, may Your recollection of us, and Your abiding interest in us, come to the fore forcefully and effectively and noticeably and distinctly and conspicuously and markedly . . . and not only Your recollection of us and our needs, but also Your recollection of our ancestors and Your servant, the Messiah, son of David, whom we await, and Your recollection of Jerusalem, Your holy city, and Your recollection of all Your people Israel and our need for sanctuary, for prosperity, for mercy, grace and compassion, for life and for peace on

On Rosh Chodesh, say: this Rosh Chodesh day.

During Chol Hamoed Pesach, say: this festival of matzot.

During Chol Hamoed Sukkot, say: this festival of Sukkot.

Remember us, A , our God, on this day for goodness and visit us with blessing. Save us and grant us prolonged life and be kind and gracious with respect to Your ancient promise of salvation. Judge us with compassion and save us, for it is to You that we ever look for salvation because You are Sovereign God, gracious and just. May our eyes see Your compassionate return to Zion! Blessed are You, A , Who surely will re-establish the Shechinah, the divine presence, in Zion.

Continue with the words "We affirm our faith in You" beneath the solid line

When praying silently, include the following paragraph, then omit the paragraph that follows, and, except during Chanukah or on Purim or Israel Independence Day, continue with the words "And so, for all these things" on page 88.

During Chanukah and on Purim, continue on page 86.

On Israel Independence Day, continue on page 88 at the top of the page.

We affirm our faith in You, for You are and always shall be A , our God and the God of our ancestors, the rock of our lives and the shield behind which we nurture our hope of redemption in every generation. All this we affirm freely to You as we recount the praises due You for the security and safety of our lives, both of which we acknowledge are in Your hands, and for our souls, which are wholly dependent on You, and also for the miracles that You perform daily for us, a never-ending series of wonders and kindnesses from which we benefit morning, afternoon and evening every day of our lives. O God of goodness, Whose compassion never fails, O God of compassion, Whose mercies never end, it is ever in You that we place our trust.

When the cantor or baal tefillah, repeating the Amidah, intones the paragraph just above, the congregation recites this paragraph quietly at the same time.

We affirm our faith in You that You are A , our God and the God of our ancestors, the God of all flesh, our Creator, the Creator of the world at its very inception. We offer our blessings and our thanksgiving prayers to Your great and holy name in gratitude for Your gifts of life and sustenance. In so doing, we pray that we continue to enjoy those very gifts of life and sustenance and that You soon see fit to gather together our exiles to the courtyards of Your holy Temple so that all of us may there keep Your laws and do Your holy will, and so that we may worship You with full hearts as an expression of our sense of thanksgiving to You.

Blessed be God, to Whom all gratitude is eternally due.

During Chanukah, add this paragraph:

עַל הַנְּסִים, וְעַל הַפְּרָקוֹן, וְעַל הַגְּבוּרוֹת, וְעַל הַתְּשׁוּעוֹת,
וְעַל הַמְּלַחְמוֹת, שְׁעֵשִׂיתָ לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם בְּזִמְנֵן
הַזֶּה. בַּיָּמִי מִתְּתִיָּהוּ בֶן יוֹחָנָן כֹּהֵן גָּדוֹל, חֲשֵׁמוֹנָאִי וּבְנָיו,
כְּשֶׁעָמְדָה מַלְכוּת יוֹן הַרְשָׁעָה עַל עַמּוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל לְהַשְׁפִּיחָם
תּוֹרְתָהּ, וּלְהַעֲבִירָם מִחֻקֵּי רְצוֹנָהּ, וְאַתָּה בְּרַחֲמֶיךָ הַרְבִּים
עָמַדְתָּ לָּהֶם בַּעֲת צָרָתָם, רַבַּת אֶת רִיבָם, דִּנְתָּ אֶת דֵּינָם,
נִקְמַתְּ אֶת נִקְמָתָם, מִסֵּרְתָּ גְבוּרִים בְּיַד חַלְשִׁים, וְרַבִּים
בְּיַד מְעֻטִּים, וְטִמְאִים בְּיַד טְהוֹרִים, וְרָשָׁעִים בְּיַד צַדִּיקִים,
וְזָדִים בְּיַד עוֹסְקֵי תּוֹרָתְךָ. וְלָךְ עָשִׂיתָ שֵׁם גָּדוֹל וְקָדוֹשׁ
בְּעוֹלָמְךָ, וְלַעֲמֻתָּהּ יִשְׂרָאֵל עָשִׂיתָ תְּשׁוּעָה גְדוֹלָה וּפְרָקוֹן
כְּהַיּוֹם הַזֶּה. וְאַחַר כֵּן בָּאוּ בְנֵיךָ לְדַבֵּר בֵּיתְךָ, וּפָנּוּ אֶת
הַיְכָלְךָ, וְטִהְרוּ אֶת מִקְדָּשְׁךָ, וְהִדְלִיקוּ גִירוֹת בְּחִצְרוֹת
קִדְשֶׁךָ, וְקָבְעוּ שְׂמוֹנֵת יָמֵי חֲנֻכָּה אֵלֶיךָ, לְהוֹדוֹת וּלְהַלֵּל
לְשִׁמְךָ הַגָּדוֹל.

On Purim, add this paragraph:

עַל הַנְּסִים, וְעַל הַפְּרָקוֹן, וְעַל הַגְּבוּרוֹת, וְעַל הַתְּשׁוּעוֹת,
וְעַל הַמְּלַחְמוֹת, שְׁעֵשִׂיתָ לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם בְּזִמְנֵן
הַזֶּה. בַּיָּמִי מִרְדְּכָי וְאַסְתֵּר בְּשׁוֹשַׁן הַבִּיָּרָה, כְּשֶׁעָמַד עֲלֵיהֶם
הַמֶּן הַרְשָׁעִי, בִּקֵּשׁ לְהַשְׁמִיד, לְהַרְגֵם וּלְאַבֵּד אֶת כָּל
הַיְהוּדִים, מִצֶּדֶר וְעַד זָקוֹן, טַף וְנָשִׁים, בַּיּוֹם אֶחָד בְּשִׁלְשָׁה
עָשָׂר לְחֹדֶשׁ שִׁנַּיִם עָשָׂר, הוּא חֹדֶשׁ אָדָר, וּשְׁלָלָם לְבוֹז.
וְאַתָּה בְּרַחֲמֶיךָ הַרְבִּים הַפְּרַתְּ אֶת עֲצָתוֹ, וְקַלְקַלְתָּ אֶת
מַחְשְׁבֹתוֹ, וְהִשְׁבֹּתָ גְמוּלוֹ בְּרִאשׁוֹ, וְתָלוּ אוֹתוֹ וְאֶת בְּנָיו
עַל הָעֵז.

the House of the Hearth. Beth Avtinan and the Chamber of the Spark were upper stories built by the side of the gates leading into the courtyard and the youths among the *kohanim* used to stand guard there. The House of the Hearth was a large domed building furnished on the inside with bleachers made of stone and it was upon these bleachers that the elders of the priestly subdivision on duty that week would sleep there with the keys to the courtyard in their hands.

The duty *kohanim* did not sleep in their priestly outfits. Instead, they slept in their street clothes, but they did have the custom of folding their priestly outfits up and using them as pillows beneath their heads. Thus would they take turns sleeping on the ground in the manner of the guards of any royal palace who do not sleep in beds (i.e., while on duty).

Should any of the duty *kohanim* experience the kind of accident for which immersion in a *mikveh* is required, he would use an underground winding path to go to the *mikveh*—this was licit because the underground passageways that led to the Temple Mount were not sanctified as holy space—then immerse himself in the *mikveh* there. He would then return to the company of his fellow *kohanim* until the gates to the courtyard were opened the following morning, at which time he could leave the Temple and go on his way.


Where did the Levites stand guard? They did so at the five gates leading into the Temple Mount, and at its four inner corners, and also outside the four corners of the courtyard (because it was forbidden to be seated inside the courtyard) and outside the five gates leading into the courtyard. (There were actually seven gates, but the *kohanim* themselves stood guard at the House of the Hearth and at the Chamber of the Spark.) Thus did the Levites stand guard at a total of eighteen stations.

On top of those, the Levites stood guard as well in the Chamber of Offering, the Chamber of the *Parochet* and on the outer side of the back wall of the Holy of Holies.

It was the practice to appoint a single individual who acted as foreman over all the different groups of Temple guards. This individual was

called the Captain of the Temple Mount and it was his job to visit and revisit each of the guard stations throughout the night. As he walked, lighted torches were carried in front of him. In the event that the men of some particular duty station did not stand up at his arrival and say, "Peace unto you, Captain of the Temple Mount," it was clear that they had been asleep. In that case, he would strike with his staff the offending sleepers and he even had the right to burn their clothing. In such an instance, the people of Jerusalem would ask, "What is that sound in the courtyard?" And the answer would come: "It is the noise of a Levite being beaten and his clothes set on fire, because he slept upon his watch."

Just before the first rays of dawn would become visible over the horizon each morning, the official whose job it was to look over the orderly functioning of the Temple would arrive at the House of the Hearth and knock on its door to awaken the *kohanim* who slept there, whereupon they would open the door to him. After accomplishing this, he would then take the key and open the small gate that led from the House of the Hearth into the courtyard, then enter the courtyard through the House of the Hearth followed by the *kohanim* holding two lighted torches. They would then split up into two groups, one of which would walk around the courtyard towards the east and the other one of which would walk towards the west. As they walked, they looked to make sure all was in order, thus checking the entire courtyard before these two groups would meet up at the Chamber of the Pancake Makers. When they met at that spot, they would call out to each other, "Shalom?" And then, once they had successfully ascertained that everything was in order, they would set the pancake makers to their daily task.

This was the custom followed in the Temple every night other than on the eve of the Sabbath. On such evenings, they did not carry lighted torches with them, but rather they checked the courtyard by the light of lamps that had been left burning there before the onset of the Sabbath. 

During Chanukah, add this paragraph:

We are grateful for the miracles, for the victory, for the acts of might, for the military triumphs and the successes in battle You wrought for our ancestors at this season of the year in ancient times. In the days of the High Priest, Mattathias ben Yochanan the Hasmonean, and his sons, when the wicked Seleucid kingdom rose up against Your people Israel to attempt to force them to forget Your Torah and to disobey its laws so reflective of Your sacred will, You, prompted by Your unending mercy, stood by them in their time of trouble and helped them fight their battles. You helped them feel justified in their fight and You wrought vengeance upon those who deserved it. You helped the weak to vanquish the mighty, the few to vanquish the many, the pure to vanquish the impure, the righteous to vanquish the wicked, and those who remained faithful to the words of Your Torah to vanquish their arrogant enemies. You made glorious and holy Your own name in this world of Yours when You wrought great deliverance and salvation for Your people Israel at this very season so many centuries ago. Afterwards, Your devoted children came to the sanctuary of Your holy Temple. They cleansed the sanctuary of the symbols of idolatry and purified the Temple, then lit lamps in its holy courtyards and declared that henceforth the eight days of Chanukah would be a festival devoted to thanksgiving and the praise of Your great name.

On Purim, add this paragraph:

We are grateful for the miracles, for the victory, for the acts of might, for the military triumphs and the successes in battle You wrought for our ancestors at this season of the year in ancient times. In the days of Mordechai and Esther, it once came to pass in Shushan, the capital of Persia, that the villainous Haman rose up against the Jewish people and attempted to destroy, annihilate and murder all the Jews, men young and old, infants and women, in one single day, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month (which is the month of Adar) and to plunder all their possessions. But You, acting in Your great mercy, ruined his plans and thwarted his plot, paying him back in kind for his wicked intentions by having Haman and his sons hanged on the very gallows from which they had planned to hang Mordechai.

On Yom Ha'atzma'ut, add this paragraph:

עַל הַנְּסִים, וְעַל הַפְּרָקוֹן, וְעַל הַגְּבוּרוֹת, וְעַל הַתְּשׁוּעוֹת,
וְעַל הַמְּלַחְמוֹת, שְׁעֲשִׂיתָ לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם בְּזִמְנֵן
הַזֶּה. בַּיָּמֵי שִׁיבַת בְּנֵים לְגְבוּלָם, בְּעֵת תְּקוּמַת עַם בְּאֶרְצוֹ
בַּיָּמֵי קֹדֶם, נִסְגְּרוּ שַׁעֲרֵי אֶרֶץ אֲבוֹת בְּפָנֵי אַחֲנוּ פְּלִיטֵי
חָרָב, וְאוֹיְבִים בְּאֶרֶץ וְשִׁבְעָה עַמֻּמִּים בְּעֲלֵי בְרִיתָם קָמוּ
לְהַכְרִית עִמָּךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאַתָּה בְּרַחֲמֶיךָ הַרְּפִים עֲמַדְתָּ לָּהֶם
בְּעֵת צָרָתָם, רַבַּת אֶת רִיבָם, דִּנְגַת אֶת דִּינָם, חֲזַקְתָּ אֶת
לִבָּם לְעִמּוּד בַּשַּׁעַר וּלְפֶתַח שַׁעֲרֵים לְנִרְדְּפִים וּלְגֹרֶשׁ אֶת
צְבָאוֹת הָאוֹיֵב מִן הָאֶרֶץ. מִסִּרְתָּ רַבִּים בְּיַד מְעֻטִּים,
וּרְשָׁעִים בְּיַד צַדִּיקִים, וּלְךָ עֲשִׂיתָ שֵׁם גָּדוֹל וְקָדוֹשׁ
בְּעוֹלָמְךָ, וּלְעַמָּךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל עֲשִׂיתָ תְּשׁוּעָה גְּדוֹלָה וּפְרָקוֹן
כְּהַיּוֹם הַזֶּה.

וְעַל כָּלֵם יִתְבַּרְךָ וְיִתְרוֹמַם שְׁמֶךָ, מִלְּכַנּוּ,
תְּמִיד לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד...

Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, add:

וְכַתּוּב לְחַיִּים טוֹבִים כָּל בְּנֵי בְרִיתְךָ

...וְכֹל הַחַיִּים יוֹדוּךָ סֶלָה, וַיְהִלְלוּ אֶת שְׁמֶךָ
בְּאֵמֹת, הָאֵל יִשׁוּעַתָּנוּ וְעֲזַרְתָּנוּ סֶלָה. בְּרוּךְ
אַתָּה יְהוָה, הַטּוֹב שְׁמֶךָ וּלְךָ נִפְאֵה לְהוֹדוֹת.



The world is filled to overflowing with people vying with each other to express their devotion to the sanctity and ineffable holiness of the commandments of Scripture in the most extravagant, flowery language possible. But only a small percentage of those people feel bidden actually to take those commandments seriously as law and to obey them even cursorily, let alone with strict attention even to their most picayune detail. The lessons that follow attempt to unravel the implications of seeking God through the medium of obedience to divine law.



The concept that God may be sought through the medium of law rests on the assumption that the laws of the Torah exist not merely to be contemplated, celebrated or elaborated through legal discourse and debate, but actually kept strictly and carefully. Therefore, individuals who feel called to embrace the most venerable of all Scriptural principles, that law is an effective medium in which God may effectively be both sought and found in the world, yet who feel no corresponding need to be especially observant of the very laws they insist they respect so absolutely, are behaving illogically. Their behavior is not only illogical, however, but also deeply counterproductive: it is precisely from the tension between desire and behavior that the energy derives that can propel an individual a step or two further on the path to God. Missing that point—and, consequently, becoming mired in the peculiar notion that spiritual energy need not be generated at all, and certainly not in the way all usable energy is generated in the physical universe through tension, friction, conflict and opposition—is, however, to overlook the fact that the spiritual system proposed by Scripture works in the first place by moving the faithful along the path to God specifically by harnessing the energy that comes from reigning in the animal instincts that character-

ize human life at its least noble and using the resultant tension to propel the reluctant pilgrim one step closer towards redemption in God.

For the citizens of free republics, there will inevitably be something suspect about any assertion that there is merit in the denial of the freedom of the individual to live a life unfettered by extraneous rules. That may well be the case as a principle of republican political science, but, even in the most free of societies, individuals are supposed to possess the inalienable right to subjugate any specific desire for any reason at all, even in order to search for God through the medium of obedience to divine law.



Although the function of law in the context of divine revelation is to give to members of the covenantal community opportunities to pursue the veneration of God within the framework of their daily lives, it is the special insight of Scripture that the door to the perception of God can be opened through obedience to those same laws. Therefore, those who evaluate the laws of the Torah with reference to the specific degree of likelihood that they themselves would have enacted similar laws and statutes if somehow they had been charged by the world with becoming its supreme legislators have misunderstood the reason for which Scripture routes the path towards redemption through obedience, fealty and submission in the first place. The essential concept of the Torah is to use different kinds of laws and statutes to efface—and eventually even perhaps to destroy—the almost (but *only* almost) impenetrable wall that separates humankind from God, a wall fashioned from the feeling human beings can cultivate all too easily that, somehow, it is they who rule over the world in which they live rather than God who rules over it and, by extension, over them as well.

There is paradox afoot here too, however. Indeed, setting forth on a journey without movement to a God who does not and cannot exist in any particular place that is undertaken by obeying laws and statutes that are presented in Scripture as being reflective of the will of a God Who is also

On Israel Independence Day, add this paragraph:

We are grateful for the miracles and the victory, for the acts of might, for the military triumphs and the successes in battle You wrought for our people at this season of the year.

When Jewish people undertook a return to their ancestral homeland and began to re-establish themselves as free people living in their own land as in ancient times, entry into the Promised Land was suddenly denied to the very refugees who had escaped annihilation elsewhere. But when our enemies in the land and their allies in adjacent countries rose up to destroy Your people Israel, You, acting in accordance with Your great mercies came to their defense in their time of most dire trouble and rendered a just judgment on their behalf. You gave them the courage to rise up and to pry open the gates of the land to grant entry to those who needed it most and to repulse the enemy armies from the land. You gave the many into the hands of the few and the wicked into the hands of the righteous. You made glorious and holy Your own name in this world of Yours and, for Your people Israel, You wrought great deliverance and salvation on this very day.

And so, for all these things, may Your name be blessed and exalted for always and for all time, O sovereign God. . .

*Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, add these words:
and may You inscribe for a good life all those bound to you
in sacred covenant*

. . . for then shall all living creatures give thanks to You, *selah*, and render sincere praise to Your name, O God of our salvation, our ever-present help, *selah*. Blessed are You, A , Whose name is goodness itself and Who is wholly deserving of all gratitude.

When the cantor or baal tefillah repeats the Amidah, this paragraph is added:

אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, בְּרַכְנוּ בְּבִרְכָה הַמְשַׁלֶּשֶׁת בַּתּוֹרָה
הַכְּתוּבָה עַל יְדֵי מֹשֶׁה עֲבָדְךָ, הָאֲמוּרָה מִפִּי אֶהְרוֹן וּבְגִינִי,
כְּהַגִּים, עִם קְדוּשָׁתְךָ, כְּאָמֹר:

יְבָרְכֶךָ יְהוָה וַיִּשְׁמְרֶךָ.

The congregation responds: כֵּן יְהִי רָצוֹן.

יָיֵאֵר יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיַּחֲנֶךָ.

The congregation responds: כֵּן יְהִי רָצוֹן.

יִשָּׂא יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיִּשֵׂם לְךָ שָׁלוֹם.

The congregation responds: כֵּן יְהִי רָצוֹן.

Except between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, continue:

שֵׁים שָׁלוֹם, טוֹבָה וּבִרְכָה, חֵן וְחֶסֶד וְרַחֲמִים, עָלֵינוּ וְעַל
כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל עַמְּךָ. בְּרַכְנוּ, אָבִינוּ, כָּלֵנוּ כְּאֶחָד בְּאוֹר פְּנִיָּךָ,
כִּי בְּאוֹר פְּנִיָּךָ נִתְתָּ לָנוּ, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, תּוֹרַת חַיִּים וְאַהֲבַת
חֶסֶד, וַיַּצְדֵּקָה וּבִרְכָה וְרַחֲמִים וְחַיִּים וְשָׁלוֹם, וְטוֹב בְּעֵינֶיךָ
לְבַרְךָ אֶת עַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּכָל יֵת וּבְכָל שְׁעָה בְּשָׁלוֹמְךָ.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, הַמְּבָרֵךְ אֶת עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּשָׁלוֹם.

Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, continue here:

שֵׁים שָׁלוֹם, טוֹבָה וּבִרְכָה, חֵן וְחֶסֶד וְרַחֲמִים, עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל
יִשְׂרָאֵל עַמְּךָ. בְּרַכְנוּ, אָבִינוּ, כָּלֵנוּ כְּאֶחָד בְּאוֹר פְּנִיָּךָ, כִּי בְּאוֹר
פְּנִיָּךָ נִתְתָּ לָנוּ, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, תּוֹרַת חַיִּים וְאַהֲבַת חֶסֶד,
וַיַּצְדֵּקָה וּבִרְכָה וְרַחֲמִים וְחַיִּים וְשָׁלוֹם, וְטוֹב בְּעֵינֶיךָ לְבַרְךָ
אֶת עַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּכָל יֵת וּבְכָל שְׁעָה בְּשָׁלוֹמְךָ. בְּסִפּוֹר חַיִּים,
בְּרָכָה, וְשָׁלוֹם, וּפְרִנְסָה טוֹבָה, גִּזְכָּר וְנִפְתָּב לְפָנֶיךָ, אֲנַחְנוּ וְכָל
עַמְּךָ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל, לְחַיִּים טוֹבִים וּלְשָׁלוֹם. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה,
עוֹשֵׂה הַשָּׁלוֹם.

described as a perfect Being Who therefore knows neither need nor lack and Who, therefore, cannot want anything at all—agreeing to set forward on such a journey is the beginning of unraveling the great and deep riddle that rests at the core of a life devoted to the pursuit of holiness and the search for God through the medium of obedience to the commandments of the Torah.



Every commandment has an outer aspect, which consists of an obvious halachic ritual, and an interior aspect, which consists of the inner kernel of meaning embedded in the physical deed that constitutes the performance of that commandment. For example, the outer aspect of the commandment to recite the Shema Yisrael prayer morning and evening consists of the actual recitation of the words of the prayer twice daily, while the inner aspect has to do with accepting that God is one and the name of God is one and that God is the sole aspect of absolute, undifferentiated unity that exists or that ever could exist in the world. These two aspects are like two sides of a single coin in that, for all they cannot be separated from each other, they are nevertheless not each other's equal in terms of the way individuals relate to them. Nor is that the single important way in which the inner and outer aspects of the commandments differ. Of all those ways, however, the single most important one will inevitably have to do with their doability: even young schoolchildren can—and do—learn how to recite the words of the Shema with relative ease, whereas coming to faith in the unity of God is the result of decades of spiritual endeavor, of meditative effort and of intellectual work, of veneration of the divine and disengagement from the world of acquisitiveness and materialism. Coming to faith in the unity of God is the fruit of an entire lifetime dedicated to cultivating love for God and to seeking the love of God. Learning the recite the words of the Shema, on the other hand, is—at most—the work of a few minutes' effort.

The upshot of all this is that, although the performance of the commandment to read the Shema

is indeed something that children can learn to do, the act of investing the outer shape of the commandment with its inner essence—which is its heart and its soul in every real sense of the word—is the work of a lifetime of concentrated spiritual effort. It is neither simple nor easy. More to the point, it is more than possible to devote serious energy to its accomplishment without ever succeeding. Indeed, the fact that it feels reasonable to hope that the soul could conceivably be elevated even through the unsuccessful effort to perform a commandment properly and fully is a source of hope most people find it natural to bring to their spiritual lives. But to confuse hope with certainty is to infantilize the spirit and reduce the laws of the Torah to the level of helpful suggestions, and that does not seem to be a good idea for any interested in coming to know God, or to know of God, through the medium of fealty to law.



The point of Sabbath observance is not to provide a context in which the human need for regular and periodic rest can be satisfied after a tiresome and burdensome week of work. The point of the dietary laws is not to provide a context in which human beings can eat healthy, fortifying foods at the same time they learn to avoid foodstuffs that could potentially have a deleterious effect on their health. The point of the observance of the festivals of Israel is not to provide a context in which one can formally recall certain specific events that happened in the past to the ancestors of the Jewish people.

It is, in fact, never necessary to rationalize the observance of the commandments with reference to any human need or desire other than the human need and desire to create a context in which people can worship God. Indeed, when the effort of a lifetime spent walking in the ways of God succeeds at creating such a context, then those ways become essential tools in the hands of those who seek to seek God and to worship God and to know and love God, as it is written in the Book of Psalms, “Seek ye God with all your heart

When the cantor or baal tefillah repeats the Amidah, this paragraph is added:
Our God and God of our ancestors, bless us with the blessing recorded in the Torah as having been taught by Moses, Your servant, to Aaron and his sons, the priests of Your holy people, so that they bless the people using these words:

May A bless you and guard you.

The congregation responds:

So may it be Your will.

May A shine the light of the divine countenance upon you and be gracious unto you.

The congregation responds:

So may it be Your will.

May A lift up the divine countenance toward you and grant you peace.

The congregation responds:

So may it be Your will.

Except between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, continue:

Grant peace, goodness, blessing, grace, mercy and compassion to us and to all Your people Israel. Bless us all together, O holy Parent, with the radiance of Your countenance, for in that holy light did You, A , our God, give us the Torah of life and instill in us the love of mercy, righteousness, blessing, compassion, life and peace. It is good in Your eyes to bless Your people Israel at all times, at every hour of every day, with Your peace. Blessed are You, A , Who will always bless the people Israel with peace.

Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, continue here.:

Grant peace, goodness, blessing, grace, mercy and compassion to us and to all Your people Israel. Bless us all together, O holy Parent, with the radiance of Your countenance, for in that holy light did You, A , our God, give us the Torah of life and instill in us the love of mercy, righteousness, blessing, compassion, life and peace. It is good in Your eyes to bless Your people Israel at all times, even at every hour of every day, with Your peace. May we and all members of Your people, the House of Israel, be remembered and entered in the Book of Life, Blessing, Peace, and Great Prosperity, for now and for always, for a good life and for peace.

Blessed are You, A , Maker of peace.

The silent recitation of the Amidah continues below, but here concludes the public repetition of the Amidah by the cantor or the baal tefillah. On fast days other than Tisha Be'av, and on the days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, continue with Avinu Malkeinu on p. 104. On Tisha Be'av, continue with Kaddish on page 138. During Chol Hamoed, and on Purim, Rosh Chodesh, Yom Ha'atzma'ut and the days of Chanukah, continue with Hallel on page 184. (On Chol Hamoed, worshipers wearing tefillin remove them at this point in the service.) Otherwise, on Mondays and Thursdays, continue with the long version of Tachanun on page 114. On other weekdays, continue with the short version of Tachanun on page 134. On days Tachanun is not recited, continue with Kaddish on page 138.

The Prayer of Mar, son of Rabina

אֱלֹהֵי, נִצּוּר לְשׁוּנֵי מִרְעֵ, וּשְׁפָתַי מִדְּבַר מְרֻמָּה, וְלִמְקוֹלֵי נַפְשֵׁי
 תְּדוּם, וְנַפְשֵׁי כְּעֶפֶר לְכֹל תְּהִיָּה. פֶּתַח לְבָבִי בְּתוֹרָתְךָ, וּבְמִצְוֹתֶיךָ
 תִּרְדּוּף נַפְשֵׁי. וְכֹל הַחוֹשְׁבִים עָלַי רָעָה, מְהֵרָה הַפֵּר עֲצָתָם וְקַלְקַל
 מַחֲשַׁבְתָּם.

עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן שְׂמֹד.

עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן יְמִינְךָ.

עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן קִדְשְׁתָּךְ.

עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן תּוֹרָתְךָ,

לְמַעַן יִחַלְצוּן יְדִידְךָ, הוֹשִׁיעָה יְמִינְךָ וַעֲנֵנִי. יְהִי לְרִצּוֹן אִמְרֵי בִי
 וְהִגִּיזוֹן לְבָבִי לְפָנֶיךָ, יְהוּה צוּרֵי וְגוֹאֲלֵי. עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמְרוֹמָיו, הוּא
 יַעֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ, וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאִמְרָה, אָמֵן.

At the conclusion of the Amidah, we append a prayer for the restoration of Jerusalem and the rebuilding of our holy Temple.

יְהִי רִצּוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, יְהוּה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, שְׂיִבְנֶה בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ
 בְּמַהֲרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ, וְתֵן חֶלְקֵנוּ בְּתוֹרָתְךָ, וְשֵׁם נִעֲבָדְךָ בִּירְאָה, פְּיָמֵי עוֹלָם
 וּכְשֵׁנִים קְדָמוֹנִיּוֹת. וְעֲרָבָה לִיהוּה מְנַחַת יְהוּדָה וִירוּשָׁלַיִם, פְּיָמֵי עוֹלָם
 וּכְשֵׁנִים קְדָמוֹנִיּוֹת.

The silent recitation of the Amidah ends here. In the presence of a minyan, the service continues with the public repetition of the Amidah by the cantor or baal tefillah. Absent a minyan, private worshipers continue with Avinu Malkeinu, Hallel, or Tachanun, as indicated above, or with Ashrei on page 154.

(Psalm 119:2),” and as it is written in the Torah, “And you shall love A , your God, with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might (Deuteronomy 6:5).”

Moreover, this way of worship is called the way of pure faith regarding which the prophet Isaiah wrote, “this is the way / veer neither to the right or the left (Isaiah 30:21).” But there is a peculiarity in the text of Isaiah—the word for “veer not to the right”, which ought to be written with the Hebrew letter yod as its second letter, has an aleph there instead, thereby creating a word related in form, if not in formal meaning, to the word for faith, emunah, which is written with the same three letters. And what did the prophet mean by spelling the word with an aleph instead of with a yod? Only this: this is the way of faith along which members of the covenanted community who believe in God should spend their lives wandering without veering away from it in any direction at all!



The legal stringency adopted by any who live lives of strict adherence to religious law because of an overwhelming desire to transform the commandments of the Torah from empty vessels possessed solely of potential spiritual importance into useful paving tools with which to create a path to God—and to a life of holiness as a servant of God—is totally reasonable and logical, and requires no secondary justification at all. Indeed, strict adherence to the minutiae of the law for the sake of more fully knowing God through the medium of fealty and obedience is not only praiseworthy, but intensely so. But divine worship that does not bring the worshiper closer to attaining the great goal of all religious effort, which is communion with the communicative and perceptible presence of God, cannot be taken all that seriously no matter how fervently pursued—and this is the inner meaning of the verse from the ninety-sixth psalm: “Bring your gifts and come to the Temple courtyards (Psalm 96:8).” The poet’s words are famous and easy to endorse, their implication dramatically

less so. Take your gifts, the poet is saying with reference to the commandments you observe and the prayers you declaim in truth, and bring them to the innermost courtyard of the House of God, that chamber of the human heart in which God may always be found by those who seek the divine presence in a state of purity, of absolute honesty, of candor untainted with arrogance or egotism, and of uncompromising spiritual integrity. Worship, he means to say, is no more than this. But also, of course, no less.



The most basic of all Scriptural notions regarding the nature of divinity is that God exists far beyond the ken of even those men and women who seek communion with the divine realm the most ardently and with the most passion and dedication. Yet it is the special insight of Scripture that God, somehow, may be known nonetheless—or perhaps merely perceived during the most momentary flicker of redemptive insight imaginable—through the medium of obedience to divine law. To speak untruthfully about the nature of these laws, therefore, is the equivalent of denying their usefulness and validity even if the lies in question themselves are flattering. Moreover, using the laws and commandments of Scripture as elements in one's personal campaign to garner the admiration of the world is the moral and practical equivalent of co-opting the reality of God's existence for personal gain.

However, keeping the commandments diligently and humbly is the equivalent of paving a path towards communion with God with stones made of realized hope—the hope that those faithful souls paving the path might possibly find the strength of character and the spiritual integrity to wander down that path towards redemption without being distracted by egotism, arrogance or the disapproval—or, even more distractingly, by the approval—of others.

Scripture endorses this idea over and over in a wide variety of contexts. For instance, the famous commandment to love God “with all your heart

The silent recitation of the Amidah continues below, but here concludes the public repetition of the Amidah by the cantor or baal tefillah. On fast days other than Tisha Be'av, and on the days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, we continue with Avinu Malkeinu on p. 105. On Tisha Be'av, continue with Kaddish on page 139. During Chol Hamoed, and on Purim, Rosh Chodesh, Israel Independence Day and the days of Chanukah, continue with Hallel on page 185. (On Chol Hamoed, worshipers wearing tefillin remove them at this point in the service.) Otherwise, on Mondays and Thursdays, continue with the long version of Tachanun on page 115. On other weekdays, continue with the short version of Tachanun on page 135. When Tachanan is not recited, continue with Kaddish on page 139.

The Prayer of Mar, son of Rabina

My God, keep my tongue from speaking evil and my lips from uttering slander. May I have the inner strength to remain silent in the face of my enemies' taunts and may I have the courage to be indifferent to all who might insult or mock me. Open my heart to Your Torah and inspire me to yearn to do Your commandments faithfully and properly. And may You quickly annul the plans and bring to naught the plots of those who wish me ill. Do this for the sake of Your name, for the sake of Your great right hand, for the sake of Your holiness, and for the sake of Your holy Torah. May Your right hand grant salvation as You answer our prayers so that those who love You might be granted relief from their burdens. May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable before You, A , my Rock and my Redeemer. And may God Who makes peace on high make peace for us and for the whole House of Israel. And to that, let us all say Amen.

At the conclusion of the Amidah, we append a prayer for the restoration of Jerusalem and the rebuilding of our holy Temple.

May it be Your will, A , our God and God of our ancestors, that the holy Temple be rebuilt quickly and within our days. And may we all have a portion in Your Torah sufficient to guarantee us the merit to serve You in awe in that place, just as in ancient days and bygone years. May the sweet savor of the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant to You, A , just as in ancient days and bygone years.

The silent recitation of the Amidah ends here. In the presence of a minyan, the service continues with the public repetition of the Amidah by the cantor or baal tefillah. Absent a minyan, private worshipers continue with Avinu Malkeinu, Hallel, or Tachanun, as indicated above, or with Ashrei on page 155.

*The Nineteen Benedictions of the Daily Amidah:
The Daily Meditations of Myron Bloom*

In ancient times, Rabbi Eliezer taught that those who say their prayers in the style he designated with the Hebrew word keva (that is: by rote, without concentration, or absent real devotion), have no chance that their prayers will be accepted on high as heartfelt supplication. (Rabbi Eliezer's lesson is preserved in the Mishnah at Tractate Berakhot 4:4.) Yet not all worshipers are possessed of the kind of poetic souls that would allow extemporaneous prayer to flow unimpeded from even willing lips, and those people too are bidden by Rabbi Eliezer's dictum to make their prayers personal, idiosyncratic and deeply individual. To that end, we present here a set of personal meditations composed to go along with the daily recitation of the Amidah. Some worshipers may wish to create their own devotional framework for personalizing their daily prayers. Others may wish to adapt the meditations that follow. In either event, the goal will be the same: worship as tachanunim (that is: heartfelt supplication, to use Rabbi Eliezer's term), not as keva.

Dear God,

My ability to comprehend You is less than an amoeba's ability to comprehend me. Nevertheless, I believe that You are a personal God, Who cares about me and my loved ones, and Who will hear this prayer.

I begin my prayer with this thought in mind:
You are the one God, the one source of all morality.

Blessed are You, A , Protector of Abraham.

Please protect me, my family, and my friends from harm.

Because You are with me, I shall not fear.

Blessed are You, A , Who grants life anew to the dead.

Please grant eternal life to my family and friends who have died, including (*the names of specific individuals may be added here*). May those of us who are alive be worthy of Your gift of eternal life when we die.

and with all your soul and with all your might (Deuteronomy 6:5)" is followed not with pious exhortations to wait patiently until one might be visited by the angel of redemption mentioned elsewhere in Scripture bearing the gift of transcendent, personal salvation, but with practical, useful suggestions for seeking God in the context of daily life. Nor is there any indication that people who seek to use these precepts to invite God's palpable presence into their personal lives—that is, those who keep the words of Torah alive in their own hearts and who teach them diligently to their children and who speak of them at home and while they are away from home on long journeys and who bind them on their arms and who place them firmly between their eyes and who write them on the doorposts of their homes and who engrave them onto the gates of their cities—there is no indication whatsoever that these people are behaving basely or poorly by attempting to create a context in which God might conceivably deign to appear to them. Just to the contrary is the case: by obeying the commandments, and by using them to pave a path forward towards the kind of spiritual wholeness that is, almost by definition, salvation in God, the faithful add to their innate sanctity and natural holiness.

The rabbis of ancient times were very hostile to the notion of using obedience to the laws of Scripture for one's own ends—and Hillel's ancient, uncompromising dictum to the effect that even casual use of the Torah's crown should be punished with death is merely the expression of this idea taken to the extreme. However, the use of the commandments of the Bible to forge a covenantal relationship between the individual performing those commandments and the God perceived to be their divine Author is not an insult to the grandeur of Scripture, but its fulfillment in the world of real people and the realization and actualization of its most sacred program: the transformation of the merely human into the expressly sacred and the hallowing of the mundane realm of ordinary men and women into the kingdom of God on earth.

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As already noted, the essential idea of Scripture is that communion with the living God may be sought by human beings through the medium of strict observance to law. And it is to make real this possibility, then, that Scripture, and specifically the Torah, offers its readers a wide range of commandments, laws, statutes and ritual edicts, each of them designed to escort the seeker one step closer to God along the path of obedience and fealty.

These commandments may be divided down into a large number of different categories according to their essential natures and the details of their performance: positive and negative commandments, commandments based on a recurring calendar of obligation and commandments that devolve upon the faithful in a more haphazard way, commandments specifically designated for those who live in the Holy Land and commandments unrelated to the specific place of residence in which an individual might reside, commandments tied to special events in the lives of the pious—their weddings or the births of their children or the deaths of their parents—and commandments that bear no such relationship to events of human life, commandments specifically designated for observance by men and commandments specifically given to women, commandments that will only be feasible for the wealthy to observe and commandments given to all without regard for social class, commandments that pertain to relations between people and commandments specifically pertaining to the relationship between a pious individual and God, commandments given especially to members of the House of Israel and commandments designated for all humanity, commandments only doable by landowners or farmers and commandments unrelated to an individual's profession, commandments that may only be carried out in the Temple in Jerusalem and commandments doable in any time and any place, and commandments that are specifically applicable to the descendants of Aaron

Blessed are You, A , holy God.

May your holiness inspire me to suppress my animal instincts and to behave in a kind and holy manner.

Blessed are You, A , Who grants intelligence to human beings.

Thank You for giving my grandparents the wisdom to come to this country. Please give me the wisdom to be true to myself, to lead a full and meaningful life, and to be humble about doing so.

Blessed are You, A , Who desires the repentance of sinners.

Thank You for teaching me to apologize when I do wrong, and that *teshuvah*, *tefillah* and *tzedakah*—repentance, prayer and charitable giving—are the paths to a good life.

Blessed are You, A , our gracious God, ever ready to grant forgiveness.

May Your example inspire me to be forgiving of others, thankful for what they are and understanding of what they are not.

Blessed are You, A , Redeemer of Israel.

Thank You for preserving the Jewish people despite so many hardships over the years. Please enable me to help my fellow Jews whenever and wherever they are persecuted.

Blessed are You, A , Who sends healing to the ill of Israel, holy people of God.

Please send a total recovery of the body and the soul to *(the names of individuals may be added here or else say, "those among us stricken with illness.")* May their illnesses give me perspective as to what is important and what is not; may they remind me to be grateful for today, because tomorrow does not stretch out forever.

Blessed are You, A , Who blesses the years.

Bless me with prosperity, O God, so that I may better perform the *mitzvot*.

Blessed are You, A , Who will surely gather the dispersed remnants of Israel.

Gather us in, O God, after millennia of exile. Thank You for permitting me to participate in the ingathering by supporting the State of Israel.

Blessed are You, A , O Sovereign Who loves righteousness and justice.

Please bless me with these attributes so that I can be a good person and meet my responsibilities as a husband, father, son, relative, friend, businessman, citizen and Jew. (*Other worshipers may substitute the terms that refer to their own roles in the world as parents, spouses, children, employers, employees, etc.*)

Blessed are You, A , Destroyer of our enemies and Vanquisher of the wicked.

Please disrupt the designs of my enemies, and give me the self-discipline to avoid vulgarity and sin.

Blessed are You, A , Who is our protective support and a secure haven for the righteous.

May Your example inspire me to support my family and friends when they go through difficult times.

the High Priest and commandments intended for all without regard for sacerdotal rank or status.

There is a deep spiritual point to this variegation of commandment and statute. Although Scripture holds out the democratic idea of equality under the law as a necessary—and desirable—basis for the fair functioning of society when it declares, “One Torah shall apply to the citizen and the stranger living among you (Exodus 12:49),” the reality of the system is that the divine service to which any specific individual is called will never mirror the service to which another is called exactly. This is not a flaw in the system or an accidental development: it is precisely in the search for God through the medium of fidelity to the specific terms of the covenant that apply to the specific life circumstances of a specific individual’s life that that individual’s chance for personal redemption in God lies.

This notion—that the existence of one covenant for all does not imply that all members of the covenanted community will be redeemed through allegiance to precisely the same set of laws—is the precise parallel of the concept that all men and women are created in God’s image. The Torah says as much with great clarity and unequivocally several times in the opening chapters of the Bible, but does not scruple to explain how all human beings can be made in God’s image if there are no two who resemble each other precisely. Other than in the case of identical twins (and not even always in that case once they are grown), no two people are each other’s mirror image. Yet all are created in the image of God. Similarly, no two people bear precisely the same obligations under the terms of the covenant that binds Israel to God. Yet all are included in the great covenantal idea that God may be sought—and the deliverance of the individual achieved—through fidelity to God’s law.



God does not simply materialize in the world through the performance of the commandments, but materializes specifically according to the

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givens of the commandment being performed at any given moment in the creative consciousness of the specific individual performing it. It is in this sense that the ancients described God as the cosmic partner of the worshiper in creation. And, indeed, it is this notion that underlies those passages in Scripture that refer to God being the God of a specific individual, as, for example, at 2 Samuel 7:14 or 1 Chronicles 17:13 or 28:6, where it is said of King Solomon that, by building the Temple in Jerusalem, he became the child of God—not that he somehow magically became the real child of God, whatever that could possibly mean literally, but that his relationship to God was henceforth to be so personal, private and idiosyncratic that it would resemble the relationships between parents and children, relationships that, for all the similarity of their outer contours, are nonetheless totally specific and centered in the reality of the specific families in which they grow, develop and, ideally, flourish.

It is also in this context that we can understand the various verses in Scripture that suggest that the commandments are a kind of song that the worshiper sings with his body and spirit, with his ritual activities and prayers. When, for example, we read in the 119th psalm the verse, “For me, Your laws are songs I sing in my dwelling house (Psalm 119:54),” the point is obvious: the poet’s dwelling house is his body—the earthly home of his soul—and it is through the use of ritual that the poet transcends mere theorizing and actually comes to worship God through the medium of law in that house. (In other passages, however, it is the entire Torah that is called a song and not just the laws presented in it. These verses, however, have the same idea embedded in them: just as a song does not truly exist in the world until an individual comes to sing it in the presence of a human ear capable of hearing and deciphering it, so does divine law itself merely exist in the realm of conceptual ideas until human beings wholly devoted to the worship of God usher it into the domain of active reality through the sheer force of their collective will to know God through the medium of fidelity and obedience to law.)

Blessed are You, A , Who will surely rebuild Jerusalem.
Thank You, O God, for granting that the Holy City be rebuilt over and over in the course of our history. May You never need to grant that it be rebuilt again! Also, please protect the State of Israel and my Israeli friends (*if applicable, add: “and family”*) from violence at the hands of violent foes.

Blessed are You, A , Who will surely bring forth a descendant of David to lead us to salvation.
Please send the Messiah soon, and thus perfect our imperfect world.

Blessed are You, A , Who will ever listen to heartfelt prayer.
Please respond positively to my prayers. But if I do not merit that You do, then please grant me the strength, hope and courage to deal with life on life’s terms.

Blessed are You, A , Who surely will return the Shechinah, Your divine presence, to Zion.
And may You send Your living spirit as well to our adopted homeland, the United States of America. Please let the bond of friendship between Israel and the United States remain strong as a result of sharing Your values.

Blessed are You, A , Whose name is goodness itself and Who is thus wholly deserving of all gratitude.

Dear God,
I am very grateful for all that You have done for me. Thank You for my beloved spouse (*add here the name of a husband or wife, or omit the reference entirely*), the foundation of my happiness. Thank You for my dear family and friends, and for the fortunate upbringing my parents gave me. Thank You that I woke up this morning and was not in pain. Thank You for my health and for the health of my family, and for the availability of medicine to keep us well. Thank You for my ability to think clearly, and for my senses that permit me to enjoy the wonders of Your world. Thank You for whatever talents I possess, and for motivating me to reach my potential. Thank You for giving the Torah to humankind, and for bringing the State of Israel into existence after so many centuries of exile. Thank You for the religious freedom, political freedom, peace and prosperity that I enjoy in my blessed country, the United States of America. And thank You for making me happy with my lot.

Blessed are You, A , Who will always bless the people Israel with peace.

Please grant mental peace and physical peace to me and to my family and friends, and also to the people of my community, the State of Israel, the United States and the world.

**Amen, *kein yehi ratzon!*
May God grant all these things.**

In this context, one could even say that the mindful worshiper actually liberates the commandments from the literary prison in which Scripture has incarcerated them, so to speak, and grants them the freedom to exist in the world unfettered by etymology, morphology, phonology or grammar. In this way, the worshiper becomes the partner of God in the cause of cosmic redemption: just as God redeems the faithful from the chains of human mortality and physicality, so do sincere worshipers redeem the commandments and grant them their freedom to exist in the world as more than word-based theories. This is not a new lesson. Indeed, it was taught millennia ago by Rabbi Acha bar Yaakov, who based himself on the verse from Exodus in which it is noted that the Ten Commandments were written “with writing that was the writing of God engraved on the tablets (Exodus 32:16). Playing on the assonance of the Hebrew words for “engraved” (*charut*) and “freedom” (*cheirut*), Rabbi Acha taught the great paradox of human worship: that the commandments themselves are capable of acting as agents of redemption . . . for those who have the will to redeem them from the domain of legal theory and make them real in space and time.



The primary goal of any who would worship God through the medium of obedience to divine law must always—and only—be to pierce through the outer layer of ritual action to the idea that rests at the core of the commandment. Then, having identified that idea and accessed it, the secondary goal becomes attainable: to embrace that specific idea through the performance of that specific commandment, thereby translating it from the domain of language into a real, physically existent structure in which a human being yearning for communion with God can exist in a symbiotic relationship of succor and hope with the God Who desires the worship of humankind.

This effort to identify and embrace the core ideas about God presented in Scripture by fulfill-

The Matriarchs of Israel

In recent decades, some worshipers have sought to balance the references to the patriarchs of Israel in the opening blessing of the Amidah with a parallel list of the names of the Biblical matriarchs and with a reference to the Almighty as the God through Whose miraculous intervention Sarah became pregnant. To accommodate such worshipers, we present the opening blessing of the Amidah here with the inclusion of the names of the mothers of Israel in the first benediction.

אֲדֹנָי שְׁפָתַי תִּפְתָּח וּפִי יַגִּיד תְּהִלָּתֶךָ.

פְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ,
אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹרָהֶם, אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק, וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב,
אֱלֹהֵי שָׂרָה, אֱלֹהֵי רַבֵּקָה, אֱלֹהֵי רַחֵל וְאֱלֹהֵי
לֵאָה, הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל הַגִּבּוֹר וְהַנּוֹרָא אֵל עֲלִיוֹן,
גּוֹמֵל חַסְדִּים טוֹבִים וְקוֹנֵה הַכֹּל וְזוֹכֵר חַסְדֵי
אֲבוֹת וַיִּמְבִּיא גּוֹיָל לְבָנֵי בְנֵיהֶם לְמַעַן שְׁמוֹ
בְּאַהֲבָה...

Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, add:

זְכַרְנוּ לְחַיִּים, מְלֶךְ חַפֵּץ בַּחַיִּים,
וְכִתְּבֵנוּ בִּסְפֵר הַחַיִּים, לְמַעַן אֱלֹהִים חַיִּים

...מְלֶךְ עוֹזֵר וּמוֹשִׁיעַ וּמַגֵּן, פְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה,
מַגֵּן אֲבֹרָהֶם וּפּוֹקֵד שָׂרָה.

ing the commandments rests at the center of all Jewish religious life; it is the catalytic agent that transforms ritual from superstition to noble effort, from magic to transformational progress towards the kingdom of God. For example, the Torah tells the story of the exodus from Egypt at great length not solely so that the latter-day descendants of those people liberated from bondage to Pharaoh can know about the various events that happened to their ancestors as they sought their freedom, but rather so that the descendants of those people can, by contemplating the image of God as divine Liberator—and by allowing that concept to animate and grant depth and meaning to the wide range of commandments that develop out of the story of Israel's exodus from Egypt—seize the concept that God functions in the world as the source of liberation for all who are held back, be it by the chains of a real despot . . . or by chains fashioned of their own inadequacies and shortcomings. In this way, the story and the laws that develop out of it become united in the hearts of the faithful and a path becomes paved that individuals may successfully follow on their way to God.



The peculiar notion that God may be accessed through simple, faithful obedience to specific divine laws in the same way a specific program on a computer may be accessed only by someone who knows the special password (which otherwise locks the program and makes it inaccessible even to the most accomplished computer scientist) is negated by the fact that no one has ever actually succeeded in conclusively counting the commandments of the Torah. Indeed, although a list of those who have attempted to compose a detailed enumeration of the commandments reads like a roster of the greatest sages of Talmudic and post-Talmudic Judaism—the author of the Halachot Gedolot, Solomon ibn Gabirol, Maimonides, Simon ben Zemach Duran, Aaron Halevi of Barcelona and Nachmanides, just to name the most illustrious—the fact remains that none

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Havineinu

Except between December 5 and Passover, this short version of the Amidah may be recited when circumstances make it impossible to recite the longer text.

A version of the opening blessing mentioning the names of the matriarchs of Israel appears on page 99.

ברוך אתה יהוה אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו, אלהי אברהם, אלהי יצחק, ואלהי יעקב, האל הגדול הגבור והגורא, אל עליון, גומל חסדים טובים, וקונה הכל, וזוכר חסדי אבות, ומביא גואל לבני בניהם למען שמו באהבה...

Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, add these words:

זכרנו לחיים, מלך חפץ בחיים, וכתבנו בספר החיים, למענה אלהים חיים... מלך עוזר ומושיע ומגן. ברוך אתה יהוה, מגן אברהם. אתה גבור לעולם אדני, מחיה מתים אתה, רב להושיע...

Between Shemini Atzeret and December 5, add these words:

משיב הרוח ומוריד הגשם... מכלל חיים בחסד, מחיה מתים ברחמים רבים, סומך נופלים, ורופא חולים, ומתיר אסורים, ומקים אמונתו לישגי עפר, מי כמוך בעל גבורות ומי דומה לך, מלך ממית ומחיה ומצמיח ישועה...

Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, add these words:

מי כמוך אב הרחמים, זוכר יצוריו לחיים ברחמים... ונאמן אתה להחיות מתים. ברוך אתה יהוה, מחיה המתים. אתה קדוש ושמך קדוש וקדושים בכל יום יהללה, סלה. ברוך אתה יהוה, האל הקדוש.

הבינו יהוה אלהינו לדעת דרכיה, ומול את לבנו ליראתך, ותסלח לנו להיות גאולים, ורחקנו ממכאוב, ודשנו בנאות ארצה, ונפוצותינו מארבע תקבץ, והתועים על דעתך ישפטו, ועל הרשעים תגיה ידה, וישמחו צדיקים בבגין עירך, ובתקון היכלך, ובצמיחת קרן לדוד עבדך, ובעריכת גר לבן ישי משיחך. טרם נקרא אתה תענה. ברוך אתה יהוה, שומע תפילה.

of them produced a list that is universally accepted as authoritative and final.

This maddening quality of the law—that its codicils cannot be counted or named conclusively, yet it must nonetheless be obeyed unconditionally—is reflective of the nature of blessing in general. Indeed, it is precisely because the laws of Scripture are, collectively, a blessing for mankind that they cannot be counted well or, one might even say, at all. Numerous texts from antiquity speak directly to this point. Abraham’s progeny, Scripture says, will also resist precise counting, as God said to Abraham, “I shall make your seed as the dust of the earth such that your descendants will only be countable by someone who can also count the particles of dust in the world (Genesis 13:16).” Indeed, Scripture specifically ordains that any attempt to conduct a census in Israel must have its negative consequences vitiated in advance, as at Exodus 30:12, where the text decrees, “When you take the census of the people of Israel according to their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul to A when you count them; do this so that there will be no plague among them when you count them.” And the dire consequences that ensued when King David ill-advisedly chose to conduct a census are also relevant: “And David’s heart struck him after he had counted the people. And David said to A , ‘I have sinned greatly in what I have done; and now, I beseech you, A , take away the iniquity of your servant; for I have acted very foolishly (2 Samuel 24:10).’” Indeed, the ancient sages relied on the same assumptions about the nature of blessing when they decreed that “blessing may never be found in the weighed, measured or counted thing, but only in something the specific dimensions, weight and size of which are hidden from the eye (BT Taanit 8b and Bava Metzia 42a)—and the same is true of the greatest of all blessings—the blessing of Torah.

On the other hand, the famous midrash of Rabbi Simlai preserved in the Talmud (at Tractate Makkot 23b) according to which there are precisely 613 commandments in Scripture, only serves to underscore the underlying principle that

the commandments may never be counted: their sum may well have been known to Rabbi Simlai, but even he did not attempt to produce their authoritative list. And the chances are strong that even Rabbi Simlai didn't mean his number to be taken literally in that it is merely the sum of the days of the solar year (which is said to match the number of negative commandments) and the number of discrete limbs and organs in the human body (which is said to match the number of positive commandments) and, therefore, was probably intended to suggest that individuals truly in search of God through the medium of obedience to divine law will devote themselves, body and soul, to the task every day of their earthly lives.

Indeed, this interpretation is supported by the teaching of Rabbi Hamnuna preserved slightly further along in the Talmud (at Makkot 23b-24a), to the effect that the number 613 is derived from the fact that the numerological value of the Hebrew word *torah* is 611. The number 611, then, would represent the number of commandments revealed through Moses to the people, while the remaining two would be those that the Israelites camped at the foot of Mount Sinai would have heard, according to Rabbi Hamnuna, directly from God. It's great, creative *midrash*—but surely Nachmanides was right to label it as an *asmachta*, that is: as an inspiring, interesting lesson unrelated to the actual literary history of Scripture or its laws.

Given the long history of efforts to count the commandments, however, it seems wrong to conclude that there is no point to the effort. There is indeed a point, only that it is not predicated on the doability of the task at hand. The point, actually, is just to the contrary: the set of commandments that can and cannot be counted are the perfect path along which the righteous might stumble forwards towards a God Who exists in the world and Who cannot exist in the world, Whom human beings can know and Who is totally unknowable, towards that God acclaimed by the prophet (at Isaiah 45:15) as the Hidden God . . . and said by King Solomon to dwell in the misty fog, that is to say: in a penetra-

Havineinu

Except between December 5 and Passover, this short version of the Amidah may be recited when circumstances make it impossible to recite the longer text.

A version of the opening blessing mentioning the names of the matriarchs of Israel appears on page 99.

Blessed are You, A , our God and God of our ancestors, God of Abraham, God of Isaac and God of Jacob, great and mighty God Most High, source of endless mercy, Creator of all, God ever willing to remember the good deeds of ancestors, God Who will lovingly send a redeemer to their children's children for the sake of the divine name . . .

Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, add these words:

Remember us for life, O Sovereign God Who desires that we merit life, and inscribe us in the Book of Life for Your own sake, O living God.

. . . O sovereign God, our divine Helper, Savior and Protector.

Blessed are You, A , Protector of Abraham.

You are forever mighty, Adonai, O God capable of bestowing life anew upon the dead, our never ending source of salvation . . .

Between Shemini Atzeret and December 5, add these words:

God, Who makes the wind to blow and the rain to fall

. . . God, Who mercifully sustains the living and Who compassionately grants life anew to the dead, Who supports the fallen and Who heals the sick, Who frees the imprisoned and Who will never break faith with those who lie in the dust. Who is like You, Author of mighty deeds? And who can be compared to You, O Sovereign Who decrees death, then grants life anew, and Who will surely bring about our salvation?

Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, add these words:

Who is like You, O Author of compassion, Who remembers Your creations and mercifully judges them worthy of life?

Indeed, You are certain to grant life anew to the dead.

Blessed are You, A , Who grants life anew to the dead.

Grant us intelligence, A , our God, that we may understand Your ways and open our hearts totally that we may hold You in perfect awe.

Forgive us our sins that we may be redeemed and distance us from pain.

Grant that we may someday graze in the pastures of Your holy land and gather our dispersed nation from the four corners of the earth. Judge kindly those who err in their beliefs about You, but bring the full weight of Your arm of justice down upon the wicked. May the righteous rejoice in the restoration of Your city and in the reconstruction of Your holy Temple, and may they be privileged to witness a descendant of the House of David coming forth as their anointed king and acclaimed in public as a true descendant of Your servant David, son of Jesse. Before we even call out to You, answer us! Blessed are You, A , Who listens to prayer.

ble-impenetrable cloud of endlessly intermingled being and beinglessness.

In turn, the image of a God Who may not be perceived being served by commandments that cannot be counted is meant to point directly to a deep truth: that the journey to God may be undertaken but never actually completed, that revelation is poetry, not prose . . . music not science, yearning not consummation, desire not the fulfillment of desire.



One of the best indications of sincerity in worship untainted by self-serving egotism and arrogance is precisely the enthusiasm, alacrity and zeal an individual brings to worship. Indeed, it is the overt willingness to be obedient to the strictures of the commandments—and even the delight an individual feels in that obedience—that is behind those passages in Scripture that refer to the relationship between human beings and God both as though it were parallel to the relationship between servants and their masters and mistresses and also as though it were parallel to the relationship between earthly lovers.

This ability to use the alacrity one brings to divine service to demonstrate the depth of one's desire to know God through the medium of observance is behind an old midrash on the verse from Exodus "You shall keep the matzot (that is: the commandment of eating matzah on Passover; Exodus 12:17)" preserved in one of the oldest books of rabbinic commentary on the Torah, the Mekhilta of Rabbi Ishmael, in the name of Rabbi Josiah. Playing on the fact that the Hebrew, a bit cryptically, says merely: "You shall keep the matzot" and also on the fact that the word for matzot is written with the same letters as the word mitzvot ("commandments"), the ancient rabbi observed that the lesson Scripture wishes to impart is two-fold: not only are the Israelites to eat matzah during Passover, but, just as the unleavened dough must not be allowed to lie around before being baked lest it rise even slightly, so must a commandment, once it has devolved

רצה, יהוה אלהינו, בעמך ישראל ובתפלתם, והשב את העבודה לדביר ביתך, ואשי ישראל ותפלתם באהבה תקבל בראון, ותחי לראון תמיד עבודת ישראל עמך. ותחזינה עינינו בשובה לציון ברחמים. ברוך אתה יהוה, המחזיר שכנתו לציון.

מודים אנחנו לך, שאתה הוא, יהוה אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו, לעולם ועד. צור חיינו, מגן ישענו, אתה הוא לדור ודור. גזרה לך ונספר תהלתך על חיינו המסורים בידך, ועל נשמותינו הפקודות לך, ועל נסיה שפכל יום עמנו, ועל נפלאותיה וטובותיה שפכל עת, ערב ובקר וצהריים. הטוב פי לא כלו רחמיך, והמרחם, פי לא תמו חסדיך מעולם קיינו לך. ועל פלם יתברך ויתרומם שמה, מלפניו, תמיד לעולם ועד.

Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, add these words:

וּכְתוּב חַיִּים טוֹבִים כָּל בְּנֵי בְרִיתְךָ

וְכָל חַיִּים יוֹדוּךָ סֵלָה, וַיְהַלְלוּ אֶת שְׁמֶךָ בְּאַמְתָּה, הָאֵל יִשׁוּעַתְנוּ וְעֲזַרְתְּנוּ סֵלָה. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יהוה, הַטוֹב שְׁמֶךָ וְלֶךָ נְאֻה לְהוֹדוֹת.

During morning prayers, recite this paragraph:

שִׁים שְׁלוֹם טוֹבָה וּבְרָכָה, חֵן וְחֶסֶד וּרְחָמִים, עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל עִמָּךְ. בְּרַכְנוּ, אֲבִינוּ, כְּלָנוּ כְּאֶחָד בְּאוֹר פְּנִיָּה, כִּי בְּאוֹר פְּנִיָּה נִתְּתָ לָנוּ, יהוה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, תּוֹרַת חַיִּים וְאַהֲבַת חֶסֶד, וְאַדְקָה וּבְרָכָה וּרְחָמִים וְחַיִּים וְשְׁלוֹם, וְטוֹב בְּעֵינֶיךָ לְבָרֶךְ אֶת עַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּכָל יְת וּבְכָל שְׁעָה בְּשְׁלוֹמָךְ.

Except between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, conclude with this blessing:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יהוה, הַמְּבָרֵךְ אֶת עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּשְׁלוֹם.

Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, conclude with this passage:

בְּסִפּוּר חַיִּים, בְּרָכָה, וְשְׁלוֹם, וּפְרִנְסָה טוֹבָה, גְּזֵכֶר וְנִפְתָּב לְפָנֶיךָ, אֲנַחְנוּ וְכָל עַמְּךָ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל, לְחַיִּים טוֹבִים וְלְשְׁלוֹם. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יהוה, עוֹשֵׂה הַשְּׁלוֹם.

During afternoon and evening prayers, recite this paragraph:

שְׁלוֹם רַב עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל עִמָּךְ תְּשִׁים לְעוֹלָם, כִּי אַתָּה הוּא מְלֶכֶךְ אֲדוֹן לְכָל הַשְּׁלוֹם. וְטוֹב בְּעֵינֶיךָ לְבָרֶךְ אֶת עַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּכָל יְת וּבְכָל שְׁעָה בְּשְׁלוֹמָךְ.

Except between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, conclude with this blessing:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יהוה, הַמְּבָרֵךְ אֶת עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּשְׁלוֹם.


Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, conclude with this passage:

בְּסִפּוּר חַיִּים, בְּרָכָה, וְשְׁלוֹם, וּפְרִנְסָה טוֹבָה, גְּזֵכֶר וְנִפְתָּב לְפָנֶיךָ, אֲנַחְנוּ וְכָל עַמְּךָ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל, לְחַיִּים טוֹבִים וְלְשְׁלוֹם. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יהוה, עוֹשֵׂה הַשְּׁלוֹם.

upon an individual, not be allowed to languish even slightly until that person gets around to fulfilling it. Instead, every opportunity life affords an individual to worship God must be seized with enthusiasm and alacrity—and performed as quickly as possible—for enthusiastic obedience to the law is itself an injunction of Scripture, as the psalmist wrote, “I moved quickly and without hesitation to keep Your commandments (Psalm 119:60).”

In the Mishnah (in Tractate Avot, called the Ethics of the Fathers, 5:20), this point is made even more clear in the words of Rabbi Judah ben Tema who called on the faithful to be “as strong as leopards and as swift as eagles and as fleet of foot as deer and as brave as lions” when approaching the enterprise of worship. By this, he meant to say that it is not merely incumbent upon the faithful to worship God in every aspect of their lives, but to do so obediently . . . and with alacrity and with speed and without undue hesitation or uncertainty.



The journey to God along the path of obedience to divine law can never be attained through disobedience to a different law, or to a different set of specific laws, than the one an individual is attempting to obey at any given moment. Indeed, people who transgress one of the commandments of the Torah while attempting to uphold a different one accomplish nothing of too lasting value and are akin to those ancients whom the prophet described as putting coins in a purse with holes at the bottom: the coins retain their value . . . but only for whomever finds them, not for the one who loses them along the way. 

Take pleasure, A , our God, in Your people Israel and in their prayers. And restore the ancient worship service to the sanctuary of Your great Temple and accept the offerings and prayers of Israel willingly and with love so that the worship of Your people Israel will ever find favor before You. May our eyes see Your compassionate return to Zion. Blessed are You, A , Who surely will re-establish the Shechinah, the divine presence, in Zion.

We affirm our faith in You, for You are and always shall be A , our God and the God of our ancestors, the rock of our lives and the shield behind which we nurture our hope of redemption in every generation. All this we affirm freely to You as we recount the praises due You for the security and safety of our lives, both of which are in Your hands, and for our souls, which are wholly dependent on You, and also for the miracles that You perform daily for us, a never-ending series of wonders and kindnesses from which we benefit morning, afternoon and evening every day of our lives. O God of goodness, Whose compassion never fails, O God of compassion, Whose mercies never end, it is ever in You that we place our trust. And so, for all these things, may Your name be blessed and exalted for always and for all time, O sovereign God . . .

Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, add these words:

and may You inscribe for a good life all those bound to you in sacred covenant

. . . for then shall all living creatures give thanks to You, *selah*, and render sincere praise to Your name, O God of our salvation, our ever-present help, *selah*. Blessed are You, A , Whose name is goodness itself and Who is wholly deserving of all gratitude.

During morning prayers, recite this paragraph:

Grant peace, goodness, blessing, grace, mercy and compassion to us and to all Your people Israel. Bless us all together, O holy Parent, with the radiance of Your countenance, for in that holy light did You, A our God, give us the Torah of life and instill in us the love of mercy, righteousness, blessing, compassion, life and peace. It is good in Your eyes to bless Your people Israel at all times, at every hour of every day, with Your peace.

Except between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, conclude with this blessing:

Blessed are You, A , Who will always bless the people Israel with peace.

Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, conclude with this passage:

May we and all members of Your people, the House of Israel, be remembered and entered in the Book of Life, Blessing, Peace, and Great Prosperity, for now and for always, for a good life and for peace. Blessed are You, A , Maker of peace.

During afternoon and evening prayers, recite this paragraph:

Grant a great and permanent peace to Your people Israel, for You are the Sovereign of all peace and we pray that it be good in Your eyes to bless Your people Israel at every time and in every hour with Your peace.

Except between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, conclude with this blessing:

Blessed are You, A , Who will always bless the people Israel with peace.

Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, conclude with this passage:

May we and all members of Your people, the House of Israel, be remembered and entered in the Book of Life, Blessing, Peace, and Great Prosperity, for now and for always, for a good life and for peace. Blessed are You, A , Maker of peace.

On fast days other than Tisha Be'av and on all the days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, continue here as the Ark is opened. On Tisha Be'av, continue with Kaddish on page 138.



In the eleventh and twelfth chapters of the section of the Mishneh Torah called “The Laws Concerning Kings and their Wars”, Maimonides turns to the codification of the traditions about the Messiah and messianic redemption. In the eighth and ninth chapters of the section called “Laws of Repentance,” Maimonides turns specifically to the concept of the World to Come. Together, these chapters can be considered as a kind of theological treatise on redemption, and it is in that spirit that they are presented here. The passages from the “Laws of Repentance” appear in a revised version of an original translation by Rabbi Simon Glazer.

Laws Concerning Kings

Chapter Eleven

In future time, King Messiah, the anointed king of Israel, will arise and renew the Davidic dynasty, restoring it to its initial sovereignty. He will rebuild the Temple and gather in the dispersed remnant of Israel. Then, in his days, all the statutes will be reinstated as in former times. We will offer sacrifices and observe the sabbatical and jubilee years according to all their particulars set forth in the Torah. Whoever does not believe in him, or does not await his coming, denies not only the other prophets, but also the Torah and the words of Moses, our teacher, for the Torah attests specifically to the coming of the Messiah, stating at Deuteronomy 30:3-5: “And A your God will bring back your captivity and have compassion upon you. God will return and gather you (from among all the nations). . . . Even if your dispersed ones are in the furthest reaches of the heavens, (from there will God gather you in). . . . God will bring you (to the land). . . .”

These explicit words of the Torah subsume all that was said (on the subject) by all the prophets.

אָבִינוּ מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, חֲטָאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ.
 אָבִינוּ מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, אֵין לָנוּ מֶלֶךְ אֱלֹה אֲתָה.
 אָבִינוּ מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, עֲשֵׂה עִמָּנוּ לְמַעַן שְׂמִיךָ.

Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, recite this line:

On fast days recite this line:

<p>אָבִינוּ מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, בְּרַךְ עֲלֵינוּ שָׁנָה טוֹבָה.</p>	<p>אָבִינוּ מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, בְּרַךְ עֲלֵינוּ שָׁנָה טוֹבָה.</p>
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אָבִינוּ מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, בִּטּוֹל מֵעֲלֵינוּ כָּל גְּזֵרוֹת קִשּׁוֹת.
 אָבִינוּ מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, בִּטּוֹל מִחֲשָׁבוֹת שׁוֹנְאֵינוּ.
 אָבִינוּ מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, הִפָּר עֲצַת אוֹיְבֵינוּ.
 אָבִינוּ מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, כִּלְה כָּל צָר וּמִשְׁטִיין מֵעֲלֵינוּ.
 אָבִינוּ מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, סְתוּם פִּיּוֹת מִשְׁטֵינֵנוּ
 וּמִקְטָרֵיגָנוּ.
 אָבִינוּ מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, כִּלְה דְּבַר וְחָרָב וְרָעַב וְשִׁבִי
 וּמִשְׁחִית מִפְּנֵי בְרִיתְךָ.

There is also a reference to the Messiah in the passage concerning Balaam, who prophesied about the two anointed kings of Israel: the first, David, who saved Israel from her oppressors, and the final one, the messianic king who will arise from among his descendants and save Israel at the End of Days. The following are the references from the latter passage, Numbers 24:17–18, “I see it, but not now”: this refers to David. “I perceive it, but not in the near future”: this refers to King Messiah. “A star shall go forth from Jacob”: this refers to David. “And a staff shall arise in Israel”: this refers to King Messiah. “God shall crush all of Moab’s princes”: this refers to David, (as it is written at 2 Samuel 8:2, that David “smote Moab and measured them with a plumb line.” “God shall break down all of Seth’s descendants”: this refers to King Messiah, (about whom it is written, “God will rule from sea to sea” at Zachariah 9:10). “Edom will be demolished”: this refers to David, as it is alluded to at 2 Samuel 8:6 and 8:14, where it is written that “Edom became the servants of David.” “His enemy, Seir, will be destroyed”: this refers to the Messiah, as it is written at Obadiah 1:21, “The victors will ascend Mount Zion to judge the mountain of Esau. . . .”

Similarly, in regard to the cities of refuge, it is stated at Deuteronomy 19:8–9, “When God expands your borders . . . you shall add three more cities.” This command has never been fulfilled. Surely, God did not give this command in vain, (and thus the intent was that it be fulfilled after the coming of the Messiah). There is no need to cite prooftexts on the concept of the Messiah from the words of the prophets, for all their books are filled with it.

One should not entertain the notion that King Messiah must work miracles and wonders, bring about new phenomena within the world, resurrect the dead, or perform other similar deeds. This is not true. A proof can be brought from the fact that Rabbi Akiba, one of the greatest sages of the Mishnah, was one of the supporters of King Ben Koziva, and would describe him as King Messiah. He and all the sages of his generation considered him to be King Messiah until he was killed

Avinu Malkeinu

*On fast days other than Tisha Be'av and on all the days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, continue here as the Ark is opened.
On Tisha Be'av, continue with Kaddish on page 139.*

Avinu Malkeinu,
we have sinned before You.
Avinu Malkeinu,
we have no Sovereign but You.
Avinu Malkeinu,
deal with us kindly
for the sake of Your own name.

Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, recite this line:

*Avinu Malkeinu, grant us
a good new year.*

On fast days, recite this line:

*Avinu Malkeinu, bless us
with a good year.*

Avinu Malkeinu,
annul all evil decrees against us.
Avinu Malkeinu,
annul the schemes of those who hate us.
Avinu Malkeinu,
render the advice given our enemies useless.
Avinu Malkeinu,
render our foes powerless against us.
Avinu Malkeinu,
render mute those who defame and denounce us.
Avinu Malkeinu,
**make safe from plague and sword, from famine,
captivity and destruction, all those linked to You
in holy covenant.**

אָבִינוּ מִלְפָּנֶיךָ, מִנֵּעַ מִגִּפָּה מִיַּחַד לְתַךְ.
אָבִינוּ מִלְפָּנֶיךָ, סִלַּח וּמַחֲל לְכָל עֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ.
אָבִינוּ מִלְפָּנֶיךָ, מַחֵה וְהַעֲבֵר פְּשָׁעֵינוּ
וְחַטֹּאתֵינוּ מִנְּגִד עֵינֶיךָ.
אָבִינוּ מִלְפָּנֶיךָ, מְחַוֵּק בְּרַחֲמֶיךָ הַרְבִּים כָּל
שְׂטָרֵי חוֹבוֹתֵינוּ.

*The next nine lines are recited first by the cantor or the baal tefillah,
then repeated by the congregation.*

אָבִינוּ מִלְפָּנֶיךָ, הַחֲזִירְנוּ בְּתַשׁוּבָה שְׁלֵמָה
לְפָנֶיךָ.
אָבִינוּ מִלְפָּנֶיךָ, שְׁלַח רְפוּאָה שְׁלֵמָה לְחוּלֵי
עַמּוֹךָ.
אָבִינוּ מִלְפָּנֶיךָ, קַרַע רוּעַ גָּזַר דִּינֵינוּ.
אָבִינוּ מִלְפָּנֶיךָ, זְכַרְנוּ בְּזַכְרוֹן טוֹב לְפָנֶיךָ.

On fast days other than the Fast of Gedaliah, say the following five lines:

אָבִינוּ מִלְפָּנֶיךָ, זְכַרְנוּ לְחַיִּים טוֹבִים.
אָבִינוּ מִלְפָּנֶיךָ, זְכַרְנוּ לְגֵאֲלָה וּישׁוּעָה.
אָבִינוּ מִלְפָּנֶיךָ, זְכַרְנוּ לְפִרְנָסָה וְכִלְפָּלָה.
אָבִינוּ מִלְפָּנֶיךָ, זְכַרְנוּ לְזִכְיוֹת.
אָבִינוּ מִלְפָּנֶיךָ, זְכַרְנוּ לְסִלְיָהּ וּמַחֲלָהּ.

because of (his) sins. Once he was killed, they realized that he was not (the Messiah). The sages did not ask him for any signs or wonders. (Rather), this is the main thrust of the matter. This Torah, with its statutes and laws, is everlasting. We may neither add to them nor subtract from them. Indeed, whoever adds to the commandments or subtracts from them, or misinterprets the Torah by implying that the commandments are not intended to be understood literally, is surely a wicked imposter and a heretic.

If a king should arise from the House of David who delves deeply into the study of the Torah and who, like David his ancestor, observes its commandments as prescribed by the Written Law and the Oral Law—and if he compels all of Israel to walk in the way of the Torah and if he repairs the breaches in its observance . . . and if he fights the wars of God—we may tentatively consider him to be the Messiah. If he succeeds in the above, builds the Holy Temple on its site, and gathers in the dispersed remnant of Israel, he is definitely the Messiah. He will then perfect the entire world, (motivating all the nations) to serve God together, as it is written at Zephaniah 3:9, “I will make the peoples pure of speech so that they will all call upon the name of God and serve God with one purpose.”

Chapter Twelve

One should not entertain the notion that, in the era of the Messiah, any element of the natural order will be nullified, or that there will be any innovation in the work of creation. Rather, the world will continue according to its established pattern. Although Isaiah (at Isaiah 11:6) states, “The wolf will dwell with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the young goat,” these words are meant allegorically to imply that Israel will dwell securely together with the wicked nations who are likened to wolves and leopards, as in the verse at Jeremiah 5:6, “A wolf of the deserts despoils them, a leopard watches over their cities.” (In this era, all nations) will return to the true faith and no longer plunder or destroy. Instead, at peace with Israel, they will eat that

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which is permitted, as it is written at Isaiah 11:7, "The lion shall eat straw like the ox." Similarly, other prophecies of this nature concerning the Messiah are analogies. In the era of King Messiah, everyone will realize what was implied by these metaphors and allusions.

Our sages taught in the Talmud at Berakhot 34b: "There will be no difference between the current age and the era of the Messiah except our emancipation from subjugation to (Gentile) kingdoms." The simple meaning of the words of the prophets appears to imply that the war of Gog and Magog described in the thirty-eighth chapter of the Book of Ezekiel will take place at the beginning of the messianic age. Before the war of Gog and Magog, a prophet will arise to rectify Israel's conduct and prepare their hearts, as it is written at Malachi 3:23: "Behold, I am sending you Elijah before the advent of the great and awesome Day of God." He will not come to declare the pure, impure, nor to declare the impure, pure; nor will he come to disqualify the lineage of those presumed to be of flawless descent, nor to validate lineage which is presumed to be blemished. Rather, he will come in order to establish peace in the world; as (the above prophecy) continues, "He will bring back the hearts of the fathers to the children (Malachi 3:24)." Some of the sages say that Elijah will appear before the coming of the Messiah. All these and similar matters cannot be known by humankind until they occur, for they are undefined in the words of the prophets. Even the Sages have no established tradition regarding these matters, beyond what is implied by the verses cited; hence there are divergences of opinion among them. In any case, neither the sequence of these events nor their precise details are among the fundamental principles of the faith. One should not occupy oneself at length with the *aggadot* and *midrashim* that deal with these and similar matters, nor should one deem them of prime importance, for they bring one to neither the awe nor the love of God. Similarly, one should not try to calculate the appointed time for the coming of the Messiah. Our sages declared in the Talmud at Sanhedrin 97b: "May the spirits expire

Avinu Malkeinu, eliminate illness from the people known as Your sacred inheritance.

Avinu Malkeinu, pardon and forgive all our sins.

Avinu Malkeinu, erase and make as naught in Your eyes our transgressions and our iniquities.

Avinu Malkeinu, in Your great compassion, cancel all record of our debts to You.

The next nine lines are recited first by the cantor or the baal tefillah, then repeated by the congregation:

Avinu Malkeinu, bring us back to You in complete repentance.

Avinu Malkeinu, send a complete healing to the sick of Your people.

Avinu Malkeinu, annul whatever decrees You may already have enacted against us.

Avinu Malkeinu, remember us before You with good thoughts.

On fast days other than the Fast of Gedaliah, say the following five lines:

Avinu Malkeinu,
remember us for a good life.

Avinu Malkeinu,
remember us for redemption and salvation.

Avinu Malkeinu,
remember us for prosperity and success.

Avinu Malkeinu,
remember us because of our merits.

Avinu Malkeinu,
remember us for forgiveness and pardon.

Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur,
including on the Fast of Gedaliah, recite these five lines:

אָבִינוּ מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, כְּתִבְנוּ בְּסֵפֶר הַיּוֹם טוֹבִים
אָבִינוּ מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, כְּתִבְנוּ בְּסֵפֶר גְּאֻלָּה וַיְשׁוּעָה.
אָבִינוּ מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, כְּתִבְנוּ בְּסֵפֶר פְּרִנָּסָה וְכִלְפָּלָה.
אָבִינוּ מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, כְּתִבְנוּ בְּסֵפֶר זְכוּיוֹת.
אָבִינוּ מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, כְּתִבְנוּ בְּסֵפֶר סְלִיחָה וּמְחִילָה.

On all days Avinu Malkeinu is recited, continue here:

אָבִינוּ מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, הַצְמַח לָנוּ יְשׁוּעָה בְּקָרוֹב.
אָבִינוּ מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, הָרֵם קָרוֹן יִשְׂרָאֵל עַמּוֹךְ.
אָבִינוּ מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, הָרֵם קָרוֹן מְשִׁיחֶךָ.
אָבִינוּ מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, מִלֵּא יְדֵינוּ מְבָרְכוֹתֶיךָ.
אָבִינוּ מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, מִלֵּא אֲסַמְיֵנוּ שָׁבַע.
אָבִינוּ מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, שְׁמַע קוֹלֵנוּ, חוּס וְרַחֵם
עָלֵינוּ.

אָבִינוּ מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, קַיֵּל בְּרַחֲמִים וּבְרָצוֹן אֶת
תְּפִלָּתֵנוּ.

אָבִינוּ מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, פְּתַח שַׁעֲרֵי שָׁמַיִם
לְתִפְלַתֵנוּ.

of those who attempt to calculate the final time of Messiah's coming!" Rather, one should wait and believe in the general concept of the matter, as we have explained.

During the era of King Messiah, once his kingdom has been established and all of Israel has gathered around him, the entire (nation's) line of descent will be established on the basis of his words through the prophetic spirit which will rest upon him, as it is written at Malachi 3:3, "He shall sit as a refiner and purifier." He will purify the lineage of the kohanim and Levites first, stating that "This one is a kohen of defined lineage" and "This one is a Levite of defined lineage." Those whose lineage he does not recognize will be relegated to the status of Israelites. This is implied by Ezra 2:63: "The governor said to them, 'They shall not eat of the most holy things until a kohen arises (who will wear) the Urim and Tumim.'" From this verse one can infer that the genealogy of those presumed to be of unquestioned (priestly and levitical) lineage will be traced by means of the prophetic spirit, and those found to be of such lineage will be made known. He will define the lineage of the Israelites according to their tribe alone, making known each person's tribal origin by stating that "This one is from this tribe" and "This one is from another tribe." However, concerning a person who is presumed to be of unblemished lineage, he will not state that "This individual is illegitimate," or "This person is of slave lineage," for the law rules that once the members of a given family have become intermingled (within the entire Jewish people), they may remain so intermingled.

The sages and prophets did not yearn for the messianic era in order that (the Jewish people) rule over the entire world, nor in order that they have dominion over the Gentiles, and neither was the point that they be exalted by them, nor that they eat, drink and celebrate. Rather, their aspiration was that (Jewish people) be free (to involve themselves) in Torah and its wisdom without anyone to oppress or disturb them, and thus be found worthy of life in the World to Come, as we explained in the "Laws of Repentance."

In that era there will be neither famine nor war, neither envy nor competition, for good things will

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flow in abundance and all the delights will be as freely available as dust. The occupation of the entire world will be solely to know God. The Jews will therefore be great sages and know the hidden matters, and will attain an understanding of their Creator to the (full) extent of human potential, as it is written at Isaiah 11:9, "For the world will be filled with the knowledge of God as the waters cover the ocean bed."

Laws of Repentance

Chapter Eight

The hidden good in store for the righteous is life in the World to Come, which is a life connected with no death and a kind of good connected with no evil as described in the Torah, where it is written, "That it may be well with you, and you may prolong your days (Deuteronomy 22:7)," which has traditionally be understood as follows: "that it may be well with you": in a world which is entirely good, "and you may prolong your days": in a world that will exist forever, and this is a reference to the World to Come.

The reward of the just is that they will acquire the sweetness of that everlasting world, and its goodness. By contrast, the punishment of the wicked is precisely that they will not share in such life, but will suffer excision and eternal death. And whosoever does not earn such life is to be permanently dead, never again to come again to life, severed from life by his iniquity and sent off to oblivion like a steer. This is what the Torah means when it speaks of the punishment of excision, saying, "That soul shall utterly be cut off (e.g., at Numbers 15:31)," which verse has traditionally been explained to mean: "cut off" in this world and "utterly cut off" from the World to Come. The verse implies that the soul in question, when it separates from the body that houses it in this world, shall not share in the life of the World to Come, for even from the World to Come is it totally cut off.

The World to Come harbors neither body nor aught of a concrete form, save only the souls of the righteous divested of body as are the ministering angels. Inasmuch as it harbors no concrete

*Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur,
including on the Fast of Gedaliah, recite these five lines:*

Avinu Malkeinu,
inscribe us in the book of good life.
Avinu Malkeinu,
inscribe us in the book of redemption and salvation.
Avinu Malkeinu,
inscribe us in the book of prosperity and success.
Avinu Malkeinu,
inscribe us in the book of merit.
Avinu Malkeinu,
inscribe us in the book of forgiveness and pardon.

On all days Avinu Malkeinu is recited, continue here:

Avinu Malkeinu,
bring the speedy dawn of our salvation.
Avinu Malkeinu,
raise up the horn of Israel, Your people.
Avinu Malkeinu,
raise up the horn of Your Messiah.
Avinu Malkeinu,
fill our hands with Your blessings.
Avinu Malkeinu,
fill our storehouses with plenty.
Avinu Malkeinu,
hear our voice when we cry out to You;
take pity on us and be compassionate with us.
Avinu Malkeinu,
accept our prayers willingly
and compassionately.
Avinu Malkeinu,
open the gates of heaven to our prayers.

form, there is no need there for eating, drinking, or any other of the bodily necessities of human beings in this world. Neither will any of the many things which happen to bodies in this world come to pass there, as, for example, sitting down, standing up, sleeping, dying, or experiencing sadness, mirth or the like.

Thus did the ancient sages say (in the Talmud at Tractate Berakhot 17a), "In the World to Come, there is no eating, no drinking, and no family life, save that the righteous are sitting, graced with garlands upon their heads, and there they indulge themselves in feasting upon the luminousness of the Shechinah." From this text, it should be clear to you that no body exists there, seeing that there is neither eating nor drinking. That expression of "sitting" employed by the sages in the comment just cited too is figurative, as if saying that they are there without effort or fatigue, as is the expression "graced with garlands upon their heads," means that they have conscious knowledge of the reason why they have merited to be in the World to Come, and this is their crown of garlands, as, for example, in the verse at Song of Songs 3:11, where King Solomon makes mention of "the crown wherewith his mother crowned him." Moreover, it was said, "And everlasting shall joy be upon their heads (Isaiah 35:10)." Joy, of course, is not a physical body that can rest upon a head, and so this must be taken as a metaphor, just as the reference to the crown mentioned by the sages, which refers to knowledge. But what is the meaning of the phrase "and indulge in feasting upon the luminousness of the Shechinah?" It is a reference to what they will know and understand of the truth of the blessed Holy One, something that they cannot know while in the dark, low bodies (they inhabit in this world).

The term "soul" employed on this subject refers not to the breath of life necessary for the body, but the form of the soul which is the intelligence by which it attained knowledge of the Creator's essential being according to its intellectual power, and by which it attained knowledge of the non-concrete intelligences and other works of God . . .

Because there is no death connected with life in the World to Come, seeing as how death is

אָבִינוּ מִלְּפָנָיו, זְכוֹר כִּי עֶפֶר אֲנַחְנוּ.
אָבִינוּ מִלְּפָנָיו, נֹא אֵל תְּשִׁיבֵנוּ רִיקָם מִלְּפָנֶיךָ.
אָבִינוּ מִלְּפָנָיו, תְּהֵא הַשָּׁעָה הַזֹּאת שְׂעַת
רַחֲמִים וְעֵת רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ.
אָבִינוּ מִלְּפָנָיו, חֲמוּל עָלֵינוּ וְעַל עוֹלָלֵינוּ
וְטִיבֵנוּ.
אָבִינוּ מִלְּפָנָיו, עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן הַרוּגִים עַל שֵׁם
קֹדְשֶׁךָ.
אָבִינוּ מִלְּפָנָיו, עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן טְבוּחִים עַל
יְחוּדְךָ.
אָבִינוּ מִלְּפָנָיו, עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן בָּאֵי בָּאֵשׁ וּבַמַּיִם
עַל קְדוּשַׁת שְׁמֶךָ.
אָבִינוּ מִלְּפָנָיו, נִקּוּם נִקְמַת דָּם עֲבָדֶיךָ
הַשְּׂפוּךְ.
אָבִינוּ מִלְּפָנָיו, עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַנְךָ אִם לֹא לְמַעַנְנוּ.
אָבִינוּ מִלְּפָנָיו, עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַנְךָ וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ.
אָבִינוּ מִלְּפָנָיו, עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן רַחֲמֶיךָ הַרְבִּים.
אָבִינוּ מִלְּפָנָיו, עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן שְׁמֶךָ הַגָּדוֹל,
הַגָּבוּר וְהַנּוֹרָא שֶׁנִּקְרָא עָלֵינוּ.

only incidental to the happenings which befall a body, and as there exists no body in the World to Come, the life of which we are speaking when we reference life in the World to Come is really a collection of (pure) life (force), even as it is said, "Yet the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life (1 Samuel 25:29)." This reward is such that there is no reward higher than it, and it is the kind of good after which no other good exists, and it is this reward that all of the prophets craved.

This reward is known by figurative names: the mountain of A , God's holy place, the holy path, the court of A , the graciousness of A , and the gate of A . The sages, however, figuratively used the term "banquet" to name this good which is in store for the righteous. But its more universal name is the World to Come.

The worst of all retributions, beyond which there can be no worse punishment, is that the soul be cut off and not obtain life hereafter, as it is said, "That soul shall be utterly cut off; its iniquity shall be upon that soul (Numbers 15:31)." As for hell, it is what the prophets call figuratively by different names, such as "pit of destruction," "burning flame," "leech," and every word which means decay and destruction. It is called by these names because they are all expressions that denote terminal decay from which there is no regeneration and a loss which remains forever gone.

Perhaps you will consider this good lightly, and imagine that no reward for observing the commandments and for following wholly the paths of truth could possibly be of any real worth unless one is also eating and drinking good food, enjoying beautiful faces, dressing in garments of linen, lounging in tents of ivory, being served on dishes of gold or silver, and similar things . . . But scholars and sensible people should know that all such things are idle and vain, wherein there is nothing consequential, and if they are considered of the greatest good by us in this world, it is because we are owners of bodies and concrete forms, and all such things are bodily necessities, and the soul neither craves nor desires them save because of bodily necessities, so that it may satisfy its desires and remain well.

Avinu Malkeinu, remember that we are but dust.

Avinu Malkeinu, turn us not away
from You unanswered.

Avinu Malkeinu, may this hour be an auspicious
hour of merciful compassion before You.

Avinu Malkeinu, take pity on us
and on our infants and children.

Avinu Malkeinu, act for the sake of the martyrs
who were murdered for the sanctification
of Your name.

Avinu Malkeinu, act for the sake of the martyrs
who were slaughtered for proclaiming
Your uniqueness.

Avinu Malkeinu, act for the sake of the martyrs
who went through fire and water to sanctify
Your holy name.

Avinu Malkeinu, avenge the spilt blood
of your servants.

Avinu Malkeinu, act for Your own sake,
if not for ours.

Avinu Malkeinu, act for Your sake and save us.

Avinu Malkeinu, act for the sake
of Your own great powers of compassion.

Avinu Malkeinu, act in recognition of the fact
that we are known to the world as the people
of a God Whose name is great, mighty
and wholly awesome.

אֲבִינוּ מִלְכֵנוּ,

חַבְנוּ וְעַנְנוּ,

כִּי אֵין בְּנוּ מַעֲשִׂים,

עֲשֵׂה עִמָּנוּ צְדָקָה

וְחֶסֶד וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ.

*Except on Erev Yom Kippur, continue with Tachanun on page 114
or page 134. On Erev Yom Kippur, continue with Kaddish on page 138.*

When there is no body, all these things are found to be completely nullified. But as to the great good the soul will enjoy in the World to Come, there is no way in this world to attain or know it, for, in this world, we know of no other good save that of the body, which we crave. But that good (that awaits the righteous in the World to Come) is exceedingly exalted and has no estimate alongside the good of this world save as a figure of speech. To draw a comparison between the good in store for the soul in the World to Come and the good of the body by eating and drinking in this world is impossible. Indeed, that good is so great that by no search can it be attained, and by no form of estimate and comparison can it be comprehended, even as David said, "O, how great is Your goodness which You have stored away for those who fear you (Psalm 31:19)."

How David longed and craved for the life of the World to Come! Indeed, he wrote, "Perhaps they would have already vanquished me, had I not believed it to be my lot to look upon the goodness of A in the land of the living (Psalm 27:13)." We were long since informed by the ancient sages that it is not within the power of human beings clearly to comprehend the good of the World to Come, nor for any to know its grandeur, beauty or quantity, save only the blessed Holy One. Furthermore, we all know that all the good things the prophets did prophesy for Israel are nothing other than corporeal matters, which Israel will enjoy during the messianic era when governance will be restored to Israel. But as the good in the life of the World to Come has neither estimate nor measure, the prophets did not compare it to anything so as not to lessen it by comparison. This is what Isaiah said, "Neither has an eye seen a God besides You, or what God will do for those who wait for God (Isaiah 64:3)," by which the prophet meant to say, "The good which the eye of a prophet had not seen, and none save God ever saw, did God make for those who wait for deliverance by God." The sages declared (in the Talmud at Tractate Shabbat 63a, Tractate Sanhedrin 99a and Tractate Avodah Zarah 65a), "All of the


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prophets combined prophesied solely about the messianic era, but, the World to Come, no eye ever saw, O God, besides You.”

As for the reason that the sages called it the “World to Come,” it is not because it is not now in existence, so that it might be inferred that this world will be destroyed and thereafter will come that world. The matter is not so, for that World exists and is ready, even as it says, “O, how great is Your goodness that You have stored up for those who fear You, which You have wrought for those who take their refuge in You (Psalm 31:19–20).” They called it the World to Come because it is the life that comes after the life of this world, in which we exist as bodies and souls, and this is the life that human beings encounter first.

Chapter Nine

It is known that the reward for the fulfillment of the commandments and the good which we will attain if we have kept the ways of A as prescribed in the Torah is life in the World to Come . . . while the retribution exacted from the wicked . . . is excision. What then is the meaning of the statements found everywhere in the Torah that “if you obey, it will happen to you thus,” and “if you do not obey, it will be otherwise,” given that all these happenings, such as war and peace, sovereignty and subjugation, residence in the Promised Land and exile, prosperity and failure . . . are events that will clearly take place in this world?

All those promises were once truly fulfilled and they will again be fulfilled. When we fulfill all the commandments of the Torah, all the good things of this world will come to us. When, however, we transgress the precepts, the evils that are written in the Torah will befall us. Nevertheless, those good things are not the final reward for the fulfillment of the commandments, nor are those evils the last penalty exacted from those who transgress all the commandments. . . . 

Avinu Malkeinu,
be gracious to us
and answer us, for we have
no deeds to present to You
on our own behalf.
Act toward us in
consonance with Your
great qualities of charity
and justice, and save us.

*Except on Erev Yom Kippur, continue with Tachanun on page 115
or page 135. On Erev Yom Kippur, continue with Kaddish on page 139.*

Tachanun

Tachanun, a series of penitential prayers, has a long version that is recited on Monday and Thursday mornings, and a shorter version that is recited on other weekday mornings and every weekday afternoon other than Friday afternoons and the afternoons before the onset of festivals.

Neither version is recited on the following days of the year: Shabbat, all major festivals, Rosh Chodesh, Erev Rosh Hashanah, from Erev Yom Kippur through Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan, Hanukkah, Tu Bishvat, Purim, Shushan Purim, the entire month of Nisan, Yom Ha'atzma'ut, Pesach Sheini, Lag Ba'omer, Yom Yerushalayim, the first thirteen days of Sivan, and the ninth and fifteenth days of Av. In years with two months of Adar, Tachanun is omitted on the 14th and 15th of Adar I.

Tachanun is also omitted in a house of mourning and in synagogue on the day of a brit milah if one of the principal parties is present.

The Long Version

וְהוּא רַחוּם יְכַפֵּר עֲוֹן וְלֹא יִשְׁחִית,
וְהִרְבֵּה לְהַשְׁיב אַפּוֹ, וְלֹא יַעִיר כָּל חַמְתּוֹ.
אִתָּה, יְהוָה, לֹא תִכְלָא רַחֲמֶיךָ בְּמִצְוֵנוּ,
חֲסִדֶיךָ וְאַמְתֶּךָ תָּמִיד יִצְרוּנוּ. הוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ,
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, וְקַבְּצֵנוּ מִן הַגּוֹיִם, לְהוֹדוֹת
לְשֵׁם קְדוֹשְׁךָ, לְהַשְׁתַּבַּח בְּתַהֲלֹתֶיךָ.

אִם עֲוֹנוֹת תִּשְׁמֹר יְהוָה, אֲדַנִּי מִי יַעֲמֹד? כִּי עֲמֹד
הַסְּלִיחָה, לְמַעַן תִּזְרָא. לֹא כַחֲטָאֵינוּ תַעֲשֶׂה
לָנוּ, וְלֹא כְעֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ תִגְמַל עֲלֵינוּ. אִם עֲוֹנוֹנוּ
עָנּוּ בָנוּ, יְהוָה, עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן שְׂמֹךְ. זְכוֹר רַחֲמֶיךָ,
יְהוָה, וְחֲסְדֶיךָ, כִּי מֵעוֹלָם הִפְמָה.



In the seventh book of his great account of the war against Rome that led to the destruction of Jerusalem, *The Jewish War*, Flavius Josephus describes in detail the events at Masada that have become inextricably connected with the Jewish conception of martyrdom. The text is given here in the 1737 English translation of William Whiston, as updated by the editor of this volume.

When Bassus was dead in Judea, Flavius Silva succeeded him as procurator there. When he saw that all the rest of the country was subdued in this war, and that there was but one stronghold that was still in rebellion, he got all his army together that lay in different places, and made an expedition against it. This fortress was called Masada. It was one Eleazar, a potent man, and the commander of these Sicarii, that had seized upon it. He was a descendant from that Judas who had persuaded many of the Jews, as we have formerly related, not to submit to the taxation when Cyrenius was sent into Judea to levy taxes; for then it was that the Sicarii got together against those that were willing to submit to the Romans, and treated them in all respects as if they had been their enemies, both by plundering them of what they had, by driving away their cattle, by setting fire to their houses and saying that they differed not at all from foreigners, by betraying, in so cowardly a manner, that freedom which Jews thought worthy to be contended for to the utmost, and by insisting that they preferred slavery under the Romans before such a contention. Now this was in reality no better than a pretense and a cloak for the barbarity which was made use of by them, and to color over their own avarice, which they afterwards made evident by their own actions, for those that were partners with them in their rebellion joined also with them in the war against the Romans, and went further lengths with them in their impudent undertakings against them. When they were again

convicted of dissembling in such their pretenses, they still more abused those that justly reproached them for their wickedness. And indeed that was a time most fertile in all manner of wicked practices, insomuch that no kind of evil deeds were then left undone, nor could anyone so much as devise any bad thing that was new, so deeply were they all infected, and strove with one another in their single capacity, and in their communities, who should run the greatest lengths in impiety towards God, and in unjust actions towards their neighbors, the men of power oppressing the multitude, and the multitude earnestly laboring to destroy the men of power. The one part were desirous of tyrannizing over others, and the rest of offering violence to others, and of plundering such as were richer than themselves. They were the Sicarii who first began these transgressions, and first became barbarous towards those allied to them, and left no words of reproach unsaid, and no works of perdition untried, in order to destroy those whom their contrivances affected. Yet did John demonstrate by his actions that these Sicarii were more moderate than he was himself, for he not only slew all such as gave him good counsel to do what was right, but treated them worst of all, as the most bitter enemies that he had among all the citizens; nay, he filled his entire country with ten thousand instances of wickedness, such as a man who was already hardened sufficiently in his impiety towards God would naturally do, for the food was unlawful that was set upon his table, and he rejected those purifications that the law of his country had ordained so that it was no longer a wonder if he, who was so mad in his impiety towards God, did not observe any rules of gentleness and common affection towards men. Again, therefore, what mischief was there which Simon the son of Gioras did not do? Or what kind of abuses did he abstain from as to those very free-men who had set him up for a tyrant? What friendship or kindred were there that did not make him more bold in his daily murders? Indeed, they looked upon the doing of mischief to strangers only as a work beneath their courage, but thought their barbarity towards their nearest relations would be a glorious demonstra-

Tachanun

Tachanun, a series of penitential prayers, has a long version that is recited on Monday and Thursday mornings, and a shorter version that is recited on other weekday mornings and every weekday afternoon other than Friday afternoons and the afternoons before the onset of festivals. Neither version is recited on the following days of the year: Shabbat, all major festivals, Rosh Chodesh, Erev Rosh Hashanah, from Erev Yom Kippur through Rosh Chodesh Heshvan, Hanukkah, Tu Bishvat, Purim, Shushan Purim, the entire month of Nisan, Israel Independence Day, Pesach Sheni, Lag Ba'omer, Yom Yerushalayim, the first thirteen days of Sivan, and the ninth and fifteenth days of Av. In years with two months of Adar, Tachanun is omitted on the 14th and 15th of Adar I. Tachanun is also omitted in a house of mourning and in synagogue on the day of a brit milah if one of the principal parties is present.

The Long Version

God, being by nature compassionate, will always forgive sin without grievously harming the sinner, and multiply acts of pardon without becoming enraged. Your compassion has no limits, א ; I shall ever be under the protection of Your devotion to mercy and truth. Save us, א , our God, and gather us in from the nations amongst whom we live in exile so that we might give thanks to Your holy name, so that we might give ourselves over entirely to Your praise.

If God were to keep careful track of sin . . . Adonai, which of us could withstand the scrutiny? But we hold You in awe *not* out of fear, but because of Your endless propensity to forgive. Deal with us, therefore, neither in accordance with our sins nor in vindictive response to our transgressions. But if our sins are truly too great to overlook, then act for the sake of Your great name instead and forgive us. Remember Your own boundless compassion and mercy, for they are truly eternal.

יַעֲנֵנוּ יְהוָה בְּיוֹם צָרָה, יִשְׁגְּבֵנוּ שֵׁם אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב.
 יְהוָה, הוֹשִׁיעָה, הַמֶּלֶךְ יַעֲנֵנוּ בְּיוֹם קָרְאֵנוּ. אָבִינוּ
 מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, חָנּוּן וְעַנּוּן, כִּי אֵין בָּנוּ מַעֲשִׂים. צְדָקָה
 עֲשֵׂה עִמָּנוּ לְמַעַן שְׂמֹךְ. אֲדוּגֵינוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, שְׁמַע
 קוֹל תַּחֲנוּנֵינוּ, וְזָכַר לָנוּ אֶת בְּרִית אַבְרָהָם,
 וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ לְמַעַן שְׂמֹךְ.

וְעַתָּה, אֲדוּנֵי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתָ אֶת עַמְּךָ
 מִמִּצְרַיִם מִצְרַיִם בְּיַד חֲזָקָה, וַתַּעַשׂ לָךְ שֵׁם
 כְּבוֹד הַזֶּה, חֲטָאנוּ, רָשָׁעֵנוּ. אֲדוּנֵי, כָּכָל
 צְדָקוֹתֶיךָ, יוֹשִׁבֵינָא אִפְּךָ וַחֲמַתְךָ מֵעִירְךָ
 יְרוּשָׁלַיִם הֵר קִדְשֶׁךָ. כִּי בַחֲטָאֵינוּ וּבַעֲוֹנוֹת
 אַבְרָהָם, יְרוּשָׁלַיִם וְעַמְּךָ לְחָרְפָה לְכֹל
 סְבִיבוֹתֵינוּ. וְעַתָּה, שְׁמַע, אֱלֹהֵינוּ, אֵל תַּפְּלַת
 עַבְדֶּךָ וְאֵל תַּחֲנוּנֵינוּ, וְהָאֵר פְּנֵיךָ עַל
 מִקְדָּשְׁךָ הַשָּׁמַיִם לְמַעַן אֲדוּנֵי.

הִטָּה, אֱלֹהֵי, אֲזַנְךָ וּשְׁמַע, פָּקַח עֵינֶיךָ וּרְאֵה
 שׁוֹמְמוֹתֵינוּ, וְהַעִיר אֲשֶׁר נִקְרָא שְׂמֹךְ עָלֶיךָ. כִּי לֹא
 עַל צְדָקוֹתֵינוּ, אֲנַחְנוּ מִפְּלִיטִים תַּחֲנוּנֵינוּ לְפָנֶיךָ, כִּי
 עַל רַחֲמֶיךָ הַרְבִּים.

tion thereof. The Idumeans also strove with these men who should be guilty of the greatest madness, for they (all), vile wretches as they were, cut the throats of the High Priests, that so no part of a religious regard to God might be preserved. They thence proceeded to destroy utterly the least remains of a political government and introduced the most complete scene of iniquity in all instances that were practicable, under which scene that sort of people that were called zealots grew up, and who indeed corresponded to the name—for they imitated every wicked work nor, if their memory suggested any evil thing that had formerly been done, did they avoid zealously to pursue the same. Although they gave themselves that name from their zeal for what was good, yet did it agree to them only by way of irony, on account of those they had unjustly treated by their wild and brutish disposition, or as thinking the greatest mischief to be the greatest good. Accordingly, they all met with such ends as God deservedly brought upon them in way of punishment, for all such miseries have been sent upon them as man's nature is capable of undergoing, till the utmost period of their lives, and till death came upon them in various ways of torment. Still, one might say justly that they suffered less than they had done, because it was impossible they could be punished according to their deserving. But to make a lamentation according to the deserts of those who fell under these men's barbarity, this is not a proper place for it—I therefore now return again to the remaining part of the present narration.

For now it was that the Roman general came, and led his army against Eleazar and those Sicarii who held the fortress Masada together with him; for the whole country adjoining, he presently gained it, and put garrisons into the most proper places of it, and he also built a wall quite round the entire fortress, that none of the besieged might easily escape. He also set his men to guard the several parts of it and pitched his camp in such an agreeable place as he had chosen for the siege, and at which place the rock belonging to the fortress did make the nearest approach to the neighboring mountain, which yet was a place of difficulty for getting plenty

of provisions. Indeed, it was not only food that was to be brought from a great distance (to the army), and this with a great deal of pain to those Jews who were appointed for that purpose, but water was also to be brought to the camp, because the place afforded no fountain that was near it. When therefore Silva had ordered these affairs beforehand, he fell to besieging the place, which siege was likely to stand in need of a great deal of skill and pains, by reason of the strength of the fortress, the nature of which I will now describe.

There was a rock, not small in circumference, and very high. It was encompassed with valleys of such vast depth downward, that the eye could not reach their bottoms; they were abrupt, and such as no animal could walk upon, excepting at two places of the rock, where it subsides, in order to afford a passage for ascent, though not without difficulty. Now, of the ways that lead to it, one is that from the lake Asphaltiris, towards the sun-rising, and another on the west, where the ascent is easier: the one of these ways is called the Serpent, as resembling that animal in its narrowness and its perpetual windings; for it is broken off at the prominent precipices of the rock, and returns frequently into itself, and lengthening again by little and little, has much ado to proceed forward. Indeed, he that would walk along it must first go on one leg, and then on the other, but there is also nothing but destruction, in case your feet slip, for on each side there is a vastly deep chasm and precipice, sufficient to quell the courage of every body by the terror it infuses into the mind. When, therefore, a man has gone along this way for thirty furlongs, the rest is the top of the hill—not ending at a small point, but is no other than a plain upon the highest part of the mountain. Upon this top of the hill, Jonathan the High Priest first of all built a fortress, and called it Masada: after which the rebuilding of this place employed the care of King Herod to a great degree. He also built a wall round about the entire top of the hill, seven furlongs long composed of white stone; its height was twelve, and its breadth eight cubits, and there were also erected upon that wall thirty-eight towers, each

A will always answer us in our day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob will grant us respite from those who would drag us down. A , save us on the very day we cry out to You. *Avinu Malkeinu*, be gracious to us and answer us, for we have no deeds to present to You on our own behalf. Deal with us kindly and justly for the sake of Your holy name. Adonai, our God, hear our cries and supplications and remember the covenant You forged with our ancestors. Save us for the sake of Your great name. And now, Adonai, the very God who took Your people forth from bondage in Egypt with a mighty hand, affirm anew Your reputation for kindness even though we have sinned and behaved wickedly. Adonai, may Your anger abate in accordance with Your deep, endless righteousness and may Your rage subside when You consider the fate of Jerusalem, site of Your holy mountain, for it is precisely because of our sins and the transgressions of our ancestors that Jerusalem and Your people have become an exemplar of shame amidst the nations that surround us. And now, our God, hear Your servants' prayers and supplications and shine the light of Your countenance toward Your ruined Temple. Do it for your own sake, Adonai.

Incline Your ear, O God, and listen! Open Your eyes and see our desolation, and the desolation of the city that is called by Your name, Jerusalem, city of God. For we base our supplications to You on our faith in Your endless sense of compassion, not on any vain convictions about the great worth of our own righteousness.

אֲדֹנָי, שְׁמֹעָה. אֲדֹנָי, סִלְחָה. אֲדֹנָי, הַקְשִׁיבָה. וַעֲשֵׂה,
אֵל תְּאַחֵר, לְמַעַנְךָ, אֱלֹהֵי, כִּי שָׁמָּה נִקְרָא עַל עִירְךָ
וְעַל עַמְּךָ.

אָבִינוּ הָאֵב הַרְחָמוּ, הִרְאֵנוּ אוֹת לְטוֹבָה, וְקִבֵּץ
נְבוֹצוֹתֵינוּ מֵאֲרָבַע פְּנוּבוֹת הָאָרֶץ. יִפְרוּ וַיִּדְעוּ כָּל
הַגּוֹיִם, כִּי אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ. וְעַתָּה, יְהוָה, אָבִינוּ
אַתָּה, אֲנַחְנוּ הַחֹמֶר וְאַתָּה יוֹצְרֵנוּ, וּמַעֲשֵׂה יָדְךָ כְּלָנוּ.
הוֹשִׁיעֵנו לְמַעַן שְׁמֹךְ, צוּרֵנוּ מִלְכָּנוּ וְגוֹאֲלֵנוּ, חוֹסֵה,
יְהוָה, עַל עַמְּךָ, וְאֵל תִּתֵּן גְּחֻלְתְּךָ לְחֹרֶפֶה לְמִשְׁלָבָם
גּוֹיִם. לָמָּה יֹאמְרוּ בְּעַמִּים, אֵיךְ אֱלֹהֵיהֶם? יִדְעֵנוּ כִּי
חֲטָאנוּ וְאִין מִי יַעֲמֵד בְּעַדְנוּ, שְׁמֵךְ הַגְּדוֹל יַעֲמֵד-לָנוּ
בְּעַת צָרָה. יִדְעֵנוּ כִּי אִין בָּנוּ מַעֲשִׂים, צְדָקָה עָשִׂה
עִמָּנוּ לְמַעַן שְׁמֹךְ. כְּרַחֵם אָב עַל בָּנִים, כֵּן תִּרְחַם
יְהוָה עֲלֵינוּ, וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנו לְמַעַן שְׁמֹךְ. חֲמַל עַל עַמְּךָ,
רַחֵם עַל גְּחֻלְתְּךָ, חוֹסֵה נָא כְּרוֹב רַחֲמֶיךָ, חַגְּנוּ
וְעִנְנוּ, כִּי לָךְ, יְהוָה, הַצְּדָקָה, עָשִׂה גְּפֻלָּאוֹת בְּכָל עֵת.

הַבְּטִי-נָא, רַחֵם-נָא עַל עַמְּךָ מִהֲרָה לְמַעַן שְׁמֹךְ,
כְּרַחֲמֶיךָ הַרְבִּים, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, חוֹס וְרַחֵם

of them fifty cubits high, out of which you might pass into lesser edifices, which were built on the inside, round the entire wall, for the king reserved the top of the hill, which was of a fat soil, and better than any valley for agriculture, that such as committed themselves to this fortress for their preservation might not even there be quite destitute of food in case they should ever be in want of it from abroad. Moreover, he built a palace therein at the western ascent; it was within and beneath the walls of the citadel, but inclined to its north side. Now the wall of this palace was very high and strong, and had at its four corners towers sixty cubits high. The furniture also of the edifices, and of the cloisters, and of the baths, was of great variety, and very costly; and these buildings were supported by pillars of single stones on every side; the walls and also the floors of the edifices were paved with stones of several colors. He also had cut many and great pits as reservoirs for water out of the rocks at every one of the places that were inhabited, both above and round about the palace, and before the wall; by this contrivance he endeavored to have water for several uses, as if there had been fountains there. Here was also a road dug from the palace, and leading to the very top of the mountain, which yet could not be seen by such as were without (the walls). Nor indeed could enemies easily make use of the plain roads, for the road on the east side, as we have already taken notice, could not be walked upon, by reason of its nature, and for the western road, he built a large tower at its narrowest place at no less a distance from the top of the hill than a thousand cubits. This tower could not possibly be passed by, nor could it be easily taken, nor indeed could those that walked along it without any fear (such was its contrivance) easily get to the end of it. After such a manner was this citadel fortified, both by nature and by the hands of men, in order to frustrate the attacks of enemies.

As for the furniture that was within this fortress, it was still more wonderful on account of its splendor and long continuance. Here was laid up corn in large quantities, and such as would subsist men for a long time and here was also wine

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and oil in abundance, with all kinds of grain and dates heaped up together; all this, Eleazar found there, when he and his Sicarii got possession of the fortress by treachery. These fruits were also fresh and full ripe, and no way inferior to such fruits newly laid in, although they were little short of a hundred years from the laying in these provisions (by Herod) till the place was taken by the Romans; nay, indeed, when the Romans got possession of those fruits that were left, they found them not corrupted all that while, nor should we be mistaken, if we supposed that the air was here the cause of their enduring so long, this fortress being so high, and so free from the mixture of all terrain and muddy particles of matter. There was also found here a large quantity of all sorts of weapons of war, which had been treasured up by that king and were sufficient for ten thousand men; there was iron and brass and tin, which show that he had taken much pains to have all things here ready for the greatest occasions. Indeed, the report goes how Herod thus prepared this fortress on his own account, as a refuge against two kinds of danger, the one for fear of the multitude of the Jews, lest they should depose him and restore their former kings to the government, and the other danger, greater and more terrible, which arose from Cleopatra, queen of Egypt, who did not conceal her intentions, but spoke often to Antony and desired him to cut off Herod, and entreated him to bestow the kingdom of Judea upon her. And certainly it is a great wonder that Antony did never comply with her commands in this point, as he was so miserably enslaved to his passion for her. Nor should any one have been surprised if she had been gratified in such her request. So the fear of these dangers made Herod rebuild Masada, and thereby leave it for the finishing stroke of the Romans in this Jewish war.

Since therefore the Roman commander Silva had now built a wall on the outside, round about this whole place, as we have said already, and had thereby made a most accurate provision to prevent any one of the besieged running away, he undertook the siege itself, though he found but

Adonai, hear our cry! Adonai, forgive us our sins! Adonai, listen to our supplications and act without delay on our behalf for Your own sake, O my God, for both Your city and Your people are known in the world by Your name.

O heavenly Parent filled with mercy, show us a sign of Your inexpressible goodness and gather our scattered exiles from the four corners of the earth. May all the nations see Your efforts on our behalf and recognize that You are A , our God. And now, A , we acknowledge You as our divine Parent. We are the clay and You, the divine Potter, for we are all part of Your creation. Save us for the sake of Your great name, O our Rock, our Sovereign and our Redeemer. Have mercy on Your people, A , and do not allow Your inheritance to know the shame of being ruled over by hostile nations. After all, why should the nations find it rational to ask where our God is to be found?

We know that we have sinned and that, although there is no one to plead on our behalf, Your great name will serve as our defense in times of trouble. We know that we have no good deeds to present on our own behalf, so instead we call out to You, “Deal charitably with us for the sake of Your holy name.” As a father cannot but deal compassionately with his children, so will A deal compassionately with us, saving us for the sake of the great and holy name of God. Take pity on Your people. Have compassion in dealing with Your inheritance. Behave kindly, as befits One invested with Your boundless sense of compassion. Be gracious with us and answer us, for Yours, A , is the great attribute of kindness, O God who ever performs wonders for us.

Look at us and show compassion toward Your people quickly for the sake of Your name. In your great compassion, A , our God, take pity and show compassion toward us. Save the sheep of Your flock and do not rule over us angrily, for it is to You that we turn our eyes in hope. Save us for the sake of Your name! Have compassion on us for the sake of Your covenant! Look down on us and answer us in our time of distress, for our salvation

one single place that would admit of the banks he was to raise—for behind that tower which secured the road that led to the palace, and to the top of the hill from the west, there was a certain eminency of the rock, very broad and very prominent, just three hundred cubits beneath the highest part of Masada; it was called the White Promontory. Accordingly, he got upon that part of the rock, and ordered the army to bring earth, and when they fell to that work with alacrity, and abundance of them together, the bank was raised and became solid for two hundred cubits in height. Yet this bank was not thought sufficiently high for the use of the engines that were to be set upon it, but still another elevated work of great stones compacted together was raised upon that bank that was fifty cubits, both in breadth and height.

The other machines that were now got ready were like to those that had been first devised by Vespasian, and afterwards by Titus, for sieges. There was also a tower made of the height of sixty cubits, and all over plated with iron, out of which the Romans threw darts and stones from the engines, and soon made those that fought from the walls of the place to retire, and would not let them lift up their heads above the works. At the same time Silva ordered that great battering ram which he had made to be brought thither, and to be set against the wall, and to make frequent batteries against it, which with some difficulty broke down a part of the wall, and quite overthrew it. However, the Sicarii made haste, and presently built another wall within that, which should not be liable to the same misfortune from the machines with the other; it was made soft and yielding, and so was capable of avoiding the terrible blows that affected the other. It was framed after the following manner. They laid together great beams of wood lengthways, one close to the end of another, and cut in the same way: there were two of these rows parallel to one another, and laid at such a distance from each other as the breadth of the wall required, and earth was put into the space between those rows. Now, that the earth might not fall away upon the elevation of this bank to a greater height, they further laid other beams over

וְהוֹשִׁיעָה צֶאֱן מִרְעִיתָךְ, וְאֵל יִמְשַׁלְּבֵנוּ קֶצֶר,
כִּי לָךְ עֵינֵינוּ תְלוּיוֹת. הוֹשִׁיעֵנו לְמַעַן שְׂמֹךְ,
רַחֵם עָלֵינוּ לְמַעַן בְּרִיתְךָ, הַבִּיטָה וְעִנְנוּ בְּעֵת
צָרָה, כִּי לָךְ יְהוּה הִישׁוּעָה. בָּךְ תּוֹחַלְתָּנוּ, אֱלוֹהַ
סְלִיחוֹת, אָנָּה סֶלַח נָא, אֵל טוֹב וְסֶלַח, כִּי אֵל
מְלֹךְ חַנוּן וְרַחוּם אַתָּה.

אָנָּה מְלֹךְ חַנוּן וְרַחוּם, זְכוֹר וְהִבֵּט לְבְרִית בֵּין
הַבְּתָרִים, וְתִרְאֶה לְפָנֶיךָ עֲקֻדַת יְחִיד, לְמַעַן
יִשְׂרָאֵל. אָבִינוּ מִלְכֵנוּ, חָנּוּן וְעִנְנוּ, כִּי שְׂמֹךְ
הַגָּדוֹל נִקְרָא עָלֵינוּ, עֲשֵׂה גִפְלָאוֹת בְּכָל עֵת,
עֲשֵׂה עִמָּנוּ כְּחִסְדֶּךָ, חַנוּן וְרַחוּם, הַבִּיטָה וְעִנְנוּ
בְּעֵת צָרָה, כִּי לָךְ יְהוּה הִישׁוּעָה. אָבִינוּ מִלְכֵנוּ
מִחֲסֵנוּ, אֵל תַּעֲשֵׂ עִמָּנוּ כְּרַע מֵעַלְלֵנוּ, זְכוֹר
רַחֲמֶיךָ יְהוּה וְחִסְדֶּיךָ, וְכָרֵב טוֹבָךְ הוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ,
וְחַמְלָנָא עָלֵינוּ, כִּי אֵין לָנוּ אֱלוֹהַ אַחֵר
מִבְּלַעֲדֶיךָ, צוּרֵנוּ. אֵל תַּעֲזֹבֵנוּ, יְהוּה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, אֵל
תִּרְחַק מִמָּוֶנּוּ, כִּי גִפְשָׁנוּ קֶצֶר מִחֲרֵב וּמִשְׁבֵּי,
וּמִדְּבַר וּמִמְגַפָּה, וּמִכָּל צָרָה וְיִגוֹן. הַצִּילָנוּ, כִּי
לָךְ קוֹיָנוּ. וְאֵל תִּכְלִימֵנוּ, יְהוּה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, וְהָאֵר

them, and thereby bound those beams together that lay lengthways. This work of theirs was like a real edifice. When the machines were applied, the blows were weakened by its yielding and, as the materials by such concussion were shaken closer together, the pile by that means became firmer than before. When Silva saw this, he thought it best to endeavor the taking of this wall by setting fire to it, so he gave order that the soldiers should throw a great number of burning torches upon it. Accordingly, as it was chiefly made of wood, it soon took fire; when it was once set on fire, its hollowness made that fire spread to a mighty flame. Now, at the very beginning of this fire, a north wind that then blew proved terrible to the Romans, for by bringing the flame downward, it drove it upon them, and they were almost in despair of success, as fearing their machines would be burnt. After this, however, on a sudden, the wind changed into the south, as if it were done by Divine Providence, and blew strongly the contrary way, and carried the flame, and drove it against the wall, which was now on fire through its entire thickness. So the Romans, having now assistance from God, returned to their camp with joy, and resolved to attack their enemies the very next day. For this reason, they set their watch more carefully that night, lest any of the Jews should run away from them without being discovered.

However, neither did Eleazar once think of fleeing, nor would he permit any one else to do so; when he saw their wall burned down by the fire, and could devise no other way of escaping, or room for their further courage, and setting before their eyes what the Romans would do to them, their children, and their wives if they got them into their power, he consulted about having them all slain. Now as he judged this to be the best thing they could do in their present circumstances, he gathered the most courageous of his companions together and encouraged them to take that course by a speech which he made to them in the manner following: "Since we, long ago, my generous friends, resolved never to be servants to the Romans, nor to any other than to God, Who alone is the true and just Ruler of mankind, the time is

depends wholly on You, A . In You rest all our hopes, O God of forgiveness. We beseech You, O good and forgiving God, forgive us our sins, for You are a kindhearted and compassionate Sovereign.

We beseech You, merciful and compassionate Sovereign, for the sake of Israel, remember, even visualize, the great covenant into which Abraham entered with You . . . and the way he showed his boundless allegiance to You by binding his most loved son to the altar.

Avinu Malkeinu, have pity on us and answer us, for Your great name is connected to our destiny in this world. Doer of endless wonders, act mercifully with us! O endlessly kind and generous God, look down from heaven and answer us in our time of greatest distress, for salvation is Yours alone. *Avinu Malkeinu*, our haven in times of trouble, do not deal with us as our wicked deeds would make reasonable. Remember instead Your boundless compassion and mercy, A , and save us as befits a God so wholly good. Behave graciously with us, we beseech You, for we have no God other than You, O our Rock. Neither abandon us, A , our God, nor distance Yourself from us, for our spirits are overburdened with fear of the sword and captivity, of plague and epidemic. Keep us safe from all trouble and misery, for it is in You that we place our trust.

פָּנִיךָ בָּנוּ, וְזָכַרְנוּ לָנוּ אֶת בְּרִית אֲבוֹתֵינוּ,
וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ לְמַעַן שְׁמֹךְ. רְאֵה בְּצָרוֹתֵינוּ וּשְׁמַע
קוֹל תְּפִלָּתֵנוּ, כִּי אַתָּה שׁוֹמֵעַ תְּפִלַּת כָּל פֶּה.

אֵל רַחוּם וְחַנוּן, רַחֵם עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל־מַעֲשֵׂיךָ,
כִּי אֵין כְּמוֹךָ, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ. אָנָּה שָׂא נָא
בְּשָׁעֵינוּ, אָבִינוּ מִלִּפְנֵי צוּרָנוּ וְגוֹאֲלֵנוּ, אֵל חַי
וְקַיִם, הַחֲסִין בַּכַּחַ, חָסִיד וְטוֹב עַל כָּל מַעֲשֵׂיךָ.
כִּי אַתָּה הוּא יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, אֵל אֶרֶץ אֲפִים,
וּמְלֵא רַחֲמִים, עֲשֵׂה עִמָּנוּ כְּרַב רַחֲמֵיךָ,
וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ לְמַעַן שְׁמֹךְ. שְׁמַע מִלִּפְנֵי תְּפִלָּתֵנוּ,
וּמִיַּד אוֹיְבֵינוּ הַצֵּילֵנוּ. שְׁמַע מִלִּפְנֵי תְּפִלָּתֵנוּ
וּמִכָּל צָרָה וְיִגוֹן הַצֵּילֵנוּ. אָבִינוּ מִלִּפְנֵי אַתָּה,
וּשְׁמֹךְ עָלֵינוּ גִּקְרָא, אֵל תַּנְחֵנוּ, אֵל תַּעֲזֹבֵנוּ,
אָבִינוּ, וְאֵל תִּשְׁשֵׁנוּ, בּוֹרְאֵנוּ, וְאֵל תִּשְׁכַּחֵנוּ,
יּוֹצְרֵנוּ, כִּי אֵל מְלֹךְ חַנוּן וְרַחוּם אַתָּה.

אֵין כְּמוֹךָ חַנוּן וְרַחוּם, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, אֵין כְּמוֹךָ
אֵל אֶרֶץ אֲפִים וְרַב חֶסֶד וְאֵמֶת. הוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ
בְּרַחֲמֵיךָ הַרְבִּים, מִרַעַשׁ וּמְרֹגֵז הַצֵּילֵנוּ. זְכוֹר
לְעַבְדֶיךָ לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וּלְיַעֲקֹב, אֵל תִּפְּן אֵל

now come that obliges us to make that resolution true in practice. And let us not at this time bring a reproach upon ourselves for self-contradiction, while we formerly would not undergo slavery, though it were then without danger, but must now, together with slavery, choose such punishments also as are intolerable. I mean this, upon the supposition that the Romans manage to take us under their power while we are alive. We were the very first that revolted from them and we are the last that fight against them, and I cannot but esteem it as a favor that God has granted us, that it is still in our power to die bravely, and in a state of freedom, which has not been the case of others, who were conquered unexpectedly.

"It is very plain that we shall be taken within a day's time, but it is still an eligible thing to die after a glorious manner, together with our dearest friends. This is what our enemies themselves cannot by any means hinder, although they be very desirous to take us alive. Nor can we propose to ourselves any more to fight them and beat them. It had been proper indeed for us to have conjectured at the purpose of God much sooner, and at the very first, when we were so desirous of defending our liberty, and when we received such sore treatment from one another, and worse treatment from our enemies. We ought to have been sensible that the same God, Who had of old taken the Jewish nation into divine favor, had now condemned them to destruction; for had God either continued favorable, or been but in a lesser degree displeased with us, surely God would not have overlooked the destruction of so many men, or delivered the most holy city to be burnt and demolished by our enemies.

"To be sure, we weakly hoped to have preserved ourselves, and ourselves alone, still in a state of freedom, as if we had been guilty of no sins ourselves against God, nor been partners with those of others; we also taught other men to preserve their liberty. Wherefore, consider how God has convinced us that our hopes were in vain, by bringing such distress upon us in the desperate state we are now in, and which is beyond all our expectations, for the nature of this fortress which was in itself unconquerable, has not proved

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a means of our deliverance. Even while we have still great abundance of food, and a great quantity of arms, and other necessities more than we want, we are openly deprived by God of all hope of deliverance; that fire which was driven upon our enemies did not of its own accord turn back upon the wall which we had built, but was the effect of God's anger against us for our manifold sins, which we have been guilty of in a most insolent and extravagant manner with regard to our own countrymen. The punishments for these sins, let us not receive from the Romans, but from God, as executed by our own hands, for these will be more moderate than the other. Let our wives die before they are abused, and our children before they have tasted of slavery; after we have slain them, let us bestow that glorious benefit upon one another mutually, and preserve ourselves in freedom, as an excellent funeral monument for us. But first let us destroy our money and the fortress by fire, for I am well assured that this will be a great grief to the Romans, that they shall not be able to seize upon our bodies and our wealth; let us spare nothing but our provisions, for they will be a testimonial when we are dead that we were not subdued for want of necessities, but that, according to our original resolution, we have preferred death before slavery."

This was Eleazar's speech to them, but all the auditors did not acquiesce. Indeed, although some of them were very zealous to put his advice in practice, and were in a manner filled with pleasure at it and thought death to be a good thing, yet had those that were most timid a commiseration for their wives and families. When these men were especially moved by the prospect of their own certain death, they looked wistfully at one another, and by the tears that were in their eyes declared their dissent from his opinion. When Eleazar saw these people in such fear, and that their souls were dejected at so prodigious a proposal, he was afraid lest perhaps these timid persons should, by their lamentations and tears, enfeeble those that heard what he had said courageously. Therefore, he did not leave off exhorting them, but stirred up himself, and, recollecting

Do not cause us shame, A , our God! May the light of Your countenance shine on us as You remember the covenant You forged with our ancestors. Save us for the sake of Your great name! Consider our troubles and hear the sound of our prayers, for You are a God who listens attentively to the prayers of every single human being.

O God full of compassion and grace, show compassion to us and to all Your creatures, for there is none like You, A , our God. We beseech You, forgive us our sins, *Avinu Malkeinu*, our Rock and our Redeemer, our living and ever existent God, our exceedingly mighty Ruler Who is nevertheless kind and generous to every single creature. As You are A , our God, an ever merciful God suffused with boundless compassion, act with us in accordance with Your sense of compassion and save us for the sake of Your great name. O Sovereign of the universe, hear our prayer and save us from our enemies. O Sovereign of the World, hear our prayers and save us from all trouble and suffering. You are our divine Parent and Sovereign, *Avinu Malkeinu*, and Your name, *El*, is part of our name, *Yisra-el*. Therefore, for Your own name's sake, do not leave us defenseless against the world. Do not abandon us, O celestial Parent, and do not neglect us, O our Creator. Forget us not, O Maker of all, for You are sovereign God, suffused with mercy and compassion.

A , our God, there is no being even close to Your effortless graciousness and compassion, none that approaches Your endlessly tolerance and forbearance. O God great of mercy and truth, save us in Your great compassion from trial and tribulation.

Remember Your servants, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Consider not our obstinacy, wickedness or iniquity. Turn back from anger and abandon Your plans to

proper arguments for raising their courage, he undertook to speak more briskly and fully to them concerning the immortality of the soul.

So he made a lamentable groan, and fixing his eyes intently on those that wept, he spake thus: "Truly, I was greatly mistaken when I thought to be assisting to brave men who struggled hard for their liberty, and to such as were resolved either to live with honor, or else to die, but I find that you are such people as are no better than others, either in virtue or in courage, and are afraid of dying, though you be delivered thereby from the greatest miseries. Yet, you ought to make no delay in this matter, nor to await any one to give you good advice, for the laws of our country, and of God, have from ancient times, and as soon as ever we could use our reason, continually taught us—and our forefathers have corroborated the same doctrine by their actions, and by their bravery of mind—that it is life that is a calamity to human beings, and not death; for this last affords our souls their liberty, and sends them to their own place of purity, where they are to be insensible of all sorts of misery. Indeed, while souls are tied down to a mortal body, they are partakers of its miseries, and really, to speak the truth, they are themselves dead, for the union of what is divine to what is mortal is disagreeable. It is true, the power of the soul is great, even when it is imprisoned in a mortal body, for by moving it after a way that is invisible, it makes the body a sensible instrument, and causes it to advance further in its actions than mortal nature could otherwise do.

"However, when it is freed from that weight which draws it down to the earth and is connected with it, it obtains its own proper place, and does then become a partaker of that blessed power, and those abilities, which are then every way incapable of being hindered in their operations. It continues invisible, indeed, to the eyes of humankind, as does God as well, for certainly it is not itself seen while it is in the body, where it exists after an invisible manner. Indeed, when it is freed from it, it is still not seen. It is this soul which has one nature, and, at that, an incorruptible one. Yet, the soul is the cause of the

קִשְׁיֵנוּ וְאֵל רִשְׁעֵנוּ וְאֵל חַטָּאתֵנוּ. שׁוּב מִחֲרוֹן
אִפְּךָ, וְהִנָּחֵם עַל הָרָעָה לְעַמְּךָ. וְהִסֵּר מִמֶּנּוּ מִפֶּת
הַמּוֹת, כִּי רַחוּם אַתָּה, כִּי כֵן דִּרְכָּךָ, עֲשֵׂה חֶסֶד
חַנּוּם בְּכָל יוֹר וָדוֹר. חוֹסֵה, יְהוּה, עַל עַמְּךָ
וְהַצִּילָנוּ מִזַּעְמֶךָ, וְהִסֵּר מִמֶּנּוּ מִפֶּת הַמַּגָּפָה וְגִזְרֵה
קָשָׁה, כִּי אַתָּה שׁוֹמֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל. לָךְ אֲדֹנָי הַצְּדָקָה,
וְלָנוּ בִשְׁתַּת הַפְּנִים. מֵה גִתְאוּנָן וּמֵה גָאֵמֵר, מֵה
גִּדְבָר וּמֵה גִצְטֻדִיק? גִּחְפֹּשָׁה דְרַכֵּינוּ וְנַחֲקָרָה,
וְנִשְׁוֹבָה אֵלֶיךָ, כִּי יְמִינֶךָ פְּשׁוּטָה לְקַבֵּל שָׁבִים.
אָנָּה, יְהוּה, הוֹשִׁיעָה נָא. אָנָּה, יְהוּה, הַצְּלִיחָה נָא.
אָנָּה, יְהוּה, עֲנֵנוּ בַיּוֹם קִרְאָנוּ. לָךְ יְהוּה חֲפִינוּ, לָךְ
יְהוּה קוֹיֵנוּ, לָךְ יְהוּה גִּיחַל. אֵל תַּחֲשָׁה וּתְעַנְּנוּ, כִּי
נָאֵמוּ גוֹיִם, אֲבָדָה תִּקְוֹתֵם. כָּל בָּרֶךְ וְכָל קוֹמָה לָךְ
לְבַד תִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה.

הַפּוֹתֶחַ יָד בְּתִשׁוּבָה לְקַבֵּל פּוֹשְׁעִים וְחַטָּאִים,
נִבְהָלָה נַפְשֵׁנוּ מִרַב עֲצָבוֹנָנוּ, אֵל תִּשְׁפַּחְנוּ
נִצַּחַת, קוֹמָה וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ, כִּי חָסִינוּ בָּךְ. אָבִינוּ
מִלִּפְנֵינוּ, אִם אֵין בָּנוּ צְדָקָה וּמַעֲשִׂים טוֹבִים,
זָכַר לָנוּ אֵת בְּרִית אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, וְעִדוּתֵינוּ בְּכָל
יוֹם: יְהוּה אֶחָד. הַפִּיטָה בְּעֵנֵינוּ, כִּי רַבּוּ
מִכְאוּבֵינוּ, וְצָרוֹת לְבַבְנוּ.

change that is made in the body; for whatsoever it be which the soul touches, that lives and flourishes, and from whatsoever it is removed, that withers away and dies, such a degree is there in it of immortality.

“Let me produce the state of sleep as a most evident demonstration of the truth of what I say. Then, souls, when the body does not distract them, have the sweetest rest depending on themselves, and conversing with God, by their alliance to heaven; they then go everywhere and foretell many futurities beforehand. And why are we afraid of death, while we are pleased with the rest that we have in sleep? And how absurd a thing is it to pursue after liberty while we are alive, and yet to deny it to ourselves where it will be eternal! We, therefore, who have been brought up in a discipline of our own, ought to become an example to others of our readiness to die.

“Yet, if we do stand in need of foreigners to support us in this matter, let us regard those Indians who profess the exercise of philosophy. These good men do but unwillingly undergo the time of life, and look upon it as a necessary servitude, and make haste to let their souls loose from their bodies; nay, when no misfortune presses them to it, nor drives them upon it, these have such a desire of a life of immortality, that they tell others beforehand that they are about to depart. Nobody hinders them, but every one thinks them happy, and gives them letters to be carried to their familiar friends (that are dead), so firmly and certainly do they believe that souls converse with one another (in the other world). So when these philosophers have heard all such commands that were to be given them, they deliver their body to the fire. In order to their getting their soul a separation from the body in the greatest purity, they die in the midst of hymns of commendations made to them, for their dearest friends conduct them to their death more readily than do any of the rest of mankind conduct their fellow-citizens when they are going a very long journey. Those who accompany them may weep on their own account, but they look upon the others as happy persons, as so soon to be made partakers of the immortal order

requite Your people for their wicked ways. Annul the death sentence justly decreed against us, for You are the essence of compassion and such is Your regular practice, O God, source of unearned kindness in every generation. Take pity on your people and save us from Your own rage. Annul the decrees of pestilence and persecution, if such have been decreed against us, for You are the Guardian of Israel. Charity, after all, is Yours, Adonai, whereas all we have earned for ourselves is shame. What words can we use to plead our cause? What ever could we say to avert the decree against us?

What words could we utter to annul the punishment we surely have coming to us? What justification could we ever find to explain our behavior? We shall subject our behavior to the most exactly scrutiny and then we shall return to You in perfect repentance, for Your great right hand is ever open to receive the repentant sinner. We beseech You, A , save us. We beseech You, A , grant us success in pleading our case. We beseech You, A , answer us on the very day we cry out to You. We await You, A . We hope to merit Your presence among us, A , and for such we shall ever hope.

Be not silent, therefore, and answer us, for hostile nations are taunting us with the most horrific of taunts, saying, “They have lost hope.”

But we know the truth: that it is to You alone that every knee must bend and every body bow down in obeisance.

O God ever willing to open a divine hand to the repentant and to accept back into the fold repentant sinners and evildoers, our souls are in a complete state of upheaval because of our great distress. Never forget to rise up and save us, for it is in You that we have placed our trust. *Avinu Malkeinu*, if we truly have no kind or charitable acts to plead our case, then at least remember

חוֹסֵה, יְהוּה, עָלֵינוּ בְּאַרְץ שְׁבִינּוּ, וְאֵל תְּשַׁפּוּךְ
 חֲרוֹגָה עָלֵינוּ, כִּי אֲנַחְנוּ עִמָּךְ בְּנֵי בְרִיתְךָ. אֵל,
 הַפִּיטָה, דֵּל כְּבוֹדְנוּ בַּגּוֹיִם וְשִׁקְצוֹנוּ כְּטִמְאַת
 הַנְּפִדָה. עַד מָתִי עֲזָה בְּשִׁבִי וְתַפְאֲרֶתְךָ בְּיַד צָר?
 עוֹרְרָה גְבוּרֶתְךָ וְקִנְאַתְךָ עַל אוֹיְבֶיךָ, יְהִם
 יְבוֹשׁוּ וַיִּחַתּוּ מִגְבוּרֶתְךָ וְאֵל יִמְעֵטוּ לְפָנֶיךָ
 תְּלֹאוֹתֵינוּ. מִיָּהָר יִקְדְּמוּנוּ רַחֲמֶיךָ בַּיּוֹם צָרֵתֵינוּ,
 וְאִם לֹא לְמַעַנְנוּ, לְמַעַנְךָ פֶּעַל, וְאֵל תִּשְׁחִית
 זְכַר שְׂאֲרֵיתָנוּ, וְחֹן אִם הַמִּיַּחֲדִים שְׁמֶךָ פֶּעַמִּים
 בְּכָל יוֹם תָּמִיד בְּאַהֲבָה וְאוֹמְרִים: שְׁמַע
 יִשְׂרָאֵל, יְהוּה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוּה אֶחָד.

*It is customary to rest one's head on one's forearm
 while the following passage and Psalm 6 are recited.*

וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד אֵל גָּד, צַר לִי מְאֹד. נִפְלָה נָא בְּיַד
 יְהוּה, כִּי רַבִּים רַחֲמֶיךָ, וּבְיַד אָדָם אֵל אִפְלָה.
 רַחוּם וְחַנּוּן, חֲטָאתִי לְפָנֶיךָ. יְהוּה מְלֹא
 רַחֲמִים, רַחֵם עָלַי וְקַבֵּל תְּחִנּוֹתַי.

Psalm 6:2-11

יְהוּה, אֵל בְּאַפָּךְ תּוֹכִיחֵנִי וְאֵל בְּחַמְתְּךָ
 תִּיַסְרֵנִי. חַנּוּן, יְהוּה, כִּי אֲמַלֵּל אֲנִי. רַפְּאֵנִי,
 יְהוּה, כִּי גִבְהָלוּ עֲצָמַי. וְנַפְשִׁי גִבְהָלָה מְאֹד,

of beings. Are not we, therefore, ashamed to have lower notions than the Indians and, by our own cowardice, to lay a base reproach upon the laws of our country, which are so much desired and imitated by all mankind?

"Still, in that we have been brought up under another persuasion, and taught that life is the greatest good which men are capable of, and that death is a calamity, the circumstances we are now in ought to be an inducement to us to bear such calamity courageously, since it is by the will of God, and by necessity, that we are to die, for it now appears that God has made such a decree against the whole Jewish nation, that we are to be deprived of this life which (God knew) we would not make a due use of. For do not ascribe the occasion of our present condition to yourselves, nor think the Romans are the true reason that this war we have had with them is become so destructive to us all: these things have not come to pass by their power, but a more powerful cause has intervened, and made us afford them an occasion of their appearing to be conquerors over us. What Roman weapons, I pray you, were those by which the Jews at Caesarea were slain? On the contrary, when they were no way disposed to rebel, but were all the while keeping their Sabbath, and did not so much as lift up their hands against the citizens of Caesarea, yet did those citizens run upon them in great crowds, and cut their throats, and the throats of their wives and children, and this without any regard to the Romans themselves, who never took us for their enemies till we revolted from them. But some may be ready to say, that truly the people of Caesarea had always a quarrel against those Jews that lived among them, and that when an opportunity offered itself, they only satisfied the old rancor they had against them. What then shall we say to those of the citizens of Scythopolis, who ventured to wage war with us on account of the Greeks? Nor did they do it by way of revenge upon the Romans, for they acted in concert with our countrymen. Wherefore you see how little our good-will and fidelity to them helped us, for they were slain, they and their whole families, after the most inhuman manner,

which was all the requital that was made them for the assistance they had afforded the others; that very same destruction which they had prevented from falling upon the others did they suffer themselves from them, as if they had been ready to be the actors against them.

“It would be too long for me to speak at this time of every destruction brought upon us; you cannot but know that there was not any one Syrian city which did not slay their Jewish inhabitants, and were not more bitter enemies to us than were the Romans themselves. Indeed, even those of Damascus, when they were able to allege no tolerable pretense against us, filled their city with the most barbarous slaughters of our people, and cut the throats of eighteen thousand Jews, with their wives and children. And as to the multitude of those that were slain in Egypt, and that with torments also, we have been informed they were more than sixty thousand; those indeed being in a foreign country, and so naturally meeting with no allies against their enemies, were killed in the manner aforementioned.

“As for all those of us who have waged war against the Romans in our own country, had we not sufficient reason to have sure hopes of victory? For we had arms, and walls, and fortresses so prepared as not to be easily taken, and courage not to be moved by any dangers in the cause of liberty, which encouraged us all to revolt from the Romans. But then these advantages sufficed us but for a short time, and only raised our hopes, while they really appeared to be the origin of our miseries, for all we had has been taken from us, and all has fallen under our enemies, as if these advantages were only to render their victory over us the more glorious, and were not disposed for the preservation of those by whom these preparations were made. And as for those that are already dead in the war, it is reasonable we should esteem them blessed, for they are dead in defending, and not in betraying, their liberty, but as to the multitude of those that are now under the Romans, who would not pity their condition? And who would not make haste to die, before he would suffer the same miseries with them? Some

the covenant You forged with our ancestors and their constant affirmation of Your unique nature: “God is one.” Consider our affliction, for many are our wounds and the woes that trouble our hearts. Show mercy, A , in the lands of our captivity and pour not Your wrath out on us, for we are Your people, the one nation allied to You in covenant. O God, look at how our dignity amidst the nations is non-existent, how they treat us with the greatest contempt as though we were unclean. How long will Your great power appear to be itself in captivity, Your splendor held hostage by relentless foes? Awaken Your indescribable might and Your jealous rage on Your enemies so that they become ashamed, then terrified, despite their own general willingness to be brave. Let not our complaints be negligible before You; may Your compassion come to the fore quickly on the day of our deepest distress . . . and if You cannot do any of this for our sake, then do it for Your own sake. Let the memory of the remnant of our once great people not be destroyed. Show compassion to the people who scruple to declare Your absolute unity with love two times every single day, as they sing out:”Hear, O Israel, A is our God, A is one.”

It is customary to rest one's head on one's forearm while the following passage and Psalm 6 are recited.

And David said to Gad, I am in the deepest distress. Let us place our fate in the hands of ever-compassionate A and not in the hands of other human beings.

Merciful and compassionate God, I have sinned before You. A full of compassion, show compassion toward me and accept my supplication.

Psalm 6:2–11

A , neither rebuke me in Your anger nor cause me to suffer as a result of Your divine wrath. Instead, be gracious to me, A , for I am wretched.

Heal me, A , for I am terrified down to my bones; even my soul is profoundly terrified.

How long will You . . . O A !

of them have been put upon the rack, and tortured with fire and whippings, and so died. Some have been half devoured by wild beasts, and yet have been preserved alive to be devoured by them a second time, in order to afford laughter and sport to our enemies; surely such of those as are alive still are to be looked on as the most miserable, who, being so desirous of death, could not come at it. And where is now that great city, the metropolis of the Jewish nation, which was fortified by so many walls round about, which had so many fortresses and large towers to defend it, which could hardly contain the instruments prepared for the war, and which had so many ten thousands of men to fight for it? Where is this city that was believed to have God inhabiting therein? It is now demolished to the very foundations, and has nothing of it preserved, except the camp of those that destroyed it, which still dwells upon its ruins; some unfortunate old men also lie upon the ashes of the Temple, and a few women are there preserved alive by the enemy, for our bitter shame and reproach. Now who is there that revolves these things in his mind, and yet is able to bear the sight of the sun, though he might live out of danger? Who is there so much his country's enemy, or so unmanly, and so desirous of living, as not to repent that he is still alive? And I cannot but wish that we had all died before we had seen that holy city demolished by the hands of our enemies, or the foundations of our holy Temple dug up after so profane a manner. But since we had a generous hope that deluded us, as if we might perhaps have been able to avenge ourselves on our enemies on that account, though it be now become vanity, and has now left us alone in this distress, let us make haste to die bravely.

"Let us pity ourselves, our children, and our wives while it is in our own power to show pity to them, for we were born to die, as well as those were whom we have begotten, nor is it in the power of the most happy of our race to avoid it. But for abuses, and slavery, and the sight of our wives led away after an ignominious manner with their children, these are not such evils as are natural and necessary among men; such as do not pre-

וְאַתָּה יְהוָה עַד מָתַי. שׁוּבָה, יְהוָה, חֲלָצָה נַפְשֵׁי,
הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי לְמַעַן חֲסִדְךָ. כִּי אֵין בַּמּוֹת זְכָרְךָ,
בְּשֵׂאוֹל מִי יוֹדָה לָךְ? יַגְעֵתִי בְּאַנְחָתִי, אֲשַׁחַה
בְּכָל לַיְלָה מִטָּתִי, בְּדַמְעֵתִי עֵרְשֵׁי אִמָּסָה.
עֲשֵׂשָׁה מִכַּעַס עֵינַי, עֲתָקָה בְּכָל צוּרְרֵי. סוּרוּ
מִמּוֹנֵי כָּל פְּעֻלֵי אָוֶן, כִּי שָׁמַע יְהוָה קוֹל בְּכִינִי.
שָׁמַע יְהוָה תְּחִנָּתִי, יְהוָה תִּפְּלֹתַי יִקַּח. יִבְשׁוּ
וַיִּפְּהֻּ מְאֹד כָּל אֲיֹבֵי, יִשְׁבוּ יִבְשׁוּ רָגַע.

יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, שׁוּב מִחֲרוֹן אַפְּךָ וְהַנַּחֵם עַל
הָרָעָה לְעַמְּךָ.

הִבֵּט מִשָּׁמַיִם וּרְאָה, כִּי הֵינִנוּ לְעַג וְקָלָס בְּגוֹיִם, נַחֲשִׁבְנוּ
כְּצֹאן לְטֹבַח יוֹבֵל, לְהַרוֹג וּלְאַבֵּד וּלְמַכּוֹת וּלְחַרְפָּה. וּבְכָל זֹאת
שָׁמְךָ לֹא שָׁכַחְנוּ, נָא אֵל תִּשְׁפָּחֵנוּ.

יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, שׁוּב מִחֲרוֹן אַפְּךָ וְהַנַּחֵם עַל
הָרָעָה לְעַמְּךָ.

זָרִים אוֹמְרִים אֵין תּוֹחֶלֶת וְתִקְוָה. חֵן אִם לְשִׁמּוֹךְ מִקְּוֹת.
טְהוֹר, יִשׁוּעָתְנוּ קִרְבָּה. יַגְעֵנוּ, וְלֹא הוֹיַבַּח לָנוּ. רַחֲמֶיךָ יִכְבְּשׁוּ
אֶת כַּעַסְךָ מֵעַלְיָנוּ. אָנָּה, שׁוּב מִחֲרוֹנְךָ, וּרְחַם סִגְלָה אֲשֶׁר
בְּחַרְתָּ.

יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, שׁוּב מִחֲרוֹן אַפְּךָ וְהַנַּחֵם עַל
הָרָעָה לְעַמְּךָ.

חוֹסֶה יְהוָה עָלֵינוּ בְּרַחֲמֶיךָ, וְאֵל תִּתְּנֵנוּ בְיַדֵי אֲכָזְרִים.

fer death before those miseries, when it is in their power so to do, must undergo them on account of their own cowardice. We revolted from the Romans with great pretensions to courage; when, at the very last, they invited us to preserve ourselves, we would not comply with them. Who will not, therefore, believe that they will certainly be in a rage at us, in case they can take us alive? Miserable will then be the young men who will be strong enough in their bodies to sustain many torments! Miserable also will be those of elder years, who will not be able to bear those calamities which young men might sustain! One man will be obliged to hear the voice of his son implore help of his father when his hands are bound. But certainly our hands are still at liberty, and have a sword in them. Let them then be subservient to us in our glorious design; let us die before we become slaves under our enemies, and let us go out of the world, together with our children and our wives, in a state of freedom. This it is that our laws command us to do; this it is that our wives and children crave at our hands. God has brought this necessity upon us, while the Romans desire the contrary, and are afraid lest any of us should die before we are taken. Let us therefore make haste, and instead of affording them so much pleasure, as they hope for in getting us under their power, let us leave them an example which shall at once cause their astonishment at our death, and their admiration of our hardiness.”

Now as Eleazar was proceeding on in this exhortation, they all cut him off short, and made haste to do the work, as full of an unconquerable ardor of mind, and moved with a demoniacal fury. So they went their ways, as one still endeavoring to be before another, and as thinking that this eagerness would be a demonstration of their courage and good conduct, if they could avoid appearing in the last class, so great was the zeal they were in to slay their wives and children, and themselves also! Nor indeed, when they came to the work itself, did their courage fail them, as one might imagine it would have done, but they then held fast the same resolution, without wavering, which they had upon the hearing of Eleazar’s

Return, A , and grant relief to my soul; save me for the sake of Your mercy. For there is no possibility of praising Your name after death; in Sheol, who will give thanks to You? My moaning has exhausted me; I drench my couch every evening so totally that I have practically melted my bed away with my tears. My eyesight is fading, actually wasting away, because of the anger I feel directed toward me by my foes. Depart from me, you doers of iniquity, for A has heard the sound of my crying. A has heard my supplication; A shall accept my prayer. May all my enemies be ashamed and terrified; may they relent and, even just for a moment, be ashamed.

A , God of Israel, abandon Your rage and renounce the suffering that threatens Your people.

Look down from heaven and see that we have become a laughing stock, the embodiment of scorn, among the nations. They consider us so many sheep ready to be led to the slaughter, thinking of us as worth little more than killing and annihilating, as little more than a plague among the nations, as the paradigm of scorn. But, for all that, we have never forgotten Your name and so must You not forget about us.

A , God of Israel, abandon Your rage and renounce the suffering that threatens Your people.

Alien nations insist that there is no hope for us, but we know better and so we pray: “Show mercy to a nation that *ever* places its trust in Your name.” O God of purity, bring nigh Your salvation. We are weary, but our enemies will not let us be. May Your compassion for us overwhelm Your anger. We beseech You, turn back from Your rage and be kind and generous to the treasured people You Yourself chose from amongst the nations.

A , God of Israel, abandon Your rage and renounce the suffering that threatens Your people.

A , take pity on us out of Your boundless compassion and do not give us into the hands of cruel foes.

speech, while yet every one of them still retained the natural passion of love to themselves and their families, because the reasoning appeared to them to be very just, even with regard to those that were dearest to them. Husbands tenderly embraced their wives, and took their children into their arms, and gave the longest parting kisses to them, with tears in their eyes. Yet at the same time did they complete what they had resolved on, as if they had been executed by the hands of strangers, and they had nothing else for their comfort but the certainty they were doing this execution to avoid that prospect they had of the miseries they were to suffer from their enemies. Nor was there at length any one of these men found that scrupled to act their part in this terrible execution, but every one of them dispatched his dearest relations. Miserable men indeed were they whose distress forced them to slay their own wives and children with their own hands, as the lightest of those evils that were before them. Unable to bear the grief they were under for what they had done any longer, and esteeming it an injury to those they had slain to live even the shortest space of time after them, they presently laid all they had upon a heap and set fire to it. They then chose ten men by lot out of them to slay all the rest, every one of whom laid himself down by his wife and children on the ground, and threw his arms about them, then offered their necks to the stroke of those who by lot executed that melancholy office. When these ten had, without fear, slain them all, they made the same rule for casting lots for themselves, that he whose lot it was should first kill the other nine, and after all should kill himself. Accordingly, all these had courage sufficient to be no way behind one another in doing or suffering; so, for a conclusion, the nine offered their necks to the executioner, and he who was the last of all took a view of all the other bodies, lest perchance some or other among so many that were slain should want his assistance to be quite dispatched, and when he perceived that they were all slain, he set fire to the palace, and with the great force of his hand ran his sword entirely through himself, and fell down dead near

לְמַה יֹאמְרוּ הַגּוֹיִם, אֵיךָ נָא אֱלֹהֵיהֶם? לְמַעַנְךָ עָשָׂה עִמּוֹנוּ
חֶסֶד, וְאֵל תֵּאַחֵר. אָנָּה, שׁוּב מִחֲרוֹנְךָ, וְרַחֵם סִגְלָה אֲשֶׁר
בְּחַרְתָּ.

יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, שׁוּב מִחֲרוֹן אַפְּךָ וְהַנַּחֵם עַל
הָרָעָה לְעַמֶּךָ.

קוֹלְנוּ תִשְׁמַע וְתַחֵן, וְאֵל תִּטְשֵׁנוּ בְּיַד אוֹיְבֵינוּ לְמַחֹזֹת אֶת
שְׁמֵנוּ. זְכוֹר אֲשֶׁר גִּשְׁבַּעְתָּ לְאֲבוֹתֵינוּ, כְּכֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם אֲרֵפֶה
אֶת זְרַעְכֶם, וְעַתָּה גִשְׁאֲרֵנוּ מֵעַט מֵהַרְבֵּה. וּבְכֹל זֹאת שְׁמֹךְ לֹא
שָׁכַחְנוּ, נָא אֵל תִּשְׁכַּחְנוּ.

יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, שׁוּב מִחֲרוֹן אַפְּךָ וְהַנַּחֵם עַל
הָרָעָה לְעַמֶּךָ.

עֲזַרְנוּ, אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׁעֵנוּ, עַל דְּבַר כְּבוֹד שְׁמֹךְ, וְהַצִּילְנוּ וְכַפֵּר עַל
חַטֹּאתֵינוּ לְמַעַן שְׁמֹךְ.

יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, שׁוּב מִחֲרוֹן אַפְּךָ וְהַנַּחֵם עַל
הָרָעָה לְעַמֶּךָ.

שׁוֹמֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל, שְׁמוֹר שְׂאֵרֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאֵל יֹאבֵד יִשְׂרָאֵל,
הָאוֹמְרִים שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל.

שׁוֹמֵר גּוֹי אֶחָד, שְׁמוֹר שְׂאֵרֵי עַם אֶחָד, וְאֵל יֹאבֵד גּוֹי אֶחָד,
הַמֵּיַחֲדִים שְׁמֹךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד.

שׁוֹמֵר גּוֹי קְדוֹשׁ, שְׁמוֹר שְׂאֵרֵי עַם קְדוֹשׁ, וְאֵל יֹאבֵד גּוֹי
קְדוֹשׁ, הַמְשַׁלְּשִׁים בְּשִׁלְשׁ קְדוּשׁוֹת לְקְדוֹשׁ.

מְתַרְצֶה בְּרַחֲמִים וּמִתְפַּיֵס בְּתַחֲנוּגִים, הַתְּרַצֶּה וְהַתְּפַיֵס לְדוֹר
עֵבֶר, כִּי אֵין עוֹזֵר.

to his own relations. So these people died with this intention, that they would not leave so much as one soul among them all alive to be subject to the Romans. Yet was there an ancient woman, and another who was of kin to Eleazar, and superior to most women in prudence and learning, with five children, who had concealed themselves in caverns under ground, and had carried water thither for their drink, and were hidden there when the rest were intent upon the slaughter of one another. Those others were nine hundred and sixty in number, the women and children being withal included in that computation. This calamitous slaughter was made on the fifteenth day of the month Xanthicus, that is, Nisan.

Now for the Romans, they expected that they should be fought in the morning, when, accordingly, they put on their armor, and laid bridges of planks upon their ladders from their banks, to make an assault upon the fortress, which they did; but saw nobody as an enemy, but a terrible solitude on every side, with a fire within the place as well as a perfect silence. So they were at a loss to guess at what had happened. At length they made a shout, as if it had been at a blow given by the battering ram, to see whether they could bring anyone out that was within; the women heard this noise, and came out of their underground cavern, and informed the Romans what had been done, as it was done; the second of them clearly described all both what was said and what was done, and this manner of it. The Romans, however, did not believe in such a desperate undertaking, and did not believe it could be as they said. Attempting to put the fire out, and quickly cutting themselves a way through it, they came within the palace, and so met with the multitude of the slain, but could take no pleasure in the fact, though it were done to their enemies. Nor could they do other than wonder at the courage of their resolution, and the immovable contempt of death which so great a number of them had shown, when they went through with such an action as that which they did.

When Masada was thus taken, the general left a garrison in the fortress to keep it, and he himself

Why should the other nations ask where our God is to be found? For the sake of Your own reputation, act mercifully with us and do not delay! We beseech You, turn back from Your rage and be kind and generous to the treasured people You Yourself chose from amongst the nations.

A , God of Israel, abandon Your rage and renounce the suffering that threatens Your people.

Hear our voices and be merciful with us. Give us not into the hand of enemies who would erase your name from the world. Remember that which You swore to our ancestors, “I shall make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky.” Now, of those many, we have but few left. But, for all that, we have not forgotten Your name. We beseech You, therefore: do not forget us!

A , God of Israel, abandon Your rage and renounce the suffering that threatens Your people.

Our Help, God of our salvation, for the sake of the glory of Your name, save us and grant us atonement from our sins for the sake of Your name.

A , God of Israel, abandon Your rage and renounce the suffering that threatens Your people.

Guardian of Israel, watch over the remnant of Israel and may Israel never perish, that nation that sings out “Hear, O Israel.”

Guardian of a unique people, watch over the remnant of the unique nation named Israel so that it never perish, that people that unifies Your name with the famous words, “. . . **A** , our God, **A** is one.”

Guardian of the holy people, watch over the remnant of the holy people so that the holy nation not perish, that nation that sings out the word “holy” three times in a row as it recites the Kedushah twice daily.

God Who delights in compassion and Who is ever swayed to generosity and kindness by heartfelt supplication, take delight in compassion and be swayed to generosity and kindness toward a pitiful generation, for we have no one to help us.

אֲבֵינוּ מִלְכֵנוּ, חַנּוּנוּ וְעַנּוּנוּ
 כִּי אֵין בָּנוּ מַעֲשִׂים,
 עֲשֵׂה עִמּוֹנוּ צְדָקָה וְחֶסֶד
 וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ.


וְאַנְחָנוּ לֹא גִדַע מֵהַ גַּעֲשָׂה, כִּי עָלֶיךָ עֵינֵינוּ. זְכוֹר
 רַחֲמֶיךָ, יְהוָה, וְחֶסְדֶּיךָ, כִּי מֵעוֹלָם הִמָּחָה. יְהִי חֶסְדֶּךָ,
 יְהוָה, עָלֵינוּ, כַּאֲשֶׁר יַחֲלֵנוּ לָךְ. אַל תִּזְכֹּר לָנוּ עֲוֹנוֹת
 רֵאשׁוֹנִים, מֵהַר יְקֻדָּמוֹנוּ רַחֲמֶיךָ, כִּי דָלוּנוּ מְאֹד.
 חַנּוּנוּ, יְהוָה, חַנּוּנוּ, כִּי רַב שָׁבַעְנוּ בּוֹז. בְּרָגַז רַחֵם
 תִּזְכֹּר. כִּי הוּא יִדַע יִצְרָנוּ, זְכוֹר כִּי עָפַר אֲנַחְנוּ.
 עֲזָרְנוּ אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל דְּבַר כְּבוֹד שְׁמֶךָ,
 וְהַצִּילָנוּ וְכִפֵּר עַל חַטֹּאתֵינוּ לְמַעַן שְׁמֶךָ.

*After Tachanun, the cantor or baal tefillah continues
 the service with the Half Kaddish on page 138.*


*Absent a minyan, private worshipers
 continue with Ashrei on page 154.*

went away to Caesarea, for there were now no enemies left in the country, but it was all overthrown by so long a war. Yet did this war afford disturbances and dangerous disorders even in places very far remote from Judea; still it came to pass that many Jews were slain at Alexandria in Egypt, for as many of the Sicarii as were able to flee thither, out of the seditious wars in Judea, were not content to have saved themselves, but took to undertaking new disturbances, and persuaded many of those that entertained them to assert their liberty, to esteem the Romans to be no better than themselves, and to look upon God as their only God, their sole Ruler. But when part of the Jews of reputation opposed them, they slew some of them. With the others, they were very pressing in their exhortations to revolt from the Romans, but when the principal men of the senate saw what madness they were come to, they thought it no longer safe for themselves to overlook them. So they got all the Jews together to an assembly, and accused the Sicarii of madness, and demonstrated that they had been the authors of all the evils that had come upon them. They said also that "these men, now they were run away from Judea, having no sure hope of escaping—because as soon as ever they shall be known, they will be soon destroyed by the Romans—they have come hither to fill us full of those calamities which belong to them, while we have not been partakers with them in any of their sins." Accordingly, they exhorted the multitude to care, lest they should be brought to destruction by their means, and to make their apology to the Romans for what had been done by delivering these men up to them; being thus made aware of the greatness of the danger they were in, they complied with what was proposed, and ran with great violence upon the Sicarii, and seized upon them. Indeed, six hundred of them were caught immediately, and, as to all those that fled into Egypt and to the Egyptian Thebes, it was not long ere they were caught also, and brought back, whose courage, or whether we ought to call it madness, or hardness in their opinions, everybody was amazed at. For when all sorts of tor-

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ments and vexations of their bodies that could be devised were done to them, they could not get any one of them to comply so far as to confess, or seem to confess, that Caesar was their lord. Instead, they preserved their own opinion, in spite of all the distress they were brought to, as if they received these torments and the fire itself with bodies insensible of pain, and with a soul that in a manner rejoiced under them. But what was most of all astonishing to the beholders was the courage of the children; for not one of these children was so far overcome by these torments as to name Caesar for their lord, so far can the strength of the courage of the soul prevail over the weakness of the body. 

Avinu Malkeinu, be gracious to us and answer us, for we have no deeds to present to You on our own behalf. Act towards us in consonance with Your great qualities of charity and justice, and save us.

Otherwise, we would have no clear idea what to do, for our eyes are fixed solely on You. Remember Your great sense of compassion, אלהים, for it is among Your eternal qualities. May Your mercy extend to us, אלהים, to the same extent that we have put our trust and hope in You. Recall not the sins of our youths, but let Your compassion pave the way before us as we travel toward divine judgment, for we are pitiable, miserable creatures! Be gracious unto us, אלהים, be gracious, for we have suffered more than enough abuse and contempt. Even as You feel anger, let that anger be tempered with mercy, for You know our human natures all too well; remember that we are but dust!  Help us, O God of our salvation, for the sake of the glory of Your own name. Save us and annul our sins for the sake of Your name.

After Tachanun, the cantor or baal tefillah continues the service with the Half Kaddish on page 139.

Absent a minyan, private worshipers continue with Ashrei on page 155.

The Short Version of Tachanun

It is customary to rest one's head on one's forearm while the following passage and Psalm 6 are recited.

וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד אֵל גָּד, צַר לִי מְאֹד, נִפְלְאָה נָא בְיַד יְהוָה, כִּי רַחֲמֵי רַחֲמֵינוּ וּבִיד אָדָם אֵל אִפְלָא.

רַחוּם וְחַנוּן, חֲטָאתִי לְפָנֶיךָ, יְהוָה מְלֵא רַחֲמִים, רַחֵם עָלַי וְקַבֵּל תְּחִנּוּתִי.

Psalm 6:2-11

יְהוָה, אֵל בְּאִפְפֵּךְ תּוֹכִיחַנִי וְאֵל בַּחֲמַתְךָ תִּיַסְרֵנִי. חַנּוּנִי, יְהוָה, כִּי אִמְלַל אֹנִי. רַפְּאֵנִי, יְהוָה, כִּי נִבְהַלֹּו עֵצְמִי. וְנַפְשִׁי נִבְהַלְהָ מְאֹד, וְאַתָּה יְהוָה עַד מָוְתִי. שׁוּבָה, יְהוָה, חַלְצֵה נַפְשִׁי, הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי לְמַעַן חֲסִדְךָ. כִּי אֵין בַּמּוֹת זְכָרְךָ, בְּשֵׂאוֹל מִי יוֹדֵה לָךְ. יַגְעֵתִי בְּאַנְחָתִי, אֲשַׁחַה בְּכָל לַיְלָה מוֹטְתִי, בְּדַמְעֵתִי עֵרְשִׁי אֲמַסֶּה. עֵשְׂשָׂה מִפְּעַס עֵינַי, עֲתֻקָּה בְּכָל צוּרְרֵי. סוּרוּ מִפְּנֵי כָל פְּעֻלֵי אָוֶן, כִּי שָׁמַע יְהוָה קוֹל בְּכִי. שָׁמַע יְהוָה תְּחִנּוּתִי, יְהוָה תִּפְלְתֵי יִקַּח. יִבְשׁוּ וַיִּפְּחֲלוּ מְאֹד כָּל אִיבֵי, יִשְׁבוּ יִבְשׁוּ רַגְעַ.

שׁוֹמֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל, שְׁמוֹר שְׂאֵרֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאֵל יֹאבֵד יִשְׂרָאֵל, הָאוֹמְרִים שָׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל. שׁוֹמֵר גּוֹי אֶחָד, שְׁמוֹר שְׂאֵרֵי עַם אֶחָד, וְאֵל יֹאבֵד גּוֹי אֶחָד, הַמְּנַחֲדִים שְׂמֵךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד. שׁוֹמֵר גּוֹי קְדוֹשׁ, שְׁמוֹר שְׂאֵרֵי עַם קְדוֹשׁ, וְאֵל יֹאבֵד גּוֹי קְדוֹשׁ, הַמְּשַׁלְּשִׁים בְּשֵׁלֶשׁ קְדוּשׁוֹת לְקְדוּשׁוֹ. מִתְרַצָּה בְּרַחֲמִים וּמִתְפַּיֵס בְּתַחֲנוּנֵינוּ, הַתְרַצָּה וְהַתְפַּיֵס לְדוֹר עֵבֶר כִּי אֵין עוֹזֵר.



These brief lessons are meant to challenge worshipers to pause in the midst of their devotions to ponder the riddles that flow directly from the concept of divine love. What does it mean to love God or to imagine that God's love for one individual, or for one people, is different than God's love for another person or another nation? The Torah commands the love of God, but what human being knows of love that can be commanded at all? How does the love we are commanded to feel for God differ from reverence or from awe? And what is there to learn about the love of God from the love of earthly lovers? All these are riddles well worth contemplating as we lay our heads down upon our forearms to pause in the middle of prayer to contemplate the specificity and uniqueness of the relationship logic dictates God must bear to each one of us as individuals.



In the end, it all comes down to love. Love is the context in which human beings step outside themselves to pierce into the personal universe of another individual not because it is possible, let alone reasonable, to do so, but because they must, because they feel called to make themselves whole by coming to know themselves (more than slightly paradoxically) through intimate knowledge of the contents of the most secret chambers of another's heart. Love is the context in which we all grow, in which we slowly become aware of the contents of the inmost chambers of our own hearts precisely by opening our hearts to the love of another. The discrete sphere of being that each of us is, after all, can only be penetrated by another when that other individual is so forcefully driven forward by desire so as to lose sense of what can and cannot logically be, and, in so doing, to become able to bypass the physics of the natural world and enter into a lover's universe of private, intimate discourse and over-

whelming erotic passion unencumbered by rules of any sort at all. It is this kind of selfless self-knowledge that exists at the confluence of ecstasy and introspection that Scripture recommends as the soil in which the seeds of divine communion may most rationally be planted. In other words: only by learning to know another can one learn to know, or even to know of, the great Other that is the God of the world and its Creator. And only by experiencing the overpowering desire to love another can human beings even begin to seize the implications—and they are many—of the commandments, that exists at the liturgical core of all worship: “You shall love A , your God, with all your heart, with all your soul and with all the intensity of which you are capable (Deuteronomy 6:5).”



Like the love of lovers, the love the faithful feel for God must be selfless and pure, and it must be totally untainted by base expectations about what they may rationally expect back from God in return for years of obedient service. In Biblical terms, this is the spiritual equivalent of the love of David and Jonathan that was characterized by the ancient rabbis as “the kind of love that, being independent of any hope for personal gain, will never fade (Pirkei Avot 5:16)”; it is love unadulterated and untainted by false hope, love that exists as the physical manifestation of the longing that flows directly out of one untroubled human heart into the chambers of another.

This lesson was taught in ancient times by Rabbi Eleazar, who based himself on a verse from the 112th psalm: “Hallelujah! Happy is the individual who fears A and whose total desire is for the divine commandments (Psalm 112:1).” To this, Rabbi Eleazar noted that the pious individual is one whose yearning for God may be characterized as love precisely because it manifests itself as total, uninhibited desire for the commandments . . . and not for the rewards, imagined or real, that may await one who performs them.

Therefore, it is possible to say that every commandment observed as a function of the hope one

The Short Version

It is customary to rest one's head on one's forearm while the following passage and Psalm 6 are recited.

And David said to Gad, I am in the deepest distress. Let us place our fate in the hands of ever-compassionate A and not in the hands of other human beings.

Merciful and compassionate God, I have sinned before You. A full of compassion, show compassion toward me and accept my supplication.

Psalm 6:2–11

A , neither rebuke me in Your anger nor cause me to suffer as a result of Your divine wrath. Instead, be gracious to me, A , for I am wretched. Heal me, A , for I am terrified down to my bones; even my soul is profoundly terrified. How long will You . . . O A ! Return, A , and grant relief to my soul; save me for the sake of Your mercy. For there is no possibility of praising Your name after death; in Sheol, who will give thanks to You? My moaning has exhausted me; I drench my couch every evening so totally that I have practically melted my bed away with my tears. My eyesight is fading, actually wasting away, because of the anger I feel directed toward me by my foes. Depart from me, you doers of iniquity, for A has heard the sound of my crying. A has heard my supplication; A shall accept my prayer.

May all my enemies be ashamed and terrified; may they relent and, even just for a moment, be ashamed.


Guardian of Israel, watch over the remnant of Israel and may Israel never perish, that nation that sings out “Hear, O Israel.”

Guardian of a unique people, watch over the remnant of the unique nation of Israel so that it never perish, that people that unifies Your name with the famous words, “. . . A , our God, A is one.”

Guardian of the holy people, watch over the remnant of the holy people so that the holy nation not perish, that nation that sings out the word “holy” three times in a row as it recites the Kedushah twice daily.

God Who delights in compassion and Who is ever swayed to generosity and kindness by heartfelt supplication, take delight in compassion and be swayed to generosity and kindness toward a pitiful generation, for we have no one to help us.

אֲבִינוּ מִלְכֵנוּ, חַנּוּנוּ וְעַנּוּנוּ כִּי אֵין בָּנוּ מֵעֲשִׂים, עֲשֵׂה עִמָּנוּ צְדָקָה וְחֶסֶד וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ.

וְאַנְחָנוּ לֹא גִדַע מֶה נַעֲשֶׂה, כִּי עָלֵינוּ עֵינֵינוּ. זְכוֹר
רַחֲמֶיךָ יְהוָה וְחֶסְדֶיךָ, כִּי מֵעוֹלָם הִמָּתָה. יְהִי חֶסְדֶיךָ
יְהוָה עָלֵינוּ, כַּאֲשֶׁר יַחֲלֵנוּ לָךְ. אֵל תִּזְכֹּר לָנוּ עֲוֹנוֹת
רֵאשׁוֹנִים, מִהֵרָ יִקְדְּמוּנוּ רַחֲמֶיךָ, כִּי דָלוּנוּ מְאֹד.
חַנּוּנוּ, יְהוָה, חַנּוּנוּ, כִּי רַב שָׁבַענוּ בּוֹז. בְּרָגַז רַחֵם
תִּזְכֹּר. כִּי הוּא יָדַע יִצְרָנוּ, זְכוֹר כִּי עָפַר אֲנַחְנוּ.
עֲזָרְנוּ אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׁרָאֵל עַל דְּבַר כְּבוֹד שְׁמֶךָ, 
וְהִצִּילָנוּ וְכִפֵּר עַל חַטֹּאתֵינוּ לְמַעַן שְׁמֶךָ.

*After Tachanun, the cantor or baal tefillah continues
the service with the Half Kaddish on page 138.*

*Absent a minyan, private worshipers
continue with Ashrei on page 154.*

*When Tachanun is recited as part of the
Afternoon Service, continue on page 272.*

harbors for some specific reward is the equivalent of “love dependent on personal gain” in the world of ritual activity and divine service. And it was directly to this point that Antigonos of Sokho spoke when he observed that those who obey the laws and statutes of the Torah are obliged—if they wish their activities to bear meaning and to move them closer to personal salvation in God—to perform the commandments **not** in the manner of servants who serve their masters for the sake of some anticipated reward, but rather in the manner of faithful, dedicated servants who serve their masters out of a deep sense of commitment to their service and, even, out of affection and the desire that their masters’ will be done.



To underscore how important it is that the love for God not be tainted with ulterior motive, Scripture refers in the most extreme terms to people whose service to God is based wholly or even mostly on the benefits they expect to accrue to themselves as a result of their fidelity to ritual. The author of the 119th psalm, for example, refers to the “cursed arrogant who err in the performance of Your commandments (Psalm 119:21) and many other passages in Scripture speak equally disparagingly about those who would attempt to use the commandments for personal gain.

In the Biblical conception, there is no greater error than the one made by those who undertake the service of God out of the conviction that they will be rewarded for their efforts in specific, hoped-for ways. Therefore, people who approach the service of God in the manner of people who come into a shop with long shopping lists that they intend to read aloud while the shopkeeper scurries about looking for all the various things they have come to purchase are dooming their efforts from the outset. Although it is the customers who are the guests in the shopkeeper’s shop, they behave as though they are the masters and the shopkeeper, their servant. But, of course, he runs around seeking to earn their favor by providing them with whatever they wish to buy precisely

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because, for all it is his shop, the shopkeeper is nevertheless totally dependent on his customers for his income. To the extent that that is so, there is some logic in treating the shopkeeper as a servant . . . but to approach the service of God in the manner of an imperious customer reading out an order to a servile shopkeeper is to degrade the concept of fidelity to the law as a manifestation of love. It is the love of God that the faithful bring to divine service . . . and nothing else of value or consequence. And that is true, no matter how unlikely some people are to accept that idea or any notion like it as reasonable, let alone likely.




Many centuries ago, Kohelet, king of Jerusalem, wrote these words, “I said in my heart, let me go and drown myself in pleasure and enjoy all of life’s pleasures . . . but this too turned out to be hollow and joyless (Kohelet 2:1).” Behind the king’s dour words, however, rests a great truth.

If the goal of religion is to bring the faithful to a state of intimacy and ongoing communion with God, then the notion that the journey is supposed to be pleasant is not at all logical. Indeed, the idea that the goal of religion in the world is to make pleasurable and pleasant the lives of those who embrace faith and who walk in the ways of a specific religious system is neither a reasonable nor an especially dignified idea. Indeed, one could argue far more cogently that just the opposite is true—that, generally speaking, the more difficult a journey undertaken in this world, the more worthwhile it is likely to turn out to be. At any rate, the point of religion is the praise and adoration of God and the life-long quest for intimacy and communion with God, not the physical or intellectual pleasure that individuals may occasionally derive from their efforts at worship . . . or from their efforts to praise God in hymn and prayer.



Reasonably, most who yearn for God in this world do not specifically long to be judged by the Judge

Avinu Malkeinu, be gracious to us and answer us, for we have no deeds to present to You in our own behalf. Act towards us in consonance with Your great qualities of charity and justice, and save us

Otherwise, we would have no clear idea what to do, for our eyes are fixed solely on You. Remember Your great sense of compassion, אלהים, for it is among Your eternal qualities. May Your mercy extend to us, אלהים, to the same extent that we have put our trust and hope in You. Recall not the sins of our youths, but let Your compassion pave the way before us as we travel toward divine judgment, for we are pitiable, miserable creatures! Be gracious unto us, אלהים, be gracious, for we have suffered more than enough abuse and contempt. Even as You feel anger, let that anger be tempered with mercy, for You know our human natures all too well; remember that we are but dust!  Help us, O God of our salvation, for the sake of the glory of Your own name. Save us and annul our sins for the sake of Your name.

After Tachanun, the cantor or baal tefillah continues the service with the Half Kaddish on page 139.

Absent a minyan, private worshipers continue with Ashrei on page 155.

When Tachanun is recited as part of the Afternoon Service, continue on page 273.

The Half Kaddish

יִתְגַּדֵּל וְיִתְקַדֵּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא בְּעֵלְמָא דִּי בְּרָא כְרַעוּתָהּ,
וְיִמְלִיךָ מַלְכוּתָהּ בְּחַיִּיכוּן וּבְיוֹמֵיכוּן וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל בֵּית
יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּעַגְלָא וּבְזַמַּן קָרִיב, וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן.

The congregation joins the cantor or baal tefillah in reciting this line.

יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעָלְמָא וְלְעָלְמֵי עָלְמֵיָא.

The cantor or baal tefillah continues:

יְתַבְרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח, וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרוֹמַם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא וְיִתְהַדָּר
וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלָּל שְׁמֵהּ דְקַדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא

Except for the days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, say:

לְעֵלָא מִן כָּל

Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, say:

לְעֵלָא לְעֵלָא מִכָּל

בְּרַכְתָּא וְשִׁירָתָא, תְּשַׁבְּחָתָא וְנַחֲמָתָא, דְאִמְרִין בְּעֵלְמָא,
וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן.

On Mondays and Thursdays on which Tachanun is recited, add these words:

אֵל אֲרַךְ אַפַּיִם וְרַב חֶסֶד וְאִמְתָּ, אֵל בְּאַפְּךָ תִּזְכִּיחֵנוּ.
חַיִּסָּה יְהוּה עַל עַמּוּךָ, וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ מִכָּל רָע.
חֲטֵאֵנוּ לָךְ אָדוֹן,
סְלַח־נָא כְּרוֹב רַחֲמֶיךָ, אֵל.

On days the Torah is not read, continue with Ashrei on page 154.

of the world or governed by the Sovereign of the universe. Instead, their desire for God is rooted in their hope for friendship and companionship of such an intimate variety that it might become reasonable for them to imagine their souls as being bound up inextricably with the great world-soul that is God in a relationship of mutual succor and supportive caring. And although, as noted, the Scriptural concept of this kind of deeply supportive friendship is the relationship between David and Jonathan, the Bible does not limit this kind of relationship to human friends or even to human siblings. Indeed, as Scripture notes at the end of the eighteenth chapter of the Book of Proverbs, “there are friends who are even closer than brothers (Proverbs 12:23)” . . . and that friend can be Almighty God as well as a human friend. In the end, the basic idea is that God does not function in the world solely as Sovereign and Magistrate, but also as the deeply caring intimate friend of all who seek that kind of relationship with the divine in truth and with integrity.

All who seek this kind of intimacy with Friend God are called to the observance of the commandments of Scripture no less clearly than any others, only perhaps with greater urgency. And, indeed, this truth is mirrored in the Bible in many different passages. Abraham, for example, is heard complaining that he is lonely and without progeny in the world, but the very next verse contains the solution for all the truly bereft souls of the world: “And the word of א came to him (Genesis 15:4)—and so will obedience to the word of God bring love and a deep and abiding sense of companionship to any who feel alienated from the world and cut off from society. Similarly, when the psalmist says of himself, “I am a stranger in the land (Psalm 119:19),” and then follows this first remark with a second: “Conceal not Your commandments from me (ibid.),” his point surely is that adherence to the commandments of the Torah will bring an individual to know Friend God as the source of caring and succor in human life, not merely as the source of judgment and governance.


Especially directed towards the engenderment of such feelings in the hearts of the devout are

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those commandments that have at their core the notion that all people, rather than thinking of themselves as the kings and queens of their tiny domains, would do far better to think of themselves as guests in God's house. These commandments are many—that the faithful be hospitable to strangers, that they be kind to the weak and indigent of society, that they give charity freely and unbegrudgingly to the poor, that they gladly eat the foods declared licit for them to eat without carping and complaining about the arbitrary natures of the dietary laws, that they bless God in gladness and deeply felt satisfaction after every meal of which they partake—but although they are many, they all have the same basic concept generating their detail: that is it possible for human beings to seek to find in God the source of warmth and friendship in the world. . . . and, in so doing, to find God not only in the world and its parts, but in the inmost chambers of their own hearts as well.



The cornerstone of all worship is the commandment to love God with the totality of the inner strength and fortitude one can muster from the deepest recesses of one's human heart, just as King Josiah instructed the people of Jerusalem to worship God "with all their hearts and with all their souls (2 Kings 23:3)."

Like all love worth the name, however, this love cannot be limited to the sphere of the intellect and requires physical expression in the world for it to exist in any truly satisfying way for the parties concerned. This truth, no less romantically and erotically charged than intellectually and emotionally challenging, is presented in a different chapter of Scripture, the eleventh chapter of Deuteronomy, when the commandment "You shall love A , your God" is followed with specific instructions for transforming the injunction from the sphere of the ephemeral and theoretical to the domain of actual reality: ". . . and you shall keep God's standards, laws, statutes and commandments every day (Deuteronomy 11:1)." 

The Half Kaddish

Magnified and sanctified be the great name of God in this world created according to divine plan, and may God's sovereignty be established speedily and soon during the days of our lives and the lives of all members of the House of Israel, and let us say, Amen.

The congregation joins the cantor or baal tefillah in reciting this line.

May God's great name be blessed forever and throughout all eternity.

The cantor or baal tefillah continues:

May the name of the Holy One, source of all blessing, be blessed, adored, lauded, praised, extolled, glorified and venerated in language . . .

Except between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, say:

more exalted

Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, say:

entirely more exalted

. . . than any blessing, hymn, ode or prayer recited by the faithful in this world, and let us say, Amen.

On Mondays and Thursdays on which Tachanun is recited, add these words:

O God, long-suffering and abundantly merciful and truthful, do not chastise us in Your rage. Take pity on Your people, A , and save us from all harm. We have sinned before You, O God.

Forgive us, we beseech You, in accordance with Your great compassion, O God.

On days the Torah is not read, continue with the Ashrei on page 155.

The Torah Service for Mondays and Thursdays, Rosh Chodesh,
Purim, the Weekdays of Chanukah, Yom Ha'atzma'ut, Fast Days
(including Tisha Be'av) and All Days of Chol Hamoed
Other Than Hoshana Rabba.

(On Hoshana Rabba, continue on page 352.)

As the Ark is opened, the following is recited:

וַיְהִי בְּנִסּוּעַ הָאָרֶץ וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה: קוּמָה יְהוָה וַיִּפְּצוּ אֵיבֵיךָ,
וַיִּגְסוּ מִשְׁנֵאֵיךָ מִפְּנֵיךָ. כִּי מִצִּיּוֹן תֵּצֵא תוֹרָה, וְדַבֵּר יְהוָה
מִירוּשָׁלַיִם. בְּרוּךְ שְׁנַתֵּן תוֹרָה לְעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּקֹדְשָׁתוֹ.

Once the Torah is taken from the Ark,
the cantor or baal tefillah bows down and intones these words:

גָּדְלוּ לַיהוָה אֱתֵי, וּגְרוּמָמָה שְׁמוֹ יַחְדָּו.

The congregation responds as the scroll is carried
to the table on which it will be read.

לָךְ יְהוָה הַגְּדֹלָה וְהַגְּבוּרָה וְהַתְּפֹאֶרֶת וְהַנְּצִיחַ וְהַהוֹד, כִּי כָל
בְּשָׂמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ. לָךְ יְהוָה הַמְּמֹלְכָה וְהַמְּתַנַּשֵּׂא לְכָל לְדָאֵשׁ.
רוּמָמוֹ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְהַשְׁתַּחֲוִי לְהַדָּם רַגְלָיו, קְדוֹשׁ הוּא.
רוּמָמוֹ, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, וְהַשְׁתַּחֲוִי לְהַר קְדִשׁוֹ, כִּי קְדוֹשׁ יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֵינוּ.

The Torah is set down on the table and the gabbai calls a kohen
(or, if none is present, anyone at all) to the Torah with these words:

וְתִגְּלָה וְתִרְאָה מַלְכוּתוֹ עָלֵינוּ בְּזִמְנֵן קְרוֹב, וַיַּחֲן פְּלִטָתָנוּ
וּפְלִטַת עַמּוֹ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל לְחֹן וּלְחֹסֵד וּלְרַחֲמִים וּלְרִצּוֹן
וְנֹאמֶר אָמֵן. הַכֹּל הָבִי גְדֹל לְאֱלֹהֵינוּ וְתִגְּלוּ כְבוֹד לְתוֹרָתוֹ. כֹּהֵן
קָרֵב, יַעֲמֹד בְּן _____ הַכֹּהֵן.

(Omit the word כֹּהֵן if the individual called forward is not a kohen and instead
say במקום כֹּהֵן.)

בְּרוּךְ שְׁנַתֵּן תוֹרָה לְעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּקֹדְשָׁתוֹ.

The congregation responds:

וְאַתֶּם הַדְּבָקִים בַּיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם, חַיִּים פְּלִכֶם הַיּוֹם.



The laws that govern the public reading of the Torah have been codified many times, most authoritatively by Rabbi Joseph Caro (1488–1575) in the Orach Chayim section of the Shulchan Aruch. Excerpts from chapters 135–149 of the Orach Chayim follow in the translation of Rabbi Simchah Roth, amended slightly by the editor and accompanied by the comments of Rabbi Moses Isserles (1530–1572) reflecting the practices of Ashkenazic Jewry in his day.

Chapter 135

On Mondays and Thursdays and on Shabbat at Minchah, three people read, no less and no more, and there is no haftarah. Note of Rabbi Moses Isserles: If there are two bridegrooms in the synagogue and both of them are Israelites, it is permitted to add a fourth reading because, for them, it is like a festival and on such days it is permitted to add. It seems that the same applies to two fathers whose sons are to be circumcised: it is their festive day. . . .

The place where the reading ends on Shabbat morning is the place where the reading begins at Minchah, on Monday and Thursday and on the following Shabbat. Note of Rabbi Moses Isserles: If the Torah is not read on one Shabbat for some reason, the reading on the following Shabbat consists of the omitted portion together with the portion that belongs to that subsequent Shabbat.

A kohen reads from the Torah first, then a Levite and then an Israelite.

The prevalent custom is to grant precedence to a kohen who is an ignoramus over a great scholar who is an Israelite. We follow this procedure on the assumption that the kohen knows how to read (for, if he cannot read, then how can he recite the blessing over the Torah? Nevertheless, if he can read just well enough to read along with the Torah reader word for word, we consider that to be sufficient. . . .)

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If the Sefer Torah is opened while the sole kohen present is still reciting the Shema, he may not stop reading and an Israelite is called up in his stead. Note of Rabbi Moses Isserles: A similar law applies on the public fast days after Passover and Sukkot: if the kohen is not fasting, an Israelite is called forward. In such cases, however, it would be best if the kohen were to leave the synagogue rather than be present when a non-kohen is called up.

If a kohen comes into the synagogue after the Israelite has begun to recite the Torah blessing, the latter should not stop in the middle of a blessing. The Barchu, however, is not considered part of the blessing in this regard. In such a case (i.e., where the Israelite has recited the Barchu, but has not gone further) the Israelite should remain at the reading desk, however, until the (newly arrived) kohen completes the blessing and then reads from the scroll, and then a Levite is called forward and does the same. If there is no kohen in the synagogue and an Israelite reads instead, a Levite should not be called after him. Note of Rabbi Moses Isserles: But the Levite can be called first. When they call him, however, they should say “instead of a kohen,” so that people should not make the mistake of thinking that this person is a kohen.

If there are a kohen and a Levite in the synagogue and the kohen reads (from the Torah first), then, thinking that there is no Levite present, begins to recite the Torah blessing again—he is not to be interrupted.

If there is no Levite in the synagogue, the kohen who reads first recites the blessings a second time in place of a Levite. A different kohen should not replace the first one (i.e., for the Levite aliyah) however, lest people think that a disqualification had been found in the first one called

Similarly, two Levites should not go up to read from the Torah one after the other, so that people should not think that one of them has been found to be disqualified.

It is customary to call a kohen after a kohen with an Israelite between them. In such a case, the cantor notes that he is a kohen by adding the words “although he is a kohen” when he is called forward. It is similarly customary to call up a

The Torah Service for Mondays and Thursdays, Rosh Chodesh, Purim, the Weekdays of Chanukah, Israel Independence Day, Fast Days (including Tisha Be'av) and All Days of Chol Hamoed Other Than Hoshana Rabba.

(On Hoshana Rabba, continue on page 352.)

As the Ark is opened, the following is recited:

As the Ark traveled forward, Moses would sing out: Rise up, A ; make Your enemies scatter and those who hate You flee from before You.

For *torah* shall come forth from Zion and the word of A from Jerusalem.

Blessed be God, Who bestowed the Torah on the people of Israel in an act of sublime sanctification.

Once the Torah is taken from the Ark,

the cantor or baal tefillah bows down and intones these words:

Join me in magnifying A and together we shall exalt God's holy name.

The congregation responds as the scroll is carried to the table on which it will be read:

Yours, A , is greatness and might, splendor, eternity and majesty, for all that is on earth or in heaven belongs to You, O God.

Yours, A , is sovereignty and the right to govern all flesh.

Exalt A , our God, and bow down to the divine footstool, our holy Temple.

Exalt A , our God, and bow down toward the holy Temple Mount in Jerusalem, for A , our God, is holy.

The Torah is set down on the table and the gabbai calls a kohen

(or, if none is present, anyone at all) to the Torah with these words:

May Your sovereignty soon become fully obvious and apparent to us all and may God show mercy, kindness, compassion and forbearance to the remnant of our people, the House of Israel, and to that let us all say, Amen.

Ascribe greatness to our God, all of you, and thus show your reverence for the Torah. Let the *kohen* approach the *bimah*: Come forward _____, son of _____ *hakohen*.

(Omit the word “hakohen” if the individual called forward is not a kohen and instead say “bimkom kohen” (“in place of a kohen”).)

Blessed be God, Who bestowed the Torah on the people Israel in an act of sublime sanctification.

The congregation responds:

As you cleave unto A , your God, may you all be granted long and happy lives.

The individual called to the Torah comes forward, locates the correct spot in the scroll and kisses it using the corner of a tallit, then grasps the ends of the scroll's wooden handles and recites the following blessing.

בְּרַכּוּ אֶת יְהוָה הַמְּבַרֵךְ.

The congregation responds:

בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה הַמְּבַרֵךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

The individual called to the Torah continues:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִלְּךָ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בְּנוּ מִכָּל הָעַמִּים וְנָתַן לָנוּ אֶת תּוֹרָתוֹ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה.

After the reading, a closing blessing is recited:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִלְּךָ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָנוּ תּוֹרַת אֱמֶת, וְחַיֵּי עוֹלָם גִּטֵּעַ בְּתוֹכֵנוּ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה.

If the individual called to the Torah has recently recovered from a serious illness, returned from an arduous journey, or survived a dangerous mishap, the following blessing is added.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִלְּךָ הָעוֹלָם, הַגּוֹמֵל לְחַיִּיבִים טוֹבוֹת, שְׂגַמְלֵנִי כָּל טוֹב.

To a man reciting this blessing, the congregation responds:

אָמֵן, מִי שְׂגַמְלֵךְ כָּל טוֹב, הוּא יְגַמְלֵךְ כָּל טוֹב, סָלָה.

To a woman reciting the blessing, the congregation responds:

אָמֵן, מִי שְׂגַמְלֵךְ כָּל טוֹב, הוּא יְגַמְלֵךְ כָּל טוֹב, סָלָה.

Levite after a Levite with an Israelite between them. Note of Rabbi Moses Isserles: It is therefore permitted for him to be called as *maftir* in a similar fashion; and if the cantor just calls “*maftir*” there is no reason to be concerned about disqualification, since he did not mention his name. There are those who say that a kohen or a Levite should not be called among the regular Israelite *aliyot*, but that, after that number has been reached, they may do so. And this is the custom in our lands, but nevertheless, where there is great need and distress, one can rely on the former view.

There is one authority which says that, if the cantor calls a kohen who is not present, he should not call another by name because of the aspersions that might thus be cast upon the pedigree of the former, but another kohen should go up of his own accord. (It is also accepted that a cantor who is a kohen may call another kohen to the Torah.)

If a town consists entirely of kohanim, but there is one Israelite among them, that Israelite should read from the Torah first in order to preserve the peace. Where there are not sufficient Israelites or where there are no Israelites at all, kohanim may read one after the other because there would be no aspersions cast on their pedigree by such a procedure since everyone knows that there are only kohanim there. The same applies if a town were to consist solely of Levites.

We do not bring a Sefer Torah to people incarcerated in prison, not even on Rosh Hashanah or Yom Kippur. Note of Rabbi Moses Isserles: This applies specifically to the concept of bringing the scroll for the express purpose of reading the Torah portion from it, but if the Sefer Torah is brought for him a day or two previously, it is permitted to read from it at the appropriate moment. If the incarcerated individual is an important person, it is permitted to bring a scroll into prison under all circumstances.

Chapter 136

On Shabbat, on festivals and on Yom Kippur, Torah scholars who are appointed over the community are called to read from the Torah after the Levite. After them, Torah scholars who are worthy to be appointed as communal leaders (that is to say, such

as can respond when asked a halachic question anywhere) are called. After them, the sons of Torah scholars whose fathers are appointed over the community are called, then the heads of the synagogues and then, finally, all the rest of the people.

Chapter 137

On a day when three people are called to read, not less than ten verses are to be read and the regular Scriptural refrain, "And A spoke," is included in that number. If, however, the topic being read concludes in less than ten verses (such as the reading about Amalek, which has only nine verses) it would appear to be acceptable to leave the reading at that number of verses.

No less than three verses are read for each of them. Two of the honorees read three verses each and one of them reads four. Whichever of them reads the four verses is considered the more honored.

On Shabbat afternoon or on a Monday or Thursday morning, the following rules apply if the reader inadvertently skips a verse without reading it. If he has read ten verses apart from the verse that he skipped, he need not repeat the reading; otherwise, he must. However, on Shabbat morning, even if he skipped just one verse, he must read it again, and this is the case even if the Sefer Torah has been returned to the ark and he has recited the Kaddish: he must reread that verse together with two other verses and this is so even if the *haftarah* has been read and the Musaf service already recited. One does not need to reread the festival sections, however, because their halachic status is the same as the reading for Minchah on Shabbat or Monday and Thursday, and such sections are deemed less important because they are read in the course of the rest of the year on the sabbaths those Torah portions are read out as part of our general cycle of Torah readings.

If one among the honorees reads only two verses, he must read again. But if the three of them together only read nine verses—three for each of them—they do not need to read again; the perfect example is Parashat Amalek. If the

The individual called to the Torah comes forward, locates the correct spot in the scroll and kisses it using the corner of a tallit, then grasps the ends of the scroll's wooden handles and recites the following blessing

Blessed be A , source of all blessing.
Barkhu et Adonai hamevorakh.

The congregation responds:

Blessed forever and for all time be A , source of all blessing.
Barukh Adonai hamevorakh le'olam va'ed

The individual called to the Torah continues:

Blessed forever and for all time be A , source of all blessing.
Barukh Adonai hamevorakh le'olam va'ed

Blessed are You, A , our God, Sovereign of the universe, Who chose us from all the nations and granted us the divine Torah.

Blessed are You, A , Giver of the Torah.

*Barukh atah Adonai, Elohenu melekh ha'olam,
asher bachar banu mikol ha'amim venatan lanu et torato.
Barukh atah Adonai, notein hatorah.*

After the reading, a closing blessing is recited:

Blessed are You, A , our God, Sovereign of the universe, Who bestowed the Torah of Truth upon us, thus planting eternal life in our midst. Blessed are You, A , Giver of the Torah.

*Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu melekh ha'olam,
asher natan lanu torat emet vechayei olam nata betokheinu.
Barukh atah Adonai, notein hatorah.*

If the individual called to the Torah has recently recovered from a serious illness, returned from an arduous journey, or survived a dangerous mishap, the following blessing is added:

Blessed are You, A our God, Sovereign of the universe,
Who deals kindly with those in need and Who
has been exceedingly good to me.
*Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu melekh ha'olam,
hagomel lechayavim tovot, shegemalani kol tov.*

The congregation responds:

Amen! May God Who has shown you such kindness now,
ever be kind and gracious unto you, *selah*.

To a man: Mi shegemalkhah kol tov, hu yigmolkhah kol tov selah.

To a woman: Mi shegemaleikh kol tov, hu yigmeleikh kol tov selah.

After the Torah reading, a special prayer is recited for those in the community stricken with illness.

מִי שֶׁבֵרַךְ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אֲבָרָהֶם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב, שָׂרָה, רִבְקָה, רָחֵל וְלֵאָה, הוּא יְבָרַךְ וַיִּרְפָּא אֶת הַחֹלִים

The names of the sick are mentioned here.

הַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא יִמְלֵא רַחֲמִים עֲלֵיהֶם לְהַחֲזִיקֵם וּלְרַפְּאֵתָם, וַיִּשְׁלַח לָהֶם מִהֶרָה רְפוּאָה שְׁלֵמָה לְכָל אֲבֵרֵיהֶם וְגִידֵיהֶם בְּתוֹךְ שָׂאֵר חוּלֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, רְפוּאָת הַנַּפֶּשׁ וְרְפוּאָת הַגּוּף, הַשְׂתָּא בְּעֶגְלָא וּבְזִמְן קָרִיב, וְנֹאמַר אָמוּן.

The Half Kaddish

יִתְגַּדֵּל וַיִּתְקַדֵּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא בְּעֶלְמָא דִּי בְּרָא כְרַעוּתָהּ, וַיִּמְלִיךְ מַלְכוּתָהּ בְּחַיִּיכוּן וּבְיוֹמֵיכוּן וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּעֶגְלָא וּבְזִמְן קָרִיב, וְנֹאמְרוּ אָמוּן.

The congregation joins the cantor or baal tefillah in reciting this line.

יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעָלָם וּלְעֵלְמֵי עֲלַמְיָא.

The cantor or baal tefillah continues:

יִתְבָּרַךְ וַיִּשְׁתַּבַּח, וַיִּתְפָּאֵר וַיִּתְרוֹמֵם וַיִּתְנַשֵּׂא וַיִּתְהַדָּר וַיִּתְעַלֶּה וַיִּתְהַלַּל שְׁמֵהּ דְקֻדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא

Except for the days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, say:

לְעֵלָא מִן כָּל

Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, say:

לְעֵלָא לְעֵלָא מִכָּל

בְּרַכְתָּא וְשִׁירָתָא, תְּשַׁבְּחָתָא וְנַחֲמָתָא, דְאִמְרִין בְּעֶלְמָא, וְנֹאמְרוּ אָמוּן.

three together have read less than nine verses, however, they must read again.

If the second honoree inadvertently reads the same verses as the first person called, then, if he added three verses to what the first had read (or even just two when it is not possible to add three), he is counted as one of the three honorees. This rule does not apply, however, with respect to the reading regarding the sacrifices of the bulls on Sukkot, because it is not possible to do so without abandoning the natural structure of the passages in question.

Chapter 138

The one who reads from the Torah should not leave less than three verses to the end of a parashah because people who leave the synagogue at that point might suppose that the next honoree will only read two verses. Similarly, one should not start less than three verses from the beginning of a parashah because people who come into the synagogue at that point might possibly imagine that the last honoree read only two verses. Note of Rabbi Moses Isserles: It makes no difference whether it is an open parashah or a closed one. One can leave over two verses at the end of a parashah or start two verses into a parashah. Indeed, one should always try to begin reading with something good and to conclude with something good.

Chapter 139

In a place where it is customary that the honoree himself reads the Torah out loud, one should not accept the honor and ascend to read without previously having rehearsed the parashah two or three times privately. Where it is a professional Torah reader who reads, then that individual must rehearse it beforehand.

We should insist that a person who does not know how to read should not ascend to the Sefer Torah. If we need such an illiterate person to ascend because he is a kohen or a Levite and if there is no other such person present, then, if he is able to read the words from the text after the

professional Torah reader says them aloud, he may ascend. Otherwise, he may not.

Even the synagogue president . . . may not read from the Torah until instructed to do so. It is customary that a cantor who so chooses may recite the blessing and read without receiving permission to do so, since it is assumed that such permission was given automatically when he was appointed as cantor. Note of Rabbi Moses Isserles: In these lands, this is not customary, and the cantor may take an aliyah only when the beadle tells him to do so. However, he is not then called by his name like the other honorees, i.e. So-and-so, son of So-and-so. If someone's father became an apostate, he should be called by his grandfather's name, but not by his personal name alone so as not to shame him publicly. This is the case when he has never previously been called as an honoree with his father's name. If, however, he is an adult who has become accustomed to being called to the Torah in that town by his father's name and his father then becomes an apostate, he should be called using his father's name as has been his custom heretofore, so as not to shame him publicly. Similarly, one should do so if there is cause to fear the apostate's enmity. Foundlings should be called by the name of their maternal grandfathers; if this is not known, he should be called as a son of Abraham, just as proselytes are called forward.

A blind person may not read, because it is prohibited to recite even one letter that is not read from the text. Note of Rabbi Moses Isserles: Maharil wrote that nowadays a blind person may be called forward, just as we allow someone uneducated to be called forward if someone is prepared to read from the Torah for him.

All the readers recite a blessing before and after the reading. They open the scroll before they say the blessing, look at the verse with which they will begin and then they say the blessing. After they have read, they close the scroll and recite the second blessing. Note of Rabbi Moses Isserles: While saying the first blessing they should look away from the scroll, so that it will not seem as if they are reciting the blessing from the Torah. It seems to me that they should turn their face to the left.

It is customary to cover the text of the Torah with a cloth between each honoree (but in these

After the Torah reading, a special prayer is recited for those in the community stricken with illness.

May the God who blessed our ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah, bless and heal all the sick among us, including:

The names of the sick are mentioned here.

May the blessed Holy One be filled with compassion in their regard, strengthening them, healing them, and sending them a full and speedy recovery of body and spirit together with all those of our people stricken with illness, and may this happen quickly and without delay, and let us all say, Amen.

The Half Kaddish

Magnified and sanctified be the great name of God in this world created according to divine plan, and may God's sovereignty be established speedily and soon during the days of our lives and the lives of all members of the House of Israel, and let us say, Amen.

The congregation joins the cantor or baal tefillah in reciting this line.

May God's great name be blessed forever and throughout all eternity.

The cantor or baal tefillah continues:

May the name of the Holy One, source of all blessing, be blessed, adored, lauded, praised, extolled, glorified and venerated in language . . .

Except between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, say:

more exalted

Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, say:

entirely more exalted

. . . than any blessing, hymn, ode or prayer recited by the faithful in this world, and let us say, Amen.

When the Torah is lifted up, these words are recited:

זֹאת הַתּוֹרָה אֲשֶׁר שָׂם
מֹשֶׁה לְפָנָיו בְּיַד יְשׁוּעָה
עַל פִּי יְהוָה בְּיַד מֹשֶׁה.

On the days Tachanun is recited, these prayers are added.
On days when Tachanun is not recited, Ashrei, Lamenezach
(Psalm 20) and Uva Letziyon may be inserted here instead.

יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶי אָבִינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמִים, לְכוּנֵן אֶת בֵּית חַיִּינוּ
וְלִהְיוֹת אֶת שְׂכִינְתוֹ בְּתוֹכֵנוּ בְּמִהְרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ, וְנֹאמֵר אָמֵן.
יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶי אָבִינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמִים, לְרַחֵם עָלֵינוּ וְעַל פְּלִיטָתֵנוּ,
וְלִמְנוַע מִשְׁחִית וּמִגְּפָה מֵעָלֵינוּ וּמֵעַל כָּל עַמּוֹ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל,
וְנֹאמֵר אָמֵן.

יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶי אָבִינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמִים, לְקַיֵּם בְּנוֹ חֲכָמֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל,
הֵם וּמִשְׁפְּחוֹתֵיהֶם וְתַלְמִידֵיהֶם וְתַלְמִידֵי תַלְמִידֵיהֶם, בְּכָל
מְקוֹמוֹת מוֹשְׁבוֹתֵיהֶם, וְנֹאמֵר אָמֵן.

יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶי אָבִינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמִים, שְׁנִשְׁמַע וְנִתְפָּשֵׁר בְּשׁוֹרוֹת
טוֹבוֹת יְשׁוּעוֹת וְנִחְמוֹת, וְיִקְבֹּץ גְּדֻחֵינוּ מֵאַרְבַּע פְּנּוֹת הָאָרֶץ,
וְנֹאמֵר אָמֵן.

אֲחִינוּ כָּל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל הַנְּתוּנִים בְּצָרָה וּבְשִׁבְיָה, הַעוֹמְדִים בֵּין
בָּיִם וּבֵין בְּיַבְשָׁתָהּ, הַמְּקוּם יְרַחֵם עָלֵיהֶם וְיֹצִיאֵם מִצָּרָה
לְרוּחָהּ, וּמֵאִפְלָה לְאוֹרָהּ, וּמִשְׁעָבוֹד לְגִאֲלָהּ, הַשְׂתָּא בְּעַגְלָא
וּבְזַמְנוֹ קָרִיב, וְנֹאמֵר אָמֵן.

lands, it is the custom for it to be rolled shut between honorees and this is now the accepted ruling).

The person called forward says Barchu and the blessings out loud. Someone who says them quietly is in error and there are authorities who insist that such a person must repeat the blessings out loud. Note of Rabbi Moses Isserles: This is so that the people will hear the blessing and respond barukh Adonai hamevorakh le'olam va'ed. If the congregation does not hear the honoree, even if they have heard the cantor responding, they should not respond together with him but respond Amen after they hear the cantor's response.

After the people have responded, the honoree must repeat their response so as to include himself among those who bless God.

Even if an honoree has already recited the Torah blessing privately as part of his morning prayers, he must nevertheless repeat the blessing "asher bachar banu" when he is called forward to the Torah because this blessing was instituted because of the honor due to the Torah when it is read publicly.

The reverse is not true, however. Therefore, if he is called to read from the Torah before he has recited the Torah blessing privately as part of morning prayers, he is considered already to have fulfilled the duty to recite "asher bachar banu", since his situation is hardly less meaningful than the situation of someone who is excused by reciting the "Ahavah Rabbah" blessing before the Shema.

One who reads from the Torah must hold onto the Sefer Torah while reciting the blessing. Note of Rabbi Moses Isserles: This custom is based on what is written in the Book of Joshua: "This book of the Torah shall never leave your mouth . . . be strong and courageous (Joshua 1:8-9)." From this too has come the custom each time one finishes reading the Torah of saying to that person, "Be strong!"

Chapter 140

If someone is reading the Torah and encounters difficulties, the person who stands up to replace the person having the difficulties begins from the same place as the first reader began, and recites

the blessings before and after the reading. According to Rambam, however, he does not recite the blessing before the reading. Note of Rabbi Moses Isserles: And nowadays, when a professional Torah reader reads (the Torah, i.e. and not the person called forward), this is still the law.

If someone rises to read from the Torah, recites the blessing before the reading and reads a few verses, and then delivers some remarks (either religious or secular), this is not considered to be a break and he does not have to recite the blessing again.

If someone rises to read from the Torah and is shown the place where he must read, then recites the blessing and begins to read (or does not even begin to read) when it is pointed out to him that (an error has been made and that) it is a different section that must be read, that individual rolls the scroll to the place where he must read and does so. There are some authorities who say that he must recite the blessing again and there are some who say that he need not do so.

Chapter 141

One must read the Torah while standing. It is forbidden even to support oneself against the wall or lectern, unless one is obese. Note of Rabbi Moses Isserles: The Torah reader too must stand together with the honoree.

Two people may not read the Torah simultaneously. Either the honoree reads his own aliyah and the Torah reader remains silent, or the Torah reader reads and the honoree does not read out loud. Nevertheless he must read the text along with the professional Torah reader so that the blessing not be recited in vain. He must read quietly, however, using his eyes only. (We do not consider it a grievous offense if the person called forward reads along audibly, however, since this is not worse than the situation that pertains when someone audibly recites a prayer that ought be recited silently.)

Some have the custom of having someone dictate the blessing to the honoree word for word. In such a case, after this person says a word, the honoree repeats it.

When the Torah is lifted up, these words are recited:

This is the Torah that Moses set before the Children of Israel at the behest of God, acting through Moses.

On the days Tachanun is recited, these prayers are added.

*On days when Tachanun is not recited, Ashrei, Psalm 20
and Uva Letziyon may be inserted here instead.*

May it be Your will, O heavenly Parent, that our holy Temple be rebuilt and that Your Shechinah re-establish its holy presence in that place. May this happen quickly and speedily in our day and let us say, Amen.

May it be Your will, O heavenly Parent, to take pity on us and on the surviving remnant of our long-suffering people. May You eliminate sickness and plague from us and from the whole House of Israel and let us say, Amen.

May it be Your will, O heavenly Parent, to sustain the sages of the Jewish people, them and their families, their students and their students' students wherever they settle and let us say, Amen.

May it be Your will, O heavenly Parent, that we hear comforting and joyous tidings of the arrival of the Messiah and may You gather our far-flung people from the four corners of the earth and let us all say, Amen.

May God take pity on all our brethren of the House of Israel who find themselves in distress or in captivity, regardless of whether they be on the seas or on dry land, and grant that they find relief from their misery, moving from darkness to light and from servitude to freedom. And may this all happen quickly and speedily in our own day, and let us say, Amen.

At this juncture in the service, members of the congregation observing the yahrzeits of late family members or friends may request that the El Malei Rachamim prayer be recited.

In memory of a man:

אֵל מֵלֵא רַחֲמִים שׁוֹכֵן בְּמְרוֹמִים, הַמֵּצֵא
מִנּוּחָה נְכוּנָה תַּחַת פְּנֵי הַשְּׂכִינָה בְּמַעְלוֹת
קְדוּשִׁים וְטְהוּרִים, כְּזֹהֵר הָרְקִיעַ מִזֵּהִירִים,
לְנִשְׁמֹת _____ בֶּן _____ שֶׁהֵלֵךְ לְעוֹלָמוֹ, בְּגֵן
עֵדֶן תִּהְיֶה מִנּוּחָתוֹ. אָנָּה, בְּעַל הַרַחֲמִים,
הַסְּתִירָהּוּ בְּסִתְרֵי כְּנָפֶיךָ לְעוֹלָמִים, וְצָרֹר
בְּצָרֹר הַחַיִּים אֶת גִּשְׁמָתוֹ. יְהוּה הוּא גִּחְלָתוֹ,
וְיִגּוּחַ בְּשָׁלוֹם עַל מִשְׁכָּבוֹ, וְנֹאמֵר אָמֵן.

In memory of a woman:

אֵל מֵלֵא רַחֲמִים שׁוֹכֵן בְּמְרוֹמִים, הַמֵּצֵא
מִנּוּחָה נְכוּנָה תַּחַת פְּנֵי הַשְּׂכִינָה בְּמַעְלוֹת
קְדוּשִׁים וְטְהוּרִים, כְּזֹהֵר הָרְקִיעַ מִזֵּהִירִים,
לְנִשְׁמֹת _____ בַּת _____ שֶׁהֵלְכָה לְעוֹלָמָהּ,
בְּגֵן עֵדֶן תִּהְיֶה מִנּוּחָתָהּ. אָנָּה, בְּעַל הַרַחֲמִים,
הַסְּתִירָהּ בְּסִתְרֵי כְּנָפֶיךָ לְעוֹלָמִים וְצָרֹר
בְּצָרֹר הַחַיִּים אֶת גִּשְׁמָתָהּ. יְהוּה הוּא גִּחְלָתָהּ,
וְתִגּוּחַ בְּשָׁלוֹם עַל מִשְׁכָּבָהּ, וְנֹאמֵר אָמֵן.

If a professional Torah reader himself wishes to recite the blessings and read, someone else must stand beside him. The reason for this is that the Torah was transmitted to Israel through a middleman and so may not be read aloud in public by someone unaccompanied by others.

The congregation may not respond Amen until the reader finishes reciting the blessing, nor may the reader begin reading from the Torah until the congregation has finished responding Amen.

It is possible for two brothers to read one after the other and a son after the father. Indeed, the only reason we do not do so is because of the evil eye. Even if one of them is the seventh (to be called) and the other is *maftir*, the latter should not be called by name because of the evil eye.

Someone who ascends to the *bimah* should do so by the shortest route from his place and should descend from the *bimah* by the longest route back to his place. (If the two distances are equal, he should ascend through the entrance which is for him on the right and descend from the opposite side.) He should not descend, however, until the person who is designated to read after him has already ascended.

Each word in the Torah which is to be pronounced other than it is written constitutes a rule which goes back to Moses at Sinai according to which some words are to be written in one manner and read in another. It once happened that some Torah reader read such a word as it is written before the great sages of the age, Rabbi Isaac Aboab and Rabbi Abraham Valence and his son Rabbi Samuel Valence, of blessed memory. They formally warned him that he must read according to the Massoretic text, but he would not agree to do so. They thereupon excommunicated him and removed him from the *bimah*.

Chapter 142

If, when the honoree reads, he makes a mistake in accurately pronouncing even one letter, he is made to read it again. Note of Rabbi Moses Isserles: This is also the rule when a professional Torah reader reads, but only when the change will alter the meaning. If he errs in the intonation of the trope or the

t

diacritical signs, he is not to be made to read it again, but merely reprimanded.

In a town where there is a minyan, but no one who knows how to read the Torah properly as regards punctuation and trope, they should nevertheless read the Torah as best they can, and they should recite its attendant blessings.

Chapter 143

We do not read from the Torah with less than ten free adults, but, if they started reading with ten present and then some of them left, they may finish.

If each book of the Pentateuch was written on its own scroll, even if each were like a Torah scroll, we may not read from it publicly, for all five books must be sewn together. Note of Rabbi Moses Isserles: And they must be rolled as a scroll like a Sefer Torah, but we may not make a blessing over printed Chumashim even when all five books are bound together. In a place where there is a Torah scroll, but no cantor or professional Torah reader who knows the correct melody by heart, I have seen a custom whereby the cantor reads from a printed Chumash and the honoree reads after him from the valid Sefer Torah.

Even in villages which have no valid Sefer Torah, blessings may not be recited over an invalid scroll.

If an error is discovered in a Sefer Torah while reading from it, another Sefer Torah must be brought out; the reading is completed by starting in the new scroll from the place where the error was discovered and then completing the number of honorees remaining after those who read from the scroll that contains the error. If an error is discovered in the middle of the reading, the honoree completes his reading in a valid scroll and recites the blessing after the reading and does not recite the blessing before it once again. Note of Rabbi Moses Isserles: If three verses have already been read from it and it is possible to stop the aliyah at that point, the reading is concluded, he recites the blessing after it, and then the number of honorees is completed from a new Torah scroll. A new scroll is taken out only when a crass error is discovered, but because of an error concerning full and deficient orthography, another scroll should not be taken out

At this juncture in the service, members of the congregation observing the yahrtzeits of late family members or friends may request that the El Malei Rachamim prayer be recited.

In memory of a man:

O God full of compassion Who dwells on high, grant perfect peace beneath the wings of the Shechinah in the holy precincts of heaven that are as pure as the clearest blue sky to the soul of _____, son of _____, who has gone to his eternal rest. May his repose be in paradise. O God of endless compassion, guard his soul beneath Your protective wings for all time and bind up his soul in the bond of life everlasting. A be his portion forever and may he rest in peace.

And let us all say, Amen.

In memory of a woman:

O God full of compassion Who dwells on high, grant perfect peace beneath the wings of the Shechinah in the holy precincts of heaven that are as pure as the clearest blue sky to the soul of _____, daughter of _____, who has gone to her eternal rest. May her repose be in paradise. O God of endless compassion, guard her soul beneath Your protective wings for all time and bind up her soul in the bond of life everlasting. A be her portion forever and may she rest in peace.

And let us all say, Amen.

When the Torah is about to be returned to the Ark,
the cantor or baal tefillah sings:

יְהַלְלוּ אֶת שֵׁם יְהוָה, כִּי נִשְׁגָּב שְׁמוֹ
לְבַדּוֹ...

The congregation joins the cantor or the baal tefillah in song
as the Torah scroll is carried around the synagogue.

...הוֹדוּ עַל אֶרֶץ וּשְׁמַיִם.
וַיִּרְם קָרוֹן לְעַמּוֹ, תְּהַלֵּה לְכָל חֲסִידָיו,
לְבַנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עִם קְרוֹבוֹ, הַלְלוּיָהּ.

The Twenty-Fourth Psalm

לְדוֹד מִזְמוֹר, לַיהוָה הָאֶרֶץ וּמְלוֹאָתָהּ, תִּבֵּל וַיִּשְׁבֵי בָהּ. כִּי
הוּא עַל יָמִים יִסְדָּהּ, וְעַל גְּהָרוֹת יִכּוֹנְנֶנָּה. מִי יַעֲלֶה בְּהַר
יְהוָה, וּמִי יָקוּם בְּמִקְוֹם קֹדֶשׁוֹ. גִּקִּי כַפַּיִם וּבֵר לִבְבִּי,
אֲשֶׁר לֹא נִשְׂא לְשׂוֹא גַבְשִׁי, וְלֹא נִשְׁבַּע לְמַרְמָה.
יִשְׂא בְרָכָה מֵאֵת יְהוָה, וַצְדָקָה מֵאֵלֹהֵי יִשְׁעוֹ. זֶה דוֹר
דוֹרְשָׁיו, מִבְּקִשֵׁי פִגְיָה יַעֲקֹב סָלָה. שִׂאוּ שְׁעָרִים
רְאשֵׁיכֶם, וְהַנְּשִׂאוּ פִתְחֵי עוֹלָם, וַיִּבּוֹא מִלֶּךְ הַכְּבוֹד. מִי
זֶה מִלֶּךְ הַכְּבוֹד, יְהוָה עֲזוֹז וְגִבּוֹר, יְהוָה גִּבּוֹר מִלְחָמָה.
שִׂאוּ שְׁעָרִים רְאשֵׁיכֶם, וְשִׂאוּ פִתְחֵי עוֹלָם, וַיִּבּוֹא מִלֶּךְ
הַכְּבוֹד. מִי הוּא זֶה מִלֶּךְ הַכְּבוֹד, יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת, הוּא
מִלֶּךְ הַכְּבוֹד, סָלָה.

because our scrolls are not so accurate that we can assume that the other will be more valid. Rabbi Jacob Möllin has stated that another scroll should not be taken out in this case, but Rabbi Yosef Caro stated that another Sefer Torah must be taken out. In an emergency, when the congregation only has an invalid scroll and there is no one there who can correct it, there are authorities who say that it may be read from publicly and blessings may be recited over it, but there are other authorities who forbid this. If one book of the Torah is complete and without error, a lenient view may be taken and passages may be read from that specific book even though there are errors in the others.

In a synagogue where there is only one person who knows how to read, he should recite the blessings, read a few verses and recite the blessings after them; this he should do several times to complete the number of requisite aliyot for that day.

Chapter 144

We skip from one non-contiguous passage to another in the prophets, but in the Torah we do not skip from one parashah to another. This is the case as regards two topics, because in such a case there is a danger that the listeners might become confused. When both readings are on the same topic, however, such as is the case with the passages Acharei Mot and Ach Be'asor which the High Priest reads on Yom Kippur, we may skip from one to the other. Even in such a case, however, one may not read by heart, because it is forbidden to read even just one word not directly from the parchment. In the books of the prophets, we may skip even to join sections that are about two different topics, provided that, when skipping to a topic, the reader does not hesitate so much that the congregation is left waiting in silence. This is the case within the book of a single prophet, but we do not skip from the book of one prophet to the book of another. Within the books of the twelve minor prophets, however, we may skip from prophet to prophet provided that the reader does not skip from the end of the book to the beginning.

On a Shabbat service attended by a bridegroom, there is a custom to add two or three verses from the *haftarah* “I shall be very glad” (beginning with Isaiah 61:10) after the week’s *haftarah*. When Rosh Chodesh falls on Shabbat and Sunday, we read the first and last verse of the *haftarah* “And Jonathan said to him tomorrow is the new moon” (i.e., of the *haftarah* normally read on the eve of Rosh Chodesh, the verses being read after the correct *haftarah*) and there is no reason to object to this.

We do not roll a Torah scroll in public because it is considered an offense against the dignity of the public to make the congregation wait. If they have only one Torah scroll and they have to read two separate passages, they may roll it and the public’s dignity is simply overlooked.

We do not read two *aliyot* from two different Torah scrolls because of the fear that the public will conclude that there was something wrong with the first scroll. In the case of three people reading from three scrolls—such as Rosh Chodesh Tevet which falls on Shabbat—there is no fear that anyone will think such a thing, however.

Chapter 145

In Talmudic times, they used to translate the reading into Aramaic verse by verse in order that the people understand the reading. The reader did not read more than one verse at a time to the translator, and the translator did not translate until the reader had finished the verse, nor was the reader permitted to commence a new verse until the translator had finished translating. The reader did not raise his voice louder than the translator, nor the translator louder than the reader; the reader was not permitted to prompt the translator, lest it be said that the translation was written in the Torah. A minor was permitted to translate for an adult, but it was not considered appropriate for an adult to translate for a minor. Nowadays it is not customary to read the ancient Aramaic translation at all—for what point would there be in reading aloud a translation that no one would understand?

*When the Torah is about to be returned to the Ark,
the cantor or baal tefillah sings:*

The faithful will ever praise the name of א , for the divine name alone is wholly and incomparably exalted.

*The congregation joins the cantor or baal tefillah in song
as the Torah scroll is carried around the synagogue.*

The majesty of God covers earth and heaven. Indeed, God shall lift up the horn of the people Israel, granting renown to the pious and to all Israel, God’s treasured people. Hallelujah.

The Twenty-Fourth Psalm

A psalm of David.

The world and its fullness, the earth and its inhabitants—everything belongs to א , Who laid its foundation upon the seas and set it firm upon its many rivers. Who may go up onto the mountain of א ? And who may stand in that holy place? One who has clean hands and a pure heart, one who has never falsely taken a vow by his life nor sworn a duplicitous oath—that person will receive a blessing from א , a righteous blessing from the God of salvation. This is the generation of those who seek God, who seek Your face in the style of Jacob, *selah*.

Lift up your heads, O gates. Lift yourselves up, O portals of eternity, so that our glorious Sovereign may enter. And just who is our glorious Sovereign? א , valiant and triumphant, א , triumphant in battle. Lift up your heads, O gates. Lift up your heads, O portals of eternity, so that our glorious Sovereign may enter. And just who is our glorious Sovereign?

א , God of all heavens, is our glorious Sovereign, *selah*.

As the Torah is replaced in the Ark, the following is sung aloud:

וּבְנַחַה יֹאמֵר: שׁוּבָה, יְהוָה, רַבְבוֹת אֱלֹהֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל. קוֹמָה, יְהוָה, לְמַנּוּחַתְךָ, אֶתָּה וְאֶרְוֹן
עֵזְךָ. כַּהֲנִיף יִלְבָּשׁוּ צַדִּיק, וְחֲסִידֶיךָ יִרְנְנוּ.
בְּעִבּוֹר דָּוִד עֲבָדְךָ, אֵל תָּשֵׁב פָּנֶי מְשִׁיחֶךָ. פִּי
לָקַח טוֹב גַּתְתִּי לָכֶם, תּוֹרַתִי אֵל תַּעֲזֹבוּ.

עֵץ חַיִּים הִיא לְמַחְזִיקִים בָּהּ,
וְתַמְכִּיָּהּ מֵאֲשֶׁר. דְּרָכֶיהָ דְרָכֵי
נְעִים, וְכֹל גְּתִיבוֹתֶיהָ שְׁלוֹם.
הַשִּׁיבֵנו יְהוָה אֵלֶיךָ וְנִשׁוּבָה,
חֲדָשׁ יְמֵינוּ כְּקֵדָם.

The service continues with Ashrei on page 154. If Ashrei, Lamenatzteach and Uva Letziyon have already been recited, continue with the Full Kaddish on page 162, except on Rosh Chodesh, Purim, or Tisha Be'av, or during Chol Hamoed. On Rosh Chodesh, continue on page 220. During Chol Hamoed, continue on page 196. On Purim, continue with the reading of the Megillah. On Tisha Be'av, continue with the reading of Eichah. After the Torah is read on the afternoons of fast days, continue on page 238.

Chapter 146

Generally speaking, it is forbidden to leave an Torah scroll open and unattended. To do so between aliyot, however, seems acceptable.

Once the reader has started to read from the Torah scroll, it is forbidden to chat even about Torah matters, even between honorees, and even if they have completed a review of the whole parashah. But there are some who permit one to study silently. And there are some authorities who hold that if there are ten other people who are following what is being read from the Torah scroll, it is permissible for others to engage in conversation during the reading. There are still others who permit this solely to those whose only occupation is Torah study. And there are some authorities who permit this to those who physically turn away from the Torah reading before the Torah scroll is opened, thus indicating that they do not want to listen to what is being read from the Torah scroll, but would rather read—and who then actually do start reading. It is permitted to fulfill the rabbinic obligation to review the Torah portion twice in the original and once in translation every week during the public reading of the Torah. None of this applies to parashat Zakhor and parashat Parah, however, both of which must be read in a quorum of ten by Torah law: one must pay attention and hear them read by the reader. Actually, a conscientious person should concentrate on hearing all of the parashot of the Torah from the reader.

It is forbidden to discuss profane matters while the haftarah is reading from the prophets until it is finished, just as one would refrain from speaking while the Torah scroll is being read.

There is no need to stand while the Torah is being read. (There are some who take a stricter view for themselves and do stand, and this was the custom of Rabbi Meir of Rothenburg.)

Chapter 147

It is forbidden to touch a Torah scroll with one's bare hands without using a kerchief. Note of Rabbi Moses Isserles: Some authorities hold that the same rule applies to all other books of Scripture, but that

is not our custom. Still, it is best to take the more stringent view if one has not washed one's hands; in the case of a Torah scroll, even if one's hands are clean, it is forbidden. The most prominent person of those that read from the Torah winds it up, and people are accustomed to buy this honor at great expense in order to show affection for this mitzvah. Note of Rabbi Moses Isserles: There are some authorities who hold that if the jacket is linen on one side and silk on the other, the silken side must be turned to the scroll when it is wound up, but that is not the prevailing custom. One should not wind it up with a torn kerchief if another is available. Nor may one use kerchiefs for a Torah scroll that have been made from things that have previously been used for secular purposes.

The person rolling the Torah scroll must raise it on the seam so that, if it tears, it will tear on the seam.

The person rolling the Torah scroll must roll it from the outside, but when it is fastened he must fasten it from the inside. Note of Rabbi Moses Isserles: This means that when the scroll is raised before him the text should be facing him and he should then start rolling it from the outside. After it has been rolled, he should tie the end of the kerchief inside in such a manner so that one will find the tie on the inside when one wishes to read (again from the scroll) and will not need to turn the Torah scroll over (in order to find the tie). Obviously, all this is relevant when it is one person who is doing all the rolling, but now that it is customary that one person raise the scroll and another roll it, the text side should be in front of the person raising the scroll. This is now the custom, for *hagbahah*, the raising of the scroll, is the main element in rolling and holding the Torah scroll.

It is preferable that the kerchief be wound around the rolled Torah scroll rather than that the Torah scroll be rolled while being tied with the kerchief.

The *maftir* should not begin before they have finished rolling the Torah scroll so that the person rolling the scroll not be too preoccupied to listen to the *haftarah*.

As the Torah is replaced in the Ark, the following is sung aloud:

And then, when the Ark was set down in its new resting place, Moses would exclaim: Return, A , God of the myriad clans of Israel. Rise up, A , and watch over the resting place of Your sacred Ark, for it is also the resting place of Your divine presence. Then shall Your priests garb themselves in righteousness and shall Your pious rejoice. For the sake of David, Your faithful servant, delay not the arrival of Your anointed prince, our Messiah. For it is all as King Solomon said of the Torah to his sons, "Behold I am giving you a goodly gift; do not abandon my teaching."

It is truly a tree of life to those who grasp it firmly; its supporters are ever happy. Its ways are pleasantness itself, its paths, paths of peace. Bring us back to You, A , and we shall return to You in perfect repentance. Renew our days as of old!

The service continues with Ashrei on page 155. If Ashrei, Lamenatzeach and Uva Letziyon have already been recited, continue with the Full Kaddish on page 163, except on Rosh Chodesh, Purim, or Tisha Be'av, or during Chol Hamoed. On Rosh Chodesh, continue on page 221. During Chol Hamoed, continue on page 197. On Purim, continue with the reading of the Megillah. On Tisha Be'av, continue with the reading of Eichah. After the Torah is read on the afternoon of fast days, the service continues on page 239.

The service continues with Ashrei.


אֲשֶׁרֵי יוֹשְׁבֵי בֵיתָךְ, עוֹד יְהַלְלוּךָ סֵלָה.
אֲשֶׁרֵי הָעַם שִׁפְכָה לוֹ, אֲשֶׁרֵי הָעַם שְׁיִחוּהוּ אֱלֹהָיו.
תְּהַלֵּה לְדָוִד
אֲרוֹמְמֶךָ אֱלֹהֵי הַמְּלֶכֶת, וְאַבְרַכָּה שְׁמֶךָ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.
בְּכָל יוֹם אֲבָרְכֶךָ, וְאַהֲלִלָה שְׁמֶךָ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.
גְּדוֹל יְהוָה וּמְהֻלָּל מְאֹד, וְלִגְדֻלְתּוֹ אֵין חֶקֶר.
דוֹר לְדוֹר יִשְׁבַח מִעֲשֵׂיךָ, וּגְבוּרֹתֶיךָ יִגְיִדוּ.
הַדָּר כְּבוֹד הַוָּדָה, וְדַבְרֵי גִבּוֹלֹתֶיךָ אֲשִׁיחָה.
וְעִזּוֹז בּוֹרְאוֹתֶיךָ יֵאמְרוּ, וּגְדֻלְתְּךָ אֲסַפְּרָנָה.
זָכַר רַב טוֹיבָה יִפְיֵעוּ, וְצַדִּיקְתְּךָ יִרְגִנוּ.
חֲנוּן וְרַחוּם יְהוָה, אֲרָךְ אַפַּיִם וּגְדֻלַּחֲסֵד.
טוֹב יְהוָה לְפָל, וְרַחֲמָיו עַל כָּל מַעֲשָׂיו.
יִוְדֶיךָ יְהוָה כָּל מַעֲשֵׂיךָ, וְחִסְדֵיךָ יִבְרַכּוּכָה.
כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתְךָ יֵאמְרוּ, וּגְבוּרֹתֶיךָ יִדְבְּרוּ.
לְהוֹדִיעַ לְבַנְיֵי הָאָדָם גְּבוּרֹתָיו, וְכְבוֹד הַדָּר מַלְכוּתוֹ.
מַלְכוּתְךָ מַלְכוּת כָּל עוֹלָמִים, וּמְמִשְׁלֹתֶיךָ בְּכָל דוֹר וָדוֹר.
סוּמְךָ יְהוָה לְכָל הַנִּפְלְאִים, וְזוֹקֶה לְכָל הַכְּפוּפִים.
עֵינֵי כָל אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאַתָּה גוֹתֵן לָהֶם אֶת אֲכָלָם בְּעֵתוֹ.
פּוֹתֵחַ אֶת יַדְּךָ, וּמְשַׁפִּיעַ לְכָל חַי רְצוֹן.
צַדִּיק יְהוָה בְּכָל דְרָכָיו, וְחִסִּיד בְּכָל מַעֲשָׂיו.
קְרוֹב יְהוָה לְכָל קִרְאָיו, לְכָל אֲשֶׁר יִקְרָאָהוּ בְּאָמְתוֹ.
רְצוֹן יִרְאִיו יַעֲשֶׂה, וְאֶת שׁוֹעֲתָם יִשְׁמַע וְיִוְשִׁיעֵם.
שׁוֹמֵר יְהוָה אֶת כָּל אֲהַבָּיו, וְאֶת כָּל הַרְשָׁעִים יִשְׁמִיד.
תְּהַלֵּת יְהוָה יִדְבַר פִּי, וַיְבָרֶךְ פֶּלַח בְּשֵׁר שִׁם קִדְשׁוֹ
לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד. וְאַנְחֵנוּ גְבָרָה יְהוָה, מִעֲתָה וְעַד עוֹלָם, הִלְלוּיָהּ.

On a day when there are two Torah scrolls, the second should not be opened nor should its cover be removed until the first scroll has been rolled. Note of Rabbi Moses Isserles: In addition, the first scroll should not be removed before the second scroll has been placed on the reading desk. This is done so that the congregation will not be distracted from the mitzvot. Two scrolls are taken out at the same time and the second is held until they have finished reading from the first.

Chapter 148

In a community where the Torah scrolls are kept in a private home outside the synagogue (and where the custom is for the community to leave the synagogue to return the scrolls to that house after reading), the baal tefillah may not take the cover off the Torah reading table while there are still congregants left in the building.

Chapter 149

The congregation may not leave the synagogue until the Torah scroll has been put away. Note of Rabbi Moses Isserles: Nevertheless, if it is only individuals who leave, it does not matter. If the Torah scroll is kept in another building and the synagogue has only one exit, everyone must wait until the Torah scroll has been taken out and then follow it to the place where it is kept. If the synagogue has two exits, it is permitted to leave by one of them before the Torah scroll is removed through the other, provided that (people) follow the Torah scroll and accompany it to the place where it is kept. Note of Rabbi Moses Isserles: Where the custom is to keep the Torah scroll in the Ark in the synagogue, it is the duty of everyone it passes on its way to the Ark to accompany it to the Ark into which it is placed. Similarly, the person honored with gellilah must follow the Torah scroll as far as the Ark and stand there until it is returned to its place. The same custom applies to the person honored with hagbahah, which is the main component of the "rolling", as we described above in chapter 147. There are some authorities who write that children should be brought to kiss the Torah in order to train them and encourage them to observe mitzvot. 



In his magnum opus, *The Legends of the Jews*, Louis Ginzberg (1873–1953) collected rabbinic midrashim, legends and traditions from scores of sources and managed to weave them together into cogent, readable prose. As counterpoint to the next section of the Shacharit service, some of Ginzberg’s material relating to the Ark, the candelabrum and the Tabernacle that the Israelites constructed in the desert as a place of moveable worship is given here.

The Ark with the Cherubim

The very first thing that Bezalel constructed was the Ark of the Covenant, contrary to Moses’ order first to erect the Tabernacle and then to supply its separate furnishings. He succeeded in convincing Moses that it was the proper thing to begin with the Ark, saying: “What is the purpose of this Tabernacle?” Moses: “That God may let the Shechinah rest therein, and so teach the Torah to the people of Israel.” Bezalel: “And where dost thou keep the Torah?” Moses: “As soon as the Tabernacle shall have been complete, we shall make the Ark for keeping the Torah.” Bezalel: “O our teacher Moses, it does not become the dignity of the Torah that in the meanwhile it should lie around like this, let us rather first make the Ark, put the Torah into it, and then continue with the erection of the Tabernacle, for the Tabernacle exists only for the sake of the Torah.” Moses saw the justice of this argument, and Bezalel began his work with the construction of the Ark. In this, he followed the example of God, Who created light before all the rest of the creation. So Bezalel first constructed the Ark that contains the Torah, the light that illuminates this world and the next world; and only then followed the rest. The Ark consisted of three caskets: a gold one the length of ten spans and a fractional part, within this a wooden one nine spans long, and within this wooden one, one of gold eight spans long, so that within and without

The service continues with Ashrei.

Happy are those who dwell in Your house, for, in so doing,
they praise You endlessly, *selah*.

Happy is the nation whose lot is thus.

Happy is the nation whose God is A .

(A psalm of praise of David.)

I shall exalt You, O my God and Sovereign,
and I shall bless Your name forever and always.

Each day shall I bless You; I shall praise Your name forever and always.
Great is A and very worthy of praise; there is no limit to God’s greatness.

One generation lauds Your works to the next, telling of Your mighty acts.

Glorious is the splendor of Your majesty;

I shall speak of Your wondrous acts.

Some will talk about the might of Your awesome deeds,
but I shall tell of Your greatness.

Others will attempt to express the essence of Your great goodness,
singing joyously of Your righteousness: “A is gracious
and compassionate, long-suffering and greatly merciful.

A is good to all and compassionate to all humanity.”

Indeed, all your creatures will give thanks to You, A , and the pious
will bless You as well; they will talk of the glory of Your majesty
and speak of Your might, so as to tell humanity about Your might
and the glorious splendor of Your sovereignty.

Your sovereignty is sovereignty everlasting;

Your governance endures throughout every generation.

A supports all who fall and raises up all those who are bent over.

Indeed, the eyes of all are fixed on You, for it is You Who give them food
when it is most needed, You Who open Your hand and Who willingly
satisfy the needs of all living creatures.

A is righteous in all ways and merciful in all deeds.

A is close to all those supplicants who call out to God in truth;

God does that which those who fear God wish, listens to their prayers
and grants them deliverance.

A guards those who love God, but destroys all the wicked.



For all these reasons shall my mouth sing the praise of A , and all
flesh shall bless God’s holy name forever and always.


And so shall we ever praise B from this time forth
and forever.

Halleluyah!

Psalm 20

The twentieth psalm is omitted on Rosh Chodesh, Chol Hamoed, Erev Pesach, Tisha Be'av, Erev Yom Kippur, all eight days of Chanukah, Purim, Shushan Purim, the 14th and 15th days of Adar I in a leap year and in houses of mourning.

לְמִנְצַחַת, מִזְמוֹר לְדָוִד.

יַעֲנֶךָ יְהוָה בְּיוֹם צָרָה, יִשְׁגָּבְךָ שֵׁם אֱלֹהֵי
יַעֲקֹב. יִשְׁלַח עֲזָרָךְ מִקֹּדֶשׁ, וּמִצִּיּוֹן יִסְעָדְךָ.
יִזְכֹּר כָּל מְנַחֲתֶךָ, וְעוֹלֹתֶיךָ יִדְשָׁנָה סֶלָה.
יִתֵּן לְךָ כָּל־לִבְבֶךָ, וְכָל־עֲצָתֶךָ יִמְלֵא. גְּרַנְנָה
בִּישׁוּעָתֶךָ, וּבְשֵׁם אֱלֹהֵינוּ גְּדַגֵּל, יִמְלֵא
יְהוָה כָּל מִשְׁאֲלוֹתֶיךָ. עֲתָה יִדְעֵתִי כִּי
הוֹשִׁיעַ יְהוָה מִשִּׁיחוֹ, יַעֲנֶהוּ מִשְׁמֵי קֹדֶשׁוֹ,
בְּגִבְרוֹת יֵשַׁע יְמֵינוּ.  אֱלֹהֵי בָרֶכֶב
וְאֱלֹהֵי בַסּוּסִים, וְאֶנְחֲנוּ בְשֵׁם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ
בְּזָפִיר. הִפְמָה פָּרְעוֹ וְנַפְלֹה, וְאֶנְחֲנוּ קַמְנוֹ
וְנִתְעוֹדֵד. יְהוָה הוֹשִׁיעָה, הַפְּלֹךְ יַעֲנֶנּוּ
בְּיוֹם קָרְאֵנוּ.

the wooden was overlaid with the golden caskets. The Ark contained the two tablets of the Ten Commandments as well as the Ineffable Name, and all other divine epithets. The Ark was an image of the celestial Throne, and was therefore the most essential part of the Tabernacle, so that even during the march it was spread over with a cloth wholly of blue, because this color is similar to the color of the celestial Throne. It was through the Ark, also, that all the miracles on the way through the desert were wrought. Two sparks issued from the cherubim that shaded the Ark, and these killed all the serpents and scorpions that crossed the path of the Israelites, and furthermore burned all thorns that threatened to injure the wanderers on their march through the desert. The smoke rising from these scorched thorns, moreover, rose straight as a column, and shed a fragrance that perfumed all the world, so that the nations exclaimed: "Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant (Song of Songs 3:6)?"

Apart from this Ark, which was kept in the Tabernacle, they had another one in which were contained the tablets broken by Moses, which they carried with them whenever they went to war. The Ark that Bezalel constructed was also used again in Solomon's Temple, for he retained the Ark used by Moses in the Tabernacle, even though all the other furnishings of the Temple were fashioned anew. It remained there up to the time of the destruction of the Temple by Nebuchadnezzar, when it was concealed under the pavement of the Chamber of Wood, that it might not fall into the hands of the enemy. This place remained a secret for all time. Once a kohen, noticing about the Chamber of Wood that something lay hidden under it, called out to his colleagues, but was suddenly stricken dead before divulging the secret.

On the Ark were the cherubim with their faces of boys and their wings. Their number was two, corresponding to the two tablets, and to the two sacred divine names, Adonai and Elohim, which characterized God as benevolent and as powerful. The face of each cherub measured one

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span, and each of their wings extended ten spans, making twenty-two spans in all, corresponding to the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet. It was “from between the two cherubim” that God communed with Moses, for the Shechinah never wholly descended to earth any more than any mortal ever quite mounted into the heaven, even Moses and Elijah stood a slight distance from heaven; for “The heaven, even the heavens, belong to God, but the earth, God gave to the children of men (Psalm 115:6).” Therefore, God chose the cherubim that were ten spans above the earth as the place where the Shechinah betook itself to commune with Moses. The heads of the cherubim were slightly turned back, like that of a scholar bidding his master farewell; but, as a token of God’s delight in the people Israel, the faces of the cherubim, by a miracle, looked one to another whenever the people Israel was devoted to God. Yes, they even clasped one another like a loving couple. During the festivals of the pilgrimage, the *kohen* used to raise the curtain from the Holy of Holies to show the pilgrims how much their God loved them as they could see in the embrace of the two cherubim.

A two-fold miracle came to pass when the cherubim were brought into the Temple by Solomon: the two staves that were attached to the Ark extended until they touched the curtain, so that two protuberances like a woman’s breasts became visible at the back of it, and the wings of the cherubim furthermore extended until they reached the ceiling of the Holy of Holies.

The Table and the Candelabrum

While the number of cherubim was the same in the Temple as in the Tabernacle, Solomon had, on the other hand, ten tables set up in the Temple in place of the one fashioned by Moses. This was because the one table sufficed to bring sustenance to Israel so long as they were maintained by manna in the desert; but, as the demand for food was greater after they settled in the promised land, Solomon had ten tables set up. But in the Temple also did the table of Moses retain its

Psalm 20


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For the conductor, a psalm of David.

A will answer you in a day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob will set you high and safe from danger. God will send you help from the sanctuary, aiding you from Zion. God will remember all your grain offerings and will consider all your wholly burnt sacrifices as though they were made of pure fat, *selah*.

God will grant you whatever your heart wishes and make right all the advice you give. We shall rejoice in your salvation, expressing our joy by praising God’s name; **A** will fulfill all your requests.

Now I know that **A** has saved the anointed one of God and will answer him from holy heaven with the redemptive might of the divine right hand.

 Some trust in chariots and others in horses, but we shall always recall the saving might of the name of **A**, our God. Those others will bend and fall, whereas we shall rise up and remain ever strong.

A, save us!

Sovereign God will answer us on the day we call out.

The second, third and fourth lines on the page are omitted on Tisha Be'av and in a house of mourning.

וּבֹא לְצִיּוֹן גּוֹזֵל, וּלְשִׁבֵי פֶשַׁע בְּיַעֲקֹב, נְאֻם יְהוָה.
וְאֲנִי זֹאת בְּרִיתִי אִתְּם אָמַר יְהוָה, רוּחִי אֲשֶׁר עָלְיָה,
וּדְבָרֵי אֲשֶׁר שָׁמַתִּי בְּפִיךָ. לֹא יִמוּשׁוּ מִפִּיךָ, וּמִפִּי
זֶרַע, וּמִפִּי זֶרַע זֶרַע, אָמַר יְהוָה, מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם.
וְאַתָּה קְדוֹשׁ, יוֹשֵׁב תְּהַלּוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל. וְקָרָא זֶה אֵל זֶה
וְאָמַר: קְדוֹשׁ קְדוֹשׁ קְדוֹשׁ יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת, מְלֵא כָּל
הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדוֹ. וּמִקְבְּלֵי דֵין מִן דֵּין, וְאֹמְרֵי: קְדִישׁ
בְּשָׁמַי מְרוֹמָא עֲלָא בֵּית שְׁכִינְתָּהּ, קְדִישׁ עַל אֲרֻעָא
עוֹבֵד גְּבוּרְתָּהּ, קְדִישׁ לְעֵלַם וּלְעֵלְמֵי עֲלַמְיָא, יְהוָה
צְבָאוֹת מְלִיָא כָּל אֲרֻעָא זִיו יְקָרָה. וְתַשְׁאֲנֵי רוּחַ,
וְאֲשַׁמַּע אַחֲרֵי קוֹל רַעַשׁ גְּדוֹל, בְּרוּךְ כְּבוֹד יְהוָה
מִמְקוֹמוֹ. וּנְטַלְתְּנִי רוּחָא, וְשִׁמַּעַת בְּתַרֵּי קָל זִיעַ
סְגִיָא, דְּמִשְׁבַּחִין וְאֹמְרֵין, בְּרִיךְ יְקָרָא דִּיהוּה מְאַתָּר
בֵּית שְׁכִינְתָּהּ. יְהוָה יִמְלֹךְ לְעֵלַם וְעַד. יְהוָה מְלַכּוּתָהּ
קָאֵם לְעֵלַם וּלְעֵלְמֵי עֲלַמְיָא.
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם יִצְחָק וְיִשְׂרָאֵל אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, שְׁמֵרָה
זֹאת לְעוֹלָם, לְיַצֵּר מַחְשְׁבוֹת לִבָּב עִמָּךְ, וְהִכֵּן לִבָּבְם
אֱלִיךָ. וְהוּא רַחוּם, יִכְפַּר עוֹן וְלֹא יִשְׁחִית, וְהִרְפָּה
לְהַשִּׁיב אָפוֹ, וְלֹא יַעִיר כָּל חַמְתּוֹ.

ancient significance, for only upon it was the show-bread placed, and it stood in the center, whereas the tables fashioned by Solomon stood five to the south and five to the north. For from the south come "the dews of blessing and the rains of plenty," while all evil comes from the north; hence Solomon said: "The tables on the south side shall cause the rains of plenty and the dews of blessing to come upon the earth, while the tables on the north side shall keep off all evil from Israel."

Moses had great difficulty with the construction of the candelabrum, for although God had given him instructions about it, he completely forgot these when he descended from heaven. He thereupon betook himself to God once more to be shown, but in vain, for hardly had he reached earth, when he again forgot. When he betook himself to God the third time, God took a candelabrum of fire and plainly showed him every single detail of it, that he might now be able to reconstruct the candelabrum for the Tabernacle. When he found it still hard to form a clear conception of the nature of the candelabrum, God quieted him with these words: "Go to Bezalel, he will do it aright." And indeed, Bezalel had no difficulty in doing so, and instantly executed Moses' commission. Moses cried in amazement: "God showed me repeatedly how to make the candelabrum, yet I could not properly seize the idea; but you, without having had it shown to you by God, could fashion it out of your own fund of knowledge. Truly, you deserve the name Bezalel, (which means, 'in the shadow of God'), for you act as if you had been 'in the shadow of God' while God was showing me the candelabrum."

The candelabrum was later set up in the Temple of Solomon, and although he set up ten other candelabra, still this one was the first to be lighted. Solomon chose the number ten because it corresponds to the number of commandments revealed on Sinai; and each of these candelabra had seven lamps, seventy in all to correspond to the seventy nations. For while these lamps burned the power of these nations was held in check, but on the day on which these lamps were extinguished the power of the nations increased. The

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candelabrum stood toward the south, and the table to the north of the sanctuary, the table to indicate the delights of which the pious would partake in Paradise, which lies to the north; the light of the candelabrum to symbolize the light of the Shechinah, for in the future world there will be but one delight, to gaze at the light of the Shechinah. On account of its sacredness the candelabrum was one of the five sacred objects that God concealed at the destruction of the Temple by Nebuchadnezzar, and that God will restore when, in an act of divine loving-kindness, God erects the Temple. These sacred objects are: the Ark, the candelabrum, the fire of the altar, the holy spirit of prophecy, and the cherubim.

The Altar

One of the most miraculous parts of the Tabernacle was the altar. For when God bade Moses make an altar of *shittim* wood and overlay it with brass, Moses said to God: “*Ribono shel olam*, You bade me make the altar of wood and overlay it with brass, but You also bid me have ‘a fire kept burning upon the altar continually.’ Will not the fire destroy the overlay of brass, and then consume the wood of the altar?” God replied: “Moses, you are judging by the laws that apply to men, but will these also apply to Me? Behold, the angels that are of burning flame. Beside them are My store houses of snow and My store houses of hail. Does the water quench their fire, or does their fire consume the water? Behold, also, the *Hayyot* that are made of fire. Above their heads extends a terrible sea of ice that no mortal can traverse in less than five hundred years. Yet does the water quench their fire, or their fire consume the water? For, ‘I am the God Who makes peace between these elements in My high places.’ But you, because I have bidden you to have ‘a fire kept burning upon the altar continually,’ are afraid that the wood might be consumed by the fire. Dead things come before Me, and leave Me imbued with life, and you are afraid the wood of the altar might be consumed! Your own experience should by now have taught you better; you

Uva Letziyon

All of the first paragraph except the first sentence is omitted on Tisha Be'av and in a house of mourning.

And so shall a redeemer come to Zion, to those of the people of Jacob who renounce sin, says *A*. And this shall be the substance of My covenant with them, says *A*: that neither My holy spirit, which I have poured out on you, nor those of My sacred words, which I have placed in your mouths, that neither of these shall ever be absent from your mouths, or from the mouths of your descendants or your descendants’ descendants, and that this is a promise of *A* now and forever.

You are holy, O God enthroned upon the praises of the people Israel. And so did Isaiah have a vision in which he saw the angels calling out to each other on high, saying, “Holy, holy, holy is *A* of hosts; the whole world is filled with divine glory.” By this, the prophet meant to allude to a great secret: that, as they hear the word “holy” repeated, they offer a different response each time the word is repeated, “Holy unto the highest heaven is the holy Temple,” then “Holy on earth is the God Who does wonders,” then “Holy forever and for all time is *A*, the God of hosts. The whole earth is filled with the splendor of divine grandeur.”

And so did Your prophet Ezekiel say, “And a great wind lifted me up and I heard a great noise behind me. Blessed be the splendor of *A* from the dwelling place of all divine splendor.” The prophet was speaking plainly and not in poetic metaphor: he meant literally that a great wind lifted him high and, as he was aloft, he heard a great noise behind him: the sound of the angelic hosts praising God with the sacred words, “Blessed be the splendor of God as it originates in the sacred residence of the Shechinah on high.

And Moses too had a prophetic experience of God at the Sea of Reeds, whereupon he included in his great song these words, “*A* shall reign forever and always.” Indeed, he meant to say that the sovereignty of *A* would surely exist for all time. *A*, God of our forebears, Abraham, Isaac and Israel, keep ever in mind the wayward tendencies of Your people Israel, and guide their hearts to Your service. For God, compassionate and forgiving of sin, will never destroy the Jewish people. Indeed, God will ever be charitable and kind, declining to embrace anger as a response to way-

pierced the fiery chambers of heaven, you entered among the fiery hosts on high, yes, you even approached Me, that 'am a consuming fire.' Surely you should then have been consumed by fire, but you were unscathed because you went into the fire at My command; no more shall the brass overlay of the altar be injured by fire, even though it be no thicker than a denarium."

The Completion of the Tabernacle

On the eleventh day of Tishri, Moses assembled the people and informed them that it was God's wish to have a sanctuary among them and that each man was bidden to bring to the sanctuary any offering he pleased. At the same time, he impressed upon them that, however pious a deed participation in the construction of the Tabernacle might be, still they might under no circumstances break the Sabbath to hasten the building of the sanctuary. Moses thereupon expounded to them the kind of work that was permissible on the Sabbath, and the kind that was prohibited, for there were not less than thirty-nine occupations the pursuit of which on the Sabbath was punishable by death. Owing to the importance of keeping the Sabbath, Moses imparted the precepts concerning it directly to the great masses of the people that he had gathered together, and not to the elders alone. In this he acted according to God's command, Who said to him: "Go, Moses, call together great assemblages and announce the Sabbath laws to them, that the future generations may follow your example, and on Sabbath days assemble the people in the synagogues and instruct them in the Torah, that they may know what is prohibited and what is permitted, that My name may be glorified among My children." In the spirit of this command did Moses institute that on every holy day there might be preaching in the synagogues, and instruction concerning the significance of the special holy day. He summoned the people to these teachings with the words: "If you will follow my example, God will count it for you as if you had acknowledged God as your king throughout the world."

כִּי אַתָּה אֲדֹנָי טוֹב וְסַלַח, וְרַב חֶסֶד לְכָל קוֹרְאֶיךָ.
צְדָקְתְּךָ צְדָק לְעוֹלָם, וְתוֹרַתְךָ אֱמֶת. תִּתֵּן אֱמֶת
לְיַעֲקֹב, חֶסֶד לְאַבְרָהָם, אֲשֶׁר גִּשְׁפַּעְתָּ לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ מִיְמֵי
קֶדֶם. בְּרוּךְ אֲדֹנָי, יוֹם יוֹם יַעֲמַס־לָנוּ, הָאֵל יִשׁוּעַתָּנוּ
סָלָה. יְהוּה צְבָאוֹת עִמָּנוּ, מִשְׁגָּב לָנוּ, אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב
סָלָה. יְהוּה צְבָאוֹת, אֲשֶׁר־י אָדָם בְּטַח בְּפָּ. יְהוּה
הוֹשִׁיעָה, הַמְּלֹךְ יַעֲנֵנוּ בַּיּוֹם קְרָאֵנוּ. בְּרוּךְ הוּא
אֱלֹהֵינוּ, שְׂבָרָאֵנוּ לְכְבוֹדוֹ, וְהִבְדִּילָנוּ מִן הַתּוֹעִים,
וְנָתַן לָנוּ תּוֹרַת אֱמֶת, וְחַיֵּי עוֹלָם גִּטֵּעַ בְּתוֹכֵנוּ. הוּא
יִפְתַּח לְבָנֵינוּ בְּתוֹרָתוֹ, וְיִשֵּׁם בְּלִבֵּנוּ אֶהְבַּתוֹ וְיִרְאָתוֹ,
וְלַעֲשׂוֹת רְצוֹנוֹ וְלַעֲבֹדוֹ בְּלִבָּב שָׁלֵם, לְמַעַן לֹא גִיגַע
לְרִיק וְלֹא גִילַד לְבַהֲלָה. יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, יְהוּה
אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, שְׁנִשְׁמֹר חֻקֶּיךָ בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה,
וּבְזָכָה וּבְחַיָּה וּבְרָאָה, וּבִירַשׁ טוֹבָה וּבְרָכָה, לְשָׁנֵי
יְמוֹת הַמְּשִׁיחַ וְלַחַיֵּי הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא. לְמַעַן יִזְמַרְךָ
כְּבוֹד וְלֹא יָדָם, יְהוּה אֱלֹהֵי לְעוֹלָם אֹדְךָ.
בְּרוּךְ הַגֹּבֵר אֲשֶׁר יִבְטַח בִּיהוּת, וְהָיָה יְהוּה מְבֹטְחוֹ.
בְּטַחוֹ בִּיהוּה עַד־יָעַד, כִּי בָּיָה יְהוּה צוּר עוֹלָמִים.
וְיִבְטַחוּ בְּךָ יוֹדְעֵי שְׁמֹךָ, כִּי לֹא עֲזַבְתָּ דוֹרְשֶׁיךָ,
יְהוּה. יְהוּה חֲפִץ לְמַעַן צְדָקוֹ, יַגְדִּיל תּוֹרָה וְיִאֲדִיר.

On Chol Hamoed, continue with the Half Kaddish on page 196.

On Rosh Chodesh, continue with the Half Kaddish on page 220.

On other weekdays, continue with the Full Kaddish on the following page.

On Rosh Chodesh, worshippers wearing tefillin remove them before continuing.

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The stress laid on the observance of the Sabbath laws was quite necessary, for the people were so eager to deliver up their contributions that, on the Sabbath, Moses had to have an announcement proclaimed that they were to take nothing out of their houses, as the carrying of things on the Sabbath is prohibited. For Israel is a peculiar people, one that answered the summons to fetch gold for the Golden Calf and, with no less zeal, answered the summons of Moses to give contributions for the Tabernacle. They were not content to bring things out of their houses and treasuries, but forcibly snatched ornaments from their wives, their daughters, and their sons, and brought them to Moses for the construction of the Tabernacle. In this way they thought they could cancel their sin in having fashioned the Golden Calf. Then, they used their ornaments in the construction of the idol; now, they employed them for the sanctuary of God.

The women, however, were no less eager to contribute, and were especially active in producing the woolen hangings. They did this in so miraculous a way, that they spun the wool while it was still upon the goats. Moses did not at first want to accept contributions from the women, but these brought their cloaks and their mirrors, saying: "Why dost thou reject our gifts? If thou doest so because thou wantest in the sanctuary nothing that women use to enhance their charms, behold, here are our cloaks that we use to conceal ourselves from the eyes of the men. But if thou art afraid to accept from us anything that might be not our property, but our husbands', behold, here are our mirrors that belong to us alone, and not to our husbands." When Moses beheld the mirrors, he waxed very angry, and bade the women to be driven from him, exclaiming: "What right in the sanctuary have these mirrors that exist only to arouse sensual desires?" But God said to Moses: "Truly dearer to Me than all other gifts are these mirrors, for it was these mirrors that yielded Me My hosts. When in Egypt the men were exhausted from their heavy labors, the women were wont to come to them with food and drink, take out their mirrors, and caressingly


wardness or let the full force of divine rage be known, for You are Adonai, good, forgiving, and suffused with loving-kindness to all those who call out to You. Your righteousness is rooted in eternal justice and Your Torah is truth itself. You granted truth to Jacob and mercy to Abraham, just as You have consistently promised since earliest times. Blessed be Adonai, Who day by day bears our burden and Who is the God of our salvation, *selah*.

A , God of all heavens, is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge, *selah*. A , God of all heavens, happy is the individual who trusts in You.

A , save us! May sovereign God answer us on the day we call out.

Blessed be our God, who created us to reflect the splendor of the divine, separating us from those who err in their assessment of God, granting us a Torah of truth, and planting the potential for eternal life in our midst. May God open our hearts to the Torah and, in so doing, inspire love and awe of the divine in us so totally that we do God's will and serve the Almighty with full hearts, thus ensuring that we will not be toiling for naught or become enmeshed in pointless, fruitless endeavors.

May it be Your will, A , our God and God of our ancestors, that we be inspired to keep Your laws in this world so that we merit to live long enough to see and inherit goodness and blessing in the days of the Messiah and life in the World to Come. May all this come to pass so that my soul be inspired to sing out to You and not be silent. A , my God, I shall declare my gratitude to You forever.

Blessed are they who place their trust always in A , thus making A into their safe haven in times of trouble. Trust in A for all time, for B, A , is the rock of all ages.  Therefore do those who know Your name trust in You, for You will never abandon any who seek You, A .

A is well pleased for the sake of divine righteousness; God will magnify the Torah and make it glorious.

On Chol Hamoed, continue with the Half Kaddish on page 197.

On Rosh Chodesh, continue with the Half Kaddish on page 221.

On other weekdays, continue with the Full Kaddish on the following page.

On Rosh Chodesh, worshipers wearing tefillin remove them before continuing.

The Full Kaddish

יִתְגַּדֵּל וְיִתְקַדֵּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא בְּעַלְמָא דִּי בְּרָא
כְּרַעוּתָהּ, וְיִמְלִיךָ מַלְכוּתָהּ בְּחַיִּיכוֹן וּבְיוֹמֵיכוֹן
וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּעַגְלָא וּבְזַמַּן קָרִיב,
וְאָמְרוּ אַמֵּן.

The congregation joins the cantor or baal tefillah in reciting this line.

יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעַלְמֵי וְלְעַלְמֵי עַלְמַיָּא.

The cantor or baal tefillah continues:

יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח, וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרוֹמַם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא
וְיִתְהַדָּר וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלָּל שְׁמֵהּ דְּקֻדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא

Except between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, say:

לְעַלְמָא מִן כָּל

Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, say:

לְעַלְמָא לְעַלְמָא מִכָּל


בְּרַכְתָּא וְשִׁירָתָא, תְּשַׁבַּחְתָּא וְנַחֲמַתָּא, דְּאָמִירָן
בְּעַלְמָא, וְאָמְרוּ אַמֵּן.

תְּתַקַּבֵּל צְלוֹתְהוֹן וּבְעוֹתְהוֹן דְּכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל
קָדָם אֲבוּהוֹן דִּי בְּשַׁמַּיָּא, וְאָמְרוּ אַמֵּן.

יְהֵא שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שְׁמַיָּא, וְחַיִּים, עָלֵינוּ וְעַל
כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ אַמֵּן.

עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרוֹמָיו, הוּא יַעֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ
וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ אַמֵּן.

say to their husbands: 'Look into the mirror, I am much more beautiful than thou,' and in this way passion seized the men so that they forgot their cares and united themselves with their wives, who thereupon brought many children into the world. Take now these mirrors and fashion out of them the laver that contains the water for the sanctifying of the kohanim." Furthermore, out of this laver was fetched the water that a woman suspected of adultery had to drink to prove her innocence. As formerly the mirrors had been used to kindle conjugal affection, so out of them was made the vessel for the water that was to restore broken peace between husband and wife.

When Moses, upon God's command, made known to the people that whosoever was of a willing heart, man or woman, might bring an offering, the zeal of the women was so great, that they thrust away the men and crowded forward with their gifts, so that in two days all that was needful for the construction of the Tabernacle was in Moses' hands. The princes of the tribes came almost too late with their contributions and at the last moment, they brought the precious stones for the garments of Aaron that they might not be entirely unrepresented in the sanctuary. But God took their delay amiss, and for this reason they later sought to be the first to offer up sacrifices in the sanctuary. After everything had been provided for the construction of the Tabernacle, Bezalel set to work with the devotion of his whole soul, and as a reward for this, the Holy Scriptures speak of him only as the constructor of the sanctuary, although many others stood by him in this labor. He began his work by fashioning the boards, then attended to the overlaying of them, and when he had completed these things, he set to work to prepare the curtains, then completed the Ark with the penance-cover belonging to it, and finally the table for the showbread, and the candelabrum. 



To know if a machine works, one must first know what it is supposed to do . . . and the same is true of the mechanics of spirituality: adequately to evaluate one's progress on the great journey to God one must know what precisely one expects to acquire for one's efforts . . . and to develop a reasonable sense of what it means to undertake such a journey in the first place. In the following lessons, readers are challenged to consider questions most of the faithful prefer to leave unasked, hence unanswered, at least most of the time. But as the morning service draws to a close, the time has come to begin to consider what one has accomplished by asking what, precisely, it was one expected or hoped to accomplish by approaching God through the medium of ritual, commandment and prayer.



God can be called many things—the world beyond the world, the core and perimeter of existence, the heart and soul of being, the quintessence of love, the moral center of the universe, the great and never-ending source of law, the effulgent unity of opposites, the One, the Name . . . to say only the ones that come most readily to mind—but for those who yearn for God with purity of heart and intensity of spirit, it is as the fulcrum of insoluble paradox and un-unravelable riddle that the Almighty will be the most familiar. Acting as the possibility of impossibility in a world that both apparently can and also absolutely cannot contain even the least consequential aspect of divine being, God presents the faithful—or, rather, the would-be faithful—with the prospect of finding the deepest level of existence—God—by undertaking a journey that may not exist to a goal that does not exist along a trajectory that cannot exist to a level of faith that can only be embraced by accepting—and by accepting wholeheartedly and without reservation—the great secret of human existence, that arcane ambiguity that the

The Full Kaddish

Magnified and sanctified be the great name of God in this world created according to divine plan, and may God's sovereignty be established speedily and soon during the days of our lives and the lives of all members of the House of Israel, and let us say, Amen.

The congregation joins the cantor or baal tefillah in reciting this line.

May God's great name be blessed forever and throughout all eternity.

The cantor or baal tefillah continues:

May the name of the Holy One, source of all blessing, be blessed, adored, lauded, praised, extolled, glorified and venerated in language . . .

Except between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, say:

more exalted

Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, say:

entirely more exalted

. . . than any blessing, hymn, ode or prayer recited by the faithful in this world, and let us say, Amen.

May the prayers and supplications of all Israel be acceptable before their heavenly Parent, and let us say, Amen.

May we, and all Israel, be blessed with great peace that comes to us directly from heaven, and with life, and let us say, Amen.

May God Who brings peace to the heavens grant peace to us and to all Israel, and let us say, Amen.

עֲלֵינוּ לְשַׁבַּח לְאֲדוֹן הַפֶּלַל, לְתַת גְּדֻלָּה לְיוֹצֵר בְּרֵאשִׁית,
שֶׁלֹּא עֲשָׂנוּ כְּגִוְיֵי הָאָרְצוֹת, וְלֹא שָׁמְנוּ כְּמִשְׁפָּחוֹת הָאָדָמָה,
שֶׁלֹּא שָׁם חָלְקֵנוּ פָּהֶם, וְגִרְלָנוּ כְּכֹל הַמוֹנָם,

וְאַנְחָנוּ כְּזֹרְעִים וּמִשְׁתַּחֲוִים וּמוֹדִים לְפָנֵי
מֶלֶךְ, מַלְכֵי הַמַּלְכִּים, הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא,
שֶׁהוּא נוֹטֵה שָׁמַיִם וְיִסַּד אָרֶץ, וּמוֹשֵׁב יִקְרוּ בְּשָׁמַיִם
מִמַּעַל, וְשֹׁכֵינֵת עִזּוֹ בְּגִבְהֵי מְרוֹמִים. הוּא אֱלֹהֵינוּ, אֵין
עוֹד, אִמַּת מַלְכֵנוּ, אִפְסֵ זִלְתּוֹ, כְּפָתוּב בְּתוֹרָתוֹ: וְיִדְעָתָּ
הַיּוֹם וְהַשַּׁבָּת אֵל לְבַבְךָ, כִּי יְהוָה הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים בְּשָׁמַיִם
מִמַּעַל וְעַל הָאָרֶץ מִתַּחַת, אֵין עוֹד.

עַל כֵּן נִקְוָה לָךְ, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, לְרֵאוֹת מְהֵרָה בְּתַפְאֵרֶת
עֲזֶיךָ, לְהַעֲבִיר גְּלוּלֵינוּ מִן הָאָרֶץ וְהַאֲלִילֵנוּ כְּרוֹת יִפְרֵתוֹן,
לְתַקֵּן עוֹלָם בְּמַלְכוּת שְׁדֵי וְכֹל בְּנֵי בָשָׂר יִקְרְאוּ בְּשִׁמְךָ,
לְהַפְּנוֹת אֱלֹהֵי כָּל רִשְׁעֵי אָרֶץ, יִפְּירוּ וְיִדְעוּ כָּל יוֹשְׁבֵי
תֵּיבֵל, כִּי לָךְ תִּכְרַע כָּל בְּרֵךְ, תִּשָּׁבַע כָּל לָשׁוֹן. לְפָנֶיךָ יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֵינוּ יִכְרְעוּ וְיִפְּלוּ, וְלִכְבוֹד שִׁמְךָ יִקְרֵי יִתְגַּבֵּן. וְיִקְבְּלוּ כָּל־
אֶת עוֹל מַלְכוּתְךָ, וְתִמְלֹךְ עֲלֵיהֶם מְהֵרָה לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד. כִּי
הַמַּלְכוּת שֶׁלָּךְ הִיא, וְלְעוֹלָמֵי עַד תִּמְלֹךְ בְּכַבוֹד, כְּפָתוּב
בְּתוֹרָתְךָ: יְהוָה יִמְלֹךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

וְנֶאֱמַר:  וְהָיָה יְהוָה לְמֶלֶךְ עַל כָּל הָאָרֶץ,
בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יְהִיָּה יְהוָה אֶחָד, וְשִׁמוֹ אֶחָד.

Zohar calls the *raza demehemnuta*, the mystery of faith: that although God may not be known, the love of God somehow remains possible.

This great goal is called cleaving unto God, but, like all terms conceived within the framework of purely symbolic language, it merely points at, without actually referring to (let alone delineating clearly) that which it is supposed to denote. But because all roads to God lead through this crux of meaning and the impossibility of meaning, the human soul seeking to cleave unto God may do so most effectively along the landscape of symbolism and myth. Because, for example, God is the heart of existence, faith may be sought within the chambers of the human heart . . . and through the promulgation of kindness and the pursuit of love. Because God is the moral ground of being, faith may be sought through the informed contemplation of the world . . . and through the establishment of an ethical society devoted to divine values. Because God is the mind of the universe, faith may be sought within the labyrinthine matrices of intelligence and creativity of the human brain . . . and through the informed manipulation of the intellect through textual study, meditative exercise and mindful, contemplative prayer.

All of these avenues are real paths that a human being may wander towards faith despite the fact that none of them actually exists or could actually exist. The journey out is the journey in. Searching is finding. Despair is hope. Impossibility is possibility. Is is is not. Embracing paradox is the resolution of paradox. And so, the great goal of cleaving unto God—of embracing faith in God and the love of God within the context of palpable reality without becoming crippled by the seductive power of delusion and self-serving fantasy—is both possible and impossible, the latter because it must be and the former, because, somehow, it is.



The possibility of cleaving unto God in a relationship of life-long intimacy is precisely the same for men and women, and this is the meaning of the verse, “On the day God created humanity, God

fashioned it in the divine image, creating both men and women (Genesis 5:1–2)—that is to say: the physical differences between women and men are incidental to the spiritual equality described in the language of Scripture with reference to their common origin in God and their common creation in the form and shape of the Almighty. Therefore, any who claim that the will of women to serve God is less capable than the analogous will of men to find spiritual expression through the performance of the commandments, through prayer and through the study of Torah—and, especially, any who would attempt to justify such a claim with reference to the norms of public worship that have come down to us through the generations—such people are guilty of denying the fact that the common origin of men and women is in God and that their common origin points ineluctably to a common destiny as well.



For many people, it is helpful to conceptualize the life-long search for communion with the divine as a kind of journey towards God. And indeed, other than physical reality, growth towards God has many of the trappings of a journey undertaken from one place to another and thinking of one's spiritual life in those terms can be useful . . . provided one bears several fundamental truths in mind every step of the way. Of these, the most important is that the journey has neither trajectory nor itinerary, neither beginning nor end. Therefore, the traveler does not actually move from one place to another in the course of his travels. Nor does the destination exist at all in any but the most extended sense of the word possible.

It is not possible to describe this journey in any human language. Therefore, people who sell guidebooks full of words to those seeking to undertake this journey without mentioning that their books are works of poetry, myth, fable, metaphor and symbol are, by definition, attempting to convince people that they can describe that which is by definition indescribable, even ineffable . . . and surely far beyond the reach of even the

Aleinu


It is our duty to praise the Author of all existence and to declare the greatness of the Creator for not making us like the other nations or granting us the spiritual bearing of other clans within the greater human family, and for neither giving us a portion similar to theirs nor a destiny like that of their great populations. Instead, we all bend the knee and kneel down to give thanks before sovereign God Who rules over even their most powerful royalty, the blessed Holy One Who spread out the heavens and established the earth, Whose holy residence is in heaven above, and Whose absolute power is revealed in the highest celestial realms.

The Almighty is our God; there is no other. The Sovereign of truth, God is wholly unique, as it is written in God's Torah: "And above all else you shall take to heart that A , alone and fully unique, is God in heaven above and on earth below."

Therefore, do we place our trust in You, A , our God, so that we may quickly come to see the glory of Your splendid power as it manifests itself to sweep away and utterly destroy the repulsive idols that are worshiped on this earth, to establish the sovereignty of God on earth so that all humanity will come to invoke Your sacred name, and to turn the wicked of the earth toward You in full repentance, so that all who dwell on this planet will recognize and understand fully that it is to You alone that every knee must bend and every tongue pledge loyalty.

It is before You, A , our God, that they will kneel and fall prostrate; it is to the glory of Your name that they will all show honor as they accept upon themselves the yoke of Your sovereignty.

Then shall You rule over them, quickly and permanently, for sovereignty is Yours and so shall You ever rule over us with honor, as it is written in the Torah, "A shall reign forever."

 And so also is it written in the book of Your prophet, "And it shall come to pass that A will be Sovereign over all the earth. Indeed, on that day, the unique nature of A will be acknowledged on earth so totally that even the divine name itself will be 'One.'"

*The Mourner's Kaddish**

יִתְגַּדֵּל וְיִתְקַדֵּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא בְּעֻלְמָא דִּי בְּרָא
כְּרַעוּתָהּ, וְיִמְלִיךָ מַלְכוּתָהּ בְּחַיִּיכוֹן וּבְיוֹמֵיכוֹן
וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּעַגְלָא וּבְזַמַּן קָרִיב,
וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

The congregation joins the mourners in reciting this line.

יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעָלַם וּלְעַלְמֵי עֻלְמָיָא.

The mourners continue:

יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח, וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרוֹמַם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא
וְיִתְהַדָּר וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלָּל שְׁמֵהּ דְּקֻדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא

Except between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, say:

לְעַלְמָא מִן כָּל

Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, say:

לְעַלְמָא מִכָּל

בְּרַכְתָּא וְשִׁירָתָא, תְּשַׁבַּחְתָּא וְנַחֲמַתָּא, דְּאָמִירוֹן
בְּעֻלְמָא, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

יְהֵא שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שְׁמַיָּא, וְחַיִּים, עָלֵינוּ וְעַל
כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרוֹמָיו, הוּא יַעֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ
וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

most eloquent human speaker. It is, of course, possible to move forward towards a life in God, but only on the condition that the would-be traveler constantly recall that the intellectual concept of God as a physically existent destination one might reach by undertaking an arduous journey from where one is to where one wishes to go is utterly misleading. In turn, this is the meaning of the rabbinic adage to the effect that God is the Place of the world, even though the world is not the place of God.



The journey to God may be undertaken successfully only by someone so utterly and deeply possessed of absolute intellectual integrity and spiritual honesty that even the slightest hint of self-deception becomes an impassable road block that makes it absolutely impossible for that individual to continue on towards the kind of psychic assimilation into the divine that is the goal of all focused religious endeavor. Therefore, all who would step outside of time to take their places among the others gathered at Sinai must first accept—and accept absolutely and totally—that even casual lies about God have the power to derail the course of long years dedicated to the performance of ritual and rite and to distance those who tell them from God.



The religious life is an old hut that has undergone so many different repairs over the millennia that the original building has actually vanished entirely. That there originally was a building—the original structure to which all the repairs were done—seems impossible to doubt. And that God was the Maker of this original structure is the basic principle of faith. The secret of living a life struggling towards communion with God is therefore embedded in the ability an individual may cultivate to live in this tottering hut without succumbing to depression or worry for as long as it takes to seek in it a God Who can only be known through the medium of symbol and allusion . . . and through the focused contem-

*The text of the Mourner's Kaddish may be found in transliteration on page 277.

plation of the mysterious way the various pieces and parts of the universe can all be interpreted in a thousand different ways as being expressive of their Creator's nature. All this creates a situation in which the performance of even the least significant commandment of Scripture has the ability to become either an expression of deep-seated and profound nobility or an exercise in self-delusion. The job of the faithful, therefore, is to tip the balance towards nobility through the sheer force of their focused will.



God is every thing and no thing, in every place without exception and in no place that exists according to the physics of the world. God belongs to the world and is other than the world . . . and is, by definition, the definition of absolute existence that does not exist at all or, more precisely, that cannot exist without that declaration of existence impacting fatally on the inner nature of divine reality. The search for God is founded on another insoluble paradox as well: the truly righteous in the world hear God speaking to them by listening to the soundless voice of the living God they know they know and they know they do not—and will not ever—know and attempt, in so doing, to gaze upon the divine face—as it is written, “Justified finally, I shall gaze on Your face (Psalm 17:16)” —at the same time they accept—and accept totally and without reservation—that it is impossible to see the face of God and survive the experience, as it is written, “You will be unable to see My face, for no one can see My face and live (Exodus 33:20).”

The author of the 119th psalm expressed the same truth when he wrote of himself, “I have sought You with all my heart (Psalm 119:10)” thus presenting the totality of his credo in three simple Hebrew words and challenging his readers to follow his exalted lead to undertake a journey to heaven by burrowing as deeply as possible in the inmost chambers of a heart that contains and cannot possibly contain a glimmer of the perceptible spark of divinity the universe both contains and

*The Mourner's Kaddish**

Magnified and sanctified be the great name of God in this world created according to divine plan, and may God's sovereignty be established speedily and soon during the days of our lives and the lives of all members of the House of Israel, and let us say, Amen.

The congregation joins the mourners in reciting this line.

May God's great name be blessed forever and throughout all eternity.

The mourners continue:

May the name of the Holy One, source of all blessing, be blessed, adored, lauded, praised, extolled, glorified and venerated in language . . .

Except between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, say:

more exalted

Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, say:

entirely more exalted

than any blessing, hymn, ode or prayer recited by the faithful in this world, and let us say, Amen.


May we, and all Israel, be blessed with great peace that comes to us directly from heaven, and with life, and let us say, Amen.

May God Who brings peace to the heavens grant peace to us and to all Israel, and let us say, Amen.

**The text of the Mourner's Kaddish may be found in transliteration on page 277.*


*Psalm 24: The Psalm the Levites Used to Sing
in Ancient Times on Sundays in the Temple*

הַיּוֹם יוֹם רֵאשׁוֹן בַּשַּׁבָּת, שָׁבוּ הָיוּ הַלְלוּיִם אוֹמְרִים בְּבֵית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ.

לְדוֹד מִזְמוֹר, לַיהוָה הָאָרֶץ וּמְלוֹאָהּ, תִּבֵּל וַיִּשְׁבֵּי בָהּ. כִּי הוּא עַל
יָמִים יִסְדָּהּ, וְעַל גְּהָרוֹת יְכוֹנְנֶתָּ. מִי יַעֲלֶה בְּחַר יְהוָה, וּמִי יִקּוּם
בַּמְּקוֹם קֹדְשׁוֹ. גָּקִי כַפַּיִם וּבֵר לִבְבִּי, אֲשֶׁר לֹא נָשָׂא לְשׂוֹא נַפְשִׁי,
וְלֹא נִשְׁפַּע לְמִרְמָה. יִשָּׂא בְרָכָה מֵאֵת יְהוָה, וַיִּצְדָּקָה מֵאֱלֹהֵי
יִשְׁעוֹ. זֶה דוֹר דְּרָשִׁיו, מִבְּקָשֵׁי פְּנִיָּה יַעֲקֹב סֵלָה. שְׂאוּ שְׁעָרִים
רְאשֵׁיכֶם, וְהַנְּשֹׂאוּ פִתְחֵי עוֹלָם, וַיָּבֹאוּ מִלְּקַף הַכְּבוֹד. מִי זֶה מִלְּקַף
הַכְּבוֹד, יְהוָה עֲזָזוֹ וְגִבּוֹר יְהוָה גִּבּוֹר מִלְּחָמָה.  שְׂאוּ
שְׁעָרִים רְאשֵׁיכֶם, וְשְׂאוּ פִתְחֵי עוֹלָם, וַיָּבֹאוּ מִלְּקַף הַכְּבוֹד. מִי
הוּא זֶה מִלְּקַף הַכְּבוֹד, יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת, הוּא מִלְּקַף הַכְּבוֹד סֵלָה.

*Psalm 48: The Psalm the Levites Used to Sing
in Ancient Times on Mondays in the Temple*

הַיּוֹם יוֹם שְׁנֵי בַשַּׁבָּת, שָׁבוּ הָיוּ הַלְלוּיִם אוֹמְרִים בְּבֵית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ.

שִׁיר מִזְמוֹר לְבַנֵּי קִרְחַת. גְּדוֹל יְהוָה וּמְהַלָּל מְאֹד, בְּעִיר אֱלֹהֵינוּ
הַר קֹדְשׁוֹ. יִפֶּה גּוֹף מְשׁוֹשׁ כָּל הָאָרֶץ, הַר צִיּוֹן יִרְפָּתִי צְפוֹן,
קִרְיַת מִלְּקַף רַב. אֱלֹהִים בְּאַרְמְנוֹתֶיהָ גּוֹדַע לְמִשְׁגָּב. כִּי הִנֵּה
הַמְּלָכִים נוֹעְדוּ, עָבְרוּ יַחְדָּו. הִמָּה רָאוּ פֶן תִּמְהוּ, גִּבְהָלוּ, נַחְפְּזוּ.
רָעָה אַחְזָתָם שָׁם, חֵיל פִּיּוֹלָדָה. בְּרוּחַ קֹדִים תִּשְׁפֹּר אַנְגִּיּוֹת
תְּדַרְשִׁישׁ. כַּאֲשֶׁר שִׁמְעֵנוּ, כֵּן רָאִינוּ בְּעִיר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת, בְּעִיר
אֱלֹהֵינוּ, אֱלֹהִים יְכוֹנְנֶתָּ עַד עוֹלָם, סֵלָה. דְּמִינוּ אֱלֹהִים חֲסִדְךָ
בְּקִרְבַּי הִיכַלְךָ. כְּשִׁמְךָ אֱלֹהִים פֶּן תִּהְלֹתְךָ עַל קַצְוֵי אֶרֶץ,
צֶדֶק מְלָאָה יְמִינְךָ. יִשְׂמַח הַר צִיּוֹן, תִּגְלַלְנָה בְּנוֹת יְהוָה,
לְמַעַן מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ. סָבוּ צִיּוֹן וְהִקִּיפוּהָ, סִפְרוּ מִגְדְּלֶיהָ. שִׁיתוּ
לְבַבְכֶם לַחִילָה פִּסְגוֹ אַרְמְנוֹתֶיהָ, לְמַעַן תִּסְפְּרוּ לְדוֹר אַחֲרוֹן.
כִּי זֶה אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהֵינוּ עוֹלָם וָעֶד, הוּא יִנְהַגֵּנוּ עַל מוֹת. 

cannot possibly hold, and which must be and cannot be part of God.



The Jewish road towards a life in God is paved with commandments, but these commandments are neither magic rituals that have the power to force God's blessings nor superstitious rites that have any effect of any sort other than the one they have on the soul of worshipers seeking to elevate their souls to a state of ongoing communion with the divine. This lesson is at the core of the Biblical injunction to know God through divine service and, indeed, when the Bible defines the Israelites as those who manage to cleave unto God in their lifetimes at Deuteronomy 4:4, the very next verse reads, "Behold, I have taught you (My) laws and statutes" in order to make the point that much more clear than it might otherwise have been.



The performance of the commandments is intended to serve as a kind of spiritual exercise capable of making the heart wide enough to contain some immeasurably small spark of the divine spirit. Indeed, it is precisely this experience of opening up the inmost chambers of the secret heart to the palpable, dynamic presence of God that defines the experience of cleaving unto God and makes of it the great and noble goal of all human spiritual endeavor.

This point permeates Biblical thinking about God, even when it is not made explicit. For example, consider two adjacent verses in the 119th psalm. In the first, the poet writes of himself and says "I have cleaved (i.e. unto You), O A , through (the helpful agency of) Your testimonies; cause me (therefore) not to feel shame (Psalm 119:31)." And the verse that follows explains even more precisely what idea the psalmist is hoping to inspire in the hearts of his readers: "I an running (towards You) along the path of Your commandments . . . (and I will succeed if) You widen my heart (sufficiently; Psalm 119:32)." By this juxta-

position of ideas, the poet means to say that spiritual and intellectual communion with God comes to an individual as a function of the degree to which that person is dedicated to the performance of the commandments, for it is the poet's sense that they alone possess sufficient spiritual force to widen the human heart to the degree necessary for it to accept within its chambers the real, palpable presence of God. Historically speaking, this is the reason Jews have traditionally sought to cleave unto God by cleaving first unto the commandments of the Torah and why they have allowed themselves to refer to those commandments liturgically as "their lives and the length of their days"—not because it is literally so, but because they possess the capability of leading mortals to a life in God, Who is the Life of the universe and the Author of its days.



The ancients attempted to describe the great goal of all ritual activity along all sorts of mythic and poetic lines. Among the most famous of these is the attempt on the part of some authors to describe this experience of willing one's heart open to the presence of God as a kind of surgical operation designed actually to make visible and physically to widen the chambers of the human heart . . . as though the whole difficulty in cleaving unto God might literally be that the chambers of an individual's heart are simply be too narrow to accommodate the divine spirit. Indeed, the addition to the daily prayer service attributed to Mar son of Rabi-na—words the pious even today recite three times daily—to the effect that what honest supplicants truly need from God is that the chambers of their hearts be made wide open to the Torah so that their souls might more actively pursue the performance of the commandments is merely the translation of this idea into the language of prayer.


In Biblical times, the notion that all who would cleave unto God must first physically open the chambers of their hearts to the divine spirit was referred to as the circumcision of the heart and so do we read explicitly in Deuteronomy: "And you

Psalm 24: The Psalm the Levites Used to Sing in Ancient Times on Sundays in the Temple

A psalm of David.

The world and its fullness, the earth and its inhabitants—everything belongs to A , Who laid its foundation upon the seas and set it firm upon its many rivers. Who may go up onto the mountain of A ? And who may stand in that holy place? One who has clean hands and a pure heart, one who has never falsely taken a vow by his life nor sworn a duplicitous oath—that person will receive a blessing from A , a righteous blessing from the God of salvation. This is the generation of those who seek God, who seek Your face in the style of Jacob, *selah*.


Lift up your heads, O gates. Lift yourselves up, O portals of eternity, so that our glorious Sovereign may enter. And just who is our glorious Sovereign? A , valiant and triumphant, A , triumphant in battle.

 Lift up your heads, O gates. Lift up your heads, O portals of eternity, so that our glorious Sovereign may enter. And just who is our glorious Sovereign?

A , God of all heavens, is our glorious Sovereign, *selah*.


Psalm 48: The Psalm the Levites Used to Sing in Ancient Times on Mondays in the Temple

A psalm-song of the sons of Korach. Great is A and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, home of God's holy mountain. Its lovely landscape the delight of all the earth, Mount Zion lies at the extreme northern point of the city of our great king; in its palaces, God is known to maintain a stronghold. For here did kings gather, meeting together in council; once gathered, they looked around and were duly amazed. They were in awe, overwhelmed. A trembling took hold of them there akin to the shuddering of a woman in labor; with an easterly breeze, You foundered the ships of Tarshish. And just as we had heard would happen, so did we see things actually unfold in the city of A , God of all heavens, in the city of our God established by God forever, *selah*.

We imagined Your mercy, O God, in the midst of Your palace, for the praise due to You, like Your name, reaches to the ends of the earth; Your right hand is filled with justice. Let Mount Zion rejoice; let the daughters of Judah be glad because of Your laws. Surround Zion and encompass it, then count its towers; turn your attention to its ramparts, then climb up to its palaces so that you can tell of them to the next generation.  For this is God, our God forever and always whose leadership makes it possible for us to transcend death.

*Psalm 82: The Psalm the Levites Used to Sing
in Ancient Times on Tuesdays in the Temple*

הַיּוֹם יוֹם שְׁלִישִׁי בַשַּׁבָּת, שָׁבוּ הָיוּ הַלְוִיִּם אֹמְרִים בְּבֵית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ.

מִזְמוֹר לְאַסָּת, אֱלֹהִים נֹצֵב בַּעֲדַת
אֵל, בְּקָרֵב אֱלֹהִים יִשְׁפֹּט. עַד מַתִּי
תִּשְׁפֹּטוּ עוֹל, וּפְנֵי רְשָׁעִים תִּשְׁאוּ
סֵלָה. שִׁפְטוּ דָל וְיִתּוֹם, עָנִי וְרֵשׁ
הַצְדִּיקוּ. פִּלְטוּ דָל וְאֶבְיוֹן, מִיַּד
רְשָׁעִים הַצִּילוּ. לֹא יָדְעוּ וְלֹא יִבְיִנוּ,
בַּחֲשֵׁכָה יִתְהַלְכוּ, יִמּוּטוּ כָּל מוֹסְדֵי
אָרֶץ. אֲנִי אֶמְרָתִי אֱלֹהִים אַתֶּם,
וּבְנֵי עֲלִיוֹן כְּלֶכֶם. אֲכֹן כְּאָדָם
תִּמְוִיתוּן, וְכֹאֶחֶד הַשָּׂרִים תִּפְלוּ.
קוֹיְמָה אֱלֹהִים שִׁפְטָה הָאָרֶץ, 
כִּי אַתָּה תִּנְחַל בְּכָל הַגּוֹיִם.

shall circumcise the foreskin of your heart (Deuteronomy 10:16). The ancients, of course, did not imagine that there really was some sort of membrane that covered the human heart and made it impossible for the divine spirit to enter into its chambers. Rather, this is merely a poetic way of saying that the whole effort of spirituality and religion in the world—the sole legitimate goal of worship and of spiritual enterprise divested of arrogance and the hope for personal gain—is the slow experience of making wide the human heart and, in so doing, to prepare it for the entry of the spirit of the living God, that spark of divine reality to which the human soul may cleave . . . when it is present in the physical space in which that human being lives and works, and not merely present within the confines of that individual's intellect as a lofty idea or philosophical construct.



The notion that mortal individuals can move towards attaining the great goal of integrating their spiritual selves—their souls—into God by observing even those commandments of the Torah that regulate behavior between human beings is a cornerstone of Biblical faith and one of the cardinal foundation stones of modern Judaism. This is what the poets call the integration of the inner and outer self in God and what the mystics referred to as cleaving unto God. For most of us, the first step towards that great goal is taken by turning to face an individual in the world other than ourselves and acknowledging that that person too is created in image of God, then relating to that individual in a way that reflects the implications of that specific aspect of his or her reality.

This is especially challenging when the people who cross our paths are not those the most obviously endowed with qualities reminiscent of God's grandeur or power on earth. It is not particularly taxing, after all, to find traces of the Almighty in the physical presence of the strong and powerful on earth, just as it is relatively simple to find traces of God in the guise of divine Judge present in the physical presence of human judges as they preside

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over their courtrooms and pass judgment on people indicted of heinous crimes. It is far less simple, however, to find the image of God stamped on poverty-stricken individuals struggling to keep from drowning in the circumstances of their own lives . . . and it is precisely for this reason that the Torah presents such a large number of commandments rooted in the idea that it is an act of divine worship—and not merely one of natural kindness—to lift the indigent up out of poverty and to refuse to stop up one’s ears to the cries of the needy. Indeed, when the Bible declares that “one who stops up his ears to the cries of the needy will himself not be answered when he cries out in need (Proverbs 21:13),” the meaning is simply that just as one has the ability to help or to refuse to help those in one’s vicinity who are needy in comparison to oneself, so are all people needy and indigent in comparison to the Almighty Who will either respond or decline to respond to their cries for help in direct relationship to the degree to which they respond to the needs of the needy in their midst who turn to them for assistance.


In the end, human beings have the freedom to choose how to live in the world . . . but there is no more pathetic fantasy than the notion that the way we live in the world need have no influence on the degree to which we know God.

The act of seeking to cleave unto God by searching for the trace of divinity stamped on even the most miserable of human beings is called the sanctification of life in the language of Scripture because those individuals who show mercy and kindness to others **because** of the trace of the divine image they perceive in even the least enviable of human beings are able to use the acts of succor and kindness they perform to build a kind of holy bridge to God, the source of holiness in the world whom Scripture acclaims over and over as the Holy One of Israel.

Therefore, all who do not pervert the justice due even to the less influential member of society—and who do not take the clothing of the poor as collateral when they lend them money without interest and who do not oppress the stranger in their midst and who endeavor to make sure even orphans and widows are properly represented in

Psalm 82: The Psalm the Levites Used to Sing in Ancient Times on Tuesdays in the Temple

A psalm of Asaph.

God stands up in the divine council, speaking words of judgment in the midst of the celestial assembly: “How long will you render false judgment, favoring the faces of the wicked, *selah?* Judge the poor person and the orphan fairly, deal justly with the poverty-stricken and the destitute; rescue the weak and the needy, and save them from the grip of the wicked.” They know nothing, understand nothing; they walk around in darkness while the very foundations of the world totter. “I say,” God continues, “You may well be members of the heavenly assembly, all of you celestial beings, but you will henceforth die like human beings and fall down dead like earthly princes.”  Rise up, O God, and judge the earth, for the nations of the world are Yours to possess.

*Psalm 94: The Psalm the Levites Used to Sing
in Ancient Times on Wednesdays in the Temple*

הַיּוֹם יוֹם רְבִיעִי בַשַּׁבָּת, שָׁבוּ הָיוּ הַלְוִיִּם אוֹמְרִים בְּבֵית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ.
 אֵל נִקְמוֹת יְהוָה, אֵל נִקְמוֹת הוֹפִיעַ. הַנְּשֵׂא שׁוֹפֵט הָאָרֶץ, הַשֵּׁב
 גָּמוּל עַל גָּאִים. עַד מָתִי רְשָׁעִים יְהוָה, עַד מָתִי רְשָׁעִים
 יַעֲלֹזוּ? נִפְיֵעוּ יִדְבְּרוּ עִתְקָה, יִתְאֲמְרוּ כָּל פְּעֻלֵי אָוֶן. עַמּוֹהַּ יְהוָה
 יִדְבְּאוּ, וְנִחַלְתָּהּ יַעֲנוּ. אֲלַמְנָה וְגַר יִתְרַגֵּוּ, וַיִּתּוּמִים יִרְצַחוּ.
 וַיֹּאמְרוּ לֹא יִרְאֶה יְהוָה, וְלֹא יִבְיִן אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב. בָּיִנוּ בַעֲרִים בָּעַם
 וְכִסְיִלִּים מֹתֵי תִשְׁפִּילוּ. הַנְּטֵעַ אֶזְרָא הֲלֵא יִשְׁמַע, אִם יֵצֵר עֵינָיו
 הֲלֵא יִבְיִט? הַיִּסֵּר גּוֹיִם הֲלֵא יוֹכִיחַ, הַמְּלַמֵּד אָדָם דַּעַת? יְהוָה
 יִדַּע מַחְשְׁבוֹת אָדָם, כִּי הֵמָּה הֶחְלָה. אֲשֶׁרֵי הַגִּבֹּר אֲשֶׁר תִּיִסְרְפוּ
 יְהוָה, וּמִתּוֹרַתְךָ תִּלְמַדְנוּ. לְהַשְׁקִיט לֹא מִיַּמֵּי רַע, עַד יִפְרָה
 לְרַשָּׁע שְׁחַת. כִּי לֹא יִטֵּשׁ יְהוָה עַמּוֹ, וְנִחַלְתוּ לֹא יַעֲזֹב. כִּי עַד
 צֶדֶק יֵשׁוּב מִשְׁפָּט, וְאַחֲרָיו כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵב. מִי יִקּוּם לִי עַם
 מִרְעִים, מִי יִתִּיצֵב לִי עִם פְּעֻלֵי אָוֶן? לֹאֲלֵי יְהוָה עֲזָרְתָה לִּי,
 כַּמֵּיט שְׁכָנָה דוֹמָה נִפְשִׁי. אִם אֲמַרְתִּי מָטָה רַגְלִי, חֲסָדְךָ
 יְהוָה יִסְעֲדֵנִי. בָּרַב שִׁרְעֵפֵי בְּקִרְבִּי, תִּנְחַוּמִיךָ יִשְׁעִשְׂעוּ
 נִפְשִׁי. הִיחַבְּרָה כֶּסֶף הוֹזֹת, יוֹצֵר עֵמֶל עֵלֵי חֶק? יִגּוֹדוּ עַל
 נִפְשׁ צְדִיקָה, וְדָם נָקִי יִרְשִׁיעוּ. וַיְהִי יְהוָה לִי לְמִשְׁגָּב, וְאֱלֹהֵי
 לְצוּר מִחֲסִי. וַיֵּשֶׁב עֲלֵיהֶם אֶת אוֹנָם וּבִרְעָתָם יִצְמִיתָם,
 יִצְמִיתָם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ.

*To nod to the approaching Sabbath, we add the verses
of Psalm 95 that open the Kabbalat Shabbat service:*

לְכוּ בְרַנְנָה לַיהוָה, בְּרִיעָה לְצוּר יִשְׁעֵנוּ. נִקְדְּמָה פָּנֵינוּ
 בְּתוֹרָה, בְּזִמְרוֹת בְּרִיעַ לֹא. כִּי אֵל גְּדוֹל יְהוָה, וּמְלֹךְ גְּדוֹל עַל
 כָּל אֱלֹהִים.

court when they are forced to seek redress for grievances they have against those who would take advantage of their lack of influence in society—all such people are deemed by Scripture to come one step closer to God, the source of holiness in the world, through every single act of solicitude and caring they perform.



When the ancient poet wrote of himself that he was “imprisoned and could not escape (Psalm 88:9),” he was not an actual prisoner in a real prison of some sort, but was rather commenting on the human condition: all individuals, he was suggesting, are the prisoners of their own moral deficiencies, ethical inadequacies and spiritual shortcomings. The same is true in our day. Most human beings do not inhabit jails made of bricks and bars and high walls, but the prisons inhabited by the arrogant, the selfish and the wholly self-absorbed are real enough nevertheless.

This notion, that all people are prisoners in worlds they themselves manufacture, is a basic principle of faith. But there is another principle that needs to be paired with it . . . and that is the notion that God has the power and the ability and the will to free the imprisoned and to liberate incarcerated persons too weak and too little powerful to liberate themselves. Liberation from the world of inadequacy and ethical flaw is called redemption and, by its very name, it suggests that the great goal of all religious observance is the loosening of the bonds of shortcoming that plague all human beings as they attempt to live lives in God. Redemption, however, is a reward from God and this puzzle—that one can only be freed from the bonds that hold us back by embracing the notion that the bonds in question are of our own fashioning and that we, therefore, control their existence with our deeds and with the degree of our devotion to God—is itself one of the great paradoxes, but also one of the most basic axioms, of faith. In its own right, it is a gateway to pass through for all those who would cleave unto God and, in so doing, find redemption.

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Just as there is the Torah Scripture itself calls the “torah of truth” behind and beyond the parchment scroll we humans revere as the Torah, so is there a world behind and beyond the world we know and this world is known, in parallel fashion, as the World of Truth. In some contexts, however, this World of Truth is also called the Kingdom of God or the World to Come, the latter of which names implies that it is the realm in which the faithful may come to know God if they manage, through lives of service and worship, to free their souls from the bonds of terrestrial existence, then to ascend to God’s heaven unfettered by crippling doubt and unsullied by sin.

This ability to encounter God in the world behind the world is said by Scripture to be “the lot of the righteous,” as in the verse from the 119th psalm, “A is my lot / I pledge to keep Your commands (Psalm 119:57)” or the one from the sixteenth psalm in which the poet plainly declares, “A is my portion, my lot (Psalm 16:5).” Both these verses, and many others like them, point to a single truth: that the ability to cleave unto God is the lot—and the right—of all believers who yearn to serve and worship God wholeheartedly and without ruining their own efforts by spoiling them with selfishness or crippling self-importance. This is also the meaning of the verse from Deuteronomy, “Moses has bequeathed us Torah as an inheritance for the congregation of Jacob (Deuteronomy 33:4),” which is to say: the Torah is the natural inheritance of all who cleave unto its commandments and attempt to walk in its ways and the lot and portion of the faithful. Of the wicked, on the other hand, Scripture declares that “the spirit of terror is the cup from which they drink (Psalm 11:6).” The use of this idea—that one fashions out of the specific nature of one’s faith in God a kind of cup from which one must then drink the purest water or the bitterest gall—appears elsewhere in Scripture with respect to the pious where it is noted that God alone is the cup from which they drink the living waters of faith and, indeed, the end of the verse cited above from the sixteenth psalm makes that point explicitly: “. . . You

Psalm 94: The Psalm the Levites Used to Sing in Ancient Times on Wednesdays in the Temple

A is a God of vengeance; O God of Vengeance, appear! Rouse Yourself, O Judge of the earth, and pay back the arrogant in kind. How long, A , how long shall evil people exult? How long shall the wicked express themselves by speaking words of defiance, shall doers of iniquity boast about themselves? They oppress Your people, A , and torture Your very own; they kill widows and strangers, even daring to murder orphans. They say, “B will not see; the God of Jacob will pay no heed.” Understand this, you destroyers of the people, you fools. When will you gain some insight?

Shall the One Who designed the ear not hear? Shall the Creator of the eye not see?

Shall the One Who chastises nations, Who endows humanity with intelligence—shall that One not rebuke people like You? A knows the thoughts of human beings, though they be no more substantive than breath.

Happy is the individual whom You allow to suffer, B, for thus do You instruct him from Your teaching, keeping him calm on a day of evil . . . until a pit can be dug for the wicked. For A will neither abandon the people of God nor forsake the very people who constitute the divine inheritance, but, setting an example for the honest to follow, will return a just verdict. Who will stand with me against evildoers? Who will stand up for me against the doers of iniquity? If A were not my help, my soul would almost certainly endure its existence in silence. If I were to say that my foot is slipping, Your mercy, A , would help me. Despite the multitude of dour thoughts within me, Your words of comfort delight my soul. Will You associate Yourself with those who sit on the seat of scheming, who create havoc by promulgating unjust laws? They may gang up on the righteous soul and do evil to innocent blood, but A is my citadel and my rocky haven, my God Who turns wickedness against the wicked and destroys them with their own evil. Most assuredly, A , our God, will destroy them.

To nod to the approaching Sabbath, we add the verses of Psalm 95 that open the Kabbalat Shabbat service:



Come let us sing hymns of joy to A ; let us raise up a joyous noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before the divine countenance bringing a thanksgiving sacrifice; with songs, let us revel before our God. For A is a great God, a great Sovereign exalted above all other divinities.

*Psalm 81: The Psalm the Levites Used to Sing
in Ancient Times on Thursdays in the Temple*

הַיּוֹם יוֹם חַמִּישִׁי בַשַּׁבָּת, שָׁבוּ הָיוּ הַלְוִיִּם אוֹמְרִים בְּבֵית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ.
לְמַנְצַחַּךְ עַל הַגְּתִית לְאַסֶּף. הֲרַנֵּינוּ לֵאלֹהִים עוֹזֵנוּ,
הֲרִיעוּ לֵאלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב. שָׂאוּ זְמֶרָה וְתָנוּ תָהּ, כַּפֹּזֵר
נְעִים עִם נָבֵל. תִּקְעוּ בַחֲדָשׁ שׁוֹפָר, בַּפִּסָּה לְיוֹם
חַגֵּנוּ. כִּי חֹק לְיִשְׂרָאֵל הוּא, מִשְׁפָּט לֵאלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב.
עֲדוֹת בִּיהוֹסֵף שָׁמוּ בְצֵאתוֹ עַל אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם, שְׁפַת
לֹא יִדְעֵתִי אֲשַׁמֵּעַ. הַסִּירוֹתַי מִסֹּבֵל שְׁכֵמוֹ, כַּפְּיוֹ
מִדוֹד תַּעֲבֹרְנָה. בְּצִרָה קָרָאתָ וְאַחֲלָצְךָ אֶעֱנֶךָ בְּסִתֵּר
רַעַם, אֶבְחַנְךָ עַל מִי מוֹרִיבָה סָלָה. שְׁמַע עַמִּי
וְאַעֲיֶדָה בָּךְ, יִשְׂרָאֵל אִם תִּשְׁמַע לִי. לֹא יִהְיֶה בָּךְ
אֵל זָר, וְלֹא תִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לְאֵל גֵּכָר. אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ,
הַפְּעַלְךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם, הֲרַחֵב פִּיךָ וְאַמְלֵאֲהוּ. וְלֹא
שְׁמַע עַמִּי לְקוֹלִי, וְיִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא אָבָה לִי. וְאַשְׁלַחְהוּ
בְּשִׁרְיוֹת לֶבֶם, יִלְכוּ בְּמוֹעֲצוֹתֵיהֶם. לֹא עַמִּי שְׁמַע
לִי, יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּדַרְכֵי יְהִלְכוּ. כַּמַּעֵט אוֹיְבֵיהֶם אֲכַנִּיעַ,
וְעַל צָרֵיהֶם אֲשִׁיב יָדִי. מִשְׁנֵאֵי יְהוָה יִכְחָשׁוּ
לוֹ, וְיִהְיֶה עֵתָם לְעוֹלָם. וַיִּאֲכִלְהוּ מִחֶלֶב חֶטָּה,
וּמִצֹּר דָּבַשׁ אֲשַׁבִּיעֶנְךָ.

are my cup / the Framer of my destiny (Psalm 16:5)."



Many of the commandments of the Torah require of those who would worship God that they draw a line in the world with the intention that it serve as a kind of barrier between disparate spheres of existence that would otherwise be interconnected or, at least, contiguous. Obscure and seemingly unsettlingly picayune, these commandments are actually based on the notion that the most basic, fundamental test of the legitimacy of a given act of divine worship is whether it enables the individual to move forward psychically, spiritually and emotionally towards a state of ongoing communion and intimacy with God along a path paved with that individual's unquenchable desire for spiritual redemption.

This truth is hidden just behind the famous words spoken by God to Abraham at the beginning of the twelfth chapter of Genesis: "Go forth from your country, from your homeland and from your father's house to the land that I shall show you (Genesis 12:1)." These words were addressed to Abraham when he was in Haran—but was Haran his homeland? Indeed, Scripture answers that question only a few lines earlier when it notes that Abraham's brother, Haran, died "in the presence of his father, Terach, in the land of his birth, in Ur Kasdim (Genesis 11:28)" and surely Abraham and Haran, who were both born in the same year when their father was seventy, were also all born in the same city. With this apparent slip, however, Scripture wishes to teach something profound and important: by commanding Abraham to leave his homeland when he had already done so, the Torah is teaching us that it was not only from Mesopotamia to Israel that Abraham was being commanded to travel, but from the domain of the mundane to the domain of the sacred, to the holy realm, to God.

Indeed, God is acclaimed—subtly but repeatedly—throughout Scripture as the land in which the faithful dwell. God is the land in which the patriarchs wandered and towards which pilgrims

wander, the fertile soil in which the spirit of any human being can grow to full maturity when that individual is wholly given over to the worship of God through the agency of fealty and obedience to the word of God as captured, encapsulated and presented in the pages of Scripture. It is for this reason that God is called Zion, as in the famous words of two prophets “For from Zion comes forth the Torah (Isaiah 2:3 and Micah 4:2),” in which “Zion” cannot possibly refer to Mount Zion in Jerusalem because, as every student of Scripture knows, the Torah was revealed to Israel at Mount Sinai, not in Jerusalem.

Furthermore, it is from Sinai that the Torah came, but from God that it continues to come forth, that is: to inspire and direct the faithful towards the great goal of communion with the living spirit of the divine. And, indeed, that is also the meaning of the reference, also in the Book of Isaiah, to “Zion, the Holy One of Israel (Isaiah 60:14).”

From all this, it follows that the faithful may profitably think of God as the vast land for which the pious yearn and in which they spend their lives attempting to settle. It is for this reason that so many Jewish sages have concluded from their study of Scripture that settling in the Land of Israel is one of the commandments of Scripture—not because the other lands of the globe are somehow less meaningfully part of God’s creation, but simply because the act of traveling to Zion and settling there is meant to symbolize the willingness of an individual to travel to God, called Zion, and there to dwell all the long days of a life solely and totally devoted to the quest for God. And if one were to challenge this idea by asserting that, if God exists in every place, there cannot actually be any real advantage in living in one specific land or another, then the answer would have to be that those who travel to the Holy Land—and especially those who travel there with the express intention of settling there—elevate their souls to the Holy One of Israel . . . for what could be more logical than seeking holiness in a land that is wholly holy, in a land suffused by God with the sanctity of the divine in its every path and byway?

Psalm 81: The Psalm the Levites Used to Sing in Ancient Times on Thursdays in the Temple

For the conductor, a song of Asaph to be accompanied on the *gittit*.

Sing joyously to the God of our strength; make joyous noise unto the God of Jacob. Take up song, accompany it on the drum, on the delightful lyre, on the *nevel*. Sound the *shofar* on the New Moon, on the eve of our festival day, for doing so is a law for Israel, a statute of the God of Jacob, Who vouchsafed divine testimony to Jehoseph while going forth against the land of Egypt. I hear words now, although I do not know fully what they mean. Then, as I removed some of the burden from another’s back and eased his load from his hands, God spoke:

“In distress you call out and I shall grant you relief; I shall answer you with mysterious thunder. I shall test you at the waters of Meribah, *selah*. Hear, O my people, and I shall vouchsafe testimony to you—even to you, O Israel, if you will only listen. There shall be no alien god among you, nor shall you bow down to a foreign god.

“I am A , your God, Who took you out of the land of Egypt, saying, ‘Open wide your mouth and I shall fill it.’ But My people did not listen to My voice; indeed, Israel had no desire for Me. And so did I send them forth in the stubbornness of their heart, letting them go forward according to their own lights. If My people would only listen to Me, if Israel would only walk in My ways, then would I soon overwhelm their enemies and turn My hand against their foes.”




Those who hate A will always deny the reality of God, but will their time last forever?

But as for the pious, God will feed them of the choicest wheat germ, saying, “I will satisfy you with honey from a rock.”

*Psalm 93: The Psalm the Levites Used to Sing
in Ancient Times on Fridays in the Temple*

הַיּוֹם יוֹם שְׁשֵׁי בַשָּׁבָת, שָׁבוּ הָיוּ הַלְלוּיִם אוֹמְרִים בְּבֵית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ.

יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ גִּּאֹת לְבַשׁ, לְבַשׁ יְהוָה
עַז הַתְּאֵזֶר, אֵף תְּכוּן תֵּבֵל בַּל
תְּמוּט. נְכוּן כְּסֵאֵךְ מֵאֵז, מֵעוֹלָם
אַתָּה. נְשִׂאוּ נְהָרוֹת יְהוָה, נְשִׂאוּ
נְהָרוֹת קוֹלָם, יִשְׂאוּ נְהָרוֹת דְּכִיָּם.
מִקְלוֹת מַיִם רַבִּים אֲדִירִים מִשְׁבְּרֵי
יָם, אֲדִיר בַּמָּרוֹם יְהוָה.  עֵדוּתֵיךְ
נֶאֱמָנוּ מְאֹד, לְבֵיתֵךְ נֶאֱוָה קֹדֶשׁ,
יְהוָה לְאַרְךְ יָמִים.



It is the natural way of people to imitate themselves and walk comfortably along paths they themselves have already traveled and this is the meaning, or one of the meanings, of the famous statement of Ben Azzai's preserved in the Ethics of the Sages, that the reward of performing one of the commandments is the energy and inclination to undertake the performance of another and that, similarly, the freedom to sin is engendered, more than by anything else, than by having already sinned and, one would like to think, gotten away with it.

The prophets of Israel, however, had their own *torah*, according to which the reward inherent in the performance of a commandment of Scripture is the slow integration of the soul of the worshiper into the great ocean of divine presence in the mundane world. According to this model, the reward for the performance of a commandment is that the individual in question personally becomes, so to speak, one of a series of never ending, permanently undulating waves that do and cannot exist within the exalted reality and absolute unreality of God in a world that both does and cannot contain even the smallest spark of true divinity at the time it functions—and functions effectively—as an ocean of being in which human beings can will themselves to cleave unto God and, in so doing, to become children of God, as the Torah, speaking ideally, observes almost simply, “You are—destined to be and capable of becoming and entitled to think of yourself as—the children of A , your God (Deuteronomy 14:1).”



The concept of attempting to see further by standing on one's own shoulders, the notion of attempting to deal with the problem of a lack of faith in specific dogmatic principles by embracing those very principles wholeheartedly in the context of total intellectual integrity, the idea that it is possible to conclude your own personal spiritual journey by deciding finally, actually, to undertake it . . . these

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paradoxes are all the natural results of the attempt of the individual possessed of spiritual integrity creatively, productively and intelligently to use the tension and frustration that result from undertaking a set of tasks that are possible and impossible at the same time . . . and to use that energy to unravel the riddle of trying with every ounce of one's spiritual fiber to know a God Whom one accepts as being totally unknowable. This is the inner meaning of the verse from the Torah, "Serve God and cleave unto God (Deuteronomy 10:20)," which is to say: cleave unto God through the means of worship, for you will never cleave unto God unless you find the strength to worship a God you have yet to know . . . or regarding Whose existence you have yet to feel totally secure and unconflicted.




God is neither from the world nor of the world, but neither is God to be found behind or beneath or beyond the world and this is the meaning of the divine oracle preserved in the book of the prophet Hosea, "For I am God and not a man, the Holy One in your midst (Hosea 11:9)." Indeed, God is found in no place and in every place and was therefore known to the sages of classical antiquity as The Place . . . because even though the world is not the place of God, God may still somehow be described aptly as the Place of the world.

Although traces of God's presence are perceptible in everything that exists, God is nonetheless so totally other than the world and from its things that it becomes reasonable to say that God is not the totality of existence and the totality of existence is not God.


God is not the whole world or even a part of it, but is rather the perceptible/imperceptible Soul of the universe and its Heart. To seek God in the context of worship, however, is not impossible. Nor is it at all irrational. Yet, to attempt to journey towards faith in the context of unwavering spiritual integrity, the would-be pilgrim on his or way to Jerusalem must embrace several ideas that themselves will require a bit of effort to accept wholeheartedly. For example, such a tentative pil-

Psalm 93: The Psalm the Levites Used to Sing in Ancient Times on Fridays in the Temple

A reigns wearing robes of majesty. A wears, or rather girds the divine loins with, that very might once used to create the world and make it sturdy and permanent. Your throne too stands eternally firm; You Yourself, of course, shall exist forever. The rivers, A , the rivers lift up their voice; the rivers rise and rage, but A is mighty on high, mightier even than the sound of the great waters, even than the roar of the sea's mightiest breakers.  Your testimonies regarding Your House, the most beautiful of holy places, are entirely true, A , and permanently so.

Psalm 27

During the weeks between Rosh Chodesh Elul and Hoshana Rabba,
we read the twenty-seventh psalm at the end of the Morning Service.
During the month of Elul, except for Erev Rosh Hashanah, the shofar
is sounded before the psalm is recited.

לְדָוִד, יְהוָה אֹזְרִי וַיִּשְׁעֵנִי, מִמִּי אֵיךְ אֶרְאֶה? יְהוָה מֵעוֹז
חַיִּי, מִמִּי אֶפְחָד? בְּקֶרֶב עָלִי מִרְעִים לֶאֱכֹל אֶת
בְּשָׂרִי, צָרִי וְאֹיְבֵי לִי, הִמָּה פִּשְׁלוֹ וְנִפְּלוֹ. אִם
תִּחְנֶנּה עָלַי מִחֲנָה, לֹא יִירָא לְבַי, אִם תִּקְוִים עָלַי
מִלְחָמָה, בְּזֹאת אֲנִי בּוֹטֵחַ. אַחַת שְׂאֵלְתִי מֵאֵת
יְהוָה, אוֹתָהּ אֲבַקֵּשׁ, שְׁבִתִּי בְּבֵית יְהוָה כָּל יְמֵי חַיִּי
לְחַזוֹת בְּנִעִים יְהוָה וּלְבַקֵּר בְּהִיכָלוֹ. כִּי יִצְפְּנֵנִי
בְּסִכָּה בַּיּוֹם רָעָה, יִסְתַּרְנִי בְּסִתְרֵי אֹהֶלֹ, בְּצִוּר
יְרוּמָמָנִי. וְעַתָּה יְרוּם רֹאשִׁי, עַל אֹיְבֵי סְבִיבוֹתַי,
וְאֶזְבְּחָה בְּאֹהֶלֹ זִבְחֵי תְרוּעָה, אֲשִׁירָה וְאֶזְמַרְהָ
לַיהוָה. שְׁמַע יְהוָה קוֹלִי אֶקְרָא, וְחַנּוּנִי וְעֲנִנִי. לֵךְ
אֲמַר לְבַי, בְּקִשׁוֹ פָּנָי, אֶת פָּנֶיךָ יְהוָה אֲבַקֵּשׁ. אֵל
תִּסְתַּר פָּנֶיךָ מִמּוֹנֵי, אֵל תֵּט בְּאָרְ עֵבְדֶךָ, עֲזַרְתִּי
הֵייתִי, אֵל תִּטְשֵׁנִי וְאֵל תַּעֲזֹבֵנִי אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׁעֵי. כִּי
אָבִי וְאִמִּי עֲזָבוּנִי, וַיְהוֶה יֶאֱסָפֵנִי. הוֹרְנִי יְהוָה
דְּרָכֶךָ, וּנְחַנֵּנִי בְּאֶרֶץ מִישׁוֹר, לְמַעַן שִׁדְרֵנִי. אֵל
תִּתְּנֵנִי בְּגִפְשׁ צָרִי, כִּי קָמוּ בֵּי עֵדֵי שִׁקֵּר וַיִּפְּחֻ
חֲמָס. לֹא הָאֱמַנְתִּי, לְרָאוֹת בְּטוֹב יְהוָה בְּאֶרֶץ
חַיִּים.  קוֹה אֵל יְהוָה, חֲזֵק וַיֵּאֱמֵץ לְבָבִי, וַיִּקְוֶה
אֵל יְהוָה.

grim will have to will him or herself to believe that there is reasonability in seeking communion with the divine in a world that cannot logically or reasonably contain God, that faith can never reasonably be used as a shield against honesty, science and true knowledge (and that this is so despite the fact that faith, by its very nature, seeks to live precisely where scientific knowledge refuses to dwell), and that the pilgrim seeking Jerusalem on earth must agree to seek God in places God cannot logically exist without despairing . . . or succumbing to the almost overwhelming temptation to fashion a spiritual life on lies and half-truths.



Somehow, the ancient prohibition of seeking God through the medium of idols and idolatrous worship has ended up in the modern world translated into a general ill ease about seeking real, content-rich communion with God at all. This is not entirely illogical—it was, after all, content-rich communion with God that idolaters were seeking—but it is as grave a misstep as any could be for the pilgrim seriously interested in using the rituals of religion to embrace not *only* theoretical faith in God, but an ongoing, sensually real sense of God's fully-present presence in his or her life. Therefore, although it is forbidden—and forbidden absolutely—for a Jew to seek communion with Baal-Zebub—as indicated by the sarcastic question the angel bid the prophet Elijah put to the king of Israel: “Go up to the messengers of the king of Samaria and say unto them, ‘Is there no God in Israel that you are constrained to seek communion with Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron?’ (2 Kings 1:3)—it is entirely permitted to seek communion with the God of Israel, and this is what the prophet Hosea meant when he declared “. . . and it is the right time now to seek out A , the God of Israel, that God may come and teach you justice (Hosea 10:12).” It is also what the Torah means to teach us is permitted when it says of Rebecca that “she went to seek communion with A (Genesis 25:22),” thus saying almost clearly that she went with neither advance per-

mission nor prior license from the religious authorities of her day.

The bottom line is that any who teach that seeking communion with God by attempting to cleave utterly and absolutely to the reality of God in the world is an impossibility or, even more absurdly, a sin of some sort are denying both the point of religion and the immediate reality of God in the world . . . as though lovers somehow debase the purity of their passion by seeking to translate it from the realm of unfulfilled pining into the sphere of ongoing dialogue and physically real pleasure by actually encountering each other in the flesh.



Religion at its best is far more of a playing field than an art gallery. As a result, the task of the faithful is not to act as the curators of a gallery of sacred things, but as athletes willing and ready to take on ancient rites and rituals and wrestle them to the ground for the sake of transforming them from dim memories of ancient worship into useful planks with which they might build a bridge to a life of ongoing communion with God.

This being the case, the approach to Judaism rooted in the idea that the sole function of the commandments of the Torah is to give a particular generation of Jews something to inherit from the generation that preceded them and to bequeath to the generation that follows them without actually enriching the spiritual live of the actual Jewish people alive in that specific generation is the ultimate in spiritual vulgarity. The cause of ensuring Jewish continuity has the ring of nobility to it, but although ensuring the orderly transfer of the commandments from one generation to the next sounds like a worthy enough goal, the great goal of Jewish life is not merely to avoid its own extinction. Rather, the whole point of preserving Jewish life at all is to give into the hands of the Jews of every generation the possibility of unifying the name of God through the performance of the commandments and, in so doing, to cleave unto God . . . and this is the meaning of the verse from the Book of Joshua that equates the twin tasks

Psalm 27


During the weeks between Rosh Chodesh Elul and Hoshana Rabba, we read the twenty-seventh psalm at the end of the Morning Service. During the month of Elul, except for Erev Rosh Hashanah, the shofar is sounded before the psalm is recited.

(A psalm) of David.


If A is my light and my salvation, whom need I fear? If A is the stronghold of my life, of whom then should I be frightened?

When evildoers draw near to me to devour my flesh, when my enemies and foes approach, they stumble and fall. Should an army array against me, my heart shall not know fear; should war be declared against me, even then shall I remain confirmed in my faith.

One favor have I asked of A and I request it now anew: that I be permitted to dwell in the House of A all the days of my life, so that I might gaze on the beauty of A and tarry forever in the divine sanctuary. For God will surely conceal me in the Temple—the divine *sukkah*—on a day of evil, hiding me in that protective tent, lifting me up onto a rock. Indeed, as I offer up the kind of sacrifice attended by trumpet blasts in God’s tent, I can see my head lifted up higher than any of the enemies who surround me; I shall sing and chant hymns to A .

Hear my voice, A , when I cry out; be gracious unto me and answer me. I heard my heart say, “Seek me” to You, but surely it is I who need to seek out Your face, A . That being the case, hide not Your presence from me. Turn not from Your servant in anger, for You are my help; neither forsake nor leave me, O God of my salvation. For although my father and my mother have left me, A shall care for me. Teach me Your way, A , and guide me on the level path in order to confound my oppressors. Give me not into the hand of my enemies, for false witnesses out to inspire violence have risen up against me. Perhaps they would have already vanquished me,  had I not believed it to be my lot to look upon the goodness of A in the land of the living. Hope in A ! Be strong and may your heart be of good courage; hope in A !

On Rosh Chodesh, Psalm 104 is recited.

בְּרַכֵּי נַפְשֵׁי אֶת יְהוָה, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי גְדֻלַּת מְאֹד, הוֹד וְהַדָּר לְבִשְׁתָּ.
עֹטָה אֹרֶךְ כְּשִׁלְמָה, נוֹטָה שָׁמַיִם כִּי־רִיעָה. הַמְקַרְה בַּמַּיִם עַל־יִדְתֵינוּ,
הַשֶּׁם עֲבִים רְכוּבוֹ, הַמְהַלֵּךְ עַל פְּנֵי רֹחַ. עֲשֵׂה מְלֶאכֶיךָ רוּחוֹת,
מְשֻׁרְתֵינוּ אֵשׁ לַחֵט. יָסַד אֶרֶץ עַל מְכוּנֶיהָ, בַּל תִּמְוֹט עוֹלָם וָעֶד.
תְּהוֹם כְּלָבוֹשׁ כְּסִיתוֹ, עַל הָרִים יַעֲמֵדוּ מַיִם. מִן גְּעֻרְתָּךְ יְנוֹסוּן, מִן
קוֹל רַעְמָךְ יִחַפְּזוּן. יַעֲלוּ הָרִים יִרְדוּ בְּקַעֲוֹת, אֵל מְקוֹם זֶה יִסְדֹּתָ
לָהֶם. גְּבוּל שָׁמַיִם בַּל יַעֲבֹרוּן, בַּל יִשְׁבוּן לְכַסּוֹת הָאָרֶץ. הַמְשַׁלַּח
מַעֲיָנִים בְּנַחְלָיִם, בֵּין הָרִים יִהְלָכוּן. יִשְׁקוּ כָּל חַיֵּיתוֹ שָׂדֵי, יִשְׁבְּרוּ
כְּפָאִים צְמָאִם. עַל־יֵהָם עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם יִשְׁכּוּן, מִבֵּין עֲפָאִים יִתְנוּ קוֹל.
מִשְׁקָה הָרִים מַעֲלִיֹּתֵינוּ, מִפְּרֵי מַעֲשֵׂיךָ תִּשְׁבַּע הָאָרֶץ. מִצְמִיחַ חֲצִיר
לְבַהֲמֹה, וְעֹשֵׁב לַעֲבֹדַת הָאָדָם לְהוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ. וַיִּנּוּ יִשְׁמַח
לִבֵּב אֲנוֹשׁ לְהַצְהִיל פְּגִים מִשָּׁמֶן, וְלָחֵם לִבֵּב אֲנוֹשׁ יִסְעֵד. יִשְׁבְּעוּ
עֲצֵי יְהוָה, אֲרָזֵי לְבָנוֹן אֲשֶׁר גָּטַע. אֲשֶׁר שֵׁם צִפְרִים יִקְנְנוּ, חֲסִידָה
בְּרוּשִׁים בֵּיתָהּ. הָרִים הַגְּבוּהִים לִיעֲלִים, סְלַעִים מַחֲסֵה לְשֹׁפְנִים.
עֲשֵׂה יֶרֶחַ לְמוֹעֲדִים, שֶׁמֶשׁ יָדַע מִבּוֹאוֹ. תִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה וַיְהִי לַיְלָה, בּוֹ
תִרְמֹשׁ כָּל חַיֵּיתוֹ יַעַר. הַכְּפִירִים שֹׁאֲגִים לְטָרְף, וְלִבְקֹשׁ מֵאֵל אֲכָלִם.
תִּזְרַח הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ יֵאֲסִפּוּן, וְאֵל מַעֲוֹנֹתֶם יִרְבֹּצוּן. יֵצֵא אָדָם לַפְּעֹלוֹ,
וְלַעֲבֹדָתוֹ עֲדֵי עָרֵב. מָה רַבּוֹ מַעֲשֵׂיךָ יְהוָה, כָּל־כֹּחַ בְּחִכְמָה עֲשִׂיתָ,
מְלֵאָה הָאָרֶץ קִנְיָנָךְ. זֶה הַיָּם גָּדוֹל וְרַחֵב יָדַיִם, שֶׁם רָמַשׁ וְאִין
מִסְפָּר, חַיִּוֹת קִטְנוֹת עִם גְּדֻלוֹת. שֶׁם אֲנִיּוֹת יִהְלָכוּן, לְוִיתָן זֶה
יִצְרֹת לְשִׁחַק בּוֹ. כָּל־כֹּחַ אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׁבְּרוּן, לְתַת אֲכָלֶם בְּעֵתוֹ. תִּתֵּן לָהֶם
יִלְקֻטוּן, תִּפְתַּח יָדְךָ יִשְׁבְּעוּן טוֹב. תִּסְתִּיר פְּגִיךָ יִבְהַלּוּן, תִּסְרַף רוּחַם
יִגְוְעוּן, וְאֵל עֲפָרָם יִשׁוּבוּן. תִּשְׁלַח רוּחְךָ יִבְרָאוּן, וּתְחַדֵּשׁ פְּגִי
אֲדָמָה. יְהִי כְבוֹד יְהוָה לְעוֹלָם, יִשְׁמַח יְהוָה בְּמַעֲשָׂיו. הַמְבִיט לְאֶרֶץ
וּתְרַעַד, יִגַע בַּהָרִים וַיַּעֲשֶׂנוּ.  אֲשִׁירָה לַיהוָה בְּחַיֵּי, אֲזַמְרָה
לְאֱלֹהֵי בְעוֹדֵי. יַעֲרַב עֲלֵינוּ שִׁיחֵי, אֲנַכִּי אֲשַׁמַּח בִּיהוָה. יִתְמוּ חֲטָאִים
מִן הָאָרֶץ וְרִשְׁעִים עוֹד אֵינָם, בְּרַכֵּי נַפְשֵׁי אֶת יְהוָה, הַלְלוּיָהּ.

bestowed by Joshua upon the tribes of Reuben, Gad and Manasseh: "to keep the divine commandments and to cleave unto God (Joshua 22:5)."



God functions in the universe as the ordering force that rests just behind, beneath and behind every physically existent thing, and as the ontological energy that makes real and evident those things able to bear existence in real space. Therefore, any who seek to live in a state of ongoing communion with God must learn to transcend the boundaries of the world and, in so doing, to come to a place that exists without any trace of physicality, to a place that is and is not part of the world, to a place that exists solely as creative, poetic energy, to a place that is the Place of the world without the world actually being its place . . . but none of this will ever be possible for prisoners of the world who are incarcerated in and by its physics in the way actual prisoners in jail are kept in place by bars of steel.

Since God is totally other than the created universe, it follows that human beings can only discern the divine in the universe they inhabit indirectly through the medium of allusive hint and indirect suggestion. Indeed, to the extent that human beings can see divinity at all, God can only be seen in this world in the light of the occasional ray of luminescence that sometimes shines forth when the parts of the universe separate for the briefest moment and reveal a blurry picture of what the world itself generally keeps hidden and obscure . . . and this experience, rare thought it may be, is called salvation, as in the famous verse from the Psalms: "Shine the light of Your face upon Your servant / grant me salvation according to Your great mercy (Psalm 31:17)." Even those few who know how to look in precisely the right direction at precisely the right moment will see almost nothing—"for no one can see Me and survive"—but they still maintain a serious advantage over those who look in the wrong direction at the right time or vice versa, or (needless to say) those who look in the wrong direction at the wrong moment.

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The goal of Judaism is to point the Jew in the right direction to find God and it is for this reason that the first efforts of any individual to establish a life of communion with God are called, collectively, by the name *teshuvah*. Literally meaning “turning”, the word is generally translated as “repentance,” but it is not at all the same thing as regret or remorse. This is why God chose to speak through the prophet Ezekiel with the words, “Turn and live (Ezekiel 18:32)” —which is to say: turn back unto Me in perfect repentance and thus shall you merit living together with Me in the state of ongoing psychic communion which the Torah calls the love of humanity for God, as it is written, “And you shall love A , your God (Deuteronomy 6:4).”



When Scripture ordains that worshipers approach the divine palace in joy, as, for example, in the words of the one hundredth psalm “Serve ye A in joy (Psalm 100:2),” the concept is that the suppliant before God is not meant to be alienated or depressed by the obligation to worship the Almighty without wandering unawares into the realm of dream and delusion. Just to the contrary—the injunction to worship in joy is meant to remind those who seek God in the world that it is possible—and eminently so—to suffuse one’s ritual activities with meaning and deep significance to the extent that those rituals never degenerate into mere mimicry and slavish, uninformed obedience.

Therefore are all who would aspire to the worship of God in joy obligated to approach the performance of the commandments imbued with a deep sense of gratitude that they are able to know joy at all. The God of Israel, they accept and believe through their own experience of the divine, is the source of joy in the world and so do they embrace the words of the fourth psalm, in which the poet acclaim God with the words “You have placed joy in my heart (Psalm 4:8). They are joyful because they have come closer to God through the medium of rite and ritual . . . and because they have the insight into the nature of things to understand that the ability to step back far enough from

On Rosh Chodesh, Psalm 104 is recited.

O my soul, bless A .

A , my God, You are very great; You wear splendor and magnificence as Your garments.

You are the One Who wears light as though it were a robe, Who hangs the heavens as though they were curtains, Who uses water to make the roofing for the uppermost chambers of the divine palace, Who uses clouds as a chariot, Who travels about on the wings of the wind, Who uses the winds as messengers, Whose ministers are flames of burning fire, Who set the earth on its foundations so that it will never totter.

The deep covered the earth as though it were its cloak. The waters rose over the mountains at that time, then fled away at Your scolding command; indeed, they rushed away at the sound of Your thunder.

The mountains grew and the valleys sunk to the precise foundation You laid for them; You set a boundary for land and sea that neither will ever cross. The waters will never again cover the earth.


You are the One Who sends the water of subterranean springs into rivers that run between mountains and gives water to drink to all the animals of the field; even the wild donkeys, drinking from them, slake their thirst. The birds of heaven dwell by them and sing out from the branches of nearby trees.

You are the One Who irrigates the mountains with waters stored in the upper chambers of heaven; the hunger of the earth is satisfied with the fruit You have made. You are the One Who makes the grass grow for animals to eat and the vegetation necessary for humanity to bring forth bread from the earth through working the soil. Indeed, it is bread on which the heart of humankind feasts—and also wine, which gladdens the hearts of all and makes people’s faces shine more brightly than if they were rubbed with oil. The trees of A are well nourished, the mighty cedars of Lebanon that God planted—those trees in which birds make their nests—and the fir trees too, which are home to the storks. And You also made the high mountains for wild goats and the great rocks that serve rabbits as their safe haven.

You are the One Who made the moon in all its phases, and the sun in such a way that it knows to set in the evening. You decree darkness and it becomes night, the time when the animals of the forest creep forth in safety, when lions roar at their prey—for their roaring too is a way of asking God for food. But when the sun shines again, they rejoice their prides and lie down in their dens to rest, just as humanity is ready to go to work, to labor until evening.


How great are Your works, A ! You have made everything with wisdom; the world is filled with Your creation. There is the sea, great and wide, filled with swimming things without number, small creatures and big. There, ships make their way; there lives the Leviathan, which you created to frolic in it.

They all look to You to give them their food in due course. You give it to them and they gather it up; You open Your hand and they are satisfied with good. But when You hide Your face, they are terrified; when You stop their breathing, they die and return unto the dust from which they came. Then, when You send them Your breath to revive them, it is as though they are created afresh, just as You renew the face of the earth.

May the glory of A be forever. May A , Who can look at the earth and make it quake and Who can touch mountains and make them smoke, forever rejoice in the work of divine creation.  I shall sing to A as long as I live; I shall sing hymns to God as long as I exist. May my words be pleasant unto God, as it is in A that I rejoice. May sinners be gone from the earth and may the wicked likewise vanish! O my soul, bless A .

Hallelujah!

In a house of mourning, the forty-ninth psalm is recited.

לְמַנְצַחַּ לְבַנֵּי קִרְחַ מִזְמוֹר. שְׁמְעוּ זֹאת כָּל הָעַמִּים,
הַאֲזִינוּ כָּל יֹשְׁבֵי חָלָד. גַּם בְּנֵי אָדָם, גַּם בְּנֵי אִישׁ,
יַחַד עֲשִׂיר וְאַבְיוֹן. פִּי יְדַבֵּר חֲכָמוֹת, וְהַגִּית לְבִי
תְבוּנוֹת. אֲטָה לְמַשָּׁל אֲזִנִּי, אֶפְתַּח בְּכַנּוֹר חֵידָתִי.
לָמָּה אֵירָא בְיָמַי רָע, עוֹן עַקְבֵי יִסְפְּנִי. הַבְּטָחִים עַל
חֵילָם, וּבָרַב עֲשָׂרָם יִתְהַלְּלוּ. אַח לֹא פָדָה יִפְדָּה
אִישׁ, לֹא יִתֵּן לְאֱלֹהִים כְּפָרוֹ. וַיִּקַּר פְּדִיוֹן גַּבְשָׁם,
וְחָדַל לְעוֹלָם. וַיְחִי עוֹד לְנֹצֵחַ, לֹא יִרְאֶה הַשְּׁחָת. פִּי
יִרְאֶה חֲכָמִים יָמוּתוּ, יַחַד כְּסִיל וְבַעַר יֵאבְדוּ, וְעִזְבוּ
לְאַחֲרֵים חֵילָם. קִרְפָּם בְּתִימוֹ לְעוֹלָם, מִשְׁכַּנְתָּם
לְדוֹר וָדוֹר, קִרְאוּ בְשִׁמוֹתַם עָלַי אֲדָמוֹת. וְאָדָם בִּיקַר
בַּל יִלְוֶה, גַּמְשָׁל כְּפִהֵמוֹת גְּדָמוֹ. זֶה דְרָפָם, כְּסִל
לָמוֹ, וְאַחֲרֵיהֶם בְּפִיהֶם יִרְצוּ, סָלָה. כִּצְאוֹן לְשִׁאוֹל
שִׁתּוֹ, מוֹת יִרְעֶם, וַיִּרְדּוּ בָם יִשְׂרָיִם לְבָקָר, וְצוֹרָם
לְבַלּוֹת שִׁאוֹל מִזָּבֵל לוֹ. אַךְ אֱלֹהִים יִפְדָּה גַבְשֵׁי מִיַּד
שִׁאוֹל, פִּי יִקְחֵנִי סָלָה. אֵל תִּירָא פִּי יַעֲשֶׂר אִישׁ, פִּי
יִרְפָּה כְּבוֹד בֵּיתוֹ. פִּי לֹא בְּמוֹתוֹ יִקַּח הַכֹּל, לֹא יִרַד
אַחֲרָיו כְּבוֹדוֹ. פִּי גַבְשׁוֹ בְּחַיָּיו יִבְרָךְ, וַיּוֹדֶךָ פִּי תִיטִיב
לָךְ. תְּבוֹא עַד הַדוֹר אֲבוֹתָינוּ, עַד גִּצְחַ לֹא יִרְאוּ אוֹר.
אָדָם בִּיקַר וְלֹא יָבִין, גַּמְשָׁל כְּפִהֵמוֹת גְּדָמוֹ. 

oneself to understand the larger implications of one's ritual activity is itself a gift from God to a grateful nation anxious to know its Maker in ways that human consciousness can fathom.



The most basic aspect of the Torah is the scroll our ancient sages called “The Written Torah.” It is revelation translated into the domain of parchment and ink, the divine presence encapsulated in the sounds and utterances of written and spoken language. It is available to all who would read it, which is what Scripture means when it refers to itself as “the Torah that Moses set before Israel (Deuteronomy 4:44)”, that is, before all those born or accepted into the ranks of the covenanted community defined as such through the contemplative study of the Torah.


More interior than that is the aspect of commandment and law that has its origin in the notion that God may be known not merely through intellectualizing, but through physical service. These commandments are included in the written Torah, but they are distinct from it as well—the act of eating *matzah* at Passover is not to be confused with the text of the law ordaining the eating of *matzah* at Passover, nor is it to be assumed that the rewards connected with this more interior aspect of the commandment must necessarily be the same as those connected with the contemplation of the written word ordaining its observance.

Most interior of all is the level of secrets and mysteries that surround even the most apparently banal section of Scripture. These secrets and inner interpretations are the province of mystics and scholars who are no less devoted to study and observance than their less spiritually adept co-religionists, but who have the ability and the desire to pierce through the literary and physical aspects of the commandment to view its inner core and to see what rewards might await the faithful possessed of the requisite insight—and audacity—to travel even closer to God through the focused power of their own desire to encounter the divine in as intimate a way as any human ever may.

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Attaining the first level, the level of study of the written word of Scripture, is an act of respect towards the presence of God on earth. Attaining the second level, the level of practice and observance, is an act of fealty and devotion. Attaining the third aspect, the level of knowing the Torah not according to the garments it wears in the world or even according to the body of the law that rests just behind and beyond the parchment of the Torah scroll, is an act of love, and it is the ultimate, if endlessly elusive, definition of the true love of God to which all are called by Scripture. Furthermore, it is the level of the personal redemption of the individual in God. And indeed, for all it is the domain of the esoteric and foreign, it is entirely attainable by all who devote themselves to the quest for God in the world through the informed excavation of the human soul, through prayer, through contemplative, intelligent introspection infused with the unyielding desire for spiritual integrity and wholeness.



Although the notion that God is the Creator of the world and the Author of existence is the basic building block of faith, it is also a slippery concept even the most pious among us find difficult to seize totally . . . and how much the more so average people who are attempting to find faith in God the Creator at the same time they grapple with the misery and suffering of the people who actually live in God's world. Such people are called in Scripture "seekers after faith", because, although they wish to believe and they exert themselves to believe, they have not yet come to the stage of spiritual development at which they actually do believe in God in the normal way people believe in the unconditional, unquestionable existence of the things they see around them. In a way, such people are the latter-day counterparts of the ancient pilgrims who made their slow progress to Jerusalem three times a year, traveling step by step along the dusty pathways of ancient Judah until they eventually arrived at the gates of the Holy City. . . . 

In a house of mourning, the forty-ninth psalm is recited.

For the conductor, a psalm of the sons of Korach.

Hear this all nations! Give ear all residents of earth, children of Adam, all humanity, wealthy and poor alike!

My mouth shall speak words of wisdom; the thoughts of my heart that I am about to express will be possessed of deep insight. I shall incline my ear to hear a parable developing in my thoughts; I shall open my riddle-song with a flourish of the lyre.

Why should I know fear in times of trouble, merely because the iniquity of my pursuers surrounds me? They, after all, are the ones who place their trust in their riches, praising themselves because of the extent of their wealth. But no one can redeem a brother from divine punishment. Indeed, it is because the redemption of the souls of sinners is so very precious that one cannot effect it merely by paying a ransom to God; the punishment for sin is that one simply ceases to exist forever.


Shall a human being live forever, then, and never see the grave?

One can see, after all, that even sages die; together with fools and boors they perish and leave their possessions to others.

Their graves become their permanent homes, their residences from generation to generation and the earthly addresses by which they are known; human beings, similar in this to the beasts whose mortality they share, cannot live forever because of their earthly wealth.

Such is the fate of all who cannot accept their own mortality: foolishness belongs to them and, afterwards, to those who find their words pleasing, *selah*.

They are marked for descent to Sheol like slaughtered sheep, Death serving as their shepherd and the righteous ruling over them in the morning. Indeed, such people so regularly make God, their rock, punish them with death that Sheol can no longer serve as the sole residence of the dead. Yet God will redeem my soul from the grasp of Sheol by bringing me forth, *selah*.

Be not in awe when an individual waxes wealthy or when the honor of that person's house grows great. When such a person dies, he will not take it all with him. His glorious possessions will not descend to Sheol after him because he blessed his own soul during his lifetime; instead, he ought to have thanked You when things went well for him. His soul shall join the ranks of his ancestors who shall never again see light,  for human beings, similar in this to the beasts whose mortality they share, are more than capable of loving earthly wealth without understanding its highly transient nature.