

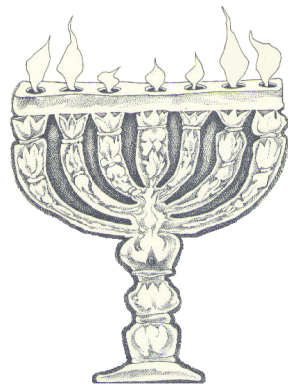
# **BECOME A BLESSING**

## **A Book of Intentions**

**Magidah Khulda Bat Sarah**

**Rabbi Moshe ben Asher**

*All etchings by Saul Raskin (1886-1966). Raskin was born in Russia, trained as an artist in Europe, and came to the U.S. in 1904. These etchings were originally published in The Book of Psalms (New York: Saul Raskin, 1942) and Pirke Aboth (New York: Saul Raskin, 1940).*



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# INTRODUCTION

## WHY PRAY?

This is the cynic's question, but sometimes it's ours too. Most of us can acknowledge that in times of trouble we find hope and solace by praying with a congregation, and that such prayer may even allow us to reach the deepest parts of ourselves, to feel deeply our connection to God.

And yet . . . such moments, for most of us, are few and far between.

What about the rest of the time? What about those times when the cynic in us asks: "Why are you praying? Don't you have anything better to do?"

That would be our point exactly! That's why we're praying. We're trying to find something better to do—with our lives! And we're relying on the prayer to show us the way.

For if we don't also commit to transform ourselves and the world in the image of God, then what is our prayer?

To paraphrase Rabbi Samson Rafael Hirsch's equation, prayer minus the intention to do better in life equals lip service. Or as Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel said, "Prayer is meaningless unless it is subversive, unless it seeks to overthrow and ruin the pyramids of callousness, hatred, opportunism, falsehood." And of course, prayer that's not connected to doing better in life often *feels* empty—it feels like lip service. It can leave us wondering: "Why isn't this working? I don't feel blessed. What am I doing here?"

According to Rabbi Hirsch, "The People of Abraham are, in private and public life, to follow one calling: *להיות ברכה* to become a blessing. To dedicate themselves with all devotion to the Divine purpose of bringing happiness to the world and mankind. . . ." (Genesis 12:2)

Is that possible? Do we dare to believe such a thing—that we can make God present in the world, nurturing and sustaining all life, by sanctifying our own day-to-day action?

Not without preparation, we can't; not without time, even if it is only momentary, to reflect on what we've done and what we will do; not without time to recharge our spirits to go back out into the world.

We understand the purpose of prayer to be not an end in itself, but rather a preparation for life. Prayer can be the time when we choose to renew our intention to become a blessing and save our lives from meaninglessness.

How are we to instill this admittedly extraordinary, even grandiose meaning and purpose into our prayer?

We begin by questioning: What is this prayer asking us to do? How is it prompting us to act in the image of God such that we may become a blessing?

We explore these questions in this *sefer kavanot* (book of intentions) in two ways:

With the *drashot*, the interpretations, we dive into the prayer, as if it were a pool. Our sages have used the word "siakh" (literally, plant growth) for prayer, comparing human spiritual growth to the growth of a plant. Prayer from this point of view, according to Rabbi Hirsch, is "simply drinking from the source of all spiritual life, accordingly, watering all the fibres and filaments of our inner being to produce new blossoms." Through the *drashot*, we wanted to immerse ourselves in the prayer at length, to sound its depths, and to emerge "saturated" and prepared to flourish—that is, with a better understanding of the creation and what would be required of us to be in harmony with it, to become a blessing.

Of course, at some point we have to climb out of the pool and go back to the real world. We have to stop soaking and start blooming! In the *iyun tefillot*, the poetic meditations, we explore how the prayer might inspire us to action in the image of God, first unseen within ourselves and then conspicuously out in the world of others. We understand the prayer as intending to send us back into the world to do a *mitzvah*, so that we can become a blessing.

It is said that when we humans do a *mitzvah*, we unite the two halves of the name of God—recreating and unifying justice and love in the world by acting in the image of God—filling our prayer and our life with *כוונה* (focused intention) and finally achieving *נחת רוח* (satisfaction of the spirit).

May we all find satisfaction of spirit by becoming a blessing!

# NOTES ON USAGE

This book is meant to be used with our CD or cassette album, *Become A Blessing*, which is why we have included transliterations and special typography, as explained below. In both the album and book, we have focused on those parts of the liturgy that are commonly sung by the congregation. Each section of the book is organized in the following order: Hebrew tefilla, transliteration, translation, d'rash, and iyun tefilla. Footnotes are included at the end of each section.

## *Personal Pronouns*

Both Torah and Siddur in many instances use personal pronouns, particularly the male “He,” when referring to God—as if God is a *male person*. Similarly, the tradition makes wide use of anthropomorphic representations of God, such as God’s hand or nose or anger.

The rabbis have unequivocally taught that the pronouns and anthropomorphisms are not to be taken literally. That is, although God’s qualities may usefully be described with such language, it is employed only to facilitate understanding of the Ein Sof.\*

In this book we have respected the mitzvah neither to add nor take away from the Hebrew Scriptures or, in the same spirit, from traditional siddur Hebrew. We have, however, used interpretive translations of pronouns to be more inclusive, relying on terms that are neuter gender.

## *Transliteration Pronunciation Guide\*\**

Pronunciation follows Sephardic conventions. All consonants are pronounced as they normally would be in American English, with the exception of the *kh* combination, which does not have an English counterpart. It is pronounced as a hard “h” sound. An apostrophe following a consonant is equivalent to a short “ih” sound (e.g., l' = “lih”). Vowel sounds are pronounced as follows:

a = ah, like <u>f</u> ather	e = eh, like <u>b</u> et	ei = ay, like <u>d</u> ay	ai = aye, like <u>l</u> ie
i = ee, like <u>s</u> ee	o = oh, like <u>v</u> ote	u = oo, like <u>f</u> ood	

## *Key to Special Typography*

Brackets [ ] are used to show material that has been included to accommodate our musical arrangements; they denote text excerpted or added, and which does not correspond to the traditional siddur. Parentheses ( ) are used to indicate that the original text is not sung. Arrows < > are used in transliterations and translations to indicate material that is sung two or more times.

## *Translations*

While we appreciate poetic and interpretive translations, virtually all of the translations are literal as an aid to learning Hebrew. On occasion, however, we have taken the liberty of also offering an interpretive translation, which is marked with an asterisk and noted at the end of the section.

\* Kabbalistic mystical reference to the pure essence of God, that which is beyond any revealed characteristic and which remains beyond all forms of human perception and cognition.

\*\* With thanks to Jeremy Lipton.

# SHIRIM



L'sheim,  
l'sheim yi-khud,  
l'sheim yi-khud ku-d'sha.  
<Ku-d'sha, ku-d'sha, ku-d'sha,  
l'sheim yi-khud ku-d'sha.>

**For the sake of the unification of the Holy One  
[I am ready to fulfill the Torah's commandments].**

## D'rash

**For the sake of the unification of the Holy One**—יְחִוּד (yikhud) refers to unification of Hakadosh (the Holy One) and the Shekhina (the Dwelling One), the male and female aspects of God, which are said to reflect the external male sexuality, apropos to God's presence when revealed outside of ourselves (as at the Sea of Reeds), and the internal female sexuality, apropos to the Shekhina's presence within us (as when we show kindness to another). We "exile the Shekhina" by alienating ourselves from the presence of God within us, and we hasten that alienation by blinding ourselves to the holiness of our physical world, no longer seeing its divine mind by God. When the Shekhina is alive within us, our physical world reflects the Divine Presence. We unify Hakadosh and Shekhina by our action, when the soul of every other person becomes the preoccupation of the spirit within each of us. Tzedek is one visible manifestation of the Shekhina's presence. When we act as a kahal poalei tzedek (a congregational community of doers of righteousness and justice) to alter our physical world, we unify God through the mitzvah to love your fellow like yourself because, as Hillel said, the rest is only commentary to guide us in the realization of that love in God's creation.

\* Excerpted from the traditional weekday siddur (prayerbook), to focus intention before doing mitzvot, but often not included in contemporary siddurim.

## Iyun Tefilla

### THE MITZVAH DIMENSION

Did you think it was going to be easy  
Living in the fourth dimension,  
Mastering another reality  
While others live only  
With length and breadth  
And height?  
You have to be patient.  
You have to watch  
For the moment  
To bloom  
Right at your doorstep.  
Now! There! See!  
The window opens  
Onto the secret garden.  
You turn.  
You catch a shimmer  
In the tree.  
Opportunity  
Has landed like a bird  
Of rare plumage  
In your garden.  
What are you waiting for?  
Seize the moment!  
Become the bird!  
Rise on healing wings  
And give  
The broken world  
One soul!

מה טבו אהליך יַעֲקֹב, מִשְׁכְּנֹתֶיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל. וְאֲנִי בְּרַב חֲסִדֶּךָ אָבוֹא בֵּיתְךָ, אֲשַׁתְּחֹוּהָ  
אֶל הַיֵּכַל קֹדֶשׁךָ בִּירְאָתְךָ. יְיָ אֱהַבְתִּי מְעוֹן בֵּיתְךָ, וּמְקוֹם מִשְׁכַּן כְּבוֹדְךָ. וְאֲנִי  
אֲשַׁתְּחֹוּהָ וְאֶכְרַעָהּ, אֶבְרַכָּהּ לִפְנֵי יְיָ עֲשֵׂי. וְאֲנִי, תִּפְלְתִי לָךְ יְיָ, עַת רְצוֹן, אֱלֹהִים  
בְּרַב חֲסִדֶּךָ, עֲנֵנִי בְּאֵמַת יִשְׁעֶךָ [אֱלֹהִים בְּרַב חֲסִדֶּךָ, עֲנֵנִי בְּאֵמַת יִשְׁעֶךָ].

Ma to-vu o-ha-le-kha ya-a-kov mish-k'no-te-kha yis-ra-el. Va-ani b'rov khas-d'kha a-vo  
vei-te-kha esh-ta-kha-veh el hei-khal kod-sh'kha b'yir-a-te-kha a-do-nai a-hav-ti m'on  
bei-te-kha u-m'kom mish-kan k'vo-de-kha va-a'ni esh-ta-kha-veh v'ekh-ra'ah ev-ra-kha lif-nei  
a-do-nai o-si va-a'ni t'fi-la-ti l'kha a-do-nai eit ra-tzon e-lo-him b'rov khas-de-kha a-nei-ni  
b'e-met yish-e-kha.

How good are your tents, Jacob, your dwellings, Israel. As for me, through Your abundant kindness I will enter Your house; I will prostrate myself toward Your Holy Sanctuary in awe of You. Adonai, I love the sanctuary of Your house, and the place where Your glory resides. I shall prostrate myself and bow, I shall bend the knee before Adonai, my Maker. As for me, may my prayer to You, Adonai, be at an opportune time; God, in Your abundant kindness, answer me with the truth of Your salvation.



## D'rash

**How good are your tents**—Tent symbolizes the committed relationship that is the foundation of family life. To be outside the tent is to be away from one's mate—physically, intellectually, emotionally, or spiritually. Our families approach the perfection of unity and harmony when we love our partners as ourselves, and when we personally assume the burden of our children's moral and ethical education in the face of ubiquitous corruption. **Jacob**—Because of its commitment to the moral purity of the family, which is the underpinning of community and nationhood, Israel was destined to survive and succeed. **Your dwellings, Israel**—This is confirmed in the description of Israel's tents not as beautiful but "good." **As for me, through Your abundant kindness I will enter Your house**—Your gift of free will has given me the choice to make my home a sanctuary, a place of prayer and study dedicated to Kiddush Hashem (the Sanctification of Your Name). **I will prostrate myself toward Your Holy Sanctuary in awe of You**—In reverence and wonder at the canvas You have created, I will use in Your service all of the energy and spirit I can muster, reaching within and without, going beyond what is familiar and comfortable, to help shape Your creation as a work of art. **Adonai, I love the sanctuary of Your house, and the place where Your glory resides**—There is no greater joy than to be in the presence of Your righteousness, Your truth, Your justice, Your freedom, Your peace, and Your kindness. **I shall prostrate myself and bow, I shall bend the knee before Adonai my Maker**—I shall use up my life's time and energy to dwell where Your glory resides. I shall transform my own selfish appetites and desires *l'sheim yikhud* (for the sake of the unification). **As for me, may my prayer to You, Adonai, be at an opportune time; God, in Your abundant kindness, answer me with the truth of Your salvation**—May it be Your will that I have not delayed too long in choosing life over death, in committing myself to jettison that which is deathly and dead within me for that which is alive and life-giving, so that I may—through the compassionate healing power of Your creation—be redeemed and saved.

## Iyun Tefilla

### MEETING PLACE

Climb to the top  
Of a hill.  
And like Balaam,

Look down,  
At Israel's camps.  
Open your mouth.  
Allow the blessing  
To fall from your lips.  
Mah tovu ohalekha, Yaakov!  
How good are your tents, Jacob!  
Then look there,  
On the east  
And if your tribe is  
Judah, Yisakhar or Zevulun,  
You have found  
Your place.  
Your tent is there.  
And if you are  
Reuvein, Shimon or Gad,  
Then you are on the south.  
And if  
Ephraim, M'nashe or Binyamin,  
Then you and yours  
Are on the west,  
Or on the north,  
If you are  
Dan, Asher or Naphtali.  
And if you are a Levite,  
Then you are  
In their midst.  
And in your midst  
A tent and an ark,  
A place to meet with God.  
And yet,  
A meeting place is not  
What makes for being good  
Or getting near.  
So do not cry:  
Heikhal Hashem  
The Temple of God,  
The Temple of God!  
As if it were a place  
To hide.  
But rather Jeremiah-like  
Declare:  
Let me  
Become the place  
Your Name  
Shall touch  
The earth!  
Let me become  
Your dwelling place!  
Your tent!

אלו דברים שאין להם שעור [שאין להם שעור]: הפאה והבכורים והראיון  
 וגמילות חסדים ותלמוד תורה:  
 אלו דברים שאדם אוכל פרותיהם בעולם הזה והקרן קיימת לו לעולם הבא,  
 ואלו הן [ואלו הן]: כבוד אב ואם, וגמילות חסדים, והשכמת בית המדרש  
 שחרית וערבית, והכנסת אורחים, ובקור חולים, והכנסת כלה, ולנית המת, ועיון  
 תפלה, והבאת שלום בין אדם לחברו ובין איש לאשתו, ותלמוד תורה כנגד  
 כלם [ותלמוד תורה כנגד כלם].\*

Ei-lu d'va-rim <sh'ein la-hem shi-ur>. Ha-pei-a v'ha-bi-ku-rim v'ha-rei-a-yon u-ge-mi-lut  
 kha-sa-dim v'tal-mud to-ra.

Ei-lu d'va-rim she-a-dam o-kheil pei-ro-tei-hem ba-o-lam ha-zeh v'ha-ke-ren ka-ye-met lo  
 la-o-lam ha-ba, <v'ei-lu hein>: ki-bud av va-eim, u-g'mi-lut kha-sa-dim, v'hash-ka-mat beit  
 ha-mid-rash sha-kha'rit v'ar-vit v'khakh-na-sat or-khim u-vi-kur kho-lim, v'hakh-na-sat ka-la,  
 u-l'va-yat ha-meit, v'i-yun t'fi-la v'ha-va-at sha-lom bein a-dam la-kha'vei-ro u-vein ish  
 l'ish-to, <v'tal-mud to-rah k'ne-ged ku-lam>.

These are the things that do not have a prescribed measure: the corner (of the field, left for the poor), the first fruit offering, the pilgrimage, acts of lovingkindness, and study of Torah.

These are the things the fruit of which a person consumes in this world but whose principal endures in the world to come—they are: honoring mother and father, acts of lovingkindness, early (attendance) at the house of study, morning and night, welcoming guests, visiting the sick, bringing the bride (under the wedding canopy), accompanying the dead, devotion in prayer, and bringing peace between one person and another, and between husband and wife—and the study of Torah is equivalent to all of them.

## D'rash

**These are the things that do not have a prescribed measure**—Because the upper standard for action was not established by the Torah, it was effectively left to each individual's discretion, although the principle of *lifnim mishurat hadin* (going beyond the letter of the law) should sensitize us against doing only the minimum required by our own conscience. **The corner (of the field, left for the poor)**—So that a minimum fraction (1/60th) of the produce of our labor should always accrue directly to those who are impoverished and malnourished. **The first fruit offering**—So that the civic duty of every citizen is to support adequately those who provide to the people the essentials of spiritual and moral guidance and education. **The pilgrimage**—Three times a year we are to respond not only to our narrow provincial interests but also to those of *klal Yisrael*, all the people, gathering together in *tefilla* (prayer), *teshuva* (repentance), *thanksgiving*, and *celebration*. **Acts of lovingkindness**—Unlike *tzedakah* (giving what justice requires), which is limited to 20 percent of one's income or wealth, lovingkindness has no limit and may be shown even to the dead. **And the study of Torah**—To guide our actions each day of our life, we are to study Torah each day, equally for its immediate illumination of the path and to remind us constantly of its singular light.

**These are the things the fruit of which a person consumes in this world but whose principal endures in the world to come**—We “consume” them because we too are the beneficiaries of our *mitzvot*, as it is said, “the reward of a *mitzvah* is the *mitzvah*,” not only in the present moment but in the accumulation of goodness that redounds to the future of this world, and which, when linked to our spirit, uplifts others remaining here when we have passed on to the next world. **Honoring mother and father**—Seeking to find not their foibles and failures but worthy character and conviction, which we honor not with lip service but heartfelt performance of *mitzvot* in which they may take pride. **Acts of lovingkindness**—Motivating ourselves to take greater pleasure from giving than receiving by affording the benefit

of the doubt to all others, especially those in need, whether for spiritual, emotional, or material support. **Early (attendance) at the house of study, morning and night**—That regardless of what else occupies us, we begin each day with learning and teaching, acquiring for ourselves and sharing with others, knowledge of how to live in the image of God. **Welcoming guests**—Never losing sight of our own personal and national experience as strangers, the fear and pain and struggle, and showing to others empathy commensurate with the challenges they face. **Visiting the sick**—Recognizing that, given the importance of spiritual well-being to physical and emotional recovery, our show of care and kindness may dramatically improve or even save a life. **Bringing the bride (under the wedding canopy)**—Traditionally the mitzvah of providing a dowry to the impoverished, but in our time encompassing any form of nurture or support that enables a less fortunate young woman (or man) to make a successful Jewish marriage and home—to be performed with humility in private so as not to cause embarrassment or shame. **Accompanying the dead**—Referred to as *khesed shel emet* (true lovingkindness), because the honor we show to the deceased by accompanying them to the grave and assisting in its closure (in place of paid cemetery employees), exacts a high emotional price and can't be repaid. **Devotion in prayer**—That our prayer has authentic *kavvanah* (focused intention) because it leads and follows our mitzvot (biblically commanded good deeds) and *tikun olam* (repair of the world). **Bringing peace between one person and another, and between husband and wife**—Not simply contributing to the absence of strife and violence but teaching negotiation and mediation skills to enable constructive resolution of inevitable conflict, which is the necessary condition preceding all personal and social harmony and fulfillment. **And the study of Torah is equivalent to them all**—Because instinct, intuition, and commonsense are not reliable guides to find our way through the moral and ethical maze of social, political, and economic life.

## Iyun Tefilla

### KINDNESS IS FOREVER

How few  
Are the things  
About which I can say:  
This is truly  
Without measure!  
Do I dare  
To count my love  
Among them?  
I try to see my soul  
Stretching like  
That night garden,  
The starry sky,  
Or like that boundless  
Path of broken stars,  
The beach.  
But time always  
Has its way,  
Its end of the season,  
And place has  
Its end of the line.  
So how am I  
To think of kindness  
Without end?  
Let me try to remember  
How many  
Are the kindnesses,  
Ki I'olam khasdo,  
On which  
My life has depended.

Let me try to remember  
In whose image,  
I am created.  
Ki l'olam khasdo.

\* From the Mishnah, Peah 1:1, and the Gemara, Shabbat 127a.

אֱלֹהֵי, נִשְׁמָה שְׁנַתָּת בִּי טְהוֹרָה הִיא [אֱלֹהֵי, נִשְׁמָה שְׁנַתָּת בִּי טְהוֹרָה הִיא]. אַתָּה  
בְּרֵאתָהּ, אַתָּה יִצְרָתָהּ, אַתָּה נִפְחָתָהּ בִּי, וְאַתָּה מְשַׁמְרָהּ בְּקִרְבִּי. [אֱלֹהֵי, נִשְׁמָה  
שְׁנַתָּת בִּי טְהוֹרָה הִיא].

<E-lo-hai n'sha-ma she-na-ta-ta bi t'ho-ra hi.> A-ta v'ra-ta a-ta y'tzar-ta, a-ta n'fakh-ta bi,  
v'a-ta m'sham-ra b'kir-bi. E-lo-hai n'sha-ma she-na-ta-ta bi t'ho-ra hi.

My God, the soul You placed in me is pure. You created it, You fashioned it, You breathed it into me, You keep it in me.

## D'rash

**My God, the soul You placed in me is pure**—*The part within me that is created uniquely in Your image, both separating and joining me with all the rest of Your creation, is “capable of all that is good and pure, holy and divine” (S.R. Hirsch)—not limited in any way. You created it, You fashioned it, You breathed it into me, You keep it in me—That I am capable of goodness and holiness is not my virtue but Your continuing gift.*

## Iyun Tefilla

### DON'T PUT OUT THE LIGHT

For You  
Who made the light  
And blew it into me,  
Who gave me  
My soul  
To be a lantern  
In Your hand,  
Saying,  
Don't put out the light!  
Let me keep pure  
This filament,  
My body.  
Let it be  
According  
To Your will,  
A sheath for light,  
That I may lift  
My lamp  
Into Your hands.

---

אֲשֶׁרֵינוּ, מָה טוֹב חֶלְקֵנוּ, וּמָה נְעִים [מָה נְעִים] גּוֹרְלֵנוּ, וּמָה יָפָה יְרֻשָׁתֵנוּ. אֲשֶׁרֵינוּ,  
שְׂאֲנַחְנוּ מִשְׂכִּימִים וּמַעֲרִיבִים, עֶרֶב וּבֹקֶר, וְאוֹמְרִים פְּעַמַּיִם בְּכָל יוֹם: שְׁמַע  
יִשְׂרָאֵל, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, יְיָ אֶחָד:

Ash-rei-nu ma tov khel-kei-nu, u-<ma na-im> go-ra-lei-nu, u-ma ya-fa y'ru-sha-tei-nu. Ash-  
rei-nu, she-a-nakh-nu mash-ki-mim u-ma-a-ri-vim e-rev va-vo-ker, v'om-rim pa-a-ma-yim  
b'khol yom: sh'ma yis-ra-el, a-do-nai e-lo-hei-nu, a-do-nai e-khad.

We are happy. How good is our portion and how pleasant our lot, and how beautiful our heritage. We are happy that we rise early and stay late (in the house of study), morning and evening, and we proclaim twice each day: Listen Israel, Adonai is our God, Adonai is One.

## D'rash

**We are happy. How good is our portion and how pleasant our lot, and how beautiful our heritage—Our inheritance has taught us that our purpose in life is to make a difference, to leave more than we found, to make the world a better place for those who come after us. Our history has taught us that, despite the pain, it is better to be among the persecuted than the persecutors. We are happy that we rise early and stay late (in the house of study), morning and evening—We are fulfilled learning and teaching, not satisfied with answers unless they beget questions, never tiring of Torah and the prospect of turning it over and over to discover new lessons. And we proclaim twice each day: Listen Israel, Adonai is our God, Adonai is One—With our eyes covered to avoid distractions, we proclaim, not only for ourselves but for all who may listen and learn, especially Jews, not only what we believe but what we can be and do. That one Divine Intelligence is minding the creation, and that its governance can be known even while its Creator remains hidden in its infrastructure, confirms that although we are little more than dust, we are given the power to remake the world in God's image. This, then, is the One God that offers hope; the One God to which we are devoted above the “gods” of position, possessions, prestige, and power; the One God Who has given us the Torah blueprint for creation that enables us to find our way.**

## Iyun Tefilla

### WITNESS FOR HEAVEN\*

To be a witness  
For heaven you have to  
Reach  
For the last letter  
Of sh'ma  
And the last letter  
Of ekhad  
And hold on  
To all that is  
between.  
It's a stretch,  
I know,  
But you can do it.  
To be a witness,  
You have to teach

What you hold.  
 For to hold what  
 You learn  
 And not to teach  
 Is to wear knowledge  
 Like a jewel  
 In a headdress,  
 Good only  
 For parades  
 Of the self.  
 To be a witness  
 Is to hold on  
 To the future.

\* The last letter of sh'ma (ayin) and the last letter of ekhad (dalet) together form the word עד (witness). "Everybody who utters it [the Sh'ma] stands as a witness of God to himself and to the world." (S.R. Hirsch)

הַגִּיד לְךָ אָדָם מַה-טוֹב  
 וּמָה יֵה דוֹרֵשׁ מִמֶּךָ  
 כִּי אִם-עֲשׂוֹת מִשְׁפָּט וְאַהֲבַת חֶסֶד  
 וְהִצְנֹעַ לְכֶת עִם-אֱלֹהֶיךָ\*

Hi-gid l'kha a-dam ma-tov,  
 u-ma a-do-nai do-reish mim-kha:  
 ki im a-sot mish-pat v'a-ha-vat khe-sed  
 v'hatz-nei-a le-khet im-e-lo-he-kha.

One has told you, human, what is good,  
 what Adonai requires of you:  
 only to do justice and love kindness,  
 and to go modestly with your God.

## D'rash

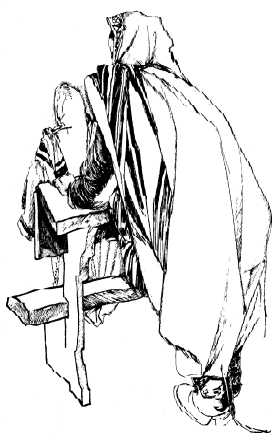
**One has told you, human, what is good**—*The Creator, Who determines the workings of the world, has made right and wrong clear to us; not what is good in principle or in the abstract, but what is good for us to do.* **What Adonai requires of you**—*We regard the mitzvot as obligatory not because we must observe them, but because only through them can we be fulfilled.* **Only to do justice and love kindness, and to go modestly with your God**—*Kindness is the hallmark of relationships that conquer existential loneliness and, through which, we find meaning and fulfillment. Kindness is made possible by justice and modesty, that is, humility. There is no kindness in a relationship in which either person is an "it," an object for the other's gratification rather than a "thou," another sentient human being—which fundamentally is an issue of justice. And there is no kindness in a relationship in which either person is closed to learning from the other—which fundamentally is an issue of humility. More than anything, goodness relies on kindness, and nothing makes it more possible than justice and humility.*

## Iyun Tefilla

### MERCY DOES NOT FALL LIKE GENTLE RAIN

In fact  
It doesn't fall  
At all  
Out of the sky,  
But is delivered  
By the hands  
Of justice,  
Our hands.  
We are the hands  
Of both.  
To think otherwise  
Is to act as if  
We could ignore  
The child about to step  
Into heavy traffic  
For the sake of  
Not speaking harshly.  
What kind of love is that?  
To think otherwise  
Is to tear God's name  
In two.

\* Micah 6:8.



אֵלֶיךָ יְיָ אֶקְרָא, וְאֵל אֲדֹנָי אֶתְחַנֵּן  
[אֵלֶיךָ יְיָ אֶקְרָא, וְאֵל אֲדֹנָי אֶתְחַנֵּן]  
שְׁמַע יְיָ וְחַנּוּנִי, יְיָ הִיָּה עֶזְרִי לִי  
[שְׁמַע יְיָ וְחַנּוּנִי, יְיָ הִיָּה עֶזְרִי לִי]  
לְמַעַן יִזְמְרֶךָ כְּבוֹד וְלֹא יִדָּם  
[לְמַעַן יִזְמְרֶךָ כְּבוֹד וְלֹא יִדָּם]  
יְיָ אֱלֹהֵי לְעוֹלָם אֲוֹדְךָ  
[יְיָ אֱלֹהֵי לְעוֹלָם אֲוֹדְךָ]\*

<Ei-le-kha a-do-nai ek-ra, v'el a-do-nai et-kha-nan.>  
<Sh-ma a-do-nai v'kho-nei-ni a-do-nai he-yei o-zeir li.>  
<L'ma-an y'za-mer-kha kha-vod v'lo yi-dom.>  
<A-do-nai e-lo-hai l'o-lam o-de-ka.>

To You Adonai I would call and to my Liege I would plead. . . . Listen Adonai and favor me, Adonai be a helper to me. . . , that my soul sing to You and not be silenced. Adonai, my God, forever I will thank you.

## D'rash

**To you Adonai I would call and to my Liege I would plead**—*I turn to You for the path to my redemption, reaching within myself to find all that You have given me in the past, that you may be giving me now, or that You may give to me in the future. Listen Adonai and favor me*—*Sustain my faith in our covenant, that as I listen for Your will, Your Creation listens for my mitzvot, allowing their effects to ripple to the farthest reaches, defining the meaning of my life. Adonai be a helper to me*—*Sustain the workings of Your Creation, so that one good deed continues to draw another in its train. That my soul sing to You and not be silenced*—*My heart sings praises to God in the awesome recognition that I am allied with the Creator, that we are partners in tikun olam. Adonai, my God, forever I will thank you*—*There is within me the utter certainty that you are the source of my every moment and the choice I have to fill each of them with divine purpose.*

## Iyun Tefilla

### SONG WITHOUT WORDS

Like the psalmist,  
I swear not  
To be silent—  
V'lo yidom—  
Not ever.  
But who  
Could sing on  
Forever?  
And anyway,  
What is a song,  
But a robe  
For doing?  
If I want  
To refuse silence,  
Let me make  
Myself  
The garment  
For this prayer,  
And I will rise  
And be a song  
Forever.

\* Psalm 30:9, 11, 13.

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בְּרוּךְ שְׂאֵמַר וְהָיָה הָעוֹלָם, בְּרוּךְ הוּא [בְּרוּךְ שְׂאֵמַר וְהָיָה הָעוֹלָם, בְּרוּךְ הוּא],  
בְּרוּךְ עֲשֵׂה בְּרֵאשִׁית, בְּרוּךְ אוֹמֵר וְעֹשֶׂה, בְּרוּךְ גּוֹזֵר וּמְקַיֵּם, בְּרוּךְ מְרַחֵם עַל  
הָאָרֶץ, בְּרוּךְ מְרַחֵם עַל הַבְּרִיּוֹת, (בְּרוּךְ) מְשַׁלֵּם שְׂכָר טוֹב לִירְאָיו, (בְּרוּךְ) חַי  
(לְעַד) וְקַיִם לְנֶצַח, בְּרוּךְ פּוֹדֶה וּמְצִיל. [בְּרוּךְ שְׂאֵמַר וְהָיָה הָעוֹלָם, בְּרוּךְ הוּא.  
בְּרוּךְ שְׂאֵמַר וְהָיָה הָעוֹלָם, בְּרוּךְ שְׂמוֹ].

<Ba-rukhh she'a-mar v'ha-ya ha-o-lam, ba-rukhh hu.> Ba-rukhh o-seh v'rei-shit, ba-rukhh o-mer  
v'o-seh. Ba-rukhh go-zeir u'm'ka-yeim, ba-rukhh m'ra-kheim al ha'a-retz, ba-rukhh m'ra-kheim al

hab'ri-yot, m'sha-leim sa-khar tov li-rei-av, khai v'ka-yam la-ne-tzakh, ba-rukh po-deh u-ma-tzil. [Ba-rukh she'a-mar v'ha-ya ha-o-lam, ba-rukh hu, ba-rukh she'a-mar v'ha-ya ha-o-lam, ba-ru-kh sh'mo.]

Blessed is God Who spoke and the world came into being, Blessed is God. Blessed is God Who makes creation, blessed is God Who speaks and does, blessed is God Who ordains and fulfills, blessed is God Who has compassion on the earth, blessed is God Who has compassion on the creatures, blessed is God Who gives a good reward to those in awe of God, blessed is God Who lives forever and Who endures to eternity, blessed is God Who redeems and Who rescues, blessed is God's name.

## D'rash

**Blessed is God Who spoke and the world came into being, blessed is God**—We grasp two tzizit and leave behind our private petitions, joining together in praise for the Source of all life and intelligence. **Blessed is God Who makes Creation**—We are grateful to God Who made us in the divine image, free to partner ourselves as authors of the Creation. **Blessed is God Who speaks and does**—The will and workings of the Creator are not obscure but cause for wonder by witnesses the world over. **Blessed is God Who ordains and fulfills**—We are thankful that the Creation operates not at random but according to the Creator Who sustains its predictability, which we discover with Torah and confirm with science. **Blessed is God Who has compassion on the earth**—The Creator has implanted the capacity for recovery in virtually all life when the forces that seek to destroy it are overcome while it yet lives. **Blessed is God Who gives a good reward to those in Awe of God**—Our reward follows, first, from recognition of God's will; second, we must see that the power of observance is communal, not individual; and finally, we must acknowledge that the guarantee of reward is not quantitative but qualitative. If we observe the mitzvot as a community, we have it within our power to reduce our pain—the pain of loneliness in personal travail, the pain of inadequacy in natural catastrophe, the pain of isolation when faced with aggression. **Blessed is God Who lives forever and Who endures to eternity**—The Creator's cosmic process was for our ancestors as it is for us, and as it will be for our progeny; only the conditions of its application have changed. **Blessed is God Who redeems and rescues**—God's gift of redemption is to the people, the whole community. By doing God's will as a community, we will have done everything we can to ensure "our physical, social, and political well-being. . . [and] everything else we can leave to God." (S.R. Hirsch) **Blessed is God's Name**—Our praises of God are mere "lip-service. . . if they are not employed to promote the active service of God in everyday life. . . ." (S.R. Hirsch)

## Iyun Tefilla

### DO NOT SAY THIS PRAYER

Do not let my lips  
Shape the word  
That speaks Your name  
And my response to it.  
Let me not lisp  
Bar-ukh, bar-ukh, bar-ukh  
Without thinking  
Of how I will become  
The word.  
Let me not speak  
Until my every breath  
And beat of heart  
Intend the blessing,  
And ache

To bind  
Your word,  
My deed,  
As one.



תּוֹרַת יְיָ תְּמִימָה מְשִׁיבַת נַפְשׁ  
עֲדוּת יְיָ נֶאֱמָנָה מַחְכִּימַת פְּתִי:  
פְּקוּדֵי יְיָ יִשְׂרָאֵל מְשִׁמְחֵי לֵב  
מִצְוֹת יְיָ בְּרָה מְאִירַת עֵינָיִם:  
יִרְאַת יְיָ טְהוֹרָה עוֹמֶדֶת לְעַד  
מְשִׁפְטֵי יְיָ אֱמֶת, צְדָקוֹ יַחְדּוֹ:  
הַנְּחָמָדִים מְזַהֵב וּמְפֹז רַב  
וּמְתוֹקִים מְדַבֵּשׁ וְנוֹפֵת צוֹפִים:  
גַּם עֲבֹדָה נְזַהֵר בָּהֶם בְּשִׂמְרָם עֵקֶב רַב\*:



To-rat a-do-nai t'mi-ma, m'shi-vat na-fesh.  
Ei-dut a-do-nai ne'eh-ma-na, makh-ki-mat pe-ti.  
Pi-ku-dei a-do-nai y'sha-rim, m'sam-khei leiv.  
Mitz-vat a-do-nai ba-ra, m'i-rat ei-na-yim.  
Yi-rat a-do-nai t'ho-ra, o-me-det la-ad.  
Mish'p'tei a-do-nai eh-met, tzad-ku yakh-dav.  
Ha-ne-khe-ma-dim mi-za-hav u-mi-paz rav.  
U-m'tu-kim mi-d'vash v'no-phet tzu-phim.  
Gam av-da-kha ni-z'har ba-hem b'shom'ram ei-kev rav.

The Torah of Adonai is perfect, restoring the spirit; the testimony of Adonai is trustworthy, making the simple person wise. The precepts of Adonai are upright, rejoicing the heart. The commandment of Adonai is clear, enlightening the eyes. Awe of Adonai is pure, enduring forever. The judgments of Adonai are true, altogether just. They are more desirable than gold, than even much fine gold, and sweeter than honey and drippings from the honeycombs. Moreover, your servant was warned by them, in keeping them there is great reward.

## D'rash

**The Torah of Adonai is perfect, restoring the spirit**—The teaching contains myriad paths, from which diligent search through prayer and study reveals the ideal that enables us to release all that is deathly in favor of that which is life-giving. **The testimony of Adonai is trustworthy, making the simple person wise**—The lessons from Sinai are timeless, they form the corpus of national codes everywhere, guiding us when we're vulnerable to our selfish appetites. **The precepts of Adonai are upright, rejoicing the heart**—The khukim and mishpatim (statutes and ordinances) reveal to us the shortest distance between any two points in life—from loneliness to family, from vulnerability to community, from poverty to productivity—which are the wellsprings of joy. **The commandment of Adonai is clear, enlightening the eyes**—We have only to open our minds and hearts to see that the mitzvot are not what we are compelled to do but a revelation of the consequences that will benefit or burden us if we fail to heed their call. **Awe of Adonai is pure, enduring forever**—Our service to God, acceptance of the challenge to ally ourselves in life-giving

creation, is the result of the radical and awesome understanding of God as Gaon Hakol (Mastermind of All). **The judgments of Adonai are true, altogether just**—Whatever the dim antecedents or ultimate consequences of our existence, we are responsible for our own decisions and actions, and they shall survive to speak for us in both worldly courts and heavenly tribunals. **They are more desirable than gold, than even much fine gold, and sweeter than honey and drippings from the honeycombs**—We discover to our everlasting regret that obsession with personal physique, possessions, position, and power, and all the prestige that accompany them, leave us empty and enervated when we finally possess them. **Moreover, your servant was warned by them, in keeping them there is great reward**—Every lesson of Torah learned and every mitzvah accomplished is a lesson in both immediate and ultimate fulfillment, the certain satisfaction that we have used our life to its highest and best purpose.

## Iyun Tefilla

### TO FEAR YOU IS TO HOLD YOU

What I want  
Is to hold You  
Always  
Before me,  
To call You  
To mind  
Always  
In my coming  
And going,  
The way I carry  
My children's faces  
In the photo  
In my wallet.  
But who  
Could remember  
Always  
A face  
That's never  
Seen nor held,  
A face  
Beyond the reach  
Of time?  
Your Face  
I will remember  
With a seed of Torah  
Planted under  
My tongue.

\* Psalm 19:8-12.

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מי האיש החפץ חיים, אוהב ימים לראות טוב  
[מי האיש החפץ חיים, אוהב ימים לראות טוב]  
נצר לשונה מרע ושפתיה מדבר מרמה  
סור מרע ועשה טוב, בקש שלום ורדפהו  
\* [מי האיש החפץ חיים, אוהב ימים לראות טוב]

<Mi ha-ish he-kha-feitz khai-yim,  
o-heiv ya-mim lir-ot tov.>  
N'tzor l'shon-kha mei-ra us-fa-te-kha mi-da-beir mir-ma.  
Sur mei-ra va-a-sei tov, ba-keish sha-lom v'rod-fei-hu.  
[Mi ha-ish he-kha-feitz khai-yim,  
o-heiv ya-mim lir-ot tov.]

Who is the person who desires life, who loves days to see good. Guard your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceitfully. Turn from wrongdoing and do good—seek peace and pursue it.

## D'rash

**Who is the person who desires life, who loves days to see good?**—*How do we recognize such people? We may know them by their unstinting commitment to honor and nourish life.* **Guard your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceitfully**—*When you are tempted to do lashon hara (evil tongue or gossip) or listen to the gossip of another, as if it were innocuous banter, imagine yourself to be its subject and consider the impact on your life.* **Turn from wrongdoing and do good**—*It is good to refrain from lashon hara; it is better to also refuse to passively accept the lashon hara of others; but it is best to also teach lashon hara's destructive consequences for the subjects of the gossip, the listeners, the gossipers, and the community.* **Seek peace and pursue it**—*The root of peace (shalom) is completeness or wholeness, “. . . the reverse of every kind of separation and fragmentation” (Or Hachayim), which is the inevitable result of lashon hara.*

## Iyun Tefilla

### WORDS WILL NEVER HURT ME

You  
Who say the tongue  
Requires no guard,  
Watch out!  
Sticks and stones  
Never had it so good!  
And do not say  
You doubt its power!  
Or the weight  
Of your own  
Words, words, words  
Will surely  
Crush you.  
Try not to hurt yourself  
When tripping  
On your tongue.  
Try to remember:  
What's good for others  
Is also good for you.  
The same rule applies:  
You may know me.  
I may know you.  
But none of us is known  
As God knows.



Ho-du la'do-nai ki tov, ki l'o-lam khas-do.  
 Ho-du lei-lo-hei ha-e-lo-him, ki l'o-lam khas-do.  
 Ho-du la'do-nei ha'a-do-nim, ki l'o-lam khas-do.  
 L'o-sei nif-la-ot g'do-lot l'va-do, ki l'o-lam khas-do.  
 L'o-sei ha-sha-ma-yim bit'vu-nah, ki l'o-lam khas-do.  
 L'ro-ka ha'a-retz al ha-ma-yim, ki l'o-lam khas-do.  
 L'o-sei o-rim g'do-lim, ki l'o-lam khas-do.  
 Et ha-she-mesh l'mem-she-let ba-yom, ki l'o-lam khas-do.  
 Et ha-ya-rei'akh v'kho-kha-vim l'mem-sh'lot ba-lai-la, ki l'o-lam khas-do.  
 L'ma-kei mitz-ra-yim biv'kho-rei-hem, ki l'o-lam khas-do.  
 Va-yo-tzei yis-ra-el mi-to-kham, ki l'o-lam khas-do.  
 B'yad kha-za-ka u'viz-ro-a n'tu-ya, ki l'o-lam khas-do.  
 L'go-zeir yam suf lig-za-rim, ki l'o-lam khas-do.  
 V'he'e-vir yis-ra-el b'to-kho, ki l'o-lam khas-do.  
 V'ni-eir par-o v'khei-lo v'yam suf, ki l'o-lam khas-do.  
 L'mo-likh a-mo ba-mid-bar, ki l'o-lam khas-do.  
 L'ma-kei m'la-khim g'do-lim, ki l'o-lam khas-do.  
 Va-ya-ha-roq m'la-khim a-di-rim, ki l'o-lam khas-do.  
 L'si-khon me-lekh ha-e-mo-ri, ki l'o-lam khas-do.  
 U-l'og me-lekh ha-ba-shan, ki l'o-lam khas-do.  
 V'na-tan artz-am l'nakh-a-la, ki l'o-lam khas-do.  
 Nakh-a-la l'yis-ra-el av-do, ki l'o-lam khas-do.  
 She-b'shif-lei-nu za-khar la-nu, ki l'o-lam khas-do.  
 Va-yif-r'kei-nu mitz-a-rei-nu, ki l'o-lam khas-do.  
 No-tein le-khem l'khol ba-sar, ki l'o-lam khas-do.  
 Ho-du l'eil ha-sha-ma-yim, ki l'o-lam khas-do.

Thank God for God is good. God's kindness endures forever.  
 Thank the God of gods. God's kindness endures forever.  
 Thank the Master of masters. God's kindness endures forever.  
 God alone performs great wonders. God's kindness endures forever.  
 God makes the heavens with understanding. God's kindness endures forever.  
 God spreads the earth over the waters. God's kindness endures forever.  
 God made the great lights. God's kindness endures forever.  
 The sun to rule by day. God's kindness endures forever.  
 The moon and the stars to rule by night. God's kindness endures forever.  
 God struck down Egypt through their firstborn. God's kindness endures forever.  
 And God brought Israel out from their midst. God's kindness endures forever.  
 With a strong hand and an outstretched arm. God's kindness endures forever.  
 God divided the Sea of Reeds into parts. God's kindness endures forever.  
 God passed Israel through it. God's kindness endures forever.  
 God threw Pharaoh and his army into the Sea of Reeds. God's kindness endures forever.  
 God led God's people through the wilderness. God's kindness endures forever.  
 God struck down great kings. God's kindness endures forever.  
 God destroyed mighty rulers. God's kindness endures forever.  
 Sikhon, king of the Amorite. God's kindness endures forever.  
 And Og, king of Bashan. God's kindness endures forever.

And God gave their land as a heritage. God's kindness endures forever.  
 A heritage for Israel, God's servant. God's kindness endures forever.  
 In our lowliness God remembered us. God's kindness endures forever.  
 And God freed us from our tormentors. God's kindness endures forever.  
 God gives food to all flesh. God's kindness endures forever.  
 Thank the Almighty of the heavens. God's kindness endures forever.

## D'rash

**Thank God for God is good**—*We have the Creator to thank for implanting goodness in the world, even while we must hold ourselves accountable to choose it over evil.* **God's kindness endures forever**—*Adonai unflinchingly refreshes our spirit, so that within us there is an irrepressible urge to do good, if only we will allow ourselves to respond to it.* **Thank the God of gods**—*We shall never be satisfied except by God's gifts, and all else that we worship, material or intangible, shall fail to fulfill us.* **God alone performs great wonders**—*It is Adonai alone Who directs us to reach within ourselves to find miraculous powers we don't believe we possess.* **God makes the heavens with understanding**—*What appears to us as unfathomable mystery, the shape and size and systemization of the universe, is but the recreation of the Creator.* **God spreads the earth over the waters**—*Had the Creator not created the dry lands and all that thrives upon them, we would have had no place or patrimony to sustain us.* **God made the great lights. . . . The sun to rule by day. . . . The moon and the stars to rule by night**—*They illuminate our landscape, shape our seas, and guide us on our way—and without them we would truly be lost.* **God struck down Egypt through their firstborn. . . . And God brought Israel out from their midst. . . . With a strong hand and an outstretched arm. . . . God divided the Sea of Reeds into parts. . . . God passed Israel through it. . . . God threw Pharaoh and his army into the Sea of Reeds**—*God transformed the ancient world from its rigid patterns of social, political, and economic life; the Exodus allowed for the possibility of liberation and personal as well as national development l'shei m shamayim (for the sake of heaven, i.e., in the service of God).* **God led His people through the wilderness. . . . God struck down great kings. . . . God destroyed mighty rulers. . . . Sikhon, king of the Amorite. . . . And Og, king of Bashan**—*The improbability of the survival of Am Yisrael (the Jewish people), in the face of impossible odds, dates from our earliest beginnings and continues throughout our history, confirming for all but the most incredulous that human forces alone fail to adequately explain our miraculous story.* **And God gave their land as a heritage. . . . A heritage for Israel**—*Even when not in our possession, we passed it down from generation to generation; although incapable of possessing it, we refused to let go of it; and to claim it as our birthright remains our implacable tradition.* **In our lowliness God remembered us. . . . And God freed us from our tormentors**—*Repeatedly, when by all reason our peoplehood should have ended, we outlasted our enemies, rising again and again.* **God gives food to all flesh. . . . Thank the Almighty of the heavens**—*Our food, whether for the body or the spirit, bread or Torah, has but a single Source; what sustains us comes not from the supermarket or the television. We have God and Torah to thank for the gift of life, both the seeds from which life springs and our notions of righteousness, truth, and justice, freedom, peace, and kindness that make life worth living.*

## Iyun Tefilla

### DID YOU EVER HEAR OF THE LEAF-CUTTER ANT?

If I forget  
 The Hand  
 That feeds me,  
 Let me remember  
 That my own hand  
 Could not even imagine  
 The smallest  
 Of Your creations.  
 Let me remember

That last night  
 While I lay sleeping,  
 The ant,  
 Deep in his jungle,  
 Climbed up  
 Into the tree  
 Above his home  
 And carried down  
 A harvest of leaves  
 Far larger  
 Than himself  
 On his back,  
 Into a tiny room  
 In the ground  
 Under the tree.  
 Last night  
 While I lay sleeping,  
 The smallest farmer  
 Was sustained in  
 Farming fungus  
 In the dark  
 By the same One  
 Who let me sleep.  
 Let me remember  
 The Hand that sustains  
 My own  
 With kindness.  
 With kindness,  
 Let my own hand  
 Remember to sustain.

\* Psalm 136.

טוב להדות לַיְי, וּלְזַמֵּר לְשִׁמְךָ עֲלֵיוֹן  
 [טוב להדות לַיְי, וּלְזַמֵּר לְשִׁמְךָ עֲלֵיוֹן]  
 לְהַגִּיד בַּבֶּקֶר חֶסֶדְךָ וְאַמוּנָתְךָ בְּלֵילוֹת:  
 עָלַי עָשׂוֹר וְעָלַי נָבֵל, עָלַי הַגִּיּוֹן בְּכִנּוֹר:  
 כִּי שִׁמְחַתְנִי יְיָ בְּפַעֲלֶךָ בְּמַעֲשֵׂי יְדִיךָ אֲרִנֵּן:  
 [כִּי שִׁמְחַתְנִי יְיָ בְּפַעֲלֶךָ בְּמַעֲשֵׂי יְדִיךָ אֲרִנֵּן]  
 מַה גָּדְלוֹ מַעֲשֵׂיךָ יְיָ, מֵאֵד עִמָּךְ מִחֻשְׁבֹּתֶיךָ:  
 [מַה גָּדְלוֹ מַעֲשֵׂיךָ יְיָ, מֵאֵד עִמָּךְ מִחֻשְׁבֹּתֶיךָ:]\*

<Tov l'ho-dot la-do-nai, u-l'za-mer l'shim-kha el-yon.>

L'ha-gid ba-bo-ker khas-de-kha, ve'e-mu-na-t'kha ba-lei-lot.

A-lei a-sor va-a'lei na-vel, a-lei hi-ga-yon b'khi-nor.

<Ki si-makh-ta-ni a-do-nai b'fo-a-le-kha b'ma-a-sei ya-de-kha a-ra-nein.>

Ma gad-lu ma-a-se-kha a-do-nai, m'od am-ku makh-sh'vo-te-kha.

It is good to thank Adonai, and to sing praise to Your Name, Lofty One; to tell of Your kindness in the morning and Your faithfulness in the nights; on a ten (stringed instrument) and on a harp, with meditation on a lyre; for You have made me happy Adonai with Your deeds, the work of Your hands—I sing joyfully; how great are Your deeds Adonai, how very deep Your thoughts.

## D'rash

**It is good to thank Adonai**—*My gratitude is commanded, yet I'm fulfilled in it, renewed and gladdened, even without understanding my thankfulness.* **And to sing praise to Your Name, Lofty One**—*Praises sing themselves out of me to the name of my cosmic God.* **To tell of Your goodness in the morning**—*At daybreak I tell of the kindness, the blessings that God brings to me, strengthening me to deal with what I must.* **And your faithfulness at night**—*And in the evening, every night, I tell of God's faithfulness, looking back and remembering: I walked this day with God and Torah, and they were faithful, offering up the vision and the path.* **On a ten (stringed instrument) and on a harp, with meditation on a lyre**—*With music and song do I reflect upon all this.* **For You have made me happy Adonai with Your deeds, the work of Your hands—I sing joyfully**—*It is a great relief, a cause for joy, that I can find in Your Torah the path I am to follow.* **How great are Your deeds Adonai, how very deep Your thoughts**—*That You are eternally minding the whole of Creation reveals to the thoughtful, living in Your image, the grandeur of Your divine intelligence.*

## Iyun Tefilla

### HOW CAN I SING WHEN I'M SO SAD

Of course  
I will be thankful  
In the morning.  
But who could be thankful  
For the dark?  
For the panic,  
Post mammogram,  
At 3 a.m.?  
In the dark,  
I blame myself  
Or, who else?  
God.  
Don't ask me to sing.  
And yet  
I may  
Remind myself  
The goodness  
Of this world  
Is greater than  
I know.  
And some of it is mine.  
I may yet  
Make my life  
A cause  
For gratitude.

\* Psalm 92: 2-6.

צְדִיק כְּתָמָר יִפְרַח, כְּאַרְז בְּלִבְנוֹן יִשָּׂגָה:  
 שְׂתוּלִים בְּבֵית יי, בְּחִצְרוֹת אֱלֹהֵינוּ יִפְרִיחוּ:  
 עוֹד יִנּוּבוֹן בְּשִׁיבָה, דְּשָׁנִים וְרַעֲנָנִים יִהְיוּ:  
 לְהַגִּיד כִּי יֵשֶׁר יי, צוּרִי וְלֹא עוֹלָתָהּ בּוֹ:

Tza-dik ka-ta-mar yif-rakh, k'e-rez bal-va-non yis-geh.  
 Sh'tu-lim b'veit a-do-nai b'khatz-rot e-lo-hei-nu yaf-ri-khu.  
 Od y'nu-vun b'sei-va, d'shei-nim v'ra-a'na-nim y'hi-yu.  
 L'ha-gid ki ya-shar a-do-nai, tzu-ri v'lo av-la-ta bo.

The righteous will blossom like a date palm, grow tall like a cedar of Lebanon. Planted in the house of Adonai, in the courtyards of our God they will flourish. They will yet be fruitful in old age, vigorous and fresh they will be—to tell that Adonai is just, my Rock, and that there is no wrong in God.

## D'rash

**The righteous will blossom like a date palm, grow tall like a cedar of Lebanon**—*When we strengthen ourselves through the struggle to do God's will, our good works have both longevity and notable effect. Planted in the House of Adonai, in the courtyards of our God they will flourish*—*The will to righteousness grows slowly, but when matured it resists corruption of the mind or spirit. They will yet be fruitful in old age, vigorous and fresh they will be*—*Service to God is reciprocated; in return we receive limitless spiritual sustenance. To tell that Adonai is just, my Rock, and that there is no wrong in God*—*Choosing to live in the image of God, we find the shortest path, always the most efficient means to Kiddush Hashem.*

## Iyun Tefilla

### LATE BLOOMER

Like the palm  
 Let me store up  
 Moisture  
 For the drought.  
 Let me bloom  
 In spite of the desert  
 And even bear fruit  
 In old age,  
 Sowing deeds  
 Like children.  
 Knowing  
 What I know now—  
 That children grow  
 To live beyond  
 Our reach—  
 I will raise them  
 Carefully.  
 May my deeds  
 Go forth in the world  
 Like beloved children.



הַלְלוּיָהּ [הַלְלוּיָהּ, הַלְלוּיָהּ, הַלְלוּיָהּ],  
הַלְלוּ אֵל בְּקִדְשׁוֹ, הַלְלוּהוּ בְּרִקְיעַ עֲזוֹ:  
הַלְלוּהוּ בְּגִבּוֹרֹתָיו, הַלְלוּהוּ כְּרֹב גְּדֻלוֹ:  
[הַלְלוּיָהּ, הַלְלוּיָהּ, הַלְלוּיָהּ, הַלְלוּיָהּ]  
הַלְלוּהוּ בְּתַקַּע שׁוֹפָר, הַלְלוּהוּ בְּנִבְל וְכִנּוֹר:  
הַלְלוּהוּ בְּתֹף וּמְחוּל, הַלְלוּהוּ בְּמִנִּים וְעֶגְב:  
[הַלְלוּיָהּ, הַלְלוּיָהּ, הַלְלוּיָהּ, הַלְלוּיָהּ]  
הַלְלוּהוּ בְּצִלְצְלֵי שְׁמַע, הַלְלוּהוּ בְּצִלְצְלֵי תְרוּעָה:  
כֹּל הַנְּשָׁמָה תְהִלֵּל יְהוָה הַלְלוּיָהּ.  
כֹּל הַנְּשָׁמָה תְהִלֵּל יְהוָה הַלְלוּיָהּ.\*

<<<Ha-l'lu-ya>>> Ha-l'lu eil b'kod-sho, ha-l'lu-hu bir-kia u-zo.  
Ha-l'lu-hu vig'vu-ro-tav, ha-l'lu-hu k'rov gud-lo.  
[<<<Ha-l'lu-ya>>>]  
Ha-l'lu-hu b'tei-ka sho-far, ha-l'lu-hu b'nei-vel v'khi-nor.  
Ha-l'lu-hu b'tof u'ma-khol, ha-l'lu-hu b'mi-nim v'u-gav.  
[<<<Ha-l'lu-ya>>>]  
Ha-l'lu-hu v'tzil-tz'lei sha-ma, ha-l'lu-hu b'tzil-tz'lei t'rua.  
<Kol han-sha-ma t'ha-leil ya ha-l'lu-ya.>

Praise God. Praise the Almighty in the Sanctuary, praise God in the firmament of God's power. Praise God for God's mighty acts, praise God according to the bounty of God's greatness. Praise God with a blast of the shofar, praise God with a lyre and a harp. Praise God with drum and with dance, praise God with stringed (instruments) and flute. Praise God with cymbals resounding, praise God with cymbals arousing. Let all souls praise God. Halleluyah! Let all souls praise God. Halleluyah!

## D'rash

**Praise God**—*With word and deed, boast of God's majesty and power to those whose minds and hearts are open. Praise the Almighty in the Sanctuary*—*Praise God in all places where His Holy Name is sanctified by action that uplifts life. Praise God in the firmament of God's power*—*Praise God in all places where the order and unity of creation, from the molecular building blocks of matter to the wheeling constellations of the cosmos, is revealed. Praise God for God's mighty acts, praise God according to the bounty of God's greatness*—*Look into a wilderness night sky, ride the roiling waves of a stormy sea, resonate to the trembling of an earthquake, and acknowledge the power that is masterminding creation. Praise God with a blast of the shofar, praise God with a lyre and a harp*—*The shofar calls us to do God's will; the harp and lyre help us contemplate our moral and ethical abilities. Praise God with a drum and with dance, praise God with stringed (instruments) and flute*—*Our praises must not be solitary and silent; they must be communal and joyful to have useful effect; so we are to dance and sing our praises. Praise God with cymbals resounding, praise God with cymbals arousing*—*Let us stir ourselves to broadcast the benchmark of our peoplehood to all the nations. Let all souls praise God*—*May each of us, with every breath, recognize the presence of God in every facet of Creation.*

## Iyun Tefilla

### GOD IN ALL THINGS

How could heaven  
Be contained  
In a wildflower?  
Surely God's touch  
Is there  
Waking the bloom,  
But not the Hand.  
Nor could the heavens

Themselves,  
That blue bowl  
For all the stars,  
Contain It.  
As the blossom strives  
To turn itself  
Out of the seed,  
Let me strive  
To become  
The vessel  
That reveals  
Your touch.

\* Psalm 150.



אָז יִשִּׁיר מֹשֶׁה וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת הַשִּׁירָה הַזֹּאת לַיהוָה, וַיֹּאמְרוּ לֵאמֹר: אֲשִׁירָה לַיהוָה כִּי  
גָאָה גָאָה סוּס וּרְכָבוֹ רָמָה בַיָּם: עָזִי וְזִמְרַת יְהוָה וַיְהִי לִי לִישׁוּעָה זֶה אֱלֹהֵי וְאַנְוָהוּ  
אֱלֹהֵי אָבִי וְאַרְמְמָנְהוּ: יְיָ אִישׁ מִלְחָמָה יְיָ שְׁמוֹ: מִרְכַּבַּת פָּרְעָה וַחֲיִלוֹ יָרָה בַיָּם,  
וּמִבְּחַר שְׁלִשׁוֹ טָבְעוּ בַיָּם סוּף: תְּהַמַּת יִכְסִימוּ יָרְדוּ בְּמִצּוֹלַת כְּמוֹ אֲבָן: יְמִינָהּ יְיָ  
נֶאֱדָרִי בַכַּחַ, יְמִינָהּ יְיָ תִרְעֵץ אוֹיֵב: וּבִרְבִּי גְאוּנָה תִהְרַס קַמְיָה תִשְׁלַח חֲרוֹנָהּ יִאֲכַלְמוּ  
כְּקֶשׁ: וּבְרוּחַ אַפְיָהּ נִעְרְמוּ מִיָּם נִצְבּוּ כְמוֹ גֵּד נִזְלִים, קָפְאוּ תְהַמַּת בְּלֵב יָם: אָמַר  
אוֹיֵב אֲרֹדֶף אֲשִׁיג אֲחַלֵּק שְׁלָל תִּמְלָאמוּ בְּפִשִׁי, אָרִיק חֲרָבִי תוֹרִישְׁמוּ יָדָי: נִשְׁפַּתַּ  
בְּרוּחָהּ כְּסָמוּ יָם, צָלְלוּ כְּעוֹפְרַת בְּמִים אֲדִירִים: מִי כְּמֹכָה בְּאֵלִים יְיָ, מִי כְּמֹכָה  
נֶאֱדָר בְּקֹדֶשׁ, נוֹרָא תְהַלֵּת עֲשֵׂה פִּלָּא [מִי כְּמֹכָה בְּאֵלִים יְיָ, מִי כְּמֹכָה נֶאֱדָר בְּקֹדֶשׁ,  
נוֹרָא תְהַלֵּת עֲשֵׂה פִּלָּא]\*

Az ya-shir mo-she u-v'nei yis-ra-el et ha-shi-ra ha-zot la-do-nai va-yom-ru lei-mor: a-shi-ra  
la-do-nai ki ga-o ga-a, sus v'rokh-vo ra-ma va-yam. O-zi v'zim-rat ya va-y'hi li li-shu-a zeh ei-li  
v'an-vei-hu e-lo-hei a-vi va-a'ro-m'men'hu. A-do-nai ish mil-kha-ma, a-do-nai sh'mo. Mar-  
k'vot par-o v'khei-lo ya-ra va-yam u-mi-v'khar sha-li-shav tu-b'u v'yam suf. T'ho-mot y'khas-  
yu-mu, yar-du vim-tzo-lot k'mo a-ven. Y'min-kha a-do-nai ne-da-ri ba-ko-akh, y'min-kha  
a-do-nai tir-atz o-yeiv. U-v'rov g'o-n'kha ta-ha-ros ka-me-kha t'sha-lakh kha-ro-n'kha yokh-lei-  
mo ka-kash. U-v'ru-akh a-pe-kha ne-eir-mu ma-yim nitz-vu kh'mo neid noz-lim, kaf-u t'ho-mot  
b'lev yam. A-mar o-yeiv eir-dof a-sig a-kha-leik sha-lal tim-la-ei-mo naf-shi, a-rik khar-bi  
to-ri-shei-mo ya-di. Na-shaf-ta v'ru-kha-kha ki-sa-mo yam, tza'l'lu ka-o-fe-ret b'ma-yim  
a-di-rim. <Mi kha-mo-kha ba-ei-lim a-do-nai, mi ka-mo-kha ne'dar ba-ko-desh, no-ra t'hi-lot  
o-sei fe-le.>

Then Moses and the Children of Israel sang this song to Adonai, and they spoke saying: I will sing to Adonai for God is most high, horse and its rider God threw into the sea. My strength and my song of praise is God and God is my salvation. This is my God and I will glorify God [by dedicating my mind and body as a place for God], the God of my parents, and I will hold God high. Adonai is a warrior, Adonai is God's name. Pharaoh's chariots and army God threw into the sea; and the select of his officers were entangled in the Sea of Reeds. Deep waters covered them; they descended into the depths like stone. Your right hand, Adonai, endowed with strength; Your right hand, Adonai, smashes the enemy. In Your expansive majesty, You destroy those who rise up against You. You send Your anger, it consumes them like straw. And with the wind from Your nostrils the waters were piled up, the flowing water upright as a wall, the depths congealed in the heart of the sea. The enemy said: I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide loot, my desires will be gratified. I will draw my sword, my hand will dispossess them. You blew with Your wind, the sea covered them. The mighty ones sank like lead in waters. Who is like You among the gods, Adonai; who is like You, majestic in holiness, awesome [in virtues eliciting] praise, doing wonders.

## D'rash

**Then Moses and the Children of Israel sang this song to Adonai—They knew that although their own will had brought them into the sea, it was God's will that they traversed it successfully, while the Egyptians were drowned. And they spoke saying: I will sing to Adonai for God is most high, horse and rider God threw into the sea—The events of the day made clear that not the Israelites but God had vanquished the Egyptians. My strength and**

my song of praise is God, and I will glorify God [by dedicating my mind and body as a place for God], the God of my parents, and I will hold God high—*The courage of the people was extraordinary, but even the least of them could see that the outstretched arm of God was miraculous, producing a result that all would have declaimed as impossible if asked beforehand. Adonai is a warrior, Adonai is God's name—Our God has arranged the workings of the world so that those who suffer injustice, oppression, and poverty may ally themselves with the Freedom-Fighter of human liberation. Pharaoh's chariots and army, God threw into the sea; and the select of his officers were entangled in the Sea of Reeds. Deep waters covered them, they descended into the depths like stone—The price of liberty, not only release from bondage but freedom to choose service to the One God, was set not by the Almighty but by those who sought to thwart God's providence for Am Yisrael. Your right hand, Adonai, endowed with strength; Your right hand, Adonai, smashes the enemy—This allegorical symbol of strength reminds us that the Creator has arranged for the ultimate denouement of all evil-doing. In Your expansive majesty, You destroy those who rise up against You—Our sensitivities and sensibilities notwithstanding, the inescapable lesson of history is that the price of radical evil is utter destruction, and usually sooner than later. You send Your anger, it consumes them like straw—Evil-doing, containing as it does the seeds of its own destruction, is highly volatile and reactive when confronted with countervailing power, since those who practice it rely on passivity, acquiescence, and intimidation to succeed. And with the wind from Your nostrils, the waters were piled up, the flowing water upright as a wall, the depths congealed in the heart of the sea—The triumph of God's glorious goodness over evil, the unstoppable alliance of human and divine forces, has no limits in method or outcome—the miraculous can become momentarily commonplace, the wondrous temporarily workaday. The enemy said: I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide loot, my desires will be gratified—The delusion of evil-doers is that they are the masters of their personal destiny and human history, that ultimate victory will be theirs, blinded as they are by their arrogance to the verity of God's immanent and transcendent dominion in human affairs. I will draw my sword, my hand will dispossess them—The enemy of Am Yisrael fatally errs in the conviction that victory follows inevitably from military might, ignoring the effect of the spirit and the love of God. You blew with Your wind, the sea covered them. The mighty ones sank like lead in waters—How quickly do the tales of their strength and power recede, to be replaced with long-lived revulsion at their tyranny and inhumanity. Who is like You among the gods, Adonai; who is like You, majestic in holiness, awesome [in virtues eliciting] praise, doing wonders—When we strip the scales from our eyes, calculating from our experience the quotient of Divine Intelligence, we confront the supranatural—not the magic and mumbo-jumbo of the Wizard of Oz, but the certainty that deep in the infrastructure of Creation dwells our Loving Parent, to whom we are inextricably connected in ways that are not inherently unknowable yet to us shall always remain unknown.*

## Iyun Tefilla

### LOCOMOTION

If I say  
 Anveihu, \*\*  
 Do I become  
 The space through  
 Which You move?  
 A room  
 For Your Shekhina  
 Here on earth?  
 No, not a room,  
 But a ring of steel,  
 A whirling wheel,  
 And You  
 The bounding pistons,  
 Rocking gears!  
 Roll on  
 Freedom train!  
 To hasten toward

A kindness  
 We fly across  
 The land,  
 The freight we haul  
 Is mitzvahs  
 By the ton.  
 Drive!  
 Drive the world  
 Toward freedom!  
 Drive the world  
 To know:  
 Being free  
 Means setting free.

\* Exodus 15:1-11. \*\* A reference to God as the “force that moves me.” (S.R. Hirsch)

נְשַׁמַּת כָּל חַי, תְּבָרַךְ אֶת שְׁמֶךָ יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ. [נְשַׁמַּת כָּל חַי, תְּבָרַךְ אֶת שְׁמֶךָ יי  
 אֱלֹהֵינוּ] וְרוּחַ כָּל בָּשָׂר, תִּפְאֵר וְתִרְוַמִּים זְכָרְךָ מִלְּכֵנוּ תָּמִיד. [נְשַׁמַּת כָּל חַי, תְּבָרַךְ  
 אֶת שְׁמֶךָ יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ.]

<Nish-mat kol khai, t'va-reikh et shim-kha a-do-nai e-lo-hei-nu.> V'ru-akh kol ba-sar t'fa-eir  
 ut-ro-meim zikh-r'kha mal-kei-nu ta-mid. [Nish-mat kol khai, t'va-reikh et shim-kha a-do-nai  
 e-lo-hei-nu.]

The soul of every living being shall bless Your Name, Adonai our God. The spirit of all flesh shall glorify and  
 raise up Your remembrance, our Ruler forever.

## D'rash

**The soul of every living being shall bless Your Name, Adonai our God. The spirit of all flesh shall glorify and raise up Your remembrance, our Ruler forever**—*Even when we ungratefully bless God exclusively with words, in the absence of deeds, our very existence—that we live (in spirit) and breathe—nonetheless confirms that the Creator’s handiwork is praised by us beyond measure.*

## Iyun Tefilla

### BREATHE IN, BREATHE OUT

What can I do  
 To bless You?  
 Even the stars,  
 By their existence  
 Praise You,  
 And the moon too,  
 Just by hanging there.  
 And this breath  
 I am breathing

Just now,  
That too  
Proclaims You.  
That too  
Belongs to You.  
So what can  
I bring?  
I bring  
Knowing  
That to be  
Is not to live,  
To really live.  
I bring You  
This breath  
Breathed  
In making  
A blessing  
Of myself.

---

אור קֹדֶשׁ עַל צִיּוֹן תְּאִיר [אור קֹדֶשׁ עַל צִיּוֹן תְּאִיר] וְנִזְכָּה כָּלֵנוּ מִהֶרָה לְאֹרוֹ  
[מִהֶרָה לְאֹרוֹ, וְנִזְכָּה כָּלֵנוּ מִהֶרָה לְאֹרוֹ, מִהֶרָה לְאֹרוֹ, אֹר קֹדֶשׁ עַל צִיּוֹן  
תְּאִיר, אֹר קֹדֶשׁ עַל צִיּוֹן תְּאִיר]

<Or kha-dash al tzi-on ta-ir.> <V'niz-ke khu-la-nu <m'hei-ra l'o-ro>.>

May You shine a new light on Zion and may all of us be worthy, speedily, of its light (shining on us).

## D'rash

**May You shine a new light on Zion and may all of us be worthy, speedily, of its light (shining on us)**—*May the original illumination of Your Creation, before its human corruption, be recovered. And may each of us do our part to restore the light by hastening the days of Mashiakh.*

## Iyun Tefilla

### LIFE AS A LAMP

In our hands  
You laid the light.  
Or rather  
Its possibility.  
For You said  
That our souls  
Could be Your lamp  
In a world full  
Of dark places.  
Help me then,

To understand  
 The dark  
 To be the place  
 Where light  
 May enter.  
 And Help me  
 Find the door  
 To open,  
 The threshold  
 Of a soul  
 Where I may offer  
 Wings of words  
 With which to sail  
 The light.

אֱמֶת וַיִּצִיב וְנִכּוֹן וְקִים וַיִּשָּׂר וְנֶאֱמַן וְאֶהוּב וְחֻבִּיב וְנִחְמַד וְנִעִים וְנוֹרָא וְאֲדִיר וּמִתְקַן  
 וּמְקַבֵּל וְטוֹב וַיִּפֶּה הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה עָלֵינוּ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד [לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד].

E-met v'ya-tziv v'na-khon v'ka-yam v'ya-shar v'ne-e-man v'a-huv v'kha-viv v'nekh-mad  
 v'na-im v'no-ra v'a-dir u-m'tu-kan u-m'ku-bal v'tov v'ya-feh ha-da-var ha-zeh a-lei-nu l'o-lam  
 va-ed <l'o-lam va-ed>.

True and certain, established and enduring, upright and faithful, beloved and cherished, delightful and pleasant, awesome and mighty, correct and accepted, good and beautiful is this word to us for all eternity.

## D'rash

**True and certain**—That which came before this—our declaration that You are One, that we must repeat and teach Your Torah, and that we shall be lost if we fail to do Your will—is beyond question or doubt: we know the truth of it with utter certainty. **Established and enduring**—Though we are plagued with doubts and questions about ourselves and our lives, fearful of our own frailties, we are confident that You are the Eternal One, that You were present for those who came before us, and that You shall remain for all who come after us. **Upright and faithful**—When we emulate You, living in Your image by honoring Your Torah, we and all those who learn from us are raised up and made faithful to You. **Beloved and cherished**—You are our Beloved, in whom we live, and we cherish You when, by our deeds, we invite Your Shekhina into our world. **Awesome and mighty**—We are compelled by Your creation and its laws, the continuity of our lives and communities bound to our recognition of Your power and dominion. **Correct and accepted**—We are grateful that You have revealed in Your Torah the order of Your Creation, the blessings and commandments we need to fulfill our covenant with you. **Good and beautiful is this word to us for all eternity**—We declare, to ourselves and to the world beyond us, that only goodness and beauty will ever follow from affirming Your Oneness, learning and teaching Your Torah, and doing Your will.

## Iyun Tefilla

### READ THE MANUAL

Looking  
 Into the Torah,  
 Before creating the world,

Did God stop to think  
About people like me  
And what would happen  
Once the world  
Was put into our hands,  
Given how we are,  
About testing the rules  
And pushing limits?  
See, I think  
God knew all about  
People like me and  
What might happen,  
But just went ahead  
With the plan  
Anyway,  
Knowing  
That in spite of  
Our nature,  
If the nature  
Of the creation  
Is such that  
If I jump  
Into the deep end  
Of the pool  
And I don't wave  
My legs and arms,  
I will drown.  
As with everything  
Else in life,  
I may refuse.  
I may say:  
I DON'T LIKE THIS RULE!  
Or even,  
YOU CAN'T MAKE ME LIVE BY THIS RULE!  
I will still drown.

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אֲדֹנָי  
אֲדֹנָי שְׁפָתַי  
אֲדֹנָי שְׁפָתַי תִּפְתָּח  
וּפִי  
וּפִי יִגִּיד  
וּפִי יִגִּיד תְּהַלְתֵּךְ  
אֲדֹנָי שְׁפָתַי תִּפְתָּח וּפִי יִגִּיד תְּהַלְתֵּךְ:  
[אֲדֹנָי שְׁפָתַי תִּפְתָּח וּפִי יִגִּיד תְּהַלְתֵּךְ]

[A-do-nai  
A-do-nai s'fa-tai

A-do-nai s'fa-tai tif-takh  
U-fi  
U-fi ya-gid  
U-fi ya-gid t'hi-la-te-kha.]  
A-do-nai s'fa-tai tif-takh u-fi ya-gid t'hi-la-te-kha.

My Liege, open my lips that my mouth may declare Your praise.

## D'rash

**My Liege, open my lips that my mouth may declare Your praise**—*May these words, before reading the Amidah silently, bolster our kavvanah (focused intention) when our community's combined voices, and the spiritual nourishment they provide, recedes.*

## Iyun Tefilla

### LIPSERVICE

My Master,  
Adonai,  
By this name  
I call You  
As did Your prophets.  
By this name I ask:  
Please open my lips.  
Open my heart  
To Your will.  
For to praise You  
And not to serve  
Is to praise nothingness,  
And to make a god  
Of words,  
While You,  
Master of all worlds,  
Have no need  
For words  
Alone.  
Nora t'hilot  
They sang  
At the edge of the sea,  
Fearing to praise.  
And I too fear  
To praise You,  
Without deeds.  
Unless I can count  
Myself among the servants,  
I will not praise  
At all.

יִשְׂמַח מֹשֶׁה בְּמַתַּנַּת חֶלְקוֹ, כִּי עֶבֶד נְאֻמָּן קָרָאתָ לוֹ.  
 כְּלִיל תְּפֹאֶרֶת בְּרֵאשׁוֹ נָתַתָּ בְּעַמְדוֹ לְפָנֶיךָ עַל הַר סִינַי.  
 וּשְׁנֵי לוחות אֲבָנִים הוֹרִיד בְּיָדוֹ, וְכָתוּב בָּהֶם שְׁמִירַת  
 שַׁבָּת. וְכֵן כָּתוּב בְּתוֹרָתְךָ:



Yis-makh mo-she b'mat-nat khel-ko, ki e-ved ne-e'man ka-ra-ta lo. K'lil tif-e-ret b'ro-sho na-ta-ta, b'om-do l'fa-ne-kha al har si-nai. Ush-nei lu-khot a-va-nim ho-rid b'ya-do, v'kha-tuv ba-hem sh'mi-rat sha-bat, v'khein ka-tuv b'to-ra-te-kha.

Moses rejoiced in the gift of his portion; for You called him a faithful servant. A crown of glory You placed on his head when he stood before You on Mount Sinai. He brought down two stone tablets in his hand, on which is inscribed the observance of the Sabbath. And so it is written in Your Torah.

## D'rash

**Moses rejoiced in the gift of his portion**—That even as a child he was given the opportunity to ask Pharaoh to grant a day of rest to the Jewish slaves, to serve both God and Am Yisrael. **For You called him a faithful servant**—He was chosen not to author but to receive, record, and disseminate the teachings of Torah, which was enough to shower him with honor ever since. **A crown of glory You placed on his head when he stood before You on Mount Sinai**—He was invested with the Torah's wisdom (righteous judgment) to be a leader and judge, responsibilities that are undermined more often by moral and ethical lapses than deficiency in worldly knowledge or skill. **He brought down two stone tablets in his hand, on which is inscribed the observance of the Sabbath**—Because the people had gone beyond idolatrous worship to incest and the murder of Hur, jeopardizing the very survival of their newly acquired peoplehood by wholesale rejection of Torah, he cast down the first set of tablets and smashed them. The people were unworthy of the Torah, their rejection of its gifts had already broken its spirit among them, so by smashing the tablets Moses compelled them to confront what they had forsaken. **And so it is written in Your Torah**—"The people Israel shall observe Shabbat, to make Shabbat an eternal covenant throughout their generations," and although Moses broke the first set of tablets beneath the mount, in the precinct of the holy place in which they had been given by God, so clear was his purpose and his knowledge that the tablets were only a symbol, that neither God nor Torah nor Shabbat could in any way be diminished by shattering them but, on the contrary, could only be strengthened.

## Iyun Tefilla

### GLADDEN MY HEART

Did Moses  
 Dream his way  
 Down the mountain,  
 Happy just  
 Thinking of  
 The sweet gift  
 He would bring  
 To gladden their hearts  
 Like a bridegroom  
 With a bouquet of roses?  
 And did he dream  
 The gift

Would reach  
 To my heart too?  
 Let me rejoice now  
 In my portion—  
 The gift of  
 This Shabbat.  
 May it enter my heart  
 And the heart of  
 This home.



וּשְׁמְרוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת הַשַּׁבָּת, לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת הַשַּׁבָּת  
 לְדֹרֹתָם בְּרִית עוֹלָם. בֵּינִי וּבֵין בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֹת הַיָּא לְעֹלָם  
 [בֵּינִי וּבֵין בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֹת הַיָּא לְעֹלָם], כִּי שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים  
 עָשָׂה יְיָ אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ [שָׁמַיִם וְאָרֶץ], וּבַיּוֹם  
 הַשְּׁבִיעִי שָׁבַת וַיִּנָּפֵשׁ [שָׁבַת וַיִּנָּפֵשׁ], וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי שָׁבַת  
 וַיִּנָּפֵשׁ, שָׁבַת וַיִּנָּפֵשׁ].\*

V'sham-ru v'nei yis-ra-el et-ha-sha-bat, la-a-sot et-ha-sha-bat l'do-ro-  
 tam b'rit o-lam. Bei-ni u-vein b'nei yis-ra-el ot hi l'o-lam, ki shei-shet  
 ya-mim a-sa a-do-nai et-ha-sha-ma-yim v'et-ha-a-retz, u-va-yom

hash-vi-i sha-vat va-yi-na-fash.

And the Children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to make the Sabbath an everlasting covenant for their generations. Between Me and the Children of Israel it is a sign forever that in six days Adonai made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day God rested and was refreshed.

## D'rash

**And the Children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath**—We are commanded to maintain a watch over one day in the week that is set apart from the other six days of the week to enable the emergence of our Neshama Yetarah (extra soul). The extra soul has room for rest and joy, both for the loved ones God has brought to us and for our love of God Who has brought them. **To make the Sabbath an everlasting covenant for their generations**—We are to plan and make preparations that welcome and honor the Sabbath Queen and Bride, to follow the Shabbat mitzvot so that we may refresh ourselves in the beauty of Shabbat, and thus bequeath a living inheritance to our children and grandchildren. **Between Me and the Children of Israel it is a sign forever that in six days Adonai made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day God rested and was refreshed**—Our Holy Writings tell not of a worldly law that allows a day of rest but a holy ordinance legislated in the image of the Almighty, not to be surrendered to worldly interests or sundered by them.

## Iyun Tefilla

### 7-DAY COMPASS

You said  
 That if I wanted  
 To keep

My world  
From spinning  
Out of control  
I would have  
To give up control;  
I would need,  
To withdraw  
Into my own essence  
As You did  
On the seventh day.  
You said:  
Bring me  
Six days  
Of good work.  
And lay them down.  
And the six will receive  
Their measure  
From the One.  
And if I did, then  
I could keep  
My little world  
On its axis  
And know  
My place.  
And if I didn't, then  
I would have to  
Navigate the night  
Without the stars,  
And sail  
Without a map,  
And maybe  
Never even know  
The journey's end.  
So here I am,  
Bringing You  
Six good days,  
Which I'm sure  
You know  
Are also  
Six hard days.  
Though they count  
For little  
In this world,  
I lay them down.  
Please take them  
From me  
And grant me  
My compass.

\* Exodus 31:16-17.

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עם מְקַדְשֵׁי [עם מְקַדְשֵׁי] שְׁבִיעִי, כֻּלָּם יִשְׂבְּעוּ וְיִתְעַנְּגוּ מִטוֹבָה, וְהַשְּׁבִיעִי רְצִיתָ בוֹ  
 וְקִדְשָׁתוּ, הַמִּדַּת יָמִים [הַמִּדַּה] אוֹתוֹ קָרַאתָ, זָכַר לְמַעֲשֵׂה [לְמַעֲשֵׂה] בְּרֵאשִׁית.  
 [זָכַר לְמַעֲשֵׂה, לְמַעֲשֵׂה בְּרֵאשִׁית. עִם מְקַדְשֵׁי שְׁבִיעִי, כֻּלָּם יִשְׂבְּעוּ  
 וְיִתְעַנְּגוּ מִטוֹבָה]

<Am m'ka-d'shei> sh'vi-i, ku-lam yis-b'u v'yit-an-gu mi-tu-ve-kha, v'hash-vi-i ra-tzi-ta bo  
 v'ki-dash-to, khem-dat ya-mim [khem-da] o-to ka-ra-ta, <zei-kher <l'ma-a-sei> v'rei-shit.>

The people that sanctifies the seventh [day], they will all be satisfied and delighted by Your goodness. And the seventh [day], You found favor in it and sanctified it. “Most coveted of days,” [delight] You called it, a memorial to the act of Creation.

## D'rash

**The people that sanctifies the seventh [day], they will all be satisfied and delighted by Your goodness**—*Not the individual but the people that sanctifies the seventh day, together in community; they will realize their highest spiritual potential, individually and collectively, which is the foundation for human happiness. And the seventh [day], You found favor in it and sanctified it*—*The seventh day was set aside and dedicated, for the sake of humankind, because while we are little more than dust, we are also only a little lower than the angels. “Most coveted of days,” You called it, a memorial to the act of Creation*—*Who would not prefer rest to toil, learning to labor, time to clock-watching, freedom to slavery, loving to litigating, singing to shouting, beauty to banality, and community to isolation—all made possible by respite from creation.*

## Iyun Tefilla

### CARAVAN TO THE OASIS

Listen!  
 Do you hear it?  
 Put your ear  
 To the ground.  
 You can feel it  
 Six days away!  
 The caravan is coming!  
 Let its  
 Swaying camels,  
 Trembling bells  
 Carry you  
 Back  
 From the desert,  
 Back to palms  
 And pools of water,  
 Honey and dates.  
 Don't be late!  
 You don't want to miss  
 The last ride home!

אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, רְצֵה בְּמִנוּחֵתָנוּ, קְדֹשְׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתֶיךָ וְתֵן חֶלְקֵנוּ בְּתוֹרָתְךָ,  
שְׁבַעְנוּ מִטּוֹבְךָ וְשִׂמְחָנוּ בִּישׁוּעָתְךָ, וְטַהַר לִבֵּנוּ לְעִבְדֶּךָ בְּאֵמֶת, וְהִנְחִילֵנוּ יי  
אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּאֶהְבָּה וּבְרִצּוֹן שַׁבַּת קְדֻשָּׁה, וַיְנוּחוּ בָּהּ יִשְׂרָאֵל מִקְדָּשֵׁי שָׁמַיָּהּ.

E-lo-hei-nu vei-lo-hei a-vo-tei-nu, r'tzei vim-nu-kha-tei-nu. Ka-d'shei-nu b'mitz-vo-te-kha  
v'tein khel-kei-nu b'to-ra-te-kha, sab-ei-nu mi-tu-ve-kha v'sam-khei-nu bi-shu-a-te-kha,  
v'ta-heir li-bei-nu l'ov-d'kha be-e-met, v'han-khi-lei-nu a-do-nai e-lo-hei-nu b'a-ha-va u-v'ra-  
tzon sha-bat kod-she-kha, v'ya-nu-khu va yis-ra-el m'ka-d'shei sh'me-kha.

Our God and the God of our ancestors, may You be pleased with our rest. Sanctify us with Your commandments and give us our portion in Your Torah; satisfy us from Your goodness and hearten us with Your salvation, and purify our heart to serve You in truth. Adonai, our God, with love and favor grant us Your holy Sabbath as a heritage, and may Israel, those who sanctify Your Name, rest on it. Blessed are You, Adonai, Who sanctifies the Sabbath.

## D'rash

**Our God and the God of our ancestors, may You be pleased with our rest—***May we, through Your mitzvot, know the gift of Your Shabbat. Separate us and dedicate us to the unique path of our peoplehood, removed from the materialism and violence that surrounds us. Sanctify us with Your commandments and give us our portion in Your Torah; satisfy us from Your goodness and hearten us with Your salvation, and purify our heart to serve You in truth—*Let all who love God unite to do good, with simkha shel mitzvah (joy of the mitzvah), to attain our common salvation, the seal of our spirit l'sheim shamayim. **Adonai, our God, with love and favor grant us Your holy Sabbath as a heritage, and may Israel, those who sanctify Your Name, rest on it—***Rebuke us when we lapse in welcoming Your Shabbat, and let the consequences of our failures fall heavily upon us, so that Your treasured seventh day never slips through our fingers because we are obsessed with sating our senses.*

## Iyun Tefilla

### DISSATISFY MY HEART

For any goodness  
But Yours.  
Teach it to demand  
Your presence  
In my every act.  
And if I should  
Go away from You,  
Oh God,  
Turn back my heart  
With desire.  
Teach it to expect  
Only You  
To arrive  
In my every  
Moment.



יְבָרְכֶךָ יי וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ. כֵּן יִהְיֶה רְצוֹן  
 יֵאָר יי פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וְיִחַנֶּךָ. כֵּן יִהְיֶה רְצוֹן  
 יִשָּׂא יי פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וְיִשֵּׂם לְךָ שָׁלוֹם. כֵּן יִהְיֶה רְצוֹן

Y'va-re-kh'kha a-do-nai v'yish-m're-kha. Kein y'hi ra-tzon.  
 Ya-eir a-do-nai pa-nav ei-le-kha vi-khu-ne-ka. Kein y'hi ra-tzon.  
 Yi-sa a-do-nai pa-nav ei-le-kha v'ya-seim l'kha sha-lom. Kein y'hi ra-tzon.

May you find harmony with the divine, shelter and light.  
 May the wonder of the infinite shine, gracious and warm.  
 And may our holy God be in our heart, < < compassion and peace > >.\*

## D'rash

**May God bless you and keep you**—*May we always remember that God's creation is much richer than we can comprehend, and our material wants are satisfied when we open ourselves to its blessings and commandments.* **May God's face light you and grace you**—*Since we are blessed by God with the capacity to understand Torah, we may use that understanding to attain spiritual fulfillment through "insight into God's management in history and of our own mission and tasks in life" (S.R. Hirsch), so that we may be "gracious to one another and compassionate to one another" (Numbers Rabbah 11:6).* **May God face you and give you peace**—*May we always exert ourselves to seek the face of God, the divine path of Torah, so that we pursue peace beyond ourselves, in our family and community, the reward for which is to be enlightened, and liberated from our private anxieties and depression.*

## Iyun Tefilla

WHEN YOU LIFTED UP YOUR HANDS, AARON

Did it occur to you that  
 They were created  
 For just that moment?  
 And when you said

Vayisa Adonai panav eilekha,  
 Could you imagine  
 God's face  
 Turning to you?  
 Or, like the rest of us  
 Were you worried  
 About all the mistakes,  
 Wondering,  
 Would you be worthy  
 Of the blessing?  
 Would God want you?  
 Given what happened  
 With the calf and so on.  
 And when you did raise  
 Your hands,  
 And God did turn,  
 Did you finally understand  
 That it meant you?  
 That your hands  
 Could rise  
 To God's purpose?  
 That God's face could  
 Turn to you?  
 That you, like us,  
 Were the purpose  
 God had in mind  
 From the beginning?

\* Interpretive translation of the Hebrew above, from Leviticus 6:24-26.

שִׁים שְׁלוֹם בְּעוֹלָם [שִׁים שְׁלוֹם בְּעוֹלָם], טוֹבָה וּבְרָכָה, חֵן וְחֶסֶד וְרַחֲמִים, עָלֵינוּ  
 וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל עִמָּךְ. בְּרַכְנוּ, אָבִינוּ, כְּלָנוּ כְּאֶחָד בְּאוֹר פְּנֵיךָ, כִּי בְּאוֹר פְּנֵיךָ נָתַתָּ  
 לָנוּ, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, תּוֹרַת חַיִּים וְאַהֲבַת חֶסֶד, וְצִדְקָה וּבְרָכָה וְרַחֲמִים וְחַיִּים וְשְׁלוֹם  
 [וְשְׁלוֹם], וְטוֹב בְּעֵינֶיךָ [וְטוֹב בְּעֵינֶיךָ] לְבָרֵךְ אֶת עַמָּךְ [אֶת עַמָּךְ] יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּכָל עֵת  
 וּבְכָל שָׁעָה בְּשְׁלוֹמָךְ [בְּכָל עֵת וּבְכָל שָׁעָה בְּשְׁלוֹמָךְ].

<Sim sha-lom ba-o-lam,> tov-a u-v'ra-kha, khein va-khe-sed v'ra-kha-mim a-lei-nu v'al kol  
 yis-ra-el a-me-kha. Bar-khei-nu a-vi-nu ku-la-nu k'e-khad b'or pa-ne-kha, ki v'or pa-ne-kha  
 na-ta-ta la-nu, a-do-nai e-lo-hei-nu, to-rat kha-yim v'a-ha-vat khe-sed, utz-da-ka u-v'ra-kha  
 v'ra-kha-mim v'kha-yim <v'sha-lom>, <v'tov b'ei-ne-kha> l'va-reikh <et am-kha> yis-ra-el  
 <b'khol-eit u-v'khol sha-a bish-lo-me-kha>.

Make peace in the world—goodness, blessing, graciousness, kindness, and compassion on us and on all of Your people Israel. Bless us, our Parent, all of us as one, with the light of Your mien, for with the light of Your mien You gave us, Adonai, our God, the Torah of life and a love of kindness, righteousness, blessing, compassion, life, and peace. And may it be good in Your eyes to bless Your people Israel, at all times and in every hour with Your peace.

## D'rash

**Make peace in the world—goodness, blessing, graciousness, kindness, and compassion on us and on all of Your people Israel—***May You continue creating a world for us to complete and heal through our struggles to know righteousness and to lessen pain and degradation, always sensitive to the dangers of both order and disorder, always valuing both the individual and the community. Bless us, our Parent, all of us as one, with the light of Your mien, for with the light of Your mien You gave us, Adonai our God, the Torah of life and a love of kindness, righteousness, blessing, compassion, life, and peace—***We accept that Your blessings are given to us as a people; that it is not our family, congregation, or community You favor, but klal Yisrael; thus we acknowledge our need for Your light, to illuminate the path of respect, lovingkindness, and unity between ourselves and other Jews, regardless of past disagreements or strife. And may it be good in Your eyes to bless Your people Israel, at all times and in every hour with Your peace—***May our commitments and our actions that unify us as a people open the heavens to a shower of blessings, especially shalom, because together we will have acknowledged our common heritage and future as a holy nation.*

## Iyun Tefilla

### REFLECTION

We do not see  
Your face,  
But in its light  
We come to see  
Ourselves  
For what  
We dare to be—  
A mirror.  
In that light  
We are all shining  
And able  
As new moons  
To rise and struggle  
With the night  
And fling  
Reflected glory  
Deep into the dark.  
In that light  
We come to see  
Ourselves  
As one.  
In that light  
We can see forever.

---

עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרוֹמָיו, הוּא יַעֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ, וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.  
[עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרוֹמָיו, הוּא יַעֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ, וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמְרוּ: אָמֵן.]  
עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרוֹמָיו, הוּא יַעֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ.

<O-sei sha-lom bim-ro-mav, hu ya-a'sei sha-lom a-lei-nu, v'al kol yis-ra-el v'im'ru a-mein.>  
O-sei sha-lom bim-ro-mav, hu ya-a'sei sha-lom a-lei-nu.

May God who makes peace in the high heavens, may God make peace upon us and upon all Israel. Now say: Amen.

## D'rash

**May God who makes peace in the high heavens, may God make peace upon us and upon all Israel. Now say: Amen**—*May we be given to understand from the One Who masterminds the harmony of all creation, how we are to repair the world and restore Am Yisrael as a people unified by love of Torah and holy service in everyday life.*

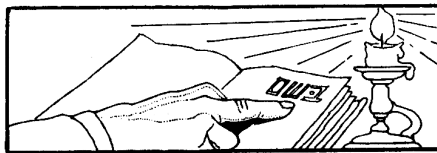
## Iyun Tefilla

### ALL THINGS ARE MADE OF SMALLER THINGS

“Acts of kindness bring about great peace.”  
—Rabbi Eliezer ben R. Yose

What does it take  
To bring about  
The kingdom of God on earth?  
We search  
And never know  
The kingdom's end.  
We strain  
To find an order in the skies,  
To find our place  
And count our part.  
The moon, the stars—  
Which are we?  
Dust.  
Small stones  
Skipped into a summer sea.  
And yet,  
The largest things  
Are made of smaller things.  
Drops divide the waters of the sea,  
And drops divide those drops.  
And sands of moons  
And distant stars  
Are also small.  
And none is lost.  
And so  
Are all small acts of kindness  
Like drops of water  
That can wear away a stone  
To its very heart,  
Or make a well  
Spring up,  
Or wash away  
A shadow on a soul  
And help to bring it

In the light.  
Which are we?  
And where?  
A little lower  
Than the angels.



בְּרוּךְ הַבָּא בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה, בְּרַכְנוּכֶם מִבֵּית יְהוָה.  
[בְּרוּךְ הַבָּא בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה, בְּרַכְנוּכֶם מִבֵּית יְהוָה]  
אֵל יְהוָה וַיֵּאָר לָנוּ.  
[אֵל יְהוָה וַיֵּאָר לָנוּ]  
אָסְרוּ חַג בְּעֵבְתַיִם עַד קַרְנוֹת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ.  
[אָסְרוּ חַג בְּעֵבְתַיִם עַד קַרְנוֹת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ]  
אֵלֵי אֶתְהָ וְאוֹדֶךָ אֱלֹהֵי אֲרוֹמְמֶךָ.  
[אֵלֵי אֶתְהָ וְאוֹדֶךָ אֱלֹהֵי אֲרוֹמְמֶךָ]  
הוֹדוּ לַיְי כִּי טוֹב, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶדּוֹ.  
[הוֹדוּ לַיְי כִּי טוֹב, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶדּוֹ]\*

<Ba-rukhh ha-ba b'sheim a-do-nai, bei-rakh-nu-khem mi-beit a-do-nai.>

<Eil a-do-nai va-ya-eir la-nu.>

<Is-ru khag ba-a-vo-tim ad kar-not ha-miz-bei-akh.>

<Ei-li a-ta v'o-de-ka e-lo-hai a-ro-m'me-ka.>

<Ho-do l-do-nai ki tov, ki l'o-lam khas-do.>

Blessed is the one who comes with the name of Adonai. We bless you from the house of Adonai. Adonai is God Who has given us light. Bind the festival offering with cords up to the corners of the altar. You are my Almighty and I will thank You, my God I will exalt You. Give thanks to God for goodness, for God's kindness is infinite.

## D'rash

**Blessed with the name of Adonai is the one who comes**—It is the Creator who has bestowed the fullness of blessing on all that comes to life. Yet it is for us who are blessed to form the holy community that will enable the full realization of that blessing in ourselves, and to show lovingkindness to others so that they may join us in that fullness. **We bless you from the house of Adonai**—We are the builders of the house of Adonai, because we have been blessed by God with the tools; but it is our will and energy that draw the materials together to create the sanctuary for our service to God. We are bidden to build it at home, at work, at play, going back and forth, in the light and dark. **Adonai is God who has given us light**—The light shines upon us, with its myriad blessings and paths, but it is we who must open our own hearts to it and then create the openings for others, so that together we may see the light of Torah and mitzvot. **Bind the festival offering with cords up to the corners of the altar**—When we join together with our people around the sacred place where we are to make our offering of prayers, we come not asking for blessings but

*pledging to be a blessing—certain in our conviction and commitments, having them “bound up with cords,” before we come to declare them in the sanctuary. You are my Almighty and I will thank You, my God I will exalt You—I am able to sustain my conviction and commitments because I recognize that your Divine Intelligence is masterminding not only the infinity of creation but the moment circumstances of my life. Give thanks to God for goodness, for God’s kindness is infinite—That you allow the redemption of myself, my people, and all of humankind, despite our failings and foibles, is kindness beyond measure.*

## Iyun Tefilla

### A WALK IN THE DARK

When the last  
Lamppost  
Is far behind,  
And there is no path,  
Give me Your Name  
To keep me  
In the ways of blessing.  
Better yet,  
Give me  
The dark  
To kindle  
Into blessing!  
Give me Your light  
With which to penetrate  
The night  
And reach  
Beyond the furthest lamp,  
Beyond the furthest dark.

\* Psalm 118:26-29.



מי שְׁבַרְךָ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אֲבָרְהָם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב, וְאִמֵּנוּ  
שָׂרָה רִבְקָה רָחֵל וְלֵאָה, הוּא יְבָרְךָ וְיַרְפָּא אֶת־  
הַחוּלִים [הוּא יְבָרְךָ וְיַרְפָּא אֶת־הַחוּלִים]:

Mi she-bei-rakh a-vo-tei-nu av-ra-ham yitz-khak v'ya-a-kov, v'i-mo-tei-nu sa-ra riv-ka ra-kheil v'lei-a <hu y'va-reikh vi-ra-pei et-ha-kho-lim>.

Holy One of blessing, Who blessed the ones before us—Avraham, Yitzkhak, and Ya'akov; Sarah, Rivka, Rakheil, and Leah. May God bless and may God heal, those who are in need; and open our hearts to reach out with our hands, to bring strength, comfort, and peace.\*

## D'rash

May God Who blessed our ancestors—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah—may God bless and heal the sick—May our compassionate God help us—we who are enjoying the blessing of good health—to offer with an open heart, the hope, consolation, and support needed by those who are recovering and by their loved ones.

## Iyun Tefilla

### VISITATION

In their names,  
Abraham, Isaac and Jacob  
Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah,  
Shall I bring you  
A blessing?  
Remember you  
For healing?  
Let me be sure  
To remember  
As God remembered,  
Coming to the door of  
Of Abraham's tent  
In the heat of the day,  
To heal and to bless.  
Let me remember  
That kindness  
With my own.

\* Interpretive translation.

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יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְפָּנֶיךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ שֶׁתְּבַטֵּל מִלְחָמוֹת וּשְׂפִיכוֹת דָּמִים מִן  
הָעוֹלָם [מִן הָעוֹלָם] וְתַמְשִׁיךְ שְׁלוֹם גָּדוֹל וְנִפְלָא בְּעוֹלָם וְלֹא יִשָּׂא גּוֹי אֶל גּוֹי חָרֵב  
וְלֹא יִלְמְדוּ עוֹד מִלְחָמָה. [יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְפָּנֶיךָ, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, יְהִי רְצוֹן  
מִלְפָּנֶיךָ, יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְפָּנֶיךָ]

Y'hi ra-tzon mil-fa-ne-kha a-do-nai e-lo-hei-nu vei-lo-hei a-vo-tei-nu shet-va-teil mil-kha-mot  
ush-fi-khut da-mim <min ha-o-lam> v'tam-shikh sha-lom ga-dol v'nif-la ba-o-lam v'lo yi-sa  
goy el goy khe-rev v'lo yil-ma-du od mil-kha-ma. [<<Y'hi ra-tzon mil-fa-ne-kha>> a-do-nai  
e-lo-hei-nu vei-lo-hei a-vo-tei-nu.]

May it be Your will, Adonai our God and God of our ancestors, that wars and spilling of blood will cease from the world, and spread a great and wonderful peace over the world, and nation will not lift up sword against nation, and they will not teach war anymore.

## D'rash

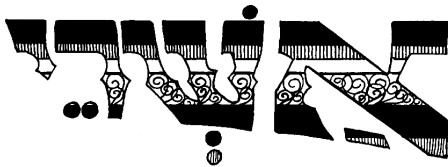
**May it be Your will, Adonai our God and God of our ancestors, that wars and spilling of blood will cease from the world—***May we inculcate in ourselves God's intolerance for the evil that foments war and lawless violence, that each of us becomes a vocal advocate of shalom. And spread a great and wonderful peace over the world, and nation will not lift up sword against nation—***Open our eyes to the violence we do to ourselves, to the blood we shed in our families, to the slaughter in our communities, and to the wars of aggression between nations. And they**

**will not teach war anymore**—Let us acknowledge that our teaching must begin with the recognition that without righteousness there is no truth, without truth there is no justice, without justice there is no freedom, without freedom there is no peace—and without peace there is no kindness.

## Iyun Tefilla

### ON THE HOMEFRONT

If the war machine  
Can be made  
Into pruning hooks,  
Who knows what  
My own wrath  
Might convert to!  
Let me remember:  
The toll of anger  
Is charged not only  
To accounts of nations.  
Unteach me  
Ways of war  
In homely places.  
May Your will be great  
Before my angry mouth.  
And even if  
I do not want them,  
Give me wings of peace  
To ride the winds  
Of war,  
And I will fly  
Fast and far  
To make my world,  
Starting here,  
A place of peace.  
If I can manage that,  
There might just  
Be something else  
Besides pruning hooks  
That we could make.



אֲשֶׁר יוֹשְׁבֵי בֵיתְךָ, עוֹד יִהְלְלוּךָ סֵלָה:  
אֲשֶׁר יֵעָם שְׂכֵכָה לּוֹ, אֲשֶׁר יֵעָם שְׁנֵי אֱלֹהִיו:  
תְּהִלָּה לְדָוִד,  
אֲרוֹמְמָה אֶלֹהֵי הַמִּלָּחָה, וְאֶבְרַכְּךָ שְׂמֶה לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:  
בְּכֹל יוֹם אֶבְרַכְּךָ, וְאֶהְלֵלְךָ שְׂמֶה לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:  
גָּדוֹל יְיָ וּמְהֵלָל מְאֹד, וְלִגְדֹלְתוֹ אֵין חֶקֶר:  
דוֹר לְדוֹר יִשְׁבַח מַעֲשֵׂיךָ, וְגִבּוֹרֹתֶיךָ יִגִּידוּ:  
הַדָּר כְּבוֹד הַיְהוָה, וְדַבְּרֵי נִפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ אֲשִׁיחָה:

וְעִזּוּ נֹרְאוֹתֶיךָ יֹאמְרוּ וּגְדוּלְתֶךָ אֶסְפְּרָנָה:  
זָכַר רַב טוֹבָה יִבְיָעוּ, וְצִדְקָתֶךָ יִרְנְנוּ:  
חֲנוּן וְרַחוּם יְיָ, אַרְךְ אַפַּיִם וּגְדֹל חֶסֶד:  
טוֹב יְיָ לְכֹל, וְרַחֲמָיו עַל כָּל מַעֲשָׂיו:  
יְדוּהָ יְיָ כָּל מַעֲשֵׂיךָ, וְחִסְדֵיךָ יִבְרַכּוּכָה:  
כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתֶךָ יֹאמְרוּ, וּגְבוּרַתֶךָ יִדְבְּרוּ:  
לְהוֹדִיעַ לְבַנֵּי הָאָדָם גְּבוּרָתוֹ, וּכְבוֹד הַדָּר מַלְכוּתוֹ:  
מַלְכוּתֶךָ מַלְכוּת כָּל עֲלָמִים, וּמִמְשַׁלְתֶךָ בְּכֹל דּוֹר וָדוֹר:  
סוֹמֵךְ יְיָ לְכֹל הַנִּפְלְאִים, וְזוֹקֵף לְכֹל הַכְּפוּפִים:  
עֵינַי כֹּל אֵלֶיךָ יִשְׁבְּרוּ, וְאַתָּה נוֹתֵן לָהֶם אֶת אֲכָלָם בְּעֵתוֹ:  
פּוֹתַח אֶת יְדֶךָ, וּמִשְׁבִּיעַ לְכֹל חַי רִצּוֹן:  
צְדִיק יְיָ בְּכֹל דְרָכָיו, וְחֹסֵד בְּכֹל מַעֲשָׂיו:  
קָרוֹב יְיָ לְכֹל קְרָאִיו, לְכֹל אֲשֶׁר יִקְרָאֵהוּ בְּאֱמֶת:  
רִצּוֹן יִרְאִיו יַעֲשֶׂה, וְאֶת שׁוֹעֲתָם יִשְׁמַע וַיּוֹשִׁיעֵם:  
שׁוֹמֵר יְיָ אֶת כָּל אֲהַבָּיו, וְאֶת כָּל הַרְשָׁעִים יִשְׁמִיד:  
תַּהֲלֵת יְיָ יִדְבַּר פִּי, וַיִּבְרַךְ כָּל בֶּשֶׂר שֵׁם קִדְשׁוֹ, לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:  
וְאַנְחָנוּ נִבְרַךְ יְיָ, מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם, הַלְלוּיָהּ\*

Ash-rei yosh-vei vei-te-kha, od y'ha-l'lu-kha se-la.

Ash-rei ha-am she-ka-kha lo, ash-rei ha-am she-a-do-nai e-lo-hav.

T'hi-la l'da-vid

A-ro-mim-kha e-lo-hai ha-me-lekh, v'a-var-kha shim-kha l'o-lam v'ed.

B'khol yom a-var-khe-kha, va'a-ha-l'la shim-kha l'o-lam v'ed.

Ga-dol a-do-nai u-m'hu-lal m'od, v'lig-du-la-to ein khei-ker.

Dor l'dor y'sha-bakh ma-a-se-kha, ug-vu-ro-te-kha ya-gi-do.

Ha-dar k'vod ho-de-kha, v'div-rei nif-l'o-te-kha a-si-kha.

Ve-e-zuz no-r'o-te-kha yo-mei-ru, ug-du-la-t'kha a-sap-re-na.

Zei-kher rav tu-v'kha ya-bi-u, v'tzid-ka-t'kha y'ra-nei-nu.

Kha-nun v'ra-khum a-do-nai, e-rekh a-pa-yim ug-dol-kha-sed.

Tov a-do-nai la-kol, v'rakh-a-mav al kol-ma-a-sav.

Yo-du-kha a-do-nai kol-ma-a-se-kha, v'kha-si-de-kha y'var-khu-kha.

K-vod mal-khu-t'kha yo-mei-ru, ug-vu-ra-t'kha y'da-bei-ru.

L'ho-di-a liv-nei ha-a-dam g'vu-ro-tav, u-kh'vod ha-dar mal-khu-to.

Mal-khu-t'kha mal-khut kol-o-la-mim, u-mem-shal-t'kha b'khol-dor va-dor.

So-meikh a-do-nai l'khol-ha-nof-lim, v'zo-keif l'khol-ha-k'fu-fim.

Ei-nei khol ei-le-kha y-sa-bei-ru, v'a-ta no-tein la-hem et-okh-lam b'i-to.

Po-tei-akh et-ya-de-kha, u-mas-bi-a l'khol-khai ra-tzon.

Tza-dik a-do-nai b'khol-d'ra-khav, v'kha-sid b'khol-ma-a-sav.

Ka-rov a-do-nai l'khol-ko-r'av, l'khol a-sheer yik-ra-u-hu ve-e-met.

R'tzon y'rei-av ya-a-seh, v'et-shav-a-tam yish-ma v'yo-shi-eim.

Sho-meir a-do-nai et-kol-o-ha-vav, v'eit kol-ha-r'sha-im yash-mid.

T'hi-lat a-do-nai y'da-ber pi, vi-va-reikh kol-ba-sar sheim kod-sho l'o-lam va-ed.  
Va-a-nakh-nu n'va-reikh ya, mei-a-ta v'ad o-lam. Ha-l'lu-ya.

Happy are those who dwell in Your house; they are always praising You, Selah!  
Happy is the people for whom this is so, happy is the people whose God is Adonai.  
A psalm of praise by David,  
I will exalt You, my God the Ruler, and I will bless Your Name forever and ever.  
Every day I will bless You, and I will extol Your Name forever and ever.  
Adonai is great and exceedingly praised, and God's greatness is beyond investigation.  
Each generation will praise Your deeds to the next and of Your mighty deeds they will tell.  
The majestic glory of Your grandeur and Your wondrous deeds I shall meditate on.  
And of Your awesome power they will speak, and Your greatness I shall relate.  
A memory of Your abundant goodness they will utter and of Your righteousness they will sing exultantly.  
Gracious and merciful is Adonai, slow to anger and abundant in kindness.  
Adonai is good to all; God's mercies are on all God's works.  
All Your works shall thank You, Adonai, and Your devout ones will bless You.  
Of the glory of Your kingdom they will speak, and of Your power they will tell;  
To make known to human beings God's mighty deeds, and the majestic splendor of God's kingdom.  
Your kingdom is a kingdom of all eternities, and Your dominion is throughout every generation.  
Adonai supports all the fallen ones and straightens all the bent.  
The eyes of all look to You with hope and You give them their food in its time;  
You open Your hand, and satisfy the desire of every living thing.  
Righteous is Adonai in all God's ways and magnanimous in all God's deeds.  
Adonai is close to all who call upon God, to all who call upon God in truth.  
The will of those who fear God, God will do; and their cry God will hear, and save them.  
Adonai protects all who love God; but all the wicked God will destroy.  
May my mouth declare the praise of Adonai and may all flesh bless God's Holy Name forever and ever.  
And we will bless God from this time and forever, Halleluyah!

## D'rash

**Happy are those who dwell in Your house; they will always praise You, Selah!**—*Those who have made You a presence where they dwell are touched least by the forces that destroy individuals, families, and communities; may they never forget Hamakom (lit., "the place" where God is present).* **A Psalm of praise by David**—*An ancient voice, yet alive, turning my insides out, greeting the unknown in me, whether I am sovereign or subject.* **I will exalt You, my God the Ruler, and I will bless Your Name forever and ever. Every day I will bless You, and I will extol Your Name forever and ever. Adonai is great and exceedingly praised, and God's greatness is beyond investigation. Each generation will praise Your deeds to the next, and of Your mighty deeds they will tell**—*To those who will listen or learn, may I shout Your Name from the heights, protesting all that is malignant and cruel, knowing that therein is the legacy for our children and all the children that come after them.* **The majestic glory of Your grandeur and Your wondrous deeds I shall meditate on. And of Your awesome power they will speak, and Your greatness I shall relate. A memory of Your abundant goodness they will utter and of Your righteousness they will sing exultantly**—*Your Shabbat, between what we have done to live in Your image and what we have yet to do, is our haven, the sacred time when we come together in consolation and celebration of the week past and joyful renewal of our vision and vitality for the struggles of the week ahead.* **Gracious and merciful is Adonai, slow to anger and abundant in kindness. Adonai is good to all; God's mercies are on all God's works**—*How little we have suffered for all our self-serving manipulations; how undeserving we have been for our survival and success—with chutzpah (effrontery) we've called them serendipitous. When living in God's image, our needs have been fulfilled; we have been shepherded and prepared for the challenges we've faced.* **All Your works shall thank You, Adonai, and Your devout ones will bless You. Of the glory of Your kingdom they will speak, and of Your power they will tell. To make known to human beings God's mighty deeds, and the majestic**

**splendor of God's kingdom**—Your rivers are running, Your justice demanding, Your creation renewed—another glorious day. You have filled us with wonder, lifting us high up above. The words spill out despite our reluctance: You have thrilled us beyond knowing, taking us out of ourselves. **Your kingdom is a kingdom of all eternities, and Your dominion is throughout every generation**—The sages of science have made it their mission to discover what we call the immutable laws of nature, succeeding beyond our wildest imagining. **Adonai supports the fallen ones and straightens all the bent. The eyes of all look to You with hope and You give them food in its time**—You have given us blessings beyond counting; You have given us life and hope, earth and its provender, and the loved ones you have made and brought to us in Your goodness. **You open Your hand, and satisfy the desire of every living thing. Righteous is Adonai in all God's ways and magnanimous in all God's deeds**—You are our source and our sustenance, Who without fail provides for all our needs when we reach within ourselves, our families, our communities, and our people to use all that You have given us. **Adonai is close to all who call upon God, to all who call upon God in truth**—We embrace Your divine power, accepting openly and joyfully that in You and Your Torah we are strengthened and guided to meet the challenges we face. **The will of those who are in awe of God, God will do**—When we are angry because we don't want to be held accountable for others and for the consequences of our own actions, we may choose atonement or greater spiritual alienation from the divine image that the Creator implanted within us. When we choose to be at one with God, in the service of the Holy One, God does our will. **Adonai protects all who love God**—But God rebuked Moses at the edge of the Reed Sea for remaining immobilized in prayer, waiting passively for God's salvation, while the Children of Israel were threatened by the pursuing Egyptians. We too must act to save ourselves. **But all the wicked God will destroy**—If we miss the right path, thus wronging or losing ourself and, possibly, others, because we fail to speak or act when we might prevent harm to one who is innocent, we tilt ourselves toward evil, which if not halted is the beginning of our destruction. In effect, we do evil by failing to act against it when it is within our power. We thus bear the burden of self-imposed alienation from the Creator of the world and all that is good in it. **May my mouth declare the praise of Adonai and may all flesh bless God's Holy Name forever and ever. And we will bless God from this time and forever, Halleluyah!**—May each of us, with the Torah as our guide, become a blessing in the lives of those around us, always acquiescing to the urge to tell of the gifts we have received in return, praise God!

## Iyun Tefilla

### BE THE FIRST IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD!!!

To build a  
 Perpetual motion machine!  
 Project Plans  
 Available now!  
 Step 1:  
 Make yourself  
 Happy!  
 Grasp  
 Ashrei  
 (Read: Striding continuously forward)  
 Firmly  
 To set in motion  
 On path  
 As designated  
 In Torah manual,  
 Engaging both  
 Hands and feet.  
 Warning:  
 Do not attempt  
 This much happiness  
 Without Help.  
 (Consult Manual).

Step 2:  
 Take  
 Od y'hal'lukha—  
 I will praise You forever—  
 In your pocket  
 (Recommended fuel source)  
 Congratulations!  
 You are the first  
 In your neighborhood  
 To become  
 A living,  
 Breathing,  
 Never-ending  
 House of prayer  
 Bringing God's  
 Grace and peace  
 Wherever you go!  
 Warning:  
**DO NOT TURN OFF!**

\* From Psalms 84:5, 144:15, and 145.

עֵץ חַיִּים הִיא,  
 לְמַחְזִיקִים בָּהּ,  
 וְתַמְכִּיהָ מֵאֲשֶׁר.  
 דָּרְכֶיהָ דָּרְכֵי נְעָם,  
 וְכָל נְתִיבוֹתֶיהָ שְׁלוֹם.\*

Eitz kha-yim hi  
 la-ma-kha-zi-kim ba,  
 v'to-m'khe-kha m'u-shar.  
 D'ra-khe-ha dar-khei no-am,  
 v'khol n'ti-vo-te-ha sha-lom.

You flower on  
 ancient tree,  
 shading paths beyond those we know.  
 And your strength renews all life,  
 binding heaven to earth and sea.\*

עֵץ חַיִּים הִיא. . . .

A tree of life it is to those who take hold of it, and those who support it are happy. Its ways are ways of pleasantness and all its paths are peace.



## D'rash

**A tree of life it is to those who take hold of it**—*If we will make the Torah our own, it will become the tree of our life—giving us deep roots in our history and heritage, a solid trunk of wisdom on which to stand, a surfeit of branches of learning to guide us through life's challenges, and an explosion of simkha blossoms (joyful celebrations) that will beautify our days with meaning and purpose.* **And those who support it are happy**—*As with all of life, there is greater joy in giving than receiving; thus our greatest happiness will derive from our efforts to bring the blessings of Torah into the lives of others.* **Its ways are ways of pleasantness and all its paths are peace.** *If we will but join together with others, proclaiming the vision of Torah, each of us walking the path in our own unique way within its bounds, we shall achieve the deepest happiness possible.*

## Iyun Tefilla

### THE WAY BACK

When Eve,  
The mother of all,  
Noticed the tree of life  
Before she took matters  
Into her own hands,  
Did she think, like us:  
I want to live forever?  
Did she then regret  
Having to leave paradise,  
The only home  
She'd ever known,  
And find it harsh  
That God placed  
A flaming sword  
That turns every which way  
And a pair of angels  
To guard the tree?  
But could they not  
Just as easily  
Have been waiting  
There for us  
All this time,  
Guarding the way  
Back?  
Some say,  
If only we had  
A trail of breadcrumbs  
To show us the way.  
I say we do.  
I say when God blew  
The breath of life into us  
The letters of the Torah  
Were included.

\* Interpretive translation of Proverbs 3:18, 17.

כְּבוֹדוֹ מְלֵא [מְלֵא] עוֹלָם, מִשְׁרְתָיו שׁוֹאֲלִים זֶה לָזֶה, [מִשְׁרְתָיו שׁוֹאֲלִים זֶה לָזֶה]  
אֵיהָ מְקוֹם [מְקוֹם] כְּבוֹדוֹ [כְּבוֹדוֹ מְלֵא, מְלֵא עוֹלָם, מִשְׁרְתָיו שׁוֹאֲלִים זֶה לָזֶה,  
מִשְׁרְתָיו שׁוֹאֲלִים זֶה לָזֶה אֵיהָ מְקוֹם כְּבוֹדוֹ].

<K'vo-do <ma-lei> o-lam, <m'sha-r'tav sho-a-lim zeh la-zeh>, a-yei <m'kom> k'vo-do.>

God's glory fills the world, God's ministering angels ask one another, Where is the place of God's glory?

## D'rash

**God's glory fills the world**—*God's love and compassion for life and its potential know no boundaries; from mountain tops to desert valleys, from the skies to the ocean depths, we discover the pulsating presence of God's glory.*  
**God's ministering angels ask one another, Where is the place of God's glory?**—*All those who carry the word of God must wonder as to its source; but eventually they must leave off their inquiries, accepting the limits of their understanding, to carry out their task as messengers.*

## Iyun Tefilla

### OURS TO KNOW

Like the angels  
We must content  
Ourselves  
With not knowing  
God's place.  
And like the stars,  
Those ancient  
Ships of light  
Steering into darkness  
On their way to  
Who knows where,  
We sail on,  
Never knowing  
The birthing place of light,  
Except the path  
That's put before us  
In this world.  
And yet it's ours  
To know  
The glory of it  
Fills the earth!  
Of course,  
It's easy  
Not to see  
What's hidden  
In plain sight.  
It conforms to the rule:  
Whatever  
We take for granted  
Becomes invisible.

אֵין כְּאֱלֹהֵינוּ, אֵין כְּאֲדוֹנֵינוּ, אֵין כְּמִלְכֵנוּ, אֵין כְּמוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ.  
מִי כְּאֱלֹהֵינוּ, מִי כְּאֲדוֹנֵינוּ, מִי כְּמִלְכֵנוּ, מִי כְּמוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ.  
נוֹדֵה לְאֱלֹהֵינוּ, נוֹדֵה לְאֲדוֹנֵינוּ, נוֹדֵה לְמִלְכֵנוּ, נוֹדֵה לְמוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ.  
בְּרוּךְ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, בְּרוּךְ אֲדוֹנֵינוּ, בְּרוּךְ מִלְכֵנוּ, בְּרוּךְ מוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ.  
אֲתָה הוּא אֱלֹהֵינוּ, אֲתָה הוּא אֲדוֹנֵינוּ, אֲתָה הוּא מִלְכֵנוּ, אֲתָה הוּא מוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ.  
אֲתָה הוּא שֶׁהִקְטִירוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ לְפָנֶיךָ אֶת קְטֹרֶת הַסַּמִּים.

Ein kei-lo-hei-nu, ein ka-do-nei-nu, ein k'mal-kei-nu, ein k'mo-shi-ei-nu.  
Mi khe-lo-hei-nu, mi kha-do-nei-nu, mi kh'mal-kei-nu, mi kh'mo-shi-ei-nu.  
No-deh lei-lo-hei-nu, no-deh la-do-nei-nu, no-deh l'mal-kei-nu, no-deh l'mo-shi-ei-nu.  
Ba-ruk h e-lo-hei-nu, ba-ruk h a-do-nei-nu, ba-ruk h mal-kei-nu, ba-ruk h mo-shi-ei-nu.  
A-ta hu e-lo-hei-nu, a-ta hu a-do-nei-nu, a-ta hu mal-kei-nu, a-ta hu mo-shi-ei-nu.  
A-ta hu she-hik-ti-ru a-vo-tei-nu l'fa-ne-kha et k'to-ret ha-sa-mim.

There is none like our God, there is none like our Lord, there is none like our Ruler, there is none like our Savior.

Who is like our God, who is like our Lord, who is like our Ruler, who is like our Savior?

Let us thank our God, let us thank our Lord, let us thank our Ruler, let us thank our Savior.

Blessed is our God, blessed is our Lord, blessed is our ruler, blessed is our Savior.

It is You Who are our God, it is You Who are our Lord, it is You Who are our Ruler, it is You Who are our Savior.

You are the One before whom our ancestors burned the incense of spices.

## D'rash

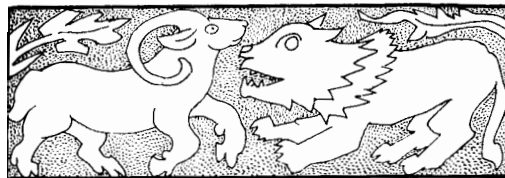
**There is none like our God, there is none like our Lord, there is none like our Ruler, there is none like our Savior**—Our devotion to the Holy One is not out of habit or sentimentality, but because the Holy Name stands for all we hold dear, the justice and compassion we cannot forsake. **Who is like our God, who is like our Lord, who is like our Ruler, who is like our Savior?**—We have found nothing-gods that divert us, but none to which we are devoted dor l'dor (generation to generation): none are the Author of history and humanity. **Let us thank our God, let us thank our Lord, let us thank our Ruler, let us thank our Savior**—At the margin of love and loneliness, work or uselessness, life or death, there is but One God Who receives our spontaneous gratitude. **Blessed is our God, blessed is our Lord, blessed is our Ruler, blessed is our Savior**—There is no other god in whose image we seek to live our lives. **It is You Who are our God, it is You Who are our Lord, it is You Who are our Ruler, it is You Who are our Savior**—We admit it, we acknowledge it, we proclaim it: You are the One in Whom we find salvation. **You are the One before Whom our ancestors burned the incense of the spices**—Withal, throughout the generations, we have returned to Your altar to share the sweet savor of our love for You.

## Iyun Tefilla

### PAPER GOD

Isn't it embarrassing  
Though,  
To get caught

Bowing to stone?  
 Everyone knows  
 It's not cool.  
 Who wants to say:  
 This thing of stone  
 Has power over me?  
 And, after all, a thing  
 Of so little substance.  
 Me, an individual!  
 I have power.  
 But oh paper,  
 Little green paper!  
 Nothing embarrassing  
 About that.  
 It's mostly not  
 The thing itself,  
 Of course,  
 The consciousness  
 Of thousand dollar bills  
 Floating on the brain  
 Like ticker tape.  
 It's mostly not  
 The bowing down.  
 No, the main problem with  
 Worshipping idols is  
 That they require  
 So little.  
 You think not?  
 Remember the time  
 We worshipped  
 The calf?  
 Remember the orgy?  
 Remember the incest?  
 Remember that was when  
 We murdered Hur.



אֲדוֹן עוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר מֶלֶךְ, בְּטָרֵם כָּל יִצִיר נִבְרָא.  
 לַעֲת נַעֲשֶׂה בְּחִפְצוֹ כֹּל, אֲזִי מֶלֶךְ שְׁמוֹ נִקְרָא.  
 וְאַחֲרֵי כִכְלוֹת הַכֹּל, לְבַדּוֹ יִמְלוֹךְ נוֹרָא.  
 וְהוּא הָיָה, וְהוּא הוֹדָה, וְהוּא יִהְיֶה, בְּתַפְאָרָה.  
 וְהוּא אֶחָד וְאֵין שְׁנַי, לְהַמְשִׁיל לוֹ לְהַחְבִּירָה.  
 בְּלִי רֵאשִׁית בְּלִי תְכָלִית, וְלוֹ הָעֵז וְהַמְשָׁרָה.

וְהוּא אֱלֹהֵי וְחַי גַּאֲלֵי, וְצוּר חֶבְלֵי בַּעַת צָרָה.  
וְהוּא נָסִי וּמְנוּס לִי מִנַּת כּוֹסֵי בַּיּוֹם אֶקְרָא.  
בְּיָדוֹ אֶפְקִיד רוּחִי, בַּעַת אִישָׁן וְאַעֲרָה.  
וְעַם רוּחִי גְוִיָּתִי, יֵי לִי וְלֹא אִירָא.

A-don o-lam a-sher ma-lakh, b'te-rem kol y'tzir niv-ra  
L'eit na-a'sa v'khef-tzo kol, a-zai me-lekh sh'mo nik-ra.  
V'a-kha-rei kikh-lot ha-kol, l'va-do yim-lokh no-ra.  
V'hu ha-ya, v'hu ho-veh, v'hu yi-hi-yeh b'tif-a-ra.  
V'hu e-khad v'ein shei-ni, l'ham-shil lo l'hakh-bi-ra.  
B'li rei-shit, b'li takh-lit, v'lo ha-oz v'ha-mis-ra.  
V'hu ei-li v'khai go-a-li, v'tzur khevli b'eit tza-ra.  
V'hu ni-si u-ma-nos li, m'nat ko-si b'yom ek-ra.  
B'ya-do af-kid ru-khi, b'eit i-shan v'a-i-ra  
V'im ru-khi g'vi-ya-ti, a-do-nai li v'lo i-ra.

Ruler of the universe, Who ruled before any form was created. When God's will brought all into being, then as "Ruler" was God's Name proclaimed.

After all has ceased to be, God, the Awesome One, will reign alone. It is God Who was, God Who is, and God Who shall abide in splendor.

God is One—there is no second to compare to God, to be God's equal. Without beginning, without ending—God is the power and dominion.

Adonai is my God, my living Redeemer, Rock of my pain in time of trouble. God is my banner, a refuge for me, the portion of my cup on the day I call.

Into God's hand I shall entrust my spirit at the time I go to sleep and when I wake. With my spirit shall my body remain. Adonai is with me, I shall not fear.

## D'rash

**Ruler of the universe, Who ruled before any form was created**—With *b'reishit* (in this beginning), we see both the "big bang" and the "steady state" of Your creativity, affirming You as the ultimate Author of creation and destruction. **When God's will brought all into being, then as "Ruler" was God's Name proclaimed**—We could not acknowledge a king as more than leader, because he too was ruled; we could not acknowledge the sun or moon or stars as sovereign, for they too were subservient; we could not acknowledge the idols of other nations as governors, since they made no binding rules. But Your blueprint for creation, Your Torah, compelled us to proclaim Your reign. **After all has ceased to be, God, the Awesome One, will reign alone. It is God Who was, God Who is, and God Who shall abide in splendor**—During the big bangs of Your creations, You are the only steady state: in each *tzimtzum* (apparent contraction and expansion of God's infinite light or presence), the creation is created out of nothing. **God is One—there is no second to compare to God, to be God's equal. Without beginning, without ending—God is the power and dominion**—Every other object of worship has passed into oblivion in the face of Your immanent compassion and mercy and transcendent power and majesty. **Adonai is my God, my living Redeemer, Rock of my pain in time of trouble. God is my banner, a refuge for me, the portion of my cup on the day I call**—I have no illusion that there is any other Source of my strength; I have no fantasy that there is any greater measure of goodness; I have no hallucination that my salvation shall be found anywhere else. **Into God's hand I shall entrust my spirit at the time I go to sleep and when I wake. With my spirit shall my body remain. Adonai is with me, I shall not fear**—You are faithful to me: every day, without fail, You restore my soul to me. After hours of unconsciousness and suspension of my will to live in Your image, You breathe Your spirit into me again. My soul is again consciously connected to You: it wants to live in Your image, to do Your will in the world, to sanctify Your name no matter the obstacle.

## Iyun Tefilla

### FEEL NO FEAR

Is what they tell you.  
What they really mean  
Is pretend  
Not to feel.  
I say,  
Guard your fear.  
Beware  
Wasting it  
On other people  
And their money.  
Fear only that  
Your life  
Will have no meaning.  
Give in to this fear daily.  
And if, like me,  
You are afraid  
Of everything,  
Say now:  
God is mine—  
I feel this fear  
But I refuse  
To act on it.

---

הִנֵּה אֵל יְשׁוּעָתִי, אֲבֹטַח וְלֹא אֶפְחָד,  
[Adonai is the source of our strength and rejoicing.]  
כִּי עֲזִי וְזִמְרַת יְהוָה יִי, וַיְהִי לִי לְיִשׁוּעָה:  
וְשָׂאֲבָתָם מִיָּמִים בְּשִׁשׁוֹן מִמַּעֲיֵנַי הַיְשׁוּעָה:  
לִי הַיְשׁוּעָה עַל עֲמָךְ בְּרִכְתְּךָ סֵלָה:  
יְיָ צְבָאוֹת עֲמָנוּ מִשְׁגֵּב לָנוּ אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב סֵלָה:  
יְיָ צְבָאוֹת אֲשֶׁרֵי אָדָם בִּטַח בְּךָ:  
יְיָ הוֹשִׁיעָה הַמֶּלֶךְ יַעֲנֵנוּ בְיוֹם קְרָאֵנוּ:  
לְיִהוּדִים הִיְתָה אוֹרְהָ וְשִׁמְחָה וְשִׁשׁוֹן וַיִּקָּר:  
כֵּן תִּהְיֶה לָנוּ, כּוֹס יְשׁוּעוֹת אֲשָׂא. וּבְשֵׁם יְיָ אֶקְרָא: \*  
[Adonai is the source of our strength and rejoicing.]

Hi-nei eil y'shu-a-ti ev-takh v'lo ef-khad.

Ki o-zi v'zim-rat ya va-y'hi li li-shu-a.

U-shav-tem ma-yim b'sa-son mi-ma-a'y'nei ha-y'shu-a.

La-do-nai ha-y'shu-a al am-kha bir-kha-te-kha, se-la.

A-do-nai tz'va-ot i-ma-nu mis-gav la-nu e-lo-hei ya-a'kov, se-la.

A-do-nai tz'va-ot ash-rei a-dam bo-tei-akh bakh.  
A-do-nai ho-shi-a ha-me-lekh ya-a'nei-nu v'yom kor-ei-nu.  
La-y'hu-dim ha-y'ta o-ra v'sim-kha v'sa-son vi-kar.  
Kein ti-h'yeh la-nu, kos y'shu-ot e-sa. U-v'sheim a-do-nai ek-ra.

Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and I will not fear, for my strength and my praise is God, Adonai, Who was my deliverance.

You will draw water with joy from the springs of salvation.

To Adonai is deliverance, Your blessing is upon Your people, Selah.

Adonai of Legions is with us, a tower for us is the God of Jacob, Selah.

Adonai of Legions, happy is the person who trusts in You.

Adonai save [us]—may the Sovereign answer us on the day that we call.

For the Jews there was light and joy and bliss and honor, so may it be for us.

The cup of deliverance I will raise, and the name of Adonai I will invoke.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן.

Ba-rukḥ a-ta a-do-nai, e-lo-hei-nu me-lekh ha-o-lam, bo-rei p'ri ha-ga-fen.

Blessed are You, Adonai, our God, Sovereign of the Universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא מִיְּנֵי בְשָׂמִים:

Ba-rukḥ a-ta a-do-nai, e-lo-hei-nu me-lekh ha-o-lam, bo-rei mi-nei v'sa-mim.

Blessed are You, Adonai, our God, Sovereign of the Universe, Creator of varied spices.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא מְאוּרֵי הָאֵשׁ:

Ba-rukḥ a-ta a-do-nai, e-lo-hei-nu me-lekh ha-o-lam, bo-rei m'o-rei ha-aish.

Blessed are You, Adonai, our God, Sovereign of the Universe, Creator of the light of fire.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַמְּבַדִּיל בֵּין קֹדֶשׁ לְחוֹל, בֵּין אֹר לְחֹשֶׁךְ, בֵּין  
יְשָׂרָאֵל לְעַמִּים, בֵּין יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי, לְשֶׁשֶׁת יְמֵי הַמַּעֲשֶׂה: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, הַמְּבַדִּיל בֵּין  
קֹדֶשׁ לְחוֹל:

Ba-rukḥ a-ta a-do-nai, e-lo-hei-nu me-lekh ha-o-lam, ha-mav-dil bein ko-desh l'khol, bein or  
l'kho-shekh, bein yis-ra-eil la'a-mim, bein yom hash-vi-i, l'shei-shet y'mei ha-ma-a-seh: ba-  
rukḥ a-ta a-do-nai, ha-mav-dil bein ko-desh l'khol.

Blessed are You, Adonai, our God, Sovereign of the Universe, who separates sacred from profane, light from darkness, the seventh day of rest from the six days of labor. Blessed are You, Adonai, who separates the sacred from the profane.

## D'rash

**Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust and I will not fear, for my strength and my praise is God, Adonai, Who was my deliverance**—*Look at my life—do you not see how I have been saved? No longer am I a slave to mistrust and anxiety. Yet I claim no virtue for any strength or accomplishment—I was delivered by the God whose presence calls attention to whatever value my life has achieved. You will draw water with joy from the springs of salvation—You too, with all your doubts and disabilities, may choose to refresh yourself from the Creator's infinite strength and compassion. To Adonai is deliverance, Your blessing is upon Your people, Selah. Adonai of Legions is with us, a tower for us is the God of Jacob, Selah. Adonai of Legions, happy is the person who trusts in You. Adonai save [us]—may the Sovereign answer us on the day that we call—See all around us the blessed, the legions seeking to serve the Creator, those who have been delivered to a higher calling, who are secure and fulfilled because the Holy One has guided them and sustained them. For the Jews there was light and joy and bliss and honor, so may it be for us—With Adonai, our people's faith and hope was not empty, nor need it be for us in this time, despite our reason and experience. The cup of deliverance I will raise, and the name of Adonai I will invoke—Because there is no greater source of joy in my life than to praise the God Who has created the Torah and the Jewish people to walk in its path.*

## Iyun Tefilla

### CATCHING FIRE

Here's how  
To make a fire  
After Shabbat.  
When the last moment  
Flies away  
From you  
In the smoke  
Of the candle,  
And the Aishdat,\*\*  
The holy fire,  
Seems lost to you,  
Stir the ashes,  
Find some coals.  
To carry back  
To your week.  
Look around  
For kindling  
(A mitzvah).  
In fact,  
To make it last,  
Build a tent  
Of sticks.  
Blow gently!  
Keep blowing!  
Don't let it go out!

\* From Isaiah 12:2-3, Psalms 3:9 and 46:12, Esther 8:16, and Psalm 116:13.

\*\* אשֶׁרָא (Deuteronomy 33:2)—fire become law, the Torah.

Our Shabbos now has ended  
 With its day of peace and prayer,  
 We have read the Torah portion  
 And seen the future there  
 We have found our second souls  
 And kindred spirits in our midst,  
 So renewed in faith and vision  
 We face the week ahead  
 Sh'vua tov,  
 Sweet savor of Shabbat  
 We hold so close,  
 Shabbat Shalom

## D'rash

**Our Shabbos now has ended**—The 25 hours of reflection, recreation, and regeneration have ceased, but once again we embark on the extended Shabbat, the days which follow and lead up to those 25 hours, in which we seek to make the Shekhina ever more present in the world. **With its day of peace and prayer**—We have not ceased doing, but instead have taken the break from mundane pressures and demands as an opportunity to be our whole selves, to realize—literally hold in our mind's eye—our full potential in family, community, and sacred purposes. **We have read the Torah portion and seen the future there**—We have abandoned the desperate fear of losing control, which is the source of our obsession with self-determination, in recognition that our personal preferences lead neither to our own fulfillment nor to that of our children or their children. **We have found our second souls and kindred spirits in our midst**—Looking not within ourselves for God's voice, since we are not like animals who do what is good for themselves as a matter of instinct, we turn our eyes and hearts heavenward, certain that the source of fulfillment is communal dedication to the vision and path of Torah. **So renewed in faith and vision, we face the week ahead**—The rediscovery of our additional soul has, once again, empowered us to move forward as individuals and members of a kahal poalei tzedek, despite our reason and experience, which would otherwise demoralize and immobilize us. **Sh'vua tov, sweet savor of Shabbat we hold so close, Shabbat Shalom**—We are confident that to the degree we make Shabbat, it shall nourish and sustain our spirits in the week ahead, energizing us day-to-day l'sheim yikhud, for the sake of the unification of the Holy One.



## Iyun Tefilla

### SECOND SOUL

Captive  
 Self,  
 Lonely-bird-  
 In-a-cage  
 Soul,  
 Was that you  
 I heard  
 Singing

In the dark?  
Were you  
Hoping  
All the time  
That I  
Would come?  
While I  
Was waiting  
All that time  
For you?  
And then  
The Shabbos  
Moment came  
When I had  
Had enough!  
Enough of work.  
Enough of waiting.  
You wouldn't  
Come for me—  
I'd come  
For you!  
And so  
I rearranged  
My weekday self  
To harmonize  
Your singing soul,  
And looked  
Into the Torah.  
There you were!  
Standing  
In the future  
Of my people!