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INTRODUCTION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

INTRODUCTION

How did this Machzor come about?

The genesis of this Machzor came about one Friday night at London's Finchley Synagogue (better known as "Kinloss") in 2011. The newly arrived Israeli Ambassador to the United Kingdom, Daniel Taub, was the special guest at a dinner for students at the synagogue, organised by University Jewish Chaplaincy. That Shabbat, the Torah reading was Vayikra, starting that book of the Torah (Leviticus).

In his closing message to the students that evening, Ambassador Taub mentioned something which had occurred to him on a recent flight to Israel. As the plane descended into Ben-Gurion airport, some of the older passengers began to weep, emotionally affected by the opportunity to visit the Holy Land. A younger passenger, sitting near to Ambassador Taub, turned to his neighbour in amazement. "Why are they crying? Aeroplanes land here every five minutes. What's the big deal?"

The contrast between the older and the younger passengers can also relate to the contrast between the Books of Shemot (Exodus) and Vayikra (Leviticus).

Shemot, with its dramatic stories of exodus, splitting of the sea, Revelation at Mount Sinai and more, has thematic parallels with the events in the early years of the State of Israel. Events such as the wars of 1948, 1967 and 1973, the emotional scenes as Jews, particularly from countries where they were oppressed, were able to return to their ancient homeland, stirred the Jewish heart. This was the Israel over which the older passengers wept tears of joy.

Vayikra, by contrast, contains many daily rituals which lay at the heart of religious practice, and has parallels with the regular running of an established modern state. This was the framework of reference for the younger passenger who had not grown up with the foundational events of the State.

◀ Our task

Our task, suggested Ambassador Taub, is to combine both approaches. We must understand the background to the State of Israel and pass that understanding on, especially as we move further away from those foundational events. In doing so, we underpin the daily functioning and development of the State with greater meaning and significance, whilst building a contemporary society.

The following Monday morning, Ambassador Taub's words were shared with the team at US Living & Learning (the United Synagogue's educational, publications and programming hub). Rabbi Andrew Shaw, then Director of Living & Learning, conceptualised the four "modern" days of the Omer period – Yom HaShoah, Yom HaZikaron, Yom HaAtzma'ut and Yom Yerushalyim – as a discrete group for essential messages relating to modern Jewish history, the State of Israel and their impact on our lives.

We applied Ambassador Taub's ideas to Rabbi Shaw's grouping and the result is this machzor.

The name and purpose of this Machzor

These days represent an ongoing journey from exile towards the biblical promises of redemption and peace for which we pray daily, hence the name of this machzor, *migalut ligula* – from exile towards redemption.

It is perhaps no accident that these days, and the journey they symbolise, fall during the Omer period each year, that time from Pesach and Shavuot when our ancestors left the slavery of Egypt and arrived at Mount Sinai for the Revelation and giving of the Torah.

As people privileged to witness the return of *Am Yisrael* (the Jewish People) to *Eretz Yisrael* (the Land of Israel) as expressed through *Medinat Yisrael* (the State of Israel), our prayer is that we will also be blessed to experience the realisation of redemption, in the Land of Israel and for the world.

One factor which unites the figures whom you will encounter in this machzor, in the prayers, the commentaries and the essays, is their sense of mission and purpose to use their lives in service of the Jewish people, striving for a better future for all. That sense drove, or drives, their lives.

Being a Jew is to have a sense of purpose, through living as a Jew and thereby bringing the blessings of being Jewish to those around us and to

◀ future

future generations. Being a Jew is to do *Kiddush Hashem*, sanctifying God's name, bringing more Godliness to the world through the way we live.

This sense of purpose is also a central part of our ongoing efforts for Jewish continuity, transmitting Judaism to those around us and those who come after us. We take a lesson in this from our forefather, Yaakov (Jacob). The Torah tells us how he arrived *shaleim* (complete) when he came to the town of Shechem, north of Jerusalem, on his return to the Land of Israel (Bereishit/Genesis 33:18). The rabbis of the Midrashic and Talmudic periods, who taught us so much about how the way we live and understand Judaism, note that Yaakov was “complete” in his physical and financial condition as well as in his knowledge of and commitment to Torah.*

Yet, even with this, Yaakov faced a number of subsequent challenges which tested his ability to transfer the sense of being “complete” to his children and others. Events such as the tribulations and violence with which he had to contend at Shechem, the disappearance of his beloved son Yosef (Joseph) and the eventual move of his whole family from their ancestral home to Egypt – which became the start of our 210 years of exile there before the exodus we commemorate at Pesach – may have presented difficulties in transferring the values needed for Jewish continuity. Even if we feel we are “complete,” we still need God's help and to work to ensure Jewish continuity.

Despite the challenges he faced, Yaakov succeeded in passing on a commitment to Jewish values, crystallised in our faith, practice, knowledge, pride in being Jewish and desire to build a better world.

His success and that of those after him, upon whose shoulders we stand, is one of the reasons that you are reading this machzor today. Our challenge is to emulate all of those who came before us and passed this commitment onto us. The days marked by this machzor provide powerful opportunities to do so.

We hope that this machzor inspires you to feel a sense of purpose, to remember our story, to be proud of it, to never stop dreaming of that better future and to make your contribution to the wonderful, ongoing story of *Am Yisrael*. May God bless you with success and satisfaction in doing so.

* See Rashi to that verse, Midrash Raba Bereishit 79:5 and Talmud Shabbat 33b.

What is this machzor and how you can use it

This machzor has two parts, prayers (tefilot) and essays. They start from opposite sides of the machzor.

The tefilot section contains the Mincha, Maariv and Shacharit prayers in that order, as in a regular machzor, for use in shul, school or at home. Accompanying the tefillot are explanations, recollections of events which connect to the prayers and observations about Jewish life. Many of these are by people who experienced events which shape our world today, so their first-hand observations are especially valuable. Photographs are also included to enhance the messages of the tefillot and the accompanying materials. We have tried to select combinations to enhance your understanding and appreciation of our prayers and of the events marked by the days it commemorates.

We have included the counting for each day of the Omer, so that the machzor can easily be used throughout the Omer period, other than on Rosh Chodesh.

The essays section comprises a variety of interviews, historical articles, memorials, speeches, photos and personal recollections. They have inspired, moved and educated us, reminding us of our gratitude to God and the greatness of the human spirit. Our aspiration is that they will achieve the same for you, providing moments of reflection, inspiration and contemplation.

In future years, whether marking the days commemorated by this machzor or at other times, we hope that you will return to this machzor often.

Its webpage at www.theus.org.uk/galuttogeulah provides more thought-provoking articles, videos and other information to extend the reach of the machzor. The essays and the materials on the webpage can be used in shul, school and home settings to create your own commemorations and inspirations.

* * *

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Our heartfelt thanks go to Linda and Michael Weinstein and their family for dedicating this machzor in memory of Linda's and Michael's late

◀ parents

parents – Nellie and Solo Grinberg and Stella and Ernest Weinstein of blessed memory.

The Weinstein family's unassuming support for many causes in the UK, Israel and further afield is immensely appreciated, as is their personal encouragement and kindness in the Finchley Synagogue community and beyond. Their dedication of this machzor provides another example of their sense of purpose: how Linda, Michael and the whole Weinstein family follow the example set by their late parents. May God grant them continuing *berachah vehatzlachah* in all that they do.

This machzor would not have come to fruition without all of our contributors, especially those who wrote specially for this machzor. We also acknowledge with gratitude those who gave us permission to reproduce work which they published. We are indebted to them all. May the inspiration which they have provided continue to reverberate for generations to come and remain a recurring source of merit for them.

Koren Publishers Jerusalem, along with their Maggid and Toby imprints, have earned a prominent position in the Jewish library. It has been a great pleasure to work with Koren on this machzor and to include excerpts from the broader ranges of its fascinating library. Our grateful thanks go to Matthew Miller and his team, especially Avishai Magence, Aryeh Grossman and Esther Be'er.

In his installation address, Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis set education and our links to Israel at the heart of his Chief Rabbinate. We hope this machzor will further the Chief Rabbi's aims in these respects and thank him for his leadership of and inspiration for our community. We greatly appreciate the Chief Rabbi's insights and foreword for this machzor as well as his support for the work of the US Living & Learning department. Our thanks also go to his office staff, especially Ari Jesner and Mark Frazer, for their help and advice with producing this machzor.

The forewords from President Reuven Rivlin, Rabbi Andrew Shaw, Rabbi Yechiel Wasserman, HE Ambassador Mark Regev, Stephen Pack and Sally Saunders enhance this publication. We are grateful for the encouragement they give to our work. Rabbi Wasserman also displayed characteristic generosity in providing with us with resources from the World Zionist Organisation's archives.

◀ Rabbi Lord

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks continues to be a source of inspiration and Torah teaching. We thank him for allowing us to reproduce his translations, commentaries and other articles. The assistance of Joanna Benarroch and Daniel Sacker in Lord Sacks's office was invaluable too.

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The United Synagogue Trustee Board provides the crucial support which allows the organisation to function. We thank all of our trustees for this support.

The professional teams at the United Synagogue have played a central role in making this machzor happen. We are indebted to our colleagues for their help.

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◀ of the United

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All of these organisations do tremendous work for *Am Yisrael* and we appreciate the links we enjoy with them.

The teachings of Rabbi Chaim and Miriam Brovender, who went on *aliya* from the USA in 1965, reflect a love of the Torah, the Land and its people, thereby inspiring ideas in this machzor.

We owe a debt of gratitude to Shimon Cohen, Lady Esther Gilbert, Major Keren Hajioff of the IDF Spokesperson Bureau, Yanky Fachler, Yossi Fachler, Naomi and Mark Nevies, Michael Freeman and Theo Robertson-Bonds of the Embassy of Israel in London, as well as Scott Saunders of March of the Living UK for their help in accessing materials.

It is an honour to work in the US Living & Learning department, principally due to the tremendous team that we have. Joanna Rose, our programmes manager, has typed much of what you will read in this machzor whilst unflappably running our office and taking care of many of the details behind the machzor. Nomi Goldberg, our Events Coordinator, has helped similarly. The research and writing skills of Esther Shindler, our intern, were invaluable too.

◀ David Kaplan

David Kaplan, our Director, is a driving force behind our work. We thank him enormously for the support he provides to our team. The quiet work he does behind the scenes has helped this machzor and other projects come into existence.

Acharon, acharon chaviv – following Jewish tradition, our greatest and most precious acknowledgement is our final one, to God, without whom nothing would be. It is a great privilege to carry out the work we do and especially to have worked on this machzor. We thank the Almighty for the precious opportunity to labour in His vineyard and for enabling us to do so. Our fervent hope is that this machzor will achieve what it is set out to do, to connect you to the days and ideas it marks, to sanctify God's name, *lehagdil Torah ulha'adirah*, to magnify the greatness of our Torah and the ongoing sense of mission which is at the heart of being Jewish.

הרחמן, הוא יבשר לנו בשורות טובות ישועות ונחמות
והוא יוליכנו קוממיות לארצנו.

המקום ירחם עלינו ויוציאנו מצרה לרוחה, ומאפלה לאורה, ומשעבוד לגאולה
השתא בעגלא ובזמן קריב.
ונאמר אמן!

Rabbi Michael Laitner and Rebbetzen Ilana Epstein

גלות בריטניה, 5777/2017, London,

www.theus.org.uk/galuttogeulah

Afternoon Service

אֲשֶׁרִי Happy are those who dwell in Your House;
they shall continue to praise You, Selah!

Ps. 84

Happy are the people for whom this is so;
happy are the people whose God is the LORD.

Ps. 144

A song of praise by David.

Ps. 145

I will exalt You, my God, the King, and bless Your name for ever and all time. Every day I will bless You, and praise Your name for ever and all time. Great is the LORD and greatly to be praised; His greatness is unfathomable. One generation will

The words of Mincha recited by the chazan boomed around Auschwitz, through the loud-speakers set up for the occasion, a searing contrast to what was broadcast on the original loud-speakers of the camp which still stand. At our head was Rabbi Lau, the child survivor who had become a Chief Rabbi of a Jewish state in the Land of Israel.



Rabbi
Yisrael
Meir
Lau and
March
of the
Living
Partici-
pants

It was one of the most poignant services I have ever attended. The editorial team hope that using and reading this machzor will inspire your prayers on the days this machzor commemorates and at other times too.

ASHREI

It says in Psalms (145:18): “God is near to all those who call Him – to all who call Him in truth.” Anyone who truly calls, whether religious or not. Neither I, as a Rosh Yeshiva, nor my students and friends, your comrades-at arms, represent God any more than you do. Whose prayer comes nearer to God – the prayer of someone like me who was trained in it from childhood, or your prayer, which you discovered in the heat of battle? Only God knows... a sincere prayer that originates in the depths and flows forth from there, even if the words are stammered, is heard at the highest heights. King David wrote in one of his psalms (ibid, 130:2), “God! Listen to my

מנחה

תהלים פד

תהלים קמד

תהלים קמה

אֲשֶׁרִי יוֹשְׁבֵי בֵיתְךָ, עוֹד יִהְיֶה לְךָ סֶלָה:
אֲשֶׁרִי הָעַם שֶׁכָּכָה לוֹ, אֲשֶׁרִי הָעַם שִׁיְהוּה אֱלֹהֵיו:

תְּהִלָּה לְדָוִד
אֲרוֹמְמֶךָ אֱלֹהֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ, וְאֶבְרַכָּה שְׁמֶךָ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:
בְּכָל-יוֹם אֶבְרַכְךָ, וְאֶהְלֵלָה שְׁמֶךָ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:
גָּדוֹל יְהוָה וּמִהֲלָל מְאֹד, וְלִגְדֹלְתוֹ אֵין חֶקֶר:

MINCHA

The Mincha prayers correspond to the prayers offered by our patriarch Yitzchak and the daily afternoon offering given in the Beit HaMikdash (the Temple) in Jerusalem. This links us every day back to Jerusalem, the Temples, the Revelation at Mount Sinai where we received the Torah and, of course, to God.

The International March of the Living programme brings thousands of people to Poland for the week after Pesach to learn more about the hundreds of years of Jewish history in that country. Inevitably, substantial time is devoted to studying the Holocaust. The final day of the programme, coinciding with Yom HaShoah, is the March itself. This is a quite remarkable occasion. Starting at Auschwitz I, participants from around the world, including a substantial Israeli delegation, march together to Auschwitz II-Birkenau, aware of the blood-soaked turf beneath them and the privilege they have to walk freely as Jews.

The March ends with a tekes (ceremony) at the far end of Auschwitz II-Birkenau. I was privileged to attend on one occasion. At the end of the tekes, the former Chief Rabbi of Israel and a child survivor of the Holocaust, Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau, quietly said one brief phrase from Psalm 84 into the microphone: *ashrei yoshevei vaytecha*, happy are those who sit in Your [God's] house. This is the opening phrase of Mincha.

Immediately, all those who wished to say this prayer went up to the dais and started to pray.

Jews in the Western Hemisphere traditionally pray in an easterly direction, towards Jerusalem. East from the dais on that occasion faced towards the exit from the camp. In front of us were thousands of Jews, including servicemen and women from Israel and elsewhere, proudly affirming their Judaism and commitment to Israel.

praise Your works to the next, and tell of Your mighty deeds. On the glorious splendour of Your majesty I will meditate, and on the acts of Your wonders. They shall talk of the power of Your awesome deeds, and I will tell of Your greatness. They shall recite the record of Your great goodness, and sing with joy of Your righteousness. The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and great in loving-kindness. The LORD is good to all, and His compassion extends to all His works. All Your works shall thank You, LORD, and Your devoted ones shall bless You. They shall talk of the glory of Your kingship, and speak of Your might. To make known to mankind His mighty deeds and the glorious majesty of His kingship. Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Your reign is for all generations. The LORD supports all who fall, and raises all who are bowed down. All raise their eyes to You in hope, and You give them their food in due season. You open Your hand, and satisfy every living thing with favour. The LORD is righteous in all His ways, and kind in all He does. The LORD is close to all who call on Him, to all who call on Him in truth. He fulfils the will of those who revere Him; He hears their cry and saves them. The LORD guards all who love Him, but all the wicked He will destroy. ► My mouth shall speak the praise of the LORD, and all creatures shall bless His holy name for ever and all time.

We will bless the LORD now and for ever. Halleluya!

Ps. 115

Psalm 145 (popularly known as Ashrei) is recited three times each day and is in praise of God. The third recitation is this one, at Mincha. Reciting Ashrei helps us to prepare for saying the Mincha Amida through ensuring that we follow the structure of our prayers in starting by praising God. One of the final verses states is that 'The Lord is close to all who call on Him, to all who call on Him in truth'. Radak (Rabbi David Kimchi, 1160-1235) explains in his commentary that this verse refers to anybody who calls out to God with heart and mouth aligned, that is with sincerity and in truth.

דֹּדֶר לְדֹדֶר יִשְׁבַּח מַעֲשֵׂיךָ, וּגְבוּרֹתֶיךָ יִגִּידוּ:
הִדָּר כְּבוֹד הַדָּדֶךָ, וְדַבְּרֵי נִפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ אֲשֵׁיחָה:
וַיַּזְוּ נִדְאוֹתֶיךָ יֹאמְרוּ, וּגְדוּלַתְךָ אֲסַפְּרָנָה:
זִכֵּר רַב־טוֹבְךָ יַפְיֵעוּ, וְצִדְקַתְךָ יִרְנְנוּ:
חֲנוּן וְרַחוּם יְהוָה, אֶרֶךְ אַפַּיִם וּגְדֹל־חֶסֶד:
טוֹב־יְהוָה לְכָל, וְרַחֲמָיו עַל־כָּל־מַעֲשָׂיו:
יִדְוֹךְ יְהוָה כָּל־מַעֲשֵׂיךָ, וַחֲסִידֶיךָ יִבְרַכּוּכָה:
כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתְךָ יֹאמְרוּ, וּגְבוּרַתְךָ יִדְבְּרוּ:
לְהוֹדִיעַ לְבָנֵי הָאָדָם גְּבוּרָתוֹ, וּכְבוֹד הַדָּד מַלְכוּתוֹ:
מַלְכוּתְךָ מַלְכוּת כָּל־עֲלָמִים, וּמִמְשַׁלְתְּךָ בְּכָל־דָּד וְדָד:
סוּמֶךָ יְהוָה לְכָל־הַנִּפְלָאִים, וְזוֹקֶף לְכָל־הַכּוֹפִּים:
עֵינֵי־כָל אֵלֶיךָ יִשְׁבְּרוּ, וְאַתָּה נּוֹתֵן־לָהֶם אֶת־אֲכָלָם בְּעֵתוֹ:
פּוֹתֵחַ אֶת־יָדְךָ, וּמַשְׁבִּיעַ לְכָל־חַי רִצּוֹן:
צָדִיק יְהוָה בְּכָל־דְּרָכָיו, וַחֲסִיד בְּכָל־מַעֲשָׂיו:
קָרוֹב יְהוָה לְכָל־קָדְאִיו, לְכָל אֲשֶׁר יִקְרָאָהוּ בְּאַמֶּת:
רִצּוֹן־יִרְאָיו יַעֲשֶׂה, וְאֶת־שׁוֹעֲתָם יִשְׁמַע, וְיוֹשִׁיעֵם:
שׁוֹמֵר יְהוָה אֶת־כָּל־אֲהָבָיו, וְאֶת כָּל־הַרְשָׁעִים יִשְׁמִיד:
- תַּהֲלֵת יְהוָה יִדְבֹּר פִּי, וַיְבָרֶךְ כָּל־בֶּשֶׂר שֵׁם קָדְשׁוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:
וְאַנְחֵנוּ נִבְרַךְ יְהִי מַעֲתָה וְעַד־עוֹלָם, הַלְלוּיָהּ:

תהלים קטו

voice (*Hashem shema bekoli*); may Your ears be attentive to the sound of my supplication." A great Chasidic master once pointed out that it does not say "listen to my voice (*shema koli*)," rather "listen in to my voice (*shema bekoli*) – listen to what is hidden within the notes of my voice, what I could not articulate in words. (*Rabbi Yehuda Amital, Speech to Yom Kippur War combat soldiers, 1973, recorded in By Faith Alone – Elyashiv Reichner / Elli Fischer – p.89*).

HALF KADDISH

Leader: יְהוָה Magnified and sanctified may His great name be,
in the world He created by His will.
May He establish His kingdom
in your lifetime and in your days,
and in the lifetime of all the house of Israel,
swiftly and soon –
and say: Amen.

All: May His great name be blessed for ever and all time.

Leader: Blessed and praised, glorified and exalted,
raised and honoured, uplifted and lauded
be the name of the Holy One, blessed be He,
beyond any blessing, song, praise and consolation
uttered in the world –
and say: Amen.

THE AMIDA

*The following prayer, until “in former years” on page 30, is said silently, standing with feet together. If there is a minyan, the Amida is repeated aloud by the Leader. Take three steps forward and at the points indicated by *, bend the knees at the first word, bow at the second, and stand straight before saying God’s name.*

O LORD, open my lips, so that my mouth may declare Your praise.

Ps. 51

PATRIARCHS

בְּרוּךְ Blessed are You, LORD our God and God of our fathers,
God of Abraham, God of Isaac and God of Jacob;
the great, mighty and awesome God, God Most High,

AMIDA INTRO

The Amida: Redemption and Aspiration

Telephone companies like to tell us that it is good to talk. That holds true for our relationship with God as much as it does for our relationship with people. The word

חצי קדיש

ש"ץ: יִתְגַּדֵּל וְיִתְקַדֵּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא (קהל: אָמֵן)
 בְּעֶלְמָא דִּי בְּרָא כְרַעוּתָהּ
 וַיְמַלִּיךְ מַלְכוּתָהּ
 בְּחַיֵּיכוֹן וּבְיוֹמֵיכוֹן וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל
 בְּעַגְלָא וּבְזֶמֶן קָרִיב, וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן. (קהל: אָמֵן)
 קהל: יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבֹרַךְ לְעָלְמָא וְלְעָלְמֵי עָלְמֵיָא.
 ש"ץ: יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרוֹמֵם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא
 וְיִתְהַדָּר וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלָּל
 שְׁמֵהּ דְקֻדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא (קהל: בְּרִיךְ הוּא)
 לְעֵלָא מִן כָּל בְּרַכָּתָא וְשִׁירָתָא, תְּשַׁבַּחְתָּא וְנַחֲמָתָא
 דִּי אִמְרִין בְּעֶלְמָא, וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן. (קהל: אָמֵן)

עמידה

The following prayer, until קְדַמְנִיּוּת on page 31, is said silently, standing with feet together. If there is a מוֹנִין, the עמידה is repeated aloud by the שליח ציבור. Take three steps forward and at the points indicated by *, bend the knees at the first word, bow at the second, and stand straight before saying God's name.

תהלים נא

אֲדֹנָי, שְׁפָתַי תִּפְתָּח, וּפִי יַגִּיד תְּהִלָּתְךָ:

אבות

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ
 אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם, אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק, וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב
 הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל הַגִּבּוֹר וְהַנּוֹרָא, אֵל עֲלִיוֹן

CHATZI KADDISH / HALF KADDISH

The leader recites this prayer to 'bind' the community together before the quiet Amida prayer which follows.

who bestows acts of loving-kindness and creates all,
 who remembers the loving-kindness of the fathers
 and will bring a Redeemer to their children's children
 for the sake of His name, in love.

King, Helper, Saviour, Shield:

▼Blessed are You, LORD,
 Shield of Abraham.

and the next, which are all easier said than done. It is a continual work in progress. Our aspiration is that each attempt should bring us closer to the serenity that connection with God brings. This is expressed by King David in Psalm 16, when he stated that "I have set God before me at all times. He is at my right hand and I shall not be shaken". May our 'call' to God be answered favourably. (*Sefer Hashiva*, p.150-151).

AVOT / PATRIARCHS

Rabbi Haim Sabato
 writes about how
 one of his fellow
 tank soldiers in the
 Yom Kippur War of 1973
 used the verse from
 Psalm 51 with which we
 begin the Amida. This
 account appears in a
 debriefing following a
 fierce battle.

I had heard about the Iraqi tank column that Shlomo was the first to engage, as it advanced towards our brigade's bivouac. He had knocked out seven tanks single-handedly before anyone could get organised. Now I would hear the whole story. It came punctuated with verses from the prayer book and the Bible, as though they were an intrinsic part of it.

"Since this is the first time I'm telling anyone about these things", said Shlomo, "I'd like to begin by thanking the Lord for watching over me, for it is written, "*O LORD open my lips and my mouth shall tell Your Praise.*" He took a small Psalter bound in plastic from his shirt pocket, here it was kept with his field dressing and POW card. (*Adjusting Sights*, p.117-118).

AVOT, the opening *beracha* of the Amida praises God for us being the descendants of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov. This provides a link to the covenants God made with our Patriarchs in the book of Bereishit (Genesis) which included God's promise to give them and their descendants, the Jewish people, the gift of the Land of Israel. It is a gift we have never forgotten about, even in the thousands of years that we have lived away from the Land. We live in momentous times when Jews can live in the Land and even establish their own state as an implementation of this gift.

גוֹמֵל חֲסָדִים טוֹבִים, וְקִנְיָה הַכֹּל
 וְזוֹכֵר חֲסָדֵי אֲבוֹת
 וּמֵבִיא גּוֹאֵל לְבָנֵי בְנֵיהֶם לְמַעַן שְׁמוּ בְּאַהֲבָה.
 מֶלֶךְ עוֹזֵר וּמוֹשִׁיעַ וּמִגֵּן.
 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, מִגֵּן אֲבֹרָהִם.

Amida means ‘standing’ which reflects our deportment when we are saying this prayer. It is the central focus of every daily prayer service, and is a special moment in time when we talk to God. In early biblical times, prayer was ‘freestyle’. People composed their own prayers in tune with their sense of spiritual awareness or personal circumstances at a particular time. Prayer was a creative spiritual art by which we built a connection with God. With the destruction of the first Temple in 586 BCE and our exile to Babylon, we gradually began to lose this art and our Hebrew linguistic skills. This is when the Amida emerged. The scholars of that period, the *Anshei Keneset HaGedola* (Men of the Great Assembly) including Ezra, one of its leading figures, identified the need for a consistent liturgy. This led to the formulation of the Amida and the development of our siddur, ensuring that the art of prayer would not be lost. It now became a creative spiritual art within a structure. Those scholars also understood that the changes in the landscape of Judaism following the destruction required them to bring the memory of the Temple to the people wherever they were.

In addition to a consistent liturgy, fixed daily prayers to commemorate the daily offerings in the Temple became part of Jewish life with the Amida at the centre. As our main ‘phone call’ with God, the weekday Amida contains 19 blessings divided into three sections: *shevach* (praise of God); *bakasha* (requests of God, written in the plural since we do not just pray for ourselves) and *hoda’ah* (thanks to and acceptance of God). It is recited quietly to allow us a private, personal ‘call’ to God. Other than at Maariv, it is followed by an audible repetition by the prayer leader for the community, emphasising the communal aspect of prayer and helping those lacking fluency to learn the prayers by hearing them aloud. Maariv is different because it represents the continuation into the night of the afternoon offering which was brought in the Temple.

Each Amida should be like another positive ‘phone call’ to God, ideally making us more sensitive to what it means to be a Jew. A phone call, of course, is a dialogue. As we reach out to God in prayer, we show our willingness to bring Him into our lives, ‘inviting’ Him into our lives, acknowledging His involvement in everything. This is not always easy. It requires persistence, faith and a belief in God’s plan for this world