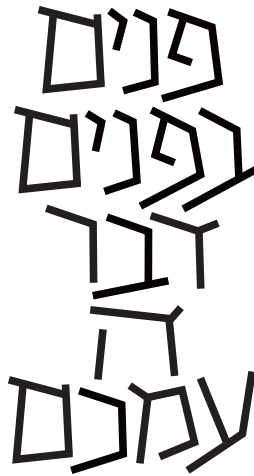


THE GENTIN EDITION

מחזור קורן לשבועות  
THE KOREN SHAVUOT MAHZOR



WITH INTRODUCTION, TRANSLATION  
AND COMMENTARY BY

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks



KOREN PUBLISHERS JERUSALEM

The Koren Shavuot Mahzor  
The Gentin Edition, Nusah Ashkenaz  
First North American Hebrew/English Edition, 2016

Koren Publishers Jerusalem Ltd.  
POB 4044, Jerusalem 91040, ISRAEL  
POB 8531, New Milford, CT 06776, USA

[www.korenpub.com](http://www.korenpub.com)

Koren Tanakh Font © 1962, 2025 Koren Publishers Jerusalem Ltd.  
Koren Siddur Font and text design © 1981, 2025 Koren Publishers Jerusalem Ltd.  
English translation and commentary © 2006, 2016 Jonathan Sacks.

Considerable research and expense have gone into the creation of this publication.  
Unauthorized copying may be considered *geneivat da'at* and breach of copyright law.  
No part of this publication (content or design, including use of the Koren fonts) may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embedded in critical articles or reviews.

The creation of this Mahzor was made possible with the generous support of  
Torah Education in Israel.

Standard Size, Hardcover, ISBN 978-965-301-818-1  
Compact Size, Hardcover, ISBN 978-965-301-819-8

Printed in PRC

SHUA3

## *"The Flag of Benjamin"*

We dedicate this prayerbook to the sacred memory of our father and teacher, **Benjamin Gentin**, בנימין בן יוסף הירש ז"ל.

As the Jewish people journeyed through the wilderness, each tribe of Israel traveled with its own distinctive flag.

The flag of the tribe of Reuben was red with an emblem of mandrakes, symbolizing love. Love was our father's most dominant trait, beginning with his relationship with our mother, Adèle Gentin, may she live and be well. Our father's love flowed without limit to his children, grandchildren, and extended family.

The flag of the tribe of Simeon was green with an emblem of the City of Shechem, symbolizing courage and protection. Our parents wholly devoted themselves to the well-being of our family, with self-sacrifice and unflagging energy.

The flag of the tribe of Levi was red, black and white, with the emblem of a parchment inscribed with God's name. Our father's identity as a Jew was central to him; his concern for the Jewish people and Israel were constant. He was a person of profound, quiet faith.

The flag of the tribe of Judah was sky blue with the emblem of a lion, symbolizing leadership. Our father was the patriarch of our family; his gravitas was clear as day. There was no important issue that we did not discuss with him, no decision where we did not seek his counsel. He was deeply insightful, soft-spoken, modest, and grateful. He knew what was important.

The flag of the tribe of Issachar was dark blue with an emblem of the sun and moon. Our father's parents were his sun and his moon and he honored them all his life.

The flag of the tribe of Zebulun was white with the emblem of a ship, symbolizing commerce. Our father was a distinguished and successful physician, respected by the doctors he trained, and beloved by his patients.

The flag of the tribe of Dan was sea blue with the emblem of a snake, symbolizing judgment. Our father was exacting, dispassionate and cerebral. He was honest with himself and others. His advice was priceless.

The flag of the tribe of Naphtali was purple with the emblem of a deer, symbolizing playfulness. Our father was a joy to be around. He had

## CONTENTS

מבוא	vii	Preface
פתח דבר	ix	Foreword
הקדמה	xiii	Introduction: The Greatest Gift
<b>ערב שבועות</b>		<b>EREV SHAVUOT</b>
עירובין	3	Eiruvim
הדלקת נרות	5	Candle Lighting
מנחה לחול	9	Minḥa for Weekdays
<b>ליל יום טוב</b>		<b>YOM TOV EVENING</b>
קבלת שבת	41	Kabbalat Shabbat
מעריב ליום טוב	47	Ma'ariv for Yom Tov
מעריבות	95	Ma'aravot
עמידה למעריב של יום טוב	63	Amida for Ma'ariv of Yom Tov
קידוש לליל יום טוב	137	Kiddush for Yom Tov Evening
ברכת המזון	141	Birkat HaMazon / Grace after Meals
<b>תיקון ליל שבועות</b>	165	<b>TIKKUN LEIL SHAVUOT</b>
מעמד הר סיני (מתוך מסכת שבת)	171	The Revelation at Mount Sinai
<b>יום טוב</b>		<b>YOM TOV</b>
השכמת הבוקר	217	On Waking
פסוקי דזמרה	269	Pesukei DeZimra
האל בתעצומות עוז	315	"God – in Your absolute power"
ברכו	321	Barekhu
קריאת שמע	337	The Shema
עמידה לשחרית של יום טוב	347	Amida for Shaḥarit of Yom Tov
סדר הלל	361	Hallel
סדר קריאת התורה	379	Reading of the Torah for the First Day of Shavuot
ליום טוב ראשון של שבועות		
תפילה לשלום המלוכה	429	Prayer for the Welfare of the Government
תפילה לשלום מדינת ישראל	433	Prayer for the State of Israel

## PREFACE

## זמן מתן תורתנו

*The time of the giving of our Torah*

Why does the Torah not explicitly associate the holiday of Shavuot with the giving of the Torah? The answer, says the Maharal, lies in the fact that Shavuot is a *hag* – a holiday on which we celebrate and rejoice. An explicit association of Shavuot with the giving of the Torah would constitute a commandment to rejoice about our having received the Torah. But happiness cannot be legislated – it must originate within us. Salvation from slavery is marked by Pesah, and God's protection in the wilderness which we celebrate on Sukkot is obvious grounds for joy. Receiving the Torah might not appear to the casual observer as a reason to rejoice. It was left to the Jewish people, as a community and as individuals, to reach this conclusion on our own, to appreciate and celebrate the privilege of *Matan Torah* (Rabbi Yehuda Amital, ז"ל). It is our hope that this *Koren Shavuot Mahzor*, with its elucidating translations and thought-provoking commentaries, will help *Klal Yisrael* reach the understanding of the enormity of the gift we have received, enabling us to rejoice as that gift warrants.

We could not have embarked on this project without the moral leadership and intellectual spark of Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks. Rabbi Sacks provides an invaluable guide to the liturgy through his remarkable introduction, translation, and commentary. His work not only clarifies the text and explains the teachings of our sages, but uniquely and seamlessly weaves profound concepts of Judaism into the reality of contemporary life. It was our distinct privilege to work with Rabbi Sacks to create a *Mahzor* that we believe appropriately reflects the complexity and depth of Jewish prayer.

The Rabbinical Council of America has long been the moral and professional voice of traditional Orthodoxy in North America. The publication of this *Mahzor* marks Koren's first association with the RCA; this endorsement has great meaning for us and we thank Rabbi Leonard Matanky, Rabbi Shalom Baum and Executive Director Rabbi Mark Dratch under whose leadership the RCA has grown and expanded its activities for the benefit of the religious life of Jews everywhere.

◀ We only

We only hope that all these contributions are matched by the scholarship, design, and typography that have been hallmarks of Koren Publishers Jerusalem for more than fifty years. Koren is privileged to have a small, but remarkably talented team of consummate and dedicated professionals. Rabbi David Fuchs supervised the textual aspects of the work. Rachel Meghnagi edited the English texts and Efrat Gross the Hebrew texts. Jessica Sacks supplied the superb translations of *Megillat Rut*, the Torah readings, and many of the *piyutim*. The text of the *mishnayot* for *Tikkun Leil Shavuot* was taken from the Noé edition of the *Koren Talmud Bavli*, with commentary and elucidation by Rav Adin (Even-Israel) Steinsaltz. Rabbi Eli Clark contributed the informative and useful Halakha Guide. We thank Esther Be’er for assembling and typesetting the texts.

This new edition of the Koren Maḥzor continues the Koren tradition of making the language of prayer more accessible, thus enhancing the prayer experience. One of the unique features of the Maḥzor is the use of typesetting to break up a prayer phrase-by-phrase – rather than using a block paragraph format – so that the reader will naturally pause at the correct places. No commas appear in the Hebrew text at the end of lines, but in the English translation, where linguistic clarity requires, we have retained the use of commas at the end of lines. Unlike other Hebrew/English *maḥzorim*, the Hebrew text is on the left-hand page and the English on the right. This arrangement preserves the distinctive “fanning out” effect of the Koren text and the beauty of the Koren layout.

We hope and pray that this Maḥzor, like all our publications, extends the vision of Koren’s founder, Eliyahu Koren, to a new generation, to further *Avodat HaShem* for Jews everywhere.

Matthew Miller, Publisher  
Jerusalem, 5776 (2016)

## FOREWORD

Unlike the holidays of Sukkot or Pesah, the holiday of Shavuot, as celebrated in a post-Temple era, lacks the majesty of distinctive mitzvot and customs. For there is no Shavuot equivalent of a seder or a sukka, a matza or a lulav. Rather, Shavuot is centered on the memory of the pageantry of the offering of the first fruits and awesome revelation at Sinai.

As such, the nature of the spoken or printed word, of prayer to God and remembrances of glories long ago are in the forefront of our Shavuot experience. It is for this reason that a Shavuot mahzor carries such significance. Because it is within the words of the mahzor that we create mental images of events beyond our experiences, and connect to the past. Whether it is the ninety verses of *Akdamut*, that begin with Creation and take us on a journey through angelic praises and human suffering, or the Torah readings that recall the Temple service and the glory of Sinai, the mahzor is our guide to creating both memory and meaning.

Yet, the meaning of Shavuot can also be discovered within our daily prayer, via the *Birkot HaTorah* recited each morning. While on the surface, these opening prayers may be categorized simply as blessings for mitzvot, similar to other *berakhot* that precede other mitzvot, Rabbi Mordechai Yaffe in his halakhic masterpiece, the *Levush* (אורח חיים סימן מו), rules that they are in fact *Birkot HaNehenin* – blessings of worldly enjoyment. In fact, he argued that the first *berakha* – “לְעִסּוּק בְּדַבְרֵי תוֹרָה” – “To engage in study of the words of Torah” – is the *Berakha Aharona*, the concluding blessing, to the previous day’s learning, while the more familiar “אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר אֱלֹהִים מִכָּל הָעַמִּים” – “Who has chosen us from all the peoples,” is the *berakha* for the coming day’s study.

However, beyond the halakhic detail of this position, there is a critical lesson – that the study of Torah is one of the great pleasures of this world. In fact, Rabbi Avraham Bornstein in his classic introduction to *Eglei Tal* argues that unlike other mitzvot that are not given for the purpose of pleasure, the study of Torah is unique in that its goal is to bring joy to the student.

Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik categorized Torah study as an “object of joy” and therefore even if one didn’t derive pleasure from its study, it would still be a forbidden activity on days of mourning.

◀ The Rabbinical

The Rabbinical Council of America is very proud to partner with Koren Publishers Jerusalem in the presentation of this magnificent new mahzor. It is our hope and prayer that together with the soaring translation and commentary, our thoughts will be transported to the time of God's revelation at Sinai, and our prayers will be filled with the glory of Torah – as our motto expresses, **לְהַגְדִּיל תּוֹרָה וּלְהַאֲדִירָהּ**.

Rabbi Shalom Baum, President of RCA  
 Rabbi Leonard Matanky, Past President of RCA  
 Adar Sheni 5776 (March 2016)



## הוצאת ספר תורה

תהלים פו  
תהלים קמה  
תהלים כט  
תהלים נא

אִין־כְּמוֹךְ בָּאֱלֹהִים, אֲדֹנִי, וְאִין כְּמַעֲשֶׂיךָ:  
מַלְכוּתְךָ מַלְכוּת כָּל־עֲלָמִים, וּמַמְשִׁלְתְּךָ בְּכָל־דּוֹר וָדוֹר:  
יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ, יְהוָה מֶלֶךְ, יְהוָה יְמֶלֶךְ לְעֹלָם וָעֶד.  
יְהוָה עֹז לְעַמּוֹ יִתֵּן, יְהוָה יְבָרֶךְ אֶת־עַמּוֹ בְּשָׁלוֹם:  
אֵב הַרְחֵמֵם, הִיטִיבָה בְּרָצוֹנְךָ אֶת־צִיּוֹן תְּבַנֶּה חוֹמוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם:  
כִּי בָךְ לָבַד בְּטַחֲנוּ, מֶלֶךְ אֵל רַם וְנִשְׂאָ, אֲדוֹן עוֹלָמִים.

*The ark is opened and the ark stands. All say:*

במדבר י  
ישעיה ב

וְיִהי בְּנִסְעֵה הָאָרֶץ וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה  
קוֹמָה יְהוָה וַיַּפְּצוּ אֲיָבֶיךָ וַיִּנָּסוּ מִשְׁנֵאֶיךָ מִפְּנֶיךָ:  
כִּי מִצִּיּוֹן תֵּצֵא תוֹרָה וּדְבַר־יְהוָה מִירוּשָׁלַם:  
בָּרוּךְ שְׁנַתֵּן תוֹרָה לְעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּקֹדֶשְׁתּוֹ.

### READING OF THE TORAH

Since the revelation at Mount Sinai, the Jewish people has been a nation defined by a book: the Torah. The Mosaic books are more than sacred literature. They are the written constitution of the house of Israel as a nation under the sovereignty of God, the basis of its collective memory, the record of its covenant with God, the template of its existence as “a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (Ex. 19:6), and the detailed specification of the task it is called on to perform – to construct a society on the basis of justice and compassion and the inalienable dignity of the human person as the image of God. Just as the Torah is central to Jewish life, so the reading of the Torah is central to the synagogue service.

The penultimate command Moses gave to the Israelites was the institution of a national assembly once every seven years when the king would read the Torah to the people (Deut. 31:10–13). The Tanakh records several key moments in Jewish history when national rededication was accompanied by a public reading of the Torah, most famously in the days of king Josiah (11 Kings 23) and Ezra (Neh. 8). According to tradition, Moses ordained that the Torah be read regularly and publicly; a long reading on Shabbat morning and shorter readings on Mondays and Thursdays. Ezra, reinstituting this practice, added the reading on Shabbat afternoon.

*The following (The Thirteen Attributes of Mercy) is said three times:*

יהוה The LORD, the LORD, compassionate and gracious God, Ex. 34  
 slow to anger, abounding in loving-kindness and truth,  
 extending loving-kindness to a thousand generations,  
 forgiving iniquity, rebellion and sin,  
 and absolving [the guilty who repent].

*Each individual says silently, inserting appropriate phrase/s in parentheses:*

רבונו Master of the Universe, fulfill my heart's requests for good. Satisfy my desire, grant my request, and enable me (name, son/daughter of father's name), (and my wife/ husband, and my sons/daughters) and all the members of my household to do Your will with a perfect heart. Deliver us from the evil impulse, grant us our share in Your Torah, and make us worthy that Your Presence may rest upon us. Confer on us a spirit of wisdom and understanding, and may there be fulfilled in us the verse: "The spirit of the LORD Is. 11 will rest upon him – a spirit of wisdom and understanding, a spirit of counsel and strength, a spirit of knowledge and reverence for the LORD." So too may it be Your will, LORD our God and God of our ancestors, that we be worthy to do deeds that are good in Your sight, and to walk before You in the ways of the upright. Make us holy through Your holiness, so that we may be worthy of a good and long life, and of the World to Come. Guard us from evil deeds and bad times that threaten to bring turmoil to the world. May Ps. 32 loving-kindness surround one who trusts in the LORD. Amen.

יהי May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my Ps. 19  
 heart find favor before You, LORD, my Rock and Redeemer.

*Say the following verse three times:*

ואני As for me, may my prayer come to You, LORD, Ps. 69  
 at a time of favor. O God, in Your great love,  
 answer me with Your faithful salvation.

---

רבונו של עולם Master of the Universe. The festivals are heightened times of holiness, and the opening of the Ark is a moment when we most intensely feel the transformative energy of the Divine Presence. Thus, when these two sacred moments coincide, we say a personal prayer for God's blessing in our lives and the lives of our family, that we may have a material and spiritual environment that will allow us to serve God without distraction or hindrance.

*The following (י"ג מידות הרחמים) is said three times:*

שמות לד יהוה, יהוה, אל רחום וחנון, ארך אפים ורב חסד ואמת:  
נצר חסד לאלפים, נשא עון ופושע וחסאָה, ונקה:

*Each individual says silently, inserting appropriate phrase/s in parentheses:*

רַבּוֹנוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם, מֵלֵא מְשָׁלוֹת לְבִי לְטוֹבָה, וְהִפֵּק רְצוֹנִי וְתֵן שְׂאֵלְתִי, וְזִכָּה  
לִי (פלוני/ת) בְּ/בֵּית פְּלוֹנִי) (וְאִשְׁתִּי/בְעָלִי וּבְנֵי וּבָנוֹתִי) וְכָל בְּנֵי בֵּיתִי, לַעֲשׂוֹת  
רְצוֹנְךָ בְּלִבָּב שָׁלֵם, וּמִלְטָנוּ מִיָּצֵר הָרָע, וְתֵן חֶלְקֵנוּ בְּתוֹרָתְךָ, וּזְכֵנוּ שֶׁתְּשׁוּרָה  
שְׂכִינְתְּךָ עָלֵינוּ, וְהוֹפֵעַ עָלֵינוּ רוּחַ חֲכָמָה וּבִינָה. וְיִתְקַים בָּנוּ מִקְרָא שְׁפָתוֹב:  
וְנַחֲהָ עָלֵינוּ רוּחַ יְהוָה, רוּחַ חֲכָמָה וּבִינָה, רוּחַ עֲצָה וּגְבוּרָה, רוּחַ דָּעַת וְיִרְאַת  
יְהוָה: וּבְכֵן יִהְיֶה רְצוֹן מִלְפָּנֶיךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, שֶׁתּוֹבְנוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת  
מַעֲשִׂים טוֹבִים בְּעֵינֶיךָ וּלְלַכֵּת בְּדַרְכֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְפָנֶיךָ, וּקְדֹשְׁנוּ בְּקִדְשְׁתְּךָ  
בְּדֵי שְׁנוּבָה לַחַיִּים טוֹבִים וְאוֹרוֹכִים וּלְחַיֵּי הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא, וְתִשְׁמְרֵנוּ מִמַּעֲשִׂים  
רָעִים וּמִשְׁעוֹת רָעוֹת הַמַּתְרָגְשׁוֹת לְבוֹא לְעוֹלָם, וְהַבּוֹטָח בִּיהוָה חֲסֵד  
יְסוֹבְבֵנוּ: אָמֵן.

תהלים יט יהיו לרצון אמרי־פי והגיון לבי לפניך, יהוה צורי וגאלי:

*Say the following verse three times:*

תהלים סט ואני תפלת־לך יהוה, ית רצון, אלהים ברב־חסדך  
ענני באמת ישׁעך:

#### THE THIRTEEN ATTRIBUTES OF MERCY

The "Thirteen attributes of compassion" is the name given by the sages to God's declaration to Moses when he prayed on the people's behalf after the golden calf. They constitute God's Self-definition as the source of compassion and pardon that frames the moral life. According to the Talmud (*Rosh HaShana* 17b), God made a covenant that no prayer for forgiveness accompanied by these words would go unanswered. This and the following prayer are not said on Shabbat since we do not make personal requests of God on that day.

ברוך Blessed is the name of the Master of the Universe. Blessed is Your crown and Your place. May Your favor always be with Your people Israel. Show Your people the salvation of Your right hand in Your Temple. Grant us the gift of Your good light, and accept our prayers in mercy. May it be Your will to prolong our life in goodness. May I be counted among the righteous, so that You will have compassion on me and protect me and all that is mine and all that is Your people Israel's. You feed all; You sustain all; You rule over all; You rule over kings, for sovereignty is Yours. I am a servant of the Holy One, blessed be He, before whom and before whose glorious Torah I bow at all times. Not in man do I trust, nor on any angel do I rely, but on the God of heaven who is the God of truth, whose Torah is truth, whose prophets speak truth, and who abounds in acts of love and truth. ▶ In Him I trust, and to His holy and glorious name I offer praises. May it be Your will to open my heart to the Torah, and to fulfill the wishes of my heart and of the hearts of all Your people Israel for good, for life, and for peace.

*Zohar,  
Vayak'hel*

*Two Torah scrolls are removed from the Ark. The Leader takes one in his right arm and, followed by the congregation, says:*

Listen, Israel: the LORD is our God, the LORD is One.

*Deut. 6*

*Leader then congregation:*

One is our God; great is our Master;  
holy is His name.

*The Leader turns to face the Ark, bows and says:*

Magnify the LORD with me,  
and let us exalt His name together.

*Ps. 34*

*The Ark is closed. The Leader carries the Torah scroll to the bima and the congregation says:*

יְיָ Yours, LORD, are the greatness and the power, the glory and the majesty and splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is Yours. Yours, LORD, is the kingdom; You are exalted as Head over all.

*1 Chr. 29*

---

of reciting it has its origins in the circle of mystics in Safed associated with Rabbi Isaac Luria. It is a beautiful prayer in which we yearn to be open to the Torah and faithful to our vocation as a servant of the Holy One, for the highest privilege is to serve the Author of all. As the doors of the Ark open, so we open our hearts.

וזה ויקהל  
 בְּרִיךְ שְׁמָה דְּמֵרָא עֲלֵמָא, בְּרִיךְ כְּתִירָךְ וְאַתְרָךְ. יְהֵא רַעֲוִיתָךְ עִם עַמְךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל  
 לְעֵלְמָא, וּפְרָקוֹן יְמִינְךָ אַחְזִי לְעַמְךָ בְּבֵית מִקְדָּשְׁךָ, וְלֹא־מִטּוֹי לְנָא מְטוֹב  
 נְהוּרָךְ, וְלִקְבֵּל צְלוֹתָנָא בְּרַחֲמִין. יְהֵא רַעֲוֵא קְדָמְךָ דְּתוֹרִיךָ לֵן חֵיין בְּטִיבוֹ,  
 וְלֵהוּי אָנָּא פְקִידָא בְּגוֹ צְדִיקָיָא, לְמַרְחָם עָלֵי וּלְמַנְטֵר יְתִי וְיֵת כָּל דִּי לִי וְדִי  
 לְעַמְךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל. אֲנֵת הוּא זֶן לְכָלֵא וּמִפְרָנִס לְכָלֵא, אֲנֵת הוּא שְׁלִיט עַל כָּלֵא,  
 אֲנֵת הוּא דְשְׁלִיט עַל מַלְכֵיֵא, וּמַלְכוּתָא דִּילָךְ הִיא. אָנָּא עֲבָדָא דְקָדְשָׁא  
 בְּרִיךְ הוּא, דְּסָגִידָנָא קָמָה וּמִקְמֵי דִיקָר אֹרִיתָהּ בְּכָל עֵדָן וְעֵדָן. לֹא עַל אָנָּשׁ  
 רַחֲיִצָּנָא וְלֹא עַל בַּר אֱלֹהִין סְמִיכָנָא, אֲלֵא בְּאַלְהָא דְשִׁמְיָא, דְּהוּא אֱלֹהָא  
 קְשׁוּט, וְאֹרִיתָהּ קְשׁוּט, וּנְבִיאֹתָהּ קְשׁוּט, וּמִסְגָּא לְמַעְבַּד טְבוּן וְקְשׁוּט. - בְּה  
 אָנָּא רַחֲמֵי, וְלִשְׁמָה קְדִישָׁא יִקְרָא אָנָּא אִמְר תְּשַׁבְּחֵן. יְהֵא רַעֲוֵא קְדָמְךָ  
 דְּתַתְּפַתַּח לְבָאֵי בְּאֹרִיתָא, וְתַשְׁלִים מִשְׁאֲלִין דְּלְבָאֵי וְלְבָא דְכָל עַמְךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל  
 לְטָב וְלַחֲיִין וְלִשְׁלָם.

Two שליח צבור are removed from the ספרי תורה. The שליח צבור takes  
 one in his right arm, and, followed by the קהל, says:

דברים ו

שִׁמְעֵ יִשְׂרָאֵל, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, יְהוָה אֶחָד:

קהל then שליח ציבור:

אֶחָד אֱלֹהֵינוּ, גָּדוֹל אֲדוֹנֵינוּ, קָדוֹשׁ שְׁמוֹ.

The שליח ציבור turns to face the קודש ארון and says:

תהלים לד

גִּדְּלוּ לַיהוָה אֶתִּי וּנְרוֹמְמָה שְׁמוֹ יַחְדָּו:

The קהל and the בימה to the ספר תורה שליח ציבור carries. The קודש ארון is closed. The שליח ציבור carries the ספר תורה to the בימה and the קהל says:

דברי  
 הימים א'  
 כט

לְךָ יְהוָה הַגְּדֹלָה וְהַגְּבוּרָה וְהַתְּפָאֶרֶת וְהַנִּצָּח וְהַיְּהוּד, כִּי־כָל בְּשָׁמַיִם  
 וּבָאָרֶץ, לְךָ יְהוָה הַמְּמַלְכָּה וְהַמְתְּנֵשָׂא לְכָל לְדָאֵשׁ:

בְּרִיךְ שְׁמָה Blessed is the name. This passage, from the mystical text, the Zohar,  
 is prefaced in its original context with the words: "Rabbi Shimon said: When  
 the scroll of the Torah is taken out to be read in public, the Gates of Com-  
 passion are opened, and love is aroused on high. Therefore one should say  
 [at this time] ..." The words "Blessed is the name" then follow. The custom

**וְיִמְצְאוּ** Exalt the LORD our God and bow to His footstool; He is holy. *Ps. 99*  
 Exalt the LORD our God, and bow at His holy mountain, for holy is the LORD our God.

Over all may the name of the Supreme King of kings, the Holy One blessed be He, be magnified and sanctified, praised and glorified, exalted and extolled, in the worlds that He has created – this world and the World to Come – in accordance with His will, and the will of those who fear Him, and the will of the whole house of Israel. He is the Rock of worlds, LORD of all creatures, God of all souls, who dwells in the spacious heights and inhabits the high heavens of old. His holiness is over the Ḥayyot and over the throne of glory. Therefore may Your name, LORD our God, be sanctified among us in the sight of all that lives. Let us sing before Him a new song, as it is written: “Sing to God, make music for His name, extol Him who *Ps. 68* rides the clouds – the LORD is His name – and exult before Him.” And may we see Him eye to eye when He returns to His abode as it is written: “For they shall *Is. 52* see eye to eye when the LORD returns to Zion.” And it is said: “Then will the glory *Is. 40* of the LORD be revealed, and all mankind together shall see that the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

Father of mercy, have compassion on the people borne by Him. May He remember the covenant with the mighty (patriarchs), and deliver us from evil times. May He reproach the evil instinct in the people by Him, and graciously grant that we be an eternal remnant. May He fulfill in good measure our requests for salvation and compassion.

*The Torah scroll is placed on the bima and the Gabbai calls a Kohen to the Torah.*

**וְיִצְוֶה** May He help, shield and save all who seek refuge in Him, and let us say: Amen. Let us all render greatness to our God and give honor to the Torah.  
 \*Let the Kohen come forward. Arise (*name son of father's name*), the Kohen.

*\*If no Kohen is present, a Levi or Yisrael is called up as follows:*

*/As there is no Kohen, arise (*name son of father's name*) in place of a Kohen./*

Blessed is He who, in His holiness, gave the Torah to His people Israel.

*The congregation followed by the Gabbai:*

You who cling to the LORD your God are all alive today.

*Deut. 4*

---

cally, known as the *ba'al koreh*), “so as not to shame those who do not know how to read” their own portions (see *Beit Yosef, Oraḥ Ḥayyim* 141). Instead, the *oleh* says the blessings before and after the portion, and recites the text silently along with the reader.

תהלים צט רוממו יהוה אלהינו והשתחוּו לַהֲדָם רַגְלָיו, קָדוֹשׁ הוּא: רוממו  
יהוה אלהינו והשתחוּו לַהֲרַ קְדִשׁוֹ, כִּי־קָדוֹשׁ יְהוה אֱלֹהֵינוּ:

עַל הַכֹּל יִתְגַּדֵּל וְיִתְקַדֵּשׁ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרוֹמֵם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא שְׁמוֹ שֶׁל מֶלֶךְ  
מַלְכֵי הַמַּלְכִּים הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא בְּעוֹלָמוֹת שְׁפָרָא. הָעוֹלָם הַזֶּה וְהָעוֹלָם הַבָּא,  
בְּרָצוֹנוֹ וּבְרָצוֹן יִרְאִיו וּבְרָצוֹן כָּל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל. צוֹר הָעוֹלָמִים, אֲדוֹן כָּל הַבְּרִיּוֹת,  
אֱלֹהֵי כָּל הַנְּפֻשׁוֹת, הַיּוֹשֵׁב בְּמִרְחַבֵּי מָרוֹם, הַשּׁוֹכֵן בְּשָׁמַיִם שְׁמַיִ קָדָם, קְדֻשָּׁתוֹ  
עַל הַחַיּוֹת, וְקְדֻשָּׁתוֹ עַל כָּסֵא הַכְּבוֹד. וּבִכֵּן יִתְקַדֵּשׁ שְׁמֶךָ בְּנוֹ יְהוה אֱלֹהֵינוּ  
לְעֵינֵינוּ כָּל חַיִּי, וְנֹאמַר לְפָנָיו שִׁיר חֲדָשׁ, כְּכַתוּב: שִׁירוּ לַאלֹהִים זִמְרוּ שְׁמוֹ, סִלּוּ  
לְרֹכֵב בַּעֲרֻבוֹת, בִּיָּה שְׁמוֹ, וְעִלּוּ לְפָנָיו: וְנִרְאֶהוּ עֵינֵינוּ בְּשׁוּבוֹ אֶל נוֹהוּ,  
כְּכַתוּב: כִּי עֵינֵינוּ בָּעֵין יִרְאוּ בְּשׁוּבוֹ יְהוה צִיּוֹן: וְנֹאמַר: וְנִגְלָה כְּבוֹד יְהוה, וְרֹאוּ  
כָּל־בָּשָׂר יַחְדָּו כִּי פִי יְהוה דִּבֶּר:

תהלים סח

ישעיה נב  
ישעיה מ

אֲב הַרְחֵמֵם הוּא יִרְחֵם עִם עַמּוֹסִים, וְיִזְכֹּר בְּרִית אֲבֹתֵינוּ, וְיַצִּיל נַפְשׁוֹתֵינוּ מִן  
הַשְׁעוֹת הָרָעוֹת, וְיַגְעֵר בִּיצָר הָרָע מִן הַנְּשׂוּאִים, וְיַחַן אוֹתָנוּ לְפִלִּיטַת עוֹלָמִים,  
וְיִמְלֵא מִשְׁאֲלוֹתֵינוּ בְּמַדָּה טוֹבָה יִשׁוּעָה וְרַחֲמִים.

The תורה כהן and the גבאי calls a כהן to the תורה placed on the ספר תורה.

וַיַּעֲזֹר וַיִּגֵּן וַיִּשְׁמַע לְכָל הַחוֹסִים בוֹ, וְנֹאמַר אָמֵן. הַכֹּל הָבוּ גִּדְּל לַאלֹהֵינוּ  
וְתַנּוּ כְבוֹד לַתּוֹרָה. \* בַּהֵן קָרַב, יַעֲמֵד (פלוני בן פלוני) הַבַּהֵן.

\*If no כהן is present, a לוי or ישראל is called up as follows:

/אין כאן בַּהֵן, יַעֲמֵד (פלוני בן פלוני) בְּמָקוֹם בַּהֵן./

בְּרוּךְ שֶׁנָּתַן תּוֹרָה לְעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּקֻדְשָׁתוֹ.

The גבאי followed by the קהל:

דברים ד

וְאַתֶּם הַדִּבְּקִים בִּיהוה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם חַיִּים כָּל־כֶּם הַיּוֹם:

#### ASCENT TO THE TORAH

The original custom was that each of those called to the Torah read his own portion. Not everyone was able to do this, so the practice developed of entrusting the reading to one with expertise (commonly, though ungrammati-

*The Reader shows the oleh the section to be read. The oleh touches the scroll at that place with the tzitzit of his tallit, which he then kisses. Holding the handles of the scroll, he says:*

*Oleh:* Bless the LORD, the blessed One.

*Cong:* Bless the LORD, the blessed One, for ever and all time.

*Oleh:* Bless the LORD, the blessed One, for ever and all time.

Blessed are You, LORD our God, King of the Universe,  
who has chosen us from all peoples  
and has given us His Torah.

Blessed are You, LORD, Giver of the Torah.

*After the reading, the oleh says:*

*Oleh:* Blessed are You, LORD our God, King of the Universe,  
who has given us the Torah of truth,  
planting everlasting life in our midst.  
Blessed are You, LORD, Giver of the Torah.

*One who has survived a situation of danger, says:*

Blessed are You, LORD our God, King of the Universe, who bestows good  
on the unworthy, who has bestowed on me much good.

*The congregation responds:*

Amen. May He who bestowed much good on you  
continue to bestow on you much good, Selah.

*After a Bar Mitzva boy has finished the Torah blessing, his father says aloud:*

Blessed is He who has released me from the responsibility  
for this child.

---

**אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָנוּ תּוֹרַת אֱמֶת** *Who has given us the Torah of truth.* An act of affirmation following the reading. There is truth that is thought and there is truth that is lived. Judaism is about the transformative truths that we enact when we align our will with that of God.

**וְחַיֵּי עוֹלָם** *Everlasting life.* Immortality lies not in how long we live but in how we live. Reaching out to the Eternal and finding Him reaching out to us, we touch eternity.



*The עולה shows the עולה the section to be read. The עולה touches the scroll at that place with the טלית of his ציצית, which he then kisses. Holding the handles of the scroll, he says:*

עולה: בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ הוֹדוּ הַמְּבָרֵךְ.

קהל: בָּרוּךְ יְיָ הוֹדוּ הַמְּבָרֵךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

עולה: בָּרוּךְ יְיָ הוֹדוּ הַמְּבָרֵךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ הוֹדוּ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בָּנוּ מִכָּל הָעַמִּים וְנָתַן לָנוּ אֶת תּוֹרָתוֹ.  
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ הוֹדוּ, נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה.

*After the קריאת התורה, the עולה says:*

עולה: בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ הוֹדוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָנוּ תּוֹרַת אֱמֶת וְחַיֵּי עוֹלָם נָטַע בְּתוֹכָנוּ.  
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ הוֹדוּ, נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה.

*One who has survived a situation of danger, says:*

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ הוֹדוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
הַגּוֹמֵל לְחַיִּיבִים טוֹבוֹת, שְׁגִמְלָנִי כָּל טוֹב.

*The קהל responds:*

אָמֵן. מִי שְׁגִמְלָךְ כָּל טוֹב הוּא יִגְמְלָךְ כָּל טוֹב, סֵלָה.

*After a בר מצווה has finished the תורה blessing, his father says aloud:*

בָּרוּךְ שִׁפְטָרֵנִי מַעֲנֵשׁ שְׁלֹזָה.

*Bless the LORD.* An invitation to the congregation to join in blessing God, similar to the one that precedes communal prayer in the morning and evening services.

*Who has chosen us from all peoples.* This ancient blessing, to be said before Torah study as well as before the public reading of the Torah, makes it clear that chosenness is not a right but a responsibility.

## FOR AN OLEH

May He who blessed our fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, bless (*name*, son of *father's name*) who has been called up in honor of the All-Present, in honor of the Torah, and in honor of the festival. As a reward for this, may the Holy One, blessed be He, protect and deliver him from all trouble and distress, all infection and illness, and send blessing and success to all the work of his hands, and may he merit to go up to Jerusalem for the festivals, together with all Israel, his brethren, and let us say: Amen.

## FOR A SICK MAN

May He who blessed our fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Moses and Aaron, David and Solomon, bless and heal one who is ill, (*sick person's name*, son of *mother's name*), on whose behalf (*name of the one making the offering*) is making a contribution to charity. As a reward for this, may the Holy One, blessed be He, be filled with compassion for him, to restore his health, cure him, strengthen and revive him, sending him a swift and full recovery from heaven to all his 248 organs and 365 sinews, amongst the other sick ones in Israel, a healing of the spirit and a healing of the body – though on festivals it is forbidden to cry out, may healing be quick to come – now, swiftly and soon, and let us say: Amen.

## FOR A SICK WOMAN

May He who blessed our fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Moses and Aaron, David and Solomon, bless and heal one who is ill, (*sick person's name*, daughter of *mother's name*), on whose behalf (*name of the one making the offering*) is making a contribution to charity. As a reward for this, may the Holy One, blessed be He, be filled with compassion for her, to restore her health, cure her, strengthen and revive her, sending her a swift and full recovery from heaven to all her organs and sinews, amongst the other sick ones in Israel, a healing of the spirit and a healing of the body – though on festivals it is forbidden to cry out, may healing be quick to come – now, swiftly and soon, and let us say: Amen.

מי שבירך לעולה לתורה

מִי שֶׁבִּירַךְ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אֲבִרָהֶם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב, הוּא יְבָרֵךְ אֶת (פלוני בן פלוני), בַּעֲבוּר שְׁעָלָה לְכָבוֹד הַמָּקוֹם וְלְכָבוֹד הַתּוֹרָה וְלְכָבוֹד הָרָגֶל. בְּשֹׁכֵר זֶה הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא יִשְׁמְרֵהוּ וְיִצִּילֵהוּ מִכָּל צָרָה וְצוּקָה וּמִכָּל נֶגַע וּמַחֲלָה, וְיִשְׁלַח בְּרָכָה וְהַצְלָחָה בְּכָל מַעֲשֵׂה יָדָיו, וְיִזְכֶּה לַעֲלוֹת לָרָגֶל עִם כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל אָחִיו, וְנֹאמַר אָמֵן.

מי שבירך לחולה

מִי שֶׁבִּירַךְ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אֲבִרָהֶם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב, מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן דָּוִד וּשְׁלֹמֹה הוּא יְבָרֵךְ וְיַרְפָּא אֶת הַחוֹלָה (פלוני בן פלוני) בַּעֲבוּר שְׁ (פלוני בן פלוני) נוֹדֵר צְדָקָה בַּעֲבוּרוֹ. בְּשֹׁכֵר זֶה הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא יִמְלֵא רַחֲמִים עָלָיו לְהַחֲלִימוֹ וּלְרַפְּאוֹתוֹ וּלְהַחְזִיקוֹ וּלְהַחְיֹתוֹ וְיִשְׁלַח לוֹ מִהֲרָה רְפוּאָה שְׁלֵמָה מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם לְרַמ"ח אֲבָרָיו וּשְׁס"ה גִּידָיו בְּתוֹךְ שָׁאֵר חוֹלֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, רְפוּאָת הַנֶּפֶשׁ וּרְפוּאָת הַגּוּף. יוֹם טוֹב הוּא מְלֻעָק וּרְפוּאָה קְרוֹבָה לָבוֹא, הַשְׁתָּא בַּעֲגָלָא וּבִזְמַן קָרִיב, וְנֹאמַר אָמֵן.

מי שבירך לחולה

מִי שֶׁבִּירַךְ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אֲבִרָהֶם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב, מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן דָּוִד וּשְׁלֹמֹה הוּא יְבָרֵךְ וְיַרְפָּא אֶת הַחוֹלָה (פלונית בת פלונית) בַּעֲבוּר שְׁ (פלוני בן פלוני) נוֹדֵר צְדָקָה בַּעֲבוּרָהּ. בְּשֹׁכֵר זֶה הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא יִמְלֵא רַחֲמִים עָלֶיהָ לְהַחֲלִימָהּ וּלְרַפְּאוֹתָהּ וּלְהַחְזִיקָהּ וּלְהַחְיֹתָהּ וְיִשְׁלַח לָהּ מִהֲרָה רְפוּאָה שְׁלֵמָה מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם לְכָל אֲבָרֶיהָ וּלְכָל גִּידֶיהָ בְּתוֹךְ שָׁאֵר חוֹלֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, רְפוּאָת הַנֶּפֶשׁ וּרְפוּאָת הַגּוּף. יוֹם טוֹב הוּא מְלֻעָק וּרְפוּאָה קְרוֹבָה לָבוֹא, הַשְׁתָּא בַּעֲגָלָא וּבִזְמַן קָרִיב, וְנֹאמַר אָמֵן.

## ON THE BIRTH OF A SON

May He who blessed our fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Moses and Aaron, David and Solomon, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah, bless the woman (*name*, daughter of *father's name*) who has given birth, and her son who has been born to her as an auspicious sign. Her husband, the child's father, is making a contribution to charity. As a reward for this, may father and mother merit to bring the child into the covenant of Abraham and to a life of Torah, to the marriage canopy and to good deeds, and let us say: Amen.

## ON THE BIRTH OF A DAUGHTER

May He who blessed our fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Moses and Aaron, David and Solomon, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah, bless the woman (*name*, daughter of *father's name*) who has given birth, and her daughter who has been born to her as an auspicious sign; and may her name be called in Israel (*baby's name*, daughter of *father's name*). Her husband, the child's father, is making a contribution to charity. As a reward for this, may father and mother merit to raise her to a life of Torah, to the marriage canopy, and to good deeds, and let us say: Amen.

## FOR A BAR MITZVA

May He who blessed our fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, bless (*name*, son of *father's name*) who has completed thirteen years and attained the age of the commandments, who has been called to the Torah to give praise and thanks to God, may His name be blessed, for all the good He has bestowed on him. May the Holy One, blessed be He, protect and sustain him and direct his heart to be perfect with God, to walk in His ways and keep the commandments all the days of his life, and let us say: Amen.

## FOR A BAT MITZVA

May He who blessed our fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah, bless (*name*, daughter of *father's name*) who has completed twelve years and attained the age of the commandments, and gives praise and thanks to God, may His name be blessed, for all the good He has bestowed on her. May the Holy One, blessed be He, protect and sustain her and direct her heart to be perfect with God, to walk in His ways and keep the commandments all the days of her life, and let us say: Amen.

מי שבירך ליולדת בן

מִי שֶׁבֵּרַךְ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אֲבָרָהִם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב, מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן דָּוִד וּשְׁלֹמֹה, שָׂרָה רַבֵּקָה רַחֵל וְלֵאָה הוּא יְבָרֵךְ אֶת הָאִשָּׁה הַיּוֹלֶדֶת (פלונית בת פלוני) וְאֶת בְּנָהּ שֶׁנוֹלַד לָהּ לְמוֹל טוֹב בְּעֶבֶר שֶׁבַעֲלָה וְאָבִיו נוֹדֵר צִדְקָה בַּעֲדָם. בְּשֹׁכֵר זֶה יִזְכּוּ אָבִיו וְאִמּוֹ לְהַכְנִיסוֹ בְּבֵרִיתוֹ שֶׁל אֲבָרָהִם אָבִינוּ וּלְגַדְּלוֹ לְתוֹרָה וּלְחֻפָּה וּלְמַעֲשִׂים טוֹבִים, וְנֹאמֵר אָמֵן.

מי שבירך ליולדת בת

מִי שֶׁבֵּרַךְ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אֲבָרָהִם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב, מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן דָּוִד וּשְׁלֹמֹה, שָׂרָה רַבֵּקָה רַחֵל וְלֵאָה הוּא יְבָרֵךְ אֶת הָאִשָּׁה הַיּוֹלֶדֶת (פלונית בת פלוני) וְאֶת בָּתָּהּ שֶׁנוֹלַדָּה לָהּ לְמוֹל טוֹב וְיִקְרָא שְׁמָהּ בִּישְׂרָאֵל (פלונית בת פלוני), בְּעֶבֶר שֶׁבַעֲלָה וְאָבִיהָ נוֹדֵר צִדְקָה בַּעֲדָן. בְּשֹׁכֵר זֶה יִזְכּוּ אָבִיהָ וְאִמָּהּ לְגַדְּלָהּ לְתוֹרָה וּלְחֻפָּה וּלְמַעֲשִׂים טוֹבִים, וְנֹאמֵר אָמֵן.

מי שבירך לבר מצווה

מִי שֶׁבֵּרַךְ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אֲבָרָהִם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב הוּא יְבָרֵךְ אֶת (פלוני בן פלוני) שְׁמֻלָּאוֹ לוֹ שְׁלֹשׁ עֶשְׂרֵה שָׁנָה וְהִגִּיעַ לְמִצְוֹת, וְעָלָה לְתוֹרָה, לְתֵת שֶׁבַח וְהוֹדָיָה לַהֲשִׁים יִתְבָּרַךְ עַל כָּל הַטּוֹבָה שֶׁגָּמַל אֶתוֹ. יִשְׁמְרֵהוּ הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא וְיַחֲיֶהוּ, וְיִכּוֹנֵן אֶת לְבָבוֹ לְהִיּוֹת שְׁלֵם עִם יְהוָה וּלְלַכֵּת בְּדַרְכֵּיו וּלְשֹׁמֵר מִצְוֹתָיו כָּל הַיָּמִים, וְנֹאמֵר אָמֵן.

מי שבירך לבת מצווה

מִי שֶׁבֵּרַךְ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אֲבָרָהִם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב, שָׂרָה רַבֵּקָה רַחֵל וְלֵאָה, הוּא יְבָרֵךְ אֶת (פלונית בת פלוני) שְׁמֻלָּאוֹ לָהּ שְׁתֵּים עֶשְׂרֵה שָׁנָה וְהִגִּיעָה לְמִצְוֹת, וְנוֹתַנָּת שֶׁבַח וְהוֹדָיָה לַהֲשִׁים יִתְבָּרַךְ עַל כָּל הַטּוֹבָה שֶׁגָּמַל אֶתָּה. יִשְׁמְרֵה הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא וְיַחֲיֶה, וְיִכּוֹנֵן אֶת לְבָבָהּ לְהִיּוֹת שְׁלֵם עִם יְהוָה וּלְלַכֵּת בְּדַרְכֵּיו וּלְשֹׁמֵר מִצְוֹתָיו כָּל הַיָּמִים, וְנֹאמֵר אָמֵן.

## TORAH READING FOR THE FIRST DAY OF SHAVUOT

*On Shavuot, after the Kohen is called up to the Torah and before he makes the blessing, the following is said responsively by the Reader and the congregation.*

## AKDAMUT

*Leader:* The beginning of words – the opening of speech:  
I shall ask permission and leave to begin.

*Cong:* Trembling I open my mouth with two matters and three,  
by leave of the One who bears us through to old age.

*Leader:* His are eternal mighty acts,  
which could not be laid out in words,  
even were all the skies parchment, and all the forests reeds;

*Cong:* if all the seas were ink, and all the lakes,  
and the all people, scribes and clerks.

*Leader:* The glorious Master of Heaven, Ruler of the land,  
founded His world alone, and took control of it.

*Cong:* Without weariness He perfected it, without tiring at all;  
by the lightest of letters, something without substance.

---

It is about Torah as it stands *outside* history, from the beginning of time to the end of days.

These features differentiate it from other liturgical poems, but what is most unusual and eventually gave rise to controversy was the point of the service at which it was said, namely after the first verse of the reading of the Torah. As authorities (among them the *Taz*, Rabbi David HaLevi Segal, 1586–1667) pointed out, this is a seemingly forbidden interruption. Eventually, under cumulative opposition, many communities moved it to immediately *before* the reading and its blessing. Yet for several centuries, beginning with R. Jacob Moelin (Maharil, 1365–1427), great authorities had sanctioned its

## קריאה ליום טוב ראשון של שבועות

On ברכה and תורה is called up to the *after the* שבועות, *the following* is said responsively by the שליח ציבור and קהל.

### אקדמות

ש"ץ: אַקְדָּמוֹת מְלִין וְשָׁרִיוֹת שׁוֹתָא  
אִילָא שְׁקֻלָּנָא הָרְמֵן וְרִשׁוֹתָא.

קהל: בְּבָרִי תִירִי וְתִלֵּת דְּאַפְתָּח בְּנִקְשׁוֹתָא  
בְּבָרִי דְּבָרִי וְטִירִי עֲדִי לְקִשְׁיִשׁוֹתָא.

ש"ץ: גְּבוּרֵן עֲלָמִין לֵה, וְלֹא סִפְק פְּרִישׁוֹתָא  
גְּוִיל אֱלוֹ רִקִּיעִי, קִנֵּי כָּל חֲרָשְׁתָּא.

קהל: דִּין אֱלוֹ יָמֵי וְכָל מִי כְּנִישׁוֹתָא  
דִּירִי אַרְעָא סְפָרִי וְרִשְׁמֵי רִשׁוֹתָא.

ש"ץ: הִדֵּר מְרִי שְׁמִיָּא וְשִׁלִּיט בִּיבְשִׁתָּא  
הַקִּים עֲלָמָא יַחֲדָאִי, וְכַבְשָׁה בְּכַבְשׁוֹתָא.

קהל: וּבִלָּא לָאו שְׁכָלְלָהּ, וּבִלָּא תִשְׁשׁוֹתָא  
וּבִאֲתָא קְלִילָא דְלִית בֵּה מִשְׁשׁוֹתָא.

#### AKDAMUT

*Akdamut* – meaning, “preface, prologue, introduction” – is one of the best known of all *piyutim*. In several respects, though, it stands outside the standard conventions of liturgical poetry. First, it is not written as an addition to prayer. It is about a different feature of the synagogue service, namely, the reading of the Torah. Second, *piyut* is normally written in Hebrew, whereas *Akdamut* is written in Aramaic. Third, the poetry of prayer is usually about the specific day on which it is said, but *Akdamut* is not, except in its very last line, about Shavuot and the giving of the Torah at a specific time and place.

*Leader:* He summoned forth all creation in those six days;  
and then His shining glory rose, to sit upon His throne of fire.

*Cong:* A heavenly host of a thousand thousands  
and myriads serve Him –  
created each morning anew, so great is His faithfulness.

*Leader:* Seraphim, covered with six wings, bow many times over,  
and stand in utter silence until they have leave.

*Cong:* They receive leave from each other –  
and at once, without pause,  
His glory fills all the world, at their threefold sanctifying.

*Leader:* Like a voice from the Almighty, like the noise of many waters –  
Cherubim raise themselves towards the Ophanim  
in a roar of noise,

*Cong:* to see face to face what looks like sparks of the rainbow flying,  
and wherever they are sent, they arrive in a flash of motion.

*Leader:* They bless His glory in every secret term,  
from the place of the home of His Presence,  
which cannot even be sought.

---

language of Ashdod or the language of one of the other peoples, and did not know how to speak the language of Judah” (Neh. 13:24). At the great public Torah reading in Jerusalem convened by Ezra, learned Levites were stationed throughout the crowd to explain what was being read, “making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people understood what was being read” (Neh. 8:8). The Talmud (*Megilla* 3a) explains that “making it clear” means “*Targum*,” that is, providing a translation.

Eventually in Europe the custom of line-by-line translation during the Torah reading lapsed, since Aramaic was no longer the everyday language of Jews (Yemenite Jews, however, still continue the practice). There were, though, two exceptions: the reading on the seventh day of Pesah (the Song at the Sea), and the first day of Shavuot (the Ten Commandments). This explains *Akdmut*. It is a *reshut* – a request for permission from the



ש"ץ: זמן כל עבדתה בהך יומי שתא  
זהור יקרה עלי, עלי ברסיה דאשתא.

קהל: חיל אלף אלפין ורבוא לשמשותא  
חדתין נבוט לצפרין, סגיא טרשותא.

ש"ץ: טפי יקידין שרפין, כלול גפי שתא  
טעם עד יתייב להון, שתיקין באדישתא.

קהל: יקבלון דין מן דין שוי דלא בששתא  
יקר מלי כל ארעא לתלותי קדשתא.

ש"ץ: בקל מן קדם שדי, בקל מי נפישותא  
ברובין קבל גלגלין מרוממין באושתא.

קהל: למחזי באנפא עין בות גירי קשתא  
לכל אתר דמשתלחין, זריזין באשותא.

ש"ץ: מברכין בריך יקרה בכל לשון לחישותא  
מאתר בית שכינתה, דלא צריך בחישותא.

recitation *during* the reading. To understand all this requires a historical context.

During the period of the Second Temple, as the institution of the synagogue gradually spread, it became the custom during the reading of the Torah for a member of the community to translate it line by line into Aramaic, the spoken language of Jews at the time. This was known as the *Targum* (translation), and it was done purely orally, without reference to a written text, by a member of the congregation known as the *Meturgeman* (translator). Eventually a normative translation was recorded in written form in several versions, best known of which was that of Onkelos in the first century.

Maimonides (Laws of Prayer, 12:10–11) dates the practice to the days of Ezra in the fifth century BCE. The book of Nehemiah tells us that this was a time when Jews in the land of Israel had become so assimilated that they no longer knew how to speak Hebrew: “Half of their children spoke the

*Cong:* And all the hosts of heaven give praises in great fear,  
of the sovereignty that will last through all ages, forever.

*Leader:* They each lay out His holiness in praise,  
and when their moment has passed  
it is gone forever; seven years will go by and it will not return.

*Cong:* His precious estate, Israel – they are more fortunate, for always  
may they praise Him, dawn and dusk.

*Leader:* They are set apart, His portion, to perform His will,  
and they will tell the wonders of His praise in speech.

*Cong:* He desires and values and yearns for them  
to labor for Him to weariness,  
and so He accepts their prayers; it is their pleas that are fulfilled.

*Leader:* And those pleas are joined, with a crown and an oath,  
to the One who lives forever,  
and worn with the phylacteries He binds to Himself always,

*Cong:* which are inscribed inside with wisdom and with insight,  
with the greatness of Israel, who read the Shema.

---

Sephardi Jews came together in a single synagogue. The Sephardim, who came from Spain and Portugal, had never said *Akdamut*, a composition that came from the world of Ashkenaz in Germany and France. Not knowing its history, they were amazed that a poem was allowed to interrupt the Torah reading. The halakhic authorities were themselves torn. On the one hand they knew that *Akdamut*, said at that point, had long been approved of, and one should not change existing custom. On the other, its original context, the public recitation of the *Targum*, beginning after the first line of the Torah reading, no longer applied. Eventually a compromise was reached, whereby *Akdamut* was said *prior* to the Torah reading and its blessing.

The poem continued to be read, even without its original context, because it had become well-loved by Ashkenazi communities, it was an established part of the Shavuot service and its traditional melody was part of the music of the day. Besides, it still had a bearing on the theme of the day itself, namely

קהל: נְהִים כָּל חֵיל מְרוֹמָא, מְקַלְסִין בְּחִשְׁשִׁתָּא  
נְהִירָא מַלְכוּתָהּ לְדֹר וְדֹר לְאַפְרִשְׁתָּא.

ש"ץ: סְדִירָא בְּהוֹן קְדֻשְׁתָּא, וְכֹד חֲלָפָא שְׁעָתָא  
סְיוּמָא דְלַעֲלֵם, וְאוּף לֹא לִשְׁבוּעָתָא.

קהל: עֲדָב יִקְר אַחְסָנִתָּה חֲבִיבִין, דְּבִקְבַּעְתָּא  
עֲבִידִין לֵיה חֲטִיבָא בְּדִנָּח וּשְׁקַעְתָּא.

ש"ץ: פְּרִישָׁן לְמִנְתָּה לְמַעַבְד לֵיה רְעוּתָא  
פְּרִישְׁתִּי שְׁבַחָהּ יַחוּז בְּשְׁעוּתָא.

קהל: צְבִי וְחַמֵּד וְרִגְג דִּילָאוֹן בְּלָעוּתָא  
צְלוּתָהּ בֵּין מְקַבֵּל, וְהֵנָּא בְּעוּתָא.

ש"ץ: קְטִירָא לְחֵי עֲלָמָא בְּתַגָּא בְּשְׁבוּעָתָא  
קָבֵל יִקְר טוֹטְפָתָא יְתִיבָא בְּקִבְעָתָא.

קהל: רְשִׁימָא הִיא גּוּפָא בְּחֻכְמָתָא וּבְדַעְתָּא  
רְבוּתָהּ דִּישְׂרָאֵל, קְרָאִי בְּשִׁמְעָתָא.

congregation – to engage in this verse-by-verse translation. That is why it is written in Aramaic, and why it was said after the first verse of the Hebrew reading, immediately before the first line of the Aramaic translation. It is also why it was said on Shavuot, one of only two occasions in which the *Targum* was still incorporated into the public Torah reading.

It was written in the late eleventh century by Rabbi Meir bar Yitzhak Nehorai of Orléans, one of the great sages of his generation, cited approvingly by Rashi and the Tosafists. At the time and for several centuries later, everyone understood why the poem was said at that point. Eventually, though, the public recitation on the *Targum* was discontinued even on these two days, yet the poem remained – now, without a context. That is why, having been accepted without demur for several centuries, in the seventeenth century *Akdamut* occasioned controversy.

It began in Venice where, in the seventeenth century, Ashkenazi and

*Leader:* And I, in the same way, praise the Master of the Universe,  
and it befits me to speak of Him to those of other nations,

*Cong:* who come and form crowds, like waves all around,  
doubting, asking about Him, about the signs He performs –

*Leader:* “Where is your Beloved from, yes who is He, who is so beautiful,  
that you let yourselves be killed for Him in the lions’ den?

*Cong:* “You would be more respected, lovelier,  
if you bent yourselves to our rule:  
your will would be done then wherever you would be.”

*Leader:* With wisdom I reply to them, telling them of the end –  
“If you only knew, if you only truly knew Him,

*Cong:* “and what your greatness is worth when compared to that glory,  
or the greatness  
I will be granted when my salvation comes...

*Leader:* “When light comes to me, and shame covers you over;  
when His presence is revealed to me in might and in great pride.”

*Cong:* He shall pay His enemies back in kind, the aggressors  
of the distant isles,  
and perform justice for the beloved people, rich in merit,

---

Jewish people, composed by R. Israel Najara in Safed in the late sixteenth century.

The poem, ninety lines long, is constructed in the form of two-line verses said responsively by the leader of prayer and the congregation. The first 44 lines form a double alphabetical acrostic, while the remainder spell out the words, “Meir, son of Rabbi Isaac, may he grow in strength and good deeds, Amen. Be strong and of good courage.” Each line ends with the letters מן, the last and first letters of the Hebrew alphabet, suggesting the idea of uninterrupted study of the Torah: no sooner have we reached the last letter than we begin again.

The overarching theme of *Akdmut* is the Torah itself, not as it was given at

ש"ץ: שִׁבַּח רַבּוֹן עֲלֵמָא, אֲמִירָא דְכּוּתָא  
שִׁפְרָא עָלֵי לְחֻוּיָהּ בְּאַפִּי מַלְכוּתָא.

קהל: תָּאִין וּמִתְבְּנִשִּׁין בְּחֻזְ אֲדוּתָא  
תִּמְהִין וְשִׁילִין לֵהּ בְּעֶסֶק אֲתוּתָא.

ש"ץ: מִנְּן וּמֵאֵן הוּא רְחִימָךְ, שְׁפִירָא בְּרוּתָא  
אָרוּם בְּגִינָה סְפִית מְדוֹר אֲרִיּוּתָא.

קהל: יִקְרָא וַיֵּאָה אֵת, אֵין תַּעֲרִבִי לְמִרוּתָא  
רְעוּתֵךְ נַעֲבֵד לִיךְ בְּכָל אֲתוּתָא.

ש"ץ: בְּחֻכְמָתָא מְתִיבְתָּא לְהוֹן, קֶצֶת לְהוֹדְעוּתָא  
יִדְעָתוֹן חֻכְמִין לֵהּ בְּאַשְׁתְּמוּדְעוּתָא.

קהל: רְבוּתָכוֹן מָה חֲשִׁיבָא קָבֵל הָהִיא שְׁבַחָתָא  
רְבוּתָא דִּיעֲבֵד לִי, כִּד מְטִיא יְשׁוּעָתָא.

ש"ץ: בְּמִיתִי לִי נְהוּרָא, וְתַחֲפִי לְכוֹן בְּהָתָא  
יִקְרָה כִּד אֲתִגְלִי בְּתַקְפָּא וּבְגִיּוּתָא.

קהל: יִשְׁלֵם גְּמֻלָּא לְשִׁנְאֵי וְנִגּוּתָא  
צְדָקָתָא לְעַם חֲבִיב וְסִגֵּי זְכוּתָא.

the giving of the Torah. R. Yitzhak Hadari (*Shana BeShana*, 1987) has suggested a further reason. The two occasions on which the *Targum* was recited in the days of R. Meir recalled the two greatest miracles in Jewish history: the division of the Reed Sea on the seventh day of Pesah and the giving of the Torah on Shavuot. At the Sea the people sang a song, but at Mount Sinai after the giving of the Torah they were too terrified to do so (they “trembled with fear and stood at a distance,” Ex. 20:18). *Akdmut* fills that gap: it is the song the Israelites might have sung had they not been paralyzed by fear. Supporting this hypothesis is the fact that Sephardi communities have their own song, written as a *ketuba*, a marriage contract, between God and the

*Leader:* when He brings perfect happiness, and us as pure vessels;  
when He brings the exiles back into the city of Jerusalem.

*Cong:* He shall cast His glory over them day and night,  
as a canopy where they shall voice the splendor in  
joyful songs,

*Leader:* for the shining of those clouds will make each canopy fine  
as the actions of the one who sits in it; so will each shelter  
be made.

*Cong:* On seats of finest gold, in seven tiers, sit the righteous  
in their places before the One whose acts are manifold.

*Leader:* And they appear as seven tiers of joy,  
like the dome of the sky in its brilliance, like stars of light.

*Cong:* This is a glory no mouth can express,  
glory that the prophets never heard or saw in their visions.

*Leader:* For no eye has ever overseen the Garden of Eden,  
where the righteous circle the place of the dance, and the holy  
Presence among them.

*Cong:* And they point to Him, saying with awe, "It is He!  
"The One for whom we longed when we were captives, in our  
powerful faith.

---

From here the poet moves to his second theme. Rabbi Meir was writing in the late eleventh century. At that time, while Spanish Jewry was enjoying its golden age, the condition of Jews in Northern Europe was palpably worsening. The First Crusade, with its massacre of Jews in Speyer, Worms and Mainz (1096) had not yet happened. R. Meir died in 1095. But there were already ominous signs of what a historian has called "the formation of a persecuting society."

Christians were calling on Jews to convert, arguing that their lowly condition showed that God had abandoned them: "Where is your Beloved ... that you let yourselves be killed for Him in the lion's den?" If only they would

ש"ץ: חָדוּ שְׁלֵמָא בְּמִיתִי, וּמָנָא דְכוּתָא  
קִרְיָתָא דִּירוּשָׁלַם בְּדַ יְכַנֵּשׁ גְּלוּתָא.

קהל: יְקָרָה מַטֵּל עָלֶיהָ בְּיוֹמִי וְלִילוּתָא  
גְּנוּנָה לְמַעַבְדַּ בֵּה בְּתַשְׁבְּחָן כְּלִילָתָא.

ש"ץ: דְּזָהוּר עֲנִיָּא לְמַשְׁפָּר כִּילָתָא  
לְפָמָה דְּעִבְדִּיתָא עֲבִידִין מְטַלְלָתָא.

קהל: בְּתַכְתְּקֵי דְהַב פָּזָא, וּשְׁבַע מַעֲלָתָא  
תַּחֲמִימִין צְדִיקֵי קָדָם רַב פַּעֲלָתָא.

ש"ץ: וְרוּיָהוֹן דְּמִי לְשַׁבְּעָא חֲדוּתָא  
רְקִיעָא בְּזָהוּרָה וְכוּכְבֵּי זִיּוּתָא.

קהל: הִדְרָא דְלָא אָפְשָׁר לְמַפְרֵט שְׁפוּתָא  
וְלָא אֲשַׁתְּמַע וְחֲמִי נְבִיאָן חֲזוּתָא.

ש"ץ: בְּלֹא שְׁלֵטָא בֵּה עֵין, בְּגוּ עֵדֶן גְּנָתָא  
מְטִילִי בֵּה חֲנֻגָּא לְבַהֲדֵי דְשְׁכִינָתָא.

קהל: עֲלֵיהָ רְמִיזֵי דִין הוּא, בְּרַם בְּאִימְתָּנוּתָא  
שְׁבִרְנָא לָהּ בְּשַׁבִּין, תְּקוּף הִמְנוּתָא.

Mount Sinai but as it existed in the mind of God prior to the creation of the universe. In sharp contrast to ancient myth in which the universe was thought to have achieved order only after an epic battle between contending forces, the poet emphasizes how God brought the world into being without effort and "by the lightest of letters." God is worshiped in the heavens by myriads of angels, yet more valued by Him than this is the praise of "his precious estate, Israel." The poet invokes the ancient rabbinic image (*Berakhot* 6a) that just as Israel binds itself to God by wearing tefillin, so God binds Himself to Israel by wearing tefillin in which are written the words, "And who is like Your people Israel – one nation on earth?" (1 Chr. 17:21).