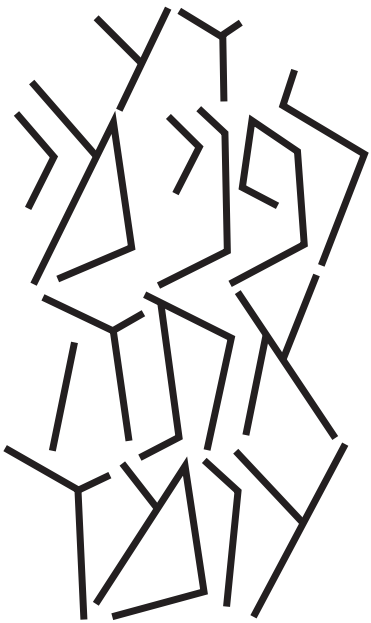
סידור קורן • נוסח אשכנז

The Koren Siddur • Nusaḥ Ashkenaz

סידור קורן
THE KOREN SIDDUR



WITH INTRODUCTION, TRANSLATION
AND COMMENTARY BY

Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks שליט"א

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PREFACE TO THE FIRST HEBREW EDITION

"My help comes from the LORD…"

"And their fear toward Me is as a commandment of men learned by rote" (Is. 29:13) laments the prophet, referring to those who turn prayer into routine habit. Even when they pray before the LORD, "With their mouth and with their lips do [they] honor Me, but have removed their heart far from Me." This is precisely as our sages cautioned, saying: "When you pray, do not do so as a fixed routine, but as a plea for mercy and grace before God" (*Avot* 2:18). Bartenura elaborates, "[Do not say] as a person who has a duty to fulfill says: I shall relieve myself from this burden." Thus is the nature of ritual duties: when they become routine habit, their original meaning is diminished.

The prayers in this Siddur – the same words, those same sentences we repeat daily and even several times each day – become routine verbiage, "a chirping of a starling" which lacks the deep concentration and the vital sense of "knowing before whom one stands."

This unfortunate situation – which is natural – became our inspiration to present worshipers with the means to connect to prayer, both to the words of the prayers and to the content and meaning our sages infused into the phrases. We resolved to bring the prayers before the worshiper not in a secular form, as a regular book, but in a more sacred manner, so as to enable the worldly structure to become a source of inspiration, reverence, sanctity and awe.

To achieve this, we created an original design of the printed font and the layout of the words in accordance with the meaning of the prayers, line-by-line, page-by-page. From a visual standpoint, the contents of the prayers are presented in a style that does not spur habit and hurry, but rather encourages the worshiper to engross his mind and heart in prayer.

One possible hazard that undermines the beauty and the purity of the prayers is carelessness of diction when pronouncing the words. Disregard for grammar and punctuation, disrespect, or lack of knowledge of the laws of the *dagesh*, the quiescent *sh'va* and the mobile *sh'va*, and so forth, that our sages – the authors of the *Mesora*, the scholars of the linguistic form of the language, the adjudicators of the laws and students of the Torah

◂ and Kabbala

and Kabbala – were so meticulous about perfecting. In parts of prayers (such as the Shema and the Blessing of the Kohanim), they viewed this meticulous pronunciation as obligatory.

In order to relieve the worshiper of these details – for the sake of his praying – we have presented him (excluding Biblical quotations) with a different notation between the two *sh'va*s (the mobile *sh'va* is more predominant, which is a sign for the worshiper to express the vowel as a brief *segol*, while the quiescent *sh'va* is smaller, as it is not pronounced), and a special form of the *kamatz* (the "small *kamatz*" has a longer foot).

"A window thou shalt make to the ark," says God to Noaḥ, and our sages took this also to mean that the correct pronunciation of the words is an embellishment to the prayers. It is fitting that our conversations with God be clear, pure and unblemished, open and lit as this window.

The Nusaḥ Ashkenaz edition of this Siddur is based upon that of the "first Ashkenazic scholars," incorporating the revisions that were accepted in the land of Israel by the pupils of the Vilna Ga'on, and are customary in synagogues in Israel and the Diaspora (with different customs indicated).

I am very grateful to the excellent proofreaders Shmuel Vexler and Abraham Frankel, for their diligent work, and to Esther Be'er, who skillfully prepared the difficult typesetting of this Siddur.

All this would not have been possible without the help and guidance of my friend Meir Medan, who helped us reach this goal. Using his vast knowledge and careful comparison between different versions, we strived together to make this Siddur as perfect as humanly possible.

And let the beauty of the Lord *our God be upon us: and establish the work of our hands upon us; O prosper it, the work of our hands.*

Eliyahu Koren

PREFACE TO THE HEBREW/ENGLISH EDITION

"One generation will praise Your works to the next… "

It is with gratitude and pride that we introduce this first Hebrew/English Edition of the Koren Siddur. Since its publication in 1981, The Koren Siddur has been recognized for its textual accuracy and innovative graphic design. We have remained committed to these qualities, as we have had the privilege of enriching the Siddur with the eloquent English translation and insightful introduction and commentary of one of the most articulate and original Jewish thinkers of our time, Rabbi Jonathan Sacks. It is our hope that through this project we have realized the aim of master typographer Eliyahu Koren, founder of Koren Publishers Jerusalem, "to present to worshipers a means to draw and connect them not only to the words of the prayers, but also to the contents and meaning that were before our sages when engraving the phrases of the prayers, and our rabbis throughout the ages when compiling versions of the prayers."

Those new to The Koren Siddur will note several unique features:

- Two, distinct fonts, designed by Eliyahu Koren and recently digitized, are used throughout the Siddur. Koren Tanakh Font is used for Tanakh texts (except when embedded in prayers,) and Koren Siddur Font is used for prayers, in keeping with Mr. Koren's belief that the presentation of Tanakh text should be distinctive.
- Reading aids, fully explained in the Guide to the Reader, facilitate correct reading.
- The graphic layout distinguishes poetry from prose, and provides space to allow pages to "breathe." We have developed a parallel style for the English text that balances the weight of the Hebrew letters to further Mr. Koren's intention of presenting the texts "in a style that does not spur habit and hurry, but rather encourages the worshiper to engross his mind and heart in prayer."

This Hebrew/English Edition also includes new features. We have added Rabbi Sacks' introduction and commentary to illuminate and clarify practice and tradition. We have introduced concise instructions and practical *halakha* guides. Finally, we have incorporated prayers for

◂ visitors

visitors to Israel, for Yom HaZikaron and Yom HaAtzma'ut to reflect the essential and integral connection between the Jewish people in Israel and around the world, and the centrality of Jerusalem to us all.

We wish to thank Rabbi Sacks שליט"א for his exceptional introduction, translation and commentary, and his dedicated involvement throughout the preparation of this Siddur; Rabbi Eli Clark for his extraordinarily helpful section on *halakha*; and Rabbi Tzvi Hersh Weinreb שליט"א, David Olivestone and their colleagues at the Orthodox Union for their support and appreciation.

A number of rabbis devoted considerable time to review, correct and offer invaluable suggestions to early drafts of the Siddur. We especially wish to thank Rabbi Michael Broyde for his critical help, as well as Dr. David Berger, Rabbi Elazar Muskin, Rabbi Jonathan Rosenblatt, Dr. Moshe Sokolow, and Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner. To all who made corrections and suggestions, thank you.

Raphaël Freeman designed and typeset the Siddur, and led an outstanding team at Koren, including Rabbi David Fuchs and Esther Be'er. We also thank the following individuals for their invaluable assistance: Chanan Ariel and Yisrael Elitzur for their expertise in Hebrew grammar; Rachel Meghnagi for her English language editorial assistance, and Simon Prais for his contribution to the design process.

We can only hope that we have extended the vision of Eliyahu Koren to a new generation and a larger audience, furthering *Avodat HaShem* for Jews everywhere.

Matthew Miller, Publisher
Jerusalem 5769 (2009)

FOREWORD

Our sages encourage us to have very lofty expectations of ourselves with regard to our prayers. Maimonides, for example, considers the duty to pray to have a firm basis in the written Torah. Rabbi Judah HaLevi considers our moment of prayer to be the "heart of our daily routine." Rabbi Kook speaks of the "perennial prayer of the soul."

Most of us have occasionally experienced such moments of spirituality – perhaps during a particularly inspirational holiday service, or perhaps in a moment of exultant joy or poignant sorrow. But those rare moments depend on very special circumstances. The challenge is to achieve a sense of spirituality during routine prayer times, which are fixed and regular – three times a day, every day of the year – and even in mundane moments and dreary contexts.

We need external stimuli which can refresh our inner selves to help us capture, if not sublimity, then at least a sense of the sacred. A proper siddur, which is sensitive to the needs of he or she who prays, can be such a stimulus.

The Siddur which you have before you, produced by master publishers of Hebrew books, Koren of Jerusalem, attempts to relate to the spiritual needs of those who turn to prayer and need an aesthetic context which will raise them from their routine to a higher sphere. This Siddur accomplishes this mission in several ways. It affords us the beautiful, contemporary, impactful translation of a man who, perhaps more than anyone else of our generation, is in tune with the spiritual needs of the English-speaking Jew. In this prayer book, Rabbi Jonathan Sacks offers us words of introduction and explanation, commentary, and an exquisite grasp of the poetry of prayer. The conceptual richness of his thoughts, coupled with the artistic beauty of his choice of words, will stimulate a sense of the sacred in everyone who uses this Siddur.

The clear print, the spacing, and the punctilious attention to the grammar and syntax of the Hebrew are all part and parcel of what we have come to expect from Koren Publishers. Every page is a pleasure to the eye. The layout conveys dignity and depth, and the subtleties of text and design will move us, sometimes unconsciously, to feelings and intuitions that are novel, pleasing and uplifting.

◂ In our prayers

In our prayers, we are connected to the Almighty through the land of Israel, the city of Jerusalem and the site of the holy Temple. It is, therefore, especially valuable that this Siddur connects those who use it to the land of Israel in very contemporary ways. It contains, for example, the prayer for the welfare of Israel, as well as the prayer for the soldiers of the Israel Defense Forces. It reflects our celebration of Israel's independence and our sorrow for those who have fallen in its defense.

It is with great pride that the Orthodox Union joins in presenting this Siddur to the Jewish communities of North America. Numerous siddurim are available, but this one, through a variety of modalities – intellectual, aesthetic, poetic and visual – is designed and is destined to motivate prayers which are richer, more meaningful, and – yes – more effective.

For prayer to "fly heavenward," it must come from a heart full of contrition and sincerity. This Siddur will help bring forth that contrition and sincerity from the souls of those who use it.

May He who hears all of our prayers listen attentively to the prayers which this Siddur will evoke.

Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb
Executive Vice President, Orthodox Union
New York 5769 (2009)

UNDERSTANDING JEWISH PRAYER

1. Introduction

Prayer is the language of the soul in conversation with God. It is the most intimate gesture of the religious life, and the most transformative. The very fact that we can pray testifies to the deepest elements of Jewish faith: that the universe did not come into existence accidentally, nor are our lives destined to be bereft of meaning. The universe exists, and we exist, because someone – the One God, Author of all – brought us into existence with love. It is this belief more than any other that redeems life from solitude and fate from tragedy.

In prayer we speak to a presence vaster than the unfathomable universe, yet closer to us than we are to ourselves: the God beyond, who is also the Voice within. Though language must fail when we try to describe a Being beyond all parameters of speech, language is all we have, and it is enough. For God who made the world with creative words, and who revealed His will through holy words, listens to our prayerful words. Language is the bridge joining us to Infinity.

Judah HaLevi, the great eleventh-century poet, said that prayer is to the soul what food is to the body. Without prayer, something within us atrophies and dies. It is possible to have a life without prayer, just as it is possible to have a life without music, or love, or laughter, but it is a diminished thing, missing whole dimensions of experience. We need space within the soul to express our joy in being, our wonder at the universe, our hopes, our fears, our failures, our aspirations – bringing our deepest thoughts as offerings to the One who listens, and listening, in turn, to the One who calls. Those who pray breathe a more expansive air: "In the prison of his days / Teach the free man how to praise" (W. H. Auden).

The siddur is the choral symphony the covenantal people has sung to God across forty centuries, from the days of the patriarchs until the present day. In it we hear the voices of Israel's prophets, priests and kings, its sages and scholars, poets and philosophers, rationalists and mystics, singing in calibrated harmony. Its libretto weaves together texts from almost every part of the vast library of Jewish spirituality: Torah, the Prophets, the Writings, the classic compendia of the Oral Law – Mishna, Midrash

◂ and

and Talmud – together with philosophical passages like Maimonides' "Thirteen Principles of Faith" and extracts from the *Zohar*, the key text of Jewish mysticism.

There is space in Judaism for private meditation – the personal plea. But when we pray publicly, we do so as members of a people who have served, spoken to, and wrestled with God for longer and in more varied circumstances than any other in history. We use the words of the greatest of those who came before us to make our prayers articulate and to join them to the prayers of others throughout the world and throughout the centuries.

Almost every age and major Jewish community has added something of its own: new words, prayers, customs and melodies. There are many different liturgies: Ashkenazi, Sephardi, Oriental, Yemenite, Italian, those of Rabbi Isaac Luria and the Vilna Gaon and others, each with its own subdivisions. Each tradition has a character of its own, to which Jewish law applies the principle *nahara nahara ufashteh*: "Every river has its own course." Each of the historic traditions has its own integrity, its own channel through which words stream from earth to heaven.

This introduction tells of how prayer came to take its present form, the distinct spiritual strands of which it is woven, the structures it has, and the path it takes in the journey of the spirit.

2. *Two Sources of Prayer*

The best-known phrase about Jewish religious worship is: "If you serve the LORD your God with all your heart (Deut. 11:13) – what is [the sacrificial] service of the heart (*avoda shebalev*)? This is prayer" (*Sifrei* to Deuteronomy, 41). Behind these simple words lies a remarkable story.

Throughout the Hebrew Bible, we find two quite different forms of religious worship. One is prayer. Outside the book of Psalms there are some 140 references to people praying; in ninety-seven cases we are told the words they said. Abraham prays for the cities of the plain. Jacob prays for deliverance before confronting Esau. Hannah prays for a child. These prayers are direct, simple and spontaneous. They have no fixed formula, no set text. Some are very brief, like Moses' five-word prayer for his sister Miriam: "Please, God, heal her now." Others are long, like Moses' forty-day prayer for forgiveness of the people after the sin of the Golden

◂ Calf

Calf. There are no general rules: these prayers have no fixed time, place or liturgy. They are improvised as circumstance demands.

The other form – generally known as *avoda*, "service" – is sacrifice. Sacrifice could not be less like prayer. As set out from Exodus to Deuteronomy, the sacrificial service is minutely specified. It has its prescribed order: which offerings should be made, when, and by whom. It has a designated place: the Tabernacle in the wilderness, and later, the Temple in Jerusalem. There is no room for spontaneity. When two of Aaron's sons, Nadav and Avihu, make a spontaneous offering of incense, they die (Lev. 10:1–2). The Mosaic books contain two set texts associated with the Temple: the Priestly Blessing (Num. 6:24–26) and the declaration made when bringing the first fruits (Deut. 26:5–10). Certain sacrifices, such as sin-offerings, involved verbal confession. Psalms were sung in the Temple, and the Mishna details the prayers said there. But the sacrificial act itself was wordless. It took place in silence.

So we have two quite different traditions, prayer and sacrifice: one spontaneous, the other rigorously legislated; one that could be undertaken anywhere, at any time, by anyone; the other which could only happen in a set place and time in accordance with detailed and inflexible procedures. How did these two forms of worship become one?

The answer lies in the national crisis and renewal that occurred after the destruction of the First Temple by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 BCE. Psalm 137 has preserved a vivid record of the mood of near-despair among the exiles: "By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept as we remembered Zion… How can we sing the LORD's songs in a strange land?" In exile in Babylon, Jews began to gather to expound the Torah, articulate a collective hope of return, and recall the Temple and its service. These assemblies (*kinishtu* in Babylonian, *knesset* in Hebrew) were not substitutes for the Temple; rather, they were reminders of it. The book of Daniel, set in Babylon, speaks of threefold daily prayer facing Jerusalem (Dan. 6:11). The loss of the Temple and the experience of exile led to the emergence of regular gatherings for study and prayer.

The next chapter in this story was written by Ezra (fifth century BCE) who, together with the statesman Nehemiah, reorganized Jewish life in Israel after the return from Babylon. Ezra ("the scribe") was a new type in

history: the educator as hero. The book of Nehemiah (8:1–9) contains a detailed description of the national assembly Ezra convened in Jerusalem, where he read the Torah aloud, with the help of the Levites who explained it to the people.

Ezra and Nehemiah were disturbed by the high degree of assimilation among the Jews who had remained in Israel. They knew that without a strong religious identity, the people would eventually disappear through intermingling with other nations and cultures. To guard against this, they set in motion far-reaching initiatives, including a national reaffirmation of the nation's covenant with God (Nehemiah, chapter 10). One of the most important developments was the first formulation of prayers, attributed by the sages to Ezra and the Men of the Great Assembly. Maimonides suggests that one of their motives for so doing was to reestablish Hebrew as the national language: at that time, "Half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod, or the language of the other peoples, and did not know how to speak the language of Judah" (Neh. 13:24; Maimonides' "Laws of Prayer" 1:4).

One of the results of this religious renewal was the birth, or growth, of the synagogue. During the Second Temple period, priests were divided into twenty-four groups, *mishmarot*, each of which served in the Temple for a week in a rota. They were accompanied by groups of local laypeople, *ma'amadot*, some of whom accompanied them to the Temple, others of whom stayed in their towns but said prayers to coincide with the sacrifices. Whether the synagogue developed from these *ma'amadot*, or whether its origins were earlier, by the time the Second Temple was destroyed in 70 CE, it was a well-established institution.

The synagogue was "one of the greatest revolutions in the history of religion and society" (M. Stern). It was the first place of worship made holy, not because of any historic association, nor because sacrifices were offered, but simply because people gathered there to study and pray. It embodied one of the great truths of monotheism: that the God of everywhere could be worshiped anywhere. After the loss of the Second Temple it became the home-in-exile of a scattered people. Every synagogue was a fragment of Jerusalem. And though the destruction of the Temple meant that sacrifices could no longer be offered, in their place came an offering of words, namely prayer.

◂ The

The transition from sacrifice to prayer was not a sudden development. A thousand years earlier, in his speech at the dedication of the Temple, King Solomon had emphasized prayer rather than sacrifice (1 Kings 8:12–53). Through Isaiah, God had said "My House shall be called *a house of prayer* for all peoples" (Is. 56:7). The prophet Hosea had said: "Take words with you and return to the LORD… Instead of bulls we will pay [the offering of] our lips" (Hos. 14:3). Sacrifice was the external accompaniment of an inner act of heart and mind: thanksgiving, atonement, and so on. Therefore, though the outer act was no longer possible, the inner act remained. That is how sacrifice turned into prayer.

What had once been two quite different forms of worship now became one. Prayer took on the highly structured character of the sacrificial service, with fixed texts and times. The silence that had accompanied the sacrifice was transmuted into speech. Two traditions – prophetic prayer on the one hand, priestly sacrificial service on the other – merged and became one. That is the remarkable story behind the words, "What is the [sacrificial] service of the heart? This is prayer."

There is a series of arguments, spanning the centuries, about the nature of prayer. According to Maimonides, daily prayer is a biblical commandment; according to Nahmanides it is merely rabbinic. Two third-century teachers, Rabbi Yose son of Rabbi Ḥanina, and Rabbi Joshua ben Levi, disagreed as to the origin of the prayers, the former holding that they were instituted by the patriarchs – Abraham initiating the morning prayer, Isaac the afternoon, and Jacob the evening service – while the latter held that they corresponded to the sacrifices. Centuries earlier, Rabban Gamliel and the sages differed as to which was primary, the silent Amida or the Leader's Repetition. Each of these debates ultimately hinges on the question as to which of the two sources of prayer – the improvised prayers of the figures of the Bible or the sacrificial service of the Tabernacle and Temple – is the more fundamental.

In truth, there is no answer: prayer as we have known it for two millennia draws on both traditions. More remarkably, we honor both, because *each Amida is said twice*, once silently by individuals, a second time aloud and publicly by the Leader. The silent Amida recalls the prayers of individuals in the Bible, while the Leader's Repetition recalls the sacrifice: hence there is no Repetition of the evening Amida, since there was no

◂ sacrifice

sacrifice in the evening. In prayer, two great streams of Jewish spirituality met and became one.

3. Structures of Prayer

The Hebrew word for a prayer book, *siddur*, means "order." At its height, prayer is an intensely emotional experience. The wonder of praise, the joy of thanksgiving, the passion of love, the trembling of awe, the broken-heartedness of confession, the yearning of hope – all these are part of the tonality of prayer. Yet Judaism is also, and supremely, a religion of the mind – for untutored emotion, like a river that bursts its banks, can be anarchic and destructive. The opening chapter of Genesis, with its account of creation, evokes a sense of order. Each day has its task; each life-form has its place; and the result (until the birth of sin) was harmony. Jewish prayer, therefore, has an order. Like a choral symphony, it has movements, each with its moods, its unfolding themes, its developmental logic. In this section, I analyze some of these structures.

The siddur as it exists today is the result of some forty centuries of Jewish history. Yet the result is not mere bricolage, a patchwork of random additions. It is as if the composition of the prayer book has been shaped by an "invisible hand," a divine inspiration that transcends the intentions of any particular author. Specifically, form mirrors substance. The shape of the prayers reveals the basic shape of the Jewish spirit as it has been molded by its encounter with God. These are some of the structural features of the prayers:

A. FROM UNIVERSAL TO PARTICULAR

In general, sequences of Jewish prayer move from the universal to the particular. Grace after Meals, for example, begins with a blessing thanking God "who in His goodness feeds *the whole world*." The second blessing moves to particularities: Israel, liberation from slavery, "the covenant which You sealed in our flesh," Torah and the commandments. We thank God "for the land [of Israel] and for the food." The third is more narrowly focused still. It is about the holy city, Jerusalem.

The same pattern exists in the two blessings before the Shema in the morning and evening service. The first is about the universe (God gives light to the earth, creates day and night), and the second is about Torah,

◂ is about

the specific bond of love between God and the Jewish people. Look and you will find many more examples in the siddur. (The one exception is *Aleinu*, whose first paragraph is about Jewish particularity and whose second is a universal hope. Regarding this, see section B. MIRROR-IMAGE SYMMETRY.)

This movement from universal to particular is distinctively Jewish. Western culture, under the influence of Plato, has tended to move in the opposite direction, from the concrete instance to the general rule, valuing universals above particularities. Judaism is the great counter-Platonic narrative in Western civilization.

Moving from the universal to the particular, the prayer book mirrors the structure of the Torah itself. Genesis begins, in its first eleven chapters, with a description of the universal condition of humankind. Only in its twelfth chapter is there a call to an individual, Abraham, to leave his land, family and father's house and lead a life of righteousness through which "all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

There are universals of human behavior: we call them the Noahide Laws. But we worship God in and through the particularity of our history, language and heritage. The highest love is not abstract but concrete. Those who truly love, cherish what makes the beloved different, unique, irreplaceable: that is the theme of the greatest of all books of religious love, *the* Song of Songs. That, we believe, is how God loves us.

B. MIRROR-IMAGE SYMMETRY

Many Torah passages are constructed in the form of a mirror-image symmetry, technically known as *chiasmus*: a sequence with the form ABCCBA, where the second half reverses the order of the first. A precise example is the six-word commandment that forms the central element of the Noahide covenant (Gen. 9:6):

> [A] Who sheds [B] the blood [C] of man [C] by man [B] shall his blood [A] be shed.

This is more than a stylistic device. It is the expression of one of the Torah's most profound beliefs; namely, the reciprocal nature of justice. Those who do good are blessed with good. Those who do evil, suffer evil. What happens to us is a mirror image of what we do. Thus, form

◂ mirrors

mirrors substance: mirror-image symmetry is the literary equivalent of a just world.

Some prayers have a mirror-image structure. Most of the paragraphs of the Amida, for example, finish the same way as they begin ("at the end of a blessing one should say something similar to its beginning," *Pesaḥim* 104a). So, for example, the sixteenth blessing begins, "Listen to our voice" and ends "who listens to prayer." The eighteenth begins, "We give thanks to You" and ends "to whom thanks are due." The Amida as a whole begins with a request to God to help us open our mouths in prayer. It ends with a request to God to help us close our mouths from deceitful speech.

According to Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik, the first and last three blessings of the Amida stand in a mirror-image relationship. The last uses the same key words as the first: kindness (*ḥessed*) and love (*ahava*). The penultimate has the same subject as the second: the gift of life and the hidden miracles that surround us constantly. The seventeenth and third are both about holiness. Thus the end of the Amida is a mirror image of its beginning.

This explains why *Aleinu* – the prayer with which most services end – is constructed in a sequence opposite to all other prayers. Others move from the universal to the particular, but *Aleinu* reverses the order, beginning with a hymn to particularity ("Who has not made us like the nations of the lands") and ending with one of the great prayers for universality, when "*all* humanity will call on Your name." *Aleinu* gives each service a chiastic structure. Previous prayers have been A–B (universal–particular); *Aleinu* is B–A (particular–universal).

As we will see, many of the other structuring principles are three-part series of the form A–B–A.

C. PRAISE, REQUEST, THANKS

The sages ruled that the Amida – prayer par excellence – should follow a basic pattern of praise (*shevaḥ*), request (*bakasha*), and acknowledgment or thanks (*hodaya*). This is how Maimonides puts it: "The obligation of prayer is that every person should daily, according to his ability, offer up supplication and prayer, first uttering *praises* of God, then with humble *supplication and petition* asking for all that he needs, and finally offering praise and *thanksgiving* to the Eternal for the benefits already bestowed on him in rich measure" (Laws of Prayer 1:2).

The Amida is constructed on this template. Of its nineteen blessings, the first three express praise. The middle thirteen on weekdays are requests (we do not make requests in the Amida on Shabbat or Yom Tov, which are times dedicated to thanking God for what we have, as opposed to asking Him for what we lack). The final three are acknowledgments. The same pattern can be seen in the blessings over the Torah at the beginning of the morning service (see section G. FRACTALS).

D. PREPARATION, PRAYER, MEDITATION

Prayer requires intense concentration, and this takes time. It is impossible to move directly from the stresses and preoccupations of everyday life into the presence of eternity. Nor should prayer end abruptly. It must be internalized if it is to leave its trace within us as we move back into our worldly pursuits. Maimonides writes that because prayer needs mental focus,

> One should therefore sit awhile *before* beginning his prayers, so as to concentrate his mind. He should then pray in gentle tones, beseechingly, and not regard the service as a burden that he is carrying and which he will cast off before proceeding on his way. He should thus sit awhile *after* concluding the prayers, and only then leave. The ancient saints used to pause and meditate one hour before prayer and one hour after prayer, and spend an hour in prayer itself. (Laws of Prayer 4:16)

In the morning service, the Verses of Praise (*Pesukei deZimra*) are the preparation. In them, our thoughts gradually turn from the visible world to its invisible Creator. The Shema, Amida and their surrounding blessings are prayer as such. The remainder of the service is our meditation as we leave the orbit of heaven and reenter the gravitational field of earth.

E. DESCRIPTION, EXPERIENCE, RECOLLECTION

It is one thing to describe an experience, another to live it. One of the striking features of the weekday morning service is its threefold repetition of the *Kedusha* ("Holy, holy, holy"), once before the Shema (known as *Kedushat Yotzer*); a second time during the Leader's Repetition of the Amida; and a third time during the prayer "A redeemer will come to Zion" (known as *Kedusha deSidra*). The first and third are different from

◂ the second

the second in that, (1) they do not require a *minyan*, and (2) they do not need to be said standing.

The *Kedusha* – one of the supreme moments of holiness in Jewish prayer – is constructed around the mystical visions of Isaiah and Ezekiel, of God enthroned in majesty, surrounded by angels singing His praises. In the first and third *Kedushot*, we *describe* the angelic order; in the second, we *enact* it, using the same words, but this time in direct, not reported, speech (Geonim, Maimonides). The intensity of *Kedusha* is heightened by this three-movement form: first the anticipation and preparation, then the experience itself, and finally the recollection.

F. PRIVATE, PUBLIC, PRIVATE

The Amida itself – especially on weekday mornings and afternoons – is constructed on a triadic pattern. First it is said silently by the members of the congregation as individuals. Next it is repeated publicly out loud by the Leader. This is then usually followed by private supplications (*Taḥanun*), also said quietly. As I have suggested above, this is a way of reenacting the two modes of spirituality from which prayer derives. The silent Amida recalls the intensely personal prayers of the patriarchs and prophets. The public Repetition represents the daily sacrifices offered by the priests in the Temple on behalf of all Israel (there is no Repetition of the evening Amida because there were no sacrifices at night). Thus the prayers weave priestly and prophetic, individual and collective voices, into a single three-movement sonata of great depth and resonance.

G. FRACTALS

We owe to the scientist Benoit Mandelbrot the concept of fractals: the discovery that phenomena in nature often display the same pattern at different levels of magnitude. A single rock looks like a mountain. Crystals, snowflakes and ferns are made up of elements that have the same shape as the whole. Fractal geometry is the scientific equivalent of the mystical ability to sense the great in the small: "To see a world in a grain of sand / And a Heaven in a wild flower, / Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand, and Eternity in an hour" (William Blake).

◂ The first

The first of the "request" prayers in the daily Amida is a fractal. It replicates in miniature the structure of the Amida as a whole (Praise–Request–Thanks). It begins with praise: "You grace humanity with knowledge and teach mortals understanding," moves to request: "Grace us with the knowledge, understanding and discernment," and ends with thanksgiving: "Blessed are You, O LORD, who graciously grants knowledge." You will find many other fractals in the siddur.

The existence of fractals in the siddur shows us how profoundly the structures of Jewish spirituality feed back repeatedly into the architectonics of prayer.

H. MIDRASHIC EXPANSION

Midrash is the rabbinic investigation into the meaning of holy texts: the root *d-r-sh* means "to explore, enquire, explain, expound." It seeks out the inflections and innuendos of words, making explicit their implicit dimensions of meaning.

One example occurs in the *Nishmat* prayer on Shabbat morning (page 445). A key phrase in prayer, spoken by Moses and incorporated into the first paragraph of the Amida, is "God, great, mighty and awesome" (Deut. 10:17). *Nishmat* meditates on these four words, one by one:

> God – in Your absolute power,
> Great – in the glory of Your name,
> Mighty – for ever,
> Awesome – in Your awe-inspiring deeds.

Another is the passage on Shabbat morning following the phrase "who forms light and creates darkness, makes peace and creates all" (pages 455–457). A brief prayer takes the last word, "all," and builds around it a fivefold set of variations: "*All* will thank You. *All* will praise You. *All* will declare: Nothing is holy as is the LORD. *All* will exalt You, Selah, You who form *all.*"

Always look for apparent repetition in prayer – like the tenfold "Blessed" in *Barukh She'amar* ("Blessed is He who spoke"), the eightfold "True" after the Shema, or the fivefold "All" immediately after *Barekhu* ("Bless the LORD") on Shabbat morning. Reiteration is never mere repetition. The prayer is inviting us to meditate on the multiple layers of

◂ meaning

meaning that may exist in a single word or phrase, as if words were diamonds and we were turning them this way and that to catch their multiple refractions of light.

I. NUMERICAL STRUCTURES

As we have seen, many of the prayers have an obvious three-part structure, but in some cases this is repeated in great detail on a smaller scale, as in fractals.

The most striking example is the weekday Amida, which is composed of three parts: praise–request–acknowledgment. The first and last of these are each constructed in threes: three blessings of praise at the beginning, and three of acknowledgment at the end. Less obvious is the fact that the middle thirteen blessings – "requests" – *also* share this structure. There are six individual requests, followed by six collective ones, each divided into two groups of three. The individual requests begin with three spiritual needs (understanding, repentance, forgiveness) followed by three material ones (deliverance from oppression, healing, prosperity). The collective requests begin with three political-historical elements (ingathering of exiles, restoration of judges, and an end to internal strife – the "slanderers"), followed by the three spiritual bases of nationhood (the righteous, Jerusalem, and the restoration of the Davidic monarchy). The thirteenth, "Listen to our voice," stands outside this structure because it is not directed to any specific request but is, instead, a prayer that our prayers be heeded.

The number seven is also significant and always indicates holiness, as in the seventh day, Shabbat; the seventh month, Tishrei with its Days of Awe; the seventh year, the "year of release"; and the fiftieth year, the Jubilee, which follows seven cycles of seven years. Seven in Judaism is not a simple prime number. It is the *one-after-six*. Six represents the material, physical, secular. Ancient Mesopotamia, the birthplace of Abraham, originally used a numerical system based on the number six. Western civilization still bears traces of this in the twenty-four hour day (2×6 hours of light, plus 2×6 of darkness); the sixty (10×6) minutes in an hour, and seconds in a minute; and the 360 degrees in a circle ($6 \times 6 \times 10$). All of these originated in astronomy, at which the ancient Mesopotamians excelled. Judaism acknowledges the six-part structure of time and space,

◂ but adds

but adds that God exists *beyond* time and space. Hence seven – the one beyond six – became the symbol of the holy.

Six, too, is not a simple number in Judaism. This becomes evident when we read the story of creation in Genesis 1 carefully. The first six days fall into two groups. On the first three, God created and separated *domains* (1: light and darkness, 2: upper and lower waters, 3: sea and dry land). On the second three God *populated* these domains, each with its appropriate objects or life-forms (4: sun, moon and stars, 5: birds and fish, 6: land animals and man). The seventh day, Shabbat, is *holy* because it stands *outside* nature and its causal-scientific laws.

Mirroring this pattern, the morning service is structured around the number seven: the three paragraphs of the Shema, surrounded by three blessings, leading to the seventh, the Amida, which is the domain of the holy, where we stand directly in the presence of God. On holy days – Shabbat and Yom Tov – the Amida has a sevenfold structure: the three opening and closing paragraphs, plus a middle paragraph dedicated to "the holiness of the day."

It follows that sixfold structures in the siddur signal the universe and creation. Thus, on weekday mornings we say six psalms (145–150) in the Verses of Praise. *Kabbalat Shabbat* also contains six psalms, corresponding to the days of the week, before *Lekha Dodi*, which represents Shabbat itself. The blessing after the Shema repeats the keyword *Emet* ("true") six times to show how God's love is translated into redemptive activity in a this-worldly time and space.

Many prayers such as *El Adon* (page 461) and *Aleinu* are constructed in a pattern of fours: four-line verses, each of four words. Often these reflect Jewish mysticism with its four "worlds": *Asiyya* (Action), *Yetzira* (Formation), *Beri'a* (Creation) and *Atzilut* (Emanation). *Merkava* mysticism, based on Ezekiel's vision of the divine chariot, is an important strand of early rabbinic prayer.

The number ten represents the "ten utterances with which the world was created" (the ten places in Genesis 1 where an act of creation is preceded by the words "God said"). That is why *Barukh She'amar*, the blessing before the creation section of the prayers, begins with a tenfold litany of phrases each beginning with the word "Blessed."

Fifteen represents the fifteen steps between the courtyards of the Temple, the fifteen psalms beginning "A song of ascents," and the numerical value of the first two letters of God's holiest name. Hence, there are fifteen expressions of praise in the paragraph *Yishtabaḥ* (page 451), fifteen adjectives following "the LORD Your God is true" at the end of the Shema in the morning service, fifteen psalms in the Verses of Praise on Shabbat and Yom Tov mornings, and so on. There are also more intricate numerical patterns.

These are not mere aesthetic conventions like, for example, the fourteen-line sonnet form or the four-movement structure of a symphony. As always in Judaism there is a matching of form to content, structure to substance. The sages understood – as did the ancient Greeks, amply confirmed by modern science – that *reality has a numerical structure*. Mirroring this structure in prayer, we evoke the sense of a world of order in which we are called upon to respect differences and honor boundaries, accepting graciously the integrity of natural and moral law.

J. FROM LOVE TO AWE

The supreme religious emotions are love and awe – in that order. We are commanded to "Love the LORD your God." We are also commanded to experience the feelings associated with the Hebrew word *yira*, which means "awe, fear, reverence." This is how Maimonides puts it: "When a person contemplates His great and wondrous works and creatures and from them obtains a glimpse of His wisdom, which is incomparable and infinite, he will immediately love Him, praise Him, glorify Him, and long with an exceeding longing to know His great name… And when he ponders these matters, he will recoil frightened, and realize that he is a small creature, lowly and obscure, endowed with slight and slender intelligence, standing in the presence of He who is perfect in knowledge" (*Yesodei HaTorah* 2:2).

The supreme expression of love in Judaism is the Shema with its injunction: "Love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might." The supreme expression of awe is the Amida prayer, when we stand consciously in the presence of God. The basic movement of the morning and evening prayers is first, to climb to the peak of love, the Shema, and from there to the summit of awe, the Amida.

◂ 4. *Creation*

4. Creation, Revelation, Redemption

One structural principle of the prayers deserves special attention, since it touches on the fundamentals of Jewish faith. In the twelfth century, Moses Maimonides enumerated the Thirteen Principles of Jewish Faith. They appear in the siddur in two forms: the poem known as Yigdal (page 25) and a prose version after the end of the morning service (page 203).

Rabbi Shimon ben Tzemaḥ Duran (1361–1444) pointed out that Maimonides' principles could be analyzed and categorized into three themes: (1) the existence of God, the Creator (principles 1–5: God's existence, unity, incorporeality and eternity, and that He alone is to be worshiped); (2) Divine revelation (principles 6–9: prophecy, Moses' uniqueness, the God-given character of the Torah and its immutability), and (3) God's justice (principles 10–13: God knows all, repays us according to our deeds, and will bring the Messiah and the resurrection of the dead). The philosopher Franz Rosenzweig summarized these in three words: creation, revelation, redemption. Creation is the relationship between God and the universe. Revelation is the relationship between God and humanity. Redemption occurs when we apply revelation to creation.

The movement from creation to revelation to redemption is one of the great structural motifs of prayer. One example is the three blessings in the morning service, surrounding the Shema and leading up to the Amida (pages 89–107). The first is about the *creation* of the universe in space and time; the second is about the *revelation* of the Torah; and the third is about the miracles of history, ending with the words, "who *redeemed* Israel."

The three paragraphs of the Shema display the same pattern. The first is about creation (God's unity and sovereignty), the second about revelation (acceptance of the commandments), and the third about redemption ("I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt").

The weekday morning service as a whole is constructed on this principle. First come the Verses of Praise, taken from the book of Psalms, with their majestic vision of creation. Then follows the central section – the Shema and its blessings, leading to the Amida – in which we sit, then stand, in the immediate presence of God (revelation). Finally we come to the concluding prayers with their central line, "A *redeemer* will come to Zion." The second paragraph of *Aleinu* is likewise a vision of redemption.

The pattern is repeated yet again in the Shabbat evening, morning

◂ and afternoon

and afternoon prayers. On Friday evening, in the central blessing of the Amida, we speak of the Shabbat of creation ("the culmination of the creation of heaven and earth"). In the morning we refer to the Shabbat of revelation (when Moses "brought down in his hands two tablets of stone"). In the afternoon we anticipate future redemption (when "You are One, Your name is One" and the people Israel are again one "nation unique on earth").

Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik suggested that the same sequence is the basis for the threefold structure of the weekday Amida: praise, request, thanks. Praise "emerges from an enraptured soul gazing at the *mysterium magnum* of creation," request "flows from an aching heart which finds itself in existential depths," and thanksgiving "is sung by the person who has attained, by the grace of God, redemption." Creation leads to praise, revelation to request, and redemption to thanksgiving.

In these multiple ways, prayer continually reiterates the basic principles of Jewish faith.

5. Prayer and Study

There is one spiritual activity that the sages regarded as even higher than prayer: namely, study of Torah, God's word to humanity and His covenant with our ancestors and us (*Shabbat* 10a). The entire *Pirkei Avot* (Ethics of the Fathers) is a set of variations on the theme of a life devoted to Torah study. In prayer, we speak to God. Through Torah, God speaks to us. Praying, we speak. Studying, we listen.

From earliest times, the synagogue was a house of study as well as a house of prayer. Gatherings for study (perhaps around the figure of the prophet; see II Kings 4:23 and the commentaries of Radak and Ralbag; *Sukka* 27b) may well have preceded formal prayer services by many centuries. Accordingly, interwoven with prayer are acts of study.

The most obvious is the public reading from the Torah, a central part of the Shabbat and Yom Tov services, and in an abridged form on Monday and Thursday mornings and Shabbat afternoons. There are other examples. In the morning blessings before the Verses of Praise, there are two cycles of study, each in three parts: (1) Torah, that is a passage from the Mosaic books; (2) Mishna, the key document of the Oral Law; and (3) Talmud in the broadest sense (pages 11 and 43–55).

◂ In the main

In the main section of prayer, the paragraph preceding the Shema is a form of blessing over the Torah (see *Berakhot* 11b), and the Shema itself represents Torah study (*Menaḥot* 99b). The last section of the weekday morning prayers (pages 175–177) was originally associated with the custom of studying ten verses from the prophetic books. Kaddish, which plays such a large part in the prayers, had its origin in the house of study as the conclusion of a *derasha*, a public exposition of biblical texts. The entire weekday morning service is thus an extended fugue between study and prayer.

This is dramatized in two key phrases: the first is *Shema Yisrael*, "Listen, Israel," God's word through Moses and the Torah, and the second is *Shema Koleinu*, "Listen to our voice," the paragraph within the Amida that summarizes all our requests (see above). These two phrases frame the great dialogue of study and prayer. Faith lives in these two acts of listening: ours to the call of God, God's to the cry of humankind.

6. Prayer and Mysticism

Jewish mysticism has played a major role in the prayer book. The most obvious examples are the passage from the *Zohar*, "Blessed is the name" (page 503), the Song of Glory (pages 571–573) written by one of the medieval north-European pietists, and the two songs written by the sixteenth-century Safed mystics associated with Rabbi Isaac Luria, "Beloved of the soul" (page 309) and "Come, my Beloved" (pages 319–323).

Less obviously, many of the early post-biblical prayers were deeply influenced by *Hekhalot* ("Palace") and *Merkava* ("Chariot") mysticism, two esoteric systems that charted the mysteries of creation, the angelic orders, and the innermost chambers of the divine glory.

Undoubtedly, though, the most significant mystical contribution to the prayers is the *Kedusha*, said in three different forms, most notably during the Leader's Repetition of the Amida. We have noted the two major tributaries of prayer: the spontaneous prayers said by figures in the Hebrew Bible, and the sacrificial service in the Temple. Mysticism is the third, and its most sublime expression is the *Kedusha*, based on the mystical visions of Isaiah (chapter 6) and Ezekiel (chapters 1–3). There are times in the prayers when we are like prophets, others when we are like priests, but there is no more daring leap of faith than during the

◂ *Kedusha*

Kedusha, when we act out the role of angels singing praises to God in His innermost chambers.

Familiarity breeds inattention, and we can all too easily pass over the *Kedusha* without noticing its astonishing drama. "The ministering angels do not begin to sing praises in heaven until Israel sings praises down here on earth" (*Ḥullin* 91b). "You," said God through Isaiah, "are My witnesses" (Is. 43:10). Israel is "the people I formed for Myself that they might declare My praise" (ibid, 43:20). We are God's angels on earth, His emissaries and ambassadors. The Jewish people, always small and vulnerable, have nonetheless been singled out for the most exalted mission ever entrusted to humankind: to be witnesses, in ourselves, to something beyond ourselves: to be God's "signal of transcendence" in a world in which His presence is often hidden.

This is a mystical idea, and like all mysticism it hovers at the edge of intelligibility. Mysticism is the attempt to say the unsayable, know the unknowable, to reach out in language to a reality that lies beyond the scope of language. Often in the course of history, mysticism has tended to devalue the world of the senses in favor of a more exalted realm of disembodied spirituality. Jewish mysticism did not take this course. Instead it chose to bathe our life on earth in the dazzling light of the divine radiance (*Zohar*, the title of Judaism's most famous mystical text).

7. Reliving History

History, too, has left its mark on the siddur. There are passages, indicated in the Commentary, that were born in the aftermath of tragedy or miraculous redemption. This edition of the siddur also includes suggested orders of service for Yom HaAtzma'ut and Yom Yerushalayim, marking the birth of the State of Israel in 1948, and the Six Day War of 1967.

No less significantly, the synagogue service invites us at many points to reenact history. The Verses of Praise begin with the song of celebration sung by King David when he brought the Ark to Jerusalem. The verses we sing when we take the Torah scroll from the Ark and when we return it recall the Israelites' journeys through the wilderness, when they carried the Ark with them. In one of the most fascinating transitions in the service, as we move from private meditation to public prayer (pages 79–83), we recall three epic moments of nation-formation: when David gathered the

◂ people

people to charge them with the task of building the Temple; when Ezra convened a national assembly to renew the covenant after the return from Babylonian exile; and when Moses led the Israelites through the Reed Sea. Even the three steps forward we take as we begin the Amida recall the three biblical episodes in which people stepped forward (*vayigash*) as a prelude to prayer: Abraham pleading for the cities of the plain, Judah pleading with Joseph for Benjamin to be set free, and Elijah invoking God against the prophets of Ba'al on Mount Carmel.

We are a people defined by history. We carry our past with us. We relive it in ritual and prayer. We are not lonely individuals, disconnected with past and present. We are characters in the world's oldest continuous story, charged with writing its next chapter and handing it on to those who come after us. The siddur is, among other things, a book of Jewish memory.

8. Prayer and Faith

The siddur is also the book of Jewish faith. Scholars of Judaism, noting that it contains little systematic theology, have sometimes concluded that it is a religion of deeds not creeds, acts not beliefs. They were wrong because they were searching in the wrong place. They were looking for a library of works like Moses Maimonides' *Guide for the Perplexed*. They should have looked instead at the prayer book. The home of Jewish belief is the siddur.

At several points, the prayers have been shaped in response to theological controversy. The opening statement in the morning service after *Barekhu*, "who forms light and creates darkness, makes peace and creates all," is a protest against dualism, which had a considerable following in the first four centuries CE in the form of Gnosticism and Manichaeism. Its presence can be traced in the ancient documents discovered in the 1940s, the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Nag Hammadi codices. Against dualism, with its vision of perpetual cosmic struggle, Judaism insists that all reality derives from a single source.

The second paragraph of the Amida, with its fivefold reference to the resurrection of the dead, reflects the ancient controversy between the Pharisees and Sadducees. The morning prayer, "My God, the soul You placed within me is pure" (page 7), may be directed against the Pauline doctrine of original sin. The Mishna chapter, "With what wicks may we

◂ light

light?" (pages 329–331), was probably inserted as part of the polemic against the Karaite sect. The Ten Commandments, said daily as part of the Temple service immediately after the Shema, was removed from the prayers when it was used by sectarians to argue that only these ten commandments were commanded by God.

The fact that Jewish faith was written into the prayers, rather than analyzed in works of theology, is of immense significance. We do not analyze our faith: we pray it. We do not philosophize about truth: we sing it. Even Maimonides' Thirteen Principles of Jewish Faith – the most famous creed in the history of Judaism – only entered the mainstream of Jewish consciousness when they were turned into a song and included in the siddur as the hymn known as Yigdal. For Judaism, theology becomes real when it becomes prayer. We do not talk *about* God. We talk *to* God.

I have known many atheists. My doctoral supervisor, the late Sir Bernard Williams, described as the most brilliant mind in Britain, was one. He was a good, caring, deeply moral human being, but he could not understand my faith at all. For him, life was ultimately tragic. The universe was blind to our presence, deaf to our prayers, indifferent to our hopes. There is no meaning beyond that which human beings construct for themselves. We are dust on the surface of infinity.

I understood that vision, yet in the end I could not share his belief that it is somehow more honest to despair than to trust, to see existence as an accident rather than as invested with a meaning we strive to discover. Sir Bernard loved ancient Greece; I loved biblical Israel. Greece gave the world tragedy; Israel taught it hope. A people, a person, who can pray is one who, even in the darkest night of the soul, can never ultimately lose hope.

9. Prayer and Sacrifice

The connection between prayer and sacrifice is deep. As we have seen, sacrifice is not the only forerunner of our prayers; many prayers were spoken by figures in the Bible. These were said without any accompanying offering. Yet the sacrificial system is a major tributary of the Jewish river of prayer. After the destruction of the Second Temple, prayer became a substitute for sacrifice. It is *avoda shebalev*, "the sacrificial service of the heart." Yet it is just this feature of the prayers that many find difficult to understand or find uplifting. What, then, was sacrifice?

◂ The Hebrew

The Hebrew word for sacrifice is *korban*, which comes from a root that means "to come, or bring, close." The essential problem to which sacrifice is an answer is: how can we come close to God? This is a profound question – perhaps *the* question of the religious life – not simply because of the utter disparity between God's infinity and our finitude, but also because the very circumstances of life tend to focus our gaze downward to our needs rather than upward to our source. The Hebrew word for universe, *olam*, is connected to the verb meaning "to hide" (see Lev. 4:13; Deut. 22:1). The physical world is a place in which the presence of God is real, yet hidden. Our horizon of consciousness is foreshortened. We focus on our own devices and desires. We walk in God's light, but often our mind is on other things.

How then do we come close to God? By *an act of renunciation*; by giving something away; specifically, by giving something *back*. The sacrifices of the biblical age were ways in which the individual, or the nation as a whole, in effect said: what we have, God, is really Yours. The world exists because of You. *We* exist because of You. Nothing we have is ultimately ours. The fundamental gesture of sacrifice is, on the face of it, absurd. What we give to God is something that already belongs to Him. As King David said: "Who am I and who are my people that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from You, and we have given You only what comes from Your hand" (1 Chr. 29:14). Yet to *give back* to God is one of the most profound instincts of the soul. Doing so, we acknowledge our dependency. We cast off the carapace of self-absorption. That is why, in one of its most striking phrases, the Torah speaks of sacrifice as being *rei'aḥ niḥo'aḥ*, "sweet savor" to God.

One of the sweetest savors of parenthood is when a child, by now grown to maturity, brings a parent a gift to express his or her thanks. This too seems absurd. What can a child give a parent that remotely approximates what a parent gives a child, namely life itself? Yet it is so, and the reverse is also true. The cruelest thing a child can do is *not* to acknowledge his or her parents. The Talmud attributes to Rabbi Akiva the phrase *Avinu Malkenu*, "Our Father, our King." Those two words encapsulate the essence of Jewish worship. God is King – Maker and Sovereign of the vast universe. Yet even before God is our King, He is our Father, our Parent, the One who brought us into being in love, who nurtured and sustained us, who taught us His ways, and who tenderly watches over our destiny.

◂ Sacrifice

Sacrifice – the gift we bring to God – is the gift of the made to its Maker, the owned to its Owner, the child to its Parent. If creation is an act of love, sacrifice is an acknowledgment of that love.

The late Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik emphasized the difference between *ma'aseh mitzva*, the external act specified by a commandment, and *kiyum mitzva*, the actual fulfillment of a commandment. When the Temple stood, for example, a penitent would bring a guilt- or sin-offering to atone for his sin: that was the external act. The fulfillment of the commandment, though, lay in confession and contrition, acts of the mind and will. In biblical times, the sacrificial order was the external act, but the internal act – acknowledgment, dependency, recognition, thanks, praise – was essential to its fulfillment. That is why Judaism was able to survive the destruction of the Temple and the cessation of the sacrificial order. The external act could no longer be performed, but the internal act remained. That is the link between sacrifice and prayer.

The difference between prayer-as-request and prayer-as-sacrifice is that request *seeks*, sacrifice *gives*. The prophets asked, usually on behalf of the people as a whole, for forgiveness, deliverance, and blessing. The priests who offered sacrifices in the Temple asked for nothing. Sacrificial prayer is the giving back to God what God already owns: our lives, our days, our world. Prayer is creation's gift to its Creator.

The prophets were critical of the sacrificial system. They reserved for it some of their most lacerating prose. Yet none proposed its abolition, because what they opposed was not the sacrificial act, but the *ma'aseh* without the *kiyum*, the outer act without the inner acknowledgment that gives the act its meaning and significance. The idea that God can be worshiped through externalities alone is pagan, and there is nothing worse than the intrusion of paganism into the domain of holiness itself. Then as now, the sign of paganism is the coexistence of religious worship with injustice and a lack of compassion in the dealings between the worshiper and the world.

Sacrifice, like prayer, is a transformative act. We should leave the synagogue, as our ancestors once left the Temple, seeing ourselves and the universe differently, freshly conscious that the world is God's work, the Torah God's word, our fellow believers God's children, and our fellow human beings God's image. We emerge refocused and reenergized,

◂ for we

for we have made the journey back to our source, to the One who gives life to all. Distant, we have come close. That is prayer as sacrifice, *korban*, giving back to God a token of what He has given us, thereby coming to see existence itself as a gift, to be celebrated and sanctified.

10. Kavana: Directing the Mind

Prayer is more than saying certain words in the right order. It needs concentration, attention, engagement of mind and heart, and the left and right hemispheres of the brain. Without devotion, said Rabbi Baḥya ibn Pakuda, prayer is like a body without a soul. The key Hebrew word here is *kavana,* meaning mindfulness, intention, focus, direction of the mind. In the context of prayer, it means several different things.

The most basic level is *kavana le-shem mitzva*, which means, having the intention to fulfill a *mitzva*. This means that we do not act for social or aesthetic reasons. We pray because we are commanded to pray. Generally in Judaism there is a long-standing debate about whether the commandments require *kavana,* but certainly prayer does, because it is supremely an act of the mind.

At a second level, *kavana* means understanding the words (*perush hamilim*). At least the most important sections of prayer require *kavana* in this sense. Without it, the words we say would be mere sounds. Understanding the words is, of course, made much easier by the existence of translations and commentaries.

A third level relates to context. How do I understand my situation when I pray? Maimonides states this principle as follows: "The mind should be *freed from all extraneous thoughts* and the one who prays should *realize that he is standing before the Divine Presence*." These are essential elements of at least the Amida, the prayer par excellence in which we are conscious of standing before God. That is why we take three steps forward at the beginning, and three back at the end – as if we were entering, then leaving, sacred space.

The fourth level of *kavana* is not merely saying the words but meaning them, affirming them. Thus, for example, while saying the first paragraph of the Shema, we "accept of the yoke of the kingdom of heaven" – declaring our allegiance to God as the supreme authority in our lives. In the second paragraph, we "accept of the yoke of the commandments." The

◂ word

word *Amen* means roughly, "I affirm what has been said." In prayer we put ourselves into the words. We make a commitment. We declare our faith, our trust, and our dependency. We mean what we say.

There are, of course, higher reaches of *kavana*. Mystics and philosophers throughout the ages developed elaborate meditative practices before and during prayer. But at its simplest, *kavana* is the practiced harmony of word and thought, body and mind. This is how Judah HaLevi described it:

> The tongue agrees with the thought, and does not overstep its bounds, does not speak in prayer in a mere mechanical way as the starling and the parrot, but every word is uttered thoughtfully and attentively. This moment forms the heart and fruit of his time, while the other hours represent the way that leads to it. He looks forward to its approach, because while it lasts he resembles the spiritual beings, and is removed from merely animal existence. Those three times of daily prayer are the fruit of his day and night, and the Sabbath is the fruit of the week, because it has been appointed to establish the connection with the Divine Spirit and to serve God in joy, not in sadness… (*Kuzari*, III:5, as translated by Hartwig Hirschfeld)

Of course it does not always happen. It is told that on one occasion Rabbi Levi Yitzḥak of Berditchev went up to one of his followers after the prayers, held out his hand and said "Welcome home." "But I haven't been anywhere," said the disciple. "Your body hasn't been anywhere," said the Rebbe, "but your mind has been far away. That is why I wished it, 'Welcome home.'"

Rabbi Menaḥem Mendel of Kotzk once asked: "Why does it say in the Shema, 'These words shall be *on* your heart'? Should it not say, 'These words shall be *in* your heart'? The answer is that the heart is not always open. Therefore we should lay these words on our heart, so that when it opens, they will be there, ready to enter."

Prayer requires practice. That is implicit in defining prayer as *avoda shebalev*, "service of the heart." The word *avoda*, service, also means hard work, labor, strenuous activity. We have to work at prayer. But there are also times when the most inarticulate prayer, said from the heart, pierces the heavens. What matters is seriousness and honesty. "The LORD is close to all who call on Him, to all who call on Him in truth."

◂ *11. Jacob's*

11. Jacob's Ladder

Prayer is a journey that has been described in many ways. According to the mystics, it is a journey through the four levels of being – Action, Formation, Creation and Emanation. Rabbi Jacob Emden worked out an elaborate scheme in which the prayers represent a movement from the outer courtyards to the Holy of Holies of the Temple in Jerusalem. According to everyone, the stages of prayer constitute an ascent and descent, reaching their highest level in the middle, in the Shema and Amida.

The metaphor that, to me, captures the spirit of prayer more than any other is Jacob's dream in which, alone at night, fleeing danger and far from home, he saw a ladder stretching from earth to heaven with angels ascending and descending. He woke and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the House of God; this is the gate to heaven" (Gen. 28:10–17).

Our sages said that "this place" was Jerusalem. That is midrashic truth. But there is another meaning, the plain one, no less transfiguring. The verb the Torah uses, *vayifga*, means "to happen upon, as if by chance." "This place" was any place. Any place, any time, even the dark of a lonely night, can be a place and time for prayer. If we have the strength to dream and then, awakening, refuse to let go of the dream, then here, now, where I stand, can be the gate to heaven.

Prayer is a ladder and we are the angels. If there is one theme sounded throughout the prayers, it is creation–revelation–redemption, or ascent–summit–descent. In the Verses of Praise, we climb from earth to heaven by meditating on creation. Like a Turner or Monet landscape, the psalms let us see the universe bathed in light, but *this* light is not the light of beauty but of holiness – the light the sages say God made on the first day and "hid for the righteous in the life to come." Through some of the most magnificent poetry ever written, we see the world as God's masterpiece, suffused with His radiance, until we reach a crescendo in Psalm 150 with its thirteen-fold repetition of "Praise" in a mere thirty-five words.

By the time we reach *Barekhu* and the blessings of the Shema we have neared the summit. Now we are in heaven with the angels. We have reached revelation. The Divine Presence is close, almost tangible. We speak of love in one of the most hauntingly beautiful of blessings, "Great love" with its striking phrase: "Our Father, merciful Father, the Merciful,

◂ have

have mercy on us." Now comes the great declaration of faith at the heart of prayer, the Shema with its passionate profession of the unity of God and the highest of all expressions of love, "with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might." Ending with a reference to the exodus, the Shema gives way to the *Emet* blessing with its emphasis on redemption, the exodus and the division of the sea. Then comes the Amida, the supreme height of prayer. Three traditions fuse at this point: the silent Amida said by individuals, reminding us of prophetic prayer; the Leader's Repetition representing priestly worship and prayer as sacrifice; and then the *Kedusha*, prayer as a mystical experience.

From here, prayer begins its descent. First comes *Taḥanun* in which we speak privately and intimately to the King. At this point, with a mixture of anguish and plea, we speak not of God's love for Israel but of Israel's defiant love of God: "Yet despite all this we have not forgotten Your name. Please do not forget us." There is a direct reference back to the Shema: "Guardian of Israel, guard the remnant of Israel, and let not Israel perish who declare, *Shema Yisrael*."

Then comes *Ashrei* and the subsequent passages, similar to the Verses of Praise but this time with redemption, not creation, as their theme. The key verse is "A redeemer will come to Zion." The section closes with a prayer that we may become agents of redemption as we reengage with the world ("May it be Your will … that we keep Your laws in this world"). We are now back on earth, the service complete except for *Aleinu*, Kaddish and the Daily Psalm. We are ready to reenter life and its challenges.

What has prayer achieved? If we have truly prayed, we now know that the world did not materialize by chance. A single, guiding Will, directed its apparent randomness. We know too that this Will did not end there, but remains intimately involved with the universe, which He renews daily, and with humanity, over whose destinies He presides. We have climbed the high ladder and have seen, if only dimly, how small some of our worries are. Our emotional landscape has been expanded. We have given voice to a whole range of emotions: thanks, praise, love, awe, guilt, repentance, remembrance, hope. As we leave the synagogue for the world outside, we now know that we are not alone; that God is with us; that we need not fear failure, for God forgives; that our hopes are not vain; that we are here for a purpose and there is work to do.

◂ We are

We are not the same after we have stood in the Divine Presence as we were before. We have been transformed. We see the world in a different light. Perhaps we radiate a different light. We have spoken to and listened to God. We have aligned ourselves with the moral energies of the universe. We have become, in Lurianic terminology, vessels for God's blessing. We are changed by prayer.

12. Is Prayer Answered?

Is prayer answered? If God is changeless, how can we change Him by what we say? Even discounting this, why do we need to articulate our requests? Surely God, who sees the heart, knows our wishes even before we do, without our having to put them into words. What we wish to happen is either right or wrong in the eyes of God. If it is right, God will bring it about even if we do not pray. If it is wrong, God will not bring it about even if we do. So why pray?

The classic Jewish answer is simple but profound. Without a vessel to contain a blessing, there can be no blessing. If we have no receptacle to catch the rain, the rain may fall, but we will have none to drink. If we have no radio receiver, the sound waves will flow, but we will be unable to convert them into sound. God's blessings flow continuously, but unless we make ourselves into a vessel for them, they will flow elsewhere. *Prayer is the act of turning ourselves into a vehicle for the Divine.*

Speaking from personal experience, and from many encounters with people for whom prayer was a lifeline, I know that our prayers are answered: not always in the *way* we expected, not always as quickly as we hoped, but *prayer is never in vain*. Sometimes the answer is, "No." If granting a request would do us or others harm, God will not grant it. But "No" is also an answer, and when God decides that something I have prayed for should not come to pass, then I pray for the wisdom to understand why. That too is part of spiritual growth: to accept graciously what we cannot or should not change. Nor is prayer a substitute for human effort: on the contrary, prayer is one of the most powerful sources of energy for human effort. God gives us the strength to achieve what we need to achieve, and to do what we were placed on earth to do.

Prayer changes the world because it changes us. At its height, it is a profoundly transformative experience. If we have truly prayed, we come in

◂ the course

the course of time to know that the world was made, and we were made, for a purpose; that God, though immeasurably vast, is also intensely close; that "were my father and my mother to forsake me, the LORD would take me in"; that God is with us in our efforts, and that we do not labor in vain. We know, too, that we are part of the community of faith, and with us are four thousand years of history and the prayers and hopes of those who came before us. However far we feel from God, He is there behind us, and all we have to do is turn to face Him. Faith is born and lives in prayer, and faith is the antidote to fear: "The LORD is the stronghold of my life – of whom shall I be afraid?"

It makes a difference to be brushed by the wings of eternity. Regular thrice-daily prayer works on us in ways not immediately apparent. As the sea smoothes the stone, as the repeated hammer-blows of the sculptor shape the marble, so prayer – cyclical, tracking the rhythms of time itself – gradually wears away the jagged edges of our character, turning it into a work of devotional art. We begin to see the beauty of the created world. We locate ourselves as part of the story of our people. Slowly, we come to think less of the "I," more of the "We"; less of what we lack than of what we have; less of what we need from the world, more of what the world needs from us. Prayer is less about getting what we want than about learning what to want. Our priorities change; we become less angular; we learn the deep happiness that comes from learning to give praise and thanks. The world we build tomorrow is born in the prayers we say today.

When, at the end of his vision, Jacob opened his eyes, he said with a sense of awe: "Surely God is in this place and I did not know it." That is what prayer does. It opens our eyes to the wonder of the world. It opens our ears to the still, small voice of God. It opens our hearts to those who need our help. God exists where we pray. As Rabbi Menaḥem Mendel of Kotzk said: "God lives where we let Him in." And in that dialogue between the human soul and the Soul of the universe a momentous yet gentle strength is born.

Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks
London 5769 (2009)

◂ *Keywords*

KEYWORDS OF PRAYER

THE NAMES OF GOD

The two key names, in prayer as in the Torah, are (1) the Tetragrammaton, יהוה, the "four letter" name, and (2) אֱלֹהִים *Elohim*. They are different in meaning and tone. The sages understood the Tetragrammaton as God's compassion. *Elohim* is God's attribute of justice.

Judah HaLevi (*Kuzari*, IV:1) made a more fundamental distinction. The ancients used the word *El* or *Elo'ah* to designate a force of nature: the sun, the sea, the storm, and so on. These they personified as gods. Often, therefore, *el*, or *elil*, denotes an idol. In Hebrew, monotheism's mother tongue, *Elohim* in the plural means "the One who is the totality of powers, forces and causes in the universe." It refers to God as we experience Him in creation and its natural laws, as well as in justice and its moral laws (it sometimes also has a secular sense, meaning those who hold positions of power, usually judges).

The Tetragrammaton not only has a different meaning, it is also a word of a different grammatical type. It is God's *proper name*, standing in relation to Him as the names Abraham or Sarah attach to human beings (hence it is sometimes referred to as *HaShem*, "the name"). The use of a proper name in connection with God means that a direct relationship between us and heaven is possible. We can speak to God, and He listens. There is a direct connection between the Tetragrammaton and the word "You." Only a being that has a proper name can we address as "You." Hence, in prayer, "You" is always directed to the Tetragrammaton; *Elohim* goes with the third-person, "He." Thus, *Elohim* signifies God-as-law, natural or moral. The Tetragrammaton refers to God as we encounter Him in intimacy, compassion and love.

Though I have followed convention, rendering the Tetragrammaton as "LORD," it should be remembered that "LORD" is not a *translation* but a *substitution*. So holy was the divine name that it was used only in the Temple. In all other contexts, it was (and still is) pronounced as *Adonai*, which means "my LORD."

The use of the word *Eloheinu*, "*Our* God," signifies our acceptance of God as the sole object of our worship. Formal acknowledgment of this fact – in the first line of the Shema – is a pledge of loyalty and service, called by the sages, "Acceptance of the yoke of divine kingship."

◂ The word

The word מֶלֶךְ, "King," when applied to God means, first, that God is the sole ultimate Sovereign of the people Israel, who accepted His kingship and covenant at Mount Sinai. At that ceremony, God undertook to guide the Israelites' destiny, while the people accepted their vocation as "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation," bound by God's laws. The second and wider meaning is that God is Sovereign over the universe and all humanity – with whom, via Noah, He made a covenant after the Flood (Genesis, chapter 9). That covenant, with its seven laws, embodies the fundamental principles of human conduct under God. Though God's sovereignty is not yet recognized by all, it will be in the end of days. Hence our prayers often end with the prophecy of Zechariah (14:9), "Then the LORD shall be King over all the earth." The sovereignty of God is the ultimate sanction against tyranny. It implies that all human authority is delegated authority, to be exercised only within the constraints of the covenant.

Sometimes God is referred to as קוֹנֶה which, though I have followed convention by translating it as "Creator," literally means "Owner" of heaven and earth. This represents the idea that because God *created* the universe, He *owns* it. The world and its benefits do not belong to us. What we possess, we hold in trust from God. This is the legal basis of divine sovereignty of the universe – similar to the ancient concept of "eminent domain" by which all ownership of land within a country is ultimately vested in its head of state. As Sovereign of the universe, God rules by right, not power.

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

Many of the key terms descriptive of God are not precisely translatable because they presuppose the concept of covenant: an open-ended pledge between two or more parties to join their destinies together in a reciprocal bond of loyalty and love. The nearest human equivalents are, (1) the bond of marriage, (2) peace treaties between nations. The unique idea of the Torah is that such a covenant can exist between God and humanity.

Thus אֱמֶת, often translated as "true," actually means "faithful, one who acts in accord with his word, one who honors commitments and promises." חֶסֶד, translated as "loving-kindness" or "love," refers to the emotions and actions that flow from a covenantal bond, such as between husband and wife, or between parents and children. It means *love translated into deed.*

◂ There is

There is no English word for צְדָקָה, which means both "justice" and "charity." צֶדֶק, often translated as "righteousness," means "distributive justice, equity" as opposed to מִשְׁפָּט, which means "legal or retributive justice." רַחֲמִים, which I have translated as "compassion," derives from the word *reḥem*, meaning "a womb." It signifies the unconditional love of a mother for her child. חֵן, "grace," means gratuitous kindness, which flows from the generosity of the giver, not the merits of the recipient.

קָדוֹשׁ *Holy*. In general, this means "separated, set apart, standing outside." Used of God, it means "He who stands outside nature" because He *made* nature. Used of the people of Israel (as in "a holy nation," Ex. 19:6) it means the people who stand outside the normal laws of nations – defined by land, language, race or political structure – because they are the sole nation whose constitutive *raison d'être* is to serve God as His witnesses to the world. Shabbat is holy time because it stands outside the normal concerns of the week. The Temple is holy space because it is dedicated to the service of God.

To stand in the presence of holiness, as in prayer, is to enter God's domain; that is, the place where His will rules, not ours. That is why prayer is like sacrifice, because both involve a psychological-spiritual act of renunciation. We renounce our will, accepting His. The Hebrew word for sacrifice, *korban*, means "coming, or bringing, close." Often, in non-Hebraic languages, the word "holy" implies distance and awe. In Judaism, the reverse is also true: Israel encounters holiness as a special closeness to God. This is experienced as both love and awe: love, because of our closeness to the Infinite; awe because of the exacting responsibilities this carries with it.

OTHER KEY TERMS

אָמֵן *Amen*. Saying "Amen" is what philosophers call a "performative utterance." It is a formal act of acceptance and affirmation, meaning, (1) we believe this to be true, or (2) we associate ourselves with what has been said. It functions in the Torah as an assent to an oath (for example, in Deuteronomy 27:15–26). The root *'-m-n* has a range of senses, including "to believe, to trust, to care, to be faithful." In general, liturgical responses – such as "Blessed is He and blessed is His name" – form an essential link between the Leader and congregation, turning a prayer *on behalf of* the

◂ community

community into one assented to *by* the community. Special significance was attached by the sages to the response during the recital of Kaddish, "May His great name be blessed for ever and all time." Indeed for them, the merit of saying Kaddish is precisely that it evokes this response from the community.

אַתָּה *You*. The gods of the ancient world were at best indifferent, at worst actively hostile, to human beings. The God of the philosophers – abstract, conceptual, the prime mover or necessary being – can be contemplated but not addressed. The difference between the God of the prophets and the God of the philosophers is that the former knows us, cares about us, and listens to us (Judah HaLevi, *Kuzari*). Without the word "You" there can be meditation, but not prayer. The central section of most forms of the Amida begins with the word "You."

בָּרוּךְ *Blessed*. When applied to God it means: He is the *source* of all blessings, not only spiritual but also physical: health, livelihood, safety and security. In prayer we learn to see our material enjoyments as God's blessing, belonging as they do to the world He created and pronounced good. The root *b-r-kh* also means (1) to bow, bend the knee; (2) a pool or reservoir of water. What connects these is *downward movement*. A blessing is what, metaphorically, flows down to earth from heaven.

There are several categories of blessings in the siddur: (1) blessings of acknowledgment, which are forms of praise and thanksgiving; (2) blessings over the performance of commandments, which are formal declarations of intent (*kavana*) that the act we are about to perform is done because God has commanded us to do so; (3) blessings over enjoyments (food, drink, and so on), which are acts of redemption in the technical sense of buying something back for secular use that would otherwise be holy, and thus not available for our personal benefit.

מִזְמוֹר *Mizmor* ("Psalm") is found 57 times as the heading of a psalm, and is used nowhere else in Tanakh. Many believe it refers to a song written to be accompanied by musical instruments. תְּהִלָּה *Tehilla*, "song of praise," is used only once as superscription to a psalm (Psalm 145); despite this, the book of Psalms as a whole is known to Jewish tradition as *Tehillim*, "Songs of Praise." Some psalms carry the name of the person who wrote it or to whom it was dedicated; others the occasion on which it was sung; yet others are musical directions. The term לַמְנַצֵּחַ, *lamenatze'aḥ*,

◂ means

means "for the conductor, director of music, choir-master," and usually signals a choral work.

סֶלָה *Selah.* A word of unknown meaning. Some hold that it means "for ever"; others understand it as an affirmation, similar to the word "Amen." Yet others see it as a musical notation, a signaled pause, or an indication of the end of a passage.

עוֹלָם *Olam.* The word *olam* means both "universe" and "eternity" – the outermost limits of space and time. It may come from the same root as *ne'elam*, "hidden." This was understood by Jewish mystics, especially of the Lurianic school, as meaning that to create a universe, the Infinite had to contract or limit Himself, otherwise Infinity would leave no space for finitude. God is present in the physical universe but in a hidden way. We are, explains Nahmanides, surrounded by miracles. The world is filled with the radiance of God, but to see it, we have to open our eyes. Part of the purpose of prayer is, in this sense, to open our eyes.

שֵׁם *Name*: How God is perceived by human beings. When He is recognized as the supreme Sovereign, this is a "sanctification of the name." When He is forced to exile His people – and thus seen by the nations as if powerless to protect them – this is a "desecration of the name." The opening words of Kaddish, "Magnified and sanctified may His great name be," mean "May the sovereignty of God be ever more widely recognized by human beings." The closing words of *Aleinu*, "On that day the LORD shall be One and His name One," refer to a time – the Messianic Age – when God will be recognized by all. God does not change; human recognition of God does. The use of the word "name" marks the distinction between God as He is and as He is humanly perceived.

Other terms are explained within the Commentary.

JS

GUIDE TO THE READER

This new edition of the Koren Siddur continues the Koren tradition of making the language of prayer more accessible, thus enhancing the prayer experience.

One of the unique features of the Siddur 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 bilingual siddurim, 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.

PRONUNCIATION AIDS:

- Most Hebrew words are pronounced with a stress on the last syllable. For words where the stress is placed on the penultimate syllable, a short vertical line (the *meteg*) appears next to the vowel of that syllable, so readers know how to pronounce the word correctly [מֶלֶךְ]. However, this system is not used in the text of the Shema and the Torah readings because their pronunciation is indicated by the *ta'amei hamikra*.

- We have differentiated between the *kamatz katan* (the *oh* sound) and the *kamatz gadol* (the *ah* sound in Sephardi pronunciation) by using a larger symbol for the *kamatz katan*. See *Ḥokhma* [חָכְמָה]. Similarly, we have differentiated between the *sh'va na* (a pronounced vowel) and the *sh'va naḥ* (an unpronounced vowel) by using a larger symbol for the *sh'va na*. See *Nafshekha* [נַפְשֶׁךָ]. We have followed the rules of grammar for the placement of the *kamatz katan* and *sh'va na*.

- As is traditional in the Koren Tanakh, the furtive *pataḥ* is placed slightly to the right, rather than centered underneath the letter, to indicate to the reader that the vowel is pronounced before the consonant rather than after; for example, פּוֹתֵחַ is pronounced *pote'aḥ* and not *poteḥa*.

◂ A small

A small arrow (◂) indicates the suggested starting point for the *Shaliaḥ Tzibbur*. However, where the local custom differs, the *Shaliaḥ Tzibbur* should certainly follow that custom.

We have tried to provide concise instructions for prayer within the text. Expanded explanations and *halakhot* are provided in the Guides to Prayer at the end of the Siddur.

For those who are using the Siddur on a visit to Israel, changes in the prayers have been indicated throughout the text. In addition, a comprehensive "Halakhic Guide for Visitors to Israel" has been added at the end of the Siddur.

In transliterating Hebrew, we have followed modern Israeli pronunciation. We have transliterated the Hebrew ח with a *ḥ* and the כ with a *kh*. We have also compromised on strict consistency in favor of clarity and ease of use. For example, although we have generally omitted the *h* at the end of words like "Amida," we have retained it in the word "Torah," because that is the common spelling. In addition, the *sh'va na* is sometimes represented by an apostrophe and sometimes with an *e* (for example, *Barekhi*, *sh'va*). We have also used an apostrophe to separate syllables where the correct pronunciation is not readily apparent, as in *mo'ed*.

There are two Koren typefaces: one used exclusively for Tanakh, and one for the Siddur. Sections of the Siddur that reproduce complete paragraphs from the Tanakh, such as much of *Pesukei DeZimra*, have been set in the Tanakh typeface. However, where verses from the Tanakh are quoted within the prayers, we have in general used the Siddur typeface to maintain a consistent look and feel. Nevertheless all verses from Tanakh conclude with the *sof pasuk* (׃), the double diamond that is the "period" of the Tanakh. This differs from the colon (:) which is used where appropriate in prayers that are not quotations from Tanakh.

We hope that these innovations will make praying with the Siddur a more profound and uplifting experience.

Raphaël Freeman, Editor
Jerusalem 5769 (2009)

סידור קורן

THE KOREN SIDDUR

ימי חול

WEEKDAYS

Shaḥarit

The following order of prayers and blessings, which departs from that of most prayer books, is based on the consensus of recent halakhic authorities. See laws 315–323.

ON WAKING

On waking, our first thought should be that we are in the presence of God. Since we are forbidden to speak God's name until we have washed our hands, the following prayer is said, which, without mentioning God's name, acknowledges His presence and gives thanks for a new day and for the gift of life. See laws 315–323.

מוֹדֶה I thank You, living and eternal King,
for giving me back my soul in mercy.
Great is Your faithfulness.

Wash hands and say the following blessings.
Some have the custom to say "Wisdom begins" on page 10 at this point.

בָּרוּךְ Blessed are You, LORD our God, King of the Universe,
who has made us holy through His commandments,
and has commanded us about washing hands.

בָּרוּךְ Blessed are You, LORD our God, King of the Universe,
who formed man in wisdom
and created in him many orifices and cavities.
It is revealed and known before the throne of Your glory
that were one of them to be ruptured or blocked,
it would be impossible to survive
and stand before You.
Blessed are You, LORD,
Healer of all flesh who does wondrous deeds.

אֲשֶׁר יָצַר *Who formed man in wisdom:* A blessing of thanks for the intricate wonders of the human body. *Were one of them to be ruptured or blocked* – even the smallest variation in the human genome can cause potentially fatal illness. The more we understand of the complexity of life, the more we appreciate "How numerous are Your works, LORD; You made them all in wisdom; the earth is full of Your creations" (Psalm 104:24). This blessing is a rejection of the idea that the spirit alone is holy, and physical life bereft of God.

שחרית

The following order of prayers and blessings, which departs from that of most prayer books, is based on the consensus of recent halakhic authorities. See laws 315–323.

השכמת הבוקר

On waking, our first thought should be that we are in the presence of God. Since we are forbidden to speak God's name until we have washed our hands, the following prayer is said, which, without mentioning God's name, acknowledges His presence and gives thanks for a new day and for the gift of life. See laws 315–323.

מוֹדֶה/ *women* מוֹדָה/ אֲנִי לְפָנֶיךָ מֶלֶךְ חַי וְקַיָּם
שֶׁהֶחֱזַרְתָּ בִּי נִשְׁמָתִי בְּחֶמְלָה
רַבָּה אֱמוּנָתֶךָ.

Wash hands and say the following blessings.
Some have the custom to say רַאשִׁית חָכְמָה *on page 11 at this point.*

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יהוה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל נְטִילַת יָדָיִם.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יהוה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
אֲשֶׁר יָצַר אֶת הָאָדָם בְּחָכְמָה
וּבָרָא בוֹ נְקָבִים נְקָבִים, חֲלוּלִים חֲלוּלִים.
גָּלוּי וְיָדוּעַ לִפְנֵי כִסֵּא כְבוֹדֶךָ
שֶׁאִם יִפָּתֵחַ אֶחָד מֵהֶם אוֹ יִסָּתֵם אֶחָד מֵהֶם
אִי אֶפְשָׁר לְהִתְקַיֵּם וְלַעֲמֹד לְפָנֶיךָ.
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יהוה, רוֹפֵא כָל בָּשָׂר וּמַפְלִיא לַעֲשׂוֹת.

מוֹדֶה אֲנִי *I thank You:* These words are to be said immediately on waking from sleep. In them we thank God for life itself, renewed each day. Sleep, said the sages, is "one-sixtieth of death" (*Berakhot* 57b). Waking, therefore, is a miniature rebirth. Despite its brevity, this sentence articulates a transformative act of faith: the recognition that life is a gift from God. Expressing gratitude at the fact of being alive, we prepare ourselves to celebrate and sanctify the new day.

אֱלֹהַי My God,
the soul You placed within me is pure.
You created it, You formed it, You breathed it into me,
and You guard it while it is within me.
One day You will take it from me,
and restore it to me in the time to come.
As long as the soul is within me,
I will thank You,
LORD my God and God of my ancestors,
Master of all works, LORD of all souls.
Blessed are You, LORD,
who restores souls to lifeless bodies.

TZITZIT

The following blessing is said before putting on tzitzit. Neither it nor the subsequent prayer is said by those who wear a tallit. The blessing over the latter exempts the former. See laws 324–330.

בָּרוּךְ Blessed are You, LORD our God, King of the Universe,
who has made us holy through His commandments,
and has commanded us about the command of tasseled garments.

After putting on tzitzit, say:

יְהִי רָצוֹן May it be Your will, LORD my God and God of my ancestors,
that the commandment of the tasseled garment be considered before You
as if I had fulfilled it in all its specifics,
details and intentions,
as well as the 613 commandments
dependent on it, Amen, Selah.

---

them. The blessing ends with a reference to the resurrection of the dead, returning to the theme of the first words said in the morning.

אֱלֹהַי
נְשָׁמָה שֶׁנָּתַתָּ בִּי טְהוֹרָה הִיא.
אַתָּה בְרָאתָהּ, אַתָּה יְצַרְתָּהּ, אַתָּה נְפַחְתָּהּ בִּי
וְאַתָּה מְשַׁמְּרָהּ בְּקִרְבִּי, וְאַתָּה עָתִיד לִטְלָהּ מִמֶּנִּי
וּלְהַחֲזִירָהּ בִּי לֶעָתִיד לָבוֹא.
כָּל זְמַן שֶׁהַנְּשָׁמָה בְּקִרְבִּי, מוֹדֶה/*women* מוֹדָה/ אֲנִי לְפָנֶיךָ
יהוה אֱלֹהַי וֵאלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתַי
רִבּוֹן כָּל הַמַּעֲשִׂים, אֲדוֹן כָּל הַנְּשָׁמוֹת.
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יהוה, הַמַּחֲזִיר נְשָׁמוֹת לִפְגָרִים מֵתִים.

לבישת ציצית

The following blessing is said before putting on a טלית קטן. *Neither it nor* יְהִי רָצוֹן *is said by those who wear a* טלית. *The blessing over the latter exempts the former. See laws 324–330.*

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יהוה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל מִצְוַת צִיצִית.

After putting on the טלית קטן, *say:*

יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, יהוה אֱלֹהַי וֵאלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתַי
שֶׁתְּהֵא חֲשׁוּבָה מִצְוַת צִיצִית לְפָנֶיךָ
כְּאִלּוּ קִיַּמְתִּיהָ בְּכָל פְּרָטֶיהָ וְדִקְדּוּקֶיהָ וְכַוָּנוֹתֶיהָ
וְתַרי״ג מִצְוֹת הַתְּלוּיוֹת בָּהּ, אָמֵן סֶלָה.

אֱלֹהַי *My God, the soul You placed within me is pure:* An affirmation of Jewish belief in the freedom and responsibility of each human being. The soul as such is pure. We have good instincts and bad, and we must choose between

BLESSINGS OVER THE TORAH

In Judaism, study is greater even than prayer. So, before beginning to pray, we engage in a miniature act of study, preceded by the appropriate blessings. The blessings are followed by brief selections from Scripture, Mishna and Gemara, the three foundational texts of Judaism.

בָּרוּךְ Blessed are You, LORD our God, King of the Universe,
who has made us holy through His commandments,
and has commanded us to engage in study
of the words of Torah.
Please, LORD our God, make the words of Your Torah
sweet in our mouths and in the mouths of Your people,
the house of Israel,
so that we, our descendants (and their descendants)
and the descendants of Your people,
the house of Israel,
may all know Your name
and study Your Torah for its own sake.
Blessed are You, LORD,
who teaches Torah to His people Israel.

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

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chosenness means responsibility, and is inseparably linked to the study and practice of Torah.

So as to follow the blessings immediately with an act that fulfills the commandment, we read three texts whose recitation forms an act of study. The Talmud (*Kiddushin* 30a) rules that Torah study must be divided into three: study of (1) Torah, (2) Mishna, and (3) Gemara. Hence we read: (1) a biblical text – the priestly blessings, (2) a passage from the Mishna about commandments that have no fixed measure, and (3) a passage from the Gemara about the reward of good deeds in this world and the next.

ברכות התורה

In Judaism, study is greater even than prayer. So, before beginning to pray, we engage in a miniature act of study, preceded by the appropriate blessings. The blessings are followed by brief selections from תנ״ך, משנה *and* גמרא, *the three foundational texts of Judaism.*

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יהוה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו
וְצִוָּנוּ לַעֲסֹק בְּדִבְרֵי תוֹרָה.
וְהַעֲרֶב נָא יהוה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֶת דִּבְרֵי תוֹרָתְךָ
בְּפִינוּ וּבְפִי עַמְּךָ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל
וְנִהְיֶה אֲנַחְנוּ וְצֶאֱצָאֵינוּ (וְצֶאֱצָאֵי צֶאֱצָאֵינוּ)
וְצֶאֱצָאֵי עַמְּךָ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל
כֻּלָּנוּ יוֹדְעֵי שְׁמֶךָ וְלוֹמְדֵי תוֹרָתְךָ לִשְׁמָהּ.
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יהוה, הַמְלַמֵּד תּוֹרָה לְעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל.

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

BLESSINGS OVER THE TORAH

The history of Judaism is a story of the love of a people for the Book of Books, the Torah. As a preliminary to study, we pronounce two blessings and a prayer. The first, "who has made us holy through His commandments," is a blessing over the commandment to engage in study of the Torah, a declaration that we do not simply study as an intellectual or cultural exercise but as the fulfillment of a divine commandment. This is followed by a prayer that God make Torah study sweet, and help us to hand it on to our children. The final blessing, "who has chosen us," is a blessing of acknowledgment that

יְבָרֶכְךָ May the LORD bless you and protect you. *Num. 6*
May the LORD make His face shine on you
and be gracious to you.
May the LORD turn His face toward you
and grant you peace.

אֵלּוּ These are the things *Mishna Pe'ah 1:1*
for which there is no fixed measure:
the corner of the field, first-fruits,
appearances before the LORD
[on festivals, with offerings],
acts of kindness and the study of Torah.

אֵלּוּ These are the things *Shabbat 127a*
whose fruits we eat in this world
but whose full reward awaits us
in the World to Come:
honoring parents; acts of kindness;
arriving early at the house of study
morning and evening;
hospitality to strangers; visiting the sick;
helping the needy bride; attending to the dead;
devotion in prayer;
and bringing peace between people –
but the study of Torah is equal to them all.

Some say:

רֵאשִׁית חָכְמָה Wisdom begins in awe of the LORD; *Ps. 111*
all who fulfill [His commandments] gain good understanding;
His praise is ever-lasting.
The Torah Moses commanded us *Deut. 33*
is the heritage of the congregation of Jacob.
Listen, my son, to your father's instruction, *Prov. 1*
and do not forsake your mother's teaching.
May the Torah be my faith and Almighty God my help.
Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom for ever and all time.

במדבר ו

יְבָרֶכְךָ יהוה וְיִשְׁמְרֶךָ׃
יָאֵר יהוה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וִיחֻנֶּךָּ׃
יִשָּׂא יהוה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וְיָשֵׂם לְךָ שָׁלוֹם׃

משנה, פאה א: א

אֵלּוּ דְבָרִים שֶׁאֵין לָהֶם שִׁעוּר
הַפֵּאָה וְהַבִּכּוּרִים וְהָרֳאָיוֹן
וּגְמִילוּת חֲסָדִים וְתַלְמוּד תּוֹרָה.

שבת קכו.

אֵלּוּ דְבָרִים שֶׁאָדָם אוֹכֵל פֵּרוֹתֵיהֶם בָּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה
וְהַקֶּרֶן קַיֶּמֶת לוֹ לָעוֹלָם הַבָּא
וְאֵלּוּ הֵן
כִּבּוּד אָב וָאֵם, וּגְמִילוּת חֲסָדִים
וְהַשְׁכָּמַת בֵּית הַמִּדְרָשׁ שַׁחֲרִית וְעַרְבִית
וְהַכְנָסַת אוֹרְחִים, וּבִקּוּר חוֹלִים
וְהַכְנָסַת כַּלָּה, וּלְוָיַת הַמֵּת
וְעִיּוּן תְּפִלָּה
וַהֲבָאַת שָׁלוֹם בֵּין אָדָם לַחֲבֵרוֹ
וְתַלְמוּד תּוֹרָה כְּנֶגֶד כֻּלָּם.

Some say:

תהלים קיא

רֵאשִׁית חָכְמָה יִרְאַת יהוה
שֵׂכֶל טוֹב לְכָל־עֹשֵׂיהֶם
תְּהִלָּתוֹ עֹמֶדֶת לָעַד׃

דברים לג

תּוֹרָה צִוָּה־לָנוּ מֹשֶׁה, מוֹרָשָׁה קְהִלַּת יַעֲקֹב׃

משלי א

שְׁמַע בְּנִי מוּסַר אָבִיךָ וְאַל־תִּטֹּשׁ תּוֹרַת אִמֶּךָ׃
תּוֹרָה תְּהֵא אֱמוּנָתִי, וְאֵל שַׁדַּי בְּעֶזְרָתִי.
בָּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

TALLIT

Say the following meditation before putting on the tallit. Meditations before the fulfillment of mitzvot are to ensure that we do so with the requisite intention (kavana). This particularly applies to mitzvot whose purpose is to induce in us certain states of mind, as is the case with tallit and tefillin, both of which are external symbols of inward commitment to the life of observance of the mitzvot.

בָּרְכִי נַפְשִׁי Bless the LORD, my soul. LORD, my God, You are very great, clothed in majesty and splendor, wrapped in a robe of light, spreading out the heavens like a tent. *Ps. 104*

Some say:

For the sake of the unification of the Holy One, blessed be He, and His Divine Presence, in reverence and love, to unify the name *Yod-Heh* with *Vav-Heh* in perfect unity in the name of all Israel.

I am about to wrap myself in this tasseled garment (tallit). So may my soul, my 248 limbs and 365 sinews be wrapped in the light of the tassel (*hatzitzit*) which amounts to 613 [commandments]. And just as I cover myself with a tasseled garment in this world, so may I be worthy of rabbinical dress and a fine garment in the World to Come in the Garden of Eden. Through the commandment of tassels may my life's-breath, spirit, soul and prayer be delivered from external impediments, and may the tallit spread its wings over them like an eagle stirring up its nest, hovering over its young. May the *Deut. 32* commandment of the tasseled garment be considered before the Holy One, blessed be He, as if I had fulfilled it in all its specifics, details and intentions, as well as the 613 commandments dependent on it, Amen, Selah.

Before wrapping oneself in the tallit, say:

בָּרוּךְ Blessed are You, LORD our God, King of the Universe, who has made us holy through His commandments, and has commanded us to wrap ourselves in the tasseled garment.

According to the Shela (R. Isaiah Horowitz), one should say these verses after wrapping oneself in the tallit:

מַה־יָּקָר How precious is Your loving-kindness, O God, and the children of men find refuge under the shadow of Your wings. They are filled with the rich plenty of Your House. You give them drink from Your river of delights. For with You is the fountain of life; in Your light, we see light. Continue Your loving-kindness to those who know You, and Your righteousness to the upright in heart. *Ps. 36*

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an undergarment *beneath* our outer clothes. Though they fulfill a single commandment, they were deemed so different as to warrant two different blessings.

עטיפת טלית

Say the following meditation before putting on the טלית. *Meditations before the fulfillment of* מצוות *are to ensure that we do so with the requisite intention* (כוונה). *This particularly applies to* מצוות *whose purpose is to induce in us certain states of mind, as is the case with* טלית *and* תפילין, *both of which are external symbols of inward commitment to the life of observance of the* מצוות.

תהלים קד

בָּרְכִי נַפְשִׁי אֶת־יהוה, יהוה אֱלֹהַי גָּדַלְתָּ מְאֹד, הוֹד וְהָדָר לָבָשְׁתָּ: עֹטֶה־אוֹר כַּשַּׂלְמָה, נוֹטֶה שָׁמַיִם כַּיְרִיעָה:

Some say:

לְשֵׁם יִחוּד קֻדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא וּשְׁכִינְתֵּהּ בִּדְחִילוּ וּרְחִימוּ, לְיַחֵד שֵׁם י״ה בְּו״ה בְּיִחוּדָא שְׁלִים בְּשֵׁם כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל.

הֲרֵינִי מִתְעַטֵּף בַּצִּיצִית. כֵּן תִּתְעַטְּפֵנִי נִשְׁמָתִי וּרְמַ״ח אֲבָרַי וּשְׁסָ״ה גִּידַי בְּאוֹר הַצִּיצִית הָעוֹלֶה תַּרְיַ״ג. וּכְשֵׁם שֶׁאֲנִי מִתְכַּסֶּה בְּטַלִּית בָּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה, כָּךְ אֶזְכֶּה לַחֲלוּקָא דְּרַבָּנָן וּלְטַלִּית נָאָה לָעוֹלָם הַבָּא בְּגַן עֵדֶן. וְעַל יְדֵי מִצְוַת צִיצִית תִּנָּצֵל נַפְשִׁי רוּחִי וְנִשְׁמָתִי וּתְפִלָּתִי מִן הַחִיצוֹנִים. וְהַטַּלִּית תִּפְרֹשׂ כְּנָפֶיהָ עֲלֵיהֶם וְתַצִּילֵם, כְּנֶשֶׁר יָעִיר קִנּוֹ, עַל גּוֹזָלָיו יְרַחֵף: וּתְהֵא חֲשׁוּבָה מִצְוַת צִיצִית לְפָנַי הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא, כְּאִלּוּ קִיַּמְתִּיהָ בְּכָל פְּרָטֶיהָ וְדִקְדּוּקֶיהָ וְכַוָּנוֹתֶיהָ וְתַרְיַ״ג מִצְוֹת הַתְּלוּיוֹת בָּהּ, אָמֵן סֶלָה. דברים לב

Before wrapping oneself in the טלית, *say:*

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יהוה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְהִתְעַטֵּף בַּצִּיצִית.

According to the Shela (R. Isaiah Horowitz), one should say these verses after wrapping oneself in the טלית:

תהלים לו

מַה־יָּקָר חַסְדְּךָ אֱלֹהִים, וּבְנֵי אָדָם בְּצֵל כְּנָפֶיךָ יֶחֱסָיוּן: יִרְוְיֻן מִדֶּשֶׁן בֵּיתֶךָ, וְנַחַל עֲדָנֶיךָ תַשְׁקֵם: כִּי־עִמְּךָ מְקוֹר חַיִּים, בְּאוֹרְךָ נִרְאֶה־אוֹר: מְשֹׁךְ חַסְדְּךָ לְיֹדְעֶיךָ, וְצִדְקָתְךָ לְיִשְׁרֵי־לֵב:

TALLIT AND TEFILLIN

The mitzva of tzitzit, placing tassels on the corner of our garments, is to recall us constantly to our vocation: "Thus you will be reminded to keep all My commandments, and be holy to your God" (Num. 15:40). Over the course of time, the fulfillment of this commandment took two different forms: the tallit, worn as a robe during prayer, *over* our clothes, and the tallit katan, worn as