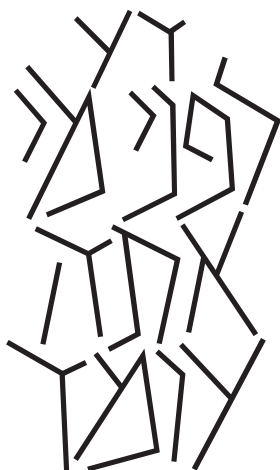


סידור קורן
עם פירושי הרב אברהם יצחק הכהן קוק
נוסח אשכנז

The Koren Rav Kook Siddur
Nusah Ashkenaz



סידור קורן
עם פירושי הרב אברהם יצחק הכהן קוק
THE KOREN RAV KOOK SIDDUR



WITH COMMENTARY BASED UPON THE TEACHINGS OF

Rabbi Avraham Yitzhak haKohen Kook

TRANSLATED AND ADAPTED BY

Rabbi Bezalel Naor

TRANSLATION OF THE TEFILLOT BY

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks



KOREN PUBLISHERS JERUSALEM

The Koren Rav Kook Siddur
First Hebrew/English Edition, 2017

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

Koren Tanakh Font © 1962, 2017 Koren Publishers Jerusalem Ltd.
Koren Siddur Font and text design © 1981, 2017 Koren Publishers Jerusalem Ltd.
English translation © 2006, 2011 Jonathan Sacks
Translation & Adaptation of the Teachings of Rabbi Kook © 2017 Bezalel Naor

The English translation in this edition is based on the English translation first published in Great Britain in 2006 in the Authorised Daily Prayer Book of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth: New Translation and Commentary by Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, (Fourth Edition, Compilation © United Synagogue) by Collins, a division of HarperCollins Publishers, London.

The image on the front cover is an artistic creation by Eliyahu Misgav adapted from the seal of Rav Kook.

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Standard Size, Hardcover, ISBN 978 965 301 754 2

KOAO1

This Siddur is dedicated
to the memory of our beloved Brother and Uncle

Aaron Stefansky

By
David and Estee Stefansky & Children

איש חמודות
רב פעלים לתורה וללומדיה
בר אוריין ובר אבהן

הר"ר אהרן ז"ל
בן הרב אליעזר שליט"א
סטפנסקי

אהה על שבר, נהי נשמע ברמה
בעל ואב פאר חבר, שוכן באדמה.
התורה חדותו, שירת הנשמה
הקדיש מבשרונו ושקידתו,
ליל ויממה.
רבנן נשא, קרבתם המה,
צילם חסה, בלב ונשמה.
נפלא בנדבת צדקתו, לסעד והקמה
בהונו ואונו ועזרתו,
ועצתו המחוכמה.
עסקיו באמונה וחרץ, אמרתו מקויימה
חסדו ואמתו במרץ,
נחמד למטה ואהוב ברמה.
הזדכך ביסורי מחלתו, גזירתו קיבל בדממה
על בניו וביתו מליצתו, במורשתו יראו בנחמה.

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EDITOR'S GRATITUDE

The Editor wishes to acknowledge his gratitude to David Stefansky for initiating the project of publishing Rav Kook's commentary in English translation and for making the dream a reality; to Matthew Miller of Koren Publishers for undertaking the execution of this noble enterprise; to Lord Rabbi Jonathan Sacks for allowing the use of his fine English translation of the Prayer Book in this edition; to Rabbis Shimon Cohn and Henoah Cohn for acting as facilitators in this process; to Rabbi Moshe Yehiel Halevi Zuriel for being a constant source of inspiration and fount of wisdom in the propagation of Rav Kook's teachings; and to Avrohom Manes, Michael Nagel and Nachman Schneider for acting as "sounding boards" for much of the Torah included in this volume. May Hashem bless them all from the treasury of blessings.

I have based my commentary on the commentary "*Olat Re'iyah*" with additions from other writings of Rav Kook, as well as some original insights of my own (signed "Editor" to distinguish between my comments and those of Rav Kook). This is the method that I employed previously in *The Rav Kook Hagadah* to great acclaim.

A word about the translations. For the most part, these are not literal word-for-word translations of Rav Kook's comments, but rather paraphrases designed to convey the gist of his meaning. On those occasions where I have translated the Rav's teaching verbatim, the text is set in from the margin to indicate that it is an exact quote.

According to the Talmud (*Eyn Ya'akov*, *Hagigah* 12b; quoted in *Tosafot*, *Menaḥot* 110a, s.v. *Michael*), in Heaven there is an altar, and Archangel Michael stands and sacrifices (*makriv*) upon it every day the souls of the righteous. Like Michael, Rav Kook serves to this day as a guardian angel of Israel. And every day – through his spiritual legacy – he brings close (*mekarev*) the souls of the righteous. And in his penetrating "look" (Yiddish, *Kook*), all Israel are "righteous" ("*tsaddikim*") – even the "sinners of Israel" ("*posh'ei Yisrael*").

ועמד בלם צדיקים!

BN

3 Ellul, 5777, *Yahrzeit* of Rav Kook

ABBREVIATIONS

- AT* – ‘*Arpilei Tohar*
b. – *Bavli*
EA – ‘*Eyn Ayah*
IR – *Igrot Rayah*
KMYK – *Kevatsim mi-Khetav*
 Yad Kodsho
m. – *Mishnah*
MRIT – *Me’orot ha-Rayah:*
 ‘*Inyenei Tefillah*
MT – *Mishneh Torah*
OḤ – *Orah Ḥayyim*
OK – *Orot ha-Kodesh*
OR – ‘*Olat Re’iyah*
RAYH – *Rabbi Avraham Yitshak Hakohen [Kook]*
RZYH – *Rabbi Zevi Yehudah Hakohen [Kook]*
SK – *Shemonah Kevatsim*
t. – *Tosefta*
y. – *Yerushalmi*

KEY TO PRONUNCIATION IN COMMENTARY

‘*a* = א

‘*a* = א

h = ה

ḥ = ח

ts = צ

THE WELLSPRING AND THE HEART

There is a mountain, and on the mountain there stands a stone, and from the stone issues a spring.

Everything has a heart. And the world too in its entirety has a heart...

This mountain – with the stone and the spring – stands at one end of the world, and this heart of the world stands at the other end of the world.

This heart stands opposite the spring and forever longs to come to that spring. It cries out to come to that spring.

And this spring too longs for the heart...

And this spring has no time, for the spring is not within time. (Which is to say, the spring has no time in the world, for it is much higher than the time of the world.)

But the time of the spring is only the one day that the heart bestows upon it.¹

And when it is the end of the day... close to the end of the day, then the heart and the spring bid farewell to one another (*gezegeben*), and begin to sing wondrous songs (*lieder*) to one another with great love and great longing.

(Rabbi Naḥman of Breslov, “The Seven Beggars,” Day Three)

No discussion of prayer from the Jewish perspective would be complete without mention of the famous Maimonides-Naḥmanides controversy.

1. Reflecting upon Rabbi Naḥman’s story, the thought occurred to the writer (BN) that the Hebrew word for time, “*zeman*” is *notarikon* for *zeh ma”n*. In Lurianic Kabbalah, *ma”n* is shorthand for *mayin nukvin* (“feminine waters”). This coda encapsulates Rabbi Naḥman’s philosophy of Time.

For a contemporary interpretation of the trope of the heart and the spring, see Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz, *Beggars and Prayers* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), pp. 179–181. And more recently, Ora Wiskind-Elper, *Tradition and Fantasy in the Tales of Reb Naḥman of Bratslav* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), pp. 209–215.

For Maimonides, prayer, “*avodah she-ba-lev*” (“service of the heart”) is a Biblical command. It is not bound by time. Nahmanides took the opposite tack. The obligation of prayer is of rabbinic origin. From its inception, prayer is time-bound, limited by the three prescribed times of “evening, morning, and afternoon.”² Women (normally exempt from time-bound commandments) were obligated by the rabbis in prayer only because of its exceptional character as *rahamei*, supplication.³

Perhaps at the root of the controversy between the two great men of Israel, lie differing perceptions of the essential character of prayer. For Maimonides, prayer is a universal phenomenon. It is not bounded by time; neither is its formula prescribed. It transcends both time and language. Not subject to the exigencies of time, its content remains fluid, undetermined.

In Nahmanides’ reckoning, prayer is a function of time. It comes into being in a specific time, and each time impresses upon prayer its specific stamp; its particular needs; its unique supplication.

Enter Rav Kook. Rav Kook introduces to the conversation a novel insight, a fresh look at prayer. Prayer is an incessant internal monologue. “In truth, the soul constantly prays.”⁴ In the inner recesses of the soul, there is an uninterrupted flow. What we observe in the formal prayer uttered at the prescribed time is but the eruption of a hidden babbling brook, the surfacing of a subterranean current.⁵

2. Psalms 55:18; *b. Berakhot* 20b.

3. See *b. Berakhot* 20b; Maimonides, *Sefer ha-Mitsvot*, positive commandment 5 and Nahmanides’ animadversion there; and positive commandment 10; Maimonides, *MT, Hil. Tefillah* 1:1; Rabbi Aryeh Leib Ginzburg, *Sha’agat Aryeh*, chap. 14; Rabbi Israel Meir Kagan, *Mishnah Berurah* to *Shulhan ‘Arukh*, *OH* 106:1.

When hard-pressed, Nahmanides might be willing to concede that prayer at a time of communal crisis (“*et tsarah*,” “*tsarat ha-tsibbur*”) is Biblically mandated (*loc. cit.*).

4. *OR*, vol. 1, “*Inyenei Tefillah*” 1:2 (p. 11).

5. In this regard, see *Talmidei Rabbenu Yonah, Berakhot*, 11b (pagination of Rav Alfas), s.v. *Tefillah*: “Even though prayer has a set time, since they said, ‘If only man would pray the entire day!’ [*Berakhot* 21a], we judge it as a commandment that is not time-bound, and therefore women are obligated; or also, because prayer is supplication.” (Cf. *Tosafot, Berakhot* 26a, end s.v. *Iba’ya lehu.*) See “*Inyenei Tefillah*” 1:2 (in previous note).

The foundation of prayer consists of settling within the soul of man the most exalted wants that flow within the interior of his soul from the supernal flow (*shetef*). This flow does not stop for a moment its work.⁶

From the midst of that spring (*ma'yan*) full of natural holiness that is in our hearts, we draw, actualizing its delicate feelings... This is the law of prayer.⁷

Prayer flows from the supernal divine spring (*ma'yan*), in which all that is lofty and sacred is included, and from which they flow.⁸

Rather than being mutually exclusive, Maimonides' and Naḥmanides' perspectives actually complement one another. They describe two dimensions of a single phenomenon. Maimonides addressed the interior process of prayer; Naḥmanides addressed the exterior process of prayer. They call to one another as Rabbi Naḥman's spring and heart yearn for one another.

The wholly transcendent consciousness of the spring longs for immanence in the "heartiness" of the heart; in its trials and tribulations; in its seemingly trivial, mundane, earth-bound and time-bound concerns. The mountain longs for the valley.

By the same token, the heart, time-conditioned as it is, longs for transcendence. It screams for the spring, for the unitive consciousness that is an ongoing, even flow, beyond the vicissitudes of this lowly world. How the heart of the world longs to break out of this world! How it would love to escape the oppressive heat and be cooled by the waters of the wellspring!

And it is this perpetual leave-taking; this ongoing romance; this night-ly serenade; these melancholy *Nacht-Lieder* of the Heart and the Spring that constitute the World of Prayer.

BN

6. *MRIT*, p. 345.

7. *SK* 7:144.

8. *'Inyenei Tefillah* 1:5 in *OR*, vol. 1, p. 12.

INTRODUCTION TO *THE RAV KOOK SIDDUR*

By Bezalel Naor

Rav Kook is one of the most important Jewish thinkers of the modern era. If we analyze Rav Kook's thoughts on prayer, we find three major components. I shall list them in order of their historical development.

1. The Spanish Jewish philosopher Rabbi Joseph Albo in his work *Sefer ha-'Ikkarim* raised the following philosophical problem. How is prayer possible? Does not prayer by definition attempt to change God's will? And can "*shinuy ha-ratson*" (change of divine will) be philosophically justified?¹ Albo's solution to the problem is that prayer has the ability to reverse a divine decree by changing the person's circumstance. The decree was directed at a certain type of person; through prayer that person is transformed into a different type altogether, thus rendering the previous decree inapplicable.² Rav Kook's response to this challenge is that prayer sets out not to change God but man. In the crucible of prayer, man's will is purified and refined, and ultimately realigned with that of his Maker.³
2. East European Hasidism (not to be confused with the medieval

1. Rabbi Joseph Albo, *Sefer ha-'Ikkarim* IV, 18; SK 1:304; 2:324; 7:98; OR, vol. 2, p. 39; Rabbi Moshe Zevi Neriyah, *Orot ha-Tefillah* (Ma'aleh Adumim: Ma'aliyot, 2004), bottom p. 129.

2. See Neriyah, p. 149, quoting Rabbi Ya'akov Moshe Harel, *Mei Marom – Passover Haggadah*, pp. 89–90. See now *Mei Marom*, vol. 10 [Leviticus] (Jerusalem, 1997), *Aharei-Kedoshim, ma'amar* 26 (p. 76).

3. SK 7:124, 125; KMYK, vol. 1, ed. Boaz Ofen (Jerusalem, 2006), *Pinkas 81 Piska'ot* (Yaffo), par. 52 (p. 181) = OR, vol. 1, *'inyenei Tefillah* 4:14 (p. 31); EA, vol. 1, pp. 147–148, par. 71 (*Berakhot* 32a). Cf. Rabbi Judah Löw (Maharal of Prague), *Derekh Hayyim* (London: L. Honig and Sons, 1960), *Avot* 2:4; and MRIT, p. 544, adjacent to n. 431.

On the connection of will to prayer, see SK 2:350; OK, vol. 3, pp. 45–60; MRIT, pp. 544–546; KMYK, vol. 2, ed. Boaz Ofen (Jerusalem, 2008), *Pinkas ha-Dapim* 1, par. 9 (pp. 54–55), based on *Zohar* II, 133a.

Rhenish pietism of the *Ḥasidei Ashkenaz*), as expounded by Rabbi Dov Baer, the Maggid of Mezritch (eminent disciple of Rabbi Israel Ba'al Shem), taught a quietist form of spirituality.⁴ Summed up in a nutshell, the Maggid would have us accept that in reality, all is perfect. This outlook poses a challenge to traditional Jewish Prayer, for if the universe is already the picture of perfection, what room does that leave for *bakashah* or petitionary prayer?⁵

3. Psychoanalysis, the brainchild of the Viennese Jew Sigmund Freud, uncovered the lost continent of the “unconscious.” (There are authors who attribute a theory of the unconscious to Rabbi Israel Salanter, founder of the Mussar movement, though it turns out that Rabbi Israel Salanter was actually influenced by Kant.)⁶ Rav Kook’s theory of the unconscious, if you would have it, is that the soul is constantly praying.⁷ This ongoing internal conversation seeks some external expression,

4. See Rivkah Schatz-Uffenheimer, *Quietistic Elements in Eighteenth Century Hasidic Thought* (Jerusalem, 1968), chap. 6; Rabbi Dov Baer of Mezhirech, *Maggid Devarav le-Ya’akov*, ed. Rivkah Schatz-Uffenheimer (Jerusalem, 1976).

Here is an example of this dilemma from Rav Kook’s journal:

For the great *tsaddikim*, prayer is exceedingly difficult, as they have no selfish will at all, and their great awareness – bound to their lucid belief in the divine love – sweetens everything for them. So how can they pray to be saved from some trouble, when in reality they haven’t any trouble? (*SK* 3:67)

5. See my essay “Two Types of Prayer: Halakhic and Hasidic,” *Tradition* 25(3), Spring 1991, pp. 26–34; reprinted in Bezalel Naor, *From A Kabbalist’s Diary: Collected Essays* (Spring Valley: Orot, 2005), pp. 59–73.
6. See Yitzhak Ahren, quoted in Hillel Goldberg, *Israel Salanter: Text, Structure, Idea* (New York: Ktav, 1982), pp. 170–176.
7. Most instructive in this respect is the passage that occurs as a “comment” published at the end of *Resh Millin* (London, 1917), p. 137, par. 2:

The activity of the life of the soul is unceasing, just as the general activity of material life never ceases all the days of life. From time to time there is a revelation of intellectual life, when the thinker originates a novel, brilliant thought. We perceive that there is a time lapse between one original thought and the next, but it comes not from the foundational, essential power of life, rather from its mental manifestations. In reality, the essence of life, which is the activity of the soul at its depth, never ceases at all. The thoughts are forever originating and streaming through us. All the toil of our study merely predisposes us – by the revelation that breaks through from the outside to

and it is this outpouring of the soul, this “catharsis,” which is embodied in formal prayer.⁸ (It is possible that in this respect Rav Kook was influenced by Rabbi Naḥman of Breslov’s notion of “*siḥah beino le-vein kono*,” intimate conversation between man and his Creator.)

These are three of the streams running through Rav Kook’s thoughts on prayer: the philosophical, the mystical, and the psychological.

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The *Siddur ‘Olat Re’iyah* first appeared in print in 1939. The editor was Rav Kook’s only son, Rabbi Zevi Yehudah Hakohen Kook, who cobbled together the work from three primary sources:

1. An explicit commentary to the Prayer Book;
2. Marginalia to the *Siddur Shelah* (authored by Rabbi Isaiah Halevi Horowitz) from which Rav Kook prayed;
3. Selections from *‘Eyn Ayah*, Rav Kook’s commentary to the *Agadot* of the Talmud (since published in its entirety by Rabbi Ya’akov Filber).

In at least one instance, Rabbi Zevi Yehudah saw fit to include an entire chapter from *Orot* (*editio princeps* Jerusalem, 1920) in the commentary to the Prayer Book.⁹

The title, which one assumes was chosen by the Editor, is a double entendre. In compliance with the Biblical command, “Three times a year all your males shall be seen by the face of the master, the Lord,”¹⁰ Jews would bring to the Temple in Jerusalem a sacrifice known as the *‘olat re’iyah*.¹¹ *Re’iyah* is also the initials of Rav Kook’s name: Rav Avraham Yitshak Hakohen.

*

the depth of life – to increasingly recognize the stream of thoughts, which is a river that never stops, whose waves churn within us constantly without cease.

8. “Catharsis” is an important concept in modern psychology, specifically in regard to crying. See below Rav Kook’s remarks on Psalm 6:7–10, recited in *Taḥanun*. And see now *MRIT*, p. 14.
9. Cf. *OR*, vol. 1, pp. 241–242, s.v. *Ahavah Rabbah* to *Orot*, *Orot ha-Teḥiyah*, chap. 21.
10. Exodus 23:17; 34:23.
11. See *m. Ḥagigah* 1:1; *b. Ḥagigah* 6a; *MT, Hil. Ḥagigah* 1:1.

According to Rabbi Zevi Yehudah, Rav Kook commenced composition of his work on prayer during his sojourn in London in World War I.¹² The work continued to Rav Kook's last days in Jerusalem, by which time he had reached as far as the verse "Thank the God of gods, His lovingkindness is forever," the beginning of *Hallel ha-Gadol* in *Pesukei de-Zimrah* for Sabbath morning.

Because of the sheer abundance of material, Rabbi Zevi Yehudah decided to divide the prayer book in two volumes: Volume I restricted to the weekday prayer, and Volume II to consist of the prayers for Sabbath and Festivals.¹³

In Volume I, we are informed that the actual commentary '*Olat Re'iyah*' extends up to (but does not include) *Yehi Khevod* in *Pesukei de-Zimrah*. The additional material that we find in the volume was supplemented from other writings of the Rav. That goes for the prefatory chapters of '*Inyenei Tefillah*' (Matters of Prayer) as well.

Rav Kook (as earlier Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi)¹⁴ used the

12. *OR*, vol. 1, Introduction, p. 7. See too RZYH, *Li-Sheloshah be-Ellul*, vol. 1 (Jerusalem, 1938), par. 66 (p. 29).

In at least one instance, I found that RZYH included in *OR* a piece from an earlier commentary to the Prayer Book penned by his father, the Rav, in his youth. Entitled "*Tselota de-Avraham*," the commentary covers the beginning of the *Siddur: Modeh Ani, Mah Tovu, Adon 'Olam* and *Yigdal*. It first saw the light of print in *Me'orot ha-Rayah: 'Inyenei Tefillah*, pp. 398-411. The commentary on p. 405 has been reworked in *OR*, vol. 2, p. 39, s.v. *ve-ahare ki-khelot ha-kol*.

The editors of the compilation *MRIT* are reticent who titled that earlier commentary "*Tselota de-Avraham*." Was it the youthful author Rav Kook himself? (By the way, this work is not to be confused with the famous *Siddur Tselota de-Avraham* based on the teachings of Rabbi Abraham Landau of Ciechanow [1789-1875].) Rabbi Reuben Margalio appended to his edition of *Zohar Hadash* (Mossad Harav Kook, Jerusalem) marginalia taken from the *Zohar Hadash* of Rav Kook's ancestor Rabbi Abraham of Preil and Sebez. The collection of marginalia is entitled "*Zehiruta de-Avraham*." I speculate that it was Rav Kook who provided the title "*Zehiruta de-Avraham*."

13. Volume One for weekdays was published in 5699/1939. Volume Two for Sabbaths and Festivals was published a decade later in 5709/1949. At the end of Volume 2, RZYH Kook wrote an afterword which sums up the Godly events of the recent War of Independence.

14. Hayyim Meir Heilman, *Beit Rabbi I* (Berdichev, 1902), 1b.

Siddur Shelah by the kabbalist Rabbi Isaiah Halevi Horowitz, author *Shnei Luhot ha-Berit*. Rav Kook studied much in that prayer book and penned comments in the margins of his personal copy. An example of these marginalia, mystical in nature, would be that transcribed by Rabbi Zevi Yehudah in the commentary to *Tahanun*:

We repeat six times “YHWH Elohei Yisrael” because *Tiferet* is the six cardinal points (*vav ketsavot*).¹⁵

15. *OR*, vol. 1, p. 304. To the best of my knowledge, generally Rav Kook did not pray with the Lurianic *kavvanot*. A seeming exception to the rule occurred on a trip to Tsefat. In order to compensate for his inability to physically visit the grave of Rabbi Isaac Luria (Ari) buried there – as a *Kohen*, Rav Kook was forbidden by *Halakhah* to enter the cemetery – Rav Kook did the next best thing: He prayed *Minhah* (the afternoon service) in the local synagogue of Ari according to the lengthy order of the Ari. See RZYH, *Li-Sheloshah be-Ellul*, vol. 1, par. 76 (p. 33), based on the testimony of Rabbi Meir David Schottland, the Karliner Ḥasid who served as Rav Kook’s *shamosh* (sexton).

A WORD OF INTRODUCTION

A student asked his *Rosh Yeshivah*, whether he should study Rav Kook's *Perush* (commentary) to the *Siddur*.

In his inimitable style, the *Rosh Yeshiva* replied: "Ach, it's not a *Perush* (commentary) to the *Siddur*."

Intrigued, the student asked: "If not a *Perush* (commentary) to the *Siddur*, then what is it?"

"A *neshamah* (soul) on paper."

1. Told to the Editor by Rabbi Elisha Paul, student of Rabbi Shmuel Ya'akov Weinberg, late *Rosh Yeshiva* of Ner Israel, Baltimore.

THE PARADOX OF PRAYER

When one reaches the realization that in the divine scheme all is perfect, all is present, all is complete, then the very concept of prayer, which is a declaration that something is missing, something is wanting, something is lacking – appears ludicrous. How can we ask for something when we already have everything? But on the other hand, a universe bereft of the dimension of prayer would be lacking a most important ingredient of existence. So existence must encompass prayer.¹

1. Based on *OR*, vol. 1, p. 150, s.v. *ha-Melekh*.

TWO TYPES OF PRAYER: MYSTICAL AND RATIONAL

In the following *pensée*, Rav Kook contrasts the kabbalist's and rationalist's approaches to prayer. The kabbalist believes that owing to the spiritual interconnectivity of all existence, man's every word reverberates throughout the universe. A typical kabbalistic *kavvanah* (intention) will include the phrase "*al-yedei zeh yushpa' shefa' rav be-khol ha-'olamot*" ("through this there will be great influence in all the worlds"). The rationalist, on the other hand, knows of no such invisible threads linking the microcosm to the macrocosm. He would probably view such an outlook as "magical thinking." But the rationalist does acknowledge the effect the moral improvement of even one individual can have upon society as a whole. Inasmuch as prayer can contribute to the ethical refinement of a human being, indirectly it has the ability to impact upon the totality of existence.¹

There are two schools of thought regarding the value of prayer: the mystical school and the rationalist school.

The first explains the connection of the universe to man and all his movements, and demonstrates that the expression of man's soulful will, when cleaving to God, truly acts and creates in that spiritual

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1. A splendid example of the rationalist philosophy bent on the improvement of society, is Maimonides' interpretation of the first *mishnah* in Tractate *Pe'ah*. Maimonides explains that by performing commandments between man and God (such as *tsitsit*, *tefillin*, *Shabbat*), one will reap one's due reward in the World to Come. However, by performing commandments between man and man (whose essence is "*gemilut Ḥasadim*," acts of lovingkindness), one will start to reap the "fruits" or dividends already in this world. "If man performs the commandments that improve relations between men, he will have reward in the World to Come for having performed the commandment, and will derive benefit in this world for having behaved well with people, for if he goes in this way and his fellow goes in this way, he will derive benefit therefrom" (Maimonides, *Perush ha-Mishnah*, ed. Kafah [Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1963], *Seder Zera'im*, p. 55).

state momentous events in general existence. So automatically, as far as concerns man and his requests, there is a positive effect.

The rationalist school does not recognize these wondrous mysteries. Rather it subsumes prayer within the system of ethics, psychology and poetry. Through prayer, man will be uplifted; his soul will be purified; his character traits will be improved. Ethics certainly plays a part in man's destiny. Through moral betterment, man's lot will be better. All existence aspires to progress, to good. Wickedness is spewed out from existence. The soulful improvement brought about by the poetry of prayer is the end.

According to this school, prayer should not be attached specifically to a desired effect; it comes about through the collective. This school recognizes that if a man does not pray, there will accumulate in his midst many tough traits, lacking perfection and delicacy, and as a result his moral composure will suffer greatly. And the contrary, through prayer, man will be uplifted; spiritually he will be enlightened, so *ipso facto* his wants will be fulfilled.

In general, the idealism of prayer, the expression of the soul, is dearer than the specific end of that which is requested in prayer. It is understood that for this school the ideal state must be more refined in order for prayer to be recognized as an obligation of great value. Truly, the second school is full of an inner idealism – weaving² from all of existence in its midst – but it manages to attract hearts to its constancy.³

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2. Assuming the vocalization is *mozeret*. There is another possibility that the word is vocalized *muzeret* (detached), derived from the root “*huzar*,” “separated” (as in *Nazir*). In that case, it may also mean “strange” or “estranged.”
 3. SK 1:282. Cf. KMYK, vol. 2 (Jerusalem, 2008), *Pinkas ha-Dapim* 4, par. 75 (p. 133). There, Rav Kook writes that eventually one graduates from the rationalist understanding of prayer, which yet differentiates between the inner and outer worlds, to the higher outlook whereby there is no longer “any difference between these worlds, the outer and the inner, and we find that whatever has been effected for good, has taken effect throughout all of existence.”

ענייני תפילה

MATTERS OF PRAYER

(From RZYH Kook's Introduction to Siddur 'Olat Re'iyah)

התפילה המתמדת של הנשמה – The Constant Prayer of the Soul

1. The constant prayer of the soul forever strives to come out from concealment to full revelation, to extend over all the life-powers of spirit and soul, and all the life-powers of the entire body. Likewise, the prayer longs to reveal its essence and influence upon the entire environment, the entire world. Toward this end, we need to do some spiritual stock-taking (*Heshbono shel 'olam*), by way of Torah and wisdom. The outcome will be that the entire service of Torah and her wisdom is the constant revelation of the hidden prayer of the soul. "The soul of all that lives shall bless Your name, LORD our God."¹
2. Proper prayer results only from the thought that in truth the soul is constantly praying. She longs for and flies to her Beloved without cease; only that during the actual hour of prayer the constant soul-prayer is revealed in deed. This is the delicacy and loveliness of the prayer: She is likened to a rose who opens her beautiful petals to receive the dew or the sun's light rays. Therefore, "Oh, that man would pray the entire day!"²
3. Prayer seeks from the soul its function. When days and years go by without meaningful prayer, there gather in the heart many blockages, whereby one feels an inner heaviness. When the good spirit returns and the gift of prayer is granted from on high, with every prayer blocks are removed, and the dams which obstructed the flowing stream of the living soul, disappear. And with the ascent of the soul in each prayer

1. *Nishmat* prayer for Sabbath and Festival.

2. Saying of Rabbi Yoḥanan in *b. Berakhot* 21a.

(for as long as it lasts), a certain percentage of lost time is made up for. Certainly not at once can the missing be filled; it is a gradual process. And the window of the prayer increasingly reveals its lights.³

4. Prayer brings to light, to life, that which is concealed in the depths of the soul. In direct relation to the degree of inner purity of man, is the impact of prayer as it emerges from the depths of his inner will, as he turns to the Source of all souls and all worlds. Great and wondrous is the effect of man's expression upon life. A great light flows with the word.⁴ The word is taken from hidden storehouses of rich life. As great as its inner penetration, so shall be great the luminosity the word reveals and engenders. Clarity of expression clarifies the details of the light, while solidifying existence with a clearly defined will. It is not possible that prayer makes no impression. Whether it brings about the effect according to its specific target, or by a circuitous route – these are wonders of the Perfect Intelligence. Be that as it may, an entire world is revealed in prayer, whether it be the organized prayer that is common to all, or the private prayer flowing from the depths of the heart of every individual and every community, based on its condition and needs. Together with all the preparations for a world order, upper and lower; with all of mankind's advancement – practical, societal, intellectual, artificial – by which the quality of life is improved, by which the world becomes outwardly (and to a degree even inwardly) ordered – there must come at the top of the list *prayer*; prayer which is the inner order, the head of all desires. Prayer will invigorate all the branches of life, all of civilization's improvements. Man will know how to balance out prayer and action; will know how to achieve their integration. "For My house shall be called a House of Prayer for all the peoples."⁵
5. Prayer deepens in us the lofty, holy feeling that is the essence of the light of the Life of the Worlds absorbed in our souls, and prayer inseminates us with holy lights that produce fruits of salvation. Not only

3. KMYK, vol. 1, *Pinkas "Reshimot mi-London,"* par. 28 (p. 200).

4. Rabbi Israel Ba'al Shem Tov punned on the verse in Genesis 6:16, "Make a light for the ark": "Make luminous the word!" The Hebrew for *ark*, "*teivah*," may also signify *word*.

5. Isaiah 56:7; SK 6:192.

for us as private individuals; whatever prayer accomplishes, works upon us in relation to all existence and all life, in all their values, past, future and present. How wonderful are the manifestations, how lofty the sparks that are enhanced by every prayer, though it be temporary, solitary and isolated; all the more so, if it be permanent, collective and societal. Prayer flows from the supernal divine spring, in which all that is lofty and sacred is included, and from which they flow. And to that spring, prayer returns with strength and might imbued with holiness, and adds blessing to the Spring of Life, encompassing the Tree of Life and adorning its branches. The underground currents that feed the spring combine together, and many different saps bond together, forming a source of blessing for rivers of eternal love and abundant love, and blessing and peace for all existence. And when the prayer of Israel rises to the holy height, when it is focused in the Land of eternal delight, on the Temple Mount – all the worlds are flooded with light; myriads of souls are renewed by the supernal splendor; and lofty ideals rise in holy pride; and the supernal glory is forever blessed. “Blessed is the LORD’s glory from His place.”⁶

6. Prayer is for us, and for the entire world, an absolute necessity – and at the same time the most proper of pleasures. The waves of our soul continuously flow. We desire of ourselves and of the world a perfection such that our limited existence cannot provide; as a result, we find ourselves in great trouble, whose misfortune can bring us to utter distraction. But before a long time elapses, before this mass can form in our midst, we come in prayer. We pour out our conversation and rise to a world of perfect existence. Then our inner world truly becomes perfect, our mind is at peace, and that measure of influence that our inner resolve exerts upon existence – of which our interior is one of its components – tilts the entire world to merit on the scales of justice.
7. Prayer is the ideal of all worlds. All existence pines for its source of life. Every plant, every bush; every grain of sand, every clump of earth; all in which life is revealed and all in which life is concealed; all the micro

6. Ezekiel 3:12; SK 8:29.

and all the macro of creation; heavens above and holy seraphs; all the specificity of being, and all its generality; all longs, aspires, pines, thirsts for the pleasant perfection of its highest source – the living, holy, pure and mighty. Man absorbs all of these longings at every hour; he is elevated and ascends by his holy desires. There comes the time that these godly desires be revealed in a prayer that makes waves of light; that goes out in unfettered might, in holy conversation to the divine expanses. With prayer, man uplifts all creation, uniting with him all being; uplifting all to the Source of blessing and the Source of life.⁷

7. *OR*, vol. 1, pp. 11–13

MEDITATION BEFORE (AND AFTER) PRAYER

One who prays, needs to pause¹ one hour before the prayer and one hour after the prayer.

Before the prayer, for it says, “Happy are those who dwell in Your House.”²

After the prayer, for it says, “However the righteous shall give thanks to Your name, the just shall dwell in Your presence.”³

Our Rabbis taught: The early pious men (*Ḥasidim*) would pause for one hour, and pray for one hour, and once again pause for one hour.

Now since they devoted nine hours a day to prayer, how could their Torah be preserved, and when was their labor done?⁴

But since they were pious men (*Ḥasidim*), their Torah was preserved and their labor was blessed.⁵

In the *Talmud Yerushalmi*, we find a significant variant. In reply to the questions – “When did they engage in Torah? When did they engage in their labor?” – Rabbi Yitshak be-Rabbi El’azar replied: “Since they were pious men (*Ḥasidim*), blessing was bestowed upon their Torah and blessing was bestowed upon their labor.”⁶

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1. *Bavli* has “pause” (*sh-h-h*). *Yerushalmi* has “sit” (*y-sh-v*), and so Maimonides, *Hil. Tefillah* 4:16. However, one might counter that “*yashav*” in this context does not mean “sit” but “pause.” See Rashi, Leviticus 12:4: “*Yeshivah* is an expression for remaining (*akavah*).” If that is so, then *shehiyah* of *Bavli* and *yeshivah* of *Yerushalmi* are truly synonymous. The prooftexts from Psalms suggest literal sitting. In practice, some famous Ḥasidic rabbis would deliberately take a seat for a moment before exiting the sanctuary after prayer.
 2. Psalms 84:5.
 3. Psalms 140:14.
 4. “Nine hours⁷ – for three prayers” (Rashi).
 5. *b. Berakhot* 32b.
 6. *y. Berakhot* 5:1.

Rav Kook felt that the wording of the *Talmud Yerushalmi* (“blessing was bestowed upon their Torah”) as opposed to the wording of the Babylonian Talmud (“their Torah was preserved”) lent support to his pet theory that there is an essential difference between the two Talmudim. Rav Kook believed that “because of the influence of the light of prophecy that always appears to some degree in the Land of Israel,” the scholars of Israel had an advantage over the scholars of Babylonia. The divine spirit that rested upon those who engaged in Torah in the Land of Israel, aided them in clarifying their doubts and broadening their intellect. This is reflected in the wording of the *Yerushalmi*: “Blessing was bestowed upon their Torah.” In Babylonia, *their* Torah was merely “preserved.”⁷

7. Letter of Rav Kook to Rabbi Aharon Yitshak Zaslansky, datelined “Jerusalem, 14 Shevat 5687 [1927],” responding to Rabbi Zaslansky’s “*kuntres*” (booklet) of comments to *Igrot ha-Rayah*. The letter was published in *Eretz Tzvi: Tzvi Menachem Glatt Memorial Volume* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem, 1989), pp. 185–186. Rabbi Zaslansky made the observation concerning the variant in the *Yerushalmi*, and Rav Kook wholeheartedly embraced that finding. Rabbi Zaslansky was commenting on the third letter in the 1922 edition of *Igrot ha-Rayah*. In the later 1962 edition of *Igrot ha-Rayah*, it would be Letter 103 to Rabbi Yitshak Isaac Halevi (Rabinowitz), author *Dorot ha-Rishonim* (*IR*, vol. 1, pp. 122–128). For a lengthy discussion of Rav Kook’s theory of the *Sitz im Leben* of *Yerushalmi* versus *Bavli*, see Bezalel Naor, *The Limit of Intellectual Freedom: The Letters of Rav Kook* (Spring Valley, NY: Orot, 2011).

PUBLISHER'S PREFACE

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

It is with gratitude and pride that we offer the Rav Kook Edition of the Koren Siddur.

This exceptional volume combines the profound thought and analysis of HaRav Avraham Yitzhak Kook – the great Torah scholar, halakhist, philosopher, and one of the most influential and renowned Jewish leaders of the twentieth century – and the eloquent translation of the *tefillot* by Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, one of the most articulate and original Jewish thinkers of our time.

The creation of this volume owes so much to Rabbi Bezalel Naor, whose incredible scholarship and interpretations of the writings of Rav Kook are evident on the pages of this book. We are grateful for his tireless efforts and admirable dedication to this work.

This unique project would never have come to fruition without the invaluable support of David Stefansky, whose unending enthusiasm for both the importance of Rav Kook's teachings and Rabbi Naor's elucidation have made this essential publication possible. Generations of readers will be forever in your debt.

Since its publication in 1981, The Koren Siddur has been recognized for its textual accuracy and innovative graphic design. 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 worshippers a means to draw and connect them not only to the words of the prayers, but also to the contents and meaning."

This special 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.

We thank the small but professional team at Koren for upholding our commitment to enhance the meaning of prayer, in particular typesetter Esther Be'er.

It has been both an honor and a real pleasure for us to collaborate in the publication of this important work. We can only hope that we have extended the teachings of Rav Kook to a new generation and a larger audience, furthering *Avodat HaShem* for Jews everywhere.

Matthew Miller, Publisher
Jerusalem, 5778 (2018)

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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.

מוֹדֵה 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 12 at this point.

בְּרוּךְ 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.

awakens to a glorious universe: a vast, infinite reality. And the wonder is that confronted with the infinite universe, the individual self remains undaunted. And to the contrary, in this limitless vista, the "I" finds divine confirmation and validation.²

חַי וְקַיִם *Living and existing.* In our experience, "life" and "existence" are anti-theoretical. "Life" conjures up images of growth, change, flux. That which "exists," on the other hand, is permanent and unchanging. In the divinity, this apparent contradiction is resolved. In God, there is what mystics refer to as a "*coincidentia oppositorum*," a coincidence of opposites.³

עַל נְטִילַת יָדַיִם / ABOUT WASHING HANDS

The ritual washing of the hands prior to prayer, symbolizes the purity of deeds

2. OR, vol. 1, p. 1.

3. OR, vol. 1, p. 2, s.v. *ve-kayyam*. Cf. below Rav Kook's commentary to *Barukh she-Amar* (OR, vol. 1, pp. 195–196, s.v. *Barukh hai la-'ad ve-kayyam la-netsah*).

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.

מוֹדָה / women מוֹדָה / אֲנִי לְפָנֶיךָ מֵלֶךְ חַי וְקַיִם
שֶׁהַחַזְרָת בִּי נִשְׁמַתִּי בְּחַמְלָה
רַבָּה אֲמוֹנָתְךָ.

Wash hands and say the following blessings.

Some have the custom to say ראשית הקמה on page 13 at this point.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֵלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
אֲשֶׁר קָדְשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל נְטִילַת יָדַיִם.

השכמת הבוקר / ON WAKING

Modeh Ani is an expression of gratitude to the Almighty for returning my soul to me after its nocturnal journey. We do not wait until we have washed our hands to recite *Modeh Ani*. Gratitude must be expressed immediately. It must not be delayed. There is a lesson to be derived concerning interpersonal relationships. When another human bestows kindness upon us, our expression of gratitude should be forthcoming immediately.¹

אני מודה *I thank*. The word “*modeh*” has double meaning. Besides conveying thanksgiving, it has another sense of admission or confession. In this particular instance, affirmation of the greater reality is the cause of thanksgiving. Released from the shackles of ordinary, materialist perception, one

1. Rabbi Raphael Kook quoting his uncle Rav Kook; in Simḥah Raz, *Mal'akhim ki-B'nei Adam* (Jerusalem, 2002), p. 290.

בְּרוּךְ 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.

In our present state, after the food we eat has been digested, some of it is absorbed and assimilated in our system, while the remainder is eliminated. But it was not always so in the past, and looking into the distance, it will not be this way in the future. Before the Primordial Sin, all of the food ingested remained in the system. It was man's partaking of the Tree of Knowledge ('*Ets ha-Da'at*) that brought about the present state by which some of the nourishment is turned into foul-smelling waste matter. The Sages alluded to this transition when they found support for the *halakhah* (regarding the recitation of *Shema'* and prayer) that one must keep a distance of four cubits from the waste matter of an adult (as opposed to an infant) from the following verse: "He that increases knowledge (*da'at*), increases sorrow."⁸ On the other hand, the manna in the Desert, which recaptured the paradisaical existence before the Tree of Knowledge, "was absorbed in the two hundred and forty-eight limbs."⁹ And in the future, man will once again return to this ideal state. This will be the *tikkun* of the future.¹⁰

8. Ecclesiastes 1:18; *b. Sukkah* 42b. Rashi explains that the word "*makh'ov*" (sorrow) was understood in this context to mean "*masri'ah*" (smell).

9. *b. Yoma* 75b. See Rabbi Zadok Hakohen Rabinowitz of Lublin, *Kedushat Shabbat, ma'amar* 7, in *Peri Zaddik*, vol. 1 (Lublin, 1901), 23b. See also Rashi, Numbers 21:5 and 'Avodah Zarah 5b, s.v. *ba-lehem ha-kelokel*.

10. Rabbi Shelomo Elyashev, *Leshem Shevo ve-Aḥlamah: Sefer ha-De'ah (Derushei 'Olam ha-Tohu)* (Piotrków, 1912), Part Two, 3:18 (34b).

OR, vol. 2, pp. 204–207.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
 אֲשֶׁר יָצַר אֶת הָאָדָם בְּחָכְמָה
 וּבָרָא בּוֹ נְקֻבִים נְקֻבִים, חֲלוּלִים חֲלוּלִים.
 גְּלוּי וַיְדוּעַ לְפָנַי כִּסָּא כְבוֹדְךָ
 שָׂאִם יִפְתַּח אֶחָד מֵהֶם
 אוּ יִסְתֵּם אֶחָד מֵהֶם
 אִי אֶפְשֶׁר לְהִתְקַיֵּם וְלַעֲמֹד לְפָנֶיךָ.
 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה
 רוֹפֵא כָּל בָּשָׂר וּמַפְּלִיא לַעֲשׂוֹת.

which is a prerequisite to the act of prayer. Prayer must not be coupled with unethical deeds. The hands must be free of iniquity.⁴

Perhaps an anecdote concerning Rabbi El'azar is apropos to our discussion. The Talmud relates that it was the custom of Rabbi El'azar to first give a coin to a poor person and (only) afterward pray. He cited the verse: "Through righteousness (*tsedek*) I shall see Your face."⁵ The portal to beholding the divine countenance is acting charitably towards one's fellow man.

אֲשֶׁר יָצַר / WHO FORMED MAN IN WISDOM

Man's form, his face, is a manifestation of the divine wisdom. "A man's wisdom lights up his face."⁶ Now that divine wisdom ordained that the exalted human form should have bodily needs which it shares with animals. This connection between the spiritual and the material tells us that certainly divine wisdom has some wonderful purpose in impressing a dark material, subject to lowly conditions, with a splendid stamp.⁷

4. OR, vol. 1, p. 57.

5. Psalms 17:15; b. *Bava Batra* 10a; Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, *Tanya* 1V, 8 (112b).

6. Ecclesiastes 8:1.

7. OR, vol. 1, p. 57. (Cf. Rabbi Moses Isserles' gloss to *Shulhan 'Arukh*, OH 6:1.)

אֱלֹהֵי 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.

בְּרוּךְ 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 command-
 ments dependent on it, Amen, Selah.

There is no darkness, no shadow of death in that illumination. No obstacle resulting from some corruption or some sin, has the ability to stop up the original light, which penetrates to the interior of every soul.

From that might, comes the first, pure utterance of the morning, spoken with the originality of truth: *My God!*¹²

נְשָׁמָה שֶׁנָּתַתָּ בִּי טְהוֹרָה הִיא *The soul that You placed within me is pure.* There is an
 ongoing tension between the infinite light (*'Or Ein Sof*) which is the source of
 the soul, and the egoistic, individualistic identity that it must assume for the
 duration of its bodily sojourn. Despite what one might think to the contrary,
 the purity of the soul is undiminished, because the soul is forever aspiring
 to ascend to its lofty source.¹³

וְאַתָּה מְשַׁמְרָה בְּקִרְבִּי *And You guard it while it is within me.* The preservation of

12. OR, vol. 1, p. 66.

13. OR, vol. 1, p. 67.

אֱלֹהֵי

נִשְׁמָה שְׁנַתַּת בִּי טְהוֹרָה הִיא.

אֶתְּךָ בְּרֵאתָה, אֶתְּךָ יִצְרָתָה, אֶתְּךָ נִפְחָתָה בִּי
וְאֶתְּךָ מִשְׁמְרָה בְּקִרְבִּי, וְאֶתְּךָ עֲתִיד לְטֹלָה מִמֶּנִּי
וְלִהְיוֹתִי בִּי לְעֵתִיד לְבֹא.

כָּל זְמַן שֶׁהַנְּשָׁמָה בְּקִרְבִּי, מוֹדָה / *women* מוֹדָה / אֲנִי לְפָנֶיךָ
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתַי
רְבוֹן כָּל הַמַּעֲשִׂים, אֲדוֹן כָּל הַנְּשָׁמוֹת.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, הַמַּחְזִיר נְשָׁמוֹת לְפִגְרִים מֵתִים.

לבישת ציצית

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

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְרָצוּנוּ עַל מִצְוֹת צִיצִית.

After putting on the טלית קטן, say:

יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתַי, שֶׁתִּהְיֶה חֲשׂוּבָה מִצְוַת
צִיצִית לְפָנֶיךָ, כְּאֵלוֹ קִמְתִּיהָ בְּכָל פְּרֻטְיָה וְדִקְדוּקָיָה וְכוּנּוֹתֶיהָ, וְתִרְיֹג
מִצְוֹת הַתְּלוּיוֹת בָּהּ, אֲמֵן סְלָה.

אֱלֹהֵי / MY GOD

This holy *cri de coeur* whereby each individual confidently addresses the LORD as his personal God, is the expression of the soul at its source. The soul recognizes itself and its strength. It knows that its existence and its vitality are [of] the Living God. It knows that at the hidden height, there is no division of light, and if an innumerable multitude of souls, and creatures and worlds without number, are all drenched with the light (*or*) of the true God, then the divine vitality (*hiyyut*) with unending love penetrates all of them equally – as if there is but one single soul found in all of existence!¹¹

11. Cf. Judah Halevi, *Kuzari* 1V, 1; Maimonides, *Guide of the Perplexed* 1, 72.

BLESSINGS OVER THE TORAH

Before beginning to pray, we engage in a miniature act of study. 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.

בְּרוּךְ 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.

יְהִי עֵרֶב נָא 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.

בְּרוּךְ 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.

יְבָרְכֶךָ 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.

בְּרֻכּוֹת הַתּוֹרָה / BLESSINGS OVER THE TORAH

The blessing recited before studying Torah concludes with the words “Who gives the Torah,” in the present tense, though the Torah was given on Mount Sinai three thousand years ago. In reality, God is constantly giving the Torah anew. In every age, the Torah flows constantly within the interior of the soul.¹

1. OR, vol. 1, p. 61.

ברכות התורה

Before beginning to pray, we engage in a miniature act of study. 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 התנ"ך and גמרא, the three foundational texts of Judaism.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְעַסֵּק בְּדַבְרֵי תוֹרָה.

וְהֵעֲרַב נָא יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֶת דְּבַרֵי תוֹרַתְךָ
בְּפִינוּ וּבְכַף עֵמֶךָ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל
וְנִהְיֶה אֲנַחְנוּ וְצִאֲצֵאֵינוּ (וְצִאֲצֵאֵי צִאֲצֵאֵינוּ)
וְצִאֲצֵאֵי עֵמֶךָ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל
כְּלָנוּ יוֹדְעֵי שְׁמֶךָ וְלוֹמְדֵי תוֹרַתְךָ לְשִׁמְחָה.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, הַמְלַמֵּד תוֹרָה לְעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל.

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

יְבָרְכֶךָ יְהוָה וַיִּשְׂמְרֶכָּ:

יָאֵר יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיַּחַנְכֶּךָ:

יֵשָׂא יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיִּשֶׂם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם:

במדבר ו

the soul in the body occurs in two senses: 1) There is the very wonder that there can be this bonding of the spiritual and material realms.¹⁴ 2) The purity of the soul is preserved intact, no matter how low the person may stoop; no matter to what dark depths one may descend.¹⁵

14. Cf. Rabbi Moses Isserles' gloss to *Shulhan 'Arukh*, OH 6:1.

15. OR, vol. 1, pp. 67–68.

אלו These are the things
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.

*Mishna
Pe'ah 1:1*

אלו These are the things
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.

*Shabbat
127a*

Some say:

ראשית חכמה Wisdom begins in awe of the LORD;
all who fulfill [His commandments] gain good understanding;
His praise is ever-lasting.
The Torah Moses commanded us
is the heritage of the congregation of Jacob.
Listen, my son, to your father's instruction,
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.

Ps. 111

Deut. 33

Prov. 1

אֱלוֹ דְבָרִים שְׁאִין לָהֶם שְׁעוֹר

הַפֶּאֶה וְהַבְּכוֹרִים וְהָרְאִיוֹן

וּגְמִילוֹת חֲסָדִים

וְתַלְמוּד תּוֹרָה.

משנה פאה
א.א

אֱלוֹ דְבָרִים שְׁאָדָם אוֹכַל פְּרוֹתֵיהֶם בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה

וְהַקְּרוֹן קִיַּמַת לוֹ לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא

וְאֵלוֹ הֵן

כְּבוֹד אָב וָאִם

וּגְמִילוֹת חֲסָדִים

וְהַשְּׂפָמַת בֵּית הַמְדַרְשׁ שְׁחֵרִית וְעֵרְבִית

וְהַכְּנֶסֶת אוֹרְחִים

וּבְקוֹר חוֹלִים

וְהַכְּנֶסֶת פְּלֵא

וּלְוִיַת הַיָּם

וְעֵיוֹן תְּפִלָּה

וְהַבָּאֵת שְׁלוֹם בֵּין אָדָם לְחֵבְרוֹ

וְתַלְמוּד תּוֹרָה פְּנֵגֵד כָּלָם.

שבת קכו.

Some say:

רֵאשִׁית חֲכֻמָּה יִרְאֵת יְהוָה

שְׁכַל טוֹב לְכָל-עֲשִׂיהֶם, תִּהְיֶה עֲמֻדַת לְעַד:

תּוֹרָה צְוֵה-לָנוּ מוֹשֶׁה, מוֹרֶשֶׁה קֹהֵלֶת יַעֲקֹב:

שָׁמַע בְּנֵי מוֹסֵר אֲבִיךָ וְאֵל-תַּטֵּשׁ תּוֹרַת אֲמִיךָ:

תּוֹרָה תִּהְיֶה אֲמוּנָתִי, וְאֵל שְׂדֵי בְּעוֹרָתִי.

בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

תהלים קיא

דברים לג

משלי א