

## עמידה: ברכות השבח Amidah: Challenge of Praising God

### 1. Amidah, Siddur

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב הַקֵּל הַגָּדוֹל הַגִּבּוֹר  
וְהַנּוֹרָא קַל עֲלִיוֹן גּוֹמֵל חֲסָדִים טוֹבִים וְקוֹנֵה הַכֹּל וְזוֹכֵר חֲסָדֵי אֲבוֹת וּמְבִיא גּוֹאֵל לְבְנֵי בְנֵיהֶם לְמַעַן  
שְׁמוּ בְּאַהֲבָה: מְלַךְ עוֹזֵר וּמוֹשִׁיעַ וּמְגַן: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מְגַן אַבְרָהָם:

Blessed are You, Hashem, our God, and God of our fathers, God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, most high Almighty, Who bestows beneficent kindness, Who possesses everything, Who remembers the piety of the Patriarchs, and Who brings a redeemer to their children's children, for the sake of His Name, with love.

King, Helper, and Deliverer and Shield. Blessed are You, Hashem, Shield of Abraham.

### 2. Babylonian Talmud, Megillah 25a

הוּא דְנִחִית קָמִיה דְרַבִּי חֲנִינָא, אָמַר: "הַקֵּל הַגָּדוֹל הַגִּבּוֹר וְהַנּוֹרָא הָאֲדִיר וְהַחֲזָק  
וְהָאֲמִיץ."  
אָמַר לֵיה: סִימְתִינְהוּ לְשִׁבְחִיה דְמָרָךְ? הַשְׁתָּא הֵי תַלְתָּא, אִי לָא דְכַתְּבִינְהוּ מִשָּׁה  
בְּאוּרֵייתָא, וְאַתּוּ כְּנֻסְתָּ הַגָּדוֹלָה וְתִקְנִינְהוּ — אָנִן לָא אֲמַרִּין לְהוּ. וְאַתְּ אֲמַרְתָּ כּוּלֵי הַאי!  
מִשָּׁל לְאָדָם שְׁהִיּוּ לוֹ אֶלְף אֶלְפִים דִּינְרֵי זָהָב, וְהִיּוּ מְקַלְסִין אוֹתוּ (בְּאֶלְף) דִּינְרֵי כֶסֶף.  
לָא גְנָאי הוּא לּוּ?!

A certain person went down (to lead the prayers) before Rabbi Chanina, he said: "The Lord, the great, the mighty and the awesome, the powerful, the strong and the valiant."

Rabbi Chanina said to him: Have you completed the praise of your Master? Now, these three (praises) if Moshe had not written them in the Torah, and the men of the Great Assembly had not established them, we could not say them. And you said all of these? It is like a man who has thousands upon thousands of coins of gold, and they praised him with one thousand coins of silver. Is this not disrespectful of him?

### 3. Deuteronomy 10:17-18

כִּי יִקְוֶה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם, הוּא אֱלֹהֵי הָאֱלֹהִים וְאֵדְנִי הָאֲדֹנָיִם הַקֵּל הַגָּדוֹל הַגִּבּוֹר וְהַנּוֹרָא אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִשָּׂא פָנָיִם וְלֹא  
יִקַּח שֹׁחַד: עֹשֶׂה מִשְׁפָּט יְתוּם וְאֶלְמָנָה וְאֵהֵב גֵּר לְמַת לּוֹ לֶחֶם וְשִׂמְלָה:

For your God Hashem is God supreme and Lord supreme, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who shows no favor and takes no bribe, but upholds the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and befriends the stranger, providing food and clothing.

#### 4. Babylonian Talmud, Yoma 69b

דאמר רבי יהושע בן לוי: למה נקרא שמו אנשי כנסת הגדולה — שהחזירו עטרה ליושנה. אתא משה, אמר: "הקל הגדול הגבור והנורא". אתא ירמיה ואמר: גוים מקרקרין בהיכלו, אינה נוראותיו? לא אמר "נורא". אתא דניאל אמר: גוים משתעבדים בכניו, אינה גבורותיו? לא אמר "גבור" אתו אינהו ואמרו: אדרבה, זו היא (גבורת) גבורתו: שפוכש את יצרו — שנותן ארץ אפים לרשעים. ואלו הן נוראותיו — שאלמלא מוראו של הקדוש ברוך הוא היאך אומה אחת יכולה להתקיים בין האומות. רבנן: היכי עבדי הכי ועקרי תקנתא דתקין משה? אמר רבי אלעזר: מתוך שידעו בהקדוש ברוך הוא שאמתו הוא, לפיכך לא פיגרו בו.

Rebbi Yehoshua ben Levi said, "Why were they called the members of the Great Assembly? It is because they returned the crown of the Holy One, Blessed be He, to its former glory. Moses came and said, "The great, mighty, and awesome God" ([Devarim 10:17](#)). Jeremiah came and said, "Non-Jews are dancing in the Temple, where is God's awe?" He did not say awesome ([Jeremiah 32:18](#)). Daniel came and said, "Non-Jews are persecuting His children, where is God's might?" He did not say mighty ([Daniel 9:4](#)).

They (the members of the Great Assembly) came and said, "You should view it from the opposite direction. This is the might-of-God's-might, for He conquers his desire by granting forgiveness to the evil ones. And this is the source of God's awe, were it not for the awesome nature of the Holy Blessed One how could the one tiny nation survive among all the nations?"

And the rabbis, i.e., Jeremiah and Daniel, how could they do this and uproot an ordinance instituted by Moses, the greatest teacher, who instituted the mention of these attributes in prayer? Rabbi Elazar said: They did so because they knew of the Holy One Blessed be He, that He is truthful. Consequently, they did not speak falsely about Him.

#### 5. Jeremiah 32:18

עשה חסד לאלפים ומשלים עון אבות אל־תיק בנייהם אחריהם הקל הגדול הגבור יקנק צבאות שמו:

You show kindness to the thousandth generation, but visit the guilt of the parents upon their children after them. O great and mighty God whose name is GOD of Hosts.

#### 6. Daniel 9:4

ואתפללה ליקנק אלקי ואתנבזה ואמרה אגא אדני הקל הגדול והנורא שמר הברית והחסד לאהביו ולשמרי מצותיו:

I prayed to the Hashem my God, making confession thus: "O Lord, great and awesome God, who stays faithful to His covenant with those who love Him and keep His commandments!"

R. Ezra Bick, **Geula and Tefilla:  
Dependency upon and Trust in  
God**

R. Ezra Bick, **Geula and Tefilla:  
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**7. Geula and Tefilla:  
Dependency upon and Trust  
in God**

**8. Geula and Tefilla:  
Dependency upon and Trust  
in God**

**9.**

**10.**

**11.**

# 12. Geula and Tefilla: Dependency upon and Trust in Go

## 7. R. Jeff Fox, Introduction to Shema and its Berachot (4)

<https://roshyeshivatmaharat.org/2020/11/introduction-to-shema-and-its-berachot-4-the-blessings-and-the-amida-1-%d7%a1%d7%9e%d7%99%d7%9b%d7%aa-%d7%92%d7%90%d7%95%d7%9c%d7%94-%d7%9c%d7%aa%d7%a4%d7%99%d7%9c%d7%94/>

I believe that we are living in a generation that wants the lover-beloved imagery but still needs the king-servant reminder...

Halakha rests on the foundation of a divine Commander and human beings who are commanded.

## 8. Yeshayahu Leibowitz, *Judaism, Human Values, and the Jewish State*, p.30

The only meaning of prayer as a religious institution is service of God by man who accepts the yoke of the kingdom of Heaven... The greatness and power of prayer, the legally mandated fixed and obligatory prayer, is in the rejection by man of all personal interests and motives... in favor of the awareness of standing before God, a posture which is identical to all people in all conditions and in all circumstances, and is not dependent on one's personal history or what has occurred to him; i.e. the extinction of a person's will in favor of the obligation to serve God.

## 9. R. Aryeh Ben David, *The Godfile*, p.77

As you learn to reject or minimize personal interests and motives in prayer, you will also learn to minimize personal interests and motives in your relationships. Social structures supersede personal needs. The demands of family, community, and nation assume pre-eminence in life. Personal needs are subjected to the greater good of the larger group.

This approach to God and human relationships focuses on your level of dependability and loyalty; your own moods, needs, and desires are not central.

## 10. Michtav Me-Eliyahu, Part III, p.81

אלקי אברהם אלקי יצחק ואלקי יעקב: נאמר "אלקי" בכל אחד, שכל אחד במדתו  
המיוחדת עבד את השם.

**God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob:** The word "*eloka?*" (God of) is repeated for each [of the forefathers] because each one of them worshiped God with their own unique characteristics.

## 11. Genesis Rabbah 68

רבי יהושע בן לוי אבות הראשונים התקינו שלש תפלות, אברהם, תהן תפלת שחרית, שנאמר (בראשית יט, כז): וישכם אברהם בבקר אל המקום אשר עמד שם וגו', ואין עמידה אלא תפלה, שנאמר (תהלים קו, ל): ויעמד פינחס ויפלל. יצחק תהן תפלת מנחה, שנאמר (בראשית כד, טג): ויצא יצחק לשוח בשדה, ואין שיחה אלא תפלה, שנאמר (תהלים קמב, ג): אשפך לפניו שיחי. יעקב תהן תפלת ערבית, שנאמר: ויפגע במקום, ואין פגיעה אלא תפלה, שנאמר (ירמיה ז, טז): ואל תשא בעדם וגו' ואל תפגע בי. וכן הוא אומר (ירמיה כז, יח): ואם נבאים הם ואם יש דבר ה' אתם יפגעו נא בה' צבאות.

אמר רבי שמואל בר נחמן כנגד שלש פעמים שהיום משתנה, בערבית צריך אדם לומר יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלקי שתוציאני מאפלה לאורה. בשחרית צריך לומר מודה אני לפניך ה' אלקי שהוצאתני מאפלה לאורה. במנחה צריך אדם לומר יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלקי ששכשם שזפיתני לראות חמה בזריחתה כך תזכני לראותה בשקיעתה.

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: The early patriarchs instituted three prayers: Abraham instituted the morning prayer, as it is stated: “Abraham arose early in the morning to go to the place where he stood...” (Genesis 19:27), and standing is nothing other than prayer, as it is stated: “Pinhas stood and prayed” (Psalms 106:30). Isaac instituted the afternoon prayer, as it is stated: “Isaac went out to converse [*lasuah*] in the field [toward evening]” (Genesis 24:63), and *siha* (conversation) is nothing other than prayer, as it is stated: “I will pour out my complaint [*sihi*] before Him” (Psalms 142:3). Jacob instituted the evening prayer, as it is stated: “He encountered [*vayifga*] the place” (Genesis 28:12) and *pegia* (encounter) is nothing other than prayer, as it is stated: “You, do not raise a cry [or a prayer] on their behalf, and do not plead with [*ijga*] Me” (Jeremiah 7:16). Likewise it says: “If they are prophets, and if the word of the Lord is with them, please, let them plead [*yifge'u*] with the Lord of hosts” (Jeremiah 27:18).

Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahman said: It is corresponding to the three times that the day changes. In the evening, a person must say: ‘May it be Your will, Lord my God, to take me out from darkness to light.’ In the morning, he must say: ‘I give thanks before You, Lord my God, that You have taken me from darkness to light.’ In the afternoon, a person must say: ‘May it be Your will, Lord my God, that just as you accorded me the privilege of seeing the sun in its rising, so You will accord me the privilege to see it in its setting.’

## 12. Genesis 19:27-28

וישכם אברהם בבקר אל המקום אשר עמד שם את פני יקוק: וישקוף על פני סדם ועמרה ועל כל פני ארץ הכפף וירא והנה עלה קיטר הארץ כקיטר הכבשן:

Next morning, Abraham hurried to the place where he had stood before GOD, and, looking down toward Sodom and Gomorrah and all the land of the Plain, he saw the smoke of the land rising like the smoke of a kiln.

## 13. Genesis 24:63-64

ויצא יצחק לשוח בשדה ערב וישא עיניו וירא והנה גמלים באים: ותשא רבקה את עיניה ותרא את יצחק ותפל מעל הגמל:

And Isaac went out walking (to converse) in the field toward evening and, looking up, he saw camels approaching. Raising her eyes, Rebekah saw Isaac. She alighted from the camel.

#### 14. Genesis 28:11-13

וַיֵּצֵא יַעֲקֹב מִבְּעַר שֶׁבַע וַיֵּלֶךְ חֲרָנָה: וַיִּפְגַּע בְּמָקוֹם וַיֵּלֶן שָׁם כִּי־בָא הַשָּׁמֶשׁ וַיִּקַּח מֵאֲבָנֵי הַמָּקוֹם וַיִּשָּׂם מִרְאֲשֹׁתָיו וַיִּשְׁכַּב בְּמָקוֹם הַהוּא: וַיְחַלֵּם וַהֲגֵה סֶלֶם מֵצֶבֶת אֶרֶצָה וְרֵאשׁוּ מִגַּיַע הַשָּׁמַיְמָה וַהֲגִיה מִלְּאֲכָי אֱלֹקִים עֲלֵים וַיְרִדִים בּוֹ:

Jacob left Beer-sheba, and set out for Haran. He came upon (encountered) a certain place and stopped there for the night, for the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of that place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place. He had a dream; a stairway was set on the ground and its top reached to the sky, and angels of God were going up and down on it.

#### 15. R. Dov Zinger, *Prepare My Prayer: Recipes to Awaken the Soul*

Abraham rises in the morning

At the day's dawn,

With its clearness,

And stands.

He stands up for himself, he has what to say.

He does not back down, does not give up, does not only prostrate before God and exalt.

He wants to be a partner.

The Hebrew word *pilel* is connected to the word *lehitpallel*, to pray, and also means to appeal in court.

So Abraham appeals – there is a trial taking place.

He has a case and a judgment.

He does not give in, he demands.

Trying to rescue,

He argues.

With courage,

Resolve,

He stands...

Isaac goes out to converse in the field.

In a prayer that holds within it the gentleness of the field, the connection to the natural flow, the continuing conversation of nature and the world.

As evening falls, as the sun sets

Nature is at its most beautiful

Painted in colors of yearning.

Isaac is in deep conversation, speaking heart to heart.

He pours out his speech before the Lord

Without effort, without force, without judgment.

This simple sharing becomes the raw material of the connection with God.

The commonplace and the mundane are transformed into the infinite.

And there is One who hears and answers. There is an echo.

A conversation.

In just a moment Isaac will meet Rebecca.

This conversation in the field is also the opening of the heart to relationship,

To the words and conversation that form it...

Jacob flees

Alone

At night

In a time of despair, of doubt,

He doesn't see how to go forward.

He collides with the place,

Stuck.

Being stuck, this impasse

Transforms into prayer.

Yaakov is stuck in place, and discovers that this is the place,

The place that is the Place of the World.

This wall he's hit becomes the Wailing Wall,

The collision becomes connection.

When we hit a wall and cannot move forward

We have no choice but to turn our eyes upward

And suddenly our field of vision expands

Everything becomes possible.

The limit

Becomes limitless.

The surrounding darkness transforms

Into countless stars shining in the sky.

#### 16. Babylonian Talmud, Brakhot 4b

דְּרַבִּי יוֹחָנָן סָבַר גְּאוּלָּה מְאוּרְתָא נְמִי הָוֵי, אֲלֵא גְּאוּלָּה מְעַלְיִיתָא לָא הָוֵי אֲלֵא עַד צַפְרָא. וְרַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן לֹוִי סָבַר כִּיּוֹן דְּלֵא הָוֵי אֲלֵא מְצַפְרָא — לָא הָוֵי גְּאוּלָּה מְעַלְיִיתָא.

**Rabbi Yohanan holds: Redemption occurred in the evening as well; however, the full-fledged redemption was only in the morning.** Since the redemption began in the evening, it is appropriate to juxtapose the blessing of redemption to the daily evening prayer. **Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi, on the other hand, holds: Since full-fledged redemption only occurred in the morning, and the redemption of the previous evening was not a full-fledged redemption, there is no need to juxtapose the blessing of redemption to the evening prayer.**