

## עמידה: בקשות

?Amidah: What Are We Asking of God

### 1. Amidah, Siddur

- **דעת:** אתה חונן לאדם דעת ומלמד לאנוש בינה: תגנו מאתך דעה בינה והשכל: ברוך אתה יקוק חונן הדעת:
- **תשובה:** השיבנו אבינו לתורתך וקרבינו מלכנו לעבודתך והחזירנו בתשובה שלמה לפניך: ברוך אתה יקוק הרוצה בתשובה:
- **סליחה:** סלח לנו אבינו כי חטאנו מחל לנו מלכנו פי פשענו פי מוחל וסולח אתה: ברוך אתה יקוק חנון המרבה לסלוח:
- **גאולה:** ראה בענינו וריבה ריבנו וגאלנו מהרה למען שמך פי גואל חזק אתה: ברוך אתה יקוק גואל ישראל:
- **רפואה:** רפאנו יקוק ונרפא הושיענו ונושעה פי תהלתנו אתה והעלה רפואה שלמה לכל מכותינו פי אל מלך רופא נאמן ורחמן אתה: ברוך אתה יקוק רופא חולי עמו ישראל:
- **ברכת השנים:** ברוך עלינו יקוק אלקינו את-השנה הזאת ואת-כל-מיני תבואתה לטובה, ומן [בימות החמה: [ברכה /] בימות הגשמים: [טל ומטר לברכה על פני האדמה ושבענו מטובה וברך שנתנו בשנים הטובות: ברוך אתה יקוק מברך השנים:
- **קבוץ גלויות:** תקע בשופר גדול לחרותנו ושא נס לקבוץ גליותינו וקבצנו יחד מארבע כנפות הארץ: ברוך אתה יקוק מקבץ נדחי עמו ישראל:
- **משפט:** השיבה שופטינו ככראשונה ויעצינו כבתחלה והסר ממנו יגון ואנחה ומלוך עלינו אתה יקוק לבדך בחד וברחמים וצדקתו במשפט: ברוך אתה יקוק מלך אהב צדקה ומשפט:
- **ברכת המינים:** ולמלשינים אל תהי תקנה וכל הרשעה כרגע תאבד וכל איביה מהרה יכרתו והיזדים מהרה תעקר ותשבר ותמגר ותכניע במהרה בניינו: ברוך אתה יקוק שובר אלים ומכניע זדים:
- **הצדיקים:** על-הצדיקים ועל-החסידים ועל-זקני עמך בית ישראל ועל פליטת סופריהם ועל גרי הצדק ועלינו נהמו רחמיה יקוק אלקינו ותן שכר טוב לכל הבוטחים בשמך באמת ושים חלקנו עמם לעולם ולא נבוש פי כה בטחנו: ברוך אתה יקוק משען ומבטח לצדיקים:
- **בנין ירושלים:** ולירושלים עירך ברחמים תשוב ותשכון בתוכה כאשר דברת ובנה אותה בקרוב בנינו בנין עולם וכסא דוד מהרה לתוכה תכין: ברוך אתה יקוק בונה ירושלים:
- **מלכות בית דוד:** את-צמח דוד עבדך מהרה תצמיח וקרנו תרום בישועתך פי לישועתך קנינו כל היום: ברוך אתה יקוק מצמיח קרן ישועה:
- **שומע תפילה:** שמע קולנו יקוק אלקינו חוס ורחם עלינו וקבל ברחמים וברצון את-תפלתנו פי אל שומע תפלות ותחנונים אתה ומלפניך מלכנו ריקם אל-תשיבנו פי אתה שומע תפלת עמך ישראל ברחמים: ברוך אתה יקוק שומע תפלה:
- **עבודה:** רצה יקוק אלהינו בעמך ישראל ובתפלתם והשב את העבודה לדביר ביתך ואשי ישראל ותפלתם באהבה תקבל ברצון ותהי לרצון תמיד עבודת ישראל עמך: ותתנינה עינינו בשו"ב לציון ברחמים: ברוך אתה יקוק המחזיר שכינתו לציון:

- **Knowledge:** You favor people with perception and teach humankind understanding. Grant us knowledge, understanding and intellect from You. Blessed are You, Hashem, Grantor of perception.

- **Repentance:** Cause us to return, our Father, to Your Torah and bring us near, our King, to Your service; and bring us back in whole-hearted repentance before You. Blessed are You, Hashem, Who desires penitence.
- **Forgiveness:** Pardon us, our Father, for we have sinned, forgive us, our King, for we have transgressed; for You forgive and pardon. Blessed are You, Hashem, Gracious One, Who pardons abundantly.
- **Redemption:** Look upon our affliction, and defend our cause: and redeem us speedily for the sake of Your Name; because You are a Mighty Redeemer. Blessed are You, Hashem, Redeemer of Israel.
- **Healing:** Heal us, Hashem, and we will be healed, deliver us and we will be delivered; for You are our praise. Grant a complete healing to all our affliction because You are the Almighty, King, Who is a faithful and merciful Healer. Blessed are You, Hashem, Healer of the sick of His people Israel.
- **Prosperity:** Bless for us, Hashem our God, this year and all the varieties of its produce for good; and bestow [summer:] blessing/[winter:] dew and rain for a blessing upon the face of the earth; satisfy us from Your bounty and bless our year, like the good years. Blessed are You, Hashem, Blesser of the years.
- **Gathering the Exiles:** Sound the great *shofar* for our liberty, and raise a banner to gather our exiles, and gather us together from the four corners of the earth. Blessed are You, Hashem, Gatherer of the dispersed of His people Israel.
- **Justice:** Restore our judges as before and our counsellors as at first. Remove sorrow and sighing from us, and reign over us You, Hashem, alone with kindness and compassion; and make us righteous with justice. Blessed are You, Hashem, King, Lover of righteousness and justice.
- **Against Enemies:** Let there be no hope for informers and may all wickedness instantly perish; may all the enemies of Your people be swiftly cut off, and may You quickly uproot, crush, rout and subdue the insolent, speedily in our days. Blessed are You, Hashem, Crusher of enemies. and Subduer of the insolent.
- **The Righteous:** May Your mercy be aroused, Hashem our God, upon the righteous, upon the pious, upon the elders of Your people, Israel, upon the remnant of their scholars, upon the true proselytes and upon us. Grant bountiful reward to all who trust in Your Name in truth; and place our lot among them, and may we never be put to shame, for we have put our trust in You. Blessed are You, Hashem, Support and Trust of the righteous.
- **Rebuilding Jerusalem:** And return in mercy to Jerusalem, Your city, and dwell therein as You have spoken; and rebuild it soon, in our days, as an everlasting structure, and may You speedily establish the throne of David therein. Blessed are You, Hashem, Builder of Jerusalem.
- **Kingdom of David:** Speedily cause the sprout of David, Your servant, to flourish and exalt his power with Your deliverance. We hope all day for Your deliverance. Blessed are You, Hashem, Who causes the power of salvation to sprout.
- **Response to Prayer:** Hear our voice, Hashem, our God; spare us and have compassion on us, and accept our prayers compassionately and willingly, for You are Almighty Who hears prayers and supplications; and do not turn us away empty-handed from Your Presence, our King, for You hear the prayers of Your people, Israel, with compassion. Blessed are You, Hashem, Who hears prayers.
- **Temple Service:** Be pleased, Hashem, our God, with Your people, Israel, and their prayer; and restore the service to the Holy of Holies in Your abode, and the fire-offerings of Israel; and accept their prayer, lovingly and willingly. And may You always find

pleasure with the service of Your people, Israel. And may our eyes behold Your merciful return to Zion. Blessed are You, Hashem, Who returns His Divine Presence to Zion.

## 2. Avot 2:13

וּכְשֶׁאַתָּה מְתַפְּלֵל, אַל תַּעַשׂ תְּפִלָּתְךָ קִבְעָה, אֲלֵא רַחֲמִים וְתַחֲנוּנִים לְפָנַי הַמְּקוּם בְּרוּךְ הוּא, שְׂנֵאָמַר (יואל ב) כִּי חַנוּן וְרַחוּם הוּא אֶרְךָ אַפִּים וְרַב חֶסֶד וְנָחֵם עַל הָרָעָה.

When you pray, do not make your prayer fixed [keva], rather compassionate pleas and entreaties before the Omnipresent, blessed be He, for it is said: “for He is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in kindness, and renouncing punishment” (Joel 2:13).

## 3. Babylonian Talmud, Brakhot 29b

רַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר אוֹמֵר כָּל הָעוֹשֶׂה תְּפִלָּתוֹ קִבְעָה וְכוּ': מַאי "קִבְעָה"? אָמַר רַבִּי יַעֲקֹב בַּר אִידִי אָמַר רַבִּי אוֹשְׁעֵיָא: כָּל שֶׁתְּפִלָּתוֹ דּוֹמָה עָלָיו כְּמִשׁוּי. וְרַבִּנּוּן אָמַר: כָּל מִי שֶׁאֵינוֹ אוֹמְרָה בְּלִשׁוֹן תַּחֲנוּנִים. רַבָּה וְרַב יוֹסֵף דְּאִמְרֵי תְרוּיָהוּ: כָּל שֶׁאֵינוֹ יָכוֹל לְחַדֵּשׁ בֵּה דְבָר.

Rabbi Eliezer says: “One whose prayer is fixed (*keva*), his prayer is not supplication.” What is the meaning of fixed (*keva*)? Rabbi Ya’akov bar Idi said that Rabbi Oshaya said: It means anyone for whom his prayer is like a burden upon him. The Rabbis say: This refers to anyone who does not recite prayer in the language of supplication. Rabba and Rav Yosef both said: It refers to anyone unable to introduce a new element.

## 4. Rashi on Brakhot 29b

לְחַדֵּשׁ בֵּה דְבָר – בִּבְקִשְׁתּוֹ וְהֵינּוּ לִשׁוֹן קִבְעָה כִּיּוֹם כֵּן אֶתְמוּל כֵּן מַחֲר:

“To introduce a new element” – into his request. And this is the meaning of “fixed” – yesterday is like today is like tomorrow.

## 5. Rebbe Nahman of Breslov, Likutei Moharan, Part 1, Torah 196

כִּי אֲסוּר לְאָדָם לְעַמֵּד עֲצָמוֹ עַל שׁוּם דְּבָר, הֵינּוּ שְׂאֲסוּר לְהִתְעַקֵּשׁ בְּתְפִלָּתוֹ שֶׁהַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה לוֹ דְּוָקָא אֶת בְּקִשְׁתּוֹ, כִּי זֶה הוּא כְּמוֹ לִוְקַח דְּבָר בְּחִזְקָה, בְּגִזְלָה; רַק צָרִיךְ לְהִתְפַּלֵּל וּלְהִתְחַנֵּן לְפָנַי הַשָּׁם יִתְבָּרַךְ בְּרַחֲמִים וְתַחֲנוּנִים, אִם יִתֵּן הַשָּׁם יִתְבָּרַךְ – יִתֵּן, וְאִם לֹא – לֹא... וְזֶה: אַל תַּעֲשֶׂה תְּפִלָּתְךָ קִבְעָה, מְלִשׁוֹן גִּזְלָה, כְּמוֹ שֶׁכָּתוּב (משלי כ"ב:כ"ג): וְקִבְעָה אֶת קִבְעֵיהֶם נַפְשׁ. הֵינּוּ, שֶׁכָּל מֶה שֶׁהוּא מְבַקֵּשׁ, הֵן פְּרִנְסָה אוֹ בְּנִים אוֹ שְׂאָר צָרְכִים, אֲסוּר לְהִתְעַקֵּשׁ וְלְעַמֵּד עֲצָמוֹ בְּתְפִלָּתוֹ, שֶׁדְּוָקָא יַעֲשֶׂה הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא אֶת תְּפִלָּתוֹ, כִּי זֶה הוּא תְּפִלַּת קִבְעָה, שֶׁלֹּקַח הַדְּבָר בְּחִזְקָה, בְּגִזְלָה, רַק יִתְפַּלֵּל רַחֲמִים וְתַחֲנוּנִים כְּנִ"ל:

It is forbidden for a person to be obstinate about anything. That is, in his prayer, it is prohibited to stubbornly insist that the Holy One must fulfill his request. This is like taking something by force, by robbing it. Rather, a person has to pray and beseech God with compassionate pleas and entreaties. If God gives it, He gives it; and if not, not...

“Do not make your prayer *keva*,” the term “*keva*” connotes “stealing,” as it is written (Prov. 22:23): “And rob [*keva*] the life of those who rob them.” That is, no matter what a person requests, be it livelihood or children or other needs – it is forbidden for him to stubbornly insist

and be obstinate in his prayer, that God must fulfill his prayer. For this is a “*keva* prayer” – he takes the thing by force, by robbing it. Rather, as explained, he is to pray “compassionate pleas and entreaties.”

**6. R. Jonathan Sacks, Understanding Jewish Prayer, *The Koren Sacks Siddur*, p. xli**

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.”

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

Often we make requests of God in our prayer.  
Sometimes insignificant, sometimes important.  
There are times these requests are truly critical,  
We want an answer,  
Preferably here and now.  
In our difficulty, we insist, we pound on the table.  
This stubbornness, this strong-armed approach, in the end it will weaken us.  
We miss the opportunity buried in the difficulty:  
This difficulty is an opening for movement, for closeness, for conversation.  
The Holy Blessed One so desires our prayer.  
Problems are not something we need only to solve or to make go away.  
They offer an opportunity to invite us to move into a softer space.  
They are an opportunity to share, to talk.  
Stubbornness limits God,  
Insisting: “My way or no way.”  
If we can let go a bit,  
The answer to our prayers can come from a place we can’t imagine right now.  
We can allow the Holy Blessed One to surprise us.  
We can speak to God with soft words,  
In language of compassion,  
Of supplication,  
In conversation with Life.

**8. Irvin D. Yalom, *Love’s Executioner***

Imagine this scene: three to four hundred people, strangers to each other, are told to pair up and ask their partner one single question, “What do you want?” over and over and over again.

Could anything be simpler? One innocent question and its answer. And yet, time after time, I have seen this group exercise evoke unexpectedly powerful feelings. Often, within minutes, the room rocks with emotion. Men and women—and these are by no means desperate or needy but successful, well-functioning, well-dressed people who glitter as they walk—are stirred to their depths. They call out to those who are forever lost—dead or absent parents, spouses, children, friends: “I want to see you again.” “I want your love.” “I want to know you’re proud of me.” “I want you to know I love you and how sorry I am I never told you.” “I want you back—I am so lonely.” “I want the childhood I never had.” “I want to be healthy—to be young again. I want to be loved, to be respected. I want my life to mean something. I want to accomplish something. I want to matter, to be important, to be remembered.”

So much wanting. So much longing. And so much pain, so close to the surface, only minutes deep.

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

So what do you want today?  
A person is defined not only by action  
But first and foremost by desire.  
It's as if prayer is telling me:  
Be impractical.  
Every one of us walks about the world with desires hidden deep within,  
Desires awaiting prayer.  
Prayer is an opportunity  
To sojourn in the realm of desires  
Without forcing them  
Without seeking the means to pull them down into the world of action  
Simply to be in the world of expressing desires.

**10. R. Jonathan Sacks, *Letter 13: Prayer, in Letters to the Next Generation 2***

Prayer is the education of desire. Take the weekday *Amidah* as an example: It teaches us to seek knowledge, wisdom and understanding – not just a new car, an exotic holiday or expensive clothes. It teaches us to want to return to God when, as happens so often, we drift in the winds of time, blown this way and that by the pressures of today. It teaches us to seek spiritual healing as well as physical health. It teaches us to seek the best not just for ourselves but also for our people and ultimately for all humanity.

**11. R. Abraham Joshua Heschel, *Man's Quest for God***

Prayer may not save us, but prayer makes us worth saving...

Prayer teaches us what to aspire to. So often we do not know what to cling to. Prayer implants in us the ideals we ought to cherish. Redemption, purity of mind and tongue, or willingness to help, may hover as ideas before our mind, but the idea becomes a concern, something to long for, a goal to be reached, when we pray.

**12. R. Joseph B. Soloveitchik, *Redemption, Prayer, Talmud Torah***

Whoever permits his legitimate needs to go unsatisfied will never be sympathetic to the crying needs of others. A human morality based on love and friendship, on sharing in the travail of others, cannot be practiced if the person's own need-awareness is dull, and he does not know what suffering is. Hence Judaism rejected models of existence which deny human need, such as the angelic or the monastic. For Judaism, need-awareness constitutes part of the definition of human existence...

Therefore, prayer in Judaism, unlike the prayer of classical mysticism, is bound up with the human needs, wants, drives and urges, which make man suffer.

**13. R. Avraham Weiss, *Holistic Prayer*, p.27-28**

A story is told of a Hasidic rebbe before the establishment of the State of Israel, who – contrary to the sentiments of his community – was a religious Zionist, doing all he could to promote the

Zionist cause by encouraging Jews to go to *Eretz Yisrael*. Some of his disciples were critical: “Doesn’t the *Amidah* say that God and God alone will gather in the exiles?” To make this point, they slowly read him parts of the ingathering request: “Sound the great shofar for our liberty... and gather us together from the four corners of the earth.”

The rebbe thought for a minute and then replied, “In the *Amida* we seek health, we ask for healing: ‘Heal us, Lord, and we shall be healed.’” Looking at his critics, the rabbi went on, “Even as we ask for God’s help, do we totally rely upon Him? Clearly this blessing is not meant to prohibit our seeking out medical advice. Similarly, in the blessing of redemption, when we invoke God’s help to redeem Zion, we commit ourselves to actively take part in that process.” So too, in all the “request” blessings, as we call out to God for relief, we challenge ourselves to assume responsibility to join in this effort.

#### 14. Chana Friedman Uhlman, *Everyone Needs*

כָּל אָדָם צָרִיךְ מִיִּשְׁהוּ לְהִתְפַּלֵּל עִבּוּרוֹ.  
מִיִּשְׁהוּ לְהַגּוֹת שְׁמוֹ בְּשִׁפְתָיִם  
שֶׁל אֲמוּנָה וְתִקְוָה וְחַיִּים,  
לְהַחֲיוֹת מִיִּשְׁהוּ אַחֵר.  
וְכָל אָדָם צָרִיךְ לֵב לְהַנִּיחַ עָלָיו יָדַיִם  
שֶׁל אֲמוּנָה וְשֶׁל בְּרָכָה,  
וְכָל אָדָם צָרִיךְ זֹלָת,  
וְצָרִיךְ לְצִאת וּלְהַכְנִס,  
וּבְעֵקֶר לְצִאת מֵעֶצְמוֹ,  
וּלְשַׁכַּח אֶת עֶצְמוֹ.  
וְכַמָּה לְהַכְנִס וְכַמָּה לְהִיּוֹת  
מִיִּשְׁהוּ אַחֵר -  
לְשַׁעָה, לְיוֹם, לְבֹכֵי.  
לְהִיּוֹת מִיִּשְׁהוּ אַחֵר.  
כָּל אָדָם צָרִיךְ לְעֵמֶד בְּפָנָי אֱלֹקָיו וּלְצַעֵק:  
דִּי, וּמִסְפִּיק, הַנִּח לּוֹ, הַנִּח לּוֹ,  
הוּא זָהָב נְדִיר, הוּא אָבִן יְקָרָה,  
הוּא בֶן שְׁלֵה, יְחִיד וּמְיֻחָד.  
תֵּן לוֹ טוֹב נְרָאָה וְנִגְלָה,  
תֵּן לוֹ גַּם, תֵּן לוֹ גַּם,  
לְהִיּוֹת מְסֻגָּל לְהִתְפַּלֵּל.  
עֲזֵר לוֹ לְהִתְפַּלֵּל  
עִבּוּר מִיִּשְׁהוּ אַחֵר.

Everyone needs someone to pray for him.  
Someone whose lips will utter his name  
In faith and hope and life, to revive someone  
Else and everyone needs a heart on which to place hands  
In faith and blessing, and everyone needs someone else  
And needs to go out and go in and mainly to go beyond

And forget himself and for a bit to go in and for a bit to be  
Someone else for an hour, for a day, for a cry.  
To be someone else.  
Everyone needs to stand before his God  
And to cry out enough, no more  
Let him be, let him be, he's pure gold,  
He is a precious gem, he is Your Son,  
Your one and only,  
Give him good, visible and revealed, give him also,  
Give him also, the ability to pray.  
Help him pray  
For someone else.