

# AMIDAH

## תפילת העמידה לשחרית לשבת

A transliteration of the opening b'rakhot of the Amidah may be found on page 166. When a minyan is present, some communities repeat the Amidah after it is recited silently; others recite the first three blessings (including the Kedushah on page 161) aloud and the rest of the Amidah silently. The Amidah concludes on page 166.

אֲדַנִּי שְׁפָתַי תִּפְתָּחַ, וּפִי יַגִּיד תְּהִלָּתְךָ.

With Patriarchs and Matriarchs:

יְיָ בְרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה,  
אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ,  
[וְאִמּוֹתֵינוּ], אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹרָהם,  
אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק, וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב,  
אֱלֹהֵי שָׂרָה, אֱלֹהֵי רִבְקָה,  
אֱלֹהֵי רָחֵל, וְאֱלֹהֵי לֵאָה,  
הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל הַגְּבוּר וְהַנּוֹרָא,  
אֵל עֲלִיּוֹן, גּוֹמֵל חֲסָדִים  
טוֹבִים, וְקוֹנֵה הַפֶּלַח, וְזוֹכֵר  
חֲסָדֵי אֲבוֹת, [וְאִמּוֹת],  
וּמְבִיא גּוֹאֵל לְבָנָי בְּגִיחָם  
לְמַעַן שְׁמוֹ בְּאַהֲבָה.

With Patriarchs:

יְיָ בְרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה,  
אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ,  
אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹרָהם, אֱלֹהֵי  
יִצְחָק, וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב, הָאֵל  
הַגָּדוֹל הַגְּבוּר וְהַנּוֹרָא,  
אֵל עֲלִיּוֹן, גּוֹמֵל חֲסָדִים  
טוֹבִים, וְקוֹנֵה הַפֶּלַח, וְזוֹכֵר  
חֲסָדֵי אֲבוֹת, וּמְבִיא גּוֹאֵל  
לְבָנָי בְּגִיחָם לְמַעַן שְׁמוֹ  
בְּאַהֲבָה.

On Shabbat Shuvah we add:

וְזָכְרֵנוּ לְחַיִּים, מֶלֶךְ הַפֶּיַךְ בְּחַיִּים,  
וְזָכְרֵנוּ בְּסִפּוּר הַחַיִּים, לְמַעַן אֱלֹהִים חַיִּים.

**AMIDAH.** The Amidah, literally "the prayer said while standing," is a moment of personal meditation and is also known as the "Silent Prayer." It always contains three introductory b'rakhot and three concluding b'rakhot. On Shabbat and festivals, a middle b'rakah focuses on distinctive themes of the day. Before the Amidah begins we take three steps forward, approaching God's presence. (If there is no room, we first take three steps backward.)

**ADONAI, OPEN MY LIPS** אֲדַנִּי שְׁפָתַי תִּפְתָּח Psalm 51:17, where prayer is exalted over sacrifice. Rabbi Yohanan (3rd century) recommended that this verse precede the Amidah (Talmud of the Land of Israel, Berakhot 4:4).

**BENDING THE KNEES AND BOWING.** Bowing is both a symbolic acknowledgment that our prayers are to God and also a sign of humility on our part. We stand up

straight when we reach God's name, however, for we speak to God face to face (Babylonian Talmud, Berakhot 12a). The Talmud records disagreement about how deeply one should bow: some say that one should fully bend over, some that one should feel one's spine bending, and others that one should bow only one's head (Berakhot 28b). The Talmud confined bowing to the beginning and end of this first b'rakah, as well as to the beginning and end of the next-to-last b'rakah, which thanks God for the gift of life (Berakhot 34a). The sign י indicates the place to bow.

**GOD OF ABRAHAM** אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹרָהם. God uses this language when first addressing Moses, at the burning bush (Exodus 3:5-6). Its inclusion here at the beginning of the Amidah may remind us of the focus and attentiveness that we need to sense God's presence.

**REDEEMER** גּוֹאֵל. Judaism's messianic impulse reminds us that the world, as broken as it sometimes appears, is ultimately perfectible; God's teachings, carried out by us, will help the world achieve such perfection. Some liberal prayerbooks use the word *ge'ullah*, "redemption," in place of "redeemer," to de-emphasize the role of any single individual in facilitating the world's healing.

**REMEMBER US** וְזָכְרֵנוּ. This brief prayer is the first of four additions to the Amidah during the Ten Days of Repentance. Each of the four phrases of this short addition ends with the word *hayim*, "life."

With Patriarchs and Matriarchs:

מֶלֶךְ עֹזֵר וּפּוֹקֵד  
וּמוֹשִׁיעַ וּמְגַן.  
וְ בְרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה,  
מְגַן אֲבֹרָהּם וּפּוֹקֵד שָׂרָה.

With Patriarchs:

מֶלֶךְ עֹזֵר וּמוֹשִׁיעַ וּמְגַן.  
בְּחֹרֶךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה,  
מְגַן אֲבֹרָהּם.

אַתָּה גִּבּוֹר לְעוֹלָם אֲדֹנָי,  
מְחַיֶּה מֵתִים אַתָּה,  
רַב לְהוֹשִׁיעַ.

מְשִׁיב הַרְוּחַ וּמוֹרִיד הַגֶּשֶׁם,  
[From Pesah until Sh'mini Atzeret, some add: מוֹרִיד הַפֶּל, From Sh'mini Atzeret until Pesah:]

מְכַלְכֵּל חַיִּים בְּחֶסֶד,  
מְחַיֶּה מֵתִים בְּרַחֲמִים רַבִּים,  
סוֹמֵךְ נוֹפְלִים, וְרוֹפֵא חוֹלִים, וּמַתִּיר אֲסוּרִים,  
וּמְקַיֵּם אֲמוּנָתוֹ לִישְׁנֵי עָפָר,  
מִי כְמוֹךָ בַּעַל גְּבוּרֹת וּמִי דוֹמָה לָךְ,  
מֶלֶךְ מְמִיַּת וּמְחַיֶּה וּמְצַמִּיחַ יְשׁוּעָה.

On Shabbat Shuvah we add:

מִי כְמוֹךָ אֵב הַרְחֻמִּים, זוֹכֵר וְצוֹרֵר לְחַיִּים בְּרַחֲמִים.

וּנְאֻמָּן אַתָּה לְהַחְיֹת מֵתִים.  
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, מְחַיֶּה הַמֵּתִים.

אַתָּה קְדוֹשׁ. When the Amidah is recited silently, continue on page 162 with

**SHIELD OF ABRAHAM** מְגַן אֲבֹרָהּ. This phrase is derived from Genesis 15:1, the first time we hear Abraham speak to God. There Abraham—the paragon of faith—expresses to God his fears, skepticism, and insecurity about the fulfillment of God's promises. Authentic prayer may encompass feelings of doubt as well as faith, challenge and frustration as well as praise and gratitude. Some who include the matriarchs at the beginning of this prayer conclude with this ending, so as not to change the received wording of the conclusion of a *b'rakhah*.

**GUARDIAN OF SARAH** וּפּוֹקֵד שָׂרָה. Or: "the one who remembered Sarah" (after Genesis 21:1). We, who stand here today, are the fruit of God's promise to Abraham and Sarah.

**SUPPORT THE FALLING** סוֹמֵךְ נוֹפְלִים. After Psalm 145:14. For centuries, human rulers have defined "power" as the ability to exert control over others, often through the threat of physical injury. Quite differently, God's power is described here as manifested as *hesed*, love and generosity, especially to those who are most

vulnerable. The other attributes describing God in this paragraph are also taken from biblical texts: Exodus 15:26 ("heal the sick"), Psalm 146:7 ("loosen the chains of the bound"), and 1 Samuel 2:6 ("brings death and life").

**GIVES LIFE TO THE DEAD** מְחַיֶּה הַמֵּתִים. Over the millennia, many Jewish perspectives on the afterlife have been proposed. Many sages (including Saadiah Gaon, 10th century, and Maimonides, 12th century) caution against speculation about the specific implications of the doctrine of bodily resurrection of the dead. They understand it to be an articulation of God's supreme power: God cares even for the dead. Some moderns understand that the lives of those who died before us are a part of the stream of life, continuing to affect us, though we can never know precisely how.