

The Amidah

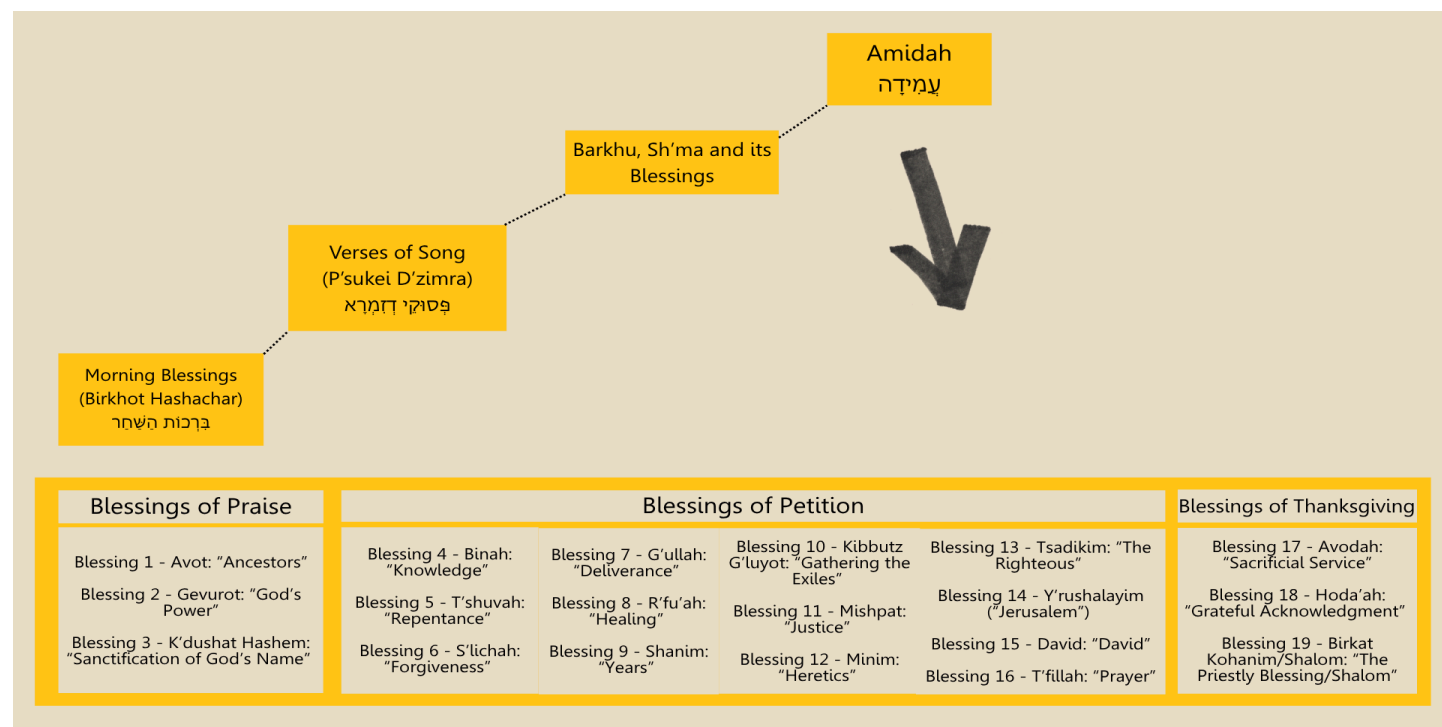
Vocabulary

Tsa'akah צַעֲקָה: To cry out	Shemoneh Esreh שְׁמוֹנֶה עָשָׂר: Eighteen (18)	Genizah גִּנְיָזָה: From "ganaz" to file or store away.
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The Amidah, also known as HaTefillah or Shmoneh Esreh ("The Prayer" or "18") is largely a petitionary prayer consisting, despite its name, of 19 blessings. Rabban Gamaliel, was the Nasi, the chief Rabbi of his era, codified the Amidah. He is recorded in [tractate Berakhot 28b:12](#) saying, "Each and every day, a person recites the prayer of eighteen blessings"

Given the time of his existence (during the various wars and revolts that expelled Jewry from various places), Rabban Gamaliel sought to ease the notion of the messianic era be ushered in by final messianic war, the Amidah serves as something of a litmus test for whether any messianic figure were legitimate by whether the conditions set forth had occurred (Has human suffering ceased? Has exiles returned? etc). This avoidance of apocalyptic speculation can be applied to the Jewish bible writ large, as various books that pertain to such were omitted.

One who is able, stands when reciting the Amidah. On Shabbat and holidays, it is reduced to seven blessings, leaving only the first three, last three, and a summary of the middle thirteen.



It is said three times daily, once at each service, silently to one self and repeated aloud by the prayer leader. If time constraints necessitate shortening the liturgy, one recites the first three blessings, Havineinu (text at the end of this chapter), and the last three blessings, rather than forgoing the entire prayer.

Why is it called '18' when there are 19 blessings?

There had been historical speculation the Rabbi Gamaliel added #12 as a blessing against heretics, but as documents from the Cairo Genizah would clarify, the initial Amidah was only 18 blessings, but Blessing 14 (on Jerusalem) and Blessing 15 (on the coming of the messiah) were combined as one blessing with a common chatimah: "Blessed are You ... God of David who builds Jerusalem."

The Amidah from Fragments in the Genizah

Opening Meditation ([from Psalms 57.17](#))

Adonai, open my lips, that my mouth may declare your praise.

Blessings 1 to 3: Blessings of Praise

Blessing 1 - Avot: "Ancestors"

Blessed are You, Adonai, our God and our ancestors' God, Abraham's God, Isaac's God, and Jacob's God, great, mighty, and revered God, supreme God, master of heaven and earth, our protector and our ancestors' protector, our security in each and every generation.

Blessed are You, Adonai, Abraham's protector.

Blessing 2 - Gevurot: "God's Power"

You are mighty, you humble the proud, you are strong, you judge the wicked, and you live forever; You support the dead, cause the wind to blow and bring down the dew, and sustain life giving life to the dead;

in the blink of an eye you bring salvation.

Blessed are you, Adonai, who gives life to the dead.

Blessing 3 - K'dushat Hashem: "Sanctification of God's Name"

Holy are You, and your name is revered; there is no god other than You.

Blessed are You, Adonai, the holy God.

Blessings 4 to 15: Blessings of Petition

Blessing 4 - Binah: "Knowledge"

Favor us, with your knowledge, our father, and with your Torah's understanding and wisdom.

Blessed are you, Adonai, who favors people with knowledge.

Blessing 5 - T'shuvah: "Repentance"

*Bring us back to You, Adonai, that we shall return.
Renew our days as of old.
Blessed are You, Adonai, who takes pleasure in repentance.*

Blessing 6 - S'lichah: "Forgiveness"

*Forgive us, our father, for we have sinned before You;
wipe out and remove our transgressions from before your eyes, for great is your mercy.
Blessed are You, Adonai, who is quick to forgive.*

Blessing 7 - G'ulah: "Deliverance"

*See our affliction and fight our fight;
redeem us for the sake of your name.
Blessed are You, Adonai, who redeems Israel.*

Blessing 8 - R'fu'ah: "Healing"

*Heal us, Adonai, from the pains of our heart, and remove sorrow and complaint from among us.
Bring healing to our wounds.
Blessed are You, Adonai, who heals the sick among his people Israel.*

Blessing 9 - Shanim: "Years"

*Bless this year for us for goodness through its produce, Adonai our God, and quickly bring the year near that ends our exile.
Grant dew and rain on the surface of the ground, and eternal abundance from the stores of your goodness, and grant blessing through the work of our hands.
Blessed are You, Adonai, who blesses our years.*

Blessing 10 - Kibbutz G'luyot: "Gathering the Exiles"

*Sound a great shofar for our freedom, and lift up a banner for the gathering of our exiles.
Blessed are You, Adonai, who gathers the dispersed among his people Israel.*

Blessing 11 - Mishpat: "Justice"

*Restore our judges as in days of old, and our counselors as in former times, and reign over us, You alone.
Blessed are You, Adonai, who loves justice.*

Blessing 12 - Minim: “Heretics”

*May there be no hope for apostates, and may You quickly uproot the insolent reign in our day, and may the Christians and heretics instantly perish.
May they be erased from the book of life, and may they not be written with the righteous.
Blessed are You, Adonai, who humbles the insolent.*

Blessing 13 - Tsadikim: “The Righteous”

*Show compassion to righteous converts, and give us a good reward with those who do your will.
Blessed are You, Adonai, who is the trust of the righteous.*

Blessing 14 - Y'rushalayim v'david: “Jerusalem and David”

*Have mercy, Adonai our God, in your great mercy, on Israel your people, and on Jerusalem your city, and on Zion where your presence dwells, and on your palace and on your habitation and on your righteous servant David's kingdom.
Blessed are You, Adonai, David's God, who builds Jerusalem.*

Blessing 15 - T'fillah: “Prayer”

*Adonai our God, hear the voice of our prayers and have mercy on us, for You are the God who is gracious and merciful.
Blessed are You, Adonai, who hears prayer.*

Blessings 16 to 18: Blessings of Thanksgiving**Blessing 16 - Avodah: “Sacrificial Service”**

*Find favor, Adonai our God, and dwell in Zion that You may be served by your servants in Jerusalem.
Blessed are You, Adonai, whom we will serve with awe.*

Blessing 17 - Hoda'ah: “Grateful Acknowledgment”

We gratefully acknowledge You—You are Adonai our God and our ancestors' God—for all the goodness, the kindness, and the mercy that you have shown and done for us and for our ancestors before us, and if we say our step has faltered, your kindness will support us. Blessed are You, whom is it good to gratefully acknowledge.

Blessing 18 - Birkat Kohanim: “The Priestly Blessing”

*Grant your peace on Israel your people and on your city and on your heritage, and bless all of us as one.
Blessed are you, Adonai, who brings peace.*

Closing Meditation ([Psalms 19:15](#))

May the words of my mouth and the thoughts of my heart be favorable before You, Adonai, my rock and my redeemer.

The Amidah (Modern)

Opening Meditation

Adonai, open my lips, that my mouth may declare your praise.

From [Psalms 57.17](#), this is sometimes omitted as being extraneous, however the understanding of hearing as a stimulus for speech (as opposed to speech as a stimulus for hearing) and the requisite acknowledgement of one's focus on praise that enables prayer.

Blessings 1 to 3: Blessings of Praise

Blessing 1 - Avot: "Ancestors"

¹Blessed are You, Adonai, our God and our ancestors' God: Abraham's God, Isaac's God, and Jacob's God, great, mighty, and revered God, supreme God, who acts most piously, who is master of everything, who remembers the piety of our ancestors, and who brings a redeemer to their descendants for the sake of his name in love.

From Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur, add:

²Remember us for life, our king who delights in life, and write us in the book of life, for your sake, our living God.

³Our king helps and saves and protects!

⁴Blessed are You, Adonai, Abraham's protector.

In many liberal prayer books, the matriarchs are added to the list of ancestors.

Blessing 2 - Gevurot: "God's Power"

¹You are forever mighty, Adonai: giving life to the dead, You are a mighty savior.

From Sh'mini Atseret to the first day of Passover, add:

²You cause the wind to blow and you cause the rain to fall.

From the first day of Passover to Sh'mini Atseret, add

³You bring down the dew.

⁴You sustain life with kindness, giving life to the dead with great mercy, supporting the fallen, healing the sick, and freeing the captive, and keeping faith with sleepers in the dust.

⁵Who is like You, master of might, and who resembles You, a King who causes death and causes life, and causes salvation to flourish!

From Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur, add:

⁶Who is like you, father of mercy, who in mercy remembers his creatures for life!

⁷You faithfully give life to the dead.

⁸Blessed are You, Adonai, who gives life to the dead.

Life to the dead refers to sickness, however “sleepers” is the only explicit reference to resurrection in the bible, from [Daniel 12.2](#).

Blessing 3 - K’dushat Hashem: “Sanctification of God’s Name”

[This version is said individually during the period of silent prayer that precedes the repetition by the prayer leader:]

¹You are holy and your name is holy, and holy beings will praise You every day forever.

²Blessed are You, Adonai, the holy God.

**From Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur, say instead:*

³Blessed are You, Adonai, the holy king.

[This version is reserved for the public repetition of the Amidah by the prayer leader:]

[Prayer Leader]

⁴Let us sanctify your name on earth, as it is sanctified in the heavens on high, as written by your prophet, “They called out one to another:

[Congregation and Prayer Leader]

⁵Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. The whole earth is full of his glory.’

[Prayer Leader]

⁶From across the way they offer blessing:

[Congregation and Prayer Leader]

‘The glory of Adonai is blessed from his place.’

[Prayer Leader]

⁷In your holy scriptures it is written:

[Congregation and Prayer Leader]

“Adonai will reign forever, your God, Zion, for all generations. Halleluyah.”

[Prayer Leader]

⁸For all generations we will tell of your greatness and for all of eternity proclaim your holiness.

⁹Your praise, our God, will never depart our mouths, for You are a sovereign God, great and holy.

¹⁰Blessed are You, Adonai, the holy God.

**From Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur, say instead:*

¹¹Blessed are You, Adonai, the holy king.

Blessings 4 to 16: Blessings of Petition

Blessing 4 - Binah: “Knowledge”

¹*You favor people with knowledge and teach mortals understanding.*

²*Favor us with your knowledge, understanding, and wisdom.*

³*Blessed are You, Adonai, who favors people with knowledge.*

Blessing 5 - T'shuvah: “Repentance”

¹*Bring us back to your Torah, our father, draw us near to your service, our king, and turn us back, in perfect repentance before You.*

²*Blessed are You, Adonai, who takes pleasure in repentance.*

Blessing 6 - S'lichah: “Forgiveness”

¹*Forgive us, our father, for we have sinned.*

²*Pardon us, our king, for we have transgressed, for You forgive and pardon.*

³*Blessed are You, Adonai, who is gracious and quick to forgive.*

Blessings 4, 5, and 6 acknowledge an awareness (knowledge) of both sin and forgiveness, realizing the complementary nature (i.e. when one is aware that they have sinned, one knows they must ask forgiveness). “Perfect repentance” as referenced in blessing 5 marks the difference between “teshuvah me'yirah” and “teshuvah me'ahava”, repentance motivated by fear and repentance motivated by love, respectively, offering that repentance motivated by love expiates the sin and becomes a merit, whereas repentance motivated by fear is more like an unintentional transgression. [Yoma 86b:4](#)

Blessing 7 - G'ullah: “Redemption”

¹*See our affliction, and fight our fight; redeem us quickly for the sake of your name, for You are a mighty redeemer.*

²*Blessed are You, Adonai, who redeems Israel.*

On fast days, add:

³*Answer us, Adonai, answer us on our fast day, for we are greatly distressed.*

⁴*Do not regard our wickedness, do not hide your face from us, and do not hide from our supplication.*

⁵*May You be near to our cry; may your kindness be a comfort to us.*

⁶*Before we call to You, answer us, as it is written, “Before they call, I will answer. While they are still speaking, I will hear.”*

⁷*For You, Adonai, who answers in time of distress, redeems and delivers in every time of distress and woe.*

⁸*Blessed are You, Adonai, who answers in time of distress.*

Redemption here is a Conceptually, the idea here is that God responds to penitential prayers when Israel fasts. Line 6, is from [Isaiah 65:24](#) describing the redemption of Jerusalem. Some prayer books universalize this passage to avoid nationalistic fervor and ask redemption for Jews in unsafe places. Redemption is a communal project, with individual efforts.

Blessing 8 - R'fu'ah: "Healing"

¹*Heal us, Adonai, that we shall be healed.*

²*Save us that we shall be saved, for You are our praise.*

³*Bring complete healing to all of our wounds.*

If praying for a specific individual, add:

⁴*May it find favor before You, my God and my ancestors' God, that You speedily send complete healing from the heavens, spiritual healing and physical healing to _____ who is sick, along with others who are sick among Israel.*

⁵*For You are our sovereign, steadfast, merciful healing God.*

⁶*Praised are You, Adonai, who heals the sick among his People Israel.*

Line 2, "Save us..." is typically used in a military context, here it is likely a reference to the mutual nature of the human and divine in efforts of healing (a doctor or scientist who finds a cure for an ailment is an agent of God, who creates a world in which the intellect of his creation is revealed, thus a cure found). At the time of this writing, with a lack of modern medicine, when illnesses that were common and untreatable resulted in recovery, God was thanked.

Blessing 9 - Shanim: "Years"

¹*Bless this year for us along with all its various produce for goodness, Adonai our God, From Passover to December 4, say: and grant blessing From December 4 to Passover, say: and grant dew and rain for blessing upon the surface of the earth, and satisfy us with its goodness, and bless our year like the best of years.*

²*Blessed are You, Adonai, who blesses our years.*

This is a blessing for agricultural productivity. The date was established as sixty days after the autumn equinox as calculated by the talmudic Amora Shmuel. On that day, the sun crosses the equator, autumn begins, and day and night are of equal duration. ### Summary

The Julian calendar calculated the year as 365.25 days and added a leap day every four years. However, the actual solar year is about 365.2422 days, so the calendar gradually became inaccurate, drifting about three days every 400 years.

By 1582, the calendar was about 10 days off, causing the vernal equinox to fall on March 11 instead of March 21. Pope Gregory XIII corrected this by removing 10 days from the calendar and changing the leap-year rules. Under the new Gregorian calendar, there are 97 leap years every 400 years, with century years only being leap years if they are divisible by 400.

Since we use the solar calendar, we can fix the interval of sixty days thereafter as falling always on Ma'ariv of December 4 (except for a civil leap year, when it occurs one day later, December 5).

Blessing 10 - Kibbutz G'luyot: "Gathering the Exiles"

¹*Sound a great shofar for our freedom, and lift up a banner to gather our exiles, and gather us together from the four corners of the earth.*

²Blessed are You, Adonai, who gathers the dispersed among his People Israel.

This prayer has often been reworked to avoid nationalistic intentions (particularly Herzlesque negation of Zionism types), universalizing by referring instead to “all exiles” and praying for the liberation of the oppressed.

Blessing 11 - Mishpat: “Justice”

¹Restore our judges as in days of old and our counselors as in former times.

²And remove sorrow and complaint from among us, and reign over us, You alone, Adonai, in kindness and mercy, and acquit us in trial.

³Blessed are You, Adonai, our king who loves righteousness and justice.

^{}From Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur, say instead:*

⁴Blessed are you, Adonai, the king of justice.

Blessing 12 - Minim: “Heretics”

¹May there be no hope for slanderers, and may all wickedness instantly perish, and may all your enemies quickly be destroyed.

²May You quickly uproot, smash, destroy, and humble the insolent quickly in our day.

³Blessed are You, Adonai, who smashes his enemies and humbles the insolent.

Blessing 13 - Tsadikim: “The Righteous”

¹Show compassion to the righteous, to the pious, to the leaders of your People, the House of Israel, to the remnants of their sages, to righteous converts, and to us, Adonai our God.

²And give a good reward to all who truly trust in your name, and let our lot be among them forever that we will not be shamed, for we put our trust in You.

³Blessed are You, Adonai, who is the support and trust of the righteous.

Blessings 11-13 are responses to the various social ills suffered by the Jews at the time under Roman rule and provides a pathway for redemption.

Blessing 14 - Y'rushalayim (“Jerusalem”)

¹Return to Jerusalem your city in compassion, and dwell in its midst as You promised You would, and rebuild it soon in our day into an eternal structure, and quickly establish David's throne within it.

²Blessed are You, Adonai, who rebuilds Jerusalem.

Blessing 15 - David: “David”

¹Cause the progeny of David, your servant, to blossom quickly.

²Let him shine in your deliverance, for we await your salvation every day.

³Blessed are You, Adonai, who causes the light of salvation to blossom.

Blessing 16 - T'fillah: "Prayer"

¹Hear our voice, Adonai our God.

²Have pity and mercy on us, and accept our prayer with favor, for You are the God who hears our prayers and supplications.

³Do not turn us away from You, our ruler, empty-handed, for You hear the prayer of your People Israel in mercy.

⁴Blessed are You, Adonai, who hears prayer.

Blessings 17 to 19: Blessings of Thanksgiving

Blessing 17 - Avodah: "Sacrificial Service"

¹Find favor, Adonai our God, in your People Israel and in their prayer.

²And return the sacrifice to the Holy of Holies. In favor accept the fire-offerings of Israel and their prayers in love.

³And may the service of Israel your People always be favorable.

On Rosh Chodesh—the New Month—and Chol Hamo'ed, the intermediary days of Passover and Sukkot, add:

⁴Our God and our ancestors' God, may these arise, come forth, reach up, be noted, be favored, be heard, be recorded, and be remembered before You for deliverance and goodness, for grace, kindness, and mercy, for life and peace: our memory; our record; our ancestors' memory; the memory of the messiah, son of David your servant; the memory of Jerusalem, your holy city; and the memory of the entire house of Israel, your People, on this

On Rosh Chodesh, the New Month, say: start of this month. On Passover, say: day of the holiday of Passover.

***On Sukkot, say:
day of the holiday of Sukkot.***

⁵Remember us, Adonai our God, on this day for goodness.

⁶Record us on this day for blessing.

⁷And save us on this day for life.

⁸In this matter of salvation and mercy, spare us and be gracious to us, have mercy upon us and bring salvation, for our eyes turn to You, for You are the sovereign God, gracious and merciful.

⁹May our eyes behold your return to Zion in mercy.

¹⁰Blessed are You, Adonai, who restores his divine presence to Zion.

Blessing 18 - Hoda'ah: "Grateful Acknowledgment"

¹We gratefully acknowledge that You are Adonai our God and our ancestors' God for ever and ever.

²You are the rock of our lives and the shield of our salvation from generation to generation.

³We gratefully acknowledge You by rendering your praises, for our lives, which are in your hands, and for our souls, which are entrusted to You, and for your miracles that are with us on each day, and for the wonders and goodness at every time, evening, morning, and afternoon.

⁴You are good, for your mercy never ceases.

⁵You are merciful, for your kindness never ends.

⁶You have always been our hope.

The Modim D'rabbanan—To be recited in an undertone, while the prayer leader repeats this blessing:

⁷We gratefully acknowledge that You are Adonai our God and our ancestors' God, God of all flesh, our creator and creator of the universe.

⁸We offer blessings and grateful acknowledgments to your great and holy name, for having given us life and having sustained us.

⁹—So give us life and sustain us and gather our exiles to your holy courts to keep your laws and perform your will, to serve You whole-heartedly; and for our acknowledging You with gratitude.

¹⁰Blessed is the God of grateful acknowledgment.

On Chanukah, add:

¹¹For the miracles and for the redemption and for the mighty acts and for the triumphs and for the wars you brought about for our ancestors in those days at this time of year—

¹²in the days of the Hasmonean, Mattathias ben Yohanan, the high priest, and his sons, when the evil government of Greece rose up against your People Israel to make them forget your Torah and to make them leave the laws of your will:

¹³In your great mercy You rose up with them in their time of trouble and fought in their fight, judged their cause just, and avenged them with a vengeance.

¹⁴You delivered the mighty into the hands of the weak, the many into the hands of the few, the unclean into the hands of the pure, the evil into the hands of the righteous, and the arrogant into the hands of those who engage in your Torah.

¹⁵For You, You made a great and holy name in your world; and for your People Israel, You brought about a great triumph and redemption on that very day.

¹⁶And then your children came to the Holy of Holies, and emptied your temple, and purified your holy place, and lit candles in your holy courts, and established these eight days of Chanukah gratefully to acknowledge, and to praise, your great name.

On Purim, add:

¹⁷For the miracles and for the redemption and for the mighty acts and for the triumphs and for the wars You brought about for our ancestors in those days at this time of year—

¹⁸in the days of Mordecai and Esther in the capital city of Shushan, when the evil Haman rose up against them and sought to destroy, to kill, and to wipe out all the Jews, young and old, women and children, in one day, on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month (which is Adar), and to plunder their wealth:

¹⁹*In your great mercy You brought his advice to naught and frustrated his plan.*

²⁰*You turned his scheme around on him, so that he and his sons were hanged from a tree.*

²¹*For all of these your name will be blessed and exalted, our king, forever to the ends of time.*

From Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur, add:

²²*And write down all of the children of your covenant for good life.*

²³*All that lives will gratefully acknowledge You forever and praise your name in truth, God, our salvation and our help, forever.*

²⁴*Blessed are You, Adonai, whose name is good and to whom grateful acknowledgment is befitting.*

Blessing 19 - Birkat Kohanim/Shalom: "The Priestly Blessing/Shalom"

¹*Our God and our ancestors' God, bless us with the threefold blessing in the Torah, written by Moses your servant, and said by Aaron and his sons the priests, your holy people:*

²*"May Adonai bless you and keep you.*

³*May Adonai shine his face toward you and treat you graciously.*

⁴*May Adonai lift his face toward you and grant you peace."*

⁵*Grant peace, goodness, and blessing, grace, kindness, and mercy to us and to all of Israel, your People.*

⁶*Bless us, our Father, all of us as one, in the light of your face, for in the light of your face, Adonai our God, You gave us a Torah of life, a love of grace, righteousness, blessing, mercy, life, and peace.*

⁷*You see fit to bless your People Israel at all times, at every hour, with your peace.*

⁸*Blessed are You, Adonai, who blesses his People Israel with peace.*

**From Rosh Hashanah to Yom Kippur, say instead:*

⁹*May it be the book of life, blessing, peace, and prosperous goodness that we are remembered for and written in before You—we and all of your People, the House of Israel, for life, goodness, and peace.*

¹⁰*Blessed are You, Adonai, who brings peace.*

Closing Meditation

¹*My God, guard my tongue from evil and my lips from speaking deceit.*

²*To those who insult me, may my soul be silent; may my soul be like dust to everyone.*

³*Open my heart to your Torah, that my soul might pursue your commandments.*

⁴*As for all who think evil of me, quickly bring their advice to naught and frustrate their plan.*

⁵*Do this for the sake of your name, for the sake of your right hand, for the sake of your holiness, for the sake of your Torah.*

⁶*For the sake of delivering your beloved, save with your right hand and answer me.*

⁷*May the words of my mouth and the thoughts of my heart be favorable before You, Adonai, my rock and my redeemer.*

⁸*May the One who brings peace on high bring peace to us and to all Israel. Say: Amen.*

⁹*May it be favorable before You, Adonai our God and our ancestors' God, that the Temple be speedily rebuilt in our day, and grant us a share in your Torah.*

¹⁰*There we will serve You in reverence, as in the ancient days and the earliest of years.*

¹¹*And the afternoon offering of Judah and Jerusalem will reach God, as in the ancient days and the earliest of years.*

Havineinu

¹*Adonai our God, grant us wisdom to know your ways and open our minds to revere You; forgive us that we may be redeemed; keep us far from suffering; satisfy us with the goodness of your land; gather our dispersed People from the four corners of the earth.*

²*Let those who stray be judged by your disposition; wield your hand against the wicked; let the righteous rejoice in the rebuilding of your city, and in the reconstruction of your Temple, and in the blossoming of your servant David's progeny, and in the continuance of the light of your anointed, the son of Jesse.*

³*You answer us before we even call.*

⁴*Blessed are You, Adonai, who hears prayer.*

¹Open our minds is a call to an idiom from [Deuteronomy 10.16](#), literally "circumcize the heart". Circumcision in this sense was understood to correct a malfunction.