Redemption

What might redemption mean in our time? Gordon Tucker, a contemporary rabbi, points out that in the Bible, when an object is redeemed, it returns to its original state. Following a teaching of the Hasidic master Avraham Mordecai of Gav (Inrai Emet, parshat Emor), he remarks that there was a moment after leaving Egypt and crossing the Sea when we experienced freedom and the infinite possibility signalled by the limitless horizon of the desert. It was the time before the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai; yet it was a special moment of being with God. Jeremiah records God saying, “I remember the generosity of your young days, the love you exhibited when we were first engaged, walking with Me in the desert” (1:12). We can hope that our religious life will lead us back to a moment of innocence, when we feel free and in unselfconscious relation to God.

Truly, the God of the universe, our sovereign, is the stronghold of Jacob and our protecting shield.

In every generation God is present, God’s name endures, God’s throne is established, and God’s sovereignty and faithfulness abide.

God’s teaching is living and enduring, truthful and beloved throughout all time.

As our ancestors accepted it as incumbent on them, we accept it as incumbent on us, and on our children, and all the future seed of the house of Israel who serve You. Both for our ancestors and our descendants, it is a goodly teaching, enduring forever, a constant truth, a never-changing principle.

Truly, You are Adonai our God and the God of our ancestors, our sovereign and our ancestors’ sovereign, our redeemer and our ancestors’ redeemer. You are our creator, and the rock of our deliverance, our redeemer and help. So, You are known throughout time, for there is no God but You.

You were always the help of our ancestors, a shield and deliverer for their descendants in every generation. You abide at the pinnacle of the universe—Your judgment and Your righteousness extend to the ends of the earth.

Blessed are the ones who attend to Your mitzvot and place Your teaching and words on their hearts.

Truly, You are the ruler of Your people, a mighty sovereign, who takes upon their cause.

Truly, You were at the beginning and You will be at the end—aside from You we have no ruler who can redeem and deliver.

Amen אדונָי אֲדֹנָיה יָעַלְתָה מָלַכְתָה. אֶת יְשֵׁלָה מֵעָלֶיה. אֶת יְשֵׁלָה מֵעָלֶיה אֶת יְשֵׁלָה מֵעָלֶיה אֶת יְשֵׁלָה מֵעָלֶיה אֶת יְשֵׁלָה מֵעָלֶיה אֶת יְשֵׁלָה מֵעָלֶיה אֶת יְשֵׁלָה מֵעָלֶיה אֶת יְשֵׁלָה מֵעָלֶיה אֶת יְשֵׁלָה מֵעָלֶיה אֶת יְשֵׁלָה מֵעָלֶיה אֶת יְשֵׁלָה מֵעָלֶיה אֶת יְשֵׁלָה מֵעָלֶיה אֶת יְשֵׁלָה מֵעָלֶיה אֶת יְשֵׁלָה מֵעָלֶיה אֶת יְשֵׁלָה מֵעָלֶיה אֶת יְשֵׁלָה מֵעָלֶיה אֶת יְשֵׁלָה מֵעָלֶיה אֶת יְשֵׁלָה מֵעָלֶיה אֶת יְשֵׁלָה מֵעָלֶיה אֶת יְשֵׁלָה מֵעָלֶיה אֶת יְשֵׁלָה מֵעָלֶיה אֶת יְשֵׁלָה מֵעָלֶיה אֶת יְשֵׁלָה מֵעָלֶיה אֶת יְשֵׁלָה מֵעָלֶיה אֶת יְשֵׁלָה מֵעָלֶיה אֶת יְשֵׁלָה מֵעָלֶיה אֶת יְשֵׁלָה מֵעָלֶיה אֶת יְשֵׁלָה מֵעָלֶיה אֶת יְשֵׁלָה מֵעָלֶיה אֶת יְשֵׁלָה מֵעָלֶיה אֶת יְשֵׁלָה מֵעָלֶיה אֶת יְשֵׁלָה מֵעָלֶיה אֶת יְשֵׁלָה מֵעָלֶיה אֶת יְשֵׁלָה מֵעָלֶיה אֶת יְשֵׁלָה מֵעָלֶיה אֶת יְשֵׁלָה מֵעָלֶיה אֶת יְשֵׁלָה מֵעָלֶיה אֶת יְשֵׁלָה מֵעָלֶיה אֶת יְשֵׁלָה מֵעָלֶיה אֶת יְשֵׁלָה מֵעָלֶיה אֶת יְשֵׁלָה מֵעָלֶיה אֶת יְשֵׁלָה מֵעָлֶיה אֶת יְשֵׁלָה מֵעָלֶיה אֶת יְשֵׁלָה מֵעָלֶיה אֶת יְשֵׁלָה מֵעָלֶיה אֶת יְשֵׁלָה מֵעָלֶיה אֶת יְשֵׁלָה מֵעָלֶיה A

Shabbat and Festivals • Morning Service • Sh’ma and Its Blessings
ADONAI our God, You redeemed us from Egypt
and freed us from the house of bondage.
Their firstborn You slayed, Your firstborn You redeemed.
You split the sea, You drowned the wicked,
You rescued Your beloved.
The waters engulfed their oppressors; not one of them survived.
Then they sang in praise, acclaiming God for all that had occurred.
The beloved people offered songs of thanksgiving, hymns
of praise, and blessings to the sovereign ever-living God,
who is transcendent, powerful, and awe-inspiring,
humbling the haughty, raising up the lowly,
freeing those in chains, redeeming the poor,
helping the weak, and answering God’s people when they cry out.

- Our homage is to God on high, who is ever praised.
Moses, Miriam, and the people Israel joyfully sang
this song to You:

“Who is like You, ADONAI, among the mighty!
Who is like You, adored in holiness,
revered in praise, working wonders?”

Mi khamocha ba-ilei ADONAI, mi kamokha nedar bakodesh,
sora chilot, oshe felekh.

- At the edge of the Sea, the rescued sang a new song of praise
to Your name; together, as one, they thanked You and
acclaimed Your sovereignty, saying:

“ADONAI will reign forever and ever.”

ADONAI yismichah Olam v’ed.

Stronghold of the people Israel.
Arise and help the people Israel!
Redeem, as You promised. Judah and the people Israel.
Our redeemer is called ADONAI Ta’avor,
the Holy One of the people Israel.

Tzur yisrael, kumah b’etz rat yisrael.
uf de’el kninumeka y hudah v’yisrael.
Go’alenu ADONAI Ta’avor shmo, kedosh yisrael.
Barukh utah ADONAI, who liberated the people Israel.

The Amida for Festivals is found on page 306.

Moses, Miriam, and the People Israel
The Torah is emphatic that Moses led the men and Miriam led the women, so that all the people Israel sang the song at the Sea. (See page 144.)

WHO IS LIKE YOU MI’KOMA?

The Sh’ma was preceded by the song of the angels, “Holy, holy, holy...” and now is followed by our singing a praise of God from the Song at the Sea.
Through the recitation of the Sh’ma, our song and the angels’ song become a common chorus.

ADONAI will reign
Exodus 15:18.

Israel yisrayel.
The name “Israel” is repeated four times before the conclusion of the brakhot, emphasizing the plea for the redemption of the people Israel.

Our redeemer
Isaiah 43:1.

Liberated the People Israel
This brakhot, in contrast to most, concludes with a verb in the past tense. We can properly bless God for the redemptive acts that have already occurred—
not those we still hope and pray for (Babylonian Talmud, Pesahim 108b).

Sh’ma and the Amida.
The Babylonian Talmud links this last brakhot
of the Recitation of the Sh’ma, mentioning God’s redeeming the people Israel from Egypt to the personal prayers that follow in the Amida, and recommends that there be no verbal interruption at this point (Berakhot 5b). It is as if to say that the possibility of prayer flows out of our experience of God’s love as exhibited in freeing us from slavery.
The Shabbat Morning Amidah

Prayer

Adonai, open my lips that my mouth may speak Your praise.

First B’rakhah: Our Ancestors

God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob, great, mighty, awe-inspiring, transcendent God, who acts with kindness and love, and creates all, who remembers the loving deeds of our ancestors, and who will lovingly bring a redeemer to their children’s children for the sake of divine honor.

Songs to God not only express joy; they express pain as well. There is no greater prayer than pouring out one’s heart over the distance one feels from God.

---SHALOM NOAH BERZONFY

A translation of the opening brakhot of the Amidah may be found on page 466. When a minyan is present, some communities repeat the Amidah after it is recited silently; others recite the first three blessings (including the Kaddish on page 181) aloud and the rest of the Amidah silently. The Amidah concludes on page 186.

---BABYLONIAN TALMUD

One should pray as a beggar knocking on a door and wish for a time of generosity.

---RAVI BAYAM BEN ATTAR

Prayer is for one’s soul; what nourishment is for one’s body. The blessing of one’s prayer lasts until the time of the next prayer, just as the strength derived from one meal lasts until another. During the time of prayer, one cleanses the soul of all that has passed over it and prepares it for the future.

---YUDAH HALEVI

With Patriarchs and Matriarchs:

"Barukh atah Adonai, our God and God of our ancestors, God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob, great, mighty, awe-inspiring, transcendent God, who acts with kindness and love, and creates all, who remembers the loving deeds of our ancestors, and who will lovingly bring a redeemer to their children’s children for the sake of divine honor.

On Shabbat Shu’ah we add:

Remember us for life, Sovereign who delights in life, and inscribe us in the Book of Life, for Your sake, God of life.

On Shabbat Shu’ah we add:

Remember us for life, Sovereign who delights in life, and inscribe us in the Book of Life, for Your sake, God of life.

On Shabbat Shu’ah we add:

With Patriarchs:

"Barukh atah Adonai, our God and God of our ancestors, God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob, great, mighty, awe-inspiring, transcendent God, who acts with kindness and love, and creates all, who remembers the loving deeds of our ancestors, and who will lovingly bring a redeemer to their children’s children for the sake of divine honor.

With Patriarchs:

Adonai, open my lips that my mouth may speak Your praise.

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 straight when we reach God’s name; however, for we pray to God face to face. (Babylonian Talmud, Berakhot 15a). 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 brakhot, as well as to the beginning and end of the next-to-last brakhot, which thanks God for the gift of life (Berakhot 34a). The sign " indicates the place to bow.

GOD OF ABRAHAM, EL SHADAI, God uses this language when first addressing Moses, at the burning bush (Exodus 3:6). Its inclusion here at the beginning of the Amidah may remind us of the focus and attention that we need to sense God’s presence.

REDEEMER: The text reiterates the idea of redemption, "redemption," in place of "redeem," to de-emphasize the role of the one individual in facilitating the world’s healing.

Remember us, for life. 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 hinei, "life."
God of Our Ancestors

The God we know seems to much greater, so much vaster, than the God of former generations. The universe we live in is so much more known and charted; we measure distances in light years and send persons and machines coursing through space. The lenses through which we see the small as well as the vast have forever changed our way of viewing the world, the pace at which we seek and find knowledge. To say “our God and God of our ancestors” is no longer that the One of whom we speak in such an age is the same One as the God of small-town Jewish scholars and shopkeepers of a hundred years ago. This is no small admission, no small act of humility, for such as ourselves.

—Arthur Green

Second Brachah: God’s Saving Care

You are ever mighty, Adonai—You give life to the dead—great is Your saving power:

From Shmini Atzeret until Pesah:
You cause the wind to blow and the rain to fall.

[From Pesah until Shmini Atzeret, some add:
You cause the dew to fall.]

You sustain the living through kindness and love, and with great mercy give life to the dead,
You support the falling, heal the sick,
loosen the chains of the bound,
and keep faith with those who sleep in the dust.
Who is like You, Almighty,
and who can be compared to You?
The sovereign who brings death and life
and causes redemption to flourish.

M’khail el yamin b’bede, m’hayeh melimit brahamim rabim,
someh niflim v’ot nef sim olam u’matsir asurim.
un’mayem emunucho leshelmah alo.
Mi khamokha beal g’vurot um dinmeh lash.
melekha melimit un’mayem y’matemlah y’shuvah.

On Shabbat Shu’vah we add:
Who is like You, source of compassion,
who remembers with compassion Your creatures for life?

You are faithful in bringing life to the dead.
Barukh atah Adonai, who gives life to the dead.

When the Amidah is recited silently, continue on page 136 with “Holy are You.”

Life to the Dead

A Hasidic master taught: There are parts of our- selves that have become desiccated. When we pray this blessing we should ask ourselves: “What part of myself needs to be awakened? What should I be concerned with, that I have forgotten?”

SHIELD OF ABRAHAM (ךבנה רמא) 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 Brachah.

GUARDIAN OF SARAH (ךבנה רמא) On: “the one who remembered Sarah” (after Genesis 21:6). We, who stand here today, are the fruit of God’s promise to Abraham and Sarah.

SUPPORT THE FALLING (ךבנה רמא) After Psalm 143. 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 health, 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 143:6 ("Loosen the chains of the bound"); and 1 Samuel 16 ("Brings death and life.").

GIVES LIFE TO THE DEAD (ךבנה רמא) 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.
Third Brakhah: God’s Holiness

**The Kedushah**

The Kedushah is recited only with a miyanot.

*Kadosh Barukh, Hamelech.*

We hallow Your name in this world as it is hallowed in the high heavens, as Your prophet Isaiah described:

Each cried out to the other:

“Holy, holy, holy is Adonai Yitevot, the whole world is filled with God’s glory!”

Kadosh, kadosh Adonai Yitevot, m’lo khi haaretz k’vodo.

Then in thunderous voice, rising above the chorus of seraphim, other heavenly beings call out words of blessing:

“Praised is Adonai’s glory wherever God dwells.”

Barukh kvod Adonai mimikomo.

Our sovereign, manifest Yourself from wherever You dwell, and rule over us, for we await You. When shall You rule in Zion? Let it be soon, in our day, and throughout all time. May You be exalted and sanctified in Jerusalem. Your city, from one generation to another, forever and ever. May our eyes behold Your dominion, as described in the songs of praise offered to You by David, rightfully anointed:

“Adonai will reign forever, your God, O Zion, from generation to generation. Halleluyah!”

Yisheleach Adonai, lekum, ekraham levav’oid vodyer, hailuyah.

From generation to generation we will declare Your greatness, and forever sanctify You with words of holiness. Your praise will never leave our lips. For You are God and Sovereign, great and holy.

Barukh atah Adonai, the Holy God.

On Shabbat Shuvah we substitute:

Barukh atah Adonai, the Holy Sovereign.

We continue on the next page with the Fourth Brakhah, “Moses rejoiced.”

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**HOLINESS**

Rabbi Hama the son of Rabbi Ishmael taught:

What is the meaning of the verse: “Walk in the path of Adonai, your God” (Deuteronomy 15:3)? Is it possible for a human being to behave like the Shekhinah? And hasn’t the Torah also taught us: “For Adonai your God is a consuming fire” (Deuteronomy 4:24)? Rather, the verse teaches you to imitate the virtues of the Holy One—just as the Holy One clothes the naked, as it is written, “And Adonai, God, made garments of leather, and clothed them” (Adam and Eve when they were expelled from the Garden of Eden) (Genesis 3:21), so too are you to clothe the naked. Just as the Holy One visits the sick, as it is written, “And Adonai appeared to him in the grove of Mamre [as Abraham was recovering from hiscircumcision]” (Genesis 18:1), so too are you to visit the sick. Just as the Holy One comforts the mourners, as it is written, “And it came to pass after the death of Abraham that God blessed Isaac, his son” (Genesis 25:12), so too are you to comfort the mourners. And the Holy One buried the dead as well, as it is written: “And God... buried him [Moses] in the valley” (Deuteronomy 34:6), so too are you to bury the dead.

—Babylonian Talmud
The Blessing of Shabbat
During the week we build, we fashion objects, we aim for mastery, we fulfill responsibilities, and in all the busyness we easily lose sight of ourselves. On Shabbat we may uncover what is hidden to us in our busyness—going for a walk we see a bird’s nest, the flowers in our neighbor’s garden refresh and delight us; we notice a tree planted in another century; rain is experienced as a blessing. On Shabbat we enter this world of gentleness, of appreciation, of welcome. We join in community, not of people struggling with or against one another, but of people finding each other. In giving up striving, we can move away from self-judgment, no longer bound by an accounting of failure or assertions of great success and power. We can simply “be,” enjoy, “be with.” On Shabbat our souls can remember how to be open.

On weekdays we may be too distracted, too involved with our work and our responsibilities to see the holiness of everyday life. The gift of Shabbat is that all we experience, every meal, every meeting with another person, every joy can be seen as holy.

—SHALOM NOAH BEZROFSKY

The following paragraph is said only when the entire Amidah is recited silently:
Holy are You and holy is Your name;
holy ones praise You each day.
Barukh atah Adonai, the Holy God.

On Shabbat Shuvah we substitute:
Barukh atah Adonai, the Holy Sovereign.

All continue here:
Fourth Br’akhah: The Holiness of Shabbat
Moses rejoiced in his portion,
for You called him a faithful servant.
You adorned him with a brilliant crown
when he stood before You on Mount Sinai.
He carried down two tablets of stone,
inscribed with the instruction to observe Shabbat.
Yismah moshe b’marat heklo
ki eved neeman karata lb.
K’ll tiferet b’rosho nata.
brodeo l’fanekha al har sai.
U-shninel lubot avanim harid b’yado.
vina’tu bahem shmirat shabbat.
vaken katon b’toratokha.

And it is written in Your Torah:
The people Israel shall observe Shabbat, to maintain it as an everlasting covenant throughout all generations. It is a sign
between Me and the people Israel for all time, that in six days
Adonai made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh
day, ceased from work and rested.
V’himru v’nel yisrael et ha-shabbat.
iskoot et ha-shabbat idorotam b’hit olam.
Beini u-vein b’nel yisrael et li’l’sham.
ki sheisher yamim asah Adonai et ha-shamayim vet haaretz.
u-yavom ha-shavil shavat yasinafash.

Moses rejoiced in his portion.
This passage is an addition to the Shabbat morning Amidah of unknown origin. These verses are a fragment of a larger alphabetical acrostic but only the yod through mem lines survive. (The word shirbim ["two"] was probably added later to the likhet ["cableless"] line.) This prayer is not found among the fragments of liturgical remains of the Land of Israel in the Cairo Genizah. The geonim of Babylonia recommended that it be said, but its inclusion was contested by Rashi (1040–1105, northern France), among others. Nevertheless, it was adopted soon afterward by all rabbis.

What caused Moses to be joyful? A midrash maintains that the very notion of Shabbat was first suggested by Moses in Egypt. Moses argued that even slaves needed a day of rest in order to survive and Pharaoh granted them Shabbat (Exodus Rabbah 110b). Moses was happy that his suggestion became incorporated in the Decalogue. Medieval commentators add another interpretation: that Moses was overjoyed to be God’s servant, appointed to communicate the law of Shabbat to Israel. Others say that the prayer celebrates the giving of the Torah, which Moses was happy to receive. According to a midrashic source, the Torah was given on Shabbat and the Torah is called God’s gift, motzah— the same word used in this prayer to describe Moses’ portion in the afterworld, where his share is assured (Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 10b). Some remark, regarding the future tense, that the future alluded to is not the world that is coming, but each generation in which Shabbat is observed and this prayer is recited: Moses’ joy stems from the fact that the descendants of the Israelites of his own generation (whom he instructed) continue to observe what he taught.

A FAITHFUL SERVANT
Based on Numbers 12:2, where God tells Miriam and Aaron that Moses is totally trusted (neeman) in God’s house. In Deuteronomy 34:9 Moses is referred to as “God’s servant.” And so yet another explanation of Moses’ joy is that he was happy to be called a “faithful servant.”

CROWN
When Moses descended from the mountain, his face shone with God’s light (Exodus 34:29).

But, Adonai our God, You have not given it to the nations of the world, nor, our Sovereign, have You bestowed it on idol worshippers, nor do the uncircumcised find rest on this day, for

With love, You have given Shabbat to the people Israel, the descendants of Jacob, whom You have chosen. The people who sanctify the seventh day shall feel fulfilled and shall delight in Your goodness, for You Yourself were pleased with the seventh day and sanctified it, calling it the most beloved of days, a symbol of the work of creation.

Our God and God of our ancestors, embrace our rest. Make us holy through Your mitzvot and let the Torah be our portion. Fill our lives with Your goodness and gladden us with Your deliverance. Purify our hearts to serve You truly.

Adonai our God, lovingly and willingly grant that we inherit Your holy Shabbat, that the people Israel, who make Your name holy, may find rest on this day.

Kadoshenu b’mizvotakha v’ten heleknu b’toratokha, sabneinu mi-cuvekha v’tamheinu bi-tishu’atokha,
v’sheirei Ilehuin lovd’ka be-emet,
v’hanpeleinu Adonai Aloheinu batavah u-v’razzon shabbat; kadoshka,
v’yanu vah yisrael mi-kadosh nekamka.

Barukh atah Adonai, who makes Shabbat holy.

**Fifth B’rakkhah: The Restoration of Zion**

Adonai our God, embrace Your people Israel and their prayer. Restore worship to Your sanctuary. May the prayers of the people Israel be lovingly accepted by You, and may our service always be pleasing.

On Rosh Hodesh and Yom Ha’mom we add:

Our God and God of our ancestors, may the thought of us rise up and reach You. Attend to us and accept us; hear us and respond to us. Keep us in mind, and keep in mind the thought of our ancestors, as well as the Messiah, the descendant of David: Jerusalem, Your holy city; and all Your people, the house of Israel. Respond to us with deliverance, goodness, compassion, love, life, and peace, on this


Remember us for good;
respond to us with blessing;
redeem us with life.
Show us compassion and care with words of kindness and deliverance;
have mercy on us and redeem us. Our eyes are turned to You,
for You are a compassionate and caring sovereign.

**But... You have not given it** (תּוֹךְ הָאָדָם). These phrases and the sentences that follow do not appear in early Ashkenazic liturgy. They were probably added in the High Middle Ages, due to the competition between Judaism and Christianity and the persecution in the time of the Crusades and after. A sharp distinction was thus drawn: we are the inheritors of God’s wonderful gift. Shabbat, but our persecutors do not participate with us in this special moment. Our situation today is quite different, and we welcome non-Jews to join with us in celebrating Shabbat. As the prophet Isaiah declared, Judaism’s gifts are not a secret treasure to be hoarded, but a divine blessing to be shared with all who would join in receiving them.

**To Your Sanctuary** (לְדַבְּרוֹתֵיכֶם). Literally, the “inner-chambers” as in 1 Kings 6:49, “within the Temple, on the inside.” We pray for access to the innermost reaches of the divine realm for the most intimate relationship with God. Yet this intimacy is not silence. The word `divr` connects to `davar`, “word.” In the divine, God hears our voice, and we hear that of the Divine.

**May the Thought of Us Rise Up and Reach You** (לְדַבְּרֵיהֶם בָּעָלָם). This paragraph, recited on every festival and New Moon, asks God—and by implication, us—to see the New Moon or the festival as a time to focus on renewal and redemption.
Gratitude

My instincts are from You, my body was fashioned by You, the songs I sing reach up to You, and with offerings of thanksgiving I greet You. The air I breathe is Yours, the light in my eyes reflects Your glory, my insights are formed from Your mystery, thoughts of You are guideposts of my life. Whenever my love calls to You, my heart finds You. But my mind cannot contain You. And my thoughts and conceptions can never truly picture You, or my errors and mistakes ever diminish You.

— after Yehuda Halevi

Thanking God

David prayed, “For all is from You, and from Your own hand I give to You” (I Chronicles 29:14).

May our eyes behold Your compassionate return to Zion. Barukh atah Adonai, who restores Your Divine Presence to Zion.

Sixth B’rakah: Gratitude for Life and Its Blessings

When the Amidah is recited silently, we read the following paragraph. When the Amidah is chanted aloud, the leader reads this paragraph as the congregation reads the next passage.

† We thank You, for You are ever our God and the God of our ancestors; You are the bedrock of our lives, the shield that protects us in every generation. We thank You and sing Your praises—for our lives that are in Your hands, for our souls that are under Your care, for Your miracles that accompany us each day, and for Your wonders and gifts that are with us each moment—eveling, morning, and noon.

† You are the one who is good, whose mercy is never-ending; the one who is compassionate, whose love is unceasing. We have always placed our hope in You.

This paragraph is recited by the congregation when the full Amidah is repeated by the leader, custom remaining seated and bowing slightly.

† We thank You for the ability to acknowledge You. You are our God and the God of our ancestors, the God of all flesh, our creator, and the creator of all. We offer praise and blessing to Your holy and great name, for granting us life and for sustaining us. May You continue to grant us life and sustenance. Gather our dispersed to Your holy courtyards, that we may fulfill Your mitzvot and serve You wholeheartedly, carrying out Your will. May God, the source of gratitude, be praised.

On Hanukkah we add Al Hanisim on page 106.

For all these blessings may Your name be praised and exalted, our sovereign, always and forever.

On Shabbat Shuvah we add:

And inscribe all the people of Your covenant for a good life.

May all that lives thank You always, and faithfully praise Your name forever, God of our deliverance and help.

† Barukh atah Adonai, Your name is goodness and praise of You is fitting.

In the Land of Israel in the 1st millennium, this blessing ended with the words “she-ahav” (She-ahav), meaning “You alone shall we worship in awe.” The vision of the return to Zion is a vision of a religious life not yet attained.

Your Divine Presence

The Hebrew word shekhinah has been used for centuries to refer to God’s immanence, the presence of God that is felt in the world. The word shekhinah is grammatically feminine. Accordingly, Jewish mystical tradition has tended to personify the Divine Presence as female.

We thank You for the ability to acknowledge You. You are our God and the God of our ancestors, the God of all flesh, our creator, and the creator of all. We offer praise and blessing to Your holy and great name, for granting us life and for sustaining us. May You continue to grant us life and sustenance. Gather our dispersed to Your holy courtyards, that we may fulfill Your mitzvot and serve You wholeheartedly, carrying out Your will. May God, the source of gratitude, be praised.

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Be Like the Students of Aaron

Hillel would teach: “Be like the students of Aaron: loving peace and pursuing peace, living every living being and drawing them near to the Torah.” What would Aaron do? When two people were fighting with each other, he would go and sit near the first and say, “My child, you should only know how disturbed and embarrassed your friend is about having offended you,” and thus his anger would be quieted. Then Aaron would go to the second one, sit near him and say, “My child, I’ve just spoken with your friend and you should realize how disturbed and embarrassed he is about having offended you.” And Aaron would sit with him until his anger had dissipated. When the two met, they would hug each other and kiss. That is why it is written that when Aaron died, the entire house of Israel mourned for thirty days (Numbers 33:38), but when Moses died it does not say the whole house of Israel mourned.

—Avot D’Rabbi Natan

Peace

Mekhalah said in the name of Hori: Great is peace, for regarding all the journeys of the Israelites in the desert it is written that they journeyed in contention and encamped with contention. But when they came to Mount Sinai they encamped as one, as it is written, “And Israel encamped there” (Exodus 19:1). The Torah does not say “the children of Israel” but rather “Israel” to teach you that there were no differences but they came there as one. The Holy One then said: “This is the hour that I can give the Torah to My children.”

—Leviticus Rabbah

Seventh Brachah: Prayer for Peace

During the silent Amidah, continue with בָּרוּךְ אֵת ה’ [ Barthokhah].

During the repetition of the Amidah, the leader recites בָּרוּךְ אֵת ה’ [Birkat Kohanim].

Our God and God of our ancestors,

bless us with the threefold blessing of the Torah

written by Moses Your servant,

recited by Aaron and his descendants, the kohanim,

the consecrated priests of Your people:

May Adonai bless and protect you.

So may it be God’s will. Ken yhi ratzon.

May Adonai’s countenance shine upon you

and may Adonai bestow kindness upon you.

So may it be God’s will. Ken yhi ratzon.

May Adonai’s countenance be lifted toward you

and may Adonai grant you peace.

So may it be God’s will. Ken yhi ratzon.

Grant peace to the world, goodness and blessing, grace and compassion, for us and for all the people Israel. Bless us, our creator, united as one with the light of Your presence; by that light, Adonai our God, You have given us a guide to life, the love of kindness, righteousness, blessing, compassion, life, and peace. May it please You to bless Your people Israel at every season and at all times with Your gift of peace.

Shalom bar-elim. As he went, the former saw him and said, “Peace be with you.”

The wordings of the paragraph in place of the line that follows it:

May we and the entire house of Israel be called to mind and inscribed for life, blessing, sustenance, and peace in the Book of Life. Barukh atah Adonai, who brings peace.

Barukh atah Adonai, who blesses Your people Israel with peace.

During the silent Amidah, continue with בָּרוּךְ אֵת ה’ [Birkat Kohanim], בָּרוּךְ אֵת ה’ [Barthokhah].

The blessing known as Birkat Kohanim (the Priestly Blessing), is prescribed in the Torah to be recited by Aaron and his descendants, the kohanim (priests), Mishnah Tamid (51) reports that each day after the morning Shma was recited, the prayers in the Temple concluded with the Priestly Blessing.

On Shabbat an additional blessing was added for the kohanim who began their service in the Temple that week: “May the one who dwells in this house cause love, unity, and peace to dwell among you” (Babylonian Talmud, Berakhot 2a).

Grant peace, as it is written, בָּרוּךְ אֵת ה’ — The translation of the previous paragraph is related directly to the Priestly Blessing, both in its mention of the blessings of peace and in its reference to the light of God’s countenance. Thus, the Shalom Barthokhah is traditionally recited at all services at which the Priestly Blessing occurs when the Amidah is recited in the Land of Israel. An alternative version of this blessing, Shalom Raw, is recited in the Amidah on most afternoons and in the evening, in the words of the midrash: “Great is peace, for all prayers conclude with a plea for peace” (Leviticus Rabbah 35).

To the world שִׁפְיוֹת, in accordance with the text of the 13th-century prayerbook of Sason Cohen, Conservative Movement prayerbooks insert this word (Shifiot) to emphasize that Jewish prayers for peace are universalistic and encompass the entire world.
The silent recitation of the Amidah concludes with a personal prayer or one of the following:

- "My God, keep my tongue from evil, my lips from deceit. Help me ignore those who would slander me. Let me be humble before all. Open my heart to Your Torah, that I may pursue Your mitzvot. Frustrate the designs of those who plot evil against me; nullify their schemes. Act for the sake of Your name, act for the sake of Your triumph, act for the sake of Your holiness, act for the sake of Your Torah. Answer my prayer for the deliverance of Your people. May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable to You, Adonai, my rock and my redeemer. Some have the custom of taking three steps backward and bowing at the conclusion of the Amidah, as if exiting the court of a sovereign. May the one who creates peace on high bring peace to us and to all Israel [and to all who dwell on earth]. And we say: Amen."

- "Grant me the liberating joy of Shabbat, the ability to truly taste its delights. May my heart not be weighed down by sorrow on this holy Shabbat. Fill the soul of Your servant with gladness—for to You, Adonai, I offer my entire being. Help me to increase the joys of Shabbat and to extend its joyful spirit to the other six days of the week. Show me the path of life, that I may be filled with the joy of being in Your presence, the delight of being close to You forever. May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable to You, Adonai, my rock and my redeemer. Some have the custom of taking three steps backward and bowing at the conclusion of the Amidah, as if exiting the court of a sovereign. May the one who creates peace on high bring peace to us and to all Israel [and to all who dwell on earth]. And we say: Amen."

Yihyu l’tzion imtem fi v’hevron libi lifanake Asdonai zuvari v’gevethi.
Oseh shalom bimromav hu yaseh shalom alenu v’al kol yisra’el [v’al kol yoshiv v’al telavv], v’imru amen.

When the Amidah is to be repeated aloud, we turn back to page 159. On Shabbat Hol Ha-Mo’ed, Shabbat Rosh Hashanah, and Hanukkah, we continue with Hallel on page 316.
Kaddish Shalem

Leader:
May God's great name be exalted and hallowed throughout the created world, as is God's wish. May God's sovereignty soon be established, in your lifetime and in your days, and in the days of all the house of Israel. And we say: "Amen.

Congregation and Leader:
May God's great name be acknowledged forever and ever!
Yehi shem rabah mi'varakh Elyon u-malkei avimaya.

Leader:
May the name of the Holy One be acknowledged and celebrated, lauded and worshipped, exalted and honored, extolled and acclaimed—though God, who is blessed, be'rich hu, is truly [on Shabbat Shuah we add: far] beyond all acknowledgment and praise, or any expressions of gratitude or consolation ever spoken in the world.
And we say: "Amen.

May the prayers and pleas of all Israel be accepted by their creator in heaven. And we say: "Amen.

May heaven bestow on us, and on all Israel, life and abundant and lasting peace. And we say: "Amen.

May the one who creates peace on high bring peace to us and to all Israel [and to all who dwell on earth]. And we say: "Amen.

KADISH SHALEM. Every service that features an Amidah is brought to a close with Kaddish Shalem, the complete Kaddish, so called because in addition to the words of the Kaddish recited at other times in the service, it adds a line asking God to accept our prayers: "May the prayers and pleas of all Israel be accepted by their creator in heaven." Here, the placement of Kaddish Shalem marks the end of the morning Shabbat prayers. The liturgy now moves on to the Torah service.

In a formal sense, though introduced and followed by brachot and prayers, the reading of the Torah and the Megillah constitutes study, not prayer. For the ancient rabbis, prayer was quintessentially defined by the Amidah, which we have now completed.