

Integral Kabbalah V
Morning Practice

שחרית
SHAKHARIT



The Jewish Path of Presence

III

Amidah Opening

In this session, we will look at the opening of the *Amidah* – the “Standing” prayer (also called *Shemonei Esrei*, “Eighteen,” and *HaTefilah*, “The Prayer.”)

Atzeilut – World of Origination
Amidah



B’riyah – World of Creation
Sh’ma and Her Blessings



Yetzirah – World of Formation
Pesukei D’Zimra



Assiyah – World of Action
Birkhot HaShakhar



The opening blessing three blessings of the *Amidah* broadly correspond to the three central *sefirot*, *Hesed* (Loving-Kindness), *Gevurah* (Strength) and *Tiferet* (Harmony, Beauty)...

They also correspond to the “Three Portals” of our basic practice, as well as the “Three Mother Letters” –

1
Heart
Offering, Generosity
Chest, א *Aleph*
Hesed – Lovingkindness

2
Body
Sensory Awareness
Belly, מ *Mem*
Gevurah – Strength

3
Field of Awareness
Spacial Awareness
Head, ש *Shin*
Tiferet – Harmony, Beauty

In spatial order:

3
Field of Awareness
Spatial Awareness
Head, ש *Shin*
Tiferet – Harmony, Beauty

1
Heart
Offering, Generosity
Chest, א *Aleph*
Hesed – Lovingkindness

2
Body
Sensory Awareness
Belly, מ *Mem*
Gevurah – Strength

Furthermore, within each of the first three blessings, all three *sefirot* (and more) are contained. Let's look...

The first blessing is referred to as אבות *Avot*, “Ancestors” or “Patriarchs,” because it places our relationship with the Divine within the context of the tradition, referring to the “Patriarchs” Abraham, Isaac and Jacob...

In some modern versions of the *Amidah*, like the ones found in the *siddurim* of the Reform, Conservative, Reconstructionist and Renewal movements, the *Imahot*, the “Foremothers” Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah have been added as well...

אָבוֹת ANCESTORS

Bend knees at Barukh/Blessed, bow at Atah/You, straighten at Adonai/Hashem.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ
אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב
הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל הַגִּבּוֹר וְהַנּוֹרָא אֵל עֲלִיוֹן גּוֹמֵל חַסְדִּים טוֹבִים וְקוֹנֵה הַכֹּל
וְזוֹכֵר חַסְדֵי אָבוֹת וּמְבִיא גּוֹאֵל לְבָנֵי בְנֵיהֶם לְמַעַן שְׁמוֹ בְּאַהֲבָה

Barukh Atah Adonai, Eloheinu, Velohei Avoteinu v'Imoteinu
Elohei Avraham, Elohei Yitzhak, Velohei Yaakov
Elohei Sarah, Elohei Rifka, Elohei Rakhel, Velohei Leah
Ha El HaGadol HaGibur v'HaNora, El Elyon;
Gomel hasadim tovim, v'konei hakol
V'zoher hasdei avot v'imahot,
umevi go'el livnei v'nehem l'ma'an sh'mo b'ahavah!

*Blessed are You, Hashem, Our Divinity, God of our ancestors,
God of Abraham, God of Isaac and God of Jacob;
God of Sarah, God of Rebecca, God of Rachel and God of Leah;
Supreme, Powerful and Awesome God, Transcendent Divine;
Bestowing good loving-kindness and creating all;
Who remembers the loving-kindness of our ancestors
And brings redemption to their children's children, with love.*

From Rosh Hashanah through Yom Kippur add:

זְכַרְנוּ לְחַיִּים מְלֶכֶךְ חַפֵּץ בְּחַיִּים וְכַתְּבָנוּ בְּסֵפֶר הַחַיִּים לְמַעַן אֱלֹהֵים חַיִּים
Zokhreinu l'hayim, Melekh hafetz bahayim

v'khotveinu l'sefer hahayim l'ma'ankha Elohim Hayim!
Remember us for life, King Who desires life;
and inscribe us in the Book of Life, for Your sake, Living Divinity!

מֶלֶךְ עֹזֵר וּמוֹשִׁיעַ וּמַגִּין: בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה מֶגֶן אַבְרָהָם
Melekh, Ozer, uMoshiah uMagein! Barukh Atah Adonai, Magein Avraham!
Sovereign, Helper, Savior and Shield!
Blessed are You, Hashem, Shield of Abraham!

The blessing begins by enumerating the Patriarchs, or the Patriarchs and Matriarchs:

אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב
Elohei Avraham, Elohei Yitzhak, Velohei Yaakov
God of Abraham, God of Isaac and God of Jacob

The *Avot* are the three *sefirot*, and when we add the *Imahot*, we get all seven of the lower *sefirot*...

Barukh Atah Adonai, Eloheinu, Velohei Avoteinu v'Imoteinu
Elohei Avraham, Elohei Yitzhak, Velohei Yaakov
Elohei Sarah, Elohei Rifka, Elohei Rakhel, Velohei Leah

Blessed are You, Hashem, Our Divinity,
God of our ancestors (Fathers and Mothers)
God of Abraham, God of Isaac and God of Jacob;
God of Sarah, God of Rebecca, God of Rachel and God of Leah

If all the *sefirot* are mentioned, what is it that characterizes this first blessing primarily as *Hesed*?

The hint is near the end of the blessing:

גוֹמֵל חֲסָדִים טוֹבִים וְקוֹנֵה הַכֹּל
Gomel hasadim tovim, v'konei hakol
Bestowing good loving-kindness and creating all

In other words, all creation is rooted in *Hesed*; Being is fundamentally an act of lovingkindness...

וְזוֹכֵר חֲסֵדֵי אֲבוֹת וּמִבִּיא גּוֹאֵל לְבְנֵי בְנֵיהֶם לְמַעַן שְׂמוֹ בְּאַהֲבָה

V'zoher *hasdei avot v'imahot*,
umevi go'el livnei v'nehem l'ma'an sh'mo b'ahavah!

*Who remembers the loving-kindness of our ancestors
And brings redemption to their children's children, with love...*

In other words, even though the ancestors represent different qualities, *Hesed* being only one of them, nevertheless *hesed* and *ahavah*, kindness and love, are the root of all of them...

אַתָּה גִּבּוֹר לְעוֹלָם אֲדֹנָי מְחַיֶּה מֵתִים אַתָּה רַב לְהוֹשִׁיעַ
Atah gibur l'olam Adonai, m'hayei meitim Atah, rav l'hoshia!
*You are the One Eternal Power,
bringing life to the lifeless, great in salvation!*

From after Sukkot until Pesakh:

מַשִּׁיב הַרוּחַ וּמוֹרִיד הַגֶּשֶׁם Mashiv HaRuakh Umorid HaGeshem
Who causes the wind to blow and the reain to fall!

From Pesakh until Sukkot:

מוֹרִיד הַטַּל Morid HaTal – *Who causes the dew to descend!*

מְכַלְכֵּל חַיִּים בְּחֶסֶד מְחַיֶּה מֵתִים בְּרַחֲמִים רַבִּים
סוֹמֵךְ נוֹפְלִים וְרוֹפֵא חוֹלִים וּמַתִּיר אֲסוּרִים
וּמְקַיֵּם אֱמוּנָתוֹ לִישְׁנֵי עָפָר,
מִי כְמוֹךָ בְּעַל גְּבוּרוֹת וּמִי דוֹמֶה לָךְ מְלֵךְ יִמִּית וּמְחַיֶּה וּמְצַמֵּחַ יְשׁוּעָה
M'khalkei *hayim b'hesed*, m'hayei meitim b'rakhamim rabim
Somekh noflim v'rofei *holim*, umatir asurim
Um'kayem emunato lishenei afar
Mi Khamokha Ba'al Gevurot umi domei Lakh?

Melekh meimit um'hayei umatzmiyakh yeshuah!
*Sustainer the living with kindness,
Giver of life to the lifeless with great compassion
Supporter the fallen, Healer the sick, and Releaser the bound.
Who is like You, who causes death
And restores life and makes salvation sprout?
Sustainer in faithfulness to those who sleep in the dust!
Who is like You, Master of All Powers, and Who can be compared to you?
King who causes death and restores life and makes salvation sprout!*

From Rosh Hashanah through Yom Kippur add:

מִי כְמוֹךָ אֱב הָרַחֲמִים זֹכֵר יְצוּרֵי הַחַיִּים בְּרַחֲמִים
Mi Khamokha Av HaRakhamim, zokher y'tzurav l'hayim tovim?
Who is like You, Merciful One, who remembers creation for good life!

וְנִאֲמַן אַתָּה לְהַחְיֹת מֵתִים: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה מְחַיֵּה הַמֵּתִים
V'ne'eman Atah l'hahayot meitim!
Barukh Atah Adonai, M'hayei hameitim!
*And You Faithfully enliven the lifeless!
Blessed are You, Hashem, Who gives life to the lifeless!*

The character of this second blessing of the *Amidah* is clear right from the beginning:

אַתָּה גִבּוֹר לְעוֹלָם אֲדֹנָי מְחַיֵּה מֵתִים אַתָּה רַב לְהוֹשִׁיעַ
Atah gibur l'olam Adonai, m'hayei meitim Atah, rav l'hoshia!
*You are the One Eternal Power
Enlivening the lifeless, great in salvation!*

אַתָּה גִבּוֹר
Atah gibur

Literally, “You are strong” – *Gevurah*

מְחַיֵּה מֵתִים
m'hayei meitim
“Enlivening the lifeless”

This is the essence of *Gevurah*, which means “strength,” and also “boundaries.” The act of strengthening ourselves (through exercise, or strengthening our minds through learning), is an act of strengthening of our aliveness...

Paradoxically, *Gevurah* is also associated with death, since death is the *limitation* or *boundary* of life...

Life and death, of course, are not separate, but are necessary for each other:

מֶלֶךְ מֵמִית וּמְחַיֶּה וּמְצַמֵּחַ יְשׁוּעָה
Melekh meimit um'hayei umatzmiyakh yeshuah!
*Sovereign who causes death and restores life
and makes salvation sprout!*

Meaning: Death is necessary for new life to “sprout” – this is *yeshua*, “salvation” from death!

The third blessing is much shorter:

אַתָּה קָדוֹשׁ וְשִׁמְךָ קָדוֹשׁ וְקְדוּשִׁים בְּכָל־יּוֹם הַלְלוּךָ סְלָה
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה הָאֵל הַקָּדוֹשׁ

Atah Kadosh, v'Shimkha Kadosh, u'kedushim b'khol yom y'halelukha, sela!
Barukh Atah Adonai, HaEl HaKadosh!

*You are holy and Your Name is holy and holy beings praise You every day, forever.
Blessed are You, Hashem, the Holy Divine One!*

Still, we have all three *sefirot* included here as well:

אַתָּה קָדוֹשׁ *Atah Kadosh* – “You are holy”

The key word is *Atah*, “You”

Hesed is relation to the “You”...

וְשִׁמְךָ קָדוֹשׁ v'*Shimkha Kadosh* – “and Your Name is holy”

The *Shem*/Name is a particular form which embodies an idea, corresponding to *Gevurah*...

וְקְדוּשִׁים בְּכָל-יוֹם יְהַלְלוּךָ סְלָה
u'kedushim b'khol yom y'halelukha, sela!
...and holy beings praise You every day, forever.

The image here is one of a choir of angels, praising with singing and music, corresponding to *Tiferet*, which is “beauty” or “harmony,” the *sefirah* which corresponds to this third blessing as a whole.

Why?

Because the angels making music are *kedushim*, “holy ones,” and each of three different qualities are nevertheless all expressions of *kedushah*, “holiness”...

אַתָּה קְדוֹשׁ וְשִׁמְךָ קְדוֹשׁ וְקְדוּשִׁים בְּכָל-יוֹם יְהַלְלוּךָ סְלָה

Atah **Kadosh**, v'Shimkha **Kadosh**, u'**kedushim** b'khol yom y'halelukha, sela!

*You are **holy** and Your Name is **holy** and **holy** beings praise You every day, forever...*

This thrice mentioning of *kadosh* parallels not only the three *sefirot*, but also the *Kedushah* liturgy we learned about in the last session:

קְדוֹשׁ קְדוֹשׁ קְדוֹשׁ יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת מְלֵא כָּל הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדוֹ
Kadosh, Kadosh, Kadosh, Adonai Tzeva'ot,
M'lo khol ha'aretz k'vodo!
*Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of All Forces,
The whole earth is filled with the Divine Presence!*

There is a traditional practice of each individual praying the *Amidah* quietly and individually, followed by the *hazzan* repeating the entire *Amidah* out loud, while the congregation listens and responds *amen* to each blessing....

When the repetition happens, the *hazzan* replaces the third blessing with another version of the *Kedushah*...

In cases when there is not enough time for the both the silent *Amidah* and its repetition, there is the practice of making a *Heikha Kedushah*, which means that rather than *davening* the whole thing silently and then out-loud, the *hazzan daven*s the first three blessings out-loud with the *Kedushah* while the congregation does

the various responses, and then each individual *davens* the rest of the *Amidah* silently...

This way of *davening* the *Amidah* was adapted by the Reform Movement as the common practice, and we too will make use of the *Heikha* Kedushah in order to keep the practice within a shorter time frame, without sacrificing effectiveness.

However, when you *daven* alone, you would simply skip the *Kedushah*.

Let's try...

First, let's review the four different external skills of *davening*:

1. Chanting together (this is sometimes done in unison, sometimes more chaotically)
2. Chanting silently
3. Leader leading the group with solo melodies, as well as the group responding to the leader (*shliakh tzibur* – prayer leader, or *hazzan* – prayer singer).
4. Singing melodies together

(Reminder: the internal skills are the Seven Keys – Meditation, Prayer, Affirmation, Movement, Intention, Concentration and Visualization. We will be practicing all of these as well.)

KEDUSHAH

The *Kedushah* is chanted only with a *minyán*, either on the repetition or *Heikha Kedushah*

Congregation recites, *Hazzan* repeats:

נְקַדִּישׁ אֶת־שִׁמְךָ בְּעוֹלָם כְּשֵׁם שֶׁמַּקְדִּישִׁים אוֹתוֹ בְּשָׁמַי מָרוֹם.

בְּכַתוּב עַל־יַד נְבִיאָךְ וְקָרָא זֶה אֶל־זֶה וְאָמַר

N'kadesh et Shimkha ba'olam, k'shem shemakdishim oto bishmei marom

Kakatuv al yad n'viyekha v'kara zeh el zeh v'amar:

We will sanctify Your Name in the world, as they sanctify It in the heavens above, as is written by the hand of Your prophet – “And they called one to another, and said...”

Congregation recites, *Hazzan* repeats:

קְדוֹשׁ קְדוֹשׁ קְדוֹשׁ יְהוָה יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת מְלֵא כָּל הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדוֹ

Kadosh, Kadosh, Kadosh, Adonai Tzeva'ot, m'lo khol ha'aretz k'vodo!

Holy Holy Holy is the Lord of All Forces,

The whole earth is filled with the Divine Presence!

Hazzan:

לְעַמְתָּם בְּרוּךְ יְאֹמְרוּ L'umatam barukh yomeiru— *Facing them, say: Bless!*

Congregation recites, *Hazzan* repeats:

בְּרוּךְ כְּבוֹד־יְהוָה מִמְּקוֹמוֹ

Barukh K'vod Adonai miM'komo! — *Blessed is the Divine Presence from Its Place!*

Hazzan:

וּבְדִבְרֵי קִדְשְׁךָ כְּתוּב לְאֹמַר Uv'divrei Kodshekha katuv lemor:

In Your holy words it is written:

Congregation recites, *Hazzan* repeats:

יִמְלֹךְ יְהוָה לְעוֹלָם אֱלֹהֵינוּ צִיּוֹן לְדוֹר וָדוֹר הַלְלוּיָהּ

Yimlokh Adonai le'olam, Elohayikh Tziyon l'dor vador, Halleluyah!

Hashem will reign forever; Your God, Zion, throughout all generations! Praise Yah!

Hazzan:

לְדוֹר וָדוֹר נִגִּיד גְּדֻלָּתְךָ וְלִנְצַח נִצְחֵיךָ קִדְשְׁתָּךְ נְקַדִּישׁ

וְשִׁבְחָךְ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִפִּינוּ לֹא יִמוּשׁ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד כִּי אֵל מְלֹךְ גָּדוֹל וְקְדוֹשׁ אַתָּה:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה הָאֵל הַקְּדוֹשׁ אָמֵן Amein – Cong.

From generation to generation we will declare Your greatness,

and to all eternity, we will sanctify Your holiness, and Your praise, our God, will not depart from our mouth forever and ever; because You are the Almighty Who is King; Great, and Holy. Blessed are You, Hashem, the Divine, the Holy!