


# Jewish Literacy # 11

## Prayer and the Prayerbook

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## Jewish Prayer

- **Types of Jewish Prayer**
  - Blessings
  - Liturgy - "Services"
  - Individual Prayer
- **Blessings**
  - Begin with traditional opening: "Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech ha-olam" then one adds either:
    - a blessing over an event or food "boray p'rei ha-gafen" or "ha-motzie lechem min ha-haretz"
    - or if for a mitzvah, add the words "asher kidshanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu ..." and then name the mitzvah e.g. "I'hadlik ner shel shabbat"
  - The form of the blessing was "minted" by the rabbis of the Talmud
  - Blessings (and prayers) can be said in any language, but Hebrew is preferred.
  - See "The Learner's Guide to Blessings"

## The Learners' Guide to Blessings

1. The opening...  
 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ הוֹה, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם...  
*Ba-ruch a-ta Adonai, Eh-lo-hei-nu meh-lech ha-o-lam...*  
 Blessed are You, Yahweh/My Lord/Adonai/Ha-Shem, Our God, King of the Universe...
2. For a mitzvah.  
 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ הוֹה, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר  
 קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ...  
*Ba-ruch a-ta Adonai, Eh-lo-hei-nu meh-lech ha-o-lam, a-she-er ki-d'sha-nu b'mitz-vo-tav v'tzi-vo-nu...*  
 Blessed are You, Adonai, Our God, King of the Universe, who has made us holy with His commandments and commands us to...
3. Foods-bread  
 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ הוֹה, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַמוֹצֵא  
 לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ.  
*Ba-ruch a-ta Adonai, Eh-lo-hei-nu meh-lech ha-o-lam, ha-mo-tzi le-chem min ha-a-retz.*  
 Blessed are You, Adonai, Our God, King of the Universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.

## The Learners' Guide to Blessings

4. Foods-wine  
 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ הוֹה, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי  
 הַגֶּפֶן.  
*Ba-ruch a-ta Adonai, Eh-lo-hei-nu meh-lech ha-o-lam, bo-ray p'ri ha-ga-fen.*  
 Blessed are You, Adonai, Our God, King of the Universe, creator of the fruit of the vine.
5. Foods-other  
 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ הוֹה, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהַכֹּל  
 נִהְיָ בְּדַבְּרוֹ.  
*Ba-ruch a-ta Adonai, Eh-lo-hei-nu meh-lech ha-o-lam, she-ha-kol nee-h'yeh beed-va-roh.*  
 Blessed are You, Adonai, Our God, King of the Universe, whose word caused everything into being.
6. Witness: Natural Phenomena  
 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ הוֹה, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, עֹשֶׂה מַעֲשֵׂה  
 בְּרֵאשִׁית.  
*Ba-ruch a-ta Adonai, Eh-lo-hei-nu meh-lech ha-o-lam, o-she ma-a-say v'ray-sheet.*  
 Blessed are You, Adonai, Our God, King of the Universe, who performs the work of creation.
7. The Shehekiyanu: On a special event, new clothes, furniture, seeing a friend after a lapse of 30 days, a holiday, etc.  
 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ הוֹה, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהֵחֵינּוּ  
 וְקִמְּנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמַן תְּזָה.  
*Ba-ruch a-ta Adonai, Eh-lo-hei-nu meh-lech ha-o-lam, she-hech-hey-yu-nu v'key-y'ma-nu v'hee-gee-yu-nu laz-man ha-zeh.*  
 Blessed are You, Adonai, Our God, King of the Universe, who has kept us alive, and sustained us and enabled us to reach this occasion.

## The Learners' Guide to Blessings

8. Mitzvot. Lighting Shabbat (or Chanukah) Candles  
 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָהוָה, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר  
 קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל שַׁבָּת  
 (חֲנֻכָּה).  
*Ba-ruch a-ta Adonai, Eh-lo-hei-nu meh-tech ha-o-lam, a-sheh ki-d'sha-nu b'mitz-vo-tav  
 v'tzi-va-nu l'had-lik ner shel Shabbat (Cha-nu-kah).*  
 Blessed are You, Adonai, Our God, King of the Universe, Who has made us holy with  
 His commandments and commands us to light the lights of Shabbat (Chanukah).
9. Mitzvot: For Studying Torah or any Jewish Texts:  
 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָהוָה, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר  
 קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְעִסּוֹק בְּדַבְרֵי תוֹרָה.  
*Ba-ruch a-ta Adonai, Eh-lo-hei-nu meh-tech ha-o-lam, a-sheh ki-d'sha-nu b'mitz-vo-tav  
 v'tzi-va-nu la-a-sak b'div-rey Torah.*  
 Blessed are You, Adonai, Our God, King of the Universe, Who has made us holy with  
 His commandments and commands us to occupy ourselves in words of Torah.
10. Before putting on a Tallit  
 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָהוָה, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר  
 קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְהִתְעַטֵּף בְּצִיצֵת.  
*Ba-ruch a-ta Adonai, Eh-lo-hei-nu meh-tech ha-o-lam, a-sheh ki-d'sha-nu b'mitz-vo-tav  
 v'tzi-va-nu l'hit-a-tayf bah-tzee-tzet.*  
 Blessed are You, Adonai, Our God, King of the Universe, Who has made us holy with  
 His commandments and commands us to enwrap ourselves with the fringes.

## Liturgy & Services

### The Liturgy and Services

- The *Siddur* (means “arranged in order”) is the evolving collection of prayers and ritual.
- Prayers as old as the Torah and as new as those for the new State of Israel
- This is where theology hits the road.
  - Each movement has its own prayer book
  - Reform changes in the prayer book
  - Newest Reform prayer book – *Mishkan Tefillah*
- The Service is the remnant of the sacrificial service.
  - In Temple times, we had 3 sacrifices per day, now we have 3 prayer services per day.
  - In Temple times, the priests said the prayers, today everyone says the prayers

## Liturgy & Services

- The structure of every service is basically the same (morning, afternoon, evening, weekday, Shabbat, High Holy Day) with important differences depending on the day and occasion. See “Structure” sheet.
- For certain prayers (*bar'chu*, *kaddish*, reading of Torah), a *minyana* is required (10 adult Jews).
- The key prayers/sections of the service:
  - Kabblat Shabbat* welcoming the Sabbath
  - Bar'chu*: the call to worship
  - Shema* and her blessings: the best known prayer
  - Amidah* or *Tefillah* (means “standing” or “prayer”): the central prayer of the service
    - Took the place of animal sacrifice
    - contains 19 sections on weekdays (even though its called the *Shemoneh Esrei* meaning “eighteen”)
    - contains 6 sections on Shabbat
    - See “Blessings of the *Shemoneh Esrei*” handout
  - Reading of the Torah
  - Aleinu*
  - Mourners' *Kaddish*

Differences between Orthodox, Conservative, Reform services.

## The Structure of the Friday Night/Saturday Morning Service

(page references are to Mishkan T'filah)

- Welcoming Shabbat or *Kabblat Shabbat* (pgs: 130-143, 181-207)**
  - Psalms (Friday)
  - Lecha Dodi (Friday)
  - Opening Prayers & Morning Blessings (Saturday)
- Reader's *Kaddish* or *Hatzie Kaddish* (pgs: 144, 224) serves as a divider to begin the actual service.**
- The Shema and its Blessings: Key prayers are:**
  - The *Bar'chu* or call to prayer (pgs: 146, 226)
  - The Creation prayer or *Maariv Araviv* (pgs: 148) on Friday (and all) evenings
    - On Saturday (and all) mornings, the Creation prayer is the *Yotzer* (pg: 228)
  - The “God Loves Us” prayer or *Ahavat Olam* (150) on Friday (and all) evenings
    - On Saturday morning, this is *Ahavah Rabah* (230)
  - The *Shema* and *V'ahavta* (same in all services) (pgs: 152-154, 232-234)
  - The Redemption Prayer including the Song of the Sea or *Mi-cha Mo-cha* (pgs: 158, 238, 240 ) note slightly different wording on Saturday (and all) mornings.
  - The Evening Prayer (*Hashkiveinu*) (pg. 160)
  - Covenant of Shabbat or *V'shamru* (162)

## The Structure of the Friday Night/Saturday Morning Service

- **The Tefillah or Amidah consists of 19 sections on weekdays and only 7 on Shabbat**
  - God of All Generations or *Avot v'Emahot* (pgs: 166, 244)
  - God's Power or *Givurot* (pgs: 168, 128246)
  - The Holiness of God's Name & or *Kiddusha* Note: longer daytime version (pgs: 170, 248)
  - The Holiness of the day (Shabbat) *Kiddushat Ha-Yom* and acceptance of our Sabbath rest including *Yism 'chu/V'shamru* on Saturday morning (this one short section takes the place of 13 sections on weekdays) (pgs: 172, 250-252)
  - For Worship or *Avodah* (pgs: 174, 254)
  - Thanksgiving or *Hoduah* (pgs: 176, 256)
  - Peace or *Shalom Rav* (pgs: 178) *Sim Shalom* on Saturday morning (258).
- **Conclusion of Amidah: Silent Prayer (pgs: 180, 260)**
- **Torah Service (note: traditionally Saturday morning) (pgs: 362-375)**
- ***Aleinu* (pgs: 586-589)**
- **Mourner's Kaddish (pg: 598)**

## Individual Prayer

### Individual Prayer

- Can take many forms:
  - Talking to God - and waiting for an answer!
  - Meditation
  - Contemplation
  - Reciting the "*Shema*" or other parts of the service.
- There is more to Judaism than liturgy – your individual prayer is traditional and important to your spiritual life.
  - Being in relationship with God: liturgy may be compared with the Hallmark card. Your prayers are the notes you write in the card and/or the letters that you write.
  - It's not so much that God needs our prayers, but that we need to be the kind of people that pray.

## Individual Prayer

- Set a regular time for prayer. Morning and evening *Shema* is a perfect starting place.
- Don't let your scientific, logical, left-brain doubts about God (which are perfectly reasonable and OK) interfere with your prayer life and relationship with God.
- Prayer and spirituality cannot only be learned from books.
  - In *Healing into Life and Death*, Stephen Levine relates: "[There was] an intellectual youth who felt he could learn everything from books. He read about the stars and became an astronomer, he read about history and became an historian, he read about swimming and drowned."
- "Don't Just Sit There – Pray Something!"
  - It doesn't matter where you are
  - It only matters what direction you headed in.
  - Do something – do more – be consistent!
  - May God bless us all!