



The Lord's Prayer -

The Lord's Prayer in Hebrew - Part 1

אָבִינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמַיִם יְתְקַדֵּשׁ שְׁמֶךָ

“Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name” (Matthew 6:9)



Who are you?

Before you can begin to pray as Jesus intended, you must settle the question of whether God is your Father, and you are His child. Nothing is more important. Are you a child of God? Are you part of his family, his *mishpachah*? Just as you were born physically into an earthly family, so Jesus said you must be reborn spiritually into a spiritual family (John 1:12, 3:3). This happens by faith -- by believing that God loves you as a Father and cares for you as His child.

אָבִינוּ שְׁבַשְׁמַיִם

Shebashamayim Avinu

Who is God?

Your Father is “in heaven.” He inhabits eternity and is enthroned above the highest reach of the cosmos (Deut. 26:15, 1 Ki 8:30). But though He is exalted over all things, as Creator and LORD He knows the number of hairs on your head (Matt. 10:30) and what things you have need of before you ask Him (Matt. 6:8). Your Father’s greatness spans all the cosmos and yet is conscious of the smallest details of your life. God cares for you as His child.



Sanctifying the Name

You are to understand that your Father's Name is to be "hallowed," or set apart as sacred. Among other things, this means that you trust the Father by obeying His commandments and making daily choices in the light of His reality.

יְתַקְדֵּשׁ שִׁמְךָ
yitkadesh shimkha

You do not "profane" your Father's Name by witnessing to the world around you that He is not who is really is -- namely, the LORD to whom every knee shall bow and every tongue confess. You are to bear witness to His Name by sanctifying it, by honoring it, and by living in the awe of God every moment of your time of sojourn here on earth.

When you truly understand yourself as the Father's child, your life will be conformed into the image of his Son (Rom. 8:29).

Transliteration:

						←(2)←(1)
שְׁמֶךָ	יְתַקְדֵּשׁ	יְתַקְדֵּשׁ	יְתַקְדֵּשׁ	יְתַקְדֵּשׁ	יְתַקְדֵּשׁ	אָבִינוּ
(2) (1)	(3) (2) (1)	(5) (4) (3) (2) (1)	(3) (2) (1)			
sheem·khah	yeet·kad·desh	she·ba·shah·ma·yeem	a·vee·noo			
your Name	be sanctified	Who is in heaven	Our Father			

Avinu shebashamayim, yitkadesh shimkhah.



Note about the Hebrew and Greek Texts for the LORD's Prayer

The New Testament was written in Koine Greek, of course, and that's the starting point for serious exegesis of its writings. The Hebrew translation used here comes from the Salkinson-Ginsburg Hebrew New Testament (1999 edition) which I compared to F. Delitzsch's older Hebrew translation of the Brit Chadashah as well as with the Robinson-Pierpont Majority Text (1995), the Westcott and Hort NT, and the Friberg NT (UBS3/4). Others have done similar work (i.e., attempting to reconstruct the Hebrew from the Greek), such as Brad Young and David Bivins of the Jerusalem School of Synoptic Research.

The LORD Jesus undoubtedly taught this prayer to His disciples in Hebrew, since Hebrew was the language of the synagogue and temple of His day, and Jesus Himself "made aliyah" by performing Torah readings at the synagogues (Luke 4:16). Jesus also revealed Himself to Paul in Hebrew language during Paul's dramatic conversion experience (Acts 26:14).

The Hebraic mindset informs the intent of the New Testament writers, and we may fall into isogesis if we overlook this foundational truth. In the West we have often imported Greek concepts into the text of Scripture, forgetting that the New Testament documents were all written by Jews who were steeped in Jewish culture. If you need any background information on that idea, I would suggest "Our Father Abraham" by Marv Wilson or Jim Gerrish's book, "Does God Play Favorites?"

In fact there is historical evidence that Matthew wrote his gospel in Hebrew. External evidence for this reaches as far back as Papias of Hierapolis, of the second century CE. Eusebius quoted Papias:

"Matthew collected the oracles in the Hebrew language"
(*The Ecclesiastical History*, III, XXXIX, 16).

This is corroborated later in the Babylonian Talmud (*Shabbat 116a*), the Jerusalem Talmud (*Shabbat 15c*), as well as the Tosefta (*Shabbat 13:5*), where debate rages concerning the destruction of the scrolls of the New Testament. The question asked was, "Should they be burned since they contain the divine Name (i.e., YHVH)?" This debate clearly documents that the gospel was extant in Hebrew in early church history.

Moreover, Jerome, the translator of the Latin Vulgate (around 400 A.D.) and considered the greatest Hebrew scholar of the late Roman Imperial age, wrote the following in his *De Viris Illustribus* (Of Illustrious Men):

"Matthew, also called Levi, apostle and aforesaid publican, composed a gospel of Christ at first published in Judea in Hebrew for the sake of those of the circumcision who believed, but this was afterwards translated into Greek though by what author is uncertain. The Hebrew itself has been preserved until the present day in the library at Caesarea which Pamphilus so diligently gathered. I have also had the opportunity of having the volume described to me by the Nazarenes of Beroea, a city of Syria, who use it. In this it is to be noted that wherever the Evangelist, whether on his own account or in the person of our Lord the Savior quotes the testimony of the Old Testament he does not follow the authority of the translators of the Septuagint but the Hebrew. Wherefore these two forms exist, "Out of Egypt have I called my son," and "for he shall be called a Nazarene."



The Lord's Prayer -

The Lord's Prayer in Hebrew - Part 2

תָּבֹא מַלְכוּתְךָ יַעֲשֶׂה רְצוֹנְךָ בָּאָרֶץ כַּאֲשֶׁר נַעֲשֶׂה בַשָּׁמַיִם

"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10)



"Tavo Malkhutekha," Thy Kingdom come.

The Kingdom of God is the manifestation of the rule of God over the hearts of men. Thus when ancient Israel wanted a king like the other nations, the LORD reproached them for not wanting His rule within their hearts (see 1 Samuel 8:6-7). Later, the prophet Daniel foretold of the succession of world kingdoms destined to be destroyed by "a kingdom of God" that shall last forever (see Daniel 2:44), where the "Son of Man" (*bar enosh*) is given dominion, and glory, and an everlasting and indestructible kingdom (Daniel 7:14). Isaiah likewise foretold of the coming Prince of Peace (*sar shalom*) upon whose shoulders the reign of God would rest (Isaiah 9:6).

מַלְכוּת
הַשָּׁמַיִם

*The Kingdom
of Heaven*

When Jesus began to preach, He declared Himself as the "Son of Man" who came to proclaim that the Kingdom of God was at hand (Matthew 3:2, 4:17, etc.).

He taught that this Kingdom "cometh not by observation" (Luke 17:20), but is "within you" (Luke 17:21), meaning that it is evidenced by the working of faith as you submit to the authority of the LORD. Identifying yourself as a subject of the King means that you are actively living out His reign and glory in your daily life, and sharing the rule of God with others you encounter.



"Ye'aseh Retsonekha," Thy will be done.

This phrase parallels the first, for being a subject in the Kingdom of God means doing the will of the Sovereign of the Kingdom. This is decidedly not an appeal for Stoic or passive resignation in the face of frustration or disappointment, since the modifying phrase, "on earth as it is in heaven" precludes this interpretation. Rather, "Thy will be done" involves active consecration or dedication to the cause of promoting the reign of God within our hearts.



We fulfill the will of the LORD when we keep His *mitzvot* (1 John 2:3-4) and proclaim His Salvation (Matthew 28:19-20).

"Ba'arets ka'asher na'asah vashamayim," on earth, as it is in heaven

God's kingdom is fully established in heaven, where His perfect rule is forever unchallenged. Yet His authority is not regarded here on earth, where the kingdoms of this world will ultimately be dashed in pieces like a potter's vessel (Psalm 2), and those who disobey His commandments will be subject to everlasting punishment (Matthew 25:31-46).

Are you willing to obey the Rule of the LORD by sanctifying yourself through faith in Him? The choice is ultimately yours.

Transliteration:

← (2) ← (1)

תָּ בֹא (4) (3) (2) (1)	יְ אֶ שֶׁה (3) (2) (1)	תְּ כֹ מַלְכֹ (4) (3) (2) (1)	תָּ וּבֹ (2) (1)
re-tsoh-ne-kha	ye-'a-seh	mal-khoo-te-kha	tah-voh
Thy will	be done	Thy Kingdom	let come

יִ מַ שָׁ (4) (3) (2) (1)	יְ אֶ שֶׁה (3) (2) (1)	שֶׁ כֹ אֶ (3) (2) (1)	בָּ אֶ רֶצֶן (3) (2) (1)
va-shah-ma-yeem	na-'a-sah	ka-'a-sher	bah-'ah-rets
in heaven	it is done	as	on earth



The Lord's Prayer -

The Lord's Prayer in Hebrew - Part 3

תן-לנו היום לחם חקנו

"Give us this day our daily bread." (Matthew 6:11)



מלכות
השמים

*The Kingdom
of Heaven*

"Ten lanu...," Give to us!

It might seem odd that Jesus taught us to use the imperative of the verb "give!" when addressing the Father, but it is undeniably part of the text, and might best be understood as the appeal of a child who is utterly dependent upon his father to provide for his needs. God Himself has created in us all the hunger and thirst for life, and a child without such desire would be a sickly child indeed.

"Haiyom...," this day

The appeal, however, is qualified by the need for "this day." The Father's manna is given to us one day at a time. "Each one is to gather as much as he needs... No one is to keep any of it until morning" (Exodus 16:16,19). We are to live as the birds of the air or the lilies of the field, taking no thought for the morrow, trusting in God's provision for the needs of our lives.

"Lechem chukeinu," our daily bread.

This phrase likewise occurs in Proverbs 30:8, where it is written, "Give me neither poverty nor riches, but provide me with my daily bread (*lechem chuki*)." The Hebrew here suggests food that is given by ordinance (*chok*), but the verb might also derive from a related Hebrew verb (*chakok*) meaning "to engrave." Since God has created us with an "engraved" hunger and thirst, we must ultimately look to Him for our sustenance and life.





“Kingdom bread” is the really the Bread of Life, which Jesus said truly satisfies our inner hunger. As we seek first His Kingdom (“Thy Kingdom come”) and His Righteousness (“Thy will be done”), we are assured that the needs for this day of kingdom life will indeed be met (Matthew 6:33-34).

Transliteration:

נֹן	כֵּי	נַחְמֵךְ	לֶחֶם	הַיּוֹם	נֹן	לָנוּ	-	תֵּן
(3)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)
chuk- kei -nu	le -chem	hai-yom	la -nu	ten				
our daily bread		this day	give to us					

Ten-lanu haiyom lechem chukeinu.



The Lord's Prayer -

The Lord's Prayer in Hebrew - Part 4

וּסְלַח-לָנוּ אֶת-אֲשַׁמֹּתֵינוּ כַּאֲשֶׁר סְלַחְתָּם לְאִשְׁרֵי אֲשַׁמּוּ לָנוּ

“And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.” (Matthew 6:12)



“Forgive us ... as we forgive...”, which means that our forgiveness of others is the measure of our own state of forgiveness, “for with the measure you use it will be measured back to you” (Luke 6:38).

If we cling to resentment, bitterness, or a desire for revenge, we appeal to principles that alienate us from reconciliation with others. But if we intend to have God be the Judge of others, we appeal to Him to be our own Judge as well.

סְלִיחָה
Selichah
Forgiveness



This petition functions as a mirror for our hearts: as we forgive others who have sinned against us, so we apprehend the forgiveness of the LORD. Or, to put it the other way, our experience of the forgiveness of the LORD is revealed in the way we treat others who have wronged us.

If we merely hear this truth but fail to practice it, we are like someone who looks at their face in a mirror but soon forgets what they saw, thereby exempting themselves from the truth of their own condition (James 1:22-24).

If we have an unforgiving spirit toward others, we will not be forgiven (Matthew 6:15); if we are judgmental toward them, we ourselves will be put on trial; if we are cruel and ungiuing toward them, we will experience life as hellish, miserable and mean.



This reciprocal principle of Kingdom life appears throughout Jesus' teaching. As you forgive, so you shall be forgiven (Matthew 6:14); as you judge, so you shall be judged (Matthew 7:2); as you show mercy, so you shall be shown mercy (Matthew 5:7); as you give unto others, so it shall be given unto you (Luke 6:38).

Beloved let us love and forgive one another.

Transliteration:

←(2)←(1)

שֶׁר (3)	אֲשֶׁר (2)	כִּי (1)	נוֹ (4)	מִתֵּי (3)	אֲשֶׁר (2)	אֵת (1)	לָנוּ (2)	לְ (1)	וּ (3)	סְלַח (2)	וּ (1)
ka-'a-s her			ash-ma- tei -nu			'et	la -nu			u-se- lakh	
just as			our sins			()	and forgive us				

נוֹ: (2)	לְ (1)	מִנוּ (2)	אֲשֶׁר (1)	שֶׁר (3)	אֲשֶׁר (2)	לְ (1)	נוֹ (3)	נַחְנוּ (2)	אֲנַחְנוּ (1)	סְלַח (3)	תִּים (2)	וּ (1)
la -nu		ash -mu		la-'a- sher			a- nakh -nu			so-le- khim		
sin against us				to those who			we are			forgiving		

*u'selach lanu et ashmateinu, ka'asher
solechim anachnu la'asher ashemu lanu.*



The Lord's Prayer -

The Lord's Prayer in Hebrew - Part 5

וְאַל-תְּבִיאֵנוּ לְיַדֵּי מַסָּה כִּי אִם-הַצִּילֵנוּ מִן-הַרָע

“And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” (Matthew 6:13)



The “Hands of Massah”

Massah comes from a root that means to melt, dissolve, or consume -- as by fire that tests the quality of something. As a noun, the word is often translated as “test,” “trial,” or “temptation,” and is directly used to name the place where the children of Israel rebelled against God in the wilderness (Ex 17:7; Deut 6:16, Psalm 95:8; Hebrews 3:7-9). Significantly, *massah* can also mean “despair,” in the sense of “melting of heart,” and is usually rendered as mockery or scorn (Job 9:23).

מַסָּה
“*Massah*”

When we petition the Father to be “led not into temptation,” we are essentially asking to be redirected in our heart’s attitude in the face of difficult and trying moments. To fall into the “hands of *Massah*” means yielding to despair -- and to the psychological dissolution that results in bitterness, scorn, and mockery.

Deliverance from *Yetzer Hara*



The origin of this despair is what Jewish tradition calls *yetzer hara*, or the inner impulse to gravitate toward selfish gratification (idolatry). This concept first appears in Genesis 6:5 where the wickedness of man is described as “every imagination (*yetzer*) of the thoughts of his heart was only evil (*ra*).” In the New Testament, *yetzer hara* is called the “carnal mind,” the “old nature,” or the “natural man.”



The word *yetzer* itself is a neutral word used to refer to something formed or shaped, like pottery fashioned by the hand of a potter. Just as a potter purposes a shape before forming an object, so that which is intended within the heart will form our character. But since God has “power over the clay” to make one vessel fit for honor and another for dishonor (Romans 9:21), we are to appeal to the Father alone for deliverance from the evil impulse.

The ultimate source of the evil impulse is *hara* itself, that is, the evil *one*, since it is Satan who seeks to entice us into idolatry. Satan does this in order to rob God of His glory by blinding us to the truth of His love and of our desperate need for Him. He seduces us with vain imaginations that we might be satisfied with things other than God Himself. But Yeshua instructs us to pray to be delivered from the evil one by the power of God's salvation.

May you be so delivered today.

Transliteration:

וְ	אֵל	-	תְּ	בִי	אֵי	נוּ	לִי	יְדֵי	מִן	סָה	כִּי	אִם	-	הַ	עֵי	לִי	נוּ	
	(2)		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(1)		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	
	ve'al		te-vi-ei-nu	li-dei	mas-sah	ki	'im	ha-tzi-lei-nu										
			and lead us not		into the hands of massah	but		deliver us										

מִן	-	הַ	רָע
(1)		(1)	(2)
min		ha-ra	
		from the evil one	

ve'al-tevieinu lidei massah, ki-'im hatzileinu min-hara.



The Lord's Prayer -

The Lord's Prayer in Hebrew - Part 6

כִּי לָךְ הַמְּמֹלָכָה וְהַגְּבוּרָה וְהַתְּפָאֶרֶת לְעוֹלָמֵי עוֹלָמִים אָמֵן

“For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.” (Matthew 6:13b)



The Concluding Doxology

Jesus taught us to pray in an entirely Jewish manner. The first three phrases of the so-called “Lord’s Prayer” mirror the Jewish Kaddish and the sanctification of God’s Name. The middle phrases summarize the essential petitions of the ancient Jewish Amidah prayer, and the climactic conclusion mirrors the praises King David offered at the dedication of the first Temple (1 Chronicles 29:11-13). All in all, this is an entirely Jewish prayer given to us by our Jewish Lord and Savior.

Like most other Jewish prayers, this one ends with the adverb “amen” meaning “truly” or “surely.” Amen comes from a root word (*aman*) meaning to nourish, support, and to make sure and strong. The Hebrew word for faithfulness, *emunah*, comes from this same root.

The Jewish sages teach that “amen” can be thought of as an acronym for *el melekh ne’eman*, “God is a faithful King,” a phrase said every day before the Shema is personally recited. And indeed the Lord Jesus is “the Amen, the faithful and true witness” (Revelation 3:14) who has shown us the power and the glory of the One who is to be worshipped forever in Spirit and in truth.

The very first word of Scripture is *b’reishit* (Genesis 1:1) and the last word is *amen* (Revelation 22:21). Putting these words together we obtain:

בְּרֵאשִׁית אָמֵן

“In the beginning was Amen.”





Likewise, putting the very first and last *letters* of the Scriptures together yields the word *ben*, meaning “a son”:



From beginning to end, then, we see that the Scriptures point to the Lord Jesus as the Faithful and True Son of the Father, the rightful King of the kingdom of God.

Transliteration:

וְהַתִּפְרֵת	וְהַגְּבוּרָה	וְהַמְּלָכָה	לְךָ	כִּי
(5) (4) (3) (2) (1)	(5) (4) (3) (2) (1)	(5) (4) (3) (2) (1)	(2) (1)	(1)
ve-ha-tif-e-ret	ve-hag-ge-vu-rah	ha-mam-me-la-kha	le-kha	ki
and the glory	and the power	the kingdom	thine is	For
אֱמִן	עוֹלָמִים	עוֹלָמֵינוּ	לְעוֹלָמֵינוּ	
(2) (1)	(3) (2) (1)	(4) (3) (2) (1)	(4) (3) (2) (1)	
a-mein	o-la-mim	le-o-le-mei		
Amen	forever and ever			

*ki lekha ha-mamelakha ve-hagevurah vaha-tiferet,
le'olemei 'olamim amein.*