



<p><b>1) The “Amidah” prayer, first blessing</b></p> <p>Blessed are You, LORD our God and God of our fathers, God of Abraham, God of Isaac and God of Jacob, the great, mighty and awesome God, exalted God, who bestows bountiful kindness, who creates all things, who remembers the piety of the Patriarchs, and who, in love, brings a redeemer to their children's children, for the sake of His Name. O King, (You are) a helper, a savior and a shield. Blessed are You LORD, Shield of Abraham.</p>	<p><b>העמידה</b></p> <p>בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם, אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב. הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל, הַגָּבוֹר וְהַנּוֹרָא, אֵל עֲלִיוֹן, גּוֹמֵל חַסְדִּים טוֹבִים וְקוֹנֵה הַכֹּל, וְזוֹכֵר חַסְדֵי אֲבוֹת, וּמְבִיא גּוֹאֵל לְבְנֵי בְנֵיהֶם לְמַעַן שְׁמוֹ, בְּאַהֲבָה. מְלַךְ עוֹזֵר וּמוֹשִׁיעַ וּמַגֵּן. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' מֶגֶן אַבְרָהָם.</p>
<p><b>2) Deuteronomy 10:17</b></p> <p>(17) For the LORD your God is God supreme and Lord supreme, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who shows no favor and takes no bribe.</p>	<p><b>דברים י': י"ז</b></p> <p>כִּי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם הוּא אֱלֹהֵי הָאֱלֹהִים וְאֲדֹנֵי הָאֲדֹנָיִם הָאֵל הַגָּדֹל הַגָּבוֹר וְהַנּוֹרָא אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִשָּׂא פְנָיִם וְלֹא יִקַּח שֹׁחַד:</p>
<p><b>3) Nehemiah 9</b></p> <p>(32) “And now, our God, great, mighty, and awesome God, who stays faithful to His covenant, do not treat lightly all the suffering that has overtaken us—our kings, our officers, our priests, our prophets, our fathers, and all Your people—from the time of the Assyrian kings to this day.</p>	<p><b>נחמיה ט'</b></p> <p>וְעַתָּה אֱלֹהֵינוּ הָאֵל הַגָּדֹל הַגָּבוֹר וְהַנּוֹרָא שׁוֹמֵר הַבְּרִית וְהַחֲסֵד אֲלֵינוּ יַמְעֵט לְפָנֶיךָ אֶת כָּל־הַתְּלַאָּה אֲשֶׁר־מְצַאֲתָנוּ לְמַלְכֵינוּ לְשָׂרֵינוּ וְלַכְהֲנָנֵינוּ וְלַנְּבִיאֵינוּ וְלַאֲבֹתֵינוּ וְלַכָּל־עַמְּךָ מִיְמֵי מַלְכֵי אַשּׁוּר עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה:</p>
<p><b>4) Yoma 69b</b></p> <p><b>As Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: Why are the Sages of those generations called the members of the Great Assembly? It is because they returned the crown of the Holy One, Blessed be He, to its former glory. How so? Moses came and said in his prayer: “The great, the mighty, and the awesome God” (Deuteronomy 10:17). Jeremiah the prophet came and said: Gentiles, i.e., the minions of Nebuchadnezzar, are carousing in His sanctuary; where is His awesomeness? Therefore, he did not say awesome in his prayer: “The great God, the mighty Lord of Hosts, is His name”</b></p>	<p><b>תלמוד בבלי מסכת יומא ב ס"ט</b></p> <p>דאמר רבי יהושע בן לוי למה נקרא שמן אנשי כנסת הגדולה שהחזירו עטרה ליושנה אתא משה אמר (דברים י', ז) האל הגדול הגבור והנורא אתא ירמיה ואמר נכרים מקרקרין בהיכלו איה נוראותיו לא אמר נורא אתא דניאל אמר נכרים</p>



<p>(Jeremiah 32:18). <b>Daniel came and said: Gentiles are enslaving His children; where is His might? Therefore he did not say mighty</b> in his prayer: “The great and awesome God” (Daniel 9:4).</p> <p>The members of the Great Assembly <b>came and said: On the contrary, this is the might of His might</b>, i.e., this is the fullest expression of it, <b>that He conquers His inclination in that He exercises patience toward the wicked</b>. God’s anger is flared by the gentile nations’ enslavement of His people, yet He expresses tremendous might by suppressing His anger and holding back from punishing them immediately. Therefore, it is still appropriate to refer to God as mighty. <b>And these acts also express His awesomeness: Were it not for the awesomeness of the Holy One, Blessed be He, how could one people</b>, i.e., the Jewish people, who are alone and hated by the gentile nations, <b>survive among the nations?</b> The Gemara asks: <b>And the Rabbis</b>, i.e., Jeremiah and Daniel, <b>how could they do this and uproot an ordinance instituted by Moses</b>, the greatest teacher, who instituted the mention of these attributes in prayer? <b>Rabbi Elazar said:</b> They did so <b>because they knew of the Holy One Blessed be He, that He is truthful</b> and hates a lie. <b>Consequently, they did not speak falsely about Him</b>. Since they did not perceive His attributes of might and awesomeness, they did not refer to them; therefore, they cannot be criticized for doing so.</p>	<p>משתעבדים בבניו איה גבורותיו לא אמר גבור</p> <p>אתו אינהו ואמרו אדרבה זו היא גבורת גבורתו שכובש את יצרו שנותן ארך אפים לרשעים ואלו הן נוראותיו שאלמלא מוראו של הקב"ה היאך אומה אחת יכולה להתקיים בין האומות</p> <p>ורבנן היכי עבדי הכי ועקרי תקנתא דתקין משה אמר רבי אלעזר מתוך שיודעין בהקב"ה שאמתי הוא לפיכך לא כיזבו בו</p>
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<p><b>5) Jeremiah 32:18</b></p> <p>(18) You show kindness to the thousandth generation, but visit the guilt of the fathers upon their children after them. O great and mighty God whose name is LORD of Hosts,</p>	<p><b>ירמיהו ל"ב: י"ח</b></p> <p>עֲשֵׂה חֶסֶד לְאֲלֹפִים וּמְשַׁלֵּם עֵן אָבוֹת אֶל-חֵיק בְּנֵיהֶם אַחֲרֵיהֶם הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל הַגִּבּוֹר יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ:</p>
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<p><b>6) Daniel 9:4</b></p> <p>(4) I prayed to the LORD my God, making confession thus: “O Lord, great and awesome God, who stays faithful to His covenant with those who love Him and keep His commandments!</p>	<p><b>דניאל ט':ד'</b></p> <p>וְאֶתְפַּלֵּלָה לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵי וְאֶתְנוּגָה וְאֶמְרָה אֲנִי אֲדַנִּי הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל וְהַנּוֹרָא שְׁמֵר הַבְּרִית וְהַחֶסֶד לְאֲהַבָיו וּלְשֹׁמְרֵי מִצְוֹתָיו:</p>
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**7) “A New Confession -- Ours,” *Mishkan HaNefesh*, YK, p. 472**

We confess — In our generation, faith is partial and frayed.

Like an old *tallis*, threadbare and torn,

faith has been worn thin by doubts,

torn by ambivalence.

What do we see when we look at its knotted fringe?

Reminders of mitzvot?

Or something tangled, coming apart — a reminder of all our misgivings?

We confess —

In our generation, love of Torah is tenuous;

indifference to communal obligation profound.

We allow our differences to divide us;

resentments fester; and a small people is made smaller by disunity and strife.

We fail to notice the signs of Your presence in our world,

and we forget to lament Your absence from our lives.

Uncertainty too easily turns to skepticism;

we allow hard questions to consign religion to irrelevance.

Our forebears called You *Tzur Yisrael*, *Tzur Olamim* —

Rock of Israel, Rock of All Time and Space.

We confess our longing for the faith that sustained them.

We confess our need and desire to attach our hopes to theirs.



**8) Kobi Oz, “Elohai”**

“You are the Lord my G-d

You are the Lord who gathers the scattered of Israel my G-d

Gather our scattered from four corners of the earth

And send the Messiah our King David son of Peretz”

I have so much to tell you,

yet you know everything

I have so many requests to ask of you,

but you anyway want the best for me

I give you a little smile for every thing of beauty I notice,

impressive or delicate

And I’m a bit embarrassed – dunno what to call you – Elohim or Elokim?

I have so so so so many thank you’s standing in line at your door, but my thank you’s always come out corny

I have so so so so so many requests to ask of you, though I’m basically fine.

Lord if you hear my prayer

maybe you can send my love to my Grandfather

Tell him that the Sephardi moderation he maintained has been replaced by zealotry and extremism

But despite everything,

tolerance is bubbling beneath the surface

Look how people are bit by bit leaving behind the tension and in the end just want to be united

In this great synagogue called the Land of Israel

Where everyone is welcome

אתה אל קבץ נדחי ישראל אלוהי  
קבץ נדחינו מארבע פנות הארץ  
ושלח משיחנו מלכנו דוד בן פרץ

יש לי כל כך הרבה דברים לספר לך

ואתה הרי הכל יודע

יש לי הרבה

בקשות לבקש ממך אבל אתה הרי תפז  
בטובתי ממילא

אני גותן לך חיוך קטן על כל דבר יפה שבו  
אני מבחין,

מרשים או עדין.

ואני קצת נבוך אני לא יודע איך לקרא לך,

אלהים או אלקים.

יש לי המון תודות תודות תודות עומדות בתור  
מול דלתך

אבל תודות יוצאות לי קיטש.

יש לי מלא בקשות בקשות בקשות  
לבקש ממך למרות

שאצלי בסה"כ הכל בסדר.

אלהי אם אתה שומע תפילתי

אולי אפשר למסור ד"ש לסבא שלי.

תגיד לו שהמתינות הספרדית שבה הוא דגל

התחלפה בקנאות, קיצוניות.

אבל למרות הכל

הסובלנות רוחשת מתחת לפני השטח,

תראה לאט לאט אנשים עוזבים את המתח

ורוצים בסוף הכל להיות בייחד,

בבית הקנסת הגדול הזה שנקרא ארץ ישראל



to look up at the heavens,	פה כולם מוזמנים
pray for rain,	להביט אל השמים
and watch out for missiles	להתפלל לגשמים
I have so so so so many thank you's standing in line at your door,	לפחד מטילים.
but my thank yous always come out corny	יש לי המון תודות תודות תודות עומדות בתור
I have so so so so so many requests to ask of you, though I'm basically fine.	מול דלתך אבל תודות יוצאות לי קיטש.
	יש לי מלא בקשות בקשות בקשות
	לבקש ממך

**9) Catherine Madsen, *The Bones Reassembled***

The fantasy of the Book of Life and God's judgment is memorable, but the extraordinary aspect of the prayer is its emotional impress: Any of us might die of anything, any time. When? Now or later? With or without warning? Who by stroke and who by cancer, who by famine and who by plague, who by collision and who by explosion? We are grass, glass, shadow, cloud, Adam. . . . Certainly it is imaginary; how else but through imagination do you talk about death in the community where you spend your life — with the people you know, the people you do business with, the people who help you, love you, employ you, exasperate you? Indirection and fable are forms of delicacy; they create an atmosphere in which painful subjects can be raised without speaking of specific deaths that have wounded the people you know. The Untaneh Tokef was written in a time when fear and sorrow were closer to the surface of public life than they are now, but in private life we still know that security is a thin veneer. God suspends the earth over the void, says a piyut in the Yom Kippur Shacharit Amidah; the Untaneh Tokef shows us the thread on which it hangs.

**10) Rabbi Dr. Jacob J. Schacter, "Halakhic Authority in a World of Personal Autonomy," in *Radical Responsibility***

...[A] closer look at contemporary notions of autonomy yields the inescapable conclusion that they are, in fact, bankrupt and empty of meaning. All people make decisions to limit their autonomy—and do so all the time—to get through life. All people abide by laws, whatever they may be; the dream of unbridled liberty and autonomy is a foolish one. The choice made by Jews committed to halakhah to serve God is a choice to move to a higher form of freedom, an 'ordered freedom', if you will, and one more tested and longer lasting than any other notion of 'ordered freedom' or 'ordered liberty' (to use phrases often attributed to George Washington and at the heart of the American constitutional order). The life of the halakhic Jew represents, I would argue, the highest human expression of this freedom, deeply creative and exercised in the context not of isolated individuals but of an entire community.

In the words of the sages (*Kalah rabati* 8), *Ein ben horin ela mi she'osek batorah*, 'There is no one as free

as one who is involved with Torah’, and I take ‘involved with Torah’ to go beyond solely the study of Torah. And, if this is the case, when I personally make a conscious choice to ‘abdicate’ my freedom of choice in the service of God, I am not abdicating anything of value at all but rather gaining something of infinitely greater value.

### 11) Paul Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil*

“The dissolution of the myth as explanation is the necessary way to the restoration of the myth as symbol. Thus, the time of restoration is not a different time from that of criticism; we are in every way children of criticism, and we seek to go beyond criticism by mean of criticism, but a criticism that is no longer reductive but restorative.”

“... demythologization is the irreversible gain of truthfulness, intellectual honesty, objectivity. On the other hand, modern hermeneutics entertains the project of a revivification of philosophy through contact with the fundamental symbols of consciousness.” (350-351)

“Does that mean that we could go back to a primitive naivete? Not at all. In every way, something has been lost, irremediably lost: immediacy of belief. But if we can no longer live the great symbolisms of the sacred in accordance with the original belief in them, we can, we modern men, aim at a second naivete in and through criticism. In short, it is by *interpreting* that we can *hear* again. Thus it is in hermeneutics that the symbol’s gift of meaning and the endeavor to understand by deciphering are knotted together.” (351)

### 12) Rabbi Dr. Michael Marmor, “Speaking Truthfully about God,” in *A Life of Meaning*

One way of understanding the differences between traditionalists and progressives is to think about the emphasis each places on the “should” and the “can.” A traditionalist will say that you can’t just throw away the truths of tradition every time you are hit over the head by some new faddish notion. If the idea of a merciful God seems hard to reconcile with a world on fire, try harder. Meanwhile, the progressives respond by insisting that a tradition which requires us to give up on our credulity is not worth preserving.

A teaching usually attributed to the founder of the Chasidic movement, the Baal Shem Tov, notes that the *Amidah* prayer begins in a curious manner: “Our God and the God of our ancestors....” Why does it need to mention both ourselves and those who came before us? He concludes that there are two kinds of people in the world. The “God of our fathers” camp concentrates on the concept of God provided by tradition, while the “our God” people are engaged in their own search for a meaningful notion of God. We say both parts of the blessing because one sensibility without the other is weak. If all we have is tradition, we can become parrots repeating sentences we don’t understand or believe in. And if we are constantly searching, we can be blown around by the winds of opinion, believing one thing today and another tomorrow. By combining the two approaches, we can have both firm roots and high aspirations.