

ברכות השחר

The following blessings are said aloud by the שליח ציבור, but each individual should say them quietly as well. It is our custom to say them standing.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לִשְׂכּוֹי בִּינָה
לְהַבְחִין בֵּין יוֹם וּבֵין לַיְלָה.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
שֶׁלֹּא עָשָׂנִי גוֹי.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
שֶׁלֹּא עָשָׂנִי עֶבֶד.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
שֶׁעָשָׂנִי בְּרִצּוֹנוֹ. ^{women} / ^{men} שֶׁלֹּא עָשָׂנִי אִשָּׁה.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה *Blessed are You:* These blessings, itemized in the Talmud (*Berakhot* 60b), were originally said at home to accompany the various stages of waking and rising. “Who gives sight to the blind” was said on opening one’s eyes, “Who clothes the naked” on putting on clothes, and so on. Several medieval authorities, however, held that they should be said in the synagogue.

Their purpose is to make us conscious of what we might otherwise take for granted. Praise is an act of focused attention, foregrounding what is usually in the background of awareness. “The world is full of the light of God, but to see it we must learn to open our eyes” (Rabbi Nahman of Bratslav).

אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לִשְׂכּוֹי *Who gives the heart:* This is the translation according to Rabbeinu Asher (Rosh); Rashi and Abudarham read it, “the cockerel.” According to Rosh’s reading, the first blessing mirrors the first request of the Amida, for human understanding, as well as the first act of creation in which God created light, separating it from darkness.

MORNING BLESSINGS

The following blessings are said aloud by the Leader, but each individual should say them quietly as well. It is our custom to say them standing.

בְּרוּךְ Blessed are You, LORD our God,
King of the Universe,
who gives the heart understanding
to distinguish day from night.

Blessed are You, LORD our God,
King of the Universe,
who has not made me a heathen.

Blessed are You, LORD our God,
King of the Universe,
who has not made me a slave.

Blessed are You, LORD our God,
King of the Universe,
men: who has not made me a woman.
women: who has made me according to His will.

שֶׁלֹּא עָשָׂנִי *Who has not made me a heathen, a slave, a woman:* These three blessings are mentioned in the Talmud (*Menahot* 43b). Before we bless God for the universalities of human life, we bless him for the particularities of our identity. We belong to the people of the covenant; we are free; and we have differentiated responsibilities as women and men. These blessings have nothing to do with hierarchies of dignity, for we believe that every human being is equally formed in the image of God. Rather, they are expressions of acknowledgment of the special duties of Jewish life. Heathens, slaves and women are exempt from certain commands which apply to Jewish men. By these blessings, we express our faith that the commandments are not a burden but a cherished vocation.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
פוֹקֵחַ עֵוְרִים.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
מַלְבִּישׁ עֲרֻמִּים.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
מַתִּיר אֲסוּרִים.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
זוֹקֵף כְּפוּפִים.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
רוֹקֵעַ הָאָרֶץ עַל הַמַּיִם.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
שׁוֹעֲשֵׂה לִי כָּל צְרֻכָי.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
הַמְכִּין מַצְעָדֵי גֵבֶר.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
אוֹזֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל בַּגְּבוּרָה.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
עוֹטֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל בַּתְּפָאֶרֶת.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
הַנּוֹתֵן לַיָּעֵף כֹּחַ.

Blessed are You, LORD our God,
King of the Universe,
who gives sight to the blind.

Blessed are You, LORD our God,
King of the Universe,
who clothes the naked.

Blessed are You, LORD our God,
King of the Universe,
who sets captives free.

Blessed are You, LORD our God,
King of the Universe,
who raises those bowed down.

Blessed are You, LORD our God,
King of the Universe,
who spreads the earth above the waters.

Blessed are You, LORD our God,
King of the Universe,
who has provided me with all I need.

Blessed are You, LORD our God,
King of the Universe,
who makes firm the steps of man.

Blessed are You, LORD our God,
King of the Universe,
who girds Israel with strength.

Blessed are You, LORD our God,
King of the Universe,
who crowns Israel with glory.

Blessed are You, LORD our God,
King of the Universe,
who gives strength to the weary.

hundred blessings daily, as it is written, *And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee?*¹ On Sabbaths and on Festivals² R. Hiyya the son of R. Awia endeavoured to make up this number by the use of spices and delicacies.³

It was taught: R. Judah⁴ used to say, A man is bound to say the following three blessings daily: '[Blessed art thou . . .] who hast not made me a heathen',⁵ ' . . . who hast not made me a woman'; and ' . . . who hast not made me a brutish man'. R. Aḥa b. Jacob once overheard his son saying '[Blessed art thou . . .] who hast not made me a brutish man', whereupon he said to him, 'And this too!'⁶ Said the other, 'Then what blessing should I say instead?' [He replied,] ' . . . who hast not made me a slave'. And is not that the same as a woman?⁷—A slave [44a] is more contemptible.⁸

Our Rabbis taught: The *hillazon* resembles the sea in its colour,⁹ and in shape it resembles a fish; it appears¹⁰ once in seventy years, and with its blood one dyes the blue thread; and therefore it is so expensive.

It was taught: R. Nathan said, There is not a single precept in the Torah, even the lightest, whose reward is not enjoyed in this world; and as to its reward in the future world I know not how great it is. Go and learn this from the precept of *zizith*. Once a man, who was very scrupulous about the precept of *zizith*,

(1) Deut. X, 12. The word *מה* 'what' is interpreted as though it were *מאה* 'a hundred'. But see Tosaf. s.v. *מאה*. (2) When in place of the usual prayer of eighteen benedictions there is a prayer of seven benedictions. (3) For the enjoyment of which it is necessary to make a blessing. (4) So in many MSS., in Hal. Ged. and Alfasi, and in the parallel passages in Jer. Ber. IX, 1, and Tosef. Ber. VII. Cur. edd. 'R. Meir'. (5) So MS.M., Alfasi and Asheri, and so too in Tosef. Ber. l.c. Cur. edd. ' . . . who hast made me an Israelite'. (6) This blessing savours somewhat of conceit. *Aliter*: there is no reason to make this blessing since a brutish man is also bound by all the precepts. (7) For with regard to the performance of precepts a woman and a slave are on the same footing; cf. Hag. 4a. (8) Or, 'nevertheless go on (including the blessing concerning the slave)', so as to make up the three blessings. (9) Or 'its essence', i.e. its blood. V. Lewysohn, op. cit. p. 282. (10) Lit., 'comes up', i.e., from the sea; so Rashi in San. 91a and Meg. 6a.

heard of a certain harlot in one of the towns by the sea who accepted four hundred gold [*denars*] for her hire. He sent her four hundred gold [*denars*] and appointed a day with her. When the day arrived he came and waited at her door, and her maid came and told her, 'That man who sent you four hundred gold [*denars*] is here and waiting at the door'; to which she replied 'Let him come in'. When he came in she prepared for him seven beds, six of silver and one of gold; and between one bed and the other there were steps of silver, but the last were of gold. She then went up to the top bed and lay down upon it naked. He too went up after her in his desire to sit naked with her, when all of a sudden the four fringes [of his garment] struck him across the face; whereupon he slipped off and sat upon the ground. She also slipped off and sat upon the ground and said, 'By the Roman Capitol,¹ I will not leave you alone until you tell me what blemish you saw in me'. 'By the Temple',² he replied, 'never have I seen a woman as beautiful as you are; but there is one precept which the Lord our God has commanded us, it is called *zizith*, and with regard to it the expression 'I am the Lord your God' is twice written,³ signifying, I am He who will exact punishment in the future, and I am He who will give reward in the future. Now [the *zizith*] appeared to me as four witnesses [testifying against me]'. She said, 'I will not leave you until you tell me your name, the name of your town, the name of your teacher, the name of your school in which you study the Torah'. He wrote all this down and handed it to her. Thereupon she arose and divided her estate into three parts; one third for the government,⁴ one third to be distributed among the poor, and one third she took with her in her hand; the bedclothes, however, she retained. She then came to the Beth Hamidrash of R. Hiyya, and said to him, 'Master, give instructions about me that they make me a proselyte'. 'My daughter', he replied; 'perhaps you have set your eyes on one of the disciples?' She there-

(1) A form of oath. According to Rashi: By the head of Rome (referring to the Emperor). (2) Lit., 'the service' (of the Temple). (3) Num. XV, 41. The expression is repeated in this verse. (4) So that they should not hinder her in her purpose of being converted to Judaism.

sheth said: 'Who doest wonderfully'. R. Papa said: Therefore let us say both, 'Who healest all flesh and doest wonderfully'.

On going to bed one says from 'Hear, oh Israel' to 'And it shall come to pass if ye hearken diligently'. Then he says: 'Blessed is He who causes the bands of sleep to fall upon my eyes and slumber on my eyelids, and gives light to the apple of the eye. May it be Thy will, O Lord, my God, to make me lie down in peace, and set my portion in Thy law and accustom me to the performance of religious duties, but do not accustom me to transgression; and bring me not into sin, or into iniquity, or into temptation, or into contempt. And may the good inclination have sway over me and let not the evil inclination have sway over me. And deliver me from evil hap and sore diseases, and let not evil dreams and evil thoughts disturb me, and may my couch be flawless before Thee, and enlighten mine eyes lest I sleep the sleep of death. Blessed art Thou, oh Lord, who givest light to the whole world in Thy glory.'

When he wakes he says: 'My God, the soul which Thou hast placed in me is pure. Thou hast fashioned it in me, Thou didst breathe it into me, and Thou preservest it within me and Thou wilt one day take it from me and restore it to me in the time to come. So long as the soul is within me I give thanks unto Thee, O Lord, my God, and the God of my fathers, Sovereign of all worlds, Lord of all souls. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who restorest souls to dead corpses'.¹ When he hears the cock crowing he should say: 'Blessed is He who has given to the cock understanding to distinguish between day and night'. When he opens his eyes he should say: 'Blessed is He who opens the eyes of the blind'. When he stretches himself and sits up, he should say: 'Blessed is He who looseneth the bound'. When he dresses he should say: 'Blessed is He who clothes the naked'. When he draws himself up he should say: 'Blessed is He who raises the bowed'. When he steps on to the ground he should say: 'Blessed is He who spread the earth on the waters'. When he commences to walk he should

(1) P.B. p. 4. (2) Ibid. p. 293. (3) Ibid. p. 5.

say: 'Blessed is He who makes firm the steps of man'. When he ties his shoes he should say: 'Blessed is He who has supplied all my wants'. When he fastens his girdle, he should say: 'Blessed is He who girds Israel with might'. When he spreads a kerchief over his head he should say: 'Blessed is He who crowns Israel with glory'. When he wraps himself with the fringed garment he should say: 'Blessed is He who hast sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to enwrap ourselves in the fringed garment'. When he puts the *tefillin* on his arm he should say: 'Blessed is He who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to put on *tefillin*'. [When he puts it] on his head he should say: 'Blessed is He who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us concerning the commandment of *tefillin*'. When he washes his hands he should say: 'Blessed is He who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us concerning the washing of hands'.¹ When he washes his face he should say: 'Blessed is He who has removed the bands of sleep from mine eyes and slumber from mine eyes. And may it be Thy will O Lord, my God, to habituate me to Thy law and make me cleave to Thy commandments, and do not bring me into sin, or into iniquity, or into temptation, or into contempt, and bend my inclination to be subservient unto Thee, and remove me far from a bad man and a bad companion, and make me cleave to the good inclination and to a good companion in Thy world, and let me obtain this day and every day grace, favour, and mercy in Thine eyes, and in the eyes of all that see me, and show lovingkindness unto me. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who bestowest lovingkindness upon Thy people Israel'.²

IT IS INCUMBENT ON A MAN TO BLESS etc. What is meant by being bound to bless for the evil in the same way as for the good? Shall I say that, just as for good one says the benediction 'Who is good and bestows good', so for evil one should say the benediction 'Who is good and bestows good'? But we have learnt:

(1) For all these blessings v. P.B. p. 5f. These blessings are now no longer said after each act, but are all said together in the morning service.

(2) Ibid. p. 6.

Maimonides and Abraham, his son, Egypt, 12th-13th Century

At about the same time that the Hasidei Ashkenaz in Germany were encouraging the recital of the B blessings in their original context, Maimonides [1135-1204] and his son Abraham [1186-1237] encouraged the same practice in Egypt. While Natronai Gaon's famous responsum justified the practice of reciting the blessings as a unit, Maimonides, in the *Mishneh Torah*, insists that these blessings should only be recited at the time of the corresponding action:

[6] When he belts his belt, he blesses "who girds Israel with glory;" when he puts on his shoes, he blesses "who provides for all my needs." When he sets out on the road, he blesses "prepares a person's steps." And a person should bless every day P[raised]... who did not make me a gentile; P[raised]...who did not make me a woman; P[raised]...who did not make me a slave.

[7] These eighteen blessings have no particular order; rather one recites each one at the appropriate time. How? For example if one belts his belt and he is still on his bed, he should bless "who girds Israel with glory"...and each blessing which one is not obligated to recite one should not recite....

[9] It is the custom of the populace in most of our cities to recite these blessings one after another in the synagogue regardless of whether one is obligated or not. This is a mistake and it is not proper to do. One should not recite a blessing unless one is specifically obliged to do so.⁸

For Maimonides, there is apparently no question about which blessings are in the set; he alludes to eighteen without enumerating them. He informs us of the "custom of the populace in most of our cities" to recite these blessings in the synagogue. His citation of the B and M sets in a single *halakhah* shows that while he knew that they had separate origins, they were treated as a single unit. Maimonides considered the blessings to be in

⁸ *Hilkhot Tefila*, 7:7, 8, 10. These paragraphs are paraphrased in the prayerbook of Jacob of London, the only witness to Jewish customs in England before 1290. In the sole surviving manuscript, next to the quotation from Maimonides, a marginal note quotes from Natronai's responsum to the effect that it is impossible to recite them before washing the hands. The gloss—which is impossible to date—reconciled the prayerbook with then prevailing practice. Rabbi Jacob Hazan of London, *Etz Hayyim*, ed. Israel Brodie (Mosad ha-Rav Kook: Jerusalem, 1961), p. 65.

the category of “blessings for things enjoyed” and not general “blessings of praise.”

Maimonides’ son, Rabbi Abraham, attributes to his father the radical claim that the M blessings too should relate to actual daily experiences, just like the talmudic instructions for the B blessings.⁹

It appears from the intention of my father, my teacher of blessed memory, in the Laws of Prayer, that the three blessing of gentile, slave and woman¹⁰ should be recited daily whether or not one has seen one; and thus it is in the laws of Rabbi Isaac, author of *ha-Halakhot*.¹¹ And he said to me someone had seen an old version of the Talmud and it was written there: “when one sees a gentile person, bless; and thus for a slave and a woman.”¹² And it appears that this is the correct version and the truth is with it, and so we find in the prayerbook of Rabbi Amram ben Sheshna of blessed memory.

Rabbi Abraham is trying to resolve an internal conflict in the *Mishneh Torah*. At first, in Mishneh 9:6, it appears that Maimonides agrees with the prevailing custom that the three blessings should be recited daily. However, in Mishneh 9:9, he states that a blessing should only be recited if there is cause. Rabbi Abraham quotes his father who is alleged to have known a third person who once saw an old copy of the Talmud. This chain of evidence is fragmentary at best. Wieder suggests that this case is parallel to what we described earlier with regard to Menahem Recanati’s claim to have a variant text of the Talmud: a variation amongst different prayerbooks was projected onto the Talmud itself. We have no evidence that Amram wrote the text in the way that Rabbi Abraham describes; but, as mentioned above, many additions and changes were made in the *siddur*

⁹ Moses Maimonides, *Kovets Testuvot ha-Rambam ve-Igrotav* (Leipzig, 1859), 42.

¹⁰ Here the order is “gentile, slave, woman,” while in the *Mishnah Torah* Maimonides is faithful to the Talmud’s “gentile, woman, slave.” There is no consistency in any of the early prayerbooks or commentaries in placing “woman” or “slave” first.

¹¹ See above, p. 114.

¹² Thus, these blessings become like the other occasional blessings recorded in BT *Berakhot* 59a/b which are recited when one sees a great teacher, a ruler, or a person of unusual appearance.

It appears that these blessings were forgotten until the Tannaim and Amoraim came and established for us one hundred blessings which we say daily. To recite each one in its proper place is impossible since the hands are used for touching [the genitals]; rather when a person wakes up from his sleep he washes his hands, face and feet....²²

[The] hands are engaged [i.e. can be used for sexual activity]²³ and in any case they are dirty...but [Israel] cannot refrain from studying Torah and from reciting blessings. Since not everyone is expert in them, the people are in the custom of reciting them all in the synagogue together aloud. These are the one hundred blessings which we say and their enumeration. The blessings of Shaharit²⁴ are more than twenty since people added blessings for every need they had, and according to the law they are not proper; but there is no reason to fear if they are added, since it is only said not to reduce [the number of blessings] but to add to them they have permission to bless for every desire....

Two different reasons are given for not reciting the blessings in their proper place.

First there is a lengthy apologetic about impurity and the absence of cleanliness. The equally pragmatic second explanation is that most people simply did not know them!

²² The requirement to wash the feet, as well as the hands and face, is a topic of much concern. Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Prayer 4:3 requires it. See Naphtali Wieder, *Islamic Influences on Jewish Worship (Heb.)* (Oxford, 1947), 10-12. Washing the feet also appears in Natronai's instructions (Benjamin Lewin, *Olzar ha-Geonim* (Haifa, 1928), 135, #369), but his responsum is so highly edited it is impossible to assert that this was part of the original.

²³ The expression *דים עסקניות* is from BT *Shabbat* 14a. "They are active and apt to touch things. Hence unless their owner has taken care that they should not touch a ritually unclean object after he washed them, they are treated as unclean." *BT, Shabbat*, Soncino ed., 57, n. 7. In our case, they are presumptively unclean until they have been washed in the morning.

²⁴ Presumably, "the blessings of *Shaharit*" would include all the blessings of the morning service: clearly, he intends the blessings unique to the *Shaharit* service which are not otherwise named. After saying here that "there are more than twenty" he goes on to conclude that "anyway their sum is eighteen." Authorities differ as to whether or not the blessings for the Torah, which immediately follow and are usually enumerated as a separate unit, are to be included in this group: see Abraham ben Isaac of Narbonne, *Sefer ha-Eshkol*, ed. Tzvi Benjamin Auerbach (Tel Aviv, 1964), 6, which lists 19 blessings in this section. In Natronai's responsum, there are eighteen blessings in this unnamed, first section. In later texts, it is commonly called "One Hundred Blessings," "Blessings," and "Order of Blessings." See Wieder, "One Hundred Blessings," *Sinai* 44, 358-360. Other names include "the blessings of *Shaharit*" and "all the blessings," or as part of a general listing of "the blessings of thanksgiving and petition;" see Meir ben Baruch of Rothenburg, *Teshuvot, pesakim u-minhagim*, ed. Isak Farkas Kahan (Jerusalem: Mosad ha Rav Kuk, 1957), 103. Judah ben Barzillai, *Sefer ha-Itim*, ed. Yaakov Shor (Cracow: Mikitzai Nirdamim, 1903), 103. Moses of Coucy, *Sefer Mitzvot Gadol*, *Aseh* 27, 24a.

In contemporary Reform liturgy, the sequence is given the rubric "סִיּוּם בְּכָל יוֹם" (Miracles of Daily Life) in Hebrew and "For Our Blessings" in English, *Gates of Prayer*, ed. Chaim Stern (New York: Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1978), 286.

These blessings are all about the renewal of the work of creation daily, and a person must thank and praise the Holy One Blessed be He for this, and even though one did not hear the voice of the rooster, and did not stand up and did not reach out [one's limbs] and did not get dressed.... one blesses them at their time in the hour of renewal and the time of the separation of the day from the night, and thus wrote Rav Natronai Gaon and Rav Amram of blessed memory.

Natronai and Amram did say that these blessings are customarily recited daily in the synagogue but his explanation of why is original to Rabbi Abraham. These blessings, Abraham ben Isaac explains, are about the "renewal of the work of creation" and thus are to be said daily. In this explanation, the blessings are further moved from their original setting—corresponding to the gestures and movements of waking and dressing—to a more abstract plane. If the poetry of their original setting is the metaphorical resemblance between the microcosmic human action and the macrocosmic divine act—"when he places his feet on the ground, he says: 'Blessed...is the one who establishes the earth upon the water'"—here they are entirely metaphorical and the corresponding human gesture has been set aside. Once the direct link to specific human actions was severed, it became easy to freely add additional blessings, either to acknowledge other divine attributes or to help make up the complement of "one hundred blessings." Beyond the practical considerations of ignorance by the populace and uncleanness of the hands, the justification for reciting the blessings out of their original contexts is that they are a reminder of the "renewal of creation," or that these blessings are recited not on behalf of the individual but in appreciation of "the way of the world and its order."³⁰ Halakhically,

³⁰ "All these blessings one should only bless once daily even if one sleeps during the day a night-time sleep since they are only about the way of the world and its order." Abraham ben David of Posquieres (Rabad), c. 1125-1198, quoted by Aaron ben Jacob ha-Kohen of Lunel, *Orhot Hayim*, ed. Moses Schlesinger (Florence, 1749; reprinted, 1980), 10. Aaron of Lunel was actually from Narbonne.

PURITY
AND IM-
MORTAL-
ITY OF THE
SOUL

O my God, the soul which thou gavest me is pure; thou didst create it, thou didst form it, thou didst breathe it into me. Thou preservest it within me, and thou wilt take it from me, but wilt restore unto me hereafter. So long as the soul is within me, I will give thanks unto thee, O Lord my God and God of my fathers, Sovereign of all works, Lord of all souls! Blessed art thou, O Lord, who restorest souls unto the dead.

EARLY
MORNING
BLESSINGS

Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who hast given to the mind understanding to distinguish between day and night.

Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe who hast not made me a heathen.

the more solemn is the injunction, "Even as the soul is pure wher entering upon its earthly career, so let man return it pure to his Maker" (Midrash). Judaism rejects the dogma of Original Sin. There is no fatal necessity for man to sin: the commandments of God are a bulwark against all animalism and godlessness. Though sin and guilt and crime poison much of human life, the antidote to such poison has been made known to man, enabling him, through repentance, to regain his God-given purity.

restore it unto me. Here the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is affirmed. "The dust returneth to the earth as it was, but the spirit returneth to God Who gave it" (Ecclesiastes 12. 7).

INDIVIDUAL BLESSINGS. After thanking God for enabling us to rise with bodies refreshed by sleep, we thank Him for restoring us to full consciousness, evidenced by our clear discrimination between light and darkness.

mind. The Hebrew word used here, שכני, occurs only in Job 38. 36. In the Talmud, that word is interpreted to mean "cock". Some take it in that sense in this Blessing, and connect it with the fact that the service at the Temple began with the cleansing of the Altar at cock-crow. This Blessing would then praise God for the wonderful animal-instinct which acts as an unfailling herald of the morning, rousing us to His service and our daily duties.

After the reawakening of consciousness, comes the reawakening of self-consciousness as Jews, and as free men and women.

heathen. Heb. גוי. In Scripture this word means "nation," but in later Hebrew, "heathen". In recent times, גוי has been changed in many editions of the Prayer Book to נכרי, lit. "a foreigner".

In the Talmud, we find the Blessing worded in a positive form, "Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who hast me an Israelite", ברוך אתה ד' אלהינו סדך העולם שעשני ישראל.

אלהי • נשמה שנתת בי טהורה היא • אתה
בראתה אתה יצרתה אתה נפתתה בי • ואתה משמרה
בקרבי • ואתה עתיד לפלה ממני ולהחזירה בי לעתיד
לבא: כל-זמן שהנשמה בקרבי מודה אני לפניך •
אלהי ואלהי אבותי רבון כל-המעשים ארון כל-
הנשמות: ברוך אתה • המחזיר נשמות לפגרים
מתים:

ברוך אתה • אלהינו מלך העולם • אשר נתן
לשכני בינה להבחין בין יום ובין לילה:
ברוך אתה • אלהינו מלך העולם • שלא עשני נכרי:

is, according to the Rabbis, the man who adopts and bestows parental care upon a female orphan till she is married.

attending the dead. The most disinterested of all deeds of loving-kindness. It is showing reverence to man's humanity as such. In larger communities, a *Chevrá Kadisha* ("Holy Brotherhood") exists, whose members attend to the last rites in connection with the dying and the dead, and perform offices of condolence to the mourners.

devotion in prayer. The worshipper must purify his heart before he prays, concentrate his whole being on the service of God, and banish all other thoughts from his mind and heart. This is *kavanah*—a concept that is found in no other ancient language.

making peace between man and his fellow. Peace-making between parted friends, or in personal home-frictions, is a duty of far-reaching importance. Even greater is the prevention of strife and enmity by kind word or judicious counsel. A vital element in the fulfilment of this duty is to be charitable in judging our neighbour (Rashi).

leadeth to them all. Because knowledge of the will of God leads to the practice of the righteous acts enumerated above. It is the soul of them all.

ELOHOY NESHOMOH. *O my God, the soul.* This prayer is an expression of gratitude for the soul's awakening from sleep to new life. The realization of the Divine Source of his soul strengthens man to meet the tasks and temptations of daily life.

is pure. Because "Thou didst create it". Man is made in the Divine Image, and his soul is a spark of the Divine nature. All