

The Mourner's Kaddish: A New Interpretation

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“In solemn testimony to that unbroken faith which links the generations one to another, let all who are in mourning now rise to magnify and sanctify God’s holy name.” – Silverman Siddur, p. 161

<p>Exalted and sanctified be His great name in the world which He created according to His will and may He rule His kingdom in your lifetime and in your days, and in the lifetime of all Israel speedily and in the near future, and say Amen.</p> <p>2) May His great Name be blessed forever and for all eternity.</p> <p>3) Blessed and praised, and glorified, and exalted and uplifted and honored and elevated and extolled be the Name of the Holy One, blessed is He</p> <p>4) [that is] above all the blessings and songs praises and consolations which we utter in the world and say Amen</p> <p>6) May there be great peace from heaven and life for us and for all Israel and say Amen</p> <p>7) He who makes peace in His high heavens may He make peace for us and for all Israel and say Amen (Translation: Metsudah Siddur)</p>	<p>יִתְגַּדֵּל וְיִתְקַדֵּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא. בְּעֻלְמָא דִּי בְרָא כְּרַעוּתָהּ, וְיִמְלִיךָ מַלְכוּתָהּ בְּחַיֵּינוּ וּבְיָמֵינוּ וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל. בְּעֻגְלָא וּבְזִמְנָן קָרִיב וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:</p> <p>(2) יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעֵלַם וּלְעֵלְמֵי עֵלְמַיָּא:</p> <p>(3) תְּבָרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח, וְיִתְפָּאָר וְיִתְרֹמֵם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא וְיִתְהַדָּר וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלָּל שְׁמֵהּ דְּקֻדְשָׁא בְּרִיךְ הוּא</p> <p>(4) לְעֵלְא מִן כָּל בְּרַכְתָּא וְשִׁירְתָּא, תְּשַׁבְּחָתָא וְנִחְמָתָא, דְּאִמְרִין בְּעֻלְמָא, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">6</p> <p>(יְהֵא שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שְׁמַיָּא וְסַיִים עֲלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:</p> <p>(7) עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרוֹמָיו הוּא יַעֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם עֲלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:</p>
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<p>R. Yishmael said: At the moment when Israel is gathered in the study houses and hears a teaching from a wise one, afterward they answer: “Amen, May His great name be blessed”. In that moment, the Holy Blessed One is joyful and rises in His world... - Midrash on Proverbs 14</p>	<p>מדורש משלי (בובר) פרשה יד ר' ישמעאל אומר בשעה שישראל נאספין בבתי מדרשות ושומעין אגדה מפי חכם, ואח"כ עונין אמן יהא שמייה רבא מברך, באותה שעה הקדוש ברוך הוא שמח ומתעלה בעולמו, ואומר למלאכי השרת בואו וראו עם זו שיצרת בעולמי כמה הן משבחין אותי, באותה שעה מלבישין אותו הוד והדר, לכך נאמר ברב עם הדרת מלך.</p>
<p>(18) On that day, when Gog sets foot on the soil of Israel - declares the Lord God - My raging anger shall flare up. (19) For I have decreed in My indignation and in My blazing wrath: On that day, a terrible earthquake shall befall the land of Israel. (20) The fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the beasts of the field, all creeping things that move on the ground, and every human being on earth shall quake before Me. Mountains shall be overthrown, cliffs shall topple, and every wall shall crumble to the ground. (21) I will then summon the sword against him throughout My mountains - declares Lord God - and every man's sword shall be turned against his brother. (22) I will punish him with pestilence and with bloodshed; and I will pour torrential rain, hailstones, and sulfurous fire upon him and his hordes and the many peoples with him. <u>(23) Thus will I manifest My greatness and My holiness, and make Myself known in the sight of many nations. And they shall know that I am the Lord.</u> (Ezekiel 38:18-23)</p>	<p>יחזקאל פרק לח (יח) וְהָיָה בַיּוֹם הַהוּא בְּיוֹם בּוֹא גּוֹג עַל אֶדְמַת יִשְׂרָאֵל נָאֵם אֲדֹנָי יְקוֹק הַתְּעֹלָה חֲמָתִי בָאֵפִי: (יט) וּבִקְנָאֲתִי בָאֵשׁ עֵבְרָתִי דִּבְרָתִי אִם לֹא בַיּוֹם הַהוּא יִהְיֶה רַעַשׁ גָּדוֹל עַל אֶדְמַת יִשְׂרָאֵל: (כ) וְרַעְשׂוּ מִפְּנֵי דְגֵי הַיָּם וְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וְחַיֵּי הַשָּׂדֶה וְכָל הַרְמֵשׁ הַרְמֵשׁ עַל הָאָדָמָה וְכָל הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר עַל פְּנֵי הָאָדָמָה וְנִהְרְסוּ הַהָרִים וְנִפְּלוּ הַמְּדַרְגּוֹת וְכָל חוֹמָה לְאֶרֶץ תִּפּוֹל: (כא) וְקִרְאֲתִי עָלָיו לְכָל הָרֵי חֶרֶב נָאֵם אֲדֹנָי יְקוֹק חֶרֶב אִישׁ בְּאֶחָיו תִּהְיֶה: (כב) וְנִשְׁפָּטִי אֹתוֹ בְּדָבָר וּבְכֶדֶם וּגְשָׁם שׁוֹטֵף וְאֶבְנֵי אֶלְגָּבִישׁ אֵשׁ וּגְפָרִית אֲמַטִּיר עָלָיו וְעַל אֲגָפָיו וְעַל עַמִּים רַבִּים אֲשֶׁר אֹתוֹ: (כג) וְהִתְגַּדַּלְתִּי וְהִתְקַדַּשְׁתִּי וְנוֹדַעְתִּי לְעֵינֵי גוֹיִם רַבִּים וַיִּדְעוּ כִּי אֲנִי יְקוֹק: ם</p>



<p>At first he requests from God to hurry His promise, as He promised us through his prophet: “Thus will I manifest My greatness and My holiness, and make Myself known in the sight of many nations” (Ezekiel 38:23) - Rav Hai Gaon (10-11th c)</p>	<p>שתי תשובות על קדיש לרב האי – גנזי שכטר כרך ב, 156-161 מ[תחלה הוא מבקש מל]פני המקום להחיש בטחונו, כמו [שהבטיחנו] על יד הנביא והתגד' והתקדשתי ונודעתי ל[עיני] גוים רבים...</p>
<p>This is the meaning of “May God’s name be magnified and sanctified.” In the future His name should be made great and sanctified, as it is written: And they will know that I am YHVH. For right now, He is not written as He is called. He is called Adonai, but He is written YHVH. - Sefer HaPardes of Rashi (11th c.)</p>	<p>ספר הפרדס לרש"י ע' שכג וכן [הוא] משמעו יתגדל ויתקדש שמו של הק[דוש] ב[רוך] ה[וא] לעתיד לבוא שיהא [שמו הגדול] מגודל ומקודש כדכתיב [וידעו] כי [אני] ה'. לפי שעכשיו לא כשנכתב הוא נקרא, כי הוא נקרא באל"ף דל"ת ונכתב ב"ה</p>
<p>And moreover, why did they establish to say “May...be great, and be raised up, and be exalted”? The simple meaning of these words is that these words refer to the intention of people to say that God, may God be blessed, should reveal God’s godliness and exaltedness to the eyes of all the nations. As it says (Ezekiel 38:23): “Thus will I manifest My greatness and My holiness, and make Myself known in the sight of many nations.” - Responsa of the Rashba 1:423 (13th c)</p>	<p>שו"ת הרשב"א חלק א סימן תכג ועוד למה תקנו לומר יתגדל ויתרומם ויתנשא. ופשוטי הדברים אין דברים אלו אלא כנגד כוונות בני האדם ולומר שיגלה הוא יתברך אלהותו ורוממותו לעיני כל הגוים. כענין שכתוב (יחזקאל ל"ח) והתגדלתי והתקדשתי ונודעתי לעיני רבים.</p>
<p>Source of Yehei Shmei: Daniel (19) The mystery was then revealed to Daniel in a night vision; <u>then Daniel blessed the God of Heaven.</u> (20) <u>Daniel answered and said:</u> “Let the name of God be blessed forever and ever, for wisdom and power are His.” (Daniel 2: 19-20)</p>	<p>דניאל פרק ב (יט) אָדִין לְדַנְיָאֵל בְּחֻזָּא דִּי לִילְיָא רְזָה גְּלִי אָדִין דְּנִיָּאֵל בְּרַךְ לְאַלְהֵי שְׁמַיָּא: (כ) עָנָה דְּנִיָּאֵל וְאָמַר לְהוּא שְׁמֵהּ דִּי אֱלֹהֵא מְבָרַךְ מִן עַלְמָא וְעַד עַלְמָא דִּי חֻכְמָתָא וּגְבוּרָתָא דִּי לֵהּ הִיא:</p>



<p>Source of Yehei Shmei: Job (20) Then Job arose, tore his robe, cut off his hair, and threw himself on the ground and worshiped. (21) He said: “Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return there; <u>God has given, and God has taken away.</u> <u>Blessed be the name of God.</u> (Job 1:20-21)</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">איוב פרק א (כ) וַיָּקָם אִיּוֹב וַיִּקְרַע אֶת מְעָלוֹ וַיִּגְזַז אֶת רֹאשׁוֹ וַיִּפֹּל אַרְצָה וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה: (כא) וַיֹּאמֶר עָרָם יִצְאֵתִי מִבֶּטֶן אִמִּי וְעָרָם אָשׁוּב שָׁמָּה יִקְוֶה נַמְנוּ וַיִּקְוֶה לְקַח יְהוָה שֵׁם יִקְוֶה מִבְּרַךְ: תהלים פרק קיג (א) הַלְלוּ יְהוָה הַלְלוּ עַבְדֵי יִקְוֶה הַלְלוּ אֶת שֵׁם יִקְוֶה: (ב) יְהוָה שֵׁם יִקְוֶה מִבְּרַךְ מִעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם:</p>
<p>Source of Yehei Shmei: Psalms (1) Halleluyah! O servants of God, give praise; praise the name of God. (2) Let the name of God be blessed now and forever. (Psalms 113:1-2)</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">תהלים פרק קיג (א) הַלְלוּ יְהוָה הַלְלוּ עַבְדֵי יִקְוֶה הַלְלוּ אֶת שֵׁם יִקְוֶה: (ב) יְהוָה שֵׁם יִקְוֶה מִבְּרַךְ מִעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם:</p>
<p>God’s connection to Yehei Shmei A baraita teaches: Rabbi Yose said: One time I was walking on the path, and I entered a ruin from one of the ruins of Jerusalem in order to pray. Elijah of blessed memory came and watched the doorway until I finished my prayer....He said to me...: “Whenever the Israelites go into the synagogues and schoolhouses and respond: ‘May His great name be blessed’, God shakes His head and says: “Happy is the king who is thus praised in His house! Woe to the father who had to banish his children, and woe to the children who had to be banished from the table of their father!” (B. Berachot 3a)</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">תניא, אמר רבי יוסי: פעם אחת הייתי מהלך בדרך, ונכנסתי לחורבה אחת מחורבות ירושלים להתפלל. בא אליהו זכור לטוב ושמר לי על הפתח עד שסיימתי תפילתי. ... ואמר לי: ... בשעה שישאל נכנסין לבתי כנסיות ולבתי מדרשות ועונין יהא שמיה הגדול מבורך הקדוש ברוך הוא מנענע ראשו ואומר: אשרי המלך שמקלסין אותו בביתו כך, מה לו לאב שהגלה את בניו, ואוי להם לבנים שגלו מעל שולחן אביהם.</p>
<p>“Immediately the Holy Blessed One shakes His head” – this is related to what we say in the Kaddish: “praises and comforts” – that God needs, as it were, comforts because of the sorrow around the Destruction - Tosafot HaRosh to Berachot 3a</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">תוספות הרא"ש מסכת ברכות דף ג עמוד א מיד הקדוש ברוך הוא מנענע את ראשו. וזהו מה שאנו אומרים בקדיש תושבחתא ונחמתא שצריך כביכול תנחומים על צער החורבן.</p>



Mourner's Kaddish: Comfort through Memory

The concept of a God who is Himself pained by the sufferings of His children is a powerful and rich idea....The Midrashic God mourns just as do human beings: sitting in sackcloth, weeping, walking barefoot (Lam. R. 1:1).

Perhaps most poignantly, God reverses the famous verse in Isaiah: (40:1) "Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God" [נחמו נחמו עמי] to a plea that the people assuage His pain: "Comfort Me, comfort Me, O My people [נחמוני נחמוני עמי] (PDRK 16:9).

God is not only suffering, but turns to human beings as they so often turn to Him, to salve the wounds of this world.

(David Wolpe, Healer of Shattered Hearts, pp. 147, 150)

Mourner's Kaddish: Comfort through Memory

Now the Jew who is tormented by his afflictions thinks that he alone suffers, as if all his personal afflictions and those of all Israel do not affect [God] above, God forbid. Scripture states, however, "In all their troubles, He was troubled" (Isaiah 63:9), and the Talmud states: When a person suffers, what does the Shekhinah say? "My head is too heavy for me, My arm is too heavy for Me." Our sacred literature tells us that when a Jew is afflicted, God, blessed be He, suffers as it were much more than the person does.

It may be that since He, blessed be He, is not subject to any limitation - for which reason no conception of Him is possible in the world - therefore His suffering from Israel's troubles is also boundless. It is not merely that it would be impossible for a person to endure the experience of such great suffering, but that even to conceive of His suffering, blessed be He - to know that He, blessed be He, does suffer, to hear His voice, blessed be He: "Woe for I have destroyed My House and have exiled My children" -is impossible, because He is beyond the confined of the human.

(Eish Kodesh, Feb 14, 1942 - trans. Nehemia Polen)



