

## STRUCTURE OF THE AMIDAH

The weekday Amidah contains nineteen blessings. Each blessing ends with the signature "Blessed are you, O Lord..." and the opening blessing begins with this signature as well. The first three blessings as a section are known as the *shevach* ("praise"), and serve to inspire the worshipper and invoke God's mercy. The middle thirteen blessings compose the *bakashah* ("request"), with six personal requests, six communal requests, and a final request that God accept the prayers. The final three blessings, known as the *hoda'ah* ("gratitude"), thank God for the opportunity to serve the Lord. The *shevach* and *hoda'ah* are standard for every Amidah, with some changes on certain occasions.

The nineteen blessings are as follows:

1. Known as *Avot* ("Ancestors") this prayer offers praise of God as the God of the Biblical patriarchs, "God of Abraham, God of Isaac and God of Jacob."
2. Known as *Gevurot* ("powers)", this offers praise of God for His power and might. This prayer includes a mention of God's healing of the sick and resurrection of the dead. It is called also *Tehiyyat ha-Metim* = "the resurrection of the dead."
  - Rain is considered as great a manifestation of power as the resurrection of the dead; hence in winter a line recognizing God's bestowal of rain is inserted in this benediction. Except for many Ashkenazim, most communities also insert a line recognizing dew in the summer.
3. Known as *Kedushat ha-Shem* ("the sanctification of the Name") this offers praise of God's holiness.
  - During the chazzan's repetition, a longer version of the blessing called *Kedusha* is chanted responsively. The *Kedusha* is further expanded on Shabbat and Festivals
4. Known as *Binah* ("understanding") this is a petition to God to grant wisdom and understanding.
5. Known as *Teshuvah* ("return", "repentance") this prayer asks God to help Jews to return to a life based on the torah, and praises God as a God of repentance.
6. Known as *Selichah*, this asks for forgiveness for all sins, and praises God as being a God of forgiveness.
7. Known as *Geulah* ("redemption") this praises God as a rescuer of the people Israel.
8. Known as *Refuah* ("healing") this is a prayer to heal the sick.
9. Known as *Birkat HaShanim* ("blessing for years [of good]"), this prayer asks God to bless the produce of the earth.
10. Known as *Galuyot* ("Diasporas"), this prayer asks God to allow the ingathering of the Jewish exiles back to the land of Israel.
11. Known as *Birkat HaDin* ("Justice") this asks God to restore righteous judges as in the days of old.
12. Known as *Birkat HaMinim* ("the sectarians, heretics") this asks God to destroy those in heretical sects (*Minuth*), who slander Jews and who act as informers against Jews.
13. Known as *Tzadikim* ("righteous") this asks God to have mercy on all who trust in Him, and asks for support for the righteous.
14. Known as *Bo'ne Yerushalayim* ("Builder of Jerusalem") asks God to rebuild Jerusalem and to restore the Kingdom of David.
15. Known as *Birkat David* ("Blessing of David") asks God to bring the descendant of King David, who will be the messiah.
16. Known as *Tefillah* ("prayer") this asks God to accept our prayers, to have mercy and be compassionate.
17. Known as *Avodah* ("service") this asks God to restore the Temple services and sacrificial services.
18. Known as *Hoda'ah* ("thanksgiving") this is a prayer of thanksgiving, thanking God for our lives, for our souls, and for God's miracles that are with us every day. The text can be found in the next section.
  - When the chazzan reaches this blessing during the repetition, the congregation recites a prayer called *Modim deRabbanan* ("the thanksgiving of the Rabbis").
19. Known as *Sim Shalom* ("Grant Peace"); the last prayer is the one for peace, goodness, blessings, kindness and compassion, Ashkenazim generally say a shorter version of this blessing at Minchah and Maariv, called *Shalom Rav*.