

# Jewish

## Prayers & Practices for your 12-Step Journey

For some Jews in recovery, working a 12-Step program is the first experience of continuous striving toward relationship with a Higher Power. For those who would like to experience the ways in which Jewish prayers and practices may enhance a 12-Step program of recovery, these suggestions are offered. May the God of your understanding bless you on your journey to wholeness/*shleimut*/שְׁלִימוּת and healing/*refuah*/רְפוּאָה

When describing the Eleventh Step in the chapter ‘Into Action’, the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous provides a guide for seeking conscious contact with the God of our understanding throughout the day. In this booklet we follow the Big Book’s outline for evening, morning, and daytime activities, offering Jewish prayers that may serve the intention of each moment.

**...the way to rectification and  
renewal, to deep solace and healing,  
to meaning and eternal tranquility  
is only through actively seeking  
Your Will. Thank You, God, for  
leading me to this understanding.**

*Rebbe Nachman of Breslov*

# The Gift of Free Will

God of wonders,  
You’ve given me  
The most wonderful  
Of all gifts—  
The gift of free will.  
May my will never deviate  
From Your holy Will.  
Guide me always,  
So that all the choices I make  
Are good ones—  
Choices that are  
In harmony with Your Will,  
As long as I live.

*Rebbe Nachman of Breslov*

We have chosen in this pamphlet to refer to the Deity of Israel as God. Many people use other and varied names to refer to their Higher Power, including Lord, *Hashem*, *Adonai*, *Elohim/Elokim*, Source of All Being, Source of Life, and more. Some prefer to write “G-d” in printed English. In these readings and meditations we invite you to use a Name for the God of your understanding that is most comfortable for you. As this pamphlet contains God’s name in both Hebrew and English, please treat it with appropriate respect.

JCFS Chicago’s addiction and substance misuse services help Jewish individuals and their families find support within their community and receive education on treatment resources.

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## Prayers & Practices for your 12-Step Journey



## Evening / Erev / ערב

...when we retire at night, we constructively review our day...after making our review we ask God's forgiveness and inquire what corrective measures should be taken. (Alcoholics Anonymous p.86)

The following are adapted excerpts from the Bedtime Sh'ma/Kriat Sh'ma al ha-Mita/ קריאת שמע על המטה

Forgiving Others Each Night:

I forgive anyone who made me angry or upset or who hurt me, my body, my things, my feelings, or anything that is mine; by accident or on purpose; by words, actions, or thoughts. I forgive each one. May nobody be punished because of me. May it be your will God—God of my ancestors—that I not hurt anyone anymore.

Blessed are you God, the Guide of my life, who makes my eyes heavy and my eyelids sleepy. May it be your will God—God of my ancestors—that I lie down to sleep in peace and awake in peace. May I not be upset by any bad dreams or thoughts. May You help me see in the dark, for it is You who illuminates the pupil of the eye. Blessed are you God, whose Radiance lights up the world.

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, The Lord is One.  
Sh'ma Yis-ra-el, A-do-nai E-lo-hei-nu, A-do-nai E-chad.  
שמע ישראל יהוה אלהינו יהוה אחד

Blessed is God's glorious kingdom forever and ever.  
Ba-ruch Shem k'vod mal-chu-to l'o-la-m va'ed.  
ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד

Into God's hands I place my spirit בידו אפקיד רוחי  
B'yado af'kid ruchi

When I sleep and when I wake בעת אישן ואעירה  
b'eit ishan v'ah'ira

And with my spirit, my body ועם רוחי גויתי  
v'im ruchi g'viyati

God is with me, I will not be afraid אדני לי ולא אירא  
Adonai li v'lo ira  
(From the prayer Adon Olam)

## Morning / Boker / בקר

On awakening let us think about the 24 hours ahead...we ask God to direct our thinking...we ask God for inspiration, an intuitive thought or a decision. (Alcoholics Anonymous p.86)

I thank You, Eternal One, for returning my soul to me with compassion. Your faithfulness is great.

I surrender all of myself to You, God.

I ask God to give back to me what I need to do God's will today.

Modeh/Modah ani lifanecha melech chai v'kayam.  
Shehechezarta bi nishmahti b'chemlah, rabah emunatecha.

מוֹדֵה/מוֹדָה אָנִי לְפָנֶיךָ מֶלֶךְ חַי וְקַיִים.  
שֶׁהֶחֱזַרְתָּ בִּי נִשְׁמַחְתִּי בְּחֶמְלָה. רַבָּה אֱמוּנָתְךָ:

We usually conclude the period of meditation with a prayer that we be shown all through the day what our next step is to be, that we be given whatever we need to take care of such problems. (Alcoholics Anonymous p.87)

One thing have I asked of the Lord, that I will seek:  
That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life...  
Psalm 27: 4

Achat sha'alti me'eit Adonai otah avakeish:  
Shivti b'veit Adonai kol yemei chayai

אַחַת שְׁאַלְתִּי מֵאֵת יְהוָה אוֹתָהּ אֲבַקֵּשׁ:  
שִׁבְתִּי בְּבֵית יְהוָה כָּל יְמֵי חַיַּי;

If we belong to a religious denomination which requires a definite morning devotion, we attend to that also. (Alcoholics Anonymous p.87)

The traditional Jewish practice is to pray standard prayers every morning, including the Sh'ma and the Amidah (The Shemoneh Esrei, The Silent Devotion). These can be found in all major Jewish prayerbooks.

## Daytime / Sha'ot haYom / שעות היום

As we go through the day we pause, when agitated or doubtful, and ask for the right thought or action... "Thy will be done." (Alcoholics Anonymous p.87-88)

Here are some thoughts or kavanot (often translated as "intentions" or "directions of the heart") that can help us focus our thoughts or actions during the day.

May it be Your will  
Yehi Ratzon Milfanecha

יהי רצון מלפניך

Here I am  
Hineni

הִנְנִי

I place God before me always  
(Psalm 16:8)  
Shiviti Adonai l'negdi tamid

שִׁוִּיתִי יְהוָה לְנֶגְדִי תָמִיד

## In Tune with God

O dear God,  
Be with me,  
And help me  
Strive to come close—  
To be fully committed to You.  
Let every part of me  
—physical, emotional and spiritual—  
Join  
In focused determination  
To fulfill Your Will.  
May my thoughts,  
My emotions,  
My words,  
And all my actions  
Be wholly in tune  
With You.

Rebbe Nachman of Breslov