AMIDAH

“The Standing Prayers”

The Amidah is the central prayer of all four Jewish prayer services: shacharit (morning), mincha (afternoon), maariv (evening), and mussaf (additional).

The word Amidah literally means standing, because it is prayed while standing. It is also known as Shemoneh Esrei, meaning eighteen, because it originally consisted of eighteen blessings, and as tefilah (prayer) because in liturgical regards it is the most important Jewish prayer. The obligation to pray three times a day, which was established by Ezra and codified in the Talmud (Berakhot 26b), is traditionally fulfilled by reciting the Amidah.

In the 5th century B.C.E., the 120 men of the Great Assembly composed the basic text of the Amidah. The exact form and order of the blessings were codified after the destruction of the Second Temple in the first century C.E. The Amidah was expanded from eighteen to nineteen blessings in the 2nd century C.E. adding the blessing (against heretics to combat the threats posed initially by the Samaritan and Sadducee sects, and later by the Christians.
Traditional Customs

Traditionally a person stands with one's feet together while reciting the Amidah as a show of respect for G_D. The rabbis add that this pose mirrors the vision of angels that Ezekiel had in which the feet of the angels appeared as one (Ezekiel 1:7). The custom is to face the direction of Israel, and if one is in Israel, to turn to Jerusalem and the Temple Mount. This shows respect for the Temple, which was central to Jewish life, and reminds one that the synagogue was established to try to fill the gap in Jewish life left by the Temples' destruction. In many synagogues in the west, the ark is on the eastern wall of the synagogue for this reason.

The Amidah is a person's opportunity to approach G_D in private prayer, and should therefore be said quietly. The words should be audible to oneself, but one should be careful to pray softly enough not to disturb others. If one is alone, it is permissible to raise one's voice slightly if it helps concentration. Traditionally it is forbidden to interrupt the Amidah even to greet an important person. One should not even acknowledge a greeting. Only a grave emergency justifies interrupting the Amidah, since it is considered a conversation with G_D... no interruptions please!

The Amidah does afford the opportunity to insert one's private prayers. During the eighth blessing, for healing, many siddurim (prayer books) include a prayer that asks G_D to heal a specific person and has a place to insert the name of anyone who is sick. Personal requests may be made during any of the blessings, but in the sixteenth blessing specifically, which asks G_D to hear our prayers, it is appropriate to insert one's own requests. Traditionally the appropriate place in this blessing to do so is after the words "raykam al teshivanu" (do not turn us away empty). These additional prayers can be said in any language for any need.
Order and Content of the Blessings

There is a logical basis for the order and content of the blessings. One Talmudic source provides scriptural foundations, another suggests that each is associated with a historic or miraculous event, and another relates the blessings of the Amidah to the prayer of Hannah. Either way, the Amidah contains three sections: a three-blessing introduction made up of praises of G_D; thirteen petitions to G_D for various needs; and a closing of three blessings of thanksgiving. The model for this structure is how one would approach a powerful ruler or how a servant would approach a master.

The Amidah is introduced with a verse that requests, "Lord, open my lips and my mouth will declare Thy praise" ("adonai sfatai..."). The first three blessings of praise appeal to G_D as the protector of our forefathers, and extol His powers and holiness. The blessings of petition ask for six personal needs: knowledge, repentance, forgiveness, redemption, health and economic prosperity. They also plead for six needs of the Jewish people: ingathering of the exiled, restoration of justice, destruction of Israel's enemies, reward for the righteous, restoration of Jerusalem, and the coming of the Messiah. The final supplication asks G_D to hear our prayers. The closing three blessings speak of the hope of return to Temple worship, thanksgiving to G_D, and a prayer for peace.

Final Thoughts

In all practicality the Amidah, with the exception of the Shema is the most often recited prayer(s). Traditionally the collection of prayers is viewed singularly ... as in one conversation/appointment with G_D!

The Messianic Jewish faith continues to pray the AMIDAH!
"O Lord, open Thou my lips; and my mouth shall show forth thy praise." (Psalm 51:17 [h])

Amidah 1 Avot - Praising the G_D of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob

The first blessing of the weekday Amidah is called Avot (Patriarchs), and offers praise to G_D as the “G_D of Abraham, G_D of Isaac, G_D of Jacob.”
The second blessing of the weekday Amidah is called Gevurot ("mighty deeds"), and offers praise to G_D as the ultimate Power in the universe as demonstrated by the resurrection from the dead.

You are of the dead, restorer, O Lord, forever mighty. You are

Who sustains, able to save, greatly

the living, Who supports, abundant with mercy, the dead who revives.

the captives and releases, the sick and heals.

his faith, who maintains

O Master is like you, who

O King, who makes life and death

the dead, to revive, are you and faithful.

Lord, are you Blessed.

Blessed are you, Lord, who revives, 

May His mighty deeds even be known by the captives as a reward, that those asleep in the dust may awake, that to you compares and who of mighty deeds, he who caused the dead to revive.

for the living and for the dead, who supports the sick, and releases the captives, and presides over the world.

by Your mercy, for Your blessings, we are still alive.

May you be praised and exalted, and may your praise be above all praises, our God, Lord, King of the Universe.
Amidah 3 - Kedushat HaShem - The Holiness of G_D's Name

The third blessing of the weekday Amidah is called *Kedushat HaShem* ("the holiness of the Name"). *Kedushat HaShem* is also a technical term for "sanctifying G_D’s Name," which, in extreme cases, may require the giving of your life. The following is recited when you are by yourself, reciting the Amidah:

Amidah 4 - Da'at - Petition for Knowledge and Insight

The fourth blessing of the weekday Amidah is called *Da'at* ("knowledge") and functions as a prayer for understanding from the LORD. Note that this part of the Amidah is only recited during weekdays (the Shabbat and Holiday versions skip this prayer).
Amidah 5 - Teshuvah - Return us, our Father, to Thy Torah

The fifth blessing of the weekday Amidah is called *Teshuvah* ("turning") and functions as a prayer for return to the LORD and His Torah. Note that this part of the Amidah is only recited during weekdays (the Shabbat and Holiday versions skip this prayer).

**Malkeinu ve'arveinu lehatora kevishnu ha-shiveinu**

our King draw us near to Your Torah our Father Return us

**Le-fane ysha shelemah bit shuvah ve ha-chazi renu le-avo da-tekha**

to your presence complete in repentance restore us to serve you

**Boreh isha vedereh keratze beshavah**

in repentance who desires Lord are You Blessed

Amidah 6 - Selichah - Forgive us, our Father, for we have sinned

The sixth blessing of the weekday Amidah is called *Selichah* ("forgiveness") and functions as a confession of sin before the LORD. Note that this part of the Amidah is only recited during weekdays (the Shabbat and Holiday versions skip this prayer).

**Selah le-vonvim pi yshaven, motzei levin molven, cri ki malkeinu lamu me-chal chatanu ki avinu lamu se-lach**

for our King us pardon we have sinned, for our Father us Forgive

**Peshuven, cri mitala melatza eman. orzu eman yoreh**

Lord are You Blessed are You and forgiver a pardoner for we have rebelled

**Hashem tov ba'lom**

forgives who abundantly the gracious
Amidah 7 - Geulah - Redeem us for the sake of thy Name

The seventh blessing of the weekday Amidah is called Ge’ulah (“redemption”) and appeals to the LORD for redemption and deliverance. The Talmud states that this blessing’s position as seventh in the Amidah points to the future advent of the Mashiach, which will be preceded by seven years of travail (the time of Jacob’s trouble). In the seventh year, the upheaval will reach its climactic stage and the world will totter on the brink of total destruction. Then the Mashiach will appear and end the horror to usher in an era of unsurpassed shalom.

Amidah 8 - Refuah - Heal us, O LORD, and we shall be healed

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Amidah 9 - Birkat Hashanim - An appeal for a prosperous year

The Birkat Hashanim (blessing of the years) is the ninth blessing of the Amidah wherein appeal is made to the LORD to prosper us for the year's needs.

B'rakhah: Veten leovah tevu'ah menei kol ve'set
Blessing and give for goodness crops kinds of all and

The Lord is You Blessed that were good like the years our year

Amidah 10 - Kibbutz Galuyot - Ingathering of Exiles

The Kibbutz Galuyot (gathering of exiles) is the tenth blessing of the Amidah wherein appeal is made to the LORD to return the Jews from the affliction of Galut.

B'rakhah: Veten leovah tevu'ah menei kol ve'set
Blessing and give for goodness crops kinds of all and

The Lord is You Blessed that were good like the years our year

Israel of His people the scattered Who regathers Lord are You Blessed
Amidah 11 - Birkat HaDin - Restoration of Justice

The Birkat HaDin (restoration of justice) is the eleventh blessing of the Amidah wherein appeal is made to the LORD to restore righteous rule upon the earth.

Amidah 12 Birkat Ha_minim – against enemies

The LORD, who loves righteousness, who loves judgment, let us be Your people, our Lord, and the ruler of our salvation.

The LORD, who loves righteousness, who loves judgment, let us be Your people, our Lord, and the ruler of our salvation.
 Amidah 13 tzaddikim – the righteous ones

עַל הַחֲצֵרֵיכָם עֲלֵי הַחֵסִידִים, עָלָּיוֹן בְּנֵי יְהוָה

‘am me-kha zik-nei ve’al ha-chesidim ve’al hais-dikim ‘el
your people the elders and on the devout and on the righteous on

יִרְחָא שִׁירֵה יִשְׂרָאֵל עָלָיוֹן פּוֹלְקִית
yir-cha shi-reh yisra-el ve-lokei tiv
converts and on of their scholars the remnant on Israel house of

אֲדֹנָּי וְאֵלֹהֵינוּ אֲדֹנָּי רַחֲמֶה-קֶה יִשְׂרָאֵל
elohenu Adonai ra’chame-kha ye’hemu ve’aleinu hais-te-dak
our God Lord your compassion may it rise the righteous the righteous

בֵּ-עָמֶט בֵּ-שִׁמְקֶה הַבְּרוֹכֶה-כָּה לְ-כָּל הַטּוֹב שַׁחַר וְטִן
be-amet be-shim-kha hab-bo-te-chim le-khol tov shakhar vet-en
in truth in your name who trust to all good reward and give

רְשָׁי הִכֵּלִים שְׁאָם לְעָלָם לִפְלְצָה לְאֵל יְבֹשֵׁי אֶרְקֶה
ve-kha ki ne-vosh ve-lo lo’-am’im mahem he-li-qem ve-sim
in you for ashamed and not forever with them our lot and put

בְּשָׁפְנוֹת בּוֹרֻהוּ בַּאוֹתָה יִרְחָא, בְּשָׁפְנוֹת בְּתוֹבָה לְצִיְרִים
del tsed-dikim um-vitch mish’an Adonai ’attah baruka ba-tachnu
of the righteous and assurance stronghold Lord are You Blessed we trust
While in Galut (exile), Jews will never stop mourning for and praying to return to Jerusalem. This sentiment finds its expression in Zionism - the worldwide movement of the Jewish people to return to their ancient homeland as the chosen people of G-D (Zionism comes from the word Tsion, one of the Jewish names for the holy city of Jerusalem).

Blessings ten through fifteen of the Amidah emphasize the LORD’s redemption of national Israel. With blessing fifteen, Malkhut beit David, the appeal is made for the “Branch of David” (Tzemach David) to arise and bring about Israel's salvation (yeshuah).
Amidah 16 – Kabbalat Tefillah – Acceptance of Prayer

Blessing sixteen of the Amidah prayer, Kabbalat Tefillah, is an appeal to the LORD for pity, mercy, and acceptance of the foregoing petitions, and thereby closes the petitionary (middle) section of the foregoing sequence of prayers.

בְּרֵאשִׁית אֱלוֹהִים יְהֹוָה, חָכֵם וַחֲרָמִים
 améric 16 – Kabbalat Tefillah – Acceptance of Prayer

Aleinu ve-erachem chus elodenu Adonai kolenu shma
 on us and mercy have pity our God Lord our voice Hear

טְפִלֶּה וּשְׂמַע לְמַעַן הֶרֶם וּקְשֵׁם וּגְדוֹלָה

Our prayer -- and in favor in mercy and accept

כִּי אֶל שְׁמַע תְּפִלָּתֵנוּ וְתַחֲנֵנוּ אֲלֵה
 are You and supplications prayers who hears God for

וּמַלֵּךְ לֹא רָאֵץ אַלָּחֵי נַשְׁבֵּנוּ
 turn us away do not empty our King from before You

כִּי אֶל שְׁמַע תְּפִלָּתֵנוּ עָנָה וְחָרָם יִשְׁרָאֵל בְּרַחְמָה
 in mercy Israel Your people the prayer of hear You for

בְּרֵאשִׁית אֱלוֹהִים יְהֹוָה, שְּמַעְתָּה תְפִלָּתָה

Blessed prayer who hears Lord are You
The Avodah (worship, labor, service) is the seventeenth blessing of the weekday Amidah and the fifth blessing of the Shabbat Amidah. According to the Rabbis of the Talmud, the Avodah prayer was said by the priests in the Temple just after they had offered the sacrifices (Mishnah Tamid 5:1).

The translation of the Avodah prayer includes:

- "and to their prayer Israel Your people our God Lord Accept"
- "of Your house most holy the service ( ) and restore"
- "in favor accept in love and their prayer of Israel and the fires"
- "Your people of Israel the service always and may it please You"
- "You return to Zion may our eyes behold"
- "to Zion His Presence Who restores Lord are You Blessed"
Amidah 18 – Hoda’ah– Thanksgiving to The Lord

The eighteenth blessing of the weekday Amidah is composed of two parts: the Hoda’ah portion, expressing thanks to the LORD, and the concluding section. Hoda’ah means gratitude, and is considered the most basic of attitudes toward HaShem.

Our God, for You are Adonai, You we we thank

of our lives Rock and ever forever our fathers and God of

You We will thank to generation from generation Are You our salvation Shold of

and for into Your hands are entrusted our lives for Your praise and tell

that every day are Your miracles and for to You entrusted our souls

that are at all times and favors Your wonders and for with us

your mercies exhausted not for O Good and afternoon and morning evening

in You we hope forever Your kindness ended not for and compassions
מלך צלאם יברך ויהויהו שמך מלכנו
mal-kenu shim'kha ve-yi'ro mam yit-ba rakh kuf lam ve'al
our King Your Name and exalted blessed all this and for

setName לשלום נצח. כל חוהים ידרוּתָה
selah yo-dukha ha chai yim ve chof ve'ed le o lam tamid
forever will praise You the living and all and ever forever always

ירגלת איה שם בקמה. הרתָל לשרְתָנוּ
ye-shu' ate nu ha el be e met shim kha 'et vi hal el lu
O God of our salvation Your Name in truth and praise

שמדון גלְלוּ בורך. אתָה איה רותָה. חסן שמך
shim kha hattov 'Adonai 'at tah barukh selah ve'ez rete nu
Your Name The Good Lord are You Blessed forever and our help

לך נאם לחרוגה.
le ho dot na'eh u le kha
to give thanks it is right and to You
The final blessing of the weekday Amidah is called Sim Shalom which means "create peace," and anticipates the birkat kohanim, "May He grant you peace" (Numbers 6:24-26).

ברךך אוֹר פּוֹנֶךְ, נַחַת לָיָנוּ
לְנוּ מְנֶטֶת פָּנֵי-קְחָה וּ֝וֹר קִי מִזָמַר בָּרֵכָה יְהֹוָה.

כֵּי בָאָוָא מִמְּוָא הַיִּירָמָא, וַעֲקַר בִּילְקַסְטָנָא, וַעֲקַר בְּשָׁלֹם הַיֵּהוֹא, נָחַת לָיָנוּ.

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Oseh Shalom Bimromav

This blessing ends with the following ritual: Bow to the left for the phrase oseh shalom bimromav, bow forward for during hu ya’aseh shalom aleinu, and straighten up for ve’al kol yisrael. Veimru amen:

Not quite finished yet!

Perhaps … just perhaps we can see that there is an intentional or maybe unintentional pattern to these prayers which depict a certain form of movement … not surprisingly an “aliyah” of sorts towards the throne … towards our own destiny?

Let’s recap the Amidah while thinking in very discrete steps:

Step 1-Attesting to the identity of ELOHIM … the G_D of Israel and all creation.
Step 2-Acknowledging ELOHIM’s glory and power over life, death … all things!
Step 3- Attesting to the holiness of ELOHIM … even His very NAME!
Step 4-Submitting to ELOHIM as being the source of all knowledge and wisdom
Step 5-Repenting and cleaving to Torah as a sign of repentance
Step 6-Confession of sin and forgiveness
Step 7-Seeking Redemption/Adoption into the inheritance … Kingdom Israel
Step 8-Request for healing and bearing witness to our dependency upon ELOHIM
Step 9-Thankfulness for the sustenance/blessings provided by ELOHIM
Step 10-Fellowship and the in-gathering
Step 11-Walking in Torah with ELOHIM and each other … producing a righteous environment
Step 12-Standing as a light against the darkness of this world (olam hazeh)
Step 13-Blessing and supporting those people that abide by the everlasting covenant
Step 14-Awaiting the Re-building up of Jerusalem
Step 15-Awaiting in all hope for Mashiach’s appearance and reign
Step 16-Acceptance of prayers
Step 17 - Restoring of the Holy Service
Step 18 - Receiving Salvation
Step 19 - Living in everlasting peace before the face of ELOHIM

Now for one moment ... in good Hebraic prayer fashion ... let us ponder this discrete and tactical aliyah/ascent in a Messianic perspective.

YESHUA is the WORD through which all things were created ... HE is the king of Israel;
YESHUA has been given all authority of The FATHER and has life in HIMSELF;
YESHUA is the "HOLY ONE of Israel";
YESHUA is the ONE WHO has the words of life and WHO sends forth the SPIRIT of remembrance, truth and wisdom;
YESHUA declares that those who love HIM will keep the commandments ... will be conformed to HIS image;
YESHUA is faithful to wash us clean of sin if we genuinely repent and confess;
YESHUA redeems us ... makes us new ... adopts us into the root ... HIMSELF;
YESHUA heals us by HIS stripes;
YESHUA is the sustaining bread of life ... the bread from Heaven;
YESHUA binds us up together into Israel ... into the “body of Mashiach”;
YESHUA is righteousness ... walking in HIM produces righteousness and works to heal the creation;
YESHUA is the light of the world and the darkness comprehends not ... nor can stand against HIM;
YESHUA brings individual and communal love ... manifesting the will of the FATHER;
YESHUA makes us stones of the very temple itself;
YESHUA is not just the King of Kings to come but HE is the hope of all Israel;
YESHUA is the eternal High Priest through which all prayers flow;
YESHUA within the believer makes life a “living sacrifice” to ELOHIM;
YESHUA is SALVATION ... the event ... the power ... the transformation ... the glory;
YESHUA is SHALOM ... HE is the face of ELOHIM!

Just some things to ponder beloved children of ELOHIM! Yet again we should readily see that tradition typically aligns perfectly with Mashiach YESHUA. Does our journey by chance represent this aliyah? Hmmm!

Shalom Aleichem ... P.R. Otokletos