

THE ANCIENT ARAMAIC PRAYER OF JESUS – “The Lord’s Prayer”

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PRAYER

SLOTHA [*All purple words are Aramaic*]: It literally means “to set a trap.” So prayer, literally, means, “to set your mind like a trap and wait patiently to catch the thoughts of God”; that is, to trap inner guidance and impulses. It also means attentiveness, adjustment or “tuning in.”

GOD (*From German word GOOT – The good one*)

ALAHA: This is also the Arabic word *Allah* and in Hebrew *Alohim*. In simple language ALLAH is my very breath, and my very heartbeat, and my very life. The living God encompasses us and watches over us as a shepherd watches over his flock. “For in him [God] we live and move and have our being.” (Acts 17:28) *The purpose of prayer is not to change God but to change us.* When we attune our minds with proper attitude, then we can trap God’s counsel, and thereby be of “one accord” with Him. (See John 10:30)

“**In Jesus’ name.**” (John 16:23-24). To truly pray “in his name” means to pray with the same kind of understanding about God and man that he had. The Aramaic word **BESHEMI** (“in my name”) means “according to my technique, my way, my method, my approach, or my system of doing things,” or “with my kind of understanding. Jesus encouraged his disciples to pray to the Father “in his name,” but he meant for them to pray in the manner he taught them.

Jesus’ equation: God is a loving Father – God is the source of all good – Man gets what he expects and that man can expect good things. Living in this kind of awareness negates all that is not good.

Religion comes from Aramaic word **DINA** which means “balance” a balance in our own beings with a just, balanced relationship with others.

Our Father who [is] throughout the universe.

Let your name be set apart.

Come your kingdom (counsel).

Let your desire be, as in the universe, also on the earth.

Give us bread for our necessities this day.

And free us from our offenses, as also we have freed our offenders.

And do not let us enter our temptation (worldliness), but set us free from error.

For belongs to you the kingdom, power, and song, from ages to ages.

Sealed in faithfulness.

■ *A literal translation from the Aramaic by Rocco A. Errico*

OUR UNIVERSAL FATHER

AWOON DWASHMAYA “**Our Father who [is] in the universe**” One of few possible translations. *God acts only for the good of all.* The Jews used to begin prayer: “O Father Abraham...” We do not need mediators like the patriarchs. In this prayer Jesus does not use the word “God”. He uses Aramaic word **ABA** = Father, or, as it appears here **AWOON** “Our Father.” He is not someone to be feared. He is someone in whom we can place our trust and love : “In God we Trust.”

Some have told us to approach God as degraded unworthy sinners. Jesus, even in the parable of the Prodigal Son, reminds us that even in our sin we have no other title but child of the heavenly Father. Repentance and forgiveness were His way of restoration (*See Luke 24:46-47*). Prayer is NOT an attempt to “get into” union with God – it is an acknowledgement of this union. **He always sees us as His children BUT we do not always see Him as Our Father – AWOON.**

The very FIRST attitude we have to “tune in to” is that **we are one with our Father – now!** “God is Spirit; and those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth [that is, with understanding” (John 4:24)].

God can not be contained anywhere. After Solomon built the temple he prayed “Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee; how much less this house which I have built?” (1 Kings 8:27). Isaiah also knew of God’s universality: “... where shall I dwell? But to him who is calm and humble, and trembles at my word” (Isaiah 66:1-2).

HALLOWED BE THY NAME

NITHKADASH SHMAKH “Holy be thy name”. The word **KADISH** “holy” or set aside for a specific purpose. Keep God’s name apart from wrong deeds and transactions. We should never associate or use God’s name in evil or false conversations. “Let your yes be yes and your no No. (Matthew 5:37).

Exodus 20:7 – Do not use God’s name “in vain”. The Aramaic word for in vain is **DAGALOOHA** “in falsehood”. God’s name should be kept apart from lying words and false oaths. The idea of God’s holiness should remind us that He takes no part in evil transactions or in deeds which hurt, destroy or kill people. His holiness does not make Him distant from us.

THY KINGDOM COME

TAYTHEY MALCOOTHAKH “Come your kingdom”. We begin the Liturgy with “Blessed is the Kingdom...” The Jews were looking for an earthly partisan kingdom but Jesus spoke of a Spiritual Kingdom for all that rules the human heart.

MALCOOHA also means counsel – advice. It has the same root as angel – king – counselor. We are praying: *Let God’s counsel or advice come into our lives to guide and direct us rightly.* “The Kingdom of God is within you” (Luke 17:21). “Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you” (Matthew 6:33). It is God’s guidance that we need FIRST before any action.

God’s inspiration necessary for right action “for it is God who inspires you with the will to do the good things which you desire to do” (Philippians 2:13).

LET YOUR WISH BE

NEHWEH SEVIANAKH AICANNA DWASHMAYA OP BARAH “Let your wish be, as in the universe, also on the earth.” The Aramaic word **SEVIANAKH** means: thy will – thy desire – thy wish – thy delight or thy pleasure. God’s will for us is the same as the will of every good father who wants the best for his children. “If therefore you who err, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him?” (Matthew 7:11).

God does not inflict any evil upon people. All things work unto good for those who trust in the Lord. **SHMAYA** means sky – heaven – cosmos – universe and metaphorically it means prosperity – peace and harmony. Our lives should reflect God’s beauty and grace.

DINA is the word for religion and it means “balance.” We should reflect this balanced (*in media res* – the middle way) way in our lives. We must become attuned to God’s ways.

GIVE US BREAD TODAY

HAVLAN LAKHMA DSONKANAN YOMANA “Give us bread for our necessities today.” Eastern peoples prepare bread for a given day. They also bake extra for any possible stranger who would become a guest. **LAKHMA** doesn’t simply mean bread-food. It also means understanding and truth. Jesus spoke of himself as “the bread of life.”

In the first temptation of Jesus He repudiates the tempter “It is written that it is not by bread alone that man can live, but by every word which proceeds from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4).

Moses spoke similar words “... man does not live by bread alone; but by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord does man live” (Deuteronomy 8:3). Moses also reminded us that material wealth alone will not bring equality, justice, and social order. Having wealth without truth and justice would only lead to chaos, violence and a disintegrating social order. The communists thought differently. They used both violence and wealth to try to create order – peace and equality. You can create equality of opportunity but rarely of outcome.

God always provides for us “Every good and perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of Lights” (James 1:17). God gave us intelligence to provide for our needs and his grace to see things properly.

FREE US FROM OUR OFFENSES

WASHBOKLAN KHOBEN: AICANNA DOP KHNAN SHBAKN LEKHAYAVEN “Forgive us our offenses, as we have forgiven our offenders” a literal translation would be “Free us [from] our offenses as also we have freed our offenders.” **KHOBEN** means something more than debt. It also means faults – mistakes or offenses, The word **SHBAKN** means forgive and also to free – to untie – or to release.

Genuine forgiveness stops the circle of pain and heals any hurts or wrongs. In some way it’s like a new life where we regain the precious attitude of a willing mind which is ready to learn all over again. When the body is hurt it begins to heal immediately. We should learn from nature to forgive early and often so as to begin to heal.

Forgiveness is a two-way street where we decide how to receive and how to give forgiveness. This does not mean that we are defenseless. Jesus taught us to be “Wise as Serpents and Pure as Doves” (Matthew 10:16). Snakes avoid being stepped on by being attentive and doves always seek peace and fly from being entrapped. Forgiveness revitalizes our souls and releases the inner tensions and bondages which plague our minds.

DO NOT LET US ENTER INTO WORLDLINESS

GOLA TALAN LNISUNA ELLA PASAN MIN BISHA “And do not let us enter into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” Most other translations of this verse read like this; “And do not lead us into temptation...” But the correct translation from the Aramaic reads: “And do not let us enter into temptation...” Benjamin Franklin was perplexed by the King James version of this prayer so he translated it more accurately compared to the Aramaic: “And keep us out of temptation.”

God is light and there is no darkness in Him. God tempts no one and leads no one into temptation. “Let no man say when he is tempted. I am tempted of God; for God cannot be

tempted with evil, neither does he tempt any man; But every man is tempted by his own lust; he covets and is enticed' (James 1:13-14). It is our disordered desires that lead us to evil and not God.

TALAN comes from the root word **AL** which means to enter into – to attack – to wrestle. Here it means “do not let us enter.” The same word is used by Jesus in Matthew 26:41, when he said to his apostles: “Awake and pray, that you may not enter (**TALON**) into temptation.”

The Aramaic word **NISUNA** means trials or temptation and sometimes materialism. We are called to use material things and not to be blinded or used by them. When we serve things we become slaves and our humanity is subsumed by the worries of this life as if there is no other way to live.

The Aramaic word **PASAN** means “part us” or “set us free.” We want to avoid trouble and free ourselves from entrapment and manipulation. **BISHA** means evil error or mistake. God’s grace leads us to a new and better life and severs chains of habits and habitual thinking that wants to eliminate a future full of possibilities.

BELONGS TO YOUR KINGDOM, POWER, and GLORY

MITTOL DILAKHYE MALCOTHA OKHELA OOTISHBOKHTA: LALAM ALMIN AMEN “**For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory for ever and ever. Amen.**” We acknowledge God’s power or rather the power of Our Father who is the source of all power and possibility and who wants the best for us. This is a child’s trust in Daddy.

The Aramaic word **LALAM ALMIN** means from ages to ages. He was teaching us that the kingdom of God always remains faithful and unchanging “from ages to ages.”

The Lord closes His prayer with **AMEN** which means faithful – truthful – and sincere. It also means “sealed in truth.” When we say Amen to our prayers we’re each individually saying: “I’ll back it up; everything I’ve said, I’ll be faithful to.”

WALK IN HIS WAY

We acknowledge and realize who God is – a loving Father Who is forever at hand and concerned about His children’s welfare.

We acknowledge and realize who we are – children of a gracious Father who are provided for in all ways.

We acknowledge and accept God’s Kingdom, ruling within our own hearts.

We acknowledge and realize that God always provides for His children, so we need not fear the future.

We acknowledge and understand the value of forgiveness, both for ourselves and for others, even as our loving Father forgives all who ask of Him.

We acknowledge and work with the guidance of our Father within. Who ever leads us away from error and toward Truth.

We acknowledge and believe that all will be accomplished because it is sealed in truth and faithfulness.

Therefore, we acknowledge and accept only one Kingdom or Counsel, only one Power, and only one Glory – the Kingdom. The Power, and the Glory of our Loving Heavenly Father.