

## *Who Gives Sight to the Blind*

*When we thank God for giving sight to the blind, we express thankfulness not only for the literal gift of sight, but also for our capacity for insight, for our ability to be aware of the world around us, and for the capacity to understand ourselves and our world.*

Rabbi Benjamin said:  
We are all blind until the Holy One enlightens our eyes, as the Bible records regarding Hagar, “And God opened her eyes and she saw a well” (Genesis 21:19).

—GENESIS RABBAH

## *Imitating God*

Our prayers thanking God for the clothes we wear and for the ability to stand up and walk about are also a reminder of the imperative for us to provide clothing for the “naked,” to offer help to those who are in physical need, and to defend those who are unjustifiably “bound.” The ancient rabbis commented on the verse, “You shall follow Adonai your God...” (Deuteronomy 13:5)—just as God is kind and loving, so too you should be kind and loving; just as God performs acts of generosity, so should you; just as God is patient, so should you be, as it is written, “You shall make yourselves holy, for I, Adonai your God, am holy” (Leviticus 19:2).

—based on THE BABYLONIAN TALMUD

# Abbreviated Morning Prayer before Shofar Calls

## *Blessings for a New Day*

*We rise.*

*Barukh atah ADONAI, our God, sovereign of time and space, who enables the bird to distinguish day from night, who made me in the divine image, who made me free, who made me a Jew, who gives sight to the blind, who clothes the naked,*

*Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam,*

*asher natan la-sekhvi vinah l'havhin bein yom u-vein lailah.*

*Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam,*

*she-asani b'tzalmo.*

*Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam,*

*she-asani ben/bat horin.*

*Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam,*

*she-asani yisrael.*

*Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam,*

*pokei-ah ivrim.*

*Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam,*

*malbish arumim.*

## בְּרָכוֹת הַשַּׁחַר

*We rise.*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,  
אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לְשִׁכְוֵי בֵינָה לְהַבְחִין בֵּין יוֹם וּבֵין לַיְלָה.  
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שְׁעָשִׂנִי בְּצַלְמוֹ.  
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,  
שְׁעָשִׂנִי בְּנוֹאֲבַת חוֹרֵין.  
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שְׁעָשִׂנִי יִשְׂרָאֵל.  
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, פּוֹקֵחַ עֵוְרִים.  
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, מְלַבֵּישׁ עֲרֻמִּים.

**BLESSINGS FOR A NEW DAY**  
בְּרָכוֹת הַשַּׁחַר. As reported in the Babylonian Talmud, most of the *b'rakhot* in this collection were originally recited at home as one went through the daily acts of waking and rising (Berakhot 60b). Each passage extols God as we begin the day: on arising from sleep, on hearing the birds sing, on dressing, on taking one's first steps, and so on. Maimonides stated: "These *b'rakhot* are without a prescribed order; each is to be recited only on the appropriate occasion... and not as part of the synagogue service" (Mishneh Torah,

Hilkhot Tefillah 7:7, 9). Other authorities, however, beginning with the siddur of Rav Amram Gaon in the 9th century, recommended the public recitation of these *b'rakhot*. This has been the standard Ashkenazic practice to this day; the common Sephardic practice is to recite these *b'rakhot* privately and to begin the service with the morning psalms.

**BARUKH** בְּרוּךְ. Many commentators argue that the word *barukh* is not a passive verb meaning "blessed," but rather an adjective descriptive of God: God is the wellspring of all blessings. (The similar-sounding Hebrew word *b'reikhah* means "pool of water.") Thus the opening words of a *b'rakhah* are an acknowledgment that God is the source of all blessings (*Meir ibn Gabbai*).

**WHO ENABLES THE BIRD TO DISTINGUISH** אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לְשִׁכְוֵי בֵינָה. We are a part of the natural world, responding to the morning sunlight as does all of nature. This first blessing attributes understanding to the animal realm and points to humans taking instruction from them.

The language is taken from the Book of Job (38:36), where God responds to Job out of the whirlwind, saying: "Who placed wisdom in the most hidden places? Who gave understanding to the bird? Who is wise enough to describe the heavens?" The word used for bird is *sekhvi*, and the Babylonian Talmud identifies it as a rooster (Rosh Hashanah 26a).

**WHO MADE ME IN THE DIVINE IMAGE** שְׁעָשִׂנִי בְּצַלְמוֹ. This blessing and the next one ("who made me free") are versions of blessings mentioned in the Tosefta (Berakhot 6:18) and in the Babylonian Talmud (Menahot 43b). They have been emended in Conservative prayerbooks on the basis of manuscript fragments, found in the Cairo Genizah.

**WHO MADE ME A JEW** שְׁעָשִׂנִי יִשְׂרָאֵל. This positive formulation is the wording in the Babylonian Talmud (Menahot 43b).

**WHO GIVES SIGHT TO THE BLIND** פּוֹקֵחַ עֵוְרִים. Said when opening the eyes. Many of these blessings are taken from the psalmist's descriptions of God's actions: "... sets prisoners free ... restores sight to the blind ... makes those who are bent stand straight ..." (Psalm 146:7–8).

**WHO CLOTHES THE NAKED** מְלַבֵּישׁ עֲרֻמִּים. God's clothing of Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:21) was an act of kindness exhibited to these first humans, even as they were exiled from the Garden.

*Barukh atah ADONAI*, our  
 God, sovereign of time  
 and space,  
 who endows each and  
 every living thing with  
 unique capabilities and  
 purpose,  
 and creates me in the  
 divine image;  
 who grants me free will,  
 and the ability to exer-  
 cise it,  
 and blesses me with the  
 gift and responsibility of  
 being a Jew;  
 who opens my eyes to  
 the world around and  
 within me, blessing me  
 with insight, awareness,  
 and understanding,  
 and protects me when I  
 feel vulnerable,  
 exposed, or ashamed;  
 who frees me from all that  
 limits or confines me,  
 and restores my dignity  
 when I feel bent or  
 broken;  
 who leads me back to solid  
 ground when the world  
 shifts beneath my feet,  
 and guides me along my  
 path when I am lost or  
 confused;  
 who creates me with  
 needs, and the where-  
 withal to meet them,  
 and strengthens the  
 people Israel with the  
 courage to embody our  
 beliefs;  
 who crowns the people  
 Israel with a sense of  
 mission and purpose,  
 and renews me each night  
 when I am weary, that I  
 may awake to each new  
 day with strength.

—JAN UHRBACH

who releases the bound,  
 who straightens those who are bent,  
 who stretches out the earth over the waters,  
 who steadies our steps,  
 who has provided for all my needs,  
 who strengthens the people Israel with courage,  
 who crowns the people Israel with glory,  
 and who gives strength to the weary.

*Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam, matir asunim.*

*Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam, zokof k'tufim.*

*Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam,  
 roka ha-aretz al ha-mayim.*

*Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam,  
 ha-meikhin mitzadei gaver.*

*Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam,  
 she-asah li kol tzorki.*

*Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam, ozer yisrael bigvurah.*

*Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam, oter yisrael b'tifarah.*

*Barukh atah Adonai eloheinu melekh ha-olam,  
 ha-noten laya-eif ko-ah.*

*Barukh atah ADONAI*, our God, sovereign of time and space,  
 who removes sleep from my eyes and slumber from my eyelids.

May it be Your will, our God and God of our ancestors,  
 that You accustom us to study Your Torah  
 and cling to Your mitzvot;  
 do not lead us into error, or transgression, or sin,  
 nor subject us to trials or disgrace.  
 Do not let the inclination to evil control us,  
 and distance us from people who would do us evil  
 and from friends who commit evil;  
 spur in us the yearning to do good and to act with goodness.  
 Bend our will and our desires to Your service.

► Today and every day, may You look upon us, and may all who  
 see us look upon us, with eyes filled with kindness, love,  
 and compassion. Act toward us with kindly love.  
*Barukh atah ADONAI*, who acts with kindly love to the  
 people Israel.

ברוך אתה יהוה אלהינו מלך העולם, מתיר אסורים.  
ברוך אתה יהוה אלהינו מלך העולם, זוקף כפופים.

ברוך אתה יהוה אלהינו מלך העולם,  
רוקע הארץ על המים.

ברוך אתה יהוה אלהינו מלך העולם,  
המכין מצעדי גבור.

ברוך אתה יהוה אלהינו מלך העולם,  
שעשה לי כל-צרכי.

ברוך אתה יהוה אלהינו מלך העולם,  
אוזר ישראל בגבורה.

ברוך אתה יהוה אלהינו מלך העולם,  
עוטר ישראל בתפארה.

ברוך אתה יהוה אלהינו מלך העולם,  
הנותן לייעף כח.

ברוך אתה יהוה אלהינו מלך העולם,  
המעביר שנה מעיני ותנומה מעפעפי.

ויהי רצון מלפניך, יהוה אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו  
[ואמותינו], שתרגילנו בתורתך, ודבקנו במצותיה,  
ואל תביאנו לא לידי חטא, ולא לידי עברה ועון, ולא  
לידי נסיון, ולא לידי בזיון, ואל תשלבנו יצר הרע,  
והרחיקנו מאדם רע ומחבר רע. ודבקנו ביצר הטוב  
ובמעשים טובים, וכוף את-יצרנו להשתעבד-לה.  
« ותגנו היום, ובכל-יום, לחן ולחסד ולרחמים בעיניך,  
ובעיני כל-רואינו, ותגמלנו חסדים טובים.  
ברוך אתה יהוה, גומל חסדים טובים לעמו ישראל.

WHO RELEASES THE BOUND  
מתיר אסורים. Releasing the  
letters of wickedness, free-  
ing the oppressed, feeding  
the hungry, and providing  
for the homeless are men-  
tioned by the prophet Isa-  
iah as acts that God desires  
of human beings (58:6).

WHO STRAIGHTENS THOSE  
WHO ARE BENT זוקף  
כפופים. Literally, "making  
those who are bowed down  
stand upright." This phrase,  
as found in Psalm 146:8,  
is the biblical warrant for  
standing up straight when  
God's name is pronounced,  
after having bowed at the  
beginning of a blessing.

WHO STRETCHES OUT THE  
EARTH OVER THE WATERS  
רוקע הארץ על המים  
Psalm 136:6. Genesis depicts dry  
land being formed from  
the splitting of the primal  
waters.

MAY IT BE YOUR WILL ויהי  
רצון. A prayer recorded in  
the Babylonian Talmud  
(Berakhot 60b).

TRIALS נסיון. The trials of  
life are many: confronting  
personal illness or tragic  
situations, difficult ethical  
dilemmas, temptations that  
may endanger us. In addi-  
tion, because faith is often  
accompanied by doubt,  
and even the strongest  
faith may be vulnerable in  
trying times, we hope that  
today will affirm rather  
than challenge our faith.

INCLINATION TO EVIL יצר  
הרע. The ancient rabbis

believed that we are subject to impulses that lead us to do good or evil. For instance, competitiveness can spur us to exert greater energy but it can also lead to hurtful behavior. The yearning for fame and the approbation of others can influence us to perform acts of kindness and to exercise leadership roles, but it can also produce egos that are never satisfied. We yearn to do good, but we are often impeded by our jealousies, our self-concern, and our desire for mastery and conquest.

### *Both in Private and in Public*

The Torah directs that the ark, which was to contain the tablets, be overlaid with gold both inside and out (Exodus 25:11). The ancient rabbis asked: Why must it be golden on the inside, where, after all, no one will see it? To teach us that we are like the ark—our outer lives and our inner lives should be consistent.

—BABYLONIAN TALMUD

### *Who We Are*

The Hasidic master Simḥah Bunam taught: Each person should carry in his or her pockets two notes. One should read, “The world was created for me.” The other should read, “I am but dust and ashes.”

### *Descendants of Abraham*

What is at stake in our lives is more than the fate of one generation. In this moment we, the living, are Israel. The tasks begun by the patriarchs and prophets, and carried out by countless Jews of the past, are now entrusted to us. No other group has superseded them. We are the only channel of Jewish tradition, those who must save Judaism from oblivion, those who must hand over the entire past to the generations to come. We are either the last, the dying, Jews or else we are those who will give new life to our tradition. Rarely in our history has so much been dependent upon one generation. We shall either forfeit or enrich the legacy of the ages.

—ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL

### *Living with Life's Tensions*

We are caught in the tension between our roles as unique beings capable of great accomplishment, and the knowledge that we are mortal and that our fate is to die and disappear. Prayer helps mediate this tension by impressing on us a sense of thankfulness for the gift of life, the gift of a single day.

### *A Penitential Prayer*

Both in private and in public, a person should always be in awe of heaven, acknowledging the truth, speaking truth in one's heart, and upon arising one should declare:

Master of all worlds! Not upon our merit do we rely  
in pleading before You, but upon Your great compassion.  
What are we? What is our life?  
Our goodness? Our righteousness?  
Our achievement? Our power? Our victories?  
What shall we say in Your presence,  
ADONAI our God and God of our ancestors?  
Heroes count as nothing in Your presence,  
the famous are as though they had never been,  
the wise seem ignorant, the clever as lacking reason.  
For the sum of our deeds is chaos;  
in Your presence our lives seem futile.  
Human beings have no superiority over beasts, for all is vanity.

Surely, though, we are Your people, partners to Your covenant:  
descendants of Abraham, who loved You, to whom You made  
a pledge on Mount Moriah; the seed of Isaac, his designated  
heir, who was bound upon the altar; the congregation of Jacob,  
Your firstborn son, whom You renamed Israel and Jeshurun  
because of the love You bore him, and the delight he gave You.

לְעוֹלָם יִהְיֶה אָדָם יִרְאֵה שָׁמַיִם בְּסִתְרוֹ וּבִגְלוֹי,  
 וּמוֹדָה עַל הָאֲמֶת, וְדוֹכֵר אֲמֶת בְּלִבּוֹ, וַיִּשְׁפֹּם וַיֹּאמֶר:  
 רַבּוֹן כָּל־הָעוֹלָמִים, לֹא עַל צְדָקוֹתֵינוּ אֲנַחְנוּ מְפִילִים  
 תַּחֲנוּנֵינוּ לְפָנֶיךָ, כִּי עַל רַחֲמֶיךָ הַרְבִּים.  
 מָה אֲנַחְנוּ, מָה חַיֵּינוּ,  
 מָה חֲסָדֵנוּ, מָה צְדָקֵנוּ,  
 מָה יִשְׁעֵנוּ, מָה כּוֹחֵנוּ, מָה גְבוּרַתֵנוּ.  
 מָה נֹאמֵר לְפָנֶיךָ,  
 יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ [וְאֲמוֹתֵינוּ],  
 הֲלֹא כָּל־הַגְּבוּרִים כָּאֵין לְפָנֶיךָ,  
 וְאֲנָשֵׁי הַשָּׁמַיִם כְּלֹא הֵיוּ,  
 וְחַכְמַיִם כְּבִלֵי מִדְּעָה, וְנְבוֹנִים כְּבִלֵי הַשֶּׁפֶל.  
 כִּי כָּל־מַעֲשֵׂיֵנוּ תָּנֹהוּ,  
 וַיְמִי חַיֵּינוּ הִבֵּל לְפָנֶיךָ,  
 וּמוֹתֵר הָאָדָם מִן הַבְּהֵמָה אֵין, כִּי הִבֵּל הִבֵּל.  
 אֲבָל אֲנַחְנוּ עִמָּךָ, בְּנֵי בְרִיתֶךָ, בְּנֵי אֲבֵרָהֶם אֲהַבֶּךָ  
 שְׁנִשְׁבַּעְתָּ לּוֹ בְּהַר הַמּוֹרִיָּה, זָרַע יִצְחָק יַחֲיִידוּ,  
 שְׁנִשְׁבַּעְתָּ עַל גְּפֵי הַמִּזְבֵּחַ, עֲדַת יַעֲקֹב בְּכוֹרֶךָ,  
 שְׁמֵאֲהַבְתָּךְ שְׁאֲהַבְתָּ אוֹתוֹ, וּמִשְׁמֹחֶתְךָ שְׁשִׁמְחֵת בּוֹ,  
 קָרָאתָ אֶת־שְׁמוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּשְׂרוּן.

**A PERSON SHOULD ALWAYS BE IN AWE OF HEAVEN**  
 לְעוֹלָם יִהְיֶה אָדָם. This passage is taken from the 1st-millennium midrash Seder Eliyahu Rabbah (chapter 19). The midrash is interpreting Isaiah 33:18, "Your heart shall murmur in awe."

**WHAT ARE WE? WHAT IS OUR LIFE?** מָה אֲנַחְנוּ, מָה חַיֵּינוּ. The phrase is mentioned in the Babylonian Talmud as forming an essential formula of confession (Yoma 87b). Originally it was part of the Yom Kippur liturgy, but it was thought to be appropriate to be recited daily. Throughout the Middle Ages it was a custom of the pious to rise in the middle of the night to pray and study; this was thought to be a time when God's mercy could especially be called upon. This prayer became part of that nightly ritual, which included a confession of sins and a plea for forgiveness. Its place in this part of the prayerbook is a remnant of this penitential custom.

**VANITY** הִבֵּל. The word is the same as used in the opening verses of Kohelet (Ecclesiastes) and variously translated there as "vanity," "futility," and "fleeting breath."

**ABRAHAM, WHO LOVED YOU** בְּנֵי אֲבֵרָהֶם אֲהַבֶּךָ. The phrase originates in 2 Chronicles 20:7.

**TO WHOM YOU MADE A PLEDGE** שְׁנִשְׁבַּעְתָּ לּוֹ. In some traditions, the biblical passage of the binding of Isaac is read before this prayer. After the binding of Isaac, the angel promises Abraham in God's name, "I will bestow My blessing upon you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars of heaven and the sands on the seashore; and your descendants shall seize the gates of their foes. All the nations of the earth shall bless themselves by your descendants because you have obeyed My command" (Genesis 22:17–18).

**WHOM YOU RENAMED ISRAEL** קָרָאתָ אֶת־שְׁמוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל. Abraham, Sarah, and Jacob all had their names changed by God as a sign of God's promise to them. In Jacob's case this name change is recorded twice—once when he wrestles with the angel, and then again when God appears to him at Bethel as he is about to descend to Egypt and blesses him: "Be fertile and increase; a nation, yes, an assembly of nations, shall descend from you..." (Genesis 35:11–12). Isaac, though, was named by God in the womb (17:19) and so always kept his name (Talmud of the Land of Israel, Berakhot 1:4).

**AND JESHURUN** וַיִּשְׂרוּן. Another name for the people Israel (Deuteronomy 32:15, Isaiah 44:2). It is derived from the word meaning "upright."

Therefore it is our duty to thank You and glorify You,  
to bless and sanctify and praise Your name.

► How blessed we are:

how goodly is our portion,  
how delightful our lot,  
how beautiful our inheritance!

How blessed are we that twice each day, morning and evening,  
as we awaken and as we end our day, we say:

Hear, O Israel, ADONAI is our God, ADONAI is one.

*Sh'ma yisrael, Adonai eloheinu Adonai ehad.*

*Recited quietly:* Praised be the name of the one whose  
glorious sovereignty is forever and ever.

*Barukh shem k'vod malkhuto l'olam va-ed.*

### *The Song of "You"*

*Levi Yitzhak of Berditchev  
used to sing a song, part of  
which is as follows:*

Where I wander —You!  
Where I ponder —You!  
Only You, You again,  
    always You!  
You! You! You!  
When I am gladdened  
    —You!  
When I am saddened  
    —You!  
Only You, You again,  
    always You!  
You! You! You!  
Sky is You! Earth is You!  
You above! You below!  
In every trend,  
    at every end,  
Only You, You again,  
    always You!  
You! You! You!

*(translated by Olga Marx)*

You were before the world was created,

and You are since creation;

You are in this world,

and You will be in the world that is coming.

You are ADONAI our God, in the heavens and on earth,  
even in the highest heavens.

Truly,

You are first and You are last,  
and beside You, there is no other.

► Manifest Your holiness through those who hallow Your  
name, and hallow Your name in this world;  
as Your deliverance arrives, raise up our heads with pride.

*Barukh atah ADONAI*, who sanctifies Your name through  
community.

לְפִיכֶם אֲנַחֲנוּ חַיִּים לְהוֹדוֹת לָךְ וּלְשַׁבְּחָךְ וּלְפָאֲרָךְ  
וּלְבָרְךָ וּלְקַדְּשׁ וּלְתַתּוֹת שְׁבַח וְהוֹדִיָּה לְשִׁמְךָ.  
« אֲשֶׁרֵינוּ, מֵה טוֹב הִלְקֵנוּ,

וּמֵה נָעִים גּוֹרְלָנוּ,

וּמֵה יָפָה יְרֻשָׁתָנוּ.

אֲשֶׁרֵינוּ, שְׂאֲנַחֲנוּ מִשְׁכִּימִים וּמִעֲרִיבִים,

עָרַב וּבָקָה, וְאוֹמְרִים פְּעַמִּים בְּכָל־יוֹם:

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד.

בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מְלַכּוֹתֵינוּ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד. *Recited quietly.*

*(not traditionally included here in a full service)*

וְאַהֲבַתְּ אֵת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל־לִבְּךָ וּבְכָל־נַפְשְׁךָ

וּבְכָל־מְאֹדְךָ: וְהָיָה הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְצַוְּךָ

הַיּוֹם עַל־לִבְּךָ: וְשָׁנַנְתָּם לְבָנֶיךָ וְדַבַּרְתָּ בָּם בְּשַׁבְּחֶךָ

בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבְלִכְתֹּתֶךָ בְּדֶרֶךְ וּבְשֹׁכְבְּךָ וּבְקוּמֶךָ:

וּקְשַׁרְתָּם לְאוֹת עַל־יָדְךָ וְהָיָה לְטֹטְפֹת בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ:

וּכְתַבְתָּם עַל־מְזוֹזוֹת בֵּיתְךָ וּבְשַׁעְרֶיךָ:

דברים ו:ד-ט

שמע ישראל שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל.

Although the full Sh'ma will be recited later in the service, its first line was inserted here to fulfill the obligation of reciting the Sh'ma "when you rise up"; it was recited at home.

Similarly in the evening, though the Sh'ma is recited as part of the evening service, the first paragraph is said again before retiring, in order to fulfill the scriptural obligation of reciting it "when you lie down" (Deuteronomy 6:7).

אַתָּה הוּא YOU WERE. This emphatic phrase (literally, "You are the one who...") appears a total of seven times in this passage. Given that the number seven has mystical significance, this sevenfold refrain may have served as a meditational exercise.

עַד שֶׁלֹא נִבְרָא BEFORE THE WORLD WAS CREATED. A credal statement to the effect that God is beyond time also follows the Sh'ma recited later in the morning service (see page 157). Both are perhaps intended as an interpretation of the meaning of God's uniqueness affirmed in the Sh'ma: the God who is one is eternal.

אַמֶּת, TRULY, YOU ARE FIRST. אַתָּה הוּא ראשון. These words are adapted from

Isaiah 44:6, where God proclaims: "I am the first and I am the last, and there is no God but Me."