**THE AMIDAH**

**1. THE GOD OF HISTORY:**Blessed are you, O Lord our God and God of our  
fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob, the  
great, mighty and revered God, the Most High God who bestows  
lovingkindnesses, the creator of all things, who remembers the good deeds  
of the patriarchs and in love will bring a redeemer to their children's  
children for his name's sake. O king, helper, savior and shield.  
Blessed are you, O Lord, the shield of Abraham.

**2. THE GOD OF NATURE:** You, O Lord, are mighty forever, you revive the  
dead, you have the power to save. [From the end of Sukkot until the eve  
of Passover, insert: You cause the wind to blow and the rain to fall.]  
You sustain the living with loving kindness, you revive the dead with great  
mercy, you support the falling, heal the sick, set free the bound and keep  
faith with those who sleep in the dust. Who is like you, O doer of mighty  
acts? Who resembles you, a king who puts to death and restores to life,  
and causes salvation to flourish? And you are certain to revive the dead.  
Blessed are you, O Lord, who revives the dead.

**3. SANCTIFICATION OF GOD:**[Reader] We will sanctify your name in this world just as it is sanctified in the highest heavens, as it is written by your prophet: "And they call out to one another and say:  
[Cong.]    'Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.'" [**Isa. 6:3**]   
[Reader] Those facing them praise God saying:  
[Cong.]   "Blessed be the Presence of the LORD in his place." [Ezek. 3:12]  
[Reader] And in your Holy Words it is written, saying,  
[Cong.]    "The LORD reigns forever, your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. Hallelujah." [**Ps. 146:10**]  
[Reader] Throughout all generations we will declare your greatness, and to all eternity we will proclaim your holiness. Your praise, O our God, shall never depart from our mouth, for you are a great and holy God and King. Blessed are you, O Lord, the holy God. You are holy, and your name is holy, and holy beings praise you daily. (Selah.) Blessed are you, O Lord, the holy God.

**4. PRAYER FOR UNDERSTANDING:**You favor men with knowledge, and teach mortals understanding.   
O favor us with the knowledge,   
the understanding and the insight that come from you.   
Blessed are you, O Lord, the gracious giver of knowledge.

**5. FOR REPENTANCE:** Bring us back, O our father, to your Instruction;   
draw us near, O our King, to your service;   
and cause us to return to you in perfect repentance.   
Blessed are you, O Lord, who delights in repentance.

**6. FOR FORGIVENESS:** Forgive us, O our Father, for we have sinned;  
pardon us, O our King, for we have transgressed; for you pardon and forgive.  
Blessed are you, O Lord, who is merciful and always ready to forgive.

**7. FOR DELIVERANCE FROM AFFLICTION:** Look upon our affliction and plead our cause,  
and redeem us speedily for your name's sake,   
for you are a mighty redeemer.   
Blessed are you, O Lord, the redeemer of Israel.

**8. FOR HEALING:** Heal us, O Lord, and we will be healed;   
save us and we will be saved, for you are our praise.   
O grant a perfect healing to all our ailments,   
for you, almighty King, are a faithful and merciful healer.  
Blessed are you, O Lord, the healer of the sick of his people Israel.

**9. FOR DELIVERANCE FROM WANT:** Bless this year for us, O Lord our God,  
together with all the varieties of its produce, for our welfare.  
Bestow ([from the 15th of Nissan insert:] dew and rain for) a blessing upon the  
face of the earth. O satisfies us with your goodness, and bless our year  
like the best of years.   
Blessed are you, O Lord, who blesses the years.

**10. FOR GATHERING OF EXILES:** Sound the great shofar for our freedom,   
raise the ensign to gather our exiles,   
and gather us from the four corners of the earth.   
Blessed are you, O Lord, who gathers the dispersed of his people Israel.

**11. FOR THE RIGHTEOUS REIGN OF GOD:** Restore our judges as in former times,  
and our counselors as at the beginning; and remove from us sorrow and  
sighing. Reign over us, you alone, O Lord, with loving kindness and  
compassion, and clear us in judgment. Blessed are you, O Lord, the King  
who loves righteousness and justice.

**12. FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF APOSTATES AND  
    THE ENEMIES OF GOD:** Let there be no hope for slanderers,   
and let all wickedness perish in an instant.  
May all your enemies quickly be cut down,   
and may you soon in our day uproot, crush, cast down   
and humble the dominion of arrogance.   
Blessed are you, O Lord, who smashes enemies and humbles the arrogant.

**13. FOR THE RIGHTEOUS AND PROSELYTES:** May your compassion be stirred, O Lord our God,   
towards the righteous, the pious, the elders of your people  
the house of Israel, the remnant of their scholars, towards proselytes,  
and towards us also. Grant a good reward to all who truly trust in your  
name. Set our lot with them forever so that we may never be put to shame,  
for we have put our trust in you.   
Blessed are you, O Lord, the support and stay of the righteous.

**14. FOR THE REBUILDING OF JERUSALEM:** Return in mercy to Jerusalem your city, and dwell in it as you have promised.  
Rebuild it soon in our day as an eternal structure,   
and quickly set up in it the throne of David.  
Blessed are you, O Lord, who rebuilds Jerusalem.

**15. FOR THE MESSIANIC KING:** Speedily cause the offspring of your servant David to flourish,   
and let him be exalted by your saving power,   
for we wait all day long for your salvation.   
Blessed are you, O Lord, who causes salvation to flourish.

**16. FOR THE ANSWERING OF PRAYER:** Hear our voice, O Lord our God; spare us and have pity on us.   
Accept our prayer in mercy and with favor,   
for you are a God who hears prayers and supplications.   
O our King, do not turn us away from your presence empty-handed,   
for you hear the prayers of your people Israel with compassion.   
Blessed are you, O Lord, who hears prayer.

**17. FOR RESTORATION OF TEMPLE SERVICE:** Be pleased, O Lord our God, with your people Israel and with their prayers.  
Restore the service to the inner sanctuary of your Temple,   
and receive in love and with favor both the fire-offerings of Israel and their prayers.   
May the worship of your people Israel always be acceptable to you.   
And let our eyes behold your return in mercy to Zion.   
Blessed are you, O Lord, who restores his divine presence to Zion.

**18. THANKSGIVING FOR GOD'S UNFAILING MERCIES:** We give thanks to you that you are the Lord our God  
and the God of our fathers forever and ever.  
Through every generation you have been the rock of our lives, the shield  
of our salvation. We will give you thanks and declare your praise for our  
lives that are committed into your hands, for our souls that are entrusted  
to you, for your miracles that are daily with us, and for your wonders and  
your benefits that are with us at all times, evening, morning and noon.  
O beneficent one, your mercies never fail; O merciful one,   
your loving kindnesses never cease. We have always put our hope in you.  
For all these acts may your name be blessed and exalted continually,   
O our King, forever and ever. Let every living thing give thanks to you and  
praise your name in truth, O God, our salvation and our help. (Selah.)  
Blessed are you, O Lord, whose Name is the Beneficent One,   
and to whom it is fitting to give thanks.

**19. FOR PEACE:** Grant peace, welfare, blessing, grace, loving kindness and mercy to us   
and to all Israel your people. Bless us, O our Father, one and  
all, with the light of your countenance; for by the light of your  
countenance you have given us, O Lord our God, a Torah of life,  
loving kindness and salvation, blessing, mercy, life and peace.   
May it please you to bless your people Israel at all times   
and in every hour with your peace.  
Blessed are you, O Lord, who blesses his people Israel with peace.

**SEVEN BLESSINGS OF A JEWISH WEDDING**

"You can still change your mind if you want to," my mother whispered to me as we stood at the top of the hill overlooking my chuppah. Below us the music echoed through the twilight as the flower girls covered the aisle with white rose petals. The chuppah rippled in waves of white and behind it, the sun was setting into the water.

"No, she can't," my father whispered back as he subtly motioned to the hundreds of people who had turned to watch us approach.

We walked slowly down the aisle, and I wondered why my mother had said that. I knew she liked her future son-in-law. I knew she was happy for me. Perhaps she was as afraid as I had been that whole week before the wedding.



A month before our [Lag B’Omer wedding](http://www.aish.com/h/o/33o/), I had tried to arrange for little torches to line the wedding aisle like bonfires. The wedding planner couldn't find a way to do it because of the safety regulations. I remember telling my fiancé that I was disappointed that we wouldn't be able to have the torches and he just shrugged.

"You don't really care, do you?" I asked him.

There was the same confused expression on his face that had appeared when we were choosing the flowers, the hall, the menu. "Not really," he answered. "I don't really care about the mini bonfires or the color of the flowers. Our wedding is exciting, but it just lasts a few hours. I'm more excited to actually be married and spend the rest of our life together."

**I loved my fiancé and wanted to be married, but forever was scary.**

This answer terrified me. *The rest of our life?* I loved my fiancé and wanted to be married, but forever was scary. Forever was day in and day out, without soft music playing and flower petals beneath our feet. Forever was like nothing that I had ever done before. Walking towards the chuppah, I didn't want to change my mind, but I was still scared. Did I really know what I was doing? Did I really know my fiancé well enough? How would I know?

There's a joke hung up on a sign on the outside of a restaurant in NYC: "The past, present and future walked into a bar. It was tense." This was what I discovered marriage asks of us: to bring our pasts, our presents and our futures together. And to do it in a way that uses the tension of such precious intensity as a channel for blessing and growth. As we reach our 16thanniversary, I have begun to see the unique blessings inherent in a Jewish marriage and how the Torah protects and nurtures our relationship.

Here are seven blessings (among many more) that a [Jewish marriage](http://www.aish.com/f/m) bestows upon us.

**1. The Blessing of Shared Values**. Torah gives us a blueprint of timeless values as a couple. It brings us clarity when we are faced with dilemmas. It protects our connection in daily life. It guides our dreams and helps us reach and form meaningful goals. It makes our conversations deeper and our home stronger.

**2. The Blessing of Seeing Our Children as Spiritual Beings.** Raising children is challenging and requires dedicated teamwork. It helps that we both see our children as gifts that we are entrusted with, as individuals who have their own unique missions in this world. That shared perspective helps us to be patient when we're tired, optimistic when we are down and dedicated when we are depleted.

**3. The Blessing of Renewal.** The laws of family purity in the Torah nurture and preserve passion and intimacy within marriage. The wisdom within these laws renews marriage each month, bringing back the energy and focus of the wedding, reminding a couple to see each other with the freshness and excitement that they had when they first met.

**4. The Blessing of Community.**The members of our shul, the teachers in our children's school, our neighbors, friends and leaders – they all remind us that we are part of something bigger than ourselves. That our goals as a couple are part of more transcendent goals of our community and of our nation. Sharing in other's celebrations expands our hearts and being beside our friends in their sorrows stretches our souls.

**5. The Blessing of Feeling a Part of Each Other's Achievements.** The Torah teaches us that spouses are two halves of one soul. My husband's achievements are part of me, and my accomplishments are part of him. This connects us both when we are struggling and when we are succeeding because it helps us see that we are not just individuals living together but rather a team that rises and falls together.

**6. The Blessing of Appreciating Our Differences.**Judaism teaches us that we are here in this world to constantly grow and work on ourselves. The challenging characteristics of our spouses are powerful catalysts for our own growth. This helps us to not only be grateful for what we love about each other but also for what we dislike about each other. Our arguments and weaknesses are part of what transform us and push us to stretch beyond ourselves.

**7. The Blessing of Shabbos.** Every week, the noise and distraction of daily life disappear as we welcome Shabbos into our home. It gives us a chance to focus on each other and on the highlights of our weeks. And it gives us the time to treasure our children together and step back to look at our lives.

Marriage isn't a perfect fairy tale sprinkled with rose petals and lined with the glow of mini bonfires. It's more like surfing with its ups and downs and occasional wipe outs. One of the greatest surfers of all time, Laird Hamilton, describes being towed out to the treacherous Teahupo'o break. How he looked into the vortex of that wave, and knew that he either had to let go of the rope and ride the wave or face crashing into the shallow reef below. It was a moment when greatness was rising up before him but only if he could carve a way into the tunnel of water. Only if he didn't fight against it. Only if he had the courage to let go of what was holding him back.

There is that moment when we all face the vortex of the wave, and we have the chance to go higher than we ever dreamed of going. But we have to go into the water first. We have to let go of the rope. Because as frightening as it may be to face the power of the ocean, it is far more frightening to stay on the shore, missing the chance to live. Because, as one surfer once said, "Out of the water, I am nothing." And without the growth and joy and incredible blessing of marriage, the water would be beyond my reach.