

# **Ein Keloheinu: the Song, the Words, the NAME**

הַשֵּׁם

Booklet #3 in the Series

“Siddur as an Instrument  
of Resilience”

Prepared by Rebekah Tanner, MLS, MA, CITS

© March 2023.

## **INTRODUCTION**

There I was, humming the unforgettable melody to the short, repetitive prayer song "Ein Keloheinu" one day and I was struck by the immense power of the words used to name the *Uncaused Cause of All*. Somehow, I had the thought that I had something worthwhile to share with others about the few Hebrew words that make up the text of this liturgical masterpiece.

In the months since, I have been completely preoccupied by this song. I have found my thoughts traveling, recalling earlier experiences, information and ideas I had been taught, or learned on my own. I have been engulfed in a bubble of wonderment. Yet, I have felt terribly small and insignificant. I keep hearing the voice inside my head asking: Who are you, Rebekah, to attempt articulating anything at all about the *LORD of Hosts*, the *One* you most often call "HaShem" – *The Name*?

In all honesty – I am not a rabbi or cantor, I have never attended seminary, or spent time in a monastery, ashram, or any other school of sacred learning. I probably attended, at most, a total of under 100 hours of Hebrew School-After-School in my pre-teen years and I never even went to a Jewish day or sleep-away camp. My only real qualifications are that I minored in Religion at a private, secular college, over 45 years ago and that I have been in a fairly consistent interior dialogue with *Creator* for as long as I can recall.

In any case, here goes! – Because I can't contain it, I must share it. I can only pray that whoever finds their way to reading these words will be as touched by the humbling and beautiful loving relationship that the *Creator of the Universe, G-d of Our Ancestors* longs to have with each and all of us foolish humans, as I have been.

## **EIN KELOHEINU**

Ein keloheinu, ein kadoneinu, ein k'malkeinu, ein k'moshi'einu.

Mi kheloheinu, mi khadoneinu, mi kh'malkeinu, mi

kh'moshi'einu.

Nodeh leloheinu, nodeh ladoneinu, nodeh l'malkeinu, nodeh

l'moshi'einu.

Barukh Eloheinu, barukh adoneinu, barukh malkeinu, barukh

moshi'einu.

Atah hu Eloheinu, atah hu adoneinu, atah hu malkeinu, atah hu

moshi'einu.

Atah hu sheh-hiktiru avoteinu l'fanekha et k'toret ha-samim.

There is nothing like our G-d, like our Lord. There is nothing like our King, our Deliverer.

Who compares to our G-d, to our Lord? Who compares to our King, our Deliverer?

Let us thank our G-d, our Lord. Let us thank our King, our Deliverer. Let us praise our God, our Lord. Let us praise our King, our Deliverer.

You are our G-d, our Lord. You are our King, our Deliverer.

You are the One to whom our ancestors offered fragrant incense.

## אין כאלוהינו

אין כאלוהינו, אין כאלוהינו,  
אין כאלוהינו, אין כאלוהינו,  
מי כאלוהינו, מי כאלוהינו,  
מי כאלוהינו, מי כאלוהינו.  
נודה לאלוהינו, נודה  
לאלוהינו, נודה למלכנו,  
נודה למושיענו.  
ברוך אלוהינו, ברוך אלוהינו,  
ברוך מלכנו, ברוך מושיענו.  
אתה הוא אלוהינו, אתה הוא  
אלוהינו, אתה הוא מלכנו,  
אתה הוא מושיענו.  
אתה הוא שהקטירו אבותינו  
לפניך את קטורת הסמים.

TRACK 1

## *Ein Keloheinu*

Zina Goldrich (1964–)

*Ein keloheinu, ein kadoneinu, ein  
k'malkeinu, ein k'moshi'einu. Mi kheloheinu,  
mi khadoneinu, mi kh'malkeinu, mi  
kh'moshi'einu. Nodeh leloheinu, nodeh  
ladoneinu, nodeh l'malkeinu, nodeh  
l'moshi'einu. Barukh Eloheinu, barukh  
adoneinu, barukh malkeinu, barukh  
moshi'einu. Atah hu Eloheinu, atah hu  
adoneinu, atah hu malkeinu, atah hu  
moshi'einu. Atah hu sheh-hiktiru avoteinu  
l'fanekha et k'toret ha-samim.*

There is nothing like our God, like our Lord.  
There is nothing like our King, our Deliverer.  
Who compares to our God, to our Lord?  
Who compares to our King, our Deliverer?  
Let us thank our God, our Lord. Let us thank  
our King, our Deliverer. Let us praise our  
God, our Lord. Let us praise our King, our  
Deliverer. You are our God, our Lord. You  
are our King, our Deliverer. You are the  
One to whom our ancestors offered fragrant  
incense.

[Conclusion of Shabbat morning]

Shir Hadash, New Music at Park Avenue Synagogue, 2013, released  
September 2, 2013.

“My soul finds its place in the Name, and my soul finds its ease in the embrace of the Name. I struggled with shapes and with numbers, and I carved with blade and brain to make a place, but I could not find a shelter for my soul. Blessed is the Name which is the safety of the soul... and the health of the innermost breath. I searched the words that attend your mercy. You lift me out of destruction, and you win my soul. You gather it out of the unreal by the power of your name. Blessed is the Name that unifies demand, and changes the seeking into praise. Out of the panic, out of the useless plan, I awaken to your name and solitude to solitude all your creatures speak, and through the inaccessible intention all things fall gracefully. Blessed is the shelter of my soul, blessed is the form of mercy, blessed is the Name.”

~~ Leonard Cohen

Traditionally, there are seven divine names that require the scribe's special care:

El, Elohim, Adonai, YHWH, Ehyeh-Asher-Ehyeh, Shaddai, and Tzevaot.

<https://www.abarim-publications.com/Meaning/El.html>

<https://www.abarim-publications.com/Meaning/Elohim.html>

<https://www.abarim-publications.com/Meaning/Adonai.html>

<https://www.abarim-publications.com/Meaning/YHWH.html>

<https://www.abarim-publications.com/Meaning/Shaddai.html>

<https://www.abarim-publications.com/Meaning/Sabaoth.html>

[https://jbnqnew.jewishbible.org/assets/Uploads/384/384\\_Ehyeh.pdf](https://jbnqnew.jewishbible.org/assets/Uploads/384/384_Ehyeh.pdf)

## **Some Names, Metaphors and Attributes of the Creator**

The following list is by no means exhaustive.

Almighty: <https://biblehub.com/strongs/genesis/17-1.htm>

Ancient of Days: <https://biblehub.com/strongs/daniel/7-9.htm>

Beloved: <https://biblehub.com/strongs/songs/2-8.htm>

Counselor: <https://biblehub.com/strongs/isaiah/9-6.htm>

Creator: <https://biblehub.com/strongs/isaiah/45-7.htm>

Father: <https://biblehub.com/strongs/deuteronomy/32-6.htm>

Fountain: <https://biblehub.com/strongs/psalms/36-9.htm>

G-d of Our Ancestors: <https://biblehub.com/strongs/exodus/3-6.htm>

G-d of Heaven: <https://biblehub.com/strongs/psalms/136-26.htm>

G-d of Israel: <https://biblehub.com/strongs/isaiah/45-3.htm>

Guardian: <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/6485.htm>

Healer: <https://biblehub.com/strongs/psalms/147-3.htm>

Help: <https://biblehub.com/strongs/psalms/46-1.htm>



I Am: <https://biblehub.com/strongs/exodus/3-14.htm>

Judge: <https://biblehub.com/strongs/psalms/98-9.htm>

King: <https://biblehub.com/strongs/psalms/95-3.htm>

Liberator: <https://biblehub.com/strongs/exodus/20-2.htm>

Light: <https://biblehub.com/strongs/psalms/27-1.htm>

Lord of Hosts: <https://biblehub.com/strongs/haggai/2-7.htm>

Maker: <https://biblehub.com/strongs/psalms/121-2.htm>

Most High: <https://biblehub.com/strongs/psalms/97-9.htm>

One: <https://biblehub.com/strongs/deuteronomy/6-4.htm>

Potter: <https://biblehub.com/strongs/isaiah/64-8.htm>

Protector: <https://biblehub.com/strongs/psalms/32-7.htm>

Refuge: <https://biblehub.com/strongs/psalms/36-7.htm>

Redeemer: <https://biblehub.com/strongs/isaiah/47-4.htm>

Rock: <https://biblehub.com/strongs/psalms/18-2.htm>

Savior: [https://biblehub.com/strongs/2\\_samuel/22-3.htm](https://biblehub.com/strongs/2_samuel/22-3.htm)

Shelter: <https://biblehub.com/strongs/psalms/119-114.htm>

Shepherd: <https://biblehub.com/strongs/psalms/23-1.htm>

Shield: <https://biblehub.com/strongs/psalms/84-11.htm>

Stronghold: <https://biblehub.com/strongs/psalms/31-2.htm>

The Name: <https://biblehub.com/strongs/psalms/86-11.htm>

Wisdom: <https://biblehub.com/strongs/proverbs/8-1.htm>

NOTE: Shechinah, as such, does not appear in Torah. It is related to the word for "Indwelling" and I have included some information on this feminine aspect of the Divine in the additional resources section, below.

NOTE: The Hebrew word meaning "hosts" as in the name "The LORD of Hosts" is now commonly transliterated as "Tzevaot." In older fashion it was written as "Sabaoth." This issue of spelling in transliteration is one that may also impact the spellings of other words, depending on the usage at the time of publication and other factors.

NOTE: As persons in the 21st century are more concerned with questions of gender and representation of the feminine in general, there have been and will likely continue to be changes in the language used in the liturgy as new modes of expression become common and widely accepted.

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

### **Ein Keloheinu**

<https://www.hadar.org/tefillah-element/s-mu-ein-keloheinu>

<https://cantorazischwartz.bandcamp.com/track/ein-keloheinu>

<https://images.shulcloud.com/14396/uploads/Cantors-Classroom/einkeloheinu.pdf>

<https://opensiddur.org/prayers/solilunar/everyday/ein-keloheinu/ein-keloheinu-translated-in-aramaic-arabic-yiddish-ladino-and-english/>

<https://jr.co.il/ein-keloheinu.htm>

<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/ein-keloheinu-a-blessing-explosion/>

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/513b9fc4e4b0b5df0ebd941d/t/56a4fe5e42f552687685be11/1453653599158/Ein-K-Eloheinu-Resource-Page.pdf>

<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/ein-keloheinu>

### **And More...**

Book of Mercy by Leonard Cohen. Villard Books, New York, 1984 (P. 47).

<https://biblehub.com/strongs.htm>

<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/about-god-in-judaism/>

<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/the-evolving-name-of-god/>

<https://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/11305-names-of-god>

[https://www.chabad.org/search/keyword\\_cdo/kid/2276/jewish/Divine-Names-The.htm](https://www.chabad.org/search/keyword_cdo/kid/2276/jewish/Divine-Names-The.htm)

[https://www.chabad.org/kabbalah/article\\_cdo/aid/380403/jewish/Free-to-Be-What-I-Will-Be.htm](https://www.chabad.org/kabbalah/article_cdo/aid/380403/jewish/Free-to-Be-What-I-Will-Be.htm)

<https://www.rabbinicalassembly.org/sites/default/files/2020-03/Kabbalat%20Shabbat%20and%20Maariv%20SIDDUR%20LEV%20SHALEM%202.pdf>

[https://images.shulcloud.com/7924/uploads/uploaded\\_documents/HHD-Prayers/HHDPrayer-8-36AM.pdf](https://images.shulcloud.com/7924/uploads/uploaded_documents/HHD-Prayers/HHDPrayer-8-36AM.pdf)

[https://www.zemirotdatabase.org/view\\_song.php?id=530](https://www.zemirotdatabase.org/view_song.php?id=530)

<https://www.jtsa.edu/torah/our-god-and-god-of-our-ancestors/>

<https://genius.com/Debbie-friedman-the-angels-blessing-lyrics>

<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/the-divine-feminine-in-kabbalah-an-example-of-jewish-renewal/>

<https://forward.com/news/6364/the-female-divine/>

<https://ritualwell.org/ritual/adding-matriarchs-amidah/>

<https://www.scribd.com/document/90202567/The-Names-of-God-Bible#>

This is not published by a Jewish source, but it is a fascinating document and some may wish to make use of it.

### **About this booklet:**

The links to Hebrew text analysis in this booklet comes from *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* which is available online through *Bible Hub*. For those unfamiliar with using a concordance, it is a type of reference book that has, as its main function, listings of every occurrence of a specific word in the scriptures. *Strong's* is also well known for its inclusion of Hebrew (and Greek) etymology.

### **About the "Siddur as an Instrument of Resilience" Series:**

Inspiration for this work originated with the online ScholarStream presentations of May, 2022 provided by the Rabbinical Assembly entitled "Liturgy of Resilience." In particular, "*I Shall Not Fear*": *Liturgy, Emotional Honesty, and Resilience* presented by Rabbi Jan Uhrbach.

Find it here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Yz5XEHWYo4>

That inspiration was then reinforced by reading the Pew Research Center document entitled "Jewish Americans in 2020."

Find it here:

<https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2021/05/11/jewish-americans-in-2020/>

These brief studies about significant / frequently used words found in the Jewish prayer book (Siddur) are not intended to be especially religious – although any spiritual benefit one might derive from them would be a lovely additional outcome. It might be that understanding some core liturgical vocabulary could enrich individuals' experiences during worship services. The hope is that as people learn some basic liturgical vocabulary they will feel empowered in their own prayer life, rather than feeling like audience

members at a performance mostly provided by the Cantor.

These booklets are intended to be the scaffolding around which small peer-to-peer groups of interested adults will develop their own word studies based upon a select group of Hebrew words. It is just as simple as that. This research is freely offered as a place to begin – may the learning journeys that result be a source of joy to all who utilize the “Siddur as an Instrument of Resilience.”

### **Acknowledgements:**

This project would not have been conceived without the inspiration of Rabbi Jan Uhrbach, founding director of the Block / Kolker Center for Spiritual Arts at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York City.

It then would not have come to fruition without the encouragement of the Temple Adath Yeshurun community in Syracuse, NY. Particular thanks to Board Member and Chair of the Programming Committee, Lauren Beth Thirer and to Cantor Esa Jaffe.

### **About the Author:**

Rebekah Tanner has masters degrees in Library Science, and Museum Studies, and an Advanced Certificate in Interdisciplinary Trauma Studies. In addition to her extensive formal education she is an autodactic with interests in learning about a diverse body of information from archaeology to etymology, meteorology to thanatology and more; fine craft, Asian Studies, poetry, local history and genealogy – the list goes on.... Throughout her life she has also enjoyed sharing what she has been learning with others.

As a young woman, while working as a public librarian in New York City during the era of Ronald Regan's presidency, Rebekah watched in horror as the lives of several colleagues and acquaintances were devastated, and sometimes ended, by the unaddressed AIDS epidemic. The first time she saw Keith Haring's now famous "SILENCE = DEATH" graphic, she was made to recall Rabbi Meir Kahane's phrase "Never Again" and began to make connections about how society actively works to marginalize certain groups of individuals.

Having parents of differing races / ethnicities / religions from one another, and being a Lesbian who was still very much in the process of coming out in the 1980's, this intersectionality made a profound impression upon her. Already deeply interested in the ways that the peoples of the world expressed their cultures, this became a major force behind the direction of her career and personal political involvements over the years.

Rebekah retired from librarianship earlier than she might have, in order to have the flexibility needed to be the primary caregiver to her life-partner who became disabled about 15 years ago. In those days, there was no Affordable Care Act and LGBTQIA+ persons did not have easy legal mechanisms by which they could have their families recognized. The sense that society picked and chose who was entitled to the privileges of certain basic rights was strongly reinforced for her at that time. Then, with the 2018 terror at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, PA, Rebekah felt a renewed need to use the blessings of her life experience to speak up, speak out, and work to reverse the trends toward hatred that she saw, and still sees, occurring throughout the United States and the world.

It was this fear of Anti-semitism, in particular, that brought her back, after an almost 50 year absence, into activity with the Jewish community. She is



now attending shul, participating at her local Jewish Community Center and creating this series of booklets. It is her hope that by learning a few basic words, and by feeling empowered in their own prayer lives, Jews, and others, will find the strength to build a future world without hatred or fear. May we use our voices in service of "tikkun olam" – repairing the world.

