

More than for Mourners - the Kaddish

Exalted and hallowed be God's great name in the world which God created, according to plan. May God's majesty be revealed in the days of our lifetime and the life of all Israel -- speedily, imminently, and say Amen. Blessed be God's great name to all eternity. Blessed, praised, honoured, exalted, extolled, glorified, adored, and lauded be the name of the Holy Blessed One, beyond all earthly words and songs of blessing, praise, and comfort, and say Amen. <i>May the prayers and pleas of all Israel be accepted by their parent in heaven, to which we say, Amen.</i> May there be abundant peace from heaven, and life, for us and all Israel, and say Amen. May the One who creates peace on high, bring peace to us and to all Israel and say Amen.	יִתְגַּדַּל וְיִתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא. בְּעֶלְמָא דִּי בְּרָא כְּרֵעוּתָהּ וְיִמְלִיךְ מַלְכוּתָהּ בְּחַיֵּינוּ וּבְיוֹמֵינוּ וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעֶגְלָא וּבְזִמְנוּ קָרִיב, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן: יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעָלְמָא וְלְעָלְמֵי עָלְמֵיָא: יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרוֹמֵם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא וְיִתְהַדָּר וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלָּל שְׁמֵהּ דְּקֻדְשָׁא. בְּרִיךְ הוּא. לְעֵלָּא מִן כָּל בְּרִכְתָּא וְשִׁירְתָּא תְּשַׁבְּחָתָא וְנַחֲמָתָא דְּאִמְרֵינוּ בְּעֶלְמָא. וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן: תִּתְקַבֵּל צְלוּתָהּ וּבְרֵעוּתָהּ דְּכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל קֳדָם אֲבוּהוֹן דִּי בְּשַׁמַּיָּא, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן. יְהֵא שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שְׁמַיָּא וְחַיִּים עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל. וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן: עוֹשֵׂה שָׁלוֹם בְּמִרְמֵיו הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שָׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:
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Five Kinds of Kaddish by Rabbi Dina Rosenberg

Mourner's Kaddish (Kaddish Yatom), traditionally said by mourners—that is, those who have lost a parent during the previous eleven months or a child, sibling, or spouse during the last thirty days—and by those observing the anniversary of the death of those close relatives... The mourner's Kaddish omits lines 7 and 8 of the Full Kaddish that asks God to answer our prayers, because presumably, God did not grant the mourner's prayers that the relative recover and live).

Full Kaddish (Kaddish Shalem), is said upon the conclusion of the main section a prayer unit, typically the one that includes Shemoneh Esrei. This form of Kaddish is the only one that includes the phrase... “accept the prayer and the supplication of the entire Jewish people.” Accordingly, it is sometimes referred to as “Kaddish Titkabeil.” This Kaddish may be recited immediately after the Shmoneh Esreh.

Half Kaddish (Chatzi Kaddish), which omits the last two sentences of Mourner's Kaddish, and consists of only the first two paragraphs and the response ("May his great name be blessed forever and for all eternity")

Rabbi's Kaddish (Kaddish D'Rabbanan), which inserts a paragraph asking god's blessing on those who teach and study Torah.

Burial Kaddish, is recited on two special occasions: when completing a tractate of Talmud or an order of Mishna, and at a funeral. These two occasions are radically different, but there is something in common. The theme of this Kaddish is that, in the merit of Torah study, the world will be renewed, including the eventual revival of the dead. Therefore, it is said for both a siyum (recognizing as it does the rewards of Torah study) and a funeral (as it contains within it the consolation that those who have passed on will someday return to us). All five require the presence of a minyan

Peninei Halakhah, Prayer 23:7:3

There are four versions of Kaddish: 1) Half-Kaddish. This is the essence of the Kaddish. It is called Half-Kaddish so as to distinguish it from other Kaddishim which contain further additions. In any section of prayer where a prolonged interruption is undesirable, Half-Kaddish is recited. 2) Kaddish Yehei Shelama, also called Kaddish Shalem (Full-Kaddish). This is recited after saying verses of Scripture, and contains an added request for peace and good life for us and for all Israel. We conclude, "Oseh shalom bimromav... v'imru Amen". Since this Kaddish is usually recited by people who have lost a parent, it is also called Kaddish Yatom (Mourner's Kaddish). 3) Kaddish-Titkabal. The chazan recites this Kaddish after the conclusion of the Amidah. In it, before the addition of Kaddish Shalem, a request is added that our prayers be accepted. 4) Kaddish d'Rabbanan. This Kaddish is recited after learning rabbinic teachings. Before the addition of Kaddish Shalem, we add a prayer in this Kaddish for those who learn Torah, that they should merit long and prosperous lives.

פניני הלכה, תפילה כ"ג:ז:ג'

ארבעה נוסחים ישנם בקדיש, ונצייןם בשמם: א) חצי קדיש הוא עיקר הקדיש, ונקרא כן כדי להבדילו משאר הקדישים שיש בהם עוד תוספות. ובכל מקום שאין להאריך בהפסק, אומרים חצי קדיש. ב) קדיש יהא שלמה, נקרא גם 'קדיש שלם', ואומרים אותו אחר אמירת פסוקי תנ"ך, ונתווספה בו בקשה שיהא לנו ולכל ישראל שלום וחיים טובים. ומסיימים: "עושה שלום במרומיו וכו' ואמרו אמן". וכיוון שקדיש זה נאמר בדרך כלל על ידי היתומים, הוא נקרא גם 'קדיש יתום'. ג) קדיש תתקבל נאמר על ידי החזן אחר סיום תפילת עמידה. ובו לפני התוספת של 'קדיש שלם' מוסיפים בקשה שתפילתנו תתקבל. ד) קדיש דרבנן אומרים אחר לימוד בדברי חכמים. ובו לפני התוספת של 'קדיש שלם' מוסיפים תפילה על לומדי התורה, שיזכו לחיים טובים וארוכים.

Shulchan Arukh, Orach Chayim 56:1

One should have concentration when answering to kaddish. One should answer loudly and run to hear kaddish.

One should stand when responding to kaddish and to all holy moments, and if someone enters a synagogue and hears them responding to kaddish, they should respond with them, even if they did not hear the hazan start the prayer.

אורח חיים נ"ו:א'

יש לכוון בעניית הקדיש: הגהה: ולא יפסיק בין יהא שמייה רבא מברך ולענות אותו בקול רם, ולהשתדל לרוץ כדי לשמע קדיש:

הגהה: ויש לעמד כשעונין קדיש וכל דבר שבקדשה, ומי שבא לבית הכנסת ושומע הקהל עונין קדיש, עונה עמם, אף על פי שלא שמע שליח צבור שאמר יתגדל

Ezekiel 38:23

Thus will I manifest My greatness and My holiness, and make Myself known in the sight of many nations. And they shall know that I am GOD.

יחזקאל ל"ח:כ"ג

והתגדלתי והתקדשתי ונודעתי לעיני גוים רבים וידעו כי אני יהוה: {ס}

Psalms 113:1-2

(1) Hallelujah. O servants of the Eternal, give praise; praise the name of the Eternal. (2) Let the name of the Eternal be blessed now and forever.

תהילים קי"ג:א'-ב'

הַלְלוּ יְהוָה הַלְלוּ עַבְדֵי יְהוָה הַלְלוּ אֶת־שֵׁם יְהוָה: יְהִי שֵׁם יְהוָה מְבָרַךְ מְעַתָּה וְעַד־עוֹלָם:

Berakhot 3a:12-14

It was taught that Rabbi Yosei said: I was once walking along the road when I entered ruins among the ruins of Jerusalem to pray. Elijah, of blessed memory, came and guarded the entrance for me and waited at the entrance until I finished my prayer... And Elijah said to me: What voice did you hear in that ruin?

I responded: I heard a Heavenly voice, cooing like a dove and saying: Woe to the children, due to whose sins I destroyed My house, burned My Temple, and exiled them among the nations.

And Elijah said to me: By your life and by your head, not only did that voice cry out in that moment, but it cries out three times each and every day. Moreover, when Israel enters synagogues and study halls and answers May the great name be blessed, the Holy Blessed One, shakes the divine head and says: Happy is the ruler who is thus praised in their own house. How great is the pain of the parent who exiled their children, and woe to the children who were exiled from their parent's table.

ברכות ג' א:י"ב-י"ד

תניא, אמר רבי יוסי: פעם אחת הייתי מהלך בדרך ונכנסתי לחורבה אחת מחורבות ירושלים להתפלל. בא אליהו זכור לטוב ושמר לי על הפתח, (והמתין לי) עד שסיימתי תפילתי... ואמר לי: בני, מה קול שמעת בחורבה זו? ואמרתי לו: שמעתי בת קול שמנהמת כיונה ואמרת: "אוי שהחרבתי את ביתי ושרפתי את היכלי והגליתי את בני לבין אומות העולם". ואמר לי: חייך וחי ראשך, לא שעה זו בלבד אומרת כך, אלא בכל יום ויום, שלש פעמים אומרת כך. ולא זו בלבד אלא, בשעה שישראל נכנסין לבתי כנסיות ולבתי מדרשות ועונין "יהא שמיה הגדול מבורך", הקדוש ברוך הוא מנענע ראשו, ואומר: אשרי המלך שמקלסין אותו בביתו כך, מה לו לאב שהגלה את בניו, ואוי להם לבנים שגלו מעל שולחן אביהם.

Shabbat 119b:5

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said that anyone who answers: Amen, may the great name be blessed, wholeheartedly, with all their might, they rip their sentence, as it is stated: "When punishments are annulled in Israel, when the people offer themselves, bless the Eternal" (Judges 5:2). What is the reason for when punishments are annulled? Because the Jewish people blessed God...

שבת קי"ט ב:ה'

אמר רבי יהושע בן לוי: כל העונה "אמן יהא שמיה רבא מבורך" בכל כחו, קורעין לו גזר דינו, שנאמר: "בפרוע פרעות בישראל בהתנדב עם ברכו ה'". מאי טעמא "בפרוע פרעות" — משום ד"ברכו ה'"...

Sotah 33a:6-7

Didn't Rav Yehuda say: A person should never request in the Aramaic language that their needs be met, as Rabbi Yochanan said that with regard to anyone who requests in the Aramaic language that their needs be met, the ministering angels do not attend to them, as the ministering angels are not familiar with the Aramaic language?

סוטה ל"ג א:ר'ז'

ותפלה בכל לשון? והאמר רב יהודה: לעולם אל ישאל אדם צרכיו בלשון ארמית, דאמר רבי יוחנן: כל השואל צרכיו בלשון ארמי — אין מלאכי השרת נזקקין לו, לפי שאין מלאכי השרת מכירין בלשון ארמי! לא קשיא: הא — ביחיד, הא — בצבור.

The Orphan's Kaddish from myjewishlearning.com by Edward Alexander

The founding myth of the Kaddish is the medieval story of Rabbi Akiva found in Vitry (a source for early prayer texts and customs). Walking in a cemetery, he meets a naked man, carrying wood on his head and apparently alive. Stopping him, Akiva asks why he does such onerous work and just who he is. The man replies that he is dead, and that in life he had been a tax collector who favored the rich and killed the poor. Akiva asks whether his “superiors” have told him how he might relieve his condition. The unfortunate man, “black as coal,” says there is probably no relief for him, but that he has heard that if he had a son and his son were to stand before the congregation and recite “Bless the Lord who is blessed!” and the congregation were to answer amen, and the son were also to say “May the Great Name be blessed” (a sentence from the Kaddish) “they would release him from his punishment.” Unfortunately, the man never had a son, although he did leave his wife pregnant when he died. But even if she gave birth to a boy, who would teach to the son of a friendless man?

At this point Akiva volunteered to discover whether the man had indeed produced a son, so that he himself might teach the son Torah and enable him to lead the congregation in prayers. He discovered the son and circumcised him, but the boy was a miscreant like his parents and refused to learn Torah. In distress, Akiva fasted for 40 days; and God responded by opening the boy's heart to Torah and enabling him to recite “Bless the Lord who is blessed!” to a congregation that responded “May the Great Name be blessed!”

“At that moment,” Mahzor Vitry continues, “the man was released from his punishment [and] came to Rabbi Akiva in a dream, and said: “May it be the will of the Lord that your soul find delight in the Garden of Eden, for you have saved me from the sentence of Gehenna...”

The Mourner's Kaddish Is Misunderstood by Rabbi Ellie Kaunfer

The Kaddish is often viewed as offering praise to God, despite a person's own suffering and loss. When researching the origins of the prayer, including reading medieval commentaries on it, I discovered that this approach is simply inaccurate. And over generations, this prevailing interpretation has turned off so many to the experience of the Kaddish. I want to offer an alternative explanation...

The first key phrase is the opening line: Yitgadal Ve-Yitkadash Shemei Rabbah. This is often translated into English as “Magnified and sanctified be His great name.” It is understandable how this could be seen as a prayer praising God. But the prayer is not a praise; it is a request. The worshiper is asking for God to be magnified and to be sanctified, implying — correctly — that God is not magnified and sanctified right now.

How could it be that God is not magnified and sanctified now? It is clear from the biblical context of this line in Ezekiel 38:23 that God will only be made great and holy at the end of days, when all nations recognize God as the supreme moral force in the world. Shockingly, the Kaddish also claims that God is not king, by stating: “let God's kingdom rule.” (God is not fully king until everyone recognizes God.)

In a world of death and mourning, it is clear that God is not fully holy, great or even king. This prayer — put in the mouth of the mourner — begs God to speed the day when God is, in fact, great and holy. But it acknowledges that we aren't there yet.

The other line in Kaddish that is critical is the congregational response: Y'hei Sh'mei Raba M'varach L'alam Ul'almei Almaya. The translation: “May His great Name be blessed forever and for all eternity.” A very strange feature of the Kaddish is the lack of God's name. Almost all other prayers mention God's name — so why is it missing from this particular prayer? Why is God absent, but God's name (“his name”) is mentioned multiple times?

The answer has everything to do with the radical theology of the Kaddish. This is a prayer that is acting out the reality we live in: a world in which God's name is diminished. And while we want God's name to be great and blessed, and ask for that in this prayer, we still live in a world where that hasn't happened fully. Exhibit A? The death we are mourning, the death that brought us to this prayer...

The Kaddish is not a stoic praise of an unfeeling God who for reasons we can't know let our loved ones die without remorse. Rather, it is a plea for a better world in which God is more fully holy, and the presence of God more completely experienced.

We are not living in that world, and the Kaddish knows it; but it offers us a path to imagine a world beyond our current one. And critically, God is in league with us in begging for that world to come soon.