



Yetzer Hara

Prayer to Overcome the Evil Inclination

וַיֵּרָא יְהוָה כִּי רַבָּה רָעַת הָאָדָם בָּאָרֶץ וְכָל-יֵצֶר מַחְשַׁבַת לִבּוֹ רָע כָּל-הַיּוֹם

The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

The *yetzer hara* represents the inner impulse or tendency within the human heart to gravitate toward selfish gratification (the word *yetzer* first appears in Genesis 6:5 where the wickedness of man is described as “every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually”). The *yetzer hatov*, on the other hand, represents the inner impulse to do good.

Yetzer is also used in Scripture to refer to something formed or shaped, like pottery fashioned by the hand of a potter. Just as a potter purposes a shape in his or her mind before forming an object, so that which is intended within the mind will shape or form our character and disposition, especially with regard to our relationship with God.

The following prayer appeals to the LORD to help us love His Torah and His *mitzvot* and also to keep us from the power of the evil inclination within us that pushes us into sin, pride, perversity, temptation, and shame:



בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ כְּמֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
הַמַּעֲבִיר שָׁנָה מֵעֵינַי וְחַנוּמָה מֵעַפְעָפִי.
וַיְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ,
שִׁתְּרְגִילָנוּ בְּתוֹרָתְךָ וְדַבְּקָנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתֶיךָ,
וְאַל תְּבִיאֵנוּ לֹא לַיָּדַי חַטָּא, וְלֹא לַיָּדַי עֲבָרָה
וְעוֹן, וְלֹא לַיָּדַי נְסִיוֹן, וְלֹא לַיָּדַי בְּזִיוֹן,
וְאַל תִּשְׁלַט בָּנוּ יֵצֶר הָרָע.

Blessed art Thou, LORD our God, King of the universe, who removes sleep from my eyes and slumber from my eyelids. May it be Your will, LORD our God and God of our fathers to accustom us to Your Torah and attach us to Your mitzvot. And do not lead us into the hands of sin, nor into the hands of pride or perversity, nor into the hands of temptation, nor into the hands of shame, and do not let the evil inclination rule over us.



Transliterated:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,

ha-'o-lam me-lekh 'e-lo-hey nu 'Adonai 'at-tah ba-rukh
the universe king (of) our God Lord are you Blessed

הַמַּעֲבִיר שְׁנָה מֵעֵינַי וּתְנוּמָה מֵעַפְעָפַי.

mei af'apai ut-numah me'eynai sheinah hama'avir
from my eyelids and slumber from my eyes sleep who removes

וְיְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ,

'a-vo-tei nu ve-lo-hei 'e-lo-hei nu 'Adonai mil-fa-ne-kha ratson vihi
our fathers and God of our God Lord before You the will may it be

שֶׁתַּרְגִּילֵנוּ בְּתוֹרָתְךָ וְדַבְּכֵנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתֶיךָ,

be-mits-vo-tey-kha ve-dab-kei-nu be-to-ra-te-kha she-tar-gi-lei-nu
to your mitzvot and attach us in your Torah that you accustom us

וְאַל תְּבִיאֵנוּ לֹא לְיַדֵּי חַטָּא, וְלֹא לְיַדֵּי עֲבָרָה

'a-ve-rah li-dei ve-lo chet li-dei lo' te-vi-'ei-nu ve'al
of pride into hands nor of sin to the hands not lead us and don't

וְעוֹן, וְלֹא לְיַדֵּי נִסְיוֹן, וְלֹא לְיַדֵּי בְזִיווֹן,

vee-za-yon li-dei ve-lo' nis-sa-yon li-dei ve-lo' ve-'a-vo-n
of scorn into hands nor of temptation into hands nor and perversity

וְאַל תִּשְׁלַט בָּנוּ יֵצֶר הָרָע.

hara' ye-tser ba-nu tash-let ve'al
of evil inclination over us let rule and don't

Barukh attah Adonai Eloheinu melekh ha-olam, hama'avir shenah me'eynai utnumah me'afapai. Vihi ratson milfaneykha, Adonai Eloheinu velohei avoteinu, shetargileinu betoratekha vedabkeinu bemitzvotekha, ve'al tevi'einu lo lidei chet, velo lidei averah, ve'avon, velo lidei nissayon, velo lidei vizayon, ve'al tashlet banu yetzer hara.