

Keter Malkhut

Chapter 1

May this my prayer aid mankind The path of right and worth to find;
The living God, His wondrous ways, Herein inspire my song of praise.
Nor is the theme at undue length set down, Of all my hymns behold "The
Royal Crown."

Wonderful are thy works, as my soul overwhelmingly knoweth.

Thine, O Lord, are the greatness and the might, the beauty, the triumph, and
the splendour.

Thine, O Lord, is the Kingdom, and Thou art exalted as head over all. Thine
are all riches and honour:

Thine the creatures of the heights and depths. They bear witness that they
perish, while Thou endurest.

Thine is the might in whose mystery our thoughts can find no stay, so far art
Thou beyond us.

In Thee is the veiled retreat of power, the secret and the foundation.

Thine is the name concealed from the sages, The force that sustaineth the
world on naught, And that can bring to light every hidden thing.

Thine is the loving-kindness that ruleth over all Thy creatures, And the good
treasured up for those who fear Thee.

Thine are the mysteries that transcend understanding and thought. Thine is
the life over which extinction holdeth no sway, And Thy throne is exalted
above every sovereignty, And Thy habitation hidden in the shrouded height.

Thine is the existence from the shadow of whose light every being was
created, Of which we say, in His shadow we live.

Thine are the two worlds between which Thou hast set a boundary, The first
for deeds and the second for reward.

Thine is the reward which Thou for the righteous hast stored up and hidden,
Yea, Thou sawest it was goodly and didst hide it.

Chapter 2

Thou art One, the first of every number, and the foundation of every
structure,

Thou art One, and at the mystery of Thy Oneness the wise of heart are struck
dumb, For they know not what it is.

Thou art One, and Thy Oneness can neither be increased nor lessened, It
lacketh naught, nor doth aught remain over.

Thou art One, but not like a unit to be grasped or counted, For number and
change cannot reach Thee. Thou art not to be visioned, nor to be figured
thus or thus.

Thou art One, but to put to Thee bound or circumference my imagination
would fail me. Therefore I have said I will guard my ways lest I sin with the
tongue.

Thou art One, Thou art high and exalted beyond abasement or falling, "For how should the One fall?"

Chapter 3

Thou existest, but hearing of ear cannot reach Thee, or vision of eye, Nor shall the How have sway over Thee, nor the Wherefore and Whence.

Thou existest, but for Thyself and for none other with Thee.

Thou existest, and before Time began Thou wast, And without place Thou didst abide.

Thou existest, and Thy secret is hidden and who shall attain to it? So deep, so deep, who can discover it?

Chapter 4

Thou livest, but not from any restricted season nor from any known period.

Thou livest, but not through breath and soul, for Thou art soul of the soul.

Thou livest, but not with the life of man, which is like unto vanity and its end the moth and the worm.

Thou livest, and he who layeth hold of Thy secret shall find eternal delight:

"He shall eat and live for ever."

Chapter 5

Thou art great, and compared with Thy greatness all greatness is humbled and all excess diminished.

Incalculably great is Thy being, Superber than the starry heaven, Beyond and above all grandeur, "And exalted beyond all blessing and praise."

Chapter 6

Thou art mighty and there is none among all Thou hast formed and created who can emulate Thy deeds and Thy power.

Thou art mighty, and Thine is the completed power beyond change or alteration.

Thou art mighty, and from the abundance of Thy might dost Thou pardon in the time of Thy wrath And forbearst long with sinners.

Thou art mighty, and Thy mercies are upon all Thy creatures, yea upon all of them. These are the mighty deeds which are from eternity.

Chapter 7

Thou art Light celestial, and the eyes of the pure shall behold Thee But the clouds of sin shall veil Thee from the eyes of the sinners.

Thou art Light, hidden in this world but to be revealed in the visible world on high. "On the mount of the Lord shall it be seen."

Light Eternal art Thou, and the eye of the intellect longeth and yearneth for Thee. "Yet only a part shall it see, the whole it shall not behold."

Chapter 8

Thou art the God of Gods, and the Lord of Lords, Ruler of beings celestial and terrestrial,

For all creatures are Thy witnesses And by the glory of this Thy name, every creature is bound to Thy service.

Thou art God, and all things formed are Thy servants and worshippers. Yet is not Thy glory diminished by reason of those that worship aught beside Thee, For the yearning of them all is to draw nigh Thee,

But they are like the blind, Setting their faces forward on the King's highway, Yet still wandering from the path.

One sinketh into the well of a pit And another falleth into a snare, But all imagine they have reached their desire, Albeit they have suffered in vain.

But Thy servants are as those walking clear-eyed in the straight path, Turning neither to the right nor the left Till they come to the court of the King's palace.

Thou art God, by Thy Godhead sustaining all that hath been formed, And upholding in Thy Unity all creatures.

Thou art God, and there is no distinction 'twixt Thy Godhead and Thy Unity, Thy pre-existence and Thy existence,

For 'tis all one mystery. And although the name of each be different, "Yet they are all proceeding to one place."

Chapter 9

Thou art wise. And wisdom is the fount of life and from Thee it wellet, And by the side of Thy wisdom all human knowledge turneth to folly.

Thou art wise, more ancient than all primal things, And wisdom was the nursling at Thy side.

Thou art wise, and Thou hast not learnt from any beside Thee, Nor acquired wisdom from any save Thyself.

Thou art wise, and from Thy wisdom Thou hast set apart Thy appointed purpose, Like a craftsman and an artist

To draw up the films of Being from Nothingness As light is drawn that darteth from the eye:

Without bucket from the fountain of light hath Thy workman drawn it up, And without tool hath he wrought,

Hewing, graving, cleansing, refining,

Calling unto the void and it was cleft, And unto existence and it was urged, And to the universe and it was spread out;

Establishing the clouds of the heavens And with his hand joining together the pavilions of the spheres,

And fastening with the loops of power the tent-folds of creation, For the might of his hand extendeth to the uttermost borders, "Linking the uttermost ends."

Chapter 10

Who shall utter Thy mighty deeds, For Thou madest a division of the ball of the earth into twain, half dry land, half water,
And didst surround the water with the sphere of air, In which the wind turneth and turneth in its going, And resteth in its circuits,
And didst encompass the air with the sphere of fire,
And the foundations of these four elements are but one foundation, And their sources one,
And from it they issue and are renewed, "And from thence was it separated and became four heads."

Chapter 11

Who can declare Thy greatness? For Thou hast encompassed the sphere of fire with the sphere of the firmament, Wherein is the Moon, Which by the splendour of the Sun raceth up, panting and shining,
And in nine and twenty days fulfilleth her revolving And then remounteth her bounded circuit.
Of her secrets some lie unveiled and some are unsearchable, And her body is to the body of the earth As one part is to thirty-nine parts,
And from month to month she stirreth up the world and its chances, And its good and evil happenings, According to the will of her Creator, "To make known to the sons of men His mighty deeds."

Chapter 12

Who shall tell Thy praises? For Thou madest the Moon the chief source whereby to calculate Appointed times and seasons, And cycles and signs for the days and the years.
Her rule is in the night, Until the coming of the fixed hour
When her brightness shall be darkened And she shall clothe herself with the mantle of gloom.
For from the light of the Sun is her light, And should it hap on the night of the fourteenth that both of them stand On the line of the Dragon, So that it cometh between them,
Then the Moon shall not convey her light, And her illumination shall be extinguished,
To the end that all the peoples of the earth shall know That they are the creatures of the Most High, And however splendid they be There is a Judge above them to humble and exalt.
Nathless she shall live again after her fall And shall be resplendent again after her darkness,
And when she is in conjunction with the Sun at the end of the month,
If the Dragon shall be between them, And both shall stand upon one line,
Then the Moon shall stand before the Sun like a projecting blackness And shall hide the light thereof from the sight of all beholders,

In order that all who behold may know That the sovereignty is not with the
hosts and legions of heaven
But that there is a Master over them, Obscuring and irradiating,
For height behind height He keepeth, yea, and the heights beyond them, And
they that imagine the Sun is their god
At such time shall be ashamed of their imaginings, For their words are then
tested,
And they shall know 'tis the hand of the Lord hath done this And that the Sun
hath no power And His alone is the rule who can darken its light,
Sending to it a slave of its slaves, A beneficiary of its own kindly glow, To
becloud its radiance, To cut off the abominable idolising thereof, "And let the
Sun be removed from sovereignty."

Chapter 13

Who shall declare Thy righteousness? For Thou hast compassed the
firmament of the moon with a second sphere Without deviation or infraction,
And within it is a star called Mercury, And its measure to the earth is like one
to twenty-two thousand.
And it completeth its turbulent course in ten months
And is the stirrer up in the world of strifes and contentions And enmities and
cries of complaint,
And it giveth the force to obtain power and to heap up wealth, To gather
riches and to lay up abundance,
According to the command of Him who created it to be His minister As a
servant before a master.
And it is the star of prudence and wisdom,
"Giving subtlety to the simple And to the young man knowledge and
discretion."

Chapter 14

Who shall understand Thy mysteries? For thou hast encompassed the
second sphere with a third sphere, And therein a brightness (Venus) like a
queen amid her hosts, And her garments adorned like a bride's,
And in eleven months she fulfilleth her circuit, And her body to that of the
earth is as one to thirty and seven, To those who know her secret and
understand her.
And she reneweth in the world, by the will of her Creator,
Peace and prosperity, dancing and delight,
And songs and shouts of joy, And the love-cries of bride and bridegroom on
their canopies.
And it is she conspireth the ripening of fruit And other vegetation, "From the
precious things of the fruits of the sun, And from the precious things of the
yield of the moons."

Chapter 15

Who shall understand Thy secret? For Thou hast encompassed the sphere
of this shining one With a fourth sphere, wherein is the Sun
That completeth his circuit in a perfect year.
And his body is one hundred and seventy times greater than that of the
earth, According to indications and devisings of intellect.
And he is the apportioner of light to all the stars of the heavens, And giveth
to kings salvation And majesty, dominion and awe,
And reneweth marvels on the earth, Whether for war or for peace,
And rooteth up kingdoms, And establisheth and exalteth others in their stead
And hath power to abase and uplift with a high hand,
But all according to the will of the Creator who created him in wisdom.
Every day he prostrateth himself before the King, And taketh his stand in the
house of his course,
And at dawn he raiseth his head And boweth towards the west in the
evening.
"In the evening he goeth down and in the morning he returneth."

Chapter 16

Who can grasp Thy greatness? For Thou hast appointed the Sun for the
computing Of days and of years, and appointed periods,
And to make the fruit-tree to burgeon, And, under the sweet influence of the
Pleiades and the bands of Orion, The green shoots luxuriant.
Six months he journeyeth towards the north to warm the air, And the waters,
the woods, and the rocks,
And as he draweth nigh to the north, The days grow longer and the seasons
wax,
Till there is found a place where the day is so lengthened That it lasteth six
months, According to confirmed indications,
And six months he journeyeth towards the south In his appointed courses
Till there is found a place where the night is so lengthened That it lasteth six
months, According to the proof of searchers.
And from this may be known a fringe of the ways of the Creator, A whisper of
His mighty powers, Of His strength and His wondrous works.
As from the greatness of servants May the greatness of the master be known
By all men of understanding,
So through the ministering Sun is revealed The grandeur and glory of the
Lord, "For all the goods of his Master are delivered into his hands."

Chapter 17

Who can grasp Thy wonders? For Thou hast appointed him to furnish light to
the stars Of high or low degree, And to the Moon, "If that white bright spot
stays in its place"
And according as she moves away to stand opposite the Sun,
She receiveth his shining

Until his light is at the full when she stands before him, And it irradiates her whole face.

And when that she draws nigh in the latter half of the month, And declineth from him

And is far from standing opposite him And proceedeth to the side of him, In that degree waneth her splendour,

Till the end of her month and her circuit, And she declineth to her extreme rim.

And when she is in conjunction with him She is hid in secret places For a day and half an hour And some numbered moments,

And after that she is renewed and returneth to her prior self And "issueth forth as a bridegroom from his chamber."

Chapter 18

Who can know Thy wondrous works? For Thou hast encompassed the sphere of the Sun with a fifth sphere, And therein Mars like a king in his palace,

And in eighteen months he completeth his circuit.

And his measure to the body of the earth Is as one and five-eighths to one.

And this is the scope of his greatness,

That he is like a terror-striking warrior Whose shield of red gives him might, And who stirreth up wars, And slaughter and destruction,

With men smitten of the sword And consumed of flame, Their sap burned to dryness;

And years of dearth And fiery burnings and thunders and hail-stones And piercings and withdrawals of the sword in consonance with them,

"For their feet run swiftly to commit evil and hasten to shed blood."

Chapter 19

Who shall find words for Thy tremendous works? For Thou hast encompassed the sphere of Mars with a sixth sphere,

A vast and mighty encompassing sphere,

Wherein dwelleth the righteous planet (Jupiter).

And his body is greater than that of the earth seventy-five times By the measure of her breadth.

And he completeth his revolution in twelve years, And is as a planet of goodwill and love,

Stirring up the fear of heaven, And righteousness and repentance and every good quality,

And increasing all crops and fruits,

And causing wars to cease, And enmity and strife;

And his appointed task is to repair by righteousness every breach, "For He judgeth the world in righteousness."

Chapter 20

Who shall reason of Thy greatness? For Thou hast encompassed the sphere of Jupiter with a seventh sphere, And therein revolveth Saturn. And his body is greater than that of the earth ninety-one times by the measure of him, And he completeth his revolution in thirty years of his course, And stirreth up wars, And spoliation and captivity and famine, For such is his appointed task; And devastateth the lands, And rooteth up kingdoms According to the will of Him "Who hath appointed him to His service, Even such strange service."

Chapter 21

Who shall attain to Thy exaltation? For Thou hast encompassed the sphere of Saturn with an eighth sphere of encompassment, And it is laden with the twelve constellations On the line of the belt of its ephod, And all the higher stars of cloudland Fixed in its rigidity. And every star of them compasseth its circuit in six and thirty thousand years, From the greatness of its altitude; And the body of each is a hundred and seven times that of the earth, And this is the limit of its greatness. And from the might of these stars Is drawn the strength of all creatures below, Each after its kind, According to the will of the Creator who hath appointed them, And set every one of them in its fit station, And given it its name, "Each man to his service and his station."

Chapter 22

Who can know Thy pathways? For Thou hast made palaces for the seven planets In the twelve constellations, And to the Ram and the Bull Thou hast imparted Thy strength in uniting them, And the third is the Twins, like two brothers in their unity And their human likeness. And the fourth is the Crab, And on him, as on the Lion, hast Thou bestowed of Thy splendour, And on his sister the Virgin, who is near unto him, And on the Scales and the Scorpion placed by his side, And on the ninth that was created in the form of a man of might, whose strength runs not dry, For he is the Archer, mighty of the bow. And thus too by Thy great power are created the Goat and the Water-Bearer, While alone is the last constellation, "For the Lord did appoint a great Fish." And these are the constellations high and exalted in their degrees, "Twelve princes according to the nations."

Chapter 23

O Lord, who shall search out Thy profundities? For Thou hast set apart above the sphere of the constellations The sphere that is ninth in order,

That encompasseth all the spheres and their creatures, Wherein they are closed up,
Which driveth all the stars of heaven and their planets From the east to the west in the might of its movement.
Once a day it bows down in the west to the King who enthroned it,
And all the creatures of the universe in its midst are as a grain of mustard in the vast ocean From the mighty vastness of its breadth.
Yet all this and its greatness are accounted as nothing and naught By the side of the greatness of its Creator and King,
And all its sublimities and grandeur "Are vain and void in comparison with Him."

Chapter 24

Who shall understand the mysteries of Thy creations? For Thou hast exalted above the ninth sphere the sphere of Intelligence. It is the Temple confronting us, "The tenth that shall be sacred to the Lord,"
It is the Sphere transcending height, To which conception cannot reach,
And there stands the veiled palanquin of Thy glory.
From the silver of Truth hast Thou cast it, And of the gold of Reason hast Thou wrought its arms,
And on a pillar of Righteousness set its cushions And from Thy power is its existence,
And from and toward Thee its yearning, "And unto Thee shall be its desire."

Chapter 25

Who shall descend as deep as Thy thoughts? For from the splendour of the sphere of Intelligence Thou hast wrought the radiance of souls,
And the high angels that are the messengers of Thy will, The ministers of Thy presence,
Majestic of power and great in the Kingdom of heaven, "In their hand the flaming sword that turneth every way,"
Performing their work whithersoever the spirit wafteth them,
All of them shapen to comeliness, shimmering as pearls, Transcendent creatures, Angels of the outer courts, or angels of the Presence, Watching Thy movements.
From a holy place are they come, And from the fount of light are they drawn.
They are divided into companies, And on their banner are signs graven of the pen of the swift scribe. There are superior and attendant bands,
And hosts running and returning,
But never weary and never faint, Seeing but invisible.
And there are some wrought of flame, And some are wafted air, And some compounded of fire and of water,
And there are Seraphim in burning rows,

And winged lightnings and darting arrows of fire,
And each troop of them all bows itself down "To Him who rideth the highest
heavens." And in the supreme sphere of the universe they stand in
thousands and tens of thousands,
Divided into watches, That change daily and nightly at the beginning of their
vigils,
For the ritual of psalms and songs, "To Him who is girt with omnipotence."
All of them with dread and trembling bow and prostrate themselves to Thee,
Saying: To Thee we acknowledge
That Thou art He, the Lord our God;
Thou hast made us, and not we ourselves, And the work of Thy hands are
we all.
For Thou art our Lord, and we are Thy servants, Thou art our Creator, and we
are Thy witnesses.

Chapter 26

Who can approach Thy seat? For beyond the sphere of Intelligence
hast Thou established the throne of Thy glory; There standeth the splendour
of Thy veiled habitation,
And the mystery and the foundation. Thus far reacheth Intelligence, but
cometh here to a standstill,
For higher still hast Thou mounted, and ascended Thy mighty throne, "And
no man may go up with Thee."

Chapter 27

O Lord, who shall do deeds like unto Thine? For Thou hast established under
the throne of Thy glory A standing-place for the souls of Thy saints,
And there is the abode of the pure souls That are bound up in the bundle of
life.
They who were weary and faint here await new strength,
And those who failed of strength may here find repose; For these are the
children of rest,
And here is delight without end or limit, For it is The-World-To-Come.
And here are stations and seeing-places for the standing souls, Whence, in
"mirrors of the serving-women,"
They can behold and be seen of the Lord.
In the palaces of the King do they dwell, And at the King's table stand,
And glory in the sweetness of the fruit of Intelligence, For He giveth them of
the dainties of the King.
This is the rest and the heritage Whose goodness and beauty are endless,
Such is "the land which floweth with milk and honey and such the fruit
thereof."

Chapter 28

O Lord, who can unroll Thy mysteries? For Thou hast made in the Height chambers and store-houses, Some of them awesome to tell of, a tale of mighty doings,
And some treasuries of life for the pure and the clean.
For some are treasures of salvation to those who have returned from iniquity,
And some are treasures of fire, And rivers of brimstone For the breakers of the covenant.
And there is a provision of deep pits whose fire is never quenched. He that is abhorred of the Lord shall fall therein.
And there are caverns of storm-winds and tempests And congelation and cold,
And treasures of hail and ice and snow and drought, Also of heat and flowing channels
And of thick smoke and hoar-frost and of clouds and thick cloud, And darkness and gloom.
The whole hast Thou prepared in its due season, "Thou hast ordained it for mercy or judgment,
And established it, O Rock, for correction!"

Chapter 29

O Lord, who can comprehend Thy power? For Thou hast created for the splendour of Thy glory a pure radiance "Hewn from the rock of rocks and digged from the bottom of the pit."
Thou hast imparted to it the spirit of wisdom And called it the Soul.
And of flames of intellectual fire hast Thou wrought its form, And like a burning fire hast Thou wafted it,
And sent it to the body to serve and guard it, And it is as fire in the midst thereof yet doth not consume it,
For it is from the fire of the soul that the body hath been created, And goeth from Nothingness to Being, "Because the Lord descended on him in fire."

Chapter 30

O Lord, who can reach Thy wisdom? For Thou gavest the soul the faculty of knowledge that is fixed therein,
And knowledge is the fount of her glory.
Therefore hath destruction no power over her, But she maintaineth herself by the stability of her foundation, For such is her nature and secret;
The soul with her wisdom shall not see death. Nevertheless shall her punishment be visited upon her, A punishment bitterer than death,
Though be she pure she shall obtain favour And shall laugh on the last day.
But if she hath been defiled, She shall wander to and fro for a space in wrath and anger,
And all the days of her uncleanness Shall she dwell vagabond and outcast;
She shall touch no hallowed thing, And to the sanctuary she shall not come
Till the days of her purification be fulfilled.

Chapter 31

O Lord, who shall requite Thy goodness? For Thou hast placed the soul in the body to vivify it, And to teach and show it the path of life
And to deliver it from evil;

Thou hast formed man from a pinch of clay and breathed into him a soul,
And didst impart to him the spirit of wisdom Whereby man is divided from the beasts That he may ascend to a higher sphere.

Thou hast him enclosed in Thy universe, And directest and beholdest his deeds from without,
And all that would conceal him from Thee Thou beholdest from within and without.

Chapter 32

Who shall know the secret of Thy operations?

For Thou hast provided the body with the means to do Thy work,

And Thou hast given it eyes to see Thy signs

And ears to hear of Thy tremendous deeds,

And thought to understand the fringe of Thy secrets,

And a mouth to declare Thy praise,

And a tongue to proclaim Thy might to all comers,

Even as I to-day, "Thy servant, the son of Thy handmaid",

Am declaring according to the feebleness of my tongue. A shadow of a shade of Thy sublimity,

For these are but a fraction of Thy ways.

How mighty then must be the sum of them, "For they are life to those who find them."

By them, all who hear of them may recognize Thee,

Even if they cannot see the face of Thy splendour.

For whoso hath not heard of Thy might,

How can he recognize Thy Godhead,

And how can Thy truth enter his heart,

And how can he fix his thoughts on Thy service?

Therefore hath Thy servant found the heart To make mention before his God

Of a shade of a shadow of the sum of His praises.

Peradventure thereby less shall be exacted of his iniquity "For wherewith should he reconcile himself unto his Lord if not with these heads?"

Chapter 33

O God, I am ashamed and confounded To stand before Thee with this my knowledge

That even as the might of Thy greatness, So is the completeness of my poverty and humbleness,

That even as the might of Thy potency So is the weakness of my ability,

And that even as Thou art perfect, so am I wanting.

For Thou art a Unity, and Thou art living, Thou art mighty, and Thou art permanent, And Thou art great, and Thou art wise, and Thou art God!
And I am but a clod, and a worm, Dust from the ground,
A vessel full of shame, A mute stone, A passing shadow,
"A wind that fleeth away and returneth not again." To an asp akin,
Deceitful underneath, Uncircumcised of heart,
Great in wrath, Craftsman in sin and deception,
Haughty of eye, Short in forbearance, Impure of lips,
Crooked of ways, And hot-footed.
What am I? What is my life? What my might and what my righteousness?
Naught is the sum of me all the days of my being, And how much the more so after my death!
From nothing I came, And to nothing I go.
Lo! before Thee am I come, as one "not according to the law," With insolence of brow, And uncleanness of thoughts,
And a lewd desire On his idols turned,
And lust showing itself master;
With a soul impure And a heart unclean, Perishing and corrupted,
And a body plagued With a rabble of pains Increasing until increase is impossible.

Chapter 34

O my God, I know that my sins are too great to tell, And my trespasses too many to remember,
Yet as a drop from the sea will I make mention of some, And make confession of them; Perhaps I shall silence the roar of their waves and their crashing,
"And Thou wilt hear from heaven and forgive."
I have trespassed against Thy law, I have despised Thy commandments, I have abhorred them in my heart, And with my mouth spoken slander.
I have committed iniquity, And I have wrought evil, I have been presumptuous, I have done violence, I have plastered over falsehood, I have counselled evil,
I have lied, I have scoffed, I have revolted, I have blasphemed, I have been rebellious and perverse and sinful, I have stiffened my neck,
I have loathed Thy rebukes and done wickedly,
I have corrupted my ways, I have strayed from my paths,
I have transgressed and turned away from Thy commandments. But Thou art just in all that is come upon me For Thou hast dealt truly and I have dealt wickedly.

Chapter 35

O God, my countenance falleth, When I remember all wherein I have provoked Thee. For all the good which Thou hast bestowed on me I have requited Thee with evil.

For Thou hast created me not from necessity, but from grace, And not by
compulsion of circumstance But by favour and love.
And before I was, With Thy mercies didst Thou precede me, And breathe into
me a spirit and call me into being,
And after I came forth into the light of the world Thou didst not forsake me,
But like a tender father didst Thou watch over my growing up,
And as a nurse fostereth a suckling didst Thou foster me. Upon the breasts
of my mother Thou madest me rest trustfully,
And with Thy delight didst satisfy me. And when I essayed my feet, Thou
didst strengthen my standing
And didst take me in Thine arms and teach me to walk. And wisdom and
discipline didst Thou impart to me,
And from all trouble and distress didst Thou relieve me, And at the time of
the passing away of Thy wrath In the shadow of Thy hand didst Thou hide
me,
And from how many sorrows concealed from mine eyes didst Thou deliver
me! For before the hardship came Thou didst prepare the remedy for my
distress all unbeknown to me,
And when from some injury I was unguarded, Thou didst guard me, And
when I came within the fangs of lions Thou didst break the teeth of the
whelps and deliver me thence,
And when evil and constant distress anguished me, Thou hast freely healed
me, And when Thy dreadful judgment came upon the world, Thou didst
deliver me from the sword
And didst save me from the pestilence, And in famine didst feed me,
And with plenty sustain me.
And when I provoked Thee, Thou didst chastise me as a father chastiseth his
son,
And when I called out from the depths of my sorrow, My soul was precious in
Thy sight, Nor didst Thou send me empty away.
But all this didst Thou yet exceed and add to
When Thou gavest me a perfect faith To believe that Thou art the God of
Truth And that Thy Law is true and Thy prophets are true.
For Thou hast not set my portion with the rebels and those who rise up
against Thee And the foolish multitude that blaspheme Thy name;
Who make mock of Thy law, And contend with Thy servants,
And give the lie to Thy prophets,
Making a show of innocence But with cunning below,
Exhibiting a pure and stainless soul, While underneath lurketh the bright
leprous spot:
Like to a vessel full of shameful things, Washed on the outside with the
waters of deceit,
And defiling all that is within.

Chapter 36

Unworthy am I of all the mercies and all the truth Which Thou hast wrought
for Thy servant. Verily, O Lord my God, will I thank Thee
For that Thou hast given me a holy soul, Though by my deeds I have defiled
it,
Polluted and profaned it with my evil inclination.
But I know that if I wrought wickedly,
I harmed but myself, never Thee.
In sooth, at my right hand my fierce inclination As an adversary standeth,
Allowing me no breathing-space to establish my tranquillity.
Oft have I purposed with double bridle to lead him, From the sea of his lusts
to dry land to restore him, But I could not prevail.
My devices he baulked, made profanities flow from my lips.
I think thoughts of simplicity, he fabricates guile and iniquity,
I am for peace, and he is for war,
To the point that he made me his footstool, And even in peace-time shed the
blood of war.
How oft have I sallied forth to combat against him, And set in battle-array
My camp of service and repentance, And placed the host of Thy mercies
beside me for auxiliary,
For I said, if my evil inclination Shall come to one camp and shall smite it,
Then the camp that is left shall escape. As I thought, so it was.
For temptation has routed me and scattered my forces,
So that there is nothing left me but the camp of Thy mercies.
But yet I know that by these I shall overcome it, And they shall be unto me
better than a city of refuge. Peradventure I shall prevail and smite it and drive
it away.

Chapter 37

May it please Thee, O Lord my God, To subdue my fierce desire. O hide Thy
face from my sins and trespasses, Do not carry me off in the midst of my
days,
Until I shall have prepared what is needful for my way
And provender for the day of my journeying,
For if I go out of my world as I came, And return to my place, naked as I
came forth,
Wherefore was I created And called to see sorrow?
Better were it I had remained where I was Than to have come hither to
increase and multiply sin.
I beseech Thee, O God, judge me by Thine attribute of mercy, And not by
Thine anger lest Thou wither me.
For what is man that Thou shouldst judge him? And how shalt Thou weigh a
drifting vapour?
When Thou placest it in the balance, It shall be neither heavy nor light, And
what shall it profit Thee to weigh the air?

From the day of his birth man is hard-pressed and harrowed, "Stricken, smitten of God and afflicted."

His youth is chaff driven in the wind, And his latter end is flying straw,
And his life withereth like a herb, And God joineth in hunting him.

From the day he cometh forth from his mother's womb His night is sorrow
and his day is sighing.

If to-day he is exalted, To-morrow he shall crawl with worms.

A grain of chaff putteth him to flight, And a thorn woundeth him.

If he is sated, he waxeth wicked, And if he is hungry, he sinneth for a loaf of
bread.

His steps are swift to pursue riches, But he forgetteth Death, who is after
him.

At the time he is straitened, he multiplieth his promises, And scattereth his
words,

And is profuse in vows, But when he is enlarged, He keepeth back his word
and forgetteth his vows, And strengtheneth the bars of his gates,

While Death is in his chambers,

And he increaseth guards in every quarter While the foe lieth ambushed in
his very apartment.

As for the wolf, the fence shall not restrain it From coming to the flock.

Man entereth the world, And knoweth not why, And rejoiceth, And knoweth
not wherefore, And liveth, And knoweth not how long.

In his childhood he walketh in his own stubbornness,

And when the spirit of lust beginneth in its season To stir him up to gather
power and wealth, Then he journeyeth from his place

To ride in ships And to tread the deserts,

And to carry his life to dens of lions, Adventuring it among wild beasts;

And when he imagineth that great is his glory And that mighty is the spoil of
his hand,

Quietly stealeth the spoiler upon him, And his eyes are opened and there is
naught.

At every moment he is destined to troubles, That pass and return,

And at every hour evils,

And at every moment chances,

And on every day terrors.

If for an instant he stand in security, Suddenly disaster will come upon him,
Either war shall come and the sword will smite him, Or the bow of brass
transpierce him;

Or sorrows will overpower him, Or the presumptuous billows flow over him,
Or sickness and steadfast evils shall find him,

Till he becometh a burden on his own soul, And shall find the gall of serpents
in his honey.

And when his pain increaseth His glory decreaseth,

And youths make mock of him, And infants rule him,

And he becometh a burden to the issue of his loins, And all who know him
become estranged from him.
And when his hour hath come, he passeth from the courts of his house to
the court of Death, And from the shadow of his chambers to the shadow of
Death.
And he shall strip off his broidery and his scarlet And shall put on corruption
and the worm,
And lie down in the dust And return to the foundation from which he came.
And man, whom these things befall, When shall he find a time for repentance
To scour away the rust of his perversion?
For the day is short and the work manifold,
And the task-masters irate, Hurrying and scurrying,
And Time laughs at him And the Master of the House presses.
Therefore I beseech Thee, O my God, Remember the distresses that come
upon man,
And if I have done evil Do Thou me good at my latter end,
Nor requite measure for measure To man whose sins are measureless,
And whose death is a joyless departure.

Chapter 38

O my God, If my iniquity is too great to be borne, What wilt Thou do for Thy
great name's sake?
And if I do not wait on Thy mercies, Who will have pity on me but Thee?
Therefore though Thou shouldst slay me, yet will I trust in Thee.
For if Thou shouldst pursue my iniquity, I will flee from Thee to Thyself, And I
will shelter myself from Thy wrath in Thy shadow,
And to the skirts of Thy mercies I will lay hold until Thou hast had mercy on
me, And I will not let Thee go till Thou hast blessed me.
Remember, I pray Thee, that of slime Thou hast made me, And by all these
hardships tried me,
Therefore visit me not according to my wanton dealings, Nor feed me on the
fruit of my deeds,
But prolong Thy patience, nor bring near my day, Until I shall have prepared
provision for returning to my eternal home,
Nor rage against me to send me hastily from the earth, With my sins bound
up in the kneading-trough on my shoulder.
And when Thou placest my sins in the balance Place Thou in the other scale
my sorrows,
And while recalling my depravity and frowardness, Remember my affliction
and my harrying,
And place these against the others.
And remember, I pray Thee, O my God, That Thou hast driven me rolling and
wandering like Cain, And in the furnace of exile hast tried me,
And from the mass of my wickedness refined me, And I know 'tis for my
good Thou hast proved me,

And in faithfulness afflicted me,
And that it is to profit me at my latter end That Thou hast brought me
through this testing by troubles.
Therefore, O God, let Thy mercies be moved toward me, And do not exhaust
Thy wrath upon me,
Nor reward me according to my works, But cry to the Destroying Angel:
Enough!
For what height or advantage have I attained That Thou shouldst pursue me
for my iniquity,
And shouldst post a watch over me, And trap me like an antelope in a snare?
Is not the bulk of my days past and vanished? Shall the rest consume in their
iniquity?
And if I am here to-day before Thee, "To-morrow Thine eyes are upon me
and I am not."
And now wherefore should I die And this Thy great fire devour me?
O my God, turn Thine eyes favourably upon me For the remainder of my brief
days, Pursue not their escaping survivors,
Nor let the remnant of the crops that the hail hath spared Be finished off by
the locust for my sins.
For am I not the creation of Thy hands,
And what shall it avail Thee That the worm shall take me for its meal And
feed on the product of Thy hands?

Chapter 39

May it please Thee, O Lord my God, To return to me in mercy, And to bring
me back to Thee in perfect repentance.
O dispose my heart and turn Thine ear to supplication, And open my heart to
Thy law,
And plant in my thoughts the fear of Thee,
And decree for me good decrees, And annul the evil decrees against me,
And lead me not into the power of temptation, Nor into the power of
contempt,
And from all evil chances deliver me, And hide me in Thy shadow until the
havoc pass by,
And be with my mouth in my meditation, And keep my ways from sin through
my tongue,
And remember me when Thou rememberest and favourest Thy people, And
when Thou rebuildest Thy Temple,
That I may behold the bliss of Thy chosen ones, And purify me to seek
diligently Thy Sanctuary
devastated and ruined, And to cherish its stones and its dust,
And the clods of its desolation, And rebuild Thou its wastes!

Chapter 40

O my God, I know that those who implore favour from Thee

Have for ambassadors their antecedent virtues, And the righteousness which they have heaped up,
But in me are no good deeds, For I am shaken and emptied like a stripped vine,
And I have no righteousness, no rectitude, No piety, no uprightness,
No prayer, no plea, No innocence, no faith,
No justice, no quality of goodness, Neither service of God nor turning from sin.
May it be Thy will, O Lord our God and God of our Fathers, Master of the Worlds,
To have mercy upon me, And be Thou near me,
To favour me with the visitation of Thy goodwill, And to lift up to me the light of Thy face,
And to show me Thy graciousness!
Requite me not according to my deeds And make me not a byword to the base.
Take me not away in the midst of my days Nor hide Thy face from me.
Purify me from my sins, And cast me not out from Thy presence,
But quicken me with glory And with glory receive me afterwards.
And when Thou shalt bring me out of this world, Bring me in peace to the life of the world to come,
And place me in glory among the saints,
And number me with those whose portion is appointed in the world of life
And purify me to shine in the light of Thy countenance,
And restore and revive me And bring me up again from the depths of the earth.
Then will I say: I thank Thee, O Lord, that though wroth with me, Thine anger is turned away and Thou hast comforted me. Thine, O Lord, is loving-kindness
In all the goodness Thou hast bestowed on me,
And which Thou wilt bestow till the day of my death.
And for all this it behoves me to give thanks, To laud, to glorify, to extol Thee.
By the mouth of Thy creatures O yield Thyself praise, By those hallowing Thee be Thou self-sanctified,
Through those owning Thy Unity cry Thou Thy oneness, With the lips of Thy glorifiers chant Thee Thy glory,
And exalt Thee in rhapsody through Thine exalters, Supremely upborne on Thy worshippers' breath,
For 'mid the gods and their works, O Lord, there is none like to Thee and Thine.
May this word of my mouth and my heart's true thought Find, O Rock and Redeemer, the favour sought.

Selected Religious Poems of Solomon Ibn Gabirol, trans. Israel Zangwill.
JPS, Philadelphia, 1923

[https://www.sefaria.org/Keter Malkhut](https://www.sefaria.org/Keter_Malkhut)