



Open

Work inspired by

אֲדֹנָי שְׂפָתַי תִּפְתָּח וּפִי יַגִּיד תְּהִלָּתֶךָ

Adonai, open my lips that my mouth may declare Your praise.

Adonai sefatai tiftaḥ ufi yagid tehilatekha.

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Joanne Fink

May my words

May my words be Your words spoken inside of me
May they be the words You would have me say

Rabbi David Zaslow



Let's Talk

Open my lips

So okay, it's me
And You
Creator of Light and Dark,
Object of love, loving us.
Claiming truth, demanding same.
Seeing me and
Seeing us.
Let's pray together.
So, my dear, what's new?
What is your name, really?
Do you nap on Shabbat like me?
This is a holy conversation.

So that my mouth may declare your glory!

Or not.
I can't talk to Glory, and
Awesome doesn't return my calls.
You're here every day,
What's so fearsome about that?
And where's the dialogue in terror?
You're not a king,
You're not even a You.
Let's make a *hevruta*, let's talk!
Ancestors, power, holiness,
Rest, healing, gratitude, peace,
So interesting.

I'll start.

Trisha Arlin

The etymology and root of every word in all languages is almost always a metaphor – a physical representation that is then abstracted into the meaning we are accustomed to. Here, I took the actual root meanings of the words “Adōnai s’fatai tiftaḥ oo-fee yageed t’hilateḥa” and strung them together. Then I shaped them to create one of many possible interpretive poems.

Prelude to Prayer

אֲדֹנָי	Adonai,
שִׁפְתַי	take me to the shore, to the edge of water,
תִּפְתַּח	and open me wide as you carve out a place within me
וּפִי	at the broken edge of my being.
יִגִּיד	It is from that place that I'll tell You praises
תְּהִלְתֶּךָ	in shining, flashing hymns and prayers of light.

Rabbi David Zaslow

Notes to the Prelude to Prayer: Below is a worksheet uncovering the etymological root meanings of all the words. Write your own prelude to prayer.

Rabbi David Zaslow

אֲדֹנָי	Adonai	the root means <i>God, master</i>
שִׁפְתַּי	s'fatai	the root means <i>language, shore, edge of water</i>
תִּפְתַּח	tivtach	the root means <i>open wide, loosen, carve, engrave</i>
פִּי	oo-fee	the root means <i>mouth, edge, extremity</i> which itself is from פָּאָה pa-ah whose root means <i>break into pieces</i>
יִגִּיד	ya-geed	the root means <i>to tell, inform, report, expound</i>
תְּהִלְתֶּךָ	t'hilatecha	the root means <i>praise, adoration, hymn of praise</i> which itself is from הִלָּל from ha-lal whose root means <i>shine, flash forth light</i>

HOLY
SPACE
—————
HOLY
TIME

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When I Can't Open

Sometimes I do everything I can
to forget I'm running on a broken leg,
to ignore how the cliff ended
twenty feet back and there's nothing
beneath my feet but empty air.
If I let down my guard I know I'll weep --
disappear into grief's gaping chest wound.
Shelter me in this tallit's embrace.
Open my lips for me. Remind me
I'm enough, even if all I can manage today
is whispering your name.

R. Rachel Barenblat



Joanne Fink



Open My Lips

Adonai, open up my lips
And help me find the right words
The words that will
Bring tears to my eyes
Burn hot in my chest
Liberate my tongue
Reach through silences and pains
Free my legs to walk
Rise in song
Dance in the dark
Be set on the fridge as the new goal for this month.

Adonai, open my lips because
I am getting too old for secrets
And words are the only
Possible bridges, ladders, and wings
Between heaven and earth.
Open my lips because
At times that's how
I sense, feel, create, and think.
Open my lips and
Give me words because
without them I am stuck within my own skin.

Adonai, open my lips.
Guide my feet.
Hold my hands.
Raise my head.
Widen my chest.
Caress my skin.
Strengthen my arms.
Comb my hair.
Kiss my eyelids.
Support my back.
Soften my belly.

Adonai, open my lips.

Rabbi Sonja K. Pilz



Joanne Fink

Listen In Shul

Holy Wholeness!
Listen in shul
To the siddur pages turning;
To the children squirming;
To feet stepping back and forward three times;
To those checking their phones;
To the familiar tune;
To the schmoozers in the back row;
To the silent prayers;
To us.
Amen

Trisha Arlin



Before Prayer

Adonai, help me get started in my prayers with the right words.

R. Zalman Schachter-Shalomi zt"l

Prepare

Take a breath

3 steps back

3 steps forward

Another breath

Stand up tall

(not too proud)

Feet together

(a bit off balance)

Recite

אֲדֹנָי שְׁפָתַי תִּפְתָּח

Adōnai s'fatai tiftah

וּפִי יַגִּיד תְּהִלָּתְךָ

oofee yageed t'hilateha

Say בָּרוּךְ *baruch*

bend knee

Say אָתָּה *Ata*

Bow

Stand up tall

(not too proud)

Say יהו"ה

YHVH

Rock gently

Sway

(You are connected)

Pray

Rabbi David Zaslow



Open

Open my crown and I'll feel your radiance
Open my eyes and I'll see you everywhere
Open my ears and every voice is yours

Open my fingertips poised on computer keys
Open my skin, let me feel you inside
Open my feet, I'll reach out like thirsty roots

Open my mouth: my lips sing praise

R. Rachel Barenblat



Steve Silbert



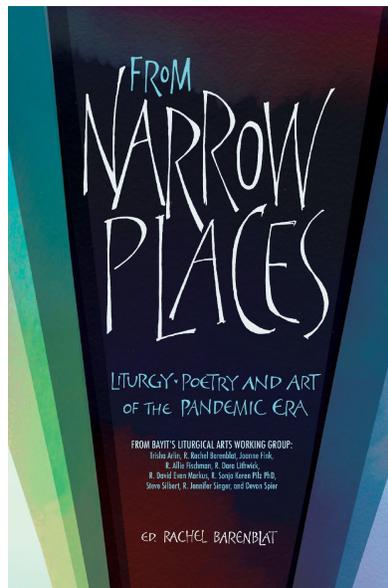
About Us

Co-created by members of Bayit's Liturgical Arts Working Group, 2023.

Bayit is building a soulful, inclusive and meaningful Jewish life for all ages and stages. Our visionary teams of clergy, liturgists, artists, educators and other thought leaders across and beyond denominational life develop, test, refine and distribute tools for a Jewish future always under construction.

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