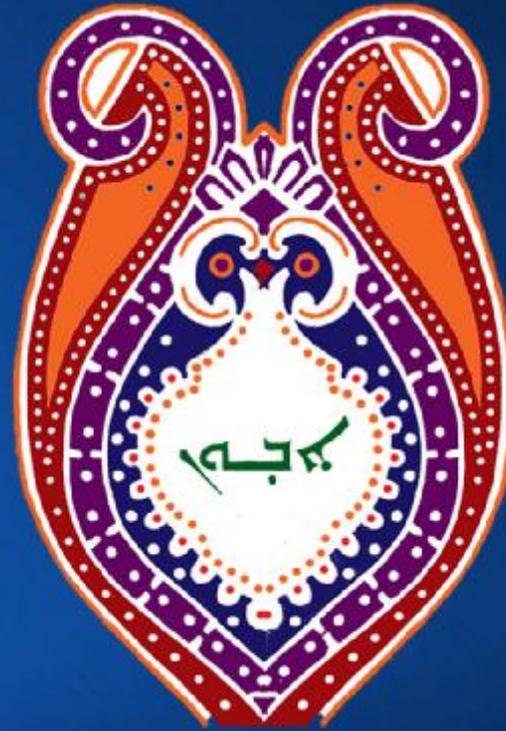


Exploring the Lord's Prayer in the Aramaic



By Rev. Paul M. Shaffer
St. John in the Wilderness - May 2013

Resources used for the presentation

- *Prayers of the Cosmos: Meditations on the Aramaic Words of Jesus*, by Neil Douglas-Klotz
- *Original Prayer: Teachings and Meditations on the Aramaic Words of Jesus*, by Neil Douglas-Klotz
- *Rabbi Jesus: An Intimate Biography*
The Jewish Life and Teaching That Inspired Christianity,
by Bruce Chilton
- *Setting A Trap for God: The Aramaic Prayer of Jesus*
by Rocco A. Errico
- *Jewish Meditation: A Practical Guide*, by Aryeh Kaplan
- *Son of Man: The Mystical Path to Christ*, by Andrew Harvey

The Lord's Prayer

Rocco A. Errico's version

Our Father who is everywhere,

Holy be Your Name.

Let your counsel come,

Let your desire be

as in the universe, so also on the earth .

Provide for us our needful bread from day to day.

Forgive us our offenses, even as

we have forgiven our offenders.

Do not let us enter into temptation,

but free us from error.

Because Yours are the kingdom, the power,

and the glory from all the ages,

throughout all ages.

Amen.

The Western Aramaic Peshitta Text

אבון דבשמיא נתקדש שמך.

תאתא מלכותך נתא זכינך

איכנא דבשמיא: אף בארעא.

הב לן לחמא דסונקנו יוסנא.

ושבוק לן חובין:

איכנא דאף חנו שבקו לחובין.

לא סעלן לגסונא

אלא פצן מן בישא.

(מטל דילך יה מלכותך
יחלא ותשבוקתא לעלם עלמין.)

אמן

Abwoon d'bwashmaya netqdash shmackh.

Teytey malkuthakh neyweh tzevyanach

aykanna d'bwashmaya aph barha.

Hawlan lachma d'sunqanan yaomana.

Washboglan khaubayn

aykanna daph khnan shbwogan l'khayyabayn.

Wela tahlan l'nesyuna

ela patzan min bisha.

Metol dilakhie malkutha

wahayla watesbukhta l'ahlam almin.

Ameyn.

Introduction (recap)

- Aramaic
 - Jesus taught mostly in Galilean Aramaic , a regional dialect of the common language
 - Aramaic has many words that hold more than one meaning, and certain words can express whole thoughts
- Mishnah
 - A rabbi's *mishnah* was his “repetition,” the words and actions that conveyed his teachings
 - The Lord’s Prayer is a comprehensive version of Jesus’ *MISHNAH*
- Jesus gives the prayer twice
 - Luke 11:1-4 - the disciples – when a disciple comes to him and asks that he teach them to pray
 - Matthew 6: 5-14 - to the multitudes during what is known as the Sermon on the Mount

Jesus' *Mishnah* - the first three lines

- Abwoon (transliterated phoenetic spelling)
 - Ab – shortened form of *abba*, but also means: source, parent, generative power, initiator, first cause, unity
 - Bw – a buzzing sound of the lips as air is pushed through
 - Oo – the opening sound
 - N – the close, creation into forms
- *Abwoon* is one of those words that contains a full concept about God as Creator
- **Abwoon d'bwashmaya netqadash shmakh**
(Source / heaven [relationship with God] / holy [swept out – prepared for planting] / name [personal essence])
- **Teytey malkuthakh nehwey tzevyanach aykanna d'bwashmaya aph barha**
(Come, come / realm / act now / heart's desire / at the same time / heaven / earth [created forms])
- **Hawvlan lachma d'sunqanan yaomana**
(Provide / sustenance / embracing [nesting] us / today [time of activity])

The Fourth Line:

Washboglan khaubayn (wakhtahayn) aykanna daph khnan shbwogan l'khayyabayn
(Forgive us our trespasses (sins) as we forgive those who trespass against us)

- What does it mean to “forgive” someone?
- *(wa)shboglan*—means to forgive/release/bring us out from
- Two versions of the word used - *shboglan* and *shbwogan*
 - There are several other translations possible
 - Return to its original state
 - Reestablish slender ties to
 - to untie
 - It is key here to understand that the process is one of re-establishing, returning and releasing
 - Not just the other person, or being, but ourselves as well
 - This process of returning to an original state takes a lot of work
 - Lucas’ story of re-meandering the river
- It is clearly seen in the word *wakhtahayn* (used by Luke in his version of the prayer)
 - The key concept in this word is KNOTTEDNESS
 - It refers to yarn or thread that has become tangled and knotted and the work it takes to tease out the knot and straighten the threads so the piece is back to its original form

- The two words *khaubayn* and *wakhtahayn* have some similarities
 - *Khaubayn* is used by Matthew – also used twice – *l'khayyabayn*
 - It means debts or offenses
 - It also refers to: stolen property, secret and inner desires that affect a person negatively, and even refers to having a hidden past
 - The clear rendering is that any and all of these are causes for strained relationships and cause blocks to clear, open, loving wholeness
 - *Wakhtahayn* is the word used by Luke
 - Relationships communal or personal can easily become “knotted up” and tangled by an uncaring (or unthinking) action or set of words
 - It is possible to step over another’s boundaries without meaning to, but generally we create the problems through frustration, fear or anger
- Both of these words tell us that a time has come when work must be done in the relationship for it to be restored to trust and balance
- We have dealt previously with the *aykanna*. It refers to actions happening concurrently within a continuum
 - How we live within and understand daily life IS our spiritual reality
 - We must also release regularly and consistently if our knottedness and overstepping are to move to wholeness again.
- All of this is tied to the statement, “Blessed are the pure in heart.”
 - The pure in heart are those who know the depth of forgiveness brings peace and joy—regularly, consistently

- Deeper understandings of “forgiveness”

- A Semitic understanding is that nature does not blame or point fingers
 - When something is in trouble or goes wrong, nature will try and fix it
 - After a forest fire, nature will begin the process of regrowth and replenishment.
 - When a person gets a cut, the body will immediately begin to send coagulants to the area to stop the flow of blood. Antibodies will show up to fight infection. What it doesn't do is say, “So, did you cut yourself on purpose? Too bad for you, because now I'm not going to help you.”
 - God is the Father of nature. It gets its understanding from Him.
 - God forgives because forgiveness is what brings healing to the situation and people.
- Forgiveness goes both directions: toward the other and toward ourselves
 - We must actually let go and no longer hold a grudge once we have stated that we forgive.
 - It may be that the other person does not care if we forgive them, but doing so is also for our own health and heart
- The knottedness within ourselves needs to be released
 - Our bodies tense up, blood pressure goes up, our capillaries restrict blood flow, we get into flight or fight mode.
 - Finding ways to reframe and reopen, reduces this tension, allows us to understand more clearly and relax our bodies , minds and spirits—it is part of forgiving

- A cultural understanding of forgiveness was of the “Jubilee Year”
 - Jesus’ use of Jubilee year
 - Luke 4: 16-21
 - The Year of the Lord’s Favor is another name for the Jubilee Year.
 - This is the year (every 50 years) when people who had become indentured to others were to be set free and released, and farm lands that had been taken in debt would be returned to their original families.
 - In other words, Jesus had come to initiate and proclaim a Great Sabbath time
 - A rest from wrestling with God (Israel) and each other
 - A time of reflection and understanding, not “work”
- Our work in forgiveness, the unknotting, the listening and restoring of relationship, the effort to bring back to wholeness, is the same effort God has toward us.
 - This includes our efforts to restore our environment, care for animals, create urban gardens, and anything else that brings health
 - *Aykanna* is the word that signifies that effort
 - The work of forgiveness in our daily living IS the work of heaven, IS God’s work for every being.

- Other ways to translate this fourth line based upon what we now know
 - Loosen the cords of mistakes binding us, as we release the strands we hold of other's guilt.
 - Erase the inner marks our failures make, just as we scrub our hearts and embrace those of others with emptiness.
 - Untangle the knots within so we can mend our heart's simple ties to others.
 - Compost our inner stolen fruits just as we forgive others the spoils of their trespassing.

Washboglan khaubayn aykanna daph khnan shbwogan l'khayybayn
(Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us)

Next: line 5

A Meditation on Forgiveness

- Lie down

- Feel your heartbeat and the flow of your blood. If this is difficult, place a right hand over your heart and feel the hand “listening” for the heart’s movement.
- Visualize the blood bringing to your lungs everything that needs to be released and breathe that OUT with every out breath.
- Each IN breath brings new life, new energy which pulses back out to every organ, every cell, every particle of your being.
 - The word for Spirit in Aramaic is *RUHA* and the same word means breath, wind and air.
 - Breathe easily and deep, as you connect to the wind of Earth and the Spirit of Heaven, releasing that which holds you knotted or bound and drawing in that which provides refreshment and new life.
- Your muscles will begin to relax as you continue releasing tension and allow your blood to flow more easily.
- If you do this regularly, you may begin to see old habits and “armor” being let go—you are beginning to fully “forgive” yourself. . . For giving to God
- If you decide to use the words of this line of the prayer as part of your meditation remember that the soft “h” sound used refers to patterns that are not fully hardened, and can be changed