TEFILA: Mode Ani Lefanekha

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Virtually all Siddurim (Jewish prayer books) that we have today begin with the prayer Mode (or Moda) Ani Lefanekha… "I thank You, Oh living and everlasting King, for You have returned to me my soul with [Your] compassion. Great is Your faithfulness".

This is a short prayer of gratitude that is said when one wakes up in the morning. It is one of the best known prayers, although ironically, it was not mentioned in the Talmud or Shulchan Arukh. The first time this prayer appears is in 1599 in the book Seder haYom, written by the Mequbbal Rabbi Moshe ben Makhir from Tzefat (16th Century).

The content of this beautiful prayer alludes to the idea (or motif) that the soul—the sensorial elements of it— is stored by God and it is returned to us when we wake up in the morning. This idea is based on the Pasuq from the Psalms (31:5) *beyadekha -afqid ruchi*… "In your hands, oh God, I entrust my soul". With this prayer we express our gratitude to God for giving us back our spirit of life. "Mode Ani" paraphrases the belief formulated in "Elo-hay, Neshama…", which is the original prayer mentioned in the Talmud: when a new day begin and our inert bodies (*pegarim metim*) recover their vitality, we are virtually born again and for that new opportunity we thank the Almighty. Thus, our first thought and the first word that we utter everyday, is one of gratitude for being alive.

Mode Ani was formulated to be said before we wash our hands (netilat yadayim) and this is why the name of God does not appear explicitly in it. God is referred to as the "living and eternal King".

√ Click **here** to listen to "Mode Ani", the song. By Beny Elbaz.

√ **Read The aftermath of Hurricane Sandy** by Charlie Harary