

To Dr. W. Max Corden and Dr. Isaiah Frank, who introduced me to Judaism, to economics and to development and to Rabbi Dr. Barry Freundel, who brought me into the Jewish community and introduced me to the thought of Rabbi Soloveitchik, with many thanks for his comments.



The Harold Hartog School of Government and Policy, Tel Aviv University

The Harold Hartog School of Government and Policy is situated in the Gershon H. Gordon Faculty of Social Sciences at Tel Aviv University, Israel's largest university.

Established in 2000, the Hartog School is dedicated to improving governance in Israel by preparing students for leadership in public service, serving as a leading public policy think tank, encouraging multidisciplinary research into governance and related issues, and bridging between the academic and policy communities.

In addition to collaborating with and supporting degree programs in the Faculty of Social Sciences, the School offers scholarships and fellowships, provides funding for programs and courses, initiates and pursues research projects and new teaching agendas, and publishes research reports, monographs and conference proceedings. It endeavors to involve the local and international communities in issues of pressing concern to governance in Israel and elsewhere – such as public integrity, international development and diplomacy – through conferences, workshops and lecture series.



Dear Workshop Participants,

This event is the continuation of an important process that began in New York more than 18 months ago. At that gathering over 50 representatives from 35 Jewish and Israeli NGOs engaged in international development and humanitarian aid gathered. The event, hosted by the Chairman of the Board of the Hartog School, Stanley Bergman, and Trevor Pears, Executive Chair of the Pears Foundation UK, fostered a sense of community and common purpose.

This second event is a fitting follow-up to the gathering at the Harmony Club. NGOs can learn from the accumulated knowledge and experience of other organizations operating in the field of international development. The workshop will provide a platform for the examination of issues pertaining to the roles of identity and religion in development and assistance, and will facilitate communication and knowledge-sharing among Jewish and Israeli development and humanitarian assistance organizations. The workshop also includes sessions dedicated to the development of a policy rationale for cooperation amongst Jewish and Israeli organizations, and between world Jewry and the State of Israel, on issues of international development and humanitarian assistance.

It is our hope that this event will encourage cooperation between all participating organizations and institutions, to improve the living conditions in the developing world.

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Of Progress and Purpose – Redemption and Development in the Amidah

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The Amidah is the central prayer of the Jewish liturgy. As such, it embodies the key values of the Jewish people, its world-vision and its objectives. This article will argue that these vision and objectives can be understood as the material as well as the spiritual development of mankind, two dimensions which are viewed as inextricably and dialectically interlinked.¹ In particular, the article will posit that the Amidah reflects the central objective of the Jewish community as envisaged by its sages --the improvement of the individual, the community and the world in socio-economic-political terms as well as in spiritual terms.² This concept of socio-economic-political and ethical-spiritual development is encapsulated in the concept of redemption.

The concept of redemption is at the core of the Jewish view of the world. Throughout the liturgy, creation (of the world and of the first Jew), first redemption (exodus—birth of the Jewish people) and second (ultimate) redemption are closely connected.³ The message is clear

¹ Redemption stands at the core of Judaism. It is a central concept in the Torah –particularly in the prophets--, the Talmud and the liturgy (the *Aleinu*, the *Haggadah* and *Havdalah* are obvious examples) and it has traditionally been interpreted to have both material and spiritual dimensions: “Throughout a long and varied history the idea of redemption has always had both physical and spiritual meanings...there is no dichotomy of the material and the spiritual... For physical concerns and spiritual aspirations are inseparable. The sacred cannot exist without the profane. The sacred (*kodesh*) and the profane (*chol*) together influence the human spirit...” Z. Yaron “Redemption: a contemporary Jewish understanding.” In *Living Faiths and Ultimate Goals: a Continuing Dialogue*, 1974: 23-33: 24, 26 and 30.

² Redemption has been identified as the central theme of the Amidah by numerous commentators. In Rav Soloveitchik’s words: “Like redemption, prayer too is a basic experiential category in Judaism...The *Halakha* has viewed prayer and redemption as two inseparable ideas. The *Halakha* requires that the Amidah be preceded, without a break, by the benediction of “*gaal israel*” which proclaims G-d as the redeemer of Israel. Apparently, the Rabbis considered prayer and redemption to be identical.” In “Redemption, Prayer, Talmud Torah.” *Tradition* 17:2 (Spring 1978). R. Kimelman also views redemption as the core of the Amidah. See R. Kimmelman “The Daily Amidah and the Rhetoric of Redemption.” *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, LXXIX, Nos. 2-3 (October, 1988-January 1989): 165-197.

³ See R. Rendtorff, “Creation and redemption in the Torah.” In *The Blackwell Companion to the Hebrew Bible* (2001): 311-320. For a dissenting view, see David Hartman’s *A Living Covenant*. In particular in chapter 11 on “The Celebration of Finitude,” Hartman argues that Judaism can be defined just with reference to the covenant and that redemption is not a necessary element of the Judaic worldview of religious philosophy. A. Cohen’s critique Hartman’s position (based on the liturgy, Maimonides and Soloveitchik) can be summarized in his statement that: “There is...no biblical faith without a belief in redemption, and no “power of the beginning” that cannot affirm some “certainty of the end” for the righteous man.” I concur with A. Cohen and the bulk of the tradition, both because of the overwhelming centrality of the concept of redemption in the liturgy, but also because faith in a better future is key to

—the world was created and we were created and freed to struggle for the liberation and redemption of humanity and we need to work with G-d to achieve it.⁴ The tri-partite Jewish philosophy of time and life purpose also stresses this world-view as it harkens back to the past—to the time of the creation of the world, the first Jew (Avraham), and the Jewish people (Exodus)—while linking the past to the future and final redemption through our actions in the present. In Rav Soloveitchik's words: "Within the covenantal community not only contemporary individuals but generations are engaged in a colloquy and each single experience of time is three-dimensional, manifesting itself in memory, actuality and anticipatory tension."⁵ Namely, the connection of past and future takes place through the present actions of the community guided by its covenant with G-d.

The Amidah, as the central Jewish prayer, also takes us from our origins (with the first Jew, Avraham) to our destiny as a people. What this destiny is has traditionally been identified as redemption through the implementation of the covenant. Therefore, the Amidah is a specification⁶ of what it means to implement our covenant with G-d in order to bring about the redemption of man and of the world as a whole.⁷ This article will argue that the Jewish concept of redemption as reflected in the Amidah—but also more broadly in the Torah and in much of Jewish philosophy—, has very much in common with what in modern parlance is called (economic, political and social) development. In short, it will argue that the Amidah contains a blueprint, not only for the moral, but also for the material improvement of the world while indicating that both are inextricably intertwined.

the Jewish psycho-philosophical structure. A. Cohen, "God and Redemption in the Thought of David Hartman." *Modern Judaism* 17 (1997): 221-251.

⁴ This view of our mission in the world as building material and moral progress is present from the outset in Genesis when humanity is commanded to "fill the world and subdue it" up to the visions of the prophets for a radically better, just society.

⁵ J.. Soloveitchik, *The Lonely Man of Faith*, 68-69.

⁶ I use the indefinite article "a" specification since it is not the only one, with "the" specification by excellence being *Halakha*.

⁷ The last two chapters of the Rambam's *Mishne Torah* clearly refer to *world* redemption (and not just the redemption of Israel), e.g., "to bring peace to the world..." (Ch. XII, p. 241) and "the one preoccupation of the whole world will be to know the Lord" (p. 242). The *Aleinu* also encompasses the whole world in its vision of ultimate redemption. From a secular-material perspective, this global view of world peace is much more plausible than an isolated "world" of peace for Israel alone, as the economic and political well-being of societies is inextricably intertwined. The ultimate era of sustainable world peace can only be achieved at a global level, not for an island in a sea of instability. For a dissenting view according to which peace refers only to Israel, see R. Kimelman, "The case for creation, revelation, and redemption in the Shema: a study in the rhetoric of the liturgy." In *Proceedings of the Rabbinical Assembly of America* 52 (1991): 191.

The Vision – Redemption, Development, Democratization and Peace

The Jewish view of redemption is that of the messianic era --a time when human beings will be free to devote themselves to the service of G-d. Just like the first redemption took place so we could receive and begin observing the Torah, the second redemption will take place so we can fully devote ourselves to fulfilling it. The vision of that time is provided by the Amidah in its final blessing—a world of peace.⁸ This is also the view presented by Maimonides in his *Mishne Torah*—a messianic era in which man is free from environmental constraints so he can devote himself fully to the service of G-d. The defining characteristics of such an environment are presented by the Rambam as follows: "In that era there will be neither famine nor war, neither jealousy nor strife. Blessings will be abundant, comforts within the reach of all."⁹ The laws of nature will continue to apply to other aspects of life—the end of history will only be different from today in that it will be a perfected version of *our* world.¹⁰ If human nature will not be any more ethical but human relations will be much more so, the change needs to be attributed elsewhere.¹¹ What the Amidah intimates (and history corroborates) is that this improved ethical behavior can only be due to a combination of economic wellbeing (leading to less temptation to sin and time availability to devote ourselves to study Torah), Messianic era institutions (properly structuring human interactions in a moral fashion),¹² Torah study (allowing the perfection of the ethical and

⁸ The concept of peace or wholeness as the central characteristic of --at least the end of-- the messianic process is shared by the mystical schools of Judaism. In those schools of thought, however, redemption is brought about through what the *Lurianic* school of *Kabbalah* describes as releasing the good sparks or "*tikkim*" from the evil shattered husks or "*klippot*" of the world. It is this release, which is achieved through the strict observance of '*mitzvoth*,' that brings about "*tikkun olam*" (the repairing of the initial shattering of the world) and hence redemption.

⁹ Maimonides, *Mishne Torah*, Chapter XII, p. 242.

¹⁰ Maimonides insists that human nature will never change, not even in the messianic era: "Let no one think that in the days of the Messiah any of the laws of nature will be set aside, or any innovation be introduced into creation. The world will follow its normal course." *Mishne Torah*, Chapter 10. M. Buber presents a similar view: "The end of history, he says, does not mean another world, different from the one in which we live. The words of the Bible "mean that this, our world, will be purified to the state of the "Kingdom," that creation will be made perfect, but not that our world will be annulled for the sake of another world." M. Buber, "The Man of Today and the Jewish Bible (1926) in *On the Bible*. New York, 1968: p. 15. Cited in A. Shapira, "Political Messianism in Buber's Conception of Redemption." *Journal of Jewish Studies* 42, 1 (1991), 92-107: 95.

¹¹ Saadya Gaon presents, as the factors behind people "choose(ing) obedience towards G-d" in the Messianic era, a combination of an alteration in the laws of nature and socio-economic political changes along the lines of Maimonides: "A new heart also will I give you and a new spirit will I put within you" (Ezekiel 26). They will choose this path for a number of reasons: because of their witnessing the light of the Divine Presence; because of the descent of Divine inspiration upon them; because of their existence as an independent kingdom in prosperity and freedom from oppression; because of the absence of poverty and distress; because of their complete happiness in every respect. For G-d has informed us that pestilence, diseases, and calamities will completely vanish, and likewise all grief and sorrow." S. Gaon, *Book of Doctrines and Beliefs*, "The Two Roads to Redemption."

¹² It will be these institutions that will structure the highly moral individual interactions within a supportive economic and political system and an international environment that allows for world peace. In that context of sound

spiritual health of humanity and underpinning the continuation of economic and political wellbeing) and peace (since war and insecurity lead societies to immoral behavior).

The Maimonidean view of the “end of history” as a Messianic era pervaded by material well-being, peace, and spiritual perfection corresponds to the vision presented in the Amidah and elsewhere in Jewish liturgy. It includes all relevant dimensions of human well-being –material as well as spiritual—culminating in world peace. This vision is also consistent with current theoretical trends in economics and political science as well as with concomitant empirical evidence. According to these theories and their findings, full, sustainable peace (rather than the sheer absence of conflict) is the end of the economic development and political democratization processes. There is an ongoing debate in the literature as to whether economic development leads to democratization or whether underlying, more fundamental factors –such as education and urbanization among others—, are the drivers of both processes more or less simultaneously. What is clear, however, is that the basic tenet of “democratic peace theory” holds, which is that democracies do not fight each other. Therefore, a world without wars –the messianic era—would have to be a fully developed, democratic world.

The Centrality of Freedom

A common element between the Jewish concept of redemption and contemporary understandings of development is the centrality of freedom, both freedom *from* material obstacles and freedom *to* lead a valuable life. In both literatures, the first freedom is seen as necessary for the second. In Jewish liturgy, the recitation of the Amidah needs to be preceded by reading about the first redemption (the exodus). This sequence indicates the necessity of the freedom brought about by the first redemption before we can devote ourselves to bringing about the second redemption¹³ --which in turn is characterized by the removal of material obstacles (freedom from) to allow human beings to freely serve G-d (freedom to). The Rambam's *Mishne Torah* describes the messianic era as one in which "Israel be free to devote itself to the Law and its wisdom, with no one to oppress or disturb it..."¹⁴ As characteristics of such an environment, he includes the removal of material obstacles to the study of Torah,

institutions, economic wellbeing and international peace, individuals will be able to devote themselves to the study of the Torah, which will make them into more perfected spiritual beings. This view is in line with the current emphasis of economic and political research on the central importance of institutions for development. See, D. North, *Structure and Change in Economic History*. Norton: London/New York, 1981 and *Understanding the Process of Economic Change*, Princeton University Press, 2005.

¹³ According to J. Soloveitchik, one can be a slave in one's mind even if one is not in one's body, but the opposite is not true. Namely, material, physical freedom is a requirement for spiritual freedom: "...slavery...is a way of life that still exists today in the midst of economic and political freedom (though, I would argue, the opposite is not true; one can not be free as an individual in the absence of economic and political freedom." *Redemption, Prayer, Talmud Torah. Tradition* 17:2 (Spring 1978).

¹⁴M. Maimonides, *Mishne Torah*, Chapter 12, 242.

prominently mentioning economic well-being (the absence of famine, the ability of all to earn a comfortable living in a legitimate way, and comforts within the reach of all), political independence (delivery from servitude to foreign powers, no one to oppress) and security, (absence of strife and world peace).

Rav Soloveitchik presents a vision of a redeemed world which is germane to the Amidah and the Rambam as well as to current views of development. He envisages redemption as linked to two concepts which are also core to (economic, social and political) development –freedom to lead valuable lives as the end goal and the removal of material obstacles in order to be able to achieve that stage of development. According to Rav Soloveitchik, “Redemption involves a movement by an individual or a community from the periphery of history to its center... (to) a history-making people ...that leads a speaking, story-telling, communing free existence, (from)... a non-history-making, non-history-involved group (which) leads a non-communing and therefore a silent, unfree existence.”

Periphery and center are also key concepts in the history of economic and political development. Developed nations play a key role in shaping and stand at the center of the world’s political and economic regimes and institutions. The poorer and politically weaker a developing country is, on the other hand, the more at the periphery of the world’s trade, monetary-financial and political system it stands. The process of development is indeed one of movement from the periphery to the center, from marginality to centrality, from lack of voice to voice.¹⁵ The same is true of a socio-economic group within a country –the greater the level of education, political organization and economic power a group has, the greater its “centrality” to the policy-making process. The development process within a country is typically one from a situation in which only the wealthy, well-organized and politically influential determine policy-making to one in which the middle classes and, eventually, the poor also become central to a more open and participatory policy-making process.

Rav Soloveitchik’s description of redemption is remarkably similar to the view of development presented by economics Nobel Prize-winner Amartya Sen.¹⁶ Amartya Sen, in his seminal work *Development as Freedom*, defines development as the situation in which people have the freedom “to lead a life they have a reason to value.” Sen emphasizes that the process needed to arrive at such a situation requires the removal of impediments and the provision of

¹⁵ On international regimes, see S. Krasner, ed., *International Regimes*. Cambridge, Ma.: Cornell University Press, 1983. The concepts of center (or core) and periphery were used by Marxist political economy in a different sense, implying that the developed nations at the center shaped the world’s economic and political system so that they could exploit the developing nations of the periphery. Immanuel Wallerstein: “Patterns and Perspectives of the Capitalist World-Economy.” *Contemporary Marxism* (9), San Francisco (1984).

¹⁶ Jonathan Sacks has similarly noted that “Hence the Bible’s insistence that a free society cannot be built on *mishpat*, the rule of law alone. It requires also *tzedakah*, a just distribution of resources. This view has close affinities with Nobel Prize-winning economist Amartya Sen’s concept of “development as freedom.” *The Dignity of Difference*. London/New York: Continuum, 2002: 115.

opportunities, ranging from access to education and health, to the setting up of working institutions that provide transparency and accountability, economic opportunity, physical security and social opportunities.¹⁷ He stresses that all these dimensions are inter-linked and mutually-supportive and that they all shape the definition of development or welfare.

Both for the Jewish tradition (e.g. Maimonides and R. Soloveitchik) as well as for Sen, freedom *from*, freedom as absence of material constraints, is valuable in and of itself.¹⁸ The intrinsic value and ultimate importance of freedom in the Jewish tradition is first established by the exodus. In Rav Soloveitchik's words, "Only freedom secures the full ethical experience."¹⁹ If spiritual perfection were to be possible in a context of economic hardship and political subjection, the liberation from Egypt would not have been necessary. The Jewish people would simply have been summoned to "liberate their spirits" within the context of slavery. This has never been the Jewish way. On the contrary, the exodus "is an account of deliverance or liberation expressed in religious terms, but it is also a secular, that is, a this-worldly and historical account."²⁰ Exodus as the first redemption also became a model for the second and final redemption and it imbued it with its combination of material and spiritual components.²¹

Freedom as absence of constraints, however, is only a step in the process. What matters most, in the Rambam's and Rav Soloveitchik's view of redemption --as well as in Sen's view of development--, is the ultimate goal --freedom *to* do something.²² That something, in both

¹⁷ He classifies these freedoms in the following categories: 1) political freedoms; 2) economic facilities; 3) social opportunities; 4) transparency guarantees; and 5) protective security. A. Sen, *Development as Freedom*, 10.

¹⁸ Freedom is central to the process of development for two distinct reasons: a) the evaluative reason: assessment of progress has to be done primarily in terms of whether the freedoms that people have are enhanced; b) the effectiveness reason: achievement of development is thoroughly dependent on the free agency of people. A. Sen, *Development as Freedom*, 4.

¹⁹ J. Soloveitchik, *The Emergence of Ethical Man*. Newark: New Jersey: Ktav, 2005.

²⁰ M. Walzer, *Exodus and Revolution*. Perseus Books, 1985: p. 9. This book presents a broad-ranging perspective on the use of the exodus as a blueprint for other revolutions. For the interpretation of redemption as the acquisition of liberal political rights during the emancipation period, see J. Katz, "The Impact of the Jewish Emancipation on the Concepts of Galut and Geulah—Exile and Redemption." In *Yearbook of the Central Conference of American Rabbis*, 80 (1970): 119-133.

²¹ "We judge the promise of final redemption from the first promise at the time when we were living as exiles in Egypt..." S. Gaon, *Book of Doctrines and Beliefs*. "On the Redemption of Israel." "The Exodus from Egypt is both starting point and prototype for the future redemption." Z. Yaron, "Redemption, A Contemporary Jewish Understanding." In *Living Faiths and Ultimate Goals: a Continuing Dialogue*, 1974: 23-33: 23.

²² Another Nobel-Prize winning economist, Milton Friedman, also placed freedom at the center of his value structure. In *Capitalism and Freedom*, he argues that government's ultimate objective should be to protect individual freedom. In his view, the role of Government should be strictly limited (to preserving law and order, enforcing private contracts and fostering competitive markets); in other areas, it should be careful to keep its intervention to a minimum. Friedman's view of freedom is similar to Sen's in that he believes that freedom *from* and freedom *to* are both important (individuals value freedom *from* government intervention and freedom *to* pursue their individual

cases, is leading a life that we have a reason to value. For Sen, the substance of that life is left for each individual and society to define while, in Judaism, it is a life of Torah study and practice.²³ For both, bringing that situation about requires the fulfillment of human material needs and ethical improvement. Sen, as an economist, focuses on the former aspect while Judaism focuses on the latter. The similarities on what the process entails, especially from a material perspective, however, are significant.

The Fulfillment of Human Needs

According to Rav Soloveitchik, a critical part of the redemption process consists in the fulfillment of human needs (a concept shared by Maimonides and most of the Jewish tradition). Rav Soloveitchik makes the connection from this process to prayer and, specifically, to the Amidah: "Therefore, prayer in Judaism, unlike the prayer of classical mysticism, is bound up with the human needs, wants, drives and urges, which make man suffer. Prayer is the doctrine of human needs. Prayer tells the individual, as well as the community, what his or its, genuine needs are, what he should, or should not, petition G-d about. Of the 19 benedictions in our Amidah, 13 are concerned with basic human needs"²⁴ The Rav's vocabulary is also strikingly – and not coincidentally-- similar to the terminology currently used in development parlance. Nowadays, development is widely recognized as the process of progressively addressing human needs and poverty lines are based on the definition and quantification of these "basic needs."²⁵ As we will show below, the Amidah's blessings contain a repertoire of areas corresponding to the human needs which would be included in any contemporary development policy textbook. In addition, however, it is interspersed with ethical/spiritual needs which would be absent from such a textbook, but are nevertheless critical to long-term societal improvement –both moral and material.

Therefore, the Amidah: 1) is centered on redemption/development; 2) establishes a vision of what the end outcome of the redemption/development process is (material development, peace and ethical/spiritual perfection); 3) spells out the role of humanity and G-d in bringing the change about; 4) sets out the steps needed to achieve it; and 5) highlights the dialectical relationship between the spiritual and the material dimensions of the redemption/development process.

goals), but differs in seeing freedom as lack of government intervention as the supreme value and in believing that a strictly limited role of government is the best route to achieving a desirable socio-economic and political system.

²³ See Maimonides, *Mishne Torah*, Chapters XI-XII.

²⁴ Here Rav Soloveitchik is even using the same language of development "human needs," individual as well as social-national. J. Soloveitchik, "Redemption, Prayer, Talmud Torah." In *Tradition* 17:2 (Spring 1978).

²⁵ The definition of the absolute (or extreme) poverty line, for instance, is based on a measurement of "basic human needs" in a society while other development indicators also make reference to human needs.

The Role of the Individual, the Community and G-d in the Amidah

The Amidah and its blessings describe a redemption/development process which can be seen as the progressive fulfillment of humanity's material needs and the gradual perfection of our ethical/spiritual actions. The *tefillah*, therefore, comprises not only a vision of the future redeemed world (the world of peace described at the end), but also of the steps needed to build it. The Amidah has been portrayed as "a counter-messianic manifesto."²⁶ Namely, it is not a prayer for the Messiah to come and fix the world, but rather one that indicates to every individual Jew and to the Jewish community as a whole what needs to be done to bring about redemption. The key actors in the prayer are the individual, the community and G-d.²⁷ The figure of the Messiah, on the other hand, appears only at the end, as the culmination of a process brought about by man in community and in cooperation with G-d.

Although there are dissenting voices²⁸, the Amidah is viewed by most commentators as a blueprint for our action in the world.²⁹ To use Rav Solovetichik's terms, redemption is the process brought about by the joint work of Adam the First and Adam the Second, as set forth in his *Lonely Man of Faith*. It is Adam the First, who builds material progress, working hand-in-hand with Adam the Second, who strives toward spiritual improvement, who bring about redemption, i.e. material and spiritual development. The collective nature of the endeavor is as clear in the work of Adam the first (in his community of work) as in Adam the Second (in his covenantal community and community of prayer).³⁰

²⁶ L. Hoffman, "How the Amidah Began." In *My People's Prayer Book. Traditional Prayers, Modern Commentaries*. Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing, 1998: 35.

²⁷ "Here we encounter another of the central dialectical tensions that define rabbinic Judaism: men and women must act in order for history to unfold, and yet G-d, too, must act because human initiatives by themselves are insufficient. But, and this is the essential error to be avoided, there is no disjunction, no either/or, between G-d's activity...and the imperative of human action. It is not a matter of G-d's grace *or* human action but rather of G-d's grace *and* human action." S. T. Katz, "Man, Sin, and Redemption in Rabbinic Judaism." In *The Cambridge History of Judaism IV* (2006): 925-945: 931.

²⁸ For example, R. Kimelman: "the distinctive contribution made by this liturgy to the idea of national redemption lies in...the uncompromising emphasis on divine involvement, all of which converge to make the point that G-d alone is the redeemer as opposed to any human redeemer." In "The Messiah of the Amidah: A Study in Comparative Messianism. Critical Notes." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 116/2 (1997): 313-4.

²⁹ Of course, our actions are dialectically linked to G-d's intervention. "Judaism has this dialectic believing both in human responsibility to fulfill the mitzvot and G-d's action as redeemer." M. Stroh, "Mending the World and the Evil Inclination: The Human Role in Redemption." In *Duties of the Soul* (1999): 83-92: 90.

³⁰ At the same time, Rav Soloveitchik grants an important role in leading the community to *geulah* to the leader of every generation: "G-d wants an individual great in knowledge, in morality, in prophecy, to be a participant in the drama of *geulah*...In every generation, there is a *shali'ah* who is qualified to become the *Ish Elokim*, the person with whom G-d walks, who speaks on G-d's behalf, through whom G-d speaks. In that generation, it was Moses." Moses and Redemption," In *Festival of Freedom. Essays on Pesach and the Haggadah*. New York: Ktav, 2006: 154.

Perhaps most poignantly, in *Kol Dodi Dofek*, Rav Soloveitchik illustrates the ultimate failure of the individual who is incapable of becoming part of the community and his subsequent redemption only after he is able to bridge that gap. Indeed, the Rav argues that Job's failure was to be concerned only about his own welfare, not going far enough to reach out to the other, to care for the stranger and to identify with the community. In Job's moment of personal redemption, he points out, "The great miracle occurred. Job suddenly grasped the true nature of Jewish prayer. In a moment he discovered its plural form, he discovered the attribute of *hesed* which sweeps the individual from the private to the public domain."³¹

The basic nature of Jewish prayer is thus communal. The community-orientation of the Amidah is obvious both from its phrasing as well as from its praying requirements. The wording of all blessings is in the plural—none, not even the blessings that have been classified by some commentators as "personal" are phrased in the singular³²—and we need a *minyan*—the most clear requirement of community-- to recite the *Kedusha*.³³ The meaning of the Tefilah's emphasis on the plural and the community is that, for redemption to come about, we need collective (not just individual) wisdom, health, economic wellbeing and repentance.³⁴ This is also true of development. Societies develop or fail as a whole. The development effort needs to be collective; policies need to benefit the majority and progress needs to benefit the population as a whole. There is no developed country led by and with benefits circumscribed to a minority. Redemption and development are collective, community endeavors. As we will see below, this spiritual and moral insight is corroborated by development empirics.

The Internal Structure of the Redemption/Development Process

The Amidah, therefore, is about redemption, about transforming the world, together as a community and in partnership with G-d. It is about development, both material and spiritual, both and both intertwined. As such, the tefilah spells out the catalogue of important human needs, both material and spiritual, that are needed to bring about the stage at which man can

³¹ J. Soloveitchik, *Fate and Destiny. From the Holocaust to the State of Israel*, pp. 14-15.

³² Among those authors making the distinction between personal (typically, blessings n. 4-9) and community or national blessings (n. 10-18) are M. Liber (1950), L. Finkelstein, R. Kimmelman (1989) and E. Gertel (2006). L. Liebreich, on the contrary, argued that "Such a classification...fails to reckon with the original purpose of the institution of the Amidah. For it...sought to give voice to aspirations cherished by the community as a whole, and to impress the worshipper with his duty to offer supplications in behalf of the nation, the land and the Temple."

³³ The only petitions in the singular are the opening and closing reflections: "G-d open my lips, that my mouth may declare Your praise" and "May the expressions of my mouth and the thoughts of my heart find favor before You, my Rock and my Redeemer. My G-d, guard my tongue from evil..."

³⁴ Therefore, contrary to a number of commentators of the Amidah, I do not find it useful to distinguish between "personal" and "national" blessings.

concentrate on serving G-d. This catalogue is ordered as a series of steps, reflected in the Tefillah's blessings, which are material as well as spiritual, together and interspersed.

The fact that there is no particular order from spiritual to material blessings or vice-versa in a prayer and a liturgy where order is of critical importance indicates that there is no prioritization of one set of values above the other and that the various steps are inter-linked and they feed on each other. Namely, morality is needed for successful development and, vice-versa, successfully addressing the material needs of a society allows us to become a more moral society.³⁵ This is an important insight which is firmly embedded in Jewish thought, but alien to modern secular thinking which, despite massive historical evidence to the contrary, tends to view the spheres of the material and the spiritual/ethical as distinct and independent.³⁶

Precisely because the intermediate blessings of the Amidah are about transforming the world, we omit them on Shabbat and on *Chagim*, when we rest and enjoy the world as is. Even then, however, we include the blessing for peace because ultimate peace as wholeness and a perfected world is the final vision we aspire to as the result of the redemptive development process more than something which we bring directly about.

The Amidah contains 18 blessings, which in *gematria* equal *chai*—life. In other words, the vision and purpose described in the various blessings of the Amidah are what life is all about. The rabbis were highly conscious of the importance of order and, hence, the order of the blessings themselves matters very much. This order, which we will see unfold as we proceed, not only provides insights into the process of the ethical/spiritual perfecting of the world, but also of laying the basis for economic, social and political development and eventually bringing about global peace.

Avot—Blessed are You, H-Shem, our G-d and the G-d of our forefathers, G-d of Abraham, G-d of Isaac, and G-d of Jacob; the great, mighty, and awesome G-d, the supreme G-d, Who bestows beneficial kindnesses and creates everything, Who recalls the kindnesses of the Patriarchs and brings a Redeemer to their children's

³⁵ On the connection between ethical behavior and success (and hence progress and development): "No success can be attained through a non-ethical performance...An ethical end can never hallow the non-ethical means, since such a means would never produce the desired result." In J. Soloveitchik, *The Emergence of Ethical Man*. Katv Publishing: Newark, NJ: 2005: p. 141. A good example of an economy and a society's material regression due to immoral policies is that of Spain after the expulsion of Jews and Muslims and the institution of the Inquisition.

³⁶ This is in part because there still is no theory linking moral and economic development. Many economists have had quite explicit moral concerns as the motivators of their work (from A. Smith, K. Marx, J.M. Keynes and M. Friedman in the past to A. Sen and J. Sachs today). Some economists even wrote about both topics. Most prominently, A. Smith authored a book on ethics entitled *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. Even these economists, however, did not develop a theoretical link or explore empirical connections between one sphere of human activity and the other. An exception to this separation is Benjamin Friedman's *The Moral Consequences of Economic Growth* which argues that economic growth makes societies more moral.

children, for His Name's sake, with love. O King, Helper, Savior, and Shield. Blessed are You, H-Shem Shield of Abraham.

This blessing conveys the importance of having a strong sense of origins, community and pride in one's history. Knowing that one is part of a collective historical endeavor with a purpose provides a human being and a people as a whole with the sense of rootedness and purpose that it takes to find one's place in the world and the strength and direction needed to make a contribution to its improvement. Placing the individual in the context of a community rooted in a historical past and with a purpose for the future is central to Judaism, to sound ethics and to development. The first blessing of the Amidah is devoted to this concept –to providing a sense of community, origins and purpose. To stress this order, it starts at the beginning –with the creation of the world and the Jewish people and finishes with the Messiah.³⁷ This sequence thus emphasizes the continuity in the people's history and points to what we are aiming at in the world, i.e., redemption.³⁸ Past history and future vision, thus, are tied into one first blessing before the Tefillah introduces us to what we need to do in the present to bring the future vision about.³⁹

Having a sense of history --understood as a shared vision of where they come from as a people--, identity and mission or purpose as a community is also essential to development. Peoples who have a strong sense of history, community and purpose (such as European and most Asian nations) have been much more successful in development than those who are more internally divided and have a less clear sense of their joint origins and belief in their collective mission (as many nations do, for instance, in Africa and Latin America).⁴⁰ These differences in collective vision are due to many factors, the most important of which is history and, in

³⁷ The creation of the world is present in the qualification of G-d as "creator of everything," the creation of the Jewish people is the main theme of the blessing as exemplified by the central role of the Patriarchs, and the blessing concludes with the Messiah in order to stress the final objective of both creations.

³⁸ "And Who brings a Redeemer to the descendants of their descendants..." In this phrase, all of history is skipped. From the G-d "Who remembers the kindnesses of the Patriarchs," the prayer reaches directly to the final Redemption, to the Messiah, who is being brought to the Patriarchs descendants. The role of each praying Jew is to focus on the consummation, the final rectification of humanity." H. Goldberg, "The First Paragraph of the "Shemoneh Esrei." In *Tradition* 38 (2) 2004: 86-103: 99.

³⁹ For an exposition of the Jewish philosophy of history, see J. Soloveitchik, "Charismatic Man as a Historical Personality." In *Out of the Whirlwind*. Ktav Publications: Newark, NJ: 2003: pp. 163-178.

⁴⁰ The weaker sense of community in some nations or parts of the world is due to a combination of factors including the heterogeneity of their populations, the recent establishment of their state and difficulties in nation-building. The weaker sense of mission and belief in themselves is related to this less-developed sense of joint origins and national cohesion, but is also deeply rooted in colonialism. Indeed, colonialism not only shattered the historical process of endogenous evolution of those regions/nations subjected to it, but it also purposely educated its populations in the superiority of the metropolis and the inferiority of indigenous cultures. The much stronger influence of colonialism in Africa and Latin America compared to Asia explains a great deal of the difference in the sense of community and purpose among their nations. How real and historically-accurate the community's shared view of its history or mission, on the other hand, seems to be less important than their having it.

particular, colonialism. In S. Biko's words, "there is always an interplay between the history of a people, i.e., the past, and their faith in themselves and hopes for their future."⁴¹ Indeed, regions that have had the "historical luxury" of developing mainly endogenously have a much stronger sense of origins, purpose (or "belief in themselves") as well as greater internal cohesion than countries that have been subjected to more disruptive processes of extra-regional colonization, which have tended to weaken their development process.⁴² Building a sense of collective history and mission, therefore, is both critical to moral improvement as well as to economic, political and social development.

A shared sense of origins and purpose, jointly with Jewish law, provide the grounding for the Jewish community of the present. Indeed, this strong feeling of community has been a key factor behind the religious continuity, physical survival and material success of the Jewish people throughout history.⁴³ This cohesiveness and support network which helps groups and nations succeed is now widely recognized in the social sciences as "social capital."⁴⁴ Groups and societies with high amounts of social capital, however, tend to be more closed to outsiders than those that are more porous.⁴⁵ Amartya Sen in *Identity and Violence* posits that, while a sense of community is a resource that can powerfully support those within it, it can also be used as a way to divide and exclude.⁴⁶ Therefore, the emphasis on our joint origins and group identity also brings in, as a critical balance, the oneness of humanity. This is why the Amidah starts with a blessing for our origins in Avraham and finishes with the blessing for our destiny in peace understood as wholeness and unity of the world.⁴⁷ Both are inter-related. Avraham was the first monotheist because he was the first human being to acknowledge not only the unity of

⁴¹ S. Biko, *I Write What I Like*. Picador Africa, 2004: p 57.

⁴² Colonizers, on the other hand, have tended to prosper and strengthen their sense of identity and purpose in the short to medium run while being brought down by what has been termed "imperial over-extension" in the long run. See, for instance, P. Kennedy, *The Rise and Decline of the Great Powers*. London: Unwin, 1988.

⁴³ From a religious perspective, the *Mishna* commands us not to distance ourselves from the community. From an economic perspective, A. Greif has illustrated the economic advantages of the social capital of the Jewish community of North African traders or "Maghribis," in a time of weak institutions. A. Greif, "Contract Enforceability and Economic Institutions in Early Trade: The Maghribi Traders' Coalition." *American Economic Review* 83: 525-548.

⁴⁴ See the work of R. Putnam. For instance, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Communities*. 2001; *Democracies in Flux: The Evolution of Social Capital in Contemporary Society*. 2004.

⁴⁵ For example, European societies, which are more homogenous and function more as communities, are also more closed than the United States which is more heterogeneous and has a weaker sense of community.

⁴⁶ A. Sen, *Identity and Violence*. Norton: London & New York, 2006.

⁴⁷ Similarly, N. Leibowitz comments that the first revelation from G-d to the founding father of the Jewish people begins with "extreme particularism" and finishes with "generous universalism": "And I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make thy name great, and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and curse him that curses you; and all the families of the earth shall bless themselves by you." (Bereishit 12:2-3). N. Leibowitz, *Studies in Bereishit*. Israel: Maor Walach Press, 112.

G-d but also, unlike Noah, the unity of humanity.⁴⁸ This first recognition of unity links up with the final unity of *shalom* as the end of the redemption process –when the world and humanity will truly be one and will devote themselves to the worship of *the One*.

G-d's Might—You are eternally mighty, my Lord, the Resuscitator of the dead are You; abundantly able to save.

The first paragraph has introduced us, the Jewish people. The second paragraph introduces our Partner in history, community and purpose—G-d. The paragraph presents G-d in his role as savior or redeemer, hence pointing to the ultimate purpose of our joint endeavor.

Summary Paragraph—Who sustains the living with kindness, resuscitates the dead with abundant mercy, supports the fallen, heals the sick, releases the confined, and maintains His faith to those asleep in the dust. Who is like You, O Master of mighty deeds, and who is comparable to You, O King Who causes death and restores life and makes salvation sprout. And You are faithful to resuscitate the dead. Blessed are You, H-Shem, Who resuscitates the dead.

After the two main actors of the Tefilah have been introduced, the next paragraph provides us with a summary description of our joint endeavor –the redemption/development process. The paragraph opens with a reference to a central ethical quality in this process-- *chesed* or loving-kindness. *Chesed* is the first quality of G-d mentioned in the Tefilah that is susceptible of imitation by human beings and the one which is mentioned most times.⁴⁹ Being mentioned first and being mentioned most jointly indicate the primordial importance of *chesed* in the redemption process. This centrality is also reflected in the Torah which, as the Talmud points out, begins and ends with an act of *chesed*.⁵⁰ In Judaism, loving-kindness and respect of one's fellow beings is a key precept. Moreover, kind treatment of the *ger* as the most vulnerable among us and hence most in need of *chesed* is the most often mentioned commandment in the

⁴⁸ Noah did not stand up for humanity when G-d asked him to construct the ark for the flood, hence evincing the fact that he did not see himself as one with them. Avraham, on the other hand, did fight for the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. Avraham is also seen in many other instances as acknowledging the oneness of humanity and reaching out to the other, as exemplified in the key characteristic that the commentators attribute to him –*chesed*.

⁴⁹ *Chesed* is mentioned six times in the Tefilah. It also features prominently in the very last blessing of the Amidah, that of peace. Therefore, one could argue that the Tefilah also finishes with a reference to *chesed*. Other qualities of G-d such as holiness and might are mentioned before and more often, but they are not qualities strictly (might) or directly (holiness) susceptible of imitation by human beings. Hence, an *imitatio Dei* approach to the Amidah clearly points in the direction of *chesed* as its central pillar. *Imitatio Dei* is a central concept of Maimonidean theology and ethics: "For the utmost virtue of man is to become like Him, may He be exalted, as far as he is able; which means that we should make our actions like unto His." *Guide of the Perplexed* Chapter 54 (p. 128 in Pines edition). Similarly, "...the categorical norm within our ethical system, *imitatio Dei*, is correlated with the ideal of *hesed*." J. Soloveitchik, "A Theory of Emotions," in *Out of the Whirlwind*, p. 297.

⁵⁰ "And Hashem, G-d, made for Adam and his wife garments of skin and clothed them (Gen. 2.21) And he (Moses) was buried in the valley in the land of Moab (Deut. 34.6))." *Talmud, Sotah*, 14.a. Quoted in Chafetz Chaim, *Ahavath Chesed*. Jerusalem/New York: Feldheim Publishers, p. 21.

Torah.⁵¹ In the words of Rabbi Sachs, "...a society is judged by what it contributes to the welfare of the least advantaged, "the widow, the orphan, the poor and the stranger...The message of the Hebrew Bible is that civilizations survive not only by strength but by how they respond to the weak."⁵²

It is significant that a paragraph dominated by the feature of *chesed* (the most outwardly focused characteristic) should follow the blessing of *avot* or origins (by definition inwardly focused) and should start with a description of G-d's might *Atah Givor*. We are thereby told that our origins and sense of community (*avot*--inwardness) are essential for us to be able to devote ourselves (outwardly) to bringing about redemption by reaching out to the other (*chesed*) and that the only One who truly is separate and different, is G-d.⁵³

Chesed is key to both redemption and development. It reflects the ability to bridge the gap from the self to the other, from the individual to the community and from one's community to the other's community in kindness.⁵⁴ Altruism, love of the other reflected in policies that are not merely self-seeking either for the individual or for one community, taking into account the welfare of the other and treating him/her like oneself, are critical to good economic policy-making and to development.⁵⁵ Whether a society chooses a development model that is more individual-centered or one that is more community-oriented, equity and the transcendence of the interests of specific individuals and groups are a critical component for success. In a more individual-based society (such as Anglo-Saxon societies), the key is that individuals and groups

⁵¹ It is mentioned 36 times. T. Bava Metzia 59b. Also cited by M. Maimonides in "Letter to Ovadyah the Convert (Third Letter)." In M. Walzer, M. Lowerbaum and N. Zohar eds., *The Jewish Political Tradition*. Volume Two: Membership, p. 501.

⁵² J. Sachs, *To Heal a Fractured World. The Ethics of Responsibility*. London/New York: Continuum, 2005: 36-37.

⁵³ The best reaching out can be done when one is grounded in who one is as an individual and as a community. But it is only through this reaching out as an individual and as a community that one becomes truly and fully oneself. In M. Buber's words, "I require a You to become; becoming I, I say You." M. Buber, *I and Thou*. New York: Scribners: 62. The idea that it is through (well-understood) particularity that we are best able to reach the rest of humanity is a central argument in J. Sachs, *The Dignity of Difference*. London/New York: Continuum, 2002.

⁵⁴ "...Judaism has raised the idea of *chesed* to an existential level. Fundamentally, *chesed* denotes the opening up of a personal, unique, closed-in existence. Self-transcendence and the surge towards the other are called *chesed*." J. Soloveitchik, "A Theory of Emotions," in *Out of the Whirlwind*, p. 209. Similarly, "Man lives in the spirit when he is able to respond to his You. He is able to do that when he enters into this relation with his whole being. It is solely by virtue of his power to relate that man is able to live in the spirit." M. Buber, *I and Thou*. Scribners: New York, 1970: p. 89.

⁵⁵ This characteristic needs to be present in legal, institutional/political and economic areas. A key difference between the Middle Ages and the Modern era is the abundance of "private laws" during the previous time period and their (almost) disappearance during the latter period as "general laws" --representing equality before the law-- became the norm. Equal treatment by and equitable representation of individuals and groups in public institutions are defining components of good governance and political development. Equity of opportunity and avoiding high levels of inequality (in education levels, health status, or income) are also critical components of sound policy-making and strong and sustainable development outcomes (see footnote below for bibliographical reference).

have equality of opportunity. In a more community-based society (such as continental Europe), in addition to equality of opportunity, society and government also strive to diminish inequalities in developmental outcomes. Societies and governments which fall short of such basic equity and equality criteria (the policy implication of the ethical concept of *chesed*) undermine their effectiveness and their chances of success and material and spiritual development.⁵⁶ At the international level, peace is more likely in regions where nation-states transcend the traditional self-centered definition of national interest and regard themselves as interdependent with their neighbors and hence attempt to maximize the security and interests of the whole.⁵⁷

Chesed or kind treatment by others also matters enormously in the wellbeing of the individual. Survey studies on the wellbeing of the poor show that one of the things that matters most to them is how they are treated.⁵⁸ These surveys reveal frequent complaints by the poor of bad treatment and lack of respect by fellow citizens and service providers. This attitude is often compounded by prejudiced attitudes towards those who, in addition to being poor, also belong to an ethnic minority or indigenous group. This absence of basic kindness and respect is also reflected in the frequent failure of the state to cater to the poor in their languages or in ways which are sensitive to their cultures. The compounded effect of all this is one of hurt and alienation by the poor or socially excluded, who often shun the use of public services (such as schools or health centers) or public institutions which they view as hostile to them. This leads to what is qualified as "demand-side" constraints in public service provision, namely, difficulties in reaching the poorest and most marginalized population groups, not because of absence of supply of services, but rather because the way in which such services are provided does not encourage demand. The final effect, however, is the same –an inability to improve the wellbeing of the poor and, therefore, of society as a whole. The less than full participation of the poor or of socially excluded groups in an economy and a country's institutions also prevents the maximization in use of existing human capital and weakens the society's cohesion as a whole, impinging on development prospects.

In addition to references to life after death and to the final redemption, the actions that are included in this paragraph are physical sustenance, support of the most vulnerable (the

⁵⁶ On recent trends in theory and empirical evidence in these areas, see *Equity and Development*. Washington: World Bank, 2006.

⁵⁷ A region in which this change has operated can be regarded as a region with a "cooperative security system, in which states identify positively with one another so that the security of each is perceived as the responsibility of all...the "self" in terms of which interests are defined is the community; national interests are international interests." A. Wendt, "Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics." *International Organization* 46, 2 (Spring 1992): 391-425. An example of such a region would be the European Union or, arguably, even the NATO area.

⁵⁸ D. Narayan, *Voices of the Poor*. Washington, DC: A co-publication of Oxford University Press and the World Bank, 2002.

“fallen”), healing of the sick, and freeing of the captives.⁵⁹ Hence, economic opportunity, security for the weakest⁶⁰, health and freedom are singled out as the prime characteristics of the redemption/ development process. In all such areas, we are called on to imitate G-d.

The Kedusha –We shall sanctify Your Name in this world, just as they sanctify it in heaven above, as it is written by Your prophet, “And one (angel) will call another and say: “Holy, holy, holy is H-Shem, Master of Legions, the whole world is filled with His glory. Those facing them say: “Blessed is the glory of H-Shem from His place.” And in Your holy Writings the following is written: “H-Shem shall reign forever –your G-d of Zion—from generation to generation, Halleluyah! From generation to generation we shall relate Your greatness and for infinite eternities we shall proclaim Your holiness. Your praise, our G-d, shall not leave our mouth forever and ever, for You O G-d, are a great and holy King. Blessed are You H-Shem, the holy G-d.

The Kedusha is the most obviously mystical part of the Amidah. It is a balance to the more earthly blessings of the Tefillah and is strategically placed after the summary paragraph of the redemption development process and before we launch into the intermediate petitionary section of the prayer. To express that this collective dedication to G-d is the holiest part of our prayer, we are required to stand and are only allowed to recite it in the presence of a *minyan*. It also contains the core of the “Shema,” reminding us of the central importance of acknowledging the oneness of G-d and, hence, the oneness of mankind.⁶¹

G-d’s Holiness—You are holy and Your name is holy, and holy ones praise You every day, forever. Blessed are You, H-Shem, the holy G-d.

This is the last blessing of the introductory section of the Tefillah and it immediately precedes the intermediate petitionary section which includes the description of the redemption

⁵⁹ Freeing the captive “can also be interpreted metaphorically to refer to releasing someone from intellectual or psychological bonds –superstitious beliefs, for example, or prejudice toward others.” E. Dorff in L. Hoffman, *My People’s Prayer Book. Traditional Prayers, Modern Commentaries*: p. 75. Development and moral progress require the freeing of society from magical thinking/superstitious beliefs as well as prejudice –prejudiced societies are not only morally ill, but chain themselves into limitations to material progress. This happens, for example, through restricted access of parts of the population to education, land or other physical assets, economic opportunities and government and leadership positions.

⁶⁰ The fact that “support for the fallen” follows “(economic) sustenance” can be interpreted as the need for a society to provide economic opportunity for all as well as social safety nets to sustain those who “fall.” The establishment of *tzeddakah* funds for members of the community in need has been a tradition of Jewish communities for centuries.

⁶¹ If all human beings are created in G-d’s image, it follows that our differences are superficial and ultimately unimportant. Rav Soloveitchik points out that the Torah mentions the creation of plants and animals of various kinds and species, but only the creation of one man and one woman. From this, he deduces: “Concerning man, the Torah did not mention group affiliation for a simple reason: it believed in the equality of all men.” J. Soloveitchik, *The Emergence of Ethical Man*. Newark: Ktav, 2005: p. 26.

development process. The blessing establishes G-d's holiness as a manifestation of His sovereignty. This blessing and the last one –*Modim*—(opening and closing the petitionary section respectively) stress that G-d is King and, ultimately, it all comes from Him, all we do is with Him and thanks to Him. This blessing is also linked with the next one --on *da'at* or knowledge. While G-d's holiness, *kedusha*, emphasizes his basic and ultimate otherness and separateness from mankind, the blessing on *da'at* brings in the hope for, despite the separateness, getting closer to G-d, developing some knowledge of Him as we make progress in the redemption/development process.

Knowledge—You graciously endow man with wisdom and teach insight to a frail mortal. Endow us graciously from Yourself with wisdom, insight, and discernment. Blessed are You, H-Shem, gracious Giver of wisdom.

The first petitionary blessing of the Amidah is devoted to the element that constitutes the basis of the ethical/spiritual as well as the material development of mankind --knowledge. Knowledge is the basis of our full development as human beings because we become G-d-like through it. It is the characteristic that Maimonides describes as the image of G-d within us and as the ultimate path to G-d: "Those who know Him are those who are favored by Him and permitted to come near Him."⁶² Therefore, Maimonides stresses the utter importance of knowledge in our process of individual and collective perfection and his messianic era is precisely defined as one in which knowledge of G-d will attain its highest possible level.⁶³ The Saadya Gaon also placed knowledge at the center of the dynamic bringing about the messianic era. In his words, it is through the "disappearance of doubts and the removal of errors (that)...the knowledge of G-d and His Law will spread in the world like the spreading of water in all parts of the sea."⁶⁴ Similarly, the Talmud places Torah study at the top of the rank of mitzvot with the inference that it leads to the performance of all other mitzvot.⁶⁵

The knowledge that is requested and aspired to in this first blessing is not just any knowledge, but rather individual and collective knowledge, secular and religious knowledge both, and both with a purpose. In Judaism, education is not only an individual obligation, but also a key communal endeavor. Jewish communities are recorded from very early times as running public

⁶² *Guide of the Perplexed*. Chapter 54. S. Pines edition p. 123. Also, see "What are the basic building blocks of redemption? ...Only by way of knowledge, in its widest possible understanding. Intelligence, experience, discernment, insight --without these tools, without our intellectual apparatus and the ability to reflect on our experience, we are not human." I. Stone, "Worship and Redemption: Recovering Our Spiritual Vocabulary." *Judaism*, Winter 1994, 43: p. 70.

⁶³ "In that era...The one preoccupation of the whole world will be to know the Lord. Hence Israelites will be very wise, they will know the things that are now concealed and will attain an understanding of their Creator to the utmost capacity of the human mind, as it is written: For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea (Isa. 11:9). Maimonides, *Mishne Torah*, Chapter XII: p. 242.

⁶⁴ Saadya Gaon, *Book of Doctrines and Beliefs*. "Prolegomena."

⁶⁵ Mishna. *Pirkei Avot*.

schools and the Talmud commands fathers to teach their son a trade as well as Talmud-Torah.⁶⁶ Even in the home of the Talmud-Torah-focused *cheder*, Eastern Europe, secular knowledge was progressively added to strictly religious subjects.⁶⁷ The wisdom of King Solomon, the archetypal model of the wise man in the Torah, also included both spiritual as well as worldly dimensions of knowledge which fed on each other. His era of peace, which allowed for the building of the Temple, was founded on the treaty he signed with Hiram.⁶⁸ This fact, argues Ralbag, “suggests that the divine wisdom granted to Solomon includes political and executive acumen.”⁶⁹

From a development perspective, knowledge is also the basis of everything else. Education is the most important determinant of a person’s income. It is also a critical determinant of health, with the level of education of the mother being the single most important determinant of the chances of survival of an infant in the developing world. For a society as whole, the level and distribution of education is one of the most important factors contributing to economic development as well as to the emergence of democratic political systems. Societies that only educate an elite do not succeed in the economic development process, which necessitates the education of the whole (or at least the large majority of) society. Similarly, the good governance that is a central building block of a well-functioning democratic society is critically dependent not only on an educated elite to staff its institutions, but also on an educated population mass that can hold its government accountable. In short, equitable education devoted to the improvement of society fosters the kind of knowledge that yields development.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ “Josephus (Against Apion 2.204) stresses the Jewish custom of teaching all children to read and instructing them on religious customs and the history of the forefathers...From the time of Simeon ben Shetah onwards, we hear of public concern for education, and shortly before the destruction of the Temple the High Priest Joshua ben Gamla commanded that “teachers shall be appointed in every district and in every town, and they shall be sent (to school) from the age of six or seven (*Babylonian Talmud*, “Bava Batra,” 21a).” H.H. Ben-Sasson, *A History of the Jewish People*. Harvard University Press, 1976.

⁶⁷ “The significance of these schools can hardly be overestimated. In an age when almost everyone else was illiterate, in places where even aristocrats had difficulty in signing their own names, obligatory universal schooling for Jewish boys raised the Yiddish speakers’ cultural level far above that of their gentile counterparts. Even more so when, in later centuries, the syllabus was extended to include literacy in Yiddish...Other subjects too, like arithmetic, geography, and a grounding in the national language of their neighbours, crept in the curriculum.” P. Kriwaczek, *Yiddish Civilisation. The Rise and Fall of a Forgotten Nation*. London: Orion Books, 2005: 134.

⁶⁸ “The Lord had given Solomon wisdom, as he had promised him. There was peace between Hiram and Solomon and the two of them made a treaty.” I Kings, 5:26.

⁶⁹ Cited in *Etz Chaim Chumash*. The Jewish Publication Society, 1999: 499.

⁷⁰ Knowledge can also be used for evil. The most infamous use of “knowledge” and “technology” for evil in the history of mankind was that engineered by Nazi Germany. Its result was not “development,” but moral and material catastrophe: the holocaust, the Second World War and the loss to Germany and large parts of Europe of its Jewish community.

Therefore, the knowledge that is needed in the redemption/development process, both from a Jewish and from a development perspective, is secular as well as ethical/religious. Rav Soloveitchik in *The Lonely Man of Faith* stresses the importance of Adam the first working jointly with Adam the second. Adam the first, the man who develops the technical and material world in fulfilling the command of “filling the earth and subduing it,” needs to work hand-in-hand with Adam the second with his ethical and spiritual concerns. Man’s technical knowledge and intelligence need to be complemented and guided by “the specific human element –the moral agent.”⁷¹ Even more, the material development activities of Adam the first cannot stand alone and tend to unravel unless they are guided by ethical and spiritual concerns, as we learn from the *Migdal Bavel* and the Adam and Eve episodes.⁷² The Saadya Gaon also explicitly states that the objective of the improved knowledge and removal of errors sought by his book is ultimate justice and equity.⁷³

Knowledge disassociated from ethical and divine purpose, knowledge that defies or ignores G-d and humanity, cannot prosper. A field that has not received much attention but deserves it is the relationship between the morality of societies and their development. Basic ethical principles such as equity, absence of corruption and a modicum of social solidarity are not only essential moral principles, but also important components of the prosperity of a society –both directly (because they are intrinsic determinants of the wellbeing of individuals) and indirectly because they are correlated with economic prosperity and equitable political and social development.⁷⁴

According to the above argument, secular knowledge and its application cannot prosper and bear fruit in a society as development without a sound ethical grounding. Similarly, in the views of the Saadya Gaon, the Rambam and Rav Soloveitchik, religious knowledge needs secular knowledge to bear its best fruit. In their view, the best Torah knowledge can be achieved through the joint pursuit of secular and Torah study. In short, both secular and religious knowledge are relevant and necessary for both types of objectives (material and

⁷¹ J. Soloveitchik, *The Emergence of Ethical Man*. Newark, NJ: Ktav, 2005: 76.

⁷²In the words of Isaac Arama: “That generation, being united by one common language and sharing the same ideas become unanimously convinced that the aim of their existence was a political society. Their sin was not in trying to achieve this but in regarding it as an end in itself rather than as a means to a still greater end –spiritual wellbeing.”N. Leibowitz, *New Studies in Bereishit*, Maor Wallach Press, 96.

⁷³ “My intention is to place the subject matter throughout the book within the grasp of the reader...that his study may be made straightforward, and through it he may attain his object: Justice and Truth, even as the Faithful Servant said with regard to wisdom when placed within easy grasp, “Then thou shalt understand righteousness and justice, and equity, yea, every good path (Proverbs 2.9).” *Book of Doctrines and Beliefs*. “Prolegomena.”

⁷⁴ B. Friedman in *The Moral Consequences of Economic Growth*, argues that economic prosperity makes societies more moral (with causality running in the opposite direction from what is posited here). There is ample literature on the negative impact of corruption on economic growth. On the negative impact of corruption on poverty and income distribution, see R. Alonso, H. Davoodi and S. Gupta, “Does Corruption Affect Income Inequality and Poverty?” *Economics of Governance* (2003).

ethical/spiritual), which feed on each other in a dialectical fashion and both need to be aimed at the improvement of mankind and the greater knowledge of G-d.

In L. Hoffman's view, "All other blessings that we might offer –and indeed, all requests that we might voice –depend on our ability to know ourselves and G-d's world in the first place."⁷⁵ The same is true of knowledge/education in development --all other dimensions of development (health, economic activity and institutional development) depend on it.

Repentance—Bring us back, our Father, to Your Torah, and bring us near, our King, to Your service, and influence us to return in perfect repentance before You. Blessed are You, H-Shem, Who desires repentance.

The sequence from blessing 4 (knowledge) to blessings 5 and 6 (repentance and forgiveness) implies that the first implication of knowledge is increased awareness and the ensuing revelation that we sin and, therefore, that we need repentance and forgiveness. Repentance is a critical step toward redemption, but the former is in our hands while the second is in G-d's hands. Namely, redemption, unlike repentance, is understood to be an act of G-d. "In rabbinic Judaism, redemption is conceived of as an "earned response"---human beings *merit* redemption through their good deeds and through their "repentance."⁷⁶ Therefore, this paragraph introduces one of the key ethical/ spiritual steps needed as individuals and as societies to bring about the redemption/development process.

Although some commentators have viewed this as an individual blessing, it can also be seen as collective. In Judaism, there is a strong sense of communal ethical and even *halakhic* responsibility.⁷⁷ Jews are responsible for each other (*Kol Israel arevim ze vazeh*). We are responsible for the moral health of the community as an educational mechanism to develop empathy and social responsibility, but also because the morality of the community greatly affects that of its individual members. We are also collectively responsible because we are judged as one by the rest of the world –*Kiddush HaShem* as well as *Hillul HaShem* fall on the entire community. In Hoffman's words, "Jewish destiny is tied up, with all of us acting in concert, not just in the course of individual Jewish lives".⁷⁸ We also pray together for forgiveness as a community, most prominently during the days of Awe when we stand together for judgment in front of G-d. Thus, the Amidah, with its collective formulation of repentance,

⁷⁵ E. Dorff, in L. Hoffman, ed., *My People's Prayer Book. Traditional Prayers, Modern Commentaries*. Jewish Lights Publishing: Woodstock, Vermont, p.102.

⁷⁶ S. Katz, "Man, Sin and Redemption in Rabbinic Judaism." In *The Cambridge History of Judaism IV* (2006): 925-945: 942.

⁷⁷ "...the "I" is held responsible for the sin of his fellow, if it was in his power to rebuke him, to protest against his behavior and induce him to repent. A collective ethico-halakhic responsibility devolves upon the entire Jewish people." J. Soloveitchik, *Fate and Destiny*, 49.

⁷⁸ D. Landes, in L. Hoffman, ed. *My People's Prayer Book. Traditional Prayers, Modern Commentaries*, p. 124.

emphasizes that the Messiah will only come when the whole community is righteous and that we are all collectively responsible for bringing this change about.

There is also a communal or societal dimension to sin and repentance in development. All societies have collectively sinned. This blessing underscores the importance of communal repentance. The moral healing of a society and its health depends to a large extent on communal repentance, namely, on the extent to which it recognizes its communal --historical and contemporary-- sins. In secular terms, the progress of a country necessitates an underpinning state with a certain amount of societal cohesion and a sense of belonging by its (various groups of) citizens. This cohesion and loyalty can only be built upon justice, including the acknowledgment of collective sins. On the contrary, particularly divided societies with states which have failed to build loyalty by its various groups of citizens have historically been fragile and prone to disintegration.⁷⁹ From a spiritual perspective, the truly "wholesome" society of the Messianic era requires acknowledgment of a society's wrongdoings and "social repentance" so unity across groups can be built.

Forgiveness—Forgive us, our Father, for we have erred; pardon us, our King, for we have willfully sinned; for You pardon and forgive. Blessed are You, H-Shem, the gracious One Who pardons abundantly.

The counterpart of repentance is forgiveness. If we repent, we are forgiven and, just as G-d forgives, so are we required to. This blessing which, like its predecessor seems to be of a purely personal and spiritual nature, also has a socio-political dimension. In deeply divided societies and, in particular, in societies emerging from conflict, reconciliation --the societal dimension of forgiveness--is a key step toward the normalization of life. It is on these two building blocks, for example, that South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission was built, i.e., repentance and forgiveness. The World Bank includes "political and reconciliation processes" as one of the central dynamics to support and monitor in the economic and political reconstruction of post-conflict societies.⁸⁰ Similarly, the sequence of blessings from repentance to forgiveness points to the fact that the acknowledgement of societal sins needs to be followed by reconciliation. It is on the basis of reconciliation among groups that trust is built and trust, in turn, is at the basis of a well-functioning economy, society and political system.⁸¹

⁷⁹ In divided societies, economic policy and institution-building become biased toward certain (economically stronger and politically well-organized) social groups. Often, the disaffected groups eventually revolt (e.g., Latin American popular and/or populist revolutions) and sometimes even facilitate foreign invasion (e.g., Jews during the Muslim take-over of Spain trying to free themselves from the oppression of the Visigoths). The Spanish conquest of the Americas was also aided by popular disaffection under the Aztec and Inca Empires.

⁸⁰ See the World Bank's website on "Fragile and conflict-affected societies": <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/PROJECTS/STRATEGIES/EXTLICUS/0,,contentMDK:21415721~h1PK:3941952~menuPK:3937942~pagePK:64171531~piPK:64171507~theSitePK:511778,00.html>.

⁸¹ "...a nation's well-being, as well as its ability to compete, is conditioned by a single, pervasive cultural characteristic: the level of trust inherent in the society." F. Fukuyama, *Trust*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995: 7.

Geulah Redemption—Behold our affliction, take up our grievance, and redeem us speedily for Your Name’s sake, for You are a powerful Redeemer. Blessed are You, H-Shem, Redeemer of Israel.

This blessing occurs in the midst of those devoted to spiritual and material development, with the blessings for the ingathering of the exiles and the final redemption coming at the end of the Tefilah. Repentance followed by divine pardon renders us all worthy of redemption and what this collective redemption process consists of will be spelled out in the coming blessings. In L. Hoffman’s words, “The Jewish concept of redemption is corporate, not individual –all the world will be redeemed in a process that begins with the individual but culminates in a cosmic change of history, the details of which are spelled out in the next eight blessings.”⁸² Growth theory, democratization theory and democratic peace theory all provide evidence that there are spillovers or “neighborhood effects” from being in a rich (or growing), democratic, or peaceful region (the reverse being also true). Namely, a country surrounded by neighbors with fast economic growth is likely to grow faster, a country surrounded by democratic countries is more likely to become democratic and a country placed in a peaceful region is more likely to enjoy peace. Therefore, it is in a country’s interest to seek the development, democratization and peaceful orientation of its neighbors, as lasting economic development, democratization and peace are regional and, eventually, global.

Refuah, Healing—Heal us, H-Shem –then we will be healed; save us—then we will be saved, for You are our praise. Bring complete recovery for all our ailments, for You are G-d, King, the faithful and compassionate Healer. Blessed are You, H-Shem, Who heals the sick of His people Israel.

In this blessing, healing is meant in the physical, non-metaphorical sense. It is a blessing about health and healing. In the Jewish tradition, we have the duty to imitate G-d in trying to prevent, cure, or at least ameliorate disease and the medical profession has been honored since time immemorial.⁸³ Sound health is considered a basic need to be able to properly study Torah and serve G-d. Also, according to some commentators, “the first sign of redemption will be the absence of pain and illness.”⁸⁴

In the field of development, health is equally acknowledged as a key dimension of well-being and socio-economic development. Health is a necessary asset for children to be able to learn in school and for adults to be able to be productive. Many hours of work are lost in developing countries due to the poor health of workers and many die at the prime of their life. Therefore,

⁸² L. Hoffman in L. Hoffman, ed., *My People’s Prayer Book. Traditional Prayers, Modern Commentaries*. p. 113.

⁸³ Some of the foremost Jewish sages, like the Rambam and the Saadya Gaon, were medical doctors.

⁸⁴ L. Hoffman, in L. Hoffman, ed., *My People’s Prayer Book. Traditional Prayers, Modern Commentaries*. p. 117.

in addition to the direct impact of health on an individual's welfare, it also has implications for education and economic productivity. Health has an important communal or public dimension, as most obviously exemplified by communicable diseases. Therefore, like all the other blessings we have examined, it is not only relevant for the individual, but also for the community as a whole to strive for health.

Parnasah—Bless on our behalf –O H-Shem , our G-d—this year and all its kinds of crops for the best, and give (dew and rain for) a blessing on the face of the earth, and satisfy us from Your bounty, and bless our year like the best years. Blessed are You, H-Shem, Who blesses the years.

This blessing is, strictly speaking, a blessing for a good harvest. At the time of the composition of the *Amidah*, agriculture was by far the most important sector of the economy and it became a metonym for income. Throughout Jewish liturgy, whenever we pray for sustenance, we pray for a good harvest. The *Shema* and *Birkat HaMazon*, for instance, use agricultural produce as a shorthand for economic bounty.⁸⁵ Accordingly, this blessing has also traditionally been understood in the broader sense of a prayer for *parnasah* or an adequate livelihood.⁸⁶ In our days, we would be speaking about a good economic year.

Economic wellbeing is highlighted by both Judaism and development as perhaps the ultimate determinant of material welfare. In mainstream Judaism, a basic level of economic wellbeing is considered necessary to be able to focus on serving G-d –“if there is no flour there is no Torah.”⁸⁷ Similarly, the Rambam's description of the Messianic era features “all” as “earn(ing) a comfortable living in a legitimate way.”⁸⁸ Like in other blessings, we petition G-d to help us achieve a goal while setting the responsibility to work toward it before ourselves, individually and as a community. Individually, it is one of the duties of a father to teach his son a trade so as to provide him with the means of making a *parnasah*.⁸⁹ Communally, this blessing commands us to provide others with the ability to provide for themselves. “We are to help them find employment, arrange funding for them to establish businesses, provide them with loans or

⁸⁵ In particular, in the second paragraph of the *Shema*, in which agricultural bounty appears as the result of G-d's reward and G-d's punishment (Deuteronomy 11: 13-21), and in *Birkat HaMazon* where the first blessing for nourishment is followed by the second blessing for the land and the sustenance it provides.

⁸⁶ D. Landes in L. Hoffman, ed., *My People's Prayer Book. Traditional Prayers, Modern Commentaries*. Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing 1998: 120.

⁸⁷ “Pirkei Avot,” Chapter 3, *perek* 21. *Mishna*. In its dialectical way, the *Mishna* also reminds us that “if there is no Torah, there is no flour,” namely, that economic prosperity does not endure without Torah.

⁸⁸ M. Maimonides, *Mishne Torah*, Chapter XII, par.1.

⁸⁹ *Mishna Kiddushin*, 4, 14—cited by E. Chinitz in his commentary to this blessing in E. Chinitz, “My Problem with the *Amidah*.” In *Judaism*. New York, Summer 2006 (Vol. 55, Iss.1/2): p. 3.

gifts, and welcome them into partnerships in our own enterprises. Such activity is the highest form of righteousness."⁹⁰

Economic opportunity is key to the well-being of an individual and a society. Ability to economically provide for one-self –as an individual adult, as a family, and even as a community or a nation-- is an important component of one's sense of worth, achievement, and security. As a society, building an environment in which economic enterprise can prosper –what nowadays is called a "good investment climate"--, has proven critical to sustained investment and, even more importantly, to productivity growth.⁹¹ The result of such economic opportunity in a society already endowed with the assets we have already prayed for –education and health most prominently--, results in economic growth and, eventually, in a high level of economic development. In fact, the single most significant indicator of a country's level of development is income per capita, namely, *parnasah*.

Kibbutz Galuyot-- ingathering of the exiles—Sound the great shofar for our freedom, raise the banner to gather our exiles and gather us together from the four corners of the earth. Blessed are You, H-Shem, Who gathers in the dispersed of His people Israel.

The Amidah envisions the (full) ingathering of the exiles as taking place after significant progress has been made in the redemption/development process. It appears after the blessings for moral/spiritual improvement (repentance and forgiveness) and for material progress (knowledge, health and *parnasah*) and immediately preceding the blessings for justice (see below). The fact that the spiritual improvement of the community and its material progress precede the (full) ingathering of the exiles indicates that these conditions are necessary for the ingathering to be able to be completed in such a way as to build a community based on justice (the next blessings). "With healing accomplished for people and for land, this blessing addresses the hope for a return from exile, the pivotal next stage in the rabbinic drama of redemption."⁹²

Mishpat, Justice—Restore our judges as in earliest times and our counselors as at first; remove from us sorrow and groan; and reign over us –You, H-Shem, alone—

⁹⁰ Rambam, *Laws of Gifts to the Poor*, Mishne Torah 10:7. Cited by L. Hoffman, *My People's Prayer Book. Traditional Prayers, Modern Commentaries*. Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights Publishing 1998: p. 120.

⁹¹ For a summary of recent literature on the institutional underpinnings of economic growth, see *Building Institutions for Markets*. World Bank Development Report, 2002. For a more comprehensive survey of the determinants of economic growth, see E. Helpman, *The Mystery of Economic Growth*. Harvard University Press, 2004.

⁹² This vision is not contradictory with the view that the state of Israel constitutes "*reshit smichat geulateinu*." Namely, the establishment of the State can be seen as a step in a redemptive process that can only be finalized (with the completed ingathering of the exiles) once the moral/spiritual and material development described in the previous blessings has taken place.

with kindness and compassion, and justify us through judgment. Blessed are You, H-Shem, the King Who loves righteousness and judgment.

A just society is the culminating hallmark of the age of redemption. Having prayed for spiritual and material improvement and the ensuing end to exile, we turn to a petition for justice, a theme that will be elaborated in the coming blessings. The fact that the blessing for justice is the very first after the blessing for the return to Israel is significant. This structure parallels the one in the Torah when, right after we enter the land, we are exhorted to act justly. The second (and final) redemption is also inextricably linked to justice: "Zion shall be redeemed with justice and they that return to her with righteousness."⁹³ In L. Hoffman's words, "The blessing for justice is said to follow the blessing for the redemptive return to *Eretz* Israel because (as one commentator called *Etz Yosef* puts it) it is well known that we will be redeemed only on account of justice."⁹⁴

This sequence of blessings in the Amidah tells us that the Kingdom of G-d to be established after the (full) ingathering of the exiles will be based on the principles of justice and righteousness. Namely, the most important characteristic of the society that needs to be instituted in the land of Israel is justice. "Restore our judges" is a paraphrase of Isaiah's: "I will restore your judges as in days of old,"⁹⁵ an eschatological prophecy imagining a restored, properly functioning judicial system. In the Amidah, the restored "judges" refer to the leaders of Israel after Joshua and before the establishment of the monarchy, since it is a period which is viewed as the pre-messianic governance ideal.⁹⁶

The administration of justice is an essential societal function in the Torah as well as throughout Jewish history. One of the first leadership functions of Moses is administering justice and the first institution he creates, at Jethro's suggestion, is a justice system. Establishing courts of justice is such an important commandment that it applies to all human beings at all times. It is a positive command of the Torah to appoint a judiciary and a police force throughout Israel after the ingathering of the exiles.⁹⁷ The Halakhic system which has guided and supported the Jewish diaspora for the past two thousand years has at its core a legal system with

⁹³ Isaiah, 1:27. "(M. Buber) applied this exalted idea especially to the Jewish relationship to the Palestinian Arabs. In his lectures he warned against Jewish ethnocentrism, recalling the 'Golden Rule' of Rabbi Hillel the Elder: 'Do not do unto thy neighbor what is hateful to thee.'" K. Yaron, "Martin Buber." *Prospects: the quarterly review of comparative education* (Paris, UNESCO: International Bureau of Education), vol. XXIII, no. 1/2, 1993, p. 135-146.

⁹⁴ L. Hoffman, *My People's Prayer Book. Traditional Prayers, Modern Commentaries*, p. 129.

⁹⁵ Isaiah, 1:26.

⁹⁶ This is because the judges governed Israel much better than the kings that followed, the election of which also was seen as reflecting a rejection of G-d's kingship. M. Brettler in L. Hoffman, *My People's Prayer Book. Traditional Prayers, Modern Commentaries*, p. 127.

⁹⁷ M. Maimonides, "Laws of Sanhedrin": 1.1. Quoted by D. Landes in L. Hoffman, *My People's Prayer Book. Traditional Prayers, Modern Commentaries*: 129.

accompanying courts of justice. For non-Jews, the establishment of courts of justice is a Noahide law. The obligation to set up a judicial system is so central and wide-ranging in its application because it is considered to be an essential part of any morally and materially civilized society.

This blessing can be interpreted as a blessing for “good governance.” Indeed, the rule of law epitomized by a well-functioning judiciary is the basis of the sound institutional system which needs to underpin ultimate development. A point underscored by the order of the blessings in the Amidah (as well as by historical experience) is that a well-functioning judiciary (as well as other sound public institutions) cannot exist until the right material (education, health, income level/*parnassah*) and ethical basis (values regarding equity and corruption) has been created in a society.⁹⁸

In Mendelsohn’s terms, “As the agents of good temporal government are honest judges and moral teachers, so doubtless the collaborators of G-d’s reign are incorruptible administrators of justice and loyal conscientious teachers of religion—faithful leaders of men in the ways of G-d--and a prayer that G-d would reestablish them is the real purport of (this) benediction...that He would install civil and religious agents like those of former times.”⁹⁹ As in other blessings, the one at hand implies that both secular and religious justice systems are needed for the ultimate moral and material improvement of society and that both are inextricably intertwined.

Minim, Heretics--And for slanderers let there be no hope; and may all wickedness perish in an instant; and may all Your enemies be cut down speedily. May You speedily uproot, smash, cast down, and humble the wanton sinners –speedily in our days. Blessed are You, H-Shem, Who breaks enemies and humbles wanton sinners.

The blessing (or curse) of the *minim* continues the theme of its predecessor (justice) by considering the punishment that a just society will mete out in its attempt to eradicate evil. It can also be interpreted as a blessing for national religious preservation so the Jewish community can play its role in bringing about the ultimate redemption.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ There is also a dialectical relationship here, though, with good governance/sound institutions and low corruption contributing in turn to lower levels of poverty and income inequality. On the role of institutions in underpinning economic growth, see cited works by D. North and E. Helpman. On the impact of corruption on poverty and income inequality, see S. Gupta, H. Davoodi and R. Alonso-Terme, “Does Corruption Affect Income Inequality and Poverty?” *Economics of Governance*, 2003.

⁹⁹ S. Mendelsohn, “The Eleventh Benediction of the Shemoneh-Esreh.” *Jewish Journal of Lore and Philosophy*, Volume I July-October, Numbers 3 and 4: 363-364.

¹⁰⁰ Commentators pointed out that the concern of the rabbis was that, if the Jewish people disappeared (among Saducees or Christians), it would not be able to play its role in bringing about redemption. See also D. Instone-Brewer, “The Eighteen Benedictions and the Minim before 70.” *Journal of Theological Studies*, April 2003: 54:1: 25-44.

Tzaddikim—On the righteous, on the devout, on the elders of Your people the Family of Israel, on the remnant of their scholars, on the righteous converts and on ourselves –may Your compassion be aroused, H-Shem, our G-d, and give goodly reward to all who sincerely believe in Your Name. Put our lot with them forever, and we will not feel ashamed, for we trust in You. Blessed are You, H-Shem, Mainstay and Assurance of the righteous.

In the blessing for the *tzaddikim*, “the worshipper asks to ride the coattails of the righteous, as if G-d will exercise corporate judgment, rewarding all Jews according to the good deeds of the especially righteous, or, more literally, the opposite, punishing the righteous for the sins of society at large.”¹⁰¹ This blessing echoes the principle of mutual responsibility which we have expounded upon in previous sections. Although the principle has no direct parallel in the process of material development, it is reminiscent of the broader idea that a society eventually prospers or fails as one and, hence, that basic principles of equity and relative equality are important for sustainable development. Just like (barring Divine intervention), a (righteous) minority cannot save the rest, in a society an (educated, wealthy or uncorrupted) minority cannot pull along a(n) (uneducated, poor or corrupt) majority. In society, we are all responsible for each other morally and materially and the moral or material wellbeing of the few cannot redeem the poor moral or material predicament of the many.

Taken together, the blessing against the *minim* and the one for the *tzadikim* are blessings for the continuation of the Jewish people (not being lost to the *minim*) as good people (*tzadikkim*) who can help bring about the final redemption.

And to Jerusalem, Your city, may You return in compassion, and may You rest within it, as You have spoken. May You rebuild it soon in our days as an eternal structure, and may You speedily establish the throne of David within it. Blessed are you H-Shem, the Builder of Jerusalem.

The next three blessings --the rebuilding of Jerusalem, the coming of the Messiah, and the rebuilding of the Temple-- are the most escathological of the Amidah. They deal with the end of times and are the least clearly related to material development. With the process of material and spiritual improvement finalized, the exiles (fully) returned and a complete system of justice in place, we turn to the image of the end of times. These times are characterized by a Jerusalem rebuilt and the establishment of a model community devoted solely to G-d and G-d’s ways. According to the Amidah and to Judaism more broadly, these are the characteristics of the “life we have a reason to value,” the pursuit of which is the goal of the freedom awarded by the development process, in the view of economist Amartya Sen.

¹⁰¹ M. Brettler in L Hoffman, *My People’s Prayer Book. Traditional Prayers, Modern Commentaries*, 136.

Moschiah--The offspring of Your servant David may You speedily cause to flourish, and enhance his pride through Your salvation, for we hope for Your salvation all day long. Blessed are You, H-Shem, Who causes the pride of salvation to flourish.

Belief in the Messiah who will spring from the house of David is one of the thirteen principles of faith by which Maimonides defines a Jew. There have historically been widely diverging interpretations of the role of the Messiah, in particular regarding whether the Messiah is to come at a time of particular distress and redeem the world or whether he is to come at a time when the world has already been perfected by humanity and bring it to its final redemption.¹⁰² The Amidah's theology is clear—the Messiah is the final step in the redemption process, not its beginning.¹⁰³ The blessing for the Messiah only comes after the process of material and spiritual redemption has been finalized, the exiles have been ingathered and a system of justice has been established. He comes to reign over the perfect society of peace and universal harmony which has already been established by humanity.

According to the *Iyun Tefillah*, the fact that the coming of the Messiah is compared to the sprouting or flourishing of a plant "indicates that the normal process of redemption is like the barely noticeable daily growth of a plant."¹⁰⁴ This is a beautiful metaphor that is strongly reminiscent of the development process –just like the ethical and spiritual redemption of the world is the result of small improvements on a daily basis, so is its material development. For centuries, the long-term basis of development is slowly established –through the building up of education, health, economic opportunity, public institutions – and it is only at the end of the process that all its dimensions become ripe and visible.¹⁰⁵

Hear our voice, H-Shem our G-d, pity and be compassionate to us, and accept –with compassion and favor—our prayer, for G-d Who hears prayers and supplications are

¹⁰² For an exposition of the various views of the Messiah in Judaism, see B. Freundel, *Contemporary Orthodox Judaism's Response to Modernity*. Chapter 10: "The Messiah." Ktav Publishing: Jersey City, New Jersey, 2004: pp. 98-109.

¹⁰³ "It is clear that the appearance of the Messiah marks the culmination of the process, not its initiation." R. Kimelman. "The Messiah of the Amidah: A Study in Comparative Messianism. Critical Notes." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 116/2 (1997): 317.

¹⁰⁴ *Iyun Tefillah*. Quoted in *The Complete Artscroll Siddur*, p. 108.

¹⁰⁵ Africa is a good example of the fact that progress, especially in the earlier stages of the development process can be hard to perceive. Common wisdom has it that the African continent has not advanced much in the development process over the past half century. When one looks deeper and compares literacy, health and institutional development indicators over the past fifty years, however, one finds a very different story. Literacy (which was close to zero in 1960 now stands at over 60 percent), life expectancy and child mortality have improved dramatically (despite the recent setback due to the AIDS epidemic) and a continent that was previously ruled by and for foreign powers has established and is slowly strengthening its own government institutions. The democratic rating of African countries, starting from a low basis, has also improved significantly over the last two decades (See *Freedom House Indicators* at <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=15>). Though governance problems are still rife, so have they been everywhere, improving slowly and in a non-linear fashion, over centuries.

You. From before Yourself, our King, turn us not away empty-handed, for you hear the prayer of Your people Israel with compassion. Blessed are You, H-Shem, Who hears prayer.

Be favorable, H-Shem, our G-d, toward Your people Israel and their prayer and restore the service to the Holy of Holies of Your Temple. The fire-offerings of Israel and their prayer accept with love and favor, and may the service of Your people Israel always be favorable to You. May our eyes behold Your return to Zion in compassion. Blessed are You, H-Shem, Who restores His presence to Zion.

The last of the middle blessings looks back upon all the others, seeing them as a single extended prayer for human deliverance, beginning with knowledge and repentance, and ending with the just social order that we call messianic. Our theme here is the petition that G-d will hear our prayer and will answer us. This blessing reminds us “that we too must hear the cry of others if we are to emulate G-d.”¹⁰⁶ Here we find again the dialectical relationship between material and spiritual improvement –just as we wish G-d to listen to our prayer and not turn us away empty-handed, we need to hear and respond to others. This is both a moral responsibility as well as a material necessity in a well-functioning society characterized by social cohesion, openness and empathy. The central characteristic of this listening and its response is compassion (*rachamim* is mentioned three times in this blessing), a compassion that needs to permeate both individual and collective ethics, which are seen as inseparable and mutually reinforcing.

This is the only part of the Amidah where we are asked to recite an individual prayer. The location of this personal prayer is significant –we first need to focus on our collective effort as a community and only afterwards can we turn to our specific individual needs.¹⁰⁷ That the collective fulfillment needs to include each and every individual, however, is equally underscored by having this personal prayer precede the final blessing for the ultimate collective prayer –the one of the redeemed community at the rebuilt Temple.

Modim--We gratefully thank You, for it is You Who are H-Shem, our G-d and the G-d of our forefathers for all eternity; Rock of our lives, Shield of our salvation are You from generation to generation. We shall thank You and relate Your praise –for our lives, which are committed to Your power and for our souls that are entrusted to You; for Your miracles that are with us every day; and for Your wonders and favors in every season –evening, morning and afternoon. The Beneficent One, for Your compassions were never exhausted, and the Compassionate One, for Your kindnesses never ended –always have we put our hope in You. For all these, may

¹⁰⁶ D. Landes in L. Hoffman, *My People's Prayer Book. Traditional Prayers, Modern Commentaries*: 147.

¹⁰⁷ “What Judaism requires is the communization of the individual existence. This is achieved by directing the self-centered emotional life toward the outside, or, if we wish to state it differently, by letting others from the outside enter our inner life.” J. Soloveitchik, *Out of the Whirlwind*, 203.

Your Name be blessed and exalted, our King, continually forever and ever. Everything alive will gratefully acknowledge you, Selah! And praise Your Name sincerely, of G-d of our salvation and help, Selah! Blessed are You, H-Shem, Your Name is "The Beneficent One" and to You it is fitting to give thanks.

In this blessing, we acknowledge that everything comes from G-d and thank Him for all the goodness we enjoy each day. Even as societies become more and more developed and individuals increasingly materially affluent, we should not forget the ultimate goal of our material wellbeing and our technical prowess and its original and ultimate source: G-d. Societies which become very affluent have often tended to decline, both morally and, eventually, materially, as self-satisfaction and laxness set in. The Amidah warns us against this disease.

This blessing ties in with the blessing on the holiness of G-d, which immediately precedes the petitionary section of Tefillah. In both cases, we acknowledge that everything comes from G-d. Hence, before and after we describe our joint task in perfecting the world between G-d and humanity (the intermediary blessings), we acknowledge that G-d is the ultimate arbiter.

Priestly Blessing—Our G-d and the G-d of our forefathers, bless us with the three-verse blessing in the Torah that was written by the hand of Moses, Your servant, that was said by Aaron and his sons, the Kohanim, Your holy people, as it is said: May H-Shem bless you and safeguard you; May H-Shem illuminate His countenance for you and be gracious to you; May H-Shem turn His countenance to you and establish peace for you.

The priestly blessing comes just before the final blessing for peace and summarizes the requests and tasks set out in the intermediary blessings. A *midrash* interprets its three components as a logical progression: "bless you" means with mundane benefits: our physical possessions (*parnassah*). "Keep you" refers to our person—security from physical harm from without, moral harm from within, or domination by others (sovereignty or political freedom). It also refers to keeping us within covenantal faithfulness beyond our own earthy life, into messianic days, the eternal life of the soul, and the world-to-come. These summary blessings also encapsulate the development experience, since material wellbeing, physical security and political autonomy is what nations ultimately aspire to. As this stage is reached, the ground has been set for the final blessing for peace.

Peace—Establish peace, goodness, blessing, graciousness, kindness, and compassion, upon us and upon all of Your people Israel. Bless us, our Father, all of us as one, with the light of Your countenance, for with the light of Your countenance You gave us, H-Shem our G-d, the Torah of life and a love of kindness, righteousness, blessing, compassion, life, and peace. And may it be good in Your eyes to bless Your people Israel, in every season and in every hour with Your peace. Blessed are You, H-Shem, Who blesses His people Israel with peace.

The very last blessing of the *Tefilah* is the blessing for peace. In this blessing, which is the culmination of the whole prayer, we ask for "grace, righteousness, blessing, mercy, life and

peace.” Thus, we do not only ask for lack of conflict, but also for a summary of what we have prayed for previously in the intermediary blessings. In short, we request the peace we need to experience fully all the other blessings. Therefore, this blessing is for peace as “*shalom*” or wholeness, unity, the essence of redemption. It is the conclusion of everything else, which is why it comes at the end as its summing up: “When G-d sought to bless his people, he found no vessel which would contain all the blessings with which to bless them except peace”¹⁰⁸

This is the characteristic which will pervade the Messianic era –peace—a peace which will allow individuals and society as a whole to devote themselves to the service of G-d. As the order of the prayer underscores, this ultimate stage of redemption can only be achieved after society has moved through its previous stages of progressively improving society’s material and ethical/spiritual wellbeing.

As pointed out before, peace is also the last stage in the development process which can only be achieved at a global level once material development and democratization have taken place. Therefore, also in the secular development realm, peace is not only absence of conflict, but rather the culmination of the material development process. It can only occur on the basis of education, health, economic opportunity, sound institutions and a strong ethical basis.

The Amidah stresses that peace is wholeness, both materially and spiritually. It is the definition of Amartya Sen’s ultimate development—a situation in which all individuals are free to lead a life they have a reason to value. From a Torah perspective, this life is best described by Maimonides as one in which “Israel (will) be free to devote itself to the Law and its wisdom, with no one to oppress or disturb it...(and)The one preoccupation of the whole world will be to know the Lord.”¹⁰⁹ These two visions are not only consistent, but mutually reinforcing.

¹⁰⁸ *Berachot*, 2.4, 5.a. Cited in R. Kimelman, “The Daily Amidah and the Rhetoric of Redemption.” *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, LXXIX: p. 192.

¹⁰⁹ Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*, “The Book of Judges,” Chapter XII, sections 4 and 5, p. 242.

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