



# MODEH ANI- BEING THANKFUL

מודה אני לפניך מלך חי וקיים שהחזרת בי נשמתי בחמלה רבה אמונתך

I am thankful before you, living and eternal King, for You have mercifully restored my soul within me; Your faithfulness is great.

*This short prayer that we say every morning has much depth. In this session we will look at 3 aspects of Modeh Ani and see how they connect.*

## FIRST IMPRESSIONS COUNT



The first word we say in the morning is *Modeh Ani* - literally translated as "Thankful am I"

The prayer is a statement that "I" (ani) give thanks to God. Modeh is actually a variant of the word Hodah, Hodah does mean to thank, but it also has a deeper meaning. It can also mean to admit, to acknowledge and to confess. Before we can give thanks we need to acknowledge in ourselves that we ought to give thanks.

❖ WHY DO YOU THINK THANKYOU IS THE VERY FIRST WORD WE SAY?

Pronounced	Hebrew	Meaning	Significance
Modeh	מודה	Admit, acknowledge, thank	First word we say upon waking
Hodu	הודו	Praise (imp. plural)	First word of communal tefillah
Today	תודה	Thank you	First song of "Songs of Praise"
Yehudah	יהודה	Judah	Son of Jacob from whom most Jews are descended
Yehudi	יהודי	Jew	Who we are
Hoda'ah	הודאה	Praise, thanks	First stage of tefillah
Vadai	ודאי	Certainty	
Vidui	וידוי	Confession	Recited after tefillah

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## THE MAGIC WORD

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תלמוד בבלי מסכת ברכות דף ז עמוד ב

מיום שברא הקדוש ברוך הוא את עולמו לא היה אדם שהודה להקדוש ברוך הוא עד שבאתה לאה והודתו, שנאמר דהפעם אודה את ה'.



The Gemara (Berachos 7b) relates that from the day Hashem created the world, no one thanked Him until Leah thanked Him for the birth of her fourth son Yehudah

Leah, married to Yaakov, was one of the mothers of the Jewish people. The name Yehuda shares the same root in Hebrew as the word *todah*, meaning "thank you."

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BUT WHAT DOES THE TALMUD MEAN WHEN IT SAYS THAT LEAH WAS THE FIRST PERSON TO EVER **REALLY** THANK GOD?

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Leah was a prophetess who knew that the Jewish nation was destined to descend from the 12 sons of Jacob, her husband. Each tribe would be a foundation stone that would shape our history. Yaakov's sons would come from four women: Leah, Rachel, Bilha, and Zilpah. Leah expected that each woman would have 3 sons.

Judah was Leah's fourth son. She recognized that he was one more than her share. Her thankfulness for Yehudah was deeper and more heartfelt because he was unexpected. He was a gift.

This is how we are supposed to view *everything* in life. Every ray of sunshine, every child, every breath -- they are all gifts from God.

The mistake of thinking anything is owed to us blocks us from gratitude.

People sometimes don't appreciate sight until they meet someone who is blind. We shouldn't wait until we are sick to appreciate our health. We should count our blessings

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## RENEWAL – RETURNED SOUL

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### Had a bad day?

Ever had one of those days? You wake up in the morning, you're late, you jump out of bed, stub your toe, have to wait for your sister to finish her longest ever bathroom routine. You finally get to the bathroom, no hot water! You rush into the kitchen to grab coffee before you head out- no milk! Seriously? You're late for school- you're in trouble with your homeroom teacher. The day is awful and its only 9am!

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❖ WHAT'S THE SOLUTION?

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We are taught by the sages that during our sleep our soul departs from our bodies, we rest in a state that is close to death. The Talmud tells us this state of sleep we experience is so deep it is 1/60th of death (*Talmud Bavli Brachot 59b*). During our bedtime prayers one entrusts their soul to G-d, that He keep it and then return it to us in the morning so that we awaken. During that time it is entrusted to God our soul communes with Him. As we sleep our souls are able to recharge and rejuvenate (*Kitzur 1:2*), it returns to the Source of life from which it came and when we awaken it returns.



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❖ ACCORDING TO THE ABOVE, WHY DO WE FEEL BETTER IN THE MORNING?

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## RABBA EMUNATECHA

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What does “*Rabbah emunatekha*” mean, and what does it have to do with waking up each morning? It seems to be a superfluous addition to *Modeh Ani*’s central theme of gratitude.

❖ ADVANCED QUESTION

Moreover, because “*emunah*” is typically translated as “faith in”, or “reliance upon”, the simple understanding of “*Rabbah emunatekha*” presents a theological difficulty, as it implies that God has faith in something or someone else. Further, “*Rabbah emunatekha*,” cannot mean “I have great faith in You,” as the appropriate grammatical form for such a declaration would have been “*Rabbah emunati*” — “Great is my faith.”





The *Sifrei* says: "אל אמונה- "שהאמין בעולם"”  
“A God of faith”- that He believes in the world.”

Hashem trusts in the world and each individual therein, believing that they will eventually fulfill their potential. He believes in the value of every person and deems it worthwhile to invest them with life.

Hashem has faith in us!

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## CONCLUSIONS

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- ❖ **MODEH ANI**- The first word we say as Jews in the morning is thank you- this is the essence of a Jew- a Yehudi- we come from Yehuda which means Hodaa- to thank.
- ❖ **RETURNED SOUL**- we thank God for returning our soul to us. We thank Him for giving us an opportunity to feel renewal and a chance to start over.
- ❖ **RABBA EMUNATECHA**- We are thanking God for having enough trust in us and faith in us to give us a renewed opportunity each day.