

SIDDUR LESSON 1

Modeh Ani

מודה אני

Sunday, October 25, 2026

14 Cheshvan 5787 ♦ י"ד חשוון תשפ"ז

Siddur Tehillat Hashem (Nusach Ari Zal) · Upon awakening

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Sources: Siddur Tehillat Hashem · Shulchan Aruch HaRav · Kitzur Shulchan Aruch · Hayom Yom · Midrash · Chabad.org

Each lesson in this series takes one passage of the Siddur Tehillat Hashem (Nusach Ari Zal) and reads it slowly. First, where the prayer comes from and what it means in Chassidus; then the text itself, word by word, in large letters, with every word taken apart into its prefix, its root and its ending.

We begin where the Jewish day begins: with **Modeh Ani**, twelve words said the moment we open our eyes.

1 Origin and Inner Meaning

מקור ופנימיות



Where Modeh Ani comes from

The source the Alter Rebbe gives for Modeh Ani is the sefer *Seder HaYom*. He brought it into the very first chapter of his Shulchan Aruch (begun in about 5531, 1771, at the request of the Maggid of Mezritch), in both editions (Mahadura Kama 1:5 and Mahadura Basra 1:6), with the exact wording of our Siddur:

טוב לומר מיד כשיעור משנתו: מודה אני לפניך מלך חי וקים, שהחזרת בי נשמת בך מלה, רבה
אמונתך

"Immediately upon waking it is proper to say Modeh Ani...: 'I offer thanks to You, living and eternal King, for You have mercifully restored my soul within me; great is Your faithfulness.'"

SOURCE Shulchan Aruch HaRav, Orach Chayim 1:5 (Mahadura Kama) · tr. Touger & Kaploun; Hebrew source note: Seder HaYom, and so in Mahadura Basra 1:6; translators' note 1 on the date · chabad.org/.../aid/3268140

Why it may be said before washing

The Alter Rebbe continues: one need not wash the hands first, even if they are unclean, "because there is no sanctity in its words, since they do not include any of the Divine names... that may not be erased." The translators add that the Rebbe explains the positive side in *Kuntreis Inyanah shel Toras HaChassidus*: Modeh Ani "emanates from a point in a Jew's soul that cannot be affected by ritual impurity." Hayom Yom says the same in its own words:

"[A Jew's] day begins with Modeh Ani. This is recited before washing negel-vasser, even though one's hands are [still] impure, for there is no impurity in the world that can taint a Jew's Modeh Ani, [his grateful acknowledgment of G-d]. He may lack this or that [element in his Divine service], but his Modeh Ani remains intact."

SOURCE Shulchan Aruch HaRav, Orach Chayim 1:5 (Mahadura Kama) · with translators' note 14 (Touger & Kaploun) · chabad.org/.../aid/3268140

Hayom Yom, 11 Shevat (from Sefer HaSichos 5703, p. 7) · tr. Hayom Yom: Tackling Life's Tasks (Sichos in English); also Kehot tr. Y. M. Kagan · chabad.org/.../aid/3315388

Why Hashem's Name is not in Modeh Ani

The commentary printed with this translation of Hayom Yom ("Probing Beneath the Surface") adds, citing the Rebbe's *Kuntreis Inyanah shel Toras HaChassidus* (p. 46, n. 78): a name delimits and defines. That is why no Divine Name appears in Modeh Ani: the prayer relates to a level of G-dliness that is beyond any definition. It is the essence of a Jew connecting to the Essence of G-d.

SOURCE Hayom Yom, 11 Shevat, "Probing Beneath the Surface", n. 3 · citing Kuntreis Inyanah shel Toras HaChassidus (On the Essence of Chassidus), p. 46, n. 78 · chabad.org/.../aid/3315388



Why we wake up at all

The opening law of the Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch gives Modeh Ani its purpose. One should rise like a lion "for the service of his Creator, blessed be He, because for this he was created, and for this purpose He returns his soul to him." And: "He should consider in his heart before Whom he is lying." The soul that Modeh Ani thanks Hashem for is returned for a reason: to serve Him today.

SOURCE Shulchan Aruch HaRav, Orach Chayim 1:1 (Mahadura Kama) · tr. R. Eliyahu Touger & Uri Kaploun (Sichos in English) · chabad.org/.../aid/3268140



“New every morning”

Modeh Ani ends with words from Eichah 3:23: “They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness.” The Kitzur Shulchan Aruch explains the gratitude: the soul is returned to us refreshed and rejuvenated. A Midrash on this verse, brought in *Shaar HaKolel*, says it in a parable:

“Rav Alexandri said, ‘The way things generally work in this world, a person stores new goods with his fellow and retrieves them old. But that’s not the way G-d deals with us. He returns our bodies to us new and rested, as it says, ‘they are new every morning.’”

SOURCE Eichah (Lamentations) 3:23 · Hebrew text via Sefaria · sefaria.org/Lamentations.3.23

Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 1:2; Ketzos HaShulchan 1:6 · as summarized in “The Laws Upon Awakening in the Morning” (Chabad.org) · chabad.org/.../aid/260663

Midrash Rabbah, Eichah 3:23, as cited in Shaar HaKolel · quoted in Tzvi Freeman, “Modeh Ani — Step by step” (Chabad.org), who notes it is not the standard printed version · chabad.org/.../aid/1466224

How it is said (Chabad custom)

- Right on waking, while still in bed, before washing the hands (Shulchan Aruch HaRav 1:5).
- The Rebbe Rayatz directed that when saying it, “one should place one hand against the other and lower the head” (Sefer HaMaamarim 5710, p. 244; Sefer HaMinhagim, p. 3, as cited by the translators).
- Make a short pause between בְּחַסְדֶּךָ and רַבָּה, so that the sentence reads “...with compassion. Great is Your faithfulness” (Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 1:2).

For any practical question, ask your rav.

SOURCE Shulchan Aruch HaRav, Orach Chayim 1:5 (Mahadura Kama) · translators’ note 13 (Touger & Kaploun) ·

chabad.org/.../aid/3268140

Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 1:2; Ketzos HaShulchan 1:6 · as summarized in “The Laws Upon Awakening in the Morning” (Chabad.org) ·

chabad.org/.../aid/260663

2 The Text

הַנְּטָח



Exactly as printed in the Siddur Tehillat Hashem, with full nikud; then line by line in the Chabad (Ashkenazi) pronunciation.

Modeh Ani — on waking

Said immediately on waking, while still in bed, before washing the hands.

מוֹדָה אָנִי לְפָנֶיךָ מֶלֶךְ חַי וְקַיִם, שֶׁהַחַיָּוִת בִּי נִשְׁמָתִי
בְּחֶמְלָה, רַבָּה אֱמוּנוֹסֶעֱחוּ.

Modeh ani l'fonecho, melech chai v'kayom, shebechezarto bi nishmosi b'chemlo, rabo emunosecho.

Women and girls say: ... מוֹדָה אָנִי לְפָנֶיךָ מֶלֶךְ חַי וְקַיִם (Modoh ani l'fonecho...)

Only the first word changes: מוֹדָה is a participle and agrees with the speaker (masculine modeh, feminine modoh). The rest is identical.

SOURCE Siddur Tehillat Hashem (Nusach Ari Zal), morning, upon awakening · text as on Chabad.org, “To Be Said Upon Awakening” · chabad.org/.../aid/283764

Hayom Yom, 11 Shevat (Kehot tr. Y. M. Kagan) · names “Siddur Tehilat HaShem p. 6” · chabad.org/.../aid/6061

Modeh Ani

HEBREW	TRANSLITERATION	MEANING
מוֹדָה אָנִי לְפָנֶיךָ	<i>Modeh ani l'fonecho</i>	I acknowledge and thank You (lit. “before You”),
מֶלֶךְ חַי וְקַיִם	<i>melech chai v'kayom,</i>	living and enduring King,
שֶׁהַחַיָּוִת בִּי נִשְׁמָתִי	<i>shebechezarto bi nishmosi</i>	for You have returned my soul within me
בְּחֶמְלָה	<i>b'chemlo,</i>	with compassion;
רַבָּה אֱמוּנוֹסֶעֱחוּ	<i>rabo emunosecho.</i>	great is Your faithfulness.

The closing words come from Eichah 3:23, חֲדָשִׁים לְבָקָרִים רַבָּה אֱמוּנוֹתְךָ, “They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness” (see part 1).

SOURCE Eichah (Lamentations) 3:23 · Hebrew text via Sefaria · sefaria.org/Lamentations.3.23

3 Word by Word

מלה במלה



Each word is written as a sum, read from right to left: prefix + stem + ending = the word in the Siddur. Root letters are in bold burgundy.

Color key: prefix / preposition root letters (shoresh) suffix / ending

blue, dashed box = prefix · bold burgundy = root · green, dotted box = suffix; each vowel takes its letter's color

מודה

=

ודה

+

מ

modeh

root וד"ה; the root's first letter shows א

m-: marks the present (participle) of the *bif'il*

I acknowledge, I thank

Root: וד"ה · In the *bif'il*, verbs whose root begins with ו turn that letter into ו (compare הודה, "he thanked"). The participle prefix מ makes it "acknowledging, thanking". A woman says מודה, with the feminine ending הָ.

→ see §G1 (p. 7), §G2 (p. 8), §G7 (p. 11), §G8 (p. 11)

אני

=

אני

ani
I

independent pronoun "I" (no root to split)

A pronoun is not built from a root, so it stays whole. It comes *after* מודה: first the thanks, then the "I". → see §G4 (p. 9)

לפניך

=

יך

+

פנים

+

ל

l'fonecho
before You

your (m.), on a plural noun

panim, face (root פנ"ה)

to, toward

Root: פנ"ה · "To your face" is how Hebrew says "before You". When the ending is added, פנים drops its ים and the פ loses its dagesh, giving לפניך. → see §G3 (p. 8), §G4 (p. 9), §G5 (p. 9)

מלך

=

מלך

melech
King

all three letters are the root

Root: מלך · No prefix and no ending: the bare root with two *segol* vowels (a "segolate" noun). It describes the One we address: "You, King". → see §G5 (p. 9)

חי =

חי

chai
living

root חַיִּיה; the final ה falls away

Root: חַיִּיה · A short adjective from the root of חַיִּים, “life”. → see §G2 (p. 8), §G6 (p. 10)

וְקַיָּם =

קַיָּם

+

וְ

v'kayom
and enduring*kayam*, lasting (root קָיָם; the ו shows as a doubled י)

and

Root: קָיָם · Same root as קוֹם, “stand up”: what is קַיָּם stands firm forever. The dot (dagesh) in the י doubles it.
→ see §G3 (p. 8), §G2 (p. 8), §G6 (p. 10)

שָׁחַזְתָּ =

תָּ

+

חָזַר

+

הִ

+

שֶׁ

shebechezartō
for You have returned

you (m.) did

root חָזַר, return

hif'il prefix: “cause to”

that, for

Root: חָזַר · חָזַר means “to come back”; with the *hif'il* ה it becomes “to bring back”. The ending תָּ says “You did it”, and the opening שֶׁ links it to what came before: “for You brought back”. → see §G3 (p. 8), §G7 (p. 11), §G8 (p. 11)

בִּי =

יְ

+

בְּ

bi
in me

me

in

A preposition with a personal ending makes one short word, “in me”. The *sheva* becomes a *chirik* before the ending.
→ see §G3 (p. 8), §G4 (p. 9)

נִשְׁמָתִי =

יְ

+

נִשְׁמָה

nishmosi
my soul

my

neshamah, soul (root נִשְׁם)**Root:** נִשְׁם · Before an ending, the feminine ה turns into ת and the vowels shift, giving נִשְׁמָתִי. Same root as נְשִׁימָה, “breath”.
→ see §G4 (p. 9), §G5 (p. 9)

בְּחֶמְלָה =

הָ

+

חֶמֶל

+

בְּ

b'chemlo
with compassion

feminine noun ending

root חָמַל, pity

with

Root: חָמַל · חֶמֶל is compassion that spares. The Kitzur Shulchan Aruch asks for a short pause after this word, before רַבָּה.
→ see §G3 (p. 8), §G5 (p. 9)

$$\text{רַבָּה} = \boxed{\text{הָ}} + \boxed{\text{רַבֿ}}$$

rabo feminine: agrees with אֲמוּנָה *rav*, great (root ר־ב־ב)

great (is)

Root: ר־ב־ב · The two ב of the root merge into one ב with a dagesh. Hebrew needs no “is” here: “great — Your faithfulness”.
→ see §G2 (p. 8), §G6 (p. 10)

$$\text{אֲמוּנוֹתְךָ} = \boxed{\text{ךָ}} + \boxed{\text{אֲמוּנָה}}$$

emunosecho your (m.) *emunah*, faithfulness (root א־מ־ן)

Your faithfulness

Root: א־מ־ן · Again the ה becomes ת before the ending. Same root as אָמֵן, the “Amen” we answer to every bracha.
→ see §G4 (p. 9), §G5 (p. 9)

4 Grammar: the Concepts of This Lesson

ד קריק

Each concept is explained here in full, once, under a fixed number (§G1, §G2...). Later lessons will only refer back to it, for example “see Lesson 1 §G3”.

§G1 GRAMMAR CONCEPT The root and the three-part word

Most Hebrew words are built on a **root** (*shoresh*): usually three consonants that carry one basic idea. The root ח־ז־ר carries the idea of “returning”; the root נ־ש־ם the idea of “breath”. Around the root, Hebrew adds vowels and a few extra letters to make one particular word: a noun, an adjective, or a verb in a given tense and person.

So every word can be read as a small sum: **prefix + stem + ending**. The *prefix* is a letter or two in front (“and”, “in”, “that”). The *stem* is the root dressed in a vowel pattern. The *ending* tells “my”, “your”, “you did”, feminine or plural. In the word-by-word pages each word is written this way, with the root letters in bold burgundy.

Finding the root is the key skill of this course. Set aside what you recognize as prefix and ending, then set aside the vowels: the three letters left are usually the root. One root, once learned, opens a whole family: מוֹדֶה (I thank), מוֹדִים (we thank) and תוֹדָה (thanks) all come from י־ד־ה. When three letters cannot be found, a root letter is hiding (§G2).



שֶׁבַחְךָ	<i>shebechezarto</i>	for You returned	root ח־ז־ר · two prefixes, one ending
נִשְׁמָתִי	<i>nishmosi</i>	my soul	root נ־ש־ם · ending “my”
מוֹדֶה	<i>modeh</i>	I thank	root י־ד־ה
תוֹדָה	<i>todo</i>	thanks	same root: a noun

§G2 GRAMMAR CONCEPT Hidden root letters

Some root letters are “weak”: **yud, vav and hei** (and a root whose last two letters are the same) do not always appear as themselves. When a root letter seems to be missing, it has usually changed shape or merged with its neighbour.

Modeh Ani shows four cases:

- **A first yud becomes a vav.** The root of מוֹדֶה is י־ד־ה; in this verb pattern the yud shows as ו (compare הוֹדֶה, “he thanked”).
- **A final hei drops.** The adjective חַי, “living”, comes from חַיִּיה; the hei has fallen away.
- **A middle vav becomes a doubled yud.** The adjective קַיִם, “enduring”, comes from קַיִרִם, the root of קוּם, “stand up”.
- **Two identical letters merge.** The adjective רַבָּה, “great”, comes from רַב־ב־ב; the two bets are written once.

Watch for the **dagesh**, the dot inside a letter. Inside a letter that follows a vowel it usually means the letter is doubled, that is, that something has merged into it: the ב of רַבָּה, the י of קַיִם. When you cannot find three root letters, look for a vav or yud standing in for a root letter, a missing final hei, or a dagesh.

מוֹדֶה	<i>modeh</i>	I thank	root י־ד־ה: yud shows as vav
חַי	<i>chai</i>	living	root חַיִּיה: final hei drops
קַיִם	<i>kayom</i>	enduring	root קַיִרִם: vav becomes a doubled yud
רַבָּה	<i>rabo</i>	great	root רַב־ב־ב: two bets merge

§G3 GRAMMAR CONCEPT One-letter prefixes

Hebrew writes several of its most common little words as a single letter joined to the front of the next word. Modeh Ani has four of them, and you will meet them on almost every line of the Siddur: וְ “and”, בְּ “in, with”, לְ “to, toward”, שֶׁ “that, who, for”. A fifth, מִ “from”, appears in מִלְפָּנֶיךָ “from before You”.



1. **They are never written alone.** בְּחַמְלָה is one word: the prefix *be-*, “with”, joined to חַמְלָה, “compassion”.
2. **Their usual vowel is a sheva**, and it changes for ease of speech. Before another sheva it becomes a chirik: *le-* joined to שְׁמוֹ gives לְשְׁמוֹ, “for His Name”. The *ve-* “and” becomes וְ before the letters bet, mem and pei, or before a sheva: וּבְכָל, “and with all” (the Shema).
3. **ה and ש usually double the next letter** with a dagesh: מִלְפָּנֶיךָ (Hei, alef, ches, ayin and reish cannot take a dagesh, which is why the hei of שְׁהִיְיָ has none.)
4. **They stack, in a fixed order:** *ve-* “and” or *she-* “that” comes first, then *be-*, *le-* or *mi-*. In מִלְפָּנֶיךָ two prefixes sit together: *mi-* “from” on *le-* “to”.
5. **With a personal ending they become a whole little word:** בִּי “in me”, לִי “to me”, לָךְ “to you” (§G4).

The word אֲשֶׁר, “who, which”, does the same job as *she-* written in full (Lesson 2).

וְקַיִם	<i>v'kayom</i>	and enduring	<i>ve-</i> "and"
בְּחֶמְלָה	<i>b'chemlo</i>	with compassion	<i>be-</i> "with"
לְפָנֶיךָ	<i>l'fonecho</i>	before You	<i>le-</i> "to"
שָׁחֲזָרְתָּ	<i>shebechezarto</i>	for You returned	<i>sbe-</i> "that, for"
מִלְפָּנֶיךָ	<i>mil'fonecho</i>	from before You	<i>mi-</i> + <i>le-</i> , stacked; dagesh after <i>mi-</i>
וּבְכָל	<i>uv'chol</i>	and with all	<i>ve-</i> becomes <i>u-</i> before a sheva

§G4 GRAMMAR CONCEPT Pronouns: standalone and attached

Hebrew says "I, you, my, your" in two ways. The **independent pronoun** is a word of its own: אֲנִי "I", אַתָּה "You" (m.). The **attached ending** (pronominal suffix) is joined to a noun, a preposition or a verb: נַשְׁמָתִי "my soul", בִּי "in me".

The endings you meet first:

- *-i* "my, me": נַשְׁמָתִי, "my soul"; בִּי, "in me".
- *-cho* or *-echo* "your" (m.): אֱמוּנָתְךָ, "Your faithfulness".
- *-echo* with a yud, "your" on a **plural** noun: לְפָנֶיךָ, built on פָּנִים, "face", which is plural in form.
- *-einu* "our": אֱלֹהֵינוּ, "our G-d" (Lesson 2).
- *-o* "his", and *-ov* "his" on a plural noun: נַשְׁמָתוֹ, "his soul"; בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, "with His commandments" (Lesson 2).

The yud is the plural sign. In the endings of לְפָנֶיךָ and בְּמִצְוֹתָיו a yud is written but not pronounced as a vowel of its own: it tells you the noun is plural.

Word order. In מוֹדָה אֲנִי the pronoun comes after the verb, so the sentence opens with the thanks. The present-tense verb does not show the person by itself (§G8), so אֲנִי is needed to say who is speaking.

Speaking to Hashem. In every bracha we say אַתָּה, "You": in prayer we speak to Hashem in the second person. Lesson 2 brings a Chassidic insight on this "You".

אֲנִי	<i>ani</i>	I	independent pronoun
אַתָּה	<i>Ato</i>	You (m.)	independent pronoun
נַשְׁמָתִי	<i>nishmosi</i>	my soul	<i>-i</i> "my"
בִּי	<i>bi</i>	in me	<i>be-</i> + <i>-i</i> "me"
אֱמוּנָתְךָ	<i>emunosecho</i>	Your faithfulness	<i>-echo</i> "your"
לְפָנֶיךָ	<i>l'fonecho</i>	before You	yud: "your" on a plural noun

§G5 GRAMMAR CONCEPT Nouns: masculine, feminine, plural

Every Hebrew noun is masculine or feminine. Most masculine nouns have no special ending: מֶלֶךְ, "king". Most feminine nouns end in a kamatz and a hei: נַשְׁמָה "soul", חֶמְלָה "compassion", אֱמוּנָה "faithfulness".

Plural. Masculine nouns add *-im*, feminine nouns *-os*: מְצוֹת gives מצוות, “commandments” (Lesson 2). Some nouns exist only in plural form: חַיִּים, “life”, and פְּנִים, “face”.

The feminine hei becomes a tav whenever something is attached after it: נֶשְׁמָתִי gives נשמתִי, “my soul”; אֱמוּנָה gives אֱמוּנָתְךָ, “Your faithfulness”. The same tav appears when the noun is followed by another noun (Lesson 2): נֶשְׁמַת כָּל חַי, “the soul of every living being” (Shabbos morning).

Vowels shorten when the word grows. An ending pulls the stress to the end of the word, and the vowels near the start reduce. In נֶשְׁמָה the shin has a kamatz; in נֶשְׁמָתִי that kamatz has become a sheva. Hebrew does not begin a word with two shevas, so the first one becomes a chirik.

Segolates. מֶלֶךְ, with two segols and the stress on the first syllable, belongs to a large family of nouns that change shape strongly when an ending is added: מַלְכֵנוּ, “our King” (*Ovinu Malkeinu*).

מֶלֶךְ	<i>melech</i>	king	masculine · segolate
נֶשְׁמָה	<i>nesbomo</i>	soul	feminine
נֶשְׁמָתִי	<i>nishmosi</i>	my soul	hei becomes tav; vowels shorten
חַיִּים	<i>chayim</i>	life	plural form only
מְצוֹת	<i>mitzvos</i>	commandments	feminine plural
מַלְכֵנוּ	<i>Malkeinu</i>	our King	segolate with an ending

§G6 GRAMMAR CONCEPT Adjectives, and sentences without “is”

A Hebrew adjective normally comes **after** its noun and **agrees** with it in gender and number. In מֶלֶךְ חַי וְקַיִם, “King living and enduring”, both adjectives are masculine singular, like מֶלֶךְ.

Hebrew has no present-tense word for “is”. When the adjective is placed **first**, it is a statement, not a description: רַבָּה אֱמוּנָתְךָ, “great (is) Your faithfulness”. The adjective רַבָּה is feminine because אֱמוּנָה is feminine. The verse it comes from opens the same way: חֲדָשִׁים לְבָקָרִים, “new (are they) every morning”, plural to agree with the many things it speaks of.

Placed first, the adjective is stressed: before naming the faithfulness, we say how great it is. You will see this shape again in every bracha (Lesson 2).

מֶלֶךְ חַי	<i>melech chai</i>	a living King	noun + adjective: a description
וְקַיִם	<i>v'kayom</i>	and enduring	masculine, agrees with “King”
רַבָּה אֱמוּנָתְךָ	<i>rabo emunosecho</i>	great is Your faithfulness	adjective first: a sentence; feminine
חֲדָשִׁים לְבָקָרִים	<i>chadoshim labkorim</i>	new every morning	plural, placed first

§G7 GRAMMAR CONCEPT Verb patterns (binyanim) and the hif'il

A root becomes a verb by entering one of seven fixed patterns, the **binyanim**. Each pattern changes the meaning in a regular way. The basic one is *kal*, "simple": קָזַר, "he returned". The **hif'il** makes the action happen to someone or something else ("cause to"): הִקְזִיר, "he brought back".



How to recognize the hif'il:

- in the **past**, a hei in front: הִקְזִיר, and with the ending for "You", הִקְזַרְתָּ;
- in the **present**, a mem in front: מִקְזִיר, "brings back" (you will meet it in the Alter Rebbe's words in Lesson 2);
- often a yud before the last root letter, as in הִקְזִיר and in מִקְזִיר.

מוֹדֶה is a hif'il too: the mem is the present-tense sign, and the vav is the first root letter, a yud in disguise (§G2). The same verb opens a psalm said every morning: הוֹדוּ לֵה', "give thanks to Hashem".

Other binyanim will come as we meet them; the next one, the *pi'el*, is in the bracha of Lesson 2.

קָזַר	<i>chozar</i>	he returned	<i>kal</i>
הִקְזִיר	<i>hechezir</i>	he brought back	<i>hif'il</i> , past
שֶׁהִקְזַרְתָּ	<i>shehechezarto</i>	for You brought back	<i>hif'il</i> , past, "You"
מִקְזִיר	<i>machazir</i>	brings back	<i>hif'il</i> , present
מוֹדֶה	<i>modeh</i>	I thank	<i>hif'il</i> , present, root י־ד־ה
הוֹדוּ	<i>hodu</i>	give thanks!	<i>hif'il</i> , command

§G8 GRAMMAR CONCEPT Present and past: who is speaking

The present is a participle. The Hebrew present tense works like an adjective: it changes for gender and number, but not for person. Of מוֹדֶה, "thanking", the four forms are מוֹדֶה (m.), מוֹדֶה (f.), מוֹדִים (m. pl.) and מוֹדוֹת (f. pl.). That is why a woman says מוֹדֶה אֲנִי, and why אֲנִי is needed: the verb alone does not say who. The rest of Modeh Ani does not change, because the other words describe Hashem, not the speaker.

The past adds endings that say who. With the *kal* of חָזַר:

- חָזַרְתִּי "I returned"; חָזַרְתָּ "you (m.) returned"; חָזַרְתְּ "you (f.) returned";
- חָזַר "he returned", the bare form; חָזְרָה "she returned";
- חָזַרְנוּ "we returned".

In Modeh Ani the verb שֶׁהִקְזַרְתָּ is a hif'il past (§G7) with the ending *-to*: "You brought back". We speak to Hashem directly, in the second person.

מוֹדֶה	<i>modeh</i>	(I, a man) thank	present, m. sg.
מוֹדֶה	<i>modo</i>	(I, a woman) thank	present, f. sg.
מוֹדִים	<i>modim</i>	(we) thank	present, m. pl. (Amidah)
חָזַרְתִּי	<i>chozarti</i>	I returned	past, <i>-ti</i>
חָזַרְתָּ	<i>chozarto</i>	you (m.) returned	past, <i>-to</i>
חָזַרְנוּ	<i>chozarnu</i>	we returned	past, <i>-nu</i>

Grammar at a glance

WORD	TRANSLITERATION	MEANING	ROOT	GRAMMAR
מוֹדֶה	<i>modeh (f. modoh)</i>	I acknowledge, I thank	י־ד־ה	<i>Hif'il</i> present participle, m.s.; fem. מוֹדֶה. The participle agrees with the speaker, hence <i>Modeh/Modoh</i> . Same root as תוֹדֶה (thanks) and the name יְהוֹדָה (Bereishis 29:35).
אֲנִי	<i>ani</i>	I	—	Independent pronoun, 1st person common singular. Placed <i>after</i> the participle: the thanks comes first, the "I" second.
לְפָנֶיךָ	<i>l'fonecho</i>	before You	פ־נ־ה	Preposition לְפָנֶי (lit. "to the face of", from פָּנִים) + 2nd m.s. suffix יְךָ. The mark under the נ (<i>meteg</i>) shows where the reading pauses, as the siddur prints it.
מֶלֶךְ	<i>melech</i>	King	מ־ל־ךְ	Segolate noun, m.s. Here it stands in apposition to "You": "(You,) King..."
חַי	<i>chai</i>	living	ח־י־ה	Adjective, m.s.
וְקַיִם	<i>v'kayom</i>	and enduring	ק־ו־ם	ן "and" + adjective on the pattern <i>kattal</i> (doubled middle letter): "lasting, established".
שֶׁחָזַרְתָּ	<i>shebechezarto</i>	for You have returned	ח־ז־ר	ש "that/for" + <i>Hif'il</i> past, 2nd m.s. Qal חָזַר = "to return" (by itself); <i>Hif'il</i> חָזַרְתָּ = "to bring back" (causative). Chataf-segol under the guttural ח.
בִּי	<i>bi</i>	in me, within me	—	Preposition בְּ + 1st c.s. suffix יְ.
נִשְׁמָתִי	<i>nishmosi</i>	my soul	נ־ש־ם	הָ + 1st c.s. suffix; before a suffix the final ה becomes ת: construct form נִשְׁמָתִי. Related to נְשִׁימָה, "breath".
בְּחֶמְלָה	<i>b'chemlo</i>	with compassion	ח־מ־ל	בְּ "with" + noun f.s. חֶמְלָה, "pity, compassion".
רַבָּה	<i>rabo</i>	great (is)	ר־ב־ב	Adjective f.s., agreeing with אֱמוּנָה. A nominal sentence: Hebrew has no present-tense "is". The predicate comes first, for emphasis.
אֱמוּנָתְךָ	<i>emunosecho</i>	Your faithfulness	א־מ־ן	הָ + 2nd m.s. suffix יְךָ; again ה becomes ת before the suffix. Same root as אֱמֵן and נֶאֱמַן, "trustworthy".

WORDS FROM MODEH ANI YOU WILL MEET AGAIN

מוֹדִים *modim* · we thank

root י־ד־ה · *Modim anachnu loch* in the Amidah

מֶלֶךְ *melech* · King

root מ־ל־ךְ · *Melech ho'olom* in every bracha

נֶשְׁמָה *neshomo* · soul

root נ־ש־ם · *Elokai neshomo* in the morning blessings

מִלְפְּנֶיךָ *mil'fonecho* · from before You

root פ־נ־יָהּ · *Y'hi rotzon mil'fonecho*

חַיִּים *chayim* · life

root ח־י־יָהּ · *Chai* in Modeh Ani

אָמֵן *omein* · Amen (it is true)

root א־מ־ן · same root as *emunosecho*

5 Review

חזרה

1. What source does the Alter Rebbe give for Modeh Ani, and where did he codify it? Why may it be said before washing the hands? Give the halachic reason and the deeper one (Hayom Yom; the Rebbe in *Kuntreis Inyanah shel Toras HaChassidus*).
2. Write שְׁהַחֲזִירָתָה as a sum of its four parts and say what each part means. Then do the same for לְפָנֶיךָ.
→ see **SG1** (p. 7), **SG3** (p. 8)
3. Find the root letters in מוֹדֶה, וְקִיָּם, and רַבָּה. In each word one root letter is “disguised”: which, and how?
→ see **SG2** (p. 8)
4. Why does נֶשְׁמָה become נֶשְׁמָתִי? Find another word in Modeh Ani that follows the same rule. → see **SG5** (p. 9)
5. The Alter Rebbe says Hashem returns the soul “for this purpose”: His service. The Midrash says He returns it “new and rested”. Tomorrow morning, what will you have in mind when you say *rabo emunosecho*?

Hatzlocho rabbo!

These lessons are for learning and discussion. For practical halachic questions, please consult your rav.