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*A*  
JEWISH  
WOMAN'S  
*Prayer Book*



EDITED BY  
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SPIEGEL & GRAU  
NEW YORK  
2008



PUBLISHED BY SPIEGEL & GRAU

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Published in the United States by Spiegel & Grau, an imprint of The Doubleday Publishing Group, a division of Random House, Inc., New York

[www.spiegelandgrau.com](http://www.spiegelandgrau.com)

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LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOGING-IN-PUBLICATION DATA  
[to come]

ISBN 978-0-385-

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

FIRST EDITION

*D*EDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF MY

DEVOUT AND SAINTLY GRANDMOTHER,

HANNA MASHIACH,

TISHREI 5666—TISHREI 5762





“With humility, my Lord, I approach You,  
revealing the hidden secrets of my heart, and  
offering thanks to You.

“You see into my soul; my innermost being  
is before You as an open book. No emotion that  
moves my heart, no breath, no utterance of my  
voice, no thought that animates my soul—none  
is hidden from Your eyes.”

FROM THE BOOK OF PRAYERS BY FANNY NOIDA,  
PRAGUE, 1855





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I

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MOMENTS

*in a*

WOMAN’S

LIFE



## YOUNG GIRL'S PRAYER

Fanny Noida

*Grace is deceiving and beauty is transient; a woman who fears God—  
she shall be praised.*

[PROVERBS 31:30]

Our God Who is in heaven and on earth, God Who is good:  
You attend to all of Your creatures; faithful Father, all of Your creations  
take refuge under Your wings.

You have called me, too, Your daughter; to me, too, You extend Your  
love—an eternal love. My childhood has passed in green pastures; I thank  
you for my happy youth; I thank You for what I am. You have given me all  
kinds of goodness: a dear mother and father at my side, guiding me with  
gentleness and love, with advice and help, caring for me and sustaining me,  
enhancing my life with sweet and heartwarming joys.

With humility, my Lord, I approach You, revealing the hidden secrets  
of my heart, and offering thanks to You.



Fanny Noida (1819–1894) was born to a rabbinical family in Moravia, Czechoslovakia. Her brother, Dr. Avraham (Adolph) Schmidl, was a Rabbi in Vienna and a well-known scholar of Philosophy of Religion. Like her brother, Fanny was educated in both Jewish and secular studies, and she married one of the first rabbis in Moravia to have received a secular education, Rabbi Avraham Noida. When he died at a young age, Fanny created a prayer book in his memory. As far as we are able to ascertain, she was the first Jewish woman to write a book of her own prayers in German. Fanny's book, *Prayers and Supplications: Intimate Devotions, A Book of Prayer and Ethics for Jewish Women and Girls, for Prayer in Public and in Private, for All Occasions in a Woman's Life*, was not originally intended for publication, but after much encouragement she eventually agreed to publish it, and it went on to be a best-seller, with a new edition appearing every two years. It was also published in Eastern Europe in Yiddish translation and in America in English in the early twentieth century.

## תפילת הנערה הצעירה

פאני נויִדא

“שָׁקֵר הַחַן וְהַקֵּל הַיָּפִי אִשָּׁה יִרְאֵת ה’ הִיא תִתְהַלֵּל”

[משלי לא 30]

לְהִינּוּ שְׂבִשְׂמִים וּבְאֶרֶץ, הָאֵל הַטּוֹב. אַתָּה דוֹאֵג לְכֹל בְּרוּאֵיךָ. אָב  
נְאֻמָּן, בְּצֵל כְּנֶפֶד חוֹסִים כָּל יְצוּרֵיךָ.

גַּם לִי קָרָאתָ בְּתוֹךְ, גַּם אוֹתִי מְלִנָּה אֶהְבֶּתְךָ, אֶהְבַּת עוֹלָם. בְּנְאוֹת דְּשָׂא  
מוֹרִיקִים חָלְפוּ עָלַי יְמֵי יְלָדוּתִי, אוֹדְךָ עַל נְעוּרֵי הַמְּאֻשְׁרִים, אוֹדְךָ עַל מַה  
שָׂאֲנִי. נִתַּתְּ לִי מְכַל טוֹב, אִם וְאָב יִקְרִים לְצַדִּי, מְנַחִים אוֹתִי בְּרֹךְ וּבְאֶהְבָּה,  
בְּעֵצָה וּבְעֵזְרָה, מְטַפְּלִים וּמְפַרְנְסִים אוֹתִי, מְעֻטְרִים אֶת חַיֵּי בְּשִׂמְחוֹת מְתוֹקוֹת  
וְרַבּוֹת חֵן.

בְּעֵנְנָה, אֵלֵי, אֲנִי קֹרְבָה אֵלֶיךָ, פּוֹרְשֵׁת צְפוֹנוֹת לְבִי וּמוֹדָה לָךְ.  
אַתָּה רוֹאֵה לְנַפְשִׁי, כִּסְפָּר הַפְּתוּחַ מִנַּח תּוֹכִי לְפָנֶיךָ. כָּל סַעֲרַת רוּחַ הַמְּנִיעָה  
אֶת לְבִי, כָּל גְּשִׁימָה, כָּל הַבֶּל־פֶּה הַמְרַעֵיד מִיִּתְרִים, כָּל מַחְשְׁבָה הַמְּסַעֵרָה  
אֶת נַפְשִׁי, אֵינָם נִסְתָּרִים מִנְּגֵד עֵינֶיךָ. לוֹ יִהְיוּ כָּל רְגִשׁוֹתֵי, מַחְשְׁבוֹתֵי וּמַעֲשֵׂי



In the nineteenth century, Hebrew, the traditional language of Jewish prayer, was spoken fluently by learned men who frequented the synagogue, but it had otherwise been forgotten over the years. Because women were generally absent from the synagogue, Hebrew was foreign and incomprehensible to most of them. Fanny Noida's book answered the needs of women of her time: it was written by a woman, for women, in a familiar language, and it included prayers that were meant to be offered in individual situations, facilitating a private, personal, and intimate conversation with the Creator. Her touching supplications address the needs and problems of women throughout the ages: there are prayers for all hours of the day, prayers for weekdays and for festivals, prayers for special occasions, for the New Year, and for religious holidays. This particular prayer is intended for a young girl on the brink of reaching adulthood.

You see into my soul; my innermost being is before You as an open book. No emotion that moves my heart, no breath, no utterance of my voice, no thought that animates my soul—none is hidden from Your eyes. If only all my emotions, my thoughts and my actions might find favor and grace before You. Deliver me from the evil inclination, and imbue my heart with submission and humility.

Our Father Who is in heaven: guide my heart to choose the way that is good and not to deviate from the straight path. Wherever I—lacking experience—am unable to distinguish between good and evil, grace me with Your wisdom, teach me to recognize the truth, that I may maintain modesty and good traits, that I may punctiliously observe Your words and Your commandments with faith and with love, and walk before You wholeheartedly and with devotion.

Let my heart not follow vanity and emptiness, and let the pleasures of the world not cloud my vision, that I not waste my precious life—the life given to me to fulfill my obligations. May it be Your will that I not turn, in a moment of frivolity, from the words of Your mouth; that virginal honor and a pure heart be a precious adornment for me.

Bless me, my Lord, with understanding and insight, with a healthy body and soul, with a heart that is joyful and content. May I never deviate from the commandment of honoring one's father and mother, and not offend or anger my dear parents, so that I may succeed in bringing them happiness through my actions. Bestow Your blessing, my God, upon my loved ones, that illness, trouble and anxiety never be their lot, that they may enjoy success in their endeavors and fulfillment of their hearts' wishes, and may their occupations and work bear abundant fruit. Bless them, my God, with long life, that they may rejoice in their lifetimes with strength and good health of body and soul, Amen.

נושאים חן וחסד מלפניך, ותצילני מיצר הרע ותן בלבי הכנעה וענוה.  
אבינו שבשמים, הנחה את לבי לבחור בדרך הטובה ולא לסטות מדרך  
הישר. במקום שבו אני, החסרה נסיון, לא אדע להבחין בין טוב ורע, חנן  
אותי בחכמתך, למדני להפיר באמת, למען אשמר על צניעות ומדות טובות,  
על דברך ומצוותיך אקפיד באמונה ובאהבה, ובנקיון פנים ובאדיקות  
אתהלה לפניך.

אל נא תתן את לבי להבל ולריק, ולהנאות עולם אל תתן לערפלי, שלא  
אוציא לשוא את עתותי הקרות, העתים שעלי לקיים בהן את חובותי. יהי  
רצון, שלא אסור בשעה של קלות-דעת מאמרי פיך, שכבוד הבתולה והלב  
הנדה יהיו לי לעדי יקר ערך.

ברכני, אלי, בבינה ובתבונה, בבריאות גוף ונפש, בלב שמח ושבע-רצון.  
תן שלעולם לא אסור ממצות כבוד אב ואם, שלא אפגע ולא אכעיס את  
הורי הקרים, שיעלה בידי לשמח אותם במעשי. שים ברכתך, אלהי, על  
יקירי, שלעולם אל יהיו חלי, צרה וחרדה מנת חלקם, שישאו ברכה בעמלם  
ובמשאלות לבם, ובמשלח ידם ובעסוקם ישאו פרות לרב. ברך אותם, אלי,  
באריכות ימים, שבכח ובבריאות הגוף והנפש ישמחו בחייהם, אמן.

## COMPLETION

*Based on the teachings of Rabbi Nahman of Breslov*

Loving God:  
So numerous are  
Those deprived of true love;  
So many  
Cannot find their match.  
Have mercy upon them.  
Source of love—  
Allow  
Every solitary, lonely soul  
To experience the completion  
That comes  
with finding one's match.



Rabbi Nahman of Breslov was born in 1772 in the town of Mezhibuzh in the Ukraine. He was the great-grandson of the Ba'al Shem Tov, the founder of Hassidism. Before the age of twenty, Rabbi Nahman already led a group of Hassidim and had instituted a unique approach that met with disapproval on the part of other Hassidic leaders who suspected him of Sabbateanism. His young age, his manner of leadership, and his new approach to *Hasidut* aroused their disfavor.

In 1798, at the time of Napoleon's war against the Turks, Rabbi Nahman left his family, traveled to the Holy Land, and remained there for an entire winter, spending most of his time in Safed and Tiberius. His stay in the Holy Land influenced him deeply. Later he would say, "All the vitality that I have is only from my stay in Eretz Yisrael." Four years later, in 1802, he arrived in the city of Breslov, where the essence of his philosophy was consolidated and where he established his circle of followers: the Breslov Hassidim.

## זיווג

על-פי רבי נחמן מברסלב

אֵל ל אֹהֵב,  
כֹּה רַבִּים הֵם  
חֹסְרֵי אֲהָבַת הָאֱמֶת;  
כֹּה רַבִּים  
אֵינָם מוֹצְאִים אֶת זְיוּגָם.  
רַחֵם עֲלֵיהֶם.  
מְקוֹר הָאֲהָבָה,  
תֵּן  
לְכֹל נַשְׁמָה בּוֹדְדָה וְגַלְמוּדָה,  
לְחַוֹּת אֶת הַשְּׁלֵמוֹת  
הַנּוֹבְעֹת  
מִמְצִיאת זְיוּג.



Rabbi Nahman loved to commune with God, his heart pouring forth prayers that he composed himself at times of inspiration. He experienced enormous tragedy in his life, losing his wife and several of his children to illnesses. At the end of his life, suffering from tuberculosis and sensing that his own death was not far off, he moved to the city of Uman, where he died in 1810 and where he was buried.

Rabbi Nahman of Breslov authored only two books himself, and of those, one was burned at his orders and the other remains hidden among his followers. Natan Sternhartz, one of his disciples, recorded the rest of his teachings.

This beautiful matchmaking prayer is taken from the *The Gentle Weapon: Prayers for Great Occasions and Small Moments* (1999), which is based on R. Nahman's eternal teachings and was written by Moshe Mykoff and S.H. Mizrahi.



## PERFECT UNITY

*By Perl, wife of Rabbi Levi Yitzhak of Berdichev*

*M*aster of the world: I ask of You—please help me, such that when my Levi Yitzhak recites the blessing over these loaves on Shabbat, he should have in his heart the same meditations that I have at this time, as I knead and bake.



Perl's prayer is recorded in *The Hidden Light* by Martin Buber. Tradition has it that Perl, the wife of the famed Hassidic master Rabbi Levi Yitzhak of Berdichev (1740–1810) who was known as “Israel's advocate,” would recite this prayer as she kneaded and baked bread for the Sabbath.



## תחינת פרל

אשת ר' לוי יצחק מברדיטשוב

**ר**בונו של עולם, מבקשת אני מלפניך, אָנָּא עֲזֹר לי, שְׁכַנְשֵׁיהָא לוי יצחק שלי מברך בשבת על החלות האלה, יכּוּן בְּלִבּוֹ אוֹתָן הַפְּנוּנוֹת שְׁאֲנִי מְכַנְנֶת בְּשַׁעַה זוֹ שְׁאֲנִי לְשֵׁה וְאוֹפֶה.

## PRAYER AT MENOPAUSE

*Ruth Lazare*

**Y**ou created my body with wisdom  
You have taught me the secret of filling and of absence;  
The powers of growth and giving.  
And now I am prepared and ready for a new life.



Ruth Lazare has ventured to add to the compendium of women's prayers some meditations for moments that others have generally avoided addressing. Menopause, she declares, is not only an end, but is also a new beginning in a woman's life.

## תפילה לאשה בגיל המעבר

רות לזר

**נ**ראת את גופי בקבמה  
למדת אותי את סוד ההתמלאות והקעדר  
את כחות הצמיחה וההענקה.  
ועתה אני מוכנה ומזמנה לחיים חדשים.