
Alexander Massey

Kaddish

(voice & guitar)

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Kaddish

Much could be (and has been) written about the *Kaddish*. Although one version is referred to as 'Mourner's *Kaddish*', it is part of our daily prayers, and comes, in some form (often more than once), in every service. It is, above all, a prayer that affirms life. At the very end of *Yom Kippur*, we sing a lively melody for it, but at most other times in the liturgical week and year, the music is much more intense and inward. My musical setting is intended to emphasise the positivity, vitality and excitement that I feel is inherent in the words.

Note that no name of God is actually mentioned in the *Kaddish*. The 'Name' in the text refers to God's immanence. It falls to us to make God's presence more manifest in the world. How can we do this? Through thought, word and deed, we can affirm God as sole (and soul!) Creator, and fundamental origin of our internal and external ethical guidance system. Ethical thought, speech and action can be inspired and shaped through what we learn from Torah, Tanach (Bible), Talmud, and Jewish teachings and dialogue through the centuries. Living ethically is something all humans can do, whether they affirm God explicitly, or are confirmed atheists. In terms of the language of the *Kaddish*, this means 'magnifying' God's name in the world (*yitgadal* – 'let us magnify').¹

Originally a prayer said to conclude a period of Torah study, and then later to honour one's rabbis, the *Kaddish* later became linked to mourners. Through acquiring this new context, the prayer's meaning transformed: in the face of the inevitability of death, including death that can come in terrible forms, we affirm God, life, and the possibility for a better world, and one that we will help bring about.

May it grow,
may it be made holy ...
the great Name!
in this world
that same Name whose will created this world.
May Oneness come to pervade everyone's awareness
in our lifetime, and in our days
and in the lifetime of the house of Israel
speedily and soon may it come.
And let us say: **Amen.**

May the great Name be blessed ...
in this world, all worlds, and worlds beyond worlds.

Let us bless, let us burst with praise

¹ Despite the fierce joy and affirmation of this text, the absence of God's name in the *Kaddish* perhaps expresses also our anxiety, disappointment, sadness, perhaps even anger, that God is not always apparent in the world. I learned this idea from Jeremy Schonfeld's book 'Undercurrents of Jewish Prayer' (2006).



let us shout, let us raise,
let us lift up, let us prize,
let us adore, let us sing to the skies,
the holy Name,
who truly is blessed ...

... who is far above all blessing,
or song, or honour, or consolation
that can be spoken of in this world.
And let us say: **Amen.**

May great peace from heaven
and the gift of life be granted to us and all Israel.
And let us say: **Amen.**

May the Maker of peace at the highest levels
bring this peace to us and all Israel
and to all who live on this earth
and to all the created world.
And let us say: **Amen.**

Interpretive translation: Alexander Massey (2017)



Kaddish

Music: Alexander Massey

Words: Trad.

Yit - ga - dal v'-yit - ka - dash sh'-meih ra -

ba b' - al - ma di v'ra chi - ru-teih v' - yam -

lich mal-chu-teih b'-cha - yei - on uv'-yo - mei-chon uv'-cha - yei di chol beit yis-ra -

eil ba'a-ga - la u-viz' - man ka - riv v' - i - m' -

ru: a - mein. Y' - hei sh'-meih ra - ba m'-vo - rach, y'

hei sh'-mei ra - ba m'-vo - rach I' - a - lam ul'-al - mei al-ma - ya,

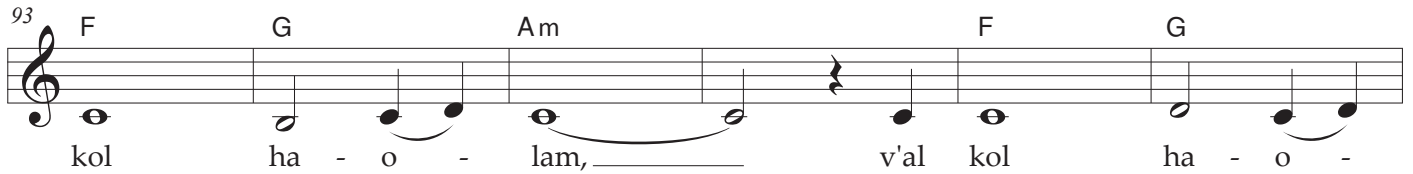
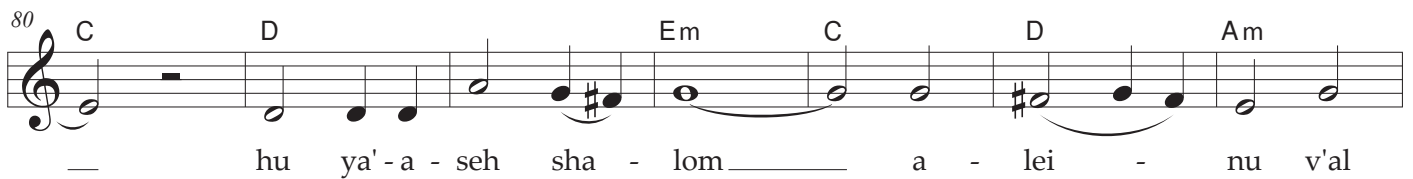
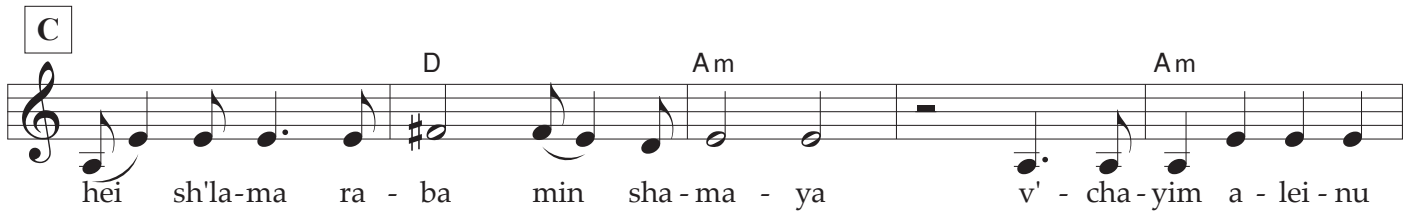
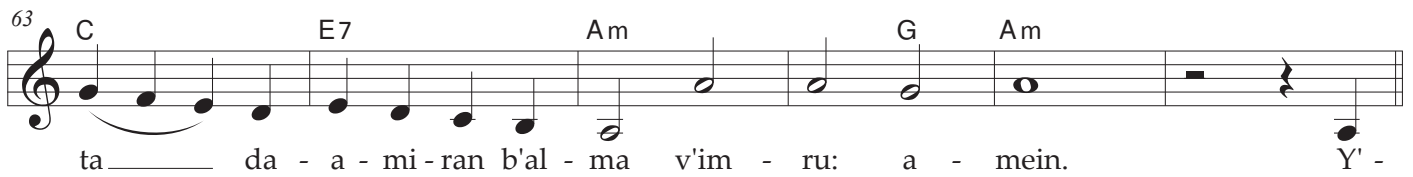
I' - a - lam ul' - al - mei al - ma - ya. Yit - ba - rach, v'-yish - ta -

bach, v'-yit - pa' - ar, v'-yit - ro - mam, v'-yit - na - seh, v'-yit - ha - dar v'-yit - ha -

leh, v'-yit - ha - lal sh' - meih d'-k' - du - sha: brich hu. L' - ei - la min kol



Kaddish - Massey



יִתְגַּדֵּל וְיִתְקַדֵּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא.
בְּעֵלְמָא דִּי בְּרָא כְרַעוּתָהּ וְיִמְלִיךְ מַלְכוּתָהּ
בְּחַיֵּינוּ וּבְיוֹמֵינוּ וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל
בְּעֵגְלָא וּבְזֶמַן קָרִיב, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן :

יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעָלְמָא וּלְעָלְמֵי עָלְמֵינָא :

יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרוֹמֵם
וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא וְיִתְהַדָּר וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלָּל
שְׁמֵהּ דְקֻדְשָׁא. בְּרִידָה הוּא.

May it grow,
may it be made holy ...
the great Name!

in this world
that same Name whose will created this world.
May Oneness come to pervade everyone's awareness
in our lifetime, and in our days
and in the lifetime of the house of Israel
speedily and soon may it come.
And let us say: **Amen.**

לְעֵלְא מִן כָּל בְּרַכְתָּא בַּעֲשִׂית
תְּשַׁבְּחָתָא וְנִחְמָתָא דְאָמִירָן בְּעֵלְמָא. וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן :

יְהֵא שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שְׁמֵינָא
וְחַיִּים עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל. וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן :

עוֹשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרוֹמָיו הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם
עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן :

**May the great Name be blessed ...
in this world, all worlds, and worlds beyond worlds.**

Let us bless, let us burst with praise
let us shout, let us raise,
let us lift up, let us prize,
let us adore, let us sing to the skies,
the holy Name,
who truly is blessed ...

... who is far above all blessing,
or song, or honour, or consolation
that can be spoken of in this world.
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May the Maker of peace at the highest levels
bring this peace to us and all Israel
and to all who live on this earth
and to all the created world.
And let us say: **Amen.**

*Interpretive translation
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