

יָדִיד׃

## Strong's Concordance

**yadid: beloved**

**Original Word:** יָדִיד׃

**Part of Speech:** Adjective

**Transliteration:** yadid

**Phonetic Spelling:** (yed-eed')

**Short Definition:** beloved

<http://biblehub.com/hebrew/3039.htm>

**ledidiel** An angel invoked during ritual.

<http://www.angelfire.com/journal/cathbodua/Angels/Iangels.html>

# Yedid Nefesh

**Yedid Nefesh** (Hebrew: יְדִיד נֶפֶשׁ *y'did nefesh*) is the title of a *piyyut*. It is usually sung on the Jewish Sabbath.

## 1 Traditions and origin

Some sing it between Minchah (afternoon prayer) of Friday and the beginning of Kabbalat Shabbat (literally: receiving or greeting the Sabbath—a collection of psalms usually sung to welcome in the Shabbat queen, as it were, the restful contentment that descends from above during nightfall on Friday).

It is sung by many Jews during Seudah Shlishit (the third meal on Shabbat; the first is on Friday night, the second on Saturday lunch, and the third on Saturday before nightfall).

Many Chassidim say or sing it every morning before beginning to the Pesukei dezimra section of Shacharis in order to arouse their love of Hashem in preparation for the praises of Pesukei d'Zimra.

This beautiful poem is commonly attributed to the sixteenth century kabbalist, Rabbi Elazar ben Moshe Azikri (1533-1600), who first published it in *Sefer Charedim* (published in Venice 1601), but Azikri did not claim authorship of it and there have been other suggested authors (e.g. Judah Halevi, or Israel Nagara). *The Hebrew Manuscripts at Cambridge University Libraries* by Stefan C. Reif (1997, page 93) refers to an appearance of Yedid Nefesh in the *Commentary On the Book of Numbers* by Samuel ben David ben Solomon, a manuscript dated to about 1438—long before Azikri's birth. Azikri's philosophy centred around the intense love one must feel for God, a theme that is evident in this *piyyut* (see references). The first letters of each of the four verses make up the four letter name of God, known in English as the *tetragrammaton*.

## 2 Text

The words are as follows:

## 3 Notes on the text

The text above is the “conventional” text appearing in most Ashkenaz liturgies (including the ArtScroll siddur

down to our day. There have been, over the centuries, many variants in different published prayerbooks. The conventional text differs from the text first printed in 1601, and both the conventional and the 1601 texts differed from Azikri's manuscript (both the manuscript and the 1601 printing were in unpointed Hebrew).

Verse 3, line 2: בֶּן אֲהוּבֶךָ *bein ahuvecha*, translated here as “the son of Your beloved” is, in other translations of the same text, rendered as “your beloved son” (or child) or “your loving son”. Some Sefardic/Mizrachi prayerbooks rewrite this phrase as עַם אֲהוּבֶךָ *am ahuvach*, “your beloved people” (e.g. *The Orot Sephardic Shabbat Siddur*, ed by Rabbi Eliezer Toledano (1995) p. 571). But the first printing and Azikri's manuscript both have *bein ahuvecha*.

Rabbi Azikri's manuscript of this song (reproduced in *Chwat*) varies in several spots from the conventional text. The Hebrew and English text used in the *Koren Sacks Siddur* (2009) followed this manuscript -- although the *Authorised Daily Prayer Book* (4th ed. 2006, pages 576-577) translated and annotated by the same Rabbi Jonathan Sacks used the conventional printed text. The significant changes include: Verse 2, line 6, שְׂפִחָה *shifchas* (your maidservant) replacing *simchas* (gladness, joy), so the line would read “She will be your maidservant for eternity.” (This was also the reading in the 1601 first publication.)

Verse 3, line 4, both the manuscript and first printing omit *m'heirah* (speedily), but in line 6 חֻשְׁחָה *chushah* (hasten) in the manuscript and 1601 publication was replaced in the later printings by *v'chusah* (take pity).

Verse 3, line 5, both the manuscript and the 1601 printing had אֵלֵי אֱלֹהֵי אֱלֵי *Ana Eli* instead of *Eileh*, so the line changes from “These are my heart's desire” to “Please, My God, [You are] my heart's desire”. So the manuscript says, for verse 3 lines 4 & 5, “O, my Lord, [You who are] my heart's desire, hurry please.” But the conventional printings (such as ArtScroll) have it, “My heart desired only these, so please have pity.”

The 1601 printing indicated that the last line of each verse (in the printing above, the fifth and sixth lines of each verse) was to be repeated. Jacobson mentions an earlier (apparently circa 1870) prayerbook that similarly attempted to restore the text according to the 1601 printing, which met with such condemnation (mostly over the substitution of “maidservant” for “gladness”, though both the 1601 printing and Azikri's manuscript support this) from influential Hasidic rabbis that the editor was forced

to print replacement pages with the conventional (if erroneous) text.<sup>[1]</sup>

Azikri's handwritten manuscript of this poem was discovered (by the great scholar Meir Benayahu) in the library of Jewish Theological Seminary of America in the mid-20th century. As a result the Siddur Rinat Yisrael (Ashkenaz ed. by Rabbi Shlomo Tal, 1977) p. 189 had the same Hebrew text as Koren-Sacks, namely the text of the handwritten original. In a subsequent commentary to his prayerbook, Rabbi Tal published a photocopy of that handwritten original (Tal, *Ha-Siddur Behistalsheluto*, 1984, page 68). Tal also noted that a few earlier prayerbooks (Livorno 1910 and Jerusalem 1953) also printed versions that restored "maidservant" from the 1601 edition.

## 4 References

[1] Silverman, Morris, *Further Comments on the Text of the Siddur*, Journal of Jewish Music & Liturgy, vol. 13 (1991-1992) page 39, which favors "maidservant", and "Those are my heart's desires".

- Azikri, Elazar ben Moshe (Venice 1601), *Sefer Charedim* (the original printed version is on page 45; in the flyleaf of this copy someone has pasted what appears to be two pages from the 1984 commentary on the Rinat Yisrael version with a photocopy of Azikri's handwritten copy. (This feature works in Internet Explorer but apparently not in some other browsers.)
- Chwat, Dr. Ezra (June 29, 2010). *Who wrote the poem Yedid Nefesh*
- Feldheim. *The Essential Shiron-Birkon*, p. 90.
- "Hasidic Musician" (Aug. 4, 2009). *The Koren Siddur on Yedid Nefesh*
- Jacobson, B.S. (1981) *The Sabbath Service: An exposition and analysis of its structure, contents, language and ideas*, Sinai Publishing, Tel-Aviv, pages 371-374.
- Rabbinical Assembly and United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism. *Siddur Sim Shalom*, p. 252
- Rothman Foundation. *The NCSY Bencher*, p. 51.
- Sacks, Jonathan (2009). *The Koren Sacks Siddur*, with introduction, translation and commentary by Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks. Koren Publishers, Jerusalem, pages 308-309 and 688-689.
- Scherman, Nosson, Meir Zlotowitz, Sheah Brander. *The Complete Artscroll Siddur* (סדור קול יעקב), Mesorah Publications, p. 591.
- Scherman, Nosson, Benjamin Yudin, Sheah Brander. *Artscroll Transliterated Linear Siddur, Sabbath and Festival* (סדור זכרון אברהם), Mesorah Publications, p. 82.
- Siddur Rinat Yisrael - Hotza'at Moreshet, p. 180

## 5 External links

- Full transliteration and translation in an article on Shabbos afternoon and the third meal by Lori Palatnik for Aish.com
- Transliteration and translation of Zalman Goldstein and Chaim Fogelman's Ashkenaz-style recording for chabad.org
- Sephardi transliteration of the first verse
- Yedid nefesh YouTube

### 5.1 Recordings

- Recordings, text, translation, transliteration from The Zemirot Database
- Instrumental accompaniment to the first few lines
- Details of the first verse with audio from project z'mirot
- A polyphonic take on the traditional Ashkenazi tune, sung by Emilia Cataldo
- Video of a live performance of the song in the Moroccan Andalusian style by Binyamin Buzaglo and the Israeli Andalusian Orchestra (התזמורת האנדלוסית הישראלית).
- Yedid Nefesh sung to a Modzitz nigun
- Yedid Nefesh sung to a traditional Sephardi Tune.
- Multiple melodies of various sources.

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