

## The Silenced Modim----Modim d'Rabanan

מודים אנחנו לך שאתה הוא יהוה אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו אלהי כל

בשר יוצרנו יוצר בראשית ברכות והודאות לשמך הגדול והקדוש

על שהחיתנו וקימתנו. כן תחינו ותקימנו ותאסוף גליתנו לחצרות

קדשך לשמור חקיך ולעשות רצונך ולעבדך בלבב שלם על

שאנחנו מודים לך. ברוך אל ההודאות

We are grateful to You Adonai our God and God of our ancestors, God of life, who creates us, and all that lives. Blessing and gratitude are due your ineffable name for giving us life and sustaining us. Continue to enliven and sustain us; gather our *exiled* to Your Holy place, there to consummate your commandments, do your will, and serve you with a whole heart. For all this we are grateful to You. Blessed is the God of gratefulness.

מודים אנחנו לך *Modim Anachnu Lakh.* We are grateful to You

Gratefulness is appreciation for blessings received. Cast in God's image, each starts life blessed and grateful. In the exuberant chorus of *Modim*, there is one *Modim* that lives in silence. A *Modim* virtually hidden, almost driven underground, tucked away in the siddur. A *Modim* whose destiny it is *never* to be recited publicly. A *Modim* snubbed by omission even in private prayer. A *Modim* relegated to silence in the wings, while some other *Modim* is given center stage. Yet this silent *Modim* so constrained in public prayer *and* private prayer, wounded in its eloquence, resolutely, though often in small print, hangs on tenaciously in the Siddur, to be read without sound.

Who then are the grateful “we” who having no voice mutely mouth the words?

## לֹד מוֹדִים אֲנַחְנוּ לָךְ We are grateful to You...

“WE” is all of “me”. Accounted for, are all our diverse “selves,” Some of our “selves” are blessed, and valued. Other of our “selves” cursed, and rejected. Some of our “selves” we display. Other “selves” we hide. To some of our selves we give voice publicly and privately. To others we turn a deaf ear. Some of our “selves” we curse as worthless. These wounded and exiled selves especially are included.

The cursed, wounded “selves” result when “violence” (some unintended) tears at the fragile, vulnerable “Divine Image” in which we are cast. In childhood, the “image” being tender, this happens all too easily. For too many others, trauma happens later on. A particular “self” is wounded even as other “selves” continue to grow. Life being what it is, few escape whole, unscathed. We give names to these wounded “selves”: anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, insecurity, fear, and so on. We experience “them”, these cursed selves, as symptoms and we label “them” problematical. We struggle to rid ourselves of “them”, *try* to stifle “them”, hoping, that at least “they” stay hidden, at best silent, ignored by us, unseen and unheard by others. At times when “they” do show up, we are so mortified and appalled that we relinquish the field to “them” and they seem to be all we are. For that time, “they” are us. And we have the experience of saying, “that just wasn’t me”, “I would never do that!” “I just wasn’t myself.”

Where do these wounded “selves” reside? “They” languish in the rifts that mark our [Either/Or] dichotomies; our splitting of our world into [me/not me]; [good/bad]; [rational/irrational]; [independent/dependent]; [mind/body]; [sacred/profane]; [conscious/unconscious]; [strong/weak]; and on and on. When we say that a certain thought we have, an impulse we entertain, some act we do, falls into one or the other of our [Either/Or] dichotomies, and determines who we are, we create these rifts. We hold tightly to the notion that our true self is *either* one *or* the other side of these splits. We struggle to opt for what we “should” be and condemn and curse our unblest other. We have learned from childhood that who we are is a choice between one or the other of these

splits. We have been painstakingly taught to overlook that we *are* [Both/And] rather than [Either/Or].

This thoroughly mastered notion of “Self” is not useful. Each of us, no matter how solitary, is not a “Self”. Each of us is a Relationship. Self occurs in the relationship between our various “selves”, (and between our resulting Self and other Selves). When both/all “selves” *are* simultaneously blessed and valued, acknowledged and appreciated, and in I-Thou respectful contact, Self comes to be.

So the silenced *Modim* hangs in there, and says, “read me,” in silence, as you must. And know that the silence also, is a blessing, because it is in the silence that all “*selves*” can be heard. “I” the silenced “*Modim*” give mute voice to the gratefulness of the wounded, often cursed “selves”. Their gratefulness is testimony to their appreciation for having been created, blessed and sustained by God. With “my” expression of gratefulness, voiced on behalf of all our “selves”, those that have no voice, those tucked away, those condemned to silence, at best unacknowledged, mostly cursed, “I” the silenced “*Modim*”, “myself” an almost unrecognized “self”, in stillness give voice and place and blessing to the “selves”, that have been exiled, cursed, and rebuffed. On behalf of all exiled selves, the silenced *Modim* affirms that each “self” *is blessed* and valued and has a place. This *Modim's* gratefulness proclaims that all “selves” are God’s creation, and thereby share God’s blessing and provenance.

So, “**We**” thank God for creating, nourishing and sustaining all our “selves”. embracing those we have struggled against, who we have strained to stifle. “*We*” pray that God bless all our “selves” bringing those “selves” we have exiled back to God’s holy place. When that happens, the “I-You” conversation between “selves” can commence. And it is in that conversation that **Self** happens. With all “selves” blessed, present and accounted for, in relationship and discourse with one another, then, and only then, can God’s will be done with a full and whole heart. For that promise “we” are “all of us” grateful.