

Prayer and Praying/Origins of Karaite Prayers

By Yochanan Zaqantov

The Tanakh is a book filled with prayers. It gives us many examples of prayers we can model after to talk with YHWH. Yet, it does not give us clear steps in how to pray. That is left up to the individual. Yet we do have examples of how people prayed then and how people pray now.

We are going to look at what is pray, prayer and praying. We will also review some of what is worship, which is covered in my other paper on “Worship in the Tanakh”.

One of the first Hebrew words we will look at is Na.

Na' (Nun-Aleph) is reference number 4994. It is found in Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew English Lexicon (BDB) on page 609 and in the New Englishman's Hebrew Concordance (NEHC) on page 781. It is a participle of entreaty or exhortation as defined in the BDB. We will examine how it is used in the Tanakh.

Bereshit/Genesis 12:11, 13

11 As he was about to enter Egypt, he said to his wife Sarai, **[behold please] (hineh na'** **הִנֵּה נָא**) “I know what a beautiful woman you are.” 12 If the Egyptians see you, and think, ‘She is his wife,’ they will kill me and let you live. 13 **Please say (im'riy na'** **אִמְרֵי נָא**) that you are my sister, that it may go well with me because of you, and that I may remain alive thanks to you.”

Na as used here appears to show him saying “please” or “I pray” as in asking something of someone.

Bereshit/Genesis 24:23

23 **“Pray (na' נָא) tell me,”** he said, “whose daughter are you? Is there room in your father’s house for us to spend the night?”

Again asking not actually pray.

Bereshit/Genesis 27:19

19 Jacob said to his father, “I am Esau, your first-born; I have done as you told me. **Pray** [rise] (**qom na’ נָעַמְתָּ**) sit up and eat of my game, that you may give me your innermost blessing.”

Yaqov is asking Yitchak to sit up.

Bereshit/Genesis 18:4,30

4 [please] Let (yuqach na’ נָעַמְתָּ) a little water be brought; bathe your feet and recline under the tree.

30 And he said, “**Let not** (please – al na’ נָאַלְתָּ) adoni be angry if I go on: What if thirty should be found there?” And He answered, “I will not do it if I find thirty there.”

The Hebrew word Na is not translated here I have shown please here instead. It is a form of politeness in asking like please. You recognize that Avram realizes that here a people will be destroyed.

Bereshit/Genesis 32:10-12, 20

10 Then Jacob said, “O Elohim of my father Abraham and Elohim of my father Isaac, YHWH, who said to me, ‘Return to your native land and I will deal bountifully with you’! 11 I am unworthy of all the kindness that You have so steadfastly shown Your servant: with my staff alone I crossed this Jordan, and now I have become two camps. 12

Deliver me, **I pray** (na’ נָעַמְתָּ), from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; else, I fear, he may come and strike me down, mothers and children alike.

25 Jacob was left alone. And a man wrestled with him until the break of dawn. 26 When he saw that he had not prevailed against him, he wrenched Jacob’s hip at its socket, so that the socket of his hip was strained as he wrestled with him. 27 Then he said, “Let me go, for dawn is breaking.” But he answered, “I will not let you go, unless you bless me.” 28 Said the other, “What is your name?” He replied, “Jacob.” 29 Said he, “Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with beings divine and human, and have prevailed.” 30 Jacob asked, “**Pray tell me** (**haggidah na’ נָהַגְדָּתָה**) your name.” But he said, “You must not ask my name!” And he took leave of him there. 31 So Jacob named the place Peniel, meaning, “I have seen a divine being (Elohim) face to face, yet my life has been preserved.”

First Yaqov asks to be delivered from his brother since he is in fear of his life. Later he is asking for the name of the divine messenger he wrestled. Both cases different situations

if anything I pray or please is what is being said here. The earlier example is the one used with what appears to be a prayer.

Bereshit/Genesis 47:4

4 We have come,” they told Pharaoh, “to sojourn in this land, for there is no pasture for your servants’ flocks, the famine being severe in the land of Canaan. [let live] **Pray** (yes’vu na’ נָאַת בְּנֵי שָׂרֵךְ), then, let your servants stay in the region of Goshen.”

Again asking for permission like with please.

Shemot/Exodus 5:3

3 They answered, “The Elohim of the Hebrews has manifested Himself to us. Let us go, we **pray** (na’ נָאַת), a distance of three days into the wilderness to sacrifice to YHWH Eloheynu, lest He strike us with pestilence or sword.”

Moshe is asking permission to leave with the Children of Yisrael.

Shemot/Exodus 33:13, 18

13 Now, if I have truly gained Your favor, [if] **pray** (im na’ נִזְמַן) let me know Your ways, that I may know You and continue in Your favor. Consider, too, that this nation is Your people.”

17 And YHWH said to Moses, “I will also do this thing that you have asked; for you have truly gained My favor and I have singled you out by name.” 18 He said, “Oh, (**pray** – na’ נָאַת) let me behold Your Presence!” 19 And He answered, “I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim before you the name YHWH, and the grace that I grant and the compassion that I show. 20 But,” He said, “you cannot see My face, for man may not see Me and live.”

Here Moshe is asking YHWH first for him be with Moshe and the people. The second part He is asking for seeing YHWH’s presence.

Shemot/Exodus 34:9

9 and said, “If I have gained Your favor, YHWH, [if] **pray** (im na’ נִזְמַן), let YHWH go in our midst, even though this is a stiffnecked people. Pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for Your own!”

Bamidbar/Numbers 12:12-13

11 And Aaron said to Moses, “Adoni, **account not** (**al na’ tashet תְּשַׁׂתֵּן אַל-**) to us the sin which we committed in our folly. 12 [Not pray you] (**al na tehi אל-תִּהְיֶה**) Let her not be as one dead, who emerges from his mother’s womb with half his flesh eaten away.” 13 So Moses cried out to YHWH, saying, “Elohim, **pray** (**na’ נְאָזֵן**) heal her!”

Here Aharon pleads to Moshe and Moshe pleads to YHWH.

Bamidbar/Numbers 14:17,19

17 Therefore, **I pray** (**yig’dal na’ יִגְדֹּל נָא**), let my Adoni’s forbearance **be great**, as You have declared, saying, 18 ‘YHWH! slow to anger and abounding in kindness; forgiving iniquity and transgression; yet not remitting all punishment, but visiting the iniquity of fathers upon children, upon the third and fourth generations.’ 19 **Pardon**, I **pray** (**selach na’ סְלַח־נָא**), the iniquity of this people according to Your great kindness, as You have forgiven this people ever since Egypt.”
20 And YHWH said, “I pardon, as you have asked.

Moshe pleads for the forgiveness of the people.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 3:25

23 I pleaded with YHWH at that time, saying, 24 “Adoni YHWH, You who let Your servant see the first works of Your greatness and Your mighty hand, You whose powerful deeds no Elohim in heaven or on earth can equal! 25 **Let me, I pray** (**e’berah na’ אֶעֱבֹרָה־נָא**), cross over and see the good land on the other side of the Jordan, that good hill country, and the Lebanon.” 26 But YHWH was wrathful with me on your account and would not listen to me. YHWH said to me, “Enough! Never speak to Me of this matter again!

Here we have seen that the word Na’ is used primarily as a pleading or to ask favor of someone whether YHWH or a man. So when you see “I pray” you may be seeing someone asking for their favor in something. Thus this word is not what we are seeking for this study. We also see in this passage that not everything we plead for is given to us.

Next let's look at Tefillah.

Tefillah (Tav-Fey-Lamed-Hey) and is a feminine Noun from the root (Pey-Lamed-Lamed) which verb is Palal. This is reference number 8605 found in the BDB on page 813 and in the NEHC on page 1355. It means prayer.

This word is not used in torah but is first found in Shemu'el Aleph.

Shemuel Bet/2 Samuel 7:27

27 Because You, YHWH of Hosts, the Elohey of Israel, have revealed to Your servant that You will build a house for him, Your servant has ventured to offer **this prayer (hatefillah הַתְפִלָּה)** to You.

David offers a prayer to YHWH for allowing a descendant of his to build the House for YHWH.

Melekhim Aleph/I Kings 8:28, 29, 38, 45, 49, 54

28 Yet turn, YHWH my Elohay, to the **prayer (tefillat תְפִלָּת)** and supplication of Your servant, and hear the cry and **prayer (hatefillah הַתְפִלָּה)** which Your servant **offers (is praying mit'pallel מִתְפִלֵּל)** before You this day.

29 May Your eyes be open day and night toward this House, toward the place of which You have said, 'My name shall abide there'; may You heed the **prayers (hatefillah הַתְפִלָּה)** which Your servant **will offer (yit'pallel יִתְפִלֶל)** toward this place.

37 So, too, if there is a famine in the land, if there is pestilence, blight, mildew, locusts or caterpillars, or if an enemy oppresses them in any of the settlements of the land.

"In any plague and in any disease, 38 in any **prayer (tefillah תְפִלָּה)** or supplication offered by any person among all Your people Israel—each of whom knows his own affliction—when **he spreads his palms** toward this House,

40 so that they may revere You all the days that they live on the land that You gave to our fathers.

41 "Or if a **foreigner (hanakeriy)** who is not of Your people Israel comes from a distant land for the sake of Your name—42 for they shall hear about Your great name and Your mighty hand and Your outstretched arm—when he comes to **pray (vahitepel)**

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה תְּפִלֵּל (וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה תְּפִלֵּל) toward this House, 43 oh, hear in Your heavenly abode and grant all that the

foreigner (hinakeriy) asks You for. Thus all the peoples of the earth will know Your name and revere You, as does Your people Israel; and they will recognize that Your name is attached to this House that I have built.

44 “When Your people take the field against their enemy by whatever way You send them, **and they pray (vahit’pal’lu)** וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה תְּפִלֵּל (וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה תְּפִלֵּל) to YHWH in the direction of the city which You have chosen, and of the House which I have built to Your name, 45 oh, hear in heaven **their prayer (tefillattem)** תְּפִלְתָּם (וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה תְּפִלֵּל) and supplication and uphold their cause.

46 “When they sin against You—for there is no man who does not sin—and You are angry with them and deliver them to the enemy, and their captors carry them off to an enemy land, near or far; 47 and then they take it to heart in the land to which they have been carried off, and they repent and make supplication to You in the land of their captors, saying: ‘We have sinned, we have acted perversely, we have acted wickedly,’ 48 and they turn back to You with all their heart and soul, in the land of the enemies who

have carried them off, and **they pray (vehit’pal’lu)** וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה תְּפִלֵּל to You in the direction of their land which You gave to their fathers, of the city which You have chosen, and of the House which I have built to Your name—

54 When Solomon finished offering (praying –lehit’pallel לְהַתְפִּלֵּל) to YHWH **all this prayer (kal hatefillah)** בְּלִיהְתְּפִלָּה and supplication, **he rose from where he had been kneeling,** in front of the altar of YHWH, **his hands spread out toward heaven.**

We see several things in this prayer, first prayer is offered towards land of Yisrael, the city of Yerusalayim, and to the Temple (Beit Hamikdash). Melekh Shlomo prayed kneeling with hands upraised spread towards the sky.

Melekhim Aleph/9:3

3 YHWH said to him, “I have heard the [your] **prayers (tefillat’kha)** תְּפִלְתָּךְ (וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה תְּפִלֵּל) and the supplication which you have offered to Me. I consecrate this House which you have built and I set My name there forever. My eyes and My heart shall ever be there.

Here YHWH accepts the prayer made by Shlomo.

Nehemyah/Nehemiah 1:6,11

6 Let Your ear be attentive and Your eyes open to receive the **prayer** (**tefillat תְפִלָּת**) of Your servant that I am praying to You now, day and night, on behalf of the Israelites, Your servants, confessing the sins that we Israelites have committed against You, sins that I and my father's house have committed.

11 YHWH! Let Your ear be attentive to the **prayer** (**tefillat תְפִלָּת**) of Your servant, and to the **prayer** (**tefillat תְפִלָּת**) of Your servants who desire to hold Your name in awe. Grant Your servant success today, and dispose that man to be compassionate toward him!" I was the king's cupbearer at the time.

Here Nehemyah offers his prayer to YHWH.

Nehemyah/Nehemiah 11:17

17 Mattaniah son of Micha son of Zabdi son of Asaph was the head; **at prayer (latefillah לְתַפֵּלָה)**, he would lead off with praise; and Bakbukiah, one of his brothers, was his second-in-command; and Abda son of Shammua son of Galal son of Jeduthun.

Here we see that prayer was lead off with praise. It was done primarily as part of the temple worship.

Yeshayahu/Isaiah 1:15

15 And **when you lift up your hands**,
I will turn My eyes away from you;

Though you **pray at length (kiy tar'bu tefillah בִּיְתְּרֻבֹּו תְּפִלָּה)**,
I will not listen.
Your hands are stained with crime—

While the text reflects the prayers given in a negative light, the actions support what they would have done. Lift you hands up and praying at length or lift up you hand and say many prayers. Though we see some prayers in tehillim/Psalms, which are very brief.

Yeshayahu/Isaiah 38:1-5

1 In those days Hezekiah fell dangerously ill. The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz came and said to him, "Thus said YHWH: Set your affairs in order, for you are going to die; you will not get well." 2 Thereupon Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and **prayed (veyit'pallel נִזְתְּפָלֶל**) to YHWH. 3 "Please, YHWH," he said, "remember how I have

walked before You sincerely and wholeheartedly, and have done what is pleasing to You.” And Hezekiah wept profusely.

4 Then the word of YHWH came to Isaiah: 5 “Go and tell Hezekiah: Thus said YHWH, the Elohim of your father David: I have heard **your prayer** (**tefillatekha** תְפִלָּתֶךָ), I have seen your tears. I hereby add fifteen years to your life

Here Hezekiah turned his face to the wall. Since he was in Jerusalem the direction of his prayer was where he was.

Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah 7:16

16 As for you, do not **pray** (**tit'pallel** תִּתְפַּלֵּל) for this people, do not raise a cry of **prayer** (**utefillah** עֲתֵדְפָּלָה) on their behalf, do not plead with Me; for I will not listen to you.

YHWH is set to punish his people so he warns Yermiyahu not to pray for them. We see palel, which is pray, and we will look at this word later.

Yirmeyahu/Jeremiah 11:14

14 As for you, do not **pray** (**tit'pallel** תִּתְפַּלֵּל) for this people, do not raise a cry of **prayer** (**tefillah** תְּפִלָּה) on their behalf; for I will not listen when they call to Me on account of their disaster.

YHWH repeats the same statement later to Yermiyahu.

Yonah/Jonah 2:7(8)

8 When my life was ebbing away, I called YHWH to mind; And **my prayer** (**tefillatiy** תְּפִלָּתִי) came before You, Into Your holy Temple.

Here Yonah is dying and he says his prayer in his mind. It shows us we need not even move our lips but also think in a situation we can not pray.

Daniel 9:3, 17, 21

3 I turned my face to YHWH Elohim, devoting myself to **prayer** (**tefillah** תְּפִלָּה) and supplication, in fasting, in sackcloth and ashes. 4 I **prayed** (**va'et'pal'lah** וְאַתְּפִלֵּה) to YHWH Elohay, making confession thus: “YHWH, great and awesome Elohim, who stays faithful to His covenant with those who love Him and keep His commandments!

17 “O Eloheynu, hear now **the prayer** (**tefillat** תְּפִלָּת) of Your servant and his plea, and show Your favor to Your desolate sanctuary, for YHWH’s sake. 18 Incline Your ear, O my Elohim, and hear; open Your eyes and see our desolation and the city to which Your name is attached. Not because of any merit of ours do we lay our plea before You but because of Your abundant mercies. 19 YHWH, hear! YHWH, forgive! YHWH, listen, and act without delay for Your own sake, O my Elohim; for Your name is attached to Your city and Your people!”

20 While I was speaking, praying , and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and laying my supplication before YHWH my Elohim on behalf of the holy mountain of my Elohim—21 while I was uttering my **prayer** (**umit'pallel** וּמִתְפִלֵּל), the man Gabriel, whom I had previously seen in the vision, was sent forth in flight and reached me about the time of the evening offering.

Here we see Daniel praying and while at prayer he would sometimes have visions. Also, Daniel would pray at the time of the evening offering.

Next let look at the verb root Palal.

Palal (Pey-Lamed-Lamed) and is a verb. This is reference number 6419 found in the BDB on page 813 and in the NEHC on page . It means judge in the Pi’el form of the verb. Other forms of this verb are translated as: Hithpael – pray, prays, prayed, praying.

To understand this the Piel is the Active or stative property as well it can be factive. Thus, it is like saying that someone put that person in a state of being judged. Whereas, The Hithpael is essential the same word judge but used as: the person put themselves in a state of being judged.

Pi’el

Shemu’el Aleph/I Samuel 2:25

25 If a man sins against a man, the Elohim may **pardon** (**judge upil’lu** וּפְלִלּוּ) him; but if a man offends against God, who can **obtain pardon** (**judge yit’palel** יִתְפִלֶל) for him?” But they ignored their father’s plea; for YHWH was resolved that they should die.

Here Eli is warning his sons to change their ways. He was telling them that by their actions they were being judged.

Yehe'zqel/Ezekiel 16:52

52 Truly, you must bear the disgrace of serving as your sisters' **advocate (judge pilal'te תִּלְתָּ)**: Since you have sinned more abominably than they, they appear righteous in comparison. So be ashamed and bear your disgrace, because you have made your sisters look righteous.

Here the city of Yerusalayim is portrayed as the judge of her sister yet she is worst than they.

Tefillim/Psalms 106:30

30 Phinehas stepped forth and **intervened (judged vayefallel נִיפְלֵל)**, and the plague ceased

Here Phinehas put himself in the position to be judged and was found to be in the right.

Hithpael

Bereshit/Genesis 20:7, 17

7 Therefore, restore the man's wife—since he is a prophet, **he will intercede (pray/judge veiyit'pallel נִיחַפְלֶל)** for you—to save your life. If you fail to restore her, know that you shall die, you and all that are yours.”

17 Abraham then **prayed (vayit'palel נִיחַפְלֶל)** to Elohim, and Elohim healed Abimelech and his wife and his slave girls, so that they bore children;

Avraham prayed for/put into a position to be judged Avimelekh.

Bamidbar/Numbers 11:2

2 The people cried out to Moses. Moses **prayed (vayit'pallel נִיחַפְלֶל)** to YHWH, and the fire died down.

Moshe interceded or put the children of Yisrael in a position to be judged as an advocate does.

Bamidbar/Numbers 21:7

7 The people came to Moses and said, “We sinned by speaking against YHWH and against you. **Intercede** (hit’pallel הַתִּפְלֶל) with YHWH to take away the serpents from us!” And Moses **interceded** (yit’palel וַיַּתִּפְלֶל) for the people.

Devarim/Deuteronomy 9:20, 26

20 Moreover, YHWH was angry enough with Aaron to have destroyed him; so **I also interceded** (va’et’pallel וְאַתָּתִפְלֶל) for Aaron at that time.

26 **I prayed** (va’et’pallel וְאַתָּתִפְלֶל) to YHWH and said, “Adoni YHWH, do not annihilate Your very own people, whom You redeemed in Your majesty and whom You freed from Egypt with a mighty hand.

It appears that YHWH was angry with Aharon and the people over an incident. So Moshe had to advocate for them. Thus they were in a state of being judged.

Shemu’el aleph/I Samuel 1: 10,12, 26, 27

10 In her wretchedness, she **prayed** (vatit’pallel וַתִּתְפְּלֶל) to YHWH, weeping all the while.

12 As she kept on **praying** (hit’pallel הַתִּפְלֶל) before YHWH, Eli watched her mouth.

26 She said, “Please, adoni! As you live, adoni, I am the woman who stood here beside you and **prayed** (hit’pallel הַתִּפְלֶל) to YHWH. 27 It was this boy **I prayed** (hit’pallal’tiy הַתִּפְלֶלְתִּי) for; and YHWH has granted me what I asked of Him.

Hanna prayed for a son she did it silently. Later she brings back to boy (Shemu’el) who she swore to offer to serve YHWH.

Shemu’el aleph/I Samuel 2:1

1 And Hannah **prayed** (**vatit'pallel** וַתִּתְפָּלֶל): My heart exults in YHWH; I have triumphed through YHWH. I gloat over my enemies; I rejoice in Your deliverance.

Here Hanna says she has victory (gloats) over her enemies.

Shemu'el aleph/I Samuel 7:5

5 Samuel said, “Assemble all Israel at Mizpah, and **I will pray** (**ve'et'pallel** וְאֵתִ פָלֶל) to YHWH for you.”

Here we see again Shemu'el as advocate or interceding for the children of Yisrael.

Shemu'el aleph/I Samuel 8:6

6 Samuel was displeased that they said “Give us a king to govern us.” Samuel **prayed** (**vayit'pallel** וַיַּתְפָּלֶל) to YHWH,

Shemu'el bet/2 Samuel 7:27

27 Because You, YHWH of Hosts, the Elohey of Israel, have revealed to Your servant that You will build a house for him, Your servant has ventured **to offer** (**hit'palel** מִתְפָלֵל) this prayer to You.

Melekhim aleph/I Kings 8:28, 29, 30, 33, 35, 42, 44, 48, 54

28 Yet turn, YHWH Elohay, to the prayer and supplication of Your servant, and hear the cry and prayer which Your servant **offers** (**mit'pallel** מִתְפָלֵל) before You this day. 29 May Your eyes be open day and night toward this House, toward the place of which You have said, ‘My name shall abide there’; may You heed the prayers which Your servant will **offer** (**yit'pallel** יִתְפָלֶל) toward this place. 30 And when You hear the supplications which Your servant and Your people Israel [**they**] **offer** (**yit'pal'lu** יִתְפָלְלוּ) toward this place, give heed in Your heavenly abode—give heed and pardon.

33 “Should Your people Israel be routed by an enemy because they have sinned against You, and then turn back to You and acknowledge Your name, and **they offer** (**tit'pal'lu** יִתְפָלְלוּ) prayer and supplication to You in this House,

35 “Should the heavens be shut up and there be no rain, because they have sinned against You, and then **they pray** (*hit’pal’lu*) הַתִּפְלֹלּוּ toward this place and acknowledge Your name and repent of their sins, when You answer them,

42 for they shall hear about Your great name and Your mighty hand and Your outstretched arm—when he comes **to pray** (*hit’pallel*) הַתִּפְלֵל toward this House,

44 “When Your people take the field against their enemy by whatever way You send them, and **they pray** (*hit’pal’lu*) הַתִּפְלֹלּוּ to YHWH in the direction of the city which You have chosen, and of the House which I have built to Your name,

48 and they turn back to You with all their heart and soul, in the land of the enemies who have carried them off, and **they pray** (*hit’pal’lu*) הַתִּפְלֹלּוּ to You in the direction of their land which You gave to their fathers, of the city which You have chosen, and of the House which I have built to Your name

54 When Solomon finished offering to YHWH all this prayer and supplication, **he rose from where he had been kneeling**, in front of the altar of YHWH, **his hands spread out toward heaven.**

This is the same text from before but this time we look at the praying they will do who come to prayer at his house.

Tehillim/Psalms 5: 2(3)

3 Heed the sound of my cry, my king and Elohay, for **I pray** (*et’pallel* אֶתְפָּלֵל) הַתִּפְלֵל to You

Tehillim/Psalms 32:6

6 Therefore let every faithful man **pray** (*yit’pallel* יִתְפָּלֵל) הַתִּפְלֵל to You upon discovering [his sin], that the rushing mighty waters not overtake him.

How to pray?

I Kings 8:54 Hands spread, kneeling

54 When Solomon finished offering to YHWH all this prayer and supplication, he rose from where **he had been kneeling**, in front of the altar of YHWH, **his hands spread out toward heaven.**

Bowed (qadad) 6915 (qof-dalet-dalet)

Shemot/Exodus 4: 29-31

29 Then Moses and Aaron went and assembled all the elders of the Israelites. 30 Aaron repeated all the words that YHWH had spoken to Moses, and he performed the signs in the sight of the people, 31 and the people were convinced. When they heard that YHWH had taken note of the Israelites and that He had seen their plight, **they bowed low in homage (yiq'du יִקְדַּעַ).**

Nehemyah/Nehemiah 8:5-6 (standing up, hands raised then bowing down with faces on the ground)

5 Ezra opened the scroll in the sight of all the people, for he was above all the people; as he opened it, **all the people stood up.** 6 Ezra blessed YHWH, the great Elohim, **and all the people answered, “Amen, Amen,” with hands upraised.** Then they bowed (vayiq'du יִקְדַּעַ) **their heads and prostrated (vayish'tachovu יִשְׁתַּחֲוּ)** themselves before YHWH with their faces to the ground.

Bowed down (shachah) often in reference to worship. (from kneeling)

Bereshit/Genesis 18:2

2 Looking up, he saw three men standing near him. As soon as he saw them, he ran from the entrance of the tent to greet them and, **bowing (vayish'tachu יִשְׁתַּחֲוָה)** to the ground,

The 3 messengers Avram meets by bowing in prostration to them.

Bereshit/Genesis 19:1

1 The two angels arrived in Sodom in the evening, as Lot was sitting in the gate of Sodom. When Lot saw them, he rose to greet them and, **bowing low(vayish'tachu יִשְׁתַּחֲוָה)** with his face to the ground,

Lot greets the messengers by bowing down to them.

Bereshit/Genesis 33:3

3 He himself went on ahead and **bowed low** (Vayish'tachu יִשְׁתַּחֲוו) to the ground seven times until he was near his brother.

Yaaqov showing reverence or respect for his brother Esau.

Ruth 2:10

10 She **prostrated** (Vatish'tachu יִשְׁתַּחֲוו) herself with her face to the ground, and said to him, “Why are you so kind as to single me out, when I am a foreigner (nekh'riyah)?”

Here Ruth bows/prostrates face to the ground to Boaz.

Shemu'el Aleph/I Samuel 25:23-24

23 When Abigail saw David, she quickly dismounted from the ass and **threw herself face down** before David, **bowing** (vatish'tachu יִשְׁתַּחֲוו) to the ground. 24

Prostrate (vatipil יִפָּלֶא) at his feet, she pleaded, “Let the blame be mine, adoniy, but let your handmaid speak to you; hear your maid’s plea.

She falls down on her face in a prostrate position.

Fall down (nafal) in reference to laying flat. Reference 5307 (nun-fey-lamed)

Devarim/Deuteronomy 9:25

25 When I **lay prostrate** (vaet'nabal יַעֲבֹדֵל) before YHWH those forty days and forty nights, because YHWH was determined to destroy you,

Moshe was prostrating for 40 days and nights.

So you can see some information about prayer in the Tanakh. It does not give you step by step because I believe prayer is a personal thing between our elohim and us. There is a time for formal prayers and a time for informal prayers. We also see some who simply talked to Elohim as a man talks to another man. Community prayers were developed so that people could follow along standardized prayers were developed. What was the basis for these? How were they formed? What should we do today?

When did it change from temple prayers to synagogue/beit knesset prayers?

The destruction of the temple removed the Kohenim and Levi'im from their tasks of daily tefillah and sacrifices. We have seen earlier that the Kohenim and levi'im used those writings of David as one source.

Divrei HaYamin Aleph/I Chronicals 15:16-22

16 David ordered the officers of the Levites to install their kinsmen, the singers, with musical instruments, harps, lyres, and cymbals, joyfully making their voices heard. 17 So the Levites installed Heman son of Joel and, of his kinsmen, Asaph son of Berechiah; and, of the sons of Merari their kinsmen, Ethan son of Kushaiah. 18 Together with them were their kinsmen of second rank, Zechariah, Ben, Jaaziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattithiah, Eliphalehu, Mikneiah, Obed-edom and Jeiel the gatekeepers. 19 Also the singers Heman, Asaph, and Ethan to sound the bronze cymbals, 20 and Zechariah, Aziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Maaseiah, and Benaiah with harps on alamoth; 21 also Mattithiah, Eliphalehu, Mikneiah, Obed-edom, Jeiel, and Azaziah, with lyres to lead on the sheminith; 22 also Chenaniah, officer of the Levites in song; he was in charge of the song because he was a master.

David assigned the Levi'im to sing the prayers during the bringing of the Ark to the City of David.

Divrei HaYamin Aleph/I Chronicals 16:7-43

7 Then, on that day, David **first commissioned Asaph and his kinsmen to give praise to the Lord:**8 “Praise the Lord;call on His name;proclaim His deeds among the peoples.9 Sing praises unto Him;speak of all His wondrous acts.10 Exult in His holy name;let all who seek the Lord rejoice.11 Turn to the Lord, to His might;seek His presence constantly.12 Remember the wonders He has done;His portents and the judgments He has pronounced,13 O offspring of Israel, His servant,O descendants of Jacob, His chosen ones.14 He is the Lord our God;His judgments are throughout the earth.15 Be ever mindful of His covenant,the promise He gave for a thousand generations,16 that He made with Abraham,swore to Isaac,17 and confirmed in a decree for Jacob,for Israel, as an eternal covenant,18 saying,‘To you I will give the land of Canaanas your allotted heritage.’19 You were then few in number,a handful, merely sojourning there,20 wandering from nation to nation,from one kingdom to another.21 He allowed no one to oppress them;He reproved kings on their account,22 ‘Do not touch My anointed ones;do not harm My prophets.’23 “Sing to the Lord, all the earth.proclaim His victory day after day.24 Tell of His glory among the nations,His wondrous deeds among all peoples.25 For the Lord is great and much acclaimed,He is held in awe by all divine beings.26 All the gods of the peoples are mere idols,but the Lord made the heavens.27 Glory and majesty are before Him;strength and joy are in His place. 28 “Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples,ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.29 Ascribe to the Lord the glory of His name,bring tribute and enter before Him,bow down to the Lord majestic in holiness.30 Tremble in His presence, all the earth!The world stands firm; it cannot be shaken.31 Let the heavens rejoice and the earth exult;let them declare among the nations, “The Lord is King!”32 Let the sea and all within it thunder,the fields and everything in them exult;33

then shall all the trees of the forest shout for joy at the presence of the Lord, for He is coming to rule the earth.³⁴ Praise the Lord for He is good; His steadfast love is eternal.³⁵ Declare: Deliver us, O God, our deliverer, and gather us and save us from the nations, to acclaim Your holy name, to glory in Your praise.³⁶ Blessed is the Lord, God of Israel, from eternity to eternity.” And all the people said, “Amen” and “Praise the Lord.”³⁷ He left Asaph and his kinsmen there before the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord to minister before the Ark regularly as each day required,³⁸ as well as Obed-edom with their kinsmen—³⁸; also Obed-edom son of Jeduthun and Hosah as gatekeepers;³⁹ also Zadok the priest and his fellow priests before the Tabernacle of the Lord at the shrine which was in Gibeon;⁴⁰ to sacrifice burnt offerings to the Lord on the altar of the burnt offering regularly, morning and evening, in accordance with what was prescribed in the Teaching of the Lord with which He charged Israel.⁴¹ **With them were Heman and Jeduthun and the other selected men designated by name to give praise to the Lord, “For His steadfast love is eternal.”**⁴² **Heman and Jeduthun had with them trumpets and cymbals to sound, and instruments for the songs of Elohim; and the sons of Jeduthun were to be at the gate.**⁴³ Then all the people went every one to his home, and David returned to greet his household.

David established the saying of his Tehillim/as praises to YHWH Elohim. So while the offerings were being done praises were being made. This continued with the later Kings or Yehudah.

Divrei HaYamin Bet/2 Chronicles 29:29-30

29 When the offering was finished, the king and all who were there with him knelt and prostrated themselves. 30 King Hezekiah and the officers ordered the Levites to praise YHWH in the words of David and Asaph the seer; so they praised rapturously, **and they bowed and prostrated themselves.**

They even prostrated themselves.

Hosea 14:2-4

2 Return, O Israel, to the Lord your God, For you have fallen because of your sin.³ Take words with you And return to YHWH. Say to Him: “Forgive all guilt And accept what is good; Instead of bulls we will pay [The offering of] our lips.⁴ Assyria shall not save us, No more will we ride on steeds; Nor ever again will we call Our handiwork our elohim, Since in You alone orphans find pity!”

The ideas of bring words instead of sacrifice. Therefore, when we pray we offer up our offering. The next thing that is done is that there were sacrifices done for us by the Kohenim. This does not mean we go out and start sacrificing animals but instead like it states we pray.

Why we Karaites pray twice daily? Why do we do Prayers instead of Levites?

Bamidbar/Numbers 3:11- 13

11 YHWH spoke to Moshe, saying: 12 As for me, I hereby take the Levites from the midst of the Children of Israel, in place of every firstborn, breacher of womb from the Children of Israel; they shall be mine, the Levites. 13 For mine is every firstborn; at the time that I struck-down every firstborn in the land of Egypt, I hallowed to me every firstborn in Israel, from man to beast. Mine shall they be- I am YHWH!

Here we see that they Levites were taken in our place to serve YHWH. Therefore, if they are not serving in our place then we are responsible to pray on our own. Even Daniel prayed at the evening sacrifice.

Daniel 9:3, 17, 21

3 I turned my face to YHWH Elohim, devoting myself to **prayer (tefillah)** תְפִלָּה and supplication, in fasting, in sackcloth and ashes. 4 I **prayed (va'et'pal'lah)** וַאֲתַפֵּלֶה to YHWH Elohay, making confession thus: “YHWH, great and awesome Elohim, who stays faithful to His covenant with those who love Him and keep His commandments!

17 “O Eloheynu, hear now **the prayer (tefillat)** תְפִלָּת of Your servant and his plea, and show Your favor to Your desolate sanctuary, for YHWH’s sake. 18 Incline Your ear, O my Elohim, and hear; open Your eyes and see our desolation and the city to which Your name is attached. Not because of any merit of ours do we lay our plea before You but because of Your abundant mercies. 19 YHWH, hear! YHWH, forgive! YHWH, listen, and act without delay for Your own sake, O my Elohim; for Your name is attached to Your city and Your people!”

20 While I was speaking, praying , and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and laying my supplication before YHWH my Elohim on behalf of the holy mountain of my Elohim—21 while I was uttering my **prayer (umit'pallel)** וּמִתְפִלֵּל, the man Gabriel, whom I had previously seen in the vision, was sent forth in flight and reached me **about the time of the evening offering.**

Here we see Daniel praying and while at prayer he would sometimes have visions. Also, Daniel would pray at the time of the evening offering. He did pray more often than Karaites do each day.

Bamidbar/Numbers 28:3-8

3 And you are to say to them: This is the fire-offering that you are to bring-near to YHWH: lambs a year in age, wholly-sound, two per day, (as) a regular offering-up. 4 The one lamb you are to sacrifice in the morning, and the second lamb you are to sacrifice

between the setting-times; 5 and a tenth of an efa of flour, as a grain-gift, mixed with oil, crushed, a fourth of a hin 6 -the regular offering-up sacrificed at Mount Sinai- as a soothing savor, a fire-offering for YHWH. 7 And its poured-offering (is): a fourth of a hin for the first lamb; in the Holy-shrine you are to pour-it-out as a poured-offering of intoxicant for YHWH. 8 And the second lamb you are to sacrifice between the setting-times; like the morning grain-gift and like its poured-offering you are to sacrifice it, a fire-offering of soothing savor for YHWH.

Two sacrifices a day were done. Therefore, we pray twice a day.

How did Karaite Prayers evolve into what we have today?

Daniel Frank has written a really good history on this and I will quote some of his material but being it is commercially available I can not share the complete article. It is a part of a greater work by Meira Pollack. On page 559, Chapter 24 he states:

“In its original form, Karaite worship represents a conscious attempt to restore Jewish prayer to its biblical origins.”

You have seen that prayer in the Tanakh is derived from those words written down. Therefore, Karaites also look to the Tanakh to derive their prayers. Mr. Franks determines the first to discuss Karaite Prayers was al-Qirqisani.

“The earliest Karaite discussion of prayer can be found in al-Qirqisani’s *Kitab al-anwar wa'l-maraqib*. In his characteristically systematic fashion and lucid style, he delineates and examines topics that would feature prominently in all subsequent Karaite writings on prayer, such as the definition, times, direction, location, and physical postures of daily worship” Pg 560, Frank.

Al-Qirqisani was one of the first to try to organize Karaite Prayers based upon the Psalms or Tehillim. As Mr. Frank writes:

“Al-Qirqisani assigned seven Psalms for Morning and evening recitation: 136, 145, 102, 51, 90 (morning) or 141 (evening) and 106. Following Psalm 51, the lection concerning the daily sacrifice (numbers 28:1-8 is read. For each Psalm, he offers a rationale or brief explanation and describes the appropriate physical posture: Psalm 136 and 145 constitute thanksgiving and should be recited standing; Psalms 102 and 51 are supplications that should be said kneeling. Although al-Qirqisani’s general liturgical principles would remain valid, certain key elements are absent from this service, notably an opening Psalm of praise, a proclamation of divine unity (e.g. Deuteronomy 6:4) and a confessional.”

Thus, we see the early formulation of the Karaite prayers but not yet fully formed by this time. However, it is based on the Tanakh for its words. After al-Qirqisani two Karaites added their views in incorporating the Mourners of Tzion or lamentations to the prayer. These two were Salmon Ben Yeruhim and Yefet Ben Eli. On page 563. Mr Frank states:

“Following al_Qirqisani, they claimed that the Psaltery was Judaism’s book of common prayer, and lamentations a special liturgy of mourning...In their introductions to Psalms, both Salmon ben Yeruhim (mid-tenth century) and Yefet ben ‘Eli (fl. 975-1000) stress the book’s liturgical nature. Arguing directly against Sa’adiah, they maintain that is frequent exhortations to thank, praise, sing, exalt and recount – all in the imperative plural-are intended not only for the levites, but also for the entire nation. The numerous please for salvation, moreover, can meaningfully refer only to the exile.”

This moved the prayers along in its evolution to what they are today. The next to move the prayer along was Levi ben Yefet ben ‘Eli. As stated by Mr. Franks on page 565:

“During the first decades of the eleventh century, Levi Ben Yefed ben ‘Eli composed a code that includes an important treatise on prayer.”

Levi Ben Yefed ben ‘Eli also produced an abridged prayer for those who were in need of a shorter version. It was very popular and was widely used. In opposition to udah Hadassi’s version this was more detailed. Mr. Frank documents on page 566:

“Judah Hadassi vast encyclopedic code, Eshkol ha-kofer (ca. 1150) contains a detailed treatment of worship. Significantly, the liturgy accords in large measure with Aaron ben Joseph’s prayer book (ca. 1300). This suggests that the basic Karaite service was canonized at least 150 years earlier than commonly supposed. Quite possibly, the liturgy of Eshkol ha-Kofer even reflects the practice of the Mourners of Zion.”

The Karaite that brought the Siddur closer to the final form was Aaron ben Joseph “the Physician”. He was also credited with sefardization of European Karaite culture. This is pointed out by Mr. Frank. In his article on page 566 he states:

“Aaron ben Joseph “the Physician” is generally credited with giving the Karaites Siddur its present form. Full versions of the liturgical texts—Psalms, biblical passage, and florilegia—are provided together with instructions, e.g. ‘the worshipper stands, prostrates himself before the ark (heikhal) and recites.’”

There were later changes and the Karaite Siddur today is based upon the Vilna 1840 version. If you examine it you will see it is based upon the Tanakh.

Table 2: The Liturgies of Levi ben Yefet, Judah Hadassi,
and the *Siddur* compared

Levi b. Yefet	Judah Hadassi	The <i>Siddur</i>
—	1. Ps 34	1. Ps 34
1. <i>Tawhid</i>	2. <i>Tihud</i>	2. <i>Tihud</i>
2. Ps 136	3. Ps 136	3. Ps 136
—	4. <i>Beri'at ha-Yom</i> , Job 42:4	4. <i>Beri'at ha-Yom</i>
—	5. Ps 100	5. Ps 100
3. Num 28:1–8	6. Num 28:1–8	6. Num 28:1–8
4. Ps 145	7. Ps 145–150	7. Ps 145–150
5. <i>fawāsiq al-qīnōth</i>	8. <i>Vidduy</i> ^a	8. <i>Vidduy</i>
—	9. Ps 29	9. Ps 29
—	10. Ps 30	10. Daily Psalm

Table 2 (*cont.*)

Levi b. Yefet	Judah Hadassi	The <i>Siddur</i>
6. Ps 79	—	[—] ^b
7. Ps 90	11. Ps 90	11. Ps. 90
8. Ps 86	—	—
—	12. Is 63:15	12. <i>Baqqashah</i>
—	13. <i>Qedushah</i>	13. Five <i>Qedushot</i>
—	—	14. <i>Hoda'ah</i>
—	14. Four <i>Hodayot</i>	15. Four <i>Hoda'ot</i>
9. I Chron 29:10ff.	15. 1 Chron 29:11	16. <i>Malkhut Shamayim</i>
—	16. <i>Vidduy</i> (Ezra 9:10)	17. <i>Tefillah be-Lahash</i>