

Søren Kierkegaard's May 5-13th, 1846 Berlin Prayers NOTES

B-fort. 353a is a subsection of L-fort. 353 in *EP*, labelled Pap. VII 1 A 130-146 in *Pap*

“B-fort. 353a (Paper 339-340 [the entry numbers later given by Barfoed]) are the loose papers (four in total) that fall under Kierkegaard’s heading “*Berlin, 5t Mai - 13d 46*”, which at his death lay »Til Venstre« in the lower room in Pjedestal”

“The records do not contain any dates with the exception of the covers of the papers, the indirectly handed over Paper 339. On this, SK if. Barefoot written »Berlin, 5h May - 13d 46« (SKS 27, 349,1-2). That SK was in Berlin at this time is confirmed by the newspaper Flyve-Posten's passenger lists. Here it appears that SK was with the steamship 'Geiser' on the departure to Szczecin on 2 or 3 May, and that he returned to Copenhagen two weeks later, on 16 May.” -- <http://sks.dk/p339/txr.xml>

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There are 6 prayers on this document [B-fort. 353a], out of a total of 18 demarcated entries: Papir 340:2, Papir 340:3, Papir 340:4, Papir 340:7, Papir 340:8, Papir 340:13.

5 of these 6 are translated by Jens & Harry Thomson (at Chicago Theological Seminary) for Perry LeFevre’s *The Prayers of Kierkegaard*.

Alexandar Dru translated 2 of these prayers: Papir 340:3 (see no. 603 on p. 172 of *Journals*; he trims some of the beginning out) and Papir 340:8 (see no. 604 on p. 73 of *Journals*).

In total Dru provides 6 translations of the 18 entries from B-fort. 353a, many of which have been trimmed without being marked as so. See no. 602-606 on pp.171-174.

Dru’s translation on Internet Archive:

<https://archive.org/details/journalsselectio0000kier/page/172/mode/2up?view=theater&q=%22Fa+ther+in+heaven%22>

LeFevre uses Dru’s trans of Papir 340:8 (#49). It’s possible LeFevre did not include Dru’s trans of Papir 340:3 as well because of Dru’s undocumented trimming down of the prayer.

T.H. Croxall translates the last half of Papir 340:3 (see pp. 137-138 in *Meditations from Kierkegaard*).

The Hongts translate all 6 of the prayers; see #3404-#3409.

None of these prayers have been translated or placed in the KJN (see note below).

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The KJN editors have chosen to translate Kierkegaard’s Journal JJ (and very likely other journals too) as it was at the time of their work, in this case around 2015. They have not translated anything from H. P. Barfod’s edition to include back in, though the online SKS cross-references to it (from *Pap* to *Papir*).

“at present [2015] thirty leaves from the first half of the journal [JJ] are missing. In most cases the wording of the journal entries from these thirty leaves has been transmitted indirectly, via H. P. Barfod’s edition of *Af Søren Kierkegaards Efterladte Papierer* (EP [1869-1881]).”---KJN Vol 2, p 453.

English readers beware, that the KJN is not an exact replica of the SKS! Insofar as the SKS carries no scruples in cross-referencing to previous editions of Kierkegaard’s journals.

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**Søren Kierkegaard, »Berlin, 5t Mai - 13d 46« (May 5, 1846)**  
**PRAYERS**

**Papir 340:2 / Pap VII A 131/** Hong #3404/ LeFevre *The Prayers of Kierkegaard* #64:  
<http://sks.dk/p339/txt.xml#k340:2>

Father in Heaven! Thou dost speak to man in many ways; Thou to whom alone belongeth wisdom and understanding yet desirest Thyself to be understood by man. Even when thou art silent, still Thou speakest to him, for the one who saith nothing, yet speaketh in order to examine the disciple; the one who saith nothing, yet speaketh in order to try the beloved one; the one who saith nothing, yet speaketh so that the hour of understanding may be more profound. Is it not thus, Father in Heaven! Oh, in the time of silence when man remains alone, abandoned when he does not hear Thy voice, it seems to him doubtless that the separation must last forever. Oh, in the time of silence when a man consumes himself in the desert in which he does not hear Thy voice, it seems to him doubtless that it is completely extinguished. Father in Heaven! It is only a moment of silence in an intimacy of conversation. Bless then this silence as Thy word to man; grant that he never forgets that Thou speakest also when Thou art silent; give him this consolation if he waits on Thee, that Thou art silent through love and that Thou speakest through love, so that in Thy silence as in Thy word Thou art still the same Father and that it is still the same paternal love that Thou guidest by Thy voice and that Thou dost instruct by Thy silence.

Fader i Himlene! Paa mange Maader taler Du til et Menneske; Du hvem Viisdom og Forstand ene hører til, Du vil dog gjøre Dig forstaaelig for ham. Ak, og ogsaa naar Du tier, da taler Du jo dog med ham; thi ogsaa Den taler, der tier for at overhøre den Lærende; ogsaa Den taler, der tier, for at prøve den Elskede; ogsaa Den taler, der tier, for at Forstaaelsens Stund maatte være desto inderligere, naar den kommer. Fader i Himlene er det ikke saaledes! O, i Taushedens Tid, naar et Menneske staaer ene og forladt, der han ikke hører Din Røst, da er det ham vel som skulde Adskillelsen være for stedse; o, i Taushedens Tid, naar et Menneske forsmægter i Ørkenen, der han ikke hører Din Røst, da er det ham vel, som var den ganske forsvunden: Fader i Himlene det er jo dog kun Taushedens Øieblik i Samtalens Inderlighed. Saa lad den være velsignet ogsaa denne Taushed som hvert Dit Ord til et Menneske, lad ham aldrig glemme, at ogsaa da taler Du, naar Du tier; skjenk ham denne Fortrøstning, hvis han bier paa Dig, at Du tier af Kjerlighed, som Du taler af Kjerlighed, saa hvad enten Du tier eller Du taler er Du dog den samme Fader, den samme Faderlighed, hvad enten Du veileder ved Din Stemme, eller Du opdrager ved Din Taushed.

**Papir 340:3 / Pap VII 1 A 132 / Hong #3405 / LeFevre #10** [p. 15-16]: (see also Croxall pp. 137-138 (only translates the last half) and Dru (trims out some of the beginning, see below, p. 172 no. 603)):

Father in Heaven! Great is Thine infinite kingdom. Thou who bearest the weight of the stars and who governest the forces of the world through immense spaces; numberless as the sands are those who have life and being through Thee. And yet, Thou hearest the cry of all the creatures, and the cry of man whom Thou hast specially formed. Thou hearest the cry of all men without confusing their mixed voices and without distinguishing one from another in such a way as to play favorites. Thou hearest not only the voice of one who is responsible for many others and so prays to Thee in their name, as if his high function could bring him nearer to Thee; Thou hearest not only the voice of one who prays for dear ones, as if he could thereby attract Thine attention, he who is privileged in having the dear ones; no, Thou hearest also the most miserable, the most abandoned, and most solitary man—in the desert, in the multitude. And if the forgotten one has separated himself from all others; and if in the crowd he has become unknown—having ceased to be a man except as a number on a list—Thou knowest him. Thou has not forgotten him. Thou rememberest his name; Thou knowest him where he is, retired, hidden in the desert, unperceived in the crowd, in the multitude. And if in the thick shadows of dread, in the prey of terrible thoughts, he was abandoned by men, abandoned almost by the language men speak, still Thou wouldst not have forgotten him. Thou wouldst understand his language. Thou knowest also how quickly to find a way which leads to him, quick as sound, prompt as light; and if Thou shouldst wait it is not slowness, but wisdom; and if Thou dost wait, it is not slowness, but because Thou only knowest the speed of Thy help; if Thou dost wait, it is not stingy parsimony, but paternal economy which keepeth the best things reserved for the child, in a secure place, for a favorable moment. Lord our Father! Man cries to Thee in the day of distress and he gives thanks to Thee in the day of joy. Oh how wonderful to give thanks when man understands so easily that Thou art the giver of good and perfect gifts, when even the earthly heart is at once ready to understand and when even earthly prudence speedily consents. More blessed though it is to give thanks when life becomes a darkened story; more blessed though to give thanks when the heart is oppressed and the soul darkened, when reason is a traitor in its ambiguity and memory is mistaken in its forgetting, when egoism recoils in fright, when human wisdom resists, if not in rebellion then in discouragement more blessed then to thank God, for the one who thus is thankful truly loves God. He dares to say to Thee, Thou all knowing God: Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest I love Thee.

Dru's: Father in Heaven! Though oblivion had separated him from all others, though he were lost in the crowd thou knowest him, thou hast not forgotten him, thou knowest where he is hidden, hidden in the wastes of lost in the crowd, and although he sat in the outer darkness of dread filled with terrible thoughts, abandoned by men, abandoned almost by the language which men use: thou hast not forgotten him, thou understandest his language, thou knowest how to reach him with the speed of sound and light; and if thou doest tarry it is not from slowness, but wisdom, not from slowness because thou knowest the speed of they help; and if thou shouldst tarry a while it is not parsimony, but a fatherly thrift which keeps what is best for the child in the safest place and for the right time. Lord our God! To thee does man call in the day of his need, thee does he thank in times of joy. O, how beautiful to give thanks when a man understands easily that thou givest good and perfect gifts, when even the fleshy heart is ready to understand and even earthly understanding readily agrees: but it is more blessed still to give thanks when life becomes dark and gloomy, when the heart is oppressed, the mind darkened, the understanding treacherous in its ambiguity, and the memory deceitful in its

forgetfulness, and self-love terrified starts back, when intelligence is in opposition even though not defiant, but despondent—then it is more blessed still to give thanks to God; for he who thanks thus, loves God, he can even dare say to thee: Lord thou knowest all things, thou, knowest that I love thee.

Fader i Himlene! Stort er Dit uendelige Rige, Du som bærer Himme[]klodernes Vægt og styrer Verdens-Kræfterne i det uhyre Rum; utalligt som Sand er deres Tal, der kun ved Dig leve og ere. Og dog hører Du Alles Raab, ogsaa Menneskets, hvem Du særligen dannede saaledes, Du hører alle Menneskers Raab, og ikke mellem hinanden i Forvirring, og ikke særligen som gjorde Du Forskjel. Du hører ikke blot Dens Røst, der har Ansvar for Mange, i hvis Navn han kunde bede til Dig, som stod han Dig nærmere, fordi han staaer høit; og ikke blot Dens, der beder for de Elskede, som kunde han fortrinligen drage Din Opmærksomhed paa sig, han, der har Glædens Fortrin af at have de Elskede: nei det usseleste, det meest forladte, det eensomste Menneske – i Ørkenen, i Vrimlen, ham hører Du. Og om Glemsel havde adskilt ham fra alle Andre, og om han i Mængden var bleven ukjendelig<sup>1</sup>: Du kjender ham, Du har dog ikke glemt ham, Du husker hans Navn, Du veed hvor han er skjult, hvor han er skjult i Ørkenen eller overseet i Mængden; og om han sad i Angestens yderste Mørke med forfærdelige Tanker, forladt af Mennesker, forladt næsten af det Sprog, som Mennesker tale: | Du har dog ikke glemt ham, Du forstaaer hans Sprog, Du veed hurtigt at finde Veien til ham, hurtigt som Lydens og som Lysets Fart; og tøver Du, det er dog ikke Langsomhed men Viisdom; og tøver Du, det er dog ikke Langsomhed, men fordi Du kun kjender Din Hjælps Hurtighed; og tøver Du, det er dog ikke smaalig Paaholdenhed, men faderlig Sparsomhed, der gemmer det Bedste for Barnet paa det sikreste Sted for det beleiligste Øieblik. Herre vor Gud! Til Dig raaber et Menneske paa Nødens Dag, Dig takker han paa Glædens. O, skjønt at takke, naar et Menneske saa let forstaaer, at Du giver gode og fuldkomne Gaver, naar selv det kjødelige Hjerte er flux til Rede til at forstaae, og selv den jordiske Forstandighed iilsomt samtykker: saligere dog at takke, naar Livet bliver en mørk Tale, saligere dog at takke, naar Hjertet er beklemmt, naar Sindet er formørket, naar Forstanden bliver forrædersk i Tvetydighed og Hukommelsen svigefuld i Glemsomhed, naar Selvkjerligheden forfærdet gyser tilbage, naar Klogskaben gjør Modstand om ikke i Trods saa dog i Mismod – saligere da at takke Gud; thi Den der takker saaledes han elsker Gud, han tør sige til Dig Du Alvidende: Herre Du veed Alt, Du veed, at jeg elsker Dig.

<sup>1</sup> ja ikke som et Menneske mere men kun som et Tal i Folketællingen

**Papir 340:4 / Pap VII 1 A 133 / Hong #3406 / LeFevre #66:**

Keep me from becoming a fool who will not accept Thy chastisement, or a rebellious fool who is unwilling to accept Thy chastisement, a fool who is unwilling to accept it for his blessing, or a rebellious fool who wants to accept it for his perdition.

.... Frels mig fra at blive en Daare der ikke [vil] antage Din Tugt, eller en trodsig Daare, der ikke vil antage Din Tugt, en Daare, der ikke vil antage den til Velsignelse, en trodsig Daare, der vil antage den til Fordærvelse.

**Papir 340:7 / Pap VII 1 A 136 / Hong #3407 / LeFevre #32:**

Father in Heaven! As a father sends his son out into the world, so also hast Thou sent man down here; he is, it seems, separated from Thee by a world; he does not see Thee with his eyes; he does not hear Thy voice with his ears of flesh. He stands now in the world, the way opens before him—so long weakened in the discouraging moment which will not give him time, so impassive in the moment of enervating impatience which will not give him time; give then to Thy child freedom from discouragement in the vast world, freedom from discouragement when false leads seem so numerous and the right road so difficult to find. Give him the freedom from discouragement when dread and care seem to be undergirded by the destructive furor of the elements and the terror of events and by the despair of human misery; give then to Thy child the courage to remember and believe that as a father sends his child into the world, Thou hast also sent man down here. God of compassion! As the prodigal son found everything changed on his return, even the disposition of his brother, but not that of his father whose fatherly love he received and who welcomed with a festival, whose fatherly love gave him courage in his discouragement at the festival. Even so, when a man turns back toward Thee, Thou givest him courage on his road to conversion, for his return is not joyous like that of the well-loved child returning home, but it is painful like that of the prodigal son, and he is not thus expected by a loving father who with joy awaits his loving son and is joyous at seeing him again. Ah, that he may have courage to believe that a compassionate Father, who in His solicitude dreads his perdition, is awaiting him.

6. Fader i Himlene! Som en Fader sender sit Barn ud i Verden, saaledes har Du sat et Menneske her paa Jorden; han er skilt fra Dig som ved en Verden, han seer Dig ikke med sine Øine, han hører ikke Din Røst med sit jordiske Øre. Han staaer nu i Verden, og Veien ligger for ham — saa lang i Mismodets matte Øieblik der ikke vil give sig Tid, saa ufremkommelig i Utaalmodighedens piinagtige Øieblik, der ikke vil give ham Tid: da give Du Barnet Frimodighed i den vide Verden, Frimodighed, naar Vildsporet synes saa mangfoldigt og den rette Vei saa vanskelig at kjende, Frimodighed naar Angest og Bekymring synes at finde Medhold i Elementernes fordærvelige Rasen, i Begivenheders Rædsel, i mistrøstende menneskelig Elendighed: da give Du ham Frimodighed til at mindes og tro, at som en Fader sender sit Barn ud i Verden, saaledes har Du sat et Menneske her paa Jorden. — Forbarmende Gud! Som den | forlorne Søn, da han søgte Veien tilbage, fandt Alt, endog Broderens Sind forandret, kun ikke Faderen; hvis Kjerlighed modtog ham, den Hjemkomne, med et Gjestebud; hvis Faderlighed gjorde ham, den Forlorne, frimodig ved Gjestebudet: naar saaledes et Menneske vender tilbage til Dig, da give Du ham Frimodighed paa Omvendelsens Vei, thi hans Tilbagekomst er jo ikke saaledes glædelig som et elsket Barns, der vender hjem, men den er tung naar det er den Forlorne; han er jo heller ikke saaledes forventet af den kjerlige Fader, der glad venter den Elskelige, ak at han dog har Frimodighed til at tro, at han er forventet af den Barmhjertige, der bekymret frygter hans Fortabelse.

**Papir 340:8 / Pap VII 1 A 137 / Hong #3408 / Dru #604 / LeFevre #49**

Father in Heaven! Well do we know that thou art everywhere present; and that should anyone at this moment call upon thee from his bed of sickness, or one in greater need upon the ocean cry out to thee, or one in still greater need in sin, that thou art near to hear him. But thou art also near in thy house where thy community is gathered together, some perhaps flying from heavy thoughts, or followed by heavy thoughts, but some too coming from a quiet daily life of contentment, and some perhaps with a satisfied longing hidden in a thankful heart enveloped in joyous thoughts—and yet all drawn by the desire to seek God, the friend of the thankful in blessed trust; consolation of the weak in strengthening communion; refuge of the anxious in secret comfort; confidante of the afflicted as

thou dost count their tears; last comfort of the dying as thou dost receive their souls. So let thyself be found also in this hour; thou who art the Father of all, let thyself be found with a good gift for everyone who needs it, that the happy may find courage to rejoice at thy good gifts, that the sorrowful may find courage to accept thy perfect gifts. For to men there is a difference in these things, the difference of joy and of sorrow, but for thee, O Lord, there is no difference in these things; everything that comes from thee is a good and perfect gift.

7. Fader i Himlen! Vel vide vi at Du er overalt tilstæde; og om Nogen i dette Øieblik maaskee fra sit Sygeleie paakalder Dig, om Nogen i Havsens dybe Nød raaber til Dig eller fra Syndens endnu dybere, at Du er nær til at høre ham. Men Du er jo ogsaa nær her i Dit Huus, her hvor Din Menighed forsamler sig, Mangen maaskee fra svære Tanker som han flyer, eller med svære Tanker som følge ham, men vel ogsaa Mangen fra et stille dagligt Liv i Nøisomhed, maaskee ogsaa Nogen med Ønskets Opfyldelse gjemt i det taknemlige Hjerter indsvøbt i glade Tanker – Alle dog med den Trang at søge Dig o Gud, Du de Taknemliges Ven i velsignet Fortrolighed; Du de Svages Trøst i styrkende Omgang; Du de Ængstedes Tilflugt i lønlig Husværelse; Du de Grædendes Medvider, naar Du tæller Taarerne; Du den Sidste ved Dødsleiet, naar Du annammer den Døendes | Sjæl. Saa lade Du Dig da finde o Gud ogsaa i denne Time; Du som er Alles Fader, Du lade Dig [finde] med Vidnedsbyrdets gode Gave for hver især som han behøver det, at den Glade maatte vinde Frimodighed til ret med Dig at turde glæde sig over Dine gode Gaver, at den Sørgende maatte vinde Frimodighed til ret med Dig at annamme Dine fuldkomne Gaver. Thi for os Mennesker er der vel Forskjel i disse Ting, Glædens og Sorgens Forskjel, men for Dig o Gud er der jo ingen Forskjel i disse Ting: Alt, hvad der kommer fra Dig, er jo en god og en fuldkommen Gave.

**Papir 340:13 / Pap VII 1 A 142 / Hong #3409 / LeFevre #3:**

Father in Heaven! Thou art incomprehensible in Thy creation; Thou livest afar off in a light which no one can penetrate and if we recognize Thee in Thy providence, our knowledge is feeble and veils Thy splendor, Thou who art incomprehensible in Thy splendor. But Thou art still more incomprehensible in Thy grace and in Thy mercy. What is man that Thou art mindful of him, Thou Infinite One-but even more, what is the son of a fallen race, that yea Thou wouldst visit him, Thou Holy One; yea what is the sinner that Thy Son wouldst come into the world because of him, not to judge but to save, not to make known His own dwelling place so that the lost might seek Him, but in order to seek out that which is lost, having no den such as wild beasts have, having no place on which to lay his head, knowing hunger in the desert, thirst on the Cross. Lord, Father of compassion! What is man able to do for such great benefits; he is not even able to give Thee thanks without Thee. Teach us then the humble discernment of true intelligence that, as a broken heart sighs under the weight of its guilt, saying in its sorrow: "It is impossible! it is impossible that God is able to show such compassion," so that the one who appropriates this assurance in faith must also say in his joy, "it is impossible." If death too seemed to separate those who love one another and again they were given to each other, their first cry at the moment of their reunion would be, "it is impossible." And this joyous message of Thy compassion, Father in Heaven, even if man has heard it since his tender infancy, is not for that the less incomprehensible! And even if man meditates on it day by day, it does not become for that less incomprehensible! Was then Thy incomprehensible mercy like that of a man, which disappeared on closer acquaintance, like the happiness of those who loved each other once in days of old incomprehensible (then) but not any more. O torpid human reason! O guileful earthly wisdom! O

cold thought of slumbering faith! O miserable forgetfulness of the cold heart! No, Lord, keep Thou everyone who believes in Thee in the proper humble understanding and deliver him from evil.

10. Fader i Himlene! Ubegribelig er Du i Din Skabning, Du boer fjernt i et Lys, som Ingen kan trænge ind til, og kjendes Du end i Dit Forsyn, vort Kjendskab er dog kun svagt og fordunkler Din Klarhed, Du som er ubegribelig ved Din Klarhed. Men | endnu ubegribeligere er Du dog i Din Naade og Barmhjertighed. Thi hvad er et Menneske for Dig Du Uendelige, at Du dog kommer ham ihu – men endnu mere, hvad er den faldne Slægts Søn for Dig, Du Hellige, at Du dog vil besøge ham; ja hvad er en Synder, at for hans Skyld Din Søn dog vilde komme til Verden, ikke for at dømme men for at frelse, ikke for at lade sit Opholdssted blive bekjendt, at det Fortabte kunde søge til ham, men for at søge det Fortabte, uden at have en Hvile, som dog Dyret har det, uden at have en Steen at helde sit Hoved til, hungrende i Ørkenen, tørstende paa Korset. Barmhjertige Gud og Fader! hvad formaaer et Menneske at gjøre til Gjengjæld; end ikke at takke Dig formaaer han – uden Dig. Saa lære Du os da den rette Forstaaelses ydmyge Skjønsomhed, at som Den, der sønderknuset sukker under Skylden siger i sin Sorg: det er umuligt; det er umuligt at Gud saaledes kunde forbarme sig – at saaledes Den, der i Troen tilegner sig det, maatte sige i sin Glæde: det er umuligt. Hvis endog blot Døden syntes at ville adskille de Elskende, og de atter gjengaves hinanden, da var dette jo det første Udraab i den visse Gjenforenings Øieblik: det er umuligt. Og Glædens (dette glade) Budskab om Din Barmhjertighed himmelske Fader – ja, om end et Menneske fra sin tidligste Barndom hørte det: var det derfor mindre ubegribeligt! | Om end et Menneske dagligen betænkte det: blev det derfor mindre ubegribeligt! <sup>1</sup>Var da Din Naades Ubegribelighed som et Menneskes, der var engang men forsvandt ved det nærmere Bekjendtskab; være (var den) som de Elskendes Lykke: engang i fordums Dage ubegribelig men nu ikke mere! O, dorske menneskelige Skjønsomhed, o svigefulde jordiske Viisdom, o indslumrede Troes matte Tanke, o kolde Hjertes usle Glemsomhed – nei Herre, bevar Du hver Din Troende i den rette Forstaaelses ydmyge Skjønsomhed og frels ham fra det Onde!

<sup>1</sup> Skulde da Din Naades Ubegribelighed være som et Menneskes