

How Does Teshuva Work?

Section 1 – How do these these texts differ regarding the divine mechanics of teshuvah? Is forgiveness earned or given?

1. Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Teshuvah 2:4

Among the ways of repentance are, for the penitent to continue to cry out in tearful supplication before the Name, to bestow alms according to his means, and to distance himself exceedingly from the thing wherein he sinned, to have his identity changed, as if saying: "I am now another person, and not that person who perpetrated those misdeeds", to completely change his conduct for the good and straight path, and to exile himself from his place of residence, for exile atones iniquity, because it leads him to submissiveness and to be meek and humble-spirited.

מִדְרָכֵי הַתְּשׁוּבָה לְהִיּוֹת הַשָּׁב צוֹעֵק תָּמִיד לְפָנֵי הַשֵּׁם בְּבִכּוּי וּבְתַחֲנוּנִים וְעוֹשֶׂה צְדָקָה כְּפִי כָחוֹ וּמְתַרְחֵק הַרְבֵּה מִן הַדְּבָר שֶׁחָטָא בּוֹ וּמְשַׁנֶּה שְׁמוֹ כְּלוֹמֵר אֲנִי אַחֵר וְאֵינִי אוֹתוֹ הָאִישׁ שֶׁעָשָׂה אוֹתָן הַמַּעֲשִׂים וּמְשַׁנֶּה מַעֲשָׂיו כְּלֵן לְטוֹבָה וּלְדַרְךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל וְגוֹלָה מִמְּקוֹמוֹ. שְׁגָלוֹת מִכְּפָרַת עוֹן מִפְּנֵי שִׁגוֹרְמַת לוֹ לְהַפְנֹעַ וּלְהִיּוֹת עָנוּ וְשָׁפַל רוּחַ:

2. Talmud Bavli, Kiddushin, 40b

Rabbi Shimon ben Yoḥai says: Even if one was completely righteous all his life and he rebelled by sinning at the end of his life, he loses his early merit, as it is stated: "The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him on the day of his transgression" (Ezekiel 33:12). And similarly, even if one was completely wicked all his life and repented in the end, he is no longer reminded of his wickedness, as it is stated in the continuation of the verse: "And as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not stumble over it on the day that he turns from his wickedness."

ר"ש בן יוחי אומר אפילו צדיק גמור כל ימיו ומרד באחרונה איבד את הראשונות שנאמר (יחזקאל לג, יב) צדקת הצדיק לא תצילנו ביום פשעו ואפילו רשע גמור כל ימיו ועשה תשובה באחרונה אין מזכירים לו שוב רשעו שנאמר (יחזקאל לג, יב) ורשעת הרשע לא יכשל בה ביום שובו מרשעו

3. Rabbeinu Yonah, Sha'arei Teshuva 1:1

Among the good things which God, may He be blessed, has bestowed upon His creations is the path which He prepared for them to ascend from the baseness of their actions, to escape the trap of their inequities, to hold their souls back from destruction and to remove His anger from upon them. Because of His goodness and uprightness, He has taught them and warned them to return to Him when they sin against Him - for He understands their nature, as it is stated (Psalms 25:8), "Good and upright is the Lord; therefore He shows sinners the way."

מן הטובות אשר היטיב הש"י עם ברואיו כי הכין להם הדרך לעלות מתוך פחת מעשיהם. ולנוס מפח פשעיהם. לחשוך נפשם מני שחת ולהשיב מעליהם אפן. ולמדם והזהירם לשוב אליו כי יחטאו לו לרוב טובו וישרו כי הוא ידע יצרם שנאמר - (תהילים כ"ה:ח') טוב וישר ה' על כן יורה חטאים בדרך.

4. Ramchal, Mesilas Yesharim, Ch. 4

Thus when the penitent man recognizes his sin and admits it, and reflects on his evil, repents of it and completely regrets ever having done it, as he would regret [in annulling] a certain vow, in which case there is complete regret, and he desires and longs that this deed had never been committed, and pains himself strongly that the matter was done, and renounces it for the future, and flees from it - then the uprooting of the deed from his will is counted to him as the annulment of a vow and he gains atonement for it. As scripture says: "your iniquity is gone and your sin atoned for" (Isaiah 6:7) - that the sin is actually removed from existence, and uprooted through his paining himself and regretting in the present what he had done in the past. This is certainly a kindness for it is not according to the letter of justice. But nevertheless, it does not negate the attribute of justice completely for there are ways to consider it justice.

דהיינו, שבהיות השב מכיר את חטאו ומודה בו ומתבונן על רעתו ושב ומתחרט עליו חרטה גמורה דמעיקרא כחרטת הנדר ממש שהוא מתנחם לגמרי והיה חפץ ומשתוקק שמעולם לא היה נעשה הדבר ההוא ומצטער בלבו צער חזק על שכבר נעשה הדבר ועוזב אותו להבא ובורח ממנו, הנה עקירת הדבר מרצונו, יחשב לו כעקירת הנדר ומתכפר לו. והוא מה שאמר הכתוב (ישעיה ו'): וסר עונך וחסאתך תכפר, שהעון סר ממש מהמציאות ונעקר במה שעכשיו מצטער ומתנחם על מה שהיה למפרע. וזה חסד ודאי שאינה משורת הדין, אך על כל פנים הנה הוא חסד שאינו מכחיש הדין לגמרי, שהרי יש צד לתלות בו.

☞ Rambam (Source #1) says that among the ways of *teshuvah* is you change your name (or nickname) as if to say, "I am someone else, not the person who did those actions." To Rambam, part of the *teshuvah* process is changing yourself so that your new personality is disassociated from the sins. You have grown and no longer deserve punishment for past actions. In this accounting, *teshuvah* is *emes*, truth, justice.

Rav Elchanan Wasserman (*Kovetz Ma'amarim, Ma'amar Al Teshuvah*, 1991 edition p. 23) illustrates this approach by quoting the Gemara (Source #2) that someone

righteous all his life who rebels at the end loses all his merits because he regrets his past good deeds. From the perspective of religious standing, regret undoes past actions. If regretting past good deeds causes someone to lose his merits, regretting past sins should cause you to lose your punishment. That is the just, true outcome.

In contrast, Rabbeinu Yonah (Source #3) argues that teshuvah has no place in justice. You committed the sins and deserve punishment for them. It is only through divine kindness, *chesed*, a *tovah*, that we can erase our past misdeeds. The prophet Yirmiyahu describes it as “*erpa meshuvoseichem*, I will heal their repented deeds” (3:22). *Teshuvah* consists of divine healing of our past that otherwise would require punishment. Ramchal (Source #4) agrees with Rabbeinu Yonah.

Section 2 – How many steps does teshuva require?

5. Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Teshuvah 2:2

What is repentance? The sinner shall cease sinning, and remove sin from his thoughts, and wholeheartedly conclude not to revert back to it, even as it is said: "Let the wicked forsake his way" (Is. 55.7); so, too, shall he be remorseful on what was past, even as it is said: "Surely after that I was turned, I repented" (Jer. 31. 19). In addition, thereto he should take to witness Him Who knoweth all secrets that forever he will not turn to repeat that sin again, according to what it is said: "Say unto Him.... neither will we call any more the work of our hands our gods" (Hos. 14.3–4). It is, moreover, essential that his confession shall be by spoken words of his lips, and all that which he concluded in his heart shall be formed in speech.

ומה היא התשובה. הוא שיעזב החוטא חטאו ויסירו ממחשבתו ויגמר בלבו שלא יעשהו עוד שְׁנֵאָמַר (ישעיה נה ז) "יעזב רשע דרכו" וגו'. וכן יתנחם על שעבר שְׁנֵאָמַר (ירמיה לא יט) "כי אחרי שובי נחמתני". ויעיד עליו יודע תעלומות שלא ישוב לזה החטא לעולם שְׁנֵאָמַר (הושע יד ד) "ולא נאמר עוד אלהינו למעשה ידינו" וגו'. וצריך להתודות בשפתיו ולומר ענינות אלו שגמר בלבו

6. Rav Sa'adia Gaon, *Emunos Ve-Dei'os* 5:5

ועיני התשוב' ארבעה, העזיבה, והחרטה, ובקשת הכפרה, ושיקבל על עצמו שלא ישנה. וארבעתם מקובצים במקרא במקום התשובה

7. Talmud Bavli, Kiddushin, 49b

If one says to a woman: Be betrothed to me **on the condition that I am a righteous man**, then **even if** he was a **completely wicked man she is betrothed**, as **perhaps** in the meantime **he had thoughts of repentance in his mind** and is now righteous. Similarly, if one says to a woman: Be betrothed to me **on the condition that I am a wicked man**, then **even if** he was a **completely righteous man she is betrothed**, as **perhaps he had thoughts of idol worship in his mind**, a serious sin that would earn him the label of wicked.

על מנת שאני צדיק
אפילו רשע גמור
מקודשת שמא הרהר
תשובה בדעתו על
מנת שאני רשע אפילו
צדיק גמור מקודשת
שמא הרהר דבר
עבודת כוכבים בדעתו

☞ Rambam (Source #5) lists four steps to *teshuvah*: 1) stopping the sinful act, 2) regretting the sin, 3) accepting to never return to the sin, 4) confessing to G-d for the act. Other Jewish thinkers divide the steps somewhat differently. Rav Sa'adia Gaon (Source #6) adds a fifth step of asking for forgiveness. Rabbeinu Yonah (ibid., ch. 1) offers a more detailed *teshuvah* program with twenty steps that include changes in attitudes as well as behaviors.

What if you only start the first step of *teshuvah*? Are you divinely forgiven at the beginning or only when you complete the course? If *teshuvah* is a matter of justice, then only when you have completely changed into a new person then you achieve forgiveness. However, if *teshuvah* is a result of divine mercy, then perhaps anyone who starts on the path of repentance merits that mercy. In fact, we find that Rav Moshe of Trani (Mabit, *Beis Elokim* 2:1) says that *teshuvah* is a function of divine *chesed* and mercy and later (2:2) says that even though Rabbeinu Yonah lists twenty steps of *teshuvah*, you receive forgiveness after only the two steps of regretting and stopping the sin.

The Gemara (Source #7) says that if a man marries a woman on condition that he is righteous, then he is married even if until then he was wicked. As soon as he does *teshuvah* in his thoughts, he is considered righteous. According to Rabbeinu Yonah, we understand why this would be the case since *teshuvah* is a function of mercy. You can stop sinning and regret the sin in your thoughts, even without fulfilling the other steps. According to Rambam that *teshuvah* is a function of *emes*, justice, the later commentaries have to distinguish between being righteous and achieving forgiveness. You are righteous even if you repent in your thoughts but you achieve forgiveness only after following all the steps of *teshuvah* (see *Minchas Chinuch* 364:1).

Section 3 – Which of these steps sound like traditional teshuvah? According to which theory of teshuvah do the other steps seem reasonable?

8. Rabbeinu Peretz, Glosses on Sefer Mitzvot Katan, no. 53

תשובת הגדר כיון אם חטא באשה פנויה או נשואה יגדור גדר שלא להסתכל באשה ולא בבגדיה שלא יבא עוד לידי עבירה זו. תשובת הכתוב מדקדק בעונש הכתוב בתורה על עבירה זו שעשה ולפי העונש יסבול צער בתשובה. תשובת המשקל ישקול בדעתו לסבול צער כנגד הנאתו שהיה לו בשעת העבירה תשובת החרטה אין תשובה אא"כ מתחרט בלב על כל מה שעשה ואם שב ואינו מתחרט כאילו טובל ושרץ בידו.

Medieval Ashkenazic authorities prescribed a variety of strong acts of self-induced suffering as part of the *teshuvah* process, including long-term fasting, lashes, exile and more. Rabbeinu Peretz (Source #8) lists four kinds of *teshuvah*:

- 1) *teshuvah ha-geder*, in which you set additional boundaries for yourself to avoid sinning in the future;
- 2) *teshuvah ha-kasuv*, in which you undergo the punishment listed in the Torah for your sin;
- 3) *teshuvah ha-mishkal*, in which you inflict yourself with pain corresponding to the amount of pleasure you enjoyed with your sin.
- 4) *teshuvah charatah*, in which you regret the sin;

Of these four, the last is what we consider standard *teshuvah* and the first is going above and beyond. The second and third are not — and should not be — practiced today. The Vilna Gaon's brother (*Ma'alos Ha-Torah*, introduction) makes clear that we cannot undergo these harsh forms of *teshuvah* in our time (his time, even more so in our time) and emerge physically and religiously healthy. Instead, he recommends intense Torah study.

If *teshuvah* is an element of justice, what value is there going beyond the official steps? Once you have fulfilled the steps, you no longer are burdened with those sins. If you then continue repenting, you are repenting for sins you have already shed. Even if Rambam's four steps are a telescoped version of Rabbeinu Yonah's twenty steps, once you have followed all the steps, you achieve forgiveness. However, if *teshuvah* is a divine mercy, then we can rightfully beg for mercy as hard as possible, going as far as our spiritual and physical limitations allow to arouse divine forgiveness. If *teshuvah* is an element of *chesed*, we can better understand these extreme forms of *teshuvah*.

Although perhaps even according to Rambam, who holds that *teshuvah* is an element of *emes*, we can still understand the extreme *teshuvah* practices mentioned above. Rav Yechezkel Landau (*Noda Bi-Yehudah*, vol. 1 *Orach Chaim* no. 35) explains that these self-punishments are designed to inspire a person to true *teshuvah*. They have no inherent value but serve as methods to fully achieve the required steps of *teshuvah*. According to this explanation, even Rambam would agree that these additional punishments have value in the *teshuvah* process when they do, in fact, motivate toward complete *teshuvah*.

In Search of the Essential Self

1. אורות הקודש / חלק ג - מוסר הקודש / עמוד קמ / בקשת האני העצמי - צז

"And I am among the exiles (in the midst of the exile)" (Ezekiel 1:1), the inner, essential I of each person and of the community is truly revealed only according to its holiness and purity, its supreme might, consumed in the pure illumination of sublime brightness burning within it.

But we have sinned as our fathers have, the sin of Adam, the first Man, who was *estranged from his essence*, who heeded the snake and *lost himself*, could offer no clear answer to the question, "Where art thou?" because he did not know his own mind, because he had lost his true *I-ness* by his sin of bowing down to an alien god.

Israel sinned – it went whoring after strange G-ds, deserted its own essence; Israel neglected the good. The Land sinned, denied her *selfhood*, sapped her own strength, pursuing aims and ends, did not devote all her hidden virtue to making the taste of the tree be as the taste of its fruit. She cast her eye outside of herself, taken up with fortunes and careers. She cursed the moon, lost her inner orbit, her contentment with her lot; began to dream of glorifying foreign kings. And thus the world *sinks ever deeper in loss of self*, of each and every individual and of the whole.

Learned educators come along, caught up with externality, they too are distracted from the *self* and add fuel to the fire, offering vinegar to the thirsty, cramming minds and hearts with everything other, everything outside of themselves, *and the self is gradually forgotten, because if "I" am not, neither is "he" and, moreover, neither are "thou."*

"The breath of our nostrils, the anointed of the Lord" (Lamentations 4:20). That valor and might *is not*

ואני בתוך הגולה, האני הפנימי העצמי, של היחיד ושל הציבור, אינו מתגלה בתוכיותו רק לפי ערך הקדושה והטהרה שלו, לפי ערך הגבורה העליונה, הספוגה מהאורה הטהורה של זיו מעלה, שהיא מתלהבת בקרבו, חטאנו עם אבותינו, חטא האדם הראשון, שנתנכר לעצמיותו, שפנה לדעתו של נחש, ואבד את עצמו, ידע להשיב תשובה ברורה על שאלת איך, מפני שלא ידע נפשו, מפני שהאניות האמיתית נאבדה ממנו, בחטא ההשתחואה לאל זר, חטא ישראל, זה אחרי אלהי נכר, את אניותו העצמית עזב, זנח ישראל טוב. חטא הארץ, הכחישה את עצמיותה, צמצמה את חילה, הלכה אחרי מגמות ותכליתות, לא נתנה את כל חילה הכמוס להיות טעם עץ כטעם פרי, נשאה עין מחוץ לה, לחשוב על דבר גורלות וקריירות. קטרגה הירח, אבדה סיבוב פנימיותה, שמחת חלקה, חלמה על דבר הדרת מלכים חיצונה, וכה הולך העולם וצולל באבדן האני של כל אחד, של הפרט ושל הכלל.

באים מחנכים מלומדים, מסתכלים בחיצוניות, מסיחים דעה גם הם מן האני, ומוסיפים תבן על המדורה, משקים את הצמאים בחומץ, מפטמים את המוחות ואת הלבבות בכל מה שהוא חוץ מהם, והאני הולך ומשתכח, וכיון שאין אני, אין הוא, וקל וחומר שאין אתה. רוח אפינו משיח ד', זהו גבורתו הדר גדלו, איננו מבחוץ לנו, רוח אפינו

external to us, it is our own breath, the Lord our G-d and David our King whom we shall seek, we stand in awe before the Lord and before His goodness. We shall seek our "I," our selves, and we shall find us. Cast off all alien G-ds, remove every stranger and mamzer, "And know that I am the Lord your G-d, who brings you out from the land of Egypt to be your G-d, I am the Lord."

הוא, את ד' אלקינו ודוד מלכנו
נבקש, אל ה' ואל טובו נפחד, את
האני שלנו נבקש, את עצמנו נבקש
ונמצא, הסר כל אלהי נכר, הסר כל
זר וממזר, וידעתם כי אני ה'
אלקיכם, המוציא אתכם מארץ
מצרים להיות לכם לאלקים, אני ה'.

○ What's Rav Kook referring to here, in the opening passages?

○ What does it really mean to "sin"?

○ What's the "common denominator" of all sin?

○ Rav Kook refers to the "learned educators;" what sort of mistakes do they make?

○ How does my sense of self impact others?

2. מוסר אביך / מדות הראיה / אמונה

All the commandments are portrayals of faith, they drive from a depth of faith, and from what faith in the divine in its highest reaches implies for human behavior. Every commandment and its derivative particulars, as they are performed, deposit impressions in the inner life and in the world in which is spelled out the profound truth of faith in God. Every transgression and neglect of a commandment deposits in the inner life and in the world impressions that are completely contrary to what faith in God, in its fullest truth, requires. Whether this chain of causation is known or not, the effect takes place, and the strength of divine dimension is enhanced with the keeping of the Torah, which derives ultimately from faith, and it diminishes with the voiding of the divine service or its neglect.

כל המצוות כולן הן ציורי האמונה, באות הן מתוך עומק האמונה, ומתוך מה שהאמונה האלהית, בעליונותה המופלגה, מחייבת במהלכי החיים. כל מצוה וסעיפיה בהעשותם מציירים הם בחיים הנפשיים והעולמיים את הראוי להצטייר מצד עומק האמת של אמונת אלהים. וכל העברה, כשלון ורפיון אשר למצוה, הרי היא מציירת, בחיים ובעולם את ההיפוך הגמור ממה שהאמונה האלהית ברום אמתתה מחייבת. בין שיהיה כח אותה השלשלת ידוע או בלתי ידוע לעושה, הפעולה היא נפעלת, והעז האלהי מתגדל בעבודה התורית שבאה מהסתעפות האמונה, ונופל ונימק בביטול העבודה ועזיבתה.

○ What's the impact that mitzvot have on our lives?

○ Can we give an example of Rav Kook's point?

3. ספר מחשבות חרוץ - אות ז

Every Jew has a portion in the world to come. In other words, hidden within their hearts unknown even to themselves is that the root of their soul is a part of Hashem from above. This is the meaning of the Midrash "Hashem is the heart of Israel"—this is the secret of the world to come. And this is the portion that each Jew has -- even sinners. All their sins comes from the material and the manifestation of this world but not from the depth of the purity of their soul hidden in this world but to be revealed in the future as it is written [Baba Batra 75:] "In the future Israel will be referred to as HaKadosh Baruch Hu" because they will be gathered up into their Source.

All punishments are not like those of a mortal King which are merely a fine because the subject transgressed the King's will. Rather the reward of a transgression is the transgression and evil will pursue the evil doer. In other words, the transgression is itself the punishment.

וכל ישראל יש להם חלק לעולם הבא, היינו דמעמקי לבבם הנעלם שאינו בהתגלות כלל אפילו לאדם עצמו שהוא שורש נשמתם חלק אלוה ממעל שעל זה אמרו (שיר השירים רבה ה', ב') דהקב"ה לבן של ישראל, דבר זה הוא סוד העולם הבא שהוא נגד ליבא כידוע, והוא החלק לעולם הבא שיש לכל ישראל אפילו לחוטאים, שכל החטאים הוא רק מצד החומר וההתגלות בעולם הזה ולא מצד עומק הנשמה הטהורה הנעלמת בעולם הזה ומתגלת לעתיד לבוא שיהיה אור הלבנה כאור החמה, דהיינו אור כנסת ישראל יהיה מאיר ומבהיק כשמש ומגן ה' כביכול כדרך שאמרו (בבא בתרא ע"ה ע"ב) עתידים ישראל שיקראו בשמו של הקב"ה, היינו שיתכללו במקורן...:

וכל העונשין דה' יתברך אינם באים כמו עונשי מלך בשר ודם שהוא דרך קנס מפני שעבר מצותו, רק כמו שאמרו (אבות ד', ב') שכר עבירה עבירה ורשעים תרדף רעה, דהעבירה והרעה עצמה היא העונש הרודפו, כי ממילא הרי נמשך אחר הרע והרע דעבירה הוא עצמו הרע דעונש, כי כל סיטרא דרע הכל אחד וכמו שאמרו (בבא בתרא ט"ז). הוא השטן הוא יצר הרע הוא מלאך המות, והכפירה באיזה דבר הוא שאין לו שייכות לדבר זה דעל כן בא חבוקוק והעמידן על אחת, שעל ידי אמונת הנפש בה' יתברך ממילא יש לו שייכות ודיבוק לה' יתברך, ומי שאינו מאמין אין לו שום שייכות בנפשו, והאמונה בעולם הבא הוא החלק לעולם הבא שיש לכל ישראל, וזהו מעיקרי היהדות להאמין שיש עולם אחר הנצחי ואין העולם הזה תכלית

🗨️ What is your portion in the world to come?

🗨️ What is the ultimate reward and punishment for our deeds?

Forgiveness When We Have Not Sinned

Rav Yosef Tzvi Rimon

Translated by Maury Rosenfeld

Designed by Rav Rimon to explore the nature of forgiveness with family members of all ages

1. Shulchan Aruch, 606

To reconcile with your friend on Erev Yom Kippur | לפייס את חברו בערב יום הכיפורים.

🗨️ Why would a person need to reconcile with his friend specifically on the day before Yom Kippur? Why Yom Kippur specifically?

2. Mishna Berurah, 606:1

Even though throughout the rest of the year, a person is obligated to reconcile with his friend with whom he has sinned against, if he didn't have the opportunity to do so, he waits to reconcile until the next day. However, on Erev Yom Kippur, one is obligated to fix everything, in order to be purified from all of their inequities, as it says "For on this day, He will atone for you, for all of your inequities."

והנה אע"פ שגם בשאר ימות השנה מחוייב לפייס למי שפשע כנגדו מ"מ אם אין לו פנאי הוא ממתין לפייסו על יום אחר אבל בעיוה"כ מחוייב לתקן הכל כדי שיטהר מכל עונותיו כדכתיב כי ביום הזה יכפר עליכם מכל חטאתיכם.

🗨️ According to the Mishnah Berurah, when must one do Teshuvah?

3. Yoma 86a

Rav was giving shiur in front of his teacher, Rebbe. In the middle, Rebbe Chiya walked in, and Rav started again from the beginning. Afterwards, Bar Kapra entered, and Rav again started from the beginning. Yet after this, Rebbe Shimon, Rebbe's son, entered, and Rav started from the beginning a third time. Finally, Rebbe Chanina walked in. Rav exclaimed, "How am I supposed to start anew each time someone enters?" He did not start from the beginning this time. Rebbe Chanina was insulted, and on Erev Yom Kippur, Rav approached him to ask for forgiveness, and Rebbe Chanina did not acquiesce!

רב אמר שיעור לפני רבי. באמצע השיעור נכנס רבי חייא. חזר רב על השיעור מתחילתו. אחר כך נכנס בר קפרא – חזר רב על השיעור מתחילתו. אחר כך נכנס רבי שמעון (בנו של רבי) – חזר רב על כל השיעור. אחר כך נכנס רבי חנינא. אמר רב: האם אפשר כל פעם לחזור מחדש על השיעור? לא חזר והמשיך את השיעור. רבי חנינא נפגע. בערב יום הכיפורים, בא רב אל רבי חנינא לבקש מחילה, והוא לא הסכים למחול!

[The Gemara asks about Rebbe Chanina's hesitance to forgive, and answers that there was indeed a specific reason for his doing so.]

🗨️ Why would Rav have to go ask for forgiveness? Why did he do so on Erev Yom Kippur?

4. Tur, Orach Chaim, 606

- ☞ Why is it imperative to ask for forgiveness on Erev yom Kippur? Learn the commentary of the Tur, you will extrapolate that in order to be forgiven by G-d, it's essential for Klal Yisrael to be united. Yom Kippur is a day of forgiveness, therefore the more our nation becomes unified the more we can be forgiven (Think of a parent's happiness when their children are in concordance).

And each person must accept in his heart on Erev Yom Kippur to reconcile with anyone with whom they had sinned against, as any sins between a person and God, Yom Kippur atones for, though any sins between people, Yom Kippur does not atone for unless there is reconciliation ... and one should do this, so that the heart of all of Israel will be whole, each with his fellow, [so that there will be no room for any accusation or charge on Israel, and so that they will be similar to the angels] ... Just as the angels have peace between them, so too Israel on Yom Kippur, and God hears the testimony against them, and [still] forgives them.

ויתן כל אדם אל לבו בערב יום הכפורים לפייס לכל מי שפשע כנגדו דעבירות שבין אדם למקום יום הכיפורים מכפר ושבין אדם לחבירו אין יום הכפורים מכפר עד שיפייסנו ... ועושין כן כדי שיהא לב כל ישראל שלם כל אחד עם חבירו, [כדי שלא יהיה מקום לקטרג על עם ישראל וכדי להידמות למלאכים]... מה מלאכי השרת שלום ביניהם כן ישראל ביום הכפורים והקב"ה שומע עדותן מן המקטרגין ומכפר עליהם:

- ☞ Can you think of a different – or additional – reason why it's important to ask forgiveness on Erev Yom Kippur specifically?
- ☞ Is there any reason, from what we've seen, that it would be worthwhile to ask forgiveness even if we have not necessarily sinned?

Kol Nidrei: The Great Unifier

Prepared for publication by students of
Rav Goldwicht

The Mishna, *Yoma* 1:5, teaches us about a statement that the elder kohanim would say to the Kohen Gadol while he was preparing for Yom Kippur:

ואמרו לו, אישי כהן גדול, אנו שלוחי בית דין, ואתה שלוחנו ושלחיה בית דין, משביעין אנו עליך במי ששכן שמו בבית הזה, שלא תשנה דבר מכל מה שאמרנו לך. הוא פורש ובוכה, והן פורשין ובוכין.

They said to him, The Honorable Kohen Gadol, we are representatives of the court and you are our representatives and the representative of the court. We adjure you in the name of He who dwells in this abode that you will not stray from anything we tell you. He would leave crying and they would leave crying.

Rambam, *Hilchot Avodat Yom Hakippurim* 1:7, explains the Mishna:

בימי בית שני צץ המינות בישראל ויצאו הצדוקין מהרהר יאבדו שאינן מאמינין בתורה שבעל פה והיו אומרים שקטורת של יום הכיפורים מניחין אותה על האש בהיכל חוץ לפרוכת וכשיעלה עשנה מכניס אותה לפני לקדש הקדשים. הטעם, זה שכתוב בתורה כי בענן אראה על הכפרת אמרו שהוא ענן הקטורת. מפי השמועה למדו חכמים שאין נותן הקטורת אלא בקדש הקדשים לפני הארון שנ' ונתן את הקטרת על האש לפני ה'. ולפי שהיו חוששין בבית שני שמא כהן גדול זה נוטה לצד מינות היו משביעין אותו ערב יום הכיפורים ואומרים לו אישי כהן גדול ... והוא פורש ובוכה על שחשדוהו במינות והן פורשין ובוכין לפי שחשדו מי שמעשיו סתומין ושמא אין בלבו כלום.

During the Second Temple Period, heresy sprouted among the Jewish people, and the Sadducees, who didn't believe in the Oral law, emerged. They would say that the ketoret of Yom Kippur should be



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placed on the fire in the Heichal, outside of the Holy of Holies, and when it starts to produce smoke, it should be brought into the Holy of Holies. Their reasoning: The Torah states, "I will appear in smoke above the Kaporet," and they said that this refers to the smoke of the ketoret. Our rabbis had a tradition that the ketoret is only placed in the Holy of Holies before the Ark as it states, "The ketoret is placed on the fire in front of Hashem." Since they were concerned during the Second Temple period that the Kohen Gadol was influenced by this heresy, they would adjure him on the eve of Yom Kippur and say to him "Honorable Kohen Gadol etc. . . ." He would leave crying because they accused him of heresy and they would leave crying because they accused someone whose slate is clean and maybe doesn't harbor such thoughts.

Let us ask a few questions. First, why was it so important for the Tzedukim to prepare the *ketoret* outside of the *Kodesh Kodashim* and enter only after the smoke rose? Why were they so bothered by the practice of the Perushim to do everything in the *Kodesh Kodashim*?

The Midrash Tanchuma states:

א"ר יצחק בן אליעזר תדע לך שנעשה המשכן וכל כליו ושחט את הקרבנות והקריבו וערך על המזבח וסדר את השלחן ואת המנורה ואת הכל ולא ירדה שכינה עד שהקריבו את הקטורת.
R. Yitzchak ben Eliezar said: Know that the Mishkan was constructed, all of its

utensils were assembled, the sacrifices were slaughtered and offered, and set on the Altar up, the Table and the Menorah were set and everything was in place. But the Divine presence didn't descend until the ketoret was brought.

Tanuchma, Parashat Tetzaveh

What was so special about the *ketoret*, that it was the only vehicle in the Mishkan that brought the Divine presence?

Kol Nidrei

We begin the holy day of Yom Kippur with the recitation of Kol Nidrei. Synagogues are filled from wall to wall, more so than any other part of the Yom Kippur service. This is true despite Kol Nidrei being simply an annulment of vows.

How does Kol Nidrei begin? We recite the following sentence three times:

על דעת המקום ועל דעת הקהל, בישיבה של מעלה ובישיבה של מטה, אנו מתירין להתפלל עם העבריינים.

With consent of the Omnipresent and with consent of the congregation, in the assembly above and the in the assembly below, we approve praying with the transgressors.

The *Tur*, OC 619, writes:

ערבית נכנסין לבית הכנסת ונוהגין באשכנז שקודם שיתפללו מתירין לכל העבריינים כדי להתפלל עמהם ואפילו אם לא יבקשו שיתירו להם. דאמר רבי שמעון חסידא כל תענית

צבור שאין בו ממושעי ישראל אינו תענית
שהרי החלבנה ריחה רע ומנאה הכתוב עם
סמני הקטורת.

In the evening [of Yom Kippur], we enter the Synagogue. In Germany, the custom is that prior to praying, we authorize the transgressors so that we may pray with them, even if they don't request authorization. [The reason for this is] that R. Shimon Chasida said, any fast day that doesn't include Israel's transgressors is not a [bona fide] fast. Behold, galbanum has a bad odor and yet the Torah includes it as one of the spices of the ketoret.

The recitation of Kol Nidrei — specifically our authorizing prayer with the transgressors — connects us to the ketoret. Just like the ketoret — which is made with spices of beautiful fragrance and also one spice whose fragrance is bad — so too, we include the transgressors among us when we pray on Yom Kippur.

Yet the recitation of Kol Nidrei itself has not always been universally accepted. *Tur* quotes R. Natronai Gaon that in his time, many did not recite Kol Nidrei. R. Amram Gaon also writes that it is a mistake to recite Kol Nidrei. Those who question the practice do so out of concern that it is ineffective in annulling past vows or preempting future vows. While many Rishonim do endorse the practice, let us ask a third question: Why has Kol Nidrei become universally accepted? Given the controversy, why don't we simply rely on the annulment of vows that takes place before Rosh Hashanah?

You Have Said Enough!

When Moshe Rabbeinu beseeched Hashem to enter the Land of Israel, he was told by Hashem (Devarim 3:26) “*rav lach*,” you have said enough. The *Da'at Zekeinim Mibaalei Hatosafot* expand on this:

Kol Nidrei: For Past Vows or For Future Vows?

Kol Nidrei was classically understood to be an annulment of all previous vows. Rabbeinu Tam (cited in Tosafot, *Nedarim* 23b), however, noted that there are a number of components lacking from Kol Nidrei that are required for annulment of vows: a specific list of the vows taken; regret for the vows taken (our current text does include regret, but earlier texts did not); and a competent *beit din* (rabbinical court) or an expert to evaluate the merit of the annulment. Rabbeinu Tam therefore suggests that the Kol Nidrei service should be modified, and any reference to annulment of vows of the previous year should be eliminated. The purpose of the service should be to preempt future vows from taking place. In order to accommodate this new understanding of Kol Nidrei, Rabbeinu Tam is forced to change the text of Kol Nidrei. Whereas the ancient text refers to vows “from the previous Yom Kippur until this Yom Kippur,” Rabbeinu Tam’s version refers to vows “from this Yom Kippur until next Yom Kippur.” Rabbeinu Tam also changes the pronunciation of the words in order that they refer to the future tense rather than to the past tense.

Rabbeinu Asher, *Yoma* 8:28, defends the ancient version of Kol Nidrei from the questions of Rabbeinu Tam. Nevertheless, *Mishna Berurah*, 619:2, writes that the text of Kol Nidrei should follow the opinion of Rabbeinu Tam and refer to vows “from this Yom Kippur until next Yom Kippur.” However, some siddurim try to satisfy both opinions by referring to vows “from the previous Yom Kippur until this Yom Kippur,” and “from this Yom Kippur until next Yom Kippur.” The *hatarat Nedarim* on the eve of Rosh HaShanah is a more robust form of annulment of vows and preemption of future vows, and addresses many of the challenges that face Kol Nidrei.

Torah To Go Editors

רב לך. אמר משה לפני הקב"ה רבון העולמים
אם נדרת ונשבעת שלא אכנס לארץ לך והתיר
נדרך כמו שהתרת לי נדרי כשנשבעתי ליתרו
כדפרש"י בפ' ואלה שמות. אמר לו הקב"ה,
משה רב לך כלומר יש רב עליך שיכול להתיר
נדרך אבל אני אין לי רב עלי ואין לי מי שיתיר
נדרי.

Moshe said before Hashem, "Master of the universe, if You took a vow or oath that I should not enter the Land, go and annul Your vow just like You annulled that vow that I swore to Yitro (mentioned by Rashi in Parashat Shemot)." Hashem said to him, "Moshe, rav lach, you have a teacher above you that can annul your vow. I don't have a teacher above me and there is nobody to annul my vow."

While Moshe had the ability to annul his vow, there doesn't seem to be any way for Hashem to annul a vow that He took.

Vayechal Moshe: An Annulment of Hashem's Vow?

When the Jewish people sinned with the Golden Calf, Moshe pleaded to Hashem for forgiveness. The Torah (Shemot 32:11) uses the term “*vayechal Moshe*.” The midrash comments on this term:

דבר אחר “ויחל משה” מהו כן אמר רבי ברכיה
בשם רבי חלבו בשם רבי יצחק שהתיר נדרו
של יוצרו כיצד אלא בשעה שעשו ישראל העגל

וְאַשְׁבַּח בְּהַר אֲרָבָעִים יוֹם וְאַרְבָּעִים לַיְלָה לָחֶם
לֹא אָכַלְתִּי וּמַיִם לֹא שָׁתִיתִי.

At Sinai you angered G-d and G-d was enraged with you and wanted to destroy you. When I ascended the mountain to take the tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant that G-d sealed with you. I sat on the mountain forty days and forty nights. I did not eat bread and I did not drink water.

Devarim 9:8-9

When Moshe annulled the vow of Hashem not to destroy the Jewish people, he invoked another vow — the covenant that Hashem made with our forefathers that their children will forever carry their legacy. Moshe came as a representative of the Jewish people pleading to Hashem that He must keep His original covenant. However, when Moshe requested to enter the Land of Israel, his request was not as a representative of the Jewish people but as an individual. To that request, Hashem responds that He has no means of annulling the vow.

Entering the Holy of Holies

This insight helps explain the difference between the Tzedukim and the Perushim regarding the *ketoret*. The Tzedukim took the approach that the relationship with Hashem is distant. Before entering the Holy of Holies, one must first create a barrier of smoke so that the Kohen Gadol cannot see what takes place inside. However, we follow the Perushim who see ourselves as partners in the transmission of Torah. We don't need a barrier to separate us from Hashem. The Kohen Gadol enters the Holy of Holies as a representative of the Jewish people. There is no King without a nation of followers and the rendezvous with Hashem in the Holy of Holies is a rendezvous of the

קשה, אמר רבי יוחנן דבר קשה אמר לפניו תהיה התמהא אמר לו תוהא אנא על הרעה אשר דברתי לעשות לעמי, אותה שעה אמר משה מותר לך מותר לך מותר לך אין כאן נדר ואין כאן שבועה הוי "ויחל משה" שהפר נדרו ליוצרו כמה דאת אמר "ולא יחל דברו" אמר רבי שמעון בן לקיש לפיכך נקרא שמו "איש הא-להים" לומר שהתיר נדר לא-להים.

[The verse records that Moshe said] "I sat on the mountain." What does this refer to? R. Huna b. Acha said, he sat to annul the vow of his creator. And what did he say to Him? Something difficult to say. R. Yochanan said, [Moshe] said something difficult to say to the Almighty: perhaps You regret what You said (that You are going to destroy the Jewish people). [G-d] said, I regret the evil that I said I would do to My nation. At that time, Moshe said, "it is permissible for you, it is permissible for you, there is no vow or oath." This is what is meant by "vayechal Moshe" — he annulled the vow of his creator, just as we find the language "lo yachel devaru." R. Shimon b. Lakish said, therefore [Moshe] is called "The Man of G-d" to teach that he annulled the vow of G-d.

We see that Moshe Rabbeinu was able to annul the vow of Hashem. Why, then, did Hashem tell Moshe "*Rav lach*, you have a teacher above you that can annul your vow. I don't have a teacher above me and there is nobody to annul my vow"? Why couldn't Moshe annul Hashem's vow not to let Moshe into the Land of Israel, just as Moshe was able to annul Hashem's vow to destroy the Jewish people?

Perhaps the answer can be found in another verse describing how Hashem forgave the Jewish people for the sin of the golden calf:

וּבְחֹרֵב הַקְּצִפְתָּם אֶת ה' וַיִּתְאַפֵּן ה' בְּכֶם
לְהַשְׁמִיד אֶתְכֶם. בְּעֵלְתֵי הַהָרָה לְקַחַת לִוְהַת
הָאֲבָנִים לִוְהַת הַבְּרִית אֲשֶׁר כָּרַת ה' עִמָּכֶם

עמד משה מפני הא-להים שימחל להם אמר הא-להים משה כבר נשבעתי "זבח לאלהים יחרם" ודבר שבועה שיצא מפי איני מחזירו אמר משה רבון העולם ולא נתת לי הפרה של נדרים ואמרת "איש כי ידר נדר לה' או השבע שבועה לאסר אסר על נפשו לא יחל דברו."

Another interpretation of "vayechal Moshe": What did he say? R. Berechiah said in the name of R. Chelbo in the name of R. Yitzchak: [Moshe] annulled the vow of his creator. How so? When the Jewish people made the [golden] calf, Moshe tried to appease G-d to forgive them. G-d said: Moshe, I already swore that "One who worships idols will be destroyed," and I will not retract on an oath that came out of My mouth. Moshe said, Master of the Universe, did You not teach me about the annulment of vows, and You said "If a man takes a vow to Hashem or an oath to prohibit something on himself, his word shall not be desecrated"?

The midrash connects the term *vayechal Moshe* to the term *lo yachel devaru* — his word shall not be desecrated — found in the section about annulment of vows. Moshe in fact annulled Hashem's vow!

The Gemara, *Berachot* 32a, makes a similar observation:

"ויחל משה את פני ה'" אמר רבא עד שהפר לו נדרו, כתיב הכא "ויחל" וכתיב התם "לא יחל דברו" ואמר מר הוא אינו מיחל אבל אחרים מחלין לו"

"Moshe pleaded before Hashem." Rava said, [He pleaded] until he annulled His vow. It states here "vayechal" and it says there "lo yachel devaru." It has been taught, he may not desecrate, but others may desecrate it for him (i.e. through the annulment of vows).

The midrash elaborates on the details of the annulment:

"ואשב בהר" ומהו כן אמר רבי הונא בר אחא שישב להתיר נדרו של יוצרו ומה אמר לו דבר

King with His people, with the Kohen Gadol acting as a representative. He enters with the *ketoret* to symbolize that he is not only representing those with a beautiful fragrance, but he is also representing those who don't have a nice fragrance, those who are distant from Judaism.

Shehechyanu Vekiyimanu

Today, we don't have a Kohen Gadol, or *ketoret* or a Beit Hamikdash. What we do have is Kol Nidrei. The chazzan stands with the entire congregation and after specifically including the transgressors in the congregation, begins to annul vows. Whose vows? The vows of Hashem! Hashem, if You ever took an oath or a vow to punish us, we come to you to annul that oath or vow because we are going to invoke the covenant that You sealed that the Jewish people will remain forever, no matter how far we have strayed.

Without Kol Nidrei, where would we be? Hashem took a vow that we would never enter the Land of Israel:

אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה אָקוּט בְּדוֹר וָאָמַר עִם תְּעִי לָבָב
הֵם וְהֵם לֹא יִדְעוּ דְרָכַי. אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי בְּאָפִי אִם
יָבֹאוּ אֵל מְנוּחָתִי.

For forty years I was angered by a generation and I said, "They are a nation that errs in their heart." Therefore, I swore in my anger that they will never enter My resting place.

Tehillim 95:10-11

Yet we entered the Land of Israel. How did that happen? We the Jewish people annulled that vow. This is why we recite *Shehechyanu* out loud immediately after Kol Nidrei. *Tur*,

Orach Chaim no. 619, writes that we recite *Shehechyanu* in the synagogue because we don't recite Kiddush on Yom Kippur. However, based on what we said, perhaps we can explain why we recite *Shehechyanu* specifically after Kol Nidrei. After annulling the vows of Hashem, it is as if we are born anew. What more appropriate time to say a blessing "that He gave us life, sustained us and brought us to this time"?

With Your Sweet Aroma

This idea explains why it was specifically the *ketoret* that brought the Divine presence and not the Altar, the Shulchan or the Menorah. The Divine presence is a reflection of the unity that exists among us. This unity generates unity and partnership with the Almighty. It is this type of unity that we need to enter into Yom Kippur.

The Mishna, *Tamid* 3:8, teaches us that the smell of the *ketoret* reached all the way to Yericho. In order to enter the Land of Israel, we need to have that sense of smell that allows us to connect and unify.

The prophet Yechezkel tells us that when the Almighty will gather us in from the exile, it will be in the merit of a pleasant smell:

בְּרִיחַ נִיחֹחַ אֲרָצָה אֲתֹכֶם בְּהוֹצִיאִי אֲתֹכֶם
מִן הָעַמִּים וְקִבַּצְתִּי אֲתֹכֶם מִן הָאֲרָצוֹת אֲשֶׁר
נִפְצַתֶם בָּם וְנִקְדַּשְׁתִּי בְכֶם לְעֵינֵי הַגּוֹיִם. וִידַעְתֶּם
כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה בְּהִבִּיאִי אֲתֹכֶם אֶל אֶדְמַת יִשְׂרָאֵל
אֶל הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁאַתִּי אֶת יְדֵי לְתַת אוֹתָהּ
לְאַבוֹתֵיכֶם.

With your sweet aroma will I accept you, when I bring you out from the peoples,

and gather you out of the countries where you have been scattered; and I will be sanctified in you in the eyes of the nations. And you shall know that I am G-d, when I shall bring you into the Land of Israel, into the country which I lifted up My hand to give to your fathers. Yechezkel 20:41-42

Which aroma is the verse referring to? The *Metzudat David* suggests that it refers to the *ketoret*:

בְּרִיחַ נִיחֹחַ. בַּעֲבוּר הַבִּאֵת רִיחַ הַקְּטוֹרֶת
הַבֹּאֵה לְנַחַת רוּחַ אֱהִיָּה מְרוּצָה לָכֶם זוּהַ יִהְיֶה
בְּזִמְנֵי שְׂאוּצִיא אֲתֹכֶם מִן הָעַמִּים וְכוּ'.

With your sweet aroma—Because of the offering of the ketoret and its aroma which comes to bring a spirit of satisfaction, I will accept you. This will be during the time when I take you out from the nations.

How can the *ketoret* be responsible for the ingathering of the exiles? Nowadays, we don't have an altar or a Beit Hamikdash! The answer is that the *ketoret* of today is unity. If we can learn to overlook the flaws of others the same way we overlook our own flaws, we can recreate that sweet aroma that was created by the *ketoret* and could be smelled from miles away.

Therefore, despite the controversy surrounding whether or not to recite Kol Nidrei, it has become the introduction to Yom Kippur in almost all circles. It unifies us as a people and allows us to tell Hashem that He should annul any vows that He may have made to punish us. Through it, we merit that He gives us life, sustains us and brings us to this time.



Find more shiurim and articles from Rabbi Meir Goldwicht at
<http://www.yutorah.org/Rabbi-Meir-Goldwicht>

RENEWING OUR SHUL EXPERIENCE

The Siddur: More Than Just **OUR** Words



OU CHAG AT HOME
RABBI ANDREW MARKOWITZ
ram@shomrei-torah.org



Intro to this packet and guiding questions to keep in mind

One of the parts of Jewish life that was disrupted during the past 6 months was tefilla. Our Shuls were closed and we were davening in our homes. I would like to explore this topic of prayer with you. Why is tefilla important? Why is it that so many find a difficult time connecting to it? What is kavana? These are just some of the questions that I would like to explore with you. Please feel free to reach out to me personally to follow up.

In this source packet, we learn about the core aspects, challenges, and opportunities of Tefilla. It is framed within the context of the time that we are in. We are experiencing a proliferation of Siddurim of all shapes and sizes, a far cry from what our parents or grandparents had when they were younger. I find it overwhelming to walk into a seforim store to choose a new siddur, there are simply too many options. Is this a good thing? Please discuss

The Siddur Revolution: As the introduction to this learning packet, I found original advertisements of English translated siddurim from Birnbaum, Artscroll, and more recently from Koren. Notice what they were advertising. What was their hook? What were they trying to accomplish with their translation?

Challenges to Tefillah: Tefillah is “worship of the heart,” it is deeply personal, yet performed communally. What are the challenges that you personally face when approaching tefillah? We shared two passages from the Gemara that address this difficulty as well as a quote from the Baal haTanya addressing the role of Tefillah in the end of days.

Halacha/Lomdus Section

We begin by noting a contradiction in the Rambam between two passages in his Mishneh Torah. There are two approaches to resolve the contradiction. Before we get there, we learn together the reasons why the Rambam feels the first bracha in Shmoneh Esrai is more important in regards to Kavanah than the rest.

Two approaches: Rav Chaim Soloveichik vs Chazon Ish/Avi Ezri.

Rav Chaim writes that there are really two different aspects of kavana. 1. The feeling that we are standing before Hashem. 2. Understanding the Words. What is the difference between the two? Why would one be more significant than the other?

Standing Before Hashem: When we are in praying Shmoneh Esrai, we are standing before Hashem. We share 4 proofs to this notion from halacha. With several other nice thoughts about tefilla as well.

Baseline Kavana: Based on an essay in the Kehillos Yaakov, we share a practical difference (nafka mina) between the approach of the Chazon Ish and Rav Chaim.

Philosophical Difference: Rabbi Lamm zt”l wrote an essay about the divergent opinions of these gedolim and how it connects to our continuous connection to HaKadosh Baruch Hu on an ongoing basis. It is a Machlokes between the Baal haTanya and the Moreh Nevuchim.

Final Thoughts: We share practical tips to help enhance our tefillah. **Keeping our cell phones out of shul, focusing on one bracha/tefillah for a week at a time to maximize kavana, purchasing a new siddur yearly,**

Many thanks to Rabbi Shalom Baum, Rabbi Dovid Bashevkin, Rabbi Avraham Bergstein, Rabbi Michael Bleicher, Rabbi Elli Bloom, Dr Menachem Butler, Rabbi Menachem Penner, Taki Shirayangi, and Rabbi Benjamin Yudin, for their help, insight, and thoughts for this drasha.

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The Siddur Revolution

Just Published! HA-SIDDUR HA-SHALEM

הסדר השלם
The complete Daily Prayerbook
Translated and Annotated
by PHILIP BIRNBAUM

The Hebrew Publishing Company deems it a privilege to announce publication of the most exquisite edition of the complete *Siddur*, long-expected and awaited by many thousands of worshippers and students.

Ha-Siddur ha-Shalem, concise and comprehensive, has been especially designed for synagogue, school and home use. Each service is arranged as an integrated unit. Directions are explicit, brief and to the point. The complete traditional text is carefully vocalized and divided into sentences and clauses by the use of modern punctuation marks. Festival services such as *Tal* and *Geshem*, *Akdamuth* and *Hoshanot*, are included as well as the *Ethics of the Fathers*.

The modern English translation is free from disconcerting archaic forms. The running commentary in this edition explains various points of interest.

\$3.50 AT ALL BOOKSELLERS

Hebrew Publishing Company
77 Delancey Street, New York

Ad for the new Birnbaum Siddur that appeared in April 1949 in the OU's Jewish Life magazine

Jewish World Magazine
1984

country, with reset, uniformly styled type and contemporary English language. Yet, commentary remained minimal, reflecting the relative lack of Jewish scholarship among most American Orthodox Jews before the maturing of the day school movement in recent decades.

In recent years, the graduates of this national network of primarily Orthodox day schools have assumed a leadership role within the lay Orthodox community and its institutions. This new generation of Jewish laymen and laywomen have created a significant commercial demand for Jewish books of enhanced religious content better suited to their day school training.

The support of this group has been a major factor in the growth of the Artscroll/Mesorah series of publications over the past decade. The publication house has produced books in a characteristic format, combining the classic Hebrew text with a new translation and original English commentaries based exclusively upon classical rabbinic commentaries for the books of the Bible, the Talmud, the Haggadah and small segments of the liturgy.

More recently, the Artscroll team has applied the same format to new books on Jewish holiday themes. It has also published translations and original books on Jewish religious, biographical, historical and Halachic themes, as well as a series for children.

These books enjoy a remarkable popularity, literally creating and serving a significant new Jewish book market, and causing quite a stir in Jewish literary circles. The books are distinguished by their distinctive and easily recognizable formats, made possible by recent advances in computerized Hebrew and English typography.

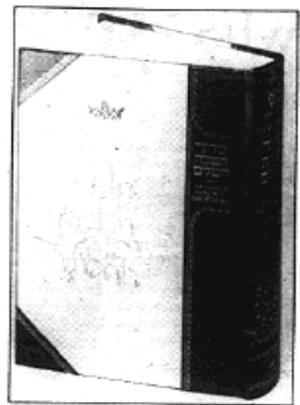
Yet, it was not until three years ago that Artscroll addressed itself seriously to the formidable task of producing a new siddur for its demanding constituency. That project culminated this month with the publication of its 1,000-page *The Complete Artscroll Siddur*, in Ashkenaz Nusach.

It is, by far, the most difficult and ambitious project ever undertaken by Artscroll and has taken priority for its editorial and production staff over the past two years.

The first step was the publication in 1981 of a Friday night siddur. It was originally intended as the beginning of a multi-volume siddur set designed, in the standard Artscroll format, primarily for study and reference, but the reaction it elicited from rabbis and laymen alike forced the Artscroll team to rethink the entire concept of the project. It became apparent that there was now a substantial demand for a complete, single volume siddur both practical for daily use and containing the translation and expanded English commentary based on classical sources that is Artscroll's speciality.

At this point, Artscroll's general editors, Rabbi Nosson Scherman and Rabbi Meir Zlotowitz, launched a major effort to reformulate and redesign the traditional Jewish prayer book. Rabbis, synagogue and communal leaders from throughout the Orthodox community were consulted, test editions were produced and circulated for comment, and earlier editions of the siddur were analyzed for their faults and strengths.

Challenge of Typography, Design
Combining all of the desired elements onto a practical siddur page presented a tremendous challenge of typography and design.



Artscroll's new siddur

The final version is the result of a continuing trade-off between the need for practical daily utility and the detail required for clear instructions, translations and commentaries on the prayer text.

Many of the prayers had to be translated into English for the first time, since previous translations had only paraphrased them or omitted them completely. Other sections were adapted from previous Artscroll works on individual prayers or holidays.

The translation emphasizes the literal, overall meaning of the prayers, and the commentary on the bottom of each page has been kept more concise and more uniform in viewpoint than the usual Artscroll treatment. The overall goal is to transmit the inspirational content of the prayers, and the overriding priority was to produce a siddur that is convenient and practical for everyday use in the home and synagogue.

In order to fit conveniently on existing synagogue bookshelves, the siddur will be slightly smaller than most other Artscroll books, measuring five-and-a-half by eight-and-a-half inches. Because it is designed for daily use, the book is being produced with extra-tough, high quality materials, including ultra-opaque, thin Bible paper and a three piece, hard cover binding.

The finished pages are well-organized and comfortably readable. All instructions and notes are inserted into the text of the prayers at the exact point of application. Chazzan's notes are clear, but unobtrusive. Communal responses are translated in bold face. There are special instructions to correct the reader's errors or omissions as well as special sections with more extensive discussions of the laws of specific prayers. The Artscroll siddur contains the complete text of all prayer services, in order, complete with Torah readings.

Special care has also been taken with the page breaks to maintain continuity, and the overall design includes numerous esthetic touches.

The Artscroll team reports a large advance order for the new siddur; of its initial 50,000 press run, half has already been committed.

Currently plans call for the production of both a Sphard Nusach edition and reduced size version within the next few months. Separate Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur Machzors are also planned. □

Artscroll markets distinctive Orthodox siddur

By YAAKOV KORREICH

The Jewish people have always been known as "the people of the Book." The obvious question, of course, is which book?

On one level, the answer is simple, the book is the Torah, including not only the Five Books of Moses and the entire Old Testament, but also the books of the Oral Torah, the Talmud and rabbinic commentaries. On another level, however, on a thrice daily basis, for thousands of years, the overwhelming vehicle of religious expression for Jews from all walks of life has been the traditional prayer book — the siddur.

In a very real sense, the siddur is an anthology of the best of all Jewish religious literature. It includes lengthy passages from the Five Books of Moses, half of the entire book of Psalms, the Song of Songs, whole

chapters of the Talmud, selections from the Kabbalah (the prime sourcebook of Jewish mysticism) and the finest examples of over 1,000 years of rabbinic religious poetry in Aramaic and Hebrew.

Last week, a new siddur appeared on the market, culminating a three-year and half a million dollar effort by Artscroll/Mesorah, a publishing house based in Brooklyn. Called *The Complete Artscroll Siddur*, it is a complete daily, Sabbath and holiday siddur.

In general, the siddur has been one of the prime vehicles for religious creativity in Judaism, with each separate culture and segment of Judaism expressing its uniqueness through it. The Ashkenazic and Sephardic communities and Hasidic groups use significantly different versions, called Nusachs. All three versions contain largely

the same prayers with some variation in text and order, and are mutually recognized as valid among the different groups.

There is a rich tradition, now largely unused, of *Piyyut*, special prayers, often beautifully poetic and lyrical, which were composed by classical rabbinic scholars over the past thousand years. The prayer services of the numerous pre-Holocaust European Jewish communities could be distinguished by the selections of this optional *Piyyut* included in community prayer services.

New Siddurs Through Generations

Thus, numerous different editions of the siddur were published through the generations, reflecting the uniqueness of each community's separate prayer customs and traditions. One of the first tasks attempted by new ideological or reform movements in contem-

porary Judaism is the publication of a new prayerbook, reflecting the group's ideological innovations, either by the selection of prayers employed, the new liturgy introduced, or the interpretation assigned to established prayers.

Even within the Orthodox community, cultural evolution has been reflected in the editions of the siddur most commonly in use. In the early decades of this century, the most popular versions were reprints of European editions, with the minimal additions of English language instructions. Early Orthodox English language translations used stilted, archaic language, largely without commentary.

Only over the past 30 years have truly contemporary English-Hebrew editions of the Orthodox siddur become popular in this

The Emergence of the English Speaking Rabbinate by Rabbi Louis Bernstein

As members of the R.C.A. began to occupy more pulpits and their English-speaking congregants increased, the need for an updated translation of the siddur became apparent. In some congregations there were English readings as the number of worshippers who did not know or understand Hebrew increased. It was necessary to meet the Reform and Conservative competition. Both had their own translations of the prayerbook and English readings of prayers were widely used in their services.

The siddur, when it appeared, was called The Traditional Prayer Book for Sabbath and festivals. The English translations were printed opposite the Hebrew text. Most other prayer books contain the entire Sabbath service and then the holiday services. This siddur published the services according to the time of day, the Sabbath and festival evening services together in one section, followed by the morning Sabbath and

At the October executive meeting in 1944, Morris Max reported that the Hebrew Publishing Company had contacted the Rabbinical Council and was anxious to publish a siddur with a translation bearing the Rabbinical Council imprimatur. The R.C.A. would appoint the compilers, translators, and editorial board.¹ The Executive Committee instructed the Publications

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Koren Aviv Weekday Siddur



The Koren Sacks Siddur



The Koren Sacks Siddur



Mesorat HaRav Siddur



Koren Shalem Siddur



Koren Rav Kook Siddur



RCA Siddur Avodat HaLev



The Koren NCSY Siddur

Challenges of Tefillah

תלמוד בבלי מסכת ברכות דף ו עמוד ב

אמר ליה ההוא מרבנן לרב ביבי בר אבבי, ואמרי לה רב ביבי לרב נחמן בר יצחק: מאי כרם זלת לבני אדם? - אמר ליה: אלו דברים שעומדים ברומו של עולם ובני אדם מזלזלין בהן

תלמוד בבלי מסכת ברכות דף לג עמוד ב

תנו רבנן, ארבעה צריכין חזוק ואלו הן:
תורה, ומעשים טובים, תפילה ודרך ארץ

תשמו	אחרון	קנטרס
	<p>עליה, והיא חובה של תורה ממש למביני מדע תועלת ההתבוננות ועמק הדעת קצת כל חר לפום שעורא דיליה, בסדור שבחו של מקום ברוך הוא בפסוקי דזמרה, ושתי ברכות שלפני קריאת שמע יוצר ואהבה לעורר בהן האהבה המסתרת בלב כל ישראל ללב לבא לבחינת גלוי בהתגלות הלב בשעת קריאת שמע עצמה, שזאת היא מצות האהבה שבפסוק (וברים ה' ה) 'ואהבת גו' בכל לבבך גו', הנמנית ראשונה בתנ"ך מצותי, כמו שכתב הרמב"ם ז"ל (הל' יסודי התורה פ"ב ה"א) שהיא מיסודי התורה ושרשה ומקור לכל רמ"ח מצות עשה, כי על אהבה המסתרת בלב כל ישראל בתולדותם וטבעם לא שיק צווי כלל:</p>	<p>מוציאו ידי חובתו אף שלא שמע כאלו שמע, שהוא כעונה ממש, וכך איתא בגמרא (ר"ה לה.) קמט גבי עם שבשדות דאניסי ויוצאים ידי חובת תפלת שמונה עשרה עצמה בחזרת השליח צבור כאלו שמעו ממש, וגם קדשה וברכו בכלל: והנה זאת תקנויה פן הוא אף גם בדורות הראשונים של חכמי המשנה והגמרא שהיתה תורתם קבע ועקר עבודתם ולא תפלתם, ומכל שכן עתה הפעם בעקבות משיחא שאין תורתנו קבע מצוק העתים, ועקר העבודה בעקבות משיחא היא התפלה כמו שכתב הרב חיים ויטאל ז"ל בעין חיים ופרי עין חיים (שער התפילה פ"ז) מכל שכן וקל וחומר שראוי ונכון לתן נפשנו ממש</p>

The Tanya, Rav
Shneur Zalman of
Liadi

What is the Definition of Kavana? Contradiction in the Rambam

בספ משנה אהבה הלכות תפלה וברכת כהנים פ"ד בספ משנה

אחת חסידים הראשונים מ"מ לריך לישג מעט: ואחר כך יתפלל בנחת ובתחנונים וכו'. משנה פרק תפלת השחר (פג): רבי אליעזר אומר העושה תפלתו קבע אין תפלתו תחתונים ובגמ' (טט): מאי קבע א"ר יעקב בר אידי אמר רבי הושיעא כל שתפלתו דומה עליו כמשוי ורנן אמרי כל שאינו אומניה בלשון תחנונים. ורבינו כחב דתרווייהו בני שפיהה בנתח ובתחנונים ושלא תראה עליו כמשוי דע"כ לא פליגי ר' הושיעא ורנן אלא בפירוש עושה תפלתו קבע דלומר רבי אליעזר אבל כולהו מנידו דלכתולה תרווייהו בעינן: חסידים הראשונים וכו'. ברישא פרק אין עומדין (נג): יז שכור אל יתפלל וכו'. פרק הדר (סד): מימרא דרבה בר רב [רב] הונא: איזהו שכור וכו'. מימרא סס: ומה שאמר דברביעית מקרי שמוי הכי משמע הכס בשהוא פירקא (סד):

טו כוונת הלב כיצד וכו' ואם התפלל וכו'. סוף פרק תפלת השחר (נ): א"ר יוחנן אני ראימי את רבי ינאי דללי והדר ללי, כלומר ולמה לי שחי תפלות אלא אחת של שחרית ואחת של מוספין ולאפוקי ממ"ד הכס אין תפלת המוספין אלא בצבור, א"ל ר' ירמיה לרבי זירא ודילמא מעיקרא לא כיון דעמיה והשתא כיון דעמיה. ומדלמא ליה הכי למד רבינו שאם התפלל בלא כוונה חוזר ומתפלל בצוונה. וכ"כ הראשונים ז"ל: לפיכך הבא מן הדרך וכו'. ערובין פרק הדר (סג): א"ר אליעזר הבא בדרך אל יתפלל ג' ימים. ומפרש רבינו דהיינו בא מן הדרך, ואפשר שכן הייתה גירסתו בגמרא. וגם בדבריו ז"ל נכלל שהבא בדרך לא יתפלל מדנקט או מיצר, וס"ל דטעמא מפני שהוא עיף או מירא אבל אם דעמו מכוונת יתפלל ולמדנו ק מדרמרי' הכס אצוה דשמואל כי אמי בצורחא לא מנלי תלתא יומי ואם איחא דכל אדם אפורים מאי רבותיה דאצוה דשמואל אלא ודאי דאצוה דשמואל היה מויק לו הדרך ולהכי לא מנלי עד תלתא יומי אבל אם לא היה מלעזר היה לריך להתפלל מיד: מצא דעתו וכו'. פרק הדר (סג): אמר רב חייל בר אשי אמר רב כל שאין דעמו מיושנה עליו אל יתפלל:

טו כוונת הלב כיצד. כל תפלה שאינה בכוונה
וכי **אינה תפלה ואם התפלל בלא כוונה חוזר ומתפלל בכוונה.** מצא דעתו משובשת ולבו טרוד אסור לו להתפלל עד שתתישב דעתו. לפיכך הבא מן הדרך והוא עיף או מצר אסור לו להתפלל עד שתתישב דעתו, אמרו חכמים שלשה ימים עד שינוח ותתקדר דעתו ואחר כך יתפלל: טז כיצד היא הכוונה. שיפנה לבו מכל המחשבות ויראה עצמו כאילו הוא עומד לפני השכינה לפיכך צריך לישב מעט

קודם התפלה כדי לכוון את לבו ואחר כך יתפלל בנחת ותחנונים. ולא יעשה תפלתו כמי שהיה נושא משוי משליכו והולך לו לפיכך צריך לישב מעט אחר התפלה ואחר כך יפטר. חסידים הראשונים היו שוהין שעה קודם התפלה ושעה אחר התפלה ומאריכין בתפלה שעה: יז שכור אל יתפלל מפני שאין לו כוונה ואם התפלל תפלתו תועבה לפיכך חוזר ומתפלל

בספ משנה אהבה הלכות תפלה וברכת כהנים פ"ט-י בספ משנה

פרק עשירי

א מי שהתפלל ולא כיון את לבו יחזור ויתפלל בכוונה [א] ואם כיון לבו בבכורה ראשונה שוב אינו צריך. מי שטעה באחת משלש ברכות הראשונות חוזר לראש ואם טעה באחת משלש אחרונות חוזר לעבודה ואם טעה באחת מן האמצעיות [ב] חוזר לתחלת הברכה שטעה בה ומשלים תפלתו על הסדר.

15 Proper intention: What is implied? Any prayer that is not [recited] with proper intention is not prayer. If one prays without proper intention, he must repeat his prayers with proper intention. One who is in a confused or troubled state may not pray until he composes himself. Therefore, one who comes in from a journey and is tired or irritated is forbidden to pray until he composes himself. Our Sages taught that one should wait three days until he is rested and his mind is settled, and then he may pray. **16** What is meant by [proper] intention? One should clear his mind from all thoughts and envision himself as standing before the Divine Presence. Therefore, one must sit a short while before praying in order to focus his attention and then pray in a pleasant and supplicatory fashion. **1** A person who prayed without concentrating [on his prayers] must pray a second time with concentration. However, if he had concentrated during the first blessing, nothing more is necessary. (translation from Chabad.org)

Why is the First Bracha so important?

לד: אין עומדין פרק חמישי ברכות

המאן: כותבי התפלה ומעתיקי סימן רע לו ואם שליח צבור הוא סימן רע לשולחיו מפני ששולחיו של אדם כמדתו אמרו עליו על ר' חנינא בן חוסא שהיה מתפלל על החולים ואומר זה חי וזה מת אמרו לו מנין אתה יודע אמר להם אם שגורה הפלתי בפי ידע אני שהוא מקובל ואם לאו יודע אני שהוא ממוקף: גמ' אביה א"ר חייא אמר רב ספרא משום חד רבי רבי באבא אימא רבתי לה אברייחא המתפלל יצרך שיכוין את לבו בבולן ואם אינו יכול לכוין בבולן יכוין את לבו באחת א"ר חייא אמר רב ספרא משום חד רבי רבי באבא אמרו עליו על רבי חנינא וכו': כנא הני כולי א"ר

תוספות מסכת ברכות דף לד עמוד ב

יכוין לבו באחת מהן - והא דאמרי' בסוף פרק ת"ה (דף ל:): לעולם ימוד אדם דעתו אם יכול לכוין יתפלל ואם לאו אל יתפלל יש לפרש התם נמי באחת מהן.

רש"י מסכת ברכות דף לד עמוד ב

שהוא תחלת התפלה, רמז הוא שאין חפץ בה

ספר אבודרהם דיני שמונה עשרה

פי' לפי שהיא חשובה יותר משאר ברכות מפני שיש בה גדולת השם וזכות ראשונים וגאולת אחרונים ועוד מפני שאם ניתן דעתו עליה יתלמד להוסיף בכוונתו. ודע כי לפי הכוונה תקובל התפלה שנאמר (שמות כב, כב) כי אם צעוק יצעק (עלי) [אלי] שמוע אשמע.

מהרש"א חידושי אגדות מסכת ברכות דף לד עמוד ב

אהייא כו' באבות כו'. והיינו מטעם דמתחלת בברוך ומסיימת בברוך וכמה שמות נזכרו בה אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו אלהי אברהם כו' ונסמכה ממש לגאולה וק"ל:

Koren Rav Siddur, Rav Yosef Dov Soloveichik

forefathers." If we are able to engage in prayer at all, it is only through the precedent of our forefathers who, as stated by the Gemara in *Berakhot* (26b), established the very institution of prayer.
Relying on the precedent of our forefathers in our initial approach to God is essential, but more is required of us. The Gemara (*Berakhot* 32b) states that

2 Approaches to the Rambam



Chazon Ish, Rav Avraham Yeshaya Karelitz

כרע מגרמיה. ולולי דברי הגאון ז"ל, יש לומר דהרמב"ם בפרק ד' בעיקר התפילה איירי, ועניינה, אבל שיעור שחייבו חז"ל לעכב, פירש בפרק י', וכן בגמרא לא תני בחד דוכתא, ויש בדברי הרמב"ם העתק מאמרי חז"ל בהפלגת הכוונה, אבל אין כולם מעכבים, ואם עמד מתוך הלכה שאינה פסוקה אינו חוזר ומתפלל, וכן כיוצא בזה. וכל אדם העומד להתפלל לא שייך בו מתעסק, ולעולם יש בו ידיעה כהה שהוא תפילה לפניו ית' אלא אין לבו ער כל כך, ובידיעה קלושה זו סגי בדיעבר, אלא שאינה רצויה ומקובלת כל כך.

Reshimot Shiurim, Rav Yosef Dov Soloveichik



אמנם יתכן לפרש את דברי הרמב"ם באופן אחר דבאמת הרמב"ם סובר שכוונה מעכבת בכל התפלה דכל החפצא של תפלה בעיא כוונה (וכדמשמע מסתימת לשונו בפ"ד מהל' תפלה הט"ו). ברם, יתכן לפרש דמש"כ הרמב"ם (פ"י מהל' תפלה ה"א) "ואם כיון לבו בברכה ראשונה שוב אינו צריך", דר"ל שהכוונה שכיוון בברכה ראשונה של שמונה עשרה מצטרפת וחלה לכל התפלה, ונחשב כאילו כיוון בכל השמונה עשרה, דבעי רק מעשה כוונה בברכה ראשונה ועי"ז חלה כוונה לכל התפלה, אלא א"כ חלה הפקעה שמפקיעה את כוונתו. והרמב"ם סובר דלו יצויר שכיוון בברכת אבות ונעשה שיכור

חידושי ר' חיים הלוי על הרמב"ם



מסתימת לשון הרמב"ם מבואר דדין כוונה הוא על כל התפלה שכל התפלה הכוונה מעכבת בה, וקשה ממה שפסק הרמב"ם בפ"י שם ז"ל מי שהתפלל ולא כיון את לבו יחזור ויתפלל בכוונה ואם כיון את לבו בברכה ראשונה שוב אינו צריך, דמבואר להדיא דהכוונה אינה מעכבת רק בברכה ראשונה, וצ"ע.

ונראה לומר דתרי גווני כוונות יש בתפלה, האחת כוונה של פירוש הדברים, יסודה הוא דין כוונה, ושנית שיכוון שהוא עומד בתפלה לפני ד'. כמבואר

בדבריו פ"ד שם ז"ל ומה היא הכוונה שיפנה את לבו מכל המחשבות ויראה עצמו כאלו עומד לפני השכינה. ונראה דכוונה זו אינה מדין כוונה רק שהוא מעצם מעשה התפלה, ואם אין לבו פנוי ואינו רואה את עצמו שעומד לפני ד' ומתפלל אין זה מעשה תפלה, והרי הוא בכלל מתעסק דאין בו דין מעשה. וע"כ מעכבת כוונה זו בכל התפלה, דבמקום שהיה מתעסק דינו כלא התפלל כלל, וכאלו דלג מלות אלה.... ובזה אין חילוק בין ברכה ראשונה לשאר התפלה, כיון דהוא דין הנהוג בכל המצות,

וכשאר המצות דכל המצוה כולה צריכה כוונה ולא מהני כוונת מקצתה, הכי נמי בתפלה דכוונתה כולה צריכה כוונה....

ונראה דדעת הרמב"ם דשני מחלקות הן בתפלה, זאת הכוונה שהוא מכון ומכיר שהוא עומד בתפלה דזה הוי משום דין מתעסק ומשום דין מצות צריכות כוונה, דזה הדין והעיכוב הלא נוהג בכל התורה ובכל המצות לחוד. וכונת פירוש המלות לחוד. ותרי גוויי חיובי המה בתפלה, מחויב הוא לכוון שהוא עומד בתפלה משום דלא שניא תפלה משאר המצות, ומחויב הוא בכוונת פירוש הדברים משום חובת כוונה המסוים רק בתפלה. ושני החיובים אין מעכבין זה את זה, אלא דיוצא מזה ממילא, דאם הוא מתעסק או חסר לו דין כוונה של כל המצות א"כ הרי בטל עיקר המצוה, וממילא דהרי הוא כלא התפלל, ואם אינו יכול לכוון אל יתפלל

כיון דאין זה תפלה כלל. אכן בחובת כוונה של פירוש הדברים כיון דהויא מסוימת רק בתפלה ע"כ אמרינן דאע"ג דאינו יכול לקיימה מ"מ שפיר חיילא עליה חובת תפלה שיעשה אותה ככל המצות ואית בה דין תפלה.

Avi Ezri,
Rav Elazar Menachem Shach



ודאי שיש לו כוונה ללמד גם בכל ברכות התפלה, דהרי כל התפלה היא המנוחה, הלא מה שכחצו בסיומן ק"ח שילא ככוונתו באבות, היא הכוונה של פירוש המלות ושהשכינה כנגדו, אבל כוונה ללמד צעיון בכל התפלה, הלא זהו מסביק אס תחלתו מכון להתפלל ולקיים מנחת תפלה, אף שבנת התפלה אינו מכין פירוש המלות ופשוט.

אולם ראיתי בספר חדושי רבנו חיים הלוי שחידש בזה חידוש גדול לדעת הרמב"ם, ע"פ מה שבעיר שכלן ע"ש. ואני מתפלל בזה, לחדש חידוש בזה מאחרי משמעות מלשון הרמב"ם שאינו נכונה כ"כ, שהרמב"ם מהחמך ממקום אחד על השני כמו שכתבתי שכתבתי מקומות כיוצא בזה. ואולי יש לו ראיות מעוד מקומות, ואנחנו לא יודעים.

ובהא שכחצו שכלל כוונה זו שיראה עלמו כעומד לפני השכינה ה"ו מתעסק שאין כאן מעשה תפלה כל עיקר וכן אס אין מכין לשם מנוח זה דין של כל החורה כולה, דין זה הוא בכל הברכות של י"ח, לא רק בברכה הראשונה, הרי מפורש כמו בן בק"ש מה שכחצו הרמב"ם בפ"ג מהל' ק"ש ה"א, הקורא אס שמע ולא כיון לבו

B'Or Panecha: Rav Ahron Lichtenstein
on the Brisker Method

If you were at all familiar with American football, I could give you a simple metaphor to explain what Rav Chaim's method accomplished. There are two teams. The offensive team tries to advance the ball while the defensive team seeks to deny this advance. If you choose not to pass, there are two approaches to advancing the ball. You can run the ball up the middle of the field where you directly confront massive linemen who are determined to stop you, or you can run to the outside, evading the obstacles and running freely through the open field.

One of the problems that arises with studying the Maharsha and the Maharam Schiff is that they are always in the thicket, always grappling with minutiae, with no freedom to run. Rav Chaim ran to the outside.

Rav Chaim's method opened the gates wide; it engendered whole new fields of study. It posed challenges and created opportunities. It removed barriers, unlocked gates, burst open doors and banished gatekeepers. Someone once said of the modern age that it was *l'age de petits papiers*, a generation of minor writings. Brisk is not *petit papier*; it thinks big. But let me reiterate that one must be aware of what this method offers and what it lacks. Don't pretend that you possess things that you do not have.

Standing in the Presence; In Defense of Rav Chaim

שולחן ערוך אורח חיים הלכות תפילה סימן קב סעיף ד

אסור לעבור כנגד מתפללים בתוך ד' אמות, ודווקא לפניהם, אבל בצדיהם מותר לעבור ולעמוד..

משנה ברורה סימן קב

(טו) אסור לעבור מפני שמבטל כונתו עי"ז ולכן אסור אפילו עוסק אז בק"ש וח"א כתב הטעם מפני שמפסיק בין המתפלל להשכינה

ט"ז אורח חיים סימן קב

ואפשר לומר ט"א דהמקום שהמתפלל עומד אדמת קודש הוא כ"ז שהוא מתפלל וע"כ צריך לאותו שהוא באותו מקום דהיינו תוך ד"א לנהוג בו כבוד וכל שיושב ואינו עוסק ג"כ בדבר קדוש הוי כאלו לאו קדושה שם והוה כשאר מקומות שבבית ע"כ צריך שיעמוד להראות שיש כאן קדוש' אבל אם עוסק בתפלה או בד"ת אפילו יושב הוי עליו ג"כ קדושה.

משנה ברורה סימן צא

(ו) משום הכון לקראת וגו' - איתא בזוהר ואתחנן מאן דקאים בצלותא בעי לכסויי רישיה ועינוי בגין דלא יסתכל בשכינתא. [והיינו בטלית של מצוה וכן נוהגין כהיום לכסות ראש עד עינים בטלית מצוה בשעת תפלת י"ח. פמ"ג] מאן דפקח עינוי בשעת צלותיה מקדים עליה מה"מ וכו' ועיין בסי' צ"ה במ"ב סק"ה:

משנה ברורה סימן צה

(ה) למטה לארץ כתבו האחרונים שכל מי שאינו עוצם עינוי בשעת תפילת י"ח אינו זוכה לראות פני שכינה בצאת נפשו אך אם מתפלל בסידור ועינוי פקוחות כדי לראות בו לית לן בה. ועיין לעיל בסימן צ"א סק"ו במ"ב:

V'Ani Tefillah, Rav
Moshe Wolfson

אין לבוא אל שער המלך בלבוש שק

איתא בזוה"ק שכדי להגיע ולעמוד לפני המלך צריכים להתכונן לכך מקודם, כי אין לבוא אל שער המלך בלבוש שק, ולכן צריכים להתכונן וללבוש מלבושים ראויים כעומד לפני המלך כמ"ש בגמ' ונפסק בשו"ע (סי' צ"ח ס"ד). ומעיקר תיקוני המלבושים הם ציצית ותפילין, לא בחנם צריך ללבוש טלית ותפילין בתפילה, המה נחוצים מאד לתפילה, ואפי' בחור שאינו לובש

התפילה,
 עוד לפני שהיא בקשה,
 עוד לפני שהיא תודה,
 עוד לפני שהיא שבח,
 היא מפגש.
 עמידה לנוכח,
 לפני השכינה.
 לכן, הצעד הראשון בבואנו להתפלל
 הוא פתיחת התודעה אל הנוכחות,
 אל התחושה שה' נמצא,
 מעליי, מולי, סביבי, בי.
 אל הידיעה שכל מה שאני רואה סביבי אינו רק עצמים דוממים,
 אלא חפצים מלאי חפץ פנימי,
 כמיהה והשתוקקות.
 אל התחושה כי כל האנשים הסובבים אותי קיימים באמת,
 נוכחים ומלאי געגועים
 ומקור החיים אף הוא כאן,
 מצוי, קרוב, נוגע.

עקירת הרגלים מבטלת מצב של 'קירבת אלקים' שבתפילה

כתב רבי יצחק הוטנר:

הבדל יסודי יש בין התוכן של 'קירבת אלקים' של כללות עבודת ה' לבין התוכן הפנימי של 'קירבת אלקים' בעבודת התפילה בפרט.

הנה, בעוד שהמצב הכללי של קירבת אלקים של עבודה בכלל נוצר על ידי קיומן של המצוות, הנה מצות התפילה מתקיימת על ידי יצירת המצב של 'קירבת אלקים'.

ורואים אנו דבר זה מכמה הלכות בדיני התפילה שמצינו בהן שכל זמן שלא עקר את רגליו הריחו כעומד באמצע התפילה, ולשון הפוסקים בזה שהוא עדיין 'עומד לפני המלך'. והלא בודאי לאחר שסיים מלומר התפילה נגמרה ונשלמה מצוותו, ובכל זאת עדיין הוא 'עומד לפני המלך'. אך בשאר המצוות לא מצינו כדבר הזה.

אלא, כאמור, יש לפרש שקירבת אלקים של שאר מצוות - בקיומן היא גנוזה. לעומת זאת, התפילה מצד עצמה היא מעשה של 'קירבת אלקים', על כן נצרכת פעולה מיוחדת, כגון עקירת הרגלים, לבטל מצב זה של 'קירבת אלקים' הנוצר ע"י מעשה התפילה.

(פחד יצחק, ר"ה ה, ג)

המבי"ט, בית אלקים, שער התפילה, פרק ה

ועיקר תפילותינו הם י"ח ברכות שאנו מתפללין ג' פעמים בכל יום, ותיקנו אותם כאילו מדבר עם השכינה לנוכח, ברוך אַתָּה, אַתָּה גבור, אַתָּה קדוש, אַתָּה חונן, השיבנו וכו', רצה, מודים אנחנו לך וכו'. ולזה צריך גם כן שיהפוך פניו אל מקום שכינתו, כמדבר איש אל חברו שמדבר לו פנים אל פנים, בפרט בתפילת י"ח שהוא לנוכח. כי במה שמתפלל האדם בישיבה כמו בקריאת שמע וברכותיה אין צריך להיות נוכח השכינה, וכן תיקנו הברכות קצתם לנוכח וקצתם בנסתר.

הַלְבוּת הַתְּפִלָּה סִימָן קא

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קא שְׁצִירָה לְכוּן בְּכָל הַפְּרָכוֹת, וְשִׁיכוֹל לְהַתְּפִלֵּל בְּכָל לְשׁוֹן. וְבוּ ד' סְעִיפִים:

- א (א) *הַמְתַּפְּלֵל צָרִיךְ (ב) שִׁיכוֹן בְּכָל הַפְּרָכוֹת. *וְאִם אֵינוֹ יָכוֹל לְכוּן בְּכָלָם, לְסַחֲוֹת *יִכְוֶן (ג) בְּ'אָבוֹת'. וְאִם לֹא כֵּן בְּ'אָבוֹת', בְּאֶף-עַל-פִּי שְׁמוֹן בְּכָל הַשָּׁאֵר יִחְזֹר וְיִתְּפִלֵּל: הַגָּה * (ד) וְהֵאֵינָא אֵין חוֹזְרִין בְּשִׁכִּיל חֲסֵרוֹן (ה) [א] כּוֹנֵה, שְׂאָף בַּחֲזָרָה קְרוֹב הוּא שְׂלֵא יִכְוֶן, אִם-כֵּן לְמָה יִחְזֹר (טור): ב' יֵלֵא יִתְּפִלֵּל (ו) * בְּלִבּוֹ לְבַד.

Biur Halacha

להוציא באופן זה, ועל-פירוש פתורצני הראשון: * והאידינא אין חוזרין וכו'. לכאורה פגתו אם סים השמונה-עשרה ולא כון באבות, אבל אם עומד אצל "אפה גבור" ונזכר שלא כון באבות, כיון דמצד הדין לא יצא כונה, האין נאמר לו שיקרה עוד פרכות שלא יצא כונה, אחר דחסר לו פרכת אבות, וכי מפני שקרוב שלא יכון נאמר לו שיקרה עוד פרכות שקודאי לא יצא כונה? כן היה נראה לי. אבל מדברי הסמ"א קלל כד דין ב משמע דאינו חוזר אפלו עומד אצל "אפה גבור". ויותר נראה לי עצה אחרת באופן זה: שלא יאמר עוד עמה קלל, וימתין על הש"ץ שיאמר פרכת אבות ויכון לצאת, וכשיציע הש"ץ לברכת "אפה גבור" יתחיל בעצמו, דהלא בתפלה קומא לן דאינו מוציא אלא דוקא מי שאינו כפי, מה שאין כן באבות, כיון שאינו יכול לקרן אותה בעצמו: * בלבו. וכדיעבד אם התפלל בלבו, מצד המגן-אברהם דלא

Eretz haTzvi, Rav Aryeh Tzvi Frommer

Halichot Shlomo, Rav Shlomo Zalman Aurbach

עוד יש לי ללמוד מהמקובי האר הכ"ל דאף אם לא כון באבות פי' המלות רק שמתכוון להתפלל לפי השי"ת ונמשכה זו עמד בכל זכות אבות ג"כ די צדק וילא כדיעבד כיון דסיקר חיוב כונה באבות משום כונה לפני המלו' וא"כ כל שמתכוון למלות הפלה די, ובס' מג"א להרב המניד בקדוש מטריוסק ז"ל כ'... ששם מאביו הרב המניד הקדוש מו"ה מרדכי מטשפרנאביל זללה"ה שאחר בשם הבעש"ט זללה"ה שאם אפי' האדם אינו יודע שום כונה רק שהוא מתפלל להשי"ת מתמה שהוא ליווה כך להתפלל לפניו אף שאינו יודע אפי' פי' המילות עכ"ז ספלתו בנקמת ועולה עד לרקיע, עיי"ש, וזה סמך לדברינו, וראיתי בס' **ובזה** יש ללמוד זכות על הרבה מן ההמון שאין מכוונים באבות ומ"מ מותר להם לסיים השמו"ט ושם הפלה על"י כנלע"ד, וחושבני עוד לומר דבר חדש

יא. והנה הנה"ל סי' ק"א (ד"ה והאידינא) חמה היאך ממשיך בחפלתו הא כיון דמדינא חוזר איך נאמר לו להתפלל אף שאינו יוצא בזה ידי חובה חפלה, עיי"ש³³. ונראה דנהי דלא ינא ידי חובת חפלה, אבל מ"מ זכות לצטלה אין כפן, שהרי סו"ס אמר הזכרה בשלמותה, וחסרון הכוונה אינו עושה הזכרה לצטלה אלא דלא ינא ידי חובתו, אבל מ"מ שם חפלה עלי', וכמו שפשוט שאסור לעבור לפניו, וכן עולות לו למאה זכות (וגם הרי תלמידים לנשים ולפסוטי עם זכות וחפלות אע"פ שאינם מכוונים, ולא חיישינן שגורמים להם צדק זכות לצטלה ח"ו, אלא ודאי משום דסו"ס שם זכרה וחפלה עליה, כיון שאמרה בשלמותה³⁴). וה"ה לענין טעה ולא הזכיר

Yabia Omer, Rav Ovadiah Yosef

יב) מסקנא דדינא שמי שלא כיון בתפלתו אף באבות רשאי לחזור ולהתפלל בתורת נדבה, ויתאמץ לכיון בכל לבו. ואפשר ג"כ לחזור ולהתפלל בדרך תנאי, אם הוא חייב לחזור ולהתפלל כדברי מרד. תהיה לחובתו ואם אין לו לעשות כן (וכד' הרמ"א) תהיה בתורת נדבה. ומימ אין לעשות כן אא"כ דרכו תמיד לכיון לכל הפחות באבות, ותקראו אותו כאלה בדרך מקרה שלא נתכוון הפעם, לכן יחזור בתנאי דנדבה. אבל אם אין דרכו לכיון תמיד, אינו חוזר כלל. הואיל וקרוב לודאי שלא יכוין, וגם כשנעשה לו כן באקראי אינו חוזר ומתפלל אא"כ חלפה שעת טרדתו ובהילותו וקים ליה בנפשיה דמצוי מכוין. אבל אם אינו בטוח בכך אין לו לחזור ולהתפלל כלל. הנלע"ד בחבתי. והי"עב"א.

A Deeper Understanding: The Rambam, Kuzari, and Baal HaTanya

Yovel haYovlos (1987), Rabbi Dr Norman Lamm

ואמנם נראה שיסוד זה שנוי במחלוקת בין גדולי הוגי דעות הראשונים והאחרונים, אם לכל אדם כחור יציר כפיו של הקב"ה שנברא בצלמו וכדמותו יש זיקה אליו יח' בכת, דהיינו אפשרות של דבקות והתקשרות בבורא עולם, ואשר מוטל על האדם להפעילו על-ידי יזמתו ועמלו האנושיים; או אם, יותר מזה, שהאדם הוא בעצם ובטבע בריאה דתית-רוחנית פעילה, אף אם אינו מודע למה שמתרחש בקרבו, ושהוא באמת תמיד ובפועל במצב של התקשרות נשמתית עם קונו אף אם אינו ער לממד הרוחני הפעיל שלו בתת-הכרתו.

Moreh Nevuchim 3:51, quoted by Rabbi Lamm

דבר זה כמעט שאינו צריך לפנינו, אבל לשם הבהרת דיונונו בענין חשוב זה, ניתי ספר ונחזי. במו"נ חלק ג פרק נ"א פותח הרמב"ם במשל המפורסם על ארמון המלך והדרגות השונות של בני אדם מסביב לארמון ההוא. הנמשל הוא סוגי בני אדם עפ"י דרגת עיונם בידיעת ה', מאלה אשר הם, למטה מדרגת האדם ומעל לדרגת הקופים" (כפי תרגומו של הרב יוסף קאפח), ועד למשה רבנו אדון הנביאים. סיוג זה, כאמור, הוא עפ"י רמת ההשכלה והעיון: „השכל הזה אשר שפע עלינו מאתו יתעלה הוא המגע אשר בינינו לבינו. והבחירה בידך, אם תרצה לחזק את המגע הזה ולעבותו, עשה; ואם תרצה להחלישו ולדקדקו לאט לאט עד שתפסיקו, עשה". הרי

Tanya Likutei Amarim 18, Rav Shneur Zalman of Liadi

מעומקא דלבא באמת לאמיתו בדחילו ורחימו
שהיא אהבה מסותרת שבלב כללות ישראל
שהיא ירושה לנו מאבותינו רק שצריך להקדי'
ולבאר תחלה באר היטב שרש אהבה זו
ועניינה ואיך היא ירושה לנו ואיך נכלל בה גם
דחילו ולכן כל ישראל אפילו הנשים ועמי
הארץ הם מאמינים בה' שהאמונה היא
למעלה מן הדעת וההשג' כי פתי יאמין לכל
דבר וערום יבין וגו' ולגבי הקב"ה שהוא
למעלה מן השכל והדעת ולית מחשבה
תפיסא ביה כלל הכל כפתיים אצלו ית'
כדכתיב ואני בער ולא אדע בהמות הייתי עמך

It should be recognised with certainty that even the person whose understanding in the knowledge of G-d is limited, and who has no heart to comprehend the greatness of the blessed *En Sof*, to produce therefrom awe and love [of G-d] even in his mind and understanding alone— however it is a "very nigh thing" for him to observe and practise all the commandments of the Torah and the "Study of the Torah which counter-balances them all," in his very mouth and heart, from the depths of his heart, in true sincerity, with fear and love;Therefore even the most worthless of worthless and the transgressors of the Israelites, in the majority of cases sacrifice their lives for the

ואני תמיד עמך וגו' כלומר שבזה שאני בער
ובהמות אני תמיד עמך ולכן אפי' קל שבקלים
ופושעי ישראל מוסרים נפשם על קדושת ה'
על הרוב וסובלים עינוים קשים שלא לכפור
בה' אחד ואף אם הם בורים ועמי הארץ ואין
יודעים גדולת ה'. וגם במעט שיודעים אין
מתבונני' כלל ואין מוסרי' נפשם מחמת דעת
והתבוננות בה' כלל. אלא בלי שום דעת
והתבוננות רק כאלו הוא דבר שאי אפשר כלל
לכפור בה' אחד בלי שום טעם וטענה ומענה
כלל והיינו משום שה' אחד מאיר ומחיה כל
הנפש ע"י התלבשותו בבחי' חכמה שבה
שהיא למעלה מן הדעת והשכל המושג ומובן:

sanctity of G-d's Name and suffer harsh torture
rather than deny the one G-d, although they be
boors and illiterate and ignorant of G-d's
greatness. [For] whatever little knowledge they do
possess, they do not delve therein at all, [and so]
they do not give up their lives by reason of any
knowledge and contemplation of G-d. Rather [do
they suffer martyrdom] without any knowledge
and reflection, but as if it were absolutely
impossible to renounce the one G-d; and without
any reason or hesitation whatever. This is because
the one G-d illuminates and animates the
entire *nefesh*, through being clothed in its faculty
of *chochmah*, which is beyond any graspable and
understood knowledge or intelligence.

Rav Avraham Yitzchak haKohein Kook

אין התפלה באה כתקונה כי-אם מתוך המחשבה שבאמת הנשמה היא
תמיד מתפללת. הלא היא עפה ומתרפקת על דודה בלא שום הפסק כלל, אלא
שבשעת התפלה המעשית הרי התפלה הנשמית התדירית היא מתגלה בפעל.
וזהו עידונה ועינוגה, הדרה ותפארתה, של התפלה, שהיא מתדמה לשובנה
הפותחת את עליה הנאים לקראת הטל או נכח קרני השמש המופיעים עליה
באורה, ולכן "הלוואי שיתפלל אדם כל היום כולו".

Enter Rav Kook. Rav Kook introduces to the conversation a novel
insight, a fresh look at prayer. Prayer is an incessant internal monologue.
"In truth, the soul constantly prays."⁴ In the inner recesses of the soul, there
is an uninterrupted flow. What we observe in the formal prayer uttered at
the prescribed time is but the eruption of a hidden babbling brook, the
surfacing of a subterranean current.⁵

Final Thoughts; Practical Suggestions

A Guide to Jewish Prayer, Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz

But even though there is no “magic formula” that applies to everyone, there are ways to achieve *Kavvanab*. Each person’s soul is a unique world unto itself, and what works for one person is not necessarily effective for another. Nevertheless, there are some pieces of advice that are likely to be useful, to some extent, for most people.

Rabbi Rafi Eis, OU Jewish Action

2. Our understanding of God is supposed to evolve.

She said, “Lord of Hosts [Tzeva’kot]” (I Samuel 1:11). Rabbi Elazar said: “From the day that the Holy One, Blessed be He, created His world, there was no person who called the Holy One, Blessed be He, ‘Lord of Hosts’ until Chana came and called Him ‘Lord of Hosts’” (Berachot 31b).

Not only does Chana speak to God, she also creates a new name for God. She is the first to address God as “Lord of Hosts.” Chana forever transforms the way humans speak to and understand God. In explaining the meaning of this new name for God, the Talmud remarks how Chana’s new name for God creates a different type of mechanism between man and God: the all-powerful means caring for the particular individual. Similarly, the Talmud *Berachot* 7b records that Abraham is the first to address God as *Adon*, meaning master, and that Leah is the first to give thanks to God. Our understanding of God is supposed to evolve.

1. Reliance, Rav Moshe Weinberger & Malbim

Self-Sufficiency—An Obstacle to Tefillah

By Moshe Weinberger, as told to Bayla Sheva Brenner

Learning Torah is *avodah she’b’moach*, work of the intellect, whereas *tefillah* is *avodas halev*, work of the heart. Work of the intellect is relatively easy. Work of the heart, however, requires a tremendous amount of effort.

For the heart to be awakened, one needs to feel a certain sense of longing, a need for Hashem. One of the terms for *tefillah* is “*tefillah l’oni*,” the *tefillah* of the poor person.” Dovid HaMelech speaks about this. One is compelled to pray when he feels a complete dependence upon God.

The underlying problem in our time is that we don’t feel the instability of life the way we used to. We are not threatened by pogroms every Monday and Thursday; we have roofs over our heads and food in the refrigerator. Even though we have challenges, for the most part, the feeling of neediness that generates a longing for God is diminished. There’s a feeling of confidence, that one is in control of his destiny. *Tefillah l’oni* doesn’t only mean financial impoverishment; it implies a sense of emptiness and need.

To be honest, we are all impoverished. So many of us have difficulty with our children, with *shidduchim*, with our relationships . . . that could be a starting point [to engaging our hearts in *tefillah*—acknowledging our individual impoverishment, our neediness and vulnerability.

Rabbi Moshe Weinberger, a noted speaker, has served as mashpia in Yeshiva University since 2013, and is the founding mora d’atra of Congregation Aish Kodesh in Woodmere, New York.



2. Community: A Guide to Jewish Prayer, Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz

For this reason, when praying in public, a person should always seek a congregation that will be supportive of his prayer, rather than the contrary. In a praying congregation, the prayer of each person strengthens and encourages the prayer of every other individual. At moments of emotional weakness or dullness of the heart, one may participate in, and be swept along by, the praying congregation.

3. One at a time



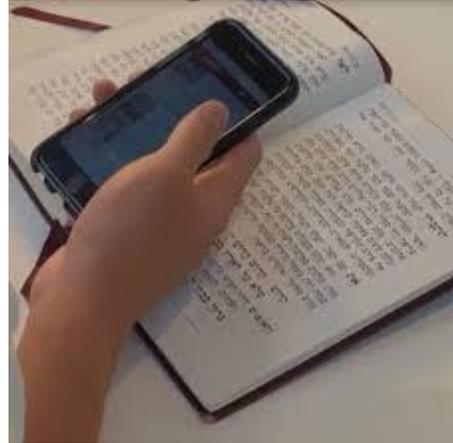
4. Speed



5. Siddur



6. Cell Phone
a. Modeling
b. Conversation



Dr Judith Bleich

I teach in a building located on Lexington Avenue and 30th Street. When I arrive early in the morning, I walk past groups of young women heading up Lexington Avenue toward 35th Street and the Stern College campus. Invariably, one or another of those young ladies has her face so deeply buried in a small *siddur* that I am concerned for her physical safety as she dashes to school while concentrating on the *shaharit* prayer. My classmates in Stern College for Women's pioneering class were fine women all, but I do not recall this type of *davening*. When I enter the Touro College Women's Division some minutes later there are always young women in a

Forgiveness

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

I don't know whether you ever noticed, but teshuvah, the whole cycle of repentance and forgiveness, plays no part in the early dramas of humankind. It doesn't in the story of Adam and Eve. As for Cain, God mitigates his punishment but he doesn't forgive him for his crime. There is no call to repentance to the generation of the Flood, or the builders of Babel, or the people of Sodom and the cities of the plain.

The first time God forgives is after the sin of the golden calf. He hears Moses prayer and agrees. "Although this is a stiff-necked people," he said, "forgive our wickedness and our sin, and take us as your inheritance." And God did. Moses pleaded again after the sin of the spies: "Forgive the sin of these people, just as you have pardoned them from the time they left Egypt until now." And God replied, "I have forgiven them, as you asked."

Why the change? Why does God forgive in the book of Exodus but not in the book of Genesis? The answer, I think, is extraordinary and it made a huge difference to me when I realised it.

The first recorded instance of forgiveness in all of literature is the moment when Joseph, by then

viceroys of Egypt, revealed his identity to his brothers, who had long before sold him as a slave. He forgives them. He says, it wasn't you, it was God. He said: "Don't be distressed or angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you." And it wasn't only then that Joseph forgave them. After their father Jacob had died, the brothers were anxious that now Joseph would take revenge. Once again Joseph forgave. And on that note the book of Genesis ends.

God did not forgive human beings until human beings learned to forgive. It took Joseph to bring forgiveness into the world. That is what God was waiting for. Had God forgiven first, He would have made the human situation worse, not better. People would have said, 'Why shouldn't I harm others? After all, God forgives.' We have to forgive others before God can forgive us.

So, before Yom Kippur, take time to apologise to others you may have offended. Forgive others who have offended you. Resentment is a heavy load to bear. Let go of it and you will travel more lightly. Now is the time to heal the wounds of the past. Then you will have more energy for the future.

קול דממה דקה

QUIETING OUR LIVES

Rabbi Efrem Goldberg

What's Your Brand?

ROSH HASHANAH 2019

When he was in his early thirties, Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb was consumed with a number of very pressing questions: Should I stay in Torah learning, or should I continue in psychology? How should I further my career? Should I move into private psychotherapy work or accept an offer from one of the county social service organizations in the area?

He described that he felt stuck, unsure what to do next, depressed and in a state of uncertainty. He spoke to various close friends, and one of them—a Chabad chassid—suggested that he visit the Rebbe. And so it was that in February of 1971 he called the Rebbe. The Rebbe's secretary answered the phone in English, with a simple "Hello, who's this?" As he was talking to the secretary, in the background, the Rebbe was asking in Yiddish, "Who's calling?" Rabbi Weinreb replied, "A yid fun Maryland, a Jew from Maryland."

He told the secretary that of the many questions he wanted to discuss with the Rebbe—questions about what direction his life should take, questions regarding his career, questions of faith—he explained that he was at a very uncertain stage in his life and he didn't know where to turn. Rabbi Weinreb heard the secretary paraphrase everything he was saying in Yiddish to the Rebbe. What the Rebbe responded shocked not only Rabbi Weinreb but the Rebbe's secretary who had never heard him say anything like it before.

זה היום תחלת מעשיך זכרון ליום ראשון כי חק
לישראל הוא משפט לאלקי יעקב.

This day is the beginning of Your creation,
a remembrance to the first day.

Today, Rosh Hashanah, we are marking the beginning of time, the creation of the world. Interestingly, Rosh Hashanah, the 1st of Tishrei, doesn't correspond with the first day of creation, but with the sixth, the day man was created. The world gained significance and

meaning, its purpose was only realized, when man was introduced to the scene.

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹקִים נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כְּדִמוֹתֵנוּ וְיִרְדּוּ
בְּדִגְתַּי הַיָּם וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבַבְּהֵמָה וּבְכָל־הָאָרֶץ
וּבְכָל־הָרֶמֶשׂ הָרֹמֵשׂ עַל־הָאָרֶץ:

And Hashem said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. They shall rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the cattle, the whole earth, and all the creeping things that creep on earth."

What did Hashem mean when He said, "let us make man." Who is the us? The Ramban says that Hashem was addressing the earth He had created earlier and said, "Nu, let us make man together, you provide the ingredients for the body and I will imbue that body with a soul."

The Ohr HaChaim explains that though Hashem created the entire world and everything in it, He was essentially using the "royal we" to model humility:

ואמר נעשה כי הוא מקור הענוה לזה דבר בלשון
רבים כי כן ידבר יחיד העניו.

Rashi explains that by saying na'aseh, "let us," the Ribbono Shel Olam was teaching us a fundamental lesson. Even a great person should consult with and seek the opinion of those who are less great. Hashem was teaching us derech erez and humility.

These lessons are all important, but didn't Hashem leave the door open for heretics and deniers to claim the Torah was written by more than one being? What lesson was so great, what message so important to communicate, that it was worth taking such risk?

Rabbi Weinreb describes that after asking his question, he heard the Rebbe say in the background, in Yiddish: "Tell him that there is a Jew who lives in Maryland that he can speak to. Der yid hayst Veinreb—his name is Weinreb." The secretary asked him, "Did you hear what the Rebbe said?" Rabbi

Weinreb was shocked and couldn't believe his ears. He knew for sure that he had not given the secretary his name, but the Rebbe had just said his name! He wanted to make sure he had heard correctly, so when the secretary asked whether he heard, he said no.

The secretary repeated the Rebbe's words to me: "There's a Jew in Maryland whom he should talk to. His name is Weinreb." Rabbi Weinreb replied, "But my name is Weinreb! And then he heard the Rebbe say, "Oib azoi, zol ervisen zayn az amol darf men reden tzu zich, If that's the case, then he should know that, sometimes, one needs to speak to himself."

The secretary also seemed stunned by what was taking place. He said, "The Rebbe said that sometimes it's best to talk to yourself. Isn't your name Weinreb?" "Yes, my name is Weinreb, but maybe the Rebbe means a different Weinreb." "No, the Rebbe's saying, 'Talk to Weinreb,' and he explained that you must to talk to yourself." The call ended with that.

Rabbi Weinreb describes that he hung up the phone and understood what the Rebbe was telling him. He was saying, "You're looking for answers outside yourself. You're not a kid anymore; you're a man. You are thirty years old, you are a father, you are a teacher of Torah. You have to have more self-confidence. It's time to grow up and listen to yourself. Don't be so dependent on others. Trust yourself."

To whom was God talking when five thousand, seven hundred and eighty years ago today He said, na'aseh adom, let us make man? Says the Zohar, He was talking to the man He was about to create, He was talking to each one of us, to you and to me and He was saying, let us, together make you. I will start, I will bring you into this world, provide you with personalities, predispositions and potential, but you need to partner with Me, you need to finish what I started and make yourself.

Hashem told us, you will be different from angels who are created perfect and holy. You are not like animals, who have only instincts and intuition. When you recognize the potential I have given you and you work to actualize it, to become the best version of yourself, to live the life you were meant to live, then you and I together will have made Adom. Being His partner in making ourselves and crafting our lives is what makes us different than all of creations, it is what gives purpose and meaning to our lives.

Today, on Rosh Hashanah, the anniversary of na'aseh adom, we are still getting that call, receiving that invitation to stop feeling we are objects being acted upon, and realizing we are subjects, invited to forge

our own lives and destiny. Stop being passive, fatalistic, a spectator to your own life, and start getting in the game, making choices, writing your next chapter and leading your best life.

You are not an actor in someone else's play, you are the director of your own. It is true that there are things that happen in our lives that are out of our control, things we would never write into our play given the choice. Those props, characters or plot lines are handed to us, but make no mistake, we still write the next scene, we determine where the play goes from here.

Many of us need to hear the same message the Rebbe was giving Rabbi Weinreb. It's time to grow up. It is time to not be so dependent on others. It is time to listen to ourselves, to trust ourselves, and to na'aseh adom, to be His partner in making ourselves.

What do we want our lives to look like? What difference do we want to make? How do we want to be thought of by others? Just like products, companies and institutions have brands, so do people. Today, as we accept the invitation to make ourselves, we have to ask, what's my brand?

Some people's brand is "he is always late," and others' is "she is always so helpful." Some people overcommit and underdeliver and others surpass expectations in everything they are involved in. These become our brands. Some people are the great davener, and others are the incessant talker, some are the big learners and others are the cynic and scoffer, some have a brand as a great volunteer and others never do for the community, some can't say no to giving tzedakah and others seem like they can't say yes. Some are the hands-on parent and others are the absentee mom or dad. Which are you? As you determine to make yourself and to write your script, ask yourself, what is your brand, what is your image, how are you thought of by others?

Most people's brand is developed by default, passively, it just sort of happens. We feel like we woke up and were just that person, living that life, filling that role. We feel like victims of our genetics, our limitations, our backgrounds or our opportunities. But, my friends, make no mistake, na'aseh adom, we have a say in our own lives, we are responsible for the lives we are living. We cannot control the cards we are dealt, but we can control how we play them.

So, it is time to stop making excuses, and instead to finally make ourselves. How?

Why did Hashem say na'aseh adom, why not "nivra adom," let us create a more appropriate verb? The

Zohar says it isn't a coincidence the word na'aseh is used to invite us to partner, because it is an allusion to the language we would use many years later to accept that invitation. When we stood at the base of Har Sinai, ready to accept the challenge to better ourselves, to live our best selves, to lead a mission-driven life, we answered the invitation of na'aseh adom with the declaration of na'aseh v'nishma. Hashem, we will take what you started to the next step, we will in fact work to complete ourselves. Our script must be written in the language of Torah, our brand must reflect our loyalty to yiddishkeit.

This morning, while listening to the shofar and celebrating our collective birthday, think about the day you came to be and the invitation – na'aseh adom – to be part of your ongoing creation. For the next ten days we will be evaluated by what we have done to answer that call, to respond to that invitation to not be spectators to our lives, but to craft them, to not make excuses but to get to the business of making ourselves and taking responsibility for our personal brand. Will your time and emphasis be spent on activities and priorities that pad your resume or on providing content for your eulogy? The Alter Rebbe encouraged us to spend Rosh Hashanah not only thinking about what we need, but thinking about what we are needed for.

Young or old, at the beginning of your career or retired, single, married, divorced or widowed, you write the next scene, the next chapter of your life, and it is never too late; you are never too old to partner in making yourself and forming your brand. Herman Wouk, who passed away this year, wrote and published his last book when he was 100 years old. This past July, John and Phyllis Cook got married. He was 100 years old and she was 102. We are never done. Our play is not over until the final curtain comes down.

Our community conversation this past Selichos night dealt with addiction and recovery. One of the panelists, Laizer, described his journey growing up in a large, very religious family. The combination of losing his father at a young age and his struggle to belong, fit in, and meet expectations all contributed to his turning towards drugs to numb himself. He eventually found himself living in his car, lost and hopeless. One day, he decided he had enough, he wanted to know what it was like to be sober, to be awake and clear again and so for the first time in two years, he didn't get high that day. He went from being a victim, an object, a spectator, to deciding he was ready to take back the script and to own his story. He was tired of his brand being the drug addict, the drop out. He has been clean for a year and a half and has never been happier, more productive, more fulfilled. Now his brand is the gibor, the warrior who is confronting and conquering his demons.

As I sat listening to Laizer, it struck me how he had decided to listen to himself and decided to be Hashem's partner. He is writing the next chapter in his life. Maybe our story is not as dramatic, the changes needed not as drastic, but we, too, need to grow up, answer the invitation of na'aseh adom. It is time to pick up a proverbial pen. The Torah provides the template, but it is up to us to write our next chapter, our best chapter yet.

May we rise to the challenge of "Na'aseh" and be worthy of the Divine accolade given to Adom:

וַיִּרְא אֱלֹקִים אֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה וְהִנְהִיטוּב מְאֹד.

May Hashem read the script we continue to write and say, wow, tov m'od, that is indeed very good.

The Right to be Forgotten

YOM KIPPUR 2019

In March of 2008, two brothers in their 70's had an argument about money at a seaside restaurant in the Italian coastal town of Pescara. One brother stabbed the other with a fish knife and was arrested. Alessandro Biancardi, a journalist in the small town, heard the details from the police and knew he had a hot story for his small news website.

Fast forward a decade and that journalist is now unemployed and at the center of a huge debate over the internet's future. What happened?

Several years after the stabbing story was published, one of the brothers demanded that it be deleted. Biancardi refused. True, the brothers were arrested after the fight, but the assault-related charges against them were effectively dropped when the authorities did not pursue them.

The brothers sued Biancardi, claiming the article was damaging their reputation, and cited Europe's "right to be forgotten" law. The law goes back to the 90's and says a citizen can request that a company or website take down material considered old, irrelevant, inaccurate, or excessive. A few years ago, the European courts ruled the law could even be used to force Google to delist material from its search engine results.

In 2013, an Italian judge ruled against Biancardi and ordered him to delete the stabbing story, saying the information in it was old and the brothers had the right for it to be forgotten. Mr. Biancardi appealed the judge's decision to Italy's highest court. In 2016, the appeal was rejected. Last September, exactly 13 years after his news site was started, he had run out of money from all the litigation and had been ordered to remove so many stories, he had to shut down the site.

Just so you know, right here in the United States, lawmakers are looking at Europe's privacy laws, including the right to be forgotten, as a model and are considering similar legislation.

The right to be forgotten. Is that in fact a right? Does the Torah offer that right, are we entitled to have our actions, our behavior, our conduct be erased and forgotten?

אף על פי שהתשובה והצעקה יפה לעולם. בעשרה
הימים שבין ראש השנה ויום הכפורים היא יפה
ביותר ומתקבלת היא מיד.

In the second chapter of Hilchos Teshuva, the Rambam tells us that even though we can do teshuva the entire year, these past ten days, culminating today, are designated times to reflect and feel remorse for mistakes we made and things we did wrong. If we do, our efforts are accepted immediately, says the Rambam, and we are granted forgiveness and pardoned; what we have done to Hashem is forgotten.

But then the Rambam qualifies his words:

אין התשובה ולא יום הכפורים מכפרין אלא על
עברות שבין אדם... אבל עברות שבין אדם לחברו
...אינו נמחל לו לעולם עד שיתן לחברו מה שהוא
חייב לו וירצהו. אף על פי שהחזיר לו ממון שהוא
חייב לו צריך לרצותו ולשאל ממנו שימחל לו. אפלו
לא הקניט את חברו אלא בדברים צריכים לפי
ולפגע בו עד שימחל לו. לא רצה חברו למחל לו
מביא לו שורה של שלשה בני אדם מרעיו ופוגעין
בו ומבקשין ממנו. לא נתרצה להן מביא לו שניה
ושלישית. לא רצה מניחו והולך לו וזה שלא מחל
הוא החוטא.

Teshuva and Yom Kippur are effective for the things you did to violate Hashem's trust and expectations, but the hurt you caused, the damage you did against other people, that requires you to not only ensure full compensation, but make sincere amends. If you make the effort and ask three times and the other person doesn't forgive, then they, says the Rambam, in fact become the transgressor.

We do subscribe to a right to be forgotten and forgiven. However, unlike the European law, that right has a condition, a prerequisite. There must be sincere remorse, genuine regret, true commitment not to repeat the mistake, and importantly, a heartfelt and authentic apology. Then and only then does the perpetrator have a right for his or her misconduct to be forgotten, so much so that after a sincere apology, the burden shifts to the aggrieved to forgive.

Moreover, the Mishna in Bava Metzia 58a states:

כשם שאונאה במקח וממכר כך אונאה בדברים
...אם היה בעל תשובה לא הראשונים מעשיך זכור
לו יאמר

Just as there is a prohibition against exploitation in buying and selling, so is

there ona'ah in statements, verbal mistreatment. If one is a ba'al teshuva, another may not say to him: "Remember your earlier deeds."

Judaism absolutely recognizes a right to be forgotten, but it is not a blanket entitlement, it must be earned. My dear friends, we can erase the parts of our lives we are not proud of. We can edit our history and we do have a right for our mistakes, poor judgment and bad decisions to be forgotten. But we have to put in the hard work. Teshuva is not as simple as deleting a post, clearing our browser history, or doing a hard reset on our device. It is about transforming ourselves, taking stock of our lives, using the feelings of shame and regret not to get stuck in the past, but to shape a brighter, better future. The best way to have parts of the past forgotten is to become a different person in the present, not the same one who did, said, or wrote those things.

That is exactly how the Rambam describes teshuva working:

...ומתרחק הרבה מן הדבר שחטא בו ומשנה שמו...
 כלומר אני אחר ואיני אותו האיש שעשה אותו
 המעשים ומשנה מעשיו כלן לטובה ולדרך ישרה:

[Teshuva occurs when] one distances himself exceedingly from the thing wherein he sinned, to the point his identity changes, as if saying: "I am now another person, and not that person who perpetrated those misdeeds", to completely change his conduct for the good and straight path.

It isn't enough to do the right thing going forward, we have to take responsibility and be accountable for what we did in the past. We have to find the people we have hurt with our nasty emails, nasty looks, or nasty behavior and we must ask forgiveness. For the behavior we regret to be forgotten, we need to find the people we injured in business, socially, online, or offline and we must make real and meaningful amends.

While there is no simple right to be forgotten or forgiven, the Torah does provide and encourage the right to simply forget. We should be predisposed to forgive, let go, and look the other way.

The Gemara in Yoma (87a) tells us that if Rav Zeira was insulted by someone, he would pace back and forth near the person so that the offender would

come and appease him. Rav Zeira didn't stand on ceremony, he didn't wait for the other person to approach him, he approached them, made himself available and sent the signal it would be easy to apologize, he was eager to forgive and forget.

Today, judgment day, the Navi tells us that Hashem looks back at Jewish history and reflects with nostalgia, fondness, and affection:

הֲלֹךְ וְקִרְאתָ בְּאָזְנֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם לֵאמֹר כֹּה אָמַר ה' זְכַרְתִּי
 לְךָ חֶסֶד וְנְעוּרֶיךָ אֲהַבְתָּ כְּלֹלְתֶיךָ לְכַתֵּךְ אַחֲרַי בְּמִדְבָּר
 בְּאַרְצָ לֹא זָרוּעָה:

Go proclaim to Jerusalem: So said Hashem: I remember the devotion of your youth, your love as a bride, how you followed Me in the wilderness, in a land not sown.

Hashem fondly recalls the wonderful times we had in the Midbar, the love, loyalty and embrace we shared in the forty-year journey. While a lovely passuk and beautiful song, this memory hardly seems accurate. After all, those forty years were full of rebellion, complaining, and ingratitude. Perhaps the reason we invoke this passuk is because it represents Hashem modeling for us how to use selective memory, how to choose to forget. Of course Hashem knows and remembers every detail about those forty years in the desert. But He chooses what to remember and what to forget, what to hold onto and what to let go of.

We, too, have selective memory but too often in the opposite direction. We tend to overemphasize the bad, the shortcoming, the hurt, the times people didn't show up and we forget their virtues, their good, the times they came through. Recently on a Jetblue flight that landed early, the flight attendant said, "Ladies and gentleman we landed 40 minutes early, please remember that next time we are running late."

It has been said, "Not forgiving someone is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to die." Forgiveness ultimately is about us, not them. There is no undeserved right to be forgotten, but we always have the right to forget, even when it is not earned.

יושר מליץ באין - the biggest advocate for us is if we are an "ein," and we make nothing of the hurts or insults. Chazal say ha'maavir al midosav, ma'avirimi kol pasha'av. If we expunge the negative from the files we have on others, Hashem will expunge from our own files.

You likely saw the video from last week of a hug felt around the world. A former Dallas police officer, Amber Guyger, was sentenced on Wednesday to serve 10 years in prison for the fatal 2018 killing of an innocent man she shot when she mistakenly entered his apartment believing it was her own. The victim's 18-year-old brother, Brandt Jean, took the witness stand and spoke to Guyger, saying, "I know if you go to God and ask him, he will forgive you... I personally want the best for you." Brandt then asked the Judge if he could give Guyger, the woman who killed his brother, a hug. The judge said yes, Brandt stepped off the witness stand, they embraced and Guyger broke into tears.

If this man could forgive the person who killed his brother and give her a hug, we can forgive the small slights, hurts and injuries we have incurred. We can dig deep and hug the people who didn't really mean to hurt us, maybe they were insensitive or thoughtless because in fact they were just hurting themselves. So we weren't invited to someone's simcha or we were unhappy with our seating. So our birthday came and went and our children or grandchildren didn't even call. So we extended ourselves for friends and it wasn't reciprocated. So someone walked by and didn't say hello.

There are so many broken relationships and so much dysfunction because we choose to remember instead of forget, and unlike Hashem we don't do it selectively. Don't hold a grudge or look for the fault, or shortcoming. Let go and move on, and you will feel a huge relief.

My dear friends, we don't have a basic right for our wrongs to be forgotten. We need to own up, seek forgiveness, and make amends. But we absolutely have the right and even responsibility to forget. Let's use it to let go of things that don't matter in the long run and to avoid drinking a poison that will only prove lethal to us.

Does G-d Owe Us Anything?- Lessons From Chana on Maximizing Our Rosh Hashanah

Mrs. Emma Katz

The haftara on the first day of Rosh Hashanah tells the story of Elkana, a man from Shevet Efraim, and his two wives, Penina and Chana. Penina has been blessed with many children with Elkana, while Chana is barren. After extensive tormenting by Penina and a half-hearted attempt at comfort from Elkana, Chana takes matters into her own hands, and goes to pray before Eli the Cohen Gadol, crying out to Hashem for a child. Chana promises that if Hashem grants her a son, she will dedicate this son to Hashem. After a brief misunderstanding in which Elkana mistakes Chana's quiet prayers as drunken muttering, Eli recognizes the beauty and power of Chana's tefillot and blesses her that her requests from Hashem should be fulfilled.

Chana is blessed with a son, who she dedicates to work in the mishkan as soon as he is weaned. This son is Shmuel Hanavi¹. There are many questions to ask with regards to this story and many possible lessons that can be learned. The aspect most often focused on from this perek is the tefilla of Chana. Chana's tefilla revolutionized private prayer, and became the model on which our tefilla is based. However, according to many midrashim, Chana was brazen and even audacious in her tefillot for a child. Why then, is Chana portrayed as our exemplar of tefilla on Rosh Hashanah?

There are many midrashic and talmudic sources that paint the image of Chana as

being completely audacious in her tefillot for a child:

ואמר רבי אלעזר: חנה הטיחה דברים כלפי מעלה, שנאמר: ותתפלל על ה' - מלמד, שהטיחה דברים כלפי מעלה?²

And Rabbi Elazar said: Hannah spoke impertinently toward God on High. As it is stated: "And she prayed onto the Lord," as opposed to the common phrase: To the Lord. This teaches that she spoke impertinently toward on High.³

The Gemara in Masechet Brachot discusses the story of Chana extensively. It begins by stating that Chana bombarded heaven with her tefillot, as if she was throwing her words at Hashem. The Gemara continues explaining what it was that Chana was saying to Hashem in her tefillot, with one suggestion even more audacious than the next.

אם ראה תראה, אמר רבי אלעזר: אמרה חנה לפני הקדוש ברוך הוא: רבוננו של עולם, אם ראה - מוטב, ואם לאו - תראה, אלך ואסתתר בפני אלקנה בעלי, וכיון דמסתתרנא משקו לי מי סוטה, ואי אתה עושה תורתך פלסתר, שנאמר: ונקתה ונזרעה זרע.⁴

"If you will look upon [*im ra'o tireh*]," Rabbi Elazar said: Hannah said before the Holy One, Blessed

¹ Sefer Shmuel Alef, Perek Alef

² Masechet Brachot 31b

³ All translations from the William Davidson digital edition of the Koren Noé Talmud

⁴ Masechet Brachot 31b

be He: Master of the Universe, if You will look upon [ra'o] me now, fine, and if not, in any case You will see [tireh].

Chana is saying to Hashem, "If you see me worthy of having a child, then please bless me. However, if you do not, I will seclude myself with a man who is not my husband so that I will be accused of being an Isha Sota. When I am found to be innocent of the accusations, I will be blessed with children as is the blessing given to an Isha Sota who is found innocent.⁵"

The Gemara provides one last explanation to the words of Chana:

אמר רבי אלעזר: מיום שברא הקדוש ברוך הוא את עולמו, לא היה אדם שקראו להקדוש ברוך הוא צבאות עד שבאתה חנה וקראתו צבאות; אמרה חנה לפני הקדוש ברוך הוא: רבוננו של עולם, מכל צבאי צבאות שבראת בעולמך קשה בעיניך שתתן לי בן אחד? משל למה הדבר דומה - למלך בשר ודם שעשה סעודה לעבדיו, בא עני אחד ועמד על הפתח, אמר להם: תנו לי פרוסה אחת! ולא השגיחו עליו; דחק ונכנס אצל המלך. אמר לו: אדוני המלך, מכל סעודה שעשית קשה בעיניך ליתן לי פרוסה אחת?'

Rabbi Elazar said: From the day that the Holy One, Blessed be He, created His world, there was no person who called the Holy One, Blessed be He, Lord of Hosts until Hannah came and called Him Lord of Hosts. *This is the first time in the Bible that God is referred to by this name.*

⁵ Bamidbar 5:28

⁶ Masechet Brachot 31b

Rabbi Elazar explains that Hannah said before the Holy One, Blessed be He: Master of the Universe, are You not the Lord of the Hosts, and of all of the hosts and hosts of creations that You created in Your world, is it difficult in Your eyes to grant me one son?

The Gemara suggests a parable: To what is this similar? It is similar to a flesh and blood king who made a feast for his servants. A poor person came and stood at the door. He said to them: Give me one slice of bread! And they paid him no attention. He pushed and entered before the king. He said to him: My lord, the King, from this entire feast that you have prepared, is it so difficult in your eyes to give me a single slice of bread?

According to this piece of the Gemara, Chana is saying to Hashem, "You, Hashem, created all of the forces in the world, is it too difficult for you to give me a child?" It seems like Chana did not approach Hashem with beautiful, meaningful tefillot, rather she challenged Hashem, and demanded a child from Hashem. This strikes as an outrageous imperfect model for tefilla. How do we reconcile this understanding of Chana's tefillot with our knowledge that Chana is the source for many halachot of tefilla, and is presented in the haftara of Rosh Hashanah in order to model proper tefilla?

Daniel Goleman, author and New York Times journalist, gives insight which can help to understand the tefilla of Chana. Goleman, in his 1995 New York Times Bestselling book "Emotional Intelligence," defines emotional intelligence is the ability to identify and manage one's own emotions

as well as the emotions of others.⁷ For example, someone with a high level of EQ knows to prioritize greeting a friend at a large party over a complete stranger, or knows when someone is upset, even if they are not openly expressing it. EQ gives a person the ability to adjust one's own speech and behavior in accordance with the feelings of others in the room. Chana was not audacious, or demanding towards G-d, rather, she was modeling a high level of emotional intelligence.

Chana's tefillot came from a deep knowledge of herself, her strengths, and her relationship with Hashem. The Pesikta Rabati gives insight into Chana's deep understanding of her own strengths and weaknesses.

ותדור נדר ותאמר ה' צבאות
(שמואל א' א' י"א) מהו ה'
צבאות, אמר רבי יהודה בר'
סימון אמרה חנה לפני הקדוש
ברוך הוא רבונו של עולם יש
צבא למעלה יש צבא למטה,
הצבא של מעלה אינם [לא]
אוכלים ולא שותים ולא פרים
ורבים ולא מתים אלא חיים
לעולם, והצבא שלמטה אוכלים
ושותים ופרים ורבים ומתים,
ואיני יודעת מאיזו צבא אני, אם
משל מעלה או משל מטה, אם
מצבא של מעלה אני, לא אהיה
לא אוכלת ולא שותית (אלא)
[ולא] מולידה ולא מתה אלא
חיה לעולם כשם שהם חיים
לעולם, ואם מצבא של מטה אני,
אהא אוכלת ושותית ומולידה
ומתה כשם שהם אוכלים
ושותים ופרים ורבים זהו ה'
צבאות.⁸

According to this midrash, Chana came before Hashem and expressed confusion. She said that she has observed that there is the world of Malachim (angels) and the world of human beings and there are many distinguishing qualities between the two. One factor that she emphasizes is that the angels do not procreate, while human beings do. Chana says, "I seem to be a human being in that I eat and drink, so seemingly I should be able to procreate as well." Chana seems to be implying that without having a child, she is not fulfilling any purpose as a human being. How could that be? Chana has lived so many years as a woman without having any children, and knows of the famous Imahot (foremothers), who lived many years and served in great roles without having children. It cannot possibly be that Chana thinks she has no purpose without having a child. Rather, Chana understands her own strengths and weaknesses. Chana is expressing her feeling that while she knows she can serve as a productive woman in the world, even without having a child. However, she also realizes that the full extent of her abilities and talents can only be actualized by becoming a mother, she therefore turns to Hashem and implores him for a child so that she can maximize her full potential.

While the key to emotional intelligence is knowing yourself deeply and having the ability to look inside one's heart, the other key "ingredient" is having the ability to understand how you relate to others, and where you stand in your relationships with those around you. Chana is a model for emotional intelligence not only because she knew her strengths and weaknesses but also knew where she stood in her relationship with Hashem. Chana was one

⁷ Goleman, Daniel. *Emotional Intelligence*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014.

⁸ Pesikta Rabati, Piska 43

of the seven neviot⁹(the prophetesses), and therefore one could assume that just by nature of being in that role, she had a close relationship with Hashem. One could also assume based on the fact that she was a neviah, that she most likely knew that she was going to have a child, and therefore, felt confident praying with such determination. Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik applies this idea to our tefillot for geula, the final redemption. The Rav states that one must daven before Hashem for the geula to a point that it seems as if we are demanding from G-d that we be redeemed, He justifies this act of chutzpah by explaining that once Hashem makes a promise, the Jewish people have the right, and opportunity, to demand it. Coming before Hashem and demanding the geula through fervent prayer shows that we really care about bringing the redemption. Likewise, Chana was showing Hashem through davening with such fervor and determination that she knew Hashem had promised her a son, and she was not going to stop davening until she was granted a son. Chana was in close standing with Hashem and was only confident to pray in the way that she did because of the closeness of that relationship. Through her tefillot, Chana is showing her high level of emotional intelligence by expressing a deep knowledge of herself, as well as an acute awareness of her relationship with Hashem.

The Klausenberger Rebbe, like Chana, was someone who exemplified emotional intelligence within their relationship with Hashem. The Klausenberger Rebbe, Rabbi Yekutiel Yehuda Halberstam, after losing his eleven children in the Holocaust, was placed in the Föhrenwald Displaced Persons

Camp at the conclusion of the war in 1945. On Yom Kippur of that year, he was going to be meeting with President Eisenhower. On the Eve of this Yom Kippur in the DP camp, one that would be like no other, the Rebbe delivered the following sermon:

“Ashamnu - Did we sin?
Bagadnu - Were we unfaithful?... Were we, G-d forbid, unfaithful to G-d and fail to remain loyal to him? Gazalnu - did we steal? From whom did we steal in Auschwitz and Mühldorf? ... Maradnu - We rebelled? Against whom? We rebelled against you, Master of the Universe?...This Vidui (confession) was not written for us,” he concluded, closing his Machzor. But, he thundered anew... “we are guilty of sins that are not written in the machzor... How many times did many of us pray, Master of the Universe, I have no more strength, take my soul so I will not have to recite Modeh Ani anymore”?... We must ask the Almighty to restore our faith and trust in Him. ‘Trust in G-d forever.’... Pour your hearts out to Him.¹⁰”

The Klausenberger Rebbe had an incredible level of self awareness, both of himself, and of those in his makeshift congregation, to accurately express what they were feeling to Hashem. The average individual does not have the ability to confidently say that they have never sinned or were never unfaithful. The Rebbe however, was someone who was

¹⁰ This formulation of the story quoted from “Ki Tavo 5779: Turning a Curse into a Prayer”, September 18, 2019, Rabbi Alex Israel

⁹ Masechet Megilla 14a

so close with Hashem, in addition to having an acute awareness of his actions and beliefs that he felt confident to come before Hashem honestly, with this incredibly meaningful tefilla on behalf of his congregation.

The average Jew is not Chana, or the Klausenberger Rebbe, neither in their relationship with Hashem, nor with their level of self-awareness. How can one internalize the lessons of these models of tefilla? Each person must develop emotional intelligence in their relationship with Hashem. Having a clear understanding of our strengths may not present itself as it did with Chana, in demanding what we believe that we need from Hashem, However, by working on our ability to look inside ourselves, to reflect honestly on our actions and what we would like to change in the upcoming year, we can have a more honest and open communication with Hashem. Additionally, and most importantly, we can spend time reflecting on our relationship with Hashem. We must ask ourselves, do we feel confident that we have put in the time and effort to establish a close relationship with Hashem? Only once we view Hashem as our Father, our Confidant, and our closest relation, will we truly feel confident to come before Hashem with our honest tefillot.

May we have the strength to come before Hashem on the Yamim Noraim this year, with emotional intelligence, an honest understanding of ourselves, and confidence that we are coming before the One that loves us most, and wants nothing more than to help us in becoming our best selves.