

## OVERVIEW OF תפלת שחרית-1

Now that we have completed our study of תפלת שחרית, we should pause for a moment and consider what we have learned. Because we studied each topic as an independent lesson, we may have been missed some of the underlying themes. The following is a short review of the essential points that need to be considered in understanding תפלת שחרית.

Point 1:

*We congregate in the בית כנסת as a group of ten men primarily for the purpose of reciting the silent שמונה עשרה together.*

The ימים נוראים, days of increased liturgical involvement, represent a moment in the Jewish calendar to remember that we congregate in the בית כנסת primarily to recite the silent שמונה עשרה. Given the number of פיוטים that are included in our תפילות, the fact that they are sung beautifully by the שלוחי ציבור and that they enhance the תפילות, it is easy to be fooled into thinking that the פיוטים are the primary focus of the תפילות of the ימים נוראים. In truth the recital of פיוטים is totally optional. A review of the מחזור that follows נוסח תימן shows that in נוסח תימן they do not recite any פיוטים on ראש השנה.

Simply put, the silent שמונה עשרה is the core of every תפלה. The power of the silent שמונה עשרה lies in the fact that it represents not only the prayer of the individual ten men present or the ten men as a group. It represents all of כלל ישראל. That is what the נמרא meant to teach when it concluded that ten men constitute an עדה. The עדה they represent is כלל ישראל. This concept of representative action is derived from the עבודה in the בית המקדש. There the כהנים represented כלל ישראל in bringing the קרבנות of the ציבור. Just as the כהנים while performing the עבודה represented all of כלל ישראל, so too ten men who congregate to recite the silent שמונה עשרה together represent all of כלל ישראל.

Point 2

*Two views exist as to the purpose of שמונה עשרה; that it represents the formula: שבה (praise), בקשה (request) and הודאה (thanksgiving) and that it represents a substitute for the עבודה in the בית המקדש.*

The classic view of שמונה עשרה is that it based on a formula. The first three ברכות represent שבח, praise; the middle ברכות represent בקשה, request, both individual and communal; while the last three ברכות represent הודאה, thanksgiving. That is a formula put forth by the רמב"ם in presenting his position that תפלה is a מצווה מדאורייתא. He holds that תפלה as a מצווה מדאורייתא did not follow a fixed text. Instead each individual composed his own prayers but followed the formula of שבח, בקשה and הודאה.

רמב"ם הלכות תפילה ונשיאת כפים פרק א' הלכה ב'—לפיכך נשים ועבדים חייבין בתפלה לפי שהיא מצות עשה שלא הזמן גרמא. אלא חיוב מצוה זו כך הוא: שיהא אדם מתחנן ומתפלל בכל יום, ומגיד שבחו של הקדוש ברוך הוא, ואחר כך שואל צרכיו שהוא צריך להם בבקשה ובתחנה, ואחר כך נותן שבח והודיה לה' על הטובה שהשפיע לו, כל אחד לפי כחו.

Translation: Therefore, women and servants are required to perform the mitzvah of Tefila because it is not a time bound Mitzvah. This is the requirement of the Mitzvah: that a person include in his prayer words of praise to G-d, then his requests to G-d and then praise and thanksgiving for the goodness that G-d bestows upon him. Each person prays as best as he can.

The רמב"ם's position is based on a גמרא:

תלמוד בבלי מסכת ברכות דף לד' עמ' א'—אמר רב יהודה: לעולם אל ישאל אדם צרכיו לא בשלש ראשונות, ולא בשלש אחרונות, אלא באמצעיות. דאמר רבי חנינא: ראשונות, דומה לעבד שמסדר שבה לפני רבו, אמצעיות, דומה לעבד שמבקש פרס מרבו, אחרונות, דומה לעבד שקבל פרס מרבו ונפטר והולך לו.

Translation: Rav Yehudah said: Never should a person make his requests within the first three Brachos of Shemona Esrei and not in the last three Brachos of Shemona Esrei. Instead he should make his requests in the middle three Brachos of Shemona Esrei. This is in accordance with the opinion of Rav Chanina who said: we should approach the first three Brachos of Shemona Esrei in the same way that a servant approaches his master, by first heaping praise upon his master; the middle three Brachos of Shemona Esrei in the same way as a servant who makes his requests to his master and the last three Brachos of Shemona Esrei in the same way as a servant who was granted his requests by his master.

The fact that the רמב"ם developed his formula based on the statement of רב יהודה who quoted רבי חנינא did not preclude the possibility of a different view of שמונה עשרה. We need only look at the definition of one word in שמונה עשרה to find that two views of שמונה עשרה exist. That word is מודים. The common definition of מודים is thanksgiving. Based on that definition of that word, the רמב"ם viewed the last three ברכות of שמונה עשרה as representing שבח והודיה. But a second definition of מודים is presented by the תרגום; i.e. bowing. Ask yourself: why do we bow when we say the word: מודים? Do we as Jews bow when we say thank you? No. Why do we bow when we say the word: מודים? Because the word מודים means: bow.

# להבין את התפלה

That is why **מודים דרבנן** was instituted. It would be inappropriate for the **שליח ציבור** to recite: **מודים אנחנו לך**, we bow down to You, and be the only one bowing. The congregation needs to join him in bowing so that the statement is not false. Why do we need to bow in the next to last **ברכה** of **עשרה**? Because the **כהנים** bowed each time they completed a part of the **עבודה**. We too need need to bow at the end of **שמונה עשרה** because we have finished our **עבודה**. The practical difference between the two views of **עשרה** concerns the proper place to insert personal requests within **שמונה עשרה**. If the **רמב"ם**'s view of **עשרה** is correct, then we can insert our personal requests in the appropriate **ברכה**; i.e. for the sick in **רפאינו**, for the destitute in **ברך עלינו**. If the proper view of **עשרה** is that it is a substitute for the **עבודה** in the **בית המקדש**, then we should not be interrupting the **עבודה** to make personal requests. Any such requests should be made after completing **שמונה עשרה**. This view of **עשרה** explains the origin of the practice to recite the prayer: **אל-הי נצור** after the **ברכות** of **שמונה עשרה** are completed. It further explains why **אל-הי נצור** is recited only after signalling the completion of **שמונה עשרה** by reciting the line of **יהיו לרצון אמרי פי**. The middle of **אל-הי נצור** is the appropriate point at which to make personal requests when you view the recitation of **שמונה עשרה** as a substitute for the **עבודה** in the **בית המקדש**.

What about the position of **רב יהודה** quoted above? It is an important rule of Jewish liturgical history that when you find a person stating his opinion in the **משנה** or in the **גמרא** on a matter involving liturgy or synagogue practice, he is attesting to the custom that he followed. That does not preclude the possibility that other authentic customs existed at the same time. Anyone who has any doubts that multiple liturgical practices and synagogue practices can co-exist need only spend time in both Ashkenazic and Sephardic synagogues.

## Point 3

*שמונה עשרה, וידוי, נפילת אפים ותחנון are integral parts of שמונה עשרה.*

One of the more difficult liturgical questions to answer is: at what point is **שמונה עשרה** completed. Is it after completing all the **ברכות**? Is it after reciting **אל-הי נצור**? Or is it after stepping back three steps? Another difficult question to answer: when is the repetition of **שמונה עשרה** completed? After completing all the **ברכות**? After reciting **יהיו לרצון אמרי פי**? Or after reciting **חצי קדיש** following **תחנון** and **נפילת אפים**? The silent **שמונה עשרה** is complete after stepping back three steps. The repetition of **שמונה עשרה** is not complete until after **חצי קדיש** is recited following **תחנון** and **נפילת אפים**. To be able to participate in **תחנון** and **נפילת אפים** as part of **הש"ץ** is an additional

reason to recite the silent **שמונה עשרה** with a group of ten men. In **נוסח אישכנו** it is difficult to identify the point at which **וידוי** is recited particularly on Sundays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays. For your information, it consists of one line:

**רחום וחנון, הטאתי לפניך, י-י מלא רחמים, רחם עלי וקבל תחנוני.**

One reason that it is not easily recognized as **וידוי** lies in the fact that the line is being camouflaged by the following verse:

**ויאמר דוד אל ג', צר לי מאד, נפלה נא ביד י-י, כי רבים רחמיו, וביד אדם אל אפלה.**

Because the verse: **ויאמר דוד אל ג'** appears to hide the line of **וידוי** caused some sources to counsel against saying the line of **ויאמר דוד אל ג'**. It is further the reason that some sources say that it is necessary to stand while reciting the line: **רחום וחנון, הטאתי לפניך**.

**נפילת אפים** is also an essential element of **שמונה עשרה**. Non-verbal acts such as **נפילת אפים** play an important role in Jewish prayer. That point is brought home by the line: **תחנון ואנחנו לא נדע מה נעשה** that we recite upon concluding **אבודרהם**. The **אבודרהם** explains that line as being an expression of exasperation that we direct to the **רבנו של עולם**. We say to the **רבנו של עולם** that we have completed three physical acts during **תפלת שחרית**. We sat while reciting **שמע שמע**. We stood while reciting **שמונה עשרה** and we fell on our faces while reciting **תחנון**. We performed those physical acts so as to duplicate the physical actions that **משה רבינו** undertook to gain forgiveness for the Jewish people after the sin of the Golden Calf. By that line we mean to say: we do not know what other physical acts we can do to cause the **רבנו של עולם** to answer our prayers.

Perhaps a similar concern is the reasoning behind a practice attributed to the late Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik, **זצ"ל** and noted in the **מהזור הרב** for **ראש השנה**. It was the practice of the Rav to sit when reciting **אשרי** in **תפלת מנחה**. The editor did not provide an explanation for the Rav's practice. It occurred to me that the Rav may have had the comment of the **אבודרהם** in mind. If you do not sit while reciting **אשרי**, then you cannot recite the line of **ואנחנו לא נדע מה נעשה** in **תחנון** properly. The physical actions that you have performed in **תפלת מנחה** are incomplete since you have not recited any part of **תפלת מנחה** in a sitting position.

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*Additional Comments On תפלת שחרית Next Week, אי"ה*

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## SUPPLEMENT

### *The אשמנו of פיוט*

In his book: *מחקרי תפלה ופיוט*, Magnes Press, תשל"ט, pages 370-371, Professor Daniel Goldschmidt reproduces a פיוט that רב סעדיה גאון wrote for the וידוי of אשמנו. Since the וידוי of אשמנו plays such an important role in the סליחות and in the תפילות of יום כיפור, it is useful to know what one of our גאונים believed the words represented.

אשמנו בדבור ראשון / אז לב התל הטנו

בגדנו והן דקה לשוני לחכי / אשר נואלו ואשר הטאנו.

We have violated the First of the Ten Commandments / We turned a deceptive heart towards You

We were treacherous and my tongue stuck to my palate / How we erred and sinned

גולנו בדבור שני לא יהיה לך א-לקים אחרים על פני / גם שופט צדק שפטנו

דברנו דפי ולא אמרנו איה ה' / כי לה' א-לקינו הטאנו.

We have committed robbery concerning the Second Commandment that we should not worship another god in front of our G-d / But You acted as a just judge in judging us

We have spoken slander instead of seeking G-d / And it was to G-d that we sinned

העוינו בדבור שלישי לא תשא / הן מעטה בשת בכך יעטנו

והרשענו ונתננו לבז ולמשסה / כי רבו משובותינו לך הטאנו.

We have acted perversely concerning the Third Commandment of not reciting G-d's name in vain / We have caused ourselves to be covered by shame

We have wrought wickedness and caused ourselves to be abused and plundered / Because our backsliding has increased and we have sinned against You.

זדנו בדבור רביעי זכור / זועם בכל יום רוש הלעיטנו

חמסנו וגעינו שכורים כשכור / לה' א-לקינו הטאנו.

We have acted presumptuously concerning the Fourth Commandment of Remember the Sabbath / We have caused You to always be enraged against us

We have done violence and wepted like drunkards / Against G-d we have sinned.

טפלנו שקר על דבור המישי כבוד / טורף על כן לבטנו

יעצנו רע ומי נתננו לבוזים ולאבד / הלא ה' זו הטאנו.

We have expressed lies concerning the Fifth Commandment of honoring our parents / We were confused and so we struggled

We have given bad advice and so we have been turned over to those who abuse us and harm us / Is it not against G-d that we have sinned.

כזבנו ועברנו על דיבור ששי לא תרצה / כביר על כן שלח אפו ומעטנו  
לצנו וקצנו בעזות מצח / וישקנו מי ראש כי חטאנו.

We have spoken falsely and have violated the Sixth Commandment of not committing murder / The Mighty One therefore unleashed His anger and made us few  
We have scoffed and have become the victims of G-d's stubbornness / He has fed us bitter waters because we have sinned.

מרדנו בדבור שביעי לא תנאף / מוגג מול מונה על כן חבטנו  
נאצנו ונמאסנו מעלות ביום חרון אף / אל המקום אשר אמר ה' כי חטאנו.

We have rebelled concerning the Seventh Commandment prohibiting us from committing adultery/ We tried to hide from the One who can count all beings; that is why we were struck

We have provoked and so we have been rejected from travelling at the times that G-d's anger is exhibited / To the Place that G-d spoke of because we had sinned.

סררנו בדבור שמיני לא תגנוב / סוטן על כן ממצב שמטנו  
עוינו עבור כן זנבו זנוב / כי צדיק ה' א-להינו על כל מעשינו וכי חטאנו.

We have rebelled concerning the Eighth Commandment prohibiting us from stealing / We turned aside and so He threw us down from our lofty position

We committed evil and so He cut us off / Because G-d is righteous in all His ways and we are the sinners

פשענו בדבור תשיעי ועברנו על לא תענה / פורר אחר סורר על ככה להטנו  
צררנו אז צרחו רצועים בכף מענה / ויאמרו אל ה' חטאנו.

We have sinned concerning the Ninth Commandment and have violated the prohibition against false testimony / We crumbled after rebelling that is why we were harmed

We were oppressors so we became oppressed by the hands of our torturers / And they said: against G-d we have sinned

קשינו ערף בדבור עשירי ועברנו על לא תחמד / קוצץ מול רוצץ לכן טאטנו  
רשענו ונענשנו ונשמדנו שמוד / לך לבדך חטאנו.

We were stubborn concerning the Tenth Commandment and violated the prohibition against coveting / We who had destroyed others were crushed and swept away

We did evil; we were punished and we were destroyed/ and so just You we serve

שחתנו עברנו על עשרת הדברות / תקיף על כן כמתי עולם הלעיטנו  
תעינו תעבנו תעתענו והרבינו עבירות / אני ובית אבי חטאנו.

We have corrupted and we have violated all Ten Commandments / Powerful one therefore You caused us to be small in number

We have committed abomination, we have gone astray and we have caused others to go astray and we have committed many sins/ I and my fathers household have sinned.