

הקדמה

Read the words of the Rambam below:



רמב"ם הלכות תפילה א:ד

בין שגלו ישראל... ונולדו להם בנים בארצות הגוים ואותן הבנים נתבלבלו שפתם והיתה שפת כל אחד ואחד מערבת מלשונות הרבה וכיון שהיה מדבר אינו יכול לדבר כל צרכו בלשון אחת אלא בשבוש... ומפני זה בשהיה אחד מהן מתפלל תקצר לשונו לשאל חפציו או להגיד שבח הקדוש ברוך הוא בלשון הקדש עד שיערבו עמה לשונות אחרות. וכיון שראה עזרא ובית דינו כך עמדו ותקנו להם שמונה עשרה ברכות על שידה... שיהיו ערוכות בפי הכל וילמדו אותן ותהיה תפלת אלו העלגים תפלה שלמה בתפלה בעלי הלשון הצחה. ומפני ענין זה תקנו כל הברכות והתפלות מסדרות בפי כל ישראל כדי שיהא ענין כל ברכה ערוך בפי העלג:

When Israel was scattered... children were born to them in these foreign countries and those children's languages were corrupted. Every ones' speech was a mixture of many languages. No one was able to express himself clearly in any one language, but rather in a mixture...

As a result, when someone would pray, he would be limited in his ability to request his needs or to praise the Holy One Blessed Be He, in Hebrew, unless other languages were mixed in with it. When Ezra and his court saw this, they established eighteen blessings in order... So that the prayers could be set in the mouths of everyone and they could learn them quickly and the prayers of those unable to express themselves would be as complete as the prayers of the most eloquent. It was because of this matter that they established all the blessings and prayers so that they would be ordered in the mouths of all Israel, so that each blessing would be set in the mouth of each person unable to express himself...

What was the problem with the prayers of בני ישראל during the time of עזרא?

What did עזרא decide to do as a result? _____

Who helped עזרא? _____

3. Whisper:

Why do we daven in a whisper?



- a. חנה davened in a whisper when she asked 'ה' for children as it says in - שמואל א' פרק א:יג (ברכות לא). וְרַק שִׁפְטֶיהָ נָעוּת וְקוֹלָהּ לֹא יִשְׁמַע
- b. If we davened out loud it would embarrass sinners who are confessing their sins (סוטה לב, רש"י)

How do you think davening quietly can help your concentration or feeling during שמונה עשרה?



DID YOU KNOW?

Although we daven in a whisper we should still make sure to hear what we are saying. (שולחן ערוך קא:א)



THE ALTER REBBE'S INSPIRATION

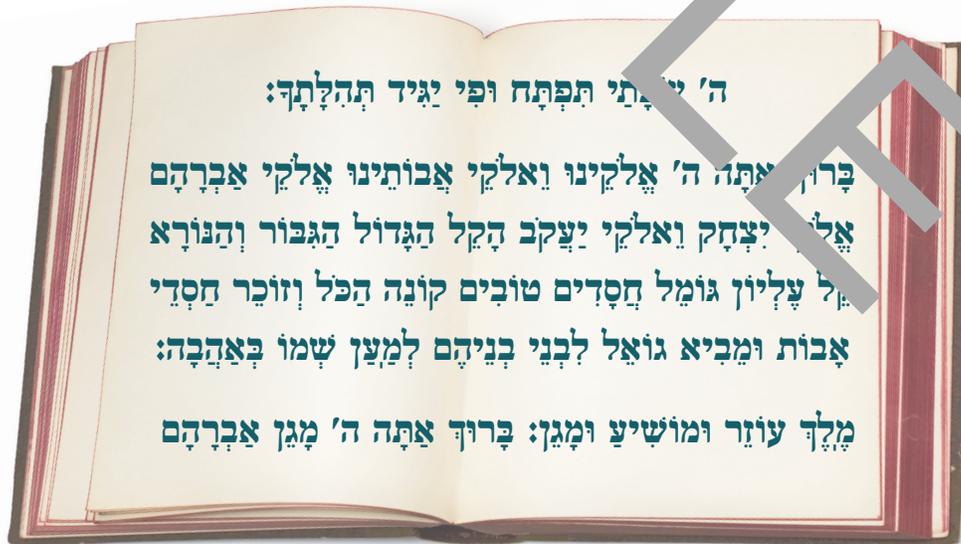
Bowing in עשרה is composed of two actions: bending the knees at ברוך, and bowing the head at אתה. When a person bends his knees, his head and torso are still straight. This gesture does not affect his fundamental will and desires. He is merely bending his knees – implying submission to a higher will – against his own personal desires and tendencies. Bowing his head, by contrast, represents a more complete level of submission. The person submits not only his body but also his mind to ה' will; i.e., ה' will becomes his will, as he gives himself over entirely to His service. (*Likkutei Torah*)



What can you think about the next time you bow to make ה' will become your will?



MAKING IT MEANINGFUL



D. קל עליון גומל חסדים טובים קונה הכל וזוכר חסדי אבות ומביא גואל לבני בניהם.

As mentioned above, we can only praise/describe ה' based on what He told us in the Torah. We immediately follow that by saying that He is:

- עליון – Above our comprehension and that we cannot really praise Him at all.
- What we can do is describe His actions/what we see – He is: **גומל חסדים טובים**.
 קונה הכל – קונה here means to create as in "קונה שמים וארץ".
 זוכר חסדי אבות – He remembers the deeds of our אבות, thousands of years later and He rewards his undeserving children for them.
 Or as Rav Sessler explains the concept of זכות אבות – He recognizes that we have the potential to do good! Either way, Hashem doesn't need us to remind Him of the זכות אבות but our mentioning of it strengthens ourselves which further yields merit for ourselves.

What can you do to tap into the זכות אבות of חסדים that are in your DNA because of the אבות? How can you be more like them?



THE ALTER REBBE'S INSPIRATION

גומל חסדים טובים

Why does it say that the חסדים are טובים? Isn't it obvious that a חסד is good?

Everything that ה' grants us is good. Sometimes, however, that goodness is not apparent. We are asking that ה' goodness be granted in such a way that we are readily able to recognize it as good. (Likkutei Torah)

Can you think of a time that ה' did a חסד for you but you did not immediately realize that it was good? _____

D. משיב הרוח ומוריד הגשם



DID YOU KNOW?

We add these words during the rainy season starting on עצרת and ending on פסח. Someone who forgets these words must repeat the שמנה עשרה. If someone cannot remember if he said these words, for the first 30 days, we assume that he is not yet used to saying them. (שמונה עשרה) This is one reason why it is important to look in the siddur when we say שמנה עשרה!

Can you think of a time when you were in real need of water and then you finally received it? What happened and how did you feel?

Can you think of a powerful storm with rain or wind that you experienced? When was it and how did you feel?

Can you think of a time or place where there was a drought and then it finally rained? What happened? How did the recipients of the rain feel?



'ה controls all of these things. Thinking about it helps us recognize 'ה's "strength".



THINK ABOUT IT

It is well known that שלמה המלך was so wise that he even understood the language of animals!

There are different ways that a person can be intelligent. Some people have an understanding of music, some are gifted at math, some can think about things deeply, and some have an ability to grasp languages with ease.

What is a kind of intelligence that you have? What is a kind of intelligence that you wish you had or would like to develop?

In this חידוש we ask for more than one form of intelligence.



STORIES FROM THE REBBE

The Alter Rebbe taught another idea about the difference between these three descriptions of wisdom. When someone meditates on ה' greatness, they experience a flash of divine wisdom (הארה). To truly work to fully develop this spark of wisdom, exploring it from every angle completely, to truly feel love and awe for ה', they must form a personal connection with the idea, creating a strong mental bond with it (דעת).

In the original Chabad Yeshiva in the town of Lubavitch, the youngest group of boys (after Bar Mitzvah) were entrusted for mentorship to Reb Michael Bliner. He was an elderly chasid whose very presence was a valuable lesson for the boys in how to be a Jew and a chasid.

He would begin his first lesson each year with the following story. A simple villager received a letter with important information. Being illiterate, he brought the letter to the melamed (teacher), who the villagers hired to educate their children. As the melamed read the letter, the villager fainted.



3. והחזירנו בתשובה שלמה לפניך.

Our request from ה' for help doing complete תשובה implies that there is also a concept of incomplete תשובה. In fact, R' Yisrael Salanter, founder of the Mussar movement, emphasized to his תלמידים the importance of the idea of incomplete תשובה. We often think that it has to be all or nothing. "If I cannot do something fully, why bother at all!" R' Yisrael Salanter recommended doing תשובה by doing small and easy things. We do partial תשובה. Here we ask ה' for help to do the rest, even complete תשובה.



Think of something you would like to work on or do תשובה for.

- What is it? _____
- What would complete תשובה look like?

- What is one step that you can partially take to do incomplete תשובה?



STORIES FROM THE REBBE

In a small village near Lubavitch, there lived a devoted chossid of the Rebbe the Tzemach Tzedek. This chossid married his daughter off to a young Torah genius, providing him with everything he needed to learn Torah. After some time, the young man stopped learning and began spending time with the wrong friends. He strayed from the path of Yiddishkeit. The worried chossid traveled to see the Rebbe Tzemach Tzedek. With a heavy heart, he told the Rebbe about what happened. The Rebbe instructed him, "Bring your son-in-law to me."

It wasn't easy, but the chossid finally convinced the young man to visit Lubavitch. When they arrived at the Rebbe's courtyard, the Rebbe called over the young man and asked him a surprising question:



IN THE REBBE'S WORDS



When we say, “Forgive us for we have sinned,” you might wonder why this comes in the middle of *שמונה עשרה* rather than before we begin davening.

Think about it like cleaning your room. Sometimes, you don’t notice how messy your room really is until your mother

turns on all the lights. When we first start davening, we might not realize what we need to fix in ourselves.

As we begin to daven, singing Hashem’s praises in *פסוקי דזמרה* and declaring our love for Him in the *שמע*, we’re like turning on more and more lights in our *נשמה*. We start to see things we didn’t notice before.

By the time we reach *שמונה עשרה* we can see clearly how we could be better and closer to Hashem. That’s why we ask for forgiveness at this point—not because we’ve done terrible things, but because now we can truly see the little ways we could improve.

The holier we become during davening, the more we notice these little things that separate us from Hashem. It’s like using a magnifying glass—the closer we get to Hashem, the more we can see what needs fixing.

Adapted from Likkutei Torah and Toras Shmuel; <https://www.chabad.org/161873>



MAKING IT MEANINGFUL



סִלַּח לָנוּ אֲבִינוּ כִּי חָטֵאנוּ
 מִחוּל לָנוּ מִלִּפְנֵינוּ כִּי פָשַׁעְנוּ
 כִּי קָל טוֹב וְסִלַּח אֶתָּה:
 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' חַנוּן הַמְרַבֵּה לְסִלּוֹת.

5. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' גּוֹאֵל יִשְׂרָאֵל

🔗 TYING OUR TEFILLA TOGETHER

Think of the ברכה that concluded the שמע קריאת שמע that we say right before we start עשרה עשרה? What are the two words it ends with that are almost the same as the ones we say here?

What is the difference? _____

Think of someone who has saved you or someone else in the past. Who is it and what did he do?

If you would need similar help in the future would you ask that person again? Or would you ask someone else? Why?

Since ה' was גואל ישראל in the past we have been told that ה' can do so again and as such we have the confidence to ask Him to be גואל ישראל in the present!



💬 THE ALTER REBBE'S INSPIRATION

The Alter Rebbe taught that while saying this ברכה one should make sure to have complete בטחון in ה'’s ability to redeem us right away. Otherwise, how could we say the ברכה of גואל ישראל with ה'’s name? It would be a לכתלה לכתלה!

The Alter Rebbe added that even if we recite this ברכה and don't see immediate results, each time we recite it, there is a spiritual redemption, even if we don't experience a physical one. (סדור התפילות מכל השנה כב:ג)



STORIES FROM THE REBBE

As one of the Alter Rebbe’s wealthy chassidim advanced in years, he was able to marry off his children and establish them in business. A generous man by nature, when the responsibilities of his immediate family became less pressing, he committed himself to pay for the weddings and dowries of his relatives’ children.

Suddenly, however, his business affairs took a sharp turn for the worse, and instead of being affluent, he found himself in debt and unable to meet his commitments. Before his financial situation became public knowledge, he hurried to Liozna to receive advice and blessings from the Alter Rebbe.

At yechidus he poured out his heart to the Rebbe, saying that he was prepared to renounce himself, but he needed to pay his debts and honor the commitments that he had made to his relatives.



The Alter Rebbe responded: “You are speaking about what you need. But you have not given a thought to what you are needed for.”

The chassid fainted; the Alter Rebbe’s attendant had to help him out of the Rebbe’s room. When he came to, he began to devote himself to prayer and study, without thinking of his business concerns.

After the chassid had conducted himself in this manner for some time, the Alter Rebbe sent for him. Standing before the Rebbe, the vision of his previous yechidus flashed in his mind, and he could barely muster the strength to look the Rebbe in the face. This time, however, the Alter Rebbe spoke to him gently: “Now you appreciate ה'’s truth. You can return home...; may ה' grant you success.”

The man made his way home and discovered that the gloomy picture he had seen previously could be corrected. A few favorable strokes of fortune had given him the opportunity to right his financial course.

The sequence is noteworthy. Once he was able to appreciate his purpose, he was granted the means to accomplish it. https://www.chabad.org/therebbe/article_cdo/aid/78968/jewish/Chapter-1-What-You-Need-and-What-You-are-Needed-For.htm

What are you needed for? How can ה' support you to accomplish that?
