

# קול מברשר

## Kol MevaSer

A PUBLICATION OF THE KEMP MILL SYNAGOGUE



## "Hineini": The First Annual Gordon Lederman z"l Memorial Chesed Weekend

by Lisa Schopf, Aviva Janus, and Fran Kritz

On May 31 and June 1, 2014, KMS members and the greater community came together for the first annual Gordon Lederman z"l Memorial Chesed Weekend. Gordon, who passed away last year, left behind a legacy of engaging in acts of chesed, or lovingkindness. More importantly Gordon, in his quiet way, encouraged many others in our community to join him in his efforts. He was instrumental in creating KMS's Chesed Committee and dedicated many hours to chesed programming. We honor his memory and continue his important work by dedicating an annual weekend of learning about and participating in chesed in his name.

On Shabbat, May 31, more than 230 people gathered at KMS along

with Gordon's wife, Lisa, his children, Mitchell, Kyle, and Morgan, and his parents, David and Naomi, for a special lunch to kick off the Chesed Weekend. Participants heard from a number of inspirational speakers about many different opportunities to do chesed in Kemp Mill and beyond.

Gordon's father reflected on how Gordon became dedicated to doing acts of chesed. David shared some of Gordon's early experiences and influences, most notably his grandparents.

Hedy Peiser, the volunteer services coordinator at the Hebrew Home of Greater Washington, spoke about the impact that volunteers have on those they help, as well as the deeper impact volunteering has on the volunteers

continued on page 6



Kyle and Morgan Lederman with their grandparents.



Mitchell Lederman (second from the right) and friends with some of the collected clothing.

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## Dear Gabbai

by Ira Rabin

Dear Gabbai,

I often get confused as to when we say things in Shabbat davening like "Av Hara-chamim," "Tzidkatcha Tzedek" (at Shabbat Mincha) and Vi'hi Noam on Saturday night. Is there an easy way to remember?

Confused Congregant

Dear CC,

These prayers are the source of much confusion for gabbaim as well as congregants. Though not 100% straightforward, there are some ways to keep track of when these are omitted.

- 1) Vi'hi Noam: This is probably the simplest of those you mention. At Ma'ariv on Motzei Shabbat Vi'hi Noam is said every week after the Amidah unless there is a work-prohibiting holiday (Pesach, Shavuot, Sukkot, Shemini Atzeret, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur) during the upcoming week, *not* including the next Shabbat. This is because we only recite it if there are six full days in the upcoming week of "Ma'aseh Yadenu" (referring to productive work). Upcoming holidays like Chanukah and Purim, or special occasions such as Rosh Chodesh or Tu Bishvat do *not* cause us to omit this prayer.
- 2) Tzidkatcha Tzedek: An easy way to think about whether Tzidkatcha is recited at Shabbat Mincha is to ask ourselves, "If

continued on page 7

### IN THIS ISSUE

FROM THE RABBI  
page 3

REMEMBERING GORDON  
LEDERMAN  
page 4

INSIGHTS INTO THE SHABBAT  
PRAYERS  
page 5

Donations  
page 14



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# Joy, Tora Study and Tisha B'Av

by R. Yaakov Bieler



Although Jewish primary sources mandate daily Tora study,<sup>1</sup> on Tisha B'Av, only certain types of such study is permitted, with the majority of Tora subject matter prohibited according to a Baraita:<sup>2</sup>

Ta'anit 30a

Our Rabbis have taught:

*All the restrictions that apply to the mourner<sup>3</sup> hold equally good for the Ninth of Av.<sup>4</sup>*

Eating, drinking, bathing, anointing, the wearing of shoes and marital relations are forbidden thereon.

(*Tanna Kamma*) It is also forbidden [thereon] to read the Chumash, the Nevi'im, and the Ketuvim or to study Mishna, Talmud,<sup>5</sup> Midrash, Halachot, or Aggadot.

He may, however, read such parts of Scripture as he does not usually read, and study such parts of Mishna as he usually does not study.<sup>6</sup>

And he may also read Eicha, Iyov and the sad parts of Yirmiyahu.

And the school children are free from school.<sup>7</sup>

For it is said, (Tehillim 19:9) "The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart..."

R. Yehuda said: Even such parts of Scripture which he does not usually read, he may not read, nor study parts of the Mishna which he does not usually study.

But he may read Eicha, Iyov and the sad parts of Yirmiyahu.<sup>8</sup>

And the school children are free [from school].

For it is said, "The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart..."

While the Tanna Kamma and R. Yehuda disagree regarding the study of material that the student will find difficult, they do agree that the source upon which the prohibition against most Tora study on Tisha B'Av is based, is the phrase "Pikudei HaShem... *Mesamchei Lev*."<sup>9</sup>

Yet when the simple meaning of this verse is considered, the "joy" appears to be understood to emanate, not so much from Tora study, as from Tora observance:

Da'at Mikra<sup>10</sup> (Amos Chacham)<sup>11</sup> on Tehillim 19:9

"Pikudei HaShem"—"Pikudim" is one of the synonyms for *Mitzvot*...

"Yesharim"—They direct one to act in an overall just manner. And there is also the implication that they themselves [the *Mitzvot*] are individually proper actions, and there is nothing within them that could be considered evil, as in the practices of the idolaters.<sup>12</sup> And therefore--

"Mesamchei Lev"—They cause joy in the hearts of those who carry them out.

Although it is obviously necessary to learn what to do before it can be done, nevertheless one can wonder whether the deep spiritual enjoyment that the Psalmist mentions is most intimately related to the carrying out of *what* one learns rather than the learning itself. A practical implication of such an interpretation would delineate a significant emotional difference between studying aspects of the Tora that have practical ramifications,<sup>13</sup> the learning being accompanied by the anticipation of applying the conclusions to the real world in addition to opportunities to reinforce what was studied by action and repetition, as opposed to focusing upon areas that are at best theoretical, at least for the moment.<sup>14</sup>

Consequently, in order to have Tehillim 19:9 serve as a basis for not studying most portions of the Tora during Tisha B'Av, the psychological experience of learning has to be emphasized at the expense of a more literal interpretation of the verse. Ibn Ezra, who usually advocates a Peshat rendering of biblical texts, in this case offers an approach consistent with the Baraita regarding Tisha B'Av:

Ibn Ezra on Tehillim 19:9 d.h. Pikudei

[The word "Pikudei," lit. the Commandments] derives from "Pikadon" [lit. deposit] as in VaYikra 5:23.<sup>15</sup> And they are found in the potential of the soul of every man in his capacity as a person susceptible/responsible to fulfill Mitzvot.<sup>16</sup> And HaShem Deposited them in the heart. And the word "Yesharim" [just] is mentioned with them because all of the thoughtful individuals become more intelligent in a just manner by means of them, because there is no stumbling-block. And it says, "Mesamchei Lev" [lit. rejoicing of the heart] because by means of them, the wise individual reaches the level of eternal joy.

In other words, when an individual studies something that resonates within the depths of his soul, the sense that he has

*continued on page 10*

## Further Reading

Some of Rabbi Bieler's Divrei Torah, along with podcasts of some of his Shiurim, are available at the synagogue website. To access this material, go to [www.kmsynagogue.org](http://www.kmsynagogue.org) and move your cursor to "Rabbi" on the left-hand side of the home page.



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# Remembering Gordon Lederman

by Mitchell Morris Lederman

I would like to talk about my dad, Gordon, and the things we liked to do together. My dad was a very very very very very very very special person. He was a very very very very very very very funny person.

A big part of what we liked to do was sports. The sports we liked were baseball, football, and hockey. We would watch sports on TV. We would also play sports with little plastic



figures from the website of Kaskey Kids. We would also play sports outside. My dad even taught me how to swing a bat to hit a baseball. I can hit a baseball four times farther now than I could hit when my dad taught me.

We once videoed a football game we created with the plastic figurines, using the computer. He taught me how to start and stop the computer and keep the whole game on one video.

We also liked to go to Shul together. We liked the Friday night Ruach Minyan. Dad even gave me his little mini torah for Simchat Torah which I used to keep in our cubby at Shul. My dad did Mitzvos. I remember during Purim we would pack and deliver food baskets as the Mishloach Manos to people who could not always pay for their groceries.

We also liked to build together. Sometimes we made large buildings out of cut-up cardboard boxes. Other times we would make Lego stuff such as an airplane, a garbage truck, and a dump truck.

He always made me drink the vitamins even though the taste was super bad. He knew they were good for me.

One time before bedtime, I asked for chocolate milk and my Mommy said "No." But my dad said, "That's a great idea! Give him some chocolate milk." So I got to drink the delicious chocolate milk that night.

I went to my dad's office once. I like remembering going to my dad's office. It was right next to the White House! I saw my dad's desk and computer. In my dad's office there was a sliding chair like one in our home office, with a plastic, see-

through mat underneath the chair and underneath the mat was a radish-colored rug. I was told that he made secret laws to keep our country, the USA, safe.

My dad learned with Rabbi Bieler. And after my dad died, Rabbi Bieler offered to learn with me. Now I learn with Rabbi Bieler just like my dad did.

We did a lot of stuff together. He helped me ride my bike and practice with training wheels.

My dad loved to go places with me such as the airplane museum. He also took me to the Washington Monument. We went on the Metro to the Zoo to see the pandas. In February 2013, when the chemo was really helping him, we were able to go to Miami together for a family vacation. It was one of the best trips ever.

When he was sick, he made sure to spend as much time as he could with me and Kyle and Morgan and Lisa, my mommy. One time on a Saturday afternoon, we learned Torah together



in his home office, the same place where I wrote most of this article.

In camp Gan Izzy, they started last summer the Gordon Lederman Library in his memory.

He taught me a lot of things that I know right now such as davening, Torah, sports, art, sports facts, and sports players. He got me *Sports Illustrated for Kids* once a month and *Sports Illustrated* for himself so we could talk about sports together.

My dad always made me feel like I was the most important person in his world. I am so glad that I have so many memories of my dad but I am still super super super sad that my dad died.

[The Editors are grateful for Anna Rose Osofsky's assistance with this article.]



## Part 32: Ein K'Elokeinu and Associated Passages

by R. Yaakov Bieler

**A**mong the concluding sections of the Shabbat Morning and Yom Tov Musaf services<sup>1</sup> is a curious amalgam of passages<sup>2</sup> including: 1) the liturgical poem Ein K'Elokeinu, 2) a Talmudic passage from Kritut 6a describing the incense offering, 3) a Mishna from Tamid 7:4 describing the various Tehillim that the Levi'im would sing each day of the week in the Beit HaMikdash, 4) a passage from Megilla 28b advocating daily study of the laws of the Tora, and 5) a passage from Berachot 64a extolling the virtues of "Shalom" (peace). In addition to appreciating each of these parts of the traditional liturgy in its own right, seeking ways of explaining their sequencing and interacting with one another has the potential to enhance our prayer experience that much further.

R. Adin Steinsaltz<sup>3</sup> notes that Ein K'Elokeinu is a very early composition in that it already appears in the Siddur of R. Amram Gaon.<sup>4</sup> R. Elie Munk<sup>5</sup> quotes an interesting approach

to understanding the structure of Ein K'Elokeinu that is tied to the Shulchan Aruch's<sup>6</sup> requirement to recite at least 100 Blessings each day:

They [commentators]<sup>7</sup> point out that the three prayers of Shabbat (and Yom Tov), Ma'ariv, Shacharit and Mincha, contain only seven Blessings each,<sup>8</sup> in contrast to the eighteen<sup>9</sup> each of the weekday prayers, leaving a deficiency of 33 Blessings from the prescribed 100 Blessings that are to be recited daily.<sup>10</sup> Compensation is made for this deficiency by the addition of the following prayers on Shabbat: Seven Blessings of Mussaf, the "Additional prayer"; the six Blessings<sup>11</sup> that are recited in connection with the "Third Meal," the additional meal prescribed for the Shabbat<sup>12</sup>; and finally the twenty instances in which *God is addressed directly* in Ein K'Elokeinu<sup>13</sup> and which

*continued on page 12*

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*Chesed, continued from page 1*

themselves. She noted that relationships are often forged between the residents of the Hebrew Home and the volunteers who help them create an ethical will, passing along the lessons and ideas they want to share with their loved ones. Hedy encouraged us all to become more involved.

Miriam Friedman, who actively volunteers for a number of local organizations, including Bikur Cholim of Greater Washington, Amit, and A Wider Circle, spoke passionately about the roles volunteers play when they respond to spoken and unspoken requests with the word “Hineini” (I am here). Suggesting countless opportunities to get involved, Miriam linked the volunteer experience with the Judaic principle encompassed by the responses of Avraham and Moshe to Hashem’s requests, and encouraged us to step up to help.

Rivka Weiser shared her experiences as a bone marrow transplant recipient, encouraging us to register with the Gift of Life through the Swab-a-Cheek program that would be part of the hands-on chesed activity program the next morning. Rivka noted that her donor described feeling as though he’d “won the lottery” upon learning that he was a match for someone needing a transplant. She encouraged us to “buy a ticket” by entering the registry. Rabbi Bieler examined the Jewish tradition of chesed as emulating one of Hashem’s thirteen attributes, רב חסד. Emphasizing Hashem’s desire for people to perform acts of chesed, Rabbi Bieler reflected on the ways we demonstrate and evoke the tselem Elokim within ourselves and others as we seize opportunities to connect and to help.

On Sunday morning, KMS became the hub for chesed activities for over 150 people who donated children’s clothing, joined the bone marrow registry through the Swab-a-Cheek program, learned to blow the shofar, and participated in activities to support Bikur Cholim, Sunflower Bakery, NIH, the DC Central Kitchen, and the Hebrew Home. We are proud of the following:

- Over 213 pounds of clothing were collected, sorted and donated both to a neighborhood gemach and to a local thrift store.
- Volunteers learned shofar-blowing techniques to provide more people in the community to blow shofar each Rosh Hashanah for home-bound individuals.
- Rubber band balls and fortune-tellers were prepared for patients at NIH. These gifts were distributed through the “Thoughtful Treasures” program to children staying at the NIH Children’s Inn.
- Toiletry bags and blankets for patients in local hospitals were prepared for distribution to patients under the auspices of Bikur Cholim.
- Residents of the Hebrew Home will enjoy colorful and joyful cards wishing them a good Shabbos and a

fun summer thanks to the many children who made cards with thoughtful messages and lots of rainbows.

- Volunteers enjoyed the delicious pastries provided by Sunflower Bakery and children enjoyed decorating cupcakes and cookies. A pastry chef from Sunflower Bakery spent the morning teaching pastry decorating techniques and many children chose to donate their creations to the DC Central Kitchen.
- Snack bags were packed for the DC Central Kitchen. This is an organization that combats hunger, feeding thousands of homeless men, women, and children.
- Volunteers entered the Gift of Life bone marrow registry with a simple swab of the inside of their cheeks!

With the success of the first annual Gordon Lederman z”l Memorial Chesed Weekend, we hope to continue joining together in future years to honor and continue Gordon’s efforts to seek out those who need help and to step up and say “Hineini.”



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*Gabbai, continued from page 1*

this exact moment were a weekday, at this Minyan, would we say Tachanun right now?" If the answer is yes, then we recite it. If not, then it is skipped. In addition to the obvious times (like Chodesh Nissan, Rosh Chodesh, and Chol Ha'moed), Erev Rosh Chodesh and other times Tachanun would be omitted at Mincha the preceding afternoon, and the presence of a Chattan (during the week of Sheva Brachot) would also result in omitting Tzidkatcha. Of note, though usually the same events would preclude recitation of Kel Maleh Rachamim at Shabbat Mincha, there are instances where Kel Malehs can still be recited (i.e, the presence of a Chattan) even though Tzidkatcha would be omitted. Opinions differ as to whether the presence of a Baal Ha'brit or Sandak of a Brit that already occurred earlier that day would nullify Tzidkatcha.

- 3) Av Harachamim: This prayer is by far the most complicated of the ones you inquired about. Though the general rule "if you would skip Tachanun you skip Av Harachamim" usually applies, there are important exceptions in both directions. The Shabbat before Shavuot, even

though Tachanun would be skipped on a weekday (and Tzidkatcha omitted at Mincha,) Av Harachamim is still indeed said because it was originally written for this Shabbat. On the flip side, on the four special Shabbatot that introduce the Pesach season (Shekalim, Zachor, Parah, Ha'Chodesh) Av Harachamim is omitted, having nothing to do with whether Tachanun would be said if that date were a weekday. The presence of a Chattan (in the week of Sheva Brachot), Mohel, Baal Ha'brit, or Sandak also causes omission of Av Harachamim, as does the recitation of Birkat Ha'Chodesh except during Sefira (customs vary as to whether this applies to Iyar and Sivan or just Sivan).

One simple but important guideline to remember is that we will *never* say Av Harachamim if we take out more than one Sefer Torah on a Shabbat morning.

*To submit a question to "Dear Gabbai" please send an email to [ira.rabin@yahoo.com](mailto:rabin@yahoo.com).*

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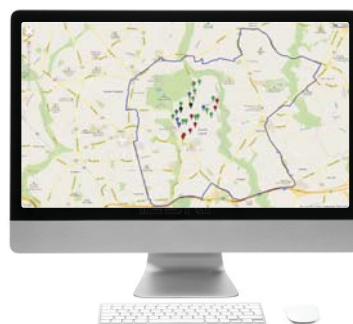




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become aware of an idea that is profoundly correct and undeniable, provides him with a sense of true joy<sup>17</sup> and fulfillment.

RaDaK claims that the sense of joy emanates as a result of a temporary resolution of the dialectical duality that each of us experiences:

RaDaK d.h. Pikudei

(After agreeing with Ibn Ezra's interpretation of the implication of the term "Pikudei") These are ideas with which one's intellect agrees.... And for this reason they are "Mesamchei Lev," because a wise individual rejoices over his intellect. And when it can overcome the wiles of the body, and the individual is able to conduct himself in accordance with the dictates of the mind, there is no joy in the world like that joy. It is the joy of the soul. For this reason the text states "Rejoicing of the heart" (in contrast to "rejoicing of the person") because a human being rejoices when his worldly passions/desires are fulfilled; but the intellect, this is the "Lev," does not rejoice over anything but that which derives from the intellect....

R. Michel HaLevi Epstein, who lived in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as opposed to Ibn Ezra and RaDaK, who date from the medieval period, offers a less metaphysical and more nuanced psychological explanation of the mixed emotions engendered

by Tora study:

Aruch HaShulchan, Orech Chayim 554:3

It seems in my humble opinion that the matter is as follows: Certainly even with respect to Tora study, there is both joy as well as pain resulting from the strenuousness of the study that is encountered by even the greatest Tora luminary, since there is no end to the infinite depth of the Holy Tora. Nevertheless, the essential act of Tora study brings joy to the Jewish soul even if there is pain and struggle [to the body] while one is engaged in it...

And this is in accordance with RaMBaM in Hilchot Geirushin, Chapt 2...<sup>18</sup> because every Jewish soul truly wishes to fulfill the Will of his Creator, even if his body is not willing. However with respect to subject matter describing evil events it is permitted to study them [on Tisha B'Av] because even the soul suffers pain when confronted with the troubles of the Jewish people. Therefore, despite the fact that even the evil things are part of Tora which by definition causes joy for the soul, nevertheless the pain trumps the joy....

It is notable that each of these three commentaries associates the Simcha of Tora study with the spiritual component that we believe resides within each of us, the soul. It could then be said that the degree to which we feel, or for that matter don't

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feel, joy when engaged in Tora study, constitutes a referendum on both the extent to which we are in touch with our souls, as well as whether our spiritual dimensions play an important role in our lives. When we can't undertake normal Tora study on Tisha B'Av, does this add to our sadness and mourning? We should strive to make this aspect of Tisha B'Av as impactful upon our lives and spirits as going for 25 hours without food, drink and other bodily amenities.

#### NOTES:

<sup>1</sup>E.g., Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh De'ah 446:1

Every Jewish male is obligated in engaging in Tora study, whether poor or wealthy, whether healthy and bodily whole or suffering afflictions, whether young or elderly, even a poor person who begs from door to door, even someone who is married with children, he is required to set times for Tora study during the day and at night, as it is said (Yehoshua 1:8), "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein; for then thou shalt make thy ways prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success."

<sup>2</sup>A Rabbinic source often cited in the Talmud, dating from the Mishnaic period.

<sup>3</sup>Moed Katan 21a

Our Rabbis taught: The following things are forbidden to a mourner: He is forbidden to do work, to bathe or anoint himself, to have [marital] relations, or don sandals; he is forbidden to read the Chumash, Nevi'im or Ketuvim, or to recite the Mishna, or Midrash and Halachot or the Talmud or Aggadot...

<sup>4</sup>Although the primary reason for the mourning of the Jewish people as a whole on Tisha B'Av is the commemoration of the destructions of the First and Second Temples, other calamities are associated with the day as well:

- During the time of Moses, Jews in the desert accepted the slanderous report of the ten Spies, and the decree was issued forbidding them from entering the Land of Israel. (1312 BCE) (BaMidbar 14:22-3)
- The Bar Kochba revolt was crushed by Roman Emperor Hadrian. The city of Betar – the Jews' last stand against the Romans – was captured and liquidated. Over 100,000 Jews were slaughtered. (135 CE)
- The Temple area and its surroundings were plowed under by the Roman general Turnus Rufus. Jerusalem was rebuilt as a pagan city – renamed Aelia Capitolina – and access was forbidden to Jews. <http://www.aish.com/h/9av/oal/48944076.html>

<sup>5</sup>This restriction imposes particular difficulty for those engaged in the Daf Yomi program, whereby a page of Talmud is to be studied each day in order to complete the study in 7 1/2 years. Here is advice given in response to this very question:

Although there is a Daf for the day of Tisha B'Av it should not be learned on Tisha B'Av itself. It should be done either prior to or after Tisha B'Av instead. <http://judaism.stackexchange.com/questions/29990/daf-yomi-on-tisha-bav>

<sup>6</sup>The disagreement between the Tanna Kamma and R. Yehuda concerning whether on Tisha B'Av one would be permitted to study Tora material that is unfamiliar to him seems to revolve around the question whether things that are difficult to understand and therefore will require great exertion and effort mitigate the joy of discovering and understanding that is entailed in all forms of Tora learning.

Should we conclude that these Tanna'im do not think that there is any joy in secular learning, or are they presuming that a traditional Jew should not be engaged in non-Tora learning, in the spirit of the following passage from the Talmud:

Menachot 99b

Ben Dama the son of R. Yishmael's sister once asked R. Yishmael, May one such as I who have studied the whole of the Tora learn Greek wisdom? He thereupon read to him the following verse, (Yehoshua 1:8) "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night." Go then and find a time that is neither day nor night and learn then Greek wisdom. (!)

<sup>7</sup>Explanations for why schools would be closed on Tisha B'Av mentioned by Aruch HaShulchan, Orech Chayim 554:1-2 include: 1) even young students

experience joy when learning Tora, and 2) although the students are learning new material which could cause them frustration and consternation, this is not the case for the person teaching them.

<sup>8</sup>The Shulchan Aruch expands the range of permitted subject matter:

Shulchan Aruch, Orech Chayim 554:2, 4

2) And it is permitted to study the Midrash on Eicha and the chapter "Eilu Megalchim" (Moed Katan, Chapt. 3), as well as the commentaries on Eicha and Iyov. (With regard to the latter examples, there are some who would insist that studying commentaries, i.e., in-depth of even the most depressing subject matter, will lead to intellectual joy and satisfaction. Consequently, the Shulchan Aruch's position in this case could be considered a leniency.)

4) And it is permitted to read the readings for the day (of Tisha B'Av), the section on sacrifices, the Mishna Eizehu Mekoman, and the Midrash Rabbi Yishmael (sections of Tora SheB'Al Peh that have been incorporated into the standard liturgy and recited every day—see Koren Siddur pp. 51-5).

RaMA: And it is permitted to review the upcoming Parashat HaShavua on Tisha B'Av.

<sup>9</sup>Although only the verse in Tehillim 19:9 is cited in Ta'anit 30a (as well as in Moed Katan 21a—see fn. 3), several other verses in at least one other Tehilla support a similar conclusion:

Tehillim 119:14, 16, 24, 47, 54, 70, 77, 103, 111, 143, 162, 174.

I have rejoiced in the way of Thy Testimonies, as much as in all riches.

I will delight myself in Thy Statutes; I will not forget Thy Word.

Yea, Thy Testimonies are my delight, they are my counsellors.

And I will delight myself in Thy Commandments, which I have loved.

Thy Statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.

Their heart is gross like fat; but I delight in Thy Law.

Let Thy tender Mercies come unto me, that I may live; for Thy Law is my delight.

How sweet are Thy Words unto my palate! Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

Thy Testimonies have I taken as a heritage forever; for they are the rejoicing of my heart.

Trouble and anguish have overtaken me; yet Thy Commandments are my delight.

I rejoice at Thy Word, as one that findeth great spoil.

I have longed for Thy Salvation, O Lord; and Thy Law is my delight.

<sup>10</sup>A modern biblical commentary that focusses upon the simple meaning of the text.

<sup>11</sup>Mosad HaRav Kook, Yerushalayim, 5750, p. 99.

<sup>12</sup>The commentator refers to Devarim 12:31:

Thou shalt not do so unto the Lord thy God; for every abomination to the Lord, which He Hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters do they burn in the fire to their gods.

<sup>13</sup>The topics that are discussed in the Orech Chayim section of the Shulchan Aruch are everyday, practical Halachot, and for this reason, the Chafetz Chaim wrote his commentary, Mishna Berura.

<sup>14</sup>E.g., issues having to do with the Temple and sacrifices. While we pray for the reinstitution of the Temple and its rituals, for the time being there is not much opportunity to apply these practices. While conceptual principles can be derived from these theoretical discussions—"Derosh VeKabel Sechar" (interpret and receive reward)—such learning cannot measure up to the value of actually acting on specific Halachot, in the spirit of:

Kiddushin 40b

R. Tarfon and the Elders were once reclining in the upper story of Nitza's house, in Lod, when this question was raised before them: Is study greater, or practice? R. Tarfon answered, saying: Practice is greater. R. Akiva answered, saying: Study is greater, for it leads to practice. Then they all answered and said: *Study is greater, for it leads to action.*

<sup>15</sup>Then it shall be, if he hath sinned, and is guilty, that he shall restore that which he took by robbery, or the thing which he hath gotten by oppression, or the deposit which was deposited with him, or the lost thing which he found.

<sup>16</sup>The assumption that Mitzvot are innate to a Jew's literal being is articulated by the following Talmudic passage:

Nidda 30b

It [the fetus] is also taught all the Tora from beginning to end, for it is said, "And he taught me, and said unto me: Let thy heart hold fast my

*continued on page 13*

therefore are regarded as twenty separate Blessings, thus giving a total of 33 Blessings to make up for the lack explained above. For this reason the arrangement of the verses of Ein K'Elokeinu is such that their initial letters אֵין, נִוְדָה, מִי, אֵין form the word Amen, which is repeated four times, corresponding to the four designations for God [Elokeinu, Adoneinu, Malkeinu and Moshieinu] while the last three verses each begin with Baruch and Ata corresponding to the opening words of any other Blessing.

In addition to the natural literary transition between the last line of Ein K'Elokeinu and the historic role that incense has played in Jewish worship,<sup>14</sup> R. Baruch HaLevi Epstein<sup>15</sup> explains very creatively why the passage regarding how the incense offering was carried out in the Temple immediately follows Ein K'Elokeinu. Basing himself on, among other sources, two passage from the Talmud—

Berachot 42b

The same one [who says the Blessing over wine that is brought to the table during the course of the meal] says [the Blessing] over the *perfume*, although the perfume is not brought in until after the meal.

Beitza 20b

And that is logical that thy table should not be full and the Table of thy Master empty.

—R. Epstein suggests that since, particularly on Shabbat and Yom Tov, an individual surrounds himself with experiences that give him sensual pleasure, it would be inappropriate not to think of HaShem and offer to Him the types of sacrifices that are most ethereal and spiritual, i.e., the incense offering.

The subsequent passages in this section of the liturgy can be accounted for in a like manner: a) the summary of the Tehillim recited in the Temple on each day of the week, b) the virtues of studying—and carrying out—Halacha, and c) man pursuing peace via Tora study. These are all means by which man can assure that not only will he pursue Oneg Shabbat (the pleasures of Shabbat) but that “Pleasure”<sup>16</sup> is experienced by God by means of man’s actions, i.e., verbal praise, sacrifice, and Tora study for the purposes of living according to God’s Directives and bringing peace to the world in general. It could be said that Ein K'Elokeinu and that which follows describes a resulting commitment to a plan of action that the intense inspiration hopefully arising from Shabbat’s more leisurely pace and its allowing for substantial introspection and reflection, extra prayers, and public Tora reading, will motivate and precipitate. Once the morning prayers draw to a close, and we look ahead to the afternoon and evening meals, prayers and fellowship with family and friends, we will hopefully tap into that energy and good feeling to recommit to proper prayer,

Tora study and living lives that hew close to Halacha in the days, weeks and years to come.

## NOTES:

<sup>1</sup>The custom in the land of Israel is to recite this passage daily, as opposed to only on Shabbat. See note in Koren Siddur, p. 193. Ellenbogen (*Jewish Liturgy: A Comprehensive History*, trans. Raymond Scheindlin, JPS, Philadelphia, 1993, p. 71) notes, “All rites but Ashkenaz have Ein K'Elokeinu...in the daily service, and several quotations from the Talmud...”

<sup>2</sup>Koren Siddur, pp. 553-7.

<sup>3</sup>*HaSiddur VeHaTefilla*, Vol. 2, Yediot Acharonot, Tel-Aviv, 1994, p. 6.

<sup>4</sup>Amram Gaon (Hebrew: עמרם גאון, or Amram bar Sheshna, Hebrew: עמרם ששנא, or sometimes: Amram ben Sheshna or Amram b. Sheshna; died 875) was a famous Gaon or head of the Jewish Talmud Academy of Sura in the 9th century. He was the author of many Responsa, but his chief work was liturgical. He was the first to arrange a complete liturgy for the synagogue. His Prayer-Book (Siddur Rab Amram or Seder Rav Amram), which took the form of a long responsum to the Jews of Spain, is still extant and was an important influence on most of the current rites in use among the Jews.... [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amram\\_Gaon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amram_Gaon)

<sup>5</sup>*The World of Prayer*, Vol. 2, Feldheim, New York, 1963, p. 58.

<sup>6</sup>Orech Chayim 46:3, based upon Menachot 43b.

<sup>7</sup>The commentaries Iyun Yaakov and Eitz Yosef identify the source of this interpretation as the Kol Bo.

<sup>8</sup>E.g., Ma'ariv on Friday evening, contains the following conclusions of blessings (while not all blessings begin “Baruch Ata HaShem” due to the principle of Beracha Semucha LeChaverta (lit. a blessing that is juxtaposed next to another; i.e., if a blessing ends with Baruch Ata HaShem, the next blessing can also rely on this formulation as its beginning in order to avoid excessive invoking of God’s Name):

(1) Baruch Ata HaShem, Magen Avraham (Koren Siddur, p. 345).

(2) “ “ “, Mechayeh HaMeitim. (Ibid. p. 347).

(3) “ “ “, HaKeil HaKadosh. (Ibid.)

(4) “ “ “, Mekadesh HaShabbat. (Ibid. p. 349).

(5) “ “ “, HaMachzir Shechinato LeTzion. (Ibid. p. 351).

(6) “ “ “, HaTov Shimcha U’Lecha Na’eh LeHodot. (Ibid. p. 353)

(7) “ “ “, HaMevarech Et Amo Yisrael BaShalom. (Ibid. p. 355)

<sup>9</sup>In fact, in its final form, despite the standard term “Shemoneh Esreh” (18), there are in fact 19 blessings in the weekday Amida, the final one having been composed, according to Berachot 28b-29a, by Shmuel HaKatan during Rabban Gamliel’s reign as Nasi. Perhaps in defense of maintaining the term “Shemoneh Esreh,” it could be pointed out that the blessing beginning “VeLamalshinim” is more of a curse than a blessing, much as Yaakov’s final words to Reuven, Shimon and Levi hardly seem like blessings, although the Tora does refer to all that the patriarch said to his sons as *Birchot* Yaakov (the *blessings* of Yaakov) (Beraishit 49:28).

<sup>10</sup>18 x 3 = 54; 7 x 3 = 21 resulting in a shortfall of 33.

<sup>11</sup>(1) Baruch Ata HaShem, Al Netillat Yadayim before eating bread;

(2) Baruch Ata HaShem, HaMotzee Lechem Min HaAretz; Blessing over bread; *Grace after meals*:

(3) Baruch Ata HaShem, HaZan Et HaKol;

(4) Baruch Ata HaShem, Al HaAretz VeAl HaMazon;

(5) Baruch Ata HaShem, Boneh Yerushalayim;

(6) LeOlam Al Yechasreinu. (In this last instance, since according to Berachot 48b-49a, the fourth blessing was added at a later point, and therefore designated as Rabbinic as opposed to being mandated by the Tora, despite its coming immediately after the third blessing (see fn. 6), it must start with its own “Baruch Ata HaShem,” and does not end with this formula.)

If there is a Zimun (at least three people simultaneously reciting the Grace after meals), there is a value to reciting this prayer over a cup of wine, which then would generate two additional Blessings: Baruch Ata HaShem, Boreh Peri HaGafen, and, following the drinking of a minimum amount, a concluding Blessing Baruch Ata HaShem, Al HaGefen VeAl Pri HaGefen. Yet since (1) reciting Grace over a cup of wine is optional, and (2) even when it is done, only the leader will make the additional two Blessings, and (3) it is possible that an individual will eat alone, the commentators apparently chose not to include these extra Blessings in their calculation.

<sup>12</sup>During the Talmudic period, people typically would eat twice each day, once in the morning and once in the evening. As an additional way to make



Shabbat stand out from the rest of the days of the week, and perhaps also to provide the opportunity for reciting more Blessings, the “Third Meal” was instituted for Shabbat afternoon.

<sup>13</sup>While in Ein K'Elokeinu, there are actually only *four* direct references to God where the second-person singular pronoun appears in the fifth stanza (the concluding line: *Ata Huh SheHiktiru Avotainu Lefanecha Et Ketoret HaSamim* is apparently not included in the calculation)—

1) *Ata Huh Elokeinu*; 2) *Ata Huh Adoneinu*; 3) *Ata Huh Malkeinu*; 4) *Ata Huh Moshieinu*—

the use of the word Elokeinu four times in each of the first four stanzas (4x4 = 16), e.g., 1) Ein K'Elokeinu; 2) Ein K'Adoneinu; 3) Ein K'Malkeinu; 4) Ein K'Moshieinu, paralleling the use of the same word in individual Blessings, e.g., Baruch Ata HaShem, *Elokeinu* Melech HaOlam, serves as the basis for the

contention that Ein K'Elokeinu is equivalent to twenty Blessings.

<sup>14</sup>“You are the One that our forefathers offered before You, the fragrant incense.”

<sup>15</sup>*Baruch SheAmar: Tefilot HaShana*, Am Olam, Tel-Aviv, 1968, p. 276.

<sup>16</sup>The first biblical reference to God's Gaining “Pleasure” through man's sacrificial actions is recorded soon after the Flood:

Beraishit 8:20-1

And Noach builded an altar unto the Lord; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt-offerings on the altar. And *the Lord Smelled the sweet savor*; and the Lord Said in His Heart: ‘I will not again Curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again Smite any more everything living, as I have Done.



*Rabbi, continued from page 11*

words, keep my commandments and live.”

As soon as it, sees the light, an angel approaches, slaps it on its mouth and causes it to forget all the Torah completely, as it is said, “Sin coucheth at the door.”

<sup>17</sup>The Talmud distinguishes between “true” and “foolish” joy when reconciling an apparent contradiction in Kohelet:

Shabbat 30b

Rav Yehuda son of R. Shmuel b. Shilat said in Rav's name: The Sages wished to exclude from the Biblical canon the Book of Kohelet, because its words are self-contradictory....

And how are its words self-contradictory?...

It is written, (Kohelet 8:15) “Then I commended joy”; but it is written, (Ibid. 2:2) “And of joy [I said] What doeth it?”...

“Then I commended joy”: this refers to the joy of [fulfilling] a precept.

“And of joy [I said], what doeth it”: this refers to joy [which is] not in connection with [fulfilling] a precept.

<sup>18</sup>RaMBaM, Mishneh Tora, Hilchot Geirushin 2:20

When a man whom the law requires to be compelled to divorce his wife does

not desire to divorce her, the court should have him beaten until he consents, at which time they should have a *get* written. The *get* is acceptable. This applies at all times and in all places....

Why is this *get* not void? For he is being compelled [to divorce] against his will [and a *get* must be given voluntarily]. Because the concept of being compelled against one's will applies only when speaking about a person who is being compelled and forced to do something that the Tora does not obligate him to do—e.g., a person who was beaten until he consented to a sale, or to give a present. If, however, a person's evil inclination presses him to negate [the observance of] a mitzvah or to commit a transgression, and he was beaten until he performed the action he was obligated to perform, or he dissociated himself from the forbidden action, he is not considered to have been forced against his will. On the contrary, it is he himself who is forcing [his own conduct to become debased]. With regard to this person who [outwardly] refuses to divorce [his wife]—*he wants to be part of the Jewish people, and he wants to perform all the mitzvot and eschew all the transgressions; it is only his evil inclination that presses him. Therefore, when he is beaten until his [evil] inclination has been weakened, and he consents [to the divorce], he is considered to have performed the divorce willingly....*



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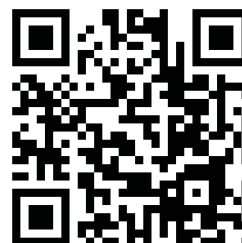
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