

Epistemology of Tefila(Class 13) - 7/13/2020 — Middle Brachot of Shemoneh Esrei

Recap

1. Shemoneh Esrei means 18 so there were originally 18 now 19 brachot.
2. Common brachot first 3 Avot, Gevurah, Kedushat HaShem- PRAISE and last 3 - Avodah, Hoda'ah, Shalom - THANKS
3. Middle thirteen - REQUESTS divided into 4 groups of three with 1 separating first 6 requests for individuals, middle link request, and last 6 requests for the nation with each group of 6 is divided into 3 spiritual needs 1st and then 3 material/physical needs 2nd.
4. Last week we finished the last request for spiritual needs of nation: Tzadikim/The Righteous(#13) and began the first request for the physical needs of the nation Boneh Yerushalyim/Rebuilding Jerusalem(#14)
5. Today we end with the last two brachot of requests with the two final physical requests for the nation.

Class Strategy

5. Malchut Beit David/Davidic Reign(15)

Malchut Beit David/Davidic Reign -(#15) First we must remember that Kisei David was mentioned in the previous blessing to show us the connection to the fulfillment of Jerusalem depending on the Davidic heir(RCA page 108) Here we learn ultimate salvation will come from the Davidic Moshiach. Rabbi Sacks(page 125) explains HaShem promised King David that the monarchy will always be the heritage of his children. This will be restored in the messianic age since the Hebrew word Mashiach means anointed and will therefore the Messiah can only be a king of Davidic descent. Rav Munk(page 146) stresses this point as he states again that the proof we have that the Messiah has not yet arrived is

found in Yehshayahu/Isiah(11:1) where we see the true Mashiach will not be of unknown origin. He further states that Christianity sets itself in direct opposition to Judaism by believing the Messiah has arrived. Rabbi Kleinman(page 251) says that the main theme of this section is that today at anytime we believe the Mashiach could come and by continuing to trust and believe that in our time Mashiach is coming.

Et Tzemach David Avdecha Mehayra Tatzmiach/The offspring of Your servant David may You speedily cause to flourish - From Zechariah(6:12) and Yirmiyahu/Jeremiah(23:5)we learn that the Mashiach's name will be Tzemach which means the sprouting or flourishing of a plant(RCA page 108). This shows us that the Biat Hamashiach/process of redemption is barely noticeable to us like the growth of a plant. As Rav Munk(page 147) says "Redemption too will come gradually, not abruptly and suddenly but slowly". Rabbi Kleinman(page 253) while it difficult to believe in this challenging time the seeds of Geulah/redemption are present and just waiting to be nurtured by HaShem. Rav Schwab(page 493) says we should think that just like water makes a plant grow so do our tears of those who mourn for Tzion and Yerushalyim by praying everyday for the Geulah. This is our special focus now in these 3 weeks of mourning we are commemorating now. Again we use the word Mehayra/speedily(Rav Schwab page 494).

Vekarno Tarum Bishuatecha/And enhance his pride through Your salvation - Rav Schwab(page 495) says the word Karno/His pride comes from the word in Hebrew for an animals horn. But it is a metaphor of characteristics the mashiach will have like that of Moshe Rabeinu as we see in Shemot/ Exodus(34:35) where Karan were the rays on Moses face, he will have power like a horn to slay the wicked, and finally he will bring us back to Eretz Yisrael with a mass movement to do Teshuvah.

Ki Lishuatecha kivinu kol Hayom/For we hope for Your salvation all May Day long - Rav Munk(page 147) every day we should look for the coming of the redemption. He says we see this the Talmud(Sab. 31a) that on the Day of Judgement every soul will have to answer the question "Did you look forward to Redemption?" Rav Schwab(page 497) says when we say the prayer everyday we should have hope and anticipation that we are awaiting to be redeemed by HaShem. Rabbi Travis(page 162) says every person faces minor or major challenges each day so while saying this blessing we should have in mind that HaShem is sending us these trials so we can ask

for His help and hope for the fulfillment of our salvation all day long. Furthermore these thoughts from our tefilot (Rav Schwab page 497) should permeate our whole day. We can surely see the importance of this today so as not to despair and believe Hashem will bring the redemption.

Baruch atah Hashem matzmiach Keren Yeshuah/Blessed are You HaShem Who causes the pride of salvation to flourish - Rav Schwab(page 493) we see again in this blessing the connection to the Keren Yeshuah/ Flourishing of Salvation and Keren leDavid(Tehillim 132:17) the flourishing of David. As the Navi Malachi/ (3:1) at first it appears nothing is visible but the salvation is being prepared and then suddenly it will be here. That's why we can keep our hope all the time that redemption can come even in our time.

6. Kabbalat Tefila/Acceptance of Prayer(16)

Kabbalat Tefila/Acceptance of Prayer -(#16) Rabbi Travis(page 162-163) says in these last group of six blessings we have asked for the return of judges, downfall of the slanderers, the rise of the righteous, rebuilding of Jerusalem, and the return of the kingship of David, yet we are still waiting. This is the final last-ditch plea a blessing of requests an all inclusive prayer that asks that all our requests as a nation both individual and group be answered. Rav Munk says the Talmud(page 147) has already asked the question why this prayer is at the end of the requests. The answer is given in reference to the verse of Yehshayahu/Isiah(56:7) which is that the joyous elation from our prayers being accepted is still a matter of the distant future the last part of our physical redemption. Rav Schwab(page 499) says that tefilah is a physical request because it has a connotation of "thinking". We call this Kavana a mindset during which we must be aware that HaShem is responsible for every minute of ur life and we are totally dependent on Him. It is here that most authorities say it is appropriate to add personal requests(Rabbi Sacks page 124) especially if davening at home(Rabbi Barclay & Rabbi Jaeger page 179-180). Rav Munk(page 148) cautions quoting the Oruch Hashulchan that the rule" Better add a little with devotion than a great deal without devotion". Rav Schwab(page 500) says says your daily Tefila experience should be a special experience each day rather than just a repetitious exercise of repeating the same. So try as difficult as it is to be uniquely motivated each day rather than adding the same list of personal requests everyday. Rabbi Kleinman(page 255) says

that people who go through challenges speak of relief and release when they surrender their plight to HaShem by recognizing there is no other power. One of the famous quotes from the Talmud(Berachot 33b) “Hakol Byedei Shamayim Chutz Miyirat Shamayim/All is in the hands of HaShem except the awe of HaShem the Yirat Shamayim refers to the acceptance, practicing, and study of Torah. While clearly there are many philosophical debates about free will this philosophy can be very powerful when coping with challenges.

Before we delve into the specifics of this blessing I want to make one reminder when praying with a minyan being able to respond to the Kedushah is important so you may want to leave these additional requests for Elokai Netzor as mentioned in Guidelines for Tefila(Rabbi Barclay & Rabbi Jaeger page 179-180) based on the Mishnah Brurah(122:4).

Shema Koleinu HaShem Elokeinu Chus Verachem Aleinu/Hear our voice HaShem our G-d, pity and be compassionate unto us - Rav Munk says since we say this prayer silently we are referring to the voice of our heart like in Devarim/Deuteronomy(30:10). Rav Schwab(page 500) this voice of our heart that HaShem hears is our Kavana the thought and emphasis we put into our tefilot/prayers. Furthermore Rav Munk continues we use the Double Name of HaShem Elokeinu like Moses in Devarim/Deuteronomy(3:24) like Moses when we want the Mercy of HaShem in judgement. As Rav Schwab says(page 500) this tone we use by appealing to HaShem mercy gives a different meaning when we plead with supplication rather than just rattling off our request. The word Chus/Pity according to the Vilna Gaon(Rav Schwab page 500-501) is used to express the feeling one would have for something you made yourself. We see this from the use of the words in Yeshayahu/Isiah(13:18) and Bereshit(45:20). so we are first asking HaShem as our Craftsman to hear our pleas and spare us as we are His handiwork that He would want to preserve then we continue on behalf of ourselves for rachamim/mercy.

Vekabeil Berachamim Uvratzon Et Tefilateinu/And accept with compassion and favor our prayer - Rav Munk says(age 148) as long as we remain weak and insufficient we have to plead for mercy and compassion to have our prayers answered. Rav Schwab (page 501) says here the two ways HaShem can accept our Tefilot/prayers are with rachmim even if we are not worthy but HaShem wants to help us or their wise with favor since the prayer deserves to be answered. Rabbi Travis (page 163) says the

combination of Rachamim and Ratzon is that we want HaShme to answer our prayers without feeling we are being too demanding and that our requests do not strain our relationship with Him by being unrealistic. Interestingly the Hebrew grammatical use here of Tefilateinu/our prayer and not Tefilot/our prayers is using the singular for Tefila/prayer and not the plural for Tefilot/prayers. Rav Schwab (page 501) explains that this was instituted since each person places different emphasis on the same words of prayer as we have mentioned in discussions on Kavana here we talk about our tefila/prayer.

Ki Kel Shomaya Tefilot vetachanunim Atah Umilfaneca Malkeinu Reikum al Teshiveinu/For G-d who hears prayers and supplications are You, from before Yourself our King turn us not away empty-handed - Rav Schwab (page 501) says here we talk about all tefilot/prayer tachaunim/ supplications of all mankind not just Bnei Yisrael. Furthermore he continues while HaShem may have to say no to our Tefilot we ask him not to turn us away empty handed meaning that our hearts still remain full of Emunah/ faith and Bitachon/Trust. We should feel a privilege that we have been able to talk to HaShem and that he has heard us. We want to have the feeling of Chana in (Shmuel 1:18) she had an appetite again was no longer sad as she could rely on HaShem's judgement.

Ki Atah Shomeah tefilat amcha Yisrael Berachamim/For You the prayer of your people Israel with compassion - Here again we use Tefila/prayer in the singular but include the people of Israel Rav Schwab (page 502) here if someone may feel they are not deserving of HaShem hearing his or her tefila by including oneself with Amcha Yisrael/ Jewish Nation wherever they may be even around the globe, we feel HaShem will accept the prayer because of his special relationship with Amcha/his people as said in Devarim(4:7).

An interesting note (Rav Schwab page 502) if someone is davening at home without a minyan it is for this reason why he should be davening at the same time as the Tzibbur is like we have been doing at Torah Ohr with the published times in the Bulletin. If this is not possible one should always think you are davening as part of Klal Yisrael and not as an individual so your prayer becomes part of Klal Yisrael which HaShem in His mercy always hears.

Baruch atah Hashem Shomayah Tefila /Blessed are You HaShem Who hears prayer - This bracha (Rav Munk page 148) is a realization of an ultimate goal for us one day when like Boneh Yerushalyim, Ga'al Yisrael will be fulfilled can we truly hope our prayers will accepted as is. Rav Schwab(page 502) says this bracha closes with our Emunah/belief that haShem hears our prayers ad that is a hidden miracle of something only HaShem can do. One last note on this Bracha that Rav Munk(page 148-149)adds is that when davening with a minyan and this bracha is being repeated by the Chanan adding Amen acquires a special significance as it is the conclusion of the 13 requests and is of the same rank as replying to Kaddish and Kedushah.

This concludes the final three requests for material/physical needs of the nation and we continue to end our Shemoneh Esrei in the usual ways with Avodah(#17),Hoda'ah(#18), and Shalom(#19).