

Class 6 – The Siddur
Rabbi Moshe Davis

Class Outline

- Review
- Definition of Jewish Prayer
- Origin of Jewish Prayer
- Beginning of the Siddur
- Development of the Siddur

I. Review

Talmud can be understood as the in depth understanding of Torah, commentary to the mishnah, or just simply the discussions of the amoraim (200 CE – 500 CE). It is a 'layered' work – the result of hundreds of years of Jewish tradition.

II. Definition of Jewish Prayer

Babylonian Talmud, Avot 1:2

Shimon the Righteous was one of the last survivors of the Great Assembly. He used to say: On three things the world is sustained: on the Torah, on Avodah, and on Gemilut Chasadim.

1. Worship of the Heart

Babylonian Talmud, Taanit 2a

"To love the Lord your G-d, and to worship Him with all your heart." What type of worship is one which occurs in one's hear? It is prayer.

2. Dialogue with G-D

Reflections of the Rav vol. 1, Rabbi Abraham R. Besdin

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There are four media through which man reaches out to G-d, transcending his finiteness and communicating with infinity. These are the intellectual, *limmud* (study); the emotional, *ahavat Hashem*, (love of G-d); the volitional, *shemirat hamitzvot* (observance of Torah commandments); and prayer, *tefilah*...

We wish to designate prayer as an autonomous realm, as distinct from the previous three. The three media are one-directional, there are unilateral acts performed by man. Man transcends his finitude, but G-d does not respond by meeting him halfway. In prayer, however, we have a dialogue, which is bilateral and reciprocal. Man climbs the mountain toward G-d which He descends, figuratively, from the mountain top. Two hands embrace, as in a handshake. "And

the Lord came down upon Mt. Sinai, on the top of the mountain; and the Lord called Moses to the top of the mountain and Moses went up.” The prayer of Solomon suggests the mutuality of prayer: “And the incline unto the prayer of Your servant and to his supplications, O Lord, my G-d... that Your eyes may be open towards this house [Temple] night and day.” In prayer, both G-d and man move. In the other three media, man moves but G-d does not.

3. Petition/Dependence

Worship of the Heart, Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik

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The reason for the centrality that Judaism has given to the element of petition in the service lies in our philosophy of prayer. Avodah sh-ba-lev, for all its tendency to express the religious experience as a whole, and particularly its emotional aspect, does also tend to single out a particular state of mind. For when we view the noetic content of prayer we must admit that one emotion is central as far as prayer is concerned – namely the feeling of unqualified dependence...

III. Origin of Jewish Prayer

1. Biblical or Rabbinic?

Rambam (Spain 1135 – Egypt 1204), Book of Mitzvot

Mitzvah 5

The fifth mitzvah is to pray...

Ramban (Spain 1194 – Land of Israel 1270), commentary to the Book of Mitzvot

Mitzvah 5

...and this is not correct, for the sages of the Talmud have already indicated that prayer is rabbinic... And when then the Talmud expounds on the verse, “and to worship Him,” this refers only to praying in a time of duress.

2. Relationship to Sacrifice

Babylonian Talmud, Berachot 26b

R. Yose son of R. Chanina said: The *tefillot* were instituted by the *Avot* (Patriarchs). R. Yehoshua b. Levi says: The *tefillot* were instituted to replace the daily sacrifices... It has been taught in accordance with R. Yose b. Chanina: Avraham instituted the morning prayer, as it says, 'And Avraham got up early in the morning to the place where he had stood' (*Bereishit* 19:27) and 'standing' refers to prayer... Yitzchak instituted the afternoon prayer, as it says, 'And Yitzchak went out to meditate in the field at eventide' (*Bereishit* 24:63) and 'meditation' means only prayer... Yaakov instituted the evening prayer, as it says, 'And he happened [*va-yifga*] upon the place' (*Bereishit* 24:11), and '*pegi'a*' means only prayer, as it says, 'Therefore pray not thou for this people neither lift up prayer nor cry for them, neither make intercession to [*tifga*] Me.'... It has also taught in accordance with R. Yehoshua b. Levi: Why did they say that the morning prayer could be said till midday? Because the regular morning sacrifice could be brought up to midday... and why did they say that the afternoon *Tefilla* can be said up to the evening?

Because the regular afternoon offering can be brought up to the evening... and why did they say that for the evening prayer there is no limit? Because the limbs and the fat which were not consumed [on the altar] by the evening could be brought for the whole of the night..."

Guide for the Perplexed, Rambam

Book III Chapter XXXII

...it is therefore according to the nature of man impossible for him suddenly to discontinue everything to which he has been accustomed. Now God sent Moses to make [the Israelites] a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (Exod. xix. 6) by means of the knowledge of God. Comp." Unto thee it was showed that thou mightest know that the Lord is God (Dent. iv. 35):" Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the Lord is God" (ibid. v. 39). The Israelites were commanded to devote themselves to His service; comp." and to serve him with all your heart" (ibid. xi. 13):" and you shall serve the Lord your God" (Exod. xxiii. 25);" and ye shall serve him" (Dent. xiii. 5). But the custom which was in those days general among all men, and the general mode of worship in which the Israelites were brought up, consisted in sacrificing animals in those temples which contained certain images, to bow down to those images, and to burn incense before them; religious and ascetic persons were in those days the persons that were devoted to the service in the temples erected to the stars, as has been explained by us. It was in accordance with the wisdom and plan of God, as displayed in the whole Creation, that He did not command us to give up and to discontinue all these manners of service; for to obey such a commandment it would have been contrary to the nature of man, who generally cleaves to that to which he is used; it would in those days have made the same impression as a prophet would make at present if he called us to the service of God and told us in His name, that we should not pray to Him, not fast, not seek His help in time of trouble; that we should serve Him in thought, and not by any action. For this reason God allowed these kinds of service to continue; He transferred to His service that which had formerly served as a worship of created beings, and of things imaginary and unreal, and commanded us to serve Him in the same manner.

How can we suppose that Divine commandments, prohibitions, and important acts, which are fully explained, and for which certain seasons are fixed, should not have been commanded for their own sake, but only for the sake of some other thing: as if they were only the means which He employed for His primary object ? What prevented Him from making His primary object a direct commandment to us, and to give us the capacity of obeying it ? Those precepts which in your opinion are only the means and not the object would then have been unnecessary. Hear my answer, which will cure your heart of this disease and will show you the truth of that which I have pointed out to you. There occurs in the Law a passage which contains exactly the same idea; it is the following : " God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt; but God led the people about, through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea," etc. (Exod. xiii. 17). Here God led the people about, away from the direct road which He originally intended, because He feared they might meet on that way with hardships too great for their ordinary strength; He took them by another road in order to obtain thereby His original object. In the same manner God refrained from prescribing what the people by their natural disposition would be incapable of obeying, and gave the above-mentioned commandments as a means of securing His chief object, viz., to spread a knowledge of Him

[among the people], and to cause them to reject idolatry. It is contrary to man's nature that he should suddenly abandon all the different kinds of Divine service and the different customs in which he has been brought up, and which have been so general, that they were considered as a matter of course; it would be just as if a person trained to work as a slave with mortar and bricks, or similar things, should interrupt his work, clean his hands, and at once fight with real giants. It was the result of God's wisdom that the Israelites were led about in the wilderness till they acquired courage. For it is a well-known fact that travelling in the wilderness, and privation of bodily enjoyments, such as bathing, produce courage, whilst the reverse is the source of faint-heartedness: besides, another generation rose during the wanderings that had not been accustomed to degradation and slavery. All the travelling in the wilderness was regulated by Divine commands through Moses; comp." At the commandment of the Lord they rested, and at the commandment of the Lord they journeyed; they kept the charge of the Lord and the commandment of the Lord by the hand of Moses" (Num. ix. 23). In the same way the portion of the Law under discussion is the result of divine wisdom, according to which people are allowed to continue the kind of worship to which they have been accustomed, in order that they might acquire the true faith, which is the chief object [of God's commandments]. You ask, What could have prevented God from commanding us directly, that which is the chief object, and from giving us the capacity of obeying it? This would lead to a second question, What prevented God from leading the Israelites through the way of the land of the Philistines, and endowing them with strength for fighting? The leading about by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night would then not have been necessary.

A third question would then be asked in reference to the good promised as reward for the keeping of the commandments, and the evil foretold as a punishment for sins. It is the following question: As it is the chief object and purpose of God that we should believe in the Law, and act according to that which is written therein, why has He not given us the capacity of continually believing in it, and following its guidance, instead of holding out to us reward for obedience, and punishment for disobedience, or of actually giving all the predicted reward and punishment? For [the promises and the threats] are but the means of leading to this chief object. What prevented Him from giving us, as part of our nature, the will to do that which He desires us to do, and to abandon the kind of worship which He rejects? There is one general answer to these three questions, and to all questions of the same character: it is this: Although in every one of the signs [related in Scripture] the natural property of some individual being is changed, the nature of man is never changed by God by way of miracle. It is in accordance with this important principle that God said," O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me," etc. (Dent. v. 26). It is also for this reason that He distinctly stated the commandments and the prohibitions, the reward and the punishment. This principle as regards miracles has been frequently explained by us in our works: I do not say this because I believe that it is difficult for God to change the nature of every individual person; on the contrary, it is possible, and it is in His power, according to the principles taught in Scripture; but it has never been His will to do it, and it never will be. If it were part of His will to change [at His desire] the nature of any person, the mission of prophets and the giving of the Law would have been altogether superfluous.

Parsha Illuminations

Rabbi Baruch Adler

The Ramban (*Vayikra* 1:9) goes to great lengths in severely criticizing the Rambam for this line of thinking. How could the Torah introduce a great *mitzvah*, central to the entire service of Hashem, merely for the purpose of removing “false beliefs from the hearts of the wicked and fools of the world”? Moreover, *mizbei'ach* sacrifice would not be an antidote to the disease of idol-worship; but, to the contrary, it would be a mark of respect and honor to these deviations. After all, what the gentiles consider to be holy, would now be offered as a sacrifice to Hashem; a greater honor could not be accorded to idolatry. In addition, the Rambam himself stated that the idol-worshippers used to sacrifice to the moon and to the sun, so it is obvious that while some heathens shunned eating of the flesh of these animals, others offered them as sacrifices. The Ramban further argues that animal sacrifice was popular long before the Egyptians and Chaldeans. Hevel brought the first-born of his flock as an offering to Hashem (*Bereishis* 4:4). Noach and his three sons offered animal sacrifices upon their exit from the ark (*Bereishis* 8:20), and Bilaam, too, brought animal offerings in order to approach Hashem so that he would be reached by His communication. How then could the offerings specified in the Torah be a cure against all idols? The disease of idolatry would have been better cured, according to this logic, if *Klal Yisrael* had been commanded to eat the flesh of these animal-deities: an act forbidden and repugnant to these idolators.

The *Meshech Chachmah* (introduction to *Vayikra*) seeks to reconcile the Rambam's view with that of the Ramban. He explains that the Rambam's contention that the *karbanos* were introduced to distance *Klal Yisrael* from idolatry refers to those sacrifices which were brought on *bamos*, which were acceptable in the period preceding the *Beis Hamikdash*. Although these altars did not have the sanctity of the *mizbei'ach* of the *Beis Hamikdash*, they nevertheless served as an interim step in removing idolatry from the people's hearts. Once the *Beis Hamikdash* was established, the *Meshech Chachmah* continues, then the view of the Ramban comes into play. The offering of *karbanos* in the *Beis Hamikdash* was purely a spiritual action, binding this world with the Upper World.

IV. Beginning of the Siddur

Rambam, Mishnah Torah 1:4

When Israel was exiled in the time of the wicked Nebuchadnezzar, they became interspersed in Persia and Greece and other nations. Children were born to them in these foreign countries and those children's language was confused.

The speech of each and every one was a concoction of many tongues. No one was able to express himself coherently in any one language, but rather in a mixture [of languages], as [Nehemiah 13:24] states: "And their children spoke half in Ashdodit and did not know how to speak the Jewish language. Rather, [they would speak] according to the language of various other peoples."

Consequently, 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 sequence.

The first three [blessings] are praises of God and the last three are thanksgiving. The intermediate [blessings] contain requests for all those things that serve as general categories for the desires of each and every person and the needs of the whole community.

Thus, the prayers could be set in the mouths of everyone. 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.

V. Development of the Siddur

Otzer HaMidrashim (Eizenstein) The Shmoneh Esrei Page 584

The Gemara teaches us that Shimon HaPakuli (cotton dealer) put the 18 Brachot of Shmona Esrei into an order before Rabban Gamliel in Yavneh. Aggadah: What does the Gemara mean when it says "into an order"? This refers to an order that corresponds to events in Jewish history. Therefore we find that the 18 Brachot of Shmona Esrei were composed one after the other. At the time of the Great Assembly, they collected the 18 Brachot and put them in order. When Avrohom, our forefather was saved from the fire of the furnace into which Nimrod threw him, the angels opened by saying: Magen Avrohom. When Yitzchak was sacrificed on the altar and his body turned to ash and the ashes were thrown onto Mount Moriah, G-d immediately dropped dew on the ashes and brought Yitzchak back to life. In recognition of this event, King David said; Ki'Tal Chermon Sh'Yoraid Al Harirai Tzion (Psalms 133, 3) meaning like the dew that G-d used to bring Yitzchak our forefather back to life; immediately the angels opened by saying: Michayeh Ha'Maisim; when Yaakov our forefather reached the Temple Mount and came in contact with the gates to heaven and sanctified G-d's name, the angels opened by saying: Ha'Kail Hakadosh; when Pharaoh decided to make Yossef his second in command in Egypt, Yossef was tested as to whether he was fluent in 70 languages, the angels opened by saying: Chonain Ha'Da'At; when Reuven sinned in the incident involving his father's wife, Bilhah, Reuven was sentenced to be punished with death. Reuven performed Tshuva as it is written: Va'Yeshev Reuven El Ha'Bohr; Rabbi Yochanon said: that means that Reuven performed Tshuva and his sentence was commuted as it is further written: YiChi Reuven V'Al Yamos; the angels opened by saying: Ha'Rotzh Bi'Tshuva. When Yehudah was involved with the episode with Tamar and Yehudah said: Ho'Tziooha V'Tisaref and

אוצר המדרשים (אייזנשטיין) תפלת שמונה עשרה עמוד 584

תניא שמעון הפקולי הסדיר שמונה עשרה ברכות לפני רבן גמליאל על הסדר ביבנה. אגדה, מאי על הסדר זה סדר עולם, לכך מצינו י"ח ברכות של תפלה מעולם היו מתקנות זו אחר זו, כיון שבאו אנשי כנסת הגדולה כללם ותקנום כסדרן. כשניצל אברהם אבינו מאור כשדים פתחו מלאכי השרת ואמרו בא"י מגן אברהם, כשנעקד יצחק על גבי המזבח ונעשה דשן והיה אפרו מושלך על הר המוריה מיד הביא עליו הקב"ה טל והחיה אותו, לפיכך אמר דוד ע"ה כטל חרמון שיויר על הררי ציון כטל שהחיה הקב"ה בו את יצחק אבינו, מיד פתחו מלאכי השרת ואמרו בא"י מחיה המתים. כשבא יעקב אבינו ופגע בשערי שמים והקדיש שמו של הקב"ה מיד פתחו מלאכי השרת את פיהם ואמרו בא"י האל הקדוש. כשבא פרעה להמליך את יוסף במצרים בדקו אם יודע בשבעים לשונות בא גבריאל ולמדו שבעים לשונות, מיד פתחו מלאכי השרת ואמרו בא"י חונן הדעת. כשעשה ראובן מעשה בלהה פילגש אביו נקנסה עליו מיתה מיד חזר בתשובה דכתיב וישב ראובן אל הבור אמר רבי יוחנן שחזר בתשובה וחיה, דכתיב יחי ראובן ואל ימות וגו', מיד פתחו מלאכי השרת ואמרו בא"י הרוצה בתשובה. כשעשה יהודה מעשה תמר ואמר הוציאוה ותשרף ושלחה לו ואמרה הכר נא, מיד הודה ואמר צדקה ממני ונסלח לו על אותו עון, מיד פתחו מלאכי השרת ואמרו בא"י חנון המרבה לסלוח. כשמררו המצריים את חיי אבותינו אמר הקב"ה וגאלתי אתכם, מיד פתחו מלאכי השרת ואמרו בא"י גואל ישראל. כשנצטער אברהם אבינו בצער המילה בא רפאל ורפאו, מיד פתחו מלאכי השרת ואמרו בא"י רופא חולים. כשזרע יצחק אבינו ומצא מאה שערים מיד פתחו מלאכי השרת בא"י מברך השנים. כשבא יעקב אבינו למצרים וראה יוסף ושמעון ונתקבצו הוא ובניו ביחד, מיד פתחו מלאכי השרת ואמרו בא"י מקבץ נדחי עמו ישראל. כשנתנה תורה לישראל אמר לו הקב"ה למשה ואלה המשפטים אשר תשים לפניהם, מיד פתחו מלאכי השרת ואמרו בא"י מלך אוהב צדקה ומשפט. כשטבעו המצריים בים פתחו מלאכי השרת ואמרו בא"י שובר אויבים ומכניע זדים.

Tamar then sent Yehudah some items that Yehudah had left with her and Yehudah then admitted that Tamar was right, Yehudah was forgiven for that sin. The angels immediately opened by saying: Chanun Ha'Marbeh Lisloach. When the Egyptians made the lives of our forefathers unbearable, G-d said: I will free them; the angels immediately opened by saying: Go'Ail Yisroel. When Avrohom was suffering from the pain of his circumcision, the angel Raphael came and healed Avrohom; the angels immediately opened by saying: Rofeah Cholim. When Yitzchak our forefather planted and found 10 gates, the angels immediately opened by saying: Mivarech Ha'Shanim. When Yaakov our forefather came to Egypt and reunited with Yossef and Shimon and all the sons were together, the angels immediately opened by saying: Mikabetz Nidchai Amo Yisroel. When the Torah was given to the Jewish people and G-d said to Moshe: V'Aileh Hamishpatim Asher Tasim Lifnaihem, the angels immediately opened by saying: Melech Ohaiv Tzedaka Oo'Mishpat. When the Egyptians drowned in the Red Sea, the angels immediately opened by saying: Shover Oyvim Oo'Machniya Zaydim. When G-d told Yaakov: V'Yossef

Yashis Yado Al Ainecha, Yaakov became very happy and believed the words of G-d. When Yaakov passed away and Yossef put his hands on Yaakov's eyes, kissed Yaakov and began to cry, the angels immediately opened by saying: Mishan Oo'Mivtach La'Tzadikkim. When King Shlomo finished building the Beit Hamikdash, the angels immediately opened by saying: Boneh Yerushalayim. When the Jews were saved and passed safely through the Red Sea and recited the Shira: Va'Yosha, the angels immediately opened by saying: Matzmiach Keren Yeshua. When the Jews were oppressed in Egypt and cried out to G-d and G-d heeded their cries as it is written: Va'Yaianchu Bnei Yisroel Min Ha'Avoda Va'Yizaku Va'Ta'Al Shavasam El Ha'Elokim Min Ha'Avodah, the angels immediately opened by saying: Shomeah Tefila. When the Jews completed the Mishkan and the Schechina came down and rested between the two Keruvim, the angels immediately opened by saying: Ha'Machazir B'Rachamav Schechinaso L'Tzion. When King Shlomo placed the Ark within the Beit Hamikdash and said: Hashem Elokim Al Tashev Pnei Michichecha and gave thanks and recited praise to G-d and said: Baruch Hashem Asher Nasan Minucha, the angels immediately opened by saying: Ha'Tov Shimcha Oo'Licha Naeh Li'Hodos. When the Jews entered Israel and thus was fulfilled that which was written: V'Nasati Shalom Ba'Aretz, the angels immediately opened by saying: Oseh Hashalom. As a result, when the men of the Great Assembly put the Brachot of Shmona Esrei in order according to their understanding, the angels immediately opened by saying: Baruch Chacham HaRazim Sh'Nasan Chochma Li'Yirayav Sh'Hem Bnai Goy Gadol as Moshe had said: Ki Mi Goy Gadol Asher Lo Elokim Krovim Eilav Ki'Hashem Elokinu Bi'Chol Korainu Eilav.

כשאמר לו הקב"ה ליעקב ויוסף ישית ידו על עיניך שמח ובטח על דבריו של מקום ובשעה שנפטר יעקב אבינו מן העולם ובא יוסף ונתן שתי ידיו על עיניו ונשקו ובכה לו, מיד פתחו מלאכי השרת ואמרו בא"י משען ומבטח לצדיקים. כשבנה שלמה את ביהמ"ק מיד פתחו מלאכי השרת ואמרו בא"י בונה ירושלים. כשנושעו ישראל ועברו את הים סוף ואמרו שירת ויושע פתחו מלאכי השרת ואמרו בא"י מצמיח קרן ישועה. כשנאנחו ישראל וצעקו לאל ושמע צעקתם כמה שנאמר ויאנחו בני ישראל מן העבודה ויצעקו ותעל שועתם אל האלהים מן העבודה, מיד פתחו מלאכי השרת ואמרו בא"י שומע תפלה. כשעשו ישראל את המשכן וירדה שכינה ושכן בו בין שני הכרובים, מיד פתחו מלאכי השרת ואמרו בא"י המחזיר ברחמיו שכינתו לציון. כשהכניס שלמה הארון לפניו ואמר ה' אלהים אל תשב פני משיחך וגו' ונתן הודאה ושבח למקום ואמר ברוך ה' אשר נתן מנוחה וגו', מיד פתחו מלאכי השרת ואמרו הטוב שמך ולך נאה להודות. כשנכנסו ישראל לארץ ונתקיים עליהם המקרא ונתתי שלום בארץ, מיד פתחו מלאכי השרת ואמרו בא"י עושה השלום. לפיכך כשבאו אנשי כנסת הגדולה ותקנום בסדר הזה בחכמתם מיד פתחו מלאכי השרת ואמרו ברוך חכם הרזים שנתן חכמה ליראיו שהם בני גוי גדול כמו שאמר להם משה ע"ה כי מי גוי גדול אשר לו אלהים קרובים אליו כה' אלהינו בכל קראנו אליו.

Babylonian Talmud, Berachot 28b

MISHNAH. RABBAN GAMALIEL SAYS: EVERY DAY A MAN SHOULD SAY THE EIGHTEEN BENEDICTIONS. R. JOSHUA SAYS: AN ABBREVIATED EIGHTEEN.¹² R. AKIBA SAYS: IF HE KNOWS IT FLUENTLY HE SAYS THE ORIGINAL EIGHTEEN, AND IF NOT AN ABBREVIATED EIGHTEEN. R. ELIEZER SAYS: IF A MAN MAKES HIS PRAYERS A FIXED TASK, IT IS NOT A [GENUINE] SUPPLICATION. R. JOSHUA SAYS: IF ONE IS TRAVELLING IN A DANGEROUS PLACE, HE SAYS A SHORT PRAYER, SAYING, SAVE, O LORD, THY PEOPLE THE REMNANT OF ISRAEL; IN EVERY TIME OF CRISIS¹³ MAY THEIR REQUIREMENTS NOT BE LOST SIGHT OF BY THEE. BLESSED ART THOU, O LORD, WHO HEARKENEST TO PRAYER. IF HE IS RIDING ON AN ASS HE DISMOUNTS AND PRAYS. IF HE IS UNABLE TO DISMOUNT HE SHOULD TURN HIS FACE [TOWARDS JERUSALEM]; AND IF HE CANNOT TURN HIS FACE HE SHOULD CONCENTRATE HIS THOUGHTS ON THE HOLY OF HOLIES. IF HE IS TRAVELLING IN A SHIP OR ON A RAFT,¹⁴ HE SHOULD CONCENTRATE HIS THOUGHTS ON THE HOLY OF HOLIES.

GEMARA. To what do these eighteen benedictions correspond? R. Hillel the son of Samuel b. Nahmani said: To the eighteen times that David mentioned the Divine Name in the Psalm, Ascribe unto the Lord, O ye sons of might.¹⁵ R. Joseph said: To the eighteen times the Divine Name is mentioned in the Shema'. R. Tanhum said in the name of R. Joshua b. Levi: To the eighteen vertebrae in the spinal column.

R. Tanhum also said in the name of R. Joshua b. Levi: In saying the Tefillah one should bow down [at the appropriate places] until all the vertebrae in the spinal column are loosened. 'Ulla says: Until an issar¹⁶ of flesh is visible opposite his heart.¹⁷ R. Hanina said: If he simply bows his head, he need do no more. Said Raba: This is only if it hurts him [to stoop] and he shows that he would like to bow down. These eighteen are really nineteen? — R. Levi said: The benediction relating to the

Minim was instituted in Jabneh.¹⁹ To what was it meant to correspond? — R. Levi said: On the view of R. Hillel the son of R. Samuel b. Nahmani,²⁰ to The God of Glory thundereth;²¹ on the view of R. Joseph, to the word 'One'²² in the Shema'; on the view of R. Tanhum quoting R. Joshua b. Levi, to the little vertebrae in the spinal column.

Our Rabbis taught: Simeon ha-Pakuli²³ arranged the eighteen benedictions in order before Rabban Gamaliel in Jabneh. Said Rabban Gamaliel to the Sages:²⁴ Can any one among you frame a benediction relating to the Minim?²⁵ Samuel the Lesser arose and composed it. The next year²⁶ he forgot it

תלמוד בבלי מסכת ברכות דף כח עמוד ב

משנה. רבן גמליאל אומר: בכל יום ויום מתפלל אדם שמנה עשרה. רבי יהושע אומר: מעין שמונה עשרה. רבי עקיבא אומר: אם שגורה תפלתו בפיו - מתפלל שמונה עשרה, ואם לאו - מעין שמונה עשרה. רבי אליעזר אומר: העושה תפלתו קבע אין תפלתו תחנונים. רבי יהושע אומר: ההולך במקום סכנה מתפלל תפלה קצרה, ואומר: הושע ה' את עמך את שארית ישראל, בכל פרשת העבור יהיו צרכיהם לפניך, ברוך אתה ה' שומע תפלה. היה רוכב על החמור - ירד ויתפלל, ואם אינו יכול לירד - יחזיר את פניו, ואם אינו יכול להחזיר את פניו - יכוין את לבו כנגד בית קדשי הקדשים. היה מהלך - בספינה או באסדה - יכוין את לבו כנגד בית קדשי הקדשים.

גמרא. הני שמונה עשרה כנגד מי? אמר רבי הלל בריה דרבי שמואל בר נחמני: כנגד שמונה עשרה אזכרות שאמר דוד +תהלים כ"ט+ בהבו לה' בני אלים. רב יוסף אומר: כנגד שמונה עשרה אזכרות שבקריאת שמע. אמר רבי תנחום אמר רבי יהושע בן לוי: כנגד שמונה עשרה חוליות שבשדרה. ואמר רבי תנחום אמר רבי יהושע בן לוי: המתפלל צריך שיכרע עד שיתפקקו כל חוליות שבשדרה; עולא אומר: עד כדי שיראה איסר כנגד לבו; רבי חנינא אומר: כיון שנענע ראשו שוב אינו צריך. אמר רבא: והוא - דמצער נפשיה ומחזי כמאן דכרע.

הני תמני סרי, תשסרי הוויין! אמר רבי לוי: ברכת המינים ביבנה תקנוה. כנגד מי תקנוה? אמר רבי לוי: לרבי הלל בריה דרבי שמואל בר נחמני - כנגד +תהלים כ"ט+ אל הכבוד הרעים, לרב יוסף - כנגד אחד שבקריאת שמע; לרבי תנחום אמר רבי יהושע בן לוי - כנגד חוליא קטנה שבשדרה. תנו רבנן: שמעון הפקולי הסדיר שמונה עשרה ברכות לפני רבן גמליאל על הסדר ביבנה. אמר להם רבן גמליאל לחכמים: כלום יש אדם שיודע לתקן ברכת המינים? עמד שמואל הקטן ותקנה, לשנה אחרת שכחה.

- **Symbolism of the number 18 – Man focused or G-d focused**

Olam HeTefilot, page 124
Rabbi Eliyahu Munk

We can conclude by way of a clue that the number 18 Brachot was already established well before Shmona Esrei was composed and only the order of the middle Brachot and their exact wording was established during a later period. In many early Midrashim, we already find the number 18 has a significance based on verses from Tanach. This number was established well before the composition of the wording of these Brachot. The Midrashim are proof that the number 18 in and of itself carried a special importance. The apparent goal to reach a certain number of Brachot begs to be interpreted. First of all, the sources reveal that the initial goal was not to compose exactly 18 Brachot or requests but to recite G-d's name 18 times within this Tefila. Only as means of reaching that goal were 18 Brachot composed. In most sources, the number 18 is based on the fact that G-d's name which consists of four letters (d-ied) appears 18 times in the chapter of Psalms that begins: Havu L'Ashem Bnei Ailim (Psalms 29) or within the three Parshiot of Kriyat Shema or within the verses of Oz Yashir. This follows what we provided in our explanation in Birchot Haschachar and to Oz Yashir that the mention of G-d's name which consists of four letters 18 times was intended to represent G-d's ineffable name which consisted of 72 letters ($18 \times 4 = 72$) which are found in Oz Yashir. It appears from the content of those verses that G-d's name of 72 letters was tied to the miracles that occurred in the Exodus from Egypt. According to the words of the Rosh, one should not concern himself with the recital of G-d's name in the 19th Bracha of V'Lamalshinim which was added in a later era. The miracles that occurred during the exodus from Egypt and in particular the miracles that occurred during the splitting of the sea were tied to the ineffable name of G-d and became the basis for the rule of Semichat Geula L'Tefila. Because this name is tied to the miracles that occurred in the Exodus from Egypt, this name was given a special place in Shmona Esrei. All of the Brachot of Shmona Esrei were composed around the idea that together they should represent the 72 letter name of G-d. Just as Shmona Esrei as a prayer was built around G-d's 72 letter name so too each of its Brachot was built around G-d's name of four letters out of the enduring hope that "My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust" (Psalms 91,2), will always extend a listening ear: "He shall call upon me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will save him, and honor him." (ibid. 15). By reciting a prayer that was composed in this manner our prayers rise to the heavens as a wonderful Kiddush Hashem.

- **So why do we still call it Shemonah Esrei?**

Levush Techelet

Although there are 19 Brachot in Shmona Esrei, the prayer is still called Shmona Esrei, because at first it was composed with 18 Brachot. The Bracha concerning the apostates was not composed by the Men of the Great Assembly. Afterwards in the time of Rabban Gamliel, the number of apostates grew significantly. Rabban Gamliel added to Shmona Esrei a Bracha concerning the apostates that the apostates be soon eliminated and they set it among the Brachot of Shmona Esrei. However the prayer's original name, that there were Shmona Esrei Brachot, never left the vocabulary of the people and so they continued to call the prayer, Shmona Esrei (18).

רחם ה' אלוקינו ברחמך הרבים עלינו ועל ישראל עמך ועל ירושלים עירך ועל ציון משכן
כבודך ועל מלכות בית דויד משיחך ועל היכלך ועל מקדשך ועל מעונך ברוך אתה ה' אלקי
דויד בונה ירושלים.

במדבר רבה (וילנא) פרשה יח סימן כא

הושע יד) כל תשא עון וקח טוב ונשלמה פרים שפתינו, אמרו ישראל רבש"ע בזמן שבהמ"ק = שבית
המקדש = קיים היינו מקריבים קרבן ומתכפר ועכשיו אין בידינו אלא תפלה טו"ב בגימטריא י"ז תפלה י"ט
ברכות הוצא משם ברכת המינין שתקנוה ביבנה ואת צמח דוד שתקנו אחריו על שום (תהלים כו) בחנני
ה' ונסני

Two key points to consider when studying the development of the siddur:

1. Chazal were concise

Example: How many words are there in the blessing of 'Veleyerushalayim' in Shemonah Esrei?
How many words are there in the prayer for the State of Israel?

2. The siddur developed over a long period of time, and in a historical context

As uncovered by Professor Uri Ehrlich of Beer Sheva University and published in the
journal: קבץ על יד כרך שמונה עשרה:

תפלת שמונה עשרה על פי מנהג ארץ ישראל – אתה גיבור ואין כמוך חזק ואין וולתיך משיב
הרוח ומוריד הגשם מכלכל חיים בחסד ומחיה מתים ורב להושיע. ברוך אתה ה' מחיה
המתים.

As provided by Rabbi Yissaschar Jacobsen on page 273, Vol. 1 of his book: גתיב בינה:

אתה גבור משפיל גאים חזק לדון עריצים חי לעולמים מקים מתים משיב הרוח ומוריד הטל
מכלכל חיים מחיה מתים בהרף עין ישועה לנו מצמית. ברוך אתה ה' מחיה המתים.

The text of the ברכה as it is found in the סדר רב עמרם נאון is remarkably close to our
own:

סדר תפילה – אתה גבור לעולם ה' מחיה מתים אתה רב להושיע – מוריד הטל ובימות
הגשמים אומר משיב הרוח ומוריד הגשם – מכלכל חיים בחסד מחיה מתים ברחמים רבים
סומך נופלים רופא חולים מתיר אסורים ומקיים אמונתו לישני עפר. מי כמוך בעל גבורות
ומי דומה לך מלך ממית ומחיה ומצמית ישועה. ונאמן אתה להחיות מתים. ברוך אתה ה'
מחיה המתים.

