

THE PIRCHEI SHOSHANIM ROADMAP TO PRAYER PROJECT

The Roadmap to Prayer

Lesson 15

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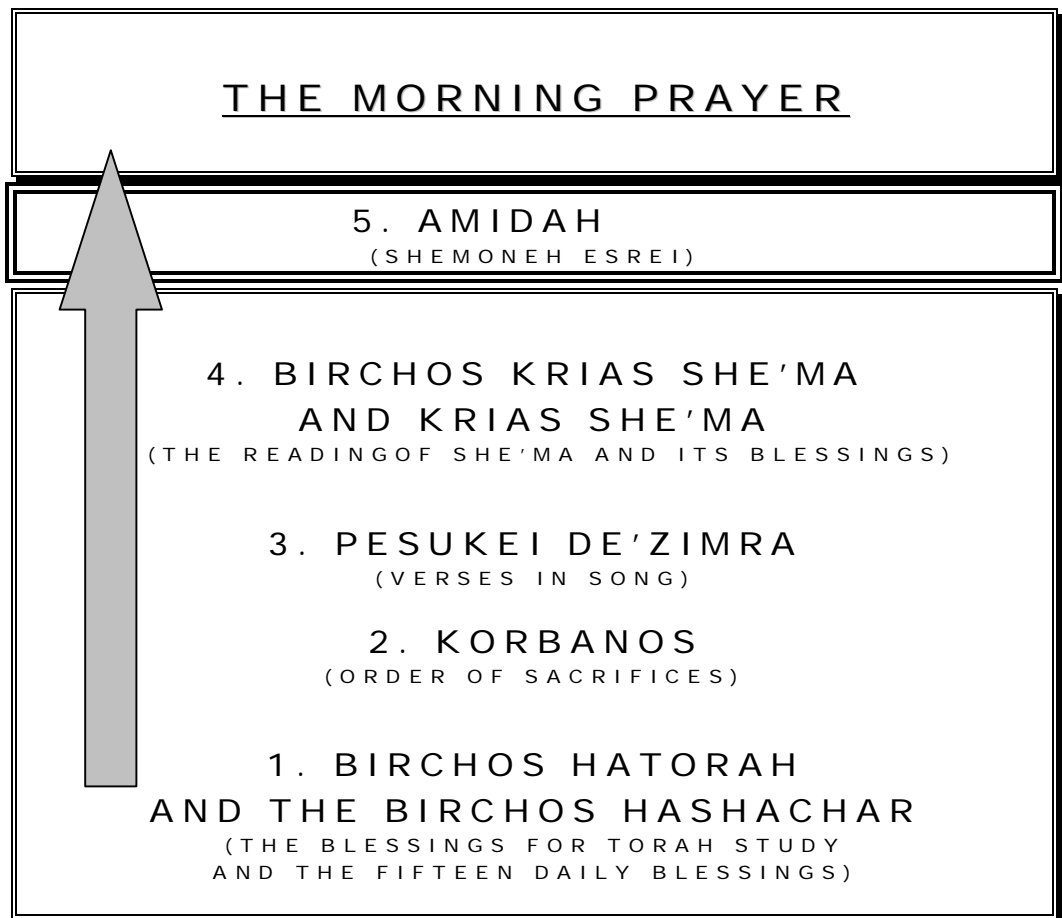
The Roadmap to Prayer

Lesson

15

Shemoneh Esrei: The Amidah Prayer

After finishing the Shema Reading with its accompanying blessings (*Birchos Krias She'ma*), we immediately proceed to recite *Shemoneh Esrei* the *Amidah Prayer* which is the central prayer upon which the entire davening revolves.



¹ Lit. the "standing" prayer

The Standard for Prayer

The above outline for Prayer is a constant, basic model for the Morning Prayer throughout the entire year, whether weekday, Shabbos or Festival. Any additional prayers that we recite on Shabbos and Festivals are additions to the standard format of prayer outlined above. Any additions to the basic format for Prayer should be viewed as “add-on modules” for the selections inserted for special occasions and instances. In the *Amidah Shemoneh Esrei* we are required to mention the specific occurrence that we celebrate on each specific day such as *Shabbos, Yom Tov, Rosh Chodesh, Chanukah* and *Purim* which sometimes require just an insertion of a paragraph and sometimes it changes an entire section of the *Amidah*. However, even then, the basic format of the *Amidah* remains intact as we will soon explain.

Amidah (Shemoneh Esrei)

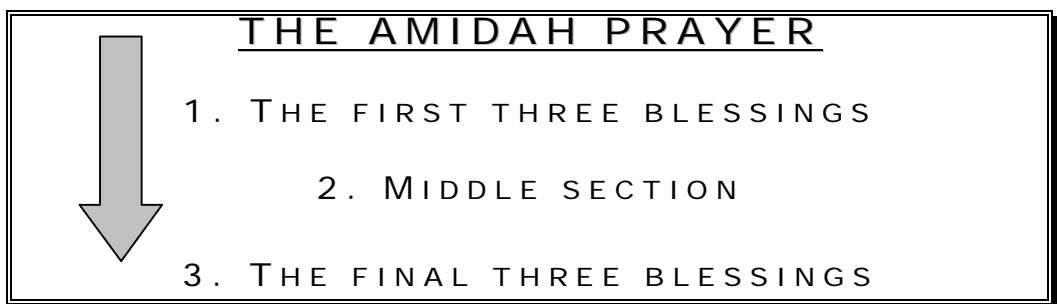
Beginning and End

The *Amidah* itself has a very specific format that is consistent throughout all prayers of *Amidah*. It begins with three prefatory blessings devoted to the grandeur and splendor of the Al-mighty. It ends with an additional three blessings that give thanks and praise to *Hashem* for the goodness and kindnesses that he provides for us.

The Middle

The entire middle section of the weekday *Shemoneh Esrei* consists of prayers formulated as blessings that beseech *Hashem* for health, welfare, forgiveness and other vital needs. On Shabbos and Festival days, the entire middle section is replaced by a prayer that relates to that particular day's event which is being commemorated.

Hence, even on Shabbos and Festival days where the *Amidah* is significantly shortened from 19 blessings to just 7, the format of the *Amidah* remains intact. So much so, that if someone would mistakenly recite the entire weekday *Shemoneh Esrei* and then add in a portion to commemorate the Holy day of Shabbos or other Festival day, one would have fulfilled the obligation of prayer.



During Shemoneh Esrei

One who is praying *Shemoneh Esrei* should do the following:

- Š Find a place where one can complete the entire *Shemoneh Esrei* in one go without interruption.
- Š Take three steps back and then forward before starting the prefatory verse "*Hashem sefasaye tiftach*".
- Š Bow four times

The 4 Places to Bow

There are four places where one bows by bending the knees, then bowing the head and spine, and then raising oneself back to an upright position by first raising one's head and then following by straightening the spine.

- Š By the beginning of *Shemoneh Esrei*
- Š By the end of the first blessing which ends with *Magen Avraham*
- Š By *Modim anachnu lach* (we thank you) which is the first of the last three blessings
- Š By the close of that blessing with *Hatov shimcha u'lecha na'eh le'hodos* (Your Name is "the Good One" and to You alone it is fitting to give thanks).

At the beginning of *Modim*, many people have the custom of just bending the head and the spine without bending the knees².

After completing the *Shemoneh Esrei* before reciting the closing words the One who makes Peace (*Osseh shalom bimromav etc.*) one bends his head and spine forward and takes three steps backwards moving the left foot first and then the right foot just behind his left foot and then the left foot back again, bringing it alongside his right foot. Then while still in a bent-over position one turns to the left saying "*Osseh shalom bimromav*" (the One who makes peace). Then one bends to the right and recites the words "*Hu ya'aseh shalom aleinu*" (He should make peace for us) and finally one bends forward completing the verse with the words "*Ve'al kol Yisrael ve'imru amen*". (On all Israel and say Amen).

² Others bend the knees when saying *Modim* just as at the other places we bow during *She'mone Esrei*

At this point, one straightens oneself back up to an upright standing position and pauses there for a few seconds before taking three steps forward and returning to his original spot. One should preferably remain in his place before taking three steps forward again until the *chazzan* starts repeating the *Shemoneh Esrei* and reaches *Kedusha*. At that time one should take three steps forward getting back to his original position at the beginning of *Shemoneh Esrei*. Although it is not absolutely necessary to stay in this position of three steps backwards, one must at least remain there for a few seconds for as long as it takes to walk four *Amos* (cubits). Nevertheless, whenever one will be reciting *Kedusha* one should try to remain in his place until the *chazzan* reaches *Kedusha*³.

Now one recites the “*Yehi ratzon*” (May it be your desire) prayer for the rebuilding of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem and for the merit of Torah study and renewed Temple service.

Yehi ratzone mile'fanecha ... she'yibaneh Beis Hamikdash ...

POSTURE FOR SHEMONEH ESREI

1. THREE STEPS BACK AND
THREE STEPS FORWARD
IN UPRIGHT POSITION
2. WE BOW FOUR TIMES
3. THREE STEPS BACK AND
THREE STEPS FORWARD
IN A BOWING POSITION

³ Generally, if there will be a longer than usual time for the *chazzan* to reach *Kedusha* as on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur and other festivals where other prayers are inserted to the repeat *Shemoneh Esrei*, the custom is to take the three steps forward before reaching *Kedusha*

How to Bow

Whenever one bows when reciting a *bracha*, (blessing) one should bend his knees upon reciting the word Blessed (*Baruch*). When reciting the word You (*Atta*) one should bow forward by bending his spine and head forward. Before reciting the word *Hashem* one must straighten himself to an upright position as the verse states, *Hashem zokeif kefufim* (G-d straightens those who are bent over).

Shaking, Swaying and Standing Still

When we observe people praying, we notice that everyone's mannerism is different. Some shake to and fro while some sway from side to side, yet others stand very still. We often times wonder what the significance of all these styles of prayer mean.

The *Magen Avraham* mentions different opinions on the matter of swaying (*shohk'eling*) during prayer (*davening*). The Pri Megadim mentions from the *sefer Elya Rabba* that it's improper to stand still while just swaying one's head in a haughty manner. Aside from this, he concludes that if one wishes to sway during prayer or not is a matter of choice as there are different opinions on this matter.

About this we need only say one thing

Whichever way one chooses, it's important that one does it for the sake of Heaven (*U'bilvad she'yechavein es libo lashomayim*).

We may add that prayer (*Tefilla*) is a service of the heart and mind (*avodah she'be'leiv*) a way for us to connect with the Master of the World (*Ribbono Shel Olam*). This process is subject to constant improvements and can take on different meanings each time. Therefore, the external expression of swaying (*shohk'eling*) will invariably also take on different mannerisms and need not always be performed in the same way.

Dovid Hamelech said:

“All my bones speak ‘Hashem! Who is like You?’”

Three Steps to Shemoneh Esrei⁴

The Rama in Simon 95 mentions from the sefer *Roke'ach* that one should take three steps forward before starting *Shemoneh Esrei* to indicate that one is stepping forward to perform an important task. It is customary to take three steps backwards first, before taking three steps forward when starting *Shemoneh Esrei*. Some have the custom of taking the three steps backwards right before saying "Rock of Israel" *Tzur Yisrael*. The *Elya Rabba* brings from the *Eitz Chaim* that one takes the three steps back when reciting "Praise to G-d the most high" (*Tehilos lekeil elyon*) A few paragraphs before the start of *Shemoneh Esrei*.

If one were standing with one's back against the wall it would be sufficient just to take three steps forward to start *Shemoneh Esrei*.

The three steps correspond to:

וַתִּקְרְבוּן וַתַּעֲמְדוּן, תַּחַת הַהָר; וְהָהָר בֵּעֵר בְּאֵשׁ, עַד-לֵב הַשָּׁמַיִם- חֹשֶׁךְ, עָנָן וְעֲרֵפֶל

And you approached and stood at the foot of the mountain, and the mountain burned with fire up to the midst of the heavens, with darkness, (חֹשֶׁךְ), a cloud, (עָנָן) and opaque darkness. (וְעֲרֵפֶל)

Choshech Anan and Arafel (חֹשֶׁךְ, עָנָן וְעֲרֵפֶל) are the three layers of partitions that *Moshe Rabbeinu* (Moses our teacher) passed through when going to pray to *Hashem*. That's why we take three steps back at the end of davening to indicate we are leaving that area and coming back out of the three partitions. Additionally, we find three languages of stepping forward to pray:

§ *Vayigash Avraham* - Avraham approached

§ *Vayigash eilav Yehudah* - Yehudah approached him

§ *Vayigash Eliyahu* - Eliyahu approached

The reason we keep both feet together side by side is:

§ To indicate that we are bound and cannot make any move without G-d's consent.

⁴ Siddur Otzar Hatefilos page 293

- Š To stand before G-d in a humbled fashion as the *Malachim* (angels) do. The verse (*pasuk*) states about the way the Angels (*Malachim*) stand - *Ve'ragleihem reggel yeshara* (and their feet are like a straight foot). The verse (*pasuk*) begins with feet (plural) and concludes with foot (singular). This indicates that they brought their two feet together as one.

Laws דינים

- Š It is necessary to stand and to keep one's feet together for *Shemoneh Esrei*. One should keep one's feet together even if one is forced to daven *Shemoneh Esrei* in a sitting or laying position.

The reason that one should preferably daven while standing is in order that we pray in a similar fashion to the way the *Kohanim* (Priestly descendants of *Aharon HaKohen*) served in the Temple (*Beis Hamikdash*).

- Š If one davened without placing both feet together, the Prayer (*Tefilla*) is still valid⁵. The same rules apply for reciting *Kedusha*.

Intimations רמז

During the *Amidah*, one's legs should be straight and together. This is based on the verse *Ve'ragleihem reggel yeshara* וְרַגְלֵיהֶם, רֶגֶל יְשָׁרָה means "straight" in Hebrew.

Rashi comments:

"were straight legs" - [Jonathan renders]: רַגְלֵי יָן בְּיוֹנָן parallel legs, this one opposite this one.

The Hebrew letters for the word straight יְשָׁרָה is the same as the word for praise in Hebrew שִׁירָה. The numerical value 515 (*Gematriya*) of the word *yeshara* (straight) יְשָׁרָה is the same as the word *Tefilla* תְּפִלָּה (Prayer) in Hebrew. Interestingly enough, when *Moshe Rabbeinu* prayed to *Hashem* to allow him to enter into *Eretz Yisrael* (The Land of Israel) he also prayed 515 prayers. This is hinted in the verse *Va'eschanan el Hashem ba'eis hahee* וַאֲתַחֲנֶן אֶל הַשֵּׁם בְּעֵת הַהוּא לֵאמֹר (And I prayed to *Hashem* at that time).

⁵ Mishna Berura Simon 95: 1

⁶ Ezekiel/ *Yachezkel* 1: 7, describing the heavenly angels

צוֹר יִשְׂרָאֵל, קוֹמָה בְּעִזְרַת יִשְׂרָאֵל, וּפְדָה כְּנַאֲמֶנָּךְ
יְהוּדָה וְיִשְׂרָאֵל. (וְאָמַר ר') גְּאֵלֵנוּ יְיָ צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ, קְדוֹשׁ
יִשְׂרָאֵל. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ גְּאֵל יִשְׂרָאֵל.

Rock of Israel

Tzur Yisrael

צוֹר יִשְׂרָאֵל

The paragraph right before the start of the morning *Shemoneh Esrei* begins *Tzur Yisrael* צוֹר יִשְׂרָאֵל, The Rock of *Yisrael* (I.e. Faithful One)⁸ and ends with the *bracha* of *Go'al Yisrael*.

The Gemora derives that there is a strict requirement to juxtapose Redemption (*Ge'ulah*) with Prayer (*Tefilla*) (i.e. to begin *Shemoneh Esrei* immediately following the closing of the Blessings of the Shema Reading (*Birchos Krias She'ma*) with the prayer of Redeeming of Israel (*Go'al Yisrael*) from the verse in Psalms (*Tehillim*) where King David (*Dovid Hamelech*) says - השם צורי וגואלי - *Hashem* is my Rock and my Redeemer, *Hashem* should respond to you in a day of trouble. This is why some versions begin this paragraph with the word צוֹר Rock (*Tzur*).

This verse (*pasuk*) is where we derive the rule that one must put the prayer *Shemoneh Esrei* next to the blessing (*bracha*) of *Go'al Yisrael*, being *someich* (juxtaposing) *Ge'ulah le'Tefilla*. Accordingly, the Law varies on a weekday and Yom Tov which are inherently "regular days" that may be troubled as indicated in the verse (*pasuk*) of *Yom Tzara* (a troubled day). As for Shabbos, it is inherently a day of rest and not a day of trouble. Therefore on Shabbos one may be more lenient to interrupt between the *bracha* of *Go'al Yisrael* and *Shemoneh Esrei* for something important such as *Kaddish*, *Kedusha* or *Borchu*. Still, it's preferable not to respond *Amen* at this point even on Shabbos.

In the morning we say in the last paragraph before saying the *Shemoneh Esrei* Rock of Israel (*Tzur Yisrael* צוֹר יִשְׂרָאֵל) while in the evening the text in the Blessing *Go'al Yisrael* changes to say the name *Yaakov* יַעֲקֹב אֵת הַשֵּׁם כִּי פָדָה הַשֵּׁם (Hashem has redeemed Yaakov). This intimates that in the morning we bring up the merit of *Yisrael* יִשְׂרָאֵל since when

⁷ Sephardic and Nusach Sefard. The Sephardic version omits צוֹר יִשְׂרָאֵל and begins with ר' וְאָמַר

⁸ See footnote 7

Yaakov Avinu gathered his sons around his bed before his death and they said *She'ma Yisrael* (ישראל) he responded with *Baruch sheim kevode malchusso le'olam vo'ed*, which envisioned the final redemption and the revelation of *Hashem*. Therefore, we mention the name *Yisrael* ישראל. In the evening by the *Ma'ariv* prayer, we mention the name *Yaakov* יעקב since he was the one who originally instituted the evening prayer (*Tefillas Ma'ariv*) when he was still called *Yaakov*.

Interruption for Tallis and Tefillin

If someone did not receive his *Tallis* or *Tefillin* until he was in the middle of the Shema Reading (*Krias She'ma*) one should put on one's *Tefillin* immediately since it is important that each word of *Krias She'ma* be said with *Tefillin* on.

- § If one is between the paragraphs, one may recite both *brochos* on the *Tefillin* as usual and one may even recite *Baruch sheim kevode malchusso le'olam va'ed*.
- § If one is in the middle of a paragraph, one should don the *Tefillin* but only reciting the *bracha* of *Lehani'ach Tefillin*. (Note: Sephardim only recite a single *bracha* whenever they don *Tefillin*)
- § If one already recited *Krias She'ma* before davening (praying) and now is repeating *Krias She'ma* as part of the regular order of *Tefilla*, one should wait until between the paragraphs and then put the *Tefillin* on with both *brochos*.
- § If one is in the middle of either of the *brochos* that preface the Shema Reading (*Krias She'ma*), one continues until the end of the *bracha* and then puts on the *Tefillin* with both *brochos*.
- § If one already is past the Shema Reading (*Krias She'ma*) in the middle of the blessing of *Emmes ve'yatziv*, only the blessing of *Lehani'ach Tefillin* is recited.
- § If one is already past *Shira Chadasha* and just received one's *Tefillin*; one should put them on reciting the blessing of *Lehani'ach* and go back to *Shira Chadasha* or to *Tzur Yisrael*, and continue straight from there.
- § If one is between the blessing *Go'al Yisrael* and *Shemoneh Esrei* (*Ge'ulah* and *Tefilla*) when receiving *Tefillin*, one should put the *Tefillin* on without a *bracha*

⁹ Siddur Otzar Hatefilos - *Achris Leshalom*

and later one should move them a little and recite both blessings (*brochos*) after by moving them around in their places after davening.

- Š If necessary, one should wait for his *Tefillin* even if he will miss *Tefilla be'tzibbur* (davening *Shemoneh Esrei* with ten people over *Bar Mitzvah*).
- Š One should however not miss the time of day allowable to pray *Shemoneh Esrei* (*zeman Tefilla*) to wait to put on *Tefillin* in the event they were unavailable.

The Beginning of Shemoneh Esrei

G-d, Please Open my Lips

Hashem Sefasaye Tiftach

השם שפתי תפתח

At the start of each *Shemoneh Esrei*, we say *Hashem sefasaye tiftach u'fi yaggid tehilasecha* (G-d please open my lips; and let my mouth say your praises).

By saying these words, one is considered to have started the *Shemoneh Esrei* and one now is considered to have all stringent rules of interruptions upon him. Although we are not supposed to interrupt between the closing *bracha* of *Go'al Yisrael* and the start of the *Shemoneh Esrei*, *Chazal* (our Sages) instituted to say these prefatory words before the start of *Shemoneh Esrei* which are considered to be part of *Shemoneh Esrei* and not something incidental which is considered an interruption. We need to preface our prayer with this introduction since the idea of conversing with G-d and beseeching Him for our basic needs, is very humbling and can be very imposing to the point that we may not be capable of expressing our thoughts and desires in a clear and orderly fashion. Therefore, since it is a necessary introduction to *Shemoneh Esrei*, it's considered to be integral to *Shemoneh Esrei*. As a matter of fact, although the *Mishna Berura*¹⁰ maintains that if one davened *Shemoneh Esrei* but forgot to say this introduction one fulfills (is *yotzei*) one's obligation. The opinion of the *Iggros Moshe*¹¹ is that it indeed invalidates one's *Shemoneh Esrei* if it was omitted.

¹⁰ Biur Halacha 111:2 *D'h Chazer*

¹¹ Orach Chaim (5) 24:8

Roadmap for Tallis and Tefillin during Pesukei De'Zimra

Pesukei De'zimra	<i>Tallis</i>	<i>Tefillin Bracha #1 Le'hani'ach</i>	<i>Tefillin Bracha #2 Al Mitzvas</i>	<i>Tefillin Baruch Sheim Kevode</i>	<i>Tallis and Tefillin Other pesukim</i>
Bein Haperakim	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>
Be'emtza Haperek	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
Between Az Yashir and Yishtabach for individual	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>
Between Az Yashir and Yishtabach for Chazzan	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
Between Yishtabach and Kaddish	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>

Roadmap for Tallis and Tefillin during Krias She'ma and its Brochos - I

Be'emtza Haperek	Tallis	Tefillin Bracha #1 Le'hani'ach	Tefillin Bracha #2 Al Mitzvas	Tefillin Baruch Sheim Kevode	Tallis and Tefillin Other pesukim
From Borchu until end of Yotzeir Ohr, Ahavah Rabba	<i>No; put on later bein haperakim with bracha</i>	<i>No; put on later bein haperakim with bracha</i>	No	No	No
Krias She'ma	<i>Put on without bracha but not during the first Parsha Ve'ahavta</i>	Yes	No	No	No
Emmes ve'yatziv	<i>Put on without bracha</i>	Yes	No	No	No

Roadmap for Tallis and Tefillin during Krias She'ma and its Brochos - II

Bein Haperakim	Tallis	Tefillin Bracha #1 Le'hani'ach	Tefillin Bracha #2 Al Mitzvas	Tefillin Baruch Sheim Kevode	Tallis and Tefillin Other pesukim
Yotzeir Ohr, Ahavah Rabba	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Krias She'ma	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Emmes ve'yatziv (i.e. Between Go'al Yisrael and Shemoneh Esrei)	No	No	No	No	No

If one fulfilled the mitzvah (yotzei) of Krias She'ma before davening, one should wait to put on Tefillin until Bein haperakim since he is not required to have his Tefillin on right at this moment since one already was yotzei previously.

Questions:

1. What is the basic order of the Morning Prayer (*Shacharis*) throughout the entire year up to *Shemoneh Esrei*?
2. What is the basic format for the *Amidah Shemoneh Esrei* prayer?
3. What part of *Shemoneh Esrei* is subject to change?
4. Where are the 4 places to bow when reciting *Shemoneh Esrei*?
5. Where do we say a prayer for the rebuilding of the Holy Temple (*Beis Hamikdash*) on Shabbos and Festivals?
6. What rule does one need to be aware of when taking three steps backward at the end of *Shemoneh Esrei*?
7. What rule does one need to be aware of when bowing during *Shemoneh Esrei*?
8. What is better? Davening while standing still or while swaying?
9. What is the reason for taking three steps forward at the start of *Shemoneh Esrei* (from the Chumash)?
10. Why do we pray with are feet side by side together?
11. How should one position oneself for *Shemoneh Esrei* when traveling and unable to stand up for *Shemoneh Esrei*?
12. What should one do if one would not receive his *Tefillin* until after *Tefilla Be'tzibbur*?
13. What should one do if one would not receive his *Tefillin* until after the time for *Tefilla* will pass?

Answers:

1. The order of *Shacharis* begins with *Birchos Hatorah* and *Birchos Hashachar*, then *Korbanos*. The Prayer continues with *Pesukei De'Zimra* and *Krias She'ma* and its *brachos*, followed by *Shemoneh Esrei*.
2. The opening 3 *brachos*, a middle section of *brachos* and then another set of 3 *brachos*.
3. The middle section.
4. The beginning of the first *bracha* and again at the end of that *bracha*. By *Modim* and at the closing of that *bracha*.
5. After completing the *Amidah* prayer we recite the *Yehi ratzon she'yibaneh Beis Hamikdash ...*
6. The rule is that one may not return to his original place until at least a period of time equal to the amount of time it takes to walk 4 *Amos*, or if there will be *Chazoras hashatz* (repetition of *Shemoneh Esrei*) with *Kedusha*, one should wait until *Kedusha* before returning to one's spot.
7. That one must bring oneself to an upright position before saying *Hashem's* Name.
8. Either way is acceptable. One should do whatever will help his concentration on prayer. One may pray one way at one prayer and then another way at another prayer.
9. It corresponds to the three barriers *Moshe Rabbeinu* passed through on Mount Sinai by *Matan Torah* (the *giving of the Torah*).
10. We stand in a way similar to the heavenly angels. Additionally, we stand as if our feet are bound together signaling that we have our concentration on prayer alone and have no intention of going anywhere else at the moment.
11. One should sit with one's feet put together.
12. One should wait for his *Tefillin* even though he will miss *Tefilla Be'tzibur*.
13. One should not wait for his *Tefillin* if he will miss the time for *Tefilla*.