

THE PIRCHEI SHOSHANIM ROADMAP TO PRAYER PROJECT

The Roadmap to Prayer

Lesson 36

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Rehov Kahanamin 54, Bnei Brac 03.616.6340
164 Village Path, Lakewood NJ 08701 732.370.3344 fax 1.877.Pirchei (732.367.8168)

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Lesson

36

Maariv - Part 2

The Third Blessing (bracha)

The *bracha* that follows immediately after the reading of Shema (*Krias Shema*) begins with the words *Ve'Emunah Kol Zos* (It is authentic; this entire etc.) The *bracha* ends with *Baruch Atta Hashem Go'al Yisrael* (Blessed are You, Hashem Who redeemed Israel). This *bracha* (blessing) is referred to as *Ge'ulah*, the blessing of Redemption, which is to be recited right before *Shemoneh Esrei – Tefilla*. This is what is meant by the necessity of being *Somech Ge'ulah Le'Tefilla* (that the prayer for Redemption should immediately be said prior to reciting the *Shemoneh Esrei*).

Although this *bracha* (blessing) is recited after the reading of the Shema (*Krias Shema*), it doesn't begin with a formal *Baruch Atta Hashem Elokeinu Melech Ha'olam* (Blessed are You Hashem, King of the Universe), since this too is considered a *Bracha Hasemucha Le'chaverta* (a blessing that follows in succession to another blessing). It is considered as a consecutive blessing with the *bracha* of *Ahavas Olam* and to the first *bracha* of *HaMaariv Aravim*, which is the first of the series of blessings and begins with *Baruch Atta Hashem Elokeinu Melech Ha'olam*.

Semichas Ge'ulah Le'Tefilla - The Order of Prayer

Just as by *Shacharis* we are required to say the ending *bracha* of *Birchos Krias Shema* the *bracha* of *Go'al Yisrael*, (the blessing of the Redemption of Israel) and then begin *Shemoneh Esrei* without interruption. Similarly by the evening Prayer (*Tefillas Maariv*) we are also required to do the same to a certain extent. The main difference is that by *Maariv* we seemingly always interrupt it with many other things. However, we will see that in truth we usually do fulfill the dictum of being *Somech Ge'ulah Le'Tefilla* by *Maariv* as well.

Understanding Semichas Ge'ulah Le'Tefilla

In the morning prayers (*Tefillas Shacharis*) we are always *Somech Ge'ulah Le'Tefilla*. We finish the final blessing of the reading of Shema (*bracha* of *Krias Shema*) with *Baruch Atta Hashem Go'al Yisrael* and immediately we start *Shemoneh Esrei*. The only thing that is between the two is the verse *Hashem Sefasaye Tiftach*, (*Hashem Please open my lips*)

which the *Gemara*¹ deems not to be an interruption because the *Shemoneh Esrei* begins with that verse. Likewise by *Maariv*, our intent is to end with the *bracha* of *Go'al Yisrael* and then immediately followed by the *Shemoneh Esrei* of *Maariv*. However, this is really not the case. After the *bracha* of *Go'al Yisrael* we still have to at least say the *bracha* of *Hashkiveinu* (Lay us down to sleep) and *Chatzi-Kaddish* (Half-Kaddish) while in *Chutz La'Aretz* (Diaspora) we also have to say the *bracha* of *Baruch Hashem Le'olam Amen ve'Amen*. The *Gemara* answers that since the *Rabbanan* instituted to recite the *bracha* of *Hashkiveinu* at *Maariv*, it is now considered as if it were part of the blessing of Redemption (*bracha* of *Ge'ulah*). The *Gemara* refers to this as being *Ge'ulah Arichta* – one long *Blessing of Redemption*. The extension of these blessings continues with the *bracha* of *Baruch Hashem Le'olam Amen ve'Amen*². The *Chatzi-Kaddish* (Half-Kaddish) that comes after this *bracha* and before the start of *Shemoneh Esrei* should normally be considered an interruption between *Ge'ulah* and *Tefilla*, except that we recite it there for another reason as we will soon explain³.

The *Sefer HaEshkol*⁴ writes the following explanation how the blessing of *Hashkiveinu* ties in with the topic of Redemption. He writes that when the Jewish people were on the verge of leaving Egypt, they were commanded at first not to leave their houses the entire night of the 15th of *Nissan* (the Hebrew calendar date that Passover begins). This was to protect them from pestilence and plague that were rampant in Egypt on that night which started with the Smiting of the first-born Egyptians. At that time the *Bnei Yisrael* were fervently praying a prayer for Divine protection. Therefore, such a prayer is said each night to protect the children of Israel from any danger and evil that is more prevalent at night.

Amen after the Bracha of Hashkiveinu

The *Mechaber*⁵ rules that one should answer *Amen* after the *bracha* of *Hashkiveinu*; even after one's own *bracha* since this comes at the end of a series of *brochos*. The opinion of the *Rama* is not to recite *Amen* after one's own *bracha* except for the *bracha* of *Bonei be'rachmov Yerushalayim Amen*, by *Birchas Hamazon* (the Grace after a meal of bread).

¹ *Berachos* 4b and 9b

² This blessing is not mentioned by the Talmud as it was only said later on in time

³ See *Gemara Berachos* daf 4b, *Tosefos*, *Rosh Simon* 5 and *Students of Rabbeinu Yonah* on the *Rif* for various opinions regarding the reason for the institution of the *Baruch Hashem Le'olam* prayer.

⁴ Prayer Chapter 9; *Mishna Berura* 236:3 in the name of the *Students of Rabbeinu Yonah*.

⁵ 236:4

Amen after the Bracha of Baruch Hashem Le'olam

The opinion of the *Mechaber*⁶ is that where the custom is to recite the blessing *Baruch Hashem Le'olam* one shouldn't answer *Amen* at the end of one's own *bracha* even though it is the last of a series of *brochos* (blessings) since it is really independent from the blessings of the reading of *Shema* (*Birchas Krias Shema*).

When saying the closing of this blessing *Baruch Atta Hashem Hamelech bichvodo tamid Yimloch aleinu le'olam va'ed etc.* (Blessed are You, *Hashem*, the King in His glory, He shall constantly reign over us forever and ever etc.) one should not say this as a prayer that *Hashem* should reign over us forever, because closings of blessings are not meant to be prayers; it's only a praise that *Hashem* reigns forever and ever⁷.

Other Interruptions that are Allowed

Even though we are careful to be *Somech Ge'ulah Le'Tefilla* by *Maariv*, nevertheless the *Gabbai* (the sexton) is permitted to announce the necessary additions that one needs to insert into the *Maariv Shemoneh Esrei* of *Rosh Chodesh* (*Ya'aleh Veyavoh* – Bring up and bring forth). Likewise, he may make an announcement to begin saying *Ve'sein Tal u'Matar*⁸ (Give us dew and rain) which is a necessary insertion that's integral to *Shemoneh Esrei* during that time of year. The *Mishna Berura*⁹ adds that he may even announce the additions for *Chanukah* and *Purim* (*Al Hanissim*) even though they are not integral to *Shemoneh Esrei* they are still important parts of *Shemoneh Esrei*. Both these announcements are not considered interruptions between *Ge'ulah* and *Tefilla*, because they are for the purpose of praying (*davening*) *Shemoneh Esrei* properly and are related to *Shemoneh Esrei*.

Although we allow the *Gabbai*¹⁰ to announce the above-mentioned additions to *Shemoneh Esrei*, he may only do so when he himself reached up to *Shemoneh Esrei*. However, he may not make these announcements if he himself is still in the middle of *Birchas Krias Shema* where such interruptions are not allowed.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ *Magen Avraham* 236:4

⁸ *Vs'sein Tal u' Matar L' Bracha* – Give Dew and Rain for a Blessing - This Prayer is begins to be said from *Maariv* on December 4th or the 5th until the holiday of *Pesach*.

⁹ 236 *S"K* 7

¹⁰ *Gabbai* – Director of Congregational affairs and Services

The *Mechaber*¹¹ adds that the *Chazzan* may even recite *Borchu* again before starting *Shemoneh Esrei* for people who came late to services. This was once the custom but it is no longer in practice. Nowadays, *Borchu* is usually repeated before or after *Aleinu* for the sake of those who missed it at the beginning of *Maariv*.

Interruption Points

There are two general levels for points of interruptions by *Tefillas Maariv*; one is *Bein Haperakim* (between the sections) and one is *Be'Emtza Haperek* (in the middle of the sections). *Bein Haperakim* is the more lenient of the two since it is at the end of a section.

<u>Bein Haperakim (between the sections) and Be'emtza Haperek (in the middle of a section) of Ma'ariv</u>
After <i>Borchu</i> is already considered <u>Be'emtza Haperek</u>
After the Bracha of HaMaariv Aravim and before the second bracha of Ahavas Olam is Bein Haperakim
After the Bracha of Ohev Ammo Yisrael and before Shema Yisrael is Bein Haperakim
After the final pasuk (verse) of the first section of Krias Shema (which starts with Ve'ahavtah eis Hashem) right before Vehayah Im Shamo'ah is Bein Haperakim
After the final pasuk (verse) of the second section of Krias Shema (which starts with Ve'ayah Im Shamo'ah) right before Vayomer Hashem is Bein Haperakim
After the final pasuk (verse) of Vayomer Hashem and before Emmes and Emunah is considered <u>Be'emtza Haperek</u>
After the Bracha of Go'al Yisrael and before Hashkiveinu is Bein Haperakim
After the Bracha Hashkiveinu until Shemoneh Esrei (including Baruch Hashem Le'olam Amen Ve'Amen for those who recite it) is Bein Haperakim

¹¹ *Simon 236*

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Maariv</u> <u>Interruptions</u></p> <p>Krias Shema and its Blessings</p>	<p>Kedusha (only the verses <i>Kadosh Kadosh etc.</i> and <i>Baruch Kevode etc.</i>¹²)</p>	<p>Kaddish (only <i>Amen of Yehel Shemei Rabba</i> and after <i>Damiran Be'alma</i> according to <i>Ashkenazi</i> custom and to all 5 <i>Amens</i> according to <i>Sephardim</i>)</p>	<p>Borchu</p>	<p>Amen of HaKeil Hakadosh and Shomeah Tefilla¹⁰</p>	<p>Amen to all other Brachas (Blessings)</p>	<p>Baruch Hu U'Varuch She'mo, Brich Hu</p>
<p>Bein Haperakim</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Yes according to <i>Ashkenazi</i> custom</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Be'emtza Haperek</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>After the bracha Shomer Ammo Yisrael Lo'ad until Shemoneh Esrei</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Yes according to <i>Ashkenazi</i> custom</p>	<p>No</p>

Reciting Krias Shema of Maariv after Nightfall

Rabbeinu Hai Ga'on maintains that one cannot recite the Reading of the Shema (*Krias Shema*) with its blessings (*brochos*) before the evening stars comes out (*Tzeis Hakochavim*)¹³. With this in mind, he was asked whether it is better for someone to pray (*daven*) *Shemoneh Esrei* of *Maariv* with the *Tzibbur* (congregation) first, and then at *Tzeis Hakochavim* recite *Krias Shema* with its *brochos* even though *Ge'ulah* is not put together with *Tefilla*. Or maybe it is better for one to wait to pray (*daven*) privately after *Tzeis Hakochavim* in order to place the blessing of *Geulah* together with *Shemoneh Esrei* (*Tefilla*)?

¹² This is possible to happen when the congregation is praying (*davening*) *Mincha* after *Plag HaMincha* and before sunset and the individual is reciting *Maariv* before sunset after *Plag HaMincha*

¹³ *Tzeis Hakochavim* – This term is the determining factor in referring to when nightfall is according to Jewish Law. Jewish Law tells us that the previous night is referred to as the next day as opposed to Secular Law where the next day commences at midnight. Under Jewish Law the next day could start as early as 6. P.M. (in the winter) of the previous night. For example the laws of the Sabbath would in the winter be binding on a person as early as 6 p.m. on Friday night. The times when *Tzeis Hakochavim* actually goes into effect varies according to ones custom.

Rav Hai answered that anytime from *Plag HaMincha*¹⁴ and on, one should pray (*daven*) *Shemoneh Esrei* of *Maariv* with the *Tzibbur* (congregation) first, and then wait until nightfall (*Tzeis Hakochavim*) to recite *Krias Shema* with its *brochos*.

What we see from *Rav Hai Gaon* is that although generally the order for the evening Prayer (*Tefillas Maariv*) is first the Reading of the Shema (*Krias Shema*) including its blessings (*brochos*), then followed by *Shemoneh Esrei*; which is like the opinion of *Rebbe Yochanan*, it's only so when we can also successfully place the blessing of *Geulah* with *Tefilla Shemoneh Esrei* together. However, since in our case one needs to first pray (*daven*) *Shemoneh Esrei* with a *Minyan*, we therefore forgo the regular order of *Maariv* and reverse it for the sake of praying (*davening*) *Shemoneh Esrei* with a congregation (*Minyan*)¹⁵ and then say the Reading of the Shema with its accompanying blessings. The *Shulchan Aruch* in *Simon 236 Se'if 3* rules according to this opinion that one who comes to *shul* (synagogue) for *Maariv* and finds that the *Minyan* is about to start *Shemoneh Esrei* he should first pray (*daven*) *Shemoneh Esrei* along with them and then read the Shema (*daven Krias Shema*) with its *brochos* afterwards. The *Mishna Berura*¹⁶ notes that one may pray (*daven*) *Shemoneh Esrei* from *Plag HaMincha* and on and that one is only allowed to take this course of action when he will not find another *Minyan* later on. Otherwise, one should rather wait to pray (*daven*) with a *Minyan* later on in its proper order, being *Somech Ge'ulah Le'Tefilla*, saying *Krias Shema* with its blessings and praying *Shemoneh Esrei* both in their proper order.

In such a case, according to the opinion of *Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l*, if one is *davening* in a place where they recite *Borchu* before the *Aleinu* prayer (as is the custom in *Eretz Yisrael*), one should immediately start *Krias Shema* with its *brochos*¹⁷ and say *Aleinu* only later on after finishing praying *Maariv* (i.e. *Krias Shema* with its *brochos*). However, in a place where *Borchu* is not said after *Shemoneh Esrei* of *Maariv*, one should first say *Aleinu* with the Congregation (*Tzibbur*) and wait for the final *Kaddish* before proceeding to say *Krias Shema* and its *brochos*. It is preferred that one prays (*davens*) the rest of *Maariv* as soon as possible so that he doesn't come to forget it

¹⁴ *Plag HaMincha* literally means half of *Mincha*. This means that when we calculate the time from *Mincha Ketanah* until sundown we have two and a half Halachic Hours. That is from nine and a half hours which is *Mincha Ketanah* until sundown which is the end of the twelfth hour of the day. When we take this amount of time and divide it into half, one and a quarter Halachic Hours, it gives us the time for *Plag HaMincha*.

¹⁵ Rama 69:1 writes that this is because *Maariv* is essentially an optional prayer. See Rama 236:2 references *Simon 69. Magen Avraham 236:1. Sha'ar Hatziyun 236:8* states clearly that by *Shacharis* we never reverse the order.

¹⁶ S"K 12

¹⁷ If it's after *Tzeis Hakochavim*

altogether¹⁸. There is however no prohibition to interrupt between *Shemoneh Esrei* of *Maariv* and the rest of the *Maariv* prayer (i.e. *Krias Shema* with its *brochos*).

Based on the above, it is preferable to forgo praying *Maariv* in its regular order and being *Somech Ge'ulah Le'Tefilla* (saying the reading of Shema with its blessings next to *Shemoneh Esrei*) for the sake of praying (*davening*) with a *Minyan*. However, according to *Kabbalistic tradition*, one should always be *Somech Ge'ulah Le'Tefilla*, even if it means missing praying with a Congregation (*Tefilla Be'tzibbur*).

We find a similar case by *Shacharis*. According to *Halacha* (Jewish Law), when one is praying *Pesukei De'zimra* of *Shacharis* one may skip certain parts of *Pesukei De'zimra* of *Shacharis* (the morning prayers) for the sake of reaching *Shemoneh Esrei* with the *tzibbur* (congregation). According to *Kabala* one should never skip any part of *Pesukei De'zimra*. Therefore, we conclude that one should avoid skipping on a regular basis and in a habitual way; one should only do so from time to time when necessary. The same applies to *Maariv* as well. If one only skips being *Somech Ge'ulah Le'Tefilla* from time to time, it would be acceptable to do so. However, if one were to do this on a regular basis, it would be unacceptable since according to our *Kabalist's Tradition* (as explained before) one should always be *Somech Ge'ulah Le'Tefilla* even by *Maariv*¹⁹.

One Who Needs to Pray *Mincha* and finds the Congregation Praying *Maariv*

If someone came to the synagogue to pray (*daven*) *Mincha* and finds that the congregation started praying (*davening*) *Maariv*²⁰, he should first pray (*daven*) *Shemoneh Esrei* of *Mincha* while everyone is reciting the blessings of the Shema (*Birchos Krias Shema*) and then pray (*daven*) the *Shemoneh Esrei* for *Maariv* together with the congregation. If one will have a congregation of 10 Men (*Minyan*) for *Maariv* later on then he should rather wait to pray (*daven*) *Shemoneh Esrei* of *Mincha* when the congregation is praying *Shemoneh Esrei* of *Maariv*.

One should not opt to pray (*daven*) *Mincha* while the congregation is praying (*davening*) *Maariv* if one will not find a *Minyan* for *Maariv* later on since doing so doesn't

¹⁸ *Halichos Shlomo* 13:13

¹⁹ *Si'ach Tefilla*

²⁰ This is possible to happen when the congregation is praying (*davening*) *Maariv* after *Plag HaMincha* and before sunset and the individual is reciting *Mincha* before sunset after *Plag HaMincha*

constitute praying (*davening*) with a *Minyan*; it's only considered on the level of praying when there is a *Minyan* praying²¹.

Baruch Hashem Le'Olam

Background מקורות

The Tur²² writes that this *bracha* was originally instituted because synagogues (*shuls*) used to be situated outside the confines of the city in secluded areas and people were afraid to stay late to pray (*daven*) *Maariv* with the congregation (*tzibbur*). Therefore, they instituted the prayer *Baruch Hashem Le'olam Amen Ve'Amen*, which contains *Hashem's Name* eighteen times, corresponding to the eighteen blessings of *Shemoneh Esrei* of *Maariv*.

Unlike by *Shacharis*, by *Maariv* the *Chazzan* recites *Chatzi-Kaddish* just before starting *Shemoneh Esrei*. This custom originally began when *Baruch Hashem Le'olam* was said instead of *Shemoneh Esrei*; after which they would leave for home. Even though nowadays our synagogues (*shuls*) are no longer situated outside of the city and everyone remains in *shul* to pray (*daven*) *Shemoneh Esrei* of *Maariv*; we still continue to say *Baruch Hashem Le'olam* and *Kaddish* continuing the tradition as it was done originally.

The prevalent custom is to recite this *bracha* outside of *Eretz Yisrael* (the Land of Israel). According to the custom of *Sephardim* and also according to the *Gra*²³ and *Nusach Ari* (*Chabad*), one doesn't recite this *bracha* even in *Chutz La'Aretz* (outside of Israel). However, in *Eretz Yisrael* (the Land of Israel), it is not said at all.

*Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l*²⁴ suggests that the reason that *Baruch Hashem Le'olam* is not recited in *Eretz Yisrael* is most likely because it was originally most recently settled by the students of the *Gra* and of *Rav Shneur Zalman*²⁵ of Liadi, the author of the *Shulchan*

²¹ *Magen Avraham* 236:3, *Mishna Berura* s"v 11

²² *Simon* 236

²³ R' Eliyahu Ben Shlomo Zalman of Vilna – The Vilna Gaon, **Gaon Rabbeinu Eliyahu/ Gra: Born:** Vilna, Lithuania, 1720. **Died:** Vilna, Lithuania, 1797. **Notes:** Of the greatest Torah scholar of the past two centuries and one of the most marking figures in halachic Judaism since the Beis Yosef he is revered throughout the Jewish world for his vast knowledge and saintly character. He devoted every minute of his life to Torah study never having slept more than two hour a day. He never took any position as a Rav or Rosh Yeshiva. He is the author of countless seforim, many recorded and published by his students

²⁴ *Iggros Moshe* Vol. 2:102

²⁵ R' Shneur Zalman of Liadi – Graz - Born: Liazna, Russia, 1745. Died: Kursk, Russia, 1813. Notes: Founder of Chabad, also known as the Alter Rebbe of Lubavitch and as the Ba'al HaTanya. Author among other works of the

Aruch Harav, who were both of the opinion that one does not recite the blessing of *Baruch Hashem Le'olam* at *Maariv*.

Although the opinion of the *Gra* himself is not to recite this *bracha*, it is said that the custom of the congregation where the *Gra* prayed (*davened*) was to recite the *bracha*²⁶.

Different opinions amongst the Rishonim²⁷ regarding the custom of reciting *Baruch Hashem Le'olam*

Tosefos in *Berachos* write that *Baruch Hashem Le'olam* was instituted to be recited by the congregants so that the latecomers would have time to catch up and recite *Shemoneh Esrei* along with everyone else.

The *Rosh* stresses that it was started because people were afraid to stay in *shul* at night since their *shuls* were situated in secluded areas outside of the cities.

The *Students of Rabbeinu Yonah* write that it was instituted because *Tefillas Maariv* (the Evening Prayer) was an optional prayer so they recited this prayer instead of reciting *Shemoneh Esrei*.

These three opinions seem to be disparate and different. The *Aruch Hashulchan*²⁸ suggests that in fact the three explanations are really three aspects of the same reason. He writes that what happened was that since *Maariv* was an optional prayer and people came late and were davening in *shuls* outside of their cities, they substituted (or according to *Tosefos* they added) a prayer that had *Hashem's Name* mentioned in it eighteen times corresponding to the original eighteen blessings of *Shemoneh Esrei*. According to the *Rosh* the main reason for instituting this *bracha* was because people were afraid to stay in *shul*. According to the *Students of Rabbeinu Yonah* it was allowed to be instituted because *Maariv* was anyway just an optional prayer. According to *Tosefos* it was added for those who came late.

There's really another strong point that the *Aruch Hashulchan* points out which resolves another difficulty with the custom of those who do not recite *Baruch Hashem Le'olam*, yet they still interrupt *Maariv* right before *Shemoneh Esrei* with *Chatzi-Kaddish* (Half-Kaddish) which we do not do at *Shacharis*. He writes that the *Baruch Hashem*

Shulchan Aruch HaRav, a major code of law following the framework of the Shulchan Aruch and incorporating later authorities, of Tanya, a major treatise of kabbalah and Chassidic philosophy, and of Torah Or, a collection of Chassidic discourses on the weekly parshas and Festivals, published by his grandson, the Tzemach Tzedek.

²⁶ (*Maaseh Rav* 66, *Tefilla Kehilchasa* page 345 (48))

²⁷ Early commentaries of the *Gemara*

²⁸ *Simon* 236:6-8

Le'olam prayer consists of verses (*pesukim*) pertaining to *Ge'ulah* (Redemption). These were chosen to continue with the theme of *Ge'ulah* so it should not be considered an interruption between *Ge'ulah le'Tefilla*. *Kaddish* has the theme of *Ge'ulah* according to those who insert a prayer for the Messiah by adding *Ve'yatzmach Purkonei Vi'kareiv Meshichei* (His salvation shall sprout bringing the Messiah closer). Even according to those who do not recite this, the entire thrust of the *Kaddish* prayer is for salvation when *Hashem* will rule with sovereignty over all mankind. Although *Kaddish* was only recited when *Baruch Hashem Le'olam* was recited, it remained part of the *Maariv* prayer even by those who do not recite *Baruch Hashem Le'olam* any longer since it is such an important and significant prayer.

Rav Natrina'ee Ga'on writes that the reason for instituting saying *Baruch Hashem Le'olam etc.* with *Kaddish* was because *Maariv* was only an optional prayer (*tefilla*), which they omitted because they were afraid to stay in their synagogues. They therefore recited *Kaddish* after *Baruch Hashem Le'olam* to conclude davening and allow people to go home.

Although it would seem appropriate to recite the full *Tiskabal*²⁹ *Kaddish* according to the original custom of those who ended the *Maariv* prayer with *Baruch Hashem Le'olam*, we rather recite just *Chatzi-Kaddish* at this point since we continue on with *Shemoneh Esrei* and we will then recite *Kaddish* with *Tiskabal* which will then also include that our *Shemoneh Esrei* prayer be readily accepted by *Hashem*.

Thus we see that the original custom of those who prayed (*davened*) in shuls that were situated remote areas outside of their cities is still present to some extent according to all customs and by people of all backgrounds.

To Stand or to Sit when reciting Baruch Hashem Le'olam?

The *Rama* writes that it is preferable that one should stand while reciting *Baruch Hashem Le'olam* since it was originally instituted as a substitute for *Shemoneh Esrei* of *Maariv*. On the other hand, The *Mishna Berura*³⁰ writes that many *Poskim* (Rabbinical Authorities) maintain that one should better sit when saying this blessing to show that one does not want this to take the place of the regular *Shemoneh Esrei*. The *Mishna Berura* adds that when one recites this blessing after *Shemoneh Esrei* as in the case where one prays (*davens*) *Krias Shema* and its blessings after *Shemoneh Esrei* of *Maariv*, then one may definitely stand while reciting this blessing.

²⁹ The verse *Tiskabal Tzelos'hone* (accept their prayers) or *Tiskabal Tzelosana* (accept our prayers) is inserted towards the end of *Kaddish* after each *Shemoneh Esrei* prayer asking *Hashem* to accept and respond to our prayers. By *Shacharis* we delay saying this until after *U'vah Le'Tziyone Go'eil*.

³⁰ *Simon* 236:10

When to skip Baruch Hashem Le'Olam

If one sees that the Congregation (*Tzibbur*) is starting *Shemoneh Esrei* soon and he will not be able to start *Shemoneh Esrei* along with the *Tzibbur* unless he skips the *bracha* of *Baruch Hashem Le'olam*, one may do so³¹.

However, one should not skip the blessing of *Hashkiveinu* or any of the other blessings³² in order to do the same. If one omitted the *bracha* of *Hashkiveinu* in error, then he should recite it after *Shemoneh Esrei* even as late as dawn (*Alos Hashachar*)³³. In the case where one omits the *bracha* of *Baruch Hashem Le'olam* there is a question whether one should recite this *bracha* by itself after *Shemoneh Esrei*. The *Mishna Berura*³⁴ suggests that to be on the safe side, one should recite the verses (*pesukim*) of *Baruch Hashem Le'olam* and finish the blessing but without saying the Name *Hashem* to avoid reciting a blessing in vain.

One who Started Shemoneh Esrei of Maariv a Second time

Rav Ovadiah Yosef *shlit"á* rules that if one started *Shemoneh Esrei* of *Maariv* by mistake, thinking that he had not prayed (*davened*) yet, he may continue praying (*davening*) as a *Nedava* "donation" prayer since *Tefillas Maariv* is essentially an optional prayer. This is not the case by *Shemoneh Esrei* of *Shacharis* or *Mincha* since they are obligatory prayers, and the *Halacha* is that if one started *Shemoneh Esrei* as a *Chovah* (obligation) one cannot switch it to be a *Nedava* prayer³⁵.

What to do when there is only one Minyan for Maariv

If the only *Minyan* for *Maariv* is before nightfall (*Tzeis Hakochavim*) then one should do one of the following:

- § One should pray (*daven*) with the congregation (*tzibbur*) the entire *Maariv* prayer. When *Tzeis Hakochavim* arrives one should repeat just *Krias Shema* alone in order to fulfill the *Mitzvah* of reading *Shema* at night.
- § One should pray just *Shemoneh Esrei* with the congregation (*tzibbur*). When nightfall (*Tzeis Hakochavim*) arrives one should then recite *Krias Shema* with its *brochos* (including *Baruch Hashem Le'olam*)³⁶.

³¹ *Mishna Berura* 236:11

³² *Tefilla Kehilchasa* 19:22

³³ *Iggros Moshe* Volume 1:89

³⁴ 236:11

³⁵ See Rambam Lesson 35 page 521

³⁶ *Mishna Berura* 236:12, *Chafetz Chaim* would personally do this when necessary as recorded by his son in *Sichos Chafetz Chaim*. See also *Shulchan Aruch Horav* 267:2

- § According to the *Gra* in *sefer Maaseh Rav*, one should rather not even pray (*daven*) *Shemoneh Esrei* with the Congregation (*tzibbur*) before *Tzeis Hakochavim*. Rather, one should wait until *Tzeis Hakochavim* to pray (*daven*) the entire *Maariv* individually then. One should only follow this custom if one always follows his customs³⁷.
- § One who prayed (*davened*) *Mincha* on that day after *Plag HaMincha* cannot pray (*daven*) *Maariv* before sunset (*shekiah*) and therefore he cannot join the Congregation (*tzibbur*) to pray (*daven*) *Maariv* before then.

Sim Shalom/Shalom Rav

According to *Sephardim* one should recite *Sim Shalom*. According to *Ashkenaz* and *Nusach Sefard*, *Shalom Rav* is recited. If one mistakenly started to say *Sim Shalom* instead of *Shalom Rav*, one need not correct himself to say *Shalom Rav*³⁸.

Kaddish Tiskabal

After praying (*davening*) *Shemoneh Esrei* of *Maariv* the *Chazzan* recites *Kaddish Tiskabal*. The *Chazzan* should preferably wait for at least nine people to finish *Shemoneh Esrei* so that they can answer to his *Kaddish*. Some opinions maintain that if there are a minimum of six people that finished *Shemoneh Esrei*, the *Chazzan* may recite *Kaddish*³⁹.

Tachanun

After *Kaddish Tiskabal* we proceed to recite *Aleinu*. *Tachanun* is not said by *Maariv*, although according to some early opinions *Tachanun* is recited after *Maariv* as well. Not only do we not recite *Tachanun* after dark, but even when one were to pray (*daven*) *Maariv* after *Plag HaMincha* when it is still daylight, one wouldn't recite *Tachanun* after declaring it to be nighttime through his prayer (*tefilla*) of *Maariv*. Furthermore, even if one forgot to pray (*daven*) *Mincha* and is praying (*davening*) two *Shemoneh Esreis* back to back; the first for *Maariv* and the second for *Mincha*, one doesn't recite *Tachanun* after the *Shemoneh Esrei* for *Mincha*⁴⁰.

The Sephardic Custom

According to the *Sephardic* custom, Psalm 121 is recited on weekdays with *Kaddish Yehei Shelama*⁴¹ following it. *Borchu* is then recited again followed by *Aleinu*. *Kaddish* is not recited after *Aleinu* since it was already said after Psalm 121.

³⁷ *Iggros Moshe* Vol. 2:60

³⁸ *Tefilla Ke'Hilchasa* 19:23, *Iggros Moshe* 4:18, *Biur Halacha* 127 D"h *Aval*

³⁹ See *Tefilla Ke'Hilchasa* 19:25 for sources

⁴⁰ *Mishna Berura* 237:2

⁴¹ Also known as *Kaddish Yasome* (the Mourner's *Kaddish*)

Questions:

- 1) Why doesn't the *bracha* of *Ve'emunah Kol Zos* (It is authentic; this entire etc.) begin with *Baruch Atta Hashem Elokeinu Melch Ha'olam*?
- 2) What does it mean that by *Maariv* one must be *Somech Ge'ulah le'Tefilla*?
- 3) How does the *bracha* of *Hashkiveinu* tie in with the topic of redemption?
- 4) Should one answer *Amen* to one's own *bracha* of *Hashkiveinu* or to one's own *bracha* of *Baruch Hashem Le'olam*?
- 5) What announcements may the *Gabbai* announce before *Shemoneh Esrei* of *Maariv*?
- 6) Which of the following points of *Maariv* are considered as *Bein Haperakim* or *Be'emtza Haperek*?
 - 1) After *Borchu* but before *Baruch Atta ... Asher Bidvaro Maariv Aravim*
 - 2) Between the end of *Vehayah Im Shamo'ah* and *Vayomer Hashem*
 - 3) After the *bracha* of *Hashkiveinu* and before *Shemoneh Esrei*
 - 4) In the middle of the *bracha* of *Baruch Hashem Le'olam*
- 7) When is one permitted to reverse the order of the blessings of *Krias Shema* and the *Shemoneh Esrei* of *Maariv*?
- 8) If someone who needs to pray (*daven*) *Mincha* finds that the congregation started to pray the *Maariv* prayer before sunset, what should he do if there will be no other *Minyan* for *Maariv* later?
- 9) What should one do in the above situation if there will be another *Minyan* for *Maariv* later?
- 10) Why was the prayer *Baruch Hashem Le'olam* instituted (*Rosh, Tur*)?
- 11) What is the issue regarding sitting or standing for the blessing of *Baruch Hashem Le'olam*?
- 12) Why do we not recite *Tachanun* when praying (*davening*) *Maariv* before sunset?
- 13) If one is trailing in *Tefillas Maariv* and wants to catch up to pray (*daven*) *Tefilla Be'tzibbur*, what part of *Maariv* can one skip?
- 14) What should one do if the only *Minyan* for *Maariv* is before sunset?

Answers:

- 1) It is considered a *Bracha Ha'semucha Le'chaverta* which is a blessing that comes in succession to other blessings with the first one beginning with *Baruch Atta Hashem Elokeinu Melech Ha'olam*.
- 2) We need to place the *bracha* of *Go'al Yisrael* together with *Shemoneh Esrei*.
- 3) This was a prayer recited by the Jews in Egypt when *Hashem* killed all the first-born of Egypt on the night of the Exodus.
- 4) According to the Mechaber, one answers *Amen* to one's own *bracha* of *Hashkiveinu* but not to one's own *bracha* of *Baruch Hashem Le'olam*. According to the Rama one doesn't answer *Amen* to either *bracha*.
- 5) He may announce *Ya'aleh Veyavoh, Al Hanissim* and *Ve'sein Tal u'Matar*.
- 6) 1) *Be'emtza Haperek* 2) *Bein Haperakim* 3) *Bein Haperakim* 4) *Bein Haperakim*
- 7) If one needs to pray *Shemoneh Esrei* with the congregation where there will not be any other *Minyan* for *Maariv* and he did not yet recite *Krias Shema* and its blessings.
- 8) He should pray (*daven*) *Shemoneh Esrei* of *Mincha* while the congregation is reciting *Krias Shema* and its blessings and then he should pray (*daven*) *Shemoneh Esrei* of *Maariv* along with the congregation. Then he should recite *Krias Shema* and its blessings when it is nighttime.
- 9) In this case he should pray (*daven*) his *Shemoneh Esrei* of *Mincha* when the congregation is reciting *Shemoneh Esrei* of *Maariv*.
- 10) It was instituted for those who were afraid to stay late in the *shuls* outside of the cities.
- 11) Either it is better to stand because *Baruch Hashem Le'olam* is a prayer that corresponds to the eighteen blessings of *Shemoneh Esrei*. Or, it is better to sit since nowadays we pray *Shemoneh Esrei* in full and we recite *Baruch Hashem Le'olam* just as a custom.
- 12) Since we do not recite *Tachanun* at nighttime, once we pray (*daven*) *Maariv* we consider it like it is nighttime already.
- 13) One may skip *Baruch Hashem Le'olam* but not any other blessing.
- 14) One can either pray (*daven*) with the congregation from the beginning or one may choose to pray (*daven*) *Shemoneh Esrei* with the congregation and then *Krias Shema* and its blessings by nightfall.