

THE PIRCHEI SHOSHANIM ROADMAP TO PRAYER PROJECT

The Roadmap to Prayer

Lesson 37

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Lesson

37

Maariv - Part 3

The First Blessing (bracha)

HaMaariv Aravim (Who bring on evenings)

Asher Bidvaro Maariv Aravim (Who by His word He brings on the darkness of evenings).

The word *Aravim* is in plural, indicating more than one kind of Evening. The *Abudraham* quotes *Ibn Ezra* that there are two specific points of where there occurs a change from daytime to nighttime. At first the sun disappears from sight under the horizon. The second point occurs when the ball of the sun is well below the horizon when the sky turns dark.

The benefit of this transition is obvious. Since the sun sets gradually, people are forewarned of the impending darkness and they will have time to take the necessary measures to prepare themselves for the darkness of the night. Were this to occur suddenly, like someone shutting the lights in a room without windows, people would be caught off guard, and "in the dark". Therefore, we imply our recognition of this benefit in this prayer and praise Him for this.

B'Chochma Pose'ach She'arim U'Visvuna Meshaneh Ittim

We express two specific languages referring to G-d's wisdom in Creation; B'Chochma U'Visvuna. These two expressions denote two specific meanings.

The verse in *Mishlei* states: *Hashem* founded the earth with *Chochma* (wisdom), established the heavens with *Tevuna* (discernment/sagacity).

(Rashi) *Hashem* founded the earth with wisdom - According to the Torah. This is the Torah, which is *discernment* and which is *knowledge* (i.e. wisdom).

We make reference to these aspects of G-dly wisdom which were used in Creation of the Heavens and the Earth when we take note of the "opening of the gates" and the "changing of time". As in many of our prayers, we allude to other things in the subtleties of the language that is used. This however only focuses on the two expressions, *Chochma* and *Tevuna*, used; however, we must now explain the reference to "gates" and "changing times".

B'Chochma Pose'ach "She'arim"

B'Chochma Pose'ach She'arim - with wisdom He opens gates.

This refers to the gates of Heaven which is stated here in the plural as *Dovid Hamelech* (King David) refers to them in *Tehillim* – *Dalsei Shamayim P'sach* (Open the doors of Heaven). *Yaakov Avinu* also refers to the area above where the *Beis Hamikdash* was to stand, as *Shaar Hashamayim* (the gate of Heaven)¹. Perhaps when referring to the gates of Heaven as being shut and needing to be opened we refer to them in the plural as we find such a reference when *Shlomo Hamelech* was bringing the *Aron Kodesh* (The Holy Ark) into the *Kodesh Kodoshim* (the Holy of Holies) for the very first time he wasn't able to do it first because the doors of the inner sanctum stuck to each other and sealed shut. It wasn't until *Shlomo Hamelech* beseeched *Hashem* to open the gates for the G-d's sake and for the sake of his father *Dovid Hamelech* (King David) that gates finally opened. Thus whenever we speak of gates opening, we refer to them in plural because their closure is by the two doors sealing shut.

U'Visvuna Meshaneh "Ittim"

U'Visvuna Meshaneh Ittim - with discernment *Hashem* changes the times.

The changing of the times perhaps refers to the length of days and nights and *U'machlif es Hazemanim* refers to the changes in the seasons of the year.

Chochma U'Sevuna

The *Sefer Shiras Dovid* suggests (based on *Rav Chaim of Volozhin*) that Chochma refers to the knowledge of science and nature while Sevuna refers to the esoteric knowledge of the spiritual forces that are behind nature. He bases this on the special blessing one makes when one sees a brilliant non-Jewish scholar – *Baruch Asher nassan mechochmasso le'bassar ve'dam* (Blessed is He Who has given from His knowledge to mortals). From the wording of this blessing one sees that knowledge of science and nature is called Chochma, as in the dictum *Chochma bagoyim taamin*² (one who says that non-Jews possess wisdom; believe him).

Sevuna (or *Tevuna*) refers to the knowledge of hidden mystical realities of nature and science. For example, one can study the science of the sun and track its path and its pattern of warming etc. while one who possesses *Sevuna* understands the spiritual element that causes the sun to take its course and what its causes are in its warming pattern etc. Of course, these spiritual secrets are known only to select pious

¹ *Abudraham*

² *Rosh Hashanah Daf 20b*

Tzaddikim and also in a limited amount; but it is they who are privy to such lofty concepts and insights. These concepts are discussed in the scholarship of planning a Jewish Lunar Calendar as discussed in the *Gemara* about *Sod Ha'Ibbur*³ (the Mystery of calendrical intercalation) which is considered a knowledge that is recognized by non-Jewish scholars as being especially well-known to the Jewish scholars. The *Chasam Sofer*⁴ comments that this knowledge is far too complex and difficult for most people to master. Very few have the intellectual acumen to become proficient in the scientific and mathematical studies required for this undertaking. It is written in the Torah about this body of knowledge: *Ki hee chochmaschem u'vinaschem le'einei ha'amim.*⁵

וְשָׁמַרְתֶּם, וַעֲשִׂיתֶם כִּי הוּא חֻמַּתְכֶם וּבִינַתְכֶם, לְעֵינֵי הָעַמִּים: אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁמְעוּן, אֵת כָּל-הַחֻקִּים
הָאֵלֶּה, וְאָמְרוּ רַק עַם-חָכָם וְנָבוֹן, הַגּוֹי הַגָּדוֹל הַזֶּה

6. And you shall keep [them] and do [them], for that is your wisdom and your understanding in the eyes of the nations, who will hear all these statutes and say, "Only this great nation is a wise and understanding people."

Rashi - And you shall keep [them] - This refers to study.

And do [them] - [To be interpreted] according to its apparent meaning; for that is your wisdom and your understanding [in the eyes of the peoples]. Through this you will be considered wise and understanding in the eyes of the nations.

Regarding the calculations of the New Moon and establishment of the Jewish Calendar; from the History of the Jewish People - From Yavneh to Pumbedisa pages 190 -191 Mesorah Publications.

In the year 359 CE (4119), Hillel II and his court calculated all the future new moons and consecrated in advance, all future months in accordance with these calculations. Likewise, they calculated and consecrated all future leap years.

How accurate were the calculations used by Hillel II in determining the calendar?

Of two things we are certain: 1) All measurements given by the Torah are as accurate as necessary for the purpose at hand. 2) That they stand on their own as the word of *Hashem* and transmitted through the Sages. Nevertheless, it is interesting to compare the data used by the Sages with the conclusion reached by modern technology.

³ Rosh Hashanah *Daf* 20b

⁴ R' MOSHE SOFER SCHREIBER - CHATAM SOFER - Born: Frankfurt, Germany, 1762. Died: Pressburg, Hungary, 1839. Notes: Commentator and Halachist. A son-in-law of R' Akiva Eiger, his family traced its roots to Rashi. He was appointed Rav of Mattersdorf, Hungary, in 1798 and Rav and Rosh Yeshiva in Pressburg in 1807, he ultimately became one of the most influential poskim of his time. He became an outstanding leader of Hungarian Jewry and led the struggle against Reform under the banner of "Chadash assur min HaTorah"/Torah Law forbids innovations. Author of **Torat Moshe**, a commentary on the Chumash, **Chatam Sofer**, a commentary on the Talmud, a commentary on the Shulchan Aruch, and **Teshuvot Chatam Sofer**, a large collection of Responsa. Among his students is his son the Ktav Sofer.

⁵ *Devarim* 4:6

In Tractate Rosh Hashanah⁶ the Talmud cites Rabban Gamliel: I have received a tradition from the house of my father's father that the moon's month is not less than 29 ½ days, plus 2/3 thirds of an hour plus 793 *chalakim* (parts of 1080/hour) from one new moon to the next. This is equal to 29 days, 12 hours, 44 minutes, and 3 ½ seconds (or 29.530594 days).

According to NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Agency) of the United States, the length of the "synodic month" (i.e. the length of time from one new moon to the next) is 29.530588 days. Thus, the difference this figure and the one used by the Sages is .000006 or six millionth of a day. This is the discrepancy for one month. In the 16 centuries from Hillel II until now the discrepancy adds up to only 2.84 hours. An amazing accuracy.

U'mesadeir es Hakochovim ba'rakia Kiretzono

U'mesadeir es Hakochovim ba'rakia Kiretzono (and He arranges the stars in the heavens in accordance to His will).

Despite our *Sevuna*-knowledge, ultimately all of creation is what G-d willed into existence *Kiretzono* (in accordance to His will). Everything was created by G-d Himself according to His infinite wisdom which no human can understand to its full extent. Even if we may observe some reason for certain phenomena in creation, we cannot fathom G-d's reasons for creating any specific thing since *Hashem* had multiple interconnected and interrelated reasons for creating anything in nature. For example, the sun was created to give light, heat, promote growth, magnetic fields etc. etc. How and when and to what extent the sun will shine and affect its surroundings etc. cannot be fully grasped by human minds.

In this blessing, the stars are used as the prime example of *Hashem* doing things according to His infinite wisdom and insight. There are billions of stars and thousands of galaxies⁷ in outer space. In *Sefer Tehillim* (the Book of Psalms) *David Hamelech* (King David) speaks of *Hashem* taking each star and naming each of them

⁶ *Daf 25a*

⁷ GALAXY, a massive ensemble of hundreds of millions of stars, all gravitationally interacting, and orbiting about a common center. All the stars visible to the unaided eye from earth belong to the earth's galaxy, the Milky Way. The sun with its associated planets is just one star in this galaxy. Besides stars and planets, galaxies contain clusters of stars; atomic hydrogen gas; molecular hydrogen; complex molecules composed of hydrogen, nitrogen, carbon, and silicon, among others; and cosmic rays. Thousands of galaxies were identified and cataloged by the British astronomers Sir William and Caroline Herschel and Sir John Herschel, during the early part of the 19th century. Since 1900 galaxies have been discovered in large numbers by photographic searches. Galaxies at enormous distances from earth appear so tiny on a photograph that they can hardly be distinguished from stars. The largest known galaxy has about 13 times as many stars as the Milky Way.

individually. A name represents a specific reason for its creation just as we find that the Torah describes the names of the Twelve Tribes at their birth and the reason for their names. In this blessing we speak of *Hashem* placing and arranging each and every star in the sky in its unique and special place. The *Zohar* learns a great and exceedingly important lesson from this. Just as *Hashem* knows each individual star by name and makes it His business (so to speak) to arrange each and everyone of them in the sky so that all fit His plan and purpose; so too each individual Jew should know that he is a significant being in the world that *Hashem* created and that G-d doesn't find it to be beneath His dignity to be intimately involved in the physical and spiritual progress of each individual just as He does with the stars.

Hashem Tzevakos⁸ Shemo; Keil Chai Vekayam Tamid Yimloch Aleinu
 Le'olam Va'ed

Hashem Tzevakos⁹ Shemo (Hashem; Master of Legions is His name), Keil Chai Vekayam Tamid Yimloch Aleinu Le'olam Va'ed (The living G-d should reign over us forever)

According to *Abudraham*, the above phrase should not be said at the closing of the blessing of *HaMaariv Aravim* since it has no connection with the theme of this blessing that discusses daytime and nighttime and other related matters. *Sephardim* in fact omit this stanza from the blessing while *Ashkenazim* recite it. The *Tur* brings that his brother *Rabbeinu Yechiel* heard from his father the *Rosh* a reason to include this stanza in their prayer. They explain its connection with the general theme of this blessing is from the verse "*Vehayah le'eis erev yihyeh ohr*¹⁰" - וְהָיָה יוֹם אֶחָד, הוּא יִנְדַע לַהַשֵּׁם - "וְהָיָה לַעֲתָ עֶרֶב, וְהָיָה אֹר" (And it shall be one day that shall be known to *Hashem*, neither day nor night; and it shall come to pass that at evening it shall be light). This verse refers to the end of our exile amongst the nations when in times of darkness and gloom, deep into *Galus (Galut, exile)* a light will appear. This refers to our salvation from the clutches of our enemies. In this allegorical reference, the above verse links up with the blessing of *HaMaariv Aravim* in the sense that we are alluding to another kind of light (salvation) and darkness (exile). Therefore, we recite here a prayer for the future that *Hashem* that *Hashem* should spread His *light*

⁸ The translation of this word is Master of Hosts/Legions which is one of G-d's names. We do not pronounce it as it is written *Tzeva'-os*, rather it is said as *Tzevakos*, unless one recites it in a *bracha* (blessing). Rav Hirsch explains that this attribute of G-d's Name represents His command over the almost infinite amount of forces that form the universe.

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¹⁰ *Zechariah* 14:7

upon us and He should reign over us forever and cast darkness over our enemies.
Keil Chai Vekayam Tamid Yimloch Aleinu Le'olam Va'ed (The living G-d should reign over us forever).

Hashem Tzevakos Shemo

Hashem Tzevakos Shemo (Hashem, Master of Legions is His Name)

This phrase is recited by *Sephardim* even though the *Abudraham* holds that it should not be inserted into this prayer. Although *Sephardim* do not say the latter portion because they don't view it to be relevant with the theme of the blessing, this part they say because it's mentioned in a verse in *Amos* - *Osseh shachar eifah Hashem Tzevakos Shemo*, עֲשֵׂה שַׁחַר עִיפָה, וְדָחַךְ עַל בְּמֹתֵי אֶרֶץ הַשָּׁם אֱלֹקֵי צְבָאוֹת, שְׁמוֹ, - (He makes dawn into darkness, and treads on the high places of the earth; the Master of Hosts is His Name).

Rashi explains this as follows:

He makes dawn - for the righteous like a bright light.

Darkness - He turns the brightness of the wicked into darkness (*Yeshayah* 8:22) "And behold, distress and darkness, darkness (מְעִיפָה) of oppression." Similarly, (*Iyov* 10: 22) "Land of darkness (עֲפֻתָה)"; (ibid. 11:17) "Darkness (תְּעִיפָה) shall be like morning." Your darkness shall shine like the morning.

Keil Chai Vekayam Tamid Yimloch Aleinu Le'olam Va'ed

Keil Chai Vekayam Tamid Yimloch Aleinu Le'olam Va'ed (May the living and enduring G-d continuously reign over us for all eternity).

There is a question amongst the commentaries¹¹ where to place the word "*Tamid*" (continuously). Should it be read together with the latter part of the phrase as in the above translation? Or does the word "*Tamid*" describe G-d, Who endures "*Tamid*" (forever)? Then *Yimloch Aleinu Le'olam Va'ed* refers to Hashem Who we beseech that He reign over us forever.

Please see final blessing of *Baruch Hashem Le'olam* for a further discussion of this topic.

The Second Blessing (bracha)

Ahavas Olam

In the morning, the second blessing which we recite before the Reading of Shema begins with *Ahavas Olam* (an eternal love) according to some and with *Ahavah Rabba*

¹¹ *Prisha* 236:3

(a great love) according to others. All agree that by *Tefillas Arvis* (Arvit, nighttime prayers) the blessing begins with the words *Ahavas Olam* (an eternal love)¹². The reason we use this expression at night is¹³ because although nighttime corresponds to exile and troubles, we recognize that this is only a temporary state and that *Hashem* loves us eternally and will eventually fulfill the prophecies and bring us back to the Land of Israel and rest His Divine Presence amongst us once again at the holy site of the *Beis Hamikdash* (Holy Temple). This exact terminology *Ve'Ahavas Olam Ahavtich* (I loved you with eternal love) is expressed by the *Navi Yirmiyahu* (Prophet Jeremiah)¹⁴.

Beshachveinu U'vekumeinu Nasi'ach Bechukecha

Beshachveinu U'vekumeinu Nasi'ach Bechukecha (When we retire and when we arise we will discuss Your statutes).

We will constantly be involved in Torah study, even our "small talk"¹⁵ will be about Torah as we consider Torah more than just a subject to study but as part of the fiber of our lives, as we go on to say in this blessing *Ki heim chayeinu ve'orech yameinu* (for they are our *life* and the *length of our days*). The *Ohr HaChaim*¹⁶ explains that *life* refers to our existence in this world (*Olam Haze*) which means that our existence is only to serve our Creator through Torah and *Mitzvos*. The *length of our days* means eternal life in the World to Come (*Olam Haba*) which through living a *life* devoted and dedicated to Torah and *Mitzvos* we are guaranteed eternal blessing and joy in the World to Come (*Olam Haba*).

Another reason we make the above point in this blessing according to *Likutei Maharich*¹⁷ is to show our devotion to *Hashem* and to His Torah. He brings from the *Gemara* in *Menachos*¹⁸ that technically one can fulfill one's obligation of Torah study in

¹² There are other slight differences between *Sephardim* and *Ashkenazim* in this blessing.

¹³ Based on the explanation of the Gra (*Haggadah shel Pesach* - Passover Haggadah, *Ve'hi She'amda*) that at night *Hashem's love* for us is not visibly strong and it is because of the past love that He had for us that He doesn't ever abandon us. In the Morning we recite (according to some customs) *Ahavah Rabba* which represents His great love for us which is alluded to because the Morning corresponds to Redemption.

¹⁴ *Yirmiyahu* Chapter 31:2

¹⁵ The word *Nasi'ach* (talk or chat) has this connotation (*Si'ach Yitzchok*)

¹⁶ R' CHAIM IBN ATTAR - OHR HACHAIM - Born: Sale, Morocco, 1696. Died: Jerusalem, Israel, 1743 Notes: Torah commentator, Kabbalist, Talmudist, he is known as having lived a particularly saintly life. He was the Rav of Sale until he moved to Jerusalem in 1740, where he established an important yeshiva. Author of the *Ohr HaChaim*, a commentary on the Torah where he uses the four methods of Pardes, and of *Pri To'ar* on *Yoreh Deah*

¹⁷ By Rabbi Yisrael Friedman *zt"l* (published in the year 1900)

¹⁸ *Daf* 110

the morning and evening through the Reading of Shema¹⁹. Therefore, we express ourselves here in the blessing that precedes the Shema that just as *Hashem* has unconditional love for us, we also love Him in return and it's because of our love for Him that we cling to His Torah and constantly converse in it day and night. We are not just "satisfying" a requirement to study Torah twice a day, as much as we are *living* it. Ki Heim Chayeinu (for they are our life)...

AT THIS POINT, *KRIAS SHEMA* IS RECITED AND THE BLESSING THAT FOLLOWS IT BEGINS WITH *VE'EMUNAH KOL ZOSE* (AND FAITHFUL IS ALL THIS)²⁰.

The Third Blessing (bracha)

Ve'Emunah Kol Zose

Ve'Emunah Kol Zose (and faithful is all this)

If one looks in the *Siddur* (Prayer Book) one will see that in truth, the blessing after *Krias Shema* has another word before we say *Ve'Emunah Kol Zose*. That word is *Emmes* (it is true). So really we are stating that *Kol Zose* - all this (referring to all declarations of *Krias Shema*) is *Emmes Ve'Emunah* (true and faithful). The only reason we do not actually read it like this is because we are enjoined to put the word *Emmes* together with the closing statement of *Krias Shema* and say *Hashem Elokeichem Emmes* as per the verse *Va'Hashem Elokim Emmes* והשם אֱלֹהִים אֱמֶת, הוּא-אֱלֹהִים חַיִּים וְמוֹלֵךְ עוֹלָם (But *Hashem Elokim* (G-d) is true; He is a living *Elokim* (G-d) and the King of the world). The *Abudraham* explains that the two expressions of *Emmes Ve'Emunah* represent Torah and *Mitzvos*.

Emmes represents Torah which is Truth as expressed by *Dovid Hamelech* (King David) in *Tehillim*²¹ - *Ve'sorascha Emmes* (and Your Torah is true). Likewise, *Shlomo Hamelech* (King Solomon) in *Mishlei*²² writes in reference to Torah knowledge *Emmes kenei ve'al timkor* (Purchase truth; do not sell it).

Emunah refers to *Mitzvos* as stated in the verse in *Tehillim* - *Kol mitzvosecha Emunah*²³ (all Your statutes are faithful). Alternatively, we refer to *Hashem*

¹⁹ The *Gemara* goes on to say that one should not reveal this to the unlearned so that they should not suffice with this minimal amount

²⁰ This refers to all declarations of *Krias Shema* (*Eitz Yosef*)

²¹ 119:142

²² 23:23

²³ 119:86

as the true and faithful One for He is always being deposited at nighttime with weary and tired souls and every morning He returns truthfully and faithfully; He even returns them invigorated and rejuvenated²⁴. This is expressed in *Tehillim*²⁵, *Padisa osee* “*Hashem Keil emmes*”, בְּיָדְךָ, אֶפְקִיד רוּחִי, פְּדֵת, "הַשֵּׁם קַל אֶמֶת" (In Your hand I entrust my spirit; You have redeemed me, O Hashem of truth).

The *Abudraham* writes that we always follow *Krias She'ma* with praise to *Hashem* for redeeming us out of the bondage of *Mitzrayim* (Egypt). Since the last paragraph of *Krias She'ma* is about *Hashem* taking us out of *Mitzrayim* (Egypt), the *bracha* that follows it is also about the same theme. In the morning we say *Emmes Ve'Yatziv* (It is true and it is firm) in commemoration of the miracles that *Hashem* performed for us when taking us out of *Mitzrayim* (Egypt). At night we say *Emmes Ve'Emunah* to express our faith that *Hashem* will redeem us from our present *Galus* (*Galut*, exile). Additionally, it commemorates the faith we had on the night of *Makkas Bechoros* (smiting of the first-born), when *Hashem* killed the first-born of *Mitzrayim* (Egypt) and spared the first-born of the Jews. On that night we put our trust in Him that He was going to redeem us the next morning, which is *Emmes Ve'Emunah* which is true and faithful. He also kept His promise and took us out of *Mitzrayim* (Egypt) the next morning which is *Emmes Ve'Yatziv* that is true and firm.

Ha'osseh Gedolos ad ein cheiker Nissim Ve'nifla'os ad ein mispar

Ha'osseh Gedolos ad ein cheiker (Who performs great deeds beyond our comprehension)
*Nissim Ve'nifla'os*²⁶ ad ein mispar (miracles and wonders beyond number).

The *Malbim*²⁷ explains the first verse; *Ha'osseh Gedolos* is referring to the marvels of creation that are so vast, that they are beyond our comprehension what their purpose is in creation. Even if an entire galaxy would vanish, its loss wouldn't be noticed in the vastness of space. Accordingly, the next verse; *Nissim Ve'nifla'os* refers to general miracles of nature that occur all the time.

²⁴ *Medrash Tehillim* 25:2

²⁵ 31:6

²⁶ According to certain texts the word *Nissim* is omitted

²⁷ *Iyov* 9:10 — R' Meir Leib Ben Yechiel Michael – Malbim – Born: Voloshisk, Poland, c. 1809. Died: Kiev, Russia, 1879. Notes: Commentator and gifted public speaker. He was appointed Rav of Wrteschen in 1839 and Rav of Bucharest and Chief Rabbi of Romania after 1858. A leading opponent of reform, he was imprisoned due to false accusations by the reformers. He was sentenced to death and only through the efforts of Sir Moses Montefiori did the Romanian government change his sentence to exile. Author of **Malbim on Chumash**, where he focuses on the connection between the Oral Law and the Written Law, and a commentary on the whole Tanach, which gained widespread acceptance. Author of **Artzot HaChaim**, a commentary on the Shulchan Aruch.

Gedolos

In keeping with the theme of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* (exodus from Egypt), the *Siddur Maggid Tzedek* explains the first verse is referring specifically to the great miracles that G-d performed at the Red Sea. As we mention on the night of Passover in the Haggadah, the miracles performed at the splitting of the Red Sea were five-fold the miracles performed in Egypt. This is alluded here by the word Gedolos (great deeds) which is the language used by the Torah to describe the miracles at the Red Sea, *Va'yaar Yisrael es hayad "Hagedolah" etc.*²⁸ וַיֵּרָא יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת-הַיָּד הַגְּדוֹלָה, אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה ה' בְּמִצְרַיִם (And Israel saw the great hand, which Hashem had used upon the Egyptians).

Nissim Ve'nifla'os

The next verse, *Nissim Ve'nifla'os²⁹ ad ein mispar* refers to a wondrous hidden miracle performed for the Jews when traveling through the desert on their way to the Land of Israel. This occurred at the Valley of Arnon when the enemies from the Amorite nation lay in ambush on the two sides of this valley hiding in the clefts and crevices of two mountains on either side ready to attack the Jews on their way through the narrow valley below. Hashem performed an incredible miracle bringing the two mountains together crushing the Amorite soldiers hidden inside. The Jews passed by without incident and without even noticing the great miracle that Hashem performed for them. Hashem then miraculously separated the mountains again and sent the *Wellspring of Miriam (Be'eira shel Miryam)* through the mountains to sweep down the remains of the enemy soldiers so that the Jews could see the great miracle that Hashem performed for them. The *pasuk* (verse) instructs us to speak about this great miracle as we also speak of the miracles that happened in Egypt. עַל-כֵּן יֵאָמַר ה' בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא. מִלְחָמָה יִהְיֶה ה' אִתָּהּ. בַּסֶּפֶר הַזֶּה וְאֵת הַנֶּזֶל יִם אֶרְנוֹן. The *pasuk* (verse) reads *Al kein ye'amar besefer milchamos Hashem* (Therefore it is said in the book of the Wars of Hashem) *Es vaheiv basufah ve'es hanechalim Arnon*³⁰ (The gift of the Reeds - i.e. the Red Sea - and the rivers of Arnon - i.e. the flowing blood and body parts which signaled to the Jews the miracle that was performed). As *Rashi* explains, the beginning of the verse implores us to speak of the great miracles that G-d performed for us; the splitting of the Red Sea and the *Rivers of Arnon*.

Hamadricheinu al Bamos Oyveinu; Vayarem Karneinu al kol Son'einu

Hamadricheinu al bamos Oyveinu (Who makes us tread on the heights of our enemies)

Hamadricheinu al bamos Oyveinu (Who makes us tread on the heights of our enemies)

²⁸ *Shemos* 14:31

²⁹ According to certain texts the word Nissim is omitted

³⁰ *Bamidbar* 21:14

We had mentioned previously in this blessing that *Hashem* punished the Egyptians measure for measure - *Midah Knegged Midah*. Just as they drowned our babies in the water, they were drowned in the waters of the *Yam Suf* - the Red Sea. Here we mention something else, that *Hashem* makes us tread on the heights of our enemies and raised our pride above all who hate us (*Hamadricheinu al bamos Oyveinu vayorem karneinu al kol Son'einu*). These references refer to two things. *Hamadricheinu al bamos Oyveinu* (Who makes us tread on the heights of our enemies) refers to *Amalek* who is our arch enemy. The *Gemara Megillah*³¹ states when *Mordechai* was being royally paraded around the city of *Shushan* by *Haman* the descendant of *Amalek*, *Mordechai* said to *Haman* the verse *Ve'atta al bomaseimo sidroch* (but you will trample the haughty ones). The next verse *vayorem karneinu al kol Son'einu* (and raised our pride above all who hate us) refers to the wars of *Yehoshua* against the 31 Kings that lived in the Land of Israel at that time.

Ha'osseh lanu Nissim U'Nekama be' Pharaoh Ossos U'Mofsim be'admas Bnei Cham

Ha'osseh lanu Nissim U'Nekama be'Pharoh (Who wrought for us miracles and vengeance upon Pharaoh)

Ossos U'Mofsim be'admas Bnei Cham (signs and wonders upon the offspring of *Cham*³²)

The *Maharal* of Prague explains the difference between an *Os* (sign) and a *Mofess* (wonder). *Os* refers to a miracle within the rules of nature such as the plague of *Kinnim* (lice) which came about by *Aharon* striking the Egyptian soil with a stick. This is expressed in the Passover Haggadah - *U'be'ossos zeh hamateh* (and with signs, this is the stick) - refers to *Aharon* striking the ground with his stick³³. *U'bemofsim zeh hadam* (and with wonders, this is the blood) - refers to the plague of blood where all the waters of Egypt turned miraculously to blood, which is a miracle beyond the rules of nature. This is what we refer to here with *Ossos U'Mofsim be'admas Bnei Cham*³⁴.

Alternatively, it refers to the simultaneous punishment and destruction that occurred in the Land of Cham i.e. Egypt when the armies were drowning in the Red Sea as

³¹ *Daf* 16a

³² *Mitzrayim*, the forerunner of the Egyptian nation was a son of *Cham* who was *Noach's* son (*Bereishis* 10:6)

³³ *Shemos* 8:12

³⁴ *Siddur Maggid Tzedek*

mentioned in *Rashi* on the verse in *Az Yashir* - *I shall flee before Israel for Hashem is waging war for them in Egypt*³⁵.

Si'ach Yitzchok explains *Ha'osseh lanu Nissim U'Nekama be'Pharoh* (Who wrought for us miracles and vengeance upon Pharaoh) in the following manner. He says that there were three reasons for the miracles in *Mitzrayim* (Egypt). 1) For the honor of *Bnei Yisrael*. 2) To punish Pharaoh. 3) To teach people that *Hashem* is the One and Only G-d. Accordingly, he explains this prayer in three parts. 1) *Ha'osseh lanu Nissim - Hashem* performs miracles for us; this is to honor the *Bnei Yisrael*. 2) *U'Nekama be'Pharoh* He directs His vengeance against Pharaoh to punish him for his wicked deeds. 3) *Ossos U'Mofsim be'admas Bnei Cham*, *Hashem* brings signs and wondrous acts in the land of *Bnei Cham* (Egypt) in order to teach them that *Hashem* is the One and Only G-d Who created the world and Who continues to control its destiny and He is able to change nature at will to protect those who serve Him faithfully.

Vayotzei es Ammo Yisrael le'Cheirus Olam

Va'yotzei es Ammo Yisrael le'Cheirus Olam (And he took His nation Yisrael out for eternal freedom).

The Maharal of Prague in the *Sefer Gevuros Hashem*³⁶ writes that people question the significance of the Exodus from Egypt since the Jews are not better off now as they are still in *Galus* (*Galut*, exile). He writes that the question is totally incorrect. When *Hashem* took us out of *Mitzrayim*, it created a state of freedom that became part of our fiber and essence. Once freed by *Hashem*, we became a nation beholden to Him and totally subjugated to performing His will. Any kind of subsequent bondage that may trap us is only a transitory state; not our essence or destiny. This is true freedom; this is eternal freedom - *Cheirus Olam*.

Hamavir Banav bei gizrei Yam Suf

Hamavir Banav bein gizrei Yam Suf (Who passes His children though the sections of the *Sea of Reeds*). At this point we turn our attention to the miracles *Hashem* did for us at the splitting of the Red Sea in detail. We praise Him for "*cutting*" the sea into twelve portions making paths for each tribe to travel through individually. The *Medrash* speaks of how there was fresh clear water for the *Bnei Yisrael* to drink flowing from these walls, as well as delicious fruits.

³⁵ *Shemos* 14:25

³⁶ Chapter 61

Ve'ra'oo Banav Gevurasso Shibchu Ve'hodu Lishmo

Ve'ra'oo Banav Gevurasso Shibchu Ve'hodu Lishmo (And His children saw His strength; they gave praise and thanks to His name).

After splitting the sea for the *Bnei Yisrael* to pass through safely out of harms way, *Hashem* performed another miracle for the Jews to witness with their own eyes. They saw how *Hashem* drowned the Egyptians who were in hot pursuit of them and when seeing this they sang *Hashem's* praise in song. The *Shirah* of *Az Yashir* is what our Sages consider the first time in history that people sang *Hashem's* praise in song. This song is considered to be so exceptional that we recite it daily in the morning *Pesukei De'Zimra* prayers. It's so unique that anyone who says it with great joy is promised that his sins will be forgiven³⁷. The *Beis Halevy* explains although *Adam* sang a song of praise a long time before this, which is recorded by *Dovid Hamelech* (King David) in *Tehillim* in the chapter that we recite every *Shabbos - Mizmor shir le'yome haShabbos* (A psalm, a song for the Sabbath day), there is something unique about the song of *Az Yashir*. What is unique is that this was the first time that the hand of *Hashem* brought salvation and punishment simultaneously. He brought salvation for the Jews and destruction for the Egyptians all in the same event. This level of Divine Protection was experienced and expressed for the first time in history by the Jewish nation, by *Krias Yam Suf* (the splitting of the Red Sea) and *Az Yashir*. The excitement of this momentous event elicited great praise and thanks - *Shibchu Ve'Hodu Lishmo*. The two expressions represent the dual meaning of the miracle of *Krias Yam Suf* (the splitting of the Red Sea).

U'Malchusso Beratzone Kiblu Aleihem, Moshe U'vnei Yisrael Lecha Anu Shira Besimcha Rabba; Ve'amru Chulam...

U'Malchusso Beratzone Kiblu Aleihem, Moshe U'vnei Yisrael Be'Simcha Rabba - Ve'amru Chulam (and His kingship they accepted upon themselves gladly, *Moshe* and the *Bnei Yisrael* raised their voices to You in song with great joy - and they all said...)

In the *Sefer* (book) *Baruch She'omar* the author stresses to avoid the common mistake that *Chazzanim* make, putting together the words *Be'Simcha Rabba* (with great joy) with *Ve'amru Chulam* (they all said together). Rather, the correct way to recite it would be to keep the words *Be'Simcha Rabba* together with the above words about the song of praise (*Shirah*) which the *Bnei Yisrael* sang with abundant joy. Then *Ve'amru Chulam* refers on the next verse that comes right after this which states that they all said *Mi Chamocha...* (Who is like You...)

³⁷ *Mishna Berura* 51:17 quoting the *Zohar*

Ve'ne'emar Ki Phadah Hashem es Yaakov

Ve'ne'emar Ki Phadah Hashem es Yaakov (and it is further stated: *Hashem* has redeemed Jacob). The *Abudraham* notes that in the morning we say this in the future tense while in the evening it is said in the past tense. He explains this to mean that in the morning we say a prayer that *Hashem* should save us from our enemies who try to harm us daily in our exile in foreign lands, while in the evening we say it in past tense giving thanks to *Hashem* for protecting us during this day.

The Fourth Blessing (bracha)

Hashkiveinu

Hashkiveinu Hashem Elokeinu Le'Shalom (Lay us down to sleep, *Hashem* our G-d in peace). In the *bracha* (blessing) of *Hashkiveinu* we ask *Hashem* to allow us to have a peaceful night of sleep so that we can feel refreshed the next morning ready to serve *Hashem* with all our strength and fervor³⁸.

The blessing of *Hashkiveinu* was added after *Go'al Yisrael* (Who redeemed Israel) as a prayer for Divine Protection at night when it is most common for there to be danger lurking. In truth, we are meant to be *Somech Ge'ulah le'Tefilla* (put together *Ge'ulah* and *Tefilla*) as we do by *Shacharis* without interruption. The *Gemara* in *Berachos*³⁹ explains that this is not an interruption because it is considered to be a *Ge'ulah Arichta* (an extended Redemption).

Abudraham brings from the *Raavad* who asks that it is still difficult to understand why we only recited an *extended Ge'ulah* by *Maariv* and not by *Shacharis*? He answers that when we were redeemed from our bondage in Egypt we were redeemed at midnight on the 15th of the Hebrew month of *Nissan*. That is when *Hashem* killed all the first-born Egyptians and Pharaoh sent orders to chase us out of Egypt. However, G-d only commanded us to leave the next morning. Therefore, since the redemption at night was extended until morning, we add a blessing making it a *Ge'ulah Arichta* (an extended Redemption).

Vesakneinu Be'eitzah Tovah

Vesakneinu Be'eitzah Tovah (and set us aright with good counsel). *Abudraham* explains that nighttime is usually when one tends to reflect on the day that has passed and plans ahead for the next day. We therefore beseech *Hashem* to help us in this process and guide our plans in the right direction.

³⁸ *Rav Hirsch* zt"l

³⁹ *Daf 4b*

At the end of this *bracha* (blessing) each individual answers *Amen* at the conclusion of the *bracha Shomer Ammo Yisrael Lo'ad*, according to the Mechaber as practiced by *Sephardim*. This is because the blessing of *Hashkiveinu* concludes the series of blessings - the *Birchos Krias Shema*. Even according to the other custom of not answering *Amen* to one's own *bracha*, if one concludes this blessing at the same time the *Chazzan* concludes it, one should answer *Amen*.

The Additional Blessing: Baruch Hashem Le'olam

The final blessing of *Baruch Hashem Le'olam* is recited only according to some customs as mentioned in the previous lesson⁴⁰. According to those who recite it, it was originally meant to be in place of the 18 blessings of *Shemoneh Esrei*. It is a collection of various Scriptural verses. *Likutei Maharich* brings that there is a question whether the verse *Hoshieinu Hashem Elokeinu* (Save us Hashem our G-d) is said from *Tehillim* 106:47 or if a similar verse *Hoshieinu Elokei Yish'einu* (Save us O G-d of our salvation) is recited from *Divrei Hayamim* 16:36⁴¹. According, to the former, this verse would bring the total of times the name of *Hashem* is mentioned in this prayer, to 19. This follows the present-day format of *Shemoneh Esrei* which now consists of nineteen blessings ever since the blessing *Ve'lamalshinim...* (as for slanderers...) ⁴² was inserted in Talmudic times; so too the *Ge'onim* that composed this blessing have in it 19 times the name of *Hashem*. However, *Likutei Maharich* prefers the verse from *Divrei Hayamim* without the additional mention of *Hashem's* Name in it, since when the *Gemara* states that the 18 *brochos* of *Shemoneh Esrei* correspond to the 18 times *Hashem's* Name is mentioned in the psalm *Mizmor Le'David...* or the 18 times it is mentioned in *Krias Shema*, the 19th *bracha* is not alluded to by another mention of *Hashem's* Name. Rather, it is alluded to in the verse *Keil Hakavode Hir'im*⁴³ (the G-d of Glory thunders), in the former, and in the word *Echad* (the Only One) in the latter. Therefore, if the *Ge'onim* allude to the 18 blessings of *Shemoneh Esrei* in the 18 names of *Hashem*, it is not possible to say that there is a 19th mention of G-d's name for this purpose. Therefore, it would be better according to *Likutei Maharich* to recite the blessing from *Divrei Hayamim* instead. Notwithstanding, the prevalent custom is to recite the verse from *Tehillim*.

⁴⁰ Roadmap to Prayer Lesson 36

⁴¹ This verse is part of *Hodu* at *Shacharis*

⁴² *Berachos* 28b

⁴³ *Tehillim* 29:3

The Closing of the Bracha (blessing)

As mentioned previously, in the first *bracha* of *Tefillas Maariv*, there is a question where to place the word "*Tamid*". Likewise, in the closing of this final blessing where we say *Baruch Atta Hashem HaMelech Bichevodo Tamid Yimloch aleinu le'olam va'ed ve'al kol maasav* we have a similar issue.

The *Sefer* (book) *Baruch She'omar* explains that there is a fundamental difference between the word *Tamid* and the word *Le'olam va'ed*. The former means continuously without interruption. On the other hand, *Le'olam* means forever, but it doesn't necessarily mean without breaks or interruptions. Therefore, in both instances we read the word with the latter part of the verse. In this blessing it will be read to mean that *Hashem* with His glory shall constantly reign upon us without interruption and that it should be forever, *Le'olam*.

SUMMARY OF RULES CONCERNING DIFFERENT SITUATIONS FOR
PRAYING (DAVENING) MAARIV WITH A MINYAN

One who came to shul in the middle of *Birchos Krias Shema* and cannot catch up

One should wait and first pray (*daven*) *Shemoneh Esrei*; then recite *Maariv* (i.e. the *Birchos Krias Shema*; the Blessings and the reading of the *Shema*) after nightfall.

One who did not yet pray (*daven*) *Mincha* and the *Minyan* is praying (*davening*)
Maariv and there will be another *Minyan* for *Maariv* later on

One should pray (*daven*) *Shemoneh Esrei* of *Mincha* first while the congregation is praying (*davening*) *Shemoneh Esrei* of *Maariv*.

One who did not yet pray (*daven*) *Mincha* and the *Minyan* is praying (*davening*)
Maariv and there will not be another *Minyan* for *Maariv* later

One should pray (*daven*) *Shemoneh Esrei* of *Mincha* first while the congregation is reciting *Birchos Krias Shema*. Then he should recite *Shemoneh Esrei* of *Maariv* with the congregation. Afterwards, he should recite the rest of *Maariv* (*Krias Shema* with its blessings).

One who came late for *Maariv* and finds the congregation starting *Shemoneh Esrei*
of *Maariv* and there will not be another *Minyan* for *Maariv*

He should first pray (*daven*) *Shemoneh Esrei* with the congregation and then recite *Krias Shema* with its blessings later on.

One who came late for *Maariv* and finds the congregation starting *Shemoneh Esrei*
of *Maariv* and there will be another *Minyan* for *Maariv*

He should wait until the later *Minyan* in order to pray (*daven*) *Maariv* in its proper order.

One who usually prays (*davens*) *Maariv* after nightfall
and the only *Minyan* is before *nightfall*

One could first pray (*daven*) *Shemoneh Esrei* with the *Minyan* and wait to recite *Krias Shema* with its blessings after nightfall, or

One could begin reciting *Maariv* immediately with the congregation, or

One who always follows the opinion of the *Gra* should pray (*daven*) *Maariv* individually later on after nightfall.

Questions:

- 1) Why is the word *Aravim* used in the plural (i.e. evenings)?
- 2) Explain the meaning of Chochma and Sevuna (or *Tevuna*).
- 3) Explain what *Kiretzono* (in accordance to His will) means?
- 4) What lesson should we derive from *Hashem* and His handling of the stars?
- 5) Why do *Sephardim* skip *Keil Chai Vekayam Tamid Yimloch Aleinu Le'olam Va'ed* (The living G-d should reign over us forever)?
- 6) Why is the term *Ahavas Olam* (an eternal love) used particularly at night?
- 7) Explain the significance of *Nasi'ach Bechukecha*?
- 8) What is the logical sequence of the *bracha* immediately after *Krias Shema* with *Krias Shema*?
- 9) How does the *Malbim* explain *Ha'osseh Gedolos ad ein cheiker* (Who performs great deeds beyond our comprehension)?
- 10) Which two miracles in particular do we allude to when saying *Ha'osseh Gedolos ad ein cheiker Nissim Venif'laos*?
- 11) What is the difference between *Os* and *Mofess* according to the *Maharal*?
- 12) *Ha'osseh lanu Nissim U'Nekama be'Pharaoh...*, what three reasons are alluded to there about the miracles of *Krias Yam Suf* (splitting of the Red Sea)?
- 13) Who does *Bnei Cham* refer to?
- 14) What is the significance of *Krias Yam Suf* and the *Shirah* of *Az Yashir*?
- 15) Why do we only recite an *extended Ge'ulah* by *Maariv* and not by *Shacharis*?
- 16) What is unique about the fourth *bracha* of *Krias Shema* and answering *Amen*?

Answers:

- 1) It is referring to 2 points of sunset. The first is when the sun goes below the horizon but there is still daylight. The second is when the sky gets dark.
- 2) Chochma is a term used to describe scientific knowledge; knowledge of nature. Sevuna (or *Tevuna*) refers to the esoteric knowledge of the spiritual forces behind nature.
- 3) This means that ultimately, everything in creation is there for reasons that *Hashem* had according to His infinite knowledge.
- 4) We can learn that just as *Hashem* deals with each star individually, arranging them in their places for their specific purpose, how much more so is *Hashem* intimately involved in the physical and spiritual welfare of man.
- 5) Since this really is unrelated to the theme of the blessing of *HaMaariv Aravim*.
- 6) Nighttime represents exile. Even in exile, when *Hashem's* love for us seems to be weak, His promise to us is to love us eternally.
- 7) The term *Nasi'ach Bechukecha* connotes that even our "small talk" will be about Torah matters as our love for Torah knows no bounds.
- 8) The logical sequence is to speak about *Yetzias Mitzrayim* (the Exodus from Egypt) since the last verse of *Krias She'ma* was about that.
- 9) The *Malbim* explains that *Hashem* created such a vast universe that even if a large part of it would vanish, it would still go unnoticed in the immenseness of the rest of creation.
- 10) We allude to the miracle of the splitting of the *Yam Suf* (Red Sea) and of the Rivers of Arnon.
- 11) An *Os* refers to a miracle done with nature. *Mofess* is a miracle outside of Nature.
- 12) There are 3 parts to the miracles performed at the *Yam Suf*. One is that *Hashem* did a miracle for the honor of the *Bnei Yisrael* who needed to be rescued. The second point was to take retribution from Pharaoh. The third was to teach the world that *Hashem* is directly involved with the world which He created.

- 13) *Bnei Cham* refers to *Mitzrayim* who were the descendants of *Mitzrayim* the son of *Cham* who was *Noach's* son.
- 14) It was the first *Shira* (song of praise) of its kind. It praises *Hashem* for simultaneously rescuing the *Bnei Yisrael* while at the same time punishing Pharaoh and the Egyptians.
- 15) We recite an *extended Ge'ulah* at night commemorating the initial Redemption from Egyptian bondage that came at midnight of the night of *Hashem* killing the first-born of *Mitzrayim* (*Makkas Bechoros*), but continued until morning when they actually left *Mitzrayim*.
- 16) According to the opinion of the Mechaber, one should answer *Amen* at the conclusion of one's own blessing of *Shomer Ammo Yisrael La'ad*, (the closing of *Hashkiveinu*).