

THE YESHIVA PIRCHEI SHOSHANIM PRESENTS:
THE ROADMAP TO PRAYER PROJECT

The Roadmap to Prayer

Lesson 48

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Comparing Shacharis to Mussaf

- 1) The *Shacharis Amidah* consists of seven *brochos* similar to a regular *Amidah* of *Shabbos* and *Yom Tov*.
- 2) It has the first three *brochos* and the last three *brochos* as a standard *Shemoneh Esrei/ Amidah* prayer (except for the special additions that are inserted as explained in the lesson 46).
- 3) The *Brocha* in between consists of a typical prayer that contains the *Kedushas HaYom* (the relevant Sacredness of the Day) with the closing of the *brocha* being *Mekadeish Yisrael VeYom HaZikaron* (Who consecrates the *Bnei Yisrael* who in turn consecrate the Day of Remembrance²).

On the other hand, *Tefillas Mussaf* (The “Additional” Prayer, corresponding to the *Korbanos Mussaf* offerings that were sacrificed when the *Beis Hamikdash* was in existence) is quite different³ as we are about to see.

Mussaf

MALCHUYOS, ZICHRONOS AND SHOFROS

There are three special parts to the *Mussaf Amidah* of *Rosh Hashanah*, which make it uniquely different from all other *Amidah* prayers during the course of the year.

¹ On *Shabbos* we recite *Mekadeish HaShabbos VeYisrael...* (Who consecrates the *Sabbath* and the *Bnei Yisrael...*)

² *Rosh Hashanah* is referred to as the Day of Remembrance throughout our prayers

³ It is worthy to note that there are dissenting opinions amongst the *Rishonim* who maintain that the *Amidah* of *Shacharis* contains the same nine *brochos* as *Mussaf*. This however is not the prevailing *Minhag* (custom) nowadays.

During the year, all special holiday *Amidah* prayers consist of 7 blessings. 6 of them are the standard opening and closing blessings that are the same for *Shemoneh Esrei/Amidah* prayers. In addition, there is one additional blessing placed between the first 3 and the last 3 blessings of every *Amidah*. However, by *Mussaf* of *Rosh Hashanah* there are 3 blessings added between the opening and closing blessings. The 3 blessings are the segments of *Malchuyos - Kingship, Zichronos* and *Shofaros*. Altogether there are 9 blessings. At the end of each of these blessings, additional *Shofar* blasts are sounded, as these are the central themes of our prayers on *Rosh Hashanah*. These blessings are recited at *Mussaf* even when *Rosh Hashanah* is on *Shabbos* when the *Shofar* is not sounded.

Malchuyos, Zichronos and *Shofaros* are each a collection of a minimum of 10 verses selected from *Tanach* (*Torah* - The Five Books of Moses; *Nevi'im* - Prophets and *Kesuvim* - Writings). The order in which we recite these verses is 3 verses from the *Torah*, 3 verses from *Kesuvim*, 3 verses from *Nevi'im* and 1 more verse from *Torah* again.

The *Gemara* relates a number of reasons why we recite 10 verses. They correspond to:

- ☞ The 10 utterances of G-d at Creation
- ☞ The 10 Commandments at *Har Sinai* (Mt. Sinai)
- ☞ The 10 praises that *Dovid HaMelech* (King David) praises G-d in the last chapter of *Tebillim*; one of which is *Praise Him with the blowing of the Shofar*

Malchuyos

The theme of *Malchuyos* is the acceptance of *Hashem* as our sovereign. The verses from *Tanach* are about *Hashem* kingship with the concluding verse *Shema Yisrael Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad* the 10th verse on the theme of *Hashem* being our King.

IN THE BLESSING OF MALCHUYOS, WE ALSO INCORPORATE THE KEDUSHAS HAYOM (MENTION OF THE "SANCTITY OF THE DAY") AT THE BEGINNING OF THE BLESSING AS WELL AS IN ITS CLOSING. THIS CORRESPONDS TO THE MIDDLE BLESSING OF THE AMIDAH OF SHACHARIS.

Korbanos, *Aleinu* and *Al Kein Nekaveh Lecha*

In the first of the middle blessings that contain the verses for *Malchuyos*, the verses are preceded by the *Kedushas HaYom Kedushas HaYom* (mention of the Sanctity of the Day) and the *Korbanos Mussaf* that were brought on *Rosh Hashanah*. The verses of *Malchuyos* begin with *Al Kein Nekaveh Lecha* and are recited after mentioning the *Korbanos* of *Mussaf*.

The *Kolbo* asks:

*“Why was it necessary to insert the paragraph of *Aleinu Leshabei’ach* in between the two since it neither mentions the *Korbanos*, nor does it contain any reference to Hashem’s sovereignty?”*

He answers:

*“Although *Aleinu* doesn’t include either of the above references, it was inserted at this point because otherwise the prayer wouldn’t read well. It was specifically put here as an introduction to *Malchuyos*. If our attitude is that - *Al Kein Nekaveh Lecha* (therefore, we place our hope in You) would follow the section dealing with the *Korbanos* of *Mussaf*, *Al Kein Nekaveh Lecha* (therefore, we place our hope in You) wouldn’t make sense. Instead we put *Aleinu Leshabei’ach* (It is incumbent upon to praise) after the *Korbanos* and before *Al Kein Nekaveh Lecha* (therefore, we place our hope in You) just as it follows in the daily order of prayer, first *Aleinu* and then *Al Kein Nekaveh Lecha*.”*

Zichronos

The theme of the next blessing *Zichronos* is that *Hashem* has total recall of all of mankind’s actions since the beginning of time. He reviews everyone’s deeds both good and bad and passes verdict on this Day of Judgment. There is nothing that *Hashem* cannot remember. Here too we have a collection of 10 verses about this theme.

Shofaros

The final blessing of the special *Rosh Hashanah* *Mussaf* prayer is the section of *Shofaros*. In this segment there are 10 verses that mention the concept of *Shofar*.

Outline of the Three Blessings

Each of the above sections begins with a preface that introduces each theme:

- ☞ *Malchuyos* - G-d's sovereignty,
- ☞ *Zichronos* - Remembrance (how G-d recalls all the deeds of Humanity)
and
- ☞ *Shofaros* - the *Shofar* symbolizing G-d's Might and Providence.

Kesuvim before Nevi'im

After reciting the preface for each blessing, we recite selections of verses from *Tanach*, followed by a petition to *Hashem* relating to the theme of that blessing.

In these selections of verses, we recite the verses from *Kesuvim* (Book of *Writings*) before those of *Nevi'im* (Book of *Prophets*) because the verses of *Kesuvim* are from *Tebillim* (Psalms) which were composed by *Dovid HaMelech* (King David) who preceded the verses from *Nevi'im*.

Malchuyos, Zichronos and Shofaros and the three stanzas beginning with "U'Vechein..."

The Tur draws a parallel between the blessing of *Malchuyos*, *Zichronos* and *Shofaros* and the three "*U'Vechein*" stanzas that are inserted in the third opening *brocha* of the *Amidah*:

- 1) *U'Vechein Tein Pachdecha* (And so too, You shall place Your awe),
- 2) *U'Vechein Tein Kavod* (And so too, You shall give honor) and
- 3) *U'Vechein Tein Kavod* (And so too, You shall give honor)

Rav Samson Rafael Hirsch ז"ל, elaborates on this point. He writes that:

- ☞ **Malchuyos** proclaims G-d's sovereignty over the world which is the theme of *U'Vechein Tein Pachdecha* (And so too, You shall place Your awe)
- ☞ **Zichronos** proclaims G-d's Providence over Humanity which corresponds with the theme of *U'Vechein Tein Kavod* (And so too, You shall give honor)
- ☞ **Shofaros** speaks of training and discipline as represented by the *Shofar's* proclamation of different events and procedures. It corresponds to *U'Vechein*

⁴ Rosh in tractate *Rosh Hashanah* 32a

⁵ Horeb, § 642

Tzaddikim (And so too, the righteous) which speaks of a time when evil will be vanquished and all of humanity will be trained in doing the will of *Hashem*.

U'vechein...

The *Abudraham* notes that the word *U'vechein* is the same expression that *Esther HaMalkea* (Queen Esther) used when she prepared to go to *Achashverosh* (King Ahasareus) to plead that he annul *Haman's* evil decree to annihilate all the Jews on the 13th day of the Hebrew month of *Adar*. She said:

“...*U'vechein avo el HaMelech asher lo kadash*”⁶ (...then I will go to the king contrary to the law – **Rashi: Contrary to the law** - for it is contrary to the law for one who is not summoned to enter).

Along these lines,

The *Maggid Tzedek* explains that we too must feel this way when we approach *Hashem* to forgive our sins. We must feel that no matter how much *Teshuva* (repentance) we have gone through, we still are not worthy of total forgiveness.

Even *Esther* herself alludes in the above verse that **she is unworthy of approaching the King, Hashem** to abolish the Heavenly decree against the Jews of her generation, despite the fact that everyone had fasted for her success for three days and three nights.

How much more so with us, when we beseech *Hashem* to forgive our sins during the period of *Aseres Yemei Teshuva*? All one needs to do to drive this point home, is to reflect on the *Piyut* of *U'nesaneh Tokef*, and see how even the *Malachim* (Heavenly angels) tremble and fear the Day of Judgment.

U'Vechein and the Shofar Sounds

There is another approach in explaining the significance of the word *U'vechein* used here in the *Amidah* of *Rosh Hashanah*.

According to *Nusach Sefard* there are actually four times that *U'vechein* is mentioned.

⁶ *Megillas Esther* 4:16

⁷ Page 736

Before *U'Vechein Tein Pachdecha* (And so too, You shall place Your awe), *U'Vechein Yiskadash Shimcha* (And so too, Your Name shall become sanctified).

The *Chasam Sofer* writes that they correspond to the four *Shofar* sounds of

- a. *Tekiah*,
- b. *Shevarim*,
- c. *Teruah*
- d. *Tekiah*.

Accordingly,

U'Vechein Tein Pachdecha (And so too, You shall place Your awe), and *U'Vechein Tein Kavod* (And so too, You shall give honor) correspond with *Shevarim*, and *Teruah*. *U'Vechein Tein Pachdecha* is a prayer that *Hashem* restore His glory to the world so that everyone can recognize His sovereignty.

U'Vechein Tein Kavod is a prayer to restore the honor of *Bnei Yisrael* in the world. Originally, during *Bnei Yisrael's* forty years of travel in the desert, there was no need for the prayer of *U'Vechein Tein Kavod* since at that time *Bnei Yisrael* were recognized as a nation of *Hashem* and with special Divine Providence.

However,

Although we had a portable sanctuary at that time where the Divine Presence was clearly seen⁸, still, it was necessary to pray for *U'Vechein Tein Pachdecha* since there were many idol-worshippers who denied *Hashem's* existence, or His supremacy.

Therefore, it was enough to sound the *Shevarim* sound which corresponds to *U'Vechein Tein Pachdecha* without the *Teruah* that corresponds to *U'Vechein Tein Kavod*.

⁸ The *Bnei Yisrael* had the privilege of having a *Mishkan* (Tabernacle), where *Hashem* rested His Divine Presence in our midst (see *Shemos* Chapter 25)

Only after the destruction of the *Beis Hamikdash* (the Holy Temple) when *Bnei Yisrael* were exiled and their honor was diminished, did it become necessary to pray *U'Vechein Tein Kavod* for the honor of *Bnei Yisrael*.

Even then,

Perhaps it would have been sufficient just to pray for *U'Vechein Tein Kavod* since by restoring the honor of *Bnei Yisrael*, automatically this would have also restored *Hashem's* honor as well.

Therefore,

There is an opinion in the *Gemara* that it would be sufficient just to sound the *Tenuab* sound that corresponds to *U'Vechein Tein Kavod* without the *Shevarim*. Others maintain that one should pray directly for restoring both the honor of *Hashem* as well as the honor of *Bnei Yisrael*.

Therefore,

This opinion maintains that both *Shevarim* and *Tenuab* should be sounded.

THE CHASAM SOFER CONCLUDES THAT MOST LIKELY, NOWADAYS WE BLOW ALL THREE SETS, TEKIAH SHEVARIM TERUAH TEKIAH, TEKIAH SHEVARIM TEKIAH, AND TEKIAH TERUAH TEKIAH, TO FULFILL THE MITZVAH ACCORDING TO ALL THE THREE WAYS THE SHOFAR WAS SOUNDED.

Blowing the Shofar during the Quiet Amidah

There are those who have the custom of blowing the Shofar during the quiet Amidah that everyone says for themselves.

A set of *Shofar* blasts are sounded at the end of each section; by the end of *Malchuyos*, *Zichronos* and *Shofaros*.

Ashkenazim do not blow the *Shofar* during the quiet *Amidah*, only during *Chazoras Hashbatz* (the repeat *Amidah*). Anyone completing the first blessing should wait for the blowing of the *Shofar* at the end of the blessing before proceeding to the next blessing. The same is true for the next two blessings of *Zichronos* and *Shofaros*.

- One who hears the *Shofar* before completing the blessing should be careful to stop right away as soon as one notices that they will begin blowing the *Shofar* for *Malchuyos*, *Zichronos* or *Shofaros*, since one is obligated to hear the entire *Shofar* blast regardless of its duration⁹.

HaYom Haras Olam

On this day was the birth of the world. All creatures of the world stand in Judgment, whether as children of Hashem or as servants. If as children, be merciful with us as the mercy of a father for children. If as servants, our eyes look toward You and depend on You, until You be gracious to us and release our verdict, clear and pure as light, O Awesome and Holy One.

After each set of *Shofar* sounds are completed, the congregation recites the prayer of *HaYom Haras Olam* (On this day was the birth of the world). One who has not yet completed the blessing should continue from the point he was up to and he should not recite the prayer of *HaYom Haras Olam*.

Im Ke'Banim Im Ka'Avadim

In the *Tefilla* of *Hayom Haras Olam* we mention that *Hashem* should have mercy upon us either like a father that has mercy for his son or like a master for his slave. If we are considered like a son, we ask *Hashem* for mercy. If we are considered as slaves, then we long for *Hashem* to judge us favorably and kindly to avoid punishing us.

- 1) *Why do we mention these two types of relationships in our prayers?*
- 2) *What is the basic difference between the two approaches?*
- 3) *Finally, what connection does this have with *Tekias Shofar*?*

Rebbe Yonasan Eibshutz ז"ל writes in his *Sefer Yaaros Devash* that there is a basic difference between the relationship of a son and his father and a master with his slave. If a son is disrespectful to his father, although he will rebuke him, it will be with love and patience. However, a master is less tolerant towards a disrespectful slave and will punish him more harshly. When we blow the *Shofar* there are two types of broken sounds that we produce:

One is a *Teruah* and the other is a *Shevarim*.

The word *Teruah* actually means *love*,

⁹ In case one didn't hear the entire *Shofar* blast during the quiet *Amidah*, there is no need to have them repeated since one already fulfills his basic obligation with the *Tekias De'Meyushav*

- 1) It connotes that even if *Hashem* needs to punish us, it should be with love and patience like a father has for his son.
- 2) We deserve this relationship when our *Teshuvah* is done out of our love of *Hashem*.
- 3) However, when our *Teshuvah* is only out of fear of punishment, then we can expect *Hashem's* mercy to be like that of a master to his slave.
- 4) Just as a master would punish his slave severely when he acts disrespectfully, we too can be subject to punishment that would, *Heaven forbid*, hurt us.
- 5) This is alluded to by the other broken sound of the *Shofar* which is a *Shevarim* which literally means *broken*.
- 6) Nevertheless, we plead with *Hashem* to pardon us just like a slave would plead with his master for a pardon.
- 7) This is why we end this prayer that if we are to be treated like slaves, we long for *Hashem's* pardon anyway like a slave who begs for mercy and is sometimes granted a pardon.

THE AMOUNT OF SHOFAR BLASTS THAT NEED TO BE SOUNDED DURING THE AMIDAH IS A MATTER OF DISPUTE AMONGST THE GE'ONIM AND RISHONIM AND THE CUSTOM TODAY VARIES FROM COMMUNITY TO COMMUNITY¹⁰.

Chazoras Hashatz and More Shofar Blasts

After the quiet *Amidah* is recited by the congregation, the *Chazzan* begins to recite the *Chazoras Hashatz*.

- 1) This consists of the identical basic *Amidah* of *Mussaf* that was just recited quietly; but now it is repeated with many additions.

¹⁰ They are clearly listed in their respective versions of the *Machzorim* (Festival Prayer Books)

- 2) Some of the additions are said solely by the *Chazzan* while others are recited with the participation of the *Tzibbur* (congregation). Sephardim do not have many additional *Piyutim* in the *Chazoras Hashatz*.

Paying Close Attention to Chazoras Hashatz

According to strict *Halacha*, one should pay especial attention to the *Chazzan's* *Chazoras Hashatz* because the *Mitzvah* of *Tekias Shofar* is during the recitation of the blessings containing verses of *Malchuyos*, *Zichronos* and *Shofaros* in the course of *Chazoras Hashatz*. However, there is a leniency to recite *Tehillim* when the *Chazzan* is singing the many *Piyutim*, which are added to the *Chazoras Hashatz*.

U'nesaneh Tokef

AMONGST THE MANY PIYUTIM THAT WE RECITE DURING CHAZORAS HASHATZ OF MUSSAF¹¹ IS THE FAMOUS PRAYER - U'NESANEH TOKEF, WHICH ASIDE FROM TEKIAS SHOFAR IS THE HIGHEST MOMENT OF THE ROSH HASHANAH PRAYERS.

ונתנה תוקף

קדושת היום כי הוא נורא ואיום ובו תנשא מלכותך ויכון בחדס כסאך ותשב עליו באמת אמת כי אתה הוא דיין ומוכיח ויודע ועד וכותב וחותרם וסופר ומונה ותזכור כל הנשכחות ותפתח ספר הזכרונות ומאליו יקרא, וחותרם יד כל אדם בו ובשופר גדול יתקע, וקול דממה דקה ישמע ומלאכים יחפזון, וחיל ורעדה יאחזון ויאמרו: הנה יום הדין לפקד על צבא-מרום בדין כי לא יזכו בעיניך בדין וכל באי עולם יעברון לפניך כבני מרון כבקרת רועה עדרו, מעביר צאנו תחת שבטו כן תעביר ותספר ותמנה ותפקד נפש כל חי ותחתוך קצבה לכל בריה, ותכתב את גזר דינם!

A TRANSLATION (IN PART) OF U'NESANEH TOKEF READS:

U'nesaneh Tokef

Let us now relate the power of this day's holiness, for it is awesome and frightening. On it, Your Kingship will be exalted; Your throne will be firm with kindness and You will sit upon it in truth ... You will open the Book of Chronicles; it will read by itself, with everyone's signatures in it. The Great Shofar will sound ... Angels will hasten, a trembling and terror will seize them. They will say "Behold, it is a Day of Judgment, to indict the Heavenly Hosts for judgment!"... All who are in the world pass before You like members of the flock ... and You shall apportion the fixed needs of all Your Creatures and inscribe their verdict.

¹¹ According to Ashkenaz and *Nusach Sefard*

The Story of Rav Amnon

U'nesaneh Tokef is a very stirring prayer, and it is imbued with a great deal Divine inspiration. This prayer was composed by *Rav Amnon* about a thousand years ago in the city of Mayence (Mainz), Germany. *Rav Amnon* was inspired to compose this prayer and disseminate it to all Jews as a self-imposed atonement for a terrible experience he had.

As an advisor to the Bishop in Mayence, the Bishop took the opportunity one day to press for *Rav Amnon's* conversion to a foreign faith. *Rav Amnon* innocently responded that he would need three days to think about at which time he will respond to the request.

Although *Rav Amnon* only did this as a ploy to bide time, he quickly regretted ever saying this to the Bishop, for he left the Bishop with the impression that this was something that he would seriously consider, G-d forbid. He immediately started fasting for three days to atone for this terrible sin and he didn't return to the Bishop.

The Bishop became infuriated when *Rav Amnon* didn't return and had him forcibly brought back to stand before him and offer an explanation for his refusal to return. Instead, *Rav Amnon* demanded that the Bishop cut out his tongue for he sinned with it by telling the Bishop that he would even consider the request to change his faith.

To this the Bishop replied with wrath that it wasn't his tongue that sinned but rather it was his feet that sinned by not returning to him on time. He ordered to have *Rav Amnon's* feet cut off, limb by limb for disobeying him. The same was done to his hands. Each time *Rav Amnon* was given the choice of converting and saving himself from further harm; each time he refused. Finally, after completing this cruelty, the Bishop had him delivered home with all his body parts next to him on a stretcher.

Rosh Hashanah was approaching and *Rav Amnon*, who was suffering tremendously from his wounds. He asked that he be taken to the local *Shul* (synagogue) and be placed in front of the Holy Ark next to the *Chazzan*. Before the *Chazzan* was about to recite *Kedusha* he asked if he may sanctify G-d's Holy Name in front of the congregation. He then proceeded to recite the above prayer in front of everyone in the *Shul*. **After completing this prayer, *Rav Amnon* died from his wounds.**

Three days later, *Rav Amnon* appeared to *Rav Klonimus ben Meshullam* a great Talmudic and Kabbalistic scholar in Mainz in a dream and taught him

the exact words of the *U'nesaneh Tokef* prayer. He asked him to send it to all parts of Jewry to insert it into their liturgy.
May He Have a Peaceful Gan Eden, Amen.

“You will open the Book of Chronicles; it will read by itself, with everyone’s signatures in it” (U’nesaneh Tokef)

The *Klausenberger Rebbe* זצ”ל questions¹²:

- 1) What does it mean that ‘it will read by itself’?
- 2) Where do we find such a concept in Jewish thought?

He suggests the following answer:

Perhaps what is meant is that although after committing an *Aveira* (sin), it is recorded in this book and signed by the person himself.

- ➔ Yet when a person does *Teshuvah* (repentance) out of love and reverence of *Hashem*, the *Aveira* (sin) remains on record but it bears a different meaning. Just as there are certain words recorded in the *Torah* that are written one way and read in a totally different way, so too the *Aveira* (sin) is now read as a *Mitzvah*.
- ➔ This could be what is meant *it will read by itself* i.e. it will be read but not simply as it is written; rather it will be read as a *Mitzvah*, since one repented out of *Ahavas Hashem*.

To further elaborate, on this point,

It is written in the *Gemara* that when a person does *Teshuvah* (repentance) out of fear of punishment, the *Aveira* (sin) is considered as if it was done accidentally, which carries a lesser punishment.

However,

One who does *Teshuvah* (repentance) out of love and reverence of *Hashem*, his *Aveira* (sin) is considered as it were a *Mitzvah*!

¹² *Divrei Yatziv Orach Chaim* Simon 253

This means that when a person does *Teshuvah* (repentance) out of love and reverence of *Hashem*, *Hashem* considers his *Teshuvah* so great that **the *Aveira* (sin) is now considered as a credit** since he managed to overcome the obstacle of falling into the abyss of sin and pull himself away from it with a genuine desire to follow *Hashem's* will and commandments.

A similar saying is said about the *Satan* becoming confused when we sound the *Shofar* so many times on *Rosh Hashanah*. As explained earlier, we sound the *Shofar* before the *Amidah* and then again during the *Amidah* on *Rosh Hashanah*. *Rashi* explains that by doing the *Mitzvah* more than the *Torah* requires us to do, the *Satan* sees how we do the *Mitzvah* out of love of *Hashem* and his prosecution is muted. The question is why shouldn't the *Satan* prosecute even more vigorously in order to counter our *Mitzvah* of *Tekias Shofar*?

According to the above logic it makes a lot of sense

- 1) Since we perform the *Mitzvah* of *Shofar* with such zeal, it shows that our desire to do *Teshuvah* (repentance) which is symbolized by the *Shofar* is truly genuine in nature.
- 2) It follows then that the more *Aveiros* (sins) we had on our record, would ultimately benefit us when our *Teshuvah* (repentance) is done genuinely out of our love of *Hashem*, since they all will then be considered as *Mitzvos*!
- 3) Therefore, the more the *Satan* prosecutes and accumulates as *Aveiros* (sins) on our record will defeat his purpose, since then we will have more *Mitzvas* after they are all converted.
- 4) Thus, when we perform the *Mitzvah* of *Tekias Shofar* with love, the *Satan* rests his prosecution, lest he add more *Mitzvos* on our account.

May we all merit reaching this great level of Teshuvah! Amen.

The Rest of Chazoras Hashatz – Repeating the Shemoneh Esrei

- 1) There are numerous additions of *Piyutim* into the *Amidah/Shemoneh Esrei* that are inserted.
- 2) Some are said by the *Chazzan* alone, while others are chanted with the participation of the congregation.

- 3) In some versions there are many *Piyutim* while in others there are fewer. All these can be found in the respective *Machzorim* (Festival Prayer Books).

Ve'Seiarev instead of Retzei

On *Rosh Hashanah*, the *Kohanim* bless everyone from the *Duchen* (the platform) at the front of the *Shul* (synagogue). When this is done, the version of *Retzei* that is usually recited right before *Modim* is changed to *Ve'Seiarev etc.*

This is said out loud,

- 1) First by the congregation and then by the *Chazkan* in Ashkenaz and *Nusach Sefard*.
- 2) The congregation doesn't recite the closing of the blessing with *Hashem's Name* since they are not reciting the *Amidah*.
- 3) Their recital is only customary and is therefore not said in the full form of a blessing.
- 4) The closing of the blessing that the *Chazkan* recites is different than the regular closing of the blessing from a regular *Shemoneh Esrei* that ends with *Baruch Atta Hashem, Hamachzir Shechinasso Le'Tziyone*.
- 5) Here the ending is *She'oscha Levad'cha Be'yirah Na'avod*.

Birchas Kohanim

On *Shabbos* when *Birchas Kohanim* is recited, the congregation doesn't recite any additional prayers. The *Kohanim* recite the three *pesukim* (verses) of *Yevarechecha, Ya'eir* and *Yissa*. The *Kohanim* recite each verse word by word, repeating after the *Chazkan*. After each verse is completed, the congregation responds with *Amen*.

Refrain from Gazing

- 1) It is customary for the *Kohanim* to cover their hands with a *Tallis* while they are blessing the congregation with their hands lifted over their shoulders according to the specific laws pertaining to *Birchas Kohanim*.
- 2) The congregation also is instructed to refrain from gazing at the hands of the *Kohanim* at during this time.

- 3) Therefore it has become customary for the congregation to cover themselves over their heads with their *Talleisim*.
- 4) Likewise it became customary for young children to hide under their father's *Tallis* at this time.

What to say during the Blessings of the Kohanim

In many *Machzorim* (Festival Prayer Books), there is a corresponding verse printed alongside each word of the *Birchas Kohanim*. In some congregations the custom is to say recite *pesukim* that are printed in the *Machzorim* (Festival Prayer Books).

Other congregations maintain do not recite these *pesukim*; rather everyone just listens quietly to the *Kohanim's* blessings. Even in those congregations where the custom is to recite these verses, they should be said in an undertone so that everyone can listen to the *Kohanim* as they say the words of *Birchas Kohanim*¹³.

When *Birchas Kohanim* is recited during the week, then the congregation recites a special prayer at the end of each verse. The congregants should conclude the prayer at the same time the *Kohanim* end the verse; so that the *Amen* said by the congregation to the blessing of the *Kohanim* will also go towards the personal prayers of the congregants.

The Prayers Recited by the Congregation during Birchas Kohanim

The *Gemara* in *Berachos* teaches us that when someone has a bad dream, he should have them interpreted by a good friend, so that it can be interpreted for the good. A dream will always be influenced by its interpretation. The *Gemara* there elaborates on this point with many stories and examples of different interpretations of dreams.

The *Gemara* also mentions that one who experiences a bad dream should present himself in front of the *Kohanim* during *Birchas Kohanim* and recite the special prayer for bad dreams as printed in the *Machzor*.

After the third *Pasuk* (verse) is about to be concluded by the *Kohanim*, the congregation recites a different prayer silently while the *Kohanim* chant a special tune before they proceed to pronounce the final word *Shalom* (peace) at the end of *Birchas Kohanim*. When the *Kohanim* say the final word, the entire congregation

¹³ *Mishna Berura* 128:103

responds *Amen* again coinciding the end of their personal prayer with this *Amen*. There is a custom in some congregations to recite the same personal prayer at the end of the final *Pasuk* of *Birchas Kobanim* just like at the end of the first two *Pesukim* of *Birchas Kobanim*.

Coinciding Amen to a Negative Verse

There is an interesting *Halachic* discussion regarding the concept of an *Amen* said for a certain *Brocha* that coincides as an *Amen* to something else that was recited at that same time.

If a person hears a *Brocha* or *Kaddish* while he prays, and he had just recited in his prayer a verse that speaks of calamity, idolatry, or some other negative topic, should he answer “*Amen*” to the *Brocha* or *Kaddish*? Consider, for example, the case of a person who hears *Kaddish* as he recites *Shema*, right when he says the verse, “*Ve’Chara Af Hashem Bachem*” (“G-d shall be incensed with you”). If he exclaims “*Amen*” at this point, it sounds as though he express his wish that this ominous warning should materialize, Heaven forbid. Or, if a person answers “*Amen*” during *Aleinu*, after he recited the words, “*She’beim Mishtachavim La’bevel Va’rik*,” which speaks of the idolatry of the pagan nations, it sounds as though he gives his support for pagan practices.

For this reason, the *Chesed Le’Alafim* (work of *Halacha* by Rabbi *Eliezer Papo*, Bulgaria, 1785-1828) ruled that in such a situation one should forego on the response of “*Amen*” and continue praying, rather than give the impression that he expresses his support for a curse or some other undesirable phenomenon. This is the view as well of the *Ben Ish Chai* (Rabbi *Yosef Chayim* of Baghdad, 1833-1909), in the end of *Parshas Ki-Sissa*. *Chacham Ovadiah Yosef sblit”a*, however, in his work *Halichos Olam* (vol. 1, p. 247), disagrees, arguing that one is not excused from the obligation to respond “*Amen*” in such a case. After all, *Hashem* is aware of and is concerned with what a person thinks in his mind, and therefore one should respond “*Amen*” to the *Brocha* or *Kaddish* regardless of whatever undesirable matter he has just mentioned in his own prayer. *Rav Ovadiah Yosef sblit”a* adds, however, that a person should try to avoid such a situation; if he anticipates hearing *Kaddish* or a *Brocha*, he should try to ensure that he does not recite at that point a part of the prayer describing something negative.

Summary: If a person hears *Kaddish* or a *Brocha* while he prays and he has just mentioned something undesirable, such as a warning of punishment, he should

nevertheless respond “*Amen*” to the *Bracha* or *Kaddish*. Ideally, however, one should endeavor to avoid such a situation¹⁴.

At the Conclusion of Birchas Kohanim

After *Birchas Kohanim* is completed, both the *Kohanim* as well as the congregants recite another prayer quietly. As before, the prayer is said so that its completion coincides with the *Chazzan's* completion of the *Bracha* of *Sim Shalom*, so the *Amen* will apply equally to all the prayers together at the same time. The Prayer of the *Kohanim* prays to *Hashem* for the success of their blessing to *Bnei Yisrael*.

This prayer begins with the words *Ribbono Shel Olam* (Master of the Universe). The congregants recite a prayer to *Hashem* praying for *life, prosperity* and *security*. This prayer begins with *Adir Bamarom* (Most powerful on high).

Chazzan's closing of the Rosh Hashanah Mussaf Amidah

Just before the *Chazzan* completes the *Amidah*, he recites out loud the prayer for *Hashem's* blessings beginning with *Hayom Te'amtzeinu* (today You shall strengthen us). Then *Kaddish Tiskabal* is recited. In many congregations it is sung by the *Chazzan* in a melodious tune.

Immediately after the *Chazzan's Chazoras Hashatz, Ein Ke'Elokeinu* and *Aleinu* are recited. As for the *Shir Shel Yom* (the daily verses that the Levites sang during the period the *Beis Hamikdash* stood) and *Le'David Hashem Oree*, there are various customs. Generally, Ashkenaz says it after *Mussaf* at the very end of prayers (*davening*) while *Sephardim* and *Nusach Sefard* recite them after *Shacharis*.

The Rest of the Shofar Blasts

Although according to Torah Law, one is only obligated to listen to nine *Shofar* sounds as indicated by the verses (*Pesukim*) in the *Torah* regarding *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yovel* (Jubilee Year), on *Rosh Hashanah* there is a custom to complete the *Shofar* blasts up to one hundred *Shofar* sounds. In order to do so according to the various *Minhagim* (customs), we must blow a number of additional *Shofar* sounds after the *Chazzan's Chazoras Hashatz* of the *Mussaf Amidah*. This is done at different points as indicated in the respective *Machzorim* (Festival Prayer Books).

¹⁴ Credits: Rabbi Eli Mansour

Questions:

- 1) How many *Berachos* are there in the *Amidah* of *Shacharis* on *Rosh Hashanah* and how many are there at *Mussaf*?
- 2) What are those additional *Berachos* of *Mussaf*?
- 3) Which two *Berachos* are combined into one at the *Amidah* of *Mussaf*?
- 4) What are the details of the individual makeup of each of the additional *Berachos* of *Mussaf*?
- 5) Why are the verses from *Kesuvim* (Writings) recited before those of *Nevi'im* (Prophets)?
- 6) What do the three stanzas beginning with “*U’Vechein...*” correspond with?
- 7) What connection does the word “*U’Vechein*” have with Queen Esther and what lesson can we take from this?
- 8) According to *Nusach Sefard*, what do the four stanzas beginning with “*U’Vechein...*” allude to?
- 9) During what points of the *Amidah* is the *Shofar* sounded?
- 10) How much of each *Shofar* blast is one obligated to hear when a *Shofar* blast goes for longer than its minimum requirement?
- 11) Why is it especially important to follow along the *Chazoras Hashatz* of *Mussaf* on *Rosh Hashanah*?
- 12) What benefit can one have from having his past sins on record, even after fully repenting?
- 13) What replaces *Retzei* by *Rosh Hashanah* at *Chazoras Hashatz* of *Mussaf* and who recites this prayer?
- 14) List a few examples of coinciding endings of prayers with *Amen* to a *Brocha*?
- 15) Is it acceptable to respond *Amen* to a *Brocha* when it coincides with a verse with a negative connotation that one just concluded?

Answers:

- 1) The *Shacharis Amidah* of *Rosh Hashanah* consists of seven *brochos* while *Mussaf* consists of nine.
- 2) The additional *brochos* consist of *Pesukim* (verses) about *Malchuyos*, *Zichronos* and *Shofaros*.
- 3) In the fourth *brocha* which is *Malchuyos* we also include with it *Kedushas HaYom* (the sanctity of the day).
- 4) Each *brocha* contains ten *Pesukim* (verses). Three are from the Torah followed by three from *Kesuvim* and then three from *Nevi'im*. The final *Pasuk* is from the *Torah*.
- 5) Since all the *Pesukim* (verses) are from *Tehillim* which was authored by *Dovid HaMelech* (King David), they are recited before the *Pesukim* (verses) from *Nevi'im* since they were from prophets of later generations.
- 6) They correspond with *Malchuyos*, *Zichronos* and *Shofaros*.
- 7) The word “*U’Vechein*” was used by *Esther HaMalka* who spoke about presenting herself to King Ahasereus without permission. Likewise, we should feel like our request for mercy and forgiveness is without true justification.
- 8) The *Chasam Sofer* explains the four *U’Vechein*’s to correspond with the four sounds of a set of *Shofar* blasts. They are *Tekia*, *Shevarim*, *Teruah* and *Tekia* again.
- 9) At the end of *Malchuyos*, *Zichronos* and *Shofaros* of *Chazoras Hashatz* of *Mussaf*. Some have the custom of blowing the *Shofar* at those points also during the quiet *Amidah* prayer.
- 10) A person is required the entire length of each *Shofar* blast even when it goes longer than the minimum amount it’s required to be.
- 11) Since the *Tekios* are meant to be blown for the *brochos* of *Malchuyos*, *Zichronos* and *Shofaros*, it’s important that the *Chazoras Hashatz* be validated by ten adult men following along as is required by any *Chazoras Hashatz*.
- 12) When one does a *Teshuvah* (repentance) out of one’s love of *Hashem*, then his *Aveiros* (sins) are transformed into *Mitzvos*. Therefore, any *Aveira* on record will be transformed into *Mitzvos*.

- 13) The blessing beginning with *Ve'Seiarev etc.* The congregation recites it out loud until the closing of the *Brocha*, and then the *Chazzan* recites it and closes the *brocha* with *Baruch Atta Hashem, She'oscha levad'cha be'yirah na'avod.*
- 14) The silent prayers that the congregants recite at the conclusion of each of the *Birchas Kohanim* are coincided to end along with the end of each verse of *Birchas Kohanim.*
- 15) This is a matter of debate. *Rav Ovadiab Yosef shlita* concludes that if this situation arises, one is required to answer *Amen* anyway. However, if one sees that this may happen, he should try to avoid coinciding them at the same time.