

Ohr Shabbos

Hilchos Tefila

R' Elishai Kohananoo



The Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 101: 1) writes that one must have Kavana while saying Shemona Esrei. However, even if a person is unable to have Kavana for the entire Shemona Esrei, as long as he has Kavana during the first bracha (Avos), he will have fulfilled his obligation of Tefila. The Beis Yosef (ibid) brings the Smak, that says that the Kavana one must have while davening is to think about the meaning of every word and to be careful not to miss even a single letter of the Shemona Esrei. The Steipler (c.f. Orchos Rabbeinu vol. 1 pg 59) brings a proof to this opinion from the Yerushalmi. However, Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach in his sefer Halichos Shlomo (pg 98 par 9) disagrees. He maintains that, as long as a person has Kavana while reciting the words which contain the main idea of the bracha, he has fulfilled his obligation. If a person realizes that he forgot to concentrate during the first bracha of Shemona Esrei, the Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 101: 1) rules that he must go back to the first bracha. If he already finished Shemona Esrei, he must daven again. The Rema, however, disagrees. He writes that although this Halacha was true in the past, nowadays one should not repeat the Shemona Esrei. The reason is that there is no guarantee that during the repetition anything will change. The Kaf HaChaim (101, 4) writes that, for Sefardim as well, the Minhag is not to repeat the Shemona Esrei. This was said regarding repeating Shemona Esrei after one has already finished it. The Biur Halacha asks what the Halacha would be if one finds himself in the middle of Shemona Esrei and realizes that he did not have Kavana during the first bracha. Should he finish davening or, because he will not be Yotzei with this Shemona Esrei, should he stop so as to avoid making further brachos in vain? The Biur Halacha contends that if this does happen to someone, he should wait until the Shliach Tzibur repeats the Shemona Esrei and have Kavana to be Yotzei with him. Rav Moshe (Igros Moshe O.C. V, 5) and Rav Shlomo Zalman (Halichos Shlomo ch 8: 9) point out that for most people this suggestion is very difficult. (Another issue one could raise is that this suggestion won't work for someone who is davening alone.) Therefore they suggest that the person should not continue davening; rather he should go back to the beginning of the Shemona Esrei and *רהרהמה* the brachos from that point until he reaches the bracha that he is up to. This way he is certainly Yotzei B'dieved. It is worthwhile to mention the Pri Megadim (M.Z. 100: 2), who writes that it is obligatory for everyone to learn the meaning of the Tefilla; certainly to do so for the first bracha of Shemona Esrei and Modim (c.f. Mishna Berurah 101: 2) in order to fulfil his obligation of Tefilla.

Parshas Tzav

R' Yakov Erlanger



What follows here is from my Rebbe, Harav Chaim Dov Keller zt'l, Rosh Yeshiva Telshe Chicago, from his ספר החידוקים.

In פרק ח' פסוק כ"ג we find the rare 'Trop' (cantillation note) of "וישחט" on the word "שלשת", where Moshe is slaughtering the special איל המלואים. This trop indicates a mighty inner turmoil and struggle, with conflicting emotions competing with each other.

Even its written form is a line that bends to the right, left, right and again left. This too indicates the struggle it represents.

We find three other places in the Torah that this 'trop' is found:

When Lot is given the directive of the angels to flee from his city Sedom it says he paused -ויתמהמה-. This word is marked with a שלשת. Rashi points out there, that he was delaying because he was about to lose all his money, and this was a struggle for him, hence, the שלשת.

When Eliezer the servant of Avraham is praying by the well for success in finding the right wife for Yitzchak, there too we find a שלשת. His struggle was that he wanted to fail in this mission, in order that Yitzchak marry his daughter! Overcoming that desire, and to pray wholeheartedly for success in finding someone else, is indicated by the שלשת.

When Yosef is trapped and the subject to the seduction and entreaties of Potiphar's wife, it says "וימאן" -and he refused,

marked again with a שלשת. The struggle there is obvious, and it was the overcoming of that test that earned Yosef the title of "יוסף הצדיק".

So, what then is the reason for the placement of the שלשת here?

Here too, there was a struggle.

Up until this point, Moshe is the איל גדול. But it is with the איל גדול, the 'Ram of Training', that he is initiating, training and filling Ahron's hand with the position and status of איל גדול. This was actually a punishment for Moshe Rabbeinu, for his initial refusal to take the role of redeemer. (As Rashi brings in שמות ד' י"ד) So, here Moshe needed to overcome this inner tension and be מקריב and be מקריב in order to transfer the כהונה over to Aharon and his sons. (see the אור החיים הק' at the beginning of פ' שמיני)

Rabbi Keller concludes with the following: This cantillation note is called שלשת which means 'a chain'. The נפש החיים describes the different הנשמה as a chain. The נפש רוח ונשמה are all tied and connected to each other like a chain. When a person is faced with a formidable ניסיון, and he draws upon inner strength to overcome it, the reverberations of the exertion of his struggle travel up the chain of his הנשמה and back down again with the strength needed to bring out his will into the עולם המעשה.

Inspiring Stories

This story took place in the Lakewood beis midrash in which Rabbi Grama used to learn each day with a chavrusa. Besides the many talmidei chachamim who learned there, bachurim and working bnei Torah also made use of this beis medrash. One boy in particular caught Rabbi Grama's attention. He was a 12-year-old boy with Down syndrome who would sit in front of a large pile of open sefarim and gesture with his hands in the manner of the other chavrusos he saw all around him. Every so often, he would look into a sefer, say something aloud, and then pick up his pen and begin writing. Throughout his seder he would open up various sefarim and repeat this procedure, writing with great determination. Occasionally he would get up and go to the bookcase to choose other sefarim to learn from. He had a collection of notebooks that he was filling with his writings. Rabbi Grama was very curious to know what this young boy was writing. Was he really able to learn all of the sefarim in front of him and write his comments? The sefarim open on his table were those learned by accomplished talmidei chachamim. Did he truly understand them? One day, he walked over to the boy's seat and looked over his shoulder as he was writing. What he saw pierced his heart. There were no words, but every line on the page was filled from beginning to end with the scribbled lines of this boy who obviously did not know how to write. Tears came to Rabbi Grama's eyes as he realized what was going on. This boy sat in a beis midrash filled with talmidei chachamim who learned Torah each day and wrote their comments in notebooks. This boy's pure neshemah wanted nothing more than to join them as they dived into the deep seas of Torah, but he didn't have the capacity to do so. Therefore, he decided to do the best he could. He copied the actions of those around him, opening and closing sefarim, "learning" aloud, and writing his "insights" in his notebooks. To him, the scribbles were Torah learning; to those around him, they were scribbles. In Heaven, they were the holy writings of a traddik. Rabbi Grama wished to have a page of this boy's writings. It would provide his own talmidim with a powerful example of true ahavas haTorah. However, when he gently asked the boy if he might be willing to give him one page, the boy clutched the notebook to his chest and answered ardently, "No! It's mine!" He was clearly guarding what he considered his most precious possession. The next day, Rabbi Grama decided to try again. However, he got the same reply. This boy would not part with even one page of his notebook. A few days later, the boy approached Rabbi Grama with a notebook in hand. Smiling, he handed it over. "Here, you can have my whole notebook!" he announced. Rabbi Grama checked with the boy's father, who assured him that he should not hesitate to accept the gift. "He has many

notebooks like this at home," the father explained. "if he wants to give it to you, you can keep it." Rabbi Grama took one scribbled sheet from that precious notebook and framed it. In his eyes, it was not at all indecipherable. It articulately told of the ahavas haTorah in every Jew's heart. We all want to learn Torah on a high level; some of us have greater abilities and some of us struggle. Our job in this world is to delve into Torah to the best of our abilities. As we work our way through our sefarim, the insights we write down, whether they're profound words or mere scribbles, are treasured in Heaven simply because we gave it all our efforts.

Weekly Challenge

Which Tractate's name is the antonym (opposite) of the name of the seder of which it is part?

Last Week: What are two mitzvos that can only be done on Wednesday?

Answer: 1) Bircas HaChamah. The Berachah is said on Wednesday every 28 years 2) Burning the Parah Adumah. The Gemora learns from Pesukim, that the Cohen Gadol, who participates in the burning of the Parah Adumah, by schecting the cow and spraying the blood with the index finger of the right hand towards the Heichal, has to quarantine for 7 days; just like the Cohen Gadol who will do the avodah on Yom Kippur. An additional Rabbinic law was to sprinkle the Cohen Gadol with a mixture of water and the ashes of the previous Parah Adumahs, for 5 or 6 days of the quarantine. 6 days if the 4th day was Shabbos, 5 days otherwise. In order to maximize the days of sprinkling, the quarantine started on Wednesday, so the 4th day would be Shabbos; and the Parah Adumah, for the 8 times it was burned during the 2nd Bais Hamikdash occurred on Wednesdays. (Courtesy of R' Shmuel Spiegel)

A Glimpse Inside

R' Daniel Kashepava



I was born in Eretz Yisroel and moved to Toronto when I was 7 years old. I went to university in Waterloo ON, where I was introduced to Judaism. I subsequently went to yeshiva in Ohr Somayach, Monsey. Shortly after coming back, I met my wife and we got married during Covid. We lived down south for shana rishona (where I went to R Oberstein's TTEC!) We moved to Thornhill about 3 months ago. Now that I have moved here, I appreciate the difference a kollel-centred community makes. I feel very privileged to be living in such a choshuv community.