

ב"ה

SHEMONEH ESREI

a guide for adults and children



EXCERPTED FROM CHITAS FOR KIDS

With gratitude to Hashem, we are pleased to present this booklet, providing a basic overview of *davening* in general, and especially *Shemoneh Esrei*.

With all of the distractions and stresses of the world today, it is ever more important to make sure that our connection to Hashem, as established in *davening*, is strong. One way to ensure that *davening* accomplishes its goal is to understand the meaning and purpose of the 19 *brachos* of *Shemoneh Esrei*. In this booklet, we have tried to provide that understanding.

We have also added at the end some examples of how to impart the *tochen* and *kavana* of this *tefillah* to our children.

Our daughters Chanale and Shternie were the first in our family to use this method of *davening Shemoneh Esrei*, and their *kavana* and enthusiasm for this special part of their day is an inspiration to us. They look forward to *davening* in general, and especially this moment of private connection to Hashem.

We as parents also look forward to this time, when we can help guide our children to ask Hashem for all of the *brachos* they need.

We hope that this compilation will enhance your *davening*, strengthen your *kavana*, and by extension make a positive impact on the rest of your day.

The focus of *Shemoneh Esrei* parallels the focus of our *shlichus* in general, which is to bring the *Geulah Sheleimah*, beginning with the *Geulah* inside of ourselves and our surroundings. May we see this revealed *bekarov mamosh*, now!

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Chitas for Kids

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OVERVIEW OF DAVENING

Before we go to sleep, we say *Kriyas Shema She'al Hamita*. We take our *neshama* and all of the *mitzvos* we did during the day and give them to Hashem for the night. We say “*Beyadcha Afkid Ruchi*,” I am giving my *neshama* to You to take care of.

When we wake up in the morning, Hashem gives us back our *neshama* — refreshed, with new *koach* for the new day! We say *Modeh Ani Lefanecha* — Thank You Hashem, for giving back our *neshama*! So our *neshama* is back inside of us, but it will take work, the *avodah* of *davening*, to make it start to shine in all of our *kochos*.

In the first section of *davening*, we connect to Hashem with just our *koach* of *emunah*, which is deep inside of us. (If we didn't *daven*, that's where our *neshama* would stay all day!) This part of *davening* is like the lowest of the *Ruchnius olamos* (“worlds”), the place where Hashem is hidden the most. In this world of *Asiyah*, since we can't see Hashem, we only know about Him because of our *emunah*.

When we say *Pesukei Dezimra*, the second section of *davening*, we go up to the next *olam*. We say how Hashem is the Creator of everything and takes care of every detail in the world! This wakes up the hidden love for Hashem that is in our heart, and we feel our connection to Hashem using our *midos*. This corresponds to the *olam* of *Yetzira*, where Hashem's *midos* (which are what our *midos* are like!) shine the most. Now our *neshama* has spread to our *midos*, giving us extra *koach* for the next steps of *tefillah*!

The third part of *davening* is *Shema* and the *brachos* before

and after. We take the *koach* of our *neshama* and help it spread into our *sechel*. We use our minds to think about the Oneness of Hashem. *Shema Yisroel!* There is no existence aside for Hashem.

When we uncover our eyes after saying *Shema*, the world still looks like the same *Gashmius* world, though. Still, with our stronger recognition of the Oneness of Hashem, we are able to recognize that the world is not just what it looks like!

We remember how in the *brachos* before *Shema* we said how Hashem chose Yidden, and not *malochim*, to do the mission of making a *Dira Betachtonim*. We are proud and happy to do our job — “*Ve’ahavta*,” (and you should love Hashem), we are ready to dedicate ourselves to the *shlichus* that Hashem has given to each of us.

This *avodah* is the third section of *tefillah*, corresponding to the *olam* of *Briyah*. There, Hashem’s *binah* shines the most. In our *neshama kochos*, which come from Hashem’s *sefiros*, this is our *ChaBaD* — our *sechel*. They also shine with the light of our *neshama* when we say *Shema!* Our *neshama* has now spread into all of our *kochos*.

After this *avodah*, we aren’t so selfish anymore. We aren’t thinking about what WE want for ourselves, and we aren’t thinking that the *Gashmius* of the world is the most important thing. We spent time thinking about Hashem, realizing that Hashem is what is real. We know that we are here in this world on a special *shlichus* for Hashem, to serve Him in this world (“*Ani Nivreisi Leshamesh Es Koni*”). That is what is important — the rest of the world is here only to make our *shlichus* possible.

With these thoughts, and with our *neshama* spread through

our whole body, we are ready to go to the highest part of *tefillah*, *Shemoneh Esrei*. We stand face to face with Hashem alone. This is the level of *Atzilus*, where no existence is felt aside for Hashem.

We ask that Hashem give us our needs in the *zechus* of the *Avos*, and we repeat Hashem's greatness. We ask Hashem to give us the tools we need to do our *shlichus* for Him. We ask for *sechel* and *hatzlacha*, that we have health and wealth and only good for all Yidden! We ask Hashem to bring us the *Geulah Sheleimah*, now! We thank Hashem for His kindness to us, and then step away from our private meeting with Hashem.

During the rest of *davening*, we will take these special feelings and make them practical, so that we will be acting the way we decided to during our climb up the ladder of *tefillah*.

Once we already made this connection to Hashem, it lasts all day! We don't have to set up a new connection to Hashem by saying *Pesukei Dezimra* again before *Mincha*, or any time during the day that we want to ask Hashem for something. But since during the day we are involved with *Gashmius* things, our connection somewhat weakens. That's why we need to *daven* again. We do only a short preparation, since we are just refreshing what we have done before. Then we stand before Hashem and *daven Shemoneh Esrei* of *Mincha*.

HISTORY OF SHEMONEH ESREI

Many years ago, *davening* wasn't the same way it is today.

Let's take an imaginary Yid called Yerucham, and see how he davened:

Yerucham wakes up very early, as soon as he hears the first crow of the rooster. After getting dressed, Yerucham puts on his Tefillin and says Kriyas Shema. He feeds the animals, eats a light breakfast, then goes out to the field.

Yerucham carefully inspects the vineyards, then moves on to the wheat fields. As he is walking down the rows of golden wheat, he notices that insects are starting to nibble at the fresh sheaves of wheat! This could be a big problem for his crop.

Yerucham puts down his shovel. He turns to face east, and lifts up his eyes to Shomayim. In clear Lashon Kodesh, he says words of praise to Hashem. "Hashem is great, exalted, and holy! He creates the entire world and all that is in it. He gives every creation exactly what it needs." Yerucham now asks Hashem for help. "Hashem, please protect my crop! Keep the insects and animals from destroying my fields so that I will have a good harvest this year." Yerucham finishes off with thanks to Hashem. "Hashem has given me so many brachos! My large farm, many animals, my health, and my beautiful family. Thank You!" Yerucham has now done the mitzvah of tefillah.

He davens again a few more times today, when he hears from his neighbor that wolves are trying to attack the local sheep, or when he hears that his daughter is getting sick.

After a long day at work, Yerucham comes home as the sun is setting, to eat a meal with his family and to study some Torah. At nightfall, Yerucham again says Kriyas Shema. He feels very connected to Hashem, and knows that he can always turn to Him whenever he needs anything.

It used to be that whenever a person needed anything, he would simply stand before Hashem and daven. He would praise Hashem, ask for what he needed, and then thank Hashem for

His kindness. That could be at any time of the day, and anywhere. There were no specific words to say, and no set time to ask.

But the *Chachomim* saw that this wasn't working for everyone anymore. People didn't know *Lashon Kodesh* well anymore, and they were not praising Hashem properly. They didn't know how to speak to Hashem with *kavod* and ask for what they wanted in an appropriate way.

The Anshei Kneses Hagedolah, with Ezra and his *Beis Din*, set up a system of *tefillah* that would be the same for everyone. They gave us words to say so that we could ask Hashem for our needs and give Him proper praise, even if we don't know *Lashon Hakodesh*.

The *tefillah* they set up was 18 (*shemoneh-esrei*) *brachos*.

The first three *brachos* are praise to Hashem. The middle *brachos* ask for the needs of a person, and of *Klal Yisrael*. The last three *brachos* are giving thanks to Hashem.

Having the words of these *brachos* written down made it possible for every person to *daven* to Hashem properly, and speak to Hashem with beautiful, *kavodik* words.

TWO KINDS OF NEEDS

The *Chachomim* put together *Shemoneh Esrei* as the main part of each *tefillah*. In *Shemoneh Esrei*, we ask Hashem for all of our needs.

Here is how the *brachos* of *Shemoneh Esrei* are organized:

- The first three and last three *brachos* of *Shemoneh Esrei* are praise to Hashem
- The middle 12 (now 13) *brachos* are what we ask from Hashem.

These middle *brachos* are split up into two sections as well:

- First, we ask for our personal needs. These are the first six of the middle *brachos*.
- Then, we ask for what we need for all Yidden together, in the other six middle *brachos*.

What do we need for all Yidden together? We ask Hashem to return the status of Yidden to the way it used to be, so that we can again fulfill all of the *mitzvos* properly in Eretz Yisroel. In other words, these *brachos* ask Hashem to bring *Moshiach*!

GOING INTO SHEMONEH ESREI

When we *daven Shemoneh Esrei*, our feet should be together, touching, so they look like one foot. The *posuk* tells us that this is how *malochim* stand, who only have one foot. We also stand this way during *Kedusha*, when we make Hashem holy like the *malochim* do.

The *Chachomim* tell us to take three steps forward, to show that we are going towards something important. In order to take these steps forward, we first need to take three steps back.

We clear our thoughts and focus on standing before Hashem and the meaning of the words we are saying to Hashem.

FIRST THREE BRACHOS OF SHEMONEH ESREI

The first three *brachos* of *Shemoneh Esrei* show us that we should rely only on Hashem, not on any person!

- 1) *Avos* — The first *bracha* in *Shemoneh Esrei* asks Hashem

to remember the *zechus* of the *Avos*, Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov. We may not deserve on our own that Hashem help us, but we hope He will help us in the *zechus* of the *Avos*, out of His *chesed*!

2) *Gevuros* — The second *bracha* in *Shemoneh Esrei* speaks about how Hashem is in charge of giving a person life. It reminds us that Hashem can do ANYTHING!

3) *Kedushas Hashem* — In this *bracha* (*Ata Kadosh*), we say that Hashem is the King over everything. Even the *kochos* of Hashem that make the world work with “nature” praise Hashem! Hashem is in charge of everything in the world, including nature. There is nobody to ask for help, only Hashem Himself.

By reminding ourselves of these three things before asking for our needs, we show that we know that we can rely only on Hashem!

(The *Chovos Halevavos*, when teaching about *bitachon*, says that these are things that are important to know in order to have proper *bitachon* in Hashem! A person can't provide security in all of these areas, only Hashem can.)

ATA CHONEN L'ADAM DAAS

The very first thing we ask Hashem, after the three *brachos* of praise, is “*Ata Chonein L'Adam Daas.*” We ask Hashem to give us *sechel*.

Why is that the very first thing we ask for? Is being able to understand things SO important that we need to ask for it first?

In a *sicha* said to kids at camp, the Rebbe explained one

reason why: During *Shemoneh Esrei*, we will be asking Hashem for the things we need. But how will we know what is important and what to ask for? That's why we first ask for *sechel*, that we will understand to *daven* for the right things!

HASHIVEINU

The second *bracha* of *Shemoneh Esrei* that asks for our needs is "*Hashiveinu Avinu*." In this *bracha* we ask Hashem to bring us close to the way of Torah.

This *bracha* is one of the two times in *Shemoneh Esrei* where we talk to Hashem as our Father. Just like a father has the *achrayus* to teach his children how to behave, we ask Hashem to show us how to act, so we can serve Him properly.

SELACH LANU

Next comes the *bracha* of *Selach Lanu*. We ask Hashem to forgive us for our past *aveiros*.

Once we have prepared for *davening* properly, and asked Hashem to help us serve Him, we are on a higher level than before! We ask Hashem to help make sure that what we did in the past won't stop us from doing the right thing now. We ask Hashem to free us from the bad habits we got into, so we can have a fresh start today.

GOEL YISROEL

The seventh *bracha* in *Shemoneh Esrei* is "*Goel Yisroel*." In this *bracha*, we ask Hashem to free us from all of the problems that keep us from serving Hashem properly. We say "*Goel Yisroel*,"

that Hashem is redeeming us right now!

There are many kinds of *tzaros* that can make it hard to do our *avodah*. There might be other people that bother us, feelings we have inside of us, or things we are afraid of. Hashem frees us from all of these problems so we can go do what we need to do!

We say this *bracha* after Selach Lanu, where we ask Hashem to forgive us. This fits with what it says in *Tehillim*, that Hashem forgives our *aveiros*, and then in that *zechus* redeems us from our *tzaros*: “*Hasoleiach Lechol Avonochi ... Hagoel Mishachas Chayochi.*”

Of course, when we have our personal *geulah* from things that keep us from doing *mitzvos*, we will be able to bring the *Geulah* for ALL of the Yidden!

REFO'EINU

In the *bracha* of *Refo'einu*, we ask Hashem to give us health. If someone is sick, *chas veshalom*, we ask that Hashem should give him a *Refuah Sheleimah*!

The *Sefer* “*Reishis Chochmah*” writes that when we say *Refo'einu*, it is not enough to just be thinking about health for the body. We also need to be asking Hashem to be healthy emotionally and *Beruchnius*. Just like a person might not feel well because of a sickness in his body, a person might also have an illness in his emotions and feelings, or in his *Ruchnius*. We ask Hashem to be healthy in ALL of these ways, so we can serve Him properly!

BAREICH ALEINU

In *Shemoneh Esrei*, the *bracha* that we say to ask Hashem for *parnasa* is “*Bareich Aleinu*.”

(If you look at the translation of this *bracha*, you will see that it is all about rain and growing things. That’s because it used to be that everyone’s *parnasa* was connected to farming.)

It says in *Hayom Yom* that when we ask Hashem to bring *bracha* on all that we grow, we should have in mind the matzah for *Pesach*, the esrog for Sukkos, and the wine for *Kiddush*. When the wheat, esrogim, and grapes grow well, we can do these *mitzvos* in the nicest way. When the reason we ask for *parnasa* is to do *mitzvos* properly, Hashem will surely *bentch* us with plenty of *parnasa*.

TEKA BESHOFAR

The *brachos* of *Shemoneh Esrei* are split into 3 parts: The first part praises Hashem, the middle part asks for our needs, and the last part thanks and praises Hashem again. The middle part of *Shemoneh Esrei* is also split in half. The first half has *brachos* for each person alone, and the second half has *brachos* for Klal Yisroel all together.

We asked Hashem to take away the things that are bothering us, but we still aren’t really satisfied. We can’t rest completely until we are back in Eretz Yisroel with the coming of *Moshiach*! That’s why we say this *bracha* of *Teka Beshofar*, asking Hashem to bring back all of the Yidden together to Eretz Yisroel.

So why does this *bracha* start with the words “*Teka Beshofar Gadol*,” blow the great shofar?

In the *Navi Yeshaya*, it says in the *posuk* clearly that first the

shofar is blown, and then comes Kibbutz Galuyos! “*Veyaha Bayom Hahu, Yitaka Beshofar Gadol, Uva’u Ha’ovdim Me’eretz Ashur, Vehanidachim Be’eretz Mitzrayim — Veyishtachavu LaHashem Behar Hakodesh BiYerushalayim!*” On that day, first the great shofar will be blown, and then the Yidden will be gathered to serve Hashem in Yerushalayim!

HASHIVAH SHOFTEINU

The eleventh *bracha* of *Shemoneh Esrei* is “*Hashiva Shofteinu.*” In this *bracha*, we ask Hashem to bring back our judges, the *Sanhedrin*, to what they were before. When the *Sanhedrin* met, they decided exactly how the *mitzvos* should be kept. Everyone was able to understand clearly what Hashem wanted from them, and could do all the *mitzvos* properly.

We ask Hashem to bring us back to that, with the coming of *Moshiach*!

The Rebbe told us that we can have a taste of this by following the *horaos* of the *Rebbeim*. The *Rebbeim* showed us how to do the *mitzvos*, and how to make everything we do part of serving Hashem. They especially taught us that *Moshiach* is almost here, and that we should get ready now!

VELAMALSHINIM

When the *Anshei Kneses Hagedolah* put together the *davening*, they set up 18 *brachos* to say as *Shemoneh Esrei*, the main part of *davening* where we ask Hashem for our needs.

Later, in the times of Rabban Gamliel, there were many Yidden who stopped following *Yiddishkeit* the way it had been kept since the times of *Matan Torah*. They stopped following

the Torah *Shebaal Peh*, and only did whatever they wanted to of the Torah *Shebichsav*. Unfortunately, this confused many Yidden, who thought that this was a real way to follow the Torah.

Since this was causing many Yidden to stop keeping the Torah and *mitzvos*, Rabban Gamliel's *Beis Din* put together another *bracha* and added it to the *Shemoneh Esrei*. In this *bracha*, "*Velamalshinim*," they asked Hashem that all of these new ideas and philosophies shouldn't stop Yidden from acting like Yidden. They asked Hashem that these people should do *teshuvah* and shouldn't be able to affect anyone else to copy their strange ways.

Even today, many groups of Yidden come up with new ideas of how to act — and many of them are not the way the Torah teaches us to behave. When we say the *bracha* of *Velamalshinim*, we are asking Hashem to make sure that *Yiddishkeit* stays the way it always has.



Chassidus explains the deeper meaning of this *bracha*, that we are asking Hashem to protect us from the source of all not-good things, which is *kelipah*.

Hashem created the world with *kedushah* and with *kelipah*. Whatever brings a Yid closer to Hashem is *kedushah*, and the *koach* of *kelipah* is whatever tries to do the opposite. We ask Hashem not to let that *kelipah* make it hard for us.

We ask Hashem to destroy the *kelipah* in three different ways, one way for each of the *Shalosh Kelipos Hatemeios*, the kinds of *kelipah* that need to be completely wiped out: "*U'se'aker, U'se'shaber, U'se'mager*."

But there is another kind of *kelipah* that CAN try to pull

us away from Hashem, but can also easily be used to bring us closer to Hashem. Most *Gashmius* things in this world are this kind of *kelipah*, like food or toys. If we don't use them for any good reason, they can *chas veshalom* pull us further from Hashem. But if we use them for a *mitzvah*, or to help us serve Hashem better, they can become *kedusha* and bring us closer to Hashem.

In *Velamalshinim*, we ask Hashem to force that kind of *kelipah* to help us do the right thing. We say, “*Vesachnia*,” “and You should subjugate it,” meaning that Hashem should help us use this *kelipah* and make it into *kedusha*!

Because this is talking about a different kind of *kelipah*, we pause between the words “*U'se'mager*” and “*Vesachnia*.”



This *bracha* is part of the second half of *Shemoneh Esrei*, where we ask for the needs of *Klal Yisroel* and for the *Geulah*. This *bracha* is also asking Hashem for the *Geulah*! When *Moshiach* comes, Hashem will remove all *tumah* from the world, and *kelipah* will not be able to hide Hashem anymore!

AL HATZADIKIM

One of the *brachos* we say to ask Hashem for the needs of *Klal Yisroel* is the *bracha* of *Al Hatzadikim*. In this *bracha*, we ask Hashem to help the *tzadikim*, and all of those who are supporting *Yiddishkeit*. We ask Hashem that we should be a part of them!

VELIRUSHALAYIM

In this *bracha*, we ask Hashem to rebuild Yerushalayim. We also ask Hashem to again make Dovid Hamelech king in that holy city, which will be when *Moshiach* comes.

In fact, EVERY time we mention Yerushalayim, we are supposed to ask Hashem to rebuild it. That's why it is a *minhag* to write, after the word "Yerushalayim," "*Tiboneh Vesikonon Bimheira Veyameinu Amen.*"



A deeper meaning of this *bracha* is to ask for Hashem to strengthen the Yerushalayim inside each of us.

Yerushalayim is not only a city on the map. It is something inside of every Yid! *Tosfos* writes that Yerushalayim is made up of two words, "*Yirah Shaleim*," complete *Yiras Shomayim*.

In "*Velirushalayim*," we are also asking Hashem to help us reach the highest level of *Yiras Shomayim*, so we can be Yidden the way Hashem wants us to be. Our *Yiras Shomayim* will be truly complete when *Moshiach* comes!

The Rebbe Maharash once said that any time a Yid asks for *Yiras Shomayim*, Hashem will always give it to him!

ES TZEMACH DOVID

The next *bracha* in *Shemoneh Esrei* is very important! It helps us remember what we are supposed to be doing, and helps us keep a *chayus* in *Yiddishkeit*.

In the *bracha* of "*Es Tzemach Dovid*," we ask Hashem to bring *Moshiach*, who comes from Dovid Hamelech!

As we say in this *bracha*, "*Ki Lishuas'cha Kivinu Kol Hayom!*" "Hashem, we hope for your *yeshuah* the whole day!" The

Rambam teaches that waiting for *Moshiach* isn't just one of the *mitzvos*, it is a basic part of *Yiddishkeit*.

Why?

Moshiach is the whole reason why Hashem created the world! Hashem wants us to make the world a comfortable place for Him. By doing the *mitzvos* here in the world, we are making it comfortable for Hashem. Only when *Moshiach* comes will we be able to fulfill all of Hashem's *mitzvos*. Only then will Hashem be able to really be comfortable in the world.

By waiting and hoping for *Moshiach* all day, we show that we understand Hashem's *kavana* in creating the world, and that we are properly connected to Torah and *mitzvos*.

SHOMEIA TEFILLAH

In the middle *brachos* of *Shemoneh Esrei*, we ask Hashem for our needs. The last of these *brachos* is *Shomeia Tefillah*.

First, we asked Hashem to bring us our own private *Geulah*, to take away all of the things that keep us from doing what Hashem wants. We asked for a healthy *sechel*, to want to act the way Hashem shows us in the Torah, which will then bring us the *brachos* from *Shomayim* of health, *parnasa*, and *nachas*. Then we asked for the *Geulah* for all of the Yidden. We asked Hashem to bring the Yidden back to Eretz Yisroel, re-establish the *Sanhedrin*, build up Yerushalayim, and bring *Moshiach*.

Now we ask Hashem to listen to all of our *tefillos*.

In *Shulchan Aruch* and other *seforim*, it teaches that this is the place to ask Hashem for any detailed things we want Hashem to help us with. By asking Hashem for these detailed things, we show that we know Who to ask when we need something! First we ask Hashem, and only afterwards do we use the *kochos*

Hashem gave us to make a *keili* to bring down the *bracha* of Hashem.

RETZEI - VESECHEZENAH

In the *bracha* of *Retzei*, we ask Hashem to accept the *tefillos* we just said. But these *tefillos* are not complete. Our *tefillos* are supposed to be along with the *korbanos* in the *Beis Hamikdash*! We ask that Hashem should rebuild the *Beis Hamikdash* and again have His *Shechinah* rest there, so that we can serve Hashem the way we are truly supposed to.

The Medrash *Shocheh Tov* tells us that in the times of Dovid Hamelech, the *Aron* traveled to many different places. It didn't have a proper home, and there wasn't a place for the *kohanim* to do their *avodah*. In that time, thousands of soldiers passed away, because they didn't demand for Hashem to build the *Beis Hamikdash*.

If so, it is a *Kal Vachomer* for us! Those Yidden didn't know how wonderful a *Beis Hamikdash* was. There had never been a *Beis Hamikdash*, and of course, there was never a *Churban*. But we DO know about how special the *Beis Hamikdash* is! We do know how terrible it was that the *Beis Hamikdash* was destroyed.

So we need to REALLY cry out to Hashem in every *tefillah*, asking Him to bring us back to Yerushalayim and the *avodah* in the *Beis Hamikdash*. This is why the *Chachomim* set up this *bracha* of *Retzei*.



In the *maamar* of *Ve'ata Tetzaveh*, the Rebbe explains why it

is so important to say this *bracha* in *Shemoneh Esrei*.

Even though we are in *Golus*, there are *Boruch Hashem* many Yidden who are not suffering very much. A Yid might feel that he has most of what he needs in *Gashmius* — he has a house and a car, enough money for the things he needs, pretty good health, and some *nachas* too! He might also feel happy with his *Ruchnius* — he is able to have *kavana* when he *davens* many times, and does his best to follow *Shulchan Aruch*.

But deep down inside of every Yid, there is an *Etzem Haneshama*, the deepest part of the *neshama*. The *Etzem Haneshama* of a Yid is hurting and feels crushed that there is no *Gilui Elokus* (being able to see Hashem), like there was in the *Beis Hamikdash*.

This bothers a Yid so much that every time he stands before Hashem in *Shemoneh Esrei*, he asks Hashem that “*Vesechezenah Eineinu*,” that our eyes should be able to see Hashem again in the *Beis Hamikdash*. At least three times a day, he asks that there should be a *Gilui Elokus*.

Where do we get the *koach* to want this so badly? It comes from Moshe Rabbeinu, and the Moshe of every generation, the Rebbe. It is the Moshe of each generation that connects the *etzem* of a Yid’s *neshama* with Hashem, which makes us feel how much *Golus* hurts and how much we want *Moshiach* to come.

When we ask Hashem for the *Geulah* with our *Etzem Haneshama*, we can be sure that in this *zechus* we will deserve to have the *Geulah* now!

MODIM

Shemoneh Esrei has three parts:

- 1) *Three brachos at the beginning, where we praise Hashem*
- 2) *Thirteen brachos in the middle, where we ask Hashem for our needs — first the needs of individuals, and then the needs of Klal Yisroel*
- 3) *Three brachos at the end, where we conclude our requests and thank Hashem.*

The second *bracha* of these last three *brachos* starts with the word “*Modim*,” (recognizing) and finishes with the words, “*Hatov Shimcha Ulecha Na’eh Lohodos*” — “that Your name is good, and it is fitting to thank You.”

At the beginning of this *bracha*, we say that we recognize that Hashem is our *Aibishter*. We realize that He is our *chay-us*, and that He takes care of every detail of our lives with His *Hashgacha Protis*. Then we thank Hashem for accepting our *tefillos*, and for all the good He does for us.

We thank Hashem for doing *nissim* for us — all the time! Many times, we don’t even notice that there are *nissim* taking place. We thank Hashem for always taking care of us, and making many *nissim* happen that we don’t even see.

SIM SHALOM

At the end of *Shemoneh Esrei*, we ask Hashem to accept our *tefillos*. Then, we ask Hashem to bring back the *Avodah* of the *Beis Hamikdash*, because our *tefillos* are in place of the *korbanos*.

After the daily *korbanos* were brought, the *kohanim* would *bentch* the Yidden. Here, at the end of our “*korban*,” *Shemoneh Esrei*, the *chazan* says *Birchas Kohanim*.

The last *bracha* of *Shemoneh Esrei* speaks about the most important *bracha* that the *kohanim* give the Yidden, the *bracha* of *Shalom*. That is why this *bracha* starts with the words, “*Sim*

Shalom” — “Place peace upon us.”

The reason why *Birchas Kohanim* ends off with the *bracha* for *shalom* is that *shalom* is a *keili* for *bracha*, it is like a container that catches and holds *brachos*. After asking Hashem for all of the *brachos* during *Shemoneh Esrei*, we ask Hashem that we should be able to keep all of the *brachos*, which is only possible when we have *shalom*.



In *Sim Shalom* we say, “*Borcheinu Avinu Kulanu Ke’Echad Be’or Panecha!*” “Our Father, bless us all together with the light of Your face!”

The *Midrash Pesikta Rabbah* explains that the light of Hashem means the light of *Moshiach!*

How do we get the light of *Moshiach*? When Hashem is able to bless us all together, *kulanu k’echad*. When we have *achdus*, we deserve the light of *Moshiach!*

We say this as the last *bracha* not only because *shalom* is the *keili* for all of the *brachos*, but that *shalom* is also the *keili* for the whole reason the world was created: That the light of *Moshiach* should shine throughout the world!

YIHIYU LERATZON

We started *Shemoneh Esrei* with a *posuk*, “*Hashem Sefasai Tiftach,*” that Hashem should open our lips and our mouths should say Hashem’s praise.

The *Gemara* tells us that we also finish off *Shemoneh Esrei* with a *posuk*. After we finish the last *bracha*, we say “*Yihiyu Leratzon,*” asking Hashem that our *tefillos* should be accepted.

Yihiyu Leratzon Imrei Fi — the words I said, whether or not I had *kavana*, should be pleasant for Hashem

Vehegyon Libi Lefanecha — as well as the thoughts I had during *davening*.

Hashem Tzuri Vego'ali — Hashem is my strength and the One Who brings me *Geulah*.

In so many parts of *davening* we finish off by talking about *Geulah*, so we finish off with *Geulah* here too!

After 18 *kapitelach* of *Tehillim* (*Kapitel Alef* and *Beis* are sometimes considered one *kapitel* together), Dovid Hamelech finished off with this *posuk*. We also finish the 18 *brachos* (now 19 *brachos*) of *Shemoneh Esrei* with this *posuk*.

ELOKAI NETZOR

During the times of the *Gemara*, many of the *Chachomim* would add their own *tefillah* at the end of *Shemoneh Esrei*. One of these *tefillos* later became part of *Shemoneh Esrei* for all of us, the paragraph of *Elokai Netzor*.

First, we ask Hashem to help us treat other people properly. We say, “*Elokai, Netzor Leshoni!*” “Hashem, protect my tongue!” We ask Hashem to help us speak to others in an honest way, not saying not nice things or pretending to be nice when we’re really trying to hurt others. We ask Hashem to help us stay away from *machlokes*, and not even to think badly about another person!

We ask Hashem that we should be humble, and that Hashem should open our heart to understand Torah, and to WANT to do *mitzvos* and connect to Hashem.

If anyone or any *koach* is trying to keep us from doing this, Hashem should protect us from them!

ASEI LEMAAN SHEMECHA

At the end of this paragraph, we say: “*Asei Lemaan Shemecha, Asei Lemaan Yeminecha, Asei Lemaan Torasecha, Asei Lemaan Kedushasecha!*” “Do it for the sake of Your name, do it for the sake of Your right hand, do it for the sake of Your Torah, do it for the sake of Your *kedusha!*” We ask Hashem not to answer our *tefillos* for OUR sake, but for Hashem’s sake!

The *Gemara* tells us that a person who says these words every day will have the *zechus* of greeting the *Shechinah*.

This is also an appropriate place to *daven* for any specific things we didn’t already ask for in other parts of *Shemoneh Esrei*.

NAME PESUKIM

At the end of *Shemoneh Esrei*, we again say the *posuk* of *Yihiyu Leratzon*, asking that our words be wanted by Hashem. Then we say the paragraph of *Elokai Netzor*, the personal added *tefillah* from one of the Amoraim. After we finish this *tefillah*, we again say *Yihiyu Leratzon*.

We have a *minhag* to add something before this second *Yihiyu Leratzon*:

At the end of *Shemoneh Esrei*, we say a *posuk* from *Tanach* that has the same first and last letters as our name! For example, someone with a name of Avraham would say a *posuk* that starts with an *Alef* and ends with a *Mem*. If we have two names, we say a *posuk* for each one.

This *posuk* is important for the *neshama* when it goes up to *Shomayim*.

Chassidim have a *minhag* not only to say a *posuk* for our own name, but to also say the *pesukim* for the Rebbe's name! It is important for a *neshama* to show that it is connected to its Rebbe also in *Shomayim*.

Here are the *pesukim* we add for the Rebbe (as the Rebbe told us):

- “*Me’or Einayim Yesamech Lev Ushmua Tova Tedashen Atzem*” (from *Mishlei*)
- “*Mah Tovu Ohalecha Yaakov Mishkenosecha Yisroel*” (from *Chumash*)

OSEH SHALOM

During *Shemoneh Esrei*, we had a private moment with Hashem. We spoke to Hashem and asked Him for everything we need so that we will be able to do our *shlichus* happily. We asked Hashem to bring us *Moshiach*, which is what all of the *Yidden* need most!

When our private time with Hashem is finished, we step out of our place. We walk backwards to show respect, like when a person walks away from a king or from a Rebbe.

When a person leaves another person, he gives *Shalom*, wishing the other person peace when he goes. It is not *kavodik* for a person to say *Shalom* to Hashem, so we say the word *Shalom* in the *posuk*, “*Oseh Shalom Bimromav*.” We bow to Hashem on each side.

Finally, we ask Hashem again that He should rebuild the *Beis Hamikdash*. Then, instead of just *davening* in place of the *korbanos*, we can bring the *korbanos* too!

SHEMONEH ESREI WITH CHILDREN

When we *daven Shemoneh Esrei* with a child, we want the child to remember that Hashem is in charge of everything in the world, and He gave us a *shlichus* to act as a Yid should. Now is our opportunity to ask Hashem to help us with that mission and to bring *Moshiach* now! Give the child a moment of silence to connect with Hashem and think about this.

By starting to *daven* even with a young child, we help ease them into *davening* the whole *Shemoneh Esrei* with *kavana*.)



The following is an example of a more detailed guided Shemoneh Esrei to use with children, going through the steps of this powerful tefillah:

Now we're ready for the most important part of *davening*. You're going to have a private meeting with Hashem, and ask Him for all of the things you need so you can do your *Avodas Hashem* with *simcha*!

Stand facing the *Beis Hamikdash*, and take three steps back.

Now walk three steps forward, into Hashem's throne room, and put your feet together, so you are standing like the *malochim*.

Whisper to Hashem, asking Him to help you say the right things:

"Hashem Sefosai Tiftach, Ufi Yagid Tehilasecha."

Now bend your knees, ***"Baruch."***

Bow forward, ***"Ata"***

Stand up straight, with the *koach* of the *Aibishter*, ***"Hashem."***

Ask Hashem to help you in the *zechus* of the *Avos*:

“Elokeinu Veilokei Avoseinu. Elokei Avraham, Elokei Yitzchak, Veilokei Yaakov.”

We know that Hashem controls the whole world, and makes everything happen, including making the rain fall: ***“Morid Hatal,”*** or ***“Vesein Tal Umatar Livracha.”***

Hashem is holy, and Hashem has so many *malochim* who feel His holiness! Even though we don't usually feel Hashem's *kedusha*, we have a special *shlichus* from Hashem to act the way a Yid should.

Ask Hashem to help you make the right choices today... ask Hashem that you should be healthy, and that you should have all the *Gashmius* you need to do your *avodah*...

Ask Hashem to help all the Yidden in the world, to give a *Refuah Sheleimah* to everyone who is sick, and that everyone who is poor should have all they need...

Ask Hashem to bring all of the Yidden back to Yerushalayim, and rebuild the *Beis Hamikdash*, that we should have *Moshiach* now — ***“Ki Lishuascha Kivinu Kol Hayom!”***

Now close your eyes and ask Hashem for all of the things you need. (*For example, if you need a prettier backpack, or you want to be better at baseball, or that you should remember the answers on your Chumash test. Ask Hashem for help if you are trying to train yourself to do something, so that you should be successful. That someone you know who is sick should be healthy, that people you know who are fighting should get along...*)

Then open your eyes, and say:

“Ki Ata Shomeia Tefillos Kol Peh. Baruch Ata Shomeia Tefillah.”

We ask Hashem to accept our *Tefillah*, and remind ourselves that no matter what happens in *Golus*, this is not where we

should be! We want there to be *Geulah*.

We recognize that everything we have comes from Hashem, and we thank Hashem for all of the good things He gives us. We ask Hashem that there should be *shalom* among Yidden, so that we should be able to get all of the *brachos* from Hashem...

Now that our private moment with Hashem is over, we take three steps back, and bow to the left and to the right, out of *kavod* for Hashem, the King of the world.

“Oseh Shalom Bimrovam, Hu Yaaseh Shalom Aleinu, Ve’al Kol Yisroel Ve’imru Amen.”

We ask Hashem that next time we *daven*, it shouldn’t just be with our *siddur*, but the way it should be, in the *Beis Hamikdash*, with *korbanos*, like Hashem wants: ***“Yehi Ratzon Milfanecha... Sheyibaneh... Vesein Chelkeinu Besorasecha.”***

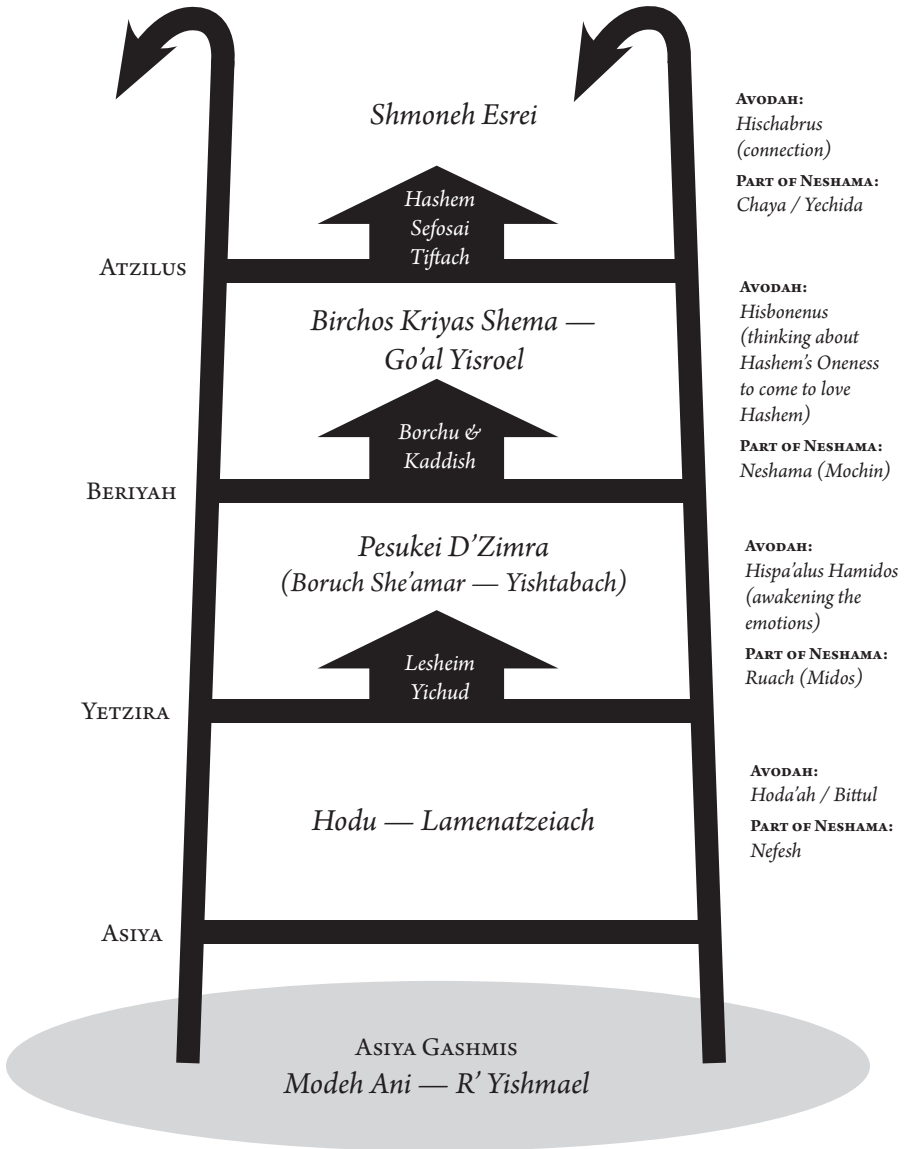
Now you can go back to your place.

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- *Maamar Lag B'omer 5745*
- *Masechta Shel Tefillah*

SULAM HATEFILLAH

"והנה סלם מצב ארצה וראשו מגיע השמימה"



TEFILLAH FOR WOMEN

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

1. *Morning Brachos*
2. *Hareini*
3. *Vayedaber (Korban Tomid)*
4. *First line of Shema*
5. *Emes Veyatziv — Go'al Yisroel*
6. *Shmoneh Esrei*
7. *Ach Tzadikim*

Shmoneh Esrei of Mincha



IN HONOR OF

Chanale & Shternie Hecht

ON THEIR FIFTH BIRTHDAY

DALED MENACHEM AV, 5775