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PSALM NINETEEN
ITS COHERENCE AND MESSAGE

The Interrelation of Nature and Torah
in Jewish Liturgy and Thought

by Rabbi Dr. Zvi A. Yehuda

The Hebrew Text

Translation of the Divine Name: ‘א, El, is rendered God and יי, God’s handiwork (19.2). The Tetragrammaton [YHWH], the Ineffable Name, is respectfully inscribed in Hebrew, יי or 'י or שם. In reading, it is ordinarily replaced by Hashem ("The Name"), while in sacred occasions it is rendered and pronounced Adonai [v.15].
PSALM NINETEEN
Translated by Rabbi Dr. Zvi A. Yehuda

(1) To the Conductor: A Psalm of David.

(2) The skies tell
God's glory;
[The glory of] God's handiwork —
The firmament acclaims.

(3) Day after day —
[The skies] utter thought;
Night after night —
[They] intimate wisdom.

(4) No phrase,
No words,
Inaudible —
Their voice;

(5) [Yet] throughout the earth,
Goes forth their cord,
To the edge of the planet —
Their messages.
To the sun,
[God] has set a tent of light
Within [the skies]

(6) Thus [the sun] appears as a groom,
Emerging from its nuptial chamber;
Joyous as a mighty one,
To run swiftly on its way.

(7) From the skies' edge,
Is [the sun's] rising;
Its circuit —
To [the skies'] very edges.
Nothing is hidden
From [the sun's] heat.

(8) Hashem's Torah is complete,
Gratifying one's desire.
Hashem's Testimony is trustworthy,
Enlightening one's mind.

(9) Hashem's Precepts are righteous,
Delighting one's heart.
Hashem's Legacy is brilliant,
Brightening one's vision.

(10) Hashem's Authority is spotless,
Enduring forever.
Hashem's Decrees are the truth
Just in their wholeness.

(11) Desirable more than gold,
The finest gold,
Sweeter than honey,
The tastiest honey.

(12) [Addressing God]
Your worshipper, too,
Lives by the light [of God's precepts],
Heeding them
With great persistence.

(13) [Yet] errors —
Who can discern [them]?
From covert faults,
Purge me;

(14) From overt wrongs, too,
Spare your worshipper,
Let them not overrule me.
Then, I shall be faultless,
Clean from grave transgressions.

(15) May the words of my mouth be pleasing [before You],
[May] the meditations of my heart before You [be pleasing],
Adonai, my rock and my redeemer.
Psalm 19: A Composite of Two Themes, Nature and Torah

Psalm 19 is a majestic hymn of adoration to God, the One Source of the natural order and of the Torah. The Psalm comprises two clearly distinguishable parts, different in theme and style. The first part (2-7) sings of the glory of God — and the glory of God's handiwork — as reflected in the constant natural order. In particular, in the regular cycle of the sun, its rising and hiding, "day after day", "night after night", in the skies above, and thereby affecting the entire earth. In picturesque and lively style, this part depicts the vigorous circuit of the sun, figuratively fixing day and night, as routinely narrating and communicating Divine glory. The poetic description is flowing and vigorous. The second part (7-15) sings of Torah, detailing its enlightening and delighting qualities, sweetening and enriching one's life experience — especially of one individual, the Psalmist himself, God's eved ["servant," worshipper, devotee], who fervently desires to do God's will. In its ardent, superlative phrases, this poetic part is enthusiastic, declarative and personal.

The sudden, transparent shift, in focus and form, between the two parts is striking. The first part radiates descriptive verses in blazing imagery. The second part begins with a repetitive recital of superlative praise (8-11), and ends with devotional supplication (12-15). In the first part, the Psalmist lyrically depicts the "silent" narration of the glory of God and God's handiwork, as emanating from the "voiceless" splendor of the material, mundane horizons. In the second, the Psalmist himself "voices" his own human emotions, with lucidity and passion, on a spiritual "handiwork" of God — Torah. In craftily sculpted lines, using a rather formulaic, recitative mode, the Psalmist first enumerates Torah's merits, exhibited in six manifold synonyms (8-11). He then concludes with a confessional plea to God, his "rock and redeemer" (12-15).

These two poetic parts of Psalm 19 also differ remarkably in their invocation of the Divine Name. In the first part, the Psalmist mentions God only once, in the first line. There, he mentions the Divine Name in subtle circumvention, using the shorter-generic Name El and a construct idiom, speaking not to or of God, but of God's glory (kevod-El). It seems as if the poet wants to avoid a direct and frontal talk with or about the Divine. The "glory" of God and God's handiwork, God's "weighty" impact, God's indwelling and immanence — not God in the absolute — is syntactically the direct object of the verbal phrase. Nonetheless, God's presence does dominate all verses. God is the implicit Actor in the elliptical verbal-phrase, depicting the setting of the sun's abode and luster (5). Without mentioning any Divine name, the verse clearly implies that God has set a tent for the sun within the skies. It is a tent of light. The Hebrew word for "tent" ["ohel"] conveys a double sense of dwelling and radiance.

In the second part, however, in dramatic contrast to the first, the Psalmist employs the ineffable Name, the Tetragrammaton [YHWH], repeating it, seemingly by design, seven times [6+1]. In the first six mentions, the Name appears in the construct form ["of YHWH," "YHWH's"] — God as the Source, the Possessor or
Originator, of the Divine Torah, called in this tri-linear segment by all its poetic six synonymous designations. Finally, in the seventh mention, at the concluding verse of personal supplication, the Name appears purely in its [grammatically] absolute form. There, the Psalmist addresses YHWH personally as "his own" ["My rock and my redeemer"], and turns to God as "You" in one idiom, "before You" (le-fanehka, governing both nouns of the line). The Psalmist appeals to God that both, "the words of my mouth" and "the meditations of my heart" — my verbal expressions and inward speculations — shall "be pleasing before You". This final verse (15) may befittingly serve as a solemn finale ("seal") to the entire Psalm.

In the Masoretic text, Psalm 19 appears as one integrated unit. Accordingly, we may inquire, is it one harmonious poem or a composite of two distinctly unrelated poems, (or only loosely related)? At first glance, we tend to maintain, as many biblical scholars claim, that these two parts are inherently two independent poems, far apart from each other in their content, outlook and message. As we already noticed, the two segments are demonstratively dissimilar in form, genre and mood. It is thus tempting to assume that these two finely delineated poetic units do not belong to one another, or to the same author or period.

Indeed, modern scholars generally propose that the first section, bearing some external resemblance to ancient Near Eastern poetry, stems from an earlier period, possibly that of David around 1000 B.C.E., and the second section, from the days of Ezra around 428 B.C.E. Moreover, while the first one (2-7) appears to be purely a so-called "nature poem", like Psalm 104, the second one (8-15) sounds as a hymn of praise to the Torah, like Psalm 119. Thus, most dominant schools of biblical criticism insist that the two parts of Psalm 19 are two unrelated poetic fragments, artificially stitched together. These two poetic segments, presumed to be completely disconnected from one another, ought to be read and studied each as separate piece — the first as an earlier, pre-exilic, pagan-like ode to Nature, and the second as a later, post-exilic, Ezra-inspired, hymn to Torah. Simply put, according to mainstream biblical scholarship, the Masoretic Psalm Nineteen, as one literary unit, virtually does not exist.

Notwithstanding, the Masoretic tradition has cherished and preserved Psalm 19 as one poetic composition, its second part as a continuation and conclusion of the first. Adopting the implicit Masoretic vantage point, we shall treat Psalm 19 as one coherent literary unit with two complementary parts sustaining each other. Moreover, we contend that the fragmentary, "scholarly" (non-Masoretic) approach may becloud the inherent meaning of this distinctively Hebraic Psalm. Only by approaching this Psalm as it is, holistically, in both context and form, we can better appreciate its profound rhetoric and world-view. Reversely, by treating each part of the whole as a detached, independent, "self-sufficient" fragment — and ignoring altogether the existence and charm of this magnificent poem as a whole — we miss the essential message of each part in itself.

To clarify this point we shall first examine the idea of nature in biblical thought.
The Biblical Idea of Nature

The first part of our Psalm is not a "nature poem" in the common western sense. To label it as such is anachronistic and misleading. The Psalmist sings God's glory, not nature's beauty. The very term "nature" for the cosmic order — for the totality and complexity of the physical world with all its phenomena — is alien to the Hebraic mind. The term does not exist in biblical Hebrew or in the domain of Hebraic thought and expression. Espousing neither the idea of nature nor the consequent notion of its conceivable violation, Hebrew Scriptures have no term for the corollary idea of miracle.

Scriptures speak of wonders (pele, ot, mofet) in the sense of impressive, purposeful, consequential and redemptive events, but not of any "miracle" in the common sense of violating, transcending or suppressing nature. Only later, in post-Biblical sources, did the biblical term nes — that truly means sign, banner, mast — assume the connotative sense of "miracle", as a presumed "meta-physical" or "supernatural" phenomenon. From the Rabbinic perspective, "Miracle" [or, in Hebrew, "nes"], in the latter common sense, is not always an admirable term. Rabbinic sources largely disparage and discourage any reliance on miracles, whether in human life or as a divine proof.

The comprehensive term nature (or Nature), for the physical world, or the forces collectively controlling the phenomena of the physical world (sometimes personified as a woman called "Mother Nature") is Western, not Hebraic. The Hebrew word for Nature, teva — related to coin minting and used in post-biblical Hebrew in the sense of "the makeup or character of" — emerged in its western cosmic sense only during the medieval ages. The term emerged because of the need to translate, from the Arabic into Hebrew, classic works of Greek philosophy.

The Hebraic mind views existential reality, as a whole (the so-called "natural order"), as a reflection of God. It is neither a "veil" concealing the Divine, nor a barrier obstructing God's glory. Hence, there is no need for exceptional "miracles" — supposedly surpassing or suspending nature — to facilitate or enhance the revealment of God. The entirety of nature, in its mundane flow, divinely ordained and permanently inviolate, serves as an open and constant window for the power and presence of God. The natural world as it is, is a living "declaration" of God's glory. God is revealed in the "natural" no less than in the "miraculous" phenomena. The ongoing renewal of creation — in its very constancy and lawfulness — is the greatest wonder and the most persuasive testimony to God.

The Hebrew Term "Olam"

The current word עולם olam, now employed to denote "world", has never had any purely spatial meaning in the Hebrew Bible. There, as well as in early rabbinic liturgy, olam denotes duration in time, not substantiality in space. The well-known, recurrent, Hebrew benedictory phrase, melekh ha-olam for God, surely
means neither "King of the universe" nor "Ruler of all reality" (all common translations to the contrary notwithstanding) but simply "The Eternal King" as in its biblical source (Jeremiah 10:10). The term olam, however, gained an added spatial connotation later, in rabbinic literature, to convey somehow the import of the Greek cosmos.

This Greek term perceives the universe as a beautiful, orderly and harmonious whole, as distinct from chaos. Now, while the Greek cosmos points to a universe of matter and design, the Hebrew olam, even in its post-biblical, corporeal sense, depicts all reality not as a statically stationary substance, but rather as a dynamic, ongoing existence, occurring in both space and time. It is characteristic of the Jewish genius that the people erected their monuments not in static forms, sculptures or temples, by means of the plastic arts, but in enduring conceptual ideas. Unlike the classical "universe" the Hebrew olam blends the physical with the metaphysical, the material with the eternal.

In this light, we may better understand the term olam even in its post-biblical sense. Olam always refers not to a static, material, concrete entity (earth, world; in Latin, mundus), in its solidity and stability, but rather to social-historical continuity. In this compound meaning, the term olam appears in post-talmudic liturgy, as in the Morning Prayer, Barukh she'amar ve-hayya ha-olam: "Blessed is the One Who decreed and the 'world' came to be!" Meaning: By the power of the Divine Word/Idea [logos], this spatial/temporal "world" emerged — it came into existence and continues to exist. The Tannaitic phrases "beri'at ha-olam" (creation of the world), "ha-olam omed/qayyam" (the world exists/endures), "ha-olam hazze/habba" (this world/the world to come), or the Amoraic phrase "kulei alma" (in Aramaic, the entire world) all refer to progressive Space/Time confluence. Even the medieval hymn "Adon Olam" refers to God not just as the Master and Leader [Adon] "of the world" [olam], but rather as the everlasting Adon, whose reign antedates the world's creation, "olam" conveying a more temporal than spatial sense.

The Talmudic and Liturgical Phrase "ma'aseh bereshit"

Another term used in post-biblical literature for "cosmos" is ma'aseh bereshit (referring to Genesis account), meaning creation in its perpetual process of constant self-renewal. When the Psalmist wants to express in words the notion of "world" as he declares that all that exists belongs to and stems from the Almighty God, he uses an extended phrase, "the earth [erez] and all its fullness; the temporal world [tevel] and all its inhabitants" (Psalms 24:1). We ask, Why so many words? We answer, because no single Hebrew word can convey the full complexity and multiplicity of existence. The Hebrew terms erez and tevel, appearing in this verse in poetic parallelism, both refer to the very same idea, namely, the world around us, our existential reality.

While we routinely render erez as "earth" (an alliterative or perhaps also a derivative of the Hebrew), we yet wonder over the meaning of tevel. This intriguing idiom, seemingly referring to "temporal" world, suggests a feeble, infirm and
ephemeral reality that wears out, decays and deteriorates [from the root-word b-l-h]. This term projects a characteristically Hebraic view of reality, by pointing to all matter (the so-called "world") as temporal and transitory, existing and enduring only by Divine Will. Thus, the very presence of the world, tevel, innately frail, yet astonishingly enduring, testifies to the eternal power of God's Will and Might.

Torah's Genesis narratives employ a joining of two terms — [ha-shamayim ve-ha-aretz], "the skies and the earth" — to convey the classic notion of the created universe, the world. The current term "Creation of the World" — [beriat ha-olam] — is post biblical. There is no one word for world in biblical Hebrew. That Scriptures had to employ numerous terms to present the idea of the totality of the universe is of great theological significance. The very idea of a "universe" (from the Latin universum), depicting the whole of reality as "one unified venture" is doubtless an anathema to the Hebraic biblical mind. In Creation, whatever is created represents plurality. Only God, the Creator, is One.

Three Approaches to Nature: Hebraic, Hellenic, Pagan

What is unique about the Hebrew biblical outlook on the universe and its natural order? Let us compare the monotheistic, Hebraic-biblical view to the two other major contemporaneous approaches, the pagan-mythological (the Eastern), and the Greek-philosophical (the Western).

Classical paganism and idolatry conceived the world as consisting of various violent forces, which while destined by fate and regulated by divergent gods, were yet subject to blind and capricious misfortune. Ancient pagan literature depicted natural phenomena with a profound sense of dread and resignation.

Greek philosophy, on the other hand, viewed the world as signifying unity and system, expressed by the term cosmos, implying beauty, harmony and order. The cosmos is a concrete, autonomous entity that exhibits intelligence, as if possessing a mind and soul of its own. It is a physical reality in space, a total structure in form. The Greek would marvel at the splendor and symmetry of the physical environment. Besides awe and admiration, Pagans would generally confront nature with a sense of exasperation and submission. In contrast, the Greek tended more to welcome nature with a sense of appreciation and investigation.

In contrast to these two dominant approaches, the Hebrew Bible describes the totality of existence as a perfect manifestation of God's will. How did the people of antiquity view the natural world? What was the world's quintessence in their mind? Positing a sweeping simplification, we may say that while for the pagans the world's essence was largely power, and for the Greek, order, for the Hebrews it was Divine Law. For the Hebrew poets, all reality seems to appear as a splendid manifestation and a consummate fulfillment of God's legislation, representing God's will and wisdom. In the Hebraic mind, the powers of "nature" largely represent dependency on Divine authority rather than self-sufficiency, and loyal obedience to the Creator rather than wild rebellion. In the mind and heart of the biblical worshipers, the natural world exhibits moral purpose rather than formal design,
divine meaning rather than crafty artistry, just law rather than brute force. Thus, the Hebrews learned to admire ethics more than esthetics, right rather than might, and morality above ritual.

The story of creation starts with the Divine Word, "God said, 'Let there be light' and there was light". The Hebrew text uses the verb יָמַר [va-yomer] for the act, commonly rendered "said". Contextually, however, the verb does not connote speech but resolve and decree. According to Rabbinic commentary (Sa'adia, Maimonides, Nahmanides and others), in this context of creation, יָמַר [va-yomer] means that God willed or decided.

So too in Psalm 33:9, the term יָמַר [amar] denotes volition and decision: "[God] decreed and it was, [God] ordained and it stood" — "it" referring to everything existential. The Hebrew Monotheist sees the world as a manifestation of Divine omer, God's davar, God's decree and law. Psalm 119, supposedly wholly dedicated to the praise of the Divine Torah, speaks of God's דָּבָר [davar], Word, as well as Divine אֶמּוֹן [emuna], faithfulness, as intrinsic in the very feat of creation and the enduring existence of the mundane world, skies and earth (Psalms 119:89-90):

Forever, Adonai, Your Word [stands] upright in the skies;
For generation to generation, Your faithfulness;
You have established the earth so that it shall [firmly] stand!

The twain nouns, יָמַר דָּבָר "Your word" (devarekha, decree) and אֶמּוֹנָה "Your faithfulness" (emunatekha, fidelity), form poetic parallelism. Taken as a hendiadys, they mean, Your Faithful Word, Your enduring, reliable, unfailing decree. The twain objects, skies and earth (the former indirect and the latter direct), refer to the composite, created world in its complex totality.

The parallel adverbs, le-olam (forever) for "Your word" and le-dor va-dor (for generation to generation) for "Your faithfulness" correspond to the parallel verbs nitzav (standing erect) and va-ta'amod (so that it shall persist), both indicating firmness and endurance. Paraphrased in simple prose, the verses state that the Divine dependable decree inheres and empowers the skies and the earth (the world), to exist and persist. The very same trustworthy decree (davar/emuna), embodied in the Divine Torah, eternally sustains and enlivens the worshipper.

Nature and Torah as Dual Expressions of the Divine Law

For the Psalmist, "nature" and Torah both represent virtually one essence. Both express God's Law. The Psalmist therefore can sing of both while poetically experiencing and expressing the same religious inspiration. The fusion of both themes nature and Torah, into one Psalm is congruent and expectable. While
contemplating the two as distinguished entities, the Psalmist ultimately sings only of the One.

Psalm 19 sings essentially on one theme, the Divine Law. It starts with the description of God's creation. God's artistry bespeaks His mastery. Each moment of enduring existence, day to day and night to night, manifests God's wisdom. For the skies tell God's glory constantly, day after day and night after night. The Psalmist sees in nature complete adherence to God's decrees and rulings. Unlike the mythological world, the biblical universe is not rebellious. Metaphorically, all natural forces worship God, and sing His praises. The natural phenomena are virtually God's messengers, "angels" (mal'akhim; 104:4), which fulfill God's will with contentment, gratification, and joy, as poetically portrayed in verse 6.

The shared imagery of light is the poetic link, externally and internally, between the sun שמש [shemesh] and the Torah. The light of the sun suffuses the whole earth; the light of Torah permeates the receptive human mind. In addition, the imagery of consummate obedience and total dominance links the two hymnal parts, on nature and Torah; for both embody the Divine Law and no one on earth can ignore either of these two. None can hide from both, the sun's heat and Torah's compelling brilliance and sweetness.

A similar link between the sun as deity and the law is curiously a part of the ancient Near Eastern tradition. According to Babylonian mythology, the sun god Shamash granted the code of laws to King Hammurabi; and the king duly acknowledged his debts to Shamash in his prologue to his classic Code.

This piece of information (unknown to all post-biblical generations hitherto), to which only we of this century are privy, remarkably puts the message of this Hebraic Psalm in sharper focus. The Hebraic shemesh (unlike the Babylonian Shamash) is neither a god nor a giver of law. The sun, like all other natural phenomena, serves God. The sun is thus, semantically and figuratively, God's Shamash, God's server.

God has set a tent [והיה ohel] for the sun in the skies (v. 5b). As mentioned above, the Hebrew may also yield an additional meaning, that God endowed the sun with its shining light (compare Job 29:2; 31:26). The sun, by God's will, provides natural light and heat, but not social morals or norms. For moral law and instruction, the Psalmist turns to God's Torah.

The juxtaposition of the Psalm's two poetic parts, in their varied content and form, is richly suggestive of literary associations. The dominant noun in the first part is השמים, ha-shamaim, which we render "the skies". The common translation, the "heavens", though more fanciful, is less fitting. The poem's scope is wholly this worldly, not supernatural or metaphysical. This word השמים, ha-shamaim, appears twice in this poetic unit. It is the starting word in its first verse (2) and it appears once again, in a constructive mode ["from ha-shamaim's edge"], at the start of its concluding verse (7). Its common biblical counterpart, ha-aretz (the earth) and its parallel tevel (which points to the earth's temporality) appears later (verse 5a).
This dominant noun, the skies, serves as the main subject of the poetic unit. Indeed all the following verbs (even in the singular) and the possessive suffixes of nouns (all in the plural; their voice, their cord, their messages, therein) in the ensuing verses (3-5) relate to "the skies" (only in 5b the implicit/hidden Actor of the verb "set" [סָמַךְ] is God). While "the skies" dominate the first part, the Torah presides over the second. The second part starts with Torah [Torat-Hashem] and continues with a charming repetition of Torah's various epithets.

These two "first" words, one of the first part and the other of the second, taken together may subtly allude to the idea of Torah's heavenly substance and origin ("Torah min ha-shamaim"). Torah is from God, while no more in "Heaven", as Moses insists in Deuteronomy 30:12 (according to rabbinic view). The Torah of the Psalmist is also a part of the human experience on earth – sweet more than honey precious more then gold. Also, the "six and seventh" numerical mode of the second part (obvious though not explicit) deserves critical attention.

Regarding Torah, it contains six recitative lines of praise mentioning Torah, in its various honorific appellations (8-10), climaxing with the seventh superlative verse (11). Regarding the Tetragrammaton, it mentions the Ineffable Name six times in conjunction with Torah (8-10), concluding with the Psalmist's frontal appeal to God as "my rock and my redeemer" (15). This poetic mode of the second part of the Psalm may likely serve as a hint (and even a link) to the idea of creation (six workdays and the Seventh Shabbat), the implicit quintessence of the natural order, and the theme of the first part.

The Psalm's Poetic Transition from Nature to Torah

From the rejoicing, luminous sun, the Psalmist turns to describe God's Torah, its gratifying, enlightening and brightening qualities, in the second part.

In this part Torah appears adoringly in six of her lovely names: Torah (Teaching), Edu (Testimony), Pidyonim (Precepts), Mitzvah (Legacy, not "commandment"), Yir'ah (Authority, not "Fear"), and Mishpatim (Decrees). All these synonymous nouns refer essentially to the same living and enduring, conceptual entity: The Divine Law, representing the Legacy (Mitzvah) to the people and the Authority (Yir'ah) of God. All these facets of Torah appear as precious, enjoyable and sweet.

There is, indeed, a clear distinction between the two parts of the Psalm. The first part describes a world of function, the second a world of values. The world of creation denotes determination and decisiveness, while the world of humankind implies free choice and fallibility. While the essence of creation is stability, the core of human society is liberty.

Thus, we come to the Psalm's turning point. Verse 12 is the turning point in the flow of the Psalm's ideas. In it, the personality of the Psalmist emerges for the first time. It says, "Your worshipper, too, lives by their [God's precepts] light, heeding them with great persistence. The Hebrew verb for "heedful" is niz'har in the common sense of being careful, cautious and attentive; but the root-word of this
passive verb (in nif'al) is zohar (exactly as the name of the Kabbalistic classic, the Zohar), meaning light and illumination. Hence, we may also render the verse this way: "Your worshipper too receives his light through them." Alternatively, "lives by their light". Namely, he derives his moral and spiritual illumination, insight, instruction, from the words of Torah.

The correlation between the enlightenment of Torah (part two of the Psalm) and the brightness and radiance of the sun (part one) becomes now transparent and crystal-clear. Here we have the Psalmist's emotional response to his objective observations of God's will, manifested in "nature" and Torah. He realizes, however, an essential distinction between the completeness and perfection revealed in creation and his own human situation. God's words reflected in nature are in a constant state of fulfillment. God ordained light and so it was and continues regularly to be. However, the laws of the Torah are for the people; they must fulfill them. In this mood, the Psalmist concludes with a sense of humility, pleading (13): "[Yet of] errors who can be aware? From covert faults purge me!"

Encountering the world of God, the Psalmist feels a sense of inadequacy. He would very much like to emulate God's hosts of devoted, obedient servants in nature, rejoicing in fulfilling His will, but how can he? The confrontation with nature stirs in the Psalmist a desire for perfection, and he realizes that to gain it he needs not only God's laws, but also God's help to fulfill them. In this spirit, he ends, *May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be pleasing before You!*

**Psalm's Structure and Sentiment is Characteristically Hebraic**

The peculiar structure of Psalm 19, not conforming though to the modes and norms of western poetry, is yet fully compatible with and paradigmatic of later Jewish liturgy.

The prevailing tendency to break our coherent Psalm into fragments is largely due to the impact of Christian theologians who see a dichotomy between the realms of mundane life and religious spirituality. To many of them it seems inconceivable that the same poem could simultaneously embrace appreciation of creation and devotion to the Creator. Motivated by Christological biases, many biblical critics (consciously or unconsciously) tend to isolate those passages in the Book of Psalms that adoringly glorify the Law (Torah), and then devalue their theological significance. Especially bewildering to some critics is the fact that the Psalmist appraises the Law lovingly rather then pragmatically; that this pious believer treats the Law not as a temporary necessity of transitional usefulness, but rather as a supreme value, as a precious treasure of enduring truth and spiritual appeal. To many Biblical scholars it is incomprehensible that the Psalmist sings of God's ordinances with such abiding passion and affection (v. 11):

*Desirable more than gold, the purest Gold
Sweeter than honey, the most delicious honey.*
This can be explained both semantically and theologically. Semantically, Torah is not Law (nomos) in the western sense, but rather teaching, guidance, enlightenment. Theologically, Judaism sees in Torah, even in its pronounced aspects of legislation ("Law") an expression of Divine love.

Facing their natural environment, the ancient Hebrews were impressed more by nature's internal lawfulness than external enchantment; its reassuring constancy than capricious fury; its promising benevolence than vicious violence. Therefore, they resented the urge to placate and submit to the natural forces or to worship formal beauty, but instead learned to reject oppression and violence and admire justice and kindness. Above all, seeing in nature, metaphorically speaking, demonstrative obedience and loyalty to God's Laws, the people aspired to be devoted lovers of the Law.

Psalm 19 breathes pure Jewish monotheism, reflecting the Hebrew Bible's total rejection of Eastern paganism on the one hand, and Western materialism on the other. From the Jewish point of view, to worship any being other than God is to deny God; to see ultimate Oneness in creation is as idolatrous as to attribute plurality to the Creator. Thus, instead of submitting to the forces of nature, the biblical Jew adhered to the Laws of God; instead of aesthetics, he developed ethics. This Psalm as a whole -- in its dyadic design, literary balance, poetic imagery, architectonic structure and lucid religious tenor -- is a perfect gem, reflecting genuine Jewish genius.

The Role of Psalm Nineteen in Jewish Liturgy

Psalm Nineteen is in itself liturgy. It is pristine, universal, cosmic liturgy. Poetically, it is heavens' song to God. Midrashically, we on earth, by our mundane liturgy, emulate the superb liturgy of the heavens above [bi-shemei marom]. Curiously, Maimonides embraces the idea of the heavens praising God in concrete terms. Endorsing the ancient Greek philosophical-astronomical view (labeled "Aristotelian"), that the heavenly bodies – the spheres, sun, moon, stars – are living beings, endowed with reason, who are competent to worship the Creator, Maimonides states (Guide 2:5; compare Code, Fundamentals 3:9) that the spheres are animate and intellectual, and capable of comprehending ideas and acknowledging God.

The "spheres" in Maimonides' common English translations are certainly not הָרַבָּת [Sefirot] of Jewish Mysticism, but the גַּלָגָל [galgalim, "wheels"]. This term refers to the planetary celestial bodies that move in circles around earth, and is based on the Ptolemaic System of astronomy, according to which the earth is at the center with the sun, moon and planets revolving around it. Maimonides asserts: "The galgalim are not, as the ignorant folks think, dead masses, like fire and earth, but are, as the philosophers assert, endowed with life, and serve their Creator, whom they mightily praise and glorify; as stated (Psalms 19:1), 'The heavens declare the glory of God.'"

Since Rav Sa'adia Gaon (9th-10th centuries.), rabbinic commentators as a rule take this verse metaphorically, claiming that this poetic verse does not mean
that the heavens, dead and mute, actually "declare" and 'relate' the glory of God, but rather that they inspire people to do so, to praise God with their uniquely human gift of speech.

Maimonides differs. In confrontational disagreement with his predecessors, Maimonides reads this verse literally: "It is an error to think that this is a figure of speech. By 'declare' and 'relate' the verse describes what the heavens themselves do, not what they inspire people to do". Maimonides' view, however, is not within the scope of modern science. Whether metaphoric or literal, Psalm 19, the "liturgy of the heavens", is now embedded in Jewish liturgy.

In particular, this Psalm serves as a paradigm for the two Benedictions preceding the Shema -- Yozer Or and Ahava Rabbah -- the first focusing on Divine Creation and its physical light, and the second on the Divine Torah and its spiritual light. The same scheme of Psalm 19 underlies the two berakhot (benedictions) before the recital of the Shema. There we praise God for creating the celestial luminaries, for ruling the sun, bringing forth the day and the night, the light and the darkness; then (in ahava) for granting us Torah as an expression of His eternal and abundant love for us. As in Psalm 19 so in our later liturgy, we acclaim God for His twofold manifestation, creation, in terms of light and time, and revelation expressive of His love and law.

This idea is mentioned for the first time by R. Asher ben Shaul, one of the "sages of Lunel" (late 12th and early 13th centuries), in his Sefer ha-Minhagot ("Book of Customs"). This Sage notes (page 5b) that the sun and the Torah appear as twins in Jewish liturgy for comparison and contrast. Both are formidable sources of light, but whereas the sun shines only during the day, the Torah projects its supernal light continuously.

The composers of our classical liturgy, according to R. Asher, modeled their Benedictions after Psalm 19, first praising God for creating the natural light (Yozer Or) and then for granting us the enlightening Torah in great and eternal love (Ahava). The Spanish R. David ben Joseph Abudarham (14th century), in his classic liturgical work Sefer Abudarham (1340), quotes this idea and probes it.

It is currently an established custom to insert Psalm 19 within Pesukei De-Zimra of Shabbat and Yom-Tov. The first to mention this custom are Rashi (1040-1104) in Siddur Rashi and Rashī's student, R. Simhah Vitry, in Mahzor Vitry. However, the author of Sefer Abudarham indicates that the ancient custom was to recite this Psalm daily. This is compatible with the idea that this Psalm is in the very core of the daily benedictions recited before the daily Shema. This ancient custom also conforms with the Psalm's own verse that the skies utter praise to God "day after day" (yom leyom).

The prevailing custom, however, is to recite this Psalm not daily, but only on Shabbat [and, by extension, on festivals too]. This custom clearly emerged because of the two themes of the Psalm, creation and Torah, which adequately suit the day of Shabbat (Rokeach's Commentary on the Siddur, by R. Elazar of Worms, 12th century). Shabbat, like our Psalm, recalls Divine Creation [ma'aseh Bereshit], and points to the ultimate value of Torah by promoting its reading and study.
Furthermore, Shabbat marks the completion of Creation and in addition, Shabbat is the day of the giving of the Torah (Bavli Shabbat 86/b). On Shabbat, the wonders of nature and the words of Torah declare the glory of God, in the most magnificent way.

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THE POTENTIALLY TRANSFORMATIONAL
AND SPECIAL ROLE OF THE MUSIC TEACHER
AS LIFE COACH

by Shoshana Averbach, M.A., CMT

Understandably, academics are a parent’s primary concern about their children’s education. When a child expresses a desire to study music, some parents are worried about the child having less time for Torah study. In a duality, learning to play an instrument provides training for life’s lessons which are not taught as an academic subject yet influence the child’s character development.

Over the past thirteen years, I have worked as a private music teacher, mostly in the frum community in Brooklyn, New York, consistently observing behaviors and emotional needs that silently plead for the role of a music therapist. The behaviors that students manifest in a music lesson or their execution of music reflect their personal issues, such as stress, feeling overwhelmed, pressure, anxiety, time management, impatience and frustration, and inhibition with creative and emotional expression. This article will explore how the music educator can assume the dual role of life coach and use the framework of a music lesson as a transformational arena for effectively dealing with students’ musical and nonmusical issues.

THE CHALLENGES OF TEACHING IN THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

Yeshiva students carry a load double that of the average secular student. They spend most of their day in a sedentary position, creating disharmony with their juvenile bodies which need kinesthetic release. Due to the limited number of waking hours remaining after school, most of which are devoted to eating and homework and suppression of their need to play, release pent-up energy, and be off stage, students have little time to practice.

Although most students enjoy their lessons, practicing may be perceived as yet another demand on their time. Some students seem to be experts in comic delay tactics to avoid the painful reality of the proving ground of the lesson, to show what they’ve prepared or, rather, not prepared. They silently avert the teacher’s gaze, lower their heads, and remain mute while shrugging their shoulders. Other sigh audibly, throw their hands up in the air with a scowl, and impatiently exclaim, eyes lachrymose, “I don’t know!” Complexions redden, trying to hide embarrassment and shame. Parents become the mouthpiece for the overwhelming pressures that their child feels because he or she feels too inhibited to express them to the teacher.

The easy way out is to quit the lessons because they did not meet the student’s diversional expectations. Instead, the lessons replicate the student’s
academic pressures and have the potential to become imprinted as the child’s life-long song of pain, guilt, pressure, anxiety, and shame; it seems larger than life and insurmountable. If there is no lingering shame, many adults have remarked that they regretted not taking lessons or stopping them because their parents did not encourage them to practice. The music teacher, as any other instructor, carries an awesome responsibility.

THE POTENTIALLY TRANSFORMATIONAL AND SPECIAL ROLE OF THE MUSIC TEACHER

The question that arises: How do parents justify the expense of a lesson (in addition to paying yeshiva tuition) and the time that the lesson takes away from Torah learning or homework? How does the music instructor justify to the parents the need for the child to learn music?

The key lies in the relationship between the student and the music teacher and how the music educator makes him- or herself indispensable to the student so that he or she yearns for that special bond and attention that s/he receives during the music lesson that no one else provides. Many students complain that former music teachers were too demanding or did not know how to teach although the teacher may be a concert pianist. Thus, it seems that the quality of the human relationship carries over and motivates the student or not.

With the teacher adopting a therapeutic intention of honing in on the student’s emotional challenges, pedagogy is transformed into a therapeutic music lesson, a form of music therapy, * and a pedagogue becomes a life coach. The music lesson becomes a projection of an occult emotional script and a stage on which life’s nonmusical challenges and dramas are acted out and resolved. The bond between teacher and student deepens from ontological to the dynamic exchange of energies between a conductor, an interpreter of music, and his orchestra, the performer of those interpretations.

WHY IS DEVELOPING CREATIVITY IMPORTANT WHEN TORAH LEARNING TAKES PRECEDENCE?

Children are usually expected to complete academic assignments within rigid guidelines which produce the one and only right answer and in split-second timing. They look with expressions of fear and consternation when asked to creatively use and explore chords. They are inhibited to think for themselves, be patient with themselves, and devote the time needed for creative experiments that don’t necessarily result in one attempt. Thus, children are missing a vital part of their development, and music can serve as that correction.

Music utilizes both sides of the brain, combining intellect and creativity, increasing brain power; it’s holistic thinking. Just as sleep relaxes and refreshes the body, music relaxes the intellect by turning on the creative and emotional parts of the
THE POTENTIALLY TRANSFORMATIONAL AND SPECIAL ROLE OF THE MUSIC TEACHER AS LIFE COACH

brain. Music provides balance and a welcome relief from rigorous academics while reinforcing the same skills required for intellectual learning, e.g., focus, attention, dexterity, eye-hand coordination, reading, self-discipline. That balance can actually help achieve more academically when fatigued from studying. Spending even a few minutes playing the piano and singing can refresh the mind and uplift the spirit to enable the student to return to his studies with renewed interest.

Creative thinking encourages independence, confidence, and courage by taking a known fact and applying it in a way that is unknown. Creativity comprises the “ON” button for the mind that sparks innovation. Creativity provides a form of self-expression and personhood by owning one’s experiences and feelings and communicating them in a unique, personal style.

MUSIC REFLECTS THE STUDENT’S PERSONAL ISSUES

Whether in life or in music lessons, issues are often the same because the dynamics and problem-solving approaches are the same: how to deal with feeling pressured and overwhelmed, coping with frustrations, being in a place of low gear and choosing to give up or move ahead, to forgive oneself for making mistakes and move forward, the courage to try new things and to create something from nothing, to overcome challenges and get pleasure from progress, to discourage dependency and foster independent thinking and problem solving, to think outside a structure, to turn ideas around in the mind and creatively solve problems by coming up with different ways to do the same task.

UNLOCKING KEYS TO LEARNING BY UNDERSTANDING THE STUDENT’S PERSONALITY

A person’s issues often surface in the context of a lesson and present resistance to learning. Approaching the lesson therapeutically offers insight and solutions. A therapist and an insightful teacher might consider the following: What’s blocking learning? What would facilitate learning? Within the framework of a music lesson, how can s/he help the student grow personally? Rather than being critical or giving in to frustration, more cooperation and success has been effected by trying to understand the reasons for the student’s behavior.

THE TEACHER IS ALSO THE STUDENT

A student who shows a lot of resistance presents a great challenge. One very challenging student resisted lessons due to lack of self-esteem. In order to build his self-esteem, after he finished playing a piece, he was asked to evaluate himself and also to make at least one positive comment about his playing (which he also resisted), even if only that he had the tenacity to finish playing the piece despite the numerous errors. Over time, his cooperation increased and his playing improved.
Upon completing his first year of study, he commented, "I feel proud of myself." The teacher replied, "I'm proud of you for being proud of yourself." He was able to own his accomplishment and the teacher learned a lesson as well about the importance of insight and understanding a student's needs.

OVERCOMING BLOCKS AND INHIBITION WITH
CREATIVE THINKING AND EXPERIMENTATION

Safety and confidence are key factors to overcoming creative-thinking blocks. When students resist independent thinking and creative exploration, the reason is often due to fear of giving the incorrect answer, which in school brings shame and pressure. They seem to be frozen when challenged to think creatively. They are used to thinking concretely rather than creatively since their studies emphasize intellectual skills. For example, to address their need for safety and familiarity they are given guidelines for improvisation, such as a variety of accompaniment patterns or moods or how chords match a melody. They can be reassured that there is no right or wrong way; that the emphasis is in their effort and playfulness. Emotional security is provided by showing concern for their awkwardness with "musical stumbling" and appealing to their often-suppressed need to exert positive control (playing a piece as the student wishes) and express themselves in their own unique way. Eventually, some students prefer the creative assignments more than the method book! Thus, they learn that there is more than one way to do something and to have the courage to create without knowing what's ahead, just as in life.

DECIPHERING THE UNDERLYING
MESSAGE AND NEED OF THE STUDENT

When students cannot instantly grasp a concept or sight-read a piece, they may shrug their shoulders, "I don't know!" What is the real message? Could it be, "I am too tired to spend time figuring this out?" Or, "I can't get it right away and I have so much homework to do that I'm going to give up because the pressure is too much for me?" Or, "New things are difficult for me and I'm afraid?" A variety of approaches can be helpful when the real, underlying message and feeling needing to be acknowledged is understood by the teacher. Sometimes, anxiety can be relieved simply by inviting the child to take a deep breath and say, "I have the time that I need to figure this out" or "I can take things slowly and one at a time so that I can focus." An exercise from Brain Gym™ called Positive Points fosters confidence by activating the corresponding areas of the brain. To do this, place fingertips on the forehead in a vertical direction above the midpoint of the eyes, take a deep breath, exhale, and say, "I can do this." Repeat 3-5 times.
MUSIC TEACHES COMMUNICATION AND AWARENESS OF FEELING FOR EFFECTING BETTER RELATIONSHIPS

Many children are taught to think concretely yet lack a vocabulary to articulate feelings. If “life and death are in the hand of the tongue,” then we are aware of the importance of expressing one’s feelings. The effectiveness of their expression directly influences the outcome of a situation, whether as peace or conflict. Music can help with communication skills by sensitizing a person to greater consciousness of moods and feelings which are like the colors of an artist’s palette in life. Students chuckle when asked to make up an “outlandish” accompaniment to a melody. This word cues them to be maximally playful; they cherish the freedom which schools do not seem to encourage. Sometimes they are asked to create accompaniments to express contrasting feelings (excited, contemplative) and for different audiences (formal dinner, preschool class). The more one has awareness of his or her feelings and ups and downs, the more s/he can understand others and effect better relationships in business, marital, and social arenas with that understanding.

Thus, music education is really an education for life, teaching not only an instrument but also life skills, coping skills, helping one to achieve developmental milestones in addition to the joy of the results of practicing.

MUSIC SERVES A VITAL ROLE IN JUDAISM

Spiritually, music enlivens the soul and opens the heart to serve HaShem with joy, to magically motivate dancing for a bride and groom. Historically, biblical figures such as King David and Serach bat Asher used music therapeutically. The Levites sang in the Temple to arouse compunction in a person offering a sacrifice so it would be offered with the proper kavana. Cantillation provides the musical melody for the reading of the Torah. The cantor’s responsibility includes inspiring the congregation through music.

There is so much good that can come from the study of music. While a child’s or student’s academics come first, suppressing a person’s need for emotional expression could cause irreversible damage to the person’s spirit. A world without music would be like a black-and-white sunset. The role of a music educator as a life coach can fill in the spaces between life’s notes with the colors of emotions and gentle encouragement to grow in life, providing vital life and relationship skills that make a difference in the quality of the student’s life and others. In essence, tikkun olam!

FOOTNOTES

2. I Samuel.


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* The title of music therapist can be used only by a person who has completed a degree program in music therapy and is qualified to practice music therapy. For more information, contact the American Music Therapy Association at www.musictherapy.org
COMMENTARY YAKHIN LASHON  
ON SIDDUR AVODAT YISRAEL  
PART TWO

by Rabbi Dr. Menachem Raab

Continued from Journal of Jewish Music and Liturgy  
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B. The Amidah

1. The Berakhah אבתר

This is based on the verse קָדוֹשׁ שֵּׁם הָאָרֶץ [“maker of heaven and earth”, Gen. 14:19]. The letter Nun, of necessity takes a יא because it is in the construct state. [Ordinarily the letter Nun would take a סְגוֹלָה since it is a participle. Here, however, it has a יא because it is a construct state, connected with the word הָאָרֶץ.] In the Sephardic siddurim it appears as קָדוֹשׁ without the conjunction Vav.

2. The Berakhah תברורה

The letter Yod has a יא under it, similarly, מְלָהָה מְשִׁית at the end of this berakhah, because they are in the construct state, i.e. the word מְשִׁית is connected to the next word מְלָהָה . However, מְלָהָה in this berakhah is separate not in the construct state and, therefore, has a סְגוֹלָה.

In an old manuscript, also in the סִדּוּר Siddur, the word is written רָבָּתא. This seems also to be the version of Ibn Yarhi. Although, in the Tur and Abudarham it appears without a Vav; so also in three different manuscripts. This is the correct version for it is based on the verse in Isaiah 63:1 [רָבָּתא לְהַרְשֵׁית, “mighty to save”]. See also Yosif Ometz, chapter 44. It is also noteworthy that the word תַּחַת, which precedes it, must be accented in the first syllable since it is the end of the phrase.

[Explanation 16: In Biblical Hebrew and in much classical poetic Hebrew, the accent in the last word of a sentence or phrase moves from the ultima (last syllable) to the penultimate (preceding syllable).]
This is in accordance with what is found in the beginning of Tractate Ta’anit (2a), and Berakhot 33a and Baba Mezi’a 85b. It is based on the verse יִשָּׂרֵא אֱלֹהֵי מִיָּמֵי [“He causes His wind to blow and the waters flow”] (Psalms 147:18) Just as from the word יֵשַׁב you get מַגִּיס so too from יֵשַׁב you get מָשָׁב.

[Explanation 17: The root of the word יֵנָשׁ is (to approach). In the future conjugation, first person singular, the word is יֵנָשׁ (he will approach). In the present participle, masculine, first person singular, the word is יֵנָשׁ (he will blow). In the לְמָשָׁב conjugation, future, masculine, first person singular the word is יֵנָשׁ (he will blow). In the לְמָשָׁב conjugation, in the present participle, masculine, first person singular, the word is מָשָׁב (he causes to blow).]

רִים = Every living thing. This is a plural in the present participle of the word רוּם. In German “die lebenden”.

דָּלֶת לְפָאָה דָּלֶת = The dalet of דָּלֶת דָּלֶת takes a dagesh kal, for according to the rules of accents there is a pause at the word דָּלֶת. Furthermore, דָּלֶת is accented on the penultimate because of נָבִיא הָאָדָם [“recessive accent”].

[Explanation 18: “Recessive accent” refers to a condition where a word is to be accented on its ultima syllable and is followed immediately by a word accented on its first syllable. If this occurs, the accent in the first word is moved back to the penultimate in order not to have two accents following each other.]

The letter lamed in the word לְפָאָה לְפָאָה takes a dagesh according to the law of the dehik, similar to לְפָאָה לְפָאָה . (Gen. 31:12)

[Explanation 19: The grammatical term, dehik, refers to the case where the letter heh is repressed, i.e. not accented. See Explanation 4. In our case it is due to the rule that states that a word in which the accent is moved back to the penultimate because of the principle of “recessive accent” and ends with a סָפָול followed by the letter heh, the heh is repressed and is followed by a dagesh.]

3. The Berakhah

כָּסִים = This is a Talmudic word similar to the Biblical word כָּסִים.

רְשָׁבָה = Rabbi Joseph Kimhi⁴⁵ wrote in Sefer ha-Zikkaron, “those who say [pronounced ushvakha] erred from the path of understanding. It is,
however, קְשַׁבָּל [pronounced veshevkhaka], just as from כְּבָּר [pronounced tevah] we get קְשַׁבָּל [pronounced tivhaka] and from כְּבָּר [pronounced tevah] we get קְשַׁבָּל [pronounced zivhakha], and this is the rule for guttural letters”. Thus explained also Habahur Lesharashim under the root שבאת.\(^{46}\)

4. The Berakah

ביתה = This is based on the verse in Psalms 94:10. It appears that the proper vocalization is כְּבָּר [pronounced le’adam], the letter lamed taking a א as it appears in all old manuscripts, and not כְּבָּר [pronounced la’adam with the lamed taking a ק] according to the annotation of the author of Sha’arei Tefillah. Also the reason he gives for his emendation is without rationale, for here the reference in the word ביתה is to the axioms [intuitions] that every person possesses without any learning, which but comes from the grace of the Creator. That is the meaning of הָנַּח [emphasis of the word הוֹנַּח, “endows with grace”]. The author\(^{47}\) of ha-Ikarim already explained this well in essay Aleph, chapter 16 as well as the Rashbash\(^{48}\) in Magen Avot page 41b.

דְּעָה = It is a noun, similar to דְּעָה והשלכָּא [“with knowledge and understanding”] (Jeremiah 3:15).

5 The Berakah

תָּשְׁבָּה = The first bet has a dagesh kal in רֵי Siddur and it is correct, because according to the rules of accents, there is an ending accent on the preceding word סֵפֶר.

[Explanation 20: When the letters ת, ת, ב, נ, ג, ז, ס, פ, כ, ג, לו, ו appear in the beginning of a phrase they take a dagesh kal.]

Similarly, in הרֵוִיָּה [the concluding words of the berakah] the bet has a dagesh in the ר Siddur and there is no doubt that it is to be read so, because perforce the preceding word הרֵוִיָּה takes the concluding ספֵּפֶק note.

[Explanation 21: The reference is to the notes used when incanting the Torah. Among the notes are some that indicate a pause or a rest. The ספֵּפֶק is one such note. See Explanation 10.]

So too are both words with a dagesh in the Sha’arey Tefillah and the Vaya’ater Yitzhak prayer books.

6. The Berakah

טָלִיה = This is a Mishnaic term (Yoma 7:1, Ketubot 17a\(^{49}\)). Its meaning is
like the Biblical term סלוהו = ["forgiveness"]. In all the printed sidurim the het takes a פה. So it is also in the book Tishbi. This is correct, for in most words whose ayin hapo'el [the second letter] of the root is guttural it takes a פה, such as in the words והל, הלך, הלך, הלך, הלך, הלך, הלך, הלך, הלך, הלך, הלך, הלך, הלך, הלך, הלך, הלך, הלך, הלך, hal'ol. Although, in the language of the Rabbis of the Talmud we find it also with a פה, such as in בהל ילב (Berakhot 28a, Shabbat 30a, Ta'anit 20b, Sanhedrin 107b). Furthermore, here there is another reason for the פה and that is to match the words [i.e., alliteration, to match the sound of the words פלון לן פלון לן in the beginning of the berakhaḥ.] like בהל ילב פלון לן (Psalms 55:10).$¹

Every רבי which appears in Scriptures is accented in the ultima even though the heh is an added letter.

**Explanation 22:** The rule of accents states that when an unnecessary letter is added to the end of a word and is preceded by an unnecessary vowel the penultimate is accented. The word in the berakhaḥ should beRib otro but the heh is added at the end and the מיר precedes it for poetic effect. According to the above rule the word should be accented on the penultimate. However, here and wherever the word appears in Scriptures, it is accented on the ultima.

7. The Berakhaḥ ברכה השנויות = In two manuscripts and in the Siddurim of ר"ז ר"ז and it appears as הנויות in the plural. Also, Ya'vez wrote it so in his siddur and in Luah Eres, Chapter 154. Although this can also be correct, nevertheless, שנותנים is more accurate, for the entire text of the berakhaḥ is formulated in the singular, for example, נבואה איה השנה האה ונותנת. Similarly, in the Sephardic sidur it is הנויות in the singular. It also appears to be so from the formulation in the sidur of Sa'adya Gaon whose text reads, "Bless for us this year with all manners of crops and bless it [םפיים דרבנה with a מפי in the letter heh, which gives it the meaning of “bless it” in the singular] like the good years, blessed art Thou, etc."

8. The Berakhaḥ קבץ גליאתי לחרותנו = This is a Talmudic word that stems from the Aramaic. The word is translated חוררי (In Targum Onkolos, Lev. 25:10, in Targum Jonathan, Isaiah 61:1). Its root is חור which means “to set free”. From this in the Talmud we have the expression כל חוררי מין חוררי ["from freedom"] (Gittin 86a) and כל המתרזים מין חוררי ["from the free assets"] (Baba Kamma 95a). Basically, the vowels of the word should be חוררי with a ק under the het but because of the resh that follows it which does not
take a *dagesh*, א, י replaces ה. This word has no similar form among Hebrew nouns. The fact that we find the forms **ך** and **ך** these words are from the roots that drop their second letter [**ך**]. What is somewhat similar to it is הוה [“vileness”] (Psalms 12:9) [pronounced zulut].

**Explanation 23:** Letters following the short vowels, מ, נ, ר, ו, ז, ק, ח, ל take a *dagesh*. As mentioned before, the author calls the **ם** נ, ק by the name **ך**. This is comparable to how we change from מלאכים ממלכת to מחלכות [“kingdoms”] (Daniel 8:22). The *yod* has a *dagesh* as in all critical texts and manuscripts. Similarly, we change from יהודיה לשון to יהודיה [“cells”] (Jeremiah 37:16). The *Mikhlol* also says this at the end of the entry פלשת. Rabbi Azriel also vocalized it similarly in his *siddur*. This is in fact correct. The factual proof is the word form that is comparable to it and has a *yod*, and that is the word form מָלֹך, מַלֹּך, מְלֹך, מַלֹּךְ, מַלֹּךְ, מַלֹּךְ, מַלֹּךְ, also having a *dagesh* in the *yod* in the plural, similar to **ך** and **ך** and **ך**. In all of them the *yod* has a *dagesh*. As to what the author of *Sha’arey Tefillah* elaborates in his argumentation in chapter 96 that the vocalization should be **ך**, the *gimmel* having a ש, is refuted by the verse **ך** [“he shall let my exiles go free”] (Isaiah 45:13) where the *gimmel* has a **ך**. This disproves his entire argument.

**드** In the *Siddur* there is an indication on the *daled* that it is without a *dagesh*, and it is proper without a *dagesh* according to the verse in Psalms 147:2, נָבַרְתָּו יִשְרַיָּא לִכְכֶם, “He gathers together the dispersed of Israel”. Here the same word appears without a *dagesh*.

9. The *Berakhah* [This is the name used for the *Berakhah* in the Talmud (Megillah 17a). Others call it just *דרי* and some call it דרכי הנהנַת הָדְשַׁבָּת הַמְּשֵׁפֶס, “He gathers together the dispersed of Israel”].

**דָּמָלֶךְ הַמְּשֵׁפָס** = The version with which this *berakhah* is concluded during the Ten Days of Penitence, is explained by *Rashi* in Berakhot 12b that “it is the same as **ך** [“the ark of the covenant”] (Joshua 3:14), and is the same as **ך** and also **ך** [“the boarders of the
bases”] (II Kings 16:17) which is the same as "the valley of the dead bodies" [Jeremiah 31:39] which is the same as "the valley of the dead bodies".

[Explanation 24: Grammatically, the rule is that if a noun is preceded by a definite article (introduced by the prefix heh) the modifying adjective must also be definite (and be introduced by the prefix heh.) See Explanation 6. The concluding words of this berakhah have the definite article (the heh) before both words, indicating it might be a noun and its adjective. Rashi explains, however, that it is rather a possessive form, which means He is the King of Judgment. He brings examples were the definite article is used and the words do not represent a definite noun and its adjective. In all these cases we have two nouns. What is intended here in this berakhah is a possessive form, "the King of Judgment", similar to the examples Rashi brings, "the ark of the covenant", "the borders of the bases", "the valley of the dead".]

So too did Rabbi Jonah write in Sefer ha-Rikmah, gate 37. See also the Responsa of Rashi printed in Sefer Hapes Matmonim, paragraph 4. See also Nimmuk of Wolf Heidenheim on Mozaim, page 23. The Rabad (who is quoted in the Kol Bo, chapter 11 and also in Abudarham at the end of the Shmoneh Esreh) explains that this is a division of the praise of the Almighty, may He be blessed. It implies that He is the King and He is the Judgment, just as one would say, "he is wisdom and he is knowledge". So too did Rabbi Manoah explain it according to the Bet Yosef, chapter 581.

10. The Berakhah

[Explanation 25: The author has a lengthy discussion concerning the accurate wording of this berakhah and comes to the conclusion that what we have is a later version that contains many variations from the original text forced upon us by the censors of our oppressors. He offers what he believes is the original version of this berakhah and renders a full explanation of that text. We have used his commentaries only on those words that are found in most of our textual renditions.]

לְמָלֵשׁנִים = One should know that in the Siddurim רֹפֵי ר"מ ר"פ"י it is written לְמָלֵשׁנִים and not לְמָלָשׁנִים, and that is the way it should be said, just as the author of Ateret Zekenim wrote in chapter 101.

תַּעֲקַר = [The vocalization is a לָשׁ resh under the tav, a פַּתּ ה ה under the ayin and a צַי ה ה under the kuf and a dagesh in it] This is how it is vocalized in all the siddurim. Its meaning is like רִיעְּזָר דֶּד אֲדֹת לְרָכַב יִשְׂרָאֵל ["and David hamstrung all the chariot horses"] (II Samuel 8:4) It is in this form to alliterate the words [with the following two words so they all have the same vocalization, instead of its proper form תַּעֲקַר]. Whoever says תַּעֲקַר in the ה declension vocalization is also correct. It’s meaning is “destruction”, as in לִשְׁפָּר כְּפָר [“uprooting the planted”]
(Ecclesiastes 3:2). In the Haggadah we read “לֹ֥א בקָ֑שׁ לְעָקְרוּר אֶת הַ֖כֶל [Laban sought to uproot all].

11. The Berakhah

על אֲדוֹנֵיָ֥הוּ = Both words have a קְפֶ֖ים at the end of the word. Radak\textsuperscript{67} also notes that both words are in the form [conjugation] with a קְפֵּן [under the ayin letter of the root].

לָּצֵ֔דְקֵיָ֥הוּ = The lamed has a פָּתָ֖ח and the sade has a dagesh in all the siddurim, and this is correct.

[Explanation 26: The פָּתָ֖ח under the lamed represents the definite article heh. When the prepositional letters בֶּ֣לַו [bet, kaf, lamed and mem] are added to a word which has a definite article heh, the heh is dropped and the added prepositional letter takes a פָּתָ֖ח and the next letter gets a dagesh.]

12. The Berakhah

בני יִרוּשָׁלְיָ֧ים

[The following notations in this berakhah refer to the insertion said on Tishah b’Ab known as נַחַ֛ה]

וּרְדֹ֖רֶבּ = The heh takes a סְגוּל and the het takes a קְפָר. It is an expression of “destruction”. [חרב] (Ezekiel 36:35)

bones that become [Hebrew: אֵ֛מֶר בְּכָל אֲבָל] (Isaiah 22:4). In two old manuscripts and also in the Sephardic siddurim the text reads [the mem with a סְגוּל and the first resh with a קְפֶּן]. It is so also in Maimonides\textsuperscript{68}. However, our text is more accurate since the format of [the mem with a סְגוּל and the first resh with a קְפֶּן] is not found in Scriptures.

13. The Berakhah

วยִדְרֹבּ = The scholars had a problem with the meaning of יִדְרֹבּ.

[Explanation 27: The question is, how are the words [“the offerings of Israel and their prayers”] to be divided up. Are the words יִדְרֹבּ to be read with the preceding phrase and the meaning would be “and restore the service to the sanctuary of the Temple and its offerings.” Or are these words to be read with the word following יִדְרֹבּ, and the meaning would be “receive with love and favor both the offerings of Israel and their prayers.”\textsuperscript{69}]
In reality, however, there is no linguistic difficulty at all. The meaning of the conjunctive vav of בּרֹאָה בֵּיתֵרָה [“in Ramah, even in his own city”] (I Samuel 28:3), and also like the vav in רְשִׁית תְּבֻנָּה [“and two rings shall be on the one side of it”] (Ex. 25:12). In German it is "nämlich" [namely].

**Explanation 28:** The meaning according to the author is that the vav is not the regular conjunctive letter but rather it serves as a comma with the meaning of "that is". He compares it to the verses quoted where the letter vav is not a conjunction. In Samuel the city named is Ramah, and then we are told it is his city. The verse quoted from Exodus tells us that in constructing the Ark there should be four rings, that is, two rings on one side and two on the other. The meaning of the prayer is thus, “receive with love and favor the offerings of Israel, that is, their prayers.”

It is so because in our times the prayers are in place of the offerings in keeping with the verse, וְנָשַׁלְּמָה פָּרֵיס שָׁפָתִינוּ [“so we will render for bullocks the offering of our lips.”] [Hosea 14:3] Even if we [read וְנָשַׁלְּמָה לֵבֶן יִשְׂרָאֵל and רְשִׁית תְּבֻנָּה together and] render the language as a plea for the future there is still no difficulty, for then the vav of וְנָשַׁלְּמָה is conjunctive and its simple meaning is that just as in the days of the Temple prayer accompanied the sacrifices, so too it shall be in the future.

14. The Berakhah ההודאה

הַדוֹדָה = The shin takes a קְפֶם. Thus it is vocalized in the old manuscripts and in the Siddur י"ע. Compare above page 84.

**Explanation 29:** The reference is to the words אמרת מאשר ההודאה in the berakhah after the Shema. The author explains there, like here, that the shin takes a קְפֶם in order to "broaden" the sound of the alef. This is similar to the verse אמרתkees מְדֵבֶר 좋아ש (“that it is You Who talks with me”, Judges 6:17.)

נָוָה לְלֹאָלָלְבָמ בֵּית וּזְרֵז נְסֵפָר, “we give You thanks for ever, we will tell of Your praise to all generations”] in Psalms 79:13. Consequently, נוֹדָה is to be accented on the ultima and the lamed of לְלֹא is without a dagesh. [This is based on the way the words appear in the verse quoted.]

הֵסֹד = The heh is vocative. Similarly, is the heh of והזיתוֹז. [Addressing God as “You the Good One’ and “You the Compassionate One”.]

The following insertion of על הנבتمكن is said on Chanukah and on Purim.

ירשועה הפק = This is an Aramaic word and its Hebrew meaning is [salvation]. The verse [“this great salvation”] (I Samuel 14:45) in the Aramaic translation is פארק מרא [the author calls it a פארק in the Siddur, both here and in the Sabbath morning prayer after the Torah reading]. This is true both if we vocalize the word in the Hebrew form or in the Aramaic form. In the Aramaic its form is like פארק [with a פארק under the first syllable and a פארק under the second one] and like פארק [with the same vocalization]. In Hebrew its vocalization is like פארק רבר and פארק [with the same vocalization].

[Explanation 30: The פארק is a short vowel (See Explanation 22 above) that is either 1) under a closed syllable, that is, one that ends with an unaccented consonant or a ו, or 2) it is a פארק that replaces a פארק.] I have already explained this in the book Toze’ot Hayyim, page 115.

בשומן הזוה = This is the correct version and the version appearing in some siddurim, is a mistake. See also in the berakhot for the Hanukkah lights. [He explains there that some say in the berakah of השומן, with a the lamed. This he claims is incorrect. The proper version is with a the lamed just as here there is a תחת the bet.]

The following insertion of בבר מתחזרה is said on Hanukkah.

רוהד = This has already proven from early texts that basically there is a ה after the mem. He, however, printed with an alef between the nun and the yod. This alef is superfluous and is only written because of the books that did not have vocalizations so as not to read the nun with a ה. If the word is vocalized this reading aid letter should be removed. This is similar to how we find Hazal (the Talmudic Rabbis) wrote in their non-vocalized books, and in Scriptures, where it is vocalized, it is שומן שומן without an alef. (I Chronicles 2:28). Similarly they wrote דומם and in Scriptures it is דומם without an alef. (Esther 1:18) I have already pointed this out in the book Toze’ot Hayyim page 7. The name שומן according to some is a proper noun. According to others, it is an adjective with the meaning of “great” and “noble” as in the verse [“nobles shall come”] (Psalms 68:32). Simply it seems to be a surname for the entire family taken from the city of their birth, which was שומן (Joshua 15:27). It seems that Simeon, the father of Johanan and the grandfather of Mattathias (Seder Olam Zuta72 and First Book of Maccabees, chapter 2) was born in Heshmon and because of this they called him בֵּית הַשָּׁמוֹנָא and the entire family בֵּית הַשָּׁמוֹנָא.
The word = An adjective in the feminine form as in מִדְרְכֵי הַרְשָׁעִים [“from his wicked way”] (Ezekiel 3:18).

[Explanation 31: The word is not a noun, “wickedness”, but and adjective defining the words “Greek Kingdom”].

See Nemuk Habahur le-Shorashim under the root רְשָׁעִים.

הָפְעִיל לָהַשְׁכֵּית הָוָרָךְ = This is the Ashkenazi version, [causative conjugation], as in לָהַשְׁכֵּית אָוִם שֶׁמֶּים [“to cause My people to forget My name”] (Jeremiah 23:27). In the Sephardi version it is לָשְׁכֵּית הָוָרָךְ [intensive conjugation]. This is also correct as in שְׁכָּהָה בֶּזַּעְזָע שֶׁבָּה מְרוּד [“the Lord has caused to be forgotten in Zion festival and Sabbath”] (Lamentations 2:6). In many siddurim it is written מָחָרְךָ [with a mem], and Abudarham wrote about this “It is a mistake, and one is not to say מָחָרְךָ מְחָרְךָ with a mem in the beginning, but rather מְחָרְךָ without a mem”. It is so also in the siddur of Rabbi Sa’adya.”

לְהָבוֹרֵאָה מַחָּרְךָ רְצוּנָּה = So it appears in all old siddurim and manuscripts. So too is the version in Abudarham, and this is correct. The Magen Avraham73 in Chapter 682 and also the Matteh Yehudah74 erased the mem of מַחָּרְךָ in the name of Abudarham. May they forgive me, but they erred, for Abudarham only removed the mem from מַחָּרְךָ alone and preserved the mem of מַחָּרְךָ, as anyone who checks in his book will see. In truth the version לְהָבוֹרֵאָה מַחָּרְךָ רְצוּנָּה presents no difficulty at all. It is based on the verse לֹא עָבַרְתִּי מַצְוָתְךָ לֹא שָׁכַחְתִּי [“I have not transgressed any of Your commandments, neither have I forgotten them”] (Deut. 26:13). Only, the simple conjugation הָפְעִיל was altered to the הָפְעִיל [causative conjunction] and it deals with two recipients, [that is the mem added is the plural possessive pronoun].

םְעָשְׂרִים = Written with the letter sin as explained previously on page 37.

[Explanation 32: The reference is to the morning berakha recited for the study of Torah in which we read לְעַשָּׂרֵים בְּברֵי הַתּוָרָה [“to occupy ourselves with the words of the Torah”]. There the author points to the fact that in the Talmud the word לְעַשָּׂרֵים [“to occupy”] is found often and always appears with the letter samekh. Yet, in that berakha, as in our prayer here, the word is written with the letter sin. He explains that in the Talmud, since there is no vocalization, in most words where there is a sin it is written as a samek so that one not err and read it as a shin. In Scriptures and whereever there is vocalization, the correct spelling is with a sin.]
This is the practice in the Mishnah [the word written with a vav] instead of אלה [written with a heh] in Scriptures.

The following insertion is said on Purim.

The letter heh is the vocative heh, as is the heh of יהוה [see above in this berakhah.] This is similar to מזמור [“as for you, the congregation”] (Num. 15:15), ומזרח [“you, young man”] (I Samuel 17:58), ו الداخل [“you, old men”] (Joel 1:2), וים [“O, you sea”], וירדן [“O, you Jordan”] (Psalms 114:5), וחרמון [“O, you mountains”] (Psalms 114:6). The meaning is, You Who are the Almighty, You are our salvation.

15. The Berakah שלום

This is a noun like אמרת טובות [“to do good”] (Num. 24:13). In German it is “Guten”. It is the same also in קדשה וברכה [In the prayer inserted on Rosh Hodesh and holidays in the berakah of the word שלום is said and it has the same meaning as a noun.] They set נבואה in the feminine and נבוא in the masculine so that we not err to assume it is an adjective to שלום.

This is the proper version based on the verse והביאו פניםך [“they walk, O Lord, in the light of Your countenance”] (Psalms 89:16). It is not הביאו פניםך (Ibn Yarhi).

16. Concluding Meditation

(Thus it is in the קדשה וברכה Siddur.) It is not שפתי. In all Scriptures the plural expression שפתי is not found, only שפתי.

According to the grammar of the language, it is proper to say וברך וברך וברך וברך and not וברך וברך וברך וברך.

C. The Sabbath Intermediate Berachot of the Amidah

1. Ma’ariv Service

The mem takes a ל SimpleDateFormat according to the רפיע of the רפיע and the ל SimpleDateFormat.
Siddurim. That is the proper way to say it since it is the end of a statement. In his commentary Abudarham writes that one has to pause a little between לְשׁוֹנָר and תַּכּוֹלָת so as it not appear that it refers to what precedes it, may Heaven forbid. [The word תַּכּוֹלָת means “end”. It, therefore, should be avoided to attach it to the preceding word which is “Your Name”.]

רי"ל = The first syllable should be read quickly [unaccented], and one who says רי"ל [accenting the vav], woe to his foolishness. (”הב"ז)

לְעָבְרָה = The daled does not have a dagesh according to the rule concerning the root לְעָבְרָה when it takes a pronominal suffix.

ירה"ו = In two old manuscripts and also in the Rav Amram Siddur. So it seems also from the Sefer Hasidim, chapter 882 and so also the author of Torat Hayyim wrote on the Tractate Hullin at the end of 80b and the author of Ateret Zekanim on Orah Hayyim, chapter 268. In Mahzor Roma the wording is יְרֵשָׁמַה בּרֶכֶל יִשְׂרָאֵל מְקוֹדְשֵׁי שֵׁם. The author of Shenet Luhot ha-Berit and Ya'ez confirmed the wording יְרֵשָׁמַה בּרֶכֶל יִשְׂרָאֵל מְקוֹדְשֵׁי שֵׁם. This is also the wording of Rabbi Isaac Tyrna and it is in accord with the expression of Abudarham. However, ישבת is a feminine word, (see the commentary of Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra on Numbers 28:10 and Isaiah 56:2) therefore, it is actually בּוֹכָל and it is so in the Sefardic siddurim, except the add כּל יִשְׂרָאֵל.

2. The Shaharit Service

לְאוֹבָה = is a masculine word.

והַשְׁבִיתָּו = This is the wording by Abudarham and this is correct. In some siddurim the wording is והַשְׁבִיתָו and the author of רִirut עִז already recognized the double use of the preposition bet and so he removed the word ב. The expression, however, as I constructed it is correct.

[Explanation 33: If the bet is placed before the word שביעית and the word ב is used then the meaning of the sentence is “and on the Seventh You found favor on it.” The word “on” is redundant. The author leaves off the bet from the word “Seventh” and adds a definite article, making its meaning, “the Seventh, You found favor in it.”]
In every expression of דָּלֶד the daled has a dagesh. [This is a dagesh kal since it starts a new syllable.]

3. The Musaf service

In Scriptures we do not find the plural of כְּרַבֵּן with the possessive pronoun except in the third person, as in כְּרַבֵּןָם ["their offerings"] (Lev. 7:38). The author of כִּי יִרְאוּ relied on this to alter the expression to כְּרַבֵּנה ["its offerings"]. In the Mishnah, however, it always says כְּרַבֵּנה in the feminine plural (as for example in Zebahim 112b) [כְּרַבֵּנה צִבּוֹר, “public sacrifices”]. Rabbi David Kimhi in the Mikhlof, page 182b also wrote that the plural of the form יָפֵל is in the feminine structure, כְּרַבֵּנה. So too wrote Abraham de Balmes in his book Mikneh Avram.

The root is זְכָר which in Scriptures means cleanliness and purity and the Hazal used it to mean to reach something that was expected. (In German "erlangen") like in זָכָרִים שְׁתֵּאמָר מֵצְצָר מִסְיָרִים בֵּילְדוֹת ["and I have never merited to have the exodus from Egypt mentioned at night-time"] (Ber 12b); זָכָר מִקְטָב פִּנֵי שִׁכְנוֹת ["merits to welcome the Divine Presence"] (Ibid. 64a, Men. 43b); זָכָר מִשְׁחָטֵהוּ [literally, "who ever merits, merits it"] (Mishnah, Tamid 1,2); זָכָרָה בֵּשָׂמְתֶּיהָ ["merits to share in her joy"] (Ta’anit 30b); זָכָר תַּלְמְדֵי הָרָבִּים ["merits many things"] (Avot 6,1). In the prayers we find זָכָרָה נִרְבּוּ מִלְאָרִים ["and may we all speedily merit its light", at the end of the first berakhah before the morning Shema]; זָכָרָה לְנוֹרָה ["and we shall merit that we live", at the end of the prayer זָכָרְתֶּם מֶרְצְנוּ לְמִלְאָרִים פִּיוּלָה פִּי פִּי ["may the All-merciful make us merit the days of the Messiah", towards the end of Grace After Meals].

This is in the נַפְסָכָיו conjugation which the authors of the Mishnah used in a minimal number of places it is also found, for example, נַפָּסַר נַפָּסַרְתֶּךָ נַפָּסַר ["and it will be forgiven"] (Deut. 21:8) which is the same as נַפָּסַר נַפָּסַר נַפָּסַר נַפָּסַר ["and they will be taught"] (Ezekiel 23:48) and נַפָּסַר נַפָּסַר נַפָּסַר נַפָּסַר ["are alike"] (Proverbs 27:15)

Explanations 34: This prayer states that the Israelites were commanded at Mt. Sinai. The word for commanded should have been דָּלֶד כְּרַבֵּן, (with a מִכְרַבֵּן under the sade) in the נַפָּסָכָיו conjugation, which would be in the passive sense or הָכַר in the נַפָּסָכָיו conjugation (this form does not exist at all for this root). The author points out that a נַפָּסָכָיו form is used, which is a form not often used in Scriptures but is used in the Mishnah in place of the נַפָּסָכָיו. He quotes Scriptural sources...
where the נפתעֵל is used. The examples he brings are all in the
conjugation. In our prayer here the Mishnaic נפתעֵל is used.]

מְסִף = The sacrifice of the day in addition to the daily sacrifice they called
מָסִיף. It is structured in the form of מְסָר [“based, founded”] and מָסָר [“moral”], the
plural is מָסִפים.

כַּרְאוּ = As it is correct (in German “wie es sich gebührt”) and this is the
singular of הרַאֲיוֹת לְתָתָּל [“who were her due”] (Esther 2:9). [The meaning is that
רַאֲיוֹת is the singular of רַאֲיוֹת]

כָּתַב עָלַי יָדֹודֵים = The meaning is “for us”, similar to מְסָר [“write concerning the Jews”] (Esther 8:8) which means “concerning the Jews” [the
word עָלַי usually means “on” but in this sense it means “concerning”].

כַּלְכָּל = The meaning is כַּלְכָּל [according to their prescribed
ordinance]. This word is according to the Talmudic usage.

בַּחֹרֶה = The second tav takes a ח in the 1 ר"פ Siddur. Similarly the
word הבחרה has a ח under the daled. This is correct because there is no significant
statement pause to require a change from a חא to a ספ. [See explanation 10 and
15]

4. The Musaf service on the New Moon

נָצָל = Thus it is in most siddurim. This is the past tense of the
conjugation for the root נָצָל. In the 1 ר"פ Siddur it is נָצֶל. This is also possible and it
would be the past tense of the נָצֶל conjugation of
נָצָל.

יְדוֹלִים = This is the plural from the singular יְדוֹל, as יְדוֹלִים comes from
יְדוֹל and it is an adjective.

[Explanatio 35: The meaning is that the word is in the בֵּרוּיִי (present)
tense which is used as an adjective in Hebrew.]

שְׁנֵי הַלְוַה = This is the wording in all old siddurim and in the manuscripts.
It is the same in the Rabbi Amram Siddur and in Maimonides and Abudarham.
Suddenly, the author of Vaya’ater Yitzhak prints insteadיהלְוַה and and יְנו"ר רְב"א in his
sidur follows him. In truth, the implication ofיהלְוַה is not as the same

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implication is that an expression in the past tense while verb ל(5,125),(994,898) tense [present]. (This has already been pointed out by Rabbi Samuel David Luzzatto86 in Betulat Bat Yehudah, page 15 and in the introduction to his Mahzor.) We should, therefore, not abandon the original expression. We have already seen above87 that the Sages used the נְפָעל conjugation in the Mishnah and in the liturgy instead of the נְפָעל נְפָעֵל (as they referred to the נְפָעל “the goat that is sent”) Shab. 86a and Yoma 41b. This conjugation is also found in Scriptures so it is proper to use it as the Sages say נְפָעֵל נְפָעֵל (“we were removed far”) (in the holiday Musaf Amidah), נְפָעֵל נְפָעֵל (“as they were blessed”) (in the Grace After Meals), נְפָעֵל נְפָעֵל (“why is it different”) (in the Haggadah of Passover) which expressions even the ה"י"ר left in tact.

5. The Sabbath Minah service

ינוהしてる = Its meaning is a crown of salvation. What is the splendor [mentioned in the preceding words of this prayer] and the crown? It is “the day of rest and holiness which You have given to Your people”. This is the simple and the correct meaning. From this it is obvious that the proper expression of the prayer is ינוהしてる [that is, to add the word שם] as it is found in many old siddurim. This is also what the Tanya88 may his memory be blessed, wrote, “ינוהしてる כינורא לתורה למט"ל תָּנִית [“a day of rest and holiness You have given to Your people”]. This is as it should be properly said, since at the end of the expression he says ינוהしてる בר [the word “on it” being in the masculine], for all the expressions mentioned before it are in the feminine. This is what I found attributed to Rabbi Shalom Bar Yizhak, of blessed memory, that this is how it was being said in Narbonne.” See also the Turei Zahav,89 on the Orah Hayyim chapter 292).

[Explanation 36: The matter discussed here is whether the word מִי or “day” should be said here referring to the Sabbath. The position the author takes is that it should be said because the word השבת is feminine and the phrase should have ended with the word ב, using the feminine form for the word “on it”. Instead the masculine form is used which compels our author to say that it refers to the word מִי, which is masculine and refers to the “day” of the Sabbath. The author also refers us to the Turei Zahav who makes the same point. However, he also cites the Tosafot in tractate Kethuboth 5a (beginning word בָּשָׁם) who says that Shabbat can be both feminine and masculine.]

גְּלָת = All the letters take a בָּשָׁם because there is a pause here. [See Explanation 10 and 15] This is similar to אָלֶה וּתְפַלֵּת (“it you may destroy and cut down”) (Deut. 20:20). This is also how it is in Vaya’ater Yitzhak and it is correct. Later, however, in the Rosh Hodesh Musaf the vocalization there is בָּשָׁם with a בָּשָׁם [under the first tav]. The בָּשָׁם, in his siddur, reversed this position and he erred.
The three future expressions in this statement are in place of the past tense. The word בְּ also relates to Abraham and Isaac. Its meaning is as if it were written “Abraham גָּאַל [“was glad”] on it (that is on the day of rest), Isaac רֵ,…[“rejoiced”] on it, Jacob and his sons נֶחֶם [“rested”] on it. This is the usage in the Hebrew language when it speaks in a poetic and lyrical style it uses the future tense for a past meaning, for example, Num. 23:7, Psalms 80:10, 103:7, 107:17-19, 139:16. Also in simple speech we find occasionally the future tense in place of the past, as for example, Judges 2:1, I Kings 21:6.

That which the author of Magen Avraham and the author of Eliyahu Zuta⁹⁰ on the Shulhan Arukh, Orah Hayyim chapter 268 wrote that on Sabbath eve one should say יִנְוָה הב in the feminine and Sabbath morning יִנְוָה הב in the masculine and to Minhah בּ יִנְוָה הב, that is something of a wonder and against all rules of the language.

FOOTNOTES

40. In the introduction to his siddur the author explains he has an old manuscript written on parchment but does not know when it was actually written.
41. Abraham b. Nathan ha-Yarhi of Lunel, author of ha-Manhig
42. This reference is to the Arba'ah Turim written by Jacob ben Asher (c.1270-1340) and is a codification of Jewish law. The author generally follows the opinions of his father known as the Rosh and that of Maimonides.
43. David ben Joseph Abudarham, 14th century, author of Sefer Abudarham, written in 1340 in Seville.
44. A work describing Jewish customs, written in Frankfurt am Main.
45. Eighteenth century, father of the more famous Moses and David Kimhi.
46. For further discussion on this word and for the opinion of the Gaon of Vilna see Otzer Hafetz Yitzhak ad locum.
47. Joseph Albo (15th century).
49. In truth this is a Tannaitic term but not Mishnaic.
50. A lexicon of Hebrew words found in the Talmud and the Hebrew of the Middle Ages written by Elijah Levita (1468-1549).
51. The name נָל is found in Genesis 10:25 and there the peh and the lamed have a בּ under them. Here in Psalms they both have a בּ under them. The explanation for this is for alliteration effect, to make the word correspond in sound with the word בּ in the beginning of the phrase. See Biblical Commentary of S. L. Gordon, Tel Aviv, ad locum in the footnotes.
52. A work by Ya’vez on the grammar of the siddur.
53. Saadia ben Joseph, (882-942), one of the great scholars and authors of the gaonic period. Since there was no regular prayer book in his time he compiled one of his own in Arabic.

54. See Explanation #3 above.

55. Our author writes the word יָדוּ with a שַׁדֶּה after the lamed but in fact in our text it is written יָדָו with a בָּרֶךְ under the lamed.

56. The Talmud here quotes a verse in Isaiah 45:13. While the actual text in Isaiah reads יָדוּ וְתַֽאֲדוּת, the Talmud quotes it as יָדוּ וְתַֽאֲדוּת.

57. Derech Si'ah ha-Sadeh edited by Rabbi Azriel of Vilna and his son Eliya. First printed in Frankfort am-Main in 5464 (1704).

58. In his introduction the author mentions this work written by the grammarian Rabbi Zalman Henna in 5539 (1779).

59. This is a work of Jonah Ibn Janah (first half of 11th century). He called it Katab al-
Tanqih (The Book of Minute Research). It was translated by Judah Ibn Tibbon. It consists of two parts, the first being a grammar which Ibn Tibbon called Sefer ha-
Riknah.

60. Edited by Dober Goldberg, Berlin, 5605 (1845).

61. Written by Abraham Ibn Ezra in 1140 and contains a survey of grammarians who preceded him as well as certain grammatical terms. Wolf Heidenheim edited it in 1791.

62. Rabbi Abraham Ben David of Posquieres (c. 1125-1198)

63. An halakhic work whose authorship is unknown written about the end of the 13th century.

64. Manoa of Narbonne (c. end of 13th century), mentioned in Shem Gedolim under the letter mem no. 46.

65. A major commentary on the Tur written by Rabbi Joseph Caro, author of the Shulhan Arukh.

66. In our edition of the Bet Yosef it is chapter 582.

67. Rabbi David Kimhi

68. At the end of the Book of Ahava in the Yad ha-Hazakah.

69. See Iyun Tefillah in Otzer Israel ad locum for a full explanation of the question.

70. The Talmudic Rabbis explain this verse to mean that today when we have no way of offering sacrifices, the offering of our lips, which is our prayers, replace the sacrifices.


72. An anonymous chronicle of generations from Adam to the Talmudic sages in Babylonia in the year 520.

73. Commentary on Shulhan Arukh

74. A commentary on the Shulhan Arukh, Orah Hayim by Judah Ayash (d.1760).

75. Jekuthiel ben Judah Ha-Cohen (13th century), Hebrew grammarian. He dealt much with whether a word is to be stressed on its penultimate or on its ultima.

76. The author does not explain the rule to which he refers. Most of the modern siddurim have a dagesh in the daled, probably because when one נֶשֶׁד follows immediately after another the first is a נֶשֶׁד נֶשֶׁד and the second is a יָדָו נֶשֶׁד. The letters נ, ג, כ, ל, ה, ב when they come with a יָדָו take a dagesh kal.

77. Attributed to Rabbi Judah he-Hasid of Regensburg (d. 1217). It is a work on Jewish ethics.

78. By Hayyim ben Shabbetai, Rabbi in Salonika, d. 1647.

79. Written by Menahem Mendel of Krotoszn. See Azulai, Shem Hagdolim, Ma'arekhet Sefarim.
80. Isaiah ben Abraham Halevi Horowitz, (d. 1630).
81. Austrian Rabbi of the 14th century who compiled a work on customs.
82. See note #10
83. In most of our *siddurim* the expression is דבשברין. The *Daily Prayer Book* by Rabbi Joseph H. Hertz follows our author’s suggestion.
84. A grammarian who lived in the end of 15th century and beginning of 16th in Italy. This book was printed posthumously.
85. See note 4.
86. (1800-1865) The work mentioned was published in 1840 and is based on the poetry of Rabbi Judah Halevi.
87. See Explanation 34.
88. Written by Shneur Zalman of Lyady, (1745-1813), founder of Habad Hasidism. It is a collection of sayings about the essence of Hasidism.
89. A commentary on the *Orah Hayyim* division of the *Shulhan Arukh*.
90. Written by Elijah Ben Benjamin Wolf Shapira, of Prague, (1660-1712)

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THE VOICE OF JERUSALEM AND ZION IN OUR DAILY PRAYER SERVICE

by Macy Nulman

The Siddur is replete with the names Yerushalayim (Jerusalem) and Tziyon (Zion) in various prayer recitals. Furthermore, the prayers are filled with references to messianic hope and aspirations for his arrival to bring an end to the suffering and the return of the People of Israel to their own land. The Pesikta Rabbah writes that the three days before the advent of the Messiah, Elijah who is expected to be the herald of the Messiah, will appear on the mountains of Israel and exclaim, “O mountains of Israel, how long will you remain waste and desolate?” He will then proclaim world peace and God will redeem Israel and inaugurate its ingathering.

In the Bible, Jerusalem is referred to 656 times. Almost two thirds of the Talmud involves Eretz Yisrael (the Land of Israel). Of the 613 mitzvot (precepts) 195 apply to Eretz Yisrael only and another 78 mitzvot depend upon being in Eretz Yisrael.

A SACRED BOND LINKING THE JEWISH PEOPLE TO ERETZ YISRAEL

Unlike other nations whose common history brought them to permanently reside in a particular area or territory, the People of Israel are linked to Eretz Yisrael by a sacred bond which dates from antiquity. God made a covenant with the patriarchs: to Abraham He said, “To your descendents have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river of Euphrates” (Gen. 15:18); to Isaac it was told, “For to you and your seed I will give all these lands” (Gen. 26:3); Jacob was told, “The land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac, I will give to you, and your offspring after you I will give the land” (Gen. 35:12).

The Divine basis for Eretz Yisrael and its role in the preservation of the Jewish people has been expressed in the words of the psalmist who wrote, “If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its skill. Let my tongue adhere to my palate if I fail to recall you, if I fail to elevate Yerushalayim above my foremost joy” (Ps. 137:5-6). This declaration led to the custom of breaking a glass at the wedding ceremony in memory of Jerusalem. It also became a practice to place ashes on the forehead of a groom before the marriage ceremony. The longing for redemption and the coming of Messiah led to the practice of proclaiming at the Seder on Passover and again after the Ne’ila service on Yom Kippur, Leshanah haba’ah Birushalayim (Habenuyah) – “Next year in (rebuilt) Jerusalem!” Some say the phrase three times at the Seder and at Ne’ilah – once for the exile from Egypt, the second time for the exile from Babylonia, and the third time for the exile from Edom (Rome). The word habenuyah is added by those living in Jerusalem, saying the phrase three times; the word is added in the third repetition.
TZIYON AND YERUSHALAYIM IN CONNECTION WITH MOURNERS

Tziyon and Yerushalayim are mentioned not only at festive and happy occasions but also when leaving the mourners at the cemetery after a funeral, or at the end of a visit to the house of mourners, or on Friday night when in the synagogue, the worshipers come out to greet the mourners. On these occasions the traditional statement of condolence Hamakom yenaḥem etkhem betokh aveilei Tziyon Virushalayim ("May God comfort you among all those who mourn for Zion and Jerusalem") is said. Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, asked, "What connection is there between one grieving the loss of human life and the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem?" The Rebbe answered: "Just as the grief over Zion and Jerusalem is common to all Jews, so too, all Jews share the grief of one Jew. Ultimately God will rebuild Zion and Jerusalem through the Messiah, at which time He will repair the personal loss of every Jew by fulfilling the promise of resurrection."

PRAYING IN THE DIRECTION OF JERUSALEM

At public worship Jews have always prayed in the direction of Jerusalem as it is stated: "And pray unto You towards their land that You gave to their forefathers and by the way of the city (Jerusalem) You have chosen" (1Kings 8:48). Scripture records, too, that Daniel prayed thrice daily facing Jerusalem (Dan. 6:10). The Talmud notes that Jews in foreign lands turn in prayer to Eretz Yisrael; those in the land of Israel toward Jerusalem; those in Jerusalem toward the Temple; and those in the Temple, toward the Holy of Holies. In accordance with this injunction, synagogues are so constructed that the Ark is placed in the direction of Eretz Yisrael so that the people may turn to it in prayer.

ERETZ YISRAEL IN THE DAILY PRAYERS

The following represents the many requests made for redemption and the building of Jerusalem which accompanied the Jewish people through the millennia of its history. If we take into account the Amidah prayer repeated at Minnah and Ma'ariv and Birkat Hamazon (Grace after meals) recited two or three times daily, a person makes these requests some fifty times. Many requests are clothed in blessings. For example, the concluding blessing in Velirushalayim Irekha reads, "Blessed --- the builder of Jerusalem." The ending of the Avodah section ends with, "Blessed --- who restores Your Presence to Tziyon (Zion). Rabbi Dr. Joseph Breuer wrote that, "this form is designed to teach us how to utter our requests; all that we ask of God is to be dedicated to His service through berakhot (blessings)."
**Birkat Hashahar**

_Yigdal_

By the end of days, He will send our _Mashiah_, to redeem all who wait for final help.

In the twelfth principle based on the Thirteen Articles of Faith, its author speaks of the coming of the _Mashiah_, one who will lead us out of exile. This is the hope and prayer of every Jew in every generation who is awaiting his salvation.

_Ribono Shel Olam_

_I will remember My covenant with Jacob, also My covenant with Isaac, and also My covenant with Abraham I will remember, and I will remember the land._

The entire paragraph speaks of God who will bring us to the land that our forefathers inherited. God says He will remember the covenant He made with Jacob, to do good for His children, in merit. If their sons will be so great that the merit is not sufficient, I will remember that covenant I made with Isaac. And if the merit of both is not enough, I will remember the covenant I made with Abraham. And I will now also remember to count the dissolute land of Israel.

_Yehi Ratzon_

_May it be Thy will ... that the Temple be speedily rebuilt in our days, and grant our portion in Thy Torah._

After reciting the laws of the sacrifices we express our hope that the actual _avodah_ (service) of the Temple may soon be restored so that we may be enabled to discharge our Torah task to the fullest extent possible. This wish is repeated at the end portions of our prayers.¹²
PESUKEI DEZIMRAH

Yehi Khevod

כי בחר אלי ביתך אוה למוסב לח For God has chosen Zion; He Has selected it for His dwelling place.

God chose Zion to divinely inspire. He desired it should be a popular city for His sake; to establish in it the Bet Hamikdash (Holy Temple).\(^{13}\)

Haleluyah Haleli Nafshi

ימלך לך כל מלך אלהים ציון ודור ודור哈哈哈哈 Hashem shall reign forever, You God, O Zion, throughout all generations.

God Who dwells in Zion will reign there. Praise God in the future for generations, forever, and because of this Haleluyah (Praise God).

Haleluyah Ki Tov

שבחיו ויהבלי אתה יי הלל אלהים ציון Praise Hashem, O Jerusalem: extol You God, O Zion.

Jerusalem and Zion are stressed in this psalm for which holiness, redemption and Torah will emanate. The Divine institution of Jerusalem was not ended when we were exiled. The future will reach perfect realization.

Haleluyah Shiru Lashem

ישמה ישראל بمושלי בני ציון יגולה במלכות Let Israel rejoice in its Creator; let the children of Zion rejoice in their King.
Israel refers to the people as a whole; the children of Zion are the elite of the people. The future all will sing a new song of redemption.

Barukh Hashem Le’olam

Blessed is Hashem from Zion,
Who dwells in Jerusalem,
Praise God.

The word Barukh (Blessed) is expressive of the most perfect adoration. Beginning with Zion the idea of God will be kept alive in Israel, even after the fall of Zion, when His signs and miracles will be apparent to none but Himself, till finally His glory will fill the whole world.

THE SHEMA AND ITS BLESSINGS

La’el Barukh

Aor hashul zion haizer
Shine a new light upon Zion.

We pray that we may be worthy of enjoying the original light of creation that will shine on Zion and Jerusalem. We should merit to speedily have enjoyment from its light.

Ahavah Rabbah

And bring us in peace from the four corners of the earth and lead us upright to our land.

May we return from our exile to our land (Eretz Yisrael) with our heads held high; not in meekness.
AMIDAH

Re’ei (Na) Ve’onyeinu

And redeem us speedily for the
sake of Your Name; because You
are a mighty redeemer. Blessed …
Redeemer of Israel

The seventh benediction in the weekday Amidah, known as Birkat Hage’ulah (“The blessing of the redemption”), implores God to redeem the people of Israel. The concluding formula is go’eil Yisrael (“Redeemer of Israel”) in the present time, whereas the blessing immediately prior to the Amidah is go’al Yisrael (“Who hast redeemed Israel”), in the past tense.18

Teka Beshofar

וְכָנַע יְהֵודָא פְּרוֹבֵעַ כִּפְתָּרִי.

And gather us together from
the four corners of the earth.
Blessed … Gatherer of
the dispersed of His people
Israel.

The tenth blessing in the Amidah known as Kibbutz Goliyot (“An ingathering of the exiles”) is a plea for the redemption of the entire Jewish community, for whom there can be no freedom while in exile.

Velirushalayim Irekha

וְלֶירְעַשָּׁלָיִם יִירָדְכִּי בַרְחָמִים תֹּשֵׁב

And to Jerusalem, Your city,
Return in mercy and dwell there
As You have spoken; and rebuild
it soon, in our days, as
an everlasting edifice.
… Blessed … Builder of
Jerusalem.
The fourteenth benediction in the weekday Amidah is known as Birkat Binyan Yerushalayim ("Blessing of the Building Jerusalem"). The benediction contains four petitions: And to Jerusalem, Your city, return in mercy; to dwell there; rebuild it speedily; and restore the Kingdom of the house of David. Velayushalayim Irekha and Et Tzemah David, which follows, once constituted a single benediction and were separated in the Mishnaic period. That is, the request for rebuilding Jerusalem and the establishment of the messianic kingdom were joined, and the conjunction vav points to this fact.

*Et Tzemah David*

את צמא דוד подроб מוהר
tzemah kedem torah bishmotek

The spirit of David, Your servant, speedily cause to flourish, and exalt his power with Your deliverance.

The fifteenth benediction in the weekday Amidah seeks the reestablishment of the Kingdom of David. It concludes with Blessed ... Who causes strength of salvation to flourish.

*Retzei*

רצה ... והשב את מעשה
lezach ... vesho et meusha
לדברי ברכה ... והפי לרצון
ladeharim berakhah varak ha
תפניר עבודה ישראל עמק
tovneye avodat israel amak
תרזון קこんにちは בשבך לרצון
thorazon kmhene ba-shem bzeron
ברחמים: ברוך ... המהרי שכניה
beyrahmi: borok ... mahari shenicha
לציון
lezion

Be pleased... and restore the service of the sacrifice to the Bet Hamikdash ... May You always find acceptable the service of Your people, Israel. And may our eyes behold Your merciful return to Zion. Blessed ... Who returns his Divine presence to Zion.

The blessing pleads to God to return the Avodah (The Temple service) and to return the Divine Presence to Zion. Although there is no Temple at present, we ask that our prayers, which take the place of sacrifices, be received with favor.
Modim Derabbanan

האספוקה כל ישראלנו להצרת קדרש
And gather our exiles to Your sanctified Courtyard.

Gather all of Israel from the Diaspora, where they were driven, and bring them to Your sanctified Courtyard (i.e. the Bet Hamikdash).

Yehi Ratzon

See above, p. 41.

Just as in the days of Moshe Rabbenu and Shlomo Hamelekh You accepted their offerings, so too, accept our prayers that replace offerings (tefillah bimkom korban).

TAHANUN

Vehu Rahum

Let your anger and Your rage be turned away from Jerusalem,
Your city, Your holy mountain;
for because of our sins and the iniquities of our fathers
Jerusalem and Your people are held in contempt by all who surround us.
And let Your radiant countenance shine upon Your desolate sanctuary for Your sake, my Master.

And You Hashem, in keeping with Your righteousness that You did with us from the time of the exile from Egypt till now, so may Your anger and rage be turned away from Your city Jerusalem in which the Har Habayit (Temple Mount) is found.
Hatei Elohai Ozneka

וחтвер אשת נקראה שמעת עלייה
וקבץ מפורחותין מאברת כוף אرار
ויתר ויתר כל dünya כי אתה
כי אלהינו

And the city which is called by Your Name.
And gather our dispersed people from the four corners of the earth, so that all the nations will recognize and know that You, Hashem, are our God.

Incline Your ear, my God, and hear our voice in prayer, see our destruction and the city that is called “God’s City” – it is also desolate and destroyed.

READING THE TORAH

Vayehi Binsoa

כפי מפורחים היא תורה
ויהי יי מפורשים

For form Zion the Torah will go forth, and the word of Hashem from Jerusalem.

In the future the Torah’s message will go out of Zion to enlighten the entire world and the word of Hashem will go out of Jerusalem.

Yehi Ratzon Milifnei Avinu Shebashamyim

לכון אשת בית הוריו וחושש אתי
שכרות בחרון באמרתו בירם
ירקם ותקמות מאברת כוף אמר

To establish the house of our life and restore His Divine presence in our midst speedily in our days.
May He gather our dispersed from the four corners of the earth.

We plead for the fulfillment of the yearnings and desires for restoration of the Temple, and for salvation and consolation and the ingathering of our dispersed.
CONCLUSION OF THE SHAHARIT SERVICE

Lamenatzeiah Mitzmor Ledavid

יִשְׁלַח עֵדֶר מְקוּדֵּשׁ
מצוֹן יָשָׁעֵךְ

May He send you help from the Sanctuary and support you from Zion.

God will help you because of your attitude to His Sanctuary. He will let spiritual refreshment and strength come to you from the spiritual fount that flows forth from Zion.

Uva Letziyon

רַבָּה לְצִיּוֹן גְּואָלָה

The Redeemer shall come to Zion

The Messiah will come to redeem Zion and the people of Israel. Not only the righteous will be redeemed but also the sinners, provided they return to the ways of God.21

Shir Shel Yom

Reciting a different psalm daily dates back to Temple Days.22 As a memorial to the Temple, these psalms have been incorporated into the Shaharit service.23 The psalms are introduced with “Today is the (first) day of the Sabbath on which the Levites would recite in the Temple.”

MINHAH AND MAARIV

One hundred and twenty elders including a number of prophets instituted the eighteen benedictions (Shemonah Esrai) with the theme of redemption mapped out for Israel, the coming of the Messiah, and the rebuilding of Jerusalem. It is repeated three times daily.
Barukh Hashem Le’Olam Amen VeAmen

Blessed Hashem from Zion,
who dwells in Jerusalem.
Gather in from the nations to
give thanks to Your Holy Name.

The Divine blessing is described as emanating from Zion. Zion is hallowed as the eternal abode of God’s Law, and Jerusalem which awaits His presence.

We petition God that the exiles be gathered to Zion with the object in mind of rendering praise to God.

Yire’u Eineinu

May our eyes behold, our hearts
rejoice, and our souls exalt
in Your true deliverance,
when it will be said to Zion:
“Your God has begun His reign.”

This end formula in the Arvit prayer service contains the petition: Blessed are You Hashem, the King in His glory – may He constantly reign over us, forever and ever, and over all His creations.

Conclusion

The above prayer passages are proof that the Jewish people have been petitioning, requesting and entreating God to end their exile and bring them to the Promised Land, Eretz Yisrael. Eretz Yisrael has been the center for the Jewish people. It has occupied the focal point in the mind and in the heart of the Jew of all ages and in all lands. A possible explanation for the repetitious solicitation in our prayer service may be due to the numerous threats confronting the Jewish people throughout the ages. Rabbi Jacob Emden wrote in his introduction to his Siddur Bet Ya’akov: “There is no nation in the world that has been persecuted like us. How numerous are our enemies who rise against us from earliest years to destroy us and annihilate us. All the early, strong nations’ memories were lost. And we cling to God, we all live today. The length of our exile has not been forgotten; even one letter or vowel of our Torah and the words of our Sages remain.”

24
It has been the thought and the hope of Eretz Yisrael that has made the Ga\l ut (Diaspora) endurable. For it has made the Jew forget the present, and has helped him into an olam habah, a world that is certain to come! This thought has been expressed in the Songs of Zion, that is, the lyrical hymns known as the 'Zionides' (Shirei Tziyon) recited on Tishah b'Ab morning. The greatest number of these songs unite to voice a heartfelt desire to see the nation, the city of Jerusalem, Mount Zion, and the Temple restored to the former splendor. Each of the poems begin with Tziyon (Zion) and are concluded with verses of consolation. Among the composers of these hymns are Ibn Gabirol (11\textsuperscript{th} cent.), Judah al-Harizi (13\textsuperscript{th} cent.) and Israel Najara (16\textsuperscript{th} cent.).

The sacredness of Eretz Yisrael has never varied. Not only is Eretz Yisrael the cradle and sepulcher of the Patriarchs, but it remains the Promised Land of the Jewish people. The Torah specifies the details. God called Eretz Yisrael "My land" (Joel 4:2), Eretz Yisrael is distinguished as a land that Hashem, your God, seeks out; the eyes of Hashem, your God, are always upon it" (Deut. 11:12). Eretz Yisrael, in addition to being known as Eretz Hakedoshah (The Holy Land; Zech. 2:12), is also known as Eretz Hahayyim (the land of the living; Ez. 26:20). R. Eliezar based on this the assertion that the dead will be resurrected\textsuperscript{25} That led to the practice of importing earth or sand from Eretz Yisrael and spreading it on the dead during burial outside of Eretz Yisrael.

Just as the name Tziyon has been suggested to mean ‘stronghold’ and Yerushalayim ‘foundation of peace’, so may we go forth together to return to a strong Tziyon and a peaceful Yerushalayim and witness the homecoming of our brethren from the far-flung corners of the Diaspora, and the redemption of all of Israel. And may the prayer of comfort which is recited on Tisha b'Ab afternoon be fulfilled. Blessed are You, Hashem, Who consoles Zion and rebuilds Jerusalem.

FOOTNOTES
1. The prophets and the Book of Psalms considered Jerusalem synonymous with Zion.
2. Chap. 35.
3. The prophet of Israel during the days of King Ahab (1 Kings 17:1; 21:7).
4. Rabbi Elchanan Wasserman, Kovetz Ma'amarim, p. 129.
5. Rema.
10. Maimonides, Yad Tefillah 9:2; Shulhan Arukh, Orah Hayyim, 94:1-3.
16. Y. Weingarten’s, ibid., p. 127.
17. Si’ach Yitzchak, cf. also W. Weingarten, p. 128.
18. Rashi, Pes. 117b, s.v. Ditzlute Go’ayl Yisrael.
19. Jer. Tal. Ber. 14, 3-4; Ber. 49a; Taan 2,2; Pes. 117b.
20. E. Munk, World of Prayer, ibid., p. 146.
24. Sulam Bet El, p. 6b

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