

Escorting out the Shabbat: Vi-Yhi No'am and Ve-Atah Kadosh

Part 1: Vi-Yhi No'am and Shalom Aleikhem

I.

Vi-Yhi Noam (the last verse in *Tehillim* ch. 90 and all of ch. 91) and *Ve-Atah Kadosh* are recited every *Motza'ei Shabbat* except for when *Yom Tov* falls during the week. They are not recited on *Motza'ei Yom Tov*.⁵³⁹ In the next section we will deal with *Ve-Atah Kadosh*.

⁵³⁹. The following is a synopsis of the history and some customs regarding the recitations of *Vi-Yhi No'am* and *Ve-Atah Kadosh*: The first reference to the recitation of *Vi-Yhi No'am* is found in *Seder R. Amram Ga'on* in which it is written that after the *sheli'ach tzibbur* recites *Kaddish* he recites the verse of *Vi-Yhi No'am* which is then followed by the adjoining psalm, *Yosheiv Be-Seiter Elyon*, whose last verse is recited a second time by the *sheli'ach tzibbur*. Thereafter, *Ve-Atah Kadosh* is said in its entirety. The entire recitation is said melodiously so that it takes time to complete its recitation. This is important because so long as Jews have not completed its recital, the recently deceased need not return to *Gehenom* from which they had been shielded throughout the course of Shabbat. This is what we hint at by the opening verse, "*vi-yhi no'am...*" ("Let there be pleasantness..."). It hints at the fact that what is being recited should be said melodiously and at a slow pace.

As time went on, commentaries added insights and dimensions to various -aspects of the recitations. By the time of *Machzor Vitry*, it was customary for the entire congregation, not just the *chazan*, to repeat the last verse, "*Orekh yamim asbi'eihu...*"

Reasons for reciting *Vi-Yhi No'am*:

1.

The *Machzor Vitry* explains that this verse is part of a psalm of blessing and therefore it is proper to begin the week on a blessed note. (He does not explain why the entire psalm is not recited.)

2.

Likutei Ha-Pardes Le-Rashi: On *Motza'ei Shabbat* we are cognizant of the wicked returning to *Gehenom*. We therefore pray that we should conduct our business dealings honorably so that we will not be judged as guilty and have to undergo the travails of *Gehenom*.

Reasons for reciting *Yosheiv Be-Seiter Elyon*:

1.

Likutei Ha-Pardes Le-Rashi: This psalm is recited because it contains God's -assurances to Israel that He will protect them during the darkness of the weekdays.

2.

Ha-Machkim: a) The Talmud (*Shevu'ot* 15b) refers to it as a "song to protect one against plagues." b) The psalm is composed with every letter of the alphabet except *zayin* – this conveys that one who recites this psalm will have no need for weapons (*kelei zayin*) to protect him. c) It was instituted primarily as a means of keeping -people in *shul* after Shabbat to demonstrate that Jews do not view Shabbat as a burden.

3.

Shibolei Ha-Leket cites the *Pesikta* who writes that *Yosheiv Be-Seiter* was recited by Moshe at the time that the *Mishkan* was completed. R. Elazar explains that "*be-yom kalot Moshe*" – "when Moshe completed" (*Bemidbar* 7:1) refers to Moshe's prayer on this day that Israel be free of predators.

Reasons for repeating the verse "*orekh yamim asbi'eihu...*" twice:

1.

Likutei Ha-Pardes Le-Rashi: The verse is repeated to demarcate it from the verses of *Ve-Atah Kadosh* that follow. It is normal to repeat a verse for this reason.

2.

Ha-Manhig: The souls return to *Gehenom* immediately after the verse "*orekh yamim*" is said, and therefore we repeat the verse in order to postpone this from happening. The *Rokei'ach* also lists this as the reason that "*orekh yamim*" is repeated, but posits that the souls do not return until after *Ve-Atah Kadosh* is completed.

3.

Abudirham: There are 124 words from *Vi-Yhi No'am* until the end of "*orekh yamim*." If we were to recite all these verses twice we would recite 248 words in correspondence to the 248 limbs in one's body, and thus these verses would serve as a prayer at the beginning of the week that *Hashem* guard our limbs. Thus, by rights, every verse should be repeated. However, this is not done, simply because it would too burdensome for the congregation. We, therefore, suffice with having the first verse, "*vi-yhi no'am*," and the last verse, "*orekh yamim*," repeated [our contemporary custom is only to repeat the latter].

According to the *Midrash*, the verse that begins with the words “*vi-yhi no’am*” was the verse recited by Moshe upon completion of the *Mishkan*. It is therefore appropriate to recite this verse as soon as -Shabbat is over and the weekdays begin, as a prayer that *Hashem* bless the “work of our hands” (“*ma’asei yadeinu*”) throughout the week. Because the verse actually says “*u-ma’asei yadeinu*,” the commentators divide this word into two – “*u*” and “*ma’asei yadeinu*.” “*U*” in Hebrew is “*vav*.” The numerical value of “*vav*” is six. The commentators thereby derive from this that it is only when there are six workdays in the workweek that one can receive the blessings stated in the verse that begins *Vi-Yhi No’am*. When, however, *Yom Tov* falls during the week and work is therefore prohibited on some of the forthcoming weekdays, this verse is not recited.

Interestingly, in virtually all communities, when the verse -beginning with “*vi-yhi no’am*” is omitted so also is *Yosheiv Be-Seiter* (ch. 91). It is far from clear why this should be so. This chapter of *Tehillim* is normally recited because in it we beseech *Hashem* to send His guardian angels to protect us throughout the week. Why should this not be recited when a *Yom Tov* falls out during the week? Before answering this, we will first discuss the changing of the angels which takes place on both Friday and Saturday evenings.

II.

It is customary to recite *Shalom Aleikhem* on Friday night.⁵⁴⁰ In it, we speak of welcoming the Shabbat angels and bidding farewell to the angels that guard a person throughout the week. The notion of differing groupings of angels derives from *Bereishit* 32:2–3: “And Yaakov went on his way, and angels of God met him. And Yaakov said when he saw them, ‘This is the camp of God,’ and he named the place Machanayim.” Machanayim was on the border of Israel and the *galut* (the exile away from the land). Here, at this transition point, the angels of Israel and those of the *galut* were encamped. A changing of the guard was taking place. The angels that accompanied Yaakov in the *galut* were now being relieved by the angels of Israel. Soon thereafter, upon entering Israel, Yaakov fought with and bested an angel – the angel of Esav. That angel renamed him Yisrael, because he “had fought both [an angel of God] and man and you have been victorious” (*Bereishit* 32:29). *Hashem* later reiterated the name change, while also continuing to address Yaakov by his original name. This duality speaks to Yaakov’s dual personality. The name Yaakov is reminiscent of the Jew in *galut*, mired in adversity. He was given this name by his father Yitzchak because when Yaakov was born,

4.

Arukh Ha-Shulchan: There are 16 verses from *Vi-Yhi No’am* through “*orekh yamim*.” We repeat the last verse so that in total we recite 17 verses – the numerical value of 17 is “*tov*” (good).

The connection between *Vi-Yhi No’am* and *Ve-Atah Kadosh*:

Tur: *Sar Shalom* writes that when *Vi-Yhi No’am* is not said, neither is *Ve-Atah Kadosh*. However, the *minhag* in the Sephardic communities is simply to skip *Vi-Yhi No’am*, but recite *Yosheiv Be-Seiter* and *Ve-Atah Kadosh*.

Reasons for not beginning *Ve-Atah Kadosh* from the start of *U-Va Le-Tziyon*:

1.

Machzor Vitry: There is a rule that one must make three appropriate proclamations before reciting *Kedushah*. During the week these proclamations consist of “*u-va le-Tziyon go’el*,” “*va-ani zot beriti*,” and “*ve-atah kadosh*.” On *Motza’ei Shabbat* they are replaced by the recitation of “*vi-yhi no’am*” and the doubling of the verse “*orekh yamim*.”

2.

Siddur Rashi: *U-Va Le-Tziyon* (which describes the Redemption) is omitted because the Redemption will not take place at night.

Recitation of *Vi-Yhi No’am* when *Yom Tov* falls out the following week:

1.

Sar Shalom Ga’on writes that the Rabbis limited saying *Vi-Yhi No’am* to *Motza’ei Shabbat*. It is not recited on *Motza’ei Yom Tov* or *Yom Kippur* when these fall on a weekday.

2.

Rokei’ach: The expression *u-ma’asei yadeinu* refers to “*vav*” *ma’asei yadeinu* – i.e., working for six days. When *Yom Tov* falls in the middle of the week, we do not work for a full six days.

3.

Shibolei Ha-Leket: R. Sherira Ga’on writes that the only time that *Vi-Yhi No’am* is not said on *Motza’ei Shabbat* is when that night is *Yom Tov* or *Chol Ha-Mo’ed*.

4.

Abudirham: The letter *zayin* (seven) is absent in the verses from “*vi-yhi no’am*” to “*orekh yamim*.” This teaches that there are seven *Motza’ei Shabbatot* on which these verses are not said. The seven occur when any of the following falls during the week: the first or last day of *Pesach*, *Shavuot*, *Rosh Ha-Shanah*, *Yom Kippur*, *Sukkot*, and *Shemini Atzeret*.

5.

When *Pesach* falls on Shabbat, *Vi-Yhi No’am* is not recited the previous Shabbat because one may not do work on *Erev Pesach* after noon.

⁵⁴⁰. While *Shalom Aleikhem* is recited almost universally, its origin is post-*Shulchan Arukh*. Many authorities object to all or part of its passages.

he was clutching the heel of Esav. The name Yisrael, on the other hand, speaks of the point at which the Patriarch obtained spiritual perfection. The name Yisrael symbolizes the Jew in the era of Redemption.

In our own lives, and in the microcosm of the week, there is this same duality – the weekdays symbolize *galut* and darkness; Shabbat symbolizes redemption and light. From this perspective, even Friday night is classified as “day,” and therefore, when Shabbat arrives there is a changing of the angels. As such, when we return from the synagogue on Friday night, we first greet the Shabbat angels by reciting “*shalom aleikhem malakhei ha-shareit...bo’akhem le-shalom malakhei ha-shalom*” – “peace be upon you ministering angels...come in peace angels of peace.” Moreover, just as Yaakov asked that the angel of Esav that he fought with bless him, so too we beseech the angels to bless us in the manner that Yaakov was blessed – “*barkhuni le-shalom malakhei ha-shalom*.”⁵⁴¹ Finally, after the greeting of the Shabbat angels, we bid the angels who guarded us throughout the week farewell.⁵⁴²

III.

On *Motza’ei Shabbat* the process is reversed, and therefore we recite *Yosheiv Be-Seiter*, which contains the verse “For His angels He commands to guard over your paths.”

The commentators explain that the reason that the Shabbat angels leave is due to the departure of the *neshamah yeteirah* following Shabbat, which leaves the Shabbat angels with nothing left for them to protect. Once the Shabbat angels leave, it is imperative that Jews be guarded by the weekday/*galut* angels. It is for this reason that we recite *Yosheiv Be-Seiter*.

However, it is not inevitable that one lose his or her *neshamah yeteirah* when Shabbat ends. According to the *Zohar*, the *neshamah yeteirah* can be retained constantly. In fact, the great *tzadikim* possess *neshamot yeteirot* even during the week.

IV.

Given this background we can now understand why we do not recite *Yosheiv Be-Seiter* when a *Yom Tov* falls during the week. While there is a dispute as to whether or not a person possesses a *neshamah yeteirah* on *Yom Tov*, assuming that one does, there is a basic difference between that *neshamah yeteirah* and the *neshamah yeteirah* of Shabbat. Since Shabbat is consecrated by *Hashem*, He grants us the gift of the *neshamah yeteirah* of Shabbat automatically. *Yom Tov*, however, is consecrated by *Kelal Yisrael*, who are active participants in the creation of the festival, through the setting of the calendar and the *Yom Tov* preparations. Thus, the *neshamah yeteirah* of *Yom Tov* is gained, not simply given. By properly purifying ourselves and preparing for the holidays, we retain this modified form of the *neshamah yeteirah* from Shabbat, and thus on a Saturday night leading into a week in which *Yom Tov* falls, there is no reason to recite *Yosheiv Be-Seiter*.⁵⁴³

V.

This analysis leads us to another question that has been much debated by commentators: Should one recite *Shalom Aleikhem* on a *Yom Tov* that falls out on Shabbat?

There are different customs in response to this question, which I propose revolve around whether one has a *neshamah yeteirah* on *Yom Tov*.

Those who maintain that one has a *neshamah yeteirah* on *Yom Tov* believe that the Shabbat angels that arrived on the Shabbat before the *Yom Tov* remain through the last day of *Yom Tov*. Thus, there is no reason to recite *Yosheiv*

⁵⁴¹. The commentators explain that the blessing that we request of the angels is that they bestow upon us the *neshamah yeteirah* (extra soul) that is granted to each Jew on Friday night. Some find the recitation of this request to be theologically problematic. Yet, it does follow the format of Yaakov’s encounter.

⁵⁴². Some refrain from reciting this stanza.

⁵⁴³. It is the general custom that when *Yom Tov* falls on Shabbat, *Yosheiv Be-Seiter* is recited on the previous Saturday night. In that case *Vi-Yhi No’am* is recited because there are six full workdays in the week and, as explained by *Arukh Ha-Shulchan*, *Yosheiv Be-Seiter* is also recited for purposes of *parnasah*. Notwithstanding, because Jews begin making their *Yom Tov* preparations starting Saturday night, the angels do not leave and there is no reason to recite *Shalom Aleikhem* at the arrival of *Shabbat Yom Tov*.

Be-Seiter that previous Saturday night⁵⁴⁴ or *-Shalom Aleikhem* on *Shabbat Yom Tov*. Once the last day of *Yom Tov* ends the angels leave⁵⁴⁵ and *Shalom Aleikhem* must be recited on the next -Friday night.

Those who recite *Shalom Aleikhem* when *Yom Tov* comes out on Shabbat maintain that a person does not have a *neshamah yeteirah* on *Yom Tov*. Thus, on the previous *Motza'ei Shabbat*, the Shabbat angels depart and therefore must be greeted again the following Shabbat with *Shalom Aleikhem*. However, the question remains, according to this position: If the Shabbat angels are departing, why not say *Yosheiv Be-Seiter* that Saturday night? Those on this side of the dispute have no answer to this question and hence admit that by rights it should be said.

Part 2: *Ve-Atah Kadosh*: The Fourth *Shemoneh Esrei*

I.

Ve-Atah Kadosh (or in its expanded form, *U-Va Le-Tziyon*⁵⁴⁶) is a prayer that seems to be ubiquitous. It is recited after *Shemoneh Esrei* each morning during *Shacharit*, before the *Minchah Shemoneh Esrei* on Shabbat, after the *Ma'ariv Shemoneh Esrei* on *Motza'ei Shabbat*, before *Ne'ilah* on *Yom Kippur*, after *Eikhah* on *Tishah Be-Av*, and after the *Megillah* on *Purim*. Yet, understanding it remains a challenge. It is one of several “prayers” that are composed of a series of verses from *Tanakh* – most notably from *Tehillim* but also from *Yeshayahu*, *Yirmiyahu*, *Mikhah*, and *Divrei Ha-Yamim* – that are strung together in what may appear to be a haphazard or at best a stream of consciousness mode. Two other similar “prayers” are *Yehi Khevod*, recited during *Shacharit*, and *Shomei'a Tefillah Adekha Kol Basar*, which is a preamble to the *Selichot*. However, upon close examination there is a very important overriding theme to *Ve-Atah Kadosh* which we shall presently examine and that shall help us gain insight into its meaning.

II.

We begin by noting that during the ending of the weekday *Shacharit*, the section of the *tefillah* that encompasses *Ashrei*, *U-Va Le-Tziyon*, and *Aleinu* contains the same bookends, *Ashrei* and *Aleinu*, that comprise the weekday *Minchah* service. Thus, in a sense, this section is its own self-contained *tefillah* service. This point is given added credence by the fact that oftentimes one mourner takes over for another as the *sheli'ach tzibur* to recite this section.⁵⁴⁷ If this is so, it means that *U-Va Le-Tziyon* is considered to be the *Amidah* of this miniature *tefillah*. We will now proceed to show that, in fact, the sequence of its verses corresponds to *Shemoneh Esrei*. After demonstrating that this is so, we will explain why this “fourth *Shemoneh Esrei*” was instituted.

For purposes of presentation, we begin with the third through fifth verses of *U-Va Le-Tziyon* which contain within them the three essential verses of *Kedushah* with their translations followed by a reference to the first two blessings of the *Shemoneh Esrei*, the *Avot* and *Gevurot*.⁵⁴⁸

<i>Shemoneh Esrei</i>	<i>Ve-Atah Kadosh</i>
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⁵⁴⁴. In a case where *Yom Tov* falls during the week and the workweek is abbreviated we do not recite either *Vi-Yhi No'am* or *Yosheiv Be-Seiter* the previous Saturday night.

⁵⁴⁵. While *Yosheiv Be-Seiter* is not said at this point, it is interesting to note that among Lubavitch *Chasidim* it is customary to recite the verse, “And Yaakov went on his way, and angels of God met him” (*Bereishit* 32:2) immediately at the end of *Shemini Atzeret-Simchat Torah* to mark the transition to the regular week.

⁵⁴⁶. The first two verses, “*u-va le-Tziyon go'el*” and “*va-ani zot beriti*,” are not said at night because according to tradition, the Redemption will take place solely during the day.

⁵⁴⁷. *Bi'ur Halakhah*, O.C. 132, s.v., *Kuntrus Ma'amar Kaddishin*.

⁵⁴⁸. The translation is from the *Online Siddur with Commentary* (translated by Rabbi Eliyahu Touger; edited by Uri Kaploun; Chabad Lubavitch of Maryland) and *The Complete Jewish Bible*, Judaica Press.

<p>וקרא זה אל זה ואמר קדוש. קדוש. קדוש ה' צבאות. מלא כל הארץ כבודו...ברוך כבוד ה' ממקומו... ימלך ה' לעולם אלהיך ציון לדר ודר הללוי-ה. אתה קדוש ושםך קדוש וקדושים בכל יום יהללך סלה:</p> <p>And the [seraphim] called to each other saying, "Holy, holy, holy is God, Commander of legions; the entire earth is filled with His glory"... "Blessed be the glory of God from its place"... "God will reign forever – your Lord, O Tziyon, to all generations. Halleluyah! You are holy, and Your name is holy, and holy ones praise You every day for eternity."</p>	<p>ואתה קדוש יושב תהלות ישראל. וקרא זה אל זה ואמר קדוש. קדוש. קדוש ה' צבאות. מלא כל הארץ כבודו... ותשאני רוח. ואשמע אחרי קול רעש גדול ברוך כבוד ה' ממקומו...ה' ימלך לעולם ועד:</p> <p>You, holy One, are enthroned upon the praises of Yisrael. And the [-seraphim] called to each other saying, "Holy, holy, holy is God, -Commander of legions; the entire earth is filled with His glory" (Yeshayahu 6:3)... And a wind bore me, and behind me I hear a great voice resonating loudly, "Blessed be the glory of God from its place" (Yechezkel 3:12)... "God will reign forever and ever" (-Shemot 15:18).</p>
<p>ברוך אתה ה' אלהינו וא-להי אבותינו. א-להי אברהם. א-להי יצחק. וא-להי יעקב...</p> <p>Blessed are You, God, our Lord, and the Lord of our Patriarchs, the Lord of Avraham, the Lord of Yitzchak, and Lord of Yaakov...</p>	<p>ה' א-להי אברהם יצחק וישראל אבותינו...</p> <p>O Lord God of Avraham, Yitzchak, and of Yisrael, our fathers (Divrei Ha-Yamim Aleph 29:18)...</p>
<p>אתה גבור לעולם...רב להושיע</p> <p>You are mighty forever...[God is] abounding in deliverance.</p>	<p>שמרה זאת לעולם...</p> <p>Keep this (the promises to the Avot) forever...</p>

The fourth and fifth blessings of the *Shemoneh Esrei*, the first of the *bakashot* (requests) – *Atah Chonein* and *Hashiveinu Avinu* – and the corresponding verses of *Ve-Atah Kadosh*, speak of how God invests man with knowledge and intellectual abilities, and that we pray to Him that He cause us to turn our hearts to Him and repent.

<p>אתה חונן לאדם דעת. ומלמד לאנוש בינה...</p> <p>You graciously endow knowledge to man and teach understanding to mortals...</p>	<p>ליצר מחשבות לבב עמך...</p> <p>Even the creation of the thoughts of the heart of Your people, and prepare their hearts to You...</p>
<p>השיבנו אבינו לתורתך. וקרבו מלכנו לעבודתך והחזירנו בתשובה שלמה לפניך...</p> <p>Our Father, cause us to return to Your Torah; draw us near O King, to Your service, and bring</p>	<p>והכן לבבם אליך: והוא רחום. יכפר עון ולא ישחית. והרבה להשיב אפו. ולא יעיר כל חמתו...</p> <p>And prepare their hearts to You (Divrei Ha-Yamim Aleph 29:18). But He, being full of compassion, forgave their</p>

us back to You in complete repentance...	iniquity, and did not destroy them; often He turned away His anger, and did not stir up all His wrath (<i>Tehillim</i> 78:38)...
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After repenting, in both prayers, we implore *Hashem* to forgive us.

סלח לנו אבינו כי חטאנו. מחל לנו מלכנו כי פשענו. כי מוחל וסולח אתה... Forgive us, our Father, for we have sinned, absolve us, our King, for we have transgressed...	כי אתה ה' טוב וסלח. ורב חסד לכל קראיך... For You, O Lord, are good and forgiving, with much kindness to all who call You (<i>Tehillim</i> 86:5)...
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In the *Shemoneh Esrei*, we next ask *Hashem* for redemption. Interestingly, *Ve-Atah Kadosh* does not appear to make a similar request. We will explain this below.

ראה בעינינו. וריבה ריבנו. וגאלנו מהרה למען שמך. כי גואל חזק אתה... Please behold our oppression and wage our battle, redeem us speedily for the sake of Your Name, for You God are a strong Redeemer...	[Unlike in <i>Shemoneh Esrei</i> , there is no mention of redemption. Instead we have:] צדקתך צדק לעולם ותורתך אמת: תתן אמת ליעקב... Your righteousness is perpetual righteousness, and Your Torah is true (<i>Tehillim</i> 119:142). You shall give the truth of Yaakov...
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In both *tefillot*, the next request is that *Hashem* heal us and redeem us. The “loving-kindness to Avraham” refers to God’s visiting him after his circumcision and sending an angel to heal him.

רפאנו ה' ונרפא. הושיענו ונושעה כי תהלתנו אתה... Heal us, O God, and we will be healed, deliver us and we will be saved...	חסד לאברהם. אשר נשבעת לאבותינו מימי קדם... Loving-kindness to Avraham, which You swore to our forefathers from days of yore (<i>Mikhah</i> 7:20)...
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The next two areas that follow in both prayers are sustenance and redemption. Interestingly, Ibn Ezra and Radak offer two possible interpretations of the word “*ya’amas*.” The first is that it refers to “blessings” and thus the verse reads, “every day God lavishes upon us *His blessings*.” As such, it refers to the blessing of *Bareikh Aleinu*. The second is that it refers to *Hashem* hastening the final Redemption. Thus, the verse reads, “Every day God lavishes upon us *our salvation* forever.” In this case, “*ya’amas*” refers to the blessing of *Teka Be-Shofar*.

ברך עלינו ה' א-להינו את השנה הזאת ואת כל מיני תבואתה לטובה...	ברוך ה' יום יום יעמס לנו... Blessed is the Lord; every day God lavishes upon us our salvation forever (<i>Tehillim</i> 68:20)...
Bless for us, God our Lord, this year and all varieties of its produce for good...	
תקע בשופר גדול לחרותנו...	הא-ל ישועתנו סלה...
Sound the great <i>shofar</i> for our freedom...	Every day God lavishes upon us our salvation forever (<i>Tehillim</i> 68:20)...

The *Shemoneh Esrei* next speaks of *Hashem's* reinstituting the legal system. As *Tehillim* 82:1 teaches, "God stands...in the midst of the judges." Thus at the time of Judgment, "The Lord of Hosts is with us," ruling as our Judge.

השיבה שופטינו כבראשונה ויועצינו כבתחלה. והסר ממנו יגון ואנחה. ומלך עלינו אתה ה' לבדך בחסד וברחמים. וצדקנו במשפט...	ה' צבאות עמנו משגב לנו א-להי יעקב סלה...
Restore our judges as at first and counselors as in the beginning. Remove from us sorrow and sighing, and reign over us, You alone, O God, with kindness and mercy, and vindicate us with justice.	The Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of Yaakov is our fortress forever (<i>Tehillim</i> 46:12).

Following that, both the blessing of *Al Ha-Tzadikim* and the verse cited in *Ve-Atah Kadosh* speak of *bitachon* (faith in *Hashem*). This is the only time that this term is used in the *Shemoneh Esrei*, but it is emphasized many times in subsequent verses of *Ve-Atah Kadosh* that are listed after the verses that correspond to the *Shemoneh Esrei*.

על הצדיקים ועל החסידים. ועל זקני עמך בית ישראל. ועל פליטת סופריהם. ועל גרי הצדק. ועלינו. יהמו רחמך ה' א-להינו. ותן שכר טוב לכל הבוטחים בשמך באמת. ושים חלקנו עמם לעולם ולא נבוש כי בך בטחנו...	ה' צבאות אשרי אדם בטח בך:
On behalf of the righteous, on behalf of the pious, on behalf of the elders of Your people, the House of Israel, on behalf of their surviving halls of learning, on behalf of the righteous converts, and on our own behalf; may Your mercies be aroused, God our lord. Grant a good reward for all those who genuinely trust in Your Name. Let us share their lot. May we never be ashamed, because we trust You.	O Lord of Hosts, fortunate is the man who trusts in You (<i>Tehillim</i> 84:13).

Next we ask that God save us both physically and spiritually by returning to *Yerushalayim*.

<p>ה' הושיעה... ולירושלים עירך ברחמים תשוב. ותשכן בתוכה כאשר דברת. ובנה אותה בקרוב בימינו בני עולם. וכסא דוד מהרה לתוכה תכין...</p>	<p>O Lord, save [us] (<i>Tehillim</i> 20:40)...</p>
<p>Return to <i>Yerushalayim</i> Your City with mercy, dwell within it, as You declared. Speedily establish the throne of David, Your servant, within it...</p>	

Then we ask that God send us the King, *Mashi'ach*. Note, we interpret "*Ha-Melekh*" in the phrase "*Ha-Melekh ya'aneinu*" as referring [also] to *Mashi'ach*.

<p>המלך יעננו... את צמח דוד עבדך מהרה תצמיח. וקרנו תרום בישועתך. כי לישועתך קוינו כל היום...</p>	<p>May the King answer us (<i>Tehillim</i> 20:40)...</p>
<p>Speedily cause the scion of David (<i>Mashi'ach</i>) Your servant to sprout forth. Raise his standard high with Your deliverance, for we hope for Your deliverance to flourish...</p>	

Finally we arrive at the point where we ask *Hashem* to hear and respond positively to all of our requests.

<p>ביום קראנו... שמע קולנו. ה' א-להינו חוס ורחם עלינו...</p>	<p>On the day we call (<i>Tehillim</i> 20:40)...</p>
<p>Hear our voice, God, our Lord. Merciful Father, have compassion upon us...</p>	

III.

Up until this point we have shown that essentially the *Ve-Atah Kadosh* portion of *U-Va Le-Tziyon* consists of parallels to the *Amidah* from the first blessing through the blessing of *Shema Koleinu*. Before proceeding further, we must understand the reason that it was decided that a "fourth *Shemoneh Esrei*" should be added to the prayer.

In my book *Esther's Plea*, I elaborate on the fact that the *Ma'ariv* prayer was instituted by Yaakov when he was on his way to *galut* (exile).⁵⁴⁹ As such, there is strong indication among the traditional sources that it was not recited when the Temple stood during times of [relative] peace.⁵⁵⁰ R. Chaim Vital (*Eitz Ha-Da'at Ha-Tov, Vayishlach*) explains that Yaakov actually prayed *Ma'ariv* at the site where the Temple would be built, right *at* sunset before the time for reciting the *Shema* had arrived. Similarly, the Arizal prayed *Ma'ariv*, except on Shabbat eve, between sunset and the time that two stars were visible. The point of his praying at that time was that it is at that moment that darkness (the decree of *galut*) is descending on the earth but has not as yet taken hold. It is therefore an auspicious time to pray for the tearing up of negative decrees.

What we have termed the "fourth *Shemoneh Esrei*," *Ve-Atah Kadosh*, is a prayer that was instituted *after* the onset of *galut*. It was to be recited each day – during *Shacharit* – when the world was spiritually *dark* even while the sun is ascending and is casting its glorious rays upon the earth. *Galut* was a time of despair. It was also a time when Jews were on a very modest spiritual plane. To overcome this dire plight, the *Kedushah De-Sidra* was instituted with its various verses that parallel the *Shemoneh Esrei*. The function of this "*Shemoneh Esrei*" is to beseech God that He should redeem the Jewish people.

IV.

The preamble to the prayer consists of two verses:

⁵⁴⁹. Nachman Cohen, *Esther's Plea* (New York, 1999), 6–18.

⁵⁵⁰. *Esther's Plea*, p. 16.

And a redeemer shall come to Tziyon, and to those who repent of transgression in Yaakov, says the Lord. “As for Me, this is My covenant with them,” says the Lord. “My spirit, which is upon you and My words that I have placed in your mouth, shall not move from your mouth or from the mouth of your seed or from the mouth of your seed’s seed,” said the Lord, “from now and to eternity.” (*Yeshayahu* 59:20–21)

The first verse is comprised of two elements: God will redeem Israel *and* that the recipients of this redemption will be those who do *teshuvah*. The second verse assures that throughout time, God’s spirit and His Torah will remain steadfast in the lives of the Jewish people. As the prayer develops, each verse cited corresponds to the *Shemoneh Esrei* except for the one that is meant to correspond to redemption. Instead, the verse cited in *U-Va Le-Tziyon* is “Your righteousness is perpetual righteousness, and Your Torah is true” (*Tehillim* 119:142). While this verse does not speak of redemption explicitly, it speaks to the *bitachon* of the Jewish people who have full trust that God will redeem His people. Thus, after reaching the verse that corresponds to the blessing of *Shema Koinu* in which one may expand upon his own needs or the congregation’s needs, we assert again, in *U-Va Le-Tziyon*, our belief that God granted us a Torah of Truth and that we can be assured of redemption:

Blessed is He, our God, Who created us for His glory, separated us from those who go astray, gave us the Torah of truth, and implanted eternal life within us.	ברוך הוא א-להינו שבראנו לכבודו. והבדילנו מן התועים. ונתן לנו תורת אמת וחיי עולם נטע בתוכנו.
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This supplication is a response to God’s declaration stated at the beginning of this prayer. There God declares, “As for Me, this is My covenant with them. ‘My spirit, which is upon you and My words that I have placed in your mouth, shall not move from your mouth or from the mouth of your seed or from the mouth of your seed’s seed,’ said the Lord, ‘from now and to eternity.’” To this Israel retorts, “Yes! This is what we want as well. We recognize and bless You for creating us for Your glory, and for separating us from those who go astray. You have placed in our mouths the Torah of truth, and implanted eternal life within us. May You open our hearts to Your Torah, place Your love and Your fears in our hearts and [inspire us] to carry out Your will so that we serve You wholeheartedly. We also call upon You, O God, to fulfill Your promise that Your words ‘shall not move from [our] mouth or from the mouth of [our seed] and from the mouth of [our] seed’s seed from now and to eternity’ so that ‘we will not labor in vain,’ nor be alarmed by bearing children who will not be accomplished in Torah and observant in its *mitzvot*.”

It is to this end that we pray:

May it be Your will God, our Lord, and the Lord of our fathers, that we observe Your statutes in this world, and that we merit, live, see, and inherit good blessing in the era of <i>Mashi’ach</i> and the life of the World to Come so that my soul will play music for Your glory and not fall silent; God my Lord, I will thankfully acknowledge You forever.	יהי רצון מלפניך ה' א- להינו וא-להי אבותינו. שנשמר חקיך בעולם הזה. ונזכה ונחיה ונראה ונירש טובה וברכה לשני ימות המשיח ולחיי העולם הבא. למען יזמרך כבוד ולא ידם. ה' א-להי לעולם אודך.
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The prayer ends by returning to the verse that was recited corresponding to the blessing of redemption:

Your righteousness is perpetual righteousness, and Your Torah is true (<i>Tehillim</i> 119:142)...	צדקתך צדק לעולם ותורתך אמת...
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Along with a declaration of our trust (*bitachon*) in God’s promises:

Blessed is the man who trusts in God, and God will be his assurance. Trust in God forever, for the strength of the worlds is in God the Lord. Those who know Your name will put their trust in You, because, You, God have not abandoned those who seek You...	ברוך הגבר אשר יבטח בה'. והיה ה' מבטחו. בטחו בה' עדי עד. כי ביה ה' צור עולמים. ויבטחו בך יודעי שמך. כי לא עזבת דרשך ה'...
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We end the prayer by merging the themes of the first two verses, “*u-va le-Tziyon*” and “*va-ani zot beriti*” – where the first verse spoke of redemption and the second of Torah, declaring:

God desired, for the sake of His righteousness, to make the Torah great and glorious.	ה' חפץ למען צדקו. יגדיל תורה ויאדיר.
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Thus, we implore God to redeem Israel, knowing that this will accomplish God’s greatest desire of furthering the knowledge of Torah and having the world understand its, and His, grandeur.

V.

Based upon our hypothesis, we explain the positioning of *Ve-Atah Kadosh* in the prayers, as follows:⁵⁵¹ *Ve-Atah Kadosh* is recited each day after the *Shemoneh Esrei* of *Shacharit* because an added prayer for redemption is necessary, as explained above. It is recited towards the end of Shabbat at *Minchah* and during *Ne’ilah* on *Yom Kippur* because on these days *Mashi’ach* cannot come to redeem Israel, and thus we pray for him to come the next day – thus, the *Ve-Atah Kadosh* prayer is recited in the time that redemption becomes a possibility. It is also recited after the reading of *Eikhah* on the night of *Tishah Be-Av* because in our direst hour we wish to declare that we have full faith that *Hashem* will redeem us for “Your righteousness is perpetual righteousness, and Your Torah is true.” Likewise, on *Purim*, when we recall one of our finest hours as a nation, we recite *Ve-Atah Kadosh* and beseech: Just as You redeemed us then, please redeem us again, speedily in our days.

⁵⁵¹. Everyone agrees that *U-Va Le-Tziyon* is recited after *Shacharit* during the weekdays. Different reasons are given for its recitation, however. *Shibolei Ha-Leket* (44) cites R. Shlomo who writes that for those who followed the procedure of the *chasidim ha-rishonim*, who remained in the synagogue for some time (*sha’ah achat*) after *Shacharit*, the Rabbis instituted the recitation of *Ashrei*, which begins “Happy are those who reside in Your house.” During this period people would study *Tanakh*, *Mishnah*, and Talmud. When Jews became impoverished and they could not remain in *shul* so long to study, they recited the *Shema* and the Ten Commandments and the two verses of “*u-va le-Tziyon*” and “*va-ani zot beriti*.” On Shabbat and *Yom Tov*, when people were not burdened with making a living, they remained in the synagogue to study as in days of old. Therefore, there was no need to recite *Ashrei* and *U-Va Le-Tziyon* on Shabbat morning. Nevertheless, it was recited at *Minchah* on Shabbat and *Yom Tov*, so that “people do not forget to say it during the week and the customs of Israel are considered to be Torah.”

Kol Bo (40) claims that the reason *U-Va Le-Tziyon* is not recited on Shabbat morning is because it would elongate the *tefillah* to the point that it would be -onerous for the elderly, pregnant, and nursing mothers who would have to fast until the prayers were completed. *Ha-Itim* reports that while *Ashrei* and *U-Va -Le-Tziyon* were not said as part of the regular ending of *tefillah* on Shabbat, it was said by those who remained after the *tefillah* to study. On the other hand, *Ha-Manhig* cites R. Sherira and R. Hai Ga’on who report that *Ashrei* and *U-Va Le-Tziyon* were recited after *Musaf*.

With regard to *Yom Kippur* there are several customs. In the community of the *Shibolei Ha-Leket* (as he writes in 320–321), *Ashrei* and *U-Va Le-Tziyon* were recited as part of *Minchah*, but only *Ashrei* was recited before *Ne’ilah*. *Ha-Manhig* states that *Ashrei* and *U-Va Le-Tziyon* were recited both after *Musaf* and before *Ne’ilah*. Rashi (*Siddur* 214) writes that they were not said before *Minchah* because *Yom Kippur* is different from Shabbat and *Yom Tov* since during the latter days, people go home after the morning service. When they then come back for *Minchah*, it is appropriate that they recite those prayers before taking out the Torah. On *Yom Kippur*, however, since *Minchah* follows *Musaf* immediately, there is no need for preparatory prayers.