

BS"D Soul Prayer, Class #13, February 4, 2020¹

The Amidah – Standing in the Light

Five Stages of Shachrit

- I. In and Up – *Birkhot HaShachar / Korbanot*
 - A. Name: Final *Heh* of *YHVH* (lower gate to spiritual dimension).
 - B. Dimension: *Asiyah* (action; indwelling level of spirituality within physicality; physical body as temple of the soul, and physical world as Hashem's Temple).
 - C. Soul-level: *Nefesh* (indwelling soul, enmeshed with deepest processes of physical body).
 - D. Consciousness: *emunah* that Hashem is with you in all your personal issues; *selichah* (asking forgiveness, pardon); *taharah* (cleansing, purity of action and purity of intent); *kaparah* (atonement and transformation).
- II. In and Up – *Pesukey d'Zimrah*
 - A. Name: *Vav* of *YHVH* (learning to see your path, the path of your life-journey, from the perspective of heaven).
 - B. Dimension: *Yetzirah* (formation; spiritual dimension immediately above you).
 - C. Soul-level: *Ruach* (spirit; intuition; inner voice of prophecy), appreciating your true identity and mustering the emotional maturity to own it.
 - D. Consciousness: *emunah* in *hashgachah pratit* (heightened awareness of Hashem's care, providence, and guidance in your life); *todah* (thankfulness); *tehillah* (praise); *berakhah* (experiencing Hashem's blessing in our life).
- III. In and Up – *Kriat Shma & Blessings*
 - A. Name: First *Heh* of *YHVH* (Divine palace at peak of mountain).
 - B. Dimension: *Beriah* (creation; spiritual dimension above *Yetzirah* and *Asiyah*).
 - C. Soul-level: *Neshamah* (divine soul; revealed guidance from above); mind (mental clarity, discovering deeper meaning).
 - D. Consciousness: *emunah* that you have a part to play in Hashem's plan; *kedushah* (holiness, elevation of your whole life to a higher plane); *simchah* (uncontrollable joy, bubbly excitement, elation); *ahavah* (love for Hashem and all His creations; feeling His closeness and His love healing you).
- IV. In and Up – *Amidah*
 - A. Name: *Yod* of Name.
 - B. Dimension: *Atzilut* (emanation, closeness).
 - C. Soul-level: *Chayah* (transpersonal, collective

soul); experiencing transcendence.

- D. Consciousness: life review, heavenly vision of your life; *yirat ha'rommemut* (awe of Hashem's infiniteness beyond anything you have ever known); *devekut* (bonding, ecstasy); *yichud* (oneness, merging).

V. In and Up – *Hallel / Viduy-Tachanun / Kriat HaTorah*: apex of *Yod*; *Keter* of *Atzilut*; *Yechidah*; space between *keruvim*; nullification of small self to connect to Great Self, Infinite Source of Renewal.

VI. Return Down and Out – *Ashrei*: returning to *Beriah*; clear mind. *Shir Shel Yom*: returning to *Yetzirah*; clean heart and emotions. *Ketoret*: returning to *Asiyah*; physical body as temple. Torah (Spiritual Food) and Breakfast (Physical Food): *Berakhot*; *Birkat HaMazon*.

The Amidah – Our Daily Yom Kippur

Every day we pray the *Amidah* (standing prayer) three times. The *Amidah* represents the peak of the daily mountain-ladder of prayer. It is the peak of Mount Sinai where we receive the Torah (just as Moshe received the Torah on Sinai), and the peak of Yaacov's ladder where we are granted a vision of our life from Hashem's point of view (as Yaacov was granted in his vision of the ladder). It is that place beyond place where we commune with Hashem in the holy of holies of our mind and heart.

The Amidah is our daily Yom Kippur.

On *Yom Kippur*, the day of atonement (at-one-ment), Hashem cleans and clears us from our past, not by erasing or forgetting our past, but by transforming the way we understand our lives completely. The same is true of the *Amidah* together with all the stages of the davening that lead to it.

The powerful light that Hashem shines on us on *Yom Kippur* flows down from His highest plan for us. It is for this reason that it has the power to not only free us from our past, not only allows us to be who we are despite our past, but to be our true self a million times more than if we had never fallen, never lost our *daat* (our meta-awareness of who we are as souls). *Yom Kippur* gives us new eyes with which to see our life. *Yom Kippur* gives us a mission, to live our lives on a higher level, knowing clearly that there is no greater joy and privilege than to serve Hashem. With such new eyes, our very humanness which we thought was our undoing is our greatest strength. Again, the same is true of our daily *Amidah*.

Just as in mountain climbing, it is important to see the goal of prayer before you (in your mind's eye) before you

¹ Contact Avraham Sutton, www.AvrahamSutton.com; email: avraham.sutton@icloud.com; whatsapp: +972-525-640-249.

begin davening. It is important that the goal be clear. What is the goal of the inner work of davening?

To get clear! To be clean! In the psalm for *Yom Rishon*, it is called “*Neki kapayim ubar levav* – clean hands-actions and a pure heart” (Ps. 24:4). In the Torah, it is called “*Viheyitem nekiim me’Hashem umi’Yisrael* – you shall be clean in your relationship with Hashem and in your relationship with Israel” (Numbers 32:23). You shall be clean with Hashem (on the inside, between you and Gd), and you shall be clean with Israel (and on the outside, between you and your fellow man).

This is the meaning of the following *yehi ratzon* from the *korbanot* section of the davening: “*Yehi ratzon milefanekha*, may it be in accordance with Your will, and may it be pleasing before You, Hashem our Gd and Gd of our ancestors, *sh’terachem alenu* (to have compassion on us) *ve’timchol lanu* (and pardon us) for all our errors; *u’tekhaper lanu* (cleansing us) of all our intentional transgressions; *ve’timchol ve’tislach lanu* (and pardon and forgive) all our rebellious crimes...”

Mechilah (pardon), *selichah* (forgiveness), and *kaparah* (atonement, cleansing). In asking Hashem for these things, we are asking for His help (beyond whatever we can do on our own) to get clean and clear from all mental, emotional, and physical impediments that are preventing us from living our lives to the fullest. The inner work of davening involves opening up to this powerful cleansing energy. **Clear with Hashem, clear with others, and clear with ourselves.**

This is what we meant when we said that the goal has to be clear. We have to know what we are striving for and why, and we have to know that Hashem WANTS NOTHING MORE THAN TO HELP US GET THERE. Hashem is infinite. Connecting to Hashem is connecting to infinite potential. As we shall see, this means connecting and aligning our *ratzon* (desire, will, willingness) with His *ratzon* (desire, will, favor). There is no question that we can and should ask this on *Yom Kippur* – nothing less than complete clearing, cleaning, atonement, transformation – but it is no less important to ask for this every day. It is in this sense that *Yom Kippur* is the source of whatever we can achieve on a daily basis.

Now, imagine yourself arriving at the peak of the mountain of prayer, entering a magnificent throne room and bowing before Hashem. **Imagine** Hashem greeting you warmly and saying, “*Shalom*, may your coming be in peace.” **Imagine** Hashem asking you about your life (your *climb* up the mountain). **Imagine** Hashem opening and expanding your mind to be able to see the entire panorama of your life (the entire trek up the mountain) from where you are now standing.

Imagine that you are transported back in time in your mind to your childhood, to those first days and years of your life when you were pure and felt pure (even

if don’t remember feeling that way, **imagine** what it would be like to feel your own innate purity and beauty).

Two levels. First, **imagine** yourself as the little boy/girl you were. See yourself sometimes playing happily, but sometimes struggling to understanding who you are. Feel that struggle. Second, imagine that Hashem is an invisible presence with you, a soul consciousness hovering over you, surrounding you, guiding you. Give this a few minutes. You are imagining something that is true. His presence was surrounding you. He was guiding you! You were not aware of it, but you can be aware of it now, and this new awareness can make a tremendous difference in how you live the rest of your life. We are trying to access a very deep truth here, that Hashem was with us even when we weren’t aware.

Of course, the huge question arises, Why? If He was there with us, why leave us so vulnerable, so impressionable, so at the mercy of so many forces and so many pulls? The answer is equally huge: It was all decided in heaven before we were born. We went before the heavenly tribunal with Hashem at their head. We were shown a vision of our life. We were told what we would need to go through and why. It was/is in order to be of service to Hashem and to all the people in our lives. In other words, in the process of serving Hashem and of helping others, we would attain true Selfhood, true infinite eternal Existence.

The wisdom of Hashem’s plan for us was revealed to us, and we understood. We were shown the family into which we would be born and all its members, and our relationships with them. We were shown the trials and tribulations/failures we would endure, and we were shown the triumphs/victories. We were shown that the victories were part and parcel with the failures.

At the peak of your daily davening you too can access this lofty vision of your life, this life review, one of Hashem’s great gifts to us. Here you can imagine being in Hashem’s presence, speaking directly to you: “Stay with Me in this sacred space, and let the deep truth of My presence in your life penetrate and permeate your heart and being, so that when you go forth from here you will take this new *daat*, this new meta-awareness with you. From now on, whenever difficult situations occur, you will know that it is Me. Oh, don’t worry, I will also reveal Myself in your life in pleasant ways, but these will generally be followed by some test that is meant to bring out your best. The main way to succeed and overcome every test is to know that it is from Me. In this way, they will no longer divert you or prevent you from being of service. On the contrary, they will hint and even assure you that I am with you. For the more you are aware of My presence behind the scenes, the more direct your connection to Me.”