

PRAY *with all* YOUR HEART

—
A GUIDE TO MORE HEARTFELT TEFILLA

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A PUBLICATION OF THE PRIORITY-1 RESOURCE CENTER

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THE ESSENCE OF TEFILLAH *An Overview*

According to the Rambam, it is a Mitzvah from the Torah to perform Tefilla daily. We fulfill this Mitzvah with the Shmoneh Esrei. Tefilla is called Avodah Shebilev, service of the heart. One must have some sense of what feelings we must have during Tefilla and an understanding of the words and concepts of the Shmoneh Esrei, to enable us to inspire the appropriate emotions.

This work will attempt to explain some of the Tefilla process and then to explain the words of the Shmoneh Esrei, to inspire deeper feelings.

The Passuk says in *תהלים ק"כג*: *... תהלים ק"כג: "הנה כעיני עבדים אל יד אדוניהם. . . כן ענינו אל ד' אלקינו עד שיחנונו."* Behold, like the eyes of servants to their masters . . . so, too, are our eyes focused on Hashem until He is gracious to us. The Ibn Ezra explains the comparison to the Eved (servant) and Shifcha (maidservant). Just as the Eved is so dependent that he doesn't have the strength to even run for his life if his master doesn't save him, so too, our eyes are riveted on Hashem and dependent on Him until He graciously saves us. No matter how long it seems to take, we are waiting and waiting until it happens, until He answers us. By continuing to wait until He answers us, we deepen our trust and confidence in Him.

The Ramban, in his disagreement with the Rambam in the Sefer HaMitzvos, uses this Passuk to describe the essence of Tefilla. It seems that one must feel totally helpless without Hashem's gracious kindness and patiently await that kindness, no matter how long it takes in coming, to fulfill the Mitzvah of Avoda Shebilev (tefillah). This may also explain why the Mishna Brurah tells us that when we say the name of Hashem, we need only think of Him as the Adon Haakol, Master of everything. Every time that we say that He is the constant source of all blessing and the Master of everything, we underscore our feeling of helplessness and total reliance on him.

The Avnei Eliyahu in the Siddur HaGra, in the Bracha of Shema Koleinu, says that the root of the word Tefilla refers to an optimistic

thought and hope to get something, based on the Passuk in בראשית "מ"ח:י"א: "ראה פניך לא פללת" I didn't allow myself to be optimistic that I would see your face.

The concept of Tefilla, according to this, is to develop a sense of optimism and hope leading to reliance, confidence and absolute trust in Hashem, Bitachon.

The feeling of helpless waiting without giving up, inspires a sense of reliance and trust which represents the feeling expected of us in this service of the heart called Tefilla.

Chazal tell us that any Bracha that does not contain the name of Hashem and the fact that He is the King of the universe, is not a proper Bracha. The question arises that in the Shmoneh Esrei, the concept of Melech Haolam, King of the universe, is not mentioned. If we analyze the difference in the nature of Shmoneh Esrei, as opposed to all other Brachos, we may begin to understand why the idea of "King of the Universe" is not mentioned.

In the Brachos which express thanks for the pleasures and blessings of life or for the privilege of having and doing Mitzvos, the concept of Melech Haolam can be understood with the following story. A widow used to support her family by selling bagels. All day long she would walk around the marketplace with a basket of bagels. One day, the entire day passed, and she did not even sell one bagel. Finally, as she began to proceed home, broken and disappointed, someone stopped her and asked what she had in the basket. When she answered, he told her that he desperately needed all of them.

On her way home, happy and uplifted by what had just happened, she turned her head heavenward and said, "Master of the Universe, You are so busy with so many important matters of concern to the whole world, where do You find the time to look into my basket and take care of my needs?"

When we recite Brachos expressing appreciation, the fact that Hashem is "King of the Universe" enhances our appreciation for His taking the time and concern to provide for our mundane needs.

In Shmoneh Esrei, however, when the feeling we want to realize is one of trust and confidence, the concept of "Master of the Universe" can even

make it harder to be able to rely on and trust Him. It would seem to us that His involvement with the global issues makes it less likely for Him to be concerned with our relatively petty requests.

We do mention, however, that He is the King. At the end of the first Bracha, the Vilna Gaon explains "מלך עוזר ומושיע ומגן". We call Hashem the King who helps, saves and shields, referring to His help to those who put their trust in Him together with their own effort, or without any effort at all, or even while putting themselves in danger (see notes on first Bracha).

The "King" that we focus on in Shmoneh Esrei is a King who helps, saves and protects all those who put their trust in Him. This is the feeling that we try to achieve in Tefilla. Therefore, a different statement of Malchus is used in Tefilla. Tosafos in Brachos says that V'Elokei Avoseinu is the Malchus. This refers to the special relationship that Hashem has with us, in the merit of our forefathers.

When we analyze the structure of the Shmoneh Esrei, we find that it seems to be built around the concept of inspiring trust and reliance on Hashem. First we pronounce three Brachos of praise of Hashem, then we ask for our various needs, and then we focus on the return of the Avodah in the Bais Hamikdash. After that, we thank Him for all He does for us, declare our confidence that He will continue His kindness to us forever, and then offer a final request for peace, asking, as Chazal say, for the vessel to be able to hold all of the Brachos. Without Shalom, all Brachos fall away.

Despite all of the aspects of the Tefilla, which are structured to assist us in developing our trust and confidence in Him, the concept of standing before the Creator, asking Him for all of our worldly needs, and developing trust in Him, is very difficult for a mere mortal. Even with the preceding three Brachos of praise and the immediate praise after each request, it is still not easy to feel that reliance on Him. It is for this reason that all sorts of Brachos, Pesukei D'Zimra, and the Brachos of Shema and the references to Yetzias Mitzrayim etc precede our Tefillos. These recitations strengthen our recognition of His kindness and caring for us, before we even begin Shmoneh Esrei. This is the reason we are not permitted to interrupt between the Bracha of Ga'al Yisrael and Shemoneh Esrei.

Chazal compare it to one who is heaping praises on a king, and then does not take advantage of the opportunity to request of him his needs at that moment. Obviously, Chazal did not mean that Hashem needs to be flattered with our praises before He answers our requests. The point is that we feel more confident and reliant that He will respond to our prayers positively, after we praise Him since we have increased our appreciation for His kindness and mercy.

From the Yerushalmi it seems that the specific praises referring to Yetzias Mitzrayim underscore our special relationship with Hashem as our Redeemer. It is with this feeling, of having a unique relationship with the ever-so-kind Controller of heaven and earth, that we begin the process of beseeching Him, called Tefilla.

Another point about reaching a level of confidence and reliance is that it is best achieved when it starts from the depths of trouble and need. This is why, according to the Ramban, Tefilla is only a Torah command when it is offered at a time of trouble. It is for this reason that the Shmoneh Esrei starts with "ר' שפתי תפתח ופי יגיד תהלתך", Hashem, open my lips, that my mouth may declare Your praise. We must first realize that we are so helpless, that we cannot even open our lips to praise Hashem, without His doing it for us.

It is also important to understand the mechanism and purpose of Tefilla. Rashi (Breishis 28:21) explains the Tefilla of Yitzchak as "entreating" Hashem, and Hashem's response as "allowing Himself to be entreated and to be placated and swayed" by the Tefilla of Yitzchak.

The Sefer Hachinuch explains two benefits of Tefilla. One, is that it allows us to achieve all of our requests when we ask Him for them. Second, there is a special Zechus, which comes from focusing on the fact that Hashem is the Master of All, the One who bestows goodness, that His eyes are constantly open to our ways, and that at any time, He hears our heartfelt cries.

The knowledge that with Tefilla we have the ability to influence Hashem's dealing with us, and that He bestows goodness and hears our cries, is very helpful in developing an enhanced Bitachon.

To accomplish the real purpose of Tefilla, one must have real feeling. There is a serious concern about our just praying by habit and not having

any feeling. With this in mind, the Chaye Adam, in a moral will left to his family, suggests that in the last paragraph on Shmoneh Esrei, Elokai Nitzor, after the Passuk of Yehiyu Lratzon, one should offer personal requests, whatever one wants, in any language that one is comfortable with, to assure that the Tefilla is not Tefillas Keva (Tefilla by rote) rather than Tefillas Tachanunim (a Tefilla of begging and feeling).

The Sefer Hachinuch explains that Hashem's purpose in creation is to bestow kindness on His creations. However, he continues, in order for this kindness to be true Chessed that we will appreciate, we must be deserving. One of the greatest Zechusim (merits) for us to merit His kindness is the recognition that He is the only source of all blessing. As we recognize this fact, He then bestows His infinite Chessed upon us, and thus we have aided Him in the fulfillment of His purpose in creation.

The Shmoneh Esrei starts with this declaration (Baruch Atah). You, Hashem, are the source of all blessing. This theme is repeated in nineteen Brachos.

The Shmoneh Esrei ends with a request for peace. Chazal tell us (עוקצים ג'–י"ב) that Hashem did not find any vessel that holds blessings together except for peace (Shalom). When we finish expressing our recognition of Hashem as the source of all Bracha, we then ask for a vessel to hold all the Brachos and protect them from falling away and disappearing.

When we breach Shalom, we are preventing Hashem's blessings from working, and we are thereby undermining the very purpose of creation itself. This is why Machlokes is so terrible and Shalom is so truly important.

One final note: The greatest deterrent to a feeling of complete Bitachon may be the sense that a person has that he is not deserving of the benefit that he wants to rely on Hashem for.

Logically, one has no basis to be sure of Hashem's help because he may be unworthy. However, one who deepens his awareness of Hashem's kindness and mercy can bring himself to the emotional feeling, a voice from within, that Hashem will not disappoint him. In addition, it seems from Chazal that even a Rasha, a wicked person, who trusts in Hashem, his trust will not be disappointed.

Constant reflection and deepening of these feelings through the process of Tefillah can evoke real feelings of trust in Hashem's chesed and confidence that He will not let us be disappointed. (מאירי ברכות סה.).
(הבוטח בה' אין תוחלת שלו נכזבה)



Please note: The explanations presented in the following pages have been gathered from explanations in the Otzar Hatefillos and other sources, including Medrash and Gemara. They have been adapted and presented in such a way as to underscore the power they have to inspire trust and confidence in Hashem that He will, in fact, answer our Tefillos.

HOW TO USE THIS TEXT

This text is comprised of several elements, all presented with the intention of enhancing your tefillah. Along with the Hebrew text (A) we provide the English translation of the words (B), the p'shat explanation (C), and then a deeper explanation of the passage (D).

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| <p>B Who bestows beneficial kindnesses</p> <p>C His kindness is completely good, with no negative aspect to it.</p> <p>D <i>One of the issues which often bothers us about Tefillah is that we can ask for something which, in reality, may not be good for us. Hashem's kindness is completely good and when He answers our prayers, He makes sure that the results are, in fact, always good.</i></p> | <p>גוֹמֵל חֶסְדִּים A
טוֹבִים</p> |
|---|---|

Alludes to the fact that Hashem is the only source for all blessing.

אֲדַנִּי שְׁפָתַי תִּפְתָּח
וּפִי יִגִּיד תְּהִלָּתְךָ

This is a declaration of helplessness – “I cannot even open my lips.” This begins the process of feeling reliance, hope, anticipation, confidence and finally trust in Hashem.



This first Brachah outlines the attributes of Hashem that focus our trust in Him, and that make evident to us that we have no one else to rely on but Hashem nowhere else to turn other than to Hashem.



The source of all blessings are You

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה

Alludes to the fact that Hashem is the *only* source for *all* blessing.

Everything we need or want must come from Hashem – the constant and endless source of all blessing. We refer to Hashem in second person, because we have a personal, familiar relationship with Him.

Hashem

יְיָ

Hashem is His name. So personal is our relationship with Him, that we are, as if, on “first name” basis.

Refers to Hashem’s attribute of mercy and the fact that He is the master of everything and trustworthy to keep His word.

We bend our knees at Baruch and bend down at Atah. When we lift ourselves up at the utterance of the name of Hashem, we are reinforcing the realization that we are nothing without Hashem. We are bent-down

and helpless before Hashem – but He lifts us up and provides us with our every need. (Chazal say that we straighten up at the name of Hashem, because of the Passuk, “Hashem zokef kifufim”, Hashem straightens the bent – Yalkut Shimoni.)¹

our God

אֱלֹהֵינוּ

He is both ruler and judge and He is our God. We have a personal relationship with Him.

He is our God, because He redeemed us from slavery to be our God. Hashem did not only redeem our forefathers from slavery in Egypt with amazing miracles; we were all included in that freedom so that we may serve Him. If we know He saved us once, we can feel certain that He will save us again, whenever we need Him.

The concept of Ruler and Judge also show the extreme extent of His Chesed. He didn't need to be so involved in every aspect of our lives, except to do continuous Chesed. This might be what inspired the Avos to reach such lofty levels of service to Hashem.

and the God of our forefathers,

וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ

This personal relationship was present all the way back to our forefathers. The Vilna Gaon says that our fathers were so great that it is befitting to praise Hashem as the God of our fathers. This inspires

1. Rabeinu Yonah (end of first perek Berachos) explains the concept of bending then straightening out when saying the name of Hashem as follows. When we daven, we feel a fear that we are unworthy of Hashem's kindness, and when we straighten up we remember that Hashem "straightens up the bent" seemingly unconditionally, as he does for everyone regularly. This inspires a deep bitachon, meaning from terrible fear of not being worthy of His chesed, and in contrast to trust that Hashem bestows kindness even on the undeserving.

confidence in the Zechus Avos (the merit our fathers) working for us.

Another possible way to view אלקינו ואלהי אבותינו refers to Hashem as ruler and judge which combine to produce infinite השגחה פרטית and חסד. It could be that when our merit falls short, He revisits the merit of our forefathers finds in their judgement additional merit to provide אבות זכות (merit of our forefathers) for their children.

God of Avraham,

אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם,

Avraham, who passed the ten tests and was willing to sacrifice his only son.

Avraham recognized Hashem on his own, even before the Exodus. The loving, personal relationship between Avraham and Hashem was so great that Avraham wanted to sacrifice Yitzchok to fulfill the will of Hashem. Avraham subjugated his desires to the will of Hashem and did it as if it were his own will. In the merit of that act, we can feel confident that Hashem will subjugate His will to meet our desires and treat them as if they were His will.

God of Yitzchok,

אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק,

Yitzchok, who was willing to help sacrifice his own life.

He asked Avraham to tie him up so he shouldn't move and invalidate the sacrifice.

and the God of Yaakov,

וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב,

Yaakov, who, through all his troubles and difficulties, kept full faith in Hashem.

He was only concerned that his suffering shouldn't negatively impact upon his spiritual level of achievement.

The Avos's recognition of Hashem as Ruler and Judge inspired an active commitment in them to the ultimate levels of service to Him. This example inspires us to deeper commitment and we are therefore more able to have Bitachon as there is a lessening concern about our unworthiness for His kindness.

The Almighty,

הַאֵל,

Hashem's ultimate might is manifested by the fact that He subdues His anger to allow expression of His mercy, and does not destroy us for our sins (Vilna Gaon).

Since a major interference with Bitachon comes from concern that our sins would not allow the desired results, knowing that Hashem subdues His anger in order to allow expression of His mercy, enhances our Bitachon.

The Great,

הַגָּדוֹל,

Referring to Hashem's humility. Specifically, that He allows us to praise Him never for His sake, but only for us to gain inspiration.

We cannot begin to comprehend Hashem's all-encompassing greatness and power. How much more so do we find ourselves lacking in the ability

to express and understand His praise. If we would greet the king of a super-powerful country and refer to him as the “King of the throne room,” we would really be insulting him. Nevertheless, Hashem allows us to “praise” Him so that we may reach a higher level of appreciation for His attributes, draw closer to Him and deepen our trust in Him.

The Mighty,

הַגְּבוֹר,

He overpowers His anger at our enemies, so that He can tolerate the wicked people who harm us (Yoma 69b).

In Hashem’s master plan for Klal Yisroel, it is for our benefit to undergo this bitter exile. Nevertheless, it takes, literally, supreme might for Hashem, so to speak, to see His nation victimized by so many enemies and allow it to continue.

and the Awesome,

וְהַנּוֹרָא,

Refers to the miraculous survival of the Jewish nation (ibid.).

The amazing miracles necessary for us to survive as a nation for 2,000 years in exile are greater than the miracles manifested by the Ten Plagues in Egypt and the splitting of the Red Sea (R’ Yaakov Emden). These miracles are part of a delicate balance: Hashem contains His love and compassion for B’nei Yisroel and allows our continued suffering (for our long-range benefit). At the same time, Hashem uses miracles beyond our comprehension to assure our survival throughout the most vicious persecution. (This is compared in Shabbos Zemiro to a lion keeping his mouth open for 2,000 years while a lamb rests inside. He tries to devour the

lamb, but although he causes pain, bloodshed and suffering, he cannot devour the lamb.)

Supreme God

אל עליון

These miracles are often beyond our comprehension, or even completely hidden.

The Vilna Gaon tells us that Lavan wanted to destroy the Jewish nation at its very inception, and we did not even realize it. Similarly, in every generation, we face threats from which Hashem saves us, before we even know we are in danger.

Who bestows beneficial kindnesses

גומל חסדים טובים

His kindness is completely good, with no negative aspect to it.

One of the issues which often bothers us about Tefillah is that we can ask for something which, in reality, may not be good for us. Hashem's kindness is completely good and when He answers our prayers, He makes sure that the results are, in fact, always good.

and creates everything,

וקנה הכל,

Hashem has the ultimate power over everything.

Hashem uses this power to rule over every detail of every object or occurrence in this world. He is capable of rectifying every problem we have. The word קונה is present tense. He is continuously creating because בי לעולם חסדו, His kindness is forever.

Knowing that Hashem is forever creating everything gives us a deepened sense of His endless kindness

and inspires us to be more capable of relying on that eternal kindness.

Who recalls the kindnesses of the forefathers,

וְזִכָּר חֶסֶדֵי אֲבוֹת,

Hashem remembers the Chesed of all of our ancestors and applies the merit to our account.

Imagine the acts of kindness performed by our ancestors from the time of Avraham Avinu until the present moment. Hashem takes all of that merit into account when He judges us. This alone can inspire a sense that He will answer us, even if only in the merit of the kindness of our forefathers. He repays kindness with kindness.

Another explanation of “the kindness of the forefathers” lies in the recognition of Hashem’s purpose in creating the world. His goal was to bestow kindness, chesed. To maximize His chesed, He bestows this chesed with consideration of what we deserve. Therefore, it can be understood that any mitzvah is also so to speak a chesed to Hashem, as it justifies His bestowing more chesed, thus fulfilling His purpose of creation.

and brings a redeemer to their children’s children for His Name’s sake,

וּמְבִיא גּוֹאֵל לְבָנָי
בְּנֵיהֶם,

Our redemption from exile will bring about the highest level of honor and respect for Hashem.

In the time of Moshiach, everyone will recognize the ultimate sovereignty of Hashem.

with love.

Hashem brings the redeemer purely because of His love for us.

*Even though Hashem's name will be so honored by bringing Moshiach, and this is the ultimate accomplishment, He only wants this honor because of the benefits it will bestow upon us, being the people of Hashem. His **only** motivation is His great love for us.*

לְמַעַן שְׁמוֹ בְּאֵהָבָה.

בעשיית:

Remember us for life

זְכֵרְנוּ לְחַיִּים,

Does Hashem ever forget? It seems that to convey the extent of His love for us, He refers to His withholding of any benefit as forgetting about us, as the only way, so to speak, that He can cope with our suffering. Therefore, we say to Him, "Remember us."

King Who desires life

מֶלֶךְ חַפֵּץ בְּחַיִּים,

He desires life for us, not death or punishment. This makes it easier to put our trust in Him.

And inscribe us in the book of life

וְכָתַבְנוּ בְּסֵפֶר
הַחַיִּים,

During the Days of Judgment, this is our primary concern.

For Your sake, God of life

לְמַעַן אֱלֹהִים
חַיִּים.

We believe that it is to Him as if it were for His sake, so much does He want life for us.

King

מְלִיךָ,

The ultimate King.

He is the all-powerful, and responds to the different levels of Bitachon His children place in Him (Avnei Eliyahu).

Who Helps

עוֹזֵר,

Hashem helps those who trust in Him, when they put in effort on their own behalf (ibid.).

Who Saves

וּמוֹשִׁיעַ,

Hashem saves those who trust in Him, even when they do nothing to save themselves (ibid.).

And Who Shields

וּמְגִן.

Hashem protects those who trust in Him, even when they put themselves in danger (ibid.).

These statements show the amazing power of Bitachon, and the degree upon which we can rely on Hashem to always answer our prayers. They also add up to the fact that ultimately our efforts are not what bring results; it's all from Hashem. Even when we ~~do~~ nothing to help or even the opposite, He saves us.

The source of all blessings are You, Hashem,

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי,

We speak Hashem in second person, in a familiar form, and refer to Him directly using His name, as if we're on “first-name” basis with Him.

Shield of Avraham.

מִגֵּן אַבְרָהָם.

We trust that Hashem will protect us, just as He protected Avraham Avinu.

Avraham had complete trust in Hashem and was unharmed by a fiery furnace. We trust that Hashem will save us, as well, when we put our trust in Him.

Note: In this case Avraham's trust was a general trust in Hashem, not specifically that he would be saved from the furnace. That would have diminished his Mesinas Nefesh.

**You are eternally mighty my Master**אַתָּה גִבּוֹר לְעוֹלָם
אֲדֹנָי,

Resurrecting the dead is the ultimate manifestation of Hashem's might and unlimited power.

the Resuscitator of the dead are You, abundantly able to saveמְחַיֶּה מֵתִים אַתָּה,
רַב לְהוֹשִׁיעַ.

Hashem is the greatest savior.

Since Hashem has the ultimate might necessary to bring the dead to life, He is also recognized as the greatest savior.

בחורף:

מְשִׁיב הַרְיָח וּמוֹרִיד הַגֶּשֶׁם.

He makes the wind blow, and He makes the rain descend

The cycle of the seasons is a miniature resurrection of the dead and a graphic example of His powers.

Every year plants flourish in the spring and summer, only to die in the fall and winter. Nevertheless, they come back to life again the following spring. This cycle is also an example of Hashem's total power over the entire world: If He were to withhold rain, everything would begin to shrivel and die. When Hashem would allow the rain to fall once again, everything would be rejuvenated.

He sustains the living with kindness,

מְבַלְבֵּל חַיִּים בְּחֶסֶד,

Hashem provides sustenance to *each and every* creature through His Chesed.

Hashem is personally involved in the care and preservation of every living thing from the smallest insect to the largest beast (Pesachim 118a). If these endeavors are not too insignificant for His involvement, we can rely on His caring for us.

resuscitates the dead with abundant mercy,

מְחִייה מְתִים
בְּרַחֲמִים רַבִּים,

Hashem's infinite mercy leads Him to perform this ultimate act of might.

The emphasis on restoring the dead has also to do with the need that we have for permanence in order to enjoy the blessings of this world.

supports the fallen, heals the sick, releases the bound,

We are confident that Hashem will fulfill our needs.

If we focus on the fact that Hashem's Chesed provides for every living being, and that His mercy leads Him to perform the ultimate acts of might, we can begin to feel confident that He will furnish us with all of our everyday needs.

סוּמֵךְ נוֹפְלִים,
וְרוֹפֵא חוֹלִים,
וּמַתִּיר אֲסוּרִים,

and maintains His faith to those asleep in the dust,

Since Hashem is the ultimate in kindness, mercy and might, we can begin to feel confident that He will keep His trust.

If Hashem can be relied on to save those who no longer beseech Him in prayer, how much more so can we rely on Him to save us!

וּמְקִיִּם אַמּוֹנָתוֹ
לִישְׁנֵי עֶפֶר,

Who is like You, Master of mighty deeds, and who is comparable to You,

There is no other power in the universe like Hashem and not even one who might be somewhat comparable to Him.

If there were, we would not be able to have complete trust in Hashem. We could think that the other power will intervene, or we might put some of our trust in it and not Hashem (Chovos Halevavos, Shaar Habitachon).

מִי כַמוֹךְ בַּעַל גְּבוּרֹת
וּמִי דוֹמֶה לָךְ,

King

The ultimate expression of His incomparable status is His sprouting of salvation from death.

מְלֶכֶךְ

We are like servants who are totally dependent on an all-powerful king.

His benevolence extends beyond helping, saving and shielding, even when He takes a life away, it is part of a process of restoring it.

who causes death and restores life

מִמֵּית וּמְחַיֶּה

Hashem takes life, and also returns life, but not one without the other.

We see that everything is part of a master plan.

He restores life as part of a process of sprouting salvation (דובר שלום).

and makes salvation sprout.

וּמְצַמְחַת יְשׁוּעָה.

A seed can be growing and just about to sprout, but we don't see it yet.

The seeds of our redemption – on both a communal and a personal level – have already been sown. They are flourishing, ready to burst forth into the open at any moment. This awareness can enhance our Bitachon, even though we do not see any results yet.

בעשיית:

מי כְּמוֹךָ אֵב הַרְחַמִּים, זֹכֵר יְצוּרֵי לְחַיִּים בְּרַחֲמִים.

**Who is like You, Merciful Father, Who recalls
His creatures mercifully for life!**

Hashem wants us to get a sense of how much He loves us and cares for us, therefore He refers to Himself as forgetting, whenever He finds it inappropriate to bestow a blessing or benefit upon us. It is as if to say that He can't bear our suffering unless he forgets about us. Therefore, we say He remembers us with mercy to grant us life.



It is interesting to note that the revival of the dead is mentioned four times in this Bracha, besides at the end. True, that this is an expression of ultimate power, but it may serve another meaning as well. A part of having Bitachon is that the result is going to bring us happiness. If we don't feel it will bring happiness, then we can't maintain the continued desire that leads to trust.

The temporal status of life puts a damper on human happiness, since it's almost over before it really begins. The confidence that He will most definitely revive the dead is a powerful boost to lasting happiness.

Therefore the desire for the fulfillment of our prayers is enhanced and we are thus more capable of mastering Bitachon - that He will, in fact, answer us favorably.



And You are faithful to resuscitate the dead.

וְנֶאֱמַן אֶתָּה
לְהַחְיֹת מֵתִים.

We can rely on Hashem completely to bring the dead back to life.

If so, we can certainly rely on Him to solve all our other problems, even if they seem beyond hope.

**The source of all blessings are You, Hashem,
Who resuscitates the dead.**

**בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי,
מְחַיֵּה הַמֵּתִים.**

We use the present tense, because it is as if Hashem's (so to speak) "profession" is resuscitating the dead, and He does it on a regular basis. In fact, to a certain extent, it is done to everyone who wakes up in the morning.

This shows our confidence in Hashem actually performing this great act.

קְדוּשָׁה

נְקַדֵּשׁ אֶת שְׁמֶךָ בְּעוֹלָם, בְּשֵׁם שְׁמִקְדֵּי־שָׁמַיִם אוֹתוֹ בְּשֵׁמִי
—Cong. then
מְרוֹם, כְּכַתוּב עַל יַד נְבִיאֶךָ וְקָרָא זֶה אֵל זֶה וְאָמַר:
Chazzan

קְדוּשׁ, קְדוּשׁ, קְדוּשׁ, יי צְבָאוֹת מְלֵא כֹל הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדוֹ. —All

לְעַמְתָּם בְּרוּךְ יְאִמְרוּ: —Chazzan

בְּרוּךְ כְּבוֹד יי מִמְקוֹמוֹ. —All

וּבְדַבְרֵי קְדֻשָׁתְךָ כְּתוּב לְאִמֹר: —Chazzan

יִמְלֹךְ יי לְעוֹלָם, אֱלֹהֶיךָ צִיּוֹן, לְדֹר וָדֹר, הַלְלוּהָ. —All

לְדֹר וָדֹר נְגִיד גְּדֻלָּה, וּלְנֶצַח נֶצְחִים קְדֻשַׁתְךָ נְקַדֵּשׁ,
—Chazzan
וְשִׁבְחֶךָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מִפִּינּוּ לֹא יִמוּשׁ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד, כִּי אֵל מְלֹךְ
only
אַתָּה. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, גְּדוֹל וְקְדוּשׁ הָאֵל הַקְּדוּשׁ
concludes

(בְּעֵשִׂיית: הַמְלֹךְ הַקְּדוּשׁ).

Cong. then
Chazzan— **We shall sanctify Your Name in this world, just as they sanctify it in heaven above, as it is writte by Your prophet, “And one [angel] will call another and say:**

All— **‘Holy, holy, holy is Hashem, Master of Legions, the whole world is filled with His glory’”**

Chazzan— **Those facing them say ‘Blessed’:**

All— **‘Blessed is the glory of Hashem from His place.’**

Chazzan— **And in Your holy Writings the following is written:**

All— **‘Hashem shall reign forever - your God, O Zion - from generation to generation, Halleluyah!’**

Chazzan
only
concludes— **From generation to generation we shall relate Your greatness and for infinite eternities we shall proclaim Your holiness. Your praise, our God, shall not leave our mouth forever and ever, for You O God, are a great and holy King. Blessed are You Hashem, the holy God (*Aseres Yimei Teshuvah: the holy King*).**

To sanctify His name, we must proclaim how it is separated above and beyond anything else in the world.

How great this potential of man must be to dare to say that we will sanctify Hashem’s name, as it is done in heaven.

It is from the Navi that we know how the angels proclaim Hashem’s separateness.

They call one to another, to ask permission to so praise Him, it is truly fearsome even for angels, to be able to properly praise Hashem.

The word “Kadosh” refers to a state of total separateness, above and beyond anything humanly imaginable. In what is He considered so separate?

The Navi tells us, “ויגבה ה' צבקות במשפט והקל הקדוש נקדש בצדקה”.

He is considered so separate in His Tzedaka – kind generosity in justice.

Hashem Tzivakos refers to His Mishpat. Therefore Kadosh etc. seems to say: Hashem who is exalted in Mishpat – justice – is beyond comprehension in His Tzedaka, which tempers His Mishpat.

The Avudraham says this refers to Hashem's Hashgacha Pratis. He tempers His judgment with infinite kindness and generosity. This is manifest in His Hashgacha Pratis. Would He conduct His world with only justice, we could never be deserving of all the blessings bestowed upon us by His Hashgacha Pratis.

His glory fills the earth through the recognition of His Hashgacha Pratis, tempering the judgment with kindness, and allowing us continued blessing beyond our actual deserving.

You are holy

אַתָּה קָדוֹשׁ

The word Kadosh refers to the fact that Hashem is totally separate and beyond any being.

Hashem's holiness and separateness stems especially, from His righteousness, kindness, and generosity. (Yeshayah 5:16).

and Your Name is holy

וְשִׁמְךָ קָדוֹשׁ,

The angels in heaven refer to Hashem as Kadosh.

Hashem is well above and beyond even the angels in heaven.

His name refers to Hashem, the all-merciful, in His quality of mercy He is exalted above and beyond every being.

and holy ones praise You every day, forever.

This refers to both the angels and the Jewish people.

The angels can do no wrong and never disobey a command from Hashem, because they have a totally clear perception of Hashem's complete holiness. Man, too, can become totally subservient and dedicated to Hashem, if he recognized Hashem's holiness.

The source of all blessings are You, Hashem, the holy God.

The fact that Hashem subdues His anger to allow the expression of His compassion to us is an ultimate expression of His unique holiness. During the Ten Days of Teshuva we say “the King who is holy.” Even though “the King” is exalted in righteousness and kindness, during those days there must be an extra emphasis on His kingship, not his subduing his anger.

וְקְדוּשֵׁים בְּכָל יוֹם
יְהִלְלוּךָ סְלָה.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי,
הָאֵל הַקְּדוֹשׁ
(בְּעֵשִׂי"ת)
הַמְּלִךְ הַקְּדוֹשׁ.



The following requests are all phrased in the plural, because we must pray, not only for ourselves, but also for our families, friends, and the entire Jewish people. These supplications are also usually in the present tense, because Hashem is the constant source of all blessing. If He would stop maintaining our needs, even momentarily, we would cease to exist. Each blessing begins with a request and an immediate statement of our confidence in Hashem – the source of all goodness, with whom we have a “personal” relationship – to grant our request.

The first blessing is the only one to begin with a statement of praise for Hashem.

The distinction between this Bracha and the others may be understood in the following way: In the other Brachos, it is quite obvious that what we are requesting is clearly in the hands of Hashem, i.e. forgiveness, healing, sustenance, redemption, etc. When it comes to knowledge and wisdom, one might think that this is already determined at birth; one is born either smart or not. The statement of praise underscores for us that Hashem is constantly graciously granting us wisdom anew and constantly teaching us insights. These are always happening, and therefore our prayers for them daily are appropriate.



You graciously endow

אַתָּה חוֹנֵן

We are asking Hashem for a gift without necessarily being deserving.

We are not asking to be compensated for any merit we may have, rather to be recipients of His infinite graciousness of which we may be totally undeserving.

man with wisdom

לְאָדָם דָּעַת,

The ultimate wisdom is knowledge of Hashem.

and teach insight to a frail mortal.

וּמְלִמַּד לְאֵנוּשׁ בִּינָה.

Hashem constantly teaches Torah even to those with a lower level of understanding.

Enosh refers to a lower intellectual level than Odom. No matter how we were born, He teaches us and we learn.

Endow us graciously from Yourself with wisdom,

תַּנְנוּ מֵאַתָּה יְדָעָה,

To understand Hashem and His ways.

The Navi tells us that the only praiseworthy achievement is השכל וידע אותו - knowing Hashem.

insight,

בִּינָה

To understand the Torah.

This praiseworthy knowledge comes through understanding Torah.

and discernment.

וְהַשְׂכִּיל.

Success in learning Torah.

The Navi tells us that the knowledge of Hashem is that He does kindness, justice and righteousness on earth which once again expands our Bitachon.

The source of all blessings are You, Hashem, gracious giver of wisdom.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, חוֹנֵן הַדָּעוּת.

Giver, in the present tense, indicates that Hashem is “by profession,” so to speak, committed to constantly granting knowledge to man, without receiving anything in return.

The knowledge Hashem grants us is truly undeserved, because we often use it to help us sin. Nevertheless, we can still rely on Hashem to bestow us with wisdom, because He is the constant, ongoing source of intelligence to all mankind.



We pray for Teshuva immediately after we pray for wisdom, because we often use our knowledge to help us sin.



Bring us back, our Father, to Your Torah,

First, we must return to learning Torah.

We refer to Hashem here as “our Father,” because Torah knowledge, even though we must toil and struggle to understand every word, is ultimately a gift from our compassionate Father in heaven (Niddah 70b).

הַשִּׁיבֵנו אֲבִינוּ
לְתוֹרַתְךָ,

and bring us near, our King, to Your service,

Then we can come close to properly serving Hashem.

Here, Hashem is referred to as “our King,” because we must subjugate ourselves as servants before their royal master in order to truly serve Hashem and obey His Mitzvos.

וְקָרְבָנוּ מִלְּפָנֶיךָ
לְעִבּוֹדָתְךָ,

and influence us to return in perfect repentance

Only now can we do Teshuva.

Once we return to learning Torah and the service of

וְהַחְזִירֵנוּ בְּתַשׁוּבָה
שְׁלֵמָה

Hashem, we can then utilize Teshuva to bridge the gap that sin created between ourselves and Hashem.

before You.

לְפָנֶיךָ.

After Teshuva, we will once again be able to feel close to Hashem.

In Eichah we ask Hashem to return us to Him and then we will be better able to do Teshuva. We ask that here too. Closeness to Him inspires greater Bitachon.

The source of all blessings are You, Hashem, Who desires repentance.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי,
הַרוֹצֵה בְּתַשׁוּבָה.

Hashem desires our Teshuva. Therefore, we can be confident that we will achieve our goal.

This “desire for Teshuva,” on His part, expresses how much He truly loves us. Even though we distance ourselves from Him through sin, He craves and awaits our return, to once again be close to Him.

Reb Yisroel Salanter taught that praying for repentance is in itself a form of Teshuva.



The emphasis on doing Teshuva, before asking for all kinds of mercy, can be understood in the following way (see Mishna Beruruvah, Hilchos Ta'anis Esther): Hashem sees and hears every person in the time of his Tzarah (trouble) when he fasts and returns to Hashem (Teshuva) with his whole heart. He hears their requests for mercy and graciousness (undeserved kindness) that He should help them. The preparation to facilitate the situation that Hashem will, so to speak, see and hear and then accept our request for mercy and graciousness, is Teshvua with a full heart.



Forgive us, our Father,

סְלַח לָנוּ, אָבִינוּ,

We ask, as a child to a father.

for we have erred;

בִּי חֲטָאנוּ,

We sinned by accident.

Selicha is enough to remove an accidental transgression.

pardon us, our King, for we have willfully sinned;

מְחַל לָנוּ, מֶלְכֵנוּ,
בִּי פָשְׁעָנוּ,

We even sinned intentionally, but please still pardon us.

Because we transgressed willfully, we no longer deserve the special father to son relationship; we will be judged as a servant to his master. In addition, this type of sin requires Mechilah – pardon.

for You pardon and forgive.

בִּי מוֹחֵל וְסוֹלֵחַ אֶתָּה.

We are confident because that is His way, to constantly pardon and forgive.

This is not only His way, it is what He is. His nature is to be a pardoner and forgiver, making it even easier to rely on Him.

The source of all blessings are You, Hashem, the gracious One Who pardons abundantly.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי,
חֲנוּן הַמְרַבֵּה לְסִלַּח.

We hope Hashem will “pardon abundantly” and erase our sins, even without retribution.

This blessing is a form of Viduy (confession), and must be said with the proper concentraion.



The following Bracha strengthens our Bitachon – trust – in Hashem in three stages. The redemption referred to here is not the ultimate redemption of Klal Yisroel, rather the redemption from personal suffering.



See our affliction,

רֵאָה בְּעֵינָיו,

In the midst of our suffering, we trust that Hashem sees all of our troubles.

We never allow even the depths of suffering to mislead us to thinking that maybe Hashem doesn't see everything.

take up our grievance,

וְרִיבָה רִיבָנוּ,

As we are being saved, we remain confident in Hashem, and ask Him to plead our cause before Himself.

We continue to trust only in Hashem and do not trust anyone else to take up our cause.

and redeem us speedily

וְגָאֵלְנוּ מְהֵרָה

We not only feel comfortable enough with Him to ask for redemption, we insist on a speedy response.

The request to “speed it up” is indicative of the closeness and tightness of our relationship with Him.

for Your Name’s sake,

לְמַעַן שְׁמֶךָ,

Since we know we do not deserve it, we ask Hashem to remove our suffering for His sake.

If Hashem’s chosen people are in pain and are oppressed, His honor is reduced. We ask Hashem to save us, so that His Kavod can be fully reinstated. The Jewish people are innately sensitive to a lack in Kavod Shamayim, sometimes even more than to their own pain, as indicated by asking for the removal of our pain for His reputation’s sake.

for You are a powerful redeemer.

כִּי גּוֹאֵל חֲזָק אַתָּה.

Hashem is, and should be recognized as, the ultimate savior. We are not asking for something so outlandish, because Hashem is, in fact, the constant powerful redeemer.

The source of all blessings are You, Hashem, redeemer of Israel.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי,
גּוֹאֵל יִשְׂרָאֵל.

Hashem constantly responds to our troubles and difficulties. The present tense underscores Hashem’s ongoing and constant status as Redeemer. If He always redeems, then we can rely on it.

It seems a bit strange that we ask Hashem to see our suffering. He certainly sees everything, always. This can be understood as an insight into how deeply Hashem, so to speak, feels our pain. He can’t bear to see our suffering and if He deems it necessary for the suffering

to continue, He makes it as if He looks away, not to see. We then say to Him, "look at our suffering and plead our cause," with the intent that when He does "look", so to speak, He will certainly plead our cause. Before whom does He plead our cause? Before Himself.

בתענית צבור מוסיף הש"ץ

עֲנֵנוּ, יי, עֲנֵנוּ, בְּיוֹם צוֹם תְּעִנִיתֵנוּ, כִּי בְצָרָה גְדוֹלָה אֲנַחְנוּ. אֵל תִּפְּן
אֵל רִשְׁעֵנוּ, וְאֵל תִּסְתֵּר פְּנֵיךָ מִמֶּנּוּ, וְאֵל תִּתְּעַלֵּם מִתְּחַנְתָּנוּ. הֲיֵה נָא
קְרוֹב לְשׁוֹעֲתֵנוּ, יְהִי נָא חֲסִדְךָ לְנַחֲמֵנוּ, טָרֵם נִקְרָא אֱלֹהִים עֲנֵנוּ,
כְּדָבָר שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וְהָיָה טָרֵם יִקְרָאוּ וְאֲנִי אֶעֱנֶה, עוֹד הֵם מְדַבְּרִים
וְאֲנִי אֲשָׁמַע. כִּי אַתָּה, יי, הָעוֹנֶה בְּעֵת צָרָה, פּוֹדֶה וּמְצִיל בְּכָל עֵת
צָרָה וְצוּקָה. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי, הָעוֹנֶה בְּעֵת צָרָה.

Answer us, Hashem, answer us, on this day of our fast, for we are in great distress. Do not pay attention to our wickedness; do not hide Your Face from us; and do not ignore our supplication. Please be near to our outcry; please let Your kindness comfort us – before we call to You answer us, as it is said: ‘And it will be that before they call, I will answer; while they yet speak, I will hear.’ For You, Hashem, are the One Who responds in time of distress, Who redeems and rescues in every time of distress and woe. Blessed are You, Hashem, Who responds in time of distress.

Heal us, Hashem,

רְפָאֵנוּ, יי,

We ask Hashem to heal each and every Jew.

We even beseech Hashem to aid sinners so they will recover and do Teshuva.

then we will be healed,

וְנִרְפָּא,

Hashem will definitely heal us.

We will be cured, even if the “experts” have given up home. A doctor may perform healing efforts, but results are not guaranteed. However, with Hashem the results are guaranteed.

save us, then we will be saved,

הוֹשִׁיעֵנו וְנִשְׁעָה,

Hashem, Himself, must save us, because man does not have the capability to save, and if Hashem does the act of saving, it will definitely work.

There is a tendency to rely on the doctor’s wisdom and experience, undermining total recognition of Hashem’s role. When we praise Him as the ultimate healer, it helps to dispel this misconception.

for You are our praise,

כִּי תִהְיֶה לָנוּ אַתָּה,

We will praise only Hashem for our recovery.

Because Hashem is the only – and complete – source of healing, and He does it “by profession,” so to speak, we assure Him that if He heals us, we will make no mistake about who actually healed us.

Bring complete recovery for all our ailments.

**וְהַעֲלֵה רְפוּאָה שְׁלֵמָה
לְכָל מַבּוֹתֵינוּ.**

We pray for a cure to all diseases. We must not only pray for the healing of the individuals who are sick, but we must also pray for the cure for the disease, in general (Harav Yaakov Kaminetsky זצ”ל).

For You are God,

כִּי אֱלֹהִים,

This refers to Hashem's attribute of mercy, which overpowers His anger and allows Him to heal us, even though He has much reason to be angry with us and punish us with sickness.

King,

מֶלֶךְ,

We are helpless servants, who totally rely on an all-merciful and King.

As our king, He has an extra motivation to heal us, because we are His servants.

the faithful and compassionate Healer.רוֹפֵא נְאֻמָּן
וְרַחֲמָן אֶתָּה.

Hashem is the most trusted and merciful healer, besides the motivation of a master healing His servants.

**The source of all blessings are You, Hashem,
Who heals the sick of His people Israel.**בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי,
רוֹפֵא חוֹלֵי עַמּוֹ
יִשְׂרָאֵל.

Hashem is constantly healing His people. We are His people, and with this knowledge, we can more easily rely on Him to heal us.

He is not only the one who heals, but also the "Healer by Profession", so to speak. If so, it is even easier to rely on him.

**Bless on our behalf, Hashem, our God,
this year**

Hashem should bless everything that occurs this year, with special emphasis on our sustenance.

It should be a year of flourishing business (עץ יוסף). It is told that the great Gaon HaRav Yaakov Kaminetsky זצ"ל would daven to say a good Shiur in this Bracha, since the Shiur was his Parnassah. The blessing in our produce should turn out to be completely good for us. (עץ יוסף).

בְּרַךְ עָלֵינוּ,
יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ,
אֶת הַשָּׁנָה הַזֹּאת

and all kinds of crops for the best,

All the produce should be blessed.

וְאֶת כָּל מִינֵי
תְּבוּאָתָהּ לְטוֹבָה,

and give (dew and rain for) a blessing

The cycle of the seasons should be blessed.

Even the seasons, which seem to be governed by the laws of nature, are all under His control and require Hashem's constant blessing to properly benefit us.

Reminiscent of the Tefillah of Choni Hamaagal who insisted on just the right type of rain, we not only ask for general Bracha, but in the appropriate season. We are very specific in our request.

בְּקִיּוֹם וְתֵן בְּרָכָה
בְּחֶרֶף וְתֵן טַל וּמָטָר
לְבְרָכָה עַל פְּנֵי
הָאָדָמָה

and satisfy us from Your bounty

We need a special blessing to be satisfied with all that Hashem gives us.

If we are not satisfied, we lose an opportunity to appreciate His kindness, and thus lose a potential opportunity to increase our Bitachon.

וְשַׂבְּעֵנוּ מִטּוֹבְךָ

and bless our year like the best years.

The blessings should be constantly increasing (Avnei Eliyahu).

We are rewarded commensurate to our merits. We pray that we be able to constantly elevate ourselves so that we will continuously increase our rewards. Even though our decree was decided on Rosh Hashanah, we can still influence Hashem to deliver those decrees for our benefit through our daily prayers (Siddur HaGra).

וּבְרַךְ שָׁנָתֵנוּ
מִבְּרָכִים הַטּוֹבוֹת.

**The source of all blessings are You, Hashem,
Who blesses the years.**

He does not bless the years occasionally. He is “Blesser of the years” constantly.

From this Bracha and on, the references are to the future redemption (עיון תפלה).

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי,
מְבָרֵךְ הַשָּׁנִים.



Sound the great shofar for our freedom,

Free us from being beholden to the nations of the world.

We await the fulfillment of the Navi's promise of, "On that day, He will blow a great Shofar" (ישעיה כ"ז).

תִּקַּע בְּשׁוֹפָר גָּדוֹל
לְחֵירוֹתֵנוּ,

raise the banner to gather our exiles,

Refers also to the ten lost tribes.

This too is fulfillment of the promise of the Navi (ישעיה י"א).

וְשָׂא נֶס לְקַבֵּץ
גְּלוּתֵינוּ,

and gather us together from the four corners of the earth.

Gather in all the exiles together.

The Torah promises that even if our people will be at the ends of the earth, He will gather us back to Eretz Yisroel. After close to 2,000 years of exile, it is encouraging to see this happening today. It should be a source of strength for us to put all our trust in Hashem for everything.

וְקִבְּצֵנוּ יְיָ
מֵאַרְבַּע כְּנָפוֹת
הָאָרֶץ.

The source of all blessings are You, Hashem, Who gathers in the dispersed of His people Israel.

Hashem will make the entire nation of Israel whole again.

Throughout our exile, the present tense indicated Hashem's readiness for immediate ingathering. Today, we see it beginning to happen.

כָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ,
מְקַבֵּץ נִדְחֵי עַמּוֹ
יִשְׂרָאֵל.



Restore our judges as in earlier times

The return of the Sanhedrin is the preparation for the coming of Mashiach.

With the influence of the Sanhedrin, evil will disappear (עוֹיֵן תִּפְלֵה).

הַשִּׁיבָה שׁוֹפְטֵינוּ
כְּבָרָאשׁוֹנָה

and our counselors as at first,

We should once again have advisors as qualified as the prophets were, who can advise us on personal, as well as communal, matters.

וְיִעֲצֵינוּ כְּבֵתְחִלָּה,

When inappropriate judges and advisors lead us, justice and truth are perverted and suffering to Klal Yisroel ensues.

remove from us sorrow and groan,

When we experience the final redemption, the obvious display of Hashem's mercy will make all of our long years of suffering appear, in retrospect, a mere moment in time (Yeshaya 54:7, Radak).

When justice is returned and we have proper advisors, all suffering will disappear; even the memories of past suffering will seem insignificant.

וְהִסַּר מִמֶּנּוּ
יָגוֹן וְאַנְחָה,

and reign over us, You, Hashem, alone, with kindness and compassion

After our redemption, the ultimate sovereignty of Hashem will be recognized.

The Navi Zecharia tells us, "And Hashem will be the King over the whole earth. On that day He will be one, and His name will be one." The entire world will recognize the one and only King, "Alone." However, He will reign over us with a special kindness and compassion.

וּמְלוֹךְ עָלֵינוּ אַתָּה,
יְיָ, לְבַדְּךָ
בְּחֶסֶד וּבְרַחֲמִים,

and make us come out righteous in judgement.

We beg Hashem to use His kindness and compassion to enable us to come out righteous in the judgment.

We await the day when justice and mercy will clearly be inseparably intertwined.

וְצִדְקָנוּ בְּמִשְׁפָּט.

The source of all blessings are You, Hashem, King Who loves righteousness and judgement.

He tempers His judgment with kindness and compassion, so that we can come out innocent in the judgment.

Hashem loves both kindness and compassion and justice. When we lack the deserving of favorable judgment, and He tempers our judgment with Tzedaka, we are, as if to say, forcing Him to compromise His love of justice. That might be why many great people only wanted justice, not tempered by kindness.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, מִלְךָ
אוֹהֵב צְדָקָה וּמִשְׁפָּט
(בעשי"ת)
הַמְלִיךְ הַמִּשְׁפָּט.



And for the slanderers let there be no hope,

After the restoration of the Sanhedrin, two Brachos being with a "ו" (and), indicating a connection - ולמלשינים and ולירושלים. With the return of proper judges, the evildoers of the world will be eliminated and the Diving Presence will return to Yerushalayim.

The Eitz Yosef says that one should pray for the uprooting of all heresy, and that everyone should believe in and accept the written and oral Torah with complete acceptance.

וְלַמְלִשְׁיָנִים
אֵל תִּהְיֶה תִקְוָה,

and may all the wickedness perish in an instant,

Wickedness, not the wicked, should be destroyed instantly.

וְכָל הָרָשָׁעָה
בְּרִגְעַת אִבְדָה,

We await the return of all wicked people to recognizing Hashem's rule.

and may all Your enemies be cut down speedily.

וְכָל אוֹיְבֵיךָ מְהֵרָה
יִפְרְתּוּ,

Those who hate Bnai Yisroel, He considers as His enemies.

May You speedily uproot, smash, cast down and humble the wanton sinners, speedily in our days.

וְהַזְדִּים מְהֵרָה
תַּעֲקֹר וְתַשְׁבֵּר
וְתַמְגֵּר וְתַכְנִיעַ
בְּמַהֲרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ.

This refers to the Mitzvah of destroying Amalek. The reign of Hashem will only be complete when Amalek is destroyed (עץ יותף).

The source of all blessings are You, Hashem, Who breaks enemies and humbles wanton sinners.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי,
שׁוֹבֵר אוֹיְבִים
וּמַכְנִיעַ זְדִים.

Hashem breaks our spiritual enemies and humbles our physical enemies.

The ultimate battle is between Amalek, the consummate evil, and the Tzaddikim in the world.

פסוק

The following Bracha requests Hashem's positive response to the righteous with perfect Bitachon, and to consider us, with less than perfect Bitachon, to be accepted together with them.

פסוק

On the righteous,

Those who never sinned.

עַל הַצְדִּיקִים,

On the devout,

Those who sinned but already repented.

וְעַל הַחֹסִידִים,

on the elders of Your people, the family of Israel,

The Elders and leaders of the generation, that are involved with the Klal for the sake of Heaven (עץ יוסף).

וְעַל זְקֵנֵי עַמְךָ
בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל,**on the remnant of their scholars,**

The teachers of Torah to young children who have the merit of “shining like stars forever” (עץ יוסף).

וְעַל פְּלִיטַת
סוֹפְרֵיהֶם,**on the righteous converts and on ourselves,**

We beg for mercy for ourselves, even though we are not worthy.

וְעַל גְּרֵי הַצֶּדֶק
וְעַלֵּינוּ,**may Your compassion be aroused, Hashem, our God,**

“Hashem Our God” refers to Hashem’s attribute of mercy.

יְהִמוּ נָא רַחֲמֶיךָ,
יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ,

We need Hashem to arouse His mercy, because we are going to ask that our Bitachon in Him not be disappointed, and that He should respond mercifully to us, even if we don't necessarily deserve it.

and give goodly reward to all who sincerely trust in Your Name.

Grant a special reward to those who have true and complete Bitachon in You.

They truly deserve that reward (in the merit of their Bitachon), even if they had not deserved it by the merit of their Mitzvos.

וְתֵן שְׂכָר טוֹב
לְכָל הַבוֹטְחִים
בְּשִׁמְךָ בְּאֵמֶת.

And put our lot with them forever,

We ask that our Bitachon in Hashem be rewarded together with the trust of the true Ba'alei Bitachon.

We are asking Hashem to respond to our Bitachon in Him, just as He responds to the true Ba'alei Bitachon, even though we are not on their level and our Bitachon is not as complete as theirs.

It seems that תקווה, hope (not giving up hope, no matter how bad it seems), when not completely sure that Hashem will grant us what we want, is considered Bitachon. And it has the merit to grant us our heart's desire (see "הנה עין ה' ליריאו" on רד"ק, תהילים ל"ג). This is a lower level of Bitachon, but it has similar results, only if we truly don't give up hope at all.

וְשִׁים חֶלְקֵנוּ
עִמָּהֶם לְעוֹלָם,

and we should not feel ashamed, for we trust in You.

Our prayers are an expression of our trust and Bitachon in Hashem.

We beg Hashem that our prayers and our Bitachon do not go unanswered, and that we are not thereby embarrassed, because we put our trust and Bitachon in Him, to no avail.

וְלֹא נִבּוֹשׁ בִּי
כִּדְבַר בְּטַחְנוּ.

It seems that even though our Bitachon may not be complete, and therefore, we are undeserving of the merit of true Bitachon, whatever level of Bitachon we do have, if it goes unanswered, we will be embarrassed, and that entitles us to a response beyond what we deserve.

The source of all blessings are You, Hashem, Mainstay and Assurance of the righteous.

For the righteous, there are no obstacles to the fulfillment of their Bitachon. They are truly deserving of all good in the merit of their deeds. We ask to be included with them.

פְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי,
מְשַׁעַן וּמְבַטָּח
לְצַדִּיקִים.



The Bracha mentions four stages that will take place when the redemption comes.



And to Jerusalem, Your city, may You return in compassion,

First, Hashem will return to Jerusalem.

Hashem will do all this, even though we do not yet deserve it.

וְלִירוּשָׁלַיִם עִירְךָ
בְּרַחֲמִים תָּשׁוּב,

and may You dwell within it, as You have spoken.

Second, Hashem will dwell there.

As it says, ולכבוד אהיה בתוכה. Hashem's dwelling in Yerushalayim will be a great source of enhanced Kavod, not a limiting of His Kavod from the rest of the world.

וּתְשׁוּבֹן בְּתוֹכָהּ
כְּאֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ.

May you rebuild it soon in our days as an eternal structure,

וּבְנֵה אוֹתָהּ בְּקֶרֶב
בְּיָמֵינוּ בְּנֵי עוֹלָם,

Third, Hashem will build an everlasting structure.

Even though Hashem will be living amongst us, we will still urgently need Him to build an external structure to truly appreciate His presence.

and may you speedily establish the throne of David, your servant within it.

וּכְסֵא דָּוִד מְהֵרָה
לְתוֹכָהּ תִּבְנֶה.

Fourth, Hashem will restore the Kingdom of David.

We feel so comfortable with Hashem that we even ask him to “put a rush” on our request.

The source of all blessings are You, Hashem, the Builder of Jerusalem.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי,
בּוֹנֵה יְרוּשָׁלַיִם.

Once again, this blessing is in present tense. Even though the eternal rebuilding of Jerusalem is yet to come, Hashem is involved, at this very moment, in unfolding the events leading up to that glorious moment.



The offspring of Your servant David, may You speedily cause to flourish,

אֶת צֶמַח דָּוִד עֲבָדֶיךָ
מְהֵרָה תַצְמִיחַ,

After the throne of David is restored, we ask that the Mashiach speedily come forth.

The Medrash tells us that the redemption does not come in one swift moment, rather, little by little. Therefore, we ask that it should sprout speedily (עיון תפלה).

and enhance his power through Your salvation,

His power will stem from You saving us, Your people.

Our salvation is called Hashem's salvation, because when we are saved, He feels, so to speak, personally saved Himself. If this is His attitude towards us, it certainly helps us to feel Bitachon.

וְקִרְנוּ תְרוּם
בְּיִשׁוּעַתְךָ,

for we hope for Your salvation all day long.

We constantly await the Mashiach, even through a long and bitter exile. May we merit his coming due to that, even though we are otherwise undeserving.

We also await Hashem's salvation from all our troubles. In the merit of our waiting, may we all see Hashem remove our suffering. The reference to hoping and waiting refers to our refusal to give up. Despite the length and bitterness of the exile, we continue to hope and wait so long. This is a very special merit, and we pray that in that merit, we should be answered.

כִּי לִישׁוּעַתְךָ
קִוִּינוּ כָּל הַיּוֹם.

The source of all blessings are You, Hashem, Who causes the power of salvation to flourish.

Hashem is constantly involved in the process of causing salvation to come.

Our salvation will sprout from the seeds planted long ago, even if we cannot see signs of their growth, they are developing at this moment.

This knowledge enhances our Bitachon, despite the length of our exile.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי,
מְצַמֵּיחַ קֶרֶן יִשׁוּעָה.

Hear our voice, Hashem, our God,

שְׁמַע קוֹלֵנוּ,
יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ,

Listen, even though we have no merit (Avnei Eliyahu).

Even though we do not understand the full meaning of our Tefillos, nor do we know the full extent of our needs, even so, listen to our prayers (עץ יוסף).

pity

חַסִּים

This refers to the natural feeling of mercy one has for one's own creation.

and be compassionate to us,

וְרַחֵם עָלֵינוּ,

This refers to the feeling aroused in Him, by seeing the extent of our suffering.

and accept – with compassion and favor – our prayer,

וְקַבַּל בְּרַחֲמִים
וּבְרַצוֹן אֶת
תְּפִלָּתֵנוּ,

Accept our prayer with compassion and go beyond what we ask for, with special favor.

Our needs are so extensive, we cannot even mention everything we require, nor do we even know everything we need. Hashem, like a father, goes even beyond what we request.

for God Who hears prayers

כִּי אֵל שׁוֹמֵעַ תְּפִלוֹת

The word Tefillah refers to our positive thought and reliance that Hashem will help us. (See Overview)

We ask Him to accept our prayers, because He is the merciful One who listens. Since He listens, He will surely accept. The name קל refers to His overpowering His anger to have mercy.

and supplications are You.

Tachanunim refers to pleading, begging requests.

Even though we have Bitachon, and we completely rely on Hashem, we still beg Him to grant our needs. If we don't beg and plead, we may come to rely on our Bitachon rather than on the compassion of Hashem (Avnei Eliyahu).

וְתַחֲנוּנֵינוּ אֵתָּהּ,

From before Yourself, our King, turn us not away empty-handed.

After our prayers reach You, please don't turn us away. Even if You don't see fit to grant us all our desires, please don't turn us away empty-handed.

Chazal tell us, "Tefillah does half." No heartfelt Tefilla is ever turned away without having some results, even if they cannot be readily seen.

וּמִלְפָּנֶיךָ, מִלְּפָנָיו,
רִיקָם אֵל תִּשְׁיבֵנוּ.

for You hear the prayer of Your people Israel with compassion.

Hashem listens to our prayers with mercy, even if we don't deserve to be heard on our own merit.

We are His people and because of the special relationship He listens to our prayers with mercy.

כִּי אֵתָּה שׁוֹמֵעַ
תְּפִלַּת עַמְּךָ
יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּרַחֲמִים.

**The source of all blessings are You, Hashem,
Who hears prayer**

כָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי,
שׁוֹמֵעַ תְּפִלָּה.

We emphasize that He hears prayer. We know that His compassion is such that as soon as He hears, He accepts. That's the meaning of "accept, because you hear."



By now we have been brought to a sublime level of reliance on, and closeness to, Hashem. Now we invoke the Beis Hamikdash and the sacrifices, because Tefillah serves today in place of the service in the Beis Hamikdash. Just as the Korbonos brought us closer to Hashem, so do our Tefillos.

When we ask for restoration of the Beis Hamikdash, we remind ourselves of, and invoke, a very special relationship with Hashem. Reabbeinu Bechai brings a Medrash that compares the Beis Hamikdash to a house that provides a Kavod for us that Hashem visits us, but also a Kavod for Him, that He is with us there.

If we have such a sense that we are capable of giving Him Kavod by building a Beis Hamikdash for Him to be with us, how much more do we yearn for its rebuilding, and how much more we can appreciate the special feeling He has for us when we stand in Tefillah in His Mikdash Me'at (shuls or Beis Medrash).



**Be favorable, Hashem, our God, toward
Your people Israel and their prayers.**

רִצֵּה, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ,
בְּעַמְךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל
וּבְתַפִּלָּתָם,

Show desire towards Your people and their prayers, even though they are undeserving.

If we imagine Hashem's desiring us and our prayers, it makes it easier to put our trust in Him to answer them.

**and restore the service to the Holy of Holiest
of Your Temple,**

The restoration of the Avodah in the Beis Hamikdash will allow for a much higher level of Avodah than that which we achieve through our prayers.

**The fire-offerings of Israel, and their prayer
accept with love and favor,**

Accept their prayers, because of Your love for them and Your desire to help them.

Focusing on Hashem's love for and His desire to help us makes having Bitachon that He will answer us much easier.

**and may the service of Your people Israel
always be favorable to You.**

May both our service in the Beis Hamikdash, and the service of our prayers, always be acceptable.

וְהָשִׁב אֶת הָעֲבוֹדָה
לְדַבֵּיר בֵּיתְךָ,

וְאֲשֵׁי יִשְׂרָאֵל,
וְתִפְּלָתֶם בְּאַהֲבָה
תִּקְבַּל בְּרִצּוֹן,

וְתִהְיֶה לְרִצּוֹן תָּמִיד
עֲבוֹדַת יִשְׂרָאֵל
עִמָּךְ.

בְּרֵאשׁ חֹדֶשׁ וּבַחֹל הַמוֹעֵד אֹמְרִים בְּאֵן "יַעֲלֶה וַיְבֹא":
 אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, יַעֲלֶה וַיְבֹא, וַיִּגִּיעַ, וַיִּרְאֶה, וַיִּרְצֶה, וַיִּשְׁמַע,
 וַיִּפְקֵד, וַיִּזְכֵּר זְכוּרָנוּ וּפְקֻדוֹנָנוּ, וְזִכְרוֹן אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, וְזִכְרוֹן מְשִׁיחַ בֶּן
 דָּוִד עֶבְדְּךָ, וְזִכְרוֹן יְרוּשָׁלַיִם עִיר קְדֻשָׁתְךָ, וְזִכְרוֹן כָּל עַמְּךָ בֵּית
 יִשְׂרָאֵל לְפָנֶיךָ, לְפִלִּיטָה, לְטוֹבָה, לְחַן וּלְחַסֵּד וּלְרַחֲמִים,
 לְחַיִּים וּלְשָׁלוֹם, בַּיּוֹם

לְרֵאשׁ חֹדֶשׁ: רֵאשׁ הַחֹדֶשׁ הַזֶּה.
 לְפָסַח: חַג הַמִּצּוֹת הַזֶּה.
 לְסֻכּוֹת: חַג הַסֻּכּוֹת הַזֶּה.

זְכוּרָנוּ, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, בּוֹ לְטוֹבָה, וּפְקֻדָנוּ בּוֹ לְבִרְכָה, וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנו בּוֹ
 לְחַיִּים. וּבְדַבַּר יְשׁוּעָה וְרַחֲמִים, חוּס וְחַנּוּן, וְרַחֵם עָלֵינוּ וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנו,
 כִּי אֵלֶיךָ עֵינֵינוּ, כִּי אֵל מִלְּךָ חַנּוּן וְרַחוּם אַתָּה.

Our God and God of our forefathers, may there be rise, come, reach, be noted, be favored, be heard, be considered, and be remembered – the remembrance and consideration of ourselves; the remembrance of our forefathers; the remembrance of the Messiah, son of David, Your servant; the remembrance of Jerusalem, the City of Your Holiness, the remembrance of Your entire people the Family of Israel – before You, for deliverance, for goodness, for grace, for kindness, and for compassion, for life, and for peace on this day of

On Rosh Chodesh: Rosh Chodesh
On Passover: the Festival of Matzos
On Succos: the Succos Festival.

Remember us on it, Hashem, our God, for goodness; consider us on it for blessing; and help us on it for life. In the matter of salvation and compassion, pity, be gracious and compassionate with us and help us, for our eyes are turned to You, because You are God, the gracious and compassionate King.

We are very demanding in exactly how we want our prayers to be heard and accepted.

We use eight expressions, which parallel the eight special expressions of the closeness of our relationship with Hashem, and His love for us expressed in the Atah Bechartanu (Avudraham).

It seems that we take advantage of our special relationship with Him and our knowledge of how much He loves us and desires us (so to speak), to be very specific in demanding attention to our requests.

We mention “remembrance” five times, parallel to the five times Bnei Yisroel is mentioned in the Passuk in Bamidbar 1:19. This phenomenon, says the Avudraham, is comparable to a king who is asked about his son, and he answers, “My son was sleeping, my son awoke, my son ate, my son went to school, my son came home from school.” So Hashem craves to recognize the children of Israel every moment. We take advantage of His craving desire (so to speak) and invoke our remembrance before Him.

With this background, we reach a heightened state of Bitachon as we request His help.

We ask Him to bestow upon us deserved and undeserved kindness and mercy for life and peace on this special day.

The special days are days that represent our special relationship, as indicated in Atah Bechartanu, and in the prayers of those days we refer to our special relationship with Him.

We ask that the remembrance that we asked of Hashem should be for good, for blessing, and for life.

We seem to add an additional request for total salvation and mercy. We ask this in terms of mercy, because we are His creations, undeserved kindness and mercy because He knows our suffering, and total salvation from our exile and all of its suffering and pain.

We don't just ask these requests because He is the Almighty King who is gracious and merciful. Rather, we ask these requests in the merit of

“because our eyes are riveted on You.” We are looking to You for salvation and remain with our eyes heavenward until You grant our request. This is a telling statement of our trust in Him and our insistence on keeping our eyes heavenward until He answers, expands and deepens our trust more and more.

We continue to say that our Bitachon will be accepted by You, because You are the King who overpowers His anger to be merciful on us and is gracious and merciful.

We know that Your graciousness (responding with undeserved kindness) and mercy are active in Your accepting our prayers. We also know that even when this is not possible, due to our distancing ourselves from You, You still respond to our total Bitachon in You, because that evokes a great measure of Your overpowering Your anger to be merciful, and bestowing undeserved kindness and mercy.

This Bitachon is surely inspired by our knowledge of His nature of graciousness, kindness and mercy, but it is undoubtedly enhanced by our feeling those bonds of our special relationship expressed in Atah Bechartanu.

May our eyes behold Your return to Zion in compassion.

May it happen in our lifetime.

We can be privileged to see with our own eyes that which we earned through the suffering of the exile while still maintaining our belief and awaiting redemption (יערות דבש).

וְתַחֲזִינָה עֵינֵינוּ
בְּשׁוּבְךָ לְצִיּוֹן
בְּרַחֲמִים.

The source of all blessings are You, Hashem, Who restores His Presence to Zion.

Hashem is constantly and presently involved in returning to Zion.

כָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי,
הַמְחֲזִיר שְׁכִינָתוֹ
לְצִיּוֹן.



From the Sefer Hachinuch (Parshas Eikev, Mizvah 430), there seems to be a very special reason that we need to say Modim immediately after all of the requests. The system of praising Hashem and then requesting our needs, with a Bracha immediately following each request, is so powerful that it truly gives us Bitachon, a sense that we already have that which we requested. That being so, there is a danger of losing the recognition that it all comes from Hashem, because we no longer need Him, since we feel we have it already. This may seem a bit bizarre, since we only feel that we have it because we trust Him to deliver. However, once we feel that trust, there is an ever-present danger of losing focus on Him, since we feel our need is assured of being fulfilled.



We gratefully thank You, for it is You Who are Hashem, our God

מוֹדִים אֲנַחְנוּ לָךְ,
שָׂאתָ הוּא,
יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ

We thank Hashem for allowing us to call Him our God

By allowing us to call Him our God, we feel closer to Him and can more easily rely on Him to answer us.

and the God of our forefathers

וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ,

We thank Hashem for allowing us to call Him the God of our forefathers.

This inspires confidence that our Zechus Avos will work for us too.

for all eternity.

לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד,

You have not, nor will you ever, exchange us for another nation

A relationship is most secure when it is permanent.

Rock of our lives,

צוֹר חַיִּינוּ,

We rely on Hashem the same way as a person takes refuge under a rock.

Hashem is like a protective rock that shields anyone, without regard to their purpose or worthiness, as long as they take refuge under it. There are no conditions to be met, or any expectations of being paid anything in return (Vilna Gaon).

Shield of our salvation.

מָגֵן יְשׁוּעָנוּ,

Hashem protects all who rely on Him.

Hashem even “shields” one who puts himself in danger.

are You from generation to generation.

אַתָּה הוּא לְדוֹר וָדוֹר,

Hashem's protection is constant, and it has been throughout history.

When we ponder our miraculous survival throughout history, we draw new confidence in His saving and deepen our appreciation for all of His kindness.

We shall thank You and relate Your praise,נֹדְהָ לְךָ וְנִסְפִּיר
תְּהִלָּתְךָ,

Thanks and praise are the essential ingredients to allow us to comprehend the compassion of Hashem.

We praise Hashem by expressing the fact that He has the ultimate power to help us, and the kindness to be willing to fulfill our needs. We thank Hashem because He has sustained us and satisfied our wishes.

נודה means we will thank, in the future, indicating our trust that He will always continue to benefit us.

for our lives,

עַל חַיֵּינוּ

A compassionate God, who graciously grants us continued life, can certainly be relied upon to enhance the quality of that life with all good.

which are in Your hand

הַמְּסוּרִים בְּיָדְךָ,

We have no power whatsoever, except through Hashem.

And neither does anyone else. "Every bullet has an address."

and for our souls that are entrusted to You,

וְעַל נְשְׁמוֹתֵינוּ
הַפְּקוּדוֹת לְךָ,

We entrust our souls to Hashem every night, and He returns them to us every morning.

We rely on this every night, and in the morning we say "רבה אמונתך" - great is Your faithfulness.

and Your miracles that are with us every day,

וְעַל נִסֵּיךָ
שֶׁבְּכָל יוֹם עִמָּנוּ,

For the miracles that we are aware of.

If we look for and focus on Hashem's Hashgacha Pratis.

and for Your wonders and favors in every time – evening, morning and afternoon,

וְעַל נִפְלְאוֹתֶיךָ
וְטוֹבוֹתֶיךָ שֶׁבְּכָל עֵת,
עֶרֶב וּבֹקֶר וְצַהֲרַיִם,

For the miracles that we are not aware of, which are constantly occurring, every moment of our existence.

When we ponder the massive extent of Hashem's miraculous involvement in our lives, we become overwhelmed with gratitude, as well as the ability to trust Him to continue bestowing all sorts of good upon us.

An alternative explanation is that evening, morning and afternoon refers to the times of day when we must thank Hashem for the miracles, rather than when the miracles occur. To maintain our Bitachon, we must constantly thank Hashem again and again.

The Good One, for Your compassion is never exhausted,

הַטּוֹב, כִּי לֹא
כָּלוּ רַחֲמָיִךָ,

The good that stems from Hashem's endless compassion.

and the Compassionate One, for Your kindness is never ending,

וְהַמְּרַחֵם, כִּי לֹא תָמוּ
חַסְדֵיךָ,

The compassion that stems from Hashem's endless kindness.

We receive kindness even when we are not deserving.

always have we put our hope in You.

מֵעוֹלָם קִיְּנֵנוּ לָךְ.

We always have, and always will, rely on Hashem.

Since Hashem has consistently helped in the past, we can rely on Him in the future, even though we don't deserve it (just as we did not deserve it in the past) (Vilna Gaon, Mishlei 25:15). The basis for this reliance is that we know that He is always good, because His mercy is endless. Even if we think that His mercy is a feeling of pain for us that may not

lead to His responding to us, we must remember that He is also one of endless Chesed (kindness) and will surely respond, besides just feeling our pain. If our reliance was based on what we deserve, then maybe we don't deserve anything. However, since it is based on His kindness, it is always sure, since His kindness is endless and eternal.

מודים דרבנן

מודים אנחנו לך, שאתה הוא יי אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו, אלהי כל
בשר, יוצרנו, יוצר בראשית. ברכות והודאות לשמך הגדול
והקדוש, על שהחיייתנו וקיימתנו. בין תחינו ותקיימנו, ותאסוף
גלותינו לחצרות קדשך, לשמור חקיך ולעשות רצונך, ולעבדך
בלבב שלם, על שאנחנו מודים לך. ברוך אל ההודאות.

We gratefully thank You, for it is You Who are Hashem, our God and the God of our forefathers, the God of all flesh, our Molder, the Molder of the universe. Blessings and thanks are due Your great and holy Name for you have given us life and sustained us. So may You continue to give us life and sustain us and gather our exiles to the Courtyards of Your Sanctuary, to observe Your decrees, to do Your will and to serve You wholeheartedly. [We thank You] for inspiring us to thank You. Blessed is the God of thanksgivings.

לחנכה ופורים:

על הנסים, ועל הפרקן, ועל הגבורות, ועל התשועות, ועל
המלחמות, שעשית לאבותינו בימים ההם בזמן הזה.

לחנכה:

בימי מתתיהו בן יוחנן כהן גדול, חשמונאי ובניו, כשעמדה מלכות יון הרשעה על עמך ישראל להשכיחם תורתך, ולהעבירם מחקי רצונך, ואתה ברחמיך הרבים עמדת להם בעת צרתם, רבת את ריבם, דנת את דינם, נקמת את נקמתם, מסרת גבורים ביד חלשים, ורבים ביד מעטים, וטמאים ביד טהורים, ורשעים ביד צדיקים, ונדים ביד עוסקי תורתך. ולך עשית שם גדול וקדוש בעולמך, ולעמך ישראל עשית תשועה גדולה ופרקן כהיום הזה. ואחר בן באו בניך לדביר ביתך, ופנו את היכלך, וטהרו את מקדשך, והדליקו נרות בחצרות קדשך, וקבעו שמונת ימי חנכה אלו, להודות ולהלל לשמך הגדול.

לפורים:

בימי מרדכי ואסתר בשושן הבירה, כשעמד עליהם המן הרשע, בקש להשמיד להרג ולאבד את כל היהודים, מנער ועד זקן, טף ונשים, ביום אחד, בשלושה עשר לחדש שנים עשר, הוא חדש אדר, ושללם לבז. ואתה ברחמיך הרבים הפרת את עצתו, וקלקלת את מחשבתו, והשבות לו גמולו בראשו, ותלו אותו ואת בניו על העץ.

(And) for the miracles, and for the salvation, and for the mighty deeds, and for the victories, and for the battles which You performed for our forefathers in those days, at this time.

Chanukah:

In the days of Mattisyahu, the son of Yochanan, the High Priest, the Hasmonian, and his sons – when the wicked Greek kingdom rose up again Your people Israel to make them forget Your Torah and compel them to stray from the statues of Your Will – You in Your

great mercy stood up for them in the time of their distress. You took up their grievance, judged their claims, and avenged their wrong. You delivered the strong into the hands of the weak, the many into the hands of the few, the impure into the hands of the pure, the wicked into the hands of the righteous, and the wanton into the hands of the diligent students of Your Torah. For Yourself You made a great and holy Name in Your world, and for Your people Israel you worked a great victory and salvation as this very day. Thereafter, You children came to the Holy of Holies of Your House, cleansed Your Temple, purified the site of Your Holiness and kindled lights in the Courtyards of Your Sanctuary; and they established these eight days of Chanukah to express thanks and praise to Your great Name.

Purim:

In the days of Mordechai and Esther, in Shushan, the capital, when Haman, the wicked, rose up against them and sought to destroy, to slay, and to exterminate all the Jews, young and old, infants and women, on the same day, on the thirteenth of the twelfth month which is the month of Adar, and to plunder their possessions. But You, in Your abundant mercy, nullified his counsel and frustrated his intentions and caused his deign to return upon his own head and they hanged him and his sons on the gallows.

For all these, may Your Name be blessed and exalted, our King, continually forever and ever.

Hashem's name is the source for all blessing and is exalted more than all the praises already mentioned.

We find the concept of Hashem's name being blessed repeated throughout our liturgy – Yisgadal

וְעַל כָּלֵם יִתְבָּרַךְ
וְיִתְרוֹמַם שְׁמֶךָ
מִלְּפָנֵינוּ תָּמִיד
לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

V'yiskadah Shemai Rabah . . . Barach Shem Kivod . . . Yehay Shmay Raba Mivarach . . . We learn that Hashem's name should be recognized as the source of all blessing.

Why do we say that His name should be recognized as the source of all blessing, why not say that He Himself should be recognized as the source of all blessing?

The Seforno on Parshas Shemos explains that a name is meant to describe the attributes of the holder of the name. It seems that for us to say that Hashem should be recognized as the source of all blessing is too abstract, as we do not really have a concept of Hashem. But to identify Him by His name, which describes His essence, the Master of all and the All-merciful, makes the process more comprehensible and less abstract. When you add to this the concept that we call Hashem by His name, so to speak, as a sign of our personal, close relationship, it makes the realization of His being the source of all blessing much more real and potent.

בעשי"ת:

וּכְתוֹב לְחַיִּים טוֹבִים כָּל בְּנֵי בְרִיתְךָ.

And inscribe all the children of Your covenant for a good life.

Everything alive will gratefully acknowledge You, Selah!

וְכֹל הַחַיִּים
יִזְדְּרֹךְ סֵלָה,

Referring to those who have already gone through the “ordeal of life.”

and praise Your Name sincerely,

וַיְהַלְלוּ אֶת שְׁמֶךָ
בְּאֵמֶת,

After what they have gone through, they will truly praise Hashem.

God

הָאֵל

He Who holds back His anger in order to be merciful (The Gra, Rosh Hashana Machzor).

of salvation and help, Selah!

יְשׁוּעָתָנוּ וְעִזְרָתָנוּ
סֵלָה.

Just having Hashem as our God is our salvation and help.

Hashem does not only save us, He is our salvation. Our relationship with Him is in itself the real essence of salvation.

The source of all blessings are You, Hashem, Your Name is “Beneficent One” and to You it is fitting to give thanks.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי,
הַטּוֹב שְׁמֶךָ וְלִךְ
נֶאֱמָה לְהוֹדוֹת.

It is fitting to praise Hashem, because He is totally good, without any trace of bad.

הש"ץ אומר:

אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, בְּרַכְנוּ בְּבִרְכַּהּ הַמְּשֻׁלֶּשֶׁת
בַּתּוֹרָה הַכְּתוּבָה עַל יְדֵי מֹשֶׁה עַבְדְּךָ, הָאֲמוּרָה מִפִּי אַהֲרֹן
וּבְנָיו כֹּהֲנִים, עִם קְדוּשְׁתְּךָ, כְּאֲמֹר.

יְבָרְכֶךָ יי וַיְשַׁמְרֶךָ. (קהל—בֵּן יְהִי רְצוֹן)
יְאֵר יי פְּנֵי אֱלֹהֶיךָ וַיַּחַנְדֶּךָ. (קהל—בֵּן יְהִי רְצוֹן)
יִשָּׂא יי פְּנֵי אֱלֹהֶיךָ וַיִּשֶׂם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם. (קהל—בֵּן יְהִי רְצוֹן)

**Our God and the God of our forefather, bless us with the
three-verse blessing in the Torah that was written by the
hand of Moses, Your servant, that was said by Aaron and his
sons, the Kohanim, Your holy people, as it is said:**

May Hashem bless you and safeguard you. (Cong.—So may it be.)

**May Hashem illuminate His countenance for you and
be gracious to you. (Cong.—So may it be.)**

**May Hashem turn His countenance to you and
establish peace for you. (Cong.—So may it be.)**



*At the end of Shmoneh Esrei, we ask for peace – the receptacle for all
blessing (Uktzim 3:12) – to indicate that we are so confident in Hashem
answering our prayers that all we are lacking is that receptacle to hold
together all of the blessings that He will give us.*



Establish peace,

שִׁים שְׁלוֹם,

We ask for peace, because without it all the other blessings are worthless.

goodness, blessing, graciousness, kindness and compassion,טוֹבָה וּבְרָכָה,
חַן וְחֶסֶד וְרַחֲמִים,

After we ask for peace, now all other blessings take on a new and enhanced meaning, and so we ask for good, all sorts of blessings, undeserved kindness, general kindness and mercy when He sees our plight. The blessings are only meaningful in the context of Shalom.

upon us and all of Your people Israel.עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל
יִשְׂרָאֵל עַמְּךָ.

The request for all of Israel is an extension of the request for peace. There can be no true peace and wholeness unless it includes all of our people.

Bless us, Our Father, all of us as oneבְּרַכְנוּ, אָבִינוּ,
כְּלָנוּ בְּאַחַד

The blessing should be bestowed upon us as one, because only through total unity can we have peace.

with the light of Your countenance,

בְּאוֹר פְּנֵיךָ,

Refers to Hashem's compassion and pity, as expressed originally at Har Sinai.

Without compassion and pity, no human could ever have been privileged with receiving Hashem's Torah, His blueprint for creation.

for with the light of Your countenance You gave us, Hashem, our God,

The fact that He has already shown us such overwhelming compassion at Sinai and given us so much, enables us to deepen our trust that His compassion will grant us further blessing, which needs much less compassion than to receive His Torah.

כִּי בְּאֹר פְּנֵיךָ
נִתְּתָ לָנוּ,
יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ,

Torah of life

The written Torah – The text is passed down from generation to generation.

תּוֹרַת חַיִּים

and a love of kindness,

The oral Torah (Etz Yosef) – The oral Torah needs our Chesed to be taught to the next generation.

וְאַהֲבַת חֶסֶד,

and righteousness, and blessing, and compassion, and life, and peace,

Hashem has given us all these blessings, and finally, peace – the necessary ingredient to enjoy all blessings.

וְצְדָקָה וּבְרָכָה
וְרַחֲמִים וְחַיִּים
וְשָׁלוֹם,

And it should be good in Your eyes to bless Your nation Israel

Hashem should bless us even if we are not deserving.

וְטוֹב בְּעֵינֶיךָ לְבָרֵךְ
אֶת עַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל

all the time and every hour, with Your peace.

The peace that Hashem bestows is the only true peace and the ultimate blessing. If, however, it is interrupted, it cannot be true peace.

בְּכֹל עֵת וּבְכֹל
שָׁעָה בְּשָׁלוֹמְךָ.

בעשיית:

בְּסֵפֶר חַיִּים, בְּרָכָה וְשָׁלוֹם, וּפְרֻנְסָה טוֹבָה, נִזְכָּר וְנִכְתָּב
לְפָנֶיךָ, אֲנַחְנוּ וְכָל עַמְּךָ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל, לְחַיִּים טוֹבִים וְשָׁלוֹם.

In the book of life, blessing, and peace, good livelihood, may we be remembered and inscribed before You – we and Your entire people the Family of Israel for a good life and for peace. Blessed are You, Hashem, Who makes peace.

The source of all blessings are You, Hashem, Who blesses His nation of Israel with peace.

Hashem is the constant source of peace.

He is constantly blessing His people with peace.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ,
הַמְבָרֵךְ אֶת עַמּוֹ
יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּשָׁלוֹם.

במנחה ומעריב:

שָׁלוֹם רַב עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל עַמְּךָ תָּשִׁים לְעוֹלָם, כִּי אַתָּה
הוּא מֶלֶךְ אֲדוֹן לְכָל הַשָּׁלוֹם. וְטוֹב בְּעֵינֶיךָ לְבָרֵךְ
אֶת עַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּכָל עֵת וּבְכָל שָׁעָה בְּשָׁלוֹמְךָ.

Establish abundant peace upon Your people Israel forever, for You are King, Master of all peace. May it be good in Your eyes to bless Your people Israel at every time and every hour with Your peace.

Even though human discord is a result of man's free choice, still Hashem controls all peace.

Hashem is Adon Hakol, so why mention Adon Hashalom specifically? The answer is that even though discord seems in the realm of human free choice, Hashem can cause circumstances to affect the free choice of a person engaged in Machlokes (discord), and we ask Him to do so to get us out of a Machlokes, and provide lasting peace.

May the words of my mouth and the thoughts of my heart find favor with You Hashem, my Rock and my Redeemer.

When we ask that Hashem accept our Tefilos, we strengthen our trust in Him that He will do so. This happens by recognizing Him as our rock and redeemer, always to be relied upon to protect us, despite the level of our deserving.

יְהִי לְרָצוֹן אִמְרֵי פִי
וְהִגִּיזוֹן לִבִּי לְפָנֶיךָ,
יְיָ צוּרִי וְגֹאֲלִי.

My God, guard my tongue from evil, אֵלֹהֵי נִצּוֹר לְשׁוֹנֵי מִרְעַ,

and my lips from speaking deceitfully. וּשְׁפָתַי מִדְּבַר מִרְמָה,

To those who curse me, let my soul be וְלִמְקַלְלֵי נַפְשִׁי
silent; תְּדַם,

and let my soul be like dust to everyone. וְנַפְשִׁי כְּעָפָר לְכָל
תְּהִיָּה.

Open my heart to Your Torah, פֶּתַח לִבִּי בְּתוֹרַתְךָ,

then my soul will pursue Your וּבְמִצְוֹתֶיךָ
commandments. תִּרְדּוּף נַפְשִׁי.

As for all those who design evil against me, וְכָל הַחֹשְׁבִים
עָלַי רָעָה,

speedily nullify their counsel and disrupt מְהֵרָה הַפֵּר עֲצָתָם
their design. וּקְלַקְל מַחְשַׁבָתָם.

Act for Your Name's sake; עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן שְׁמֶךָ,

act for Your right hand's sake; עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן יְמִינְךָ,

act for Your sanctity's sake; עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן קְדוּשָׁתְךָ,

act for Your Torah's sake.

עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן תּוֹרַתְךָ.

That Your beloved ones may be given rest;

לְמַעַן יַחֲלִצוּן יְדִידֶיךָ,

let You, right hand, save and respond to me.

הוֹשִׁיעָה יְמִינְךָ וְעֲנֵנִי.

May the expressions of my mouth and the thoughts of my heart find favor before You,

יְהִיו לְרָצוֹן אֲמָרֵי
פִּי וְהִגִּיוֹן לִבִּי לְפָנֶיךָ,

Hashem, my Rock and my Redeemer.

יְיָ צוּרִי וְגוֹאֲלִי.

He Who makes peace in His heights,

עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם
(בעשיית יש אומרים:
הָלוֹם) בְּמְרוֹמָיו,

may He make peace upon is

הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ,

and upon all Israel.

וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל.

Now respond: Amen.

וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן.

May it be Your will,

יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ,

Hashem our God and the God of our
forefathers,

יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ
וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ,

that the Holy Temple be rebuilt, speedily in
our days.

שְׂיִבְנֶה בַּיִת הַמִּקְדָּשׁ
בְּמַהֲרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ,

Grant us our share in Your Torah,

וְתֵן חֶלְקֵנוּ בְּתוֹרַתְךָ,

and may we serve You there with reverence,
as in days of old and in former years.

וְשָׂם נִעְבְּדֶךָ בִּירְאָה
בְּיָמֵי עוֹלָם וּבְשָׁנִים
קִדְמוֹנוֹת.

Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem
will be pleasing to Hashem,

וְעִרְבָה לֵי מִנְחַת
יְהוּדָה וִירוּשָׁלַיִם,

as in days of old and in former years.

בְּיָמֵי עוֹלָם וּבְשָׁנִים
קִדְמוֹנוֹת.

