

Laws of Fasts, Chapter 4 (Auto Translated)

English

Auto Translated

Shiur Overview

Summary of Shiur – Rambam Hilchot Ta'anivot, Chapter 4

Introduction and Context

Chapter 4 deals with the special seder hatefilah (order of prayer) for the **seven final fasts** due to atzeret geshamim (withholding of rain). The order of fasts (from Chapter 3): First only talmidei chachamim fast, then three fasts for the community, then another three, and then seven final ones – thirteen fasts in total. At the seven final fasts there is already a complete ma'amad bireshut harabim (public gathering).

Halacha 1 – The Order of Prayer at the Seven Final Fasts

A) Going Out to the Rechavah Shel Ir with the Sefer Torah

Rambam's Words: "On each and every day of the seven final fasts for rain, they pray according to this order... they take out the ark to the rechavah shel ir (city square)..."

Explanation: At the last seven fasts they make a great public ma'amad – they go out to the street (rechavah shel ir) and bring out the Sefer Torah in its teivah (ark).

Insights and Explanations:

1. **What is "teivah"?** In Hilchot Tefilah (Chapter 11) it states that there is a "heichal" (aron kodesh) where the Sefer Torah is placed, a "bimah" in the middle of the beit kneset, and a "teivah" where the Sefer Torah is placed. The conclusion is that "teivah" is a box/case in which the Torah lies (similar to the Sephardic custom where the Sefer Torah lies in its own box). They take out the teivah with the Sefer Torah from the heichal and place it outside – they make, as it were, a bit of a beit midrash on the street.

2. **Why bring out a Sefer Torah?** The Gemara (Ta'anit) gives the reason: "**Kli tzanu'ah hayah lanu venitbazei**" – the Torah that was kept inside is brought outside as a sign of bizayon/distress, that we have been scattered through our troubles.

B) Sakim (Sackcloth)

Rambam's Words: "...and they cover themselves with sakim..."

Explanation: The people cover themselves with sackcloth.

Insights and Explanations:

It is asked whether sakim is a **siguf** (it scratches the body) or a **bushah** (one wears a lowly garment). The conclusion is that it is **more a bushah than a siguf** – a person normally goes in levushei kavod (honorable clothing), and when one puts on such a degrading garment one humbles oneself. The Gemara (Ta'anit) says: "**Lomar harei anu chashuvim kivehemah**" – sackcloth is a garment of animals, and one shows thereby that one is no better than an animal. It is also connected to Megillat Esther: "Vayetze betoch ha'ir vayiz'ak ze'akah gedolah umarah" and "Sak va'efer yutzah larabim."

C) Eifer Mikleh (Burnt Ash) on the Teivah and Sefer Torah

Rambam's Words: "...and they place eifer mikleh on top of the teivah and on top of the Sefer Torah..."

Explanation: They place ash on the teivah (the box) and on the Sefer Torah itself – they open the teivah and also place it on the Torah itself.

Insights and Explanations:

1. **The Rambam's Special Reason – Unlike the Gemara:** The Gemara brings the reason why ash is placed on the Sefer Torah: "**Imo anochi betzarah**" / "**Bechol tzaratam lo tzar**" – the Shechinah is also in distress with Klal Yisrael. **But the Rambam specifically did not bring this reason**, rather he writes: "**Kedei lehargil et habechiyah ulehachni'a libam**" – the purpose is to shake up the community. The Rambam relies on Rabbi Zeira in Masechet Ta'anit, who says that when he would see ash being placed on the Sefer Torah, "**Mizdaz'a li kol gufai**" – his entire body would tremble. The Rambam understands that "Imo anochi betzarah" doesn't mean a metaphysical statement, but a practical effect: when people see that the holiest object is being treated with disgrace, it shakes them and brings them to teshuvah.

2. **Why is ash a symbol of distress/disgrace?** Poor people and heavy laborers (coal miners, furnace workers) are blackened with ash – ash is a sign of diminished honor.

D) Ash on the Head of the Nasi and Av Beit Din

Rambam's Words: "And one of the people takes from the ash and places it on the head of the nasi and on the head of the av beit din in the place where tefillin are laid."

Explanation: A simple person from among the people places ash on the head of the nasi and av beit din, on the forehead where tefillin are placed. Every simple Jew places it on himself.

Insights and Explanations:

1. **Why "echad min ha'am"?** Because it is not a matter of kavod – it is actually a bizayon, not an honor for the nasi. Even a simple poor person can do this.

2. **Why bimkom hanachat tefillin?** The verse in Yeshayahu (61:3) says: "**Lasum la'aveilei Tziyon latet lahem pe'er tachat eifer**" – there is a language of consolation (splendor instead of ash). Here they do the opposite: they place ash on the place where normally lies the "pe'er" (tefillin).

3. **Why must another person place it on the nasi?** The Gemara says: One who shames himself is not such a great shame. But when another does it, that is a greater shame. The nasi has already done many fasts, he has already shamed himself – but more shame is needed, therefore another does it. "**Kedei sheyitbayshu**" – this applies to everyone, but the nasi must first be ashamed and do teshuvah.

4. **The Rambam brings the first reason (shame/crying/brokenness) and not the second reason from the Gemara** – "Sheyizkor lanu afro shel Yitzchak" (that he is considered as ash). The Rambam emphasizes more the practical matter of shame.

5. **[Digression: Rosh Hashanah and Akedat Yitzchak]** Today on Rosh Hashanah, which is a yom tov and we cannot place ash, we read Parashat Ha'akeidah kedai sheyizkor lanu Yitzchak. But Rosh Hashanah is not a ta'anit, it is something else.

Halacha 2-3 – The Zakein Vechacham, Divrei Kibushin, and Shaliach Tzibur

A) The Zakein Vechacham and Divrei Kibushin

Rambam's Words: Afterwards they place a zakein vechacham among the people who are sitting. If there is no zakein vechacham, they place a chacham; if no chacham, a zakein; if neither, they place an "adam shel tzurah." He says divrei kibushin.

Explanation: There must be an authoritative figure who will say mussar words to the people. The order of preference: chacham takes precedence over zakein.

Insights and Explanations:

1. **"Adam shel tzurah"** – The Rambam in Yesodei HaTorah says "Vehadaat hayeteirah hametzuyah benafso shel adam hi tzurat ha'adam hashalem beda'ato," but here it means exactly the opposite: someone who has a tzurat panim, he looks distinguished – a nice beard, a distinguished appearance. **The reason:** People don't listen to mussar from just anyone, one needs someone who looks distinguished.

2. **"Divrei kibushin"** – "Kavush" means to conquer, words that conquer a person's heart (kovesh et libo shel adam).

3. **When it is an adam shel tzurah (not a chacham)** – the chachamim give him the words to say, he doesn't say them himself. The "vehu omer lifneihem" refers to the adam shel tzurah, to whom Chazal tell a derashah.

B) Content of the Divrei Kibushin

Rambam's Words: "Acheinu, lo sak veta'anit gormim, ela teshuvah uma'asim tovim, shechen matzinu be'anshei Nineveh shelo ne'emar bahem 'Vayar HaElokim et sakam ve'et ta'anitam' ela 'Vayar HaElokim et ma'aseihem.' Uvekabbalah hu omer 'Vekir'u levavechem ve'al bigdeichem.'"

Explanation: The main thing is not the external ta'anit, but teshuvah and good deeds. The proof is from the people of Nineveh.

Insights and Explanations:

1. **Why specifically the people of Nineveh?** It is very precise: we bring specifically the people of Nineveh because we see that sackcloth and fasting **can arouse** good deeds. It's not either/or – the Rambam did have sackcloth and fasting! The point is: the end goal is not the sackcloth and fasting themselves, but the deeds that this will arouse. "Vayar HaElokim et ma'aseihem."

2. **"Uvekabbalah hu omer"** – Interesting: Yonah is also "kabbalah" (Nevi'im), and yet he only calls the verse from Yoel "kabbalah." In Ta'anit (Rashi or another Rishon) this question is already asked, with an unclear answer.

3. **"Acheinu"** – Mussar must be said to "brothers," not to strangers. The tone is brotherly.

C) The Chacham Adds More

Rambam's Words: When there is a chacham, he adds "be'inyonot eilu kefi kocho" – he adds more divrei kibushin in the same direction, "ad sheyachni'a libam veyashuvu teshuvah gemurah."

Insights and Explanations:

1. **What does "teshuvah gemurah" mean?** They already had hirhurei teshuvah the whole time. "Teshuvah gemurah" means (as in Hilchot Teshuvah Chapter 2): "Eizo hi teshuvah gemurah? Zo sheba'ah leyado davar she'avar bo... ve'efshar beyado la'asoto ufeirash velo asah" – one stops sinning in practice, not just feeling bad. "Ad sheya'id alav yodei'a ta'alumot" – this is the standard of gemurah.

2. **[Digression: Going out to reshut harabim]** Perhaps therefore they come out to reshut harabim – because there one can immediately do teshuvah gemurah, one turns among people, among temptations, and one can prove that one stops sinning.

3. **When is mussar said?** Before davening. **"Ve'achar shegomer zeh divrei kibushin, omdim bitefilah"** – this is the source for the custom that rabbis give derashot before tekiat shofar / before davening.

D) Shaliach Tzibur Hara'ui Lehitpalel Beta'aniyot

Rambam's Words: After the divrei kibushin they place a shaliach tzibur hara'ui lehitpalel beta'aniyot. If the one who said divrei kibushin is also ra'ui, he davens. If not, they place another.

Explanation: The baal derashah and the shaliach tzibur are not necessarily the same person – each needs his own skills.

Insights and Explanations:

1. **"Ra'ui" means a good baal tefilah** – he has a nice voice, he can daven nicely. It states explicitly later what "ra'ui" means.

2. **Why can't the zakein vechacham always daven?** Tefilah must be more of a broken heart, a special talent. The darshan can be a good speaker but not a good baal tefilah.

3. **"Moridin lifnei hateivah"** – The language is "yored" (going down), not "oleh." **Why?** Oleh is oleh laTorah – one goes up, one forgets from the world. But tefilah is "yored" – from submission, one goes down. (Also practically: in the beit midrash the amud is a bit lower.)

Halacha 3 (Continued) – Conditions of the Shaliach Tzibur

A) "Ragil Bitefilah Veragil Likrot BaTorah Nevi'im Uchtuvim"

Rambam's Words: "Ish sheyehei ragil bitefilah, veragil likrot baTorah Nevi'im Uchtuvim."

Explanation: He must be able to daven fluently and know verses from Tanach.

Insights and Explanations:

1. **"Ragil bitefilah"** – He knows the words, he is a baki in leshonot tefilah. The entire purpose of a shaliach tzibur is because people who cannot daven well should be able to be yotzei through him. He must not have any "lashon ulai."

"Ragil" means more than "yodei'a" – he is a baki, he knows it fluently.

2. **"Ragil likrot baTorah Nevi'im Uchtuvim"** – He must know verses, because we make zichronot, shofarot from verses – one must know leshonot from Torah, Nevi'im, and Ketuvim. But not only at zichronot-shofarot – **all nuschaot hatefilah** are built on leshonot from verses. In Birkat Hamazon we say "Ka'amur potei'ach et yadecha," "Kakativ ve'achalta vesavata." In selichot we say "Aseh imanu kemo shehivtachtanu baTorah." All nuschaot (as the Abudraham shows) are built on verses. Pesukei dezimra are verses that were written to be tefilot.

3. **A broader point about the essence of Jewish tefilah:** Certainly a Jew can daven in his own language, but the foundations of Jewish tefilah are built on divrei Torah – on verses. The way to be able to make one's own tefilot is to learn much Tanach, and then your "language" becomes composed of Torah – this is "the Jewish language" of tefilah.

4. **[Digression: Rebbe Nachman of Breslov]** The same Rebbe Nachman who said one should speak in one's own language, also said that one must make from torot – tefilot. Because his language was torot. Not only from Likutei Moharan, but from Chumash one must also make tefilot. And who did this? Anshei Knesset HaGedolah – this is actually the same avodah.

5. **[Digression: Rabbi Meir of Premishlan]** Rabbi Meir of Premishlan's derech was: "Abba, kach katuv baTorah" – one pleads to the Almighty: You Yourself said in the Torah! This is an example of how one makes from verses tefilot.

B) **"Metupul Ve'ein Lo"**

Rambam's Words: The shaliach tzibur should be "metupul ve'ein lo" – he has children and he doesn't have enough for them. "Veyesh lo yegi'ah basadeh."

Explanation: He must be one who has a broken heart – he struggles with children but doesn't have enough to give them, and he works hard.

Insights and Explanations:

1. **"Metupul"** – Literally: he has children at home, he needs to take them from kupot (charity funds), he needs to drag them to cheder, he needs to find them shidduchim, jobs, etc. This makes him broken. But one who is too young (doesn't yet have children), or a great wealthy person ("yesh li mesharetim"), or a grandfather who is already "past this" – he doesn't feel with the tzaar hatzibur.

2. **"Ve'ein lo" + "Veyesh lo yegi'ah basadeh"** – He doesn't have, but he tries his best. He works hard, he has a little money. This is important: not just "ve'ein lo" that he sits and does nothing, but he struggles, he goes to work every day.

3. **Practical application for appointing baalei tefilah (also Yamim Nora'im):** A great hiddur is to take someone who (1) has children at home – he knows what it means, (2) he is a working young man – "yesh lo yegi'ah basadeh."

C) **"Beito Reik Min Ha'averot"**

Rambam's Words: "Lo yihyeh lo bevanav uvnei veito... baal aveirah. Beito reik min ha'averot."

Explanation: His entire household should be clean from sins – not him, not his children, not his wife, not his relatives.

Insights and Explanations:

1. **Question:** What is he guilty of if his children sin? – **Answer:** It doesn't mean he must be a perfect tzaddik without any sin. It speaks of things that people know – there is a "rinun" (bad rumors) about him. Because earlier the Rambam said that the chacham himself becomes broken (they place sackcloth and ash on him) – we're not talking about perfect people.

2. **Another answer:** It doesn't mean his children don't sin, but that he **doesn't allow** sins in his house. Even if he himself is a fine Jew, but he allows sins in his house – it is a deficiency.

3. **Source:** This comes from the Gemara which says "beito reikam" means empty from sins, and not just him but "beito."

D) **"Velo Yatza Alav Shem Ra Beyalduto"**

Rambam's Words: There should not have gone out about him a bad name when he was young.

Insights:

Question: What's wrong with a baal teshuvah? – **Answer:** It's a matter of kavod hatzibur. Many people still look at him and say "kodem at ir karishonim." Certainly it's good that one becomes better later, but lechatchilah we seek someone without a bad name. If we don't have – we don't have.

E) **"Shefal Berech, Umrutze La'am, Veyesh Lo Ne'imah, Vekolo Areiv"**

Explanation: He should be humble (not a snob), beloved by the people, with a sweet melody and a pleasant voice.

Insights:

"Ne'imah" vs. "Kolo areiv" – two separate things: "Ne'imah" means he knows the melody/nisuch (the nusach of davening), "kolo areiv" means he has a nice voice. One can have the nisuch but speak with an unpleasant voice – that is "ne'imah" without "kolo areiv."

F) **Zakein vs. Middot – What is Primary?**

Rambam's Words: If he is a zakein with all the middot – he is explicitly good. If he is not a zakein but has the middot – "yitpalel," he should daven.

Insights:

1. **"Zakein" here probably means a chacham** (not just old), because earlier the Rambam said he should still have children at home.

2. **The primary thing in tefilah is the middot, not chochmah.** A younger person with all the middot is better than a zakein/chacham who cannot daven.

G) **General Point: "Mrutze LaKahal" as the Main Condition**

Insight: Perhaps all the conditions of shaliach tzibur are conditions for one main thing: **"Mrutze lakahal"** – the people must feel that when he davens, he means **them**. He speaks for them. If the people think about his sins, his bad name in his youth – they don't feel with him. But if the people love him – everything is good.

1. **[Digression: Tefilah betzibur today]** True tefilah betzibur means that **one person davens** and you feel that he speaks for you, and you cry with him. In today's times, the only place where this can happen is by Chassidic rebbes, where people believe that the rebbe can speak for them to the Almighty.

2. **[Digression: "Hineni He'ani Mima'as"]** How can the chazan say loudly with a nice nusach that he is "he'ani

mima'as" – shouldn't this shame him? The answer: The main condition is that the people should feel that he davens for them, and "Hineni he'ani mima'as" is part of this – he shows humility before the community.

Halacha 4 – Seder Hatefilah Beta'anit: Zichronot, Shofarot, Tehillim, Tachanunin, "Mi She'anah," and Six Brachot

A) First Seven Brachot Until Go'al Yisrael

Rambam's Words: The shaliach tzibur begins to daven – normal Shemoneh Esrei, until Birkat Go'al Yisrael (the first seven brachot).

Explanation: They say the first brachot of Shemoneh Esrei as usual (Avot, Gevurot, Kedushat Hashem, etc.), until they come to Go'al Yisrael (the seventh brachah).

B) Zichronot Veshofarot, Tehillim, Tachanunin, "Mi She'anah Et Avraham"

Rambam's Words: "Before finishing Birkat Go'al Yisrael they say zichronot veshofarot me'ein hatzarah, chapters of Tehillim ('El Hashem betzaratah li,' 'Esa einai el heharim,' 'Mima'amakim keratich,' 'Tefilah le'ani ki ya'atof'), divrei tachanunin kefi kocho, and then 'Mi she'anah et Avraham avinu behar haMoriah hu ya'aneh etchem veyishma kol tze'akatechem bayom hazeh, baruch atah Hashem go'al Yisrael.' Then he adds six more brachot, umitchanen bechol achat mehem bedivrei tachanunin upsukim bedivrei kabbalah uvichtevei hakodesh kefi sheyargil, vechotem bechol achat mehem."

Explanation: In the brachah of "Re'eh be'anyeinu" (Go'al Yisrael) they insert zichronot veshofarot me'ein hatzarah – verses that speak of how the Almighty remembers Jews in distress and hears their shofar. Additionally they say four chapters of Tehillim (120, 121, 130, 102), tachanunin kefi kocho, and "Mi she'anah et Avraham." Then come six new brachot with their own chatimot.

Insights and Explanations:

1. The Rambam's approach in seder habrachot – unlike the simple reading of the Mishnah and Gemara (Maggid Mishneh's question): The Maggid Mishneh points out that the Rambam's order is very difficult, because it is unlike the simple reading of the Mishnah and Gemara. In the Mishnah it states that there are six extra brachot, and the zichronot, shofarot, Tehillim, and tachanunin are distributed throughout the six brachot – each brachah has its verses with its chatimah and its "Mi she'anah." But the Rambam places all the zichronot, shofarot, Tehillim, and tachanunin in one block – everything inserted into Birkat Go'al Yisrael, still before finishing the brachah. Only afterwards come the six new brachot with their chatimot. The Maggid Mishneh wants to think that perhaps the Rambam doesn't really mean this, but something got mixed up in the text, but from the Rambam's text it looks very clear that he really means this. According to the Gemara's simple reading it makes much more sense – for example, at "Mi she'anah et Avraham" we mention the Akeidah, we say verses about the oker and ne'ekar, we tell the story, and then we finish "Baruch atah Hashem" – everything together in one brachah. But according to the Rambam, the content (zichronot/shofarot/Tehillim) is cut off from the chatimot.

2. Zichronot veshofarot "me'ein hatzarah" – the difference from Rosh Hashanah: On Rosh Hashanah we say Malchuyot, Zichronot, Shofarot. At ta'anit we remove Malchuyot and say only Zichronot and Shofarot, but "me'ein hatzarah" – that is, we select verses that speak specifically of the Almighty remembering Jews in distress, and hearing the sound of the shofar of Jews who blow in their need (like "Venizkhartem lifnei Hashem Elokeichem").

3. The four chapters of Tehillim – a source for Tehillim in distress: The Rambam brings four chapters: 120 ("El Hashem betzaratah li karati"), 121 ("Esa einai el heharim"), 130 ("Mima'amakim keratich Hashem"), 102 ("Tefilah le'ani ki ya'atof"). This is practical advice from Chazal – if someone seeks Tehillim to say in distress, these are the chapters that Chazal established.

4. "Kefi kocho" – divrei tachanunin: If someone is a strong mechadeish, can make piyutim, can make his own tefilot – he says his own tefilot there.

5. "Kefi sheyargil" – two interpretations: (a) The person davens privately every day, he already has his own nuschaot that came to him during his tefilot – let him say this publicly. (b) Perhaps it means it cannot be the first time you say a tefilah publicly – you must be a "ragil bitefilah," you must already have experience.

6. Question on "Mi she'anah et Avraham behar haMoriah": What does it mean the Almighty "answered" Avraham at Har HaMoriah? It was a mitzvah, Akedat Yitzchak – what is the "distress"? **Answer:** Yitzchak was actually in great distress – he was lying on a mizbe'ach with a knife above him. Even worse, Avraham himself almost became a murderer, it was missing by a hair. But it is noted that this is "strange" – the verse presents it as a great mitzvah, that Avraham overcame himself, and we say here that he cried "Creator save my son"? It is suggested that perhaps it means the verse "Asher ye'amer hayom behar Hashem yera'eh" – that the Almighty promised him salvations. But it is said that "when no one knows the simple meaning, one may know that this is something that is somewhat strange."

7. "Hu ya'aneh etchem" – lashon nochach: The baal tefilah speaks to the people in the language of "etchem" (present), not "ya'anenu" (us). This is because the shaliach tzibur speaks **for** the people, not **instead of** the people.

C) The Six Brachot with Their Chatimot

First Brachah – Moshe Va'avoteinu Al Yam Suf

Rambam's Words: "Barishonah: 'Mi she'anah et Moshe va'avoteichem al yam suf, hu ya'aneh etchem... baruch atah Hashem zocher hanishkachot.'"

Insights:

1. "Zocher hanishkachot" corresponds to zichronot. This fits with the general order of zichronot-shofarot. But according to the Rambam's approach (where zichronot/shofarot were already said earlier in Birkat Go'al Yisrael) the connection between the content and the chatimah is weaker. According to the other interpretation (that the content is distributed throughout the brachot) it makes much more sense.

2. Zichronot – the concept of "remembering": At Moshe by Yam Suf we see an interesting thing – Moshe began to pray, and the Almighty said "Mah titz'ak eilai" – you are already helped, I already promised. This fits with **zichronot**:

zichronot means one doesn't need a new tefilah, but one reminds that the Almighty already promised, one is still holding from the first tefilah.

Second Brachah – Yehoshua BeGilgal

Rambam's Words: "Basheniyah: 'Mi she'anah et Yehoshua beGilgal, hu ya'aneh etchem... baruch atah Hashem shome'a teru'ah.'"

Insights:

1. **"Shome'a teru'ah" corresponds to shofarot.**
2. **"BeGilgal" – not necessarily Yericho:** The simple meaning is the story of the walls of Yericho (Yehoshua Chapter 6), where they blew shofar – which fits well with "shome'a teru'ah." But it has been suggested that "Gilgal" is not necessarily Yericho – Gilgal was the camp of Klal Yisrael throughout the entire conquest of the land (until Yehoshua Chapter 14 approximately). All the tefilot that Yehoshua prayed – also at the war with Ai – were "beGilgal." When we say the place (like "Mitzpah" by Shmuel, "Har HaCarmel" by Eliyahu), we mean the camp/place, not necessarily the specific miracle. If we meant specifically Yericho, it should have said "biYericho."
3. **A strong reasoning that it speaks of the tefilah at Ai** (Yehoshua Chapter 7): After 36 Jews fell at Ai, Yehoshua said a fearful tefilah: "Ahah Adonai Elokim lamah he'avarta ha'avir et ha'am hazeh... umah ta'aseh leshimcha hagadol?" – this was beGilgal officially. The Almighty answered with the entire story of Achan.
4. **Question

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Explanation: The people cover themselves with sackcloth.

Insights and Explanations:

It is asked whether sakim is a **siguf** (it scratches the body) or a **bushah** (one wears a lowly garment). The conclusion is that it is **more a bushah than a siguf** – a person normally goes in levushei kavod (honorable clothing), and when one puts on such a degrading garment one humbles oneself. The Gemara (Ta'anit) says: **"Lomar harei anu chashuvim kivehemah"** – sackcloth is a garment of animals, and one shows thereby that one is no better than an animal. It is also connected to Megillat Esther: "Vayetze betoch ha'ir vayiz'ak ze'akah gedolah umarah" and "Sak va'efer yutzah larabim."

C) Eifer Mikleh (Burnt Ash) on the Teivah and Sefer Torah

Rambam's Words: "...and they place eifer mikleh on top of the teivah and on top of the Sefer Torah..."

Explanation: They place ash on the teivah (the box) and on the Sefer Torah itself – they open the teivah and also place it on the Torah itself.

Insights and Explanations:

1. **The Rambam's Special Reason – Unlike the Gemara:** The Gemara brings the reason why ash is placed on the Sefer Torah: **"Imo anochi betzarah" / "Bechol tzaratam lo tzar"** – the Shechinah is also in distress with Klal Yisrael. **But the Rambam specifically did not bring this reason**, rather he writes: **"Kedei lehargil et habechiyah ulehachni'a libam"** – the purpose is to shake up the community. The Rambam relies on Rabbi Zeira in Masechet Ta'anit, who says that when he would see ash being placed on the Sefer Torah, **"Mizdaz'a li kol gufai"** – his entire body would tremble. The Rambam understands that "Imo anochi betzarah" doesn't mean a metaphysical statement, but a practical effect: when people see that the holiest object is being treated with disgrace, it shakes them and brings them to teshuvah.

2. **Why is ash a symbol of distress/disgrace?** Poor people and heavy laborers (coal miners, furnace workers) are blackened with ash – ash is a sign of diminished honor.

D) Ash on the Head of the Nasi and Av Beit Din

Rambam's Words: "And one of the people takes from the ash and places it on the head of the nasi and on the head of the av beit din in the place where tefillin are laid..."

Explanation: A simple person from among the people places ash on the head of the nasi and av beit din, on the forehead where tefillin are placed. Every simple Jew places it on himself.

Insights and Explanations:

1. **Why "echad min ha'am"?** Because it is not a matter of kavod – it is actually a bizayon, not an honor for the nasi. Even a simple poor person can do this.

2. **Why bimkom hanachat tefillin?** The verse in Yeshayahu (61:3) says: "**Lasum la'aveilei Tziyon latet lahem pe'er tachat eifer**" – there is a language of consolation (splendor instead of ash). Here they do the opposite: they place ash on the place where normally lies the "pe'er" (tefillin).

3. **Why must another person place it on the nasi?** The Gemara says: One who shames himself is not such a great shame. But when another does it, that is a greater shame. The nasi has already done many fasts, he has already shamed himself – but more shame is needed, therefore another does it. "**Kedei sheyitbayshu**" – this applies to everyone, but the nasi must first be ashamed and do teshuvah.

4. **The Rambam brings the first reason (shame/crying/brokenness) and not the second reason from the Gemara** – "Sheyizkor lanu afro shel Yitzchak" (that he is considered as ash). The Rambam emphasizes more the practical matter of shame.

5. **[Digression: Rosh Hashanah and Akedat Yitzchak]** Today on Rosh Hashanah, which is a yom tov and we cannot place ash, we read Parashat Ha'akeidah kedei sheyizkor lanu Yitzchak. But Rosh Hashanah is not a ta'anit, it is something else.

Halacha 2-3 – The Zakein Vechacham, Divrei Kibushin, and Shaliach Tzibur

A) The Zakein Vechacham and Divrei Kibushin

Rambam's Words: Afterwards they place a zakein vechacham among the people who are sitting. If there is no zakein vechacham, they place a chacham; if no chacham, a zakein; if neither, they place an "adam shel tzurah." He says divrei kibushin.

Explanation: There must be an authoritative figure who will say mussar words to the people. The order of preference: chacham takes precedence over zakein.

Insights and Explanations:

1. **"Adam shel tzurah"** – The Rambam in Yesodei HaTorah says "Vehadaat hayeteirah hametzuyah benafso shel adam hi tzurat ha'adam hashalem beda'ato," but here it means exactly the opposite: someone who has a tzurat panim, he looks distinguished – a nice beard, a distinguished appearance. **The reason:** People don't listen to mussar from just anyone, one needs someone who looks distinguished.

2. **"Divrei kibushin"** – "Kavush" means to conquer, words that conquer a person's heart (kovesh et libo shel adam).

3. **When it is an adam shel tzurah (not a chacham)** – the chachamim give him the words to say, he doesn't say them himself. The "vehu omer lifneihem" refers to the adam shel tzurah, to whom Chazal tell a derashah.

B) Content of the Divrei Kibushin

Rambam's Words: "**Acheinu, lo sak veta'anit gormim, ela teshuvah uma'asim tovim, shechen matzinu be'anshei Nineveh shelo ne'emar bahem 'Vayar HaElokim et sakam ve'et ta'anitam' ela 'Vayar HaElokim et ma'aseihem.' Uvekabbalah hu omer 'Vekir'u levavechem ve'al bigdeichem.'"**

Explanation: The main thing is not the external ta'anit, but teshuvah and good deeds. The proof is from the people of Nineveh.

Insights and Explanations:

1. **Why specifically the people of Nineveh?** It is very precise: we bring specifically the people of Nineveh because we see that sackcloth and fasting **can arouse** good deeds. It's not either/or – the Rambam did have sackcloth and fasting! The point is: the end goal is not the sackcloth and fasting themselves, but the deeds that this will arouse. "Vayar HaElokim et ma'aseihem."

2. **"Uvekabbalah hu omer"** – Interesting: Yonah is also "kabbalah" (Nevi'im), and yet he only calls the verse from Yoel "kabbalah." In Ta'anit (Rashi or another Rishon) this question is already asked, with an unclear answer.

3. **"Acheinu"** – Mussar must be said to "brothers," not to strangers. The tone is brotherly.

C) The Chacham Adds More

Rambam's Words: When there is a chacham, he adds "**be'inyonot eilu kefi kocho**" – he adds more divrei kibushin in the same direction, "**ad sheyachni'a libam veyashuvu teshuvah gemurah.**"

Insights and Explanations:

1. **What does "teshuvah gemurah" mean?** They already had hirhurei teshuvah the whole time. "Teshuvah gemurah" means (as in Hilchot Teshuvah Chapter 2): "Eizo hi teshuvah gemurah? Zo sheba'ah leyado davar she'avar bo... ve'efshar beyado la'asoto ufeirash velo asah" – one stops sinning in practice, not just feeling bad. "Ad sheya'id alav yodei'a ta'alumot" – this is the standard of gemurah.

2. **[Digression: Going out to reshut harabim]** Perhaps therefore they come out to reshut harabim – because there one can immediately do teshuvah gemurah, one turns among people, among temptations, and one can prove that one stops sinning.

3. **When is mussar said?** Before davening. "**Ve'achar shegomer zeh divrei kibushin, omdim btefilah**" – this is the source for the custom that rabbis give derashot before tekiat shofar / before davening.

D) Shaliach Tzibur Hara'ui Lehitpalel Beta'aniyot

Rambam's Words: After the divrei kibushin they place a shaliach tzibur hara'ui lehitpalel beta'aniyot. If the one who said divrei kibushin is also ra'ui, he davens. If not, they place another.

Explanation: The baal derashah and the shaliach tzibur are not necessarily the same person – each needs his own skills.

Insights and Explanations:

1. **"Ra'ui" means a good baal tefilah** – he has a nice voice, he can daven nicely. It states explicitly later what "ra'ui" means.

2. **Why can't the zakein vechacham always daven?** Tefilah must be more of a broken heart, a special talent. The darshan can be a good speaker but not a good baal tefilah.

3. **"Moridin lifnei hateivah"** – The language is "yored" (going down), not "oleh." **Why?** Oleh is oleh laTorah – one goes up, one forgets from the world. But tefilah is "yored" – from submission, one goes down. (Also practically: in the beit midrash the amud is a bit lower.)

Halacha 3 (Continued) – Conditions of the Shaliach Tzibur

A) "Ragil Bitefilah Veragil Likrot BaTorah Nevi'im Uchtuvim"

Rambam's Words: "Ish sheyehei ragil bitefilah, veragil likrot baTorah Nevi'im Uchtuvim."

Explanation: He must be able to daven fluently and know verses from Tanach.

Insights and Explanations:

1. **"Ragil bitefilah"** – He knows the words, he is a baki in leshonot tefilah. The entire purpose of a shaliach tzibur is because people who cannot daven well should be able to be yotzei through him. He must not have any "lashon ulai." "Ragil" means more than "yodei'a" – he is a baki, he knows it fluently.

2. **"Ragil likrot baTorah Nevi'im Uchtuvim"** – He must know verses, because we make zichronot, shofarot from verses – one must know leshonot from Torah, Nevi'im, and Ketuvim. But not only at zichronot-shofarot – **all nuschaot hatefilah** are built on leshonot from verses. In Birkat Hamazon we say "Ka'amur potei'ach et yadecha," "Kakatuv ve'achalta vesavata." In selichot we say "Aseh imanu kemo shehivtachtanu baTorah." All nuschaot (as the Abudraham shows) are built on verses. Pesukei dezimra are verses that were written to be tefilot.

3. **A broader point about the essence of Jewish tefilah:** Certainly a Jew can daven in his own language, but the foundations of Jewish tefilah are built on divrei Torah – on verses. The way to be able to make one's own tefilot is to learn much Tanach, and then your "language" becomes composed of Torah – this is "the Jewish language" of tefilah.

4. **[Digression: Rebbe Nachman of Breslov]** The same Rebbe Nachman who said one should speak in one's own language, also said that one must make from torot – tefilot. Because his language was torot. Not only from Likutei Moharan, but from Chumash one must also make tefilot. And who did this? Anshei Knesset HaGedolah – this is actually the same avodah.

5. **[Digression: Rabbi Meir of Premishlan]** Rabbi Meir of Premishlan's derech was: "Abba, kach katuv baTorah" – one pleads to the Almighty: You Yourself said in the Torah! This is an example of how one makes from verses tefilot.

B) "Metupul Ve'ein Lo"

Rambam's Words: The shaliach tzibur should be "metupul ve'ein lo" – he has children and he doesn't have enough for them. "Veyesh lo yegi'ah basadeh."

Explanation: He must be one who has a broken heart – he struggles with children but doesn't have enough to give them, and he works hard.

Insights and Explanations:

1. **"Metupul"** – Literally: he has children at home, he needs to take them from kupot (charity funds), he needs to drag them to cheder, he needs to find them shidduchim, jobs, etc. This makes him broken. But one who is too young (doesn't yet have children), or a great wealthy person ("yesh li mesharetim"), or a grandfather who is already "past this" – he doesn't feel with the tzaar hatzibur.

2. **"Ve'ein lo" + "Veyesh lo yegi'ah basadeh"** – He doesn't have, but he tries his best. He works hard, he has a little money. This is important: not just "ve'ein lo" that he sits and does nothing, but he struggles, he goes to work every day.

3. **Practical application for appointing baalei tefilah (also Yamim Nora'im):** A great hiddur is to take someone who (1) has children at home – he knows what it means, (2) he is a working young man – "yesh lo yegi'ah basadeh."

C) "Beito Reik Min Ha'averot"

Rambam's Words: "Lo yihyeh lo bevanav uvnei veito... baal aveirah. Beito reik min ha'averot."

Explanation: His entire household should be clean from sins – not him, not his children, not his wife, not his relatives.

Insights and Explanations:

1. **Question:** What is he guilty of if his children sin? – **Answer:** It doesn't mean he must be a perfect tzaddik without any sin. It speaks of things that people know – there is a "rinun" (bad rumors) about him. Because earlier the Rambam said that the chacham himself becomes broken (they place sackcloth and ash on him) – we're not talking about perfect people.

2. **Another answer:** It doesn't mean his children don't sin, but that he **doesn't allow** sins in his house. Even if he himself is a fine Jew, but he allows sins in his house – it is a deficiency.

3. **Source:** This comes from the Gemara which says "beito reikam" means empty from sins, and not just him but "beito."

D) "Velo Yatza Alav Shem Ra Beyalduto"

Rambam's Words: There should not have gone out about him a bad name when he was young.

Insights:

Question: What's wrong with a baal teshuvah? – **Answer:** It's a matter of kavod hatzibur. Many people still look at him and say "kodem at ir karishonim." Certainly it's good that one becomes better later, but lechatchilah we seek someone without a bad name. If we don't have – we don't have.

E) "Shefal Berech, Umrutzeh La'am, Veyesh Lo Ne'imah, Vekolo Areiv"

Explanation: He should be humble (not a snob), beloved by the people, with a sweet melody and a pleasant voice.

Insights:

"Ne'imah" vs. "Kolo areiv" – two separate things: "Ne'imah" means he knows the melody/nisuch (the nusach of davening), "kolo areiv" means he has a nice voice. One can have the nisuch but speak with an unpleasant voice – that is "ne'imah" without "kolo areiv."

F) Zakein vs. Middot – What is Primary?

Rambam's Words: If he is a zakein with all the middot – he is explicitly good. If he is not a zakein but has the middot – "yitpalel," he should daven.

Insights:

1. **"Zakein" here probably means a chacham** (not just old), because earlier the Rambam said he should still have children at home.

2. **The primary thing in tefilah is the middot, not chochmah.** A younger person with all the middot is better than a zakein/chacham who cannot daven.

G) General Point: "Mrutzeh LaKahal" as the Main Condition

Insight: Perhaps all the conditions of shaliach tzibur are conditions for one main thing: **"Mrutzeh lakahal"** – the people must feel that when he davens, he means **them**. He speaks for them. If the people think about his sins, his bad

name in his youth – they don't feel with him. But if the people love him – everything is good.

1. **[Digression: Tefilah betzibur today]** True tefilah betzibur means that **one person davens** and you feel that he speaks for you, and you cry with him. In today's times, the only place where this can happen is by Chassidic rebbes, where people believe that the rebbe can speak for them to the Almighty.

2. **[Digression: "Hineni He'ani Mima'as"]** How can the chazan say loudly with a nice nusach that he is "he'ani mima'as" – shouldn't this shame him? The answer: The main condition is that the people should feel that he davens for them, and "Hineni he'ani mima'as" is part of this – he shows humility before the community.

Halacha 4 – Seder Hatefilah Beta'anit: Zichronot, Shofarot, Tehillim, Tachanunin, "Mi She'anah," and Six Brachot

A) First Seven Brachot Until Go'al Yisrael

Rambam's Words: The shaliach tzibur begins to daven – normal Shemoneh Esrei, until Birkat Go'al Yisrael (the first seven brachot).

Explanation: They say the first brachot of Shemoneh Esrei as usual (Avot, Gevurot, Kedushat Hashem, etc.), until they come to Go'al Yisrael (the seventh brachah).

B) Zichronot Veshofarot, Tehillim, Tachanunin, "Mi She'anah Et Avraham"

Rambam's Words: "Before finishing Birkat Go'al Yisrael they say zichronot veshofarot me'ein hatzarah, chapters of Tehillim ('El Hashem betzaratah li,' 'Esa einai el heharim,' 'Mima'amakim keratich,' 'Tefilah le'ani ki ya'atof'), divrei tachanunin kefi kocho, and then 'Mi she'anah et Avraham avinu behar haMoriah hu ya'aneh etchem veyishma kol tze'akatechem bayom hazeh, baruch atah Hashem go'al Yisrael.' Then he adds six more brachot, umitchanen bechol achat mehem bedivrei tachanunin upsukim bedivrei kabbalah uvichtevei hakodesh kefi sheyargil, vechotem bechol achat mehem."

Explanation: In the brachah of "Re'eh be'anyeinu" (Go'al Yisrael) they insert zichronot veshofarot me'ein hatzarah – verses that speak of how the Almighty remembers Jews in distress and hears their shofar. Additionally they say four chapters of Tehillim (120, 121, 130, 102), tachanunin kefi kocho, and "Mi she'anah et Avraham." Then come six new brachot with their own chatimot.

Insights and Explanations:

1. **The Rambam's approach in seder habrachot – unlike the simple reading of the Mishnah and Gemara (Maggid Mishneh's question):** The Maggid Mishneh points out that the Rambam's order is very difficult, because it is unlike the simple reading of the Mishnah and Gemara. In the Mishnah it states that there are six extra brachot, and the zichronot, shofarot, Tehillim, and tachanunin are distributed throughout the six brachot – each brachah has its verses with its chatimah and its "Mi she'anah." But the Rambam places all the zichronot, shofarot, Tehillim, and tachanunin in one block – everything inserted into Birkat Go'al Yisrael, still before finishing the brachah. Only afterwards come the six new brachot with their chatimot. The Maggid Mishneh wants to

think that perhaps the Rambam doesn't really mean this, but something got mixed up in the text, but from the Rambam's text it looks very clear that he really means this. According to the Gemara's simple reading it makes much more sense – for example, at "Mi she'anah et Avraham" we mention the Akeidah, we say verses about the oker and ne'ekar, we tell the story, and then we finish "Baruch atah Hashem" – everything together in one brachah. But according to the Rambam, the content (zichronot/shofarot/Tehillim) is cut off from the chatimot.

2. **Zichronot veshofarot "me'ein hatzarah" – the difference from Rosh Hashanah:** On Rosh Hashanah we say Malchuyot, Zichronot, Shofarot. At ta'anit we remove Malchuyot and say only Zichronot and Shofarot, but "me'ein hatzarah" – that is, we select verses that speak specifically of the Almighty remembering Jews in distress, and hearing the sound of the shofar of Jews who blow in their need (like "Venizkhartem lifnei Hashem Elokeichem").

3. **The four chapters of Tehillim – a source for Tehillim in distress:** The Rambam brings four chapters: 120 ("El Hashem betzaratah li karati"), 121 ("Esa einai el heharim"), 130 ("Mima'amakim keratich Hashem"), 102 ("Tefilah le'ani ki ya'atof"). This is practical advice from Chazal – if someone seeks Tehillim to say in distress, these are the chapters that Chazal established.

4. **"Kefi kocho" – divrei tachanunin:** If someone is a strong mechadeish, can make piyutim, can make his own tefilot – he says his own tefilot there.

5. **"Kefi sheyargil" – two interpretations:** (a) The person davens privately every day, he already has his own nuschaot that came to him during his tefilot – let him say this publicly. (b) Perhaps it means it cannot be the first time you say a tefilah publicly – you must be a "ragil bitefilah," you must already have experience.

6. **Question on "Mi she'anah et Avraham behar haMoriah":** What does it mean the Almighty "answered" Avraham at Har HaMoriah? It was a mitzvah, Akedat Yitzchak – what is the "distress"? **Answer:** Yitzchak was actually in great distress – he was lying on a mizbe'ach with a knife above him. Even worse, Avraham himself almost became a murderer, it was missing by a hair. But it is noted that this is "strange" – the verse presents it as a great mitzvah, that Avraham overcame himself, and we say here that he cried "Creator save my son"? It is suggested that perhaps it means the verse "Asher ye'amer hayom behar Hashem yera'eh" – that the Almighty promised him salvations. But it is said that "when no one knows the simple meaning, one may know that this is something that is somewhat strange."

7. **"Hu ya'aneh etchem" – lashon nochach:** The baal tefilah speaks to the people in the language of "etchem" (present), not "ya'anenu" (us). This is because the shaliach tzibur speaks **for** the people, not **instead of** the people.

C) The Six Brachot with Their Chatimot

First Brachah – Moshe Va'avoteinu Al Yam Suf

Rambam's Words: "Barishonah: 'Mi she'anah et Moshe va'avoteichem al yam suf, hu ya'aneh etchem... baruch atah Hashem zocher hanishkachot.'"

Insights:

1. **"Zocher hanishkachot" corresponds to zichronot.** This fits with the general order of zichronot-shofarot. But

according to the Rambam's approach (where zichronot/shofarot were already said earlier in Birkat Go'al Yisrael) the connection between the content and the chatimah is weaker. According to the other interpretation (that the content is distributed throughout the brachot) it makes much more sense.

2. Zichronot – the concept of "remembering": At Moshe by Yam Suf we see an interesting thing – Moshe began to pray, and the Almighty said "Mah titz'ak eilai" – you are already helped, I already promised. This fits with **zichronot**: zichronot means one doesn't need a new tefilah, but one reminds that the Almighty already promised, one is still holding from the first tefilah.

Second Brachah – Yehoshua BeGilgal

Rambam's Words: "Basheniyah: 'Mi she'anah et Yehoshua beGilgal, hu ya'aneh etchem... baruch atah Hashem shome'a teru'ah.'"

Insights:

1. **"Shome'a teru'ah" corresponds to shofarot.**

2. **"BeGilgal" – not necessarily Yericho:** The simple meaning is the story of the walls of Yericho (Yehoshua Chapter 6), where they blew shofar – which fits well with "shome'a teru'ah." But it has been suggested that "Gilgal" is not necessarily Yericho – Gilgal was the camp of Klal Yisrael throughout the entire conquest of the land (until Yehoshua Chapter 14 approximately). All the tefilot that Yehoshua prayed – also at the war with Ai – were "beGilgal." When we say the place (like "Mitzpah" by Shmuel, "Har HaCarmel" by Eliyahu), we mean the camp/place, not necessarily the specific miracle. If we meant specifically Yericho, it should have said "biYericho."

3. **A strong reasoning that it speaks of the tefilah at Ai** (Yehoshua Chapter 7): After 36 Jews fell at Ai, Yehoshua said a fearful tefilah: "Ahah Adonai Elokim lamah he'avarta ha'avir et ha'am hazeh... umah ta'aseh leshimcha hagadol?" – this was beGilgal officially. The Almighty answered with the entire story of Achan.

4. ****Question**

: At Ai it doesn't state that Yehoshua asked (rather he made a complaint). Answer:** At Avraham it also doesn't state that he asked, and nevertheless he is mentioned.

Third Brachah – Shmuel BaMitzpah

Rambam's Words: "Bashelishit chotem: 'Mi she'anah et Shmuel baMitzpah hu ya'aneh etchem veyishma kol tze'akatechem bayom hazeh, baruch atah Hashem shome'a tze'akah.'"

Explanation: At Mitzpah there was a war between the Jews and the Philistines, Shmuel prayed, and the Almighty helped.

Insight: "Bayom hazeh" doesn't mean that the salvation should come today, but that the Almighty should **hear** the cry that we cry now – "veyishma kol tze'akatechem bayom hazeh." As He did in those days, so may He do on this day.

Fourth Brachah – Eliyahu BeHar HaCarmel

Rambam's Words: "Barevi'it yachtom: 'Mi she'anah et Eliyahu behar HaCarmel... baruch atah Hashem shome'a tefilah.'"

Explanation: Eliyahu said "Aneini Hashem aneini" at Har HaCarmel against the prophets of Baal, and the Almighty brought fire on his altar.

Insight: The language "Mi she'anah" fits very well with Eliyahu, because Eliyahu himself said "Aneini" – the same root.

Fifth Brachah – Yonah Bimei HaDagah

Rambam's Words: "Bachamishit yachtom: 'Mi she'anah et Yonah bimei hadagah... baruch atah Hashem ha'oneh be'et tzarah.'"

Insights:

1. **Place or distress?** At all other brachot we mention a **place** (Har HaCarmel, Mitzpah, Gilgal, Yerushalayim). "Bimei hadagah" is also a place – but it is actually also a distress. We speak of a time and a place – and so may the Almighty help today here.

2. **A deeper concept:** Normally one davens in the beit midrash. But when there is a distress, one is **not** in the beit midrash – one is in Mitzpah, in Gilgal, in the belly of the fish, in the street where people stand hungry. This is the concept – the Almighty answers even when one is not in the normal davening place.

3. **Yonah's tefilah in his heart:** Yonah couldn't cry out with a voice in the belly of the fish – he cried **in his heart** ("Karati mitzarah li el Hashem"). This fits with the concept that the **baal tefilah** cries out, and the other people cry **in their hearts** – "kol tze'akatechem" is what they hear from the baal tefilah and cry inwardly.

4. **[Digression: Yonah on Yom Kippur]** This is probably one of the simple reasons why we read Yonah on Yom Kippur – either because the Almighty helped Yonah (tefilah), or because Nineveh did teshuvah (mussar). Yonah has both things – tefilah and teshuvah.

Sixth Brachah – David Ushlomo BiYerushalayim

Rambam's Words: "Bashishit yachtom: 'Mi she'anah et David uShlomo beno biYerushalayim... baruch atah Hashem hamerachem al ha'aretz.'"

Insights:

1. **"Merachem al ha'aretz"** means that the Almighty should have mercy and bring rain on the land – this is what we ask.

2. **Why David and Shlomo?** They built Eretz Yisrael / the Beit HaMikdash. Here there are **two** people – David asked, and the salvation came in the days of Shlomo (when the Beit HaMikdash was completed).

3. In practice, David HaMelech had a famine for three years, and he made an entire day of tefilah. At that time he found the goren Arnan HaYevusi – the place where the Beit HaMikdash was built. This has to do with "hamerachem al ha'aretz."

D) Answering Amen

Rambam's Words: "And all the people answer amen after each and every brachah, in the manner that they answer amen after each and every brachah."

Explanation: The people answer amen after every brachah.

Insight: The Rambam says this **to exclude** what we will soon learn about the Beit HaMikdash – there they did **not** say amen, but a different order (baruch shem kevod malchuto).

E) After Davening – Gomer Hatefilah Uteki'ot

Rambam's Words: "Vegomer hatefilah al haseder" – they return to the regular Shemoneh Esrei (Refa'einu etc.) and finish in order. "Umitok'im bachatzerot" – after davening they blow shofar.

Insights:

1. It is interesting that we never have such a situation where brachot are added **in the middle** of Shemoneh Esrei (on Yom Tov there are only 7 brachot, not 18 plus). This is a special thing only at ta'anit.

2. The zichronot (that are said in the brachot) are a **preparation** for the shofar-blowing – we ask the Almighty that He should remember, and afterwards we blow.

Halacha 5 – Kaseder Hazeh Osin Bechol Makom / Seder Beit HaMikdash

A) "Bechol Makom"

Rambam's Words: "Kaseder hazeh osin bechol makom."

Insight: "Bechol makom" means **in all of Eretz Yisrael except Yerushalayim/Beit HaMikdash**. The Rambam said earlier that the full ta'anit geshamim (with all stringencies) is only in Eretz Yisrael. In chutz la'aretz they make ta'aniyot but not with this stringency. It is discussed whether in chutz la'aretz they make a ta'anit geshamim at all – no one has heard that this is done.

B) Seder Beit HaMikdash – Three Main Differences

Rambam's Words: "Keshem shemitpalelim al haseder hazeh biYerushalayim" – **in Yerushalayim they went to Har HaBayit, facing the eastern gate, and prayed according to this order.**

Explanation: They went to Har HaBayit with their faces toward the east (facing Beit Kodshei Kodashim).

Insights – Three Main Differences Between Bechol Makom and Beit HaMikdash:

1) Teki'ot in the middle: In all of Eretz Yisrael (except Yerushalayim) they blow shofar only **after davening**. In the Beit HaMikdash the teki'ot were **part of the tefilah** in the middle. The chazzan hakneset says "tik'u" and they make teki'ah uteru'ah in the middle.

2) Answering Amen vs. Baruch Shem: In the Beit HaMikdash they don't say amen, but "**Baruch shem kevod malchuto le'olam va'ed**". Also they don't say "Baruch atah Hashem" but "**Baruch atah Hashem Elokeinu Elokei Yisrael min ha'olam ve'ad ha'olam**" – a longer nusach.

3) Repeating "Mi she'anah": After blowing they say **again** "Mi she'anah" – which is not done in other places.

C) Seder Hateki'ot in Beit HaMikdash – Details

Rambam's Words: "Umashgiach shaliach tzibur lomar mi she'anah et Avraham..." – The shaliach tzibur finishes with "**Baruch atah Hashem Elokeinu Elokei Yisrael min ha'olam ve'ad ha'olam, baruch atah Hashem go'al Yisrael**", and the people answer "**Baruch shem kevod malchuto le'olam va'ed**". Afterwards they blow, and the chazzan hakneset says "**Tik'u kohanim tik'u**", and the shaliach tzibur says "**Mi she'anah et Avraham avinu behar haMoriah ya'aneh etchem...**", and afterwards tok'in hakohanim.

Insights:

1. Difference between Beit HaMikdash and bechol makom: In bechol makom they say "Mi she'anah" as part of the brachah itself. But in the Beit HaMikdash they do differently – they first make a chatimah with "Baruch atah

Hashem go'al Yisrael", the people answer "Baruch shem kevod malchuto", and afterwards comes "Mi she'anah" as a separate tefilah at the time they prepare for the teki'ot. That is, "Mi she'anah" is taken out of the brachah and becomes a separate techinah.

2. Seder hateki'ot – tok'in umeri'in: The Rambam says that "**be'achai omer tok'in uve'achai omer meri'in**" – at one brachah they begin with teki'ah (teki'ah teru'ah teki'ah), and at the other they begin with teru'ah (teru'ah teki'ah teru'ah). "**Nimtze'u hakohanim pa'am tok'in umeri'in vetok'in, ufa'am meri'in vetok'in umeri'in, sheva pe'amim.**" This is interesting, because we know that every teru'ah must have a teki'ah before it and after it – but here it appears they switch the order. At Rosh Hashanah there is no such order of switching, but at ta'anit yes.

3. "Ve'ein osin seder zeh ela behar habayit bilvad" – The special order of teki'ot with chatzotzrot and shofar together, with the switching of tok'in/meri'in, is only on Har HaBayit.

4. Language "avoteinu" vs. "avoteichem": At "Mi she'anah et Moshe va'avoteinu al yam suf" it says "avoteinu", but earlier it says "ya'aneh etchem". The Rambam was not precise in this difference between "avoteinu" and "avoteichem".

Halacha 6 (Approximately) – Going to Beit Hakevarot After Tefilah

Rambam's Words: "Veseder ta'aniyot eilu bechol makom shegozrin otam sham, achar shemitpalelim yotz'in kol ha'am lebeit hakevarot uvochim umitpalelim sham" – because "**kelomar harei atem metim ka'eilu im lo tashuvu midarcheichem**".

Explanation: After davening they go to the cemetery, they cry and they daven there. The Rambam's reason is to frighten the people – that if they don't do teshuvah, they will also die like the dead who lie there.

Insights and Explanations:

1. Great chiddush of the Rambam's own reason: In Gemara Ta'anit daf 16 there is a **dispute between Rabbi Levi bar Chama and Rabbi Chanina** why they go to the cemetery. **One reason:** "Harei anu chashuvim lefanecha kametim" – one humbles oneself before the Almighty, one shows that one is as lowly as the dead. **Second reason:** "Kedei shevakshu aleinu metim rachamim" – that the dead should ask for mercy for us. The **nafka minah** between the two approaches is whether one can go to gentile graves – if it's kedei shevakshu rachamim, one must go to Jewish graves; if it's chashuvim kametim, one can go even to gentile graves. There is also a third opinion that one should specifically go to gentile graves, because Jewish dead are "bemitatan keruyim chayim" and it doesn't fit to say "chashuvim kametim" by them.

2. The Rambam doesn't rule like any of the Gemara's formulations! He doesn't say "chashuvim kametim" (that would be toward Heaven – one shows the Almighty that one is lowly), and he doesn't say "shevakshu metim rachamim". Instead the Rambam says his own reason: "**Harei atem metim ka'eilu im lo tashuvu midarcheichem**" – this is a mussar thing for the living people themselves, to remind them that they will also die. This is **not toward Heaven** (not to

prove something to the Almighty), but **toward oneself** – one frightens oneself to teshuvah.

3. This fits together with the consistent manner (ofen ikvi) that the Rambam learns throughout – that all the actions of ta'anit are not in order to "convince" or "persuade" the Almighty, but in order to bring the person himself to teshuvah. The Rambam turns over the simple meaning of all things – instead of it being toward Heaven (one submits oneself before the Almighty), he says it is toward the person himself (one reminds oneself that one will die).

4. Yerushalmi as a source: It has been suggested that the Rambam relies on the **Yerushalmi** which brings only one reason. But the Rambam doesn't rule exactly like that reason either – he "breaks apart" (mefarrer) the reason and builds his own twist on it.

5. Practical point: In those times in Eretz Yisrael, when there was no rain, people actually saw death before their eyes – it wasn't as "distant" as today. Therefore the going to the cemetery was a strong reminder.

6. [Digression: Shulchan Aruch and custom of Erev Rosh Hashanah] In Shulchan Aruch it states that Erev Rosh Hashanah there was a custom to go to the cemetery. In the poskim it also states that one can go to a gentile cemetery, because it is a matter of reminding oneself. But there can be a problem of tumah of eretz ha'amim where gentiles are buried.

Tefilat Ne'ilah at Ta'aniyot

Rambam's Words: "**Bechol ta'anit mitanin al hatzarot shegozrin al hatzibur mitpalelim tefilat ne'ilah bechol makom**" – "**kelomar ne'alu sha'arei shamayim be'ad hashemesh venistrah**".

Explanation: At every communal fast that is decreed for troubles, they also daven tefilat ne'ilah – a fifth tefilah besides

shacharit, musaf, and minchah. This is when the sun sets.

Insights and Explanations:

1. Sha'arei shamayim vs. sha'arei Beit HaMikdash: In the Gemara there are two interpretations of what "ne'ilah" means – sha'arei shamayim or sha'arei Beit HaMikdash. The Rambam rules **sha'arei shamayim**, but he interprets it that "sha'arei shamayim" means as the sun sets – "ne'alu sha'arei shamayim be'ad hashemesh venistrah".

2. Why don't we do this today? Today we never make ne'ilah at ta'aniyot (only Yom Kippur). The answer is simple: **We don't decree a communal fast today** in the full sense. But when yes – when there is an et tzarah – we would need to daven four tefilot a day.

Shi'ur Geshem (Amount of Rain) Needed to Cancel the Fast

Rambam's Words: "**Ad sheyeirdu be'omek karka charivah tefach**" – in dry earth the rain must go in a tefach. "**Uve'avodah... ad sheyeirdu be'omek halchah sheloshah tefachim**" – in worked (moist) earth it must go in three tefachim.

Explanation: The measure when one can say that the rain has helped is: in dry, hard earth – a tefach deep; in already worked, soft earth – three tefachim deep (because there the rain goes in more easily, one needs more so it can grow).

Insight: This is a continuation of what we learned earlier – that if before chatzot it already rains, the fast is cancelled. But here the Rambam gives the measure of how much rain must fall in order to say that we have been helped. This is not necessarily on that day – it can be later as well.

With this we have completed Chapter 4 of Hilchot Ta'aniyot.

Full Transcript

Rambam Laws of Fasts Chapter 4 – The Order of Prayer During the Seven Final Fasts

Introduction: The Order of Fasts for Drought

Speaker 1: Good day, dear Jews. We are learning the holy Rambam, Laws of Fasts, Chapter 4.

So, the previous chapter, Chapter 3, we learned about various troubles for which one fasts, and Chapter 4 we figured out the main one, the one for which there is a complete order of fasts.

Speaker 2: In other words, you mean Chapter 2.

Speaker 1: Chapter 2 we learned about various troubles, and Chapter 3 we learned specifically about drought, for which there are more, an order of fasts. And this in Tractate Ta'anit is actually mainly about drought.

And there it stated exactly when, if when it should have already started raining in the month of Cheshvan, one begins on a small scale, only the Torah scholars fast. Later it is brought to the entire people, and one fasts three fasts, and then again three fasts. But when it goes deep into the winter and it still hasn't rained, there is an order of seven fasts. And during these seven fasts it is truly an order with an order of prayers, with a complete public gathering, it's a complete

order, and that's what the chapter is going to discuss. How does the public prayer gathering work? It becomes like the Days of Awe, special prayers, and so on.

And that's what we're learning, the seven final fasts.

Speaker 2: I think you added one, right? There are three fasts that the Torah scholars fast, then...

Speaker 1: Ah, you're right. There are three fasts with the community, then another three, and then there are seven. That's the order. Let's go learn the order of prayer for the fasts.

Speaker 2: Is that a total of thirteen fasts?

Speaker 1: Yes, as we learned, a total of thirteen. Okay.

Law 1: The Order of Prayer During the Seven Final Fasts

Speaker 1: On each and every day of the seven final fasts for rain, every day of the seven – because afterward one doesn't fast anymore, only the Torah scholars, one goes back to the Torah scholars – so these last seven when the people are made to fast, **they pray according to this order**. There is a special order of prayer that the Rambam is going to say here.

So, normally one prays in the study hall, but now there is something of a great innovation that one makes it more like

a... I don't know... a protest. One goes into the street and cries out the pain publicly. "And he went out into the city street and cried a great and bitter cry." There is something of a contained going into the street and crying.

They Bring Out the Ark with the Torah Scroll

Let's see, it goes like this, one goes into the street and takes out the ark upon which one places the Torah scroll.

Speaker 2: I think that's what we call the bimah, yes?

Speaker 1: Because in the Laws of Prayer we had that there is an aron, where the Torah scroll normally lies, and the teivah from which one takes it out when one wants to pray or read.

Speaker 2: I hear. One takes the teivah and places it on the bimah. "Yored lifnei hateivah" (goes down before the ark), that means, there one prayed in front of the...

Speaker 1: Ah, there stood the prayer leader. During prayer he prayed, and during reading one placed the Torah scroll there, I guess.

Discussion: What is the "Teivah"?

Speaker 2: How did we actually learn in the Laws of... Sefer Ahavah, Laws of Prayer, right? I don't remember at the moment. How one makes a synagogue, right? There was such a thing, one builds a synagogue, and there it stated that there is a teivah.

Speaker 1: Prayer of the community, right? There is an order of communal prayer, one after another?

Speaker 2: Here, Chapter 11. It stated that what? That there is a heichal, which is called an aron kodesh, and there one places the Torah scroll. And it stated "they set up a bimah in the synagogue," but the bimah is not the teivah. And "when they set up the teivah that has the Torah scroll in it, they place it in the middle." It's not clear in the Rambam when one places it in the teivah. That means, the teivah was normally in the heichal, and one took it out from the heichal.

It could be it makes like sense, the teivah is something like let's say the Sephardic Torah scroll that has such a box. That's the box. So normally the teivah lies in the heichal, in the aron. Teivah is not the bimah, bimah means a platform. Teivah is a box in which the Torah lies. About this I see that it makes like the Sephardic Torah scroll, which itself is a teivah. In the teivah lies the scroll. Not so much sense.

For some reason it seems that the teivah is, there they placed the Torah, and it seems perhaps for prayer, they always used to place it there. It's not clear to me. The teivah was placed in the aron, and when one needed to read it one took it out and placed it on the bimah.

Speaker 1: The heichal, it's called heichal here, yes. What we call the aron kodesh.

Speaker 2: It's not clear to me. Anyway, it's certain that the teivah is such a thing in which the Torah lies. It's not an empty teivah, not just any bimah. On the bimah one goes up to read the Torah, but the teivah is such a place where one prays, one used to pray lifnei hateivah. It's still not clear to me.

It could be that it means yes the platform. The platform lies on the... what we call the platform, the box upon which one places the Torah scroll, which is on the bimah, which is the stage. Yes, all large synagogues have a stage, and on the stage there is a platform. The platform is the teivah. One must take... one takes it with a Torah. It says "ve'al gabei sefer Torah" (and upon the Torah scroll), one brings it with the Torah.

Presumably the order is that one always prays with a Torah. It seems the Torah, that brings the holiness as if from the study hall. I don't know clearly.

Speaker 1: Ah, one doesn't read, ah?

Speaker 2: It's not clear. I actually see that there is a dispute, and the commentators are not clear about this. Why does he bring out a Torah scroll?

Speaker 1: No, what is also a matter of... why bring the Torah?

Speaker 2: I understand that one brings it with an obligation of awakening, that it's a pain. One doesn't read the Torah, one doesn't read.

Speaker 1: One does read, every fast one reads.

Speaker 2: He doesn't count here a special order of reading. Because here he doesn't speak about the reading. The reading he already said earlier that one reads... more Torah scrolls, earlier he said one reads blessings and curses a quarter of the day. Remember? We learned that one reads. That one reads, that's something that stands in this chapter. The chapter only discusses the order like the Shemoneh Esrei, the special order, yes.

One used to take out, so one needs to take the Torah to read, and the Torah lies in a teivah. Perhaps during reading one places it on the teivah or on a bimah, two different things. But one brings out the Torah with the box. That means, one makes a bit of a study hall on the street. That means, one sets up there, one seats the rabbi and one seats next to the Torah scroll. So it seems.

Why Do They Bring Out the Torah Scroll?

And the Gemara says about this various reasons. That is, it seems mainly, it's a hint of... the Gemara says one expression is "**kli tzanu'ah hayah lanu venitbazei**" (we had a modest vessel and it was disgraced), that the Torah belonged to us inside, but we became disgraced, we became scattered, because we have such trouble, so it states in the Gemara in Ta'anit.

Speaker 1: Okay, yes.

Speaker 2: Ah, I was wondering about this here. Yes, what does one say further?

They Cover Themselves with Sackcloth

Speaker 1: **And all the people... and all the people gather, the people come together in the city square, and cover themselves with sackcloth,** and one covers oneself with sackcloth.

Speaker 2: I think both things are stated in the Megillah, yes, "and he went out into the midst of the city and cried a great and bitter cry," and also it states there, yes, "sackcloth and ashes spread for the masses." Yes, sackcloth and ashes, yes.

Discussion: What is the Concept of Sackcloth?

And the next is ashes, one says, yes. The Gemara says that sackcloth is such a thing of an animal, perhaps animals used to go with this if it was cold, I don't know, and "**lomar harei anu chashuvim kabeheimah**" (to say behold we are considered like animals), so it states in Ta'anit. It's a topic of, they spoke about this whether it's a shame.

I thought, whether sackcloth, whether one places it on the flesh directly, like one places it as underwear so it should scratch, so it should hurt, is it affliction? Or is it shame? It seems that it's more shame than affliction. Because shame is

indeed honor, a person goes, yes, with honorable garments, respectfully, and therefore when one puts on such a disgraceful garment, that's... one humbles oneself. Yes. Then one does so.

It could be that also when one tears the garments, when one makes keriah, one has no clothes, one puts on sackcloth, one puts on something that one finds, something to cover oneself.

Speaker 1: Yes, here it doesn't say that one tears keriah.

Speaker 2: I'm saying, it could be that sackcloth is already connected with mourning in that way, I don't know.

Okay, further.

They Place Burnt Ashes on the Ark and on the Torah Scroll

What else does one do? One takes **efer mikleh** (burnt ashes), one takes ashes from the oven, **al gabei hateivah** (on the ark), one places on the teivah **and on the Torah scroll** one places black ash. Why? Because this breaks, **kedei lehargil et habechiyah ulehachni'a libam** (in order to accustom to weeping and to humble their hearts).

That is, the Gemara says about this a reason, that therefore afterward we will learn the next piece that one places burnt ashes on the heads of people, that's a way of humbling oneself, it's a part of the order of the fast that one humbles oneself. But what is the Torah scroll guilty of? The Gemara says about this, **"imo anochi betzarah"** (I am with him in trouble). The Gemara says that the Torah scroll is also in pain. The Torah scroll shows the Divine Presence among the Jews. This is indeed in our Midrashim that the Torah is just a Torah. The Almighty is also in pain. By Torah one means here the Almighty, the Shechinah. The Almighty is also in pain.

The Rambam's Special Reason: Lehargil et Habechiyah

But the Rambam specifically didn't bring that explanation, and he brought another thing, that this is **lehargil et habechiyah** (to accustom to weeping). In other words, the Rambam understood, when one says that **"imo anochi betzarah,"** one means to say that people should imagine what a great trouble it is, that even as it were the Shechinah is in trouble, and this should shake up the community.

And this comes from the Gemara, as he brings Rabbi Zeira says in Tractate Ta'anit, that when he used to see how one places burnt ashes on the Torah scroll, he trembled, **"mizdazei li kol gufai"** (my whole body trembles). That is, because it's like a terrible thing. The Torah is indeed the most important thing, the holiest thing, and one places ashes on it, this made people tremble.

So the Rambam took this and said that the reason is not what it states in the Gemara **"bechol tzaratam lo tzar"** (in all their troubles He was troubled), or he learns it in, the reason is indeed lehargil et habechiyah, to shake up the people.

Discussion: Why Are Ashes a Symbol of Disgrace?

Speaker 1: But why are ashes at all a symbol of pain?

Speaker 2: It could be that... not pain, it's disgrace. It could be that poor people, hard workers, are blackened, one works in coal mines, one works by the ovens. Yes, ashes are a degradation of honor.

It's also interesting, **"al gabei hateivah ve'al gabei sefer Torah"** (on the ark and on the Torah scroll) means explicitly. That means, because the Torah scroll lies in the teivah. One must open the teivah and also place on the Torah scroll. So it

seems. Or perhaps when one takes out the Torah one does this? Yes, that seems so.

They Place Ashes on the Head of the Nasi and Av Beit Din

"And one of the people takes from the ashes and places on the head of the nasi and on the head of the av beit din." That is, **"echad min ha'am"** (one of the people) means that since there is no matter of honor in this, one can take a simple poor person. **"And takes and places on the head of the nasi and on the head of the av beit din in the place of laying tefillin."** Why? Ashes instead of glory? Yes, the Gemara says so. Ah, there is an expression of the verse in Isaiah, **"latet lahem pe'er tachat efer"** (to give them glory instead of ashes). Conversely, there it's an expression of consolation, it will be glory instead of ashes. Here one does the opposite, one places ashes at the place of laying tefillin.

Kedei Sheyitbaiyeshu – The Shame of the Nasi

"Kedei sheyitbaiyeshu kol mi veyoshvei" (so that all who and dwellers will be ashamed). The entire people or the nasi and av beit din? No, the nasi must first be ashamed and do teshuvah. Why? Because the nasi has already done many fasts, he has already beaten al chet, he has already been ashamed of everything. But the Gemara says that clearly, he doesn't do it himself. It's a greater shame that another does it. One who is ashamed by himself, that means the simple Jews should be able to take ashes themselves, is not such a shame. But the nasi must specifically have another do it, so it should be a greater shame. **"And each and every one takes and places on his head."** The simple Jews place it themselves.

Two Reasons: Shame and Merit of the Fathers

And here there is another interpretation, **"lefi sheyizkor lanu afro shel Yitzchak"** (so that He will remember for us the ashes of Isaac). Yes, in the Gemara it states the other meaning, **"shenechshav ke'efer"** (that he was considered as ashes). And the Rambam brings the first meaning, more the shame, the weeping, the brokenness. That is, did you mean that it's an honor that the nasi receives some special ash placement? No, it's a disgrace, one wants to shame him more.

Digression: Rosh Hashanah and the Binding of Isaac

Is this today for us Rosh Hashanah, which is indeed a holiday, a joyful holiday, one cannot place ashes, one reads the portion of the Binding, so that He will remember Isaac for us. Rosh Hashanah is not a fast, it's something else. Yes.

Law 2: Elder and Sage and Words of Rebuke

They Stand an Elder and Sage

Then one does so, **and afterward they stand among them**, afterward one stands, **and they are sitting**, because the entire people sit, one stands the Torah scholars, **an elder and sage**. A sage, **and they are sitting** comes like surrounded. While they sit, the entire people sit, and one stands up the elder and sage. What he will say, he's going to say what the elder and sage does, but in the middle he interrupts.

Order of Priority: Sage, Elder, Man of Appearance

What happens if there is no elder and sage? There are either elders or sages, **one stands a sage**. A sage is more important. **If there is neither elder nor sage**, there is neither elder nor sage. Simply one must say here, if there is no sage, one places an elder. And if there is neither elder nor sage,

one stands a man of appearance. One stands a man of appearance.

What Does "Man of Appearance" Mean?

He notes that in Foundations of the Torah the Rambam says, **and the superior knowledge found in a person's soul is the form of the perfect person in his knowledge.** I don't know if he means this. And error. Here he means exactly the opposite, that person who has a beautiful beard. He looks the most important among us. A man of appearance, means he has a facial appearance, he has a beautiful little beard, I know. One who looks important, yes.

How? Why? Because the whole idea is that an important person, perhaps one will listen to him? Or perhaps, do you understand what is a man of appearance? It seems because it's missing, people don't listen to mussar from just any person.

Words of Rebuke

He says before them words of rebuke. He says before them words of mussar. Words of rebuke we learned that kavush means to conquer, words that take in a person, that conquers a person's heart, takes in the heart.

And I think that because many times one stands before one who is not an elder and sage, the sages give him the words to say. If he should say an elder and sage, he can himself. **And he says before them, and he** refers to the man of appearance. The man of appearance the sages tell him, the sages tell him below, they give him here a little sermon.

Content of the Sermon: Not Sackcloth and Fasting Cause

Order of Prayer on Fast Days: Conditions of the Prayer Leader and the Blessings

Continuation: Conditions of the Prayer Leader – "Accustomed to Reading Torah, Prophets, and Writings"

Speaker 1:

So necessarily he must be a prayer leader, someone who is, in short, he is accustomed. "Ragil" (accustomed) means more like "yodea" (knows), "baki" (expert). **"And accustomed to reading Torah, Prophets, and Writings"** - he knows verses, because we will soon learn, we say that one arranges, one makes Zichronot and Shofarot from verses. One must know both the language of prayers, and Torah, Prophets, and Writings. This is an important point.

One must be... yes, yes, wait a second. I just want to translate here for a second. I want to emphasize this very much, because we see here, I see that it's more of a general thing. We know one prayer a year where we say Zichronot and Shofarot, we bring many verses. The truth is many prayers. The Hodu that we say every day is almost the entire day. That's certain, but even within blessings, I say even within prayers and blessings, and Birkat HaMazon. For example, we say, as it is said "You open Your hand," or as it is written "And you shall eat and be satisfied," and so forth.

One of the ways of prayer is to take a verse, or there are actually verses that are prayers, as you say, the Pesukei D'Zimra etc., these are verses that were written to be prayers. Or even when one says a blessing that has its own text, or a text from the Sages, it always comes "as it is written," or "do with us," as in the Selichot we say much, yes, "do with us as You promised us in the Torah," and so forth.

So, we see here something very important, and also whoever learns Abudraham knows that all prayer texts are built on the

language of verses. So, we see here an important thing, that prayer, certainly a Jew can pray in his own language, as Rabbi Nachman of Breslov said, and God loves everything. But the foundations of prayer, a Jewish prayer, is built on the type of words of Torah that we know, on the verses.

So if one wants to know how to make one's own prayers as it were, the answer is to learn much Tanach, and then you will know. Therefore, the prayer leader must be "accustomed to reading Torah." He will know, he knows. If he were required to compose, as Rabbi Nachman said, one doesn't need one's own language. So someone whose language is Torah, Prophets, and Writings, everything he wants to express he has some language of a verse, so his language is composed of Torah. This is the Jewish language.

Digression: Rabbi Nachman of Breslov – Making Prayers from Torah Teachings

And even Rabbi Nachman, the same Rabbi Nachman who said that one should perhaps speak one's own language, he also knew this, and he said that one must make prayers from Torah teachings. Because his language was Torah teachings. Not only from the teachings of Likutei Moharan, from the Chumash one must also make prayers. And who did this? The Men of the Great Assembly. I mean, this is really the thing. Yes.

Digression: Rabbi Meir of Premishlan – "So It Is Written in the Torah"

Yes, one should say that this was the work of Rabbi Meir of Premishlan. There are many sayings about this, but it's true, as he said "Father, so it is written in the Torah." One prays to God, You Yourself said in the Torah. We see that this is very much the thing.

Continuation: Conditions of the Prayer Leader – "Burdened with Children and Has Not"

Speaker 1:

And the person must also be such, besides that he must be a good prayer leader and he must know how to learn and pray, he must also be a Jew who has a broken heart. One goes on to enumerate various things that make him have a broken heart.

Metuphal, he must be metuphal. In another version, here it says metuphal. Metuphal, he must be occupied with children. **"And has not"**, it's hard for him, he doesn't have enough to give for the children. He doesn't have money, he doesn't have whatever. Extra energy, one must be metuphal, one must have much energy. One doesn't always have... So, it's a broken heart.

Interesting, because someone who is not metapel (caring for) his children doesn't care that he doesn't have. Metapel means he...

Speaker 2:

No, no, metaphal. In his version it says metaphal.

Speaker 1:

I don't agree. It's not a bad thing. It means literally that he has children that he must take from kupot (charitable funds), he must send them to cheder.

Speaker 2:

What does the word metaphal mean?

Speaker 1:

Simply, that he has children at home, not someone who has... metapel b'banav, someone who occupies himself with his

children, he doesn't have enough to give them. He wants to give them to eat, but he doesn't always have. But the Hebrew translation is, that there is a person who has children at home, there is a person who doesn't have children at home. He causes one to have mercy.

The broken Jews are those who have children at home, he must find him a cheder, he must find him a shidduch, he must find him a job, and so on. Someone who either is too young, he doesn't have children yet, or he is a great wealthy man who "I have servants and servants," it's not relevant. Or he is already a great grandfather past his days, he is not, he doesn't feel the pain of the community.

"And Sends Gentiles to His Field" – He Works

"And sends gentiles to his field" - also, he works. He works.

Speaker 2:

No, but it's also very nice, because "and has not" and he does nothing is a disaster.

Speaker 1:

But "and has not," but he tries his best. He doesn't have, but he tries his best. He doesn't have money, but he tries his best. He works hard, he has a little money. He works hard. Very good.

Practical Application: Who Should Appoint Prayer Leaders

One must know, a great enhancement, whoever wants to appoint prayer leaders, and the poskim on the High Holy Days bring the sources on who should appoint a prayer leader on the High Holy Days as well, must know that a great enhancement, that one should take, well, first of all, someone who has children at home, this means that he knows what it means. That is, not too old also not, already not good also not. Rabbis who have gabbaim who take care of everything, I don't know if it's called metuphal.

And secondly, he must be a working young man. Someone who sits in kollel, he has no toil in the field, weak dealings with him.

Speaker 2:

I hear, do you agree?

Speaker 1:

It's a great merit to take a prayer leader, someone who is a breadwinner, he struggles, he goes to earn a living every day, he has toil in the field. Very good.

Continuation: Conditions of the Prayer Leader – "His House Empty of Transgressions"

Speaker 1:

Besides this, now come more conditions, more like Jewishness and mitzvot. Yes? Very good. **"And it should not be," it should not be, "not in his sons and members of his household,"** not he, his wife or children, **"nor all those close and attached to him a transgressor,"** not someone who associates with transgressors. Interesting. **"Rather his house should be empty of transgressions."**

Discussion: What Is He Guilty of If His Children Sin?

What is he guilty of if his children sin? It's interesting. A wonder. I mean that perhaps it means more like... he should have a good home. Transgressions means presumably not that he is a complete tzaddik who has no sin at all. But there are

things that people know, there is a rumor about him that he stumbled in forbidden sights, that sort of thing.

Because earlier we learned that the sage himself must be broken, therefore one places sackcloth and ashes on him. We're not talking about perfect people, we're talking about people with their flaws. But it's perhaps such a... I don't know what you translate, because this is the Gemara. The Gemara says "his house empty," and it says "and has not." The Gemara says, "his house empty" means empty of transgressions, and not only he, but his house. So the Rambam learns here.

But what something must... I don't know. It means to say perhaps someone who is a good Jew. Yes, it's a wonder. If someone has a child who didn't obey him, what should he now do?

Speaker 2:

No, it means to say someone who permits transgressions. Even if he is a wonderful Jew, but he permits transgressions in his house, it's a deficiency.

Speaker 1:

Ah, very good. It means to say roughly so, that the rabbi whose gabbai or whose son is a publicly known transgressor, or what the Rambam says he is from those who look at forbidden things, we're not talking about him. I always have a way to make everything against the rabbis. Everything until you become a rabbi. Okay.

Continuation: Conditions of the Prayer Leader – "And No Bad Name Went Out About Him in His Youth"

Speaker 1:

Very good. The Rambam says further, in short, not only should his children not have transgressions, but he himself when he was a child, **"and no bad name went out about him in his youth,"** not someone who when he was young had a bad name about him. Interesting.

Discussion: What About a Baal Teshuva?

What's wrong, a baal teshuva? He was young, he wasn't good, he became a baal teshuva.

Speaker 2:

No, but perhaps this is an honor for the community.

Speaker 1:

Honor for the community? A thing is needed, a person who knows, many people, one means it's a normal thing, when he was young he was, you know, wild, and afterwards he became older. He will be forgiven all transgressions, it's already a nice young man. All Jews should do teshuva and stop looking at this person and saying first look at yourself.

Wait a minute, it's certainly good that one should become better later. But something, one doesn't look at it as a not... certainly this is l'chatchila (ideally). If one doesn't have, one doesn't have. Very good.

Continuation: Conditions of the Prayer Leader – Character Traits and Pleasant Voice

Speaker 1:

And he should be **humble**. Because humble means an anav (humble person), not a snob. **"And accepted by the people,"** and someone who is beloved by the community, **"and has pleasantness,"** he has sweetness, **"and entirely pleasant."**

Discussion: Pleasantness and Entirely Pleasant – Two Things

Pleasantness and entirely pleasant isn't the same thing?

Speaker 2:

I mean that two things, pleasantness means he knows the melodies, and entirely pleasant has a beautiful voice.

Speaker 1:

It's two different things, one knows the melodies, but he speaks like this. That's not pleasantness, that is indeed pleasantness, but not entirely pleasant.

Continuation: An Elder with All the Qualities – What Is Primary?

Speaker 1:

Says the Rambam, **they are a zakein with all these qualities**. If he is a zakein in all these qualities, then he is certainly very good. Zakein means presumably here a chacham, yes? Because he said earlier that he still has children at home. If he is not a zakein, but he does have all these qualities, **yitpalel** he should be the one who prays.

That means, the main thing by prayer is that one should have the qualities, not that one should be a chacham. It's not essential. It's better, but it's not essential. And this is better than someone who is a zakein, but he can't daven. This is somewhat the... that's how it comes out here.

Discussion: Mizekeinim Megudal

Speaker 2:

Yes, there are many who say by davening mizekeinim megudal, doesn't it say here?

Speaker 1:

It only says that the zakein has learned the hara'ah ne'uni ma'aseh. The other things one does say there, pirkei hana'ah, that means pirkei hana'ah is lo yatza lo shem ra and so on. Pirkei hana'ah doesn't mean a regenave me'avir kush. Yes, so that is all things. Okay, therefore the shaliach tzibbur does say that.

Discussion: "Hineni He'ani Mima'as" – Why Isn't the Chazzan Ashamed?

Speaker 2:

Ah, now you understand? It always puzzled me, vehineh ani mima'as, shouldn't the chazzan be ashamed, yes? One can't be a chazzan. He says it out loud with a beautiful nusach, hello, strife for example one doesn't say with a nusach.

Speaker 1:

The answer is, that I think so, the main condition for the shaliach tzibbur should be, perhaps all these conditions in a certain sense are only like conditions for this, such a **merutzeh lakahol**. The people need to feel that when he davens he means them.

I think that merutzeh lakahol is also very important, so one won't think about his sins, about his shem ra yalduto, or conversely, he doesn't have. But I think that... But prayer is someone who speaks for you, he davens in your name, the people only say amen.

Discussion: Tefillah B'Tzibbur Today – A Great Bedi'eved

The people daven nowadays but why is there actually something lacking?

Speaker 2:

Let it be, let it be, it's good.

Speaker 1:

It's a great lack, because it's not tefillah b'tzibbur. What we do today is a great bedi'eved of tefillah b'tzibbur. Tefillah b'tzibbur means that one person davens, and you feel that he speaks for you, and you cry with him.

Nowadays, I mean in the only places where such a thing can be is by the rebbes, because the rebbes, people who have chassidim, who love them somewhat. They believe that the rebbe can speak for them to the Almighty. Just me with my friends in the beis medrash, no, who are you?

So, indeed. But all these conditions are essentially what makes someone who is merutzeh, and it makes that he can feel that he davens for me. If that one will think, ah, the one who last week he was a this, and he became a fine Jew, I don't feel with him. If you are righteous, if the people do love him anyway, perhaps you are good. Yes.

Halacha 5: Order of Blessings in a Fast – Beginning

Speaker 1:

Says the Rambam further. Now, we know the conditions. Now one can see what one davens, the order of blessings. Says the Rambam like this, he will enumerate the order that one davens in a fast.

He says, the shaliach tzibbur, the shaliach tzibbur that we have now enumerated, **matchil**, he begins to daven, **umitpalel**, he davens. Normal Shemoneh Esrei.

Speaker 2:

No, normal birchos krias shema, yes.

Speaker 1:

Presumably we're talking here about a shacharis, yes? At birchas go'al yisrael.

Speaker 2:

Where is there go'al yisrael?

Speaker 1:

Yes yes, in Shemoneh Esrei.

Speaker 2:

Ah, in Shemoneh Esrei.

Speaker 1:

Ra'einu ve'anyeinu, one says the birchas go'al yisrael. We're talking about Shemoneh Esrei. One has said the first five blessings of Shemoneh Esrei. And here, one says the first three on chayav itim, go'al hakadosh, atah chonen, hashiveinu, selach lanu – we're already at the seventh blessing. Okay.

Ve'omer... And the Rambam says like this, the Rambam is very difficult, the Rambam says what? That after when he is at go'al yisrael, that means we're here before go'al yisrael, before the blessing, before finishing, it's implied in the Rambam like this, not before finishing, yes, later there is the go'al yisrael is the chasimah of mi she'anah.

So the Rambam says like this, he says like this, one says the eni eni eni. Before one finishes, one says here the long prayer, one says like this, yes? **Ve'omer, one says zichronos and shofros me'ein hatzarah**. Just like we have on Yamim Nora'im Rosh Hashanah there is malchuyos zichronos shofros. Here one takes away the malchuyos, and one says zichronos and shofros. Zichronos means that the Almighty should remember people, and shofros means that one blows shofar by

a fast tzibbur. One says all these verses that the Almighty hears the sound of the shofar. One says verses, just like malchuyos zichronos shofros are verses that one says into the prayer. One says here also verses of zichronos and shofros, but me'ein hatzarah, verses that speak about the Almighty remembering Jews in a time of trouble, that the Almighty hears the shofar of Jews that they blow. Perhaps the verse, venizkartem lifnei.

Ve'omer, and in the prayer one also says the verses. One says the chapters from Tehillim "el Hashem betzarus li", I think chapter 118, 118 betzarus li karasi be'einu Hashem betzarus li Hashem kashmiyuchas. **Afterwards one says, but this doesn't have to do with zichronos shel olam. This is another thing, other things, other prayers that one says, verses from Tehillim. Prayers that say that we are in trouble.** That means, if someone wants to find Tehillim that one says in a time of trouble, this is a good advice that Chazal have established. **And the next is "esa einai el heharim mei ayin ezri, ezri mei'im Hashem".** Also a beautiful verse that one asks the Almighty. Yes. **And the next is "mimama'akim keraticha Hashem",** the chapter of mimama'akim. Yes. **And the chapter of "tefillah le'ani ki ya'atof velifnei Hashem yishpoch sicha",** which is also a powerful chapter. These three all speak of pouring out the heart strongly in prayer.

Ve'omer divrei tachnunim kefi kocho, he can add there divrei tachnunim kefi kocho. If he is a strong ba'al mechadeish, he can make piyutim, he can make tefillos, he says there his own prayers. Ve'omer, and he fills out, he says "re'eh be'anyeinu" and he is mischanein, **ve'omer besof tachnunim,** when one finishes tachnunim, very interesting, yes, omer divrei tachnunim, one says again mischanein. And this is all besides all the verses that one said from zichronos and "al tashlicheinu le'eis ziknah".

Speaker 2:

That's how it looks? It looks, because perhaps by each prayer, it's not like the long tachanun, something like a kind of...

Speaker 1:

No, mischanein, I mean that every day that one says Shemoneh Esrei one must be mischanein, because that's the thing, that's the prayer that one asks for redemption. Just like "aneinu" we say, the shaliach tzibbur says it as an extra blessing, but it belongs here in birchas geulah. He says, he speaks about the trouble that is relevant to the birchas "re'eh be'anyeinu".

Halacha 6: "Mi She'anah Es Avraham Avinu BeHar HaMoriah" – Chasimas Birchas Go'al Yisrael

Speaker 1:

Afterwards he concludes, one says like this, **"Mi she'anah es Avraham avinu behar hamoriah",** the Almighty answered Avraham on Mount Moriah. That means that He revealed Himself to Avraham and saved Yitzchak.

Speaker 2:

Not clear, very strange. What does it mean the Almighty... Was there some trouble on Mount Moriah?

Speaker 1:

Yes, his son was in danger, his son almost died.

Speaker 2:

I know. He had a mitzvah, akeidas Yitzchak.

Speaker 1:

Well, it was still a great trouble. It's strange. The Rishonim speak about this, the commentators speak quickly about this. I think it's strange. I have a new approach, when no one knows the simple meaning, one may know that this is something that is somewhat strange. Yes, I can say answers and explain simple meanings. Perhaps it means the "asher ye'amer hayom behar Hashem yera'eh"?

Speaker 2:

Ah, that he said that he will bring salvations.

Speaker 1:

Yes. But simply, Yitzchak was in great trouble. He was lying on an altar, and above him stood someone with a knife. What's the difference that it's not the same person?

Speaker 2:

Yitzchak is not the same person.

Speaker 1:

Even worse, Avraham almost became a murderer. It lacked a hair that he should become a murderer. It's...

Speaker 2:

You're switching very strangely. That means, there stands a story, and the verse says that it was a great mitzvah, he overcame everything and went to slaughter his son, and you say no, he went with a... He constantly said Tehillim that the Almighty should save Yitzchak.

Speaker 1:

Certainly, what then? He sees his son in trouble? He holds the knife in his hand, doesn't he see his son in trouble? He didn't cry, "Creator, save my son"? I think one needs something better here.

"Hu Ya'aneh Eschem" – Present Tense Language

Speaker 1:

Okay. **"Mi she'anah es Avraham avinu behar hamoriah, hu ya'aneh eschem".** He should answer "you". Interesting, one speaks here to the Jews in the language of "you". **"Veyishma kol tza'akaschem bayom hazeh".** Because he is the ba'al tefillah, he speaks to the people. He speaks for the people, he doesn't speak instead of the people. Let's simply say "yikapeinu", "ya'aneinu". All the others are also "ya'aneh eschem". It's interesting, I don't know. I can understand.

Halacha 7-8: The Six New Blessings – "Zocher Hanishkachos" and "Shome'a Teru'ah"

The Rambam's Position – Unlike the Simple Reading of Mishnah and Gemara

Speaker 1:

"Baruch atah Hashem go'al yisrael" is the normal chasimah of birchas "re'eh na be'anyeinu". One must say here, it's very interesting, the Maggid Mishneh asks this, it's very strange what the Rambam has done here. It's unlike the simple reading of the Mishnah and Gemara, and it's not clear. The Maggid Mishneh wants to think that perhaps the Rambam himself doesn't mean this, although it does look very clear from the Rambam's text like this.

That means, in the Mishnah it says that there are six blessings, and the six blessings are the six things: zichronos, shofros, one, two, three, four, five, six. These things are the blessings, and on this one says the conclusions of "mi she'anah". That

means, one says zichronos, and on this one concludes "baruch atah Hashem go'al yisrael". Actually, "zocher hanishkachos" one says on zichronos, as makes sense. Afterwards, on "mi she'anah" one says "shome'a tze'akah", and the Gemara says entire teachings why tze'akah comes first, and this has to do with the prayers.

It doesn't look like this in the Gemara. The Rambam made a completely different order. The Rambam looks like... First of all, everyone agrees that there are six extra blessings in Shemoneh Esrei. I say that the Rambam added all the zichronos with all the Tehillim, everything in one place. It's not even connected so strongly with the chasimah. It's all before birchas go'al he puts the entire text. Perhaps it takes twenty minutes, I don't know to say this. Afterwards he adds the six blessings.

And the Gemara implies that one distributes those pieces of Tehillim with all the supplications throughout the six blessings. It makes much more sense. It's just mi she'anah, it comes, one speaks, presumably one speaks by the prayer. For example, that one says here mishneh Avraham avinu, presumably it mentions, it says zocheh bris Yitzchak, and it says, one tells the story of the Akeidah, the oked vene'ekad hamizbe'ach. Yes, by the way, there is actually such a piyut from the Sephardim that describes the... oked vene'ekad, yes. The... how Yitzchak cried. And afterwards one says, so should our Almighty help today, baruch atah Hashem. It makes much more sense. Okay.

The Six New Blessings – "Umischanein Kol Echad Meihem"

Speaker 1:

Then it can be, the maskil lehosisif. Here is the point that the Rav says. Here he begins another six blessings. Sheyihyeh mosif zeh chazi, besides the go'al yisrael there are another six. Go'al yisrael has a blessing for every day. One expanded it, he could make it very long, but it's a normal blessing. A total of six with an extra chasimah, with an extra... six new blessings. **Umischanein kol echad meihem bedivrei tachnunim upesukim bedivrei kabbalah uvechsav hakodesh kefi sheyargil.** Just as he did regarding zichronos shofar that he said verses, also by each prayer one says tachnunim and verses bedivrei kabbalah and kesav hakodesh according to what he knows.

Kefi sheyargil can be, perhaps it means that the person davens every day presumably, he davens every day on the books, he should say publicly what he says in his prayers. Ragil bedivrei Torah and the like. Just like you say simply kefi sheragil because he knows you Chumash. Perhaps kefi sheyargil means that it can't be the first time that you say the prayer publicly. You must daven a whole time, you must be ragil in prayer. You surely have various texts that occurred to you during your prayers? Say that! Yes.

The Chasimos of the Six Blessings

Speaker 1:

And afterwards, **vechoteim bechol achas meihem bechasimas elu**, now the Rambam will enumerate the chasimos of the six blessings, which before one says one's own prayers and one finishes with the chasimos. So what are the chasimos?

Barishonah, vechoteim, the first blessing one finishes like this, **"Mi she'anah es Moshe va'avoseichem al yam suf, hu ya'aneh eschem, veyishma'u mikol tza'akaschem**

bayom hazeh, baruch atah Hashem zocheh hanishkachos". Very interesting, because this is zichronos and the next is shofar, yes? Very interesting. Zichronos, shofros. And according to the other explanation it makes much more sense than the Rambam's explanation. And the Maggid Mishneh, to such an extent did he think perhaps the Rambam also means that, only something got mixed up that he wrote. Very strange what the Rambam does. Because the chasimos are exactly zichronos, shofros. And the rest are already general ones of prayer, prayer, tekiah.

Halacha 9: "Mi She'anah Es Yehoshua BeGilgal" – "Shome'a Teru'ah"

Speaker 1:

Bashnayim, the second blessing is "Mi she'anah es Yehoshua begilgal". When Yehoshua was in Gilgal, that means by the story of the walls of Yericho, to be able to conquer Yericho he prayed there to the Almighty, and miracles happened. The same Almighty who then did miracles, should continue to do miracles. **"Hu ya'aneh eschem veyishma kol tza'akaschem bayom hazeh"**.

Discussion: What Does "BeGilgal" Mean?

Speaker 2:

Are you sure that begilgal means in Yericho?

Speaker 1:

That's what he says, Yehoshua chapter 13. But it doesn't say that one prayed there. One blew shofar. So if it's there, it fits very well with shofros, Yehoshua blew shofar, "uvachodashim shim'ei teru'ah". According to the Rambam's position one must actually understand the connection.

Speaker 2:

Why?

Speaker 1:

Ah, okay, the Rambam didn't become, he doesn't care that it should be connected.

Speaker 2:

No, I'll say what I thought, because I thought something. He doesn't bring the text of Yehoshua. It could be that this is the prayer by Ai.

Speaker 1:

The Gilgal, you must remember, the Gilgal is in the book of Yehoshua until one moved to the next place there, which one finished the entire conquest in Yehoshua chapter 14 approximately, until then the camp was in Gilgal. So all the prayers essentially that Yehoshua davened was in Gilgal. So by Gilgal doesn't necessarily mean also he was occupied exactly with the walls of Yericho, it would have had to say Yericho. Gilgal was the camp. And one sees in other places also, one says the place, Mitzpah Har HaCarmel. Mitzpah is actually a place where Shmuel HaNavi says that he came there for Israel. He simply took and one made a prayer, that fits much better.

But Yehoshua begilgal is a bit strange to me. I would have thought, no, not exactly, I would have thought like this, we just recently learned Yehoshua supposedly, right? Yericho for example, it doesn't say about Gilgal, it says they traveled from Shittim and went to... It doesn't say the word Gilgal. Gilgal they arrived after the Yericho, it doesn't make sense. And one took twelve stones and set it up, eleven set up for Gilgal.

So I would have thought that it certainly means that. I would have thought that it means, first of all, it could be what Yehoshua saw the sar tzava there, and it says in Yericho on the verse also. But here one sees the shofros.

Speaker 2:

Yes, it was said. It's a good explanation. It makes sense.

Speaker 1:

I would say better. I would say that this refers to the prayer that Yehoshua ben Nun said when the Jews went from Gilgal to Ai. They went, and thirty-six Jews fell. So Yehoshua said a tremendous prayer. He said, "Ahah Adonai Elokim, lamah hevarta haveita et ha'am hazeh et haYarden? Lo vashavnu b'ever haYarden vaneishev b'ever haYarden, umah ta'aseh lishimcha hagadol?" A very sharp prayer Yehoshua said. This was literally in Gilgal officially. The prayer that he prayed, Hashem answered, He said they should bring forth the whole matter, and then it was.

According to the Rambam that this is not necessarily shofrot, it's not possible to be correct. But if there is shofrot, it's clear that Yehoshua is here.

Speaker 2:

But it doesn't say that he asked.

Speaker 1:

Okay, by Avraham it also doesn't say.

Speaker 2:

Perhaps, something it could be?

Speaker 1:

I think that perhaps by Moshe and our forefathers at the sea is also an interesting thing, because there we see the opposite, Moshe began to pray, and it came out, I said to Hashem, "Ulamah titz'ak eilai," because you are already helped. So Hashem, as it were, one only needed to remind that Hashem had already promised the salvation.

Here comes in zichronot. Zichronot is that one doesn't need a new prayer, you only need to remember that You already promised me, that one already prayed, one is already holding after that.

Halacha 10 – Third Blessing: Shmuel at Mitzpah

Speaker 1:

The second is shofrot. **In the third, by the third, one concludes like this, the third prayer, after the zichronot shofrot, according to the Rambam in the third prayer, one says "Mi she'anah et Shmuel baMitzpah."**

And in the city of Mitzpah there was a war between the Jews and the Philistines, and Shmuel prayed to Hashem, and Hashem helped the Jews. **"Hu ya'aneh etchem v'yishma kol tza'akatchem bayom hazeh." It's for all these things, "bayom hazeh." "Baruch atah Hashem shomei'a tza'akah."**

We ask that the salvation should come today. Today, that is, just as He helped then for Shmuel, so should He hear now the prayer.

Speaker 2:

Ah, the cry that goes... Not that the salvation should come bayom hazeh, but the cry He should hear now, He should hear the cry that we cry now.

Speaker 1:

All of them end with "bayom hazeh." That is, just as... k'mo she'asah bayamim haheim, kein ya'aseh bayom hazeh.

Halacha 11 – Fourth Blessing: Eliyahu at Har HaCarmel

Speaker 1:

In the fourth one concludes, by the fourth blessing, one says "Mi she'anah et Eliyahu b'Har HaCarmel."

There was a great trouble, Eliyahu had a great... by Har HaCarmel, Achav set him up with the prophets of Baal, and he said the language "aneini." The language "mi she'anah" fits very well. Hashem helped Eliyahu there and brought fire on his altar. **"Hu ya'aneh etchem v'yishma kol tza'akatchem bayom hazeh, baruch atah Hashem shomei'a tefilah."**

Halacha 12 – Fifth Blessing: Yonah in the Belly of the Fish

Speaker 1:

In the fifth one concludes, one speaks of Yonah, "Mi she'anah et Yonah bim'ei hadagah."

It's interesting, because if one says the place where he was, or one mentions the trouble.

Speaker 2:

No, one mentions the trouble that he was in the trouble of the belly of the fish, or the place where he was was in the belly of the fish.

Speaker 1:

No, one mentions... You see that all... b'Har HaCarmel, baMitzpah, b'Gilgal. That is, one speaks of the place. That is, one speaks of a time and a place. At the time of Yehoshua in the place... And so should Hashem help the Jews today here.

Ah, so the word can perhaps be like that normally one prays in the beit midrash. But when there's trouble, trouble one is not in the beit midrash. One is either in Mitzpah, or in Gilgal, or in the belly of the fish, or in the street, where there is the trouble, where people stand hungry. **Hayom hazeh, baruch atah Hashem ha'oneh b'eit tzarah.**

Tzarah, yes, he was in distress, he was in a... Yonah says the language "mitzarah ekra," yes? He says a whole... he was in a "tight spot." Great troubles.

Speaker 2:

And a fish? Hello? It's actually a beautiful miracle that the fish swallowed him, but it's not a good place. It's not fun. Whoever just tried it came home very traumatized.

Digression: Why We Read Yonah on Yom Kippur

Speaker 1:

In the sixth one concludes, the sixth blessing, one says like this... By the way, this is probably the simple explanation why we read Yonah on Yom Kippur. One of the simple explanations. We see that Hashem helped Yonah. Also Nineveh did teshuvah, of course. We've already seen that Nineveh is one of the great sources of the drasha, and also the prayer of Yonah. It's very good. Yonah has here both things, both the mussar and the prayer.

Discussion: "Kol Tza'akatchem" – Who Cries?

Speaker 2:

I also thought, perhaps, that we don't see here that the Jews cry, because the prayer leader says everything. "Kol

tza'akatchem." So when Yonah was in the belly of the fish, he didn't cry with a voice, he cried in his heart, yes? One can't cry when one is surrounded by fish.

Speaker 1:

Okay, it's a good question. He cried from his heart, "karati el Hashem b'tzarah," he said it in his heart. What the prayer leader cries in his heart. All the other people, the kol tza'akah is what they hear the prayer leader and they cry in their hearts.

Halacha 13 – Sixth Blessing: David and Shlomo in Yerushalayim

Speaker 1:

In the sixth one concludes, "Mi she'anah et David u'Shlomo bno biYerushalayim," when they built the Beit HaMikdash, they merited to receive the dwelling of the Shechinah in the Beit HaMikdash. **"Ya'aneh etchem v'yishma et kol tza'akatchem hayom hazeh, baruch atah Hashem hameracheim al ha'aretz."**

It's not clear. Because meracheim al ha'aretz means that Hashem should have mercy on us and bring rain on the land. That's what we're asking, meracheim al ha'aretz. And apparently David and Shlomo have to do with this, because they built the Land of Israel.

It's very interesting that here there are two people, it's not the same prayer. David and Shlomo, it's not clear what we mean here exactly. David asked, and the salvation came in the days of Shlomo, yes? That the Beit HaMikdash was completed.

In practice, David HaMelech had, he brings up that the king had a famine for three years, and he made a whole day of prayer. Then he found the threshing floor of Arnan, where they make the Beit HaMikdash. It has something to do with this, one can expound more here. But that's the thing.

Halacha 13 (end) – Answering Amen

Speaker 1:

Says the Rambam, **"And all the people answer amen after each and every blessing, just as they answer amen after each and every blessing."**

This means that except for what we're about to learn regarding the Beit HaMikdash, there they didn't say amen, they made a different order.

Discussion: How Many Places Can the Chacham Bring?

Speaker 2:

Imagine that the chacham who says according to his ability can bring dozens more places in Tanach where other people prayed.

Speaker 1:

Could be, but the Chachamim said one should make six blessings, he can say in the middle what he wants. The conclusions are specifically, the conclusions...

Speaker 2:

Aha. Okay.

Halacha 14 – Completing the Prayer in Order

Speaker 1:

And he says, and after he finishes this... Yes, I say more in the... or in the... what's it called in the years, there is more. Yes. Now one is still holding by go'el Yisrael. Now one goes back to the regular order of prayer, and one continues with **refa'einu Hashem v'neirafei.**

It's interesting, because we never have this. When one adds, it's only seven blessings, it's Yom Tov. We never have that one should add plus the Shemoneh Esrei.

Speaker 2:

That, yes, and a fast day.

Speaker 1:

And he completes the prayer in order, one finishes the rest of the prayer until the end, **and they blow in the courtyards,** afterwards one blows in the courtyards.

Speaker 2:

When? After the davening entirely?

Speaker 1:

When, after the davening. The zichronot was a preparation for this, that Hashem should hear and remember the sound of the shofar, and afterwards one blows. That's how it looks, but it's a simple thing.

Halacha 14 (end) – According to This Order They Do in Every Place

Speaker 1:

Says the Rambam, **according to this order they do in every place.** This order one does anyway. I mean he means to say not necessarily in the Land of Israel, because the Rambam said earlier that in the Land of Israel one decrees, the fast has a law like the twenty-ninth. What the Rambam means is except for the Beit HaMikdash in Yerushalayim, where there's a whole different story.

Speaker 2:

Ah, that's the world. But you say that in every place, apparently, in the Rambam it's implied that the fast...

Speaker 1:

No, the Rambam did say that one only makes the fast in the Land of Israel. Except for, from what he's going to say next, that they don't pray what's in Yerushalayim. We did say in the answer of the previous chapter that a communal fast is like a bird only in the Land of Israel. But all other places one decrees, but not with the stringency that one may not eat a day before and so on. And also not the whole blessings perhaps. It's not clear to the extent of blessings.

That's what he says, they do in every place. This is only regarding rain.

Speaker 2:

You mean some other place that has a similar order but not exactly?

Speaker 1:

I don't know. Also in chutz la'aretz one makes in the street of the city with all these things. Only one doesn't do that one may not eat from the night before.

Speaker 2:

Have you ever heard that they do this?

Speaker 1:

I haven't heard yet. It seems that they don't hold this way. It's not clear to me dramatically, one says differently.

Speaker 2:

No, it's not. You see, afterwards he says just as they pray in this order in Yerushalayim, we did differently. It means that everywhere, except...

Speaker 1:

Ah, I meant in the Land of Israel.

Speaker 2:

Could be. Except Yerushalayim.

Speaker 1:

When they used to make proper fasts for rain. Today they don't do this, even in the Land of Israel they don't do it today.

Speaker 2:

Okay, but let's say one would have to. But in chutz la'aretz, I've never heard that one should make a fast for rain in chutz la'aretz at all, so I don't know.

Speaker 1:

Anyway, let's learn.

Halacha 15 – Order of Blessings in Yerushalayim / Beit HaMikdash**Speaker 1:**

But what did they used to do in the Beit HaMikdash? Further on. **Just as they pray according to this order in Yerushalayim**, when there was a drought in the Land of Israel and one davened in Yerushalayim, how did one go then? One didn't go just to the street of the city on I don't know which area, but one went to the Temple Mount, **facing the eastern gate**. One went to the Temple Mount facing the eastern gate, from inside literally.

Facing the eastern gate means with one's face to the east, yes? Apparently with one's face toward the Holy of Holies.

Speaker 2:

There's no difference, facing means in the area.

Speaker 1:

There was a place where one could... **And they pray according to this order.**

Three Main Differences Between Everywhere and the Beit HaMikdash**Speaker 1:**

And what did they do? That is, one did the order, but one didn't just conclude "mi she'anah Avraham" and one said amen, and afterwards blew the shofar after the whole prayer. Rather there was a different order, that the blasts were a part of the prayer.

There are a few differences. Both one said "tik'u," and both one said... There are three differences that I see in the Rambam, I'll say what I see, and afterwards what I see inside.

Three main differences. According to the Rambam, and there's a dispute among the Rishonim about what I'm saying, according to the Rambam first of all, in all of the Land of Israel one blows only after davening, not in the middle of the blessings. And not only does one blow, there's like a ba'al mikra, the chazzan of the synagogue says "tik'u," and also one makes tekiah and teruah, there's a whole order, first one blows tekiah, then one makes teruah, and so on.

Second, in the Beit HaMikdash one doesn't say amen, one says "baruch shem kevod malchuto le'olam va'ed." The same thing, one doesn't say "baruch atah Hashem," one says "baruch atah Hashem Elokeinu Elokei Yisrael min ha'olam ve'ad ha'olam," a whole long version.

And third, after one blows, one says again "mi she'anah."

Laws of Fasts Chapter 4 (Continuation) – Order of Prayer in the Beit HaMikdash, Going to the Cemetery, and Ne'ilah Prayer**Order of Prayer and Blasts in the Beit HaMikdash (Continuation)**

Speaker 1: He says "mi she'anah," and he says "baruch," and he says again "mi she'anah," and the people say amen. Or one blows, one divides the order for some reason. Right?

Speaker 2: Yes.

Speaker 1: So as we learn what he says, **"and the prayer leader begins to say mi she'anah et Avraham, he says,"** he says, he doesn't conclude with what also wasn't in every place in Yerushalayim. He doesn't conclude "mi she'anah." That is, there where one said "mi she'anah" in every place, here he does differently. He concludes, the conclusion of the blessing he makes like this, **"baruch atah Hashem,"** "mi she'anah" he says afterwards. Instead of saying "mi she'anah," he concludes **"baruch atah Hashem Elokeinu Elokei Yisrael min ha'olam ve'ad ha'olam, baruch atah Hashem go'el Yisrael."** And the people answer **"baruch shem kevod malchuto le'olam va'ed."**

And here begins the order of prayer, an order of blasts as it were, an order of special prayers as it were, because... The prayer he said before. He says a long prayer, pleading according to his ability, and he concludes **"baruch atah Hashem go'el Yisrael"** with the blasts, whatever. Afterwards one blows. **"The chazzan of the synagogue says to the blowers tik'u kohanim tik'u,"** one makes a ba'al mikra, he says "tik'u." **"And he returns and prays and says mi she'anah et Avraham avinu b'Har HaMoriah ya'aneh etchem v'yishma kol tza'akatchem bayom hazeh."** It's because the kohanim are preparing themselves. **"And after that the kohanim blow,"** one makes tekiah teruah tekiah. Because in the Beit HaMikdash chatzotzrot always come together with shofar.

Speaker 2: Yes.

Speaker 1: Okay. **"And so in the second blessing to this one, the second is different from the first, and Hashem adds."** There are seven blessings each that one extends, one is a normal blessing, and the other, one concludes, one ends **"baruch atah Hashem Elokei Yisrael."** Elokeinu v'Elokei Yisrael min ha'olam ve'ad ha'olam, baruch atah Hashem zocher hanishkachot. Remember Your mercies and suppress Your anger. And also here one says **"baruch shem kevod malchuto le'olam va'ed."** And the prayer leader returns and says, this time one should make the main thing be the teruah. And the prayer leader returns and says, **"mi she'anah et Moshe va'avoteinu al Yam Suf,"** here he says "avoteinu," not "avoteichem." Moshe and our forefathers. I also hear earlier, "baruch atah Hashem, mi she'anah ya'aneh etchem." Okay. Earlier he also said "avoteinu," no? Avoteichem.

Speaker 2: No, it's not. Something the Rambam wasn't precise about this. Actually funny.

Speaker 1: Okay. **"Hu ya'aneh etchem v'yishma b'kol tza'akatchem bayom hazeh."** And after that the kohanim blow, here they make teruah, and after that they make teruah, they make teruah, and they blow and make teruah. It's interesting, we know the halacha that every teruah comes with

a tekiah before it and after it. This could be also with the teruah comes a tekiah teruah.

Speaker 2: No, it can't be.

Speaker 1: No, it can't be like that, I don't know. The Rambam says that always it comes together, but one switches over. Look further, look. **And so for each and every blessing, in one he says tik'u, by one blessing one says tik'u, and in one he says hari'u.** It's one makes tekiah teruah, and one makes teruah tekiah. **Until he completes all seven blessings. It turns out the kohanim sometimes blow and make teruah and blow, and sometimes make teruah and blow and make teruah, seven times.** It seems that there's an order also. On Rosh Hashanah there isn't, but by a fast there is. Says the Rambam, **and they only do this order in the Temple Mount alone.** The order is a special order for the Temple Mount. Not clear why, but that's what it says in the Mishnah.

Speaker 2: Yes.

Speaker 1: When one makes tekiot and teruot, **one blows with chatzotzrot and with shofar, as we said.** So we've already learned that in the Beit HaMikdash one makes both. So until here is the order of prayer that is in, especially in the Beit HaMikdash.

Going to the Cemetery After Prayer

Speaker 1: Now we're going to learn another thing that one does by fasts. This one doesn't do... Yes, this didn't finish from the Beit HaMikdash matter just. One does like this. Ah, the Rambam says in general, in every place. **And the order of these fasts,** says the Rambam, **in every place where they decree them there...** In which place this happens, in the Land of Israel or anywhere?

Speaker 2: Yes, what does it mean? No difference.

Speaker 1: **After they pray all the people go out to the cemetery,** after davening one goes to the cemetery, **and they cry and pray there,** and one cries in the cemetery. Not necessarily graves of tzaddikim, graves of the forefathers. One goes to the cemetery, but one wants to remind the people. **That is to say, why? That is to say,** they did it to frighten the people, **"behold you are dying like these if you don't return from your ways."** You see, the cemetery is full of people who were also once strong and great, and they are now dead. You will also be dead if you don't do teshuvah.

Discussion: The Rambam's Innovation in the Reason for Going to the Cemetery

Speaker 2: This is a very "funny" innovation, a great innovation in his own language.

Speaker 1: Yes, why?

Speaker 2: In the Gemara there are two approaches to this. In the Gemara there is a dispute about why we go to the cemetery. The Gemara says two explanations. Rabbi Chama bar... I don't remember which two tzaddikim said it. One said... ah, Ta'anis daf 16. Rabbi Levi bar Chama and Rabbi Chanina. One said, "Behold, we are considered before You as dead." That this is part of humbling oneself, remembering that one is humbling oneself. So small. The second one said, "So that the dead should ask for mercy upon us." And the Gemara says what is the practical difference? The practical difference is whether one can go to gentile graves. If it's to ask for mercy, gentiles presumably cannot pray, so one must go to a Jewish grave. But if it's in order to be considered as dead, one can go

even to gentile graves. And he brings a third opinion that says one should specifically go to gentile graves, because Jewish graves are not considered as dead, they are still tzaddikim and in their death they are called living. And the Jews who are asking are also Jews.

Speaker 1: Yes, but they say, and they are considered as dead, that is humbling. When they die they will be considered as dead, now they are considered as dead, it's not relevant.

Speaker 2: No, because they will sin now, now they are in trouble. But you understand that the Rambam doesn't rule like any of these formulations, because he doesn't say considered as dead. The Rambam doesn't have this version at all, just as we learn here consistently, the Rambam doesn't have the version as he learned it, but you understand that it's not the simple meaning. The Rambam turns over the meaning of all these things that it's toward Heaven, that one makes the Almighty dwell through being humble and the like, and he says no, it's oneself being humble that you remind yourself that you will also die if you don't do teshuva (repentance). Truly a chiddush (novel interpretation).

Speaker 1: He wants to force himself that he brings, the Yerushalmi brings only one reason, so the Rambam rules according to the Yerushalmi. But it's more than that, the Rambam doesn't even rule like that reason. He explains it, yes. Based on that reason, he adds his own twist.

Speaker 2: It's interesting, because we're talking here about people who are there in Eretz Yisrael, and there's no rain, and they truly see death in front of their eyes. It's not like today. That's exactly why one goes, we don't have... By us one goes to the cemetery, because it seems to us that death is something so distant.

Speaker 1: Okay. The Rambam says... It says in Shulchan Aruch that on erev Rosh Hashanah there was the custom to go to the cemetery, and it also says in the poskim, that if one doesn't have... That is, there is the topic of... the dead should ask for mercy, whatever that means. But it also says that one can go to a gentile cemetery, because it's a matter of reminding oneself. It could be that one shouldn't go to a cemetery, because there is the impurity of the lands of the nations. Where we know that gentiles once buried there.

Speaker 2: Okay.

Speaker 1: Anyway.

The Ne'ilah Prayer at Fast Days

Speaker 1: The Rambam says further, **"On every fast day that they fast for troubles that are decreed upon the community"** – this we learned about the fast for rain, but in chapter 2 we learned about various others, for plague and the like, when there are decrees upon the community – **"they pray the Ne'ilah prayer in every place."** The Ne'ilah prayer that we know from Yom Kippur, this one must do also. The Rambam says explicitly, besides there being Mincha, one also does Ne'ilah, at the end of the day, when the day is leaving, one adds another prayer. And the Rambam says, **"That is to say, the gates of heaven are locked as the sun sets and is hidden,"** and this is also the Ne'ilah prayer. There were two explanations there: there are those who say gates of heaven, there are those who say gates of prayer, gates of the Temple. The Rambam learned gates of heaven, but gates of heaven means according to how the sun goes.

In short, also interesting why we never do it. That one should make Ne'ilah at... Okay, we never decree a fast. That's the answer, we don't make any communal fast.

Speaker 2: Yes, one would have to when there is a time of trouble. Pray four prayers a day.

The Amount of Rain That Is Required to Cancel the Fast

Speaker 1: Okay, until here is the prayer of the fast. Now, remember, He helped you.

Speaker 2: Yes, we already prayed, I have no doubt that this is a... a sign.

Speaker 1: This is also apparently a continuation or elaboration on what was learned earlier, that if before midday, for example, it already rains, one cancels the fast. But one

must know what is the measure that one has been helped. Ah, perhaps though this doesn't mean specifically on that day, just so, the next week. And we already know, there are no more fasts for rain. The Rambam says, "**Until they descend into the depth of plowed ground a tefach (handbreadth).**" When a tefach goes into the earth and becomes wet, the dry earth. And when it's plowed ground, it's earth that isn't necessarily dried out, tefachim. "**And in worked land,**" in a place where one plows, it's already very moist, already very open, it's already easy for rain to enter. "**Until they descend into the depth of the moisture three tefachim,**" because this fills up so that it can grow and the like.

And they have finished chapter 4 of the Laws of Fasts.