

Psukei D'zimra

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rabbi Ari Jacobson

Psukei D'zimra refers to the portion of davening beginning with *Baruch She'amar* until after *Yishtabach*. The term *Psukei D'zimra* is a reference to verses of song and praise with which we laud Hashem. Although the actual texts of the *Psukei D'zimra* does not appear in Gemara nor the absolute obligation to recite any specific compilation of psalms or verses of praise, the *Rishonim* point out that there are two distinct goals accomplished by *Psukei D'zimra*. The first is to put us in a mindset of *simcha shel mitzvah*, joy while performing a *mitzvah*. The *Talmud* at the beginning of *Brachot* teaches that a person when getting up to pray, specifically when reciting *shemone esrei*, should be in a positive state of mind. Rashi explains that this means one is in a state of happiness as a result of reflecting on Hashem's unique relationship with His chosen people. We say in *Yehi Kevod*, "Ki lo yitosh Hashem amo," Hashem never forsakes us. The central theme of most of these verses is how we have been chosen by Hashem. No matter how difficult things may seem, we have a unique relationship with the Almighty. Hashem promises he'll never forsake us and this should put us in a

positive state of mind. Other *Rishonim* such as the Ohr Zeruah suggest that the purpose of *Psukei D'zimra* follows the Talmudic dictum of "L'olam yesader adam shvocho shel makom v'achar kach yispallel." A person should first praise Hashem before making any requests. Before we reach the key section of prayer, *shemone esrei*, where we beseech Hashem for all our needs, we preface it with praise. Although the text of *Baruch She'amar* does not appear in the Gemara, there is a tradition recorded that a note came down from heaven containing 87 words that were to form this particular blessing. Although there are many *nusachot* of prayer, most are particular to stick to this number of words.

Baruch She'amar is the *bracha* preceding *Psukei D'zimra* and *Yishtabach* is the concluding *bracha*. The *Kitzur* writes that it's improper to interrupt between these two *brachot* even when speaking in the Hebrew language. However, with respect to speaking for the purpose of a *mitzvah*, we differentiate between *Psukei D'zimra* and the *brachot* of *Shema*. If one is in the middle of *Baruch She'amar* or *Yishtabach*, provided one didn't begin the *bracha*, one may answer *amen* to a *bracha*. If

one hears the congregation saying *shema*, one should say the first paragraph of *shema* with them so as not to give the impression that the entire congregation is accepting the yoke of heaven except for you. However, when one begins the *brachot* preceding the *shema* one doesn't interrupt for this. Likewise, only answering to certain *amens* and specific *pesukim* in *kaddish* and *kedusha* would be permitted. However, in *Psukei D'zimra* one can answer to *Kaddish*, *Kedusha*, *Barchu*, and any *amen*. Other authorities add that one can also recite *Modim d'rabbanan*. Nonetheless, the *Kitzur* writes that if it is possible to make the interruption in a place where there's a natural change of theme such as between paragraphs or between the *hallelukas* or at least between verses, one should do so. The Mishna Berura maintains that this is imperative and not just something one should try to do. It follows that one should not answer for most of the *amens* if it will break up a sentence. The only exception would be *amen* for *Hakel Hakodesh* and *Shomea Tefilah*. In addition, one can answer *D'amira b'alma v'imru amen*, *Amen yehei shemei raba*, *Kodosh kodosh*, and *Baruch kavod* in *Kedusha*.

Tomer Devora: Putting it all Together

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rabbi Yitzchak Cohen

The Sefer Tomer Devora summarizes the Thirteen Attributes of Hashem based on the verse, "Mi kel komocha." Rav Cordovero tells us that the purpose of man is to be like Hashem and to emulate His *middot* (attributes).

The Thirteen Attributes contain the concepts of *chesed* (kindness) and *emet* (truth). The Ramban comments in Parshas Shelach in regard to the Sin of the Spies that the concept of *emet* is not mentioned. The name of Hashem used is *adnut* which signifies *midat hadin* (judgement). Man will repent when Hashem shows his *middat haemet*. In this instance, they didn't repent yet. Our forefathers wanted to go to *Eretz Yisrael* and they wanted their children to go too. But the Jewish people rejected Hashem's gift. The Ramban therefore says, there's no mention at

the Sin of the Spies of *emet*. It was a *cheit b'mezid* (purposeful sin). They refused to go into the land. But at all times Hashem still is merciful. We too should strive to emulate Hashem's mercy. It comes as a result of being humble as the Reishis Chochama writes, "Eikev anava yirat Hashem, the foundation of fear of heaven is humbleness." When a person nullifies himself, when there's no I, *Yirat Hashem* follows.

The Thirteen Attributes of Hashem show his *anivut* (humility). "B'mokom she'ata motza geduloso shel Hakodosh Baruch Hu sham ata motza anivanusu. In the place where you find Hashem's greatness there you will find His humbleness." The numerical value of Hashem's name, *yud keh vav keh* is 26. The *mispar katan* is 8. 26×2 is 52. The *mispar katan* is 7. It keeps diminishing, 26×3 is 78.

The *mispar katan* is 6. The greater Hashem is, the greater is His humility.

When Hashem taught Moshe the Thirteen Attributes he wrapped Himself in a *tallit*. So too when we say these Thirteen Attributes in *Selichot* we are particular to wear a *tallit*. Hashem tells *Klal Yisrael*, you want to come close to me, recite The Thirteen Attributes which attest to Hashem's humility. Hashem doesn't stand on His honor. A sinner shames Hashem. Yet He is humble and forgives and has mercy on him. When we recite the Thirteen Attributes, Hashem can see that we are sincere, that we recognize only He can help us, and that we want to emulate Him although at the moment we aren't what we should be. At the time of prayer, if we believe we can get close to Hashem by emulating His attributes, that in itself is an atonement.

Sefer Ahavat Chesed: Returning Collateral

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rabbi Beinish Ginsburg

If Reuven lends money to Shimon and Reuven takes a collateral from him as a guarantee that Shimon will return the loan, Reuven must follow the Torah's dictum regarding collateral. If Reuven takes Shimon's nightclothes as security and Shimon needs it at night, the *halacha* is that Reuven must return it to him every night. In Devarim it says, "*Hashev tashev lo*," the lender must return the collateral to the borrower when he needs it. If Reuven doesn't return it and keeps it all night then he not only transgresses the *mitzvat ase* (positive *mitzvah*) but he also transgresses the *lav* (negative *mitzvah*) of, "*Lo tishkav b'avoto*, do not go to sleep while holding on to the collateral that the borrower needs." Similarly, if it's a daytime article that the borrower needs by day such as his only shirt, the lender must return it to him every morning. The Chofetz Chaim asks, what function does the collateral serve if it needs to be returned daily. It's embarrassing for the borrower to have his personal item taken and returned on a constant basis. This motivates him to pay off the loan as soon as possible. Having the security will ensure that the loan will not be abrogated during *shemitta*. Normally, at the

end of *shemitta* all loans are annulled. However, if the loan has a collateral, *shemitta* cannot annul it. If a borrower dies, his children are responsible to pay back his loans. If the borrower owned land, the lender can collect from his land. But if he only has *keilim mitaltelen*, objects that can move around, the debt is not collected from that. However, if there was collateral on the loan, the lender may collect from the *mitaltelen* as well. These are the three things the lender gains by taking collateral.

Halacha states, when the lender returns the security, the borrower gives him a *bracha*. The *sefarim* say even if the borrower doesn't give a *bracha*, Hashem will give the *bracha* himself. The Miel Tzedakah says if the lender goes every day to return the collateral he'll merit to receive blessing from Hashem.

The Chofetz Chaim writes that the *Torah* talks about someone who is poor in regard to these *halachot*. But theoretically if someone has money and he happens to need the collateral, the same *halachot* apply. The lender must return the actual collateral, not a replacement. It must be brought back when the borrower

needs it, if it's a pillow by nighttime, if it's a shirt by daytime. If the lender made a mistake and did not return the pillow by nighttime he violates the positive *mitzvah* but still has a responsibility to avoid the negative *mitzvah* by giving it back till morning. The Chofetz Chaim writes, *v'nirah*, meaning there's no explicit source in Mishna or Gemara but it seems to me that the time limit for this *lav* is not the technical beginning of day *alos hashachar* but rather when people get up in the morning, *misheyakar*. This is based on the language of the *lav*, *vashachav*. The *mitzvah* of *kriat shema* is fulfilled from *misheyakar*, when one can recognize one's friend. The Chofetz Chaim quotes from the Rambam on the *Gemara Brachot* that most people don't get up at *alot* but at *misheyakar*. Therefore, that defines the parameters of the time for *shema* which the *Torah* tells us to say, "*U'besachbicha uv'kumecha*, at the time when people normally go to sleep and get up. The Chofetz Chaim extrapolates that this also applies to the *mitzvah* of returning security. Preferably night items should be returned by *zeis hakochavim* (when the stars come out) and day items by *misheyakar*.