

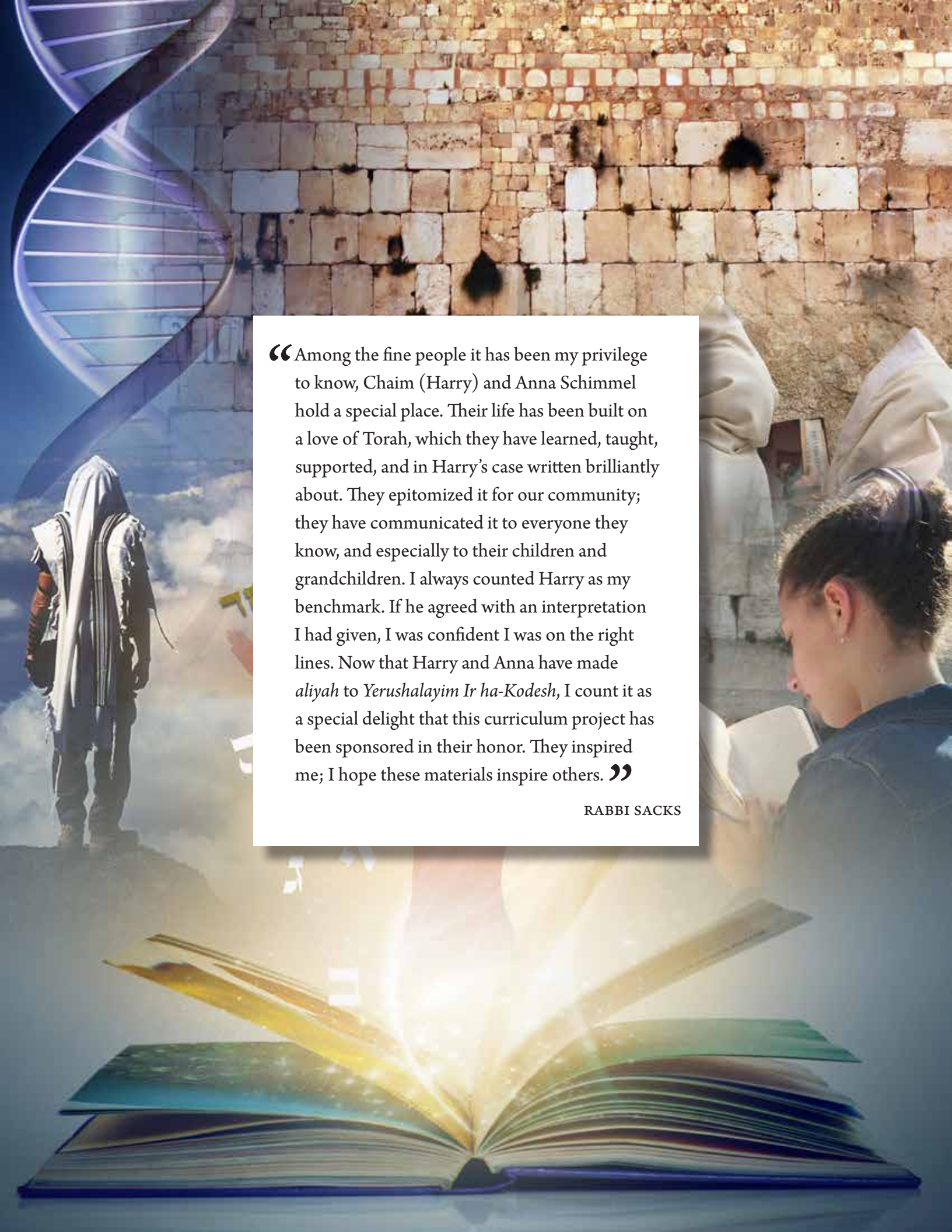
TEN PATHS TO GOD

UNIT 2 – Student Guide / Entry Level

תפילה PRAYER *Speaking to God*

Based on the teachings of Rabbi Sacks





“Among the fine people it has been my privilege to know, Chaim (Harry) and Anna Schimmel hold a special place. Their life has been built on a love of Torah, which they have learned, taught, supported, and in Harry’s case written brilliantly about. They epitomized it for our community; they have communicated it to everyone they know, and especially to their children and grandchildren. I always counted Harry as my benchmark. If he agreed with an interpretation I had given, I was confident I was on the right lines. Now that Harry and Anna have made *aliyah* to *Yerushalayim Ir ha-Kodesh*, I count it as a special delight that this curriculum project has been sponsored in their honor. They inspired me; I hope these materials inspire others.”

RABBI SACKS

Introduction

Watch: The opening video for Unit 2



First Reading: Read through the text from the video. Highlight each word or phrase that you are unsure of, whether it is the meaning of the language or the meaning of the concept.

See the short glossary below for help.

Glossary

Redeem: to change for the better (this word has other related meanings but this is how it is being used here).

Solitude: the quality or state of being alone or remote from society.

Fate: an inevitable and often adverse outcome, condition, or end.

Infinitesimal: immeasurably or incalculably small.

Concatenation: linked together.

Descartes: René Descartes (1596–1650) French mathematician and philosopher.

Unfathomable: impossible to comprehend.

Parameters: a characteristic element.



Prayer is our intimate dialogue with Infinity, the profoundest expression of our faith that at the heart of reality is a Presence that cares, a God who listens, a creative Force that brought us into being in love. It is this belief more than any other that redeems life from solitude and fate from tragedy. The universe has a purpose. We have a purpose. However infinitesimal we are, however brief our stay on earth, we matter. The universe is more than particles of matter endlessly revolving in indifferent space. The human person is more than an accidental concatenation of genes blindly replicating themselves. Human life is more than 'A tale, told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.' (Macbeth 5.5.26–28). Prayer gives meaning to existence.

It is possible to believe otherwise. There can be a life without faith or prayer, just as there can be a life without love, or laughter, or happiness, or hope. But it is a diminished thing, lacking dimensions of depth and aspiration. Descartes said, 'I think, therefore I am.' Judaism says, 'I pray, therefore I am not alone.'

It takes courage to believe. Jews need no proof of the apparent injustice of events. It is written on the pages of our history. Jews had no power or earthly glory. For the better part of forty centuries our ancestors lived dispersed throughout the world, without a home, without rights, all too often experiencing persecution and pain. All they had was an invisible God and the line connecting us to Him: the Siddur, the words of prayer. All they had was faith. In Judaism, we do not analyze our faith, we pray it. We do not philosophize about truth, we sing it, we *daven* it. For Judaism, faith becomes real when it becomes prayer.

In prayer we speak to a Presence vaster than the unfathomable universe yet closer to us than we are to ourselves: the God beyond who is also the Voice within. Though language must fail when we try to describe a Being beyond all parameters of speech, yet language is all we have, and it is enough. For God who made the world with creative words, and who revealed His will in holy words, listens to our prayerful words. Language is the bridge that joins us to Infinity.

In prayer God becomes not a theory but a Presence, not a fact but a mode of relationship. Prayer is where God meets us, in the human heart, in our offering of words, in our acknowledged vulnerability.

Jonathan Sachs



Analysis in Chavruta: Now in *chavruta* (pairs), take a look again at the text. Discuss and answer the questions on the key terms and phrases that are highlighted for you.

Prayer is our intimate dialogue with Infinity, **the profoundest expression of our faith** that at the heart of reality is **a Presence that cares**, a God who listens, a creative Force that brought us into being in love. It is this belief more than any other that **redeems life from solitude and fate from tragedy**. The universe has a purpose. We have a purpose. However infinitesimal we are, however brief our stay on earth, we matter. The universe is more than particles of matter endlessly revolving in indifferent space. The human person is more than an accidental concatenation of genes blindly replicating themselves. Human life is more than 'A tale, told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.' **Prayer gives meaning to existence**.

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the profoundest expression of our faith

1. What is “our faith” referring to? Can you give some examples of “our faith”?
2. By “expressing” something we are declaring what we believe to be true. In what way does *tefilla* express what we believe?
3. When you pray, what are you saying about what you believe?

a Presence that cares

1. Why does Rabbi Sacks capitalize the ‘P’ of “Presence”?
2. How does this “Presence” show that He (God) cares about us? Can you think of examples of this from your own life?
3. How does the act of praying confirm that we believe in a Presence that cares?

redeems life from solitude and fate from tragedy

1. How does belief in a caring God make us feel less like we are alone?
2. The ancient Greeks believed that fate (what is destined to be) determines all the good and bad things that will happen in our lives, and that there is no way to avoid this fate. How does believing in a caring God differ to this?
3. Who do you believe makes the ultimate choices in your life and decides how your life will turn out; random “fate”, God, or yourself?

Prayer gives meaning to existence

1. How can prayer, and the statement of belief in a caring God that it is, give your life meaning?
2. What meaning does your life have?
3. How does that affect the way you live your life?

It takes courage to believe

1. What do you think people who do not believe in a caring God might believe in?
2. Why does Rabbi Sacks describe faith as courageous?
3. “It is written on the pages of our history.” Do you think it is easier or harder to believe in God because of Jewish history? Why?



the line connecting us to Him: the Siddur

1. Describe how the Siddur connects us to God.
2. Wouldn't it be easier to use our own words to connect to God and not the words of the Siddur? How does the Siddur help?
3. Do you find the Siddur helps or hinders your connection to God? Why?

faith becomes real when it becomes prayer

1. Is Judaism primarily about believing, or doing?
2. How does praying make belief "real"?
3. Rabbi Sacks says we don't just talk about faith (philosophize) or keep it in our heart, we sing or *daven* our faith. Why do you think faith is better acted upon, rather than kept only in your mind or heart?

the God beyond who is also the Voice within

1. Where is the God "beyond"? How do you connect to that God?
2. How is God the "Voice within"? Within what? What does that "Voice" say?
3. Do you find it easier to relate to the "God beyond" or the "Voice within"?

Language is the bridge that joins us to Infinity

1. Why "must language fail" when we try and use it to describe God?
2. Why is language "all we have" to connect to God?
3. How do we use language to "join us to Infinity (God)"?



Share your analysis: Come together as a class, and share your answers to the questions. Listen carefully to the perspectives of your classmates. Did anyone take a different approach to the text from you? Does their approach resonate with you?

Themes of Tefilla



Exploring Themes of Tefilla: Together with your *chavruta* look at the following text from Rabbi Sacks' introduction to the Koren Siddur, and then the *mishna* from *Pirkei Avot* that follows it. Use the questions below to help you understand Rabbi Sacks' approach to *tefilla*, and its connection with the *mishna*.



The metaphor that, to me, captures the spirit of prayer more than any other is Yaakov's dream in which, alone at night, fleeing danger and far from home, he saw a ladder stretching from earth to heaven with angels ascending and descending... Prayer is a ladder and we are the angels. If there is one theme sounded throughout the prayers, it is *creation–revelation–redemption*, or *ascent–summit–descent*.

Creation – Pesukei DeZimra

In the Verses of Praise (*Pesukei DeZimra*), we climb from earth to heaven by meditating on creation. Like a Turner or Monet landscape, the psalms let us see the universe bathed in light, but *this* light is not the light of beauty but of holiness – the light the sages say God made on the first day and “hid for the righteous in the life to come.” Through some of the most magnificent poetry ever written, we see the world as God's masterpiece, suffused with His radiance...

Revelation – Shema/Amida

By the time we reach *Barechu* and the blessings of the *Shema* we have neared the summit. Now we are in heaven with the angels. We have reached revelation. The Divine Presence is close, almost tangible... Now comes the great declaration of faith at the heart of prayer, the *Shema* with its passionate profession of the unity of God and the highest of all expressions of love, “with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might.”... Then comes the *Amida*, the supreme height of prayer. Three traditions fuse at this point: the silent *Amida* said by individuals, reminding us of prophetic prayer; the Leader's repetition representing priestly worship and prayer as sacrifice; and then the *Kedusha*, prayer as a mystical experience.

Redemption – Concluding Prayers

From here, prayer begins its descent. First comes *Tachanun* in which we speak privately and intimately to the King. At this point, with a mixture of anguish and plea, we speak not of God's love for Israel but of Israel's defiant love of God... Then comes *Ashrei* and the subsequent passages, similar to the *Pesukei DeZimra* but this time with redemption, not creation, as their



theme. The key verse is “A redeemer will come to Zion.” The section closes with a prayer that we may become agents of redemption as we reengage with the world... We are now back on earth, the service complete except for *Aleinu*, *Kaddish* and the *Shir shel Yom*. We are ready to reenter life and its challenges...

We are not the same after we have stood in the Divine Presence as we were before. We have been transformed. We see the world in a different light. Perhaps we radiate a different light. We have spoken to and listened to God. We have aligned ourselves with the moral energies of the universe. We have become, in Lurianic terminology, vessels for God’s blessing. We are changed by prayer.

Understanding Jewish Prayer, The Koren Siddur

Creation – *Pesukei DeZimra*

1. The first theme is Creation, and our part in it. How does thinking about Creation help us climb the ladder to stand before God?
2. Where in our *tefillot*, specifically in *Pesukei DeZimra*, can you see examples of “magnificent poetry” that describes the world as “God’s masterpiece”?
3. Turner and Monet were painters who tried to capture the splendor of nature in the same way as *Sefer Tehillim*. Do you think we can use music and art in all its forms, even nature itself, to find a connection to God?

Revelation – *Shema/Amida*

1. The second theme is revelation, when God reveals or communicates something to us. How is standing in front of God and praying like revelation?
2. How is prayer different from revelation? (Clue: dialogue vs. monologue)
3. The climax of our *tefilla* is the *Shema* and the *Amida*. Who wrote the *Shema*? Who wrote the *Amida*?

Redemption – Concluding Prayers

1. The third theme is redemption, looking outward to make the world a better place. What does that have to do with prayer? Where in the Siddur do we find this theme?
2. Why do we not end our *tefillot* at their climax, standing in the presence of God? Why descend at all?
3. “We are not the same after we have stood in the Divine Presence as we were before... we are changed by prayer”. Can you explain how we are different? Can you think of an example of how prayer has changed you?



שמעון הצדיק היה משירי כנסת הגדולה. הוא היה אומר על שלשה דברים העולם עומד.
על התורה ועל העבודה ועל גמילות חסדים.

Shimon HaTzadik was one of the last of the Men of the Great Assembly.
He used to say: the world stands on three things: *Torah*, *Avodah*, and *Acts of Lovingkindness*.

Mishna Avot 1:2

1. What do you think Shimon HaTzadik means when he says the world “stands on three things”?
2. Why three?
3. Who is the focus when you keep the *Torah*?
4. *Avodah* is the service in the *Bet HaMikdash*, which was replaced by the *tefilla* service after the *Bet HaMikdash* was destroyed. Who is the focus during the *Avodah*?
5. Who is the focus of “Acts of Lovingkindness”?
6. These “three things” in the *mishna* are the basis of the three core relationships: man and himself (בין אדם לעצמו), man and God (בין אדם למקום) and man and others (בין אדם לחבירו). They can also be found in other sources that come in threes such as *Mishna Avot 1:12*; the three cardinal sins found in *Talmud Bavli, Sanhedrin 74a*; the three concepts of repentance, prayer, and charity that are mentioned in the *Rosh HaShana* and *Yom Kippur* prayers as “averting the evil decree”. Can you see a connection between these and the three themes of *tefilla* we explored above?



Share your analysis: Come together as a class and share your conclusions. Listen carefully to the perspectives of your classmates. Did anyone take a different approach to these themes from you? Does their approach speak to you?

Further Exploration of the Themes of *Tefilla*



Further Exploration of the Themes of *Tefilla*: Together with your *chavruta* look at one of the themes below through the two supplementary sources. Your teacher will tell you which theme to focus on. Use the guiding questions to help you.



Then join another pair to form a small *chabura* (study group) to examine the *tefilla* text from the Siddur that illustrates the theme. Use the guiding questions and commentary to help you with your analysis.

Creation: Between Man and Himself (בין אדם לעצמו)



Before I was born, Your love enveloped me.
You turned nothing into substance, and created me.
Who etched out my frame?
Who poured me into a vessel and moulded me?
Who breathed a spirit into me?
Who opened the womb of Sheol and extracted me?
Who has guided me from youth-time until now?
Taught me knowledge, and cared wondrously for me?
Truly, I am nothing but clay within Your hand.
It is You, not I, who have really fashioned me.
I confess my sin to You, and do not say
That a serpent intrigued, and tempted me.
How can I conceal from You my faults, since
Before I was born Your love enveloped me.

Rabbi Shlomo ibn Gabirol, *Before I was Born*

1. What would you say is the theme of this poem?
2. What realization is Rabbi Shlomo ibn Gabirol expressing about himself? Can you describe what that must feel like emotionally?
3. Can *tefilla* lead to this same humbling process? How so?



All beings long for the very source of their origin. Every plant, every grain of sand, every clod of earth, small creatures and great, the heavens and the angels, every substance and its particles – all of them are longing, yearning, panting to attain the state of holy perfection. Human beings suffer constantly from this homesickness of the soul, and it is in prayer that we cure it. When praying, we feel at one with the whole creation, and raise it to the very source of blessing and life.

Rav Avraham Yitzchak HaCohen Kook, *Olat Hariyah*

1. What is the “source of their origin” for all of creation?
2. How do you think the realization that we are *part* of creation and not the *masters* of creation changes the way we see ourselves?
3. What do you think Rav Kook means when he says prayer is the “cure” for “this homesickness of the soul”?



בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
 אֲשֶׁר יָצַר אֶת הָאָדָם בְּחָכְמָה
 וּבָרָא בּוֹ נִקְבִּים וְנִקְבִּים, חֲלוּלִים חֲלוּלִים.
 גָּלוּי וְיָדוּעַ לִפְנֵי כֹסֶא כְבוֹדְךָ
 שְׂאֵם יִפְתָּח אֶחָד מֵהֶם
 אוֹ יִסְתֵּם אֶחָד מֵהֶם
 אִי אֶפְשָׁר לְהִתְקִים וְלַעֲמֹד לִפְנֶיךָ.
 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה'
 רוֹפֵא כָּל בָּשָׂר וּמַפְלִיא לַעֲשׂוֹת.

...A THOUSAND WORDS



בְּרוּךְ Blessed are You, LORD our God, King of the Universe,
 who formed man with wisdom
 and created in him many openings and cavities.
 It is revealed and known before the throne of Your glory
 that were one of them to be ruptured or blocked,
 it would be impossible to survive and stand before You.
 Blessed are You, LORD,
 Healer of all flesh
 who does miracles.

REFLECTION

*"We forget that we have
 a holy body
 no less than a holy spirit."
 (Rav Kook, Orot HaTehiya 33)*

Is your body a highly
 efficient scientific machine
 or a miracle from God?
 Can it be both?

Does your human body
 help you to believe in God?

If your human body is a
 gift from God, how would
 that change the way you
 treat your body?

CONNECTION

*"The human body contains 100 trillion cells.
 Within each cell is a nucleus. Within each
 nucleus is a double copy of the human ge-
 nome. Each genome contains 3.1 billion letters
 of genetic code, enough if transcribed to fill a
 library of five thousand books. Each cell, in other
 words, contains a blueprint of the entire body
 of which it is a part. The cumulative force of these
 scientific discoveries is nothing short of wondrous.
 In ways undreamt of by our ancestors, we now
 know to what extent the microcosm is a map
 of the macrocosm. From a single cell, it may be
 possible to reconstruct an entire organism."*

(Rabbi Jonathan Sacks,
 Covenant & Conversation, Emor 5768)

LEARNING

This *berakha* is said after every
 visit to the restroom, to thank
 Hashem for the intricate won-
 ders of the human body. It is

recommended to go to the restroom im-
 mediately after washing your hands in the morn-
 ing, and then say both the *berakha* of *Netilat
 Yadayim* and *Asher Yatzar*.

1. Answer the questions under the "Reflection" section. What is the common theme behind them?
2. What is the image on the page? How is it related to the "Reflection" questions and the "Connection" section?
3. What statement of belief are you making when you make this *berakha*?
4. Describe the emotions that come with the message from this *berakha*.
5. What impact does this *berakha* have on your relationship with yourself (בין אדם לעצמו)?



Revelation: Between Man and God (בין אדם למקום)



Lord, where shall I find You?
High and hidden is Your place.
And where shall I not find You?
Your glory fills infinities of space...
I have sought Your presence
called You with all my heart,
And going out to meet You
I found You coming toward me.

Rabbi Yehudah Halevi, *Selected Poems of Judah Halevi*, p. 134

1. One of God's names is *Makom*/מקום, (as in *בין אדם למקום*), literally "space". Does this poem help you understand why?
2. "High and hidden is Your place" vs. "And where shall I not find You"? Which one is it? Is God far away and transcendent (beyond our ordinary world) or close and imminent (immediate, close by)?
3. Do you ever feel God "coming toward" you? Where do you go to find God?



In my heart I will build a sanctuary
To God's glorious splendour,
And in the sanctuary I will raise an altar
To the radiance of His majesty.
As fire I will take
The fire of the Binding,
And as a sacrifice I will offer Him
My undivided soul.

Adapted from Rabbi Eliezer Azikri, *Sefer Charedim*

1. Originally we used the *korbanot* in the *Bet HaMikdash* to worship God. What is the message behind that form of worship?
2. Since the destruction of the *Bet HaMikdash* almost 2000 years ago, we replaced that form of worship with prayer. How is prayer also a sacrifice to God?
3. How do you offer God your "undivided soul" in your everyday life?



קדושת השם

אַתָּה קָדוֹשׁ וְשִׁמְךָ קָדוֹשׁ
וְקָדוֹשִׁים בְּכָל יוֹם יְהַלְלוּךָ סֶלָה.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', הָאֵל הַקָּדוֹשׁ. / המלך הקדוש.

(עמידה, repeat the Amidah.)

REFLECTION

How can I behave today in a way that reflects my inner holiness?

Am I behaving in a way that makes a kiddush Hashem?

What will you do today to bring holiness into the world?

LEARNING

"A person will have to answer for everything that his eye beheld and he did not consume." (Yerushalmi, Kiddushin 4:12) In Judaism, holiness does not mean denying the physical, rather enjoying that which is permitted to us and uplifting it to make it spiritual. *Kedusha* is the transformation and the elevation of the mundane to the holy and spiritual.

... A THOUSAND WORDS



HOLINESS

אַתָּה קָדוֹשׁ You are holy and Your name is holy, and holy ones praise You daily, Selah!

Blessed are You, LORD,

the holy God. / Between Rosh HaShana & Yom Kippur: the holy King. / (If forgotten, repeat the Amidah.)

CONNECTION

Imagine a city in the middle of a war. The dirt flying in the air. Missiles overhead. Everything in chaos. The smell of chemicals permeating the thick fog that has become the sky and civilians running through the streets in confusion, in panic – a living nightmare. A doctor runs across the blood-stained streets looking for people he can help, wounds he can heal just enough to get people back on their feet so they can keep running, keep living. He tends to a man bleeding from a piece of shrapnel, when he suddenly hears someone call out, "Doctor."

A short distance away he sees the woman calling out. She is hurt and in need of immediate attention. But as soon as he runs toward her, he hears another voice: "David!" He looks over to see his neighbor on the ground with a serious injury. No sooner than two steps to the neighbor's direction, a small voice pierces through the sweaty air and whispers, "Dad." The doctor is paralyzed for a moment before looking for his son amidst the rubble.

"Hashem" is the Jewish People's way of saying Dad.

To most people, the man in the story

was an anonymous person running around the streets – until someone saw him performing a medical act. Then he became "Doctor." To his neighbor, however, he was "David," a name that suggests an attachment that forced him to care just a little bit more. And when he heard "Dad" come through the thick fog, he was paralyzed.

This is the power of a name. It defines the relationship we have with the person and forces us to treat him in a particular way.

"Hashem" is the Jewish People's way of saying Dad. Dad is not the person's legal name, it's not their Hebrew name, it's not their business title. It's shorthand. It's a way to say that we, as Jews, have a nickname for You, God. It's a nickname that suggests both intimacy and respect, like the appellation "Dad." It's a way to tell your father that you love him, but that you still understand he's the father, he's in charge.

Likewise with Hashem: we love You and feel close to You. And at the same time we recognize our distance and who is really in charge.

(Jon Dabach)

1. Look at the list of names in the photograph. What's in a name? What does a name represent? How does your name do that?
2. We generally do not like to pronounce God's name, and instead say *Adonai* (my master) or better still *Hashem* (which just means "the name"). Why do you think this is?
3. What do you think "Holiness" means? If God is holy, and you are created in His image, then are you holy? Do you have to work at it or does it happen automatically?
4. Read the story on the page of the Siddur. It seems that there is a lot in a name. It can define our relationship with a person. Which type of relationship with God do you most connect to?
5. What kind of impact does this *beracha* have on your relationship with God (בין אדם למקום)?



Redemption: Between Man and his Fellow (בין אדם לחבירו).



May it be your will, O Lord our God, to cause to dwell in our lot Love, fellowship, peace and friendship, to widen our boundaries through students, to prosper our goal with hope and with future, to appoint us a share in the garden of Eden, to direct us in your world through good companions and good impulse, That we may rise in the morning and find Our heart awake to fear your name.

Talmud Bavli, Berachot 16b

1. Why do we need to pray for help with finding “Love, fellowship, peace and friendship”? Aren’t these in our own hands? Are these things easy or hard to achieve?
2. Why should we pray to have students if we are not a teacher? Does everyone have “students”? Do you have any “students”?
3. Why do we need to pray for help to find hope? Isn’t that a state of mind that we can control?



Lord and King of Peace,
Who makes peace and creates all things:
Help all of us that we may always hold fast to the attribute of peace,
So that true and abundant peace prevail between man and man, between
husband and wife,
And no strife separate humankind even in thought.
You make peace in Your heaven, You bring contrary elements together:
Extend abundant peace to us and to the whole world,
So that all discords be resolved in great love and peace,
And with one mind, one heart, all come near to You and Your law in truth,
And all form one union to do Your will with a whole heart.
Lord of peace, bless us with peace.

Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav, *Likkutei Tefillot*, I, 95

1. Peace may be achieved when people don’t fight. Who, then, should be responsible for peace, God or man?
2. Do you think peace is hard to achieve? In your school? In your family? In your community? In the world?
3. Is having “one mind and one heart” the same as living in peace?



עַל בֵּן נִקְוָה לָךְ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ, לְרֹאוֹת מְהֵרָה בְּתַפְאֶרֶת עֲזֶךָ
לְהַעֲבִיר גְּלוּלִים מִן הָאָרֶץ, וְהָאֱלִילִים כְּרוֹת יִכְרְתוּן
לְתַקֵּן עוֹלָם בְּמַלְכוּת שִׁדְי.
וְכָל בֶּן־בָּשָׂר יִקְרָאוּ בְּשִׁמְךָ לְהַפְנוֹת אֵלֶיךָ כָּל רִשְׁעֵי אָרֶץ.
יִכְרִיזוּ וְיִדְעוּ כָּל יוֹשְׁבֵי תֵבֶל
כִּי לָךְ תִּכְרַע כָּל בָּרָךְ, תִּשָּׁבַע כָּל לָשׁוֹן.
לְפָנֶיךָ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ יִכְרְעוּ וְיִפְּלוּ
וְלִכְבוֹד שִׁמְךָ יִקְר יִתְנוּ
וְיִקְבְּלוּ כָּלֶם אֶת עַל מַלְכוּתְךָ
וְתִמְלֹךְ עֲלֵיהֶם מְהֵרָה לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.
כִּי הַמַּלְכוּת שֶׁלָּךְ הִיא וְלְעוֹלָמִי עַד תִּמְלֹךְ בְּכָבוֹד
בְּכִתּוּב בְּתוֹרָתְךָ, ה' יִמְלֹךְ לְעֹלָם וָעֶד:
וְנֹאמַר, וְהָיָה ה' לְמֶלֶךְ עַל־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ
בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יִהְיֶה ה' אֶחָד וּשְׁמוֹ אֶחָד:

שמות טו

זכריה יד

משלי ג

ישעיה ח

ישעיה טו

Some add:

אֲלֵהֵיכָא מִפְּחַד פִּתְאָם וּמִשְׁאֵת דְּשִׁעִים כִּי תִבָּא:
עֲזוּ עֲזָה וְתַפֵּר, דְּבִרּוּ דְּבַר וְלֹא יָקוּם, כִּי עֲמֵנוּ אֵל:
וְעַד־זְקֵנָה אֲנִי הוּא, וְעַד־שִׁיבָה אֲנִי אֶסְבֵּל, אֲנִי עֲשִׂיתִי וְאֲנִי אֲשָׂא וְאֲנִי אֶסְבֵּל וְאֲמַלֵּט:

REFLECTION

"[Hillel says]: That which is hateful to you, do not do to your friend. That is the entire Torah. The rest is just explanation. Go and study it!" (Shabbat 31a)

How would you sum up Judaism in one sentence?

... A THOUSAND WORDS



LEARNING

The two paragraphs of the prayer *Aleinu* represent two distinct but related themes. The first paragraph explores our chosenness in the eyes of Hashem, while the second speaks of our mission in the world – to improve it (*tikkun olam*), which is the reason why we have been chosen. In the words of

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks: "No prayer more eloquently expresses the dual nature of the Jewish People: its singular history as the nation chosen to be God's witness on earth, and its universal aspiration for the time when all the inhabitants of earth will recognise the God in whose image we are formed."

1. What does *Tikkun Olam* mean? How can we do it?
2. Read the Reflection question. Hillel sums up the essence of Judaism. How can that help us achieve *Tikkun Olam*?
3. In what way can we represent God so that His greatness will be recognized by others?
4. The photograph shows the flag of the State of Israel flying among the community of nations outside the United Nations building in New York. What role can Israel play in *Tikkun Olam*?
5. What kind of impact does this *beracha* have on your relationships with other people in your life (בין אדם לחבירו)?

Share your analysis: Come together as a class. Present what you learned about the theme of *tefilla* that was allocated to you, making reference to the supplementary sources and the answers you came up with to the questions accompanying them.

Therefore, we place our hope in You, LORD our God, that we may soon see the glory of Your power, when You will remove abominations from the earth, and idols will be utterly destroyed, **when the world will be perfected under the sovereignty of the Almighty**, when all humanity will call on Your name, to turn all the earth's wicked towards You. All the world's inhabitants will realise and know that to You every knee must bow and every tongue swear loyalty. Before You, LORD our God, they will kneel and bow down and give honour to Your glorious name. They will all accept the yoke of Your kingdom, and You will reign over them soon and for ever. For the kingdom is Yours, and to all eternity You will reign in glory, as it is written in Your Torah: "The LORD will reign for ever and ever." *Ex. 15*
And it is said: "Then the LORD shall be King over all the earth; on that day the LORD shall be One and His name One." *Zech. 14*

Some add:

Have no fear of sudden terror or of the ruin when it overtakes the wicked. *Prov. 3*
Devise your strategy, but it will be defeated, propose your plan, *Is. 8*
but it will not stand, for God is with us.
When you grow old, I will still be the same. *Is. 46*
When your hair turns grey, I will still carry you.
I made you, I will bear you, I will carry you, and I will rescue you.

The Assignment



In this unit we have explored the themes of *creation*, *revelation*, and *redemption* in *tefillah* and how they connect to the three paradigm relationships – *between man and himself* (בין אדם לעצמו), *between man and God* (בין אדם למקום) and *between man and his fellow* (בין אדם לחבירו).

Part 1: This assignment is to write your own *tefilla*, with all of these themes contained within it. Try to make your *tefilla* beautiful and expressive of what is in your heart. It may be a poem, or a song, or prose. If you want to explain the meaning behind it you can also write your own commentary on it.

Part 2: For bonus points, prepare a list of questions for Rabbi Sacks on any of the topics we have studied in this unit. Send your questions to your teacher, who will forward a number of insightful questions from the class to Rabbi Sacks. Rabbi Sacks will respond to a selection of the questions he receives for each unit from students around the world. Visit www.RabbiSacks.org/TenPaths to see his responses.



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