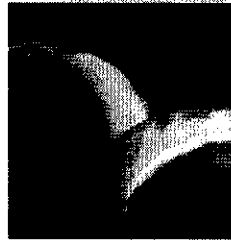
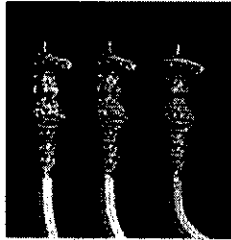


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Purposeful Prayer: Dialogue with the Divine

Birchos HaShachar – Part II:

Beginning the Morning on the Right Spiritual Foot

Rabbi Shmuel Silber

November 12th, 2012



THIS COURSE IS DEDICATED IN MEMORY OF:

אסתר חיה ז"ל בת צבי ופרומה עלקא פייגא בת מאיר ופשא לאה ז"ל נח בן אברהם ופייגא ז"ל
תהא נשמתם צרוורת בצרוור החיים

MAY THEIR SOULS BE BOUND IN THE EVERLASTING BOND OF LIFE

1. תלמוד בבלי מסכת ברכות דף ס עמוד ב

כי שמע קול תרנגולא, לימא: ברוך אשר נתן לשכוי בינה להבחין בין יום ובין לילה. כי פתח עיניה, לימא: ברוך פוקח עורים. כי תריץ ויתיב, לימא: ברוך מתיר אסורים. כי לביש, לימא: ברוך מלביש ערומים. כי זקיף, לימא: ברוך זוקף כפופים. כי נחית לארעא, לימא: ברוך רוקע הארץ על המים. כי מסגי, לימא: ברוך המכין מצעדי גבר. כי סיים מסאניה, לימא: ברוך שעשה לי כל צרכי. כי אסר המייניה, לימא: ברוך אוזר ישראל בגבורה. כי פריס סודרא על רישיה, לימא: ברוך עוטר ישראל בתפארה.

When he hears the rooster crowing he should say: 'Blessed is He who has given to the rooster understanding to distinguish between day and night'. When he opens his eyes he should say: 'Blessed is He who opens the eyes of the blind'. When he stretches himself and sits up he should say: 'Blessed is He who loosens the bound'. When he dresses he should say: 'Blessed is He who clothes the naked'. When he draws himself up he should say: 'Blessed is He who raises the bowed'. When he steps on to the ground he should say: 'Blessed is He who spread the earth on the waters'. When he commences to walk he should say: 'Blessed is He who makes firm the steps of man'. When he ties his shoes he should say: 'Blessed is He who has supplied all my wants'. When he fastens his girdle, he should say: 'Blessed is He who girds Israel with might'. When he spreads a kerchief over his head he should say: 'Blessed is He who crowns Israel with glory'.

2. סדור תפילות ישראל (מאת הרב שמשון רפאל היירש) דף יא

ברוך "Blessed be You"; that is, "I pledge myself to fulfill Your will".

ברוך When we first awakened, our thoughts were immediately directed upon our own body with its wondrous construction and upon our soul with its divine purity and purpose, and we were impelled to renew our pledge of loyalty (ברוך) to our God. Here we are given a number of special factors which also present themselves to us, now that we are fully awake, and which summon us once more to renew our promise as indicated by the term ברוך.

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch (June 20, 1808 – December 31, 1888) was the intellectual founder of the *Torah im Derech Eretz* school of contemporary Orthodox Judaism. Occasionally termed *neo-Orthodoxy*, his philosophy, together with that of Ezriel Hildesheimer, has had a considerable influence on the development of Orthodox Judaism.

3. רש"י מסכת ברכות דף ס עמוד ז

לשכוי - תרנגול, דאיכא דוכתא דקרו לתרנגול שכוי כדאמרינן בראש השנה (דף כ"ו א').

אשר נתן לשכוי

Answer #1:

כה. יא.) וְאָנוּ מְבָרְכִין עַל בֵּינַת הַתְּרַנְגוּל מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהוּא מְצַרְכֵי בְּנֵי אָדָם, שֶׁהֵם עוֹמְדִין מִמַּשְׁתָּן לְקוֹלוֹ, וְזֶהוּ שְׂאוֹמֵר לְהִבְחִין, כְּלוֹמֵר שִׁיבְחֵינוּ הַבְּרִיּוֹת וְיִדְעוּ כִּי אֲנִי מִתְחִיל הַיּוֹם. וְזֶהוּ דְבַר פְּלֵא, שֶׁאֵין בְּעוֹלָם מִי שִׁיִּדְעַ לְהִבְחִין בֵּין יוֹם לְלַיְלָה, וְאִפְלוּ הָאָדָם שֶׁהוּא בְּעַל דַּעַה וְהַשְּׂבֵל, אֲלֵא הַתְּרַנְגוּל. וְגַם בְּחֻצוֹת הַלַּיְלָה הוּא מְרַגֵּשׁ וְקוֹרֵא.

4. ספר אבודרהם דף מה בא"ד כששומע

Rabbi David Abudraham Some 600 years ago there lived in Spain a great Jewish scholar who became famous for his book on Jewish prayers and blessings. His name was Rabbi David ben Joseph Abudraham (or Abudarham), and he lived in the city of Seville. Very little is known about the personal life of the author of this famous work. He was a descendant of a distinguished family. An ancestor of his who lived about one hundred years before him, and whose name was also David, was the head of the Jewish community of Seville, and Tax Collector under King Sancho the Great (1258-95). The name Abudarham is believed to be derived from the Arabic words "Abu-darhamin," meaning "Head of the Taxes."

Answer #2:

A 5. The World of Prayer: Rabbi Dr. Elie Munk (pages 24-25)

This Bracha does not refer to the crowing of the cock. According to the ראשונים it speaks of the ability of *man* to distinguish between day and night. It is evident from Job XXXVIII, 36 that שכוי means heart. This organ is regarded as the seat of the sense of discernment. "Therefore this Bracha should be recited even if one did not hear the crowing of the cock, for it is just an expression of gratitude at enjoying the benefit of light." (Rashi (Rabba Gen. Ch.14).

This Bracha fits in closely with the preceding and the following ones. They all speak of the daily renewal of the miracles of the creation which should evoke our gratitude each day. "For every breath you breathe, you should praise G-d," as the Psalmist teaches when he sings "כל הנשמה תהלל" (Rabba Gen. Ch. 14).

The physical hulk of the original man was shaped first, then the soul was breathed into it afterwards. So for every day of life granted to us, we should give first thanks for the sustenance of our bodies, אשר יצר, then, secondly, for the regeneration of our souls, אלקי נשמה. The Bracha for the "enjoyment of the light" comes next. The break of day awakens new faith and fresh initiative everywhere. The first morning that dawned over the world was, to Adam, a message that the Divine grace for which he had fervently hoped was granted to him. To him it meant that G-d had given him the chance to begin life all over again, and to atone for the transgression of the night

He greeted the first sunrise with a cry of heartfelt gratitude. "להגיד בבקר חסדך." "To tell in the morning Thy lovingkindness" (Psalm XCII, 3). So the daily "enjoyment of the light" also was deemed worthy of a special blessing.

The form given to this Bracha is indeed noteworthy. It is not "that Thou hast given us the light of day;" but "that Thou hast given us the intelligence to distinguish between day and night." This blessing really expresses our gratitude for the gift of intelligence. Nevertheless, it does not refer to intelligence in general, but to our ability to make distinctions, which, in fact, is the basis and foundation of all knowledge. "בינה," derived from "בין" is a thought process without which no "דעה," no knowledge can exist. (Aboth III, 21. Bertinoro ad loc.). It is only a preliminary stage in the acquisition of knowledge to which our Bracha refers. This fact fits it perfectly into the order of the succession of the Brachoth we have outlined. The two preceding Brachoth treat of the two constituent elements of the human being, body and soul. They are followed by the blessing for the first independent activity of the conscious mind. For it is man's highest bliss to become aware, upon awakening, that he retains full possession of his mental faculties. His consciousness of the change from night to day proves this to him.

ב

Answer #3:

6. סדור תפילות ישראל (מאת הרב שמשון רפאל היירש) דף יב

First we contemplate the distinction between day and night, through which the Creator has divided all of life here below into two distinct halves, one to be devoted to the regeneration of our strength and the other to the active service of God with all the things we do each day. We are bidden to consider the unique talent of the cock, which the Creator has endowed with the ability to perceive the dawn of a new day, and to proclaim it with its loud cry to the still-sleeping world. Thus God has equipped every one of His creatures with special gifts for specific purposes. In like manner, as we are told by the ברכות which follow immediately, He also sent us out among the nations, geared and equipped for the fulfillment of a mission and purpose that is unique and all our own. When the darkness of error still enveloped the nations, the Jewish people had already been sent forth as the wakeners of dawn, and still walks among the nations as the herald of the new day which is to come for all of mankind.

שעשה לי כל צרכי

7. ספר אבודרהם דף מח בא"ד כשמעביר דף מח

מקום להתגדל בו. | כשלוכש מנעליו מברך
שעשה לי כל צרכי, לשון חכמים הוא
(ברכות ס, ב) על שם (דה"כ ב, טו) ואנחנו
נקרות עצים מן הלבנון ככל צרכך, ועל
שם (דברים ח, יז) עשה לי את החיל הזה.
והטעם לברכה זו, שכל זמן שהוא יחך
אינו יכול לצאת ולעשות צרכיו וצרכי

ביתו, וינין שלבש מנעליו כאלו נעשו לו
כל צרכיו.

8. The World of Prayer: Rabbi Dr. Elie Munk page 32

“שעשה לי כל צרכי”
When we tie our shoelaces we say: “Who provided me with all my needs.” As Samson Raphael Hirsch remarks, “According to the view of our Rabbis, the putting on of the shoes is the outward sign of our being prepared to engage in self-reliant activity. By contrast, those in the Scripture, who step upon sacred ground are commanded to take off their shoes. This symbolizes their relinquishing all independence, and their complete surrender to the Holy.” (Choreb §314, 12). This Bracha acknowledges, then, that all human achievement stems only from Him; “Who provides all my needs.”



9. Horeb: Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch Edoth Chapter 43 (page 208)

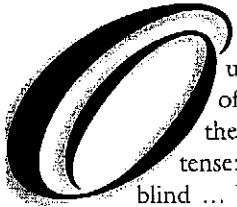
2. *Prohibition against wearing shoes, etc.*: In the view of our Sages, the wearing of shoes on our feet betokens equipment for self-supporting activity. Thus, taking off one's shoes on holy ground is ordered several times in the *Tenach* as a sign of surrendering all one's self and of a complete submission to what is holy. So, too, for the *avel* the removal of his shoes is an expression of the breach in his independent personality.

During the seven days of *aveluth* he must not wear shoes of leather on his feet (Y.D. 382). (Cf. also paras. 158, 243, 545.) A similar idea is expressed in the rule that during the seven days one must not sit or lie upon anything other than flat earth, with at most some insignificant underlay, when not standing or walking. According to former custom, all furniture intended for lying upon was thrown onto its side and the head was wrapped up completely. But both practices are already long out of use, as are many features of *hilchoth aveluth* because of the necessity to avoid anything which, catching the eye, is liable to mis-interpretation (Y.D. 386, 387).

10. נתיב בינה חלק א ברכות השחר דף 169

בפירוש „עמק ברכה“ מאת רבי מנחם מנדל חיים לנדא אנו מוצאים הבתרה מפורטת לענין. יש עוד להעיר שבטקסט סידור זה מביאים בסמיכות את שתי הברכות: „מלביש ערומים“ מכאן, ו„שעשה לי כל צרכי“ מכאן, ואלה דברי ההסבר הארוכים במעט השמשות: „מכל מקום תימה שניסחו לשון שאין בו משמעות כלל על ענין נעלים. וההכרח לומר... שהחכמים תיקנו לשון הברכות לפי דיבור הרגיל בפי העם, ויש לשער שבימיהם לא השתמשו רבים בנעלים, ועיין (פסחים ק"ב ע"א) שרבי עקיבא צוה את רבי יהושע בנו כמה מילי [כמה ענינים] בהלכות דרך ארץ וביניהם: אל תמנע מנעלים מרגליך, ופירש הרשב"ם שגנאי הוא לתלמיד חכם ללכת יחף כי ההוא דאיתא [שיש] בשבת (קכ"ט ע"א): „לעולם ימכור אדם קורות ביתו ויקח מנעלים לרגליו... ולכן היו הנעלים לרוב המון מהדברים שניקנו באחרונה, כשכבר היו לו שאר מצרכי הלבשה וכל קונה נעלים היה דרכו להביע את רגשי סיפוקו ולומר כבר יש לי כל צרכי ואפילו מנעלים לרגלי, ולהכי ניסחו הברכה לפי שימוש הלשון בפי העם. לפי זה נכון להסמיכה לברכה, מלביש ערומים, ויהיה הפירוש, שעשה לי כל צרכי בעניני הנעלה והלבשה, ועיין בסדר רב עמרם גאון [הוצאת פרומקין חלק א' ע"א ל"א], שלא חיסר מצרכי כלום. וזה מתאים היטב עם מה שפירשתי... וצריך טעמא למה נשתנה ברכה זו מכל הברכות שנתקנו בלשון בינוני, ועיין במעדני יום טוב' (סוף פרק הרואה אות פ"ה) שעמד בזה, ועיין באחרונים פרי מגדים' ומחצית השקל, שלא מצאו טעם לזה. והנה לפי הפירוש שכתבתי למעלה אתי שפיר [הענין מבואר], שאילו יאמר, העושה לי כל צרכי, היה משמע שעושה לי תמיד כל מה שאני צריך, אבל, שעשה לי הוא מחובר להקודם לו, למלביש ערומים, וכאילו היה אומר, וכבר יש לי כל צרכי ואפילו מנעלים כמו שכתבנו לעיל“ (ע"מ מ"ט).

11. Prayerfully Yours: Rabbi Dr. Abraham Twersky page 73



(A)

Our sages were not haphazard in their choice of words. It is, therefore, noteworthy that all the *berachos* of gratitude are in the present tense: "Blessed are You ... Who *gives* sight to the blind ... Who *clothes* the naked ... Who *releases* the bound ... Who *straightens* the bent ... Who *spreads out* the earth ... Who *firms* man's footsteps ... Who *girds* Israel with strength ... Who *crowns* Israel with splendor ... Who *gives* strength to

the weary." The one notable exception is "Who *has provided* me my every need." Why the change in tenses?

We are simple humans. Few of us have achieved the spirituality of R' Zusia of Anipoli, who was sickly and lived in abject poverty. Someone who saw R' Zusia dressed in tattered clothes asked him, "How can you be sincere in saying the berachah 'Who has provided me with all my needs' when you are so woefully lacking?" R' Zusia responded, "God knows what I need more than I do. He must know that one of my needs is poverty."

We are not R' Zusia. Nor are we R' Baruch of Mezhibozh.

(B) *One Friday night R' Baruch was reciting the prayer before Kiddush. When he came to the verse, "I gratefully thank You, my God and God of my forefathers, for all the kindness You have done with me, and which You will do with me...", he paused and reflected. "Why must I thank God now for future kindnesses? I can thank Him when they occur." He then concluded, "It is because I may not recognize some things as being kindness. To the contrary, I may see them as distress and perhaps I may be resentful rather than grateful. That is why I must thank Him in advance."*

R' Baruch then began crying. "How tragic it is that we can be so blind! God will be doing kindness with me, but I may not recognize it. I may actually resent His kindness

rather than thank Him for it."

R' Zusia saw everything as Divine kindness. R' Baruch was distressed that he might not see this. We are so far from their spirituality. When we suffer adversity, we are resentful and complain.

However, after time passes we may see that something which we had thought to be an adversity was actually a blessing, but it came down in disguise. Many things are much clearer when we look through the "retrospect scope."

Since we are not R' Zusia, we would be deceiving ourselves if we said the *berachah* in the present tense, thanking God "Who *provides* me with all my needs." Today I do not feel that all my needs have been provided. I can make a list of the things I need that I still lack. The sages did not want us to say a *berachah* if our heart is not in it.

However, as we reflect on the past we may better recognize the truth. "When I did not get the job I applied for, I was bitter. But later I found a much better job with far better pay. I was lucky I did not get that first job." Or, "When I lost my job, I thought my world had come to an end. But I

(D)

went back to school and earned an advanced degree. If I hadn't lost that job I'd still be doing menial work."

We are much wiser in hindsight. We may see that in the past God did indeed provide for all our needs. What R' Zusia saw in the present, we can only see in the past.

That is why the sages formulated this *berachah* in the past tense. We may be able to say with full sincerity that God did indeed provide for our needs in the past, even though we were unable to recognize it then.

(S)

12. סדור

יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, יי אֱלֹהֵי וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתַי, שֶׁתְּצִילֵנִי הַיּוֹם וּבְכָל יוֹם מֵעַזֵי פְּנִים וּמַעֲזוֹת פְּנִים, מֵאָדָם רָע, וּמַחְבֵּר רָע, וּמְשַׁכֵּן רָע, וּמְפַגֵּעַ רָע, וּמְשַׁטֵּן הַמְשַׁחִית, מִדִּין קָשָׁה, וּמִכְפָּעַל דִּין קָשָׁה, בֵּין שֶׁהוּא בֶן בְּרִית, וּבֵין שֶׁאִינוּ בֶן בְּרִית.

יְהִי רְצוֹן *May it be Your will,* HASHEM, my God, and the God of my forefathers, that You rescue me today and every day from brazen men and from brazenness, from an evil man, an evil companion, an evil neighbor, an evil mishap, the destructive spiritual impediment, a harsh trial and a harsh opponent, whether he is a member of the covenant* or whether he is not a member of the covenant.*

13. תלמוד בבלי מסכת ברכות דף טז עמוד ב

רבי חייא בתר דמצלי אמר הכי: יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלהינו שתהא תורתך אומנותנו, ואל ידוה לבנו ואל יחשכו עינינו. רב בתר צלותיה אמר הכי: יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלהינו שתתן לנו חיים ארוכים, חיים של שלום, חיים של טובה, חיים של ברכה, חיים של פרנסה, חיים של חלוץ עצמות, חיים שיש בהם יראת חטא, חיים שאין בהם בושה וכלימה, חיים של עושר וכבוד, חיים שתהא בנו אהבת תורה ויראת שמים, חיים שתמלא לנו את כל משאלות לבנו לטובה. רבי בתר צלותיה אמר הכי: יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו שתצילנו מעזי פנים ומעזות פנים, מאדם רע ומפגע רע, מיצר רע, מחבר רע, משכך רע, ומשטן המשחית, ומדין קשה ומבעל דין קשה, בין שהוא בן ברית בין שאינו בן ברית. ואף על גב דקיימי קצוצי עליה דרבי. רב ספרא בתר צלותיה אמר הכי: יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלהינו שתשים שלום... מר בריה דרבינא כי הוה מסיים צלותיה אמר הכי: אלהי, נצור לשוני מרע ושפתותי מדבר מרמה ולמקללי נפשי תדום ונפשי כעפר לכל תהיה, פתח לבי בתורתך ובמצותיך תרדוף נפשי....

14. תלמוד בבלי מסכת שבת דף ל עמוד ב

ואף ספר משלי בקשו לגנוז, שהיו דבריו סותרין זה את זה. ומפני מה לא גנזוהו – אמרי: ספר קהלת לאו עיינינן ואשכחינן טעמא? הכא נמי ליעיינן. ומאי דבריו סותרים זה את זה – כתיב: +משלי כו+ אל תען כסיל כאולתו, וכתיב +משלי כו+ ענה כסיל כאולתו, לא קשיא, הא – בדברי תורה, הא – במילי דעלמא. כי הא דההוא דאתא לקמיה דרבי, אמר ליה: אשתך אשתי ובניך בני. אמר ליה: רצונך שתשתה כוס של יין? שתה ופקע. ההוא דאתא לקמיה דרבי חייא, אמר ליה: אמך אשתי ואתה בני. אמר ליה: רצונך שתשתה כוס של יין? שתה ופקע. אמר רבי חייא: אהניא ליה צלותיה לרבי דלא לשווייה בני ממזירי. דרבי כי הוה מצלי, אמר: יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלהינו שתצילני היום מעזי פנים ומעזות פנים.

מה שכתוב בתורה ר"ש ס' אין עומדין : אשתך אשת בניך נח . ואלו השיב לו
 ששקר דיבר הים מכת"ס לו וניי מפ"ס כי אין החי יכול להכניש את החי וזה ס"י הפסוק
 סן תשנה לו גם אתם לשקרן לכן אמר כאלו הוא מחזיק טובה שנגלה לו דבר זה ויתן לו כוס
 של בשורה וכפי מה שפירש מהרש"א כל הפוסל נמוגו קוסל שהוא עולמו הים מוגד וממוזר
 לא חי לכך פקע ומית .

17. The Warmth and the Light: Rabbi Aharon Soloveitchik (42-43)

The purpose of the *akeidah*, as the Ramban explained, was not to convince God that Avraham could make the supreme sacrifice, but to convince Avraham himself that he was capable of such a noble act, of offering his own son to God, which was a much greater sacrifice than offering himself. Once Avraham realized that he was capable of making such a great sacrifice, he understood that he was certainly able to make small sacrifices. The Midrash tells us that im-

mediately after the *akeidah*, Avraham sent Yitzchak to the *yeshivah* of Shem and Eiver. Although Yitzchak was already thirty-seven years old at the time and could have gone to *yeshivah* earlier, Avraham apparently had not until then wished to make the small sacrifice of being separated from his son. After the *akeidah*, however, he realized that he was capable of making this sacrifice. Therefore, when Avraham left the scene of the *akeidah*, Yitzchak is no longer mentioned as walking together with him. Avraham had learned the lesson of the *akeidah*, that it is important to make small, daily sacrifices, and he therefore sent Yitzchak to study in the *yeshivah*.

Through the experience of the *akeidah*, Avraham had gained the inner strength to sanctify God's name at every step and in every action. For this reason, the *nisayon* of the *akeidah* is attributed to Avraham rather than Yitzchak, because the primary lesson of the *akeidah* was directed at Avraham. It demonstrated the concept of sanctifying God's name not through martyrdom, but through the constant, small sacrifices of life.

THE AKEIDAH

The following supplicatory paragraph is omitted on the Sabbath and Festivals.

Our God* and the God of our forefathers, remember us with a favorable memory before You, and recall us with a recollection of salvation and mercy from the primal loftiest heavens. Remember on our behalf — O HASHEM, our God — the love of the Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Israel, Your servants; the covenant, the kindness, and the oath that You swore to our father Abraham at Mount Moriah, and the Akeidah, when he bound his son Isaac atop the altar, as it is written in Your Torah:

Genesis 22:1-19

And it happened after these things that God tested Abraham and said to him, 'Abraham,' And he replied, 'Here I am.'

And He said, 'Please take your son, your only one, whom you love — Isaac — and get yourself to the Land of Moriah; bring him up there as an offering, upon one of the mountains which I shall indicate to you.'

So Abraham awoke early in the morning* and he saddled his donkey; he took his two young men* with him, and Isaac, his son. He split the wood for the offering, and rose and went toward the place which God had indicated to him.

On the third day, Abraham looked up, and perceived the place from afar. And Abraham said to his young men, 'Stay here by yourselves with the donkey, while I and the lad will go yonder; we will prostrate ourselves and we will return to you.'

And Abraham took the wood for the offering, and placed it on Isaac, his son. He took in his hand the fire and the knife, and the two of them went together. Then Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, 'Father —'

And he said 'Here I am, my son.' And he said, 'Here are the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the offering?'

And Abraham said, 'God will seek out for Himself the lamb* for the offering, my son.' And the two of them went together.

They arrived at the place which God indicated to him. Hashanah Muserf, older son, and Eliezer, his trusted servant.

עקדה

The following supplicatory paragraph is omitted on the Sabbath and Festivals.

אלהינו* ואלהי אבותינו, זכרנו בנפרדיו טוב לפרנך, ופקדנו בפקדונך ושיעור ורחמים משמי קדם. חזר לנו יהוה אלהינו אהבת הקדמונים אברהם יצחק וישאאל עקדתי, את הפורית ואת החסד ואת השכונת שושבתם לאברהם אבינו פהר המוריה, ואת העקדה שעקד את יצחק בנו על גפי המוקבה, פפתוב פותורתך.

בראשית כ"ב:א-ט"ט

ויהי אחר הדיברים האלה, והאלהים נסה את אברהם, ולאמר אליו, אברהם, ולאמר הנני ולאמר קח נא את בנה, את יחידך, אשר אהבת, את יצחק, ולך לך אל ארץ המורה, והעלהו שם לעלה על אחד ההרים אשר אמר אליך. ולשם אברהם בפקדו* ויהלב את המור, ויקח את שני געריי* אותו, ואת יצחק בנו, ויקבע עצו עלה, ויקם וילך אל המקום אשר אמר לו האלהים. ביום השלישי, וישא אברהם את עיניו, וירא את המקום מרחוק. ולאמר אברהם אל געריי שבו לכם פה עם החמור, ואני והנער נלכה עד פה, ונשתחווה ונשוקב אליכם* ויקח אברהם את עצי העלה, וישם על יצחק בנו, ויקח בנו את האש והמקבלת, וילכו שניהם יחדו, ולאמר יצחק אל אברהם אביו, ואבי ויאמר, חנני בנני, ויאמר הנני האש והעצים, ואיה השא לעלה. ויאמר אברהם, אלהים יראה לו השא, בנני, וילכו שניהם יחדו, ויקחו אל המקום אשר אמר לו האלהים

THE AKEIDAH / עקדה

The Akeidah is the story of the most difficult challenge to Abraham's faith in God; he was commanded to sacrifice Isaac, his beloved son and sole heir, to God. Father and son jointly demonstrated their total devotion, upon which God ordered Abraham to release Isaac. The Kabbalistic masters, from Zohar to Arizal, have stressed the great importance of the daily recitation of the Akeidah. In response to their writings, the Akeidah has been incorporated into the great majority of Siddurim, although it is not recited in all congregations. In some congregations, it is recited individually rather than as part of the public morning service. The Zohar records that this recitation of Abraham and Isaac's readiness to put love of God ahead of life itself is a source of heavenly mercy whenever Jewish lives are threatened. Avodas Hakodesh comments that the Akeidah should inspire us toward greater love of God, by following the example of Abraham and Isaac. Arizal teaches that the recitation brings atonement to someone who repents sincerely, for he identifies himself with the two Patriarchs who placed loyalty to God above all other considerations.

* Our God. This preliminary supplication is one of the highlights of the Rosh

Abraham built the altar there, and arranged the wood; he bound Isaac, his son, and he placed him on the altar atop the wood. Abraham stretched out his hand, and took the knife to slaughter his son.

And an angel of HASHEM, called to him from heaven, and said, 'Abraham! Abraham!'

And he said, 'Here I am.'

And he said, 'Do not stretch out your hand against the lad nor do anything to him, for now I know that you are a God-fearing man, since you have not withheld your son, your only one, from Me.'

And Abraham looked up and saw — behold a ram! — after it had been caught in the thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram and brought it as an offering instead of his son. And Abraham named that site 'HASHEM Yireh,'* as it is said this day: On the mountain HASHEM is seen.

The angel of HASHEM called to Abraham, a second time from heaven, and said, " 'By Myself I swear,' declared HASHEM, 'that since you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only one, I shall surely bless you and greatly increase your offspring like the stars of the heavens and like the sand on the seashore; and your offspring shall inherit the gate of its enemy; and all the nations of the earth shall bless themselves by your offspring, because you have listened to My voice.' "

Abraham returned to his young men, and they rose and went together to Beer Sheva, and Abraham stayed at Beer Sheva.

The following supplicatory paragraph is omitted on the Sabbath and festivals.

רבונו של עולם *Master of the universe! May it be Your will, HASHEM, our God, and the God of our forefathers, that You remember for our sake the covenant of our forefathers. Just as Abraham our forefather suppressed his mercy for his only son and wished to slaughter him in order to do Your will, so may Your mercy suppress Your anger from upon us and may Your mercy overwhelm Your attributes. May You overstep with us the line of Your law and deal with us — O HASHEM, our God — with the attribute of kindness and the attribute of mercy. In Your great goodness may You turn aside Your burning wrath from Your people, Your city, Your land, and Your heritage. Fulfill for us, HASHEM, our God, the word You pledged through Moses, Your servant, as it is said: 'I shall remember My covenant with Jacob; also My covenant with Isaac, and also My covenant with Abraham shall I remember; and the land shall I remember.'*¹

(1) Leviticus 26:42.

the future Temple Mount (Onkelos). Akedah as a source of merit for the offspring of Alternatively, God will eternally 'see' the Abraham and Isaac (R. Bachya).

וְיָבִן שֵׁם אֲבִרְתָּם אֶת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ, וַיַּעֲרֹךְ אֶת הָעֵצִים, וַיַּעֲקֹד אֶת יִצְחָק בְּנֵו, וַיִּשֶׂם אֹתוֹ עַל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ מִקְעֵל לְעֵצִים. וַיִּשְׁלַח אֲבִרְתָּם אֶת יָדוֹ, וַיִּקַּח אֶת הַמַּאֲבָלֶת לְשַׁחֵט אֶת בְּנֵו. וַיִּקְרָא אֵלָיו מִלְאָךְ יְהוָה מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם, וַיֹּאמֶר, אֲבִרְתָּם, אֲבִרְתָּם; וַיֹּאמֶר, הֲנִנִּי. וַיֹּאמֶר, אֵל תִּשְׁלַח יָדְךָ אֶל הַנֶּעֱר, וְאֵל תַּעֲשֶׂה לוֹ מִאֲמוֹנָה, כִּי עָמַדְתָּ נִדְעָמִי כִּי יֵרָא אֱלֹהִים אִמְתָּה, וְלֹא תִשְׁכַּח אֶת בְּנֶךָ אֶת יְחִידְךָ מִמֶּנִּי. וַיִּשָּׂא אֲבִרְתָּם אֶת עֵינָיו וַיֵּרָא, וְהִנֵּה אֵיִל אֶחָד, נֹאֵמוֹ בְּסִפְרָן בְּקִרְוָנוֹ, וַיֵּלֶךְ אֲבִרְתָּם וַיִּקַּח אֶת הָאֵיִל, וַיַּעֲלֵהוּ לְעֵלְיָה מִחַם בְּנֵו. וַיִּקְרָא אֲבִרְתָּם שֵׁם הַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא יְהוָה יִרְאֵהוּ,* אֲשֶׁר יֹאמֶר הַיּוֹם, בְּהַר יְהוָה נִרְאֵה. וַיִּקְרָא מִלְאָךְ יְהוָה אֶל אֲבִרְתָּם, שְׁנִית מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם. וַיֹּאמֶר, כִּי נִשְׁכַּחְתִּי אֶת בְּנֶךָ אֶת יְחִידְךָ, כִּי נָעַן אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתָ אֶת הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה, וְלֹא וַרְעָךָ כִּכְלֹכְכִי הַשָּׁמַיִם, וְכַחוֹל אֲשֶׁר עַל שֵׁפֶת הַיָּם, וַיִּשַׁח וַרְעָךָ אֶת שְׁעָרַי אֵיִבְרִי. וְהִתְקַבְּלוּ בְּרַעְךָ כֵּל גֹּזֵי הָאָרֶץ, עֲקֹב אֲשֶׁר שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקֹלִי. וַיִּשֶׂב אֲבִרְתָּם אֶל נַעֲרָיו, וַיִּקְמוּ וַיִּלְכוּ יַחְדָּו אֶל פְּאֵר שֶׁבַע, וַיִּשֶׂב אֲבִרְתָּם בְּבֵּאֵר שֶׁבַע.

The following supplicatory paragraph is omitted on the Sabbath and festivals.

רבונו של עולם, יהי רצון מלפניך, יהוה אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו, שתתוקר לני ברית אבותינו. כמו שקבש אברהם אבינו את רחמיך מן יחידו, ורצה לשחוט אותו כדי לעשות רצונך, כן יקבשו רחמיך את פעםך מעליו, ויגלו רחמיך אותו כדי לעשות רצונך, כן לפני משורת דיך, ותתנתג עמנו, יהוה אלהינו, במדת החסד ובמדת הרחמים. ובטובך הגדול, ישוב חרון אפיך מעליו, ומאריך ומקלחקה. ויגים לנו, יהוה אלהינו, את הדבר שהתבטחנו על ידי מלש עבדך, פאמור: וזכרתי את בריתי יצחק, ואף את בריתי אברהם אביך. והאריך אופר.

be the sacrificial 'lamb'. Nevertheless, though HASHEM will see the mountain where the Isaac was in the prime of life at the age of 37 and Akedah took place as the appropriate site for them went together, united in their dedication. His Temple. Indeed, the Akedah took place on

