



Chofesh Chavruta

Daily Family Learning & Inspiration

חורף תשפ"ו - Winter Break 2026

The Middle Brachot of Shemonah Esrei Explained



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Mama Knows Best
PEDIATRICS
718.475.0500

Mark Davidov
In Memory of
Mazol bat Husni

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 with any ideas or comments



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L'Zchut Refuah Shelaimah
for Uriel ben Hannah Batya

Mark Davidov

In Memory of
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In Loving Memory of Joseph and Suri Silber,

אברהם יוסף בן שלמה ושרה איידל בת שלמה דוב

With gratitude for all they sacrificed to ensure the
Jewish future of their children, grandchildren and
great-grandchildren.

The Peled Family

With deep Hakarat Hatov to our Administration, Rabbi Mark
Landsman, Mrs. Melissa Cohen, Rabbi Stephen Knapp,
Mrs. Esther Lowinger, Rabbi Joshua Rohr, Morah Shana Weiss,
and to our YCQ Rebbeim, Faculty and Staff. Thank you for your
partnership in educating our children. With incredible Hakarat
Hatov for your dedication, care, and commitment to their
growth—academically, spiritually, and personally.

Tehilim & Tefilot

Moshe and Karen Haimoff

In Memory of David Yehuda ben Maya Mazal

Anna Morgenthal

In Memory of Avrum Dovid ben Yitzhok .

May his Neshama have an Aliyah, May his Memory be a Blessing

The Schwartz Family

In Memory of Sarah (Goodman) Twersky, a"h

Olivia & Uri Rozic

In Memory of Moshe ben Zur

Anonymous

L'Zchut Refuah Sheleimah For Heleni Orna Bet Chen Chana

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In Memory of Rachel Miriam bat Shimshon and Reena Leah bat Mordechai Eliyahu Halevi. Two dear friends, whose lives, though brief, left a lasting imprint.

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In Honor of Mrs. Malka Fishman. Your dedication touches every corner of our school (including this Chag Chevruta!), making it a better, stronger, and more vibrant place. We are deeply grateful for your focus, vision, and tireless work.

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In Honor of our children, Chaim, Shalom & Leah Peled.

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We Need You, We Need Your Tefilah ***Special Introduction***

Rabbi Mark Landsman, Principal

Tefillah is a central aspect of every single day of our lives, whether we are in school, at home, or on vacation. As we enter winter break, we have a special opportunity to reflect on this crucial mitzvah that sustains us throughout the year.

This special learning companion focuses on the middle brachot of Shemonah Esrei to help us learn more and increase our kavanah during these essential moments of connection.

Every morning after we recite Birchat HaTorah, we mention the significance of "Iyun Tefilah," deep immersion in prayer, as one of those things that brings lasting merit. By dedicating a portion of our vacation to understanding the deeper meanings of these brachot, we can transform our daily routine into a powerful conversation with Hashem. This is especially vital now as our tefillot continue to be needed to combat the current environment for Am Yisrael worldwide.

We recognize the incredible power of our collective voices. Baruch Hashem, the list of hostages has dwindled since we first began this project. Nevertheless, our hearts remain heavy as we continue to seek the return of Staff Sgt. Ron Givili. We continue to beseech Hashem to provide nechama and refuah to all those grappling with physical and mental trauma. We also maintain our constant tefilot for our brave chayalim who continue to defend us and every individual living in Eretz Yisrael.

May our learning and our Tefilot bring comfort and safety to all of Klal Yisrael.

– Rabbi Landsman





תהילים ותפילות

On behalf of our brothers and sisters throughout the world, please take a few minutes each day to recite the Tehilim and Tefilot printed below.

פרק כ

לְמִנְצַח מְזִמּוֹר לְדָוִד: יַעֲנֶה ה' בְּיוֹם צָרָה יִשְׁגָּבֶה שֵׁם אֱלֹקֵי
יַעֲקֹב: יִשְׁלַח עֲזָרָה מִקֹּדֶשׁ וּמִצִּיּוֹן יִסְעֶדָה: יִזְכֹּר כָּל מִנְחָתָהּ
וְעוֹלָתָהּ יִדְשָׁנָה סֶלָה: יִתֵּן לָהּ כִּלְבָבָהּ וְכָל עֲצָתָהּ יִמְלֵא: נִרְנְנָה
בִּישׁוּעָתָהּ וּבְשֵׁם אֱלֹקֵינוּ נִדְגַל יִמְלֵא ה' כָּל מִשְׁאֲלוֹתֶיהָ: עֲתָה
יִדְעֵתִי כִּי הוֹשִׁיעַ ה' מְשִׁיחוֹ יַעֲנֶהוּ מִשְׁמִי קִדְּשׁוּ בְּגָבוֹרוֹת יִשְׁעֵי
יָמֵינוּ: אֱלֹהֵי בָרֶכֶב וְאֱלֹהֵי בַסּוּסִים וְאֶנְחֵנוּ בְּשֵׁם ה' אֱלֹקֵינוּ
נִזְכִּיר: הִמָּה כָרְעוּ וְנִפְּלוּ וְאֶנְחֵנוּ קִמְּנוּ וְנִתְעוֹדֵד: ה' הוֹשִׁיעָה
הַמֶּלֶךְ יַעֲנֵנוּ בְּיוֹם קִרְאָנוּ:

***Dedicated By Moshe and Karen Haimoff
In Memory of David Yehuda ben Maya Mazal***



פרק קכ"א

שִׁיר לַמַּעֲלוֹת אֲשָׁא עֵינַי אֶל־הַהָרִים מֵאֵין יָבֹא עֲזָרִי־עֲזָרִי מֵעַם
ה' עֲשֵׂה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ־אֶל־יָתֵן לְמוֹט רִגְלָךְ אֶל־יָנוּם שְׁמֶרְךָ־הִנֵּה
לֹא־יָנוּם וְלֹא יִישָׁן שׁוֹמֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל־הִי שְׁמֶרְךָ הִי צִלָּךְ עַל־יָד
יְמִינְךָ־יּוֹמָם הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ לֹא־יִכָּכֶה וְיָרֵחַ בַּלְיִלָּה־הִי־יִשְׁמְרְךָ מִכָּל־רָע
יִשְׁמַר אֶת־נַפְשְׁךָ־הִי יִשְׁמַר־צִאתְךָ וּבּוֹאֶךָ מֵעַתָּה וְעַד־עוֹלָם

Dedicated By Anna Morgenthal
In Memory of Avrum Dovid ben Yitzhok.
May his Neshama have an Aliyah, May his memory be a blessing.

פרק ק"ל

שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת מִמַּעַמְקִים קָרָאתִיךָ הִי־הִי שְׁמָעָה בְּקוֹלִי
תְּהִי־יְיָ אֲזִנִּיךָ קִשְׁבוֹת לְקוֹל תַּחֲנוּנָיִי אִם־עֲוֹנוֹת תִּשְׁמַר־קָה הִי
מִי יַעֲמֵד־כִּי־עָמָךְ הַסְּלִיחָה לְמַעַן תִּזְרָא־קוֹיִתִּי הִי קוֹתָה נַפְשִׁי
וְלִדְבָרוֹ הוֹחֵלֵתִי־נַפְשִׁי לָהִי מִשְׁמָרִים לְבָקָר שְׁמָרִים לְבָקָר־
יַחַל יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶל־הִי כִי־עַם־הִי הַחֲסֵד וְהַרְבֵּה עָמוּ פְדוּתִי־וְהוּא
יַפְּדֶה אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִכָּל עֲוֹנֹתָיו־

Dedicated by The Schwartz Family
In Memory of Sarah (Goodman) Twersky a"h



We Salute Our Alumni and Members of the Extended YCQ Family For Their IDF Service.

Name of Alumnus	YCQ Class
שמחה גדליה בן רחל שולמית	2020
אלעזר מנחם דניאל בן רחל שולמית	2017
רפאל נתן הכהן בן דבורה שמחה	2015
מידן אושר בן יוספה	2015
אתי בנימין בן הינדה	2014
בנימין הענך בן רייזל	2011
יהודה דורון בן יוספה	2011
שמחה צבי בן לאה אסתר	2011
מאיר גבריאל הכהן בן פנינה רחל	2008
יונתן דניאל בן מינדל הדסה	2008

בנימין שמחה בן יעל שרון אריאל יצחק בן מורת שרון איתן דוד בן מורת שרון נועם שמואל בן מורת שרון יגאל יהונתן בן חנה רחל מאיר בן שפרה עמישב נתנאל בן ושפע אביגיל נפתלי יצחק זכריה בן שאולה חיה	גלעד אברהם בן תמר נדב בן תמר מורן בת חנה נאוה רינה בת שרה דינה דוב ניסן בן רחל לאה נועם אהרון בן שושנה אופיר מנחם בן שושנה דוב בער בן רחל חיה
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For the IDF מי שברך לחיילי צה"ל

מי שברך אבותינו אברהם יצחק ויעקב הוא יברך את חיילי צבא הגנה לישראל, העומדים על משמר ארצנו וערי אלקינו מגבול הלבנון ועד מדבר מצרים ומן הים הגדול עד לבוא הערבה ביבשה באויר ובים. יתן ה' את אויבינו הקמים עלינו נגפים לפנייהם. הקדוש ברוך הוא ישמר ויציל את חיילינו מכל צרה וצוקה ומכל נגע ומחלה וישלח ברכה והצלחה בכל מעשה ידיהם. ידבר שונאינו תחתיהם ויעטרם בכתר ישועה ובעטרת נצחון. ויקים בהם הכתוב: כי ה' אלקיכם ההלך עמכם להלחם לכם עם איביכם להושיע אתכם ונאמר אמן:

Dedicated by Olivia & Uri Rozic
In Memory of Moshe ben Zur

For the State of Israel תפילה לשלום המדינה

אבינו שבשמים, צור ישראל וגואלו, ברח את מדינת ישראל, ראשית צמיחת גאולתנו. הגן עליה באברת חסדה, ופרש עליה סכת שלומה, ושלח אורה ואמתה לראשיה, שריה ויועציה, ותקנם בעצה טובה מלפניה. חזק את ידי מגיני ארץ קדשנו, והנחילים אלקינו ישועה ועטרת נצחון תעטרם, ונתת שלום בארץ ושמחת עולם ליושביה. ואת אחינו כל בית ישראל פקד-נא בכל ארצות פזוריהם, ותוליכם מהרה קוממיות לציון עירה ולירושלים משכן שמה, ככתוב בתורת משה עבדך: "אם יהיה נדחה בקצה השמים, משם יקבצה ה' אלקיה ומשם יקחה. והביאה ה' אלקיה אל הארץ אשר ירשו אבותיה וירשתה, והיטבה והרבה מאבתיה." ויחד לבבנו לאהבה וליראה את שמה, ולשמר את כל דברי תורתה. ושלח לנו מהרה בן דוד משיח צדקה, לפדות מחבי קץ ישועתה. הופע בהדר גאון עזה על כל יושבי תבל ארצה, ויאמר כל אשר נשמה באפו: ה' אלקי ישראל מלה, "ומלכותו בכל משלה." אמן סלה:

Dedicated By Anonymous
L'Zchut Refuah Sheleimah For
Heleni Orna Bet Chen Chana

A portrait of Staff Sgt. Ran Gvili, a man with dark hair, a beard, and round glasses, wearing a light blue shirt. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with trees.

Staff Sgt. Ran Gvili is the last hostage still held in Gaza.

Gvili, a 24-year-old Israel Police Special Patrol Unit (Yasam) volunteer from Meitar, fought with extraordinary courage on Oct. 7, 2023. When the massacre began, he left his house, put on his uniform and headed out to fight. **Although he had broken his shoulder about 10 days before and was waiting for surgery, he insisted on joining the battle.**

During the battle near Alumim, he rescued about 100 people who had fled the Nova music festival and killed 14 members of the Hamas terrorist organization before he was abducted. A panel of experts ruled in January 2024 that Gvili was no longer alive.

On the morning of the attack, as his family entered their shelter, he walked out and returned moments later in uniform. "Rani told us he would not let his friends fight alone, and that even with the fracture he could still hold a handgun," said his father Itzik. "I will never forget the look in his eyes. It was as if he was saying, 'This is what I have waited for my entire life.'"

Gvili headed to the Beersheba police station, joined the forces headed toward Alumim, and was shot in the arm and leg during the fighting.

"First to go out, last to return," his mother, Talik Gvili wrote.

–(Dec. 4, 2025 / Israel Hayom)

For the Hostages

מי שברך לשבויים

מי שברך אבותינו אברהם יצחק ויעקב יוסף משה ואהרן דוד ושלמה, הוא יברך וישמר וינצר את נעדרי צבא הגנה לישראל ואת השבויים בתוך שאר אחינו בית ישראל הנתונים בצרה ובשביה. בעבור שהקהל מתפלל בעבורם, הקדוש ברוך הוא ימלא רחמים עליהם, ויוציאם מחשך וצלמות, ומוסרותיהם ינתק, וממצוקותיהם יושיעם, וישיבם מהרה לחיק משפחותיהם. "יודו לה' חסדו ונפלאותיו לבני אדם". ויקים בהם מקרא שכתוב: "ופדויי ה' ישובו ובאו ציון ברנה ושמחת עולם על ראשם. ששון ושמחה ישיגו ונסו יגון ואנחה" ונאמר אמן.

Dedicated by the Peled Family

In Memory of Rachel Miriam bat Shimshon and Reena Leah bat Mordechai Eliyahu Halevi, two dear friends, whose lives, though brief, left a lasting imprint.

For the Injured

מי שברך לפצועים

מי שברך אבותינו אברהם יצחק ויעקב, הוא יברך וירפא את כל הפצועים הזקוקים לרפואה שלמה, בעבור שאנחנו מתפללים להחלמתם. בשכר זה הקדוש ברוך הוא ימלא רחמים עליהם להחלימם ולרפאתם ולהחזיקם ולהחיותם וישלח להם מהרה רפואה שלמה מן השמים, עם כל חולי ישראל, רפואת הנפש ורפואת הגוף, השתא בעגלא ובזמן קריב ונאמר אמן.

Dedicated by the Peled Family

**In Honor of our children,
Chaim, Shalom & Leah Peled.**

אחינו

אחינו כל בית ישראל הנתונים בצרה ובשביה העומדים בין בים ובין ביבשה המקום ירחם עליהם ויוציאם מצרה לרוחה ומאפלה לאורה ומשעבוד לגאולה השתא בעגלא ובזמן קריב ונאמר אמן:

Dedicated by the Peled Family

In Honor of Mrs. Malka Fishman. Your dedication touches every corner of our school (including this Chag Chevruta!), making it a better, stronger, and more vibrant place. We are deeply grateful for your focus, vision, and tireless work.



The Amidah Activity Center

Compiled by Rabbi Stephen Knapp, JHS Principal

Chazal, our rabbis, established the Amidah as the central prayer of the Jewish day, providing a carefully balanced structure for what deserves our daily focus and attention. Through its nineteen blessings, the Amidah guides us to praise Hashem, reflect on our needs, and express gratitude, shaping not only how we pray but how we live.

Each bracha highlights a core value, reminding us that these themes are meant to be revisited every single day.

Look out for the blue box on the bottom of each page that suggests a specific action we can take in our lives connected to each bracha.

Feel free to think about other actions throughout your day and they can relate to our Tefilot.

אֶתְדָּה חוֹנֵן

Distinguished Distinctions

Rabbi Stephen Knapp, Junior High School Principal

The Amidah is divided into three sections: praise, requests, and thanks. The fourth bracha marks the beginning of the second section, the requests, and it is striking that the very first thing we ask Hashem for is knowledge.

This raises several important questions: Why is knowledge the first request we make? Why does the bracha conclude with the phrase חוֹנֵן הַדָּעָה, that Hashem “graces” humanity with wisdom, rather than using a more straightforward term such as נֹתֵן הַדָּעָה, that Hashem simply “gives” knowledge? Finally, on Motzei Shabbat and Yom Tov we insert Havdalah into the Amidah of Maariv, known as *Atah Chonantanu*. Why is this paragraph placed specifically in the blessing of knowledge?

Let us begin with the final question. Two explanations are offered for why Havdalah is added to the bracha of knowledge on Saturday night. The first is historical. The Midrash teaches that Adam HaRishon was the first inventor, and his very first act of creation was producing fire on Motzei Shabbat. This is why fire plays a central role in Havdalah.

Fire is also the only creative act that the Torah explicitly prohibits

on Shabbat, and its reintroduction signals the transition back to the weekday.

The first three blessings of the Amidah are identical every day, weekday, Shabbat, and Yom Tov. The fourth bracha is the first opportunity within the Amidah to signal that Shabbat has ended and we are returning to our weekday tefillah. Since this bracha focuses on knowledge, it becomes the natural place to insert Havdallah.

The second explanation is thematic. The Talmud Yerushalmi in Berachot states, “*If there is no knowledge, how can there be distinction?*” Without knowledge, a person cannot distinguish between *kodesh* and *chol*, between the sacred and the ordinary. A young child who lacks awareness is not held responsible for violating Shabbat, because observance itself requires understanding, knowing that Shabbat is different from the rest of the week. Havdallah is the act of making distinctions, and distinction depends entirely on knowledge.

Therefore, Havdalah belongs in this bracha. Distinguishing between holy and mundane is only one of many distinctions a Jew must make to live a meaningful life.

This also explains why knowledge is the very first request. Without knowledge, one would not even know what to ask for. By placing this bracha first, Chazal convey a powerful message. Three times a day, except on Shabbat and Yom Tov, when we make no requests because we already have everything we need, we are given the opportunity to ask Hashem for anything. That privilege comes with responsibility. We are cautioned not to waste our tefillot on trivial or shallow desires, but to focus on what is essential and meaningful.

Finally, the wording of the bracha teaches a humbling lesson. Knowledge is not something we automatically earn; it is a gift. One person may be blessed with wisdom, another with wealth, another with health, but all of these are granted by Hashem and can be taken away at any moment.

That is why the bracha concludes, “*Baruch Atah Hashem, chonen hada’at*”, Hashem graces us with knowledge. When we use our intelligence responsibly, for Torah, kindness, and the betterment of the world, we show ourselves worthy of that gift. In doing so, we become partners with Hashem in using our blessings to help perfect the world.



The Amidah Activity Center - Talmud Torah

Learn something new and share it with someone. Listen to a new shiur or podcast. Review an old lesson, and think about it differently. Cultivate a curiosity to learn by asking questions about something you don't know much about.

Wednesday, January 14 (Last Day Before Break) – 25 Tevet
Today's Learning is Dedicated by Anatoliy & Yeva Kazakov
In Memory of Tamara bat Shifra



השיבה

The Tools for Teshuvah

Rabbi Jordan Blitstein, Grade 4 Rebbe

The Bracha of Hashivenu is a Tefilah for Teshuva. Broadly speaking, we pray not just for our own repentance, but for continuing growth in closeness to Hashem. It follows the prayer for knowledge (Ata Chonen) because without knowledge, one can not correct their own personal wrongs or continue to grow close to God. It is important to understand the meaning of this Beracha in light of this context.

It is an obligation for each individual to take upon themselves the responsibility of knowledge. A person must learn Torah, the only path to knowing Hashem and His will. One can not intuit the rights and wrongs of life without learning Torah.

In the holy sefer "Orchot Tzadikim," an example is brought in order to illustrate this principle.

A person was on a mission to find someone named Reuven. He traveled a great distance and searched very hard. People asked him, "what are you doing?" He responded "I am on a mission to find Reuven!" People then asked "What does he look like?" Our hero responded "I do not know." How can this man ever achieve his mission? If we seek to be close to Hashem, we can not just blindly search. Hashem gave us a Torah and tradition. It is incumbent upon ourselves to use the tools passed down to us by our ancestors and follow in their ways in order to perfect our service to Hashem.

Rav Yaakov Emden notes that the word "Avinu" (Our father) is found in this bracha. This is something not found commonly in Shmonah Esrei.

He quotes the words of the Holy Shlah which give deep insight to this prayer. The Gemara says that "A father is obligated to teach his son Torah." This means that one's parents are obligated to make sure that their children receive a Torah education. The Shlah says that in our Bracha, where it quotes the word "Avinu," we should have in mind that as we ask our Father in heaven to get closer to Him, we remind Hashem that since we are His children, a father is obligated to teach his children Torah. We pray that Hashem guides us to find the opportunities and insight to learn Torah in order to get close to Him.

May the Torah that we learn enable us to serve Hashem and give us the tools to do teshuvah.



The Amidah Activity Center - Personal Improvement Plans

Take responsibility for a mistake you have made, and try to rectify it.
Pick one habit to improve or change for just a short period of time.

Thursday, January 15 - 26 Tevet

Today's Learning is Dedicated by Beth & Warren Hecht

In Memory of Beth's father, Jules Alter, Yosef ben Efraim, whose Yahrtzeit is on 21 Shvat

ראה בעצמך

Active Redemption

Ms. Shoshana Rosenblum, Grade 5 Teacher

In this bracha, we ask Hashem to acknowledge our pain and fight our battles, emphasizing that He should save us as the Ultimate Redeemer, for His own sake. There are several questions that many of our Rabbis raise:

1. Why is this blessing placed here after the request for forgiveness?
2. What exactly are we asking for?
3. Why do we beseech Hashem to "see"?
4. Why do we state that He should save us for His sake rather than ours?

Rabbi Schwab, in his writings on prayer, explains that only after seeking forgiveness from Hashem can we ask Him to recognize and alleviate our suffering. He suggests that this blessing seeks a communal redemption. The reason for antisemitism and persecution lies in our sins, and redemption

requires prior forgiveness. Protection cannot precede forgiveness.

Rav Efram Goldberg, referencing Rashi in Gemarah Megillah, notes that this blessing does not seek a national salvation, which would belong later in the Shemonah Esrei, when praying for all Jews. Instead, it asks for personal deliverance from mental and emotional pain. Rabbi Goldberg suggests the blessing follows Slach Lanu because, after forgiveness, we can redeem ourselves. Having distanced ourselves from Hashem through mistakes, we seek His help to overcome them and become our best selves.

We ask Hashem to "see" our struggles. Rabbi Goldberg explains that this focuses on the individual. Only Hashem can perceive our inner struggles and the temptations we face. He sees beyond the surface, acknowledging our inner world. Quoting the Rinat Chaim, Rabbi Goldberg emphasizes that "see"

is a language of love, showing Hashem's attentiveness and care.

Rabbi Jack Abramowitz from OU Torah questions why we ask Hashem to redeem us for His sake. He explains that we wish for Hashem to save us so we can serve Him more effectively. The Talmud in Sanhedrin (46a) teaches that God shares in our suffering, just as a parent hurts when their child is injured. By redeeming us, God also alleviates His own pain.

We conclude the Bracha with the phrase גואל ישראל, signifying that Hashem is actively redeeming us at this moment. Rabbi Goldberg emphasizes that as we fervently pray, Hashem is indeed in the process of our redemption. Although we may not always perceive the ways in which Hashem safeguards us, His presence is unwavering.



The Amidah Activity Center - Personal Freedom

Articulate your "affirmations" that you are good and worthy of redemption because there is no despair for a Jew. A Jew can never give up hope. Help a friend who needs a boost.

Friday, January 16 - 27 Tevet

Today's Learning is Dedicated by Gavi & Tali, Suri, Kira, and Dovid Hoffman In Loving Memory of Joseph and Suri Silber, אברהם יוסף בן שלמה ושרה איידל בת שלמה דוב
With gratitude for all they sacrificed to ensure the Jewish future of their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.



Healing Our Hearts

Morah Shana Weiss, Early Childhood Director

When we say Refa'einu, in Shemonah Esrei it means "heal us." When we recite this bracha, we are asking Hashem to help people who are not feeling well.

But Refa'einu is not only about being sick in our bodies. Sometimes people feel hurt on the inside. They might feel sad, lonely, scared, or worried. Those feelings can hurt just as much as a stomachache or a broken arm.

When we say "רפאנו ה' ונרפא" Heal us Hashem and we will be healed. We are telling Hashem that we trust Him. We believe that Hashem knows how we feel, even when we don't say it out loud.

Hashem can heal our bodies, but He can also heal our hearts.

When we daven, we think about other people as well, someone in our class, our family, or even someone we don't know who is having a hard time. Just thinking about them and asking Hashem to help them is an act of kindness.

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks zt"l once told a story about a young child who came home from school upset. The child didn't want advice or answers. The child just wanted someone to sit next to them and listen. The parent didn't say much, they just stayed close. And slowly, the child began to feel better.

Rabbi Sacks explained that sometimes the greatest healing doesn't come from fixing a problem. It comes from being present. From knowing that someone cares.

That is what Refa'einu teaches us. When we daven, Hashem is always "there" with us. Hashem listens to how we feel, even when we don't have the right words. Hashem heals not only our bodies, but also our hearts.

And when we daven for others, we are also showing care. Even if we can't help someone ourselves, our tefillah is a way of sitting with them and saying, "You are not alone."

So the next time you say Refa'einu, think about how you feel inside and about someone else who may need comfort. Hashem hears every tefillah that comes from the heart.

May all our tefillot be answered!



The Amidah Activity Center - Bikur Cholim

Visit or reach out to someone who needs a little pick me up.
Join a Tehilim chat and pray for someone else.

Shabbat, January 17 - 28 Tevet

Today's Learning is Dedicated by the Peled Family, with deep Hakarat Hatov to our Administration and to our YCQ Rebbeim, Faculty and Staff. Thank you for your partnership in educating our children. With incredible Hakarat Hatov for your dedication, care, and commitment to their growth—academically, spiritually, and personally.

בִּרְךְ עַל יְצוֹר Heavenly Payroll

**Rabbi Joshua Rohr, Associate Principal,
Elementary School Judaic Studies**

One of our foundational beliefs is that a person's livelihood, and the amount of money they will earn in a given year, is determined on Rosh Hashanah. We devote much of that holy day to heartfelt tefillah, asking to be inscribed in the "Sefer HaChaim," and we emerge with a sense of confidence that we have been granted a year of blessing: health, sustenance, and goodness.

And yet, this belief raises an obvious question. If our parnasa is already set on Rosh Hashanah, why do we pray for it three times a day? Haven't our "heavenly bank accounts" already been filled or emptied? What, then, are we accomplishing with these daily requests?

Rav Chaim Friedlander, zt"l, the former Mashgiach Ruchani of the Ponovezh Yeshiva,

addresses this question based on a Gemara in Ta'anit.

The Gemara explains that although the total amount of rainfall allocated to a country is decreed at the beginning of the year, the *timing* and *location* of that rain depends on the merit of the people. If they are deserving, the rain falls gently on their fields, where it is needed most, and at night, when it causes minimal disruption. If they are undeserving, the rain may fall in the desert or at inconvenient times, bringing little benefit.

Rav Friedlander explains that the same principle applies to parnasa. On Rosh Hashanah it is decided how much money will pass through a person's hands over the course of the year.

Each day, however, we daven that that day's portion of parnasa should come in the most beneficial and least burdensome way. If we are deserving, it may come with ease and blessing. If not, it may arrive only after great effort, or be quickly diverted to unexpected expenses.

Beyond the theological details, the central message is clear and essential: all of our parnasa comes from Hashem. He is the true Source of everything we have. We are obligated to put in our hishtadlut, to work and act responsibly, while recognizing that our success is ultimately a gift from Hashem. This awareness is the core intention we should have when we recite the blessing of *Bareich Aleinu* each day.



The Amidah Activity Center - Tzedaka

Help another person in need. Give a little charity in person or make a donation online. Share a charity that is meaningful to you with another person.

תקע בשופר Learning to Listen

Mr. Yossi Zimlover, Director of Communications

Arthur, the beloved animated aardvark, can teach us an incredibly valuable lesson connected to the bracha of "Tikah B'Shofar." Arthur's theme song contains the simple but important message **"Open up your eyes, open up your ears,** get together and make things better by working together."

Rabbi Ezra Bick notes that the focus of this bracha is a plea for *achdut*. Later in Shemonh Esrei, we have specific brachot that focus on the return to Eretz Yisrael, but the central motif of this bracha is our dispersion and the hope that we are united again.

The bracha uses very interesting language to make this point. We ask Hashem to **"Sound the great shofar for our liberty, and raise a banner to gather our exiles."**

These two actions utilize our sense of hearing (hearing the shofar) and our sense of sight (seeing the "nes"). Perhaps, the bracha is highlighting that using these two senses is the key to unity.

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks z"l writes that "listening is a deeply spiritual act." He notes that shema is our most central and fundamental tefilah, and the theme of listening is reflected throughout the Chumash, particularly in Sefer Devarim. "Often the greatest gift we can give someone is to listen to them," he concludes.

We must do our best to actively listen to all those around us. When talking to someone we must try to set aside distractions, give them the time and space to speak without interruption, and truly do our best to understand their point of view.

Furthermore, viewing people with an "ayin tova," a good eye, and judging them favorably is a second vital component to *achdut*. Casting aside negative stereotypes and assumptions, is critical. If we look beyond the surface, we can certainly find common ground. Seeing the best in all those around us is a crucial step towards jump-starting the redemption.

To be clear, our differences shouldn't be totally ignored. Instead, we must seek to blend and harmonize our personalities. Just as the twelve shevatim fulfilled a unique purpose, each Jew has their own role to play. Every member of Am Yisrael, from every corner of the earth, must bring their strengths and talents together to unite as one.

May be zoche to be part of Kibbutz Galuyot and the Geulah Shelimah speedily.



The Amidah Activity Center - Achdut

Appreciate another Jewish community by going to a new shul that has different customs than yours. Go online to learn a little history of a different community.



השליכה שופט Justice For All

Mrs. Rebecca Blum, Director of Admissions & Grade 2 Teacher

The bracha opens with a plea: "Hashiva shofteinu k'varishona," *"Bring back our judges like in the old days."*

We ask Hashem to bring leaders and judges who are fair, kind, and honest people who help make the world a better and more just place.

The Tur, one of the great Torah commentators, notes that this bracha comes right after the bracha of "Tikah B'Shofar," where we ask Hashem to gather all the Jewish people together from around the world.

Why would gathering the Jewish people come *before* asking for justice? The Tur explains that before Hashem brings justice into the world, the Jewish people must be united.

We can understand this idea with a simple example.

Imagine a classroom where the students are arguing, blaming each other, and not listening. Even the best teacher would have a hard time making things fair. But when the class works together, respects one another, and feels like a team, it becomes much easier to solve problems and make things right. The same is true for Am Yisrael. When we feel connected, care about one another, and remember that we are one family, Hashem can bring true justice into the world.

Rabbi Efrem Goldberg teaches that when we say *Hashiva Shofteinu*, we are not just reading words from a siddur. Tefillah is meant to be real and personal. We are standing before Hashem and asking Him to help fix what feels unfair in the world with leaders who rule with wisdom, kindness, and compassion.

Real justice isn't just about rules and punishments. Real justice is about understanding people, caring about others, and wanting what is best for everyone. During winter vacation, when we are spending more time with family and friends, this bracha gives us an important message to think about. Every time we include someone who feels left out, listen before judging, and try to be fair and kind, we are helping bring the message of *Hashiva Shofteinu* into our own lives.

When we work on unity and kindness, we help prepare the world for Hashem's justice. And when we daven *Hashiva Shofteinu* with our hearts, we remind ourselves that a fairer world begins with how we treat one another.



The Amidah Activity Center - Appreciating the Law

Write a letter to your Member of Congress to say thank you for protecting your rights or to express concern about future security. Learn about the organizations and people who have helped keep our society safe and fair.

וְכַלֵּם לְשֹׁנִים

Destroying Negativity

Morah Malky Lieberman, Elementary Associate Teacher

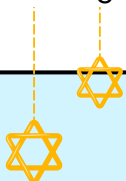
This bracha stands out for its strong and direct language. It calls for informers to lose hope, for wickedness to disappear, and for enemies and arrogance to be removed. Historically, these were people who betrayed the Jewish community by informing on them to hostile authorities, often placing lives in danger. This bracha was not written out of anger or revenge, but out of the need to protect the community and to declare that cruelty, betrayal, and injustice are not acceptable. By focusing on *rish'ah*, wickedness itself, the tefilah teaches that Judaism does not seek harm to individuals, but the removal of harmful behavior from the world.

The repetition of the word *meheirah*, quickly, reflects the deep pain that comes from living with

injustice and the urgent hope for change. When wrongdoing is allowed to continue, it affects not only individuals but entire communities. This bracha reminds us that tefilah does not ignore reality. Instead, it speaks honestly about the damage caused by harmful actions and insists that they must not be allowed to last. In the context of a school, this message is especially important. A healthy learning environment depends on fairness, safety, and trust. When those values are threatened, it becomes everyone's responsibility to stand up for what is right and to work toward restoring balance and respect.

At the same time, "*v'lamalshinim*" can be understood as a call for personal growth. The "*zaydim*," the insolent, also

represent negative traits within people, such as arrogance, selfishness, or refusing to take responsibility. Praying that these traits be "subdued" is a reminder that real strength comes from humility and self-awareness. In daily school life, this can mean admitting mistakes, choosing kindness in difficult moments, and treating others with dignity. The bracha ends by praising Hashem as the One who subdues arrogance, teaching that power is not about dominating others, but about living with integrity. Through this bracha, we should be reminded that evil and arrogance do not last forever, and that by choosing justice and respect, everyone can help create a better and more caring environment.



The Amidah Activity Center - Fighting Antisemitism

Display your Jewish pride by publicly identifying as a Jew.

Visit the website of an organization that protects the rights of Jews and fights antisemitism.

על הצדיקים

Small Steps, Big Miracles

Morah Naama Laster, Resource Room Instructor

The bracha of Al HaTzadikim in Shemonah Esrei ends by describing Hashem as "מַשְׁעָן", the One who "supports and holds the trust of the righteous" At first glance, this order might seem surprising. Usually, when someone helps you, you first see their good deed which earns your trust, and only then can you rely on their support moving forward. Here, the bracha lists it the other way around, first Hashem supports, then tzaddikim trust. Why this order?

Rav Chaim Friedlander (Sifte Chaim p.182) offers an insightful explanation to this question. Throughout Jewish history, Hashem often helps us see that He supports us and is with us in small ways before the big miracles happen. These smaller signs remind us to trust Him and strengthen our emunah as we wait for the complete yeshuva, or salvation.

Take a look at the story of Purim, for example. Before the Jewish people were ultimately saved from Haman's decree, there's a seemingly minor story. Mordechai overheard a plot to kill King Achashverosh, so he told Esther, who in turn warned the king. Because of this, Achashverosh's life was saved.

Later, Mordechai was publicly honored for his loyalty to the king, which embarrassed and angered Haman a great deal, since he was forced to show respect to someone he despised. On the surface, this story might seem like a small or even minor detail compared to the dramatic salvation at the end of the Megillah. It's a little story, but is it so life changing?

Rav Friedlander argues yes, this "side story" was actually a small miracle that mattered. It was Hashem's way of showing the Jewish people that He was there watching over them, helping build their trust in Him before the full salvation could unfold. The minor successes strengthened their emunah and prepared them to witness the ultimate victory over Haman.

Similarly, going backwards in time to Egypt before the dramatic and final redemption of Yetziat Mitzrayim, Hashem did not take the Jewish people out all at once. Instead, He brought the ten makkot on the Egyptians, along with many other miracles. Each plague showed Hashem's power in a different way and helped Bnei Yisrael learn that He was in complete control.

These miracles were not just punishments for Egypt, they were also meant to strengthen the Jewish people's emunah. Step by step, they learned to trust that Hashem was really watching over them and would eventually save them from the hands of the Egyptians. By the time the final redemption arrived, they were ready to recognize, appreciate, and believe in the greatness of Hashem's salvation.

Hashem often supports us through small steps before revealing a full miracle. Just like when we learn something new in school or at home, understanding doesn't usually come all at once. It builds slowly, with each lesson or experience adding another piece to eventually create a full picture. Those "little victories" or everyday kindnesses from Hashem are not accidental, they are sparks meant to support us and strengthen our overall trust in Him. This way, we can be better prepared to recognize and appreciate the larger blessings and yeshuot that come into our own lives.



The Amidah Activity Center - Kavod HaTorah

Appreciate your local religious role models by sending a thank you email for all that they do on behalf of you and your community. Discuss with your family what makes someone one of your Jewish heroes.



וכל ירושלים

The Center for the Jewish Future

Morah Mashie Kopelowitz, Director of K-8 Judaic Studies

The word *prayer* means to ask. When we pray, we turn to Hashem and ask Him for help. In this bracha, we ask Hashem to return to Jerusalem with mercy.

As the Romans sieged the city of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Second Beit HaMikdash was imminent, Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai was forced to make a heartbreaking decision. He pleaded with the Roman Ruler Vespasian to save the lives of the Torah scholars in Yavneh, when he realized that the city of Jerusalem was doomed.

He recognized that while however difficult, the city of Jerusalem could one day be rebuilt. However, if the Torah was forgotten, the Jewish people would cease to exist. For thousands of years, there has been a tremendous hole in the hearts of every Jew, while we yearned to return to our ancient city. Rabban Gamliel felt this pain deeply when he helped codify this bracha.

Baruch Hashem, we are living in special times today. The State of Israel was established and Jerusalem is once again in our hands, so why are we still asking for Jerusalem to be rebuilt?

First and foremost, we still do not have a Beit HaMakidash and we pray every day for its reestablishment. On a deeper level, Rabbi Avraham Chaim Feuer explains that a rebuilt Jerusalem means something more fundamental.

We were exiled from Jerusalem because we grew tired of living **so close** to Hashem. We must change our mindset and recognize that a deeper relationship with Hashem is not, chas v'shalom, a burden, but rather our ultimate purpose in life.

Only when we show Hashem that we truly want to be close to Him again will Jerusalem be fully rebuilt with the Beit HaMikdash.



The Amidah Activity Center - Kavod Beit HaKnesset

A shul represents a "Mikdash Mi'at," a mini-Beit Hamakidash. Observe the honor and beauty of the Beit Knesset. Contribute to that honor by taking a few moments to straighten up the siddurim or clean it up.

אֵת צִמְחַד דָּוִד

We Want Mashia'ch Now

Rabbi Daniel Rosenfelt, Junior High School Rebbe & Rav of the Young Israel of Kew Gardens Hills

Rav Dovid Zvi Hoffman (Al Hatefillah p. 159) writes that many Rabbis believe (at least for the Jews of Eretz Yisrael) that "V'lirushalayem" and "Et Tzemach David" were originally one bracha ending with the words:

ברוך אתה ה' אלקי דוד ובונה ירושלים.

This would also explain why even after *V'lamalshinim* was added they kept the name "Shemonah Esrei" (indicating 18 Brachot) because there used to be 17 brachot. This might also be why *V'lirushalayem* starts with a "vuv" as it was probably one bracha that started with *Et Tzemach David* and finished with *V'lirushalayem*.

However, nowadays, we say *V'lirushalayem* before *Et Tzemach David*, and of course, we say the two brachot separately. But, why do we need our own bracha of *Et Tzemach David* today?

Rav Soloveichik z"l suggests that they wanted to make their own bracha about Mashia'ch coming as a plea for keeping our identity even outside of Israel.

Et Tzemach David emphasizes that Mashia'ch has yet to come, and every day we eagerly look forward to his arrival. We ask Hashem for strength and stamina to endure the hardships of life until Mashia'ch arrives! May he come speedily in our days!



The Amidah Activity Center - Supporting Israel

Stand with Israel by proudly displaying the Israeli flag. Write a letter to an IDF soldier or someone in Israel to express your appreciation for their service. Do an act of kindness to bring our world one step closer to the Mashia'ch.

NEED.

WANT

שמע קולנו

Hearing Our Inner Voice

Morah Tova Friedman, Grade 4 Morah

In the beracha of Shema Koleinu, we ask Hashem to accept the Tefillot that verbalize and to look into our hearts and accept the Tefillot that we feel as well.

We ask this because Hashem knows what we need and what we want. Hashem is our father and we always have the privilege of knocking on His door.

It is interesting to note that it doesn't say "shema tefillateinu", rather "shema koleinu". Why do we ask Hashem to listen to our voice if Shemonah Esrei is a silent tefillah?

We are referring to the inner voice, the requests that lie beneath the words that we are saying.

These are the words that give the Tefillah meaning.

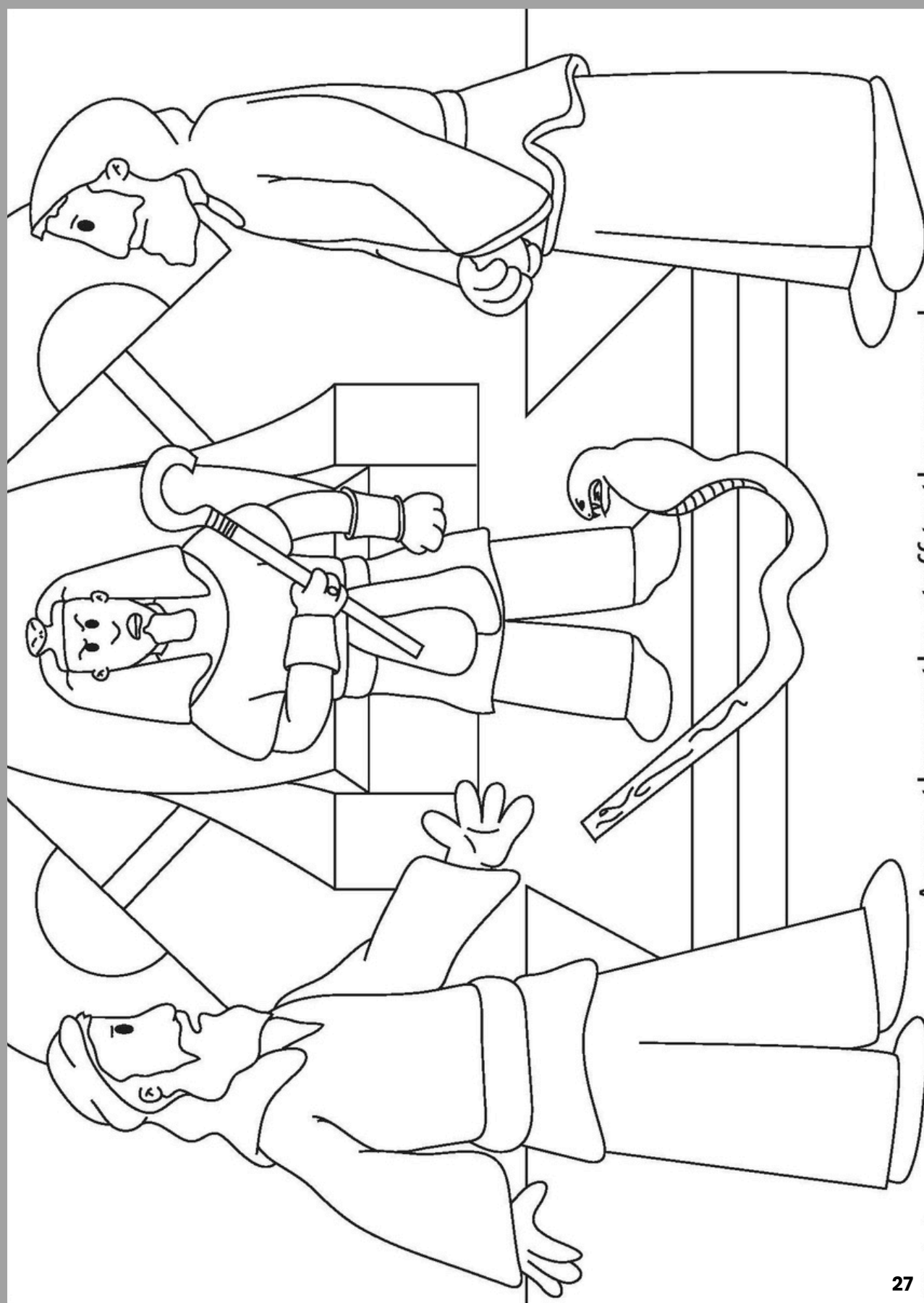
Indeed, we are encouraged to think about our personal requests and pleas during this Tefillah. Hashem is the only one who can understand our inner wishes and desires even if we don't state them explicitly.

We also ask Hashem to have pity on us and accept our Tefillot even if we are undeserving. We are Hashem's children and we can ask anything of Him. No request is too big or too small. Let us make sure that we have proper kavanah during this tefillah and pour out our hearts to Hashem and ask Him for whatever we need.

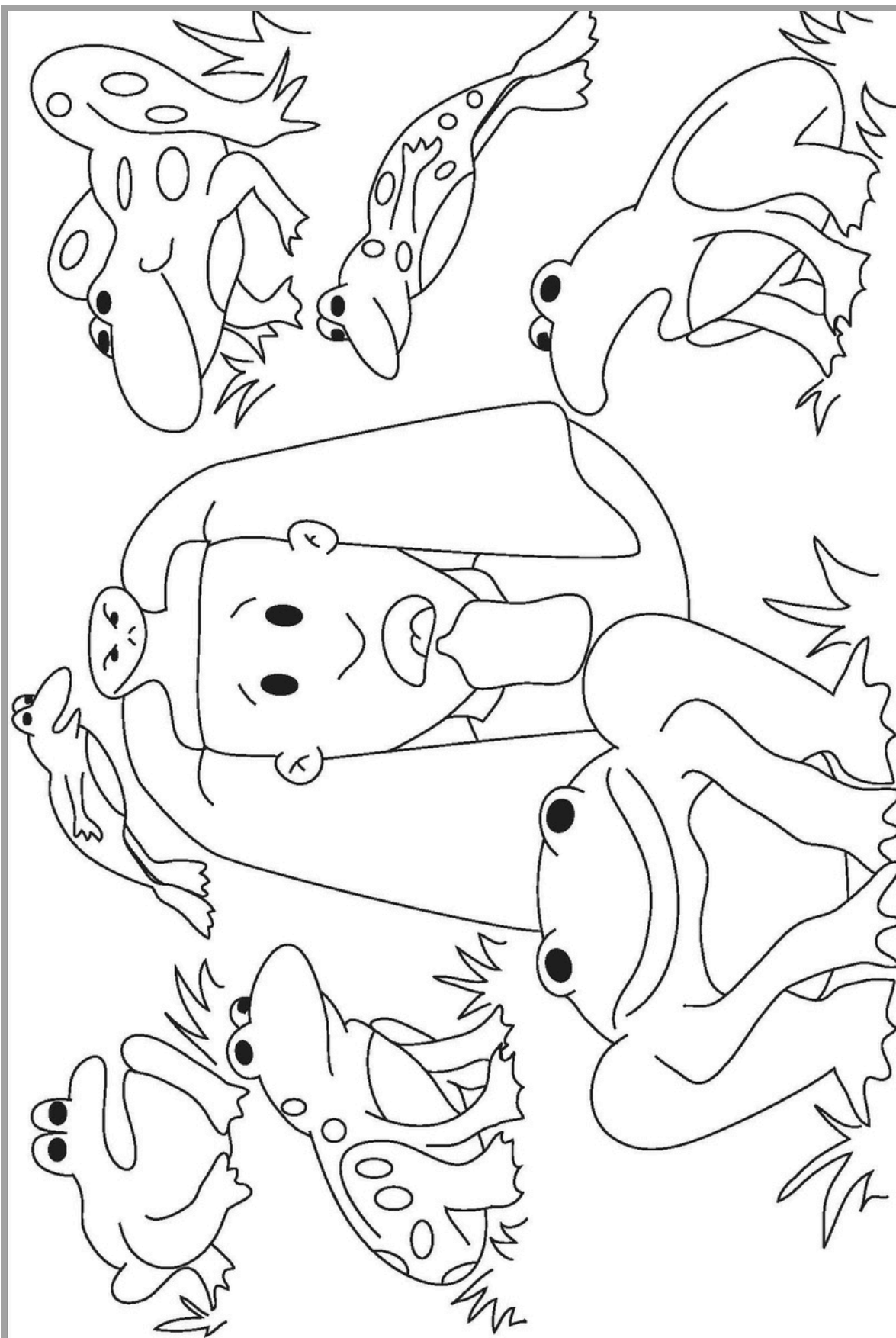


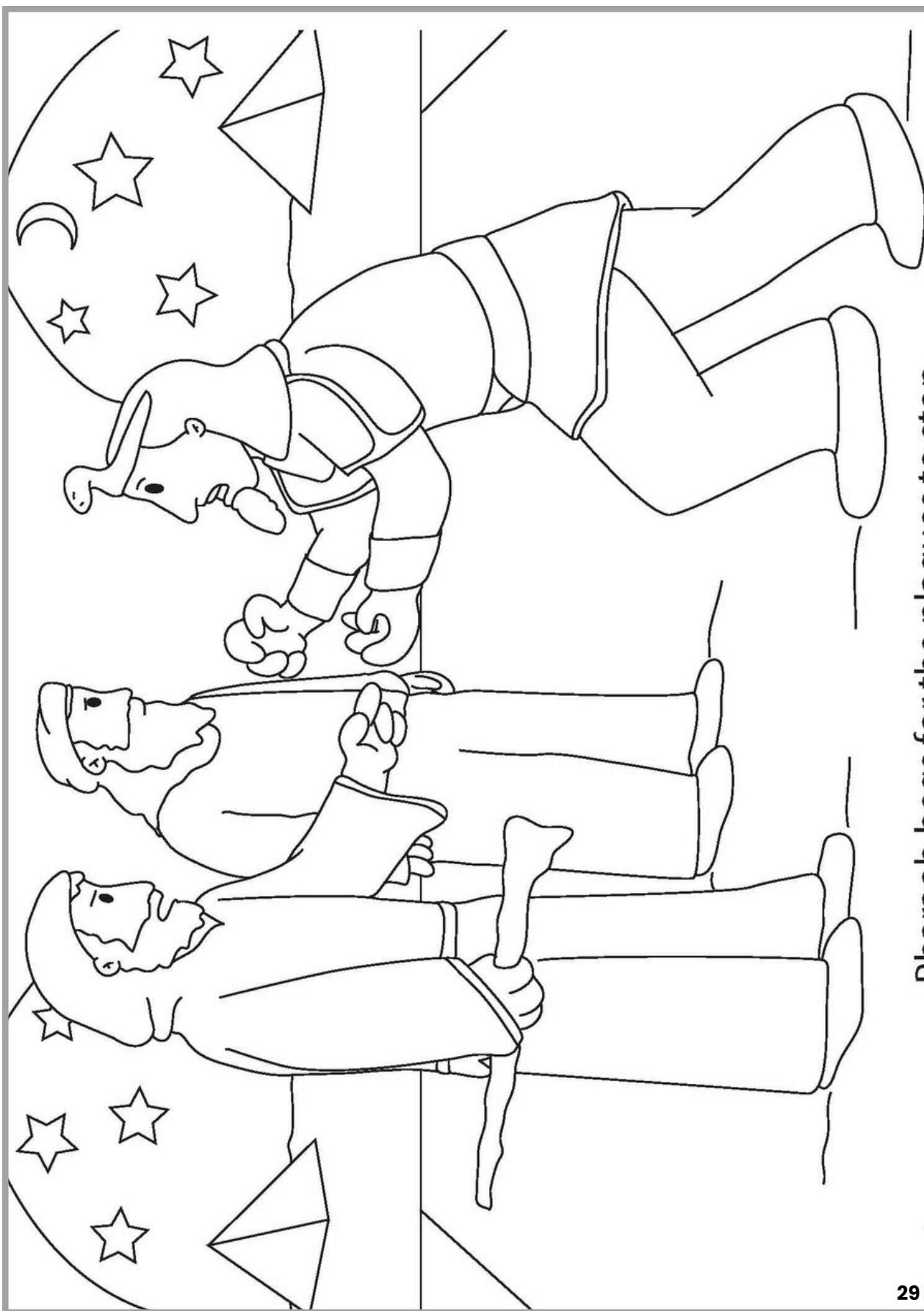
The Amidah Activity Center - Really Listen

Practice your listening skills by really listening to someone. Make eye contact. Repeat for clarification. Expand your relationship with Hashem by writing your own, short Tefilah in your own words.

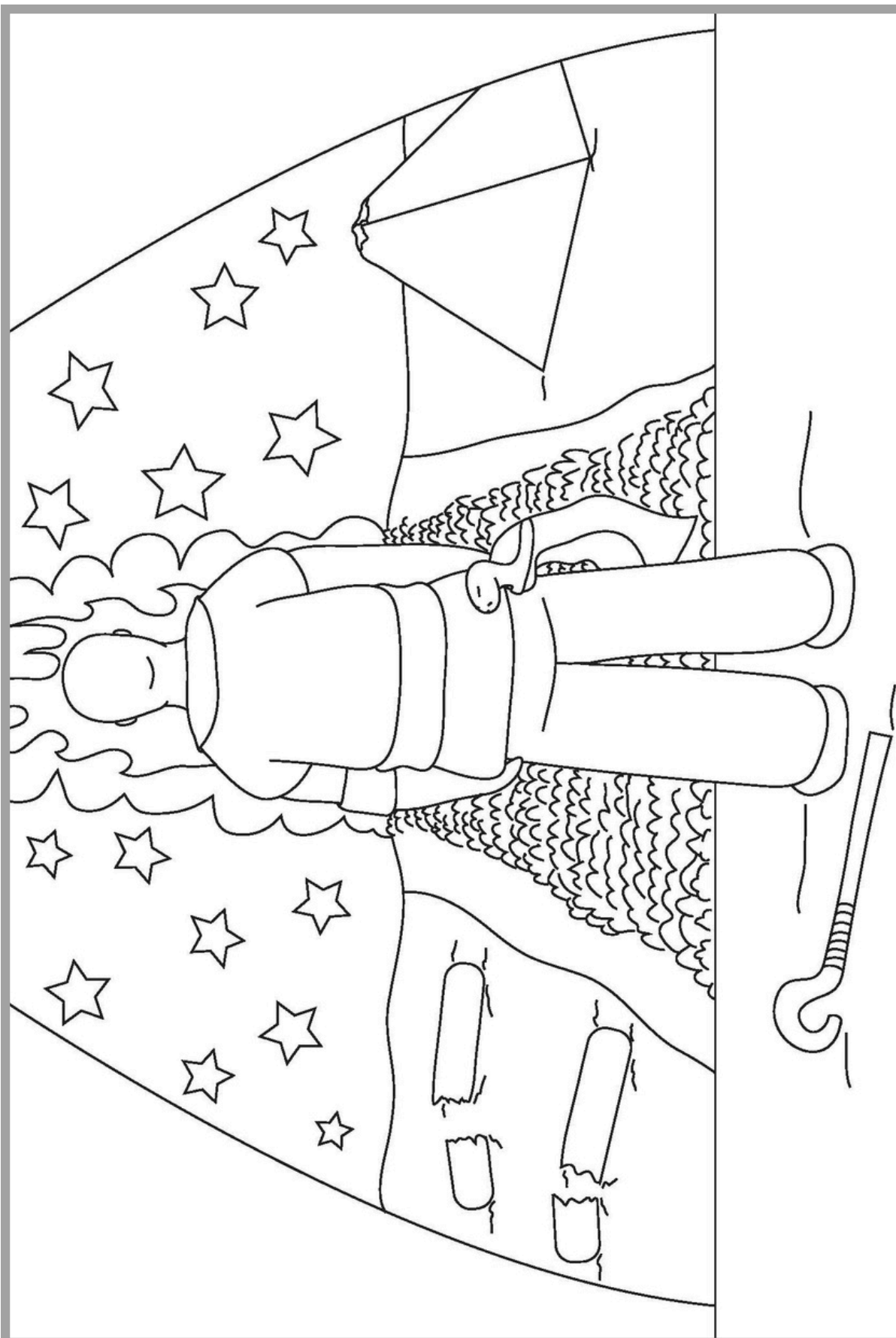


Aaron throws the staff to the ground





Pharaoh begs for the plagues to stop





Winter Break 2026

Torah and Tefilah

Don't Stop On Vacation!

Name _____ Class _____ Parent Signature _____

	Davened Shacharit	Davened Mincha	Davened Maariv	Tehilim & Tefilot	Daily Learning
Thursday					
Friday					
Shabbat					
Sunday					
Monday					
Tuesday					
Wednesday					
Thursday					
Friday					
Shabbat					
Sunday					



TORAH AND TEFILAH DON'T STOP ON VACATION!

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