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Sincerely,

Rabbi Yehoshua Werde  
Director

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ב"ה

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# DAVENING

*The Dynamics of Prayer*



# Lesson Outline

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# Part One: What is Davening

Why pray? What is prayer? What purpose does it serve?

## The Whole Person Paradigm

*Steven Covey, The Eighth Habit, P. 20*

*At the core, there is one simple, overreaching reason why so many people remain unsatisfied in their work and why most organizations fail to draw out the greatest talent, ingenuity, and creativity of their people and never become truly great, enduring organizations. It stems from an incomplete paradigm of who we are - our fundamental view of human nature.*

*The fundamental reality is, human beings are not things needing to be motivated and controlled; they are four dimensional - body, mind, heart, and spirit.*

Perhaps this insight can explain why many fail to find fulfilment in their Yiddishkeit.

Yiddishkeit is not only something we do, it encompasses all dimensions of our existence. When we look at it solely as something we are, or something we do, or something we think about, or something we feel, without looking at all the dimensions as a collective whole, our experience as a Yid is left incomplete and we feel unfulfilled. In order to find fulfilment in Yiddishkeit, it is essential that it occupy all dimensions of the person. As the second mishnah in Pirkei Avos puts it:

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

*Shimon the Righteous was one of the last survivors of the Great Assembly. He used to say, "The world rests on three things: On Torah, on Avodah (Divine service, i.e. prayer) and on acts of kindness."*

The whole person paradigm consists of four parts: 1) Intellect (mind), 2) Emotions (heart), 3) Physical experience (body), and 4) Spiritual pursuit (spirit). The foundation of our healthy existence rests upon us focusing our mind, heart, and body in the direction of spiritual pursuit (soul).

Torah engages the intellect, davening/avodah engages the heart, and acts of kindness engage the realm of action. Thus, the mishnah lays the foundation for life as a Yid, i.e., a lifestyle that occupies the dimensions of mind, heart, and body, in pursuit of the soul.

Davening is when we align our heart with our neshomah. And in this context, davening becomes rich with emotion as means of aligning our feelings in our relationship with Hashem.

### **Service of the Heart**

The purpose of davening is to create an emotional closeness to Hashem. To develop a love for Hashem, as the Gemara teaches:

לאהבה את ה' אלהיכם ולעבדו בכל לבבכם, איזו היא עבודה שהיא בלב - הוי אומר זו תפלה

*“To love Hashem your G-d and to serve him with your entire heart” (Devorim 11). Now, which service is considered the service of the heart? You must say that it is davening.*

### **The Mitzvah of Tefillah**

We know that we daven three times a day, but how many times a day does the Torah require us to daven?

Rambam, Hilchos Tefillah 1:1

מצות עשה להתפלל בכל יום שנאמר [שמות כג:כה] ועבדתם את ה' אלהיכם מפי השמועה למדו שעבודה זו היא תפלה שנאמר [דברים יא:יג] ולעבדו בכל לבבכם אמרו חכמים אי זו היא עבודה שבלב זו תפלה [תענית ב].

*It is a positive commandment to pray each day as it is stated, “And you shall serve Hashem your G-d (Shemot 23:25) ... They taught that “Avodah,” means davening, as it is stated “And you shall serve Him (le’avdo) with all your hearts” (Devarim 11:13). The Sages asked, “Which service is considered the service of the heart? You must say that it is davening” (Ta’anis 2a).*

### **Why Three Times a Day?**

How do we know that we are supposed to daven? The Torah

only tells us that we should serve Hashem, the Chachomim interpreted this to mean davening. As the Rambam writes, the biblical mitzvah to daven is only once a day, Why then do we daven three times a day?

When the Jews came back to Eretz Yisroel to rebuild the second Beis Hamikdash, the Anshei Knesses Hagedolah instituted to daven three times a day. Why three times a day? There are two opinions in the Gemara for the source of the three times:

*Talmud Brochos 26b*

איתמר, רבי יוסי ברבי חנינא אמר: תפלות אבות תקנום; רבי יהושע בן לוי אמר: תפלות כנגד תמידין תקנום

*It was said: R' Yose the son of R' Chanina said: The prayers were instituted by the Patriarchs. R' Yehoshua ben Levi said: The prayers were instituted corresponding to the daily offerings.*

## **Davening in Place of Korbonos**

In Tanach, in the book of Hoshea, we find reference to this idea that davening can take the place of korbonos:

*Hoshea: 14:2*

וְנִשְׁלָמָה פְּרִים שְׂפִתֵינוּ:

*And let us render [for] bulls [the offering of] our lips.*

Chassidus explains the relationship between korbonos and davening:

ענין הקרבנות "הוא קירוב הכחות והמדות" להקב"ה

*The idea of korbonos is "the bringing close of ones abilities and character traits" to Hashem.*

Korbon is derived from the word "kiruv," "closeness." Both davening and korbonos share the same purpose, to bring the person closer to Hashem. Just as for a korbon, one brings an animal and elevates it by placing it upon the mizbeach—offering it to Hashem, similarly, in davening, one brings one's nefesh habehamis, the animal soul, closer to Hashem.

### **When to Daven**

After citing the two opinions as to why we daven three tefillos each day, the Gemara in Brachos seeks to find support for each of these opinions and brings pesukim to show how each of the tefillos were established by one of the avos. Following which, the Gemorah then explains how the tefillos correspond to korbonos. This will also help us understand the origin and significance of the specific times at which the tefillos are recited:

*Talmud Brochos 26b*

מפני מה אמרו תפלת השחר עד חצות - שהרי תמיד של שחר קרב והולך עד חצות; ורבי יהודה אומר: עד ארבע שעות, שהרי תמיד של שחר קרב והולך עד ארבע שעות. ומפני מה אמרו תפלת המנחה עד הערב - שהרי תמיד של בין הערבים קרב והולך עד הערב; רבי יהודה אומר: עד פלג המנחה, שהרי תמיד של בין הערבים קרב והולך עד פלג המנחה. ומפני מה אמרו תפלת הערב אין לה קבע - שהרי אברים ופדרים שלא נתעכלו מבערב קרבים והולכים כל הלילה.

*Why did they say that the morning davening could be said until midday? Because the regular morning sacrifice could be brought up to midday. R' Yehudah, however, says that it may be said until the fourth hour because the regular morning sacrifice may be brought until the fourth hour. And why did they say that the afternoon davening can be said up to the evening? Because the regular afternoon offering can be brought up to the evening. R' Yehudah, however, says that it can be said only up to the middle of the afternoon, because the evening offering could only be brought up to the middle of the afternoon. And why did they say that for the evening davening there is no limit? Because the limbs and the fat which were not consumed [on the altar] by the evening could be brought for the entirety of the night.*

This also explains why Shacharis should be davened before chatzos (midday), because the daily tomid offering brought in the beis hamikdash could be offered until chatzos.

Rabbi Yehudah is of the opinion that the tomid could only be brought until the end of the fourth hour. This is where the idea of “zman tefillah” comes from—that shacharis is only until the end of the fourth hour.

The time for Mincha too corresponds to the time when the afternoon tomid offering could be brought, and maariv can technically be recited the entire night, because parts of the korbonos that needed to be burned on the mizbeach could be left burning all night long.

While it was only instituted into practice at the time of the Anshei Knesses Hagedolah, davening three times a day is a practice that we find in Tehillim:

*Tehillim 55:18*

עַרְבַּ וּבֹקֶר וְצַהֲרַיִם, אֲשִׁיחָה וְאֶהְמָה; וַיִּשְׁמַע קוֹלִי.

*Evening, morning, and noontime, I speak and moan, and He listens to my voice.*

Similarly we find about Daniel:

*Daniel 6:11*

וַדְּנִיאל בְּדֵי יַדַּע דֵּי רְשִׁים כְּתָבָא עַל לְבַיְתָהּ וְכוּיָן פְּתִיחָן לָהּ בְּעַלְיָתָהּ נִגְדַּי יְרוּשָׁלַם וְזִמְנִין תְּלַתָּהּ בְּיוֹמָא הוּא כְּרַדַּ עַל בְּרוּכֹהֵי וּמְצִלָּא וּמוֹדָא קַדָּם אֱלֹהֵהּ כָּל קַבְּל דֵּי הָוָא עֲבַד מִן קַדְמַת דְּנָה:

*And Daniel, when he knew that a document had been inscribed, came to his house, where there were open windows in his upper chamber, opposite Yerushalayim, and three times a day he kneeled on his knees and prayed and offered thanks before Hashem just as he had done prior to this.*

## **The History and Development of Davening**

So now we know that a person needs to daven and when he should daven, but what is davening? What should a person do or say in davening?

In the beginning of Hilchos Tefillah, the Rambam recounts the development of davening and how it became what we know it to be today:

חיוב מצוה זו כך הוא שיהא אדם מתחנן ומתפלל בכל יום ומגיד שבחו של הקדוש ברוך הוא ואחר כך שואל צרכיו שהוא צריך להם בבקשה ובתחנה ואחר כך נותן שבח והודיה לה' על הטובה שהשפיע לו כל אחד לפי כחו.

אם היה רגיל מרבה בתחנה ובקשה ואם היה ערל שפתים מדבר כפי יכולתו ובכל עת שירצה, וכן מנין התפלות כל אחד כפי יכולתו, יש מתפלל פעם אחת ביום, ויש מתפללין פעמים הרבה, והכל יהיו מתפללין נכח המקדש בכל מקום שיהיה, וכן היה הדבר תמיד ממשה רבינו ועד עזרא.

כיון שגלו ישראל בימי נבוכדנצר הרשע נתערבו בפרס ויון ושאר האומות ונולדו להם בנים בארצות הגוים ואותן הבנים נתבלבלו שפתם והיתה שפת כל אחד ואחד מעורבת מלשונות הרבה וכיון שהיה מדבר אינו יכול לדבר כל צורכו בלשון אחת אלא בשיבוש שנאמר ובניהם חצי מדבר אשדודית וגו' ואינם מכירים לדבר יהודית וכלשון עם ועם ומפני זה כשהיה אחד מהן מתפלל תקצר לשונו לשאול חפציו או להגיד שבח הקדוש ברוך הוא בלשון הקדש עד שיערבו עמה לשונות אחרות, וכיון שראה עזרא ובית דינו כך עמדו ותקנו להם שמנה עשרה ברכות על הסדר, שלש ראשונות שבח לה' ושלש אחרונות הודיה, ואמצעיות יש בהן שאלת כל הדברים שהן כמו אבות לכל חפצי איש ואיש ולצרכי הציבור כולן, כדי שיהיו ערוכות בפי הכל וילמדו אותן ותהיה תפלת אלו העלגים תפלה שלימה כתפלת בעלי הלשון הצחה, ומפני ענין זה תקנו כל הברכות והתפלות מסודרות בפי כל ישראל כדי שיהא ענין כל ברכה ערוך בפי העלג.

וכן תקנו שיהא מנין התפלות כמנין הקרבנות, שתי תפלות בכל יום כנגד שני תמידין וכל יום שיש קרבן מוסף תקנו בו תפלה שלישית כנגד קרבן מוסף, ותפלה שהיא כנגד תמיד של בקר היא הנקראת תפלת השחר, ותפלה שכנגד תמיד של בין הערבים היא הנקראת

תפלת מנחה ותפלה שכנגד המוספין היא נקראת תפלת המוספין.  
וכן התקינו שיהא אדם מתפלל תפלה אחת בלילה שהרי איברי תמיד  
של בין הערבים מתעכלין והולכין כל הלילה שנאמר היא העולה וגו'  
כענין שנאמר ערב ובקר וצהרים אשיחה ואהמה וישמע קולי, ואין  
תפלת ערבית חובה כתפלת שחרית ומנחה, ואף ע"פ כן נהגו כל  
ישראל בכל מקומות מושבותיהם להתפלל ערבית וקבלוה עליהם  
כתפלת חובה.

*This commandment obligates each person to offer supplication and prayer every day and utter praises of the Holy One, blessed be He; then petition for all his needs with requests and supplications; and finally, give praise and thanks to Hashem for the goodness that He has bestowed upon him; each one according to his own ability.*

*A person who was acquainted would offer many prayers and requests. [Conversely,] a person who was inarticulate would speak as well as he could and whenever he desired.*

*Similarly, the number of prayers was dependent on each person's ability. Some would pray once daily; others, several times.*

*Everyone would pray facing the Holy Temple, wherever he might be. This was the ongoing practice from [the time of] Moshe Rabbeinu until Ezra.*

*When Israel was exiled in the time of the wicked Nebuchadnezzar, they became interspersed in Persia and Greece and other nations. Children were born to them in these foreign countries and those children's language was confused.*

*The speech of each and every one was a concoction of many tongues. No one was able to express himself coherently in any one language, but rather in a mixture [of languages], as [Nechemiah 13:24] states: "And their children spoke half in Ashdodis and did not know how to speak the Jewish language. Rather, [they would speak] according to the language of various other peoples."*

*Consequently, when someone would pray, he would be limited in his ability to request his needs or to praise the Holy One, blessed be He, in Hebrew, unless other languages were mixed in with it. When Ezra and his court saw this, they established eighteen blessings in sequence.*

*The first three [brochos] are praises of Hashem and the last three are thanksgiving. The intermediate [brochos] contain requests for all those things that serve as general categories for the desires of each and every person and the needs of the whole community.*

*Thus, the prayers could be set in the mouths of*

everyone. They could learn them quickly and the prayers of those unable to express themselves would be as complete as the prayers of the most acquainted. It was because of this matter that they established all the blessings and prayers so that they would be ordered in the mouths of all Israel, so that each blessing would be set in the mouth of each person unable to express himself.

They also decreed that the number of prayers correspond to the number of sacrifices - i.e., two prayers every day, corresponding to the two daily sacrifices. On any day that an additional sacrifice [was offered], they instituted a third prayer, corresponding to the additional offering.

The prayer that corresponds to the daily morning sacrifice is called the Shacharis Prayer. The prayer that corresponds to the daily sacrifice offered in the afternoon is called the Minchah Prayer and the prayer corresponding to the additional offerings is called the Musaf Prayer.

They also instituted a prayer to be recited at night, since the limbs of the daily afternoon offering could be burnt the whole night, as [Vayikra 6:2] states: "The burnt offering [shall remain on the altar all night until morning]." In this vein, [Tehillim 55:18] states: "In the evening, morning and afternoon I will speak and cry aloud, and He will hear my

voice.”

*The Evening Prayer is not obligatory, as are the Morning and Minchah prayers. Nevertheless, the Jewish people, in all the places that they have settled, are accustomed to recite the Evening Prayer and have accepted it upon themselves as an obligatory prayer.*

## **Part Two: Kavanah - The Soul of Davening**

### **Story: Really Davening**

*Once Reb Levi Yitzchok of Barditchev visited the city of Chernowitz.*

*On his way home from the main shul on Friday night where he davened, the saintly Reb Chaim, author of the sefer Beer Mayim Chayim, decided to pass by the Chassidishe shul to hear how the tzaddik, Reb Levi Yitzchok, davens.*

*Later, when the Rov returned home, the table was set with wine and a meal in honor of Shabbos, but he sat down completely absorbed in his thoughts.*

*When the rebbetzin asked “why haven’t you made kiddush yet?” the Rov responded “I haven’t davened yet.”*

Questioned the rebbetzin in surprise: “And why didn’t you daven today? Where were you until now?”

The Rov replied: “After I heard the Tzaddik daven, I realised that my davening wasn’t really a davening...”

### **So what does it mean to really daven?**

While without saying the words, it is not considered prayer, the main part of davening is actually not the words at all.

In Chovas Halevavos, Rabeinu Bachaye compares davening without kavanah to a body that is lifeless without a soul:

*Rabeinu Bachaye, Chovas Halevavos Shaar Cheshbon Hanefesh 3*

דע, כי המילות תהיינה בלשון, והכוונה - בלב. והמילות - כגוף לתפילה, והכוונה - כרוח וכשיתפלל בלשונו, ולבו טרוד בעניין אחר זולת התפילה, תהיה תפילתו כגוף בלא רוח וכקליפה בלא לב, מפני שגופו נמצא, ולבו נעדר בעת תפילתו.

*You should know, that words should be on ones tongue, and kavanah - in one’s heart. For words are like a body for prayer, and kavanah is like its spirit. And when one prays with his tongue and his heart is troubled with something other than davening, his davening is like a body without a soul, and like a shell without a heart—since the body is there, but his heart is missing throughout his davening.*

## What happens if you didn't have kavanah?

The necessity of kavanah in davening is not just important, it is essential. If one davens without kavanah, it is considered as if no davening took place at all. The Gemara teaches, that if you davened without kavanah, you must daven again:

*Talmud, Brochos 30b*

רבי חייא בר אבא צלי והדר צלי. אמר ליה רבי זירא: מאי טעמא עביד מר הכי? אילימא משום דלא כוון מר דעתיה - והאמר רבי אליעזר: לעולם ימוד אדם את עצמו, אם יכול לכוין את לבו - יתפלל, ואם לאו - אל יתפלל!

*R' Chiya bar Abba once prayed and prayed again. R' Zeira said to him: Why did the Master do thus? Should I say it is because the Master did not concentrate [the first time]? [Surely this cannot be,] for R' Eliezer said: A person should always assess himself [before praying] if he is able to concentrate he should pray, and if not, he should not pray.*

Just a few pages later, the Gemara seems to contradict itself by saying that one only needs to daven again if they didn't have kavanah in the first brocho, but not the rest:

*Talmud, Brochos 34b*

המתפלל צריך שיכוין את לבו בכולן, ואם אינו יכול לכוין בכולן - יכוין את לבו באחת; אמר רבי חייא אמר רב ספרא משום חד דבי רבי: באבות.

*One who prays ought to concentrate his thoughts in all the blessings, but if he cannot concentrate in all*

*the blessings - let him at least concentrate in one of them. Rabbi Chiya said in the name of Rav Safra, who said in the name of one of Rebbi's academy: [the Braisa means that at the very least he must concentrate] in [reciting the blessing of] Avos.*

## **Two Types of Kavanah**

In his chidushim on the Rambam, Reb Chaim Soloveitchik offers a rather popular resolution to this question. He explains that the two Gemaras are talking about two different types of kavanah:

*R' Chaim Soloveitchik, Chidushei Hagrach on the Rambam*

ונראה לומר, דתרי גווני כוונות יש בתפלה: האחת כוונה של פירוש הדברים בו, ושנית שיכוון שהוא עומד בתפלה לפני ה'.

*It seems that there are two types of kavanah in davening: One kavanah is the meaning of the words, and the second is to have in mind that he is standing in prayer before Hashem.*

If you did not have in mind that you are standing before Hashem for the entire duration of Shmoneh Esrei, you have not fulfilled your obligation to daven. If, however, you don't have in mind the meaning of the words, but at least had in mind the meaning of the words of the first brochoh, then you are yotzei.

To illustrate this idea:

Kavanah means direction (kivun). Say for example you are travelling to a certain destination and by mistake you head in

the wrong direction, you need to turn around and try again. However, if you are going in the right direction and you encounter some glitches along the way, you can still continue along the path you started out on.

The same applies to davening. If you don't have in mind that you are addressing Hashem, your direction is off and you've got to start the whole thing over. If, however, you know that you are standing in front of Hashem, but you lost track of what you are saying, you can continue (unless you started out without knowing where you were headed, i.e. you didn't know what you were saying in the first brochoh, in which case you should restart your davening from scratch).

### **Davening Audibly**

To give davening the proper attention and to inspire kavanah, the Gemorah suggests one should daven audibly:

*Brochos 13a*

השמע לאזנך מה שאתה מוציא מפֿיך

*Your ears should hear what your mouth utters*

### **Listening to Your Neshamah Davening**

Davening is a conversation. Knowing who is talking and who is being spoken to can help your davening come alive.

In some parts of davening (for instance, in pesukei dezimrah, where the objective is to become inspired by Hashem's greatness) the words of davening are being spoken to you, in order that you should become inspired and arouse emotion. In other parts of davening, (for instance, when you recite the brochos and shmoneh esrei,) you address Hashem in the first

person—“Boruch Atoh,” “Blessed are You.”

In Lekutei Torah, the Alter Rebbe explains that even when you are addressing Hashem in the first person, it is not you who is davening, rather your lips express your neshama’s davening and praises of Hashem. You’re only listening in.

*Lekutei Torah, Shir Hashirim 2:2*

כשיתפלל האדם יגמור בלבו שלא הגוף פי' נפש הבהמית המתהווה היא המתפלל רק נפש חלק אלוה ממעל היא המתפלל והיא מדבר בו דברי התפלה וכל הענינים הנאמר בה והיא לא יעשה דבר כי אם ישמיע לאזנו אל הרנה והתפלה אשר מזמרת ומשבחת

*When a person davens he should resolve in his heart that it is not the body, i.e. the animal soul that has desires who is davening, rather it is the neshamah, the part of Hashem above who is davening and speaking through him the words of prayer and everything that is said, and he himself does nothing, only his ears listen to the song and prayer which [the neshamah] sings and praises.*

### **Wireless Connection**

Davening therefore has two functions. One is to reconnect the neshomoh to its source in Elokus. The second is for the animal soul to listen in and become inspired to form a connection as well. This can be seen in the Hebrew word for davening—“tefillah,” which means “connection.”

*Torah Ohr, Terumah 79d-80a*

תפלה הוא ל' חבור...ובלשון המשנה התופל כלי חרס שמתחברים

במקורם...וכן בעבודת ה' היא התקשרות ודבקות הנפש בשרשה

*The word “tefillah” means to adjoin...in the language of the Mishnah: “one who pieces together an earthenware vessel” [since through davening] one becomes connected to his source... and in the service of hashem it represents the connection and attachment of the soul to its source.*

### **How to Inspire the Animal Soul**

In order for the animal soul to become inspired, two things must take place:

Firstly, the types of thoughts one has before and during davening should be ones that the animal soul can understand.

Chassidim describe how one should think chassidus before davening: This is of a person you know who would be least receptive to the ideas of chassidus, and figure out a way to explain the ideas of chassidus to him. If you are successful in articulating the ideas to such a person, there is a chance that the ideas will talk to animal soul as well, and possibly even have an impact.

The second thing that needs to take place is that the animal soul must push itself to go against its nature. This is why davening is called avodah, which means hard work.

Chassidus describes the stereotypical form of avodah as the tanning of hides (preparing animal skin for use as leather, parchment, and the like) where the skins need to be stretched.

“עבודה” - הוא מלשון עיבוד עורות, שהעורות מצד עצמם הם במעמד ומצב הדורש עיבוד ותיקון, ולא עוד אלא שפעולת העיבוד והתיקון היא בניגוד לטבע העורות מצד עצמם (“זיי לאָזן זיך ניט”), אלא, שמצב זה גופא הוא לטוב - כיון שרק במצב כזה שייך כללות ענין העבודה.

ועד“ז בנוגע לכללות מציאות ותוקף הקליפה - שענין זה גופא הוא כדי להביא תועלת בעבודה, כי, תוקף הקליפה מעורר ומביא לידי התגברות גדולה יותר בכללות העבודה.

*The word “avodah” stems from the expression “tanning (“ibud”) hides.” The raw hides require tanning and curing. Moreover, the effect of the tanning and curing runs contrary to the nature of the raw hides (they alone do not allow it) but it is good for good reason—since only then it is possible for there to be “avodah.”*

*Similarly, with regard to the general existence and force of kelipah—which is designed to benefit ones avodah, since the force of the kelipah arouses and results in a great overpowering in ones general avodah.*

When one is able to push the animal soul out of its comfort zone to develop a connection with Hashem, then, even the neshamah can gain from by being ferocious as an animal in its service of Hashem, with much more force than the neshamah could ever achieve on its own.

### 3 Preparations for Davening

Chassidus prescribes three preparations for davening that can help one overcome the resistance of the animal soul and develop a conscious connection with Hashem:

*Lekutei Torah Ki Savo 43 a-b*

וג' דברים הם להסיר כל המונעים בתפלה: א' מקוה...הב' צדקה...והג'  
הוא עסק ולימוד דברי מוסר ובפרט דברי מוסר הנמצאים בזוהר

*There are three things to remove all resistance in davening 1) Mikvah 2) Tzedakah 4) Delving into and learning words of ethics, particularly words of ethics that are found in Zohar.*

1) Mikvah: The purpose of Mikvah is to remove impurity, to add additional purity, and to start again with a clean slate. This is why a converts must go to a mikvah when he converts, since it represents the cleansing of his previous life and starting anew. This is also why it is so important to go to mikvah on erev Yom Kippur.

2) Tzedakah: The gemorah tells us how Rabbi Eliezer would first give tzedakah before davening (Bava Basra 10a). This is related to the posuk “ואני בצדק אחזה פניך” “As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness” (Tehilim 17:15). In Tanya, it explains that money is the product of hard labor. Giving it away signifies that you are willing to go against your nature and give of your hard work for Hashem. This is an important first step to be able to break out of the animal soul's tendencies during daveninig.

3) Thinking chassidus: The purpose of this exercise is to realize who you are davening to, and to enter into the right

head space for davening.

### **Fascinating Fact: Our Brains are Wired to Daven**

Neuroscientist Andrew Newberg studied the human brain and discovered parts of the brain that light up exclusively when people pray. This indicates that as humans we were designed to pray!

### **Why daven in a Minyan?**

The context of davening is very important too. The Rambam explains the importance of davening in a minyan:

*Rambam, Hilchos Tefillah 8:1*

תפלת הציבור נשמעת תמיד ואפילו היו בהן חוטאים אין הקב"ה מואם בתפלתן של רבים לפיכך צריך אדם לשתף עצמו עם הציבור ולא תפלל ביחיד כל זמן שיכול להתפלל עם הציבור

*Communal prayer is always heard. Even when there are sinners in [the congregation], Hashem does not reject the prayers of the many. Therefore, a person should include himself with the community and should not pray alone whenever he is able to pray with the community.*

What is the significance of a minyan? Chasidus explains:

*Rebbe Rashab, Sefer HaMa'amarim 5672, p. 1457*

בעשרה דוקא שכינה שורה, כו' משום דבעשרה דוקא שהם נגד ע"ס דאצילות בציור קומה שלימה שם שורה כללות אור אין סוף

*The Divine Presence rests specifically upon a group*

*of ten because ten corresponds to the ten sefiros of Atzilus in a full configuration—there, rests the totality of the Or Ein Sof.*

What does this mean?

How many Jews do you need to house infinity?

You might think that no finite number would be enough. However, since Hashem rests in a place of completion, when ten Jews join together there is a representation of a complete configuration of the ten sefiros, so you have “everyone”. This allows for Hashem’s infinite presence to be openly present, which it creates a particularly auspicious context for davening.

### **Why daven in a shul?**

The same idea is true about the place in which we daven. The Rambam continues:

*Rambam, Hilchos Tefillah 8:1*

ולעולם ישכים אדם ויעריב לבית הכנסת שאין תפלתו נשמעת בכל עת  
אלא בבית הכנסת:

*One should always spend the early morning and evening [hours] in the synagogue, for prayer will not be heard at all times except [when recited] in the synagogue.*

The shul is a מקדש מעט, a small Beis Hamikdash. Just as Hashem’s presence was openly experienced in the Beis Hamikdash, similarly, Hashem’s presence is found in the shul (more so than anywhere else), making it an appropriate place

to serve Hashem.

May Hashem listen to our prayers and bring Moshiach so we can pray to Hashem in the ultimate shul—the Beis Hamikdash.

### **Concluding Question**

Based on what you've learned, can you think of three things you accomplish through your davening?

## Take-Aways

- » Torah, davening, and good deeds should keep our mind, heart, and body occupied in the service of Hashem.
- » The mitzvah of tefillah is to turn to Hashem when we have something to ask for, or to be thankful and praise Him for what He has given us.
- » The three daily tefillos were instituted by members of the Anshei Knesses Hagedolah to correspond to the prayers instituted by the Avos, or to the korbonos in the Beis Hamikdash.
- » The timing of the tefillos corresponds to the time when the korbonos were brought in the Beis Hamikdash.
- » When you are davening, if you don't have in mind that you are davening to Hashem, you are required to daven again.
- » During davening, your animal soul gets to listen in to your neshomah praising Hashem.
- » You can uplift the animal soul by 1) Thinking about Hashem in terms that even the animal soul will understand and 2) Pushing your animal soul to move out of its comfort zone.
- » A minyan in a shul is the most suitable place for davening since that is where Hashem's presence is found most and your prayers are more readily heard and answered.

