

Understanding Prayer Part Two The Relationship of Shema and the Amida What is worship of G-d?

Do I pray to G-d to be answered or is there another reason?

Last week we said;

1. Rav Kook, we pray to connect my will with G-d's.
2. Or, to elevate ourselves. To enjoy the experience.
3. Kuzari: To elevate us from the mundane.
4. Michtav MeElyahu: To connect us with G-d.
5. Rav Hirsch: To judge and change ourselves.
6. To thank G-d and pray that He continue to allow us his benevolence.

What is worship of G-d?

Worship

Etymology: Old English *worðscip*, *wurðscip* (Anglian), *weorðscipe* (West Saxon)
"condition of being worthy, dignity, glory, distinction, honor, renown," from *weorð*
"worthy" (see **worth**) + *-scipe* (see **-ship**). Sense of "reverence paid to a supernatural or divine being" is first recorded c. 1300. The original sense is preserved in the title *worshipful* "honorable" (c. 1300).

Rambam, Laws of Prayer, 1, 1

מִצְוַת עֲשֵׂה לְהִתְפַּלֵּל בְּכָל יוֹם שְׁנַאֲמַר (שְׁמוֹת כג כה) "וַעֲבַדְתֶּם אֵת ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם". מִפִּי
הַשְּׁמוּעָה לְמַדּוֹ שְׁעִבּוּדָה זֶה הִיא תְּפִלָּה שְׁנַאֲמַר (דְּבָרִים יא יג) "וְלָעֲבֹדוֹ בְּכָל לְבַבְכֶּם" אָמְרוּ
חֲכָמִים אִי זֶה הִיא עֲבֹדָה שְׁפִילָה זֶה תְּפִלָּה. וְאִין מִנִּין הַתְּפִלוֹת מִן הַתּוֹרָה. וְאִין מִשְׁנָה
הַתְּפִלָּה הַזֹּאת מִן הַתּוֹרָה. וְאִין לְתְּפִלָּה זְמַן קְבוּעַ מִן הַתּוֹרָה:

To pray daily is an affirmative duty, as it is said, "And ye shall serve the Lord, your God" (**Exodus 23:25**). The service, here referred to, according to the teaching of tradition, is Prayer, as it is said, "And to serve Him with all your heart"

(Deuteronomy 11:13), on which the sages commented, "What may be described as Service of the Heart? Prayer". The number of prayers is not prescribed in the Torah. No form of prayer is prescribed in the Torah. Nor does the Torah prescribe a fixed time for Prayer. Hence, women and slaves are under an obligation to pray, this being a duty, the fulfillment of which is independent of set periods.

Talmud Taanit 2a

ומנא לן דבתפלה דתניא (דברים יא, יג) לאהבה את ה' אלהיכם ולעבדו בכל לבבכם איזו היא עבודה שהיא בלב הוי אומר זו תפלה וכתיב בתריה (דברים יא, יד) ונתתי מטר ארצכם בעתו יורה ומלקוש

The Gemara asks: **And from where do we** derive that rain must be mentioned specifically **in the Amida prayer?** The Gemara answers: **As it was taught** in a *baraita* with regard to the verse: **“To love the Lord your God and to serve Him with all your heart”** (Deuteronomy 11:13). **Which is the service of God that is performed in the heart? You must say that this is referring to prayer. And, afterward, it is written: “And I shall give the rain of your land in its due time, the first rain and the last rain”** (Deuteronomy 11:14). This juxtaposition teaches that it is appropriate to request rain while engaged in the service of the heart, i.e., prayer.

Let's understand the connection of Shema and her blessings with the Amida and then see what this tells us about the nature of worship.

Blessings before and after Shema

Light, Creation, Angels, Kedusha

Love, Torah, mitzvot

Shema

Hashem is our One G-d

Love Him by obsessing over Him always

Keep the commandments and love G-d and we will stay in Israel

The mitzvah of Tzitzit and remembering the Exodus

Redemption, Exodus

Amida

Praise

Petition

Thanksgiving

The Shema-Amida Nexus

Berachot 4b

אמר מר קורא קריאת שמע ומתפלל מסייע ליה לרבי יוחנן דאמר רבי יוחנן איזהו בן
העולם הבא זה הסומך גאולה לתפלה של ערבית רבי יהושע בן לוי אומר תפלות
באמצע תקנום

In this *baraita*, **the Master said** that when one returns from work in the evening, he enters the synagogue, **recites *Shema*, and prays**. From this *baraita*, we see that at night, just as during the day, one first recites *Shema* and then prays. This **supports** the opinion of **Rabbi Yoḥanan, as Rabbi Yoḥanan said: Who is assured of a place in the World-to-Come? It is one who juxtaposes the blessing of redemption, recited after *Shema*, to the evening prayer. Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi says: The prayers were instituted to be recited between the two recitations of *Shema*.** According to Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi, one recites the morning *Shema*, then recites all of the prayers and only after the recitation of the evening prayer does he recite the evening *Shema*.

What's the big deal about putting one prayer next to the other?

Rabbeinu Yona of Gerona, 13th cent. Spanish commentator on the Talmud

י"ל וכי מפני שסומך גאולה לתפלה יש לו שכר כל כך שיהיה בן עוה"ב?
ואומר מורי הרב שהטעם שזוכה לשכר גדול כזה מפני שהקב"ה הכשגאלנו והוציאנו ממצרים היה להיותנו
לו לעבדים שנא' כי עבדי הם אשר הוצאתי אותם מארץ מצרים ובברכת גאל ישראל מזכיר בה החסד
שעשה עמנו הבורא והתפלה היא עבודה כדאמרין (בב"ק דף צב ב) ועבדתם את ה' אלהיכם זו היא
תפלה וכשהוא מזכיר יציאת מצרים ומתפלל מיד מראה שכמו שהעבד שקונה אותו רבו חייב לעשות
מצות רבו כן הוא מכיר הטובה והגאולה שגאל אותו הבורא ושהוא עבדו ועובדאותו וכיון שמכיר שהוא
עבדו מפני שגאלו ועושה רצונו ומצותיו נמצא שבעבור זה זוכה לחי"י העולם הבא

The reason he merits such a great reward is because when God redeemed us and took us out of Egypt, it was so that we should serve Him, as is written, "For they are My servants whom I have taken out of the Land of Egypt." In the blessing of Ga'al Yisrael, we mention the kindness that the Creator did for us. AND TEFILLA IS SERVICE ("avoda"), as is said, "'And you shall serve HaShem your God' - this refers to tefilla" ([Bava Kama 92b](#)). Therefore, when one mentions the exodus from Egypt and immediately prays, he shows that just as a slave who has been bought by his master must obey his master's commands, so too he recognizes the goodness and redemption which the Creator redeemed him, and that he is His slave and serves Him. And since he recognizes that he is His slave as a result of the fact that He redeemed him, and fulfills His will and commandments, it follows that he will merit the world-to-come as a result.

Rabbi Ezra Bick of Yeshivat Har Etzion analyzes the Rabbeinu Yona

From where does our "servitude" to G-d stem?

How does one show one's commitment to the slavery, to the master?

Where in the shema do we affirm our slavery, our commitment to His ways?

Why do the ten commandments begin with the words, I am the L-rd your G-d who took you out of the Land of Egypt, the house of bondage?

If we are worshipping G-d in prayer, why is it filled with requests?

Does it sound like we work for Him or G-d forbid that He works for us?

What is a slave? His whole purpose is to serve his master. He completely depends on him.

What does G-d want?

Rule #1: G-d has no needs. Why not?

Rule #2:

Opening of the Ramchal, **Rabbi Lutzatto, 18th cent. Italy**

והנה מה שהורונו חכמינו זכרונם לברכה הוא, שהאדם לא נברא אלא להתענג על ה' ולהנות מזיו שכינתו שזהו התענוג האמיתי והעידון הגדול מכל העידונים שיכולים להמצא. ומקום העידון הזה באמת הוא העולם הבא, כי הוא הנברא בהכנה המצטרפת לדבר הזה.

Behold, what our sages, of blessed memory, have taught us is that man was created solely to delight in G-d and to derive pleasure in the radiance of the Shechina (divine presence). For this is the true delight and the greatest pleasure that can possibly exist. The place of this pleasure is, in truth, in Olam Haba (the World to Come). For it was created expressly for this purpose.

So what then is the ultimate worship?

How does the Amida constitute worship?

How does Geula, the Shema and her blessings, prepare us for Avodah, worship?

Another reason for the nexus by Rabbeinu Yona

ועוד אמר מורי נר"ו טעם אחר מפני שכשמצריך גאולה מצרים ומתפלל מיד הוא מראה שבטוח בה' בתפלה כיון שמבקש ממנו צרכיו שמי שאינו בטוח בו לא יבקש ממנו כלום וכן נראה באלה שמות רבה בפרשת בא אל פרעה שאומר לשם שכשצריך ישראל הנסים והנפלאות שהיה עושה עמהם הבורא שלא כטבעו של עולם בטחו בו ועל זה נאמר וירא ישראל את היד הגדולה אשר עשה ה' במצרים וייראו העם את ה' ויאמינו בה' וגו' וכיון שמצריך עכשיו אותה הגאולה שבטחו אבותינו בה' והצילם ומתפלל מיד נמצא שגם הוא בטוח בו שיענה אותו כמו שענה לישראל בעבור שבטחו בו ומפני זה מזכיר אותה הגאולה ומתפלל מיד והבטחון הוא עיקר היראה והאמונה ולפיכך זוכה בסיבתו לחיי עולם הבא:

When one mentions the redemption from Egypt and prays immediately afterwards, he shows that he trusts in God for his prayer, since he requests his needs from Him. For one who does not trust Him will not request anything from Him. And this idea is found in (Midrash) Shemot Rabba on Parashat Bo, where it is written that when Israel saw the miracles and the wonders which God did for them, against the laws of nature, they trusted in Him, as is written, "And Israel saw the great hand which God wielded against Egypt; and the people feared God, and they believed in God..." ([Shemot 14,31](#)). So

now, when one mentions that redemption where our forefathers trusted in God and He saved them; and then he immediately prays, it is clear that he also trusts in God to answer him, just as He answered the Jews when they trusted in Him. That is why one mentions that redemption (geula) and prays immediately. And trust ("bitachon") is the foundation of faith and fear of God, so he will merit thereby the world-to-come.

How are the two answers of Rabbeinu Yona different? What do they think is the endgame of all this worship?

How can we now explain the two versions of the redemption blessing's conclusion? A. Redeemer of Israel, גאל ישראל and B. Rock of Israel and her Redeemer, צור ישראל וגואלו?

How does this idea explain the connection between the affirmation part of this blessing (emet, it is true) and the redemption part?

How do the parts of the Shema and the Amida warm us up for worship/faith?

G-d created light and everything

G-d gave us the Torah and the mitzvot

G-d is our one G-d

We should love Him always

We are bound in a covenant with G-d to worship Him and love Him

We must remember the Exodus and all the mitzvot

We affirm the Shema

We recall the splitting of the sea and the song we sang and G-d's redemption

Or, maybe we are inspired by the salvation of Exodus to think we can be saved again today!

Or, maybe we put redemption next to prayer to start prayer out of some joy (Rashi).

Maybe there is a link between the statement, Redeemer of Israel and the beginning of Amidah, He brings redemption to their children's children...

When we reach Emet we are at the outer curtain, Ezrat, the inner curtain and Amida is the Holy of Holies....

Final week: May 27: Understanding prayer through the Amida