

# AN EDUCATOR'S COMPANION



## A GUIDE TO THE KOREN YOUTH SIDDUR ASHKENAZ

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ASHKENAZ



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An Educator's Companion  
A Guide to the Koren Youth Siddur  
Nusah Ashkenaz

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# Introduction to the Koren Magerman Educational Siddur Series

*“Prayer is the language of the soul in conversation with God. It is the most intimate gesture of the religious life, and the most transformative.” (Rabbi Jonathan Sacks)*

These are the words with which Rabbi Sacks begins his introduction to the Koren Sacks Siddur. The act of praying can be transformative intellectually as well as spiritually and emotionally. To engage in the act of praying is to testify to the fundamentals of our faith: That the world was created by a benevolent God who participates in the history of the universe He created. There is purpose to our existence and destiny to our lives. But prayer can also be a crying out from deep within the soul. It is the aim of this siddur series to serve as a tool to encourage and facilitate our children’s engagement in *tefilla* both cognitively and emotionally, leading to an overall spiritual development.

This Koren Magerman Educational Siddur Series is an exciting new project that signals a refreshing and innovative approach to *tefilla* education in the school, home and synagogue. Each siddur in the series is appropriately designed for its developmental stage of the day-school journey, and beyond. With emphasis placed firmly on the critical foundations of Reflection, Connection, and Learning, this series of siddurim creates an impactful prayer experience that places God and the user at its center.

This second siddur in the series, the Koren Youth Siddur, has been designed to be developmentally appropriate

for use in school, shul, and the home, for children in grades 3–5 (8–11 years old). This siddur is a bridge between the Koren Children’s Siddur for grades K–2, and the Koren middle school siddur for grades 6–8, which then transitions into the Koren Ani Tefilla Siddur (aimed at grades 9–12). The Koren Youth Siddur combines stimulating and beautiful illustrations with thought-provoking educational components on each page, to provide teachers and parents with an educational resource as much as a conventional siddur. The siddur is also accompanied by this Educator’s Companion, a comprehensive guide for teachers and parents, to maximize the educational potential of this siddur.

The Educator’s Companion complements the siddur as an educational resource, to provide support to the educator and parent in the form of a thorough explanation of every page of the siddur, and suggestions of how to use the siddur in a day-school or congregational context. While the language of the companion may often be more appropriate for the teacher in a classroom context, the parent in the synagogue or in the home is also at the forefront of the design of the siddur and the writing of the companion, and our hope is that the companion will be as useful to the parent as to the teacher.



## Acknowledgments

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Many people contributed to both the siddur itself, and to this Educator's Companion and we would like to take this opportunity to express our thanks here. First and biggest acknowledgments must go to Rinat Gilboa and Tani Bayer for the way the siddur looks. Both its beauty and visual educational utility are down to them. The siddur was extensively reviewed by the members of the Educational Editorial Board, namely Rabbi Boruch Sufrin, Rabbi Adam Englander, Rabbi Benji Levy and

Rabbi Dr. Jay Goldmintz. Their feedback was invaluable to the development of the siddur. The following Tefilla Education specialists also provided invaluable input and deserve much thanks: Eli Broner, Chayim Dimont, Sharon Richter, David Saltzman, and Hadasah Smolarcik. Special thanks to Rabbi Dr. Jay Goldmintz, Rachel Meghnagi, Aryeh Grossman and Rabbi David Fuchs for reviewing this Educator's Companion, and sharing their insightful feedback and comments.

## The Educational Vision

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When we consider the paths toward a relationship with God, we need not only consider the knowledge that will help us understand God but the skills that will help us interact with and access God too. We recognize that prophecy is a skill beyond most so we settle for the ability to read the siddur and to perform the mechanics of *tefilla*. We assume that regular performance of these actions will lead to emotional and spiritual connections with God. After all, “אחרי הפעולות נמשכים הלבבות – The heart is drawn after action” (*Sefer HaHinukh* mitzva 16). We expect that a child who reads his or her prayers regularly will have a meaningful spiritual experience as a result. Of course, many educators, parents, and children know this not to be entirely true. Indeed, even those who are adept at reading the *tefillot* and navigating the choreography throughout the siddur, still do not necessarily experience God with any greater sense of spirituality than those who struggle through the siddur. Thus, we are left with the question, if we accept the concept of “אחרי הפעולות נמשכים הלבבות”, then what are those actions that will lead to inspiration and connection?

An encounter with God requires preparation that amounts to building a relationship with Him. Without such a relationship, how can one expect to have deep meaningful conversations, sharing the most intimate details of one's life? How can one expect to experience God in prayer without preparing for such an encounter by building a relationship with God in other ways? We transact all the time with strangers – the checkout person at the store, for example. We want *tefilla*, though, to be more than a transactional experience for our

children and thus aspire for them to have a relationship with God as a Father, as a King, and as something greater, in order for them to experience God in meaningful ways during *tefilla*. Engaging children in conversations about God, sharing with children the connectors and disconnectors that you experience related to God, bringing God into the mundane as well as the lofty will help children appreciate that which is transcendent and prepare them for encounters with God. Then, built on that relationship, prayer can become a heavenly experience. These are the types of actions that will lead to the emotional connection before and during *tefilla* – אחרי הפעולות נמשכים הלבבות.

So what, then, of the siddur itself? How can the siddur support this heavenly experience? The underlying assumption of this series of siddurim is that *tefilla* is more than a reading exercise, and the object of *tefilla* is not simply mastery of the *tefillot* themselves. Rather, God and the *mitpallel* are partners in the act of *tefilla*, together with the family, community, and others that comprise the world of the *mitpallel*.

Unfortunately, too often in our schools, homes, and synagogues, the words of the siddur are the focus of *tefilla* as we pray. We focus on keeping our students' exactly on the right word, pronouncing the words perfectly, and following the mechanics and choreography of prayer. No doubt, these are important and we are not suggesting that reading is not a component of prayer education worthy of time in the curriculum. We would, in fact, urge schools to find ways outside of *tefilla* to have students practice reading the words of

the siddur. That is, preparation for accuracy in reading the *tefillot* is important. However, this should not be the focus during *tefilla*. And, as we said earlier, such accuracy alone will likely not lead to experiencing God during *tefilla*.

The Koren Children's Siddur, and the series of siddurim that follow, highlight the child as an actor in prayer, asking questions and making statements that urge the child to think and engage with the world and the God that created it, directs it, and supports it daily.

It is important to note that we have purposefully chosen particular *tefillot*, guided by the centrality of those *tefillot* objectively, and also by their relevance to the daily lives of children. We have followed the guiding principle of "less is more" with regard to quantity of prayers, as the goal is to give the children a developmentally appropriate amount of text and keep the focus on the making of meaning. We appreciate those who question the omission of certain *tefillot* that their class currently recites or that a parent recalls fondly from their own upbringing. But we encourage you to

consider whether the additional prayers you would include would detract from the focus we have articulated. With the goal of strengthening the spiritual connection in mind, we, along with our practitioner colleagues on the Educational Editorial Board of this series have concluded that a recalibration of *tefilla* education and the role of the siddur is necessary.

We all aspire for a relationship with God for ourselves and for our children. Rather than counting solely on the words of prayer to build a relationship with God, we believe a strengthened relationship can prepare us for and support us through prayer. This series of siddurim is a requisite tool for enabling this shift, as it empowers the student to go beyond the words to build on his or her relationship with God.

Dr. Scott Goldberg  
Chairman, Koren Educational Editorial Board  
Dr. Daniel Rose  
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Jerusalem  
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# The Koren Youth Siddur Explained

## The Liturgical Text

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One of the central educational goals of the Koren Magerman Educational Siddur Series is that the student, by progressing through the four developmentally appropriate siddurim, will graduate the program of *tefilla* education with the breadth and depth of *tefilla* skills and emotional and cognitive relationship to the liturgy necessary to feel total comfort and engagement with the adult siddur. Motivated by this goal, we have tried at every possible appropriate opportunity to create bridges between each of the siddurim, from the Koren Children's Siddur, to the adult Koren Siddur.

As much as possible, the structure of the adult Koren Siddur has been retained, with the Hebrew text of the *tefillot* on the left-hand page, and educational resources (see below) on the facing page (where the translation is found in the adult siddur). This aesthetic, together with the use of the Koren font and paragraph formatting, will allow the student to be immediately familiar and at ease with the adult siddur whenever they encounter it. The dimensions of all the siddurim in the series also match those of the adult Koren Siddur for the same reason.

The font size varies depending on the amount of text on the page. In principle, the font size chosen is as large as possible without unduly compromising the other elements of the page such as the illustration

and rubric (instructional sentence), and while at the same time maintaining the feel that this siddur is not a first-stage siddur, but rather for children who already have basic Hebrew literacy and *tefilla* literacy skills.

Line numbering has been used once again, as in the Koren Children's Siddur, as an educational tool to help the child and teacher alike. When it is obvious that a single unit *tefilla* has been split on to one or more pages, the line numbers have continued from the first page onto subsequent pages. This is so the child gets a sense of this *tefilla* as a single unit. Examples of this are *Ashrei* on p.38–41 and *Aleinu*, on p.138–141.

New to the Koren Youth Siddur that does not appear in the Koren Children's Siddur is a “Hazan Call Out” icon, which is found within the text, indicating where the *hazan* should read the text aloud. Although the siddur is not designed to be used with a *minyan* where the “*Devarim Shebikedusha*” are said, many schools and communities have a semi-communal *tefilla* with a *hazan*, in order to enculturate the child into the conventions of adult prayer. This is based on the similar triangle feature found in all Koren adult siddurim, and will ensure that children are familiar with that element once they graduate to the adult siddur.

## Educational Components And Resources On The Page

On each page of the siddur several educational elements have been built into the page, either for teachers to reference in the classroom as they would a textbook, or simply for the student to find engaging should their mind wander during the *tefilla*. If the student does find themselves losing focus, these resources function as a constructive distraction for them. Better they should still be engaged in the siddur page than with other external distractions. Great thought has been put into each and every page to maximize the educational potential of the siddur as a resource in school. No element of this siddur has been inserted for merely aesthetic purposes alone, but rather each is designed to be used as a resource for the educator.

### The Illustrations

For each page of the siddur the illustrator was given a choice of several educational themes inspired by the text of the *tefilla* found on that page; these were based on the general meaning behind the prayer, or a specific line from the text, or a related educational objective. A guide to understanding each illustration and its educational potential is found in this Educator's Companion. If the illustration was inspired by or relates to a specific line of text from the liturgy, that line of the text appears in a color taken from the illustration, making a clear link in an aesthetically pleasing yet subtle way. This is not to overemphasize this line of the text or suggest it is more important or prominent in any way, but merely to draw attention to the thematic link between the illustration and the text of the *tefilla*.

### The Navigation Bar

The Navigation Bar appears at the bottom of every left-hand page. This is a subtle navigational tool designed to familiarize the student with the structure of *Tefillat Shaḥarit*, enabling their awareness of where in the process of *tefilla* they are at any given point. The Navigation Bar illustrates the concept of ascent to the presence of God (while saying the *Shema* and *Amida*) and then descent back to the routine of everyday life.

The aesthetic of the Navigation Bar has been inspired by this idea of ascent/descent in *tefilla* as expressed by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks in his Introduction to the Koren Siddur.<sup>1</sup> Rabbi Sacks sees the structure of *tefilla* through the metaphor of Yaakov's ladder. Prayer is the ladder, and we are the angels, ascending to heaven and then descending back to earth. This reflects the structure of *tefilla* as creation-revelation-redemption. *Birkhot HaShahar* and *Pesukei DeZimra*, with the theme of creation, allow us to ascend to the summit of the ladder, and stand in the presence of God while we say the *Amida*. From here prayer begins its descent as we turn to the theme of redemption with *Keriat HaTorah*, *Ashrei* and *Aleinu*, allowing us to redeem our everyday lives by bringing the emotional-spiritual experience of *tefilla* (as experienced in the presence of God while at the summit of the ladder) into the routine of our everyday lives. We are now ready to reenter life and its challenges.

Each of the icons found on the Navigation Bar represents one of the nine identified sections of *Tefillat Shaḥarit*. The icon representing the current section of *tefilla* will be indicated by a stronger shade, while the other seven icons will be dimmed. This will encourage the child to see and be aware of exactly where they are in the structure of the *tefilla*.

The icons and meaning behind them are found here:



הכנה לתפילה – Preparation for *Tefilla* (pre-*Birkhot HaShahar tefillot*) is represented by a character praying before getting out of bed.



ברכות השחר – Morning Blessings are represented by the morning sun.



פסוקי דזמרה – Verses of Praise (or Verses of Song) are represented by a musical note.



קריאת שמע – The *Shema* is represented by a character lifting the hand to cover the eyes.

1. This is a well-known idea which was developed by the early kabbalists, and also succinctly expressed in the siddur of Rabbi Yaakov Emden.





עמידה – The *Amida* is represented by a character standing during this *tefilla*.



קריאת התורה – The Reading of the Torah (or verses said when removing the *Sefer Torah* from the *Aron Kodesh*) is represented by a *Sefer Torah*.



אשרי – the second appearance of *Ashrei* is represented by a happy character with hands up rejoicing.



עלינו – *Aleinu* is represented by a bowing character.



שיר של יום – The Daily Psalm that concludes the *tefilla* is represented by the page of a calendar with a musical note on it.

The second section of the siddur that contains non-weekday prayers, such as Shabbat and *Hagim tefillot*, will have a different navigation bar containing the following five icons:



ליל שבת – The Shabbat Evening *tefillot* are represented by an icon containing Shabbat candles.



יום שבת – The remaining *tefillot* for Shabbat day are represented by an icon containing the traditional Shabbat items of a *Kiddush* cup and *hallot* (despite these also being relevant for Shabbat Evening).



חגים – *Tefillot* for *Hagim* (including Rosh *Hodesh*) is represented by an icon containing a *hanukkia* and a moon.



ברכת המזון – *Birkat HaMazon* is represented by a cup for the ritual washing of hands.



קריאת שמע על המיטה – The final page of our siddur is the bedtime *Shema*, which has its own icon that represents nighttime with a moon and stars.

## Kavanot

Every page of the siddur (where space allows) has one or two thought elements to encourage the child to engage in the *tefilla* emotionally and cognitively. We have termed these “*Kavanot*,” as they are designed to “direct” the child toward a particular idea from the *tefilla*, or line of thought, encouraging them toward a process of reflection, connection and learning.

There are three kinds of *kavanot* on any given page. Each has its own icon and font color and style to make it clear to the reader the type of educational element they are reading. When appropriate, the *kavana* is anchored to a specific phrase or line of the *tefilla* text through its highlighting in the appropriate color.

Wherever possible the page has been structured consistently so the child can become familiar with the elements on the page and is aware of what to expect even before they begin reading. For example, the Conceptual translation is found on the top right-hand corner of the facing page to the *tefilla* text (except in the Shabbat section where it appears alongside the *tefilla* text), and the other *kavanot* (stories and thought questions) are always found in the lower half of the page, much in the same way as the commentary is always found “below the line” in the Koren Ani Tefilla Siddur for high-school age students and beyond. Each of the three *kavanot* has its own icon, making it immediately recognizable to the reader.

The three kinds of *kavanot* are:



**Conceptual Translation:** This is a non-literal Conceptual translation that focuses on capturing the essence of the meaning of each *tefilla*, or one or two of the core concepts of the *tefilla*. The goal of this siddur is that the focus of the *tefilla* experience should be the child’s relationship with Hashem rather than the text of the *tefilla* itself. Therefore a conceptual translation rather than a literal word-by-word translation was chosen, as a more powerful tool for advancing the student’s relationship beyond the text of the *tefilla* itself. For this reason, developmentally appropriate words have often been chosen at the expense of more literal words available. While these words may be less faithful to the Hebrew text, they are better at achieving the goal

of meaning-making for this age group. A Conceptual translation is not found on every page or for every *tefilla* in the siddur. The aim is to provide translation at strategic locations in the siddur, in order to provide the child with an understanding of the essence of the *tefilla*, and encourage connection to the *tefilla* and to Hashem through the *tefilla*. The Conceptual Translation is always color coded in brown.



**Thought Questions:** Building on the *kavanot* in the Koren Children's Siddur, and toward the high-school Koren Ani Tefilla Siddur, thought questions are also a critical part of the Koren Youth Siddur. These encourage children to be reflective and to relate in a personal way to the *tefillot*. Often, but not always, a quote will precede the thought questions, in order to stimulate the thought in a specific direction, and to provide another educational resource on the page. These quotes are often verses from Tanakh, Talmudic and midrashic sources, or quotes from contemporary thinkers. The educational thinking behind the quotes and the thought questions, as well as creative ideas for how they can be used in the classroom is found in the page-by-page guide to the siddur below. The quote and thought questions will often complement each other and lead the reader in the same direction of thought. However, on occasion, the quote, while relevant to an aspect of the *tefilla* considered in the thought question, will stand alone as a resource for the teacher to use, while the thought question will not explore the idea in the quote, but rather relate only to the *tefilla* text itself. Thought Questions are always color coded in olive green.



**Stories:** The narrative is an ancient and effective method to encourage the reader to relate experientially to the themes contained in the siddur in a personal and direct way. Each story found in the siddur explores one or more educational themes that are contained in the *tefilla* text on that page. The educational thinking behind the choice of the story, as well as creative ideas for how they can be used in the classroom is found in the page-by-page guide to the siddur below. Stories are always color coded in rust.

Many primary and secondary sources are quoted as both stories, and in the Thought Questions. The type

of source can be detected by the format in which it is presented. The following guide will help the reader understand the source of the quote:

- **Verses from Tanakh** are always quoted in their original Hebrew and are followed by the source.
- **Mishna** is quoted in English translation, in quotation marks, and is immediately followed by the source.
- **Talmudic sources**, including Midrash (but not including Mishna) is found in italics and quotation marks. The source is not quoted on the page but can be found in this Educator's Companion.
- Direct and Conceptual **secondary quotes** (both modern and medieval) are found in quotation marks. The source is not quoted on the page but can be found in this Educator's Companion.
- **Retold stories** from non-classical texts are presented in italics without quotation marks. The source is not quoted on the page but can be found in this Educator's Companion.
- **Imagination exercises** are presented on the page without quotation marks and in roman type.

## Rubrics

On many pages a green rubric (instructional sentence) is provided, aimed at aiding the student (or helping the teacher to aid the student) to understand the choreography of the *tefilla* service, and in some cases a little of the background behind the *tefilla*. In several instances in the siddur, visual icons are used to illustrate the instructions found in the rubric. These can be found here:



Boys say



Girls say



*Amida* (and *Aleinu*)  
bowing icons



Conclusion of the  
*Amida* bowing (bowing  
forward, left and right)



This loudspeaker icon is found in the *tefilla* text to highlight where the *hazan* would say the text aloud. Although this siddur is not designed to be used with a *minyan* (with no *Devarim Shebikedusha* included) many schools and junior congregations have a *Hazan* to acculturate the children to this aspect of adult *tefilla*.

### **Bridges to the other siddurim in the Koren Magerman Educational Siddur Series**

The Koren Youth Siddur is the second stage of a four-stage, developmentally designed program of *tefilla* education. There are several themes and elements that provide concurrent themes that appear in all four of the siddurim, and others that form bridges between each siddur and the next.

The format and presentation of the adult Koren Siddur is present in all four of these siddurim in the series. The Hebrew text of the *tefillot* is almost always found only on the left-hand page, and the educational resources are generally found on the facing page (where the translation appears in the adult siddur). This aesthetic, together with the use of the Koren font and paragraph formatting, will allow the student to be immediately familiar and at ease with the adult siddur whenever they encounter it. The size and dimensions of all the siddurim in the series also match those of the adult

Koren Siddur for the same reason. New to the Koren Youth Siddur (KYS) that was not a feature of the Koren Children's Siddur (KCS), is the familiar Table of Contents format, and the "*Sha'ar*" page for each of the four sections of the siddur. These are all features that are taken from adult Koren siddurim.

The illustrations, both in style, and often content, create a bridge between the KYS and the KCS. The illustrator, Rinat Gilboa, worked hard to create more mature and developmentally appropriate illustrations, while replicating the beauty and meaning found in the illustrations of the KCS. The same two characters from the Children's Siddur, the boy and girl, are also found in many of the illustrations in the KYS but are obviously more mature in their appearance. There are also some examples of matching illustrations in both siddurim, such as the boy and girl walking to synagogue on Shabbat, found on p.79 of the KCS and p.193 of the KYS. The navigation bar found in the KCS is also found in the same place on the page of the KYS. These examples of bridges between the KCS and the KYS eases the transition for those children that have graduated to the KYS from the KCS. Finally, the thought questions and stories found as *kavanot* in the KYS are also found in all four of the siddurim on the series, using developmentally appropriate language and concepts, all created with Reflection, Connection, and Learning in mind.

# Page-by-Page Guide

This remainder of this Educator's Companion will explore and explain each page spread from the siddur in detail, and provide ideas and strategies for the educator to best maximize the educational potential of each page. Each page of this guide will present the following resources in order to do this:

- The text of the *tefilla* translated (translation by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks taken from the Koren Sacks Siddur)
- Possible educational themes from the text listed (for exploration independently from the other elements found on the page of the siddur)
- Highlighting of the text explained
- The illustration fully explained, together with suggested discussions that could emanate from it
- The Conceptual Translation reproduced alongside the corresponding *tefilla* text, with a short educational rationale
- An explanation and exploration of the *kavanot* (Thought Questions and Stories) including ideas for ensuing discussion from the *kavanot*, and possible classroom activities for teachers to further explore the educational potential of the *kavanot*
- Additional *Kavanot*: *kavanot* that could be used in the classroom, but were not included in the siddur, usually due to spatial constraints.

This will give the educator flexibility in how they wish to use the siddur in their own particular educational context. For example, the classroom teacher could choose to focus on a spread for a 5–10-minute period each day during the *tefilla* period over one week; one day on the meaning of the text, the next day on the illustration, a day on each *kavana*, and then a final day to summarize and reflect on everything the class has learned that week and their new understanding of the *tefilla*. Or perhaps the teacher wishes to abridge the *tefilla* one day a week, and dedicate 30 minutes to consider a *tefilla* using all the educational elements of the page at the same time. The congregational *tefilla* leader, with weekly programming opportunities, could choose to explore a different page in depth as part of the more extended time they have with the children, or may also wish to compare and contrast different spreads.




# מודה אני/על נטילת ידיים


pp. 8–9

9

When we wake up, we thank Hashem with our first thoughts and words.



Girls say:



Boys say:

**מוֹדָה | מוֹדָה**

**אֲנִי לְפָנֶיךָ מֶלֶךְ חַי וְקַיִם**

**שֶׁהַחַיּוּת בֵּי נִשְׁמָתִי בְּחֶמְלָה**


**רַבָּה אֱמוּנָתְךָ.**

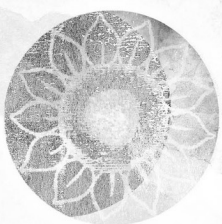
When we wake up, we wash our hands in a special way. With a cup, pour water over your whole right hand, and then over your whole left hand. Do that again two more times, and then say this *berakha*.


**בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם**


**אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ עַל נְטִילַת יָדַיִם.**

8

 I thank You, Hashem, You are our King forever, You give me back my neshama with kindness.












 Why is saying “thank you” important?

 “Rabbi Akiva was forty years old and had never studied Torah before. He was once standing by a well and wondered to himself, ‘Who made this hole in this rock?’ The people there said to him, ‘It was the water which drips on it every day.’ Rabbi Akiva suddenly realized that if something as soft as water can cut through something as hard as the rock, then surely the words of Torah, which are as hard as iron, can enter his heart, which is just flesh and blood! From then on he decided to dedicate his life to studying Torah.”

While you wash your hands, as you feel the water wash over your hands, think about the power of water.

What kind of things do you think can “enter your heart”? What will you allow to enter your heart today?

## The Tefilla Text

### Translation:

I thank You, living and eternal King, for giving me back my soul in mercy. Great is Your faithfulness.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has made us holy through His commandments, and has commanded us about washing hands.

### Highlighted Text:

The words *על נטילת ידיים* that conclude the *berakha* on the ritual washing of the hands is highlighted in the same color as the story.

### Educational Themes contained in the text:

- God as “King”/Kingship (מלכות)
- God as Creator of the world
- Gratitude
- Life is a gift from God
- Waking, renewal, creation
- Gender specific relationships with God
- Hands = action/behavior
- Water is life giving (plants, animals, humans)
- Water and ritual purity

## The Illustration

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Here we have the morning sun with her rays shining on the world in the early morning, heralding a new day and a fresh start. Within the full circle of the sun is the form of the moon, with its blueish light emanating from the previous night, while the first rays of the sun begin to shine on the world. This is the only time of the day when both the sun and moon are perceivable

in our sky. This also gives the illustration a sense of cyclical time, and the daily cycle. After the darkness of the night, with only the moon to give us comfort and limited light, comes the new dawn, with a fresh start, the brightening light of the sunrise giving us new hope for the new day.

## The Kavanot

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### Conceptual Translation of:

מודה / מודה / אני לפניך מלך חי וקים שהחזרת בי נשמתی בחמלה רבה אמונתך.

### Thought Question:

We begin our *tefillot* with the ultimate “thank you” – to Hashem for giving us renewed life each morning after we wake up. This question asks the child to consider why.

Secondary questions to consider:

- Why start the siddur this way?
- Why start our day this way?
- Why is it important for us to be grateful, and to voice that?
- When we say thank you to other people, are we doing it for them or for ourselves?
- When we say thank you to Hashem, are we doing it for Him or for ourselves?

### Activity ideas:

The teacher may wish to use this opportunity to plan experiential activities in the classroom connected to saying thank you. These could include:

- Asking for volunteers to say thank you to someone in the class. Then exploring with the students what it felt like to say thank you and to be thanked.
- Asking students to make a list of people that they think they ought to thank that day and why.

- Asking students to make a list of things they ought to thank Hashem for (see the thought question on page 122).

### Story:

This famous story, found in *Avot deRabbi Natan* (6:2), asks the reader to consider the properties of water, both physical and spiritual. It was chosen and placed on this page in order to encourage the child to relate to the *berakha* of the ritual washing of hands in the context of water and its role in our life. While water can be physically gentle and life giving, in this story it is seen to be powerful, and the question following the story asks the reader to consider that power. The Torah is often compared to water in both Tanakh and the Talmud, including this aggadic story, and the message is clearly that something as pleasant as the Torah has the power to penetrate the hearts and minds of man. The other follow-up question asks the child to consider what other ideas, values or experiences may penetrate their heart, in general, and specifically on this day.

### Activity ideas:

The teacher may wish to bring water into the classroom, or take the class outside of the classroom to a body of water, such as a stream or lake. In both these cases experiencing water in some way will encourage the child to consider the properties of water, and the role it plays in their life. The internet could also be utilized for research on the power and role of water, as a whole class activity, or individual/small group mini-projects.

**Additional Kavanot:**

*Thought questions:*

- What do you want to say thank you for today?
- How do you feel when someone thanks you?
- Why do we describe Hashem as a King? What other jobs does Hashem have, and why is the job of king the one we think about here?
- What is a *neshama*? How is your *neshama* different from everyone else's?
- What else are you going to do with your hands today?

# אשר יצר

pp. 10–11

11
10

*This is said every morning and also each time you leave the restroom, to thank Hashem for our healthy working bodies.*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
אֲשֶׁר יָצַר אֶת הָאָדָם בְּחָכְמָה  
וּבְרָא בּוֹ נִקְבִּים וְנִקְבִּים, חֲלוּלִים חֲלוּלִים.  
גִּלּוּי וִידּוּעַ לִפְנֵי כֶּסֶף כְּבוֹדָךְ  
שָׂאֵם יִפְתָּח אֶחָד מֵהֶם אוֹ יִסְתֵּם אֶחָד מֵהֶם  
אִי אֶפְשָׁר לְהִתְקִים וּלְעִמֵּד לִפְנֶיךָ.  
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ  
רוֹפֵא כָּל בָּשָׂר וּמַפְלִיא לַעֲשׂוֹת.

 "The truth is the truth we discover.  
The truth is the truth we inherit."

In which of your classes at school will you discover truth and in which will you inherit it?

Where do you see Hashem the most in school?

 Hashem made the human body with many wonderful and important parts. If even one of them was slightly different and didn't work properly, then without extra help it would be impossible to live in this world.



 Just a few hours after Aharon married Tzvia, Israel went to war in Gaza; Aharon, a commander in the paratroopers, was called to join his unit. He didn't have to go, he could have used the wedding as an excuse, but he wanted to join his men and fight to defend his country. Ten days later Aharon entered a booby-trapped house which detonated and he was crushed under the building. The first medic to reach him thought he had died. But as his body was evacuated a faint pulse was detected, and he was airlifted to safety in a helicopter. The medic aboard saw he was struggling to breathe and made a brave decision that would save his life. He inserted a tube into his throat so he could breathe, the first time such a procedure had been carried out in-flight. But still with serious head injuries it seemed unlikely that he would survive. Miraculously, within a week Aharon was sitting up, awake and alert, and after several surgeries and much treatment he was able to resume a normal life. Four years later Aharon ran the NYC marathon and raised money for a charity that supports victims of terror. Aharon's surgeon said that it was an honor to help such a hero of Israel!












## The Tefilla Text

### Translation:

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

### Highlighted Text:

The words אשר יצר את האדם בחכמה are highlighted in an aqua color from the illustration.

### Educational Themes contained in the text:

- The miracle of life/the human body
- God as the Creator of the world and of man
- The holiness of the human body as well as the soul
- Healing and God as a Healer
- The fragility of human life
- Health and personal responsibility to lead a healthy life
- The role of the physician and the role of God in healing



- The responsibility to heal others
- Not taking health for granted
- Human biology as proof of God's existence

## The Illustration

This illustration was inspired by Leonardo da Vinci's famous painting, *Vitruvian Man*. The illustration, just as the *berakha* of אשר יצר, expresses the beauty of the system of the human body (as opposed to the external beauty of the human body itself). The wheels and cogs in the illustration hint at the human body as a well-oiled, remarkable machine. The coloring and textures

behind the mechanisms in the illustration hint at the spiritual aspect of human existence, and although we celebrate the physical aspects of the human in this *berakha*, and the *neshama* and spiritual elements in the following *berakha* of אלהי נשמה, this reflects Judaism's refusal to separate between the two – human existence is a perfect balance of the physical and the spiritual.

## The Kavanot

### Conceptual Translation of:

אשר יצר את האדם בחכמה וברא בו נקבים נקבים, חלולים חלולים. גלוי וידוע לפני כסא כבודך שאם יפתח אחד מהם או יסתם אחד מהם אי אפשר להתקיים ולעמוד לפניך.

### Thought Question:

“חכמה is the truth we discover. תורה is the truth we inherit.”

This quote comes from Rabbi Sacks' book *Future Tense* and summarizes his approach to finding religious significance and value in secular sources. For Rabbi Sacks there are two legitimate paths to finding God and religious inspiration in this world, and they complement each other. חכמה is truth that we discover in “secular” studies, including the physical and social sciences, literature and the arts, and general culture. תורה, taken in its widest sense as a body of religious knowledge that has evolved and developed within a clear framework of truth revealed at a historical moment in time, is truth inherited by a particular people through their particular religion. Both are equally legitimate paths to truth, and to knowledge of and intimacy with God. Each provides a unique path to the same destination, and these paths complement each other, making that journey the most efficient and effective when taken together.

The questions for reflection that follow this quote ask the student to consider where in their school day they will have the opportunity to progress down each of

these paths. Hopefully, every class they have will fit into one or both of these categories. For some people, it is easier to see and experience God in a Torah class or during *tefilla*, and for others a science or sports or literature class will be where they find it easier to perceive God's presence and role in the world. The second question asks the child to consider where they are most likely to feel God's presence, and it is also important to note that it asks this in a sufficiently wide sense that the answer could also include areas of the school that are outside the classroom such as the lunch hall or the school yard.

This quote and these questions are placed here because this *berakha* can be considered a meeting point between these two paths to Divine Truth. This *berakha* asks us to consider the beauty of the system of the human body (as reflected in the illustration) and its Divine Architect. This *berakha* reminds us to see God in our biology class as much as our Talmud class.

### Activity ideas:

This could be a good opportunity for the teacher to demonstrate the two paths to God explored in this *kavana*, by bringing חכמה into the Judaics classroom (or the *Beit Keneset*) in the form of physical props, or the science teacher, or taking the class out into nature. The object must be to find the footprint of God in our world, using חכמה and also תורה (finding related Torah sources to the experience of חכמה that you provide for your students).

**Story:**

This story provides several points of inspiration to help the reader find the imprint of God in the human body. The focus of this story in the context of this *berakha* should be the miraculous nature of the human body to heal itself, and to achieve amazing feats. The following themes in the story could be discussed and explored:

- Aharon's heroism – putting his people before his own happiness
- Healing (and health) as a partnership between man and God
- The miraculous ability of the human body to heal itself
- Is the human body miraculous? (natural miracles vs. supernatural miracles)
- The power of the human mind in overcoming illness
- Pushing one's body to the limits in order to achieve difficult feats.

**Activity Ideas:**

Human machines: Get your class to replicate the functions of human organs through their bodies or by using

props. Divide your class into two teams. Ask each one to act out the functions of a machine that replicates the function of an internal organ in the body. You can choose which one or let them choose (for example, a kidney, a lung, the heart).

**Additional Kavanot:****Story:**

The son of Rabbi Steinsaltz was very sick with leukemia when he was a young boy of fifteen. The doctors were very worried about his condition, and recommended that he have a bone marrow transplant. Rabbi Steinsaltz traveled to New York to visit the Lubavitcher Rebbe to receive a blessing and ask his advice. The Rebbe took Rabbi Steinsaltz's hand and blessed his son with long life. He told him that he would make a full recovery. But he also warned him not to allow the doctors to proceed with the transplant. The doctors were not happy when the family informed them that they would only allow their son to be treated with other methods, and not have the transplant. The Rebbe's prediction came true, and the boy made a full recovery.

# אלהי נשמה/ציצית

pp. 12–13

13
12


**אלהי** 1  
נשמה שנתת בי טהורה היא. 2  
אתה בראתה, אתה יצרתה, אתה נפחתה בי 3  
ואתה משמרה בקרבי, ואתה עתיד לטלה ממני 4  
ולחזירה בי לעתיד לבוא. 5  
כל זמן שהנשמה בקרבי 6

**מודה** | **מודה** 7  
אני לפניך 8  
יהוה אלהי ואלהי אבותי 9  
רבון כל המעשים, אדון כל הנשמות. 10  
ברוך אתה יהוה 11  
המחזיר נשמות לפגרים מתים. 12


*This bracha is said before putting on the tzitzit while they say the bracha and then kiss them.*

ברוך אתה יהוה אלהינו מלך העולם 13  
אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו על מצות ציצית. 14









 Hashem, You created my soul and breathed it into me. And You look after it while it is in me.

 "Whoever destroys a single soul, it is as if he destroyed an entire world. And whoever saves a single soul, it is as if he has saved an entire world." (Mishna Sanhedrin, 4:5)

Why do you think the Mishna uses the word "soul" to describe a life? Why do you think a single soul is equal to an entire world?

 "Man creates a hundred coins from one press and each coin is exactly the same. But Hashem, the King of kings, creates all mankind from one man (Adam), and each person is totally unique!" (Mishna Sanhedrin, 4:5)

Look around at all your friends right now. What is unique about you?

## The Tefilla Text

### Translation:

My God, the soul You placed within me is pure. You created it, You formed it, You breathed it into me, and You guard it while it is within me. One day You will take it from me, and restore it to me in the time to come. As long as the soul is within me, I will thank You, Lord my God and God of my ancestors, Master of all works, Lord of all souls. Blessed are You, Lord, who restores souls to lifeless bodies.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has made us holy through His commandments,

and has commanded us about the command of tasseled garments.

### Highlighted Text:

The words על מצות ציצית are highlighted in the blue of the tallit in the illustration.

### Educational Themes contained in the text:

- The soul and its divine source

- The duality of man as both a physical and spiritual being (mutual dependency)
- השגחה פרטית (Divine Providence)
- Gratitude
- God as Creator of the world, both physical and spiritual
- Our soul is pure and we have free choice to lead it to good or bad
- Man is inherently good (implied by the fact that the soul Hashem has given us is “pure”)
- The soul cannot be felt physically, only sensed spiritually (like other incorporeal concepts)
- The soul as what is unique in each human
- *Tzitzit* as a visual reminder/signpost
- The values of Jewish clothing

## The Illustration

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The illustration shows us a *tallit katan* (as opposed to a *tallit gadol* which needs a different *berakha* to the one on this page of the siddur). It is not being worn, and so no character is presented, but it does seem to have some kind of form as it blows in the wind. The illustration tries to capture the atmosphere of both the *tefillot* on the page – the *berakha* for *tzitzit* as well as the *tefilla* אלהי נשמה which acknowledges Hashem as the source of our *neshama* and thanks Him for it. The feel of the illustration as a whole is very spiritual.

The *tzitzit katan* here has the stripes of *tekhelet* (turquoise) associated with the mitzva of *tzitzit*. This is explained more fully on page 78 with the third paragraph of the *Shema*, where a *tallit gadol* features in the illustration, and the link between these stripes and the Israeli national flag is explored. On that page a story relevant to *tzitzit* is also found.

## The Kavanot

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### Conceptual Translation of:

אלהי נשמה שנתת בי טהורה היא. אתה בראתה, אתה יצרתה, אתה נפחתה בי ואתה משמרה בקרבי

“Man creates a hundred coins from one press and each coin is exactly the same. But Hashem, the King of kings, creates all mankind from one man [Adam], and each person is totally unique!” (Mishna *Sanhedrin*, 4:5)

### Thought Questions:

Both quotes in the thought question *kavanot* are from the same mishna in *Sanhedrin* (4:5), and while they are clearly related, each section delivers a distinct and important educational message. The text of the *tefilla* focuses our attention on the soul. The incorporeal soul is a difficult abstract concept for any adult to consider, let alone a third- to fifth-grade student. We have chosen, with the help of this mishna and these thought questions, to focus the child on the soul as each person’s unique spiritual personality and unique worth in the eyes of God and hopefully the world.

“Whoever destroys a single soul, it is as if he destroyed an entire world. And whoever saves a single soul, it is as if he has saved an entire world.”

The mishna uses the word soul to draw our attention to the infinite value of each unique human being. This point is driven home by the juxtaposition of this statement with the *reisha* of the mishna. The child is being asked to realize that the soul they are thanking God for in this *tefilla* is what makes them unique, and what gives them infinite spiritual value in the world. Their soul is worth an entire world. This is both a statement of spiritual worth, as well as a conceptual statement about the infinite souls that can come from each soul if allowed to procreate.

The value of each individual soul as a unique being in the world created by God is also found in the verse from *Beresheet* (1:27), where God described man as created “in His image”:



ויברא אלהים את-האדם בצלמו, בצלם אלהים ברא אותו: זכר ונקבה,  
ברא אתם.

Using this verse to explore the concepts found in this *tefilla* and in the mishna helps us to understand that while each soul is unique, each soul is created by the same Creator, and in its Creator's image, and is therefore of infinite value and worth. The fact that every human being is similar (created in God's image), and also unique (each has their own unique soul), leads us to believe in the dignity of human life, and the value of human rights. These are core Jewish values.

*Activity ideas:*

- The final thought question – “What is unique about you?” – could be the basis of a class activity, where everyone in the class volunteers a unique character trait they possess. Variations on this theme could be: each child writes a trait on a piece of paper, and the papers are collected in a box. Everyone then picks one out and has to guess who that trait belongs to. Or, a piece of paper is passed around the class, and folded each time someone writes their trait on the paper. By the end, the teacher can read out all the traits written on the paper, as an expression of the unique qualities of the class as a whole, made up of many unique personalities.
- To illustrate how many souls can come from one, a family tree could be brought into class, or the

class could be asked to create their own family trees, and understand how many generations can come from one soul. This could also be an arts and crafts project.

- The final scene in the film *Schindler's List* is a moving expression of this same theme, when the descendants of the thousand souls that Schindler saved visit his grave on the Mount of Olives. While the film itself may not be appropriate to show this age group, the last scene is not inappropriate, and the message is powerfully expressed in it.
- An activity using finger prints (or a demonstration of how DNA works) would be a creative way to explore how unique we are physically from one another. The discussion of whether this is true spiritually could come from there.
- A creative art project involving snowflakes is also a fun way to consider millions of unique creations.
- Two-minute biographies: Ask students to find a partner and give them two minutes to tell them what they would especially like them to know about themselves and their lives: past, present, hopes, plans, facts, etc. After each has a turn, they join another pair to make a foursome, and introduce the partner to the new pair, by relating what they remember about the partner's autobiography. When each of the four has had a turn, they join the whole group and introduce their partners to the class.

# לעסוק בדברי תורה

pp. 14–15

15


The following בְּרִית are said for the mitzva of learning Torah.  
Even though we will do this mitzva throughout the day,  
we only say them once in the morning. We then immediately do  
the mitzva by saying some words of Torah following the בְּרִית.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ הוֹדוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו  
וְצִוָּנוּ לְעִסֵּק בְּדִבְרֵי תוֹרָה.

וְהָעֶרֶב נָא יְיָ הוֹדוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֵת דִּבְרֵי תוֹרָתְךָ  
בְּפִינוּ וּבְפִי עַמְּךָ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל  
וְנִהְיָ אֲנַחְנוּ וְצֹאֲצָאֵינוּ  
וְצֹאֲצָאֵי עַמְּךָ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל  
כְּלָנוּ יוֹדְעֵי שְׂמֶךְ וְלִוְמֵי תוֹרָתְךָ לְשִׁמְחָה.  
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ  
הַמְלַמֵּד תוֹרָה לְעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל.

16

Please, Hashem, make it enjoyable for us to learn Your Torah. And help us and our future generations to learn more about You and Your Torah.



“When the Romans had forbidden Jews from learning Torah in Eretz Yisrael, Rabbi Akiva continued to teach Torah to his students. ‘Aren’t you scared that the Romans will catch you?’ he was once asked. He replied with this story: ‘Once a fox was walking along a riverbank when he noticed fish darting from place to place in the river. He asked them, “What are you swimming away from?” They replied, “We are fleeing from the nets that humans use to try and catch us.” The wily fox asked, “Why don’t you come and live with me on dry land?” The fish replied to him, “Oh, Fox, they say the fox is one of the cleverest animals, but you are not clever at all. If we are afraid when we are in the water, a place that gives us life, then how will it be for us if we live on dry land, a place of death for us?” Rabbi Akiva said, “So too with us. If we are scared while we learn Torah, our life-source, then imagine how our lives would be if we stop learning Torah?”

How is Torah like oxygen for us?

14

## The Tefilla Text

### Translation:

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has made us holy through His commandments, and has commanded us to engage in study of the words of Torah.

Please, Lord our God, make the words of Your Torah sweet in our mouths and in the mouths of Your people, the house of Israel, so that we, our descendants (and their descendants) and the descendants of Your people, the house of

Israel, may all know Your name and study Your Torah for its own sake. Blessed are You, Lord, who teaches Torah to His people Israel.

### Highlighted Text:

The words לעסוק בדברי תורה are highlighted in the same color as the story, and the words בְּפִינוּ וּבְפִי עַמְּךָ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל are highlighted in olive green connecting it to the illustration.

### Educational Themes contained in the text:

- A *berakha* for *Limmud Torah* means it is a mitzva – divine command/spiritual experience (and not just intellectual/educational act)
- We are “chosen” to be the only People with the Torah, and with this the responsibility of being an “*Am Segula*”
- We pray that the Torah will be “sweet” in our mouths (as spiritual nourishment, just like sweet food is physical nourishment)
- We pray that we will be successful at educating (and passing our enthusiasm) to our children
- *Limmud Torah* is our gateway to understanding the ways of God
- The Torah that Moshe received, the same one we learn today, represents an unbroken tradition/heritage throughout the generations and our history
- The text of the blessing is to “engage in the words of the Torah” rather than merely “study” them
- Hashem is the source of the Torah, and He teaches it to us personally
- Learning Torah “for its own sake/לשמה”

## The Illustration

Here we meet the character from the Koren Children’s Siddur for the first time in our siddur, and of course he is more mature looking, now that he has reached fourth grade. Here he is learning Torah in his school classroom, as we say the *berakha* on this mitzva. The

words roll out of his mouth, hinting at the highlighted words בְּפִינוּ וּבְפִי עַמְּךָ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל – (*make the words of Your Torah sweet*) in our mouths and in the mouths of Your people. Notice the words he is learning – בְּרָאשִׁית, בְּרָא – the very first words of the Torah.

## The Kavanot

### Conceptual Translation of:

וְהָעֶרֶב נֹא אֵלֵינוּ אֶת דְּבָרֵי תוֹרָתְךָ בְּפִינוּ וּבְפִי עַמְּךָ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל וְנִהְיָ אֲנַחְנוּ וְצִאצְאֵינוּ וְצִאצְאֵי עַמְּךָ בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל כֻּלָּנוּ יוֹדְעֵי שְׁמֶךָ וְלִוְמוֹדֵי תוֹרָתְךָ לְשִׁמָּה.

### Story:

This famous story from the Talmud (*Berakhot* 61b) has Rabbi Akiva explaining with a parable why it is not possible for Jews to live without the constant presence of *Limmud Torah* in their lives. Just as a fish would die on dry land because the water is the source of its oxygen, its lifeline, so the Jew could not live without Torah. Perhaps that is intimated in the language of this, the first of the *berakhot* for *Limmud Torah* – לְעֵסֶק – בדברי תורה – which implies a constant engagement in the mitzva.

The question for further thought asks the child to consider why we relate to Torah in that way. Why do we think that we could not live a life without constant

Torah learning? What do we gain from learning Torah that we could not live without?

### Activity ideas:

It could be a fun activity to go around the class asking everyone to volunteer something they don’t think they could live life without. Then as a class, discuss what these things have in common, and how the Torah fits in to that picture.

### Additional Kavanot:

#### Thought questions:

- What important lessons have your parents taught you? What do you think is important to teach your children?
- Why do we make a *bracha* on learning Torah?
- *If praying is talking to Hashem, then learning Torah is listening to Hashem!*<sup>2</sup> What are you going to say to Hashem today and what will you hear from Him?

2. Based on a comment made by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks in his commentary on the *Shema* in the Koren Sacks Siddur

# אשר בחר בנו

pp. 16–17

17

1 בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
2 אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בָּנוּ מִכָּל הָעַמִּים  
3 וְנָתַן לָנוּ אֶת תּוֹרָתוֹ.  
4 בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה.

5 יְבָרְכֵךְ יְהוָה וְיִשְׁמְרֶכֶךָ:  
6 יְאֵר יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וְיַחֲנֹךְ:  
7 יֵשֶׁא יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וְיִשֶּׁם לְךָ שָׁלוֹם:

8 רִאשִׁית חֲכָמָה יִרְאֵת יְהוָה  
9 שֶׁכֶּל טוֹב לְכָל-עֲשִׂיהֶם, תִּהְלְתוּ עֲמֻדָת לְעַד:  
10 תּוֹרָה צִוְּהֵלָנוּ מֹשֶׁה, מִנְרָשָׁה קֹהֶלֶת יַעֲקֹב:

16



אֲנִי יְהוָה קְרָאתֶיךָ בְּצִדִּיק  
וְאֶחָזֵק בְּיָדְךָ וְאֶצִּיגֶנּוּ וְאֶחַנֶּנּוּ  
לְבָרִית עִם לְאוֹר גִּיּוֹם.

(Yeshayahu 42:6)

The Jewish People are a  
"Chosen People."  
Who chose us and for what  
purpose? How does that  
affect you?

The saintly Rebbe of Sanz  
was famous for his warmth  
and love. He survived the Shoah  
but lost his wife and eleven  
children. On Erev Yom Kippur in  
1947 he was still living in a refugee  
camp in Germany. As the holy  
day approached the rebbe heard  
a gentle knock on his door. As he  
opened the door he saw a young

girl with tears in her eyes. She  
explained that every year on Erev  
Yom Kippur her father would  
bless her with the Priestly Blessing,  
but this year there was no one  
to bless her. "My child, I will be  
your father this year," he said  
to her as he placed his hands on  
her head and recited the ancient  
blessing with concentration and  
emotion. The girl left smiling and  
comforted. A short while later a  
group of young girls came to his  
door, asking for the same from  
him, and he blessed them with  
tears in his eyes. As the news  
spread, the rebbe spent the rest  
of Erev Yom Kippur blessing all  
87 orphaned girls of the refugee  
camp. Each one was touched by  
his love and warmth forever.










## The Tefilla Text

### Translation:

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has chosen us from all the peoples and given us His Torah. Blessed are You, Lord, Giver of the Torah.

May the Lord bless you and protect you. May the Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you. May the Lord turn His face toward you and grant you peace.

The Torah Moses commanded us is the heritage of the congregation of Jacob.

### Highlighted Text:

The words אשר בחר בנו מכל העמים are highlighted in the color of the thought question which deals with the concept of chosenness, and the words נותן התורה are colored in a light brown to match the illustration of the Sefer Torah.

### Educational Themes contained in the text:

- We are "chosen" to be the only People with the Torah, and with this the responsibility of being an "Am Segula"

- We pray that the Torah will be “sweet” in our mouths (as spiritual nourishment just like sweet food is physical nourishment)
- The mitzva of educating our children/next generation
- *Limmud Torah* is our gateway to understanding the ways of God
- The Torah that Moshe received, the same one we learn today, represents an unbroken tradition/heritage throughout the generations and our history
- Torah is “commanded” by Hashem (i.e., it is an imperative/instruction)

## The Illustration

The illustration is of a classic Ashkenazi *Sefer Torah*, floating with an ethereal textured background behind it. While *Birkhot HaTorah* is for the mitzva of learning Torah in its widest sense, the illustration reminds us that the basis for the whole belief system of Torah

lifestyle and learning is the original Torah text. The spiritual ethereal feel behind the illustration reminds us of the spiritual aspects of Torah learning, as well as the more obvious cognitive and legal elements of Torah learning.

## The Kavanot

### Thought Question:

אני הי קראתיך בצדק ואחזק בידך ואצרך ואתנך לברית עם לאור גוים  
(Yeshayahu 42:6)

*I the LORD have called you in righteousness, and have taken hold of your hand, and kept you, and set you for a covenant of the people, for a light of the nations;*

This thought question is anchored to the words in the *berakha* אשר בחר בך מכל העמים and asks the student to begin to think about what it means to be a member of a chosen people. The verse from Yeshayahu is one possible answer – being chosen means having the responsibility to be a “light unto the nations.” However, the thought question is open ended and students may arrive at many varied conclusions on what chosenness means, including special love from God, special relationship of responsibility to protect, chosen to keep the Torah, chosen to be successful etc. To link being a Chosen People to being a “light unto the nations” is to suggest that God has chosen the Jewish People to spread His word to the world in order to improve it.

There is an example of a story about the Jewish People being a “light unto the nations” on page 72, which

is linked to the mention of chosenness in the *tefilla* (אהבה רבה) on that page, and the two thought questions on page 138 explore the concept of *Am Segula* (in the context of the *Tikkun Olam* referred to in the *עלינו* there).

### Story:

The story found on this page about the Rebbe of Sanz is about the priestly blessing that is found on this page of the siddur. There is a widespread custom to give this *berakha* to one’s children on Erev Yom Kippur, and this is the central point of the story. Many people also give their children this *berakha* every Friday night, and it can be found on page 170 with an illustration of a father giving his daughter the *berakha*. The story explores the notion that this *berakha* expresses the love and care that a parent, and the rebbe, and God, have for Jewish children. While the verses of this *berakha* are included at this point of the siddur as a way to fulfill the mitzva of learning Torah (for which we have just made the *berakha*), perhaps the choice of these verses specifically suggest a quid-pro-quo relationship between us and God. If we keep and learn the Torah (for which we have just made the *berakha*), then God will look after us (as written in these verses).



# מה טבו

pp. 18–19

19
18

Many people say this תפלה when they first enter the מִשְׁכַּן in the morning.

**מַה-טָּבוֹ**

אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְעֻקֵּב, מִשְׁכְּנֵינוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל:  
וְאֲנִי בְּרַב חֶסֶדְךָ אָבוֹא בֵּיתְךָ  
אֲשֶׁתְּחִוָּה אֱלֹהֵיכֶלֶךְ שָׁךְ בְּיָדְךָ:  
יְהוָה אֱהַבְתִּי מְעֹז בֵּיתְךָ  
וּמְקוֹם מִשְׁכַּן כְּבוֹדְךָ:  
וְאֲנִי אֲשֶׁתְּחִוָּה  
וְאֶכְרַעָה, אֶבְרָכָה לְפָנֶי יְהוָה עֲשֵׂי.  
וְאֲנִי תַפְלִיתִי לְךָ יְהוָה  
עַתָּה רְצֹז  
אֱלֹהִים בְּרַב־חֶסֶדְךָ  
עֲנֵנִי בְּאַמֶּת יִשְׁעֶךָ:



Why do you think a synagogue is called a **בֵּית כְּנֶסֶת** and not a **בֵּית תַּפְלָה**?

When the great Hasidic rebbe Menahem Mendel of Kotzk was a small boy of just five years old, he asked his father, "Where is God?" His father replied, "God is everywhere, my son." Young Menahem Mendel said to him, "I think God is only where you let Him in!"

How can you let Hashem in today?











## The Tefilla Text

### Translation:

How goodly are your tents, Jacob, your dwelling places, Israel. As for me, in Your great loving-kindness, I will come into Your House. I will bow down to Your holy Temple in awe of You. Lord, I love the habitation of Your House, the place where Your glory dwells. As for me, I will bow in worship; I will bend the knee before the Lord my Maker. As for me, may my prayer come to You, Lord, at a time of favor. God, in Your great loving-kindness, answer me with Your faithful salvation.

### Highlighted Text:

The words מה-טבו אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְעֻקֵּב, מִשְׁכְּנֵינוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל are highlighted in the same brown as the tent from the illustration.

### Educational Themes contained in the text:

- Tent = tent of learning (*Beit Midrash*)
- Tent = the Jewish home (which should also function as a *Beit Midrash* and *Beit Keneset*)
- Parallel to our tent is God's tent = *Beit HaMikdash*

## The Illustration

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In the Koren Children's Siddur the illustrator explored what a Jewish building would be (an "*Ohel Tov*," so to speak) and depicted a tent as a metaphor for the home and the synagogue with its accompanying values of *hesed* (loving-kindness) and *hakhnasat orhim* (welcoming guests, reminiscent of Abraham's hospitality and his four-doored tent). Here we have a development of the theme, with the "Jewish Building," the tent (home/

synagogue), linked to the mitzva and meta-value of *Limmud Torah*. The biblical character is learning Torah in front of his tent, and the path behind him represents a Torah scroll stretching through the generations connecting them on the basis of this value, and expressing the article of faith that the *Sefer Torah* we read today contains the very same words as the original Torah that Moshe wrote.

## The Kavanot

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### Thought Question:

The Hebrew for synagogue literally means a house of gathering, implying that there is more to the synagogue than just a house of prayer. It is a community center, and the focus of the community. Activities and services for the community are provided through the synagogue including social, charitable, and educational services. The synagogue is an example of a Jewish building/tent referred to in the *tefilla* מִדֵּה טֵבָוּהָ.

### Story:

This famous story<sup>3</sup> challenges the child to think about where we can find God, and if we need specific buildings such as synagogues and study halls to find God, or whether God can be found wherever we are. These themes are also explored in the story on page 52 and the thought question on page 53, in the context of Yerushalayim as a focus for God's presence.

### Activity idea:

A scavenger hunt for God: as a class, search throughout your school for Hashem. In each place you choose (such as the lunch hall, the synagogue, the art studio, the principal's office, the gym, etc.) an argument could be made for why God can be found in this place. At the end of the hunt, the class can vote for where they most felt God in their school.

### Additional Kavanot:

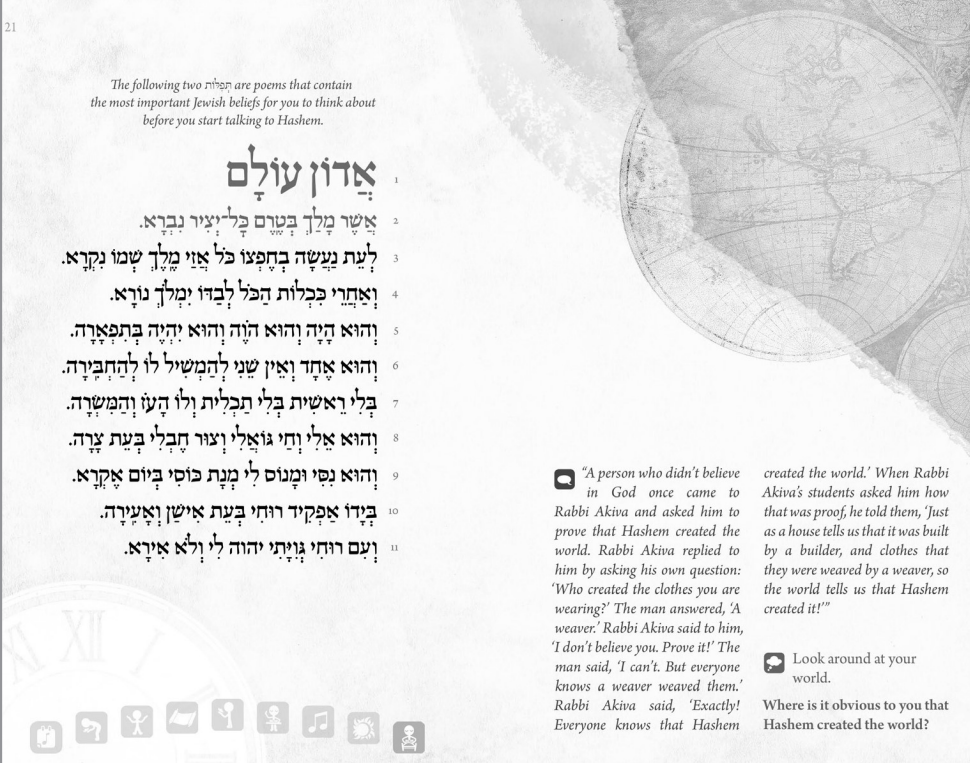
#### Thought questions:

- How often do you visit Hashem's House? How often does Hashem visit your house?
- What makes a tent or building "good"? What makes it Jewish?

3. There are other versions of how this story happened exactly. This one was based on the version found in Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan's book *Innerspace*.

# אדון עולם


pp. 20–21

21



The following two תפילות are poems that contain the most important Jewish beliefs for you to think about before you start talking to Hashem.

## אֲדוֹן עוֹלָם

- 1 אֲשׁוּר מֶלֶךְ בְּטֶרֶם כָּל־יֵצִיר נִבְרָא.
- 2 לַעֲת נַעֲשֶׂה בְּחִפְצוֹ כֹּל אֲזִי מֶלֶךְ שְׁמוֹ נִקְרָא.
- 3 וְאַחֲרֵי כָכָל הַכֹּל לְבַדּוֹ יִמְלֹךְ נִוְרָא.
- 4 וְהוּא הָיָה וְהוּא הוֹדָה וְהוּא יִהְיֶה בְּתַפְאָרָה.
- 5 וְהוּא אֶחָד וְאֵין שְ�נֵי לְהַמְשִׁיל לּוֹ לְהַחֲבִירָה.
- 6 בְּלִי רֵאשִׁית בְּלִי תְּכֵלִית וְלֹא הָעוֹ וְהַמְשָׁרָה.
- 7 וְהוּא אֵלֵינוּ וְחֵי גּוֹאֲלֵנוּ וְצוּר חֲבָלֵי בֵּיעַת צָרָה.
- 8 וְהוּא נֶפֶשׁ וּמְנוּסָה לִי מִנֶּת בּוֹסֵי בְיוֹם אֶקְרָא.
- 9 בְּיָדוֹ אֶפְקִיד רוּחִי בְּעַת אִישׁוֹן וְאֶעֱנֶהָ.
- 10 וְעַם רוּחִי גְּזוּתִי יִהְיֶה לִי וְלֹא אֵירָא.

 "A person who didn't believe in God once came to Rabbi Akiva and asked him to prove that Hashem created the world. Rabbi Akiva replied to him by asking his own question: 'Who created the clothes you are wearing?' The man answered, 'A weaver.' Rabbi Akiva said to him, 'I don't believe you. Prove it!' The man said, 'I can't. But everyone knows a weaver weaved them.' Rabbi Akiva said, 'Exactly! Everyone knows that Hashem

created the world.' When Rabbi Akiva's students asked him how that was proof, he told them, 'Just as a house tells us that it was built by a builder, and clothes that they were weaved by a weaver, so the world tells us that Hashem created it!'"

 Look around at your world.  
Where is it obvious to you that Hashem created the world?

## The Tefilla Text

### Translation:

Lord of the universe, who reigned before the birth of any thing –  
When by His will all things were made, then was His name proclaimed King.  
And when all things shall cease to be, He alone will reign in awe.  
He was, He is, and He shall be glorious for evermore.  
He is One, there is none else, alone, unique, beyond compare;

Without beginning, without end, His might, His rule are everywhere.  
He is my God; my Redeemer lives. He is the Rock on whom I rely –  
My banner and my safe retreat, my cup, my portion when I cry.  
Into His hand my soul I place, when I awake and when I sleep.  
The Lord is with me, I shall not fear; body and soul from harm will He keep.

**Highlighted Text:**

The words אדון עולם אשר מלך בטרום בל-יציר נברא are highlighted in a light brown taken from the illustration.

**Educational Themes contained in the text:**

- God as “King”
- God as Creator of the world

- God of the universe (transcendent) vs. Personal God (immanent)
- God of history – God is infinite, eternal (pre-dates history), but is involved in the history of the universe, world, Jewish people, and our own history
- God protects me (my body and soul) when I sleep and when I wake up

## The Illustration

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The illustration here expresses some of the core themes of this *tefilla*, through representing the world, and time (bottom left-hand corner). These are:

- God created the world
- God rules the world (interventionist/God of history)
- God is eternal – He existed before the world and will exist after the world ceases to exist

## The Kavanot

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**Story:**

This Talmudic story (*Temura* 3) presents the classic “intelligent design” argument for God’s existence. While the existence of God is a complex and challenging topic to embark on with students of any age, students from third grade and up will be able to relate to this simple argument. This story is brought here next to the *tefilla* which starts with the simple statement of faith that God created the universe.

*Activity ideas:*

Using props such as an article of clothing (as in the story) or a watch (another classic example of “intelligent design”) or something more contemporary from the lives of modern-day children like a cell phone or a personal computer, ask the child to tell the story of the creation of the object based on what they can know of it. They should be able to identify various people that contributed to the computers creation, such as a designer, an electrical engineer, a software programmer,

etc. Ask them how they can see and know these things. Then ask them to look at the world around them to see if they can make the same statement – is there an obvious system to the world and to nature that suggests someone designed it? This can lead on nicely to the thought question below.

**Thought Question:**

To follow on from the story ask your students where they see proof from nature and the world around them that God exists, created the world, and plays an active part in it today. Their “world” should include their school, their homes, their neighborhood and their wider world.

*Activity ideas:*

Take the class outside into nature to ask them to do this. This could be rural nature or urban nature, or better still both, and see how their answers differ. God should be detectable in both contexts.

# יגדל

pp. 22–23

**יגדל**

1 אֱלֹהִים חַי וְיֹשֵׁת־בָּחַ, נִמְצָא וְאִין עֵת אֵל מְצִיאֹתוֹ.  
2 אֶחָד וְאִין יְחִיד בְּיַחֲדוֹ, נִעְלָם וְגַם אִין סוֹף לְאַחֲדוֹתוֹ.  
3 אִין לוֹ דְּמוּת הַגּוֹף וְאִינוּ גּוֹף, לֹא נִעְרָךְ אֵלָיו קִדְשָׁתוֹ.  
4 קִדְמוֹן לְכָל דָּבָר אֲשֶׁר נִבְרָא, רֹאשׁוֹן וְאִין רֵאשִׁית לְרֵאשִׁיתוֹ.  
5 הֵנוּ אָדוֹן עוֹלָם, וְכָל נּוֹצֵר יוֹדָה גְּדֻלָּתוֹ וּמַלְכוּתוֹ.  
6 שֹׁפֵעַ נְבוֹאָתוֹ נִתְּנוּ אֶל־אֲנָשֵׁי סִגְלָתוֹ וְתַפְאֲרָתוֹ.  
7 לֹא קָם בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל כְּמֹשֶׁה עוֹד נְבִיא וּמַבִּיט אֶת תְּמוֹנָתוֹ.  
8 תּוֹרַת אֱמֶת נָתַן לְעַמּוֹ אֵל עַל יַד נְבִיאָוּהוּ נֶאֱמָן בֵּיתוֹ.  
9 לֹא יַחְלִיף הָאֵל וְלֹא יִמְיֹר דָּתוֹ לְעוֹלָמִים לוֹלָתוֹ.  
10 צוּפָה וְיֹדֵעַ סִתְרֵינוּ, מַבִּיט לְסוֹף דְּבָר בְּקִדְמָתוֹ.  
11 גּוֹמֵל לְאִישׁ חֶסֶד כְּמַפְעָלוֹ, נוֹתֵן לְרֹשֶׁעַ רָע בְּרִשְׁעָתוֹ.  
12 יִשְׁלַח לְקֶץ יָמִין מְשִׁיחָנוּ לְפָדוֹת מַחְבֵּי קֶץ יְשׁוּעָתוֹ.  
13 מְתִים יַחִיָּה אֵל בְּרַב חֶסֶד, בְּרוּךְ עַד עַד שֵׁם תְּהִלָּתוֹ.  
14



Rambam was a famous Jewish thinker and doctor, and was the personal physician to the Sultan of Egypt. This caused much jealousy among the local doctors who believed that a Jew should not have this prestigious honor. They would often devise plans to discredit Rambam in the hope that the sultan would replace him with one of them instead. Once, they informed the sultan that Rambam's words contradicted Islam. Rambam believed that an animal can never change its nature. They disproved this in front of the sultan by training a cat to serve him like a waiter. But Rambam had a plan! He opened a small box that contained a mouse and let the mouse free. The cat instantly dropped the drinks it was carrying and chased the mouse. Rambam said to the sultan, "You see! Every one of God's creatures has its own nature. Only man can change his nature and become better."

"Moshe received the Torah at Sinai and gave it to Yehoshua. Yehoshua gave it to the elders, and the elders gave it to the prophets, and the prophets gave it to the men of the Great Assembly." (Piskei Avot 1a)

Who gives you the Torah?  
Who will you give it to?

## The Tefilla Text

### Translation:

Great is the living God and praised. He exists, and His existence is beyond time.  
He is One, and there is no unity like His. Unfathomable, His Oneness is infinite.  
He has neither bodily form nor substance; His holiness is beyond compare.  
He preceded all that was created. He was first: there was no beginning to His beginning.  
Behold He is Master of the Universe; and every creature shows His greatness and majesty.

The rich flow of His prophecy He gave to His treasured people in whom He gloried.  
Never in Israel has there arisen another like Moses, a prophet who beheld God's image.  
God gave His people a Torah of truth by the hand of His prophet, most faithful of His House.  
God will not alter or change His law for any other, for eternity.  
He sees and knows our secret thoughts; as soon as something is begun, He foresees its end.



*He rewards people with loving-kindness according to their deeds; He punishes the wicked according to his wickedness. At the end of days He will send our Messiah to redeem those who await His final salvation.*

*God will revive the dead in His great loving-kindness. Blessed for evermore is His glorious name!*

### Highlighted Text:

The line תורת אמת נתן לעמו אל על יד נביאיו נאמן ביתו is highlighted in the aqua from the illustration.

### Educational Themes contained in the text:

- Rambam's Thirteen Principles of Faith
  1. Belief in the existence of God
  2. Belief in God's unity
  3. Belief in God's incorporeality

4. Belief in God's eternity
  5. The imperative to pray to God
  6. Belief that God communicates with man through prophecy
  7. Belief in the primacy of the prophecy of Moses
  8. Belief in the divine origin of the Torah
  9. Belief in the immutability of the Torah
  10. Belief in God's omniscience
  11. Belief in divine reward and punishment
  12. Belief in the arrival of the Messiah
  13. Belief in the resurrection of the dead
- God = Creator, and the God of history (*Hashgafa*)
  - Revelation through prophecy
  - Moshe = archetypal prophet
  - *Torah min HaShamayim* (The divine origin of the Torah)

## The Illustration

This illustration depicts the following line from the *tefilla*: *God gave His people a Torah of truth by the hand of His prophet, most faithful of His House*. Here we have

the *Luhot HaBerit* (Tablets of Law) which represent the Torah Moshe received on Mount Sinai, with the light of truth emanating from behind the *luhot*.

## The Kavanot

### Story:

*Yigdal* is a poetic summary of Rambam's Thirteen Principles of Faith. So we chose a story about the Rambam here that introduces the students to him as a historical figure, and from it the following facts and concepts can be explored:

- Rambam was a famous Jewish philosopher (the term thinker was used but what a philosopher is could be a useful discussion to have in class).
- Rambam was also a famous and accomplished doctor. He didn't rely on money from his rabbinic career, but rather had another profession that involved him knowing a lot about science and medicine.
- Rambam lived in Egypt (although he was born and lived first in Spain).
- Rambam believed in God, and that God created the world and all of God's creatures, that man has free-will, and that he should try to improve himself.
- Rambam was very smart.

### Thought Question:

משה קבל תורה מסיני, ומסרה ליהושע, ויהושע לזקנים, וזקנים לנביאים, ונביאים מסרה לאנשי כנסת הגדולה  
(*Avot* 1:1)

The sentence that is highlighted and linked to the *luhot* illustration could also have been linked to this thought question. Mishna *Avot* begins with the transmission of Torah, from God to Moshe, and then to Yehoshua, and ultimately all the way down to us, and to your students. This is a statement of faith in the context of *Yigdal*, and a historical-legal fact in the mishna. The follow-up thought question asks the child to relate to it in a personal way – where are they in the line of transmission? The answer hopefully will be that they received their Torah from their parents and teachers, and will pass it on to their children, and perhaps their friends and others that they are in a position to influence.

*Activity ideas:*

- Games that have a transmission aspect to them, like “Broken Telephone” where a message is whispered round the circle. Every child is only allowed to whisper it once into their neighbor’s ear. At the end we see how close to the original message it was. And then we can discuss how the Torah is exactly word-for-word the same as the original (according to *Yigdal* and Rambam’s *ikarim*) and how that came about.
- Broken Telephone in actions: Four volunteers go out of the room. A fifth volunteer who is inside the classroom acts out an activity decided on by the rest of the class (like making breakfast or ironing or something equally mundane). Then the first

volunteer returns to the room and watches the action and then performs it for the second volunteer, who then performs it for the third volunteer, who performs it for the fourth, who then needs to tell the class what they think it is.

**Additional Kavanot:**

*Thought questions:*

- The mishna says that Moshe received the Torah from Sinai. Why doesn’t it say that he received it from God?
- Why is it important to know where the Torah came from?
- When you think of Hashem what comes to mind?

# ברכות השחר 1

pp. 24–25

25
24

The following ברכות help you to think about and thank Hashem for all the things we are and have. They were originally said at home after each stage of waking up and getting ready for the day, as we realize how much we have to be thankful to Hashem for. Now we say them as part of our תפילה.


1 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
2 אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לִשְׁכּוֹן בֵּיתָה  
3 לְהַבְחִין בֵּין יוֹם וּבֵין לַיְלָה.

4 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
5 שְׁלֹא עָשִׂנִי גוֹי.

6 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
7 שְׁלֹא עָשִׂנִי עֶבֶד.

8 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם

9 שְׁלֹא עָשִׂנִי אִשָּׁה | שְׁעָשִׂנִי כְּרָצוֹן.



☞ When you look in the mirror what do you see?  
Who are you? Who would you like to be?

☞ The great Hasidic leader Reb Zusia once began crying in front of his followers, pale faced and with red eyes. "What's the matter Rebbe?" his Hasidim inquired. "I had a dream," he explained, "and the question the angels will ask me when I pass on to the World to Come was revealed to me," he said, trembling. His followers were puzzled. "But Rebbe, you are pious and holy and scholarly and humble. What question could they possibly ask of you that you should fear so much?" Zusia turned to heaven and replied with his eyes closed tightly, "I have learned that the angels will not ask me why I wasn't more like Avraham our father or Moses our teacher. But they will ask me why I wasn't more like Zusia!"

## The Tefilla Text

### Translation:

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who gives the heart understanding to distinguish day from night.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has not made me a heathen.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has not made me a slave.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has not made me a woman/who has made me according to His will.

### Educational Themes contained in the text:

- Who am I? (Personal identity exploration.)
- Who would I like to be (what will I do with what I have been given)?
- The ability to distinguish (between good and evil, light and dark, myself and others) is God-given
- What are your unique talents and where did they come from?
- Is intelligence nature or nurture?
- What are your needs and who fulfills them?
- Starting a new day with new appreciation

## The Illustration

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In this illustration we see the character looking intently in the mirror. The mirror is a metaphor for inner reflection and identity questioning. He is asking himself, “Who am I?” just as the questions of *Birkhot HaShahar* do the same, encouraging us to consider our own

identities and to thank Hashem for the opportunities to be who we are. The illustration compliments the Thought Question which asks for the child to do this process themselves. What does it mean to be a Jewish boy or girl and why are we thanking Hashem for that?

## The Kavanot

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### Thought Question:

*Berakhot* 2–5 of *Birkhot Hashahar* focus on personal identity. They ask us to consider who we are and encourage us to be thankful for that. The thought question on this page does the same. The question is phrased in a way that asks the reader to take a moment to literally and metaphorically look at themselves in the mirror (as seen in the illustration), and see who they are. Using the *berakhot* as cues, hopefully this will encourage them to explore their personal and national identities. But more than that, it also asks them to go a step further and to refuse to stand still and admire this, but rather dream of who they wish to be and what they hope to achieve.

### Activity ideas:

#### Identity games:

- Ask the class to line up in order of age; shoe size; height; alphabetical order of first name and then last name.
- Concentric circles: Have half the class sit in a circle sitting facing outwards, and the other half in a circle outside them facing inwards (each child face-to-face with another). Ask them to discuss a list of questions about themselves, such as where they were born, siblings, pets, likes and dislikes, etc. After each question ask one of the circles to move up a chair, so that each question is discussed with a different partner. The questions should get increasingly personal, and end with hopes for the future.
- Two-minute biographies: Ask students to find a partner and give them two minutes to tell them what they would especially like them to know about themselves and their lives: past, present, hopes, plans, facts, etc. After each has a turn, they

join another pair to make a foursome, and introduce the partner to the new pair, by relating what they remember about the partner’s autobiography. When each of the four has had a turn, they join the whole group and introduce their partners to the class.

- “A strong wind blows”: Ask students to sit in a very tight circle with one person standing in the middle. The person in the middle says, “A strong wind blows on anyone who \_\_\_\_\_,” and then fills in the blank with something true about them. This can be appearance (e.g., anyone wearing pink socks) or personality-based (e.g., anyone who likes math; anyone who has a sister, etc.). Upon finishing the sentence, everyone to whom the statement applies is “blown” out of their seat and everyone, including the person in the middle, must find new seats. The one left standing in the end must come up with a new statement.
- Ask the class to stand by the person that is most likely to:
  - Become a millionaire
  - Become a rabbi
  - Be the first to get married
  - Make *aliya*
  - Go to jail
  - Become president

### Story:

This often quoted story validates our self-identity (and removes the pressure of becoming a Moshe Rabbeinu, something only Moshe Rabbeinu could do) while at the same time encouraging us to be the best we can be. It has been placed here with these *berakhot* that ask us to consider who we are and who we might become.

**Additional Kavanot:***Story:*

Close your eyes. Imagine one day you woke up and you had lost all your memories. You couldn't remember your name, where you lived, who your family was or what food you like to eat. How would you go about finding out who you were? What questions would you ask and to whom would you ask them? What things would you try to discover about who you really were? What do you think you would discover about yourself?

What would you discover that you have to be thankful to Hashem for?

*Thought question:*

- “Hashem gave each of His creatures special gifts.”<sup>4</sup> What special gifts has Hashem given you?

4. Rabbi S.R. Hirsch on the siddur



## ברכות השחר 2

pp. 26–27

27
26

1 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
פּוֹקֵחַ עֵוְרִים.

3 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
מַלְבִּישׁ עֲרֻמִּים.

5 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
מַתִּיר אֲסוּרִים.

7 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
זוֹקֵף כְּפוּפִים.

9 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
רוֹקֵעַ הָאָרֶץ עַל הַמַּיִם.

11 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
שׁוֹעֲשֵׂה לִי כֹל צָרָתִי.



**☞** "The eyes are the window to your soul."  
What can you use your eyes for?  
What do you plan to use your sight for today?

**🗨** The people of Chelm were not a bright bunch. Once, when a rabbi and his student from Chelm were staying at an inn, the student asked the innkeeper to wake him up early to catch a train. When he awoke he didn't want to disturb the rabbi, so he dressed himself in the dark. But by mistake he put on the rabbi's long black coat instead of his own clothes. When he arrived at the train station he caught a glimpse of his reflection in a window. When he saw the rabbi's long black coat he shouted aloud "Oh no... The inn keeper woke the Rabbi up instead of me!"



### The Tefilla Text

#### Translation:

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who gives sight to the blind.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who clothes the naked.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who sets captives free.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who raises those bowed down.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who spreads the earth above the waters.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has provided me with all I need.

#### Highlighted Text:

The conclusion to the *berakha* פּוֹקֵחַ עֵוְרִים is highlighted in the same color as the thought question and the conclusion to the *berakha* מַתִּיר אֲסוּרִים is highlighted in the green of the bird of the illustration.

### Educational Themes contained in the text:

- What are your needs?
- What do we need to thank Hashem for on a daily basis?
- גם זו לטובה (seeing the good retroactively in the “bad”) – Hashem provides us with everything we need

- Sub-themes:
  - gift of sight
  - dignity of clothing
  - appreciation of physical abilities/functioning
  - freedom (physical/spiritual)

## The Illustration

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The character in the illustration sets a bird free. The bird is a symbol of freedom, unrestricted in movement, flying free above the world. Here the boy releases the bird, and gives us a visual metaphor for the *berakha* מתיר אסורים, thanking Hashem for our freedom, both physical and spiritual, and also within our own bodies (this *berakha* was originally said upon waking up and taking one’s first stretch, thanking Hashem for the

use of all our limbs). Notice the boy’s eyes are also closed. This is a subtle hint towards the first *berakha* on the page – פיקח עורים – thanking Hashem for our sight. Perhaps we can say that his closed eyes tell us that just as freedom is not always physical, and sometimes the key to freedom is within our own hearts, so sight is not always about our eyes, but it can also be enlightenment and openness.

## The Kavanot

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### Thought Question:

This thought question explores the eyes that we thank God for opening each morning in the *berakha* פיקח עורים. The quote “The eyes are the window to the soul” is often attributed to Shakespeare, but there is some debate about this. Its source is not important to us, but the concept that you can see the essence of someone through their eyes is a powerful one. Whether this is an abstract mystical idea, or a more scientific statement that through physical cues one can perceive emotional information about another person, either way it encourages us to really look at the people around us, and to “see them” rather than look through them.

The thought questions following the quote ask the child to consider what else their eyes and sight can be used for, and in a more practical personal way, ask them to consider what they will use their sight for today. This takes the child from the gratitude they have for their sight, as expressed in the *berakha*, to the next stage – how they will use their sight for good.

### Activity games:

Disability obstacle course. Ask for volunteers to traverse an obstacle course arranged in the classroom (or outside). For each volunteer take away a sense or ability. One is blindfolded. One has his hands tied behind his back. One has to hop on one leg only. Or you could divide the class into teams and have every student do the obstacle course, each time having one disability.

### Story:

The story, a classic from the Chelm genre, has an important message as well as an entertaining punch line. Linked to the *berakha* מלביש ערמים, it asks the child to consider the role of clothes in our life. While there are many general directions a discussion on clothing could take, such as the dignity of clothing, and modesty, and the pitfalls of fashion, the story explores identity and clothing issues, and what messages our clothes can send, both about and to us and the outside world. These questions are also asked later on in the siddur, in the context of *tzitzit* on page 78, and more indirectly in the story of “Mashiah’s Hat,”

on page 116. In this story, the boy from Chelm saw his image in the mirror wearing the rabbi's clothes, and confused himself for the rabbi, because he was unable to see the person behind the clothes. This is a case of judging a book by its cover, and obviously a pitfall to be avoided. One must judge a person on more substantial evidence other than the superficial statement their clothes make, or better still, avoid judging them at all. However, clothes do make a statement, and we believe in the importance of clothes as a chance to make value statements, such as wearing special clothing on Shabbat to sanctify and elevate the status of the day. The statement one's clothes make on Shabbat are as much to oneself as they are to others. The same can be said when it comes to *tzeniut* as expressed in one's clothing. A message is sent both to the outside world and to oneself.

**Additional Kavanot:**

*Story* (for מלביש ערומים):

A poor man once entered a wedding feast but was turned away by the bride's father because his clothes were worn and scruffy. The man went to his rich friend and borrowed fine clothes befitting a prince. When he

returned to the wedding the bride's father didn't even recognize him as he gracefully strode into the banquet hall wearing his elegant clothes. The father welcomed him to the wedding, and the man begins to stuff his pockets with the food from the lavish feast. All the guests stop and stare at the man in the nice suit who is behaving in such a strange manner. The father of the bride angrily asks him what he thinks he is doing. The man calmly explains that he is feeding his clothes, because they are the ones really welcome at the wedding, more than he was.

*Story* (for מתיר אסורים):

Reb Zusya used to travel cross-country to raise funds to ransom Jewish prisoners that had been taken captive. He once came to an inn when the inn-keeper was not at home. He noticed there a large cage with all sorts of beautiful birds. As he admired the beauty of the birds he noticed how they longed to fly free in the sky. Zusya said to himself, "You walk for miles and miles to fulfill the mitzva of *pidyon shevu'im* (setting prisoners free). What better way to fulfill this mitzva than to set these birds free from their prison?" And so he did.

# ברכות השחר 3

pp. 28–29

29
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1 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ הוֹדוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
2 הַמְכִּין מַצְעָדֵי גִבּוֹר.

3 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ הוֹדוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
4 אֲזוּר יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּגִבּוֹרָה.

5 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ הוֹדוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
6 עוֹטֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּתַפְאָרָה.

7 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ הוֹדוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
8 הַנּוֹתֵן לַיָּעֹף כֹּחַ.



 "Who is a strong person? Someone who controls their bad wishes." (Pirkei Avot 4:1)

What does it mean to be strong and where does strength come from?

Who do you know that is really strong?

How will you be strong today?



 The Beren Academy Stars were having their most successful basketball season ever. In fact, they were the first Jewish day school to ever reach the Texas state semi-final. But they couldn't play in it. The game was scheduled for the evening of Shabbat, and the state tournament refused to move it. It wasn't even a question for the team. The decision was made. To give up their dream and to stand up for what they believed in. But as their story spread reaching the national and international news across the globe, the tournament relented and allowed the game to be moved. The Stars' prayers were answered, and they got their chance to achieve their dreams. And they took it, convincingly beating their semi-final opponents 58-46 and making history, reaching the championship game. Unfortunately they narrowly lost in the final (46-42), but won hearts and inspired people across the world with their commitment to their values and to Shabbat.

## The Tefilla Text

### Translation:

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who makes firm the steps of man.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who girds Israel with strength.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who crowns Israel with glory.

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who gives strength to the weary.

### Highlighted Text:

The words אֲזוּר יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּגִבּוֹרָה are highlighted in the same green as the soldier in the illustration.

### Educational Themes contained in the text:

- What are your needs?
- What do we need to thank Hashem for on a daily basis?

- Sub-themes:
  - physical abilities/functioning
  - strength (physical/spiritual)
- nature
- national glory (achievements/talents of Israel)
- heroism

## The Illustration

This illustration could be an expression of each *berakha* on this page of the siddur, but it is primarily exploring the *berakha* of אזור ישראל בגבורה. Here we have an Israeli *hayal* (soldier), wrapped in his *tallit*, praying with a siddur open in his hands, and his rifle over his shoulder. This *berakha* thanks Hashem for “girding Israel with strength.” Here we thank Hashem for our spiritual and physical national strength. This can be represented by every single IDF soldier, fighting to defend his land (seen in the background of the illustration) and his people.

Rabbi J.B. Soloveitchik<sup>5</sup> says that this *berakha* does not speak of physical strength (which is covered in the *berakha* of הנותן ליעף כח), but rather the heroism of spiritual strength. As a nation, the IDF and its brave Jewish soldiers represent both these types of strength.

The *tallit*, siddur, and act of praying, next to the rifle, express the combination of faith in Hashem and strength and courage to stand and fight and risk and sacrifice. Rabbi Soloveitchik’s definition of heroism is sacrifice, and these soldiers are prepared to, and sadly often do, make the ultimate sacrifice for their nation.

The *hayal* praying reminds us of Yaakov on his way to meet Eisav after many years apart (Bereshit, chapter 33). Yaakov hoped for peace with his brother but feared war. So he sent gifts and peace offerings, but also divided the camp in two and prepared for war, and most importantly prayed to Hashem. This is our approach to conflict in our land – we hope for peace, prepare for war and self-defense, and pray to Hashem to deliver us.

## The Kavanot

### Thought Question:

The entire mishna (*Avot* 4:1) in the original is:

בן זומא אומר, איזה הוא חכם-הלמד מכל אדם, שנאמר “מכל מלמדיי, השכלתי” (תהילים קיט, צט). איזה הוא גיבור – הכובש את יצרו, שנאמר “טוב ארך אפיים, מגיבור” (משלי טו, לב). איזה הוא עשיר – השמח בחלקו, שנאמר “יגיע כפיך, כי תאכל; אשריך, וטוב לך” (תהילים קכח, ב); “אשריך”, בעולם הזה; “טוב לך”, לעולם הבא. איזה הוא מכובד – המכבד את הבריות, שנאמר “כי מכבדיי אכבד ובוזיי ייקלו” (שמואל א’ ב, ל).

The first three clauses of the mishna are quoted in the siddur, on pages 29, 94 and 122.

The word strength, mentioned in the second *berakha* on this page and in the mishna, can be interpreted in many varied ways (see the explanation of the illustration). Physical, emotional and spiritual strength are

all virtues to strive for. While the word in common usage is probably more often used to refer to physical strength, the mishna believes that quintessential strength is spiritual-emotional strength, and one who has this virtue is one who can overcome their natural urges that we would term the *Yetzer HaRa* (evil inclination). Everyone without exception has temptation for bad, and a strong person is someone who can surmount these desires.

While it should be acceptable for a child to answer these questions in terms of physical strength, the mishna clearly wants us to understand that ultimate strength is spiritual-emotional, and the child should be guided to explore this form of strength. Just as the illustration suggests that Israel’s strength is physical as well as spiritual-emotional, so we can interpret the *berakha* in that way too, but the child should be encouraged to

5. In the Mesorat HaRav Siddur



consider the non-physical forms of strength, especially when answering the final question.

*Activity idea:*

Place a candy on the desk in front of every child in the class. Tell them if they resist the temptation to eat it until the end of the class they will get another one.

**Story:**

This true story that took place in March 2012<sup>6</sup> is a great example of regular Jewish kids showing unity and non-physical spiritual strength in the face of adversity (as well as some physical strength on the basketball court!). This story could just as easily have been placed in the Shabbat section of this siddur, but more important than serving as an example of commitment to Shabbat, it is an example of courage and strength, performed by regular Jewish day-school kids, and should be considered an example of the strength that we are thanking God for in this *berakha*.

*Activity ideas:*

Role-playing scenarios of situations that take strength can be fun as well as experientially and educationally

rewarding. Examples of this could be finding a \$50 bill in the classroom, being served food of questionable *kashrut* at a friend's house, and being invited to watch the ball game on Shabbat at a friend's house.

**Additional Kavanot:**

*Thought questions:*

- You just said many ברכות. What else are you thankful for? What else did God give you?
- Close your eyes and picture all the things Hashem has blessed you with. Now say thank you to Hashem for each of them.

*Story (הנחת ליעף כוח):*

Tony Cavallo was crushed by the car he was fixing as it slipped off the jacks that were supporting it. When his mother Angela heard the screams of her teenage son as the car fell on top of him, she came running to help, and somehow managed to lift the car high enough and for long enough for neighbors to replace the jacks that had fallen, saving her son's life.

6. <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/02/sports/jewish-academy-competes-in-texas-after-winning-the-right-to-play.html>  
[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/edwin-black/the-texas-sabbath-showdow-tapps-and-beren-academy\\_b\\_1377057.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/edwin-black/the-texas-sabbath-showdow-tapps-and-beren-academy_b_1377057.html)

# המעביר

pp. 30-31

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1 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ הוֹדוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
2 הַמַּעֲבִיר שָׁנָה מֵעֵינֵינוּ וְהַתְּנוּמָה מֵעַמְעָפֵינוּ.  
3 וְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ יְיָ הוֹדוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ  
4 שְׁתַּגְדְּלֵנוּ בְּתוֹרַתְךָ, וְדַבְּקֵנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתֶיךָ  
5 וְאַל תְּבִיאֵנוּ לֹא לְיַד חָטָא  
6 וְלֹא לְיַד עֲבָרָה וְעֹזֶן  
7 וְלֹא לְיַד נִסְיוֹן וְלֹא לְיַד בְּזִיוֹן  
8 וְאַל תִּשְׁלַט בָּנוּ יֵצֶר הָרָע  
9 וְהִרְחִיקֵנוּ מֵאָדָם רָע וּמַחֲבֵר רָע  
10 וְדַבְּקֵנוּ בְּיֵצֶר הַטּוֹב וּבְמַעֲשֵׂים טוֹבִים  
11 וְכַף אֶת יָצָרְנוּ לְהִשְׁתַּעֲבֹד לָךְ  
12 וְהִתְנֵנוּ הַיּוֹם וּבְכָל יוֹם לְחֹן וּלְחֶסֶד וּלְרַחֲמִים  
13 בְּעֵינֶיךָ, וּבְעֵינֵינוּ כָּל רוֹאֵינוּ  
14 וְתִגְמְלֵנוּ חֲסִדִּים טוֹבִים.  
15 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ  
16 גּוֹמֵל חֲסִדִּים טוֹבִים לְעַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל.

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Please, Hashem, keep us away from bad influences and bring us close to good influences, so we can do good things and do everything You ask of us. Give us kindness, love and care, today, and every day.



Close your eyes. Relax your body. Think about what has happened to you today so far. Or yesterday, or the day before. Can you think of something you have done recently that you are very proud of? Watch yourself achieve this. How did you feel at the time? How do you feel about it now? Now think of something you did recently that you are not proud of. Something you wish you had done differently. Something you wouldn't do again. In both cases, try to think what you were thinking at the time, and what led you to behave the way that you did. Did you take a moment to think through your actions? Did you have thoughts that told you to act differently at that time? Did you have to make a decision between two things? Did you make the right choice? Would you choose differently now? How can you make sure to make the right decision each time?

## The Tefilla Text

### Translation:

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who removes sleep from my eyes and slumber from my eyelids. And may it be Your will, Lord our God and God of our ancestors, to accustom us to Your Torah, and make us attached to Your commandments. Lead us not into error, transgression, iniquity, temptation or disgrace. Do not let the evil instinct dominate us. Keep us far from a bad man and a bad companion. Help us attach ourselves to the good instinct and to good deeds and bend our instincts to be subservient to You. Grant us, this day and every day, grace,

loving-kindness and compassion in Your eyes and in the eyes of all who see us, and bestow loving-kindness upon us. Blessed are You, Lord, who bestows loving-kindness on His people Israel.

### Highlighted Text:

The words וְאַל תִּשְׁלַט בָּנוּ יֵצֶר הָרָע are highlighted in the color from the illustration that represents the path to evil and desolation. The words וְדַבְּקֵנוּ בְּיֵצֶר הַטּוֹב וּבְמַעֲשֵׂים טוֹבִים are highlighted in the color from the illustration that represents the path to goodness and life.

### Educational Themes contained in the text:

- What does it mean to be a Jew in our everyday lives? (Torah and mitzvot)
- *Yetzer HaRa* vs. *Yetzer HaTov*
- Hashem helps protect us from sin and temptation
- Distancing from bad neighbors/friends
- Using our blessings to serve Hashem and to be a good person

## The Illustration

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The illustration is a metaphor for the choice between the *Yetzer HaRa* and the *Yetzer HaTov*. There are two paths in the forest, representing the choice between two directions, two lifestyles, two different ways of behaving in any given situation. One path leads to the light and beauty of healthy growth and fertile vegetation. The other leads to the dark barren wilderness of destruction. Which path will you take? This *tefilla* asks Hashem to help guide us to the path of light and life and *Yetzer HaTov*.

### Activity ideas:

Divide the class into two teams. Each team provides a volunteer to traverse an obstacle course blindfolded. Their team must shout out instructions while the other team shouts out incorrect instructions, and the volunteer must choose which direction to follow.

## The Kavanot

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### Conceptual Translation of:

ותרחיקנו מאדם רע ומחבר רע ודבקנו ביצר הטוב ובמעשים טובים  
וכף את יצרנו להשתעבד לך ותננו היום ובכל יום לחן ולחסד ולרחמים  
בעיניך ובעיני כל רואינו ותגמלנו חסדים טובים.

### Story:

This imagination simulation aims to ask the child to use their imagination to revisit and reexperience events that took place in their lives where they have made correct decisions and listened to positive influences; and also where they have made decisions they regret (perhaps because they listened to negative influences) and would do differently if given the chance. The simulation asks them to understand what led them to the decisions they made, and whether being more aware of these factors and influences would perhaps lead them to choose differently next time. It also asks them to be more aware of these influences generally in their lives, where they may normally be less aware of them.

The activity is best performed when the children are quiet with their eyes closed, and the script is read to

them aloud. This should be followed by a discussion, with some participants sharing their experiences with the class.

### Additional Kavanot:

#### Thought questions:

- What can you do today to keep yourself away from bad influences?
- Who is a good influence on you in your life? How can you be a good influence on your friends today?

### Story:

In the world to come, Hashem will bring the *Yetzer HaRa* to all the people and kill it in front of them. When the righteous people look at it, it will appear as something huge like a mountain, but it will appear to the evil people as something tiny like a strand of hair. The righteous will cry tears of emotion that they managed to fight something so large and powerful, and the evil will also cry, that they could not manage to fight something as small and weak as a strand of hair.<sup>7</sup>

7. Sukka 52a