

## SEDER RAV AMROM GAON-THE FIRST SIDDIR

### *Introduction to Seder Rav Amrom Gaon*

Rav Amrom Gaon was head of the Yeshiva in Sura, Babylonia, in the 9th Century and died in 875 CE. In his era, being head of the Yeshiva was tantamount to being Chief Rabbi of the Jewish people. Although Rav Amrom is credited with compiling the first Siddur, known as: Seder Rav Amrom Gaon, the Siddur did not come about because Rav Amrom set out to write the first Siddur. Instead, his Siddur sprouted as a result of answering a question posed to him by a community in Spain. Rav Amrom's response inadvertently provided the Jewish Community with its first Siddur.

The first page of his response is significant because it explains what spurred the composition of his work and because Rav Amrom created the model that others followed in compiling their Siddurim. Rav Amrom began his response by presenting the requirement that a Jew recite one hundred Brachos each day. Many of the significant Siddurim that were compiled after Seder Rav Amrom Gaon, including the Siddur of Rashi, the Machzor Vitry and the Avudrohom, followed the model of Seder Rav Amrom Gaon and began with the same requirement. Over time, that format was abandoned by those who compiled Siddurim. Why that model was abandoned is a mystery.

Copies of Seder Rav Amrom Gaon are readily available today in Jewish bookstores and can be downloaded from this website: [www.beureihatefila.com](http://www.beureihatefila.com) and from [www.hebrewbooks.org](http://www.hebrewbooks.org). It is a work that must be studied by anyone who wants to trully understand Jewish Liturgy. I hope that you will notice two important facts about Seder Rav Amrom Gaon; how similar the prayers that we recite today are to what is provided in Seder Rav Amrom Gaon and how different they are.

This exhibit consists of three pages:

1. *Introduction to Seder Rav Amrom Gaon*
2. *A Copy Of The First Page Of Seder Rav Amrom Gaon*
3. *Translation Of The First Page Of Seder Rav Amrom Gaon*

## סדור רב עמרם גאון

**עמרם** בר ששנא ריש מתיבתא דמתא בחסיא, לרבינו יצחק ברי' דמרנא ורבנא שבעין חביב ויקיר ונכבד עליו ועל ישיבה כלה. שלום רב מרחמנות השמים יהי עליך ועל זרעך, ועל כל החכמים וההלמידים ואחינו ישראל השרוים שם, שאו שלום ממונו ומן רב צמח אב בית דין ישראל, ומן אלופים וחכמי ישיבה ובני ישיבה שלנו ועל עיר בחסיא, שכלם בשלום חכמים הלמידים, ואחינו ישראל השרוים כאן, שתמיד אנו שואלים בשלומכם וייראים אתכם בזכרון טוב, ומתפללים בעדכם ומבקשים רחמים עליכם, שירחם ה' ברחמי הרבים, ויגן עליכם ויגיל אתכם מכל לרה ומק ומכל חולי ומכאוב ומשלטון רע, ומכל מיני משחית ומכל מיני פורעניות המתרגשות בעולם, וימלא ברחמי הרבים כל משאלות לבכם. שגר לפנינו רבינו יעקב בן רבנא יצחק עשרה זהובים ששגרת לישיבה, ה' שלנו וה' לקופה של ישיבה, וליוני וזרכנו אותך ברכות שיתקיימו בך ובזרעך ובזרע זרעך. וסדר חכמות וזרכות של שנה כלה ששאלת, שהראנו מן השמים, ראינו לכהר ולהשיב כמבורת שבידנו כתיקון תנאים ואמוראים. דהניא ר' מאיר אומר חייב אדם לזרך מאה ברכות בכל יום, ובגמרא דארץ ישראל גרסינן הכי, תניא בשם ר' מאיר אין לך אדם מישראל שאינו עושה מאה מלות בכל יום, שגאמר ועתה ישראל מה ה' אלהיך שואל מעמך, אל תקרא מה אלא מאה. ודוד מלך ישראל תקן, כשהודיעוהו יושבי ירושלים שמתיים מישראל מאה בכל יום, עמד ותקן. ונראה הדבר שגאמרו ועמדו תנאים ואמוראים ויבדו. וסדר אלו מאה ברכות כך השיב רב נטרונאי ב"ר הילאי ריש מתיבתא דמתא בחסיא לבני קהל אליסאגה על ידי מר רב יוסף מאור עינינו, לברך כל אחת ואחת בשעתה אי אפשר מפני טופת ידים העסקניות העשויות לנושמש, אלא כשיעור משנתו רוחץ פניו ידיו ורגליו כהוגן, לקיים מה שגאמר הכון לקראת אלהיך ישראל, וכל יחיד ויחיד חייב זהם. ומנהג<sup>2</sup> כל ישראל בספרד היא אכמיהא כך היא, להוילא למי שאינו יודע שליח ליבור, כהשיב<sup>3</sup> רב נטרונאי בר הילאי:

## OPENING PAGE -SEDER RAV AMROM GAON- THE FIRST SIDDUR

Amrom son of Shashna, head of the Yeshiva in Masa Machsiya (suburb of Sura) responding to Rav Yitzchok son of the teacher and Rabbi, Rabbi Shimon, who is held dear, adored and honored in our eyes and in the opinion of the entire Yeshiva. Greetings of peace. May Heaven show compassion to you, your children and all the scholars, their students and our Jewish brethren who live there. Send greetings of peace from us and from Rav Tzemach head of the Jewish Court, from the officers, the scholars of the Yeshiva and the students of our Yeshiva and of the city of Machsiya. We, the teachers, the students and the Jewish citizens of this area are at peace. We are constantly concerned about your welfare and think of you favorably at all times. We pray for you and ask that G-d show compassion to you; that G-d bestow abundant mercy upon you, protect you, save you from troubles and difficulties, from sickness and affliction, from oppressive governments, from destructive actions, and from all the troubles that can occur in life. May G-d demonstrate compassion in granting you all that you ask for yourselves.

Rabbi Yaakov, son of Rav Yitzchok, delivered ten gold coins that were sent for the benefit of the Yeshiva; five for the leadership of the Yeshiva and five for the Yeshiva itself. We have commanded that you be blessed with Brachos and that they come to fruition for you and for your descendants.

The order of prayers and Brachos for the entire year that you requested, that has been shown to us by Heaven, we deem appropriate to set forth and lay out in the manner in which the tradition was passed down to us, as compiled by the Rabbis during the period of the Mishna and of the Gemara. And so we learned: Rabbi Mayer said: a person is obligated to recite 100 Brachos each day. In the Jerusalem Talmud we learned: it was taught in the name of Rabbi Mayer; there is no Jew who does not fulfill one hundred Mitzvos each day, as it was written: Now Israel, what does G-d your G-d ask of you? Do not read the verse as providing for the word: "what" (Mah); instead read it as including the word: "one hundred" (Mai'Eh). King David established the practice of reciting one hundred Brachos each day. When the residents of Jerusalem informed him that one hundred Jews were dying everyday, he established this requirement. It appears that the practice was forgotten until our Sages at the time of the Mishna and at the time of the Gemara re-established it. The order of the 100 Brachos was set forth by Rav Natroni son of Hil'Ai, head of the Yeshiva at Masa Machsiya, in correspondence with the community in Lucena, Spain through Rav Yosef, the elder. Rav Natroni provided as follows: it is no longer possible to recite each Bracha at its correct time because today we awake each day with unclean hands, hands that inadvertently came in contact with unclean parts of our bodies during the night. Instead when a person wakes, he should first wash his face, hands and feet as is appropriate. That is how a Jew fulfills the directive in the following verse: Prepare, Jews, for meeting with the Almighty. Every person is obligated to do so. The following represents the custom among Jews in Spain, which is Hispania: in synagogue, the prayer leader recites the morning blessings on behalf of those present so that they may fulfill their obligation by answering: Amen to the Brachos that the prayer leader recites, as Rav Natroni son of Hil'Ai provided.