

יום כיפור OF תפלת מוסף (BOWING) השתחויה

During **יום כיפור** on **תפלת מוסף** of **הזרת הש"ץ**, we bow three times during the recitation of the **עבודה**. The bowing that we undertake is done in a physical manner which we do not employ during the other days of the year. Why do we do so? The simple answer is that we are mimicking what we believe took place in the **בית המקדש** when the **עבודה** was performed on **יום כיפור**. This is how the bowing that took place in the **בית המקדש** during the **סדר העבודה** on **יום כיפור** is described:

והכהנים והעם העומדים בעזרה, כשהיו שומעים את השם הנכבד והנורא, מפרש יוצא מפי כהן גדול בקדשה ובטהרה, היו כורעים ומשתחיים ומודים ונופלים על פניהם, ואומרים: ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד.

Translation: And when the Kohanim and the laymen standing in the Temple court heard the ineffable name come forth from the mouth of the Kohain Ha'Gadol, they bent their knees, bowed down, fell on their faces and called out: Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom for ever and ever.

If in fact, we are attempting to mimic an activity that took place in the **בית המקדש**, it is fair to ask: based on what rule are we permitted to imitate an activity that took place in the **בית המקדש**? You may be tempted to point to the rule: **ונשלמה פרים שפתינו**, may the words of our mouths be deemed accepted on equal basis to the actual performance of the sacrifices. That is the basis upon which we read the details of the **קרבן תמיד** each day. That is also why we describe the **קרבן מוסף** during **עשרה קרבן מוסף**. However, in describing those **קרבנות**, we make no attempt to mimic any of the activities that were associated with those **קרבנות**, one of them being **השתחויה**.

משנה מסכת שקלים פרק ו' משנה א'—שלשה עשר שופרות שלשה עשר שולחנות שלש עשרה השתחויות היו במקדש.

Translation: Thirteen Shofars, thirteen tables and thirteen acts of prostration would take place in the Beis Hamikdash.

משנה מסכת תמיד פרק ז' משנה ג'—ודברו הלויים בשיר הגיעו לפרק תקעו והשתחוו העם על כל פרק תקיעה ועל כל תקיעה השתחויה.

Translation: At the end of the daily Tamid service, the Leviim would sing a chapter of Tehillim that would be recited in three segments. At the end of each section, the Shofar was sounded and the laymen who were present in the Temple court would fully prostrate themselves.

Despite the fact that **השתחויה** played an important role as part of the **עבודה** each day, we do not perform **השתחויה** except on **ראש השנה** during the recital of **לשבת** and on **יום כיפור** during the recital of **לשבת** and the **סדר העבודה**. Therefore the rule of: **ונשלמה פרים שפתינו** cannot be cited as the basis for performing those acts of bowing.

Furthermore, we need to ask: are we truly imitating an activity that took place in the בית המקדש? In other words, are we bowing on יום כיפור in the same manner as those present bowed in the בית המקדש? The bowing that was performed in the בית המקדש is defined as follows:

תפארת ישראל – יכין – מסכת שקלים פרק ו' משנה א'–ב) השתחויות. שכל הנכנסין להר הבית הולכין דרך ימין ומקיפין ויוצאין דרך שמאל כפ"ב דמדות, ובדרך הקפתן נ"ל שהיו משתחוין י"ג השתחויות הללו. וכל השתחויה היה בפישוט ידים ורגלים [כמגילה כ"ב ב']:

Translation: Bowing. Each person who entered the Temple Mount turned to the right. When they exited the Beit Hamikdash, they walked towards the left. Thus, during the course of entering and exiting, they followed a circular route around the Beit Ha'Mikdash. As they went around the Beit Ma'Mikdash, they bowed thirteen times, as outlined in the Mishna. Each act of bowing involved the prostration of their entire bodies upon the ground.

The term: פישוט ידים ורגלים is defined as follows by Professor Uri Ehrlich on page 39 of his book: כל עצמותי תאמרנה, Magnes Press, 2003:

השחייה היא מחווה תפלה השייכת לסוג רחב יותר של מחוות שבהן המתפלל מנמיך את גופו או חלק ממנו. המחווה המועצת והטוטלית בסוג זה היא ההשתחויה, שבה המתפלל משתרע בכל גופו על הארץ וכל איבריו נוגעים בקרקע'.

Translation: The form of bowing that we employ during Shemona Esrei (a bowing that includes only the top half of our bodies) is a gesture used in prayer that belongs to the larger classification of acts that are known as bowing during which a person lowers his entire body or a part thereof. The act of bowing that is the most emphatic and complete is known as "Hishtachavaya." During that act, the person who is praying sprawls his entire body on the ground to the point that each one of his bones makes contact with the ground.

An additional challenge to our performing acts of bowing on יום כיפור involves the question: did the כהן הגדול say the שם המפורש when he recited וידוי three times on יום אנא בשם, כהן הגדול said, whether he did or did not is dependent on whether the כהן הגדול said אנא בשם, אנא השם, כפר נא לחטאים or he said: כפר נא לחטאים. If the כהן הגדול said אנא בשם, he was employing the שם המפורש. If the כהן הגדול said אנא השם, he was not employing the שם המפורש. The word השם is a substitute for the שם המפורש. When he said the word: השם he meant to say what we today mean to say when we say the word: Hashem. In the text of the וידוי found in our versions of the עבודה, we recite paragraphs in which we include both versions of the וידוי. Be that as it may, the existence of the two versions leaves open the possibility that the כהן הגדול did not in fact recite the שם המפורש as part of his וידוי. If that was the case, we have no reason to perform השתחויה.

1. I tried to find a picture of this form of bowing, to include in this newsletter. The only pictures I could find on the internet presented Catholic priests sprawled over the floor of their churches. Feel free to google the word "adoration" which is the term used to describe this form of religious act. The 1906 Jewish Encyclopedia which can be found on-line has an entry for "adoration."

Lastly, there is some doubt as to whether the following section:

והכהנים והעם העומדים בעזרה, כשהיו שומעים את השם הנכבד והנורא, מפרש יוצא מפי כהן גדול בקדשה ובטהרה, היו כורעים ומשתחווים ומודים ונופלים על פניהם, ואומרים: ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד,

represents a part of the original version of the משניות that describe the עבודה in מסכת יומא. The lines are not included in our version of the eighth משנה of פרק ג' nor in the second משנה of פרק ד' in מסכת יומא. While the lines are currently included in the second משנה of פרק ו' in מסכת יומא, the lines are not found in all the handwritten versions of that משנה. Professors Safrai, in their commentary to the משניות of מסכת יומא, include the handwritten text of the משנה as it is found in כתב יד קופמן, the Kauffman Manuscript. It ends with the words: **אנא השם** and does not include the lines in question.

So let us return to our original question: why do we bow during תפלת חזרת הש"ץ of גאונים? No references to the practice appear in the סידורים of the מוסף on **יום כיפור**. Rabbi Dr. Ephraim Kanarfogel on page 49 of his book, "Peering Through The Lattices," Wayne State University Press, 2000, points to the following excerpt from the ראבי"ה as an early reference to the practice:

ראבי"ה? חלק ב' – מסכת יומא סימן תקל' – ועל כל אזכרה היו מברכים וכורעים לכבוד השם, וכן נמצא בספרי החיצונים כשמסר רבי נחוניא בן הקנה את השם לתלמידיו שצוה להם לכרוע וליפול על פניהם. וכן אנו עושין לזכרון ודוגמא.

Translation: Each time the ineffable name was mentioned, they would bless and bend over in honor of G-d's name. So it is found in the mystical texts. There we find that when R. Nehunya b. ha-Qanah was teaching the pronunciation of the ineffable name to his students, he ordered them to first bend over and to prostrate themselves on the ground. That is how we act as a memorial to and as an example of how one should act when dealing with the ineffable name of G-d.

Rabbi Dr. Kanarfogel, at pages 49-50, introduces the excerpt from the ראבי"ה as follows:

The second *Hekhalot* passage, which Rabiah mentions as appearing in (mystical) *sefarim bizoniyyim*, was cited to justify the practice of bowing during the recitation of the *Avodah* on Yom Kippur. According to this passage (which also is found in fuller form in *Hekhalot Rabbati*), R. Nehunya b. *ha-Qanah* instructed his students to bow and prostrate themselves when he taught them the pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton. Rabiah adds, on the basis of the Yom Kippur liturgy, that those who heard the *Kohen Gadol* pronounce the Tetragrammaton on Yom Kippur also prostrated themselves; he further remarks that this practice is not mentioned in the Talmud. It should be noted, however, that Rabiah's citation of *Hekhalot* texts to

2. R. Eliezer ben R. Yoel Halevi, Ra'avayah, was born ca. 1140 in Mainz, Germany, and passed away in Cologne, ca. 1220. His father, R. Yoel Halevi, and his grandfather, R. Eliezer ben R. Nathan (Ra'avan), were noted German Tosafists. Ra'avayah studied Torah with them and with other distinguished scholars of his generation.

explain (common) liturgical or synagogue practices does not mean that Rabiah was necessarily attuned to the mystical nature of these texts.

Let us try to understand why ר'אבי"ה believed that the basis for the practice to bow when the סדר העבודה is read on יום כיפור may be found in the practice of R. Nehunya b. ha-Qanah who required his students to bow and prostrate themselves when he taught them the pronunciation of the שם המפורש. ר'אבי"ה begins with the presumption that a rule exists that when the שם המפורש is uttered as part of a ritual act, those who hear the name must perform השתחויה. ר'אבי"ה then interprets R. Nehunya b. ha-Qanah instructions to his students as R. Nehunya b. ha-Qanah extending the requirement to bow to circumstances when those present are simply learning how to pronounce the שם המפורש. ר'אבי"ה then suggests that the practice of bowing when the סדר העבודה is described on יום כיפור is a further extension of the requirement to bow. It now includes any circumstance in which a reference to the שם המפורש is being uttered as part of a ritual act. Coincidentally, the words: שם המפורש do not appear in any other example of Jewish liturgy so that we have no means of testing our view of ר'אבי"ה's statement.

The act of bowing on יום כיפור during the recital of the סדר העבודה led to the institution of a further custom:

מרדכי³ מסכת מגילה פרק הקורא עומד רמז תתז-ואמר רב היא בריה דרב הונא חזינא להו לאביי ורבא דמצלי אצלויי פי' שהיתה שם רצפה של אבנים ומתהפכין על צדיהן שלא היו נראין כמשתחוין אף על פי שלא היו עושין פישוט ידים כלל. ושמעתי דמשום האי טעמא משימין ביהכ"פ עשבים בביהכ"נ לכסות את הרצפה משום דנופלים על פניהם כשאומרים והכהנים והעם וכו'.

Translation: R. Chiya the son of R. Huna said: I saw that Abaye and Rava when praying, etc. I interpret that statement to mean that they were praying in a place where the floor consisted of stone. When they prostrated themselves, they turned their heads to the side so that they would not appear to be bowing even though they were not performing a complete prostration. I heard that because of that concern, it is the custom before Yom Kippur to place grass all over the floor of synagogues because during the services on Yom Kippur, those present bow during the prayer leader's recital of the paragraph that begins: V'Ha'Kohanim V'Ha'Am.

Why did the practice of bowing during the סדר העבודה on יום כיפור necessitate the spreading of grass on the floors of synagogues?

3. R. Mordechai b. Hillel, a descendent of the Ra'aviyah (R. Eliezer b. Yoel HaLevi), was one of the great Rabbis of Germany (Ashkenaz) at the end of the Tosafot period. Born circa 1240, R. Mordechai was martyred in 1298 with his wife (daughter of R. Yechiel of Paris) with their five children in Nurenberg, Germany. R. Mordechai was a disciple of R. Meir (Maharam) of Rothenburg, as was his relative R. Asher (Rosh) and his brother-in-law, R. Meir haCohen, author of the Hagahot Maimoniyot

להבין את התפלה

תלמוד בבלי מסכת מגילה דף כב' עמ' ב'–גופא, רב איקלע לבבל בתענית צבור. קם קרא בספרא, פתח, בריך, חתם, ולא בריך. נפול כולי עלמא אאנפיהו, ורב לא נפל על אנפיה. מאי טעמא רב לא נפיל על אפיה? רצפה של אבנים היתה, ותניא: (ויקרא כו, א') ואבן משכית לא תתנו בארצכם להשתחות עליה; עליה אי אתה משתחוה בארצכם, אבל אתה משתחוה על אבנים של בית המקדש. כדעולא, דאמר עולא: לא אסרה תורה אלא רצפה של אבנים בלבד. אי הכי מאי איריא רב? אפילו כולו נמי! קמיה דרב הואי. וליזיל לגבי ציבורא, ולינפול על אפיה! לא בעי למיטרה ציבורא. ואיבעית אימא: רב פישוט ידיים ורגלים הוה עביד, וכדעולא, דאמר עולא: לא אסרה תורה אלא פישוט ידיים ורגלים בלבד. וליפול על אפיה ולא ליעביד פשוט ידיים ורגלים! לא משני ממנהגיה. ואיבעית אימא: אדם חשוב שאני, כדרבי אלעזר, דאמר רבי אלעזר, אין אדם חשוב רשאי ליפול על פניו אלא אם כן נענה כיהושע בן נון, דכתיב (יהושע ז', י') ויאמר ה' אל יהושע קם לך [וגו']. תנו רבנן: קידה, על אפים, שנאמר: (מלכים א', א', לא') ותקד בת שבע אפים ארץ. כריעה, על ברכים, וכן הוא אומר: (מלכים א', ח', נד') מכרע על ברכיו. השתחואה, זו פישוט ידיים ורגלים, שנאמר: (בראשית לז', י') הבוא נבוא אני ואמך ואחיך להשתחות לך ארצה. לוי אחוי קידה קמיה דרבי ואיטלע.

Translation: The text above stated: 'Rav happened to be in Babylon on a public fast. He came forward and read from the Torah scroll. He made a blessing before commencing, but made no blessing after finishing. The whole congregation subsequently fell on their faces, but Rav did not fall on his face'. Why did Rav not fall on his face? There was a stone pavement there and it has been taught: (Va'Yikra 26,1) "Neither shall you place any figured stone in your land to bow down upon it": upon it you may not bow down in your land, but you may prostrate yourselves on the stones in the Temple'. This teaching is in accord with the opinion of 'Ulla, who said: The Torah here is forbidding bowing only on a pavement of stone. If that is the case, why is only Rav mentioned? All the rest should equally have abstained? The stone floor was only in front of Rav. But could he not have gone among the congregation and fallen on his face? He did not want to trouble the congregation. Or if you like I can suggest that it was Rav's custom to spread out his hands and feet when he fell on his face, and he followed the opinion of 'Ulla, who said, The Torah forbade only the spreading out of the hands and feet. But could he not have fallen on his face without spreading out his hands and feet? He did not care to change his custom. Or if you like I can suggest that for a distinguished man the rule is different, as laid down by R. Eleazar; for R. Eleazar said: A man of eminence is not permitted to fall on his face unless he is sure of being answered like Joshua son of Nun, as it is written, (Yehoshua 7, 10) Wherefore now are you fallen upon your face. Our Rabbis taught: Kidah means falling upon the face, as it says: (M'Lachim 1,1, 31) Then Bathsheba bowed [wa-tikod] with her face to the earth. Keri'ah means going down upon the knees, and so it says: (M'Lachim 1,8, 54) Solomon arose from kneeling [mi-kroa'] on his knees. Hishtabawa'ah is spreading out of the hands and feet, as it says: (Bereishis 37, 10) Shall I and your mother and your brothers come to prostrate ourselves [lehishtabawoth] before you onto the earth.

I am not sure whether it is a custom among any Jewish group today to perform full prostration, פישוט ידיים ורגלים, when they bow on יום כיפור. However, from the

following excerpt it would appear that in the era of the מהרי"ל, פישוט ידים ורגלים, was still being performed:

ספר מהרי"ל⁴ (מנהגים) הלכות ליל יום כיפור—ואמר שיש מקומות שפורסים בגדי צבעונים בבה"כ לכבוד היום. ויש מקומות שמשטיחין עשבים על הרצפה משום דכתיב ואבן משכית לא תתנו בארצכם להשתחות עליה (ויקרא כו, א), ובי"כ אנו מרבים בהשתחוואות יותר מבשאר כל השנה. ומסיק פ' הקורא תניינא דהשתחוואה הוא פישוט ידים ורגלים ואנו עבדינן הכי ביום הכפורים דוקא. ומהאי טעמא נותנים מחצלת לפני העמוד אל פני שליח ציבור כל השנה.

Translation: The Maharil said that in some places they would install white furnishings in the synagogue to honor Yom Kippur. Other places would spread grasses over the floor based on the verse: (Va'Yikra 26, 1) Neither shall you place any figured stone in your land to bow down upon it. Since on Yom Kippur we follow the practice of bowing more than we do on other days, it was necessary to cover the floor in case the floor consisted of stone. The type of bowing that should take place is full prostration with one's entire body touching the ground which is an act that we perform specifically on Yom Kippur. For that reason, a mat is placed in front of the prayer leader and is left there all year round.

The earliest reference to the practice of bowing in a similar fashion during the recital of **עלינו לשבח** on **ראש השנה** and **יום כיפור** is also the מהרי"ל:

ספר מהרי"ל (מנהגים) סדר מוסף של ראש השנה— והיה כורע על ברכיו והיה משתחוה ונופל על פניו.

Translation: During the repetition of Mussaf Shemona Esrei on Yom Kippur, he would fall on his knees, bow and touch his head on the floor.

The practice of bowing during the recital of **עלינו לשבח** on both **ראש השנה** and **יום כיפור** appears to be an extension of the practice of bowing upon the recital of **היו כורעים** during the **סדר העבודה** on **יום כיפור**. Arguably, if you bow when you tell the story of how others bowed, you should certainly bow when you speak of yourself bowing, as we do as part of **עלינו לשבח**.

4. Maharil (Rabbi Jacob ben Moses Moellin) was born in Mainz, Germany, ca. 1360, but studied in Austria. He founded a yeshivah in Mainz in 1387 after his father's death, and soon became recognized as the spiritual leader of Ashkenazic Jewry. Maharil died in Worms in 1427.