

The Beurei Hatefila Institute One Year Course On Tefila

Teaching Tefila, Jewish Prayer, poses a challenge for Jewish educators. It cannot be taught on a page-by-page basis because no single commentary for each page of the Siddur that might hold the interest of the students is available. The only option open for teaching Tefila is to teach by topic. To date, a guide to teaching Tefila topic by topic has not been published.

Developing such a guide has been the long term goal of the Beurei Hatefila Institute. After nine years of writing a weekly e-mail newsletter in which he has traced the origin of the words and structure of the Siddur, Abe Katz, Founding Director of the Institute has prepared a Tefila curriculum that allows schools to present a one year/ one hour per week course on Tefila.

The curriculum developed by the Institute is source based. Such an approach provides the students with the opportunity to not only study Tefila but to also learn of the availability and to practice reading from a variety of sources. Teachers can choose to omit the sources or they can teach the sources in their English translations. A major benefit of a source based approach to studying Tefila is that it allows the teacher to incorporate autobiographical information about the author of each source. When the author of the source lived and where he lived is often the key to discovering why a prayer or prayer practice entered into the fixed liturgy.

The curriculum is flexible. Each lesson is independent of the others so teachers can choose which subjects they deem appropriate for their students.

Once teachers become comfortable with following a source based curriculum, they can supplement the basic curriculum by downloading additional source materials that are available from the Beurei Hatefila Institute website.

Detailed lesson plans for each topic that is part of the one year course have been drafted. Those lesson plans will be made available to teachers who undergo a training program in the use of original sources to teach Tefila led by the Beurei Hatefila Institute.

Dated: June 1, 2012

One Year Course On ביאורי התפלה

Lessons

1. *Defining Jewish Prayer*
2. *What Is The סידור*
3. *The Origin Of The Synagogue*
4. *The Purpose Of קריאת התורה And קריאת ההפטרה*
5. *Defining תפלה בעיבור*
6. *The Origin Of Reciting קדיש During תפלה*
7. *The Origin Of קדיש יתום*
8. *Two Perspectives On The Theme Of שמונה עשרה*
9. *Understanding קריאת שמע*
10. *סמיכת גאולה לתפלה*
11. *The Relationship Between תפלה And לימוד תורה*
12. *Prayers That Were Added Because Of The Persecution of Jews*
13. *The Difference Between מנהג ארץ ישראל And מנהג בבל*
14. *The Origin Of The Jewish Rites And A Sample Of Them*
15. *The Six Historical Phases In The Development Of The Modern Day סידור*
16. *The Role Of פיוט In Tefila*

Summary Of The Lessons

Defining Jewish Prayer

To teach the students that the **סידור**, the fixed text, is only one form of Jewish prayer and not the only form of Jewish Prayer. The following represent additional forms of Jewish prayer:

1. Spontaneous prayer.
2. Prayer in times of difficulty.
3. Personal prayers that are added to the fixed prayers.
4. Non-verbals acts of prayer-sitting, standing, bowing, shofar blowing, etc.
5. Vows.
6. **ראש השנה** on a **תענית ציבור** and on **קריאת התורה**.

What is the סידור

To teach the students that the fixed text began as the recital of **פסוקים**. **הז"ל** then added **ברכות**. Then **הז"ל** added their own words. This evolution in the liturgy will explain why some groups of **פסוקים** recited today are still not preceded by the recital of a **ברכה**. The students will further examine the opening pages of **סדר רב עמרם גאון** and the **סידור** of **רש"י** where they will discover that the earliest **סידורים** were composed to be guides as to how to reach the goal of reciting 100 **ברכות** each day. They will further learn why **הז"ל** structured our **תפילות** around **ברכות**.

The Origin Of The Synagogue

To teach the students that the synagogue evolved from an institution known as the **שער העיר**, the City Gates or Town Square. The **שער העיר** was a place where important commercial and personal transactions took place in ancient times. That location took on such a role because it was where the maximum number of people could learn that a transaction had taken place. Creating word of mouth represented a primitive form of record-keeping. Court proceedings and markets were also held at the **שער העיר**. One of the earliest records of an act of **קריאת התורה** reveals that it took place at a **שער העיר**. The fact that the courts met, the markets were held and **קריאת התורה** took place on Mondays and Thursdays leads some to speculate that the synagogue evolved from the practice of performing **קריאת התורה** at the **שער העיר**. Inscriptions found during the excavations of ancient synagogues confirm that **קריאת התורה** and not communal prayer

להבין את התפלה

was among the first activities that took place at a synagogue. The students will study the ברכות that follow the הפטרה which are viewed by some as one of the first examples of communal prayer that entered into the synagogue service.

The Purpose Of קריאת התורה And קריאת ההפטרה

To teach the students that קריאת התורה serves several functions:

1. On a תפלה ציבור and on ראש השנה, קריאת התורה serves as a form of תפלה.
2. On holidays, קריאת התורה serves as the fulfillment of the following requirement: ויקרא פרק כג' פסוק ב'—דבר אל בני ישראל ואמרת אליהם מועדי ה' אשר תקראו אתם מקראי קדש אלה הם מועדי.
3. On שבת, on שבת at תפלת מנחה, and on Mondays and Thursdays, קריאת התורה serves as a form of לימוד התורה.
4. Each example of קריאת התורה serves as קבלת התורה מחדש; a re-creation of קריאת התורה and a renewal of our acceptance of the תורה. Some view the קריאת התורה on the first day of שבועות as a higher level of קבלת התורה.
5. The תורה תמימה views the weekly קריאת התורה as a means by which we fulfill the obligation of: זכר found in multiple verses within the תורה.

To teach the students that קריאת ההפטרה began for one of the following reasons:

1. A decree had been issued prohibiting Jews from performing קריאת התורה.
2. The practice may have been instituted by עזרא הסופר.
3. An ancient practice to study the נביאים for an hour after the daily prayer service was discontinued and reading from the נביאים on שבת ויום טוב became the substitute.

Defining תפלה בציבור

To teach the students that תפלה בציבור, communal prayer, is defined as ten men reciting the silent שמונה עשרה together. When ten men recite the silent שמונה עשרה together, they are not praying just for themselves individually nor for just the ten men present. Instead they are praying for the entire Jewish People as representatives of the Jewish People. This practice became a substitute for the עבודה, service, that took place in the בית המקדש. There, the כהנים performed the עבודה, service, in the בית המקדש not for the benefit of themselves nor for the benefit of the כהנים present. Instead they were performing the service representing the entire Jewish People. That ten men can represent all the Jewish People is derived by the use of the word: עדה in the Torah portion that

reports on the incident involving the **מרגלים**, the spies who spoke badly of the prospects of conquering **ארץ ישראל**. Further proof that ten men act as representatives of the Jewish People when they recite the silent **שמונה עשרה** is found in the wording of **קדיש תתקבל**, the **קדיש** that is recited to signal that a prayer service has come to an end.

The Origin Of Reciting קדיש during תפלה

To teach the students that when ten men perform a **מצוה** together as a unit, they are deemed to have performed a **קידוש השם** and are rewarded by being permitted to recite **קדיש**. The students will further learn the meaning of the words of **קדיש**. This view of **קדיש** explains why **קדיש** is recited after certain parts of the prayer service. It also explains the origin of the practice to recite **קדיש** at a funeral.. Nevertheless, it does not explain the origin of **קדיש יתום**. The students will further learn why **קדיש** is recited at a funeral but not at a wedding.

The Origin Of קדיש יתום

To teach the students that our Sages in the Middle Ages debated whether a child can perform an act in this world to benefit a deceased parent in the Next World. Because of the spread of a **מדרש** involving **רבי עקיבא** known as **מעשה ברבי עקיבא**, it became accepted that a child can perform an act in this world to benefit a deceased parent in the Next World. In that **מדרש**, **רבי עקיבא** learns that if a child is able to act as prayer leader for the congregation and lead them in the recital of **ברכו** and **קדיש**, he can improve his parents lot in the next world. That led to the practice that if a man lost a parent, he would lead the service each day for the first year after his parent's death. Nevertheless, children who lost parents could not avail themselves of that activity since they were too young to lead the service. In order to assist minor children to be able to perform an activity which could improve the lot of their deceased parent, **חז"ל** started the practice of adding the recital of verses after **קדיש תתקבל** after which children whether orphans or not orphans were permitted to recite an abbreviated form of **קדיש תתקבל**. The justification for the practice was initially given as being a form of **חינוך**, preparation for adulthood. Still later, adults who were not knowledgeable enough to lead the service, were given permission to recite the same form of **קדיש** that children had been reciting. As part of this lesson, the students will be taught that those reciting **קדיש יתום** are reciting a form of **קדיש** as a substitute for the **שליח ציבור**. Moreover, the students will further learn that teaching **תורה** or sponsoring the teaching of **תורה** is a much better act that a child can perform in order to benefit his/her deceased parent.

להבין את התפלה

Two Perspectives On The Theme Of שמונה עשרה

To teach the students that the 19 ברכות of שמונה עשרה can be viewed as representing one of two themes. Each theme is revealed when you apply one of the two definitions of the word “מודים” in the 18th ברכה. The two definitions of the word מודים are as follows: 1) to thank or to acknowledge and 2) to bow. If you translate the word מודים to mean to thank or to acknowledge, then you view the ברכות of שמונה עשרה as representing a formula: the first three ברכות represent words of שבח, praise; the middle 13 ברכות represent requests both personal and communal and the last three ברכות represent הודאה, the giving of thanks. If you translate the word מודים as bow then you view the ברכות of שמונה עשרה as representing עבודה, service, a substitute for the עבודה, service, that took place in the בית המקדש. The students will then compare the עבודה that is performed when reciting שמונה עשרה with the עבודה that was performed in the בית המקדש each day and notice the similarities between the two.

Understanding קריאת שמע

To teach the students that קריאת שמע is its own unique מצוה separate apart from the מצוה of תפלה. To explain the meaning of the ברכות that surround קריאת שמע and why the מצוה of קריאת שמע can be fulfilled without reciting those ברכות. To teach that קריאת שמע is the Jewish Pledge of Allegiance. To look at early sources that refer to reciting קריאת שמע as not only the fulfillment of the מצוה of קריאת שמע but also an example of לימוד תורה. Finally to explain the importance of reciting the first verse of קריאת שמע out loud.

סמיכת גאולה לתפלה

To teach that the rule of סמיכת גאולה לתפלה was the seed that spouted into the סידור, that it created a link between the מצוה of קריאת שמע and the מצוה of תפלה and to explain the link between the concept of redemption and שמונה עשרה. That link was clearly expressed in מנהג ארץ ישראל when those who followed מנהג ארץ ישראל would say the following before the ברכה of גאול ישראל: בגלל אבות תושיע בנים: גאול ישראל of ברכה.

The Relationship Between לימוד תורה and תפלה

To teach the students that each time they recited a פסוק or פרק from תנ"ך as part of the

prayer service, they fulfill two מצוות, the מצוה of תפלה and the מצוה of לימוד תורה. The link between the two is that each can be defined as עבודה שבלב. In what manner do they share the attribute of being עבודה שבלב? By bringing man closer to G-d. That closeness is what we express just before reciting קריאת שמע:

וקרבתנו לשמך הגדול סלה באמת, להודות לך וליחדך באהבה.

The more we study G-d's words, the closer we are drawn to Him. That is why לימוד תורה is so important. That is why תפלה is so important.

Some of the פסוקים that appear in תפלה serve a second purpose: ונשלמה פרים שפתינו. Since we cannot bring the sacrifices today, we fulfill our obligation to bring the sacrifices by reciting the specifics of the sacrifices. That is why we recite קרבנות each day. That is why we recall the מוסף שמונה עשרה in מוסף.

Prayers That Were Added/ Subtracted Because Of The Persecution of Jews

To teach the students that some prayers were added while others were subtracted as a result of the religious persecution of Jews. אנב הרחמים, עלינו לשבח and יזכור are among the more well-known prayers that were added to the סידור as a consequence of religious persecution. Our failure to include the עשרת הדיברות within the prayer service resulted from the fear of religious persecution. In addition, the practice among Ashkenazim not to recite ברכת כהנים every day may be a further example of a prayer that was removed from the prayer service as a result of religious persecution.

Many of the קינות that are recited on תשעה באב reflect religious persecution. A change in theme and a change in the form of the סליחות that are recited on fast days and during the עשרת ימי תשובה by Ashkenazim can be traced to religious persecution.

The Differences Between מנהג ארץ ישראל And מנהג בבל

To teach the students that during the time of the נמרא and the time of the גאונים, the Jews of בבל and the Jews of ארץ ישראל followed independent customs concerning תפלה. In illustration, they will study the versions of שמונה עשרה that followed מנהג ארץ ישראל for weekdays, שבת and יום טוב and other examples. This lesson will help the students recognize when the Talmud is presenting a disagreement in practice that reflects the differences between מנהג ארץ ישראל and מנהג בבל.

להבין את התפלה

The Origin Of The Jewish Rites And A Sample Of Them

To teach the students the origin of the Ashkenazic and Sephardic rites. To understand the origin of the Sephardic rite, the students should be shown a map of where Jews lived under Islamic control beginning in the 700's CE. They should then study the first page of Seder Rav Amrom Gaon. To understand the origin of the Ashkenazic rite, the students should study a map showing Jewish migration into Ashkenaz. The Sephardic Rite follows closely what is known as **מנהג בבל**, the Babylonian custom while the Ashkenazic Rite adopted some important aspects of **מנהג ארץ ישראל**. That divide is seen by the fact that Ashkenazim freely include **שמונה עשרה** in the repetition of **פיוטים** while the Sephardim do not. In addition, Ashkenazim never open **קדושה** with the words: **כתר יתנו** because that introduction does not include a **הזמנה**, an invitation to the congregation to respond.

Today, two other prayer rites stand out as being significantly different than the others; the Roman Rite and the Yemenite Rite. The Roman Rite contains within it many more elements of **מנהג ארץ ישראל** than does **נוסח אשכנז**. The Yemenite Rite reflects the text of the **תפילות** as provided by the **רמב"ם**.

The Six Historical Phases In The Development Of The Modern Day סידור

To teach the students that the **סידור** went through six phases of development:

1. The period of the **משנה**-from the destruction of the Second **בית המקדש** until 220 CE.
2. The period of the **גמרא**-from 220 CE to approximately 600 CE;
3. The period of the **גאונים**-from 600 CE to approximately 1100 CE;
4. The period of the **ראשונים**-from approximately 1050 CE to approximately 1550 CE;
5. The era following the death of Rabbi Isaac Luria-the AR"l;
6. The Heidenheim **סידור**-early 1800's-an attempt to remove many of the Kabbalistic additions that had been made to the **סידור** after the death of Rabbi Isaac Luria-the AR"l.

Highlights of each era:

The period of the **משנה**-No link between the **שמונה עשרה** of **קריאת שמע** and **מצוה**. No references to **קדושה** or **קדיש**. No references to **פסוקי דזמרה** or **ברכות השחר**.

The period of the **גמרא**-**מיתת גאולה לתפלה**-**גמרא**. Our first references to the **התימות** of **ברכות השחר**. References to **קדושה** and **קדיש**, **פסוקי דזמרה**, **שמונה עשרה**. Reference is made to **תחנון** and **נפילת אפים** and to **קדושה דסדרא**. The full text of **קדיש** and **קדושה** are still not revealed. **ברכות השחר** are disclosed but not **ברוך שאמר** and not

however, ברכת השיר is discussed. The students will examine the possibility that both ברוך שאמר and ישתבח are variations of ברכת השיר.

The period of the first גאונים-The first סידורים; סדר רב עמרם גאון and the סידור of רב סעדיה שמונה, ברכות קריאת שמע, פסוקי דזמרה, קרבנות, ברכות השחר, גאון. The full text of קדיש תתקבל ends with תפלת שחרית. קדושה דסדרה and תחנון, קדושה, עשרה after קדושה דסדרה. No קדיש יתום. No קבלת שבת. A period in which מנהג ארץ ישראל is flowering particularly in Egypt.

The period of the Ashkenazic rite takes shape as does the Sephardic rite. The introduction of קדיש יתום and the recital of אנכי ה' אלילים, עלינו לשבח, יזכור. Major פירושי סידור התפלה לרוקה, מהזור ויטרי, סידור רש"י-Ashkenaz-סידורים; and the סידור of the רמב"ם and אבודרהם-Sepharad.

The era following the death of Rabbi Isaac Luria-The introduction of many Kabbalistic practices including קבלת שבת, the recital of בריך שמייה and the י"ג מידות on ימים טובים, and תיקון ליל שבועות. The new practices were instituted by the Kabbalists who viewed the expulsion of the Jews from Spain as התחלתא דגאולה, the beginning of the coming of the משיח. They introduced new practices to encourage piety as a means of hastening the coming of the משיח.

The Heidenheim סידור-Rabbi Heidenheim observed that many Jews were unhappy with the inclusion of many Kabbalistic practices into the סידור. He edited a סידור that removed many of those practices. It is a סידור that is still used in the communities that follow German-Jewish customs. The number of times קדיש יתום was recited was reduced. The recital of מזמור שיר הנכתב הבית לדוד before ברוך שאמר was discontinued.

The Role Of פיוט In Tefila

To teach the students the origin of the practice to recite פיוטים; that they were first composed to enhance the repetition of עשרה שמונה and to keep the תפילות fresh or that they were composed because of religious persecution-to replace the study of תורה that was banned. Many פיוטים incorporate the laws of the holidays and act as a substitute for the Torah lectures that were delivered to prepare the community for the holidays. To make the students conscious of the frequency in which they currently encounter פיוטים in their regular prayers. To present an introduction to the קינות of תשעה באב and the סליחות of ימים נוראים and fast days.