



A collection of Torah thoughts produced by Kollel Menachem

פרשת נצבים  
אלול תשע"ו  
שנת הקהל

### KNOW BEFORE YOU BLOW

This past week, Kollel hosted a must-attend back-to-back series on what one needs to know to be able to blow Shofar for others.

Rabbi Michoel Stern revised the halachos, including; what make a shofar kosher?, what is the minimum number of notes that one can blow, and more.

He was followed by Reb Mottel Greenbaum, and experienced Baal Tokeah, who highlighted some of these key points in the Maamer להבין ענין תקיעת שופר. The Rebbe demanded that anyone blowing Shofar on Rosh Hashona should learn through this Maamer. The Shiur packed the Kollel and was very relevant and well delivered.

### MAZAL TOV

The Kollel would like to wish Rabbi and Mrs Yonason Johnson Mazal Tov on the birth of their daughter Sima Leah. May they raise her to Torah, Chuppah and Maasim Tovim with much Nachas and blessing.

### AVOS UBONIM

This Motzai Shabbos will be the final Avos Ubonim of the winter. Join us for one final week of fun learning, raffles and nush. Avos Ubonim will return after the Yomim Noraim. Stay tuned for details.

### PUBLICATION

Look out for our "Window into Your Kollel" publication with Kollel updates and Divrei Torah.



Communal Avos Ubonim

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## Hakhel - Together in Unity

Shnas Hakhel is drawing to a close as we usher in the new year 5777 on Rosh Hashona. It's never too late to *chap arein* with the lessons of Hakhel, which will carry us through the next Hakhel in 7 years time, this time *אי"ה* in Yerushalaim with Moshiach. It is even more timely on Parshas Nitzavim.

The Mitzvah of Hakhel places great emphasis on the idea of a community and unity. The very name of the Mitzvah, Hakhel, means to gather people together. It is to be held a time when *all* of Israel come. The king, who is the heart that unites all of the Jewish people, had to read the Sefer Torah before *all* of Israel.

Rambam writes that hearing the Torah read by the king at Hakhel was like hearing it directly from Hashem on the day the Torah was given at Sinai. As a prerequisite to receiving the Torah, the Jewish people camped as one people with one heart. This same level of unity is required in the re-experience of Matan Torah during Hakhel.

A community (a Kahal) is more than just a gathering of individuals for a common purpose. True, far more can be accomplished by a group than on one's own, but this is not the uniqueness of a Kahal. A Kahal is an entirely new entity. As a completely new entity, a Kahal has the ability to achieve things which are not even on the radar for individuals or even a collection of individuals.

By way of illustration; Ten Jews gathered to pray are not just a numerical number. They take on an entirely new status - a minyan, which brings down Hashem's presence and allows them to recite the *Devarim Shebikedusha* during davening.

Parshas Nitzavim also opens with an emphasis on the unity of the Jewish people. "You are *all* standing hear today". The Torah proceeds to enumerate a hierarchy of 10 social stratas, ranging from the leaders of the tribes to the lowly water-carriers. Yet they all stand together. The Torah writes that this was for the purpose of entering a covenant with Hashem - לעברך בברית. The Alter Rebbe observes that לעברך is written in singular form, highlighting the unity of the Jewish people as one.

The key to achieving this sense of unity is humility. The unity of the Jewish people is likened to the form of a human body. Like the limbs of the body which each possess a unique function, every Jew has a contribution that they can make which no one else, not even the greatest scholar can. In this regard, even the lowly foot serves as the head. Humility and unity are the defining features of the side of Holiness.

The Alter Rebbe writes that the opening Pesukim of Parshas Nitzavim alludes to the day of Rosh Hashona when all Jews stand before Hashem equal and as one.

In our Yomim Noraim Tefillos we say יעשו כולם אגודה אחת לעשות רצונך, "and they will make one band (or bundle) to do your will with a full heart". Individual sticks are easily splintered. However a bundle creates a greater strength through the synergy of the sticks coming being held together. The analogy of a bundle is drawn from a Posuk in Amos.

This Posuk is referenced in the famous Midrash describing how the four species (the lulav and esrog) each represent a different Jew in terms of their commitment to Torah and Mitzvos. Hashem says let them be bound together to atone for one another. The Midrash goes on to say that when we come together, we cause Hashem Himself to be elevated. The Midrash quotes the Posuk הבונה שמים "Who built His strata in the Heavens and founded His group on the earth." When is He (Hashem) elevated? When they (the Jewish people) make one bundle on the earth.

This unity, says the Baal Shem Tov, is the key to drawing down Hashem's blessings for the coming year; that we stand firm and victorious in our judgment and merit a new year filled with blessings, both materially and spiritually.

In the final moments of Hakhel, let's strengthen our sense of community. We are capable of tremendous things when we work together as one, banding together to carry out Your will. May this serve as the Keili for Hashem's blessings for our community in particular and Jews throughout the world for a וחתימה טובה.

# A Davening Guide for Mothers with Young Children

Rabbi Yonason Johnson



Davening is a primary Avodah of the Yomim Noraim. The Rosh Hashona haftorahs highlight the power of a woman's prayers. On the first day we read about Chanah's prayers for a son.

The haftorah of the second day alludes to the powerful prayers of Rochel on behalf of her children when they were going into exile. Her prayers effected that which even the Avos could not achieve.

It is ironic therefore that it is often difficult for women to be more involved in the Yomim Noraim davening, due to their maternal responsibilities.

Chanah, a prophetess, understood that her sacred role and responsibility as a mother took precedence over her personal spiritual feelings. Until her son Shmuel was weaned, she chose to stay at home rather than make her annual pilgrimage to the Mishkan. Looking after her child was what Hashem wanted of her. This was a far more important Avodah.

Despite some degree of dispensation, women do have some obligations in davening. They also have their personal desire to connect to Hashem through prayer.

## Prioritising Your Tefillos

Below is a list of the Tefillos in order of priority of what should be included, when mothering and household responsibilities makes a full davening impractical. This guide applies on weekdays, Shabbos and Yomtov, including the Yomim Noraim.

**Amidah:** A woman is halachically required to daven the Amidah for Shachris and Mincha each day. This reflects the majority opinion and is also the ruling of the Alter Rebbe<sup>1</sup>.

Shachris should be davened within the correct time and certainly before *Chatzot*.

In a situation where her obligations make this genuinely not possible, she should rely on the view which only requires her to recite a short Tefillah each day which gives praise and thanks to Hashem<sup>2</sup>. *Birchos Hashachar* would suffice. A personalised Tefillah would also do the job.

**Emes Veyatziv** until its conclusion *Go'al Yisroel* is the next requirement. Through this one fulfills the Mitzvah of remembering the Exodus from Egypt, a positive Mitzvah which is *not* time-bound. This should be said just prior to Shemoneh Esrei without any interruption in between<sup>3</sup>.

A woman is obligated and should recite the Morning Blessings *Birchos Hashachar*<sup>4</sup> and *Birkas HaTorah*<sup>5</sup>, the Torah blessings.

She should also recite the Parsha of the *Tomid* in Korbonos<sup>6</sup>.

The above are the parts of davening which a woman has an obligation to say. Below are the parts of davening in which she is technically exempt. If she is able to, it is encouraged to add even these parts to her davening in the order below.

**Krias Shema:** Technically a woman is exempt from reciting Shema since it is a time-bound positive Mitzvah. Poskim recommend that she recite at least the first line of the Shema each day in order to accept Hashem's Kingship<sup>7</sup>. The Levush requires Baruch Shem to also be said. A woman is not bound to recite Shema in its proper time.

She is also exempt from reciting the blessings before the Shema (*Birchos Krias Shema*)<sup>8</sup>.

**Pesukei Dezimra:** Whether a woman must say Pesukei Dezimra is subject to *machlokes*. Mishna Berura<sup>9</sup> learns that since these verses are a preparation for the Shemoneh Esrei, women should recite them. The Alter Rebbe however exempts women from *Pesukei Dezimra*<sup>10</sup>.

The essential part of *Pesukei Dezimra* is *Ashrei*, together with the blessings of *Baruch Sheomar* recited beforehand and *Yishtabach* afterwards. The other Tehillim and pesukim are extra.

She is also exempt from the concluding Tefillos including; Tachanun, Ashrei-Uva Letzion, Shir Shel Yom, Ein Kelokeinu and Aleinu.

Again, if a woman is able to, it is commendable if she adds all of the above to her davening.

**Other:** There is a debate whether women are obligated to recite Musaf<sup>11</sup>. When Musaf is recited, it would take precedence over Pesukei Dezimra based on the above view of the Alter Rebbe.

**Hallel:** A woman is exempt from Hallel.

**Tekiyas Shofar:** A woman is technically exempt from hearing Shofar. Nonetheless women have accepted upon themselves the Mitzvah of hearing Shofar. This is the minimum 30 sounds. They can be heard at home and need not be in Shule or as part of davening.

**Yom Kippur Vidui:** Sefer Hachinuch<sup>12</sup> requires women to recite the Vidui on Yom Kippur. She should recite Vidui at least once on Yom Kippur.

## Davening at Home

During the week a woman will usually daven at home. On Shabbos, Yomtov and the Yomim Noraim whether to daven at home or Shule is a matter of personal choice. The decision largely rests on where she will be able to have more Kavanah. When davening at home, the following halachos of davening should be kept in mind;

- She should designate a specific place to daven<sup>13</sup>.
- If the direction of Mizrach is not known, she should direct her heart to Hashem<sup>14</sup>.
- She should not daven facing any pictures or tapestries which may disturb her Kavanah. One should not daven facing a mirror or picture<sup>15</sup>.
- One should daven in clothes which cover their body in a halachically acceptable manner. She

should dress in proper clothing to daven<sup>16</sup> i.e. not pyjamas.

- She should wash her hands before davening<sup>17</sup>.
- Try to create a distraction-free environment. Make sure that the baby is soothed and other children are fed and occupied.
- One should preferably not hold a baby while davening the Amidah<sup>18</sup>. If the baby is crying or needs to be held she may do so.
- If a child who is eating solids has a dirty diaper, one may not daven in its presence<sup>19</sup>.

**Interruptions:** One should not interrupt their Amidah either by speaking, moving or gesturing.

If there is a possible situation of danger, *Sakanah*, one stops their Amidah straight away and may even talk if necessary<sup>20</sup>.

If there is distraction which is affecting one's Kavanah e.g. children making noise, one may motion to be quiet. If this will not suffice one may move to another room and complete the Amidah there.

If a baby or child is crying, she may interrupt and (without speaking) move and soothe the baby or deal with the child and return to her Amidah.

If the break is long enough to complete the Amidah, one must go back to the beginning.

## Davening at Shule with Kids

Some additional Halachos to keep in mind if you will be in Shule:

- One may not kiss their child in Shule<sup>21</sup>.
- Girls who will be going into the men's section should be dressed Tzniusly<sup>22</sup>.
- Halachos of disturbing and interrupting are the same as above.
- Young children who will make noise should not be brought into shule or should be taken out if they are making noise, so that they do not disturb the davening of others<sup>23</sup>.

May Hashem answer all of our Tefillos, however much or little we manage, for a good year filled with blessings *begashmius uberuchnius* for our families and all of Klal Yisroel.

<sup>1</sup> 106:1. Based on the view of the Ramban. See Magen Avraham 106:2

<sup>2</sup> Based on Ramban. See Magen Avraham 106:2. This is the practise of Sefardim. The Chofetz Chaim's son writes that his mother rarely davened when her children were young on the advice of her husband.

<sup>3</sup> Shulchan Aruch Harav 70:1 based on Magen Avraham.

<sup>4</sup> Teshuvos Hageonim. Also implied by the Alter Rebbe

<sup>5</sup> Shulchan Aruch Harav 47:10. Mishna Berura Biur Halacha *Nashim*

<sup>6</sup> Mishna Berura based on Magen Avraham 47:14 requires a woman to recite all of the Korbonos. The Alter Rebbe requires only the Parshas Hatomid

<sup>7</sup> Shulchan Aruch Harav 70:1 <sup>8</sup> *Ibid* <sup>9</sup> 70:2 <sup>10</sup> 70:1

<sup>11</sup> See Pinas Halocho for the divergent opinions.

<sup>12</sup> Mitzvah 364 <sup>13</sup> Shulchan Aruch Harav 90:1, 18 <sup>14</sup> Shulchan Aruch Harav 94:4 <sup>15</sup> Shulchan Aruch Harav 90:22 <sup>16</sup> Shulchan Aruch Harav 91:1 and 91:6 <sup>17</sup> Shulchan Aruch Harav 92:5 <sup>18</sup> Based on Shulchan Aruch OC 96:1 <sup>19</sup> OC Siman 81 <sup>20</sup> See Shulchan Aruch OC 104

<sup>21</sup> Shulchan Aruch Harav 98:1

<sup>22</sup> See Shulchan Aruch OC 75. From which age the requirement to dress tzniusly and until what age a girl is able to go into the men's section please refer to your community Rabbi.

<sup>23</sup> Shulchan Aruch Harav 98:1. Concerning Tekiyos see 592:8