



## TOWARDS MEANINGFUL

### TEFILLA

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## יהי רצון מלפניך... שתרגילנו בתורתך

**E**very morning, on my bus ride to work, I take a moment to say Tefillat HaDerech. As I begin the tefilla, I pause and think not only about the dangers of the upcoming journey on the highway, but also of the challenges that I expect to come my way that day. This is a very meaningful way for me to set out on my day's journey. **But the reality is that Chazal actually instituted a daily "Tefillat HaDerech" for the bumpy road ahead called life. That Tefilla is the Yehi Ratzon which closes Birchot Hashachar.**

Let us analyze the beautiful words of this Tefilla:

יהי רצון מלפניך... שתרגילנו בתורתך -

We begin by asking Hashem to help us become accustomed to the Torah way of life, that the Torah lifestyle should become our natural way of being, an ingrained habit. When a person accustoms himself to doing things which are negative or a waste of time, it becomes an addictive habit that is extremely difficult to break. We all can relate to this on a personal level, living in a generation where there is such a strong

pull to waste time on the internet and on our phones. On the other hand, when one accustoms himself to learning Torah and doing Mitzvot, it also becomes an addictive habit and he will develop a natural pull to continue in that direction. The Sefer Haminhagim explains that we want our mitzvot to become second nature – we should feel that just like we can't survive without food or drink and we have a natural drive pulling us to eat and drink, so too we should feel this overwhelming need and desire to do the Mitzvot. The Gerrer Rebbe points out that the interesting thing about eating is that even though we do it every day and it is second nature to us, we never get bored of it; each time we have a fresh appetite and desire to eat again. The same is true with regard to the mitzvot – they should become second nature but at the same time remain exciting and fresh. We need Hashem's help to get us to the point.

ודבקנו במצוותיך -

We ask Hashem to enable us to feel attached to the Mitzvot. It's not enough to just do the Mitzvot, we want to feel a very strong connection and attachment to them. We can do our part by doing the Mitzvot and we ask Hashem to do His part and to help us to develop that emotional connection.

ואל תביאנו לא לידי חטא ולא לידי עבירה ועון -

Hashem, please don't bring us to sin. The Shla asks - How can we make this request of Hashem? We have free choice – **we** need to decide whether or not to sin, we can't ask Hashem to make us not sin! He answers that we are asking Hashem to remove any obstacles in our path that might prevent us from doing the Mitzvot. Ultimately, we need to make the right choices and to decide whether or not to do the mitzvot, but we can still ask Hashem to help us out by giving us the ideal conditions to enable us to do so.

The Siach Yitzchak comments on the fact that we ask Hashem to keep us away from both חטא (unintentional sins) and עבירה ועון (different types of intentional sins). He says that one may have thought

that we should first ask Hashem to prevent us from more severe types of sins and only then ask to prevent us from the less severe unintentional sins. He explains however that it is the exact opposite – it's a lot easier to commit a minor sin or to sin unintentionally. Most of us are not about to take a bite of a cheeseburger but we are very prone to committing something more “minor” like, talking Lashon Hara. So we ask Hashem first to prevent us from the sins we are more likely to commit, and only then ask that if we did end up committing “minor sins” to please prevent us from continuing down the slippery slope and committing even worse sins.

לא לידי נסיון ולא לידי בזיון -

We ask Hashem not to make us go through any tests or be brought to embarrassment.

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In Judaism, we believe that it is our job in this world to face challenges and tribulations, stand up to them and succeed, and to become better people because of what we've been through. But here we ask Hashem not to test us. Why is this? Rabbi Shimon Schwab answers that we ask Hashem to test us with those tests that we are capable of passing but not to test us with those tests which we are not able to pass, so that we will not be brought to embarrassment and humiliation.

ואל תשלט בנו יצר הרע –

Even though we already asked that Hashem help us make Torah and Mitzvot become our natural habits, we need to ask for protection against the Yetzer Hara, the evil inclination. The more we are pulled to the good, the more the Yetzer Hara is going to try to pull us in the opposite direction so we need to ask Hashem for extra protection.

והרחיקנו מאדם רע ומחבר רע –

As much as it's important to fortify ourselves with Torah and Mitzvot and protect ourselves from the Yetzer Hara, the biggest danger to our spiritual growth is the people who surround us. Human beings are naturally influenced by those around them and so we need to daven for help to make sure that we are surrounded by good neighbors and friends who will have a strong positive influence on our spiritual growth and not vice versa.

ודבקנו ביצר הטוב ובמעשים טובים –

Not only do we need to cling to the Yetzer

Hatov, to good thoughts and plans, but to translate that into action with a clinging to good deeds as well.

וכף את יצרנו להשתעבד לך –

We ask Hashem not only to protect us against the Yetzer Hara, but to help us to take that evil inclination and use it to serve Him. We were all given certain character traits and desires – the ideal is to take those set of circumstances which may seem negative at the outset and to transform them into something positive, and not just to crush and suppress our natural drives.

ותננו היום...לחן ולחסד ולרחמים בעיניך ובעיני כל  
רואינו –

As Torah observant Jews, is it very important that everything we do, not only finds favor in the eyes of Hashem, but also in the eyes of those around us, enabling a huge Kiddush Hashem.

ברוך...הגומל חסדים טובים לעמו ישראל –

The concluding line (חתימה) of this bracha brings us back to where we started (חתימה מעין פתיחה), thanking Hashem for all of the many kindnesses He has done for us, including removing the sleep from our eyes and all of the other kindnesses we mentioned in all of the Birchot Hashachar. May we all indeed be zocheh to be on the receiving end of all of the beautiful brachot of Birchot Hashachar! ■

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