



## TOWARDS MEANINGFUL

### TEFILLA

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# Tefillat HaDerech

When thinking about the various Brachot and Tefillot I recite throughout my day, one that I definitely have the most kavana for is Tefillat HaDerech. Every morning, after successfully getting all of my kids out of the house and running to catch the bus, I take my seat, catch my breath, and take a pause to daven for a safe trip to work. Given all the car accidents and acts of terror we hear about on a daily basis, I truly believe that every time we arrive safely at our destination, it is a miracle. Though we no longer have to deal with roadside bandits and wild animals (generally...though this week there was a video that went viral featuring a camel that had gotten lost in my yishuv and proceeded to run down the highway veering in between lanes and cars as he pleased....), we have many other very real dangers facing us on a daily basis.

There is a lot of Halachic discussion as to what the parameters are for when Tefillat HaDerech is required (how far do you need to travel from a populated city, how long the drive takes, etc.). But even when a drive doesn't fall into these Halachic parameters, it is agreed upon that one may still recite the Tefilla without

the concluding bracha and ask Hashem for a safe journey. So it seems that it can never hurt to recite the Tefilla, and can only come to our benefit.

The **Shelah** writes - אם שגורה תפילת הדרך - בפיו אזי תלך לבטח דרכך, *if your mouth is well-versed in Tefillat HaDerech, you will be able to travel in safety.* The **Nimmukei Orach Chaim** supports this idea as well. He writes as follows: *"Many are lenient in our times not to recite Tefillat HaDerech. They explain that the roads are not currently dangerous, especially when traveling on the train. However, 'their mouths speak futility.' And our eyes have seen and our ears have heard about the danger in our days, the murders, thefts, and all sorts of other calamities that take place on the roads, and also about the locomotive trains that collide with other trains or turn over and go off the tracks, and especially concerning automobiles, which are more dangerous than any wagon. Therefore, we certainly need Tefillat HaDerech, and Hashem should accept our prayers."*

Modern transportation has developed since those words were written in the early 1900's, and train, plane, and car travel is significantly safer than it was in the author's day. Nevertheless, the idea that Tefillat HaDerech can protect us from harm is still quite relevant today and seems to be a good practice.

Every time I recite Tefillat HaDerech,

I invariably end up asking Hashem not only to watch over me on my ride to work but to watch over me in my journey throughout the day. I never knew there was a source for this until I encountered the following quote by **Rav Avraham Yitzchak HaKohen Kook** in *Ein Aya*. Rav Kook writes as follows:

כל מצב חדש צריך שמירה, שעכ"פ מביא ציורים חדשים ורגשות חדשות...ע"כ אפילו כשאתה יוצא לדרך תכין עצמך לקראת ההתרגשות והשינויים החדשים שתוכל הדרך להביא בצורך...וזאת היא עיקר מטרת תפילת הדרך, שעמה יחד תבא המירה המעולה, כי ד' ישמור את יראיו.

*Any new situation requires protection, since it inevitably brings with it new challenges and new emotions...Therefore, when you travel, prepare yourself for the emotions and new changes that traveling may bring your way...This is the primary purpose of Tefillat HaDerech, which through it will bring the best protection, since Hashem watches over those who fear Him.*

May Hashem protect us on all of our journeys and throughout life, watching over us and granting us success in all our endeavors.

*\*Many thanks to my husband Rabbi Eli Ozarowski, English editor of Tzurba M'Rabanan, for his contribution to this article (based on his material for the upcoming volume of Tzurba) ■*

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Yoni thanks Hashem for having the opportunity of having Tziporah in his life, to learn of her caring, patience and happiness, to overcome her challenges. May Tziporah's Neshama be a light onto the world, in a time of darkness, and may her Neshama shine to Gan Eden. Yoni misses Tziporah with tears in his eyes, as Hashem gave him a gift, a crown jewel, now he returns her to Hashem.

With thanks and Toda. Love, Yoni

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