

אנא בכח

The Tefillah of Rabbi Nechuniah ben Hakanah

This tefillah, which is attributed to the Tanna, Rabbi Nechuniah ben Hakanah, is in essence a combination of allusions and hints to many of the secret Names of Hashem, which we are not allowed to pronounce overtly. Unfortunately, it is greatly underappreciated, with many people rushing through it. In truth, because of the great kedushah of this tefillah, it should be said slowly and with concentration. According to the Kabbalists, it should be said with “sweetness and song.” Since in essence we are saying the Name of Hashem, we follow this tefillah immediately with the sentence בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם, similar to what was done in the Beis Hamikdash when the Name of Hashem was pronounced.

In Appendix 15 (the expanded Kabbalas Shabbos), you will find a lengthy introduction explaining the various allusions and hints to the Names of Hashem that are found in this tefillah (which explains why there are a bunch of Hebrew letters at the end of each sentence). As well, you will find two different word-for-word translations/explanations: first on a simple level—a request for material help, and then on a deeper level—a request for spiritual help. Here, we will just give a simple overview of the basic meaning of each sentence.

Please, Hashem, use Your great strength to free us from this galus
 אֲנָא בְּכַח, גְּדוּלַת יְמִינָה, תִּתִּיר צָרוּרָה: אב"ג ית"ץ
(we are unable to leave galus physically, or, we are blinded by the materialism and imprisoned in galus by our warped value system).

Hashem, Who is so revered, please accept the tefillos of Your nation; strengthen and purify us!
 קַבֵּל רִנָּת, עֲמָהּ, שְׂגִיבֵנוּ, טְהַרְנוּ נוֹרָא: קר"ע שט"ן

Please, Hashem, Who is mighty, guard Your unique nation (*Bnei Yisrael*) as carefully as a person guards the pupil of their eye.
 נָא גְבוֹה, דּוֹרְשֵׁי יְחִידָה, כְּכַבֵּת שְׁמֵרָם: נג"ד יכ"ש

Bless them, purify them, and constantly shower them with Your tzedakah, even when they are not worthy.
 בְּרַכֵּם טְהַרֵּם, רַחֲמֵי צְדָקָתָה, תָּמִיד גְּמִלֵם:
 בט"ר צת"ג

Powerful Holy One, guide and lead Your congregation with Your abundant goodness.
 חֲסִין קְדוֹשׁ, בָּרַב טוֹבָה, נְהַל עֲדָתְךָ: חק"ב טנ"ע

Hashem, the one and only Exalted One, turn to Your people, for they proclaim Your holiness constantly.
 יְחִיד גֵּאָה, לְעַמְּךָ פָּנֵה, זֹכְרֵי קִדְשָׁתְךָ: יג"ל פז"ק

Please accept our pleas and hear the cries of our heart, for You know all our secret thoughts.
 שְׁוַעֲתֵנוּ קַבֵּל, וּשְׁמַע צַעֲקָתֵנוּ, יוֹדַע תַּעֲלוּמוֹת:
 שק"ו צי"ת

בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מְלָכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:

ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו לעולם ועד—May the perception of Hashem’s Presence and rulership be increased (*so all humans will recognize His existence and power*), לעולם ועד—forever and ever.