

And now that we are firm in our conviction that Hashem has chosen us, has taken care of us, will take care of us, and is the only power Who controls all elements of our lives, we come before Him with our requests—so that we will have all we need in order to do our unique part in this great mission in the best way possible.

OUR REQUESTS

שמנה עשרה

Opening Statement

אֲדֹנָי, שְׁפָתַי תִּפְתָּח וּפִי יִגִּיד תְּהִלָּתְךָ:

אֲדֹנָי, שְׁפָתַי תִּפְתָּח וּפִי יִגִּיד תְּהִלָּתְךָ (I am standing here because I do want to daven, create a relationship, and thank You for all the good You do for me—which is sometimes hard to see or understand—and I want to ask You for the help I need. But that does not come easy to me for so many reasons. Therefore, I am asking, please) Hashem, open my lips and help me express myself properly.

Section 1—Praises

אבות

Hashem took care of us from the beginning:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאַלֹהֵי
אֲבוֹתֵינוּ—You, Hashem, are
the Source of everything,
You control everything,
and have taken care of
Bnei Yisrael throughout
our history starting from
the time of the Avos.
You are all-powerful, You
shower us with acts of
helpful kindness (*even
though at times it is hard to
see that*), and everything is
Yours. When dealing with
us, You take into account
the good deeds of our
ancestors, and (*everything
You do for us is in order
to*) bring Mashiach to us, their descendants, even if we do not
deserve it!

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, אֱלֹהֵינוּ
וְאַלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, אֱלֹהֵי
אַבְרָהָם, אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק
וְאַלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב. הָאֵל
הַגָּדוֹל, הַגִּבּוֹר וְהַנּוֹרָא,
אֵל עֶלְיוֹן, גּוֹמֵל חֲסָדִים
טוֹבִים, וְקוֹנֵה הַכֹּל, וְזוֹכֵר
חֲסָדֵי אֲבוֹת, וּמְבִיא
גּוֹאֵל לְבְנֵי בְנֵיהֶם לְמַעַן
שְׁמוֹ, בְּאַהֲבָה:

FAQ:

Honestly, I don't really care that much about my unique mission in this world—I just daven because I need stuff from Hashem. Is that so bad?

ANSWER:

Very honest question! See Appendix 8.

FAQ:

Why am I asking Hashem for stuff? Hashem knows what I want, and He also knows what I really need. If I really need it and am supposed to have it, He would have given it to me!

FAQ:

Why should I bother making requests from Hashem? I've asked Him many times before for stuff and He keeps on saying no!

ANSWER:

Both very crucial questions for a serious Ben Torah and Bas Yisrael! See Appendix 1.

During Aseres Yemei Teshuvah add: (If you forgot—see Appendix 12:1)

זְכֵרְנוּ לְחַיִּים, מֶלֶךְ חָפֵץ בַּחַיִּים, וְכִתְּבֵנוּ בְּסֵפֶר הַחַיִּים, לְמַעַן
אֱלֹהִים חַיִּים:

מֶלֶךְ חָפֵץ—Please, Hashem, remember us for life; זְכֵרְנוּ לְחַיִּים—
for You are our King Who desires life; וְכִתְּבֵנוּ בְּסֵפֶר—
and write us in the book of life; לְמַעַן אֱלֹהִים חַיִּים—so
that we may be able to continue to serve You and live up to
our potential.

Instant Insight:

The terms מוֹשִׁיעַ, עוֹזֵר, and מִגֵּן represent three levels of help that we need in our lives—from the least to the most. עוֹזֵר—“help,” is when we are on the right track, doing what we need to do in the best way possible, and we ask Hashem to please help us that all should work out, since nothing will come to fruition without His help. מוֹשִׁיעַ—“salvation,” is when we are completely at a loss; we throw up our hands and say to Hashem, “Save me, I have no idea what to do next!” The third and highest level, מִגֵּן—“protect,” is when we think we’re on the right track and think we know what we’re doing, but in truth we are completely off base! We ask Hashem, “If I’m going in the wrong direction—מִגֵּן—protect me from myself!”

מֶלֶךְ עוֹזֵר וּמוֹשִׁיעַ וּמִגֵּן: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, מִגֵּן אַבְרָהָם:
—You are our King, You have the power to help us through our difficulties, to save us (from our physical and spiritual enemies), and to, protect us (from evil). בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה—You, Hashem, are the Source of everything; מִגֵּן אַבְרָהָם—You are the Protector of Avraham (and us, his descendants).

גבורות

Hashem is all-powerful:

אַתָּה גִּבּוֹר לְעוֹלָם, אֲדֹנִי, מַחִיָּה מֵתִים אַתָּה, רַב לַהּוֹשִׁיעַ:
—Hashem, Your power and rulership are permanent; You bring about Techiyas Hameisim (since our souls are eternal); and You have unlimited power to save us.

During the winter add:

מְשִׁיב הַרְיָח וּמוֹרִיד הַגֶּשֶׁם:

You make the winds blow and cause the rain to fall.

In Israel in the summer add:

מוֹרִיד הַטֵּל:

You cause the dew to fall.

(If you made a mistake—see Appendix 12:3)

מְכַלְכֵּל חַיִּים בְּחֶסֶד, מַחִיָּה מֵתִים בְּרַחֲמִים רַבִּים, סוֹמֵךְ נוֹפְלִים, וְרוֹפֵא חוֹלִים, וּמַתִּיר אֲסוּרִים, וּמְקִים אֲמוֹנָתוֹ לַיִּשְׂרָאֵל עֶפְרָה: מִי כָמוֹךָ בַּעַל גְּבוּרוֹת, וּמִי דוֹמָה לָךְ, מֶלֶךְ מִמִּית וּמַחֲיָה וּמַצְמִיחַ יְשׁוּעָה:

—You take care of us with Your kindness; and with Your great mercy You revive the dead (literally, Techiyas Hameisim, and You also save those who are near physical or spiritual death); You support those who have

מִי כְמוֹד אָב הַרְחָמִים, זֹכֵר יַצּוּרֵי לְחַיִּים בְּרַחֲמִים:

וְנֶאֱמַן אֶתָּה לַחַיִּיִּת מְתִים: We have total faith that You will perform Techiyas Hameisim. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, מְחִיָּה הַמֵּתִים:—You, Hashem, are the Source of everything; מְחִיָּה הַמֵּתִים—Who performs Techiyas Hameisim. (Even though it has not yet happened, we are so sure that it will happen that we say this brachah in the present tense!)

Unlike angels who have a higher understanding of Hashem, we humans cannot understand “Who” Hashem is—His very essence (represented by the word “אֱתֵרוֹ”). All we can perceive is what He does—referred to as “שִׁמְךָ.” Nevertheless, in Kedushah we will praise Hashem like the angels do. Since we can only do this when we are at the level of a tzibbur—a unified community—we therefore only say this with a minyan.

וַיִּקְרָא שֵׁם אֶת שִׁמְךָ בְּעוֹלָם, כְּשֵׁם
שִׁמְךָ יְשִׁים אוֹתוֹ בְּשִׁמִּי מְרוֹם,
כִּפְתּוֹב עַל יַד נְבִיאֶךָ, וְקָרָא זֶה אֶל
זֶה וְאָמַר:

קִדּוּשׁ קִדּוּשׁ קִדּוּשׁ יְהוָה
עֲבֹאֵת, מִלֵּא כָּל הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדוֹ:

of angels down to the very lowest world, our material world; מְלֵא כָּל הָאָרֶץ כְּבוֹדוֹ—His Presence can be felt everywhere (*though it requires effort and diligence in order to tap into it through Torah and mitzvos*).

Section 2—Requests

בינה

Help me understand

אתה חונן לאדם דעת—Hashem, through Your kindness, You give mankind knowledge, and You teach us mere humans insight. Please grant us knowledge, understanding, and the intuitive sense to perceive

אתה חונן לאדם דעת, ומלמד לאנוש בינה, חננו מאתך דעה בינה והשכל: ברוך אתה יהוה, חונן הדעת:

(*right from wrong*). אתה יהוה—You, Hashem, are the Source of everything; חונן הדעת—Who graciously gives (*humans*) knowledge.

תשובה

Help me get close to You

השיבנו אבינו לתורתך, וקרבתנו מלפניו לעבודתך, והחזירנו בתשובה שלמה לפניך: ברוך אתה יהוה, הרוצה בתשובה:

השיבנו אבינו לתורתך, וקרבתנו מלפניו לעבודתך, והחזירנו בתשובה שלמה לפניך: ברוך אתה יהוה, הרוצה בתשובה:

אתה יהוה, הרוצה בתשובה—Who wants us to do (*real and sincere*) teshuvah.

סליחה

Give me another chance

סלח לנו אבינו כי חטאנו, מחל לנו מלפניו כי פשענו, כי מוחל וסולח אתה: ברוך אתה יהוה, חונן המרבה לסלח:

סלח לנו אבינו כי חטאנו, מחל לנו מלפניו כי פשענו, כי מוחל וסולח אתה: ברוך אתה יהוה, חונן המרבה לסלח:

You, Hashem, are the Source of everything; חונן המרבה לסלח—Who is gracious and forgives us repeatedly.

FAQ:

But I keep on messing up! Maybe I should just give up. I've tried so many times to do the right thing, and yet I keep on failing!

ANSWER:

Good question! Everyone feels that way sometimes—including me! See Appendix 3.

גאולה

Alleviate my suffering

ראה נא בענינו, וריבה ריבנו, ונאלנו מהרה למען שמך, כי גואל חזק אתה: ברוך אתה יהוה, גואל ישראל:

ראה נא בענינו, וריבה ריבנו, ונאלנו מהרה למען שמך, כי גואל חזק אתה: ברוך אתה יהוה, גואל ישראל: