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וטובותיך, שבכל עת, ערב ובוקר וצהרים

“And for Your goodness, at all times, evening, morning, and afternoon.” We thank Hashem for His wonders and goodness that He is doing for us at all times.

The Powers of Torah and Tefillah

There are two fundamental forces we have on this world: **Torah** (learning), and **Tefillah** (prayer). Torah is called '*chayei olam*', eternal life. In contrast, *tefillah* is called '*chayei shaah*', temporal life.

The mitzvah of learning Torah is to learn it constantly. In this sense, learning Torah is compared to the *Korbon Tamid*, the sacrifice which was brought every day, representing the concept of consistency. Although the Gemara^[1] says that the *mitzvah* of learning Torah is fulfilled even though *Kerias shema*, ideally, Torah is meant to be learned constantly. This is because Torah is called '*chayei olam*'; it is in the plane of the eternal, so it is an eternal obligation.

The Sages said that Torah is eternal, and therefore, it needs to be learned every second. The Torah is above time, therefore, it is not bound to time; so there are no time constraints on the mitzvah to learn Torah.

The *Midrash* states that the Torah preceded the world by 2000 years. Since the Torah is above time, it must be learned every second, not because of any specific 'time' of obligation to learn it, but because of the '*chayei olam*' (eternity) that it is.

Tefillah, however, is called '*chayei shaah*' (temporal life). The word '*shaah*' means a point in time; time is always subject to change. The “evening, morning, and afternoon” which we praise Hashem’s kindnesses for in the blessing of *Modim* are representing the various times of the day, which are always changing. The *Avos* enacted the three prayers of Shacharis, Mincha and Maariv parallel to the three different times of the day, in which different *korbonos* were brought.

This is the fundamental difference between Torah and *tefillah*. Torah is above the plane of time, therefore its obligation is eternal, for it is not a time-ordained *mitzvah*; whereas *tefillah* is based on time and within time, and each of the changes in time obligates us again to pray a new *tefillah*.

The Torah Is The Unchanging

Hashem “was, is, and will be”. He is unchanging. The Torah is above time, so it resembles the ‘unchanging’ aspect of Hashem.

When we thank Hashem in the blessing of *Modim*, first we thank Hashem for His existence (**מודים** **אנחנו לך שאתה הוא ה' אלוקינו**), which is permanent and unchanging, and later in the blessing, we thank Hashem for our *neshamos* that are entrusted to Him, which are also forever (**ועל נשמותינו** **הפקודות לך**). After that, we thank Hashem for His goodness that He does with us morning, evening and afternoon (**שבכל עת, ערב ובוקר וצהרים**) – the different times of Creation, which is the aspect ‘change’ in Creation.

The lesson to take out from all of this is that our *d'veykus* (attachment) with Hashem can reach a point that is above time and space; to connect to the unchanging point, which is above time; to the fact that Hashem “was, is and will be”. This is the meaning of the possuk, “*I am Hashem and I do not change.*” One of our 13 principles of faith is that “the Torah will not be exchanged”. The Jewish people have the ability to connect to this unchanging point in time.

There are many levels of *d'veykus* to Torah and to Hashem. But the complete level of the bond is to connect to Torah and to Hashem with the depths of the soul, to the point above time. This is the depth of the concept of *d'veykus*.

Tefillah Is Based on The Changes of Time

In contrast, the power of *tefillah* is of a different nature than Torah. Unlike Torah, which comes from Heaven above and is given to man, *tefillah* begins with man and is sent above.

Tefillah is entirely about giving a renewal our life. This is the implication of ‘*chayei shaah*’: our life is temporary. *Tefillah* is the power to change reality; it is all about causing change. *Tefillah* can nullify decrees and awaken the Heavenly attribute of mercy.

Thus, Torah is the unchanging aspect of Creation, and *Tefillah* is the aspect of change in Creation.

Time is always changing. Whereas place and soul do not change, time always changes. There are different parts of the day: *neitz* (sunrise), *alos hashachar* (dawn), *chatzos* (noon), *plag mincha*, *shekiah* (dusk), *tzeis* (evening), etc., thus, we see that the times of the day are always changing.

Thus, *tefillah*, which is only possible through the changes of time, is all about the concept of change. *Tefillah* not only brings about change - it is entirely enabled through change.

Torah is the power of permanence, of the unchanging, whereas *Tefillah* is the power to bring changes.

[Now we can understand with greater depth the order of our prayers in the blessing of ‘*Modim*’.] In the beginning of *Modim*, we are first thanking Hashem on the level of “Torah” – we thank Hashem that He is our G-d, which is an unchanging aspect. Later in the blessing, we thank Hashem for the things which change - “for Your goodness, evening, morning, and afternoon.”

Each Prayer Is Unique

Furthermore, *tefillah* does not end with the changing times of the day. *Tefillah* is about change, and change is not only limited to evening, morning, and afternoon. Those three points in time (morning, evening, and afternoon) are just the roots. There are changes every moment, in time.

For this reason, the Gemara says, “If only a person would pray the entire day”.^[2] This is because since *tefillah* is about change - and time is split into 1,080 parts, as the *Nefesh HaChaim* explains -

thus, a person should really *daven* all day. Every moment, time is changing, which requires one to *daven*, again and again. Therefore, each prayer is unique^[3].

Being that prayer stems from change, we can know what the true level of prayer is: it is all about change. It is always different each time, because the times are always changing, thus there is always a completely new reason to *daven*, with every phase of time that we enter.

If we have understood this, now we can understand the following. We can use this concept as a measuring stick to determine if we are close to the true level of prayer or if we are far from it. The *Shemoneh Esrei* that we *daven* every day for our whole life, 3 times a day, might feel to us like we are just repeating words, and it becomes monotonous. Such a perspective towards *davening* is a sign that there is a general lack of understanding of what prayer is all about. In reality, each *tefillah* is different, so each *tefillah* that we *daven* can very feel different to us.

Sensing The Changes That Time Bring

There is an even subtler point.

In order for a person to reach the true level of prayer (if only a person would pray all day), he must realize that each moment in time is different than the moment before. As the *Nefesh HaChaim* writes, there are 1,080 unique parts to the day. A person can become aware of how the time has changed since a minute ago; there are changes to the soul that each moment in time brings.

The more a person lives an inner kind of life, his feelings and thoughts have deepened, and he can have an acute sense of the differences that he has gone through since yesterday, until today. He can feel the constant changes in time and how it has affected his own soul.

We can give an example of this concept. When a person is learning Torah for an hour, and he is saying the words of the Gemara, he can see that he said many words since an hour ago; but does he feel a change in his soul? He is aware that he has said many words; he is aware that he is now on a different page of Gemara. But did he feel a change in his soul? Most people do not feel a change in the soul when they learn. At best, a person can feel if he is happier or sadder since an hour ago, but he usually cannot feel any changes that have taken place in his soul since an hour ago.

Chazal say that prayer is called one of the “matters which stand at the height of the world, but people cheapen it”. This is because prayer is based on the changes of time, and people usually don’t feel the changes in time, thus they don’t appreciate the depth of prayer.

The true level of prayer is for a person to be aware of the changes in time, in his own soul, which are always taking place.

A person is judged every moment, Chazal say, and the depth of this is, because a person is judged for each new *shaah* (moment). The more inner that a person becomes and the more he is aware of himself, the more he realizes how time is always changing.

The Connection Between Prayer and Chiddushei Torah

We can give another example of this concept. Chazal state, “Whoever learns Torah *lishmah*, becomes a *maayan hamisgaber* (a mighty wellspring)”. This is referring to the power of inventing *Chiddushei Torah*, which comes from the power of *chiddush*, change. The more a person is aware that prayer is based on changes of time, the more he is in touch with the concept of *chiddush*, and he will find that he is able to have more *Chiddushei Torah*.

When a person is only aware sometimes to changes, he will only have Torah *chiddushim* once in a while. (If he does have *chiddushim* on a regular basis, it's only because he is intellectually bright, and it doesn't come from the deeper source of *chiddush* in Creation!).

Every moment is new. When a person reveals this power within his Torah learning, it becomes the power to develop *Chiddushei Torah*.

The further a person is from this concept, the longer it will take for him to mature. There are people who take a long time to mature in their wisdom about life, while at the other end of the spectrum we can find people who are 40 years old who are wise as 70-year olds. The maturity of a person's understanding about life depends on how aware he is to the changes of time that have affected his soul.

The more a person lives and experiences himself in this inner way, the more he is aware to the changes in his soul. This is not just a knowledge that one is aware of intellectually; it is a feeling.

Thus, Creation consists of two opposite aspects: the unchanging, and the changing. A person needs to connect to the 'unchanging' aspect of Creation, along with the changes of Creation. Torah learning must connect a person to the Unchanging, to Hashem, Who never changes; as well as to the Torah which is never exchanged. Along with this, one must become aware and connected to the 'changing' aspect of Creation - to the changes in his soul, which the result of the changes of time.

A person will then see 'changes' in his own Torah learning, becoming a '*maayan hamisgaber*' in his power of *Chiddushei Torah*. This is because he is in touch with the power of *chiddush* in Creation.

Without being connected with the Unchanging - to the fact that Hashem never changes, and to the fact that "this Torah will be never exchanged" - then a person lacks the stability of being connected to a source, and then he will lose balance through all of his changes. But when a person is connected to the Unchanging aspect of creation - in other words, when his *emunah* is firm - he has stability to hold onto, even as he goes through changes.

The Depth of Prayer: Awareness To Changes

Tefillah must feel to a person like a change is taking place. If one wants to know his true level of *tefillah*, besides for knowing the meaning of the words and by discerning what his feelings are as he davens (which includes how much purity of heart he has, as well as how much he feels that he is standing in front of Hashem) - although those are all true methods of self-accounting, there is another fundamental point to consider: to become aware of the changes of time as of this moment, which requires us to pray anew.

Awareness to this concept is what connects a person to the level that is called "*tefillah*". It is the soul's power of change. A person who reaches this awareness will have a heightened sense of elation all the time. He draws himself closer and closer to the constant renewal taking place in Creation.[\[4\]](#)

This concept might sound very foreign to those who hear it the first time. But when it is understood, we can understand that it is the depth of *tefillah*: it is the "Gates of the Heart." It gives a person a whole new understanding towards *tefillah*. *Tefillah* is a power in the soul to be aware of changes.

The more a person is connected to both the Unchanging (Hashem) along with the awareness towards the constant changes of time (which affect his own soul), it can be said of him that he lives a perfected kind of existence, graced with the holiness of Hashem.

[1] Menachos 99a

[2] Berachos 30a

[3] **Nefesh HaChaim**, Gate II

[4] Refer to **Tefillah #034 - Revival of the Living** and **Tefillah #043 - Finding Renewal**

Source: <http://bilvavi.net/english/tefillah-157-change-prayer-and-torah-learning>