

דיני תפילת מנחה
SOME DINNIM CONCERNING “MINCHAH”
(THE AFTERNOON SERVICE)

INTRODUCTION

Our Chachommim, of blessed memory, tell us that Minchah (the Afternoon Service) is especially precious to אֱלֹהֵינוּ הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא. For while שַׁחֲרִית (that is, the Morning Service) and מַעֲרִיב, (also known as עֶרְבִית) (the Evening Service) are recited at their fixed times, before and after one’s working day, the time for Minchah is in the middle of the day. It is a sign of loyalty and faithfulness to HaShem to “down tools” as it were, in the middle of the busy working day and turn one’s heart and thoughts away from one’s work and business, to pray to HaShem.

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1. THE MINCHAH SERVICE

It is correct to wash one’s hands before davvening, for which reason there are always washing facilities in the Shule building, usually in the foyer. Before Minchah some people have the custom to recite the פְּרִשְׁת הַבֵּיּוֹר and the פְּרִשְׁת הַתְּמִיד, followed by the פְּרִשְׁת הַקְּטוֹרֶת with the בְּרִייתָא of the קְטוֹרֶת and the selections from the גְּמָרָא, with those פְּסוּקִים that are in the first section of Shacharis, and also the אָנָּה בְּכַח. This is the “Nussach Ari,” the “Rite of the Ari” commonly called Nussach Sefard. Sefaradim, that is, those who follow the Nussach of the Jewish communities originally coming from the east (as opposed to the just-mentioned “Nussach Sefard” or “Nussach Ari” which is basically Nussach Ashkenaz but with some adaptations taken from the Sefaradim) start Minchah with לְמַנְצַח (Tehillim, 84) every day before the פְּרִשְׁת הַתְּמִיד. On Erev Shabbos, some have the custom to say הוֹדוּ (Tehillim, 107) and יְדִיד נֶפֶשׁ before Minchah, too.

- 2. Minchah proper starts with אֲשֶׁרִי, which may be said while sitting. This is followed by the half-Kaddish recited by the Reader, and for which the Congregation stands.
- 3. On public Fast Days, if there are at least seven people of the Minyan who are fasting, the Sefer Torah is taken out immediately after אֲשֶׁרִי and the following half-Kaddish, and three people are called up. The Torah Reading is made up of two sections taken from the Sidra Ki Sissoh, (Sefer Shemos, Chapter 32, verses 11 to 14 and then Chapter 34, verses 1 to 10) which describe the penitential prayers that Mosheh our Teacher prayed to HaShem on behalf of the repentant Jewish People after the episode of the Golden Calf. (This Torah Reading is unusual in that according to the Ashkenazi custom the Congregation participates by saying aloud, and in advance of the Reader, the specific short excerpts as indicated in the better Siddurim.) The third man called up is the Maftir and after his Torah Reading he recites the Brochos and reads the Haftorah, which is taken from Sefer Yeshayohu (starting from verse 6 of Chapter 55 till verse 8 of Chapter 56).

SOME DINNIM CONCERNING “MINCHAH” – דִּינֵי תְּפִילַת מִנְחָה

4. After these Readings, the Sefer Torah is returned to the Ark, half-Kaddish is again said by the Reader and Minchah continues with the Amidah (meaning, “the prayer said while standing”) also called the Shemoneh Esre (meaning, “the Eighteen Brochos,” and called so because of the number of Brochos which originally comprised this Tefilloh on weekdays). [The two names, “Amidah” and “Shemoneh Esre”, are often used interchangeably.]
5. Before starting the Shemoneh Esre, we position ourselves so as to take three steps forward, take three steps forward as if stepping respectfully into the presence of a king, and place our feet together side by side. At Minchah, both introductory verses, firstly, וְכֹוּ ה' אֶקְרָא, וְכֹוּ (not printed in all Siddurim and not said by Sefaradim) and then ה', שִׁפְתֵי תִפְתָּח, וְכֹוּ are said (both silently) before the Shemoneh Esre proper, which starts with the words, “בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה'”.
6. The Amidah is davvened silently, so that no-one else can hear it, yet one should pray so that one can hear one’s own words. When davvening the Shemoneh Esre, we are not allowed to support ourselves by leaning on anything, for it is obviously disrespectful to submit our petition to HaShem in such a posture. An ill person, of course, is exempted from this rule. If he is very weak, he still davvens the Shemoneh Esre, but sitting down and with his feet together and if he feels even sitting difficult, he prays the Shemoneh Esre even lying down. In all cases, he should make at least a gesture of bowing at the places designated in the Shemoneh Esre. One should make every effort to concentrate on what one is davvening and it is quite correct to glance into the English translation the better to understand what one is saying.
7. No interruption at all is allowed during the Shemoneh Esre. Even if the Congregation is saying קְדוּשָׁה or בְּרַכּוּ or יְהִי שְׁמִייה רַבָּה or אָמֵן, or שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל whilst one is saying the Shemoneh Esre, one cannot respond with them but one should stop and listen and then continue one’s silent prayer.
8. There are four places in the Amidah where we bow. They are:
 1. At the start of the first Brochoh, at the words, “בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה'”;
 2. at the end of that first Brochoh, at the words, “בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה'” of “מִגֵּן אַבְרָהָם”;
 3. at the words, “מוֹדִים אֲנִיחֵנוּ לָךְ”and 4. at the conclusion of that Brochoh, at the words, “בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה'” of “הַטּוֹב שְׁמַךְ וְלָךְ נִאֶה לְהוֹדוֹת”.
9. The proper way to bow at these places is as follows: At the word “בְּרוּךְ”, we bend the knees; at “אַתָּה”, we bend the body forward from the waist (with the knees still bent). But when we mention the Name of G-d (“ה'”) we should have resumed the standing position, raising the head first.
10. At the words “מוֹדִים אֲנִיחֵנוּ לָךְ” we do not bend the knees, but bow from the waist, regaining the standing position before saying the Name of G-d (“ה'”) in that sentence (which starts with the words “מוֹדִים אֲנִיחֵנוּ לָךְ שְׁאֵתָה הוּא ה'”).
11. It is forbidden (for us) to bow at the beginning or at the end of any other Brochoh in the Shemoneh Esre as we are not allowed to add to the genuflections that our Chachommim stipulated.

SOME DINNIM CONCERNING “MINCHAH” – דִּינֵי הַתְּפִילָּת מִנְחָה

12. At the words “חָטָאנוּ” (“we have sinned”) and “פָּשַׁעְנוּ” (“we have transgressed”) in the Brochoh which starts with the words “סְלַח לָנוּ” (“Forgive us”) the custom prevails to beat gently on the chest over the heart with the right fist as if to say to our hearts, “You caused this.” For our Chachommim, of blessed memory, have taught that it is the heart, symbolically the seat of the emotions and longings of a person, which causes him to stray after his eyes and to act sinfully.
13. At the end of the Shemoneh Esre proper, which ends with the words, “בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', הַמְּבָרֵךְ אֶת עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּשָׁלוֹם” (This sentence is not printed at this point in all Siddurim.) We then add the silent devotion “וְשִׁפְתֵי מִדְּבַר אֱ-לֹהִי, נִצּוֹר לְשׁוֹנֵי מִרְעַ וְשִׁפְתֵי מִדְּבַר אֱ-לֹהִי, נִצּוֹר לְשׁוֹנֵי מִרְעַ” at the end of which we insert our own personal verses of our Hebrew names (as listed in the better Siddurim) and again say the sentence “וְיִהְיֶה לְרִצּוֹן אֱמָרֵי פִי, וְכו'”.
14. Having finished our petition, we then bow from the waist and, still bowed, take three steps backwards (left foot moving back first) to bow out from the Presence of HaShem, and then stand straight.
15. Our final request is that HaShem grant us peace, for, in the words of our Chachommim, of blessed memory, “without peace, there is nothing.” This request for peace, made after the three steps backwards, is said in three short phrases, for each of which we bow from the waist in a different direction, as follows:
 1. The phrase, “עוֹשֶׂה שָׁלוֹם בְּמִרְוֹמָיו” is said after bowing to the left;
 2. the phrase, “הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שָׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ” is said after bowing to the right;
 - and 3. the phrase, “וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶמְרוּ אָמֵן” is said after bowing facing the front.
16. Having ended the Amidah, we add a short prayer for the rebuilding of the Beis HaMikdash and the restoration of the Service in the Mikdash, for we are mindful that our spoken prayers are but a substitute for that Divine Service. At this point, therefore, we express our hopes and wishes to merit to see the Service of the Beis HaMikdash in all its grandeur, as in previous times.
17. After this, we remain standing respectfully in the upright position, in our places, until we step forward to answer the Kedushah (unless there is a very good reason to step forward before then). It is not correct or proper to pass in front of someone who is standing to attention in this way (and all the more so, we should not pass in front of someone who is actually praying the Amidah) for we are considered to be “awaiting permission to leave the audience with HaShem” and we conduct ourselves accordingly. It is similarly not correct to step back at the end of one’s Amidah if someone else is still davvening his Shemoneh Esre behind one.
18. When the Reader starts to repeat the Shemoneh Esre, we get ready to say the Kedushah. The Kedushah is recited responsively by the Congregation after the Brochoh of “מִחֵיה הַמַּתִּים” and just prior to the Kedushah we resume our standing places by taking three steps forward. If one was not able to step back at the end of one’s Amidah because someone else was still davvening his Amidah, one still joins in the Kedushah and all the other responses because, after all, one has spoken the Possuk “וְיִהְיֶה לְרִצּוֹן אֱמָרֵי פִי” and thus ended one’s Shemoneh Esre. In such a case, the three steps back are taken when the person behind one, himself steps back.

SOME DINNIM CONCERNING “MINCHAH” – דִּינֵי תְּפִילַת מִנְחָה

19. The Kedushah (meaning “Holy Response”) is our own mortal way of emulating that holy and sublime chorus of the Heavenly Court, and it is recited as follows: The Reader says the introductory sentence and the Congregation responds by saying the sentence, קְדוֹשׁ קְדוֹשׁ קְדוֹשׁ, וְכוּ'. When responding, we raise ourselves a little on to our toes at each “קְדוֹשׁ” and let ourselves down again immediately. At the second sentence, which starts with the word “בְּרִיךְ”, we raise ourselves in the same way, once, and the same again at the word “יְמַלֵּךְ” (the first word of the last sentence of Kedushah). During Kedushah, our feet are placed together as when we pray the Shemoneh Esre.
20. The Reader should bear in mind not only that he leads the Congregation in prayer but that he also is the Reader for those who cannot say the prayers for themselves. It follows, therefore, that when he comes to the Kedushah, he should say aloud the whole Kedushah and not only the introductory phrases before each of the component parts of the Kedushah. In this way, those who are still davvening the Shemoneh Esre (and who must stop to listen-in to the Reader) are thus considered as answering and can indeed fulfil their obligation of responding. (This is called “שׁוֹמֵעַ בְּעוֹנָה”.)
21. When the Reader has finished that Brochah (namely, הָאֵל־ל הַקְדוֹשׁ) the Congregation may resume their seats and should respond with the words “בְּרִיךְ הוּא וּבְרִיךְ שְׁמוֹ” (“Blessed is He and blessed is His Name”) each time the Reader says “בְּרִיךְ אַתָּה ה'” and with “אָמֵן” at the conclusion of each Brochah, etc.. The Reader must allow the congregation to respond with “בְּרִיךְ הוּא וּבְרִיךְ שְׁמוֹ” before he finishes each Brochah and to respond with “אָמֵן” at its conclusion before going on to the next one.
22. It should hardly need mentioning that it is wrong for members of the Congregation to talk at all during the repetition of the Amidah by the Reader, or during the recitation of the Kaddish. After all, the Reader is our spokesman and to ignore the one who is presenting our communal petition to HaShem on our behalf is greatly disrespectful to the Reader and even more so to the Supreme Sovereign in Whose Presence the petition is made. Those who make a habit of talking during the repetition of the Amidah thereby show that they are, at best, immature and plain stupid in their lack of awareness of the proper and decent behaviour required of human beings when in the Abode of HaShem, the Supreme King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He (for every place of prayer is like a Sanctuary of HaShem in miniature) but at worst they show themselves to be uncaring of the Presence of HaShem. In addition, they also show themselves to be rather ill-bred and uncivilized, for by their disturbance of others they display a lack of consideration for their fellow congregants.
23. When the Reader says מוֹדִים, the Congregation stands and recites the alternative version (called “מוֹדִים דְּרַבְּנָן”) in an undertone, while the Reader reads מוֹדִים aloud. At the beginning and end of מוֹדִים דְּרַבְּנָן the Congregation bows. One should not sit when saying מוֹדִים דְּרַבְּנָן — indeed, some authorities are of the opinion that the whole of מוֹדִים דְּרַבְּנָן should be recited while standing and in a bowed position — and after saying מוֹדִים דְּרַבְּנָן the Congregation may resume their seats.
24. When the Reader reaches מוֹדִים דְּרַבְּנָן, then, even if one is not part of that Minyan (for instance, one is learning quietly in that Beis HaMedrash) one stands up and bows like everyone else so that it should not be construed as if one refuses to be together with the Congregation in their communal praise of HaShem. This rule applies even if one is davvening the quiet Shemoneh Esre, but of course one cannot interrupt one’s Shemoneh Esre to join with them in actually saying מוֹדִים דְּרַבְּנָן. (The same applies also to the Congregation’s response to a בְּרַכּוֹ, where one must likewise take care

SOME DINNIM CONCERNING “MINCHAH” – דִּינֵי תְּפִילַת מִנְחָה

not to let it appear as if one excludes oneself from the communal response.) However, if one is davvening the quiet Shemoneh Esre, then, because it is forbidden to add to the genuflexions stipulated by our Chachommim, of blessed memory [as stated in Paragraph 11, above] one must ensure that when thus bowing for מוֹדִים דְּרַבְּנָן (or a בְּרָכוּ) during one's silent Shemoneh Esre, one is either in-between Brochos or in the middle of a Brochoh (to bow in the middle of a Brochoh is not considered as bowing as such) but not at the beginning or at the end of a Brochoh.

25. Incidentally, if a similar situation should arise with the verse of שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל and the following sentence of בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם, one must likewise join with the Congregation so that it should not appear as if, G-d forbid, one does not wish to accept upon oneself the Sovereignty of HaShem. Therefore, if one is at a place in davvening where such interruptions are forbidden, one must, for appearance's sake, at least make a pretence of joining with the Congregation, that is, one places one's right hand over the eyes and says somewhat louder whatever words one is davvening at the time.
26. Similarly, if one is at a place where it is forbidden to interrupt to respond and the Congregation is responding to a בְּרָכוּ or to a מוֹדִים דְּרַבְּנָן, one has to stand up and bow together with the Congregation even if one cannot actually say מוֹדִים דְּרַבְּנָן, or respond to the בְּרָכוּ. However, if one was davvening the silent Shemoneh Esre and the Congregation came to קְרִיאַת שְׁמַע, then, other than just standing silently for as long as the Congregation is saying the first two sentences, one does not join with the Congregation, nor even pretend to do so, for the very fact that one is clearly davvening to the רַבּוּנוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם is in itself enough to dispel any erroneous idea that one refuses, G-d forbid, to proclaim or acknowledge the Sovereignty of HaShem.
27. Likewise, if one was davvening the quiet Shemoneh Esre and the Torah was being read, one must stop praying one's private Shemoneh Esre and listen in silent respect to the Torah Reading. In such a case, he should resume his Tefilloh just as soon as that portion of the actual Torah Reading (but not the Brochos) ends. (Incidentally, from the fact that one must stop even one's private Shemoneh Esre out of respect for the public Torah Reading, one can derive how much more so is it not right to talk, or to learn, or to say the תְּרִגּוּם, or to say Tehillim, or even to davven, during קְרִיאַת הַתּוֹרָה — a fact that sadly seems to be lost on some people.)
28. On a public Fast Day (depending on the custom of the Congregation) and during the עֲשֶׂרַת יְמֵי תְּשׁוּבָה (the Ten Days of Penitence, from Rosh HaShonnoh to Yom Kippur) the אָבִינוּ מֶלְכֵינוּ prayer is said after the Reader's repetition of the Amidah, followed by the silent prayer of confession, called תְּחִנּוּן. Otherwise, תְּחִנּוּן is said directly after the Reader has repeated the Shemoneh Esre. However, if Minchah is davvened rather late in the day (after the sun has started to set) תְּחִנּוּן is omitted and the Reader continues with Kaddish לְתַתְּקַבֵּל and Minchah concludes with the עֲלֵינוּ prayer.
29. There are other cases, too, when תְּחִנּוּן is not said at Minchah. They include: Shabbos; Yom Tov; Chol HaMo'ed; Rosh Chodesh; the entire month of Nissan; Lag b'Omer; from Rosh Chodesh Sivvan until the day after Shovuos, inclusive (but some congregations have the custom to omit saying Tach'nun until the 14th of Sivvan); Tisha b'Av; the 15th of Av; between Yom Kippur and the day after Sukkos, inclusive (but some congregations do not resume until the 2nd of Cheshvan); Channukah; Tu biShvat; Purim and Shushan Purim (and, in a leap year, the 14th and 15th of Addar Rishon, too) and at Minchah of the day preceding any of these days, too, as well as Erev Shabbos and Erev Yom Tov. In some congregations, Tach'nun is omitted on Pessach Shayni (the 14th of Iyyar).

SOME DINNIM CONCERNING “MINCHAH” – דִּינֵי תְּפִילַת מִנְחָה

Tach'nun is also not said in a house of mourning during the Shiv'ah nor is it said in the presence of a Chosson from the day of his marriage until after the end of the Sheva Brochos week. (If both, the Chosson and the Kalloh, have been married previously, their time of celebration, for the purposes of this דִּין, is only three days.)

30. Tach'nun is also omitted if one of the primary participants in a Bris Mi'loh that will be celebrated that day is present (that is, the child — or indeed the adult — himself, the father of the child, the Mohel, that is, the one who does the circumcision, or the Sandek, that is, the one who holds the baby at the circumcision). Tach'nun is omitted also if later that day, in that place of davvening, there is to be a Bris Mi'loh (and indeed if there was a Bris Mi'loh there that day, too).
31. The first part of תְּחִנּוּן, that is, the paragraph starting with the words “רַחוּם וְחַנוּן” (which according to some customs is preceded with an introductory sentence starting with the words “וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד אֵל” “גְּדֹר”) is said silently whilst sitting down and resting the forehead on the left forearm. This is the position for private confession, for it is wrong to confess one's wrongdoings in a way that others can hear it. (At תְּחִנּוּן of Shacharis, we rest our forehead on our right forearm, out of respect for the Tefillin which are tied on our left arm.) Another reason for hiding our faces in this way is that we thus symbolically show that we are ashamed at having transgressed the commandments of HaShem as given in the Sefer Torah. It would follow, therefore, that if there is no Sefer Torah where one is davvening, we would not “fall on our faces” in this way, and this indeed is the universal custom. After the paragraph of רַחוּם וְחַנוּן, the sentences, starting with “שׁוּמֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל”, are said, still sitting but not resting the forehead on the forearm. The third part, beginning with the words “וַיֹּאנְחֵנוּ לֵא” “גְּדֵעַ”, is said standing. This is the short תְּחִנּוּן, as said by Ashkenazzim.
32. Sefaradim have a different version and the תְּחִנּוּן includes the section from the Torah containing the שְׁלֹשׁ עֶשְׂרֵה מִדּוֹת (the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy of G-d) which is said while standing (and which can be recited only with a Minyan) and there are some variations in the other parts of תְּחִנּוּן, too. In this case, as in all cases in general, each person should follow the faithful traditions handed down in his or her family, for “each correct tradition has its rightful place and all are based on great and holy foundations.”
33. After תְּחִנּוּן, the Reader recites the full Kaddish (קַדִּישׁ תְּתַקְבֵּל) for which the Congregation stands and then וְכוּ' וְעַלֵּנוּ לְשִׁבְתָּ, וְכוּ' and וְכוּ' בֵּין נִקְוָה לְךָ, וְכוּ' is said by the Congregation (while standing). Some have the custom to say the sentences starting with “אֵל תִּירָא” after these two paragraphs. According to the Nussach Sefard, during the month of Ellul and until after Sukkos, the Mizmor, וְכוּ' אֵל תִּירָא, ה' אֱוִרֵי וַיִּשְׁעֵי, וְכוּ' is said after עַלֵּנוּ. Minchah (as indeed Shacharis and Maariv do, too) usually ends with the Kaddish recited either by one of the Congregation or by the Reader.

34. OCCASIONAL VARIATIONS

There are a number of changes in the Amidah (and other parts of davvening, too) brought about by the changes of the seasons of the year, special days or specific occasions, as follows:

35. “MASHIV HoRUACH uMORID HaGESHEM” — “מְשִׁיב הַרוּחַ וּמוֹרִיד הַגֶּשֶׁם”

In the rainy season (which is deemed to be from Sheminni Atserres until the second day of Pessach) we must take care to insert the phrase “מְשִׁיב הַרוּחַ וּמוֹרִיד הַגֶּשֶׁם” (“Who causes the wind to blow

and the rain to fall”) at the prescribed place in the second Brochah of the Shemoneh Esre. If one forgot to do so, then so long as one has not finished that Brochah, that is, מְחַיֶּה הַמַּתִּים, one can correct the omission by inserting “מְשִׁיב הַרוּחַ וּמוֹרִיד הַגֶּשֶׁם” at the end of a phrase. If one realized one’s mistake immediately after saying “בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה’, מְחַיֶּה הַמַּתִּים” one can add the phrase there and continue the Shemoneh Esre. If one realized one’s mistake only after saying the word “אַתָּה” of the next Brochah, then one must start the Shemoneh Esre again. (Take three steps back and then three steps forward and start from (“...בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה’, אֲ-לֹהֵינוּ וְאֵ-לֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ...”).

36. In the dry season, “מְשִׁיב הַרוּחַ וּמוֹרִיד הַגֶּשֶׁם” is simply omitted (Ashkenaz) or the phrase “מוֹרִיד הַטָּל” (“Who causes the dew to fall”) [or, according to others, “מְשִׁיב הַרוּחַ וּמוֹרִיד הַטָּל” (“Who causes the wind to blow and the dew to fall”)] is inserted instead (Sefard). If one *did* say “מְשִׁיב הַרוּחַ וּמוֹרִיד הַגֶּשֶׁם” and reminded oneself of one’s mistake before the שֵׁם of מְחַיֶּה הַמַּתִּים, one goes back to the beginning of that Brochah (אַתָּה גְּבוּר, וכו’) and continues as usual after that. If one reminded oneself only after the שֵׁם, one has to start the Shemoneh Esre again. (But if one had not yet said the words “וּמוֹרִיד הַגֶּשֶׁם”, the mistake is ignored and one continues as usual.)

37. If it is one’s custom to say “מוֹרִיד הַטָּל” (or “מְשִׁיב הַרוּחַ וּמוֹרִיד הַטָּל”) in the dry season and by mistake one said “מְשִׁיב הַרוּחַ וּמוֹרִיד הַטָּל” (or “מוֹרִיד הַטָּל”) in the winter, one should correct the mistake by inserting the words “מוֹרִיד הַגֶּשֶׁם” at a suitable point (that is, at the end of a phrase) within that Brochah. If one had finished that Brochah, however, the mistake is ignored. The same rules, however, do not apply if in the dry season he mistakenly said “מְשִׁיב הַרוּחַ וּמוֹרִיד הַגֶּשֶׁם” instead of “מְשִׁיב הַרוּחַ וּמוֹרִיד הַטָּל” and he would have to make the correction as above. (See previous Paragraph 36.)

38. In case of doubt, that is, one does not remember whether or not one said the correct version, the assumption is that after ninety times the new version will have become the habit and therefore one does not correct oneself. Before that, however, the assumption is that one said the old version out of habit and one must make the correction, as above.

39. **“וְתֵן בְּרָכָה” — “VeSAYN BROCHOH”**
and “וְתֵן טַל וּמָטָר לְבְרָכָה” — “VeSAYN TAL uMOTTOR Li’VROCHOH”

From the end of Yom Tov Rishon of Pessach onwards, that is, from the first weekday Shemoneh Esre after the initial Yom Tov of Pessach, we cease to say “וְתֵן טַל וּמָטָר לְבְרָכָה” (“and please grant rains of blessing ...”) in the בְּרַכַּת הַשָּׁנִים (which starts with the words “בְּרַךְ עָלֵינוּ”) and instead we say “וְתֵן בְּרָכָה” (“and please grant blessing ...”). If one forgot, then as long as one has not yet said the Possuk, וְכוּ, יְהִי לְרִצּוֹן אֱמִרֵי פִי, (which signifies the end of Shemoneh Esre proper) one goes back to the beginning of the בְּרַכַּת הַשָּׁנִים, that is, “בְּרַךְ עָלֵינוּ”. However, once one has said the Possuk, וְכוּ, יְהִי לְרִצּוֹן אֱמִרֵי פִי, one cannot correct oneself in this way and one must say the entire Shemoneh Esre again. As mentioned above [in Paragraph 13] the Possuk יְהִי לְרִצּוֹן is said twice. The first time, immediately after “בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה’, הַמְבַרֵךְ אֶת עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּשָׁלוֹם”, just before “וְכוּ, נִצּוֹר לְשׁוֹנֵי מִרְעֵ, וכוּ”, and the second time just before one steps back at “עוֹשֶׂה שָׁלוֹם, וכוּ”. It is the second “יְהִי לְרִצּוֹן” that signifies the end of the Shemoneh Esre.

40. In Eretz Yisroel (and nearby countries that share the same climate) from the 7th day in Cheshvan until Pessach, and outside of Eretz Yisroel, from Maariv of the 4th of December (but the 5th of December in a year preceding a civil leap year) until Pessach, we cease saying “וְיִתֵּן בְּרָכָה” and instead we pray for rains of blessing, saying, “וְיִתֵּן טַל וּמָטָר לְבְרָכָה”. If one forgot but remembered one’s mistake before saying “בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה’” at the end of that Brochah, one says “וְיִתֵּן טַל וּמָטָר לְבְרָכָה” there (repeating the words “וּבְרָךְ שְׁנוֹתֵינוּ” and so on) and continues the Shemoneh Esre. If, however, one had already said “בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה’, מְבָרֵךְ הַשָּׁנִים”, one cannot correct the mistake until one reaches the Brochah of שְׁמַע קוֹלֵנוּ where, immediately before the phrase “כִּי אַתָּה” “וְיִתֵּן טַל וּמָטָר לְבְרָכָה (עַל פְּנֵי הָאָדָמָה וְשִׁבְעֵינוּ) [מְטוֹבָה] [מְטוֹבָה]” one inserts the words “וְיִתֵּן טַל וּמָטָר לְבְרָכָה” and continues “וְיִתֵּן טַל וּמָטָר לְבְרָכָה” and ends the Brochah “וְיִתֵּן טַל וּמָטָר לְבְרָכָה” as usual after that. If one remembered only after this point, then, as long as one has not finished the Shemoneh Esre proper (that is, one has not yet said the sentence “יְהִי לְרִצּוֹן” the second time) one returns to the beginning of the Brochah “וְיִתֵּן טַל וּמָטָר לְבְרָכָה” and continues through to the end again. If the mistake was realized only after having said that second “יְהִי לְרִצּוֹן”, the Shemoneh Esre must be repeated in its entirety.
41. Sefaradim do not insert a different phrase according to the season of the year but instead have two differently-worded Brochos. The one, starting with the words “בְּרָךְ עֲלֵינוּ”, is said in the winter-time and the other, starting with the words “בְּרַכְנוּ אָבִינוּ”, is said in the summer-time.
42. If one cannot remember whether or not one said the correct version, the rule is as follows: If the first thirty days since the change have not yet passed, the assumption is that one said the old version out of habit (and one must correct oneself as described above). After the first thirty days, however, the assumption is that the new version will have asserted itself as one’s habit.
43. **THE ASSERESS Y’MAY TESHUVAH — עֶשְׂרֵת יָמֵי תְּשׁוּבָה**
The custom prevails in many communities that during the עֶשְׂרֵת יָמֵי תְּשׁוּבָה (the Ten Days of Penitence, that is, from Rosh HaShonoh to Yom Kippur inclusive) in Kaddish, instead of the words, “לְעֵילָא מִן כָּל בְּרַחְמֵי”, the words “לְעֵילָא מִכָּל בְּרַחְמֵי” are substituted.
44. In the Shemoneh Esre, instead of the words “הָאֵל-לֹהֵךְ הַקָּדוֹשׁ”, the words “הַמֶּלֶךְ הַקָּדוֹשׁ” must be said (if one forgot, then unless one corrected oneself immediately one has to start the Shemoneh Esre again) and instead of the words “מֶלֶךְ אֱלֹהִים צַדִּיק וְיָשָׁר” the words “הַמֶּלֶךְ הַמְּשַׁפֵּט” are said. (If one said “הַמֶּלֶךְ הַקָּדוֹשׁ” or “הַמֶּלֶךְ הַמְּשַׁפֵּט” during the rest of the year by mistake, the mistake is ignored and one does not correct oneself.) Also, the sentences, וְזָכְרֵנוּ, מִי כְמוֹךְ, וְכַתּוּב, and בְּסֻפֵּר are inserted in the places indicated in the Siddur, according to custom. (If any of these last-mentioned insertions were omitted, the mistake is ignored.)
45. During these Ten Days of Penitence, אָבִינוּ מֶלְכֵנוּ is said at Minchah before תְּחִנּוֹן [as mentioned in Paragraph 28, above] and, as said before, some have the custom to include הָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְיִשְׁעֵינוּ, (Tehillim, 27) in Minchah, after “עֲלֵינוּ”. Again, as mentioned above, [in Paragraph 28] on public Fast Days, אָבִינוּ מֶלְכֵנוּ is usually said at Minchah also on public Fast Days and on such Fast Days there is also the Reading from the Sefer Torah, and Haftorah. [Paragraph 3, above.]

46. “ANAYNU” — “עֲנֵנוּ”

On fast days (both public and private) the paragraph starting with the word “עֲנֵנוּ” is inserted in the Brochoh of שְׁמַע קוֹלֵנוּ. If one forgot it there, it should be said at the end of אֱ-לֹהֵי, נִצּוֹר, וְכוּ' before אֱ-לֹהֵי לְרִצּוֹן, וְכוּ' but after that, one cannot correct oneself.

47. On a public Fast Day, the Reader (who himself should be fasting) says עֲנֵנוּ as a separate Brochoh when he repeats the Shemoneh Esre, with its own conclusion, and this Brochoh is inserted immediately before the Brochoh רַפְּאֵינוּ. (He will have said עֲנֵנוּ in his own silent Shemoneh Esre, at the prescribed place, that is, in the Brochoh of שְׁמַע קוֹלֵנוּ, like everyone else in the Congregation.) If, during his repetition aloud of the Shemoneh Esre, he forgot to say it at the prescribed place and he started רַפְּאֵינוּ, he should stop and say עֲנֵנוּ and then begin רַפְּאֵינוּ again. If he finished רַפְּאֵינוּ (or even said only the שֵׁם of “בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', רֹפֵא חוֹלֵי עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל” שֵׁם) then he should say עֲנֵנוּ in the Brochoh of שְׁמַע קוֹלֵנוּ, but without its special conclusion, that is, he finishes the Brochoh שְׁמַע קוֹלֵנוּ with the words “בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', שׁוֹמֵעַ תְּפִלָּה”. (If the Reader forgot to insert עֲנֵנוּ in his own silent Shemoneh Esre, he does not correct himself but relies on his repetition aloud of the Shemoneh Esre to serve as his correction and at the end of his reading aloud, he will say אֱ-לֹהֵי, נִצּוֹר לְשׁוֹנֵי מַרְע, וְכוּ'.)

48. On a public Fast Day, too, in the Shemoneh Esre, those whose custom it is to usually say שְׁלוֹם רַב at Minchah, substitute the Brochoh שֵׁם שְׁלוֹם and in the repetition of the Shemoneh Esre the Reader inserts also the בְּרַכַת בְּהַנִּים before שֵׁם שְׁלוֹם.

49. If one intends to fast a private fast (a תַּעֲנִית חָלוּם, for example) it is imperative to speak this intention beforehand as otherwise it is considered merely as not eating rather than a deliberate and meritorious fast. This declaration, starting with the words, “רְבוֹן כָּל הָעוֹלָמִים, הָרִי אֲנִי לְפָנֶיךָ” בְּתַעֲנִית נְדָבָה לְפָנֶיךָ” (printed in most Siddurim) should be spoken as a private prayer in one’s Shemoneh Esre at Mincha the day before the intended fast day (or any time that it is still day). It is said just before the personal verses of one’s Hebrew names (concerning which see Paragraph 13, above). (There is no need to speak the intention of fasting any of the public fasts instituted by our Chachommim on the day prior to the fast day as their institution as public fast days by our Chachommim suffices as the declaration in advance for us all.)

50. At Mincha of a fast day (public or private) one says in one’s silent Shemoneh Esre the Tefillah starting with the words, “רְבוֹן כָּל הָעוֹלָמִים, גְּלוּי וְיָדוּעַ לְפָנֶיךָ” (also printed in most Siddurim) in which we ask הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא to consider our fasting as if we had brought a Korbon in the Beis HaMikdash. This Tefillah, too, is inserted immediately before the personal verses of our Hebrew names.

51. **TISHA b'AV**

At Minchah of Tisha b'Av, in the Shemoneh Esre, in addition to עֲנֵנוּ in the Brochoh of שְׁמַע קוֹלֵנוּ, we add the paragraph starting with the word “נַחֵם” in the Brochoh of וְלִירוּשָׁלַיִם. If one forgot to insert נַחֵם there, one adds it after עֲנֵנוּ in שְׁמַע קוֹלֵנוּ. But if one forgot to insert it there too, then one says it instead in the Brochoh of רִצָּה, just before “וְתַחֲזִינָה עֵינֵינוּ”. But in any such case of forgetting to say נַחֵם in the Brochoh of וְלִירוּשָׁלַיִם and inserting it instead at some other place (as just mentioned) one does not end נַחֵם with the words “בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', מְנַחֵם צִוּן וּבֹנֵה יְרוּשָׁלַיִם”,

SOME DINNIM CONCERNING “MINCHAH” – דיני תפילת מנחה

but one ends the Brochah in the usual way, that is, “ברוך אתה ה', שומע תפילה” or “ברוך אתה ה', המחזיר שכינתו לציון”.

52. “YAALEH VeYOVVO” — “יעלה ויבא”

On Chol HaMo'ed (the Intermediate Days of the Yommim Tovim of Pessach and Sukkos) and on Rosh Chodesh, the paragraph of “יעלה ויבא” is inserted in the Shemoneh Esre in the Brochah of רצה. If one forgot to say it there —

[a] But reminded oneself before the שם of “ברוך אתה ה'” at the end of that Brochah, one goes back to say יעלה ויבא and then continues as usual to the end of the Shemoneh Esre.

[b] If one had said “ברוך אתה ה'” and at that point one reminded oneself, one adds the words “למדיני חוקיך”, inserts יעלה ויבא there, then repeats the paragraph of “ותחזינה” ועינינו” and continues as usual to the end of the Shemoneh Esre.

53. (This is because by adding the words “למדיני חוקיך” to the phrase “ברוך אתה ה'”, those three words become the first part of a proper Possuk (it is verse 12 in Chapter 119 of Tehillim) and the phrase “ברוך אתה ה'” is not then considered as the Brochah's end. This then allows us to rectify the mistake there and then, because it is considered as if the Brochah has not been ended, as it were. In fact, this device is the preferred solution to all such cases where a correction must be made before the Brochah has been ended and where one has said the words “ברוך אתה ה'” and at that point realized one's mistake.)

[c] If one reminded oneself after the Brochah of רצה but before starting the next Brochah of מודים, one says יעלה ויבא there and then continues with מודים and concludes the Shemoneh Esre as usual.

[d] If one reminded oneself anywhere after that, but before יהיו לרצון, וכו', one finishes that phrase (without saying any further שם), goes back to the beginning of the Brochah of רצה and corrects the omission, finishing the Shemoneh Esre after that in the usual way.

[e] If one remembered only after having said יהיו לרצון, וכו' just before “עושה שלום” (which signifies the end of Shemoneh Esre proper) one must recite the whole of the Shemoneh Esre again. This is so even if one reminded oneself only later in the day. However, if this occurred at Maariv of Rosh Chodesh, that is, one forgot יעלה ויבא and remembered only after one had finished the Shemoneh Esre, then no correction is possible.

54. “AL HaNISSIM” — “על הנסים”

On Channukah and on Purim we insert על הנסים in the Brochah of מודים. If one forgot but reminded oneself before the שם of “ברוך אתה ה', הטוב שמך ורך נאה להודות”, one goes back to say על הנסים. But if one reminded oneself only after the שם, one finishes the Shemoneh Esre and one is not allowed to correct oneself in the Shemoneh Esre proper. Instead, it should be added after “מודים אנחנו לך”, with the introductory phrase, “א-להי, נצור לשוני מרע, וכו'”.

הַשְּׁלִיחַ וְהַצִּיבּוּר

THE PRAYER LEADER AND HIS CONGREGATION

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Very considerable use has been made in this work of
"The Art of the Shli'ach Tsibbur" by Rabbi Velvel Rosen, to whom many thanks.

In cases of doubt, please refer to a competent Halachic authority.

**"... to love HaShem your G-d and to serve Him with all your hearts" (Devorrim, 11 : 13)
 How can one 'serve with the heart'? This is prayer! (Talmud Bavli, Tractate Taanis, 2A)**

The term Shli'ach Tsibbur means "the one sent by the community," that is, the representative, the spokesman, as it were, of a Tsibbur, that is, of a community.

Nowadays, the term is used almost exclusively to mean the one
 who leads the congregation in communal prayer.

The duties of a Shli'ach Tsibbur fall under four headings:

1. To help those who cannot themselves fulfil their obligation in the Mitzvah of Davvening by representing them with his Tefilloh on their behalf — he is "מוֹצִיאֵן יְדֵי הוֹבְתָן".
2. To be the spokesman on behalf of the Tsibbur and their prayer leader, to lead the congregation in Davvening and bring them to respond together.
3. To help to make the individuals of the community into one united Tsibbur by informing them where the Davvening is up to and by setting the pace of the Davvening so that everyone can keep together.
4. To enthuse the Tsibbur and inspire them to better direct their concentration — their כְּנִיָּה — in the Davvening that it should be pleasing to HaShem.

Contrary to the mistaken idea that seems to have taken root long ago in many places, it is NOT the duty of the Shli'ach Tsibbur to in any way entertain the congregation, neither with his talent in singing nor any other kind of performance.

The performing cantor with choir is more suited to the world of the theatre and really has no place in the sacred House of Prayer.

Furthermore, nowhere in the Codes does it say that it is the duty of the Shli'ach Tsibbur to Davven as quickly as possible or that this is at all praiseworthy.

CONDITIONS, REQUIREMENTS AND PREFERENCES IN A SHLI'ACH TSIBBUR

1. A Shli'ach Tsibbur must be a male, over Bar Mitzvah and his behaviour, conduct and beliefs must comply with the requirements of the Halochoh. He cannot be lacking in any of the Basic Beliefs of Judaism — the **שְׁלֹשׁ עֶשְׂרֵה עִיקָרִים** — and generally he should conduct himself with humility and not with arrogance.
2. A Shli'ach Tsibbur must be able to read Hebrew from the Siddur correctly (included in “correctly” is to recognize the **מְתָג**, or stress point, for the right syllable in each word) fluently and clearly and he must be capable of leading the Davvening. It is preferable that he should have a pleasant voice and be well-liked by people.
3. He should be someone who can inspire the Tsibbur and command their respect, both, through his appearance (for instance, his clothing may not be torn or dirty, nor unpleasantly unusual) and through his demeanour (for instance, his speech is not coarse or impious).
4. He must be acceptable to the congregation as their Shli'ach Tsibbur and he must have their permission to be their Shli'ach Tsibbur. If someone imposes himself upon the congregation against the communal will, it is forbidden to respond **אָמֵן** to his Brochos. It is quite in order to embarrass him in this way till he steps down.
5. Unless he is the officially appointed Shli'ach Tsibbur of a community, nobody should go up to serve as Shli'ach Tsibbur until he is asked to do so. When one is asked to serve as Shli'ach Tsibbur, it is proper to show humility and initially respectfully decline the honour. When he is then asked again, he should show some reluctance and at the third invitation he should go. However, if one is asked to officiate by the Rabbi or some other person of rank, one should accept straightaway and likewise if there is no-one who is competent to serve as Shli'ach Tsibbur, it is proper to accept the honour and step up without any fuss and thus avoid disrespect for the Davvening. Similarly, if one has to step-in to take the place of the Shli'ach Tsibbur (who became ill, for instance, or otherwise indisposed) he should step-in without any fuss and simply continue from the beginning of that Brochoh where the previous Shli'ach Tsibbur left off. He does not repeat anything already said by the previous Shli'ach Tsibbur.
6. A Shli'ach Tsibbur must put aside any feelings of dislike for anyone in the congregation. If he should intend to exclude any person from his Davvening, then he cannot represent anybody else of the congregation either.
7. All other things being equal, it is befitting for the community that they should be represented in Davvening by someone who is a **תַּלְמִיד חָכָם** — a Torah scholar. Next, a Shli'ach Tsibbur who is a **בְּהֵן** is preferable to a **לְוִי** and a married man is given preference over an unmarried man.
8. It is forbidden to cause argument and strife and therefore even though serving as Shli'ach Tsibbur is a Mitzvah, one must avoid any kind of contention, even if one has an obligation to be a Shli'ach Tsibbur (for example, one has a Yahrzeit). Promoting communal peace brings greater merit than even the Mitzvah of being Shli'ach Tsibbur.
9. If it is the custom of the community to do so, the Shli'ach Tsibbur should wear a Tallis for Shacharis (although for Selichos this is indeed a requirement) and for Mincha. In some communities the custom is that no Tallis is worn for Maariv. In some communities, the

Shli'ach Tsibbur wears a Tallis only if he hasn't got a jacket or coat. The Brochah on the Tallis is only said if the Tallis actually belongs to the Shli'ach Tsibbur himself or if it is given to him (even temporarily) — but not if it is given to him only to wear as Shli'ach Tsibbur — and in any case only if it is put on in daylight hours.

10. A Shli'ach Tsibbur should not Davven in short sleeves or when wearing shorts. If the Tallis covers him completely and the Tsibbur doesn't object, then he may be the Shli'ach of this Tsibbur. During Davvening, one should not hold anything in one's hand which might distract one from the Davvening.
11. On a public fast day, someone who is not himself fasting should not serve as Shli'ach Tsibbur unless there is no-one else who is capable. In such a case, in עֲנָנוּ in the Brochah שָׁמַע קוֹלָנוּ, he should substitute the words "בְּיוֹם צוֹם הַתְּעֵנִית הַזֶּה" instead of the words "בְּיוֹם צוֹם תְּעֵנִיתָנוּ".

BEING A SHLI'ACH TSIBBUR

12. Seeing that the Shli'ach Tsibbur represents the congregation in their Davvening, it follows, obviously, that he must Davven aloud according to their custom, whether it be Sefarad or Ashkenaz. Indeed, if the Shli'ach Tsibbur is Davvening a Nussach (that is, a liturgy) that is different to his own custom, then for his quiet Shemoneh Esre it is quite in order that he should not Davven his own Nussach but he should use the congregation's Nussach and so prepare himself for his loud repetition of the Shemoneh Esre for the congregation.
13. A Shli'ach Tsibbur should Davven loud enough for the whole congregation to hear him. (Indeed, if fewer than nine people can hear his Brochos, his Brochos might be considered as "Brochos recited in vain.") The Shli'ach Tsibbur is counted together with nine others to make up the Minyan.
14. A Shli'ach Tsibbur should say the beginning and end of each paragraph loud enough for the congregation to hear him and follow him and thus it is the Shli'ach Tsibbur who sets the pace of the Davvening. At the same time, though, he should not be over-bearing and, for instance, should not Davven so loud or say everything out loud that he disturbs the congregation.
15. The Shli'ach Tsibbur has to have in mind to help the members of the congregation fulfil their obligations if they cannot discharge those obligations themselves (to make Brochos, to hear Kaddish, to hear Kedushah, etc.) and he must take care that the congregation can hear him for those parts of the Davvening that he has to say aloud to discharge their obligation.
16. The good Shli'ach Tsibbur will be aware that, because, happily, almost everybody today Davvens their own Amiddoh, the original reason for his repeating the Shemoneh Esre aloud doesn't apply and that therefore one of the main reasons for the repetition of the Amiddoh nowadays is the reciting of the Kedushah. Yet all too often the Shli'ach Tsibbur doesn't even recite the Kedushah properly! The main part of the Kedushah is the sentence, "קְדוּשָׁה, קְדוּשָׁה, קְדוּשָׁה" (that's what gives Kedushah its name!) but even more important than that sentence is the next sentence, "בְּרוּךְ ה' מִמְּקוֹמוֹ". Really, the third sentence of the Kedushah would have been "ה' יִמְלֹךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד" but our Chachommim chose the

Possuk, "יְמַלֵּךְ" because this Possuk, while saying much the same thing, also mentions צִיּוֹן. (How Sh'ma comes to be in Kedushah is explained later.) The intervening sentences are simply introductions by the Shli'ach Tsibbur, leading into the next Possuk of the Kedushah. Strictly speaking, these introductory phrases are not supposed to be said by the congregation at all (for which reason they are not allowed to be said by someone who finds himself in a place in Davvening where he may not interrupt) and in fact have grown into a communal "response" from originally simply being a prompt by the congregation to the Shli'ach Tsibbur.

17. For that reason, it is important that after the congregants make the Kedushah responses as prompted by him, the Shli'ach Tsibbur himself should repeat those three sentences aloud and thus give a chance to those of the congregation who cannot respond (because, for instance, they are Davvening Shemoneh Esre) to at least listen-in and that way to be considered as having responded to the Kedushah. The Shli'ach Tsibbur is doing nothing for anybody if all he says aloud is, "וּבְדַבְרֵי קְדֻשָּׁה בְּתוֹב לְאָמַר" !
18. As the Shli'ach Tsibbur is himself required to say the Kedushah with a Minyan and yet must say the Kedushah so that others can hear it, therefore he should start to say the same Kedushah responses as the congregation, aloud, but just as the congregation are finishing theirs. This way, his response is heard by those who have to hear it (and their hearing the response counts as if they responded themselves — "שׁוֹמֵעַ בְּעוֹנָה" as explained in the previous paragraph) and at the same time it is considered as if he too said Kedushah together with the Minyan.
19. Much the same applies also to the Kedushah in וּבָא לְצִיּוֹן, known as the קְדוּשַׁת דְּסִידְרָא. Here too, the congregation is to say the Kedushah together and for this, the Shli'ach Tsibbur says aloud the parts leading up to the actual Kedushah responses (like he does with the Kedushah in Birchas יוֹצֵר אוֹר (בְּרַכּוֹ). However, with the קְדוּשַׁת דְּסִידְרָא there is the requirement that the Shli'ach Tsibbur says aloud the words leading up to the Kedushah responses, but the words in Aramaic should *not* be said aloud (even by the congregation). This becomes quite challenging with the last of the three responses of that קְדוּשַׁת דְּסִידְרָא and about the only solution is that the Shli'ach Tsibbur says that last response aloud, together with the congregation, without, in fact leading into it aloud.
20. The Shli'ach Tsibbur has to say Brochos clearly and carefully. He has to give the congregation time to make the proper responses before he continues — but he should not drag out the end of a Brochah unnecessarily.
21. The pronunciation of the Name of HaShem must be correct. The correct pronunciation of HaShem is אֱ-לֹ-הִים, not אֱ-לֹ-הִים, not אֱ-לֹ-הִים, not אֱ-לֹ-הִים and not אֱ-לֹ-הִים.
22. Similarly, the correct pronunciation of the word אֱ-לֹ-הִים is אֱ-לֹ-הִים, that is, the vowel "ִ" under the "ה" is sounded before that letter "ה" (with the stress on the "לֹ" of the word) and not as אֱ-לֹ-הִים (much like the ה in the word נֶחֱ, which word is read as if it was written נֶחֱ-אח). (As a matter of fact, the same is true with any word which ends with an ׀, too, (like לְשִׁמּוֹעַ, for instance) but in this case of ׀ there will not be any practical difference for most Ashkenazzim.)
23. When the Shli'ach Tsibbur ends his quiet Shemoneh Esre, he takes three steps back, stands in that place for a few seconds (without engaging in casual conversation with anybody) and

then takes three steps forward and continues with the Davvening. If he has to wait, for the Rabbi or for a Minyan, he is permitted to Davven private prayers.

24. It is customary to show respect to the Rabbi and wait for him to finish his Krias Sh'ma and Shemoneh Esre before the Shli'ach Tsibbur resumes his Davvening. (The Rabbi may forego this honour.) (The Shli'ach Tsibbur's waiting at this point for the Rabbi to finish Krias Sh'ma gives more people a little extra time to catch up if they should need it so that they can all begin the Shemoneh Esre together — which is, of course, the main reason of Davvening with a Minyan at all.) If there is no Rabbi, the Shli'ach Tsibbur should wait till most of the congregation has finished their Davvening. But in any case, as mentioned above, there must be at least nine people to respond to his repetition of Shemoneh Esre.
25. The Shli'ach Tsibbur must not distort the words of Tefilloh, neither by stretching them inordinately nor by shortening them by swallowing syllables, for instance, when fitting words to a נִיגוּן (a song or tune adapted for the Davvening) or when chanting. Likewise, he may not repeat words. Indeed, repeating words changes the meaning of the Davvening and sometimes can invalidate a Brochah (and it might well be forbidden to answer אָמֵן to such a Brochah).
26. Where the Shli'ach Tsibbur (or indeed anyone else) is to say Kaddish after a section of the Tefilloh (which the congregation Davvened without a Minyan) and the Minyan only materialised in time for that Kaddish, it is required that the last three sentences of that section be repeated and then the Kaddish should be said.
27. The Shli'ach Tsibbur (or any other person) who says Kaddish should say the words יְהִי שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ, וְכוּ' together with the congregation, not after them, and he should then continue יְתַבָּרַךְ loudly. The words "וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן" should be said together, without any pause between them.
28. Someone saying Kaddish bows at the following words: יְתַבָּרַךְ, יְהִי שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא, יְתַגְדֵּל, אָמֵן, בְּרִיךְ הוּא, and אָמֵן. At the end of the full Kaddish, three steps back are taken and then the last sentence is said like this: the one saying Kaddish bows to his left and then says the words "עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִזְמוֹנֵינוּ". He then bows to his right and then says the words "הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ". Finally, he bows straight ahead and then says the words "וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן". After the Kaddish, he takes three steps forward.
29. The Kaddish said before בְּרַכּוֹ in fact belongs to the יְשַׁתְּבַח before it rather than to the בְּרַכּוֹ after it, and the Shli'ach Tsibbur may not break between יְשַׁתְּבַח and that Kaddish. Even if this means waiting half-an-hour for a Minyan, the Shli'ach Tsibbur should not say יְשַׁתְּבַח before there is a Minyan. If he had already said יְשַׁתְּבַח, he cannot any more say the Kaddish before בְּרַכּוֹ and instead goes straight into בְּרַכּוֹ without saying the Kaddish. However, he is allowed to recite the last three Pesukkim of the שִׁירַת הַיָּם and then say the Kaddish. (But יְשַׁתְּבַח may not be repeated.)
30. An individual, on the other hand, seeing that he does not say Kaddish after יְשַׁתְּבַח, *does* say יְשַׁתְּבַח straight after the end of פְּסוּקֵי דְזִמְרָא where it belongs, and he then waits at that point until there is a Minyan to continue his Davvening together with them.

31. The Half-Kaddish said after the Torah Reading belongs to that Torah Reading, not to the *הַגְּבֻהָהּ וְגַלְיָהּ* and should be recited by the one who has that last Aliyoh and should therefore be said directly after the end-Brochah of the last Reading. The *מִי שֶׁבִרָךְ, בְּרַבַּת הַגּוֹמֵל* and any other such insertions, should all be said **after** that Half-Kaddish. Strictly speaking, this Half-Kaddish “belongs” to the last *עוֹלָה*, that is, it is his prerogative. This is the reason why in some communities the last Aliyoh is often reserved for someone who has Yahrzeit or who is a mourner who wishes to say that Kaddish. Honouring such a person with this Aliyoh dates back to those times when everybody who was called up to the Torah was able to read his own Parsha correctly, with the tune and cantillation, even without preparation. Someone who was obligated to say Kaddish would therefore be called-up for the last Aliyoh so that he could recite the Half-Kaddish that went with it. Thus this Half-Kaddish, invariably said by the mourner honoured with the last Aliyoh, over time became associated with the mourner and this gave rise to some reluctance for the last *עוֹלָה* to say that Half-Kaddish if he was *not* a mourner. Later, because of the poor standard of expertise of the general public, it became the practice to have a *בַּעַל קְרִיאָה* standing by to step in, in case someone might be called up who could not read his Parasha himself. Then, later still, *שְׁלֵא לְבִיִּישׁ אֶת מִי שֶׁאֵינוּ יָכוֹל*, that is, so as not to embarrass those who could not read properly, it became the general practice that that *בַּעַל קְרִיאָה* read for everybody, regardless of their ability or lack of it and the Half-Kaddish after the Torah Reading was invariably said by the *בַּעַל קְרִיאָה*. Bearing all this history in mind, it follows that if a mourner or someone who has Yahrzeit should actually be honoured with the last Aliyoh, it makes sense that he should say that Half-Kaddish that is actually supposed to be said by him, rather than that Half-Kaddish should be said by the *בַּעַל קְרִיאָה*.
32. Much the same can be said about the Kaddish said after “*עָלֵינוּ*” after each Tefillah. Really, each Tefillah is supposed to end with Kaddish after “*עָלֵינוּ*”. It became the practice that this Kaddish was given up by the Shli’ach Tsibbur (really it is supposed to be said by him) to any mourner, so that he should have an extra chance to say a Kaddish. (Don’t forget, in many communities in the past, Kaddish was said only by one person at a time and the Kaddish was carefully rationed, almost, between those who needed to say Kaddish, sometimes resulting in each mourner being allocated only one Kaddish.) Over time, therefore, this last Kaddish became associated with mourners to the extent that a Shli’ach Tsibbur who was not in fact a mourner was most reluctant to say it. (The worry was that if he says the Kaddish usually reserved for mourners, then he would be saying Kaddish as a mourner, G-d forbid!) Therefore, today, where there is no mourner in the congregation, this Kaddish is nowadays usually said not by the Shli’ach Tsibbur (who should really say it as part of his “duties”) but instead by an older member of the congregation or by someone who has no parents. But this really borders on superstition! In any case we know that reciting Kaddish is a Mitzvah and *שׁוֹמֵר מִצְוָה לֹא יָדַע דְּבַר רָע* — “He who does a Mitzvah correctly will not know of any evil.”
33. When saying *בְּרַכּוּ*, the Shli’ach Tsibbur bows at the words “*בְּרַכּוּ אֶת*” and resumes his straight upright position before he says *ה’*. Similarly, when the congregation and the Shli’ach Tsibbur say “*בְּרוּךְ ה’ הַמְּבֹרָךְ*” they should bow at the word “*בְּרוּךְ*” but should be standing upright at the *ה’*.
34. The Shli’ach Tsibbur should lead the congregation in saying “*שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל*” and should say the whole first Possuk of *קְרִיאַת שְׁמַע* aloud with the congregation.

35. At the end of קְרִיאַת שְׁמַע, the Shli'ach Tsibbur says "אֲנִי ה' אֱ-לֹהֵיכֶם אָמֵת" like everyone else but then he repeats the words "ה' אֱ-לֹהֵיכֶם אָמֵת" again aloud for all to hear.
36. Everybody should start the Shemoneh Esre together, without any interruption at all between the end of the Brochoh "גָּאֵל יִשְׂרָאֵל" and the Shemoneh Esre, for which reason the Shli'ach Tsibbur ends that Brochoh "גָּאֵל יִשְׂרָאֵל" quietly, his voice fading at the word "יִשְׂרָאֵל". This way, no-one can hear the end of the Brochoh and so no-one answers אָמֵן. If the Shli'ach Tsibbur does end that Brochoh aloud (as indeed is the custom in some communities) the congregation should see to end their Brochoh "גָּאֵל יִשְׂרָאֵל" together with him and, the rule being that generally we do not answer אָמֵן to our own Brochoh, therefore no-one will say אָמֵן.
37. On Yom Tov, the custom prevails that the Shli'ach Tsibbur ends the Brochoh "גָּאֵל יִשְׂרָאֵל" of Shacharis and ends the Half-Kaddish before the silent Amidah of Maariv, of Mussaf and of Mincha, all with the Yom Tov tune so as to remind the congregation that instead of the regular Shemoneh Esre but with "יַעֲלֶה וְיִבֹא", a special Yom Tov Amidah is to be said instead. This is one example of how the Shli'ach Tsibbur is to guide and direct the congregation in their Davvening.
38. As mentioned before, most people nowadays are able to read the Tefillos for themselves and we hardly ever need the Shli'ach Tsibbur to say the Tefillos for anybody. However, occasionally, an individual might find himself in a situation where he cannot interrupt his private Davvening and the Shli'ach Tsibbur therefore does speak on his or her behalf. For instance, since a person is not allowed to interrupt his Shemoneh Esre at all, even to respond to Kedushah, through his hearing the Kedushah spoken by the Shli'ach Tsibbur, he fulfils his obligation, as explained above.
39. In a case where the congregation has prayed the quiet Amidah but there is no-one able to repeat the Amidah aloud except somebody who has just arrived, that person is allowed to recite the Amidah aloud and this recitation serves as his own Amidah and he therefore does not say a quiet Amidah. Similarly, if someone has already Davvened (in an earlier Minyan, for instance) and is asked to recite the loud Amidah for a congregation which has no-one else who can do this for them, he may do so but, seeing that he has already Davvened, he does not say the quiet Amidah with them.
40. The Possuk וְכוּ' שֶׁפָּתִי תִפְתָּח, before the Amidah proper (and the Possuk כִּי שֵׁם ה' before that Possuk which is said at Mincha) is said by the Shli'ach Tsibbur in an undertone (but Sefaraddim do say it aloud).

MISTAKES, OMISSIONS, INSERTIONS AND CORRECTIONS

41. A Shli'ach Tsibbur who made a mistake in his quiet Amidah which requires him to repeat the Amidah, should not repeat his quiet Amidah. Instead, he should have in mind that his Davvening the Amidah for the congregation aloud should serve for him as the repetition that he is required to make, too. If this occurred at Maariv and he has to repeat the Amidah, seeing that there is no repetition of Amidah, he does repeat his Amidah, but, out of considerations of טִירְחָא דְצִיבוּרָא, that is, unnecessarily bothering the congregation — in this case, that they would have to wait for him — he repeats his Amidah after Maariv, in private. (The abbreviated "repetition" of the Friday Night Davvening — the בְּרָכָה מְעִין שְׁבַע

— too, counts as a repetition of the Amidah as far as the requirement of repeating Amidah by the Shli'ach Tsibbur is concerned.)

42. If the Shli'ach Tsibbur made a mistake in his repetition of the Amidah and he has already moved on to a later Brochah, he must return to the beginning of the Brochah in which he made the mistake. If he had completed the Amidah and then the mistake was realized and the mistake is such that it requires a repetition of the Amidah, then the Amidah must be repeated — including the repetition of the Kedushah.
43. If the Shli'ach Tsibbur realized that he had forgotten "יַעֲלֶה וַיָּבֵא" in the recitation of the Shacharis Shemoneh Esre only after he had finished, there is no repetition of the Shemoneh Esre. The omission is not corrected because this would involve a considerable טִירְחָא דְצִיבּוּרָא, that is, unnecessarily bothering the congregation and also, after all, the Hallel of Rosh Chodesh follows immediately and in addition in any case Rosh Chodesh will be spoken of in the upcoming Mussaf.
44. If the Shli'ach Tsibbur mistakenly omitted the Birkas Kohanim and realized his mistake only after finishing that Brochah, the mistake cannot be rectified.
45. A Shli'ach Tsibbur who is a Kohen should not Duchen unless he is the only Kohen. In such a case, he is required to turn round to face the congregation during the Duchenen. Someone else of the congregation should prompt the Kohen / Shli'ach Tsibbur in his Birkas Kohanim.
46. It is not necessary for the Shli'ach Tsibbur to say the Possuk יְהִי לְרֵצוֹן אִמְרֵי פִי וכו' at the end of his repetition of the Amidah of Shacharis (unless this is the custom in this congregation) and neither does he have to step back the three steps until the end of the קְדִישׁ תְּתַקַּבֵּל later because this קְדִישׁ תְּתַקַּבֵּל is considered the real conclusion of the Amidah. (This is so even though this קְדִישׁ תְּתַקַּבֵּל is going to be some time after the Amidah, for instance, there is אֲרוֹן הַקֹּדֶשׁ and the Shli'ach Tsibbur has yet to take the Sefer Torah back to the אֲרוֹן הַקֹּדֶשׁ ("the Holy Ark") and has yet to say וּבְנוּחָה יֹאמֵר, לְדֹר מְזֻמֹּר (אֲשֶׁרֵי וּבָא לְצִיּוֹן.)
47. Those who have the custom to wear Tefillin on Chol HaMoed Pessach, remove their Tefillin before Hallel. The Shli'ach Tsibbur, however, removes his Tefillin only after Hallel. (Again, this is out of considerations of טִירְחָא דְצִיבּוּרָא, that is, unnecessarily bothering the congregation to have to wait for him.) On the first day of Chol HaMoed, the Krias HaTorah includes the Mitzvah of Tefillin and customs vary: in some places the Tefillin are not removed by anybody, in others, the congregation remove their Tefillin before Hallel but the קְרִיאָה בַּעַל קְרִיאָה alone does not until after the Krias HaTorah. This is because it is deemed incongruous to read the instruction to wear Tefillin and yet not to fulfil what is being read!
48. On Chol HaMoed Sukkos, when there is anyhow a pause before Hallel for the congregation to take their Lulav and Esrog, the Shli'ach Tsibbur takes off his Tefillin (like everyone else) before Hallel so that the Tefillin should not be an interposition (חֲצִיצָה) between the Lulav and Esrog and the hand. (Another reason for removing the Tefillin before Hallel in this way is to bring to mind the Yom Tov character of this part of the Davvening of Chol HaMoed. The Yom Tov character of Rosh Chodesh is particularly marked by the Mussaf, which is why on Rosh Chodesh we remove the Tefillin before Mussaf.)

49. On those days when there is Krias HaTorah, the Shli'ach Tsibbur is handed the Sefer Torah after it is removed from the אָרוֹן הַקֹּדֶשׁ and he holds the Sefer Torah resting it on his right shoulder. Then, he lifts the Sefer Torah and holds it forward somewhat each time when saying aloud the Pesukkim, "שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל", "אֶחָד אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ", and "גְּדֹלוֹ" to each of which the congregation responds.
50. (Incidentally, it's from this Possuk of "גְּדֹלוֹ" ("Ascribe greatness to HaShem, **together with me ...**") that we know that when one responds to the Shli'ach Tsibbur, (for instance, with "אָמֵן") one's response should not be louder than the Shli'ach Tsibbur's Davvening.)
51. The Pesukkim, "שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל" and "אֶחָד אֱ-לֹהֵינוּ" are said only on Shabbos and Yom Tov; the Possuk "גְּדֹלוֹ" is said every time there is Krias HaTorah. For the first two, the Shli'ach Tsibbur faces the congregation; while reciting the Possuk "גְּדֹלוֹ", however, he faces the אָרוֹן הַקֹּדֶשׁ, while bowing his head slightly.
52. When making his way from the אָרוֹן הַקֹּדֶשׁ to the Bimamah (that is, the Reading Desk) with the Sefer Torah, the Shli'ach Tsibbur makes his way from the אָרוֹן הַקֹּדֶשׁ to the right (as viewed facing the congregation) and when returning the Sefer Torah from the Bimamah to the אָרוֹן הַקֹּדֶשׁ, he makes his way from the Bimamah towards the left hand side of the אָרוֹן הַקֹּדֶשׁ (again, viewed facing the congregation). If more than one Sefer Torah was used, the Shli'ach Tsibbur leads the procession back to the אָרוֹן הַקֹּדֶשׁ holding the second Sefer Torah (the one used for Maftir) and the first Sefer Torah is taken back by the one who was honoured with the הַגְּבָהָה of that Sefer Torah. (But there are different customs about this.)
53. The Davvening of Shacharis (or Mussaf) Mincha and Maariv ends with the Kaddish after "עָלֵינוּ לְשַׁבְּחָה", usually recited by a mourner. If there is no mourner, the Shli'ach Tsibbur says that Kaddish, depending on the custom of the congregation.
54. Generally speaking, if there was a Minyan at the start of a part of the Davvening but then some people left so that there is now no Minyan, the rule is that (providing there are at least six people) that part of the Davvening may be concluded.
55. Some examples: if Kaddish was started, and the Minyan went out, the Kaddish may be concluded. If the Shli'ach Tsibbur started repeating the Shemoneh Esre, he may conclude it, even with the Kedushah, and with the concluding Kaddish after אֲשֶׁרֵינוּ וּבֵא לְצִיּוֹן (but not the Half-Kaddish before אֲשֶׁרֵינוּ וּבֵא לְצִיּוֹן). (But the כְּהֵנִים are not allowed to Duchen — this is considered as a separate and different part of the Davvening.) If when they started Duchening there was a Minyan but then there was no Minyan, they may conclude the Duchening. If they started Krias HaTorah, they may conclude Krias HaTorah, including new עוֹלָם, and also say the concluding Half-Kaddish — but not the מִפְטִיר or the הַפְּטָרָה. If they started the Haftorah, they may conclude it — with the Brochos. In Maariv, if there was a Minyan for בְּרַכּוֹ, the Half-Kaddish before the quiet Shemoneh Esre can be said. If there was a Minyan for the quiet Shemoneh Esre of Maariv but then there was no Minyan, the קְדִישׁ תְּתַקַּבֵּל may be said. However, if there was a Minyan for the silent Shemoneh Esre of Shacharis, Mussaf or Mincha but there was no Minyan before the Shli'ach Tsibbur started his repetition, he may not repeat the Shemoneh Esre.

SOME GENERAL POINTS CONCERNING DAVVENING

56. Where the custom of the community permits it (in fact, this is the practice almost everywhere) the Shli'ach Tsibbur may introduce נִיגוּן, that is, song, into the Davvening on Shabbos or Yom Tov, etc.. Generally, the Shli'ach Tsibbur should aim to move the congregation to greater בְּיָגָה, that is, to better direct their concentration in their Davvening that it should be pleasing to HaShem and the use of Niggun in Davvening should be with this intention and never to show off his voice or his singing expertise.
57. Perhaps what singles out a good Shli'ach Tsibbur is his ability to enthuse the congregation and in this to earn his other title, "בַּעַל תְּפִלָּה", literally, "the Master of Prayer," or prayer leader. The sensitive use of song in Tefilloh can indeed unite the individuals of a congregation to meld them into one community, all Davvening together beautifully, singing the praises of HaShem and praying to Him. A good Baal Tefilloh will have rehearsed a Niggun to make sure that it fits in with the words without distorting them, that is, without elongating them so that they can hardly be recognized, and without repeating any words (which distorts the meaning of the Davvening and in any case is often against the Halochoh). But once it is introduced into Tefilloh, Niggun must be allowed to rule! The words must be made to fit the tune rather than the tune be ruined by trying to fit it into the words! If a tune is sung wrongly it can jar and in fact disturb the בְּיָגָה of the congregants rather than help their devotion and so care must be taken that the Niggun should not be distorted or spoiled but should be sung properly and correctly. Even just a snippet or a snatch of singing can help to enhance the Davvening but using song and tunes properly calls for some advance working out on the part of the Baal Tefilloh, or even rehearsal, to ensure that song should truly beautify our עֲבוֹדַת ה', our Divine Service.
58. Another thing to bear in mind about Niggun in Tefilloh is that some Niggunim are a long-standing tradition and should not (indeed, may not) be interfered with lightly.
59. When the Shli'ach Tsibbur comes to the Brochoh of Thanksgiving (which starts with the words "מוֹדִים אֲנַחְנוּ לָךְ" — "We give thanks to You") the congregation, too, adds its own thanks. (The Abudraham explains that even if the Shli'ach Tsibbur might voice our requests for us and generally speak on our behalf, nevertheless when it comes to thanks, it's only right that each individual should say a short "Thank You" himself!) The repetition of the Shemoneh Esre by the Shli'ach Tsibbur allows some alternative versions of "Thank You" to be incorporated in our Davvening and which otherwise would not have been accommodated. מוֹדִים דְּרַבָּנֵן is the collected versions of "מוֹדִים" which were said by various Ammoro'im (Maseches Sotah, 40a). The fact that it's called "מוֹדִים דְּרַבָּנֵן" — "the מוֹדִים of the Rabbis" doesn't mean that the regular מוֹדִים, which is printed in most Siddurim in a larger font, is the מוֹדִים מִן הַתּוֹרָה! It's simply that the repetition of Shemoneh Esre allows the opportunity to use those alternative versions of the Rabbonnon of מוֹדִים. (Hence, "the מוֹדִים of the Rabbis.") The Shli'ach Tsibbur must say the regular מוֹדִים aloud, like the rest of the Amiddoh, while the congregation says the מוֹדִים דְּרַבָּנֵן in an undertone.
60. Another example of utilizing the repetition of the Amiddoh for something that really has nothing to do with the Amiddoh itself is the introduction of the Sh'ma into the Kedushah of Mussaf of Shabbos and Yom Tov. This was originally instituted when the Persian King Yezdegerd II, a fanatical fire-worshipping Zoroastrian, forbade the Jews in his kingdom to declare the Sovereignty of HaShem and went so far as to post his agents in the Shules to stop

us. Being government officials, his agents were not great sticklers for their task and once the congregation had come to the end of the Shacharis Shemoneh Esre, and knowing that this was past the place where Krias Sh'ma was supposed to be said, being typical government agents, they beetled off home. But the Chachommim of the day were determined that at least the first Possuk of Sh'ma and its last phrase, that is, "אֲנִי ה' אֵל-לְהִיבְכֶם" — should be said by the congregation together, aloud, at least once a week. And where? In the repetition of the Mussaf Amiddoh on Shabbos (and, by extension, Yom Tov). That's why the Shli'ach Tsibbur should lead the congregation in that Possuk, שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל, and in their response the congregation should stop just before the words "אֲנִי ה' אֵל-לְהִיבְכֶם" so that the Shli'ach Tsibbur should lead them in saying those three words together aloud. It was because of that evil decree, too, that the Chachommim of the day instituted that every person should recite the Sh'ma in the privacy of his own home before coming to Shule each morning. (The tyrant couldn't post a soldier in each and every Jewish home!) That's how it comes about that that private recitation of Sh'ma at home (which was later incorporated into the Davvening in Shule as part of the preliminaries to Shacharis) ends with the prayer that the time should come — please G-d! — when "מִקְדָּשׁ אֶת שְׁמֶךָ בְּרָבִים", when "Your name, HaShem, will be sanctified, without fear, in public." Even though the reason for that recitation happily does not apply nowadays in the countries of our dispersion, nevertheless, it has been retained if only to bring us to be aware how fortunate we are today that things are so very different (even if not because one can never tell what the morrow can bring, G-d forbid).

61. As mentioned above, one of the functions of the Shli'ach Tsibbur is to keep the congregation together in prayer, by speaking aloud the beginning and end of each paragraph so that everyone knows where we're up to. Also as said, the good Shli'ach Tsibbur will "pace" the Davvening and unobtrusively keep an eye on the clock to make sure that certain landmarks in the Tefilloh (particularly Shacharis) should be arrived at at their regular times, for example, "רְבִי יִשְׁמַעְאֵל אֱמֹר", "בְּרַכּוֹ", the Amiddoh, etc.. Again, as mentioned above, another of the functions of the Shli'ach Tsibbur is to regulate the pace of the Davvening that it should not be too fast, nor too slow, and because of this, it is of course important that the congregation should be able to actually hear the Shli'ach Tsibbur. Contrary to what some people seem to think, being a Shli'ach Tsibbur does not mean that one simply Davvens as usual except that he merely stands in front of the עֲמוּד (the reader's desk or lectern)!
62. In a few communities, more or less the whole Davvening is said aloud, in unison, and the function of the Shli'ach Tsibbur in those communities is primarily to lead the congregation. The repetition of the Amiddoh, the Kaddish and some other points in the communal Davvening are the only things he says aloud by himself.
63. There are Dinnim concerning the various communal responses in the Davvening. Because the prohibition to interrupt one's Davvening varies in its strictness depending on where in the Davvening and what the interruption is, therefore some responses are permitted in some places which are not permitted in other places. As mentioned above, quite a number of communal responses originated more as prompts for the Shli'ach Tsibbur rather than mandated responses as such and these responses will be permitted only if one is not actually Davvening. (It must be remembered that in times past most of Tefilloh was off-by-heart because Siddurim were a rarity — often there was only the one (sometimes hand-written) Siddur owned by the congregation — and prompting the Shli'ach Tsibbur was a great help to him.) All this is reflected in the different Halochos concerning different responses.

THE OLD SIDDUR'S STORY

*Adapted from "Dreams of Childhood" by Hermann Schwab, published by Anscombe, London.
(The book is now out of print.)*

"Mummy! Look at this old Siddur," said little Binyomin. "It's so dusty and torn. I was exploring our new house and found it in the attic among all the lumber. Whose is it, Mummy?"

"Kiss it," said his mother. "When you hurt yourself, I always kiss the place to make it better. That poor Siddur looks hurt. Kiss it to make it better."

Little Binyomin kissed the old prayer book, and stood there, looking tenderly at the fragile Siddur. And then, slowly, the old, tattered pages began to rustle, and the sound formed into words. The voice was so soft, so old and tired, that he could hardly hear it at first. Then it became louder, more distinct. It sounded like the voice of a man who has been shut away for a long time, without an opportunity to speak and who then meets another man to whom he can at last talk about his loneliness and his sufferings and his life.

"Dear little boy," it said. "I have lain in that lumber room for years, forsaken and forgotten. If you hadn't found me there, I might never again have seen the light of day. And I longed so much for the sunshine and the sky and to see the bright eyes of children. You took me out of the lumber room, and held me gently in your hands. You kissed me, though I am old and worn and tattered. You asked to whom I had belonged. Let me tell you the story of my life.

"It must be more than seventy years since I came off the printing press. I was very proud of myself. I looked so fine. My print was clear and bold, and stood out on the shiny white paper. I was bound in deep red velvet with silver edges. All the other books in the printing works envied me for my lovely dress. There were lots of books there in the printer's shop, big books and little books, and some massive volumes, of which we smaller ones stood in awe. They were not only big, but also wise. They rarely spoke to us, but we were happy to be near them.

"I wasn't left there for long. A pleasant young man came in a few days later and bought me. He gave me to his Kallah, a beautiful girl with blue eyes. She thanked him for the gift, and stood admiring me with my beautiful binding and my silver edges and my bold, clear print. She could see her face mirrored in my silver edges, but she did not look at her reflection.

THE OLD SIDDUR'S STORY

“The Chassunoh took place the next week, and before the Chassunoh the Kalloh said her prayers in my pages. She davvened earnestly and with devotion, and her eyes were full of tears. I was with her under the Chuppah, and at the Chassunoh Se’udoh I saw and heard everything. I shall never forget that day. There was music and songs and speeches, and the hall was bright with light. The glasses clinked like silver bells as all the wedding guests drank to the health of the bridal pair.”

“Then they packed me away in a dark trunk. When I was taken out again, I found myself in a big handsome room. I was put in a fine bookcase in the place of honour, and when visitors came I was shown round and admired. Three times each day my young mistress said her prayers in my pages, till after a time I knew exactly where she wanted me to open, and I opened in the right place by myself. It pleased her.

“Months passed by, and then the house was full of stir and bustle. A little boy was born. He grew up, and I watched him learn to talk and walk. I watched him laugh and run and play. He made his parents very happy. He began to read when he was six. It was slow work at first, but soon the letters became words, and the words sentences, and in the end he could read. He was followed by two other boys and a girl, who romped about the house merrily. They were good children. But I had little contact with them. My beautiful binding had suffered during the years, and their mother wanted to spare me. They were not allowed to touch me, and I led a quiet, retired life. I must say that this did not please me. I often thought how other Siddurim had friends and comrades, while I lived alone, like all who regard themselves or are regarded by others as better than their fellows. There were times when I envied my humbler comrades. They were taken to school and to Shule. They learned to know the world and people, while I always had to stay at home.

“Yet I was happy to think how my mistress treasured me and confided in me. For on the back of my title page she kept a record of all that was most important in her life. She wrote down the date of her Chassunoh, and of the Chassunos of her brothers and sisters, the date of birth of her children, and other things like that.

“So I stayed quietly in my bookcase till one day a dreadful change came into my uneventful life. I was sent to a bookbinder to be renovated. Little Shimon, the youngest boy, carried me there under his arm through the streets.

“The bookbinder was not gentle with me. I was not accustomed to such rough treatment. He tore off my velvet binding, with the silver edges, and the title page. Then he smeared a lot of nasty, smelly paste all over me, and put me under a press to dry. The press hurt me. I was kept there in torment for a whole day and night before the bookbinder at last released me from my sufferings.

“Imagine my feelings when, instead of giving me back my velvet binding with the silver edges, and my own title page, he put me into ordinary cardboard covers. I rustled my pages in protest, several times I jumped out of his hands, but it was no use. The bookbinder again placed me under the press where I could not move. I had to lie there and

THE OLD SIDDUR'S STORY

watch him put a different Siddur into my velvet binding. I never thought life could be so cruel. But there was nothing I could do.

“A few days later little Shimon came to take me away. The bookbinder gave him the other Siddur with my binding. I tried to attract his attention. I jumped down angrily on to the floor.

“‘Look,’ said Shimon, ‘there’s a Siddur fallen on the floor.’ And he bent down, picked me up, and kissed me. Dear little Shimon! I was very fond of that boy. His kiss did me a lot of good. But I knew it was a farewell kiss; that I would never see him again.

“I was left for weeks on the shelf in the bookbinder’s shop, and had plenty of time to think about all that had happened to me. I realized that I had been vain and puffed up with pride. I had thought too much of my beautiful dress. I had not considered that the dress is only the outer covering and that other books, with so much that is good and beautiful in them, can be dressed even in a plain binding.

“When I understood this, I stopped grieving for my lost glory. I was glad that I had come to the bookbinder’s shop, and I vowed that I would never again be so foolishly proud and vain.

“One day a travelling peddler came to the shop, and bought me for a few pence. My new master was a poor man. He was on the road all the week trying to sell his goods, and spent only Shabbos at home.

“He went from village to village. Whether the sun was blazing hot, or the snow lay thick on the ground, or the rain came pouring down in torrents, he always went cheerfully on his way. I lay right on top of his pack near to his hand. I felt sorry for him, because his back had become bent from carrying his heavy load.

“The poor peddler had a hard life. I witnessed many humiliations which he had to suffer. I heard people call after him ‘Jew!’ as he walked through the streets. But he refused to be dispirited by it. The word ‘Jew’ was to him a term of honour. He was proud of the history of the Jewish people.

“I learned a lot on our travels about the world, and about people. I had a great many interesting experiences. I found myself in the company of good people and of bad people. I listened to wise people, and to stupid people saying foolish things. I like to think back to the years I spent wandering with my master, even though much of that time was hard and filled with trouble.

“Every Friday evening my master came home from his wanderings, and I saw his house, and his wife and children. It was a humble little home, yet I shall never forget those Friday evenings, especially in winter. The table was laid with a clean white cloth. It was not of fine linen, but it was so shining white that it almost reflected the seven-branched lamp hanging down from the low ceiling. The old clock on the wall ticked quietly away. There was a cosy fire in the stove, and the frost painted flowers on the window-panes. It was

THE OLD SIDDUR'S STORY

happy and peaceful in the little room, and happiness shone in the eyes of the peddler and his wife. During their modest meal, one of the children turned up the right page in me, and they all sang Zemi'ros, in praise of the Shabbos. For Shabbos is the friend of man, and comes without waiting to be invited, bringing joy and making grief and sorrow vanish at its approach. They were remarkable songs I listened to every Friday night. The grown-up voices of the parents merged with the thin trebles of the children. Sometimes one little voice was higher pitched than the rest, or it sang out of tune or out of time. Yet there was pure joy in their singing, there was love and trust in HaShem, and happiness because of the Shabbos, and there was a beautiful harmony in that unmelodious song.”

The old Siddur paused, overcome with emotion at these memories, and a gentle sigh passed through its pages. Then it continued:

“I must have been with the peddler for some years. Then another change came into my life. It was in the depths of winter. We had arrived at an inn late at night. Though it was so late, there was still plenty of movement and talk going on, for many other people had come there like ourselves, to find shelter from the wind and the cold.

“The first thing my master did was, as always, to say Maariv, the evening prayer.

“Only this time, when he had finished, instead of putting me back in his pack, he left me lying on the bench while he ate his simple meal. When he rose the next morning, it was still dark, and he did not see me. In the dim light of the oil-lamp I saw his rounded back bend over to take the accustomed load. I saw his work-worn hand lifted to touch the Mezuzah on the doorpost as he went out. Then the door closed behind him. I heard his footsteps crunch in the new snow, and he was gone.

“This is how I lost my second master. In my younger days I would have worried about it. But now life had made me patient and submissive. So I lay there, waiting quietly for the daylight, and whatever was in store for me.

“Presently the inn was astir with life and movement. All the people who had stayed there overnight took their belongings, and went their way. Only one man seemed to be in no hurry. He walked slowly up and down the room, and saw me lying on the bench.

“He told the innkeeper, who explained that I did not belong to the house and said that if no-one came to claim me he could keep me. I stayed at the inn for two days, and as my master did not come back to fetch me, the finder finally put me in his coat pocket and took me home.

“There he presented me to his little boy, who was about six years old. The youngster took me to school, where he learned to read in me, and to translate from the Hebrew. So in my old age, I went back to school! The schoolroom was fairly large. The children sat on low benches, with their teacher on a raised platform. He was a youngish man, who treated the children in a very friendly fashion, and they were all very fond of him.

THE OLD SIDDUR'S STORY

“Little Yitzchok, my new master’s son, was a diligent pupil. He was not content with what he was taught at school. He went over the lessons again at home, and next day the teacher could be sure that he would know them perfectly. I was glad to see how keen he was on his studies. But it also caused me a great deal of anxiety, because I was no longer young and could not stand so much handling. Some of my pages became loose and fell out. One day Yitzchok’s father noticed it, and gave him a different Siddur to use. He stuck back my loose pages and took me to the Shule. He left me there with other Siddurim and Machzorim in his box-seat. I spent several years there.

“My owner did not come to Shule every day. He was away all the week, travelling. I was brought out only on Friday night and Shabbos. I soon noticed that my master did not pray with devotion. He prayed as a routine, with his lips, not with his heart, and this hurt me. For I knew that people could find the right words in the Siddur for everything they needed if only they would look for them. I was sorry for my master, because he did not seem to understand this fact. The Siddur should be a friend to man at all times. It has the right words for joy and sorrow, for hopes and disappointments. Those who know how to davven, have always turned to HaShem with their Siddur and, feeling oppressed, have found consolation and comfort in its words. And anyone who wishes to express his gratitude to HaShem, too, can find the right words, and be contented and come near to HaShem.

“The years passed, and gradually my owner came less often to the Shule until he hardly ever came at all. I was left all alone and I wondered what had happened. Then one day I was lifted out of my place in the box-seat and I found that I was being held by his son Yitzchok.

“He had grown up, but he looked very sad, and he opened me at the page where the Kaddish is printed. I understood that I would never see my master again. Yitzchok went up to the front of the Shule with me and said the Kaddish very quietly and sadly. Then he walked back again, a little unsteadily, and returned to his place.

“I thought then about the Kaddish, which is a prayer said by a mourner, yet has no word in it of death and mourning, only praise of the Creator. HaShem gives man life, and takes it back, and when HaShem calls for the soul to return to Him, the soul must go to Him. When a father or mother dies, the son stands up in his grief before the congregation and praises the Creator Who gives and takes away, and the congregation responds ‘Omayn’.

“And the father or mother in Heaven are happy in their child.

“Yitzchok came to Shule every day. Then one day I saw him clearing out all the books from the box-seat where I lay. There were many Siddurim and Machzorim and Chummoshim and an old Tallis. He took most of them away and left me behind with a few other old Siddurim. That summer afternoon I heard him say good-bye to his neighbours, and heard them speak of a long voyage to America. I was glad to think that I would be going so far away. I had never been on the sea and I looked forward to the experience.

THE OLD SIDDUR'S STORY

“But after he had said Kaddish that day, Yitzchok held me in his hand for a while, turned my pages fondly, and said:

“You are very old. I can't take you with me. I learned to read in your pages. With you in my hand, I said Kaddish for my father. I should perhaps have davvened better, with more Kavonnoh, from your pages and from now on I will start to davven better. But the long voyage will be too much for you, so I'll leave you here, and other people will davven from your pages.’

“He kissed me, and he put me back in my place in the box-seat, and walked out.

“Time passed by, and no one bothered about me, till one day I found myself in the hand of a strange young man. It was the evening of Kol Nidre, on Yom Kippur, one of the few occasions when this young man, whose name was Dov, came to Shule. He did not seem pleased with me. He put me next to a fine new gold-edged Machzor, and I looked poor and shabby in comparison. Dov showed me to the Shammas, who looked surprised.

“Yitzchok must have forgotten it here. If you want, you can have it,’ he said.

“I knew better. I knew that Yitzchok had not forgotten me, but had left me behind, thinking to spare me the long voyage; he had thought I would find new friends here. He had been wrong in that. He had not realized how old and worn I had become. It is the way of the world that everything old and worn must make way for what is young and pleasing.

“When Yom Kippur was over Dov wrapped me up in paper and took me home.

For a few days I was left all alone. Then he gave me to his cousin Naftoli who was visiting from abroad and needed a small Siddur. ‘Here,’ he said to him, ‘you can have this Siddur. The Shammas said I could take it but you can have it.’ So I went travelling, after all.

“Naftoli was pleased with me because I had been bound together with the whole Sefer Tehillim and he used me to say each day's set chapters of Tehillim.

“I don't know why, but I didn't think much of this Tehillim recital. There was no heart in it, it was as if Naftoli just wanted to get the recital out of the way, to be over and done with it. My new sister — that's how I felt about the Sefer Tehillim since she had been bound with me — also was unhappy about Naftoli's recital. We both thought how it would have been so much more worthwhile to say just a few chapters but properly and with feeling than to gabble down pages and pages without much devotion. We don't think Naftoli understood the words he was saying. But I suppose it was good of him to go through with this formality each day.

“My new master was an interesting person, very efficient. He was careful to utilize every moment that he was in Shule. Besides his Tehillim, during the Chazzan's repetition he scanned through a portion of the weekly Sidra with Rashi; he read through a daily Mishna and he also quickly rushed through the Perek Shiroh. And of course, he dispensed charity to the collectors that came round each day. Yet, with all this activity, when Shacharis

THE OLD SIDDUR'S STORY

ended, he always managed to be one of the first out of the door! The trouble was that he was busy doing Mitzvos but he didn't really pray at all. This was a great pity for he never really learned the meaning of prayer. I don't think he realized that the great Rabbis who composed my prayers thought hard and long and were guided from Above in their holy work. But Naftoli seemed to deliver his prayers like the coalman delivers a load of coal! His young son Mendel watched all this. He learned a lot of things from his father, to be sure, but I'm afraid that how to pray properly was not one of them. With all the frenetic activity, I was quite relieved when Naftoli eventually bought himself another Siddur and he kept me at the back of his drawer in Shule, as a spare, I suppose. The new Siddur was a beauty. Leather bound. And it had a great deal of other additions that Naftoli thought he ought to get through each day — all within the time set aside for Shacharis.

“One day, new furniture was delivered to the Shule. I was roughly taken out of the drawer and put into a sack together with other old Siddurim and Tehillim and unwanted Taleisim.

“For a long time I lay dozing in a dark corner until the day I was rudely awakened by a hand that knew no pity. I was thrown into another room, an attic at the top of the house, having been lumped together with a bundle of rubbish. I was stunned by the fall and only slowly did I come to.

“There was silence in the attic. But rarely did I hear footsteps and they never stopped to open the door. I was covered with dust. Spiders crawled over me. Summer came and went and winter followed, and so the years went by. And I lay there, and no one came near me. Then one day I heard you running about, and laughing. I saw you rummaging about among the lumber, and I hoped you would find me and take me out in the sunshine and today you did find me. You did not throw me aside. You took me to show to your mother, and you kissed me.

“You are a good boy, I can tell that from how you have been kind to me. Stay like that. Be kind. Always be good to your parents, to your brothers and sisters, and to all people, and they will be fond of you.

“I have one last wish. Bury me. When a man grows old and tired of life, and dies, he is buried in the earth, so that he may sleep. I am not a man, but I am a friend of man. I have grown old and weary, and I too would wish to sleep in the earth.”

The worn, tattered pages rustled again, softly and sadly and then they were still.

Little Binyomin took the Siddur into the garden. He dug up some earth, kissed the Siddur once more, and laid it in the little grave he had made. Then he covered it with green moss, and made a mark so that he should know the place where it was buried. And when the sun shone on the little grave he was glad, because the old Siddur had loved the sunshine.

Many years have passed since then. Little Binyomin has grown up and has seen and heard many things, but he has not forgotten the story told to him by the old Siddur.