

ליקוטי ופסקי הלכות "חוקי חיים"

ותלמוד
"תקופת התעוררות"
לעשות רצונך
בלבב שלם



שע"י "חדר הוראה" שבגנת מנחת יצחק פעה"ק ירושלם תובב"א - בראשות הרב חיים אהרן בלייער שליט"א

Halochos compiled by HaRav Chaim Bleier – Translated from the Hebrew edition by R' Zerachya Shicker

Please do not
read during
davening or
Krias HaTorah

Halachos of Tachanun – 1

Parshas Balak 5784

335

Tachanun

Background

- The tefila of Tachanun said with the face down is a plea said throughout Klal Yisroel every day at Shacharis and Mincha after Chazaras HaShatz. Because we are so used to it, people do not realize its importance and nature or the uniqueness of its content. Also, since there are times it is not said, many people are lax about saying it and extend these times to other times. Thus, we saw a need to explain its basis and importance in order to rekindle the desire to say it with kavana and patience, the way it is meant to be said; and so that we will know when, in fact, it is not said according to halacha or an accepted minhag. Then, we will also realize the greatness of the days or events when we do not say it.
- Meaning of "Tachanun."** Tachanun is a form of the word תחנונים [pleas]. In Chazal's time, people added various personal requests and pleas for things they needed very much, each person in his own words (כל בו סי' י"א, ארחות חיים), which flowed from the depths of the heart. This was an extension of the feelings of closeness to Hashem that they felt during Shemoneh Esrei. It is characterized as a request for a free gift, as in the posuk "והנותי את אשר אחון" (דברים רבה ב', א') – *I act [as with] a free gift* (שמות ל"ג, י"ט) – The nusach of the tefila of Tachanun we say today was established as a fixed nusach; it is cited in Seder Rav Amram Gaon.

Elements of Tachanun

- Tachanun consists of multiple elements: Vidui, the 13 Middos Rachamim, putting the face down, additional tefilos, and והוא רחום on Monday and Thursday. We will explain each of them.
- Vidui.** Based on the Zohar (פ' פקודי דף רס"ב ע"א), we say Vidui right after Shemoneh Esrei, before putting the face down. The idea is to confess before we as if "give up our lives," which is the concept behind putting the face down according to the Zohar (below, 19) (ליקוטי מהר"ח, שו"ת דברי יציב או"ח סי' ע"ד סוף אות ה'). This is the minhag of Nusach Sefard and Eidot Mizrach. Some Ashkenazim say Vidui on Monday and Thursday (טור קלד בשם רב עמרם, ומהגה ירושלים), but most who daven Nusach Ashkenaz do not say Vidui (טור שם).
- 13 Middos.** Since we say Vidui, we also say the 13 Middos shel Rachamim, which Moshe Rabbeinu said to ask for mercy and atonement from Hashem for Klal Yisroel after the Cheit HaEigel, as the posuk says "וקראתי בשם ה' לפניך, והנותי את אשר" (שמות ל"ג, י"ט), "אחון ורחמתי את אשר ארחם" (ר"ה יז:). The Gemara says Hashem wrapped Himself like a shliach tzibbur and showed Moshe this process of tefila, saying "Whenever Klal Yisroel sins, they should perform before Me this process [the 13 Middos] and I will forgive them."
- "Falling on the face."** In the time of Chazal, they actually prostrated themselves with their faces on the ground without extending their hands and feet [להבדיל the way the Arabs pray]. However, due to concern for improper bowing [see Shulchan Aruch (סי' קל"א ס"ח)], today we do not actually prostrate ourselves. In place of prostrating ourselves, we say Tachanun sitting and leaning on the arm with the face covered (מ"ב סק"ג).
- on Monday and Thursday.** On Monday and Thursday, we say additional tefilos, i.e., והוא רחום וכו', (שו"ת ורמ"א סי' קל"ד ס"א) והוא רחום וכו'.
- Tefilos after putting the face down.** We also say tefilos after putting our faces down, i.e., שומר ישראל (ליקוטי מהר"ח) and ואנחנו לא נדע (רמ"א).

Reshus or Chiyuv?

- Chiyuv.** Some say there is a chiyuv to say Tachanun, as it is a part of tefila, albeit one that is not critical (רמב"ם פ"ה תפילה ה"א).
- Reshus.** Others hold one does not have a chiyuv to say Tachanun (שו"ת הריב"ש סי' תי"ב, טור סי' קל"א בשם רב נטרונאי גאון, דרכ"מ שם). Yet even though it is not a real chiyuv, one should not skip it for no reason, as, at the very least, there is a real minhag to say it; only since it is not a chiyuv, wherever there is a minhag one should follow the minhag (רא"ה ברכות דף ל"א ע"א).
- Accepted as a chiyuv.** Although we primarily pasken it is not a chiyuv, and therefore there are cases where people are meikel, since today all of Klal Yisroel says Tachanun, we have accepted it upon ourselves as a chiyuv to some extent since it is a very important matter (ערוך השלחן סי' קל"א ס"ב).
- Also, it is like a chiyuv based on Kabbala since it contains great hidden significance (below, 19). The same is stated in Shaar HaKavanos by the Arizal (דרושה בחזרת העמידה, כף החיים אות נ"ג). On days when Tachanun is not said according to halacha, the kedusha of the day accomplishes what the tefila would accomplish (שם אות נ"ד).

Putting the Face Down [נפילת אפים]

Reason

- We find a reason for Tachanun with the face down after Shemoneh Esrei. It shows that we davened in all sorts of manners to arouse Hashem's mercy. We davened sitting until Shemoneh Esrei; we davened Shemoneh Esrei standing; then we say Tachanun with the face down. This is like what Moshe Rabbeinu did: (דברים י', י') "ואנכי עמדתי בהר"; (דברים ט', ט') "ואשב בהר"; (דברים י"ג, י"ג) "ואנכי עמדתי בהר"; (דברים ט', ט') "ואשב בהר"; (אבודרהם, טור, מ"ב סק"ט) (שם ט', י"ח) "לפני ה' ואנחנו לא נדע מה נעשה" – **ואנחנו לא נדע** (רמ"א סי"א) to show that after we davened in all three manners – sitting, standing, and with the face down – we do not have the strength to daven in any other way; we beseeched Hashem in all the ways we could. Hence, "We do not know what we will do" (מ"ב שם סק"ט). It is proper to say "ואנחנו לא נדע" sitting, and "מה נעשה" standing (ש"ה), because the act of standing when saying "מה נעשה" hints at the fact that we davened sitting, standing, and then with our face down – what more can we do? "Our eyes are toward You..." (ערוך השלחן סי"ט).

Intent of Putting the Face Down

- After Shemoneh Esrei, we say Tachanun with the face down. Rabbeinu Bechaye provides multiple intents and purposes for this (פ' קרח ט"ז, כ"ב עה"פ ויפלו על פניהם).
- Awe of the Shechina.** One reason is that one should have kavana when he davens that the Shechina is before him. Thus, it was established as part of the tactics of tefila that the face should be covered. This is for yiras Shomayim, as covering the face demonstrates humility and modesty.
- Teshuva.** Another reason is that it is a component of teshuva, showing pain and subservience. If one does this, his Shemoneh Esrei will be better received and Hashem will pay attention to his pain and fulfill his request.
- Submission to Hashem.** Another reason is to show submission of the emotions and shutting of the senses. By covering the eyes and closing the mouth, one shows he cannot accomplish his desires if Hashem does not consent.

"The Cheder Horoah" | 20 Minchas Yitzchok St. Yerushalayim | paskenshtibel@gmail.com

Opening times: Sun. – Thurs. 5:00pm till 8:00pm | Fri. 10:00am till 11:00am and from 1 hour before candle-lighting

19. **Mesirus nefesh.** Another idea mentioned in the Zohar is that there is a concept of mesirus nefesh in putting the face down. After one davened Shemoneh Esrei, he must show Hashem he is willing to give up his life for Hashem. One shows this by putting his face down, as if he had passed away, and by saying the paragraph from Tehillim (תהילים כ"ה) "אליך ה' נפשי אשא".

Warning of the Zohar

20. The Zohar goes on to warn that according to the reason he gives, the paragraph must be said with the proper kavana and the feeling that one is truly prepared to give up his life for Hashem; then Hashem will have mercy on him and provide atonement. If one only says it outwardly but does not feel it in his heart, he endangers himself, as he is speaking falsehoods (זוה"ק במדבר ח"ג) (ק"כ, ב/ו, הובא בב"י ד"ה כתוב בספר ובמג"א סק"ה). It turns out that his display of mesirus nefesh is a worthless display; in fact, it is a mockery, and one can ח"ו get a serious punishment for this.

21. **Changes due to the severity of the Zohar's warning.** Because of the severity of the Zohar's warning about one who does not have proper kavana when putting the face down (above, 20), the minhag is to make some changes to how it is done in practice so that it is not done in the exact form the Zohar says. This way, one will not be caught ח"ו in the severe punishments described by the Zohar, as will be explained א"ל.

The Perek Said When Putting the Face Down

22. **לדוד, אליך ה' נפשי אשא וכו'.** The original nusach is "לדוד, אליך ה' נפשי אשא וכו'" (תהילים כ"ה), arranged according to the alef beis. The Beis Yosef cites it (סי קל"א) from the Zohar (above, 19). Its content fits with the reason that one is showing mesirus nefesh for Hashem. This is the accepted nusach of Eidot Mizrach.

23. **Not putting the face down.** The minhag in Eidot Mizrach is not to put the face down when saying "לדוד, אליך ה' וכו'" so that it does not resemble the primary form of Tachanun. Instead, they say it sitting with the face up so that it does not resemble the way or intent the Zohar describes. This way, one is not in trouble (כך החיים סקל"ד). In contrast, Ashkenazim put their faces down but change the nusach they say (see 24 below).

24. **"רחום והנון וכו' ה' אל באפך תוכיחני"** There is another nusach taken from Tehillim (פרק ו') "ה' אל באפך תוכיחני" – without the first posuk, which is a posuk of song. Instead, the line "רחום והנון וכו'" is said at the beginning. This is the minhag of Ashkenazim and many Chassidim (לבוש, מ"ב סי קל"א סק"ה). [Those who daven Nusach Ari say רחום והנון and also put the face down.]

25. The reason for the minhag not to say "לדוד אליך וכו'" is to differentiate it from what the Zohar describes, as it is dangerous to say the perek לדוד אליך וכו' without the proper kavanos. Thus, Ashkenazim say the other nusach (מג"א סי קל"א ססק"ה). Still, this should also be said with kavana and patience, as it is still related to the concept of putting the face down (שלחן ארז סי"א).

How to Put the Face Down

Tilting the Head

26. When putting the face down today, one should not lay his head straight down on his arm. He should put his elbow on the table with his arm in the air diagonally and then rest his head on his arm such that his face is facing to the side, not completely downward, and covered by his arm.

27. The reason is that back when they used to actually prostrate themselves on the floor, they had to lean their bodies to the side to avoid the issur of bowing on a stone floor (שור"ע סי"ח). Even though today we put our faces down without actually bowing, we still fulfill this aspect – that the head should be tilted to the side – to remember the concept (ביאה"ל ד"ה להטות). Some hold this is halachically required (מג"א סק"כ).

Covering with a Garment

28. When putting the face down on the arm, the face must be covered by a garment, not the arm itself. This is because the arm and face are part of the same body, and a body cannot cover itself [because שיוכו אינו חוצץ] (מ"ב סק"ג) [If one davens with short sleeves ... and has no garment on his arm as a barrier, he should find some cloth, tissue, or tallis to cover his arm when putting his face down.]

Right Arm or Left Arm?

29. Most poskim hold it is better to put the face down on the left side. This way, the head tilts to the right, and the Shechina is on a person's

right side when he davens, as the posuk says, "ה' צלך על יד מינך" (שור"ע סי קל"א סי"א, ומ"ב סק"ד, הגר"א).

30. Others say one should always put his head down on the right side (מ"ב סק"ה) since the Shechina is opposite the person, and this way, the Shechina's left is opposite the person's right (מ"ב סק"ה).

31. **Without tefillin.** Since most poskim hold it is better to do it on the left side, we do so when there is no reason to do otherwise. This is what we do when one is not wearing tefillin, e.g., at Mincha or if one is not wearing tefillin at Shacharis.

32. **With tefillin.** However, when one is wearing tefillin, he should not do it on his left arm out of respect for his tefillin. He should put his face down on his right arm as a sort of compromise since some say to always do it on the right (מ"ב סק"ה, רמ"א סי"א, ט"ז, מג"א). This is the prevalent minhag (מ"ב סק"ה).

33. However, some hold one should always put his face down on the left, even when wearing tefillin, since the Shulchan Aruch's opinion is the main one (הגר"א הוזהר במ"ב סק"ו, וע"פ ספרי קבלה כף החיים סק"ל).

34. Some put the face down on both arms simultaneously to satisfy both opinions. Since it is clear he is doing it to satisfy both opinions, it is not degrading to his tefillin (ש"ת י"ט, אות י"ט, ש"ת). When wearing tefillin at Shacharis, one should put his right arm over his left; at Mincha, he should put his left arm over his right (א"א בוטשאטט סוף הסי).

35. **Lefty.** At Shacharis, a lefty should put his face down on his left arm, as it does not have tefillin (פמ"ג משב"ז סי קל"א סק"ב). He should do the same at Mincha (ש"ת באר משה ח"ב סי ג).

Sitting or Standing?

36. Vidui and the 13 Middos are specifically said standing; the same is true for שור"ע סי קל"ד סי"א) והוא רחום. Some say not standing for these is called a breach ("פורץ גדר") unless one is unwell.

37. **Putting the head down standing.** Some say one may say the part of Tachanun with his face down while standing (ריב"ש הובא במ"ב סק"י).

38. **Sitting.** However, the Shulchan Aruch rules it should be specifically said sitting, not standing (שור"ע סיב) based on Kabbala (ב"י).

39. **No other choice.** Thus, with no other choice one may rely on the opinion that allows it to be said standing. E.g., if one has nowhere to sit or someone is davening Shemoneh Esrei behind him so that he cannot take his three steps back or to the side, he should say this part of Tachanun standing (מ"ב סק"י).

40. **Leaning.** I once heard a suggestion that if one has nowhere to sit, he can lean on something heavily enough that if it were removed, he would fall, as that is also considered like sitting. Thus, if one is next to a wall, he can lean with his back on the wall. One can also lean on a shtender or table with his hands heavily enough that if it were removed, he would fall.

Davening Somewhere with a Different Minhag

13 Middos, Vidui

41. **Minhag not to say.** Someone with the minhag not to say the 13 Middos and Vidui who is davening in a shul that says them should not deviate from their minhag; he should say them with the tzibbur (ש"ת אגרות משה א"ח ח"ג סי פ"ט).

42. **Minhag to say.** Someone with the minhag to say them who is davening in a shul that does not say them should say Vidui in an inconspicuous way without tapping the heart (לד, ש"ת אור לציון ח"ס פ"ט תשובה א, הגר"י קנייבסקי ארחות רבינו ח"א עמ"ס סה). He should not say the 13 Middos, as they may not be said without a minyan (אג"מ שם). Some say them with their trop (אור לציון שם).

Putting the Face Down

43. An Ashkenazi davening with an Eidot Mizrach tzibbur, where they do not put the face down, should follow their minhag and not put his face down (הגרש"א, ס' ועלהו לא יבול סי קל"א).

Changing the Order

44. On Monday and Thursday, Nusach Sefard first puts the face down, then says ושור"ע תשובה סק"א) והוא רחום. Nusach Ashkenaz first says ושור"ע תשובה, then puts the face down.

45. If one is in a shul that says Tachanun before ושור"ע תשובה, e.g., a Nusach Sefard shul, and that is not his minhag, or vice versa, there is no issue of differing minhagim everywhere since today there are differing minhagim everywhere (הגרש"א, אשי ישראל פכ"ה הע"י כ"א, הגר"ש"א תפילה כהלכתה) (פ"ד הע"י כ"ו). Additionally, people daven at different speeds, so he is not clearly acting differently than the minhag of the place.



חוקי חיים

נתרם ע"י הר"ר משה
הבחן מוסב"ר ח"י
לרגל לידת בתו שתחי
יה"ר שיוכו לגדלה
לתורה לחופה
ולמעש"ט ולראות
רוב נחת דקדושה

נתרם ע"י הר"ר יוסף שדרך ז"ל
לניני אביו מנוצ"ר מנשה ב"ר יוסף – מ"ו תמוז תשנ"ט
ולניני ראשה אודליה ב"ר צ'ון ז"ל סיון תשפ"א
שהקב"ה ישלח כבר את משיח צדקינו ויאמר לצרותינו די

ברכת מזל טוב שלוחה בזה ליידינו החתן, מופלג בתורה ויראת שמים,
העומד לימין המערכת וקסור להגות הגליון מדי שבוע בשבוע
שלום פליישער
הבה"ה לרגל בואו בקשרי שידוכין בשעת"מ עב"ג בת
הרה"ח ר' יעקב זאלער שיחי אב"י בעיר לייקוואד
ברכת מזל טוב שלוחה בזאת לאביו הרה"ג ר' מאיר מנשה שליט"א
ולסבים הר"ר צבי עקיבא פליישער, הר"ר שמואל אמול,
הר"ר משה זאלער, הר"ר יוסף ריעדער מערכת חוקי חיים