

Kindert Torah

בס"ד

Parashas Bereshis

Aleinu Lishabayach

“Abba, everyone is standing up to say the prayer, ‘Aleinu Lishabayach’. Why is that?”

“It is very important prayer, Avi. It contains tremendous praises of the Creator; therefore, we must stand while saying it. Additionally, the gematria (numerical equivalent) of the word ‘aleinu’ is 166, which equals the gematria of the word ‘u’meumad’ – also standing.¹ We must say it with awe, fear, trembling, and sweat; with the head down, because all of the heavenly hosts are listening.”²

“Wow, that is really something. Can you teach me more about this important prayer, Abba?”

“With pleasure, Avi. *Aleinu Lishabayach* is traced back to Yehoshua Bin Nun.³ When he entered Eretz Yisrael and conquered Yericho, he saw the ways of the idol worshippers. They bowed down to the sun, the moon, Ove, Yidoni, and their witchcraft. He lifted his hands up to heaven, bowed his knees with awe, and said in a loud voice, ‘Aleinu Lishabayach’!⁴ It is incumbent upon us to praise the Master of all! How fortunate are we! We are not like the idol worshippers, who bow down to vanity and emptiness and pray to a god who cannot help them. Hashem created us with the merit to serve Him! He spreads the heavens and establishes the earth; the seat of His glory is in the heavens! He is our G-d; there is nothing else. He is truth, all else is insignificant.

“Praying this *tefillah* would insure the separation between the Jewish people and the nations of the land.⁴ ‘Aleinu Lishabayach’ subsequently became part of the ‘malchius’ *tefillos* of Rosh Hashanah. More recently, it has been included at the conclusion of every daily prayer. It is a powerful *tefillah*, which can accomplish many great things. It can help for any and every salvation, including prevention of suffering and tragedy. One must have intent, however, to accept upon himself the yoke of the Kingdom of Heaven.⁵ ‘Aleinu Lishabayach’ is a big assurance that our prayers will not return empty. Why? Because our lot is not like those who worship powerless gods. Rather we prostrate ourselves before the King of kings, the Holy One Blessed be He! Hashem is *chesed* and has *rachmonus* to favor all those who pray to Him. Therefore, along with every *tefillah* that a person prays, it is fitting to say *Aleinu Lishabayach* to insure that his prayer shall not return empty handed.⁶ The Bach⁶ adds another reason – to fix in our hearts before we go home (after praying) the Oneness of the Kingdom of Heaven, and to strengthen in our hearts this *emunah*. This will carry us through the temptations of the day.”

“Aleinu Lishabayach is just awesome, Abba.”

“Indeed it is, Avi. The second paragraph speaks about the time when the world will reach completion. We put our hope in You, Hashem, to soon behold the glory of Your might. You will banish idolatry from the earth, and exterminate the false gods. The world will come to perfection, and all of mankind, including the wicked, will call upon Your Name. They will all realize that all must bow down and give honor to You. They will all accept the yoke of Your kingdom, and You will rule over them forever. On that day, Hashem will be One and His Name will be One.

“Please note, Avi, that we do not pray for the wicked people to be destroyed, rather that their evil be obliterated, and they do *teshuva*.⁷ This is the meaning of the words, ‘Then all humanity will call upon Your Name, to turn all the earth’s wicked toward You. And all the world’s inhabitants will recognize and know... before You... they will bend every knee and cast themselves down...’”

“Abba, this is unbelievable! What a holy and merciful nation we are! How much patience, which is unmatched anywhere, can be seen in this prayer! The Jew who is downtrodden and abused all of his days by the wicked idol worshipper; in the midst of his troubles concerns himself with the fate of those who torture him and steal justice from him. He stands and prays for them with the ultimate seriousness, that they will also merit seeing the truth, as he does.”⁷

“Who is like Your people, Israel, a unique nation on earth!⁸ May we merit seeing the world come to its fulfillment speedily in our days.”

“Amen!”

Kinderlach . . .

At the end of every *tefillah* – *Shacharis*, *Mincha*, and *Maariv* – we say *Aleinu Lishabayach*. This prayer is traced back to Yehoshua Bin Nun. He composed it as a plea that the Jewish people not be influenced by the idol worshippers of the land of Israel which they were about to conquer and inhabit. It is a powerful prayer to help for every salvation, and to insure that the *tefillos* preceding it do not return empty-handed. The first part speaks of our fortune being the chosen nation who worships the Almighty King of kings, and not one of those who bow down to powerless idols. The second half describes the glory of a world that will come to perfection under the heavenly kingdom. It includes a plea to help those very people who torment us. May they come to see the truth and return from their evil ways. On that day, Hashem will be One and His Name will be One.

Chosson and Kallah

“Mazel Tov! Mazel Tov!”

“What a beautiful *chassanah* (wedding).”
“Yes, it is a beautiful thing. The *chosson* (groom) and *kallah* (bride) join to become one, in a holy union based on love and deep commitment to each other. We participate in their happiness by singing, dancing, and eating together with them.”

☪ ☪ ☪ ☪ ☪

“And *Elokim* (G-d) blessed the seventh day and sanctified it.” (Bereishis 2:3). This day is *Shabbos Kodesh* (The Holy Sabbath), a day when we eat, dress, speak, walk, and even pray differently than the rest of the week. The Avudraham points out that each *tefillah* (prayer) on *Shabbos* is unique. At night we say “*Atta kidashta*”; in the morning we say “*Yismach Moshe*” followed by “*Musaf*” (additional prayer), and in the

afternoon we finish with “*Atta echad*”.

The prayers correspond to a *chassanah* between Hashem (the *chosson*) and the Jewish People (the *kallah*). “*Atta kidashta*” (you sanctified) is like the *kiddushin* (betrothal) which the *chosson* gives the *kallah*. “*Yismach Moshe*” (And Moshe will be happy) is the celebration of singing and dancing. *Musaf* is the *korbonos* (sacrifices) that are eaten at a *se’udas mitzvah* (festive meal). Finally, “*Atta echad*” (You are One) is the unity that the *chosson* and *kallah* achieve through marriage.



Kinderlach . . .

Shabbos is a day when we can achieve the impossible... unity with Hashem. By observing the *mitzvos* of *Shabbos* - resting, eating, drinking, wearing *Shabbos* clothes, speaking only about holy subjects, learning and praying, we can come as close to Hashem as a *kallah* to a *chosson*. That can make us as happy as a *chosson* and *kallah* on their wedding day. How wonderful! *Kinderlach*, make this *Shabbos* and every *Shabbos* as special as a *chassanah*. Put extra effort into the *mitzvos* of the day. You will feel closeness with Hashem and happiness beyond words.

¹ Pirkei DiRebbe Eliezer

² Rokeach

³ Kol Bo and Rav Hai Gaon

⁴ Shaar HaRachamim

⁵ Seder HaYom

⁶ Tur Orach Chaim 133

⁷ Iyun Tefillah

⁸ Divrei HaYomim One 17:21