

~ ובכן ~

The inner Kavanos of the Yomim Noraim Tefillos

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It is written in the Siddur Chassidei Ashkenaz - Pirush on the Tefillos of Rabbi Yehuda Hachassid for Rosh Hashona;

The Tefillos of Rosh Hashona are set forth in their order. One should not add or detract even one word from the handwritten manuscript of Rabbi Yehuda Hachassid, son of Rabbi Shmuel the Chassid, a holy man and prophet, son of Rabbi Kolonimus the elder, son of Rabbi Yitzchok, the son of the great Rabbi Elazar. Anyone who adds or detracts even one letter, his Tefillos will not be heard, because they are all carefully measured and weighed in their letters and words and many secrets are contained within them.

In the Rosh Hashona and Yom Kippur Amidah we add various extra passages. One of the additions is the sequence of paragraphs beginning with the word "ובכן" which are added into the third Bracha. It appears that these additions, like others in the Yomim Noraim Amidah, originate from the period of the Geonim. However the Zohar¹ writes that they come from the Tekios (order of the Rosh Hashona prayers) of the Amora Rav from Bavel.

ובכן
 הן פתוך אֶלֶינוּ עַל
 כָּל מַעֲשֵׂיךָ וְאִמְתִּיךָ עַל
 כָּל מַתְּ שִׁבְרָתְךָ וְיִירָאוּךָ כָּל הַמַּעֲשִׂים
 וְיִשְׁתַּחֲוּ לְפָנֶיךָ כָּל הַבְּרוּחִים וְיַעֲשׂוּ כָלֵם
 אֲגוּדָה אַחַת לַעֲשׂוֹת רְצוֹנְךָ בְּלִבְּ שָׁלֵם
 כְּמָה שְׂוִדְעָנוּ אֶלֶינוּ שְׁהֵטוֹן לְפָנֶיךָ עוֹז
 בְּיָדְךָ וְזִכְרוֹתָ בְּיָמֶיךָ וְשִׁמְךָ נִזְרָא עַל כָּל מַת
 שִׁבְרָתְךָ

In context of the aforementioned words on the origins of the Rosh Hashona Tefillos, the classic sources reveal very deep mystical allusions within these paragraphs, particularly in their shared opening word ובכן.

Why do these passages begin with the word ובכן?

Avudraham finds an allusion to these passages in the Megillah. Esther had to go before King Achashveirosh to annul the decree against the Jews, but appearing before the king without being called was a capital offense. After fasting for three days and nights she proclaimed "and with this (ובכן) I will come before the king, not in accordance with the law". She uses the word ובכן, as if to say "and with 'בכן' I will come before the king."

On Rosh Hashona we come to stand before the King to plead for our needs and so we also come before Him with 'ובכן'. Like Esther, we approach the King "not in accordance with the law." We are undeserving because of our sins.

¹ Shmos 52a. Other Girsasos of the Zohar write that it was the seder Tekiyos of Rav Hamnuna

~ The Name of Hashem ~

The Tur observes that the word **בַּח** has the *gematria* of 72. It represents the 4 letter name of Hashem **יהוה** as it is expanded in its computations, which also total 72. The Acharonim offer various explanations on how the 4 letter name of Hashem is connected to the number 72.

The Beis Yosef explains that when each of the four letters of Hashem's name is spelled out in full, the letters add up to 72. This is referred to as the **מילוי**, the letters written in their full name.

20	י	ו
15	ה	ה
22	ו	ו
15	ה	ה
<hr/>		
72		

The Bach explains that by multiplying the first letter of Hashem's name by 4, the second letter by three etc. they also total 72.

40	4	י
15	3	ה
12	2	ו
5	1	ה
<hr/>		
72		

~ The 72 Names of Hashem ~

The Tur further writes that the *gematria* of **בַּח** (72) alludes to the 72 Divine Names of Hashem. The 72 Names of Hashem is a well-known idea in Jewish mystical thought. The 72 Names of Hashem are derived from three consecutive Pesukim in Parshas Beshalach² which each have exactly 72 letters;

יט וַיֹּטֵעַ מַלְאָךְ הָאֱלֹקִים הַהֹלֵךְ לִפְנֵי מַחֲנֵה יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּלְךָ מֵאֲחֵרֵיהֶם וַיֹּטֵעַ עִמּוֹד הָעֲנַן מִפְּנֵיהֶם וַיַּעֲמֵד מֵאֲחֵרֵיהֶם:

כ וַיָּבֵא בֵּין | מַחֲנֵה מִצְרַיִם וּבֵין מַחֲנֵה יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיְהִי הָעֲנַן וְהַחֹשֶׁךְ וַיָּאֵר אֶת־הַלַּיְלָה וְלֹא־קָרַב זֶה אֶל־זֶה כָּל־הַלַּיְלָה:

כא וַיִּט מֹשֶׁה אֶת־יָדוֹ עַל־הַיָּם וַיִּזְלַךְ ה' אֶת־הַיָּם בְּרוּחַ קָדִים עֶזְרָה כָּל־הַלַּיְלָה וַיִּשָּׂם אֶת־הַיָּם לְחֲרֻבָּה וַיִּבְקָעוּ הַמַּיִם:

19 Then the angel of God, who had been going in front of the Israelite camp, moved and went behind them, and the pillar of cloud moved away from in front of them and stood behind them. 20 And he came between the camp of Egypt and the camp of Israel, and there were the cloud and the darkness, and it illuminated the night, and one did not draw near the other all night long. 21 And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the Lord led the sea with the strong east wind all night, and He made the sea into dry land and the waters split.

² Shmos 14:19-21



The 72 names, each made up of three letters, are created by combining one letter from each of the three Pesukim. The letters from the first and third Pesukim are taken in their correct order from beginning to end. However the letters from the second Posuk are taken in reverse order³, starting with the last letter. The 72 Names are;

וה"ו	י"ל"י	סי"ט	על"ם	מה"ש	ל"ל"ה	אכ"א	כה"ת
הז"י	אל"ד	לא"ו	הה"ע	יז"ל	מב"ה	הר"י	הק"ם
לא"ו	כל"י	לו"ו	פה"ל	נל"ך	י"י"י	מל"ה	חה"ו
נת"ה	הא"א	יר"ת	שא"ה	רי"י	או"ם	לכ"ב	וש"ר
יח"ו	לה"ה	כו"ק	מנ"ד	אנ"י	חע"ם	רה"ע	י"י"ז
הה"ה	מי"כ	וו"ל	יל"ה	סא"ל	ער"י	עש"ל	מי"ה
וה"ו	דנ"י	הח"ש	עמ"ם	ננ"א	ני"ת	מב"ה	פו"י
נמ"ם	י"ל"ל	הר"ח	מצ"ר	ומ"ב	יה"ה	ענ"ו	מח"י
דמ"ב	מנ"ק	אי"ע	חב"ו	רא"ה	יב"מ	הי"י	מו"ם

(Interestingly, the first and the 37th of the 72 Names are והו אני, the names which we use to refer to Hashem during Hoshaanos on Sukkos. These two Name והו אני have the combined *gematria* of 78 and are alluded to by the word ובכן ⁴)

~ The Three ובכן Passages ~

The Zohar⁵ writes the three 72 letter Pesukim from Beshalach represent the three primary Sefiros; Chessed, Gevurah and Tiferes.

The first Posuk (ויסע) is the Middah of Chessed and is therefore read from beginning to end (וישר), representing a *Hamshacha* (flow of light) from Above. The second Posuk (ויבא) is Gevurah and is therefore read in reverse (למפרע), since Gevurah represents elevation or withdrawal. The third Posuk (ויט) is the Sefirah of Tiferes. Tiferes is a balance between Chessed and Gevurah, however since the Chessed is dominant, the Posuk is also read from beginning to end.

The three Pesukim also represent the three Avos who embody these three Sefiros. The first Posuk is the "side of the Chessed of Avraham". The second Posuk is Gevurah, the Middah of Yitzhok. The final Posuk is connected to Yaakov, the Sefirah of Tiferes.

The Zohar connects the three Pesukim which create the 72 Names, to the three ובכן passages; Rav Yeysa said "we find this secret (of the three Pesukim) in the order of Tekios which has three time ובכן ובכן ובכן".

Rabbi Yaakov Emden in Siddur Yaavetz elaborates, connecting the content of each of the three paragraphs beginning ובכן to the forefather and Sefirah to which they are connected;

³ See Sukkah 45a Rash"i and Tosfos. See Zohar ibid

⁴ Seder Tefillos Rosh Hashona Orchos Chaim as quoted in the Beis Yosef. Also in the order of Rabbi Yehuda Hachassid.

⁵ ibid



- **ובכן יתקדש** – “and so may Hashem be sanctified...” - refers to Avraham who sanctified Hashem’s name and is a manifestation of the attribute of Chesed. Avraham’s service of Hashem was an expression of love. This is the first Posuk of **ויסע**.
- **ובכן פחדך** – “and may You place the fear of You...” - refers to Yitzchak. When Yaakov davens, he refers to Hashem as *Pachad Yitzchak*, since Yitzchak served Hashem in a mode of Awe (*Pachad*), a manifestation of the attribute of Gevurah. This is the second Posuk of **ויבא**.
- **ובכן תן כבוד** – “and so may you give honour...” - refers too Yaakov who declared Hashem’s honour with the words **ברוך שם כבוד מלכותו**. Yaakov, the third of the Avos, represents the Sefirah of Tiferes. This is the third Posuk of **ויט**.

וּבְכֵן תֵּן פֶּחַדְךָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ עַל כָּל מַעֲשֵׂיךָ • וְאִמְתָּךְ עַל כָּל מַה שֶּׁבְרָאתָ : וְיִרְאֶיךָ כָּל הַמַּעֲשִׂים • וְיִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ לְפָנֶיךָ כָּל הַבְּרוּיִים : וְיַעֲשׂוּ כָּל־מַה אֲחַת לַעֲשׂוֹת רְצוֹנְךָ בְּלִבְבֵּי שָׁלֵם : כְּמַה שֶּׁיְדַעְנוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ • שֶׁהַשְּׁלֵטוֹן לְפָנֶיךָ • עוֹז בְּיָדְךָ • וְגִבּוּרָה בְּיַמִּינְךָ • וְשִׁמְךָ נוֹרָא עַל כָּל מַה שֶּׁבְרָאתָ :

וּבְכֵן תֵּן כְּבוֹד לְעַמְּךָ : תְּהִלָּה לִירֵאָה • וְתִקְוָה לְדוֹרֵי שִׁיבָה • וּבִתְחוּן פֶּה לַמַּיְחִלִּים לָךְ • שִׁמְחָה לְאַרְצְךָ • וְשִׁשׁוֹן לְעֵירְךָ • וְצִמְחָה קָרֵן לְדוֹד עֲבָדְךָ • וְעֵרִיכַת נֵר לְבֵן יִשְׁי מְשִׁיחְךָ • כַּמְהֵרָה בְּיַמֵּינוּ :

וְאֵן (נֵא וּבְכֵן) צְדִיקִים יִרְאוּ וְיִשְׂמְחוּ • וְיִשְׂרִים יַעֲלוּ • וְחֲסִידִים בְּרָנָה יִגִּילוּ • וְעוֹלָתָה תִּקְפֹּץ פִּיהָ • וְכָל הַרְשָׁעָה • כִּלְהַכְעִשׁוֹן תִּכְלֶה • כִּי תַעֲבִיר מִמְּשַׁלַּח זְדוּמוֹ מִיַּד אֱרֵצְךָ •

The Rebbe’s father, Rabbi Levi Yitzchok Schneerson⁶ notes that whilst each of these paragraphs contain specific requests, only the paragraph **ובכן תן כבוד** concludes **במהרה בימינו**, speedily in our days. He explains;

Chessed and Gevurah are opposing forces. The Divine flows from the side of Chesed do not come swiftly because they are challenged by the side of Gevurah. Similarly, the Divine flows from the side of Gevurah do not come swiftly because they are challenged by the side of Chesed. Since Tiferes is the harmonious balance between Chesed and Gevurah, the Divine flows from Tiferes are unhindered and can come “speedily in our day”.

~ A Fourth Paragraph ~

According to the Ariza”I (based on the Zohar and reflected in Nusach Sefard and Nusach Ha’ari), there should be four paragraphs beginning **ובכן** in each Tefillah. What does the fourth paragraph correspond to?

Kabbalah refers to the “4 legs of the *Merkava*” (the Divine chariot). They are the three primary Sefiros; Chesed, Gevurah, and Tiferes and Malchus. Usually Malchus is associated with Dovid Hamelech. The Sefirah of Malchus receives the energies of the other Sefiros via the Sefirah of Yesod. Yesod is associated with Yosef who is referred to as Yosef Hatzaddik. The Tzaddik is referred to as *Yesod Haolam* (foundation of the world). Therefore the fourth paragraph which corresponds to Yesod-Malchus is **ובכן צדיקים**.

⁶ Haaros on Zohar p226



Chessed	ובכן יתקדש
Gevurah	ובכן תן פחדך
Tiferes	ובכן תן כבוד
Yesod-Malchus	ובכן צדיקים

In another interesting correlation, Rabbi Yaakov Emden notes that 4×72 (בכּן) is equal to 288, which is the number of sparks of G-dly light which fell into our world and become elevated on the day of Rosh Hashona.

In Nusach Ashkenaz, there are only three ובכן paragraphs; ובכן תן כבוד, ובכן תן פחדך, and ובכן. The paragraph ובכן יתקדש is only recited by the Shliach Tzibbur in the Musaf Chazoras Hashatz. It is also separated from the other three paragraphs with other Piyutim including וכל מאמינים. Accordingly it is not considered part of the central Amidah text or as one of the ובכן passages⁷.

In Nusach Chabad all four passages are recited in each of the Tefillos. We also do not separate between them with any other Tefillos or Piyutim⁸.

~ Chassidus: Siddur Mahari”d ~

A lengthy explanation of these passages *al pi Chassidus* is found in the Siddur Mahari”d (from Rabbi Yitzchok Dov Ber of Liadi, a grandson of the Tzemach Tzedek). He takes a slightly divergent approach to that of the Yaavetz, writing that ובכן תן פחדך is Gevurah, ובכן תן כבוד is Chessed and ובכן צדיקים is Tiferes.

He writes that these three Middos parallel the three pillars of our service of Hashem, on which the world stands; Torah (Tiferes), Avodah (Gevurah) and Gemilus Chassadim (Chessed). When a person fails in their fulfilment of Torah, they blemish these three pillars. Rectifying the blemish requires the Avodah of Teshuvah.

The Avodah of Teshuvah is alluded to by the fourth paragraph ובכן יתקדש שמך (which, being the loftiest, is read first). He explains; Torah and Mitzvos (the three pillars) draw down the light of Hashem which is related to the worlds (ממלא כל עלמין). The light which relates to the world is described as “Hashem’s name”, like a name which is only needed when interacting with others.

Teshuvah reaches Hashem’s transcendent light (סובב כל עלמין) and brings it into the worlds to erase and recompense for the effects of our sins. The transcendent light is described as קודש, which means separate and beyond. Through Teshuvah we cause ובכן יתקדש שמך, “and so may Your name be sanctified” - drawing the transcendent light (קודש) into the light within the worlds (שמך).

⁷ Other Nuschaos have only two ובכן paragraphs, with the third beginning וְאֵל צְדִיקִים. However the Magen Avraham writes that based on the Zohar quoted above, one should say וְאֵל צְדִיקִים, for a total of three.

⁸ See Sefer Haminhogim. See also Kuntres Hashulchan. Original Chabad Machzorim were printed with עוֹד יִזְכֹּר and ולנו before ובכן יתקדש, however in the 575three print this was corrected.

Teshuvah		ובכן יתקדש
Avodah	Gevurah	ובכן תן פחדך
Gemilus Chassadim	Chessed	ובכן תן כבוד
Torah	Tiferes	ובכן צדיקים

~ Chassidus: Toras Shmuel ~

A similar explanation is found in the Chassidus of the Rebbe Maharash (5734). The Rebbe Mahrash connects the three sounds of the Shofar; Tekiya, Shevarim, Teruah to the three Avos and their corresponding Sefira.

The first Tekiya parallels Avraham (Chessed). The broken Shevarim is connected to Yitzchak (Gevurah). The Teruah is connected to Yaakov, the Middah of Rachamim (Tiferes). The fourth sound, the final Tekiya represents the *Hamshacha* from Above which come subsequent to the first three sounds.

The Rebbe Maharash, quoting the Zohar, explains that this is why we recite the three ובכן passages which allude to the three Pesukim ויסע ויבא ויט. On Rosh Hashona, through our Tefillos and Tekiyos, we are making the vessel for the *Hamshacha* of new light and *Chayus* which Hashem gives to the worlds for the coming year. The vessel is forged through these three columns that parallel three Sefiros.

When we fail or are lacking in our Torah and Mitzvos, the three columns are insufficient. However, through Teshuvah we are able to make the vessel to be worthy of this *Hamshacha*. Therefore, in addition to the three ובכן passages paralleling the three Avos and Shofar sounds, we need a fourth ובכן paragraph. This fourth ובכן is for when we come before the King, like Esther, “not in accordance with the law”.

He further explains; ובכן has the same *gematria* (78) of חסדו – His kindness. The four ובכן passages correspond to the four verses ending חסדו לעולם כי that we say in Hallel⁹:

חסדו הודו לה' כי טוב כי לעולם חסדו
 יאמר נא ישראל כי לעולם חסדו
 יאמרו נא בית אהרן כי לעולם חסדו
 יאמרו נא יראי ה' כי לעולם חסדו

The four times חסדו correspond to the four letters of Hashem's name יהוה which have the *gematria* of 26. In Tehilim Chapter 137 there are 26 verses which conclude כי לעולם חסדו¹⁰. The Gemora teaches that these 26 verses correspond to the 26 generations of man which preceded the giving of the Torah¹¹. Without the merit of Torah, they were sustained purely by the free Chessed (חסד חנם) of Hashem. According to the system of Torah, only if we go in the ways of Torah are we deserving of Hashem's blessings. The Chessed that was manifest in those 26 generations was from a deeper level than Torah.

⁹ Tehillim 118:1-4. The Midrash Tehillim says that these verses refer to Rosh Hashona.

¹⁰ See Siddur Tehillas Hashem which displays the four letters of Hashem's name corresponding to the 26 verses,

¹¹ Pesachim 118a

When we come before Hashem on the Yomim Noraim, we too are lacking in the merit of Torah and in need of Hashem's blessings. Our four **ובכן** passages represent the four times we say **ידון**, which in turn include within them the 26 **כי לעולם חסדו** verses. Through them, we appeal to Hashem to give us from the same lofty Chessed with which He sustained the 26 generations who were also lacking the merit of Torah.

When Esther came before Achashveirosh with **ובכן**, he granted her request even when she was undeserving, bringing Geulah to all of the Jewish people. So too when we come before Hashem with our **ובכן** with all of the mystical Kavanos discussed above, may Hashem answer our Tefillos for the greatest blessing of all; the ultimate and final Geulah, with the immediate arrival of Moshiach **במהרה בימינו אמן**