

Understanding Selichot - A Rabbinic tapestry of Biblical verses & themes

Shiur by Menachem Leibtag /www.tanach.org

A. Overall structure (similar to the classic daily prayer service):

- "ashrei" (Psalm 145); followed by half-Kaddish;
- Verses of praise -"shomeya tefilla" - topic of our class;
- Several 'rounds' of *prayer* in following format
 - A "pizmon" - poem with a refrain
 - "el melech yoshev.." - introduction to the request
 - Reciting the 13 attributes - asking God to judge with mercy
- A prayer that God answers our prayers
 - Verses of "zchor" [for God to remember His promises mercy]
 - "shma koleinu..." [when we open the ark]
- Confessing our sins "viddui" / "ashamnu, bagadnu..."
- Acrostics - reminding God why He should answer our prayers,
even though we may not be deserving ["asey lmaan...."]
- Full Kaddish ["kaddish tit'kabel"] - like after shmone esray

B. Focus on the "shomeya tefilla" - a composite of Biblical verses

Mostly from Tehillim, as illustrated on source sheet

Note which chapters are quoted most:

89 - 8 verses quoted from 89:6-16 [re: covenant with David]

95 - 6 verses [first chapter of "kabbalat Shabbat"]

74 - 5 verses [asking God to 'look at His covenant' / 74:20]

Two verses each from 86, 96, 99

One verse each from 5,48,55,65,100, 106,108,132,134,138

C. The principle of 'praise before prayer' - Bavli Brachot 32a

מסכת ברכות ל"ב ע"א :

"לעוֹלָם יִסְדַּר אָדָם שְׁבוֹתָו שֶׁל הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא וְאַחֲרֵיכֶם יְתַפֵּל..."

Note the 'single' quote in "shomeya tefilla" from Chumash - Devarim 3:24 -

Moshe's specific praise of God, before his request to enter the Land

D. Tehillim 89 - note the 'header' (89:1-5)

The 'structure' : 1-5 intro/ 6-15 - praise/ 16-19 - shofar

/20-38 - the Covenant with David /39-52 - the Prayer:

Begging God to remember His covenant with House of David

Note how we quote 8 of its 10 verses of praise / see 89:6-15

E. Tehillim 74 - praise prior to request for God to remember His covenant

F. Two sided nature of covenants, relating to purpose of prayer

G. Note Tehillim 95 - how to approach God,

concluded in Tehillim 99 - praise & prayer....

H. How does one 'approach God' -

see Micha 6:6-8/ in contrast -Tehillim 95:1-2

I. 'Transformative' purpose of prayer'

- when Biblical sources are understood

J. Concept of 'yes He will' vs. 'yes He can' /

The strategy of prayer to 'remember covenant'

Selichot- a 'tapestry' of Biblical verses & themes

Source sheet for shiur by Menachem Leibtag

"sho'mey'a tefilla"- the Introductory prayer / a 'collection' of psukim	
A. Come & bow down before Hashem	
שמע קפלה - עזיך כל בשר יבוא :	65:3
יבוא כל בשר להשפטות לפניך ה :	Isaiah 66
יבואו וישפטו לפניך אדני ויבאו לשפטך :	86:9'
באנו נשפטתנו ונקרעה נברכה לפניך ה' עשנו :	95:6
באו שעירינו בחטירה חצרתו בתחלה הווד לו ברכו שמו :	100:4
הנה ברכו את ה' כל עבדיו ה' העמידים בבית ה' בלילות :	134:1
שאו ידכם קרע וברכו את ה' :	134:2
גבואה למשכנתיו נשפטתנו להדים רגליו :	132:7
רוממו ה' אלהינו והשפטו להדים רגליו קדוש הוא :	99:5
רוממו ה' אלהינו והשפטו להר קדשו כי קדוש ה' אלהינו :	99:9
השפטו לה' בקדחת קרע חילו מפניו כל הארץ :	96:9
ואנחנו בرب חסוך נבוא ביתך נשפטתנו אל היכל קדש ביראתך :	[5:8]
נשפטתנו אל היכל קדש ונודה את שמה על חסוך ועל אמך כי הנגדת על כל	[138:2]
שםך אמךך :	
B. Praise Hashem, for He is Great, there is no god like Him	
ה' אלהי צבאות מי במוש חסין יה ואמוןך סביבותיך :	89:9
כי מי בשחק יערך לה' יקמה לה' בבני אלים :	89:7
כי גודל אתה ועשה נפלאות אתה אלהים לבך :	86:10
כי גודל מעל שמים חסוך ועד שחכים אמתך :	108:5
אךול ה' ומיהלך מאד ולגלותו אין חקר :	145:3
כי גודל ה' ומיהלך מאד נורא הוא על כל אלהים :	96:4
כי אל גודל ה' ומיהלך גודל על כל אלהים :	95:3
אשר מי אל כבשים ובארץ אשר ישבה כמעשיך וכגבורהך :	Dv 3:24
מי לא יראך מלך הגוים כי לך אתה כי בכל חכמי הגוים ובכל מלכיהם שאין במוש :	Jr 10:7
מאין במוש ה' גודל אתה וגודל שםך בגבורה :	Jr. 10:6

<i>C. What is YOURS, and what YOU did (and do)</i>	
לֹךְ וּרוּעַ עַם גָּבוֹרָה פָּעוֹז יְזִקְדָּךְ תְּרוּם יְמִינֶךָ :	89:14
לֹךְ יוֹם אָף לֹךְ לִילָּה אַתָּה הַכִּינּוֹת מְאוֹר וְשָׁמֵשׁ :	74:16
אֲשֶׁר בַּיָּדו מְחַקְרֵי אָרֶץ וְתוֹעֲפֹתָה קָרִים לוֹ :	95:4
מִי יִמְלָל גָּבוֹרוֹת הַיְשָׁמֵעַ כָּל תְּהַלְתוֹ :	106:2
לֹךְ הַמְּגַדֵּלה וְהַגְּבוֹרָה וְהַתְּפִאָרָת וְהַנִּצְחָה וְהַהְוֹדָבָה כִּי כָל בְּשָׂמִים וּבְאָרֶץ :	DH29:11
לֹךְ הַמְּמַלְכָה וְהַמְּתַנְשָׁא כָּל לְרֹאשׁ :	"
לֹךְ שָׁמִים אָף לֹךְ אָרֶץ תְּבֵל וּמְלָאָה אַתָּה יִסְדַּקְתָּם :	89:12
אַתָּה הַצְבָתָךְ כָּל גְּבוּלוֹת אָרֶץ קִיזְצָרָן וְחַרְבָתָךְ יִצְרָתָם :	74:17
אַתָּה רְצָאתָךְ רָאשֵׁי לְנוֹתִין תְּתַנְגַּנוּ מְאַכְלָל לְעֵם לְצִיִּים :	74:14
אַתָּה בְּקֻשְׁתָמָעֵן וּנְתַל אַתָּה הַוּבְשָׁתָת נְגֻרוֹת אֵיתֶן :	74:15
אַתָּה פּוֹרְתָת בָּעֵזֶךְ יִם שְׁבָרָתָךְ רָאשֵׁי תְּנִינִים עַל הַמְּפִימִים :	74:13
אַתָּה מוֹשֵׁל בְּגָאוֹת הַיּוֹם בְּשֹׂא גָּנוֹיו אַתָּה תְּשִׁבְתָּם :	89:10

D. What YOU are.... Conclusion & prayer

אַדְול הַיּוֹם וּמְהַלֵּל מָאֵד בָּעֵיר אֱלֹהֵינוּ הַר קָדְשׁוֹ :	48:2
הַיְמִינָה אֱלֹהִים יִשְׁרָאֵל יִשְׁבֵּת הַכְּרָבִים אַתָּה הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים לְבָדָק :	Is37:16
אֶל נְעָרֵין בְּסָוד קָדוֹשִׁים רַבָּה וּנְרוֹא עַל כָּל סְבִיבָיו :	89:8
וַיֹּודַע שָׁמִים פָּלָאךְ הַיּוֹם אֶת אָמוֹנוֹתֶךָ בְּקָהָל קָדוֹשִׁים :	89:6
לְכוּ נְגֻרָנָה לְהַיּוֹם נְגֻרִיעָה לְצָור יִשְׁעָנוּ :	95:1
נְקֻדָּמָה פְּנֵיכָה בְּתוֹךְ בְּזָמְרוֹת נְגֻרִיעָה לוֹ :	95:2
אֶדְךָ וּמְשִׁפט מִכּוֹן בְּסָאָךְ חִסְדָּךְ וְאֶמְתָּת יִקְדָּמוּ פְּנֵיךָ :	89:15
אֲשֶׁר יִחְדֹּו נְמַתִּיק סָוד בְּבֵית אֱלֹהִים נְהַלֵּךְ בְּרֶגֶשׁ :	55:15
אֲשֶׁר לוּ הַיּוֹם וּהַיּוֹם עָשָׂהוּ וִיְבַשְׁתָּ יְזִירָה :	95:5
אֲשֶׁר בַּיָּדו נְפָשָׁךְ כָּל חַי וּרוּחָךְ כָּל בָּשָׂר אִישׁ :	Jb12:10

הַנִּשְׁמָה לְךָ וּהַגָּעֵף פְּנֵיךָ. חֹסֶה עַל עַמְּלֶךָ :
 הַנִּשְׁמָה לְךָ. וּהַגָּעֵף שְׁלֵךָ. הַיְשָׁה לְמַעַן שְׁמָךָ :
 אֲתִחְנוּן עַל שְׁמָךָ - הַיְשָׁה לְמַעַן שְׁמָךָ :
 בְּעַבוּר בְּבּוֹדֶשׁ שְׁמָךָ -. כִּי אֶל חַנּוֹן וּרְחוּם שְׁמָךָ :
 לְמַעַן שְׁמָךָ הַיּוֹם - וּסְלִיחָה לְשֹׁונָנוּ כִּי רַב הָוָה :

תְּהִלָּה יְהוָה You Who hears prayer,* to You all flesh will come.¹ All flesh will come to prostrate itself before You, O HASHEM.² They will come and prostrate themselves before You, my Lord, and shall honor Your Name.³ Come! — let us prostrate ourselves and bow, let us kneel before God, our Maker.⁴ Enter His gates with thanksgiving, His courts with praise; give thanks to Him, praise His Name.⁵ Behold, bless HASHEM, all you servants of HASHEM who stand in the House of HASHEM in the nights.* Lift your hands in the Sanctuary and bless HASHEM.⁶ Let us come to His dwelling places, let us prostrate ourselves at His footstool.* Exalt HASHEM, our God, and bow at His footstool: He is holy!⁷ Exalt HASHEM, our God, and bow at His holy mountain,⁸ for holy is HASHEM, our God.⁹ Prostrate yourselves before HASHEM in an intensely holy place,* tremble before Him, everyone on earth.¹⁰ As for us, through Your abundant kindness I will enter Your House,¹¹ We will make our abode toward Your Holy Sanctuary in one of You.¹² We will

Your Name is great with power.—
Yours is a mighty arm with power, You strengthen Your hand,
You exalt Your right hand.²² Yours is the day, Yours, as well, is the
^{[1] Psalms 65:3; [2] Cf. Isaiah 66:23; [3] Psalms 86:9; [4] 95:6; [5] 100:4; [6] 134:1-2; [7] 132:7; [8] 96:9; [9] 96:9; [10] 96:9; [11] Cf. 5:8; [12] Cf. 138:2; [13] 89:9; [14] 89:7; [15] 86:10; [16] 108:5; [17] 108:1; [18] 96:4; [19] 95:3; [20] Deuteronomy 3:24; [21] Jeremiah 10:7; [22] 10:6; [23] Psalms 89:14.}

תְּפַנֵּת תְּבִרְכָה — Even beyond Your Name, Eliyahu
places ... at His footstool. In its scriptural sense
this verse from Psalms refers to the Temple. In
the context of our Yom Kippur prayers, it refers
to the places where we stand before the Throne of
He is known by. Names that suggest His
judgment. His promise of mercy overpowers us.

ପ୍ରାଚୀନ ମୂଲ୍ୟରେ ଏହାକିମ୍ବା କିମ୍ବା ଏହାକିମ୍ବା ଏହାକିମ୍ବା ଏହାକିମ୍ବା

All:

night; You estoniae luminary and the sun.¹ For in His power are the hidden mysteries of the earth,^{*} and the mountain summits are His.² Who can express the mighty acts of HASHEM, who can declare all His praise?³ Yours, HASHEM, the greatness,^{*} the strength, the splendor, the triumph, and the glory; everything in heaven and earth; Yours, HASHEM, is the kingdom, and the sovereignty over every leader.⁴ Yours is the heaven; Yours, too, is the earth; the world and its fullness — You founded them.⁵ You established all the boundaries of earth; summer and winter — You fashioned them.⁶ You crushed the heads of Leviathan,* You served it as food to the nation of legions. You split open fountain and stream, You dried the mighty rivers.⁷ You shattered the sea with Your might, You smashed sea serpents' heads upon the water.⁸ You rule the grandeur of the sea; when it raises its waves, You calm them.⁹ Great is HASHEM and much praised, in the city of our God, Mount of His Holiness.¹⁰ HASHEM, Master of Legions, God of Israel, enthroned upon the Cherubim,* It is You alone Who is God.¹¹ God is dreaded in the hiddenmost counsel of the holy ones, and inspires awe upon all who surround Him.¹² Heaven will gratefully praise Your wonders, HASHEM; also Your faithfulness in the assembly of holy ones.¹³

Come! — let us sing to HASHEM, let us call out to the Rock of our salvation.* Let us greet Him with thanksgiving, with psalm-songs, let us call out to Him.¹⁴ Righteousness and justice are Your throne's foundation; kindness and truth precede Your countenance.¹⁵ For together let us share Your counsel,* in the house of God let us walk in matriitudes.¹⁶ For His is the sea and He perfected the dry land — His hands fashioned it.¹⁷ For His is the soul of every living thing, and the spirit of all human flesh.¹⁸ Chazzan — The soul is Yours and the body is Your handiwork; take pity on Your labor. The soul is Yours and the body is Yours; O HASHEM, act for Your Name's sake.* We have come with reliance on Your Name, O HASHEM, act for Your Name's sake because of Your Name's glory — for 'Gracious and Merciful God is Your Name.'* For Your Name's sake, HASHEM, may You forgive our iniquity, though it is great.¹⁹

¹ Psalms 74:16. ² Psalms 74:17. ³ Psalms 106:12. ⁴ Psalms 106:12. ⁵ Psalms 29:11. ⁶ Psalms 89:11. ⁷ Psalms 89:11. ⁸ Psalms 89:12. ⁹ Psalms 89:12. ¹⁰ Psalms 48:2. ¹¹ Isaiah 37:16. ¹² Psalms 89:8. ¹³ Psalms 89:8. ¹⁴ Psalms 89:6. ¹⁵ Psalms 89:6. ¹⁶ Psalms 89:6. ¹⁷ Psalms 89:6.

sea of Reeds, is likened to a sea monster; while matter how imminent Israel's destruction had often seemed, the Rock of our salvation had always prevented the 'inevitable' from happening (Ancient Eliyahu).

THE PROPHET — *Let us share sacred counsel.* Let us all gather in the study hall [house of God] to discuss

¶ — Is Your Name, Graciousness and Dexterity,
are so intrinsic to You that Your very Name is
Gracious and Merciful God
— solid gold cover of the Holy Ark in the Bois
Midrash.

David uttered this verse in the presence of the entire congregation at one of the supreme moments of his life, when he had assembled the necessary contributions and materials for his heir, Solomon, to build the Temple. In this moment of public glory, David proclaimed that his every achievement was possible only because God made it so.

PSALM 105 — *The heads of Leviathan.* The Psalmist describes Israel's Exodus from Egypt and God's mercy in the Wilderness. The Egyptian army which pursued the Jews into the