

THE PIRCHEI SHOSHANIM ROADMAP TO PRAYER PROJECT

# The Roadmap to Prayer

## Lesson 35

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Lesson

# 35

## Ma'ariv

### The Evening Prayer

*Chazal* (Our Sages) instituted the evening prayer of *Ma'ariv* to correspond to the burning of the fats and limbs of the *Korbanos* (sacrifices) that were brought during the day in the time of the Holy Temple (*the Beis Hamikdash*). This follows the Jewish Law (*Halacha*) that sacrifices are only offered during the daytime but their fats and limbs (*Haktoras Eimurin*) are permitted to be burnt on the Alter (*Mizbei'ach*) throughout the night. Unlike the Service of the blood (*Avodas Hadam*) from the slaughtering until the sprinkling onto the *Mizbei'ach* (altar), the burning of the fats and limbs (*HaKetores Eimurin*) are not integral to the (Kosher status) of the *Korban* (sacrifice/offering). Even if one did not end up burning the fats of a particular *Korban*, the *Korban* is still valid and *Kosher*. Likewise, the Prayer (*Tefilla*) of *Ma'ariv* was not originally intended to be an obligatory prayer. Nevertheless, through our own volition, *Ma'ariv* has become mandatory like the other two daily prayers, *Shacharis* and *Mincha*.

#### The Nature of the Present Day Obligation for Ma'ariv

(An academic discussion)

The Rambam postulates as law that the Ma'ariv Prayer is considered to be an optional Tefilla. Generally, one who wishes to recite an additional Shemoneh Esrei at any time of day, he may do so as an optional prayer that he wishes to "donate" (*nedava*). If one started reciting Shemoneh Esrei thinking that he had not yet recited the particular prayer one is obligated in and then realizes that he already recited that prayer, one must halt his Shemoneh Esrei immediately, because a Shemoneh Esrei cannot be part obligation (*chiyuv*) and part donation (*nedava*). However, if this mistake occurred at Ma'ariv, the Rambam maintains that one should continue the prayer since Ma'ariv is an optional prayer anyway.

The Kessef Mishna explains that the Rambam follows the opinion of Rebbe Yochanan<sup>1</sup> who finds it praiseworthy to daven any time of the day that one wishes to add a voluntary (*nedava*) Shemoneh Esrei. However, one who wants to add an additional prayer as a required prayer may only pray the three daily prayers since adding an additional Shacharis prayer is like offering two Morning Korban Tamid offerings which may not be brought.

The Rav<sup>ad</sup> in his notes to the Rambam's commentary disagrees and maintains that Ma'ariv is an obligatory prayer. Since we have already accepted upon ourselves to pray (*daven*) this Tefilla every day, it has now become an obligation just as the prayers of Shacharis and Mincha. Therefore he maintains that if one made a mistake and started praying (*davening*) Ma'ariv as an obligation, he must stop when he realizes his mistake and he cannot convert that Shemoneh Esrei back into a voluntary donation (*nedava*) prayer.

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<sup>1</sup> *Berachos* 21a

## Ve'hu Rachum Yechaper Avone

### (But He the Merciful One is forgiving of Iniquity)

It is customary to recite the *pasuk* (verse) *Ve'hu Rachum Yechaper Avone*<sup>2</sup> (the whole *pasuk* should be written out and translated either here or in the footnotes) before starting *Ma'ariv*. This verse is said especially at *Ma'ariv* because *Tefillas Shacharis* and *Mincha* correspond to the *Korban Tamid* of the morning and the evening. Those *Korbanos* (sacrifices) brought us atonement when they were offered-up in the *Beis Hamikdash*. *Ma'ariv* on the other hand corresponds to the burning of the fat and limbs of the day's *Korbanos*, which do not bring atonement since the *Korban* is *Kosher* without them. Therefore, we preface *Ma'ariv* with this verse which is a prayer beseeching *Hashem* for forgiveness and atonement.<sup>3</sup> This verse has in it thirteen words which is recited when administering Legislative Lashes. It would be recited three times over, equaling thirty nine words corresponding to the maximum thirty nine Legislative Lashes that one received for transgressing a Torah-based negative command in the days when corporal punishment was administered by *Beth Din*. Since it was customary for people to receive Legislative Lashes<sup>4</sup> between *Mincha* and *Ma'ariv*, we recite it at *Ma'ariv* for that purpose too.

*Tola'as Ya'akov* writes that we begin *Ma'ariv* with this verse because nighttime is a time of spiritual darkness and stricter judgment with more prosecution by the prosecuting angels. This then could lead to difficult decrees against individuals and communities, *Heaven forbid*. We therefore preface the evening prayers with these words that *Hashem* should forgive our sins which will in turn save us against strict judgments, *Heaven Forbid*. The thirteen words in this verse are meant to arouse the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy to come to our defense. The attribute of mercy is symbolized in this verse in its reference to *Hashem* as *Rachum*, the Merciful One, Who forgives in some measure even when repentance is incomplete.

## Shir Hama'alos

Amongst *Sephardim* and *Nusach Sefard*, the custom is to start *Ma'ariv* with *Shir Hama'alos*<sup>5</sup> before reciting the verse of *Ve'hu rachum etc.* then *Chatzi-Kaddish* and then *Ve'hu rachum etc.* The reason for this custom is to preface *Krias She'ma* with words

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<sup>2</sup> *Tehillim* 78:38

<sup>3</sup> *Tur Simon* 237

<sup>4</sup> See *Abudraham* on *Tefillas Ma'ariv*

<sup>5</sup> *Tehillim* 134 (first 3 *pesukim*). The rest are a collection of *pesukim* (verses) from different parts of *Tehillim*. They all are about doing service to *Hashem* at night.

from the Torah. The *Gemara* in *Berachos*<sup>6</sup> teaches us that when a person comes home in the evening after a hard day at work, instead of eating and going to sleep, one should first enter a place of learning or a Synagogue (*shul*). If he is unable to learn he should recite the reading of the Shema (*Krias She'ma*) and pray (*daven*) *Shemoneh Esrei*, then go home and eat bread and then say the Grace after Meals - *Bentching*. This way, one fills his nights with Torah and *Mitzvos*.

The reason for choosing this particular *Shir Hama'alos* is because in this chapter King David (*Dovid Hamelech*) mentions those who *stand in the house of G-d* at night. Likewise, we who are about to begin prayer *in the house of G-d* at night preface our evening prayers with these Torah verses. Additionally, this chapter of Psalms (*Tehillim*) continues with the verse, *Se'u yedeichem kodeh u'Vorchu (like Borchu) es Hashem*, (Lift your hands in the holy place and bless the Lord) which is an appropriate lead into *Borchu*<sup>7</sup>.

After reciting these words of Torah, the *Chazzan* says half-Kaddish (*Chatzi-Kaddish*), then *Vehu Rachum* and *Borchu*.

**Borchu es Hashem Hamevorach (Bless G-d, the blessed One)**  
Before beginning *Ma'ariv* the *Chazzan* calls out *Borchu* as an invitation to everyone to join in the prayers of *Birchos Krias She'ma* and *Krias She'ma*. The congregation responds *Baruch Hashem Hamevorach le'olam va'ed* (Blessed is G-d, the blessed One, for all eternity). The *Chazzan* then repeats the same response as the congregation to include himself in praising G-d with the congregation. The same thing is done in the morning at *Shacharis* before *Krias She'ma* and its *brochos*. Originally when they would recite *Krias She'ma* and its *brochos* the *Chazzan* would say all the blessings (*Brochos*) out loud to fulfill the obligations (*motzee*) everyone else in the congregation. In order to get everyone to focus on what he was about to say, he would first say *Borchu*.

Another reason we start the blessings of the reading of the Shema (*Birchos Krias She'ma*) in the morning and in the evening with *Borchu* is because of its similarity to the reading of the Shema (*Krias HaTorah*). Since the *Chazzan* originally used to say these *brochos* out loud to fulfill the requirements (*motzee*) of the congregation (*tzibbur*) like by the reading of the Shema (*Krias HaTorah*) he would preface it with *Borchu* giving praise to *Hashem* as the *pasuk* (verse) states *Ki sheim Hashem ekra havu godel le'Elokeinu* (when I call *Hashem's Name* (i.e. words of Torah), give praise to our G-d)<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> *Daf 4b*

<sup>7</sup> *Mishna Berura 237:2*

<sup>8</sup> *Si'ach Tefilla - Tefillas Ma'ariv*

## RESPONDING TO BORCHU

§ After responding to *Borchu* one is considered to be in the middle of *Birchos Krias She'ma*. Therefore, if someone responded to the *Chazzan's Borchu* before reciting *Ve'hu Rachum*, he must wait until after *Ma'ariv* to say it.

### The Order of Ma'ariv and the Correct Time for reciting Krias She'ma in the Evening

The Tur<sup>9</sup> writes that the proper place for *Shemoneh Esrei* of *Ma'ariv* is after *Krias She'ma* and its *brochos*. This is actually an argument (*machlokes*) in the *Gemara* whether the *Birchos Krias She'ma* of *Ma'ariv* precede *Shemoneh Esrei* the way we are accustomed or whether we first recite *Shemoneh Esrei* of *Ma'ariv* and then recite *Krias She'ma* and its *brochos*, making the *Shemoneh Esrei* of *Shacharis* and the *Shemoneh Esrei* of *Ma'ariv* sandwiched between the *Birchos Krias She'ma*. The latter opinion is the opinion of *Rebbe Yehoshua ben Levi* and the former is the opinion of *Rebbe Yochanan*. We *pasken* (rule) like the opinion of *Rebbe Yochanan* that one should recite *Krias She'ma* with its *brochos* first in order to join *Ge'ulah* with *Tefilla* by *Ma'ariv* just as we do by *Shacharis*.

### Tur – The Correct Time for Saying the Shema

Accordingly, the Tur writes that the correct time for praying (*davening*) is after *Krias She'ma* which is supposed to be recited after *Tzeis Hakochavim* (the emerging of the stars)<sup>10</sup>. *Rav Paltoye Ga'on* maintains that if one deliberately prays (*davens*) *Ma'ariv* before nightfall of *Tzeis Hakochavim*, he must repeat *Krias She'ma* on time and repeat *Shemoneh Esrei* of *Ma'ariv* as well. *Rav Amram Ga'on* maintains this is even if one prays (*davens*) during twilight - *Bein Hashemashos*. However, the prevalent custom is to pray (*daven*) *Ma'ariv* even during daylight as early as from *Plag HaMincha* and on. This custom is mentioned by *Rashi* in his commentary to the first *daf* (folio) in *Berachos*.

### Fulfilling the Commandment of the Reading of the Shema

He agrees that the *Mitzvah* of reciting *Krias She'ma* in the evening is only fulfilled when it recited from *Tzeis Hakochavim* (the emerging of the stars); nevertheless, the custom is still to pray (*daven*) *Ma'ariv* before nightfall. In order to fulfill the *Mitzvah* of reciting *Krias She'ma* at night, one would recite it again before retiring for the night when reciting the bedtime *Krias She'ma* (*Krias She'ma al Hamitah*).

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<sup>9</sup> *Simon* 235

<sup>10</sup> This is the opinion of the *Rif*

## How early one can Read the Shema

The Tur then continues with a discussion about the earliest possible time for *Ma'ariv* with *Krias She'ma*, whether it begins any time after the end of the time for *Mincha* or it depends fully on the correct time for reciting the evening *Krias She'ma*. *Rabbeinu T'am* maintains that one may pray (*daven*) and recite *Krias She'ma* with its *brochos* after *Plag HaMincha* which according to *Rebbe Yehudah* is the latest time for *Mincha*.

## Fulfilling the Commandment before Nightfall

The *Ri* maintains that one cannot fulfill the *Mitzvah* of nighttime *Krias She'ma* before it gets dark, except that the custom of praying (*davening*) early tends to follow some more lenient opinions amongst the *Tanna'im* who maintain that the time for *Krias She'ma* at night is before *Tzeis Hakochavim* as mentioned by the *Gemara* in the beginning of *Berachos*. The reason the custom is to be lenient in this regard is because otherwise people would go home and not return to pray (*daven*) *Ma'ariv* with a *Minyan*. Accordingly, *Ma'ariv* should be prayed closer to nighttime; when it starts getting dark.

## The Preferred Time for Praying/Davening Ma'ariv

According to the final ruling the best time to pray (*daven*) *Ma'ariv* is after *Tzeis Hakochavim* when one can fulfill the *Mitzvah* of nighttime *Krias She'ma*. This way, one recites the *Birchos Krias She'ma* at the time one fulfills the *Mitzvah* of reciting *Krias She'ma*. The same *Halacha* applies in the morning when praying (*davening*) *Shacharis*; one should preferably pray (*daven*) at a time one fulfills the *Mitzvah* of *Krias She'ma*. One who has to recite *Krias She'ma* before praying (*davening*) loses the benefit of reciting *Birchos Krias She'ma* at the time he fulfills the *Mitzvah* of *Krias She'ma*. Nevertheless, one can fulfill the *Mitzvah* of praying (*davening*) *Ma'ariv* even before the time of night that one could fulfill the *Mitzvah* of *Krias Shema*. However, one who does this must repeat *Krias She'ma* when it is *Tzeis Hakochavim*. This is especially true if one wants to eat a meal or start an activity which may take him a long time.

Some people rely on reciting the three portions of *Krias She'ma* before retiring for the night when reciting *Krias She'ma al HaMitah* (Bedtime Shema). The Halachic Authorities (*Poskim*) are not pleased with this arrangement as one is usually tired at that time and may not remember to concentrate that he is fulfilling the Torah *Mitzvah* of *Krias She'ma* at that time. Another concern is that *Krias She'ma al HaMitah* (Bedtime Shema) is primarily recited for protection and not for the *Mitzvah* of *Krias She'ma*. Yet another concern is that one who goes to sleep after *Halachic* midnight (*Chatzos*) is not reciting *Krias She'ma* in its proper time, since *Chazal* (the Sages) instituted that one should recite the nighttime *Krias She'ma* before *Chatzos* to ensure that one doesn't forget to recite *Krias She'ma* before going to sleep. One who didn't recite *Krias She'ma* before *Chatzos* can still fulfill the *Mitzvah* up until sunrise of the next morning.

For all the above reasons, one should recite *Krias She'ma* at *Tzeis Hakochavim* rather than relying on *Krias She'ma al HaMitah* (Bedtime Shema).

### The First Bracha of Ma'ariv

*Tefillas Arvis* (The Evening Prayer or *Ma'ariv*) begins with the *bracha* of *Baruch Atta Hashem ... Asher bidvaro ma'ariv Aravim etc.* Then it continues with the theme that *Hashem* takes the light and rolls it away as darkness sets in. Likewise, *Hashem* takes the dark and rolls it away for the upcoming light of day. Not only do we mention the creation of darkness, but we also mention the creation of light. This arrangement follows the tenet of the *Gemara*<sup>11</sup> which states that one must always mention the attribute of day at night as well as the attribute of night by day. The former is fulfilled by *Ma'ariv* when we say this specific text while the latter is fulfilled in the *bracha* of *Yotzeir Ohr* which we recite in the morning, the first of the *Birchos Krias She'ma*.

The *Talmidei* (students of) *Rabbeinu Yonah* explain that we mention both the attributes of day and night by *Shacharis* as well as by *Ma'ariv* to show that we believe that both are creations of *Hashem*; not like those who say that these two opposites could not be created by a single creator.

Another explanation is given by *Mahari Abuhav*, that if we would not mention the attribute of night by *Shacharis* one could be led to believe that when *Hashem* created night he created something bad as it represents darkness and evil. Therefore, we mention to say that it is a useful creation like everything else that was created by *Hashem* in creation.

Š If someone skipped the first *bracha* of *Ma'ariv*, he should recite it even after *Ma'ariv*, even as late as *Neitz Hachamah* (sunrise)<sup>12</sup>.

Š If one reminds himself before *Krias She'ma* that he forgot the first *bracha* he should say it after *Ahavas Olam*. However, he shouldn't say it between *Krias She'ma* and *Shemoneh Esrei* as it may be considered an interruption between *ge'ulah* and *Tefilla*.

### The Second Bracha – Ahavas Olam - An Eternal Love

The second *bracha* at night begins with the words *Ahavas Olam*, an eternal love. The source for this is the verse in *Yirmiyahu*<sup>13</sup> *Va'ahavas Olam Ahavtich etc.* ואהבת עולם

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<sup>11</sup> *Berachos Daf* 11b

<sup>12</sup> *Iggros Moshe* 1:89

<sup>13</sup> 31:2

אהבתיך על כן משכתיך חסד (I loved you eternally, therefore I graced you with loving-kindness). Unlike *Shacharis* where there is a *machlokes* (dispute) amongst the *Rishonim* whether one says the version of *Ahavas Olam* (an eternal love) or *Ahavah Rabbah* (a great love); by *Ma'ariv* all agree that the text reads *Ahavas Olam*. The *Gemara*<sup>14</sup> has a *machlokes* (dispute) whether one should say *Ahavas Olam* or *Ahavah Rabba* in the *bracha* that precedes *Krias She'ma* in the morning. *Tosefos* concludes that one should say *Ahavah Rabba* in the morning and *Ahavas Olam* in the evening to satisfy the two opinions. Therefore, one should rather say *Ahavah Rabba* in the morning since that is an expression of great love, which is appropriate in a time that *Hashem* is pleased with us. Daytime corresponds to the time of redemption so we say the expression of *Ahavah Rabba*. In the evening which represents the darkness of exile when *Hashem* is displeased with His nation, we say *Ahavas Olam*, an eternal love which *Hashem* has for His nation even though at the moment they are not deserving of His love, yet He still has an eternal love for us.

### Bracha Hasemucha Le'Chaverta (Reciting Consecutive Blessings)

Generally, a *bracha* is only valid if it is comprised of the opening blessing starting with *Baruch Atta Hashem* (Blessed are You, *Hashem*) with the mention of *Hashem* as *Melech Ha'Olam* (King of the Universe). This is called the requirement of *Shem U'Malchus* (the Name and Kingship). This rule applies primarily to opening *brochos* (blessings) which either stand alone or at the beginning of a series of *brochos* (blessings). For example, a blessing for eating a fruit is *Baruch Atta Hashem Elokeinu Melech Ha'Olam borei pri HaEitz* (Blessed are You, *Hashem* our G-d King of the Universe the creator of fruit of trees). Or when a blessing starts a series of blessings like at the beginning of *Birchas Hamazone* (Grace after meals of bread) the first blessing begins *Baruch Atta Hashem Elokeinu Melech Ha'Olam Hazon es ha'olam etc.* (Blessed are You, *Hashem* our G-d King of the Universe who sustains the world etc.). However, subsequent blessings like the second *bracha* of *Birchas Hamazone* (Grace after meals of bread) begin without the above-mentioned format as it begins with *Nodeh Lecha* (We thank you). Likewise here by *Ma'ariv* the second *bracha* begins *Ahavas Olam* (an eternal love) with the opening *Baruch Atta Hashem Elokeinu Melech Ha'Olam*. The reason for this is because all the subsequent *brochos* of *Birchas Hamazone* or of *Birchos Krias She'ma* are connected. Once the first *bracha* (blessing) of the series begins with the proper format, that format carries through for all the subsequent *brochos* (blessings). Since the first *bracha* of *Birchas Hamazone* and of *Birchos Krias She'ma* begin with *Shem U'Malchus*, the rest just follow without their own specific *Shem U'Malchus*.

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<sup>14</sup> *Berachos* 11b

## Krias She'ma

At night, the *Mitzvah* of *Krias She'ma* as we know it consists of the three portions that we also recite in the morning by *Shacharis*. The first portion is *She'ma Yisrael* and *Ve'Ahavta eis Hashem Elokecha* etc. The second Portion is *Ve'haya im shamo'ah* etc. the final portion is *Vayomer Hashem* etc. *Dabber el Bnei Yisrael ve'amarta aleihem ve'assu lahem Tzitzis* (speak to the Children of Israel and tell them they should make *Tzitzis* (fringes) etc. The final portion ends with *Ani Hashem Elokeichem Asher hotzeisi eschem me'Eretz Mitzrayim* etc. *Ani Hashem Elokeichem Emmes* (I am Hashem your G-d Who took you out of the Land of Egypt etc. I am Hashem Your G-d It is true).

The first two portions represent accepting *Hashem* as our King and accepting upon ourselves the Yoke of His commandments to fulfill His *Mitzvos*. The third portion which mainly speaks about the *Mitzvah* of *tzitzis* is really not required to be recited at night since the *Mitzvah* of *Tzitzis* is not a nighttime *Mitzvah*<sup>15</sup>. However the final verse at the end of this portion is a special *Mitzvah* which we fulfill twice a day like *Krias She'ma*. It is the *Mitzvah* of remembering the Exodus from Egypt (*Yetzias Mitzrayim*). Since this portion of the Morning *She'ma* includes the verse that contains this *Mitzvah*, we recite the entire portion which comprises the *Mitzvah* of *Tzitzis* even though that particular *Mitzvah* doesn't apply at night.

One should try to remember before saying the final verse of *Ani Hashem Elokeichem asher hotzeisi eschem me'Eretz Mitzrayim* etc. that he wishes to fulfill through this the *Mitzvah* of *Zechiras Yetzias Mitzrayim* (remembering the Exodus from Egypt), since *Mitzvos Tzrichos Kavanah* (One is required to have intent to fulfill the obligation of a *Mitzvah*).

Although it is customary to hold onto one's *Tzitzis* and kiss them when reciting the final portion of *Krias She'ma* of *Shacharis*; at night one doesn't do this since nighttime is not the time for the *Mitzvah* of *Tzitzis*.

After everyone has finished reciting *Krias She'ma* the *Chazzan* repeats the words *Hashem Elokeichem Emmes* out loud just as he does by *Shacharis* to complete the number of words in *Krias She'ma* to 248; equal to the amount of limbs in a person's body and to the amount of positive commandments in the Torah.

§ When one prays (*davens*) individually and recites *Krias She'ma* by *Tefillas Ma'ariv*, he should also make sure to complete the amount of 248 words. According to *Ashkenaz* and *Nusach Sefard* one should say the three words *Keil Melech Ne'eman* before reciting the verse *She'ma Yisrael*. According to *Sephardim*, one is supposed to repeat the last three words of *Krias She'ma* - *Hashem Elokeichem Emmes* - like the *Chazzan* does.

WE WILL CONTINUE THE EXPLANATION OF THE MA'ARIV PRAYER IN THE NEXT LESSON

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<sup>15</sup> To understand this *Halacha* see *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim Simon* 18:1

## Questions:

- 1) What service of a *Korban* needs to be performed in the daytime only?
- 2) What service of a *Korban* can be performed even at night?
- 3) Why must someone who started *Shemoneh Esrei* by mistake thinking that he had not yet recited that *Shemoneh Esrei* stop when he realizes his mistake?
- 4) What is the *machlokes* (dispute) between the *Rambam* and the *Ra'avad* regarding *Ma'ariv* and what practical difference is there between the two opinions?
- 5) What part of the *Korban* does *Ma'ariv* represent and how is this related to the reason we begin *Ma'ariv* with *Ve'hu Rachum*?
- 6) When is the most optimal time for *Tefillas Ma'ariv*? Why?
- 7) Why does *Rebbe Yochanan* maintain that it is preferred to daven *Krias She'ma* with its *brochos* before *Shemoneh Esrei* of *Ma'ariv*?
- 8) What are the drawbacks relying on *Krias She'ma al HaMitah* for the sake of being *yotzei* (fulfilling) the *Mitzvah* of *Krias She'ma*? 2/3
- 9) What important lesson of creation do we derive from the first *Bracha* of *Krias She'ma*?
- 10) What is the version for the beginning of the second *bracha*. Why is this version unanimous by *Ma'ariv* but not by *Shacharis*?
- 11) What is a *Bracha Hasemucha Le'Chaverta*? (Use *Ma'ariv* as an example).
- 12) Which of the three portions of *Krias She'ma* is least applicable to nighttime *Krias She'ma*? Why?

## Answers:

- 1) The *Avodas HaDam*, the service done with the blood of a *Korban* (sacrifice) starting with the catching of the blood until its sprinkling on the *Mizbei'ach* (altar).
- 2) The burning of the fats and the limbs on the *Mizbei'ach* (altar).
- 3) This is because each *Shemoneh Esrei* can only be either an obligatory prayer (*chovah*) or a voluntary (*nedava*) prayer.
- 4) The *Rambam* maintains that *Ma'ariv* is considered to be a voluntary *nedava* prayer. The *Ra'avad* maintains it to be obligatory now that we all have accepted it upon ourselves. According to the *Rambam* one who mistakenly started *Ma'ariv* as an obligation cannot continue reciting it as a *nedava*.
- 5) It represents the *HaKetores Eimurin* of a *Korban* – the burning of the *Korban's* fats on the *Mizbei'ach* (altar), which is not obligatory.
- 6) The best time to recite *Ma'ariv* is at night when one can fulfill the *Mitzvah* of nighttime *Krias She'ma* together with its *brochos* and then follow it with *Shemoneh Esrei*.
- 7) One should recite the *Birchas Krias She'ma* before *Shemoneh Esrei* in order to be *Somech Ge'ulah le'Tefilla*.
- 8) 1) That one is tired and may not have proper *kavanah* to be *yotzei* (fulfill) the *Mitzvah*. 2) That *Krias She'ma al HaMitah* (Bedtime Shema) is primarily recited for protection and not for the *Mitzvah* of *Krias She'ma*. 3) One may forget to recite it before *Chatzos*.
- 9) An important lesson is expressing our belief in one Creator who creates opposites like daytime and nighttime.
- 10) It begins with the words *Ahavas Olam*. Since we already said *Ahavah Rabba* by *Shacharis* we recite the other expression at night. According to those who recite *Ahavas Olam* both by *Shacharis* and *Ma'ariv* that is because they maintain that the *Halacha* follows the opinion of the *Rabannan* in *Berachos* 11b.
- 11) *Ahavas Olam* doesn't have to begin with the standard opening of *Baruch Atta Hashem Elokeinu Melech Ha'olam etc.* since it follows immediately after a *bracha* that does. Any subsequent *bracha* is also considered to be a *Bracha Ha'semucha Le'chaverta*.
- 12) The third portion of *Va'yomer* which talks mainly about the *Mitzvah* of *Tzitzis* which is daytime *Mitzvah*.