

TEFILLAH TIPS

Dear Friend, This is the concluding Tefillah Tip of the spring semester. Thank you for reading the Tefillah Tips. I hope that they have enriched your davening, and that all of your prayers will be answered. Have a wonderful summer. Rabbi Ephraim Epstein

Birkat Meyeyn Sheva

After the testimonial reciting of *Vayechulu* by the entire congregation, the leader continues with *Birkat Meyeyn Sheva* – the blessing tantamount to seven. What is the blessing tantamount to seven? It must be similar to the blessing we say after consuming cake and cookies: *Al Hamichyah*, which is referred to as *Birkat Meyen Shalosh* – the blessing tantamount to three. The “three” refers to *Birkat Hamazon* which is comprised of three primary blessings. *Al Hamichyah* is a condensed version of *Birkat Hamazon*. So too, *Birkat Meyeyn Sheva* is a condensed version of the *Amidah* we recite on *Shabbat*, which is comprised of seven blessings.

If we read the words carefully we see how the *Birkat Meyeyn Sheva* reflects the *Shabbat Amidah*:

<u>Birkat Meyeyn Sheva</u>		<u>Shabbat Amidah</u>
1. Magen Avot Bidvaro	=	Magen Avraham
2. Michayeh Maytim Bemaamaro	=	Mechayeh Hamaytim
3. Hakeyl Hakadosh Sheeyn Kamohu	=	Hakeyl Hakadosh
4. Hamayniach Leamo Beyom Shabbat	=	Mekadesh Hashabbat
5. Lefanav Naavod Biyirah Vafachad	=	Retzey
6a. Venodeh Lishmoh	=	Modim
6b. Keyl Hahodaot	=	BaruchLehodot
7 Adon Hashalom	=	Sim Shalom

Since we do not recite any repetition of the *Amidah* for *Maariv* the rest of the week, why do we say the *Birkat Meyeyn Sheva* on Friday night? The *Talmud* explains that since synagogues were located outside the city in the fields, there would inevitably be those that arrived late to the services. There was a concern that it would be dangerous for the latecomers at the *shul* to return to the city alone after they finished praying. Therefore, our sages instituted *Birkat Meyeyn Sheva* so that the latecomers would be able to catch up and finish at the same time as the rest of the congregation. This *Talmudic* decree was instituted only for Friday night; not during the week or on *Yom Tov*, unless *Yom Tov* falls on Friday night (except for Pesach). The *Halachah* states that nowadays we only recite *Birkat Meyeyn Sheva* at an established synagogue *Minyan* with a *Sefer Torah* similar to the original decree. If a *Minyan davens* temporarily at a house or hotel many authorities prescribe not to say *Birkat Meyeyn Sheva*. After the leader introduces the blessing, the congregation sings *Mogen Avot*, followed by the repetition of *Mogen Avot*, the praying of *Elokaynu Veylokay Avoteynu*, and the concluding blessing *Mekadesh HaShabbat*.

Take Home Tip: Our prayers are so rich with meaning both in content and in style. The more familiar we become with our prayers, the more we notice the depth and genius therein.

Shabbat Shalom,

Rabbi Ephraim Epstein, for Tefillah Tips

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