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## “PHENOMENAL” BERACHOT Part IV – TEFILAT HADERECH

### Origin:

#### **1. Mishnah Berachot 4:4**

רבי יהושע אומר: ההולך במקום סכנה מתפלל תפלה קצרה, ואומר: הושע ד' את עמך את שארית ישראל... ברוך אתה ד' שומע תפלה

R' Yehoshua said: One who travels in a dangerous place should recite a short prayer, and say, "Gd, save Your nation, the remnant of Israel... You are blessed, Gd, who hears prayer."

#### **2. Talmud, Berachot 29b-30a**

אמר ליה אליהו לרב יהודה אחיה דרב סלא חסידא: לא תרתח ולא תחטי. לא תרוי ולא תחטי. וכשאתה יוצא לדרך, המלך בקונד וצא. מאי המלך בקונד וצא? אמר רבי יעקב אמר רב חסדא: זו תפלת הדרך. ואמר רבי יעקב אמר רב חסדא: כל היוצא לדרך צריך להתפלל תפלת הדרך.

On the topic of prayers recited while traveling and in times of danger, the Gemara discusses the traveler's prayer. When he appeared to him, Elijah the Prophet said to Rav Yehuda brother of Rav Sala Ḥasida: Do not get angry and you will not sin. Do not get drunk and you will not sin. And when you set out on a journey, consult with your Creator, and then set out. The Gemara asks: What is the meaning of: Consult with your Creator, and then set out? Rabbi Ya'akov said that Rav Ḥisda said: That is the traveler's prayer.

And Rabbi Ya'akov said that Rav Ḥisda said: It is not only good advice, but established halakha that anyone who sets out on a journey must recite the traveler's prayer prior to embarking on his journey.

מאי תפלת הדרך? "יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלהי, שתוליכני לשלום, ותצעידני לשלום, ותסמכני לשלום, ותצילני מפני כל אויב ואורב בדרכי, ותשלח ברכה במעשי ידי, ותתגני לחן ולחסד ולרחמים בעיניך ובעיני כל רואי, ברוך אתה ה' שומע תפלה"

The Gemara asks: What is the formula for the traveler's prayer? The Gemara answers: May it be Your will, Lord my God, to lead me to peace, direct my steps to peace, and guide me to peace, and rescue me from the hands of any enemy or ambush along the way, and send blessing to the work of my hands, and let me find grace, kindness, and compassion in Your eyes and in the eyes of all who see me. Blessed are You, Lord, Who hears prayer.

אמר אבני: לעולם

Abaye said: At all times

לישתף אינש נפשיה בהדי צבורא. היכי גימא? — "יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלהינו שתוליכנו לשלום" וכו'. a person should associate himself with the congregation and should not pray for himself alone. How should he say it? May it be Your will, Lord our God, that You lead us to peace, etc., in the plural.

אימת מצליי: אמר רבי יעקב אמר רב חסדא: משעה שמהלך בדרכו. עד כמה? אמר רבי יעקב אמר רב חסדא: עד פרסה.  
נהיכי מצלי לה? רב חסדא אמר: מעומד. רב ששת אמר: מפילי מהלך.

The Gemara discusses specific details pertaining to this prayer. When does one pray? Rabbi Ya'akov said that Rav Hisda said: From when one sets out on his journey, and not before. How long must one's planned journey be in order to require him to recite this prayer (Ba'al Halakhot Gedolot)? Rabbi Ya'akov said that Rav Hisda said: At least a parasah. How does he recite this prayer? Rav Hisda said: Only while standing in one place. Rav Sheshet said: Even walking or sitting.

רב חסדא ורב ששת הוו קאזלי באורחא, קם רב חסדא וקא מצלי. אמר ליה רב ששת לשמעיה: מאי קא עביד רב חסדא?  
אמר ליה קאי ומצלי. אמר ליה: אוקמן נמי לדדי ואצלי, "מהיות טוב אל תקרא רע"

The Gemara relates: Rav Hisda and Rav Sheshet were walking along the path, Rav Hisda stood and recited the traveler's prayer. Since he was blind and did not see his colleague, Rav Sheshet asked his servant:

What is Rav Hisda doing now? His servant said to him: He is standing and praying. Rav Sheshet said to his servant: Stand me up as well and I will pray. Even though Rav Sheshet held that there is no need to stand during this prayer, nevertheless: From being good, do not be called wicked. In other words, one should do better if he is able. Rav Sheshet said that one is not required to stop and stand. He did not say that it is preferable to walk or sit. Since standing in this case required no special effort on his part, as Rav Hisda had stopped to stand and pray anyway, why insist on sitting?

כל היוצא לדרך צריך להתפלל תפלת הדרך. מאי תפלת הדרך? יהי רצון מלפניך ד' אלקי שתוליכני לשלום ותצעידני לשלום ותסמכני

לשלום, ותצילני מכף כל אויב ואורב בדרך, ותשלח ברכה במעשי ידי, ותתנני לחן לחסד ולרחמים בעיניך ובעיני כל רואי, ברוך אתה ד' שומע תפלה. אמר אביי: לעולם לישתף אינש נפשיה בהדי צבורא

One who travels must recite tefilat haderech. What is tefilat haderech? "May it be Your will, my Gd, that You lead me towards peace, direct my steps toward peace, support me toward peace, and rescue me from the hand of any enemy or ambush on the way, and send blessing upon my handiwork, and give me favour, generosity and mercy in Your eyes and the eyes of all who see me. You are blessed, Gd, who listens to prayer." Abbaye said: One should always merge himself with the community.

### **3. Talmud Yerushalmi, Berachot 9:4**

כשיצא אומר יהי רצון מלפניך ד' אלקי שתוציאני מדרך זה לשלום. יצא אומר מודה אני לפניך ד' אלקי שהוצאתני לשלום כן יהי רצון מלפניך שתוליכני לביתי לשלום או למקום פלוני לשלום. הדא דאמר במדורות עכו"ם אבל בישראל אין צריך לברך

When he goes, he says, "May it be Your will, my Gd, to take me from this town to peace." After leaving, "I thank You, my Gd, for taking me out to peace. So may it be Your will to bring me to my home in peace," or "to X location in peace." This is in a non-Jewish area; in a Jewish area, one need not recite this blessing.

### **4. Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Berachot 10:25**

וכשיבקש לצאת אומר יהי רצון מלפניך ד' אלקי שתוציאני מדרך זה לשלום, ואם יצא בשלום אומר מודה אני לפניך ד' אלקי שהוצאתני מדרך זה לשלום וכשם שהוצאתני לשלום כך תוליכני לשלום ותצעידני לשלום ותסמכני לשלום ותצילני מכף אויב ואורב בדרך.

One who wishes to leave says, "May it be Your will, my Gd, to take me from this town to peace." After leaving in peace, "I thank You, my Gd, for taking me out of this town to peace. As You took me out in peace, so may You bring me to peace, guide my steps to peace, and save me from the hand of any enemy or marauder on the way."

### **5. Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Tefillah 7:6**

כשחוגר חגורו מברך אוזר ישראל בגבורה, כששובש נעליו מברך שעשית לי כל צרכי, כשמהלך לצאת לדרך מברך המכין מצעדי גבר

When one girds himself he blesses, "Who girds Israel with strength." When he dons shoes he blesses, "Who has prepared all of my needs." When he travels he blesses, "Who prepares a person's steps."

## Defining "going out on the road"

**Rashi** (s.v ad parsa a parsa) is the cutoff point at which one no longer can recite Tefilat Haderech.

**Rashba** (s.v. eimas), - after a parsa, one can no longer recite the prayer

**Rabbeinu Yonah** (20a dapei harif s.v misha'a) - follows Rashi's general approach to the Gemara. However, he writes that reciting Tefilat Haderech before travelling a parsa is preferable, but if one forgets, he can still recite Tefilat Haderech, so long as there is a significant distance remaining in his journey.

**Rosh (Brachos 4:18)** is bothered as to why someone cannot recite Tefilat Haderech after a parsa if one still has a long journey ahead. The Rosh therefore follows the BaHaG's approach that a parsa is referring to the minimal amount one has to travel to be required to recite Tefilat Haderech.

**Meiri (s.v kol)** answers the Rosh's question and explains that after a parsa, one has missed the opportunity to "seek permission" (as expressed by Eliyahu Hanavi) from his Creator.

**Tzlach (ibid.)** cites the Shelah that one can discern if he has received permission to travel based on how fluently one's lips are able to utter the prayer; this idea is based upon Brachos 34b, where a similar idea is expressed by Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa regarding his ability to discern if his prayers were accepted by Heaven. The Tzlach comments that since we are not on the level of Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa, the Gemara requires that Tefilat Haderech be said in the plural; by including the needs of the public, not just one's personal needs, one can assume consent is granted.

**Rashi** understood that the primary obligation to recite Tefilat Haderech is predicated upon the statement of Eliyahu Hanavi. Rav Yaakov is adding that the obligation to seek permission is applicable to all people, including those who are not on the level of Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa. Hence, the essence of the tefila is to seek permission from Hashem. After a parsa into the trip, therefore, one has lost his opportunity. However, the Rosh and the BaHaG understood that the obligation to recite Tefilat Haderech is not connected with the statement of Eliyahu Hanavi of seeking permission from Hashem; rather, it is a separate idea of reciting a tefila to protect the traveller upon his journey. Rav Yaakov is thus introducing the obligation to recite this tefila to protect us on our journey. Therefore, as long as there is a significant distance left in the trip, one is obligated to recite the tefila. However, it is unclear from Rav Yaakov's words how much distance must still be left in the journey for one to recite the tefila.

### Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 110:7

אומר אותה אחר שהחזיק בדרך ; ואין לאומרה , אלא אם כן יש לו לילך פרסה , אבל פחות מפרסה לא יחתום  
בברוך

One says it after starting on the road, and one should not say it unless he needs to travel a parsah. For less than that, he should not conclude with Baruch.

Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 110: 7) - follows the opinion of the BaHaG that a parsa is the minimal distance required to recite the tefila. He concludes that the tefila can be recited as long as one is not within the final parsa of his journey, where it is no longer considered a state of danger.

**Rema** argues, following the opinion of Rabbeinu Yonah, that one should preferably recite the tefila during the first parsah.

**The Shulchan Aruch** (ibid.: 7) rules that one only recites Tefilas Haderech for a trip that will be at least a parsah.

**Rabbi Chaim Na'eh** (Ketzos Hashulchan 67: Badei Hashulchan 4) adds that this parsah is measured beginning past the outskirts of the city, which is, according to halacha, 70 amos (105-140 feet). However, there is a dispute among the poskim regarding the earliest point one can recite Tefilat Haderech when embarking upon such a trip.

**The Magen Avraham** (ibid.: 14) writes that this begins past the outskirts of the city (70 amot outside the city).

**The Taz** (ibid.: 7) argues that once someone decides to set out on a journey, he can recite the tefila in his home.

#### **Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan, Biur Halachah 110 אין**

ולכאורה לפי"ז אפילו אם יש לו ליסע פרסה ביחד אך שהוא נוסע הפרסה דרך איזה עיר או שיודע שאיזה עיר קרובה בצד דרך נסיעתו בתוך פרסה ג"כ לא יאמר תה"ד בחתימה דהא ליכא מקום סכנתא ואפשר דלא פטרו רק אם כל דרך נסיעתו היה פחות מפרסה

Apparently, based on this, even who will travel a parsah, but who will be near a city in that parsah, or who knows there is a city near the road on which he travels that parsah, should not recite tefilat haderech with the conclusion, for he is not in danger. However, perhaps the sages only exempt him if his entire trip is less than a parsah.

**The Mishna Berura** (ibid.: 29) concludes that it is preferable to follow the opinion of the Magen Avraham. However, Rabbi Moshe Shternbuch (Teshuvos Vehanhagos 1: 191) says that the Steipler (Rabbi Yaakov Yisrael Kanievski) recited it immediately upon entering the highway. He also notes that this has an added benefit according to Rashi's opinion since after a parsah, one has lost the opportunity to recite the tefila.

## **How to measure a parsah?**

Is it measured by the time it takes one to travel a parsah by foot, which is 72 minutes, as this was the common method of travel in the times of the Gemara, or is it measured by the length of a parsah, which is 8,000 amos (between 12,000 and 16,000 feet). Rabbi Wosner (Shevet Halevi 10: 21: 2) cites the Zichron Yehuda that one measures by time, but notes that the Mishna Berura (ibid.: 30) implies that distance is to be used. He concludes that both opinions have validity.

## **Airplanes :**

Rabbi Betzalel Stern (Ahalech Baamitach, Tefilas Haderech fn. 7) - cites in the name of the Rogatchover (Rabbi Yosef Rosen) that there is no requirement to recite Tefilat Haderech on airplanes. The basis of this ruling is a passage in Chullin (139b) regarding the Scriptural obligation to send away the mother bird before taking the eggs or children from the nest. The Torah says one must encounter the nest "baderech", on the road, and the Gemara says that being in the air is not

considered on a derech. However, Rabbi Stern argues that one cannot compare the language of the Torah with the language used by our Sages. He points out that the Gemara teaches in Yevamot (62b) that a man is obligated to be with his wife prior to departing upon a journey. The reason is that a woman yearns for her husband as he is about to leave on a derech. Would one suggest that when flying by plane, there is no such obligation? Of course not, as the same logic would apply. The same is true regarding Tefilat Haderech; the same logic applies, as there is a danger in flying as well.

### **When is the proper time to recite Tefilas Haderech when travelling by plane?**

Rabbi Ephraim Greenblat (Rivavos Ephraim 6: 109) cites the Aderes who opined that when travelling by ship, one should recite Tefilas Haderech as soon as the ship moves, even prior to exiting the water within the area of the city. The logic behind this ruling is that the reason to delay the tefila until exiting the city is out of concern that one will change his mind and return home. However, as a passenger on a boat, one has no authority to cancel the trip. Based on this, Rabbi Greenblatt writes the same is true on an airplane; as soon as the plane begins moving, one can recite the tefila.

## **What Kind of Trip Requires Tefillat HaDerech?**

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1. According to some poskim, one should recite Tefillat HaDerech only if one is nervous about the trip. Other poskim maintain that one should recite it regardless of whether one is nervous
2. Ashkenazim hold that when one travels a distance of 8000 Amot from one city to another city, one recites Tefillat HaDerech only if there is no city within 16,000 Amot along the path one is traveling. If there is a continuous line of cities along the way within 16,000 Amot from the city where one departed one should say Tefillat HaDerech without reciting Hashem's name in the bracha. Some disagree that one should recite the bracha as long as the destination one travels is more than 16000 amot
  1. The distance is measured according to the distance it takes to travel the roads even if the road is not straight and not according to the shortest most direct line.
3. Sephardim hold that if one travels in a car, train, boat, airplane or any other mode of transportation if one travels 72 minutes from one city to another city then one says Tefillat HaDerech.
  1. The distance is only counted between one city and the other.
  2. Even if there are cities or pit stops along the way, the Sephardic minhag is to say Tefillat HaDerech.

## **Distance Traveled**

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1. According to Ashkenazim as long as the distance traveled is 3.84 kilometers then one should make the bracha, however, according to Sephardim one should only make it for a travel of 72 minutes.

## When Should One Say Tefillat HaDerech?

1. One should preferably say it within the first 8000 **Amot** of the trip. However, if one did not, as long as there are 8000 **Amot** left in the trip one may say Tefillat HaDerech.
2. One should not say Tefillat HaDerech until one leaves the city and a bit more than 70 **Amot** from the city. If one made the bracha while one was still in the city, after the fact, one is considered to have fulfilled the obligation.
3. Tefillat HaDerech should be said right after a bracha such as a **Bracha Achrona** or **Asher Yatzer** so as to connect a bracha beginning with Baruch to Tefillat HaDerech, if it is impossible then one should make Tefillat HaDerech without any bracha beforehand.
4. One who needs to travel on **Shabbat** for a medical emergency should say Tefillat HaDerech.

### Reciting the prayer

#### Talmud, Berachot 30a

אימת מצלי? - אמר רבי יעקב אמר רב חסדא: משעה שמהלך בדרך... והיכי מצלי לה? - רב חסדא אמר: מעומד; רב ששת אמר: אפילו מהלך. רב חסדא ורב ששת הוו קאזלי באורחא, קם רב חסדא וקא מצלי. אמר ליה רב ששת לשמעיה: מאי קא עביד רב חסדא? אמר ליה קאי ומצלי. אמר ליה: אוקמן נמי לדידי ואצלי, מהיות טוב אל תקרא רע

*When does he pray [tefillat haderech]? R' Yaakov cited Rav Chisda: When he begins to travel... How does one recite it? Rav Chisda said: While halted. Rav Sheshet said: Even while travelling. Rav Chisda and Rav Sheshet were travelling, and Rav Chisda halted to pray. Rav Sheshet said to his servant, "What is Rav Chisda doing?" He said, "He has halted, and he is praying." Rav Sheshet said, "Halt me, too, and I will pray; given the chance to be good, do not be called bad."*

#### Tosafot Pesachim 104b כל

וכן קשה מאתה הוא עד שלא נברא העולם ותפלת הדרך שחותם ואינו פותח בברוך וי"ל לפי שאינן ברכות אלא שבח ותפלה בעלמא

This is also difficult from... tefillat haderech, which closes but does not open with Baruch! Perhaps that is because these are not blessings, but only praise and prayer.

#### Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 110:6

הר"ם מרוטנבורג, כשהיה יוצא לדרך בבקר היה אומרה אחר יהי רצון כדי להסמיכה לברכת הגומל חסדים  
When Rabbi Meir of Rothenberg would travel, he would say it in the morning after Y'hi ratzon, to join it with the blessing of HaGomeil chasadim...

#### Talmud Yerushalmi Berachot 3:3

וחייבין [נשים] בתפילה כדי שיהא כל אחד ואחד מבקש רחמים על עצמו  
[Women] are obligated in prayer, so that each will request mercy personally.

#### Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan, Mishneh Berurah 193:5

יותר טוב שיאמרו אחרי המברך והמקדש מלה במלה בלחש אם אפשר להם דבזה יצאו לכל הפוסקים ובלא"ה נכון לעשות כן לכו"ע דא"א לכוין ולשמוע היטב

It would be better to say it after the one who recites the blessing or kiddush, word for word, quietly, where possible; this would satisfy all authorities. Aside from that reason, this would be appropriate according to everyone, for one cannot focus and listen well.

## WHEN TO SAY TEFILAT HADERECH:

Say Tefilat HaDerech when leaving your “place,” which may be a city, town, village, or even your home if you live in an isolated area. You may only say Tefilat HaDerech if you will go at least 2.8 miles outside the inhabited area.

If you will certainly leave the city limits at some point in your journey, you may say Tefilat HaDerech as soon as you start your journey (when you leave your house or get in your car, etc.).

**Example:** You may say Tefilat HaDerech when leaving your house for a flight, but the optimal time is when the plane begins to taxi.

City limits for this purpose means the last house before a gap of 2.8 miles, measured horizontally but not vertically.

Say Tefilat HaDerech in a boat that will be going at least 2.8 miles from shore.

## HOW OFTEN: ONCE A DAY/ONCE A TRIP

When riding in a vehicle on a trip, you should say Tefilat HaDerech once each day, as long as: You have gone--or will go--at least 2.8 miles past any populated area, and You will be breaking your trip at night.

**Note:** If you will be living in an RV or other vehicle, only say it once for the entire trip.

If you take a multi-day boat trip, such as a cruise, say it only once during the journey—not each day.

Note: Any time you stay overnight (on land) along the journey, say it again when you resume your travel.

## WHAT TO SAY

You do not need to say other blessings before Tefilat HaDerech. Since the tefilah begins without a blessing, some people like to say an unrelated blessing before it, but the custom is not to require saying another blessing first.

When saying Tefilat HaDerech, even if you say it for other people traveling with you, always say “titneini” (in the singular) and not “titneinu” (plural).

**Note:** This is different from most blessings, which are in the plural even when said by just one person for him/herself.

After saying the main blessing of Tefilat HaDerech, some people have the custom to say these phrases (pesukim) three times each:

*L’shuatcha kiviti... V’ya’akov halach l’darko... Yivarechecha... Hinei anochi sholei’ach lifanecha...*