**10 Fun Facts about the First 3 Brachos of Shemoneh Esrei**

1. **The first 3 Brachos are called Birchas Shevach, Blessings of praise.** The Gemara says that we must first praise Hashem before we ask.
2. **The first Bracha is the foundation for all of the Amidah.** There are 18 praises in the first Bracha corresponding to the 18 brachos of Shemoneh Esrei.
3. **The Amidah begins introducing Hashem as “the God of our fathers; the God of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov.”** Each one of the Avos embodied a different foundational attribute of Hashem. The first 3 Brachos each expounds on each one of those traits
4. **The 3 core attributes of Hashem are *Gadol, Gibor and Norah*-** The Gemara (Brachos 33b) says that these are the *only* 3 words we are allowed to use to praise Hashem because they are the exact words that Moshe used (Devarim 10,17). Without this precedent, it would be audacious for us to assume we can come up with the proper words to praise Hashem sufficiently.
5. **The theme of the 1st *Bracha* is *Chessed.*** Each phrase in the Beracha uncovers a new level of Hashem’s love and commitment to us. (See handout for a line-by-line breakdown).
6. **The 1st Bracha ends with the words *Magen Avraham*** since Avraham specifically was the one who embodied Chessed. Avraham was able to look at at a completely pagan and immoral world and see Godly potential. Hashem’s chessed is so great that even when we have no merit left Hashem will protect us and find new reasons to bestow his good on us.
7. **The theme of the 2nd *bracha* is *Gevurah.*** Gevurah is Hashem’s goodness manifested in struggle and discipline that ends in even greater good. This is demonstrated in the various examples given in the brachah Somech noflim, rofeh cholim, matir assurim, etc.
8. **The 2nd Brachah ends with the words *Mechayeh HaMeisim.*** All the struggle that we go through in this world is ultimately for the purpose of perfecting ourselves so we can experience Hashem to the fullest in Olam Habah when body and soul reunite on an even higher level. This reuniting is known as Techiyas HaMeisim.
9. **The theme of the 3rd *bracha* is *Kedushah.*** Kedushah is something that is separate from the mundane to serve a higher purpose. When speaking about Hashem, we often describe him as Kadosh, Kadosh, Kadosh. These three levels of Kedushah
10. **The 3rd Berachah ends with the words HaEil HaKadosh.** Eil refers to Hashem’s compassion and kindness. Referring to it as Kadosh is a reminder that it is beyond our comprehension.

**Overview of the first three Brachos of Shemoneh Esrei**

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| **Bracha** | **Summary** |
| Avos | * The first Brachah corresponds to Elokei Avraham, the praise of Gadol and the midah of Chessed. * The Bracha’s introduction includes the 3 core attributes of Hashem: *Gadol, Gibor and Norah*- The Gemara (Brachos 33b) says that these are the *only* 3 words we are allowed to use to praise Hashem because they are the exact words that Moshe used (Devarim 10,17). Without this precedent, it would be audacious for us to assume we can come up with the proper words to praise Hashem sufficiently. * Each phrase in the Beracha uncovers a new level of Hashem’s love and commitment to us which is based upon his relationship with our forefathers. |
| Atah Gibor  (Gevuros) | * The second Brachah corresponds to Elokei Yitzchak, the praise of Gibor and the midah of Gevurah/Din. * Gevurah is a relationship based on discipline. Even though at the time it seems difficult, the ultimate result is one of even greater pleasure. The main focus of this bracha is *Mechayeh HaMeisim.* All the struggle that we go through in this world is ultimately for the purpose of perfecting ourselves so we can experience Hashem to the fullest in Olam Habah when body and soul reunite on an even higher level. This reuniting is known as Techiyas HaMeisim. * Smaller examples of this are listed in the brachah as well, such as Somech noflim, rofeh cholim, matir assurim, etc. |
| Atah Kadosh  (Keudshas Hashem) | * The third Brachah corresponds to Elokei Yaakov, the praise of Norah and the midah of Rachamim/Tiferes. * Kedushah is something that is separate from the mundane and completely dedicated to serve an elevated purpose (e.g. marriage is called Kiddushin). * When speaking about Hashem, we often describe him as Kadosh, Kadosh, Kadosh, corresponding to the realms of action, speech and thought. This is also the 3 times Kadosh in this Brachah. |