

Tefillah Thoughts

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Promoting appropriate decorum and kavanah during davening

Pirush Ha'Milos:

"רוממו ה' אלקינו והשתחונו להדם רגליו קדוש הוא"
"Exalt the L-rd our G-d, and bow down at his footstool; holy is He."

"רוממו ה' אלקינו והשתחונו להר קדשו כי קדוש ה' אלקינו"

"Exalt the L-rd our G-d, and bow down at his holy mountain, for the L-rd our G-d is holy."

"והוא רחום יכפר עוון ולא ישחית והרבה להשיב אפו ולא יעיר כל חמתו"

"And He, being compassionate, pardons iniquity, and does not destroy; time and again he turns away his anger, and does not arouse all His wrath."

This Posuk is meant to sweeten the strict judgements against man. This is achieved through the thirteen attributes of mercy (Kail Rachum Ve'Chanun), and therefore this Posuk contains thirteen words to correspond to those thirteen attributes of mercy.

(Ohr Ha'Tefillah)

POINTS OF INTEREST:

The ascent of the Neshama occurs three times daily, during the three times of davening. This is practically true of the souls of Tzadikim who "go from strength to strength." It is certain that at all times and in every sacred place they may be, they offer invocation and prayer on behalf of those who are bound to them and to their instruction, and who observe their instructions. They offer prayer in particular for their disciples and disciples' disciples, that Hashem be their aid, materially and spiritually.

(Hayom Yom Iyar 29)

Avodas Ha'Tefillah:

The beginning of one's decline, Chas Veshalom, is the lack of avodah in davening. Everything becomes dry and cold. Even a mitzvah performed by habit becomes burdensome. Everything is rushed. One loses the sense of pleasure in Torah study. The atmosphere itself becomes crass. Needless to say, one is totally incapable of influencing others.

(Hayom Yom Iyar 23)

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Laws and customs:

Every individual, whether or not he has fulfilled his obligation to recite Shmone Esreh, must respond Amen after every single blessing. The intent he should have in mind is that "the blessing that was recited is true and I believe in it," for the word Amen signifies an affirmation of belief.

When reciting Amen after requests and supplications, such as the Amen recited in Kaddish and the like, one's intent should be oriented to the future – that the speaker's statements and requests be affirmed and speedily fulfilled. The concluding phrases of the intermediate blessings of Shemoneh Esreh, and of the blessings Retzeh and Sim Sholom, express praise and grateful acknowledgement of G-d's name, and also a wish and a hope that the statement will be fulfilled speedily. Accordingly it is desirable to have both above mentioned intents in mind.

(The Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Oruch: sec. 124:9)

Dedicated by Avraham Hayman in honor of his engagement to Devorah Gralnik.

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A Story:

During the year of mourning for the Tzemach Tzedek, all his sons had their own minyonim. The yeshiva students rotated from one minyan to another. Thus, they had the opportunity to observe each of the Rebbe's sons in their service of prayer.

Rebbe Yehuda Leib was very devout in his prayers, spending much time in concentrated meditation. "We cannot join you in such lengthy prayer," the young men told him apologetically. Though he promised to shorten the duration of his prayers, he always became so immersed that he neglected to keep his promise. Once, he told the young men that, as a reminder to shorten his prayers, he would constantly hold onto the chazzan's lectern. However, he became so enveloped in his service that he dragged the lectern all the way across the shul, deeply immersed in prayer.

Reb Yisroel Noach was known for his emotional outbursts of crying. It is told, that once he stood in the entrance of the Tzemach Tzedek's study, holding the book of Chovos-Ha'Ivovos-Duties of the Heart. As he read through a chapter, the pages became drenched with his tears. His prayer too was accompanied by tearful crying. When joining in his minyan, the young men found themselves crying uncontrollably. "At least, he knows why he is crying," they said. "But what are we crying about?" They decided to make an effort to contain themselves, with another person pinching whoever got carried away, to remind him of his resolve. It was, however, to no avail. One could not pray with Reb Yisroel Noach without being overwhelmed with tears.

There seemed nothing out of the ordinary in the Maharash's praying. However, one of the young men noticed that after the verses of Uva Letzion Goel, the Maharash would pull the Tallis over his head, totally concealing himself. The young man was anxious to know what the Maharash was doing then. Mustering courage, he peaked beneath the Tallis. The Maharash tweaked him on the nose. "I may have gotten a nip," he later told the others, "but I did see what the Maharash was doing. He removed his head Tefillin and put on the Tefillin of Shimusha Rabbah.

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Biur Tefillah: "Roka Ha'Aretz Al Ha'Moyim"

The text of this Bracha comes from Tehilim 136:6, which reads "(Give praise to G-d...) to Him Who spreads the earth over the waters, for His kindness endures forever." As we are about to take our first step, we remember Hashem's kindness in creating the world in such a way that the earth is spread out over and above the waters, so that we can live on dry land. On the third day of creation- we read in the beginning of Breishis- Hashem ordered the waters, which covered the earth, to gather into one place, so that dry land should appear. And this is how the seas and oceans were formed, covering the greater part of our globe. Large masses of water remained under the earth's surface, from which come the wells and springs of fresh water. Thus, our earth is surrounded by water and is "spread" over water. Were the land masses on the same level, or below the level, of the water, the earth would be flooded and uninhabitable. Furthermore, though earth and rocks are heavier than water, the waters below the earth's crust remain trapped and do not burst forth in a destructive flood. It is by Divine grace ("for His kindness endures forever") that we live on dry land, above the sea level, and this, too, deserves our remembering it daily, and our constant gratitude to the Creator.

(My Prayer)

Your comments and feedback are welcome: tefillahthoughts@monseychabad.com

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