

Tefillah Thoughts

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Promoting appropriate decorum and kavanah during davening

Pirush Ha'Milos:

"אתה ה' לא תכלא רחמך ממני חסדך ואמתך תמיד יצרוני"

"May you, L-rd, not withhold Your mercies from me; may your kindness and truth continually guard me."

Above we translated the word יצרוני as "guard me". The Kedushas Halevi gives a deeper meaning, that it alludes to יצירה – 'formation' or 'creation'. The Torah teaches that were it not for Hashem's will, nothing would exist except for Him. With every passing moment, because He wills our continued existence, He forms and creates us anew.

We say יצרוני רחמך – לא תכלא רחמך – *do not let Your mercy desist – ממני – because of me. Due to my sins I deserve to perish, but every moment, because of Your infinite mercy, You remake me, bestowing upon me the gift of life, as if I am a new creation. If so, just as easily You can give me a new, pure heart so that I will not sin. "May Your kindness and truth always guard me and **recreate** me."*

POINTS OF INTEREST:

On his fiftieth birthday, Reb Chaim Zelig Dobruskin had a yechidus with the Rebbe Rashab. "I feel a marked difference in my davening and performance of Mitzvot. I lack the warmth that accompanied my service in my youthful days," he complained. "What do you expect, Chaim Zelig?" replied the Rebbe. "Fifty years of breakfasts and dinners take their toll on one's service of G-d."

Avodas Ha'Tefillah:

"A ladder was standing on the ground." Prayer is the ladder that connects souls and Elokus. And although it stands "...on the ground," the start of davening being no more than acknowledgement, yet "its top reaches the Heavens" – a state of total bitul, self nullification. One reaches this level through prior attainment of comprehension and understanding inherent in p'sukei d'zimra, in the Brochos of sh'ma and in sh'ma proper.

(Hayom Yom Kislev 5)



Laws and customs:

Once the time for prayer arrives, i.e., from dawn onwards, one is forbidden to pay his friend a visit at home to greet him with Shalom. This (prohibition) is alluded to in the verse, "Keep afar from man who (merely) has breath in his nostrils, for by what does he merit esteem?" That is, "For what reason did you accord importance to that person, giving his honor precedence over Mine?" Now, the basic expression of honor and service to the Omnipresent is the Shemoneh Esreh prayer. Therefore, even if (after) rising one recited all the Morning Blessings and recited a number of hymns and praises, and even if he accepted the yoke of G-d's Sovereignty by reciting the Shema at its appropriate time before prayer, he is forbidden to pay his friend a visit at home to greet him with Shalom, or even to say, "Good Morning, sir," if he is going for the sole purpose of greeting him.

(The Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Oruch: sec. 89:3)

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

A Story:

Upstairs in the woman's gallery of the Lemberg shul, the woman were shaking their heads in displeasure. "Just look at our Rabbi's Tallis," one said. "It was so worn and tattered. It hardly befits a man of the stature of our Rabbi, Rabbi David Halevy, the renowned Taz." Without further discussion, the woman announced a campaign to collect money to buy the Rav a new Tallis, and shortly afterwards, a new Tallis was presented to the Rav.

The following Shabbos, however, the women were surprised to see the Taz, wrapped in his old Tallis. Later, the Rav was asked why he did not don the Tallis donated by the women. "My old Tallis is very dear to me," explained the Taz. "It bears witness to the fact from the day I first wrapped myself in it, my prayers were never disrupted by foreign thoughts."



Biur Tefillah: "Hamechin Mitzadei Gaver"

Walking is no simple matter, and we owe Hashem a debt of gratitude for it. But the Bracha has yet a wider and deeper meaning. It reminds us that man's movements, although they are quite free and voluntary, have a deeper purpose connected with Divine Providence. This will become clear when we trace the text of this Bracha to its original source in Tehillim 37:27, which reads "The steps of man are directed by Hashem, and He (he) delights in his (His) way." The holy Baal Shem Tov, who gave us a deeper insight into the meaning of Divine Providence, explains this Passuk to mean that while a Jew goes about his business, visits people and places, which he thinks necessary for his personal business, there is really a more important – spiritual- purpose in his moving about from place to place, and meeting different people. This is especially true when one goes to a new city, or country, whether on a visit, or for a permanent change. The more important reason, or purpose, is connected with something more than his own good: It may be for the purpose of doing someone else a favor, materially or spiritually; or to spread a good influence; or to show a good example of conduct; or strengthen and spread Torah and Mitzvah in his environment; or all of these combined.

Thus, when the Jew realizes that "the steps of man are directed by Hashem." He (the man) will delight in His (Hashem's) way, and He (Hashem) will delight in his (man's) way (for the Passuk lends itself to interpretation both ways).

(My Prayer)

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