

Tefillah Thoughts

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Inspiring thoughts promoting appropriate decorum and kavanah during davening

Pirush Ha'Milos:

“שירו לו זמרו לו שיחו בכל נפלאותיו”

“Sing to Him, chant to Him, speak of all His wonders”

“שירו לו זמרו לו”

Singing and chanting are similar in purpose yet very different in performance. Singing is accomplished by a person's mouth, which is part of the person himself, internal. Chanting however, is by instrument, which is something outside of the person, external.

(Ohr Ha'Tefillah)

“התהללו בשם קדשו ישמח לב מבקשי ה'”

“Glory in His holy name; may the heart of those who seek the L-rd rejoice.”

“דרשו ה' ועזו בקשו פניו תמיד”

“Search for the L-rd and his might; continually seek His countenance.”

“זכרו נפלאותיו אשר עשה מפתיו ומשפטי פיהו”

“Remember the wonders that He has done, His miracles and the judgments of His mouth.”

POINTS OF INTEREST:

The Tzemach Tzedek instructed all the tutors of his young grandchildren, that, in addition to regular studies, they should teach the simple meaning of the prayers. Once a month the children came to their grandfather to be tested in this subject.

(Hayom Yom 8 Teves)

There were periods of time when R. Yekusiel Liepler, a Chassid of the Alter Rebbe, davened Shacharis, Mincha and Maariv one right after the other; there was no time for intervals.

(Hayom Yom 1 Kislev)

Avodas Ha'Tefillah:

“It is obvious, that in order to be able to daven properly on Shabbos and Yom Tov, there has to be a proper preparation during the weekday davening. “Someone who toils on Erev Shabbos will have what to eat on Shabbos”. In the same way as this rule applies to the preparation of food for Shabbos, it also applies concerning the tefillos of Shabbos.

Even during the weekdays when time is scarce there has to be avodas ha'tefillah. The only difference is that during the weekday when one has no time the avodah is not so much in quantity as in the quality of concentration. On Shabbos however one can also improve on the quantity of time spent on Tefillah as well.

(Likutei Sichos Vol. 5)



Laws and customs:

“While the *Shliach tzibbur* repeats *Shemoneh Esray*, all the congregants should remain silent, concentrate on the blessings that he is reciting, and respond *Amen*. . . Every individual should act as if there are not nine listeners without him, and should listen attentively to the blessings of the *Shliach tzibbur*.”

During *pesukei de'zimrah* – from *boruch she'omar* through *yishtabach* – one can interrupt to respond “Amen,” but may not answer ‘*boruch hu u'boruch shemoi*.’”

(The Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Oruch)

A Chassidische Story:

Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi once said to one of his grandchildren: "Let me tell you about the simple faith of the Jews of Vohlyn (Ukraine)." Many years ago, I was traveling home from Mezritch after a period of study under the guidance of my master, the great Maggid. It was a cold winter night, and my feet had become immobilized by the cold. When we stopped at a wayside inn, the coachman had to carry me inside in his arms. "The innkeeper, an elderly, G-d-fearing Jew, rubbed my feet with snow and spirits until the life returned to them. He asked me about the purpose of my journey, and I told him that I was a disciple of the Maggid of Mezritch. In answer to my questions, he told me that he had been operating this inn for close to fifty years, and that, thank G-d, he has earned a comfortable living from it.

"'Is there a Jewish community here?' I asked." 'No,' replied the innkeeper. 'We are the only Jews for many miles around.'" 'So you don't have a *minyan*? What do you do on Shabbat and the festivals?'" 'To my sorrow,' sighed the old man, 'we pray without a quorum all year round. For the High Holidays, we close the inn for two weeks and travel to the city -- a several days' journey from here.'" 'But how can you live this way!' I exclaimed. 'How can a Jew go for months on end without a *kaddish* or *borchu*, without hearing the public reading of the Torah?'" 'What can I do? This is my livelihood. There is nothing for me to do in the city.'" 'How many Jewish households are there in the city?' I asked." 'About a hundred,' he replied." 'If G-d manages to provide a living for a hundred families,' I said, 'don't you think He could find a way to provide for one more?' "On that note, we parted company. I was given a room in which to rest, and the innkeeper went off to attend to his affairs.

"An hour later, I heard a commotion outside. Looking out the window, I saw several carts and wagons piled high with bundles and crates, furniture and household items. The innkeeper and his sons were running about, tying down the bundles and settling the women and children into the wagons." 'What's going on?' I asked the old man." 'We're moving to the city,' he replied. 'You're right -- this is no place for a Jew. A Jew needs a *minyan*, a rabbi, a community...'" 'But just like that, you're going? Where will you stay? And what will you do for a living?'" 'We'll find something. As you said, if G-d can take care of a hundred families in the city, He can surely provide for a few more souls...'

"Such was the faith and trust in G-d of these Jews!" Rabbi Schneur Zalman concluded his story. "I was but a young man at the time, but because I had told him that I was a disciple of the great Maggid, he unquestionably acted on my advice. Without giving it another thought, he left behind an enterprise that had provided him with a comfortable living for fifty years and set out, that very night, to a place where he could better serve his Creator."



Biur Tefillah:

Our Sages tell us that the custom of praying three times a day was originally introduced by our Avos, Avrohom, Yitzchak and Yakov. Avrohom introduced prayer in the morning, Yitzchok in the afternoon, and Yakov added one at night. In Chassidus it is explained further that each of the Avos represented a particular quality which they introduced into the service of G-d. Avrohom served Hashem with *love*, Yitzchok – with *awe*; Yakov – with *mercy*. Not that each lacked the qualities of the others, but each had a particular quality which was more in evidence. We, the children of Avrohom, Yitzchok and Yakov, have inherited all these three great qualities, and this enables us to serve Hashem with love, fear and mercy.

(My Prayer; Introduction)

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