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# Tefillah Thoughts

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**Promoting appropriate decorum and kavanah during davening**

## Pirush Ha'Milos:

“בהיותכם מתי מספר כמעט וגרים בה”

“When you were but few, very few, and strangers in it.”

“ויתהלכו מגוי אל גוי ומממלכה אל עם אחר”

“They wandered from nation to nation, and from one kingdom to another people.”

“לא הניח לאיש לעשקם ויוכח עליהם מלכים”

“He permitted no one to wrong them, and admonished kings for their sakes.”

These Pesukim are referring to the times of the Avos when there were very few Yiden in number, and the Avos dwelled in the land as strangers.

Additionally they did not remain in one area; rather, they wandered from place to place. Avrohom went to Mitzrayim, Yitzchok went to Gerar, and Yakov went to Charan.

Although it is the nature of a country to take advantage of strangers dwelling among them, Hashem did not allow anyone to wrong them.

(Metzudas Tzion)

## POINTS OF INTEREST:

The routine of the day begins with saying *Modeh Ani*. This is said before the morning washing of the hands, even while the hands are “impure”. Because all the impurities in the world do not defile the “I acknowledge” of a Jew. He might lack one thing or another, but his *Modeh Ani* remains intact.

(Hayom Yom: Shvat 11)

## Avodas Ha'Tefillah:

One should not regard his prayers, as a routine matter, but as (an entreaty for) mercy and as supplication before Hashem. Implied is that one should not pray because of his obligation, to fulfill his duty. In such an instance, one perceives his prayers as a burden that he desires to dispose of. Rather, (he should see himself) as a person in need of something, who comes to make his request of the king. He should express his request in a spirit of supplication, like a beggar at the door.

(The Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Oruch: sec. 98:3)



## Laws and customs:

One should not kiss his young children in the Shul, in order to implant in his heart that there is no love comparable to the love of Hashem. Children who disturb their fathers while praying should not be brought to Shul at all.

(The Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Oruch: sec. 98:1)

In the bracha *V'lamalshinim*, pause slightly between *us'mageir* (“crush”) and *v'sachnia* (“and subdue”), in consonance with the kavana that *s'akeir us'shabeir us'mageir* (“uproot, break and crush”) refer to the three kelipos that must be completely eradicated. *V'sachina* (“subdue”) refers to kelipas noga that must be subdued, but can be purified.

(Hayom Yom Tevet 26)

## A Story:

Everyone was already in Shul on Yom Kippur night. The Baal Shem Tov was standing in front, his Tallis over his face, tears streaming from his eyes. The congregation was waiting for a sign from the Rebbe to start with the davening but the Rebbe was apparently in a higher realm and did not notice the impatience of the congregants. Time passed rapidly, but the Tzaddik stood motionless, supplicating to Hashem, that all Klal Yisroel be granted a prosperous healthy year. Something was definitely wrong! Never had it occurred that the Rebbe should stand for so long. Slowly the entire congregation began to recite Tehilim. Everyone understood that in the highest spheres, an awesome struggle was transpiring.

Suddenly everyone's attention was drawn to the back of the Shul. Standing dormant was an apprentice shepherd, shouting at the top of his voice "Kukuriku, Kukuriku". Who is this lad, who is making a mockery of this serious situation? Everyone wondered. The Gabbai rushed to the back to eject the boy from the Shul, but at that moment, the Rebbe turned around, his face gleaming with the joy, and he gave the signal for the prayers to commence.

Motzoei Yom Kippur, the Rebbe was sitting with his disciples around a table laden with food. The Rebbe was clearly in an uplifted state of mind. He turned to his disciples and said. "You are most probably wondering what warranted my conduct last night. Last night I ascended to lofty spiritual realms and I saw that a terrible decree, G-d forbid, was looming over the Jewish nation. I tried to fight the decree, but to no avail. Suddenly I heard in the higher worlds a tremendous commotion. And all the prosecuting angels simply melted away, disappeared. That sound was the 'Kukuriku'! That child was a simple shepherd who didn't even know how to read. He came to Shul and he felt the intensity of the moment. He could sense the panic; but what could he do - he didn't know how to pray. He thought to himself, "All I know is the cry of the rooster, that's all I can offer to Hashem". It was that cry that came straight from the heart that penetrated all the heavens and succeeded to nullify that evil decree". This story clearly illustrates the importance of heart, sincerity and feeling in davening.



### ***Biur Tefillah: "Elokai, Neshamah"***

In the present bracha, our thoughts are turned from our body to our soul, and we thank Hashem for the daily miracle of the restoration of our soul to our body. Our Chachamim say that just as when one breathes out with force, the breath comes from "within," so, in a manner of speaking, our Neshama is Hashem's own "deep breath."

Being part of G-dliness, our Neshama has a natural desire to be with Hashem always, and to return to its heavenly home. It has no interest in material things and material pleasures, and delights only in spiritual things. Were it not for Hashem who preserves it within our body, it would fly out of our body and return to heaven. But the Neshama has a mission to fulfill on this earth, and Hashem orders her to stay for its allotted time. Therefore, so long as the soul is within our body, we must serve Hashem and fulfill His commandments, for He is our Master.

At the end of time on this earth, our Neshama returns to its Creator, where it is held to account for all that it has accomplished, or failed to accomplish, during its lifetime. When the time for Techias Hamaisim will come, Hashem will bring back to life the righteous dead, and the Neshama will return to a purified body, to enjoy everlasting life. Our sleep and our awakening are a daily reminder of our Neshama's eternal life. Our Chachamim say that sleep is but a sixtieth part of death. We must remember that our Neshama is pure, and we must do our best to keep it pure.

(My Prayer)

*Your comments and feedback are welcome: [tefillahthoughts@monseychabad.com](mailto:tefillahthoughts@monseychabad.com)*