

# Tefillah Thoughts

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**Promoting appropriate decorum and kavanah during davening**

## Pirush Ha'Milos:

**“אל תגעו במשיחי ובנביאי אל תרעו”**

*“Do not touch My anointed ones, and do not harm My prophets”*

According to the simple meaning of the verse, “My anointed ones” refers to kings and Kohanim, while “My prophets” refers to prophets. Our Chachamim explain (Shabbos 119b) that “My anointed ones” refers to “תינוקות של בית רבן – small school children who learn with their rebbe”, while “My prophets” refers to Talmidei Chachamim – Torah scholars.

## POINTS OF INTEREST:

The gates of heaven are never closed. Sometimes a prayer is answered only after forty days. This we learn from Moshe, as it is written, “I threw myself before Hashem for forty days...” Sometimes a prayer is answered after twenty days. This we learn from Daniel, of whom it is written, “I did not eat fine bread until the end of three full weeks,” and then he said. “Hashem hear, Hashem forgive...” Sometimes a prayer is answered within three days. This we learn from Yonah, as it is written, “And Yonah was in the stomach of the fish for three days, and Yonah prayed to Hashem his G-d from inside the fish.” Sometimes a prayer is answered within one day. This we learn from Dovid, as it is written, “And as for me, my prayer is to You, Hashem, at a moment of favor...” And then there is prayer which is answered even before it leaves the lips, as it is written, “And it shall be that before they cry, I will answer.”

(Midrash Rabbah Vaeschanan)

## Avodas Ha'Tefillah:

The Maggid of Mezritch explains why so many foreign thoughts interfere during davening, making it nearly impossible to avoid them without siyata di'shmaya. In fact, sometimes, the harder one tries to daven, the more distracting thoughts he entertains. He explains this with a parable: If a man has a bright son who learns well, giving him much nachas, he will take advantage of this source of pleasure by having every learned guest test his son. The harder and more confusing the questions, the more pleased the father will be - as long as his son knows the answers. A good guest will go ahead to great lengths to try to stump the son to please the host. In the same vain, the harder one tries to daven, the harder the Yetzer Hara tries to distract him. If he is able to overcome the evil inclination and continue davening fervently-how pleased Hashem will be!

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## Laws and customs:

One should not pray Shemoneh Esray in his heart alone. Rather, he should articulate the words with his lips and whisper audibly. He should not, however, make his voice heard (by someone standing more than four cubits away). A person who projects his voice during Shemoneh Esray is one of those whose faith is meager – as if Hashem would not hear a whispered prayer.

(The Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch 101:2)

## A Story:

Reb Yisroel Noach, the Friediker Rebbe's great uncle, told the Rashbatz that once he was with his father, the Tzemach Tzedek, and was talking to him about concepts in Torah. Reb Yisroel Noach said to the Tzemach Tzedek that such and such an idea in Torah is very difficult for him to understand and he has been struggling with it for a long time. The Tzemach Tzedek responded, "You were in a Shul when the Holy Ark was opened. When the ark is opened and the Tefillah brich shmei is recited it is an auspicious time when the heavenly chambers of Torah are open, and one's mind and heart become illuminated."

The Tzemach Tzedek continued, "The Alter Rebbe told me what he received in Mezritch in the name of the Bal Shem Tov, at the time of the opening of the ark when brich shmei was recited. When a simple Jew recites it with sincere loyal faith from the depth of his heart, Hashem fulfills his request, either completely or partially." When the ark is opened, Hashem opens the heavenly ark where all Torah scrolls, written throughout the generations with meseiras Nefesh, are present. Malach Michoel announces, 'Hashem in His holy chamber quiets the entire world.'" When a Jew says brich shmei, Malach Michoel asks for mercy that the person's request be fulfilled.



### *Biur Tefillah: "Hanosain Lasechvi Binah"*

The crowing of the rooster is one of the wonders which Hashem implanted in Nature. By some hidden peculiar sense, the rooster knows the times when the darkness of night is about to lift and gives its place to the light in the sky. We, Jews see Hashem's hand in every one of the innumerable wonders of Nature, praise Hashem for giving the rooster the understanding to sense the breaking of dawn. Normally we should have to make this blessing only when we actually hear the rooster crow, just as we make similar blessings when we see or hear any natural phenomenon, such as thunder, lightning, a rainbow, or any similar natural occurrence, in all of which we Jews recognize the manifestation of G-d's power and creation. Why then, do we make the above blessing every morning, even though we do not hear the rooster crow?

The answer is that this blessing, as also the others that follow, has a deeper meaning. Day and night, light and darkness, are synonymous with good and bad, knowledge and ignorance, happiness and misery. People who live in the "dark" are those who have no knowledge of Hashem. Terrible experiences are referred to as "nightmares". We speak of the dawn as the beginning of a new and hopeful era, after the "night" of misfortunes.

Bearing this in mind, and considering that Sechvi ("rooster") also means "heart", we can see the other and deeper meaning of this blessing. The heart is the seat of feelings and understanding. That is why we find in the Torah such expression as a "wise heart," or an "understanding heart." Now, while G-d has given the rooster a special sense to distinguish between day and night, He has given man a special sense to distinguish between good and bad. For G-d has endowed man with a Neshama which enables him to think and to feel what is right and what is wrong.

The ROSH (Rabeinu Asher) tells us that this Bracha does not essentially refer to the crowing of the rooster, but the ability of man to distinguish between good and bad. For this reason, Jewish law requires us to say this Bracha even if we have never heard the crowing of the rooster. However, since the crowing of the rooster occurs at dawn, the blessing has properly been inserted among the first morning brochos.

(My Prayer)

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